Finding the Sheldon weavers: Richard Hyckes and the Barcheston tapestry works reconsidered

Hilary L Turner

First published in *Textile History*, 33, no. 2, November 2002, pp.137-161, now updated and reproduced by permission, ©

Abstract

In his will written in 1570 William Sheldon set out plans for a cloth and tapestry weaving venture in his manor house at Barcheston, Warwickshire. The product of wider economic thinking, it was an unusual venture in Elizabethan England but it made no mark in popular memory or on contemporary records. The antiquaries who gave it life in the 1920s believed in its success but found slight evidence to substantiate their claims to its existence. No new research has since focussed on the small tapestries then attributed to it and given the name 'Sheldon'; most are without C16 provenance. Many more, with decreasing similarity, have come to light and been so identified. Little has been done either on the men who worked for those in charge of the project, Richard Hyckes and his son Francis, who were also successive heads of the royal repair shop in London from 1569 to 1609. This article presents a fresh interpretation of the subject, drawing on a diverse range of sources never previously used, to assemble a more complete record of those possibly associated with this famous but little explored enterprise.

The view of Richard Hyckes of Barcheston, arrasmaker to Queen Elizabeth, which gained currency and still prevails, is that propagated by the seventeenth-century Oxford antiquarian and gossip Anthony Wood(1632-95). Wood wrote that Hyckes was sent abroad by *Ralph* Sheldon to learn the art of tapestry weaving.[1] This is overlaid and contradicted by the explanation offered in the exploratory work of Barnard and Wace in the 1920s which has held the field, that Hyckes acted as 'tutor' to the young Ralph on a tour abroad. Their view was based on Ralph's epitaph, erected by his son, which states that he went to France and other parts. Barnard suggested that Ralph might have been accompanied by Hyckes, who subsequently remained on the continent, according to Wood in Holland; tapestry workshops, however, were largely in the Low Countries.[2] Both stories, never reconciled, are contradicted

[1] *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by himself,* ed. Andrew Clark, Oxford Historical Society, 1891, i, 477n. from Bodleian Library Oxford, Ms Rawlinson D 807,f.15, "This Richard Hyckes here mentioned first was bound prentice to a Dutch arras worker in Holland by *Ralph* Sheldon (who built the great house at Weston in Com. Warw. anno 1588) and being out of his time, settled at Barston, a manour that belongs to the Sheldons and made and weaved those fair hangings that are in the dining room at Weston."

[2] E. A. Barnard and A. J. B. Wace, 'The Sheldon tapestry weavers and their work', *Archaeologia*, vol. lxxviii, 1928, 255-318, p. 259, hereafter Barnard & Wace. Ralph's tomb is in Beoley church, Worcestershire; the

by the phrase in the will of Ralph's father William, made in 1570, that Hyckes was 'the only author and beginner of this art'.[3] William Sheldon's will created a tapestry workshop at his manor of Barcheston, directed by Hyckes, who later heads the list of the workers in the royal repair shop within the Great Wardrobe for the years 1584-88, but who, as will be shown, was given the post much earlier. How and why, despite the absence of any earlier connection, this should have been possible is a problem which has never yet been addressed. Four references in connection with tapestry work in 1568, 1585, 1605 and a now discounted reference from 1592 together with several court appearances, the record of his burial in 1621 aged 97 and his will make up all that has been known about Hyckes up to now.

Anthony Wood was acquainted with Ralph 'the Great' Sheldon (1623-84), and was asked by the heir to organise Ralph's funeral in 1684.[4] Wood might therefore be expected to have written an accurate account of the establishment of the works at Barcheston but, unexceptional as the explanation he offered, or was offered by the family itself, for the founding of a tapestry manufactory a century earlier in rural Warwickshire may well have seemed to a seventeenth century antiquarian it raises more questions than it answers. Some can be disposed of quickly; Wood was writing without having seen William Sheldon's will and, like Barnard, without knowledge of the appointment of Hyckes as head of the royal works. He appears also to have been unaware of the tradition, much less often quoted, recorded around 1780 by the Worcestershire historian Treadway Nash, that 'William Sheldon first introduced the working of tapestry into England, at Barcheston; having at his own expense brought workmen from Flanders and employed them in weaving maps of the different counties of England, and other curious pieces, several of which are still in being at Weston.'[5] In this case it is not clear whether Nash was repeating contemporary tradition. His work drew heavily on the papers and notes of Thomas Habington, Sheldon's near neighbour at Tardebigge, who had been confined to his house for life for his participation in the

---

inscription is quoted in E . A. Barnard, *The Sheldons*, Cambridge 1936, p.41. Criticism of their work and that of J. Humphreys, *The Elizabethan Sheldon Tapestries*, *Archaeologia*, vol. 74, pp. 181-202, reprinted Oxford, 1929, was expressed by Eleanor Sachs in *International Studio*, vol.94, December 1929, pp.78-80.

[3] Sheldon's will is in The National Archives (TNA) PROB 11/53/79; a transcription of the relevant part was printed by Barnard & Wace, p. 256-258, now also on-line at https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/William-Sheldon-will.pdf. Probate was granted 10 February 1571, not in 1603 as Barnard stated. A similar phrase, 'the first deviser and maker within this our realm' was said of the Queen's trumpeter when he was permitted to make trumpets in 1583, *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 1582-83, no.867, List & Index Soc vol.286.

[4] Alan Davidson, 'The Funeral of Ralph Sheldon', *Worcestershire Recusant*, no.18, December 1971, pp. 32-35.

[5] Treadway Nash, *Collections for a History of Worcestershire*, London 1781, 2 vols, i, p.66. Barnard noted the alternative tradition, *The Sheldons*, p.19, as did John Humphreys, 'The Sheldon Tapestry Maps of Worcestershire', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, vol. xliii, 1918, pp.5-22, p.6 and A.F. Kendrick, 'Some Barcheston Tapestries', *Walpole Society*, vol xiv, 1925, 28-42, p.29.

Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and occupied his time writing a history of Worcestershire. Habington's *History*, however, makes no mention of this matter.

It is, of course, perfectly possible that Hyckes was English, perhaps the son of a steward or tenant, although not at Barcheston. Except for the information of Wood and Nash, that view would appear to be consistent with what little is known of him, his appearances in court, the many miscellaneous services he performed for the family revealed in the recently discovered account book and with sending his son to Oxford before bringing him into the royal repair shop. It is not consistent, however, with what is known of the tapestry trade, with the personnel of the Wardrobe or with Hyckes' abilities as demonstrated by the hundred or so surviving examples of 'Sheldon' tapestry, large or small.[6] Neither does Wood's explanation fit the wider picture, while also leaving unanswered questions about Hyckes' origins. Why should a Warwickshire man have been sponsored by a very wealthy and very powerful landowner; why should a man aged 40 plus when we first hear of him choose to serve an apprenticeship; how did an Englishman whose background did not lie in the trade so quickly and so thoroughly acquire the skills in which 'strangers' working in London were pre-eminent Europe wide and whose work was in universal demand; by what means or effort did this man both achieve the headship of the royal arras works, an office of whose workings he may be presumed to be ignorant, and pass the office on to his son? How, without contacts, could he be expected to organise and run a successful business?

New evidence, from both central and local archives and from recent scholarship, suggested that a re-examination of all the traditionally accepted assumptions might be rewarding. It is this evidence that this article sets out to explore; by asking, and to some extent answering, different questions about Hyckes, Sheldon and their joint, or their respective, aims, a very different picture from that presented in 1928 by Barnard and Wace both of the man in charge of the Sheldon works and of the works themselves emerges.

For convenience, and because the stories are inter-linked, the new evidence is summarised below:

[6] Hilary L. Turner, 'A wittie devise': the Sheldon tapestry maps belonging to the Bodleian Library', *Bodleian Library Record*, vol.17, no.5, April 2002. Since writing this I have reconsidered the validity of previous attributions and thus this estimate of his abilities.

1. The grant to Hyckes of the headship of the royal arras works in January 1569; its extension in May 1575 to associate his son Francis in survivorship and permission to have six servants born in England to work for their own profit.[7]
2. Four documents in the National Archives, Kew not examined by Barnard; one completes the story of Sir George Calveley's order for tapestry from Hyckes around 1570, three others are concerned with and amplify personal details in the tithe dispute cases heard in 1588 in which Hyckes was involved.[8]
3. The writ removing the headship of the royal works from Hyckes, both father and son, in 1609.[9]
4. Details contained in the account book of Ralph Sheldon, acquired by Warwick Record Office in 1988.[10]
5. Wendy Hefford's use of printed records relating to alien settlers in London which provide much information about the composition of the royal arras repair shop within the Great Wardrobe and an important reference to a Fleming working for William Sheldon.[11] Neither this nor many other printed sources available at the time of their research were used by Barnard and Wace.

Richard Hyckes and the royal arras works

When in 1570 William Sheldon made his will and laid out plans which might established a cloth and tapestry works on a firm footing at Barcheston, Warwickshire, he and Richard Hyckes, its director, had known for twelve months that he would become the next

[7] *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1566-69*, no. 2573 (henceforth *CPR*); TNA C66/1060, m.7; *CPR 1572-1575*, no. 3268, C66/1136, m.16.

[8] Continuation of the Calveley case is TNA REQ 2/215/37; Barnard knew only REQ 2/118/16. In the tithe dispute case of 1588 concerning Barcheston he quoted only from REQ 2/121/32, the interrogatories for Hill, and made no use of REQ 2/223/66, which contains the initiation of the complaint and the initial depositions. See https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/barcheston-tithe-dispute.pdf.

[9] *CPR 1572-1575*, no. 3269, C66/1136, m.16 verso.

[10] Warwickshire Record Office (WaCRO), CR 2632.

[11] Wendy Hefford, 'Flemish Tapestry Weavers in England: 1550-1775', Proceedings of Congress Mechelen October 2000, "Flemish Weavers Abroad", Leuven University Press, 2002, pp. 43-61, hereafter Hefford, Weavers. I am deeply grateful to Miss Hefford for her help and guidance in my own research. R.E.G.Kirk and E.F. Kirk, *Returns of Aliens living in London, Huguenot Society of London*, Publications vol 10, four parts, 1900, in future Kirk, *Aliens*; William Page, *Aliens in England 1509-1603. Letters of Denization and Naturalization*, Huguenot Society of London, Publications vol. 8, 1893, in future Page, *Denizations*.

Queen's arrasmaker, head of the royal repair shop in the Wardrobe. The post was granted to him on January 24 1569 to succeed after the death of Thomas White on terms which were by then customary though no longer accurate; Hyckes' stipulated pay of 6d per day had been increased to one shilling at least ten years earlier.[12] Like his Flemish predecessors Hyckes was to work 'at need' and was to receive extra money for supplying materials. He also had the right to appoint deputies, a provision of which he appears to have made immediate use. Only 182 days were worked in the period Michaelmas 1568-69, the last record of Thomas White.[13] The accounts in the most commonly used series (TNA LC 9) are missing for Michaelmas 1569-70; in the audited set for that year (TNA AO 3) Henry Wells is the first name, as it is when the LC 9 series resumes. Since for none of those who subsequently appear first in the lists has an appointment been found, Hyckes seems to have appointed deputies almost immediately; surprisingly, his name is not recorded amongst the arrasworkers until 1584-85, though it is found much earlier in the Stables accounts.[14] However, he does not appear in the Wardrobe accounts before his appointment. Perhaps because he was relatively unknown the terms of his grant allowed him less scope than his predecessors, a matter he would later remedy. Nevertheless, his appointment has to have been based on previous knowledge of his abilities, making it intrinsically unlikely that he was English, for, contrary to Barnard's belief, this department was staffed, as it had long been, largely by Flemish not English workmen. Why then should an Englishman suddenly be appointed as its head?

There are two possibilities; the first is that Hyckes was only its titular head. But in that case, why did his name ever appear in the records, why did he supply materials continuously from 1584 until 1607, how did he become director of Sheldon's works and why did he 'sign' his name in one of the four tapestry maps? The alternative possibility, which answers several of the questions, is that he was more probably Flemish than English. Why then has Wood's explanation held the field for so long, while that of Nash has been forgotten?

It is largely due to absence of research other than the work of E.A.B. Barnard, following Wood, that Hyckes' nationality is assumed to be English. He supposed that Hyckes

[12] TNA LC 9/53, f. 54v.

[13] TNA LC 9/61, fo. 41; for the relationship of the three series of accounts see Hilary L. Turner, 'Working Arras and Arras Workers: Conservation in the Great Wardrobe underElizabeth I', *Textile History*, 43 (1), May 2012, pp. 43-60.

[14] TNA LC 9/76, fo. 45v; J. Munby, 'Queen Elizabeth's Coaches: the Wardrobe on Wheels', *Antiquaries Journal* 83, 2003, pp.311-367.

was a member of the Hyckes family resident at Whatcote, close to Barcheston. Other families of the same name lived at Defford, Eckington, Broadway, Bromsgrove, (Worcs.), and Bidford, Warwickshire, all villages in Sheldon country. However, an extensive survey of the surviving Worcestershire wills in whatever spelling of the name has provided only two Richards, neither of whom would have been 97 or thereabouts in 1621 (see Appendix I). A single document, known only in transcription and without source, commits a Richard Hykys yeoman of Bromsgrove, to performance of a bond; though this is close to the spelling the Queen's arrasmaker preferred, it is not a clear link either to the man or to any of the known local families.[15] Otherwise the name does not appear in either tax returns or parish registers, so it seems unlikely that he was the son of a local husbandman whose family was too numerous for the farm to support and who was therefore in need of a new livelihood.

Barnard tried to establish Hyckes in Barcheston from as early as 1559, but his documentary evidence was incomplete and is itself flawed. When in 1588 a dispute with Richard Hyll, vicar of Barcheston, came to be heard in the Court of Requests, interrogatories on oath were put to the oldest men of the village. These included the shepherd Joseph Tustian whose age was variously recorded in the same document as fifty years and more and as three score and more, but never the 69 given by Barnard; Tustian said he had known Hyckes for twenty years, not the 29 given by Barnard. On the basis of twenty-nine years acquaintance between the two men Barnard wrote that 'this deponent supplies us with the approximate date, c.1559, of the setting up of the Barcheston looms', despite being aware that Sheldon's will suggested that 'the looms had not long been set up when he made his will 1569-70.'[16] Documents that Barnard did not see also give Tustian's age as sixty and more, but record Tustian saying that he had known Hyckes only twenty years, thus taking his own residence in Barcheston and his acquaintance with Hyckes back to around 1568, consistent with all the other evidence for Hyckes' first appearance in the village.[17] He had not been mentioned in the Star Chamber proceedings connected with violent behaviour there in the 1550s and no family Hyckes is found in the late fifteenth century court rolls.[18]

---

[15] Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives (SCLA), Stratford, E 139/108.

[16] TNA REQ 2/121/32, the later document, and the only one Barnard knew, Barnard & Wace, p.268-270. Had Barnard not drawn conclusions from the '29 years acquaintance', it would have been possible to ascribe the mistake to a typographical error since his handwriting is not the clearest.

[17] TNA REQ 2/223/ 66 does not always agree with the personal details given in the earlier document, above; see https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/barcheston-tithe-dispute.pdf.

[18] WaCRO CR 580/1-8; TNA STAC 2/24/259; STAC 4/4/58; STAC 4/6/7.

Neither was Hyckes mentioned in the parish registers, which survive from 1559, until the first unambiguous reference to place him in Barcheston occurs in 1567, when his daughter Alice, his second child, was baptised on 26 October.[19] The fact was not mentioned by Barnard. A second son, William was baptised on 20 March 1569 and buried on 8 May 1571, some four months before the baptism of Edward on 7 August the same year. He was buried on 22 February 1592/3. However, that is all the information to be gleaned. The registers are silent both about Hyckes' wedding day, although he might well have married in his wife's parish,[20] and about the baptism of his first son, Francis, whose date of birth, 1566, is deduced from his matriculation at Oxford.[21] Should we assume the registers to be defective or that Hyckes was himself an incomer?

By 1572 Hyckes was sufficiently accepted to be a witness to the muddled and repetitive will, and subsequently appraiser of the inventory, of rector Lane who died in January 1571, a document which confirms our knowledge of the family.[22] Bequests were made to 'my oste Richard Hyckes' together with a bequest of £3.6s.8d. that he would be Overseer, and to my 'ostes' Hyckes; to the children, Edward, Francis, Jonne and Alice Hyckes. The puzzle lies in another bequest of 26s. 4d. made to Jonne Higgins on the line between the gifts to the parents and the other children; Jonne might therefore seem to have benefited twice, but she is more likely to have been a sister than a daughter for in 1572 a Joan Higgins married Thomas Atkins in Barcheston; neither name was previously known in the village. Atkins later attended the tithe dispute inquiries in 1588 when he was described as yeoman of Tidmington, aged 40, brother in law of Hyckes. There is no further evidence; if

---

[19] WaCRO DR 5/1, unpaginated, see under year cited. It is hard to see how this reference was not found by Barnard since he was not dependent on correspondence with the incumbent.

[20] *The Visitation of Worcestershire 1682-83*, ed. Walter C. Metcalfe, Harleian Society, 74, 1883, p. 56, records Richard's wife's name as Ann; the Barcheston registers for 1611 note the burial of Margaret wife of Richard on 13 April. In the early nineteenth century the antiquary Sir Thomas Phillips noted alongside the name Margaret that of Ingram of Little Wolford; he gave no authority, Bodleian Library, Ms Phillips-Robinson b 80, p.51^{v}. It is also possible that since by the time he arrived in Barcheston Hyckes was already married, the name should be Ingelhran and that he had married the Margaret Ingelhran recorded twice in the congregation of the Dutch church in London, Kirk, *Aliens*, i, pp. 271, 286.

[21] J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500-1714*, Oxford, 1891. Tredington registers, originals at Warwickshire Record Office, transcribed M. F. Brittain, *Birmingham and Midlands Society for Heraldry and Genealogy*, n.d., do not substantiate Barnard's statement, Barnard & Wace, p.275, that Francis was born there.

[22] Worcestershire Archaeological and Archives Service (WAAS), Worcester Wills 1571/110. WAAS Record Office holds on microfilm the wills and marriage bonds calendared by E.A.Fry, *Worcester Wills*, British Record Society, vols 31,39, 1904, 1910, by year with number thus 1571/ 43a. Identification of professions in ink in the Record Office copy are not always accurate.

the identification is correct she died in Tidmington in 1624, and would have been much the same age as her brother.[23]

In 1568, on 19 December, Hyckes was paid 45*s*. by John Talbot of Grafton in the parish of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, for the weaving of hangings and his arms. Another entry suggests that weaving of some description took place at Barcheston for 16*d*. was paid to a man for riding to Barcheston with hangings on 9 December.[24] We now know, as Barnard did not, that Sheldon employed a Flemish weaver. An entry in the 1571 list of 'strangers' taxed in London (at double the rate set for Englishmen) describes one Henrick Camerman as a 'bachiler, a man of xxix yeres, born in Bruxells, came into England in June 1564 to serve Mr Sheldon, where he hath dwelled vj yeares, and the rest here; he is an arisworker; he doth sojourne with Erasmus Abbot, clothw(eaver); no denizon and of the Duche churche.'[25] The implication is that Camerman had previously resided somewhere other than London; it could have been Beoley, the Sheldons' main residence, or Bordesley, where Sheldon's will hints there may have been a workshop although the family does not seem to have owned property there.[26] It could equally well have been at Barcheston manor which Sheldon only finally acquired in 1564.[27] It has not been possible to discover whether Camerman came alone or was, perhaps, accompanied by others, including Hyckes, either as a master or as an apprentice (even though he would then have been in his mid-forties, well above the usual age for apprenticeship). What is clear, however, is that Sheldon already had contacts with at least one Flemish workman before making his will. What then more natural than that he should have advanced the career of another? Sheldon was far better connected and more influential than Barnard knew and may have had little difficulty in placing his own nominee in the royal works just as it seems that the earl of Pembroke may have placed his own arrasman Michael

---

[23] TNA REQ 2/223/66; Tidmington Parish Registers, ed. M.F. Brittain, *Birmingham and Midland Society for Heraldry and Genealogy*, 1999. Another supposed family member found in a marriage bond for an Edmund Hickes and a Jane Tooley cited by Barnard & Wace, p.274, has been misread and mis-calendared by Fry, *Worcester Wills*; Hyckes' place of residence was not given, Tooley was of Burmington not Barcheston as quoted, Worcester Wills 1592/30b.

[24] 'The Elizabethan Estate Book of Grafton Manor', ed. J. Humphreys, *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, xliv, 1918, pp.1-124, pp 49, 83.

[25] Kirk, *Aliens*, part ii, p. 86, a reference I owe to Wendy Hefford.

[26] Bordesley became Lord Windsor's property in 1542, *Victoria County History, Worcestershire*, ed. J. W .Willis-Bund, iii, 1913, p.228; recent emphasis on its importance has little basis, Elizabeth Cleland and Lorraine Karafel, *Tapestries from the Burrell Collection*, London 2017.

[27] A former owner of Barcheston Manor drew my attention to this invaluable collection, WaCRO CR 580/14/16 and 17/1; see also https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/william-sheldon-biog-epitaph.pdf.

Otes and the earl of Sussex assisted Dennis van Alsloot.[28] But that nominee would have had to be competent; would he, in the absence of a tapestry tradition in England, have been English?

That a man sufficiently experienced in the tapestry trade, whether as weaver or negociant, to be in the royal employ and head of an independent factory should be English is intrinsically improbable. What then are the probabilities that Hyckes was an immigrant? Barnard believed that at least half the staff of the royal works were Worcestershire, or at any rate English, weavers. Recent investigation however has shown that the majority, even those with apparently English names, were 'strangers', come to England for the sake of their religion and with only their trade to sustain them. The contorted variations and convoluted phonetic approximate spellings of those who worked for the Queen have been explored by Wendy Hefford and reveal a picture very different from Barnard's.[29]

More detailed analysis still (see Appendix II) shows that of the group of 12 to 14 men who worked year by year for an unfixed number of days 'at need' to repair the royal collections of tapestries some 10 or 11 names are always quite obviously foreign. Of these a small number, by no means all, can be identified either in the denization records, attending the Dutch church or in the tax lists. In the latter are examples of English-sounding names belonging to men known by officials to be Flemings, names such as John Atkinson, Henry Barnes, Anthony Clarke and John Papworth, though none was a weaver.[30] Few amongst the royal arras workers have names that could as well be English as foreign, but unfortunately, Hyckes is one of them.

Barnard and Wace listed 70 names employed from 1558 to 1613; to these can now be added another, from an account not known to Barnard.[31] Of the 71 only 10 are found as denizens, all but one of them serving in the 1560s. A further 8 are clearly identified as foreigners in the tax lists. Of these 18, only 2 had names that could be English had they not been otherwise identified. Another 29 had very obviously foreign names so that for a total of 47, two-thirds of the workforce, we know of foreign origin. Only 22 might well be taken as

---

[28] Kirk, *Aliens,* part ii, p.299; Willem Schrickx, 'Denijs van Alsoot en Willem Tons in London in 1577', *Artes Textiles*, Ghent,viii, 1974, pp.47-64. I owe this reference to Wendy Hefford.

[29] Hefford, 'Weavers'.

[30] Irene Scouloudi, ed. *Return of Strangers in the Metropolis, 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639*, Huguenot Society of London Publications, lvii, 1985, pp. 148, 149, 199, 837.

[31] TNA AO 3/1107; I owe this reference to Wendy Hefford. See also Hilary L Turner, ''Working Arras and Arras Workers: Conservation in the Great Wardrobe under Elizabeth I', *Textile History*, 42(2), 2012.

Englishmen, five of whom, including Hyckes, had names found amongst the lists of aliens;[32] two, John Nightingale (Jan Nachtegal) and Edward Offield, are identifiable as 'strangers'. When such confusion exists it is hard to maintain that Richard Hyckes must be English. And, given the small number of royal employees who bothered to get their papers correct, the fact that there are no references to him amongst the letters of denization becomes less important.

It therefore becomes plausible to regard Hyckes, possibly under some other form of his name, as just another Flemish immigrant who might have been in London for some time before coming to Sheldon's notice, possibly associated with Camerman. The fact that there is little other than probability to go on no longer seems so significant. While there is no proof to make him a 'stranger' - there are, for example, no letters of denization nor any reference in the lay subsidy lists or registers published by Kirk - neither is there any which declares him to be English, a Higgins or Hickens, for example. Only once is a variant found when, in the documents of the Calveley case, his name was spelt as Hychyns by which the defendant's side, not his own, knew him. To the possibilities that he was born Van der Eecke, van der Eecken or Van der Hecke should be added the name Huygens. In itself, this is little enough to go on, but it indicates firstly that there was a problem attached to his name, while the diminutive ending -yns might reinforce the possibility of foreign origin. What is important is that under either of these forms he recognised himself. To this case we shall now turn, for it sheds light on the early days of the tapestry works at Barcheston.

Barcheston: the early days

In 1576 Richard Hyckes, describing himself as 'Her Highness' arrasmaker', set forth a complaint against Sir George Calveley in the Court of Requests. This will be examined in some detail, for Barnard knew only the initial complaint which alleged non-payment of £10 10s for 38 ells flemish of tapestry and the retention of certain patterns sent upon liking, but gave no details.[33] The court proceeded by means of questions to sworn witnesses, three sets

[32] 32. Kirk, *Aliens*, Jocelyn and Jane Hicke, ii,p. 29; Christopher Hickes, *ibid*, i, p.353; Alforde, *ibi*d, i, pp.24, 68; Disson, *ibid*., iii, p.343; Austen, *ibid*, i, p. 241.

[33] Barnard knew only TNA REQ 2/228/16. Sir George can be identified, from his arms described in the second set of documents, TNA REQ 2/215/37 as Sir George of Lea in Broxton hundred, Cheshire, G. Ormerod, ed. T. Helmsby, *History of the County Palatinate and City of Chester*, 3 vols, 1882, ii, pp. 284, 723, 763. Calveley was knighted in 1571, Walter C. Metcalfe, *A Book of Knights*, London, 1885, p.126; P.W.Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, HMSO 1991.

of which, in various hands written at different stages of the hearings, and not known to Barnard, add details to our knowledge of Hyckes and throw some light on the provisions of Sheldon's will.

Depositions were taken at Weston on 16 May 1576 on behalf of Hyckes from three sworn witnesses. The first, Richard Cattell, described himself as of the parish of St Andrew's London, aged 24 and servant with Richard Hyckes; the second was Henry Geerts, also of the parish of St Andrew's on the hill, London, who adds that he was 'one of the Queen's Majesties servants of Her Highness' wardrobe'. Both men told essentially the same story and claimed to have been 'personally present' when the bargain was struck at Barcheston, differing only in that while Geerts said he thought the transaction had taken place eight years past, Cattell said he did not know. In a literate hand Cattell signed his deposition; Geerts did not.

The third person examined was William Dowler of Stretton on Fosse, Warwickshire. He described himself as aged 38, arrasworker, servant of Hyckes, also present at the making of the agreement. Sent to chase the debt, Dowler avoided any reference to the time of the transaction; he too signed his statement.

Another session was held at Weston on 21 August. On this occasion Mr William Willey of Barcheston, aged 26, arrasworker, was sworn. He said that he had served Hyckes as an apprentice for seven years and served him now as a hired servant. His account tallies with the others, though he thought the episode was about four years past. He did not sign his statement.

In the meantime surviving interrogatories put on behalf of Sir George Calveley, Defendant, were issued not against Richard Hyckes but against Richard Hychyns. Why this form of his name, which everywhere else appears as Hyckes, was used is impossible to tell. It may be no more than a simple mistake, but it was not one to which Richard chose to object. Three replies survive, those of Calveley's bailiff, Hugh Fisher, and of the two servants sent to stop Hyckes delivering more goods to Fisher. All claimed that Fisher had sold a piece of arras to the wife of John Knight, baker, at Banbury for £8.

Not without their own internal confusion, the witness statements nevertheless place Hyckes at Barcheston as early as 1568 (Geerts), which receives some confirmation from Willey whose apprenticeship of 7 years takes his association with Hyckes back at least to 1569, even though he believed the transaction took place in 1572, suspiciously close to the

time from which, according to his later deposition in 1588, Willey himself says he first knew Barcheston.[34] Their statements are of particular interest, despite the inconsistencies revealed. Henry Geerts was listed amongst the royal arras workers from Michaelmas 1570-71, but in that case how did he know, or why did he say, the transaction took place some eight years before, taking it back to 1568.[35] Was he really at Barcheston prior to his engagement at the royal Wardrobe or was he hoping to assist his master? He was near the end of his life, for in the last year his name was recorded, 1576-77, he worked only 189 days out of a possible 225.[36] On the other hand, Richard Cattell was not listed amongst the royal arras workers until Michaelmas 1577-78, although at the hearing at Shipston in May 1576 he stated that he was resident in the parish of St Andrews. The parish included the buildings of the royal wardrobe and lies between St Paul's and the river Thames; several others in the royal employ lived in the vicinity.[37] The implication is that he was Hyckes' servant at Barcheston before transferring to London where he remained, with only a single year's intermission (1590-91), until 1603. His name was no longer listed in the 1605 account, so presumably he had died in the interim; he would have been around 53 years old.[38]

The testimony of this group of witnesses has three-fold interest; firstly it suggests strongly that Hyckes was not alone at Barcheston; secondly it substantiates, and to some extent explains, the provisions of Sheldon's will; lastly, it was supplied a year after a revised grant of headship of the royal workshop was enrolled on the Patent Rolls in May 1575. The earlier grant was cancelled and replaced with one on more favourable terms.[39] Firstly it associated Richard's son Francis, then aged 9, with his father as head of the works in survivorship, a rare but not unprecedented privilege; secondly, it granted them permission to have six servants born in England working for their own profit. This concession had not appeared in the earlier grant despite being one granted to former heads. Had Hyckes simply discovered its omission, or does it imply that Hyckes was by then a naturalised citizen; did it

[34] TNA REQ 2/121/32, https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/barcheston-tithe-dispute.pdf.

[35] TNA LC 9/62, f.40.

[36] TNA LC 9/62-68; no apparent link to Humfrey Geers who died in 1586, Worcester Wills 1586/76, nor TNA PROB 11/101, p.81-81v, Thomas Geers of Droitwich, 1605.

[37] Kirk, *Aliens*, ii, pp.86-88. TNA REQ 2 /215/37 .

[38] TNA LC 9/69-93, with one year's intermission, 1590-91.

[39] TNA C 66/1136, m.16.

have reference to an already functioning Barcheston workshop, or was it purely formulaic? The answers are unknown, but the message is clear. Richard Hyckes had proved his worth. Although his position would surely have meant that he would have had little difficulty getting witnesses to speak for him, it looks very much as though those who supported him had known him even before 1569; all Hyckes' witnesses are certain that the bargain was made at Barcheston, which implies both that Hyckes already had a team and also that he was already *known* to be at work there.

Around 1568, therefore, there is evidence shedding light on Hyckes' activities at Barcheston independent of, and illuminating, the will of William Sheldon which in previous accounts has formed a substantial part of the story. In conjunction with the grant of the headship of the royal workshop made to Hyckes in January 1569 this new evidence suggests that the 'strangers' were such an established element that we can name two of them, Geerts and Cattell. Both subsequently graduated to the royal Wardrobe while Dowler and Willey did not. Some of them, quite possibly all of them, had probably already been employed by Hyckes for at least a year, because of the payment in 1568 for supplying tapestry to John Talbot, already mentioned. It leaves unanswered the question of how Hyckes had come into the business, and how he had come into contact with Sheldon. But it suggests strongly that Hyckes had close connections to Flemish weavers before a project at Barcheston was outlined in William Sheldon's will, itself a subject for re-investigation.

William Sheldon's will

William Sheldon was a far more powerful and influential man than was recognised by Barnard;[40] active member of the Inner Temple from 1528, in the 1540s he acted at least temporarily in a legal capacity for Queen Katherine Parr; he was close to Sir Anthony Bourchier, through whose help Sheldon may have acted as steward to Thomas Seymour baron Sudeley, younger brother of Protector Somerset. He was prominent from the 1530s onwards in local government and well connected; for example his relative Nicholas Heath was successively bishop of Rochester, Worcester and archbishop of York and subsequently was appointed Lord Chancellor under Queen Mary.[41] He held a post at the Court of

[40] E.A.B. Barnard, *The Sheldons*, Cambridge, 1936 is superseded by the entry in S.T.Bindoff, *The House of Commons*, *1509-1558*, HMSO 1982, on which, with amplification, this paragraph is based. The will is printed in Barnard & Wace, p. 256-258 and available at https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/William-Sheldon-will.pdf.

[41] Bindoff, *op. cit.*, s.v. Heath.

Augmentations for fifteen years, and himself made a huge investment in monastic lands, many of which he subsequently sold. His second marriage opened the way to potential contact with Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester and favourite of Queen Elizabeth.[42] Nothing suggests that William lived with undue ostentation, but we know that he commissioned a portrait of his son around 1560[43] and that the only two personal notes in his will concerned rewards for his musicians and the stipulation that his tapestries at Beoley should remain there 'from heyre to heyre'.

On 3 January 1570, William Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire, four times sheriff and four times MP of Worcestershire, made his will.[44] In addition to detailed provision for his family he set out the terms on which moneys from the tolls of the market and fairs at Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, would be available to any man, English or stranger, who at the time of Sheldon's death should have been in the past, was at present or should in the future be in employment at Bordesley or elsewhere with Richard Hyckes, Thomas Chaunce or William Dowler. Preference was to be given to men resident locally. The money was a loan to be repaid after ten years and the arrangement was to continue until Sheldon's grandson was 24, which would have been around 1587.[45] By that time, presumably, it was thought the venture would have become self-supporting. As Wendy Hefford has pointed out Sheldon acknowledged the employment of both native and stranger, although he did not treat them alike. English born servants were to receive £20, foreigners 20 marks (£13.6s.8d).[46] The differentiation escaped the notice of Barnard, who interpreted it as provision for future contingencies, but it instantly sheds new light on the nature of the operation at Barcheston.

We have seen that weavers were already at Barcheston before the will was drawn up. This too changes the interpretation of William Sheldon's actions. When, in January 1570 Sheldon rehearsed his financial incentives, he was not establishing an industry from scratch but trying to make certain of the continuance of an enterprise already in embryonic existence,

---

[42] S.L.Adams, '"Because I am of that Countrye and Mynde to Plante Myself There" Robert Dudley and the West Midlands', *Midland History*, 20, 1995, pp. 21-74.

[43] Roy Strong, *The English Icon*, London & New York, p. 62.

[44] TNA PROB 11/53/79, https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/William-Sheldon-will.pdf.

[45] Bindoff, *House of Commons*, s.v. Plowden.

[46] Hefford, 'Weavers'.

under the direction of a man expecting to become head of the royal works. When, later in the will, Sheldon referred to and expanded certain conditions already agreed he and Hyckes had clearly been in negotiation over premises; use of the manor house of Barcheston was given him rent-free, seemingly together with a stock of grazing cattle, the mill and on guarantee of a repayable bond of £100. Hyckes was expected to lay out his own money to ready the property for its new role. The sole condition was that Hyckes should produce a range of materials from coarse to fine, including 'tapestry, arras, moccadoes, carolles, plometts, grograynes, sayes and sarges', the latter woven by techniques more familiar to strangers than to Englishmen.. Sheldon's final injunction was to his son, charging him to respect the provisions and allow Hyckes to continue his work. It sounds very much as though William was trying to establish not just a workshop but a man who was otherwise without home, land or stock although possessed of some capital. As Sheldon already knew, Hyckes had considerable earning potential, which perhaps explains why no loan was assigned to him as it was to Dowler. Hyckes' needs had been covered by provision of premises and cattle and perhaps by his appointment to the royal works, together with a testimonial revealing a former employer's very high opinion of him.

What do we know of the men he left in charge alongside Richard Hyckes, Thomas Chaunce and William Dowler ?

Thomas Chaunce, member of a large and moderately influential Worcestershire family, remains a shadowy figure. On the strength of the bequests in a will of 26 August 1603 he was identified by Barnard as the Thomas who died in 1603; he made gifts to my right worshipful friend Master Ralph Sheldon and to his daughter Lady Russell; three separate bequests went to the Hyckes and a gift of £20 was made to William Harpur, Sheldon's bailiff. Described as 'of Bordesley' in his marriage bond of 1571 and presumably resident either there or in Bromsgrove, in which he remained interested all his life (part of his will details provisions for a school there), in 1571 he married and moved to Hardwicke's Court in the parish of St John Bedwardine, Worcester; in two property purchases he described himself as 'gentleman'.[47] Close analysis of his will shows him to be a widower, apparently childless. His property was bequeathed to relatives, mostly the children of his brothers, while the other 99 bequests, all of small value, appear to be to the men or women who had served him. Nothing suggests that he had ever been connected with the weaving trade in any capacity so that his inclusion in Sheldon's arrangements might have been only as

[47] His will is TNA PROB 11/102/620; Worcester Wills 1571/43a, the bond; WAAS 8782/77/16-17 and 18, not known to Barnard.

a financier or as the owner or occupier of premises at Bordesley used for a time by weavers connected to Sheldon. That the premises which sheltered the looms were ever the remains of the abbey buildings there is unlikely since these became the property of Lord Windsor in 1542.[48]

About William Dowler, though still shadowy, there is more to say. Described as 'servant of Hickes' Sheldon's will awarded him a grant of £26.13s.4d., the highest sum mentioned, so presumably he was both English and willing to train or already sufficiently able to run all or part of the manufactory. Summoned in the court case against Calveley, he was again described as 'servant' to Hyckes, so in 1576 he must still have been associated with the works, but whether he had once been Hyckes' apprentice or trained as a tapestry weaver thanks to Sheldon's grants is not known. He bears a local name, not found earlier than his known association with Hyckes in that part of Worcestershire or Warwickshire that is truly Sheldon country, though it is found subsequently. A son John was born to a William Dowler in 1577 at Stretton on Fosse where Dowler said he lived and where the Sheldons had interests; a second son, Joshua, was baptised there in 1580.[49] The identification seems plausible, but quite what his role was, how long it lasted and what happened to him is unknown. He was not summoned as a witness in the 1588 tithe disputes in which another of his fellows appeared.

William Willey, also named in the Calveley case, appears again in the tithe dispute case of 1588; presumably therefore he had been in continuous employment. What else can we learn about him? In 1576 he claimed to be 26 and Hyckes' one-time apprentice, now his hired servant. His statement provides a date of around 1550 for his date of birth and, in the Tredington parish register a William, son of Roger Weeley, was baptised on 13 February 1552.[50] A William married Elenora Brookes, also of Tredington, on 2 February 1583 after which there are no further entries in the Tredington registers. From 1581 the surname occurs in the Shipston on Stour registers where, by 1588, Willey, this time spelt as Weeley, 'former apprentice, now arrisworker' said he was resident and where several Weeley babies were baptised.[51]Weeley also said that he had known the parish of Barcheston for about 15 years

[48] *Victoria County History, Worcestershire*, ed. J.W. Willis-Bund, 1913, iii, p. 228.

[49] WaCRO, DR 55 A/1; TNA REQ 2/215/37, not known to Barnard.

[50] TNA REQ 2/215/1-63, no.37;Tredington registers, originals at Warwickshire Record Office, transcribed M.F.Brittain, *Birmingham and Midlands Society for Heraldry and Genealogy*, n.d.

[51] Shipston registers in WaCRO, DR 446/1, unpaginated, see under year cited, now on Ancestry.

which, though it does not agree with his testimony in the Calveley case, where he had claimed to be present at the bargain in 1569, places him there from around 1573. If Willey served a seven year apprenticeship with Hyckes which had ended by 1576 it had started at least in 1569 and possibly earlier since by 1576 Willey was a hired servant. So once again Hyckes is shown to be in the business before the formalisation of plans by Sheldon's will and before his own appointment to the royal arras works.

Another Weeley, Thomas, also testified for Hyckes in 1588; he said he was 30 or thereabouts, which would give a date of birth around 1558.[52] Though resident in Shipston he claimed to have known the parish of Barcheston for twelve or thirteen years, which dates his presence to around 1575. He was a silk weaver, but whether or not he was related to William Willey never emerges, nor is it clear from the Shipston registers whether or not he is to be identified as one of the three Thomas Weeleys buried there, in 1594, 1596 or 1612.[53] In the Sheldon account book one or other of the Weeleys was paid for two yards of plommett on 24 December 1586.[54] In both cases the name could have a place name origin; the nearest Weoley lies close to Coventry, some 20 miles distant. Are these two local men who remained in continuous employment at the Barcheston works from c.1569 - 1588, one of them at least trained by Hyckes? Or have we traced one local man and a Flemish immigrant who adopted a local name?

Finding the Weavers

Two weavers, perhaps three if we include William Dowler, for neither the Weeleys nor Dowler appear in the Great Wardrobe accounts, have already been identified. A number of other arrasworkers can be traced in local records who may provide clues about the relationship between Hyckes' two places of employment and establish whether the terms of the 1575 grant which allowed the Hyckes to have six servants 'born in this realm' to work for their own profit, was fact or formulaic.

---

[52] TNA REQ 2/121/.32, https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/barcheston-tithe-dispute.pdf.

[53] WaCRO DR 446/1.

[54] WaCRO CR 2632, f. 34.

The first and most clearly identified makes his appearance only in death, Humphrey Hill, arrisworker of Barcheston.[55] He died in 1596, possibly not in Barcheston for his burial is not recorded, leaving a will in which he expressed a desire for burial wherever he had died. He left 20 shillings to Margott, daughter of 'my well-beloved friend' Francis Hickes who he appointed as one of three Overseers. His witnesses were Barcheston residents, Thomas Watterman, the vicar, and Richard Brandon. His bequests, however, went to the children of one John Hill and to William Barnesley, son of a kinsman and possibly the same William recorded in the lay subsidy for 1603 at Bromsgrove.[56] A link to Bromsgrove is suggested by a line deleted which detailed a bequest of 50 shillings to the poor of the parish. He does not appear to have had any family whether wife, children or siblings. He was relatively wealthy and maintained a certain style though it is noticeable that his weaving equipment is not listed. The brief inventory is worth quoting in full:

In his purse and his wearing apparel	£8.0.0
For one horse	33s. 4d
For a saddell and a brydell with a sworde and dagger	10s.
In money	£108.10.0
For a chest and a box with certain implements therein	13s. 4d.
	TOTAL £125.6s 8d.(*recte* £119.6s.8d.)

Two other names, both of them found locally and in the lists of 'strangers' counted amongst the royal arras workers, also occur in the recently discovered Sheldon account book, a coincidence too great to ignore even though their trade is not mentioned. The first, William Alford, performed miscellaneous errands for the Sheldons in May and June 1587; he served only 18 of 256 working days in the year Michaelmas 1587-88 in the Wardrobe where he was employed from 1581. He made his will on 26 February 1588; probate was granted on 12 March. Other than a bequest to John Tiler, his kinsman of the parish of St John's Worcester and the gift of his gown to Anthony Diston, his gifts were in cash; they totalled £48.[57] He

[55] Worcester wills 1597/12; compare the earlier will, J.D. Alsop, 'An Immigrant Weaver's Inventory for 1573', *Textile History*, 14, no.1, Spring 1983, 78-79.

[56] John Amphlett, ed., *The Worcestershire Lay Subsidy 1603*, Worcester Historical Society, 1899-1901, p 2-4, often bound as part of volume 10.

[57] WaCRO CR 2632, ff. 10, 78, 79, 126, 158; TNA LC 9/73-79; TNA PROB 11/72/253.

arranged ‘a potation’ for his fellow weavers, for two pounds to be given to the crippled child of his colleague Harman van Bell while the Hyckes, Edward Graveley, his wife and daughter all received gifts. Graveley, then working amongst the royal tailors, was his executor. The second name from the Sheldon accounts, Anthony Diston, was in royal employ from 1586 until 1593; whether he returned to Barcheston to work for the Sheldons there, found alternative employment or died is not known.[58] In January 1587 Hyckes’ unnamed ‘prentice delivered money to Sheldon’s steward.[59]

Two other names listed amongst the royal employees have a much less certain connection with the Sheldon works. A bequest to Francis Heeks led Barnard to associate a John Higgins with a man of the same name who entered the Wardrobe in 1593 and did not return after the end of the year 1600/01.[60] Barnard's precis of Higgins’ will omits many details; he bequeathed his house to his kinsman John Etkins who was charged with paying 40s each to Francis Heekes, Henry Disson and Ann Patchet. To John Hill, his wife’s son, he left his whole ‘brode lome and two narrow loomes’ and to his apprentice he left the linen loom standing next the wall. His three godchildren received 2s each and the residue went to his unnamed wife. Higgins signed with a mark. The inventory, appraised by four Bromsgrove men, lists one ‘brod’ loom and four narrow looms which, together with all yarns and furniture were valued at £4; his household goods, totalled £56 2s. Probate was granted on 17 October 1604. It looks very much as though Higgins had his own workshop and may not therefore be the same man as the Higgins of the royal arras works. Nevertheless, he felt he owed something to Francis Heeks, presumably ours for no other is known, and it is worth speculating whether the John Hill is the same John who figured in the will of Humphrey Hill above. Higgins might perhaps have been an outworker

The other, Ralph Canninge, was identified by Barnard with a baby born in Beoley in 1567; if this is correct, aged 26 this man entered employment with the Queen in 1593; promoted to the headship in 1609, he remained in service until at least 1631.[61] Though two members of the Canning family are recorded in the Sheldon accounts for 1587 when material

[58] WaCRO CR 2632 ff. 172, 182, 196. TNA LC 9/78-84 when he worked only 184 days of the possible 283.

[59] WaCRO CR 2632 f.5.

[60] LC 9/85-91 when he worked the full year; WAAS, Worcester Consistory Court Wills, vol. vii, 1584-1642, f. 136 for the will and Worcester Wills 1604/155h for the inventory. He was wealthy enough to be listed in the lay subsidy for 1603, *op.cit*., note 56.

[61] WAAS for Beoley parish registers; TNA LC 9/85-99, TNA, LC 5/50, f. 198-200.

for a coat was bought for both old George and young George,[62] no definite link between the three has been established. Another family, socially superior, of the same name lived at Foxcott, also with a George.[63] On the other hand the possibility that the name Canninge could well have been a corruption of the Flemish Ganning, a family found amongst the Norwich weavers should not be dismissed.[64]

Much later two more arrasworkers emerge from chance references. In 1618 George Badger of Abbots Morton, Worcestershire, stood bail for John Tandy's appearance at the Quarter Sessions. Though the name Badger is associated in several documents with the cloth trade in the area, nothing is known of his origins and antecedents, so it is not possible to relate him to the Badger in the royal works for two years 1567-69.[65] William Huckvale, listed amongst the royal workers in 1624, is surely the son of Alice Hyckes who in 1588 had married one Cuthbert Huckvale, not a local name. A Cuthbert Huckvale lived in Brailes in 1614 while Alice and her son appear in the Quarter Sessions in 1630s.[66] But for neither man has any link to the Barcheston works been established.

Fourteen men with associations with the Sheldon works have been identified, and an inter-relationship between Barcheston and the royal Wardrobe demonstrated. While men with a connection with the Sheldon enterprise enter royal employ, not all of them staying there, the presence of Geerts and Cattell and Peter the Docheman's burial at Barcheston in 1590 are the only hints that strangers worked there.[67] Although it is possible that others did come, perhaps for short periods, it is scarcely plausible that all were single men whose activities escaped record or that none wanted to settle. Nevertheless, the parish registers reveal no trace of names which could be of foreign origin. It seems more likely that work went to London, to be executed by the ever available pools of talent traceable in records when religious persecution encouraged skilled craftsmen to flight.[68] Two facts should be remembered; though a

---

[62] WaCRO CR 2632 f. 49, 53, 73, 150.

[63] International Genealogical Index, Warwickshire, sv Canning, now on Ancestry.

[64] Ursula Priestley, *The Fabric of Stuffs*, The Centre of East Anglian Studies, Norwich 1990.

[65] J.W. Willis Bund, *Calendar of Sessions Papers 1591-1643*, Worcester 1900, i, p. 256. John Badger was listed in TNA LC 9/60, 1567-68 and 1568-69, LC 9/61.

[66] The marriage bond is Worcester Wills 1588/144a; LC9/98; Willis Bund, *op.cit*., ii,.682. A Huckvale's Lane was noted in the Enclosure Award of 1787, WaCRO.

[67] WaCRO DR 5/1. There does not seem to be any reason why Barnard should have identified him as Peter van Dort; he could have been Peter Soillot or Peter Van der Howte.

[68] Hefford, 'Weavers'.

convenient appellation for an immediately recognizable style, the Barcheston school is a twentieth century concept christened by a local man and secondly that although the intention to establish a workshop is clearly documented, its realization is not. Sheldon's will made grants to people employed by Dowler, Chaunce or Hyckes; the residence qualification was secondary. Absence of evidence from Barcheston for large numbers of weavers together with absence of documentation for any tapestry labelled as Sheldon work makes it possible that in practice the manufactory's centre may have been elsewhere.

Hyckes would not have been alone in having far-flung contacts; a look at the area round Barcheston reveals that it is less socially homogenous than one might imagine. Nicholas Effeyler, a German glazier, established himself successfully at Warwick.[69] Thomas the Fleming, a weaver to judge from his inventory, died at Wootton in 1579, leaving to a wife and two daughters the lease of a property and two looms; the total value of his goods was £10. 10s. 6d.[70] Thomas Tooley, leather seller of London and Antwerp described himself as also of Burmington, some 5 miles south of Barcheston; he died in Antwerp at the house of his in-laws, the parents of his wife Susanna Lancaerts.[71] Tooley's will left bequests to them, to their servants and to the English church at Middleburgh. His brother John Tooley and his cousin John Bishop, both of whom lived at Great Wolford, were left in charge of local or family bequests. A Thomas Lanne died in Flanders;[72] one Greenholst tried to cheat Hyckes out of sheep that were rightfully his.[73] But of an established industry, as of an established manufactory, there is no trace.

William Sheldon and Richard Hyckes: the context and the achievement

A broader picture of Barcheston and its hamlet of Willington using all available documentary evidence suggests that it was a place of no great significance. The house allotted to Hyckes must have been that inhabited last by William Willington, Sheldon's father in law. It had been intended that Willington's nephew should inherit, but he died and,

---

[69] M.W.Farr, 'Nicholas Effeyler of Warwick, Glazier', *Miscellanea I*, Dugdale Society; 31, 1977, pp 29-110.

[70] Worcester Wills 1579/8.

[71] TNA PROB 11/66/133. Tooley had married Susan, daughter of John Lankaerts of Antwerp whose wife was English, *CPR 1582-83*, *Lists & Index Society*, vol. 286, no.59.

[72] Worcester Wills 1587/63c.

[73] TNA REQ 2/146/1-51, no.15.

following extensive wrangles in the family, the Barcheston property, came to William Sheldon in 1564.[74] Empty from at least 1562, the house was already old, his obligation to keep it in repair that of a tenant. The village, now consisting of the church, the rectory, the manor house with its converted barns and stables and a mill some 300 hundred yards away on the infant river Stour, had been neither sizeable nor prosperous for the past century. After 1538 when two men were taxed, Willington and William Catesby, Barcheston makes no appearance in the lay subsidy rolls, even though several of the accounts for Kington hundred appear to be complete; 14 families were recorded in the parish in 1563.[75] Between 1566 and 1613 no resident's will left goods worth more than £50.[76] Witnesses and appraisers tend to be the same people, amongst them recusants whose names are found in the lists made in 1605-06.[77] Not every known name features in the parish registers suggesting that the registers were carelessly kept. But in few wills, whether from Barcheston or amongst the wider community in which they must have had contacts, do the Hyckes appear; were they not wanted or were they never in Barcheston when they might have been called on?[78]

Even more noticeably absent, however, are the occupations which formed the backbone of the works and the supporting industries such as dyeing, fulling or spinning. Sheldon perhaps supplied his own wool - he could never have supplied the silk - and equally certainly the works required a supply of dyes. More than once entries in the account book show that Hyckes was paid for dyeing 'rugges'[79] but in neither Barcheston, Shipston nor the surrounding villages, Long Compton, Todenham or even the Wolfords Great and Little, some

---

[74] Willington's will TNA PROB 11/42B/642; https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/William-Willington-will.pdf, dispute in TNA C 3/122/71, much of the story emerges from deeds of Stockton Sons and Fortescue, Banbury solicitors, deposited in WaCRO CR 580 9/38; CR 580/14/1-20; CR 580 17/1,5 and CR 580 boxes 15 and 16. A complete record of the cases appears in TNA C78/14/36 and C78/33/30 (Dichford Frary), C78/36/27(disputed will) and C78/39/15 (Chelmscote), now available on www.Anglo-American Legal Tradition (AALT). See also https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/william-sheldon-biog-epitaph.pdf

[75] TNA E 179/192/172 and *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*, ed Alan Dyer and David Palliser, Records of Social and Economic History, new series 31, OUP, 2005, p. 292.

[76] All are Worcester Wills unless otherwise indicated; Gibbs, 1566/28; Lane, 1572/110; Page, 1589/12; Tustian 1593/30; Thornett, 1600/75k; Trepus 1606/10; Smith TNA PROB 11/112/77; Jobson, 1613/204i.

[77] E. Guise Berrow and A.M.Hodgson, 'Return of Recusants in Kineton and Barlichway Hundreds 1605-06', *Worcestershire Recusant* , no. 17, June 1971, pp 1-18.

[78] One exception is the bequest of Robert Avys, priest of Bromsgrove, who left Hyckes a gold royal 'in token of old friendship' and in charge of selling a benefice and giving the proceeds to Avys' widow in 1579. The connection, not highlighted by Barnard, may well have arisen from Hyckes' work for John Talbot to whom Avys refers as 'cosen', TNA PROB 11/63/426.

[79] WaCRO CR 2632, fos. 145, 192.

of which were much larger and wealthier places, is there trace of any such occupations. A trawl through Worcester diocese wills for people outside Barcheston who might have been involved with the enterprise turned up very little, other than the fact that Sheldon should have had the choice of applicants for his bounty, for roughly five weavers prosperous enough to leave wills died every year between 1570 and 1630, the period searched.[80] Their inventories suggest that William Sheldon's grants were generous and anyone taking them up would have had capital to spare. From them is abundant evidence for well organised family workshops, for example that of Reginald Lilly who worked for John Talbot. He died in 1586, worth £151 8s. 8d., owning a broad loom and two narrow looms with their furniture valued at £3.[81] Charles Tovey of Elmley Castle died the same year leaving to three of his seven sons respectively 'his greate loome, the lesser loom and the loom I have with John Symons and all the years that remain'. The total of his goods came to £21 12s. 2d.[82] Another weaver, Thomas Ordymare left £29 17s. 4d.[83] Two silk workers married; John Guillaum of Gloucester and Richard Davyes of Evesham.[84]

What then was William Sheldon doing when he laid his plans? Did he regard the tapestry venture as a third commercial venture or a charitable enterprise? He already owned and was developing coal mines at Coleorton, Leicestershire referred to in his will, undertaken, it seems, in association with Henry Hastings, third earl of Huntingdon, who had married Frances, sister of Robert Dudley. He also owned salt bullaries at Droitwich.[85] Sheldon senior was not a novice to commerce though it was by no means his sole, or even his chief, source of income. It does not seem likely that he would have backed an incompetent man or an idiotic idea. The scheme did not demand a huge investment of capital, nor was it Sheldon's own money. From Thomas Bourne, otherwise unknown, he purchased the market tolls of Bishop's Castle, then a manorial borough in which his son in law Edmund Plowden

[80] Information from E. A. Fry, *A Calendar of Worcester Wills*, see note 22.

[81] Worcester Wills, 1586/79 and references in the unpublished accounts of Grafton manor, Birmingham Archives and Heritage (in future BAH), 603797.

[82] Worcester Wills 1586/44; total corrected from printed version of this article.

[83] Worcester Wills 1586/103a.

[84] Worcester Wills 1588/115g and 1585/87a.

[85] The mines at Coleorton had belonged to William's father TNA C 1/892/23; others were at Bedworth TNA E 133/10/1663 and LR 13/30/7. The bullaries were at Droitwich, BAH MS 3061/1/342 (former 167742); BAH MS 3061/1/484 (former 167884), BAH MS 3061/1/56 (former 167456).

had interests;[86] this, however, was a long term investment since they were eventually to go to Sheldon's grandson. No records survive to permit an estimate of their value, but the money which they brought in was meantime to finance the tapestry venture; the premises Sheldon already owned and, as we have seen, they were already old and superfluous to the family's requirements. They could easily be spared. Though he laid out his own money to purchase the tolls, Sheldon was not offering to pay wages or to supply materials; he offered a repayable loan. It begins to look more like an early and simple monopoly or an early example of one of the shared ventures which were later to become common, where the gentleman invested his capital and the poor gave their labour.[87]

If Sheldon's enterprise is set against the wider picture of the English economic scene, there is further scope for reconsideration. In 1551-52 Protector Somerset planned to settle a community of Flemish weavers in the partially ruined buildings of Glastonbury abbey; his intention was to bring over 50 families for whom houses would be built, land found and a grant of at least £1000 paid towards materials.[88] Extensive correspondence with the Council survives, tracing the problems the settlers experienced. In the end the project failed, but the idea remained and, in the 1560s it surfaced again. The oft-quoted examples are the colonies at Sandwich, Maidstone and later, Norwich; less well-known is the colony at Stamford, Lincolnshire, set up by no less a person than Queen Elizabeth's Secretary, William Cecil.[89] He had at one stage been in Somerset's service and may have remembered the earlier example. Whatever his inspiration, in 1567 he invited a group of craftsmen to settle in Stamford; they included weavers of bays, says, stammets, fustians, carpets, fringes, linsey wolseys, tapestry, silks, velvets and linen. Ten households were invited and a house provided. The invitation was accepted, but only after negotiations for better terms. The Dutch sought permission for twenty households, without which they claimed they could not support a

---

[86] Information from the Bishop's Castle Archivist, Marian Roberts, c/o Shropshire Record Office. Plowden's son died in 1587 aged around 24, Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509-1558*, sv Plowden.

[87] Joan Thirsk, 'Projects for Gentlemen, Jobs for the Poor: mutual aid in the Vale of Tewkesbury, 1600-1630', in *The Rural Economy of England*, London, 1984, pp. 287-307.

[88] *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1547-53*, nos. 572-579, 585-587, 596-598, 767. Another scheme, for the making of velvets, satin and damask by weavers brought from Geneva and Lyons, was noted by Page, *Denizations*, p.li. Richard Springham, mercer of London, one of its initiators, was also amongst those who offered a loan to Queen Elizabeth secured against the Crown's land in Brailes which subsequently passed to William Sheldon; *Cal Pat Rolls 1558-60*, p. 436-7. His partner, Michael Loke, was a merchant venturer, citizen and mercer of London, *ibid*, p. 229. I have not found any other trace of it.

[89] Joan Thirsk, 'Stamford in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in Alan Rogers, ed., *The Making of Stamford*, Leicester, 1965, pp. 43, 64-65.

preacher, and for 200-300 acres of land to rent for the growing of hops and other crops. Correspondence in 1572 about the establishment of a church shows that the project made at least some headway.

Another man who had also been in Somerset's household was Sir Thomas Smith, author of the *Discourse of the Common Weal* published in 1549. It provides incidental information about imported goods, including tapestry, arras, carpet and painted cloths. A number of imported goods Sir Thomas thought could have been equally well made in England, in particular 'all kind of cloth, jerseys, kerseys, worsted and coverlets and carpets of tapestry...'.[90] These are the same items that later appear in the lists of skills demanded of foreigners invited to live in England under Elizabeth; for example the invitation from Maidstone to the Netherlanders requested 'makers of bays, says, mockadoes, grograyne, chamletts, russells, stammet, frisadoes...arras and tapestry'.[91] Compare this with the list of fabrics that Sheldon's will required Hyckes to weave in return for residence at Barcheston - moccadoes, carolles, plometts, grograynes, sayes and sarges - and there is an uncanny similarity. Sheldon also had had a connection to the Somerset circle, albeit brief. The records of the Privy Council from which he would have had to obtain permission to involve 'strangers' no longer exist for the period May 1567-May 1570 so the suggestion that this was his intention must remain non-proven.[92] However, given Nash's reference to weavers from Flanders, was Sheldon too copying the older example and, rather than sending an Englishman to learn a foreign skill, did he invite a group of Flemish settlers, perhaps with the ulterior object of training Englishmen and relieving the chronic poverty of the Warwickshire countryside? It may have been in this light that the earl of Leicester interpreted his effort when he remarked to the fund-seeking town clerk of Warwick that 'he wondered they had not set up some special trade like Sheldon of Beoley to keep the poor in work.'[93]

Sheldon's project therefore had its roots in contemporary thinking about the balance of trade, a factor which phrases in Sheldon's will suggest may have weighed with him; 'for that his (Hyckes') trade will be greatly beneficial to this commonwealth to trade youth in, and

---

[90] Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, Oxford, 1978, pp.13-16.

[91] V. Morant, 'The Settlement of Protestant Refugees in Maidstone during the sixteenth century', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, iv (1951), pp. 211-217.

[92] John Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council*, New Series, vol. vii 1558-1570, p. vii-viii.

[93] *The Black Book of Warwick*, ed. T. Kemp, Warwick 1899, pp.47-49. An alternative explanation, however, is that the earl was remembering his own (rejected) offer of loans to the impoverished workers of Beverley; he suggested that Warwick weavers make cloth and caps.

a means to store great sums of money within this realm that will issue and go out of this realm for the same commodities to the maintenance of the foreign parties and to the hindrance of this commonwealth'. He had a point. In 1559 tapestry imports totalled £5405 16s. 8d; in 1565 they rose still higher, to £5588.[94] Exactly how successful the works were is hard to judge since so few contracts are known. Two orders, that of John Talbot of Bromsgrove in 1568 and the less certain case of Sir George Calveley around.1572, have already been mentioned; in 1605 Thomas Horde asked for hangings for a bed in lieu of money he considered Sheldon owed him.[95] Only on one occasion are we shown Hyckes in contact with a social superior, the earl of Leicester who ordered hangings for his banqueting house in 1585 though not certainly to be woven by Hyckes.[96]

Other glimpses of Hyckes reveal that he was a useful member of the Sheldon household. Only twice did he go to law on his own account, once to obtain payment from Calveley, the second time to claim payment of a debt due to him of which he had been defrauded.[97] His three other known court appearances are mentioned also in the newly discovered account book which shows clearly that he was acting not for himself but as Sheldon's 'servant', though he was careful to describe himself as 'Queen's arrismaker'. The earliest is the case of the presentation to the rectory of Stretton where Sheldon, debarred by his faith from the right of presentation, deputed the task to Hyckes 'his servant', whose expenses he paid.[98] Hyckes' account is, contrary to Barnard's knowledge of it, borne out by the evidence of the surviving documents. Clearly, however, there was considerable sleight of hand. The two other cases, both against Robert Hill who seems to have held the livings of both Tredington and Barcheston, indicate that Hyckes was not above economies with the

[94] Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, pp.181-184.

[95] Birmingham Archives and Heritage (BAH), Mss 3061/1901-003/167897 for Horde, though the matter was sent to arbitration; see also Hilary L. Turner, 'An Early Map of Brailes', *Warwickshire History*, Summer 2001, vol. xi, no.5, pp.182-193, for its context; no evidence that the factory executed a commission for Bess of Hardwick, (Barnard & Wace, pp.279-280), was found in a thorough re-examination of the documents by Santina Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance, The Hardwick Hall Textiles*, London 1998; the Sheldon in Bess's employ, p.33, was not related.

[96] Jane Clark, 'A set of tapestries for Leicester House in The Strand: 1585', *Burlington Magazine,* cxxv, 1983, pp.283-5, now on-line in JSTOR.

[97] For Calveley see TNA REQ 2/228/16, REQ 2/215/37 and TNA REQ 2/146/15.

[98] TNA REQ 2/66/15, undated (not May 1579 as Barnard & Wace, p.265); Sheldon accounts WaCRO CR 2632, fos. 41,43, 44-47, 67,71,78,81, 84, 88,130,132,139,142.

truth to secure Sheldon's ends.[99] In the third case the plaintiff, Tomkins, claimed that because Hyckes had fenced off land, that he could no longer reach his own fields; he added that Hyckes had terrorised him, but that too occurred on Sheldon lands at Ditchford where Sheldon may have been enclosing.[100] Miscellaneous other services were requested of both Richard and Francis in the two years covered by the account book in much the same way as they were of Robert Smythson by his employer, Sir Francis Willoughby.[101]

Nevertheless, the puzzles about Hyckes' activities between 1569 and 1584 when he is first recorded as present in the Wardrobe remain. That Hyckes travelled abroad, as suggested by Wells-Cole, the only recent scholar to look at the Sheldon works, is certainly possible, but not very likely given the records of continuous employment in the Great Wardrobe.[102] Hyckes was, however inconstant in his attendance, in the royal employ and passports for foreign travel were not easily obtained; there is no record of one being issued. It would certainly not have been necessary for him to travel abroad to buy the books from which some of the patterns claimed as his designs in the 1920s were drawn since he worked for a bookish patron. The tantalising glimpses of Ralph Sheldon and his contacts, interests and activities which emerge both from his known correspondence and in even more detail in the pages of the account book covering the years 1586-88, show him to have been on good terms with Giles Brydges, lord Chandos of Sudeley, Sir Francis Willoughby of Wollaton and Greville of Beauchamp Court besides the wide circle of his family alliances, through whom he might claim cousinship to many others.[103] The books he purchased, the repair of his 'glasse and dyall' and his interest in maps, all confirm the testimony of his neighbour Habington to his

[99] Tredington TNA STAC 5/H31/35, STAC 5/H19/13, documents not known to Barnard.

[100] TNA C 2/Eliz/T10/3.

[101] WaCRO CR2632, fos. 16, 25, 66, 68 and many others; Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House*, London, 1972, p.166.

[102] A. Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the influence of continental prints 1558-1625*, New Haven 1997, p.221; H. L.Turner, 'Working Arras and Arras Workers: Conservation in the Great Wardrobe underElizabeth I', *Textile History*, 43 (1), May 2012, pp. 43-60.

[103] WaCRO CR 2632, fos. 84, 136, 174, 177, 182; Hilary L. Turner in *Bodleian Library Record*, (note 6), contains a fuller account of Sheldon's acquaintance, the Warwickshire background is explored in 'The Warwickshire Sheldon tapestry map', *Warwickshire History*, vol.xii, no.6 Summer 2002 and in *But for One Matter*, at https://ralphsheldon1537-1613.info

. .

studious, book-loving nature.[104] It makes it possible to suggest that the libraries of Sheldon and his many contacts in the scholarly world could have been the source for the printed works on which many of the designs were based rather than ascribing the entire responsibility for choice and design to Hyckes alone.

In 1609, after serving for forty years, Richard and Francis Hyckes surrendered headship of the royal arras works, their term expired. Richard had perhaps ceased to take an active part, though he continued to supply materials until the end; Francis' name ceased to head the list after 1602/03 but, like his father earlier, he too probably appointed deputies.[105] His apparent departure has given rise to the suggestion that it was at this time that he returned to Barcheston to run the works there, but the parish records suggest that he had never been long absent; however he baptised his fourth son in Shipston in 1599 and was taxed there in the same year; later evidence from wills suggests their occupation of Barcheston manor house may have come to end.[106] The Hyckes' joint tenure was the lengthiest yet recorded in the Wardrobe's history and the issue of a writ to Sir Ralph Gibbs, Sheldon, Thomas Andrews and William Moulton requiring them to witness the handover in July 1609 saw it achieved locally.[107] Whether or not it had any effect on the fortunes of the Sheldon works is unknown; there is virtually nothing to suggest their continuance even so late and certainly not beyond this decade.[108]

The Hyckes lived on in the area. Margaret, wife of Richard was buried in Barcheston in 1611, Elizabeth wife of Francis in 1617.[109] Francis briefly held a lease of land at Chastleton in the year in which the house was held on Catesby's behalf by mortgagees from

---

[104] Thomas Habington, *A Survey of Worcestershire*, ed. John Amphlett, *Worcester Historical Society*, 2 vols 1893 & 1899, I, 70.

[105] Their names are in the series AO 3; it is at this point the LC 9 series is defective.

[106] *But for one Matter: Ralph Sheldon 1537-1613* at https://ralphsheldon1537-1613.info and also https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/Richard-Hyckes-biog.pdf and https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/Francis-Hyckes-biog.pdf

[107] TNA C66/1136, m.16, verso.

[108] Their existence in 1611 was thought to be proved by a curiously formed date – 1611- in the upper right hand corner of Winter. The interpretation has been challenged by Michael Bath, Michael Bath, *The Four Seasons Tapestries at Hatfield House*, Archetype, 2013. The presence of a weaver's mark of Bruges in two tapestries Spring and Winter rather vitiates the argument for origin at Barcheston, Hilary L. Turner, 'A case of mistaken identity : the "Sheldon" *Four Seasons* tapestries at Hatfield House re-considered', *Emblematica* 19, 2012, 1-27.

[109] WaCRO DR 5/1.

his relations, including Sheldon.[110] Eventually Francis employed his time in writing and translating; Lucian's *Dialogues* for use in schools was printed and three other texts were given to Christchurch Oxford by his son, Thomas.[111] Later references to both father and son are found in connection with Shipston on Stour. Francis became involved in an affray, or so the prosecution claimed; he also witnessed a deed concerning the uses of land belonging to the parish church there in 1619.[112] He made a gift to the organ fund of Worcester cathedral in 1613, as did most of the local notables.[113] His sister Alice had married Cuthert Huckvale in 1588 and may have been living in Brailes. Francis' children were baptised in Barcheston, Richard in 1594, Margaret in 1595, William in 1596 and Thomas in Shipston in 1599.[114] Margaret married William Crofte of Sutton under Brailes, and also baptised her children in Barcheston, Francis on 25 December 1619 and Edward on 26 July 1621.[115] Francis himself is said to have died at the home of his daughter in 1630.

In 1621 Richard died and was buried at Barcheston, aged 97; his will was witnessed by William Bulwer, vicar of Barcheston, and three Shipston men, William Diston, Thomas Dowler and Erasmus Banburie.[116] His wearing apparel, the bed furniture, books and other implements in the study totalled £20 13s. 4d.; together with the remainder of two leases valued at £161, they went to Francis because 'his children had had portions of him', an odd comment since only Alice and Francis are known to have survived infancy. It was perhaps no more than a face-saving statement; steady employment for forty years and the ever-present chance of private commissions had not made him rich and Hyckes' wealth was equal to, but

---

[110] Oxfordshire History Centre, Chastleton deeds E 24/1/1D/19, 21.

[111] Christ Church Oxford manuscript translation of The History of the Peloponnesian War and The History of Herodian are Ms 156 and 157; his grammar was printed, 1633.

[112] TNA STAC 8/ 311/6 Shipston affray; Shipston parish registers WaCRO DR 446/1 f. I^{v}.

[113] Michael Hodgetts, 'Recusant Contributors to the Worcester Cathedral Organ, 1613', *Midland Catholic History*, no.1, 1991, pp. 28-33.

[114] WaCRO parish registers Barcheston DR 5/1 and Shipston DR 446/1; Thomas' birthplace was not known to Barnard.

[115] WaCRO DR 5/1.

[116] Burial, recorded WaCRO DR 5/1 and Barnard and Wace, p. 273; Worcester Wills 1622/95. Neither William Diston nor Thomas Dowler were ever at the Wardrobe, as John Humphreys, *Archaeologia* 74, 1924, p,187.

no greater than, that of his more comfortable neighbours. His family was well established, remaining in the district as local worthies for the next two centuries.[117]

Contemporary independent evidence, the records of government not of gossip, contradict Wood's 'knowledge' whether of Richard the father or of Francis the son; they support, even if they do not directly confirm, the alternative explanation offered by Nash that William Sheldon brought workmen from Flanders, a contemporary practice for which there is abundant Elizabethan and later evidence. The fact remains that there is very little to reveal the presence of either stranger or native weaver at Barcheston.[118] Few of those traced had more than a fleeting connection.

Richard would have been aware of his competitors in London, small workshops set up by émigré weavers trained abroad with some of whom he employed in the Great Wardrobe – Anthony van der Meulen, Joyce Offielde, a team in Broad Street and the widow Margaret Knute.[119]

More ironically still, Richard lived long enough to see the establishment of the new factory at Mortlake set up in 1619 with a variety of privileges and a prohibition on competing establishments, when it was still necessary to import foreign labour to start the project.[120]

Postscript

Richard Hyckes remains elusive and enigmatic. Over the past twenty years since this paper was first published continuing research has brought to light references to Hyckes' actions in various situations far removed from weaving which suggest that he was, as he put it himself, 'William Sheldon's man'. The available evidence for the success of William's plans for Barcheston, whether for identifiable weavers or certainly documented products, barely substantiates a prospering weaving venture which William Sheldon intended should also include cloth items. It may well be as I have suggested elsewhere that Richard Hyckes

---

[117] *The Visitation of Worcestershire 1682-83*, ed. Walter C. Metcalfe, Harleian Society, 74, 1883, p.56.

[118] 'Peter the Docheman' was buried in Barcheston on 17 Jul 1590, Parish Registers https://barchestonhistory.info/pdfs/ParishRegisters1562-1652.pdf.

[119] Anthony van der Meulen, Kirk, *Aliens*, i, 478, ii, 87, 183, 291,, 422 and 446;Page, *Aliens*, 241; London Metropolitan Archives, Surrey Probate Records, DW/PA/51593/204; Offielde, Page, *Aliens*, 182; Scouloudi, *Returns*, no.826, Kirk, *Aliens*, ii, 284, 334, Kirk, *Aliens*, iii, 25, 60, 97, 121 LMA, London Archdeaconry Court, ex-Guildhall, 9051, 5.101, as Vander Rizen; the Broad Street team, Kirk, *Aliens*, ii, 318; Margaret Knutte, Scouloudi, *Returns*, no.646.

[120] G. W. Thomson, *A History of Tapestry Weaving in England*, 1973 edition, pp.278-312.

achieved little more than the initial training of a few apprentices who would later go on to employment in the royal Wardrobe in London. Its next head was Ralph Canning, possibly a man with south Warwickshire links,[121] *and it is true to say that its employees were increasingly English born rather than Flemish emigres. It may even be that Hyckes was not a weaver at all but a capable manager of men. The belief that he was indeed a weaver came about only because his name was woven into the Worcestershire tapestry map – an unusual honour for a master in the trade and very rarely found.*

Appendix I and II below

[121] TNA LC 5/50, 198-200.

Appendix I Hickes families in Warwick- and Worcestershire

Compiled from Worcester diocese wills, giving the date the will was proved and divided into possible family groupings. None can supply a man who died aged 97 in 1621.

1542	Hekes, Reginald, Bromsgrove	103	W & I
1557	Hekes, John, Bromsgrove	50	W & I
1569	Heekes, John, hbman, Bromsgrove	34	W & I
1637	Heekes, John, blacksmith, Bromsgrove	57	W & I
1643	Heekes, Roger, Bromsgrove	63	W & I
1565	Hetcks, Richard, hbman, Hagley	72	W
1572	Hickes, Richard, Budbrooke	16	W & I
1579	Hicke, Thomas, m Isabel Hill of Lyghe	41c	MB
1571	Hikes, John, The Hamlet, Defford	146	W & I
1579	Heekes, Richard, hbman, Defford	23	W & I
1626	Heekes, Richard, yeoman, Defford	107	W & I
1630	Heekes, Thomas, Defford	86	A & I
1643	Heekes, Mary, vid, Defford	59	A W & I
1580	Hickes, Wm, Whatcote	10	W & I
1610	Hickes, Wm, Whatcote	157	W & I
1612	Hickes, Wm, Whatcote	125a	A, W& I
1623	Hicks Richard, yeoman, Norton Curlew	84	
1601	Heckes, Richard, Warwick	130b	Adm
1602	Hickes, Katherine,vid, Warwick	63	A W& I
1604	Heekes, Edward, Worcester	1a	A & I
1610	Hixe, Richard, nayler, Bideford	TNA PROB 11/115/52	
1624	Hickes, Wm, Bidford	116a	A & I
1621	Hickes, Elinor, Chasley	6	W & I

1621 Hickes, Richard, 95 W & I

W = will; I = inventory; MB = marriage bond.

Appendix II The personnel of the royal arras workshop : Hyckes' deputies shown in bold

SOURCE: R.E.G.Kirk and E.F. Kirk, *Returns of Aliens living in London, Huguenot Society of London*, Publications vol 10, four parts, 1900

Denizens	From tax lists only
1565 **Henry Wells** (Page, 253; Kirk, ii,87)	John Davelieu (Kirk, i,447,ii,93)
Henry Morrells (Kirk,i,478, 274)	John Campenhowte (Kirk, i,319)
John Soillot (Kirk, i,402,)	Michael Otes (Kirk, ii, 299)
1562 Philip Claes (Page, 47)	William Pover (Kirk, i,357)
1544 John Hollander (Page, 125)	
or 1557 (CPR 1557-58, 245)	Jacob von Aken (Kirk, i,478, ii, 86)
1579 Anthony vanderMuelen (Page, 241,	
Kirk, I, 478, ii,87)	John Willemets (Kirk, ii, 299)
1541 Francis Beever (Page, 22; Kirk,i,144)	Arnold Farnanboam (Kirk, i, 357)
1577 Peter Soillot, son of John (Page,46)	John Soillot jnr (Kirk,ii,20)
1571 **Anthony van der Vynnen** (Page, 241)	
Arnold Beard (Kirk, i, 417, 315 ii,88)	

Names obviously foreign

Cattell	Mende	Van Can	**van Alsloot**	v.d.Ertbruggen
Crutter	Molyneux	Van Dort	van Bell	v.d. Leese
De Lenne	Momford	v.d.Howte	van Hover	v.d.Lynden
De Wea	Outsever	v.d.Howte	van Raes	Wymond
Geerts	Panne	v.d.Hoof	van Spiro	Wageman
Grinkin	Rause	van Aken (son)	v.d.Drieche	

Possible identifications : Harman Bell = Harman Frambilo, Kirk, ii,299; Gerard von der Lynden = Garrett van delinde, Kirk,ii,330; John van Spiro = Jan van Spiro, Kirk, ii, 385; John Wageman = John Wakerman, Kirk,ii,339.

Names apparently English

Alforde	Buck	*Diston*	Higgins	Offield	Wheeler
Austen	Canning	Dowler*Hyckes*	Symons	White	
Badger	Clay	Farrington	*Hyckes*	Tandy	
Beaver	Derick	Fyssher	Nightingale	Trace	

Amongst whom are Jans Nachtegael = John Nightingale, Kirk,ii,336 and Edward Offield, son of Joas Offield, Page, 182.

Names in Kirk used by identified foreigners, who are not necessarily weavers, shown in italics.