

William Sheldon's will concerning Barcheston¹

TNA : PROB 11/53/79, written 3rd January 1570

And also whereas I have bought of one Thomas Bourne a lease of all the toll or custom as well of fairs as of market days every week to be holden within the lordship of Bishop's Castle in the county of Shropshire with all the members, so often as it shall happen there to be holden and exercised yearly, all customs, fees, profits, toll, commodities and other things whatsoever to the said fairs and markets appertaining or belonging to begin at the ninth day of April next and immediately following the end of the term, surrender or forfeiture of the state and grant of the farm of the said toll or custom and other the premises with their appurtenances to one Peter Cornewall, son of Sir Thomas Cornewall made, and to have continuance from thenceforth for term of fifty-one years, yielding and paying for the same yearly ten pounds, the which reversion granted by the said Thomas Bourne is conveyed to my said well-beloved cousin, Harry Affild², to my use upon trust, and which reversion is to begin as it is thought in April which shall be in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred threescore and fifteen [1575].

My will and mind is and also by this my last will and testament I do devise and will that all the profits of the said lease until that Edmond Plowden, son of the said Edmond Plowden, esquire, my son-in-law, shall accomplish or may accomplish if God give him life the full age of 24 years, shall be received and taken by my executors, and shall be employed for evermore in manner and form following, that is to say for all the said years to be lent freely from time to time upon good sureties to such person and persons as shall occupy and use the Art of making of tapestry and arras or either of them within the counties of Worcester and Warwick and in the cities of Worcester and Coventry in such manner and form as is hereafter in this my will expressed and declared.

That is to say first that William Dowler now servant to Richard Heekes³ the only author and beginner of this Art within this Realm, shall have freely by way of loan of the first issues, revenues and profits that shall arise and grow of the said toll and the profits thereunto belonging for ten years upon good sureties to use the said Art and to repay the same at the end of ten years the sum of £26 13s 4d.

And my will and mind is that every other person or persons that is now servant or hereafter shall be servant or servants to the said Richard Heekes or to one Thomas Chaunce or to the said William Dowler in the said Art at the time of my death and being born within this Realm shall have and orderly as they be in years likewise freely by way of loan of the next issues and profits that shall arise and grow of the said toll and other the premises thereunto belonging in Bishop's Castle aforesaid;

¹ First correctly printed in E.A.B.Barnard and A. J. B.Wace, 'The Sheldon tapestry weavers and their work', *Archaeologia* 78, 1928, 255-314, Oxford 1928.

² Henry Ashfield, relative of William's sister's second husband, Anthony of Little Tew, Oxfordshire.

³ The Elizabethan spelling has been retained; his name is now commonly written as Hyckes or Hicks.

And also of such other sums of money as is already lent by me or shall be lent by me in my life for the maintenance of the said Art and of such other sums of money as shall be lent of the said issues and profits of the said toll and other the premises to the same belonging and repaid again at the end of ten years upon good sureties to sue the said Art and to repay the same at the end of ten years the sum of £20.

And that every stranger born that shall work with the said Richard Heekes, Thomas Chaunce and William Dowler in the said Art at the time of my death shall have orderly as they have been or shall be in service with the said Richard Heekes, Thomas Chaunce and William Dowler or any of them by way of loan of the next issues and profits that shall arise and grow of the said toll and other the premises thereunto belonging in Bishop's Castle aforesaid and of the said stock of money lent and repaid again for ten years upon good sureties to use the said Art within this Realm and to repay the same again at th' end of ten years, the sum of twenty marks.

And also my will and mind is and also I do devise and will that after all such as now work in the said Art with the said Richard Heekes, Thomas Chaunce or with any Englishman now being in work or which shall be in work at Barcheston or Bordesley at the time of my death shall have had their said sums of money to them appointed by this my last will and testament, that then the residue of all the issues, revenues and profits of the said toll and other the premises afore appointed in Bishop's Castle and of the said sums of money lent and repaid again shall be forever applied and lent for ten years by £20 apiece to every such as shall use the said Art, chiefly to such as shall be hereafter prentice to any of my said servants before-named using the said Art, finding sufficient sureties to use the same and repay the money again at the end of ten years if the party that shall have the money shall so long live.

And if it shall chance the same party to die within the said ten years, that then he shall repay the said money within one year next after the time of his death in manner and form following that is to say to every person that shall so use the said Art within the said counties of Worcester and Warwick & in the said Cities of Worcester and Coventry, and for lack of such persons there or elsewhere within the counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Shropshire, Stafford, Oxford and Berkshire, so that every of them do find sureties as is aforesaid, which sureties and bonds of all the said persons aforementioned and unnamed I will and my mind is shall be made unto my executors and the overlivers of them and such person and persons as shall be Justices of Assizes at the time being of the county of Worcester and to the Clerk of the Peace of the said county of Worcester, and after the death of my executors then to the Justices of Assizes for the time being and to the Clerk of the Peace of the said county and to my heirs male of my body begotten only.

Omitted by Barnard

And that after that the said Edmund Plowden, son of Edmund Plowden, my son-in-law, shall accomplish the full age of 24 years, then I will and demise that he and his assigns shall have all the residue of the years that shall be then to come of the term of years of the said toll and other the premises in Bishop's Castle aforesaid And whereas I have lawfully assured to me and my heirs the reversion of certain lands, tenements, rents, reversions and services in the county of Hereford, my

will, devise and mind is and also by this my last will I do demise and give the said reversion of all the aid lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances unto my executors for the term of ten years to the performance of this my last will.

And after the said ten years ended then the same to remain to my son Ralph Sheldon⁴ for term of his life, and after to Edward Sheldon son of the said Ralph and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue to the heirs males of the said Ralph Sheldon and for lack of such issue to the right heirs of me, the said William Sheldon forever.

And my will and mind is and also I do give, will and devise to Symon Walweyn of Oxhill in the county of Warwick and Thomas Evett of Mickleton in the County of Gloucester and their heirs forever to th' use of them and their heirs forever yearly out of all my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Little Wolford in the said county of Warwick 56s 8d to the intent nevertheless that the said Symon Walweyn and Thomas Evett and their heirs forever shall yearly content and pay to the said Justices of Assizes for the time being 40s and to the Clerk of the Peace of the said County of Worcester for the time being 10s to that intent that the said Justices of Assizes and Clerk of the Peace shall see and take order for the taking of the said bonds yearly, and that the said sums of money may and shall be yearly employed according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will.

And my will and mind is and also I do devise and will that it shall be lawful to the said Symon Walweyn and Thomas Evett and their heirs for non-payment of the said sum 56s 8d to them before bequeathed from time to time to enter the said lands and to distrain for the same and to levy by way of distress in the said lands for every such default of payment of the sum of 20s in name of a penalty, and the same from time to time to have and detain to their own uses.

And I do devise and will that the said Symon Walweyn and Thomas Evett and their several heirs shall have yearly the said 6s 8d, the overplus of the said fifty shillings, in recompense of their pains to receive the said annuity of fifty shilling[s] and for the payment thereof yearly as is abovesaid.

And whereas in respect of a gift made by William Willington esquire deceased of the manor and lordship of Barcheston and all other his lands in the manor and lordship of Barcheston in the said county of Warwick unto me and Mary, my well-beloved first wife, and to her heirs of estate of inheritance, and by award made by Sir Robert Throckmorton, knight, and others the same manor or lordship of Barcheston and all the other lands and inheritance late the said William Willington's in Barcheston aforesaid be and are by lawful conveyance and assurance bound over and assured to me for term of my life without impeachment of any waste, and after to my said son, Ralph, and to his heirs forever, by reason of which award I paid unto Sir John Throckmorton, knight, two thousand and five hundred pounds, and spent in the law above five hundred pounds.

And whereas I have placed in the mansion house⁵ of Barcheston aforesaid one Richard Heekes and granted him the mill there and all the houses, orchards, gardens, the going, pasturing and feeding of 17 kine, 6 horses and certain other cattle without paying any rent in money for the same but only to make certain malt for me and to carry certain of my

⁴ Throughout the original calls him Rauf.

⁵ As a lawyer William used the legal term for the chief house on a manor. It did not then convey any hint of magnificence.

corn and hay, and chiefly in respect of the maintenance of making of tapestry, arras, moccadoes, carolles, plommets, grograms, says and sarges.⁶

And where also the said Richard Heekes and I are condescended and agreed that certain money shall be yearly disbursed and laid out by me and my heirs towards the making of the said tapestry and other things before recited, and how and in what manner the same shall be answered to me, my heirs and executors, and a recompense also for the said house and other things to the said to the said Richard Heekes hereby granted, as by a bill indented made between him and me more plainly at large appeareth.

And forasmuch as the same Richard Heekes hath bestowed and must bestow on the houses there a good piece of money to make all things necessary for workmen to work in the premises

And for that his trade will be greatly beneficial to this commonwealth to trade youth in and 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.

And considering that I do think my said well-beloved son Rauffe will have the same consideration to the commonwealth as I now have or more I do will and devise that my said son Rauffe if he do permit and suffer the said Richard Heekes to have and enjoy the said house and all other things specified in the said writings made between me and the said Richard Heekes according to the time limited in the said writing and according to the tenor thereof

That then my said son Rauffe and his heirs male shall not only have all the things and profits reserved in the said writings indented, but also the stock that shall remain in the hands of the said Richard Heekes at the time of my death.

And if the same be not then the value of £300 that then my executors shall within one year make the same £300 which shall be yearly employed according to the said writing indented. And in case that my said son Ralph shall not seem good to fulfill the said writing indented as much as is therein mentioned on my part and my heirs to be performed, that then I do devise and will that the said Richard Heekes shall have of the said stock the occupation of £100 during his natural life, so that he do seal and deliver to my executors or to one of them one bill obligatory for the repayment of the said sum of £100 to my executors within two years next after the decease of the said Richard Heekes, and so that the said Richard Heekes, as my special hope and trust he will, do continue the exercising of the said trade to so good a purpose as he hath begun.

⁶ All these are cloth fabrics, the weaving techniques for which were more familiar to continental weavers than to English.