

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 13 June 1585 and proved 7 February 1587, of Richard Bowser (d. 16 October 1586), who purchased the manor of Sheriffs from Oxford. For the fine, dated 29 June 1584, by which title to Sheriffs passed from Oxford to Richard Bowser, see TNA CP 25/2/132/1694/26ELIZITRIN, Item 24.

In the schedule of debts accompanying the indenture of 30 January 1575 drawn up by Oxford before he left on his continental tour (see ERO D/Drg2/25), the following amounts appear as owing by Oxford to the testator, presumably representing purchases from him in his trade as a saddler:

To Richard Bowser	£240
To Richard Bowser	£22 2s

It seems likely that Oxford sold his manor of Sheriffs to the testator in payment of these debts.

For a lawsuit in Chancery brought by Roger Harlakenden (d.1603) against the testator's son and heir, John Bowser (d.1615), vintner, in 1594 concerning a parcel of land called the Galle belonging to Oxford's former manor of Sheriff's, see TNA C 3/242/4.

In 1605 John Bowser sold the manor of Sheriffs to Lawrence Caldwell (see <http://generation13.net/Celticcumbria-eastofengland/colneengaine5.html>), and in connection with this sale, on 15 November 1605 Bowser assigned to Caldwell the recognizance in the amount of £210 which Oxford had made to the testator on 26 June 1584 in connection with the sale of the manor of Sheriffs (see ERO D/DSx/475).

The inquisition post mortem taken on 29 November 1586 states that the testator died on 16 October 1586, and that John Bowser, his only son and heir, was then aged 23 years and more. See 'Inquisitions: 1586', Abstracts of Inquisitiones Post Mortem for the City of London: Part 3 (1908), pp. 84-99:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=65894>.

For the nuncupative will of the testator's son, John Bowser, proved 4 October 1615, see TNA PROB 11/126/230.

For a bequest to John Bowser and his wife in the will of the vintner, Henry Prannell (d.1589), see TNA PROB 11/74/370.

RM: T{estamentum} Rich{ard}i Bowser

In the name of God, Amen. The thirteenth day of June in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and five and in the 27th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Richard Bowser, citizen and saddler of London, being whole in body and of good and perfect remembrance, laud and praise therefore I give to Almighty God, do make and declare my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First and principally I commit my soul into th' hands of Almighty God, my Maker and Creator, and to Jesus Christ, his only Son, my only Saviour and Redeemer, by the merits of whose precious passion I trust to be saved, and to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier and Comforter;

And I commit my body to the earth from whence it came, and as a due debt I willingly yield the same to it again, willing that the same my body be buried in the parish church of Saint Sepulchre in the West, London, at or as near the place where my son (blank) lieth as conveniently may be;

And as touching the disposition of all the goods and chattels which God hath endued me withal, my will and mind therein is as followeth, viz.:

First my will and mind is that all the debts which I do owe to any person or persons whatsoever be truly satisfied and paid;

Item, I give and bequeath to every of my menservants that shall dwell with me at the time of my decease one black cloak-cloth of the price of ten shillings a yard, and to every woman-servant that then shall serve me one black gown-cloth of the price of ten shillings a yard;

Item, I give and bequeath to thirteen poor men, some of them to be of the Company of Saddlers and the rest of the parish of Saint Dunstan's in the West where I dwell, to each of them a mourning gown of thirteen shillings four pence price apiece;

And also I give to seven old impotent women whom my overseers shall thing [sic] requisite, to each of them a mourning gown of ten shillings price apiece;

Item, I give & bequeath to Henry Prannell, vintner, and to his wife, to each of them a mourning gown of fine cloth of sixteen shinges [sic] a yard;

Item, I give to Mr John Ive, esquire, and to his wife, to each of them a mourning gown of like cloth of sixteen shillings a yard;

Item, I give to the poor forty shillings, to be distributed by my executors and overseers on the day of my burial at or in the church porch of the parish of Saint Dunstan's, and forty shillings more to the poor of Saint Sepulchre's where I shall be buried;

Item, I give and bequeath to Mr Edward Dodge a mourning cloak-cloth of fine cloth of sixteen shillings a yard, and to Mr Flower one cloak-cloth of the same;

Item, I will that a sermon be made on the day of my burial by some learned man, and to him I give for his pains ten shillings;

Item, I give, bequeath and devise to the Masters or Governors and Commonalty of the Mystery of Saddlers of the City of London one annuity of forty shillings by the year for and during the term and space of ten years next after my decease, the same annuity to be issuing and going out and forth of all that my house and tenement with th' appurtenances wherein Edward Dent now dwelleth in Fewter [=Fetter?] Lane aforesaid, and to be paid at four most usual feasts in the year by even portions, and for non-payment of the same or any part thereof, then my will is that it shall be lawful to and for the said Masters or Governors and Commonalty of the said Mystery of Saddlers into the said last-mentioned house and tenement with th' appurtenances to enter and distrain, and the distress and distresses there so taken to lead, drive, bear and carry away, and the same towards them to detain and keep until they of the said annuity with th' arrearages of the same, if any shall chance to be, shall be fully satisfied and paid, and from time to time during the said ten years as often as any default in payment of the same annuity or any part thereof shall fortune to be made, and [+if?] for want of true and well-naming of the Corporation of the said Mystery or Company of Saddlers of London this my said gift & devise of the said annuity be insufficient and imperfect in law, then my will and intent is that my executors hereunder named shall grant to the said Corporation of Saddlers for the said term of ten years one annuity of forty shillings by year to be issuing out of the said tenement wherein the said Edward Dent dwelleth in Fewter Lane as aforesaid, with clause of distress in form aforesaid, and to be paid in manner aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath to the poor of the parish of Ries in Holderness where I was born forty shillings, and I give to a preacher that shall make a sermon in the said parish of Ries for his pains ten shillings, and my will is that the said forty shillings shall be distributed amongst the poor of the said parish of Ries on that day that the said sermon shall be there made, which I will shall be within one half year next after my decease;

Item, I give to the poor of twenty parishes next round about the said parish of Ries ten pounds, viz., to the poor of every of the same twenty parishes ten shillings, the same ten pounds to be paid within one half [+year] next after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath to my brother, Robert Bowser, if he happen to be living at the time of my death, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, and if he fortune to be then deceased, then I give and bequeath unto his children the same six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence amongst them equally to be divided;

Item, I give, devise and bequeath unto my said brother, Robert Bowser, and his children all that my lease, interest or term for years which I have of, in and to all that my farm with th' appurtenances in Wane in Holderness in the county of York;

Item, I give the children of my brother, Thomas Bowser, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence equally amongst them to be divided if they or any of them be living at the time of my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath to the children of my sister Hannesley six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, to be divided equally amongst them;

Item, I give and bequeath to Richard Adams, saddler, and Mistress Reede, sometimes my master and mistress, to each of them 20s apiece;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Jane a black gown of the price or value of ten shillings the yard;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the right honourable Sir Christopher Hatton, knight, in consideration that he shall stand my son, John, his good friend, one velvet saddle with all furniture thereunto belonging;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr Necton, feodary of London, one black mourning gown of the price of sixteen shillings the yard;

Item, I give and bequeath to Joan Jenneway, my late servant, a black gown;

Item, I give and bequeath to my cousin, John Griffin, vintner, and Alice, his wife, each of them a black gown of sixteen shillings a yard;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Isabell, my maidservant, if she do serve me at the time of my death, three pounds in money;

Item, I give to my man Ezechiell four pounds, in consideration that he shall do his endeavour to get in my debts;

Item, I give to John Holloway, my servant, twenty shillings, and for the years of the said John Holloway, my servant, I refer them to my executor and overseers;

I give also to my man Cuthbert a black gown of ten shillings the yard;

Item, I give to the livery of my Company of Saddlers, in consideration that they shall go with me to the church, four pounds to make them a dinner at Mr Prannell's, and I give to the yeomanry of my company forty shillings for the like consideration and for the like intent;

Item, I give and bequeath to the poor of the parishes of Saint Sepulchre's and Saint Bride's in the suburbs of London four pounds, that is to say, to the poor of every of the same parishes forty shillings, to be severally distributed by the several churchwardens of the said parishes at their several churches on the day of my burial;

Item, I give to the ringers of the bells of the said two parishes twelve shillings, equally to be divided amongst them;

Item, I give unto two learned preachers to make sermons on the day of my burial in the said two parishes of Saint Bride's and Saint Sepulchre's twenty shillings, that is to say, to each of them ten shillings;

Item, my will and mind is that my executor hereunder named shall deliver unto the constables for the time being of the said parish of Saint Dunstan in the West the sum of six pounds of lawful money of England, to th' end and purpose that they shall therewith make some supper or drinking at the Flying Horse to and amongst my neighbours, as well poor as rich, on the day of my burial;

And as touching the disposition of all and singular my freehold manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments set, lying and being in the county of Essex and in the city of London and in the suburbs of the same city and in every or any of them, my will therein is as followeth, viz.:

I give and devise unto Alice Griffin, my sister's daughter, being now the wife of John Griffin, vintner, all that my house or tenement with the appurtenances set, lying and being in Fewter Lane in the suburbs of London aforesaid now or late in the tenure or occupation of (blank) Brasbridge or of his assign or assigns, to have and to hold the same house or tenement with th' appurtenances unto the said Alice Griffin and to th' heirs of her body lawfully begotten & to be begotten, and for default of such heirs, then I will and devise that the same house or tenement with th' appurtenances shall remain and come presently unto my son, John Bowser, and his heirs forever;

The residue of all and singular my said freehold manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with all their appurtenances shall descend and come unto my said son, John Bowser, and his heirs forever;

And the residue of all and singular my goods, chattels, leases and debts whatsoever not by me in this my last will and testament given, bequeathed or devised, my debts, legacies and funeral expenses being fully paid and discharged, I wholly give and bequeath unto my said son, John Bowser;

And my said son, John Bowser, do I make and ordain my sole executor of this my last will and testament;

And I appoint and ordain to be overseers of the same the right honourable Sir Christopher Hatton, knight, my chief overseer, the said Henry Prannell, Mr John Ive and Mr Edward Dodge, gentlemen, to be also my overseers, desiring them to be aiders and assisters to my said son, and also to see preserved and left for my said son in my now dwelling-house in Fleet Street aforesaid all the furniture and implements that I shall leave in the same;

Item, I give to the said Henry Prannell for his pains therein to be taken ten pounds, and I give to the said John Ive for his pains therein to be taken five pounds, and I give to the said Edward Dodge for his pains therein to be taken ten pounds;

In witness whereof I, the said Richard Bowser, annulling, repealing and revoking all former wills, legacies and bequests by me heretofore made, given and bequeathed, have to this my last will and testament set my hand and seal the day and year first above-written. Richard Bowser. Sealed & delivered and subscribed by the said Richard Bowser in the presence of me, John Dixon, scrivener.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Willmo Drury Legum doctor Curie Prerogative Cantuar Comissario &c septimo die mensis februarii Anno domini millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo sexto Iuramento Iohannis Bowser filij naturalis et legitimi dicti defuncti et executoris &c cui comissa fuit administratio &c de bene &c

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the seventh day of the month of February in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-sixth by the oath of John Bowser, natural and legitimate son of the said deceased and executor etc., to whom administration was granted etc., [+sworn] to well etc.]