

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 13 August 1616 and proved 17 October 1616, of John Handford (1565 – 17 August 1616) of Woollas Hall in Eckington, Worcestershire. The testator appoints his ‘dear kinsman’, Thomas Russell (1570-1634), as one of his executors. In the same year, Thomas Russell was also appointed as overseer of the will of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon.

TESTATOR’S KINSHIP WITH THOMAS RUSSELL, OVERSEER OF THE WILL OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

In the will below, the testator refers to Thomas Russell as his ‘dear kinsman’, and appoints him as one of his executors.

Hotson was unable to trace the relationship between the testator and Thomas Russell, although he noted that Sir Arnold Lygon of Beauchamps Court, who appointed the testator as his executor in 1612, referred to him as ‘kinsman’. See Hotson, Leslie, *J, William Shakespeare*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 283-8, and the will of Sir Arnold Lygon, TNA PROB 11/120/489.

It appears the testator and Thomas Russell were third cousins, and were related through the Greville family. William Greville (d. 7 March 1513) of Arle Court in Cheltenham, Justice of the Common Pleas, son of Richard Greville of Lemington by a wife surnamed Herbert, had, by his wife, Margery, three daughters: Alice Greville, who married Robert Wye, Eleanor Greville who married Robert Vampage, and Margaret or Margery Greville (d.1542), who married Sir Richard Lygon (d. 20 March 1556) of Madresfield. See the will of William Greville, TNA PROB 11/17/358, and the Handford and Lygon pedigrees in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1988), Vol. XXVII, pp. 70, 91 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n85/mode/2upPhillimore>

The testator was the son of Thomas Handford (d.1606?) and Margaret Higford or Hugford (d. 8 or 18 November 1594), daughter of William Higford and Dorothy Vampage, daughter of Robert Vampage and Eleanor Greville.

Margery Greville and Sir Richard Lygon were the grandparents of Thomas Russell’s mother, Margaret Lygon (d.1616), who married, firstly, Sir Thomas Russell (d.1574) of Strensham, and secondly, Sir Henry Berkeley (d.1601). See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, p. 22.

Thus, the testator was a descendant of Eleanor Greville, and Robert Vampage, while Thomas Russell was a descendant of her sister, Margery Greville, and Sir Richard Lygon.

For mention of Thomas Handford of Woollas Hall and his wife, Margaret, in the inquisition post mortem taken after the death of Sir John Russell (1552-1593), half brother of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), see Fry, Edward Alexander, ed., *Abstracts of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Part III, (London: London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1908), pp. 2116 at:

<https://archive.org/details/abstractsinquis00changoog/page/n271>

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the son of Thomas Handford (d.1606?) and Margaret Higford or Hugford (d. 8 or 18 November 1594), the daughter of William Higford (d. 11 December 1545) and Dorothy Vampage. See the inquisition post mortem taken after the death of William Highford, TNA C 142/74/76, and the History of Parliament entry for Margaret Higford's brother, Sir John Higford (1529-1607) of Dixton in Alderton, Gloucestershire, at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/higford-john-1529-1607>

b. 5 Jan. 1529, 1st s. of William Higford of Dixton by Dorothy, da. of Robert Vampage of Glos.; ?bro. of Robert[†]. m. (1) by 1551, Elizabeth, da. of Edmund Fettiplace of Besselsleigh, Berks., 2s. inc. John[†] 3da.; (2); (3). suc. fa. 11 Dec. 1545. Kntd. Sept. 1592.1

See also Hansford, Thelma Ironmonger, *Hansford and Kinsmen: A Family History*, (Seaford, Virginia, n.d.), pp. 4-5 at:

<https://archive.org/details/hansfordkinsmen100hans/page/n21>

See also the will, dated 11 May 1566 and proved 13 February 1567, of Margaret's brother, John Higford (d.1567?), gentleman, TNA PROB 11/49/60, in which he describes himself as 'John Higford alias Hugford, gentleman, son of William Higford alias Hugford, esquire, deceased, and of Dorothy, late wife of the said William, deceased', and in which he leaves his lands to his brother-in-law, Thomas Handford.

See also the History of Parliament entry for Sir John Higford (1529-1607), of Dixton in Alderton, Gloucestershire, brother of John Higford (d.1567?), which states that he was the son of William Higford of Dixton and Dorothy Vampage, the daughter of Robert Vampage of Gloucestershire:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/higford-john-1529-1607>

b. 5 Jan. 1529, 1st s. of William Higford of Dixton by Dorothy, da. of Robert Vampage of Glos.

John Higford came of a branch of the Warwickshire family that had been established at Dixton in Gloucestershire since the 15th century. He was under age when his father died and in October 1546 his wardship was granted to his kinsman and namesake John Higford of Henwood, Warwickshire, an esquire of the body to Henry VIII. This namesake survived until August 1558 . . . he owed his election to his wife's family. Her stepfather Thomas Denton, himself knight of the shire for Oxfordshire in this Parliament, lived only three miles from Buckingham and her brother George Fettiplace had been returned for the town to both the Parliaments of 1554.³

See also:

'Parishes: Eckington', *A History of the County of Worcester: volume 4* (1924), pp. 68-76.
URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42859>:

. . . until the death of John Vampage in 1548. (fn. 105) His heirs were Edmund Harewell, son of his sister Margaret (by Thomas Harewell of Besford), his sister Mary and his sister Dorothy, then wife of Thomas Winchcombe. Dorothy had previously married John Hugford of Dixton (co. Gloucs.), by whom she had a son John, then living, and a daughter Margaret, finally the sole heir of her mother. (fn. 106) John Vampage's widow Anne married Sir Thomas Baskerville, (fn. 107) and in 1561 Joyce (Jodocus) Harsey and Mary his wife, alias Mary Vampage, granted her a third of the manor. (fn. 108) In 1567 Sir Thomas Baskerville and Anne his wife granted this third to Thomas Hanford, who had married Margaret Hugford, mentioned above. (fn. 109) Thomas Hanford thus became possessed of two-thirds of the manor, which he held in 1578, when his estates were confiscated by the Crown for the payment of his fines as a popish recusant. (fn. 110) His wife Margaret died seised of a third of the manor on 18 November 1594, and was survived by her husband, (fn. 111) who, according to Habington, 'dwelled and dyed at Wollashull.' (fn. 112) The Harewells were still holding their third of the manor in 1605, (fn. 113) when Sir Edmund Harewell sold a rent from it to Sir Rowland Berkeley, but they must afterwards have conveyed it to Thomas Hanford or his son John, the latter of whom built the now existing hall in 1611, and died there on 17 August 1616. (fn. 114) His son Francis, who succeeded him, had disputes about common of pasture with Sir William Russell and with Richard and John George, and other tenants of the manor, in 1630 and 1642. (fn. 115)

See also the will, TNA PROB 11/110/406, dated 3 May 1606 and proved 19 November 1607, of Sir John Higford (1529-1607), in which he appoints the testator as one of his overseers.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Anne Rake, the daughter and coheir of Richard Rake, gentleman, of Allesley, Warwickshire. See Hansford, *supra*, p. 7, and the pedigree in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1988), Vol. XXVII, p. 70 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n85/mode/2up>

For her will, dated 31 October 1632 and proved 22 April 1634, see TNA PROB 11/165/362. When she married the testator, Anne Rake was the widow of John Browne of Pershore, by whom she had a son and daughter:

-Thomas Browne, esquire, of Wick by Pershore, Worcestershire, appointed executor of the will of his mother, Anne (nee Rake) Browne Handford. See also:

'Parishes: Pershore, St Andrew with Defford and Wick', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 4*, ed. William Page and J W Willis-Bund (London, 1924), pp. 163-177. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol4/pp163-177> [accessed 30 November 2019].

The dean and chapter leased the rectory from time to time. A lease granted in 1554–5 to Sir John Bourne was sold by his son Anthony to Thomas Hanford and Thomas Cocks. John Hanford bought the moiety belonging to the Cocks family and left the whole to his widow, who sold it to Thomas Browne, her son by a former husband. He sold it in 1635–6 to William Sandys.

-Anne Browne (living 31 October 1632).

Although the will of the testator's wife contains a Protestant profession of faith, other evidence suggests she was a Catholic recusant whose daughter became a nun. See Hamilton, Adam, *The Chronicle of the English Augustinian Canonesses Regular of the Lateran, at St Monica's in Louvain* (London: Sands & Co., 1906), pp. 60-2, available online:

In the year of her Lord, 1628, upon the last day of February, were professed three sisters, Sister Anne More, Sister Ann Handford and Sister Mary Leeds. . . . The second, Sister Ann Handford, was daughter to John Handford, esquire, of Woolshall in Worcestershire; her mother also a good Catholic, and excessively beloved for her good housekeeping and charitable assistance to the poor neighbours either in sickness or in any other necessity. After the death of her husband, this good woman was very desirous that some of her daughters should be religious, and to see if God would give them a calling she sent them over, leaving them, notwithstanding, free to their own liking whether they would enter presently into some monastery or else board in the town until they got a mind to be religious, and this house was particularly commended to them by some friends of ours, who also writ for them to us to obtain the place. So that three of them coming hither, they were admitted, being willing to enter in presently, but the elder went forth again after some small time, and the younger about a year after, and this, who was the

middlemost, remained constant. For she it was whom Our Lord had chosen to be the honour of her kindred and joy of her mother, who made her profession on the day aforesaid with the others, being 17 years of age.

By his wife, Anne, the testator had three sons and six daughters:

* **Francis Handford** (1602-1643), eldest son and heir. See Hansford, *supra*, p. 5. He is said to have married firstly, in 1616, Elizabeth Russell (b.1604), the daughter of Thomas Russell of Rushock. The marriage was annulled the following year. See Collingwood, Kate, *Great Comberton: A Landscape History*, (Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing, 2014), pp. 20-1 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=qvkiBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA21>

Francis Hanford must have been an interesting character. He was the son of John Hanford who built Woollas Hall in 1611 and whose magnificent tomb can be found in Eckington church. John and Francis conducted a long-running series of lawsuits against three generations of Russells of Strensham Court and various others over the diversion of water in the Avon and common rights of grazing, and the latter is probably the background to these assaults. Despite this, John was a close friend of Thomas Russell of Rushock, brother of John Russell, oldest of the three Strensham generations, leaving him 'my best gilt plate at his election and my best gelding at his choice' in his will. Thomas was a generous friend to the Hanford family, and he and John Hanford jointly contributed towards new organs for Worcester Cathedral. Thomas Russell was also a friend of Shakespeare's who left him £5 and made him administrator of his will, and it is said that Russell Street, once known as Great Russell Street, was named in memory of him. Thomas Russell inherited estates at Alderminster and Broad Campden and married into the Rushock property. There is no evidence of his ownership of property or residence in Great Comberton but John Hanford had reason to be grateful to Russell as in 1610 he reclaimed lands from the Crown with a £1,500 mortgage from him. Part of the manor had been confiscated by the Crown in 1578 for 'popish recusancy', and a general pardon granted by James I on 6th February 1604 to John Hanford 'for all offences forfeits, penalties, crimes etc. except false-coining, witchcraft, burglaries, murders, rapes, buggery' etc. probably relates to non-attendance at the parish church, otherwise it does not seem much of a pardon. . . . Following John Hanford's early death at the age of 51 his son Francis inherited the manor of Woollas and his mother's first thought was to find him a wife, although he was only 14. She settled on Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Russell. They were married in 1616 but the marriage was revoked in 1617 after a lawsuit where Elizabeth pleaded that she was 12 years of age and was coerced into it.

See also:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/52219527@N00/9270486130>

The identification of Francis Handford's first wife, Elizabeth Russell (b.1604), as the daughter of 'Thomas Russell of Rushock', i.e. Thomas Russell (1570-1634), the overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, appears to be erroneous. Thomas Russell did not have a daughter named Elizabeth. He married firstly, at Bruton on 7 September 1590, Katherine Bampffield (d. by 1596), the daughter of Hugh Bampffield (d.1589), esquire, of North Cadbury, Somersetshire, and Cecily White, by whom he had two daughters, Margaret and Jane Russell, both of whom died young. See Hotson, *supra*, pp. 42, 44, 59. It thus seems likely that Francis Handford's first wife, Elizabeth Russell (b.1604), was the daughter of Sir Thomas Russell (1577 - 30 December 1632), and the granddaughter of Sir John Russell (1552-1593), half brother of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. See the will of Sir John Russell, TNA PROB 11/92/96, and the History of Parliament entry for Sir Thomas Russell (1577 – 30 December 1632) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/russell-thomas-1577-1632>

After the annulment of her first marriage, Elizabeth Russell (b.1604) married secondly John Hornyold (1583-1643), esquire, of Blackmore Park. See 'The Hornyold Family of Blackmore Park' at:

<https://hanleyswan.net/history/families/hornyold/>

With Catholics liable to be convicted of high treason, the Hornyolds had to practice their faith surreptitiously and two secret hiding places were built into Blackmore House for visiting priests. One of the few ways to increase their wealth was to marry into other landed Catholic families. John's son Ralph married Margaret Lygon from neighbouring Madresfield and his grandson, John III (1583-1643), married Elizabeth Russell, daughter of Sir Thomas Russell, who owned Hanley Hall among other properties.

After the annulment of his first marriage, Francis Handford married secondly Elizabeth Gifford (d.1681?), the daughter of Walter Gifford (d. 27 April 1632) of Chillington, son of Sir John Gifford (d. 28 August 1613) and Joyce Leveson (d. 14 March 1608), and grandson of Sir Thomas Gifford (d. 27 May 1560) and Ursula Throckmorton (d. 15 March 1581), daughter of Sir Robert Throckmorton (c.1451-1518). See the will of Sir Robert Throckmorton, TNA PROB 11/20/25; the will, proved 26 June 1560, of Sir Thomas Gifford, TNA PROB 11/43/5; and Doyle, Patrick Joseph, 'The Giffards of Chillington, a Catholic Landed Family 1642-1861', Durham Theses, Durham University, 1968, pp. 10-11, 42-3 at:

<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9887/>

See the Gifford pedigree in Grazebrook, H. Sydney, ed., *The Heraldic Visitations of Staffordshire*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1885, p. 148 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/collectionsforpt205stafuoft#page/148/mode/2up>

For the Gifford family, see also:

'The parish of Church Eaton: High Onn', in *Staffordshire Historical Collections, Vol. 4*, ed. George Wrottesley (London, 1883), pp. 52-63. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/staffs-hist-collection/vol4/pp52-63> [accessed 2 December 2019].

See also the Gifford pedigree in Armytage, George and W. Harry Rylands, eds., *Staffordshire Pedigrees*, (London: Harleian Society, 1912), Vol. LXIII, pp. 103-4 at:

<https://archive.org/details/StaffordshirePedigreesBasedOnTheVisitationOfThatCountyMadeByWilliam/page/n113>

See also the History of Parliament entry for John Gifford at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/giffard-john-1534-1613>

See also the will of Joyce Leveson's father, John Leveson (d. 13 October 1545), TNA PROB 11/31/655.

Francis Handford maintained contact with Thomas Russell until the latter's death. See Hotson, *supra*, pp. 273-4.

* **Edward Handford**, second son. In the will below he is entrusted to the care of his godfather, Edward Sheldon (1561-1643) of Beoley, and alternatively, to the care of Edward Sheldon's son, William Sheldon (1589-1659). Edward Sheldon (1561-1643) of Beoley, the son and heir of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley (d.1613), had a sister, Katherine Sheldon (d.1633?), who was the wife of Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham (d.1626). For the will of Katherine (nee Sheldon) Trentham, see TNA PROB 11/163/485. Edward Sheldon's son, William Sheldon (1589-1659), was the owner of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays known as the Burdett Coutts folio held by the Folger Shakespeare Library. See:

http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/view/all/who/Burdett-Coutts,+W.+%28William%29,+b.+1851,+former+owner./when/1623/?sort=Call_Number%2CAuthor%2CCD_Title%2CImprint

Edward Sheldon's daughter, Joan Sheldon (buried 22 February 1625), was the first wife of Sir Henry Appleton (1599-1649), 2nd Baronet, dedicatee in 1533 of Thomas Heywood's *The English Traveller*, and a descendant of Margaret Roper, sister of the William Roper (d.1578). See the will of William Roper's legal associate, Richard Heywood, TNA PROB 11/52/234. See also the will of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, TNA PROB 11/121/345.

* **John Handford**, third son. In his mother's will he is said to be resident at Shelfield. For a grant made by Thomas Russell (1570-1634) for his benefit, see TNA C54/2326/32; Birmingham Archives MS 3802/Acc 1944-028/579979; and Hotson, *supra*, pp. 287-8.

* **Margaret Handford**, who married Thomas Copley of Bredon, Worcestershire. Thomas Copley, esquire, is referred to as 'my loving brother-in-law' in the will below. See the will of Thomas Lewknor (d.1571), TNA PROB 11/53/434, and:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/52219527@N00/9270486130>

* **Mary Handford**. In her mother's will, dated 31 October 1632, she is said to be the wife of John Brinkhurst, esquire, of the Moor House, Buckinghamshire, and the mother of Charles Brinkhurst and Anne Brinkhurst.

* **Anne Handford**. She is said to have been professed as a nun on 28 February 1628. See Hamilton, *supra*.

* **Jane Handford**.

* **Elizabeth Handford**.

* **Dorothy Handford** (b.1614?). Thomas Russell (1570-1634) stood godfather at her baptism. Earlier, in 1610, John Handford had borrowed £1,500, payable 10 May 1614, from Thomas Russell, and had acknowledged a bond of £3000 as security for repayment. In a settlement of the debt in 1614, John Handford repaid £1000, and promised to pay Thomas Russell an annuity of £50, while Thomas Russell agreed to pay £500 to Dorothy Handford at her marriage. See Hotson, *supra*, pp. 283-4.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The testator's brother-in-law and executor, John Whittington, esquire, can perhaps be identified with the John Whittington who married Bridget Higford, the daughter of John Higford of Dixon. See the Whittington pedigree in Maclean, John and W.C. Heane, eds., *The Visitation of the County of Gloucester Taken in the Year 1623*, (London: Harleian Society, 1885), Vol. XXI, p. 270 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofcoun00inchit#page/270/mode/2up>

It appears he was the son of Alexander Whittington (d.1579) of Holme Lacy, and the grandson of John Whittington (d.1525), and that his wardship was granted in 1581 to the testator's father, Thomas Handford. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. II, p. 517; the will of Alexander Whittington, TNA PROB 11/61/332; and Lambeth Palace Library CM II/22 and CM II/23, dated 30 June 1581:

<https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=CM%2f2%2f23>

Counterpart grant of wardship of John Whittington, son of Alex. Whittington of Holme Lacy, co. Hereford, by John Whitgift, Bishop of Worcester, to Thomas Handford.

See also Herefordshire Archive F 78/II/269, a settlement on 24 April 1610 involving the 'site of Eardisland' between John Whittington of Holme Lacy, gentleman, and John Hugford of Dixton, esquire, and William Hugford, gentleman, his son and heir, for the marriage of John Whittington to Bridget Hugford, and F 78/IV/287, a bond between John Whittington of Holme Lacy, gentleman, and John Hugford of Dixton, esquire, to Richard Delamere and Philip Whittington, gentleman, for observance of covenants, presumably in connection with the marriage settlement.

See also the will, dated 3 May 1606 and proved 19 November 1607, of the testator's uncle, Sir John Higford of Dixton (1529-1607), TNA PROB 11/110/406, in which he mentions 'John Higford, my son and heir apparent', and 'William Higford, eldest son of my son, John Higford', who appear to be two of the persons mentioned in the marriage settlement and bond referenced above.

See also the History of Parliament entry for the testator's uncle, Sir John Higford (1529-1607), at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/higford-john-1529-1607>

The testator's kinsman, William Langston, gentleman, has not been identified. For the Langstone family, see Grazebrook, H. Sydney, *The Heraldry of Worcestershire*, Vol. I, (London: John Russell Smith, 1873), p. 332

<https://archive.org/details/heraldryworcest00grazgoog/page/n392>

See also the Langstone pedigree in Phillimore, *supra*, p. 84 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n99/mode/2up>

TESTATOR'S TITHES

For the testator's tithes in Eckington, see:

'Parishes: Eckington', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 4*, ed. William Page and J W Willis-Bund (London, 1924), pp. 68-76. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worces/vol4/pp68-76> [accessed 30 November 2019].

In 1589–90 the tithe and glebe lands belonging to the late monastery of Pershore and to the chapel called St. Katherine of the Rock in Wollashull were granted to William Tipper and others, (fn. 170) and they must later have been granted to Sir Thomas Hanford, or his son John, the latter dying seised of tithes in Wollashull in 1616. (fn. 171)

171. Chan. Inq. p.m. (Ser. 2), ccclxv, 142. According to Nash, the queen in 1586–7 granted John Hanford all the great and small tithes of Wollashull, as part of the concealed lands of the abbey of Pershore (Hist. of Worcs. ii, 181).

For the inquisition post mortem taken after the testator's death, see TNA C 142/365/142.

The testator's widow, Anne, was involved in litigation with Thomas Russell after the testator's death. See TNA C 2/JasI/H21/4 and TNA C 3/375/8.

For the monument to the testator and his wife, see Hansford, *supra*, pp. 6-7.

LM: T{estamentum} Iohannis Hanford

In the name of God, Amen. I, John Handford of Woollas Hall in the county of Worcester, esquire, in reasonable health of body and in my strong understanding and memory, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First, as the most excellent and principal thing, I commend and give up my soul and spirit with all cheerfulness to Jesus Christ that gave it, beseeching him for his mercy's sake at his own will and pleasure to receive it into his holy kingdom and to place it amongst his glorious angels and saints, there to sing to him honour & glory forever and ever;

Secondly and next after my soul I commend my body to the grave, there to rest in the hope of a glorious resurrection, willing and requiring my executors of this my last will to see the same buried where shall seem to them most convenient in decent and comely order, avoiding all pomp and confluence of much people for that my desire is that the same may rather be privately done in the presence of my nearest lovers and friends than by multitudes or companies of neighbours and strangers;

Thirdly, as touching that portion of lands and goods whereof my Lord God hath made me owner, I give and dispose thereof in such sort as hereafter followeth:

First, I give & bequeath unto Francis, my eldest son, the capital messuage wherein I dwell, with all the gardens, orchards, yards, barns and buildings thereunto belonging in Woollas Hall aforesaid;

Also I give and bequeath to my said son all those my manors of Woollas Hall and Nafford in the said county of Worcester, with all and singular lands, tenements, mills, meadows pastures, feedings, rents, reversions and hereditaments whatsoever unto the

same or either of them belonging or appertaining, together with all lands whatsoever in the occupation of me or of any tenant of mine, whether I owe [=own] it as my free land or hold it by lease, within the precinct of the fields known by the name of Woollas Hall fields or Nafford fields, or in the furlong called Ouldeland or Wodland, with all other lands whatsoever enclosed by me and occupied as part of the demesne lands of Woollas Hall aforesaid;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said son the patronage and right of presentation to the several churches of Birlingham and Comberton in the said county of Worcester;

And also I give and bequeath unto my said son all that my meadow & meadow ground lying and being in Eckington meadow in the said county of Worcester which now is in my real and proper occupation and possession;

And also all that meadow called Gullover's meadow;

And all that piece of ground in Great Comberton aforesaid called Doddenhill Leyes late purchased by me of Thomas Deanes;

And also all that my tithes of corn and grain in Eckington aforesaid, paying for the said tithes as in this my last will is expressed;

And also the reversion and reversions of all those two tenements with their appurtenances in Woollas Hall aforesaid now in the tenure or possession of Alexander Taylor or of his assigns;

To have and to hold all and singular the said-recited premises with their and every of their appurtenances to my said son, Francis, from and immediately after he shall have attained to the age of twenty-four years, his heirs and assigns, forever;

But whereas I have certain lands, tenements and hereditaments in Eckington, Comberton, Birlingham and elsewhere in the said county of Worcester which are or are reputed to be parcel of the said manor of Woollas Hall, my intent and meaning is not that my said son, Francis, shall by any words of this my will have, challenge or demand the same, but my will is that the same be absolutely excepted and reserved from my said son;

And as touching Edward, my son, I commend him to the care and disposition of Edward Sheldon of Beoley in the county of Worcester, esquire, his godfather, according to his desire;

And because I intend not that my said son shall be any charge or burden to his said godfather further than for his care and direction for the virtuous education of my said son, I give and bequeath unto the said Edward Sheldon the sum of twenty pounds of current money to be yearly paid to him by my executors out of and with all that my annuity or rentcharge of twenty pound per annum which I have and receive at Strensham in the said county of Worcester until my said son shall attain to the age of twenty-four years;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Edward Sheldon all my estate, right, title and interest which I have of, in and to one lease of certain tithes in Comberton in the said county of Worcester for divers years yet to come made to me by Richard Goslinge, now incumbent there;

And my intent and meaning is that if the said Edward Sheldon shall happen to die before my said son, Edward, shall have attained the said age of twenty-four years, then I devise and bequeath and my will is that William Sheldon, son and heir apparent of the said Edward Sheldon, shall have the education of my said son, and shall have and receive the several bequests aforesaid in such sort as the said Edward Sheldon should have and receive the same;

And for the further maintenance and advancement of my said son, Edward, I do give and bequeath to my said son all that my annuity or rentcharge of twenty pound per annum aforesaid which I have and receive at Strensham aforesaid, to have and to hold from and immediately after he shall have attained to the age of twenty-four years, his heirs and assigns, forever, to be paid at such days and feasts and at such place as the same is paid to me;

Also I give and bequeath to my said son the reversion and reversions of all those lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances in Great Comberton in the said county of Worcester now in the possession of Thomas Clarke, to have and to hold to the said Edward from & after he shall have attained his said age of twenty-four years, if the said reversion shall then be fallen, his heirs and assigns, forever;

But if the said reversion shall not then be fallen into possession, then my intent is that whensoever the said reversion shall fall after my said son shall have attained such age as aforesaid, that then my said son shall enter into the same, and not otherwise;

And as touching John, my third son, I commit him to the care and education of my executors and the survivor of them until he shall likewise attain the age of twenty-four years, and I refer it to the discretion of my said executors & of the survivor of them what and how much shall be allowed yearly during the said time for his maintenance and education;

And for the advancement of my said son after he shall have attained the said age of twenty-four years, I give & bequeath unto my said son, John, one annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds to be paid to him by Francis, my son, for and in respect of the tithes of Eckington aforesaid, to have, hold and receive the same to my said son, John, his executors and assigns, at the feast of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady St. Mary the Virgin and the feast of St Michael th' Archangel by equal portions until one lease of the mills called Pershore mills and of the manor or farm of Binholme in the same county of Worcester and now in the possession of Richard Coxe, esquire, and Edmund Booth, gentleman, or of their assigns, for certain years yet enduring shall be expired and ended;

And after the expiration of the said lease, then my intent and meaning is that the said yearly rent of forty pound payable to my said son out of or in respect of the said tithes shall cease, and then I give and bequeath to my said son, John, all my reversion, estate, right, title and interest which I have of, in and to the said mills, manor and farm with their appurtenances, to have and to hold to my said son, his executors and assigns, for and during all the estate, term and number of years which I have or shall then have of and in the same then to come and unexpired;

And my intent and meaning is that if my said son, Francis, shall not well & truly pay to my said son, John, the said yearly rent of forty pound according to [+my?] true meaning, then my will is and I do give, devise and bequeath to my said son, John, the said tithes of Eckington, to have and perceive the same for such time and term as he should or ought by this my last will to have received the said rent of forty pound and not longer or otherwise;

And as touching my daughters, Margaret, Mary, Anne, Jane, Dorothy and Elizabeth, I commit them also to the like care of my executors, to be by them brought up in virtue and piety;

And as touching portions for their advancement, I forbear to express & set down what or how much the same shall be, but do wholly refer it to the pleasure and discretion of my executors, both how much each of them shall have and when the same shall be paid, and do purposely forbear to allot to them their portions in certainty for that I hope my daughters will thereby be made more mindful to acknowledge their duty and respect to my executors whom I trust with them, and submit themselves to their direction;

And my meaning is that until my said daughters shall have their portions paid them or be advanced, that some competent allowance may respectively and severally be made for their maintenance out of the profits of my lands;

And because I desire that all debts which I shall owe at the time of my death may be duly and speedily paid, and that the same being done, some competent portions may be raised for the advancements of my said daughters and for the maintenance of my sons, Francis and John, until they shall accomplish their several ages of twenty-four years, my will is and I do declare and appoint that my executors and the survivor and survivors of them shall from and immediately after my death have, take, order and dispose of all my lands, tenements & hereditaments whatsoever which are not specially by this my will otherwise disposed of until my son, Francis, or such other of my sons who shall be my heir if he die, shall have attained the age of twenty-four years;

And also that my said executors or the survivor of them shall take, receive and have all the rents and profits to be had, received or paid at any time hereafter to me, my executors or assigns, out of certain lands lying in Leckhampton in the county of Gloucester and in Up Hatherley in the county of the City of Gloucester which I esteem and reckon at three hundred pounds per annum for and during the term of ten years;

And also my will is and I do hereby give full power and authority to my said executors or the survivor of them at their will and pleasure either to let and demise or otherwise to sell and absolutely to convey away the reversion and reversions of all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances which I have demised to any person whatsoever either by copy of court roll or by indenture for any estate whatsoever, excepting always all such lands, tenements and hereditaments lying and being in Woollas Hall or Nafford aforesaid, which I desire should continue with my house and posterity;

And also my desire and will is that my executors or the survivor of them shall sell or at their pleasure dispose of all my estate, right, title and interest whatsoever which I have in and by any lease or leases of certain lands, tenements and other things from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster aforesaid and not otherwise by this my will disposed of;

And my will and desire is that with the rents and profits and by letting or by sale of the said premises respectively according to my true meaning that my executors or the survivor of them shall with all convenient speed pay such debts as I shall owe and educate my said sons, Francis and Edward, and my said daughters according to my intent and meaning, and that the surplusage and residue thereof be fully and wholly employed and disposed for portions of my said daughters in such sort as I have formerly declared;

And as touching my household stuff, plate and stock of corn and cattle, my desire is that the same may wholly remain to be used in and with the said house for the better maintenance of my dear wife and of my said children;

And my meaning and will is that Anne, my wife, shall have the full use and possession of all the same until my said son, Francis, or such other as shall be my heir if he die, shall attain to the full age of twenty-four years, and my desire is that my said wife and my said heir may then after agree and cohabit in the said house, if it may be with good liking;

And yet my will is that my executors or the survivor of them, if they so please for the speedy payment of my debts or for any other necessary occasion, shall & may sell such of my plate and vessel of silver as [sic] such of my hangings or goods as shall or may best be spared in their judgment;

And as touching legacies, I give and bequeath to my dear kinsman, Thomas Russell, esquire, my best piece of gilt plate at his election, and my best gelding at his choice;

Also I give and bequeath to my beloved brother-in-law, John Whittington, esquire, one of my silver pots with silver ears called college-pot, and my second best gelding;

Also I give and bequeath to William Langston, gentleman, my beloved kinsman, my other silver college-pot;

I give and bequeath to my loving brother-in-law, Thomas Copley, esquire, one of my silver tunnes(?) at his election;

I give and bequeath and my will is that one(?) hundred pounds worth of my plate, to be chosen out of the residue of my plate, and ten kine(?) and a third part of all my bedding, brass and pewter be delivered to Anne, my beloved wife, to be by her bestowed on such of my younger children as she shall please;

And I give and bequeath to my executors and to my loving friends following, to each of them a ring of gold of twenty shillings with this inscription, vt mihi sic meis, which I desire them to wear in remembrance of me;

And of this my last will and testament I make and ordain my most dear wife, Anne, and the said Thomas Russell, John Whittington and William Langston to be my executors in trust only for the benefit of my wife and children, desiring them to express that love to my wife and children which they have professed to me and which out of the experience of their worth and integrities I repose in them;

In witness whereof I have put my hand and seal to this my last will dated the etc.

This is the will and testament of me, John Handford, published the thirteenth of August anno domini one thousand six hundred sixteen in the presence of William Russell, Richard Goslinge, John Maynarde, Laurence Hanforde. John Ha{n}ford.

This my will containing fourteen sheets was again reviewed by me, the said John Handford, and published in the presence of W. Higford, John Wakeman.

This will was reviewed and published the fifteenth of August one thousand six hundred sixteen in the presence of us, W. Higforde, John Wakemans.

Probatum fuit testamentum sup{ra}scr{i}ptum apud London coram ven{er}abili viro d{omi}no Iohanne Benett milite legum d{o}c{t}ore Curie Prerogative Cant{uariensis} mag{ist}ro Custode sive Com{m}issario legitime constituto decimo septimo die mensis Octobris anno d{omi}ni mill{es}imo sexcentesimo decimo sexto iuramento Anne Relicte dicti defuncti et vnus exec{uto}rum in huiusmodi testamento no{m}i{n}at{orum} Cui com{m}issa fuit administrac{i}o omniu{m} et singuloru{m} bonoru{m} Iuriu{m} et creditor{um} eiusdem defuncti de bene et fideliter administrando eadem ad sancta dei Evangelia vigore Co{m}missio{nis} in hac p{ar}te al{ia}s emanate iurat{e} Reservata p{otes}tate similem Com{m}issionem faciendi Thome Russell Iohanni Whittington et Will{el}mo Langston executoribus etiam in hu{ius}mo{d}i testamento no{m}i{n}atis eam cum venerint petitur{is}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Sir John Bennet, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the seventeenth day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred sixteenth by the oath of Anne, relict of the said

deceased and one of the executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same by force of a grant in that part elsewhere issued, with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to Thomas Russell, John Whittington and William Langston, executors also named in the same testament, when they shall have come to petition the same. Examined.]

Vicesimo die mensis Novembris Anno domini 1632 emanavit Commissio Francisco Handford filio naturali et legitimo dicti defuncti h[ab]entis & ad administrandum bona iura et credita dicti defuncti iuxta tenorem et effectum testamenti ipsius defuncti per Annam Handford Relictam et vnam executorem testamenti dicti defuncti et iam etiam demortuam non plene administrata de bene & iurata examinatur

[=On the twentieth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord 1632 a grant issued to Francis Handford, natural and legitimate son of the said deceased, having etc., to administer the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased according to the tenor and effect of the testament of the same deceased by Anne Handford, relict and one of the executors of the testament of the said deceased and now also dead, not fully administered, sworn to well etc. Examined.]