

North East Inheritance



Exhibition Catalogue

21 September – 16 October 2009

Palace Green Library



North East
Inheritance

The North East Inheritance Project

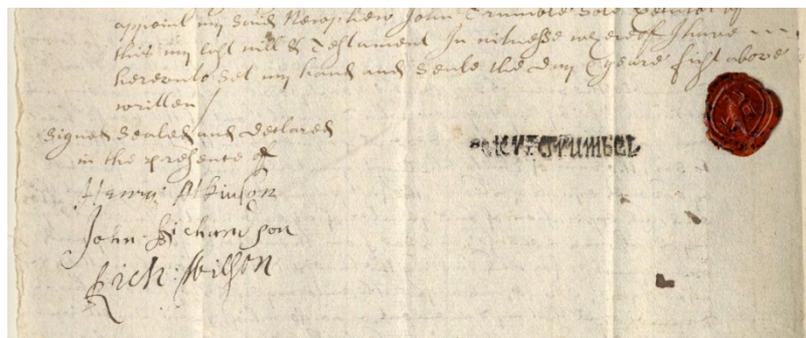
Durham University Library today holds some 150,000 probate records of 75,000 individuals from County Durham and Northumberland - the old Durham diocese - who lived between the early 16th century and the mid-19th century. With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Record Collections, Durham University and the Genealogical Society of Utah the North East Inheritance project has catalogued and digitally photographed the Durham diocese probate collection (1526-1858). The collection will be made freely available online in 2010.

Probate is the process of proving a will and of administering the estate of a deceased person. This process is today overseen nationally by the civil courts, but before 1858 probate business in England and Wales was administered in the main by ecclesiastical courts in a system of provincial, diocesan and special jurisdictions. In the natural course of several hundred years of this work substantial probate record collections have accumulated in various registries and archives. Making the Durham records available online and for free now offers to historians and genealogists an unsurpassed opportunity for study and discovery.

This exhibition offers a selection of probate records from the Durham collection. These have been chosen to illustrate both the probate process and various typical document types, and also to illustrate a number of research topics for which probate records can provide important evidence.

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Will of Peter Trumbel of Gateshead, butcher. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1689/T7/1-2.

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Probate is the process of proving a will and of administering the estate of the deceased. This process is today undertaken nationally by the civil courts, but before 1858 probate business in England and Wales was administered in the main by ecclesiastical courts in a system of provincial, diocesan and special jurisdictions. In the natural course of several hundred years of this work substantial probate record collections have accumulated in various registries and archives. Durham University Library today holds the probate records of some seventy thousand individuals from County Durham and Northumberland - the old Durham diocese - who lived between the early 16th century and the mid-19th century. Making these records available online and for free now offers to historians and genealogists an unsurpassed opportunity for study and discovery. With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Record Collections, Durham University and the Genealogical Society of Utah the North East Inheritance project has catalogued and digitally photographed the Durham diocese probate collection (1526-1858).

Wills

While only a fraction of society left probate records that survive today, those that did have bequeathed to us a treasury of history. The most familiar record to us is the will, by which a testator declares how his property is to be disposed of after his death. Although these records are often simply schedules of relatives and assets, wills can offer a colourful and detailed narrative of a time and a life lived.

The value of wills particularly to family historians can not be understated. Close reading can uncover familial and economic networks as well as information about property, indebtedness, domestic arrangements, religious conviction and education. A testator having died, in order that his wishes might be carried out lawfully his executor would first have to validate or 'prove' the will and obtain a grant of probate from the court. If the deceased died intestate, without having made a will, then the next of kin would obtain a grant of administration. Both such grants enabled the executor or administrator to begin to distribute the goods according either to the terms of the will or to the laws of distribution. These grants of representation required the appointed representatives to enter a bond, an inventory and finally an account, although sadly inventories and accounts are not commonly found in the Durham collection after 1700.

Probate Bonds

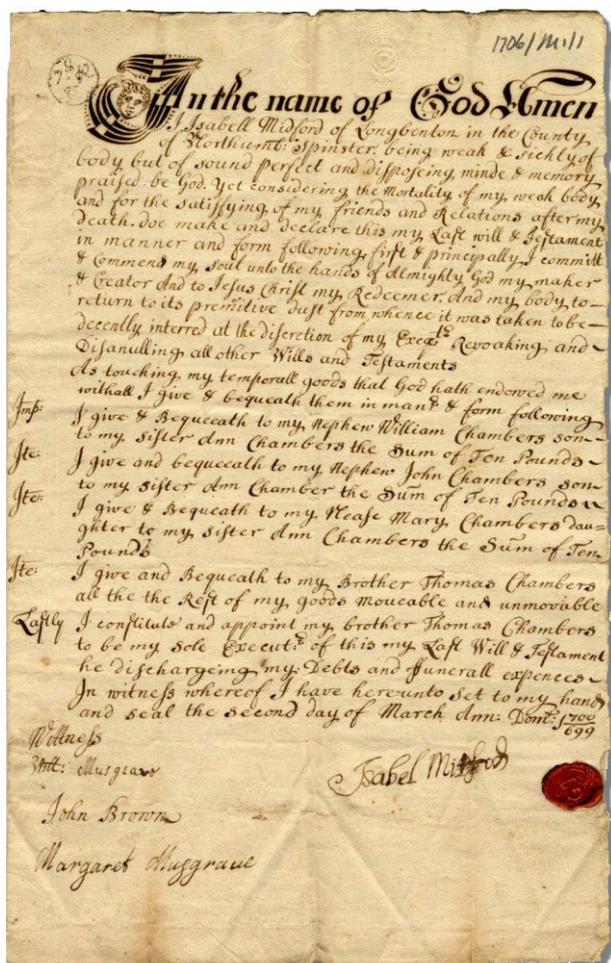
As a safeguard against maladministration or unreasonable delay executors and administrators were required to enter into a penal bond in which they bound themselves to act faithfully and as proof of this to enter an inventory and finally an account. The bishop was indemnified against any maladministration by the financial penalty the value of the bond represented, usually twice the value of the estate.

Probate Inventories

Such inventories list the goods and chattels of the deceased, and often describe the household contents room by room. As well as clothing and other household items, inventories can list detailed valuations of farming crops and stock, shop goods, and can reveal debt and credit networks and even details of funeral expenses.

Probate Accounts

Probate accounts were submitted as a final record of the often long process of winding up the deceased's affairs, and when they survive these can provide a narrative of debts received and paid, and occasionally offer a glimpse of domestic and business affairs of the deceased's estate during the months it lay in administration.



Will of Isabel Mitford of Longbenton, spinster. Isabel Mitford names a sister and three nephews and nieces, to whom she bequeaths £30, the residue passing to her brother. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1706/M1/1.

Other Captions:

1. **Administration bond for the estate of Jeremiah Abbs of Fulwell, ship-owner.** The administrator is a creditor of Abbs' named William Smith, a shipbuilder of Newcastle upon Tyne. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1834/A56.
2. **Inventory of John Hylton esquire of Hylton Castle.** On this page the appraisers list the contents of the kitchen, hall, dining room, great chamber, baron chamber and the blue bed chamber. Among the goods are a brass clock and a milking pail. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1674/H13/3.
3. **Account of the administration of the estate of Alexander Selbie esquire of Biddlestone.** Selbie's account was entered by his widow and administratrix Joan Selbie. The account names eleven creditors and more than ten servants who were owed their wages. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1632/S1/1-2.

Wills and Family History

Documents of some 75,000 individuals who lived and died between the early 16th century and the mid-19th century are held in the probate collection of Durham diocese. These are the records of the many kinds of people - farmers, merchants, widows, clerks, lords, labourers - who lived in County Durham and Northumberland and who died either testate or intestate (without a will), and whose affairs then passed through the Durham church courts. The North East Inheritance project has photographed and catalogued these records in order to make them available online to historians and researchers around the world.

As a resource for genealogists wills are a crucial means of reconstructing family relationships and of tracing the transfer of property from generation to generation. Probate bonds, inventories and accounts, where they survive, can also play an important and perhaps less appreciated part in the story. When considered together, as the new catalogue conveniently allows, these records can supply a treasury of detail and allow our ancestors to speak directly to us at a significant moment in their lives

Relationships

The first step for most family historians is to harvest the names from a will, and which can number from zero to tens of dozens in any one document; these may be relatives or friends, employees or business partners, debtors or creditors, and all manner of relationships that grow up over a lifetime.

Past Lives

But there is much more that can be drawn from wills. Testators often describe where and perhaps in what style they wish to be buried, and the date of probate or administration can narrow down a date of death. The style of the statement of faith at the start of the will can be an indicator of religious conviction. Wills can also demonstrate the education and literacy of the writer. Sometimes narratives of long forgotten family events and misadventures can even be recovered.

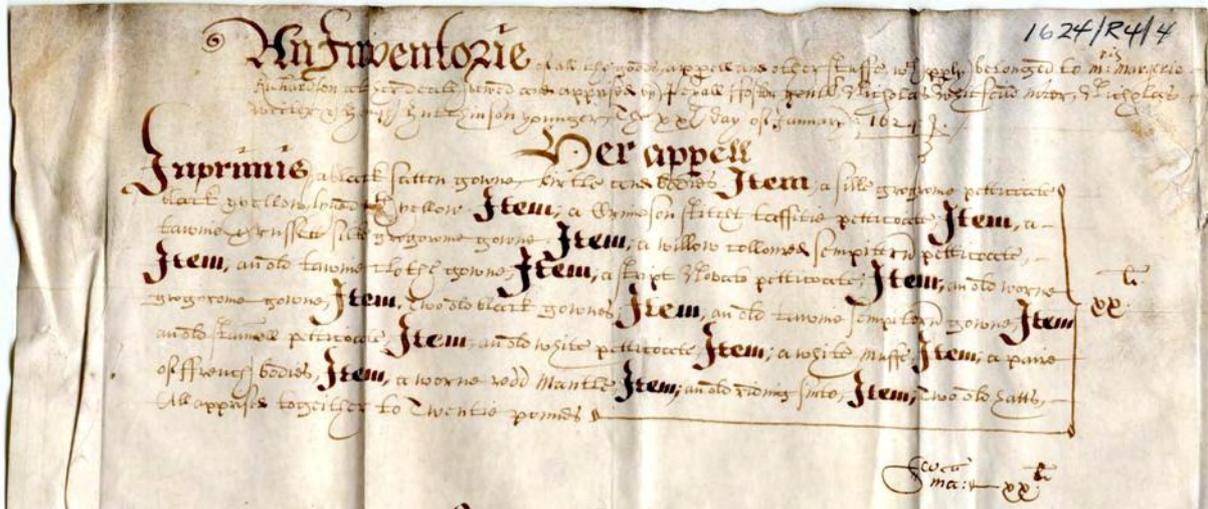
Other Probate Records

Other probate records should not be neglected, particularly as they can supply information for persons who made no will. Probate bonds can record the identity, status and place of residence of the executor and administrator, and will also supply the names of sureties who are often linked in some way with the family. Particularly after 1700, when inventories become rare, bonds can also supply a rough total value of the personal property of the deceased.

Probate inventories are wonderfully detailed lists of goods and chattels. They itemise the daily objects, tools and stock of our ancestors' houses and working lives.

As such they are very useful guides to the style in which people lived, to agricultural and trade practice, and to the tastes of consumers of the time. As these documents move from room to barn and from shop to field, they illustrate the life and work of a society and economy now long past, and at a personal level can even re-clothe a testator before our eyes.

Probate records briefly illuminate and immediately make accessible to the researcher the world and the outlook of our ancestors. Often living in the same landscape as ourselves, and certainly with many of the same cares, these vital records offer an unrivalled opportunity to family historians.



Extract from the probate inventory of Margerie Richardson of Durham, widow, appraised 20 January 1625. She lived in some style, and the list of her apparel includes a crimson stitched taffeta petticoat, a more practical 'willow collomed sempiternum [everlasting] petticoate', a white muff and a French bodice. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1624/R4/4.

Other Captions:

1. **Will of Thomas Lynn of Ferryhill, made on 4 December 1749.** Lynn was the innkeeper of the Black Horse Inn at Ferryhill, and part-owner of the Blue Bell Inn, also in Ferryhill. Every inn was a free house at this time, and Lynn's bequest of his brewing equipment indicates he was serving home-brewed beer to his customers. The will also supplies the names of seven living relatives and three witnesses. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1752/L5/1-2.
2. **Will of Margaret Ward of Newcastle upon Tyne, widow.** Sometimes marriage settlements can be recited in wills. In this case Margaret Ward (née Emmerson) exercises a right that was negotiated at her marriage eighteen years previously, that should she survive her husband she might raise £250 from a property in the Side that she had brought with her to the marriage, and which is to be paid upon her death to her son Charles Ward, clerk. The probate records of men are much more common than for women, and among women widows outnumber spinsters. Due to laws that prevailed until the Married Women's Property Act in 1882 married women had very limited property rights, and indeed could not make a will without their husband's consent, and which consent could still be revoked by a husband after his wife's death. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1743/W7/1-2.
3. **Codicil of Marmaduke Ward of Hurworth, gentleman, dated 31 January 1671.** Three months earlier he had made his will in which he left a legacy of £4 a year for life to his nephew William Ward, but this bequest was then revoked because William 'hath most unnaturally broken my

House & Chest, & stolne my writeinges'. The testator raged 'I doe by these presentes utterly Abdicate & forever disowne Him, & His' and angrily struck out the original bequest. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1681/W3/1.

4. **Will of Timothy Wright of Snow Hall in Gainford, gentleman.** By his 1778 will he leaves Snow Hall to his housekeeper Sarah Wake and makes her his executor. After her death the property is to pass to Wright's friend Richard Sherwood, an apothecary of Staindrop. Some kindred do emerge from the document: a reputed son and daughter in Barnard Castle and London each receive a generous £200 legacy. His servant George Soulby is left his clothes and a year's wages. A Spanish gun and powder horn are also listed among the bequests - perhaps booty from a foreign military adventure, for another will in the collection reports he had served in General Bland's Dragoons during the Jacobite Rising of 1745. His pallbearers were each to receive half a guinea 'for his trouble' and 'four stone of beef and eight gallons of ale [to] be ready for them at some publick house in Gainford'. Wright's servant Soulby married the housekeeper within the year, and was still resident at the hall in the 1790s, now having risen to the status of a gentleman. Some family histories can become as much a history of the home as the family, and this will has led to some fine drawings of Snow Hall held in a Durham County Record Office collection. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1778/W12/1-2.

5. **Inventory of Jane Shaftoe of Newcastle upon Tyne, widow.** These extracts from the three-page room-by-room inventory of the goods and chattels of the late Jane Shafto, probably the widow of a merchant, bear witness to a life lived in some pomp and style. Her goods include 'Nine Feather Bedds ... One Turkie worke Carpitt ... seaven & thirty Cushions ... Six Turkey worke Chaires, Eight great Chaires, Five & Thirty less Chaires ... one pair of Virginalls ... Eleavan Pictures ...'. In her cellar are 128 gallons of 'Canary [wine]', 292 gallons of 'Decayed Claritt', 183 gallons of 'reasonable good Clarett', 43 gallons of white wine, four gallons of 'Wormewood [used to brew ale or medicinally or added to cordials]', 46 gallons of 'Tent [Spanish wine]', eight gallons of 'Shery' and 54 gallons of 'Rennish [wine]'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1679/S7/2-5.

6. **Will of Henry Bainbridge of Witton Gilbert, gentleman.** Children were expected to make suitable marriages, and when Bainbridge made his will on 10 July 1772 he added an instruction as an after thought that 'none of my three Children shall marry into any mean low familys, but into such Creditable substantiall families whose <circumstances> are such as to be able to give their Children equal or better fortunes than their own'. Any child disobeying this edict was to be disinherited. But occasionally the husband of a substantial heiress might consent to be disinherited by his family as a form of estate planning. The probate collection contains many examples of suspicious and sometimes furious fathers casting a jaundiced eye on their children's romantic adventures, and among the Durham collections is a Gretna Green marriage register and the will of the Newcastle banker Aubone Surtees. Four months after Bainbridge made his will Surtees' daughter Bessie was helped out of a first floor window on Sandhill by a hoastman's son named John Scott, who would go on to occupy the not insignificant office of Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain and Ireland. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1778/B1/1.

7. **Will and Account of the execution of the will of Thomas Nixon of Leehouse and Eshgillside in Alston.** Some twelve years passed between the probate of Nixon's will and the passing of his account: his children were still minors when he died, and their guardianship passed to four friends also named as supervisors in the will. The account, entered by one of these 'executors in trust', was probably drawn up when the eldest sons, the executors, came of age. The disbursements in the account faithfully follow Nixon's testamentary instructions and add two names to the fifteen found

in the will; sadly the twenty-six of his brothers' and sisters' children (on his and his wife's side) who each received 2s 6d are not named. The account also provides a total value of £541 11s 7d for the now missing inventory. Wills and their associated probate records can be excellent genealogical resources. Before the 19th century, however, note that the term 'brother' for example was often used to describe one's brother-in-law, and 'cousin' might take in some very distant relations indeed. It was often essential nevertheless that the true nature of such kin relationships was established by the probate court for the purposes of distributing intestate's estates. For much of this period a person's kin was a valuable source of mutual support, but sometimes also a curse: in parts of the border marches where family feuding was rife, merely the fact of bearing a surname could be a death sentence. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1612/N3/1; DPRI/1/1625/N1/1-2.

1679/57/2

A true & perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods and Chattels Rights and Jewells of Jane Shaftoe late of Hewcastle upon Tyne Widow deceased taken and appraised by us whose names are hereunto subscribed, the fourteenth day of March 1678-9

Impd One three footed Tankard and Caddis
 Bott, one large salt Cellar, one large
 Cupp, one Collett Tankard, three Porringer
 Flourts and Spoones, one Tumbler, three
 Small Cupps, one little salt Cellar, all
 of Silver 33-11-10

Item - One feather Bedde, seven Boulsters
 four bedde Pillows, seven Blanketts
 one Rugg, one shaggy, seven pair of
 Curtains, Vallant, two Counterpane
 one pair of, Christ Hangings, one Bedde
 one Coverlid, one double Blankett, and
 White Quilt 19-00-00

Item - One Turkie worke Carpitt, one Coverlid
 one Rugg, eight garden Carpitts, two
 Stript Carpitts, one Bedd Carpitt, two
 Capstles, Carpitts, two, one pair of Cloths
 with flower borders, seven or thirty
 Cushions 08-00-06

Item - Five Turkie worke Chairrs, eight great
 Chairrs, five or six Turky lops Chairrs, Nine
 Twenty Stoolles covered, one pair of
 Virginalles, one, one, one, one, one
 seven Joyned Stoolles, four Wood Chairrs
 one Wandred Chairr, three Tables
 two Cupboard, seven Birturds
 seven Trays, four dozen three
 Iron thers, three little Tables one
 Standerd and Wood, salt 13-08-00

Item - four Tables, one great Shift, seven
 Spitts, eight Curtains, Beddes, four pair
 of Hang Irons, two pair of Ruggs
 two fine Shovelles 04-06-00

78-06-04

twint over

Inventory of Jane Shaftoe (see caption 5 above).

Wills and Local History

Just as the passing generations and shifting fortunes of a particular family can be traced back through the Durham probate records, so also can the history of a local community. With the North East Inheritance catalogue being available online, it has never been easier to investigate how much has changed in your parish, town or city, and indeed how much has remained the same. While individual wills can bring to light important local incidents and also shed a slanting light on national events, by considering collections of local wills made over a number of years significant trends and pattern can emerge, and which can place that locality in the national picture of the time.

Social History

Communities together share and transform the landscape over the years. In their wills the individuals who together still colour our own sense of place can speak directly to us. For many of them their last will and testament was the only opportunity they would have had to document their lives and concerns. A number of schools and local charities still active today can be traced back to endowments made in wills, sometimes hundreds of years ago.

Individual buildings and bridges or particularly bad stretches of road can also be rediscovered through probate records

Economic History

Probate inventories, with their detailed lists of household goods, work gear and stock can afford a series of snapshots of consumer tastes, agricultural practices, wages and prices, and wider economic trends within the region.

Probate records are primarily concerned with the transmission to the next generation of the deceased's personal property, and as such they present excellent opportunities for the researcher to measure the changing activities and fortunes of particular families, trades and places.

Local and Regional Scope

The North East Inheritance catalogue is designed to facilitate researchers creating study collections of probate records based on their own criteria: one might easily compare the wills of merchants in Newcastle with those in Durham, or analyse the changing lifestyles of labourers and yeomen in a couple of parishes, or perhaps examine the development of the coal trade over the whole region. Names can be collated to uncover otherwise undetected circles of kin and also the debt and credit networks that knit communities and regions together.

Whether you are researching a house, a community or the whole region of the North East, the North East Inheritance catalogue has much to offer you.

1647/F5/11

A

Memorandum That in good and lawful manner
 the said Randall Fenwick late of Lambton
 in the County of Durham gentleman being wounded in the
 service at Marston Moor in the County of York
 of his body but of good and perfect memory and sound
 in mind and with resolution do make his will and
 testament as follows at the City of York in the presence
 and presence of Margaret Stenyon now wife of
 William Huggell and of Margerie Bellows wife of
 John Bellows declare his mind and intention
 by force of words declare his mind and intention
 and make his last will in words following or in other words
 binding to the like effect that the said Randall Fenwick
 after he had made mention of diverse debts and sums of
 money which were owing unto him continued in a note
 of the said Fenwick in his hand and of other debts likewise owing
 unto him and not continued in the same note did give and
 bequeath unto all the said debts and sums of money
 at all other his goods and chattels what soever unto his
 brother Robert Fenwick and did wish and desire the
 said Margerie Stenyon to deliver unto his said
 brother all such money and writings and other things
 as did my way concern the said Randall Fenwick
 and was at that time in his custody.

Will of Randall Fenwick of Lambton, gentleman. One of the witnesses later made a deposition that on 2 July 1644 Fenwick had returned wounded from the battle on Marston Moor to the house of his master and kinsman Sir William Lambton in Minster Yard, York, 'and ther lay sick for the space of twenty days or therabouts'. Lambton himself, a colonel in the royalist army, was slain in the same action. The royalists' defeat that day was a turning point in the English civil war. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1647/F5/1-2.

Other Captions:

1. **Will of Josias Dockwray, the vicar of Newburn.** Dockwray made provision in his will to endow a charity to educate six boys in his parish, to be uniformed in red. 'The reason of the rid coates was the murder of Sir Edmund Godfrey the 12th October, whose Blood which others designed, I would have remembered against the papysts.' The murder of this magistrate was tied to the great Catholic scare instigated in 1678 by Titus Oates, and commemorated in this contemporary playing card, reprinted from *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1849). Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1683/D9/1.
2. **Will of William Angas of Rawhouse [?Roe House] in Bywell St Peter, yeoman.** Angas made a public spirited bequest towards the upkeep of a bridge still spans Riding Mill Burn. Rebuilt c. 1603, traces of an earlier structure can be seen particularly on the southern abutment, the very 'casings' Angas' legacy specifies. The bridge, 3' 10" wide, was originally built for packhorses. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1637/A6/1-2.
3. **Inventory of George Mann of Norton, husbandman.** Mann was prosperous, and his 1622 inventory provides a detailed insight into his husbandry. The inventory lists his livestock - cattle, sheep, hens and geese - and proceeds to his goods in the hall house. The gear includes seven wains, five ploughs and three harrows. Six oxgangs of land are listed, sown with winter and ware (spring) corn, highly valued at £57: eight oxgangs was the traditional measure of land one team of eight oxen could plough in a year, and Mann owned six 'of the best'. Among the debts of his estate are payments for average grass (a kind of feudal tenant service), men and women's wages and 12 pence to a 'boy for driving of the plough'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1622/M1/3.
4. **Codicil of Dame Elizabeth Freville of Walworth, widow.** In a codicil to her will made in 1630 Dame Elizabeth Freville orders 10s to be distributed to the poor of Heighington every fortnight for up to twelve months 'in consideration of the dearth & scarcity that is like to ensue this present year'. She had already created a charity for the parishes of Sedgefield and Bishop Middleham in her will: every year eighty of the poorest parishioners were to receive 2d each, and three local apprentices were to be bound, though not to weavers or any other poor trades as she is careful to stipulate. The land she directed be purchased to fund this charity, Poor Carrs (86 acres), can be traced in the Bishop Middleham 1839 Tithe Map under the ownership of The Poor of Sedgefield. Freville's charity is now administered as part of a larger fund of Relief in Need Charities for parishes in the area, and regulated by the Charity Commission. In 2007 £23,835 of the fund's £29,391 income was directed towards helping those in hardship, need or distress. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1630/F9/3.
5. **Will of Clemet Red [Clement Reed] of Elsdon.** Regional dialects have largely been lost to us, though the odd local word lives on to confuse the foreigner from Durham or Newcastle. As a Reedsdale man Clement Reed spoke a version of Northern English which retained many old Scandinavian words, like bairn for example. He or his local clerk writes phonetically, and thus the speech carries to us through his words: 'I geve to my son Thomas Red all my steden [farm-house and outbuildings] in the hould toune and I woll that he be gud to hys breder [brother] in hys steden that he maye for goye [forego] so long as thye and he dothe gre [agree, 'gree-ah']'. The inventory also includes 'ky [kine]', 'stotys [young castrated oxen]' and 'nout [cattle]'. The language of this will was highlighted by James Raine in the first Surtees Society volume of transcriptions of wills and inventories published in 1835. The different dialects across the diocese - burns in the north and

becks in the south for example - reflect its history of invasion and the movement of migrant industrial workers. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1582/R2/1.

6. **Inventory of Thomas Harrison of South Street, Durham City.** Wills were also a means to devise real property, and testators are often careful to delineate the boundaries of a holding, from which a researcher can learn the names of local landmarks, streets and neighbours. In this unusual instance it is a leasehold property's bounds which are so described in Harrison's inventory: half an acre of land 'lying & being on the East side of South Street betweene an Orchard on the North, & aparcell of free hold land on the South, extending from the Kings Street on the South side to the water of Weare'. This 1,000 year lease had been purchased by Harrison in 1623 from Richard Hutchinson of South Street, the organist at Durham Cathedral. Such boundary information can be used with title deeds to map the size and nature of property holdings in an area. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1664/H9/1.

7. (a) **Will of Charles Jackson of Newcastle upon Tyne, glass grinder;** (b) **Will of John Clark of Heworth, labourer.** Benefit societies became a feature particularly of urban working life from the 17th century, partly replacing the by then moribund trade guilds. Members attended such clubs to socialise, promote and sometimes protect business and even to attend night classes. Like other clubs such as annuity, clothing and burial clubs, benefit societies were also a means of providing financial security to their subscribing members. Payments were made typically to the unemployed or sick, and money loaned and, upon a member's death, legacies paid. Due to their small size and insufficient actuarial expertise many clubs became unsustainable: Newcastle's Keelmen's Society, for example, was forced to close its box and cease payments in 1742. Larger, national and so more secure associations took their place, hence perhaps the 'Universal' in the title of Clark's club. The right to such legacies could be gifted or traded like a bond or share certificate, and where a family was no longer in possession of a man's certificate clubs would publish death notices of members to invite a claim. Benefit clubs were also encouraged by the upper classes and employers, partly as a means of promoting the availability and moral improvement of workers, and also of fostering their financial independence and security. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1794/J1/1.

8. **Nuncupative codicil of John Bedford, minor canon of Durham Cathedral.** On September 13th 1597, while in the company of Cuthbert Nicholl and Robert Thompsonne in a Durham street, Bedford clearly felt an urgent need to record the gift to his parish church of 'his best surplesse havinge twoo sleeves and beinge worth (as he sayd) xx s [20 shillings]'. Nicholl duly added this bequest to the foot of the will, noting that Bedford's words were also heard by a party of five other persons in the street that day, namely 'Mistress Prentesse, Conand Fawell, Mistress Jacksonne, Besse Martyne and Bartie Younge alias Dronnken Barty'. Unfortunately Mr Younge's will is not found in the probate collection. Many wills are drawn up in rather dry terms and follow standard forms, but colourful local characters do emerge from obscurity on occasion, sometimes in the form of independent minded testators and sometimes, like Dronnken Barty, strolling happily down the high street with some friends on a Tuesday in September. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1597/B4/1v.

Academic Use of Probate

The completion of the North East Inheritance catalogue of the Durham probate records unlocks the research potential of some 150,000 documentary records for 75,000 individuals who lived and owned property in the north-east between the early 16th century and the mid-19th century.

The screenshot displays a web application window titled "ModesXML - [Application: North East Inheritance. File: early 17th century probate data]". The interface is split into two main sections. On the left, there is a large image of a handwritten document in cursive script, which is a probate record. On the right, there is a text area containing the digital transcription of the document. The transcription reads: "Henry FERNESIDE, merchant, of towne of Newcastell (Newcastle upon Tyne) in the county of the same towne, parish of St Nicholas [Newcastle upon Tyne St Nicholas, Northumberland]; also spelt Farnysid, Farnnysid, Fernside, Farnyside. Date of probate: 19.5.1623. For the will and inventory of the deceased's business partner [? and brother], Jacob Ferneside, see - [DPRI/1/1623/F4/1-3](#) - [DPRI/1/1623/F4/4-5](#)". Below the transcription, there is a list of related records: "will, 19.4.1623 (DPRI/1/1623/F1/1-2) endorsed: proved, 19 May [1623]", "copy will, 19.4.1623 (DPRI/1/1623/F1/5-6)", and "inventory, 12.5.1623, actual total £2,760 8s 5d (DPRI/1/1623/F1/3-4) inventory includes goods, shop goods and debts etc. held by the deceased in equal partnership with Jacob Ferneside". At the bottom of the window, there is a "Combine searches" dialog box with two subsets: "5. Merchants in Durham Diocese (152)" and "4. Durham City AND Newcastle upon Tyne persons (1268)". The operation is set to "NOT" and the result is "NOT: 17 entries in combined set". The status bar at the bottom of the application shows "CAPS NUM SCRL OVR Editing Record 64 of 152" and "SUBSET: Merchants in Durham Diocese 5958 records."

From a subset of all merchants in County Durham and Northumberland between 1600 and 1649 (152 records), a subset of all persons living in Durham city and Newcastle city (1268 records) is subtracted; resulting in a third subset of 17 merchants operating outside the two cities in this period.

Selecting Probate Records

Formerly, in order to make effective use of probate records, whether of a town or of a particular socio-economic group, researchers would have had to spend long periods consulting a series of incomplete and antiquated indexes to build such thematic subsets and then still more time to extract the required information from each original record.

'Thirty years ago researching the probate evidence for industrialising Whickham c.1500-1760 was a mammoth task. Weeks' work sifting, then a long wait while documents were microfilmed (at considerable expense) before work could begin. The new catalogue is a remarkable advance,

especially for researchers working at a distance. The benefits will be enormous.' Keith Wrightson, Randolph W. Townsend Jr. Professor of History at Yale University.

Now, however, the catalogue allows searches to be quickly made across a number of personal data fields (address, occupation, status) and also document details (date, type, monetary values). Many of these details were not formerly indexed until now, and the use of controlled forms of place names using modern spellings allows comprehensive datasets to be selected with more confidence. There is also the facility to combine multiple subsets of records in simple ways to further focus a dataset upon a particular group or theme. An image of each one of these records may then be viewed online, or downloaded to be viewed or printed later as required.

'In a Ph.D. project investigating the ownership of ships and working river craft in a relatively restricted area such as the lower River Tyne, access to a database which allows the relevant probate inventories to be identified is invaluable. Previously, a laborious search of the probate indexes was required followed by a prolonged examination of documents, many of which proved to be irrelevant. The database provides an excellent facility that both validates inventories which have already been studied, and identifies others which are worthy of further, more detailed study.' Peter Wright.

Statistical Analysis

These subsets can also be expressed in a number of template reports or downloaded as data files for more extended use by the researcher.

Parishes	Occupations	Documents
Alnwick	merchant	9
Chillingham	merchant	1
Hartlepool	merchant	2
Morpeth	merchant	2
South Shields	merchant adventurer	1
South Shields	merchant	2

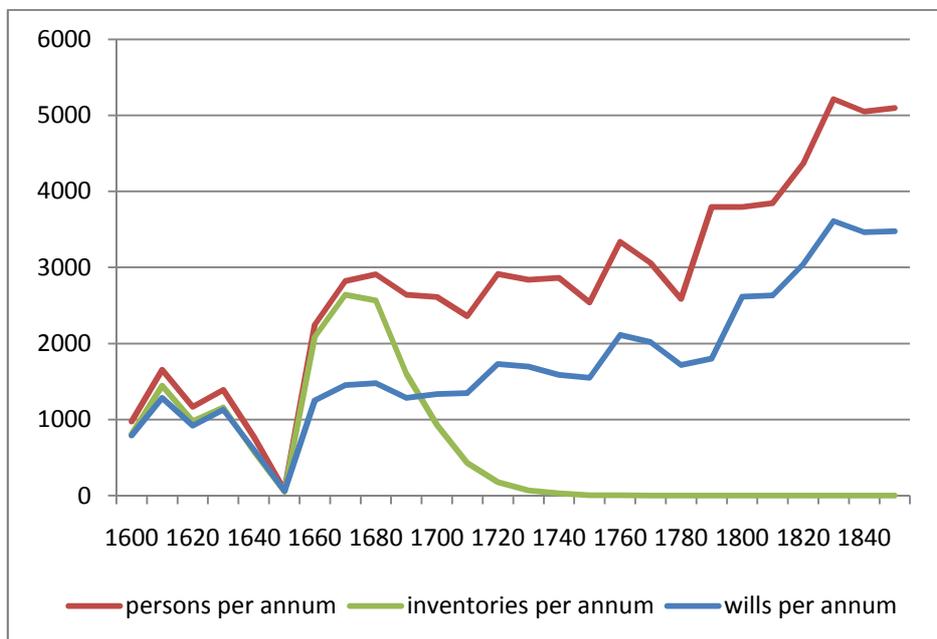
A report listing by parish the 17 merchants (1600-1649) living outside Durham city and Newcastle.

Parishes	Inventory Values	
Alnwick		3
Alnwick	£128 19s 4d	1
Alnwick	£130 12s	1
Alnwick	£2 13s (with account of debts of £7 4s 4d)	1
Alnwick	£282 0s 2d	1
Alnwick	£67 2s	1
Alnwick	£81 9s 5d	1
Chillingham	£27 7s 4d	1
Hartlepool		2
Morpeth	£103 16s 4d	1
Morpeth	£39 16s 3d (with account of debts and funeral expenses of £7 2s)	1
South Shields	£1,695 7s 2d (with account of funeral expenses of £35)	1
South Shields	£151 18s 4d (with account of debts and funeral expenses of £267 7s 4d)	1
South Shields	£499 12s 4d	1

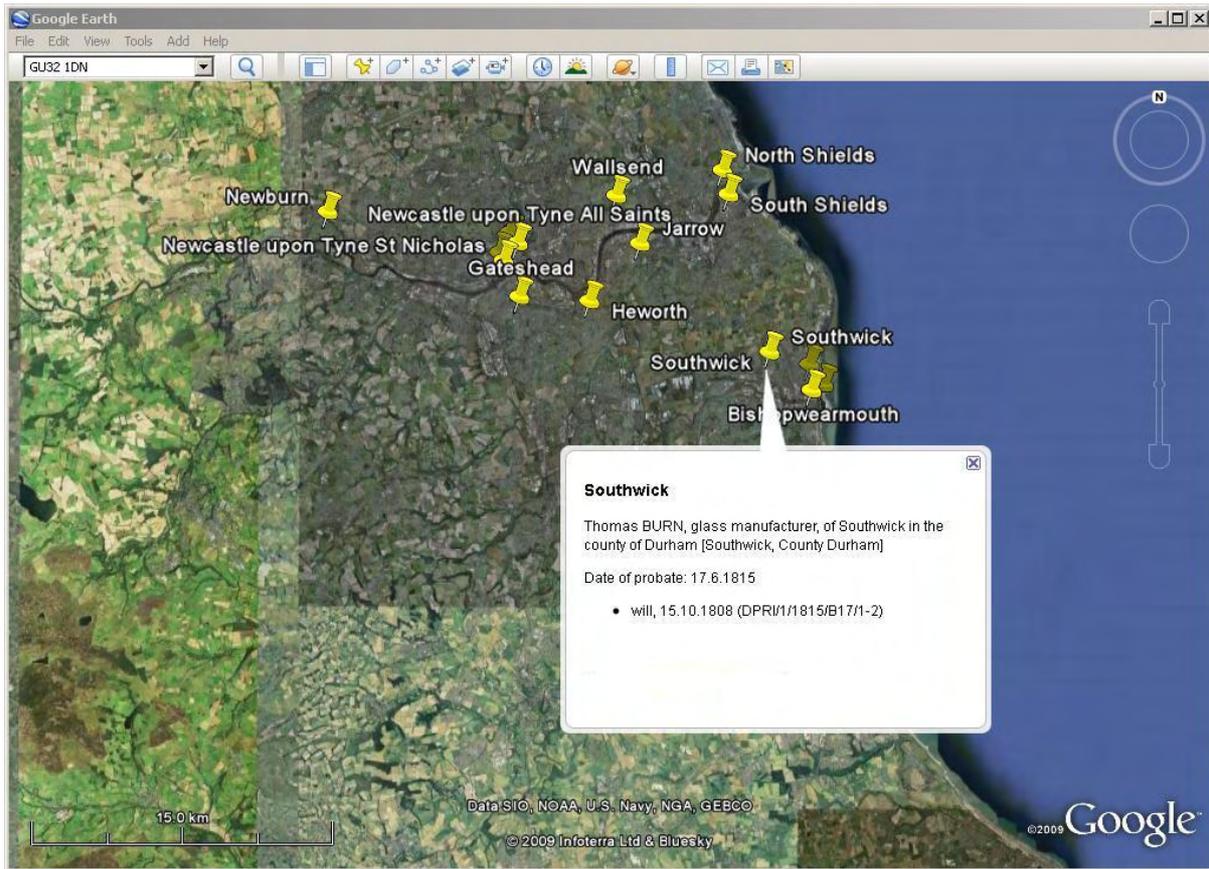
Another report on the same subset, this time tabulating the different inventory values by parish.

Data Exploitation

The catalogue data is held in XML, which maximises the opportunities to exploit the data in other contexts, for further analysis and incorporation within other projects or alongside other datasets available in XML.



A graph demonstrating firstly the significant decrease in the number of inventories surviving in the collection from c.1680, after which date inventories may only have been exhibited to the probate court upon citation. The graph also reveals a stable level of intestacy for much of the period. The dip in the 1650s was caused by a hiatus in the court's function during the Commonwealth period.

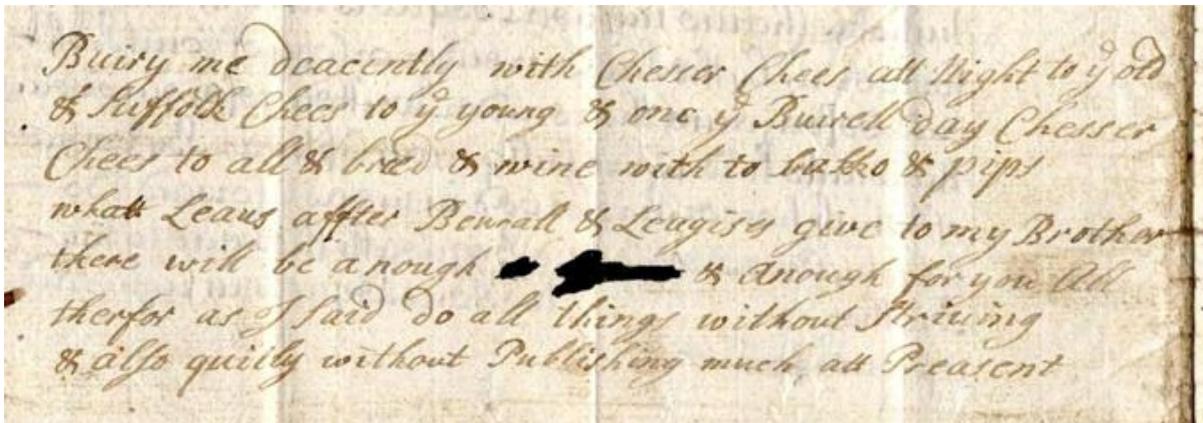


Subsets of records might be mapped in a number of ways and combined with other geographical datasets to offer new perspectives on the data. In this case a subset of persons with glass trade occupations has been displayed on a satellite photograph of part of the Northumbrian River Basin area in Google Earth in order to demonstrate the component resources of this industrial activity: access to coal for the furnaces and to shipping for import of sand and fire-clay and export of manufactures. This is a good example of an industry that in the 17th century took advantage of the dynamics of an already vigorous coal trade south into London and east into Europe.

The probate records of the region have long been considered a valuable primary source for historical research. The evidence they contain has frequently supported academic theses of regional and national scope, as well as more narrowly focused urban and industrial analyses. Nevertheless, these studies have only scratched the surface of the research potential of these records: it is anticipated that the North East Inheritance catalogue, by rendering all of these records accessible to researchers online and in a form that facilitates sophisticated analysis as well as individual document study, represents a great opportunity both for researchers who are already familiar with the probate collection and for those new to the field. The Special Collections staff will of course be happy to support this work in any way we can, and researchers whose needs are not answered by the online facilities may contact us through the website.

Death, Dying and Disposal

In addition to personal property probate records also often pass down to us the attitude of the deceased towards death, dying and the afterlife. Early wills contain in their preambles statements of faith which have been cautiously used by modern historians as an index of religious conformity in controversial times. There are also frequent references to funeral and burial arrangements. These range from the most laconic instruction of the type '*bury my body wherever my executor finds it most convenient*' to detailed lists of funeral gowns, gloves and scarves and menus for the wake or arval dinner. The burial was almost always a public act, and which was given a ceremonial aspect in keeping with the status of the decedent. As such, the evidence for such rituals found in probate records can be a valuable indicator of societal attitudes towards disease, mortality, medical science, wealth and poverty, and religion and the established church, as well as illuminating contemporary consumer behaviour.



Will of Nicholas Chance of Greenside, yeoman. Chance made his will between June and October 1740, leaving strict instructions for the distribution of cheese, bread, wine, 'to bakko' and pipes to the young and old. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1740/C2/1.

Other Captions:

1. **Inventory of Robert Crawforth, curate of Whitworth.** We can go some way to reconstructing the menu of Crawforth's arval dinner or funeral feast in the summer of 1583 as the inventory contains among the list of funeral expenses six mutttons, beef, ten geese, spice and bread. It appears to have been a temperate affair – no mention of beer or wine. Also included are the 3s 3d paid for boards and nails for his coffin, and 10s paid '*to them that watched with him in tyme of his sekenes*'. On the reverse is an unusually full itemised list of the 9s 8d in fees charged by the probate court, and which include payments to the Spiritual Chancellor of Durham, the Registrar, the Apparitor – an officer who summoned people to court – and, to a clerk of the judge of the court that day, 2d '*for wax*'. The officials of the bishop of Durham could earn very substantial sums from their offices and their positions were highly prized. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1583/C10/2.
2. (a) **Will of Peter Carter of Shincliffe;** (b) **Will of Henry Shaftow of Berwick-upon-Tweed;** (c) **Will of William Grey, first Baron Grey of Warke.** These are three examples of religious preambles

that use language characteristic of first a Catholic, second a Protestant, and finally a Presbyterian. We can see from the highlighting of the catholic-styled preamble of Peter Carter that it drew the attention and probably the disapproval of one of the bishop's officers in the registry or court. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1589/C4/1; 1631/S9/1; 1675/G14/1.

3. **Account of Cuthbert Ellyson of Newcastle upon Tyne.** The account reveals that Ellyson died at Heworth, and lists the sums paid for the coffin, his widow's mourning gown, the sweetmeats, cakes, cheese and candle, church charges, and the wine given to the gravediggers. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1632/E3/4.

4. **Will of Peter Bowlby of Durham City, gentleman.** Bowlby begins his will with a wish to '*promote the interests of science*' by ordering his dissection by either Mr Clifton or Mr William Green '*as soon after my death as conveniently may be*'. Such a request is unusual, even today: it is estimated medical students in the UK require about 1,000 cadavers for study purposes each year, but generally can obtain only two-thirds of that number. By current law testators must specifically bequeath their bodies to scientific research, and a witness must be present when they do so. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1825/B19/1.

5. **Codicil of Steven Wright of Dockwray Square, Tynemouth.** Stephen Wright's second codicil provides elaborate arrangements for his coffin and burial, including an insistence that his body '*shall not be opened nor anything done by Surgeons*'. This codicil was written in 1831, six years after the Burke and Hare scandal in Edinburgh and one year before the Anatomy Act was passed. Leaving nothing to chance, he suggests that if he is to have a lead coffin, '*it would be advisable to move my body down stairs, to avoid any accident to the stair case &c.*' Such concerns were not uncommon: Hannah Landell a spinster of Newcastle upon Tyne requested in her 1821 will her body should remain in bed undisturbed and the coffin left open '*until a change takes place*'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1834/W22/7.

6. **Account of Thomas Bell of Kyloe.** Bell's father entered this account of his administration of the estate. The account records that Thomas Bell drowned in an accident, probably just off the coast nearby. The body was recovered, and the coroner called. Raph Reveley's fee for viewing or 'crowning' the body is listed in the discharge - 13s 4d. The persons who searched the water and then carried the body to its burial received 6s 8d. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1635/B2/1.

7. **Codicil of William Hartwell, prebendary of Durham Cathedral.** An extract from a codicil to the will of William Hartwell, prebendary of Durham Cathedral, who died in 1725. By his will, he left money to a range of charitable causes, including 20 pounds yearly '*to the Jayl of Durham, for the use and benefitt of Insolvent Debtors there*' and 6 pounds for a schoolmaster in Stanhope, '*provided he Teach nothing but to read and write in the English Tongue, without any Greek or Latin.*' In this extract, he sets out arrangements for the sale of his books, his funeral arrangements, gravestone and memorial tablet in the cathedral. Durham Probate Records: DPR I/1/1725/H6/3-4.

8. **Will of Reginald Little of Newcastle upon Tyne, merchant's clerk.** His own health clearly preoccupied Reginald Little, who made his will when '*very much impaired in bodily health and strength*' and who requests his body '*to be opened & inspected by Mr Bennett surgeon or some medical man and also Dr Headlam & Dr White (provided they think it worth the trouble without pay) as my disease has baffled the most skilful men, and the only illness I had was a most severe pain in my chest and a burning heat in the stomach & which has continued about 3½ years previous to this date, & my reason for being opened is that it may throw some light on medical science & ultimately may prove a benefit to my fellow creatures similarly held – this is only if I should die in Newcastle or within two or 3 miles from it*'. The later insertion of additional medical men's names creates the impression

Little was uncertain the medical men would find his corpse sufficiently interesting and was widening the field: the provisions of the 1832 Anatomy Act had largely met the needs of anatomists. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1838/L9/1.

9. **Inventory of John Douglas of Harbottle in Alwinton, servant and shepherd.** Douglas was employed by Sir Edward Widdrington of Harbottle, and in his will he makes Lady Widdrington his universal legatrix, noting gratefully that most of what he had he had earned in their service anyway. She appears to have ensured that his funeral passed with proper ceremony, the bill for a 'crooner' appearing in the inventory. Crooner is a northern and Scottish word, and in this context probably means a person who was paid to lead the laments. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1642/D5/3.

(Just. Need Surgeon 1834/10/21/7)

In the Name of God Amen.

Whereas it has pleased the Almighty up to this Time to grant me a life clear from any very violent Sickness, for which I am truly grateful. But a dissolution is sure to take place & remove us all, & may I hope & trust from this to another & better world & when that Event takes place, my wish is that my Ex^l Friends will observe as follows.

- 1 That my Body be kept untill every appearance of Life is gone, if it happen in the Winter, the Interment should be early as the Tomb will take up some time.
- 2 That my Body shall not be opened nor any thing done by Surgeons &c. &c.
- 3 That there be no Bearers, nor any of my second Nephews (they being very numerous) ^{except such as live near} nor any Nephews from a Distance only those in the immediate Neighbourhood. And as the Distance to the Church is short, that there be only two Horses to the

Codicil of Steven Wright of Dockwray Square, Tynemouth (see caption 5 above).

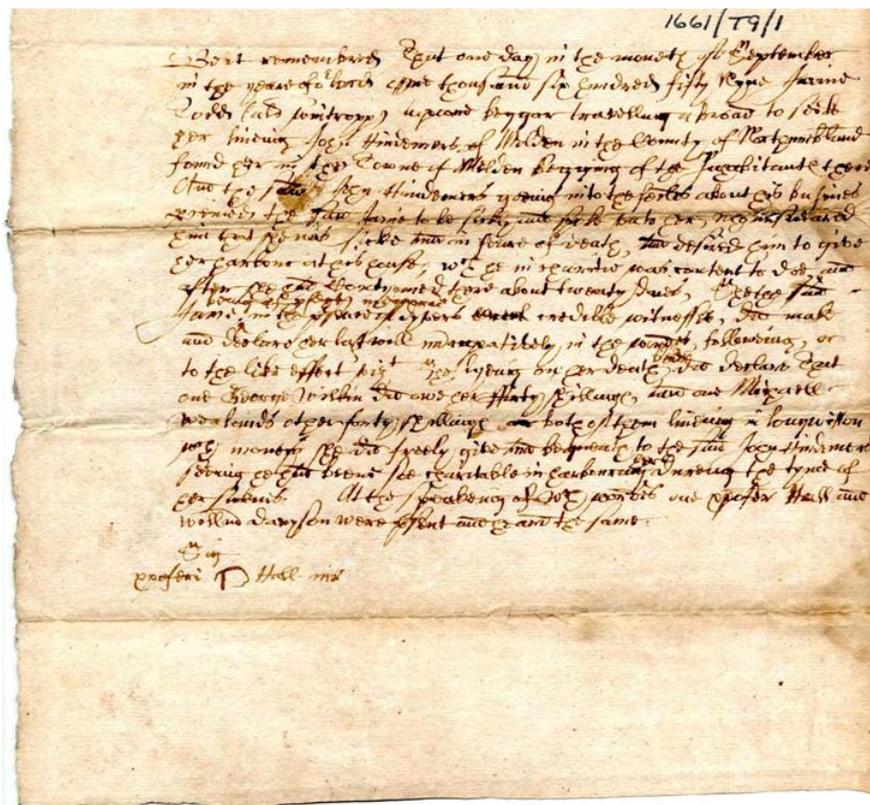
Other Captions:

1. **Nuncupative will of Jane Todd alias Wintropp, widow, an itinerant beggar.** Jane Todd was '*a poore beggar travelling abroad to seeke her liveing*' who died at Meldon, Northumberland, in the house of John Hindemers who had taken her in having found her sick in the fields out of town. Hindemers' charity was rewarded when Todd bequeathed him all she owned: 2 debts of 40 shillings. From medieval times charitable 'hospitals' and latterly tax funded almshouses and workhouses operating under the Poor Laws catered generally for the destitute and the infirm with perhaps some incidental and inconsistent provision of medical care. It was not until 1751 that an infirmary dedicated solely to the treatment of the sick was established in Newcastle. From 1777 a dispensary was able to provide professional out-patient care. A dispensary was established at Durham in 1785, and an infirmary in 1793. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1661/T9/1.
2. **Inventory of Isabel Humble of Stannington.** There was long the superstition that King's evil or scrofula could be cured by the ceremonial touch of an anointed king or queen. Introduced to England by Edward the Confessor, the practice of 'touching the king's evil' continued up until 1714. The monarch would touch the sore with a gold coin, which coin was then given to the sufferer as a dole: after 1626 applicants for the touch were required to be certified by their parish. In this case the journey to London by James Humble, perhaps the husband of Isabel, was in vain: '*what portion was left him was spent and more on him for seeking cure for the King's evil and after his return from London was lame to his death*'. This tuberculous disease is rare today, and is treated with antibiotics or surgery. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1684/H21/1.
3. **Interrogatories of John Bell, a cousin, to the witnesses of the will of Issabell Rydley of Morpeth, widow.** These are questions put to the witnesses to establish or challenge the validity of the will, each interrogatory beginning with a short Latin clause but then continuing in English. Probates of uncontentious wills could be obtained quickly in a 'common form' administrative process often involving surrogates of the bishop's judge (called the 'Official Principal') conveniently located around the diocese; but where a dispute arose then the will required a sterner test of its validity 'in solemn form' and which took place in the consistory court. This process involved the cross-examination of witnesses and the deliberation of the Official Principal, who finally produced 'sentence' (judgment) on the case. Rydley appears to have made on the same day both a written and a nuncupative will. It was alleged that Ridley had for a long time been '*as a childe being not able to governe her self*' and so not capable of making a valid will and testament. In this instance a summary of the nuncupative will was drawn up from the statements of the witnesses by the judge. Officials were often pragmatic and would conscientiously seek to correctly interpret a testator's wishes and, unless perhaps confronted by a person proscribed from making a will, would not void a deceased's final will out of hand. Those persons suffering mental illness, and who were without means, could be cared for in workhouses established under the Poor Law, sometimes in specially designated rooms. Newcastle's first dedicated Lunatic Hospital was opened in 1764, and a private Licensed House was established at Bensham, Gateshead in 1799. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1623/R6/4.
4. **Inventory of Alice Dickson of Newcastle St Andrew, widow.** A number of lazar-houses were established across County Durham and Northumberland, perhaps the earliest being the hospitals of St Mary Magdalen in Newcastle and of St Giles at Kepier near Durham in the 12th century. The former was re-established after the dissolution, much of its work then being taken up with the poor rather than strictly with lepers. In 1606 Alice Dickson was one of these '*pore which was mantaned of the maidlenes*'. The inventory contains payments both for when she was being treated for jaundice

and then later when for 11 weeks she had the plague. An accompanying letter relates a dispute over the ownership of a pot. Leprosy was already declining in England by this time, but it persists today in other parts of the world. While the disease is now treatable using multidrug therapy, millions of former sufferers remain permanently disabled. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1606/D6/1-2.

5. **Inventory of Robert Carnaby of Durham St Nicholas, servant.** The medical bill for Robert Carnaby is surprising considering his menial status. He was visited by a physician on 9 November 1610 and another physician named Mr Lamb provided a second opinion the same day: each were paid only a shilling for their pains. Probably at their suggestion an apothecary named Bartholomew Barnard supplied an ointment and some aqua-vitae the following day. When considered against Carnaby's personal estate, there are listed a disproportionately high number of expenses relating to his care, funeral and wake, and his employer Edward Nixon, a wealthy Durham cordwainer, is careful to claim £2 2s against his servant's estate for his other servants watching over him, for spoiled bedding and for the cost of losing these servants' labour during their vigil. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1610/C2/3.

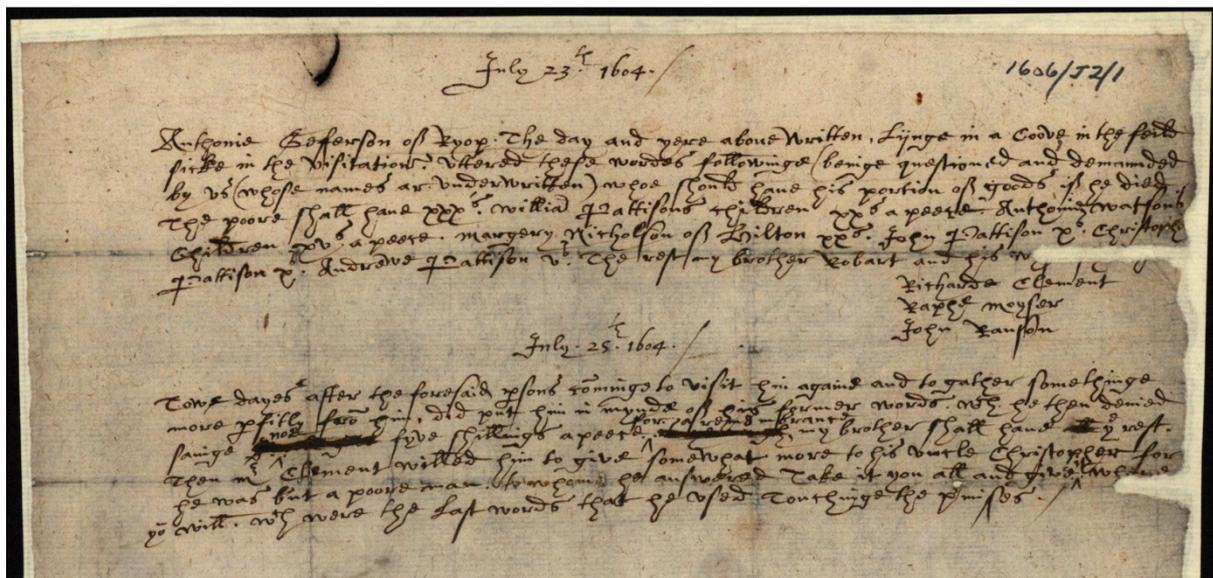
6. **Inventory of Samuel Hammond of Newcastle upon Tyne, apothecary.** Apothecaries' own inventories are an excellent source for understanding historical medical practice and provide clues to their formularies. Most of the medical compounds listed are no longer in use, having been replaced by safer and more effective alternatives. *Resin of jalap* and *scammony* are purgatives; *diascord* is a herbal medicine; *mithridate* and *Venus (Venice) treacle* are generic terms for electuaries, sweet medicinal paste compounds then valued for their properties as antidotes and preservatives; a *diacatholicon* is a laxative; *balsam of sulphur* is sulphur dissolved in oil or turpentine. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1686/H4/1.



Nuncupative will of Jane Todd alias Wintropp, widow, an itinerant beggar (see caption 1 above).

Plague

The north-east was frequently swept with epidemics usually described with the catch-alls 'plague' or 'visitations of God'. Such outbreaks of fatal disease were not always plague (bubonic, septicæmic, pneumonic), other candidates being perhaps typhus, anthrax or influenza, and in the 19th century Asiatic cholera also took its toll. At times the documentary evidence of plague suggests some of the diseases were endemic and took a constant toll, and only in the years when the pathogen achieved breakout virulence did it earn the popular tag of plague. During such epidemics mortality rates could be exceptionally heavy, the streets of Newcastle in 1637 were said to have been overgrown with grass. Probate records chronicle something of the suffering, the disturbance and the control measures adopted, but because they record the transmission of property to the next of kin the greater impression they leave is that life goes on: people adapt, some may lose everything but others thrive. The challenge for the probate officials was keeping up, and then disentangling the claims and counterclaims of the surviving next of kin: for some time after an epidemic the act books record the plague's own legacy of wills orphaned of their executors, witnesses and legatees.

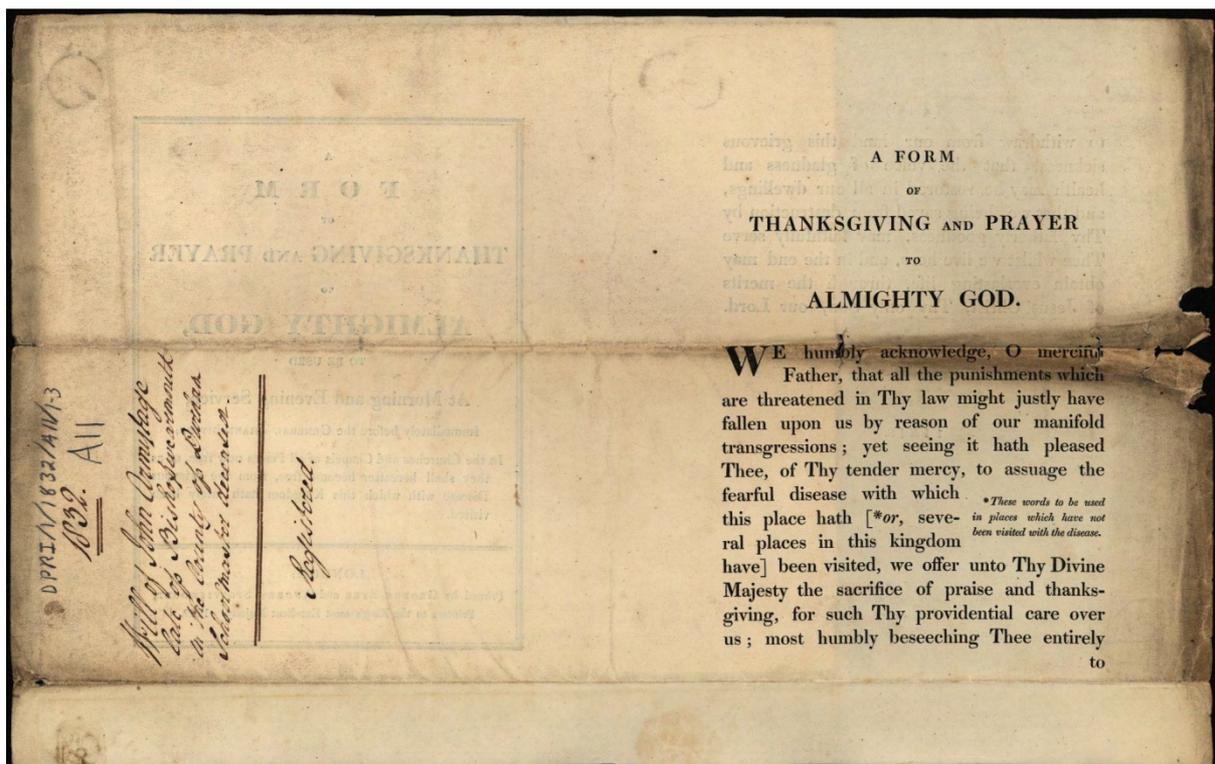


Nuncupative will and codicil of Anthonie Gefferson of Ryhope. Gefferson made his will and codicil 'lynge in a coove in the feild sicke in the visitation'. Clearly he had been quarantined or had quarantined himself in a 'cove' outside Ryhope, and over two days he had made known his wishes to visiting friends. Such extreme measures are not unusual in times of plague and the survival of the word 'spital' in place names today can be an indicator of just such a field as Gefferson died in or of a dedicated quarantine building. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1606/J2/1.

Other Captions:

1. **Inventory of Thomas Creake of Newcastle upon Tyne, yeoman.** Considering the undoubted dislocation of the time, Creake's appraisers are meticulous in recording the cleansing and the funeral expenses. The cleansers and his wife were in the house from St Luke's day (18 October) to Christmas, nine weeks in total. In this case coal was used for cleansing, a cheaper alternative to frankincense, pitch and resin. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1570/C5/2-3.
2. **Inventory of William Grey of Newcastle upon Tyne, miller.** Grey died of the plague with his wife and four of his five children. The inventory provides unusual detail of their maintenance and care over the ten weeks or so of the 'visitation'. As in this case, when such detailed plague inventories survive it is often possible to reconstruct the regime and economy of their care, and their or the community's methods for trying to contain the sickness. This document reveals that the family appears to have divided, the father spending 6 weeks in a tower in the city walls, perhaps West Spital Tower which stood beside St Mary's Hospital, and his wife and children remaining at home. Four women are named as having stayed in the house to care for the sick, each being paid separate sums for cleansing the house, for their own meat and drink, and for carrying water. Part of the contract between the Greys and their carers appears to have been the provision of meat and drink to the carer for a period even after they left their house and employ. One daughter, Alice, was provisioned for only 3 weeks, while her sister Isabel, who survived, was provisioned for 10 weeks. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1585/G1/2-4.
3. **Nuncupative will of Sibell Chamber of Boldon, singlewoman.** The virulence of the plague in 1597 might be gauged from the reaction of the unidentified probate court official, who would have been in a unique position to measure the progress of the epidemic, and who scribbled at the foot of the document '*Vive velut raptio fugitiva[que gaudia carpel]*' (Live thy life as it were spoil, [and pluck the joys that fly]), one of the classical poet Martial's epigrams (7. 47. 11)). Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1597/C2/1.
4. **Inventory of Richard Lavrick of Ouseburn.** Lavrick died with his wife and four children in the outbreak of the plague in 1609, some time in early October. The inventory is again detailed, and among the disbursements is 8 pence spent on 5 November '*looking for the thefe that stolle the clothes*'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1609/L1/4.
5. **Account of the administration of the estate of Jerrard Brown of Newburn, Northumberland.** The 'cleansing of the house' is a phrase usually found connected with plague outbreaks, and involved feeding, watering and caring for the sick and then cleansing the goods and the house of the victim. This final part of the process often included fumigating the house by the burning of coal or a pungent mixture of pitch, rosin and frankincense. In this instance the landlord, Mark Errington, accidentally burnt down the house when cleansing it after the death of his tenants Brown and his family. Errington here adds the £10 charge of re-edifying the house against Brown's estate, in the process leaving Brown's sole surviving child Blanch with a balance of only 2s 10d. These events all took place in one of the worst plague epidemics ever recorded in the North of England in 1636/7, and is thought to have reached North Shields from Holland in October 1635. Errington had been appointed by the court as Jerrard Brown's administrator and his daughter Blanch Brown's tutor, and it was not until 10 years later, presumably when she was of age, that Blanch began to contest Errington's administration, forcing him to render this account. She subsequently pursued him in the civil courts. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1647/B11/1-2.

6. **Wrapper of the will of John Armytage of Bishopwearmouth, schoolmaster.** Armytage made his will in April 1832 in the aftermath of the Asiatic Cholera Pandemic, then called cholera morbus, which was first noted in England at Sunderland in the autumn of 1831. With the passing of the epidemic parishes were enjoined to offer prayers of thanksgiving, and in July of that year a clerk in the probate registry wrapped Armytage's will in a spare copy of one of these printed prayers. The prayer continues to set disease in an eschatological context. The clerk's use of this document is symbolic of the wider complacency that set in after the epidemic passed, deferring the implementation of the necessary public health measures until the next outbreak in 1849. A young apprentice surgeon apothecary named John Snow who was later to make his name as an anaesthetist and, in the 1849 and 1854 cholera epidemics as an epidemiologist, was treating the miners at Killingworth during this outbreak. The disease today is countered by proper sanitation and vaccination. In 1831 preventative measures existed dating back to legislation in 1710 and 1722, including the checking of ships' bills of health, quarantine and even the destruction of suspect cargo. Threatened by another cholera pandemic in 1871 the River Tyne Port Sanitary Authority established a floating quarantine hospital at Jarrow Slake which continued in commission until 1930. Today Newcastle General Hospital's High Secure Infectious Diseases Unit is one of only two centres in the UK for dangerously contagious viruses. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1832/A11/3v.



Wrapper of the will of John Armytage of Bishopwearmouth, schoolmaster (see caption 6 above).

Other Captions:

2. **Affidavit of Margaret Cleugh, widow and administratrix of William Cleugh.** In the absence of a body, her husband having died at sea, Margaret Cleugh had to formally enter an account of his loss. The bare bones of the last voyage of William Cleugh's ship the Palermo are related in this sworn affidavit. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1857/A98/4-6.

3. **Schedule or Declaration instead of an inventory of the goods of William Cleugh.** The insured value of the Palermo was £2,330. The newspaper cuttings indicate Cleugh had followed the practice of insuring his vessel through a mutual maritime insurance club in which ship-owners underwrote each others' hulls and later also their liabilities for loss of life, personal injury, collision damage and loss or damage to cargo. Such regional clubs had begun to be established in the 18th century in reaction to the then restrictive and uncompetitive London market for such policies. Clubs existed in Newcastle and Sunderland, and the North of England Protecting and Indemnity Association Ltd, established in 1860, is still based in Newcastle, its archives being held by Tyne & Wear Archives. It is estimated that today 90% of ocean-going ships are insured by such Protection & Indemnity (P&I) clubs. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1857/A98/3.

4. **Caledonian Mercury, published in Edinburgh on Friday 10 April 1857.** The informant at Stavanger identifies the wreck as that of the 'Hotingen', the document he discovered being either damaged or the writing illegible: the Palermo was carrying as passengers a number of sailors who had survived the wreck of the Halcyon in the eastern Baltic. The same letter was printed in the *Newcastle Courant* on the same day.

5. **Morning Chronicle, published in London on Thursday 23 April 1857.** This is a fuller account of the facts, and was printed in a number of regional newspapers.

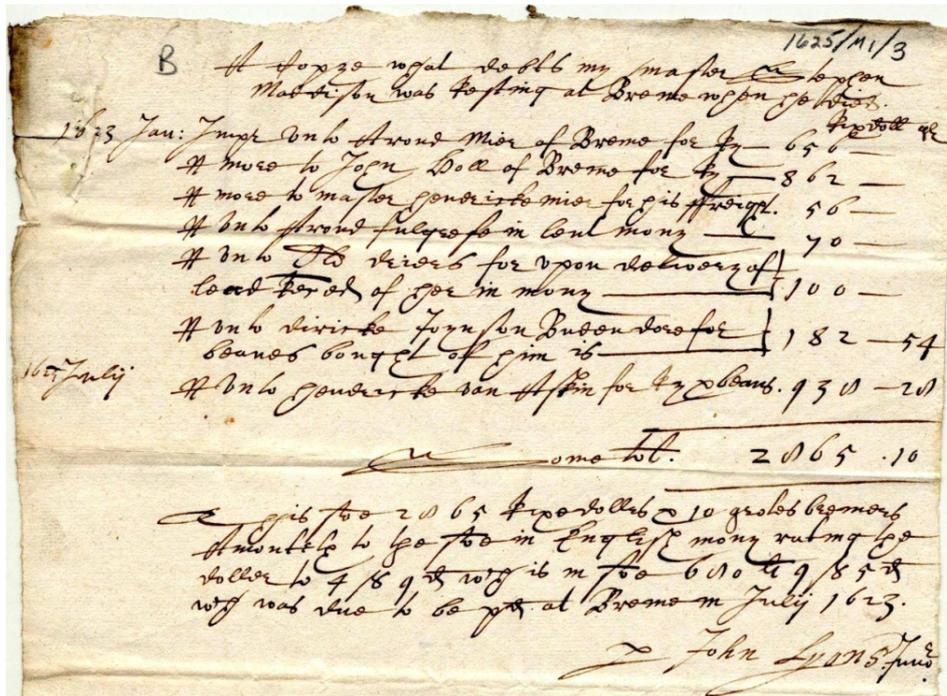
A handwritten document on aged paper, likely a schedule or declaration of goods for insurance. The text is written in cursive and lists items and their values in pounds, shillings, and pence. The items are grouped with curly braces on the right side. The total value is underlined at the bottom.

Item	Value (£ s d)
Household furniture, Plate, Linen	49. 7. 6
China &c . . . valued at	
Amount to be received for insurance on the Ship Palermo	2330. 0. 0
	<u>£ 2379. 7. 6</u>

Schedule or Declaration instead of an inventory of the goods of William Cleugh (see caption 2).

Trade and Industry

The north east has played an epic part in the industrial history of the United Kingdom. For hundreds of years its raw materials and manufactures have been exported across the world, often in ships built in Tyne and Wear side yards. Inevitably some aspects of this ceaseless activity have left a mark in the probate records of the working men and women of the region. From the administration bond of a Benwell coal-borer to the inventory of a wealthy Newcastle hoastman, and from the inventory of a smelter in Weardale to the account of a master mariner shipping coal into the south and the continent, the probate collection can access individuals at every part of the supply chain, providing a human face and story to the work that has shaped so much of the world we see around us today.



Inventory of Bremen debts of Stephen Maddison of Newcastle upon Tyne, merchant. Newcastle merchants and merchant adventurers had extensive trading interests in the British Isles and across Europe, and particularly in the Baltic or Eastland. The probate account entered by Maddison's widow refers to this inventory of debts that her husband was owing in Bremen as having come to her attention only when she had fully administered his estate, and which bill she was 'forced to pay'. The debts date from January to July 1623 and include accounts for rye and beans, unspecified freight, a money debt and also a sum already paid to Maddison or his agent for a quantity of lead, presumeably to be extracted from the North Pennines lead field. The sums were listed by a John Lyons who was perhaps Maddison's apprentice. The total of debts is \$2,865 and 10 groats (or groschen) in the local currency rix-dollars or Reichsthaler, and which Lyons calculates to be £680 9s 5d at an exchange rate of 4s 9d to the dollar. At this time the Hanseatic city of Bremen was being drawn into the Thirty Years' War. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1625/M1/3.

Other Captions:

1. **Inventory of John Walker of Durham City, alderman.** Durham shops offered produce from around the world. This is the first page of the 1692 inventory of Walker's goods which totalled £111 3s 3d. Produce and merchandise listed include items from Europe, Asia and the Americas, and some of which were probably produced using African slave labour: sugar, ferret-silk, Jamaica pepper, ginger, raisins, cloves, mace and tobacco. Most of these goods would have been imported through Newcastle. The north east's investment and involvement in the slave trade economy might also be indicated by this seal of an African head on the 1695 will of a Durham bookseller and bookbinder. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1691/W5/1.
2. **Will of Ralph Gilroy esquire of Berwick-upon-Tweed.** The testator had formerly been resident in Jamaica, and bequeaths his Berwick Estate, a coffee plantation in Port Royal parish, Jamaica, to his legitimate daughters; three other illegitimate daughters are named then living in the United Kingdom. Among his assets Gilroy lists '*all my Negroes or Slaves*' resident upon the plantation '*and all and every the Progeny Issue and Increase of the Females of the same*', proceeding then to itemise his cattle. The Slavery Abolition Act (1833) redesignated all these slaves aged six and over as apprentices, from which apprenticeships they obtained their release in 1838. However, any issue of his female slaves born after 2 August 1828 would have qualified for immediate emancipation on 1 August 1834 when the Act came into force. A John Gilroy, probably Ralph's brother, is listed in the 1840 Jamaica Almanac as the proprietor of a 467 acre estate of the same name. The will, of which this is a copy, was first proved at London in 1826 and then again at Durham in 1828. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1828/G9/1-6.
3. **Administration bond for the estate of Sarah Jarrett of Blckett Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, widow.** Jarrett was an unlucky shareholder in the Newcastle Shields and Sunderland Union Joint Stock Banking Company which failed in October 1847, its business being picked up by Woods & Company, later absorbed into Barclays. The business having been dissolved, administration was granted to the official managers winding up the company, there being no limit at this time to Jarrett's or the other share holders' liability. The first County Durham bank was founded in 1774 by the Quaker family the Backhouses of Darlington, while The Old Bank of Newcastle was founded in 1755 by Ralph Carr, a merchant who carried on much trade in the Baltic region. Such country banks, when they survived the periodic crises of confidence, played an important role in facilitating trade and supporting the growth of the mining, shipping and textile industries and later the development of the railway network. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1853/A221.
4. **Inventory of Henry Milbourne gentleman of Newcastle upon Tyne, hoastman.** The hoastmen of Newcastle together formed the most powerful mercantile corporation of the city. They achieved this dominance by monopolising the production and export of coal. Milbourne's inventory lists 10 keels, 5 coal boats and shares of 34 other ships of Newcastle, King's Lynn, Hull, Sunderland and elsewhere. Milbourne and his wife both died in 1698, leaving ten children: the curators appointed as their guardians signed a £10,000 bond in 1702, indicating a personal estate of about £5,000 in value. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1698/M5/2-3.
5. **Will of Henderson Moore of High Heworth, coal miner.** Unusually, Henderson Moore made his will some twenty-six years before his death, and it remained unaltered until his death. He nominates his wife as his sole executrix. Moore would have worked at the Wallsend and then the High Heworth collieries. He may have been lucky to have survived the 1835 Wallsend pit disaster,

but among the 102 names of the men and boys killed in the gas explosion are James Moore, aged 12, and Thomas Moore, aged 14. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1841/M15/1-2.

6. **Will of Thomas Burn of Southwick, glass manufacturer.** Burn owned six 20th shares in the Crown Glass House at Southwick. His son William Burn was the Secretary of the Sunderland Society for the Prevention of Accidents, working with its founder Dr William Clanny. Clanny developed the safety lamp which was successfully tested at Herrington Mill Pit in the winter of 1815. At this time most of the glass manufactured in the United Kingdom was being produced in Wearside and Tyneside factories, and today the National Glass Centre is located in Sunderland. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1815/B17/1-2.

1828/ G 9/1

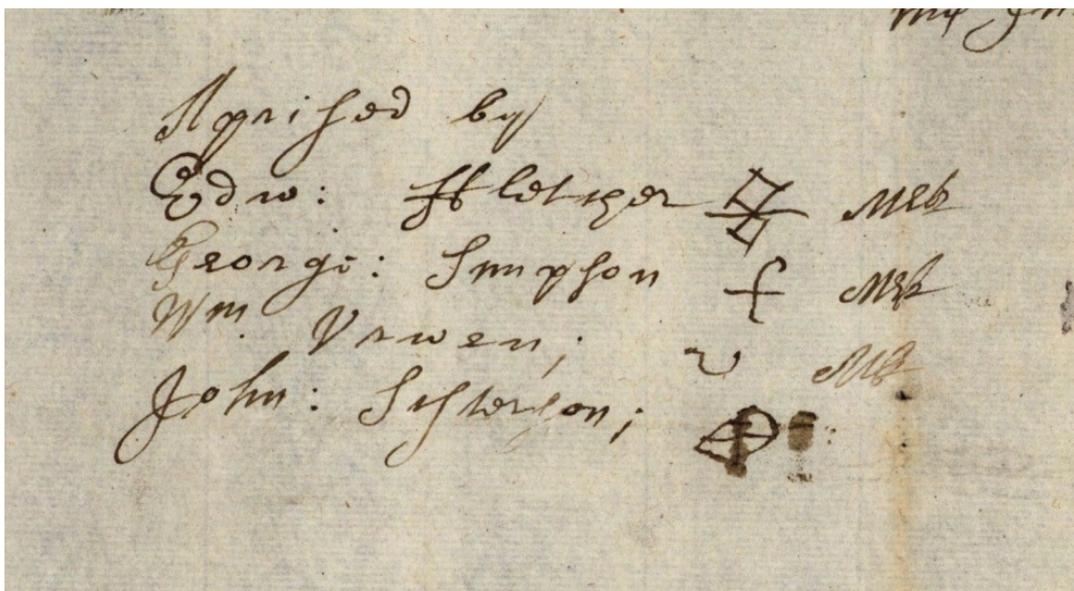
Extracted from the Registry of the
Prerogative Court of Canterbury

In the Name of God Amen I
Ralph Gilroy of Gaislaw House within
the Liberties of the Borough of Berwick upon
Tweed Esquire being in health of Body and
of sound mind memory and understanding
praised be God for the same do make this my
last will and Testament in manner and
form following that is to say I give devise and
bequeath unto my dear Daughters Mary
Ann and Sarah Gilroy at present residing
with me at Gaislaw House aforesaid all my
Mortgages Tenements or dwelling Houses
Plantation piece or parcels of land and
premises situate lying and being in the Parish
of Port Royal in the Island of Jamaica
commonly called or known by the name of
the Berwick estate together with all Houses
Outhouses Edifices Fabrics and Buildings
Mills and all Plantation Utensils and
Inplements in upon or belonging to the
said premises and also all my Negroes or
Slaves which shall at the time of my
decease be resident upon or belonging to
the said Plantation Lands or Tenements
and all and every the Progeny Issue and
Increase of the Tenants of the same

Will of Ralph Gilroy esquire of Berwick-upon-Tweed (see caption 2 above).

Literacy and Education

The provision of academic education was long dependent upon the church, the grammar and chantry schools supplying first a training for future priests and later a route for scholars into the universities. Latterly, particularly after the reformation, grammar schools were endowed by corporations and private benefactors, most such institutions having some quota of assisted places. The vast majority of the population in this period, however, were to a large degree illiterate. Moreover, secondary education was rarely accessible to women until the nineteenth century. Basic reading skills might be acquired at church or from religious texts, and an elementary education at local charity, national or dame schools. Some company schools for workers' children were also established by mining companies active in the region, and there had long been a vocational route through apprenticeships directly into the trades. In the later period there were founded the non-conformist and Catholic schools. Until the Charity Commissioners' reports in the 1830s and which marked the advent of state oversight, all this activity was regulated only at a local level, if at all. Higher education in the region began with the foundation of Durham University in 1832, and the School of Medicine and Surgery at Newcastle in 1834. Some measure of the variety and achievements of such schools and apprenticeships can be found in the probate records of their benefactors, masters and students.

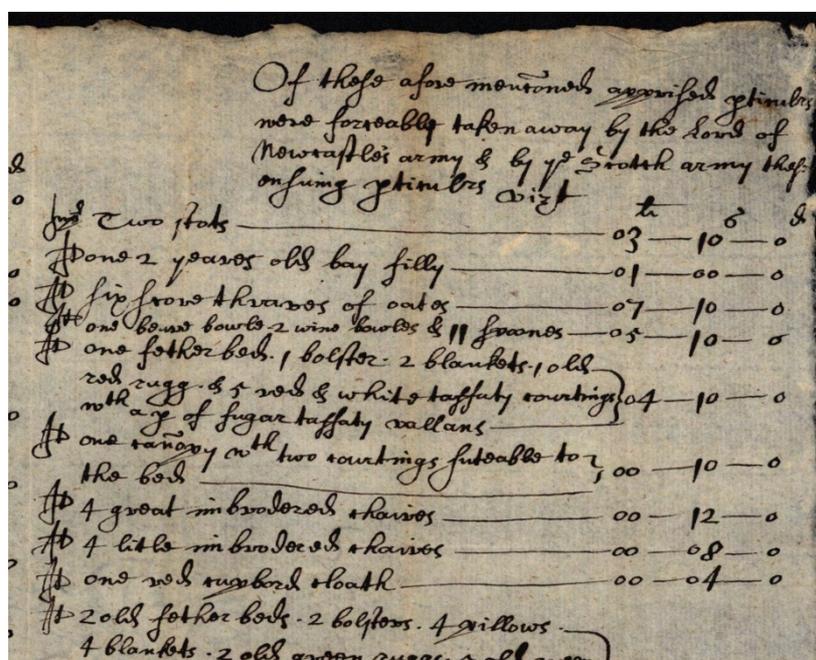


Inventory of Thomas Hyndmers of Bearle, Bywell St Andrew. Those who could not write could place a 'mark' beside their name on a document. Hyndmers' inventory points to his farming activity, and here the appraisors appear to have used personal symbols to sign the document that, it is tempting to imagine, were their personal stock brands or trade marks: blacksmiths sometimes used horseshoe marks. Normally a testator would dictate the testament to a clerk, often the local vicar, and the document having been cleanly written out and read aloud to the testator would then be assented to, signed and perhaps sealed, witnessed and so published. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1677/H23/1.

1. (a) **Will of Henry Clements of North Shields, royal navy mariner;** (b) **Will of Peter Trumbel of Gateshead, butcher.** One solution to the potentially knotty problems of probate and widespread illiteracy was to issue pro forma printed wills. Clements served on H.M.S. Winchelsea, making his will in April 1696 probably when he joined the ship as a part of the process of signing on. A more business-oriented appropriation of print technology is evident in Peter Trumbel's unusual print block, which he probably used in connection with his butchery trade, perhaps to stamp carcasses or bills. The fact that this stamp was a valid equivalent of a signature or seal illustrates a different attitude then prevalent toward this medium. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1696/C7/1-2; 1689/T7/1-2.
2. (a) **Inventory of Robert Fowberie M.A., master of Newcastle Royal Free Grammar School;** (b) **Will of Amor Oxley, vicar of Kirknewton and master of Newcastle Royal Free Grammar School.** Robert Fowberie, who taught both Latin and Greek, was the first master appointed to Newcastle's grammar school after it was re-founded by royal charter in 1599, the original grammar school having been endowed by the city mayor Thomas Horsley some seventy years earlier. Many of Fowberie's pupils would have been the sons of Newcastle merchants whose trading interests might have been traced across the '*large map of the world in 2 globes*'. Oxley's will includes the bequest of a number of theological and classical works '*towards a library*' for the school where he taught. Oxley had been removed from his post in 1645 for his attachment to the king's cause, but secured his reappointment after the restoration having suffered great poverty in the interim. Both Newcastle and Durham grammar schools are today independent schools. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1622/F13/3-4; 1669/O5/1-2.
3. (a) **List of books on loan, attached to the will of John Pilkington of Durham;** (b) **Inventory of Luce Addison of Berwick-upon-Tweed, widow.** Many persons would have possessed a small number of writings in the form of property deeds, bonds, a bible and perhaps a last will and testament, but the ownership of literary texts and practical manuals was usually limited to churchmen and professionals. Owners would circulate books among trusted friends, particularly as this was then the only means of transmitting faithfully the work and ideas of the author. Pilkington's library had been inherited from his father, an archdeacon of Durham, and many senior officials of the bishopric are named among the borrowers. Such detailed catalogues of books can provide historians with an index of the intellectual tastes and political attitudes of a society, and in some cases particular copies have been found to survive in Special Collections like that at Durham University. In contrast, Lucy Addison carefully annexes to her will a schedule of all her legal writings, her debts being a little less securely recorded '*as appears by chalkes upon a borde*'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1609/P3/1-4; 1611/A1/3.
4. **Account of the execution of the will of Robert Phillipps of Gateshead, cordwainer, and of the tuition of his son Thomas Phillipps.** Phillipps' son was too young to act as executor, and his tutor Thomas Arrowsmyth here accounts for disbursements out of his father's estate during the boy's minority, and which include the price of his apprenticeship to his new master John Tailor, a new pair of boots and shoes and two suits of clothes. The account also reveals that prior to this Thomas Phillipps had spent 1¾ years at school. Apprentices typically bound themselves to a master of a trade for seven years. They received no wages, but did receive board and lodging: at the end of this period the freed apprentice would begin his independent career as a skilled journeyman with a valuable and secure place in his trade and often with some education as well. There are over 200,000 apprentices working today in the United Kingdom, and while they now earn a wage they might still serve up to five years before qualification. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1631/P2/1-2.

Enemies, Foreign and Domestic

The diocese of Durham was exposed both to the depredations of the Scots and reivers, as well as to all the usual frailties of its own inhabitants. The course of many wars, raids and bitter domestic disagreements can be traced through the probate records of those whose lives they scorched. In the service of their country Northerners fought all over the world, such wills ranging from a royal naval printed pro forma filed at enrolment in a ship's books, to a few brief words spoken by a man mortally wounded at Marston Moor. Even in times of peace the law was often ineffective in the years before 1600, particularly in the border lands. Probate disputes of course are well chronicled, but references to civil actions, as they were not within the ecclesiastical court's jurisdiction, are rare and, by the very nature of the probate process, usually victims' tales of loss, pillage and murder. Echoes of domestic explosions can also be found in the recriminating terms of some wills, however it should be noted that for much of this period testators were limited in how much of their property they could bequeath away from their own families.



Inventory of Sir George Bowes of Wolsingham. Bowes' inventory illustrates the uncertainty and disturbance of the times, the country wracked by civil war. His property was pillaged by both the Marquess of Newcastle's army and the 'Scotch army' some time after the invasion of a Scottish army under the Earl of Leven in January 1644 and before Newcastle's royalist army abandoned County Durham in April. The inventory of items 'forceably taken away' includes grain, hay, a horse, but also a bed and various interior furnishings. A Sedgefield probate account from April that year includes consecutive entries for levies made by the two opposing armies then encamped only five miles apart. The Scots pursued Newcastle's army south into Yorkshire on 13 April 1644 leaving only Newcastle city in royalist hands. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1647/B7/1.

Other Captions:

1. **Will of Robert Shell of Berwick-upon-Tweed, gunner.** Shell's will contains a list of debts which reveal that he was owed his wages for campaigning in Scotland between June and September 1548, including monies owed to him for '*work of Dunglasse Hume [and] Roxbrugh*' – all fortifications either captured or repaired by the English during the 1544-1551 wars. This conflict originally sparked from the failure of Henry VIII's plan to unite the kingdoms of England and Scotland through the marriage of his son Edward to Mary Queen of Scots, then aged 5 and 6 months respectively: the pressure ultimately resulted in the betrothal and later marriage of Mary to François II of France. The probate registry contains an unusually high number of Berwick military wills in 1548-49, which probably reflect the Scots' siege of Haddington castle and its eventual evacuation in September 1549. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1549/S5/1.
2. **Nuncupative will of William Claveringe of Duddoe, esquire.** Claveringe made his will in his last moments '*sore wounded in his bodie*'. Contemporary accounts relate that he had been one of a party ambushed on the hills above Stanton in Northumberland returning home from Newcastle where they had been celebrating the anniversary of the accession of Elizabeth I. A retainer of the Collingwood family, Claveringe was a victim of that family's feud with the Selbies. Despite, it was said, Collingwood's wife pleading on her knees that no violence be done, Claveringe was shot and his brother was also wounded. A memorial stone called Clavering's Cross still stands on the hill where this encounter took place. The Clavering family appear to have been satisfied with monetary compensation in this instance, rather than pursuing a feud themselves. Feuding was a common feature of the border community life, 'surnames' acting in mutual solidarity for their own protection and survival. In this instance the Collingwoods and Selbies engaged in a long correspondence defending their actions to Secretary Walsingham at London, and trading accusations of March treason (colluding with the Scots), but their accounts so involved and partial it is hard to know the true cause of the incident. The damage to the document, now repaired, is caused by water rather than blood! Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1587/C5/1.
3. **Will of John Carre of Hetton, Chatton, with an Allegation concerning its validity.** Carre had conscientiously made a will prior to his departure on an expedition to Portugal, depositing it safely with a trusted cousin. This adventure was the little known 1589 English Armada, a disastrous counterstroke to the Spanish Armada of 1588. He never returned, and his sisters speedily obtained a grant of administration, rashly as it turned out for the will then came to light, as also a first-hand account of Carre's death in Portugal. With an eye to his '*longe & peralus*' voyage south Carre writes, '*my bodie I comite ether to the earthe birdes foules fyshi[es] seas or sands*'. The document also bears witness to its custodians' changing attitudes towards its preservation. The brown staining was caused by the application of a tannin solution, which by reacting with the iron in the ink brings out the text, so making it more legible. In the 20th century the document was professionally conserved. The allegation is written in Latin, but with Carre's words on his deathbed in Lisbon transcribed in the vernacular in which he delivered them: '*I have made my will before my cominge out of England all with my owne hand and left it with my Cosen Thomas Carr; That will and all there in conteyned is my will and shall stand and not be alterd*'. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1589/C3/1, 4-5.
4. **Inventory of William Collingwood of Kemerston, Ford.** Collingwood's inventory reveals a very late glimpse of the ancient border laws, soon to be abolished by James I in 1605. The border marches on both sides of the English-Scottish border comprised a separate and international jurisdiction under a body of laws first codified by England and Scotland in the mid-13th century. In

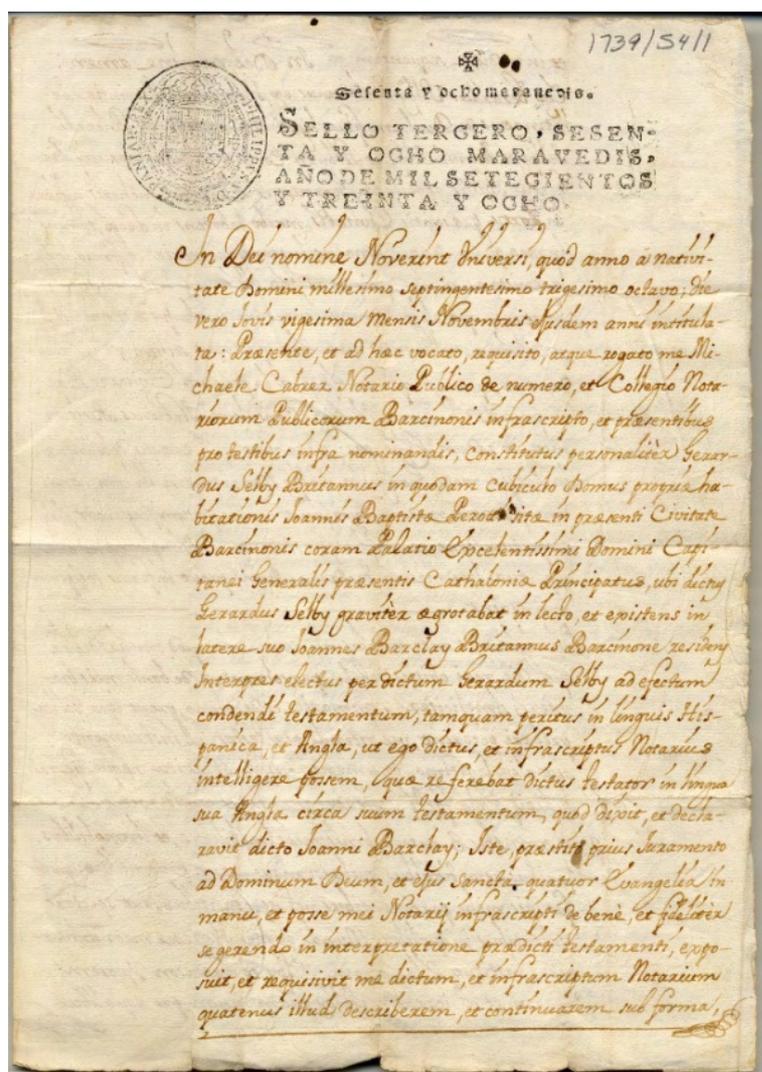
effect a martial law, it provided for the more efficient provision of justice across two national jurisdictions at a time when the marches were in a more or less constant state of violent unrest, and were intended also to prevent such low level violence escalating into international incidents. Collingwood appears to have been the victim of a Scotsman stealing his horse and then using it on his farm over the border. More than a year later Collingwood reports he had succeeded in capturing the thief and recovering his horse, much exhausted from ploughing, and had had the man imprisoned at Berwick. Unfortunately he had escaped before Collingwood succeeded in extracting any recompense '*for the forbearance of his horse according to the laws of the border*'. When such laws were operating properly then reivers in effect farmed the communities they preyed upon, 'borrowing' certain assets like beasts of draught at certain times of the year, and often returning or releasing the animals subsequently so that the cost of feeding and conditioning them was again borne by the owner. Protections from these attacks could be obtained by paying to the reivers a black mail or rent. In bad years, however, there was no law of any kind, and inhabitants of the marches either side of the border lived in constant uncertainty and terror. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1603/C8/1.

5. **Inventory of Roger Widdrington of Harbottle, esquire.** Widdrington and his wife were notorious recusant Catholics in a time when the laws of England penalised them heavily in both fines and forfeiture of lands for holding to their faith and refusing to attend the services of the established church of England. At one time Widdrington had been suspected of involvement in the Gunpowder Plot. Widow Rosamund Widdrington had a strong incentive not to cooperate with the appraisers and to hide what wealth the government had not already succeeded in confiscating during her husband's lifetime. Her efforts appear to have been only partially successful: the appraisers here are careful to note even Widdrington's signet ring and gold toothpick that his widow had refused to part with. This time was a particularly tense one for English Catholics due to Charles I's rumoured plan to deploy an Irish army in England. Roger's heir was later heavily penalised for his and his father's support for the king in the civil war, Cartington Hall being seized in May 1648 by Major Sanderson, copies of whose will and diary are also held in the library. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1641/W8/1-5.

6. **Deposition concerning the will of John Prest of Black Horse near Tudhoe, yeoman.** A strong motivation for a testator to leave a final will and testament is to provide the next of kin with clear instructions so that any later controversy might be prevented. Publication of a final will being required it is understandable that a testator usually made a will when close to death. But when the family were already alienated from each other then the making of the will itself could be a pressured or resisted act; wills might be suppressed; or a more favourable codicil fortuitously discovered later. Alice Prest did her utmost to prevent her dying but clearly estranged husband from bequeathing his property away from her and her family, refusing to leave the room and then tearing up two drafts so that his attorney had to send to his office for more paper. It is this attorney, Ralph Harrison of Durham, whose testimony is contained in this document. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1750/P9/5-6.

Northeasters Abroad

The north east of England has traded extensively with Europe and particularly with Scandinavian and Baltic states since at least the 13th century. In time, ships from the ports of Durham and Northumberland voyaged further, to the Americas and around the world carrying local raw materials and manufactures to trade, and shipping back commodities such as timber, furs, pitch, tobacco, sugar and grain. All this activity left an inevitable trail of enterprising northeasters who never returned. Many died far from their families and friends mid-voyage, stricken by disaster or disease. Many others, however, chose to make a new home for themselves where the opportunities were more favourable, be it in New England, Sonora or Van Diemen's Land, leaving their probate records to make the slow journey back to Durham in order that their remaining property in the diocese might be administered. Some successful merchants and wealthy landowners maintained transatlantic interests, growing and trading for example in tobacco, coffee or sugar from American plantations: these enterprises or 'adventures' too have left their mark in the probate records. Finally there are the many men recruited from the northeast to serve in the royal navy and the army, and whose duty in the service of an expanding empire took them to all corners of the globe.



Will of Gerard Selby of Holy Island, merchant. Selby died at Barcelona in Catalonia, Spain, on 20 November 1738. He was the owner of the *George and Eleanor*, then anchored in the port there. He died at the house of Juan Bautista Perotti in the presence of John Barclay, a resident of Barcelona, and his will was also witnessed by Ninian Browne an Englishman and Sir John Winder the British Consul. Selby instructs his skipper to continue the voyage and ship's business to its end. The document is in Latin and bears the intricate signs manual of three Barcelona notaries. In common with most of Europe, the ecclesiastical courts of England and Wales followed the Roman civil law rather than English common law, and such courts today still require notaries public in certain circumstances. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1739/S4/1-2.

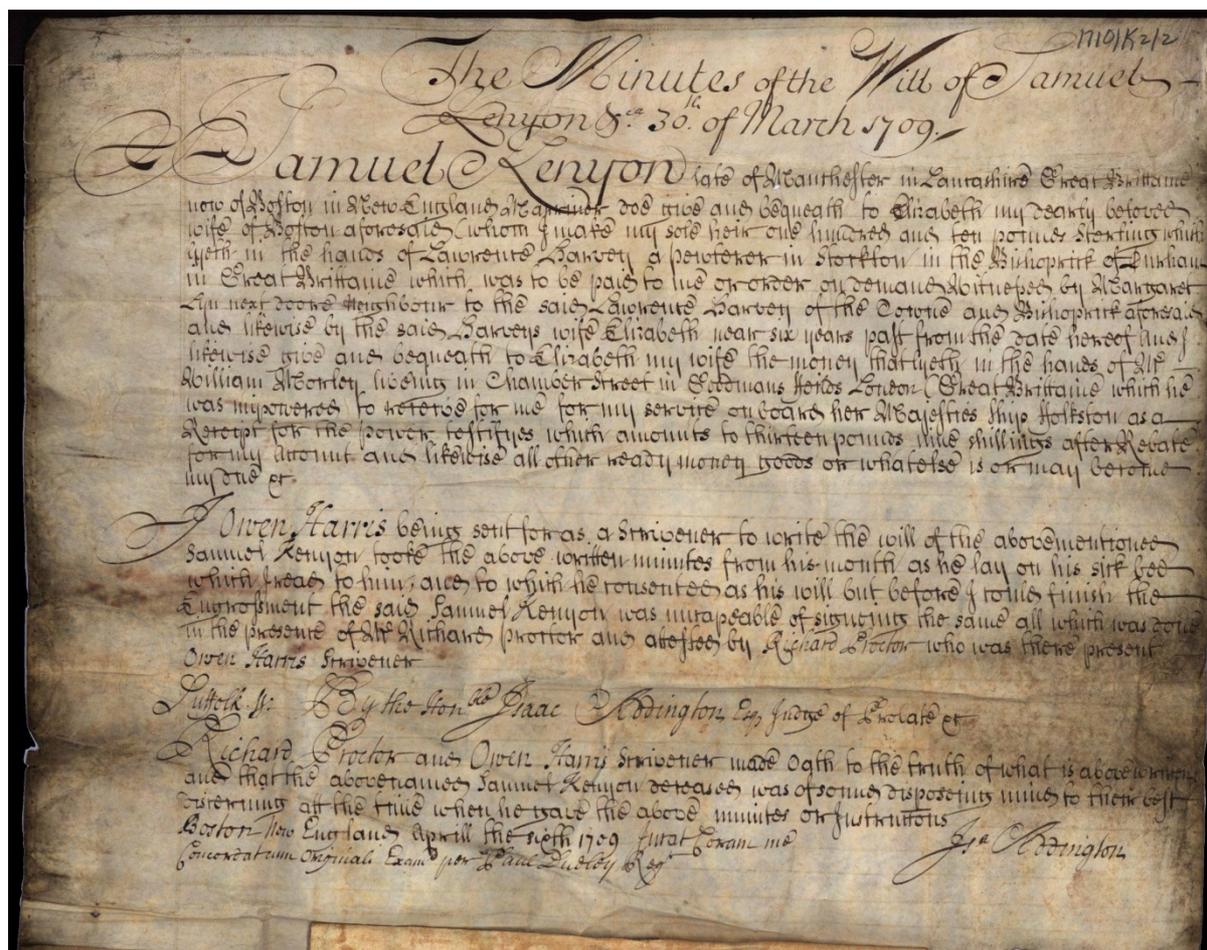
Other Captions:

1. **Inventory of John Tucker of Newcastle St Nicholas, master and mariner.** Tucker was master and part owner of the 56 ton ship the Christopher and John. The inventory and probate account entered by his administrator, a creditor, state that he died when his ship was cast aground at Elsinore (Helsingør) in Denmark and '*in danger to be utterly lost*'. His crew under the command of Edward Rand succeeded in saving the ship. Upon his return Rand made a claim against Tucker's estate for extra provisions for the crew during this adventure, for the cost of getting the ship off the rocks, and for Tucker's funeral, totalling £12 2s. The inventory indicates Tucker was exporting grindstones and coal east into the Baltic, and carrying on his return flax and often probably timber as well for the English market. Bills of exchange were preferred to cash by merchants engaged in such trade, and the presence of one such London bill hints that Tucker's trading also extended to that port as well. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1596/T5/1-2.
2. **Copy of the will of John Bayles esquire of Rokeby, Tasmania.** Bayles devises his estate of Vaucuse, near Conara, and lands on the Isis River in Tasmania to his children. Beneath the will is a part of a certified copy of the grant of administration by the Supreme Court of Van Diemen's Land to Bayles' heir Robert Hugginson Bayles made in March 1850. John Bayles died in April 1849. A year later Robert Bayles, then living at Vaucuse, appointed an attorney to administer the property in England. In September 1852 copies of the will and Tasmanian grant were made and certified in Hobart; and only in December 1853 was administration of the property in Durham diocese, estimated at £1,000 in value, granted to Robert Bayles' attorney at Durham. The length of passage between England and Australia at this time was between 3 and 5 months. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1853/B8/3-5.
3. **Affidavit of Emily Brown, administratrix of Jane Brown of West Clayton Street, Newcastle, spinster.** Jane Brown came from a large family, and which at the time of her death was distributed across three continents. This affidavit was made by her sister who here swears that those of her family who had not already renounced administration before the court were living outside Great Britain and were not '*likely soon to return*'. Various brothers and sisters were then living at Pictou in Nova Scotia, at New York, at Sonora in Mexico and at Calcutta. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1854/A21/5.
4. **Copy of the nuncupative will of Samuel Kenyon mariner of Boston, Massachusetts and Manchester, England.** Kenyon was prevented by his illness from signing his will, but the circumstances of its publication are detailed in the second paragraph by the Boston scrivener then present. The will deals principally with monies owed to him in England and informs us he had once served on H.M.S. Folkston. The will was proved at Boston by Isaac Addington the judge of probate for Suffolk County in Massachusetts on 6 April 1709, and this copy of the will was certified by Paul Dudley, the probate register there. Annexed to this document (but not present here) is a 22 August 1710 grant of administration with the will annexed made by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to John Babbage the attorney of Elizabeth Kenyon of Boston, Kenyon's widow and sole legatee. Durham Probate Records DPRI/1/1710/K2/1-2.
5. **Administration bond of Isaac Peart, master of the ship Shannon.** The bond proceeds in a standard way, stating Peart was a bachelor and that his estate was valued at £100, but on the dorse or back of the document is the sentence, '*The intestate was murdered at sea by Pirates.*' Contemporary newspapers reported that having left the Mexican port of Campeche in the Gulf of Mexico in May 1824 bound for home waters, his ship Shannon was taken and burnt by pirates and

her 16 crew murdered. Peart's telescope was found by the crew of H.M.S. Parthian in June of that year on the pirate schooner St Jose. The French invasion of Spain in 1808 precipitated the Wars of Independence in the Spanish and Portuguese New World colonies, and following the peace of 1815 the fleets of 'patriotic corsairs' commissioned by these new American states triggered the last great epidemic of piracy in those waters. Durham Probate Records DPRI/3/1828/A90.

6. **Caledonian Mercury (Edinburgh), Thursday, 23 September 1824; Issue 16086.**

7. **The Times, Monday, 27 September 1824; Issue 12454.**



Copy of the nuncupative will of Samuel Kenyon mariner of Boston, Massachusetts and Manchester, England (see caption 4 above).

This resource was created as part of the North East Inheritance Project (2009). The 2009 exhibition is also presented online, with enlarged images and full document transcriptions made available:

http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/NEI_feature.htm.