

Complete text transcriptions of
a series of wills
Crick, Northamptonshire. 1500-1700AD

researched, transcribed and analysed by
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including historical contextual notes and cross-references

"Is my team ploughing,
That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,
The harness jingles now;
No change, though you lie under
The land you used to plough.

From *A Shropshire Lad* by A.E. Houseman

1. John Garrard of Crick, 1509AD (NR1 Book , F176)

In the name of god amen. The xvjth daie of october the yere of our lord god 1509, I John Garrard of Creke, hole of mynde and good remembraunce, make my testament in this wise.
 First I bequeth my soull to almyghty god, to our lady seynt mary and to all the holy company of hevyn, and my body to be buryed in the Church yarde of the parish church of creke aforsaid.
 Item I bequethe for my mortuary as the manner of the town is.
 Item I bequethe to the modre church of lincoln 111jd.
 Item I bequeth to Richard my son v marcs of lawfull money of Englund.
 Item I will that Joane my daughter have v marks sterling, and my godes will strach so farre, when my dettes byn paid, wich I put to the discession and consciens of my wife.
 Item I bequeth to every of my godchildren iiijd.
 The Residue of all my godes, above not bequethed, I gyve & bequeth unto alice my wife, whom I ordeyne & make to be myne executrice of this my last will, to dispose for the helthe of my soule as best may please god; and I will that John pabody be supervisor to oversee my forsaid legaces, fully contented according to the premisses, theis men witnessyng viz. david Vaughan priest, John Jonys with other.

8. Henry Whyghthed of Crick, 1516AD (NR1 Book A, F317)

[The right-hand side of this will has crumbled away. Gaps in the text have been interpolated where possible, by reference to other contemporary wills, where the wording is obviously very similar. This seems to be a relatively rich man, judging by his very generous bequests to the church in Crick . In particular, the gift of 8 sheep, presumably to the church flock (the exact wording here is annoyingly illegible), seems incredibly generous. Furthermore, the legal wordings "... whom I make my executor by these presents ...", and "... In witness whereof to this present I have set my hand ...", which are unusual phrases to encounter at such an early date in the will of any common villager, also suggest that this man has a fair amount of wealth to dispose of. He is therefore almost certainly a prosperous yeoman.]

In the name of God, amen. The 10th daye of July in the yere of our lord God 1516, I Henry Whyghthed of Crick, hole of mynde and perfecte of memorye, ordaine and make my testament in manner foloing:
 First I be quethe my sole to Almighty God [.....], and my body to be buryd in the churchyard of Sent Mary of Crick .
 Item, I be quethe to the sayde church 8d.
 Also [....], 8 sheepe.
 Also to the torchys, 42d.
 Item, to the church [....], 6s-8d.
 Item, I be quethe to Elizabeth my wife, [.....].
 Item, [...], 20 marks.
 The residue of my goods, my detts payde, [...], I be quethe to William my sone, to dispose for the welth of my sole as he thynks best, whom I make mine executor by these presents, that this my present testament [.....].
 [In] wyttnes wher off to this present I have sett my hand [and seale].
 Wyttnes, [sir?] John [Churston?], William [P..ser], Richard [.....], with others more.

11. Jeffrey Rugbe of Crick, 1519AD (NR1 Book A, F365)

[Geoffrey Rugby seems to be another relatively well-to-do individual, with plenty of money to lay out on bequests to the church and for his soul. It is not easy to guess at his occupation – the temptation is just to assume that he was a yeoman farmer, but this may not necessarily be the case]

In the name of God, amen. The 13th day of May, the year of our lord 1519, I Jeffrey Rugbe, of hole mynd and memory, make my last will in manner and forme folowyng:

First I bequeth my soule unto my maker allmyghty God, to the blessed ladye Saynt Marye and all the company of heven to pray for me, and my body to be buried in the church yard of St Margaret in Creke.

To the mother church of Lincoln, 2d.

Also to every lyght in the church, 12d.

To the bells, 6s-8d.

To my wife Julyan Rugbe I bequeth £10, to her [....]

To a [priest] to syng a trentall for me, 10s.

To my brother Rugbe, 6s-8d.

And to every [....], 12d.

Item, to my daughter Helyn Smyth, 33s-4d.

And the residue of my goods moveable and unmoveable not bequethed, I bequeth to my sone Thomas Rugbe and my kinsman John [Garnle?], whom I make and ordayne my houlle executors, they to do theyrwith as shall seeme the best to the welth of my sowle to theys.

Overseers of my foresayd wyll, [....] to be performyd and obeyd and make my [chattleyn?], [sir?] William Nutt and John Jamys, to have a [.....?] for theyr labor.

Theys being wittnes, John Coolt, Rychard Kilworth, John Myles, with others more.

12. John Atkyns of Crick, 1521AD (NR1 Book B, F15)

[John Atkyns proves to be a husbandman of middling means. His gift to the church of an altar-cloth to the value of 2 shillings is illustrative of the many small bequests in goods that were customarily made by rank and file villagers to beautify and improve their church, prior to the Reformation.]

In the name of God, amen. The second day of February in the year of our lord 1520 [ie calendar year 1521], I John Atkyns, of hole mynd and good memory, make my last wyll in manner and forme folowyng:

First I bequeth my soull unto almyghty God, to our lady Saynt Mary and all the holy company of hevyn to pray for me, and my body to be buryed in the church of seynt Margaret in Creke.

And for my mortuary as manner and custome ys.

Also I bequeth to the mothy church of Lincoln, 4d.

And to the hie aulter of the fore sayd Seynt Margaret, an aulter clothe of price 2s.

Item, I bequeth for a tryntall, 10s, the halffe to be done at my buryall and the other halffe at the [momyt?] mynd [.....] at the mynd of my gostly father.

Item, to the Rode, 6s-8d.

Item, to our Lady lyght, 3s-4d.

To the bells, 3s-4d.

To the torches, 20d.

Item, I bequeth to Edmund Atkyns my sone, a cart, a cowe, a pott and a pan, and 6 sheep.

The resydue of my godes moveable and unmoveable not bequethed, I bequeth to my sone Henry Atkyns, whom I ordeyne and make my hole executor, he to do theyr with as yt shall seme hym best ordeyned for the welth of my soull and hys.

Overseers of this my foesayd wyll ...

[The will breaks off here; the last few words evidently continue on the next sheet, which is missing. However, the above fragment gives all the most important content of the will.]

14. William James of Crick, 1521AD (NR1 Book B, F57)

[From the way in which his goods are split, we may deduce that William James' first wife died not long after they were married, leaving him with a young son Robert and two small babies, and that he re-married to a widow who already had three children of her own.

That William James is still relatively young at the time of making his will is confirmed by the fact that his mother is still alive. He is probably still in his 30s.]

In die nomine, amen. The 10th daye of November, the yere of our lord 1521, I William Jamys of Creke make my testament in hole mynd.

First I bequeth my sole to almyghtye God, our lady Seynt Mary and all the halowd in heven, my body to be buryed in the chyrchort [ie church yard] of Creke.

Item, I bequeth to the church of Lincoln, 4d.

Item, I bequeth to the church of Creke, 10s.

Item, I bequeth to the hye aluter of Creke for forgotyn tythes, 6d.

Item, I bequeth to the torches, 16d.

Item, I bequeth to 4 lyghtes in the same church of Creke, to every of them 4d.

Resydue of my goods I gyve halfe to Margarete my wife, and to hyr thre chyldern; and the other halfe I gyve to [Emmot?] my mother and Robert my sone, and to too other children of my other wife; the whyche Margarete and Robert I make myne executors, to dispose for the helth of my soule.

Witnes, John Malbe, Robert Vause.

17. John Turner of Crick, 1523AD (NR1 Book B, F155)

[In this account we see that there was at this date a programme under way to collect funds to buy a bell for Crick church. Moreover, we learn that there was an image of St. Margaret in the church – no great revelation, since the church is dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch, but it all helps to give a more precise picture of the inside of the church at this date.

The bequest of 6s-8d (1 noble) to the lord of the manor "for my harriott" is in payment of a heriot, or fine, which is normally associated with passing the title of a copyhold house from one occupant to the next. We can infer, therefore, that John Turner was living in a copyhold house, and his payment of this heriot is to enable the occupation of the house to transfer to his next of kin. It is a useful statement, and gives us another standard by which to assess the costs of living at this date.

The statement "also for my corss present after the custom and manner of the towne" refers to provisions for his burial, more commonly referred to in these wills as the "mortuary".]

In the name of God, amen. In the yere of our lord 1523, be it knowyn that I John Turner, sicke in body and hole in mynd, make my last wyll and testament.

First I bequeth my soule to God, to our Lady and to all the saints in heven, my body to be burid in the church yarde of Creke.

Item, to the mother church of Lincoln, 2d.

Item, to the bying of the bell in the church of Creke, 40d.

Also to my 2 sonys Thomas and Henry, either of them, 40d.

Also to my daughter Agnes, a calfe.

Also I beqeth 8d to by a light, and it to be [trainyd?] afore the image of saint Margaret in the church of Creke.

Also I beqeth 6s-8d to my lord for my harriott.

Also for my corss present [ie corpse/cross? present] after the custom and manner of the towne.

Also the residue of my goods unto Agnes my wife, she for to pay all my detts.

Richard Banbury, John Abbot, witnes, with others more.

25. John Cole of Crick, 1528AD (NR1 Book D, F182)

[Here is an interesting variant on the usual formula of thanksgiving to God for a sound memory – this time we read "thankes be to Jesu Christe" – it indicates that the formula could in fact vary from village to village and from year to year, and moreover that at this time the formula was still fairly new, and hence not yet established in its pattern.

The right side of this parchment is eaten away, making it impossible to decipher some of the text ...]

In die nomine, amen. The 9th daye of September in the yere of our lord God 1528, I John Cole in the parish of Creke and the diocese of Lincoln, hole of mynd and of good remembrance thankes be to Jesu Christe, I make my testament in this wise.

First I beqweth my soule to almyghty God, and our lady seynt Mary and to all the holy company of hevyn, my body to be buryed in the church yard of seynt Margaret in Creke.

Item, for my mortuary, as custome and manner is.

Item, I beqweth to the mother church of Lincoln, 4d.

Item, I beqweth to the Rood lyght, 12d.

Item, I beqweth to our lady lyght in the churche, 8d.

Item, to the bells, 12d.

Item, I beqweth to the church of seynt Margaret in Creke, a whette land [ie the wheat growing on one land or furrow] uppon hotte hyll of Mychel's [gr.....] grounde.

I bequeth to George Cole my sone, a heyfer cow of [... year], a [hainnars = harness?] of my shope and all my [sholbyng?] [harness?] with [...] and [cheycotts?].
 Item, I bequeth to Rychard Colle my sone, my [..... ..] ..]
 Item, I bequeth to William Cole my sone, a cowe and a hefyer at his mother's plesure.
 Item, I bequeth to Agnes Cole my daughter, 2 shepe and 2 lambs.
 Ans also, that all my goods moveable and unmoveable not bequethed, I gyve and bequeth to Joan Cole my wife, whom I [make my executor]

[NB: the text of the will is incomplete, being continued on a subsequent sheet of parchment. The words in parentheses are estimated by the transcriber, as a likely continuation.]

26. William Jones of Crick, 1529AD (NR1 Book D, F225)

[A substantial area in the bottom left of this will has been eaten away ... the text is hard to decipher in such places; and where text is guessed or estimated, it is shown in parentheses.]

In the name of God, amen. The 8th daye of the moneth of Aprill, the yere of our lord 1529, I William Jonys of the parishe of Creke in the dyocese of Lincoln, beyng in perfytt remembrance, thanked be our lord God, never the lesse seke [and fearing the] danger of deth, I ordeyne and make my testament and last wyll in manner and forme folowyng.

First I bequeth my soule to God, to our lady seynt Mary and to all the holy seynts in heven, my body to be buryed in the church yard of seynt Margaret in Creke aforesayd.

Also I bequeth for my mortuary [after the custom of the towne.]

I bequeth to my mother church of Lincoln, 4d.

I bequeth to the sepulchre lyght, [.....]

[... ..] of Seynt Margaret aforesayd, 12d.

To our [lady lyght, 12d].

To the Rode lyght, 12d.

To the bells, 4d.

[.....]

And also, the residue of all my goods not bequethed, [my detts payd, my body] brought to the grounde, my leagcyes [discharged and] payd, I gyve and bequeth to Agnes Joans my [wife, and My] sone, the which I ordeyne and make my [hole executors, they] to dispose for the helth of my sowll and

[NB: the text of the will is incomplete, being continued on a subsequent sheet of parchment. The words in parentheses are estimated by the transcriber, as a likely continuation.]

General Note:

In 1533 an important Act recited that "divers and sundry persons... have studied ways... how they might gather together into a few hands as well great multitude of farms as great plenty of cattle, and in especial sheep, putting such lands as they can get to pasture, and not tillage," and provided that no person should hold more than 2000 sheep, or than 2 farms.

[Source: "Commons and Common Fields": Thomas Edward Scrutton, 1886].

This legislation, and other similar legislation which followed it, will influence the way in which land-ownership is conducted during the ensuing pages of these transcripts; we will see that, below the level of the nobility, 4 categories of land-workers emerge, in a clear hierarchy – labourers, husbandmen, yeomen and "super-yeomen" – and it is chiefly this last category, referred to here as "super-yeomen" and comprising aspiring gentry in these local villages, who were responsible for the appearance of the legislation of 1533.

Several attempts were made, from the late 1400s right through to the 1600s, to limit and restrict the actions of such men – though it was neither very whole-hearted, nor did it achieve much lasting success, since those most responsible for creating the problem were also those most involved in framing and passing the legislation!

The cult of the saints comes under persecution:

- 11 Aug 1536: Thomas Cromwell, acting as Henry's "vice-regent in spirituals", passes an act in convocation abolishing all holy days during the Westminster law terms or in harvest time (Early July to end of September), except for the feasts of the Virgin, of the Apostles, of St George, of St John the Baptist, and All Saints. Widespread discontent
- Further injunctions of Cromwell: Catechism, Lord's Prayer and 10 Commandments now in English not Latin; Bible in Latin and English to be put in every church; clergy to preach the royal supremacy. This in turn triggers the Pilgrimage of Grace in October 1536.
- Increasing persecution in 1538. Further injunctions of Cromwell – 1 copy of the newly printed Bible to be put in the church; a sermon must be preached each quarter on Christ's gospel and not upon idolatry; B/M/D registers are started, to be filled in weekly in presence of the churchwardens; all lights to be extinguished, except rood, altar and sepulchre lights. "If ye have heretofore declared to your parishioners anything to the exalting or setting forth ... of images, or any such superstition, ye shall now openly afore the same recant and reprove the same, shewing them (as the truth is) that ye did the same upon no ground of scripture, but as one that being led and seduced by a common error and abuse crept into the church, through the sufferance and avarice of such as felt profit by the same".
- Henry attacks the cult of the saints again in 1540
- Merging/abolition of church's lesser funds (eg to maintain candles before saints' images).

43. Henry Dunckley of Crick, 1538AD (NR1 Book F, F50)

[The Dunckley family of Crick is well documented, with 10 wills in this series between 1538 and 1701. Interestingly, there are no Dunckley wills for any of the other villages in this study group, implying that the family remained in Crick throughout the period. It will certainly be interesting to study this family group in more detail.]

In the name of God, amen. The 10th day of apryll and in the yere of God 1538, I Hary Dunkly in the parish of Creke and in the [dicocese of] Lingcoll, hole of mynd and of good remembrance, [praying?] bee lorde God, [make] my testament in thys wyse.

First I bequeth my soull to al mytye [God] and to our lady saynt Mary and to all the hole company of heven, my body to be buryd in the churche yard of saynt Margaret's churche in Creke.

I [bequethe] for my mortuari as the lawe requireth.

Item, bequethe to [the mother] churche, 2d.

Item, to the hye aulter, 4d.

Item, I bequethe to the [.....] lyght in saynt Margaret's church in Creke, 1[2d?].

Item, I [bequeth to] the behove [ie behoof] of the church of saynt Margaret, [...d].

Item, [... ..] of the [brooke?] on land of Barby, in whom [by] land of [.....] More Waye.

And also I bequeth to my wyff [.....]

[The residue] of my goods not bequethyd, my charges borne in [.....] performyd, [I gyve] the one [h]alfe to [Roha..?] Dunckley my wyff, the other alfe of [.... ..] chyldren, to be payd by hevyn [ie even] porsyons by twyn them; [and] that yf any of them do departe to God, then I wyll that [they that] lyve shall have there porcions of them that be gone, [sev... ..] them that be alyffe by even porcions. And also I ordene [and make] my wyff my executrix to dyspose for the helthe of [my soul, as she] shall thynke best.

Theys men being witness, [..... .. Foster?], William Dunkley, Antony Hinckley, with others more.

46. Thomas Jones of Crick, 1539AD (NR1 Book F, F51)

[There are sections illegible due to folds in the parchment; where possible these are estimated, as shown in parentheses.

The mention of what appears to be a north porch in the church, at this early date, seems interesting. It leads to the speculation that the south door may have been left without a porch to permit carrying of banners and images in procession (as was generally customary prior to the Reformation), but that the north door was a smaller door fitted with a porch, which was probably used as the "normal" entrance (ie on non-ceremonial days).

It would appear that, in return for leaving money for repair of the north porch, Thomas Jones wishes to be buried under the paved floor of the porch when it is mended. Certainly his two gifts of 6s-8d each for paving and mending the porch, totalling 13s-4d, are generous donations. These bequests no doubt allowed him the hope that his soul would be more readily saved ...]

In the name of God, amen. The first day of Aprill in the yere of our lord God 1538 [ie calendar year 1539], I Thomas Jones in the parish of Creke and in the diocese of Lincoln, hole of mynd and of good remembrance, thankyng be our lorde God, I make my testament in this wyse.

First I bequethe my soule to almighty God, to our blessyde lady saynt Mary and to all the hole company of heven, my body to be buryed in the north [pyche? = porch] of saynt Margaret's church in Creke.

I bequethe for my mortuary as the [custom of the towne].

[Item, I] gyff leve to my mother churche, 2d.

To renewe [the] pavment, 6s-8d.

Item, to mending of the north [pyche? = porch] of saynt Margaret's churche in Creke, 6s-8d.

Item, [for the] lyghts in the churche of saynt Margaret in Creke, 16d.

Item, to my sonnys chylde Thomas Ionys, my grayt pott, and [six silver sponys].

Item, to Richard Ionys his sohn, syx silver sponys.

Item, [to Edw?]ard Ionys, a pot and a panne.

Item, to Alic Ionys a pot [.... ..].

[Item, to] Annes Ionys, my wyff and to Ambrose Ionys [... ..], whom I ordeyne and make my executors, to dyspose [for the helth]e of my soul and theres, as they shall thynk [best].

[Item,] I also bequeth to Ambros Ionys [my] sone, my [.... ..] howse.

Theys men beyng wtyeness [to this my] last wyll, Nycolas Flemming, my cosen [..... ..well], Henry Myles, with other more.

50. John Banbury of Crick, 1540 (NR1 Book G, F58)

[There are 5 Banbury wills in this series of transcripts – 4 for Crick and 1 for Ashby St Ledgers. It may be worth attempting family reconstruction for the Crick branch of the family.]

In the name of god, amen. The 8th day of December, the year of our lord god 1540, I John Banbury of the parish of Crick and in the dyaces of Lincoln, holle of mynd and syke in my body, make my last wyll in manner following.

First I bequeath my soolle unto my maker allmyghtye god, to our lady saint Mary and to all the holy company of heven to pray for me, and my body to be buryed in the church yard of saynt Margaret in Creke.

Allso I bequeath for my mortuary as the give forth.

Item, to the mother church of Lincoln, 2d.

Item, I bequeath to John Banbury my holdes[t] son all my fee lands that lye in the aforesaid, fuly to him and his heyres and the of my horsse, and allso my theym[?] and my cart and plow, and all thyngs that be longyng to them.

I bequeath to Margerie[?] my daughter a gowne and and bullock.

I bequeath to Wyllym Banbury my son a coltt, 2 sheppe and 20s of money.

I bequeath to Rychard Banbury my son a heifere and sheppe and 20s of money.

I bequeath to Alice Banbury my daughter a bullock, 2 sheppe and a

I bequeath to Thomas Banbury and Elizabeth Banbury to the ...th 40s, and that they to god a ...th of the money shall remayne to the brethren and system be and by persons.

The resydue of all my goods movable and unmovable nott bequeathed, my body brought to the ground, my legassies and detts ysiemed[?], I give and bequeath to John Banbury my oldes son, whom I make my holle executor, so to do as yt shall seem him best, for the helth of my sowll and hysson both, this beyng wtynessed John Malbe, Rychard Kylworth, whom I make overseers of thys my last will, that yt be performyd.

General Note:

In September 1541 a separate diocese of Peterborough was formed, and this removed from the jurisdiction of Lincoln the counties of Northampton and Rutland; in 1542 Oxfordshire was lost to the new see of Oxford.

52. John Malby of Crick, 1541 (NR1 Book G, F118)

[There are wills in this series for 3 members of the Malby/Mawbie family of Crick in the period 1541-1624; all are well-to-do husbandmen, and probably members of the same family, passing on the same inheritance, which may therefore be worth studying as a group. The name does not occur in any other village in this study group.]

In the name of god, amen. The 16th daye of October in the year of our lord god 1541, I John Mallbye in the parrish of Creke and in the diociss of Peterberoso, hole of mynde and in good remembrance thanks be to our lord god, make my testament in this wyse.
 First I bequeath my soule to allmyghtye god and to our lady saint Mary and to all the holy company in heven, my body to be buryed within the church yard of Saint Margaret in aforesayd.
 Item, I bequeath for my mortuary as the custom ys.
 Item, to my mother church, 4d.
 Item, I bequeath to John Mallby my son, 5 markes in
 Item, to Elizabeth Mallby my daughter, 4 markes.
 Item, to John Mallby my son, 40s, to Thomas Mallby my son a sokyng callsynth[?].
 I bequeath to Thomas Mallby's 3 chyldren, every one of them a lambe.
 Item, I bequeath to the of saint Margaret's church in Creke, 5s.
 Item, to the sepulchre lioght 4d, to the Rood Lyoght 4d, to the torches 4d, to the bells 4d.
 Allso I bequeath to Wyllyam Mallby my son, 4 of my best horsse, my cart, my plow, my harrow and all thyngs longyng to them.
 Allso, all my goods not bequeathed, my debts payd, I give and bequeath to Elizabeth my wyffe and to Wyllyam Malby [my son], whom I order and make my sole executors, to dyspose for the helthe and good bothe as they shall best thynk.
 Being wytnessed by Nycholas Stormor my gostly father, Lane, Anthony ...oby with others more.

69. John Hynton of Crick, 1545 (NR1 Book I F20)

[This is a significant document; it is the earliest instance, in this series of transcriptions, of any sign of the effects of the Henrician Reformation. This appears in several ways:
 a) by the lengthy and fulsome appellation of Henry as, among other titles, supreme head of the church in England and Ireland – but not France!
 b) by the mention of Jesus, which is inserted ahead of the more usual Catholic spiritual formulae.
 c) by the protective clause "as the law requireth", in regard of the mortuary bequest.
 d) by the curate signing himself as the scribe. Note, moreover, the surname of the curate – Nicholas [Flemmish??] – if this is really so, does his name indicate that he is of recent Flemish extraction, as we might expect to find in a priest who appears to be introducing a first few Protestant touches?
 The subsequent Probate clearance, some 2 months after the will was penned, is also the first instance of a probate clearance in this series of transcriptions, and contains useful guidance to the customary formulae and phrasing]

In the name of god amen. And in the yere of owre lord god 1545, and in the rayne of owre susserayne lord kyng Henry the VIIIth of England Fraunce and Yerland, and over the churche of England and Yerland supreme hed under god of the spirituality and the temporality, the 3rd day of August, I John Hynton of the parish of saynt Margaret in Creke and in the dyacys of Peterboroh, holle of mynde and of good remembrans thankyng be to owre lord Jesu, I make my testament and last wyll in this wysse folowyng.
 First, I bequeth my soull to almyghty god and to owre lady saynt Mary and to all the holy company of hevyn, my body to be buryed in the churche yard of saynt Margaret in Creke.
 I bequethe for my mortuary as the lawe requyreth.
 Item, I bequeth to the mother church of Peterborowth 2d.
 I bequeth to the hey autler 4d, to the bells in saynt Margaret's steepul 40d, to the torches 4d, to the sepulchre lyght 4d, to the rode lyght 4d I bequeth.
 Item, I bequeth to my son John Hynton £5.
 I bequeth to Alys my dowter 40s.

And the resydue of all my goods movabull and unmovabull nott bequethyd, I gyve and bequeth to margaret Hynton my wyffe, whom I ordeyne and make my hoole executrix, she to do as ytt shall seme her best for the helth of my soll and hyrrs both.
These men beyng wytnesse to thys my last wyll, Ambrose [Jones?] and Harry Myllys with other more. Wryttn by me F. Nycolas, curat theyre.

Probatius est pro coram nobis Tho Maumforth officio. in ... ipse 22 die month Septembris anno xvi ... commiss... fut adminstratio et executoribus in eodem nominate et indebita in ris forma in rate salno ...

73. John Capel of Crick, 1547 (NR1 Book I F18)

In the name of god amen. In the yere of our lorde god 1547 and in the Rayne of owre sussrayne lord kyng Henry the VIIIth, of Englande Fraunce and Yerland [Ireland] kyng, and over the churche of England and Eyerland supreme hed under god of the spirituality and temporality. The 16th day of July, I John Capell of the parish of saynt Margaret in Creke and in the dyacys of Peterborowth, holle of mynde and of good remembrans thankyng be owre lord Jesu, I make my testament and last wyll in thys wysse folowyng.

First I bequeth my soll to allmyghty god and to owre lady saynt Mary and to all the hooly compenny of hevayne, my body to be buried in the churche yard of saynt Margaret in Creke.

I bequethe for my mortuary as the lawe requireyth.

Item, I bequethe to my mother churche of Peterborowth 2d.

Item, I bequethe to the bells in Creke 4d.

Item, to the torches, 4d.

Item, to the rode lyght 4d.

Item, to the sepulchre lyght 4d.

Item, I bequethe to Marteyn Capell my son, a bulloke.

The resydue of all my goods not bequethyd, everythyng honestly dyscharygd, movabull and unmovabull, I gyfe and bequethe to Margaret Capell my wyffe and to Thomas Capell my son, whom I ordeyn and make my hole executours to dyssposse for my soll and theyrs both.

Wytnesses to thys my last wyll, Wyllyam Wrythe and Hary Myles and wother more ...

Wryttn by me S Nycholas Flemmish, curat there.

Probatius est pro coram nobis Thoma Maumforth officio. in ... ipse 22 die month Septembris anno xvi ... commiss... fut adminstratio et executoribus in eodem nominate et indebita in ris forma in rate salno funerarius esse.

General Note:

Henry VIII remained a Catholic until the time of his death and firmly refused to allow any Protestant practices to be introduced into the Church; but it was different with his son Edward VI, who succeeded to the throne in 1547. Edward was a boy of nine and the Government was controlled by his uncle the Duke of Somerset, who was a Protestant.

On 21 February 1548 the Privy Council ordered the removal of all images from churches, and in many areas anything that could be regarded as an image was destroyed or defaced – wall paintings, sculptures, tombs with Catholic inscriptions, glass windows, embroidery and objects of precious metal. Almost all ecclesiastical gold- and silver-work was melted down, and only a few exquisite pieces like the Gloucester candlestick and the Ramsey censer and incense-boat survive as reminders of what has been lost.

England was now in the grip of galloping inflation – the consequences of devastating harvest failures in 1550 and 1551, the ruinous costs of war, and the debasement of the coinage which had been the nearest that successive regimes since the mid-1540s could get to a coherent monetary response to crisis.

General Note:

Extracts from the Patent Rolls (copy held at Birmingham Central Library):

02-Sep-1547 (Edward VI, Vol ?? p??)

"In consideration of the manors of (list of 19 manors, mostly outside Lincs., incl the Lordship and manor of Kylesby Northamptonshire), and all the other lands by which Henry bishop of Lincoln, by deed dated 26-Aug 1EdwVI, granted to the king:

Grant to the said bishop (a quantity of other land and manors, all in Lincs.) (II872, Hampton Court, 8 August)"

This first extract shows that the church in Lincoln was to some extent compensated by the Crown, for the seizure of its lands in Kilsby and elsewhere.

18-Apr-1549 (Edward VI, Vol II p374)

"The like, for £18-13s-4d, to John Zouche, knight, Lord Zouche, and Dame Susan his wife, to grant their manors of Barby alias Baroughbye and Blakesley, 120 messuages, 30 cottages, 1 windmill, 2 dovehouses, 3000 ac. land, 200 ac. meadow, 300 ac. pasture, 200 ac. wood, 300 ac. furze and heath, and £10 rent in Barbye, Onlye, Yelwarteoft, Blakesley and Woodyend, to Laurence Casshe, clerk, and William Ryley, clerk, and the heirs of the said Laurence, to be regranted to the said John and Susan in survivorship, with remainder to the right heirs of the said John."

This second Patent Roll provides interesting information regarding the size and contents of the manor of Barby at this time. For example, the size of woodland in Barby and Blakesley together is stated to be 200 acres, which gives a clue to the size of Barby Great Wood in 1549. It is also helpful in interpreting the process of desertion of Barby's secondary settlement at Onley. It suggests that the circular mound at Onley (marked on the archaeological survey as a windmill) is more probably the remains of a dovecot – for we know from other documents that Lord Zouch had a mill at Barby, hence there cannot have been a second mill at Onley. As for the two clerics named in the second Patent Roll, Laurence Casshe (rector of Bulwick) and William Ryley (vicar of Haringworth), neither seems to have been ever actually presented to the livings of Barby or Blakesley.

75. Thomas West of Crick, 1551 (NR1 Book P F271)

[The West family of Crick features in 4 wills in this series, between 1551 and 1637. There may be some value in attempting a family reconstruction using these documents.]

In the name of god amen. The yere of our lord god 1551, the 22nd daye of maye, in the 4th yere of the reign of our soveraign lord Edward the sixth, by the grace of god of England France and Ireland king, defender of the faith [....] the [.....] [hand?] of the churche of England and Ireland, that I Thomas Weste of Creke within the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in bodye but yet good & perfytt in memorye & mynd thankes be geven to the imortall and lyvyng god, do make [.....] and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme folowyng.

First I geve and bequethe my soule to almightie god, to our lady seynt Marye and to all the celestiaall company of heven, and my bodye to be buryed in the churchyarde of Creke aforesaid.

I bequethe to the poore mans cheste 8d.

I geve and bequethe to Richard Weste my sone my teame, cart and cart geares, with all thyngs appertaynyng to all kynds of husbandrye, ploughe, harowe, with the store of all my goods movable and nonmovable.

Item, I bequethe to Henry my sone £3 eithyr in money or else in catell, and to be paid within a yere and a day after my deceasse.

Also I geve and bequethe to Davyd my sone £3 in money or ells in catell, and to be payd within a yere and a day of my deceasse in lyke maner.

The rest and resydue of my goods unbequethed I geve and bequethe wholly to Richard Weste my sone, whom I make my sole and full executor to dispose these to the pleasure of god and salvation of my sowle.

And my overseers Thomas Mason, Thomas Kylworth, Alexander [.....].

These being wytness, F[ather] John Houghe curate of the [same?], Ambrose Johns, Thomas Myles with certane others more.

Proabtio fuit 28th April 1553 etc.

76. Richard West of Crick, 1551 (NR1 Book M F124)

In the name of god amen. The 15th daye of October in the yere of our lord god 1551, I Rychard West the elder, husbandman of the towne of Creke in the countie of Northampton, being of good and perfect remembrance thanks be to god, doo ordeyne and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following.

First I bequeath my soul to almyghtie god and my bodye to be buried in the churche yarde of Creke aforsaide.

Item, I gyve and bequeath to Margerie my wyff to be unto hir at my dysesse £5 of lawfull money of Englande, and all hir owne goods which was brought with hir at the tyme of hir marriage.

Item, I gyve and bequeath to Rychard West and Ales [Alice] West my childers by my saide last wiff, £5 to be equally devyded betwyne them, and in case one dye the other to have the holle.

Item, I will that my saide childer shall be kepte after my decesse if there mothers will untill they be able to gett their owne lvyngge, at the coste of my son in law Robert Harborde.

The resydue of my goods and cattelle not bequeathed I will and bequeath to Robert Harborde my son in law, as more playnlye and at large dothe appere in a dede of gift by me, dated, made and sealed uno the sayde Robert Harbord the daye after this presentte.

The said Robert I ordeyne and make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

I witness whereof I, the saide Rychard West have put my seale to this presente the daye and yere above meyncon, and the dede of gift above saide.

Provyded notwithstandinge this same legace, I the saide Rychard have reserved dewring my lyffe tyme to be myne owne, one pyed cow, one bull heifer, 6 shyppe and 2 hyves.

Also provyded that I the saide Rychard shall have suffycient to spende at the hande of the saide Robert dewring my lyffe.

Wyttnesses Robert [Cosyn?] of Creke and John Hughe curat, Ambros Johns, John [Cosyn?], Lawrens Cole.

Probatio fuit etc coram nobis Gulielmo Bynsley in legibus bach., octavo die mensis maij anno domini 1551. Comissa fuit administratio omni bonor ditti defuncti executori in eodem nomati, et debita inris forma inrati salvo [mira?]. [Cui.....] dat sub sigillo ... hac pte vtimi die et annis predictis.

79. Anthony Donkley of Crick, 1553 (NR1 Book M F59)

[We see here, that a plain husbandman could expect to be master of a sizeable amount of disposable income; also that he could afford to raise and maintain a large family. It should be borne in mind that the Dunckley family of Crick was well-established (there are 10 Dunckley wills in this series, all from Crick) and hence had had the opportunity to build up their wealth gradually.]

In the name of god amen. The 24th daye of Februarij in the year of our lord god 1553, I Anthonye Donkley of Creke within the countie of Northampton and in the dicoese of Peterburgh, husbandman, sycke in bodie but yet (god be thanked) perfett of memorie and remembrance, do ordeyne and make thys my my testament contaynyngge my last will, in maner and forme followyngge.

Ffirse I bequeth my Soule to Almyghtie god, our ladye saynte Marie and to all the celestyall companye of hevyn, and my bodye to be buried in the churche yarde of saynte Margaret of Creeke aforsayd.

Item, I will that Margery my wyffe and [Gnys?] my sonne occupye jointlye together the lease and interest of my house with all thinge thereto belongyngge or in any wyse apptainyngge, with all other profitt halffe throwghout, bothe within the house and without.

Also I bequeth to Thomas my sonne the some of £6: 13s: 4d, to be delyveryd at the daye of his maryage.

Item, I gyve to the same Thomas a colte.

Also I bequeth to Annie my daughter £6: 13s: 4d, to be delyveryd at the daye of hir marryage.

Also I bequeth to Jane my daughter £3, to be delyveryd at the daye of hir marryage.

Item, to Mary my daughter, £3, to be delyveryd at the daye of hir maryage.

Also I bequeth to Elizabeth my daughter £3, to be delyveryd at the daye of hir marryage.

Item I bequeth to Alys my daughter £3, to be delyveryd at the daye of hir marryage.

Also I bequeth to Antonye my youngest sonne, other £3 to be delyveryd at the daye of his marryage.

Further, yf soo fortune of the parties above rehersed do dysesse [ie decease] before the daye of their marryage to remayne amongste the rest of them beinge on lyve.

Item, I bequethe to Jone Mawbe a shyppe and to Agnes his daughter a shipp.

And to any one of my god childerne, 4d.

Item, I bequethe to Julyan Whiteheede a shyppe, and to any one of his childern a shyppe.

Item, I bequethe to Ysbell Hodgys a shypp, and to Sir John Howghe curat of Creeke a hogrell*.
The rest of my goods unbequethed, my detts beyng paide my legace performyd and my bodye buried, I gyve and bequethe wholly and fullye to Margerie my wyffe and [Gnys?] my sonne whom I make my executors to dyspose them to the pleasure of god and the helthe of my soule and all chrestyn soules And my oversears [hereof?] Thomas Donkley, Robert Donkley my brethren and William Malbye of Creeke.

These bearing witness, Sir John Howght curat of the same, John Donkley, John Banburie, Thomas [Kylworth?], Robert Mawbe with certayne others.

[* A hoggrell, or hogerele, was a sheep of either sex after the first shearing]

P'bate fuit et per coram nobis Gulielmo Kyngley in legibus baq. 29 die mons maij ano dni 1554.
Commissa fuit administratio omni bonos ditti defuncti execut. in eode nominatis et debita in ris forma inrate sulvo inic. [.....] dal sub [.....] in quo [p...ta] ultim.... die et annis predictie.

General Note:

Extract from the Patent Rolls (copy held at Birmingham Central Library):

06-Jul-1554 (Philip & Mary, 1553-58):

"Thomas Rogers to the vicarage of Assheby Leadegar, dioc. Peterborough."
Thus, a new priest (with catholic leanings?) was appointed to Ashby Ledgers at this point.

84. William Whitehead of Crick, 1555 (NR1 Book M F65)

[Here also is a prosperous husbandman – even more so than Anthony Donkley above. This will is also interesting, in that, as in the preceding will of William Bartell of Barby, it deals first with the bequests to the living before making the majority of bequests to the church – except for a trivial token 2d to the high altar.

Note, by the way, the reference to "Penny Paid Balk". From the comments on p42 of T.E.Scrutton's seminal work of 1886 on "Commons and Common Lands", it seems likely that this is a reference to a balk of land within Crick 's open fields, on which one paid 1d/annum per beast for grazing rights – yet Whitehead is granting rights on this land in his will, so that he clearly has some form of ownership – if this ownership is a part of his rights of cow-common, this might suggest that Crick had enclosed some of its cow-commons at this early date.]

In the name of god amen. The yere of our lorde god 1555 and the 15th daye of September, I William Whytheade, parish of Creeke in the county of Northampton and dyocesse of Peterborow, husbandman, sicke in body but yet of good and perfit memorie god be prayسد, doe ordeyne, make and constytute this my last will and testament in manner and fforme followynge.

Ffirst I bequethe my Soule to allmyghtie god, our ladye Saynt Marie and to all the celestiall companye of hevyn, and my bodye to be buried in the churche yarde of Creeke aforsayde.

I gyve and bequethe to the hyghe awlter of Creeke 2d.

Item, I will and bequeth that Rychard Whitehed and Davy Whitehed my sonnes after my decesse to and joyntlye together the lease of my farme.

Also I gyve and bequethe to Thomas Whitehed my sonne £5 to be payde within a yere and a daye after my decesse.

Item, I bequethe to Henrye my sonne other £5 to be payde within two yeaes and 2 dayes after my decesse.

Item, I bequethe to Margerye my daughter £5 to be payde at the daye of hir mariage.

Item, I bequethe to Julian my daughter other £5 to be payde at the [daye] of hir mariage in like manner. I will that Henrye my sonne and Margerye my daughter have any of them within the yere after my decesse 20s apece in parte of payment of their sayde £5 toward the runnyng of their [stoke? stope?].

Item, I will and bequeth that yf it happen any of my sayde childryne as Thomas, Henrye, Margerye and Julian my daughter to decesse before they do marrye, that the porson of that partie so decessyd to be distributed equally amonge the reste being on lyve, and so [... ..] amonge them foure.

Item, I bequeth to Willm my sone my russet cote and to my godson his chylde an ewe and a lambe.

Also I gyve and bequeth to John my sonne a land of barley and shortt beans and apece land on Penny Payde Balk, and to any of hys chyltren a hogrell* apece.

Item, to John Kylworthe an ewe and a lambe.

And to Elizabeth Kylworthe an hogrell.

Item, I bequeth to Agne[s] Kylworthe my daughter 2 Ewes and 2 lambes, and one of the oldest oke of the [hyves?] in the garden.

Item, I bequeth to Elizabeth Tomson my daughter apece of grasse in sand to make hyr a load of hay on.

Item, to John my sonne a hogrell.

Item, I bequeth to any of my god chyldren 4d apece.

Item, I bequeth towarde the byeng [ie buying] of a new crosse, 2s, and toward the byeng of a grayll boote, 2s.

Item, I bequethe foure dosen of bread to be gyven and de[vyded?] amongst the poor people of Creeke at the daye of my buryall.

Item, I bequeth to the torches 4d.

The rest and resydew of my goods unbequethed, my dett and legace payde and performyd, I gyve and bequeth wholly and fullye to Hye Whitehed and Davy my sonnes, whom I make my executors to dyspose them to the pleasure of god and the helthe and welthe of my Soules, my father and mother, my ffryndes and all christyan Soules.

And my oversears hereof Ambrose Johans, Lawrence [Cols?] and Thomas Kylworthe.

These beyng witnes, Sir John Houghe, curat of the same, John Symons and Davy Myles with others more.

[hogrell, or hogerel = a sheep of either sex after the first shearing]

Probati fuit et per coram nobis Gulielmo Binsley m legibs 26th die mensie septembris ano domini 1555. commissa fuit administratio omn. bonos ditti defuncti executoribus in eodem noimatis et debita in ris forma in rate salva inre in quo pte die et annis predictis

General Note:

- Heavy and prolonged rainfall produced disastrous harvests in 1555 and 1556, leading to severe famine in England (and also throughout most of northern and western Europe).
- Hard on its heels came the worst epidemic of the century – of influenza – ravaging most of the country in 1557 & 1558 and possibly also hastening on the death of Queen Mary herself.
- It seems likely to the author that these evils were probably all caused by atmospheric fallout from a major volcanic eruption.
- Elizabeth took the throne in 1558. Harvests continued good for the first 30 years of her reign

This combination of appalling weather, failed harvest and epidemic disease is clearly the background to the massive peak in the number of wills for the period 1557-1559 which follows, and the transcript texts should be interpreted with this in mind.

89. Robert Harbert of Crick, 1557 (NR1 Book P F305)

[This will, though plain and straightforward, has a nice old-fashioned phrasing to it – presumably the work of Father John Houghe the curate whose name appears among the witnesses. Note the way in which one of the witnesses, a certain Leodgar Banbury – whose own will is also recorded in this series of transcriptions – is named herein very deliberately as "Leodger of Banburie"; thus we see a perfect example of how a placename-of-origin becomes a man's surname, and we also see that this habit was still somewhat flexible as late as the 2nd half of the 16th century. It may be added in passing that the forename "Leodgar" itself is a corruption of "Leodegarius", the patron saint of Ashby St Ledgers ...]

In the name of god amen. The 7th daye of May anno dom 1557, I Robert Harbert of Creke within the countye of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being sicke in bodye but yet of good and perfect memorye (god be thanked) do make and ordayne this my testament contaynyng herein my last will in manner and forme folowyng.

First I bequethe my soule to almighty god, our lady saynt Marie and to all the celestially company of heaven, and my bodye to be buried in the church yard of st Margarett in Creke aforesaid.

Item, I bequethe to the highe alter of Creke for my tenths, oblacyons and other duetyes not fully done and paide at all tymes for the discharge of my consciens, 12d.

Item, I bequethe to William Harbert my sonne £13-6s-8d, whereof £10 of the same to be paide at the daye of his mariage and fyve marks to be paide within a yeaere and a daye after his saide mariage [NB: £13-6s-8d is 20 marks, which is evidently to be paid as 15 marks + 5 marks].

Also I bequethe to Margery Harbert my daughter tenne pounds, whereof seven pounds of the same to be paide at the daye of her mariage and the other £3 to be paide within a yeaere and a daye after her saide mariage.

Item, I geve and bequethe to Agnes Harbert my youngest daughter other £10, whereof seven pounds of the same to be paide at the daye of her mariage and the other £3 to be paide within a yeaere and a daye after her saide mariage.

The rest and residue of my goods not gyven and bequethed, my bodye reverently and decently buried, all my legacies and other my gyftes paide and performed, I geve and bequethe to Alis my wiffe and Richard my sonne, whom I make my full and true executors of this my last will and testament, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie god, the helthe and welthe of my soule, my frends soules and all christian soules; and the supervisor hereof for the due execution of the same, William Webbe my son in the lawe.

These being witness unto the same, Sir John Houghe curate of Creke, Lawrens [Coole?], Leodger of Banburie, William Wright of the same, with divers others.

Probatio fuit 1st December 1557 etc.

91. Ambrose Johns (Jones) of Crick, 1557 (NR1 Book Q F7)

[Ambrose Johns (or Jones) is the eldest son and heir of the wealthy yeoman Thomas Jones, whose will dated 1539 appears earlier in this series, and is also probably the grandfather of Edward Jones whose will dated 1619 (see later in this series) is so significant in the history of the depopulation of Onley.

Ambrose Jones has been mentioned in several earlier wills, as a witness or overseer. He is a very wealthy husbandman (in fact, he should more accurately be styled "super-yeoman"), with land in no fewer than 3 parishes (significantly, this includes Onley), and his will makes it clear that he formerly lived in at least one of the other parishes (it was probably Barby).

This will appears to have been drafted by a lawyer rather than a priest – partly because it lacks most of the usual traditional bequests to the church, and also because it abounds with legal phrases which have not been evident in any earlier wills in this series of transcripts.

Note also the bequests that he makes to Barby, Winwick, Kilsby and Yelvertoft, and the reference to Sir Thomas Cave – this man is clearly well-connected and of status only just below the gentry.

Also note the very significant bequests for buying new church plate and ornaments – presumably to replace what had been taken away at the Reformation, under the encouragement of Queen Mary's doomed attempt to bring back the catholic church in England.

Finally, he leaves money for repair of a named lane in Crick – Watts Lane, which is specifically stated to lead down to one of the fields – so that it seems likely that this lane was on the south/west side of the village, bordering Kilsby parish; it therefore also gives a clue as to the location of Ambrose Jones's farm, which was probably fairly central within the village, and close to Crick church.]

In the name of god amen. The second daie of decembre in the yere of oure lord god 1557, I Ambrose Johns of Creke within the countie of Northampton and dioces of Peterborough, husbandman, sicke and deceassed [ie diseased] in bodie but yet being of hole mynde and good remembrance thankes be to god, do make and ordeyne this my last testament contaynyng therein my last will, in manner and forme folowyng.

First I commend and bequeath my sole to almightie god, our lady saint Mary and all the celestially company of heaven, and my bodie to be buried in the churche or churche yarde of saint Margaret of Creke.

Item, I bequeath to the hye aulter of saint Margarett of Creke, whereof I am now a parishioner, fore my tithes and oblations by me forgotten or with-helde, if any such be in the discharge of my soule.

Item, I will and bequeath to Elizabeth my wif, all my purchased lande in Creke or els wherever [ie and anywhere else that I have any land], and besides the third tenth and jointure of of all my free landes in Creeke, Barby and Onley, during her naturall lyf, with halff my goodes thoroughout, moveable and unmoveable.

Further I will if it happen the said Elizabeth my wife to marry agayne, that then the said Elizabeth my wife not to have any tenth of my purchased landes either in Creke or els where, but only to enjoy her

[dowage?] of all my free landes, and to have of my goods £20 with her [clothes?], and to [depart?] without any further interest either in lands or goodes.

Item, I will and bequeath to Thomas Johans my sonn, all my free lands in Creke, Barby and Onley, with the lease and [tenement?] of my farme that I now dwell in, and the other halff of my goods moveable and unmoveable equally to be divided between Thomas Johans and Richard Johns my sonnes, as horses, beastes, shepe and other cattell with all other thinges belonging and appurtaining to all kindes of husbandrie and howshold.

Item, I will and bequeath to Richard Johans my sonne, all my purchased landes in Creke, which I lately purchased of Sir Thomas Cave knight, to remayne to the said Richard Johans and to his heires for evermore, after the naturall wi lyf death of Elizabeth my wife.

Also I give and bequeath to Alyce Johans my daughter £40, whereof £30 of the same to be paid at the daie of her marriage and ten pounds within a yere of her said marriage.

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth Johans my daughter 40 markes

Item, I bequeath to Wm [Irm....] my sonne in the lawe 20 shepe, that is to witt a [le.... ..] myne hoggwills, and to Agnes his wife 40s.

Item, I will and bequeath to 4 townes next adionynge to Creeke, that is to saie Yelvertoft, Winwicke, Kilsbie and Barby, severally to every towne I give 6s 8d, to be distributed amongst the poore people of every of the said parishes by the discrecyon and order of two honest men in every of the saide townships.

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth Bailye 20s.

Item, I bequeath to William Bailly other 20s.

Also to John Bailie in his case other 20s.

Also I bequeath towards the buying of a new grail boat 26s 8d, and towards the buying of a crosse 6s 8d, to remayne in the parish church of Creeke for a memoriall and remembrance of me and all my friends there to be praied for.

Also I bequeath towards the reparacyons of the hye waies in Creeke, that is to saie from my house down towards Wattes Lane and so to the field, 20s.

Item, I bequeath to every godchild 4d.

The rest and residue of my goods unbequeathed, my bodie decently and reverently brought to the ground, any legacis and bequests well and truly paid and performed, I give and bequeath to Elizabeth my wife, Thomas Johans and Richard Johans my sonnes, whom I make my hole and true executors of this my last will and testament, to dispose them to the will and pleasure of of almighty god and to the health of my soule, my fathers and mothers, my friends and all christian soules.

And my overseers hereof for the [....] execution of the same, Mr Robert Colin...son of Creeke and John [Longhe?] curate theare, Richard Eltington of Shawell, my [brusman?] Richard Garrat and Lawrence Cole.

These being witness to the same, Richard Myles, Thomas [Masbin?], William Harbert and Gmye [ie William?] Doncklye, with others more.

Probatio fuit 12 die Maij ann dom. 1558, administratio cor. fug. fuit executori de salvo. Inre cimin..... ..

93. William Harbert of Crick, 1557 (NR1 Book Q F3)

[Between 1557 and 1614 there are 4 Harbert wills in this series of transcripts – all from Crick, and all presumably relating to the same family. The family line seems to be one of solid husbandmen, steadily advancing towards yeoman status ...]

In the name of god amen. The 22nd daye of January in the yere of our lord god 1557, I William Harbert of Creke the yonger, husbandman, sicke and diseased in bodie but yet of good and perfect remembrance (god be thanked), do make this my present testament, reckonynge herein my last will, in manner and forme folowinge.

First I bequeath my sole to almightie god, to our ladie saint Marye and to all the holly company of heaven, and my bodie to be buried in the churche yarde of Saint Margaret of Creke.

Item, I bequeath to the high alter 8d.

Item, I bequeath to the belles 12d.

Item, I bequeath to the rode lighte 8d.

Item, I geve and bequeath to Roger Harbert my sonne one iron lannde cart and £4, with 2 paire of carte geares.

Item, I bequeath to Ambrose Harbert my sonne £4 and one paire of [hard?] whelis {ie wheels}.

Item, I bequeath to George Harbert my sonne £4.

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Harbert my sonne £4, and after the deceasse of Alice my wife to have a carte.

Item, I bequeath to Richard Harbie my sonne in the lawe and to Jone my daughter his wife, to every of their childer one ewe lambe

[This will breaks off in mid-transcript – it may be possible to locate the rest of the text ...]

103. Thomas Grene of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F80)

In the name of god amen. The firste daie of Auguste in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Thomas Grene of Creke within the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, being sicke and disceassid in bodie but yet of perfytt remembrance and good mynde god be thankid, do make and ordeign this my present testament contigning herein my last will in maner and form folowinge.

First I bequeath and comytt my sowle unto almightie god, our ladie sayny Marye and to all the celestiaall companie in heaven, and my bodie to be buried in the churche yard of saynt Margarett of Creke aforesaid.

Item, I bequeath and will that Elizabeth my wiff and Thomas my sonne shall jointly occupie my ground together with all my goods moveable and unmoveable, and the said Elizabeth my wiff to be head duringe her naturall lyffe.

Item, I bequeath to Agnes my daughter £8, to be paid as foloweth: first £4 to be paid at michelmas after my deceasse or within 1 moneth after; and the other £4 to be paid at the daie of her mariage.

The reste and residue of my goodes unbequeathed, my legaces paid and performed and my bodie reverently and decently buried, I gyve and bequeath wholly and fulley to Elizabeth my wiffe and Thomas my sone, whom I make my trew and very executors of this my last will, to dispose them to god's pleasure and to the healte of my sowle, my father and mother and all Christian sowles.

And the supervisors and oversears hereof for the due execucyon of the same, John Banbury of Creke, Richard West and John Aley of the same towne.

Theise being witness to the same, Sir John Houghe curat there, Thomas Myles with certen others.

Probatio fuit 20 die Aprilis Anno dom 1559 etc

105. Robert Donckley of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F81)

[From the nomination of his supervisors and overseers, from Hillmorton, Willoughby and Barby, we see that Robert Donckley of Crick moved in a circle well outside his own direct community. We have already seen that the Dunckley family of Crick was well-established in the village over a long period – here we see that they also moved and were influential in a larger circle.]

In the name of god amen. The 9th daie of Auguste in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Robert Donckley of Creke in the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being sicke and diseased in bodie but yet of perfect memorie and remembrance god be thankid, do ordeign and make this my present testament contaynng herein my last will, in manner and form folowing.

First I comytt and bequeath my sowle to almightie god our ladie saint Marye and to all the holy company of heaven, and my bodie to be buried in the church or churchyarde of saint Margytt of Creke.

Item, I bequeath to the hie aulter of Creke 12d.

Item, I bequeath towards the reparacyon of the bells 12d.

Item, I will that Agnes my wiffe and John my sonne shall jointly together occupie my farm during the tyme of her wydowhood.

Item, I bequeath to Alys my daughter £5.

Item, I bequeath to Isabell my daughter £5.

Item, I bequeath to Henry my sone £5.

Provided if it happen any of my foresaid children as Alyce Isabell and Henry to deceasse before they do mary, that then I will any of them to be others heir in all suche cases, and the longer lyver to enjoye the portion of the partie so deceased.

Item, I bequeath to George Ffrenche a yereling calf.

Item, I bequeath to John Donckley my brother a russit coat and a shepe.

The rest and resydew of my goodes unbequeathed, my dettes and legaces paid and performed, I gyve and bequeath wholly and fully to Agnes my wiffe and John my sonne whom I make my verie and true executors of this my last will, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie god, the healte of my sowle, my father and mother and all christen sowles.

And the supervisors hereof for the oversight and due execution of the same, Thomas Donkley of Hilmorton my brother, Wm Marriott of Willoughbie and Richard Ffrenche of Barbie. Theis being witnesses, B[rother] John Houghe curate of Creke, John Donkley of the same, John Banbury, William Malbye with divers others.

Probatio fuit 20 die Aprilis Ano dom 1559 etc

106. Leodgar Banbury of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F84)

[There are 5 Banbury family wills in this series – 4 of them for Crick and one from Ashby St Ledgers. Since Leodgar Banbury has a massive family with no fewer than 8 children, it is not difficult to understand why the later Banbury wills in the 1600s indicate that the family is by then living in somewhat reduced circumstances.]

In the name of god amen. The 9th day of August in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Leodgar Banbury of Creke in the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being sicke and diseased in my bodie but yet of perfect memorie and remembrance god be thankid, do ordeygn and make my present testamente contaynyng therein my last will, in manner and forme folowinge. First I bequeath and comytt my sowle to almightie god our ladie saint Marye and all the celestiaall companie in heaven, and my bodie to be buried within the churchyarde of saint Margarett of Creke aforesaid.

Item, bequeath to the hie aulter of Creke 4d.

Item, bequeath towards the reparacyons of the bells, 12d.

Item, bequeath toward the roode light 8d.

Item, bequeath to Richard my sonne £4.

Item, bequeath to Thomas my sonne £4.

Item, bequeath to William my sonne £4.

Item, bequeath to Robert my sonne £4.

Item, bequeath to Edmonde my sonne £4.

Item, bequeath to John my sonne 50s.

Item, bequeath to Alys my daughter 50s.

Item, bequeath to Leodgar my sonne £3.

All which goodes to be delyverid to the above-namyd parties at the daie or daies of their mariages.

And further I will that if it happen any of my foresaid children to decease before the daie of their mariage, that then I will the portion of that partie so deceased to be equallie devided amongst the rest being a lyve.

The rest and residewe of my goods unbequeathed, my dettes and legaces paied and performed, my bodie decently and reverently buried, I gyve and bequeath wholly and fullie to Jone [Jane?] my wiffe, whom I make my sole executrice of this my last will, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie god, the healthe of my sowle my father and mother and all christian sowles.

And the supervisors hereof for the due execucyon of the same, Lawrence Coole of Creke my neigboure. Theis witness being Sir John Houghe Curate there, Richard West, William Marriott, Robert Watte with others.

Probatio fuit 20 die Aprilis Ano dom. 1559 ...etc

112. Thomas Mason of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F68)

[This is another excellent example of a wealthy husbandman (or more accurately, a yeoman), with plenty of money to dispose of, and with many bequests by which he plans specifically to improve the whole community and the neighbouring communities. It may be compared, for instance, with the 1557 will of Ambrose Jones, also of Crick .

There are other similarities between the two men's wills; for instance, the occurrence of the rather uncommon forename Ambrose, and the friendship of both men with the wealthy Cave family. And finally, there is a strong hint that Thomas Mason has previously lived in another of the local villages, in the statement "Creke, wherof I am nowe a parishioner".]

In the name of god amen. The 25th daie of August in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Thomas Mason of Creke in the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being of good and

perfect memorie and in prosperous helthe god be thanked, do ordeign and make this my present testament containyng therein my last will in manner and form folowinge.

First I comytt and bequeath my soule to almightie god, our ladie saint Marie and to all the celestiaall companie in heaven, and my bodie to be buried in church or churchyarde of saint Margaret of Creke.

Item, I bequeath to the hie aulter of saint Margaret of Creke wherof I [am nowe a parishioner?] for oblacyons or tithes by me forgotten or [.....] if any such be in the discharge of my testament in that be falt, 3s 4d.

Also I bequeath to Ambrose Mason my sonne, fyftie pounds of my goods besides his own stock not accompted herein, wherof £20 of the same to be delyvered at May daie next comynge, and the other £30 within the yere after my decease.

Item, I bequeath to Emma Cave £7.

Also I bequeath to Prudence Cave her sister, other £7.

And if it happen either of them decease before thei do marye, that the one with the longer lyver to enioye [ie enjoy] the hole of the partie so deceased.

Item, I gyve to any of my children's children a shepe a pece.

Item, I bequeath to any godchild 4d.

Item, I bequeath to Winwicke, Yelvertoft and Kilsbie, to any of these townshippes 3s a pece, to be distributed by the discrete order of the curate and the honestie of every of the said townshippes, to the [use?] of their churches.

Also I bequeath towards the reparacyon of the Steple at Creke and the pointynge of the same 10s.

Item, I bequeath towards the maintenance of the bells 12d.

Item, I bequeath to John England 3 shepe, and to Julyan his wiffe the covring for a bed.

Item, I will and bequeath towards the mending of the hie roade in Creke, that is to wytt between my howse and the church, 3s 4d.

Item, I bequeath towards the scowring the [pond?] at Creke hill, 2s.

Item, I bequeath to John Mason my sone 4 shepe.

Also I bequeath to [Badegunde?] Englande my servannt an ewe and a lambe.

Item, bequeath to Sir John Houghe curat of Creke an hoggerell to pray for all Christian soules.

The rest and residue of my goodes unbequeathed, my debtes and legace paied and performed and my bodie decently and reverently buried, I gyve and bequethe wholly and fullie to William Mason my sonne, whom I make my verie trew and faithfull sole executor of this my last will, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie God, the health of my soule and my father and mother and all Christian soules. And my supervisors hereof for the [.....] execution of the same, John Mason my sone, William Hall, and John Englande my sonne in the lawe, and for their paynes herein every one of them to have 2s.

Theis being witnesses to the same, Sir John Houghe curat there, John Donckley and John Lawe with sevrall others.

Probatio fuit 2 die Marcij Ann dom 1558 etc

115. Richard West of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F89)

[There are 4 West family wills in this series – all from Crick, and dated between 1551 and 1637. It seems likely that a family profile could be created for this group.]

In the name of god amen. The 6th day of October in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Richard West of Creke within the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being sicke and diseased in bodie but yet of good remembrance and perfect memorie god be thankid, do ordaign and make this my present testament, tokynyng therein my last will, in manner and form folowinge.

First I comytt and bequethe my sowle to almightie god, to our lady saint marie and to all the celestiaall companie in heaven, and my bodie to be buried withyn the churchyarde of saint Margaret of Creeke.

Item, bequethe the hie aulter of Creeke 4d.

Item, bequethe towards the reparacyon of the belles of Creeke 20d.

Also I bequethe and will to Agnes my wiffe the lease of my howse during the yeres comprised in a pare of indentures, if she kips her self widowe; and if she do marye, then I will she shall leave it to Thomas my sonne, or to one of my children whom she shall thinke [mote?] for it, with my whole [farme?] with all thinges that belong to all kynd of husbandrye.

Item, I bequethe to Thomas my sonne 40s.

Item, bequethe to Robert my sonne 40s.

Item, bequethe to John my sonne 40s.

Item, bequethe to Elizabeth my daughter £3 6s 8d.

Item, bequethe to Jone my daughter 40s.

Item, bequethe to Isabell my daughter 40s.

Item, bequethe to Margarett my daughter 40s.

The rest and residewe of my goodes unbequethid, my detts and legaces paid and performed, my bodie decently and reveerently buried, I gyve and bequethe wholly and fullie to Agnes my wiffe, whom I make my sole executrix of this my last will, to dispose them to the pleasure of god, the helthe of my sowle, my father and mother and all christen sowles.

And my overseers hereof John West my brother and Thomas Kylworthe.

These being witnesses to the same, F[ather] John Houghe curate there, Thomas Mason and Wm Mason with divers others.

Probatio fuit 20 die Aprilis Anno dom 1559 etc

118. Freemand Eton of Crick, 1558 (NR1 Book Q F24)

In the name of god amen. The third day of December in the yere of our lord god 1558, I Freemand Eton of Creke in the countie of Northampton and diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, being sicke and deseased in bodie but yet of good perfect memorie and remembrance god be thankid, do orden and make this my present testament conteyning herein my last will, in manner and forme folowinge.

First I comytt and bequeath my soule to almightie god, our ladie saint Mary and all the holy company in heaven, and my bodie to be buried within the churchyard of saint Margarett of Creeke.

Item, I gyve and bequeath to Mathew and Richard my sonnes the [tac..?] and interest of the lease of my howse, jointly to occupie together untill Richard my sonne come to the age of 21 yeres, and then Richard to have the whole occupiing to himself at that age if he lyve unto it. If he chance to decease before that age, then the whole title to remayne to Mathew my sonne and my legace performide out of the whole stocke.

The rest of my goods I will shall be equally devided and distributed between Mathew and Richard my sonnes.

Also I bequeath to [Elinor?] my daughter £3-6s-8d to be paied at the daye of her mariage.

Item, I bequeath to Julyan my daughter £3-6s-8d to be paied in [li...ast] at the daye of her marriage.

The residue of my goods unbequeathed, my legaces and debts paied and performyd and my bodie reverently and decently buried, I gyve and bequeath wholly and fully to Mathew and Richard my sonnes, whom I make my true and faithfull executors of this my last will, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie god, the helth of my soule and all christen soules, and my overseers hereof to guyd my children untill thei come to lawfull yeres of discrecyon, William Mason, John Myles and Richard [Sowell?].

These being witnesses to the same, B[rother] John Houghe curate, Richard Banbury and Thomas Esson with diverse others more.

Probatio fuit 19 die Octobris anno predicto etc

140. John Beane of Crick, 156? (NR1 Book P F25)

In the name of god amen. Anno dom [the copy scribe has omitted the year! We can therefore only place it roughly in the 1560s] et decimo quarto die mensis Juni, I John Beane of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke in bodye but wholle of mynd, doe this my last will and testament in manner and forme folowyng.

First I bequethe my soule unto almightye god and my bodye to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke.

Item, I geve and bequethe unto the pavement [....] 4d.

Item, I bequethe to William my sonne £5[?], to be deliveryd at the age of 18 yeare.

Also I bequethe to Elizabeth my daughter £5, to be deliveryd at her yeares.

Item, I bequethe to Richard my sonne £4, to be deliveryd at 21 yeares of age.

Item, I bequethe to Alice my daughter £3, to be deliveryd at age same yeare.

Item, I bequethe to Emma my daughter £3, at like yeare.

Item, I bequethe to Sybell my daughter £3, to be deliveryd at like yeare.

Item, I bequethe to John Beane my youngest sonne £3, to be deliveryd at the same tyme before apoynted.

And finally do I will [without?] [.....] on any of my said children to be deceased before there yeares so expressed in this my last will and testament, their part to remaine amongst the rest to be equally divyded amongst them.

The residue of my goods ...

[NB: this will is not finished – the next page of the original is lacking from the copy, and should be added to the transcript]

143. William Malby of Crick, 1566 (NR1 Book P F97)

[There are 3 wills for this family – that of John Malby in 1541, the present one in 1566, and that of Edward Mawbie in 1624. This testator is the eldest son and heir and executor of John Malby of 1541.]

In the name of god amen. The 9 daye of Maye in the year of our lord god 1566, I William Malby of Creeke in countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in bodye and of good memorye, do ordayne and make my present testament containing herein my last will and testament, in manner and forme folowyng.

First I bequethe my soule unto almightie god maker of all thinges, and my bodye to be buryed in the churchyard of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I bequethe the poore mans goffer [ie coffer] 4d.

Also I will that Alice my wiffe and John my son shall joynly occupye the takes of my house together so longe as she doth remayne wedowe and soole. And yf yt happen the said Alice my wiffe to marye, that then she to depart quyety off and from the ground and to have £20 and so to avoyd, leaving all thinges movable and nonmovable unto John my son.

I bequethe to Elizabeth my daughter £10 and 14 hoggs.

Item, I bequethe to Philip my sonne £5, 5 ewes and lambes.

Also I bequethe to Richard my sonne £5 and 5 ewes and lambes.

And others of them to be other heirs yf any of them chance to decease before they be maryed.

Item, I bequethe to Susanna my daughter £5 and 5 ewes and lambes.

I bequethe to John my brother £20.

Item, I bequethe to Jane my syster £5 and so long as she ys contented to remayne with Alice my wiffe and John my sonne, to have her fynding with them; and yf not, to take her £5 and so quyety to depart them.

Also I bequethe to John Pultney my servant 3 hoggrells.

Item, I bequethe to William [Danyel?] my godsone a ewe with a lambe.

The rest and resydue of my goods not bequethed, my legace payd and performed and my bodye decently and reverently buryed, I geve and bequethe to Alice my wiffe and John my sonne, whom I make my full and true executors of this my last will and testament, to dispose them to the pleasure of almightie god and to the performance of the worke of charitie, compassion and mercie. [overseers??] [Richard?] Myles, Guy Donkley and John Malby my brother.

These being witnesses, Sir John Hough curat of Creke, Rychard Myles, John Donkley, Rich Harbert and [George?] Cole, with others more.

Probatio fuit 12 die Aprilis 1566 etc. [ie 1567 by the modern calendar]

145. Thomas Kilworth of Crick, 1567 (NR1 Book P F41)

[The Kilworth family of Crick appears in many documents throughout this period. They feature in 4 wills in this series, in 1567, 1623, 1684 and 1698 – and using the information in these wills, a family profile may be built up.]

In the name of god amen. Fourth daye of month of March anno dom 1566, in this the 8th year of the reign of our sovereign Lady Elizabeth, Quene of Englande, France and Irland, I Thomas Kilworth of Creeke within the countie of Northampton and of the diocese of Peterborough, husbandman, sicke in bodye but yet of good and perfect memorye thanks be to god, do make this my last will and testament in manner and forme folowyng.

First I bequethe my soule unto almightye god and my body to be buryed in the churchyard of St Margaret of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I bequethe to the poor men chest of C[reeke] 4d.

Allso I bequethe to Agnes my wiffe and John my sonne the takings and lease of my house and ground, jointlye to occupye the same betwene them during the tyme of her wydowhode.

But if it happen the said Agnes my wiffe to marye againe, or that she not agree with the said John my sonne, that then I will she shall depart with the former, and to have the one half of all my goods

movable and nonmovable, the teams [ie plough teams] only excepted, released unto John my sonne with all kinds of things belonging to all manner of husbandrye.

Item, I bequethe unto Elizabeth my daughter £15 to be delivered and paid at her daye of marying out of the hole shared betwene my wiffe and John my sonne. The residue of my goods unbequethed, my detts being paid and performed and my body decently and reverently buried, I give and bequethe to Agnes my wiffe and my sonne, whom I make my executors. And my overseers are [.... ..] William Malbye and William Mason and William Preste.

These being witnesses, Sir John Houghe, vicar of Creeke, Henry Sherman, with others more.

Probatio fuit 4 die Novembris anno predicto etc

162. Richard Stonley of Crick, 1580 (NR1 Book V F40)

In the name of god amen. The second daye of November in the yeare of our lord God 1580, I Richard Stonley of Crick in the countie of Northampton and in the diocese of Peterburgh, husbandman, being sicke in bodie but yet of good and perfect memorie God be prayesd, do ordeyne and make my testament contayninge therein my last will, in manner and forme following.

First I give and bequeath my soule to almightie God, and my bodie to be buryed in the churchyard of Creike aforesaid.

Item, I will and bequeath to John Stonley my sonne the takinge and the leases of the interest of [sin? = seisin??] and tittle which I have or maye have by any meanes in the right of the said leases.

Also I geve to my other thre children, William, Richard and Margaret, fivetene pounds apeece, to be payd unto them when they come to the age of 26 yeares.

Item, I will that William and Richard my sonnes shall have at the age of 21 yeares, either of them 5 pounes apeece in part of payment of the £15, towards the renewing of there [ie their] stocks.

Also I will that if Margaret my daughter be ruled by her frends, she to have £5 besydes the £15 before expressed.

Item, I will that if yt happen any of my said children as William, Richard and Margaret, to deceasse before they be 26 yeares of age, that then the porcion of that [...] so deceased to be distributed equallie amongst the rest.

Also I give to Franc my sonne in lawe and to his wiffe, 2s in money and one bullocke.

Also I give to his two children a hoggrell apeece.

Also I geve to Franc my sonne and his wiffe and 2 children theire fyndinge as they have and these 3 yeares last past, that is to saie meate, drinke and clothes, and the present of 12 strike of grayne being sowed, and he to have [thinreuse?] and 10 sheppes comens [ie grazing room on the commons for 10 sheep], and 6 strike of barley and 6 strike of pease, and so to contynewe and worke as he hath done untyl the feast of St Michael the archangel next ensuinge.

Also I geve Little a hoggrell.

The rest and resydewe of all my goods and chattells un bequethed, my debts and legacies payed and performed, I geve and bequeath whollie and fullie to John Stonley my sonne, whom I make my sole executor to dispose to the pleasure of God.

And I make my overseers Thomas Parkyns [or Darkyns?] and John Kylworth.

Witnesses to this my testament, John Hinckley, Henrie Sherman, Thomas Parkyns [or Darkyns?], Richard Maryat, George Cocks and John Atkyns.

Probatio fuit ... 17 December 1580 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad summum £47-4s.

165. John Dunckley of Crick, 1586 (NR1 Book V F250)

[The relatively new formula "renouncing all other wills and testaments" (which first appears in the 1572 will of Julian/Gillian Smythe of Onley, earlier in this series) suggests that John Dunckley had made at least one previous will; and since he is quite well to do, this is very likely.

This man is almost certainly the eldest son of Robert Dunckley whose will appears in 1558 above, and who therefore inherited most of his father's husbandry. He is a fairly prosperous man – not in the top

tier of yeomen farmers, but clearly pushing up towards that status, as the value of his inventory confirms.

The dedication of the soul is also decidedly non-Catholic, and quite poetic. Note also that the spelling of "Crick", in both the preceding will and this one, appears gradually to be changing (albeit with the occasional lapse), from the old form "Creeke" which has almost always appeared hitherto in this series, to a new and more clipped form "Cricke". It is simply not possible to pronounce these two quite different spellings in the same way, suggesting a gradual shift in pronunciation.

Regarding pronunciation, we may also note in passing, that the man's name "Leogar" (derived from Leodegarius, as in Ashby St Ledgers? – or from "Elijah"?), was generally pronounced "Liger"]

In the name of god amen. The seventeen day of October in the six and twentieth year of the raigne of our soveraigne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God the Queene of England, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, I John Donckly of Cricke in the countie of Northampton, being of good and perfect remembrance, prayed be God, make and ordeyne this my last will and testament, renouncing all other wills and testaments by me before made whatsoever.

First I bequeath my soule to Jesus Christ who hath washed away all my sinnes by shedding of his precious blood for my redemption, and my body to be buried in decent buryall within the churche or churchyard of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my wellbeloved wife Alice Donckly forty marks of good and lawfull money of England, to be had at hir pleasure and bequeathed at hir death as she shall thinke good. And I will that my said wife Alice Donckly have meate, drinke and clothing sufficient and necessary at the hande of Thomas Donckly my sonne, his executors, administrators or assignes during the wholle term of hir life.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Donckly my daughter, two and twentie pounds of goode and lawfull English money, that is twentie pounds at my death and forty shillings to be paid unto her at the daie of hir marriage.

Item, I give unto Agnes Donckly my daughter two and twenty pounds of currant English money, whereof twenty pounds to be paid at the four and twenty years of her age, and forty shillings at the day of her marriage.

Item, I give unto my daughter Magdalen Donckly tenn pounds, to be paid when she shall accomplish the age of thirty yeares or at the day of her marriage.

Item, I give unto Frances the daughter of my daughter Isabel, now wife unto Liger Banbury three pounds six shillings eight pence, to be paid unto her when she shalbe sixteene yeares of age.

I also will that if the said Frances departe out of this life before she shall come to the age of sixteene yeares, that then the said legacy shalbe paid unto her mother Isabel Banbury if she be then alive, if not to remaine unto her children.

Moreover, I will that if any of my aforesaid daughters Elizabeth, Agnes and Magdalen do deceasse unmarried or before their legacies be paid or dewe to be paid, that then all such legacies as are unto them and every of them bequeathed so deceased shall remaine unto my executors.

Item, I give unto my daughter Isabel Banbury twenty shillings.

All the rest of my goodes moveable and unmoveable, my debts being paid and my legacies performed, I give and bequeath to Thomas Donckly my sonne, whom I constitute and make my full executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have set to my hand and caused my name to be subscribed, the day and year above written.

Witnesses hereunto, Richard Garrett, John Miles, William Mason, William Conley, Ambrose Mason and Francis Johnson.

Probatio fuit ... 6 May 1587 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad summum £90-5s

174. Ralph Mungumbrie of Crick, 1588 (NR1 Book V F315)

[Another radically new Protestant style for the introductory paragraph ... added to which, mentioning God 6 times in the first 115 words of text must be some kind of a record. Yet at the same time he leaves 12d/year for the priest to say Ave Marias for his soul, a Catholic gesture which by this late date is very rare in this area – the last recorded bequest for saying trentalls of psalms in any of these parishes was in 1558, a full 30 years ago. We may perhaps venture to describe this man as spritually confused ...

He appears to be unmarried and with no children, so his bequests are all to siblings and friends. This results in the mention of some useful names and locations, such as "Ende Lane". It seems that William Young had endowed a school in Crick (his courtesy title "Sir" is merely a mark of respect from

Mungumbrie and an acknowledgment of Young's higher social status); and we also learn that 6s-8d was deemed a fair sum to spend on a funeral (c.f. with the meagre 3s-4d left for burial in Crick in the will of Wm Clarke, Item 147 in this series). His inventory extends to £12-5s, of which he gives away over £8 in bequests, so apparently his brother Thomas does not stand to inherit much ...]

In the name of god amen. The seven and twentieth day of November in the one and thirtieth yeare of the rayne of our sovereign ladye Elizabeth, by the grace of God of England France and Ireland Queene, defender of the faith, and in the yeare of our lord God 1588, I Ralph Mungumbrie of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, shepherd, sicke in bodie but of perfect remembrance thanks be to allmightie God, in the name of the eternall living God the father, the sonne and the holie ghost in whose name I was baptised, make this my last will and testament in manner and forme as followeth.

First I bequeath my soule unto God my alone [i.e. my only] creator, saviour and sanctifier, and my bodie to be buried in decent buriall.

Allso I give to the poore inhabitants within the parish of Creek 10s, to be devided amongst them at the discretion of Mr Sharrock parson of Creek and the churchwardens of the same.

Allso I give unto the poare inhabitants of Barby 10s, at the discretion of Mr Fford parson of Barby and the churchwardens of the same.

Allso I give unto Sir Younges [Schoolein?] of Creek 2s

Allso I give unto Mr John Sharrock for Ave Marias 12d a yeere.

Allso I give unto my unkle John Mungumbrie of Hillmorton twentie shillings.

Allso I give unto my sister Elizabeth Mungumbrie two pounds sixteen shillings eightpence.

Allso I give unto Mr Henry Mungumbrie of Barby 30s.

Allso I give unto William Mungumbrie my brother of Barby 40s.

Allso I give unto Richard Banburie of Creek in the [Ende Lane?] 3s.

Allso I give unto Richard Jones and Thos [Pailer?] 3d apeece.

Allso I will that there be spent at my funerall 6s-8d.

All the rest of my goods and catells not bequeathed, moveable and unmoveable whatsoever, my debts being paid and my legacies discharged, I give unto Thomas Mungumbrie of Barby, my brother, whom after my last will and testament I make and ordeine my whole executor.

In witness whereof I the said Ralfe Mungumbrie have caused my name to be inscribed, the day and yeare first above written.

These being witnesses, Giles Sharrock, William Younge, John Ffowrd.

Probatio fuit ... 8 Jan 1588 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum £12-5s.

General Note:

- Heavy and prolonged rainfall produced a succession of disastrous harvests between 1594 and 1598, leading to famine conditions again in England for the first time since the 1550s.
- It was followed, as in the 1550s, by increased incidences of disease and starvation.
- By 1596 the price of grain was almost quadruple its 1592 level.
- This combination of bad weather, failed harvest and disease helps to explain the rise in the annual number of wills for the period 1598-1602 which follows (though the peak in this locality is not so marked as that of the 1550s), and the transcript texts should be interpreted with this in mind.

187. William Clarke of Crick, 1598 (NR1 Book W F41)

[The detailed and explicit instructions in this neat will give a most useful glimpse into the interior layout and furnishings of William Clarke's house. As a wealthy man, William Clarke must have occupied one of the village's larger houses. A useful comparison may therefore be made with the later 1674 Hearth Tax record, which shows that, some 77 years after this will was drafted, one Edward Clarke was living in a 3-hearth house in Crick – though it should be noted that in 1674 as many as 17 other families in Crick were living in houses of the same or larger size, with 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 hearths respectively (we see that by 1674 Crick was a more wealthy village compared with its near neighbours). From the phrasing, it seems possible that this will was drafted by a solicitor rather than a priest. Also note that at this time overseers were still being appointed in the wills for Crick – in marked contrast to the contemporary situation in Kilsby, see also General Note above.]

In the name of god amen. The six and twentieth day of March, I William Clarke of Creake in the county of Northampton, husbandman, beings sicke in body but of good and perfect remembrance, laude and prayse be given to almightie God therefore, do doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme following.

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of almightie God my maker and redemer, and my body to be buried in the church of Creake aforesaid, for which I give to the said church three shillings and foure pence.

Item, I give unto my sonne William Clarke one hundred poundes, fiftie to be paid unto him within one yeare after my deceasse, the other fyftie twelvemonth next ensuing.

Also I give unto him a table and the frame in the parler, the better bedstead that is now standing in the highe chamber, a matrese and a bolster, a paire of sheetes, a blanket, a hillinge, and the brasse pott next the hall dore.

Item, I give unto my daughter An Clearke one hundred poundes, to be paid unto her within three yeares after my deceasse.

Also I give unto her a christning sheet and the best hilling

And if it happen that eyther of these my aforesaid children, viz. William or An Clarke, do departe or die before their marriage, then he or she shall give unto three sonnes, viz. John, Edward and Thomas.

Moreover, I will that my wyfe remaine with my sonne John, whom he shall leave in house and maintaine in honest and decent manner, and providing a carefull guide for her, using her reverently as his mother, [dystring?] her as well as he doth himself, during her naturall lyfe, allowing her twentie shillings to bestow at her death uppon or whatsoever she pleaseth.

Item, I give unto the six children of my father Edward Clarke a lambe apeece, to be delivered unto them at Martlemas next coming after my deceasse.

Item, I give unto William Clarke the sonne of Thomas Clarke, to be delivered unto him at the same time, viz. marts [i.e. Martlemas].

Item, I give my house and all my land to John Clarke my eldest sonne and to the heires males of his body lawfullie begotten; and for want of issue male of his body, to the heires males of my sonne William Clarke; and for want of heires males of William Clarke, to the heires males of Edward and Thomas Clarke my sonnes; provided always that if my said sonne John Clarke die leaving no heire male, then my will is that heire whosoever he shalbe shall paie unto the daughters of my said sonne John thertie poundes amongst them within one yeare after the entrance thereof.

Also, all the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable wheresoever they may be found, I bequeath to my sonne John, whom I make my sole executor.

And I make Thomas Clarke and William Clarke mine overseers to see this my last will performed and my debts paide, revokeing and disammllinge all former wills heretofore by me made.

In witness whereof I have set to my hand in the presence of Thomas Clarke and William Clarke, Hugh [Hanle?].

Probatio fuit ... 8 April 1598 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum £29-6s-3d [NB: sum is scarcely legible, may be erroneously transcribed]

188. James Blisse of Crick, 1598 (NR1 Book W F104)

[This will appears to have been drafted in 1578 but not proven until 1599, if we read strictly what the clerk copied. But bearing in mind that it is a clerk's copy rather than an original, and because of the very long period between 1578 and 1599, and also because of the great similarity between the appearance of 7 and 9, it seems far more likely that the drafting date was erroneously entered as 1578 and should correctly have been 1598; and finally, because of the specific wording of the last 3 lines of the will, which appears only in other wills of the 1590s, and, conclusively, because Giles Sharrock is named among the witnesses. For these reasons, this will is included here in the series and not earlier. The will also mentions a location in the fields – Langden – but this cannot be reconciled with any of the names shown in the much later Field Map of 1839, in which the only similar field name is "Lingerage". Finally, once again we see some evidence of proto-Puritanism, in names such as Christian Leeds, and perhaps also in the presence of two women among the witnesses.]

In the name of god amen. The 30th daye of Maye in the yeare of our lord God 1578 [clerk's copying error, should be 1598] I James Blisse of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in body but of perfect remembrance praysed be God, make this my last will in manner and form following. Ffirst I bequeath my soule to allmightie God and my body to bee buried in decent buriiall.

Allso I give and bequeath unto Thomas Pecocke £5 to be paid within two yeares after my decease.
 Alsoe I give and bequeath unto Christian Miles one lande of corne lying uppon Langden, the longer of my two landes.
 Allso I give and bequeath to Richard Leedes his three children, ech of them a calfe.
 Also I give unto [Danny?] Wales his two children 3s-4d apeece.
 Also I give unto the poore of the towne of Creeke 2s.
 All the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable I give unto Anne Blisse my wyfe and Richard Leedes my sonne in law, whom I make my executors of this my last will and testament.
 In witness whereof I have caused my name to be subscribed the day and yeare above written.
 These being witnesses, G. Sharrock, Richard Harbard, Katherin Harbard, Christian Leedes, Ane Preiste and Thomas Pecocke.

Probatio fuit ... 8 June 1599 ... etc
 Invent. ad summum £100-13s-4d.

190. Robert Watts of Crick, 1598 (NR1 Book W F98)

[Here we see a return for the first time since the late 1550s to the practice of making bequests of seed – in this case a quarter of barley – which would have great scarcity value after 4 years of failed harvests.]

In the name of god amen. The tenth day of September in the yeare of our lord God 1598, I Robert Wattes of Crike in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in body but of good and perfect remembrance praise be to allmightie God therefore, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, That is to say:

Ffirst I bequeath my soule and give my soule into the hands of God my maker and redemer, and my body to be buried in the parish churchyard of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I bequeath to the poore of Creeke 10s, to be paid within one yeare after my decease, by the discretion of mine executors.

Also I bequeath to Thomas Boddington of Whittington and Alice his wyfe one quarter of barley, to be delivered them the first day of March next coming.

Item, I give and bequeath to the children of the said Thomas and Alice Boddington 20s to be equally divided amongst them within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I give to ech of my sonne William Wattes his children a lamb.

All the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable I bequeath to my sonne William Wattes, whom I make my sole executor.

In witness whereof I have set to my hand the day and yeare above written, in the presence of theis whose names are next subscribed: John Bucknell, Richard Garrett and [Dug.?] Paule.

Probatio fuit ... 8 June 1599 ... etc
 Invent. ad summum £55-12s.

194. Robert Sabyn of Crick, 1599 (NR1 Book W F159)

[Of the 8 Sabin family wills in this series, 4 are from Crick, of which this is the first. The other 3 wills of the Crick Sabins date from 1628, 1685 and 1685, and shuld be read together with this one.]

In the name of god amen. The nynth day of September in the yeare of our lord God 1599, I Robert Sabine of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke in body but of perfect remembrance, prayse bee to allmightie God, doe make and ordayne this my last will in manner and forme following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soule into the handes of my creator, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my sonne William Sabine £23; £10 thereof to be payd unto him at 22 yeares of his age and £6-10s to be payd unto him at the daye of his maryage or when he shall accomplish th'age of 25 yeares, which of the sayd tymes shall first happen; and £6-10s as parcell of the sayd £23 to be payd unto him within two yeares then next following.

Item, I give unto my sonne John Sabine £23; £10 to be payd unto him at 21 yeares of his age and £6-10s to be payd unto him at the daye of his maryage or when he shall accomplish th'age of 25 yeares, which of the sayd tymes shall first happen; and £6-10s as parcell of the sayd £23 to be payd unto him within two yeares then next following.

Provided that if eyther of these my two sonnes decease before they have receved porcions, then his porcion shalbe payd unto the other of them survivinge, at such dayes and tymes as is above limited, according to the true meaning of this my sayd will.

Item, I give unto the poore of Creeke 20d, to be bestowed at the discrecion of myne executors.

Item, I give unto the poore of Barbie a strike of barley, one hoope of maslyn and a garne [ie garner] of barley, that one Woodward oweth unto me.

Item, I give unto my three sisters Susan, Alice and Elizabeth, to ech of them two sheepe, an ewe and a hoggrill.

Item, I owe unto Susan my sister 28s-6d.

Item, I owe unto my sister Alice 40s.

All the rest of my goods and my lease, as well moveable as unmoveable, I give to Isabell my wyfe [and] my sonne Thomas Sabine, whom I make my executors. Provided allways that I will and my mynd is that Isabell my wyfe shall have to her owne proper use her coffer with all such lynens as are therein, and a bed and furniture thereto belonginge.

The witnesses, John Bucknell, John Mawby, William Archer, Hugh Paule.

[**Garner** – a chest, ark or bin made of planks of split oak wedged and pegged together, for storage of meal or grain.

Hoope

1) a quart pot, so-called because it was bound with iron hoops.

2) a corn measure of 4 pecks, ie. a fourth part of a bushel.

Maslin – mixed grain, especially rye and wheat

Strike – a dry measure of half a bushel.]

Probatio fuit 15 January 1599 [ie 1601].

Invent. ad summum £102 ? [but could perhaps be £52?]

195. Richard Clarke of Crick, 1600 (NR1 Book W F169)

[There are 23 Clarke family wills in this series, most of them being from Braunston – although there are also 4 from Crick, dated 1598, 1600, 1621 and 1649, and these should be read together as a family group.

This will contains more useful guidance to the layout of Crick village, and further mention of the same Watts Lane that was named in the will of Ambrose Johns/Jones of Crick in 1557. The Watts family (see for example Robert Watts will of 1598 above) were probably long-term inhabitants of Crick. Richard Clarke is clearly a man of some property – and he is old enough to have grandsons, making him at least 55 and probably over 60 years old. The will also gives us a hint of the chief-rent due on a small cottage and close in the village, namely 5s per annum; and we get a hint of the value attached to mature timber, and of the fact that it was not uncommon for an owner to grow trees on a cottage close, presumably both for their fruit and for their timber.

From the inventory, we also form a fairly clear picture of the size and layout of his house and farm buildings.]

In the name of god amen. The five and twentieth day of January in the yeare of our lord god 1599 [ie 1600], I Richard Clarke of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in body but of perfect remembrance praysed be God, make this my last will and testament in manner and forme following.

First I give and bequeath my soule to allmightie God, and my body to be buryed in decent buryall.

Also I do give unto my wyfe Joan Clarke ten powndes and her coffer and all things contayned therein, and yearly during her naturall 23s-4d to be payd at the feast of th'annunciation of our lady St Mary [ie 25th March] and at the feast of St Michael th'archangell [ie 29th September] by equall portions.

Also I doe give unto my sonne Thomas Clarke one cottage with a backside and a close adioning to Watte his lane, withall the comodities thereunto belonging to him and his heyres male for ever, payinge yearly one Cheefe rent of 5s issuing out of the sayd cottage and close; provided alwayes that if my sonne Thomas Clarke have no heire male then the land shall return to my sonne William Clarke, payinge unto his daughter or daughters if he have any £5. Provided also that I give unto my sonne William three of my best trees growinge in the sayd close.

Also I doe give unto Richard Clarke and John Clarke the sonnes to my sonne William Clarke, eyther of them an ewe sheepe.

Also I doe give unto my sonne Edward Clarke £3-6s-8d.

All the rest of my goods and lands moveable and unmoveable, I give and bequeath unto my sonne William Clarke, whom I make my sole executor unto this my last will and testament.
In witness whereof I have caused my name to be subscribed, the day and yeare first above written.
Also I give unto Mary Clarke an ewe sheepe.
These being witnesses, G. Sharrock, William Cowley, John Clarke and Richard [Hall?].

Probatio fuit 12 February 1599 [ie 1600]
Invent. £62-13s-4d

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows]

A true Inventory of all the goods and cattels of Richard Clarke of Creeke, husbandman, deceased, praised by Mr Sharrock, Mr Bucknell, Thomas Clarke, John Clarke, with others

In the Hall:

Imprimis 1 cupboard, 1 [penne?], 1 table, 1 form, one settle & 1 chair 15s-0d
Item 11 pieces of pewter and 6 [podychers?] 12s-0d
Item, 2 great pans £1-6s-8d
Item, 3 pots £1-0s-0d
Item, 1 skimmer, salt cellar and 2 candlesticks 2s-0d
Item, 6 quishions [ie cushions] 1 towel and certain woollen yarn 15s-0d

In the Kitchen:

Item, one kettle, 3 pails, 1 kymnell, 1 hutch, 1 pot,
1 pewter dish, 6 flitches of bacon, 1 andiron, pothooks,
one chair, 3 stools and 1 settle £1-7s-0d

In the Boltinghouse:

Item, 2 kymnells, 1 boltingtub, 1 charme, 1 wheel and 1 saltingtrough 3s-4d

In the Parlour:

Item, four coffers, 3 bedsteads 18s-4d
Item, 15 pair of sheets £3-6s-8d
Item, 4 hillings £1-0s-0d
Item, 4 mattresses 12s-0d
Item, 1 featherbed & 2 bolsters 18s-0d
Item, 4 blankets, 1 fatt and 1 bedstead 14s-0d

In the Barn:

Item, barley and maslyn £2-0s-0d

In the Yard:

Item, one hovel of peas £1-13s-4d
Item, corn sown £1-10s-0d
Item, 1 bay of hay £2-0s-0d
Item, 2 carts £2-10s-0d
Item, certain pieces of timber £1-0s-0d

In the Stable:

Item, 4 horse and one foal £16-0s-0d
Item, 7 kine and 3 calves £13-6s-8d
Item, 30 sheep £7-10s-0d
Item, all his apparel 10s-0d
Item, 1 plow, 2 harrows, horse gears, cart rope and certain implements 13s-4d
Sum Total £62-13s-4d

Richard Butler

[NB: the above total is incorrectly added up; it should total £62-3s-4d.]

196. Thomas Coates of Crick, 1600 (NR1 Book W F171)

[This day labourer leaves an inventory of £30-5s – an extraordinary sum for a man of his lowly status. There seems to be some confusion in names, between his two sons, one of whom bears the slightly different surname Coles – we may surmise that he is either a stepson, a previous son of Coates' late wife by a former marriage, or else he is the husband of some daughter of Coates who is not mentioned in the will. We are also left to assume that Maurice Miles, Edward Jones, Thomas Clark and William Archer

are his nominated supervisors, though they are not named as such in the will – in any event, they are clearly friends of Coates, upon whom he feels he can rely. Finally, the relationship to the executor Philip Coates is not made clear in the will. Indeed, in many respects this will is a poor piece of draftsmanship – the first example of really careless legal phrasing in this whole series]

In the name of god amen. The tenth day of January in the yeare of our lord God 1599 [ie 1600], I Thomas Coates of Cricke in the countie of Northampton, day labourer, beinge sicke in body but of good and perfect remembrance, laude and prayse be to allmightie God therefor, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soule into the handes of god my maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my sonne Daniell Coates £5 and a yearling bullock, to be delivered unto Maurice Miles, Edward Jones, Thomas Clark and William Archer within one halfe yeare after my decease.

Item, I give unto Thomas Coles my sonne five poundes and a yearling bullock, to be delivered unto Maurice Miles, Edward Jones, Thomas Clark and William Archer within one halfe yeare after my decease, to be used and employed to the benefitt and profit of my sayd children untill they shall accomplish th'age of one and twentie yeares, and then to be delivered unto them.

And if that eyther of my sayd sonnes decease before they come to one and twenty yeares of age, that then my will is that his parte or porcion shall goe and be given to his brother survivinge.

All the rest of my goods and chattells unbequeathed I give unto Phillipe Coates whom I make my sole executor.

Witnesses, Maurice Miles, Hugh Paule and Thomas Clarke.

Probatio fuit 9 February 1599 [ie 1600]

Invent. ad summum £30-5s.

198. John Andrew of Crick, 1601 (NR1 Book W F258)

[We have here another husbandman of slightly less than average wealth. He appears to be farming a parcel of land jointly with his "brother Turner", and the lack of a larger parcel of land may account for his slightly lower inventory value. Nonetheless, he lists a wide selection of goods in his bequest to his wife, including a large range of wooden furniture of all kinds]

In the name of god amen. I John Andrewe of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in body but of good and perfect remembrance prayses be to god, do make this my last will and testament in manner and forme following.

First I bequeath my soule to allmightie God, and my body to be buried in decent buryall.

Also I give unto my sonne Thomas Andrew 40s, to be paid unto him within two yeares after my decease.

Also I do give unto my sonne Giles Andrew 40s, to be paid unto him when he shall accomplish the age of 18 yeares.

Also I do give unto my sonne John Andrew 40s, to be paid unto him when he shall accomplish the age of 18 yeares.

Also I give unto Joan Andrew my daughter 40s, to be paid unto hir when she shall accomplish th'age of 20 yeares, or at the daie of hir maryage, whether shall first happen.

Also I give unto Gillian Andrew my wife all my bedding, brasse, pewter, linnen, woollen, wooden ware, as chests, coffers, chaires, stooles, bedsteads and all other ymplements of houshold.

Also I doe give unto Rich Andrew my sonne all that right, interest and tithe which I have in one lease divided betwixt me and my brother Turner, taken of the Queen's majestie for certaine yeares yet to come, together with all my beast, horse, [troppe?] and crops of hay and come within the towne and fields of Creek, and all other ymplements belonging to husbandry.

And further I doe constitute and make this my said sonne Richard Andrew my sole executor to this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have caused my name to be subscribed the 6th daie of August in the 43rd yeare of the raigne of our sovraigne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland queen defender of the faith, 1601.

These being witnesses, G. Sharrocke, R. Sharrocke, Richard Harberd.

Probatio fuit 21 October 1601 etc.

Invent ad summum £40-16s-8d

200. Richard Harbert of Crick, 1602 (NR1 Book W F314)

[This is not a formal will, but a legal deposition of a word-of-mouth record – presumably Richard Harbert died relatively suddenly and there was not time to make an official bedside draft of the will, though the parson Giles Sharrock was called and attended the dying man.]

Memorandum: that the fourth of Aprill in the yeare of our lord God 1602, Richard Harbert of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, beinge of perfect remembrance, did, in the presence of Gyles Sharrocke cleark, parson of Crick beforesaid and Richard Banburye of the same, husbandman, make his last will and testamente, [nunciating?] this by worde of mouthe onely, in manner and forme following. First he did will that John Smyth and his wife should have ffourtie shillings, which beinge paide, the rest of his goods he gave unto Margrett his wyfe, whom he named and appointed to be his executrix.

Probatio fuit 21 May 1602.

205. Ambrose Mason of Crick, 1603 (NR1 Book X F60)

[There are 6 wills in this series for the Mason family of Crick, and these should be considered as a family group.

This will picks up virtually where that of Thomas Mason left off back in 1558 ... and it seems very likely that this testator is the son of Thomas Mason. Ambrose Mason must therefore be at least in his mid to late 60s, and more likely he is over 70.

In this extremely long and detailed will, we have a great mass of detail with which to reconstruct the lives of Ambrose Mason and his whole large family. A rich yeoman farmer, probably managing land in excess of 100 acres, he appears to have married twice – from the estimated ages of his 12 children, we can infer that his first wife died about 13-18 years prior to this will, and that his second wife Joan was married chiefly to run the house and to look after the large existing family of 5 young children; the wording of the will implies that she did her job well and was a sound housekeeper, but that perhaps there was never great love or easiness between her and the older of her step-children. A second marriage is consistent with the estimated age of Ambrose Mason – but if his first wife died 13-17 years prior to this will, then apparently he was still fathering children when in his 50s.

Mention of the dairy and of the bedchamber of Ambrose and Joan gives clues both to the size and layout of the house – it would seem that Joan's duties included specific care and management of the dairy (and probably also a buttery); and finally, we also have some useful statements about the amount of staple food and drink needed to maintain a person on a weekly basis, plus statements regarding some of the goods and furnishings of the house.

Ambrose Mason was clearly involved closely with senior yeomen farmers in both Barby and Crick – Ralph Smith and Thomas Dunkley – and the inclusion of two Cowleys as witnesses implies that there may also have been ties to close friends in Kilsby. We recall also that his father Thomas Mason had connections with the Cave family. Note also that the will of Ralph Smith of Barby comes next in this series, and should therefore be interpreted in conjunction with this will.]

In the name of god amen. I Ambrose Mason of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke and weake in bodie yet neverthesse of perfect mynde and remembrance, laude and praise be unto Allmightie God therefore, doe this 12th daie of Maye in the yeare of our Lorde God 1603, make and ordaine this my present testament, manifesting herein my last will, in manmer and forme following. First and principallie I bequeath and recomend my soule unto the infinite mercie of Allmightie God the maker and redemeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the meritte of our lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie to the ground to be buried in the churchyard of Cricke abovesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto John Mason my sonne £20 of lawfull English money, £10 whereof to be paide unto him at the feast of St Michael the Archangell next after the tyme that he shall accomplish the age of 24 yeares. And the other £10 at the feast of the annunciation of our ladye St Mary the virgin then next ensuing.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Alice Mason my daughter £13-6s-8d of like lawfull Englishe money and a porcion of certaine lynnens which were her owne mother's, to be paid and delivered unto her at the daie of her mariage or within two yeares next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Andrew Mason my sonne, £13-6s-8d of like lawfull English money, to be paid unto him at the age of 18 yeares.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Giles Mason my sonne £13-6s-8d of like money, to be paid unto him at the age of 18 yeares.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Edward Mason my sonne £13-6s-8d of like money, to be paid unto him at the age of 18 yeares.

Allso my will is that my said sonnes Andrew, Giles and Edward shall be brought upp upon my ground by my executor, he fynding and provyding them good and wholsome meate, drinke, lodging and apparell meete and convenient for them, they doinge unto my saide executor such busines and service as is meete for them to doe, untill everie of them shall accomplish the age of 18 yeares.

Allso my will is that Edward be brought upp at schoole untill he be 13 yeares of age at the charge of my said executor.

Allso I give and bequeath unto Katherin Mason my daughter £20 of like money and one great white coffer and clothes for a bedd, viz one hilling, one blankett, a mattres, a boleston, two paire of sheets and a little pillowe, to be paid and delivered unto her at the daie of her mariage or at the age of 22 yeares.

Allso I will that yf anie of my above named children depart this lyfe before his or their legacies be paid or due to be paid, then all their and such legacies and bequests shall remayne to be equallie distributed to the rest of my children that be alive unmarried.

Allso I give and bequeath to my wellbeloved wyfe Joan Mason the bedstedd and bedding whereon I lye, viz a featherbedd, a mattres, two bolestons, two pillowes, two blanketts, three hillings, two paire of sheets, one redd coffer and a forcer*, with all such lynnens and such stuffe and things as are therein, so that she leave for my executor 18 paire of sheets, 3 table clothes and six table napkins.

Allso I will that my said wyfe shall have the use of my chamber whollie unto her self, and the necessary use of the standing presse* during the tyme of her being here.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said wyfe 20 sheepe, neither of the best nor yet of the worst, to be indifferentlie set forth immediatelie after my decease. And the said 20 sheepe to be mayntained upon the ground winter and summer as my executor shall mayntain his owne.

Allso I will that my saide wyfe remayne to be a guyde for the housekeeping for my executor for such time as they shall well accord, and he remayne unmarried.

Allso my will is that my said wyfe be honestlie provyded for by my executor, not onelie with meate drink and lodging, but also apparell meete and convenient for her. Provyded allwaies that yf my said wyfe and my executor shall happen to disagree, either for guydinge of the house, or for her meate drink or apparell, and yet will remayne here sole and unmarried, I will that for her mayntenance my executor deliver her weeklie one stryke* of sweet mill corne and allso 3 mylch beasts to be indifferentlie sett forth by my overseers; and the said 3 beasts so sett forth to be allwaies mayntained upon the ground as his owne. And to have half the vessells that are usually occupied about the dearye [ie dairy], or ells £20 of money to provide them withall.

And yt is my will that she shall have free libertye and passage in the house, both to her chamber and for fyre and candle for her use and comfort, and convenient place for the using and benefytt of her dearye, at all times during the tyme of such lease or leases as he now hath or hereafter may have.

Allso, yf my executor and my said wyfe about the above said causes doe disagree, my will is that my said executor shall paie unto my said wyfe within one whole yeare after such disagreement £20 of like lawfull English money.

And it is my will that when my said wyfe Joan shall thynke good to depart from the ground, my will ys that she have with her all those goods and chattells to her bequeathed, and forego the stryke of corne weeklie and the continuall mayntenance of her cattell and [comon?].

Item, I give unto everie one of my son Thomas his children a lambe, to be delivered unto them at Michaelmas next after my decease.

Allso I give unto the children of my daughter Philis, to wit, to Robert, Ambrose, Joan and Elizabeth, to each of them a lambe, to be delivered unto them at such tyme as each of them shall accomplish the age of 12 yeares.

Item, I give unto Robert Mason my sonne 12d.

Item, I give unto Humfrey Mason my sonne 12d.

Allso I will that if anie controversy happen to arise and be betwixt my executor and my wyfe, or anie of my children for anie cause or thing herein contayned, that they referre their cause or causes to Ralfe Smith of Barbye and Thomas Dunckley of Crick, my frends and wellwillers.

Item, I give unto the said Ralfe Smith and Thomas Dunckley, whom I make overseers of this my last will, to each of them 12d.

Item, I give unto Thomas Capes my man, 12d.

Item, I give unto the towne of Crick, towards the repayring of the cawseys betwixt my house and the church, 2s.

All the rest of my goods and chattells ungiven and unbequeathed, my debts being paid and legacies discharged, I give and bequeath unto William Mason my sonne, whom I make institute and ordayne sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the said Ambrose Mason have to to this my present will set my hand and seale the daye and yeare first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of
 Richard Garret
 William Cowlye Thomas Dunkley
 John Garret Edmund Cowlye
 Richard Hall

[The manner in which these names are set out indicates that this will was signed by the testator and all the witnesses, and that they were probably all literate]

* **Forcer** – a small coffer or chest, usually covered with leather and bound with iron bands, and with a lock, used for safe-keeping of jewellery, documents and other valuables; a strong-box.

** **Presse**

1) a cupboard for keeping clothes, linen, etc.

2) the upper recessed section of a cupboard.

*** **Stricke** = strike – a dry measure of half a bushel. {Li,Lf,D}

Probatio fuit ... 31 May 1603 ... etc
 Invent. extendit ad summum £174-13s

207. John Miles of Crick, 1604 (NR1 Book Z F22)

[In the will of this relatively young but upwardly mobile husbandman, we find hints as to the size and furnishings of his bedchamber, which in turn suggests a relatively large house. Also we learn that a part of his wife's tasks was to make "linens", and that John Miles had in his possession a quantity of "raw woollen cloth readie to go to the fuller" – it seems likely that this cloth must have originated and been freshly woven within his house, perhaps by John Miles himself, as a part-time occupation. In the careful provisions for his father, we find that £2-13-4d per annum was deemed a generous allowance for clothing for an elderly man. In the provision to his brother David we find a few valuable hints to the names of parts of Crick 's 3 fields, including mention of the roads from Crick to West Haddon and to Winwick; one of the 3 fields was lying fallow, but he carefully and prudently bequeathes the hay on his land in that fallow field. Because he names his (oldest?) brother Thomas as his executor, we may perhaps infer that he was not long married (though the large size of his inventory and the obvious age of his father both tend to suggest otherwise); in any event, we know he has no children of his own – since two of his brothers each have large families, so it may be that John's wife proved barren or that any of her own children died stillborn or in infancy.]

In the name of god amen. I John Miles the sonne of Thomas Miles of Crick in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, being sick and weake in bodie yet neverthesse of perfect mynde and remembrance, laude and praise be given unto allmightie God therefore, doe this sixt daie of december in the second yeare of the raigne of our sovraigne lord Kinge James that nowe is, or make and ordaine this my present testament manifesting herein my last will, in manner and forme following.

First and principallie, I bequeath and recomend my soule unto the infinite mercy of allmightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the meritts of the death and passion of our lord God and saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie to the ground to be buried in the churchyard of Crick abovesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my wellbeloved wyfe Sibilla Miles the some of thirtie pounds of good and lawfull English money, to be paid unto her in manner and forme following, viz., ten pounds at and upon the feast daie of St John the Baptist next ensuing the date hereof, other ten pounds at and upon the said feast daie of St John the Baptist one whole yeare then next ensuing, and the third ten pounds upon the said feast daie one whole yeare then next following.

Item, I give unto my said wellbeloved wyfe Sibilla Miles the bedsteed whereon I lie and the bedding, viz., one fetherbedd, one mattrice, one boulder, five pillowes, a paire of blanketts and one hilling.

Item, I give unto my said wyfe Sibilla Miles three truncks nowe standing in my bedchamber, and all such lynnens as she brought with her and hath made since she was my wyfe.

Item, I give unto my said wyfe my blacke cloke and two peeces of rawe woollen clothe nowe readie to goe to the fuller.

And it is my [whole?] and full will that my said wyfe shall remaine in and upon my ground, and have her chamber and meate and drinke [... ...] my executor hereunder named, until such tyme as my said executor shall have paid her her last ten pounds.

Item, I give unto my wellbeloved father Thomas Miles, and it is my [whole?] and full will that my said father shall have his abyding upon my ground and be honestlie provided for by my executor in meat and drinke, fire and candle, washing and wringing, and have from my said executor 53s-4d by the yeare for his mayntenance in apparell, payeable yearlie at the feasts of the annunciation of our ladie and St Michaell the archangell by even porcions.

Item, I give unto my brother David for this yeare a land upon the Stones, to be sowed with barlie, and one lande betwixt Hadden waie and Winwick waye to be sown with pease, and a lande of haie out of the meadows.

Item, I give unto my brother David's three children, to each of them a hoggrill.

Item, I give unto my brother William's five children, to each of them a hoggrill.

Item, I give unto my godsonne John Banberie a hoggrill.

All the rest of my goods and chattells, moveable and unmoveable, my legacies and debts discharged and my bodie honestlie brought to the ground, I give and bequeath unto my wellbeloved brother Thomas Miles, whom I make sole executor of this my last will, renouncing all other wills by me at anie tyme heretofore made.

As wytness whereof I have to these present sett my hande and seale the daie and yeare first above wrytten.

As wytnesses Richard Garrett signa. suis, Edmund Cowley, Thomas Robinson signa. suis.

John Miles

Probatio fuit 15 December 1604 etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum £100-6s-2d.

210. John Mason of Crick, 1607 (NR1 Book Z F84)

[The 1558 will of Thomas Mason of Crick leaves most of his obvious wealth to his son Ambrose and his son and executor William; to his son John he bequeathed only 4 sheep. If this present testator is the same John Mason, the small bequest in 1558 suggests that he was probably either already married and thriving at that time (which is most unlikely, since this testator has 3 children all in their early teens or younger), or more likely, that he was just a young lad.

If this testator really is the same John Mason, he has done well in the meantime, for he now a relatively wealthy man – he leaves a house and property in and around the village; and in the description of his house and property we find mention of special marks of a man of property, such as glass windows, door locks and keys etc (note especially his bequest of the floorboards from his chambers – it suggests that these were ground-floor chambers, since the use of wooden floorboards instead of rush-strewn earth flooring was an innovation of about 1520-1530). From the small bequests to his brothers and to the community at large, and the injunctions to his wife not to be wasteful, the impression given is of a man who was very careful with his money.]

In the name of god amen. I John Mason of Crick in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, being sick and weake in bodie yet neverthelesse of perfect mynde and remembrance (laude and praise be given unto allimghtie God therefore), doe this fourth daie of december anno dom 1607 make and ordaine this my present testament, manifesting herein my last will, in manner and forme following, that is to saie: First and principallie I bequeath and recomend my soule unto the infinite mercie of allmightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting to be saved through the meritts of the death of our lord God and saviour Jesus Christ. And my bodie I comend to the ground to be buried within the churchyard of Crick abovesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth Mason £20 of lawfull English money, to be paied unto her at her age of eighteen yeares.

Item, I give unto my daughter Joane Mason other £20 of like money, to be likewise paied unto her at her age of eighteen yeares.

And it is further my will that if either of my said two daughters depart this lyfe before her porcion be paied her, her procion so deceasing remaine and be due unto her sister surviving.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my sonne and heire William Mason all that my tenement or messuage in Crick wherein I nowe inhabit and dwell, together with all barnes, stables, outhouses, orchards, gardens, closes, tymber, trees, woods, arable lands, leyes, meadows, pastures, feedinge commons and common of pasture, with all and singular the appurtenances thereunto belonging, to have and to hold the said tenement or messuage and all and singular other the premisses, to him the said William Mason his heires and assignes for ever.

And it is my will and desire that my said sonne William Mason shall come to his [mald?] at such tyme as hee shalbe seaven and twentie yeares old; and in the mean while to be well and honestlie brought upp and mentayned uppon my said ground by my executrix.

And it is my will that my executrix shall, for the good of myne heire, at all tymes well and sufficientlie repair mentayn and uphold all the houses and buyldings in uppon and about my said ground for such tyme as she shall be guyde and garde unto my said sonne and heire; and at noe tyme to make anie wilfull or needles wast of anie tymber, butts, woodes or underwoods standing, growing and being in uppon or about my said ground.

And it is likewise my will that my said two daughters be likewise well and honestlie brought upp and mentayned upon my said ground by my executrix untill such tyme as they shalbe eighteene yeares old. Item, I further give and bequeath unto my said sonne William Mason my table, table frame, bench and settles in my hall, all my chamber flores, [sleares?], dores, dore lockes and keyes, glasse windowes, yeates*, garners, horse leares**, horse mangers, horse rackes, cowe leares and standers in and about my house and ground.

And I give and bequeath unto my said sonne William tenn pounds of lawfull English money, to be paied unto him at such tyme as he shalbe seaven and twentie yeares old.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my brother Thomas Mason one dun redd heoffar.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my brother [G...] Mason two ewes of the worser sort.

Item, I give unto John Gulliver my sheppard one hoggerell.

Item, I give unto eiche of my godchildren four pence apeece.

Item, I give unto the poore of Crick three shillings four pence.

All the rest of my goods and chattells ungiven and unbequeathed, my debts legacies and funerall discharged, I give and bequeath unto Marie Mason my wyfe, whom I make sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In wytness whereof I the said John Mason have hereunto sett my hande the daie and yeare first above wrytten.

John Mason his mark.

Wynnesses William Gee, Richard Garred, Thomas Miller, Thomas Dunkley, William Myles, William Mason, John West, Edmund Cowlie.

* **Yeates** – gates

** **Leare** – lair, a place for beasts to lie down.

Probatio fuit ... 17 February 1607 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum £204-3s-4d.

211. William Vause of Crick, 1607 (NRI Book Z F85)

In the name of god amen. I William Vause of Crick in the countie of Northampton, backester*, being sicke and weak in bodie yet neverthesse of perfect mynd and remembrance, laud and praise be given unto allmightie God therefore, do this 17th daie of October in the yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne lord James, by the grace of God of England, Ireland, France and Scotland, King, defender of the faith etc; viz., of England France and Ireland the fifth [ie fifth year of his reign] and of Scotland the one and fortieth, make and ordaine this my present testament manifesting herein my last will, in manner and form following, that is to saie:

First and principallie I bequeath and recomend my soule unto the infinite mercie of almightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the meritts of the death and passion of our lord God and saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comend to the ground, to be buried in the churchyard of Crick abovesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Joane Vause tenn pounds of lawfull English money, the one halfe thereof to be paied unto her or her assignes within one yeare next after my decease, and the other halfe at and upon the daie of the solemnization of her marriage.

Item, I give unto my said daughter Joane Vause my second brasse pott, my second brasse pann, one little newe pann, my best candlestick, four peeces of pewter, one bedsted, one materess, one bolster, two [coverletts?], one blankett, and one coffer with all the lynnen clothes therein being sometyme her owne mother's.

Item, it is my will and full intent that my said daughter Joane Vause shall have meate, drinke and house roome with and by my executor hereunder named, for such tyme and for so long as she shall keep herself sole and unmarried, she my said daughter doing unto my executor such service and work as she nowe useth to doe for me.

Item, it is my will and full intent that my sister Isabell Vause shall have likewyse meate, drink and houseroome with and by my executor hereunder named, for such tyme and so long as she shall keep herself sole and unmarried, she my said sister Isabell doing unto my executor such service and work as she nowe useth to doe for me.

All the rest of my goods and chattells ungiven and unbequeathed, my debts legacies and funerall discharged, I give and bequeath unto John Vause my sonne, whom I constitute make and ordaine sole executor of this my last will.

In wytness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale the daie and yeare first above wrytten. The mark of William Vause in the presence of Edmund Cowlie, Thomas Robinson, Thomas Sabin, [Edward?] Maryatt, William Myles his marke.

* **Backester** = Baxter – a baker of bread.

Probatio fuit 18 February 1607 [ie 1608] ... etc
Invent. extendit ad summum £31-3s.

General Note:

We come now to a long period during which the number of annual wills rises sharply:

1609: 6	1610: 6	1611: 9	1612: 7	1613: 5
1614: 4	1615: 4	1616: 5	1617: 3	1618: 1
1619: 8	1620: 7	1621: 2	1622: 4	1623: 2

We instinctively look for a reason: famine, pestilence, increased poverty, increased literacy, increased population size ...?

Climatically, we know that the whole of the C17th saw a significant dip in temperatures across Europe – the effect is generally referred to as the "Little Ice Age". Statistically there are more rich folk's wills than poor folk's wills in this list, so we can probably rule out increased poverty as the causal factor. Likewise, there is a dip after 1624, back roughly to the previous level of annual records, so we may also rule out increased literacy as the cause. This leaves famine, disease and increased population size.

There were bad harvests following poor weather in 1614/1615, but this does not account for the significant peaks in 1609-1611 and 1619-1620; it seems more likely that these peaks are due to outbreaks of disease, most probably bubonic plague. Certainly we know that 1604 saw the worst recorded outbreak of plague in much of Warwickshire; that plague killed almost half the population of Dunchurch in 1610; and that there were further serious outbreaks in Stratford throughout the period 1613-1619. Smallpox also found its way into the country around 1600, and its earliest effects were the most virulent, as for any newly-introduced disease.

Thus, on balance it seems likely that epidemic disease is the most likely culprit for these elevated levels of will-making, with poor harvests as a probable secondary factor.

217. Giles Sharrock of Crick, 1609 (NR1 Book X F42; also copied as PROB 11/114)

[Irritatingly, neither copy of the will mentions the value of his inventory – but judging from the size of his many large bequests, it probably was around £1000, making Giles Sharrock by far the richest man to appear so far in this series of transcripts.

Sharrock is a very significant man in the early history of puritanism in Northamptonshire. He describes himself in this will simply as "clerk" ... but he is rather more than this, for we know him to have been a prominent puritan minister in the puritan-dominated "exercise" at Northampton in the early 1570s, where he figured as a principal named witness in the case of the puritan preacher John Sibthorpe vs bishop Scambler in 1574.

By the time of his death, he has clearly progressed far beyond this stage, to being a man of property with significant investments and lands in several parts of the Midlands. This may be due in part to the considerable travelling that he must have undertaken, during his time as what one of his contemporary adversaries referred to as a 'posting apostle' in the 1570s.

From other records (*Dorman & Irons, lists of Northamptonshire clergy: Northamptonshire Record Office*), we know that Giles Sharrock was appointed priest of Milton Malsor in 1571 – a living which passed to his son Reginald Sharrock in 1610. From this father-son continuity, we can deduce that Giles Sharrock retained the living at Milton Malsor (which lies 14 miles from Crick along the Watling Street and just south of Northampton) as a pluralist living until his death in 1609. His pluralist holdings probably account in part for his accumulated wealth.

Other documentation (*Coventry Archives: Deeds: ref. PA 152/37 /1 and /3, dated 15th January 1610/11*) shows that Reginald Sharrock and his wife Eleanor sold to Edward Burbery a corvisor of Coventry, a meadow adjacent to the Charterhouse watermill in Coventry for £35; and to Ralph Walden a merchant of Coventry the double-gyred watermill called Charterhouse Mill which he was already leasing from them, with a separate dwelling-house and triangle of land, for an undisclosed sum (probably well in excess of £100). This pre-existing 21-year lease to Ralph Walden suggests that these properties were parts of the estate of Giles Sharrock – and indeed, the will text confirms this precisely, stating that the mill at Coventry was 'latelie purchased of George Leavet gentleman'; moreover, their sale comes just after the time that we would expect probate clearance of his will. It is also interesting to note from these cited documents, that Reginald and Eleanor appear to be joint owners/inheritors of the property; this tends to confirm that they were staunch puritans, since puritans believed firmly in female equality.]

In the name of god amen. The thirtieth daie of September in the yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lorde James, by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland kinge, defender of the faith, and of Scotland the three and fortieth. And in the yeare of our Lorde one thousand six hundred and nyne, I Gyles Sharrock of Creek in the countie of Northampton, clerk, being of good and perfect remembrance, praised be God, doe make this my last will and testament, in maner and forme following. First I bequeath my soule into the hands of Allmightie God my maker and of Jesus Christ my Redeemer and the holie ghost my sanctifier, and my bodie to be buried in decent buriall.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Joan Sharrock my wyfe one hundred pounds of lawfull money of England, and one bedd with all the furniture of the best I have belonging unto the same.

Item, I give unto my sonne Reginald Sharrock all that my lands which I lately estated him in situate and lying in the countie of Stafford, and to his heires for ever.

Item, I give and doe grante unto William Sharrock the naturall sonne of Nathaniell Sharrock my sonne, all my right and estate in two closes in Sillesworth in the parish of Watford, the one called old Sillesworth Sharrock close, the other called new Sillesworth, and to his heires for ever. Provided allwaies that his father Nathaniell Sharrock shall have the occupacion of them both untill the said William Sharrock shall accomplish the age of one and twentye yeares, paying yearlie unto the said William his sonne twentye pounds a yeare towards his bringing upp.

Item, I give unto Joan Sharrock daughter of the said Nathaniell, fowrtie pounds of lawefull money of England, to be paied unto her when she shall accomplyshe the age of sixteene yeares.

Item, I give unto every one that I am grandfather unto and now borne, fyve pounds a peece.

Item, I give unto everie one of my godchildren, twelve pence a peece.

Item, I give unto Priscilla Davys tenne shillings.

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Myles my neece tenne shillings.

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Myles my servant tenne pounds.

Item, I give unto everie one of my servants tenne shillings a peece.

Item, I give unto John Davys clerk, twentye shillings.

Item, I give unto the children of Richard Miles my sonne in lawe, one hundred pounds, which the said Richard oweth unto me.

Item, I give unto Nathaniell Sharrock my sonne, my lease of Stonlies farme with all the closes belonging thereunto, and one other close commonlie called Guyes close.

Also I give unto the said Nathaniel my sonne, all the rest of my goods, debts and chattells, my debts being discharged, whom I make my sole executor to fullfill this my last will and testament.

In wittnes whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale this thirtieth of September aforesaid in the presence of [the text of the will does not mention any names at this point – but of course, it is only a copy of the original].

Furthermore my will is that, whereas William Archer standeth bounde with me to Mr Willmore of Everton for two and twentye pounds, my executor shall have him harmeles from the same bond.

Giles Sharrock his mark.

John Davys, John Bucknell, William Archer, William Watts, William Miles his mark, Roger Cowley.

Item, my will ys that Hearsey Wollverston esquire shall be Guardian unto the aforesaid William Sharrock. And I ordaine that the aforesaide annitye [ie annuity] of twentie pounds by the yeare during the nonage of the said William shall be yearelie paid unto the said Hearsey for the mayntenance of the said William.

Allso my will is, that one hundred pounds due unto me by vertue of a Lease of the Manor of Statfolde in the countie of Stafford, payable by the aforesaid Hearsey Woolverston after the decease of Katherin Woolnerston of Statfolde, shall be paid unto Joan Sharrock daughter of Nathaniel Sharrock aforesaid.

Item, I doe give and grannte unto Reginald Sharrock my sonne and to his heires for ever, all my land, tenements, and one myll in or neare unto Coventrie, with all and singular the appurtenances thereunto belonging, which I latelie purchased of George Leavet gentleman.

This addicion annexed in the presence of us, John Davys, Johan Sharrock, Elizabeth Milese, Hersey Wolferston, William Myles, Mariat.

Probatio fuit 15 January 1609 [ie 1610]

Invent. extendit ad summum[not filled in]

231. Guy Dunckley of Crick, 1611 (NR1 Book Z F179)

[In general the Dunckley family of Crick is a wealthy one, and this implies that Guy Dunckley may have more possessions than might be suggested from the brevity of this nuncupative will ...

He appears to have been an elderly husbandman, with just a few lambs and sheep.

Several other members of his family are mentioned in the will; and if his reported speech is to his eldest son, then he is a grandfather; moreover, since he passes on "the coffer and a pari of mustard querns that were my father's" to his grandson, it seems evident that these are probably regarded in the family as heirlooms.

It is interesting that all the subscribed witnesses to his verbal will are women – could it be possible that they are all poor neighbouring widows, and that the poorer people in the village are thus gathered together in proximity to each other? Or does it merely signify that his death may have occurred in the daytime when most of the menfolk were out in the fields? Or could there be yet other explanations?]

17 October 1611. Memorandum that Guy Duncklie of Crick in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, did the daie and yeare above said, in the presence of us whose names are hereunder subscribed as wytnesses, utter these words. "Edward, I will give Richard's sonne Guye an ewe and a lambe; I will give thy sonne Robert a sheepe; I will give thy sonne Richard the coffer and a paire of mustard quernes which were my father's. Be good I prairie thee to thy brother Richard, let him have two hillers. I will give thee all the rest".

Suzan Coxe, Joane [Drossle?], Ursula Heyward, Margade [Margaret?] Duncklie.

Probatio fuit 11 January 1611 [ie 1612] ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum £3-2s-10d.

239. William Priest of Crick, 1612 (N2 Book T F104)

[Here is a useful inventory of the main possessions of the village blacksmith. It seems from the small size of his inventory, that he is a relatively poor man – and the same was true of a previous blacksmith, Richard Tomkins of Braunston, whose 1611 will appears above – he left only £15, while Priest leaves even less, a mere £10. Could this, therefore, be another early example of a man made destitute by engrossing of his land? See also the will of Richard Tomkins, and other later wills in this series where engrossing can be more definitely proven.

It seems, from the very precise and formulaic wording of the transfer of Priest's house and close to his wife (viz 'holden of the chief Lord of the fee, by the services heretofore in and of right accustomed'), that his house and blacksmith's shop are copyhold properties held of the Lord of the Manor. We also note his relationship with the extremely poor labouring family of Lawrence Beale of Kilsby (who actually witnesses this will), and it is plain from the small bequests to Beale's daughter Alice that the two families are related.]

In the name of god amen. I William Priest of Crick in the countie of Northampton, blacksmith, being at this present time sicke and weake in bodie yet nontheless of perfect minde and remembrance (laud and praise be given unto almightie God therefor), do this sixteenth day of September in the yeare of the

Item, it is my will and desire that my daughter Elizabeth Harberd be kept and maintained by and with my executor hereunder named, with meate, drinke and apparell as heretofore she hath bin, so longe as they both shal be alive and live together; but if it shall please God that my said daughter Elizabeth shall [decease and departe? (NB: there is a fold or cut in the document here, which obscures one or more lines of the text; but the intent seems to be, that if the executor should die, his heirs must look after Elizabeth)] my executor hereunder named. If she [....] kept and maintained with meate, drinke and apparell as beforetime she was, by his heires, executors or assignes. And then it is my will, desire and full intent, that the executor of my executor hereunder named, paie and give her twentie pounds of lawfull Englishe monie, thereby she to be provided for well with some of her other frends.

All the rest of my goods and chattells, my debts legacies and funerall discharged, I whollie give and bequeath unto my sonne Roberte Harberd, whom I make constitute and ordaine to be sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the said Richard Harberd have hereunto set my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

Read, signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Richard

Harberd

Edmund Cowlie

Libens [Laban?] Driver

Edward Newton

Item, I give unto Thomas Whitemyll 40s, paiable at or on a reasonable demand at the daie of the mariage of the said Thomas.

Item, I give unto my daughter Frances Shatswell, 10s.

Item, I give unto William Harberd, Richard Harberd and John Harberd the sonnes of my sonne Robert Harberd, to every of them a shepe.

No probate date ... Invent. extendit ad £95-19s-4d

242. Nathaniel Sharrock of Crick, 1613 (PROB 11/122)

[This is the son of Giles Sharrock, the prominent early puritan who later became priest of Milton Malsor and Crick, and whose will of 1609 is listed at Item 182.

We know a good deal about both Giles and Nathaniel from other documents, see the will of Giles Sharrock above. And thus, it comes as no surprise to note that he leaves to his executor the choice of location for his burial – incidentally, the first in this series of wills who does not request burial in the parish where he resides – since we know that he has property at Crick, Milton Malsor, Watford, Coventry and elsewhere.

From the helpful details in this will regarding his leases in Watford, we see that he and his father Giles had been assiduously buying up or leasing land and enclosing it for sheep-pasture – in this case a total of 67 acres, which represented about 3-4% of the available land within Watford parish. This mirrors the process of enclosure-by-land-profiteers that was going on at Onley – and doubtless elsewhere in this area – at about the same time.

From the specific wording of his two separate references, to the '5 children he had by his wife Lucrecia' and to 'my eldest daughter Joane', it seems likely that Nathaniel Sharrock had a first wife who died (in childbirth?) and that Lucrecia is his second wife; and since Lucrecia gave him 5 children, this tends to confirm that his first wife must have died while still relatively young. Note also that the lease of land that is bequeathed to his daughter Joan will only come to her after the death of her grandmother – ie old Joan Sharrock the widow of Giles Sharrock; the will of Giles Sharrock left his property in Staffordshire to his son Reginald – so we may deduce that either old Joan is now living in Staffordshire with Reginald, or else Reginald has meanwhile died himself and that his Staffordshire property has reverted to Joan.

The final bequest – to the presenters in the Court of King's Bench – is especially intriguing. Nathaniel Sharrock has evidently been assisted by these men, in processing claims through King's Bench; so there is obviously more research work to be done on this will, by looking through the King's Bench Plea records at the PRO.]

In the name of god amen. The fourth day of June in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and thirteen, and in the eleaventh yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord James, by the grace of God king of England, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, and of Scotland the six and fortieth, I Nathaniell Sharrock of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, gentleman, being sicke in body

but of a perfect and [disposting?] mynde and memory, prayse be unto thallmightie God for the same, do make constitute and ordeyne this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge.

First I bequeath my soule to the handes of Almightye God my creator, redeemer and savour, by whose merritts only and passion I hope to be saved, and my body to be buried in such church or churchyard as my executors shalbe pleased to appoynt.

Item, I doe desire and my will and pleasure is, that our yearde and thatt quartern of land lying in Creeke in the countie of Northampton aforesaid which myselff purchased shalbe sould by my executor within three yeeres after my death and decease at the best valewe it can.

Item, my further will and pleasure is that two leases lying and being in Watford in the countie of Northampton aforesaid, the one of Twentie and seaven acres of pasture and the other of Fourtie acres for many years yet to come, shall likewise be sould by my executor at the uttermost valew within three yeares after my decease, and as well out of the profitts as by the sale of my land.

Three hundreth poundes lawfull English money to be paide to my wife Lucrecia Sharroke, which I give unto her during her lyffe, and after her death and decease the saide Three hundreth pounds to be paid to my five children which I have had by my said wyfe, that is to saye, Henry, Gyles, Thomas, Robert and Elizabeth, and the same to be devided amongst them by even and equally portions.

And also my goods and chattells likewyse to be souled at the uttermost valew; and the said three hundreth pounds being paide as aforesaide and likewise my debts being fulfilled and paide, The remaynder I give unto my said five children, to be devided as aforesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my eldest daughter Joane a lease lying and being in Statfould in the countie of Stafford, and the same to come unto her after the death and decease of her grandmother.

And lastlie I give unto the prysenters in the Comon Gaole of the King's Bench twentie shillings.

All will or wylls whatsoever which formerly I have made I doe utterly revoke and doe nomynate and ordayne Thomas [B?/R?]yllston my soule executor of this my last will and testament.

In wytnesse whereof I have hereunto putt my hand and seale the daye and yeare above written.

Signed Nathaniel Sharocke.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of Gcor: Skynner, clerk, Toby [Ewens?], James Lovell, Robert Rouse, Sign. Richard [Basst?].

Probatum fuit 8 July 1613 ... etc.

No inventory total is given.

[NB: A marginal note in Latin states that his widow Lucrecia Sharrock's probate was carried out on the 5 May 1626]

243. William Watts of Crick, 1613 (N2 Book R F18)

[This will seems to have been taken down from a verbal statement at the deathbed. Note the Watts family connection to the wealthy Mason family of Crick yeomen – see the earlier wills of Ambrose Mason and John Mason in 1603 and 1607 in this series – it seems that William Watts' wife was formerly a Mason.

William Watts appears as a wealthy yeoman farmer, with 3 quarters of a yardland – about 22 acres – of profitable farmland, plus what seems to be a separate house and grounds in Kilsby that he is renting out for profit. His inventory, just over £200, puts him above mere husbandmen.]

A note of William Watts his will, taken the 23 daie of October anno dom 1613.

First I commite my soule unto almightie God & tertio [NB is this a shorthand reference to the Trinity?].

Item, I give and bequeath unto my foure daughters fourtie pounds a peece, to be paid unto them when they shall accomlishe the age of 30 yeares or at the daie of their mariage.

Item, I give unto Richard Watts my sonne and to his heires for ever that half yearde land which I purchased of my father Mason in Cricke, but my will is that the profitts thereof be taken by my executors from my decease to Michaelmas, and from thence for four yeares following for the better performance of my will and legacies.

Item, I give unto John Watts my sonne and to his heires for ever, that quarterne of land which I purchased of Mr Sharrock in Cricke, but my will is that my executors doe take the profitts thereof till Michaelmas, and from that time for the space of five yeares after for the better performance of my will and legacies.

Also my will is that there shall be a Surrender passed of my house and grounds according to the [.....] customs in Kilsbie, unto the use of William Watts my sonne, and to his heires for ever; further my will

is that my executors take the rent and profitts of that house and grounds till Michaelmas, and from thence for the space of eight yeares for the better performance of my will and legacies.

Item, I give unto my sonne Jonas Watts twentie pounds, to be paid unto him when he shall accomplish the age of 20 yeares.

Also my will is, and I make my executors, Sibill my wife and Robert my sonne, and my will is that my wife shall occupie and be halfe with Robert my sonne in all my goods and encrease that shall growe unto them, during the time that she keepeth her selfe unmarried [.....], but if my wife shall marrie againe then shee shal have by reason of her [.....] executorix, or otherwise for her parte but onelie twentie pounds and so depart.

Item, I give to the poor of Crick 10s.

Witnesses

John Bucknell

Richard X Garret

Thomas Doncklye

Probatio fuit 13 November 1613 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad £201-7s

244. William Newett of Crick, 1613 (N2 Book S F106)

[We see here some further consequences of the break-up of the estate of the late Giles Sharrock. It appears that William Newett bought his quarter of land from Giles Sharrock before the priest died – and this was just as well for William Newett, since it appears from the will of Giles Sharrock's son Nathaniel (see earlier in 1613, above) that Nathaniel was a tightfisted individual – note Nathaniel's injunctions to his executors to sell his possessions for the maximum price obtainable. Such information as this all helps us to build up a more complete picture of the precise holdings of the Sharrock family. As for the Newetts, they appear to be a numerous tribe, some 8 or 9 children in all, with several of the children evidently still quite young – so we may infer that the parents William and Alice are most likely in their early 40s. From his relatively high inventory value, William appears to have prospered.]

In the name of god amen. I Thomas Newet of Crick in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, beinge at this present time sicke and weake in body yet nontheless of perfect mynde and remembrance (laude and prayse be given to almightie God therefor) doe this 20th daie of September anno dom 1613 make and ordayne this my present testament, manifesting herein my last will, in manner and forme following.

First and principallie I bequeath and comend my soule unto the infinite mercie of almightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the merits of the death and passion of our lord God and saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comend to the ground to be buried within the churchyearde of Crick abovesaide.

Item, I bequeath unto the poore of Crick 12d of lawfull English monie.

Item, I give and bequeath and it is my will that my wellbeloved wife Alice Newet shall have and enioie [ie enjoy] to her owne use and behoof, for and during her natural life keeping her self sole and unmarried, my quarterne of arable, meadow and pasture ground and the appurtenances, situate, lying and being in the fields of Crick aforesaid, that I did purchase of Mr Giles Sharrocke clerke, latelie deceased; but after the death of my said wife or the daie of her mariage, whethyer shall happen first, I give and bequeath my said quarterne of arable ley, meadow and pasture grounds and the said appurtenances to my sonne Richard Newet, to have and to hold to him the said Richard and the heires of his bodie lawfullie begotten, for ever; and for default of heires of the said Richard lawfullie begotten, it is my will and I give and bequeath the said quarterne of land with the appurtenances to my sonne Thomas Newet, to have and to hold to him and the heires and assignes of his bodie lawfullie begotten for ever; but for default of heires of the bodie of the said Thomas Newet lawfullie begotten, I give and bequeath my said quarterne of land and the appurtenances to my daughter [Agnes?] Newet, to have and to hold to her, her heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I give unto my daughter Elizabeth Newet ten pounds of lawfull English monie, paiable at the daie of her mariage.

Item, I give unto my daughter Alice Newet other ten pounds of like monie, paiable at the daie of her mariage.

Item, I give unto my daughter Marie Newet five pounds of like monie, paiable at the daie of her mariage.

Item, I give unto my daughter Sara Newet other five pounds of like monie, paiable at the daie of her mariage.

Item, I give unto my daughter Abigail Newet other five pounds of like monie, paiable at the daie of her mariage.

Item, unto my said sonne Thomas Newet other five pounds of like monie, paiable at his age of one and twentie yeares.

Item, I give unto my said sonne Richard one of my two colts, the which of them my wife wil.

All the rest of my goodes, cattells and chattells, my debts, legacies and funerall discharged, I give and bequeath unto my wellbeloved wife Alice Newet, whom I make constitute and ordaine to be sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hande and seale the daie and yeare first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of

Edmund Cowlie

[Corah?] Mariat

The mark of X William Dicks

Probatio fuit ... 13 November 1613 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad £101-10s-8d

248. Thomas Langfield of Crick, 1614 (N2 Book R F227)

[This will is the first in this series that bears no introduction "In the name of God amen"; indeed, it lacks almost all of the customary formulaic introductory phrases, which makes it a most unusual departure from the norm. This relative informality may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that we are evidently dealing here with quite a young married man – perhaps just into his early twenties. The fact that he makes no mention of his wife implies that she too has died, and presumably very recently.

Langfield appears to be living in close contact with his father in law Henry Lee and his wife, who are wealthy enough to afford at least 3 house-servants and a groom. This in turn gives some clue to the size of their household – it must be at least a 3-hearth household, and probably more, which narrows it down to one of about 5 or 6 houses, if they lived in Crick. However, no Langfields were listed in the 1674 Hearth Tax survey for Crick, and only one relatively poor Lee family; so it may be that the Lee family were residents of another village (eg there were plenty of Lees in Kilsby throughout the 1600s).

When we recall the relative youth of this young man, it makes his careful and generous list of bequests the more touching – especially the sad little statement "Item, for the charge of my burial, 3s-4d"....]

Anno dom 1614 August 11th. I Thomas Langfield do ordaine this to be my last will and testament. Imprimis I bequeath my soule unto almightie God, and my bodie to be buried in Christian burial in decent manner.

Item, I bequeath unto the poor of Creeke, 10s.

Item, to John Smith 5s.

Item, to the minister of Creeke Mr Keynis, 10s, to

Item, to my father and mother in law, to each 10s.

Item, to my sister Sara 5s.

Item, to my sister Margot 5s.

Item, to Martha, servant of the house, 2s-6d.

Item, to Gifford [Mills/Wills?], 2s.

Item, to [Fla....] 12d.

Item, I bequeath to Christopher [Wolsnith?] 5s.

Item, to Frances maide servant 2s-6d

Item, to Cecelia 2s-6d maide servant likewise in the house.

Item, to Kinge, servant in the [p.....] 12d.

Item, for the charge of my burial, 3s-4d.

Item, I bequeath unto my sister Joane [Hal?] her eldest son, all my goodes and chattells moveable and unmoveable resting in my father in law Henrie Lee his lands, to be payde when he cometh to be of the age of 21 yeares; and if he die, to the nexte heir living lawfullie begotten of my sister. And the use [ie the interest] thereof, my will is that it will be payde until the money be payde unto her, [that is?] unto my sister Joane.

Item, I make my father in law Henrie Lee my full whole and sole executor who, when all legacies and debts be paid, is to make account unto my sister Joan [Hal?] what remaineth behind, and afor [ie before] my wil is proved, she to have the use [ie the interest], and her child is to have the remaynder when he cometh to yeares in manner and form as is above specified, in the mean time she is to have the use.

This wil was made in the presence of us

The mark of X Thomas Langfield

Nathan Keynis

William [Friends?]

Probatio fuit ... 27 August 1614 ... etc.

No inventory total given.

249. Richard Allen of Crick, 1615 (N2 Book T F80)

[This carpenter appears, unlike some previous blacksmiths in this series, to be not too badly off; however, he has little money to bequeath, and probably most of his estimated £29-16s-4d of possessions was in hard goods. We have a useful listing of various carpenters' tools – and from bequest of the one cow, we see that the family kept one or more beasts for milk (and perhaps a pig for bacon?); and we can infer that they probably had no farmland but used their cottage-close/garden to the full for growing stock vegetables, to eke out their meagre income. From the text it is clear that there was an elder son, also named Richard after his father, who appears to have died recently – perhaps in the same epidemic? We can also infer that the other sons John and Edmund were too young to act for themselves, since their bequests were paid for safe keeping jointly to the oldest surviving son Francis and the friend of the family (or possible work-partner?) Thomas Facer, who signed his name very neatly as one of the witnesses. We can also infer that Francis was felt to be old enough – say between 15 and 20? – to inherit his father's tools and carry on the family trade, as the family's only remaining breadwinner. These inferences in turn give us the further hint, that the children were spaced out in age, with probably 2 years or more between each child – could this perhaps be another subtle sign that money was a bit tight in the household? Francis had probably learned the trade by his father's side, and acted as apprentice to him, but now had to shoulder the whole responsibility. Finally, though it is expected that his wife Joan will marry again to provide security for herself, it is also assumed that if she does this she will move out of the house – further evidence of the rough ages of the various children, who hence appear to be all in the 10-20 age group, and just about able to fend for themselves, making the husband and wife somewhere in their mid- to late 40s.]

In the name of god amen. I Richard Allen of Crick in the countie of Northampton, carpenter, being at this present time sicke and weake in bodie but of perfect minde and remembrance (praise be unto allmightie God therefor), doe this 14th daie of March anno dom 1614 [ie calendar year 1615] ordaine this my present testament in manner and forme following.

First I bequeath my soule unto the infinite mercies of almightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting to be saved through the merits of the death and passion of our lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comend to the ground, to be buried in the church yearde of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I give unto my sonne John Allen 20s of lawfull English money, paiable unto my brother Facer[?] and my sonne Francis, at and before such time as Joane my nowe wife shall marrie againe.

Item, I give unto my said sonne John, the cow which was my sonne Richard's.

Item, I give unto my sonne Edmund Allen other 20s of like monie, paiable likewise unto my said brother Facer and my said sonne Francis, at and before such time as my said wife shall marrie againe.

Item, I give unto my said sonne Francis Allen my best pair of frames [ie clamps], my best axe, a [moiebill?], a framing saw, a panel saw and a [w...se?] sawe.

Item, all the rest of my goodes ungiven, my debts and legacies discharged, I give and bequeath unto Joane my wife, whom I make sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

Item, I give unto my sonne Edmund my best cobberd [ie cupboard].

In witness whereof I have heareunto set my hande.

Witnesses

Signed Richard Allen

Edmund Cowlie

Corah Marriatt

Thomas Facer

Probatio fuit ... 1 April 1615

Invent. extendit ad ... £29-16s-4d

254. John Smith of Crick, 1615 (PROB 11/127)

[A useful will insofar as it links John Smith to Thomas Dunckley and Thomas Cowley, both in terms of friendship and also as near neighbours in the village.]

In the name of god amen. I John Smith of Crick in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, being at this present time sicke and weake in bodye, yet nevertheless of perfect mynde and remembrance (lawde and praise be given unto Almightye God therefor), doe this nyne and twentieth day of December Anno dom one thousand six hundred and fifteen, make and ordayne this my present testament manifesting herein my last will, in manner and forme folowing, viz:

First and principallie I bequeath and recommend my soule unto the infinite mercys of Almightye God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting yt to be saved only throughe the meritts of the death and passion of oure lord and Savyour Jesus Christ, and my bodye I commend to the ground to be buried within the churchyard of Crick abovesayed.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Sara Smithe tenn pounds of lawfull Englishe money, payable unto my very good neighbours and frendes Thomas Donckley and Thomas Cowley, at and upon the feast day of St John the Baptist next, by them to be employed to her use.

Item, I give unto my sayed daughter Sara twentie shillings money to buy her a Bedstead withall, and my best hillling, a blankett, a payer of sheetes and a mattresse.

Item, I give unto my sonne Samuel Smith other tenne pounds of like money, payable unto my sayed good neighbours and frendes Thomas Dunckley and Thomas Cowley at the sayed feate daye of Saint John the Baptist next, to be employed by them to his use.

Item, I give unto my sonne Joseph Smith, fyve poundes of lawfull English money, payable at such tyme as he shall accomplyshe the age of twelve yeres.

Item, I give unto my sonne William Smith other fyve poundes of like money, payable at such tyme as he shall accomplyshe the age of twelve yeres.

Item, I give unto my daughter Annys Smith other fyve poundes of like money, payable at such tyme as she shall accomplyshe the age of eighteen yeres.

Item, I give unto my daughter Elizabeth Smith other fyve poundes of like money, payable at such tyme as she shall accomplyshe her age of eighteen yeres.

Item, I give unto my daughter Dorothe Smith, other fyve poundes of like money, payable at such tyme as she shall accomplyshe her age of eighteene yeres.

Item, I give unto the child unborn with that my wife is great in childe withall, other fyve poundes of like money, payable at such tyme as the said childe shall accomplyshe the age of eighteene yeres.

And yt is my will that the legaceyys which I have given to my two sonnes Joseph and William be payd unto my sayd and friends Thomas Donckley and Thomas Cowley, being loyal by them good uses untill they come to the ages of eighteene yeres.

Item, I give to the poore homes in Crick three shillings four pence.

All the rest of my goodes and chattells ungiven and unbequeathed I give and bequeath unto my wellbeloved wife Elizabeth Smith, whom I make my sole executrix of this my last will and testament. Witnessed Edmund Cowlie, Thomas Donckley sign., Thomas Cowlie sign., Thomas Robinson, [Ba...?] Handes.

259. Joan Mason of Crick, 1616 (N2 Book P F45)

[This is the widow of Ambrose Mason (NB his second wife), whose will dated 1603 appears above. In Ambrose Mason's will we read that he was involved closely with yeomen farmers in both Barby and Crick – Ralph Smith and Thomas Dunkley – and Joan's mention in her will of the land in Barby confirms this, since it is now occupied and cultivated by a member of the Smith family (not Thomas the son of Ralph Smith; though we learn herein that Thomas Mason of Barby is Joan's son-in-law). From the formal wording used in reference to the house at Barby, we see that it is a leasehold property, to which presumably Ambrose Mason held a long-term lease from the lord of Barby. The connection with the Dunckley family still persists (eg in gifts to the children of Henry Dunckley of Haddon), since Joan herself was originally a Dunckley – as we learn in her will, her brother is Thomas Dunckley of Crick. We thus see that there were strong and close connections by marriage between these three yeoman families in Barby and Crick.]

Joan's inventory amounts to £37-19s-4d – by comparison, her late husband Ambrose left an estate of £174-13s; so we see that Ambrose's executor, his son William Mason, made good provision for his step-mother in accordance with his father's wishes.]

In the name of god amen. I Joane Mason of Crick in the countie of Northampton, widowe, beinge at this present time sicke and weake in bodie yet nevertheless of perfect minde and memorie (praise and thanks be given unto almightye God therefor), do this 15th day of November in the yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne lord James, by the grace of God of England France and Ireland King, Defender of the faith the sixteenthe, and of Scotland the nine and fortieth, make and ordaine this my present testament, manifesting herein my last will, in manner and forme following, viz:

First and principallie I bequeath and recommend my soule unto the infinite mercies of almightie God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the meritts of the death and passion of our lord God and saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comend to the ground, to be buried in the church yard of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I give to the poore of Crick e, 6s-8d, payable within oneyeare after my decease.

Item, I give towards the repayr of the towne cawces [ie causeways] 4s.

Item, I give unto my sonne Andrewe Mason five pounds of lawfull English monie, paiable within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I give unto my sonne Giles Mason £20 of lawful English monie, paiable within one halfe yeare after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my sonne Edward Mason, all that messuage or tenement, garden and close, with all the rights, [members] and appurtenances thereunto belonging, scituate lying and being in Barbie in the said countie of Northampton, nowe in the occupation of one Richard Humfrey; And also all that one quarterne of arable, lea meadow and pasture ground with all and singular the rights, members and appurtenances thereunto belonging, scituate lying and being within the fields of Barbie abovesaide, now in the tenure holding and occupation of one Edward Smith his assigne or assignes; To have and to hold the said messuage or tenement, garden and close and also the said quarterne of land with all and singular theire and onlie of theire rights, members and appurtenances whatsoever, unto him the said Edward Mason and the heires of his bodie lawfullie to be begotten, for ever. And for want of heires of the said Edward lawfullie to be begotten, unto my saide sonne Giles Mason and the heires of his bodie lawfullie to be begotten, for ever. And for want of heires of the saide Giles lawfullie to be begotten, unto William Mason and of the sonnes of Thomas Mason of Barbie and the heires of his bodie lawfullie to be begotten, for ever. To be held of the cheefe lord or lords of the fee or fees thereof, by the rents and services hearetofore due and of right accustomed.

Item, I give unto the children of Henrie Duncklie of Haddon, fortie shillings of lawful English monie, to be equallie devyded amongst them, paiable within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I give unto Nathan Douncklie a lamb.

All the rest of my goods and chattells ungiven and unbequeathed, my debts legacies and funreal discharged, I give and bequeath unto my brother Thomas Dounckelie of Crick and my sonne in law Thomas Mason of Barbie, whom I make constitute and ordaine to be sole executors of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare above first written.

Item, I give to eche of my godchildren 12d a peece.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

The mark of X Joan Mason

Edmund Cowlie John Smith X his mark

Probatio fuit 15 February 1617 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad ... £37-19s-4d

261. Joan Sharrock of Crick, 1618 (N2 Book M F198)

[This is the widow of the leading puritan and sometime priest of Crick and Milton Malsor, Giles Sharrock, and the mother of Nathaniel Sharrock gentleman, whose respective wills appear earlier in 1609 and 1613.

By the wording of her introductory dedication and request for burial, we can infer that she had another son who pre-deceased her; later in the will it appears that this was Reginald Sharrock, who we note was old enough to be married with children of his own.

Note that she leaves 4s to the "fowre ringers", ie of the church bells, which seems rather unusual for the wife of a puritan minister, since puritans tended to eschew bell-ringing. We also have in her bequest a specific and useful list of the poorer people of Crick at that date.

There is also mention of 'a coverlet of black and yellow' – which calls to mind that famous puritan of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare's Malvolio, with his yellow stockings and black cross-garters! This, too, is not quite what we expect of a sober puritan widow ...

The gift of a pair of gloves to the overseer – in this case Edward Cowley – is the first example in this series of a custom that later became very common.]

In the name of god amen. I Joan Sharrock of Crick in the countie of Northampton, widow, anno dom 1617 February the eighteenth, doe ordaine this to be my last will and testament, viz:

I bequeath my soule into the handes of almightie God my faythful creator and merciful redeemer; and my bodie I would have buried in the church of Creeke, where my [child?] was interred.

Item, I bequeath to the poore of Creeke 20s, to be bestowed in manner and forme following, viz: unto Thomas [Brigman?] 12d, and my old clothes to be bestowed unto Thomas Brigman's wife and to Annis [Beacham?] according to the discretion of Lucretia Sharrocke of Creeke my daughter in lawe; and to Annis [Beacham?] 12d in money; Item, I bequeath unto Annis Shatswell 12d, to John Smith 12d; 4s to the fowre ringers ; my old hat to Lawrence Kilworth; and the remainder of the 20s is to be bestowed where my daughter in law Lucretia Sharrock shall think fit, beside 4s to the ringers and besides the 20s mentioned.

Item, I bequeath unto Elizabeth Woodam my grandchild five pounds and my lesser chest, one coverlet of black and yellow, a payre of hempen shetes.

Item, I bequeath unto my son Reginald's children 20s, equallie to be devided, and eleven shillings unto his wife.

Item, I bequeath unto Elizabeth Sharrock, daughter unto Lucretia Sharrock of Creeke, my bedstead, my fetherbed, my woolens, with all things belonging thereunto, with my chest and linnens, and an arras covering for a bed.

Item, I bequeath unto Francis, Mr Keynes his servant, 2s-6d.

All other my goods, chattells, debts, dues and demands whatsoever belonging unto me, I doe bequeath unto my wellbeloved daughter in law Lucretia Sharrock of Creeke, whom I make my full whole and sole executrix, and I appoint Mr Nathaniel Keynes and Mr Edward Cowlie to be overseers of my will, and I bequeath to Mr Edward Cowlie a payre of gloves about 2s-6d price.

This will was made in the presence of Nathaniel Keynes, Lucretia Sharrocke and of Elizabeth [Shu...l.] and [Lettis Newton?].

The mark of X Joan Sharrock

Probatio fuit ... [no clear date]

Invent. extendit ad ... £20-11s-8d.

268. William Cowley of Crick, 1619 (N2 Book Q F207)

[There are 6 Cowley wills in this series – 3 from Kilsby and 3 from Crick – and these 6 wills are probably worth considering as a single family group.]

In the name of god amen. I William Cowlie of Cricke in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, beinge at this present time weake in bodie, yet of good remembrance (laude and praise be given unto almightie God therefore), doe this 20th daie of Julye anno dom 1619, make and ordaine this my present testament, manifestinge herein my last will, in maner and forme followinge, viz:

First and principallie I bequeath and recomende my soule unto the infinite mercies of almightie God, themaker and redeemer thereof, Trustinge it to be saved through the merits of the death and passion of our Lorde God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comende to the ground, to be buried in the churchyard of Crick abovesaide.

Item, I bequeath unto Robert Tomson of Kilsbie 20s of lawful English monie, paiable within one halfe yeare after my decease.

Item, I give unto my sonne Thomas Cowlie, a horse, an old carte, a plough, and five pounds of like monie, paiable likewise within one halfe yeare after my decease.

And to evry one of his children, a shepe.

All the rest of my goodes and cattell, my debts legacies and funeral discharged, I give and bequeath unto my sonne Roger Cowlie, whome I make sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have caused this writing to be made, and have heareunto set my hand, the daie and yeare first above written.

Sign X William Cowlie

Witnesses:

Edmunde Cowlie

The mark of X John Harris

Probatio fuit 5 October 1620etc

Invent. extendit ad £145-16s-4d.

280. John Clarke of Crick, 1621 (N2 Book P F129)

[A wealthy yeoman, with inventory valued at £235-12s-10d, a member of the influential Clarke family of Crick (see earlier wills dated 1598 and 1600, and also a later will in the 1640s), and owning land and property both in Crick and Rugby. But though wealthy, neither he nor any of his witnesses could write their names ... contrast, for instance, with Kilsby wills of this same date, where roughly half the men sign their name.

Part of his estate, as we see, was a half yardland (ie about 15 acres) 'recently' purchased from the estate of the late Giles Sharrock – though since Giles Sharrock died in 1609, it may be that the sale was made subsequently by his son Nathaniel Sharrock (died 1613), or by his widow Joan (died 1618).

In the bequests to his family, we learn much of the Clarke family tree, and we also see that they are well established in the upper levels of village society, sharing between their various members several parcels of land, several large houses and smaller cottages, and an inn, and on terms of close friendship with the well to do Bucknell and Watts families of Crick .

Note that there is a John Pynson working (in Crick ?) as a blacksmith at this time – he is almost certainly the second son of Henry Pinson the prosperous blacksmith of Kilsby, whose will dated 1590 appears earlier in this series. It will be interesting to compare the respective fortunes of the several blacksmiths who appear among these transcripts, for it is evident that they were by no means all prosperous ...]

In the name of god amen. The fifth daie of May in the yere of our Lorde one thousand six hundred twentie and one. And in the ninetenth year of the raigne of our sovereign lord James, by the grace of God king of England France and Ireland, defender of the faith, the nineteenth, and of Scotland the foure and fiftieth, I John Clarke of Cricke in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, being sicke in body but of perfect and sound remembrance thanks be to God, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament, in manner and forme following, that is to say:

First I give and bequeath my soule unto almightie God my creator, hoping assuredly through his mercy, in the merits and passion of his deare son my Savyour Jesus Christ to be made partaker of everlasting life, and I comitt my body to the earth of whence it came.

And as concerning my worldly substance which God of his mercy hath bestowed upon me, I give and bequeath them as followeth, viz:

First I give unto Alice Atkins, daughter of my cosen William Atkins and Mary now his wife, of Walcote and in the parish of Grandborough in the countie of Warwick, All that my cotage house with all the rightes members and appurtenances therof whatsoever, scituate and being in Rugby in the countye of Warwick, which I late purchased to me and my heires of Thomas Holden of Rugby aforesaid, Butcher; to have and to hold the said cotage house with all rights members and appurtenances thereof, unto the said Alice Atkins and to her heires and assignes forever.

Item, I give unto my cosen Mary Atkins, now wife of the said William Atkins, one halfe yardland of arrable meadowe pasture and comon, with all the rights members appurtenances therof whatsoever, lying and being in Crick aforesaid, which I late purchased and bought to me and my heires of Gyles Sharogge of Cricke aforesaid, clerke, to have and to hold the said halfe yardland arrable meadow pasture and comon with the rights members and appurtenances, unto the said Mary Atkins and to her heires and assignes forever.

Item, I give unto my cosen Edward Clarke, my brother Edward's sonne, one cotage house with one closse adioyninge, with the appurtenances, in Cricke aforesaide, now in the tenure of Edward Coten, and one yardland of arrable meadow pasture and comon with appurtenances, to be equally devided and taken out of that three yardlands in Cricke which is nowe in my owne possession and occupation, and to be laid and sett out at the furthest parte of the fields; To have and to hold the said cotage house, closse and yardland with their appurtenances unto the said Edward Clarke my cosen and brother's sonne and to his heires and assignes forever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Agnes Clarke, widowe, my cosen, fortie shillings.

Item, I give unto my brother Edward Clarke, twentie pounds of currant Englishe money, to be paid him by my executor hereafter named within sixe yeares next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to every of my brother Edward his sonnes, ten pounds a peece, to be paid them likewise within sixe yeares next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto William Clarke of Cricke aforesaid, Inholder, three pounds of currant English money, to be paid him within fowre yeares next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Clarke, nowe wife of Richard Clarke of Crick aforesaid, fortie shillings of currant English money.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my godchild Philippe [Birridge?] ten shillings of currant English money. And I give unto John Pynson Blacksmyth six shillings and eight pence of currant English money

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Kyrbye my godchild three shillings and fowre pence of currant English money.

Item, all the rest of my goodes, cattells and chattells whatsoever not before given and bequeathed, I give and bequeath unto my said cosen William Atkins, whom I make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

And I doe desire and appoynt my very loving neighbours and frends William Bucknell gentleman and Robert Watts to be the overseers of this my last will and testament, and I doe give to either of them for their paines they shall take therein, twentie shillings a peece.

In witness whereof I havbe hereunto sett my hand and seale, the daye and yeare aforesaid.

In the presence of theis witnesses, viz.:

William Porter, scribe

The mark of X John Clarke

William Sheares X his mark

Gregory Killworth X his mark

Probatio fuit ... 3 November 1621 ... etc

Invent. extendit ad ... £235-12s-10d.

282. Agnes Banbury of Crick, 1622 (N2 Book M F248)

[This poor widow apparently has very little to leave. We may surmise, from the nature of her bequests, that her maiden name was Greene.]

In the name of god amen. I Anise Banberie of Crick e, widowe, beinge weak in bodie but of perfite remembrance (praise be given unto God therefor) doe this 20th daie of Aprill anno dom 1622 make and ordaine this my present testament, declaring thearin my last will, in manner and forme followinge.

First I bequeath my soule unto the infinite mercies of Almightye God, the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the merits of the death of our lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and my bodie I comend to the ground to be buried within the church yearde of Crick abovesaide.

Item, I bequeath unto my kinsman Thomas Greene a payre of sheets.

All the rest of my goods whatsoever I fullie give and bequeath unto my kinsman Robert Greene, whom I make and ordaine to be sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set to my marke, the daie and yeare first above written.

Delivered as her acte and deede in the presence of Edmund Cowlie, Thomas Fisher and John [Woth?]

The mark of X Annis Banberie

Sign. Thomas X Fisher

Sign. John X [Woth?]

Probatio fuit ... 22 May 1622

Invent. extendit ad ... £5?-11s?-4d.

284. Nathaniell Keynes of Crick, 1622 (N2 Book O F127; also copied as PROB 11/141)

[Nathaniel Keynes was priest in Crick after Giles Sharrock. His first temporal bequest, of money to the poor of Broughton, may indicate that he was previously incumbent at one of the nearby Broughtons ... this could easily be checked in Dorman & Irons; and the Northamptonshire Record Office's "Dorman & Irons" catalogue will no doubt confirm that he was educated at Magdalen College – hence his interesting bequest to that College, mentioned later in his will, of a history of the world written by Sir Walter Raleigh.

The gift of his clothes to one Mr Hawsord – since he inherits a cassock along with the rest, he must be a priest, and either Keynes' curate or possibly his successor? – gives a unique insight into the wardrobe of an affluent country priest of the period, living in a comparatively rich village. Elsewhere in the will there are further gifts of high-class clothing, and a considerable list of small luxury objects, including silver and gold items, and what may be a quilt of Chinese silk.

As the will proceeds, it appears clear that Keynes' wife has her own funds, part of which she has used to purchase land at Broughton.]

In the name of god amen. I Nathaniell Keynes of Creeke in the county of Northampton, clerke, doe ordayne and make my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge.

Inprimis I bequeath my soule unto Almighty God my faythfull creator, mercifull redeemer and sanctifier, praying for patience, his comfort and consolation unto the end and in the end. And my will is that body be decently buried in the chancell next to the great broken stone [eastward?], and that a stone about 20s piece to be layd upon the grave fyttinge the place.

And I bequeath to the poor of Broughton 30s.

Item, I bequeath to the poor of Creeke forty shillings, to be distributed amongst them and paid thereof to the [right?] and according to the discretion of my executor.

I bequeath to Christopher [Mollyneux?] one hundred and fyfty pounds, yf my goods come to soe much, all my debts legacies and dues being discharged. And yf yt will not come to soe much, yet my will ys that he shall have all that remayne (my debts legacies and dues being discharged) of my goods and cattles. And my will is, that the one halfe of his legacy, be yt more or lesse, shalbe paid unto him within one halfe yeare after my decease, and thother halfe within one halfe yeare after that.

And I bequeath £20 which I would have remayne in my wife her custody for her keepinge unto Elizabeth Carter; and yf the said Elizabeth Carter decease before my wife, then my will is that my wife have and enjoy the said twenty pounds; but yf my wife decease first, then my will is that the said twenty pounds be payd into the hands of one of her unckles or aunts or cozens or sister, whom the said Elizabeth shall make choice of, to remayne in their hands in the same manner as yt did in my wife her hand, for her mayntenance.

Item, I make my wellbeloved wife my full, whole and sole executrix, whom my will is that she discharge all my debts within one quarter of a yeare after my decease at furthest, my debts besides my legacies not amounting to above thirty pounds, for which I have left sufficient to pay her the hundred pounds which I am bound to leave her at my decease.

Item, I give unto my said wife all that grayne which is at Broughton arising from the land which she purchased there.

And the timber of my house [ie money from the sale of certain trees that are ready to be felled about his property?], I would have pay for dilapidacions, yf Mr Thomas Crunwell pay them not or may be demanded.

Item, I give to my wyfe my [.....py] and I give to Elizabeth Carter my third best cowe I have.

Item, I bequeath to Ellen Slye tenne pounds, to be payd at Michaelmas come twelvemonth yf she be then livinge.

Item, I doe give to Mrs Cullen of Witney and her two daughters, tenne pounds, equally to be devidid amongst them, to be paid unto them at Michaelmas come twelvemonth if they be living, or to the survivor or survivors of them.

Item, I doe give unto Mary [Heighter?] fifty shillings, to be payd to her at Michaelmas come twelvemonth.

Item, I bequeath unto Magdalen Colledge, Sir Walter Rawleigh his history of the world.

Item, I doe give unto Mr [Hawsord?] my worser [fleeced?] cloake, my beste payer of bootes and shoes, my second suite of apparrell as hatt band, ierken, dublett, hose, stockings; as also my beste doublett, ierken, breeches and old cassocke.

Item I doe give to Mrs Herries' [ie Harris'?] little child my silver porringer and a [spirroyall?] in gold.

Item, I give to my wife Babington's [works?], my [china?] quilt [ie a silken quilt?], an old horse and two of my best cowes, and as much cloath as may make her two coats.

Item, I bequeath to Mr Robert Turner a paire of my best sheets, six table napkyns, a paire of pillowbeares and a [dysh?] cloath for a cupbord.

Item, I bequeath to Mr Addinson my best gowne, my velvet [.....] and silke girdle.

Item, I bequeath to my sister Lee and to her two daughters, forty shillings a peece.

And this I ordayne to be my last will and testament, in witness whereof I have sett to my hand and seale, the 13th September 1622.

Item, I entreat my sonne in lawe Mr [Oerrey??] to be my overseer of this my last will and testament. Testator, Nathaniel Keynes.

Sealled and subscribed in the presence of John Harrison,* November 5th.

I do alter Mrs Cullens her two daughters legacy from £10 unto £2* Ellen Sly her legacy from £10 unto £5, I Testator Nathaniel Keynes in the presence of Christopher Mollynew.

[* NB: the bottom right corner of the NRO parchment is torn off, so that some words are missing at these points.]

287. John Kilworth of Crick, 1623 (N2 Book M F254)

[The Kilworth family appears regularly, if infrequently, in the series of transcripts for Crick, with entries in 1567, 1623, 1684 and 1698. John Kilworth appears to be a fairly wealthy yeoman – though no probate total is given in the will, his estate probably exceeds £200, since he bequeathes over £70 to

his wife and daughter before leaving the bulk to his son and heir Thomas. We see that he had a two-story house with upper parlour as well as lower parlour.]

In the name of god amen. I John Kilworth of Crick in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, beinge at the presente time sicke and weake in bodie yet nevertheless of perfect minde and remembrance (thanks and praise be given unto Almightye God therefore) doe this 9 daie of Maie Anno Dom 1623 make and ordaine this my present testament, manifesting therein my last will, in manner and forme followinge. First and principallie I bequeath and recommend my soule unto the infinite mercies of Almightye God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusteing it to be saved thorough the merits of the death and passion of our lord god and Saviour Jesus Christ; and my bodie I comen to the ground, to be buried within the churchyearde of Crick above saide

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Joane Kilworth, the sume of threescore and sixe poundes thirteen shillings and four pence of lawfull English monie, paiable at her age of twentie yeares or at the daie of her mariage, whether shall happen firste.

Item, I give unto my said daughter Joane Kilworth a linnen chest great chest and al such linnens as are therein, which hearetofore were her owne mothers; the chest and linens are nowe standing and beinge in the upper parlar.

Item, I give unto my wellbeloved wife Elizabeth Kilworth, the sume of eight poundes of lawfull English monie, paiable within one yeare after my deceasse.

All the rest of my goodes and chattells, my debts legacies and funerall discharged, I give and bequeath unto my sonne and heir Thomas Kilworth, whome I make sole executor of this my last will and testament.

Witnesses:

John Kilworth

Edmund Cowlie

Henry Lee X his marke

.....ses? Killworth

Probatio fuit ... 7 June 1623 ... etc.

289. Edward Mawbie of Crick, 1624 (N2 Book O F159)

[Though describing himself as a husbandman, and evidently owning a plot of a quarter of land, Edward Mawbie nonetheless acknowledges William Miles of Crick as his "master".

The Miles family were certainly wealthy yeomen, owning much land in and around Crick – see the will of young John Miles in 1604, earlier in this series. John Miles appears to have died childless and fairly young, but he had two brothers – David and William – who had respectively 3 and 5 children. It seems very likely that the "master" to whom Edward Mawbie refers here was John Miles' brother William – if so, then William Miles must have been aged 50-60 at this time.]

In the name of god amen. I Edward Mawbie of Crick in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, beinge at this presente time sicke and weake in bodie yet nonetheless of perfect minde and remembrance (laud and praise be given unto Almightye God therefore) doe this 9th daie of Januarie 1623 [ie calendar year 1624] make and ordaine this my present testament, manifesting therein my last will, in manner and forme followinge, viz:

First I bequeath my soule unto the infinite mercies of almightye God the maker and redeemer thereof, trusting it to be saved through the meritts of the death and passion of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and my bodie I comende to the ground, to be buried in the church yarde of Crick abovesaide.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my godson Edward Mawbie, one of the sonnes of my brother Thomas Mawbie of Lilbourne, all that my one quarterne of arable, ley, meadow and pasture ground, with all and singular the appurtenances whatsoever, scituate lyinge and beinge within the parish and fields of Crick abovesaide, now in the tenure of one Philip Mawbie of Crick abovesaide, To have and to hold all the saide quarterne of arable, ley, meadow and pasture ground with the appurtenances whatsoever, unto him the saide Edward Mawbie his heirs and assignes for ever; yet it is my will and full intent that my said brother Thomas Mawbie shall have and receive the profitt and increase arising out and from the saide quarterne of land, to his owne use, until suche time as the saide Edward Mawbie shall accomlishe his full age of eighteen yeares old.

Item, I forgive unto Philip Mawbie 46s of lawfull Englishe monie, the which sume the saide Philip Mawbie is indebted unto me.

Item, I give unto my sister Elizabeth Roberds 40s of lawfull Englishe monie.

Item, I give unto my sister Dorotheie other 40s of like monie.

Item, I give unto the poore of Crick 20s of like monie.

Item, I give unto William [Furden?] 12d.

Item, I give unto [Pimden?] Murcoate 12d.

Item, I give unto my brother Thomas Mawbie my best shute of apparrell, and my wastecoate.

Item, I give unto my cosen William Mawbie, one of the sonnes of my brother Thomas Mawbie, my cheste.

Item, I give unto Edward [Lonck?] my seconde shute of apparrell and 12d in monie.

Item, I give unto Thomas Brindell that 5s which Robert Greene and Richard Dunckely oweth me, viz Robert Greene oweth me 3s and Richard Dunckely 2s.

All the rest of my goodes and cattle, my debts legacies and funerall discharged, I give and bequeath unto my master William Miles of Cricke, whome I make constitute and ordaine to be sole executer of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the said Edward Mawbie have to these present set to my hand and seale, the daie and yeare first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us as witnesses:

Edmund Cowlie

The marke of X Edward Mawbie

[plus one other illegible signature]

292. John Bucknell of Crick, 1625 (PROB 11/148)

[The first clauses of this will are surprising. There is no soul dedication; he gives money to the children of Susanna Bucknell to dissuade Susanna from contesting his will; and in later clauses, the husband of his daughter Lydia is painted as a negligent and unkind husband, so that Bucknell makes generous provisions to support Lydia and her children. This suggests considerable family discord ... However, there are many other generous bequests, to a large family, as well as to the poor of two parishes, and John Bucknell is clearly a very wealthy gentleman.

Bucknell has connections with the parish of Stanwell (is this Stanwell in Surrey near Heathrow?).

In passing, we note the custom that men should buy and wear "mourning rings". This is no puritan practice, as puritans did not favour the giving or wearing of wedding rings ...

Finally, note that his 2 yardlands are lying respectively in Hall Ground and of Heyne Ground.

The first clearly relates to the old manorial land, and it may be compared for instance with the Hall Yardland in Kilsby. Note also the indication that these lands had been at some former time the property of Oliver Cromwell.

Bucknell's son John is studying at Lincoln's Inn, and this is very significant. For most young country gentlemen, a stay at university was less important than time spent in London at one of the Inns of Court. There they met their peers from other counties and acquired that knowledge of the law needed by a local magistrate. The puritan gentry of Northamptonshire were associated in particular with Gray's Inn – and this is our third clear hint that the Bucknell family are not radical puritans.

Although no probate total is available, it is clear that John Bucknell is very wealthy – his bequests total considerably more than £250, and his whole estate is probably worth more than £600.]

In the name of god amen. The three and twentieth daye of September in the yeare of our lord God one thousand six hundred Twenty five, I John Bucknell of Crick in the county of Northampton, gent., being weak in body but of good and perect memory, doe make and ordayne this my last will and Testament in manner and forme following.

First I give unto Thomas Bucknell, William Bucknell and Hester Bucknell the some of fifteen pounds, viz five pounds apeece, so that Susanna Bucknell mother of the said Thomas, William and Hester, nor any other by her consent, meanes or procurement, goe not about to overthrow this my said last will and testament.

Item, I give unto John Bucknell my Godsonne, Sonne of John Bucknell, Twentie markes, and unto Questor Bucknell and Sibill Bucknell children of the aforesaid John Bucknell, Twentie nobles apeece.

Item, I give unto John Cartmell my godsonne, Ten pounds, and unto Nicholas Cartmell the younger and Thomas Cartmell Twenty nobles apeece.

Item, I give unto John Campion my Godson Ten pounds and unto Valentine Campion and Robert Campion Twenty nobles apeece.

Item, I give unto Richard Lucas my Godsonne Ten pounds and unto Mary Lucas his sister five pounds.

Item, I give unto Judith Campion, Mary Lucas and Lidia Stockton my daughters, Ten pounds apeece.

Item, I give unto Nicholas Cartmell, William Campion, Richard Lucas and Gilbert Stockton my Sonnes in lawe, twenty shillings apeece to buy them mourning rings withall.

Item, I give unto Anne Bucknell my daughter in lawe Ten pounds.

Item, I give unto William Chaplin and Elizabeth Chaplin her children forty shillings apeece.

Item, I give unto Anna Perkins the nurse Twenty shillings, and unto the maid Ten shillings.

Item, I give unto John Smith of Paylton forty shillings.

Item, I give unto the poore of Crick yerely upon good fridaye as followeth, viz: unto ten of the poorest Inhabitants sixe pence apeece, and unto ten of the nexte poore people fower pence apeece, yerely according to my deed heretofore revealed.

Item, I give unto the poore of Stanwell forty shillings in the whole, to bee payd by my exor.

Item, I give and my will is, that if Lidia my daughter shall happen to overlive her husband, that then my executor after his death, within sixe monethes shall paye unto her fifty pounds, and fifty pounds more within one yere following, and forty pounds more within one yere following that. And further my will is, that my said executor, dureing the life of her said husband, she being in life, shall quarterly every yere dureing his said life paye unto the use of the said Lydia £3-6s-8d. And if he shall not suffer the said Lydia to dispose of the same to the use of her selfe and her Children, upon Complaynt made by her then my executor to dispose of the same according to his discrecion.

Item, I give and devise to John Bucknell of Lincolnes Inne, my sonne, all that my two yard lands of land, meadow and pasture, lying in Crick e, with their appurtenances, th'one of hall ground, th'other of heyne ground, sometyme Sir Olliver Cromwell's land, To have and to hold unto the said John Bucknell during his natrual life, The remainder unto John Bucknell his sonne, and to the heire males of his bodie lawfully begotten. And for default of such issue, then to Questor Bucknell and to the heire males of his Body lawfully begotten; and for default of such issue, unto John Bucknell of Lincolnes Inne and to the heires males of his body lawfully begotten; and for default of such issue, then to the heire males of the body of William Bucknell; and for default of such issue, then to the right heires of the said John Bucknell, for ever.

And I doe make John Bucknell my Sonne my sole Executor and devise unto him all the residue of my goods and Chattles whatsoever by this last will and Testament unbequeathed, beareing the charges of my funerall.

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and Seale, the daye and yere above written.

Per me Johannem Bucknell.

Witnesses unto this my will, William Campion, Edward Perkins.

Probatium fuit ... 13 February 1625 [ie calendar year 1626]

General Note:

As we come out of the period between about 1606 and 1625, during which epidemics of contagious disease (chiefly bubonic plague and smallpox) and poor weather (leading to failed harvests) played significant roles in curtailing life, it is appropriate once again to generalise a little, in order to summarise a further change which had been stealing gradually across the social fabric during the period 1560-1620 – namely, the growth of cottage industry; and most particularly, the weaving and associated trades.

"When William Shakespeare was a child, he lived in a nation that produced mostly raw materials and imported finished goods. Located on the periphery of Europe, it was not very important to Europe's economy. Known for its wool, it was not known for fine cloth, and it depended on the export of wool to pay for its appetite for manufactured goods. In the 1560s this picture began to change, as civil wars on the Continent disrupted traditional markets, and entrepreneurs, often with the help of government monopolies, found it profitable to make in England what had previously been purchased abroad."

[Source: Shakespeare's England, Norman Jones]

This increase in cottage industry goes hand in hand with the steady increase of sheep-pasturing and land-enclosure which had been taking place during the same period, 1560-1620, fostered in part by the statutes of Elizabeth's government to encourage domestic processing of wool. We see local evidence of the effects of land-enclosure for pasturing, in the progressive desertion of Onley during this period (and probably also Elkington and Claycoton), and also in the appearance of new cottage trades among those who made their wills after the mid-1620s; indeed, it is likely that some of the new cottage-tradesmen had previously been husbandmen on the land which was enclosed, and that they were driven into the new life by the increasing poverty of their lives as husbandmen.

It will also become evident, in the following years, that the wills of more and more shepherds are seen, indicating that this work also emerged as a full-time specific trade in this area during the period 1580-1620.

There has already been ample evidence of some of these changes, in the wills of the early 1600s transcribed above; and further evidence will appear in the following transcripts.

296. Richard Whiteheade of Crick, 1627 (PROB 11/152)

[There are 6 Whitehead family wills in this series of transcripts – 4 from Crick dated 1516, 1555, 1627 and 1643 (which are worth investigating as a group) and 2 from Kilsby dated 1668 and 1676 (which may perhaps prove to be a later branch of the same basic family group).]

In the name of god amen. I Richard Whitehead of Crick in the countie of Northampton, woollman, being sicke in bodie but in good and perfect remembrance thanks be to God, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, that is to saie:

First and principallie I doe commite my soule into to hands of Allmightie God my heavenlie father in Christ, hopinge assuredlie to be saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ his onely sonne my alone Saviour and Redeemer. And my bodie to be buried in the church or churchyarde of Crick aforesaid.

Alsoe I doe give dispose unto Susan my lovinge wief, all that messuage or tenement with the appurtenances thereof in Crick aforesaid, wherein I doe nowe inhabite and dwell, To have and to hould to the said Susan my wief for and during the terme of the naturall lief of the said Susan.

Alsoe I doe give dispose and devise unto Richard Whitehead my sonne the said messuage with the appurtenances thereof, To have and to hould unto the said Richard Whitehead my sonne and to his heires and assignes for ever, immediatly from and after the decease of the said Susan my wief.

Alsoe I doe give and bequeath unto my said wief all my househould goodes as Naperie, Bedding [...asse], Pewter, utensills, and ymplements of househould whatsoever (one great brasse pott except). And alsoe I doe give and bequeath unto the said Susan my wief the some of fowerscore poundes of currant english money, to be paid to her presentlie after my decease.

Alsoe I give and bequeath unto my said sonne Richard Whitehead the sume of fiftie poundes of like currant english money, to be put fourth presentlie after my decease to the use benefit and behoofe of the said Richard Whitehead my sonne.

Alsoe I doe give dispose and devise unto Philipp Whitehead my brother, all that messuage or tenement with the appurtenances thereof in Crick aforesaid, where Thomas Parker doth nowe inhabite and dwell, which I purchased of William Whiteheade my late father deceased, To have and to hould to the said Phillipp Whiteheade my brother and to his heires and assignes, to the onely use and behoof of the said Phillipp Whitehead and of his heires and assignes for ever.

Alsoe I doe give unto the said Phillipp Whitehead one great potte (before excepted from my said wief), To have and to hould the said pott to the said Phillipp my brother untill my said sonne Richard shall accomplish the age of Twentie and one yeares; and if my said sonne Richard shall decease before he shall accomplish the age of Twentie and one yeares, then I give the said pott to my said brother Phillipp and to his executors and assignes for ever.

Also I doe give unto my brother John Whitehead Twentie shillings of currant english money by the year yearlie for ad during his natuall lief, and to be paid to him yearely during his lief at and upon the eleveanth day of November and the second daie of Februarie by equal porcions.

Also I doe give and bequeath unto [Eme?] Whitehead my mother the some of five poundes of currant english money, to be paid to her within one yeare next after my decease.

Alsoe I doe give unto my sister Marie Whitehead the some of five poundes of currant english money, to be paid to her within one yeare next after my decease.

And I doe give to my sister Elizabeth Whitehead three poundes of like currant money, to be paid to her within one yeare next after my decease.

Provided allwaies that if my said sonne Richard Whitehead shall dye and departe this lief before he shall accomplish his full age of Twentie and one yeares, Then my will is that his porcion of fiftie poundes to him given as aforesaid shallbe and remain to Susan my said wief and to Phillipp my said brother, to be equallie parted and devided between them.

And further alsoe, that if my said sonne Richard shall decease before he shall accomplish his full age of Twentie and one yeares, Then I doe give dispose and devise all that my said messuage or tenement wherein I doe nowe dwell with the appurtenances thereof unto the said Susan my wief, To have and to hould to her and to her heirs and assignes, to the use of the said Susan and of the heires of her bodie lawfullie cominge; and for default of such heires, Then the remainder thereof after the decease of my

said wief shalbe and remaine to the onelie proper use and behooffe of the said Phillipp Whitehead my brother and of his heires and assignes for ever.

The residue of all my goodes cattells and chattells both moveable and unmoveable unbequeathed, my debts being paid, thesi my legacies performed and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe give and bequeath unto the said Susan my lovinge wief, whom I doe make my sole executrix of this my present testament and last will.

In witness whereof I have to this my present testament and last will putt my hand and seale, the Sixe and twentieth daie of Aprill in the third yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord Charles by the grace of god king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith, anno dom 1627.

Richard Whitehead

Sealed by the said Richard Whitehead and delivered to his said executrix as his last will.

In the presence of Richard Andrewe, David Callton and Richard Ringrose scrib.

Probatum fuit 5 July 1627 ... etc.

298. Sibil Watts of Crick, 1628 (N2 Book P F259)

[Although Sibil Watts apparently has relatively little disposable money to bequeathe, there are several other clues that suggest she is used to a relatively high status in the community – even if we did already know that she is the widow of William Watts the rich yeoman farmer, whose will dated 1613 appears earlier. For instance, she expects burial either "in the church or churchyard", usually a sign of some social standing; and her house has "a chamber over the hall" ie it is of relatively imposing structure – a similar description was applied to the prebendary house in Kilsby as recited in an earlier will, and from the associated glebe terrier for the prebendary house in Kilsby we know that it was built in around 1390. Her cash bequests to most of her children are of token value only, since she knows that they were well provided for financially by her husband's will. One exception is her son John Watts, who receives "the full payment" of £13-6s-8d – because he was not provided for in William's earlier will.

It is instructive to put this will of Sibil Watts together with the preceding will of her husband William, since each includes information to complement the other, regarding the members of their family, the line of inheritance, the size and description of the house, etc. It also tends to confirm the earlier supposition, that William died suddenly and unexpectedly – for we see that his widow has survived him by 15 years.

From the many family names and several inter-family marriages referred to in this will, we can reconstruct parts of the family trees of a substantial segment of the well-to-do farming families of Crick at this period.

Finally, we find some useful cash equivalents against such items as a bullock, a ewe lamb etc., which all help to establish the current worth of these items at the time, and so guide us in turn to check the rate of inflation over the period under research.]

In the name of god amen. I Sibill Wattes of Crick in the countie of Northampton, widdowe, being sicke in bodie but of good and perfect remembrance thankes be to god therefore, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz:

First and principallie I doe give and bequeath my soule into the handes of Almighty God my maker, hoping assuredly to be saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christe my onelie Saviour and Redemer, and my bodie to be buryed in the parishe church or churchyarde of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I give unto my sonne John Wattes one shilling of currant english money.

Item, I give unto my sonne William Watts tenn shillings of like currant money.

Item, I give unto my sonne Jonas Wattes the full paiement of thirteen poundes six shillings and eightpence of currant money as aforesayd, and an coffer standing in the chamber over the hall house.

Item, I give unto my sonne and daughter Thomas Wright and his wife one shilling of currant money.

Item, I give unto my sonne and daughter Robert Wiggins and his wife one shilling of currant money.

Item, I give unto my daughter Gillian Wattes five poundes of currant englishe money.

Item, I give unto my daughter Lidia Wattes tenn poundes of currant englishe money.

Item, I give unto Edmund Wright sonne of Thomas Wright, on cow bullocke or thirtye shillings of currant money, to be paid or delivered unto him when he shall accomplish the age of Twenty and one yeares.

Item, I give unto Ruth Watts daughter of John Watts, one ewe lamb or five shillings of currant english money, to be paid or delivered unto her when she shall accomplish the age of eighteen yeares.

Also I give unto my sonnes Robert Watts and Jonas Watts, and to my daughters Gillian Watts and Lidia Watts, all my bedding, lynnens and wollen and all my other linnens and all my pewter and all my brasse, to be devyded amongst theis fowre equallie.

Item, I doe appoynt my sister Emm Banbery and my daughter Elizabeth Wright to divyde them for them.

Item, I give unto the poore of the parishe of Crick six shillings and eight pence.

All the rest of my goods moveable and unmoveable, my debts paid and legacies discharged and my bodie decentlie buried, I doe give and bequeath unto my sonne Robert Wattes, whom I make my full and sole executrix [yes, the will does say "executrix"!]

In witness whereof I have hereunder sett my hand and seale, the nineteenth day of Februarye in the third yeare of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lord Charles by the grace of god king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith, AD 1627.

Sibill Wattes her marke.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of Giles Kilworth and William Ollyver his marke.

Probatum fuit 2 August 1627 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad ... £82-6s-8d.

299. John Shatswell of Crick, 1628 (N2 Book N F146)

[John Shatswell may have died relatively suddenly, since he made no formal will – or perhaps this may be simply an instance of a man deliberately choosing not to make a will, in the belief that he was capable – as he seems to have been – of disposing his worldly goods without needing to trouble either priest or lawyer.

He is evidently a widower, and has at least 6 children; his daughters Alice and Elizabeth appear to be the oldest of his children, since they appear to have older children who are excluded from the bequests.

John Shatswell is evidently a man at least in his late 50s or early 60s – although, if the older grandchildren were excluded from the bequests because they had attained their own majorities, as seems likely, then this would make John somewhat older, say in his late 60s or early 70s.

It is interesting to note here, how the village of Cottesbrooke – from which the family of John Shatswell's daughter's husband presumably originated – is spelled as "Codsbrook". This may be a misspelling due to distance – though since Cottesbrook lies only 9 miles from Crick this seems unlikely – so more likely, it probably reflects the contemporary pronunciation of the village's name]

The 10th of March 1627 [*ie calendar year 1628*]. Memorandum that John Shatswell of Crick, husbandman, being weake in bodie but of perfitt remembrance, did in the presence of us whose names are heareunder written, utter these wordes:

I will give to my sonne William's children, to be equally divided amongst them, 10s.

To my sonne Robert's children, to be equally divided amongst them, other 10s.

To my daughter Alice Codsbrook's two younger children, other 10s.

To my daughter Elizabeth Tomson her three younger children, other 10s.

And to my sonne Richard's children, other 10s.

All the rest of my goods I give unto my sonne in lawe Thomas Cowlie, whom I make sole executor of this my will.

Witnesses,

Edmund Cowlie

Thomas Dunckly

John Cowlye

Probatum fuit ...10 June 1628 ... etc.

300. William Sabine of Crick, 1628 (N2 Book N F137)

[This labourer, though of lowly status, was by no means a poor man. He evidently dies young, since he leaves his wife perhaps newly pregnant with their first child – which makes him no older than 30, and perhaps as young as 25 – yet he has a house and a close (probably a small copyhold cottage) and his estate is valued at £23-16s-8d, which is a significant sum for a young labourer just starting married life.

It is not clear how he died; there is no mention of sickness or weakness in his will, which leads one to suppose that this may have been a death following an accident, and conjuring up thoughts of possible septicaemia; on the other hand, there had been 3 or 4 sudden deaths in Crick during the early months

of 1628 – see above – so perhaps this may be a further victim of a rather sudden and very localised minor epidemic.

Another point of interest is the use of a personal seal – a circle with a Christian cross set into it, and most probably made by an engraved seal-ring worn by William Sabine. This is the first instance in this series of the use of a personal seal by anyone below the rank of wealthy yeoman; and indeed, there have been very few of those thus far in the series. Once again, this tends to suggest that William Sabine may have been given a decent start in life.

The will mentions "the said Thomas Sabine" but does not actually tell us who this man was or refer to him in any other place – so the drafting is legally faulty. It seems very likely that it may be this testator's uncle – since he also has a son named William, it cannot be this testator's father.]

In the name of god amen. The second day of June anno dom 1628, I William Sabine of Crick in the countie of Northampton, laborer, being of perfect mynde and memorie thanks be to god, doe make this my last will and trestament in manner and forme followinge, that is to saye:

First I doe commit and bequeath my soule to the blessed trinitie, hoping to be saved only by the mercie of allmightie god and the merites of Christe Jesus; and my bodie I will to be buried with decent buriall in christian sorte at the discrecion of my executrix hereafter named.

Item, my will is that I make Abygall my wife my full executrix of this my last will and testament.

Item, I give and bequeath to Abygall my wife, for during her life, the house and clousse whereine shee liveth, and all my goodes and chattell moveable and unmoveable of what kinde and nature soever they be; and if Abygall my wife be nowe with childe, then my will is that my saide childe shall have the saide house and clouse, be it male or femalle, after the decease of Abygall my wife, for ever; and for want of such heires I give unto William Sabine sonne of the saide Thomas Sabine my house and clousse after the dissesse of Abygall my wife, to him and his heirs for ever.

In witsnesse whereof I have sett to my hand and seale.

William Sabine X his hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Witness us heare under written

[...] Campian

Robert Harbert

Edward Nearson

John X Bussell

Probatum fuit ... 14 June 1628 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad ... £23-16s-8d.

301. John Robinson of Crick, 1628 (N2 Book N F174)

[One might suppose this man to be a Puritan, from the name of his eldest son, Nehemiah; but he appears to give small consideration to his wife Ellen, regarding her almost as a piece of domestic furniture, to be kept in house as long as it serves a purpose! This does not seem to fit the normal pattern of a puritan household, in which the wife was treated far more equally, and the children were "theirs" not exclusively "his". But perhaps this is reading too much into a few words ...]

In the name of god amen. The 25th day of August in the yeare of our lord 1628, I John Robinson of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandmand, being sicke in bodie but of parfite minde I prayse God therefore, doe make and ordayne This my last will and Testament in manner and forme followinge.

First I bequeth my Sole to Almighty God my maker and redeemer, through whose merces I hope to Inioye Eternal happiness, and my bodey to be buried in the parish church yearde of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I geve and bequeth my house and all my land withing the parish of Creeke aforesayd unto my eldest Sonne Nehemiah and to his heares for ever; but my will is that Elen my wife shall have the use and occupacion of my sayd house and lands untill my sayd Sonne shall accomplish the age of 21 yeares, for the bringing up of my other children.

Item, I give and bequeth to my foresayd wife all my household stufe.

Item, I geve and bequeth unto my Sonne Edward five shillings, to be payd him when he shall accomplish the age of 21 yeares.

Item, I geve and bequeth unto my Sonne John five shillings, to be payd him when he shall accomplish the age of 21 yeares.

Item, I geve and bequeth unto my daughter Lidia five shillings, to be payd her when she shall accomplish the age of 21 yeares.

All the rest of my goodes and chattells moveable and unmoveable, my deptes payd and funerall expenses discharged, I geve and bequeth to my Sonne Nehemiah, whom I make and ordaine my executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the sayd John Robinson have heare unto sett my hand and Seale in the presence of:
George Shersbey

The marke of X William Harbord

Probatio fuit ... [10?] October 1628 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad ... £58-18s-4d.

315. Augustine Knight of Crick, 1634 (PROB 11/165)

[An interesting will, if only because it is that of a freemason. Apart from this crumb of personal information, we learn little about the testator from his nuncupative will.]

The last will and testament of Augustine Knight of Crick in the County of Northampton, freemason, which he made by word of mouth the 14th day of February Anno Dom 1633 [ie calendar year 1634] when in the hearing of us whose names are under written. He spake these words or to this effect, viz: "I give unto my brother Richard Knight his sonne, to whom I am godfather, six pounds in mony, and five poundes more amongst the other children of the said Richard Knight my brother.

Item, I give forty shillings in mony to my brother [Cans?/Caud?] his children at Stanforde, whereof twenty shillings to my godchild and the other twenty shillings amongst the rest of the children.

Item, I leave all the rest unto my wife Frances Knight."

Witnesses hereunto, Alexander [Trawell?], Thomas [Dark?].

322. Thomas Smith of Crick, 1636 (N2 Book J F245)

[From the fact that he names his mother in law as "the widow Ann Smith", it would at first appear that Thomas Smith has married a girl with the same surname as himself – but in fact, the term "mother-in-law" is used here to refer to his widowed step-mother. It is clear from the text, that Thomas Smith's father married twice, and had children by each of his wives, since Thomas refers to John as his "brother by my father's side", along with 4 other sisters Katherine Jane Elizabeth and Mary "by the father's side". His brother John and other four sisters "by the father's side" are evidently his younger half-siblings from the second marriage of his father, and Thomas himself is a child of his father by his first wife, along with his other three sisters Margaret Ann and Isabell who are his full siblings. Hence he had two sisters both called Elizabeth – one a full sister and the other a half-sister. His father is dead, as his his own mother. But he clearly loves his step-mother, and makes careful provision for her.

As a dialect note, we see that the village of Staverton was at this time locally pronounced as "Starton". His inventory makes it quite clear that he was just a young man – he possesses nothing but his clothing plus a few small portable belongings and some minor debts and credits; plus, of course, a small cottage and some land in Staverton (which was probably left to him in the will of his late father, who seems to have come originally from Staverton).

Thomas Smith was probably aged between 19 and 23 at the time of his death. His is the most perfect and complete inventory of clothing so far encountered, and paints an extremely clear picture of the wardrobe of a young man from a respectable family of sober puritans, right down to the best suit in which he was laid out for burial.

There is a minor puzzle – namely, if Thomas Smith is relatively young and unmarried, and has so many younger brothers and sisters, with whom was he living at the time of his death? We know that he is living in Crick – but we are also told that his widowed stepmother is to live in his cottage in Staverton, so clearly he is not living with her. There seem to be 3 possibilities – for he mentions his "late master Mr John Rainford"; and also, his (elder?) sister Margaret is married to one Robert Symons; and his (elder?) sister Ann is married to a man named Wood – so it seems likely that he was in service to a gentleman (his wardrobe tends to confirm this), but he may now be lodging with one of his married sisters.]

In the name of god amen. The eight and twentieth day of March in the yeare of our lord 1635 [ie calendar year 1635], I Thomas Smith of Crick in the countie of Northampton, being sick in bodie but of good and perfect memory praised be God, doe make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I comend my soule in to the hands of Allmightie God my maker, assuredly trusting that through a lively and stedfast faith in Jesus Christ my redeemer, and by the imputation of his pretious meritts unto me, I shalbe everlastingly saved; and my body I comitt into the earth from whence it was taken.

And as for the disposing of my corporall estate:

First I give and bequeath unto Ann Smith widdow, my mother in law, for and during her naturall life, All that my tenement or cottage with the back side, little close and all other the appurtenances thereunto belonging, being in Starton [ie Staverton] in the countie of Northampton, and in the possession of my said mother in law. And after her decease, I devise the inheritance and fee simple of my said tenement or cottage with the backside, little close and all other the appurtenances unto my executors hereafter named, to be solde by them or the survivor of them soe soone as they conveniently can after the death of my said mother in law, and the moneies to be raised by the sale thereof to be bestowed and divided in such manner in this my will is expressed. And if both my executors shall happen to die before a sale thereof made, then my will is that Francis Robins and Matthew [Lorne?] xx and the survivor of them shall sell the same after the death of my said mother in law, and bestow the money raised by the sale thereof likewise in manner following, that is to say: to Margrett Ann and Isabell my owne sisters and to John my brother by my father side, and Katherine Jane Elizabeth and Mary my sisters by the father side, share and share like. And my will is, that if it shall happen that any of my owne sisters aforesaid doe die (in the life tyme of the said Ann Smith my mother in law), having children, that then the parte of her or them soe dying shalbe equallie devided amongst her or their children; but if [s]he or they shall happen to dye without children, that then the parte of her or them soe dying shalbe equallie devided amongst the rest of my owne sisters before named which shalbe liveing att the decease of my said mother in law. And my will further is, that if the said John my brother by my father side or any of my said sisters by my father side shall happen to dye (in the tyme of my said mother in law) having children, that then the parte of him or her or them soe dyeing shalbe equallie devided betweene his her or their children. But if he or she or any shall happen to die without children, that then the parte of him or her or them soe dyeing shalbe equallie devided betweene my said brother and the rest of my said sisters by father side which shalbe living att the decease of my said mother in law.

Item, I give and bequeath out of my personall estate to the said Ann Smith my mother in law the sum of fortie shillings, to the intent that she should be able and carefull to repaire the said house.

Item, I give and bequeath to my said sister Margrett twentie shillings, and doe allsoe remitt unto Robert Symons her husband the debt of thirtie shillings which he oweth me.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sister Anne fortie shillings.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sister Isabell fortie shillings.

And my will is that my executors hereafter named doe pay the last mentioned summes soe soone after my decease as they can convenientlie.

Item, I give and bequeath to John Wood my god sonne the sonne of my said sister Ann forty shillings towards the getting of him forth to be an apprentice when he shalbe fitt for it. And my will is that the profitt thereof comeinge in the meane tyme be bestowed upon something which shalbe necessarie for his use. And that if it shall happen that he dye before he be bound an apprentice, that then the said fortie shillings shall goe unto his next brother; and if he have noe brother, that then it shall goe to the eldest sonne of my said sister Margrett which shalbe then liveinge.

Item, my will is that my said god sonne have one suite of clothing made of parte of my clothes.

Item, I give unto the said John my brother by my father side, and the said Katherine Jane Elizabeth and Mary my sisters by my father side, one shilling apeice for a remembrance.

Item, I give unto Thomas Gent my god sonne the sonne of George Gent of Staverton aforesaid, two shillings.

Item, I give my wainescott chest unto my said sister Isabell.

Item, I give unto the overseer of this my will hereafter named the sword which his brother my late master Mr John Rainefoord gave unto me.

All the rest of my goods and chattells unbequeathed (if any overplus shalbe after my debts legacies and all necessary charges are paid) I give and bequeath to be equallie shared between my brother and all my sisters before named, evey one share and share like.

And I make and ordaine my trustie and welbeloved kinsmen Richard Harbert and Thomas Harbert, both of Staverton aforesaid, executors of this my last will and testament, and Richard Rainford of Staverton aforesaid, gentleman, supervisor and overseer of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeere first above written.

The marke of Thomas Smith.

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

[John?] Bucknell
 {Thomas?} Bucknell
 Matthew Horne

Probatum fuit ... 25 July 1635 ...etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

A true and perfect inventorie of all the goods and chattells debts and creditts of Thomas Smith late of Crick in the county of Northampton and in the diocese of Peterborough, deceased, taken the last day of July in the yeare of our lord 1635, by us whose names are hereunto subscribed:

Imprimis, his wearing apparrell, viz an ash-coloured cloth suite dressed with silver lace	£1-0s-0d
Item, a black cloth suite	£1-0s-0d
Item, an old ash-coloured cloth suite	6s-0d
Item, two old dublitts	4s-0d
Item, a black cloth cloake	£1-6s-8d
Item, and olde ash-coloured cloth cloake	13s-4d
Item, two hatts and a capp	6s-8d
Item, five bands and a right paire of cuffs	2s-8d
Item, a shirtt and a half shirtt	5s-0d
Item, a paire of boothose, two other paires of boothose topps, and two olde capps and a napkin	1s-4d
Item, a knife, a paire of cissers, and a raiser	1s-7d
Item, a paire of gloves and other odd implements	1s-2d
Item, two paire of olde bootts and other odd implements	3s-0d
Item, a wanscott chest [ie a light chest made out of wainscotting board]	6s-8d
Item, a sword	6s-8d
Item, in ready money	£2-0s-0d
Item, due by bond from Robert Burnam, Henrie Burnam and Thomas Burnam bearing date the 4th day of March 1632	£6-9s-6d
The total summe	£14-14s-5d

Robert Watson
 Samuel U Hinds his marke
 Edward C Andrew his marke
 Francis F Robbins his marke

[NB: the above total is incorrect by 2d, and should be £14-14s-3d]

323. William Marriott of Crick, 1635 (N2 Book J F236)

[Another well-to-do husbandman, with inventory totalling £137-9s. Apparently a widower, with 6 children, one of them married (William). The two daughters do not appear to be married yet – and since there is no mention of any grandchildren, it seems that the other 3 sons also are still unmarried. This would probably make William Marriott the testator a man in his late forties or early fifties.]

In the name of god amen. The tenth day of Aprill Anno Dom 1635, and in the eleventh yeare of the raigne of our most gracious soveraigne Lord Charles, by the grace of God kinge of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., I William Marriott of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke in body but of good and perfect memorye thankes and praise be given to God therefore, doe make ordaine and declare this my last will and testament in manner and forme following (that is to say):

First I comend my soule into the handes of Almightye God who gave yt me, hopinge through the death and passion of Christ Jesus my only saviour and redeemer to be saved, and by noe other waies or meanes whatsoever; And my body I doe comend to the earth from whence yt came, to be buried in the churchyarde of Crick aforesayd.

Item, I doe give unto Dorothee Marryott and Joane, my daughters, the some of tenn pounds to be equallie divided amongst them, to be payd unto them within twelve months after my decease, and [to] each of them two payres of [.....] of the best sort.

Item, I give unto Edward Marriott and Richard, two of my sonnes, tenn pounds of like money, to be payd to them equally within two yeares next after my decease.

Item, all the rest of my goods catell and chattells I doe give and bequeath unto John Marryott one of my sonnes, whom I make my sole and only executor of this my last will and testament, hereby renouncing and revoaking all former and other wills whatsoever. And I doe make William Marryott of Hillmorton in the county of Warwick, yeoman, and John Howe of Crick aforesayd, husbandman, overseers of this my last will and testament, and for their paines I give to each of them twelve pence.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above wrytten.

William Marriott H his mark

Sealed, signed, published and declared as my last will and testament in the presence of us:

Richard Smith

William Marriott

John Howe O his mark

David Lawford

Item, I the sayd William Marriott aforesaid doe give to my sonne William Marriott twelve pence of lawfull English money.

Probatum fuit ... 10 June 1635 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad summum ... £137-9s-0d.

326. Edward Marson of Crick, 1636 (N2 Book B F20)

[From the inventory date and probate date, which are respectively 10 months and 12 months after the will date, it seems likely that Edward Marson died at some time in mid-November 1636, and this estimate is probably accurate to within a week either way.

The Mason family of Crick has already been noted as being of interest in this series of transcripts.

There are 6 Mason wills, all from Crick, and dating from 1558 to 1692, which should allow a good analysis of the family.

This will is that of a fairly wealthy yeoman farmer, with an inventory of £218-4s-3d, including a large number of sheep and beasts of all kinds. The inventory is a good guide to the layout of his house and farmstead.

His bequests show some unusual points; firstly, he bequeathes only about £53 in cash, and leaves just 7 acres of his land to one of his sons, leaving the rest of his substantial landholding (which is about 75 acres) to his wife: secondly, his bequests to many of his children are to take effect when they reach the unusually old age of 30, which suggests that most of them are already over 21, and are still unmarried and living at home.

Note also that he has one son living in London (as an apprentice?).]

In the name of god amen. I Edward Marson of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, sicke in bodye but of perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament, the two and twentieth daye of Januarye in the eleventh yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord Charles, by the grace of God king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the fayth etc., Anno Domini 1635 [ie calendar year 1636].

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almightye God my only maker and redeemer, and my bodye to be buried in the churchyard of Creek aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my sonne Willliam Marson one cowe and twelve pence in mony, to be payd unto him at the end of two yeares after my decease.

Item, I give unto my sonne Edmund Marson of the city of London, the somme of fifteene pounds of current English mony, to be payd unto him at his full age of thirtie yeares, or at the daye of his marriage.

Item, I give unto my sonne John Marson five and twentie pounds, to be payd at the age of thirtie yeares or at the daye of his marriage, which shall happen first.

Item, I give unto my daughter Ellenor Marson, the somme of tenne pounds, to be payd unto hir at the age of thirtie yeares or at hir daye of marriage, which shall happen first

Item, I give unto my daughter Marye Marson, the somme of fortie shillings, to be payd unto hir at the discretion of my executor.

Item, I give unto Samuell Marson and Marye Marson, children of my sonne William Marson, to each of them tenne shillings, to be payd unto them at their severall ages of twentie yeares.

Item, I give unto my two sonnes Josias and Thomas Marson, and to their heirs and assignes for ever, all that quarterne of [Leyne?] land, of arrable lands leyes meadowes and pasture ground with all and singular commons profits and commodities and appurtenances [etc?] whatsoever to the sayd quarterne

of [Leyne?] land belonging, which sayd quarterne of Heyne land I lately purchased of John Bucknell of Creek aforesayd, gentleman, to have and to hould the sayd quarterne of Heyne land, of arrable land leyes meadows and pasture with all and singular commons profitts commodities and appurtenances whatsoever to the sayd quarterne belonging, unto the sayd Josias and Thomas Marson and to their heyres and assigns for ever, to the only proper use and behoof of the sayd Josias and Thomas Marson and their heyres and assigns for ever, to be equally divided between them; provided allwayes that my wife Margaret Marson shall have and enioy the sayd quarterne of Heyne land and all other the before mentioned premises for hir only use and behoof, for and during the tearme of hir naturall life.

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Ward the daughter of Thomas Ward of Claycoton in the county of Northampton, one ewe shipp, to be payd hir within one month after my decease.

Item, I give unto the poore of Creek five shillings.

All the rest of my goods catells and chattells moveable and unmoveable, I give unto my beloved wife Margaret Marson, whom I make my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

Thomas Marson

In the presence of:

David Lawford

Thomas t Fisher his marke

Probatum fuit ... 14 January 1636 [ie calendar year 1637] ... etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An inventorie of all the goods chattells and catells of Edward Marson of Creek lately deceased, taken November 24th 1636 [ie calendar year 1636] and prised by David Lawford and William Mawby of Creek aforesayd, as followeth:

Imprimis, the pewter and brasse et als of the same sort	£3-0s-0d
Item, the [lane?] iron, the pothooks, bellowes, et als of the same sort	10s-0d
Item, the tubbs and payles, valued at	£1-0s-0d
Item, the remaynder in the same room	3s-4d
In the Hall:	
Item, one table, cuppboard and chayre [of ass?]	£1-10s-0d
In the Parlour:	
Item, two old bedsteeds, 4 coffers, chayre, other materials for the sayd beds et als, and other lumber, valued at	£6-1s-2d
In the Chamber above the same:	
Item, one bed and furniture with all the rest in the sayd room, with certayne potts of butter, boards et als, valued at	£1-2s-1d
Item, sheets and linnen of all sorts, valued	£5-0s-0d
Item, barrells and other brewing vessels	10s-0d
Item, certayne wool and other materials, with malt et als, in the chamber over the entry, with certayne sheets, valued at	£10-0s-0d
Item, 2 yard land crop and above a halfe, found upon the ground, valued at	£54-0s-0d
Item, 8 horses of most sorts	£36-5s-0d
Item, 11 coves and 2 calves	£20-0s-0d
Item, 8 hoggs and sows	£4-0s-0d
Item, one hundred of sheep young and old	£30-0s-0d
Item, 3 carts, the plowes, harrows and hovell timber and other materials in the yard, and materialls for husbandry of all sorts, with cove standards, horse harnesses, and lairs and mangers, valued at	£13-16s-0d
Item, certain lands of winter corn land, sowed, valued at	£3-0s-0d
Item, the hens and cocks	6s-8d
Item, mony owing him	£10-0s-0d
Item, mony in his purse, and his apparrell	£16-0s-0d
Item, certain coales and other materialls in places to be found in and about the ground	£2-0s-0d
Summa totalis	£218-4s-3d

David Lawford

William Mawbie

[...phitum] fuit 14 January 1636 [ie calendar year 1637]

[NB: The above inventory total is correctly added up.]

327. Francis Allen of Crick, 1636 (N2 Book K F103)

[This is the will of a devout puritan, as we will see presently ...

Francis Allen the carpenter of Crick is the son of Richard Allen carpenter of Crick whose will dated 1615 appears earlier in this series.

Francis Allen signs his name neatly and legibly to this will – and indeed, from the great similarity between his signature and the writing of the rest of the will, it seems likely that he has drafted the will himself. This indicates a degree both of literacy and of literary understanding somewhat out of the common. Note also that he states that he is sick – and since his inventory is dated 8th April it would seem that he died within 3 weeks of making this will; in view of this, his neat self-drafted testament seems all the more remarkable as a piece of penmanship. However, the brevity of the will, and the lack of the customary flowery religious phrases, do both tend to confirm that it was written by the testator himself. The inclusion in his inventory of a bible also confirms that he was literate. This itself is consistent with puritanism ...

... but the most interesting item in his inventory is "the practice of pietie", which was lying in his parlour. This entry refers to a book – "The Practice of Piety" was a well-known textbook of devotional exercises for puritans, written by Lewis Bayly, sometime Bishop of Bangor, and first published at some time shortly after 1610 (by 1619 it was in its 11th edition). In this book of 44 chapters, Bayly sets forth the Christian life and the duties required of a God-glorifying Christian. This book went through 60 editions by the end of the 17th century ... and the fact that Francis Allen possessed a copy tells us all that we need to know both about his religious persuasion and his social habits.

Francis Allen's two witnesses are Susan Bucknell and Edward Marson, who both sign their own names in practised hands – perhaps they are his near neighbours?

From the will of his widow Bathsheba Allen in 1642 (see later), we learn that his daughter Elizabeth is married to John Bruton, which explains one of his bequests.

His inventory, at a mere £15-1s-9d, indicates that he is a relatively poor man – all the more surprising, then, that he is so literate – yet his widow is still able in her will dated 1642 to leave 30s to their son Richard Allen in London, so it seems that his heirs did not starve.]

March 3rd 1635. In the name of God, amen. I Francis Allen of Crick in the county of Northampton, carpenter, sicke in bodie but of a perfect memorie God be thanked, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament the daie and yeare first above written, in manner and forme following, viz:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the handes of allmightie God my onely maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyarde of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I doe give to my sonne Richarde, citizen of London, the summe of tenn shillings.

Item, I doe give to my sonne John Allen of Creeke, all my carpenter's tooles and ten shillings of money, and my wife to continue in the house so longe as my wife doth live.

Item, I doe give to Marie Huchines ten shillings.

Item, I doe give to John Bruton ten shillings.

Item, I doe give to Sarah Draper ten shillings.

All the rest of my goods cattells and chattells, my debtes being paide legaces performed and funerall being discharged, I doe give and bequeath to my well beloved wife Bathshea Allen, whom I make my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the aforesaid Francis have set to my hand and seale the daie and yeare first above mentioned.

Francis Allen

And in the presence of:

Susan Bucknell

Edward Marsone

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows. It is written in the careful, neat and precise script of David Lawford, and is clear and legible.]

An inventory of all the goods chattells and cattells of Francis Allen of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, carpenter, latelie deceased, taken and prized April 8th 1635 by David Lawford and Edward Marson of Creeke aforesaid, in manner and forme followinge:

Imprimis, in the haule, one old cupboard, one old pen,

one little table with a frame, 2 old coffers, one wheele,
certain old stools, with 2 old chaires 13s-4d
Item, one brasse pot, one pan, one kettle, 4 or 5 spoons of pewter,
2 payles, 2 tubbs, one frying pan, one churne, the pothooks, pothangers,
with bellows and toongs and other od implements in the sayd haule, valued at £1-2s-4d
Item, his carpenter's tooles £1-0s-4d
Item, in the parlour, one coffer, one presse 6s-8d
Item, 2 old bed steds, 4 paire of old course sheetes, certaine blanketts,
one bolster, one other bolster, certaine other furniture for the sayd beds,
with other od implements in the sayd roome, valued at £2-2s-6d
Item, one bible, one table cloath, 2 pillowbeares and 2 napkins, the practice of pietie 10s-1d
Item, in the chamber, one old bedsted, one strike of malt, certain emptie [hin...s],
with other od lumber in the sayd chamber, valued at 6s-8d
Item, in the buttery, two old barrells, certain creampotts et alias 2s-1d
Item, certain hives of bees and a grinstone £2-1s-1d
Item, one little ranch of haye, some strawe, a ladder and [sheale?] in the barne 13s-4d
Item, one wheale with certain old wood in the cowhouse 3s-4d
Item, two beasts £3-10s-0d
Item, owing to him from the towne, with his apparrell and the rest of
his mony in his purse £2-10s-0d
Sum total is £15-1s-9d
David Lawford
Edward Marson

[NB: the above sum is correctly totalled up.]

[There is no probate date given – but this is unimportant, since we have the date of death accurately enough from the will and the inventory dates.]

330. Moses Collis of Crick, 1636 (N2 Book C F141)

[The inventory helpfully informs us that Moses Collis is raising crops on a half yardland (about 15 acres of land), and that his lease of this land still has 2 years to run. He owns 33 sheep – so, if he is grazing them on the same half yard-land, it seems that he is grazing his land pretty heavily ...]

September the 29th Anno Domini 1636. In the name of God, amen. I Moses Collis of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in bodye but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge:
First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of allmightie God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd in decent manner.
Item, I give unto John Warwick, my sister Abigail her sonne, 12d.
Item, I give unto Moses Bateman the sonne of William Bateman of Yelvertoft, 12d.
Item, I give unto my brother Aaron Collis his two daughters of Brixeworth, to each of them 12d apeece.
Item, I give unto my daughter Abigayle Collis the summe of fourtie shillings.
Item, I give unto 6 of the poorest inhabitants of Creeke 12s, to be equally divided amongst them.
All the rest of my goods chattells and cattells whatsoever I give unto my welbeloved wife Abigayle Collis, my debts legacies and funerall expenses discharged; and I doe make the sayd Abigayle Collis my wife my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.
In witness whereof I have set to my hand and seale the daye and yeaere first above written.
Moses Collis CX his mark
In the presence of:
David Lawford scr.
Richard Clarke fil. + his mark

Probatum fuit ... 14 October 1636 ... etc.
Invent. extendit ad £53-2s-2d.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An inventory of all the goods catells and chattells of Moses Collis of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, lately deceased, taken and valued October the seaventh Anno Dom 1636 by David Lawford and Edward Marson of Creeke aforesaid, in manner and forme followinge, viz:

Imprimis, in the hall, one cupboard, one table with tressells,
 one forme, certaine coales, 2 chayres, 3 tubbs, 3 payles,
 1 strike of wheat, 10 peeces of pewter, 1 spice mortar, 2 candle stickes,
 certaine dishes and spoones, the toongs, 2 brundirons, potthookes,
 pothangers, bellowes, 3 brasse potts, 4 panes or kettles,
 with certaine lumber in the sayd roome, valued at £4-2s-8d
 Item, in the parlour:
 Imprimis, one bed with his furniture, two coffers, with other lumber 13s-4d
 Item, in the milkhouse, certaine milk vessells, one saltinge trough,
 2 [...ink?] barrells, with certain shelves and other implements
 in the sayd milkhouse, valued at 10s-0d
 Item, in the chamber, 10 pare of sheetes, 2 boardcloaths,
 4 drawers, 2 napkins, 4 coffers, a barrell, one other coffer,
 1 fatt [ie vat] and 2 churnes, certaine cheese rackes, one bedsted,
 2 formes, with certain other lumber, valued at £6-3s-0d
 Item, a half yardland's crop £11-0s-0d
 Item, 2 hives of bees £1-0s-0d
 Item, one ladder, certain hovell timber,
 with old wood about the ground, 2 other ladders £1-10s-0d
 Item, the lease of a half yardland for 2 yeares £6-0s-0d
 Item, 3 coves, 2 calves £7-0s-0d
 Item, 33 sheepe in all £8-10s-0d
 Item, certaine money oweing by John Marriott and Robert Greene £3-9s-0d
 Item, his apparell and mony in his purse £2-0s-0d
 Item, one hogge 12s-0d
 Item, 4 strikes of malt 12s-2d
 Summa totalis £53-2s-2d
 David Lawford
 Edward Marson

[NB: the above total is correctly added up.]

332. William Miles of Crick, 1637 (N2 Book E F99)

[The Miles family has a long history in Crick, as witnessed by earlier wills in this series. We now see, in the attached inventory, how a yeoman family of middling substance kept their house and farm, for the attached inventory is a long and detailed one, and the house is clearly a large one, with many upper rooms and numerous small specialised downstairs rooms. William Miles clearly aspires for his body to be buried in the church – and in view of his reasonable wealth and his family's long connection in the village, he may perhaps have achieved this

We are told that he is farming 2 yardlands and one quarterne – about 70 acres – and this allows some useful cross-checks to be made, of the number of animals that such a landholding could support. As in other examples in this series, a ratio of about one sheep per acre seems to be one of the rules ...]

June the twentieth Anno Dom 1637. In the name of God, amen. I William Miles of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, sicke in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of allmightie God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church or churchyard in Creeke aforesayd in comely and decent manner.
 Item, I give unto my welbeloved wife Alice Miles the bedsted in the great parlour, with all manner of furniture thereunto belonging, with the great chest in the sayd parlour and two of the best chayres, and halfe my cussions, and her boxe, and halfe my linnens and sheetes, with three of my best beasts, and 20 sheepe of the middle sort, and halfe my pewter and brasse, and halfe my payles and tubbs, and 20s to buy her a table, and £1-6s-8d to buy her a newe cupboard, and the third part of two yard land crop at home and in the field: to be equally set out: and two barrells, whichever she please.

Item, I give unto the children of my sonne Richard Garret by Ellenor his nowe wife of Thorp Malsor, the summe of twentie pounds of current English mony, to be equally divided amongst them and payd within five yeares after my decease.

Item, to my nephewe Richard Jordan, five pounds, to be payd within 2 yeares after my decease.

Item, to my nephewe John Jordan, 20s, to be payd when he shall accomplish his full age of one and twentie yeares.

And to my daughter Anne Baxter of Sibbertoft, 20s, and to each of hir children one ewe sheepe.

Item, to every one of my daughter Haddon's children by John her nowe husband, to each of them 10s apeece, to be payd when they shall accomplish theyre full age of one and twentie yeares.

Item, to Samuell Miles sonne of my kinsman William Miles of Creeke aforesayd, one ewe sheepe, and to Abigayle Miles sister of the sayd Samuell one ewe sheepe, and to Elizabeth Howard wife of Thomas Howard of Creeke aforesayd, one ewe sheepe.

Item, to the poore of Creeke, 20s, to be divided amongst 40 of the poorest.

Item, to each one of my godchildren, 12d apeece.

Item, to my two daughters Abigayle Haddon and Ellenor Garrett, to each of them twentie shillings apeece.

Item, all the rest of my goods chattells and cattells unmentioned and unbequeathed (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged), I give unto my nephew William Jordan of Creek aforesayd, whom I have made myne heyre, and doe make him my executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

William Miles H his mark

In the presence of us:

David Lawford, script.

Edward Perkins

Probatum fuit ... 19 August 1637 ... etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An inventory of all the goods cattells and chattels of William Miles of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, latelie deceased, taken and prixed the 17th of August Anno Dom 1637 by Edmund Cowley, William Mawby, William Mason, Edward Perkins and David Lawford of Creeke aforesayd, in manner following, viz:

In the haule:

Imprimis, one longe table with his frame, 2 joyned formes,
2 settles, 2 joyned stooles, one other little side table, 3 chayres,
2 cupboards, certayne pewter, a flagon, 3 candlestickes,
a tostinge iron, a plate, 2 salts, with a chamberpott, valued at £5-6s-0d

In the great parlour:

Item, one joyned bedsted, with his tester, curtaynes and vallance,
3 blankettes, one featherbed, one flockbed, one bolster,
3 feather pillowes, 2 hillings, valued at £6-13s-4d

Item, one great chest, 12 paire of sheetes, one towell, 6 napkins,
2 tablecloathes, 3 chayres, a boxe, 10 cushions, 2 settles, valued at £4-19s-0d

In the inward parlour:

Item, one joyned bedsted with the tester and the
beddinge thereunto belonginge, one other bedsted with the furniture,
and one old coffer, £2-14s-10d

In the chamber over the parlour:

Item, one joyned bedsted with the bedding, curtaynes and furniture
thereunto belonging, one other bedsted with the bedding thereupon used,
one trucklebed, 2 coffers, 2 boxes, one cradle, one table, valued £4-8s-8d

In the cheese chamber:

Item, a cheeseracke, a table to laye cheeses on, a kinnell,
certayne cheeses, valued at £2-0s-0d

In the chamber over the haule:

Item, one saddle, four sakes, 2 winnowesheetes, one board,
one salt barrell, certayne salt, with other implements of household, valued at £1-15s-0d

In the chamber over the garner:

Item, one garner, certayne malt, one bed with bedding £1-15s-0d

In the chamber over the kitchen:

Item, 3 strikes of barley, some wheate, 3 linnen wheales	£1-0s-0d
In the kitchen:	
Item, 2 pannes, one pott, 3 kettles, one posit [ie posset], one dripping pan, one chamber pot, spits and topboards, 2 pare of pothooks, pothangers, one pare of bellows, one land iron, toongs and bruntiron	£2-15s-0d
Item, 5 cowles, 5 kinnells, one bolting tub, 3 payles, 6 barrells, one wheele, with other necessaries in the sayd roome	£1-13s-4d
In the milkhouse:	
Item, certayne milk vessels, dishes and spoones, some pewter	5s-0d
In the stable:	
Item, horse lares and mangers, one pannell, certayne horse harness, locks, fetters and loggers et al	£3-0s-0d
In the quern house:	
Item, certayne coales, a pare of querns, one cheesepresse et als, valued at	£3-0s-0d
In the cove yard:	
Item, the well curb, bucket chaynes with a stone trough, valued at	£3-0s-0d
Item, 3 iron-bound carts, 3 harrowes, 2 ploughes, with their furniture, certayne cart and plowe timber, cove standards	£10-0s-0d
Item, certayne ladders, certayne hovill timber, some scythes rakes and forkes, one grindstone with other necessaries in the yard, valued at	£1-16s-8d
Item, some 90 sheepe with sheep cribs and hurdles, 5 draught horses, 8 cowes, 2 yearlings, 2 calves, 3 hoggs, 4 pigges, valued at	£87-0s-0d
Item, the poultry, valued at	3s-0d
Item, the cropp of 2 yardland and a quarterne	£45-0s-0d
Item, his apparell and mony in his purse, and some oweinge him	£10-0s-0d
Summa totalis	£195-14s-10d
Edmund Cowlie	
William Mawbie	
Edward Perkins	
William Mason	
David Lawford	

[NB: the above total is incorrectly added, and should total £198-14s-10d.]

333. Thomas West of Crick, 1637 (N2 Book B F81)

[The West family of Crick has 4 wills in this series, dating between 1551 and 1637, and these 4 wills should be analysed as a group.

From the inventory, we see that Thomas West was farming 2 yardlands less half a quartern – that is, about 57 acres of land. His house is of a reasonable size, judging both by the quantity of its inventory of contents and also by the house description in the inventory (for example, it had a gated entry with a chamber over it, so that the house probably extended to at least 4 or 5 bays of building, not counting a sizeable stable block (he has no fewer than 4 horses).

Thomas West is probably a descendant of one or other of the two West families of Crick whose wills appear earlier in the 1550s – Thomas West in 1551 and Richard West in 1558, one of whom was probably his great-grandfather; so his farmhouse probably dates back to the early 1500s.

With this in mind, it seems strange that the 1676 Hearth Tax Survey lists in Crick only a single West household – that of William West, a relatively poor man living in a 1-hearth house, with too few goods to be taxable. What can have happened to the wealthy yeoman family of the late 1630s?

Thomas West was probably quite young when he died, since his wife is pregnant with only their second child, and his daughter is obviously well below the age of 10 (also it is evident that one room in the farmhouse is furnished as a nursery, complete with cradle and bath etc); we conclude that Thomas inherited the farmstead from his father, but then died while probably still in his early 30s. His widow may have been obliged to sell up – though more likely she married again, to give her children a father and provider; in the latter case, it seems likely that the farmstead passed into the hands of her new husband, hence the change in ownership name. Of Thomas' brother Richard West, who is mentioned in this will, there is no further trace ...]

In the name of god amen. June 23 Anno Dom 1637, I Thomas West of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, sicke in body but of a perfect memory God be thanked, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz.:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of allmighty God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my daughter Elizabeth West the summe of twentie marks, to be paid when she shall accomplish her full age of tenn yeares.

Item, I give unto the child that my wife goes withal, the summe of four pounds, to be put forth for the sayd child when it shall accomplish the full age of tenn yeares; and likewise to the sayd child my cloak if it be a man child; but if it be a female, I give the sayd cloak to my brother Richard West.

Item, I give unto my three sisters, to each of them 18d a peece.

All the rest of my goods cattells and chattells unmentioned and unbequeathed (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged) I give unto my welbeloved wife Anne West, whom I make my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, the daye and yeare first above written.

I have subscribed my name and set to my seale the day and yeare first above sayd.

The marke of X Thomas West

In the presence of us, viz:

Edmund Cowlie

David Lawford

The signe of O Richard Clarke senior

Probatum fuit ... 2 October 1637 ... etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An inventory of all the goods catells and chattells of Thomas West of Creek in the countie of Northampton, yeoman (deceased), taken and prised July 7th Anno Domimi 1637 by Edmund Cowlie, David Lawford and Richard Clarke of Creek aforesayd, as followeth:

Imprimis, in the dwelling house:

One table, one forme, with settles, one chayre,
one brasse pott, one panne, 4 kettles, one chaffing dish,
one bason, 9 peeces of pewter, one pewter flagon, one pinte pot,
4 porringers, one salt, 2 candle sticks, one pewter chamber pot,
18 spoones and one basting ladle £3-8s-10d

Item, a paire of bellowes, a firepan, one caudron, pott hooks,
pothangers, 3 payles, 2 tubbs, 3 kinnells, with other lumber in the sayd room 17s-8d

In the buttery and milke howse

Item, 3 barrells, certayne other milke vessells, and other necessaries in the sayd room 10s-8d

In the chamber:

Item, one joyned bedsted, one court cupboard, one chest, with a chayre £3-0s-0d

Item, one featherbed, one mattresse, two bolsters, 3 short pillowes,
2 other bolsters, one old bed, valued at £5-0s-0d

Item, 2 hillings with a cradlecloth £1-16s-8d

Item, 2 paire of blanketts with an hilling £1-6s-8d

Item, 2 coffers, one [bath?], one cradle, 4 cushions 7s-4d

Item, certain linnen of most sorts £10-0s-0d

Item, some 3 [los?] of wool £3-0s-0d

In the chamber over the entry:

Item, some 6 strikes of graine, certayne cheeses, certayne linnen and woollen yarn,
a wheele, 3 packs of oatmill, some bacon, certayne coarse wool,
with other lumber there..... £2-16s-0d

In the stable:

Item, 2 loads of coales, the horse harnesses, with other lumber £2-0s-0d

Item, 2 hoggs £1-0s-0d

Item, 4 horses £18-0s-0d

Item, 38 sheep, 5 lambs £9-0s-0d

Item, 4 beasts, 2 calves £8-5s-0d

Item, 2 ironbound carts, 2 harrows, one plowe, certayne cow standards,
hovell timber, with other wood about the yard £3-5s-0d

Item, 8 hens, 2 cocks 3s-4d

Item, certayne old haye, some straw 10s-0d

Item, 2 yardland crop in the feild wanting half a quarterne	£35-0s-0d
Item, his apparell and mony in his purse and mony owing him	£12-0s-0d
Total	£121-7s-2d

Edmund Cowlie
David Lawford
Richard O Clarke his mark

[NB: The above total is correctly added up.]

334. William Marson of Crick, 1637 (N2 Book C F233)

[Even a modest husbandman, so it would appear from this will, has by this time the ability to build up a sizeable flock of sheep. William Marson's 46 sheep "young and old" probably required about 30-40 acres to graze upon, yet we see in the will that he owned only two quarters of arable land, or about 15 acres. Some of his sheep must have been grazed on the common land – but he would only have a right to sheep commons in proportion to his land-holding, so we see that his grazing rights on the commons do not on their own account for the size of his flock. The answer probably lies in the telltale statement "...all the lease hades, balkes, commons ...", for this tells us that he had acquired some supplementary grazing rights on a number of hades and balks within the common fields, on which the balance of his sheep would doubtless have been tethered.]

In the name of God, amen. The tenth day of Juley one thousand six hundred thirtey and seaven, I William Marson of Crick in the countey of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke in body but of perfect mind I prays God therefore, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge:

And first I bequeath my soule to almightey God my maker and redeemer, through whowse meretes I hope to inioy eternall salvation, and my body to be buried in christian buriall.

Item, I give and bequeath to my sonne Samuel my quarterne of land lying within the parrish and feelds of Kilsbe after the decease of Liddia my wife, to him and his heares for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath to Marey my dafter my quarterne of land lying within the parrish and feelds of Crick with all the lease hades, balkes, commons with all the purtinance there unto belonging, after the desese of my afforesayd wife, to her and her heaires for ever.

All my goodes and chattells moveabell and unmoveabell, my deptes payd and funerall expenses discharged, I give and bequeath to Liddia my wife, whom I make my wholl and solle executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness wheareof I have heareunto sette my hand and sealle that day and yeare first above written, in the presence of:

George Sherley

John Hickman

Signed William Marson

Probatum fuit ... 13 October 1637 ... etc.

[A brief inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

A true inventory of all the goods and chattells of William Marson of Crick, deceased, taken the 21st of Juley 1637 by David Lawford, William Mawbie and George Sherley of Crick in manner and forme followinge:

Imprimis, all the pewter abd bras of all sortes, valued at	£3-0s-0d
Item, one bedsteed, one cupboard, one tabell and frame, one forme and stoole, with other implements	£3-0s-0d
Item, one fetherbed, one materes, with coverled and blanketts and pillowes thereunto belonging, prised at	£6-0s-0d
Item, 4 coffers, one box, and all the linnen	£4-0s-0d
Item, one quarterne's crop on the ground, prised	£5-0s-0d
Item, certaine pease on the hovell, prised	£1-0s-0d
Item, 3 coves and two [birlling?] bullocks, and a pige, prised	£8-0s-0d
Item, 46[?] sheepe, younge and owld, prised	£8-0s-0d
Item, wolle, prised	£1-10s-0d

Item, money oweinge and money in his purse, and his apparrill, prised £10-0s-0d
 Summa totalis £49-10s-0d
 David Lawford
 George Sherley
 William Mawbie

[NB: the above total is correctly added up.]

335. Edward Randall of Crick, 1637 (N2 Book B F49)

[A widowed farm labourer, living with his one son (a young teenager?) in a small house with yard and outbuildings, which he has apparently rented at virtually a peppercorn rent (about 2s per annum), probably from his employer.

His cows and single sheep are enough to provide milk/butter/cheese and a small quantity of wool, which he probably sells (although there are 2 spinning wheels in his inventory, there are no women left in the house to use them); and he has gathered a good quantity of pots and pans and other kitchen equipment. He seems to have lived a careful and prudent life, and to have been caring well for himself and his son – and he understands the high value of education, for he bequeathes all his goods to ensure the best possible education and upbringing of his son.]

August the seconde Anno Domini 1637. In the name of god amen. I Edward Randle of Creek in the county of Northampton, labourer, sicke in bodye but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in forme following:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of all mighty God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I doe give unto William Berridge of Creeke aforesayd all my goods cattells and chattells toward the educating and bringing up of my sonne David Randle.

Item, I doe give unto the sayd William Berridge and to his heyres and Assignes for ever, my house, yard and backside, with all and singular the appurtenances in Creek aforesayd, if soe be that my sonne David Randle shall depart this life after he shall accomplish his full age of one and twentie yeares, to have and to hold the sayd house, yard and backside with the appurtenances unto the said William Berridge his heyres and assignes for ever, to the only proper use of the sayd William Berridge his heyres and assignes for ever.

And I doe make him the sayd William Berridge (my debts, legacies and funerall being discharged) the executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

And it is my will that the sayd William Berridge his executors and assigns shall have the disposing of my howse with the premises till my sonne David shall come to be at age.

Edward Randle X his mark

In the presence of:

David Lawford

John Garret junior

Jane A Jennard hir mark

Probatum fuit ... 13 October 1637 ... etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An inventory of all the goods catells and and chattells of Edward Randle of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, labourer lately deceased, taken and prised August 23rd 1637 by David Lawford, Edward Clarke and Sarah Buswell of Creek aforesayd, in forme following, viz:

Imprimis, 2 cowes, one ewe and lamb £4-18s-0d
 Item, one christeninge sheet, 2 towells, 2 flaxen sheets, 4 pillowbeares,
 7 course sheets, 2 boardcloathes, 2 other pillowdrawers, 3 napkins,
 one [fptard?] cloath, valued at £2-3s-0d
 Item, 2 hillings, 3 blanketts, 2 bolsters, 4 pillowes, valued £1-10s-10d
 Item, two old bed steds, one matresse, 4 coffers, three tubbs,
 2 payles, one cupboard, one table, chaire, formes, some stooles,
 one kinnell, 2 wheeles, certaine coales, valued at £1-15s-0d
 Item, 2 brasse potts, 5 small kettles, one frying pan, one churne,

6 peeces of pewter with some other smaller peeces of pewter,	
certaine milke vessells and a lanththorne, valued at	£1-14s-3d
Item, some butter and cheese	3s-6d
Item, certayne woolen and linnen yarne, certayne wool, certayne oats,	
some gleaning corne, some old wood and fire timber, one cheese racke,	
one bolting tub, some forks rakes and a sythe, the pothooks, pothanger,	
[tonges?], cawdron, one barrell, one grinestone,	
with other necessaries unmentioned, valued at	£1-13s-8d
Item, one winnowsheete, one blankett, valued at	3s-4d
Item, his wines, his [so...acs] and his owne apparrell,	
and noe mony in his purse	£4-0s-0d
Item, the lease of the house and yard for some 11 yeares, and some haye	£1-13s-0d
Summa totalis	£19-14s-7d

David Lawford

Edward O Clarke his marke

Sara B Buswell hir mark

[NB: the above total is correctly added up.]

Kimnel

- a household tub of various sizes and purposes.
- a large wooden vessel or tub used for whey.
- a tub for kneading dough, brewing or salting meat.

Bolting tub = boulting whiche – a bin for sifting flour or meal

337. Susan Bucknell the younger of Crick, 1638 (N2 Book D F100)

[There are 3 Bucknell family wills from Crick, dating from 1625 to 1655, and these should be considered as a group.

In this will, Susan Bucknell makes it clear that she has 3 older brothers and 2 younger brothers, and one married sister and one unmarried sister. And she has received a portion from her (late?) father, and is therefore aged over 24 herself. Her age was probably between 25 and 28 at the time when she made her will ... but the probate date and inventory date are both 2 years later, indicating that she died after a lengthy illness.

Her bequests, totalling £52 when she made them in 1638, indicate that she was a wealthy young lady, but her inventory of £25-3s-0d in 1640 shows that her wealth had diminished during the period of her illness. We are left to speculate on how her bequests were finally made – although it is always possible that she had given away some of her monetary bequests to their recipients during her long illness.

Her inventory, though brief, paints a graphic picture of a fashionable young lady in a small country village, richly gowned and working away at her samplers to pass the time. The ring, ribbons and other ornaments, as well as the 4 costly gowns, imply that this family was probably not strictly puritan ... Finally, note that although she could not write her name she was obviously able to read, since she possessed two books among her inventory. This is a not unusual occurrence at this period.]

In the name of God, amen. The eyght day of January in the yeare of our lord God one thousand six hundred thirtey and seaven [*ie calendar year 1638*] I Shusanna Bucknall of Crick the younger, sicke in body but of parficte mind I prayse God therefore, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in maner and forme followinge.

And first I bequeth my soule into the hands of Almighty God my maker and redemer, through whose merites I hope to in joye Eternell Salvation, and my body to be buried in Christian Buriall at the discretion of my executor hereafter named.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother John Bucknell forty shillings.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother Thomas Bucknell ten pound.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother William Bucknell ten pound.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother Edward Bucknell ten pound, to be payd him when he shall accomplish the age of 24 yeres.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother Ralfe Bucknell ten pound, to be payd him when he shall accomplish the age of 24 yeres.

And my will is, that if my two younger brothers Edward and Ralfe or either of them do departe this life before there foresayd porcions be due to them, that then there porcions shall be equally divided amongst the rest of my brothers and sisters that are then livinge.

Item, I give and bequeth to my sister Theed five pound.

Item, I give and bequeth to my sister Theedes two sonnes Samuell and Thomas, five pound, to be equalley divided betwixt them.

Item, I give and bequeth to my sister Anne Bucknell, two pound.

All the rest of my goodes and chattelles movabell and unmovabell, my deptes leagises and funerell expenses payd and discharged, I give and bequeth to my mother Shusanna Bucknell whom I make my soulle and wholl executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have heareunto sett my hand and seall the day and yeare first above written 1637 [ie calendar year 1638].

The marke of ZB Shusanna Bucknell

In the presence of:

George Sherley

Edward [Hall?]

Probatum fuit ... 20 May 1640 ... etc.

[A brief inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An Inventory of all the goods and chattells of Sussana Bucknell, desseeded, taken the seaventh day of May 1640 by John Hall and George Sherley in manner and forme followinge:

Item, three gownes, fowre petticotes and fowre waskottes.....	£10-0s-0d
Item, seven appornes [ie aprons], twelfe corgates and all the rest of hur other wassing linnen	£5-0s-0d
Item, one ringe, with gloves, ribbonnes and other juells, and two bookes	£2-0s-0d
Item, hur leagcie given by hur fater	£7-3s-0d
Item, hur deske with samplers and other small thinges, with hoodies, stokinges and shoones	£1-0s-0d
Summa totalis	£25-3s-0d

[NB: the above total is corectly added up.]

338. William Jordan of Crick, 1638 (N2 Book D F160)

[Here is a very unusual will.

This young man is aged under 21 but has already married – in what circumstances we are not told, save that the girl in question came from Cold Ashby. His bride's father has made a bond to pay him £40 when he is 21, and in his will William now appears anxious to get possession of this money, so as to leave half of it to his brothers and sister, and not to his young bride. Our first instinct is to form a jaundiced view of the circumstances of his marriage ... especially since it is clear from the will, that he has relatively little money of his own to dispose of, should he not live long enough to inherit the £40 from his father in law. However, he also leaves money to his wife's mother, brothers and sisters ... so perhaps, after all, he was fully accepted by his wife's family. And he leaves bequests to various poor folk in Crick ; and he indicates that his grandmother, Alice Mills, is wealthy enough to employ a servant, which may help to explain his exceptionally early marriage to the daughter of a rich yeoman. His parents are both apparently dead, since he make his grandmother Alice Mills his executor. Finally, and most strange of all, there is no mention of his young wife in this will – we can only conclude from this, that his wife has also died; and this explanation would also make complete sense of his bequests to his siblings.

These facts, when considered overall, appear to point strongly to a sudden virulent epidemic in Crick at this date.]

In the name of God, amen. I William Jordan of Creek in the countie of Northampton, sicke in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my onlye maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creek aforesayd.

Item, whereas my father in lawe John Haddon of Cold Ashby in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, is bound to pay unto me the sayd William Jordan the summe of fortie pounds of current English [money] at the age of one and twentie yeares as at large yt doth appeare, nowe in such case that on the daye of the date hereof I the sayd William Jordan have power to dispose of the sayd summe of fortie pounds aforesayd, then I doe give and bequeath unto my brothers Richard and John Jordan, to each of them the summe of twentie nobles apeece [ie £6-13s-4d each], and to my sister Ann Jordan the sum of twentie nobles, to be payd to them out of the sayd summe of fortie pounds in my father Haddon's hands; but if I have no power to dispose of the sayd fortie pounds, then I doe give unto my sayd brothers Richard and John Jordan and to my sister Ann Jordan, to each of them ten shillings apeece, to be payd by my executor.

Item, I doe give unto my sisters Elizabeth and Abigail Haddon, to each of them five shillings apeece, and to my brothers William and Thomas Haddon, to each of them five shillings apeece.

Item, I doe give unto my mother Abigayle Haddon the summe of five pounds, to be payd out of that mony in my father Haddon's hands.

Item, I give unto the poor of Creek 20s.

Item, I give unto Edward Moore my grandmother's servant 6s-8d.

Item, to Thomas Heward 6s-8d.

Item, to Joan Ballard 6s-8d.

Item, to Prudence Brinley 6s-8d.

All the rest of my goods cattells and chattells of what sort soever (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged) I doe give unto my grandmother Alice Miles of Creek aforesayd, widdowe, whom I make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale, dated the seaven and twentieth daye of January in the thirteenth yeare of the raigne of our sovereign Lord Charles, by the grace of God king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., Anno Domini 1637 [ie calendar year 1638].

William Jordan

In the presence of us, viz:

David Lawford

Edward Perkins

Edward T More

Thomas H Heward

Probatum fuit ... 6 February 1637 [ie calendar year 1638] ... etc.

339. Thomas Wright of Crick, 1638 (N2 Book B F97)

[Of the 9 Wright family wills in this series, 5 are from Crick and date between 1638 and 1705. This group should be studied together. The other 4 Wright wills are from Braunston, and should also be considered as a group.

It is interesting that Thomas Wright evidently felt that he deserved to be buried in the church of Crick rather than the churchyard, as witnessed by the very forceful striking out of the word "yard" which is crossed out no fewer than 8 times. He is only a poor husbandman – indeed, his inventory shows him to possess nothing at all except 5 sheep, and to be owed a massive total of £17.

How he came to have such a large amount owing to him is a mystery; the debts are owed by his son John Wright, and by his neighbours John Howe and William Miles junior.

David Lawford appears as the official scribe of this will – and from the regularity of his performing this and other similar tasks in Crick since his sudden appearance in 1635, and right up to his last appearance in 1667 later in this series of transcripts, it might seem at first that he was the village schoolmaster, eeking out his living by acting as the draftsman of wills and other legal documents. However, in the later will of George Marvin of Crick in 1638, Lawford describes himself as the curate of Crick – so we see that the priest at this time was either ill, dead or in absence (ie as a pluralist?).

On reflection, if it was the curate who drafted this will, was he perhaps the one who was responsible for deciding to strike out the word "yard" so that this man would be buried within the church?]

In the name of god amen. I Thomas Wright of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, husbandman, sicke in body but of perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament as followeth:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of allmightie God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church ~~yard~~ of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my sonne John Wright the summe of three pounds which he oweth me; and to his daughter Sarah tenne shillings which the sayd John my sonne oweth mee.

Item, I give unto my sonne William Oliver the summe of fifty shillings which the sayd John Wright my sonne oweth me.

Item, I give unto my sayd sonne William Oliver all such summes of money as are due unto me from one William Miles the younger of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my sayd sonne William Oliver my five sheepe.

Item, I give unto my grandchild Joseph Wright the summe of five shillings, to be payd by my executor within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I give unto my sayd sonne William Oliver, All such summes of mony as are or may be due to mee from John Howe of Creeke aforesayd.

And likewise, all the rest of my goods cattells and chattells unmentioned and unbequeathed (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged) I give unto my sayd sonne William Oliver, whom I make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

Thomas OO Wright

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us, viz:

David Lawford, script.

Josiah Marson

Probatum fuit ... 12 May 1638 ... etc.

[A detailed inventory is also attached to the will, as follows.]

An Inventory of all the goods and chattells of Thomas Wright of Creeke in the Countie of Northampton, husbandman, lately deceased, taken and prized May the 16th Anno Dom 1638 by David Lawford and Edward Perkins as followeth, viz:

Imprimis, 5 sheepe	£1-4s-0d
In mony owing unto him on penaltie	£11-8s-8d
Without penaltie the summe of	£6-0s-0d
Summa totalis	£18-12s-8d

David Lawford
Edward Perkins

345. Katherine Watson of Crick, 1638 (N2 Book A F32)

[Although there are 15 Watson wills in this series, only 2 of them are from Crick, and the main concentration of this family name is in Braunston. It seems unlikely that this testatrix is connected to that branch ...

This nuncupative will is that of a poor old widow. She has no money to give away, and only a few poor belongings. Her son and three daughters have presumably been caring for her; and she has been tending hives of bees, presumably so as to sell their honey and earn a little money for fuel and food. Note that she addresses her social superior, the wealthy yeoman Edmund Cowley, as "Brother Cowley" – a sign of the puritan egalitarianism that was as common in Crick as elsewhere at this time.]

Memorandum, that Katheren Watson of Crick in the countie of Northampton, widowe, did the seventh day of June Anno Dom 1638 in the presence of us whose names are heareunder subscribed as witnesses, speake the wordes following:

Brother Cowlie, I prairie you let my daughter Alice have my old featherbed and two paire of sheetes.

Let my sonne Richard have all my hives of bees.

Let my daughter [Elinor?] have my trunck and three paire of sheets.

Give Thomas 12d.

And all the rest of my goodes I give my daughter Anne, for shee shall be my executrix.

Witnesses:

Edmunde Cowlie

Elizabeth Cowlie E her marke

Marie Boies O her marke.

346. George Marvin of Crick, 1638 (N2 Book B F119)

[George Marvin emerges as probably a relatively young man, say mid to late 30s, a poor cottager with no land, he had to take labouring work. If we take account of the significant inflation that took place from the late 1500s onwards, he was living below the poverty line, and his death may have been hastened on by longterm malnutrition. This is, no doubt, also the reason why he and his wife had only a single child.]

Julie the 7th 1638, 14th year of King Charles. In the name of god amen. I George Marvin of Creeke in the countie of Northampton, labourer, sicke in body but of perfect memory God be thanked, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner following:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of allmightie God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I give unto my brother John Marvin the summe of tenn shillings, to be payd within seven yeares after my decease.

Item, I give unto my brother Thomas Marvin 2s, to my sister Margery Marvin 2s, and to my sister Katherine Marvin 2s, to be payd them within 7 yeares after my decease.

Item, in case that my daughter Elizabeth Marvin (who is right heyre unto my howse, yard, orcharde and backside in Creeke aforesayd) shall depart this life before she shall accomplish hir full age of one and twentie yeares and unmarried without issue, then and in such case I doe give unto my wife Agnes Marvin, All that my dwelling howse, yard, orchard and backside in Creeke aforesayd, To have and to hould unto the sayd Agnes Marvin my wife, her heysr and assignes for ever, to the only proper use and behoof of the sayd Agnes Marvin my wife hir heysr and assignes for evermore; Provided that she the sayd Agnes Marvin my wife her heysr and assignes shall have hould and enjoy the sayd premises for and during hir naturall life; And likewise provided that at the hour of hir death she the sayd Agnes Marvin, or els hir heysr executors administrators or assigns, shall imediately after her death (if in case the sayd Elizabeth dieth as abovesayd) paye or cause to be payd unto the sayd Thomas and John Marvin, the sayd Margey, Agnes and Katherine Marvin, to each of them the summe of twentie shillings apeece according to the true meaning hereof.

And for the rest of my goods cattells and chattells, I give them to my sayd wife Agnes Marvin, making hir the executor of this my last will.

In witness whereof I have set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

George Marvin X his marke

In the presence of:

David Lawford, curate de Creeke

And John West X his marke

Elizabeth [Bocke?] widdowe, hir marke

Probatum fuit ... 4 June 1639 ...etc.

[A detailed inventory is attached to the will, as follows.]

A true and perfect Inventory of all the goods cattells and chattells of George Marvin of Creeke in the Countie of Northampton, who deceased the 27th day of Aprill 1639, taken by Thomas Kilworth of Creeke aforesaid and Thomas Smith of Barby, prized the 4th day of June Anno Dom 1639:

Imprimis, all his wearing apparell whatsoever	13s-4d
Item, one coverlet, bedsted, two short pillowes and 1 blankett	£1-0s-0d
Item, christening sheet and all other linnen whatsoever	£1-6s-8d
Item, all his pewter of all sorts	6s-8d
Item, brasse, viz 3 little kettles and 1 skillett	10s-0d
Item, 2 coffers and 1 cupboard with [.....]	16s-0d
Item, 1 bedsted, 1 bed, 1hilling and 1 blankett	10s-0d
Item, 1 frying pan, 1 barrell, 2 pailles and 1 tub and 1 churn	2s-6d
Item, all other lumber in the house	1s-0d
Item, 1 cowe	£2-6s-8d
Item, a little parcel of haye	1s-0d
Summa Totalis	£7-13s-10d

Thomas X Kilworth his marke

Thomas S Smith his marke

[NB: the above total is incorrectly added up, and should total £7-11s-10d. Since neither of the assessors was able to sign his own name, it appears that some third party must have written down the list of goods, and this third party may also be responsible for the imbalance in the accounting.]

351. Edward Barrett of Crick, 1640 (N2 Book D F146)

[In this will, as in several others at this period, we note that the word "daughter" is often spelled "dafter", which reminds us that the letters "gh", in most instances where they occurred, were normally pronounced as "ff" at this period; the modern pronunciation of "gh" as "orr" or "oo" came much later. An exception appears to be the word "plough", which often appears in these wills alternatively spelled as "plowe", indicating that the "gh" was normally pronounced "oww" at least in this case.

Edward Barrett owns only half a quartern of land – about 4 acres – which is nowhere near enough to sustain a family; hence he is working as a shepherd. From the inventory, and from the description in the will, it appears that his son Richard has set up shop as a blacksmith in a 1-bay section of the barn, and is working at least part-time at this trade ... his father encourages him to continue with this work. How Edward's eldest son Richard can be expected to find £30 to pay portions to his other 3 brothers within 1 year of the death of their mother, when their father's total estate amounted to no more than £18, is a total mystery – and probably it was also a mystery to Richard himself.]

In the name of God, amen. The one and twentieth day of January one thousand six hundred thirtey and nine [ie calendar year 1640], I Edward Barrett of Crick in the countey of Northampton, sheeheard, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

And first I bequeath my soule into the handes of Almighty God my maker and redeemer, through whose meretes I hope to enjoy Eternall Salvation, and my body to be buried in the parish church yard of Crick in Christian Buriall at the discretion of my executor heare after to be named.

And for my worldley estate:

I give and bequeth to my sonne Richard Barrett my house wherein I live, with the backsid thereunto belongin after the desesse of me and Marey my wife, to him and his heires for ever.

And my will is, that he the sayd Richard my sonne shall pay unto my dafter Frances Barrett, ten pound within one yeare next after my desese, and also my will is that my sayd sonne Richard shall hold his shoppe and the Baye of the Barne next unto the shoppe, and halfe the backsid duringe my wifes life, and my said wife all the rest of my housinge and the other halfe of my backsid duringe her life if she keepe her selfe widdowe; but if she marry an other man, then my will is shee shall have but her Thindes [ie her things that she brought with her to the marriage].

Item, I give and bequeth to my sayd sonne Richard Barrett, my half quartern of a yard land, to him and his heires for ever, upon condition that he paye unto my three youngest sonnes Henry Barrett, Joseph Barrett and Edward Barrett, thirtey pound within one yeare next after the desese of Marey my wife, to be eqaly divided betwixt them, that is to say, ten pound a peece; and if my sonne Richard refuse to pay to my three youngest sonnes the sayd summe of thirtey pound or any part of it, that then my will is that my sayd three sonnes shall have the sayd half quarterne of a yeardland to them and there heires for ever; and my will is that Marey my wife shall hold and enjoy the sayd half quartern of a yeardland during her life.

Item, I give and bequeth to my brother William Barrett ten shillings.

Item, I give and bequeth to my sister Elizabeth ten shillings.

Item, I give and bequeth to my sister Annes ten shillings.

All the rest of my goodes and chattells movabell and unmovabell, my deptes and leagosise payd and my funerall expenses discharged, I give and bequeth unto Marey my wife, whom I make my wholl and soulle executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the sayd Edward Barrett have hearunto sett my hand and seall, the day and yeare first above written, 1639 [ie calendar year 1640].

The marke of A Edward Barrett

In the presence of witness:

George Sherley

The marke of O John Garrett

[There is no probate date – but the inventory was taken on 19 November 1640, which indicates that he probably died in late October or early November of that year, some 9-10 months after making his will.]

A true and perfect Inventory of all the goods cattel and chattells of Edward Barrett late of Crick in the County of Northampton, shepherd, taken and prized the nineteenth day of November 1640, by us whose names are hereunto subscribed.

Imprimis, in the hall, on table, on chaire, three stooles, one forme,
 one woolen wheele, one leonnen wheele, on iron pott,
 two little brasse kettles abd one brasse frying pan 8s-0d
 Item, on paire of bellowes, one paire of pott hangers, on landiron,
 fire tonges, a brundiron, certaine dishes and spoones, and other lumber stuffe 2s-0d
 In the parlour:
 Item, two bedsteades, 3 coffers, on cubbord, 5 small peices
 of pewter upon it, and certaine bedinge upon the bedes £1-0s-0d
 In the chamber over the parlour:
 Item, one bedsted, certain cheese bordes and a cheese racke,
 six fleeces of wool, certain butter and cheese, and other lumber 13s-4d
 In the chamber over the hall:
 Item, one bedstede and one bolting fatt and a lanthorne,
 and certain other lumber stuffe 3s-4d
 In the milkhouse:
 Item, two barrells, certain cheese fatts and [fo.....s],
 certain milke vessells, two tubbs, and other wooden vessells 5s-0d
 Item, more in the parlour, six paires of sheets and one
 paire of pillowbeares, and other linnen..... 13s-4d
 Item, foure cowes, young and old £6-0s-0d
 Item, six sheep and lambs 12s-0d
 Item, one hogg 10s-0d
 Item, certain corne of wheat and barley £2-0s-0d
 Item, a little parcell of oates and a little hovell of pease £1-10s-0d
 Item, a little hovell of haye, and a little ricke of new hay £2-6s-8d
 Item, a little old wood in the cove house, and certaine bordes in the
 house chambers, and other old wood in the yard..... 5s-0d
 Item, a parcell of coales, valued 10s-0d
 Item, certain hammeres and tonges, and one anvill,
 belonging to the smith's trade £1-6s-8d
 Item, his apparell and mony in his purse, valued at £1-13s-4d
 Sum £18-18s-8d

[NB: the correct total of the above should be £19-18s-8d, not £18-18s-8d as stated.]

358. Bethshua [Bathsheba] Allen of Crick, 1642 (N2 Book H F95)

[This is the widow of Francis Allen the carpenter, whose will dated 1636 appears earlier in this series. It provides a useful cross-check on the members of their family and their links by marriage.]

February the eleventh, one thousand six hundred forty and one [ie calendar year 1642]. In the name of god amen. I Bethshua [Bathsheba] Allen of Crick in the county of Northampton, widowe, being sicke in body but of perfect minde, I prayse God therefore, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

First I bequeath my soule into the hands of Allmighty God my maker and redeemer, through whose meritts I hope to enioy eternall salvation, and my body to [be] buried in Crick churchyard in Christian buriall.

And for my worldley goods:

First I give and bequeath unto my sonne Richard Allin citizen of London, the somme of 30s, to be paid within one yeare after my dessease, and one press and one cubord.

Item, I give and bequeath to my sonne Richard his wife, 10s.

Item, give and bequeath to my dafter Elizabeth [Bruton] 10s.

And all the rest of my goods and chattells moveable and unmoveable, my debts and legacies and funerall expenses discharged, I give and bequeth to my sonne John Alline of Crick e, whom I make my wholl and soll executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I the said Basshua [Bathsheba] Allin have heare unto sett my hand, the day and yeare above written, in the presence of:

The marke of O Robart Andrewe
 The marke of I Elizabeth Hinson
 The marke of T Bashhua Allin

359. Richard Greene of Crick, 1642 (NR3 Book B F171)

[Here is a rich yeoman with a significant land-holding. He may be a distant descendant of that Thomas Green of Crick whose will appears above in 1558 – or he may be related to one of the Kilsby Greens whose wills are listed in this series in 1590, 1630, 1640 and 1677.]

In the name of God, amen. The fiftē day of Aprill in the yeare of our Lord God 1642, I Richard Greene of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being sicke in body but of perfect remembrance thanks be to God for yt, doe make and ordaine this to be my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soule to God who gave it, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my lands and goodes which God of his mercy hath lent me, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

First I geve and bequeath unto my eldest daughter Alice Barry, one quarter or fowerth part of one yard land with th'appurtenances, which was partitioned from one other quarter in the use of Richard Clarke, to have and to hold the said quarter or fowerth part of one yard land with th'appurtenances unto the said Alice Barry for and dureing her naturall life; and immediately after her decease, I doe geve and bequeath the said quarter of land with th'appurtenances to Nathaniell Barry her sonne to his heires for ever.

Allso I doe geve and bequeath unto the said Alice Barry, eight pounds, four pounds thereof to be paid within one yeare after my decease, and the other fower pounds to be paid in [five?] whole yeares after my decease.

Also I doe geve and bequeath unto Elizabeth Atkins my second daughter, on sheep or five shillings of money.

And to John Atkins her sonne, one sheep or five shillings of money.

Also I doe hereby geve and bequeath unto my two next daughters Susana and Lidia, one half yard land with th'appurtenances, which is their mother's jointure or dower, to be equally devided betwixt them by my loveing neighbours Thomas Wright and John Bayley; and after the said parition, to have and to hold the said half yardland so equally parititoned with th'appurtenances to each of my said daughters severally, their severall parts of my said land to them severally and to their severall heires for ever.

Also I doe geve and bequeath unto my youngest daughter Jane the messuage or tenement with th'appurtenances wherein Robert Greene my brother doth now dwell, to have and to hold the said messuage or tenement with th'appurtenances unto the said Jane Greene my youngest daughter and to her heires for ever, to enter uppon the same immediately after the decease of the longer liver of my said brother Robert and Catherin his wife.

Also I doe give unto Elizabeth Greene the daughter of the said Robert Greene, one ewe and lamb or 6s-8d in money.

The rest of all my goodes catells and chattells whatsoever not above bequeathed, my debts being payed my legacies performed and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe geve and bequeath to my loving wife Elizabeth Greene, whom I doe hereby make ordaine and appoint to be the sole executrix of this my last will and testament, provided allways nevertheless, and it is further my will, that if Elizabeth my wife shall happen to marry againe, then in such case she shall pay to my three youngest daughters twenty pounds a peece, to be payd to them within one yeare after she shall marry againe.

In witness whereof I the said Richard Greene have to this my last will and testament putt my hand and seale, the daye and yeare above written.

The marke of R Richard Greene testator

Sealed and signed in the presence of:

Thomas Wright

The marke of M William Miles

Thomas Garrett

Probatum fuit ... [10 June? very hard to decipher] ... etc.

360. John Whitehead of Crick, 1643 (NR3 Book C F183)

[There are 6 Whitehead wills in this series, 4 from Crick and 2 from Kilsby. The Crick wills are very widespread, occurring in 1516, 1555, 1627 and 1643, and this is not conducive to forming a family tree – but all the same, it may perhaps be possible to show some links between them ...

This will is interesting in that the testator, a humble labourer, spends a good deal on specific funeral arrangements. His specific payments to the priest of Ashby St Ledgers for a funeral sermon and to the bell-ringers of Crick to ring his knell on two days, both suggest that he may perhaps have been something of a closet catholic, for these are not common aspects of a puritan funeral, and these specific payments to the church seem more reminiscent of the 1540s than the 1640s. As for his gift of 5s "to the maids of the parish to buy them favours", such a frivolous bequest is totally against all puritan principles and practices. His bequest of 6s-8d for bellropes, again, smacks very much of earlier bequests "for the bells" dating from the pre-Elizabethan period.

The explanation of this may stem in part from the fact that John Whitehead appears to have travelled pretty widely – he bequeathes money to people in Coventry, Nuneaton, Ashby St Ledger and Winwick among other places, and he may have worked in several of these places as an itinerant labourer. Although only a labourer, he nevertheless owns a house and yard in Crick – but there is no land with it, nor apparently even a backside. Though no inventory or probate summary exists to give a clue to his total estate, his bequests total a mere £5-6 – so it seems likely that his total estate amounts to no more than about £12-15.]

In the name of God, amen. I John Whiteheade of Creeke in the county of Northampton, labourer, sicke in body but of a perfect memory God be thanked, doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament in manner following:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almightye God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I give unto Mr David Lawfords 4 children of Winwick, viz Mary, Elizabeth, John and Anne Lawford, to each of them 5s a peece, to be payd within half a yeare after my decease.

Item, to Mr Smyth of Asheby, 10s for a funeral sermon.

Item, to the ringers to ring 2 dayes, 10s.

Item, 5s to the maydes of the parish to buy them favours.

Item, to the churchwardens of Creeke to buy a sett of bellropes, 6s-8d.

Item, to the poore widdowes 20s, or to the poorer sort when the widdows are first served.

Item, to Thomas Whiteheades sonne of Coventry, who is a silk weaver, 10s.

Item, to William Clarke of Creeke, 10s.

Item, to Moses Campians children of Nuneaton, to each of them 2s a peece which are now living.

Item, to Edward Perkins and Jacob Perkins, sonnes of Edward Perkins of Creek aforesaid, to each of them 20s a peece.

All the rest of my goods cattells and chattells, together with my house and yard in Creeke aforesaid (my debts, legacies and funerall expenses being discharged), I give unto my loveing freind Edward Perkins of Creeke aforesaid, to have and to hold unto him the said Edward Perkins and to his heyres and assignes for ever.

And I doe make and appoynt him the said Edward Perkins executor of this my last will and testament, and doe revoke all former wills.

In witness whereof I have set to my hand and seale the daye and yeare first above written.

John Whiteheade M his marke

In the presence of us:

David Lawford, script.

Thomas Vause

Probatum fuit ... 30 October 1645 ... etc.

361. Richard Banbury of Crick, 1644 (NR3 Book B F32)

[Of the 5 Banbury wills in this series, 4 are from Crick and the other from Ashby St Ledgers. The Crick group is widely spaced, occurring in 1540, 1558, 1622 and 1644, which may perhaps be too widely separated to allow a family tree to be traced ...

This butcher of Crick has a son who is also working as a butcher in Rugby. He owns 2 houses in Crick, and seems to be a man of reasonable means, since he evidently had enough spare cash to purchase the second house quite recently – though without an inventory it is impossible to assess his estate with any precision. The small size of his monetary bequests, and his probable lack of significant farmland (since

none is mentioned in his will), both appear to indicate that he had little real estate other than his premises.

The Banbury family appears at regular intervals in this series from the 1550s onward – and the will of Ralph Mungumberie of Crick, 1588, mentions "Richard Banbury's house in Ende Lane, Crick", which may be the same premises referred to in this present will.

Though the earlier Leodgar Banbury of Crick (will of 1558) was apparently a wealthy yeoman farmer, he had a large family of 7 sons – and perhaps his landholding was dissipated by division among the heirs? At any rate, there are signs of poverty among the later members of the Banbury family, as seen in the will of the impoverished widow Agnes Banbury of Crick (1622), and perhaps also in that of the poor widow Elizabeth Banbury of Ashby St Ledgers (1628).]

In the name of God, amen. I Richard Banbury of Creeke in the county of Northampton, butcher, weak in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked), doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge.

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almightye God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Creeke aforesayd.

Item, I doe give unto my sonne Richard Banbury of Rugby in the countie of Warwick, butcher, my howse of building close to my dwelling howse adioyning in Creeke aforesaid, containing by estimation some two bayes of building (be it more or less) with the ground and soile whereon the sayd howse standeth, which sayd premises I lately purchased to me and my heyres of my sonne John Banbury of Creeke aforesayd, to have and to hold the sayd howse of buildinge with the ground and soyle whereon it standeth, unto the sayd Richard Banbury my sonne and to his heyres and assignes for ever. Provided notwithstanding that my widow shall have and enjoye the same for her life; And further, that the sayd Richard Banbury my sonne his heyres and assignes, or some of them, shall paye the summe of five pounds of current English money informe following, viz: to my daughter Anne [Steele?] twentie shillings within one year after my wifes decease, and 20s to my sonne Thomas Banbury within two yeares after my wifes decease, and 20s to my daughter Beatrix Ambrose within 3 yeares after my wivces decease, and 20s to my sonne Nathaneel within 4 yeares after my wifes decease, and 20s to my daughter Joane [Henfree?] within 5 yeares after my wifes decease. The which sayd summes abovesayd, if my sayd sonne Richard Banbury his heyres or assignes shall refuse or neglect to paye as abovesayd, then I doe give the foresayd premises unto my sonne John Banbury his heyres and assignes, performing the sayd legacyes abovesayd.

Item, it is my will that if any of the foresayd legatees shall departe this life before theyre severall legacies shall happen to be due, then the children of the sayd legatees deceased shall have theyre legacies.

Item, I give to my sonne John Banbury 20s.

Item, to his sonne William Banbury 5s.

And to my sonne in lawe William Hide 20s.

All the rest of my goodes cattells and chattells of what sort soever (my debts, legacyes and funerall expenses discharged), I doe give them to my wife Elizabeth Banburye, whom I make my full and sole executrix of this my last will, and do revoke all former wills.

In wites whereof I the sayd Richard Banbury have subscribed my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

Richard Banbury J his marke

In the presence of:

David Lawford

William Miles M his mark

[the following 2 items are added as a postscript, duly witnessed and attested by David Lawford]

I give unto Dicke Hide sonne of the sayd William Hide, 10s.

Elia Hide his sonne, 10s.

Probatum fuit ... [13 July 1648? the probate date is very hard to decipher] ... etc.

362. William Beridge of Crick, 1644 (NR3 Book C F211)

[This miller's will – one of 7 in this series of transcripts – indicates that a miller's income was very closely tied to the mill's income, ie that William Berige had no other significant source of income. The will of John Dale of Crick, miller, 1657, later in this series, should be read in conjunction with this will; it shows that Dale's mill was located out in the fields of Crick and not in the village itself. It seems likely that John Dale must have been working the same mill that William Berige owned, which his heirs must therefore have sold shortly after his death in 1644; this in turn tells us that John Dale cannot have

been working the mill for much more than about 10 years at the time of his death ... and since he appears to have died of old age, he must have bought it when he was already elderly.]

In the name of God, amen. The first daye of May in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand six hundred fortie and foure, I William Berige of Crick in the county of Northampton, miller, make this my last will and testament in manner and forme followinge.

First I bequeath my soule into the handes of Almightye God my maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the churchyard of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath to my sonne Thomas Berige and to my sonne Richard Berrige and to my sonne Joseph Berige and to my sonne Jonas Berige and my daughter Phillis Berige, my house and close with the appurtenances, and the Winde Mille, to be solde at the age of my daughter Phillis when she is at eighteen yeares old, or at that time shee should accomplish the age of eighteene yeares; and then to be made sale of the affore said house and close and Winde Mille, and the monie to be equally divided by even portions unto the afforesaide my sonnes and daughter as coheires.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth Morice, one brasse pott after my deceasse.

Item, I give and bequeath all the rest of my goods and catell and the house and close and the winde mille with all profitts and comodities there unto arising after my deceasse unto Joseph Berige, Jonas Berige and Phillis Berige for their maintenance and livelyhoode unto the time as aforesaid my daughter Phillis Berige or should accomplish the age of eighteene yeares.

Item, my will is that if any of the goods or catell or the rents of the mille or house or close be left besides their maintenance, it is to be equally divided amongst Joseph Berige, Jonas Berige and Phillis Berige at the time she is or should accomplish the age of eighteene yeares.

Item, I doe apoynt and constitute Richard Clarke and John Haddon to be overseers of this my last will and testament to be performed; my will is they shall have two shillings six pence apeice.

William Berige VO his marke

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Richard Clarke

John Haddon

Probatum fuit ... 5 November 1644 ... etc.

364. Edmund Cowley of Crick, 1645 (NR3 Book A F29)

[A rich yeoman and of extremely solid standing in the community, Edmund Cowley expects as a matter of course to be buried within the body of the church.

His household is well furnished and equipped with various "mod-cons", as is clear from the detailed part-inventory contained in the will itself. Note how he bequeathes glazed windows, doors, locks and keys to a relative in neighbouring Yelvertoft – such items were prized; moreover, such a bequest helps to explain the way in which doors and windows could find their way from one house to another – a state of affairs which has doubtless puzzled many a would-be house-detective.

However, it leaves unanswered the question of how his widow Elizabeth was expected to continue living in a house from which the glazed windows had been removed, along with the doors and locks and keys ...

From the handwriting in the will and the signature following it, it seems clear that Edmund Cowley's will was written by the curate David Lawford – though Cowley's own signature is very similar, and of a fluent and practised style, which tends to confirm his own statement in the will, ie that he did a good deal of writing and kept his papers in his great chest.]

March the ninth Anno Domini 1644 [*ie calendar year 1645*]. In the name of God, amen. I Edmund Cowley of Creek in the countie of Northampton, yeoman, sick in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the handes of Almightye God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church of Creek aforesayd.

And for my temporal estate, I dispose thereof as followeth:

First I give unto the poore of Crick forty shillings, to be payd them at the discretion of my executrix.

Item, I give unto Frances Lawford my kinswoman, three pounds.

Item, I give unto my kinswoman Susanna Carvill of Hillmorton, widdowe, twentie shillings.

Item, I give unto my nephew John Cowley of Yelvertoft in the county aforesaid, yeoman, these particlers following, viz: In my hall, the table and frame with the benches and charies, one great candlestick, all my glasse windowes, with all doors, locks and keys about my homested; in the

parlour, the presse; in the chamber over the parlour, the garner, the kinnell, the cheeseboardes and cheese racke; in the chamber over the hall, one joynd bed with the tester, one matresse, one featherbed, one good hilling, two blanketts, the bolster and pillowes to the same belonging, and two paire of sheets; in the buttery, the [crinktholes?] and two barrells, and the shelves in the buttery; in the kitchen, the racks, the great spitt, my second pott, the hanging pan, the cheesepresse, the dripping pan, two cowles, (the malt mill in the stable), one posnet.

Item, I give to the sayd John Cowley my youngest cove of all.

Item, all my horse racks, lairs [ie stalls] and mangers, and cowstands, with the loft of beans in the stable, one cart and a ladder, the well-curb and bucket chaynes, and the trough by the well, and the hog-trough, hovell and hovell timber, and the landiron in the parlour.

Item, I give unto the foresayd Frances Lawford my chest in the parlour where I layd my writings, and one cove.

All the rest of my goods cattells and chattells (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged), I do give unto my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Cowley, whom I make my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, and do revoke all former wills.

In witness whereof I the sayd Edmund Cowley have hereunto set to my hand and seale, the daye and yeare first above written.

Edmund Cowlie

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us:

David Lawford, scr.

Thomas T Harbert his marke

Probatum fuit ... 2 October 1645 ... etc.

365. Josiah Robinson of Crick, 1646 (NR3 Book C F75)

[Here is another carpenter who appears to be a man of some education.

Unfortunately for him, he also has five daughters and only two sons (one of whom appears to be already grown-up and married, and has already received his full portion) – it is yet another instance of mainly-female offspring, which should be compared with several other similar instances elsewhere in these transcripts, as it seems that there are some distinct genetic trends among this sample of wills.

It seems odd that he chose his third daughter as the one who should inherit the house and pay off all the others; was this because she was the cleverest? – or the most obedient? – or perhaps she was merely the least goodlooking, and therefore had the least chance of marrying.

Once again in this will, although there is no associated inventory, the will itself contains some helpful details of the layout and furnishing of his little house. Some of the tiny details are among the most revealing – for instance, the practice of hanging privacy sheets around a child-bed during a woman's labour.

We may well ask, what was meant to become of his wife in the event that the property was sold off?]

In the name of God, amen. The eight and twentieth of Aprill 1646, I Josiah Robinson of Crick in the county of Northampton, carpenter, being at this present of perfect health and of perfect memory, thanks be to God therefore, doe make and ordaine this to be my last will and testament, in manner and forme following, to wit:

First and principallie and above all things, I commend my soule into the hands of Almighty God my heavenly father who gave it, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my earthly goods which God of his mercy hath lent me, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

I doe give dispose and devise unto Elizabeth Robinson my third daughter, all that my messuage or dwellinghouse wherein I doe nowe inhabit and dwell, with all their and every of their appurtenances in Crick aforesaid, to have and to hold to her the said Elizabeth Robinson and to her heires and assignes for ever, provided allwaies and upon this condition, that shee the said Elizabeth Robinson or her heires or assignes shall pay or cause to be paid unto my foure other daughters Mary Robinson, Sara Robinson, Anne Robinson and Hannah Robinson the full sum of twenty pounds of currant English money (that is to say) to each of theis foure last named five pounds a peice, to be paid to them and to each of them within two whole yeares next after my decease.

And if my said daughter Elizabeth shall refuse, neglect or deny the payment of the aforesaid summes of five pounds a peice unto my other foure daughters aforesaid, or dislike of the receiving of this my messuage for her portion and the payment of this money as aforesaid, that then it is my will intent and true meaning, that this my messuage shall be sold and the price thereof divided equally amongst all theis my five daughters before mentioned.

And I doe by this my last will authorise my two loving freinds Edward Watkin the elder of Watford in the county of Northampton, yeoman, and Thomas Wright of Crick in the county aforesaid, husbandman, to sell the same, and doe absolutely give them full and free power to sell and convey the said message to and for the advantage of theis my five daughters aforesaid, as at their owne discretion they shall thinke or finde most requisite in their own iudgment.

I doe give unto my eldest daughter Mary Robinson, my cubbord and on little coffer.

I doe give unto my second daughter Sara Robinson, my table and frame and forme in the hall house, and on chest in the chamber.

I doe give unto my third daughter Elizabeth Robinson, on joined bedsted.

I doe give unto theis my three eldest daughters, five sheets that are used to hang about the bed at a woman's child-bearing, and a faced cloth and three napkins and three pillowbeares.

And I doe desire my loving freinds Edward Watkin and Thomas Wright aforesaid to divide them equally betwixt or amongst them.

I doe give unto my sonne Samuell Robinson, twelve pence.

I doe give unto my sonne John Robinson, five shillings.

I doe give unto my two youngest daughters Anne Robinson and Hannah Robinson, five shillings.

All the rest of my goods and chattells unbequeathed, my debts being first paid, theis my legacies performed and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe give and bequeath unto my loving wife Susanna Robinson, whom I doe make my full and whole executor of this my present testament and last will.

In witness whereof I have hereunto putt my hand and seale the day and yeare first above written.

Josiah Robinson.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Edward Wright

Thomas Hayles

[NB: the foot of the will bears the terse addendum: "turned over"; and the will then continues on the other side of the parchment, with the following endorsement, from which we may infer that Josiah Robinson died around the end of November 1650, some four and a half years after making this will.]

Memorandum, that on the ninth day of December 1650, the sayd Susanna Robinson did swear according to forme, that this was the last will of her husband Josiah Robinson (deceased), that this was a true inventory of his goods, and that she would pay his debtes and legacies so far as the lawe enjoyed her.

David Lawford

Substitute canc.

368. Robert Dunckly of Crick, 1647 (NR3 Book C F239)

[A fairly wealthy yeoman (and one of the 10 Dunckley wills from Crick in this series), who appears to be farming a total of two yardlands of leasehold and rented land, plus an unspecified additional quantity of freehold land – probably 100-120 acres in all. He has a flock of at least 60 sheep of one kind or another, plus at least 3 horses and several cows and bullocks. Once again, we have here a man with only one son but four daughters – perhaps he may have had other sons who have died, but this is yet another family with a majority of surviving female children.

There are many references to the Dunckleys of Crick in the foregoing entries in this series – including the wills of Robert Dunckley in 1558 and his son John Dunckley in 1586, who were probably both operating the same farmstead that Robert Dunckley has inherited, and which he is now passing on to his own son Francis. From the evidence of the earlier wills, we know that the Dunckleys were closely connected with the Masons and the Smiths, two other long-established Crick families of the Elizabethan period.]

In the name of God, amen. The two and twentieth day of March 1646 [ie calendar year 1647], I Robert Dunckly of Cricke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being at this present weak and sicke in bodye but yet of a perfect disposing memory (thanks be to God therefore), doe make and ordaine this to be my last will and testament.

First and principallie and above all things, I recommend my soule into the hands of Almighty God my heavenly father, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my goods, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

I doe give unto Francis Dunckly my sonne, all my landes and tenements whatsoever, to him and to his heires and assignes for ever.

Also I doe give unto him three horses, two gray horses and the bay colt.

Also I doe give him two cowes, the red heifer and that called [Plezie's?] cowe, and the bullock called Clarkes bullock.

Also I doe give him forty sheep, viz twenty sheep and twenty lambes, and ten hoggerells and ten sharrogs.

And also I doe give him all the hovell timber in the yard that I now dwell in, and the new cart and a plough and two harrowes and the furniture unto them belonging, and one paire of new carte [hilles?], and harness for four horses for draught, and one old cart.

Also I give him that joined bedstead in the parlour, and a cover, one paire of blanketts and two paire of sheets, a woollbed, on bolster and two short pillows, the table and frame in the hall house, a mault querne, a little brasse pott, one little brasse pan.

Also I doe give unto my foure daughters, viz., Elizabeth Dunckly, Abbigail Dunckly, Deborah Dunckly and Margaret Dunckly, forty pounds a peece, to be paid to them at their severall ages of twenty and one yeares.

And if any or either of these my foure daughters shall happen to departe this life before she shall accomplish her age of twenty and one yeares that her portion shall grow due to herself to dispose of, my will is that the portion of any deceased shalbe and remayne to be equally divided amongst them that shall bee there surviveing.

Also I doe give unto Francis Dunckly my son aforesaid, all the cropp of graine and hay of halfe the yardland, and half of that which I rent of Mr Andrew, and all the cropp of my own free land now in my own possession.

Also I doe give unto Edward Marson the son of Josiah Marson, a hoggerell or seaven shillings in money.

Also I doe give unto Robert Dunckly the son of my brother Richard Dunckly, a hoggerell or seaven shillings in money.

Also I doe give unto the poore of Crick ten shillings, to be disposed unto them by my loveing freinds Thomas Watson and Thomas Wright at their discretions.

All the rest of my goods and chattells unbequeathed, I doe give and bequeath unto Deborah Dunckly my loveing wife, whom I doe hereby make my full and whole executor of this my present testament and last will.

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written.

The marke of N Robert Dunckly

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Thomas Wright and

Josiah Marson

Probatum fuit ... 12 March 1649 [ie calendar year 1650] ... etc.

376. Richard Clarke of Crick, 1649 (PROB 11/261)

[Another of the well-known Clarke family, well established in Braunston but with a smaller branch also in Crick and another in Barby.

Though this husbandman is only farming a quartern of land – about 7 or 8 acres, which is insufficient land to maintain a family but quite enough for an elderly couple – it seems clear that most of his children are adult and already possessed of incomes of their own; son David and daughter Ann have married and started families of their own, and his eldest son John also seems (reading between the lines) to be out on his own in the world; indeed, it is possible that John has already received a portion, in the form of part of Richard Clarke's land, and that Richard may have originally had a larger land-holding. Richard Clarke therefore disposes his house and his (remaining?) land to his unmarried son Thomas, and bequeathes sufficient money to his unmarried daughter Elizabeth to form a dowry, together with a good-quality bed and some of its upholstery – these are time-worn traditional bequests to help an unmarried girl to get herself a husband, and recall some of the earlier wills in this series.

Richard Clarke seems to be a sober citizen; he has a suit of good hard-wearing broadcloth, but there are no signs of any luxury goods among his bequests. He may perhaps be a Puritan, though his will betrays no sign of the usual puritanical clauses ... on balance, it seems more likely that he is just a plain-living farmer, with enough income to get by on, but little money to spare for mere ostentation and with no need or desire to show off. He comes across as a trustworthy man, of quiet self-confidence and respectable humility.

Although this will was apparently prompted by a sudden illness in August 1649, Richard Clarke did not die until around Christmas 1656, some 7 years later. Supposing him to have been in his middle to late 50s when his will was drafted (estimated from the data relating to his grandchildren), he would therefore have died in his early to middle sixties.

In the Hearth Tax record of 1676 for Crick – 20 years after this will was proved – one Edward Clarke is listed as living in a 3-hearth house (one of the 16 largest houses in the village); and Edward Seale is in a 2-hearth house; these are probably both grandchildren of Richard Clarke.]

In the name of god amen. The twelveth day of August 1649, I Richard Clarke the elder of Cricke in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being at this present weake and sicke in body but yett of perfect disposing and memory, thanks be to God therefore, doe make and ordaine this to be my last will and testament, in manner and forme followinge:

First and above all things I comend my Soule into the handes of Almighty God my heavenlie father whoe made it, And my bodie to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my worldlye goods, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

I doe give dispose and devise unto my sonne Thomas Clarke all that my messuage and tenement or dwellinge house wherein I doe now inhabite and dwell in Cricke, with all their and every of their appurtenances; And alsoe my quarterne of fourth part of one yardland in Cricke aforesaid, with all their and everie of their appurtenances, unto the said Thomas Clarke my sonne and to his heires and assignes, To have and to hold to the said Thomas Clarke my sonne and to his heirs and assignes for ever.

Provided alwaies with this condition, that he the said Thomas Clarke my sonne shall pay and perform all these legacies hereafter mentioned and given by these presents.

I doe give unto Elizabeth Clarke my daughter, Twenty poundes of currant English money, to be paid to Elizabeth Clarke my wife within one whole yeare next after my decease, to be employed to and for the use and education of my daughter aforesaid.

I doe give unto David Clarke my sonne, Tenne poundes of like currant money as aforesaid, to be paid to the said David Clarke my sonne within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto the twoe children of my sonne David Clarke, Five poundes a peece, to be paid unto the said David Clarke my sonne for the use and education of his said two children, within five yeares next after my decease.

I doe give unto each of my daughter Ann Seale her children, tenn shillings a peece, to be paid to David Seale their father within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto my eldest sonne John Clarke, my gray gelding, to be delivered unto him or his assignes within two moneths next after my decease.

I doe give unto my daughter Ann Seal five shillings.

I doe give unto my daughter Elizabeth one ioyned [ie joined, that is made by a professional joiner or carpenter] bedstead in the chamber over the butterie, and one hilling coloured redd and yellow, and one newe blankett.

I doe give unto my daughter Constance Clarke the wife of my sonne David, one hillinge couloured black and yellow.

I doe give unto William Clarke my brother twentie shillings.

I doe give unto my sonne David Clarke my suit of clothes made of broad clothe.

All the rest and residue of my goods and chattells unbequeathed, my debtes being first paid, these my legacies performed and my bodye decentlie brought to the ground, I doe give and bequeath unto Thomas Clarke my sonne aforesaid, whome I hereby make my full and whole executor of this my Testament and last will.

In witness whereof I have hereunto putt my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Richard Clarke his marke.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of Thomas Wright, John Mawbie.

[NB: The following probate statement is the first one so far in this series of transcripts to have been copied out in English by the clerk, so the full text is given as an example.]

This will was proved at London the second day of January in the yeare of our lord God one thousand six hundred fiftie six (according to the computation of the Church of England) [*ie calendar year 1657*], before the Judge for probate and grantinge of administrations lawfully authorised, by the oath of Thomas Clarke, the sonne and sole executor named in the last will and testament of the said deceased, To whom administration was comitted, he being first legally sworne well and truly to administer.

377. Edward Whitmell of Crick, 1650 (PROB 11/225)

[Another wealthy yeoman, whose estate must be worth well in excess of £600, and perhaps over £800. That he has built up his wealth by astute and opportune purchases of land and property, is evident from the mention made of the house of William Mason which he bought in 1648 after William Mason died; and he has clearly put Edward Howlett into this house only as a temporary tenant to bring in a little

extra income, since Howlett is now summarily ejected (with a few shillings of handout from Whitmell's bequest to the poor of the parish, which was perhaps given by Whitmell as conscience-money) to make room for Whitmell's widow, so that his son Thomas Whitmell can inherit the family home. It will be interesting to compare the wills of the group of wealthy yeomen who appear in this series during the 1640s and 1650s, to evaluate whether there is a trend evident in the way in which they all seem to have relatively suddenly added to their fortunes by acquisition of land and property; could this perhaps be linked in some way to the Civil War? Are we in fact witnessing here the evidence of some of the after-effects of possible conflicts and deaths within these West Northamptonshire communities during that same war?]

In the name of god amen. The nineteenth day of March in the yeare of our lord one thousand six hundred fifty and one [ie calendar year 1650], I Edward Whitmell of Crick in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being in health both of body and minde, thanks be to God therefore, doe make and ordayne my last will and testament in manner and form following.

First and above all things I doe bequeath my soule into the hands of the lord my God who gave it, and my body to the earth from whence it came, and as for my earthly goods, I dispose of them as followeth: I give and bequeath unto my eldest daughter Elizabeth Whitmell the full and iust sum of two hundred pounds of lawfull money of England, to be paid unto her when shee shall accomplish the full age of twenty yeares.

I give and bequeath unto my other daughter Sarah the full and just sum of two hundred pounds of lawfull money of England, to be paid unto her when shee shall accomplish the full age of Twentie yeares.

And my will is that if either of my daughters shall happen to departe this life before they shall accomplish the age of Twenty yeares, that then the survivor of them shall have and enjoy both the portions; And if they shall happen both to departe this life before they doe accomplish the said Age of Twentie yeares, Then my will is that my sonn Thomas Whitmell shall have and enjoy both theyr portions, to be paid to him or for his use when it shall so happen to be due.

And I give unto my sonn Thomas Whitmell, when he shall accomplish the age of Twentie and one yeares, half my lands and tenements which I have now in occupation with the Land ready sowed with good seed according to the custome of the place.

And also I give him three horses, one carte and a plow, a Harrow with geares, and such necessaries to them belonging as shall be worth in value the sum of Twentie pounds.

And also I give him mine bease hefors, fitt to be kept on the Common, and fortie sheep or forty pounds, to be paid to him ie Leiw of the said bease and sheepe, which he shall then desire.

And also I give unto him half my household goods moveable and unmoveable.

And also I give unto the poore of Crick the sum of fortie shillings, to be disposed at the discretion of my executor; and my will is, that tenn shillings of the same be given Edward Howlet.

And also I give unto my wellbeloved wife Eliza Whitmell, whom I make my full and whole executor of this my last will and testament, the house wherein Edward Howlett now dwells, with the plott of ground belonging unto it, as purchased of William Mason of Crick lately deceased, and as expressed in a deed bearing date the first day of May in the yeare one thousand six hundred forty and eight, to her and her heires and assignes for ever, for and towards the payment and discharge of the portions and charges herein expressed.

As also my will is, that if the heires [apparent?] or assignes of William Mason doe pay the money due upon the forementioned deed, then my wife doe make them a full Release from the aforesaid deed and house and three quarters [ie quarterns?] of land.

And all the rest of my goods and chattells, my legacys being paid and my funerall expenses being discharged, I give as aforesaid to my wife Eliza Whitmell whom I have made my whole and full executor of this my last will and Testament.

In witness whereof I have put to my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

And also my will is that Edward Willton of Daintrie and my brother in Law John Russell of Newnam be overseers of this my last Will and Testament, to whom I give twentie shillings apeece.

Edward Witmell.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us, John King his marke, Thomas Watson.

This will above written was proved at Westminster ... 3 August 1653 ... etc.

379. John Garrett of Crick, 1650 (PROB 11/225)

[This nuncupative will is so extremely brief, that we are left wondering at the circumstances that led to it – especially since it appears to have been first recorded in writing only 38 months after the deceased

made it. Were the parties involved really so naïve that they did not realise the need for proper legal documentation? This seems scarcely credible, given that we are asked to believe that John Garrett was rich enough to call himself a yeoman, and therefore presumably had significant estate to dispose, worth more than (say) £70-80 ...]

Memorandum that in the month of Aprill 1650, John Garrett of Crick in the county of Northampton, yeoman, did make his will in words: I doe give all that I have unto my sonn Morris Garrett, in the presence of us whose names are underwritten, and at the said time made the said Morris his executor of his said will.

Witnesses Philip Smith, the marke of Robert Campion, Maurice Garrett, 17th June 1653.

Philip Smith and Robert Campion were sworn by us and doe certify that the said John Garrett made the will abovesaid; William Meade, Mawrice Miles.

This will was proved at Westminster ... 20 June 1653 ... etc.

390. Susanna Bucknell of Crick, 1655 (PROB 11/251)

[In the earlier will of John Bucknell of Crick (in 1625 above), we note that some of his bequests were made to Susanna Bucknell's children Thomas, William and Hester, and were phrased deliberately "so that Susanna Bucknell mother of the said Thomas, William and Hester, nor any other by her consent, meanes or procurement, goe not about to overthrow this my said last will and testament". The strong suggestion that there was some long-term discord within the family is borne out by the following will of Susanna Bucknell, who, to judge by the respective dates of these two wills, is presumably the daughter in law of old John Bucknell, suggesting that John's son perhaps married without his father's consent. In John Bucknell's will we noted, from several clues and hints, that the family were very likely non-puritan.]

In the name of god amen. I Susanna Bucknell of Creek alias Crick in the county of Northampton, widdow, being weak in body but of perfect memory, thankes bee given to God, doe hereby constitute ordeyne and make this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

First I give my Soule to God my Creator and Redeemer, and my body to the earth from whence it came. And for the settling of my worldly estate, I doe dispose of it as followeth hereafter written.

First I give unto my eldest Sonne John Bucknell five shillings.

Item, I give unto my Sonne William Bucknell, five shillings.

Item, I give unto Edward Bucknell, if hee bee living, five shillings.

Item, I give unto my daughter Hester [Theed?], five shillings.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my sonn Ralph Bucknell, and to his heires and assignes for ever, all my Lands and Tenements whatsoever, situate lyeing and being in theTowne and feilds of Creeke also Crick which I purchased and bought of my sonne John Bucknell of Creeke aforesaid in the county of Northampton, gentleman, at two several purchases.

Moreover, it is my will that my Sonne Raiphe Bucknell shall pay, out [of?] a yard land and half yard land called Allens' Land, and out of the Cottage or Tenement wherein Edward Chandler inhabiteth, his yearly rent of Sixteen pounds unto my Sonne Thomas Bucknell during his naturall life.

And if the yard land and halfe yard land and cottage aforesaid shall not be worth sixteenne pounds yearly, Then my will is that my Sonne Ralph Bucknell shall make it upp out of my goods and chattells. Furthermore, it is my will that my Sonne Ralph Bucknell shall out of my goods and chattells save and keep harmless and Indemnified my Sonne William Bucknell from all Engagements that he is engaged for in.

And lastly, all my goods and chattells, my debts and funerall expenses being discharged, I give unto my aforesaid Sonne Ralphe Bucknell, whom I make and appoint sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the eleaventh day of Aprill in the yeare of our Lord God, according to the account used in England, one thousand six hundred fifty and five, 1655. Signed, sealed and published in the presence of Charles Colte, Anne Thompson, the marke of Ann [Wause?], the marke of Susanne Sharman.

This will was proved at London ... 6 August 1655 ... etc.

399. John Dale of Crick, 1657 (PROB 11/281)

[This miller seems to be dying of sheer old age. He has about 22 acres of land to leave, and also a working windmill, said to be located out in "Crick field". He has borrowed money on the windmill –

possibly to fund the building or repair of it? – and now seeks to bequeath to his son and daughter such that they have a chance to carry on the business. His preference is clearly that his son should carry on operating the mill as well as working part of the land – and equally clearly, he suspects that his son does not wish to do this! – he therefore puts pressure upon his son by the manner in which he shares the estate between his son and daughter; for he knows that one quartern of land will not suffice for his son to make a living (12 acres was regarded as the bare minimum on which to raise a family).]

In the name of god amen. The seaven and twentieth daie of November one thousand six hundred fifty and seaven, I John Dale of Crick in the county of Northampton, miller, being aged and weak in bodie But yet of perfect disposing memory (thanks be to God therefore) doe at this time make and ordaine this to be my testament, wherein is contained my last will, in manner and forme following:

First and principallie, and above all things, I doe recommend my soule into the hands of Almighty God my heavenly father, who gave it mee; and my bodie to the earth from whence it came;

And as for my earthly estate, I doe dispose of it as followeth:

I doe give dispose and devise unto my sonne Francis Dale one quarterne of land in Crick aforesaid, of my three quarternes of land aforesaid in Crick e, in the occupation of Thomas Hailes, one quarterne of three quarternes to be divided; I doe give it unto him and his heires for ever, to have and to hold the said quarterne or fourth part of one yardland, with all their and every of their appurtenances, to him and his heires for ever.

I doe also unto the said Francis Dale my sonne, my windmill in Crick feild aforesaid, with all their and every of their appurtenances and materials; provided alwaies, and upon this condition, that he the said Francis Dale shall pay three score pounds of my debts for the said windmill unto my executor hereafter named, within one whole yeare next after my decease; But if my said sonne Francis Dale shall refuse or deny to pay the said sum of three score pounds of my debts as aforesaid, I doe hereby dispose and devise my said windmill unto my daughter Sara Dale, to be sould to pay the said debt of three score pounds aforesaid.

I doe give dispose and devise unto my daughter Sara Dale, All that my Messuage or dwelling house in Crick wherein I nowe dwell, with all their and every of their appurtenances whatsoever, To have and to hold to her the said Sara Dale my daughter and to her heires and Assignes for ever.

Allso I doe give unto her the said Sara Dale my daughter, All that my two quarternes of land of three quarternes of land aforesaid, to be allso divided, I doe give unto her the said Sara Dale my daughter, To have and to hold unto her the said Sara Dale my daughter, with all their and every of their appurtenances whatsoever, to her and to her heires and Assignes for ever.

I doe give unto John Dale my grandchild the sonne of my sonne Francis Dale aforesaid, twentie shillings.

All the rest and residue of all my lands, goods and chattells unbequeathed, my debts being first paid, these my legacies performed, and my bodie decently brought to the ground, I doe hereby give and bequeath unto Sara Dale my daughter aforesaid, whom I doe hereby make my full and whole executrix of this my present testament and last will.

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seale, the daie and yeare above written.

John Dale his mark.

Sealed published and delivered in the presence of Thomas Wright, Robert Wright, Samuel Cowlye.

This will was proved at London ... 25 June 1658 ... etc.

408. John King of Crick, 1660 (N4 Book 10 F109)

[We have here a blacksmith, who has acquired land and property by purchase from some of the long-term resident families of Crick .

In the 1676 Hearth Tax survey for Crick, 16 years after this will was written, it appears that the village has not one but two smithies, for William Griffin and Nicholas Kingston are each listed as living in a taxed 1-hearth house with a separate 1-hearth forge adjacent. There is no mention of any member of the King family in 1676. We deduce that Sarah King probably married – with her inheritance, even though it was modest, she would still have been an eligible young woman – and that her husband was either William Griffin or Nicholas Kingston.

The inventory of John King shows him to have been poor, despite the fact that he had evidently had enough money to purchase his land and house (and this perhaps implies that John King was a recent newcomer in the village, who had had to spend his available cash to purchase the house and land; and this explanation would also account for the lack of goods in his inventory, as the family would have brought with them only the barest necessities). Of course, the inventory does not assess the value of either his house or his land, but only his goods and chattells.]

January the thirtieth in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred fifty and nine. In the name of God, amen. I John King of Creek in the county of Northampton, blacksmyth, weak in body but of perfect memory (God be praised) doe make and ordayne this my last will and testament as followeth. First I commend my sule to God, and my body to the earth.

And for my worldly substance, I dispose thereof as followeth:

First I give and bequeath unto my wife, all that my message cottage or tenement in Creek with the appurtenances, purchased of Thomas Joanes (excepting what thereof sold to William Sutton), together with all my quartern of land, arrable, meadow and pasture purchased of Joseph Duncley in the feilds of Creek aforesaid, untill that my daughter Sarah shall accomplish her full age of one and twentie yeares; and then my said daughter Sarah shall have hold and enjoy the one halfe of all these aforesaid premises, with their and every of their appurtenances, unto her the said Sarah my daughter and to her heirs, to the only proper use and behoof of the said Sarah my daughter and of her heirs and assignes for ever.

Item, I give unto my said daughter Sarah and her heirs the said other halfe of all the before mentioned premises with their appurtenances, to have and to hold the same unto my said daughter Sarah and her heirs, to the only proper use and behoof of the said Sarah my daughter and of her heirs and assignes for ever, to enter upon the same at my wives decease.

Yet if my said daughter doe departe this life before shee be one and twentie yeares old, it is my will then that my wife shall have hold and enjoy all th'affore mentioned premises with their appurtenances during her naturall life.

Item, I give unto my daughter Sarah my cubboard, my bed in the parlour with all the furniture thereunto belonging, together with my chest and trunck and three paire of sheetes, and halfe my brasse and pewter, and four new napkins, yet my wife shall have the use of them during her life.

Item, I give unto my daughter Sarah halfe my sheep, and our cow.

All the rest of my goods and cattells, my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged, I give unto my wife, and do make her executrix of this my last will and testament; and I revoke all former wills.

In witness whereof I the said John King have hereunto set my hand and seale, the day and year first above written.

John IK King his marke

In the presence of:

David Lawford

Thomas Barnes and

Thomas T Heward his marke

Probatum fuit ... 31 October 1663 ... etc.

[A brief inventory is included at the foot of the will, which is fairly unusual as they are normally contained on a separate sheet. The inventory is as follows.]

An Inventory of John King's goods:

Imprimis, one cow and a hyffer	£3-10s-0d
Item, five sheepe	£1-10s-0d
Item, the pease and the corne	£1-13s-4d
Item, the hay in the barne	13s-4d
Item, in the hall one cuppert, one brasse pot, 2 brasse kettles, 3 pewter platters, one table, one chayre, and other implements	£1-0s-0d
Item, in the parlour, one bed, one coffer, one box	10s-0d
Item, in the chamber over the hall, one bed and bedding, one coffer, one linnen wheel and one woollen wheele, 2 tubbs, one payle	10s-0d
Item, in the chamber over the shoppe, two arks to put corne in, and other lumber	2s-6d
Item, one coverlid, two blanketts, one paire of sheets, 2 napkins	10s-0d
Item, his apparrell	10s-0d
Item, two lands of wheat and the tillage	10s-0d
Sum	£10-19s-2d

[NB: the above total is correctly added up.]

Hearth Taxes

Levied from 19 May 1662 until 1689. Provide indication of the size of each house assessed at the time. Exempt from payment were those in receipt of poor relief, those inhabiting houses

worth less than 20s per annum and not paying parish rates, schools. Almshouses etc., and industrial hearths except smiths' forges and bakers' ovens. Tax, paid by the occupier, was 2s on each hearth, collected in 2 instalments at Lady Day and Michaelmas. The most informative returns, many of which have been published, were between 1662-6 and 1669-74. The 1674 Hearth tax return, in particular, will be repeatedly referred to in these transcripts, as a source of comparative information on those mentioned in the wills.

413. Frances Dunckley of Crick, 1663 (N4 Book 6 F143)

[Another member of the prolific Dunckley family of Crick, whose records will be studied in detail ...]

In the name of God, amen. The foure and twentieth day of Aprill 1663, I Francis Dunckley of Creeke in the county of Northampton, spinster, being at this present sicke in bodye but yet of perfect disposing memory (thankes be to God therefore) doe make and ordeyne this to be my last will and testament, in manner and forme following.

First and principallie and above all thinges, I recommend my soule to Allmighty God who gave it, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my worldly goodes which God of his mercy hath lent mee, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

I doe give and bequeath unto Robert Dunckly my youngest brother, the sume of eleaven pounds of currant English money, to bee paid to him within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto Elizabeth Dunckly my youngest sister, the sum of eleaven pounds of currant money as aforesaid, to bee paid to her within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto my brother Edward Dunckly, the sum of twentie shillings of currant money as aforesaid, to bee paid to him within one whole yeare after my decease.

I doe also give unto my brother Edward Dunckly his three children, tenn shillings apeice, to bee paid to the said Edward Dunckly my brother for the use and benefitt of his three children within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto my brother in lawe Thomas Herbert twenty shillings of currant money as aforesaid, to bee paid to him within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe also give unto my brother in law Thomas Herbert his foure children, tenn shillings apeice, to bee paid to the said Thomas Herbert my brother in law for the use and benefitt of his foure children within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto my brother in law Abraham Denshire (alias Devonshire) twenty shillings of currant money as aforesaid, to bee paid to him within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe also give unto the aforesaid Abraham Denshire his foure children, tenn shillings apeice, to bee paid to the said Abraham Denshire for the use and benefitt of his foure children within one whole yeare next after my decease.

And also I doe give unto my sister Elizabeth Dunckly my hilling or coverlett and a pair of blanketts, to be delivered to her immediately after my decease.

All the rest and residue of my goodes and chattells unbequeathed, I doe give and bequeath unto Daniell Dunckly my brother, whom I doe make whole executor of this my present testament and last will.

In wittnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand, the day and yeare first above written.

The marke of O Frances Dunckly

Signed and published in the presence of:

Thomas Wright

Richard O Dunckly his marke

Probatum fuit ... 16 March 1665 [ie calendar year 1666] ... etc.

415. Jonas Watts of Crick, 1663 (N4 Book IX F11)

[Here again in this will, we see the early traces of verbose legal language in relation to the transfer of property and goods. The sudden verbose legal style and language may be compared with the earlier wills of William Hollis of Ashby Ledgers and John Clarke of Braunston]

In the name of God amen, the eighteenth day of December in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred sixty and three, I Jonas [Watts of Crick] in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being at this present in perfect health and memory thanks be to God therefore do by the.. [torn] ordain and declare this to be my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say,

First and principally [torn section] commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God my heavenly father who gave it me and my body to the earth from whence it came.

As for my lands and goods which God of his mercy hath lent me, I do hereby devise and dispose of them as followeth.

I do give and [torn] to Robert Watts my eldest son and heir apparent all my messuage or tenement and farm house situate in Crick aforesaid..... dwell together with all my houses yards, orchards & gardens and closes and all other the profits and appurtenances to the said messuage [belonging] in the town of Crick aforesaid.

And also all that two part of two yardland of arable meadow common and pasturage with the appurtenancesdly in the common fields of Crick aforesaid as they are already divided and now belongeth to my said messuage or tenement (except notwithstanding reserving to Anne my now wife her estate in the premises for her life to have and to hold all my said messuage or tenement, farm house, two parts of two yard land and all other the premises hereby meant and mentioned to be bequeathed with all their and every their appurtenances (except before excepted) unto the said Robert Watts, his heirs and assignees, to the only proper use and behoof of the said Robert Watts and his heirs and assignees forever,

Also I do give unto John Watts my second son, the sum of five shillings of current [English money]

Also I do give unto Thomas Watts my third son the sum of five shillings of like current money as aforesaid.

And whereas I the aforesaid Jonas Watts did purchase of John Bucknell of Crick aforesaid, gent., in the names of Richard Cleevely of Weeden Beck in the said county of Northampton, yeoman, & Thomas Wright of Crick aforesaid and their heirs all those three quarters of one yardland, arable meadow, common and pasture with the appurtenances lying also in the fields of Crick aforesaid being the one half of one yard land and a half called Motts yardland and a half [torn] of me the said Jonas Watts and Anne my now wife for an increase of her jointure for and during our natural lives and to the longer liver of us and after our deceases, then to the use of me the said Jonas Watts and of my heirs and assignees forever by indenture tripartite bearing date the sixth day of June in the tenth year of Charles made between the said John Bucknell of the one part and the said Richard Cleevely and Thomas Wright of the second part and me the said Jonas Watts of the third part, relation had it, doth and may appear And further whereas I the said Jonas Watts and Anne my wife have consented and agreed to settle the [torn] quarters of one yardland upon our younger children and their heirs and to cut of the estate of the said Anne in the said quarters of land have joined with others to acknowledge and levy a fine in Easter term in the two and twentieth year of our Lord Charles and by a transcript thereof in my custody it doth and may plainly appear the intent thereof being, to enable me to give and dispose of the said three quarters of one yardland to my younger children and their heirs.

And therefore I do hereby devise bequeath and confirm unto my youngest son Richard Watts aforesaid two quarters of land (or two part) of the three quarters of one yardland with their and every of their appurtenances before mentioned, I do give it unto the said Richard Watts my son and to his heirs and assignees forever.

I do give dispose and devise unto my youngest daughter Anne Watts one quarter of land (or the third part) of the three quarters of one yardland with their and every of their appurtenances before mentioned. I do give it unto my youngest daughter Anne Watts and to her heirs and assignees, Provided always and with this condition and it is my will intent and true meaning, that if my eldest son Robert Watts really pay unto my youngest daughter Anne Watts or her assignees the full sum of threescore pounds of current English money at [torn] age twenty and one years or at her day of marriage, which shall first happen to come, Then and in such case my said son Robert Watts..... have the inheritance of the said one quarter of land part of the three quarters given unto my daughter Anne Watts with a proviso and [torn] heirs and assignees forever.

Also it is my will that Anne my wife shall have all the use, benefit, and profits of the said quarter yardland given to my youngest son Richard Watts and to my youngest daughter Anne Watts and all commodities and profits with all their and [torn] the appurtenances growing or arising thereupon for three years next after my decease.

Also I give unto my daughter Alice Gilbert the wife of Robert Gilbert of Barby the sum of five shillings.

Also I do give unto my daughter Dorothy Herbert the wife of John Herbert of Crick the sum of five shillings.

Also I give unto Anne Watts my youngest daughter the full sum of threescore pounds of current English money to be paid to the said Anne Watts my youngest daughter when she shall accomplish her full age of twenty and one years or at her day of marriage, which shall first happen to come.

All the rest and residue of all my goods, cattle and chattels unbequeathed my debts being first paid and all these legacies performed and my body decently brought to the ground, I do give and bequeath unto Anne Watts my well beloved wife whom I do hereby make and ordain to be my full and whole Executor

of this my present testament and last will. In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal the day and year above written.

Signed and published in the presence of

Jonas Watts

.... Wright

..... Gilbert

..... Harbert

Probatio fuit 11 April 1674 ... etc.

418. John Watson of Crick, 1664 (N4 Book 6 F309)

[This is clearly the will of a young man, not long since married to one Sarah Ryton. Although so young, he leaves an inventory valued at £120-19s-8d, and a half yardland (about 15 acres), which implies that he is doing rather better than the average husbandman, and suggests that his father Thomas Watson might be a man of modest substance. However, the 1674 Hearth Tax return for Crick lists Thomas Watson as living in only a small 1-hearth house ...]

The [ninth?] day of Apriell 1664. I John Watson of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following. Having comited my soule and all that is mine to my gracieous God and mercifull redeemer, I dispose of my goods as followeth:

First I bequeath unto my welbeloved wife Sarrah all those goods that was her owne before mariage, and also sixteene pounds of that mony which her uncle William Righton gave her by will, and now in the hands of the trustees, and also four pounds that John Smallbon oweth me.

But if my wife shall refuse to exept [ie accept] of it, then I return all my goods to my father to pay what I owe him.

Item, I freely give and bequeath unto my father Thomas Watson, all my right title claime or demand of all and every part and parcell of my house I now dwell in, with all that half yardland that my father gave me at my mariage, to have and to hold to him and his heirs for ever.

All the rest of my goods and chattles, my debts being paid and funerall expenses discharged, I give to my loving father, whom I make my whole and soale executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have sett too my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

John Marriott M his marke

Sealed and delifered in the presence of us:

William Boyse

William Watson

Probatum fuit ... 15 December 1664 ... etc.

Invent. extendit ad ... £120-19s-8d.

424. William Abbott of Crick, 1665 (N4 Book 6 F1a)

[Of the 4 Abbott family wills in this series, the first is from Onley dated 1597, the second is from Barby dated 1618, this third will is from Crick dated 1665, and the final one is from Kilsby dated 1688. It is conceivable that they may be all from the same family; that they were obliged to leave Onley when it was enclosed and deserted around 1600-1610, and that they subsequently struggled to find a place anywhere else and were moved on at regular intervals ...]

In terms of occupations, these 4 testators were respectively a husbandman of middle income, a well to do husbandman, a husbandman and a shepherd. This does not fit precisely with the above conjecture – the later wills certainly seem to show a slide in fortune, which might be consistent with the family having lost their land to an engrosser. The question whether these 4 wills are really those of a single family therefore remains unresolved.]

In the name of God, amen. The fifth day of October 1665 according to the computation of the Church of England, I William Abbot of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being of perfect memory (praysed be God) doe make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

Imprimis, I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my creator, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to recive free pardon and

forgiveness of all my sinns; and as for body, to be buried with christian buryal at the discretion of my executors hereafter mentioned.

Item, I give to my brother Abraham £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to my brother Edward £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to my sister Mary £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to my sister Anne £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to my sister Elizabeth her children £1-0s-0d

Item, I give to Edward Cowly £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to John Cowly £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to Elizabeth Cowly £2-0s-0d

Item, I give to my brother Richard [...at?] his children, to each of them five shillings a peece.

Item, I give all the rest of my estate and goods to my sonn, and of this my last will and testament I constitute and appoint John Cowly and John Kilworth both of Creek in Northamptonshire my executors.

[NB: the will is unsigned and unwitnessed. Presumably the testator either made another draft which was signed, or died before he could sign this copy.]

Probatum fuit ... 16 November 1665 ... etc.

General Note:

Burial in Wool Acts, 1667, 1678

Intended to support the wool trade, these acts enacted that corpses should be buried in wool. The 1678 Act said that "no corpse of any person (except those who shall die of the plague), shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud or anything whatsoever, made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or in any stuff or thing other than what is made of sheep's wool only ...". A relative of the deceased was required to swear an affidavit (recorded in the registers), within 8 days of the event, that a "woollen burial" had taken place, or else a fine of £5 was levied not only on the estate of the deceased, but on anyone concerned with the burial. These Acts were repealed in 1814, but they had by then fallen into disuse.

426. Edward Winnard of Crick, 1667 (PROB 11/324)

[Another interesting will, this gives much data on the population of Crick at the time. It is also interesting in that it is the will of an old man of wealth and property, who is living out his old age with his son who is Rector of Crick. We can compare this will with that of Richard Thorpe of Barby in 1663, which clearly mentions that the puritan Stephen Fowler was "minister of Crick" – and since Fowler's will appears in 1694 below, it follows that Fowler may have continued to act as an Independent minister in Crick after the Great Ejection of Puritans from the church in 1662. This may be a valuable piece of evidence in reconstructing the evolving story of the church in this group of West Northamptonshire villages.

As for Edward Winnard, he has substantial properties in Colchester and elsewhere, and also has close connections both in the heart of London and in Lancaster, both in terms of business interests and through family members resident in those places. We infer that he must have been involved in business of some kind. Note his donation of £10 to the rebuilding of St Sepulchre's church in London – clearly a reference to the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire in 1666.]

January the thirtieth Ann Dom 1666 [ie calendar year 1667]. In the name of god amen. I Edward Winnard of Creek in the county of Northampton, gentleman, sick in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, namely:

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my only maker and redeemer, And my body to be buried in the Chancell in Creek aforesaid, At the instruction of my executor.

Item, I give unto the re-edifying and building of St Sepulchre's Church in London the sume of tenn pounds of currant English money, to be paid to the churchwardens then being if the worke be finished within foure yeares next after my decease; otherwise, if it be not built within the said space of foure yeares Then I doe give the said tenn pounds to the poore of the said parish.

Item, I give unto my three grandchildren (viz) Elizabeth Mary and Hannah Saunders the children of my daughter Anne Saunders, to every one of them forty pounds apeece, to be paid them within one yeare

and a halfe after my decease. And I intreat my sonne Mr Thomas Winnard of Creeke aforesaid And my sonne in Law Paul Weekes living in St John's Streete London, scrivener, to see that the said legacies be carefully paid unto my said three grandchildren Elizabeth Mary and Hannah, and to see that it doe not come into their father-in-law's hands.

Item, I give unto the said Paul Weekes the sume of thirty shillings for his pains.

Item, I give unto my two grandchildren Anne and Mary Faussitt the daughters of my daughter Mary Faussitt the sume of twenty pounds apeece, to be paid unto them within a yeare and a halfe next after my decease. And I intreat my said sonne Mr Thomas Winnard and Edward Fawcett of Islington their uncle to see that the said legacies be carefully paid unto them the said Anne and Mary Fawssett for their benefitt.

Item, I give unto Thomas Porter my sonne in lawe and to Daniell Faussitt brother of the said Edward Faussitt, to each of them two Thomas and Daniell, the sume of thirty shillings apeece to buy them each a ring.

Item, I give three yards of black cloth to lye upon the beare at Creeke aforesaid, to remain in the Churchwardens' hands for the use of the said parish.

Item, I give unto the poore of Creeke aforesaid the sume of five pounds, to be distributed among them at the discretion of my executor and the churchwardens of Creeke aforesaid.

Item, I give unto John Winnard my nephew and Thomas Winnard my nephew of Creeke aforesaid, to each of them five pounds apeece, to be paid unto them within a yeare and a halfe after my decease.

Item, I give unto my brother William Winnard of Brindsley in the county of Lancaster, the sum of five pounds, which he is to receive of one Alexander Woodward, and twenty shillings more of him in November next, the which said twenty shillings I authorize my said brother to pay and give unto my sister Jane Waren.

Item, I give unto Mistress Ash who lives with my said sonne Thomas Winnard, and to our maid Elizabeth, to each of them ten shillings apeece; and to Eusaby the man five shillings. Likewise to William Adkins and Benny Clarke of Creeke aforesaid, five shillings apeece.

Item, I give unto my foresaid sonne Thomas Winnard of Creeke aforesaid, All my lands messuages and tenements with their and every of their appurtenances lying and being in Colchester in the county of Essex, To have and to hold the same unto the said Thomas Winnard and his heires to the only proper use and behoof of the said Thomas Winnard and of his heires and assigns for ever.

All the rest of my goods catells and chattells unbequeathed, my debts legacies and funerall expenses being discharged, I give unto my said sonne Thomas Winnard Rector of Creeke aforesaid, whom I make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament. And I revoke all former wills.

Witness my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Memorandum that before the publication hereof it is my will that my said executor shall not be lyable to pay any of the aforesaid legacies before the end of three yeares after the date hereof, unless it appears that he hath received and recoevered the same of the creditors.

Edward Winnard.

Sealed delivered and published in the presence of us, Knightley Harrison, David Lawford.

Probatium fuit ... 1 June 1667

430. John Sumner of Crick, 1667 (N4 Book 7 F112)

In the name of God, amen. The 23rd day of Apriell in the yeare of Christ 1667, I John Sumner of Crick in the countie of Northampton doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in form following, having comitted my soule and all I have to my gracious God and redeemer and my body to the earth, my worldly goods as followeth:

Item, I give and bequeath unto my wife Sarrah the house I now dwell in for and during her naturall life, and after her decease to my daughter Mary Sumner and to her heires and assigns for ever, To have and to hold the said house with all profits comodities and appurtenances thereunto belonging, to her and her heires and assigns for ever.

And also I give unto my wife Sarah all my goods and chatles for her [use?] while she liveth, and after her decease to my daughter Mary to dispose of at her pleasure.

And also give and bequeath unto my sonn John Sumner one shilling, to be paid him within one wholl yeare after my decease.

All the rest of my goods and chattells I give to my welbeloved wife Sarah Sumner, whom I make and ordaine my wholl and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In witnes whereof I have set to my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

John Sumner

Sealed and delivered to the use of my executrix in the presence of:

Thomas Watson
Elizabeth Watson

Probatum fuit ... 29 July 1673 ... etc.

431. Francis Parker of Crick, 1667 (N4 Book 8 F221)

[It is interesting to note that the will of George Parker of Braunston appears later in this series, in 1692 – for George Parker is also a shepherd. These are the only 2 Parker wills in this series of transcripts – can it be coincidence, or are they related? The latter seems very likely.]

In the name of God, amen. The third day of May in the yeare of our lord God one thousand six hundred sixty and seaven, 1667. I Francis Parker of Crick in the county of Northampton, sheapherd, being weake of body but of perfect memory, praised be God for it, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in maner and forme following, viz.:

First and chiefly I bequeath my soule into the handes of Almighty God my creator, trusting in him to have remission of my sinns and to enjoy life everlasting; and my body to be buried in Christian buryall at the discretion of my executor; and as for my worldly goods, I bequeath as followeth:

Item, I do give unto my brother William Parkers foure children, each of them one ewe hoggrill, that is to say, William Parker one, John Parker one, Abraham Parker one, Anne Parker one; and likewise I do give unto kinseman Francis Line one ewe hoggrill.

Item, my will is that the five pounds that is oweing to my from my kinseman William Parker of West Haddon, is, that my brother William Parker shall have it to paye the rent due to Thomas [Kierk?] for the last year's rent.

Item, I do give unto the child, the issue of my wives body, the sum of twenty pounds, to be paid to it when it comes to the age of fourteene yeares. It is my will that if the child shall die before it comes to the age of fourteene yeares, then it is my will that the portion shall be divided between my wife and my brother William Parker's foure children, my wife ten pound and my brother's children fifty shillings apeece.

All the rest of my goods and chattells unbequeathed I do give unto my wife Alice Parker, whom I do make my whole and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written.

The marke of Francis Parker.

Sealed, signed and published by the testator in the presence of:

Robert Wright

The marke of V John Cox

The marke of O John Draper

443. Thomas Boyse of Crick, 1670 (N3 Book J F161)

[This will is short, sharp and to the point. The testator was clearly a man who did not waste words ... he even neglects to give any direction for the burial of his body, which is virtually unique in this whole series of transcripts.

From the handwriting of the will and the witnesses signatures, it seems likely that this will was drafted by Thomas Watson, who was one of the two witnesses.

Although the testator does not mention his wife's christian name in the body of the will, the probate text confirms that probate was granted jointly to Maria Boyse and William Boyse, who are obviously the wife and eldest son as appointed in the body of the will.

Thomas evidently lived on for a further 11 years, judging by his probate date of May 1682, his wife Maria outliving him as noted above from the probate details.]

The 17th day of November 1670. I Thomas Boyse of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following. Having bequeathed my soule and all that is deare to me into the hand of the Lord, I dispose of my worldly goods as followeth:

Firstly I bequeath unto my three duaghters, Anne, Mary and Elizabeth, the full sum of ten pounds apeece, and I give to my youngest son Thomas Boyse fifteene pounds, all which legacies to be paid to them and eche of them when they shall accomplish the age of one and twenty yeares; and if any of them shall depart this life before they shall accomplish the age aforesaid, that then there portion or portions shall be equally devided amongst the rest.

And my will is that my loving brothers William and John Boyse shall be overseers of this my last will and testament.

All the rest of my goods and catls and chatles, my funerall expenses being discharged, I give to my well-beloved wife and my eldest son William Boyse, whom I joyntly make my wholl and soale executors of this my last will and testament.

In wites whereof I have put too my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Thomas Boyse L his marke

In the presence of:

John P Perkins his marke

Thomas Watson

Probatum fuit ... 23 May 1682 ... etc.

446. Thomas Wright of Crick, 1671 (N3 Book F F108)

[From the disposition of Thomas Wright's 2 named closes of pasture, it seems probable that he has purchased one of them from John Kilworth (eg perhaps Kilworth had had to mortgage his close to pay off his immediate debts following a bad harvest, and subsequently failed to keep up the interest charges, leading to foreclosure of the mortgage; etc).

It is clear that Thomas Wright is a yeoman of substance, with 2 yardlands (which are apparently made up of 1.5 yardlands copyhold {heyne} plus half a yardland of Hall land that he or his forebears probably purchased as freehold when the manorial tenure was released by the crown; though there might also be some leasehold land), plus two houses and enclosed pastures. In total this probably amounts to something like 65-70 acres. It is obvious that the Wrights have been engrossing, probably building up their land by acquiring small parcels of land from poorer neighbours who went into debt. There is no mention of ownership of any other land outside the parish of Crick ...]

In the name of God, amen. I Thomas Wright of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being at this present in perfect health and memory, thanks be to God therefore, doe this seaventeenth day of June in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand six hundred seaventy and one, make and ordaine this to be my last will and testament in manner and forme following.

First and principallie and above all things, I doe commend my soule into the hands of Almighty God my heavenly father who gave it mee, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

And as for my earthly estate and gods which God of his mercy hath lent mee, I doe dispose of them as followeth:

I doe give dispose and devise unto my eldest sonne Edmund Wright, all that my messuage tenement and farme house in Creeke aforesaid wherein I doe now inhabite and dwell, and also all that closse of pasture adioyning thereunto, and also all that closse of pasture adioyning unto John Killworth; and all that my one yardland and half a yardland of heyne land lying dispersedly in the common feilds of Creeke with all their and every of their appurteanances whatsoever, to have and to hold to him the said Edmund Wright my sonne and to his heires and assignes for ever.

I doe give unto my youngest sonne Thomas Wright, all that my messuage tenement and farme house in Creeke aforesaid, and all that closse of pasture thereunto adioyning and belonging, wherein Robert Wright my brother doth now inhabite and dwell, with all their and every of their appurtenances whatsoever, to have and to hold to him and his heires and assignes for ever.

And also I doe give unto Thomas Wright my sonne aforesaid, all that my half a yardland of Hall land lying dispersedly in the common feilds of Creeke aforesaid, nowe in mine own possession, with all their and every of their appurtenances, to have and to hold to him and to his heires and assignes for ever, Provided allwaies and with this condicion, that hee the said Thomas Wright my sonne or his assignes shall really and truly paie unto and performe all theses legacyes hereafter in this my will expressed.

I doe give unto Arthur Wright my second sonne, the full summe of threescore pounds of currant English money, to be paid to him thus: twenty pounds a yeare for three yeares together next after my decease.

I doe give unto Arthur Wright my brother of Collingtree, five pounds of like currant money as aforesaid, to bee paid also by my sonne Thomas Wright aforesaid within one whole yeare next after my decease.

I doe give unto Robert Wright my brother, fourty shillings, to bee paid also by my sonne Thomas Wright aforesaid within one whole yeare next after my decease.

But if my brother Robert Wright or my sonne Edmund Wright shall not immediately after my decease quietly permitt and suffer my sonne Thomas Wright or his assignes to enter upon this my house and land before bequeathed and given unto him, then it is my will that my sonne Thomas Wright aforesaid

shall pay but tenn shillings apeice unto my two brother Arthur Wright and Robert Wright for their legacies, and no more.

All the rest of my goodes and chattells unbequeathed, my debts being first paid and legacies performed and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe give unto Edmund Wright my sonne aforesaid, whom I doe make my full and whole executor of this my present testament and last will, and I doe utterly revoake and make voyd all and every other former will heretofore had made or named.

In witness whereof I have hereunto putt my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written.

Thomas Wright

Signed sealed and declared in the presence of:

George Boulton

Thomas T Mawson his marke

448. John Tarry of Crick, 1671 (N3 Book D F167)

[Notes:

1. The writing in this will is especially difficult to decipher – some parts are totally indecipherable.

2. This is the first mention in this series of the term "crofter".

There are also some valuable hints regarding the names of Crick 's common fields and specific sections of the fields. Millfield, in particular, clearly relates to the field in which stood the mill referred to in the earlier wills of William Beridge (1644) and John Dale (1657). It is perhaps just feasible that there were two mills – in which case, that of William Beridge would probably have been located in the village (since a house and close was associated with it) while that of John Dale can be definitely identified as standing in Millfield, as mentioned here in John Tarry's will. The existence of a location called High Leas in Millfield, probably indicates that Millfield lay on the higher ground to the north and/or east of the village.

Although John Tarry styles himself "crofter", we should not misunderstand the term to imply that he was a poor man with only a bare croft of land to his name; indeed, the situation seems quite the opposite, since Tarry disposes of £60 in cash, plus 5 houses and backsides and at least 30 acres of land in small separate parcels, most of which he has almost certainly acquired by buying-out odds of land from poorer men who were forced to sell up in order to pay their debts. In today's terminology, it would probably be more appropriate to describe him as a rack-rent landlord.

This situation is in fact extremely useful, for the will gives us a hint as to some of those men in Crick who had recently fallen on hard times – notably, David Clarke, Joseph Dunckley, Renold Watts, Thomas Warwick, Thomas Mawby, Richard Clarke, from all of whom Tarry had recently bought small parcels of land. Checking this list of names against the 1674 Hearth Tax return, we find that the above-mentioned Richard Clarke and Thomas Mawby were poor enough to be living in untaxed houses, whilst David Clarke, Joseph Dunckley, Renold Watts and Thomas Warwick are not listed anywhere (suggesting that they had either had to leave the village altogether or else taken up lodging with a neighbour – in either event, this tends to confirm their status as "poor").

We can therefore state with some confidence that John Tarry was an opportunist who bought up parcels of land during a period of widespread debt, probably in the wake of one or more successive bad harvests. This being the case, it seems very likely that he would have previously lent money to these various poor men, when they were forced into mortgaging their homes and land, and that he then foreclosed on the mortgages when they ran into further debt and could not manage the interest payments.

We also see, from the postscript following his signature, that he had acquired a little land and property in West Haddon, presumably by similar means. It seems likely that this postscript was added after the will was written – probate was not granted until August 1676, so he evidently lived for 5 more years after writing this will.

Interestingly, the Hearth Tax of 1674 lists significantly more untaxed houses in Crick than in any other of the neighbouring villages (the proportion of untaxed houses is 40%, over 5% higher than for any other village in this sample). This tends to suggest that the process of fragmentation of land-holdings may have gone further in Crick than elsewhere during the preceding 2 generations.]

In the name of God, amen. I John Tarry of Crick in the county of Northampton, croftir, doe ordaine this my last will and testament.

First I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my creator and unto Jesus Christ my only redeemer for salvation by his blood and meritts for mee. Secondly I give my body to be buried in the church yard of Crick aforesaid.

Item, I give unto my eldest sonn Samuell Tarry, twelve pence.

Secondly I give unto my daughter Hannah, that dwelling house purchased of [David?] Clarke, with the backside, and sixtie pounds of lawfull English money, within one yeare after my decease.

Thirdly I give unto my second sonn John Tarrey, all that message [ie messuage] with the close and backsied and the two bayes of barne, purchased with the house aioyning [ie adjoining] to that which I gave to my daughter Hannah, and two [leads?] of Hall ground with two sheeps' common lien upon a plot called Hie Leas in the feild of Crick called Millfield, with that quartern of one yardland purchased of Jhoseph Dunckle of Crick with all the rites belonging unto itt, and to enter one itt at my decease, and hee shall plow manure soe and harrow, mow, and make all [.....] when all the crop or crops groing on the sayd two half quarterns

..... and land in field with one sheep common belonging unto it in
..... in consideration of land.

Fourthly I give unto my young sonn Alexander Tarrey, all that house backside with what belongs unto itt, with that plott of ground which I bought of Renold Watts of Crick, and the house [that?] was purchased of Thomas [Worik?] of Cricke; and I also give him two half quarterns of land, one purchased of Thomas Mauby of Cricke with all that belongs unto itt, and the other half quartern of land with the appurtenances of Richard Clarke of Cricke, and hee to enter at his mother's decease Elizabeth Tarrey. And it is my will that my beloved wife Elizabeth Tarrey shall hold all that [house?] and two half quarterns of land with what belongs unto them, during all the terms of her naturall life, and then after unto my sonn Alexander as above given.

And all the rest of my goodes and cattell undissposed, I doe ordaine my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Tarrey my sole executrix of this my last will and testament; and I appoynt Samuell Tarrey my sonne and William Medbourne oversears of this my last will.

To the truth of which, I have heareunto putt my hand and seale the sixt day of August 1671.

Item, I give unto Samuell Bosworth my brother in lawe, all that cottage house and backside with all that belongs unto itt in the towne and fields of West Haddon, with a cowe common and lett of furrs [ie right to gather furze on the common land] purchased of John Clarke of [Molton?] with the deeds and [fine?]. I give him this in full satisfaction of sums of money paid by his mother and Unckle [Kester?] Bosworth of Bifeild by will.

John Tarrey

Probatum fuit ... 25 August 1676 ... etc.

General Note:

"April 19th 1672. War being proclaimed and begun against Holland, many soldiers are being pressed in town and country. Today thirty-three men passed by our village on their way to London, to fight the Dutch, and ten armed men, horse and foot, were assigned as their escort. One of the escort was Abraham, the brother of Edward Freeman. When they arrived near Brixworth they rested on the grass and had dinner brought from the town, bread and cheese with plenty of strong ale. They are being kept away from towns as far as possible, in case they desert up narrow alleys or lurk in hiding."

[Source: *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport*, translated by N. Marlow, originally written 1671-73.]

456. William Watkins of Crick, 1674AD (N3 Book V, F158)

[This will is extremely fragmentary – so much so, that only the cover and part of a reversed-written blotted continuation sheet are remaining in the record, and these are so jumbled that scarcely a word can be deciphered. Of the salient details, it is possible to make out (from the cover-sheet and by mirror-reading the blotted sheet) only the following text ...]

Creek, county Northampton, 1696/7

Wm Watkins testatorius defuncto

.....

... onto the ... pasture ground ... over the dwellinghouse and ... appurtenances standing in the severall ...

And I doe give and bequeathe unto ... to bee paid unto ...

And I doe give and bequeathe unto ... the summe of five pounds of lafull money ... her age of one and twenty yeares ... whom I make the ... of this my last will and testament ... and I utterly revoke all ... heretofore made. Lastly I give ... daughter of my brother John Killworth ... his house. In witness

whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale ... in the five and twentieth yeare of the ... Charles the second, by the grace of ... France and Ireland, defender of the ...

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

John Killworth
Robert Killworth
Abraham Lee

[From the above fragments, we can deduce that this will was first drafted in the 25th year of Charles II, ie 1674; and that it was not proven until 1696/7 (that is, at some time between the calendar dates 1 January and 5 April 1697). But even such a brief fragment tells us something – for instance, the name of his brother in law John Killworth, and hence his wife's maiden name; his wife is prob dead, since he makes his daughter his executor; he had both land, property and hard cash; he earned his living from the land rather than by trade; and he probably had a young daughter who would have been aged say 5-15 in 1674, and hence about 28-38 years old by the time the will was finally proved. The 1674 hearth Tax return for Crick lists William Watkin as living in a taxed 1-hearth house, which agrees with this interpretation.]

460. William Hinton of Crick, 1676 (N3 Book F F150)

In the name of God, amen. The fifteenth day of January 1675 [ie calendar year 1676], I William Hinton of Crick in the county of Northampton, sheaperd, being of good and perfect memory and remembrance, praised be God, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz.:

First I bequeath my soule into the hands of Allmighty God my creator, hopinge that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only saviour and redeemer to receive free pardon for my sins; and as for my body, I committ to the earth from whence it was taken, to be buried in christian buriall; and as for my worldly goods, I do give and bequeath as followeth:

Item, I do give unto my cousin Joseph Hinton the sum of 20s, to be paid unto him within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my cousin Benjamin Hinton the sum of 20s, to be paid unto him within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my cousin Elizabeth Bullock, the sum of 5s, to be paid unto her within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my cousin Elizabeth Hall, the sum of 20s, to be paid unto her within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my sister Elizabeth Drapour's foure children, the sum of 20s apeece, to be paid to them within one yeare after my decease.

All the rest of my money, goods chattells and my house, I do give and bequeath unto my brother Richard Hinton, whom I do make my whole and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

The marke of X William Hinton

Sealed signed and published by the testator in the presence of:

Robert Wright scr
John Smalebone M his mark

Probatum fuit ... 8 March 1680/81 [ie calendar year 1681] ... etc.

468. Richard Makepeace of Crick, 1676 (N3 Book D F205)

[There is further evidence in this will of engrossing, and it is seen that a half yardland in Barby was bought from Thomas Smyth, probably at some time during the 1660s.

Richard Makepeace is unable to sign his own will – and since he is a clergyman, we are forced to deduce that he could read and write – so the only conclusion must be, that he was too ill to do more than scrawl his initial beside his name. This does not seem at first sight to be the will of a man guided by the injunctions of Lewis Bayly in "The Practice of Piety", for otherwise he would surely have made his will whilst still in good health. However, it may be that he was suddenly struck down very suddenly and at a relatively young age, before the thought of making a will had become a priority for him – and this assumption tends to be supported by the fact that his probate was granted on 17th November, a mere 8 days after this will was written.

Note that he leaves small bequests to the children of the former rector Thomas Winnard. The 1674 Hearth Tax survey does not mention Richard Makepeace as living anywhere in Crick. However, "Mr Wynard" is listed as living in an 8-hearth house – and in view of Richard Makepeace's bequest to the Winnard children in this will, it seems very probable that Makepeace was lodging in Thomas Winnard's house.]

In the name of God, amen. The ninth day of November 1676, I Richard Makepeace of Crick in the county of Northampton, rector, being sicke in body but of perfect memory praised be God, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz That is to say: First and cheifly I bequeath my soule into the hands of allmighty God my maker, trusting in him to have a full pardon of all my sins and after this life to enioy life everlasting; and as for my body, I committ to the earth from whence it was taken; and as for my worldly goods which God hath lent mee, I bequeath as followeth:

Imprimis I give unto my brother Thomas Makepeace my half yard land lying in Barbey field, which my father purchased of one Thomas Smyth of Barbey, which now is in the occupation of one Richard Rowliedg.

Item, I do give unto my brother John Makepeace my hogge and four pound in money, to be payd to him within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my sister Sarah Clerk the sum of ten pound, to be payd to her within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto my sister Jane Makepeace the sum of ten pound, to be payd to her within one yeare after my decease.

Item, I do give unto John Winnard, Ann Winnard and Elizabeth Smyth, tenn shillings a peece.

All the rest of my money and goods unbequeathed I do give unto my brother Thomas Makepeace, whom I do make my whole and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

The marke of M Richard Makepeace

Sealed signed and published by the testator in the presence of:

Robert Wright

The marke of X Alice Atkins

Probatum fuit ... 17 November 1676

471. Bartholomew Floyd of Crick, 1677 (N3 Book E F19)

[This will makes no remark about the testator's living accommodation; however, the 1674 Hearth Tax comes to our rescue, with a listing of "Bartle Flude" – obviously the same man – living in a 1-hearth taxed house. From this, and the fact that he is a shepherd, and hence with no land under the plough, we gather that his home is probably a copyhold cottage, with a small attached close of land, owned by the Lords of the Manor.]

In the name of God, amen. The nine and twentieth day of December 1677, I Bartholomew Floyd of Crick in the county of Northampton, sheaperd, being of perfect memory thanks be to God for it, do make and ordaine this my last will in manner and form following, viz.:

First and cheifly I bequeath my soule into the hands of Allmighty God my creator, trusting in him to have a full pardon of all my sins and to enjoy life everlasting, and my body I committ to the earth from whence it was taken and to be buried in decent manner by my executrix. And all my worldly goods which God hath lent me, I do dispose as followeth:

Imprimis I do give unto my sister Mabell Hayles all my worldly goods which God hath lent me, all my bills bonds mortgages and money whatsoever, my debts being payd and my body decently brought to the ground, I do give unto her, whom I make my whole and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

The marke of P Bartholomew Floyd

Sealed signed and published in the presence of:

Robert Wright

John Killworth

473. Edward Sale of Crick, 1678 (N3 Book K F140)

[This will gives an extremely detailed description of the buildings of Edward Sale. And from the fact that there is stated to be a well in the yard of Sale's farmstead, plus the knowledge that John Adams was

his next-door neighbour, plus the fact that Edward Sale is listed as living in a 2-hearth house and Mrs Adams in a 6-hearth house according to the 1674 Hearth Tax survey, it might be possible to identify this group of properties on a map of the village.

It is also clear that Sale has been active in buying up more land as the opportunity presented. The additional quartern of land that he bought from the widow of Thomas Clerke yeoman was evidently purchased before 1674, since the 1674 Hearth Tax shows one Widow Clerke living in a small untaxed 1-hearth cottage; and this in turn suggests that the purchase of the quartern of land was probably achieved by foreclosure of a mortgage, and that the late Thomas Clerke had run into debt due to the small size of his land-holding (in this context, the title "yeoman" is probably a euphemistic courtesy). This repeats a pattern already observed in several other examples in Crick and Barby during the 1670s. The date and month are left blank in this will, and there is no probate date visible on the document; it is therefore arbitrarily assigned to mid-June 1678.]

In the name of God, amen. The _____ day of _____ in the yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord Charles the second by the grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland king, defender of the faith etc., and in the yeare of our Lord one thousand six hundred seaventy and eight, I Edward Seale of Crick in the county of Northampton, yeoman, beinge weake and crasie in body but of sound and perfect memory (God be praised therefore), and knowing the uncertainty of this life and being desirous to settle things in order, doe make this my last will and testament in manner and forme following (that is to say):

First and principallie I comend my soule to Almighty God my creator, believeing and assuredlie trustinge to be saved by the alone meritte of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ; And my body I comitt to the earth to be decently interred with Christian buriall at the discretion of my executrix hereafter named.

And as touching such worldly goods and estate as the Lord in his mercy hath lent me, my will and meaning is, that the same shall be imployed and bestowed as is hereafter by this my will expressed. And first I doe give and bequeath unto my daughter Anne Sale and to her heires for ever after the death and decease of Anne my lovinge wife; Two bayes of building which belonge to and are part of the messuage or tenement where I now inhabit and dwell, standinge and being within the towne of Crick aforesaid, which said two bayes of building stand in the yard and ajoyne to the said messuage or tenement on the backside thereof, and one Bay of the Barne which belongeth to the said messuage or tenement and which standeth next to the dwellinghouse of one John Adams of Crick aforesaid, and which said barne by common estimation is reputed to be fowre bayes of building, Together with the moytie or half part of the yard belonging to the aforesaid messuage or tenement, (that is to say) a half part of the said yard on which the said two bayes of building doe stand on, together with free liberty of ingresse egress and regresse for the said Anne Sale my daughter her heires and assignes, from time to time and at all times hereafter, unto the well in the yard of the said messuage or tenement, to draw up and carry away all such water as to them shall be needfull.

Item, I doe give devise and bequeath unto my said daughter Anne and to her heires for ever, all that quarterne or fourth part of one yard land of arrable meadow and pasture ground with the appurtenances, lying and being within the feildes and precincts of Crick aforesaid, all which said premises I lately bought and purchased of and from one Thomas Clerke of Crick aforesaid, yeoman deceased; Nevertheless upon this condition, that my daughter Anne shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto my sonn Richard Sale the summe of tenn pounds of current English money within two yeares next after my decease, if the said Richard shall be then living.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my sonn John Sale and to his heires for ever, from and after the death and decease of my said loving wife Anne, all that other part of the said messuage or tenement and premises before mentioned with the appurtenances, together with the other three Bayes and Barninge and the other half part of the yard before mentioned with the appurtenances thereunto belonging, upon condition that my said sonn John Sale shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto my sonn James Sale the summ of ten pounds of current English money within two yeares next after my decease, if the said James shall be then living; but if default shall be made of payment of the said summ of tenn pounds last mentioned at the time aforesaid, contrary to the intent and meaning hereof, That then I doe give and devise the same unto my sonn James and to hie heires for ever. And for want of issue lawfully begotten either on the body of the said John Sale or James Sale, then to the use and behoof of the right heires of him the said Edward Sale for ever, and to none other use intent or purpose whatsoever.

And lastly my will and meaning is, that my loving wife Anne shall have hold and enjoy the aforesaid messuage or tenement and premises and every part and parcell thereof with [each and every of] the appurtenances, for and dureing the terme of her naturall life.

All the rest of my goods chattells and cattle household goods and implements of household stuffe, my debts being paid and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe give and bequeath unto my said daughter

Anne, whom I make full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, revoking and annulling all former wills and testaments by me heretofore made.

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seale, the day and year first above written.

Edward Seale

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

Xxx xxxxxx

Xxx xxxxxx [illegible]

475. John Beale of Crick, 1679 (N3 Book E F104)

[Another miller's will, in which we gain a little more information about the cottage that was associated with the windmill in the common fields of Crick . By comparing this will with the earlier millers of Crick (William Berridge, 1644, and John Dale, 1657), we see that the mill has changed hands at intervals of 13 and 22 years respectively.

This will also states that John Beale was working the mill together with his kinsman Thomas Beale, who now inherits both the mill and the associated cottage in the village. Since he is named as a kinsman, we infer that Thomas Beale is not a son of John Beale, though he is clearly some years younger than John Beale; it therefore seems most likely that he is a nephew.

Referring to the 1674 Hearth Tax, we find mention of "Thomas Balies" in a taxed 1-hearth house, and of "John Balye" in a second 1-hearth taxed house. These are probably the same men as referred to in this will.]

In the name of God, amen. I John Beale of Creeke in the county of Northampton, milner [ie miller], being weakly in body but of sound and perfect memory praised bee Almighty God, doe make ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament of that worldly estate which God heth lent mee, in manner following:

First I doe give and devise unto my kinsman Thomas Beale of Creeke aforesaid, milner, and to his heires and assignes, all that my cottage house in Creeke aforesaid wherein I now dwell, with the yard and backside and all appurtenances whatsoever unto the said cottage belonging; And also all that my Wind mill and ground and soyle whereon it standeth, situate standing and being within the parish and fields of Creeke aforesaid, and all materials rights and appurtenances to the said Wind Mill and ground and soyle or to either of them beeloning or appertaining, To hold the said cottage house yard and backside and the said Wind Mill and the ground and soyle whereon it standeth, with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances unto him my said kinsman Thomas Beale and to his heires and assignes for ever; Provided alwayes and upon this expresse condition, And it is my full intent will and meaneing, That the said Thomas Beale his heires executors or assignes shall well and truly pay or cause to bee paid unto my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Beale the annuity or summe of five pounds of lawfull money, yeerely and every yeare for and dureing the full tearme of her naturall life; the same to be paid her quarterly upon the fourse severall quarter dayes in the yeare, namely the five and twentieth daye of March, the four and twentieth daye of June, the nine and twentieth day of September and the one and twentieth daye of December, by equall portions, the first payment to bee made upon the next quarter day after my decease.

And further my full will intent and meaning touching the foresaid premisses is this, That if the said Thomas Beale my kinsman his heires or assignes or any of them doe or shall at any tyme hereafter refuse or neglect to pay unto her my said wife Elizabeth Beale the foresaid annuity or yearely summe of five pounds or any part thereof upon the dayes on which the same ought ot be paid according to the meaning of this my will, Then and in such case I doe hereby give and devise unto her my said wife Elizabeth Beale my said cottage house yard and backside and my said Wind Mill and the ground and soyle with their and every of their appurtenances for and dureing the full tearme of her naturall life, after any default of payment of the said annuity bee made.

And alsoe I doe will and appoynt that my said wife Elizabeth shall att all tymes after my decease dureing her widowhood have and enjoy to her own use the parlour roome in my said cottage and liberty of ingresse and egress into all and every of the house and roomes in my said cottage for her convenient use and occasions, and likewise free use of any household goods about the house for her necessary use. And also all manner of firewood and fewell at all tymes, as well in sickness as in health, fitt and convenient according to her age and calling, to bee provided and allowed her dureing her widowhood, at the sole cost and charges of the said Thomas Beale his heires executors or assignes.

Also I doe give and bequeath unto her my said wife Elizabeth Beale, two chests and two boxes now beeing in the parlour chamber, with all the clothes and linnens now beeing in them, and likewise my best coverlid and feather bed and all other furniture fitting for one bed, and also one brasse pott the lesser, and one kettle or cauldron, and alsoe on ehalf of all my pewter.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my kinswoman Abigail the wife of John Gavell, five shillings, and to her two sonne John and Samuell, to each of them five shillings apeece.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my kinsmen William Beale and James Beale, five shillings apeece.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my kinswoman Elizabeth Bagworth, tenne shillings.

Further my full will and intent is, that my said wife Elizabeth Beale shall have and enjoy to her own use dureing her widowhood, one halfe of the apples and grasse yearely ariseing and groweing in the orchyard and halfe the garden, and commodities yearely groweing therein.

And all the rest of my moveable goods catells chatells and personall estate quicke and dead of what kind soever unbequeathed, I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my foresaid kinsman Thomas Beale, whom I make ordaine and appoynt the full and sole executor of this my last will and testament, for payment of my legacies and discharge of my funerall expenses which I desire should be performed in decent manner. And I utterly reclayme and revoke all former wills by mee made.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the nynth day of January in the thirtieth yeere of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord Charles the Second, by the grace of God king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., anno domini 1678 [ie calendar year 1679].

John Beale X his mark

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

John Watts

Isaac Dickens X his mark

Abraham Lee

Probatum fuit ... 22 April 1679 ... etc.

479. John Bayley of Crick, 1680 (N3 Book H F70)

[Judging by the handwriting and the signatures to this will, the drafting was done by John Butlin who also witnessed it. The quaint spelling, the lack of any soul dedication or other religious prefaces, the various insertions and crossings-out, and many other errors of style, all indicate that this document was penned by a man who was not accustomed to drafting wills – he is probably the husband of Elizabeth Butlin, who was probably related to John Baylie though she is not actually specified as such.

Bayley appears to have owned 4 quarters of land, 2 quarters of which he seems to have been renting out to others; he appears to have been living on the income of this rent plus what food he could grow for himself on the remaining 2 quarters.]

October the 26th 1680. I John Baylee of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, having comited all that is deare to me to the lord, I dispose my worldly goods as followeth:

First I give Robert Robinson my cosen one quarterne of land with all profits comodities and appurtenances thereunto belonging, to his heirs and asines for ever.

I give unto my sister Jane Robinson the rent of the half yardland for 2 yeares, and the house that she liveth in (and close) for her life; and after her decease I give it to her son Robert Robinson for ever.

I give the rent of my half yardland to Elizabeth Butlin for 2 yeares, and I give the rent of my half yardland to Presillia Robinson for 2 yeares

And I give one quartern of land to my sister Elisabeth Rushalls sons Thomas Rushall and Job Rushall, to be equally devided for Thomas Rushall's life, and after to his second son Simon Rushall for ever, for my sister Elizabeth Rushall her too sons Thomas and Job are to pay her fifty shillings apeece when they have the land.

I give to my sister Elinor Baylie ten shillings, to be paid to her.

I give unto Presillia Butlin a litel pot.

I make my cosen Robert Robinson my executor of this my last will and testament.

John Baylie X his marke

In witnes whereto of I have set to my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written, in the presents of:

Robert Robinson

John Butlin

Willliam Browning

480. John Cowley of Crick, 1680 (N3 Book F F169)

[John Cowley evidently recovered from the illness which prompted this will, since his probate is dated August 1685.]

November the 20, Anno Dom 1680. In the name of God, amen. I John Cowley of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, sicke in body but of a perfect memory (God be thanked) doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and form following.

First I give and bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my only maker and redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church yard of Creeke aforesaid.

And as for my worldly goods, as followeth:

Imprimis I doe give to my wife Dorothy Cowley the bed-stead in the parlour with the furniture belonging to it, and the table and frame which is in the same room.

Item, the cubbard which is in the hall.

Item, one porridge pot and one posnet*, and one kete.

Item, a flagon and four of the best pewter platters.

Item, all the sheets and cloaths that are in the [red?] coffer, and the little coffer in the parlour.

Item, the warming pan, and one barrel, and two tubs, and one paile, and one paire of blankets and the bed coverlet, and half a dozen of chussions [ie cushions].

Item, two [coves?].

Item, I doe give to my sonne John Cowley the summe of thirty pounds of lawfull English money, to be paid to him two yeares after my decease; and if it please God to take him away before the money be due, I doe leave it to the use and benefit of his heirs, whether son or daughter, that shall be then living, provided they give a sufficient discharge to the executor whome he likes of [ie they must give proof to the executor of their identity and parentage].

Item, I doe give to my daughter Elizabeth Robinson one shilling, and to her son John Robinson the best sheep in my flock.

Item, to my grandchild John Cowley, one good sheep.

Item, I doe give all the rest of my goods catell and chattells unto my son and heir Edmund Cowley (my debts being paid, legacies and funeral expences being discharged), whome I doe make my whole and sole executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereunto I set my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written.

John Cowley + his marke

Sealed signed and confirmed by the testator in the presence of:

Francis Bromwich

Nehemiah Robinson

William Watson

[Posnet – much the same as a skillet.]

Probatum fuit ... 16 August 1685 ... etc.

485. Francis Dunckley of Crick, 1681 (N3 Book L F108)

[This detailed and precise will, of a prosperous yeoman coming from an old and established Crick family, gives details both of his descendants and his ancestors, along with a number of useful names for parts of the land in Crick 's demesne and common fields – namely, Hall Land and Heyne Land and Plowman's Ground. He appears to own a full yardland and 3/8 of a yardland (ie a total of about 40 acres), made up of 4 separate quarterns of Heyne Land, 1 quartern of Hall Land and a half-quartern of Plowman's Ground. A half-yardland of this Heyne Land was inherited from his father, who had previously bought it from another Dunckley relative, whilst the other quartern of Heyne Land and half-quartern of Plowman's Ground was also inherited from his father, who had bought it from Thomas Cowley (are these 2 further examples of engrossing?); but his quartern of Hall Land and the fourth quartern of Heyne Land may perhaps be his own (copyhold?) land, since they evidently belong with his dwelling-house, close and backside, but yet he does not mention either of them as being inherited from his father.

In addition to his land, he bequeathes £200 in cash to his sons and daughters – this is clearly a wealthy yeoman, with a total estate probably worth more than £400.]

In the name of God, amen. I Francis Dunckley of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being weake in body but of sound and perfect memory (praised be Allmighty God), doe for the disposing and settling of that worldly estate which God hath lent mee, According to my desire, make and appoynt this my last will and testament thereof in manner following:

First I doe give and devise unto my eldest sonne Robert Dunckley and to his heires, All that my messuage and dwelling house and the close and backside to the same adioyning and belonging with appurtenances, and likewise All that one quarterne of a yardland of arrable meadow and pasture with th'appurtenances called or known by the name of the Hall Land; and also All that one quarterne of a yardland of arrable meadow and pasture with th'appurtenances called or known by the name of Heyne Land; all which said devised premisses are standing scituate lying and beeing within the towne and fields of Creeke aforesaid, And now in the joynture of my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Dunckley, To have and to hold the said messuage or dwelling house close and backshire and the said halfe yard land of Hall Land and Heyne Land and all and singular the profitts commodities members and appurtenances whatsoever unto them and every of them belonging or in any wise appertaining, from and after the decease of my said wife Elizabeth, Unto him my said sonne Robert Dunckley for and dureing his naturall life. And att and after his decease, Then to and for the heires of the body of him my said sonne Robert Dunckley lawfully begotten and to bee begotten. And for want of such issue, Then to and for the only use and behoofe of my second sonne Edward Dunckley, for and dureing his naturall life; And from and after his decease, Then to and for the proper use and behoofe of the heires of the body of him my said sonne Edward Dunckley lawfully begotten and to bee begotten; And for want of such issue, Then to the use and behoofe of the right heires of him my said sonne Edward Dunckley for ever; Provided alwayes nevertheles and upon this expresse condition, And it is my full will and meaning, That hee my said sonne Robert Dunckley or the heires of his body doe and shall well and truly pay out of and for and in respect of the foresaid messuage dwelling house close halfe yardland and premisses the sum of fourty pounds of lawfull money unto my two youngest daughters namely Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley, to each of them twenty pounds apeece att or within the space of three yeeres next after the decease of my said wife Elizabeth; And likewise that hee my said sonne Edward Dunckley and his heires doe and shall in like manner pay unto my said two daughters Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley the summe of fourty pounds to each of them twenty pounds apeece att or within the space of three yeeres next after my wives decease, for and in respect of the foresaid messuage lands and premisses in case hee the said Edward or his heires shall bee possessed thereof. And further it is my will that if any of my children be visited with sickness or otherwise want houseroom or succour, being unmarried, that then in such case they shall have and enjoy convenient houseroom in the said messuage for their necessity.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my said sonne Edward Dunckley the summe of threescore pounds of lawfull money, to bee paid him by mine executor hereafter named.

Item, I doe give and devise unto my third sonne Francis Dunckley and to his heires, All that one halfe yard land of arrable meadow and pasture with th'appurtenances lyeing and being within the fields of Creeke aforesaid, commonly called Heyne Land, being heretofore the inheritance of Robert Dunckley my father, deceased, and by him purchased of and from Joseph Dunckley, to have and to hold the said halfe yard land called Heyne Land and all profitts comodities advantages and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining, Unto him my said sonne Francis Dunckley and to his heires and assignes, to his and their proper use and beehoofe for ever; Provided alwayes and soe as upon condition, that my said sonne Francis Dunckley and his heires doe and shall pay out of the said halfe yard land unto my two youngest daughters namely Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley the summe of twenty pounds to each of them ten pounds apeece when they shall accomplish their severall ages of one and twenty yeeres. And I doe also give and bequeath unto my said sonne Francis Dunckley the summe of twenty pounds, to bee paid him in money or goods by mine executrix.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my fourth sonne John Dunckley and his heires, All that one quartern of land or fourth part of a yardland of arrable meadow and pasture ground with th'appurtenances lyeing in the fields of Crick aforesaid commonly called Heyne Land, and also all the moity or one halfe quartern of a yardland of arrable meadow and pasture lyeing in the fields of Creeke aforesaid commonly called or known by the name of Plowman's Ground, which were formerly the inheritance of my said father Robert Dunckley, beeing by him purchased of and from Thomas Cowley, To have and to hold the said quarterne of a yard land called Heyne Land and the said moitie or halfe quarterne of a yardland called Plowman's Ground and all and singular the rights members profitts and appurtenances whatsoever unto them and either of them beeloning or in any wise appertaining, unto him my said sonne John Dunckley his heires and assignes, to his and their only proper use and beehoofe for ever; Provided alwayes and upon condition, that hee my said sonne John Dunckley and his heires doe and shall pay out of the said lands and premisses unto my two said daughters namely Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley the summe of twenty pounds of lawfull money, to each of them tenn pounds apeece when they shall accomplish their severall ages of one and twenty yeeres. And I doe further give and bequeath unto my said sonne John Dunckley the summe of twenty pounds, to bee paid him in money or goods by mine executrix.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth Dunckley the summe of one hundred pounds of lawfull money, to bee paid her by mine executrix within one yeere after my decease.

Item, I doe give unto my daughter Mary the wife of John Wright five shillings, to be paid by mine executrix.
 Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my two foresaid daughters Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley tenne shillings apeece, to bee paid them by mine executrix.
 And if either of my daughters Alice or Sarah shall depart this life before their portions out of the land become due, the part of the dead shall remaine payable to mine executrix.
 And all the rest of my moveable goods cattells chattells and personall estate of all kinds whatsoever unbequeathed, I doe hereby give unto my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Dunckley, whom I make ordaine and appoynt the sole and full executrix of this my last will and testament. And I revoke all former wills be mee made.
 In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the fifteenthe day of October in the three and thirtieth yeere of the raigne of our sovereign Lord Charles the Second, by the grace of God king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., Anno Dom 1681.
 Francis Dunckley
 Signed sealed and published in the presence of:
 Edmund Wright
 Thomas Cure

Probatum fuit ... 25 November 1681 ... etc.

486. Joan Marstone of Crick, 1682 (N3 Book K F168)

[The first line of this will is obscured by a fold in the parchment. The text has been estimated where necessary, as indicated by the words in parentheses.
 From the names of her children, it is apparent that this woman was married and widowed twice, to men named Harris and Marstone.
 It would appear from the spelling herein, that the name "Marson" associated with Crick (eg in such street names as Marsons Lane) is a local corruption of the original surname "Marston", indicating a person originally coming from the village of Marston; but that the original spelling of the name persisted in the village at least up until about 1700.
 It is rather unusual to see three members of the same family as the only witnesses to a will – they seem to be the family of Thomas Willington, who probably acted as scribe.]

[In the name of God, amen. The ... day of ... in the year of our] Lord God one thousand six hundred eighty and one, I Joane Marstone of Creeke in the county of Northampton, widow, being somewhat crazy in body but of sound and perfect memory and understanding (prayed be God therefore) doe make this my last will and testament, comitting my soule to God, my body to the earth, and disposing of my estate as followeth:
 First I give devise and bequeath all that my messuage or tenement with the close orchard backside and appurtenances to the same belonging, wherein I now dwell, scituate and being in Creeke aforesaid, unto my loving sonne Thomas Marstone and to his heires and assignes for ever, Provided alwayes and upon condition that my said sonne Thomas Marstone his heires or assignes doe and shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto my sonne George Marstone and to my daughter Joane Marstone the severall summes of tenne pounds a peice within one yeare next after my decease.
 Item, I give and bequeath unto my children Richard Harris, Elizabeth Harris, Margery Harris, William Marstone, Margaret Marstone, George Marstone and Joane Marstone, the severall summes of twelve pence a piece, to be paid them by my executor hereafter named.
 Lastly, I give devise and bequeath all and singular the rest of my goods cattle chattells and personall estate whatsoever not herin before disposed of (after my debts and legacies paid and funerall expenses discharged) unto my said sonne Thomas Marstone, whom I doe hereby make and appoint to be sole executor of this my last will and testament (hereby revoking all former wills by me heretofore made).
 In wittnesse whereof I the above named Joane Marstone have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.
 The marke of T Joane Marstone
 Singed sealed and published by the above named Joane Marstone as and for her last will and testament, in the presence of us:
 Thomas Willington
 Benjamin Willington
 Elizabeth Willington

Probatum fuit ... 7 February 1684/5 [ie calendar year 1685] ... etc.

490. William Sharpe of Crick, 1682 (N3 Book M F47)

[The introduction to this will is rather charming in its poetic turn of phrase ...

It is interesting to note, in the bequests of property to his son and daughter, that each of them is bequeathed a separate part of William Sharpe's dwellinghouse and homestead. The property is evidently made up of two previously separate properties – his own family house plus an adjoining property that he bought from John Turner.

Is this annexing of a neighbour's house another example of engrossing? It seems very likely – for we also learn that he purchased a half-quarter of land from one Josias Marston, and this is obviously another piece of engrossing ...

Furthermore, it seems very likely that the said Josias Marston was the deceased husband of Widow Joan Marston, whose will dated 1682 appears slightly earlier in this series. And of course, if Josias only had a half-quarter of land, that would explain why Widow Joan Marston had a house and close to bequeath but no corresponding land in the fields; moreover, if Josias had only half a quarter of land, he would certainly have got into debt and had to mortgage his land, then would subsequently have had to sell it outright when he ran through the capital and could not keep up the interest payments.

William Sharpe lived a further 9 years after making this will, and died in the winter of 1691.]

In the name of God, amen. The seaventeenth day of June in the foure and thirtieth yeare of the raigne of our soveraign Lord Charles the Second now King of England etc., Anno Dom 1682, I William Sharpe of Crick in the county of Northampton, taylor, being in good helth and perfect mind and memory thanks be to God, yet knowing nothing more certain than death and nothing more uncertaine than the houre and time thereof, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

And first I committ my soule into the hands of Almighty God, hoping to have free pardon of all my sines and to enjoye life everlasting, by and through the pretious death and meritts of Jesus Christ my onely saviour and redeemer.

And as touching those earthly blessings which it hath pleased Almighty God to bestow upon me, I doe give and dispose the same as followeth:

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my eldest son William Sharpe, my bible and a wooden cheare and one shilling. And also I doe give and bequeath unto my said son William Sharpe, all that part of my dwellinghouse and homestead in Crick aforesaid that was formerly his mother's, to him and his heires for ever.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my dauter Alice Sharp, all that part of my dwelling house and homestead in Crick with the appurtenances, that I formerly purchased to me and my heirs of one John Turner, to her and her heirs for ever.

Item, I doe give and bequeath to my son John Sharpe and to him and his heirs for ever, all that my half a quarter of a yardland with the appurtenances lying and being in the open fields of Crick aforesaid, and now in the occupation of me the said William Sharpe, which I purchased of Josias Marston.

Item, I doe give and bequeath to my dauter Abigail Sharpe, one shilling.

Item, my will is that my funerall expenses shall be equally borne between my son John Sharpe and my dauter Alice Sharpe.

Item, the rest and residue of all my goods and chattells moveable and unmoveable unbequeathed, my debts being paid, my legacies performed and my funerall expenses discharged, I doe give and bequeath to my dawter Alice Sharpe whom I doe make my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, revoking all other former wills at any time made by me.

And lastly, I doe intreate and apoynt my loving frend Joseph Wright of Crick to be my overseer of this my last will and testament.

In wittnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare above written.

William Sharpe W his marke

Signed sealed and published by the said testator in the presence of:

Katherine Butlin

Edward Hailey

Francis Butlin

Probatum fuit ... 14 December 1691 ... etc.

498. Lawrence Kilworth of Crick, 1684 (N3 Book L F182)

[This interesting will – the first in this series for an innkeeper – names the inn as "The Sabers House" (probably in memory of the late Civil War?). Two Lawrence Kilworths appear in the 1674 Hearth Tax, living respectively in a 6-hearth house and a 5-hearth house (only 1 house in the village was larger than this), which gives us a little more data regarding "The Sabers House" ...

However, Lawrence Kilworth is far more than a mere innkeeper; he is a speculator. He has accumulated a half yardland of land, being one quartern of his own land plus a second quartern that he recently purchased – and it is likely that the purchase of the second quartern was achieved by engrossing from Joseph Wright; for it transpires that Kilworth also owns the house called Mrs Bucknell's house, and also the baker's house, and these ownerships seem to point to a considerable string of land and property acquisitions over a period of time. He also owns a sizeable herd of cattle and flock of sheep, and is thus a man of diverse investments.

Since he has five (older?) daughters and a married son without children as yet, it seems likely that the testator was aged around 58-66 at the time of making this will. He has married three of his daughters into good local yeoman families in Crick and Broadwell with sound financial prospects, the fourth daughter has been married to a gentleman in West Smithfield (ie London's meat-market district), and the fifth daughter to a (yeo?)man living in Yoxall, some 10 miles NW of Tamworth; in short, Kilworth seems in every way to be upwardly mobile.

The marriage of his daughter Alice to the gentleman in West Smithfield may also indicate that he had longterm involvement and connections in the meat trade.]

In the name of God, amen. I Lawrence Killworth of Crick in the county of Northampton, innholder, make this my last will and testament as followeth:

First I comend my soule to God, in hope of salvation through the onely meritts and mercy of my lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

And as for my worldly estate as it hath pleased God to lend mee, I dispose and bequeath as followeth: First I give devise and bequeath all that my house in Crike aforesaid, comonly called or known by the name of the Sabers House, And also all that quarterne or fourth part of one yard land lyeinge and being within the feilds lymitts liberties boundarys and precincts of Crick aforesaid, commonly called or known by the name of Hall Land and to the said message or tenement belonging or appertaining; And also all that other quarterne or fourth part of a yard land lyeing and being also within the feilds limitts liberties boundarys and precincts of Crick aforesaid and alsoe commonly called or known by the name of Hall Land, and which said quarterne of a yard land I late purchased to mee and my heires for ever, of and from one Joseph Wright of Crick aforesaid, yeoman, and Alice his wife, to my loveing wife Mary Killworth, for and dureing the terme of her naturall life; and imediately from and after her decease, then to the use and behoofe of my sonne Lawrence Killworth and the heires of his bodey lawfully begotten or to bee begottoen on the bodey of his now wife Anne; and for want of such issue, then to the use of my owne right heires for ever.

Also it is my will and meaning, that if it should please God I should dye before the said two quarternes of land bee plowed and sowed in any yeare, that my said sonne Lawrence whom I make my sole executor shall at his own proper cost and charges well and truly plow and sowe the same for my said wife att such times and seasons as itt is fitting for itt to bee done.

Also I give and bequeath to my said loveing wife Mary Killworth halfe my household goods moveable and plate within the said house where I now dwell and in Mrs Bucknell's house and the said baker's house, to bee equally devided by my overseers hereafter named.

Alsoe I give and bequeath to my said loveing wife Mary Killworth fowre cowes and twenty sheepe, not of my best nor of my worst, butt to bee sett out by my overseers hereafter named.

Also I give and bequeath to my daughter Joane, wife of Joseph Hollis of Crick aforesaid, the summe of five pounds, to bee paid by my executor hereafter named within two yeares after my decease.

Also I give and bequeath to my daughter Mary, wife of Mathew Over of Bradwell in the county Warwicke, yeoman, the summe of five pounds, to bee paid to her within two yeares after my decease.

Also I give and bequeath to my daughter Alice wife of John Holloway in West Smithfeild, gentleman, the summe of five pounds, to bee paid by my executor hereafter named within two yeraes after my decease.

Also I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth, wife of Henry Hancocke of Yox-hall in the county of Stafford, the summe of five pounds, to bee paid by my executor hereafter named within two yeraes after my decease.

Also I give and bequeath to my daughter Sarah, wife of John Mason the younger of Crick aforesaid, the summe of five pounds, to bee paid by my executor hereafter named within two yeraes after my decease.

Also I give and bequeath to the poore of Crick the summe of five pounds, to bee paid yearely by my executor hereafter named by twenty shillings a yeare untill the said five pounds be fully satisfied, the

first twenty shillings to bee paid on the next Easter Monday after my decease, and to bee distributed by the minister, my overseers and my executor hereafter named.

Also, all the rest of my goods and chattells, cattell, rights debts and creditts whatsoever and wheresoever that are not already herein before in these presents given bequeathed and disposed of, I give devise and bequeath to my said sonne Lawrence Killworth, whome I make my sole and whole executor of this my last will and testament, hee paying my legacies above bequeathed, my debts and funerall expenses.

And it is my will and meaning, that I may bee decently buried according to the discretion of my overseers.

Also I make my loveing freinds Aaron Gardner of Rugby in the county of Warwick gentleman, John Killworth of Crick aforesaid yeoman, and Thomas Whitmill of Crick aforesaid yeoman overseers of this my last will and testament, and desireing them to bee aideinge and assisinge to my executor and in the devidinge of my household goods; and for their paines I give them tenn shillings a peece.

In wittnesse whereof I the said Lawrence Killworth have to this my last will and testament sett my hand and seale, this the twentieth day of August in the six and thirtieth yeare of the raigne of our sovereign Lord Charles the Secobnd, by the grace of God kings of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., and in the yeareof our Lord God one thousand six hundred eighty fowre.

Lawrence Killworth

Signed, sealed, published and declared to bee the last will and testament of the said Lawrence Killworth in the presence of us:

Aaron Gardner

Philipa Gardner

The marke of X Anne Daniell

John Slater

505. Thomas Sabin of Crick, 1685 (N3 Book K F201)

[NB: the first line of this will is obscured by a fold in the parchment. The text is re-created where possible by estimation, following the normal format, as indicated in parentheses.

The fact that he has recently acquired by purchase two quarterns of land, suggests that Thomas Sabin is an engrosser of poorer men's land, in similar manner to some other recent examples that have been noted in this series, which were for the most part in Crick .

We also note from one of his bequests, that £25 was deemed sufficient at this time to buy "a little house" in Crick ; it gives some measure of the value both of money and of housing at this date.

One Thomas Sabin appears in the 1674 Hearth Tax survey for Crick, living in a 2-hearth taxed house – but does this entry refer to this testator, or to the next one below, also Thomas Sabin, who was this testator's father?

On balance, it seems most likely that both of them, father and son, were living together in a single fairly large house, with their respective wives and siblings. Both this will and the next one should be read together, with this interpretation in mind.]

[In the name of God, amen. I Thomas Sabin of Crick in the county of Northampton, being weak in body but of sound and perfect mind and memory, thanks bee given to God for the same], doe for the settling and disposeing of all that my worldly estate and goods [as God in his mercy hath bestowed] upon mee, make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

Imprimis I doe give and bequeath unto my loveing wife Mary Sabin, All that my quartern of a yard land which I lately purchased to mee and my heires of and from my brother John Garrett, with the appurtenances, lying and being in the fields of Cricke aforesaid, And all that my other quartern of a yard land with the appurtenances, lying and being in the fields of Cricke aforesaid which I lately purchased to mee and my heires of and from Lawrence Killworth, To have and to hold the same to her for and dureing the full terme of her naturall life, provided she kepes her self a widdow; but if in case shee happen to marry againe, that then my will and meaneing is, that shee shall only hold and enjoy that one quartern of a yard land aforementioned which I bought of my said brother John Garrett.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my said loveing wife Mary Sabin, all those my household goods which were her owne before our marriage, and I also give unto her my said loveing wife my black cowe, and I alsoe give devise and bequeath unto my said wife All that my cropp of corne pease and grass which is now growing comeing and ariseing out of and upon all that my quartern of a yard land aforementioned which I purchased of my said brother John Garrett.; and my will and meaneing is that shee my said wife shall bee supplied with corne for her own particular use out of the corne in my barne untill the cropp which I have given her shall be brought in.

Item, I doe give devise and bequeath unto my brother John Sabin and to his heires and assignes for ever, the moyety or full half part of all that my said quartern of land within the fields of Crick aforesaid with the appurtenances, which I purchased of my said brother John Garrett, when the same shall happen to come after the decease of my said wife; and the other moyety or full half part of the said quartern of land with the appurtenances, after the decease of my said wife, I give devise and bequeath unto my sister Sarah Clerke and to the heires of her body begotten or to bee begotten, and for want of such heires then to the use and behoofe of my said brother John Sabin his heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I doe give devise and bequeath unto my brother Guilbert Sabin, the one moyety or full half part of that my quartern of a yard land lying and being within the fields of Cricke aforesaid which hI lately purchased of and from Lawrence Killworth, to have and to hold the same with the appurtenances unto him my said brother Guilbert his heires and assignes for ever immediately after the decease of my said wife.

Item, I give devise and bequeath the other moyety or full half part of the said quartern of land last mentioned with its appurtenances which I purchased of Lawrence Killworth unto my sister Alice Sabin and to the heires of her body lawfully to bee begotten, and for want of such heires then to the use and behoofe of my said brother Guilbert Sabin his heires and assignes for ever immediately after the decease alsoe of my said wife, in case my said wife shall keep her self a widdow; but my will and meaneing is if that my said wife shall againe marry, then immediately after such marriage the quartern of land last mentioned shall descend and bee to my brother Guilbert and Alice my sister according as is before devised and bequeathed.

Item, I give devise and bequeath to any my said brothers John Sabin, Guilbert Sabin and my brother in law Christopher Cooke and the survivors and survivor of them, the summe of five and twenty pounds, (upon this speciall trust and confidence in them reposed), to bee raised by my executor hereafter named out of my personall estate, that they my said brothers or the survivors or survivor of them shall employ the said money at interest for the use of my said wife dureing her naturall life; and after the decease of my said wife, my will and meaneing is that the said summe of five and twenty pounds shall bee to the sole use and behoofe of Thomas Sabin son of my brother William Sabin; and my will and meaneing is, that if my said brothers John Sabin Guilbert Sabin and Christopher Cooke or the survivors or survivor of them shall if they can with convenience lay out the said summe of twenty and five pounds in a little house, and that the house, if any shall bee by them or either of them purchased, shall bee settled upon my said wife for and dureing her naturall life; and after her decease, to bee to the use and behoofe of Thomas Sabin son of my brother William Sabin aforementioned his heires and assignes for ever.

Item, all the rest of my goods chattells cattell and personall estate heretofore unbequeathed of what nature kind or quallity soever, my debts being first paid and funerall expenses discharged, I give devise and bequeath unto my loveing brother William Sabin whom I make sole executor of this my last will and testament, and I doe hereby revoke and disanull all former wills by mee made, and doe publish this as my last will and testament.

In wittnes whereof I the said Thomas Sabin have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the thirteenth day of Aprill in the first year of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord James the Second, by the grace of God king of England etc., Anno Dom 1685.

Thomas Sabin

Signed selaed and published in the presence of:

John Farn

Joseph Garrett

Thomas Eyre

Probatum fuit ... 23 May 1685 ... etc.

506. Thomas Sabin the elder of Crick, 1685 (N3 Book K F205)

[This is the father of the previous testator Thomas Sabin, since he mentions an unmarried daughter named Alice and a married daughter named Sarah Clerke, etc., and the previous testator mentioned a sister named Alice and a sister Sarah Clerke as well as all the other named siblings.

To speak of a crop in the fields being "Inned or brought home" is a rather charming local phrase, which occurs here for the first time in a will, but was perhaps in wider use in normal conversation in these communities at this period.

From the long list of household goods bequeathed to his daughters Alice and Sarah, it is plain that Thomas Sabin was a fairly wealthy yeoman farmer with a well-furnished home, including a good number of recent luxury items such as a pewter salt-seller and spice-mortar. This makes it even more likely that the acquisition of additional land by his son (in the preceding will) was part of an engrossing

process, since this family clearly had the necessary capital to lend out money and make such acquisitions.

From the mention of a quantity of "woollen cloath that is not yet cutt up", we can see that weaving must also have made up a significant part of the family's income, in addition to arable farming and sheep-rearing. It would be very worthwhile to re-create the inventory of Thomas Sabin's goods – this would not be a difficult task from all the data given in this will, although of course it would not be possible to estimate the value of any of the goods.

Finally, this will supplies a great deal of family genealogical evidence, and will be helpful in reconstructing the family histories both of the Sabins and of the Clerkes]

In the name of God, amen. I Thomas Sabin of Crick in the county of Northampton, [.....], being weak in body but of sound and perfect mind and memory, thanks bee given to God for the same, for the disposing and settling of all these my goods chattells and personall estate which God hath afforded mee, make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following:

First I give and devise to my daughter Alice Sabin the summe of fourty pounds, to bee paid her by my executor hereafter named out of my personall estate; and I doe also give devise and bequeath unto her my said daughter Alice one full moyety or half part of that my half quartern cropp of corne pease and grass now groweing happening comeing or ariseing with the fields of Crick aforesaid, and alsoe soe much corne as shall feede and supply her for her own proper and particular use as is now in my house, towards her maintenance untill the said cropp shall bee Inned or brought home; and I alsoe give devise and bequeath unto her my said daughter Alice one flicht of bacon, a pair of pothangles, a smoothing iron, my two lesser pailles, the lesser kilever, the looking glass in the chamber, and my cow called the Barby Cow, the lesser tubb, the wainscott coffer in the chamber with all the linnen therein (except one pair of sheets of the middle sort which I give to my daughter Sarah Clerke); and I alsoe give to my said daughter Alice the other coffer standing by the wainscott cover [ie coffer] and the little coffer standing by her own bedsted, together with the bedstead and furniture shee now hath on, and alsoe five pewter dishes, one pewter [spinte?], one pewter salt seller, one pewter candlestick, my warming pan, one brass pott which was her mother's, one brass kettle called the bowker kettle, and alsoe my chavendish [ie chafing dish].

Item, I give and bequeath to my son William Sabin the summe of five pounds, to bee paid him by my executor hereafter named within foure months next after my decease.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my said daughter Sarah Clerke the summe of five pounds, to bee paid her within three moneths next after my decease.

Item, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my five grandchildren, that is to say, to Thomas Sabin son of my said son William Sabin, and to Samuel Sabin son of Guilbert Sabin, to Sarah Sabin daughter of John Sabin, to William Clerke the son of Christopher Clerke, and to William Sabin another son of my said son William Sabin, the summe of tenne shillings apeece, to bee paid them by my executor hereafter named.

Item, I also give devise and bequeath unto my said daughter Sarah Clerke the desk in the parlour, the spice mortar, the chest in the parlour, one brass kettell called the gallon kettle, the oldest barrell And I alsoe further give and bequeath to my said daughter Alice the best table in the hall.

Item, I doe give devise and bequeath unto my son Thomas Sabin the summe of five shillings, to bee paid him by my executor hereafter named.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my said son Guilbert Sabin foure sheep, that is to say, two hoggerills and two wether sheep.

Item, I give and bequeath to Mary Sabin the wife of my said son John Sabin one paire of blanketts and one paire of sheets of the middle sort.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my said daughter Alice, three pewter porring dishes, halfe the woollen cloath that is not yet cutt up, two small brass kettles.

Item, all the rest of my goods cattell chattells and personall estate whatsoever unbequeathed and undesposed, my debts legacies and funerall expenses being first discharged and paid, I give devise and bequeath unto my said son John Sabin, whom I make sole executor of this my last will and testament, and I doe hereby revoke and disanull all former wills by mee made, and publish this as my last will and testament.

In witnes whereof I the said Thomas Sabin have hereunto sett my hand and seale the fourth day of May in the first yeare of the raigne of our sovereign Lord James the Second, by the grace of God king of England etc., Anno Dom 1685.

The marke of T Thomas Sabin

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

The marke of T Frances Garrett

The marke of T Thomas Maggott

Thomas Eyre, scribe

Probatum fuit ... 3 July 1685 ... etc.

510. Richard Wright of Crick, 1686AD (N3 Book O, F100)

[This will offers an unusual wealth of biographic detail, not only of the testator himself and his family but even extending (for example) to the couple from whom he bought his house.

Richard Wright is a widower, and is apparently dying relatively young, since he leaves "4 small children".

He is living in a cottage – the lowliest category of dwelling, and probably with little or no land of his own other than a small close or cottage garden attached to the house, along with grazing and furze-gathering rights on the common land. But humble though it may be, he has bought it outright, and he therefore owns it as freehold and not (for example) as copyhold from the lord of the manor.

It is clear that Richard loved his wife dearly, and that he did whatever he could for her welfare.

We even read here the reported dying speech of his late wife Elizabeth (who, apparently, died not in childbirth but of a sickness which persisted for some time), and the whole effect is extremely touching.

It is a great pity that Richard Wright left no other memorial in writing – for he was clearly a born diarist, capable both of capturing much detail in few words, and also of making it interesting to read.

The 1674 Hearth Tax survey for Crick lists Thomas Wright living in a 3-hearth taxed house, Robert Wright living in a 1-hearth taxed cottage, Joseph Wright living in a 1-hearth taxed cottage, and finally Richard Wright (the present testator) living in a 1-hearth untaxed cottage. However, since Richard Wright makes no mention of either Thomas, Robert or Joseph, and nor do they appear (for example) as witnesses to his will, it may perhaps be that they are not members of his family – and with such a relatively common name as Wright, it is always dangerous to assume family connections where they may not exist.]

In the name of God, amen. I Richard Wright of Creeke in the county of Northampton, carpenter, beeing sicke and weake in body butt yett of sound and perfect memory praised bee God, doe for the maintenance and bringing up of my fower small children make ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament of that worldly estate which God hath afforded mee, as followeth:

And first, whereas I having purchased the cottage wherein I now dwell of Gilbert Sabin and Elizabeth his wife, did afterwards make a joynture thereof for the use of Elizabeth my late wife deceased, and our heires. And shee my said wife, in her sickness but then of sound and perfect memory, did desire in the presence of Emma Ward and Mary Hamant widowes, whose hands are hereafter subscribed, that the said cottage should be sold for the maintenance of her children, and did really and freely revoke and asnull her said joynture in plain words unto mee her said husband, speaking thus to mee: 'Husband, you are not able to bring up my children, beeing small, unles you sell the house, and I am freely willing that it should be sold that soe they may be brought up'.

These words and more to this effect shee spake in the presence of us the said Emma Ward and Mary Hamant, witnes hereunto our hands in testimony of the truth hereof:

Emma E Ward her marke

Mary M Hamant her marke

Whereupon I, the said Richard Wright, doe hereby give and devise unto my very loveing friends and brothers in law Thomas Hurley of Rugby in the county of Warwick, baker, and William Clever [ie Cleaver] of Welford in the county of Northampton aforesaid, husbandman, and to their heires and assignes, All that my said cottage or dwelling house in Creeke aforesaid, and all edifices profitts commondities and appurtenances whatsoever to the same beelonging or in any wise appertaining, To have and to hold the said cottage or dwelling house and all and singular the rights members and appurtenances thereunto beelonging or in any wise appertaineing unto them the said Thomas Hurley and William Clever and to their heires and assignes for ever, Upon special trust and confidence in them reposed and to this end and purpose, That they the said Thomas Hurley and William Clever and their heires shall imploy the said cottage for the benefitt of my said children, And shall and may sell the said cottage at their discretion for and towards the education and maintenance of my said children when necessity shall require. And if any money of the sale shall remaine when my children are able to help themselves and to gett their owne liveings, Then my will is that the money soe remaineing shall redound to my children, to bee divided among them at the discretion of my said Trustees.

And alsoe I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my said Trustees Thomas Hurley and William Clever, All and singular any goods cattell chattells and personall estate of all kinds whatsoever (my debts and

expenses beeing discharged), whom I appoynt the full executors of this my last will. Always upon this trust in them reposed, That my said goods should be imployed for and towards the maintenance of my children.

In witnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the first day of February in the first yeere of the raigne of our sovereign Lord James the second, by the grace of God king of England etc., defender of the faith etc., Anno Dom 1685 [ie calendar year 1686].

Richard Wright R his marke

Signed and sealed and published in the presence of:

Thomas Harris

Christopher Clarke

Abraham Lee

Probatum fuit ... 8 March 1685/6 [ie calendar year 1686] ... etc.

511. Edmund Wright of Crick, 1686 (N3 Book S F15)

[We learn here something further of the genealogy of the Wright family of Crick, and of their former purchase of some of the Heyne Land from John Bucknell gentleman, which purchase probably occurred back in the 1660s directly following the Restoration. Does this perhaps indicate that John Bucknell may have been forced to sell this land "and other things" after the collapse of the Protectorate ...?

It seems very strange, however, that his land is left to his younger son, and that the married elder son is apparently cut off with just a token shilling, even though it is the older son who is currently working the land and the younger son is still a minor – could it perhaps be that the elder married son has already received a portion of land? The joint executors named here are not members of his direct family, which also seems unusual. It is clear that his wife is dead.

As mentioned in the previous will above, the 1674 Hearth Tax survey for Crick lists Thomas Wright living in a 3-hearth taxed house, Robert Wright living in a 1-hearth taxed cottage, Joseph Wright living in a 1-hearth taxed cottage, and finally Richard Wright living in a 1-hearth untaxed cottage. Added to this, we have already surmised (see the preceding will) that Richard Wright is probably not connected with Thomas/Robert/Joseph Wright. We now meet Edmund Wright in this will, and he is stated herein to be the son of the late Thomas Wright. With this information, we are able to piece together a fairly clear family tree for the Wright family – and since he does not mention either Robert Wright or Joseph Wright, we might perhaps conclude that they were brothers of this testator's late father Thomas Wright, and that they are both now dead.]

In the name of God, amen. I Edmund Wright of Crick in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being well in health and of sound and perfect memory, praised bee Almighty God for the same, and considering the shortness and uncertainty of this mortall life, doe for the settleing and disposing of all my worldly estate and goods which God hath given mee, make ordaine and appointe this my last will and testament in manner following:

Imprimis I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my eldest sonne John Wright the summe of five shillings, to bee payd him by my executor hereafter named out of my personall estate.

Item, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my youngest sonne Edmund Wright and to his heires and assignes, all that my half yard land of arrable meadow and pasture ground with the appurtenances thereunto belonging, lyeing and being within the fields of Crick aforesayd, commonly called or known by the name of Heyne Land and now being in the tenure or occupation of my said sonne John Wright, and which was also formerly the estate of Thomas Wright my late father deceased and by him alsoe purchased amongst other things of and from one John Bucknell gentleman deceased, and heretofore being alsoe in the tenure or occupation of one Robert Andrew, to hold the sayd half yardland with all and singular the rights members profitts comodities and appurtenances whatsoever to the same or any part thereof belonging or in any wise appertaining, unto him my sayd sonne Edmund Wright his heires and assignes for ever (if in case hee my sayd sonne Edmund shall live to accomplish his full age of foure and twenty yeares). But if hee my sayd sonne Edmund shall happen to depart this life before hee shall accomplish his sayd age of foure and twenty yeares, that then and in such case I doe hereby give devise and bequeath the aforesaid half yard land with the appurtenances unto my sayd sonne John Wright his heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my grandson Thomas Wright sonne of my sayd sonne John Wright, the summe of twenty shillings, to bee payd him by my executor hereafter named.

Item, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto the poore of the parish of Crick aforesayd the summe of twenty shillings, to bee distributed amongst them by the discretion of my executor hereafter named.

Item, all the rest of my goods cattell chattells and personall estate whatsoever unbequeathed and undisposed of (my debts being first payd and funerall expenses discharged) I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my sayd sonne Edmund Wright
 And I doe hereby alsoe make oredaine and appointe my welbeloved friend and kinsman Daniell Cockerill of Collingtree in the county of Northampton aforesayd yeoman, and my wellbeloved brother in law Thomas Eyre of Crick aforesayd yeoman, joynt executors of this my last will and testament; and I doe hereby revoke all former wills by mee made and publish this as my last will and testament. In wittnes whereof I the sayd Edmund Wright have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the second day of June in the second yeare of the raigne of our soveraign Lord James the Second, by the grace of God now king of England, Anno Dom 1686.

Edmund Wright

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

The marke of O Edward Wright

The marke of W Elizabeth [Goosey?]

Thomas Eyre senior

512. Isaac Vickers of Crick, 1686 (N3 Book F F126)

[The 1674 Hearth Tax lists Isaac Vickers as living in Crick in a taxed 1-hearth house, and one Francis Vickers as living in Kilsby in an untaxed 1-hearth house (Francis may be the father of the Samuell Vickers mentioned in this will, and was probably the brother of Isaac Vickers). We are dealing here, therefore, with relatively impoverished folk, who perhaps lost their family's land through engrossment and had to move to Kilsby and Crick and take work wherever they could get it. Isaac in Crick seems to have prospered better than Francis did in Kilsby ... at least he has £22 to bequeath, out of his small house and its tiny home-close.]

In the name of God, amen. The first day of November 1686 according to the church of England, I Isaac Vickers of Crick in the county of Northampton, sheapard, being somewhat weake in body but of perfect memory and remembrance, praised be God, doe make and ordain this my last will and testament in maner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God my maker, hopeing in God that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to receive free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins; and as for my body, to be buried in Christian burial at the discretion of my executor heare after nominated.

Item, I doe give unto my well beloved wife Anne Vickers my house and close adjoining to it and all my parsonall estate dureing her life; and after my wifes decease I doe give unto my kinsman Samuell Vickers of Killsby my house and close adjoining to it; but if in case my kinsman Samuell Vickers should die with out any eayrs before my wife dieth, it is my will that it shall goe to my couson Elizabeth Muscot and to her eaires for ever after my wifes decease.

Item, it is my will that if my kinsman Samuell Vickers liveth (his eiares) to enjoy my house and close, he shall pay two and twenty pounds out of it when he doth enter of it:

Item, I doe give to my couson Elizabeth Muscot twelve pound.

Item, I doe give to my brother Elias Vickers children five pound.

Item, I doe give to my brother John Vickers children at Sawwell [ie Shawell] five pound.

Item, it is my will that my kinsman Daniell Vickers shall pay these legacies out of the house and close.

Item, I doe give unto my well beloved wife Anne Vickers all my goods bonnds and bills and chattells what soe ever, and at her disposing, whom I doe make and ordaine my full and soule executrix of this my last will and testament, revokeing all other wills and testaments.

In witness wheare of I have heare unto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Isaac Vickers I his marke

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Thomas Beale

Thomas Gillbert X his marke

Thomas Mawby T his marke

523. William Adkins of Crick, 1688 (N3 Book S F121)

[There is an unusual soul-dedication here, "into the arms of Jesus Christ, relying upon him for the full and free pardon of all my sins"; and the dedication of the body comes out of sequence before the

dedication of the soul. These anomalies mark out this will as probably being the work of a new (and relatively inexperienced) scribal hand – perhaps a new young curate?

William Adkins appears in the 1674 Hearth Tax survey, as "William Atkins", living in a 1-hearth taxed house with some other people. It seems that Adkins had been married at some time previously; for he has a grown-up son Thomas who has left the village; he now bequeathes a legacy to him "if he should ever appear" – but it sounds as though William Adkins considers this possible event to be relatively unlikely.

After the death of his first wife, William Adkins later married one widow Parker, who brought with her a son Francis from a former marriage. The 1674 Hearth Tax lists a certain William Parker living in Crick in a 1-hearth taxed house – and this was probably the man whose widow remarried to William Adkins, at some time after 1674 and before 1688.

Since William Adkins is living in only one house with his second wife, it appears that they have disposed of her previous home, the house of her first husband William Parker; or, more likely, she was bequeathed only a life interest in it, or an interest only until she remarried. Presumably that house also would have reverted to her son Francis, since it seems she only had the one son – alternatively, it may be that the Parkers were only renting or leasing their former house.]

In the name of God, amen. October the third 1688. I William Adkins, being sick in body but of perfect understanding, doe make this my last will and testament as followeth.

First I comit my body to the earth from which it was taken, and my soule into the armes of Jesus Christ, relying uppon him for the full and free pardon of all my sins.

And as for the goods and chattells which God hath lent me, I dispose of as foloweth:

First, the house I now dwell in I give unto my wife dureing her naturall life, and after her decease then to the issue of Francis Parker my wife's sonn during his naturall life, and to the issue of Francis Parker for ever if lawfully begotten; and for want of such issue, then to the use and behoofe of William Lee my sister's sonn and to his heires and assigns for ever.

Item, I give unto my sister Mary twenty shillings, to be paid one yeare after my decease.

Item, I give to my sonn Thomas Adkins, if ever he appear in person, foure pound, to be paid within two months of his appearance to my executrix.

Item, if the aforesaid Francis Parker my wifes sonn outlive my wife and enjoy the house where I now live, then I ordaine and apoint the said Francis Parker to pay unto the aforesaid William Lee the sum of eight pounds for a legacy within one yeare he shall enjoy the same.

All the rest of my goods and chattells, my depts being paid and funerall expenses discharged, I give unto my wife whom I make the sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

William Attkins A his mark

Sealed and delivered in presence of us:

William Rushell

Christopher Clark

Joseph Hollis

525. Thomas Hales of Crick, 1689 (N3 Book N F106)

[The will of Thomas Hales' widow Mabel appears below in 1698 – and in her will she bequeathes a half quartern of land (about 3-4 acres) lying in Duston near to Northampton. She also leaves her goods to the Aris family, from which it seems likely that she herself was born an Aris, and that she may have come from Duston and have an inheritance there, in addition to any land in Crick that may have belonged to Thomas Hales (though more probably he was merely a copyhold tenant).

The Hearth Tax survey of 1674 lists Thomas Hales as living in a 1-hearth cottage, which seems consistent with the above interpretation.

It is not clear whether the surname Aris is a corruption of Ayres or of Harris – but from the spelling "Earis" which appears in the will of Thomas below, the former seems the more likely. In his widow's will, it is consistently spelled as Aris.]

In the name of God, amen. I Thomas Hales of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being sicke in body but of perfect memory thanks be to God for it, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme as followeth:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God; secondly my body to the earth, to be buried in Christian burial. And as for my worldly goods, as followeth:

Item, I give unto my sister Ann White the summe of ten pounds, to be paid a twelve moneth and a day after my decease.

Item, I give unto my sister Elizabeth Burdges twenty shillings.

Item, I give unto Thomas Earis [ie Aris = Harris?/Ayres?] my kinsman ten pounds, to be paid by my executor.

Imprimis I doe give unto my loveing wife Mabel Hales all my worldly goods which God hath lent me, my legacies being paid, all my bills bonds morgages and money whatsoever I doe give unto her, whom I doe make my whole and sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

The marke of J Thomas Hales

Sealed signed and published by the testator in the presence of:

Edmund Wright

Robert Robinson

Giles Killworth

527. William Baker of Crick, 1689 (N3 Book N F136)

[This is the will of a very old man indeed. He leaves a legacy to his great-grandson, which implies that he is probably well over 80 years old. It is evident that he has saved sufficient capital to be able to lend some of it out at interest, as a means of providing himself with an income after he became too old to work.

However, William Baker is not mentioned in the Hearth Tax list of 1674, either in Crick or in any other of the local villages. The most likely conclusion is, that he has moved to Crick from somewhere else – possibly Dunton Bassett about 15 miles north in Leicestershire, since he leaves a bequest to a widow who lives there.]

In the name of God, amen. I William Baker of Crick in the county of Northampton, husbandman, being aged and infirm of body but of sound and perfect mind and memory (praised be God) doe make and ordaine my last will and testament in manner and forme following (that is to say):

First and principally I comend my soule to Almighty God my creator, relying wholly on the meritorious death and passion of my blessed redeemer for the remission of all my sinnes; my body I comitt to decent buriall at the discretion of my executor hereinafter named; and my temporal estate I dispose of as followeth:

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my my great grandson William Baker, son of my grandson Samuell Baker, the summe of tenn pounds, to be paid him by my executor hereinafter named when he shall attain the age of one and twenty yeares.

Item, I give and bequeath to my three grandchildren John Baker, Nathaniell Paybody and Anne Paybody the severall summes of three and thirty shillings and fourpence apece of current English money, to be paid unto them severally as they accomplish their respective ages of one and twenty yeares.

Item, I give and bequeath to Robert Robinson, John Gardner and Elizabeth his wife, all of Creeke aforesaid, two shillings and sixpence apece.

And also to Hester Coleman of Dunton in the county of Leicester, widdow, two shillings and sixpence more.

Item, all my moneys att interest, whether put out in my own name or in the name of any other person or persons in trust, and also all other my money or goods chattells and personal estate whatsoever (my debts legacies and funerall expenses being first paid and discharged) I give and bequeath to my said grandson Samuell Baker, whom I doe hereby constitute sole executor of this my will, declaring the same to be my last will and testament, and I doe hereby revoke all other wills by me made.

In wittnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the seaventeenth day of July in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand six hundred eighty and nyne.

William Baker O his marke

Signed sealed published and declared in the presence of us:

B. Bradley

Ro. Bradley

John [.....]

528. John Mason of Crick, 1690 (N3 Book M F53)

[John Mason presumably has land in Crick, as well as a quartern of land that he has purchased in Welford from Francis Saunders Esquire and his son William Saunders. It seems likely that he has been engrossing and picking up land where he could ... and this in turn indicates that he must have had at least 2 or 3 quarterns of land in cultivation, to provide him with the profits to invest in more land. With 4 sons to provide for, it would be highly logical for him to make every effort to acquire such extra land.

Note the signatures of John Tarrey and Abraham Lee to this will. John Tarrey is the second son of the engrosser John Tarrey whose own will appeared earlier in this series in 1671. As for Abraham Lee, his signature appears as a witness to very many wills and inventories of this period, not only in Crick but also in Barby and Kilsby.

In view of the steady stream of Mason family wills for Crick, stretching from 1558 to 1692, and the consistent evidence that the family is reasonably well to do, it is surprising to find that the 1674 Hearth Tax survey mentions only Samuel Mason and Thomas Mason, each living in a 1-hearth taxed cottage. It might have been supposed that they would have graduated by now to larger houses ...

Note that the formula for describing the newly-appointed joint monarchs William and Mary of Orange has not yet been perfected; the result in this will is a clumsy wording, the scribe being so discomposd at having to abandon his traditional formula, that he forgets to include Scotland in the listing of the monarchs' dominions.]

In the name of God, amen. I John Mason the elder of Crick in the county of Northampton, yeoman, beeing ill and pained in body but of sound and perfect memory praised bee Almighty God, doe for the settling of that worldly estate which God hath lent mee and yet undisposed of, make ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament thereof in manner following:

First I doe hereby give and devide unto my welbeloved wife Frances Mason and to her heires and assignes, All that my one quarterne of a yardland of arrable meadow pasture and grasse ground with all appurtenances thereunto beeloning and appertaineing whatsoever, lyeing and beeing within the fields and precincts of Welford in the said county of Northampton, and which (amongst other things) I purchased of and from Frances Saunders Esqr and William Saunders his sonne, to have and to hold the said one quarterne of a yardland of arrable meadow and pasture ground and all and singular the rights members commodities and appurtenances whatsoever to the said quarterne of land beeloning or in any wise appertaineing, unto her my said wife Frances Mason and to her heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my foure sonnes John Mason, William Mason, Edward Mason and Thomas Mason, and to my daughter Susanna Harris, to every one of them twelve pence apeece.

And all the rest and remainder of my goods cattell and chattells quicke and dead and personall estate of all kinds whatsoever unbequeathed, I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my said wife Frances Mason, whom I doe make constitute and appoynt my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, for the payment and discharginge of my legacies and other expenses. And I doe desire my sonnes John Mason and William Mason to bee not onely overseers of this my will, But to bee helping aideing and assisting to their mother mine executrix in whatsoever things shee doth or shall desire them.

In witnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the seaven and twentieth day of March in the first yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord king William and queene Mary, by the grace of God king and Queene of England France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., Anno Domini 1689 [ie calendar year 1690].

John Mason E his marke

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

John Tarrey

Francis Parker

Abraham Lee

Probatum fuit ... 12 November 1690 ... etc.

529. Nehemiah Robinson of Crick, 1690 (N3 Book M F34)

[It seems likely that Nehemiah Robinson is a rather elderly relic of Crick 's puritan period. His age is probably over 50 but not over 60, since his widowed daughter has a child of her own who is old enough to be accounted worthy of a legacy, but yet his son and executor is still a minor. He was thus born in the 1630s, as his puritanical Christian name implies; and we gain a further hint from the soul dedication – the fact that he makes his will early and whilst still in good health, and that he is able to sign his own name fluently to it, indicate both his literacy and that he had probably read "The Practice of Piety" (qv), the puritans' good-conduct manual which was extremely popular throughout the period 1615-1700. The 1674 Hearth Tax for Crick lists "Nemiah Robinson" as living in a 2-hearth taxed house, and also lists one Robert Robinson as living in a 3-hearth taxed house. This Robert Robinson is probably the same man as is listed in this will as this testator's nephew, the son of his widowed sister-in-law Sarah – from which we conclude that her husband, Robert Robinson's unnamed brother, must have died before 1674.]

In the name of God, amen. I Nehemiah Robinson of Creeke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, beeing at this present in health of body and of sound and perfect memory, praised bee Almighty God, yet considering the brevity and uncertainty of this mortall life, doe therefore for the settleing and disposing of that worldly estate, yet unsettled, which God hath afforded mee, make ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament thereof in manner following:
 First I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my welbeloved wife Elizabeth Robinson, two milch cowes of my middle sort and tenne ewe sheep of my middle sort, and all those household goods which shee brought with her att our marriage and noe more.
 Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my daughter Alice Harris, widow, the summe of five pounds of lawfull money; And to her daughter Grace Harris my granddaughter, twenty shillings.
 Item, I doe give unto my sister Marriah Hedge, widow, twenty shillings.
 Item, I doe give unto my sister Sarah Robinson, widow, five shillings, and to her sonne my kinsman Robert Robinson, five shillings.
 Item, I doe give unto my kinswoman Elizabeth Butlyn five shillings, and to my kinswoman Priscilla Hall five shillings.
 Item, I doe give unto my kinsman Nehemiah Bennitt twenty shillings.
 And all these said legacies I intend shall bee paid out of my personall estate att or within one yeare next after my decease by my executor and overseers hereafter named.
 Item, I doe hereby give and devise unto my sonne John Robinson and to the heires of his body lawfully begotten, All that my one half yard land with the appurtenances, one quarterne thereof beeing called or known by the name of Hall Land and the other quarterne called or known by the name of Heyne Land, lyeing within the fields of Creeke aforesaid, and now or late beeing in the tenure or occupation of Thomas Slin, To hold the said halfe yard land with the appurtenances thereunto beeloning unto him my said sonne John Robinson and to the heires of his body lawfully beegotten and to bee beegotten for ever. And for want of such issue, then and in such case I doe hereby further give and devise the said halfe yard land with all appurtenances thereunto beeloning unto my said daughter Alice Harris and to the heires of her body lawfully beegotten and to bee beegotten, To hold the said one halfe yard land with all appurtenances thereunto beeloning unto her my said daughter Alice Harris and to the heires of her body lawfully beegotten and to bee beegotten for ever. And for want of such heires, then to the right heires of mee the said Nehemiah Robinson for ever.
 And alsoe I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my said sonne John Robinson, All and singular my moveable goods cattells chattells and personall estate of all kinds quicke and dead whatsoever, unbequeathed, whom I doe hereby make ordaine and appoynt to bee the full and sole executor of this my last will and testament, for the payment of my debts and legacies and dischargeing other expenses. And I doe request desire and appoynt my welbeloved friends and neighbours Robert Watts and James Harris of Creeke aforesaid yeomen to bee overseers of this my will and helping and assisting to my executor in his minority, To the end that the said goods may bee employed for his use and benefitt according to my meaneing.
 And in case my said sonne shall depart this life before hee shall accomplish his full age of one and twenty yeares, And not married, Then and in such case my full will intent and meaneing is, That my foresaid daughter Alice Harris shall have all the goods and chattells whatsoever which shall bee and remain in the hand of my said sonne John Robinson or of any person to his use att the time of his decease, If that my said daughter shall bee then surviveing. And att and after her decease, then my full will and intent is that the heires of her body beegotten shall have all the said goods and chattells. And for want of such heires of her body beegotten, then my full will and meaneing is, that all the said goods and chattells shall returne unto the right heires of mee the said Nehemiah Robinson.
 In witnes whereof I have sett my hand and seale, the thirtieth day of May in the second yeare of the raigne of our gracious Soveraign Lord and Lady William and Mary, by the grace of God king and queene of England Scotland France and Ireland, defenders of the faith etc., Anno Domini 1690.
 Nehemiah Robinson
 Signed sealed and published in the presence of:
 Abraham Lee
 Alice Sabin W her mark
 John Sabin

Probatum fuit ... 10 March 1690 [ie calendar year 1691] ... etc.

533. John Varnum of Crick, 1691 (PROB 11/415)

[The previous references to weavers in this series occurred in 1559, 1589 and 1614; a total of 4 references in all, including this one, is less than 1% of the total of over 500 wills during the period – and

only two of these three previous entries were actually the wills of weavers. It seems a surprisingly low percentage, given the importance of weaving as a cottage-industry in this area at this period in time. It may perhaps imply that, either most weavers were relatively poor, or (more likely) that many of the folk who made part of their income from weaving also kept a few beasts and worked a small patch of land – ie, weaving was probably not their sole means of support at this time.

This man, however, does declare himself to be a full-time weaver. He is not wealthy, but he has a decent amount of land – about 18-20 acres in total; however, it is badly located in three very different places, which suggests that he inherited it. He probably rents out this land to tenants since he has not time enough to work it himself – and he now has to divide it and break it up three ways, when even in total it is only enough to support one family. Therefore he logically imposes the condition, that whichever daughter dies first must leave her portion of the land back to her sisters. However, one wonders whether this was really such a good solution – for the imposed condition would surely have made all three sisters relatively unmarriageable, since few suitors would have wanted a bride who would lose her portion if she happened to die before her sisters. From the text, it seems likely that his son Richard has left home, and is probably apprenticed somewhere – it seems odd that he did not study under his own father.]

In the name of god amen. The first day of Aprill 1691 according to the computation of the Church of England, I John Varnum of Crick in the county of Northampton, weaver, being in perfect memory and remembrance praised be God, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following, viz:

First I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my maker, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to receive free pardon for my sinns; and as for my body, to be buried in Christian buriall at the discretion of my executrix hereafter nominated.

Item, I doe give and bequeath unto my daughter Mary Varnum, my house and half quartern of land, paying thirty pound out of if which my half quartern of land is [tyed?] for.

Item, I give to my daughter Catherin Varnum one quartern of land lying in Rugby feild, paying out of it eleven pounds to my daughter Elizabeth Varnum.

Item, I give to my daughter Elizabeth Varnum, one close lying in Lillburn feild, upon condition after my debts and legacies are paid that she shall pay unto my sonn Richard Varnum out of my close in Lillburn thirty shillings a yeare.

Item, it is my will that which of my three daughters shall dye first without any heires, it is my will that their parts shall return betwixt the other two daughters.

Item, I give to my three daughters, Mary Varnum, Catherin Varnum and Elizabeth Varnum, all my household goods to be equally divided betwixt them three.

Item, I give to my daughter Elizabeth Varnum all my Looms and necessaries belonging to them, and make her sole executrix of this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills and testaments.

In witness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Joh Varnum his mark.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of John Beale, Samuell Fretter his mark, Thomas Beale.

Probatum fuit ... 10 July 1693 ... etc.

534. Richard Barrett of Crick, 1692 (N3 Book S F196)

[The 1674 Hearth Tax return for Crick lists Richard Barrett living in a taxed 1-hearth house, with a blacksmith's 1-hearth forge next door to it. In the same Hearth Tax return for Crick, Nicholas Kingston and William Griffin are also listed as living in taxed 1-hearth houses with 1-hearth forge-shops next door to them – the conclusion appears to be, that 3 blacksmiths were living and working in Crick in the 1670s, and that all three men were evidently earning sufficient that they were rated as able to pay the Hearth Tax.

Eighteen years later in 1692, Richard Barrett is evidently still working as a blacksmith, and has accumulated a modest estate to leave to his children – but that fact that he leaves his "house and land" to his eldest son John implies that Richard Barrett was also working part-time as a husbandman. It seems safe to conclude that Barrett's land did not amount to more than a quartern (7-8 acres) at most, and was perhaps only half a quartern – so that his work as a blacksmith was clearly taken on in order to supplement his income enough to maintain himself and his family.

These inferences are precisely confirmed by looking back to the will of Edward Barrett of Crick in 1640 – he was the father of Richard Barrett. Edward Barrett owned only half a quartern of land – about 4 acres, which confirms the inference in the previous paragraph – and this was nowhere near enough to

sustain a family; hence Edward also worked as a shepherd for other wealthier men. From the inventory of Edward Barrett, and from the description in his will, we saw that his son Richard had already set up shop as a blacksmith in a 1-bay section of the barn, and was working at least part-time at this trade ... in his will, his father encouraged him to continue with this work. That was back in 1640 – and so, we can see that by the time he made his will in 1692, Richard Barrett had in fact worked as a smith for at least 52 years. He must have been at least 68-70 years old by this time, and was evidently still working and in reasonable health.]

In the name of God, amen. I Richard Barrett of Creeke in the county of Northampton, blacksmyth, being in health of body and perfect memory through the mercy of God, yett considering the uncertainty of this mortall life, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say: First and pricipally I resign my soul into the mercyfull hands of allmighty God my creator, assuredly hoping through the merits of my blessed saviour to obtain remission of all my sins; and my body I commit to the earth whence it was taken, to be decently buried by the discretion of my executor hereinafter named.

And as for the worldly goods the Lord hath lent me, I dispose thereof as folowes:

Imprimis I do give unto my eldest son John Barrett one shilling out of my personall estate, in respect he is to enter upon my house and land at my decease by covenant, and thereupon engaged by bond to pay the summe of twenty pounds which I hereby dispose to my other children.

Item, I do give unto Richard Barrett one shilling, in [that?] he hath received his portion already.

Item, I do give unto my son Edward Barrett the summe of ten pounds, and likewise I do give unto my son Edward Barrett all my tools and implements in and belonging to my shopp.

And as touching my cropp of graine and hay which shall be inned or groweing in the fields at the time of my decease, my will is that my executrix shall have and enjoy it unto hir own proper use.

All the rest of my goods chatell and chattells undisposed of, I do hereby give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth [Hoone?/Shaw?], whom I do make and appoynt my full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, for to demand and receive the money by the aforesaid bond and to pay the same according to this my will, and further for the discharge of debts and funerall expenses, which I desire should be performed in Christian and decent manner, and I hereby utterly revoke all former wills by me att any time heretofore made.

In witsesse whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this thirteenth day of January in the yeare of our lord God one thousand six hundred ninety and one [ie calendar year 1692].

The marke of Richard Barrett [NB: his "mark" is a drawing of a key, very appropriate for a smith]

Signed sealed and published by the testator in the presence of:

Robert Ellis

Natt Everard

Jonathan Mitchell

536. Frances Mason of Crick, 1692AD (N3 Book V, F159)

[This document does not actually set out to be a last will and testament, but merely a document intending to record the bequest of a small piece of land. It gives no other information regarding the last wishes of Frances Mason – and therefore it should not properly speaking be included in this series of wills and testaments; however, it is clear that this document is meant to form part of Frances Mason's ultimate will and testament, if and when this was ever penned ... but perhaps she went on to die intestate?]

In the name of God, amen. I Frances Mason of Creek in the county of Northampton, widow, the relict of John Mason late of Creeke aforesaid yeoman, deceased, beeing at this present in health of body and of sound and perfect memory, blessed bee Almighty God, yett considereing the brevity and uncertainty of this mortall life, doe therefore for the settleing and disposeing of my one quarterne of a yard land with the appurtenances lyeing and beeing in the fields of Welford in the county aforesaid, according to my mind and desire dispose of the same as followeth:

I the said Frances Mason doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my youngest sonne Thomas Mason and to his heires and assignes for ever, All that my said one quarterne of a yard land or fourth part of one yard land of arrable meadow pasture and grasse ground with all the appurtenances thereunto beeloning or in any wise appertaineing, lying and beeing in the fields and precincts of Welford as aforesaid, And was given and devised unto mee the said Frances Mason and to my heires and assignes for ever by my said late husband John Mason deceased, in and by his last will and testament under his hand and seale, As by the said will relation thereunto had itt doth and may fully appeare, To have and to hold the said one quarterne of a yard land or fourth parte of a yard land of arrable meadow pasture and

grasse ground and all and singular the rights members and appurtenances whatsoever unto the said devised quarter of a yardland belonging or in any wise appertaining, unto him my said sonne Thomas Mason and to his heires and assignes for ever, To the onely proper use and behoofe of him my said sonne Thomas Mason and of his heires and assignes for ever; yet nevertheless under this Proviso and condition, and my full intent and meaneing is, That my said sonne Thomas Mason or his heires shall and will well and truly pay for and in respect and out of the said quarterne of land the full summe of twenty pounds of lawfull money withn the space of one yeare next after my decease (that is to say), the summe of tenne pounds unto my sonne Edward Mason or to his heires whom hee shall appoynt to receive itt; And the full summe of tenne pounds unto my daughter Shusanna Harris the now wife of Edward Harris or to her heires, without any neglect or refusal of the payment of the said several summes or any part thereof.

In witsse whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the tenth day of June in the fourth yeare of the raigne of our gracious soveraigne Lord and Lady William and Mary, by the grace of God King and Queene of England Scotland France and Ireland, defenders of the faith etc., Anno Dom 1692.

Frances Mason III her marke

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

William Buswell

Elizabeth Buswell + her marke

Abraham Lee

538. Thomas Winard of Crick, 1693 (PROB 11/421)

[This is the son of Edward Winnard of Crick, whose will of 1667 appears earlier in this series. Thomas Winnard (or Winard) was already rector of Crick in 1667, so he is evidently aged over 60 at the time of making this will.

The soul dedication of this will is of special interest, departing as it does from all others in this series of transcripts. In particular it sheds a revealing light upon the testator's interpretation of the act of separation between soul and body at the time of death – he evidently sees the body after death as deprived of its heavenly content, yet still worthy (by virtue of its former association with the immortal soul) of respectful treatment. This seems to indicate a new depth of scientific consideration about the process of death ... and this new "scientific" spirit, always enquiring after a greater revelation of the truth, also seems apparent in the testator's expressed wish that God will bless his church with "truth". Such ideas and thoughts have not appeared hitherto in this series ... and Thomas Winard probably absorbed this way of thinking at his seminary college of St John Baptist in Oxford*.

(* "... Science had entered Oxford behind the Parliamentary armies ...": *God's Englishman; Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, Christopher Hill, Penguin Books 1971, p251)

Thomas Winard was the executor of his father's estate, which was fairly large – and the 1674 Hearth Tax survey shows "Mr Wynard" as living in the largest house in Crick, with 8 hearths – yet he describes himself here as owning only a small estate. Why does he say this?

The answer may lie in the "scientific" nature of Thomas Winard's theology. Though not a puritan – for he appears to have taken over the church in Crick from Stephen Fowler after the Great Ejectment of 1662 – he nevertheless styles himself "minister", and his education was at Oxford's college of St John Baptist – Oxford had been a centre of puritan theology since the 1570s.

On balance, it seems likely that Thomas Winard absorbed presbyterian leanings – he was probably abstemious in his own habits, like a puritan, but was too scientific a christian to accept the simple and direct approach of earlier puritans, who believed that the second coming of Jesus would occur literally, that accumulation of wealth is no sin and that God directly rewards those who believe and trust in Him and work hard and accumulate riches. This led him, therefore, to refrain from any kind of ostentation – in fact it appears later in the will that he has considerable property and money, but he does not boast about it.

This deduction about Winard's charitable nature is suggested again in his extremely generous bequest of £20 to the poor of Crick – contrast this, for example, with the niggardly 20s left to the poor of Braunston by the much richer Richard Burdon, priest of Braunston, in 1690 above.

Note that the monetary unit "one guinea" makes its first appearance in the text of this will.]

In the name of god amen. I Thomas Winard, unworthy Minister of Christ and Rector of Crick in the county of Northampton, being of a sound mind, with a sincere hart make and constitute this my last will and testament as followeth:

Imprimis I commend my soule into the hands of God as a faithfull creator, beseeching him to cleanse it in the blood of his deare sonn and to make it fitt to be partaker of the Inheritance with the Saints in light.

My body after its seperation from the soule I commend to Christian buriall with the prayers of the church which God of his mercy bless with peace and truth now and ever.
 My temporall estate being but small, I dispose of it as followeth:
 Imprimis to St John Baptist's College in Oxford where I had my education, twenty pounds.
 Item, to the poore of Crick where I am now Rector, twenty pounds, to be disposed of to them by the Minister and Churchwardens in four equal payments, upon the two Christmas days and the two good frydays which shall happen next after the time of my decease.
 Item, to my brother in law Mr Thomas Porter of London, halfe the rents of those my houses on the Bank side over against Black fryers in London dureing his life; and the other halfe of the said rents to bee paid to my two neeces Mary Saunders and Katherine Boundy dureing the life of my said brother Porter, and at his decease the said houses to bee sould and the moneys equally divided amongst my three neeces the said Mary Saunders, my neece Mary wife to Thomas Lawrence, and the aforesaid Katherine Boundy.
 Item, to my cousen John Winard who formerly lived with mee, five pounds.
 Item, to my cousen William Winard brother to the said John Winard, a Guinea.
 Item, to my cousen Daniell Ryley of London, a Guinea, and to his two sonnys by my cousen Anne, each of them a Guinea.
 Item, to my cousen Anne Griffin who formerly lived with mee, forty shillings.
 Item, to my godson John Allen if living at the time of my death, five pounds.
 Item, to my godson Thomas Harrison, to my godson Francis Edwards, and to my godson Francis Ives and to my godson John [Holhead?] and every of them a Guinea.
 And to Elizabeth Smith formerly my servant, a Guinea.
 Item, I give to Edward Chandler, Leonard Cheynel, Thomas Maggot and Thomas Haly, every of them tenn shillings.
 Item, I give to my cousin Thomas Winnard tenn pounds.
 Item, I give to my sisters in law Mary and Sarah Nicholas, each of them a Guinea to buy rings.
 Item, I give all the rest of my estates, goods chattells debts etc., my owne debts funreall charges and these legacies aforesaid paid, to my loveing wife Martha Winard, and making her my sole executrix, she quitting her Right or Claime to any part of my houses in London aforesaid from the time of my death for ever.
 And I doe hereby constitute my cousin Thomas Harrison fellow of Sidney College in Cambridge and my cousin Thomas Winnard aforesaid the trustees of this my last will and testament, leaving to my said cousen Thomas Harrison to buy mourning the summe of five pounds.
 In witness hereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale this nine and twentieth day of August in the yeare of Our Lord one thousand six hundred ninety and three.
 Thomas Winard.
 Subscribed sealed and acknowledged by the said Mr Winard as his last will and testament in the presence of us, Thomas Harrison, Mary Nicolas, Sarah Nicolas.

Probatum fuit ... 17 March 1693 [ie calendar year 1694] .. etc.

541. Francis Dunckley of Crick, 1694AD (N3 Book T, F30)

[Francis Dunckley appears to be a relatively young man – probably no more than 40, and maybe as young as 30. He has inherited half a yardland, but he does not seem to have been able to make this land pay, which seems odd at first sight, since 15 acres is plenty of land on which to maintain a wife and one child. He owns what appears to be a freehold house.

The 1674 Hearth Tax lists Edward Dunckley living in a 3-hearth taxed house, and Francis Dunckley living in a 2-hearth taxed house. They were probably the sons of the prosperous yeoman Robert Dunckley (see his will of 1647 earlier in this series) – but it is Francis Dunckley in the 2-hearth house who concerns us here, for his will dated 1681 (also see earlier) shows clearly that he is the father of the present testator. Francis is the third son of four sons and three daughters – his elder brothers received sizeable bequests, and even Francis received 2 quarterns of good land, which had been 'his grandfather's inheritance' – so clearly, since his grandfather had prospered, we see that the land bequeathed to Francis must have been good land and capable of yielding a profit.

So, why did Francis apparently fail to make his land pay, so that he was saddled with large debts in 1694? The answer can almost certainly be seen in the will of his father Francis Dunckley (1681), which states that his bequest of the 2 quarterns to young Francis was upon condition, "that my said sonne Francis Dunckley and his heires doe and shall pay out of the said halfe yard land unto my two youngest daughters namely Alice Dunckley and Sarah Dunckley the summe of twenty pounds to each of them ten pounds peece when they shall accomplish their severall ages of one and twenty yeeres".

It seems very likely that the financial burden of meeting these conditions was what crippled Francis financially. It just goes to show what difficulties were caused for the children of a large family, owing to the often unreasonable demands of their parents' wills – in effect, the children were made to pay for the irresponsibly large families and grandiose plans of their parents.]

In the name of God, amen. I Francis Dunckley of Crick in the county of Northampton, being weak in body but in perfect sense and memory, doe ordaine and make this my last will and testament as followeth:

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my loving bretheren Thomas Killworth and John Wright, whom I apointe soule executors of this my last will and testament, all my house and whomstall [ie homestall] being or lying in Crick, with the appurtenances thereunto belonging, to them and their heires for ever. Also my two quarterns of a yardland commonly called Haine Land, to them and their heires for ever. Item, my will is that my executors shall make sale of my house and land above named, for the discharge of all my debts and funeral expenses, or so much of it as will pay my debts and funeral expenses.

Item, I give unto my executors above named all my personal estate whatsoever, and the remainder of house or land or personal estate or any part thereof after my debts are discharged.

I give the use or profit thereof of house or land or personal estate towards the maintenance of my wife and my son Edward, that is to say, for my wife dureing her life, then that which remains whether house or land or personal estate I give unto my son Edward and his heires for ever; but if my son shall dy in his minority, then I give the same unto my brother Edward's children and their heires for ever.

The marke of X Francis Dunckly

Signed sealed and published, March the 4th in the year 1693 [ie calendar year 1694], in the presence of: Christopher Clarke

John O Dunckly his marke

542. Thomas Newitt of Crick, 1694AD (N3 Book W, F220)

[The 1674 Hearth Tax lists both Richard Newitt and Thomas Newitt, each living in separate 1-hearth untaxed houses in the poorer section of the village. Among the other untaxed houses are listed 2 Vaus/Vaux families, which probably explains the presence of Elizabeth Vause as one of the witnesses to this will.]

In the name of God, amen. December the 5th 1694, I Thomas Newitt of Crick in the county of Northampton, labourer, being weak in body but of a perfect and disposing memory, blessed be God for the same, do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following: First and above all things, I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my maker and redeemer, and my body to the earth from whence it came.

Imprimis I give unto my son Samuel Newitt twenty shillings of money, due to be paid within two months after the decease of my wife, and one surplis.

Item, I give unto Thomas Newitt my son twenty shillings, due to be paid within two months after decease of my wife, and one coat and a coffer.

And there is likewise borrowed of my son Samuel Newitt and Thomas Newitt £1-12s, which is to be restored again at the feast of Saint Mychael next ensuing.

Item, I give unto my son John's children of [Badby?] twenty shillings amongst them, each one having an equall part att such time as they com to one and twenty years of age apece.

Item, I give unto Dorothy Newitt at Badby the sum of ten shillings, due to be paid within two months after the decease of my wife.

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Newitt my wife the sum of five pounds.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Henry Newitt my son, whom I make and ordaine my sole executor, all my goods and my house and homestead, to the said Henry and his heires for ever, or to his executors administrators and assignes.

In wittness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seall, the day and year first above written.

The marke of T Thomas Newitt

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

The marke of O Thomas Newitt jun.

The marke of T Elixabeth Vause

John Newitt

547. John Perkins of Crick, 1697AD (N3 Book T, F221)

[This will, judging from the abruptness of its drafting and lack of any of the customary prefaces or formula, was evidently written in a great hurry – almost certainly triggered by the sudden illness of John Perkins, or perhaps by some sudden fatal accident.

A John Perkins is listed in the 1674 Hearth Tax as occupying a 1-hearth taxed house in Crick ; also listed in Crick is Jacob Perkins, living in a separate untaxed 1-hearth cottage.]

I John Perkins of the parish Crick in the county of Northampton, having my senses, blessed be God, do leave to my dear wife Elizabeth Perkins the thirty pound that is in the hands of Mr Edmund Bateman of Guilsborough.

Item, I do give to the said Elizabeth ten pound that is in her own custody.

Item, I do leave all my goods and chattels, my debts and funeral charges being first payd, to be equally divided between my dear wife and my two loving daughters Mary Smith and Rebecca Perkins.

And I do appoint my loving son John Smith of Yelvertoft in the county of Northampton to be the executor of this my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my mark this eleventh day of August 1697.

P John Perkins his mark

Signed and sealed in the presenc of us:

Richard Blechyndon

Richard Drayson

Chrystopher Clarke

548. Mary Killworth of Crick, 1698AD (N3 Book V, F282)

[The 1674 Hearth Tax lists 3 separate Kilworth family households in Crick – those of Lawrence Kilworth the elder (innkeeper of The Sabers House) with 6 hearths, Lawrence Kilworth his son with 5 hearths, and John Kilworth with 2 hearths. This testator Mary Kilworth is the widow of Lawrence Kilworth the elder, and therefore the mother of Lawrence Kilworth the younger.

Annoyingly, all that appears to survive of Mary Killworth's will is a separate appendix/codicil to it, which reads as follows.]

I Mary Killworth of Crick in the county of Northampton, widow, am well satisfied with all things mentioned in my will dated the seventeenth day of November 1691; except a legacy of five pounds given to Elisha Cox – instead of five pounds I give him three pounds; and except a legacy of five pounds given to Sarah Killworth – instead of five pounds I give her three pounds, to be paid by my executors mentioned in my will.

Item, I give unto my good friend Mrs Hanson of Winnit [ie Winwick] a yonn [iron?] and a peticoat and a sute of linen cloths.

Signed sealed and published to be part of her will, January the fifteenth 1697 [ie calendar year 1698].

Mary W Killworth her mark

John Tarrey

Edward Whitmell

William Whitmell

[The reduction in her two bequests, from £5 each to £3 each, is probably because she has survived a further 6 years and 2 months since writing her will, and therefore her cash resources will have dwindled, as she gradually ate into them.]

549. Mabel Hails of Crick, 1698 (N3 Book L F207)

[This is the widow of Thomas Hales/Hails the husbandman, whose will dated 1689 appears earlier in this series.]

In the name of God, amen. I Mabell Hailes of Crick in the county of Northampton, widdow, being aged and infirm but of sound and disposeing mind and memory blessed be God, doe make and ordaine my last will and testament in manner following (that is to say):

First and principally I commend my sould into the hands of Almighty God, relying wholly on the meritts death and passion of my blessed redeemer Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins.

And my temporall estate I dispose of as followeth:

Imprimis I give devise and bequeath unto my cousin Thomas Aris the elder of Duston in the county of Northampton, shopkeeper, All that my one half quarterne of a yard land lying and being in Duston aforesaid, with all profitts commodities and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, for and dureing the term of his naturall life. And imediately from and after his decease I give and devise the same unto my cousin Thomas Aris the younger, son of the said Thomas Aris the elder, and the heires males of his body lawfully to be begotten. And for want of such issue I give and devise the same and every part and parcell thereof to Edward Aris brother to the said Thomas Aris the elder and to his heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my sister White twenty shillings, To my cousin Moses Clarke the younger forty shillings, To [my cousin?] Alice Palmer twenty shillings, To my cousin Susannah [Dickinson?] twenty shillings, To my cousin Sarah Aris [five?] pounds, and to Elizabeth Watts daughter of John Watts of Cricke aforesaid twenty shillings; All which legacies I appoint to be paid by my executor within one yeare after my decease.

Item, all the rest and residue of my [...] both reall and personall not hereinbefore by me bequeathed, my debts legacies and funerall expenses being paid and discharged out of the same, I give and bequeath to my said cousin Edward Aris, whom I do hereby constitute and appoint sole executor of this my will, which I publish and declare to be my last will and testament hereof, revokeing all other wills by me heretofore att any time made.

In wittnes whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the eleaventh day of May Anno Domini 1698, And in the tenth yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord William the third, by the grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland king, defender of the faith etc.

Signed sealed published and declared by the above named testator as her last will and testament in the presence of us:

Martha Winnard
Thomas Killworth
Richard [Bradley?]

Probatum fuit ... 17 May 1698 ... etc.

550. Edward Clarke of Crick, 1698AD (N3 Book X, F140)

[This will, in addition to giving further helpful data on names within part of the open fields, also shows (in a brief passing cameo) something more of the career of John Tarry, whom we have met earlier in this series of transcripts – by now Tarry is styling himself as "mercier" (NB: if he is using this term in its strict sense, he must have been connected with the wool trade – of the 12 great Livery Companies of London in the 1500s and 1600s, the greatest was that of the Mercers, who since 1347 had controlled the export of English wool and cloth) – and of his steady connection with the purchase and sale of land in the parish. In this case Tarry is being asked to act as agent and trustee for the sale of Edward Clarke's land after Clarke's death. This all tends to suggest that the nature of Tarry's work as a mercier may perhaps have included occasional work as a land agent – and such would be consistent with his earlier career as an engrosser.

The will also suggests a possible connection between Tarry and the shoemaker Christopher Clarke. Incidentally, it would seem that this Christopher Clarke is not directly related to Edward Clarke – though they probably share a common ancestor 3 or 4 generations back.

With at least 7 quarterns of land, Edward Clarke was clearly a prosperous man; but with (apparently) no surviving children to whom to leave his estate, he had no option but to sell 3 quarterns of the land that he had worked hard to build up, and to split up the remaining 4 quarterns between his 15 nephews and nieces – so they would receive about 2 acres each. In short, we are witnessing the complete break-up of a very useful and profitable estate of 50 acres into such tiny parcels as would be of little practical benefit to its owners.

The Hearth Tax survey of 1674 lists Edward Clarke as living in a 3-hearth taxed house, which is consistent with the above interpretation of his life-style.]

In the name of God, amen. I Edward Clarke of Cricke in the county of Northampton, yeoman, being (blessed be God) responsible though at present weake and infirme in body, do make and ordaine my last will and testament as followeth:

Imprimis I comend my soule to Almighty God my creator, relying on the meritorious death and passion of my blessed redeemer for the remission of all my sins; my body I commit to decent buriall at the discretion of my executors hereafter named. And my temporall estate I dispose of as followeth:

First I give devise and bequeath to my trusty friends John Tarry of Cricke aforesaid, mercer, and Christopher Clarke of Cricke aforesaid, cordewayner, All that my one half yard land of Hall Land with th'appurtenances in Cricke aforesaid, and all that my one quarterne of a yard land of Plowman's land commonly distinguished by the name of Lanke Slade piece, with all profitts comodities and appurtenances thereunto belonging, To hold to them the said John Tarry and Christopher Clarke their heires and assignes for ever; In trust nevertheless that they the said John Tarry and Christopher Clarke and the survivor of them and the heires and assignes of such survivor, shall and will with as much speed as may be after my decease sell and dispose of the said halfe yard land of Hall Land and the said peece called Plowman's Land and every parte and parcell thereof with th'appurtenances, at as good Bales as can be gotten for the same, to any person or persons they shall thinke fitt, and to the heires and assignes of such person and persons.

And by and with the monies that shall be paied by such sale, shall in the next place fully satisfie and pay all such just debts as shall be by me oweing at the tyme of my death to any person or persons whatsoever;

And in the next place, thay they my said Trustees shall and will pay out of the said purchase money the summe of fifty pounds of lawfull English money in manner and forme following (that is to say): twenty pounds thereof to my cosen Hannah Wakelin, twenty pounds more thereof to my cosen John Wakelin, and ten pounds residue thereof to their sister Dorothy Wakelin, which three several summes I appoint to be paid to them the said Hannah Wakelin, John Wakelin and Dorothy Wakelin within three months next after the decease of Ann my wife, or as soon after my death as my said wife shall decree and appoint, she my said wife being to receive the interest and increase thereof till the same shall be so paid.

And the surplus and remaining part of the said purchase money, after the payment of my debts and the said fifty pounds, I give and bequeath as followeth, that is to say:

One third parte thereof to my sister Elizabeth [Boone?/Towne?], another third parte to the foure children of my late deceased sister Anne Lord to be equally divided amongst them, and the other third parte thereof I give and bequeath to my sister Mary [Boone?/Towne?], hereby willing and appointing my said Trustees to dispose such surplusage and remaining part of the said purchase money (if any) accordingly.

Item, I give devise and bequeath all that my messuage or tenement and one yard land of Heyne Land in Cricke aforesaid, and all other my lands not devised to be sould, to the said Anne my wife for and dureing her naturall life; and imediately from and after her decease, I give devise and bequeath the same as followeth, that is to say:

I give devise and bequeath one full third parte thereof with th'appurtenances to my sister Elizabeth [Boone?/Towne?] for her life, and after her decease to her four children and their heires, to be equally divided amongst them.

One other third parte thereof with th'appurtenances I give devise and bequeath to the four children of my said deceased sister Ann Lord and to their heires and assignes for ever, to be equally divided amongst them.

And th'other third parte thereof I give and bequeath to my said sister Mary [Boone?/Towne?] for and dureing her naturall life; and after her decease, to her seaven children their heires and assignes for ever, equally to be divided amongst them.

Item, I give and bequeath all my goods chatells and personall estate to my said wife Ann Clarke, to be wholly at her owne disposal, desireing onely my funerall expenses out of the same, not doubting that the land herein before appointed to be sould will fully satisfie my debts and all such charges and expenses as my said Trustees shall be at in the sale thereof, which I appoint in the first place to be defraied out of the purchase money.

Item, I constitute and appoint my said wife sole executrix of this my will, which I publish and declare to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all other wills by me made.

In wittnes whereof to this my will and testament in two sheets of paper I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the seaventeenth day of May Anno Dom 1698, and in the tenth yeare of the raigne of King William the third, now King of England etc.

Edward Clarke

Signed sealed published and declared by the said testator as his last will and testament in the presence of us:

Thomas Whitmell

Thomas Kilworth

John [Carrite?]

B. Bradley

Probatum fuit ... 15 June 1700 ... etc.

552. Thomas Harris of Crick, 1699AD (NR1 Book X, F201)

[A well to do butcher, Thomas Harris has two houses in Crick, and one of them appears to have a substantial set of outbuildings, to judge by the fact that it includes a gatehouse (typical of the type of enclosed farmstead that is often mentioned earlier in this series of transcripts).

Since the 1674 Hearth Tax makes no mention of any Harris family in Crick, it seems that this testator has arrived in the village subsequently – and this is supported by his use of the phrase "... Crick, where I now dwell ...". The 1674 Hearth Tax listed one John Harris living in a 4-hearth house in Kilsby, who may perhaps be related to this testator. All in all, it looks as though this testator has prospered elsewhere (probably in the sheep or cattle business) before coming to settle in Crick, there to invest his money in acquiring property and setting up a business as a slaughterer and butcher.]

In the name of God, amen. The fourth day of November in the year of our lord Christ one thousand six hundred ninety and nine, I Thomas Harris the elder of Crick in the county of Northampton, butcher, being indifferent well of body and of sound and perfect minde and memory praised be God, considering that death is certaine to all butt the time thereof uncertaine, to the intent my lands and personall estate may after my decease be disposed in such manner as I desire without contention, doe make my last will and testament as followeth:

First and principally I bequeath my soule to the mercy of God that gave itt, and my body to the earth to be buryed in decent manner att the discretion of my executrix hereafter named.

And as for that worldly estate which it hath pleased God of his mercy to intrust me with, I give and dispose thereof as followeth:

Imprimis I will that all my debts which I justly owe to any person or persons whatsoever shall be paid and satisfied by my executrix hereafter named, and my funerall expenses and the charge of the proving and execution of this my last will and testament shall be likewise satisfied and paid by my executrix hereafter named.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Edward Harris, one shilling to be paid by my executrix hereafter named.

Item, all that my messuage cottage or tenement with the appurtenances in Crick aforesaid wherein I now dwell and inhabitt, and all other the lands, tenements, hereditaments and premisses with their and every of their appurtenances in Crick aforesaid, and now in my owne possession, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my loveing and welbeloved wife Sarah Harris for and dureing the terme of her naturall life; And from and after her decease I doe hereby give devise and bequeath the same premisses with the appurtenances unto my son John Harris, upon condition my said son John Harris shall within six months next after the decease of my loveing and welbeloved wife Sarah well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto my three daughters Emma Harris, Elizabeth Harris and Rebecca Harris the summe of ten pounds apeice; and also doe and shall quietly and peaceably permitt and suffer my said daughters Emma Elizabeth and Rebecca to have the shop and the chamber over the gatehouse part of the messuage cottage or tenement hereinbefore mentioned, and also priviledge to fetch water from the well belonging to this tenement, for and dureing the terme of their naturall lives, and the naturall life of the longer liver of them (if they keepe themselves sole and unmarried). But if he refuse or neglect soe to doe, then my will and meaneing is, and I doe hereby will and declare, that my said daughters Emma Elizabeth and Rebecca shall have hold and enjoy the said messuage cottage or tenement and premisses with the appurtenances hereinbefore mentioned, for and dureing the terme of their naturall lives and the life of the survivor of them; and from and after their deceases and the decease of the survivor of them, Then I doe give devise and bequeath all the aforesaid premisses with their and every of their appurtenances unto my said son John Harris and to his heires and assignes for ever.

Item, all that my other cottage or tenement with the appurtenances in Crick aforesaid, now in the occupation of my said son Edward Harris and which I lately purchased of and from one John [Malser?] and others, I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my son Thomas Harris and to his heires and assignes for ever.

Lastly, all the rest of my goods cattell chattells debts money household goods and all other my substance and personall estate whatsoever unbequeathed, I doe hereby give and bequeath unto my loving and well-beloved wife Sarah Harris, whom I make full and sole executrix of this my last will and testament, revoaking and adnulling all former wills and testaments by me heretofore made.

In wittness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the day and yeare first above written.

Thomas Harris

Signed, sealed, published and declared in the presence of:

Thomas Bromwich

John Bromwich

The marke of R Richard Greene

Edmund Bromwich

553. John Watts senior of Crick, 1700 (N3 Book W F177)

[The 1674 Hearth Tax survey for Crick lists Jonah Watts living in a 3-hearth taxed house, John Watts senior (this present testator) in a 2-hearth taxed house, and John Watts junior in another 2-hearth taxed house. The will of Jonas Watts dated 1663, which appears earlier in this series, shows that he had three sons – Robert, John and Richard in order of birth – and that Richard inherited the main share of Jonas' estate.

It seems possible that Richard Watts may have died in the interim, and that some of his estate may have passed to his younger brother John – but this is all speculative, and a more thorough attempt must be made on this family tree, by studying the whole group of Watts family wills for Crick plus the evidence of the parish registers.]

In the name of god amen. The twenty third day of February 1699/1700 according to the computation of the Church of England, I Senior John Watts of Crick in the County of Northampton, yeoman, being weak of body but of a perfect memory and remembrance, praised be God do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following viz:

Imprimis I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God my maker, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to receive free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins and as for my body to be buried at the discretion of my executors hereafter nominated.

Item I give unto my daughter Frances Watts the sum of twenty pounds to be paid her when she leaves her brother Thomas Watts and if she should live with her brother so long as life lasts, then she is to have the twenty pounds to dispose of to any of her relations.

Item I give unto my daughter Frances Watts the bed in the parlour with the furniture belonging to it.

Item I give to my daughter Elizabeth Plumpton the sum of five shillings.

Item I give to my daughter Ruth Watts the sum of fifteen pounds to be paid her two years after my decease.

Item I give to my daughter Deborah Watts the sum of fifteen pounds to be paid to her three years after my decease.

Item I give unto my daughter Ann Watts the sum of fifteen to be paid unto her four years after my decease and in case any of the three, Ruth Watts, Deborah Watts, Ann Watts should die unmarried, either before or after their portions are due that then their said portion is given to my son Thomas Watts.

Item I give to my son John Watts the little close purchased of Samuel Langley, he paying of the bond lying in John Sabin's hand.

And all the rest of my household goods I give equally to be divided between my three daughters Ruth Watts, Deborah Watts and Ann Watts.

Item I give to my son Thomas Watts one quarter of land and the bed he lies in and furniture belonging to it with all the rest of my stock, crop, goods, chattels, and all other "employments" belonging to husbandry whatsoever, upon condition he shall pay all my debts and legacies whatsoever and I make him my sole Executor of this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills and testaments.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above written.

John Watts

Signed, sealed and published in the presence of us

Thomas Flin

Charles Walsh

Nath. Killworth

554. Robert Dunckly of Crick, 1701 (N3 Book X F169)

[Note the pronunciation of "Abraham Devonshire" as "Abraham Denshire" – just one more example of how surnames were gradually altered by local dialect.

It is a pity that Robert Dunckly did not trouble to give his exact relationship to the many other Duncklys listed among his bequests; but since he gave considerably more to his sister, it seems likely that John, Jeremiah, Edward and Elizabeth Dunckly were nieces and nephews or cousins rather than his own direct descendants.

One thing seems clear – namely, that this testator is the eldest son of the yeoman Francis Dunckley of Crick, whose will dated 1681 appears earlier in this series. And from the will of his father it may be possible to work out some of the above relationships.

His relationship to John Harbert senior is clearly a close one – though the exact kinship is unclear.]

In the name of god amen. I Robert Dunckly of Crick in the county of Northampton, sheaperd, being weakly in body but of sound and perfect memory praised be Almighty God, doe make and ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament of that worldly estate which God hath lent me, in maner following:

First I doe give and devise unto my kinsman John Harbertt senior my house and whomstead and all appurtances to it belonging, to him and his heires for ever, he paying out of it to his three children and to his kinsman Thomas Harbertt the sum of ten pound apeice, to be paid whithin one yeare after my decease.

Item, I doe give to my sister Hannah Dunckly the sum of ten shillings.

Item, I doe give to Abraham Denshire and his wife the sum of ten shillings apeice.

Item, I doe give to Robert Denshire the sum of twenty shillings.

Item, I doe give to Jeremiah Dunckly, Edward Dunckly and Elizabeth Dunckly the sum of twenty shillings apeice.

Item, I doe give to John Dunckly the sum of forty shillings.

Item, I doe give to John Dunckly's three children twenty shillings apeice.

Item, I doe give to Richard Harbertt senior the sum of three pounds.

Item, I doe give to my sister Elizabeth Wells and her son William Wells twenty pound apeice, and for my sister Elizabeth Wells for to have the use of William Wells' twenty pound for her life.

Item, I doe give to my kinsman William Wells all my wareing apparrell and cloth, with a cubard, press, and a brass pan.

And it is my will that my fouregoing leagaces shall be paid within one yeare after my decease.

And all the rest of my goods chatell and chattells unbequeathed I doe give to my welbeloved kinsman John Harbertt senior, whom I make ordaine and appoynt the full and soule executor of this my last will and testament.

In wittness whereof I have heareunto sett my hand and seale, the twenty first day of Aprill in the twelfth yeare of the raigne of our soveraign lord William the Third, by the grace of God king of England Scotland France and Ireland, defender of the faith, etc., Anno Dom 1700.

Robert Dunckly J his mark

Signed sealed and published in the presence of:

Thomas T Waile his marke

John Beale

Thomas Beale

555. Robert Aby of Crick, 1704 (N3 Book W F55)

[No references appear to any other Aby families in the 1674 Hearth Tax, or in any earlier wills in this series. The logical inference is that this testator is a landless wanderer, who has settled in Crick quite recently, purchased a small cottage with a little croft of land, and takes work wherever he can find it. He mentions several brothers and sisters, but it seems likely that most or all of them live elsewhere. He leaves his house to his wife, and after her death it is to go to his nephew – so long as his nephew has paid 20s per year to support his wife while she lived; a good arrangement, and indicates that he was thinking very clearly when he made this will.]

In the name of god amen. The sixth day of January 1703 [ie calendar year 1704], according to the computation of the church of England, I Robert Aby of Crick in the county of Northampton, labourer, being of perfect memory and remembrance praised be God, doe make and ordaine this my last will and testament in manner and forme following.

Imprimis I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God my maker, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my onely saviour and redeemer to receive free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins; and as for my body, to be buried in Christian buriall at the discretion of my executor hereafter nominated.

Item, I give unto my brother William Aby the sum of ten shillings.

Item, I give unto each of my brother William Aby's children twelve pence.

Item, I give unto my brother Henery Aby's three children, twelve pence apeice.

Item, I give devise and bequeath unto my loving wife Mary Aby all that my dweling house in which I now dwell, with all profitts comodities and th'appurtenances thereunto belonging, dureing the terme of her naturall life; and imediately after her decease, I give devise and bequeath all that my said dwelling house with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging unto my cusen John Aby son of my brother John Aby and Jane his wife, to him and his heires and assigns for ever, Upon condition that my cusen John

Aby last above mentioned shall pay or cause to be paid unto my loving wife the sum of twenty shillings by the yeare dureing the term of tenn yeres next after my decease, in case my said wife shall live so long. But if my cusen John Aby doth not pay upon demand or cause to be paid the said twenty shillings by the yere, according to the true meaning and intent hereof, Then after my wife's decease, my said house above mentioned shall returne to my next heire by law.

Item, I give to my said wife, whom I make the executor of this my last will and testament, all my goods chattel and catell, houses bonds or bills or debts whatsoever unbequeathed, upon trust that shee shall pay all my debts, legacies and funerall expenses.

In wittness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seale, the day and yere above writen.

Robert Aby R his mark

Signed sealed and published in the presenc of us:

John [...shire]

Thomas Baxter

Christopher Clarke

556. Richard Wright of Crick, 1705 (N3 Book W F8)

[This testator is almost certainly not related to the yeoman Edmund Wright of Crick whose 1686 will appears above. Nor is he a son of the relatively poor Richard Wright the carpenter, whose will (also dated 1686) appears earlier – for that earlier Richard Wright stated that he had "4 small children" in 1686; and if the present testator were his son, he would be only in his mid to late twenties at this later date – but he is actually married (wife deceased) with a grown-up daughter and several other grown children, so he clearly cannot be the son of the earlier Richard; and with the same name, he is equally clearly not his brother. The only possible conclusion, is that this is another quite separate branch of the Wright family.]

In the name of god amen. I Richard Wright of Crick in the county of Northampton, t[aylor?], being waeke in body but of sound and perfect memory praised bee Almighty God, doe make ordaine and appoynt this my last will and testament of that worldly estate which God hath lent me, in manner following:

First I doe give and devise unto my daughter Elizabeth Wright of Crick aforesaid, spinster, and to her heires and assignes, all that my cottage house in Crick aforesaid wherein I now dwell, with the yard and backside and all appurtenances whatsoever unto the said cottage beelonging or appertaineing, to have and to hold the said cottage house yard and backside with the rights members and appurtenances unto my said daughter Elizabeth Wright and to her heires and assignes for ever.

Item, I doe give to my son John Wright one shilling.

Item, I doe give to my son Joseph Wright one shilling.

Item, I doe give to my daughter Mary Wright one shilling.

Item, I doe give and bequeath all the rest of my moveable goods cattells and chattells and personall estate quicke and dead of what kind soever unbequeathed, I doe hereby give and bequeath unto unto my foresaid daughter Elizabeth Wright, whom I make ordaine and appoynt the full and sole executor of this my last will and testament, for payment of my legacies and discharge of my funerall expenses, and I utterly reclayme and revoke all former wills by me made.

In wittness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale, the twentyeth fourth day of January in the third yeare of the raigne of our sovereign lady Ann by the grace of God Queen of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the faith etc., Anno Dom 1704/5 [ie calendar year 1705].

Richard Wright his mark

Sealed and delivered in the presence of:

Thomas Beale

John H Harbertt his marke

John Beale