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**The Will of Richard Dixton, Esq.**

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## THE WILL OF RICHARD DIXTON, ESQ

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Some years ago, when I was making archæological researches with view to writing a history of the Parish Church of Cirencester,<sup>1</sup> I examined all the wills of Cirencester folk in the registers at Somerset House, and Lambeth, and Worcester, from 1400 onwards till the period of the Reformation, and transcribed all that was noteworthy.

The following is the earliest of these Cirencester wills that is written in English, and is interesting on that account, though unluckily there are a few expressions, the meaning of which is not clear, as the glossaries give no help. The spelling is, of course, irregular. The will also fixes the latest limit of time for the date of the building of the chapel of the Holy Trinity in Cirencester Church, towards which Dixton was a liberal benefactor. From the terms of the will he would seem to have belonged to the household of the Duke of York, but it does not appear what his special connection was with Cirencester. William Prelett (Prelatte on his brass dated 1462) named as executor, was receiver-general of the Duke's large Gloucestershire estates,<sup>2</sup> and lived at Cirencester possibly in that capacity. Dixton may have been Prelatte's predecessor in office. The name would rather point to a Monmouthshire origin, for Dixton is a parish close to Monmouth, and Dixton's own property would seem to have been at Usk. His connection with North Wiltshire was evidently through his wife, a widow of one of the Russells, a family of Bristol merchants who held land in North Wiltshire at Lydiard Millicent, Somerford Magna, Bradenstoke, Hullavington, and at Tytherington Kelways in the parish of

<sup>1</sup> Published by Baily, Cirencester.

<sup>2</sup> MSS. letter of Duke of York at Holm Lacy, quoted by Lysons.

Bremhill. The FASTERNE mentioned in the will is now a farmhouse, about a mile-and-a-half south-west of Wootton Bassett. In the *Eulogium Historiarum*, iii., 385, mention is made in connection with the story of the conspiracy of the three Earls against Henry IV., in 1399, of a gentleman of Cirencester highly trained to arms, who always sent one of his retainers to the King's court at Christmas to bring him back an account of the jousts held there. As a row of carved tilting shields forms the ornament of a cornice in the Trinity chapel, it is possible that R. Dixton is the person alluded to. His own armorial bearings were formerly at Bradfield House in Hullavington parish: *Argent, a pile sable, over all a chevron gules*. At Wotton Bassett the tinctures were reversed: *sable, a pile argent*.<sup>1</sup> At Cirencester a painted shield agreed in tinctures with that at Bradfield. The Russell coat was shewn in painted glass at Bremhill, and Somerford: *or, on a bend sable, 2 swans argent between 3 mullets pierced or*; at Bradfield,<sup>2</sup> as at Cirencester—in both cases in connection with Dixton—the tinctures were *gules on a bend argent*.

Gyles of Brugge was an ancestor of the Brydges family. His father, Sir Thomas Brugge, had married Alice the daughter and heiress of Thomas Berkeley of Coberley, the last of the elder family of Berkeley. Thomas' wife was Elizabeth, sister and co-heiress of John Lord Chandos, with whom that title expired in 1371. The Chandos peerage was called out of abeyance for Gyles of Brugge's great-grandson John Brydges, as the family had by that time learnt to call themselves.

#### THE WILL.

In the name of oure Lord JHU Amen. The viij day of August the yere of the reyne of our sovereyne lord Kynge harry the sixte after the conquest the xvi<sup>e</sup>. I Richard Dixton squyer havynng gode and resonable witte and discrecon make ordeyne and dispose my last testament in this maner. First I bequeth my sowle unto God almyghty unto the Blessed virgine his moder named marie and to all the companye of hevene and my body to be buryed withyn the new chapell of the Trinite at Ciscetre. Item I bequeth

<sup>1</sup> See Canon Jackson's edition of Aubrey's Wiltshire.

to the saide chapell of Ciscetre a cloth of silver and a black cloth of damask sengill and a gown of Goldsmythes werk for to make vestments and a c gerciers.<sup>1</sup> Item I bequeth unto iij prestes for to syng and pray for me duryng the space of a yere yn the saide church of Ciscetre xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequethe unto the prioresse and covent of the house of Usk for to pray for me x marks. Item I bequeth unto prestes and clerkes for to doo my service and exquies and for almes for pour men xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth unto frer prechours of Gloucestre for to fynde iij prestes of the same house duryng a yere for to syng for my moder and for me xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth to the Grey Freres of Hereford for to doo semblably for my moder and for me xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth unto maistre Thomas Radnore x marks. Item I bequeth unto the Abbot of Teukysbury a covered cupp gilt. Item to the priour and covent of the same house xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to the Abbot of Siscetre a covered cupp of silver gilt. Item to the priour and convent of the same house xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to the Abbot of Evesham a covered cupp of silver gilt. Item to the covent of the same house xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to the priour of Bradestoke a covered cupp of silver gilt. Item to the convent of the same house xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to the Abbot of Malmesbury a covered cup of silver gilt. Item to the covent of the same house xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth for my nynde day xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth to my lorde of Yorke iij of my best hors to be chosen either at Usk or at Wotton and all my arneur. Item I bequeth to Jane Barre<sup>2</sup> a cupp of silver covered. Item to Elizabeth Mortymer a cupp of silver covered. Item to dame Anneys lench a cupp of silver covered. Item to Elizabeth Belliers a cup of silver covered. Item to Agas Flegge a cup of silver covered. Item to Robert Greyndor<sup>3</sup> squyer my serp<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Meaning uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Sister of Sir John Barre mentioned below. She married Kynnard De la Bere.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Greyndour was son and heir of Sir John Greyndour, by Marion, dau. and heir of . . . Hatheway, of Ruardean. He married Johanna, daughter and heir of Thomas Rigge, of Charlecombe, co. Somerset, by Katherine, daughter and heir of Sir John Bitton, of Bitton, co. Glouc. Robert Greyndour died in 1443, and his relict married, secondly, as his second wife, Sir John Barre, of Rotherwus, son of Thomas Barre (who died v. p.), by Alice dau. of Richard Lord Talbot. Sir John Barre died 14th Jan.

<sup>4</sup> Meaning uncertain.

of silver and my cheyne of gold. Item to Jane Greyndor his wyf a covered cupp of silver the wich I was wont to drynk of and a Bracelet of Gold. Item to the new Chapell at Siscetre xx<sup>li</sup>. Item I bequeth unto the Abbot of Lanternam<sup>1</sup> and his monkes x marks. Item to the priour of Goldclewe<sup>2</sup> and his monkes xx markes. Item to everych of my lordes iij chapeleyns xx<sup>s</sup>. Item to John Trebell my confessour xx marks to syng for me ij yere in an honest place where so ever he woll and iij yerdes of blew cloth. Item to the yemen of my lordys chambre xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to the officers of my said lordys hall pantre scler Boterie and Keechyn xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to Maister Robert Beaumont a cupp covered chased with Rosys beyng at the Fasterne. Item to my saide lordys servants of his stable x marks. Item to A gentill woman called Jenet hawys xx<sup>li</sup>. Item to William Benett a gown of Black furred with ficheux<sup>4</sup> beyng at the Fastern<sup>e</sup> and xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to John Mody a gown of grene damask lyned and a nother gown of Russet furred with blak and xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to ij prestes for to syng and pray for me yn the Church of Wotton duryng a yere xx marks. Item to the Church of lydyerd x marks. Item to Edmond of Cornewayle an ersgerdyll of silver. Item to John Russell squyer a gown of Rede damask furred with marteyns and a cupp of silver covered. Item to Thomas Barnaby a cupp of silver covered. Item to my servant John Bueld vj marks and j

1483. Lady Joan, as she was usually called, survived him. She made her will 3rd Feb. 1484-5 (proved 24th July following), in which she directed her body to be buried in the Church of Newland with her first husband Robert Greyndour (See ante Trans. Vol. VI. p. 183 and Vol. VII. pp. 117-125). Lady Joan died s.p., but Sir John Barre, by his first marriage, left a daughter, Isabella, his sole heir, married Humphry Stafford, created Earl of Devon in 1469, and was beheaded in the same year, after which she married Sir Thomas Bouchier, Knt., son of Henry Earl of Essex, but died s.p.

Elizabeth, the second sister of Sir John Barre, married Edmund de Cornwall, Baron of Burford, who is mentioned as a legatee lower down in the will. Maud, the third sister, married Philip Vaughan.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup> Llanvihangel Lantarnam, three miles north of Newport. The monks were Cistercians.

<sup>2</sup> Goldcliff, south east of Newport, on the estuary of Severn. The Priory, as originally founded, was a cell to the Abbey of Bee, in Normandy. After the dissolution of the alien priories, it was attached to the Benedictine Abbey of Tewkesbury.

<sup>3</sup> Stoa's fur.

gowne of Russet medley furred with blak. Item to my wyf all my stuff beyng at the FASTERNE except a sangwen gown furred with marten and the thynges above rehersed. Item my full wyll and entent is that the saide John Russell have and rejoyce for ever more all the lyvelode that meneth of his moder after her deces. Item all myn owne lyvelode to remeyne to my next heires. Item I woll that Edward Blundell squyer of Worcestershire have v marks and vi cuppes of silver every cupp weying a mark and a half of Troye for to dispos the same gode for his sone Richard Blundell of whos sowle god have mercy. Item to Thomas Cleuche xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to Richard of the Warderobe xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to John of pantrye vj marks. Item to William Wastell xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to William Estynton vi marks. Item to Watkyn Hardyng vi marks. Item to Hewe Dawesey vj marks. Item to Harry Meyr vi marks. Item to Ibex c<sup>s</sup>. Item to John hewys xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to John Danyell xl<sup>s</sup> and a little bay hors. Item to Edward xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to John of Nokys xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to Walter Parker xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to litell Pers xl<sup>s</sup>. Item to Elizabeth Belliers a scarlet gown furred with foynes.<sup>1</sup> Item to Richard of the Warderobe the fourthe best hors that I have. Item to the saide Watkyn Hardyng a gown of scarlet with slyt slyves y furred and my cuttyd hors. Item to the said William Estynton a scarlet gown and a hors. Item all my clothying and weryng harneys and beddyng at Usk, I woll that the saide Watkyn and William departe by twene hem and her felawes as they seme that goode ys and that they delyvery to Hew Dansey an hoby<sup>2</sup> and a gown of grene damask and to every of myn other men an hors whiles ther ben eny. Item I woll that my hewke<sup>3</sup> of silver be sold and do for my sowle. Item to John Cook servent to the saide Robert Greyndour xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>. And that this my last Wyll and testament be fullfilled and acomplesshid of all my goodys and catelles not bequethen be specified I make and ordeyne Gyles of Brugge squyer and Wat Bagge parson of Brynkeworth Richard Marneford and William Prelett of Siscetre my trew and lawful executors and to every of hem for her labour x mark to ordeyne and dispose for my sowle yn the best wyse that hem semeth to be done as they woll answeere before God. In witesse of wiche thyng to this my present testament I have put to my seale.

<sup>1</sup> Polecat's fur.      <sup>2</sup> A hawk.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning uncertain. Halliwell says that hewkes are heralds' coats.

Probatum fuit istud testamentum coram magistro Johanne Lyndefeld xxi die mensis Octobris Anno domini millesimo cccc° xxxviiij° Et commissa fuit administratio Willimo Prelet executori &c., Reservata &c., ac vicesimo novembris tunc proxime sequentis acquietata.—(*Somerset House Wills, Luffenham, f. 191. b.*)

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Prelatte's house was in Lauren's Street,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Gloucester Street.

There is an interesting paper in *The Wiltshire Magazine*, by Canon Jackson, on North Wilts round about Wootton Bassett and Swindon. He mentions that the FASTERNE was originally a manor house on the Despenser property: but that it was afterwards granted to Edmund Langley, son of Edw. III, who was created Duke of York. His grandson was the duke referred to in Dixton's will.

<sup>1</sup> Register of Lady Chapel, f. 19. a.

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