

SOME STOCK WILLS

Charles Phillips

The attached article is by the late Rector of Stock and Ramsden Bellhouse – the Rev F W Austen, who was also the author of the book *The Rectors of Two Essex Parishes and Their Times*. Because of the impossibility of editing out the Ramsden Bellhouse wills without losing the comprehension of the article they have been included. Note also that Saint Sunday refers to Saint Dominic.

SOME ESSEX WILLS

BY THE REV. F. W. AUSTEN

AS is probably well known to readers of the *Review*, wills are a source from which much useful information in regard to the past is obtainable. I have proved the truth of this in regard to wills relating to my late parishes of Stock and Ramsden Bellhouse, from which I have made a copy of over eighty, covering a period of more than 360 years, and going back to 1419. From these I have learnt at first hand many of the contributions which they have to make.

They tell us the names of a considerable number of those living in past days, the relations, friends and neighbours of the various testators, and from some of these we get an idea of the goodwill existing among the various members of the community at the period referred to. They are of special value in regard to the ownership of land, farms, inns and private houses. They tell us what importance our forefathers attached to the upkeep of the Parish Church, to provision for the poor and those in need, and the keeping of roads in good order. We are able to form acquaintance, through some of them, with those strange and interesting customs of the medieval Church, whereby remembrance was made of the departed.

We can form some idea also of the household contents of other days. The bequests of the various animals breathe the pure air of the country, and often seem to speak of the affection felt for them by their owners.

Some of the bequests are framed in very candid language, as will be seen.

We frequently come across evidence of the desire to make amends and die in peace, in regard to payment of tithe; and we learn how often the clergy of the day were called upon to act as supervisors or witnesses of wills.

A succession of wills, produced in full, is apt to be very monotonous, so I only propose to give extracts, those which are of some interest to myself, and likely to be the same to others.

...to myself, and likely to be the same to others.
In a stock will of 1581 (A. of E., Brewer, 139) Sir Thomas Brocke provides us with the names of a number of persons residing in Stock at that time: for he gives sums of money, generally xs or xxs, to the following: John Dennys, William Browne, widowe Grene, widowe harvey, faither Whiskarde, widowe holman, widowe Kinge, Goodman wholie, Richarde Cooper, Petygrewe, Revell, hughe Miles, Saunder, Garrett, Mother Starlinge, Nicholas Busshe, Barton the Sawyer, widowe Chippinge, Michaell Wealde, Parnell, Payne the butcher, John Busshe, Bynder of the parke, John Amatt of Stocke, surgion,

henrie Nuttinge and Parker of Stock, Richardson, Charefowle potter of the same, hopton the smythe, hilles the Sawyer and Mother heminges, All of Buttesburye.

A tongue of the parish of Buttesburye goes right through the village of Stock and forms part of it.

Three houses in Stock, Slough House, Brick House (once called Bonnings and Luthers) and Ramsey Tyrrell, are mentioned in 17th-century wills:

John Newton (Curate of Stock), 1629. (A. of E., unregistered, no. 60).

'Item I give unto my said sonn Samuell all that my customary tenement and land called Slowehowse or by what name soever situate and being in Harford Stock.'

William Hankin, 1638 (A. of E., Stephen, 256).

'I doe giue . . . unto Thomas Hankyn my sonne' by messuage or tenement wherein I now dwell commonly called Bonnings and Luthers.'

Thomasne Lunn, 1658 (A. of E., Spencer, 1660-7, p. 27).

'Also I give and bequeath to my sonne William one table foure roynd stooles one Presse one little table one rowle a schreene a grindstone and two handsawes and a dungrake also three sacks wch Goods and utensills of husbandry were lefte by my husband at a farme house called Ramsey Terrels where my sonne William now lives.'

Wills sometimes bring to light the ownership of property in other parts.

The will of William Pinder, Rector of Stock, 1625 (P.C.C., 13 Skinner) tells in that he was also the possessor of a house in Southampton :

'I will . . . that Cicely my wife shall . . . have my house in Southampton in English Streete in the parrish of All Saintes called corner tenement wherein Richard Tirrill now dwelleth for her dwellinge house.'

We learn, too, from the will of another Rector of Stock, Zephaniah Peirse, 1713 (Consistory Court of London, 1670-1706, p. 131), that he was the possessor of land in Suffolk, for he says :

'I give to my son Zephenia Peirse all my lands and tenements . . . in Brusyard and Rendham in the County of Suffolke.'

As regards inns in Stock, two of them are mentioned in early wills of the 16th century: William Samer, 1519 (Lord Petre's collection, A. 363).

'Itm I bequeth to Elinor my wyff the Inn of the Swane and the lands therto perteynyng.'

[This is a record of an inn in Stock that no longer exists.]

John Ponder, 1527 (A. of E., Rypton, viii).

'Item y bequeth to Johan croxston my dowghter a fetherbed that ys at the syne off cokk. . . .Item y wull that the gret lede wt a curbyll thet stondyth at the sine off the cokk be not removyd thence. . . .Item y wole that my howse callyd the cokk yn Stoke wt the appertennance be solde after my lyffe yff I do not sell yt yn my lyff.'