

Inquisitions post mortem

- Sworn enquiries into the lands held at their deaths by direct tenants of the crown (tenants-in-chief)
- Survive from about 1236 to 1660 (when feudal tenures were abolished) in more-or-less continuous series at the National Archives
- Usually created by *escheator*
- Designed to record and enforce royal feudal rights, especially
 - *Wardship*, when a tenant died and their heir was not of full legal age
 - *Primer seisin and relief*, when an heir was of full age
- Related documents:
 - *Proofs of age*
 - *Assignments of dower*

Christopher Bennett, gentleman.

Inquisition taken at Hendon, 4th January, 13 Charles I [1638], before William Morse, gent., escheator, after the death of Christopher Bennett, gent., by the oath of Edward Pinfold, gent., Alexander Dowle, George Banister, Thomas Shergold, William Heavill, George Stevens, Richard Fryer, John Clement, John Hooper, Warder Chamberlaine, George Freeth, John Thringe, William Gray, Robert Bowles, and Francis Edwards, who say that

Thomas Bennett, father of the said Christopher, was seised of one messuage, tenement, or farm called Chicklade Rudge alias Chicklade Farme, late in the tenure of Robert Clare alias Dominick.

So seised, the said Thomas, in consideration of a marriage then to be had between the said Christopher and Dorothy Lottisham, daughter of Oliver Lottisham, by his charter dated 26th February, 14 James I [1617], enfeoffed Edward Warr and Andrew Walton, gentlemen, of the said messuage; to hold to them and their heirs for ever to the use of the said Christopher Bennett for his life; after his decease, to the use of the said Dorothy for her life, in part of her jointure; after her decease, to the use of the heirs male of the said Christopher by the said Dorothy; for default, to the use of the heirs male of the body of the said Christopher; and lastly, for the default to the use of the said Thomas Bennett and his heirs for ever.

Christopher Bennett was seised of one messuage or tenement and one garden in the parish of St. Peter within the borough of Shaston, co. Dorset, in the tenure of Christopher Weare.

So seised, in consideration of the said marriage he, by charter dated the same day and year, enfeoffed the said Edward Warr and Andrew Walton of the said premises; to hold to them and their heirs for ever to the use of the said Christopher for his life; after his decease, to the use of the heirs of the said Dorothy for her life in part of her jointure; after her deceases, to the use of the heirs of the said Christopher; for default, to the use of William Bennett, gent., brother of the said Christopher, and his heirs; and lastly, for default, to the use of the right heirs of the said Christopher for ever.

The said Christopher was also seised in fee-tail of the capital messuage, site, and demesne lands called Northouse, lying in Semley and Tisbury, and of divers lands, tenements, and hereditaments thereto belonging; also as of fee of one messuage called Colmans, and divers lands, meadows, feedings, and pastures thereto belonging, situate in Easte Knoyle alias Bishops Knoyle; 2 closes of meadow and one close of pasture called Tolkes alias Toakes alias Tox in Tisbury; one close of meadow called Eastehayes in East Hatch; 1½ acre of pasture there late parcel of certain lands called Westwood and Midley; and one acre of meadow there late parcel of the tenement in the tenure of Edward Fricker.

The premises in the parish of St. Peter in Shafton are held of Philip Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, as of his manor of Shafton, in free and common socage, by fealty, suit at court, and the yearly rent of 2d., and are worth per annum, clear, 10s. The premises called Northouse are held of Thomas Lord Arundell, as of his manor of Semley, in free and common socage, by fealty, suit at court, and the yearly rent of 4s. 2d., and are worth per annum, clear, 20s. The messuage called Colmans is held of the Bishop of Winchester as of his manor of East Knoieil, in free and common socage, by fealty, suit at court, and the yearly rent of 5s., and are worth per annum, clear, 20s. The closes called Tolkes are held of Thomas Bennett, gent., as of his manor of Norton, in free and common socage, by fealty and the yearly rent of 6d. and 1 lb. of pepper, and are worth per annum, clear, 5s. All the premises in East Hatch are held of Francis Lord Cotlington, as of his manor of East Hatch, in free and common socage, by suit at court and the yearly rent of 1 lb. cumin, and are worth per annum, clear, 3s. 4d. The messuage in Chicklade is held of Edward Hide, esq, as of his manor of Chicklade, by fealty, and is worth per annum, clear, 10s.

Christopher Bennett died at Salisbury, 22nd April, 12 Charles I [1636]; Thomas Bennett is his son and next heir, and was aged 19 years on the 30th day of November last past.

The said Dorothy Bennett still survives.

Misc. Inq. p.m., 13 Charles I, pt. 29, No. 4.

“Abstracts of Wiltshire Inquisitions Post Mortem,” 1901, edited by George S. Fry & Edw. Alex Fry.