

# 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*

## Thomas Bennett, Esq.

**Inquisition** taken at the City of New Sarum, 18th August, 11 Charles I [1635], before Nicholas Yonge, gnet., escheator, after the death of Thomas Bennett, esq., by the oath of John Windover, gent., Andrew Pewde, gent., Anthony Davis, gent., John Greene, gent., Gilles Freeman, Edward Falconer, Richard Easton, Thomas Turner, Bartholomew Foster, Thomas Wooford, Thomas Wilson, Ralph Tomelyns, William Hayter, William Early, and John Butcher, who say that

Thomas Bennett was seised of the capital messuage of Pithowse, situate in **Easthatch**, in the parish of **Tisbury** ; divers lands, tenements, and hereditaments in Easthatch ; 1 messuage called Gutches, lying in **Westhatch** ; 1 other messuage there, late in the tenure of Walter Gray, and now in the possession of Richard Knight ; 1 close of meadow or pasture there called Westbreach ; 3 closes of meadow or pasture there called Eigroves Meade and Brickmans Haies ; 1 tenement or close of land there called Sailesfield ; 2 lanes or parcels of land there called Blackmore Lane and Oldstreet Lane ; 2 acres of land there, sometime parcel of a tenement called Hammons ; 1 tenement and 12 acres of land, meadow, and pasture there, late in the tenure of Laurence Gray ; 1 close of pasture there called Elthorne Stubbs ; 1 parcel of land there called Little Tolkes in Tisbury ; 1 tenement and 16 acres of land in **Sembly**, late in the tenure of Laurence Gray, and now in the occupation of Margaret Wrench, widow ; 1 messuage called the George in **Hindon**, and 5 acres of land thereto belonging, 1 whereof is situate in **Cricklade** ; 1 other messuage in Hindon, and 1 acre of land thereto belonging last in the tenure of Dunstan Carde, and now in the possess of William Frith ; 18 shamble in Hindon ; 1 meadow in **Knoiel** called Jagehaies, late in the

possession of George Knight, and now in the tenure of William Candy ; 1 burgage and 20 acres of land, meadow, and pasture in Hindon, late in the tenure of Roger Banister, and now in that of Edward Perry ; 1 messuage in the parish of Holy Trinity within the borough of Shaston, co. Dorset, now in the tenure of William Boring ; and 1 messuage in the parish of St. Peter within the same borough, now in the tenure of John Greene.

So seised, the said Thomas Bennet, by indenture dated 5th September, 10 James I[1612], made between himself of the one part, and John Grove, esq., William Grove, esq., and Robert Grove, gent., of the other part, agreed that he, before the end of Easter term then next following, by one or more fines would assure to the said John, William, and Robert all the said premises to the use of him the said Thomas, for his natural life ; after his decease, to the use of Thomas Bennett, junior, son of the said Thomas, and of his heirs male ; for default, to the use of Christopher Bennett, second son of the said Thomas, senior, and of his heirs male ; for default, to the use of William Bennett, third son of the said Thomas, senior, and of his heirs male ; for default, to the use of the heirs male of the body of the said Thomas Bennett, senior, by any wife he may afterwards marry ; for default, to the use of John Bennett, brother of the said Thomas, senior, and his heirs male ; for default, to the use of John Bennett, lat of Hornisham, gent., and of his heirs male ; for default, to the use of Richard Bennett, of Rockbourne, co. Southampton, gent., and of his heirs male ; for default, to the use of Edward Bennett, of Hindon, and his heirs male ; and lastly for default, to the use of the right heirs of the said John Bennett, brother of the said Thomas Bennett, senior, for ever, Afterwards, to wit, from the day of St. Martin, in 15 days, 10 James I [1612], a fine was levied at Westminster between the said John, William, and Robert Grove, plaintiffs, and the said Thomas Bennett, deforciant, of all the said premises by the name of 10 messuages, 6 cottages, 16 gardens, 16 orchards, 200 acres of land, 100 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 10 acres of wood, and common of pasture for 13 beasts in **Easthatch, Westhatch, Tisbury, Hindon, Knoiel Episcopi, Chicklade, Founthill Gifford, and Semly alias Semleigh**, whereby the said Thomas remised the said premises to the said John, William, and Robert, and to the heirs of the said John for ever.

All the premises in Easthatch are held of Francis Lord Cottington, Master of the Court of Wards and Liveries, as of his manor of Easthatch, in free and common socage, by fealty, suit at court, and 1 ob. Of cummin yearly, and are worth per annum, clear, 20s. All the premises in Westhatch, except the tenement called Gutches, are held of the King as of his manor of East Greenwich, co. Kent, in free and common socage, by fealty only, and not in chief or by knight's service, and are worth per annum, clear, 10s. The said tenement called Gutches is held, as of the manor of Westhatch, in socage, by fealty, the yearly rent of 4d., and suit at court, and is worth per annum, clear, 6s. 8d. The premises in Hindon and Knoiel are held of the Bishop of Winchester, as of his manor of Knoiel, in socage, by fealty and the yearly rent of 2s. 6d., and are worth per annum, clear, 9s. 10d. The tenement called Tolkes and all the premises in Semleigh are held of the manor of Semleigh by fealty and suit at court, and are worth per annum, clear, 5s. 6d. The premises in Chicklade are held of the manor of Tisbury, in free and common socage, by fealty only, and are worth per annum, clear, 3s. 4d. The premises in Shaston are held of the borough of Shaston, co. Dorset, in free socage, by fealty only and by the yearly rent of 3d., and are worth per annum, clear, 5s.

Thomas Bennett died at Pithowse, 20th March last past ; Thomas Bennett, junior, is his son and heir, and was then aged 47 and more.

**Inq. p.m., 11 Charles I, pt. 1, no. 116. "Abstracts of Wiltshire Inquisitions Post Mortem," 1901, edited by George S. Fry & Edw. Alex Fry.**