

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 Hawkins, gentleman

Inquisition taken at Devizes, 17th March, 15 Charles I [1640], before John Seviour, gent., escheator, after the death of John Hawkins, gent., by the oath of Thomas Sloper, John Worsdale, Robert Haskins, Thomas Withers, John Briant, John Eyles, Edward Hope, Christopher Pullen, Walter Mayo, Walter Read, Giles Milles, William Robertes alias Palmer, and Ambrose Zelig, who say that

Thomas Hawkins was seised of 13½ acres of meadow and pasture lying in Langley Burrell, called Oldbury; one cottage there now in the tenure of John Idoll, one garden, one close of pasture containing ½ acre and 2 acres of land and pasture lying scattered in the common fields of Langley Burrell, Chippenham, and Harnish, to the said cottage belonging; once close of pasture assorted containing 20 acres, lying within the parish of Chippenham, called Forrest leaze; once cottage, and 1 acre 2 virgates and 20 perches of land or pasture assorted lying within the parish of Chippenham now in the tenure of Richard Deane; one other cottage there and one close of pasture assorted containing 8 acres 1 rood 7 perches called Hartclose; one messuage, one stable, on garden, and one orchard there; and the manor of Hardenhuish alias Harduish lying within the parish of Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell.

So seised, the said Thomas Hawkins by charter dated 24th April, 2 Charles I [1626], agreed that he would be seised of the capital messuage of Hardenhuish and 108 acres of land, 50 acres of meadow, 52 acres of pasture, and 2 acres of wood to the said messuage belonging, and of one other messuage, 4 acres of pasture and 9½ acres of land there, also parcel of the said manor, to the use of himself for his life, and after his decease, to the use of Mary Hawkins, the his wife, for her life, in the name of her jointure; after her death, to the use of Robert Hawkins, son of the said Thomas, and his heirs male; and for default, to the use of the right heirs of the said Robert Hawkins for ever.

Afterwards, the said Thomas Hawkins, by his charter dated 6th January, 13 Charles I [1638], for the love which he bore towards Edward Hawkyns, his son, demised to him and his heirs the messuage in Chippenham wherein the said Thomas then dwelt, one messuage in Hardenhuish then in the tenure of Thomas Brewer, one close of pasture called Little Barrowe in Hardenhuish in the parish of Langley Burrell, containing 50 acres, one close of pasture there called Oldbury, containing 12 acres; one close of pasture sometime parcel of the said close called Oldbury, containing 6 acres, late in the tenure of John Elye; one close of pasture called Grove Leaze containing 6 acres, lying within the parish of Hardenhuish, late in the tenure of William Melksham; to hold from the death of the said Thomas and Mary, then his wife, for the term of 1,000 years, paying therefor yearly 10s.

By another charter dated 22nd January in the said year, the said Thomas Hawkins, for the love he bore towards Henry Hawkins, another of his sons, granted to him one messuage in Hardenhuish, then in the tenure of Richard Brewer, 2 closes of meadow and pasture there called Layne Hills and Bulls Meade, containing 40 acres; one close of pasture there containing 2 acres, then in the tenure of

Richard Brewer; one messuage there, then in the tenure of Henry Brewer; one messuage there in the tenure of Robert Deacon; one close called Rydinges lying in Langley Burrell and Hardenhuish, then in the tenure of Charles Aland, containing 16 acres, one close of pasture called the Forrest Leaze lying within the parish of Chippenham, in the tenure of John Bond, containing 20 acres; 1½ acres and 3 "lottes" of meadow in Haruish parcel of the farm of Hardenhuish; and one close of pasture called Hartleaze in Chippenham, then in the tenure of Robert Hawkins, son and heir of the said Thomas, containing 13 acres; to hold to him and his heirs for the term of 1,000 years, paying yearly for the same 10s.

The premises in Langley Burrell called Oldbury are held of the King as of his Duchy of Lancaster by knight's service and the yearly rent of 6d. [yearly value not given]. The cottage and garden, etc., in Langley Burrell are held of Henry White, gent., as of his manor of Langley Burrell, by fealty and rent, and are worth together per annum, clear, 30s. The close containing 20 acres assorted in Chippenham near the Forrest there is held of the King as of his manor of East Greenwich in free and common socage and not in chief or by knight's service, and is worth per annum, clear, 6s. 8d. The cottage and other the premises in Chippenham are held of the King as of his said manor by fealty only, and not in chief or by knight's service, and are worth per annum, clear, 12d. The close of pasture assorted containing 8 acres 1 rood 7 poles in Chippenham is held of the King as of his said manor in free and common socage, and not in chief or by knight's service. The messuage with the stable, garden and orchard in Chippenham are held of the King as of his manor of Amthill in co. Bedford, in free and common socage and not in chief or by knight's service, and are worth together per annum, clear, 5s. The manor of Hardenhuish and the advowson of the church there are held of the King as of his Duchy of Lancaster by knight's service, to wit, by the service of half a knight's fee, and are worth per annum, clear, £6.

Thomas Hawkins died 25th March, 13 Charles I [1638]; Robert Hawkins is his son and next heir, and was then aged 30 years and more.

Mary Hawkins, late the wife of the said Thomas, still survives.

Inq. p.m. 15 Charles I, pt. 29, No. 8.

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