

A study of Ingleton wills 1548 to 1599

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Introduction

In 2015 the Ingleborough Archaeology Group members Carol Howard and Sheila Gordon published a collection of wills and inventories from the parish of Ingleton 1548 to 1700, 'Voices from the Past'. This work was followed by a supplementary collection for the period 1700 to 1750. These volumes are available from the Ingleborough Archaeology Group.

The Ingleton parish wills studied here range from 1548 to 1599, just before Elizabeth I died in 1603. They are all written in English. John Bentley has already published his detailed analysis of all the wills and inventories in this mainly Elizabethan period: 'Elizabethan Ingleton', John Bentley, published Ingleton Publications 1990; 'The History of Ingleton', John Bentley, published Ingleton Publications 2008.

However, full transcripts of 130 wills plus inventories were not made by John Bentley, only extracts for the most part, so Ingleborough Archaeology Group decided to undertake this task of full transcription and make the information available on the IAG website.

The very substantial work of making photocopies at the Lancashire Archives in Preston was done mainly by Sheila Gordon and Carol Howard. The transcriptions were done by members of Ingleborough Archaeology Group over a period of about two years. All the wills seen are the originals.

A total of 50 wills for this period were transcribed, 42 of those were made by men (84%) , 8 by women (16%). The women's wills are found in the period 1556 to 1594. A further 53 inventories were also transcribed but are not considered here since a first objective was to make a comparison of wills between Giggleswick, Horton in Ribblesdale and Ingleton. The total of 103 wills plus inventories falls short of the 130 documents quoted by John Bentley and it is not yet known why. However, many of the documents are in poor condition and are now not sensibly transcribable. In particular the money sums in inventories quoted by Bentley do not accord well with current transcriptions because of the difficulties of reading the Roman numerals and associated Latin text. Bentley's numbers might be more certain.

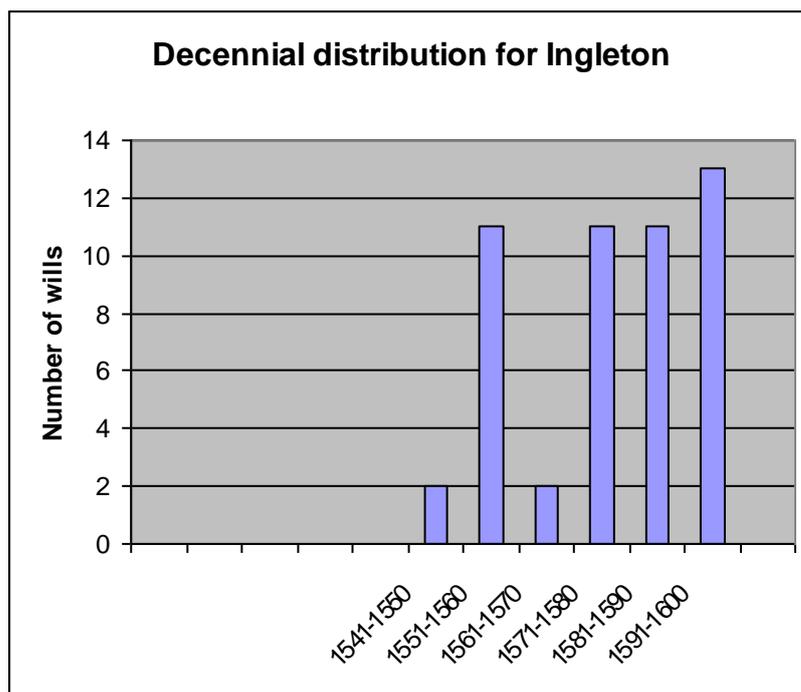
The spread over the relevant monarchs is shown in the Table.

Number of wills

Edward VI	1547-1553	6
Mary	1554-1557	5
Elizabeth	1558-1603	39

Decennial distribution

1541-1550	2
1551-1560	11
1561-1570	2
1571-1580	11
1581-1590	11
1591-1603	13



The population of the parish has been estimated at about 700 by Bentley. Ingleton was in Bentham parish in Tudor times, in the deanery of Lonsdale. The Lords of the manor were originally the Mowbray family. In 1529 Sir William Pickering Knight was the Lord, followed by William Redmayne, then Richard Shireburn of Stonyhurst in 1565. Sir Richard Cholmley and his son Richard were Lords in the later 1500s. The Cholmleys tried hard to overcome the tenants' claim to be customary tenants with fixed low rents rather than tenants-at-will whose rents could be varied by the Lord. Furness Abbey held land in the parish around Chapel-le-Dale.

The content of wills must be considered along with knowledge of the testator's family circumstances - the context needs to be known and generally this is not available. Wills are rather selective in nature since arrangements for widows and children may already have been made. Many men were content to die intestate because their affairs were settled or satisfied by common law descent of lands and goods. Wills are not representative of the population, perhaps about 30% of men left wills - but we do not know the population count at any time. A will was needed to devolve property in ways in which common law could not so we may see examples which are not representative of common practice. It requires the skills and knowledge of a professional historian of all written evidence before conclusions about many topics can be reasonably inferred. Professor Richard Hoyle has carried out this task for land tenure matters in his doctoral thesis of 1986 at Oxford (British Library D 074195 parts 1 and 2). Any conclusions reached are still specific to a parish since conditions elsewhere varied and generalization to conditions in the North of England cannot be sustained.

Oral testimony was sufficient as a will in early times (nuncupative) but there was a drift to written contractual agreements in common law as time went by. Declaration to 'recorders' was also an accepted procedure. The Statute of Wills of 1540 made an age of 14 for boys and 12 for girls the minimum for making a will.

Bentley lists wills which include the phrase 'sick of the visitation of Almighty god', presumed to be possible deaths from plague:

1590 Harling
1593 Lupton
1594 Craven
1594/5 Beaumont
1595 Tatham
1595 Weatherhead
1597 Gregson
1600/1 Guy
1603 Guy

The transcripts of wills considered here make them accessible for others to consider and have allowed us to record factual matters and the frequency of occurrence or reference to various items, with the caveat already made that conclusions must not be drawn from such information alone. The inventories often throw light on many topics, including wealth.

Religious aspects

Nearly all the wills include a reference bequeathing the soul to almighty God. Further references are sometimes added, first in a Catholic manner, and later in a Protestant manner, or with no further mention. In the north of England it is likely that Catholic customs were not completely to be replaced by Protestant practice until well into Elizabeth's reign.

Pre-Reformation (1536) gifts were made to the church and clergy, money was bequeathed to priests to pray for a testator's soul and payments of the obligatory mortuary fee and for forgotten tithes were normally made (to minimize any stay in Purgatory). However, in Ingleton's case no mention of payment of forgotten tithes is made. Post-Reformation, bequests for church repairs, road and bridge repairs, and to the poor were encouraged.

Analysis of the religious preamble has been made in terms of reference to

- a) Mary and saints in heaven
- b) prayers or masses for the soul
- c) Jesus and redemption
- d) no reference at all

The periods used in the table cover the reigns of Edward VI (1547-53), then Mary (1554-57), then Elizabeth (1558-1603).

Period	No. of wills	No. wills/year	Mary	Prayers	Jesus	Nothing
1547-1553	6	1.0	5	1		1
1554-1557	5	1.7	3	0	1	2
1558-1570	4	0.3	2	0	0	2
1571-1580	11	1.2	1	1	2	5
1581-1590	11	1.2	0	4	1	6
1591-1603	13	1.1	0	3	2	6

Most of the statements are stock phrases with very few variations of significance.

Any variation in expressions of belief in the non-Catholic period of Edward VI followed by the Catholic period of Mary is slight, probably because the number of wills considered is so small.

Clergy

Parish priests are often quoted as witnesses.

1556 Sir Richard Baines

1558 Sir Thomas Feldhose

1566 Richard Fuldhus parson of Bentham

1580 Thomas Bateson clerk and vicar of Thornton

1580 Michael Farthwaite clerk and curate of Mewith

1584, 1586, 1589 Robert Fish parson of Bentham

1592, 1597 George Williamson curate of Ingleton

1599 Thomas Procter clerk and vicar of Clapham

Mortuary payments

In medieval times it was customary to give the best animal belonging to the testator to the Lord of the Manor and the second best to the parish priest as a mortuary payment.

An act of 1529 regulated the payment of the mortuary so that people with goods valued under £30 were exempt and those liable to pay were on a sliding scale.

There are no mentions of mortuary payments in the period under review.

Charitable bequests

There are 10 wills out of 50 (20%) which bequeath to charity other than to clerics. This proportion is the same as that found for Giggleswick wills for the same time period. Post-Reformation, bequests for church repairs, road and bridge repairs, and gifts to the poor were encouraged instead of gifts to the church and clergy. After 1548, i.e. after the death of Henry VIII, charitable gifts are less common, perhaps a sign of pre-Reformation religious attitudes to charity.

In 1553 Richard Redmayne gives 5s to repair of the parish church.
In 1556 Giles Redmayne bequeathes 4d to each priest and 1d(?) to each scholar that attends his burial.
In 1556 Sir Richard Baines (a cleric) also gives 4d to each priest and to every scholar 1d.
In 1556 Alys Craven leaves 5s for a torch (candle) for the church for masses, 5s for the poor and money for a trental of masses.
In 1560 Christopher Weatherhird gives 3s 6d for repair of the church on condition that if his wife marries 3s 6d goes to the chapel.
In 1567 Joan Weatherhead gives money to the poor.
In 1572 Thomas Battersby gives 4d to each priest and 6d to the curate.
In 1576 Robert Procter gives 9s 9d to the parish church.
In 1593 William Hird leaves 10s for repair of the church.
In 1594 John Craven leaves 2s to the church.

Clothes

Of the 50 wills looked at, 11 (22%) mention clothes, and references start at 1548. Only 2 of the 8 women's wills mention clothes. Numbers are too small, however, to make detailed assumptions.

Garments given are nearly all coats and jackets (of various colours e.g. black, blue, red, white, gray) with a few doublets. Three pairs of hose are mentioned. All apparel and raiment are bequeathed in four cases.

Thomas Foxcroft says 'my apparel my cloak excepted my wife to have my cloak and cloth for a coat'.

William Guy leaves a jacket, doublet, a pair of hose, a shirt and a cap to his brother in law and a jerkin and jackets to other men.

John Stevenson gives 7s to buy cloak cloth.

William Waller (curate and clerk) leaves all his apparel, linen and woollen, his best coat excepted.

The clothes are everyday garb, but still of great value for work in house and field to recipients who have little themselves.

The word 'white' is spelled 'quyte' by Joan Wetherhird in 1567.

Household matters

The variety of household items bequeathed seems very limited.

Coverlets, usually just one: Giles Redmayne 1556 two coverlets, Alys Craven 1556, Elizabeth Cossing 1557, Joan Wetherhird 1567, Elizabeth Wetherhird 1584 (three best coverlets), Agnes Sproat 1589 (one coverlet which lyeth upon mine own bed),

John Foxcroft 1599 (two of the worst of my coverlets). Left mainly by women it is seen.

Beds and bedding: Agnes Sproat 1589 (two pair linen, two sheets), William Waller 1599 (best bedstead), Joan Wetherhird (two blankets), Elizabeth Wetherhird 1584 (best sheets, two blankets).

Great arks and chests: Thomas Foxcroft 1580, Leonard Batty 1583, William Day 1583 (a meal chest and another ark), William Hird 1593 (one great ark, one chist, a little chist and everything in it), John Craven 1594 (in the cellar and in the barn), Joan Wetherhird 1584, John Gregson 1597 (my greatest ark), John Foxcroft 1599 (one great ark, one lesser ark), William Waller 1599 (best chest).

Pots and pans, usually just one: Alys Craven 1556 (one of each), Elizabeth Cossing 1557, William Day 1583 (one brass pot), Lawrence Harling 1590 (a brass pot), John Gregson 1597 (my greatest pan).

Plates: Giles Redmayne 1556 (four pewter doublers), Elizabeth Wetherhird 1584 (three pewter platters of the best), John Foxcroft 1599 (one chafing dish).

William Day 1583 bequeathes an aumbry, John Gregson 1597 one brass mortar and a dishboard.

Altogether the list is not suggestive of well furnished households.

Livestock and produce

It is noticeable but not surprising how many of the 50 wills mention livestock – 21 or 42%. These are found throughout the whole century (see Tables). Only three wills mention crops, and only one of these names crops – oats and bigg. The overall emphasis is on sheep and cattle.

Name	Date	Lambs	Gimmers	Gimmer hoggs	Wethers	Ewes	Sheep
Foxcroft	1548						2
Jensen	1553					2	
Redmayne	1553					6	
Gybson	1554	10					
Baynes	1556		1	4		2	
Wetherhird	1560	c.4					
Wetherhird	1567	1				5	
Battersby	1572	4				1	
Denny	1573				1		
Foxcroft	1580	5				5	
Batty	1583			6			
Wetherhird	1584	2				2	
Tatham	1595	1				1	
Waller	1598	6					
Foxcroft	1599	c. 24		5	35	26	4

John Foxcroft 1599 is the owner of a large number of sheep but the inventories also have to be considered as far as this matter is concerned.

Name	Date	Horse	Mare	Filly	Foal	Kine	Cow	Quy	Calf	Stirk
Redmayne	1553		1				2.5		0.5	1
Baynes	1556									
Craven	1566						1		1	
Wetherhird	1567		1							
Battersby	1572		1		1		1			
Foxcroft	1580	1					1	2		
Day	1583			1						
Wetherhird	1584						1			
Craven	1589							2	3	
Sproat	1589						1			
Greenbank	1595						1			
Waller	1598	1					1			
Foxcroft	1599	1				7				1

Sir Richard Baynes leaves the 4 gimmer hogs to help clothe his father, one cow for his sister's wedding clothing, and a stirk to pay his funeral expenses.

Leonard Batty leaves the crop from his sheep to William Batty.

Leonard Craven leaves one cow for his funeral expenses. William Day and Elizabeth Wood leave their crops to daughter and son respectively.

George Tatham bequeathes one of the best ewes before dipping.

William Waller leaves 8 bushels of oats, 4 bushels of bigg, and one peck of bigg to a widow.

Joan Wetherhird leaves some meal and malt.

Money

There were no banks so money was held in cash or put out on loan to others - relatives or friends. Loans would often be forgiven as a bequest. The coins available were varied and minted in different periods. Coins in existence are

Gold: pound 1592 - 1600 (20s)
sovereign 1489 - 1526 and 1544 - 1553 (20s)
half sovereign 1509-1547 (10s)
ryal gold coin first issued in 1465 and worth 10 shillings,
then 15 shillings under Mary & Elizabeth 1.
noble 6s 8d (half a mark) 1344 - 1464
angel 6s 8d from 1464
half noble 3s 4d 1509-1547
half angel (angelet) 3s 4d 1464 -

Silver: testoon (12d) 1485 - 1547
shilling 1548 - 1966

sixpence 1551 - 1967
groat (4d) 1279 - 1305, 1351 - 1662
threepence 1551 - 1944
half groat (2d)
penny 780 - 1797
half penny 1279 - 1660

The mark, (not an English coin), worth 13s 4d (two nobles of 6s 8d) was a measure of weight of gold or silver and a monetary unit originally representing the mark weight of pure silver, worth 13s 4d in English and Scottish currency. There was a Scottish coin of this value and various foreign coins.

People thought in terms of units of 13s 4d, 6s 8d and 3s 4d as well as pounds, shillings and pence. The shillings commonly come in sets of 5, 10, 20 and 40. They are all mixed up in any one will.

Pounds, shillings and pence: 1548, 1553, 1554, 1556, 1556, 1556, 1560, 1567, 1572, 1572, 1576, 1579, 1580, 1580, 1583, 1583, 1585, 1587, 1589, 1589, 1592, 1592, 1593, 1594, 1595, 1597, 1597, 1598, 1599, 1599,.

Marks

1576, 1586, 1592.

Nobles

1586, 1592.

In only three wills are marks and nobles mentioned, all after 1586. In 1586 there is reference to 20 nobles and 20 marks and no mention of pounds, shillings or pence. In many cases amounts of 3s 4d and 6s 8d (noble) are quoted mixed up with other amounts in shillings and pence, usually in Roman numerals. In only one instance in 1576 are marks and pounds mentioned together. The dominance of the use of pounds shillings and pence is notable.

There are gifts of 2d or 4d to every godchild in 1548, 1556, 1567, 1599.

In 1597 10d is owed to a daughter.

Overall the sums quoted range from a few pence only, to many gifting varying amounts of pence and shillings, to mentions of large sums of many tens of pounds. One rent of 15s 3d is noted in 1554.

Other topics

Schools

Thomas Battersby 1572 'Scholemaistre and his Scholers'.

Trades

William Day 1583 says he is a weaver.

Agnes Sproat 1589 is thought to be an innkeeper (but from the Inventory only).

Richard Coop 1588 is a miller (but from the Inventory only).

Armour

Richard Gybson 1554 bequeathes splyntes, yoke and bowes – weapons and armour.