

# LADY MARGARET BEAUFORT

As we discovered in the last article, the Manor of Woking was granted to Lady Margaret Beaufort and her husband Sir Henry Stafford in 1466.

Over Christmas 1466 'preparations were being made for an important move - to the substantial manor house of Woking', 'an impressive complex, suitable for use as a centre of estate administration and conveniently close to the capital'<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Friends of Woking Palace<sup>2</sup> 'Lady Margaret and her husband made a number of improvements on moving into their new home. The counting house was re-roofed, stables repaired and a new larder built' and 'it was at about this time that the present day "barrel vault" was rebuilt'<sup>3</sup>.

Woking was obviously now an important centre, with 'an influx of Stafford servants bringing up the total strength [of the household] to between forty and fifty' people<sup>4</sup>.

Like all major landowners at that time, Lady Margaret often 'progressed' around her properties, and from her accounts<sup>5</sup> we know that she often visited Woking – sometimes for months on end. In 1467 she apparently stayed at Woking from the end of March until the 24<sup>th</sup> August, then embarking on an epic expedition around her West Country estates. From Basingstoke she went to Andover, Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Yeovil, Wells, Bristol and Chepstow to Wreyland in Devon, staying for almost a week before returning again via Bristol, Wells, Glastonbury, Thornbury and Sampford Peveral - arriving back in Woking in early November.

She was here all winter, leaving at the end of April for a quick tour of some of her properties to the north of London at Ware, Royston and Huntingdon, before returning to Woking via the capital.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1468, Lady Margaret and Stafford entertained Edward IV at the hunting lodge in Brookwood. 'A pewter dinner service and glass 'galoners' were bought at London and servants carefully transported the five dozen dishes and four dozen saucers to Brookwood'<sup>6</sup>. 'Stafford rode to meet



Lady Margaret was only thirteen when she gave birth to her only son, but she had already experienced quite an eventful life. Her father died when she was just one, and despite his wishes that her wardship and marriage should be granted to his wife, the King instead granted it to William de la Pole, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Suffolk (although Margaret apparently remained in the care of her mother)

De la Pole arranged a marriage between Margaret and his son, John de la Pole, although they were both very young and Margaret never recognised the union, which was dissolved by Henry VI in 1453 when her wardship was granted to his half-brothers, Jasper and Edmund Tudor

She was still not even in her teens when on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1455 she married Edmund Tudor. With the outbreak of war between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists, less than a year later Edmund had been captured and imprisoned in Carmarthen.

By now, aged just thirteen, Margaret was seven-months pregnant when her husband died of the plague, leaving her brother-in-law Jasper to look after the young mother and child at Pembroke Castle.

In 1458 (still a teenager), she married her second cousin, Sir Henry Stafford, son of Humphrey Stafford, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Buckingham. Although Henry fought on the Lancastrian side at the Battle of Towton in 1461, he quickly (and shrewdly) made peace with the victor, Edward IV, who granted him a pardon on the 25<sup>th</sup> June that year

The grant of Woking five years later was apparently in celebration of the marriage of Stafford's nephew, Henry Stafford (2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Buckingham) to Catherine Woodville.

the king at Guildford and after hunting with him in Woking park escorted him to Brookwood. Wildfowl and a variety of fish were consumed, including pike, half a great conger for the king's dinner', thirteen lampreys and seven hundred oysters washed down with five barrels of ale. The king, Stafford and Margaret dined under a magnificent canopy of purple sarsenet specially made for the occasion whilst music was provided by the royal minstrels<sup>7</sup>. This, apparently, was Margaret's first personal meeting with Edward I<sup>8</sup>.

The meeting appears to have been a great success, but the following July her relative, Richard Neville, 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick, rebelled against the king, with the twelve year-old Henry Tudor (then the ward of Lord Herbert) caught up in the Battle of Edgecote on the 24<sup>th</sup> July.

Apparently 'when news of the battle reached Stafford and his wife a host of anxious messages were sent out from Woking, to ascertain the fate of Herbert, Henry Tudor and also the king'<sup>9</sup>.

The household accounts from this period are full of information on Woking at this time. Christopher Woolgar notes that 'for the late 1460's there survives for this household both a daily account for consumption (a diet account) and a journal of purchases for the household'<sup>10</sup>.

He studied a five week period, between the 9<sup>th</sup> July and the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1469, and recounts that 'butter and milk, together with eggs, were

<sup>1</sup> pP138-9 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>2</sup> p15 (The Friends of Woking Palace 2015)

<sup>3</sup> Although as we found in the last essay, it had possibly only recently been constructed in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century by Margaret Holland, p23 (Poulton, The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015 2017)

<sup>4</sup> p139 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>5</sup> From the household accounts (kept in the Muniments of Westminster Abbey – WAM 12181-90)

<sup>6</sup> P140 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>7</sup> P141 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>8</sup> p47 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>9</sup> p48 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>10</sup> p9 (C. Woolgar 2001)

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purchased each day for Sir Henry Stafford at Woking<sup>11</sup>, but Mavis E Mate (who has also studied the household accounts of Lady Margaret and Henry Stafford when they were in residence at Woking) notes that 'goods that might spoil were acquired in the nearest towns' adding that 'dairy products – eggs, butter, and cheese – were bought daily at Guildford' – although she does acknowledge that on Sundays 'when the market was not held, they must have been made in a local shop or from an individual producer'<sup>12</sup>.

Woolgar<sup>13</sup> notes that 'no eggs or milk were used here on Fridays, in accordance with stricter traditions of abstinence, but butter was' and eggs and milk were present on Saturdays. He also notes that 'at least twelve trips to Guildford were made or organised by John Clement (a local merchant), probably with a packhorse, that is, every two or three days. Guildford supplied most of the fresh foods entered in the poultry account: capons, young chickens, rye peas, butter, eggs and milk', and 'some freshwater fish, chub, tench and trout, as well as mustard'.

Remarkably Guildford also apparently supplied a lot of the sea fish, 'including plaice, haddock, whiting, sole, sea bream, crab, shrimps, besides oysters and eels'.

Another local merchant, Richard Machoun, apparently supplied much of the meat. On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 'he supplied twenty eight shearlings (sheep that had been sheared once)' with a further twenty being supplied three weeks later. On the 31<sup>st</sup> July 'two bullocks and three oxen' were bought for him at 68s., with a further three oxen on the 12<sup>th</sup> August for 51s.<sup>14</sup> Woolgar goes on to note that in 1469-70 Machoun 'began buying mutton directly from a middleman, William Butcher of Farnham, receiving 140 animals that year and 240 the following year'<sup>15</sup>. Where these were kept is unknown, as according to the excavation report on Woking Palace 'one of the clearest signs that Woking Palace was being provisioned from external sources is the caprine body part patterns, which demonstrates an over-representation of meat-bearing elements and a complete dearth of head and foot bones'<sup>16</sup>. They must have been butchered off-site – possibly at a butchers in Woking.

Oxen were apparently bought from further afield<sup>17</sup> and presumably driven to Woking (saving on the cost of transportation), but like the sheep they appear not to have been butchered on site<sup>18</sup>. Purchases at the market at Reading are recorded, as well as from breeders living in Wokingham, Ewhurst, Walton-on-Thames and more locally at Byfleet<sup>19</sup>.

Meat and fish was the main part of each meal with veal, pork and poultry occasionally being consumed as well as the mutton and beef. Woolgar has estimated that on the days when meat alone was eaten (twenty-two days between 9<sup>th</sup> July and 13<sup>th</sup> August 1469), 1,876lb of beef, and 1,039lb of mutton, was consumed during the 2,784 individual meals - with the beef alone producing 475 kcal per meal, per person and the mutton 293 kcal<sup>20</sup>!

Apparently in the medieval period there was something of a north/south divide when it comes to meat eating (or more precisely a north-east/south-west divide), with the consumption of sheep being more common in the south and cattle in the north. Poulton<sup>21</sup>, however, notes from the excavations of bones at the palace that 'the Woking assemblage shows the opposite pattern, with cattle being the most abundant in all phases'. This, he argues, reflects elite consumer demand, with 'meat from animals central to the regional economy – always the least favoured by the occupants of high-status sites'.

Whilst some of the fresh fish was undoubtedly brought in, some may well have been caught locally and kept alive in one of the ponds still visible within the palace copse. The deer park attached to the palace would also have presumably supplied venison, whilst a warren would add fresh rabbits for the pot, with other game no doubt also coming from the wider estate. Presumably none of the above would show up in the household accounts looked at by Woolgar and Mate.

According to Woolgar, about a quarter of the household (766 people) were described as 'gentiles' and received extra portions of other meats, with 6½ calves, 27 piglets, 22 capons, 235 young chickens, 5 geese. 69 squabs, 3 stock doves and 4 other poultry served at those meals – adding an extra 1.08lb of meat per person, per sitting, for those members of the household.

There is apparently little mention in the accounts of either vegetables or fruit being purchased (again presumably they were all grown locally on the estate), although onions appeared in the accounts on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August, with apples apparently being bought about the time of Edward IV's visit in December 1468.

Rye, peas and oatmeal appeared in the accounts on a regular basis, although how much was for human consumption and how much may have fed poultry on site, is not known – there are records in the accounts for the construction of a dog-kennel in the poultry yard (presumably to scare off any local foxes).

For non-perishable goods, however, the London markets were often used, with the items being shipped up the Thames and then possibly up the River Wey to Woking, or carted across land presumably from Weybridge. Mate records that 'every few months barrels of salt fish – ling cod, white and red herrings, and salmon – were supplied by a London fishmonger' and a London grocer 'regularly supplied spices, rice, and sugar'<sup>22</sup>. The grocer was apparently Thomas Hill, with William Rodley the London fishmonger<sup>23</sup>

Poulton<sup>24</sup> suggests that 'it seems likely that the larger marine fish were brought up the River Thames, which may also have been the source of both the herring and flatfish that could easily have been caught in the Thames estuary'.

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<sup>11</sup> p100 (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron 2006)

<sup>12</sup> p52 (Mate 2006)

<sup>13</sup> p13 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>14</sup> p14-15 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>15</sup> p52 (Mate 2006)

<sup>16</sup> p173 (Poulton, *The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015* 2017)

<sup>17</sup> P52 Mate 2006

<sup>18</sup> P173 (Poulton, *The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015* 2017)

<sup>19</sup> P52 Mate 2006

<sup>20</sup> p12 (C. Woolgar 2001) – he has also calculated the calorific value of most of the other components of the meals too.

<sup>21</sup> p173 (Poulton, *The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015* 2017)

<sup>22</sup> p53 (Mate 2006)

<sup>23</sup> pP139-140 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>24</sup> p173 (Poulton, *The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015* 2017) the analysis of fish bones from the palace excavations suggesting that most of the fish were supplied still alive rather than filleted and salted elsewhere, given the large quantity of fish heads found.



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'The general ration of fish available to all household members was reasonably substantial, although not on the same scale as the meats.'<sup>25</sup> A Henry Terell supplied freshwater fish on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 1469 'for the lord' from the Walton and Shepperton area, and a John Clement apparently acquired more fish from Guildford.

Woolgar notes that bread, ale and wine 'was given by the Staffords at drinkings, or at the gate of Woking palace, or to workers making hay there – but it cannot be directly related to particular individuals in the household'<sup>26</sup>.

Ale seems to have been produced locally with Richard Machon, their Woking agent, buying 'two pipes of ale every eight or nine days'<sup>27</sup> There was a 'ration' of a quarter of a gallon of ale per person for each of the two main meals<sup>28</sup>, with beer brewed at Staines sometimes being purchased<sup>29</sup>.

Lady Margaret and her husband often stayed in London, of course, and later in August 1469 we know that she was in the capital until the 2<sup>nd</sup> September when she visited Odiham and Eversley<sup>30</sup>. In October she divided her time between Woking and London and for most of March the following year she was again on one of her West Country progresses, but from June 1470 until the autumn she appears to have mainly stayed in Woking or London, with visits to Midhurst and Windsor also being recorded.

Apparently lunch and supper 'were constructed on a fairly strict basis of allowances per person dining. In terms of cereals, each person received a ration of bread and ale that varied little from meal to meal. At each meal, anyone present could expect half a loaf of bread. The loaf in this household was comparatively small, baked at thirty-five loaves to the bushel of wheat.'<sup>31</sup>

The wheat was sometimes acquired in London but also locally<sup>32</sup>. In October 1470 'three quarters, four bushels of wheat were bought at Guildford at 7s a quarter' with 'ten quarters, two bushels of wheat' also bought at Farnham about this time costing slightly less at 6s.8d., a quarter. The cost of transport to Woking, however, was more from Farnham at 5s.7d for the load (compared to the cost of 10d., a quarter for the wheat from Guildford), so the Farnham grain was only slightly cheaper in the end, but neither Farnham nor Guildford could compete with the price or quantity available at the London markets, where in 1470 twenty-two quarters and four bushels were bought at 6s.3d. a quarter, which even with the cost of carriage to Woking (by boat and cart) was still marginally cheaper.

In Mate's analysis of all the purchases during 1470-71<sup>33</sup>, she found that although London was the major market for that period (goods worth £73.13s.0d. being purchased there), Guildford was not that far behind with purchases totalling £50.9s.8d. But she also noted that 'a great deal of trade was done directly with producers – the beer-brewer or local farmers – or through the services of middlemen, such as the Farnham butcher', the local brewer (or brewers) in Woking being paid a total of £49 over the same period.

Of course this was a remarkable period for the Stafford household, with major political upheaval in the summer of 1470. Margaret of Anjou was plotting to oust Edward IV and restore her husband, Henry IV, to the throne and 'on 16 July, Stafford dined with John, Lord Berners, the queen's chamberlain at Guildford'<sup>34</sup>.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1470, Henry VI was briefly restored to the Crown, when Warwick successfully released him from the Tower of London, as Edward IV fled to Holland. At the end of the month Margaret was briefly re-united with her son as 'Stafford, Margaret and Henry returned to Woking'<sup>35</sup>. Apparently on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 'Jasper Tudor and Henry Stafford sat down to dinner together at Stafford's house, and two days later Margaret and her son rode from London to the Beaufort residence at Woking, where they stayed for over a week. Then Henry travelled with his mother and step-father to Maidenhead and Henley-on-Thames, before parting from them on 12 November, presumably to rejoin his uncle Jasper.'<sup>36</sup>

But the restoration was to be short-lived.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1471, the Duke of Somerset (supporter of Henry VI) stayed at Woking, with 'dainties for the duke: fresh salmon, eel and tench' being ordered from a fishmonger in London'<sup>37</sup>. It was clear that Edward IV would soon return to oust the Henry VI, and Somerset was presumably trying to get Stafford's support.

'On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March Stafford's servant, John Davy, was sent from Staines to London with messages for Somerset. The next day the duke himself arrived at Woking with his retinue of forty men and stayed for four days. It must have been a tense occasion'<sup>38</sup>.

'The duke was forced to leave Woking on 28 March without any firm assurance of support'. Discussions continued as Somerset moved west. At the beginning of April a body of Stafford's household men travelled from Reading to Newbury for further talks with the duke'. Stafford was temporizing. On 2 April he left Woking for London, hoping to avoid the conflict. But Edward IV's decision to march past Coventry and gain entry to the capital forced his hand. On 12 April he suddenly decided to join the Yorkist army<sup>39</sup> (again correctly predicting the winning side in the dispute at this stage).

'On 13 April 1471 a horse was purchased for Gilbert Gilpyn, the steward of the household, as he prepared to ride with his master to do battle for Edward IV at Barnet'<sup>40</sup> and 'on 17 April Lady Margaret hurried from Woking to the capital and sent out a rider to Barnet to ascertain the health of her husband'<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> p13 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>26</sup> pP11 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>27</sup> p52 (Mate 2006)

<sup>28</sup> p12 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>29</sup> p53 (Mate 2006)

<sup>30</sup> WAM 12181-90

<sup>31</sup> p11-12 (C. Woolgar 2001)

<sup>32</sup> p53 (Mate 2006)

<sup>33</sup> p53 (Mate 2006)

<sup>34</sup> p51 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>35</sup> p52 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>36</sup> p69 (Griffiths and Thomas 1985)

<sup>37</sup> p54 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>38</sup> p54 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>39</sup> p54-55 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>40</sup> p143 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>41</sup> p56 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

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On the day before he went into battle, Stafford wrote his will. It is possible that it was written whilst he was still at Woking as it is witnessed by the parish priest here, Walter Baker, and includes 10s., to the church for tithes forgot and another 20s., for work on the church. He also left his step-son, Henry Tudor, new velvet trappings for four horses, a 'grizzled horse' to Reginald Bray and £160 for masses to be said for his soul – everything else he left to Margaret (see appendix). Another possibility was that Walter Baker was with Stafford at Barnet, as 'John Dey rode back to Woking on the eve of the combat carrying Stafford's message to his wife and hastily drawn up will'<sup>42</sup>.

Interestingly it was sometime between 1460 and 1470 that the upper part of the tower of St Peter's Church was completed<sup>43</sup>. Was the earlier 'watchtower' (suggested by Dr Morton) needing to be replaced during these turbulent years? Did some of Sir Henry Stafford bequest of twenty shillings go towards those costs? There is a clear difference in the material used for these upper storeys – large, strong, blocks of local sarsen stone (presumably removed from off the local commons – where some can occasionally still be discovered) – in contrast to the mixture of materials employed in the base. The tower would undoubtedly have offered a safe and secure base to look out over the surrounding countryside. Whether it was ever used as such during these turbulent times we do not know.

After his defeat at Barnet (and then Tewkesbury), Henry VI was imprisoned by Edward VI in the Tower of London, where he died. Shortly after, he was buried at Chertsey Abbey, 'and the Abbey became, for a short while, an object of pilgrimage on that account. In 1484 his body was transferred to Windsor'<sup>44</sup>, possibly so that the king could keep any such pilgrimages under control.

Sadly, Henry Stafford also died this year, on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, from injuries he sustained whilst fighting at Barnet<sup>45</sup>, but his support for Edward VI perhaps proved vital in saving Lady Margaret Beaufort from suspicion, although her son, Henry Tudor was once again forced to flee to France with his uncle, Jasper Tudor.

'In the immediate aftermath [Reginald] Bray assisted Margaret over the arrangements for Stafford's burial and accompanied her in June 1472 into the household of her fourth husband Thomas Lord Stanley', who as steward of the royal household 'afforded Margaret a powerful protector, with valuable influence at Edward IV's court'<sup>46</sup>. Shortly after, it is said, that 'new lodgings [were] added to the manor house' at Woking<sup>47</sup>.

They also apparently carried out work on the park pale in 1472<sup>48</sup> when Young and Savage<sup>49</sup> believe 'significant expansion' of the park could have been carried out.

Brayley, quoting John Stow's 'Chronicle'<sup>50</sup>, notes that Edward kept part of the festival of Christmas at Woking in 1480, but already trouble was brewing as the War of the Roses intensified.

It is not known whether any men from Woking took part in the battles, although it would have been unusual if none of Lord Stanley's local servants had got involved. We will never know therefore whether any local men were at Bosworth alongside Stanley supporting King Richard II in his fight against his step-son, Henry Tudor. If they were, their loyalty to Richard II and Stanley, may have been tempered by their loyalty to Lady Margaret and her son. Could it be that the Woking men had a change of heart as the battle began and turned instead to support Henry Tudor? Was it the Woking men who persuaded Lord Stanley to hold back and finally switch his allegiance to his step-son's side?

After the victory, the newly proclaimed King Henry VII visited Woking and 'stayed there for a number of weeks while preparations for his coronation proceeded'<sup>51</sup>. 'In the intimacy of his mother's sprawling manor house, set amidst the orchards and parkland of the Surrey countryside, plans could be laid for the future'<sup>52</sup>. Alison Weir<sup>53</sup> noted that 'prior to removing to his mother's palace at Woking' Henry VII was at Baynard's Castle in London 'affording them the opportunity to get to know each other'.

## APEENDIX

### The Will of Henry Stafford

Item. I bequeath to the high alter of the parish church of Woking, for my tithes and offerings forgotten or with-holden, 10s.

Item. I bequeath to the works of the said church of Woking, 20s

Item. I bequeath to my son-in-law, the Earl of Richmond, a trapper, and four new horse harness of blue velvet.

Item, I bequeath to my brother John, Earl of Wiltshire, my bay courser.

Item. I bequeath to Reynold Bray, my Receiver-General, my grizzled horse

And the residue of all my goods, catalogues, and debts, wheresoever they be – after my debts that I owe paid, my funeral expenses done, and this my testament fulfilled, - I give and bequeath to mine entirely bellowed wife, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, she thereof to dispose her own free will for evermore.

Witnesses, John Geffrey, Walter Baker, vicar of the parish church of Woking, aforesaid. Sir Richard Brigge, prior of the priory of Newark.

Extract of the will of Henry Stafford as reproduced in Caroline Halsted's work on Lady Margaret Beaufort<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> p143 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>43</sup> pP8 (Morton n.d.)

<sup>44</sup> p5 (Poulton, Archaeological Investigations on the site of Chertsey Abbey 1988), although Manning & Bray (Manning and Bray 1804-14) p219, note that 'King Henry VI, who was murdered in the Tower 21 May 1471, was privately buried in the Abbey on the 23<sup>rd</sup>; but Henry VII in his 19<sup>th</sup> year, 1504, had the body removed to Windsor'.

<sup>45</sup> pP144 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>46</sup> p97 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>47</sup> p23 (Poulton, The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015 2017) noting 'miscellaneous receipts and expenses of Reginald Bray as receiver of Lord Stanley 1473-4' (WAM 32407/12

<sup>48</sup> p146 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>49</sup> p26 (Poulton, The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015 2017) in their chapter on 'The location, disparking and survival of Woking Park'

<sup>50</sup> p7 (Brayley 1850), quoting Stow, p717 'this year Edward began to keepe his feast of Christies nativite at Woking, but at five daies end removed from thence to Greenwich, where he kept out the other part, with great royalties'.

<sup>51</sup> p23 (Poulton, The Moated Medieval Manor and Tudor Royal Residence at Woking Palace: Excavations between 2009 and 2015 2017)

<sup>52</sup> p66 (Jones and Underwood 1992)

<sup>53</sup> p167 (Weir 2013)

<sup>54</sup> p255 (Halsted 1839). TNA PROB/11/7/2

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