

Thomas Smith, Yeoman of this Parish

Thomas Smith lived in Goxhill. We have no idea where his house was but we do have quite a lot of information about him and his family.

On the twenty sixth day of April sixteen fifty four Thomas "Being aged but of sound memory" made and ordained his last Will and Testament

These were difficult times the country was ruled by Oliver Cromwell and his Parliament and religious reformation was changing the way in which the people of Goxhill lived. Not that they were completely opposed to the reformation because in 1641 every man in Goxhill had signed the Oath of Protestation.

(The Oath of Protestation The acceptance of the Anglican Religion and rejection of the authority of the Pope was taken by all men in England.)

The names of Richard George, Robert, Robert the elder, Thomas Jnr John Thomas and William Smith were all on the list. His will shows that he was a little uncertain of what could be permitted because after a full declaration of faith he commits his body to be buried in the church in the same part where his first wife was buried "if it can be possible."

Thomas was married twice and had two sons Robert and Richard and a daughter Mary by his first wife. His second wife gave him two sons John and William but she too had died before he made his will.

Robert and Richard were it seems married and had received provision to enable them to raise a family. Mary received a legacy of Twenty Pounds and her daughter received Ten Pounds. The sons and daughters of Robert and Richard received Five Shillings

each.

Of the younger children of his second marriage, John had already been granted a home and some land. William was to receive Ten Pounds and inherit the house in which Thomas lived together with the land belonging to it. This and the land that John had was Copyhold land and William was made responsible for the rent of thirty six shillings per year together with any other out rents and yearly payments due to the Lord or Lords. William was not married and so Thomas willed that if William should die without Heirs to his body the house and premises that he had received should pass to his Executrix Sarah daughter of John. However if William left a widow she was to be allowed to remain in the house. He also gave some detailed instructions saying who should plant and harvest the crops of the field. He also said that Sarah and her sister Katherine were to have the Bell Parlour and the room above so long as they remained unmarried.

Katherine was to receive Fifty Pounds and she and Sarah were given "That half rood of ground Now called Mill Hill Lying in a place in the fields of Goxhill called The Swallows Mill quarter and all that my Moiety or half of the Windmill now standing upon the same".

(The site of this mill was behind the houses and bungalow now standing on the west side of Ferry Road opposite Willow Lane. It was a wooden Post Mill.)

Thomas arranged the disposal of his three silver spoons and went on to bequeath his Bible and his book of sermons together with another book to his two sons. He gave to his two daughters Mr Fox

book Arts and Monuments otherwise called The Book of Martyrs. (In 1563 John Fox published a Book of Martyrs commemorating those who had died for their protestant belief it was one of the most celebrated books in the English Language.)

Thomas gave to the poor of Goxhill Twenty Shillings and to the poor of East Halton Five Shillings. After his Debts Legacies and Funeral expenses were paid he left the residue of his estate to his Granddaughter Sarah whom he made his Executrix. He entrusted Mr John Sandes and his nephew John Wakelin to be the supervisors of his will and gave them Two Shillings and Six pence each for their care and pains (John Sandes was buried in the church and is commemorated by a stone set in the floor)

The will was witnessed by Margaret Melburn (her mark) William Sergant Sen. and John Malkin.

Thomas died and probate as granted to Sarah on the twentieth day of May 1655. Sadly his intentions for his family were not realised John Also died he made his will in May 1566 and probate was granted in August of that year.

All of the records, Census, Enclosure, and other sources in the village since that time include people with the name Smith. I do not know if anyone at present living here can trace their family back to Thomas and his children. Money and ownership of land come and go but I wonder what happened to the book of sermons and Mr Fox's Book of Martyrs.

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