

THE PUBLICATIONS OF
THE BEDFORDSHIRE
HISTORICAL RE-
CORD SOCIETY
VOLUME
XX

"E VUS NE POEZ RBN FERE OUTRE
LE RECORD KE EST VOSTRE GARANT."
LOÜTHER: HEREFORD EYRE, 1292.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY AT THE
OLD HOUSE IN ASPLEY GUISE MCMXXXVIII

2

N. T. BAGSHAWE

THE PUBLICATIONS OF
THE BEDFORDSHIRE
HISTORICAL RE-
CORD SOCIETY
VOLUME
XV

**THE BEDFORDSHIRE
HISTORICAL RECORD
SOCIETY**

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY AT THE
OLD HOUSE IN ALLEY OF BISHOPS' PALACE

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XX

Issued to the Society
for the year 1938

OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE
HISTORICAL RECORD SOCIETY
FOR THE YEAR 1938

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY AT THE
OLD HOUSE IN GREAT CLIVE STREET

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SYMBOLS USED IN TRANSCRIPTION

(Explanatory of the symbols used in the text.)

1. Words underlined, underdotted, or crossed through, for deletion from the original manuscript, which form no part of the final record, are enclosed in braces {Ricardus}
2. Additions and interlineations, which form part of the final record, are in half-round parentheses, and marked by a † dagger †(uxor eius)
3. Marginal notes by the scribe are similarly in (), but are marked by an asterisk in addition *(misericordia)
4. Interpolations and additions by the transcriber, other than the usual expansions, are in crotchets [given]
5. Omissions by the transcriber are shown by dots, or by etc. in crotchets or [etc.]
6. Letters, words, and phrases, of which the reading is uncertain, are enclosed in square crotchets with a query [? tandem]
7. Terminal expansions, especially of place-names, when the right ending is uncertain, are left with an apostrophe Stacheden'
8. Unreadable words or passages are shown by dashes - - - -

In transcription of early MSS., stops and capital letters are employed in accordance with modern usage, unless otherwise stated. The limiting dates of a definite period of time are connected, as usual, by a hyphen (1147-65); the supposed earliest and latest limits for an uncertain date, such as the passing of an undated charter, are shown with an oblique bar (1147/65). As usual, 'c.' for circa indicates approximation to a date; where the approximation is very wide, 'cc.' is used.

ABBREVIATIONS IN COMMON USE

ac.	acre.
B.C.M.	Bedfordshire County Muniments.
B.H.R.S.	Bedfordshire Historical Record Society: Octavo Publications, unless marked as Quarto Memoirs.
car.	carucate.
D.B.	Domesday Book.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
deft.	defendant.
fo., ff.	folios of a manuscript.
Kg.	King.
kt.	Knight.
li.	libra or pound.
mess.	message.
N.E.D.	New English Dictionary.
O.S.	Ordnance Survey.
p.	pole or perch.
P.R.	Pipe Roll.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
P.R.S.	Pipe Roll Society.
pltff.	plaintiff.
r.	rood (areal) or rod (linear).
R.C.	Record Commission.
R.S.	Rolls Series of Chronicles and Memorials.
V.C.H.	Victoria County History (Bedfordshire, unless another County is named).
v.	virgate.

A fine furnishing of all the goods of fine I made by order
of the piece of Gough in the room of the darts and made
the first day of many I no in the big and spiced by
William Dyer / Nicolab Sharps for my friend Edna and
Nicolab first as follows:



First in the hall our velvet our vase our table and at two { p. 2, 1, 2
fourth our vase and glass table a pot of glass, two quotions { p. 2, 1, 2
and bottom of glass and potting 2

the one pot glass bottles our pot on lantern and other implements p. 2, 1, 2
the six potter dishes a warming pan, pot, plates & mortar and p. 2, 1, 2
two sandshells 2

in the lower chamber

Two beds with bedding, given two velvet six pairs of shoes
six napkins and glass pillowcases & other small kinds, p. 2, 1, 2
the six warming apparatus 2

A true Inventorve of all the goodes of John Amias thelder of the parish of Southill in the countye of Bedford deceased made this third day of March Anno domini dei 1619 and prised by William Deere Nicholas Sharpe Jefferye Redman and Nicholas East as followeth:

Imprimis in the Hall one Coberd one Casse one table and two formes one Chare and three stoles a pot shelf two quotions and bellowes and pot hangers	xxvjs.
Item one pot three kettles one posnet on lanterne and other implements	xiijs. 4d.
Item six pewter dishes a warmeinge pann pestle and mortar and two candlestickes ...	xs.

In the lower chamber

Two beds with beddinge thereon two Cofers six pare of sheets six napkins and three pillowbers and other small linnen	iiii li.
Item his waringe apparell	iiii li.

JACOBEOAN HOUSEHOLD INVENTORIES

By F. G. EMMISON

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§ 1. THE CHIEF SOURCES USED.

- a. Addy, S. O.—The Evolution of the English House. London, 1933 (rev. edn.).
- b. Batchelor, T.—General View of the Agriculture of the County of Bedford. London, 1808.
- c. Burn, R.—The Ecclesiastical Law. London, 1828 (8th edn.).
- d. Davie, W. G.—Old Cottages, Farmhouses [etc.] in the Cotswold District. London, 1905.
- e. Emmison, F. G.—Beds. Parish Registers, 1538-1812. Bedford, 1931 (in progress).
- f. Garside, J. T.—Old English Furniture: a view of its characteristics from Tudor Times to the Regency. London, 1924.
- g. Harrison's Description of England (1577-87). Ed. F. J. Furnivall. 1877.
- h. Hayward, C. H.—English Period Furniture: an account of the evolution of furniture from 1500 to 1800. London, 1936.
- i. Innocent, C. F.—The Development of the English Building Construction. Cambridge, 1916.
- j. Jekyll, G.—Old English Household Life. London, 1925.
- k. Lindsay, J. S.—Iron and Brass Implements of the English House. London, 1927.
- l. Macquoid, P., and Edwards, R.—Dictionary of English Furniture. London, 1924-27.
- m. Ryan, P. F. W.—Stuart Life and Manners. London, 1912.
- n. Victoria and Albert Museum.—Catalogue of English Furniture and Woodwork. Vol. ii. Late Tudor and Early Stuart. London, 1930. (Contains a bibliography).
- o. Various contributors.—Shakespeare's England: an account of the life and manners of his age. Oxford, 1916.

New English Dictionary, Halliwell's Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, Wright's Dialect Dictionary, Baker's Glossary of Northants. Words, etc.

For a good bibliography of inventories in print, see G. E. Fussell and V. G. B. Atwater, "Farmers' Goods and Chattels, 1500-1800," in "History," xx, 211-20.

INTRODUCTION

§ 2. GENERAL.—It is believed that there has not previously been published a collection of inventories, accompanied by introductory notes, analyses, and detailed index.¹ The present writer undertook this work without full realisation of the wide variety of subjects involved—architecture, furniture, farm equipment, live-stock, crops, local dialect, and so forth—of which his knowledge was (and still is) lamentably small. His sole reason for attempting publication was to make this valuable material accessible, instead of its remaining difficult to read and undigested. A knowledge of palæography and of Bedfordshire topography and archives seems to be his only justification for having ventured on the task. The handwriting of some of the illiterate appraisers is very difficult to master. As to topography, one of his original hopes was to identify some of the dwellings with those still surviving, and in this respect the results have been rather disappointing, despite the fact that hundreds of contemporary deeds and other documents in the County Record Office have been consulted.² Though the introduction attempts to discuss and explain certain aspects of the material, it cannot be too clearly stressed that limitations of space and time, as well as of the writer's qualifications, have caused him to leave various points untouched, so that the text of the inventories may largely be regarded as still waiting to be used

in detail, with the aid of the index, by experts on each subject.

§ 3. THE COLLECTION.—The class of 166 inventories, describing the contents of 169 households, was deemed especially worthy of publication, as it belongs to a period of only two or three years (1617-19),³ and relates solely to one county—a district typically agricultural, neither containing any large towns nor presenting any unusual features. For this county and period, therefore, the student may find himself able to draw conclusions of some value; and if the writer has occasionally hazarded an opinion, it should be regarded primarily as relating only to Bedfordshire. The series now published forms part of the muniments of the Archdeaconry of Bedford, which were deposited⁴ in the County Record Office, Shire Hall, Bedford, in 1921. Their presence is perhaps due to the archdeacon's registrar having omitted to transfer them, with the other Bedfordshire wills and inventories, to the newly established probate registry at Northampton about 1857. On the other hand, it is possible that this collection for 1617-19 was for some reason not stored with the main class of wills and inventories, for it was often the practice to file the inventory with the appropriate will or administration (though separate collections for inventories are known to exist in probate registries). At any rate, the Bedfordshire wills of the early part of the seventeenth century have few inventories attached, nor is there a separate series of inventories,⁵ so that it is particularly gratifying that the present collection has been preserved.⁶

§ 4. TRANSCRIPTION.—Apart from the following qualifications, the full text of the inventories is given. The only omissions from the inventories proper are the names of the appraisers.⁷ The note of the inventory having been exhibited in court (written by the court official at the end of each document) is also omitted. The heading of the inventory has been abbreviated into

a standard form; and phases such as "appraised at 5s.," "valued at 5s.," "worth 5s." have been contracted into "5s." only. In order to simplify the reading, all sums (values) have been converted from roman into arabic numerals, where the former are used. Short paragraphs and single separate entries have in all cases been merged into longer paragraphs, to save space; but different classes of goods are retained as separate paragraphs. In some cases the abode or occupation is not stated in the inventory; attempts have been made to provide these missing facts from the relevant wills,⁸ or from burial entries in parish registers (or "archdeacon's transcripts"); and the latter also supply the date of burial where the inventory itself lacks a date. A few occupations have been obtained from deeds deposited in the County Record Office, where the other sources have failed.

§ 5. LAW CONCERNING INVENTORIES.—By ecclesiastical law, inventories were submitted to the court of the ordinary, that is, of the bishop or archdeacon (where the latter's jurisdiction was co-ordinate with that of the bishop, as in the case of Bedfordshire). The best account of this aspect of the subject is contained in Burn's "Ecclesiastical Law."⁹ Burn says: "At the time of probate or administration granted, it is required that the executor or administrator produce an inventory of the goods, chattels, and credits of the deceased; and at the same time he maketh oath that he will exhibit such inventory into the court, as he shall thereafter be lawfully required to do." The document was to be drawn up in the presence of "some credible persons" (usually neighbours), who were also to assess the value of the deceased man's goods. The inventory was supposed to be indented, one part being delivered to the court, the other duplicate remaining with the executor or administrator. Of the Bedfordshire inventories, now published, about one in every four is indented. Such duplicates are occasionally found in private muniments.¹⁰ Burn enters into a detailed discussion as to

whether various objects, on which disputes had arisen, should or should not be included in inventories. "Fishes in a pond, conies in a warren, deer in a park, pigeons in a dovehouse" were the property of the heir, not of the executor, and were therefore to be excluded. "Things affixed to the freehold," for the same reason were to be omitted: in this category fell glass, wainscot and other fixtures. But some objects, for example, furnaces or ovens, were doubtful cases, and the evidence of our own inventories confirms the point, glass being occasionally found (nos. 11, 48, 155). According to a decision of 1740, tapestries and iron backs to chimneys were held not to be fixtures; no such fire-backs occur in our inventories, but iron may have been seldom used in Bedfordshire for the poorer people's fireplaces. For further complicated cases, the student is referred to Burn. He frankly confesses he cannot state whether debts owing by the deceased should be included, and the Bedfordshire inventories certainly give fewer debts owed to than owed by the deceased persons. The values recorded were intended to represent the price at which the goods could be sold.

I have to acknowledge with gratitude much assistance afforded me by Mr. W. A. Thorpe (of the Victoria and Albert Museum), Mr. A. Phillips (of Hitchin), Professor A. E. Richardson (of London University and Ampthill), Professor F. L. Engledow (of the School of Agriculture, Cambridge), and Mr. H. M. Cashmore (City Librarian of Birmingham); also to Dr. G. H. Fowler, for his unfailing guidance as editor. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, for her constant help throughout the preparation of the article.

With the aid of these detailed inventories, the student is able to acquire, not only an intimate knowledge of the furniture, stock and other moveable possessions, but also an indirect acquaintance with the social conditions of a representative group of Bedfordshire folk of the period. A good idea will also be obtained of the number names and positions of the dwelling-rooms, lofts and garners,

barns and outhouses, of the comparative degrees of wealth and poverty, of the relative amount and importance of the various kinds of stock and cereals, of the proportion of a man's possessions invested in goods stock, or mortgages, and so forth. A goodly collection of local dialect words of early date is also yielded by the inventories.

THE DWELLING HOUSE

§ 6. THE ROOMS.—Much has been written about the size and plan of the larger houses of our period. But as soon as the student begins to enquire about the houses in which people below the rank of esquires and gentlemen lived, he is at once faced with a dearth of material. The dwellings themselves, where they have survived for over three hundred years, form, as a rule, his most accessible record; but very few of these have remained unaltered in the course of so many generations; and the student must be far advanced in his subject to understand such ancient dwellings intelligently. The inventories are, however, contemporary records, giving in most cases detailed information about certain aspects of the homesteads; in particular, the number and names of the rooms, the storeys in which they are placed, and the outer buildings; and by far the larger number concern the homes of the poorer folk. To the Jacobean appraiser, as with the modern valuer, the most natural sections into which their inventories could be divided were the rooms in which the goods were found. So we find, in the majority of the documents, that the rooms are named, and most of the items can be visualised inside the rooms in which they were found.

With regard to the status of the deceased persons whose homes we are considering, it will be seen from the index that only four belong to the rank of gentlemen, three are parsons, and nearly all the rest fall into the farming, labouring, or artisan classes. We have the number of rooms in 110 cases. Judging from the low valuations and humble rank in the sixty inventories in

which no rooms are specified, it seems fair to assume that in the majority the number of rooms was only two, perhaps even one, and that the dwellings mostly contained only one storey with or without a "loft" (or attic).¹¹ Sometimes, no doubt, especially in the case of a widow, the deceased person was not the householder, but an aged person given "house room" (the contemporary phrase) by a relation or friend. It is therefore impossible to say how many of the inventories describe one-roomed cottages. None of the records specifically refer to a single-roomed dwelling; but in two cases (31, 153) the sole room mentioned is the hall, containing the bedding (the only two giving evidence of the hall being used also as a bedroom), though in the latter inventory there is also mention of a loft containing no bedding; and in a third case (121) we have a hall with a sleeping loft and a "strawhouse" (apparently not a living room).

In sixteen inventories there is mention of two rooms only, and in five others two rooms together with a loft (for sleeping in, except in one case). The rooms are termed the hall and the chamber in 15 out of these 21 inventories; in the remainder they are called inner and outer chamber, kitchen and chamber, hall and parlour, hall and kitchen (the latter in each case being also the bedroom), hall and kitchen (neither being bedrooms), and parlour and "working shop or hall" (the former sharing with the loft the bedsteads) (43, 29, 91, 105, 25A, 32). Such cottages could have been little better than hovels, and were probably of the wattle and daub type, a few of which still survive, sometimes as the older parts of larger cottages.

From these rude dwellings containing only a single living room (the hall) and a bedroom (the chamber), we pass on to other simple cottages, with slightly larger accommodation. A hall and two chambers are found in five inventories (13, 70, 73, 81, 131), though no doubt in some of these households the family had increased so much as to make it essential to divide a single chamber into two parts. Where there existed a second room

(other than sleeping-rooms), we seldom find it used as another living room (that is, as a kitchen), but mostly as a place for making the butter and cheese or sifting the corn; and in some cases this extra 'room' was probably little more than an outhouse or "back-house" (94). In addition to the usual hall, ten record a milkhouse or dairyhouse (48, 138, 150, 154, 166, 19, 35, 42, 101, 86); seven show a buttery (67, 88, 95, 120, 126, 159, 58), six give a kitchen (4, 94, 115, 134, 148, 41), and two have a bolting-house (23, 87). In these 25 inventories, there is mention of two chambers¹² in seven (one having a further sleeping-loft), a chamber and loft in twelve (eight having beds), and a chamber only in the remaining five.

Four-roomed dwellings seem to occur in 12 inventories; whereof four have a parlour, and in the remainder, with no parlour, the two extra rooms are kitchen and milkhouse, kitchen and buttery, kitchen and quern-house, and buttery and bolting-house. The parlour was often a second living-room giving more privacy.

It seems unnecessary to analyse dwellings with five, six or more rooms in this detailed manner, so an intermediate group will be taken as a whole. Omitting the five largest houses (three belonging to gentlemen (5, 36, 79), the other two being parsonages (11, 62), there are 32 dwellings with five to ten rooms, including bedrooms. In the majority of these lived the yeomen and husbandmen, and in the rest the tradesmen and craftsmen (baker, tailor, weaver, shoemaker). Tabulation of the rooms in these 32 houses gives the following totals: hall (in every inventory), kitchen (27 cases), buttery (22 cases), parlour (20 cases, of which 16 contained beds), milkhouse or dairy (15 cases), and bolting-house (8 cases). The majority had two or three chambers or bedrooms in addition to a possible bed-parlour; four bedrooms occur in three cases, the extra room being a servant's or maid's chamber; two yeomen, and a baker, have this distinction (nos. 47, 83, 64). A number of the inventories also mentions a brewhouse or millhouse, out-

houses, backhouse, or washhouse; and the "shop" is often referred to in the craftsman's inventories.

Analysis of all the inventories specifying rooms affords the following instructive details; the numbers in parentheses being the total of the inventories naming the particular rooms: hall (103), parlour (35), kitchen (47), milkhouse (30), buttery (42), and bolting-house (13). Chambers (bedrooms) have not been counted.¹³

Coming finally to the houses with many rooms, the two large parsonages (11, 62) show no special features, except that the former has a study. Two of the three largest houses have two parlours (one in each having a bed in it), but are otherwise not remarkable. The only inventory with a number of outstanding points is that of the Ampthill inn (79). Professor Richardson of Ampthill, who, as an authority on the English inn, is well qualified to pronounce an opinion, regards the discovery of this inventory as of some importance.¹⁴ It is therefore particularly unfortunate that the long paper roll containing this record has been badly eaten away by a mouse.

In considering the number of rooms in 17th century dwellings, it may be recalled that the complete statement of the number of hearths, provided by the hearth tax assessments of the latter half of the century, gives useful material. The number of rooms would of course be greater than that of the hearths, but this source is useful for comparative purposes.¹⁵

§ 7. SURVIVING BUILDINGS.—Attempts to identify some existing buildings of ancient date with those dealt with in the inventories have yielded practically no definite results. The Ampthill inn, the Red Hart (79), is probably the present White Hart, which, although a Georgian front was added, embodies work of much earlier date; and the "gatehowse" helps to confirm the identification. Professor Richardson believes that its name was changed to the White Hart when the small inn, known as the Red Lion, was opened. The White Hart is certainly recorded¹⁶ as early as 1660, but the

Red Lion, now no longer an inn, is also ancient. The farmhouse which adjoined Silsoe churchyard, if "the churchyardbarne" may be so construed (53), has survived; the back of the farmhouse and the barns, seen from the south side of the churchyard, show ancient work. It is possible that the yeomen of Duloe (8) and Wilshamstead Cotton End (63) lived at the farmhouses now known respectively as Duloe Manor Farm and Wilshamstead Manor Farm, the latter lying near the Wilshamstead—Eastcotts boundary.¹⁷ None of the three parsonages (11, 62, 143) has survived. The sites of several farmhouses given in the inventories have been found with some certainty, but the buildings have vanished, e.g., the old Pearse family property, lying to the south of Lower Wroxhill (1). It would have been particularly satisfactory to identify the Hawnes farmhouse (36), the inventory of which has the highest valuation. A deed¹⁸ of 1615, relating to this farm, has been found; its name was Dunstalls, and the house abutted west on the way from Hawnes house (the mansion in the park) to the church. The building is shown on Jefferys' map (1765), and several later maps, but no longer exists. Borrowe (Burrow) was tenant (not owner) of the farm. When further 17th and 18th century deeds have been made accessible, perhaps research may afford better results.

FURNITURE.

§ 8. GENERAL.—The mention of the rooms was incidental to the work of the appraisers, serving as a guide to the furniture and other contents, which were their direct concern. We are not necessarily, however, on safer ground, for the wealth of detail in the descriptions of the goods varies considerably, and depended largely on the caprice of the valuers. A tendency towards more minute description of a poor man's goods can be traced. A comparison of the inventory of the richest yeoman (36) with a rather detailed one of a labourer (21) will make the point clear: the valuations are £652 and £18

respectively, but their length is nearly equal. This lack of uniformity of detail should warn us that the absence of any given article (especially one of little value) does not imply that it was not found by the valuers. They may have included it in one of their many stock phrases, such as "other implements," "other things not named." Indeed, the majority of the lists hint at the omission of many articles of little worth: "other trash," "other lumber," "trash and trumpery" (85), occasionally "other rubbish" or "some other trifles." Too much stress must therefore not be laid on the following notes, where they relate to the smaller pieces of furniture and household utensils.

These Jacobean inventories describe very little of the so-called Jacobean furniture. The great ages in English furniture construction were those of the carpenter and joiner (up to 1660), cabinet-maker (1660-1750), and designer (from 1750), the dates in each case being very approximate.¹⁹ The latter part of the first period is sometimes divided into Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean, the last being the phase into which the Elizabethan finally but gradually merged. Actually, the Jacobean period "dates some years after the accession of the first James; the style is one of refinement and is a reaction against the open-handed display of the Elizabethan age."²⁰ By far the greater part of the furniture we shall now consider belonged therefore to the Elizabethan period, though it is certain that there was little display except in the wealthier households. With very few exceptions, every piece of furniture was made of oak, walnut not having been adopted in England until towards the end of the 16th century, and at first only in very large houses; much the same remark applies to inlaid work. Oak was obtainable almost everywhere, and was favoured for its durability. Despite this, furniture which was in use in country farmhouses and cottages in 1617-1619 has survived only to a very small extent. Comparatively little of the domestic furniture of the larger houses of the period can now be found.

Destructive fires were very common. Owing to the difficulty of producing a flame, the fire in the open hearth was kept burning throughout the greater part of the year, a frequent cause of night disasters; the rude dwellings with their contents were destroyed in a short time. The furniture was very heavy, and some of the larger pieces were fixtures, actually fitted up by the joiner inside the house, being too cumbersome to pass through the doorways. The country furniture was of too rude a nature to be preserved for its æsthetic value. So it follows that neither the two admirable museums at Bedford and Luton, nor indeed the national museums, contain more than a negligible amount of Elizabethan or Stuart domestic furniture connected with Bedfordshire: such of the rare contemporary specimens²¹ as exist belong to a higher social sphere, and have now too costly a collector's value to allow their acquisition by local museums, with their meagre incomes. The Bedfordshire inventories are then a very valuable source of information about the furniture of the humbler dwellings at the time of James I. In some ways the wealth of detail is indeed remarkable.

By the reign of James I the articles of furniture found in the ordinary home were beginning to show a marked increase in number and variety. A century earlier, domestic furniture had been "a rare commodity." One authority²² thus describes the furniture of Henry VIII's time: "Even in the larger houses the hall would contain little more than a large table, a chair for the owner of the house, forms and stools for the rest of the household, a cupboard of some sort, and a chest. In the chief sleeping room there would be a bed, a chest to hold clothes, and possibly a cupboard or press. The sleeping rooms for the less important people might contain little more than a mattress or just a couch of rushes. Smaller houses were furnished on a correspondingly smaller scale, so that it becomes clear that the chances of survival were extremely small." A generation before our period these scanty and rude pieces of furniture