

## THE INVENTORY OF WALTER HURST (1702)

Walter Hurst was a blacksmith of Fairford who wrote his will on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1702 just three days before the coronation of Queen Anne. Walter was buried a month later on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May in St Mary's churchyard. He bequeathed his lands, house, shop and tools to his only son Richard and £150 to each of his daughters Elizabeth and Katherine. Walter appointed his brother-in-law Lawrence Comely to be guardian of Elizabeth who would lose her inheritance if she should marry without Lawrence's approval. He did not make the same stipulation for his daughter Katherine. Lawrence Comely died four months after Walter so the clause in the will quickly became void.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1702 an inventory was made of Walter's goods by his brother John and a friend Thomas Soudly. The inventory lists various goods found in Walter's house but omits the value of his house and land. In addition to his own house he also owned "*my Little House that is now in the possession of William Search and all that strip of ground on the right hand side of the path in the Garden against the said House extending as far forth as the Great Catherin Peare Tree*".

A synopsis of the inventory follows, the spelling has been 'corrected' to modern English:

<b>In the chamber over hall</b>	£	s	d
A hanging press	01	00	00
One chest	00	10	00
One other chest made of oak	00	07	00
Two oak boxes	00	03	00
Two bedsteads, two beds and all that belongs to them	08	00	00
Two trunks	00	12	00
Two suits of apparel	03	00	00
Two chairs in the chamber, three chishings	00	03	00
<b>In the chamber over the shop</b>			
A bedstead, two beds and all that belong to it	02	00	00
Two chairs, one old coffer	00	02	06
<b>In the cockloft</b>			
One truckle bedstead, bed all belonging	01	10	00
Six bushels of malt	00	16	00
Two pairs of sheets, one board cloth, 12 napkins	01	00	00
One clock	01	00	00
<b>In the hall</b>			
One press, one table-board and frame, five joined stools	01	05	00
One joined chair, four turned chairs	00	07	00
One chimney-back gun, two hangles, a sconce	00	10	00
Seven dishes of pewter	01	04	00
Two warming pans, one great flagon	00	07	06
One pair of andirons	00	08	00
One jack, five porringers, a caser, three candlesticks	00	10	06
One fire shovel, tongs, a sconce candlestick	00	03	00

Seven brass kettles, four pots, a furnace	05	00	00
One mash-tub, three cowls, a powdering tub	00	14	00
Five small dishes, three plates, a salt	00	07	00
<b>In the kitchen</b>			
One chair, a table-board	00	02	00
Six barrels, a dough trough and cover to it	00	17	00
<b>In the back-side</b>			
Wood and boards	00	14	00
<b>In the little shop</b>			
Two old anvils, two grind stones	02	02	00
<b>In the great shop</b>			
Two anvils, a bickern, a pair of bellows, two vices	03	00	00
Two spits, a hand bellows	00	02	06
<b>Goods in the ware shop</b>	10	00	00
<b>Total value</b>	47	17	00

Walter Hurst's will was not proved until the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1702, some six weeks after the inventory was taken. In his will Walter bequeathed some household items to his daughters, these were:

To Elizabeth:

A flock bed (but not the bedstead)	Her mother's trunk
Two middling brass kettles	An oak box
A little brass pot	A joined chair
A warming pan	A little table board
Two pewter dishes	A barrel
Two pewter porringers	A cowl

To Katherine:

A feather bed (but not the bedstead)	The least of the oaken chests
A brass pot	An oak box
A great kettle	A barrel
A little kettle	A cowl
A warming pan	A gun flagon
Three pewter dishes	A great candlestick
Three pewter porringers	A fire shovel and tongs

Most of these items were included in the inventory but some, for example the flock bed, feather bed and gun flagon, are not specifically mentioned in the inventory so could have been additional items already removed before the inventory took place. The total value of the goods listed is equivalent to about £5,000 in 2020 terms which might indicate that Walter was not wealthy but his real estate, his houses and land, was not included in the

inventory so he was by no means a poor man. His house had a ground floor hall, a kitchen, an upstairs chamber, an attic (cockloft), two shops (perhaps a shop and a smithy), and a chamber over one of the shops. Walter's son Richard took over the blacksmith business and he in turn passed it on to his son who then passed it on to his son, another Richard, who became a successful ironmonger and whose daughter Mary married into the wealthy Wane family of Fairford.

Some of the terms mentioned in the inventory and the will may need an explanation:

Andiron	Iron bar to hold logs in a fireplace
Bickern	Small anvil with two tapering ends
Chimney-back gun	Possibly a piece of chimney or fireplace metalwork
Chishings	Probably cushions
Cowl	Tub used for cooling liquid when brewing
Feather bed	Mattress stuffed with feathers
Flock bed	Mattress stuffed with woollen waste
Gun flagon	Large ale flagon, usually made of pewter
Hanging press	Wardrobe for hanging clothes
Hangles	Chains in a chimney from which pots and pans can be hung
Jack	A device for turning a spit over a fire
Joined chairs and stools	Furniture that is made with mortice and tenon joints, not nailed
Mash tub	Tub for mashing malt in order to make beer
Porringer	Bowl-shaped dish
Powdering tub	Tub for salting or pickling meat
Press	Large cupboard with doors and shelves for storing clothes, etc
Sconce	Candle holder, often fixed to a wall
Truckle bed	Low bedstead on castors that can be moved for storage
Turned chair	Chair with legs or back pieces that have been turned on a lathe