

A Hamblethorpe will

A rather interesting local will is that of Edward Theaker, which was made in 1632.

Theaker was the owner of Hamblethorpe Hall, which was most likely part of the manor of Hamblethorpe, located between Farnhill and Bradley.

Origin of the Theaker family name

The Theaker family name is probably derived from the Old Saxon word *thekkian*, meaning “to thatch” – clearly indicating an occupation as a roofer or thatcher.

The Theaker family in Kildwick parish

There certainly was a Theaker family in this area in the 14th and 15th centuries and the surname appears a number of times in the earliest Kildwick Parish Register, covering the late 16th and early 17th centuries, including:

1/2/1574	Burial of Richard Theaker
30/1/1576	Baptism of Maria, daughter of Hugonis Theaker and his wife Isabellae
4/3/1585	Baptism of Suzanna, daughter of Hugonis Theaker and his wife Isabellae
11/4/1587	Burial of Suzanna Theaker, infant
26/2/1587	Burial of Anna Theaker, of Sutton, aged 25
15/4/1587	Burial of Isabella, wife of Hugonis Theaker
15/5/1587	Burial of Hugo Theaker, aged 50. Died of plague.
8/12/1577	Burial of Alicia Theaker
14/11/1585	Baptism of Jonas and Alicia Theaker, twins of Elizabeth Theaker, father reputedly Arthur Dransfield
23/4/1588	Burial of Anna Theaker, aged 62
15/6/1588	Burial of Alicia Theaker of Sutton
23/10/1591	Burial of John Theaker, aged 24
3/12/1595	Burial of Elizabeth Theaker, wife of Robert
19/2/1598	Marriage of Arthur Dransfield and Elizabeth Theaker
31/3/1598	Burial of Robert Theaker, of Cononley
28/5/1605	Burial of Richard Theaker, of Sutton
29/10/1607	Burial of Elizabeth Theaker, Bradeley
2/8/1617	Burial of Agnes Theaker, Sutt[on]
14/5/1621	Burial of John Theaker, Steet[on]
12/11/1626	Baptism of Henry Hill, illegitimate son of Henry Hill and Margaret Theaker
30/6/1633	Baptism of Margaret Theaker, illegitimate daughter of Thomas Mosley and Margaret Theaker

Neither Edward nor Jason Theaker (referred to in the will as Edward’s “sonne and heir”) appear in the Kildwick Parish records – suggesting that Edward wasn’t living locally or perhaps wasn’t even a local man. However, there is record of a Jason Theaker being baptised at St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster, in 1620; and also a Jane Theaker being baptised there in 1624.

The current St. Margaret's, Westminster, was completed in 1523. It is situated close to both Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. It became the parish church of the Palace of Westminster in 1614.



St. Margaret's Westminster –the parish church of the Palace of Westminster since 1614

What the will tells us about Edward Theaker

What is clear from the will is that Theaker must have had middle-class origins and most likely was not expected to inherit property. In early life he may have been apprenticed to John Waterhouse, a scrivener (scribe), a man he refers to as “sometimes my master”.

He seems to have associated with people of both high and low birth. The will leaves money to shoemakers, scriveners, a cutler, a bricklayer, a vintner; but the executor is named as Sir Robert Bell of Beaupre Hall in Norfolk, an MP whose father had been Speaker of the House.



**Beaupre Hall – Home of Sir Robert Bell of Beaupre, executor of Edward Theaker’s will.
The house was demolished in 1966**

The fact that he was a scribe, knew a senior MP, and had his son baptised in St. Margaret’s, suggests that he might have worked, as a scribe, at Westminster.

Theaker seems to have had a rather reckless attitude to spending; he had lots of debts and outstanding court judgements against him, but he still seemed to be able to count some of the men he owed money to as his friends. In his will he was concerned that all his debts should be settled – both those that he could remember and those “which I cannot now call to mind” – for which purpose he allocated no less than a third of his entire estate. He did, however, specify that Hamblethorpe Hall should be kept as part of the two-thirds of his estate that would pass to his son.

One debt that Theaker could remember was to a “Mr Harrison at the Talbott seaventeene shillings or thereabouts”. The Talbot may possibly have been the inn of that name in Southwark; a well known inn on the route out of London towards Canterbury. Before Theaker’s time it had been known as “The Tabard” and is mentioned in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales.

Despite his large debts his will was a very generous one. He left gifts of money to a number of women, in many cases wives of his friends, so that they can buy rings – presumably to remember him by.

Will of Edward Theaker

In the name of God Amen. The one and twentieth daie of June Anno Domini One thousand Six hundred and thirtie two, And in the eighth yeare of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lord Charles by the yeare of God Kinge of England, Scotland, France and Ireland defender of the faith &c. I Edward Theaker of Hamblethorpe in the Countie of Yorke Gent[leman] being at this present sicke in body but of good and p[er]fect minde and memory (praised be God) do make and ordaine this my last will and testament in man[n]er and forme following first and principally. I com[m]end my soule into the hands of Almightye God my Savio[u]r and Redeemer and my body to the earth, to be decently buried at the discretion of my Executor hereafter herein named. And as touching disposition of my land, tenements, goods and chattels I do order give and dispose the same as followeth.

First I give and bequeath unto my especial good friend S[i]r Robert Bell of Bewpery [Beaupre] Hall in the Countie of Norfolk Knight, All my leases, goods, chattels and personall estate whatsoever for and toward the payment and satisfaction of such debts and som[m]es of money as I do owe unto him. Item I have a great desire and doe soe will and appoint, that my debts and legacies be all well and truly paid and discharged. And to avoid difference[s] I have thought fit to sett downe what debts I owe in particular and to whom as neere as I can remember, vizt to Mr Isembert Christ[o]fer upon a judgement Twentie Five pounds or thereabouts, to Mr Dringe upon the like Twentie and two pounds or thereabouts, to Mr Foster, Bricklayer, upon the like Twentie pounds or thereabouts. Item to Henry Hayes sho[e]maker upon all accompts and engagements. Twentie five pounds, to Mr Boulton, vintner, Thirtie pounds or thereabouts. Item to Robert Fowlyer, cutler, three pounds and five shillings. Item small debts in the countrey amounting to five pounds or thereabouts. To Robert Cureton, scrivener, five pounds. Item to Mr Thomas Cooke foure pounds. To Mr Harrison at the Talbott seaventeene shillings or thereabouts. To Mr Timothie Howe seaventeene shillings or thereabouts. And if there shall appeare any more debts to be by mee in[stan]tly owinge which I cannot now call to mind my desire is they shall be well and truly, satisfied as well as those which I have here particularly named.

I give and bequeath to my cosen John Harrison the som[m]e of fortie pounds of current money of England. Item I give and bequeath unto John Waterhouse scrivener (sometimes my M[aste]r) Twentie pounds for his owne use, and twentie five pounds more for the use of his five children Ch[arle]s, William, Batholomew, John and Grace Waterhouse vizt five pounds apiece towards binding of them apprentices, or otherwise to be disposed for their good as their father shall think fit. Item I give and bequeath to my loving friend Thomas Boulton, Vintner, (over and besides the debts I owe him) twenty pounds. I bequeath unto my kinde friend Henry Hayes, sho[e]maker, (over and besides the debts I owe him) fifteen pounds. Item I give and bequeath to my servant John Whittell five pounds. Item I give and bequeath to the wife of Jeremy Carnell sho[e]maker twentie shillings to make her a Ringe and to her sister, the wife of the said John Waterhouse, the like som[m]e of twentie shillings for the like purpose. Item I give and bequeath to Mrs Bridgett Parker twentie shillings to make her a Ringe. Item I give and bequeath to my loving friend Oliver Grey twentie shillings to make him a ringe. Item I give and bequeath to my kinde cosen Mr Cressie twentie shillings to make him a ring and to his wife five pounds to buy her a ring. Item I give and bequeath to my cosen wid[ow] Elizabeth Acland twentie shillings to make her a ring. Item I give and bequeath unto her brother, my cosen, Francis Robinson tenne pounds.

All such legacies before specified my will and minde is shall be well and truly paid within two years next after my decease. And as touching my freehold lands, tenements and hereditaments within the Countie of Yorke or elsewhere I do dispose of the same as followeth, vizt I doe leave two parts thereof (the whole being divided into three parts) to discend to my sonne and heire Jason Theaker. And I doe give and devise to th[e] aforesaid S[i]r Robert Bell and his heires forever a full third part of all my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever. To th[e] intent the said S[i]r Robert shall by the sale thereof or otherwise paie and discharge all my debts, legacies and funeral expenses of w[hi]ch two parts that I leave to discend to my heire. My will and mind is that Hamblethorpe Hall because it is an intire thinge shal[l] be part.

Item I make and ordaine the said S[i]r Robert Bell the full and sole Executor of this my last will and testament. In witenes[s] whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seale the daie and years above written per me Edw[ard] Theaker signed, sealed, published and delivered by the said Edward Theaker as his last will and Testament in the presence of Law[rence] Wright, Ja[m]es Walter, Geo[rge] Glathorne, John Reeve, John Waterhouse Snr.

Note: £10 in 1632 is equivalent to at least £1,500 in 2016