

I The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

THE EARLY REGISTERS OF HAGLEY

The earliest record in the Parish Chest is the first volume of the Parish Registers. This is a well-preserved volume with pages of parchment but probably not its original binding. It is generally written in a clear script and the changes of hand seem to relate to the incumbents of the parish. The register begins in 1538 and as such it is one of the country's original registers, recorded on the order of Henry VIII's Vicar-General of the Church, Thomas Cromwell. It starts with the following introduction:

This Regester of Hagley Church was fyrst beganne the 25th day of October and the xxx of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lorde Kyng Henry the 8th By Thomas Laugharne parson of Hagley Anno Domini 1538

The volume covers the years from 1538 to 1631 with a break from 1553 to 1560. As this gap represents the years of Mary and the return to Catholicism, it is possible that the Rector of those years, Thomas Tyrer, associated the Register with Protestantism. The register resumes in 1560 with no explanation but with a sentence by the new incumbent, Nicholas Greves, that the register was beginning 'from this tyme foorth'.

After the original introduction the book records the baptisms, weddings and burials of the parish. Regrettably it does this in as concise a fashion as possible and very little additional information is included. There are very few references to occupations and even fewer to place names. No explanations as to the cause of death are given and there are no mentions of occurrences like plague. The occupations included are the clergy, described as 'parson', the 'baylyf' Jonathon Collins, Beale the Miller, and one servant of Jonathon Dannser. Social status was given just sufficient attention: Francis Blunt and Walter James are described as 'Gents' and the first Littelton recorded is described as 'Esquire'.

Only two place names are mentioned, but these are useful in establishing that the parish was larger than it is today. The Penn family of 'Harberrow' and the Grove family of Wassell appear in the 1327 Lay Subsidy Roll and repeated mention of these names indicates the long continuity of some of Hagley's families. Generally for the sort of parish that Hagley represents it is usual for parish boundaries to remain unchanged from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century. As the map of the parish shows, the shape was strange, being remarkably elongated. From the nucleus around the church the parish spread up the hill to include a minor settlement at Wassell and to the south it took in the settlement of Harborough, including what is today Blakedown. Only in the 1880's was the expanding village of Blakedown given its own parish.

The later part of the register contains references to the family which has held the lordship of the manor since the sixteenth century. In 1538 the lordship belonged to Anne, the wife of Sir John St. Leger of Annary in Devon. She had been the eldest daughter of the Earl of Ormonde who had held the manor in the early sixteenth century. Both the Earl and Anne were almost certainly

THE PARISH REGISTER OF 1538-1631

An extract with transcript from the Register (Latin translated)

Wed. John P(er)kis and Anne Ensor were married the
22nd of November
Bur: The same day was baptized Elizabeth
daughter of John Sparrie
Anno domi 1603. 1st of April
Bap: Edmund sonne of William Jeston
baptized the last of March
Bur: Thomas Toy was buried the second
of Aprill.

Wed. John P(er)kis and Anne Ensor were married the
22th of November

Bap: The same day was baptized Elizabeth
daughter of John Sparrie

In the Year of our Lord 1603 In the 1st Year of James

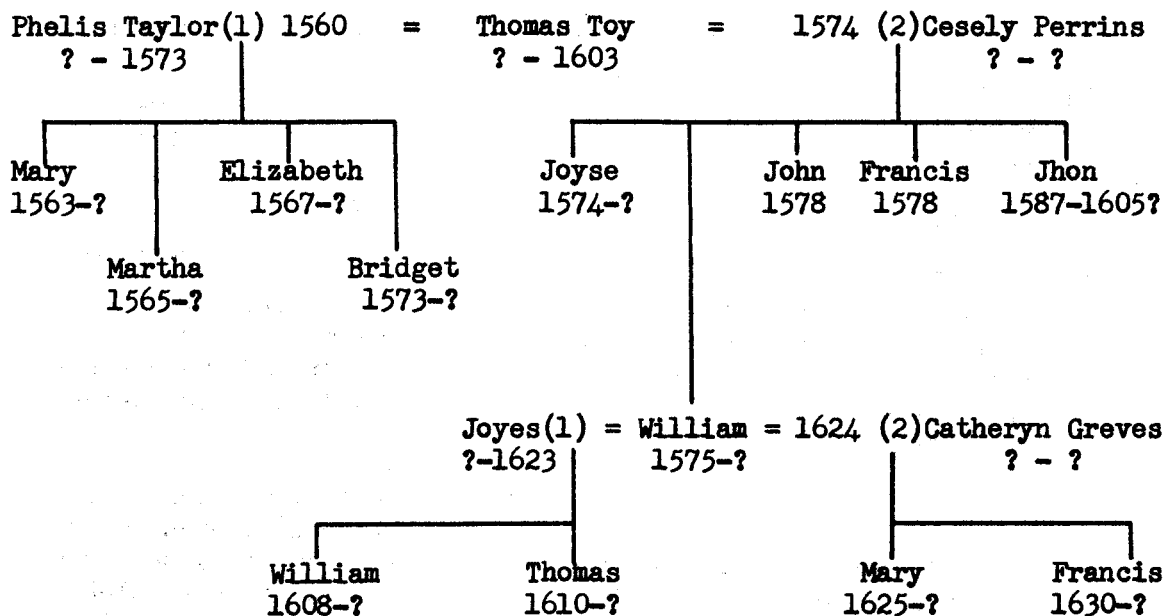
Bap: Edmund sonne of William Jeston
baptized the last of March

Bur: Thomas Toy was buried the second
of Aprill

absentee landlords, but with the purchase of the Hagley manor in 1564 by John Littelton of Frankley, Hagley passed into the hands of a family that was to make the village the focal point of its estates. John Littelton did not live at Hagley and his death in 1590-91 is not recorded in the register. The first reference to the family is in 1593 and records the baptism of Brydgett, daughter of John Littelton, the grandson of the original purchaser.

Analysis of the registers for the purpose of drawing conclusions about Hagley society in this period has proved a frustrating task. This is not an unusual feature of parish register study, but the task is complicated by the fact that the second volume of the registers does not start until 1708. In practice it is only for the relatively short period from 1560 to 1631 that the first register can be regarded as reliable. Only a small number of persons can be traced from the font to the grave and family reconstitution has proved difficult. An example is given in Figure 1 for the Toy family. As can be seen at a glance, the only completed life spans are for the twins who died very soon after birth. Although information about individuals is readily apparent, no worthwhile conclusions have been possible about infant mortality, extent of illegitimacy, age of women at marriage and total life spans.

Figure 1

THE TOY FAMILY

Dates referred to are entries in this Register.

Estimating Hagley's population from the registers is not a straightforward task. The following table (Figure 2) gives a statistical picture of the period at five-year intervals, but it does not give the whole picture. Baptisms and burials provide useful totals but, even in what can be assumed to be a relatively stable village society, mobility seems to have been considerable.¹ From the census taken by Bishop Sandys of the diocese of Worcester in 1563¹ we know that 19 families were named. Analysis of the register seems to show that 22 family names were in evidence. On the assumption that a family might contain five persons at any one time a population of about a hundred is indicated. However, it is possible that some of the 'families' in this census were extended families and so the total population might have been higher.

¹ See page 5 for list of names

Figure 2

TABLE OF BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES AND BURIALS 1538-1631

	1538-40	1541-45	1546-50	1551-60 ⁺
Baptisms	13	15	15	6
Marriages	5	4	7	5
Burials	5	18	11	7
	1561-65	1566-70	1571-75	1576-80
Baptisms	16	12	19	26
Marriages	7	6	9	4
Burials	10	1	7	11
	1581-85	1586-90	1591-95	1596-1600
Baptisms	11	19	14	11
Marriages	2	7	1	1
Burials	9	9	8	7
	1601-5	1606-10	1611-15	1616-20
Baptisms	8	16	20	15
Marriages	1	0	5	3
Burials	11	8	14	10
	1621-25	1626-30	1631	Totals
Baptisms	18	24	5	283
Marriages	4	4	0	75
Burials	7	20	0	174

⁺ No entries between June 1553 and October 1560

There are well-tried methods for estimating population from the number of baptisms, but they are not particularly reliable with small numbers. The method of multiplying the average annual number of baptisms in a ten-year period by 30 reveals quite a wide fluctuation, but the generalised curve indicates a total around the hundred mark.

The number of marriages proves a very unreliable indicator of population. This is especially evident in the period from 1591 to 1610 when in thirty years only three marriages are recorded and yet no fewer than fifty baptisms take place. The explanation is the obvious one that marriages were celebrated in other parishes. For Hagley it seems that a large majority of the inhabitants went outside the parish for their marriage partners.

Comparison of baptism and burial figures seems to indicate a rising population. In every five-year period after 1561, with the exception of just one, the number of baptisms exceeds the number of burials, usually by a wide margin. Over the whole period from 1561 to 1631 there are 231 baptisms to 132 deaths. It seems unlikely, however, that the overall population increased by any such proportion. It is difficult to trace any real increase in the number of family units, for the very practical reason that the village, and in particular the agricultural holdings, would have been unable to sustain any significant increase in the number of persons. Since we know that the towns were showing significant increases in size of population, the surplus must have been finding their way to places like Stourbridge, Dudley and Kidderminster.

New family names appear in the course of the register, but the total of family units remains between 20 and 25. When individual families are examined,

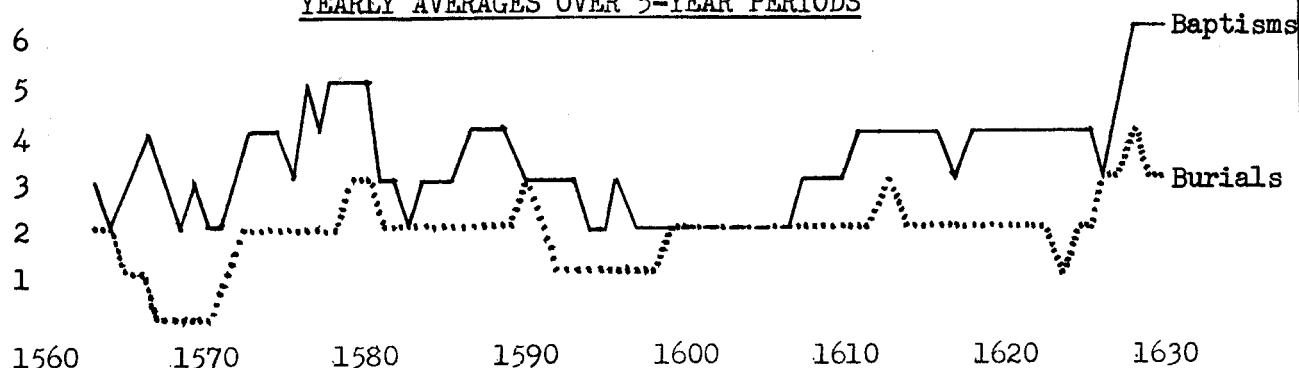
the tendency seems to be for the daughters and the younger sons to move away. This is evident in the family tree of Thomas Toy. His baptism is not recorded because it is likely that he was born before 1538. He and his wife Phelis had four daughters, but in 1573, eight months after the baptism of their last child Phelis died. Within six months Thomas Toy had married Cesely Perrens of Oldswinford and his second family started in 1575. Twins died in 1578 but two sons and a daughter survived. What is remarkable is that none of Thomas Toy's five daughters is referred to in the registers again. One can only presume that they married and moved elsewhere.

The same family illustrates two other features relating to mortality. Not only did Thomas Toy's twins die in 1578, but in 1540 twin boys, probably his brothers, died within four months of birth. The only other set of twins in the register survived. The possibility of a mother dying after childbirth was also high. This could have been the cause of Phelis' death in 1573, and in 1617 Johan, the wife of a related Thomas Toy, died just thirty days after the baptism of her daughter.

The numbers of burials give no sign of plague and little evidence for dearth in Hagley. There was high mortality in the agricultural districts of neighbouring Staffordshire in 1586-87 as a result of poor harvests. This is not reflected in Hagley although the figure of 5 deaths in 1588 is above the average. There was a nationwide dearth over the period 1596-98 as a result of a run of poor harvests from 1594 to 1597, but only three deaths were recorded in this three-year period. Dudley was afflicted by plague in 1616-17 but only five deaths occurred in Hagley in 1617 and there is nothing to suggest that plague might be the cause. The late 1620's saw a return of poor harvests and the 22 deaths in the five-year period from 1626 to 1630 represent the largest total for burials in the whole of the period covered by the register. In the winter of 1626 the burials of two 'poore wanderinge' men is the closest indication that hunger might be abroad, but neither of them were Hagley inhabitants. Of the others three were widows and four were children.

Figure 3

BURIALS AND BAPTISMS 1560-1631
YEARLY AVERAGES OVER 5-YEAR PERIODS



- 1 (p.3) The register indicates the following as the names of the 19 families: Blunt, Collins, Dannser, Grove, Harper, Higgins, Hill, Hoult, Jeston, Moore, Olyver, Ouldnall, Parkes, Patchett, Penne, Sparry, Tayler, Toy, Wyrton

Figure 4

CLERGY IN HAGLEY 1531-1634

<u>Name and Date</u>		<u>Entries in Register</u>	
Thomas Laugharne	1531	1538	Thomas Laugharne Parson of Hagley
		1550	Thomas Laugharne clarke and Margrit Denston were married xxvith day of June
		1550	Frances the sonne of Thomas Laugharne baptyzed the xith Januarie
		1551	Wyllm the sonne of Thomas Laugharne, clarke, was baptized the xxviiiith day of Februarie
Thomas Tyrer	1553	No entries in the Register	
Nicholas Greves	1560	1560	Nycolas Greves clerk parson of Hagley
		1571	Vic. resigna: Nich Greves
Nicholas Paston	1571	1571	Nicholas Paston Deacon this yeare Parson of Hagley
William Boucher	1595	1612	Martha the wife of William Boucher parson was buried the 27 day of Aprill
		1617	William Boucher, sometymes Parson of this Church of Hagley, but dyinge curate thereof, was buried the twelvth day of Aprill
Thomas Wennington	1615	1620	Elizabeth Wennington the daughter of Thomas Wennington Parson of Hagley was baptized the 17 of December
		1623	Baptized. Robert Wennington sonne of Thomas Wennington Parson of this Church of Hagley the first day of March
		1626	Jhon Wennington the father of Thomas Wennington Parson of Hagley was buried the 17th of March
		1627	Richard Wennington the sonne of Thomas Wennington and of Elizabeth his wif baptized June vth
Bartholomew Kettle	1634		

(Spellings of names are as they appear in the Register 1538-1631: the Rectors' Board in St. John Baptist, Hagley Parish Church, shows the following variants: Thomas Laughern (1531), Nicholas Greeves (1560) William Bowcher (1595).)

WILLS AND INVENTORIES OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The study of history usually seems to be concerned with those who have made a mark for themselves, but by far the greater number of people are those like ourselves - ordinary people who never hit the headlines but who nevertheless represent the reality of the past. Fortunately, through the preservation of wills and inventories it is possible to acquire some idea of that reality.

Probate inventories are a particularly useful source for the local historian as they can give quite a detailed impression of the life of the relatively ordinary person. They exist in considerable numbers and are usually kept by the county record office, in this case the Hereford and Worcester Record Office. It is estimated that they survive for approximately one third of all adult burials in the period from 1550 to 1750. For this study a selection has been made of eleven inventories covering the first half of the seventeenth century.

From the time of Henry VIII until 1859 probate of a will required the production of an inventory of the deceased's 'goods and chattels'. These lists, usually taken by neighbours, provide a mass of information on the housing of the gentry, middle class and peasantry. As well as providing a list of rooms they give details of furniture, furnishings, clothing, jewellery and plate, contents of kitchens, workshops and farms. At the same time the wills provide family details: names of widows, children, in-laws and other relatives. Wills can also supply information on a man's occupation, his lands, his tools, his customers and even his creditors. In general, then, the inventory is concerned with people's property; the will with the people themselves.

We can learn about many of the seventeenth century Hagley family names: Danser, Gowen, Grove, Hart, Holte, Jeston, Kettle, Lyttelton, Pearkes, Parry, Penn, Thatcher, Toy, Walker and Webbe. We can discover fashionable Christian names; for example, Azarias, Bartholomew, Edmund, Edward, John, Richard, Roger, Stephen, Thomas and William among the men, and Alles (Alice), Bennet, Bridget, Christian, Cordelia, Darrytye, Elizabeth, Joan and Margaret for the women. The spelling varies - no irksome spelling rules in those days!

We are able to establish some Hagley occupations. Thomas Toy who died in 1604 was a husbandman (or farmer) as were the majority of Hagley men. Some were engaged in industry like Thomas Webbe who was a scythe-grinder. William Jhoones (Jones) who died in January 1640 was a serving man to Thomas Littleton, the local lord of the manor, to whom he left £10 of his worldly goods which totalled £15 3s Od. John Gowen, buried in 1644, was a locksmith. Many such householders grew a few crops or kept a few domestic animals and owned spinning wheels and other implements associated with wool or flax.

Although none of the houses inhabited by the subjects of this research has survived, we can learn a great deal about them from the inventories. It is interesting to compare the house in which Margaret lived as the wife of William Jeston with the one she occupied as his widow (he died in 1605, she some six years later). William was a yeoman farmer and his inventory shows that his house consisted of a hall, a parlour, a bedchamber, a chamber over the bedchamber, a chamber over the hall, a buttery, a kitchen, and a chamber over the kitchen. He also owned a barn. On his death Margaret must have moved to much smaller premises for her inventory lists only a hall, kitchen and chambers.

John Pearkes who died in the spring of 1617 lived in a house consisting merely of a hallhouse and chamber with a barn. Thomas Webbe, the scythe-grinder, who was quite well-to-do, had a hall, a chamber, an upper chamber and a buttery; in his upper chamber there were some 'moveable boards upon a floore' and a ladder and '3 doores' which suggest there was no permanent staircase.

In the seventeenth century furniture was sparse. There was very little upholstery and William Jeston was one of the rare ones to own '6 quyshines' (cushions) in his hall and another six in his parlour. The most common seats were - to quote again from William Jeston's inventory - 'ffoormes', 'benches' and 'stoules'. Both John Pearkes and William Jeston owned 'cheyers' or 'cheeres' which in fact were not common in the early seventeenth century.

Meals were taken on a table board which would be placed on a frame or trestles so that it could be put away when not in use. Most families appear to have had cupboards or hanging shelves in the hall or parlour. William Jeston had a 'lyvery cubbard' (livery cupboard) in his parlour. This was a hanging or standing cupboard with a shelf and this was used to hold food and drink; sometimes it was in the bedchamber so that the occupant could have a snack at hand. Chests and coffer were common items, useful both for storage and sometimes for seating; they could also fit inside each other and were relatively easy to transport. William Jones's worldly possessions were contained in his '2 trunks'.

The bed was a very important item of furniture and was often found in the hall or parlour as well as in the bedchamber. The inventory of John Pearkes lists in the chamber 'one olde peare of Bedsteeds wth a flocke beede one kiverlett one blanket one b'ster (bolster) and one peare of sheets', and in another chamber, 'two peare of ould bedstedes two chamber twilleys (an obsolete word for quilts) one olde flocke bedde one peare of hurdene (coarse linen) sheets and a boster'.

William Jeston had 'a bedsteed and the furniture' and a warming pan in his parlour, a bedstead and a featherbed and bolsters, pillows and coverlets in his bedchamber and in the chamber over the bedchamber 'one bedhillinge' (bed-covering) and a blanket, which kept company with 'linnen cloth yarne and flax, ceartayne cheese butter and tallowe candles and other implemenths', all of which suggest this room was used for storage. The inventory of Roger Holte taken in 1602 shows that he owned 'one flocke bed, one canvase, one older coverlet & one pillowe; ii chaffe beds iiii twillies, one paire of shorte flaxen sheets and two paires and half of hempe shets'.

The inventories provide many details of household linen but unfortunately throw little light on seventeenth century wearing apparel. However, the inventory of Bennet Southall, 'late wyf of Wyllm Southall thelder (the elder) of Frankley' taken on June 8th 1602, does provide some information on female dress. Bennet owned a 'best gowne, pettecote, kercher, ptlett (partlet), smocke & hatt'. A gown was a loose garment without a waist which could be worn under a dress or serve as a dress. The petticoat would perhaps be quite ornate as it might show under the gown; the kercher was a small shawl worn around the shoulders and the partlet was a 'fill-in' for a low décolletage. Her smock would be a loose-fitting garment worn under her dress and might have been kept on to sleep in. She also owned one linen and two woollen aprons. For heavy work she had coarse hard-wearing clothes. At that time only married women wore a hat, both in and out of the home; unmarried women went without.

William Jhoones who died in 1640 left Stephen Davis his 'gray cote and best hatt'. Alas, that is the extent of knowledge imparted on costume and none of the inventories or wills mentioned jewellery. It would appear that folk in those days wasted little money on such items (except perhaps the gentry). At this point it is interesting to note that only one man owned a book! That was John Gowen, the locksmith, and unfortunately no details of his books are given - not even the number he possessed.

If few possessed food for the mind, all Hagley residents died possessed of equipment for feeding the body. Most ate from pewter or wood. Thomas Webbe possessed one brasse pot, eleven pewter dishes, four pewter 'sawcers' (these were for holding sauces), two 'salts' and five wooden vessels. Thomas Toy who died in 1604 owned sixteen assorted pieces of pewter with a chafing dish (a dish for keeping food warm) and also thirteen pewter dishes, two salts, trenchers (flat wooden plates) and spoons. At the other end of the scale, Alles Grove (deceased 1609) possessed one 'platen' which was probably a flattish wooden dish, and three saucers.

The inventories usually list implements connected with the fireplace, thus highlighting the importance of that feature as a means of heating and cooking. Thomas Webbe, for example, had in his hall 'one iron grate, a fire shovell & tongues, a greediron (gridiron), a chaffing dish & links belonging to the fire' and in the buttery a pair of 'cobboards, and a brooch (spit) & a drippinge pan, 1 bastinge ladle & a fleshe forke'. Thomas Toy possessed 'tonges, ffire shovell, Andiron (iron trivet for supporting wood in a fireplace), potgele (metal bar with hooks for hanging cooking pots) bellowes brandyron, grediron (grill) cobbourds, broche (spit) & frying pane'. John Pearkes died in 1617 possessed of 'one irne gayle, wth a peare of pothoucks & a greedirne' in his hallhouse. On the other hand, Bennet Southall had no fire furniture, although she did possess 'iii small cauldrons & one bygger cauldron' for cooking.

Meat was cooked on a spit and other cooking was done in cauldrons hung on a pothook or a gele over the fire; hence cauldrons are very common, appearing in all the inventories studied, except those of Alles Grove and Roger Holte. Thomas Webbe had five, Thomas Toy six, and William Jeston 'two great caythernes with other smaller'. Sometimes pans could be stood over the fire and several people owned brass pans. Other items of interest include a 'posnett' owned by Thomas Webbe. This was a cooking pot on short legs, and sometimes with a long handle, which stood on the fire. He also possessed a 'skimmin', presumably for making butter, 3 pails, 1 churn, 1 strike (a measure), milk pans, dripping pan, basting ladle and an iron 'peale' (for breadmaking).

Thomas Toy had a 'skimmer, a dabnet (cooking vessel), pynts (small buckets), pales & other wodde stuffe, a malte mill, mustard myll, chesse pres, skeele (pail) & kneding trough'. Most people probably burned wood on their fires, but in Roger Holt's inventory both wood and 'cooles' (coals) are mentioned.

From the kitchen utensils it is possible to glean information about seventeenth century food and drink. Many people brewed their own beer, made bread, butter and cheese. Thomas Webbe had '3 fflichins of bacon & 2 of beiffe' as well as cheese and butter in his house when he died. William Jeston had cheeses and butter stored in the chamber over the bedchamber and in a chamber over the kitchen there was 'barley and other grayne'. John Pearkes had 'foure strike of otes' in his house. These cereals could have been for consumption or for seed.

Most of the seventeenth century Hagley people studied had occupations concerned with farming and even those engaged in industry kept livestock and had some land for growing crops. Thomas Webbe was a scythe-grinder and both will and inventory provide information about his mill. His inventory, for example, lists two iron spindles for a blade mill and 'grindlestones' (grindstones). His will mentions 'two spindles of iron joined together'. He owned a cart, presumably used for business purposes. In his will he also names customers such as John Device (who owed him for a grindstone), Thomas Badlam of Worcester, an ironmonger, and William Hawkes of Stourbridge, locksmith.

By Labornie of Ball for goods
Dios of 15 Nov 1804. 1/2 paid m
1/2 left due of 15 May 1804. Ant.
Dios of 15 Jan of England 1/2 same

Item	Quantity	Price	Total
Imprim of the room in the Barn	26	10	260
Imprim of the room in the field	8	10	80
Imprim of the room in the field	12	10	120
Imprim of the room in the field	6	10	60
Imprim of the room in the field	10	10	100
Imprim of the room in the field	2	10	20
Imprim of the room in the field	13	4	52
Imprim of the room in the field	20	10	200
Imprim of the room in the field	10	10	100
Imprim of the room in the field	26	8	208
Imprim of the room in the field	13	4	52
Imprim of the room in the field	26	8	208
Imprim of the room in the field	10	4	40
Imprim of the room in the field	26	6	156

Find in 2 conf.

Th. 2.	brad panned s	200yds 4d
Th. 4.	brad panned s	260 8d
Th. 6.	brad panned s	200
Th. 3.	rand panned s	200
Th. 16	piece of panned of all sorts to a reefing diff	16 6d
Th. 13.	powder diff s. 2. salt s	6 10d
Th. 3.	flour s. 2. salt s	100
Th. 3.	flour s. 2. salt s	400
Th. 4.	pair of naggon s. 2. salt s	120
Th. 10	rand panned s	200yds 4d
Th. 8.	2 salt s	200

The Inventory of Thomas Toy 1604

The inventorie of all the goods & Cattells moveable & unmoveable of Thomas Toy of Hagley in the countie & Dioces of Worcester husbandman deceased taken & praysed by Wm Jeston, Wm Perin & John Perin Clerk the last daie of May Ao dni 1604. And in the second year of the Raighn of our Sovraign Lord James by the grace of god of England, France & Ireland Kynge defender of the faith etc & of Scotland

Imprimis of Rie corne in the Barn	16 striks	xxxii s
Itm of Rie & Wheat together in the feild	8 Acres	£8
Itm of Barley in the feild	12 Acres	xii £
Itm of pesan fetches & oats	6 acres	iiii £
Itm of oats over & besides v Acres & 2 Acres of dredge		iii £ x s
Itm hey & strawe in the Barn		13s 4d
Itm four lyttell bullocks		x £
Itm iiii kyne		viii £
Itm iii small Beasts		iii £
Itm a mare		26s 8d
Itm a colte		13s 4d
Itm 4 Swyne		26s 8d
Itm the poultrie		iii s 4d
Itm in sheepe C & vi		£26 6s
Itm in the house		
Itm 2 bras pannes		xxxiii s 4d
Itm 4 bras potts		26s 8d
Itm 6 Caldrens & a dabnet		20s
Itm 3 candlesticks & a Skimmer		ii s
Itm 16 peece of pewter of all sorts w th a chafing dyshe		16s 6d
Itm 13 pewter dyshe & 2 salts		6s 10d
Itm 3 Fetherbedds & one flock bed		lv s
Itm 3 Flaxe shets And 4 pair of hempte shets		40s
Itm 4 pair of noggen shets And 2 Blankets		12s
Itm v coverletts And v Canvasses		xxxiii s 4d
Itm 8 Bolsters		x s

80 12 0

(Transcript of introductory sentence appears on previous page)

Itm the Bedstedds of all sorts	x s
Itm 2 Bourd clothes And 12 Table napkins	v s 4d
Itm 2 pillow Bures and 2 Towells	vi s 8d
Itm 4 Coaffers & a Chest	x s
Itm 2 Cupbourds	12s
Itm 2 Table Bourds with the frames	vii s 8d
Itm the Benches Fourmes cheres & stoles	iii s 4d
Itm pynts payles & other wodde stuffe	x s
Itm 2 great Wheeles & 2 littell ones with cards 2 combes & 2 hatches	v s
Itm dyshes & trenchers & spones	vi d
Itm 3 cusshyns	xii d
Itm tonges Fire shovell Andiron potgele bellows brandyron gredyron cobbourde broche & fryinge pan	x s
Itm a mawltmyll & mustardmyll A cheespres A Skeelee kneding trough with a few sawed Bourdes	13s 4d
Itm a wayne & Tombrell 2 plowes yoke tows harrowes hurdles mattocks Stampicks Axebill spades & shovels with other husbandrie stuffe	xliii s
Itm the donge	xx s
Itm his Apparrell	xx s

Summa £80 12s

John Gowen, a Hagley locksmith, died possessing '2 paiers of bellows', 2 vices, 3 anvils, a grindstone, a trough, an 'olde strake' (which was an iron hoop or tyre of a wagon wheel), 'a tin pan, shop tooles and some iron & sheete'.

Like their counterparts in other areas of the country many Hagley families were involved in spinning wool or flax, and most people owned flaxen sheets, table-cloths and napkins. John Gowen possessed '2 spinning wheelles' and ten shillings worth of wool. Thomas Toy had '2 great wheelles' and '2 littell ones with cards, 2 combes & 2 hatchels' (implements for heckling hemp, i.e. combing the coarse fibres). In the chamber over the bedchamber William Jeston stored 'a peece of linnon cloth', yarn and flax. Roger Holte kept a 'spinnynge whele' in his kitchen and Alles Grove owned 'tow knichen' (small bundles) of hemp and three stone of 'wolle'.

Several people owned vessels for washing clothes (or themselves). Thomas Toy had a 'washing bason' and Roger Holte a 'washe pint', and Thomas Webbe possessed a 'twiggen flaskette' which was a wicker clothes basket.

Most of the inventories provided information about crops and livestock; that of Thomas Toy gives details of crops growing in his fields as follows:

Rie & wheat together in the feild - 8 acres
 Barley in the feild - 12 acres
 Pesan (peas and) fetches (vetches) & oats - 6 acres
 Oats & veshes - v acres
 2 acres of dredge (mixed corn, oats with barley).

He also had '6 striks (strikes) of corne & hey' in his barn; and John Gowen stored 'hard corn (wheat), hay, oates, pease, barly' in his.

Most people kept animals of some sort. Thomas Toy, for example, possessed '4 lyttell bullocks, iiii kyne, iii small beasts, a mare, a colte, 4 swyne, poultrie & iii sheepe' and Roger Holte owned an even greater number of domestic animals - '2 kine, iii heifers, two calves, one nagge, xxxix sheepe, iii score swine, iiii stall (hives) of bees, vi henes & a cocke & ix sheape in the custodye of William Harte of Pedmore'. William Jeston kept 'xvii score sheepe, vi oxen, ix kyne, a little bull, three steeres, Heafars, vi yeardlynges, mares & coaltes, vii swine & geese & poultry'. His widow left 'one cowe, one wenlynge (weaning) calfe, xxii sheepe & one pygge'. She also owned 'corne & mault'. The spelling of John Pearkes' animals is amusing - 'three heafers with a bowle chalfe' (bull calf) and 'tenne shippe'. Thomas Webbe rather surprisingly seems to have owned only a mare and cow, while Alles Grove owned 'xxii sheepe and one done (dun) cowe'. In her will this was the first item she mentioned - 'unto Mgaret Grove my naturall mother my dunne cow' (dun meaning brown).

In the absence of artificial fertilizers manure was an important item and therefore appears in several inventories. William Jeston's talks of 'mucke', John Pearkes' of 'mucke aboughte the howse' ('aboughte' here meaning around the outside of the house), and Thomas Toy's of 'donge'.

Many different tools are listed but it is interesting to note that only William Jeston owned a plough; he also possessed a 'wayne and a tumbrell (farm carts), ladders, shovells, spades & strikes' (measures). Roger Holte had a great number of implements - hurdles, ladders, nine pairs of harrows, a spade and shovel, a strike, an axe, a bill, a malt sieve and a coarse sieve. John Gowen and Thomas Webbe both had a cart and Webbe had a spare pair of wheels for his. He also had three 'whisketts' (nosebags) for his mare. Thomas Toy left hurdles, mattocks, picks, spades and shovels.

In general, the quality of life indicated by these inventories is not one of great prosperity. What is remarkable about all of them is the utilitarian nature of the items recorded. William Jeston, the one yeoman in this group, impresses with the wide range of his possessions and by the standards of the time he would have been regarded as comfortably off. But even his property includes scarcely anything that might be regarded as a luxury. From every page of the evidence emerges the overriding necessity of earning a living, whether it be in domestic industry or as is the case with most of these Hagley inhabitants in the vital occupation of agriculture.

Figure 5

Wills and inventories used in this study, together with valuations:

Roger Holte 1601	£30. 8.10.
Bennet Southall 1602	£35.14. 0.
Thomas Toy, husbandman 1604	£80.12. 0.
William Jeston 1605	£424.18. 0.
John Holte 1607	£3. 2. 4. (owing £16.5.0.)
Alles Grove 1609	£60. 6. 4.
Margrit Jeston, widow 1611	£32. 3. 8.
John Pearkes 1617	£12. 2. 0.
Thomas Webbe, scythe-grinder 1630	£51. 3. 0.
William Jhoones, servingman 1640	£14. 3. 0.
John Gowen, locksmith 1644	£45. 4. 0.

In the name of God Amen. The fiftenth day of Decemb^r
 Anno Dom - 1640 As William Thomas of Haverly in the
 County of Worcester Esquire being sicke in
 bodye, but in good and perfect remembrance of his
 bodie given to god, doth make this my last will and
 Testament in manner and forme following witz:
 I bequeath my soule unto almighty
 god, and to his Sonne Iesus Christ by whose
 death and passion I trust to be saved, and my
 bodie to be buried in the Christian buriall of Haverly

At to Mr Tho: Littleton my sonne 3-10-0-0
 god master
 At to Mr Thomas Mucklon 1-0-0
 At to Susan Stamppe 0-3-0
 At to my Sister Margarett Thomas 1-0-0
 if she be living
 At to Richard Lill my owle
 Cunnell and all things in it }
 At to Bridgett Danfor my best
 Cunnell and all things in it }
 At to Stephen Davis my gray
 Gote and best Hatt
 At to be spent at my burying 2-0-0

And lastly I make and ordayne that I give
 Mr Thomas Danfor my sold and whole bequests
 to this my last will and Testament in force is
 remaining more in shew in money or clothes at
 my death to for this my will affirmed & freely
 give unto him and his wife whosoever
 have hereunto set my hand this day and year
 above written. In the presence of

The make of William
 Thomas

Barthol. Kettle.

Paul D. Hancock
 his mark: /

Richard X Lill marks

The Will and Inventory of William Jones 1640

In the name of God Amen. The sixteenth day of December Anno domini 1640 I William Jhoones of Hagley in the Countey of Worcester Servingman being sicke in bodye, but in good and perfect remembrance prayse bee given to god doe make this my last will and Testament. In manner and forme following vitz: Imprimis I bequeath my soule unto Allmightie God and to his Sonne Jesus Christ by whose death and passion I trust to be saved and my bodie to be buried in the Christian buriall of Hagley

It(em) to Sir Tho: Littleton my verie good Master	£	s	d
	10	0	0
It to Mr Thomas Mucklow	1	0	0
It to Susan Stampes	0	3	0
It to my sister Margaret Jhoones) if she be liveing	1	0	0
It to Richard Hill my owld) trunke and all things in it)			
It to Bridgett Danser my best trunke and all things in it			
It to Stephen Davis my gray Cote and best Hatt			
	£	s	d
It to bee spent at my burying	2	0	0

And lastlie I make and ordayne

Thomas Danser my sole and whole Executor to this my last will and Testament and whatsoever is remayning more eyther in money or clothes at my death to see this my will performed I freelye give unto him And In wittnes whereof I have hereunto set my hand the day and yeare above written.

In the presence of

Barthol Kettle

The marke of William

+
Jhoones

Paul  Hawkes
his marke

Richard  Hills marke