

**Will of Richard Syme, Yeoman and Householder of Biddenden, Kent,  
dated 7<sup>th</sup> February 1559/60 and Proved 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1560**

*All spelling etc. is as in the original document. Text in [ ] is by way of explanation and correction.*

*The top and bottom of each sheet is blackened and hard/impossible to read in places.*

*Missing words are guesstimated and placed in ( ). See also end notes.*

In the name of God Amen The vij<sup>ti</sup> daye of ffebruarye in the yeere of o<sup>r</sup> Lord one thowsand fyve hundrethe fiftye and nine [1559/60] and in the Second yeare of the Reigne of o<sup>r</sup> Sov<sup>r</sup>eigne Ladye Elizabeth the by the grace of God quene of England [*Queen of England*] ffrannce and Irelande, defendar of the faythe &c.

I **Richard Syme** of the pishe [*parish*] of Byddynden [*Biddenden*] in the countye of Kent Yeoman feelinge my selfe sycke in bodye but whole of mynde & of good and p<sup>r</sup>fytt [*perfect*] remembrance, Laude and preysse [*praise*] be gyven to God, Do constitute [*constitute*] ordeyne and make this my p<sup>r</sup>sent Testament consernynge herein my last wyll in man<sup>r</sup> [*manner*] and forme followyng, that ys to saye

Ffyrst I compytee my Soule into the handes of Almyghtye God my maker & Redemer and my bodye to the earthe to be buryed wheare as ytt shall please God (\* *see end notes*) my soule to depte [*depart*] from ytt

Item I wyll that my executors shall burye my bodye to the earthe and to dystribute in dedes of charyttee iij [3] busshells of wheate and iij [3] busshells of malte and as muche Ale victualls as ys worthe x<sup>s</sup> [10 shillings (2\* *see end notes*)] w<sup>th</sup>in the sayd pishe of Byddynden

Item I gyve and bequethe to **Margarett my wyfe** iij [3] kyne & a mayre & all my howsholde stuffe those pelles there under wrytt and expected

Item I gyve unto the sayd **Margarett my wyffe** all my Swyne & pygges w<sup>th</sup>all my bacon butter cheese & pinktrye?

Item I gyve unto my sayd wyffe halfe my corne in my barne & house & halfe that that ys on the grounde

Item I do constitute<sup>(sic)</sup> ordeyne & make the sayd **Margarett my wyffe & Thomas Syme my Sonne** my sole exeors [*executors*] of this my sayd Testament and last wyll to dispose any goodes here undr wyllled accordyng to the trew meanynge of this my sayd Testament & last wyll and for the [*health*] of my soule and all chrysten [*Christian*] soules

Item I wyll that my sayd wyffe shall have the legacye up of my sayd children untill suche tyme as they be able to gyve heyers? or Apygnes? or ells tyll they be able to be put forthe to some Maisters or occupacion which the [black] ... to become

Item gyve unto my **sonne James** my best cote? [*black to end of page*]

Re-start page two: ... all thinges thereto belongynge

Item I gyve unto my **sonne George** my next best cote & cappe and I gyve unto my sayd **sonne George** more and to my **sonne Thoms** [*Thomas*] to eyther of them a bood [*budd*] w<sup>t</sup> be called twelvemonthinges [*12 months old*] when they shall accomlishe theyre aged of xx<sup>ti</sup> [20] yers

Item I wyll that theyr shall remayne to my messuage wherein I now dwell a quorne, a cubbert [*cupboard*] that standethe in the parlor, a table, a payre of tressells and a forme w<sup>ch</sup> I gyve unto the heyre thereof

Item I wyll that my sayd executors shall have vertue to this my wyll to putt my **sonne George** to some occupacyon [*occupation*] or to hisbondine [*his bonding - apprenticeship*] whether hee hathe most mynde unto

Item I gyve unto my **ij** [2] **daughters** that ys such **Elyzabethe** and **Iulyon** [*Julyon*] ij [2] beddes w<sup>all</sup> thinges to them belongynge and also I gyve unto my seyd ij [2] daughters towyther of theym fyve markes a pece (2\* *see end notes*) of usuall moneye of England to be payed to eyther of theym att the dayes of theyre sev<sup>r</sup>all maryages or att theyr sev<sup>r</sup>al aiges of xxj<sup>ti</sup> [21] yeres whether shall first fortune

Item I gyve unto my **Daughter Alyce the wyfe of Thom(a)s Atwoode** vj<sup>th</sup> xiijs iiij<sup>d</sup> [*£6, 13 shillings & 4 pence* (2\* *see end notes*)] of usuall moneye of Inglande toeb payed to her w<sup>thin</sup> iij [3] yers next after my decease

Item I gyve unto my **daughter in law Sysley Iglent** a ij [2] yers olde heihefer when shee shall accomplyshe thage of xx<sup>ti</sup> [20] yers

Item I gyve unto all my sonnes now lyvyng vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> [*6 shillings & 8 pence* (2\* *see end notes*)] a peece to be payed to everye of theym as they shall accomplyshe theyre aiges of xxvj<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers and yf anye of theym depte this life before the(y) do acomplyshe theyre aiges aforesayed hys porcon or pte or ptes [*portion, part or parts*] so deptyng [*departing*] to remayne to the survyvors of theym

Item I gyve unto my **sonne Stephen** vj<sup>th</sup> xiijs iiij<sup>d</sup> [*£6, 13 shillings & 4 pence* (2\* *see end notes*)] to be payed unto hym when hee shall accomplyshe his aige of xxvj<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers, the w<sup>ch</sup> vj<sup>th</sup> xiijs iiij<sup>d</sup> [*£6, 13 shillings & 4 pence* (2\* *see end notes*)] I wyll shalbe payed oute of my goodes yff theyre be so muche spare frome the payenge of my detts legacyes and bequests & byldyngs [*buildings*] where as I have here under in my wyll appoynted to be bylled and if that theyre be nott so muche spare frome payeinge of my detts, egacys & byldynge as ys aforesayed then I wyll that my **sonne Richard** shall paye the sayed vj<sup>th</sup> xiijs iiij<sup>d</sup> [*£6, 13 shillings & 4 pence* (2\* *see end notes*)] oute of his pce [*piece*] w<sup>ch</sup> I have here under wyllled unto him

The next part is crossed through: ~~w<sup>thin</sup> ij [2] yers next after the sayd **Richard** shall be in possessyon of his porcon? Theat I have here under wyllled unto hym~~

then resumes:

The Recedewe [*residue*] of all my moveable goodes & cattell [*more crossing through – but unreadable this time*] nott a bove in this my testament bequethed & gyven after my detts, legacyes & funerall expences deducted & payed I gyve theym wholye unto my sayd wyfe to dyspose the same accordinge to her discressyon [*discretion*] for the welthe of my Soule and all christen Soules

This ys the Last wyll of me the saide **Richard Syme** & be me [*by me*] made Especialle declared in the presents [*presence*] of the wytnesses of this my sayd last wyll & testament the daye and yere fyrst above said

As concernyng the dyspossytion of all my lands & tenements w<sup>th</sup> thappu<sup>r</sup>tenncs [*the appurtenances*] sett lyeinge and beyng w<sup>th</sup>in the pishe of Byddynden aforesayed or els wheare [*elsewhere*]

In primis [*firstly*] I wyll unto **Margarett my wyfe** my pryncypall [*principal*] messuage wherein I now dwell tow<sup>t</sup> [*to wit*] all & synguler [*singular*] theyre app<sup>r</sup>tenncs to coteynge [*contain*] by estymaycon xxviiij [28] acres and a halfe of grounde by ytt more or lesse as marks and bonnds devyde and stoure? lyeinge uppon the demes of 'Curells' 'worchender' & 'bortlye' beyng devyded into viij [8] peces besydes the close and garden ...

2 lines inserted in very small print here:

... whereof one pece is called 'hollow herst', iij [3] peces called 'the vij [7] acres', one pece of an acre, two more comyninge [*containing?*] to ther(e) landes yf they [leases?] of **Stephen Bigher?** & iij [3] acres adioyninge to the howse conteynninge by estymacion xviiij [18] acres aforesayd ...

... to have & holde the sayd howse & landes w<sup>th</sup> all & Synguler theyre app<sup>r</sup>tenncs unto the sayd **Margarett my wyfe** duryng & untill my **Sonne Richard** do accomplyshe his aige of xxvj<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers or duryng & untill suche tyme as hee shoulde accomplyshe his sayd aige of xxji<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers & yf the sayd **Richard my sonne** so fortune to depte [*depart*] this lyfe before hee accomplyshe his sayd aige of xxji<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers then I wyll the sayd howse and landes aoresayd w<sup>th</sup> all & Synguler theyre app<sup>r</sup>tenncs to the sayd **Margarett my wyfe** duryng the whole terme of her naurall lyf

And yf it fortune that my sayd wyffe be lyvyng after my sayd **sonne Richard** accomplyshe his aige of xxvi<sup>ti</sup> [26] yers that then I wyll my sayd wyfe to have halfe the pftyts of my sayd howse & lands duryng all the term of her naturall lyfe as ys aforsayd & That after her decease I wyll the sayd howse & landes aforsayd w<sup>th</sup> all & Synguler theyre app<sup>r</sup>tenncs unto the sayd **Richard my Sonne** & to his heyres in *fee symple* for ev<sup>r</sup>

And also my wyll ys that my sayd wyffe nor none for her or in her name to her use shall neyther fell strypp nor wast no pte nor pcell [*part nor parcel*] of my woddes nor tymber belongyng to the sayd house & grounds but onelye for necessarye reperacyons [*reparations*] of the same house & houses w<sup>ch</sup> I wyll that my sayd wyfe shall kepe bothe wynde thyght & water thyght [*wind tight & water tight*] duryng the tyme a bove specyfied and iff she do nott my wyll ys that my heyre or heyres shall take (by) v<sup>r</sup>tue be thys my wyll to put her oute anye thinge on this my p<sup>r</sup>sent wyll to the contrarye not w<sup>th</sup> standyng

Item I wyll that my sayd wyffe shall have the malte that ys grownyng of iij [3] acres & a halfe of grounde lyenge to the woddes of **Jorvyce morelind?** northe southe & west & to the woddes of **Robert Marden** agaynst thest [*the East*] w<sup>ch</sup> iij [3] acres and a halfe of wodde I gyve unto my sayd wyfe iff she kepe her my wydowe and that my sayd wyfe shall fell the sayd wodd no Afear monyes than shee shall burne ytt in her howse duryng her wydowed [*widowhood*] & iff she do marye I wyll the sayd iij [3] acras & a halfe of wodde & wodde lands unto my **sonne Richard** & to his heyres in *fee symple* for ev<sup>r</sup> in as ample & large man<sup>r</sup> [*manner*] as I have gyven hym the howse & landes aforesayd

Item I gyve unto my **Sonne James** a howse & garden in Stoneham (? 3\* see end notes) & vij [7] peces of grounde thereto belongynge coteynynyng [containing] in all by estymacyon xxij [22] acras be ytt more or lesse as markes and bondes thereof are knowen lyeinge uppon the den of Bryssenden that ys to saye one pece of x [10] acras that I have bought of **Alexander Stace & Clement Stace** & ij [2] peces that lyethe on the bankesyd [backside?] of **Smythes** & one pece that I late bought of Whytewodd & iij [3] other peces lyenge to Auther [another?] adoyninge to the sayd howse att Stonehamme To have and to holde the sayd messuage garden & the sayd vij [7] peces of grounde unto the sayd **James my sonne** & to his heyres in fee symple for ev<sup>r</sup>

Also I wyll that my sayd exer [executor(s)] shall garnishe? The kytchen at Stoneham as I have apoynted to dowe [do]

Item I gyve unto my **sonne George** xvj [16] acras of lande be ytt more or lesse lyenge uppon the dennes of devender & lurell (?) lyenge in iiij [4] partes, whereof pcell of the sayd xvj [16] acras ye called 'deffyns towne' & an other pcell lyethe to the Streate & viij [8] acras in ij [2] peces that I boughte of **John Haselden** to have & to holde the sayd xvj [16] acras of Land be ytt more or lesse w<sup>th</sup> all and synguler theyr app<sup>r</sup>tenncs<sup>(sic)</sup> unto the sayd **George my sonne** & to his heyres in *fee symple* for ever when hee shall accomplyshe his aige of xxvj [26] yers

Item I gyve unto my **sonne Thoms** [Thomas] xvj acras and a halfe of lande be yt more or lesse lyenge uppon the denne of warhenden? That ys to saye one garden of halfe an acre lyenge att borde oke [Broad Oak] & a pece of v [5] acras ioynnyng to the same called 'longe herst' & a pece called 'the well fylde' coteynyng iij [3] acras & viij [8] acras in ij [2] pcells lyenge att east wesell ? To have & to holde the sayd xvj [16] acras & a halfe of lande be ytt more or lesse w<sup>th</sup> all and synguler theyr app<sup>r</sup>tenncs<sup>(sic)</sup> unto the sayd **Thoms** [Thomas] **my sonne** & to his heyres in **fee symple** for ever when hee shall accomplyshe his aige of xxvj [26] yers

Item I gyve unto my **sonne Stephen** all those my woddes & wodd landes that I late boughte of **wyllm Wylbroke** coteynyng by estymacyon xix [19] acras be ytt more or lesse lyenge uppon the denes of 'lurekk & bryssenden' To have & to holde the sayd xix [19] acras of wodde & wodd grounde w<sup>th</sup> all and synguler theyr app<sup>r</sup>tenncs<sup>(sic)</sup> unto the sayd **Stephen my sonne** & to his heyres in **fee symple** for ever when hee shall accomplyshe his aige of xxij [22] yers

Item my wyll ys that my exers [executors] theyre executors or administrators shall have power be [by] this my wyll to sell vj [6] acrs of the sayd woddes att foxe earthe & to paye **Laurence A Barrowe** x<sup>li</sup> [£10 (2\* see end notes)] that I do owe hym & that my exer. or ass. [executor(s) or assigns] to have free entre egresse & regresse to & frome the same a(s) longe be the corner of **Stephen Ricards** woddes & into the x [10] acras that I have afore wyllid unto my **sonne James** & into the streate

And yf ytt fortune that anye of my sonnes dezece [decease] thys lyfe before they do accomplyshe theyre sev<sup>r</sup>all aiges of xxvj [26] yers & w<sup>th</sup>oute yssuew of theyr bodyes lawfullye begotten that then I wyll the pte & ptes of theym so deptyng to remyane to the survyvors of theym equallye to be devyded

Item I wyll that my sayd wyfe shall take the yearlye pftyts of all my lands & tents. [tenements] untill my sonnes accomplyshe theyre aiges aforesayde & w<sup>th</sup> the yerelye pftyts of the same & w<sup>th</sup> my goodes not a bove bequethe(d) after my detts & legacyes payed I wyll ytt shall make a howse att the garden att borde oke [Broad Oak] w<sup>th</sup> a kyttchen w<sup>ch</sup> I wyll shalbe made as I have apoynted ytt & be taken yt to and then my sayd executors theyr exers. or ass. [their executors or assigns] should sell no pte (of my)

woddes nor the tymber but onelye for my byldynges & reparacyons as I have appoynted ytt unto but onelye that I have gyven her for fyre nye & the vj [6] acras at foxe earthe w<sup>ch</sup> I have appoynted to be solde [*bottom of page folded over here*]

Item I wyll that yf anye of my sonnes depte intongell [*entangle*] or come to pledge anye other wyse incumber theyre pte or ptes of my landes so to them before gyven before the(y) shall accomplyshe theyre sev<sup>r</sup>all aiges if xxx [30] yers, that then my wyll ys that hee or they that so dothe sell or other wayes in cumber his or theyre pte or ptes before the(y) accomplyshe the sayd sev<sup>r</sup>all aiges of xxx [30] yers, that then my wyll ys that all the rest of my sayd sonnes that kepeste [*kept*] his or theyre pte or ptes shall have power be [by] ve<sup>r</sup>tue of this my wyll to enter of theyr brother or brothers pte or ptes that so dothe sell & intongell [*entangle*] theyr pte or ptes & to put hym or theym cleane oute anye thyng [*anything*] in this my p<sup>r</sup>sent wyll to the cotrarye [*contrary*] nott w<sup>th</sup>dtandyng

Pvyded [*Provided*] also & my wyll ys that yf my exors theyr exor or adminstrators [*executors, their executors or administrators*] do not infteye [*interfere?*] and trulye fullfyll this my sayd Testament & last wyll accordyng to my mynde & intende that then my wyll ys that the overseer to this my sayd last wyll & Testament shall have power mynde & intende as ys aforesayd to the use of all my sonnes & to theyr heyres

Also I wyll and desyre **John Leede** to be overseer of this my sayd testament & last wyll, desyryng hym to see my exec. theyr exec or administrators to dyspose my goodes & landes accordyng to the trew meanynge of this my sayd last wyll & testament & he to have for his paynes takynge therein vjs viij<sup>d</sup> [6 shillings & 8 pence (2\* see end notes)] & his costes and charges to be borne from my goodes wheareof ev<sup>r</sup> hee shall ryde or go

[*There next follows a third of a page which has been crossed out and is not therefore shown here*]

Item my wyll ys that my exor shall have vertue be this my wyll to sell parte of my wodds accordyng to theyre dystresshons [*their discretion*] towards my buyldyng [*buildings*]

## R Symes

In wytnesse whereof:

**Leonard Daye; John Leede & Roger Garrett** w<sup>t</sup> others & **Thomas Hollande**

Probatum fuit: Tercio die mensis Maij Anno 1560 [3<sup>rd</sup> May 1560]

Notes: \* **Richard Syme**, 'Housholder', was buried at All Saints, Biddenden, Kent on 20 Apr 1560.

21 Jan 1549/50 **Rycherde Symes** married **Margaret** (*blank*) at All Saints, Biddenden. He possibly married an earlier **Margaret** (*see bap. of children below*) – but no burial found.

**Son George** was baptised there 16 Mar 1542; **Thomas** 12 Feb 1546/47; and **Stephen** 13 Sep 1553.

**Daughter Elizabeth** 8 Oct 1541; **Daughters Julyon & Alice** are not found, save the burial of a **Julyan Syme, d. of Richard** on 3 Jun 1562 at Biddenden.

- 2\* 6 shillings & 8 pence in 1560 is approx. £140 in 2023;  
10 shillings is approx. £210;  
*A mark is 160p, or  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a pound.  $\therefore$  5 marks is approx. £1,401;*  
£6, 13 shillings & 4 pence is approx. £2,803;  
£10 is approx. £4,204.

[Source: *Bank of England Inflation Calculator*]

- 3\* There is a 'Standen' to the north of Biddenden – but no 'Stoneham' in the vicinity.