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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO
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VOL. XXIII**

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HENRY FISHWICK

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Publication of Original Documents

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VOLUME XXIII.

1891.

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A List
OF
The Lancashire Wills,
PROVED WITHIN THE
Archdeaconry of Richmond,
AND NOW PRESERVED IN THE COURT OF PROBATE
at Lancaster,
FROM 1748 TO 1792.

ALSO
A LIST OF THE WILLS PROVED IN THE
Peculiar of Halton,
FROM A.D. 1615 TO 1792.

EDITED BY
LIEUT.-COLONEL HENRY FISHWICK, F.S.A.

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INTRODUCTION.

ON the 1st November, 1748, the Wills, Inventories and Bonds from the five western deaneries of the Archdeaconry¹ of Richmond were sent from Lancaster to Richmond, and in 1861 they were removed to the Probate Registry at Somerset House. The list of the Lancashire portion of these Wills has already been printed in the 10th and 13th volumes of the Society's publications. From 1748 the Wills for North Lancashire continued to be proved at Lancaster until the passing of the Probate Act in 1857. The present volume completes the list to 1792 inclusive.

In addition to the ordinary Probate Courts, there were formerly in many parts of the country a number of ancient manorial and other courts which had a testamentary jurisdiction. These were often called "Peculiars." According to the Government Return of the Jurisdiction, Records, &c., of Ecclesiastical Courts,² the only one of these Peculiar Courts in Lancashire was that of Halton, which is co-extensive with the parish of that name, about this the following report was made:—

"RETURN FROM THE MANOR OF HALTON.

THE date of the earliest will is 6th March, 1622; such will was proved in the Peculiar or Manorial Court of Halton, on the 9th March, 1622.

¹ For particulars of these Deaneries &c., see Introduction to vol. 10.

² Printed 1830.

Subsequently there is a regular series of wills, administration bonds and other testamentary documents up to 1627; from which period up to 1645, with three exceptions, there does not appear to have been any wills proved or acts done.

From 1645 up to 1743, with some occasional chasms, there is a regular series of wills, administration bonds and other testamentary papers, but which do not appear to have been recorded.

The first of the recorded wills, bonds, acts of inventories, &c., commence in 1843, and are continued in regular order up to 1805, when the last will was proved (with the exception of the will of William Bradshaw Bradshaw, esquire, mentioned in my former return), but several of these last documents are not recorded.

There is one book of probates and administrations but there is no alphabetical index thereto.

In the proof of wills or grants of administration there appears a chasm of 18 years, viz.: from 1627 to 1645; and there are various chasms of from two to four years in different intervals between the years 1645 and 1805, but the reason or cause of such chasms I am unable to state.

The wills, grants of administration and other testamentary documents are in a good state of preservation.

HALTON HALL,
MARCH 20TH, 1830.

R. F. BRADSHAW."

This report is not quite correct: there is an Adm. in 1615, and there are a few Wills up to as late as 1814.

The following is a copy of the notice referring to this court:—

"This is to give notice to all persons within the Peculiar of the Manor or Lordship of Halton who have any Wills to prove or Administrations or Tuicons to take, that they do the same forthwith before William Bradshaw, Esquire, Lord of the said

Manor, or Mr. Dickinson, Attorney at Law, in Lancaster, his Deputy, and that all Wills and Administrations within this Peculiar are for the future to be proved and taken so."

Endorsed: "Sent this Notice to proclaim at Halton Church by young Richard Hartley, the 6 of June, 1747, by W. D."

Since the death of William Bradshaw Bradshaw, Esq. (lord of the manor of Halton), who died 18 April, 1815, no Will has been proved there, and the Wills, the Index to which is here printed, were removed from Halton Hall to the Probate Registry of Lancaster some 25 years ago.

The Society is indebted to the President of the Probate Division of Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for permission to print these indices. I am also personally indebted to J. Douglas-Willan, Esq., the District Registrar at Lancaster. And I must add that in order to place this volume in the hands of the members as early as possible, I delegated the task of arranging the slips in alphabetical order to my daughter Janet, and that without her assistance its issue must have been considerably delayed.

HENRY FISHWICK.

THE HEIGHTS,
ROCHDALE,