

*viz.* to spread information dealing with the antiquities and the archæology of the Royal County. One fact in pleading for an augmentation of our ranks is this; the Society, as already recorded, has recently purchased the *Journal*, consequently the Society is responsible for all the cost of printing and publication of this magazine, and this can only be done by our ranks being kept up to the numbers which they have now reached. Unless this is done the publication will have to cease. This last point is one which our Treasurer wishes to very strongly impress on all our members. He appeals in this report to each member to introduce one friend during each year. If this is done then he will have no cause for anxiety.

## The Will of Master Anthony Forster (1572)

TRANSCRIBED BY HARRY G. W. D'ALMAINE.

THE transcript of the Wills of three Vicars of Hurley, dated 1507, 1541 and 1552, are set out in the *Journal* (July to December, 1918).

Here is a copy of the Will of Anthony Forster (1572), the supposed murderer of Amye Robsart.

Scott—the great ‘Wizard of the North’—with all his well-known perversion of historical facts, never perpetrated a greater and more unpardonable fault than when he painted, in his *Kenilworth*, the memory of Forster, a man of education, of good family, and of many parts, and elected as Member of Parliament for Abingdon in 1570, as a mean, debased, unscrupulous villain and murderer.

Let the reader judge of the kindly heart of Anthony from the terms of his Will set out below.

### ANTHONY FORSTER'S WILL.

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN. The vth daie of November, in ye yeare of oure Lord god, 1572, I Anthonye Forster, of Comenore, in ye Countie of Barke, Esquier, being of perfitt mynde and memorie, I thanke my god therefore, doe

make and ordeine this my last will and testamet in maner and forme followinge. First, revokinge, annullinge, and forsakinge all wills and testamets had or made by me the saied Anthonie Forster, before this my present will and testament, I do suerlie and vndoubtedlie trust and assure my selfe to be saued, and to enioye the everlastinge blisse of heaven, throughe the onlie mercie and meritte off ye Sone of god, my Lord and Mr. Christ Jesus. And so bequeath my soule to the Holie Trynitie, and my bodie to be buried at the discrecon of my executours. Item, I give and bequeath to ye right honorable the Lord Robart, Earle of Leicester, my Mannor and Lordshipe of Comenore, in the saied Countie of Barke, wth all the proffits and comodities therunto belonginge, wth all and singler their appurtinucs, together wth Comenore Woode, and the hundred of Hornemore, and my lease of Whitley leaze, in the saied Countie of Barke, To haue and to holde the saied Mannor, and all other the premiss's to him and his heires for euer, upon condicon tha the saied right honorable Earle, his heires and assignes, shall paie, or cause to be paid, one thousande twoe hundreth poundes of lawfull Englishe money for the same, in maner and forme followinge, That is to saie, To my welbeloued wief Anne, five hundreth poundes, and to John Forster, sone of my brother Michaell Forster, one hundred poundes; and to Richard Forster, sone and heire to my nephew George Forster, one hundreth pounds; and to Robert Forster, Edward Forster, and John Forster, brethren to the saied Richard Forster, fourtie pounds apece, viz. to euerie of them fourtie pounds, and the rest of that twelue hundreth poundes to myne executours towards the paymet and pformance of my debts and legacies.

Item, I give to Thomas Dudley, Esquier, attendente vpon the saied Earle, my sorrell geldinge, wch I had of Ruffin for a heriott. Item, I give and bequeath to my said wief the vse off my pastures or groundes, called Long Deane, wch I houlde by lease for diuers yeres yet to come, for and during the tearme of twentie yeres yf she live so long, my saied wief payeng the lords rents, and after hir decease I giue my saied lease of the saied pasture to my nephew, Thoms Forster of Oxford. Item, I give to my cozen, Thomas Selman off Breninghm in ye Countie of Warwick, one hundreth poundes of lawfull Englishe money; and I do forgive him all the debts, reckonings, and accopts that

he oweth me, and haue bien betwen him and me (or may be) from the beginnunge of the worlde to this daie. Item, I giue and bequeath to the saied Thomas Forster, my nephew, all my beddinge and stuffe wch I haue lyeng in my lodginge, at the signe of the catte and fidle in Fletestrete in London, all writings and specialties onelie excepted; and doe forgiue him tenne pounds wch he oweth me by his obligacon, and for the wch Giles Swett standeth bounde wth him. Item, I giue and bequeath to my saied nephew, Thomas Forster, ye revercon off one coppie houlde wth in the saied Mannor of Comenore, wch the widowe of George Carter houldeth during hir widowhode, To haue and to holde the same to him for terme of his lief, accordinge to ye custome off the saied manor, ymediatlie after the deceace, forfeiture, surrēdor, or season of the state of ye saied widowe of George Carter. And I giue to my saied cozen, Thoms Forster, fourtie poundes of Englishe money, vpon condicon that he, ye saied Thomas, shall giue his best helpe, councell, and furtherunce to myne executours for the pforminge of my will and testamet in all points. Item, I giue and bequeath to my syster in lawe, Edithe Staffert, one hundreth and five pounds, in recompence of all manr reckoninges, matters, and demaunds betwen hir and me, wch hundreth and five pounds John Noorthe of Shipto, wth in the saied Countie of Berks, oweth me; and for the wch I haue in pawne and in gage the lease of the saied Nourthe of that wherein he nowe dwelleth; and wth that I will that my syster shalbe paied. Item, I giue and bequeath to ye Mr, Fellowes, and Schollers of Ballioll Coledge in Oxford, one hundreth pounds off lawfull Englishe money, to be bestowed there at the good discrecon off Mr. Adam Squyer, nowe Mr there, and Mr. John Renall, Archdeacon of Oxforde. Item, I do forgeue, remytt, release, anihilate, and make voided to the saied Adam Squier, all maner debts, writings, bills, and bonds wch are due, and be betwene me and the saied Adam Squier from the beginnunge of the worlde vntill this daie. Item, I giue to Anthonie Holborne, my godson, twenti pounds; and to Francs Holborne, his syster, other twentie pounds. Item, I do forgeue my brother in lawe, Mr. Rockley, thirteen pounds sixe shillings eight pence, which he oweth me vpon his specialtie. Item, I giue and bequeath to my saied wief, all my householde stuffe, plate, and cattell wch I haue wth in the

manner howse of Comenore, and wth in the growndes off ye sayed Manor, wth all maner my corne. Item, I giue and bequeath to Anthonye Forster, my godson, the revercon of John Francklins houlde in Comenore, for terme off his lief, after ye custome of ye manor. Item, I giue to my nephew, Walter Forster, tenne poundes of lawfull Englishe money. Ite, I giue to my cozen, Henry Grymes, twentie pounds. Ite, I forgeue, remytt, and release, and make voyde to my lovinge and painefull frend, Robert Bellamie, Doctour of Phisicke, twentie poundes wch he oweth me, and all maner bills, and bondes, and reckonings between him and me from ye begininge of the worlde vnto this daie, in consideration of his paine and travell wth me in this my sicknes. Item, I giue to my ssrunte, Marye Edmondes, twentie nobles. Ite, I giue to my olde and trustie ssrunte, John Harris, the Bayliewick of the hundred of Hornemore, and the howse wherein he dwelleth wth the close thereunto adioyninge rent free for one and twentie yeres. Item, I giue to my lovinge serunte, John Ellis, the revercon of Raynolde Daye, his houlde in Comenor for terme of his lief, after ye custome of the Mannor. Ite, I giue to my ssrunte, Margaret, fyve poundes. Ite, I giue to Anthonie Bostocke of Abingdon tenne pounds, wch he oweth me. Item, I giue to Richard, my serunte, fouer markes, to be receiued of Thoms Wilson, late his Mr, wch the saied Wilson oweth me. Item, I giue to my fouer ssrunts musicons twelve pounds tenne shillinges equallie amongst them; the wch some the saied Thomas Wilson oweth me vpon his specialtie. Item, I giue to my serunte, Henry Michell, twentie nobles. Item, I giue to my serunt, Robert Callis my butler, fortie shillinges. Item, I giue to myne olde acquaintenunce, Robert Rodes, my sixe songe bookes wch he him selfe did prick. Item, I giue to Harte, my warryner, fower marcks for his wage, and twoe loades of haie so longe as he contynueth ssrunte and kep of the warren. Item, I giue to the rest of all my householde ssrunts one halffe yeres wage, besydes that which is dew to them. Item, I giue to Mabell Stafferton . . . (blank in Will) . . . Ite, I giue and bequeath to the Mayor of Abingdon, and his brethren, twentie nobles in money, for certaine sermons to be made there at the discrecon of my Overseers. Item, I giue to Elizabeth Osbaston twentie pounds. The rest of all my goods and chattells herein not giuen, or not bequeathed, my debts and

legacies being paid, I giue to my saied kinneman Thomas Selman, and my welbeloued wief Anne Forster, whom I make my executours of this my last will and testamet; charging them, and either of them, as they will answere in the terrible daie of the most dreadfull judgement, trulie and iustlie to execute and pforme this my last will and testament in all points. And I make and ordeine Doctor Renall and Adam Squier of Oxford, overseers of this my last will and testamet. And I doe giue to either of them for their paynes, to Doctour Renall my yonger stoned horse; and I giue to Adam Squyer the stoned horse that I was wont to ride on my selfe. In witness whereof, and of all the premisses, I the saied Anthonie Forstr haue putto my hande, and to this my last will and testamet, in the presence of Robert Bellam, Phisition; Anthonie Forster, Ada Squier, Henry Greams, Nicholas Staverton, France Noble, John Ellis, Thomas Forster.

## On the Date of the White Horse

By G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD.

THE honour of having cut the White Horse on the down above Uffington is traditionally assigned to King Alfred; there can be no doubt, however, that it had been in existence at least a thousand years when the battle of Ashdown was fought. Alfred is said to have cut the horse as a memorial of his great victory over the Danes in 871. But this assertion is based upon no firmer authority than: 1. Popular tradition, embodied in the verse—

‘A was maad a lang lang time ago

Wi a good deal o’ labour and pains

By King Alfred the Great when he spwiled their consate

And caddled thaay wosberds the Danes.’

2. The fancy of the Rev. Francis Wise, B.D., who published in 1738 ‘A letter to Mr. Mead concerning some antiquities in Berkshire, particularly showing that the White Horse which gives name to the great Vale or Valley it overlooks, is a monument of the West Saxons, made in memory of a great Victory obtained over the Danes, A.D. 871.’