

James ap Jankyngs (James ap Jenkins)

James ap Jenkins was a Yeoman of the Guard under Henry VII and Henry VIII whose 1529 will (attached below) makes several references to Sampford Peverell. There is a mass of information about the Yeomen of the Guard under the early Tudors in a book by Anita Hewerdine, which includes a short section on James ap Jenkins himself¹. This explains a lot about his will, which shows that he had interests in a number of places, and owned a considerable amount of money, some very valuable possessions, various items of weaponry, and knew a lot about the goods, garments and fabrics in his possession.

The 'Yeomen of the Guard' was an organization set up by Henry VII early in his reign, which started in 1485, probably inspired by the royal guards he had seen in France during his long exile there. Early Yeomen were chosen for their loyalty to Henry VII, supporting him in France and in his campaigns to gain the English throne. Many of those supporters and their successors came from Wales, as did Henry himself, so the Yeomen of the Guard included many Welshmen, of who James ap Jenkins was probably one.

The Yeomen of the Guard had a number of duties. Their primary purpose was to act as the King's bodyguards, and as such they accompanied him everywhere, dressed in richly embroidered green and white livery and armed with a sword and halberd. In buildings they lined any corridors he might use and attended him in his personal chambers where they were known as 'Yeomen of the Chamber'. The Yeomen of the Chamber were given livery made of 'russet cloth' or 'tawney medley' as 'watching clothing', to wear while on night duty while watching the King. James ap Jankyngs was listed as a Yeoman of the Chamber who was given watching clothing from 1508 to 1512². In May 1509 he was also one of those given black livery to wear at the funeral of Henry VII. Some select Yeomen of the Guard were known as Yeomen of the Crown, and they received a special grant of 6d a day – when the standard payment to yeomen was 4d. James ap Jenkins was listed as receiving this 'Yeoman of the Crown' grant in 1516 and again in the 1520s.

What someone could wear was strictly regulated under the 'Sumptuary' laws. The purpose was twofold: to ensure that people dressed according to their station, and to limit the need for the importation of expensive materials not made in England, such as silk and velvet, which the country could not afford to do. The 1483 Sumptuary Act dictated that damask and satin were only allowed for Yeoman of the Crown, esquires and other gentry if they had a yearly income of £40 or more. Other types of cloth such as fustian, and leather or hide other than lambskin, were also restricted. The

¹ Anita Hewerdine, *The Yeomen of the Guard and the Early Tudors : The Formation of a Royal Bodyguard*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

² Ibid. p 148

garments owned by James ap Jankyns defined his status. In his will, he made several bequests of items of clothing; in doing so, he would have had to ensure that each beneficiary was entitled to wear them.

It was important that the Guards were skilful with weapons as they had bodyguard and military roles, and they were particularly known for their archery skills, which they demonstrated on special occasions such as the meeting between the English and French monarchs at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. They also had a ceremonial role, attending large formal events and functions where the King wanted to make an impression and enhance his reputation. For such ceremonial occasions they wore a special high-quality red livery.

The Yeomen of the Guard had many duties other than guarding the King, and at any one time some would be in attendance on the King and others would be undertaking work elsewhere. Both Henry VII and Henry VIII appointed Yeomen of the Guard from loyal and reliable families, or on recommendation for their skills, from around the country, and many of them were granted the use of land or property or were appointed to offices away from the capital where they represented the crown and enforced loyalty and Tudor law. Grants of properties also provided additional income for them. In July 1514 James ap Jenkins and a colleague were granted the following³:

William Butler, serjeant-at-arms, and James ap Jenkyn. Grant, in survivorship, of the houses in Westminster Palace, called Paradyse and Helle, within Westminster Hall, with lands and tenements held by James Fryes; a house called Purgatory in the said Hall, held by Nicholas Whitefeld; a house called Potans house, under the Exchequer; the tower and house called le Grenelates, held by John Catesby; and the keepership of the said palace; on surrender by Butler of patent 27 May 3 Hen. VIII., granting the above to Mathew Baker, esquire for the Body, now deceased, and the said William.

There is more information about the Westminster locations called Heaven, Hell and Purgatory on this website: https://www.pascalbonenfant.com/18c/clubs/jt_heavenandhelltavernswestminster.html

In those days Westminster was a sprawling mass of meeting rooms and passages. Two of the underground passages, known as Hell and Purgatory, were once prisons, and Heaven was a tavern. Hell and Purgatory had become alehouses by the late sixteenth century when the likes of Ben Jonson dined there. As they are all described in the grant above as 'houses', they and the houses called Potans and Grenelates were probably all alehouses when James ap Jenkins received the grants for them, which would have brought him in more income.

In November 1516 he was additionally given this appointment⁴:

To be bailiff of the lordship and keeper of the manor of Sandford Peverell, Devon, *vice* John Jakson, deceased. Greenwich, 22 Nov. 8 Hen. VIII. *Del.*

³ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol1/pp1312-1331>

⁴ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol2/pp799-816>

Westm., 24 Nov.

After the previous owner of the manor of Sampford Peverell, Lady Margaret Beaufort, died in 1509, the manor had reverted to the crown, and a bailiff was appointed to administer it. The bailiff collected revenue for the crown, and controlled and maintained the property, for which he was paid a fee. Bailiffs often received more lucrative benefits too, such as rights of pasture and the provision of a dwelling. James ap Jenkins' will shows he had a lot of personal possessions in Sampford Peverell so he probably had a dwelling here, or lived in the manor house, and he also had crops and livestock, and a 'little wench' called Thomasyn to whom he left much of his property, leaving other items to his unnamed wife who lived elsewhere.

From late 1517 to early 1518 he received sick pay from the King, as he had been ill, but returned to duty as a Yeoman, and in 1521 he was made a ragler, a Welsh office similar to bailiff, in Cardigan⁵. Yeomen could also be appointed to more practical roles, depending on their experience and expertise, and it seems James ap Jenkins must have had a seafaring background as in May 1522 he was appointed as captain of one of the "Ships appointed to keep the passage between Calais and Dover, and so from the mouth of the Thames to the Camber"⁶ namely:

The Anne of the Tower, James ap Jenkin, captain, Barth. Worall, master, and 70 men.

It was normal practice for appointments and fees to be passed on to friends or close relations, and after the death of James ap Jenkins, in or shortly before June 1529, his fee as 'Yeoman of the Crown' was passed on to Adam Holland, possibly a relation of the John Holland who witnessed his will and was also a Yeoman of the Guard. Another signatory of the will, Piers Motton, a Yeoman of the Chamber, took over James' role as ragler in Cardigan⁷. In his will James left money to three churches including the parish church of Sampford Peverell.

The will of James ap Jankyng 1529

Transcribed to the best of our ability by Heather Culpin and Peter Bowers, Aug 2021

In dei nomine amen. The yere of our Lord god a thousand fyve hundred twenty and nyne I James ap Jankyng of full mynde and p[er]fi[c]te remembrance make my testament and last wille in this maner folowing.

First I Bequeth my soule to almighty god for our Blessed Lady saint mary and to all the holy company

⁵ Hewerdine. P 149

⁶ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol3/pp959-974>

⁷ Hewerdine. P 149

of hevyn my Body to Be Buried in Crist church in London before the ymage of our lady of petie⁸
Item I wille that the formr orders of freres⁹ Bring my Body to the Church and they to be rewarded after the discretion of myne executours.

Item I geve and bequeath all suche goodes that I have at Stondlok¹⁰ (except my rayment) to my wife, and my bedde all shets, tabull clothes and towells that is at Sanford Peverell in Devonshire, and also half a doseyn of silver spones that be in my coffer amongst my writinge att the said Sanford. Soe that she be there at the Awdy¹¹ tyme to make and leve¹² and compte¹³ for the Kings money and to take a discharge therof of not all thinges afore rehersed that is at the said Sanford I doo give to a litill wenche that was gevyn me named Thomasyn.

Item I doo give and bequeth to the said Thomasyn foure kyne w[ith] their calves also all the whete and malt that I have at the said Sanford and thre acres of Barly that lyth on the grounde also vii pannys xi platters a basyn and an ewer of pewter foure potingers¹⁴ foure candelsticks a new brasyn pott, and that to be solde and kept after the counsell of Docto[ur] morgan and maister John Hoper for the use and profitt of the said Thomasyn to whom also I give xxx s¹⁵ that John Skynner doth owe me also I give and bequeth to Doctour Morgan foure mar[k]s¹⁶ of money of the whiche he hath alrede xxvi s viiii d the other xxvi s viiii d he shall receyve of william Frevan of wrythtam onther¹⁷ to take the said xxvi s viiii d out of such goodes as is in his handes also I give to the said maister Docto[ur] a furre of foxurs that is with Rauf Skynner in Southwark, also my great Ryng and foure paire of Revett¹⁸ harnesse complete

Item I give to Mathew Philip my Best Bonett with Broch and ageletts¹⁹ of gold

Item I give to my ser[va]nt Richard my litill curtall²⁰ horse

Item I give to Will[ia]m Morgan my great curtall horse and vi s viiii d²¹

Item I give to David Morgan my green Cote with agetts upon the same and my dublet of fustian w[ith] velvett poynetts²²

Item I give to Water Hargest my counterset Tynsy(lle)n²³ Cote and a dublett of velvet w[ith] fore sleeves and plagard²⁴ of cloth of gold.

Item I give to David Nasshe my fox furred gown my Jaket of frese²⁵ and vi s viiii d

⁸ pity

⁹ friars

¹⁰ Standlake in Oxfordshire

¹¹ Meaning audit?

¹² Leave in the sense of to give up

¹³ Count, account for

¹⁴ A small dish, often with a handle, for soup or porridge

¹⁵ 30 shillings

¹⁶ Marks were equivalent to 2 angels (although there was no such coin as a mark)

¹⁷ We are not sure what this should be!

¹⁸ Meaning rivet, as in riveted armour?

¹⁹ An aget is a metal sheath on the end of a shoelace or cord

²⁰ Curtall meaning with a docked tail

²¹ The value of an angel, a gold coin which was valued at 6 s 8 d at the time

²² A wrist cuff

²³ Tinsel was a fabric interwoven with gold or silver thread

²⁴ A placard was a stomacher or a kind of waistcoat

²⁵ Frise was woollen plain woven cloth with a raised nap on one side

Item I give to Mathew Philip a syngle gown of russet²⁶

Item I give my woosted gown furred w[ith] Conye²⁷ that is at Sanford to John Hoper, and for his paynes taken for me xxv s.

Item I give to Saunder Caks xs to bye him a cote and a Roon[cey]²⁸ horse that is in his keeping.

Item I give to John ap Rs²⁹ my Jaket of Saten and velvet.

Item I give to Henry Vyncent my dublet of lether w[ith] sleeves and plagard of russet velvet, and my executours to deliver to the said Vyncent as moder³⁰ for him vi s viii d and he to tarry w[ith] my wife untill she goo to Devonshire, and toward the performyng of the promisses Doctour Morgan hath in his keping wh[ich] she and he shall receyve of maister Everard of the Chekes due at our lady day last iv l xii s iii d Also the said Docto[ur] Morgan shall receyve of maister Will[ia]m of the Juell house iv l v s also of maister Bastard for my quarters rent xxxiii s also of David ap Rs at Bartolomewtyde comyng iv l vi s viii d

Item I will that

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myn executours shall paye to [christ]ofer Lustyn of Abyngton fyve m[arks] or there bowts that I doo owe him for ware

Item to Copland merchaunt of London for a pere of tawny chamlet³¹ and ii yards of russett saten.

Item to George Hampton xl s that I was Bounde for for David ap Rs if he will of his conscience take it and if there be not of that money sufficient to content my mynde and will as I have afore rehersed I leve in Doctour Morgans hands a Bason and an Ewer of silver perll gilt and a Standing Cupp³² newe gilt and a chast³³ pott of silver perll gilt. If nede be he to sell the said plate to fulfill this my last mynde and wille. if not the said plate to remain to my wife.

Item I will the said Doctour Morgan and my wife be myn executours and to fulfil this my mynde and wille and the said Doctour Morgan to be recompenste and allowed in every thyng for his charges in thus fulfilling my mynde and wille.

Item I give to my wife my gold ryng with the rubye stone.

Item I give to the Church of Stanloke in recompense of tithes forgotten vi s viii d

Item to the p[ar]ishe Chruch of Sanford Peverell vi s viii d

Item to the high awter³⁴ of Saint Andrews church in London vi s viii d

Item I give to David Nasshe my sworde my buckeler³⁵ and my dublet of satten and velvet

Item to Elys of Stondlak my Jaket of velvet and cloth

²⁶ Russet was a coarse woollen cloth, usually brown or grey

²⁷ rabbit

²⁸ A rouncey horse was an everyday riding horse

²⁹ Probably Rice or Rees but is spelt Rs

³⁰ Possibly moderation in the sense of off-setting his expenses

³¹ Chamlet or camlet was fabric made of camel or goat hair and silk, or a garment made from it

³² A standing cup was a tall decorative cup with a cover

³³ Chased, meaning engraved

³⁴ altar

³⁵ A buckler was a small round shield

Item to my S[er]vant Richard my dagger and single gabardyn³⁶ that is here to make him a frese cote and my executours to be good unto him until he may gett him a maister

Item I give to my cusyn Morys Wogan my Denmark knyfe and my holbert³⁷ that is at Standlok And also I will that maister John Hoper and Saunder Caks shal hand owt my yewes³⁸ in the porcion of tithe that I have at Holberton³⁹ And if John warren wille suffer them to compt the said tithe peasably I will that myn executours shuld release unto him vi s viii d of the money that I shuld receyve of him at Mighelmas witnesse hereof for Vyncent Wharton preest Thomas Cosyn of the signe of the Bell ageynst the gray freres in London David Nasshe Pers Mutton⁴⁰ John Holand⁴¹ and other men

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascripti defuncti Coram prefatis Comissariis in salia Cath Inn Pauli London xxi Die mensis Junii Anno D(omini) Millimo quingentessimo xxix Jurament(o) executorum in h(uius)mo(di) test(ement)o no(min)ati Ac approbatum et insinuatum et com(m)issa fuit admi(ni)stracio anote prefatorum ... patrum om(nium) et singulorum Bonor(um) Jur(iu)m et creditorum di(cti) defuncti prefats executoribus de bene fidel(ite)r admi(ni)strando ac de pleno et fideli in(ventario) Seconde die post festum diarum prox(ime) future(o) exhibendo necnon de pleno et vero compoto reddendo Ad sc(ript)a dei Emigelia Jurato

This is our attempt at a translation of the Latin above:

The above-written will of the deceased was proved before the aforesaid Commissary in ... Cath(...) Inn [Saint] Paul, London the 31st day of the month of June in the year of the Lord One thousand five hundred and twenty nine by the oath of the executor named in the will and approved and favoured and was committed administration aforesaid ... all and singular the goods rights and credits of the said deceased to the aforesaid executors well and faithfully to administer and to make a full and faithful inventory to exhibit the second day after feast of ... next coming and indeed to render a plain and true account

³⁶ Gabardine was a type of worsted wool made waterproof by using lanolin on it before weaving

³⁷ Halberd – a two handed pole weapon

³⁸ Possibly to settle his tythes using his furs as payment

³⁹ Probably Halberton, a few miles from Sampford Peverell.

⁴⁰ Piers Motton was a yeoman who took over James' role as regulator in Cardigan

⁴¹ John Holland was a yeoman who was also keeper of a property in Denbigh, North Wales