

The Will of Robert Cottle of Basingstoke, Printer, Bookseller and Stationer, 9th July 1857¹

In his Will Robert Cottle left to his wife Maria ‘all her own paraphernalia including Watches Jewels and Trinkets also my own Watch Jewels and Trinkets and the Legacy of Fifty pounds for her immediate purposes until her Income under this my ~Will shall become payable. I likewise give unto her my said Wife all my Stock of Wine Beer and Spirits and all consumable articles which shall be in and about my Dwellinghouse at my death And so much of my household goods Plate (except the service of Plate after mentioned) Linen and China Books Prints and Pictures as shall be sufficient to furnish the house and premises in Church Street in Basingstoke aforesaid hereinafter devised which she shall select for that purpose to and for her own use.’

He also gave her ‘for her use during the term of her natural life the Tea and Coffee Service of Plate presented to me by the Burgesses of the Town of Basingstoke and after her death it is my will and I do hereby give and bequeath the same unto the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses for the time being of the said Town in token of my respect and esteem towards that body of which for many years past and by the goodwill of the Burgesses I have formed part and by the unanimous voice of the Council presided over them as their Chief Magistrate five several years.’

And he left her all his real estate, mentioning in particular the messuage or tenement, shops, outbuildings, garden and premises in London Street, then in the occupation of John Williams; the messuage or tenement and premises in Church Street, then occupied by Mr Wanlace and the messuage or tenements etc at New Alresford, then in respective occupations of James Calvert & Stephen Penton. However, within one year of his death £300 from the London Street premises was to be paid to his assistant Elisabeth Curtis ‘in consideration of her services now extending over a period of twenty years’.

He left all his personal estate, ‘including my Stock in Trade Goodwill of my Business ready money Book debts and all other personal Effects of every kind not hereinbefore disposed of’ to Henry Downs, Gentleman², and George Gibbs, Grocer³ in trust by which they were to convert anything not consisting of money into money and invest the residue in stocks or funds from which they were to pay an annual income to his wife. After her death he said, ‘I desire with the means it has pleased God to bless my Industry and Exertions in this my adopted Town of Basingstoke to provide and afford some lasting mark of my respect to the Inhabitants thereof.’

The Trustees were to pay to the Trustees of the Queen’s Free Grammar School £220 to be invested and used for the Annual distribution of Prizes to ‘Boys educated at the said School not being Boarders or Private Pupils of the Head Master’ Three prizes were to be awarded to ‘Scholars who shall distinguish themselves for learning and good conduct’. The prizes were to be ‘such good and useful Books as the Vicar for the time being of the said Parish of Basingstoke shall select and think proper’ and they were to have ‘neatly printed in or upon them the words *The Cottle Prize*.’

He also left money to the Municipal Charity Trustees of Basingstoke to invest so as to provide the annual sum of £6 for the repairs and maintenance of the Almshouses ... known as Sir James Deane’s Almshouses.

¹ Hampshire Record Office 5M72/2p689, microfilm M243

² Henry Downes was Mayor in 1854-5, living in Winchester Street and was listed as a maltster in White’s Directory of 1859 .

³ George Gibbs was listed in the Pigot Directory of 1844 as a Grocer and tea dealer in the Market Place and in White’s Directory of 1859 as a Grocer in Winchester Street