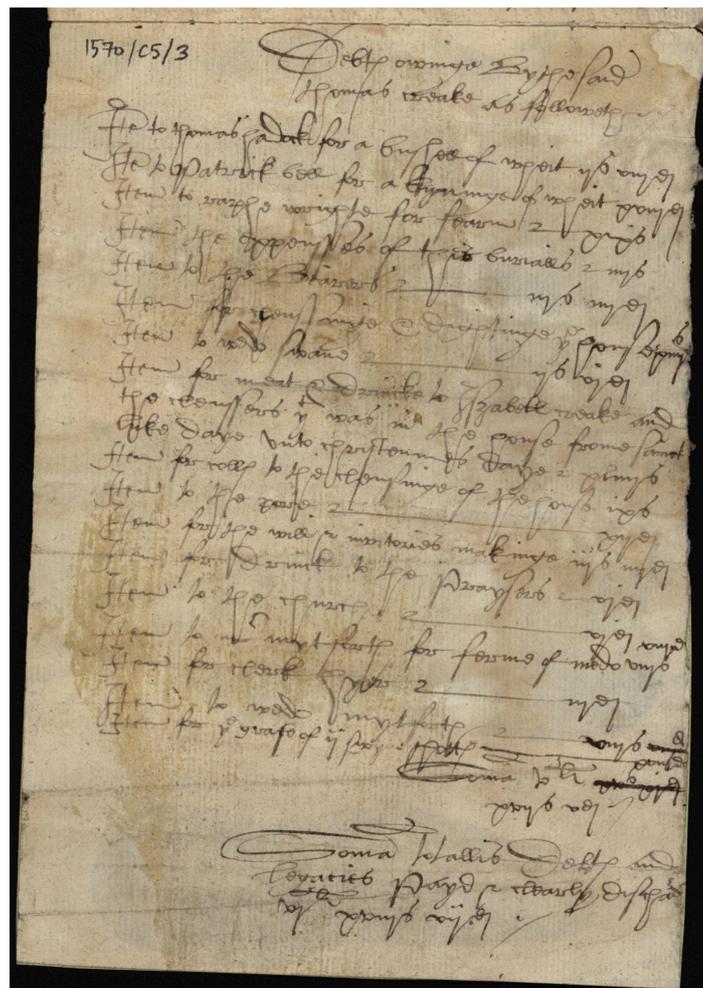




## Plague

### Inventory of Thomas Creake of Newcastle upon Tyne, yeoman

Considering the undoubted dislocation of the time, Creake's appraisers are meticulous in recording the cleansing and the funeral expenses. The cleansers and his wife were in the house from St Luke's day (18 October) to Christmas, nine weeks in total. In this case coal was used for cleansing, a cheaper alternative to frankincense, pitch and resin.



Debtes owinge By the said  
thomas creake as followeth

|  |                     |  |
|--|---------------------|--|
| Item to thomas hadock for a bushell of wheat   | ii <sup>s</sup>     | viii <sup>d</sup>                                |
| Item to Patrick bell for a kyninge of wheat  |                     | xviii <sup>d</sup>                               |
| Item to raphe wrighte for fearm  | xix <sup>s</sup>    |  |
| Item the expenses of the burialls  | iiii <sup>s</sup>   |  |
| Item to the Bearers  | iii <sup>s</sup>    | iiii <sup>d</sup>                                |
| Item for clenssinge & dightinge the house  | xiiii <sup>s</sup>  |  |
| Item to wedo swane   | ii <sup>s</sup>     | vi <sup>d</sup>                                  |
| Item for meat & drincke to Iszabell creake and<br>the clenssers that was in the house frome saint<br>luke days unto christenmes daye | xliiii <sup>s</sup> |  |
| Item for colles to the clenssinge of the house   | ix <sup>s</sup>     |  |
| Item to the pore   |                     | xii <sup>d</sup>                                 |
| Item for the will & inuitories makinge   | iii <sup>s</sup>    | iiii <sup>d</sup>                                |
| Item for drinck to the Praysers  |                     | vi <sup>d</sup>                                  |
| Item to the churche  |                     | vi <sup>d</sup>                                  |
| Item to mr mytforth for ferme of medo  | viii <sup>s</sup>   | <viii <sup>d</sup> >                             |
| Item for clerk hyer  |                     | iii <sup>d</sup>                                 |
| Item to wedo mytforth  | viii <sup>s</sup>   |  |
| Item for the grase of ii swyne shottes   |                     | xviii <sup>d</sup>                               |
|  | Somma               | v <sup>li</sup> xvii <sup>s</sup> v <sup>d</sup> |

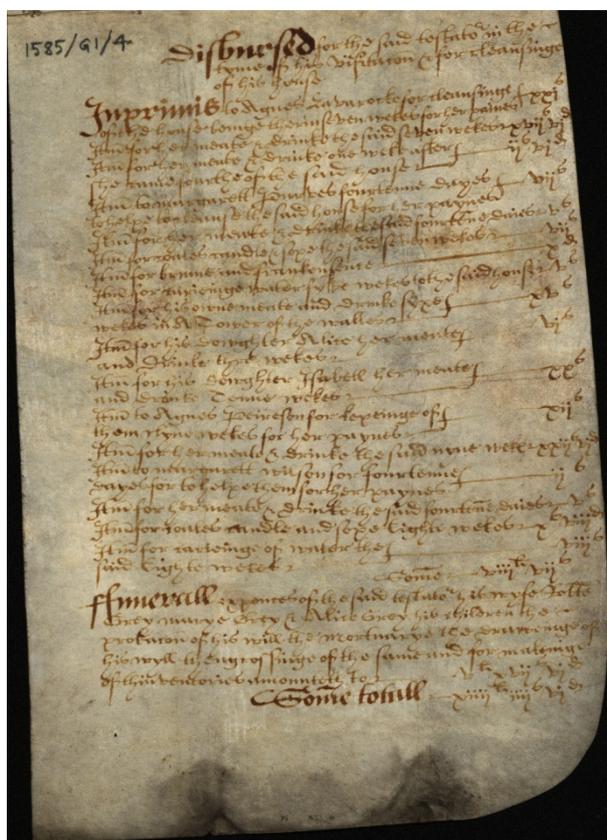
Somma totalis debtes and  
legacies Payd & clearly discha<r>d [discharged]  
vi<sup>li</sup> xviii<sup>s</sup> vii<sup>d</sup>

**Glossary:**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>bushell</i>           | a measure used for corn, fruit, etc., containing 4 pecks or 8 gallons  |
| <i>clenssinge</i>        | cleansing: this includes both feeding, watering and caring for the sick, as well as disinfecting the house and goods after the death or recovery of the infected persons |
| <i>colles</i>            | coals  |
| <i>dightinge</i>         | putting in order, preparing  |
| <i>hyer</i>              | hire   |
| <i>kyninge</i> [kenning] | a dry measure containing 2 pecks, or ½ a bushel  |
| <i>medo</i>              | meadow   |
| <i>praysers</i>          | appraisers   |
| <i>saint luke days</i>   | the feast of St Luke fell on 18 <sup>th</sup> October  |
| <i>swyne shott</i>       | a young pig  |

## Inventory of William Grey of Newcastle upon Tyne, miller

Grey died of the plague with his wife and four of his five children. The inventory provides unusual detail of their maintenance and care over the ten weeks or so of the 'visitation'. As in this case, when such detailed plague inventories survive it is often possible to reconstruct the regime and economy of their care, and their or the community's methods for trying to contain the sickness. This document reveals that the family appears to have divided, the father spending 6 weeks in a tower in the city walls, perhaps West Spital Tower which stood beside St Mary's Hospital, and his wife and children remaining at home. Four women are named as having stayed in the house to care for the sick, each being paid separate sums for cleansing the house, for their own meat and drink, and for carrying water. Part of the contract between the Greys and their carers appears to have been the provision of meat and drink to the carer for a period even after they left their house and employ. One daughter, Alice, was provisioned for only 3 weeks, while her sister Isabel, who survived, was provisioned for 10 weeks.



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Disbursed for the said testator in the  
tyme of his visitacion & for cleansing  
of his house

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Inprimis to Agnes Lavarocke for cleansing<br>of the house beinge therin seven wekes for her paines | xxi <sup>s</sup>                    |
| Item for her meate & drinke the said seven wekes   | xvii <sup>s</sup> vi <sup>d</sup>   |
| Item for her meate & drinke one weke after<br>she came fourthe of the said house                   | ii <sup>s</sup> vi <sup>d</sup>     |
| Item to Margarett Purves fourtenne dayes<br>to helpe to cleanse the said howse for her paynes      | vii <sup>s</sup>                    |
| Item for her meate & drinke the said fourtenne daies   | v <sup>s</sup>                      |
| Item for coales candle & sope the said seven wekes   | vii <sup>s</sup>                    |
| Item for brume and frankensence  | x <sup>d</sup>                      |
| Item for carieinge water fyve wekes to the said house  | v <sup>s</sup>                      |
| Item for his owne meate and drinke syxe<br>wekes in A Tower of the walles                          | xv <sup>s</sup>                     |
| Item for his dowghter Alice her meate<br>and Drinke thre wekes                                     | vi <sup>s</sup>                     |
| Item for his dowghter Isabell her meate<br>and drinke Tenne wekes                                  | xx <sup>s</sup>                     |
| Item to Agnes Peireson for kepeinge of<br>them Nyne wekes for her paynes                           | xii <sup>s</sup>                    |
| Item for her meate & drinke the said nyne wekes  | xxii <sup>s</sup> vi <sup>d</sup>   |
| Item to Margarett Wilson for fourtenne<br>dayes for to helpe them for her paynes                   | ii <sup>s</sup>                     |
| Item for her meate & drinke the said fourtenne daies   | v <sup>s</sup>                      |
| Item for coales candle and sope Eighte wekes   | x <sup>s</sup> viii <sup>d</sup>    |
| Item for carieinge of water the<br>said Eighte wekes   | viii <sup>s</sup>                   |
| Somme  | viii <sup>li</sup> vii <sup>s</sup> |

Funerall expences of the said testator his wyfe Roberte  
Grey marye Grey & Alice Grey his children the  
probacion of his will the Mortuarye the Draweing of  
his wyll thengrossinge of the same and for makeinge  
of thinventories amounteth to

Somme totall

v<sup>li</sup> xvii<sup>s</sup> vi<sup>d</sup>  
xiiii<sup>li</sup> iiii<sup>s</sup> vi<sup>d</sup>

**Glossary:**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>brume</i>       | brim[stone] [?]; sulphur, burned with frankincense to fumigate the house   |
| <i>cleansinge</i>  | cleansing: this includes both feeding, watering and caring for the sick, as well as disinfecting the house and goods after the death or recovery of the infected persons |
| <i>engrossinge</i> | to write in large letters; to write out formally, in legal form  |
| <i>mortuarye</i>   | a customary gift formerly claimed by the incumbent of a parish from the estate of a deceased parishioner   |
| <i>visitacion</i>  | a time of infection with the plague, or sickness generally   |



Memorandum That about the xxviii<sup>th</sup> [28<sup>th</sup>] day of Aprill Anno domini 1597 Sibell Chamber late of Bowlden single woman beinge of good & perfect memorie but visited with the greivouse infection of the plague & therfore supposinge with hir self that she Could not continewe in this world any longe tyme did will give legate & bequeath nuncupativelie in the presence of Robert Huitson John Smyth Robert Thompson & others as followethe.

First she did give unto hir brother <George> Chamber xiii<sup>li</sup> Also she did give unto hir brother Richard Chaber xvi<sup>li</sup> also to hir sister Alison Smales two stone of lint & towe & iiiii<sup>li</sup> in monie and all hir best linnige Clothes Also to Thomas Robinson his daughter of West Bowlden xxx<sup>s</sup> Also unto Thomas Matthewes wensh xx<sup>s</sup> to be payed when she Cometh to lawfull yeres & not before. Also unto Thomas Stepheneson his wensh ii<sup>s</sup> & <hir> white Russett Cote Also unto Robert Huetson ii<sup>s</sup> Also unto Robert Thompson ii<sup>s</sup> also unto Richard Hinemers ii<sup>s</sup> Also unto Jennett wright ii<sup>s</sup> Also to John Smyth xii<sup>d</sup> Also to Richard Chamber hir brother a Ringe Also to Jennett Robinson hir blacke Cote & to margarett Robinson hir Red Cote also to Jennett Robinson vi<sup>d</sup> in Consideracion of so much debtt as she was owinge unto hir Also she willed that ther should be paid unto Eliner Doores iii<sup>d</sup> for spinninge also she willed that ther should be paid unto Thomas Robinsons wif iii<sup>d</sup> for spininge Also she gave unto the poore of the parish x<sup>s</sup> And shortlie after dyed of the same infection.

Vive velut rapto figitiva

Vive velut rapto figitiva

[Live thy life as it were spoil (and pluck the joys that fly)]

### Glossary:

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>lint</i>                           | flax prepared for spinning; a soft material for dressing wounds (formerly also to burn for tinder), prepared by ravelling or scraping linen cloth                          |
| <i>nuncupativelie</i> [nuncupatively] | by word of mouth   |
| <i>stone</i>                          | a weight measure, which in this period varied by region and according to the substance being measured, but generally for flax, lint and tow was equal to 14 lbs in England |
| <i>towe</i>                           | the fibre of flax, hemp, or jute prepared for spinning   |
| <i>wensh</i>                          | a girl, maid, young woman; a female child  |



July 23<sup>th</sup> 1604.

Anthonie Gefferson of Ryop. The day and yere above Written, Lynge in a Coove in the feild sicke in the visitation. uttered these wordes followinge (beinge questioned and demanded by us (whose names ar underwritten) whoe should have his portion of goods if he died. The poore shall have xxx<sup>s</sup>. William Pattisons children xx<sup>s</sup> a peece. Antonie Watsons Children xv<sup>s</sup> a peece. Margery Nicholson of Hilton xx<sup>s</sup>. John Pattison x<sup>s</sup>. Christophe[r] Pattison x<sup>s</sup>. Andrewe Pattison v<sup>s</sup>. The rest my brother Robart and his w[yf] ...

Richarde Clement  
Raphe Moyser  
John Ranson

July 25<sup>th</sup> 1604.

Towe dayes after the foresaid persons comminge to visit him againe and to gather somethinge more perfity from him, did put him in mynde of his former words which he then denied sainge noe [now] fyve shillings a peece <for a remembrance>, my brother shall have the rest. Then Mr Clement willed him to give somewhat more to his uncle Christopher for he was but a poore man to whom he answered Take it you all and give <it> whome you will. which were the last words that he used Touchinge the premisses.

**Glossary:**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>a peece</i> [a piece] | each   |
| <i>coove</i> [cove]      | a sheltered place or recess among hills, woods |
| <i>premisses</i>         | aforesaid                                      |

## Inventory of Richard Lavrick of Ouseburn

Lavrack died with his wife and four children in the outbreak of the plague in 1609, some time in early October. The inventory is again detailed, and among the disbursements is 8 pence spent on 5 November 'looking for the thefe that stolle the clothes'.

8 Day of September 1609

A note of all the Disbursements paid out for  
 the said Richard his wife and children in the plague  
 the said Richard his wife and children in the plague

|                     |  |           |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| 8 Day of September  | paid out for noucel                                | vijs vijs |
| 16 Day of September | paid out for noucel                                | vijs vijs |
| 23 Day of September | paid out for noucel                                | vijs vijs |
| 29 Day of September | paid out for noucel                                | vijs vijs |
| 06 Day of October   | paid out for noucel                                | vijs vijs |
| 6 Day of October    | paid to 2 Glenstrook                               | vijs      |
| 5 Day of November   | paid for looking for thefe that stolle the clothes | vijs      |
|                     | paid for 2 binrodes to putt redde in               | vijs      |
|                     | paid for breade drink to 23 binro doddes           | vijs      |
|                     | paid for molle a full drink                        | vijs      |
|                     | paid for 13 peppes yare                            | vijs      |
|                     | paid for a pound of Lent                           | vijs      |
|                     | paid for a pound of Boston                         | vijs      |
|                     | paid for the 23 burdull of Richard Lavrick         | vijs vijs |
|                     | paid for the 4 binro                               | vijs vijs |
|                     | paid for the 23 burdull to will and the 23 burdull | vijs      |
|                     | paid for on Glenstrook 18 of October               | vijs      |



## Account of the administration of the estate of Jerrard Brown of Newburn, Northumberland

The 'cleansing of the house' is a phrase usually found connected with plague outbreaks, and involved feeding, watering and caring for the sick and then cleansing the goods and the house of the victim. This final part of the process often included fumigating the house by the burning of coal or a pungent mixture of pitch, rosin and frankincense. In this instance the landlord, Mark Errington, accidentally burnt down the house when cleansing it after the death of his tenants. Errington here adds the £10 charge of re-edifying the house against Brown's estate, in the process leaving Brown's sole surviving child Blanch with a balance of only 2<sup>s</sup> 10<sup>d</sup>. These events all took place in one of the worst plague epidemics ever recorded in the North of England in 1636/7, and is thought to have reached North Shields from Holland in October 1635. Errington had been appointed by the court as Jerrard Brown's administrator and his daughter Blanch Brown's tutor, and it was not until 10 years later, presumably when she was of age, that Blanch began to contest Errington's administration, forcing him to render this account. She subsequently pursued him in the civil courts.



The accomptant furthe[r] sayth that the howse wherein the deceased dyed of the plague, did belonge unto this accomptant, which was burnt and consumed with fire in clensing thereof, and for reedifyinge the same, this accomptant hath expended the summe of 10<sup>li</sup>, but never received satisfaction for his losse and damage susteined thereby, and therefore craveth allowance for the same in this Account

} x<sup>li</sup>

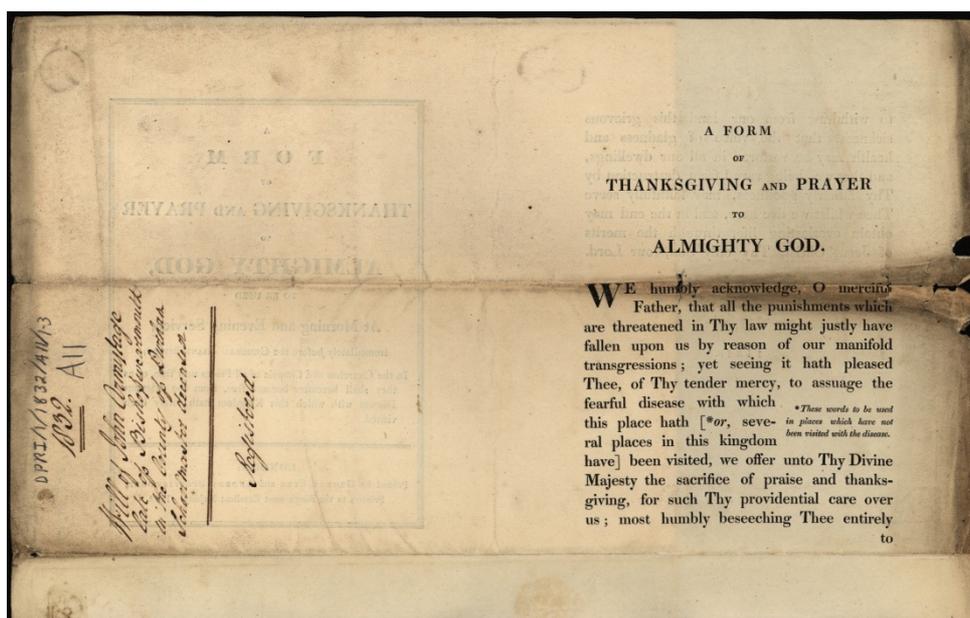
Et sic computatis computandis  
et allocatis allocandis remanent  
in manibus huismodi Computantis

} 2<sup>s</sup> 10<sup>d</sup>

[And thus taking everything into account and everything to be allowed there remain in the hands of this accountant]

## Wrapper of the will of John Armytage of Bishopwearmouth, schoolmaster

Armytage made his will in April 1832 in the aftermath of the Asiatic Cholera Pandemic, then called *cholera morbus*, which was first noted in England at Sunderland in the autumn of 1831. With the passing of the epidemic parishes were enjoined to offer prayers of thanksgiving, and in July of that year a clerk in the probate registry wrapped Armytage's will in a spare copy of one of these printed prayers. The prayer continues to set disease in an eschatological context. The clerk's use of this document is symbolic of the wider complacency that set in after the epidemic passed, deferring the implementation of the necessary public health measures until the next outbreak in 1849. A young apprentice surgeon apothecary named John Snow who was later to make his name as an anaesthetist and, in the 1849 and 1854 cholera epidemics as an epidemiologist, was treating the miners at Killingworth during this outbreak. The disease today is countered by proper sanitation and vaccination. In 1831 preventative measures existed dating back to legislation in 1710 and 1722, including the checking of ships' bills of health, quarantine and even the destruction of suspect cargo. Threatened by another cholera pandemic in 1871 the River Tyne Port Sanitary Authority established a floating quarantine hospital at Jarrow Slake which continued in commission until 1930. Today Newcastle General Hospital's High Secure Infectious Diseases Unit is one of only two centres in the UK for dangerously contagious viruses.



Durham Probate Records DPR1/1/1832/A11/3v

A FORM  
OF  
THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER  
TO  
ALMIGHTY GOD.

We humbly acknowledge, O merciful  
Father, that all the punishments which  
are threatened in Thy law might justly have  
fallen upon us by reason of our manifold  
transgressions; yet seeing it hath pleased  
Thee, of Thy tender mercy, to assuage the  
fearful disease with which

this place hath [\*or, several  
places in this kingdom

\*These words to be used  
in places which have not  
been visited with the disease.

have] been visited, we offer unto Thy Divine  
Majesty the sacrifice of praise and thanks-  
giving, for such Thy providential care over  
us; most humbly beseeching Thee entirely

to

1832

Will of John Armytage  
late of Bishopwearmouth  
in the County of Durham  
Schoolmaster deceased.

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Registered.