In dei nomine amen\(^2\) The vi\(^\text{th}\) day of the moneth of August in the yere of our lord god mccclxxxxii\(^3\) I John Ffoster of Bristow merchant being of good and hole mynde thanked be allmyghty god make ordeigne and dispose this my present testament conteynyng my last will in manner and forme as hereafter folowith that is to say ffirst I bequeth and Recommende my soule unto allmyghty god my maker and Redemer and to our lady saint mary virgine and all to all saintes. And my body to be buried beside the Ault\(^4\) of the holy trinitie within the parish church of saint werburgh virgine of Bristowe\(^5\) in a tome by me therto late edified\(^6\) in the same church at my propre cost And charge. Also I geve and bequeth to the Reparacion of the body of the saide church of saint werburgh x£ sterling for my saide sepulcure\(^7\) there tobe had Also I bequeth to Sir Richard Wood parsonne\(^8\) of the same parish church in Recompense of all thites\(^9\) And offf ringse by me forgotten or negligently with drawn xl\(^\text{th}\). Also I bequeth unto the Cathedral church of saint mary of worcester\(^10\) ii\(^{ii}\) iii\(^{ii}\) Also I bequeth unto the fryers of every house of the iii orders of friers mendicauntes of Bristowe aforesaid x\(^8\) which extendeth in all to xl\(^8\) to this entent that all or the more parte of the friers of every of the said iii houses shulbe personally present And helping in Divine Service both at my buring and at my moneth mynde\(^11\) Also I bequeth iii\(^{i}\) ii\(^{ii}\) iii\(^{iii}\) tobe distributed And disposed by the discrecions of myn executors undre named at my said buring and moneth mynde in brede amonge poure people to pray for my soule Also I bequeth vi\(^{i}\) vii\(^{ii}\) viii\(^{iii}\) tobe distributed and disposed in like wise amonge the poure prisoners of Newgate of Bristowe\(^12\) Also I will that my said executeors of my goddes finde an honest prest\(^13\) to syng dayly in the chapell of myn Almesshouse set in Stepestret in the parish of Saint Mighell in Bristowe\(^14\) by xii yeres next ensuying after my

\(^1\) In transcribing this document, the following conventions were employed. The line spacing, spelling, captialization and punctuation follow the manuscript. Reconstructions of suspensions are in italics. Shillings and pence (s. and d.) are in superscript, as are insertions. Pounds (li.) are rendered as £. I would like to thank Dr James Clark and John Moore (Bristol University) and Prof Roger Leech (Southampton University), for their advice on some of the technical terms used in this document.

\(^2\) ‘In dei nomine amen’: In the name of God, Amen.

\(^3\) 6 August 1492.

\(^4\) ‘Ault’: Altar.

\(^5\) St Werburgh Church, which lay on the corner of Small Street and Corn Street. It was dismantled in 1879 and moved to a new district in north-east Bristol.

\(^6\) ‘A tome by me therto late edified’: a tomb constructed by me.

\(^7\) ‘Sepulcure’: sepulchre (burial place).

\(^8\) Richard Wood, Rector of St Werburgh’s, 1491-1500: William Barrett, The History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol (Bristol, 1789), p. 481. ‘Sir’ was the title by which ordinary priests were addressed.

\(^9\) ‘Thites’: Presumably a mis-transcription of ‘tithes’.

\(^10\) Until the Reformation, Bristol north of the Avon lay in the Diocese of Worcester.

\(^11\) ‘Moneth mynde’: Month’s Mind. A requiem mass held one month after the death or funeral of the deceased.

\(^12\) ‘Newgate of Bristowe’: Bristol’s town gaol.

\(^13\) ‘Prest’: priest.

\(^14\) John Foster’s Almshouse, in which was located the chapel of The Three Kings of Cologne, was established by John Foster, during his life, on Steep Street (Colston’s Street) in the Bristol parish of St Michael’s on the Mount Without. It was rebuilt on the same site in 1702 and again in the nineteenth century: T. J. Manchee, ‘Foster’s Almshouse’, The Bristol Charities, Vol. I (Bristol, 1831), pp. 80-89. In 2008 the almshouse was moved to Henbury (North Bristol) and the existing buildings were converted into private apartments.
decesse for my soule And for the soules of Elizabeth late my wif our fadres moders and benefactours And in especiall for the soule of James Venables paying unto the seid prest yere for his salary iiiij sterlinges. Also that the same myn executors of my goodes pay and distribute wekely during xl yeres next ensuyng after my decesse amonge the poure people dwelling in xiii chambres of the saide almeshous ii: ii: which is for every chambre of the same xiii chambres ii: wekly
Also I will that my feoffes of and in all my landes and tenementes rentes reversions and services in Cam Slymbrigge Goslyngton and Arlingham in the Countie of Gloucester make or do tobe mad unto Richard Ffoster my sonne And to Kateryn his wyf a Laufull estate by dede endented sufficient in the Lawe of and in landes And tenementes parcell of the said Landes and tenementes to the yerely value of ~ x marc sterling over and above all charges and Reprises to have and to hold unto the said Richard Ffoster And Kateryn his wif and to the heyeres of the body of the same Richard Laufullly begoten And if it happen the said Richard Ffoster to dey withoute heire of his body begoten I woll that than all the same Landes and tenementes whereof the said estate so shalbe mad unto the saide Richard Ffoster and Kateryn be after the deth of the same Kateryn sold by myn executors undre named or by their executours. Also I will that my saide feoffes and their heires suffer the said Richard Ffostre And his heires of his body Laufullly begoten to maynure have and hold all the Residue of the said Landes and tenementes in the foresaide Countie of Gloucestre And all Rentes Revenues issues And proffittes commyng of the same to gadre receyve and have to their propre use And if it happen the same Richard Ffoster to die withoute issue of his body Laufullly begoten than I woll that all the same landes and tenementes be sold by my said executours or by their executours And that the money commyng of the sales of the said Landes and tenementes be disposede in purchasing of the Kynges licence tobe mad to my said executors or their executours or to one of them to founde in the said chapell a perpetuall chauntery of one prest to sing ther for the soules afore rehersede And in founding establishshing and endoyng of the saide Chauntery with Landes tenementes and all other things that to such a Chauntery is necessary. And also in purcha sing of an estate in fee simple of and in all the ground wherupon the said all messhous with thappurtenaunces is biled and in discharging of all Rentes going oute of the saide almeshous and Chapell with thappurtenaunces Also I bequeth to the saide Richard Ffoster C marces in plate Vessels or utensils made of silver or gold to the value of 100 marks (£66 13s. 4d.).
wherin now I dwell set in Small strete of the said town of Bristowe. Also I will that my saide executors suffre the foresaid Richard Ffoster and his heires of his body laufully begotten to have and occupie the said mesuage wherein I dwell with thapper tenaunces during all the termes due and to come to me of and in the same mesuage undre this condicion that the saide Richard and his foresaide heires well and sufficiently repaire susteyne amend and mayntene the said mesuage in walles tymbre tyles dores windowes pavymentes vawtes gowtes fforeyns and all other necessaries to the same belonging as ofte And whan as nede shall require or els at the fарthest within iii months next ensuyng after that they or any of them be thereto warned by my said executuors or by any other persone for them or in ther names And if the said Richard F Foster decesse without issue of his body laufully begoten then I woll that my said executuors sell all the termes to them than due And forto com of and in the same mesuage And the money commyng of the same sale to distribute for my soule and for the soules aforehersede in workes of pitie and Charitie. Also I woll that Agnes my doughter wif unto William Weston merchaunt have and hold during the naturall lif of the same Agnes my mesuage with thappurtenaunces sett in Cornestrete of the said towne of Bristow in which mesuage the same William Weston and Agnes nowe dwellen undre this condicion that the same William and Agnes during the lif of the same Agnes shall sufficiently repaire susteyne and mayntene the same mesuage as in walles tymbre dores windowes tiles pavymentes vawtes gowtes fforeyns and all other necessaries as ofte and when as nede shalbe And also that they shall pay yerely during the saide terme the quit-rentes hereafter following that is to say to the prioresse and Convent of the house of saint mary magdalene of Bristowe and to their successors x To the abbot and Convent of Teuxbury and to their successours ii And to the procuratours of the said church of Saint Werborghe ii yerely. And if any defaute of reparacion of the same mesuage be found at any tyme here afte by my saide executors or by either of them or by their attorney And then if the said William Weston and Agnes his wif or either of them be warned on the half of my said executors to amende the same defaultes And then if all the same defaultes of Reparacion of the saide mesuage so founde be not sufficiently reformed and amened at the propre costes of the said William Weston and Agnes from tyme to tyme within two monethes than next ensuyng after every such warnyng I woll that than Immediatly my saide executors or there executors enter unto the saide mesuage and make sale of the same mesuage to such persone as shall please them to have unto him and to his

29 Presumably 16-17 Small Street. ‘In 1504 this was the house of John Walsh...Following the will of John Foster in 1492, the tenement was included in the lands demised by John Walsh to the uses of Foster’s almsnhouse, in 1508 being described as late of Sir John Walsh’: R. H. Leech, The Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol: Part 1 (Bristol Record Society Publications, Vol. XLVIII), p. 157.

30 ‘Mesuage’: messuage. A dwelling house with surrounding lands.

31 ‘Termes’: Terms. In law, an estate or interest in land for a fixed period and under fixed conditions. In this case the term was till the deaths of the beneficiaries, the condition being the satisfactory maintenance of the property.

32 ‘Walles tymbre tyles dores windowes pavymentes vawtes gowtes fforeyns’: walls, timber, tiles, doors, windows, pavements, vaults, gouts (drains) and foreigns (exterior space).

33 The property is 41 Corn Street: Leech, Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol, p. 54.

34 ‘Quit-rentes’: Quit-rents. In this sense, a charge on, or payment from, an estate for some special purpose.

35 The Priory of St. James in Bristol was a dependent cell of Tewkesbury Abbey, which may account for this bequest.

36 ‘Procuratours’: Procurators. The official agents or financial managers of a church.

37 ‘On the half of’: on the part of.
heires for ever. Also I will that the said William Weston and Agnes his wif during
the lif of the same Agnes pay yerely towards the Reparacion of my said chapell And
Almeshous x° if necessitie of Reparacion of the same so require or els not. Also I woll ~
that my said executors sell the Reversion of the said mesuage with thappertenaunces sett
in Cornestrete to such persone as shall plese them to have unto hym and to his heires
And that the money comynge of the sale of the same mesuage with thappertenaunces be de
vied into iii equall partes whereof I woll ii partes be disposed aboute the mayntenauce of the
said almeshous And the iii° parte of the said iii partes I woll be applied to the profit of
the said church of Seint Werburgh. / Item I bequeth unto the said Agnes my daughter xl£
in plate and xl£ in salte Item I bequeth to either of Robert and Richard sonnes of
the said Richard Foster such some of money or other goodes as to myn executours shalbe
thought convenient Also I bequeth to John Walsh esquire a saltsaler with a covering
of silver half gilt and unto John Esterfeld merchaunt all myn estate and terme now
forto come of and in a mesuage with thappertenaunces set in Smalstrete aforesaid
wherin Edward Dawes merchaunt nowe dwellith And also of and in a gardyn
lying in a Lane called saint leonardes lane which the saide John Esterfeld nowe
occupied to have unto the same John Esterfeld unto thende and accomplishment
of all my terme in the same mesuage and garden nowe due forto come. Also I bequeth
unto Robert Bolten my best gowne of Scarlet with the furre in the same a cup of
silver and v£ in money nombrede. And to William Adams my servant v£ in money
a Cup of silver and cloth for a gown of violet colour The Residue of all my ~
goodes and Catalles if any remayne over and beside the contentacion of my dettes that I owe and the payment and perfomyng of my legacies and bequestes in this
my present testament expressed I geve holy unto the saide John Walsh and John
Esterfeld to have unto them as their propre goodes for evermore which John Walsh and
John Esterfeld I make ordeigne and name of this my present testament executours.
And I bequeth to either of them for his Laboure and attendaunce to tebe had in
execucion of the same xx£ sterlign And one cup of silver overgilt. In witzenesse
whereof to this my present testament I have set my seale the day and yere above
saide//

Probate was granted on 15 September 1492.

---

38 ‘Reversion’: the right to succeed to a property on the death of the grantee.
39 ‘To either of’: to each of the two.
40 ‘A saltsaler with a covering of silver half gilt’: a silver salt-cellar partially gilded in gold plate.
41 Presumably one of the gardens lying on the east side of the lane: Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol*, p. 142.
42 This implies that Foster had only a fixed-term lease in this property, which Esterfeld would now hold until the expiration of the lease.
43 ‘Money numbered’: in ready money.
44 ‘Goodes and Catalles’: ‘goods and chattels’.
45 ‘Contentacion of my dettes’: Contention (i.e. satisfaction) of my debts.
46 ‘Overgilt’: gilded all over with gold plate.
47 Since probate was granted less than six weeks after the will was written it is likely that Foster was aware that he was dying at the time he wrote this will.