

## Purchase of Two Wokingham Documents

The Wokingham Society's Executive Committee recently contributed towards the purchase of two documents relating to Wokingham by the Berkshire Record Office. One of them was for a property owned by a Henry Staverton, possibly related to the George Staverton who left money in his will to pay for a bull to be baited in the Market Place annually,

1. The first is an indenture dated 15 August 1652 between Henry Staverton and his wife Elizabeth on the one hand and John Bateman on the other. Henry and Elizabeth agreed to sell land and buildings at Edwards Lands near Bearwood Common to John Bateman for £520.

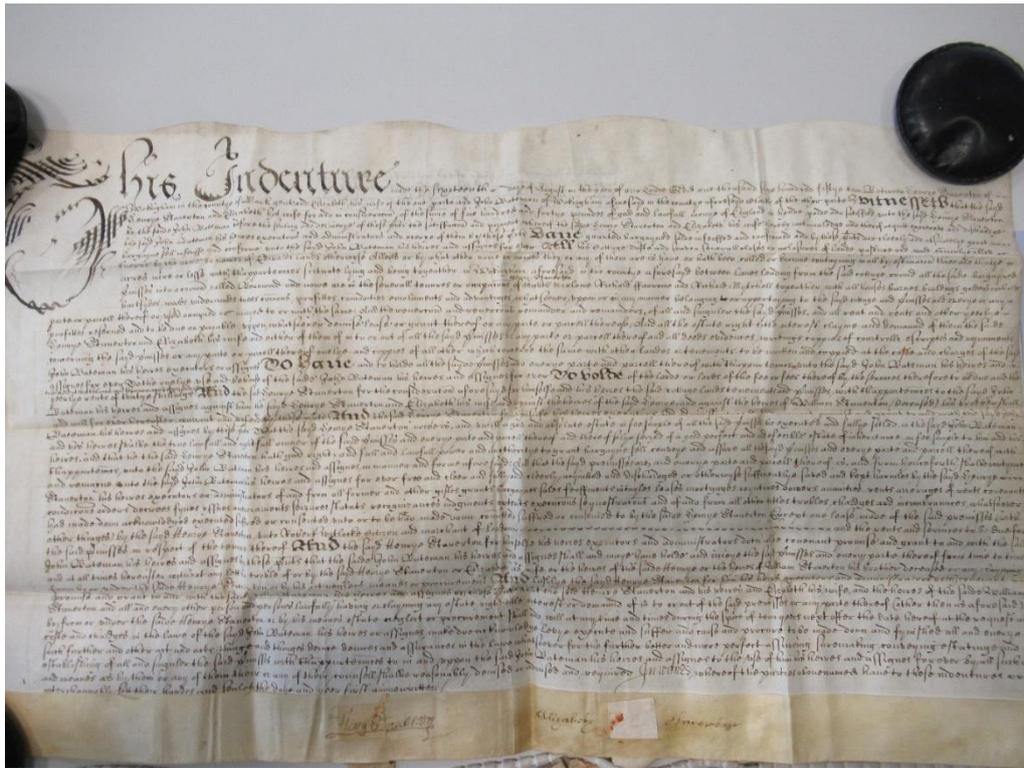
The BRO also has this record:

Catalogue Reference	<a href="#">R/D80/2/3/1-3</a>
Title	Deeds of a messuage and closes of land called Bateman's (formerly Edwards Lands) (36 a.) in Wokingham, adjoining a lane leading from the cottage to Bearwood Common.
Description	(Acquired by Edward Lane in 1793.)
Date	1761-1793
Repository	Berkshire Record Office (code: GB 005)

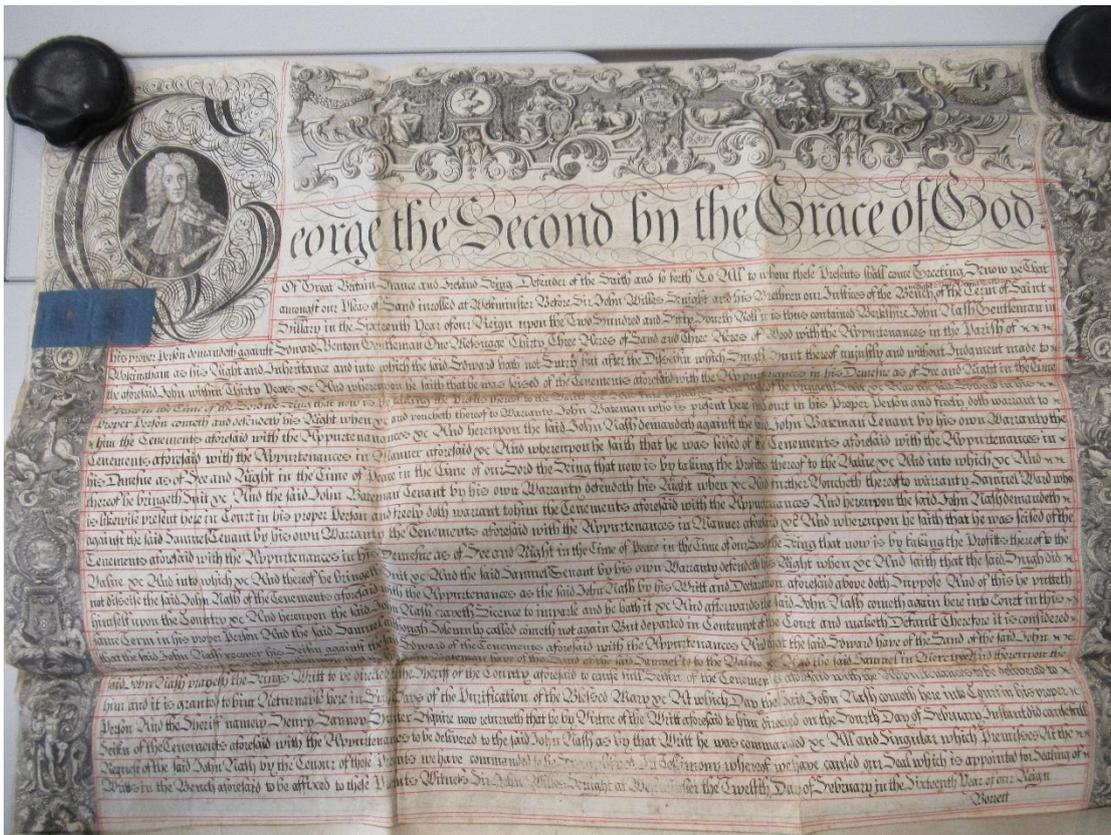
Interestingly, in 1668 a William Monk in his Will bequeathed 52s 'every year unto the end of the world' for the poor of Wokingham, to be paid from rents derived from his property called Slow Bridge, near Bearwood Common, which he had purchased from a Henry Staverton, perhaps the same Henry as above.

2. The second document is a judgment from the Court of Common Pleas on 12 February 1743, upholding the claim of John Rash of Wokingham to ownership of land and buildings held unlawfully by a Hugh Hunt. But Mark Stevens, the County Archivist, has pointed out that Hugh Hunt was a convenient fiction used in 'collusive actions', with the aim of the landowner 'recovering' his property and thereby cancelling any previous constraints on the use or sale of the land. The Crown received a fee for the Court action and the plaintiff got his land unencumbered.

The document does not identify the location of the land, comprising 'one messuage, thirty three acres of land and three acres of wood with the appurtenances in Wokingham'. Since a John Bateman was a tenant joined in the action (and the size of land – 33 acres - is the same in both documents), perhaps both papers relate to the same property and have come through descendants of the Bateman family



Indenture between Henry & Elizabeth Staverton and John Bateman 1552



Return of Land to John Rash of Wokingham by the Court of Common Pleas 1743



Engraving of George II on Decision of the Court of Common Pleas in the case of John Rash