

10 University of Chicago

PETER SHAW RECORDED HIS PEDIGREE AT ORMSKIRK ON
SEPTEMBER 22ND, 1664.

PETER SHAW II

Son and heir of the Rev. Peter Shaw; Peter Shaw, who succeeded to the Rivington and Heath Charnock property of the Reverend Peter Shaw on March 7th 1663. This should be placed first in this instalment.

Peter Shaw endeavoured to recoup his shattered fortunes by prospecting for lead in partnership with Sir Richard Standish and George Smyth of Sharples. The workings were in the Manor of Anglezark, which at this date belonged to Sir Richard Standish. After many difficulties the partners succeeded in obtaining ore of a good quality and in sufficient quantity when, unfortunately for Peter, Sir Richard died and his widow, Dame Margaret, who prior to this undertaking, now exercised her rights and became the open enemy of Peter Shaw and his friends.

The manuscripts of Lord Kenyon contain the following letter from Lady Standish to Roger Kenyon, M.P. in London.

1694. December 16th. Duxbury.

"I hope by this time you have my other letter with the account of Mr. Shaw's proceedings about the lead mines; in short, the water has put both them and me out of possession, for they are quite drowned up. I hope you will not blame me for letting you know who is Clerk of the Peace now in Lancashire; it is Mr. Morton, an attorney in Bolton. I suppose he expects thanks for easing your family of the trouble of that office, and I hope you will not forget that he is rewarded. Sir, if that malice in me to put you in mind that you are affronted, as well as myself abused, I hope God will pardon it, for I think it is for the public good that these people be made to know themselves. I find there is nothing but punishing their purses can procure my peace. Your son advises me to pay them in their own coyn and indite all but the sheriff himself."

(Hist, M. S. S. Comm. Opp. Pt. 4.)

We gather from the chancery proceedings instituted by Peter Shaw in the following February, the full nature of Lady Standish's activities.

February 12th 1694-5. Complaint by Peter Shaw of Rivington, Co. Lancs, gent, and George Smyth of Sharples, Co. Lancs, yeoman, that Sir Richard Standish, late of Duxbury, Bart, deceased about twelve years ago, Legal possessor, siezed in fee of the manor of Heapey and Anglezark and of several messuages, lands, etc., in Heapey and Anglezark, wherein as was supposed several mines of lead and other minerals lay and he came and consulted the said George Smyth who was experienced in such matters who viewed the same and reported mines there of considerable advantage to be worked and the said complainants entered into an agreement with Sir Richard (one John Jowle of Arncliffe, Co. York, miner on whose opinion Sir Richard relied, being consulted) to seek for the same, Sir Richard to have a tenth of the ore as royalty and two fifths as partner-complainants a fifth and John Jowle a tenth and an indenture to that effect was made - 13th of January 1691-2.

"The works were accordingly made and carried on at a very great expense to the partners and much against the will of Dame Margaret Standish then wife of the said Richard she believing the same would prove successless and thereby her husband already much indebted, beharmed, and damaged in his estate, she blaming complainants for encouraging her husband. For a long time they had no success but at length a very hopeful vein or mine of lead was discovered in Anglezark as well in the waste there as in atonement of John Abbots held by lease. They continued working until the death of Sir Richard in December, 1693, when Dame Margaret his widow went on in his place for four months during which time complainants spent much time on the same, they living nearby and also expended much money beyond their quota, or share, in workmen, tools, etc., above £100.

John Abbot was very interested and helped in the work refusing payment for the same.

The work in the four months after Sir Richard's death was so good and the quantity of ore so great that complainants and Dame Margaret obtained to the value of £20 or £25 a day clear of expenses and were likely to have increase of the same but Dame Margaret Standish being desirous to have all advantage for herself on May 1st, last past, with violence turned complainants out, set doors on the said works and bolted them so they and their workers were prevented from working there and seized the ore already found and lying upon the banks and caused some workmen to be arrested and so affrighted them that none would work for complainants. When the sheriff gave order on complainants' behalf she cut up the engines, tools, etc., and turned a river into the mines and gives out she would rather the whole mines and veins were lost than that complainants should have their shares therein and insists Sir Richard was only tenant for life and had no power to make the indenture with the complainants. She has drawn into confederacy with herself Sir Thomas Standish, Bart. her son, Hugh Standish of Duxbury, gent, the said John Jowle, John Owen of Duxbury, gent, Ralph Brown of the same, husbandman, Benjamin Edmondson of Chorley, clerk, Thomas Morris of Heapey, yeoman, James Livesey of Duxbury, husbandman, John Abbot of Anglezark, Thomas Mather, Thomas Boulton, Richard Fakins of Standish, yeoman, Alexander Rigby of Layton, Esquire, and others; and the complainants desire the same may be caused to appear to answer the premises.

"Answer of John Abbot, Thomas Morris, and James Livesey, three of the defendants, that they believe Sir Richard Standish was owner of the Manors of Heapey and Anglezark. It is evident that a considerable amount of lead has been taken out of the Manor of Anglezark, but only know the same because they are neighbours to the said place and have observed Joseph Masley, reported to be a miner from Derbyshire and other workmen employed there. They know as to the reason why work was stopped in the mine."

Lady Standish not receiving satisfaction from the legal officers of the county in support of her high-handed action against her late husband's partners petitioned the House of Lords. "Petition of Margaret Lady Standish, widow of Sir Richard Standish to the House of Lords, April 11th, 1695".

"Sets out that Peter Shaw and George Smyth were in possession under a wrongful title of a lead mine lately open in the Manor of Anglezark in Lancashire which was settled towards the petitioner's jointure. To recover possession she caused an action of trespass and ejectment to be brought in the name of Thomas Morris upon several demises of the petitioner and John Abbot to whose father the land in which the mine lay was anciently leased for a term of years yet enduring. Shaw and Smyth were duly served with copies of the declaration in that action and they do shelter and cover the possession by and under a mortgage made to one Thomas Waddington by Sir Richard Standish who agreed with the said Waddington to assign over the mortgage in trust for them to Lord Willoughby of Parham. At the time the said Shaw and Smyth should have defended their title in the said action, but they offered a rule, in Lord Willoughby's name, to make him defendant, but the plaintiff's attorney refused it in respect of his Lordship's privilege of Parliament. At the last assizes at Lancaster, the plaintiffs moved for judgement against the casual ejector for want of a proper defendant. The Judge on hearing afterwards that Lord Willoughby, after the action was brought, disowned that he had any title and that if his name was made use of it was only in trust, refused to give judgement, till the House of Peers determined how far Lord Willoughby's interest was really concerned. "Prays therefore that as Lord Willoughby is noways concerned in this cause but as trustee privilege may not obstruct the petitioner and the said Abbot in presenting their rights"

"Order on the above referring it to the Lords Committee for privileges who were to meet in the House of Peers on the 22nd of April at four o'clock in the afternoon; Lord Willoughby to have a copy of the petition and to give or send his answer at or before the abovenamed day and hour."

We do not know the final decisions in the case, but of one thing we are certain that Peter Shaw died a few years later a completely ruined man. His merits in the case seem to be clearly set out in his petition and the weakness of his position lay in the indenture with Sir Richard Standish, which conveyed rights that ceased on the latter's death, for the rest he seems to have been the victim of a woman's cunning and malevolence. During this period of increasing financial difficulties in which Shaw's place was mortgaged it is probable that Peter Shaw resided at the Great House in Rivington. This house may have been the principal homestead of Rivington in the Saxon period, before the Pilkingtons constructed their first hall. It was in possession of the Brodhursts at a very early date, and from them it passed by marriage to the Babhalghs (Bulloughs) and thence to Elizabeth Haydock, who conveyed it to her husband, John Shaw, in the fifteenth century.

The house has in recent years undergone extensive repairs to make it suitable for its present undignified usage. The existing structure is not of ancient date, all trace of the early residence must have been removed in the seventeenth century, when the south-end of the present house was built about the middle of that period. The next bay was added at the close of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century when the Andertons possessed it, whilst the north-end is clearly the "house newly erected at the Great House farn" about 1767.

In 1699 Peter Shaw sold the Great House Rivington, to Thomas Anderton, and also disposed of the Blindhurst land to the Vicar of Rivington; the ancient holding mentioned in the early fourteenth century Ashaw charters. About the same time increasing difficulties with his financial commitments forced him again to mortgage the whole of the Shaw property.