

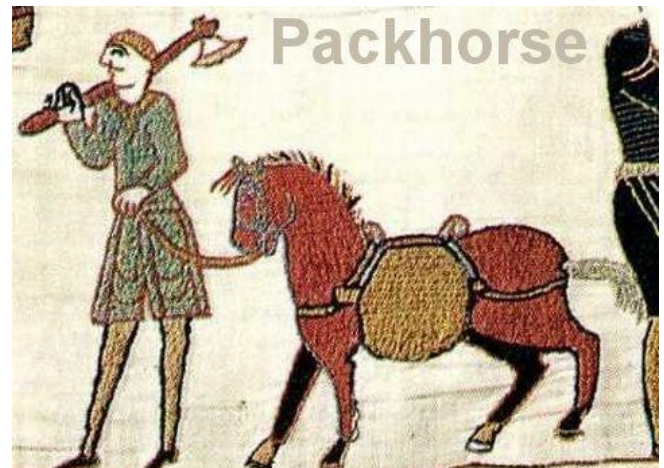
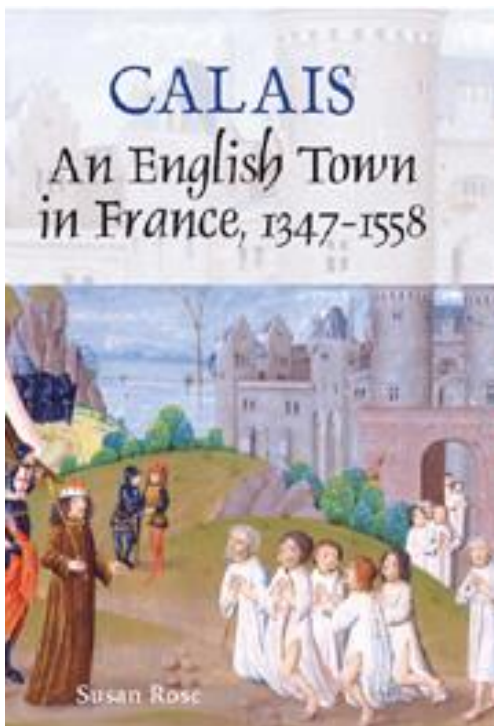
John Barton

Staple of Calais

The Company of Merchants



of the Staple of England



John Barton of Holme, Nottinghamshire, England

Nottinghamshire is a landlocked county in the east Midlands area of England.

Holme is a village and civil parish in Nottinghamshire, England.

The population of the civil parish (including Langford) at the 2011 Census was **165**.

It is located on the east of the **River Trent**, less than half a mile from the riverside and 6km north of **Newark-on-Trent**.

The **parish church of St Giles** is an Early Tudor rebuild of a 13th-century church.

The Lancashire **wool merchant John Barton** was responsible for the rebuilding.

He died in 1491, and is buried in the chancel with his wife.

In a window of his house at Holme is inscribed the verse:

***"I thanke God, and ever shall,
It is the sheep have paid for all"***



Wool Trading

As early as the 12th century the area around Newark was trading in wool, contributing to Newark's status as an important trading town.

A large share of English wool, which was the most sought after in Europe, went to **Flanders** (a province in France) to be woven into cloth, and from shortly after the Norman Conquest, the **Flemings** (people from Flanders) had been settling in the locality.

Wool was so dominant that at the beginning of the 16th century there were about three sheep to every human being. There were only 2½ to 3 million people in the whole country and possibly 8 million sheep.

Newark wool was exported not only to Flanders but also to Calais (France) which gained the monopoly on exporting wool to the continent from 1363 to 1558

The staple (a fixed market) at Calais

After Calais (in France) was conquered in 1347 by the English, Calais was the **staple (fixed marketplace)** from 1363.

A group of twenty-six traders was incorporated as the **Company of the Staple at Calais**.

In exchange for its cooperation in the payment of taxes, the company was granted a total monopoly on wool exports from England.

The company was important to the English crown, both as a source of revenue, and through its role in the defence of Calais against the French.

As domestic cloth production increased, raw wool exports were less important, diminishing the power of the Merchants.

In 1558, with the loss of Calais to the French, the staple (*market*) was transferred to Bruges (*the capital city of West Flanders in northwest Belgium*) where the Merchant Staplers continued to enjoy their monopoly on exports.

John Barton

One such **Merchant of the Staple of Calais** was **John Barton**. As a merchant he appears to have accumulated quite a “fortune” and his legacy remains in the renovation and additional construction work on **St Giles Church at Holme, Nottinghamshire**.



St Giles Church at Holme, Nottinghamshire



Holme by Newark, Nottinghamshire, window I(6)

Remains of John Barton's memorial glass. The wool merchant Barton, who died in 1491, was commemorated by donor images set against quarries charged with his initials 'JB', his merchants mark and a rebus (a pun on his name) a 'barred tun'. All these elements are in this panel, along with parts of an inscription that referred to him.

Nevil Truman in the book "Holme By Newark Church and its Founder" provides an insight into the life story of John Barton:

MASTER JOHN BARTON, Merchant of the Staple of Calais, stepped out of his front door and looked critically at the new home he had recently completed. A long rambling many-gabled stone manor house, with smallish windows, leaded in diamond panes, with here an oriel and there a square bay window, in the manner of Henry VII's reign, then just commencing.

As he stood there in his scarlet coat, furred with martin, his silver girdle and his coral rosary, he was pleased with himself. He had made a pile of money out of the wool trade and he was not at all ashamed of the fact. His sheep were all around him in the broad pasturage which he owned; his great lumbering wagons were in the barns and sheds behind him; he had a solid amount of gold coin of the realm in his strong boxes hidden away within. From small beginnings he had gone steadily on until now he was able to dine off silver plate, and his clothes were as good as anyone's. In the presses lay his best coat of camlet and others of crimson with velvet revers, of violet lined with frieze and with say, and of red furred with mink, besides another handsome silver neck chain. He felt equal to anyone in the land.

He had a largish family—four sons and two daughters—and everything pointed to their settling down in solid comfort as lords of the Manor of Holme by Newark, now he had built the house and enlarged the church.

From where he stood he could see, across two fields, the parish priest, his confessor, Sir Thomas Tylling, entering the church, and he was pleased with its appearance.

Fired by the zeal of his trade rivals, Master John Tame of Fairford and Master Thomas Fortey of Northleach, who had built such splendid churches at their Gloucestershire homes, and tired of the perpetual bragging of their wealth and devotion he had emulated them. He had been determined to show that old John Barton was as good as they were and could afford to spend just as much on his house and church as any of his brother wool merchants.

Certainly the sheep had paid and he was grateful, and rather proud of being a self-made man. There in the windows of his home he had recorded the fact in the rhyme painted on the glass and carved on the stone, 'I thanke God and ever shall, It is the shepe hath payed for all'. True he had not a coat of arms, but his wife's, which he had appropriated, did just as well and looked impressive carved over the stone fireplace in the hall.

When he first knew the church it was a dismal, narrow, aisle less building with no windows in its north side, and he had shown his gratitude to God, who had prospered him, by well-nigh pulling it down and doubling its size, with an aisle and a Lady Chapel for the burying of his own kin and the seating of them at service times.

Never mind about the north wall which he had left untouched—he could not see it from his windows, and he had put a couple of good windows in the chancel opposite his own pew. He had flooded the place with light and the windows blazed with many-hued glass in which saints, prophets and his own family, kneeling in prayer, were pictured.

*The pews and stalls were new, carved by the best workmen he could find, their ends showing dogs, lions, chameleons, dragons and other fantastic beasts. The walls glowed with the colours of the heraldry of his family alliances:—and he had not forgotten to include his trade mark and the arms of his trade guild—on stone and glass everywhere. Even his initials were stamped for ever on the work and 'J.B.' with his cunning rebus (**puzzle**) —a 'bar' (**a piece of timber**) across a 'tun' (**wine barrel**)—could be seen about the church in many places.*

The shields looked gay in their brightly-painted tints, and the newest style had been adopted throughout. True, he preferred the older mode which he had ordered for most of the windows, but those in the chancel were in the latest Tudor fashion, very plain and severe, with simple rounded arches.

*He liked, too, the **stone tomb with the figures of himself and his wife, Isabella**, which he had caused to be erected in his own part of the church, the Lady Chapel, just between the two altars of chancel and chapel. There they were, painted to the life—he with his rebus at his feet, she with her pet dog— but, plague it, the wife had already complained that the dress in which she was taken was old fashioned !*

Lest they should grow too proud and heedless he had made the carver put a stone corpse underneath to remind them each day they went to church that, despite his wealth, they, too, must go the way of all flesh. The family wanted to put a row of coats of arms across the porch, but he didn't know about it. It seemed a little too ostentatious. Better wait till the old man was gone and then they could do as they liked. But there was the bell ringing for mass, and if he did not stop dreaming he would be late.

*Glass Window
St Giles Church, Holme,
Nottinghamshire*



A very good example of the Barton Rebus
Glass windows St Wilfrid's Church, North Muskham, Nottinghamshire
(just south of St Giles Church, Holme, Nottinghamshire)

Barton rebus (puzzle) —a 'bar' (a piece of timber) across a 'tun' (wine barrel)

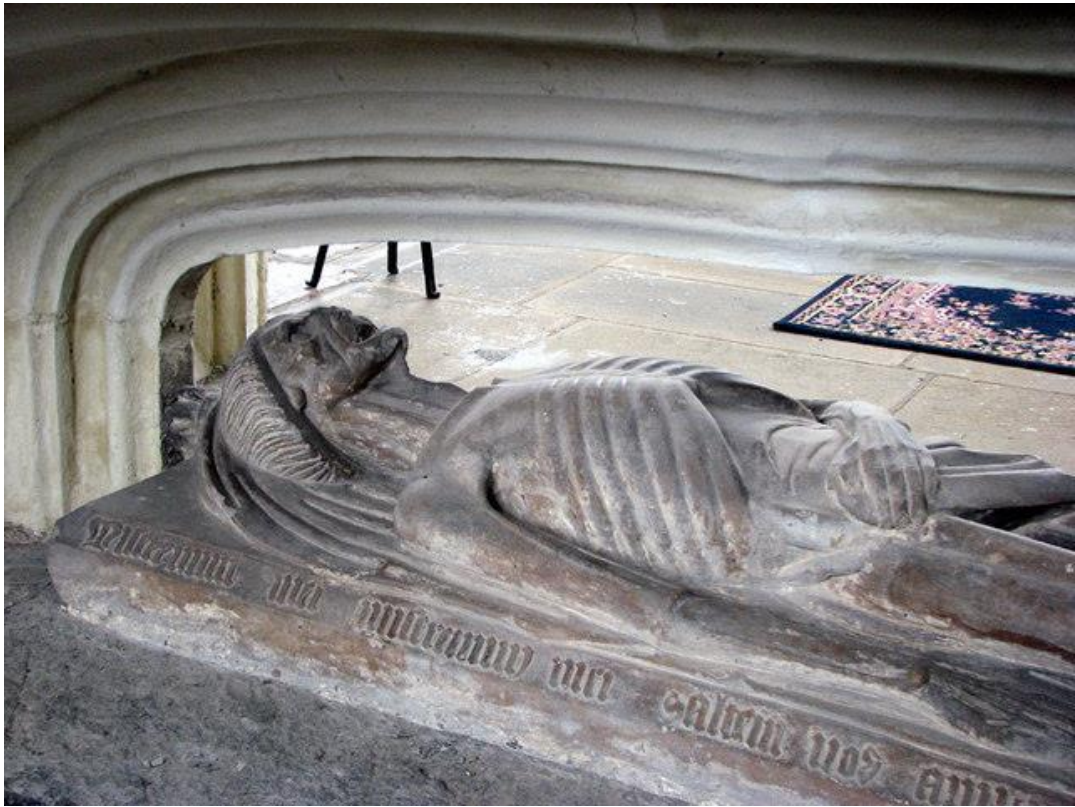




The monument to John Barton and his wife, Isabella.



The monument to John Barton and his wife, Isabella.



Beneath the tabletop or “mensa” of the tomb lies a “cadaver” or corpse, with on each side the quotation, in Latin, from the Book of Job;

“Pity me, pity me, you at least my friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me.”

There was a fatalistic fashion at the time for acknowledging the mortality of the flesh as a warning to others - “As I am so shall ye be”.

Will of John Barton, 10 December 1490

The original will of John Barton is preserved in Nottingham Castle Museum. It is a document of great interest, dated 10th December, 1490, and 'proved' [ie **Probate process in a Court of Law**] at Scrooby, Nottinghamshire on 13th June, 1491, and at Calais, France on 28th June in the same year.

A copy of his will (translated into English) is displayed at the west end of North Muskham Church.

WILL OF JOHN BARTON, 10 DECEMBER 1490.

I John Barton of Holme next Newark, Merchant of the Staple of the town of Calais, make my Will as follows. My Body to be buried in my new monument in the Chapel built by me in Holme. My best animal in the name of my mortuary. To Isabella my wife 200 marks & a third part of all utensils belonging to my house except divers things assigned by me as hereditary rights to remain in my house in Holme commonly called heirlooms, under this condition that my said wife shall be contented with the said goods for her portion as wife. Also that the said Isabella may have yearly during her life £10, out of my lands & tenements meadows feedings and pastures to be paid her by Ralph Barton my son and his heirs as he has promised me to do, at two usual terms of the year or within 40 days following so that she shall claim nothing else of my lands & tenements and also if after my decease she shall not marry; and if she shall marry she shall have but 10 marks yearly during her life. To Thomas my son 100 marks for his filial portion. To Robert my son 40 marks so that he may conduct himself well and religiously in the Priory of Shelford or in another place honestly of the same religion. To Richard my son 100 marks for his filial portion and all my lands in Newark Northgate and Osmundthorpe next Newark to hold to him & the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten; and if he die without such heir then remainder to Thomas my son & his heirs in like manner, remainder to Ralph my son in like manner, remainder to my right heirs for ever. To Katherine my daughter 40 marks for her filial portion.

I John Barton of Holme next Newark, Merchant of the Staple of the town of Calais, make my Will as follows.

My body to be buried in my new monument in the Chapel built by me in Holme.

My best animal in the name [probably 'nave'] of my mortuary.

To Isabella my wife 200 marks & a third part of all utensils belonging to my house except divers things [sundry items] assigned by me as hereditary rights to remain to remain in my house in Holme commonly called heirlooms, under this condition that my said wife shall be contented with the said goods for her portion as wife.

Also that the said Isabella may have yearly during her life £10, out of my lands and tenements meadows feedings and pastures to be paid her by Ralph Barton my son and his heirs as he has promised me to do, at two usual terms of the year or within 40 days following so that she shall claim nothing else of my lands & tenements and also if after my decease she shall not marry; and if she shall marry she shall have but 10 marks yearly during her life.

To Thomas my son 100 marks for his filial portion.

To Robert my son 40 marks so that he may conduct himself well and religiously in the Priory of Shelford or in another place honestly of the same religion.

To Richard my son 100 marks for his filial portion and all my lands in Newark Northgate and Osmundthorpe next Newark to hold to him & his heirs male of his body lawfully begotten; and if he die without such heir then remainder to Thomas my son & his heirs in like manner, remainder to Ralph my son in like manner, reminder to my right heirs for ever.

To Katherine my daughter 40 marks for her filial portion.

Also I will that the north aisle of the parish Church of Northmuscham shall be newly built at my costs and expences according to the provision of my executors & of Ralph my son who in this behalf is fully instructed. To Thomas Halle & his wife for their services done to me 10 marks in money or its true value. To Thomas Jakeson my servant 26^s 8^d. To Robert Wode a cow. To Johanna Casse a cow. To William Tasker a cow. To Johanna Barton 40^s at her marriage. Also every little son (filiolus) and daughter (filiola) of mine living in the Parish of Northmuscham shall have a sheep of the value of 20^d. To William Hall 2 ewes. To Johanna Barton wife of Ralph Barton my son my pair of coral beads as I was wont to use the same. To John Barton son & heir of Ralph Barton my son 10 marks. To Henry Barton son of said Ralph 5 marks. To Elizabeth Barton daughter of Ralph Barton 10 marks if she shall marry before she dies. To Margaret Spend my sister 2 cows & 20^s. To Marion my sister if she shall marry 5 marks. Also that my executors may restore the mass-book which I had at the Hospital of St. Citha or compound with the master for the same. All my debts to be paid as soon as convenient after my decease out of all my goods and to my creditors, before all things, faithfully to be paid.

My Executors to pay for all the poor, taxed at 4^d or less in the tax granted or to be granted within two years after my decease, within the Parish of Northmuscham, to the Collectors of the King. Sir Thomas Tyllyng to have for my tithes forgotten 40^s. Sir John la Cley one of the vicars of Northmuscham to have for my tithes forgotten 6^s 8^d. I pardon Sir Thomas Tyllyng all the debts he owes me, except a cow he has of me. To Ralph my son my best gown of Chamlet. To Thomas my son my gown of skarlete paned with m To Richard my son my gown of violet lined with say. To Thomas Clayton my gown of violet lined with fresio. To Ralph Marchall my best silver belt. To Robert my son my gown of violet lined with say. To John Tamworth my gown of Sangwyn paned To Isabella Tamworth my daughter 40^s. To every son & daughter of said Isabella 6^s 8^d. To every religious House in the Archdeaconry of Notts 6^s 8^d so that every house of the said Archdeaconry may receive me or any one in my name into the fraternity of any one of the same to pray for the safety of my soul for ever. To Richard Witt which he lately had of me & 20^s.

Also that Ralph my son may have all my lands and tenements meadows feedings & pastures wheresoever they shall be in the Kingdom of England except as before excepted. To hold to the said Ralph and the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten. And if he die without such heir the remainder to Thomas Barton my son in like manner, remainder to Richard my son in like manner, remainder to the right heirs of my body lawfully begotten. Provided always that the said Ralph & his heirs male from my lands & tenements in the of Edmston & Carberton and from lands & tenements in Northmuscham purchased by me of Cecelia Godfrey one of the daughters & heirs of Stephen Marchall, and from my lands & tenements in Newton co. Lincoln, shall find a fit priest to celebrate for the safety of my soul in the Chapel of Holme for the greater part of the year, if reasonable cause shall not subsist, according to a number of years to be fixed at the discretion & limitation of Thomas Molleneux, Ralph Marchall, Sir Thomas Tyllyng, & Thomas Clayton. And if within the number of years by the same to be limited, the said Ralph and his heirs male shall die, then the said Thomas and his heirs male if they shall live shall complete the days & years given to said chaplain. And if Thomas & his heirs male in the meantime during the terms of years shall die, then I will that Richard my son & his heirs male, if they shall live, shall complete the days & years given as aforesaid, or any one of them surviving shall be bounden to do the same. Also that Thomas my son if my goods extend to the completion of my will besides what is bequeathed above shall have 100 marks. Also that Katherine my daughter beyond the 40 marks to have above bequeathed shall be remunerated from the residue of my goods according to the discretion of my executors towards her marriage. Also that Thomas my son shall cause John Tamworth to be made a free man of the staple of the town of Calais if he can with



To Isabella Tamworth my daughter 40 shillings. To every son & daughter of Isabella 6 shillings 8 pence.

The will further continues as below:

£10, or shall give him £10. Also to Bartyn Porcherdown 6^s 8^d. I appoint Ralph Barton & Thomas Barton my sons & Thomas Clayton my Executors, and they shall administer & dispose of all my goods in the realm of England & in the town of Calais and parts beyond the sea, if they can agree together, otherwise the said Ralph and Thomas Clayton shall administer all my goods in the realm of England, and Thomas Barton & Thomas Clayton shall administer all my goods in the town of Calais & parts beyond the sea. To Ralph for his labour £40 & $\frac{1}{3}$ ^d of all utensils belonging to my house except silver plate, under condition that he shall keep the peace with my executors & especially with Thomas Barton his brother. To Thomas Clayton for his labour £20. And that Thomas Barton my son shall not have the 100 marks above bequeathed to him in reward besides his filial portion unless he keep the peace with my executors & especially with Ralph my son, and if he do so he shall have special remuneration at my will from the residue of my goods. My wife with supervision of my Executors to support & maintain my dwelling house & my household management with servants in agriculture to be observed up to the feast of St. Martin in Winter next as is wont to be done before my decease. And that all my grain in the barn & to be in the barn before the said feast besides that grain which shall belong to the use of my said house shall be converted to the fulfilment of this my last will. I appoint John Stanop Esq^{re} overseer to whom I give for his labour £10. To Master Robert Skayff 40^s.

Provided that if by any misfortune by land or sea my goods be dissipated, a pro rata defalcation is to be made according to the descretion of my Overseer & Executors. Except that my wife, Robert my son, & Katherine my daughter, shall have their portions & legacies without any diminution. In witness, etc.

Witnesses, Master Robert Skayf, notary-public, and Sir Thomas Tyllyng my confessor, another of the Vicars of Northmuscham.

Proved before Thomas Archbishop of York; dated in our manor of Scroby 13 June 1491 & the 11th year of our Translation [6 Henry 7th].

Family of John and Isabella Barton

Children mentioned in John Barton's will were:

- *Ralph Barton* *and wife Johanna (nee Radcliffe)*
- *Thomas Barton*
- *Robert Barton*
- *Richard Barton*
- *Isabella Barton* *and husband John Tamworth*
- *Katherine Barton*



Holme by Newark, Nottinghamshire, window 1(3)

Glass in the east window of the church. All that remains of the donor images of John Barton the wool merchant (died 1491) and his family are the three heads of his daughters.

✓ *This glass window most likely indicates the mother Isabella (covered hair) and her two young daughters Isabella and Katherine*