

How Did Anthony Standbank rise to prominence and become one of the leaders of Bristol's community?

In his last will and testament, Anthony Standbank bequeathed his lifetime's gains to the foundation of a new Hospital for the "Orphans and fatherlesse children"¹ of Bristol. Whether he is attempting to atone for a lifetime of sin or whether he is an early philanthropist we cannot tell, but what is certain is that by the time of his death he had amassed a significant fortune. Properties on St. Nicholas Street and Temple Street were left, as were a number of other buildings around the city including a "great Messuage or Mansion House."² While the full details of Standbank's life may never be fully uncovered, there exist enough fragments of records and fleeting mentions to enable one to put together a picture of who the man was and how he achieved the high degree of prominence he did in his later life.

As far as it is possible to know, there was only one Anthony Standbank operating in Bristol during the 16th Century. Both his names are uncommon for the period and location, with records of only three other Standbanks, husband and wife Richard & Alice³ and an Edward⁴. As far as is discernable Richard Standbank was a Draper, whilst Edward was a customs officer operating around the same time as Anthony. Because of this a fuller investigation of the Edwards's role will occur later. One issue which this does raise however is the degree of certainty with which one can identify the subject of the various sources. For the most part, the sources specify not just the surname but also either a first name or initial, but in cases where they do not this must be taken into account.

With no mention of his birth in any available parish records, the earliest suspected mention of Anthony Standbank is found in the Ledger of Thomas Smythe, 16th Century merchant and smuggler. His ledger is the only existing one of its kind for the Bristol area, not only containing full accounts of all of his many legal transactions over a period of nigh on 10 years, but also his illegal trades. Because of this it has provided the basis for the first and most detailed investigation into early modern smuggling to have been undertaken, Dr Jones' PhD Thesis and subsequent *Economic History Review* article. The name Standbank first arises in the ledger regarding Smyth's costs for fitting out a shipment of grain. As one would expect, the first of these costs seem innocuous enough. £25 is charged for a licence to sell 100 quarters of wheat, £1 10s 4d for transport costs, £1 16s 8d to fit out the ship and 17s 4d in customs and for the cocquett. There are two aspects to this account which raise suspicion however; the first being the volume of grain transported, and the second the payments to four individuals for unspecified services. When Dr Jones cross referenced the account dealing with the licence with that for the actual volumes of goods laded on the outbound journey, he found that Smyth and his associates had understated their quantities by 405 quarters, resulting in only 20% of the voyage's grain being legally traded.⁵ This can be taken as clear and unequivocal evidence of smuggling, and it is at this point that the mention of Standbank in the accounts becomes intriguing, possibly providing our first insight into the kind of man he may have been. In the early 1540s Anthony Standbank was working as a customs official in Bristol, and the fact that he appears to have received a very extravagant "gowne of damaskyn"⁶ despite providing no services leads to the obvious conclusion that this must have been a

¹ Appendix 4

² Bowen, F. W. E., *Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol*, p17

³ Leech, R. H., *The Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 1*, p169

⁴ All references appear in *Documents illustrating the overseas trade of Bristol in the 16th Century*, Jean Vanes (eds.)

⁵ Jones, E. T., *Illicit business*, p28

⁶ Vanes, J., ed., *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1500* (1974), p 108

bribe. This judgement is further reinforced by the fact that the other individuals on the list are ‘Tristan and his fellow’, one known to be a customer and the other presumed to be his partner, and ‘the searcher of Gloucester’, obviously a customs official from further up the grain supply chain.⁷ One thing that is particularly interesting about the four bribes is their quantities. The searcher of Gloucester requires only 4s to placate him, while Tristan and ‘his fellow’ require the far larger sum of £3 between them. This must then be contrasted with the gift bestowed upon Standbank. In order to guarantee his voyage safe passage Smythe gives Standbank a ‘gowne of damaskyn’ costing him £3 6s and 8d. Not only is this more than was required for all the other three customers combined, but it is also a personal gift, more flattering than a cash bribe. This would be a most useful insight into Standbank, if it were not for one small complication.

Before continuing further it is essential to look at the evidence for the identity of the man mentioned in the source. Jones, following on from Vanes, identifies him as Anthony Standbank, although there is a strong possibility that this may not be the case. As already mentioned, Anthony was not the only Standbank operating as a customs officer at this point, with Edward also in the same line of work. The possibility must therefore be considered that the recipient of the bribe may have been the latter man. The Bristol customs service was made up of one Customs Officer, one Controller, one Waiter and one or two Searchers. The first explicit record of Anthony Standbank working for the customs service is in 1543 as a waiter,⁸ the role of which was to meet incoming ships at the Hungroad and escort them to the customs house. Edward on the other hand was working in the customs service from at least 1537, making regular seizures.⁹ On top of this, there are two explicit records of Edward Standbank being involved with Tristram Lewkenor¹⁰, the man also mentioned in the account of Smythe. To compound things, the shipment to which the bribe refers is an export of grain, and would therefore not require the involvement of a waiter.

To counter this, there are later records of bribes being paid to a ‘Master Standbank’. In the 16th century master was an address of respect, only used on freemen of the city, men able to accept apprentices. Since there are no records of Edward Standbank ever having apprentices this would lead one to assume that this record is referring to Anthony. Once again, this cannot be confirmed either way, leading to more uncertain conclusions. The end result is that the identity of “Stanebanck” will most likely remain a mystery. There is fairly strong circumstantial evidence suggesting both men could have received the cloak, although that stacked on the side of Edward does seem the stronger. This ambiguity does not render this source useless however, as evidence of such widespread corruption within the customs service, especially involving a man who is probably a relation of Anthony Standbank, can lead to the conclusion that he would have most likely been involved in corrupt activities.

The picture of Anthony Standbank as a potentially corrupt official could be further supported by entry **42(L)** in Smyth’s Ledger, although once again a great deal of uncertainty must pervade this analysis. The entry deals with a shipment of leather and cloth Smyth is making in collaboration with Giles White and Robert Presy. Once again, in with the cost of the licences and customs dues is a payment of £3 made to Standbank, yet again without any stated reason. This is especially suspicious when one considers the detail that is entered to justify all other costs, explaining each licence and when it was purchased; “...the 12th day of August £8 8s 5½d which is for lycens & costes of serteyne lethir belonging to hym [White] and Thomas Smythe & Robert Presy marchentes his compartenars, as by a

⁷ Jones, E. T., *The Bristol Shipping Industry*, p50

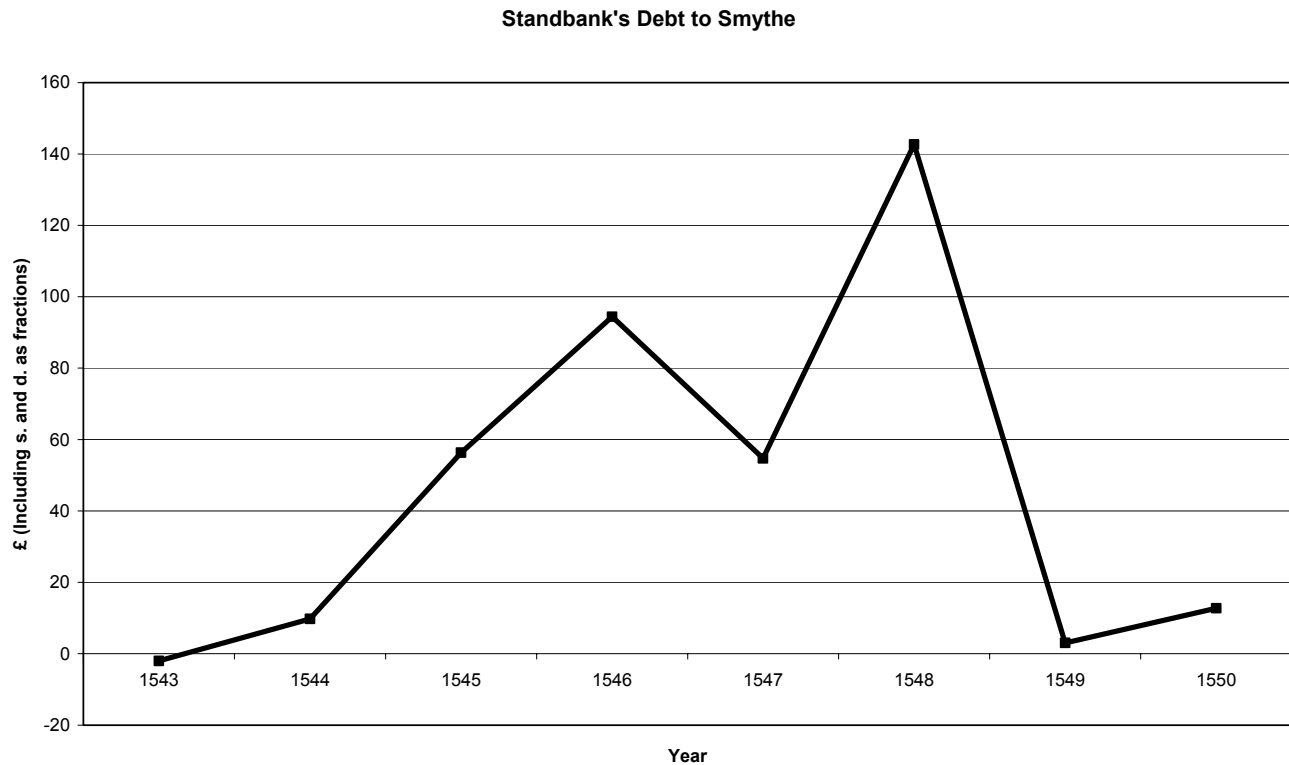
⁸ Vanes, J., ed., *Documents*, p61

⁹ Vanes, J., ed., *Documents*, p41

¹⁰ Vanes, J., ed., *Documents*, p41 & p61

count of the seid Giles may apere”¹¹ where as the mention of Standbank only warrants “£3 d’d for hym in Aprell 1541 to Master Standbank”¹². In the context of the obvious bribe payment already mentioned, it seems most unlikely that this payment could be for any purpose other than getting Standbank to overlook the cargo. Once again however the entry mentions no first name, so once again it is very possible that this may refer to either Edward or Anthony, although this time the Lewkenor connection is not present.

On top of the circumstantial evidence of corruption in the customs service are some of the aspects of Standbank’s dealings with Smythe. Before examining the significance of these one must consider the nature of business in the 16th century. When one was attempting to start a merchant house a fairly large quantity of capital would be required, usually acquired through a few years of working for other merchants, although inheritance and marriage were also potential sources. If these could be avoided by generous credit agreements then the start of a business would be far less painful, although negotiating such agreements would not necessarily have been easy. Standbank appears however to have been granted very generous terms of repayment by Smythe, with debts at some point of over £200¹³. In fact, throughout the entire account there are only two periods when Standbank is in credit. The fact that he is extended such generosity by Smythe would suggest one of 2 things, both with similar significance. Either, Standbank is being kept deliberately loyal to Smythe, or that the credit is being extended as a form of bribe. Either way the end result is that Standbank would have been highly unlikely to let his role as a waiter cause inconvenience to his benefactor.



It is not the case that Anthony Standbank never seized any illicit shipments, but the limited number of available records does suggest that it was not a regular occurrence, and that more often than not his victims were from outside of the Bristol establishment. Out of the three people we know that he seized

¹¹ Vanes, J., ed., *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1500* (1974), p74

¹² Vanes, J., ed., *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1500* (1974), p75

¹³ *Appendix 3*

goods from, two were aliens with only one a Bristol man.¹⁴ When this is compared with the statistic for the origins of merchants it seems unusual, with 64.86% of all continental trade in the hands of Bristol merchants between 1541 and 1546¹⁵. Although the sample size is far too small to be of any genuine significance, it can be seen to be further circumstantial evidence to reinforce the picture which is already arising.

We are now starting to construct a possible image of the early career of Anthony Standbank, with some indication of how his rise to prominence began. As has always been the case, in order to maintain a façade of respectability one must also maintain a legal income, and in order to rise above the station of a customs man Standbank would no doubt attempt to branch into the more lucrative world of the Continental trade. Due to obvious conflicts of interest it was not usually possible to be both a customs officer and a merchant, and for this reason one would usually assume that Standbank would have had to relinquish his role for the city as his private enterprises took off. The first definite record we have of his legal business dealings suggests that this may not have been the case however. Record #206(L) once again comes from Smythe's Ledger and details a large quantity of wine purchased by "Antony Stanbanck of Bristowe sarcher"¹⁶ between 1543 and 1550. The fact that Standbank is referred to as 'sarcher' suggests that at this point he was still in the employ of the Crown, whilst the scale and nature of the purchases cannot point to any other career than that of merchant of some kind. As will be seen, this record will prove be of some significance, enabling the construction of an estimate of the scale of Standbank's trade. First however, the exact nature of his business should be established.

When trying to find out what kind of trade an individual was involved in, a good place to start is the city's apprentice records. These are detailed and cover almost the whole period of Standbank's life, including references to him at many points. As far as can be discerned, the first of his apprentices was John Lawrence, son of husbandman Roger Lawrence of Weston, Somerset. He was taken in on the 16th of December 1542 and was given a term of 7 years, with Standbank's profession listed as 'vintner'. As has already been suggested, Anthony Standbank appeared to be involved in trade of some kind, and a career as a vintner would fit the existing evidence. Following the Apprentice Books confirms this as the case, with [records of] at least 9 apprentices over a period of 43 years all learning the wine merchant's trade from Standbank. Over the course of his career he appears to have had apprentices for all but 6 years, with an average of 2.7 (sic) apprentices at any one time.¹⁷ Standbank seems to have had no set time period for his apprentice terms, nor a set fee for the completion of their years. He was willing however to take people on whom he had a duty of more than just sustenance towards. Both William Hunte (1573) and Robert Bulfeld (1577) were to spend one year in Biscay at the expense of Standbank and his wife. Since Standbank is one of only 2 vintners to send people abroad over this period this would suggest that he is among the most successful of his trade, although at this point this is rather circumstantial evidence. It can be said with some certainty however that he must have been involved in overseas trade by this point. If the identity of his trade were to need any more reinforcement, there is also evidence of Standbank being an Innkeeper, another indication of someone being a vintner. Although information is very limited, we know that for a period he was owner of 'The Bull'¹⁸. Unfortunately the house has long since changed its name, with the only possible candidate being a pub that once bore the name. Located on the Corner of North Street and Cannon Street, it is possible it could have been Standbank's, although this is mere speculation.

¹⁴ Vanes, J., ed., *Documents*, pp61-62

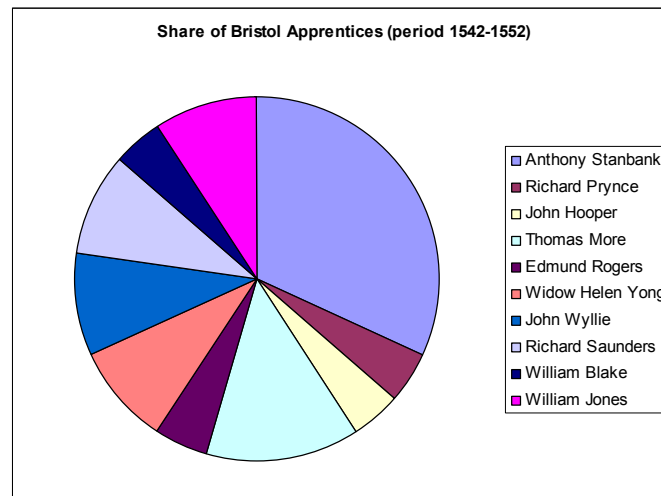
¹⁵ *Continental Trade Database*, Smuggler's City Website

¹⁶ Vanes, J., ed., *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1500* (1974), p243

¹⁷ *Appendix 1*

¹⁸ Livock, D.M. (Ed.), *City Chamberlains accounts in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, p63

Now that it has been established that he was a vintner, it is necessary to try and shed some light on Anthony Standbank's importance relative to his contemporaries. One summary way of doing this would be to compare his intake of apprentices as a proportion of the total within the city. Using the period 1542 to 1552 the results are startling. Over this time there are a total of 22 young men and women coming to Bristol to learn the Vintners trade and of these Standbank accounted for seven, 31.8% of the total¹⁹. This alone is a hugely significant figure, but when put in the context of his rivals it becomes clear just how dominant Standbank may have been. There is one merchant, Thomas More who takes on 3 apprentices over the course of 10 years. Four more; Widow Helen Yong, John Wyllie, Richard Saunders and William Jones take on 2 each, with the final 4 apprentices studying under one master each.²⁰



While it is very easy to overplay the significance of this one indicator of his size, it is nevertheless a rather elucidatory statistic. It suggests that Standbank's business was indeed larger than any of his rivals, and if it can be combined with more corroborating evidence then it may be possible to demonstrate his position as one of the city's leading Vintners.

This corroborating evidence could come in the form of Standbank's receipts for wine payments. It is at this point that the previously mentioned entry #206 comes into play. This contains the details of Standbank's personal credit account with Smythe;²¹ not only is Standbank's the only name in the entire entry, but there are also numerous references to Standbank's payments of liabilities occurred in #206 throughout the remainder of the ledger. When the purchases detailed in the entry are summed it can be seen that over a period of around 7 years Anthony Standbank purchased nearly £620 worth of produce from Smythe. All of this is explicitly stated to be wine, as one would expect given Standbank's profession. For what was presumably one of the first years of his trade, 1543, Standbank's total purchases added up to only £20. By the end of the period of Smythe's records (1548-1549²²) this had been raised to average nearly £125 per year²³. This progressive increase in yearly purchases suggests an annually increasing rise in trade, and consequently a rise in Anthony Standbank's fortunes. Whilst it cannot be certain that the one leads on to the other, the former certainly is indicative of the latter. One must bear in mind the possibility that Standbank had simply switched his supplier, although there is no reason or evidence to suggest that this is the case.

¹⁹ Appendix 1

²⁰ Appendix 1

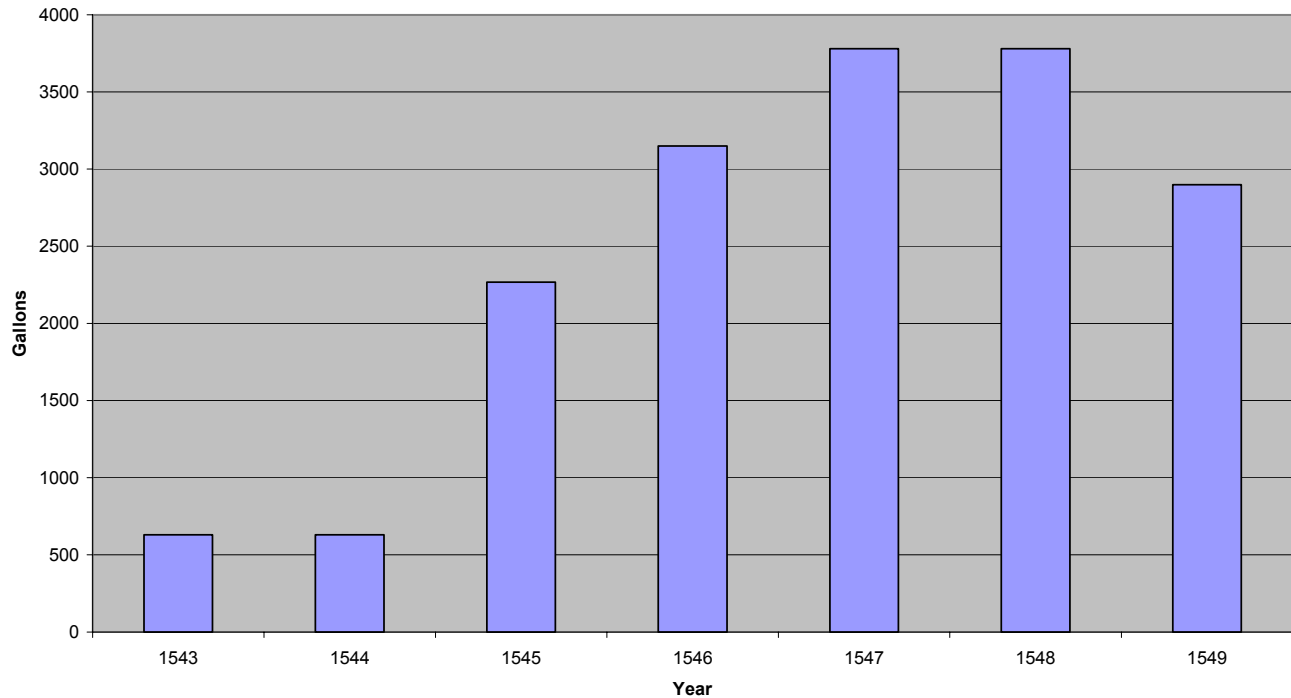
²¹ Standbank's name is the only one mentioned in the account, with every other entry stating no name or 'hym'.

²² 1550 is not used as the records for this year may be incomplete.

²³ Appendix 3

Because of the detailed nature of Smythe's records it is possible to calculate the exact quantity of wine purchased by Standbank each year. As would be expected, things start slowly with only 630 gallons purchased for the first two years. After this however trade rapidly increases, with yearly purchases approaching 3,800 gallons²⁴. Once again, this is indicative of a rise in fortune, although this must be put in the context of generally increasing wine sales throughout the period.

Yealy Volume of Anthony Standbank's Wine Purchases



Success in this period would not just have been absolute, but relative. It is therefore important to attempt to measure how successful Standbank was in compared to his peers. Although this is impossible to be certain of for exactly the same reasons one cannot fully calculate Standbank's size, some vague indicators can be isolated with the use of Smythe's Ledger. Unfortunately the fact that the second largest apprentice master, Thomas More, is barely mentioned in the ledger cannot be used as proof of his insignificance, but rather as proof that he did not have Smythe as his supplier. Out of the nine other known Vintners of the period only former Chamberlain John Wyllie has any sizable account with Smythe. When his transactions for the period are examined it seems clear that his yearly revenues would not have been nearly as high as those of Standbank, although possibly not as far below as would be suggested by the apprentice figures. Although it is difficult to calculate exactly, it appears that during the entire period he purchased £262 5s 5d worth of wine from Smythe, £20 of which was in collaboration with William Tyndall²⁵. Although none of this can be taken to be conclusive, it does seem that Standbank was a leading wine merchant within the city at this point, an obvious stepping stone on his path to success.

There are admittedly a few implicit assumptions made in this analysis, foremost among them that both men only use the one supplier for their goods. Once again, for this reason this can only be taken as an indicator of reasons for Standbank's rise to prominence not as proof, although it can once again be taken as fairly strong circumstantial evidence.

²⁴ Appendix 3

²⁵ Vanes, J., ed., *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538-1500* (1974), p110

The third and final aspect of Standbank's life, and possibly the apex of his prominence, is his time on the City council and his year as Mayor. The first record of his involvement in the governance of Bristol is his appointment as Sheriff in 1552. This nearly coincides with the first year Standbank's name is recorded on a City Ordinance, 1553, an order that William Appowell shall be he next keeper of Back Hall²⁶. This important civic building will come to feature again in the story of Anthony Standbank, but not for a few years to come. We can assume that Standbank's career on the council ended sometime between 10th May 1584 and 22nd July 1585²⁷, although this is clearly not certain. Over the 32 or so years of his tenure, Standbank's signature appears at the bottom of no less than 22 city ordnances, with many more unsigned. Although the individual ordnances can shed little light on his life, some clues can be garnered from them as will be shown later. As already mentioned, Anthony Standbank served as Mayor of Bristol for a year, with 1565 no doubt representing the pinnacle of his political career as suggested by his Will. Although no ordnances are recorded in that year, he was involved in undertaking two large scale surveys for the Crown.

Both were fine examples of political manoeuvring, with Standbank resuming his old role of helping the Merchants of Bristol evade the Crown. Although in both he admits failings in Bristol, both times he manages to exonerate himself and his fellow councillors by laying the blame on areas outside their direct gaze such as the many mills located up the Severn.²⁸ This has the dual effect of making the council look compliant and honest, whilst simultaneously shifting the gaze of the Crown onto other areas. On top of this, they manage to point some suspicion in the direction of Gloucester and their northerly rivals, thereby strengthening their own position further. It is acts like this that we can get glimpses into the ways in which Standbank would have risen to the levels he did. Skilful and devised to help the Bristol establishment, they are calculated decisions of a man with high ambitions.

One issue which must be addressed is the assumption that Standbank's prominence rose throughout the course of his life. Although at first it would seem impossible to come up with a numerical indicator of a person's significance on the council, this turns out not to be the case. City ordnances were signed by all councillors, with the mayor at the top, followed by all other members. The fact that the Mayor was the first name on the list leads on to the possibility that the order in which one signed was a mark of one's seniority. In order to test this hypothesis it is necessary to take the position from the top which Standbank's name appears, the total number of names and also the year in which the ordinance was made and attempt to establish a relationship. The total number of attendees is divided by Standbank's distance from the top and noted down below the year. In order to reduce the impact of anomalous results without removing them altogether a three year running average is constructed²⁹.³⁰ When this data is plotted on a scatter diagram and a line of best fit calculated, a very clear trend is visible, with a strong positive correlation between the year of the ordinance and Standbank's position on the list, until the 1580s. At this point a slight downward trend is observed, suggesting that position on the list was not a direct mark of seniority, but possibly of influence. As Standbank became an old man (he is most likely well into his 60s by the 1580s) it is possible that his influence on council waned, signified by his fall down the list.

²⁶ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p21

²⁷ These are the last explicit reference to his involvement and the first time his name is explicitly not on the list.

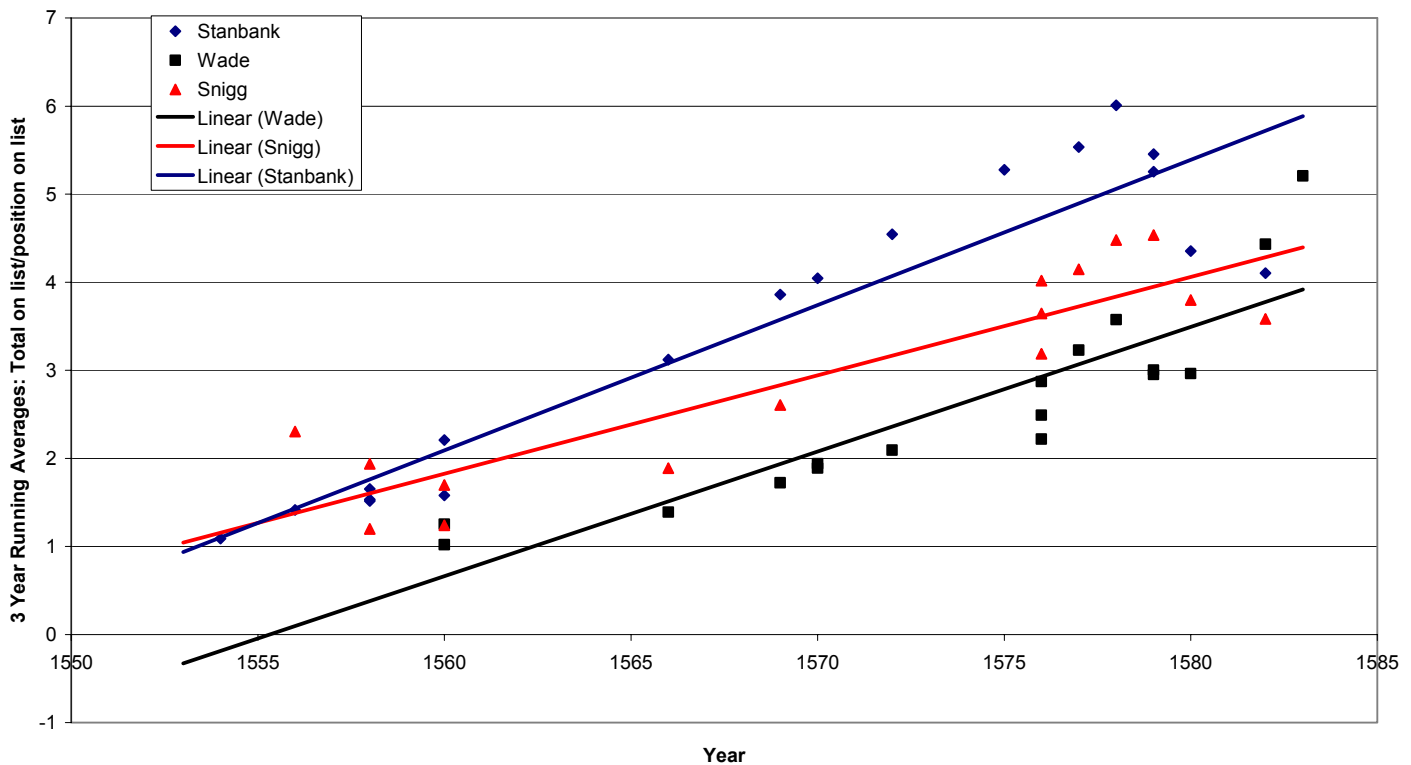
²⁸ *Survey of Smuggling in Bristol, & 1565, Bristol Port Survey, 21 May 1565*

²⁹ *Appendix 2*

³⁰ It is for the same reason that years when people were mayor are also ignored. When a denominator value of 1 is taken it gives highly distorting results and causes the Y-axis values to become greatly out of proportion. In order to compensate for this, years when people were mayor have been indicated with a vertical line.

In order to verify these results and check their validity the same process must be applied to other councillors, with a random selection of two providing John Wade and George Snigg. When the method was repeated the exact same relationship was observed, demonstrating a direct correlation between a councillor's apparent influence and the order in which they signed their names. Once again the downward trend at the end is noticed³¹. What the wider significance of this relationship is cannot be confirmed without a similar study of a wider selection of documents, but it is possible that it could be relevant for an area wider than just Bristol.

Correlation Between Seniority and List Position



With more time, it may be possible to see if there is significance to the gradient of the line of best fit, although in the context of this essay this is not an option. This is because it would require a detailed study of the careers of at least 5 or 6 other members of the council in order to calculate how prominent they were, as well as some reliable indicator of prominence with which to compare the gradient, well beyond the reach of these 5,000 words.

As already mentioned, another role which Standbank came to hold was that of Keeper of Back Hall.³² Located near Bristol Bridge, Back Hall was the civic building to which all goods imported into Bristol had to be brought. Since only burgesses were allowed to trade within Bristol, any alien merchant would have to sell his wares to a native, with the deal overseen by a broker³³. Use of the Back Hall was a way for Bristolians to guard their monopoly of trade, fining anyone who violated the oath.³⁴ For this reason, the position of Keeper would have been a most prestigious role, not only being a sign of status but also

³¹ Only on George Snigg as John Wade appears to still be in the ascendancy when the records end.

³² Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p41

³³ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Introduction pxxi

³⁴ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p90

a source of income.³⁵ Once again, in order to check this hypothesis it will be necessary to check the identity of previous Keepers of the Hall and to see to what extent they were also figures of significance within Bristol. If a positive correlation can be established, then this can again be taken as evidence of Standbank's rise to prominence. Throughout the 16th century there are records of at least 7 different Keepers, although it seems probable that there may have been more³⁶. These were John Maunsell, William Appowell, Thomas Harris, William Sprotte, William Jones, John Wade and of course Anthony Standbank. All of these men's names appear on council ordinances, most of the time close to the top of the list of members.³⁷ On top of this, at least one of them (excluding Standbank) is known to have been mayor; John Wade held the office in 1576. Although once again this can only be taken as circumstantial evidence of prominence, it is nevertheless a fairly strong indicator. When put in the context of the sums of money which were clearly involved in the office it does seem likely that the position would have been highly sought after. An ordinance of 1553 declares that William Appowell must pay John Maunsell the sum of £40 annually after replacing him as keeper of the Hall.³⁸ When compared to people's average yearly earnings in this period it can be seen that the Keepership must have been big business. To what extent can this shed light on the story of Standbank? Appointed in 1570, it seems that he held the post until 1587³⁹ by which point we know his health had started to deteriorate severely.⁴⁰ This period of time is seemingly far longer than any of his predecessors, with the previous incumbents apparently lasting no more than 7 years⁴¹. The fact that Standbank held what appears to have been a most desirable and lucrative position for so long is once again an indicator of his status within the Bristol community.

Although it has not been possible to ascertain Anthony Standbank's exact date of birth, some constraints on the date can be set. He takes on his first apprentice, John Lawrence, in 1542⁴². Only a Freeman of the city was able to have an apprentice, with one of the conditions of this being an age of 21⁴³. For this reason we can tell that Anthony Standbank was born no later than the 12th December 1521, although a date this late is highly unlikely as it would have been rare to take on apprentices as young as 21. We also know that Standbank was a city sheriff in 1552. This role combined not only the role of sheriff but that of a bailiff, implying that he would need to have been a relatively young man⁴⁴. Although it is impossible to say for certain how old Standbank would have been, it seems unlikely that he would have been significantly past his mid 30s. Because of this we can guess that he would not have been born much earlier than 1515. It can therefore be estimated with a fairly high degree of probability that Anthony Standbank was born somewhere between these two dates, with the earlier years seeming the more likely.

Standbank's will, written in 1587, is the work of a man who realises his end is near, admitting that "thow being of perfect memorye" he is "somewhat weake in body"⁴⁵. For the most part, it reveals little about his life, although a few facts of interest are revealed. As already mentioned, Standbank specified

³⁵ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p22, pp26-7, p41

³⁶ It is not clear that every appointment or dismissal is recorded, suggesting that there could have been more holders of the office.

³⁷ See above.

³⁸ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p22

³⁹ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, p91

⁴⁰ *Appendix 4*

⁴¹ William Jones, 1563-1570.

⁴² *Apprentice Books part II*, entry 219

⁴³ *Apprentice Books part II*, Introduction px

⁴⁴ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Introduction pxix

⁴⁵ *Appendix 4*

the eventual recipients of his wealth to be the “Orphans and fatherlesse children”⁴⁶ of Bristol. Before them however his properties were to pass to his wife Katherine for the “terme of her lyfe naturall”⁴⁷. When it comes to indicators of his wealth and status, there is one real clue. It is clear upon closer inspection that Standbank’s closest male friend is one Master William Burde, whom he not only describes as his “very loving and trusty frend”, but whom he also leaves in charge of taking care of his wife and has as the primary signature upon his Will. William Burde, also spelt Bird, was one time mayor of Bristol, and a similarly prominent council figure. The fact that Standbank closest friend was such a powerful man is further indication of his own high standing.

Although it sheds little light on his rise to prominence, it is interesting the level of insistence with which Standbank specifies that it must be the poor who benefit from his will. He specifies that the money will first go to “homsoever as of late it was devised by M[aster] John Carr ... for an Hospital”, and if that falls through then either of the executors of his will (Katherine or Burde) are to use “their good and godly discreacons for the best proffitt and comoditye of the poor”.⁴⁸ This tells us that apart from most likely being a philanthropic fellow, he also had no surviving children. Not a fact of significance in his rise to power, but interesting in building up a picture of the man.

Finally, and as one would expect, the Will provides a rough date for the death of Anthony Standbank. Since he declares he is “weake in body” we can assume that his end would have followed shortly, thus enabling us to fix a rough figure to his eventual age. Going by the assumption that he was born around 1515, we can conclude that Anthony Standbank most likely died just past 70, an exceedingly good age for a man of this period.

Although it is not a major discrepancy, one issue which must be mentioned is that of the name of his wife. In his Will she is unequivocally identified as Katherine, whilst in the apprentice books she is repeatedly referred to as Joan. There are 3 possibilities which arise at this point, with only one seeming to exist within the realms of possibility. The first is that Joan is simply a misprint or a shortened version of Katherine, hardly a likely proposition. The second is that there were two Anthony Standbanks in Bristol at this time. As has already been discussed, there is no evidence that this was the case, and there would not only need to have been two men of the same name, but they would both need to have worked as vintners!⁴⁹ This leaves the last possibility; Standbank’s first wife Joan died and he re-married sometime after the 26th September 1577. Whether this is true is impossible to tell, although no preferable alternatives can be constructed.

By the end of his life Anthony Standbank had risen to become a figure of some stature within Bristol. His rise to power can be traced through his successes in his many careers, following a traceable pattern. His work helping members of the establishment as a customer would have no doubt aided his position, as would his success as a vintner. No doubt the two are intertwined, with one profession reinforcing the other. While Standbank most likely abandoned his role as a searcher by the mid-to-late 1550s, we know that he continued to do good business in the wine trade until at least 1577⁵⁰, probably later. His first community role was that of sheriff, not a desirable position⁵¹ but somewhat seen as a rite of passage. He soon progressed to a junior councillor, before becoming Mayor of the city and eventually Keeper of

⁴⁶ *Appendix 4*

⁴⁷ *Appendix 4*

⁴⁸ *Appendix 4*

⁴⁹ In Smythe’s ledger Anthony Standbank ‘sarcher’ is recorded as purchasing a vast amount of wine, showing him to be a vintner.

⁵⁰ McGregor, M., Bristol apprentice book 1556-1593

⁵¹ Stanford, M., *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Introduction pxix

Back Hall until his death. It seems there was little that Standbank did not achieve. Whether he reached the heights he did through acumen and solid business skills or corruption and collusion with the establishment is debateable⁵², but Standbank's success is certainly hard to refute. This gradual rise to prominence has been shown to be mirrored by the rise of his name of the Ordinance lists, to the point that this can be applied to other people of the same period.

⁵² The most realistic conclusion would probably be one involving all four

Appendix 1: Apprentices

Start Date	Apprentice	Father	Origin	Father's Job	Term	Master	To have at end'
16/12/1542	John Lawrence	Roger Lawrence (dec)	Weston, Sommerset	Husbandman	7 years	Anthony Stanbank	40/- f 4/6 etc
10/02/1545	Richard Jones	Morgan Jones	Bristol	Weaver	9 Years	Anthony Stanbank	4 marks f 4/6 etc
16/02/1545	Richard Combar	William Combar	Kinver, Staffordshire	Husbandman	9 Years	Anthony Stanbank	4 marks f 4/6 etc
01/04/1547	Walter Kingman	Renald Kingman	Leominster, Hereford	Smith	12 Years	Anthony Stanbank	40/- f 4/6 etc
16/05/1550	William Whyte	John Whyte	Bristol	Belletter	16 Years	Anthony Stanbank	40/- f 4/6 etc
05/11/1551	Humphry Dunne	John Dunne	Eaton, Salop	Husbandman	10 Years	Anthony Stanbank	26/8 f 4/6 etc
07/11/1551	William Wever	Robert Wever	Bristol	Weaver	14 Years	Anthony Stanbank	26/8 f 4/6 etc
19/01/1573	William Hunte	William Hunte	Bristol		7 Years	Anthony Stanbank	
26/09/1577	Robert Bulfeld	John Bulfeld	Keswick, Cumberland		7 Years	Anthony Stanbank	
04/10/1542	Thomas	John Smyth	Bristol	Pewterer	10 Years	Richard Prynce	20/- f 4/6 etc
01/09/1545	Edward	Richard Clerke	Bewdley, Worcs	Capper	9 Years	John Hooper	26/8 f 4/6 etc
07/10/1545	Thomas	William Robynson	Boston, Lincs	Mariner	12 Years	Thomas More	f 4/6 etc
13/12/1545	John	Thomas Appowell	Winforton, Hereford	Grasier	12 Years	Thomas More	f 4/6 etc
26/09/1546	Thomas	Willian Morgan	Tewkesbury, Glos	Tailor	10 Years	Edmund Rogers	10/- f 4/6 etc
21/02/1547	Michael	Lawrence Corbett	Dunston, Staffs	Husbandman	8 Years	Widow Helen Yong	20/- f 4/6 etc
21/02/1547	Mary	John Thomas	Bristol	Hooper	7 Years	Widow Helen Yong	13/4 etc
24/06/1547	Michael	William Cape	Buckland, Sommerset	Fisherman	8 Years	John Wyllie	20/- f 4/6 etc
04/10/1547	William	[Blank]	Byane, Landenne		14 Years	Richard Saunders	20/- f 4/6 etc
27/03/1549	Henry	[Blank] Gurnard	Newport, Essex		7 Years	Richard Saunders	40/- f 4/6 etc
17/07/1549	Edward	John Mownsy	Kendal, Westmorland	Cutler	10 Years	William Blake	20/- f 4/6 etc
24/06/1549	Richard	Walter Chatborne	Wick, Worcs	Husbandman	10 Years	John Wyllie	20/- f 4/6 etc
10/09/1549	Richard	John Fownes	Dodford, Worcs	Yeoman	8 Years	William Jones	40/- f 4/6 etc
10/09/1549	Fowkes	[Blank] Lymell	Bridgenorth, Salop	Yeoman	10 Years	William Jones	40/- f 4/6 etc
11/11/1550	Alice	John Mayden	Bristol	Yeoman	8 Years	Thomas More	6/8 f 4/6 etc

Appendix 2: Position in City Ordinances

Positions on list

Total	43	30	35	40	25	36	27	27	31	39	38	20	24	35	29	27	26	29	24	36	33	38	26	42	30	43	43
Stanbank	42	29	29	20	18	23	17	17	9	9	10		6	6					6	6	5	7	6	7	11	12	
Wade							26	27	18	27	19	9	15			11	10	12	M	10	9	11	15	11	9	7	7
Snigg			10	36		30	21	22	12	21				M	M	8	6	9		8	7	9		9	12		

(M=Mayor for Year)

Ratio of Total List to Individual Position

Year	1553	1554	1556	1558	1558	1558	1560	1560	1566	1569	1570	1570	1572	1575	1575	1576	1576	1576	1576	1577	1578	1579	1579	1580	1582	1583	1583
Stanbank	1.02	1.03	1.21	2	1.39	1.57	1.59	1.59	3.44	4.33	3.8		4	5.83					4	6	6.6	5.43	4.33	6	2.73	3.58	
Wade							1.04	1	1.72	1.44	2	2.22	1.6			2.45	2.6	2.42		3.6	3.67	3.45	1.73	3.82	3.33	6.14	6.14
Snigg			3.5	1.11		1.2	1.29	1.23	2.58	1.86						3.38	4.33	3.22		4.5	4.71	4.22		4.67	2.5		

3 Year Running Average

Year	1553	1554	1556	1558	1558	1558	1560	1560	1566	1569	1570	1570	1572	1575	1575	1576	1576	1576	1576	1577	1578	1579	1579	1580	1582	1583	1583
Stanbank		1.09	1.41	1.53	1.65	1.51	1.58	2.21	3.12	3.86	4.04		4.54	5.28						5.53	6.01	5.45	5.25	4.35	4.1		
Wade							1.02	1.25	1.39	1.72	1.89	1.94	2.09			2.22	2.49	2.87		3.23	3.57	2.95	3	2.96	4.43	5.21	
Snigg			2.31	1.94		1.2	1.24	1.7	1.89	2.61						3.19	3.64	4.02		4.15	4.48	4.53		3.8	3.58		

Appendix 3: Standbank's credit position with John Smyth

Date	Debts			Credits			Current Debt			Current Debt	
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d		£
27/02/1543	16	0	0				16	0	0	27/02/1543	16
01/03/1543	4	0	0				20	0	0	01/03/1543	20
02/08/1543				22	0	0	-2	0	0	02/08/1543	-2
19/05/1544	8	0	0				6	0	0	19/05/1544	6
14/06/1544	4	0	0				10	0	0	14/06/1544	10
05/08/1544	9	6	8				19	6	8	05/08/1544	19.33333333
07/11/1544				9	6	8	10.33	0	0	07/11/1544	9.73333333
13/01/1545	40	0	0				49.73	0	0	13/01/1545	50.33333333
03/03/1545				10	0	0	40.33	0	0	03/03/1545	39.73333333
28/03/1545	16	0	0				55.73	0	0	28/03/1545	56.33333333
24/03/1545	16	0	0				72.33	0	0	24/03/1545	71.73333333
15/08/1545				16	0	0	55.73	0	0	15/08/1545	56.33333333
29/01/1546	84	13	4				140.3	13	4	29/01/1546	140.4
31/03/1546	16	0	0				156.4	13	4	31/03/1546	156.3333333
31/07/1546				62	0	0	94.33	13	4	31/07/1546	94.4
02/01/1547	6	13	4				100.4	26	8	02/01/1547	101
02/01/1547	16	13	4				117	39	12	02/01/1547	117.0666667
07/01/1547	3	6	8				120.1	45	20	07/01/1547	120.3333333
12/01/1547	6	13	4				126.3	58	24	12/01/1547	126.7333333
24/01/1547	23	6	8				149.7	64	32	24/01/1547	149.6666667
28/01/1547	10	0	0				159.7	64	32	28/01/1547	159.7333333
31/01/1547	40	0	0	24	13	4	175.7	51	28	31/01/1547	175.0333333
31/03/1547				20	0	0	155	51	28	31/03/1547	155.7333333
01/07/1547				44	13	4	111.7	38	24	01/07/1547	110.4
08/07/1547				18	0	0	92.4	38	24	08/07/1547	93.73333333
14/11/1547				39	8	4	54.73	30	20	14/11/1547	53.01666667
05/01/1548	20	0	0				73.02	30	20	05/01/1548	74.73333333
08/01/1548	35	0	0				109.7	30	20	08/01/1548	108.0166667
09/01/1548	10	0	0				118	30	20	09/01/1548	119.7333333
01/02/1548	28	0	0				147.7	30	20	01/02/1548	146.0166667
07/02/1548	55	0	0				201	30	20	07/02/1548	202.7333333
18/07/1548				60	0	0	142.7	30	20	18/07/1548	141.0166667
27/02/1549	40	0	0				181	30	20	27/02/1549	182.7333333
08/03/1549	12	0	0				194.7	30	20	08/03/1549	193.0166667
24/03/1549				60	0	0	133	30	20	24/03/1549	134.7333333
06/05/1550				20	0	0	114.7	30	20	06/05/1550	113.0166667
27/05/1549				80	0	0	33.02	30	20	27/05/1549	34.73333333
01/08/1549				80	0	0	-45.3	30	20	01/08/1549	-46.98333333
30/12/1549	48	6	8				1.017	36	28	30/12/1549	3.066666667
08/01/1550	48	6	8				51.07	42	36	08/01/1550	49.35
06/05/1550				20	0	0	29.35	42	36	06/05/1550	31.06666667
03/06/1550				16	13	4	15.07	29	32	03/06/1550	12.71666667
	617	6	8								
				602	2	0					

Year End Debt

Year (End)	Debt (£)
1543	-2
1544	9.7333333
1545	56.3333333
1546	94.4
1547	54.73
1548	142.7
1549	3.067
1550	12.72

Appendix 4: Standbanke's will

In the Name of God: Amen

The last daye of Maye anno a thousand five hundred eighty seven/ In the nyne and twentieth yeare of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England France and Ireland Quene defender of the faithe etces/ I Anthony Standbanke of the citye of Bristowe late Mayor thow being of perfect memorye but somewhat weake in body does make and declare this my last will and testament. First I comitt my power, unto God Almighty my Creator, Jesus Christ my only Redemer, and the Holy Ghost my comforter and I buylde my faithe only uppon my redemer and Savyour Jesus Christ, throughe the meritts of his deathe and passion and in him alone to have a joyful resurrection and to be partake of the heavenly joyes/ My body I comitt to the earthe to be laide in *Christian* buriall in the crowd [crypt] of St. Nicholas. Item I give and devise unto my welleloved wyffe Katherine Standbank all my landes tenemments rents revercons and herediaments whatsoever lying within the city of Bristowe in the county of Bristowe and in Temple street and in St. Nicholas street there and any where in the realme of England/ To holde and enjoy the same for and during the terme of her lyfe naturall and after her decease my full minde and will is that all my said lands tenements rents possessions and hereditaments & whatsoever shall remaine for ever to all intents and purposes to that good and godly use of orphans and fatherlesse children or otherwise homsoever as of late it was devised by M[aster] John Carr deceased for an Hospital to be erected within this city of Bristowe, as by the will and testament of the said John Carr it maye appeare/ and my will is that this my land and the remaynder thereof shall go to the same use and to the said hospital in further good order as by counsell it maye be devised or advised and in defaulte of further creation of the said hospital and so that it dothe not take effecte then I give and devise all my said lands tenemtnes rentes revercons and hereditaments unto my said wyffe if she be living and to my very loving and trusty frend M[aster] William Burde wollen draper to be used to their good and godly discreacons or the discreacon of one of them surviving whiche maye be for the best proffitt and comoditye of the poor people when they or one of them shall deme best. All the rest of my goodes chattells plate household stuff

[Page 2]

implements cattalls moveable and immoveable whatsoever I wholly sine and bequeathe the same unto my said wyffe Katherine, my wyffe my sole and only executive and I doe appointe the saide M[aster] William Burd to be my overseer not doubting but that he wilbe assistant and helping to my said wyffe in all things and all other things I lykewise referr to my said wives good discreason to be done as my speciall trust is in her that the will for all things to be decently executed. An wittness whereof I have to these present putt my hande and seale yeoven the days and years aboutwritten Wittnesses also present Mr William Burde, Thomas Brooke, Thomas Wryn/ By me Willm Byrde draper for wittness/ By me Thomas Brooke wittness/ By me Thomas Wryn Notary Publique wittnes

Appendix 5: Standbank's Seizures:

- 1537 Edward Standbank reported that Domyngo de Subtieta, alien merchant, had entered in the customs books 20 tins of iron in the name of John Shipman, merchant denizen.
- 1547 Edward Standbank reported that William Hill had siezed at Bristol coal to the value of 40s. goods of a merchant unknown, shipped for export customed.
- 1541 Edward Stanbank reported that Tristram Lewkenor had siezed at Bristol 4 Barrels of salmon, the goods of William Appowell of Bristol, merchant, landed uncustomed.
- 1541 Edward Standbank siezed at Bristol 10 falcons valued at 53s. 4d. each, the goods of William Appowell of Bristol, landed uncustomed. Appowell maintained that he had paid duty for the falcons he brought from Ireland, some of which were for the King's use.
- 1543 Anthony Standbank,waiter in the port of Bristol,siezed 2 pipes of salmon, the goods of Thomas White of Bristol, merchant, and 4 barrels of herring, the goods of Dennis McCreothe, an Irish merchant, all landed uncustomed
- 1544 Edward Standbank seized 1½ stoness hake and 30 verges Irish frieze, goods of an unknown merchant, landed uncustomed.
- 1546 Anthony Standbank, waiter at the port of Bristol, on 16 September, siezed 60 ells of Breton cloth, the goods of Henry Petron, alien, landed uncustomed.
- 1545 Edward Standbank reported that on the 9 April, 1545, Thomas Shipman had laden in 2 pickards, John Dee and John Coke masters, at Berkely, 32 dickers of tanned leather and 60 dozens of calf skins and taken them to Kingroad for loading into a Spanish ship for export uncustomed.
- 1544 Edward Standbank reported that Nicholas Oseley, merchant of Bristol, on 29 July, 1543, shipped 20 dickers of leather at Berkely, Gloucestershire, and took them overseas for sale.

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