

THE WILL OF JOHN FAUX

John Faux's Will was written on 5th March 1763. John felt compelled to write his Will because he was due to set sail to Bengal with the East India Company in a ship called the *Lord Clive*. The full transcript of the Will reads as follows:

I John ffaux Carpenter now bound out on a voyage to Bengal in East India in the ship called the Lord Clive Captain William Webber Commander being in bodily health and of sound and disposing mind and memory and considering the perils and dangers of the seas and other uncertainties of this transitory (so for avoiding controversies after my decease) make publish and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner following (that is to say) first Incommend my Soul to God that gave it and my Body I commit to the Earth or Sea as it shall please God to Order and as for and concerning all my worldly Estate I give bequeath and dispose thereof as follows: that is to say I give and bequeath unto my Brother Joseph ffaux of the parish of Saint John in Southwark carpenter five guineas and after my just Debts and funeral expenses are paid, all of the rest residue and remainder of such wages sum and sums of Money Lands Tenements Goods Chattels and Estate whatsoever as shall be any ways due owing or belonging unto me at the time of my decease I do give devise and bequeath the same unto my two children Susanna ffaux and Joseph ffaux equally to be divided between them part and share alike when they shall attain their respective ages of twenty-one years and if either of them shall happen to dye before then I order and divert that the part and share of that child so dying shall go to the survivor of them and I do hereby nominate and appoint my said Brother Joseph ffaux to be guardian to my said two children during their respective Minorities and I also constitute and my said Brother Joseph ffaux to be sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former and other Wills Testaments and Deeds of Gifts by me at any time heretofore made and I do ordain and satisfy these presents to stand and be for and as my only last Will and Testament In Witness whereof to this my said Will I have set my hand and seal the 7th day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty three and in the third year of the Reign of His Majesty King George Third over Great Britain*John Faux* ...signed sealed published and declared in the presence of us *Ab^r Harman* *W^m Harman*

John Faux's two children, Susanna and Joseph, were aged 8 and 5 respectively at the time this Will was written. A person who died out of the country and bequeathed property in England or Wales would have had their Will proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. John's Will was probated on 1st October 1767, however, the date of probate may have been several years after the date of death. John's record reads:

On the first day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven administration (with the Will annexed) of Goods Chattels and Credits of John ffaux late carpenter belonging to the East India Merchant ship the Lord Clive at Calcutta in the East Indies a widower deceased was granted to Gregory ffaux and Joseph Casey the ? next of kin and curator or Guardians lawfully assigned to Susanna ffaux spinster and Joseph ffaux Minors the children of the said deceased and Residuary Legatees named in the said Will for the use and benefit of the said Minors and until out of them shall attain the age of twenty one years they having been first sworn by commission duly to administer for that Joseph ffaux the Brother of the said deceased and sole Executor named in the said Will dyed without taking upon him the execution thereof.

It is clear that John's wife, Susanna, was dead by the time the Will was written. Most likely she died at the time of Joseph's birth in 1758 as the couple only had two children.

John's decision to leave England for India is brave one and clearly he was aware of the risks involved. To understand John's decision, we need to know a little about the East India Company and the situation in India at the time.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The book *Lords of the East: The East India Company and its Ships* by Jean Sutton provides some background to John Faux's decision and to the East India Company itself.

It was the desire to hinder the Dutch encroachment on the spice trade that drove a group of London merchants to seek royal sanction to trade in the East Indies. A charter in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth I gave them exclusive rights to trade and constituted the birth of the East India Company. Initially, fleets went to the Moluccas (Spice Islands) for pepper, cloves, mace and nutmegs which could be sold on the London markets at 20 times their purchase price. Later, footfalls in India meant that attention focussed to the trade of cotton and tea. England did not produce much that could be sold in the East – some iron products perhaps, so outgoing vessels tended to contain gold in the form of coins, called “pieces of eight”.

The mid-eighteenth century saw significant political changes in India that lead to substantial changes in the Company and to its supremacy in vast areas of India. This was due to the leadership of Robert (later Lord) Clive and the support of the British Navy. In the early part of the century, settlements were simple factories with employees leading a simple monastic life in the host country. But in 1754, the first royal troops travelled to India - previously the only British armed forces had belonged to the East India Company. In 1754, however, their presence was considered temporary, until Franco-British rivalry was resolved, for, although the British dominated the Carnatic, the French controlled Hyderabad, and the British position in Bengal was rapidly deteriorating. The Nawab of Bengal had finally decided to throw the British out of Bengal before they threw him. He seized Calcutta, but failed to follow up his advantage, and allowed Clive to land with effective reinforcements. The victory of Plassey followed (1757). Clive had a puppet ready to succeed the defeated Nawab. He then charged the new Nawab £200,000 for his services and the freehold rights of 900 square miles around Calcutta for the Company. The prize money for the rest of Clive's lieutenants and the Company servants was in the same generous proportions. Both the Carnatic and Bengal were virtually British and, although the French continued to fight, their position in India was hopeless. The struggle was effectively over by 1764 leaving the East India Company undisputed rulers of Bengal.

But these successes of Clive were more momentous for the British than the French. There was an army in India of far greater strength and efficiency than any native army and Clive had demonstrated how colossal fortunes could be raised by its use. It was a way of getting rich which made mere trading seem humdrum and petty. Lord Clive became the second richest person in Britain (behind the monarchy).

And so India became an El Dorado for young men in search of a fortune, and the Directors of the East India Company discovered that they wielded a patronage of royal dimensions. It is true that there was a high risk of death, but, if the young writer or ensign survived, he could expect to return to England within three years with a fortune sufficient to set himself up as a country gentleman. If he were a man of ability, he might reasonably expect to rise high in the Company's service, and then return with a fortune equal to a peer's. This wealth, displayed with the ostentation natural to an eighteenth-century gentleman, excited intense envy.

EAST INDIAMEN

John Faux sailed in the *Lord Clive* under the command of William Webber on 24th March 1763. The ship had a specified weight of 499 tons. In the 18th century, the Company mainly chartered ships at 499 tons to avoid carrying a chaplain, as stipulated in a charter of 1693. In practice, ships carried surpluses, 150 tons being common for a 499 ton vessel. The *Lord Clive* was 676 tons at the time of its sailing. A ship this size would be manned by “99 men and a boy” – the *Lord Clive* departed with 116 crew including 20 soldiers of the East India Company.

East Indiamen were built on the Thames – the east India dock was located on the eastern side of the Isle of Dogs and the ships were indistinguishable in design from the naval vessels of the day. They were built with stringent quality controls from English oak (which lasted about 4 voyages) and vessels were defended by typically 26 cannons.

The crews for the East India Company sailings were recruited along the banks of the Thames from Wapping to Rotherhithe. The sea-faring community comprised a wide range of ability and experience – able-seamen, landsmen with little or no experience, rogues and vagabonds who chose the sea-faring life as an alternative to starvation. Pay was, in fact, no better than other trades, there was a high risk of death and long periods at sea. On the other hand, the lure of the east, adventure, and periods at port with good fresh beef compensated. There was also, of course, the opportunity for private trade and, although this was not strictly permitted for ordinary seamen, most managed to stash articles for sale in England.

In general, however, there was a shortage of crew and this would have been even more so during the expansion of the 1760's. John Faux lived in Norfolk, but his half-brother Joseph evidently lived in Southwark on the south bank of the Thames. One might speculate that Joseph brought to John's attention the possibility of eastern travel. Ships required carpenters and the Carpenter was an extremely important member of the crew. He would receive £4 10s per month – only the Commander (£10) and Chief mate (£5) earned more.

But John was not employed by the East India Company, John was a *passenger*. Passengers paid for their passage and endured the long, sickly and boring journey to the East.

The ship was loaded with most provisions for the journey at Gravesend and the crew and passengers mustered at the Downs, off Deal in Kent. The journey to Bengal lasted 4 months via the Cape of Good Hope and departures were timed to catch favourable monsoon winds beyond the Cape.

By far the most important provision for the journey was water. 40 tons of water were brought on board drawn directly from the Thames, filthy and stinking. Passengers such as John (there were often only a few fare-paying passengers seeking passage) tended to bring their own filters to diminish the colour and odour but only to modest effect. Indeed, the water underwent a series of changes during the voyage and eventually cleared and sweetened considerably – Thames water was thought by sea-farers to be the best water for voyages available! (Later experiments showed that the Thames water contained so much organic animal material that a fermentation process was set off leading to gas emission and the deposit of valuable salts!).

Beer was the main thirst-quencher on board ship during the passage and the Thames water was used only for tea. There were, of course, copious supplies of alcoholic beverages, especially brandy. The next most important supply was the bread- actually biscuit, twice baked bread full of weevils, dry and flinty. Rivalling the biscuit in unpopularity was the “salt horse”, salted beef and pork which formed the staple diet during the voyage. Huge quantities of raisins and currants were supplied on board to avoid scurvy.

Large amounts of timber, oak and deal plank were loaded on board for essential maintenance and repair work as well as pitch, tar, turpentine, oil and other “junk” vital for the voyage.

THE CAPTAIN’S JOURNAL

The Commander of the ship (or delegated officer) kept a log and most logs, including the *Lord Clive’s*, can be viewed at the *British Library India Office*. The log contains a list of all people on the boat, the physical dimensions of the boat, and a day-by-day account of ship activity for those days in ports. During the voyage, just headings, weather and sea conditions are recorded.

The *Lord Clive* was launched on Thursday 2nd December 1762 at 2pm. The ship was then moved to a dry dock in preparation for the voyage. Details of the ship are as follows:

Built by Randall, launched 1762, 3 decks, 3 in bottom, length 132 ft 8 ¾ in, keel 110 ft, breadth 34 ft 4 in, hold 14 ft 2 in, between decks 6 ft and 6 ft 4 in, roundhouse 6 ft, 676 tons. Principal Managing Owner: Charles Raymond.

The voyage was to take the ship to Madras, Bengal, and then on to China, before returning to London.

The Journal was written throughout by Richard Webb, the sixth mate. It lists the names of the crew members, the soldiers and the passengers. There were 96 crew, 20 soldiers of the East India Company and 26 passengers. The lists indicate if the person left the boat for any reason. About 15% of the crew died during the voyage at some stage, more left for “man o’ war” and some were discharged. Of the 26 passengers to India, all appear to have arrived safely. The “quality” of the passengers is indicated in the journal – the passenger list includes a captain, his wife and servants - John Faux is one of three carpenters listed together and there is good reason to believe they were friends seeking their fortunes in India together. Thomas Dyson and Abraham Hathaway are the other carpenters.

During the period 2nd December 1762 to 23rd March 1763, the journal records the weather conditions, progress in preparations for the voyage and the supplies and goods brought to the ship. On 4th December at 3pm, the ship was “hailed out of the dock and lashed alongside the Hulk at the King’s third mooring Deptford”. Various non-perishable items were brought aboard including, on 23rd December, “123 Chests of the Honourable Company’s copper”. The New Year records “frosts hinder our working”.

On 8th February 1763, the *Lord Clive* was brought to Gravesend, the main supply port. On 13th February, 20 soldiers joined the vessel. It is now that the more perishable items are brought on board. 19th February saw the arrival of “55 hundred stock fish”, 21st February saw “21 puncheons of beef and 36 hogheads of pork” and, most importantly,

the “strong beer” arrived on 26th February. All was not entirely well, however, as the journal reports on 28th February:

This morning two of the Company’s soldiers took an opportunity of a small boat laying alongside and got ashore at Tilbury before we could catch them tho’ they were immediately pursued by 10 of our hands in the long boat.

The *Lord Clive* arrived at The Downs on Sunday 20th March. The Downs is a sheltered area of water between the shore at Deal, Kent, and the Goodwin Sands and this is the time that most crew and passengers would join the ship. Deal was a wealthy town, mainly because of smuggling and East Indiamen played their part. The web site <http://www.whitstableszene.co.uk> provides some background.

Smuggling thrived in Deal throughout the eighteenth century, and tobacco, brandy and gin were still being seized by Deal coastguards as late as the 1880s. During the seventeenth century East Indiamen bringing luxuries from India and the Far East would anchor in the Downs to restock with supplies, and fishermen from Deal, Ramsgate and Broadstairs made use of the opportunity to ferry silks, tea and other taxable items ashore. It is estimated that as much as one sixteenth of the cargo was landed illicitly, and it was not uncommon for captains of East Indiamen to retire in their forties, having made their fortunes after only a few trips to the East.

Deal shipbuilders developed a kind of speedboat, the galley, which was long and light, had only a small sail, but could carry up to twenty oarsmen. A galley could lose a pursuing revenue cutter by turning into the eye of the wind and taking a course that it was impossible for the cutter to follow. Local men knew shallow channels through the Goodwin Sands that galleys could slip through, and it is said that smugglers would sometimes beach a galley and carry it over the sands at low water, leaving revenue cutters helpless on the seaward side. The pursuit of a galley by a cutter was said by one captain to be like 'sending a cow after a hare'.

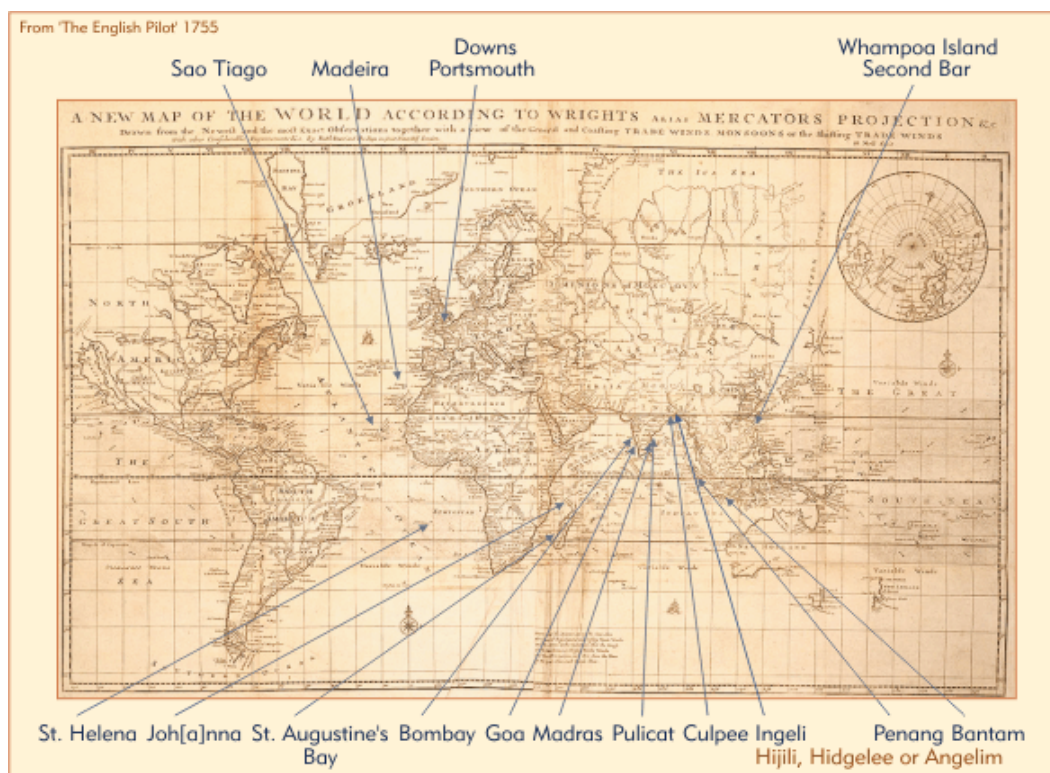
The smugglers of Deal had great success, costing the government so much in lost revenue that, in 1784, William Pitt, the Prime Minister, ordered the destruction of all vessels to be found on the shore at Deal. The dragoons sent to execute this order in January 1785 found many boats beached to avoid the winter storms and burnt them all.

It would appear that the passengers boarded the *Lord Clive* on 23rd March 1763 as the journal records its last entry before departure “AM birth the people allowance”.

Just over two weeks earlier, recognizing the dangers of the voyage, John Faux had prepared his Last Will and Testament. It would appear that he may not have seen 1764. Clearly, John Faux was entrepreneurial – the passenger trade to India was just expanding at this time – and he was obviously aiming to become rich in India where there was a shortage of skilled tradesmen. It was certainly a brave decision, perhaps reckless, as he was leaving his two young children, aged just 8 and 5, with guardians (probably half-brother Joseph in Southwark). It is also clear that he was a man of some means. Not only was it necessary to write a Will, but the passage to India was quite costly.

THE VOYAGE OF THE LORD CLIVE

The *Lord Clive*’s maiden voyage was to China. The ship was to stop off en route at Johanna, Madras, Ingeli, Kedgere, Culpee, Madras, Benkulen, Batavia and Whampoa. The return journey would see a stop at St Helena before returning to Blackwall, London.



A map of the world indicating many of the ports frequented by the East Indiamen

On Wednesday 6th July 1763, the *Lord Clive* arrived at Johanna where they stayed until 12th July. They arrived in Madras, India, on Sunday 14th August and the journal records the unloading and loading of the vessel over the following few weeks. The *Lord Clive* then appears to have departed on Sunday 4th September arriving on Wednesday 28th September at Ingellee Road (Ingeli). Here, there was a disciplinary matter to deal with:

William Usherman, seaman, having been very abusive to the officers after shirking Mr Bartlett of the Boatswain was put in irons.

It may have been at the port of Ingellee Road that the passengers disembarked. So it is possible to say that John Faux was alive on 28th September 1763.

On Wednesday 5th October, the *Lord Clive* anchored at Kedgeree nearby. The ship then departed Kedgeree on 8th October arriving in Culpee on 9th October. On arrival, the log records an officer accidentally falling overboard and drowning. The ship was in port at Culpee for about 7 weeks. On 1st November, the Captain's journal reports:

... at sunrise hoisted the ensign, at 8pm began to fire 20 minute guns in memory of 49 unhappy gentlemen whom the Nobab had put to Death in cold blood. At 3pm found the Caulkers in the Lazesell(?) all a sleep and drunk with 2 lamps burning on the deck, chastened them accordingly.

Almost certainly, the "49 unhappy gentlemen" were the victims of the "Black Hole of Calcutta" in 1756, just a few years earlier. 146 people were reputedly imprisoned, at the orders of the Nawab, in a small and airless dungeon at Fort William. Next morning, when the door was opened, 123 of the prisoners had died. This story was recounted by the survivor John Zephaniah Holwell, and soon became the basis for representing

Indians as a base, cowardly, and despotic people. Later scholars, however, determined that 146 people could not have been accommodated in a room of the stated dimensions and that the Nawab had no hand in this affair. The number of incarcerated prisoners was thought to be no higher than 69 in which case 43 were accidentally suffocated. Curiously, the number stated in the Journal record is 49, consistent with the latter figure. It is not clear why the ensign was hoisted on 1st November, it was certainly not the anniversary of the terrible events in the dungeon, perhaps it was customary for all British vessels to honour the memory of the tragic victims at some stage during their time in harbour.

The *Lord Clive* departed Culpee on 27th November to return to Ingellee Road the following day. It is clear that the task of the *Lord Clive* was to ferry goods up and down the coast. The ship departed Ingellee Road finally on 23rd December and returned to Madras, arriving early in the new year on 6th January 1764.

There is little reported for the remainder of the voyage. The *Lord Clive* weighed anchor again on Friday 3rd February and arrived at Bencoolen on 20th March, departing Bencoolen on 12th May to arrive at Batavia on 26th May and eventually arriving at Wompo (Whampoa) on 3rd August 1764.

The return journey involved a stop at the island of St Helena in the Atlantic Ocean before finally arriving back at Blackwall in London on 26th July 1765.

The *Lord Clive* was to make one further journey. On 15th November 1766 it left Blackwall once again destined for China under the Captaincy of Barnaby Bartlett. The ship is recorded as departing The Downs on 24th February 1767 but was lost on 27th February “nine miles to the southward” of Boulogne.

THE DEATH OF JOHN FAUX

The *British Library India Office* houses Inventories – lists of effects that were subsequently auctioned of those who died in East India. John Faux’s effects were sold at a public outlay on 10th October 1764 in Calcutta. There is the possibility that John Faux died in 1763, aged 30. A death entry for Bengal cites “John Fox, resident” who died in 1763. There are only three names in the death register beginning with “F” in 1763, some years have none, and there is a second John Fox who died in 1767. It is quite possible that “John Fox” is a transcription error and it is most likely that, if it were John Faux, he would have been described as a “resident” (he was not employed by the East India Company, not a soldier). If this is the case, John Faux died between 28th September 1763 and 31st December 1763. This conjecture is supported by the knowledge that it would have taken some time to collect John’s effects and arrange their sale.

The Inventory of Effects of the late John Faux make interesting reading (all actual spellings).

A chest of carpenters tools compleat	1 cloths box
10 white shirts	7 stocks
3 neck cloths	3 check shirts
4 check sheets	5 pair thread stockings
7 pair Worsted stockings	2 handkerchiefs
2 pair musquito drawers	2 wiggs
1 silver stock buckle	3 razors
1 snuff coloured cloth coat waistcoat and breeches	1 strap

1 scarlet waistcoat	1 black waistcoat
2 pair black breeches	1 blew coat
1 old Surtout	1 pair blankets
1 mattress	1 pillow
1 quilt	1 letter case
4 white waistcoats	9 case bottles
4 pair shoes	1 gold laced hatt
1 plain hatt and one cloths brush	1 rebate plain and Bailey's dictionary
Langley and Price's Architecture 2 vol	1 drawing stand and a pair of brass
2 drawing squares and a base of instruments	compassex (?)

The sale raised 384.12 rupees and the ledger was signed "Richard Houghton for Abraham Hathaway". It would appear that Abraham Hathaway, who was one of the three carpenters to sail out on the Lord Clive, arranged the sale. Indeed, he purchased the drawing squares and base of instruments.

The marriage and death indexes at the British Library have not been searched for Abraham Hathaway nor Thomas Dalton (the third carpenter). There is no PCC Will probated in the name of Abraham Hathaway but there *is* a Will probated relating to "Thomas Dalton of Calcutta, East Indies" in 1821. Assuming this Thomas Dalton died in 1818, he would have been well into his seventies if, indeed, it is the Thomas Dalton who travelled with John.