

CHARTER

Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

1 September 1547

Edward the Sixth, by the Grace of God, King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and in earth of the Church of England and Ireland, supreme head. To all to whom these present letters shall come, greeting.

Know you that We, for the love and favour that We bear and have towards Our town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the county of the same town and towards those Our beloved and trusty the merchants adventurers inhabiting within the said town and the county of the same said town of Newcastle who now are of the Fellowship of Merchants Venturers in Brabant in the parts of beyond the seas of Our special favour and of Our sure knowledge and mere motion and also by the advice and assent of Our most dear Uncle Edward, Duke of Somerset, governor of Our person and Protector of said kingdoms, dominions, and subjects whatsoever, and also of the rest of Our councilors have granted and by these presents do grant and will for Our said heirs and successors that the same Merchants Venturers who now are and inhabiting within the same town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid and of the foresaid Fellowship of Merchants Venturers in the foresaid parts of Brabant, be in matter, deed, and name one fellowship and one body incorporated of themselves forever and may have a perpetual succession.

And further, by the assent aforesaid We do assign, nominate, appoint, make, and ordain by these presents Our beloved and trusty subject Henry Anderson, one of the foresaid Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to be Governor of the said Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to exercise the office of Governor of the same Fellowship until the ninth day of October now next following. And We do assign, nominate, constitute, appoint, ordain, decree, and make by these presents the same Henry Anderson Governor of the said Fellowship until the said ninth day of October next coming.

And also by the advice and assent aforesaid We have assigned, nominated, constituted, made, ordained, and by these presents do assign, nominate, constitute, and ordain Our well-beloved and trusty subjects, Robert Brandling, Robert Lewen, George Davell, Mark Shaftoe, Cuthbert Ellison, Robert Brigham, William Carr, Bartram Bee, Roger Mitford, Thomas Bewick, Bartram Anderson, and Oswould Chapman, twelve of the foresaid Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to be assistants to the foresaid Governor and to his successors until the foresaid ninth day of October next following. And We do assign, nominate, constitute, make, decree, and ordain by these presents the same Robert Brandling, Robert Lewen, George Davell, Mark Shaftoe, Cuthbert Ellison, Robert Brigham, William Carr, Bartram Bee, Roger Mitford, Thomas Bewick, Bartram Anderson, and Oswald Chapman assistants to the same Governor and to his successors until the said ninth day of October next coming.

And also We have assigned, nominated, constituted, and ordained, and by these presents by the assent aforesaid do assign, nominate, constitute, and ordain Our beloved and trusty subjects Bartram Bewick and John Raw, two of the foresaid Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to be Wardens of the same Fellowship of Merchants Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid until the foresaid ninth day of October next coming. And We do assign, nominate, constitute, make, direct, ordain, and appoint by these presents the same Bartram Bewick and John Raw Wardens of the same Fellowship of Merchants Venturers until the said ninth day of October next coming.

And further, by the assent aforesaid We do assign, nominate, constitute, make, decree, ordain, and appoint by these presents the foresaid Henry Anderson, Robert Brandling, Robert Lewen, George Davell, Mark Shaftoe, Cuthbert Ellison, Robert Brigham, William Carr, Bartram Bee, Roger Mitford, Thomas Bewick, Bartram

Anderson, Oswald Chapman, Bartram Bewick, and John Raw, and all other those merchants inhabiting Our said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne who now are of the foresaid Fellowship of Merchant Venturers aforesaid in the foresaid parts of Brabant to be a Fellowship of Merchants Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid. And that the said Henry Anderson, Robert Brandling, Robert Lewen, George Davell, Mark Shaftoe, Cuthbert Ellison, Robert Brigham, William Carr, Bartram Bee, Roger Mitford, Thomas Bewick, Bartram Anderson, Oswald Chapman, Bartram Bewick, and John Raw, and all those Merchants Venturers inhabiting within Our foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne who now are of the said Fellowship of the foresaid Merchant Venturers in the foresaid parts of Brabant hereafter be in matter deed and name one body incorporated of themselves forever by the name of *the Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*. And by the assent aforesaid We do incorporate and establish and unite the same Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne by these presents. And We do really and fully appoint, direct, ordain, make, and constitute them by these presents a body incorporated by the name of the Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne forever to endure and that they may have a perpetual succession.

And also we will and for Us, Our heirs, and successors by the assent aforesaid do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors for ever that all they of the same Fellowship or the greater part of the same Fellowship for the time being who then shall be within the foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid from time to time forever yearly the ninth day of October in some convenient place within said foresaid town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne by such ways and means and order as to them it shall seem good shall nominate, assign, and chose and can and may forever nominate assign and choose one of the same Fellowship for the time being to be Governor of the same Fellowship for one whole year then following. And twelve of the same fellowship for the time being to be Assistants to the said Governor of the same Fellowship for one whole year then following. And two of the same Fellowship for the time being to be Wardens of the same Fellowship for one whole year then following. And that he whoso shall be nominated, assigned, and chosen by the greater part of the same Fellowship then and there present shall be Governor of the same Fellowship and bear the office of Governor of the same Fellowship for one whole year then next following, which person so to be elected and nominated to be Governor of the Fellowship aforesaid shall take a corporal oath before his last predecessor in the same office if the same his predecessor shall be then living and present in the foresaid place. And if his foresaid predecessor shall be then dead or absent, then before such Assistants aforesaid or their successors as then shall be there present for the faithful exercising and true executing of his said office.

And furthermore, We will and by the assent aforesaid do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors forever that if it happen any person being Governor of the foresaid Fellowship to die during the year wherein he shall bear or ought to bear the office of Governor of the Fellowship aforesaid or be deprived or removed for any cause from the same office within the year that then all the rest of the Assistants and others of the said Fellowship who then shall be within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne or the greater part of the same from time to time at such time as to the greater part of the same Assistants and Fellowship for the time being that shall be then present within Our foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne shall be thought good and expedient in some convenient place within the same town by such ways, means, and order as they shall think good, shall nominate and elect and can and may nominate, assign, and elect one of the same fellowship for the time being to be Governor of the same Fellowship from thence until the ninth day of October next following after such death, depriving, or removing. And he who shall be nominated, assigned, and elected by the greater part of the same Fellowship then and there being shall be Governor of the same Fellowship and bear the office of Governor of the same Fellowship until the

said ninth day of October next following, except he shall chance in the meantime to be removed for some reasonable cause which person so elected and nominated to be Governor of the foresaid Fellowship shall take corporal oath before others of the same Fellowship then and there being present for the faithful executing of his foresaid office in manner and form aforesaid.

We will also for and Us, Our heirs, and successors by the assent aforesaid do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors forever that if it happen any of the said Assistants for time being to die, be deprived, or removed from his office for any cause within the year that then the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being and all the number of Assistants and Fellowship aforesaid that shall be present within the said town and county of the town aforesaid or the greater part of them from time to time at such time as to the greater part of the same Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship for the time being who then shall be within the said town and county of the foresaid town shall be thought good and expedient in some convenient place within the same town by such ways and means as they shall think good shall nominate, assign, and elect and can and may nominate, assign, and elect one of the said Fellowship for the time being to be an Assistant to the Governor of the same Fellowship for the time being in the place of him so dying, being deprived, or removed from thence until the ninth day of October then next following. And that he who shall be so nominated, assigned, and elected shall be one Assistant to the Governor of the same Fellowship for the time being until the ninth day of October then next following, except it shall happen in the meantime he be deprived or removed from that office for some reasonable cause.

We will also (by the assent aforesaid) for Us, Our heirs, and successors do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors forever that if it do happen any of the foresaid Wardens of the Fellowship for the time being to die or deprived or removed from his office upon any cause within that year wherein he was elected to serve, that then the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being and all the Assistants and Fellowship aforesaid, or the greater part of them at such time as to them or the greater part of them then being there present, shall be thought fit in any convenient place within the same town by the same ways and means as to them shall be thought good shall nominate, elect, and choose and can and may nominate, elect, and choose one of the said Fellowship for the time being to be one of the Wardens of the said Fellowship from thence until the ninth day of October the next following, and he who shall be nominated, assigned, and elected shall be one of the Wardens of the Fellowship aforesaid until the said ninth day of October then next following, except in the meantime he chance to be deprived or removed upon a reasonable cause.

Furthermore, We will and by the assent aforesaid for Us, Our heirs, and successors do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors forever that the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being and all the Assistants and Fellowship aforesaid who shall be then present or the greater part of them so often as they shall think good shall admit and make and can and may admit and bring into the said Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid any of Our subjects or the subjects of Our heirs or successors dwelling or hereafter to dwell within the foresaid town or the county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid, which person or persons so admitted or to be admitted made or to be made of the same Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid shall be during his life one of the same Fellowship except he shall happen to be deprived or removed upon a reasonable cause.

We will also and by the assent aforesaid for Us, Our heirs, and successors do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor and his Assistants, Wardens, and fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to their successors forever that the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being all the Assistants and Fellowship aforesaid, or the greater part of them for the time being that then shall be within the said town and the county of the same town aforesaid at such time, or to the

greater part of the same fellowship for the time being that shall be then within the said town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne shall be thought good and expedient in some convenient place within the same town by such ways and means as they shall think good may admit and make, and can admit and make one of Our subjects or of the subjects of Our heirs or successors to be Clerk of the foresaid Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid to exercise the office of clerkship of the same Fellowship during the pleasure of the Governor of the same Fellowship, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship aforesaid for the time being or the great part of them and no longer. And that so often as it does happen any Clerk of the foresaid Fellowship to die or be removed from his office, they may admit and make another fit man of Our heirs or successors in the place of him so dying or being removed Clerk of the foresaid fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the foresaid town and the county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to exercise the office of Clerkship of the said Fellowship during the pleasure of the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being and the greater part of the same Merchants Society being and no longer.

We will also and by the assent aforesaid for Us, Our heirs, and successors do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid and to their successors that the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being the Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship aforesaid or the greater part of them being that then shall be within the said town and county of the foresaid town at such time as to them shall be thought meet and convenient in some fit place within the same town by such ways and means as they shall think good, can and may nominate and elect and shall nominate and elect one person to be Beadle of the foresaid Fellowship until the ninth day of October then next following (except it shall happen in the meantime he die or be removed) for the summoning and warning of men of the foresaid Fellowship and for doing and executing of other things belonging or appertaining the office of Beadleship for the Fellowship aforesaid from the time of the said election of the same Beadle until the said ninth day of October then next following. And that so often as it do happen any such Beadle so elected to die or be deprived or removed from his office before the ninth day of October then next following his said election that then the Governor of the said Fellowship for the time being, and the Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship or the greater part of them for the time being that then shall be within the said town at such time as to them shall be thought meet and convenient in some fit place within the same town by such ways and means as to them shall be thought good may nominate and elect and shall nominate and elect one other person of Our subjects to be freed of the Fellowship aforesaid until the ninth day of October then next following (except in the meantime he happen to be removed) for summons, warnings, and for the doing and executing of other things to the office of Beadleship belonging or appertaining for the Fellowship aforesaid from the said time of the election of the same Beadle until the ninth day of October then next following.

And further of Our most free grace and of Our sure knowledge and mere motions and by the advice and assent aforesaid, We give, will, and grant for Us, Our heirs, and successors to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid and to their successors forever that the same Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship and their successors can and may forever by the name of the Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne claim, implead, and be impleaded, or defend and be defended in whatsoever courts and places of Us, Our heirs, and successors and as much as lies in other places in of and upon all and singular causes writs, complaints, articles, suites, and demands whatsoever and upon all other things matters and causes whatsoever.

And that the said Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid and their successors hereafter forever shall have a common seal to seal all and singular charters, evidences, and other writings or deeds any way touching or concerning the same Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship or their successors; or their lands, tenements, hereditaments, goods, or chattels whatsoever, real, personal, or mixed.

And further, of Our mere free grace and of Our sure knowledge and mere motion by the assent aforesaid for Us, Our heirs, and successors, We will and do grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship and to their successors forever that they and their successors may be persons able and capable in the law by the said name of the Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to take, receive, and purchase to them and their successors forever manors, lordships, messages, lands, tenements, and other hereditaments whatsoever, goods, and chattels, as well real, personal, as mixed, or otherwise as well of Us, Our heirs, or successors as of other person or persons whatsoever which person or persons will give, grant, bequeath, or assign the same unto them. And that the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship, and their successors may lawfully and without penalty purchase, take, and receive all and singular so many and such manors, lordships, messages, lands, tenements, and other hereditaments, and goods and chattels whatsoever which any other person or persons will give, grant, alien, bequeath, or assign to them. To have hold and enjoy to them and their successors forever or otherwise, although they or any of them shall be holden of Us, Our heirs, or successors in soccage and not *in capite* (the statute of lands and tenements not to be put to mortmain or any other statute, act, proclamation, ordinance, or law before times made or to be made in any thing notwithstanding) so that the said manors, lordships, messages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments so by them or their successors to be purchased, taken, and received do not exceed the clear yearly value of forty pounds of lawful money of England. And that the said Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and their successors by the said name of the Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne may give, alien, demise, grant, and assign all and singular the foresaid manors, lordships, messages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, goods, and chattels whatsoever by them or by their successors to be purchased taken or received to whatsoever person or persons they will.

Moreover, We have granted by the assent aforesaid and do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers dwelling within the town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid and to their successors that the foresaid Governor and his successors governor for the time being may have full authority and power to take before them all manner of recognizances in whatsoever sum of money of any person of the Fellowship aforesaid who now is or hereafter shall be. And that the same recognizance so taken and acknowledged before such Governor shall be of such force and effect as any recognizances which shall be taken before any Our justices on the Common Bench there sitting judicially.

And further, of Our mere free grace and of Our sure knowledge and mere motion by the assent aforesaid, We will, grant, and ordain for Us, Our heirs, and successors that all and singular debts, detinues, actions personal, discords personal, and demands personal and recognizances concerning merchandises hereafter arising or growing or to be taken within the said town or the county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid or without between any only of the foresaid Fellowship of Merchants Venturers inhabiting within the said town or the county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and pleas and executions thereof shall and may be determinable to be determined judicable and to be judged by the foresaid Governor, Assistants, and their successors for the time being. And before them and their successors forever, or by the greater part of the foresaid Governor and Assistants for the time being that then shall be within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in the same manner and form as any pleas within the town of Calais or Westminster by virtue of an Act in Parliament of Lord Edward the Third, sometime King of England, Our progenitor, holden and published in the seven and twentieth year of his reign ought to be ordered and determined.

Furthermore, of Our mere free grace and of Our full knowledge and mere motion by the assent aforesaid, We will, grant, and ordain for Us, Our heirs, and successors by these presents to the aforesaid Governor, Assistants Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne aforesaid that the Governor of the Fellowship for the time being and the Assistants and Fellowship aforesaid, or the greater part of them for the time being that then shall be within the said town and

county of the town aforesaid, shall and may have authority and power from time to time forever to publish, make, and establish for the public good of the same Fellowship and for the safe governance of the same town and the county of the town aforesaid laws, statutes, and ordinances only concerning those who are or shall be of the same fellowship and to execute and use the same laws, statutes, and ordinances lawfully and without penalty in foresaid town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne from time to time as the matter shall require or otherwise, and also they can and may from time to time forever according to their discretion alter and change them and every of them as they shall think most expedient. And also to punish and fine such as shall infringe and violate such laws and ordinances so given by fines and amerciments, and to levy and take to the use of the said Fellowship by due process the same fines and amerciments.

And further, of Our more abundant special guard and of Our sure knowledge and mere motion by the assent aforesaid, We grant and give for Us, Our heirs, and successors by these presents to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchant Venturers inhabiting within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle aforesaid and to every of the same Fellowship that now is or hereafter shall be and to their successors forever that the same Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship and their successors and every of the same Fellowship that now is or hereafter shall be of the same Fellowship from time to time during Our pleasure whatsoever wools and wool fells are of the growth of Our counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and the Bishopric of Durham, and also of the lordships and liberties of Allerton and Richmond, or any of them (the wools and wool fells of the parts of the County of Northumberland assigned to Our town of Berwick only excepted) The same wools and wool fells may buy and provide (except before excepted). And in the port of the said town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to cause the same to be shipped in whatsoever ships or vessels at all times of the year wherein it may be done more fitly and conveniently during Our pleasure. And that they may and every of them may lawfully and without penalty and without impeachment, impediment, or perturbation of Us, Our heirs, or successors whomsoever or of any other person, transport, and load and cause to be transported and laden the wools and wool fells aforesaid to any parts beyond the seas at their pleasure from time to time during Our pleasure, paying to Us, Our heirs, and successors for every sack of the said wools for customs and subsidies and other duties to Us thereof due ten shillings only and no more, and for every two hundred and forty wool fells ten shillings only and no more for the customs and subsidies to Us thereof due. And also for fells called sherlings and morlings and likewise for lamb skins, the customs subsidies and other sums of money to Us before times due and accustomed for the said customs, subsidies, and other sums of money for the said wools and wool fells by the aforesaid Merchants Venturers of the foresaid Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne or any of them due to the customs or collector of Our customs and subsidies aforesaid in the said port.

And We further will and grant by the assent aforesaid for Us, Our heirs, and successors to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to every of the same Fellowship during Our said pleasure that the same Fellowship and every of the same fellowship and every of their factors and attorneys, the customers and collectors of Our customs and subsidies in the port aforesaid for the time being may be exonerated and acquitted and every of them exonerated and acquitted against Us, Our heirs, and successors of all and all manner of sums of money or any other customs, subsidies, duties, exactions, and demands which of old may be exacted of them or any of them to the use of Us, Our heirs, or successors for the premises or any of them during Our foresaid pleasure or whereof they or any of them may be charged or burdened against Us, Our heirs, and successors except of the customs and subsidies unto Us by them of the said Fellowship and by every of them or the factors of the same Fellowship or them ordained and constituted by their deed sealed with the common seal of the foresaid Fellowship to be paid in manner and form aforesaid.

Finally, We will and of Our certain knowledge and mere motion by the assent aforesaid do by these presents grant to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the said town and county of the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne that they may and shall have these Our letters patent

under Our Great Seal of England duly made and sealed without fine or fee more or less to Us in Our Haniper or in any other place to Our use by any means to be given paid or done for because the express mention of true yearly value or of the certainty of the premises or any of them or of other gifts or grants by Us or by any of Our progenitors to the foresaid Governor, Assistants, Wardens, and Fellowship of Merchants Venturers dwelling within the foresaid town of Newcastle before this time made in these presents or not expressed or any statute, act, ordinance, proviso, or restraint thereof to the contrary made, published, ordained, or provided or any other thing, cause, or matter in any thing notwithstanding.

In testimony whereof We have caused these, Our letters patent, to be made. Witness myself at Westminster, the first day of September in the first year of Our reign.

Extracts from the Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1895), 1:282-294.