

Richard Watts 1513-1579

Richard Watts established his charity via his Will of 1579. He made provision to provide work for the poor and for six rooms to be added to The Six Poor Travellers' House for the benefit of "*six poor travellers or wayfaring men*". He left land, some still owned by the Charities today, the income from which was to be used to continue his work.

Richard Watts was born in 1513, in the parish of West Peckham, and became a gentleman of some substance and standing. He was clearly a shrewd and skillful businessman, accumulating significant wealth during the turbulent reigns of four Tudor Monarchs. Both, Edward VI and Elizabeth I, recognised him as a good and loyal subject.

Between 1547 and 1550 he was joint-Surveyor General of Victualling to the navy, making his money as a merchant supplying provisions. The investment that various monarchs needed to make into the navy at the time, to prevent an invasion, meant his business did very well.

Richard used his growing wealth to purchase land; there was a lot for sale as the land confiscated from the monasteries by Henry VIII came onto the market.

In 1559 was he appointed by royal patent, Clerk of the Works at Upnor Castle. He also worked as paymaster to the Wardens of Rochester Bridge 1558-1561 and was elected MP for Rochester in 1563.

Richard Watts lived at Satis House, Boley Hill, Rochester where, in 1573, he entertained Queen Elizabeth 1.

He died on 10th September 1579 and was buried in Rochester Cathedral according to his wishes, "*neere unto the steeple and staires going up into the quire on the south side of the same staires*".