

The estate of Gordon Johnson

STATUS — WILL IDENTIFIED · *Bona Vacantia* reference BV961641/1 · died Birmingham, 3 March 1996

Conclusion: Gordon Johnson died at Birmingham on 3 March 1996, a bachelor of seventy-five on the Crown's own row, and his estate passed to the Crown although he left a will. The will, made in 1962 on a printed form, gives everything he possessed to one woman of his own address, whom it also appoints sole executrix; it does not say what she was to him, it names no substitute, and it has no residuary gift beneath the one gift it makes. Letters of administration with that will annexed issued at the Principal Registry of the Family Division on 10 February 1999 to the Solicitor for the Affairs of Her Majesty's Treasury, for the use of the Crown, which shows that the executrix did not prove the will and that its gift did not take effect; the grant does not say why, and this file does not guess. The grant certifies the gross value of the estate as £16,471 and the net value as £14,465, and because the will's one gift failed the Crown's interest is the whole net estate of £14,465 on the intestacy that follows a wholly failed will, not a lapsed share of it. Nothing about his family is established: no rung of the statutory order above the spouse was searched, and the two facts the Crown asserts about him, his birth and his death, have not been read against the registers. The thirty-year bar fell on 3 March 2026, the case no longer appears on the Crown's published list, and no claim by anyone is now possible.

HD Genealogy & Technology · 30 September 2026 10:05 BST, second edition · claim bar 3 March 2026, now passed

What this edition adds, and what it corrects. The first edition of 20 August 2026 opened with a conclusion that said only that the estate was time-barred; this edition carries the status on its top line and a conclusion that states the case. The grant and the will annexed to it, both purchased and read for the first edition, are now reported in full: what the will gives, to whom, and what the grant certifies. The first edition's references keep their numbers unchanged and are re-authored to the referencing guide as identifiers; two are added for the two purchased documents. No finding of the first edition is withdrawn, and the first edition remains on file exactly as issued.

Supplied complete and without restriction on internal circulation. No living person is named in this file.

The thirty-year limit on claims against this estate ran out on 3 March 2026. The case no longer appears on the Crown's list, and no person — heir, firm or stranger — can now claim any part of it. This file is published as a worked demonstration of how this practice opens a case and what it writes down, including what it does not know. Nothing in it entitles anyone to anything.

WHY THIS FILE CAN BE SHOWN IN FULL

The Crown accepts claims on a bona vacantia estate for at most thirty years from the date of death. Gordon Johnson died on 3 March 1996;¹ the bar therefore fell on 3 March 2026, and the current edition of the Crown's published list no longer carries him, while it still carries twenty-five other Johnsons and seventeen references from later 1996 deaths, so the absence is a removal and not a misread.¹ No section 27 notice inviting claimants stands in The Gazette under this reference either: the same search returns a notice under a known live reference and nothing at all under an invented one, so the resource answered in both directions.³

A live case file is confidential. An extinguished one is a specimen — it can show the whole of the work, because the answer no longer matters to anyone's money. That is the only reason this file exists in public.

Stated once more, prominently, because it is the one thing a reader must not mistake: **this estate cannot be claimed, by anyone, on any theory.** Any approach or advertisement inviting claims on it after 3 March 2026 is either mistaken or dishonest.

THE MAN ON THE LIST

The Crown's archived list of 8 January 2022 carries the case in a handful of words and dates: Gordon Johnson, died 3 March 1996 at Birmingham; a bachelor; born 2 September 1920 at Birmingham.¹ He died

at seventy-five, in the city where he was born. Every other column of his row — spouse, maiden name, aliases, kin or other details, informant, executors — is empty: the Crown published nothing else about him, and named nobody.

Those two dates are the two facts a researcher needs first, and they are the Crown's own assertions. Neither the birth nor the death has been read against the registers in this account, and the open points below say so rather than letting an unverified date harden into a finding.¹ The grant adds one fact the list does not carry: his address at death, in Perry Common, Birmingham.⁴

THE WILL, MADE IN 1962

He left a will, and it has been read. It is a printed will form completed in manuscript, made on 14 March 1962 at the Perry Common address the grant later gives for him.⁵ It revokes all earlier wills, appoints one woman of that same address as his sole executrix, and gives to her "all my personal estate and effects whatsoever" — insurance policies, money in the bank, post-war credits, superannuation, "in fact anything that I possess at the time of my decease".⁵ It was witnessed by two men.

Three things about it decide the shape of this case. The will does not say what the woman was to him: no relationship and no style are written anywhere on the page.⁵ It names no substitute if she should fail to take, and it carries no residuary gift beneath the one gift it makes, so if that gift failed nothing in the will caught what fell.⁵ And it stood unrevised for thirty-four years, from March 1962 to his death in March 1996.⁵ Whether she survived him is not stated by any document read, and it is not inferred here: she is described and not named, because nothing on the record shows her to have died.

THE GRANT, AND WHAT IT CERTIFIES

On 10 February 1999, nearly three years after his death, letters of administration with the will annexed were granted at the Principal Registry of the Family Division — the form of grant made when a will exists but no executor takes probate.² The purchased copy of the grant recites that Gordon Johnson of Perry Common, Birmingham, died on 3 March 1996 domiciled in England and Wales, having made and duly executed his last will, and that administration with the will annexed was granted to the Solicitor for the Affairs of Her Majesty's Treasury, for the use of Her Majesty.⁴ The court proved the will and still handed the estate to the Crown's own solicitor: the executrix the will names did not prove it.

The grant certifies the value, and it is the only document on this case that does. Its printed ceiling wording is struck through in both places, so the two figures are amounts and not brackets: the gross value of the estate in the United Kingdom amounts to £16,471 and the net value to £14,465.⁴ The digital index of grants prints no value at all; the number beside the grant there is its sequence number.²

WHY A TESTATE ESTATE REACHED THE CROWN

The will put everything on one life and appointed the same person to administer it; the grant shows that she took nothing and the Crown administered instead.⁴⁵ The documents establish that much and no more. They do not say whether she died before him, so that the gift lapsed with no substitute to catch it, or whether she survived him and was never traced, so that an estate which was hers went unclaimed; either explanation is consistent with the face of both documents, and this file does not choose between them. What follows from the failure is the same on either reading: the whole net estate of £14,465, and not a share of it, is the interest that passed to the Crown, on the intestacy that follows a will whose only gift did not take effect.⁴

The match between the grant and the case rests on surname, forename, address and the exact date of death, and the purchased grant carries all four.⁴ Johnson is among the commonest surnames in England — the live unclaimed list alone carries twenty-five of them¹ — and the match basis is stated so that a reader can weigh it.

HOW FAR THE LADDER IS CLIMBED

Spouse

closed

Issue

open

Parents

open

Brothers & sisters

open

Grandparents

open

Aunts & uncles

open

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solid box: a record states the relationship - dashed: our candidate - a rung with no box carries the reason instead

THE SECTION 46 LADDER, RUNG BY RUNG

For whatever part of the estate the will did not effectively dispose of, section 46 of the Administration of Estates Act 1925 ranks the classes of kin in order. On this case **no class above the spouse was searched at all**, and this file says so rather than dressing silence as findings:

- **Spouse** — CLOSED as a taker: the Crown records him a bachelor, so there is no widow.¹ Asserted only, and never tested against the marriage index.
- **Issue** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Parents** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Brothers and sisters of the whole blood, and their issue** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Brothers and sisters of the half blood, and their issue** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Grandparents** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Uncles and aunts of the whole blood, and their issue** — UNREACHED. Not searched.
- **Uncles and aunts of the half blood, and their issue** — UNREACHED. Not searched.

The distinction matters and is the point of this section: "**not searched**" is **not a nil**. A nil is a search that ran and returned nothing, carrying a control that proves the resource was answering. This file holds exactly two such negatives — the case's absence from the live list¹ and the silence of The Gazette³ — and neither of them is a kinship fact. The kinship work this file does not contain is shown, done in full, in this practice's published Schofield file (BV966153/1), where every one of the classes above is closed by evidence or priced as open.

WHAT REMAINS OPEN, AND WHAT IT WOULD COST

— **Whether the woman the will names survived him.** The national death index, read for her name across the whole span from March 1962 to March 1996, would show whether the gift lapsed before he died. A free index read; not made in this account.⁵

— **Birth verification** — the register entry behind the Crown's asserted 2 September 1920 at Birmingham. The birth index was not read in this account: unreached, not nil.¹

— **The death-index join** — death entries registered from 1969 carry the registered date of birth, so his 1996 entry would tie the asserted birth date to the death on a single index. Not read in this account: unreached, not nil.¹

— **The kinship ladder itself** — every class above, worked to evidence. On this estate the work was never needed: the bar fell first. The Schofield file shows what it looks like when it is.

THE DECISIVE DOCUMENTS

The two documents that decide the shape of this estate have been bought and read: the will, which names the one person it gives to, and the grant, which shows that she did not take and states what the estate was worth.⁴⁵ The document that would settle how the gift failed is her own death entry, if there is one before March 1996; its index reference is not known, because the index has not been read for her, and the search above is what would find it. Nothing was ordered on this case beyond the two documents named.

ABOUT THIS ACCOUNT

This file cites everything it asserts, states every search it did not run, and records its two negatives with the checks that make them trustworthy. It is prepared to the shape of the Genealogical Proof Standard in one specific sense: nothing is inferred, index entries are described as index entries and never as certificates, the two purchased documents are described as the documents they are, and every negative either carries its control or is recorded as not searched. The honesty is the product — the file is deliberately full of what was read and empty of conclusions it has not earned.

Please check it. Every reference below is to a public record, a public list or a document any reader can order independently, and the archived list edition is a fixed, citable document.

This is genealogical research and **not legal advice**. No living person is named, none has been approached, and no contact details are supplied. And once more: **this estate is time-barred and cannot be claimed** — this file demonstrates the work, and nothing else.

REFERENCES

References follow the University of Strathclyde standard. Where one records a negative, the control search proving the instrument was answering is stated with it.

- 1 Unclaimed estates list, live list and archived edition of 8 January 2022. Birmingham, West Midlands. JOHNSON, Gordon. 03 March 1996. BV961641/1. Government Legal Department, Bona Vacantia Division. Collection: Unclaimed Estates list. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/unclaimed-estates-list> : accessed 20 August 2026.
- 2 Testamentary records. England and Wales. 10 February 1999. JOHNSON, Gordon. Letters of administration with will annexed, London registry. Probate no. 61637. Collection: Find a Will. probatesearch.service.gov.uk : accessed 09 August 2026.
- 3 The Gazette, deceased estates notices. England and Wales. JOHNSON, Gordon. 03 March 1996. His Majesty's Stationery Office. Collection: The Gazette. www.thegazette.co.uk : accessed 20 August 2026.
- 4 Testamentary records. England. 10 February 1999. JOHNSON, Gordon. Grant of letters of administration with will annexed, purchased digital copy. Probate no. 61637. HM Courts and Tribunals Service. Collection: Find a Will, digital index of grants issued from 1 January 1996. probatesearch.service.gov.uk : accessed 20 August 2026.
- 5 Testamentary records. England. 14 March 1962. JOHNSON, Gordon. Will, the copy annexed to the grant, purchased digital copy. Annexed to probate no. 61637. HM Courts and Tribunals Service. Collection: Find a Will, digital index of grants issued from 1 January 1996. probatesearch.service.gov.uk : accessed 20 August 2026.