

SUMMARY: The document below is the entry on the King's Bench controlment roll for Michaelmas term 1596 in which William Wayte (d. 29 August 1603) requests sureties of the peace against William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon, against the London money broker and owner of the Swan playhouse, Francis Langley (1548–1602), and against two women about whom nothing further is known, Dorothy Soer and Anne Lee.

The writ was issued to the sheriff of Surrey, indicating that the parties resided in that county, likely in Southwark, and was returnable 29 November 1596, the last day of Michaelmas term.

The writ was preceded by a writ returnable on 3 November 1596 sworn by Francis Langley against William Gardiner (c.1531-1597) and his stepson, William Wayte:

*Anglia s{cire} s{cilicet} Franciscus Langley pet{it} secur{itates} pacis v{er}s{us} Will{elmu}m Gardener & Will{elmu}m Wayte ob met{um} m{ort}is & c Att{achiametum} vic{ecomiti} Surr{ie} r{etornabile} Cr{astin}o a{n}i{m}aru{m}*

*England. Be it known that Francis Langley craves sureties of the peace against William Gardiner and William Wayte for fear of death etc. Writ of attachment to the sheriff of Surrey, returnable on the morrow of All Souls [=3 November 1596].*

As Hotson has demonstrated, the real quarrel was not between Francis Langley, William Shakespeare and William Wayte, as the writ returnable 29 November 1596 suggests, but between Langley and William Wayte's stepfather, William Gardiner. See Hotson, Leslie, *Shakespeare Versus Shallow* (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), pp. 8-32 at:

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.501331/page/n51>

See also the pedigree of Gardiner of Haling at:

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/GardinerWilliam.html>

For the date of William Wayte's death, see Hotson, *supra*, p. 53 at:

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.501331/page/n73>

*Anglia s{cire} s{cilicet} Will{elm}us Wayte pet{it} secur{itates} pac{is} v{er}s{us} Will{elmu}m Shakspere ffranciscu{m} Langley Dorotheam Soer ux{or}em Ioh{ann}is Soer & Annam Lee ob metu{m} mort{is} & c Att{achiametum} Vic{ecomiti} Surr{ie} r{etornabile} xvij M{ar}tini*

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England. Be it known that William Wayte craves sureties of the peace against William Shakespeare, Francis Langley, Dorothy Soer, wife of John Soer, and Anne Lee, for fear of death etc. Writ of attachment to the sheriff of Surrey, returnable on the 18 of St Martin [=29 November 1596].