

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 20 December 1490 and 18 January 1491, and proved 4 June [1495?], of Thomas Mery (d.1495?), whose daughter, Elizabeth Mery, was the grandmother of William Lewin (d.1598), who accompanied Oxford on his continental tour in 1575, and who left Oxford a bequest of 100 ounces of gilt plate in his will.

In the PCC copy of the testator's will, the family surname is spelled 'Mere'. The variant spelling 'Mery' has been used in the transcript below.

The probatum clause is incomplete, and it is thus not known from the PCC copy when the will was proved, or by whom. In the National Archives online catalogue, the date of probate is given as 4 June 1495.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see the Mery pedigree in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Hertfordshire*, (London: Harleian Society, 1886), Vol. XXII, p. 152 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=uFE_AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA152

It should be noted that in the will below the testator mentions his second son, Robert Mery. In the pedigree, *supra*, the testator's second son, Robert Mery, is said to have been the father of Joan and Elizabeth Mery. However another source, citing Stow MS, 632, f. 47, states that the Robert Mery who was the father of Joan Mery was the only son of the testator's eldest son, John Mery (d.1544?), Clerk of the Spicery. See Cooper, J.H., 'Cuckfield Families II: Bowier, Bowyer', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, (Lewes: Farncombe & Co., Printers, 1899), Vol. XLII, pp. 19-53 at p. 23:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Sr5CAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA23>

See also Kamman, Robert, 'Some English Merys From The 1400s and 1500s' at:

<https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/merry/708/>

Pedigrees of Thomas Mery of Hatfield and Richard Bowyer of Petworth were noticed in a Bible in the library of Sir Peregrine Acland in 1850. See Forshall, Josiah and Frederic Madden, eds., *The Holy Bible*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), Vol. I, p. lxii at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=Xe4_AQAAMAAJ&pg=PR62

The current whereabouts of the pedigree of Thomas Mery is unknown. The library of Sir Peregrine Acland was sold in May, 1873. See:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=IP5KAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA619>

Testator's parents

According to the pedigree in Metcalfe, *supra*, the testator was the son of Robert Mery. The name of the testator's mother is unknown.

Testator's siblings

In the will below the testator mentions a brother:

-John Mery. The testator leaves bequests to John Mery's two daughters, Luce Mery and Katherine Mery.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married a wife named Margaret whose maiden name is unknown. She was living in 1504. See a fine in Trinity term of that year in Brigg, William, ed., *The Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, (Harpenden: William Brigg, 1895), p. 8 at:

<https://archive.org/details/hertsgenealogist01brig/page/n27/mode/2up>

John More, serjeant-at-law, and Joan, his wife, and Humphrey Adam. John Mery, son and heir of Thomas Mery, late of Bishop's Hatfield. Messuages and lands in North Mimms which Margaret Mery, widow, holds for her life.

According to the will below, the testator had three sons and four daughters:

* **John Mery** (d.1544?), eldest son, Clerk of the Spicery to Henry VIII, who married a wife named Anne or Agnes whose maiden name is unknown and who after his death married Fulke Worrall. See the will of the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), who leaves a bequest to 'my sister-in-law, Anne Worrell, widow'. See also two Chancery suits dating from the period 1544-1547, TNA C 1/1168/25-28 and TNA C 1/1170/39-42. In TNA C 1/1170/39-42 Anne is described as 'executrix and late the wife of John Mery of Hertford, while in TNA C 1/1168/25-28 she is described as 'late the wife of Fulk Werall, and formerly of John Mery, esquire, and executrix of both'. Fulk Werall is said to have been a merchant of Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire. See:

<https://www.geni.com/people/Fulk-Werall-Merchant-of-Stortford/6000000105956032939>

According to the pedigree in Metcalfe, *supra*, John Mery, Clerk of the Spicery, had only one child:

(1) Elizabeth Mery.

However the will of the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), suggests that John Mery (d.1544?) was likely also the father of Anthony Mery (living 1551), who married and had issue, John Mery (living 1551), and the London merchant tailor, Francis Mery (d.1551), who married a wife named Elizabeth and left a nuncupative will, TNA PROB 11/34/480, as well as Jane Mery (d.1563), the first wife of Thomas Bacon. See the will, TNA PROB 11/55/374, of James Bacon (d. 5 June 1573), and the History of Parliament entry for Thomas Bacon which states that he married firstly Jane Mery (d.1563), and secondly Elizabeth Mery:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bacon-thomas-1505-73-or-later>

b. c.1505, 1st s. of Robert Bacon of Drinkstone and Hessel, Suff., and bro. of Nicholas. m. (1) disp. 26 Feb. 1536, Jane (d.1563), da. of one Mery, at least 1s. 1da.; (2) Elizabeth, da. and h. of Thomas Mery of Hatfield, Herts. suc. fa. Aug./Dec. 1548.1

In his nuncupative will, Francis Mery (d.1551) mentions his brothers, John Mery and Anthony Mery, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Bacon. Francis Mery's brother, John Mery, can perhaps be identified with the John Mery, householder, who was buried at Northaw on 29 September 1565. See Brigg, William, ed., *The Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, (Harpenden: William Brigg, 1895), Vol. I, p. 121 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yK5DAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA121>

For Francis Mery, see also Kent History and Library Centre U1590/T8/1 (1551) and U1590/T8/5 (1554). The latter document states that Francis Mery's son and heir was Ishmaell Mery.

For John Mery (d.1544?), Clerk of the Spicery, see also:

<https://www.geni.com/people/John-Mery-Clerk-of-the-Spicery-to-King-Henry-VIII/6000000104687938116>

* **Robert Mery**, esquire, second son, of the Inner Temple and Northaw, Hertfordshire, who had two daughters:

(1) Jane Mery (d. 3 August 1579), who married firstly the London grocer, Thomas Bowyer (d.1558), son of William Bowyer (d.1528) of Petworth. Although in his nuncupative will, dated 29 April 1528, William Bowyer mentions only his second wife, Margaret, and his brother, Richard Bowyer, he is said to have had four sons, Thomas Bowyer (d.1558), Robert Bowyer (d.1551) of Chichester, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/35/227, John Bowyer of Petworth, and Edmund Bowyer, who died without issue, and three daughters, Marion Bowyer, who married William Foxe, Elizabeth Bowyer, who married Thomas Norton [sic?], and Katherine Bowyer, who married the London grocer,

James Caldecott (d.1529). See the will of Thomas Bowyer (d.1558), TNA PROB 11/41/93, the will of James Caldecott, TNA PROB 11/23/227, and Cooper, J.H., 'Cuckfield Families II: Bowier, Bowyer', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, (Lewes: Farncombe & Co., Printers, 1899), Vol. XLII, pp. 19-53 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Sr5CAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA19>

See also the Bowyer pedigree in Howard, Joseph Jackson and Joseph Lemuel Chester, eds., *The Visitation of London Anno Domini 1633, 1634, and 1635*, (London: Harleian Society, 1880), Vol. XV, p. 94 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=h6wKAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA94>

By Thomas Bowyer (d.1558), Jane Mery had two sons, Thomas Bowyer (d.1595) of the Middle Temple and Richard Bowyer (d.1610), grocer, and a daughter, Jane Bowyer (d. 24 September 1584), who married firstly the London grocer, George Cassy (d.1568), by whom she had an only son, Robert Cassy, and secondly Thomas Nowell (d. 5 September 1583) of the manor of Runcton in North Mundham, Sussex, nephew of Alexander Nowell, Dean of St Paul's. For Thomas Bowyer (1537-1595) of the Middle Temple and Leythorne, Sussex, eldest son of Thomas Bowyer (d.1558) and Jane Mery, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/bowyer-thomas-1537-95>

Jane Mery married secondly Alexander Nowell (c.1516/17–1602), Dean of St Paul's. See the *ODNB* entry for Alexander Nowell, and Cooper, *supra*, p. 25. As noted above, Jane Mery's daughter, Jane Bowyer, married Alexander Nowell's nephew, Thomas Nowell (d.1583) of Runcton. See the will of Thomas Nowell, TNA PROB 11/65/525.

Jane Mery appears to be the 'cousin Bowyer' who is left a bequest in the will, TNA PROB 11/41/18, of Joan Mery (d.1558), widow of William Mery (d.1547).

(2) Elizabeth Mery, who married, as his first wife, the London grocer, Thomas Norton (d.1583), by whom she was the mother of Thomas Norton (d.1584), for whom see the *ODNB* entry.

* **William Mery** (d.1547), third son, who married a wife named Joan (d.1558) whose maiden name is unknown, by whom it appears he had no issue. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/31/559. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/41/18.

* **Joan Mery**.

* **Anne Mery**.

* **Dorothy Mery** (living 1547). She may have married firstly James Button (d.1526?), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/22/43. If so, she was the mother of William Button, referred to in the will of the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), as his nephew:

Item, I give to my nephew, William Button, one hundred pounds in money over and besides the debt of a hundred pound which I have already remitted and forgiven unto him of such money as he oweth me, the same hundred pounds to be paid in 3 or 4 years as my debts shall in.

See the Button pedigree in Blaydes, Frederic Augustus, *The Visitations of Bedfordshire*, (London: Harleian Society, 1884), Vol. XIX p. 89 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=9iTTAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA89>

It appears the testator's daughter, Dorothy Mery, remarried after the death of James Button. In his will, the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), refers to her as Dorothy Rous:

Item, I will mine executors shall pay yearly unto my sister, Dorothy Rous, of my gift during her life twenty marks, half yearly to be paid.

See the Button pedigree, *supra*, and the Rous pedigree in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), p. 113 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ECoeEAAAIAAJ&pg=PA113>

It should be noted that the pedigree of Hewett of Ampthill shows that Dorothy (or alternatively Margaret) Mery married Thomas Hewett, esquire; however in the pedigree she is said (perhaps erroneously) to have been the daughter of *John* Mery. See Blaydes, *supra*, p. 37 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=9iTTAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA37>

It does seem, however, that one of the testator's daughters did marry into the Hewett family since the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), speaks in his will of 'my nephew, Robert Hewett'. According to the pedigree, Robert Hewett married Margery Tylton of Chester by whom he was the father of Dorothy Hewett, who married Sir Richard Conquest, son and heir of Edmund Conquest (d.1549). For the marriage of Sir Richard Conquest and Dorothy Hewett, see the pedigrees in Blaydes, *supra*, at pp. 37-8 and 97 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=9iTTAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA37>

The will, TNA PROB 11/15/481, of Thomas Hewett (d.1507), yeoman, of South Mimms, mentions a wife named Dorothy.

For the Hewett family, see also *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, Vol. VI, (London: Bell & Daldy, 1858), pp. 246-7, 331-2 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ZxlgT9BAen4C&pg=PA332&lpg=PA331>

* **Elizabeth Mery** (living 1547), who married John Lewin of Cuffley, Hertfordshire. For John Lewin, see TNA C 1/139/56 and TNA C 1/142/19.

Although the Northaw parish registers are no longer extant, a number of extracts were taken prior to their destruction by fire in 1881, some of which concern the Lewin family. See Brigg, William, ed., *The Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*, (Harpenden: William Brigg, 1895), Vol. I, p. 120 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yK5DAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA120>

According to the will of the testator's youngest son, William Mery (d.1547), John Lewin and Elizabeth Mery had a son, Edmund Lewin:

Item, where my nephew, Edmund Lewin, was indebted unto me in the sum of two hundred pounds, which debt I have remitted and forgiven unto the same Edmund upon condition that the same Edmund, his executors or assigns, shall pay yearly to my sister his mother, the sum of ten pounds during her natural life half yearly.

Edmund Lewin married Julian Goche, the daughter of William Goche of Broome, Norfolk, and Clifford's Inn, feodary of Essex and Hertfordshire. For William Goche, see Ives, E.W., 'The Common Lawyers in Pre-Reformation England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), Vol. 18, pp. 145-73 at p. 151:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3678959>

See also:

'Henry VIII: Pardon Roll, Part 3', in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 1, 1509-1514*, ed. J S Brewer (London, 1920), pp. 234-256. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol1/pp234-256> [accessed 26 November 2020].

Wm. Goche or Gouche, of London, Brome, Norf., and Clifford's Inn, g. or yeoman, 21 May.

By Julian Goche, Edmund Lewin was the father of five known children, including, as noted above, William Lewin (d.1598), who accompanied Oxford on his continental tour

in 1575. See the will of William Lewin, TNA PROB 11/91/472, in which he leaves the following bequest to Oxford:

Item, I give unto my special good Lord, the Earl of Oxford, in token of my duty toward his Lordship, another hundred ounces of gilt plate or fifty marks in money, to be delivered unto Mr Young, one of his Lordship's gentlemen, to buy the said plate of fashion to his Lordship's best liking.

Although she does not appear in the Mery pedigree, *supra*, Sir Richard Morison's mother is also said to have been the daughter of Thomas Mery of Hatfield. See the *ODNB* entry:

Morison, Sir Richard (c. 1510–1556), humanist and diplomat, was the second son of Thomas Morison of Sandon, Hertfordshire, and his wife, a daughter of Thomas Merry of Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

It should perhaps be noted that the burial of John Morison, householder, was recorded at Northaw on 13 January 1568, as well as two Morison marriages (John Parrett and Anne Morison, and John Morison and Elizabeth Bestney) on 22 May and 2 June of the same year. See Brigg, *supra*, p. 123 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yK5DAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA123>

See also the will of Sir Richard Morison, TNA PROB 11/39/330, and Cooper, Charles Henry and Thompson Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1858), Vol. I, pp. 143-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=k-pLAAAACAAJ&pg=PA143>

In the will below the testator mentions an illegitimate daughter, Alice Grey. She can perhaps be identified with the Alice Grey, wife of John Grey, who was buried at Northaw on 10 November 1564. See Brigg, *supra*, p. 121 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yK5DAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA121>

It should also perhaps be noted for the sake of completeness that the marriage of James Mathew and Agnes Mery was recorded at Northaw on 2 April 1567. See Brigg, *supra*, p. 122 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yK5DAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA122>

In dei nomine amen. The 20th day of the month of December in the year of Our Lord God 1490 and in the reign of King Henry the 7 the 6, I, Thomas Mery of Hatfield Bishop in the county of Hertford, of whole(?) mind, make and ordain this my present testament & last will in manner & form following:

First I bequeath my soul to God, to his Blessed Mother, Mary, and to all the saints of heaven, my body to be buried in the church of Hatfield before the image of Our Lady of Pity, & for my burying so there to be had I bequeath to the profits of the said church 6s 8d;

Also I will that the parson of the said church have for his heriot(?) & tithes forgotten the best of my quick cattle;

Also I bequeath to my ghostly father for his labour & for to bring my body to the earth 20d;

And to every priest there being in daily service in the said church for bringing my body to th' earth and being at my Mass & dirge, to every of them 12d;

Also I will that my executor cause three trentals to be done & said for the souls of me and Margaret, my wife, & that they be all 3 done within the space of a month next after my decease;

Also I will that Margaret, my said wife, have, perceive and occupy all th' issues & profits of all my lands & tenements, groves, rents, reversions & services together with all my movable goods, chattels, crop corn and debts, & thereof to perform this my present will;

And also I will that John Mery, my eldest son, have after the decease of my said wife my tenement with the mede thereto lying called Symhoggis, a mede called the Great Mede, a close with a grove thereto lying called Mustames(?) with 2 medes now in the holding of Margery, late wife of Robert Forster, an house with a mede thereto lying called Brightes with another mede abutting upon one of the said medes that Margery Forster now holdeth, and also a mede called Ravones with 2 goves [sic for 'groves'] at the head of the same Favones, one of them is called Ravones grove and the other Pipers grove in the parish of Northaw in the said county of Hertford;

And also I will that the said John Mery have after the decease of my said wife all my lands and tenements lying and being within the town & fields of Hatfield aforesaid with all my lands & tenements that I have within the parish of North Mimms lying on the north-west side of the King's Highway called London Lane;

And also I will that Robert Mery, my second son, have after the decease of my said wife my tenement in Northaw called Pipers with all the medes & closes now in the holding of Thomas Lawe, another close in the holding of John Forster called Viellis, another close called Hoselese, and an house with a mede and a grove thereto lying called Lawes in Northaw aforesaid together with a mede with hedges and ditches called Annotfreres(?), and 3 crofts with a grove lying next London Lane called Shilbornes and Goodynges in the parish of North Mimms aforesaid;

And also I will that William Mery, my youngest son, have after the decease of my said wife all my medes, leasows(?), pastures and groves lying and being within the towns and fields of Chipping Barnet in the said county of Hertford;

And if it happen the said John Mery, my eldest son, to decease without heirs of his body lawfully begotten, as God forbid, that then I will that Robert Mery, my second son, have to him & to his heirs all the portion of lands & tenements before limited to the said John Mery;

And then the part before limited to the said Robert Mery wholly to remain to the said William Mery and to his heirs;

And if it hap the said Robert Mery, my second son, to decease without heirs of his body lawfully begotten, as God forbid, that then I will that William Mery, my youngest son, have to him and to his heirs [f. 268v] all the portions of lands & tenements before limited to the said Robert Mery;

And if it hap the said William Mery, my youngest son, to decease without heirs of his body lawfully begotten, as God forbid, that then I will that all the portion of lands & tenements before-named to the said William Mery remain wholly to the foresaid Robert Mery & his heirs, and so to ascend and descend from one to another according to this my present will;

And also I will and bequeath to the marriage of my 4 daughters, that is to say, Joan Mery, Anne Mery, Dorothy Mery & Elizabeth Mery £53 6s 8d to be evenly divided, paid and delivered to them by the hands of my said wife within 3 years next after the day of their marriage;

And if there be one or any of my said daughters that be not disposed to marry, that then I will that my said wife pay & deliver to her or to them not being disposed to marry the part of the said £53 6s 8d as it cometh to when she or they come to th' age of 24 years;

And if it hap any of my said 4 daughters to decease before the time that she hath received her part of the said £53 6s 8d, as God forbid, that then I will that the part or parts of the said £53 6s 8d that she or they so deceased before the delivery aforesaid should have had be delivered & evenly divided among them that at that time shall be left on life;

And if it hap my said 4 daughters to decease all before the foresaid delivery of the money aforesaid, as God forbid, that then I will that the foresaid money not delivered to my said daughters be evenly divided among my forenamed sons at their said age(?) of 24 years;

Also I will that my said wife give and deliver to Alice Grey, my base gotten daughter, 40s in money or in money worth within a year next after my decease;

Also I bequeath to the marriage of Lewse [=Luce?] Mery and Katherine Mery, daughters to my brother, John Mery, to every of them 20s, and every of them to inherit other of that money aforesaid before it be delivered;

& of this my present testament I will & ordain to be my executors, that is to say, Margaret, my said wife, Richard Goodere and Thomas Tailor to be aiders and helpers to her when she shall have need, and Thomas Madirs, clerk, to oversee my present will to be performed;

Also I will that the said Richard Goodere have for his labour yearly during the time that he shall have occupation therewith 20s;

And the said Thomas Tailor to have yearly for his labour during the time that he shall be occupied therewith 13s 4d;

And I renounce and revoke all manner of wills and testaments before this day made & spoken, and make, assure(?) & grant this to be my last will only and none other;

Given the 18 day of January the year above-written in the presence of John Clederave, clerk, John Roger, John Mery, Thomas Mery, John Newman, Simon White, William Hewit, Thomas Hill(?), Thomas Norse and other moe.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum Coram Domino Apud Lamethith quarto Die mens {is} Iunij Anno domini Mill {es} imo CCCC Nonagesimo [incomplete]

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the fourth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord 1490. . . .]