

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 18 and 19 February 1622 and proved 19 May 1623, of Sir Francis Newport (February 1557 – 6 or 15 March 1623), eldest son and heir of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. The volume was Loan 61 in the British Library until 2007, was subsequently on loan to Lancaster University Library until 2010, and is now in the hands of a trustee, Lady Hesketh. According to the Wikipedia entry for Sir Richard Newport, the annotated Hall's *Chronicle* is now at Eton College, Windsor. See:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_\(died_1570\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_(died_1570))

Newport's copy of his chronicle, containing annotations sometimes attributed to William Shakespeare, is now in the Library at Eton College, Windsor.

For the annotated Hall's *Chronicle*, see also the will of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), TNA PROB 11/53/456; Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954); and the Annotator page on this website:

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/annotator.html>

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For early generations of the Newport family, see Bridgeman, Ernest R.O. and Charles G.O. Bridgeman, 'History of the Manor and Parish of Weston-under-Lizard, in the County of Stafford', William Salt Archaeological Society, ed., *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, Vol. XX, Vol. II, New Series, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899), p. 146 at:

<https://archive.org/details/collectionsfora14socigoog/page/n189>

See also the Newport pedigree in Grazebrook, George, and John Paul Rylands, eds., *The Visitation of Shropshire Taken in the Year 1623*, Part II, (London: Harleian Society, 1889), Vol. XXIX, pp. 372-4 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshrop01grazgoog#page/n100/mode/2up>

For the testator, see also the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/newport-francis-ii-1555-1623>

Testator's parents

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The testator was the son of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570) and Margaret Bromley (d. 11 August 1598), the only daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Bromley (d. 15 May 1555), Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, by Isabel Lyster, daughter of Richard Lyster of Rowton. See the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bromley-thomas-i-1505-55>

Margaret Bromley's grandfather, Roger Bromley, was a younger brother of William Bromley, esquire, of Mitley, father of George Bromley (d.1545) of Hodnet, father of Sir Thomas Bromley (c.1530-1587), Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor. Since their grandfathers were brothers, Margaret Bromley was a second cousin of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Bromley (c.1530-1587), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/70/219. Sir Thomas Bromley (c.1530-1587) was one of the trustees appointed in Oxford's indenture of 20 January 1575. See SRO D615/D 45(1).

For Margaret Bromley's family background, see also the Bromley pedigree in Grazebrook, *Part I, supra*, pp. 77-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshrop00britgoog#page/n132/mode/2up>

For the will of the testator's mother, Margaret (nee Bromley) Newport, see TNA PROB 11/93/149.

Testator's siblings

The testator had three brothers (two of whom died young) and four sisters:

-Andrew Newport (July 1562 – April 1611), who died unmarried and was buried at Wroxeter. See the History of Parliament entry at :

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/newport-andrew-1563-1611>

-Mary Newport, who married firstly William Gratwood, and secondly Ralph Sneyd, esquire, of Keel, Staffordshire, the uncle of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham (d.1612). For Ralph Sneyd, who was Oxford's trustee in documents entered into at the time of his second marriage and shortly thereafter, see the will of his father, Sir William Sneyd (d. 6 June 1571), TNA PROB 11/54/430.

-Isabel Newport, who married, about 1568, Sir Charles Fox of Bromfield, Shropshire.

-Elizabeth Newport, who married firstly, about 1569, Francis Lawley, esquire, of Spoonhill, Shropshire, and secondly Sir Thomas Lawley of Wenlock, Shropshire.

-Magdalen Newport (d. 1627), who married firstly Richard Herbert (d.1596), esquire, of Blackhall and Montgomery, by whom she was the mother of seven sons and three daughters, including Edward Herbert (1582?-1648), 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury, the poet George Herbert (1593–1633), Sir Henry Herbert (baptized 1594, d.1673), Master of the Revels, and Thomas Herbert (b. 15 May 1597, d. before 1643), and secondly Sir John Danvers (1584/5–1655), younger brother of Sir Charles Danvers (c.1568-1601) and Henry Danvers, (1573-1644), Earl of Danby. She was a friend of the poet John Donne, who was apparently related to Oxford through a mutual ancestor, Sir John Don.

The testator's nephew, Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, is mentioned in the will below.

For the testator's nephew, the poet George Herbert, see the *ODNB* entry:

Herbert, George (1593–1633), Church of England clergyman and poet, was born on 3 April 1593 at Montgomery, seventh of the ten children of Richard Herbert (d. 1596) and his wife, Magdalen or Magdalene Newport (d. 1627). . . .

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Beatrix Lacon (buried 9 March 1617), the daughter of Rowland Lacon (c.1537 – 3 November 1608), esquire, of Willey and Kinlet, by whom he had three sons and four daughters:

* **Sir Richard Newport** (d. 5 February 1650), eldest son and heir, who married Rachel Leveson, the daughter of Sir John Leveson (d. 7 November 1615), brother of William Leveson (d.1621), who acted as trustee for William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and other members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. For the will of Sir John Leveson, see TNA PROB 11/126/409.

* **Henry Newport** (buried 13 March 1628) at Wroxeter, who died without issue.

* **Thomas Newport** (buried 28 December 1650 at Cound).

* **Mary Newport** (b. before 1592, buried 5 August 1622), who married, as his second wife, Sir Robert Harley (1579-1656) of Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire, and Aldermanbury, London. Sir Robert Harley's first wife was Anne Barret, step-daughter of Sir John Leveson (d. 7 November 1615) (see above). After Mary Newport's death, Sir Robert Harley married, as his third wife, Brilliana Conway, by whom he was the father of Robert Harley (1661-1724), Earl of Oxford. Robert Harley's third marriage is said to have been brokered by Mary (nee Tracy) Hoby Vere (18 May 1581 - 25 December 1671), wife of Oxford's first cousin, Horatio Vere (1565-1635), Baron Vere of Tilbury, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/338/214.

See the History of Parliament entry for Sir Robert Harley at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/harley-sir-robert-1579-1656>

bap. 1 Mar. 1579, 1st s. of Thomas Harley of Brampton Bryan, Herefs. and 1st w. Margaret, da. of Sir Andrew Corbet† of Moreton Corbet, Salop. educ. privately (Richard Harley); Oriell, Oxf. 1595, BA 1599; M. Temple 1599.2 m. (1) 13 Feb. 1603 (with £2,300), Anne (d. 1 Dec. 1603), da. of Charles Barret of Belhus, Aveley, Essex, 1s. d.v.p.; (2) by 1607, Mary (bur. 5 Aug. 1622), da. of (Sir) Francis Newport† of High Ercall, Salop, 1s. 8 other ch. d.v.p.; (3) 22 July 1623, with £1,600, Brilliana (d. Oct. 1643), da. of Sir Edward Conway I of Ragley, Warws., sec. of state 1623-8, 3s. 4da. (1 d.v.p.).3 cr. KB 25 July 1603;4 suc. fa. 1631. d. 6 Nov. 1656.5 sig. Ro[bert] Harley.*

* **Margaret Newport** (c.1586 - 12 March 1619), who married John Barker, esquire, of Haughmond, Shropshire. She was buried at Wroxeter 16 March 1619.

* **Anne Newport** (baptized 31 January 1597 at High Ercall, buried there 29 December 1623).

* **Eleanor Newport**, who died young.

RM: T{estamentum} D{omini} ffrancisci Newport milit{is}

In the name of God, Amen. The eighteenth day of February in the year of Our Lord God according to the computation of the Church of England one thousand six hundred twenty and one and in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James of England, France and Ireland the nineteenth and of his Highness' reign of Scotland the five and fiftieth, I, Francis Newport of High Ercall in the county of Salop, knight, being of good and perfect memory, praised be Almighty God, and calling to mind the uncertainty of this life, and being willing to dispose of those worldly blessings which I unworthily enjoy to the good of my children and of such other persons to whom I do by this my last will and testament bequeath the same, so farforth as may stand with the good pleasure of Almighty God do in the fear of his most holy name make my last will and testament in manner following:

First and principally I commit my soul into the merciful hands of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, trusting assuredly to be saved by God's mercy purchased for me by the obedience, death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ, God and man, mine only Saviour and Redeemer, and by none other means;

And my body I will to be buried in the church of that parish where it shall please God I shall die within four and twenty hours next after my decease without all funeral pomp;

And as concerning the freehold and inheritance of such manors, messuage[s], parks, mills, lands, tenements, tithes and other hereditaments as my gracious God hath bestowed upon me, I do leave the same to descend, remain and come to such person and persons of such estate and estates as by the laws of this realm and by force of the conveyances and assurances thereof by me made and executed the same are of right to descend, remain and come;

And where I am possessed for divers years yet enduring of and in one grange or farm with divers lands, tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging and used and occupied to and with the same lying in High Ercall aforesaid in the said county of Salop commonly called by the name of Sherlowe alias Sherlowe grange, I do devise and bequeath the said grange and farm with all his rights, members and appurtenances together with all mine interest and estate therein unto Thomas Newport, gentleman, my youngest son, and to Richard Clowes, one of my servants;

To have and to hold the said grange and farm with all his rights, members and appurtenances to them, the said Thomas Newport and Richard Clowes, their executors and assigns, for and during all the rest and residue of the term of years in the original lease thereof mentioned yet to come and unexpired, nevertheless upon trust and confidence and to this only intent and purpose, that they, the said Thomas Newport and Richard Clowes, their executors, administrators and assigns, shall and will permit and suffer my son and heir apparent, Sir Richard Newport, knight, and his heirs to have and enjoy the same and to receive and take the rents, issues and profits thereof to his and their own use during all the residue of the said term yet to come and unexpired;

Also I do devise and bequeath unto my daughter, Anne Newport, the sum of five hundred pounds of current English money, and if she shall marry with the consent of mine executors hereafter named or the survivor of them, then and not otherwise my will and meaning is and I do further devise and bequeath unto her for an increase of her portion the sum of one thousand pounds more of like lawful money of England, the said sum of five hundred pounds to be paid unto her within one year next after my decease if she be then living, and the said sum of one thousand pounds within eighteen months next after such time as she shall be married with the consent of my said executors or the survivor of them as aforesaid if she or any issue of her body shall be then living;

Nevertheless my will and meaning is that if she shall be preferred in marriage by me in my lifetime and her portion paid, secured or promised by me, that then the said devise and bequest as well of the said five hundred pounds as also of the said [f. 383v] one thousand pounds given unto her upon the condition and contingent aforesaid shall be utterly void, and that mine executors shall not be charged therewith or with any more of her portion than shall be unpaid in my lifetime;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas Newport, the sum of five hundred pounds of like lawful money of England to be paid unto him within three years next after my decease if he be then living;

Also I give and bequeath unto Sir Robert Harley, Knight of the Bath, and to Dame Mary, his wife, mine eldest daughter, the sum of forty pounds of like lawful money of England, videlicet, to either of them twenty pounds apiece as a remembrance of my tender love and affection towards them, the said several sums to be paid within one year next after my decease to such of them as shall be then living;

Also I give and bequeath unto my loving nephew, Henry Herbert, gentleman, the sum of ten pounds of like current English money as a testimony of my love unto him, the sum to be paid within one year next after my decease if he be then living;

Also I give and bequeath to the poorest sort of people in the town of Salop in the said county of Salop the sum of forty pounds;

And to the poorest sort [+of?] people in the town of Wellington in the said county the sum of ten pounds;

And to the poorest sort of people in the town of Newport in the said county the sum of £10;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of High Ercall aforesaid in the said county the sum of six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Wroxeter in the said county the sum of four pounds;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Cound in the said county the sum of forty shillings;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Atcham in the said county the sum of forty shillings;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Upton under Haughmond in the said county the sum of forty shillings;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Rodington in the said county the sum of thirty shillings;

And to the poorest sort of people in the parish of Waters Upton in the said county the sum of twenty shillings, the said several sums of money so bequeathed as aforesaid to the said poor to be distributed amongst them at the discretion of mine executors hereafter named;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Richard Davies, my servant, the sum of one hundred pounds to be paid unto him within two years next after my decease if he be then living;

Also I give and bequeath unto Mary Ottley, my servant, the sum of fifty pounds to be paid unto her within one year next after my decease if she be then living;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant, Mary Barnes, the sum of twenty pounds to be paid unto her within one year next after my decease if she be then living;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant, Dorothy Fenton, the sum of ten pounds to be paid unto her within one year next after my decease if she be then living;

Item, I give and bequeath unto John Wiston, my servant, the sum of thirteen pounds six shillings and eight pence to be paid unto him within one year next after my decease if he be then living;

Item, I give to all the rest of my servants, videlicet, to every of them so much money as his or her year's stipend or wages doth amount unto over and besides so much money as at the time of my decease shall be behind and unpaid unto them of their several and respective stipends and wages, the same to be paid within one year next after my decease to such of them respectively as shall be then living;

The rest and residue of all my goods and chattels, ready money, jewels, rings, plate, armour, books, corn, grain, implements of household and husbandry, debts and all other my goods, cattles and chattels movable and unmovable of what kind, nature or quality soever they be, my funerals, debts and legacies being discharged, I do wholly give, devise and bequeath unto my said son and heir apparent, Sir Richard Newport, knight;

And I do make, constitute, ordain and appoint my said son, Sir Richard Newport, and my beloved cousin, Edward Waties of Burwen in the said county, esquire, executors of this my last will and testament;

And I do desire my worthy kinsmen and friends, Sir Edward Bromley, knight, one of the Barons of his Highness' Court of Exchequer at Westminster, Sir Humphrey Lee, baronet, and Sir Vincent Corbet, [f. 384r] knight, to be overseers of the same;

In witness whereof I have subscribed my name to every sheet of these presents and to the last of the said sheets have put to my seal in the presence of the witnesses subscribed, given the nineteenth day of this instant February 1621. Francis Newport. Thomas Screven, Robert(?) Allestrer, Richard Gwillim(?), Richard Clowes, Evan Phillipp, Reginald Piyer.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram ven{erabi}li viro Domino Will{el}imo Byrd milite legum doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariens{is} magistro Custode sive Commissario legitime Constituto Decimo Nono die mens{is} Maij Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo vicesimo tertio Iuramentis domini Richardi Newport militis filij naturalis et legitimi dicti defuncti et Edwardi Watres(?) Armigeri executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus commissa fuit administratio bonorum iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene et fideliter administrando eadem Ad sancta

Dei Evangelia coram Edwardo Piper Rectori de Rodington vigore Commiss{ionis} in
ea parte al{ia}s emanat{e} Iurat{is}

[=The above-written will was proved at London before the worshipful Sir William Byrd, knight, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the nineteenth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred twenty-third by the oaths of Sir Richard Newport, knight, natural and legitimate son of the said deceased, and Edward Waters(?), esquire, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same, before Edward Piper, rector of Rodington, by force of a grant in that behalf issued elsewhere.]