

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 12 May 1537 and proved 26 June 1537, of Thomas Bodley, vicar of South Weald, Essex, great-uncle of Sir John Bodley of Streatham, landlord of the Globe playhouse from 1601-1622. For Sir John Bodley's role as landlord of the Globe, see TNA C 54/1682, mm. 10-11.

The testator was the son of Richard Bodley (d.1491), grocer of London, and Joan Warde of Hinxworth, whose brother, John Warde, was Lord Mayor of London in 1485. For the will of Richard Bodley, see TNA PROB 11/9/28. The testator's father, Richard Bodley, was of the same family as the founder of the Bodleian library, and bore the same coat of arms, 'Gules, five martlets argent on a chief indented or three crowns azure'. See the coat of arms and pedigree in Barron, Caroline M. and Anne F. Sutton, eds., *Medieval London Widows 1300-1500*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 208, 211 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=uc3RLXFANoMC&pg=PA211&lpg=PA211&dq=%22Nicholas+Leveson%22+%22William+Strete%22&source=bl&ots=91-CgadHEH&sig=Z2EpsIAd2E-DdqOcyE5Ta2znd-w&hl=en&sa=X&ei=hSZqVNTMIsevogSemICQAg&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Nicholas%20Leveson%22%20%22William%20Strete%22&f=false>

For the will of the testator's brother, William Bodley (died c.1539), see TNA PROB 11/28/311.

For the will of the testator's brother, Ellis Bodley (d.1547), parson of St Stephen's Walbrook, situated next to the London residence of the Earls of Oxford, see TNA PROB 11/32/83.

For the will of the testator's nephew, Francis Bodley (d.1566), father of Sir John Bodley of Streatham, landlord of the Globe playhouse, see TNA PROB 11/48/415.

The testator was a first cousin of Dionyse (nee Bodley) Leveson (d.1560), grandmother of William Leveson (d.1621), one of two trustees employed by William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and other members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men in the allocation of shares in the ground lease of the Globe Theatre in 1599. For the will of Dionyse Bodley Leveson, see TNA PROB 11/43/645. For the will of William Leveson (d.1621), see TNA PROB 11/137/600. For Dionyse Bodley Leveson's coat of arms, which indicates that she, too, was of the same family as the founder of the Bodleian Library, see 'Nicholas Leveson' in *Proceedings of the Evening Meetings of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, Session 1871*, (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1872), pp. 46-55 at p. 46 and 55:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=6hEVAAAAQAAJ&pg=RA1-PA55&lpg=RA1-PA55&dq=%22gules+five+martlets+argent%22+%22Bodley%22&source=bl&ots=-OudjcieN&sig=uZKxMVWSbxq3_kMyILKxf9Vw_7s&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCEQ6AEwAWoVChMI3JbEoMjDyAIViy-

ICh3NogZs#v=onepage&q=%22gules%20five%20martlets%20argent%22%20%22Bodley%22&f=false.

For other persons named in the will below, see the will of the testator's brother, William Bodley, TNA PROB 11/28/311.

The testator was a witness to the will of Thomas Riche (d. 3 March 1531) of South Weald, whose widow married James Strelley. James Strelley may have been the father of Humphrey Strelley, whose daughter, Margaret Strelley, married Nicholas Brend (d. 12 October 1601), first landlord of the Globe playhouse. See the will of Thomas Riche, TNA PROB 11/24/36.

The testator's will was proved twice. For the later copy, see TNA PROB 11/26/118. In both PCC copies the scribe appears to have omitted text in the testator's bequest of his house and tenements to Francis Bodley (d.1566), as indicated by dots in the transcript below.

RM: Test{amentu}m Thome Bodeley cl{er}icus

In dei nomine amen. The 12th day of the month of May in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred thirty and seven and the 29th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the 8th, I, Thomas Bodley, vicar of South Weald in Essex of the diocese of London, lauded be God being of good mind & perfect memory, make my testament and last will following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, which redeemed with his precious blood, and to Our Blessed Lady, and to all the holy company of heaven, my body to be buried within the precinct of the parish church of Saint Botolph's at Billingsgate in London where I was born and [f. 53v] in the chapel where my father and mother lieth;

Item, I will the day of my sepulture 20s for two trentals to be said at convenient time for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I bequeath to the said church £6 13s 4d, to be applied to some necessary thing after the discretion of my executor;

And at my burial, after my chesting, I will such torches, tapers and other funeral expenses to be had and provided for as shall be seen convenient for me at the discretion of my executor, whom I charge to be done honestly as it requireth;

Item, I will the Brotherhood of the Papey to accompany my body to be buried, they to have for their labours and to make me a brother among them 13s 4d;

Item, I will five trentals of Masses to be celebrate for my soul & all Christian souls as shortly after my departing as can be convenient;

Item, I bequeath to every godchild 12d apiece;

Item, I bequeath Katherine Scott forty shillings, a pair of amber beads gauded with silver, a slender ring, hoop fashion, and two pair of sheets;

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Bryte 6s 8d;

Item, to the Five Orders of Friars in London in the honour of the Five Principal Wounds of Christ, 5s to every place;

Item, I bequeath to 40 poor householders in my parish of South Weald 12d apiece;

Item, I will during the space of a year every Friday five poor men to have each of them a penny apiece in the honour of the Five Wounds to pray for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I will five priests to say five Masses of the Five Wounds & dirge at my parish church, they to have 12d apiece, and all other priests that shall be there within my month's mind or at the same to have 8d apiece, the clerks and children to be recompensed according to the discretion of my executor;

Item, I will my executor to pay all my debts that can be demanded of right and sufficient proofs(?) had, supposing them to be little or none;

Item, I bequeath to my keeper in London my bed in my chamber in London as it standeth saving the upper covering, a cupboard and two forms, and 40s to be paid to her as she shall need it or require it;

Item, I bequeath to my woman at my benefice 5s, and my nightgown furred with fox, and a pair of sheets;

Item, I bequeath to the wench 5s;

Item, to my servant, John Fox, half a year's livery, 4s, and for his wages that resteth 12d;

Also I bequeath him 2s;

Item, I bequeath to the old works of Paul's 3s 4d;

Item, I bequeath to the parish church of South Weald my copes that hath been there worn, the churchwardens for the time being to entitle in their book them to be of my gift to the laud and praising of Almighty God to pray for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I will for 12 prisoners to be released in the honour of God in hope of release and comfort of my soul, the valor and sum as it shall be seen to my said executor;

Item, I will that my three kine to be farmed, and the yearly farm to be given to poor people yearly to pray for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I bequeath to every prison in London and spital houses and in the suburbs of the same 3s 4d apiece;

Item, I bequeath to my godson, Francis Bodley, my dwelling-house and all other houses, tenements, possessions, what hold soever they be of, being and lying within the parish or any part of the same called South Weald or Brentwood after manner and form of the lordships the same

. . . yearly by the space of 20 years a trental of Masses to be kept at Saint Botolph's in London aforesaid, and also 10s to be distribute among poor people there for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I bequeath to the said Francis Bodley two salts, a standing piece of silver and gilt, a standing mazer and ten marks of money, a whole complete bed, and all manner of household stuff, part of the best of everything, the custody and ordering of the premises to remain and to be in the hands and order of my brother, Master Doctor Ellis Bodley, my executor, till he be of th' age of 20 years or more;

And if case should happen, as God forbid, that the said Francis should depart this present life or he come to the age of the same, I will my executor to distribute the same to the next of the kindred, portion and portion like, according to the discretion of my executor;

Item, I bequeath to Alice Bodley, Katherine Bodley and Grisell Bodley, my brother Master William Bodley's children, to each of them 40s apiece, each of them to be other's executor;

And to the said Grisell also I bequeath a salt and six spoons of silver;

Item, I bequeath to my brother, Master Doctor Ellis Bodley, and my brother, Master William Bodley, grocer, and to my sisters, my Lady Askew, my sister Gresham, my sister Bodley, and to my brother Master Askew, knight, Master William Gresham, [f. 54r] to them and each of them a ring of gold, value 30s apiece;

Item, I bequeath to my brother, Master Doctor Ellis Bodley, my bag with silver and gilt rings, a velvet girdle and a leather girdle garnished with buckles of silver and gilt, and another leather girdle garnished with silver, and my bed in my parlour chamber as it standeth, four pair of sheets, a pounced basin with a ewer of pewter, the election of my books, my best black gown, a dozen of cushions, two tablecloths of diaper, two towels of diaper, a dozen of napkins of diaper, two plain tablecloths and 2 plain towels;

The rest of all my goods and chattels, whatsoever they be, I will my executor to distribute and give them in deeds of mercy and charity as shall seem to him most convenient for the wealth of [-of] my soul and all Christian souls as he will answer afore God at the dreadful Day of Judgment;

And I ordain and make of this my last will and testament my brother, Master Doctor Ellis Bodley, parson of Saint Stephen's in Walbrook in London, my sole executor;

And my overseer of the same I ordain and make my brother, Mr William Bodley, grocer;

In witness whereof and in presence I have subscribed this present testament and last will with my own hand, these being present: Sir John Martyn, priest, Sir John Dalton, priest, and Andrew Hubbard, layman, with divers other.

Probatum fuit suprascriptu{m} Testamentum coram d{omi}no apud Lambith vicesimo sexto die mensis Iunij Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo tricesimo septimo Iuramento Elizei Bodley executoris in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento no{m}i{n}ati Ac approbatum et insinuatum Com{m}issaq{ue} fuit adm{ni}strac{i}o o{mn}i{u}m et singulorum bonoru{m} iur{ium} et creditoru{m} d{i}c{t}i defunct{i} prefat{o} execut{ori} De bene &c Ac de pleno et fideli Inuen{ta}rio &c Necno{n} de plano et vero compoto reddend{o} ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia iurat{o}

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the twenty-sixth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred thirty-seventh by the oath of Ellis Bodley, executor named in the same testament, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executor, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and [+to prepare] a full and faithful inventory etc., and also to render a plain and true account.]