

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 1 May 1547 and proved 25 June 1547, of William Mery, whose sister, 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 will of the testator's father, the family surname is spelled 'Mere'. The variant spelling 'Mery' has been used in the transcript below. Similarly, the surname 'Lowen' in the PCC copy of the testator's will has been spelled 'Lewin' in the transcript below.

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

The pedigree should be compared with the will of the testator's father.

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>

In the will below the testator leaves bequests to Edward Mery of Northaw, and his brother, John Mery of Northaw, as well as to John Mery of St Alban's. John Mery and his brother, Edward Mery, and their wives are mentioned in the will of the testator's widow, Joan. See TNA PROB 11/41/18:

Item, I give to John Mery and Edward, his brother, and to their wives yearly during their lives by year forty shillings, that is twenty shillings to John Mery and his wife so long as either of them liveth, and so of the other.

Testator's parents

The testator was the youngest son of Thomas Mery (d.1495?) of Hatfield, Hertfordshire, and his wife, Margaret. See the will of Thomas Mery, dated 20 December 1490 and proved 4 June 1495(?), TNA PROB 11/10/417.

The testator's mother 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.

Testator's siblings

According to the will of his father, the testator had two brothers:

-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. In the will below the testator 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:

-Elizabeth Mery.

However the will below 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, by dispensation dated 26 February 1536, 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 Hesses, 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 the will below the testator leaves a bequest to James Bacon's first wife, Mary Gardiner:

Item, I give to Mary, wife of James Bacon, one silver pot, price five pounds.

Mary Gardiner was the daughter of William Gardiner (d.1541), esquire, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/29/83. The testator was appointed overseer of the will of William Gardiner (d.1541).

In his nuncupative will, Francis Mery (d.1551) mentions his brothers, John Mery and Anthony Mery, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Bacon, see TNA PROB 11/44/480. 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.

-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. 21 March 1611), 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 of the testator's widow, Joan.

(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.

According to his father's will, the testator also had four sisters:

-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, whom the testator refers to 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 sister, Dorothy Mery, remarried after the death of James Button. In the will below, the testator 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 sisters did marry into the Hewett family since in the will below the testator speaks 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. According to the will below, 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 was likely the testator's sibling since she, too, is 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.

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 his will, the testator's father mentions an illegitimate daughter, Alice Grey, who may have been the mother of Sir Richard Morison.

MARRIAGE

The testator married a wife named Joan (d.1558) who maiden name is unknown by whom it appears he had no issue. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/41/18.

TESTATOR'S EXECUTORS

For Henry Polsted (d. 10 December 1555), esquire, of Albury, Surrey, see his will, TNA PROB 11/38/39, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/polsted-henry-1510-55>

See also 'Map of Early Modern London: Bear Garden' at:

<https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/BEAR1.htm>

Henry Polsted is thought to be the first recorded owner of the property where one of the Bear Gardens would eventually be built.

For the Polsted family see also the will of Christopher More (c.1483 - 16 August 1549) of Loseley, Surrey, and the Blackfriars, London, TNA PROB 11/33/178.

For the London grocer, Henry Mylles (d.1574), and his wife, Elizabeth Mery, see his will, TNA PROB 11/56/176, the nuncupative will of Elizabeth (nee Mery) Mylles, TNA PROB 11/68/483, and:

<https://www.geni.com/people/Henry-Mylles-Rites-Alderman-of-London-Grocer/6000000001985898438>

Henry Mylles' wife, Elizabeth Mery, appears to have been the testator's niece.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For the London grocer, Nicholas Gibson (d.1540), and his wife, Avis Mortylman, see his will, TNA PROB 11/28/234, and the will, TNA PROB 11/34/65, of Barnard Jenyn (d.1551?), stepbrother of Queen Katherine Howard; of Oxford's friend, Sir George Howard (b. before 1523, d. 1580); and of Margaret Howard (d.1571), mother of Oxford's one-time friend, and later bitter enemy, Charles Arundel (d.1587). Avis Mortylman married firstly, about January 1532, Nicholas Gibson (d.1540), and secondly Sir Anthony Knyvet (d.1549?), the fifth son of Sir Edmund Knyvet (drowned at sea in 1504) and Eleanor Tyrrell (d.1520?).

The testator leaves a bequest to Edmund Conquest:

Item, I give to Edmund Conquest, gentleman, my great chain of gold worth by estimation threescore pounds or above and my velvet coat upon condition that the same Edmund shall pay and deliver unto my cousin, his wife, the sum of twenty pounds to dispose at her free will and pleasure without let or interruption of the same Edmund.

Edmund Conquest (d.1549), esquire, married Joan Button, by whom he had six daughters (Elizabeth, Dorothy, Anne, Cecily, Alice and Frances), and four sons (Edmund, Richard, William and George). For Edmund Conquest,] see his will, TNA PROB 11/32/565, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/conquest-edmund-1502-49>

See also the Conquest pedigree in Blaydes, *supra*, p. 97 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=9iTTAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA97>

See also TNA C 1/1210/37-39, a Chancery suit brought during the period 1544-1551 by Edmund Conquest against the testator's executors. See also the inquisitions post mortem taken after his death, TNA C 142/88/6 and TNA E 150/44/4.

For Sir Ralph Rowlett (d.1571), see his will, TNA PROB 11/53/380, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/rowlett-sir-ralph-1513-71>

The testator's overseer, 'Master Robert Hewett, Doctor of Physic', has not been identified.

The testator leaves a bequest to John Downes:

Item, I will that John Downes shall have the hundred pounds which I promised at the marriage of his wife to be paid at the hour of my death, that is to say, one half of my wife's portion and thother half of mine.

In her will, the testatrix' widow leaves a bequest to Martha Downes, daughter of the London grocer, John Downes (living 1547, d. by 1558):

Item, I give to Marthey Downes in money one hundred pounds, the which hundred pounds remaineth now in the hands of Margery Downes, late wife of John Downes of London, grocer, and if it happen the said Marthey Downes to depart out of this world before she be married or come to th' age of twenty years, then I will that the said hundred pound shall be divided amongst the children of Bartholomew and William Gardiner.

For John Downes, see Somerset Heritage Centre DD\WHb/2634, a power of attorney to deliver seisin granted in 1548 to John Downes, citizen of London, and John Lowyn of Cuffley. See also TNA C 147/179, and TNA C 1/1185/22-29.

The testator leaves a bequest to Thomas Strickland, who appears to be the same Thomas Strickland and his wife, Jane, mentioned in the will of the testator's widow, Joan Mery:

Item, I give to the children of Thomas Strickland the sum of forty pounds to be divided amongst them by equal portions, and every one to be other's heir, and the said money to be delivered to Jane Strickland, the mother, if she be alive at the day of my death, otherwise it shall be delivered to James Procter to see them bestowed as he thinketh good.

Item, I give to Joan Strickland, widow, ten pounds with a camlet frock and a kirtle.

He can likely be identified with Thomas Strickland of London, grocer, mentioned, with John Downe, citizen and grocer of London, in an indenture dated 10 April 1552. See TNA C 146/7636.

The testator leaves bequests to Katherine (blank) and Elizabeth Calcot:

Item, to Katherine (blank) at the day of her marriage twenty shillings.

To Elizabeth Calkat [=Caldecott] at the day of her marriage forty shillings.

The testator's sister, Katherine Bowyer, married the London grocer, James Caldecott (d.1529), by whom she had an only daughter, Elizabeth Caldecott, who married Richard Parkins. See Cooper, *supra*, p. 21, and the will of James Caldecott, TNA PROB 11/23/227.

After the death of James Caldecott, the testator's sister may have remarried and had a daughter named Katherine to whom the testator left the foregoing bequest of 20s at the day of her marriage.

RM: Test{amentu}m Will{elm}i Mery

In the name of God, Amen. The first day of May in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred forty and seven and in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Edward the Sixth by the grace of God King of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England and also of Ireland in Earth the Supreme Head, I, William Mery, citizen and grocer of London, being whole of mind and in good remembrance, lauds be unto God, ordain and make this my testament and last will in manner and form following:

First and principally I commend my soul to the most Holy and Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, which of his mere mercy and inestimable goodness hath sent into this miserable world the second person in Trinity, Our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus, to redeem with his precious blood mankind out of sin, through the which redemption I believe and trust surely to have clear remission and forgiveness of all my sins;

And I commend my mortal body to the earth, willing it to be buried in the church or churchyard of that parish where I shall depart hence out of this transitory life, desiring to have on the day of my burial a sermon preached by some well learned man to the laud and praise of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to the setting forth of his blessed and holy Word and to the declaration and testimony of my faith towards the same, certainly believing that at the last Day of Judgment Almighty God of his merciful goodness shall join again my body and soul which shall ever live together in everlasting joy and bliss;

And as concerning the ceremonies of my burial, I reserve the ordering of that thing to the discretion of mine executors, so that they be used and done moderately without all curiosity, pomp and excess;

As touching the distribution and bestowing of my worldly goods which I have received here of God's liberal gift, I will them to be disposed and distributed after my death by mine executors to the honour of God and profit of my poor neighbours, I mean in such kind of works and deeds as God hath prepared in his holy Word for us to walk in;

And to this end and purpose so much as in me lieth I charge and bind the executors of this my last will and testament to do and to distribute my said goods after the form particularly specified, which executors I do ordain & constitute Joan, my well beloved wife, Henry Polsted, gentleman, Henry Mylles, grocer, and Robert Hewett, gentleman;

Item, I will that immediately after my burial my goods and chattels movable and unmovable whatsoever shall be praised by four skilful and indifferent persons together with mine executors, and to make a true inventory thereof, and also of my ready money and debts, and that every one of mine executors have a perfect book of the same;

And I will that such as be not of ability to pay such debts as are owing to me but to their hindrance or utter undoing, such I will that mine executors do not in any wise vex or trouble them by any manner of means;

And where my wife is entitled by the law and custom of the city of London to have the moiety or halfendial of all my goods, chattels and debts, [f. 315v] yet nevertheless my said wife is right well pleased and contented of her own free will to take of my said goods, chattels and debts to the value of three thousand pounds in full recompense and satisfaction of all the said moiety and of all that that unto her appertaineth of my said goods, chattels and debts;

Wherefore I will that the said Joan, my wife, shall have and enjoy of my said goods, chattels and good debts to the value of the said three thousand pounds to be had and assigned unto her by other mine executors by indifferent appraisement in full recompense and satisfaction of all such right, title and interest as the same Joan is or shall be after my decease entitled to have of, in or unto any of my said goods and premises;

Item, I will that mine executors shall procure one hundred sermons to be preached by some godly learned men yearly within four years after my decease, whereof forty sermons to be made in the city of London and threescore in the countries where mine executors shall think most convenient, and the preacher of every such sermon in London to have five shillings for his pains, and the preacher of every sermon in the country to have 6s 8d for his pains;

Item, I will that mine executors shall the day of every of the same sermons made in the country cause the sum of 13s 4d to be distributed among the poor inhabitants in every such parish where such sermons shall happen to be made in the country;

Item, I will that at the time of my burial shall be given unto poor householders fifty russet cloth gowns of 4s the yard, whereof thirty of the said gowns which shall be for men I will shall have 3 yards and a half, and twenty of the said gowns which shall be for women to have three yards the piece, willing mine executors to pay for the making of the said gowns;

Item, I will there be given by the discretion of mine executors to the poor inhabitants within the ward of Cheap the sum of ten pounds;

Item, to the poor inhabitants about Croydon four pounds;

And to the poor inhabitants about Grafton(?) four pounds;

Item, I will there be given amongst the poor prisoners in Newgate, King's Bench and Marshalsea to release such as lieth for their fees in any of the same prisons, being of the most honest sort, to the sum of twenty pounds to be distributed by the discretion of mine executors;

Item, where the King's Majesty of his most godly disposition hath erected and instituted an universal godly order to be had within the city of London for the relief, succour and help of impotent, sick and feeble persons within the said city, therefore I give and bequeath towards the relief, succour and help of the said impotent, sick and feeble persons the sum of a hundred and fifty pounds over and besides fifty pounds already given, the said hundred and fifty pounds to be delivered within the space of four or five years by the discretion of mine executors;

Item, I will that mine executors shall deliver unto the said Fellowship of Grocers within six months after the death of the longer liver of Sir Anthony Knyvet and Dame Avis, his wife, late wife of Nicholas Gibson, grocer, the sum of twenty pounds to be bestowed by

the said Fellowship about the reparations of the almshouse and schoolhouse of Ratcliff being of erection of the said Gibson;

Item, I bequeath towards the reparations of highways near unto London the sum of one hundred pounds, to be bestowed every year twenty pounds at such places as shall seem best to mine executors;

Item, I give and bequeath unto poor maids' marriages being of good name and fame the sum of one hundred pounds, to be paid every year twenty pounds until the said £100 be run out;

And whereas Stephen Bodington is now prisoner in Ludgate for debt due to divers persons I will that mine executors shall practise with his creditors and compound with them by their discretion, toward the payment of which creditors I do give and bequeath two hundred marks so that the same Stephen may be clearly discharged out of all debt, or else mine executors not to pay the said sum of two hundred marks;

Item, I will that Robert Hewett and John Mery immediately after my wife's decease and not before shall have all my lease and term of years of the ground or farm called Bervyn in Northaw;

Item, I will that Joan, my wife, and Henry Mylles shall have and enjoy my dwelling-house in London according to such indentures as are made between me and the said Henry Mylles and Elizabeth, his wife;

Item, I will that mine executors do permit and suffer the said Joan, my well beloved wife, during her natural life to take the issues and profits of all my said farm or land called Bervyn, she paying the rents and charges of the same;

Item, I will that the said John Mery, my nephew, shall immediately after my decease have all my lease and term of the farm called Bery at Cuffley and that mine executors shall deliver unto him the indenture of the same lease;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Robert Hewett, the sum of two hundred fifty and six pounds 6s 8d over and besides the debt threescore £17 which I have already remitted and forgiven unto the same Robert, the same £256 6s 8d to be paid in four or five years as my debts come in;

Item, where my nephew, John Mery, was indebted to me in the sum of two hundred £24, I have remitted and forgiven unto the same John the sum of two hundred pounds, parcel of the said debt, so that he do pay unto mine executors the said £24 residue;

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;

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;

And also pay unto John Parker and his wife, their executors or assigns, at th' end of four years next ensuing my decease the sum of one hundred marks which I give unto them;

And also pay unto Margaret Cheping at th' end of the said four years twenty pounds which also I give unto her;

And also pay [f. 316r] unto Dorothy Hagger at th' end of the same four years other twenty pounds which also I give unto her;

And upon condition that the same Edmund shall make such sufficient assurances unto mine executors for the sure payment of the same several sums to be paid in manner and form aforesaid as shall be devised and required by my said executors;

And the residue of the same two hundred pounds to be unto the said Edmund Lewin;

Item, where Thomas Norton is indebted to me in the sum of two hundred and twenty pounds, I give one hundred pounds thereof unto the children of the said Norton which he had by my cousin, his wife, so that the same Thomas Norton do make sufficient assurance with collateral sureties unto mine executors for the sure payment of the said hundred pounds to the behoof of the said children at such days and times and in such manner and form as shall be devised or required by mine executors;

And also upon condition that the same Thomas do discharge acquit and save harmless mine executors of all such bonds as I, the said William Mery, stand bound or surety for him to any person or persons;

Item, whereas Thomas Strickland was indebted unto me in the sum of four hundred and forty pounds and 15s, I have remitted unto the same Thomas the same debt upon condition that the same Thomas do after my decease bind himself in an obligation to mine executors to pay them the sum of two hundred and twenty pounds in case the same Thomas fortune hereafter to come to substance as shall be devised and required by mine executors;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Anthony Mery, the sum of £38 3s 4d in money over and besides the debt of threescore one pounds 16s 8d, which debt I have already remitted and forgiven unto the same Anthony upon condition that the same Anthony be bound with sufficient sureties unto mine executors in the sum of two hundred pounds by good assurance that the same Anthony, his heirs or assigns, shall not interrupt, sue or trouble Joan, my wife, John Mery, Francis Mery, brethren of the same Anthony, and Robert Hewett or any of them, their heirs or assigns, of, for or concerning any copyhold lands,

meses or tenements lying within the lordship or [sic?] Northaw, Barnet or any of them which I, the said William, have or shall assign or appoint unto the said Joan my wife, John Mery, Francis Mery and Robert Hewett or any of them by surrender or otherwise in such manner and form as shall be devised or required by mine executors;

Item, I give to Edmund Conquest, gentleman, my great chain of gold worth by estimation threescore pounds or above and my velvet coat upon condition that the same Edmund shall pay and deliver unto my cousin, his wife, the sum of twenty pounds to dispose at her free will and pleasure without let or interruption of the same Edmund;

Item, I give to Henry Mylles, grocer, in money threescore seventeen pounds 10s over and besides the debt of £122 10s which I have already remitted and forgiven unto the same Henry, unto the which Henry and Elizabeth, his wife, I give all the implements of household remaining in my house in London, as cupboards, stools, chairs, forms, bedsteads, tables, trestles, settles and such other like and all the hangings there, to be delivered unto them or the children of the said Elizabeth immediately after my wife's death, provided alway and I will that mine executors shall suffer my wife to have the occupying, wearing and using of the same implements during her life;

More I give unto the same Joan thone half of all my household stuff, that is to say, of featherbeds, flock-beds, mattress, bolsters, pillows, blankets, coverings, cushions, carpets, napery, brass, pewter, latten, kitchen stuff and coffers and suchlike remaining as well in my dwelling-house in London as in my dwelling at Northaw, the residue of all which stuff I will be divided after the death of my said wife in form following, that is to say, the stuff aforesaid remaining at Northaw unto my nephew, Robert Hewett, and the said stuff remaining at my said dwelling-house in London unto Henry Mylles, Francis Mery and Anthony Mery, to be had unto them of my gift, willing nevertheless that my said wife shall have the occupying, using and wearing of all the said stuff and implements before appointed unto the said Hewett, Mylles, Francis Mery and Anthony Mery during her natural life by inventory delivered, my said wife binding herself as shall be devised and required by mine executors for the redelivery of the same stuff and implements, reasonable wear only except;

Item, I will that my wife shall have the occupying, profit and increase of the stock of all my cattle at Northaw during her life, the which stock of cattle or as much thereof as shall remain after my wife's decease I do give to Robert Hewett, to be had unto him, his executors and assigns immediately after my wife's decease and not afore;

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;

Item, I bequeath to my cousin, Jane, wife of Thomas Bacon, one hundred marks in money;

Item, to the children of Joan Boyer [=Bowyer?] one hundred marks in money;

Item, to my cousin, Francis Mery, two hundred pounds in money;

Item, to my cousin, George Dockett [=Duckett?] of Nazeing and his mother, thirteen pounds 6s 8d;

Item, to Lewes Bodington twenty pounds;

Item, to Master Cull thirteen pounds 6s 8d;

Item, I will that mine executors shall pay yearly to Edward Mery of Northaw during his life the sum of forty shillings at two terms in the year, half yearly by even portions;

Item, I will that mine executors in like manner do pay yearly unto John Mery of Northaw, brother of the same Edward, during his life the sum of forty shillings at two several terms in the year, half yearly by even portions;

Item, to Ralph [f. 316v] Pynder twenty pounds;

Item, to Christopher Payne twenty pounds;

Item, to John Ludlow twenty pounds upon condition that he discharge me and mine executors of and concerning such bond and bonds as I am bound for him;

Item, to Richard Carmesby twenty pounds;

Item, to John Hychenson twenty pounds;

Item, to Mark Norton ten pounds;

Item, to William Lawnd ten pounds;

Item, to Richard Forster three pounds 6s 8d;

Item, to Agnes Rowe forty shillings;

Item, to Margery, my maid, at the day of her marriage ten pounds;

Item, to Ellen Paskyn six pounds 13s 4d;

Item, to William Blacknall six pounds 13s 4d;

Item, to John Pykington four pounds;

Hulke's wife four pounds;

Gyllet and his wife 53s 4d;

Item, to John Lewin 40s;

Item, to Hugh Fynche and his wife forty shillings;

Item, to Mother Dodde(?) forty shillings;

Item, to Edmund Nedam [=Needham?] three pounds 6s 8d;

Item, to William Lawe twenty marks;

Item, to Thomas Lawe twenty pounds;

Item, I bequeath unto Henry Hatcombe six pounds 13s 4d to be paid at sundry times by the discretion of my executors;

Item, to John Mery of Saint Alban's forty shillings;

Item, to Katherine (blank) at the day of her marriage twenty shillings;

To Elizabeth Calkat [=Caldecott] at the day of her marriage forty shillings;

Item, I give to Mary, wife of James Bacon, one silver pot, price five pounds;

Item, I give to Joan Tego forty shillings;

Item, in case the parishioners of Saint Mildred in London do hereafter purchase as much ground of the Goldsmiths as will make a churchyard, then I give toward the purchase of the same ten pounds;

Item, I give to cloth-dresser in Bearbinder Lane forty shillings;

Item, to John Cooke forty shillings;

Item, to Mrs Blaknall forty shillings;

Item, to John Batyn three pounds 6s 8d which he oweth me;

Item, to John Grub six pounds 13s 4d to be paid at sundry times by the discretion of mine executors;

Item, I give and bequeath to my sister-in-law, Anne Worrall, widow, ten pounds;

Item, I will that John Downes shall have the hundred pounds which I promised at the marriage of his wife to be paid at the hour of my death, that is to say, one half of my wife's portion and thother half of mine;

Item, I will that mine executors shall give unto young Robert Bowyer every year forty shillings during the space of eight years next after my decease as mine executors think good, and if the same Robert happen to decease afore the said 8 years, then the same 40s to be paid yearly during the time aforesaid to other of his brothers;

Item, I give to John Woode of Waltham Forest ten pounds;

Item, whereas my plate being in my wife's custody to be occupied in my house is worth by estimation two hundred pounds or thereabouts, I will and give thone half thereof unto the said Francis Mery and Anthony Mery;

Item, I give all my wearing gear and apparel unto the said Robert Hewett, Henry Mylles, Francis Mery and Anthony Mery to be egally divided between them;

Item, I will that mine executors shall deliver to the Fellowship of Grocers in London the sum of twenty marks to make them a breakfast;

Item, I will that mine executors shall deliver certain rings to my friends according to a paper of names and prices signed with my hand;

Item, I ordain and constitute Master Robert Hewett, Doctor of Physic, Thomas Boyer [=Bowyer], citizen and grocer of London, Thomas Bacon and Francis Mery to be overseers of this my last will and testament and to be assistances for the performance of the same, unto the which Mr Hewett I give six pounds 13s 4d;

Item, I ordain Thomas Kene the smith to be a solicitor to mine executors and overseers in such matters as concern the execution of this my last will & testament, and the said Kene to have the sum of ten pounds for his labour;

Item, I give unto Henry Polsted, gentleman, for his pains in th' execution of my will twenty pounds;

The residue of all my said goods, if any be left, I will shall be bestowed in deeds of charity by the discretion of mine executors in highways;

Provided alway and I will that in case it shall appear unto the making of the said inventory that my goods, chattels and debts will not suffice to satisfy and perform such legacies as I have before appointed in manner and form as is above specified, then I will that every of the same legacies and sums of money being before willed and given by me shall be abated to every person and persons, pound and pound like, according to such rate as the lack of my said goods shall appear upon the casting and rating of the said inventory, and this to be done by the discretion of mine executors and overseers or the most part of them, anything afore mentioned to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding;

Provided also that if it happen any ambiguity or doubt to arise or grow upon any sentence or article comprised in this my said will or testament, that then I will that the same always shall be expounded, discussed and determined by my executors and overseers or the more part of the said executors or the more part of the said overseers;

Provided also that in case mine executors happen to vary for the ordering and disposing of any of my goods, chattels or debts or of any of my legacies comprised in this my last will and testament or th' execution of the same, that then I will that mine overseers or the more part of them shall order and determine all such strife and variance;

Provided alway and I will that my said wife shall not take upon her to execute any part of this my testament and last will nor shall meddle with any of my said goods, chattels or debts nor shall have any of the said legacies before unto her assigned in this my last will and testament until the same my said wife hath done as much as in her is to renounce, release and clearly discharge all such right, title and interest as she hath or shall have after my decease [f. 317r] by the law or custom of the said city of London in or to my said goods, chattels and debts, be it by knowledge afore my Lord Mayor of London or by sufficient bond obligary[=obligatory?] or instrument or otherwise as shall be reasonably devised and required by the said Henry Polsted, anything afore mentioned to the contrary notwithstanding;

Provided also and if my said wife refuse, as I think she will not, to release, renounce and discharge all her said right, title and interest by the said law and custom in or to one half of my said goods, chattels and debts as shall be devised and required by the said Henry Polsted in manner and form aforesaid, that then I will that all and every the said legacies, goods and chattels before appointed and bequeathed unto my said wife shall be utterly void and of none effect, anything afore mentioned to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding;

Provided also that if my said wife be content after my decease to accept my said legacies made unto her in recompense as is aforesaid and be also content to renounce her said interest, part and portion of my said goods by reason of the said custom, that then I will that the residue of all my said goods and chattels not before bequeathed, my debts and funerals paid and my legacies fulfilled, shall be divided into two parts, whereof I give unto the said Joan, my wife, the one half and thother half I will mine executors shall bestow in reparation of highways by their discretion, and other deeds of charity;

Witness to this will: Ralph Rowlett, squire, Henry Polsted, gentleman, Thomas Bowyer, Thomas Bacon, Henry Mylles, Robert Hewett, John Downes and Thomas Strickland. Per me William Mery. By me, Ralph Rowlett, Henry Polsted, Thomas Bowyer, Thomas Bacon. By me, Henry Mylles, Robert Hewett. By me, John Down. By me, Thomas Strickland.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascripti defuncti h(ab)entis &c xxvto die mensis Iunij Anno D(omi)ni Mill(es)imo quingentesimo quadragesimo septimo Coram d(omi)no apud London auc(torita)te d(omi)ni n(ost)ri Regis &c Iurament(o) Henrici Polsted Henrici Mylles & Roberti Hewet executorum in h(uius)mo(d)i test(ament)o no(m)i(n)at(orum) Ac approbatum & insinuatum Com(m)issa q(ue) fuit admi(n)istrac(i)o o(mn)iu(m) & singulorum bonorum Iuriu(m) & creditorum d(i)c(t)i defuncti p(efa)t(is) executorib(us) De bene & fidel(ite)r admi(n)istrand(o) Ac de pleno et fidei In(uenta)rio secundo die post festum s(an)c(t)i Andree Ap(osto)li prox(imum) futur(um) exhibend(o) Necnon de plano & vero compoto reddend(o) Ad sancta dei Eu(ang)elia Iurat(is) Iohanna Relicta & executric(is) in h(uius)mo(d)i test(ament)o no(m)i(n)at(a) &c Renu(n)cian(s)

[=The testament of the above-written deceased, having etc., was proved on the 25th day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred forty-seventh before the Lord at London by the authority of our Lord the King etc. by the oath of Henry Polsted, Henry Mylles & Robert Hewett, executors named in the same testament, and probated & entered, and administration was granted of all & singular the goods, rights & credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executors, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well & faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full and faithful inventory on the second day after the feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle next to come, and also to render a plain & true account, Joan, relict & executrix named in the same testament etc., renouncing]