

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 4 December 1553 and proved 7 September 1557, of Sir Matthew Browne (d. 6 August 1557) of West Betchworth, whose grandson and heir, Sir Thomas Browne (d. 9 February 1597), signed Lady Russell's petition against James Burbage's Blackfriars theatre, and whose great-grandson, Sir Matthew Browne (died c.1603), was the trustee of Nicholas Brend, owner of the land on which the Globe Theatre was built.

The testator was the son of Sir George Browne (beheaded 4 December 1483) and Elizabeth Paston (d. 1 February 1488), daughter of Sir William Paston (1378-1444), Justice of the Common Pleas, by Agnes Barry (d.1479). Before marrying the testator's father, Elizabeth Paston had been the wife of Robert Poyning (slain 3 February 1461 at the Second Battle of St Albans).

The testator was the nephew of Anthony Browne (d.1506), who, by his second wife, Lucy Neville (d.1534), was the great-grandfather of Mary Browne (c.1552-1607), mother of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, the dedicatee of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and of Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). By his first wife, Sir Anthony Browne (d.1506) had a daughter, Anne Browne, who was the first wife of Charles Brandon (c.1484-1545), Duke of Suffolk, who married, as his fourth wife, Katherine Willoughby (1519-1580), later the mother-in-law of Oxford's sister, Mary de Vere (d.1624).

The testator married Frideswide Guildford, the daughter of Sir Richard Guildford (c.1450-1506) by his first wife, Anne Pympe. See the *ODNB* article on Sir Richard Guildford (d.1506) and his will, TNA PROB 11/17/381.

The testator is said to have had eight sons and six daughters. However in the will below he mentions only six sons, Henry and Edward, both deceased, Richard, George, Walter and Owen, and one daughter, Agnes.

The testator's son, George Browne, appears to have been the George Browne who served with Sir Anthony Browne (d.1548) and Sir Thomas Cawarden (d.1559) in the suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace. See:

<http://www.surreyarchives.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=Z%2f407%2f8%2f3%2f1%2f2&pos=14>

Z/407/MSLb.336

1536

Accounts of receipts and expenses of Sir Anthony Browne [on expedition to suppress the Pilgrimage of Grace] travelling through Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, 17 Oct to 15 Dec 1536. Browne appears to have been accompanied by George Browne, Thomas Cawarden, and a number of servants. The recorded expenses are daily disbursements for food and lodging. Gilbert Campport

received sums of money from the three men named above and kept the accounts. 42 folios (23 blank); outer leaves frayed at head and foot.

The testator's son, Richard Browne, married Anne Saunders, the sister of Margaret Saunders (see below). See:

<http://genealogy.jvans.co.uk/getperson.php?personID=I16739&tree=1>.

The testator's daughter, Jane Browne, married firstly Sir Francis Poynings, and secondly, by May 1539, as his third wife, Sir Edward Bray (d.1558), for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bray-sir-edward-1492-1558>.

The testator's daughter, Anne Browne, married Thomas Dannett, 'a cousin and intimate friend of Sir William Cecil', for whom see Garrett, Christina Hallowell, *The Marian Exiles*, (Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp. 139-40 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=mNZxec42AhEC&pg=PA140&lpg=PA140&dq=%22Thomas+Dannett%22+%22Marian%22&source=bl&ots=61bCz6wdgu&sig=CwhK2XnIIdOvLc17wWFT-bXvN8Q&hl=en&sa=X&ei=yXVsVcvAHI3KogSanIKQCQ&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Thomas%20Dannett%22%20%22Marian%22&f=false>.

According to Emerson, Anne Browne and Thomas Dannett (23 March 1517-1569) married about 1542, and had five sons and three daughters, including a son named Audley Dannett (died c.1591). See:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenBrooke-Bu.htm>.

The testator's daughter, Mary Browne, married, about 1539, Richard Tame. See Emerson, *supra*.

The testator's daughter, Elizabeth Browne, married John Poyntz (d. 29 November 1544) of Alderley, the son of Sir Robert Poyntz (d. 5 November 1520) of Iron Acton by Margaret Woodville, the illegitimate daughter and only child of Anthony Woodville (c.1440-1483), 2nd Earl Rivers, and Gwentlian Stradling. Anthony Woodville was the brother of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV. After the death of Elizabeth Browne, John Poyntz married Margaret Saunders, daughter of Nicholas Saunders (d. 29 August 1553) of Charlwood, Surrey, by Alice Hungate, the daughter of John Hungate of Yorkshire. After John Poyntz' death, Margaret Saunders married James Skinner (d.1558) of Reigate. See the *ODNB* article on Anthony Woodville; Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 341 and Vol. III, pp. 286-7; the will of James Skinner, proved 7 December 1558, TNA PROB 11/42A/68; the will of Margaret Saunders Poyntz Skinner, proved 4 July 1564, TNA PROB 11/47/250; the will of Sir

Thomas Saunders of Charlwood, proved 7 July 1566, TNA PROB 11/48/525; and Maclean, John, *A Historical and Genealogical Memoir of the Family of Poyntz*, Part II, (Exeter: W. Pollard, 1886), pp. 113-117 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/historicalgeneal02macl#page/114/mode/2up>.

See also the History of Parliament entry for Margaret Saunders Poyntz Skinner's brother, Sir Thomas Saunders (d. 18 August 1565), at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/saunders-thomas-1513-65>.

See also the entries for Margaret Saunders and Alice Poyntz at Emerson, *supra*.

See also:

<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/POYNTZ/1999-08/0934979024>.

For the testator's other children, see also Richardson, *supra*, p. 341.

The testator's great-grandson, Sir Matthew Browne (died c.1603), was one of the trustees of Nicholas Brend (d. 12 October 1601), who leased the ground on which the Globe was built by lease dated 21 February 1599 to Richard Burbage, Cuthbert Burbage, William Kempe, Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, John Heminges and William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon (see TNA REQ 4/1/2). See the will, dated 2 August 1603 and proved 19 April 1608, TNA PROB 11/111/273, of Sir Matthew Browne (died c.1603).

The testator's eldest son and heir, Henry Browne, having predeceased him, the testator's lands were inherited by his grandson, Sir Thomas Browne (d. 9 February 1597), who in 1596 signed Lady Russell's petition against James Burbage's Blackfriars theatre. See Richardson, *supra*, pp. 341-3; and Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014), pp. 121, 123, 130, 176-7, 277-8, 324.

During the years 1541-1556 the testator was sued in Chancery by his first cousin, Eleanor (nee Browne) Fogge Kempe, who sought a one-third interest in the manors of Westbury [in Wateringbury], Kingsnoth, 'Yeffyng', Womenswold, 'Brickhills' and Moriscourt [in Bapchild] under the custom of gavelkind. See TNA C 78/6/87, TNA C 78/10/34, and TNA C 1/1240/22-26. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/43/638.

The testator's overseer would appear to have been John Caryll (d.1566), for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/caryll-%28carrell%29-john-1566>.

RM: T{estamentum} Math{e}i Browne milit{is}

[f. 242r] In the name of God Amen. The 4th day of the month of December in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred 53 in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign(?) Lady Mary by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Matthew Browne of West Betchworth within the parish of Dorking in the county of Surrey, knight, being of whole mind and in good and perfect remembrance, laud and praise be unto Almighty God, I forsake and renounce all my former and last wills and make and ordain and declare this my present testament containing my last will in manner and form following:

First I bequeath and commend my soul unto Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church of Dorking near unto the place where Frideswide, my late wife, lieth buried, or else where it shall please God that my body shall depart;

Item, I bequeath toward the reparation of the same church of Dorking 10s;

Item, I will and my mind and intent is that all such debts and duties as I owe of right or of conscience to any person or persons be well and truly contented and paid by mine executors hereafter in this my present will and testament named or else adyured [=adjured?], and so to be paid without any delay or contradiction;

Item, I give and bequeath to Agnes, my daughter, towards her marriage three hundred marks, which I will to be received and levied of the rents, revenues and profits of the manors of Kingesnoth and Mylton within the count of Kent, and that the issues, revenues and profits of the said manors of Kyngsnoth and Mylton aforesaid be employed to no other use until the said sum of three hundred marks be paid to my said daughter;

Item, I will that my said executors at the time of my departing distribute and give in alms to certain poor people as they shall think good by their discretions ten pound;

Item, I give and bequeath to Thomas Browne, son and heir of Henry Browne, my late son and heir apparent, deceased, whose soul Jesus pardon, all my implements of household which I have in West Betchworth, that is to say, hangings, bedstedells [=bedsteads], forms, tables, cupboards, brewing vessels, pots of iron, pans of iron and iron spits of iron [sic?], pewter vessel, latten candlesticks, tables, vats, stools, chests, trevets [=trivets?], chairs, all featherbeds, all coverlets, all bolsters, all pillows, all blankets, all pairs of linen sheets, all counterpoints, all pair of complete harness, all bills for the wars, all testers of beds, all cushions and all manner of linen and instuff(?) whatsoever it be, my chain of gold, and all my plate of silver and gilt, spoons of silver, and basin and ewer of silver;

Item, I will that my said executors pay unto my servants immediately after my decease all such wages as I owe them for their service, and I will to every of my servants being in my service at the day of my decease or departing my life from this transitory world, every one of them one quarter's wages;

The residue of all my goods and chattels not willed before written ne hereafter in this my present will and my last testament I give and bequeath to the said Thomas Browne and Richard Browne, my son, whom I ordain and make my executors, and they to pay my debts and funerals charges and to perform this my last will and testament;

Item, in my most hearty wise I desire John Caryll, esquire, to be my overseer, and him I make to be my sole overseer of this my last will, and I give him for his counsel and labour thereof 40s;

For the disposition of my lands, first I will and mine intent and mind is that Thomas Browne, son and heir of my late son, Henry Browne, my heir apparent, esquire, deceased, have, hold and enjoy all my manors, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments whatsoever they be with all and singular their appurtenances situate, lying and being in the counties of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and the City of London, except and forprised out of this my will and gift the third part of all such lands and tenements, rents and services as be holden of our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's grace in chief by knight's services, and also except and forprised all such my manors, lands, tenements, rents, services and other my hereditaments whatsoever they be in the said county of Kent which be of gavelkind tenure according to the custom of the said county of Kent, to have and to hold the said manors, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances except before excepted to the said Thomas Browne and to his heirs males of his body lawfully begotten according and after the true meaning and intent of the last will and testament of Sir George Browne, knight, my father, and in fulfilling and performing all covenants, grants and agreements made and contained in a pair of indentures between me, the said Sir Matthew Browne, knight, on the one party, and Sir William Shelley, deceased, and Katherine, his late wife, also deceased, and daughter of the said Sir William Shelley;

And to the residue of my said manors, lands and other the premises with their appurtenances of the tenure and nature of gavelkind in the county of Kent aforesaid my very will and mind is by this my last will and testament that the said manors, lands, tenements and all other the premises last before mentioned shall be by me, the said Sir Matthew, willed, allotted, given and declared in avoiding of debates and strifes that might hereafter come and grow amongst my children and the said Thomas Browne and one Philip Browne, son of Edward Browne, my late son;

And in avoiding of the said debates [f. 242v] and strifes between the said parties, I give and bequeath to the said Richard Browne, George Browne, Walter Browne and Olkener [sic?] Browne, my sons, and Philip Browne, every of them £10 by the year of yearly rent and annuity, to have, hold and yearly perceive the yearly rent and annuity of £10 by the year to every of the said Richard, George, Walter, Olkener and Philip Browne, their executors and assigns, during their natural lives and the longer liver of them out of all the said manors, lands, tenements and other the premises, being the gavelkind lands in the said county of Kent, at the feasts of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady and Saint Michael th' Archangel by even portions;

And if it happen the said yearly rent or annuity of ten pound by the year be behind unpaid to any of the said Richard, George, Water, Olkener and Philip Browne, their executors or assigns, at any of the said feasts above mentioned by the space of 20 days and lawfully asked, that then it shall be lawful for the said Richard, George, Walter, Olkyner and Philip Browne and every of them severally or jointly, their executors or assigns, to enter and distrain into the manors, lands, tenements and other the premises of gavelkind land and every part and parcel thereof, and the distresses there so taken, it to lead, drive, impark, retain and keep unto such time the said yearly rent or annuity of ten pound by the year be to every of the said Richard, George, Owen and Philip Browne, son of the said Edward, with the arrearages of the same, if any be, be fully satisfied, contented and paid;

And I give, will and allot by this my last will and testament all my said manors, lands, tenements, rents, services and hereditaments whatsoever they be, being gavelkind land, to the said Thomas Browne, his heirs and assigns, to have and to hold the said manors, lands, tenements and all other the premises called gavelkind lands with all and singular their appurtenances to the said Thomas Browne, his heirs and assigns, forever;

In witness whereof to this present my last will and testament I, the said Sir Matthew Browne, have subscribed my name and put to my seal the day and year abovesaid in the presence of (no names given). Sir Matthew Browne.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i Testamentu{m} coram mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Cooke Legum doctore Prerogative Cant{uariensis} Custode siue Commissario apud London Septimo die mens{is} Septembris Anno d{omi}ni mill{es}imo quingen{tesim}o quinquagesimo septimo Iuramento Thome Browne ex{ecutoris} Cui &c Res{er}uata p{otes}tate &c Rich{ard}o Browne executori in h{uius}mo{d}i no{m}i{n}at{o} &c [words crossed out] enim cu{m} ven{er}it &c ad missur{o} &c

[=The same testament was proved before Master William Cooke, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the seventh day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-seventh by the oath of Thomas Browne, executor, to whom etc., with power reserved etc. to Richard Browne, executor named in the same etc. [words crossed out] also when he shall have come etc. to be admitted etc.]