

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 23 March 1559 and proved 8 September 1559, of William Newport (d.1559), gentleman, of Rushock, Worcestershire, uncle 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 the will of Sir Richard Newport, TNA PROB 11/53/456, and Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954).

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>

Testator's parents

The testator appears to have been the William Newport referred to as one of his three younger sons in the will of John Newport (d. October 1512), esquire, of High Ercall, Shropshire, TNA PROB 11/18/166. John Newport (d. October 1512) was heir to his grandfather, Sir John Burgh, in 1471. See Bridgeman, *supra*, pp. 169-70 at:

<https://archive.org/details/collectionsfora14socigoog/page/n217>

See also Bridgeman, George T.O., *History of the Princes of South Wales*, (Wigan: Thomas Birch, 1876), pp. 275-9 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/historyofprinces00bridiala#page/274/mode/2up>

The testator's mother was Alice Swynnerton (living 17 November 1526), the daughter of Sir Thomas Swynnerton (d.1542) and Alice Stanley. In one source Alice Stanley is said to have been the daughter of Robert Stanley of Lancashire. See Swinnerton, Charles, 'Notes on the Family of Swynnerton' in Llewellynn Jewitt, ed., *The Reliquary Quarterly Archaeological Journal and Review*, (London: Bemrose & Sons), Vol. XX, 1879-80, p. 107 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=qJs1AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA107>

However see TNA C 1/358/57, a Chancery suit brought by Thomas Swynnerton, esquire, between 1504 and 1515 against his mother, Joan Swynnerton, concerning manors settled on him when he married Alice Stanley, daughter of Sir Humphrey Stanley. It thus appears that Alice Stanley was the daughter of Sir Humphrey Stanley (d. 12 March 1505/6) of Clifton and Pipe, Staffordshire, knight banneret. See *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1886), Vol. VII, p. 55-6 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=V204AAAIAAJ&pg=RA1-PA55>

See also the brass commemorating Sir Humphrey Stanley in Westminster Abbey at:

<https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/sir-humphrey-stanley>

On the floor of the chapel of St Nicholas in Westminster Abbey is a brass to Sir Humphrey Stanley, of Clifton and Pike [sic] in Staffordshire. It shows him in plate armour with sword but no helmet. At the top three shields of arms remain showing the arms of Stanley (argent, on a bend azure, three stags heads cabossed or) quartering Lathom, Stanley and Lathom quartering Stafford, Pypes and Camville, and the arms of Stafford. Two shields at the base are now blank. The Latin inscription can be translated:

Here lies Humphrey Stanley, Knight, Esquire of the Body to the most excellent Prince Henry VII King of England, who died the 12th March A.D. 1505, on whose soul God have mercy. Amen

He was the son of Sir John Stanley Knight of the Garter, and his wife Elizabeth and took part in the battle of Bosworth. After this he received a knighthood and was sheriff of the county of Stafford and knight of the body [or chamber] in the royal household. His son was John. The family derived their origin from the house of Audley who acquired the manor of Stanleigh or Stanley and the surname of Stanley was taken.

For the testator's siblings, see the will of his father, John Newport, TNA PROB 11/18/166. The testator's eldest brother:

-Thomas Newport, was the father of Sir Richard Newport (see above), the owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* thought to have been annotated by Shakespeare. For the will of the testator's brother, Thomas Newport, see TNA PROB 11/34/176.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The Boteler pedigree states that the testator married Philippa Boteler. See the pedigree (which, however, places the marriage in the wrong generation) in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcestershire 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), Vol. XXVII, p. 30 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n45/mode/2up>

According to Stallard, Philippa Boteler was the daughter of William Boteler (c.1450-1509?) and Jane Bachecote, the daughter of John Bachecote of Droitwich. She had two brothers: the elder, John Boteler of Droitwich, married Katherine Blount, the daughter of Peter Blount (d.1518?) of Sodington and Anne Cornwall, the daughter of Sir Edmund Cornwall of Burford, while the younger, George Boteler, married Mary Throckmorton, the daughter of Richard Throckmorton (d.1547) of Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, son of Sir Robert Throckmorton (d.1518x20). See the will of Sir Robert Throckmorton, TNA PROB 11/20/25, and Stallard, Jon M., *Butler of Droitwich 1300-1700*, pp. 57-8 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RYoMXDQdlFEC&pg=PA58>

In the will below, the testator names two sons and a daughter:

* **George Newport**, eldest son, for whose will, dated 18 December 1558 and proved 24 April 1560, see TNA PROB 11/43/258.

A Chancery suit dating from 1504-1515 suggests that George Newport married firstly Joan Walker, the daughter of Thomas Walker, and sister of Margaret Walker, who married a husband surnamed Banard. See TNA C 1/360/51, and Stallard, *supra*, p. 56 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RYoMXDQdlFEC&pg=PA56>

Another Chancery suit, TNA C 1/1041/30-31, brought by George Newport against the testator between 1538-1544, states that George Newport married (secondly?) Elizabeth Blount, the sister of Thomas Blount, esquire. As noted above, John Boteler of Droitwich married Elizabeth Blount's sister, Katherine Blount. See Phillimore, *supra*, pp. 17 and 22 (although in the pedigree on p. 17 George Newport's Christian name is erroneously given as 'Thomas') at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n31/mode/2up>

and:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n37/mode/2up>

For Elizabeth Blount's father, Peter Blount (d.1518?), and brother, Thomas Blount (d. December 1562?), esquire, see the will, dated 19 December 1562 and proved 18 May 1563, of Thomas Blount, TNA PROB 11/46/220, and:

'Parishes: Mamble', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 4*, ed. William Page and J W Willis-Bund (London, 1924), pp. 285-289. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol4/pp285-289> [accessed 2 November 2019].

In the will below the testator bequeaths his lease of Rushock to George's son, Thomas Newport (d.1559):

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Newport, son and heir to George Newport, my farm of Rushock during his life, and after his life to his heirs male.

It thus seems that the testator's eldest son and heir, George Newport, predeceased him, and that the testator's heir was his grandson, Thomas Newport (d.1559), who survived the testator for only a few months, and perhaps for only a few weeks. For the will of Thomas Newport, dated 8 November 1559 and proved 29 November 1559, see TNA PROB 11/42B/695.

Thomas Newport (d.1559) married Mary Purslow, the daughter of Robert Purslow of Sidbury, Shropshire. As noted above, the testator bequeathed his lease of Rushock to his grandson, Thomas Newport. In his will, Thomas Newport bequeathed all his goods to his wife and their children, a bequest which likely included the lease of Rushock. Thomas Newport's widow, Mary Purslow, married secondly Francis Brace (d.1599), who in 1570 held the lease of Rushock in right of his wife (see Clode, *infra*). Shortly before his death in 1599, Francis Brace, then a widower, courted Anne St Leger, widow of Thomas Digges, and persuaded her to sell some of Thomas Digges' leases to pay his (Brace's) debts. In return, Brace assigned to her his 'lease of the valuable manor of Rushock, Worcestershire'. By 1600 Anne (nee St Leger) Digges had married Thomas Russell (1570-1634), the overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. They were living at the time at Russell's manor of Alderminster, Warwickshire, on which he held a lease which would not expire until 1611 or 1612, and she had given him control of her lease of the manor of Rushock. In 1604 or 1605, Thomas Russell obtained a forty-year extension of the Rushock lease from the Merchant Taylors, assisted in his petition by a letter from Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire. See Hotson, Leslie, *I, William Shakespeare*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 131-3, 211-13.

For further details concerning the marriage of Mary Purslow and Francis Brace (d.1599) and the lease of Rushock and its acquisition by Thomas Russell, see the will of Thomas Russell, TNA PROB 11/165/424, and the History of Parliament entry for Francis Brace at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/brace-francis-1599>

In the will below, the testator mentions several other children of George Newport:

Item, I bequeath to John Newport, George Newport's son, ten marks in money or in cattle.

Item, I bequeath to Margaret Newport, George Newport's daughter, £20.

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth Newport, Mary Newport, Anne Newport and Jane Newport, £20 evenly to be divided amongst them.

The will does not explicitly state that Elizabeth, Mary, Anne and Jane are the daughters of George Newport. However the bequest to them follows immediately after bequests to George Newport's son, John, and daughter, Margaret.

George Newport's daughter, Margaret, may be the Margaret Newport the testator names as executor.

Margaret Newport married Thomas Copley (d.1593) of Bredon's Norton, Worcestershire, who after her death married Eleanor Middlemore, sister of John Middlemore (d. 7 June 1597), and daughter of William Middlemore (d.1549) of Hawkesley in King's Norton, Worcestershire, and Margaret Gatacre. See the will of William Middlemore, TNA PROB 11/32/606; the Copley pedigree, p. 45 in Phillimore, *supra*; and the Middlemore pedigree in Crisp, Frederick Arthur, ed., *Visitation of England and Wales*, Vol. 8, 1909, pp. 22-3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofengl29howa#page/22/mode/2up>

See also Were, F., 'Heraldry Read at Bredon, Strensham, Pershore, Dumbleton, and Didbrook', Taylor, C.S., ed., *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for 1904*, Vol. XXVII, (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith, 1904), pp. 275-8 at p. 277:

<https://archive.org/details/transactionsbris27bris/page/276>

Thomas Copley's father was of Suffolk. . . . Thomas Copley's first wife was Margaret, daughter of George Newport. . . . Thomas Copley married secondly Eleanor, daughter of William Midelmore, of Hacklow.

See also the Copley pedigree in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), Vol. XXVII, p. 45 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ECoeEAAAIAAJ&pg=PA45>

See also the will, TNA PROB 11/53/434, of Thomas Lewknor (d.1571), stepfather of William Combe (d.1610), who in 1602 sold land to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon (see SBTRO ER 27/1), who appointed John Middlemore and Thomas Copley as his overseers:

And I make overseers Mr John Middlemore of Hawkesley, Mr John Lewes, parson of Alvechurch, and Mr Thomas Copley of Bredon.

See also TNA C 4/41/49, and:

<https://soc.genealogy.medieval.narkive.com/oRpX4HBp/the-emigrant-thomas-baugh-of-henrico-co-virginia-and-his-medieval-ancestry>

* **Robert Newport**, esquire. The testator appoints him as executor, and leaves bequests to him and to his children:

Item, I bequeath to Robert Newport, my son, 6 fats of Cassy's, the which he holdeth now of me by indenture, and also two fats of mine own, the which he holdeth of me also by indenture, and also my second best chamber.

Item, I bequeath to my son Robert's children £20 evenly to be divided amongst them.

He may be the Robert Newport named as a defendant in a Chancery suit, TNA C 3/131/42, dating from 1558-1579 brought on behalf of Eleanor Newport and Alice Newport by Mary Newport.

He may also be the Robert Newport, gentleman, named as the defendant in a Chancery suit, TNA C 78/20/16, brought by Eleanor Newport and Alice Newport concerning salt fats and lands in Droitwich, Rushock and Woodcote, Worcestershire, 'late of William Newport of Rushock, deceased'. The decree in the suit is dated 24 November 1560.

He may also be the Robert Newport of Rushock who married Margaret Talbot, the daughter of Sir Gilbert Talbot of Grafton, Worcestershire. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, p. 462. See also TNA C 1/1157/25-28, a Chancery suit in which Sir Gilbert Talbot is said to be the father-in-law of Robert Newport; the will of Sir Gilbert Talbot, TNA PROB 11/29/393, in which he mentions 'Margaret Newport, wife unto Robert Newport, one other of my daughters'; and Grazebrook, H. Sydney, *The Heraldry of Worcestershire*, Vol. II, (London: John Russell Smith, 1873), p. 404 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=CFQBAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA404>

* **Margaret Newport**, who married John Croker (d.1558?) of Barton, Warwickshire, eldest son of John Croker (d. 6 March 1569) of Hook Norton, Oxfordshire, and Isabel Skinner, the daughter of Robert Skinner of Alcester, Warwickshire, and brother of Sir Gerard Croker (d.1577), by whom she had (as well as other issue who predeceased her) a daughter:

-**Bridget Croker** (living 1594), who married Thomas Strange (d.1594) of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/strange-thomas-1594>

John Croker (d. 6 March 1569) was the son of Thomas Crocker and Alice Dormer, the sister of Sir Michael Dormer (d.1545), Lord Mayor of London, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/30/546. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. II, pp. 420-4, and the pedigree of Croker of Hook Norton in Turner, William, Henry, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Oxford*, (London: Harleian Society, 1871), Vol. V, p. 185 at:

<https://archive.org/details/visitationsofcou57harv/page/n205>

For the will of Margaret Newport's husband, John Croker, dated 10 May 1558 and proved 14 May 1561, see TNA PROB 11/44/203. For the will of Sir Gerard Croker, proved 5 February 1578, see TNA PROB 11/60/91.

Margaret (new Newport) Croker, widow, was a plaintiff in a Chancery suit, TNA C 3/35/6, dating from the period 1558-1579 concerning property in Osney, Oxfordshire.

She was also a defendant in two other Chancery suits dating from the same period brought by her father-in-law, John Croker (d.1569), esquire, for whose will, proved 22 March 1569, see TNA PROB 11/51/109. The first of these, TNA C 3/32/31, concerned property in Oxhill, Warwickshire, and Water Eaton, Oxfordshire. In the second, TNA C 4/41/49, she was a defendant together with her brother, Robert Newport, and her niece, Margaret Newport, and Margaret's husband, Thomas Copley.

For the Croker family of Hook Norton, see also Chambers, E.K., Sir Henry Lee: *An Elizabethan Portrait*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 82, 175-6, 224. Chambers refers to litigation concerning the leases of two manors in Hook Norton between Sir Henry Lee's illegitimate brother, Richard Lee, who had married as his first wife Mary (nee Blundell) Croker, widow of Sir Gerard Croker (d.1577), and Sir Gerald Croker's son, John, over leases of two manors in Hook Norton. The litigation is referred to in *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584):

What shall I speak of others, whereof there would be no end? As of his [=Leicester's] dealing with Mr. Richard Lee for his manor of Hook Norton (if I fail not in the name); with Mr. Lodovic Greville, by seeking to bereave him of all his living at once if the drift had taken place; with George Whitney, in the behalf of Sir Henry Lee, for enforcing him to forego the controllership of Woodstock which he holdeth by patent from King Henry the Seventh? With my Lord Berkeley, whom he enforced to yield up his lands to his brother Warwick which his ancestors had held quietly for almost two hundred years together?

In 1589 Richard Lee married, as his second wife, Alice (nee Kempe) Hales (d.1592), widow of Sir James Hales (d.1589), to whom Robert Greene dedicated *Menaphon*.

Sir Henry Lee lived for many years with Oxford's former mistress, Anne Vavasour.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

Mary Bedell is also mentioned in the will of the testator's son, George, *supra*, as a 'cousin'. She may have been related to the Droitwich bailiff, Roger Bedell. Fulke Newport is also mentioned in both wills, as is Thomas Moulton/Multon (the latter in both cases being referred to as the testator's servant).

TESTATOR'S LANDS

For further details concerning the testator's lease of Rushock, which was held of the Company of Merchant Taylors, see the will, TNA PROB 11/165/424, of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon; and

'Parishes: Rushock', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 3* (London, 1913), pp. 203-205. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol3/pp203-205> [accessed 28 October 2019]

During the reign of Elizabeth Francis Brace was tenant of the manor of Rushock, and apparently resided there. (fn. 33) In 1619 the manor seems to have been occupied by Thomas Russell. (fn. 34)

See also Clode, Charles M., *The Early History of the Guild of Merchant Taylors, Part II*, (London: Harrisons and Sons, 1883), p. 35 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WB5YAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA35>

The Merchant Taylors Company's account books in 1545-6 . . . contain these entries:

Item, of William Newport, famer, of the manor of Rushock . . . £6.

Then, in 1569-70 the Master . . . chargeth himself to have received of Francis Brace, gentleman, farmer of the manor of Rushock in the county of Worcester in the right of his wife for one whole year's rent for the same due and ending at the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady, Anno, 1570. £18.

LM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Newporte

In nomine Dei amen. Anno Domini Millesimo CCCCXlvijio die vero mensis Marcij vicesimo tercio, I, William Newport of Rushock, generosus, being in perfect mind and memory, make my last will and testament in this manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to God Almighty and to his Mother, St Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven, and my body to be buried by my wife in the chancel of Saint Cassian in Chaddesley Corbett;

Item, I bequeath to St Mary house of Worcester 12d;

Item, I bequeath to the maintenance of the service of God in my parish church of Rushock 6s 8d;

Item, I bequeath to Robert Newport, my son, 6 fats of Cassy's, the which he holdeth now of me by indenture, and also two fats of mine own, the which he holdeth of me also by indenture, and also my second best chamber;

Item, I bequeath to my son Robert's children £20 evenly to be divided amongst them;

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Newport, my son George's son, the best chamber in my house and 6 oxen and 6 kine, with a wain and a plough and that that belongeth to them, & a gelding;

Item, I bequeath to Fulke Newport two fats walling, to him and his heirs forever;

Item, I bequeath to John Newport, George Newport's son, ten marks in money or in cattle;

Item, I bequeath to Margaret Newport, George Newport's daughter, £20;

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth Newport, Mary Newport, Anne Newport and Jane Newport, £20 evenly to be divided amongst them;

Item, I bequeath to William Aperen(?) £10;

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Multon, my servant, the house that he dwelleth in during his natural life, and also the meadow that he occupieth;

Item, I bequeath to Richard Ambiclar(?) 10s;

Item, I bequeath to William Williams 10s;

Item, I bequeath to every one of my women servants now dwelling with me 6s 8d;

Item, I bequeath to every one of thother of my menservants being above twenty years of age 6s 8d;

Item, I ordain and make Robert Newport, my son, and Margaret Newport that now dwelleth with me my true and lawful executors of this my last will and testament;

Item, I bequeath to Margaret Croker, my daughter, 6 kine;

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Newport, son and heir to George Newport, my farm of Rushock during his life, and after his life to his heirs male;

Item, I forgive Mary Bedyll [=Bedell] all debts which she oweth to me;

Item, I bequeath to Margaret Paynter, Christian Parkes, Alice Parkes [+and?] Elizabeth Hakeshawe, to every one of these 13s 4d;

Hijs testibus: John Hygyns, clerk and parson there, John Hutton, Thomas Multon, with other.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum Testamentum Coram Mag^{ist}ro Waltero Haddon Legum Doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Custod^e siue Commissario sede Archiepiscopalⁱ iam vacante octavo die mensis Septembris Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo nono Iuramento Justinian Kydd procuratoris Margarete Newport executoris in huiusmodi testamento nominat^e Cui comissa fuit administracio etc Ac de pleno Inuentario etc Reseruata potestate Roberto Nueport executori etiam &c cum venerit Deinde Secundo die mensis octobris Anno 1559 predicto Comissa fuit consimilis administratio bonorum etc Dicto Roberto Nueporte executori De bene etc Ac de plene Inuentario etc Iurat^o

[=The above-written testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the Archiepiscopal seat now vacant, on the eighth day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-ninth by the oath of Justinian Kydd, proctor of Margaret Newport, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., and a full inventory etc., with power reserved to Robert Newport, executor also etc. when he shall have come, and after, on the second day of the month of

October in the year 1559 aforesaid, a similar grant of administration of the goods etc. was made to the said Robert Newport, executor, sworn to well etc., and [+to prepare] a full inventory etc.]