

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 8 November 1559 and proved 29 November 1559, of Thomas Newport of Rushock, whose father, George Newport (d.1558?), was a first cousin of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. The volume was Loan 61 in the British Library until 2007, was subsequently on loan to Lancaster University Library until 2010, and is now in the hands of a trustee, Lady Hesketh. According to the Wikipedia entry for Sir Richard Newport, the annotated Hall's *Chronicle* is now at Eton College, Windsor. See:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Newport\\_\(died\\_1570\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_(died_1570))

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

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

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

### ***FAMILY BACKGROUND***

For the will, dated 23 March 1559 and proved 8 September 1559, of the testator's grandfather, William Newport, who held a lease of Rushock from the Company of Merchant Taylors, see TNA PROB 11/42B/459.

### ***Testator's parents***

The testator was the son of George Newport (d.1558?), likely by his first wife, Joan Walker, the daughter of Thomas Walker, and sister of Margaret (nee Walker) Baynard, widow. See TNA C 1/360/51, and Stallard, Jon M., *Butler of Droitwich 1300-1700*, pp. 50-64 at:

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

See also Stallard, *supra*, pp. 287-8 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RYoMXDQdlFEC&pg=PA287>

The testator's father married secondly Elizabeth Blount, the sister of Thomas Blount (d. December 1562?), esquire, and the daughter of Peter Blount (d.1518?) of Sodington, Worcestershire, and Anne Cornwall. See TNA C 1/1041/30-31.

For Elizabeth Blount's father, Peter Blount (d.1518?), and brother, Thomas Blount (d. December 1562?), 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].

For the will of the testator's father, George Newport, see TNA PROB 11/43/258.

It appears that the testator's father predeceased him, and that the testator was his grandfather's heir, but survived his grandfather by only a few months, and perhaps only a few weeks.

### ***MARRIAGE AND ISSUE***

The testator married Mary Purslow, the daughter of Robert Purslow (1500?-1571) of Sidbury, Shropshire. For the will of Robert Purslow, see TNA PROB 11/74/162.

According to two Chancery suits, the testator had two daughters by Mary Purslow:

\* **Eleanor Newport**, who married Philip Brace (d.1598), son of William Brace, esquire, and Margery Porter, and brother of Francis Brace (d.1599). See the WikiTree profile at:

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Brace-469>

See also the History of Parliament entry for their son, John Brace, at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/brace-john-1578-1630>

\* **Alice Newport**.

See a Chancery suit, TNA C 3/131/42, dating from 1558-1579 brought against Robert Newport on behalf of Eleanor Newport and Alice Newport by Mary Newport, likely the testator's widow, Mary (nee Purslow) Newport.

See also a Chancery suit, TNA C 78/20/16, brought by Eleanor Newport and Alice Newport against Robert Newport, gentleman, 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.

**TESTATOR'S LANDS**

The testator's grandfather bequeathed his lease of Rushock to the testator. In the will below, the testator bequeaths all his goods to his wife, Mary, and their children, a bequest which likely included the lease of Rushock.

The testator'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>

For the lease of Rushock 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=WB5AQAAMAAJ&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.*

RM: T{estamentum} Thome Newporte

[f. 475] In Dei Nomine Amen. Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo nono die vero mensis nouembris octauo, I, Thomas Newport of Rushock, being of perfect mind and memory, make my last will and testament in this manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to God, my Maker and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in holy ground where it shall please God and my friends to bury me;

Item, I bequeath all my goods to Mary, my wife, and to my children;

These being witnesses: Sir John Hygyns, parson there, and Robert Coke, with other.

vicesimo nono die mensis nouembris Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo quinquagesimo nono emanauit com{m}issio Marie Newporte Rel{i}c{t}e d{i}c{t}i defuncti ad administrand{o} bona Iura et credita eiusdem iuxta tenorem vltime voluntatis pred{i}c{t}i defuncti de bene &c Ac de pleno et fideli Inventario necnon de vero et plano compt{o} Reddend{o} &c In p{er}sona Georgij Goulston procuratoris sui &c Iurat{o}

[=On the twenty-ninth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-ninth a grant issued to Mary Newport, relict of the said deceased, to administer the goods, rights and credits of the same according to the tenor of the last will of the foresaid deceased, and [+to prepare?] a full and faithful inventory and also to render a plain and true account etc., sworn in the person of George Goulston, her proctor etc.]