

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 31 March 1564 and proved 31 May 1564, of George Nodes, grandfather of the poet and playwright, George Chapman (1559/60-1634), who described a meeting with Oxford in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (Act III, Scene 4, lines 84-103):

<http://www.elizabethanauthors.org/chapman101.htm>

CLERMONT:

*I overtook, coming from Italy,  
In Germany, a great and famous Earl  
Of England, the most goodly-fashioned man  
I ever saw; from head to foot in form  
Rare and most absolute; he had a face  
Like one of the most ancient honored Romans,  
From whence his noblest family was derived;  
He was beside of spirit passing great,  
Valiant, and learned, and liberal as the sun,  
Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects,  
Or of the discipline of public weals;  
And 'twas the Earl of Oxford; and being offered  
At that time, by Duke Casimir, the view  
Of his right royal army then in field,  
Refused it, and no foot was moved to stir  
Out of his own free fore-determined course:  
I, wondering at it, asked for it his reason,  
It being an offer so much for his honor.  
He, all acknowledging, said 'twas not fit  
To take those honors that one cannot quit.*

The testator is said to have been the son of William Nodes of Barking, Essex. According to the will below he had an elder brother, John Nodes, who had three sons, Charles Nodes (d.1593?), George Nodes and William Nodes, and a younger brother, William Nodes, who had two sons, William Nodes and Francis Nodes. See also the pedigree of Nodes at:

[http://www.shephallmanor.net/chapter\\_4.htm](http://www.shephallmanor.net/chapter_4.htm).

The testator was Sergeant of the Buckhounds to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. See Chauncy, Henry, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, (Bishops Stortford: J.M. Mullinger, 1826 reprint), Vol. II, pp. 414-15 at:

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=99MqAQAIAAJ&pg=PA415&lpg=PA415&dq=%22George+Nodes%22&source=bl&ots=RDs-\\_XjFMo&sig=v8DsRzJyfEEGu9zLj9wfXrM8TGQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=bOUYVM-YGOGCjALNj4C4Bg&ved=0CDoQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22George%20Nodes%22&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=99MqAQAIAAJ&pg=PA415&lpg=PA415&dq=%22George+Nodes%22&source=bl&ots=RDs-_XjFMo&sig=v8DsRzJyfEEGu9zLj9wfXrM8TGQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=bOUYVM-YGOGCjALNj4C4Bg&ved=0CDoQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22George%20Nodes%22&f=false)

The testator married Margaret Grimston (d. 6 June 1582), the daughter of John Grimston of Oxborough, Norfolk, by Margaret Watts. She was the sister of Edmund Grimston (d.1570) of Oxborough, and Thomas Grimston (mentioned in the will below), and a first cousin of the soldier and administrator, Edward Grimston (1507/8–1600), for whom see the *ODNB* article. For the pedigree of Grimston, see Dashwood, G.H., ed., *The Visitation of Norfolk in the Year 1563*, (Norwich: Miller and Leavins, 1878), p. 176 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=qkpFAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA176&lpg=PA176&dq=%22Grimston%22+%22Oxborough%22&source=bl&ots=oICkuAG0aO&sig=KSWkg8ab3or5SJ0tbJu3Md8yfeQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=OxwaVOa7MIO0ogTOv4CwBg&ved=0CDYQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22Grimston%22%20%22Oxborough%22&f=false>

In the will below the testator mentions two daughters, Jane Nodes, who married William Kimpton or Kempton, and Joan Nodes (d.1566), who married Thomas Chapman (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/74/19), by whom she was the mother of the poet and playwright, George Chapman (1559/60-1634).

However according to most sources the testator left no issue by his wife, Margaret (nee Grimston), and his two daughters, Jane and Joan, were illegitimate. See Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Hertfordshire*, (London: Harleian Society, 1886), Vol. XXII, p. 80 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshert00philgoog#page/n95/mode/2up>.

For the Nodes family see also:

[http://www.shephallmanor.net/Nodes\\_family.htm](http://www.shephallmanor.net/Nodes_family.htm).

For the testator's manor of Shephall, see:

'Parishes: Shephall', *A History of the County of Hertford: volume 2* (1908), pp. 443-446. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43306>:

*In 1542 the manor, with a pension of 5s. from the rectory, was granted to George Nodes, serjeant at arms, and serjeant of the Buckhounds to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, who had previously been farmer of the manor, to be held of the king in chief for a twentieth part of a knight's fee. This grant was confirmed two years later. George in 1564 obtained licence to grant it to his nephew Charles Nodes and his heirs in tail male, having previously settled a messuage called Copidhall, parcel of the manor, upon his daughter Jane and her husband, William Kimpton. After the death of George in 1564, his heirs, Jane Kimpton and Thomas Chapman, son of Thomas Chapman and Joan, a second daughter of George, claimed the manor against Charles Nodes, but the claim was not recognized, for Charles settled the manor in 1571 upon himself and his brothers George and William in tail male. Charles died seised of the manor in 1593, leaving George his son and heir, but his wife Elizabeth seems to have*

*held a third of the manor as her dower. George Chapman and Thomas Chapman conveyed their interest in 1599 to George Nodes, and in 1611 Thomas Kimpton, probably son of William and Jane, gave up his interest to the same George, who died seised of the manor in 1643.*

For the lawsuit brought by Jane Kympton and Thomas Chapman against Charles Nodes for the manor of Shephall, see TNA C 2/Eliz/K4/47.

For the testator's inquisition post mortem, see TNA C 142/139/73 and TNA WARD 7/10/15.

For a summary of the testator's will, see 'George Nodes' at:

[http://www.shephallmanor.net/George\\_Nodes\\_+.htm](http://www.shephallmanor.net/George_Nodes_+.htm).

LM: T{estamentum} Georgij Noodes

[f. 19v] In the name of God, Amen The last day of March in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred threescore and four, I, George Nodes of Shephall in the county of Hertford, gentleman, being of good and perfect mind, thanks be unto God, make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to the living God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and by the merits of Christ's passion I hope to be partaker of eternal life;

Item, I will that my body be buried in the church of Shephall if it shall fortune me to die within the same parish or within three miles thereof, and if it shall fortune me to [f. 120r] depart this transitory life in any other place, then I will my body to be buried where it shall please God so to call me to his mercy, and the charges of my burial to be at the discretion of my executors in this my present last will and testament;

Item, I will and bequeath to the parish church of Shephall ten shillings, to Aston church 6s 8d, to Benington church 6s 8d, to Thetcheworthe church 6s 8d; to Knebworth church 6s 8d, to Codicote church 6s 8d;

Item, I will and bequeath to Jane Kempton, my daughter, ten pounds;

Item, I will and bequeath to Joan Chapman, my daughter, £10;

Item, I will and bequeath to William Nodes of Stevenage twenty shillings [-twenty shillings];

Item, I will and bequeath to Edmund Nodes ten shillings;

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Item, I will to Simon Browne of Shephall 6s 8d;

Item, to Croxton of Benington 6s d;

Item, I will to Robert Kempton 6s 8d;

Item, I will to William Beure(?) 6s 8d;

Item, I will to Homersborne [=Humberstone?] of Wanckhorne (=Walkern?) Park 6s 8d;

Item, I will to every of my godchildren 7d(?) apiece;

Item, I will to Elizabeth Chapman one cow and twenty shillings;

Item, I will to Thomas Grimston, my brother [=brother-in-law], twenty shillings;

Item, I will to Edmund Dardes 6s 8d;

Item, I will to William Oswell a cow and 3s 4d in money;

Item, I will to Richardes Dardes a bullock;

Item, I will to William Mosse an ewe and a lamb;

Item, I will to John Bynckes two ewes and two lambs;

Item, I will to George Nodes, my eldest brother's son, forty shillings;

Item, I will to William Nodes, his brother, 40s;

Item, I will to William Nodes, my youngest brother['s] son, 40s;

Item, I will to Francis Nodes, his brother, twenty shillings;

Item, I will to Susan one cow and 20s;

Item, I will to Alice Whiteheade an ewe;

Item, I will to Alice Kimpton an ewe;

Item, I will to Margaret Smithe an ewe;

Item, I will to Margery Colles an ewe;

Furthermore I give and bequeath to the aforesaid Margaret, my wife, all such term of years as I, the said George Nodes, shall have to come after my decease by force of one

pair of indentures of lease for term of fourscore years bearing date the 29 day of March in the 6 year [=1564] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth that now is of and in all that my lordship and manor of Shephall and all other my messuages, lands, tenements, rents and services with their appurtenances set, lying and being in Shephall aforesaid, Aston, Stevenage or elsewhere within the county of Hertford, to have and to hold all the said manor, messuages and other the premises with th' appurtenances unto the said Margaret and her assigns during all such years as I shall have then to come by virtue of the said indenture or lease if it fortune the said Margaret so long to live;

And if it happen the said Margaret to decease before the said term of fourscore years be fully determined and ended, then I will that the said Margaret, her executors or assigns, shall have and enjoy the said manor, messuages and other the premises during the term of one whole year then ensuing next following if the aforesaid term of fourscore years do so long endure;

Also I will and bequeath the reversion of all the said lease and term of fourscore years that shall be then to come, if any be after the decease of the said Margaret and the said one year determined, unto Charles Nodes, my nephew, to have and to hold all the said manor and other the premises to the said Charles, his executors and assigns, during and until all such years as shall be then to come of the said term of fourscore years be fully completed and ended;

Provided always and I will that the executors, administrators or assigns of the said Margaret, my wife, shall not sell neither cut down any manner of timber, neither make nor cause to be made any waste upon the premises or any parcel thereof after the decease of the said Margaret during the time that they or any of them shall have the occupation or any interest in the same;

Also notwithstanding my former gifts and [f. 20v] bequests concerning my lease or term of years of my said manor and other the premises or any parcel thereof, I will and ordain that it shall be excepted and always reserved unto me, the said George, and mine assign out of the same gifts and bequests one tenement set or lying in Shephall aforesaid now in the occupation of Luce Hatton, widow, with all such lands as hath or doth appertain to the same, besides one piece of land called the Sumpe containing by estimation three acres or more and one mead called Redlinges mead containing by estimation one acre or more now in the holding of the said Luce Hatton, all which tenement and lands with the said Sumpe and mead I will and bequeath to John Nodes of Shephall aforesaid, to have and to hold all the said tenement and lands with the said Sumpe and Redlinges made [sic for 'mead'?] unto the said John Nodes, his executors, administrators and assigns, for and during all such term of years as shall remain and be to come from the day of my decease unto the full determination and end of my said years comprised in my aforesaid indentures & lease of the premises, yielding and paying therefore yearly unto my said manor of Shephall or principal message there during all the said term 4d of lawful money of England at two terms in the year usual, that is to say, at the feast of th' Annunciation of Our Lady and Saint Michael th' Archangel by even portions, and also that the said John Nodes, his executors or assigns, shall yield and pay yearly unto the said Margaret,

my wife, during the term that she shall have and enjoy the said lease, manor and other the premises, the rent that the said Luce Hatton now payeth;

All other my goods and chattels unbequeathed I give and bequeath to Margaret, my well-beloved wife, whom I ordain and make my sole executrix;

Also I will and ordain Rowland Lytton, esquire, the supervisor of this my said last will and testament, and for his pains taken in the same I give him my best gelding;

Witness to this will and testament as followeth: R. Lytton, Thomas Grimston, Thomas Michell and William Standanoughte.

Probatum erat Huiusmodi Testamentum coram magistro Waltero(?) Haddon Legum Doctor Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Commissario apud London ultimo Die mensis maij Anno millesimo Quingentesimo sexagesimo Quarto Iuramento Radulphi Browne procuratoris margarete Relicte et Executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominat Cui Comissa fuit Administracio Omnium Bonorum De ben &c ac de Pleno Inventario Exhibendo necnon De ffideli Compotio reddendo &c Iurat

[=The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the last day of the month of May in the year the thousand five hundred sixty-fourth by the oath of Ralph Browne, proctor of Margaret, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all the goods, sworn to well etc., and to exhibit a full inventory etc., and also to render a faithful account etc.]