

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 24 September 1598, and proved 26 March 1599, of Henry Henslowe, whose sister, Ellen Henslowe, married John Fortescue, gentleman, mentioned in the indenture by which William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and others purchased the Blackfriars gatehouse on 10 March 1613. See the Shakespeare Documented website at:

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/shakespeare-purchases-blackfriars-gatehouse-copy-bargain-and-sale-signed-vendor>

The will was contested by the testator's brother, Thomas Henslowe. Its validity was confirmed by definitive sentence dated 30 June 1599. See TNA PROB 11/94/114.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the grandson of Thomas Henslowe and his wife, Emmott. For the will of Emmott Henslowe, dated 8 March 1551 and proved 15 May 1551, see TNA PROB 11/34/156.

The testator was a younger son of Ralph Henslowe (d. 18 June 1577) of Boarhunt, Hampshire, servant of the Earls of Southampton, by his first wife, Clare Pounce. See the will of Ralph Henslowe, Hampshire Record Office 1577B/034, and 1607B/045. See also HRO 5M53/588; HRO 5M53/947; and the History of Parliament entry for Ralph Henslowe at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/henslowe-ralph-1520-77>

b. by 1520, s. of Thomas Henslowe of Southwick by Emmotte. m. (1) by 1545, Clare, da. of William Pound of Drayton, 2s. 2da.; (2) 1570/71, Catherine, da. of (Sir) Geoffrey Pole of Lordington, Suss., wid. of Anthony Fortescue.

For the testator's mother, Clare Pounce, see the will of her father, William Pounce (d. 5 July 1525), TNA PROB 11/21/561, and the Pounce pedigree, Hampshire Record Office, 5M50/403/405.

According to the pedigree, the testator's mother, Clare Pounce, had a brother and two sisters:

-William Pounce (d. February 1559), who married Ellen Beverley (d. 30 September 1589), half sister of Thomas Wriothesley (1505-1550), 1st Earl of Southampton, by whom he was the father of the courtier and Jesuit lay brother, Thomas Pounce (1539-1615). See Guiney, Louise Imogen, *Recusant Poets*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938), p. 182 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.501066/2015.501066.0388-recusantpoets#page/n199>

For the will of Ellen (nee Beverley) Pounce, see TNA PROB 11/74/301. In the will of Henry Wriothesley (1545-1581), 2nd Earl of Southampton, TNA PROB 11/65/88, Ellen (nee Beverley) Pounce is referred to as 'my aunt Pounce'.

-Frances Pounce, who married Francis Robinson, by whom she had a son(?), whose name is unclear in the pedigree, and two daughters, Judith Robinson and Honor Robinson. A Francis Robinson was gentleman of the horse in October 1594 to Henry Wriothesley (1573-1624), 3rd Earl of Southampton. See Akrigg, G.P.V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 43, 45. A John Robinson was steward to the testator's sister, Ellen Henslowe and her husband, John Fortescue, at the Blackfriars. See Martin, Patrick H., *Elizabethan Espionage*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=crcfDAAAQBAJ&pg=PT185>

The Fortescues' steward may have been the John Robinson mentioned as a tenant of the Blackfriars gatehouse in the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. See the Shakespeare Documented website at:

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/william-shakespeares-last-will-and-testament-original-copy-including-three>

And also all that messuage or tenement with the appurtenances wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, situate, lying and being in the Blackfriars in London near the Wardrobe. . . .

See also the indenture of 10 February 1618 by which the Blackfriars gatehouse was transferred to new trustees:

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/bargain-and-sale-transfer-blackfriars-gatehouse-new-trustees-john-greene-and>

And except one lease and demise of the premises with th' appurtenances heretofore made by the said William Shakespeare, together with them, the said John Jackson, John Heminge and William Johnson, unto one John Robinson, now tenant of the said premises, for the term of certain years yet to come and unexpired.

- **Mary Pounce**, who married John Carpenter, by whom she had a son, John Carpenter, and a daughter, Dorothy Carpenter.

After the death of Clare Pounce, the testator's father, Ralph Henslowe, married Katherine Pole, widow of Sir Anthony Fortescue, and daughter of Sir Geoffrey Pole (d.1558) of Lordington, Sussex, and Constance Pakenham. By Sir Anthony Fortescue, Katherine

Pole had three sons, one of whom, John Fortescue, married the testator's sister, Ellen Henslowe (see below). See the will of Constance Pakenham Pole, dated 7 August 1570 and proved 20 September 1570, TNA PROB 11/52/361; Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, p. 30; the *ODNB* entry for Sir Geoffrey Pole and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/pole-geoffrey-15015-58>

For the monument to Ralph Henslowe and his two wives in St Nicholas' Church, Boarhunt, Hampshire, see:

<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2614803>

Testator's siblings

The testator had two brothers and three sisters:

-**Thomas Henslowe**, who married Katherine Hyde, the daughter of William Hyde of Denchworth, Berkshire, and his wife, Alice. See HRO 5M50/1149 and HRO 5M50/1150. See also the will of William Hyde, proved 25 June 1568, TNA PROB 11/50/196; and the History of Parliament entry for William Hyde (c.1517 – 24 July 1567) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/hyde-william-1517-67>

-**John Henslowe**, mentioned in HRO 5M50/149, *supra*.

-**Ellen Henslowe**, who married John Fortescue, the son of Sir Anthony Fortescue and Katherine Pole (see above). As noted above, Ellen Henslowe's husband was the John Fortescue, gentleman, mentioned in the indenture by which William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and others purchased the Blackfriars gatehouse on 10 March 1613.

-**Jane Henslowe**, who married William Horde. See the Pounce pedigree, *supra*. William Hoorde appears to have been the son of Roger Hoorde of Wolvesey, Hampshire, who appointed Thomas Henslowe and the testator, Henry Henslowe, as overseers of his will, TNA PROB 11/63/495. For a summary of the will, dated 6 May 1580 and proved 23 October 1581, see *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, Vol. IV, pp. 267-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/miscellaneagenea04unse#page/268>

-**Christian Henslowe**. See the Pounce pedigree, *supra*. It appears likely from the will below that she is the sister of the testator who married a husband surnamed Shelley. For

the Shelley pedigree, see Berry, William, *County Genealogies: Pedigrees of the Families of the County of Sussex*, (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1830), p. 62 at:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101007240102;view=1up;seq=80>

It seems likely that the testator's sister married one of the sons of John Shelley (d.1550?) of Michelgrove in Clapham, Sussex, son of Sir William Shelley (1478/9–1549) of Michelgrove. For Sir William Shelley, see the *ODNB* entry, and Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 142-3.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For the testator's cousin, Edborough Bullaker, see the will of William Ponde, *supra*. She was born Edborough White, the daughter of John White by his first wife, Katherine Ponde (d. 31 October 1548), half sister of the testator's mother, Clare Ponde, and was thus the testator's first cousin of the half blood.

Edborough White married Peter Bullaker, by whom she had a son, Edward Bullaker and a daughter, Elizabeth Bullaker. For the Bullaker family, see the *ODNB* entry for Thomas Bullaker, and McCann, Timothy J., 'The Catholic Recusancy of Dr. John Bullaker of Chichester, 1574-1627', *British Catholic History*, Vol. II, Issue 2, (April 1971), pp. 75-86, at:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-catholic-history/article/catholic-recusancy-of-dr-john-bullaker-of-chichester-15741627/B8A4EE1805899B0A00BB47EFF8EF6674>

For the testator's cousin, Thomas White the elder, see the will of William Ponde, *supra*. He appears to have been the brother of Edborough (nee White) Bullaker.

For the testator's 'cousin', Mary Warnford, see Ford, Alan, and John McCafferty, eds., *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 96 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=r-l-shEDzG4C&pg=PA96>

The testator's executor, Edward Gage (d.1614) of Bentley, Sussex, was the son of James Gage (d.1573) of Bentley. He married Margaret Shelley (d.1624), the daughter of John Shelley of Michelgrove in Clapham, Sussex. Edward Gage was imprisoned at least twice for recusancy. In 1581, he was allowed out of prison at the behest of his first cousin, Anthony Browne (1528–1592), 1st Viscount Montagu, to 'see to the affairs of the recently-deceased Henry Wriothesley, second Earl of Southampton (Montague's son-in-law), to whom Gage was also an executor'. A decade later, in 1592, the privy council released him from house arrest to attend to matters connected with the funeral of Viscount Montague himself, and in 1597 the 3rd Earl of Southampton turned over the

administration of his financial affairs to Edward Gage and two others. See Questier, Michael C., *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 81; Akrigg, G.P.V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Harvard University Press, 1968) pp. 58, 69; and the monumental brass to Edward Gage (d.1614) and his wife, Margaret Shelley (d.1624), at Framfield, Sussex:

<http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/botmapril2015.html>

For the testator's executor, see also the will, dated 15 March 1598, of Anthony Kempe of Slindon, Sussex, TNA PROB 11/94/3, who by 1570 had married, as his second wife, Edward Gage's first cousin, Margery Gage, the daughter of Sir Edward Gage (d. December 1568) of West Firle, Sussex, and sister of John Gage (d. October 1598). Anthony Kempe's marriage to Margery Gage by 1570 is established by a document in the East Sussex Record Office:

Receipt for £150 SAS/G21/55A 28 Mar 1570. Anthony Kempe of Olantigh, Kent, esq to John Gage 'brother of my wife Margery' in part payment of £216 13s 4d given by John Gage 'of his mere good will and liberality' over and above £500 given by the will of her father Edward Gage, knight.

It should be noted that the testator's sister and brother-in-law, Ellen (nee Henslowe) and her husband, John Fortescue, lived in the Blackfriars, and that Anthony Kempe also had a mansion in the Blackfriars. See his will, *supra*, in which he permitted his niece, Anne Kempe Shirley, and her husband, Sir Thomas Shirley, to live rent-free for a year in his Blackfriars mansion.

For the testator's executor, John Cotton (d.1638) of Warblington, see Foley, Henry, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, Vol. I, First Series, (London: Burns and Oates, 1877), p. 284 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/societyofjesus01foleuoft#page/n311>

See also Questier, M.C., ed., *Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkhead*, Camden 5th Series, Vol. 12, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 227 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=nwbR5KkFmCEC&pg=PA227>

John, Richard, Sir George and Henry Cotton were all sons of George Cotton of Warblington and Bedhampton, Mott, fos 131r-5or.

For the testator's executor, William Hildesley of Benham, Berkshire, see Foley, *supra*, p. 284, and the Hildesley pedigree in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitation of Berkshire in 1566*, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1885), p. 14 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=uqFCAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA14>

For the testator's friend, Nicholas Roscarrock (c.1548-1634), see the *ODNB* entry:

In 1585–6 Roscarrock was joined in the Tower by Lord William Howard, the Catholic younger son of the duke of Norfolk, with whom he developed an enduring friendship. This is commemorated by the 'Langdale Rosary' in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London): a piece of English metalwork of about 1500, to which beads have been added depicting saints called William together with Roscarrock's parish and patron saint Endelient. By 1607 Nicholas had joined Howard's household at Naworth Castle, Cumberland, where he spent the rest of his life, receiving an annuity from Howard's nephew Thomas, earl of Arundel.

See also:

http://cornishmemory.com/item/WAT_17_043

For the testator's friend, Henry Carew, see Edwards, Edward, *The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, Vol. II, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1868), p. 204 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Q44xAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA204>

For the testator's friend, John Gage (d. 6 December 1627) of Haling, Surrey, and his wife, Margaret Copley, the daughter of Sir Thomas Copley of Gatton, Surrey, see Steinman, G. Steinman, *Some Account of the Manor of Haling in the Parish of Croydon, Surrey*, (1835), pp. 20-7 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WLEHAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA20>

RM: T{estamentum} Henrici Henslowe

In the name of God, Amen. I, Henry Henslowe of London, gentleman, being of good and perfect memory, thanks be given unto God, do make my last will and testament the four and twentieth day of September in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred ninety-eight and in the fortieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, & in manner and [+form?] following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of the Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, trusting only in his mercy through the daily intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary and all the holy and blessed company of heaven that I shall be made of a most wretched and sinful sinner here on earth in his church militant a worthy member of his church triumphant in the kingdom of heaven, there to reign with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob world without end;

Item, my will is that my debts and funerals being discharged, my body be buried in Christian burial at the discretion of my executors;

Item, I give to my mother-in-law [=stepmother], Mrs Katherine Henslowe, one piece of plate of silver and double gilt to be fashioned at her discretion containing in weight three pounds six shillings eight pence at the charges of my executors, so that the fashion thereof cometh not unto above the sum of thirteen shillings and four pence;

Item, I give unto my sister, Ellen Fortescue, one hundred marks of lawful money of England to be paid unto her or her executors, administrators or assigns by ten pounds half yearly until it be paid, the first payment to begin at the feast of St Michael the Archangel or at the feast of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady Saint Mary the Virgin which shall next ensue after my decease;

RM: Confirmatur per S{ente}n{c}iam Diff{inituam} latam vltima sess{ionis}(?) termini Trini{ta}t{is} 1599

And I give to my loving brother, her husband, Mr John Fortescue, my best gelding or six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, at his election;

Item, I give unto my brother [=brother-in-law], Mr William Horde, twenty pounds of lawful English money to be paid unto him, his executors, administrators or assigns by fifty shillings half yearly until the said sum be paid, the first payment to begin at the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel or the feast of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady Saint Mary the Virgin which shall next ensue after my decease;

Item, I give to every one of the sons of my brother Henslowe, my sister Fortescue, my sister Shelley and my brother Horde one gold ring of three pounds six shillings eight pence to be fashioned at their discretions or at their parents' at the charges of my [f. 170v] executors, so that the fashion of every one of them exceed not above the sum of six shillings eight pence;

Item, I give to every one of the daughters of my said brothers and sisters six silver spoons double gilt containing in weight three pounds six shillings eight pence, every half dozen to be fashioned at the charges of my executors, so that the fashion and gilding thereof cometh not unto above six shillings eight pence for every of the said half dozen of spoons;

All which rings and spoons to be due unto them, their executors, administrators or assigns or unto their parents within one year after my decease;

Item, I do ratify, confirm and allow of the gift of my father of the reversion of the lease after my decease of the mill and tenement of Stower in the county of Dorset unto Ralph Henslowe, my brother's second son, and whatsoever interest, right or title I have therein I give unto the said Ralph;

Item, I give to my cousin, Mr Steven Henslowe, five pounds of lawful English money to be paid unto him quarterly by even portions within one year after my decease;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Mr Thomas White th' elder, 20s, and to every one of his children five shillings apiece;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Mrs Edborough Bullocker, five pounds of lawful English money quarterly to be paid within one year after my decease by even portions;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Mrs Marie Warneforde, twenty shillings;

And to my cousin, her husband, one double ducat of gold containing thirteen shillings four pence;

And to every one of her children five shillings apiece;

All the residue of my good and chattels and other things whatsoever and besides those which I have given and bequeath[ed] in and by these presents, my debts and funerals being paid and discharged, I give unto such poor in such sort as by my loving friends, Mr Edward Gage of Bentley, Mr John Cotton of Warblington and Mr William Hildesley shall be thought meet and needful without making any account for the same;

And I do make the said Mr Edward Gage, Mr John Cotton and Mr William Hildesley my executors of this my last will and testament;

And I do give unto every one of them towards their goodwill and pains three pounds six shillings eight pence;

And so I beseech Jesus have mercy upon my soul. By me, Henry Henslowe.

A codicil to be added to the will. Be it known that whereas I, Henry Henslowe, made my last will and testament in writing bearing date (blank), that now, forasmuch as I have other things to dispose of besides those which are named in the said will, I do by this present codicil confirm and ratify the said will in all points saving such legacies as I shall bequeath by this said codicil which I, being now in sound and perfect memory, do will to be adjudged and taken as parcel of my last will and to be of force by the right of a codicil or by any other right in the best manner that may be;

And first I give twenty pounds to be disposed by my dear friends, Mr Henry Carew and Mr Nicholas Roscarrock, according to my trust reposed in them;

Item, I give my best gown, best cloak and best hat to my dear friend, Mr John Gage of Haling;

Item, I give to Mrs Margaret Gage, his wife, five marks;

Item, I give to my cousin, Stephen Henslowe, my green cloak, my best doublet;

Item, I give my russet cloak to Isaack.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum Apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Iohanne Gibson legum Doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode sive Commissario legitime constituto vna cum Codicillo vicesimo sexto die mensis Martij Anno Domini iuxta Cursum et Computacionem Ecclesie Anglicane millesimo quingentesimo nonagesimo octavo Iuramento magistri Francisci Clerke notarij publici procuratoris Edwardi Gage et Iohannis Cotton executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus Commissa fuit Administracio bonorum iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene & Ad sancta Dei Evangelia in debita Iuris forma Iuratis Willielmo Hildesley altero executori & onerari executionis dicti testamenti expresse renunciant(?)

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master John Gibson, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-sixth day of the month of March in the year of the Lord according to the course and reckoning of the English Church the thousand five hundred ninety-eighth by the oath of Master Francis Clerke, notary public, proctor of Edward Gage and John Cotton, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form or law to well etc., William Hildesley, the other executor etc., expressly renouncing the burden of the execution of the said testament.]

Deinde tertio die mensis Maij Anno Domini 1600 probatum fuit dictum testamentum iuramento dicti Willielmi Hildesley executoris Cui de et cum consensu prefatorum Edwardi Gage et Iohannis Cotton executorum predictorum commissa fuit administracio omnium bonorum dicti defuncti De bene & Ad sancta Dei evangelia iuratis

[=Afterwards on the third day of the month of May in the year of the Lord 1600 the said testament was proved by the oath of the said William Hildesley, executor, to whom by and with the consent of the forenamed Edward Gage and John Cotton, executors aforesaid, administration was granted of all the goods of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]