

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 7 October 1578 and proved 31 October 1578 of William Slywright.

The testator was the son-in-law of Humphrey Collett (d.1558) of St Saviour, Southwark, whose daughter, Mercy Collett (d. 13 April 1597), son, John Collett, and grandson, Sir John Bodley of Streatham, were involved in the early operation of the Globe theatre.

Mercy Collett married firstly Francis Bodley (d.1566), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/48/415, by whom she had two sons, Sir John Bodley of Streatham, and William Bodley.

After the death of Francis Bodley, Mercy Collett married Thomas Brend (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/93/316), and became the stepmother 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 (1568-1619), Cuthbert Burbage (1564/5-1636), William Kempe, Augustine Phillips (d.1605), Thomas Pope (d.1603) John Heminges (1566-1630) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon (see TNA REQ 4/1/2):

for the said gardens and grounds whereupon the said playhouse & galleries were afterwards builded were demised & letten by the said Nicholas Brend by his indenture of lease tripartite bearing date in or about the 21st day of February in the 41st year of the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth [=21 February 1599] unto Cuthbert Burbage, Richard Burbage, William Shakespeare, the said Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges, one of the said defendants, and William Kempe, to have and to hold the one moiety of the said garden plots and ground to the said Cuthbert Burbage and Richard Burbage, their executors, administrators & assigns, from the feast of the birth of Our Lord God last past before the date of the said indenture [=25 December 1598] unto the end & term of 31 years from thence next ensuing [=24 December 1629] for the yearly rent of seven pounds & five shillings, and to have & to hold the other moiety of the said garden plots & grounds unto the said William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges, one of the said defendants, & William Kempe, their executors, administrators & assigns, from the said feast of the birth of Our Lord God then last past before the date of the said indenture unto the said full end & term of 31 years from thence next ensuing for the like yearly rent of seven pounds & five shillings.

For the financial transactions entered into in connection with the Globe playhouse by John Collett and Sir John Bodley of Streatham, see TNA C 54/1682, mm. 10-11 and the other documents listed there.

CONNECTIONS TO THE EARLS OF OXFORD

By a fine in the Court of Common Pleas dated 6 October 1560, Robert Burbage (d.1575) transferred title to the manors of Tongs alias Clays alias Theobalds alias Cressbroke and

Darcies to the testator and Thomas Butler for £800 sterling. Oxford's father-in-law, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, later purchased the property from Burbage, and built his mansion of Theobalds on the site. See TNA CP 25/2/155/2097/2ELIZIMICH, Item 10.

For a fine in 1560 involving the testator, Robert Burbage (d.1575), Mary Zouche and Hugh Partridge (the second husband of Robert Burbage's sister, Eleanor Burbage), see TNA C54/580, No. 20; and Hardy, W.J. and W. Page, *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for London & Middlesex*, (London: Hardy & Page, 1893), Vol. II, pp. 109-110 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/acalendarofeet02pagegoog#page/n116/mode/2up>

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator's family background is unknown.

A William Slywright of Gray's Inn is mentioned in a document dated 1551. See Kent History and Library Centre U1590/T8/1 concerning an annuity of £5 payable by 'Francis Merie, citizen and merchant tailor of London to William Slywrighte alias Slyverick of Grays Inn, Middlesex, for the life of W.S. and his d. Eleanor'. For Francis Mery (d.1551), see his nuncupative will, TNA PROB 11/34/480.

Testator's siblings

The testator mentions one sister in the will below, 'my sister Jordaine', who may have been related to Edward Jordeyne (d.1514), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/17/606.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Joan Collet (d. by 1578), the daughter of Humphrey Collett (d.1558) by Joan Hunt, the daughter of Thomas Hunt of Wallington, Surrey. For Humphrey Collett (d.1558), see his will, TNA PROB 11/42A/115, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/colet-humphrey-1517-58>

For the will of Joan (nee Hunt) Collett, see TNA PROB 11/61/389.

According to the will below, the testator had three sons and five daughters:

* **John Slywright**, eldest son and heir.

* **Thomas Slywright**.

- * **Edward Slywright**.
- * **Mary Slywright**, unmarried when the testator made his will.
- * **Mercy Slywright**, unmarried when the testator made his will.
- * **Katherine Slywright**, unmarried when the testator made his will.
- * **Eleanor Slywright**, unmarried when the testator made his will. For her prospective marriage to Thomas Ryther, see:

D J Keene and Vanessa Harding, 'St. Martin Pomary 95/18', in *Historical Gazetteer of London Before the Great Fire Cheapside; Parishes of All Hallows Honey Lane, St Martin Pomary, St Mary Le Bow, St Mary Colechurch and St Pancras Soper Lane* (London, 1987), pp. 187-196. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-gazetteer-pre-fire/pp187-196> [accessed 1 December 2020].

In October 1581 Richard Ryther and his wife Elizabeth sold this messuage, now known as the 'Swanne' and occupied by their son Thomas Ryther, citizen and grocer, to Thomas and to Elizabeth Martyn daughter of Robert Martyn of Islington, innholder, for a sum of £100 paid by Elizabeth. Evidently a marriage was contemplated and the messuage was to be held to the use of Thomas and Elizabeth and the lawful heirs of their bodies. In 1583 Thomas Ryther and his wife Elizabeth let the Swanne with its shops, cellars, solars, chambers, and yards to Thomas White and Henry Dunche, grocers. Elizabeth then died and in 1587, when it was said to be worth £20 a year clear, this messuage was to serve as a jointure to Elianor Slywright, daughter of William Slywright, deceased, should she marry Thomas Ryther.

The marriage of Eleanor Slywright, daughter of the late William Slywright, gentleman, is also mentioned in an agreement dated 16 March 1587 between the London grocer, Richard Ryther (d.1592?), his son, Thomas Ryther, and the testator's brother-in-law, John Collett. See London Metropolitan Archives CLC/522/ADDMS0815. See also the will of Richard Ryther, TNA PROB 11/80/451.

- * **Dorothy Slywright**, unmarried when the testator made his will.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For the will of the testator's overseer, Thomas Brend (d. 21 September 1598) of West Molesey, who owned the ground on which the Globe playhouse was built, see TNA PROB 11/93/316. For the monumental brass to Thomas Brend in West Molesey church, see Stephenson, Mill, comp., 'A List of Monumental Brasses in Surrey', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Vol. XXX, (London: Surrey Archaeological Society, 1917), pp. 61-104, at pp. 96-8:

Here lieth buried the body of Thomas Brend of West Molesey, esquire, who had by his two wives eighteen children, videlicet, by Margery, his first wife, four sons & six daughters, who died the second of June 1564, by Mercy, his last wife, he had four sons and four daughters. She left her life the 13 of April 1597, and lieth here buried. He lived the age of fourscore and one years and departed this world the 21 of September 1598 and left one son & five daughters at his death.

The achievement, 8 1/2 by 7 1/2 inches, bears the arms and crest of Brend, Or, a chevron between three dexter hands coupéd sable. Crest, out of a coronet or, a cockatrice's head gules between two wings argent, with the usual helmet and mantling. The arms and crest were granted to Thomas Brend in 1591. The shield, 6 3/4 by 5 3/4, bears Brend impaling sable on a chevron between three hinds argent as many annulets of the field, for Collett.

For the will of the testator's overseer, Rowland Maylard (d.1596), see TNA PROB 11/88/255.

MENTION OF THE TESTATOR IN THE WILLS OF OTHERS

In the will of Anthony Wayte (d.1559), TNA PROB 11/42B/217, the testator is referred to as 'brother':

And I give unto my hearty loving brother, William Slywright, my ring of gold with a fair large sapphire in the same, desiring my said brother and my said cousin, William Wayte of Wymering, to be my overseers. . . .

The nature of the relationship between the testator and Anthony Wayte has not been determined.

The testator and his wife are left bequests in the 1558 will, TNA PROB 11/41/4, of the Anthony Wayte's son-in-law, the London grocer, Henry Mynge:

Item, I will and bequeath to Wiliam Slywright, gentleman, five pounds, and to him and his wife, to either of them a black gown, desiring also the same William to assist my wife in all her affairs and business.

For the inquisitions post mortem taken in Kent after the testator's death, see TNA WARD 7/20/53 and TNA C 142/186/18. See also the judicial sentence, TNA PROB 11/66/351.

Two additional documents likely involving the testator are held by the London Metropolitan Archives: CLC/522/ADDMS0664, dated 14 February 1565 (William Slywright, gentleman); CLC/522/ADDMS0681, dated 1 September 1576 (William Slywright, gentleman, of Weybridge, Surrey).

RM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Slywrighte

In the name of God, Amen. The 7th day of October in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred 78 and in the 20th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, William Slywright of Teddington in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, being sick in body but whole in mind and perfect of remembrance, thanks be unto Almighty God, do make, constitute and declare this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First and principally I commend my soul to Almighty God, my Maker and Creator, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer, in whom and by the merits of whose most precious death and passion is all my whole trust for clear remission and forgiveness of my sins;

And I will my body to be buried in Teddington church by Joan, my late wife;

Item, I give unto the poor of the said parish of Teddington 40s to be distributed by the discretion of mine executors undernamed;

Item, I give and bequeath to four of my daughters, that is to say, to Mercy Slywright, Katherine Slywright, Eleanor Slywright and Dorothy Slywright, the sum of four hundred pounds of lawful money of England, that is to wit, unto every of them a hundred pounds apiece to be paid unto them at their several days of their marriage or accomplishment of their several ages of 18 years, which of them shall first happen to come or be;

And my will also is that the foresaid four hundred pounds shall in the meantime be employed unto the most commodity and advantage of my said daughters towards their maintenance and good bringing up in knowledge and learning at the discretion of mine executors;

And if it happen any of my said four daughters to die before they be married or accomplish the said age of eighteen years, then I will and my mind is that the part and portion, parts and portions of her or any of them so dying shall remain unto thother of them surviving, to be equally distributed between them and to be paid and delivered to them in manner aforesaid;

Item, my will is and I do give and bequeath to my daughter, Mary Slywright, the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England to be paid unto her at her day of her marriage or age of eighteen years, which shall first happen, for the levying of which hundred pounds my mind is and I will and devise that my farm of Teddington shall be letten by my executors to the most commodity and advantage that may be, and the benefit which shall be made of the same over and above the rent therefore reserved and all charges touching the same shall make up the same one hundred pounds given to the same my daughter, Mary, in manner and form aforesaid;

The residue of the interest and term of years that shall be to come of or in my said farm at Teddington aforesaid after the said hundred pounds is levied, I give and bequeath unto my son, Edward Slywright;

And if my said daughter, Mary, happen to die before her marriage or accomplishment of her said age of 18 years, then my will is that the said hundred pounds bequeathed unto her or so much thereof as at such her decease shall be received shall remain and come unto the rest of my said daughters surviving, equally between them to be divided in manner aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath to my mother [=mother-in-law] Collett 40s;

Item, I give and bequeath to my sister Jordaine 40s;

Item, I give and bequeath to every of my servants 10s over and above such wages as is due unto them and every of them;

And as touching the disposition of all and singular my manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever, I will and dispose them in manner and form following, that is to say:

Item, I leave to descend to my son and heir, John Slywright, and to his heirs forever all that my parsonage, manor, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances lying and being in the parish of Chalk in the county of Kent;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Thomas Slywright, my son, and to his heirs forever all my messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances in Bermondsey in the county of Surrey and Kent or in one of them, being of the clear yearly value of £19 19s 4d;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the foresaid Edward Slywright, my son, and to his heirs forever all that my messuage or tenement with th' appurtenances set, lying and being in Thames Street in the parish of St Michael near Queenhithe in London which I late purchased of Richard Bythinson, gentleman, being at this present of the clear yearly value of £12 13s 4d, and after 8 years shall be of the clear yearly value of £23;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said sons, John Slywright and Thomas Slywright, my lease, interest and term of years which I have to come of, in and to a farm called Brookelands in [f. 295v] the parish of Weybridge in the said county of Surrey with all profits and commodities belonging or in any wise appertaining to the same;

LM: Confirmatur per Sentenciam diffinitiuam Latum 24o ffebruarij 1583

The rest and residue of all and singular my goods, chattels, plate, household stuff, kine, sheep, horses, corn and other my goods and chattels whatsoever before not bequeathed,

after my debts paid, my legacies being fully answered and discharged and my funerals and this my will and testament fulfilled, my will and mind is shall be equally divided between mine executors and my children aforementioned;

And of this my testament and last will I make and ordain my said eldest son, John Slywright, and John Collett of London, merchant, brother to my said late wife, my full and sole executors;

Also I make Thomas Brend of West Molesey in the said county of Surrey, gentleman, and Rowland Maylard, gentleman, overseers of this my last will and testament, to whom I give and bequeath to each of them 40s of lawful English money, and to each of their wives 20s;

Furthermore I give to Mr John Collett, one of mine executors, 40s, and to his wife 20s;

Witnesses hereof: Thomas Brend, Rowland Maylard, gentleman, Mercy Brend, wife of the said Thomas Brend, Mary Maylard, wife of the said Rowland Maylard, John Slywright and Ellen A Ryle [sic?].

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Mowse Legum doctore surrogato venerabilis viri m{agist}ri Will{el}mi Drury Legu{m} etiam doctoris curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Com{m}issarij &c vltimo die mens{is} Octobris Anno D{omi}ni mill{es}imo quingentesimo septuagesimo octauo Iuramento xpoferi Robinson notarij publici procu{rato}ris Ioh{ann}is Colet vnus executor{um} &c Cui com{m}issa fuit administrac{i}o &c De bene &c Iurat{i} Reseruata p{otes}tate similem com{m}issionem faciend{i} Ioh{ann}i Slywrighte alteri executori &c cum venerit &c admissur{o} &c

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before Master William Mowse, Doctor of the Laws, Surrogate of the worshipful Master William Drury, also Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the last day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-eighth by the oath of Christopher Robinson, notary public, proctor of John Collett, one of the executors etc., to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well etc., with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to John Slywright, the other executor etc. when he shall have come etc. to be admitted etc.]