

SUMMARY: The document below is the entry on the King's Bench controlment roll for Michaelmas term 1596 in which William Wayte requests sureties of the peace against William Shakespeare (1564-1616) of Stratford upon Avon, the London money broker and owner of the Swan playhouse, Francis Langley (1548–1602), and two otherwise unidentified women, Dorothy Soer and Anne Lee. The writ was issued to the sheriff of Surrey, indicating that the parties were residing there, likely in Southwark, and was returnable on 29 November 1596, the last day of Michaelmas term.

The writ had been preceded by an earlier writ returnable on 3 November 1596 sworn by Francis Langley against Justice William Gardiner (d.1597) and his kinsman, William Wayte:

*Anglia scire scilicet Franciscus Langley petit securitates pacis versus Willelmum Gardener & Willelmum Wayte ob metum mortis &c Attachiammentum vicecomiti Surrie retornabile Crastino animarum*

*England. Be it known that Francis Langley craves sureties of the peace against William Gardiner and William Wayte for fear of death etc. Writ of attachment to the sheriff of Surrey, returnable on the morrow of All Souls [=3 November 1596].*

For copies of both writs and a detailed discussion of the circumstances and parties involved, see Hotson, Leslie, *Shakespeare Versus Shallow* (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1931), available online. See also the pedigree of Gardiner of Haling at:

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/GardinerWilliam.html>

*Anglia scire scilicet Willelmus Wayte petit securitates pacis versus Willelmum Shakspere ffranciscum Langley Dorotheam Soer uxorem Iohannis Soer & Annam Lee ob metum mortis &c Attachiammentum Vicecomiti Surrie retornabile xvij Martini*

*England. Be it known that William Wayte craves sureties of the peace against William Shakespeare, Francis Langley, Dorothy Soer, wife of John Soer, and Anne Lee, for fear of death etc. Writ of attachment to the sheriff of Surrey, returnable on the 18 of St Martin [=29 November 1596].*