

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 8 August 1521 and proved 24 March 1522, of John Newport, serjeant at law, whose manor of Soberton, Hampshire, was later owned by Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis*.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see:

'Parishes: Soberton', in *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 257-268. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hants/vol3/pp257-268> [accessed 1 November 2019].

The abbot and convent [of Beaulieu] thereupon re-entered the manor, and in 1411 obtained licence to lease the manor to Richard Newport and his heirs for two hundred years. (fn. 20) This lease was equivalent to a sale, as no annual payment is mentioned in the indenture. As the lease was in being at the Dissolution Soberton is not included in the possessions of Beaulieu at that date, (fn. 21) and in an inquisition on the death of Richard Newport in 1477 the manor is said to be held of the duke of Buckingham, as of his honour of Clare. (fn. 22) A John Newport of Soberton is mentioned in 1451 as owing 600 marks to John Tichborne. (fn. 23) Richard Newport, probably his son, died in 1477, leaving a son and heir John, aged twenty-three. Before his death he had conveyed the manor and other premises in Soberton to John Dale and Richard Kingsmill, probably as trustees. (fn. 24) John Newport, described as serjeant-at-law, died seised of the manor in 1521 leaving no issue. (fn. 25) His widow Elizabeth, who died six years later, directed that her body should be buried in the chapel of Our Lady in Soberton church beside that of her husband. She left half a hundred sheep and two kine and ten marks in money to the parish church of Soberton, and 3s. 4d. to each of her tenants in Soberton, and ordered her executors to dispose of the rest of her property at their discretion. (fn. 26) In 1544 William Dale, (fn. 27) probably a trustee, conveyed the manor of Soberton together with the manors of Longspiers, Flexland, and Englefield, also in the parish, to Walter Bonham and Alice his wife, (fn. 28) who five years later sold them to Thomas Wriothesley, earl of Southampton. (fn. 29) The earl died seised a year later, leaving a son and heir Henry, aged three, (fn. 30) who died in 1581, his heir being his son Henry, aged eight. (fn. 31) The latter towards the end of Elizabeth's reign was drawn into the conspiracy of the earl of Essex, on the failure of which he was sent to the Tower. On 19 February, 1600–1, he was with Essex convicted of treason. Cecil, however, secured the commutation of his sentence to imprisonment for life, pleading that 'the poor young Earl merely for love of Essex had been drawn into this action.' He was sent to the Tower, but was released by James I on 10 April, 1603. On 16 May following the king restored to him the manor of Soberton, (fn. 32) four years later granting to him free warren, view of frankpledge, assize of bread and beer, waifs and estrays, and various other privileges within it. (fn. 33)

See also Hughes, Carolyn, 'The complexity of medieval Soberton (1)' at:

<http://the-history-girls.blogspot.com/2018/04/the-complexity-of-medieval-soberton-1.html>

MARRIAGE

The testator's wife, Elizabeth, has not been identified. For her will, dated 26 April 1527 and proved 13 May 1527, see TNA PROB 11/22/322.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For William Uvedale (c.1528-1569) of Wickham, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/uvedale-william-1528-69>

According to the History of Parliament entry, Richard Norton (see below) was one of William Uvedale's executors.

For Arthur Plantagenet, who witnessed the testator's will, see the discussion of his lease of the manor of Soberton below, and the *ODNB* entry:

Plantagenet, Arthur, Viscount Lisle (b. before 1472, d. 1542), soldier, diplomat, and administrator, was the illegitimate son of Edward IV (1442–1483).

The identity of Arthur's mother and his date of birth have given rise to much speculation. The editor of his correspondence, Muriel St Clare Byrne, agrees with most authorities in identifying his mother as Elizabeth Lucy, an obscure lady who was probably the daughter of Thomas Waite of Hampshire.

TESTATOR'S MANORS

Manor of Soberton

According to 'Parishes: Soberton', *supra*, the testator died seised of the manor of Soberton. The testator's heir appears to have been his sister, Agnes Newport, who married a husband surnamed Dale, by whom she had a son, John Dale (d.1522?) of Tidworth, whose heir was his daughter, Alice Dale (d. before 1551?). See the inquisition post mortem dated 28 April 1522 taken after the death of John Dale, HRO 5M53/1326.

Alice Dale's wardship was acquired in 1522 by Sir Thomas Bonham (d. 18 June 1532), who stipulated in his will that Alice Dale should marry his son, Walter Bonham (d.1551).

See the will of Thomas Bonham, TNA PROB 11/25/90; the will of Sir Walter Bonham, TNA PROB 11/34/303; and Kidston, G.J., *The Bonhams of Wiltshire and Essex*, (Devizes: C.H. Woodward, 1948), p. 66 at:

<https://archive.org/details/bonhamsowiltshi00kids/page/n75>

After the death of the testator's widow in 1527, Sir Thomas Bonham leased the manor of Soberton to Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle. See Kidston, *supra*, pp. 70-2, and HRO 5M53/99, an indenture dated 4 October 1528 between Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, John Wayte, cousin and heir of Sybil Newport, daughter of Richard Newport, gentleman, late of Soberton, and Thomas Bonham, esquire.

Walter Bonham and Alice Dale had married by 1538, and in 1544 the manor of Soberton was conveyed to them by Alice's uncle and next heir, William Dale. See 'Parishes: Soberton', *supra*:

In 1544 William Dale, (fn. 27) probably a trustee, conveyed the manor of Soberton together with the manors of Longspiers, Flexland, and Englefield, also in the parish, to Walter Bonham and Alice his wife, (fn. 28) who five years later sold them to Thomas Wriothesley, earl of Southampton. (fn. 29)

Lands in Southwick and Boarhunt

The testator also held lands in Southwick and Boarhunt, including a close called Petersfields, which he had acquired from the Southampton mercer, William Westmyll, son and heir of Thomas Westmyll. See HRO 5M50/1123 dated 6 February 1513, HRO 5M50/1124 dated 28 April 1517, and HRO 5M50/1125 dated 22 March 1518.

At some time after the death of Sir Thomas Bonham in 1532, a Chancery suit was brought on behalf of Alice Dale, who was then 13 years of age, concerning the testator's lands in Southwick and Boarhunt and the close of Petersfields. The pleadings state that:

Alice Dale is daughter and heir of John Dale of Tidworth, son of Agnes Dale, sister and heir of John Newport. She is aged 13 and a ward of Katherine Bonham, widow of Thomas Bonham.

See HRO 5M53/1326.

The pleadings state further that:

Agnes Dale has enfeoffed Richard Norton in lands including Petersfields and Thomas Rede is tenant of the same.

For Richard Norton (c.1530-1592), see the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/norton-richard-i-1530-92>

b. c.1530, 1st s of John Norton[†] of East Tisted by Anne, da. of Sir George Puttenham of Sherfield. m. (1) by 1564, Elizabeth, da. and h. of William Wayte of Wymering, Hants, 2s. inc. Richard Norton II; (2) Catherine, da. of Sir John Kingsmill of Sydmonton, 2s. 1da. suc. fa. 1561. Kntd. by 1577.1

As noted in the History of Parliament entry, Richard Norton married Elizabeth Wayte, the daughter of William Wayte of Wymering, Hampshire, who was likely related to Leonard Wayte (d.1535), to whom the testator leaves a bequest in the will below:

Also I give and bequeath to Leonard Wayte 100s to be paid the day of his marriage.

For Leonard Wayte, see also TNA E 328/260, an indenture dated 17 November 1522 to which Arthur Plantagenet, Leonard Wayte and John Wayte, esquire, were parties.

For the Wayte family of Wymering, see also:

'Parishes: Wymering', in *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 165-170. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hants/vol3/pp165-170> [accessed 1 November 2019].

RM: Test{amentu}m Ioh{ann}is Newport

In the name of God, Amen. The 8th day of the month of August the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and 21, I, John Newport, serjeant at law, of whole mind and good remembrance, ordain and make my last will and testament in form following:

Imprimis I give and bequeath my soul to Almighty God, Our Blessed Lady, and to all the holy company of heaven;

And my body to be buried in the chapel of Our Lady in Soberton;

Also I give and bequeath to the mother church of Saint Swithin's 12d;

Also I give and bequeath for my forgotten tithes 40s;

Also I give and bequeath to the church of Soberton £10 to buy an antiphoner;

Also I give and bequeath to every one of my tenants dwelling within the parish of Soberton aforesaid 40s;

Also I give and bequeath to every maiden of th' age of 15 year or about to the promotions of their marriages, being within the parish of Soberton, 100s;

[f. 177v] Also I give and bequeath to every of my household servants, as well men as women servants, 100s;

Also I give and bequeath to Leonard Wayte 100s to be paid the day of his marriage;

I give and bequeath to Sir Ralph of Corhampton, canon, 20s to pray for my soul and all Christian souls;

Item, I give and bequeath to Agnes, Elizabeth and Anne, daughters of William Uvedale, esquire, of Wickham, £300 equally to be divided and delivered to every of them the day of their marriages;

The residue of all my goods movable and unmovable afore not bequeathed I give and bequeath to Elizabeth, my wife;

And her I ordain and make my sole executrice of this my present testament containing my last will, these witness: Arthur Plantagenet, knight, William Stynt, Doctor, William Gory, clerk, Thomas Goodman, clerk, and many other.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascripti defuncti Coram d{omi}no apud Lameth xxiiiio die mens{is} Marcij Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo xxjo Iurament{o} Elizabeth{e} Relicte & executric{is} in h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{e} In p{er}sona Iohannis Kyngesmyll l{ite}rat{i} procu{rato}ris sui in ea p{ar}te Ac approbatum et insinuatum Et com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}stracio o{mn}i{u}m & singulor{um} bonoru{m} & debitoru{m} d{i}c{t}i defuncti pefat{e} executrici In p{er}sona d{i}c{t}i procuratoris De bene & fideli{te}r admi{ni}strand{o} Ac de pleno & fideli In{uenta}rio citra festum Pasche prox{imum} futur{um} exhibend{o} Necnon de plano & vero compoto reddend{o} Ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia in debita iuris forma Iurat{i}

[=The testament of the above-written deceased was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the 24th day of the month of March in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 21st by the oath of Elizabeth, relict & executrix named in the same testament, in the person of John Kingsmill, learned, her proctor in that behalf, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all & singular the goods & debts of the said deceased to the forenamed executrix in the person of the said proctor, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well & faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full & faithful inventory before the feast of Easter next to come, and also to render a plain & true account.]