

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 18 December 1558 and proved 24 April 1560, of George Newport (d.1558?), first cousin of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. The volume was Loan 61 in the British Library until 2007, was subsequently on loan to Lancaster University Library until 2010, and is now in the hands of a trustee, Lady Hesketh. According to the Wikipedia entry for Sir Richard Newport, the annotated Hall's *Chronicle* is now at Eton College, Windsor. See:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Newport\\_\(died\\_1570\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_(died_1570))

*Newport's copy of his chronicle, containing annotations sometimes attributed to William Shakespeare, is now in the Library at Eton College, Windsor.*

For the annotated Hall's *Chronicle*, see also the will of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), TNA PROB 11/53/456; Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954); and the Annotator page on this website:

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/annotator.html>

### ***FAMILY BACKGROUND***

For early generations of the Newport family, see Bridgeman, Ernest R.O. and Charles G.O. Bridgeman, 'History of the Manor and Parish of Weston-under-Lizard, in the County of Stafford', William Salt Archaeological Society, ed., *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, Vol. XX, Vol. II, New Series, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899), p. 146 at:

<https://archive.org/details/collectionsfora14socigoog/page/n189>

See also the Newport pedigree in Grazebrook, George, and John Paul Rylands, eds., *The Visitation of Shropshire Taken in the Year 1623*, Part II, (London: Harleian Society, 1889), Vol. XXIX, pp. 372-4 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshrop01grazgoog#page/n100/mode/2up>

### ***Testator's parents***

The History of Parliament entry for the testator states that he was born by 1532, the son of George Newport of Droitwich and his wife Joan, that he married, before 1554, Elizabeth Blount, the daughter of Peter Blount of Sodington Hall in Mable, Worcestershire, and that by her he had four daughters. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/newport-george-1532-5860>

*b. by 1532, ?s. of George Newport of Droitwich by Joan. m. by 1554, Elizabeth, da. of Peter Blount of Sodington Hall in Mamble, 4da.1*

The History of Parliament entry appears to be in error. A lawsuit, TNA C 1/1041/30-31, brought by the testator between 1538-1544 against his father states that he was the eldest son and heir apparent of *William Newport* (not George), and that his marriage to Elizabeth Blount took place, at the latest, by 1544 (not 1554):

C 1/1041/30-31

*Short title: Newporte v Newporte.*

*Plaintiffs: George, son and heir apparent of William NEWPORTE, esquire.*

*Defendants: the said William NEWPORTE.*

*Subject: Refusal to complete a settlement on complainant at his marriage with Elizabeth, sister of Thomas Blount, esquire, including a messuage and 'fates wallyng' in Droitwich partly with 'sele, vyne, and crybbe,' and the farm of Rushock. Worcestershire.*

*1538-1544*

The testator was thus the son of William Newport (d.1559), esquire, and Philippa Boteler. For the will, dated 23 March 1559 and proved 8 September 1559, of the testator's father, William Newport, who held a lease of Rushock, see TNA PROB 11/42B/459. See also the Boteler pedigree (which, however, places the marriage in the wrong generation) in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of Worcestershire 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), Vol. XXVII, p. 30 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n45/mode/2up>

The testator made his own will on 18 December 1558, three months before his father, William Newport, made his will, and although the testator's will was not proved until 24 April 1560, it seems likely that he predeceased his father. The will of the testator's father mentions the testator several times, but he neither leaves him a bequest nor appoints him as executor. Rather, he leaves bequests to the testator's son and heir, Thomas Newport (d.1559), and although he does not state that the testator is deceased, the nature of the bequests suggest that the testator had, in fact, predeceased him:

*Item, I bequeath to Thomas Newport, my son George's son, the best chamber in my house and 6 oxen and 6 kine, with a wain and a plough and that that belongeth to them, & a gelding.*

*Item, I bequeath to John Newport, George Newport's son, ten marks in money or in cattle;*

*Item, I bequeath to Margaret Newport, George Newport's daughter, £20.*

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*Item, I bequeath to Thomas Newport, son and heir to George Newport, my farm of Rushock during his life, and after his life to his heirs male.*

It should also be noted that the will, TNA PROB 11/42B/695, of the testator's son, Thomas Newport, is dated 8 November 1559, and was proved three weeks later on 29 November 1559. When these dates are compared with those of the will of William Newport (dated 23 March 1559 and proved 8 September 1559), it appears that Thomas Newport survived his grandfather for only a few months, and perhaps for only a few weeks. Thomas Newport left a wife and children, and after his death his wife, Mary Purslow, married Francis Brace (d.1599), for whom see the will, TNA PROB 11/165/424, of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon.

### ***Testator's siblings***

According to the will of the testator's father, *supra*, the testator had two siblings:

**-Robert Newport**, for whom see the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), TNA PROB 11/42B/459.

**-Margaret Newport**, for whom see the will of her father, William Newport, *supra*, and the will of her husband, John Croker (d.1558?), TNA PROB 11/44/203.

### ***MARRIAGE AND ISSUE***

#### ***Testator's first marriage***

A Chancery suit, TNA C 1/360/51, dating from 1504-1515 suggests that the testator's first wife was Joan Walker, the daughter of Thomas Walker, and sister of Margaret (nee Walker) Baynard, widow. See Stallard, Jon M., *Butler of Droitwich 1300-1700*, pp. 50-64 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RYoMXDQdlFEC&pg=PA56>

See also Stallard, *supra*, pp. 287-8 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=RYoMXDQdlFEC&pg=PA287>

#### ***Testator's second marriage***

The Chancery suit mentioned above, TNA C 1/1041/30-31, brought by the testator against his father, indicates that the testator married secondly Elizabeth Blount, the sister of Thomas Blount (d. December 1562?), esquire, and the daughter of Peter Blount

(d.1518?) of Sodington, Worcestershire, and Anne Cornwall. Elizabeth Blount's sister, Katherine Blount, married the testator's uncle, John Boteler of Droitwich, brother of the testator's mother, Philippa Boteler. See also the Blount pedigrees in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), Vol. XXVII, pp. 17-18 and 22. In the Blount pedigree on p. 17, the testator is erroneously identified as 'Thomas Newport':

<http://www.archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n31/mode/2up>

He is correctly identified as 'George Newport' in the pedigree on p. 22 of the same volume:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n37/mode/2up>

For Elizabeth Blount's father, Peter Blount (d.1518?), and brother, Thomas Blount (d. December 1562?), see the will, dated 19 December 1562 and proved 18 May 1563, of Thomas Blount, TNA PROB 11/46/220, and:

'Parishes: Mamble', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 4*, ed. William Page and J W Willis-Bund (London, 1924), pp. 285-289. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol4/pp285-289> [accessed 2 November 2019].

The bequests in the will below and in the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), *supra*, indicate that the testator had two sons and five daughters:

\* **Thomas Newport** (d.1559), eldest son and heir, for whose will, dated 8 November 1559 and proved 29 November 1559, see TNA PROB 11/42B/695.

Thomas Newport is not mentioned in the will below although he was still living when the testator made his will on 18 December 1558 since his own will is dated 8 November 1559. In that regard it should be noted that the testator's will was not proved until 24 April 1560, by which time Thomas Newport had also died. Bequests to deceased persons which had been struck out or amended in an original will were sometimes omitted when the PCC copy was transcribed, and this may have been the case with the testator's will, and would account for the lack of mention of his son, Thomas. For an example of this PCC practice, see the will of Dorothy (nee Yonge) Haddon Saunders Dayrell (d. 18 January 1574), TNA PROB 11/56/39.

Thomas Newport (d.1559) married Mary Purslow, the daughter of Robert Purslow (1500?-1571?) of Sidbury, Shropshire. As noted above, William Newport (d.1559) bequeathed his lease of Rushock to his grandson, Thomas Newport (d.1559). In his own will, Thomas Newport bequeathed all his goods to his wife and their children, a bequest which likely included the lease of Rushock. Thomas Newport's widow, Mary Purslow, married secondly, in 1562, Francis Brace (d. 2 July 1599), who in 1570 held the lease of Rushock in right of his wife (see Clode, *infra*). Shortly before his death, Francis Brace,

then a widower, courted Anne St Leger, widow of Thomas Digges, and persuaded her to sell some of Thomas Digges' leases to pay his (Brace's) debts. In return, Brace assigned to her his 'lease of the valuable manor of Rushock, Worcestershire'. By 1600 Anne Digges and her children were living with Thomas Russell (1570-1634), later the overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, at the manor of Alderminster, Warwickshire, on which he held a lease which would not expire until 1611 or 1612, and Anne Digges had given him control of the lease of Rushock. In 1604 or 1605, Thomas Russell obtained a forty-year extension of the Rushock lease from the Merchant Taylors, assisted in his petition by a letter from Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire. See Hotson, Leslie, *I, William Shakespeare*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 131-3, 211-13.

For further details concerning the marriage of Mary Purslow and Francis Brace (d.1599) and the lease of Rushock and its acquisition by Thomas Russell, see the will of Thomas Russell, TNA PROB 11/165/424, and the History of Parliament entry for Francis Brace at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/brace-francis-1599>

See also Purton, R.C., 'Some Account of Sidbury', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 4<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. III, (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, 1913), pp. 109-120 at p. 112:

<https://archive.org/details/transactionsofsh43shro/page/n283>

\* **John Newport**. He is referred to as the testator's son in the will, dated 23 March 1559, of his grandfather, William Newport (d.1559), but is not mentioned in the will below.

\* **Margaret Newport**, who married Thomas Copley of Bredon's Norton, Worcestershire, who after her death married Eleanor Middlemore, sister of John Middlemore (d. 7 June 1597), and daughter of William Middlemore (d.1549) of Hawkesley in King's Norton, Worcestershire, and Margaret Gatacre. See the will of William Middlemore, TNA PROB 11/32/606; the Copley pedigree, p. 45 in Phillimore, *supra*; and the Middlemore pedigree in Crisp, Frederick Arthur, ed., *Visitation of England and Wales*, Vol. 8, 1909, pp. 22-3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofengl29howa#page/22/mode/2up>

See also the will, TNA PROB 11/53/434, of Thomas Lewknor (d.1571), stepfather of William Combe (d.1610), who in 1602 sold land to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon (see SBTRO ER 27/1), who appointed John Middlemore and Thomas Copley as his overseers:

*And I make overseers Mr John Middlemore of Hawkesley, Mr John Lewes, parson of Alvechurch, and Mr Thomas Copley of Bredon.*

See also TNA C 4/41/49, and:

<https://soc.genealogy.medieval.narkive.com/oRpX4HBp/the-emigrant-thomas-baugh-of-henrico-co-virginia-and-his-medieval-ancestry>

\* **Elizabeth Newport.** She is mentioned in the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), *supra*, and in the will below.

\* **Mary Newport.** She is mentioned in the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), *supra*, and in the will below.

\* **Anne Newport.** She is mentioned in the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), *supra*, but is not mentioned in the will below.

\* **Jane Newport.** She is mentioned in the will of the testator's father, William Newport (d.1559), *supra*, and in the will below.

#### ***OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL***

The History of Parliament entry, *supra*, suggests that the testator's 'cousin', Mary Bedell, may have been related to the testator's fellow bailiff in Droitwich, Roger Bedell. Mary Bedell is also mentioned in the will of the testator's father, *supra*.

Fulke Newport and Thomas Moulton are mentioned in the will below and in the will of the testator's father.

The Dethick pedigree identifies the testator's executor, Gilbert Dethick as the third son of Richard Dethick of Sagebury, and the brother of Richard Dethick, who married Elizabeth Newport, the daughter of John Newport of Droitwich. Gilbert Dethick was thus the uncle of William Dethick, who married Jane Brace, sister of Francis Brace (d.1599). As noted above, after the death of the testator's son, Thomas Newport (d.1559), his widow married Francis Brace. See the Brace pedigree in Phillimore, *supra*, p. 24 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n39/mode/2up>

See also the Dethick pedigree in Phillimore, **supra**, pp. 47-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount02mundgoog#page/n61/mode/2up>

For the Dethick family, see also:

'Parishes: Dodderhill', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 3* (London, 1913), pp. 58-69. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/worcs/vol3/pp58-69> [accessed 3 November 2019].

*Hugh Meynill, probably son of the last-named Hugh, received a grant of free warren there in 1350, (fn. 178) and this is the first mention of Sagebury which has been found. (fn. 179) He left two sons, William, who died without issue before 1363, and Richard, (fn. 180) who was succeeded before 1403 by four granddaughters, Joan, Elizabeth, Margaret, and Thomasine. (fn. 181) At first Sagebury seems to have been divided among them, (fn. 182) but it finally passed to Margaret, who married John Dethick, (fn. 183) son of Ralph Dethick of Dethick Hall, co. Derby. Richard Dethick, grandson of John and Margaret, settled it on his son Richard on his marriage with Elizabeth daughter of John Newport in 1526, (fn. 184) and the last-named Richard died seised of the manors of Sagebury and Obden in 1544, leaving a son William. (fn. 185)*

LM: T{estamentum} Georgij Newporte

In the name of God, Amen. The 18<sup>th</sup> day of December Anno Domini 1558, I, George Newport, being sick in body but in perfect memory, make my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty [+God?] and to the holy company of heaven, my body to be buried in the churchyard by my grandfather;

Also I bequeath unto Elizabeth, my wife, my fats walling which my cousin, Marie Beddill [=Mary Bedell], now hath in occupation;

Also I bequeath to Fulke Newport my lease that I have of Mr West;

Also I bequeath to Margaret Newport, my daughter, my lease of the mill that I have of the Queen;

Also I bequeath to all my daughters, Margaret, Jane, Elizabeth and Mary, such sums of money as my brother and Gilbert Dethick shall think good;

Also I bequeath to Thomas Moulton, my servant, my best gown, my black mare and my saddle;

Also I bequeath to my brother, Robert, my best horse;

Also I do make my brother, Robert, and Gilbert Dethick my true and lawful executors of this my last will and testament;

In witness whereof I have put to my hand and seal, these being witness: my brother, Robert Newport, Fulke Newport, Margaret Newport, Thomas Moulton and Walter Hill, with others.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i testamentum coram Mag{ist}ro Waltero Haddon Legu{m} Doctore Curie prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Custode siue Com{m}issario xxiiijto die mens{is} Aprilis Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo sexagesimo Iuramento Georgij Harrison Notarij publici procu{rato}ris Roberti Newport Executoris Cui com{m}issa fuit administrac{i}o bonor{um} iuriu{m} et creditor{um} etc De bene etc Iurat{o} Reseruata p{otes}tate si{mi}lem Com{m}issionem faciend{i} Gilberto Dethicke executori etiam in h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{o} cum venerit eam in assumptur{o}

[=The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month of April in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixtieth by the oath of George Harrison, notary public, proctor of Robert Newport, executor, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits etc., sworn to well etc., with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to Gilbert Dethick, executor also named in the same testament, when he shall have come to take upon himself the same.]