

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 30 May 1597 and proved 15 December 1598, of Isabelle Mabbe, wife of the London goldsmith John Mabbe (c.1515-1582), whose son, John Mabbe the younger, purchased Oxford's manors of Gibcrack and Little Yeldham (see TNA C 66/1206, m. 30, and TNA CP 2/25/132/1694/26ELIZITRIN, Item 26) and was the father of James Mabbe (1571/2-1642?), who wrote commendatory verses for the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays in 1623. For the wills of John Mabbe (c.1515-1582), goldsmith, Chamberlain of London, and owner of the Tabard Inn in Southwark (i.e. the Tabard Inn of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), see TNA PROB 11/65, ff. 6-7 and PROB 11/71, ff. 70-1). Under the terms of the will of John Mabbe (c.1515-1582), his wife, Isabelle, held a life estate in the Tabard, which was to be inherited after her death by her son, Robert Mabbe, to whom Isabelle also leaves her six houses adjoining the Tabard Inn in the will below. For Isabella and Robert's financial difficulties concerning the Tabard, see Rendle, William and Philip Norman, *The Inns of Old Southwark and their Associations* (London: Longmans, 1888), p. 185-7. For the attempt to serve a writ of outlawry for debt on Robert Mabbe on 10 June 1599, see CP 70/91.

LM: Testamentum Isabelle Mabbe

In the name of God, amen. The thirtieth day of May in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred ninety-seven, I, Isabelle Mabbe of Totteridge in the county of Hertford, widow, sick of body but perfect in remembrance, dreading the perils of death, do make this my last will and testament:

First, I bequeath my soul unto Almighty God the Father, my Maker and Creator, to Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, and to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, and my body reverently to be buried in the church of Totteridge aforesaid;

As concerning my goods and chattels, I give and bequeath them in manner and form following:

First, I give and bequeath unto the poor inhabitants of the town of Totteridge and to every of them two shillings in money;

And unto Father Hide, ten shillings in money;

I give unto my two servants, Richard Hide, and Joan, my maid, twenty shillings in money apiece;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Jane Mabbe and Katherine Mabbe, the daughters of my son, Robert Mabbe, the lease of my houses in Saint Katherine's, with all the rents and profits thereunto belonging, equally to be divided amongst the aforesaid two children, provided always that Robert Mabbe and Jane Mabbe, his wife, and their assigns during

---

the minority of the said children shall take and receive the rents and profits of the aforesaid lease to and for the use of the said children for the education, maintenance in apparel and meat and drink and for the better bringing up of the said Jane and Katherine Mabbe;

Item, I give the lease of my house in Old Fish Street unto my son, Richard Mabbe, to be disposed or bestowed upon his children as he shall think meet and convenient;

Item, I give the lease of my grounds in Totteridge now in the occupation of Richard Smith of Whetstone to be employed to these uses following:

First, I will that the first year's revenue be disbursed and given for the placing of my son Stephen's three children, Mary Mabbe, Jane Mabbe, and Isabelle Mabbe, and for the appareling of them;

The three years' rent and profits next following arising out of the said lands and grounds I bequeath and give unto Marcella Mabbe, the daughter of John Mabbe, to be paid at her marriage or one and twenty years of age, provided that if the said Marcella Mabbe shall die before the years aforesaid, then I will that the said rents and profits before demised shall be equally divided between Mary Mabbe and Katherine Mabbe, sisters unto the said Marcella;

The rest of the years unexpired in the said lease, the rent and revenue whereof I will shall be given unto my son Stephen's five children, Mary, Jane, Dionise, John and Affable Mabbe, to be paid unto them by forty pounds in money apiece, as they or any of them shall come to the age of one and twenty years or days of marriage, so far-forth as the rent of the said lands received do or shall amount to the said sum or sums before bequeathed or so soon after as the said money shall be received by and from the said lands and grounds, and if it shall happen that any of the aforesaid five children shall die before the age of one and twenty years of age or days of marriage, then I will that such part and portion coming to any of the said children deceased shall equally be divided amongst the rest of the brothers and sisters surviving;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son, Robert Mabbe, the lease of my dwelling-house in Totteridge with all the grounds thereunto belonging which were in my own use and occupation at the making hereof, paying yearly unto Richard Stockwood of London for his annual rent fifteen pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence;

Item, I give unto Jane Mabbe, the daughter of Robert Mabbe, my best bedstead with the down bed, bolsters and pillows, best blankets, best curtains, best sheets and the fairest tapestry coverlet, and one fine christening sheet, and one of my silver bowls and one silver can or cup;

Item, I give unto Katherine Mabbe, the daughter of Robert Mabbe, my silver salt and six silver spoons, my tawny rug, four velvet stools and two tissue pillows, and my best basin and ewer, and one chair embroidered, and one dozen of my best napkins;

Item, I give unto Marcella Mabbe six silver spoons;

Item, I give unto Abigail Mabbe and Elizabeth Mabbe, the daughters of my son, John Mabbe the younger, to one of them a silver can, to thother a silver bowl;

Item, I give unto my most dear and well-beloved friends, Mr Cage, Mrs Cage and Mr Stanton, twenty shillings in money apiece to buy each of them a ring of gold;

Item, I give unto my elder son, John Mabbe, the second featherbed and bolster and pillows, and two new blankets, and one rug coverlet;

Item, I give unto my son, Richard Mabbe, the third featherbed and bolster and pillows, and two new blankets, and my second tapestry coverlet;

Item, I give unto my sons John Mabbe, Richard Mabbe and Robert Mabbe all my linen, pewter and brass, to be equally divided amongst them;

The rest of my goods, movables and chattels unbequeathed, I give and bequeath unto Jane Mabbe and Katherine Mabbe, the daughters of my son, Robert Mabbe, whom and which said Robert Mabbe I do ordain my sole and only executor of this my last will and testament, who receiving my debts and paying my debts shall accomplish this my last will and testament;

In witness whereof I, the said Isabelle Mabbe, have set to my hand and seal the day and year above-written. The mark and seal of Isabelle Mabbe. Sealed, subscribed and delivered in the presence of us: W. Stanton and Robert Mabbe, Ellen Nicholls' mark.

A schedule annexed to this my will

Item, I, Isabelle Mabbe, do give unto Marcella Mabbe a featherbed, a bolster, a pair of sheets and one dozen of napkins and a blue rug. In presentia: W. Stanton, Ellen Nicholls' mark.

Whereas in my will within specified there was a devise & grant made unto the five children of my son, Stephen Mabbe, Mary, Jane, Dyonise and John and Affabell Mabbe, of forty pounds' apiece, to be given unto them as they or any of them should come unto the age of one and twenty years or day of marriage out of the rent and profits of the lease ground in Totteridge now in the tenure and occupation of one Smith of Whetstone, upon a motion made unto me by my son, Richard Mabbe, and other, and upon good considerations known unto myself, my will now is that th' aforesaid gift shall be in this sort, viz.:

Th' aforesaid children shall have but thirty pounds apiece, and that ten pound apiece shall be given unto [-my and] the children of my son Richard Mabbe, Mary, Dionis, John, Thomas and Mathias(?) Mabbe, who are to receive the same in that sort as was before granted unto the five former children of my son, Stephen, that is, after the first four years' rent of the said lease, that then they or any of them, as they or any of them shall come unto the age of one and twenty years or day of marriage, shall receive ten pounds apiece so far-forth as the rents and profits of the said lands do or be able to discharge the same sums of money;

And also that the fifty pounds, being the whole portion given unto the five children of my son Richard, be paid by ten pounds a year, being now the half profit and yearly rent of the said lands; for the other half part of the yearly rent, being now ten pounds, I will shall be given unto the children of my son, Stephen, in part of their several portions of thirty pounds due unto them.

A will and devise of my lands in Southwark

The hour of death being uncertain unto ourselves, although most certainly determined and decreed that we all shall die and be changed at the sound of the last trump, and old folks cannot long live, I, Isabelle Mabbe of Totteridge in the county of Hertford, widow, being well stricken in years and moved by the law of nature and reason, but commanded by God himself now whilst I live for to set some order in worldly and temporal business, do make this my last will and testament:

First, I bequeath my body and soul unto the infinite mercy of God Almighty, the Creator and Maker thereof, the which I do steadfastly believe that he will vouchsafe to receive (through the merits of his only-begotten Son, my only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ) my soul presently upon the dissolution of this life, and my body in the resurrection of the just when this mortal body shall put on immortality, in the mean space and time devising the same to be buried in my parish church of Totteridge according to our laudable custom, to rest until the said joyful day;

And for that my lands and houses in Southwark, the which houses and gardens I bought of my son, Edward Mabbe, late deceased, be the things next of most value, I give and bequeath them and every of them with their appurtenances in manner and form following:

Item, for divers considerations me especially moving, and upon the natural love and affection I bear unto my son, Robert Mabbe, I do by these presents give and devise unto my son, Robert Mabbe, and his heirs forever all and singular my six houses and gardens with their appurtenances situate, lying and being in the borough of Southwark, the one of the which houses is next adjacent and being unto the inn called the Tabard in Southwark on the north part of the said inn, and late was in the tenure and occupation of one William Bellaye, a bowyer, late deceased; the other five houses are all adjacent and lying in like

manner next unto the said inn called the Tabard on the south side of the said inn, and are or late were in the tenures and occupations of Jonas Croother(?), cutler, George Bloome, John Jackson, grocer, George Haukyns(?), sadler, and Gregory Haukins(?), chandler, to have and to hold all the six messuages and six gardens with their appurtenances unto my son, Robert Mabbe, and his assigns forever;

And whereas principally for the advancement of Edward Mabbe, my son, late deceased, and through the motherly affection which I did bear towards him, I caused one indenture of covenants and limitation of uses to be made between me, the said Isabelle Mabbe of thone party, and my friends Robert Higdon and John Benson of thother part, bearing date upon the twelfth day of February in the thirtieth year [=12 February 1588] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty that now is touching and concerning my said houses and gardens with all and sing[u]lar their appurtenances, my chief intent and purpose being disappointed by the death of my said son, Edward Mabbe, which I least suspected, yet knowing that God's counsel shall stand when ours shall fail, I did by the said indenture intend and purpose upon such or the like occasion happening for to alter and change the same uses and limitations, as by the purport, true effect and meaning thereof more at large it doth and may appear, and yet that this my six houses and gardens shall be and remain unto some one of my children, as to me shall seem most convenient;

And to the end that this my last will shall stand firm and stable touching the giving, devising and disposing of my said houses and gardens aforesaid with all and singular their appurtenances unto my son, Robert Mabbe, and his heirs forever, I have levied one fine and suffered one common recovery of the said houses and gardens, the uses of which fine and recovery are only to the use of the last will and testament of me, the said Isabel Mabbe, by these presents declared and expressed in writing by this my last will and testament, and unto no other use, intent or purpose;

In witness hereof I have put my hand and seal to this my last will and devise of the aforesaid six houses unto my son, Robert Mabbe and his heirs forever, this thirtieth day of May in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred ninety-seven. The mark and seal of Isabelle Mabbe. Sealed, subscribed and delivered in the presence of us, W. Stanton and mo, Robert Mabbe, Ellen Nicholls' mark.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London Coram venerabili viro Magistro Iohanne Gybson Legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Comisario legitime constituto Decimo Quinto die mensis Decembris Anno Domini Milesimo Quingentesimo Nonagesimo Octauo Iuramento Magistri Iohannis Burroughe notarij publici procuratoris Roberti Mabbe filij et Executoris dicte defuncte in huiusmodi Testamento nominati Cui Comissa fuit Administratio Bonorum Iurium et Creditorum eiusdem defuncte De bene et fideliter administrando &c ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurati Examinatus

---

[=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 fifteenth day of the month of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred ninety-eighth by the oath of Master John Burrough, notary public, proctor of Robert Mabbe, son and executor of the said deceased named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc. Examined.]