

John were the sons of John Syred who married Ellin, the second daughter of Thomas' sister.

John was the first to die in 1709 and described himself in his will as a hoyman, meaning he was the master of a trading boat called a hoy. He wished the vessel to continue to trade with a new master, but should one not be found he wanted his five-sixteenths portion to be sold for the benefit of his children. He left his wife, Sarah, his house at the 'key', along with the yard, garden and 'kittlehouse', all of which she was able to enjoy, with the profits of his estate while she remained a widow, to enable her to bring up their children. However should she remarry, or should his executors hear of the likelihood of '*any such thing in adgitation*', they were empowered to seize all his bills, bonds, mortgages and monies and so provide for his children. Should they think it best they could even remove his children from his wife, placing them with some honest family '*till big enough to shift for themselves*'. This suggests that he had not been raised by a kind guardian as was his brother James but had to endure a stepfather.

James made his will in 1717, describing himself as a gentleman. Clearly he had parted with some of his legacies, but had an estate in Bromeswell and a house in Orford which was let. These were to be sold, whilst his wife was left furniture to furnish three rooms. Everything else was to be sold and she could enjoy the interest during the rest of her life. Afterwards their children John, James, Elizabeth and Sarah were to have the money. His other son Hastings Syred was bequeathed the gold ring James bought '*at his brother John's funeral*'. Clearly this son was named in recognition of the debt James owed to his great-uncle who brought him up. Such namings are not uncommon and result in some cumbersome combinations! Bassingborne Gaudy comes to mind!

Hastings Syred was a '*Capital Burgess*', a member of the Orford Corporation, and also a '*gentleman*'. When he died in 1739 unusually there was no religious preamble to his will. He launched straight in confirming the settlement made with his wife, Ann, when they married but not elaborating on what her dowry comprised. He left his son Hastings his property in Orford on condition he paid his sister, Ann, £16 a year until she was aged

24, and then the lump sum of £400. '*Upon further condition*' he required his son to pay £20 yearly to his young brother, John, until aged 21 and then £200. Should Hastings not pay, his siblings or their heirs could enter the property and enjoy the rents until the legacy was fully paid. This burden was placed on Hastings even though he was still below the age of 21, and all three children were placed under the guardianship of Harrington Willis, their uncle. However he renounced the executorship and presumably the guardianship, so the widow was granted probate.

John Syred also made a less than conventional will in 1770 in that he did not obtain any witnesses, so that affidavits had to be sworn by the draper Edward Ellis and farmer John Syred that they knew the deceased and recognised his handwriting. The dead man was Hastings Syred's brother, and he left him only £5 and '*a full suit of my clothes which my wife shall think proper*'. This seems to presage an entry in the Orford burial record for 1794, '*Hastings Syred, a pauper, buried*'.

Was Hastings impoverished by the demands of his father's will? It raises the question as to what is the responsibility of executors if the deceased made bequests that cannot be satisfied out of his estate?

In Hastings Syred junior's case, his inventory, taken in August 1739, came to just over £83, including arrears of rent due to him totalling some £34. He may have been an innkeeper judging by the rooms and the contents. In the hall were his writing desk, a clock and two guns, along with 14 chairs and three tables. His bedroom was in the parlour where there were spoons and his seal and watch, all silver. One chamber contained a bed, chairs, a table and a trunk, the latter often provided for gentlemen staying the night, and the other had three beds for lesser folk. In the backhouse were two coppers, one large and seven small brewing tubs and two ale stools. There was a pantry with 16 pewter dishes and 20 plates, and in the cellar were seven beer casks and two ale stools.

We have come a long way from the graffito and John Syred, but he is likely to be the man who witnessed Orford marriages in 1796, 1799 and 1807 and who farmed 85 acres of the Marquess of Hertford's land, almost encircling the castle, in