

Mabel Gwynedd Terry-Lewis (1872-1957)

Character in the Sherborne Pageant:

Elizabeth Throckmorton, Lady Raleigh, Episode 11.

Episode 11:

Through the Gate House enter on horseback Sir Walter Raleigh and his wife, Elizabeth Throckmorton. Immediately behind them a young hobbledehoy of a servant. They are followed by a small retinue of ladies and gentlemen on horseback. Sir Walter is gorgeous to behold, in a marvellous rich costume covered with jewels. Round his hat is a fourfold string of pearls. His wife is equally richly dressed.



Mabel Terry-Lewis (Mrs Batley) was the only professional actress in the Pageant.

Maud Wyndham Goodden deputised for Mrs Batley at rehearsals and, as a reward, Mrs Batley allowed Maud to play the part in the Bank Holiday Monday performance. Maud also played the part of Maid Marian.

Born in London in 28 October 1872, the youngest child of Arthur James Lewis (1824-1901) and the actress Kate Terry (1842-1924). She was a member of the Terry-Gielgud dynasty of actors, and was the niece of Ellen Terry and aunt of John Gielgud.

Lewis Carroll and W.S. Gilbert visited the family in 1883 when Mabel was 10 years old. Gilbert wrote of the event "Mabel was the gem of the whole thing. I never saw her equal among children, except Ellen Terry herself. She is a born actress."

Mabel's first appearance on the professional stage was in 'A Pair of Spectacles' at the Garrick Theatre in 1895. She had a successful stage career until her retirement from the stage in 1904 on her marriage to Captain (later Major) Ralph Cecil Batley of the Dorset Yeomanry (1863-1917).

They lived at Seaborough Court in Dorset and her young nephew, John Gielgud stayed on occasions. She took part in the amateur dramatics which she organised for the Women's Institute, and briefly returned to the stage in 1906 for her aunt Ellen Terry's jubilee celebration at Drury Lane, along with more than twenty other members of the Terry family.

In 1911 they were living at Benville Manor, Corscombe, Dorchester.

Her husband resigned his commission in January 1917 because of ill health, and died at Silton Lodge, Zeals, Wiltshire on 23 October 1917 aged 54. He was buried at Seaborough, where Mabel's ashes were also deposited in January 1958 following cremation at Putney.

Mabel returned to the stage in 1920. She also went on to appear in films, including *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Jamaica Inn* (1939). She died in London 28 November 1957, aged 85.