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Does the Don triptych portray the ancestors of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford? [Part 1 of 4]

The central figures in the Don triptych (also known as the Chatsworth altarpiece) on display at the National Gallery in London are Sir John Don (c.1430-1503), and his wife Elizabeth Hastings (c.1450-1508). According to McFarlane, the triptych was painted about 1480 in Hans Memling's studio in Bruges, a little over 60 miles from Calais where Don, a Welsh knight who fought for King Edward IV in the Wars of the Roses, held various appointments during the years 1471-1497. Sir John and his wife Elizabeth had four children -- two sons, Edward and Griffith, and two daughters, Anne and Margaret. Only one of their children appears with them in the triptych, a young girl whom McFarlane identifies as their eldest daughter Anne (1-11).

Five centuries have obliterated almost all traces of the life of Anne Don, who was born about 1471, and probably died in her early thirties. McFarlane conjectures that she predeceased her mother since the latter's will, executed in 1507, makes no mention of her eldest daughter. Anne married Sir William Rede (1467-c.1527) of Boarstall in Buckinghamshire, by whom she had a son, Leonard, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. Few facts have survived about Anne Don's daughters, apart from mention of them in the will of their grandmother, Elizabeth Hastings (McFarlane 8, 53, 56). Her son Leonard Rede inherited Boarstall, and married Anne Heron (Lipscomb 66). Today, Sir William Rede's manor house at Boarstall is gone, although the im-

pressive gatehouse which once guarded the entrance to the manor still exists, the property of the National Trust (Hall).

After Anne Don's death, Sir William Rede remarried. This second marriage, which took place about 1510, is of interest because of the links his new wife and their descendants formed in court and government circles during the Tudor period. Sir William's second wife was a niece of Archbishop William Warham and an important member of the household of Princess (later Queen) Mary (McFarlane 8, 53). Sir William Rede and Anne Warham had several children, including a daughter Anne who married, firstly, Sir Giles Greville, and, secondly, Sir Adrian Fortescue (1476?-1539). Sir Adrian, a kinsman of Queen Anne Boleyn, was, for reasons which are still unclear, executed in 1539 after having been named in an act of attainder of Henry VIII which included such prominent Yorkists as the Marchioness of Exeter, the Countess of Salisbury, and Cardinal Pole (*DNB*, 476-7). By Sir Adrian, Anne Rede was the mother of three sons and two daughters. One of her sons, Sir John Fortescue (1531?-1607), a noted classical scholar, was appointed to supervise the studies of Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth during the reign of Queen Mary, and later served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and a member of the Privy Council in the reign of Elizabeth; Anne Rede's daughter Elizabeth was the wife of Lord Chancellor Bromley (1530-1587) (*DNB*, 485-7). After Sir Adrian Fortescue's death, Anne Rede took a third husband, Sir Thomas Parry (d.1560), the son and heir of Henry Vaughan of Tretower, and a kinsman of William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Parry was steward to the Prin-

cess Elizabeth during her years at Hatfield and, after her accession to the throne, the Queen rewarded his service with a knighthood and several important offices (membership on the Privy Council, a Mastership of the Court of Wards, and the position of Controller of the Household). Lady Anne (Rede) Parry was one of the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's privy chamber. She survived Sir Thomas, and was alive in 1566, at which time she was granted an annuity of £50 for 33 years. Sir Thomas Parry and Anne Rede had four children -- two sons and two daughters; among their descendants were the poets Henry (1622-1695) and Thomas (1622-1666) Vaughan (*DNB*, 384-5).

Thus, although the details of her personal life have been obscured by the passage of time, the young girl depicted with her parents in the Don triptych is nonetheless a minor figure in the historical records of the period. The descendants of Anne Don's marriage to Sir William Rede held Boarstall manor for many generations, and the descendants of her husband's second marriage moved in the inner circle of the Tudor court and administrative system.

Issue #46 of the *Edward De Vere Newsletter* will deal with the life of Sir John Don's eldest son and heir, Sir Edward Don.

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DESCENDANTS AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS OF ANNE DON

