

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 10 November 1535 and proved 30 October 1536, of Elizabeth Kerdeston (d. 20 November 1535), widow of Sir Thierry Robsart, and grandmother of Leicester's first wife, Amy Robsart.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

There is disagreement as to the testatrix' identity. According to Humphery-Smith, she was Elizabeth Cromwell, although no evidence is offered for that assertion. See Humphery-Smith, 'The Robessart Tomb in Westminster Abbey', *Foundations* (2004) 1 (3), pp. 178-92, available online.

According to Richardson, the testatrix was Elizabeth Kerdeston, the daughter of Sir Thomas Kerdeston (d. 20 July 1446) by his second wife, Philippa Trussell (d. before Michaelmas 1454), daughter of Sir John Trussell, whom he married before 5 May 1443. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 443-4, and Vol. III, p. 282.

That Sir Thierry Robsart and the testatrix were connected to the Kerdeston family is indicated by the fact that on 25 May 1497 Edmund de la Pole granted the manor of Bircham Newton to the testatrix for life, remainder to her son, William, and the heirs of the body of Sir Thierry Robsart. See Parkin, Charles, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol. X, (London: William Miller, 1809), pp. 289-90 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=wdsvAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA290&lpg=PA290&dq=%22Robsart%22+%22Eston%22&source=bl&ots=_5k3P2dBwf&sig=wI5aTVOcD0DRMzqrG27shJ83dgo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj8hNDwyJTWAhUURGMKHeP7C5E4ChDoAQgnMAE#v=onepage&q=%22Robsart%22%20%22Eston%22&f=false

Sir Thomas Kerdeston and Philippa his wife, settled [Bircham Newton] on themselves in tail, in the 24th of Henry VI. remainder to William de la Pole Duke of Suffolk, and Alice his wife; and in the 12th of Henry VII. Edmund Earl of Suffolk, by deed, dated May 25, granted it, with Sidesterne [=Syderstone], to the Lady Elizabeth Robsart, widow, only daughter and heir of Sir Thomas, as I take it, for life, and to William her son, and the heirs of the body of Sir Terry Robsert.

For Edmund de la Pole, see also the *ODNB* entry:

Pole, Edmund de la, eighth earl of Suffolk (1472?–1513), nobleman and claimant to the English throne, was the third son of John de la Pole, second duke of Suffolk (1442–1492), and his wife, Elizabeth Plantagenet (1444–1503/4), sister of Edward IV. . . . Nevertheless Suffolk remained loyal to the Tudor crown. In November 1492, during the invasion of France, he co-operated closely with the earls of Essex and Oxford at the siege

of Boulogne. . . . At the same time the earl of Oxford agreed to monitor the behaviour of Suffolk's wife, Margaret, née Scrope (d. 1515), whom he had married before 10 October 1496. . . . Having received an undertaking that his life would be spared, Suffolk was delivered to Henry VII at Calais and imprisoned in the Tower on 24 April 1506. He was omitted from the general pardon at Henry VIII's accession and lingered in prison until the prospect of foreign-backed Yorkist conspiracy again emerged when Richard de la Pole was recognized as king of England by Louis XII of France, and fought in his service against England in 1512. Edmund was finally executed on 4 May 1513, once it became clear that his brother had claimed the English crown in his own right.

Sir Thomas Kerdeston's first wife, whom he married on or about 30 June 1422, was Elizabeth de la Pole (d. 3 April 1440), the daughter of Michael de la Pole (1367/8-1415), 2nd Earl of Suffolk, by Katherine Stafford (d. 8 April 1419). Elizabeth de la Pole was the sister of William de la Pole (1396-1450), 1st Duke of Suffolk, who married Alice Chaucer (c.1404-1475), only child of Thomas Chaucer (c.1367-1434), son of the poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. William de la Pole and Alice Chaucer had one son, John de la Pole (1442-1492), 2nd Duke of Suffolk, who married Elizabeth Plantagenet (1444-1503/4), sister of Edward IV, by whom he was the father of Edmund de la Pole (1472?-1513, 8th Earl of Suffolk, who married Margaret Scrope (d.1515), sister of Elizabeth Scrope Beaumont De Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford. For the will of Margaret Scrope, see TNA PROB 11/11/128. For the will of Elizabeth Scrope Beaumont De Vere, Countess of Oxford, see TNA PROB 11/27/144. See also Richardson, *supra*, and the *ODNB* entries for William de la Pole, Alice Chaucer, and Edmund de la Pole.

Sir Thomas Kerdeston's Latin will, dated 1 July 1446 and proved 4 May 1448, contains a bequest to the Augustine Friars in Norwich to pray for the souls of himself and his two wives, Elizabeth, and Philippa, daughter of Sir John Trussell. See Kirkpatrick, John, *History of the Religious Orders and Communities of the Hospitals and Castle of Norwich*, (London: Edwards and Hughes, 1845)p. 140 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=CvJiAAAACAAJ&pg=PA140&lpg=PA140&dq=Sir+Thomas+Kerdestone&source=bl&ots=30tQsC91xJ&sig=l80ZCeexF7ZBO-PsUvqXDnhlJUg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjuq6jfrpPWAhUD8WMKHSaDCUwQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Sir%20Thomas%20Kerdestone&f=false>

For the will of Sir Thomas Kerdeston, see also Norfolk Record Office, Norfolk Consistory Court Will Register Wylbey 137, available on microfilm, MF 27 or MF/RO 139.

Since the testatrix is mentioned in her father's will (see below) the latest date for her birth would be shortly before 1 July 1446. She was thus at least 40 years of age at the birth of her eldest son, William Robsart, in 1486, and at least 89 years of age at her death on 20 November 1535. For the inquisition post mortem taken in Norfolk in 1536/7 after the testatrix' death, see TNA C 142/58/55 and TNA E 150/636/12.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

The testatrix married Sir Thierry Robsart (1443 – 9 December 1496). For the inquisitions post mortem taken after his death on 2 November 1497 (Suffolk) and on 4 November 1497 (Norfolk), see TNA C 142/12/55 and TNA C 142/12/56. See also Lyte, H.C. Maxwell, *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol. II, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1915), pp. 46-7 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/calendarofinquis02great#page/46/mode/2up>.

For further inquisitions taken in Suffolk in 1499/1500 and on 22 September 1501, see TNA E 150/611/6 and TNA C 142/15/64. See also Lyte, *supra*, pp. 280-1 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/calendarofinquis02great#page/280/mode/2up>.

According to Humphery-Smith, Sir Thierry Robsart was the grandson of Sir John Robsart (c.1372 – 24 December 1450), and the son of Sir John Robsart (d.1447) by Jane Kerdeston. The testatrix' husband was a ward of Alice Chaucer (see above).

According to Blomefield, by Sir Thierry Robsart, the testatrix had two sons, William Robsart and Sir John Robsart, and a daughter, Lucy Robsart. See:

Francis Blomefield, 'Gallow and Brothercross Hundreds: Sedistern', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 7* (London, 1807), pp. 180-184. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol7/pp180-184> [accessed 8 September 2017].

In the 12th of Henry VII. May 25th [=25 May 1497], Edmund de la Pole Earl of Suffolk, granted to Elizabeth Robsert, widow of Sir Terry Robsert, for life, and to William Robsart, her son and heir, and the heirs of the body of Sir Terry, lawfully begotten, all his right and title in this lordship [=Syderstone], and that of Bircham Newton, on the condition, that, on her death, and on the death of the lawful heirs of Sir Terry Robsart, they should return to him and his heirs; this Elizabeth being daughter of Sir Thomas Kerdeston, whose arms, impaled by Sir Terry, were to be seen in this church. . . .

Sir Terry Robsart married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Kerdeston, and dying lord of this town, December 19, Ao. 12th of Henry VII. left two sons, William and John, and a daughter, Lucy, afterwards the wife of Edward Walpole, Esq. of Houghton.— William being a minor, King Henry VII. December 11, Ao. 19°. [=11 December 1503] granted to Margaret Carew, widow, and Thomas Blake, the wardship of all his lands, which, on the death of the said William, soon after descended to his brother, John Robsart. . . .

Sir Thomas Kerdeston's will is dated July 1st, 1446, and gives his body to be buried in the Augustine friars church at Norwich, (fn. 5) appoints the 3d part of the passage of Bunkenham ferry, which descended to him in fee simple, and all his lands, common

... fishing, rents in Claxton, Ashby, Helgheton, Berghapton, Helveston, Yelverton, which he purchased of William Claxton, to be sold, and the money to be disposed of for his soul's health, and Elizabeth's his wife, (his second wife Philippa, daughter of Sir John Trussel, surviving him,) and gives to Elizabeth, his daughter, a missal, and was proved May 4th, 1448. . . .

John Robsert, 2d son of Sir Terry, was lord of this manor, sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, in the 1st of Edward VI. I find that this John Robsert, called late of Windham in Norfolk, Esq. alias of Stanfeld, in the parish of Wymundham, to have a pardon from the said King, by the advice of Edward Duke of Somerset, the protector, and the council, for all treasons, &c. insurrections, rebellions, murders, felonies, before the 20th of January, in the first year of that King:—Witness, the King, at Westminster, the fifth day of May, in his first year.

Soon after this he died, leaving, by Elizabeth his wife, daughter of John Scott of Camberwell, Esq. in Surrey, a daughter and heir, Anne.

Anne, his daughter, married Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, who had a grant of this manor, with that of Hemesby, and advowson of the vicarage, lately belonging to the cathedral church of Norwich, the manor of Newton, by Bircham, and the advowson, late John Robsart's; (fn. 6) also the manor of Great Bircham, to hold Hemesby with Anne his wife, and the heirs of their bodies, in capite; and to hold Sidestern, Newton, and Great Bircham, to Anne and Robert, during the life of the said Robert, by a grant, dated January 30, in the 3d and 4th of Philip and Mary.

This lady came to an unhappy death at Mr. Foster's house at Cumnore, near Oxford, by a fall from the stairs, and was buried in St. Mary's, the University church at Oxford. The Earl is said not to be over kind to her, and that she was either thrown, or tumbled down a pair of stairs, and broke her neck; and the Earl held this manor for his life, dying lord of it in 1588, when it came to John Walpole, Esq. son and heir of Edward Walpole, Esq. of Houghton, and Lucy his wife, daughter of Sir Terry Robsart; (fn. 7) and in this family it remains, the Right Honourable Earl of Orford being lord.

As noted in Blomefield, *supra*, the testatrix had two sons and a daughter by Sir Thierry Robsart.

* **William Robsart** (1486 – 14 November 1503), eldest son and heir, who was 10 years of age at his father's death. His wardship was granted to Sir William Carew (d.1501) of Bury St Edmonds, who in his will granted the custody of William Robsart to his wife, Margaret (nee Chedworth) Carew. See the will of Sir William Carew (d.1501), TNA PROB 11/23/390:

Also by virtue of this my said will I give and bequeath to my said wife the custody of William Robsart with all the profits of his lands at Bulcham [=Bulcamp?] according to the covenants between my Lord of Suffolk and me.

See also Lyte, *supra*, pp. 280-1 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/calendarofinquis02great#page/280/mode/2up>.

For the Robsart manor of Bulcamp, see also *List of Early Chancery Proceedings*, Vol. VIII, (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1963), p. 71 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/listofearlychanc750newy#page/70/mode/2up>.

See also 'Blyth Estuary Quays' at:

<https://blything.wikispaces.com/Blyth+Estuary+Quays>.

According to Humphery-Smith, *supra*, William Robsart married Sir William Carew's daughter, Anne Carew, and died at Cambridge on 14 November 1503. An inquisition post mortem for a William Robsart was taken in Norfolk in 1515/16 (see TNA C 142/30/84 and TNA E 150/618/6), and this may be the same William Robsart, despite the 12-year delay in the taking of the IPM. After the death of William Robsart (1486 – 14 November 1503), Anne Carew married secondly Philip Barnard, the son of William Barnard of Rous Hall, Akenham, Suffolk. See Copinger, W. A., *The Manors of Suffolk*, Vol. 2, p. 230 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924092579550#page/n241/mode/2up>.

Philip Barnard is mentioned in the will of James Tyrrell (1475?-1538), who married Margery Kelly, the widow of Anne Carew's brother, John Carew. See the will of James Tyrrell, TNA PROB 11/26/266.

For William Carew, see also:

<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/GEN-MEDIEVAL/2012-12/1355174877>.

For William Carew, see also:

<http://listsearches.rootsweb.com/th/read/GEN-MEDIEVAL/2012-12/1355239659>.

* **Sir John Robsart** (c.1494 – 8 June 1554), father of Amy Robsart (7 June 1532 – 8 September 1560), first wife of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

* **Lucy Robsart** (buried 1 February 1560), who married Edward Walpole (1483 – 2 January 1559), the son of Thomas Walpole of Houghton, Norfolk. Their grandson was the Jesuit, Edward Walpole (baptized 28 January 1560, d. 3 November 1637), eldest son and heir of John Walpole (d.1588) of Houghton, Norfolk, by Catherine Calibut (d.1612) of Coxford, Norfolk. See the *ODNB* entry for the Jesuit, Edward Walpole:

In April of 1588 Edward's father died, leaving all to his second son, Calibut, and not even naming his elder son in the will. Five months later Robert, earl of Leicester, died. The earl had a life interest in the estates of his first wife, Amy Robsart, which lay contiguous to those of the Walpoles, and these now descended to Edward Walpole as heir-at-law to Sir John Robsart, Amy's father.

In the will below the testatrix states that she has two children in addition to those mentioned above, i.e., 'my daughter Bennet', and 'my son Eston' and 'my daughter, his wife'. The testatrix also mentions Edward Bennet, and Amy Eston, who appear to have been the testatrix' grandchildren.

In connection with the testatrix' 'daughter Eston', it is perhaps relevant that in 1500 John Eston presented to the rectory of the church of All Saints in Bircham Newton in right of his wife, Elizabeth. See Parkin, *supra*, p. 290. This suggests the possibility that the testatrix remarried after the death of Sir Thierry Robsart, but continued to be styled 'Dame Elizabeth Robsart'. The widow of Sir Thomas Lucy, for example, was known as 'Lady Elizabeth Lucy' after her remarriage to Richard Verney. In that case, the two additional children mentioned in the will below would be the testatrix' stepchildren by her second marriage.

LM: Test{amentum} D{omina} Elizabeth{e} Robsert

In dei no{m}i{n}e Amen. The tenth day of November in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred 35, I, Dame Elizabeth Robsart, widow, being in my pure widowhood, with whole mind and good remembrance, make my testament and last will in this form following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, to Our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holy company in heaven, my body to be buried by the sepulchre of my husband, Sir Thierry Robsart, knight, within the chancel of Our Lady in Syderstone;

I give to the high altar of the same for my tithes negligently forgotten 26s 8d, if it may be borne and all my other legacies;

Item, I bequeath to the reparation of both aisles within the said church of Syderstone 40s;

Item, I bequeath to the church of All Saints in Bircham Newton 13s 4d;

Item, to the reparation of the church of All Saints in Wercham 10s;

Item, I will that Sir John Elyot have for one year's service 10 marks to sing and pray for me and my friends;

Item, I give to my son, John Robsart, my basin and the ewer of silver;

Item, I give to my daughter Robsart, his wife, my best gown of black satin;

Item, I give to my daughter Walpole my best gown of black cloth and my best kirtle and my tablet;

item, I give to my daughter Bennet a gown of tawny camlet and my kirtle of tawny damask;

Item, I give to my son Eston a pair of beads of jet with the paternosters of half angels of gold;

Item, I give to my daughter, his wife, three cushions lined with fustian and a long cushion lined with buckram;

Item, I give to Amy Robsart my best (blank) and pair of my best beads;

Item, I give to my goddaughter Walpole a girdle next my best, and a pair of beads next my best, and a silver pot;

Item, I give to Amy Eston a girdle and a pair of beads;

Item, I give to Edward Bennet, my godson, a coat and 26s 8d;

Item, I give to Bartholomew Ellys five marks in money and a whole complete bed;

Item, I give to Adam Semp 6s 8d and a pair of sheets;

Item, I give to John Legg 26s 8d;

Item, I give to John Frendis 6s 8d; and a pair of sheets;

Item, to Richard Sessull[=Cecil?] 6s 8d; and a pair of sheets;

And to all other of my servants 6s 8d;

Item, I give to Katherine Ellyot 3s 4d;

The residue of my goods unbequeathed I give unto Master John Steed, gentleman, to dispose for me and my friends as he shall think best to the pleasure of God and profit of my soul, whom I ordain and make my executor;

Witness hereof, William Alen, vicar of Docking, Sir John Eliot and Adam Semp{er}, with other moe.

Probatum fuit suprascriptu{m} testamentum coram prefato Mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Petre legum Doctore commissario antedicto penultimo die mensis octobris Anno D{omi}ni Mill{esi}mo qui{n}gen{tesimo} xxxvjto Iura{men}to Ioh{ann}is Adams procur{atoris} executor{is} in h{uius}mo{d}i testa{men}to no{m}i{n}at{i} Ac app{ro}bat{um} et insinuat{um} et com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}strac{i}o o{m}n{i}um bonoru{m} et debit{orum} d{i}c{t}i defunct{i} p{re}fat{o} execut{ori} de bene et fideliter &c Ac de pleno &c xviiij die Ianuarij prox{imum} &c

[=The above-written testament was proved before the foresaid Master, William Petre, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary aforesaid, on the penultimate day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 36th by the oath of John Adams, proctor of the executor named in the same testament, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all the goods and debts of the said deceased to the forenamed executor, [+sworn?] to well and faithfully [+administer?] etc., and [+to prepare?] a full [inventory?] etc., [before?] the 18th day of January next [+to come?] etc.]