

SUMMARY: The document below is the will, dated 11 September 1540 and proved 22 September 1540, of Sir Thomas Kitson (d. 11 September 1540) of Hengrave, Suffolk, whose eldest son and heir, Sir Thomas Kitson (1540-1603), was closely associated with Oxford's friends, Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel (d.1587) and Francis Southwell, as indicated in interrogatories administered to Arundel in early 1581 (see TNA SP 12/151/47, ff. 105-106):

What did you at Sir Thomas Kitson's, and whether did you hear any Mass there, and whether did you burn any writings there?

FAMILY BACKGROUND

According to the *ODNB*, the testator was born in Warton, Lancashire, the son of Robert Kitson.

The testator's sister, Margaret Kitson, married John Washington, the ancestor of President George Washington. See:

http://www.sulgravemanor.org.uk/pages/59/family_tree.asp

MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN

The identity of the testator's first wife is unknown. By his first wife, the testator had a daughter:

* **Elizabeth Kitson**, who married Edmund Crofts of Westowe, Suffolk. After her death, Edmund Crofts married Eleanor Burgh.

The testator married secondly Margaret Donnington (1510–1561), the only child of John Donnington (d.1544) of Stoke Newington by Elizabeth Pye, by whom he had a son and four daughters:

* **Sir Thomas Kitson** (1540-1603), born posthumously. He married firstly, in 1557, Jane Paget (d.1558), the daughter of William Paget, 1st Baron Paget. He married secondly, 'at Kenninghall Palace in December 1560 under the auspices of the duchess of Norfolk', Elizabeth Cornwallis (1546/7–1628), the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19–1604) of Brome (whose eldest son and heir purchased Oxford's lease of the mansion of Fisher's Folly). See the will of Sir Thomas Cornwallis, TNA PROB 11/105/106.

Sir Thomas Kitson (1540-1603) was responsible for the secret marriage of William Bouchier (1557 – 12 July 1623), 3rd Earl of Bath, to Mary Cornwallis (see below). From the *ODNB*:

Kitson's efforts were not always crowned with success. In 1577 he had taken advantage of a visit from his young nephew William, fourth earl of Bath, then an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, to engineer his marriage to Mary Cornwallis, his wife's youngest sister. The marriage ceremony was performed late at night and the couple duly bedded. All seemed well until the young man returned to Cambridge and declared his delight in his new bride to his tutor. His mother was summoned to Cambridge, shut the bridegroom with her in her chamber, and, after what was evidently a scene worthy of her own mother, Margaret, dispatched him far from Hengrave. Although the marriage was judged to be valid, it appears eventually to have been set aside on grounds of disparagement, arising from Mary Cornwallis's Catholicism. Nevertheless, to her family and especially to Kitson, who acknowledged that the marriage had been of his contriving, she remained the rightful countess of Bath, receiving a handsome bequest of £300 under Sir Thomas Kitson's will and an annuity of £20 from her sister in 1626, which she was able to enjoy until her own death in 1627.

Sir Thomas Kitson was the subject of interrogatories put to Charles Arundel by the authorities in early January 1581 in connection with allegations made by Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard against Oxford at that time:

What did you at Sir Thomas Kitson's, and whether did you hear any Mass there, and whether did you burn any writings there?

To which Charles Arundel responded:

Other errand had we none at Sir Thomas Kitson's than to dine, and I some business with Sir Thomas Cornwallis.

See TNA SP 12/151/47, ff. 105-6 and TNA SP/151/48, ff. 107-8.

* **Katherine Kitson**, who married Sir John Spencer of Wormleighton, Warwickshire.

* **Dorothy Kitson**, who married Sir Thomas Pakington of Aylesbury.

* **Frances Kitson** (buried 4 April 1586), who married John Bouchier (1521 – 28 February 1556), Lord Fitzwarine, son of John Bouchier (d. 10 February 1561), 2nd Earl of Bath, by his second wife, Eleanor Manners, by whom she had a son William Bouchier (1557 – 12 July 1623), 3rd Earl of Bath, who succeeded his grandfather, the 2nd Earl of Bath, and married firstly, in a secret marriage at night, Mary Cornwallis, the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (see above). William Bouchier, 3rd Earl of Bath, married secondly, on 7 August 1583, Elizabeth Russell (d. 24 March 1605), second daughter of Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford.

Frances Kitson's first husband, John Bouchier (1521 – 28 February 1556), Lord Fitzwarine, died in the lifetime of his father, and after his death, she married, about September 1557, William Barnaby of Great Saxham, Suffolk, 'land agent to the Earl of

Bath, which marriage gave great offence to her friends'. See Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. II, (London: St Catharine Press, 1912), pp. 16-18.

* **Anne Kitson**, who married Sir William Spring (d. 3 February 1600?) of Pakenham, Suffolk. On 19 February 1583, Sir William Spring purchased Oxford's manor of Earls Hall. See TNA C 54/1171, Part 25.

For Sir William Spring, see also the Wikipedia article edited by the author of this website at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Spring_of_Lavenham

After the testator's death, Margaret Donnington married secondly Sir Richard Long (d. 29 September 1546), of Shengay, Cambridgeshire, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and thirdly John Bouchier (1489-1561), 2nd Earl of Bath.

Vicesimo secundo die mensis Septembris Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo quadragesimo In eccl{es}ia Cathedrali diui Pauli London Coram mag{ist}ro will{el}mo Cooke legum doctore venerabilis viri mag{ist}ri Richardi Gwent legum Doctoris Curie Prerogatiue Custodis siue commissarij Surrogato In p{erso}na(?) mei Thome Argall notarij p{ubli}ci actorum scribe et Reg{ist}rarij M{agister} Iohannes Talkarne exhibuit Procuratori{m} suum l{itte}ratorie pro d{omi}na m{ar}gareta Kytsonne Relicta et administratrice bonorum Thome Kytsonne militis Defuncti et fecit se partem pro eadem et exhibuit quandam scripturam voluntatem d{i}c{t}i d{omi}ni Thome in se continen{tem} de et super certis terris tenementis et hereditament{is} eiusdem d{omi}ni Thome in scriptis redact{is} et allegauit q{ue} idem d{omin}us Thomas Kytsonne in sua sana memoria existens voluit reliquit et disposuit d{i}c{t}e d{omi}ne m{ar}garete Kytsonne prout in d{i}c{t}a scriptura continetur et q{ue} d{i}c{t}a scriptura erat facta de mandato et expresso consensu d{i}c{t}i d{omi}ni thome Kytsonne et cora{m} eo in eius vita perlecta et per d{i}c{t}um d{omin}um Thomam Kytsonne eidem d{omi}ne Margarete pro facto ip{s}ius d{omi}ni Thomas tradita et Deliberata Cuius tenor sequitur et est talis.

[=On the twenty-second day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fortieth in the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul in London before Master William Cooke, Doctor of the Laws, Surrogate of the worshipful Master Richard Gwent, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the person [sic for 'presence?'] of me, Thomas Argall, notary public and scribe of the deeds and of the Register, Master John Talkarne exhibited his letters of proxy for Lady Margaret Kitson, relict and administratrix of the goods of Thomas Kitson, knight, deceased, and made himself a party for the same, and exhibited a certain writing containing in it the will of the said Sir Thomas of and concerning certain lands, tenements and hereditaments of the same Sir Thomas reduced to writing, and alleged that the same Sir Thomas Kitson, being in sound mind, willed, left and disposed to the said Lady

Margaret Kitson as is contained in the said writing, and that the said writing was made at the command and with the express consent of the said Sir Thomas Kitson, and was read through before him during his lifetime, and by the said Sir Thomas Kitson was entrusted and delivered to the same Lady Margaret for the deed of the same Sir Thomas, the tenor of which follows and is thus:

LM: Voluntas Tho{me} Kitson milit{is}

This is the last will of me, Sir Thomas Kitson, knight, made and declared the 11th day of September in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and forty and in the 32nd year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the 8th concerning the disposition of my manors, lands and tenements and hereditaments:

First I will and give unto Margaret, my dear beloved wife, my manor of Hengrave in Suffolk with th' appurtenances, and all my lands and tenements in Hengrave, and also my manor of Feltones with th' appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the same manors, lands and tenements to the same Margaret for term of her life, these being witness of this my last will: John Crofts, esquire, Thomas Wendy, Doctor of Physic, Henry Paine, gentleman, Nicholas Lunne, Robert Watson(?) and other. By me, John Croftes. Per me Henricum Paine. Per me Nicolaum Lunne. Per me thomam Wendy, per me Edmundu{m} Croftes.