

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 20 January 1558 and proved 29 November 1558, of Ursula (de Vere) Knightley.

The testatrix was the daughter of Sir George Vere (died c.1503) and his wife, Margaret Stafford, and sister and co-heir of John de Vere (1499-1526), 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. For the will of the testatrix' father, Sir George Vere, see TNA PROB 11/13/444.

The testatrix married firstly George Windsor, eldest son and heir apparent of Andrew Windsor (d.1543), 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Windsor. George Windsor predeceased his father, dying before 1520. According to his father's will, TNA PROB 11/29/416, he was buried in the chapel at Hounslow. Part of the inscription on the tomb of George Windsor is given in Weever, John, *Antient Funeral Monuments* (London: W. Tooke, 1768), at p. 299:

*Orate pro animabus GEORGII WINDSORE, filij ANDREE WINDSORE, de Stanwell, militis; & VRSULE uxoris eius . . . suorum & heredis apparentis . . . JOHANNIS, comitis Oxonie . . .*

The testatrix married secondly Sir Edmund Knightley (by 1491 – 12 September 1542), serjeant-at-law. For Sir Edmund Knightley's maternal grandparents, see:

<http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=39707>.

There were no surviving issue of either marriage, although the memorial brass to Sir Edmund Knightley and the testatrix at his manor of Fawsley in Northamptonshire depicts six daughters who died young. The manor of Fawsley is of significance in connection with the publication of the Marprelate tracts during Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was at Fawsley, then in the possession of Sir Edmund's nephew, Sir Richard Knightley (1533-1615), that one of the Marprelate tracts, the *Epitome*, was printed on a secret press in November 1588. Sir Richard Knightley had family connections to the de Veres though the testatrix, and to the Windsors; his mother was Anne Ferrers (d.1544), aunt of Edward Ferrers (1526-1564) of Baddesley Clinton, whose wife was Bridget Windsor, daughter of William Windsor (d.1558), 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Windsor.

One of the testatrix' principal legatees was her sister Elizabeth Vere (d.1557), widow of Sir Anthony Wingfield (d. 15 August 1552) of Letheringham, Suffolk. Elizabeth Vere's own will is dated 28 July 1557, and was proved 13 November 1559. It is therefore unclear whether Elizabeth (nee de Vere) Wingfield survived to inherit from the testatrix.

The other principal legatees of the testatrix were her nephew, Sir Robert Wingfield; her niece and executrix, Elizabeth Naunton, the daughter of the testatrix' sister, Elizabeth Vere, and widow of William Naunton (their son Henry Naunton, mentioned in the will, was the father of Sir Robert Naunton, the author of *Fragmenta Regalia*); and Thomas Seckford of Gray's Inn (1515-1587), who also had a family connection to the Wingfields (his parents were Thomas Seckford (1495-1575) and Margaret Wingfield (1493-1557),

the sister of Sir Anthony Wingfield (d. 15 August 1552) of Letheringham). The terms of the will suggest that the testatrix may have resided with Elizabeth Naunton during her final years. A later marriage further strengthened ties between the Wingfield and de Vere families: in 1582, Susan Bertie, the sister-in-law of Oxford's sister, Mary de Vere, married Sir John Wingfield (d.1596), a grandson of the testatrix' sister, Elizabeth Vere (d.1557), and her husband, Sir Anthony Wingfield (d. 15 August 1552).

The Countess of Oxford mentioned in the will as holding a reversionary interest in certain manors is Anne (Howard) de Vere (d.1558/9), Countess of Oxford, widow of the testatrix' brother, John de Vere (1499-1526), 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford.

The Lord Latimer mentioned in the will is the testatrix' nephew, John Neville (d.1577), 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Latimer, the son of John Neville (1493-1543), 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Latimer, and the testatrix' sister, Dorothy de Vere (d.1527). The four daughters and co-heirs of John Neville (d.1577), 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Latimer, married as follows: Katherine Neville (1545/6-1596) married Henry Percy (c.1532-1585), 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland; Dorothy Neville (1548-1609) married Lord Burghley's elder son, Thomas Cecil (1542-1623); Lucy Neville married William Cornwallis (1545?-1611) of Brome; and Elizabeth Neville (1545x50-1630) married Sir John Danvers (1540-1594) of Dauntsey.

Several of the manors mentioned in the will had descended to the testatrix through her uncle, John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/17/379.

LM: Tes{tamen}t{u}m D{omi}ne Vrsule knightley vid{ue}

In the name of God, Amen. The 20<sup>th</sup> day of January in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fifty and seven, I, Dame Ursula Knightley, widow, late the wife of Sir Edmund Knightley, knight, deceased, being in health of body and of perfect mind and memory, thanks be unto Almighty God therefore, remembering and calling unto mind the uncertainty of this transitory life, do make and ordain this my last will and testament, revoking all other former wills, in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath and commend my soul to Almighty God the Father, the Son and th' Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, having full hope and perfect trust through the merits of the death and passion of my Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to be one of those saved souls that shall have the fruition of the high Deity, and my body I will to be buried in such church and in such place thereof as it shall be thought good and convenient to th' executors of this my said last will and testament;

And as touching th' order, declaration and disposition of all my part and portion of, in and to all the manors, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and all other hereditaments hereafter especified which now I have and hold in possession or reversion, in coparcenary, in fee-simple or fee-tail with my nephew Sir John Neville, knight, Lord

Latimer, and my well beloved sister Elizabeth Wingfield, widow, late wife of Sir Anthony Wingfield, knight, deceased, or in common with any other person or persons having or claiming any estate or interest in the same manors, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services or other hereditaments from, by or under the said Lord Latimer and my said sister Dame Elizabeth Wingfield, or of any of them, I will and declare this my last will and testament, revoking thereby all other former wills, in manner and form following:

First, I will and bequeath all my part and portion of, in and to the manors, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and other hereditaments called Brokes Hall and Holbrook Park with th' appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, and of the manor of East Winch with th' appurtenances in the county of Norfolk, and of the manors, lands and tenements called Old Hall in Wethersfield in the county of Essex, to my said sister Dame Elizabeth Wingfield if she fortune to be in life at the time of my death, to have and to hold the said part and portion of all and singular the premises to the said Elizabeth from and immediately after my decease unto th' end and term of 20 years then next following, if she, the same Dame Elizabeth, so long shall live, and if it fortune the said Dame Elizabeth Wingfield not to be in life at the time of my death, then I will and devise by this my last will and testament all my said part and portion of all and singular the premises to my well beloved nephew, Sir Robert Wingfield, knight, son and heir of the said Sir Anthony Wingfield, knight, deceased, begotten of the body of my said sister Elizabeth, to have and to hold to him, the said Sir Robert, his executors and assigns, for and during the said term and number of 20 years from and immediately after my death, and if my said sister Dame Elizabeth Wingfield fortune to be in life at the time of my death, and to die before th' end and term of the said 20 years, then I will that all and singular my said part and portion of, in and to the premises and every part thereof shall remain and be to the said Sir Robert Wingfield, knight, his executors and assignees, for and during the said term of 20 years;

Item, I will and bequeath by this my last will and testament all my part and portion of and to the manor of Weeting, Barton Bendish, Babingley, Wolverton and Sandringham, Tostres and Fittons in Wiggenhall with th' appurtenances in the county of Norfolk, and of, in and to the manors, lands or tenements called Predenneck, Rosemaphen, Etheron, Poldian and Penhale with th' appurtenances in the county of Cornwall, and of all other my lands and tenements, rents, reversions, services and other hereditaments in the said county of Cornwall, and of the capital house called Berismarques in London, and of the gardens thereunto belonging and adjoining, and of all the yearly rents and services reserved upon any demise or demises heretofore made of the premises or any part thereof, to my well beloved niece Elizabeth Naunton, widow, to have and to hold to her, her executors and assignees, from and immediately after my death unto th' end and term of 20 years then next following fully to be completed and ended, to th' intent that the said Elizabeth Naunton with th' issues and profits thereof rising shall perform and fulfil such things as hereafter in these presents shall be appointed for her to do, according to the true meaning and intent of the same;

Item, further I will and bequeath by this my last will and testament all my part and portion of, in and to the manor of Hillington with th' appurtenances in the county of Norfolk, and of the manor of Kensington with th' appurtenances in the county of Middlesex, and of the reversion of the same manors and of every part of them, and of all other my lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and other hereditaments lying and being in the gownes(?) of Kensington and Chelsea otherwise Chelsall, or any of them, or elsewhere within the said county of Middlesex, to Thomas Seckford of Gray's Inn, gentleman, to have & to hold so much of the premises last before-mentioned as shall be in the possession of me, the said Dame Ursula, at the time of my decease, or in th' occupation or tenure of any other person or persons as farmers of the same, to the said Thomas Seckford, his executors or assignees, from and immediately after my death to th' end and term of 20 years then next ensuing, and to have and to hold so much of my part and portion of the premises as is assigned and limited to the Lady Anne, Countess of Oxenford, during her life immediately after the decease of the said Countess unto the said Thomas Seckford, his executors & assignees, for and during the term of 20 years then next ensuing fully to be completed and ended;

Item, whereas the said Anne, Countess of Oxenford, now hath and holdeth for term of life the manors of Knapton, Middelton, Scales Hoo and Tittleshall with th' appurtenances in the county of Norfolk, and the manors of Chelsworth, Walshams Hall and Preston with th' appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, and the manors of Stratford and Calverton with th' appurtenances in the county of Buckingham, and the manors of Saxton, Hawkeston and Dullingham with th' appurtenances in the county of Cambridge, and the manors of Wigston with th' appurtenances in the county of Leicester, the reversion of all and singular the said manors belonging to the said Lord Latimer, my said sister Elizabeth Wingfield, and to me, the said Dame Ursula, and to th' heirs of our body lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue to our right heirs, I will that immediately after our [sic] death of the said Lady Anne, Countess of Oxenford, that all my said part and portion of, in and to the said manors with th' appurtenances last before-mentioned whereof the said Countess of Oxford is tenant during her life, shall remain and be to my said niece Elizabeth Naunton, her executors and assigns, [-shall with th' issue and profits of my said part] for and during the term of 20 years then next and immediately following fully to be complete and ended;

Item, I will that my said niece Elizabeth Naunton, her executors and assignees, shall with the issues and profits of my said part and portion of the premises immediately after my death pay unto every of the younger sons of the said Sir Anthony Wingfield, that is to say, Charles Wingfield, Richard Wingfield, Anthony Wingfield and Henry Wingfield, yearly for and during the said term of 20 years next after my death the sum of four pounds of good and lawful money of England at two several terms in the year of Saint Michael th' Archangel and the Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions to be paid; and to William Castlond, my servant, and Margaret, his wife, and to the longer-liver of them yearly during the said term three pounds, at the said several feasts by even portions to be paid; and to my servant Robert Porter yearly during the said term of 20 years next ensuing my death 10s yearly at the several feasts aforesaid by even portions to be paid; and to Nicholas Philips, my servant, yearly during the said term of 20 years next ensuing

my death 20s at the feasts aforesaid by even portions to be paid if the said Nicholas shall remain and dwell with me at the time of my death; and to my servant Thomas Clerke yearly for and during the said term of 20 years next and immediately after my death 10s at the several feasts aforesaid to be paid;

And I will that the said Sir Robert Wingfield, knight, within one half year after my decease and the decease of my said sister Elizabeth Wingfield, shall by his sufficient deed and writing in the law grant one annuity or yearly rent of five pounds to be then going out of his part and portion of the said manor of East Winch to Harry Naunton, the younger son of my said niece Elizabeth Naunton, to have and perceive to him, the said Henry, for and during the term of his life, with clause of distress to be contained in the said deed for the non-payment thereof, and if he fail in making and granting the said annuity to the said Harry, then I will that the said Harry Naunton shall have all such like interest in the said manor of East Winch as by this my last will is limited, devised and appointed to the said Sir Robert;

Item, I will that my said niece Elizabeth Naunton, her executors and assignees, shall with th' issues and the profits of my said part and portion of the premises immediately after my death pay yearly unto my servant William Walter, and Joyce, his wife, and to the longer-liver of them for and during the said term of 20 years next after my death 10s of good and lawful money of England at two several terms in the year of Saint Michael th' Archangel [-th' Archangel] and th' Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions to be paid;

Item, I will that my said niece Elizabeth Naunton, her executors and assignees, shall with th' issues and profits of my said part & portion of my said lands immediately after my death pay yearly unto my servant John Skeawe, and Ursula, his wife, and the longer-liver of them for and during the said term of 20 years next after my death forty shillings of good and lawful money of England at the feast of Saint Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions to be paid;

Provided always that when any of the said persons to whom the said several annuities are willed, limited & appointed to be paid by my said niece, her executors or assignees, shall die within the said term of 20 years, that then the said several annuities of every such person and persons so dying shall cease;

Item, I bequeath to every of my maidens waiting upon me daily in my chamber, and to every other of my yeomen(?) servants remaining in my service at the time of my death, except such as are before mentioned unto whom I have given the several annuities aforesaid, 10s, and to every other of my inferior servants, as well men-servants as women servants remaining in my service at the time of my death, 20s over and besides all their wages that then shall be due;

And as touching my moveable goods, chattel[s], plate or household stuff, I do nor can thereof make or declare any testament, forsomuch as by my deed in writing sealed under my seal I have already, for many considerations me moving, given them all to my said

well beloved niece, Elizabeth Naunton, whom for the having, obtaining or recovering of all such debts and other things as is or shall be due unto me at the time of my death, and for the having and obtaining of all other things which by the law pertain and belong to an executor to demand, have or recover, I do nominate, ordain and appoint to be the sole executrix of this my last will and testament, and I most heartily require my said well beloved friend, Thomas Seckford of Gray's Inn, thereof to be supervisor, and to aid and assist my said well beloved niece in all things touching th' execution of this my said will, unto whom for his pains and travail I give of th' issues and revenues aforesaid the sum of ten pounds;

In witness whereof unto this my said last will and testament I have set my seal and subscribed my name the day and year above-written. Witnesses hereof: Ursula K., Richard Wingfield, Francis Sone, Thomas Seckford, George Robson, John Cooke, clerk, William Castlon, William Strangewiche, Robert Riswicke, clerk.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum tes{tamen}t{u}m coram d{omi}no apud London xxixmo die mens{is} Nouembris Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo qui{n}quagesimo Octauo Iuramento Iustiniam Kidd procur{atoris} Eliz{abethe} Naunton executric{is} in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento no{m}i{n}at{e} Ac app{ro}bat{um} et insinuatu{m} &c Comissaq{ue} fuit admi{ni}strac{i}o &c pefat{e} executrici De b{e}n{e} &c Ac de pleno et fideli Inuentario &c Necnon de plano et vero compoto &c iurat{e}

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord [+Archbishop] at London on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-eighth by the oath of Justinian Kyd, proctor of Elizabeth Naunton, executrix appointed in the same testament, and approved and entered etc., and administration was granted etc. to the forenamed executrix, sworn to well etc. and a full and true inventory etc. and also a plain and true account etc.]