

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 28 May 1561 and proved 24 January 1563, of Thomas Lee (d.1561x3) of Langley, Shropshire, who appoints as one of his trustees Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1), the owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* (formerly Loan 61 in the British Library, and now in the hands of Lord Hesketh, a trustee) containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare (see Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954)).

The testator was the son and heir of Fulke Lee and Alice Cornwall, the daughter of Sir Richard Cornwall of Berrington, Herefordshire. See Vaughan, H.F.J., 'Inscriptions on Tombs in the Parish Churches of Tong and Donington', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Vol. V, (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, 1882), pp. 313-90 at pp. 375-6:

<https://archive.org/stream/transactionsofsh05shro#page/n813/mode/2up>.

See also Corbet, Augusta Elizabeth, *The Family of Corbet*, (London: St. Catherine's Press, n.d.), Vol. II, pp. 253, 264 at:

<http://archive.org/stream/familyofcorbetit02corb#page/n135/mode/2up>.

The testator married Jane Corbet, the daughter of Sir Robert Corbet (b. about 1477, d. 11 April 1513) and Elizabeth Vernon (d. 29 March 1563), the daughter of Sir Henry Vernon (b. circa 1441, d. 13 April 1515) of Haddon. See the will of the testator's father-in-law, Sir Robert Corbet, TNA PROB 11/17/471, and Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. II, p. 465.

In the will below the testator appoints as trustees Sir Andrew Corbet, Sir Richard Newport, and Reginald Corbet, all three of whom were relations of his wife, Jane (nee Corbet) Lee:

- Sir Andrew Corbet (b. 1 November 1522, d. 16 August 1578) was the eldest son and heir of Jane Corbet's brother, Roger Corbet (d.1538/9). Roger Corbet (d.1538/9) had been a ward of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. After the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl's death, the wardship was sold to Andrew Windsor (1467-1543), 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Windsor (see TNA C 1/1485/58), who married his ward to his daughter, Anne Windsor (d.1550/1). For the will of Roger Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/27/408. For the will of Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet (d.1550/1), see TNA PROB 11/34/443. Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet's eldest brother, George Windsor (d. before 1520), was the husband of Ursula de Vere (d.1558), sister and co-heir of John de Vere, 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford (1499-1526). For the will of Ursula de Vere, see TNA PROB 11/42A/10. Anne Corbet's nephew, Edward (1532?-1575), 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Windsor, was the husband of Oxford's half-sister, Katherine de Vere (1538-1600). For the wills of Edward (1532?-1575), 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Windsor, and his wife, Katherine de Vere (1538-1600), see TNA PROB 11/57/332 and TNA PROB 11/95/237. There were thus strong family connections in this generation between the Newports

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(owners of the annotated copy of Hall's *Chronicle*), the Corbets, the Windsors, and the de Veres.

- Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1), owner of the annotated copy of Hall's *Chronicle* mentioned above, was the son of Jane Corbet's sister, Joanna or Anna Corbet, who married Thomas Newport (d.1548x51). For the wills of Thomas Newport and Sir Richard Newport, see TNA PROB 11/34/176 and TNA PROB 11/53/456.

- Reginald Corbet (born c.1510, d. 19 November 1566), was Jane Corbet's brother. His daughter, Margaret Corbet, eventually married Humphrey Lee, grandson of the testator and Jane Corbet. For Reginald Corbet, see the *ODNB* entry, and his will, TNA PROB 11/49/18.

In the will below the testator speaks of his 'great charge of children'. Although in the will below he names only four sons, Richard, Jerome, Francis and John, and two daughters, Mary and Joyce, he had several other children. Vaughan, *supra*, pp. 375-7, gives the names of three sons and seven daughters:

\* Richard Lee (d.1590/1) of Langley, Shropshire, who married Eleanor Wrottesley, the daughter of Walter Wrottesley of Wrottesley, Staffordshire, by his second wife, Joyce Leighton, daughter of Sir Edward Leighton of Wattlesborough, Shropshire. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 377; the will of Richard Lee, dated 29 October 1590, TNA PROB 11/77/548; and Wrottesley, George, *History of the Family of Wrottesley of Wrottesley, Co. Stafford*, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1903), pp. 274-5 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/historyoffamilyo00wrot#page/272/mode/2up>.

\* Thomas Lee (b.1529), who married Mary Plowden, the daughter of the lawyer, Edmund Plowden (c.1518–1585), by Katherine Sheldon, daughter of William Sheldon of Beoley. See the *ODNB* entry for Edmund Plowden, the will of William Sheldon, TNA PROB 11/53/79, and the pedigree of Sheldon at:

<http://www.sheldongenealogy.com/bigland.html>.

\* John Lee, mentioned in the will of his eldest brother, Richard, *supra*.

\* Joyce Lee, who married Robert Moreton of Haughton. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 375.

\* Dorothy Lee, who married Richard Purcell. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 376.

\* Jane Lee, who married Edward Moore. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 376.

\* Mary Lee (b.1536), who married Edward Plowden (d.1576) of Plowden, brother of the lawyer, Edmund Plowden (c.1518–1585). For the will of Edward Plowden (d.1576), in which he appoints his wife, Mary (nee Lee) Plowden, and his son, Andrew Plowden, as

executors, and his brother, Edmund Plowden (c.1518–1585), esquire, and his brother-in-law, Richard Lee (d.1590/1), esquire, as overseers, see TNA PROB 11/58/523.

\* Susannah Lee.

\* Margaret Lee, who married Hugh Bostock of Moreton Say. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 376.

\* Katherine Lee, who married Edward Corbet of Longner. See Vaughan, *supra*, p. 376.

See also the pedigree of Lee in Grazebrook, George and John Paul Rylands, eds., *The Visitation of Shropshire Taken in the Year 1623, Part II*, (London: Harleian Society, 1889), Vol. XXIX, pp. 314-20 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshrop01grazgoog#page/n46/mode/2up>.

See also the pedigree of Lee of Langley in Burke, John, and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies*, (London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1838), pp. 305-6 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/agenealogicalan03burkgoog#page/n332/mode/2up>.

See also the pedigree of Corbet in Burke, John, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1836), Vol. III, pp. 189-90 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/genealogicalhera03burk#page/190/mode/2up>.

RM: T{estamentum} Thomas Lee

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, I, Thomas Lee of Langley in the county of Salop, calling to remembrance that although there is nothing more certain than death, the time thereof being uncertain unto every creature living in this world, considering also the great charge of children which it hath pleased Almighty God to send me which for the more part be unprovided for or preferred to any living, minding to distribute and leave unto them for their relief according to such ability & power as it pleased God to send unto me, if it please Almighty God to call me unto his mercy from this transitory life before that I shall prefer them to convenient living, do therefore and for other necessary considerations me moving make and declare this my last will and testament, as well concerning the disposition of certain of my lands and tenements hereafter in this my will specified and expressed, as also my testament and last will concerning the disposition of my goods and chattels in manner and form as hereafter is expressed, mentioned and declared;

And before that I shall enter into the making and declaring of my said last will and testament as concerning the disposition of my lands and tenements, goods and chattels, I, calling to my remembrance the manifold benefits of Almighty God wrought for man, his creature, and that I, notwithstanding the same, by th' instigation of the foul and filthy motions and desires of the Devil, the world and the flesh, have been driven and given myself contrary to the most holy will and commandments of Almighty God from virtuous and clean living unto foul and stinking, for which my offences and sinful living I earnestly do repent and submit myself with a faithful, contrite and meek heart unto the great mercy of Almighty God, trusting assuredly that through and by the merits of Christ's passion, death and blood, my Redeemer and Saviour, to have full remission of all my sins and offences committed against the most holy will of Almighty God;

And I will that my body be buried within the parish church where I shall fortune to decease according to the discretion of my executors of this my last will and testament;

And now as concerning the disposition of my lands and tenements, I, the forenamed Thomas Lee, do make and ordain and declare this my last will of certain of my lands and tenements hereafter mentioned and expressed:

First I, the said Thomas Lee, will and declare by this my present last will made in writing that Sir Andrew Corbet, Richard Newport, knight, and Reginald Corbet, esquire, their executors and assigns, shall immediately from and after the time of my decease have, perceive, levy and take the whole rents, revenues, issues and profits coming, renewing and rising, as well yearly as otherwise, of and upon all and singular those my lands and tenements, rents, revenues, reversions and profits, whatsoever they be, set, lying and being [+in] the towns, lordships or hamlets of Donnington, Kilsall and Shackerley within the foresaid county of Salop until such time as the said Sir Richard, Sir Andrew and Reginald Corbet, their executors or assigns, shall have received, had or taken of the same revenues, rents, issues and profits the sum of two hundred marks to th' use and intents as hereafter in this my last will is expressed, that is to say, that the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet, their executors and assigns, shall with the same sums of money so levied, perceived and taken by them of, in and upon the premises content and pay to either of my said daughters named Mary Lee and Joyce Lee, being unmarried at the time of my decease, the sum of one hundred marks to either of their preferments and marriage;

Provided always and it is my will that if either of my forenamed daughters be not ordered in or concerning their marriages by the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet or by the more part of them, but marry themselves against the mind, goodwill, consents and agreements of the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet or the most part of them, or if it shall fortune either of my said daughters after my decease to die before she or they so deceasing shall be married, that then such part and portion of money as I have before in this my last will left, willed and appointed unto her or them so marrying her or themselves without such consents and agreement as is aforesaid, shall cease, extinct and determine without any payment thereof to be had or made by the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet or their assigns to any such of my said

daughters as shall so fortune to decease or to marry herself after my decease contrary to this my will;

Provided also and it is my will that if it shall fortune my said daughters or either of them to be married within my lifetime, and the marriage money granted, promised and agreed by me to be paid in marriage with the same daughter or daughters so being married in my life or part thereof do remain unpaid at the time of my decease, so that the same sum or sums of money as shall so remain or be unpaid at the time of my decease shall not exceed or extend above the sum of 200 marks apiece to such of my said daughters as shall fortune to be married in my lifetime, that then the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Randoll [sic] Corbet, their executors and assigns, shall content and pay unto either of the same my said daughters being married in my lifetime all such sums of money so covenanted and promised by me to be paid in marriage with the same daughter or daughters so being married in my lifetime, so that the same sum or sums of money do not extend above 100 marks apiece as shall be promised and granted by me to be paid in marriage with the same daughter or daughters, the same sums of money to be levied and taken of the rents, revenues, issues and profits of the lands and tenements before mentioned;

And if the same sum or sums of money so by me promised and granted to be paid in marriage with my said daughters or either of them being unmarried at the time of my decease do amount above the sum or sums of one hundred marks apiece, then I will that the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet, their executors and assigns, shall content and pay of the said rents, issues and profits the sum of a hundred marks to such of my said daughters as the same money shall remain unpaid unto, and the rest thereof to be paid of my movable goods and chattels;

Provided always and it is my will that if the said Sir Andrew Corbet, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet shall fortune to have levied, perceived and taken the sums above-mentioned or part or parcel of the same sums of money of the rents, issues and profits of the premises to and for the marriage or marriages of my said daughters or either of them, and the same my said daughters or either of them chance after my decease before she or they shall fortune to be married to die, that then the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet shall from time to time at the reasonable request of Jane, my wife, retain in their hands and custody as much money as I have before appointed to thother of my said daughters then living, [+and?] content and pay unto the said Jane, my wife, all such sums of money as they shall have received of the premises to and for the marriage of the same daughter so deceasing before she or they shall be married, deducting, abating and retaining of the same portion or portions of money of my said daughter so deceasing after my decease as much thereof as they shall think convenient for the finding of the same daughter so deceasing unmarried after my decease, if the same daughter were found by them, of the same portion one hundred marks or otherwise upon their costs and charges;

And furthermore my will and intent is that after all the said sums of money for the marriage or marriages or finding of my said daughters or either of them and all other charges concerning the same be fully satisfied, contented and paid of th' issues and

profits of my said lands and tenements aforesaid in manner and form before rehearsed, that then all the rents, issues and profits coming and growing of the same said lands and tenements in Donnington, Kilsall and Shackerley and th' hamlets belonging to the same by th' oversight of mine executors or of the most part of them shall remain to th' use and profit of my 2 younger sons called Francis Lee and John Lee during their lives natural, and to the longest liver of them, so that in case either of them die and depart this natural life before thother, then I will that the survivor shall have and enjoy the whole during his natural life;

And after the decease of every of my said sons, then I will that all the rents, issues and profits of the said lands in Donnington, Kilsall and Shackerley, and also all the same lordships and lands with th' hamlets belonging to the same shall remain to th' use and behoof of my right heirs forever;

And as concerning the disposition of my goods and chattels, first I will and bequeath to Richard Lee, my son, my best salt of silver and gilt, six of my draught oxen with a wain, plows and yokes belonging and necessary for the same, and to Walter Lee, son to my said son, Richard, 8 kine, so that in such condition that my said son, Richard, do not interrupt th' execution of this my last will made for and concerning my lands and tenements before expressed;

And if the said Richard or any of my heirs in any manner of wise after my decease let, interrupt or disturb th' execution of this my last will of the said lands and tenements or of any parcel of the same by suing of any manner of action or suit in the law or by any entry or other disturbance to be had or made by the said Richard Lee or by any other of my heirs or by his or any of their means, then my will is that my legacy and bequest of all the said goods and chattels by me before bequeathed in this my last will and testament unto my said son, Richard, or his son, Walter, shall be frustrate, void and of none effect, and that then the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet, their executors and assigns, immediately after any such suit, entry, interruption, let or disturbance had, made or attempted by the said Richard Lee or by any other of mine heirs or by any of their means in th' execution of this my last will made of the lands, tenements or lordships before mentioned shall enter into the two parts of all my lands and tenements in the foresaid county of Salop to take, levy and perceive all the rents, revenues and profits of the same two parts as well to th' uses of my said sons as for the levying and paying of all the foresaid sums of money before limited and appointed to be levied and taken of and upon my said lands and tenements in Donnington, Kilsall and Shackerley foresaid, as also for the supportation, bearing and maintenance of all such costs, charges and expenses as the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet, their executors and assigns, shall be put unto by means and occasion of any such action or actions, suit or suits, entry or disturbance had, made or attempted by the said Richard Lee or by any other of my heirs or by his or by any of their means or procurements;

And I will that there shall be given and distributed to poor people before or in the day of my funerals such sum of money as my executor shall think good;

The residue of all my goods and chattels I freely give and bequeath to Jane Lee, my wife, to distribute at her will and pleasure;

And I do ordain, constitute and make the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet and the said Jane, my wife, to be my executors of this my last will and testament, and to have the full execution and administration thereof;

And I do give and bequeath to every of the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet for their labours and pains to be taken in and about the performance and execution of this my last will and testament the sum of £5 sterling to be taken and levied of my moveable goods and chattels, requiring them most heartily to take upon them the pains, charges and labours in and about the performance and execution of this my last will and testament written the 28<sup>th</sup> day of May in the year of Our Lord God 1561 and in the third year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., these being witness: Thomas Poyner, esquire, William Leighton, esquire, Johan Mathen(?), Steven Poole, with others. Thomas Lee.

Be it known to all men to whom this present schedule annexed unto my will shall come to be seen or read, I, Thomas Lee of Langley, esquire, being of perfect memory, do give and bequeath and my will is that Sir Andrew Corbet and Sir Richard Newport, knights, and Reginald Corbet, esquire, their executors and assigns, shall immediately after and from the time of my decease have, perceive, levy and take the whole rents, issues, revenues and profits coming, renewing and rising as well yearly as otherwise of and upon all and singular those my lands and tenements, rents, revenues, reversions and profits, whatsoever they be, set, lying and being in the towns and lordships or hamlets of Donnington, Kilsall and Shackerley within the foresaid county of Salop unto such time as the said Sir Andrew, Sir Richard and Reginald Corbet, their executors or assigns, shall have received, had and taken of the same revenues, rents, issues and profits the sum of 40 marks of good and lawful money of England over and above the sum of two hundred marks before in my will expressed to th' use and behoof of Mary and Joyce, my two daughters;

Furthermore my will is that after the said sums of two hundred and forty marks before in my will and this schedule rehearsed and bequeathed or [sic?] paid and discharged to my said daughters, that Jerome Lee, my third son, shall have and yearly take during his life natural one annuity or yearly rent of 5 marks of good and lawful money of England issuing and going out of my said manor of Donnington and out of all the lands and tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging;

Moreover my will and [-and] intent is that if it happen the said yearly rent of five marks or an part or parcel thereof to be behind and not paid to the said Jerome at any time or times during his natural life, that then and from thenceforth it shall be lawful unto the said Jerome Lee or his assigns into the said manor of Donnington with all and singular the lands, tenements and hereditaments thereunto belonging to enter and distrain, and the

distress so taken to lead, drive and carry away, and the same to retain and keep until the said yearly rent with th' arrearages thereof, if any, be fully contented, satisfied and paid. Thomas Poyner, Edward Corbet, John Millarte, clerk.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i Testamentum coram Mag{ist}ro Waltero Haddon Legu{m} Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Comissario apud London vicesimo quarto Die Mensis Ianuarij Anno Domini Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Sexagesimo Secundo Iuramento Stephanni Isborde al{ia}s Godfrey procuratoris Iane Relicte et executric{is} in h{uius}mo{d}i Testamento nominat{e} Cui com{m}issa fuit administrac{i}o &c de bene &c Ac de pleno Inuentario Necnon de vero et plano computo Reddend{o} ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurat{i}

[The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the twenty-fourth day of the month of January in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixty-second by the oath of Stephen Isborde alias Godfrey, proctor of Jane, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and [+to prepare] a full inventory, and also to ender a true and plain account.]