

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 4 June 1573, of Roger Amyce of Wakes Colne, father of Oxford's servant, Israel Amyce (1542-1603). The testator mentions in the will a debt due to him from Queen Elizabeth in right of his deceased wife, Elizabeth Lawson, daughter of Sir George Lawson, Treasurer of Berwick. By his marriage to Elizabeth Lawson, Roger Amyce had four children: Israel, Joseph, Joyce (married to Robert Pinder) and Anne (married to Thomas Allen). At the time of the making of his will, Roger Amyce was married to Margaret Forsett, whose seven children by her former husband, Richard Forsett, are mentioned in the will, one of whom, Edward Forsett, was the author of the Latin comedy *Pedantius* performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1581. In his will Roger Amyce confirms an earlier deed poll by which he had conveyed the manor of Cranbrook in Essex, purchased from Anthony Rigby, to his son, Israel, and Israel's wife, Martha. On 9 June 1585, Leicester purchased the manor of Cranbrook from Oxford (see ERO D/DCw/T46/56). It thus seems likely that circa 1583 there had been an exchange of properties between Oxford and his then servant, Israel Amyce, by which Israel Amyce sold his manor of Cranbrook to Oxford, and Oxford sold Israel Amyce his manor of Tilbury-juxta-Clare. These transactions had far-reaching consequences for Oxford because, presumably in connection with these sales, Oxford acknowledged a recognizance to Israel Amyce in the amount of £3000 on 17 November 1583 and a statute staple in the amount of £4000 on 7 March 1584 (see ERO D/DPr260, ERO D/DPr143 and TNA 30/34/14). When Israel Amyce was outlawed for debt in 1584, these bonds of Oxford's were forfeited to the Queen, and later played a part in the fraudulent sale of Oxford's manor of Colne Priory. In his will, Roger Amyce also grants to his son Israel the remainder of the lease of Wakes Colne granted to Roger Amyce by Oxford's father, the 16th Earl, from which it may be gathered that Israel Amyce was Oxford's tenant prior to becoming his servant. The will of Roger Amyce also sheds light on Israel Amyce's three marriages. His first wife is said to have been Anne Forsett, the daughter of his step-mother Margaret Forsett. In the will, Roger Amyce refers to Israel's second wife as Martha; she is said, variously, to have been Martha van Cutsem or Martha van Murys, the daughter of Vaux van Murys of Holland. Israel Amyce's third wife was Thomasine Carew, who, after Israel Amyce's death, married Oxford's first cousin, John Vere of Kirby Hall.

LM: Testamentum Rogeri Amyce

In the name of God, Amen. Forasmuch as man born of woman hath but short time to live and is full of misery, he cometh up and is cut down like a flower, and fleeteth away like a shadow, and never continueth in one state or stay, but in the midst of life as in death, I, Roger Amyce of Colne Wake in the county of Essex, esquire, an unprofitable member and son of God, now being whole in mind and body, thanks be given unto the divine majesty of God, have thought it good to make declaration of the disposing as well of my soul and body as also of such temporal and earthly things as I have largely (without my desert) received and enjoyed of the bounteous liberality of Almighty God by this my last will and testament made and declared by me, the said Roger, the fourth day of June in the year

of our Lord God one thousand five hundred seventy-three, and in the sixteenth [sic?] year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth etc. in manner and form as followeth:

First, I commend my soul unto the merciful hands of Almighty God, with the assured trust to receive of his grace the blessed estate promised unto me and all them that steadfastly believe to receive the same, as I do, and that by the only means and merits of Jesu Christ, my Redeemer and Saviour, who hath purchased the same for me and all faithful believers by his most precious death and passion;

Secondly, I bequeath this my corruptible body to the earth from whence it came, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, when it shall please Almighty God to separate the same from the spirit, there to rest in hope, and being well assured (according unto ye articles of our Christian faith) that at the great day of the general resurrection when all human flesh shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that then I shall receive the same again joined to my soul as an uncorruptible and immortal body, and so shall behold the glory of the immortal and eternal God through the only means and merits of my Saviour, Jesu Christ, praying my executor to cause my said body to be buried in usual burial of Christians in hope of joyful resurrection among the faithful, and the same to be done without vain pomp of funeral solemnities, at which my burial I will that a sermon be made by the right reverend father in God, Edmund, now Bishop of Rochester, my very good and especial friend, if he conveniently may be had, and in his absence by such other as my executor shall entreat to do it, that by his preaching and by mine example the people may be put in mindful duty to consider the ordained end of this life, and the assurance of the resurrection and life everlasting by Jesus Christ, our Saviour;

And as touching the disposition of my lands, inheritances, possessions and earthly goods with which it hath pleased God to endue me to be a dispenser thereof, for mine own necessity and dutiful provision for those with whom he hath charged me and for his glory I do by this my said last will and testament dispose in manner and form following, albeit I know and by God's promises am right well assured that God of his merciful providence will be an husband to my wife and a father to my children while they will serve him and live in his fear, and that without his continual assistance all my provision for them is but vain, yet for th' accomplishment of my duty, since he hath laid the charge of them upon me and made me his mean for their relief, and that I may by the declaration of this my last will and testament avoid all causes of contention and controversy that after my decease might otherwise arise in my default between my wife and children to the breach of natural duty and the offending of Almighty God, the only stay and Saviour of mankind;

And I do clearly and utterly revoke all and every former last will and testament, legacy and devise at any time by me before the making hereof devised, made, bequeathed, spoken or in any wise set forth, and this my present last will and testament concerning all matters above rehearsed I do clearly affirm, ordain, constitute, make and confirm to remain and continue forever for mine only last will and testament, and none other;

First, whereas I, the said Roger, have given, conveyed and assured the manor of Cranbrook in the county of Essex which I purchased of Anthony Rigby, gentleman, now

deceased, with th' appurtenances and all and singular the lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever to the same belonging or appertaining by what name or names soever the same now are or heretofore have been known in the county of Essex unto Israel, my son, and Martha, his wife, to have and to hold the said manor and other the premises with their appurtenances unto the said Israel and Martha and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, with divers remainders over to my other children in such manner and form as by a deed poll to him, the said Israel, and Martha thereof made it doth and may more at large appear, I, the said Roger, will that the same estates therein limited shall be and remain according to the tenor, purport and effect of the same without any alteration, discontinuance and alienation of the same by the said Israel or of any of my other children;

And whereas I stand bounden by indenture of covenants to leave unto Margaret, my well beloved wife, all such plate, jewels, goods, chattels and stuff of household as were hers before the day of our marriage according unto a schedule which should have been annexed unto the said indenture, albeit in very deed there were never any such schedule made and annexed unto the said indenture of covenants whereby it might appear what goods and chattels the said Margaret had at the day of the marriage between me, the said Roger, and Margaret, wherefore I do protest before God and the world also that I have not any time or times alienated, diminished or otherwise made away any part or parcel of the foresaid goods and chattels, or otherwise impaired them beside the reasonable use of them during our abode at London and at Welles Hall in Suffolk, so much of which said plate, jewels, goods, chattels and household stuff as is now left and remaining, together with all other my household stuff, quick and living goods and chattels which now are or at ye hour of my death shall be upon any of the manors, lands, tenements or hereditaments whereof I, the said Roger Amyce, do now stand seised or possessed as in the right of the said Margaret, my wife, I, the said Roger Amyce, do give and bequeath unto the said Margaret and William, her eldest son, and their assigns, and I also will that my executor shall permit and suffer the said Margaret and William, her eldest son, and the survivor of them, their executors and assigns, to have, hold, possess and enjoy unto their own proper use and uses without let, denial or interruption of my executor [+or] of any other by his means or procurement;

Also I will that Margaret, my said wife, shall have during her life natural one yearly annuity of forty marks by year going out of my lease or farm of Colne Wake called the farm of the site of the manor and demesnes of Colne Wake, according as I have granted unto her by my deed indented;

Also I give & bequeath unto my said wife two geldings, that is to say, the white-grey double gelding and the black colt with a white in the forehead, and one of my double-gilt bowls;

Also I give unto Israel, my son, my lease of the site of the said manor of Colne Wake with all the demesne lands thereunto belonging in as ample manner and form to all intents and purposes as I, the said Roger Amyce, have or of right out to have and hold the same of the devise and grant of the right honourable John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, deceased,

situate, lying and being in the town of Colne Wake or elsewhere within the county of Essex, for and during all such term of years as is yet to come of and in the said lease, always excepted and reserved such interest as I have made and granted unto Robert Pinder, my son-in-law, of and in the mills and ycholmes(?) in Lamarsh according to a grant thereof made to the said Robert Pinder, which lease of Colne Wake aforesaid I give unto my son, Israel, upon condition that he shall take upon him to be mine executor and to prove my will and to see my debts and legacies paid and my will performed according to the tenor, intent and meaning of the said last will and testament;

Also, I will and bequeath unto Joseph, my son, one yearly annuity of sixteen pounds by year towards his education in good learning and for his preferment, issuing out of the foresaid lease and site of the manor and demesnes of Colne Wake for and during so many years as the said lease is now to continue if he, the said Joseph, shall so long live, to be paid unto the said Joseph at four terms in the year, that is to say, at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel, the Nativity of Our Lord, th' Annunciation of Our Lady, and Saint John Baptist by even portions, and if it shall happen the said yearly annuity of sixteen pounds by year or any part or parcel thereof to be behind and unpaid at any of the foresaid feasts at which it ought to have been paid (if it be lawfully demanded), that then and from thenceforth it shall be lawful to the said Joseph and his assigns into the foresaid site and demesnes of the manor of Colne Wake aforesaid to enter and distrain, and the distress or distresses there so taken to lead, drive, chase and carry away, and the same to withhold and detain until the said yearly annuity with the arrearages thereof (if any be), together with twenty shillings *nomine pene* for every default made at any of the feasts aforesaid in which it ought to be paid be unto the said Joseph, his executors and assigns, fully contented and paid;

Also I give and bequeath unto George Forsett, my wife's son, five marks;

Item, I give to every of my wife's children, that is to say, William Forsett th' elder, Henry Forsett, Edward Forsett, William Forsett the younger, Richard Forsett and Mildred Forsett, to every of them a gold ring of the price or value of twenty shillings, or twenty shillings in money;

Item, I give unto Joyce Pinder, my daughter, forty pounds to be paid unto her in manner and form following, that is to say, thirteen pounds six shillings and eight pence within one year next after my decease, and so forth year and yearly thirteen pounds six shillings and eight pence until the said sum of forty pounds be fully contented and paid;

Also I give in full satisfaction and recompense of the promise by me made to Thomas Allen, gentleman, my son-in-law, to Anne Allen, my daughter, one bedstead, one bed of down with all things thereunto belonging, namely one coverlet, one pair of blankets, one bolster, two pillows, one wool bed and the curtain which now be in the great chamber at Colne Wake aforesaid, and the bedstead, bed coverlet, bolster with th' appurtenances thereunto belonging which are now in the little chamber within the great parlour, together with the hangings in the said chambers at Colne Wake aforesaid, and also in full satisfaction and recompense of all such costs and charges as my said son-in-law hath

sustained in suit of law against my Lord Darcy and all others, I, the said Roger, do clearly give, relieve and quitclaim to the said Thomas Allen all the money by him recovered, and will that it shall and may be lawful for him, the said Thomas, to retain and keep all that the sum of thirty-six pounds by him received of one Geoffrey Pype to his own use, so that he shall hold himself contented and shall not demand any costs or charges of suit by him disbursed or sustained for any matter or cause concerning any suit or suits in law;

Also I, the said Roger, do give and bequeath unto Margaret, my well beloved wife, and to George Forsett, her son, and to the longer liver of them, their executors, administrators and assigns, all that my lease and term of years to come of and in the alley commonly called Bear Alley in the parish of Saint Andrew in Holborn, with all and singular th' appurtenances, which I lately procured and had of one of the prebendaries of the cathedral church of Saint Paul in London, so that my said wife and George, her son, do well and truly content and pay or cause to be contented and paid all such rents as are and shall be due for the said premises, and to discharge or otherwise save harmless my executor of all manner of charges wherewith he may be charged & chargeable by reason of the said premises during all the foresaid term of years in the said lease yet to come and not expired;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Margaret and George and the longer liver of them, their executors and assigns, one other lease of a certain pasture-ground lying on the north part of the gardens of the said Bear Alley, sometimes parcel of the possession of the late monastery of Missenden in the county of Buckingham, which I hold of the Queen's Majesty by lease, to have and to hold unto the said Margaret and George, their executors and assigns, during and by all the term of years yet to come of and in the said lease, discharging mine executor of all manner of charges that he may be charged with by reason of the said lease during and by all the said term;

And also I give unto Margaret, my said wife, and George Forsett, her son, one new bedstead, two new presses, whereof one hath a fair cupboard upon the upper part thereof, which be and remain in the house at London, that is to say, the one in my bedchamber and the other in the chamber within the same;

Also, I give unto the said Joseph, my son, all my divinity books and also these parcels following, that is to say, in ready money four pounds, also one of my feather-beds with a bolster, two pillows, four pair of sheets, one pair of blankets, four pillow-beres, the second best counterpoint or covering, the bedstead with hangings and tester standing in the kitchen chamber to the same bed belonging, also six silver spoons, one white jug of silver with a cover;

Also I give and bequeath unto the poor people inhabiting in Colne Wake every year at the feast of the birth of our Saviour Christ during the space of seven years six shillings and eight pence, to be distributed by mine executor where he shall think most need;

Also I give unto Edward, my servant, twenty shillings, and to every one of my other servants being in wages six shillings and eight pence;

Item, all such debt or duty as is due or owing by our Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty unto me, the said Roger Amyce, as in the right of Elizabeth Lawson, my late wife, now deceased, one of the daughters of Sir George Lawson, knight, deceased, which amounteth to the sum of [], I will that my executor or his executors shall do and make all such reasonable travail as he and they conveniently may do, and also that he and they shall make all such friends and friendship as he and they can conveniently make of him or themselves or otherwise of his friends for the having, obtaining or getting of the said debt or some other recompense to the value thereof, and if it happen that by their travail, charges, pains or other means that the said debt or other recompense to the value thereof to be obtained or gotten, then I will that my said executor (allowing unto himself out of such money or other recompense as shall happen by his means, travail and charges to be obtained all such costs, charges and expenses as by him shall happen to be disbursed, either in rewards given, or otherwise whatsoever shall be disbursed about the suing for the same) that four hundred thirty-three pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, parcel of the rest of the foresaid debt or other recompense to the value thereof (being recovered or obtained in manner and form aforesaid), shall be distributed amongst my children, my wife's children, and my children's children in manner and form following, that is to say, unto Joseph, my son, one hundred pounds, unto Joyce Pinder, my daughter, one hundred marks, unto Magdalene Amyce, my son Israel's daughter, forty pounds, unto Judith Chitting, forty pounds, unto William Forsett the younger and George Forsett, to each of them thirty pounds, to William Forsett th' elder, Henry Forsett, Edward Forsett and Richard Forsett, to every of them twenty pounds, and to Mildred Forsett twenty pounds, and to John Forsett, my wife's son-in-law, ten pounds, and to Elizabeth Pinder, daughter to Robert Pinder, twenty pounds, and of the rest of the foresaid money or other recompense that shall happen to be recovered or obtained by my said executor in manner and form aforesaid, and he allowed as is aforesaid, I give unto the right honourable Sir Nicholas Bacon, knight, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, the sum of one hundred pounds, and unto the right honourable William, Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England, the sum of five hundred marks, and to the right honourable Robert, Earl of Leicester, the sum of one hundred pounds, and to the right honourable Sir Walter Mildmay, knight, Treasurer and Chancellor of th' Exchequer, one hundred pounds, provided always that if it be recovered by their means or else this former gift to be of none effect, viz., at the hands of our most gracious Sovereign Lady the Queen's Majesty that now is;

Also I will the foresaid four hundred threescore six pounds six shillings and eight pence be paid to my children, my wife's children, and my children's children in manner and form following, that is to say, within one year next after the recovery of the foresaid debt or other recompense in lieu thereof in form aforesaid had and obtained (the charges and expenses being first allowed as is aforesaid), the sum of one hundred pounds to be paid unto Joseph, my son, and so forth every year one hundred pounds, whereof first Joyce Pinder and Judith Chitting's portions to be the next, and next them William Forsett th' elder, Henry Forsett and Edward Forsett, next them Mildred Forsett, Richard Forsett and William Forsett the younger, and next them George Forsett, Magdalene Amyce and Elizabeth Pinder, daughter of Robert Pinder, and lastly John Forsett;

Also I give unto Magdalene Amyce 66s 8d, to be paid at the day of her marriage;

The residue of my goods and chattels not before given and bequeathed, my debts paid and my will fulfilled, I give unto Israel, my son, whom I ordain and make my sole executor to see my will performed according to the trust which I have reposed in him, and I ordain and appoint my well beloved and trusty friend, the right honourable Sir Thomas Smith, knight, Principal Secretary to our Sovereign Lady, the Queen's Majesty, and Mr Edward Fettiplace, supervisors of this my said will, to either of which said my supervisors for their pains in this behalf to be employed, I give and bequeath 100s in ready money;

In witness whereof to this my present last will and testament I, the said Roger Amyce, have put my seal and subscribed my name. Per me Roger Amyce, these being witnesses: Alexander Mathew, Edward Wilkinson, Thomas Turner, Robert Upchere.

Probatum fuit huiusmodi Testamentum Coram Curiae Prerogatiuae Cantuariensis commissario vicesimo Octavo die mensis Iulij anno domini millesimo Quingentesdimo Septuagesimo quarto Iuramento Executoris in huiusmodi Testamento nominati Cui commissa fuit administracio de bene &c Iurato

[=The same testament was proved before the Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on the twenty-eighth day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-fourth by the oath of the executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted, sworn to well etc.]