

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 17 April 1577 and proved 1 May 1577, of Jane Meautys, the stepmother of Hercules Meautys, who married Lady Burghley's niece, Philippa Cook. Hercules Meautys' father was granted the manor of Bretts, which was later owned by Oxford from 1584 until his death.

The testatrix was the second wife of the courtier Sir Peter Meautys (d.1562). The testatrix' maiden name is not known with certainty, although it has been suggested that it was Angersley, and that her family was from Sussex. Apart from two of her stepchildren, the only relative the testatrix mentions in the will below is her 'cousin, William Suppam'. For the Sepham pedigree, see Bannerman, W. Bruce, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Surrey*, (London: Harleian Society, 1899), Vol. XLIII, p. 32 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofcou43beno#page/32/mode/2up>.

For the Sepham arms, see 'Sepham' in 'Surrey Coats of Arms', available online.

For the Meautys family, including the testatrix' stepdaughter, Frances Howard, mentioned in the will below, see the will of the testatrix' stepson and executor, Hercules Meautys, TNA PROB 11/73/110.

It appears that the testatrix' will was witnessed by Oxford's friend, Rowland Yorke, for whom see the *ODNB* entry and the will of his father, Sir John Yorke, TNA PROB 11/51/58.

LM: T{estamentu}m D{omi}ne Jane Mewtes vid{ue}

In the name of God, Amen. The seventeenth day of April and in the 19th year [=17 April 1577] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, I, Dame Jane Meautys of West Ham in the county of Essex, widow, late wife unto Sir Peter Meautys, whiles he lived of West Ham aforesaid, knight, being aged, sick and weak in body but, praised be God to the Almighty, of perfect mind and goodly remembrance, for the avoiding of all such doubts and questions as daily arise & be after the deaths of such persons as do die intestate, do make this my last will and testament in manner & form following:

First, I bequeath my soul unto Jesus Christ, my Saviour, by the shedding of whose precious blood and death the same was redeemed, whereby I am assured to be saved, and my body to be buried in the parish church of West Ham aforesaid;

And as touching the disposition of that worldly substance which God hath given me, I give and bequeath to Hercules Meautys, my son-in-law [=stepson], six silver pots with covers, six silver spoons, my bedstead of walnut-tree in the great chamber, a tester of red and white damask with a counterpoint of white and red sarsenet, two featherbeds, one

pair of woollen blankets, one pair of fustian, a bolster, two pillows, single valance(?) of purple satin embroidered with silver with curtains of yellow and blue sarsenet, a counterpoint of cut yellow satin lined with blue silver sarsenet, [-a counterpoint of cut yellow satin lined with blue silver sarsenet], a tester of wood, a cupboard standing in the great chamber, two long cushions of crimson satin striped with gold and embroidered with silver, six pair of sheets, that is to say, two pair of sheets Holland & four pair of other coarse sheets, six pillow-beres, a damask tablecloth, one dozen of damask napkins and a damask towel, one long plain tablecloth and two short tablecloths for a square board, three dozen of the best plain napkins with two plain towels of Holland, one pair of latten andirons, my hangings in the little parlour with my table & cupboard in the same, with a carpet of needlework to the same cupboard;

Item, I will and bequeath to my daughter-in-law [=stepdaughter], Frances Howard, my black velvet gown and my little silver cup with a cover;

Item, I will and bequeath to Judith Elderton, my late servant, my great gilt bowl with a cover, a long damask tablecloth with a towel to the same, one dozen of damask napkins, and my square carpet of needlework;

Item, I will and bequeath [-Item, I will and bequeath] to Mistress Margaret Johnson of Bedlem [=Bethlehem] a pair of very fine Holland sheets of two leaves apiece;

Item, I will and bequeath to Robert Hodgeson of London, gentleman, my best gilt salt with a cover;

Item, I will and bequeath to my cousin, William Suppam [=Sepham?], my little gilt Maudlin cup with a cover;

Item, I bequeath to Joyce Johnson, mine maiden, my two while bowls of silver, six silver spoons, and my two featherbeds at Bethelam [=Bethlehem], with a pair of blankets and a bolster;

Item, I bequeath to William Gibson of West Ham my white gelding and a year's wages;

Item, I will and bequeath to John Turwell alias Butler, my servant, my little gilt bowl, ten pounds in money, two kine, the stray nag, two platters, six dishes, six saucers, one dozen of coarse diaper napkins, two pair of sheets, the featherbed in the little chamber, and the red covering upon mine own bed;

Item, I bequeath to Margery, my maidservant, two years' wages;

Item, I bequeath to William Melborne a year's wages, and to every of my servants as much money as the black may come to, but no black cloth;

Item, I give and bequeath to the poor people of the parish of West Ham three pounds, to be paid the day after my burial and not afore;

And whereas I have one basin and ewer of silver which lieth in pawn to Mr Hodgeson for twenty pounds, my will and mind is that my son-in-law, Hercules Meautys, shall have the same, paying the said sum of twenty pounds;

And all the residue of my goods, chattels and debts whatsoever, my debts paid, my legacies performed & my funerals discharged, I wholly give and bequeath to my said son, Hercules Meautys;

And of this my testament and last will I do make, ordain and appoint my well-beloved son-in-law, Hercules Meautys, and my loving friend, Robert Hodgeson of London, gentleman, mine executors, whom I require to see this my will performed in all things;

In witness whereof I, the said Dame Jane Meautys, to this my present last will and testament have put my hand and seal the day and year above-written [-Jane Meautys to this present last will and testament have put my hand and seal the day and year above-written];

This will was sealed and subscribed by the same Dame Jane Meautys in the presence of us, Rowland York, Edward Saundershill, William Bate, William Gibson.

Probatum fuit testamentu{m} h{uius}mo{d}i coram Mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Drewrie Legum doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuarien{sis} Comissario apud London Vicesimo Primo die mens{is} Maij Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Septuagesimo Septimo Iuramento m{agist}ri Petri Johnson Notarij publici Procuratoris Herculei Mewtes vnius executor{um} Cui com{m}issa fuit Admi{n}strac{i}o de bene & Iurat{o} Res{er}uat{a} p{otes}tate alteri ex{ecuto}ri cu{m} ven{er}it &c

[=The same testament was proved before Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the twenty-first day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-seventh by the oath of Master Peter Johnson, notary public, proctor of Hercules Meautys, one of the executors, to whom administration was granted, sworn to well etc., with power reserved to the other executor when he shall have come etc.]