

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 10 January 1577 and proved 21 June 1578, of William Roper (d. 4 January 1578), son-in-law of Sir Thomas More.

For another transcript of the will, see Herbruggen, Hubertus Schulte, *Das Haupt des Thomas Morus in der St. Dunstan-Kirche zu Canterbury*, (Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, 1982), p. 79 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=vLF9BwAAQBAJ&pg=PA79>

CONNECTIONS TO THE EARLS OF OXFORD

The testator's executor, Edmund Plowden (c.1518-1585), was the brother-in-law of Ralph Sheldon (d.1613?) of Beoley, whose daughter, Katherine Sheldon (d.1633?), married Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham (d. 12 October 1626). For the will of Ralph Sheldon, see TNA PROB 11/121/345. For the will of Katherine (nee Sheldon) Trentham, see TNA PROB 11/163/485. See also the will of Ralph Sheldon's father, William Sheldon (d. 24 December 1570), TNA PROB 11/53/79.

For John Southcote and Sir William Cordell's connections to Oxford, see Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 99-103.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see Hogrefe, Pearl, 'Sir Thomas More's Connection with the Roper Family', *PMLA*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 1932, pp. 523-533, at:

www.jstor.org/stable/457892

See also the pedigree in Burke, Bernard, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 60th ed., p. 1424 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=NlhQAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1424>

It should be noted that the pedigree contains errors.

See also the pedigree in Hovenden, Robert, ed., *The Visitation of Kent Taken in the Years 1619-1621*, (London: Harleian Society, 1898), Vol. XLII, p. 82 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=o79MAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA82>

See also the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry for the testator at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/roper-william-149596-1578>

Testator's parents

The testator was the eldest son of John Roper (d.1524), Attorney-General to Henry VIII, for whom see the *ODNB* entry, and his will, dated 27 January 1524, in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, (London: Kent Archaeological Society, 1859), Vol. II, p. 153:

<https://archive.org/details/archaeologiacant02kent/page/152/mode/2up>

The testator's mother was Jane Fyneux (d.1544?), the daughter of Sir John Fyneux (d.1525), Chief Justice of the King's Bench. It should be noted that although most modern sources refer to the testator's mother as Jane, in her will, TNA PROB 11/30/316, her Christian name is given as Joan.

The testator's mother should not be confused with her younger half-sister, Jane Fyneux, who married Anthony Sondes (d.1575) of Throwley, Kent, For the will of Anthony Sondes, see TNA PROB 11/57/662.

The testator's mother, Jane Fyneux and her sister, Mildred Fyneux (d. by 1525?), who married James Digges, esquire, of Barham, Kent, were Sir John Fyneux's daughters and coheirs by his first marriage to Elizabeth Apuldfreld. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir John Fyneux:

[Sir John Fyneux's] first wife, Elizabeth, was daughter and heir of William Apuldfreld (d. 1487) of Faversham and Lynsted. Their son Richard (d. 1520) twice served as member of parliament for Dover; another son, John, became an Austin canon. One of their daughters, Jane, married John Rooper (d. 1524) of Eltham, whom Fyneux appointed as chief clerk of his court; their grandson John (d. 1618) sold the chief clerkship to become Baron Teynham in 1616. At the time of Fyneux's death, on 17 November 1525, his only surviving son, and thus his heir, was William (d. 1557), the child of Fyneux's second wife, also Elizabeth (d. 1539), daughter of Sir John Paston and widow of William Clere.

See also Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 656-7, and the will of James Digges, TNA PROB 11/28/308.

Testator's siblings

It appears the testator had two brothers and six sisters:

-Edward Roper (living 1558), mentioned in his father's will and in the will of his brother, Christopher Roper. In her 1542 will, his mother requested her executors to bestow 40s 'to buy him clothes for his body'.

-Christopher Roper (d.1559), who married Elizabeth Blore, the daughter of Christopher Blore, esquire, of Rainham, Kent. For the will of Christopher Blore's father, William Blore (d.1530?), see TNA PROB 11/24/4.

In his will, Christopher Roper leaves bequests to three sons, John Roper, Edmund Roper and German Roper, and two daughters, Cecily Roper, wife of Norton Grene, and Gertrude Roper, as well as to other unnamed unmarried daughters. See his will, TNA PROB 11/42B/60, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/roper-christopher-15089-5859>

See also Ireland, W.H., *A New and Complete History of the County of Kent*, (London: G. Virtue, 1829), Vol. II, p. 704 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ltUvAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA704>

-Ellen Roper (d. May 1563), who married, firstly John Morton (d. 21 August 1522), esquire, of the manor of Bencham, Surrey, the son of Thomas Morton (d. 24 December 1516) by his second wife, Margaret Woodford (1479-1507). John Morton was the half brother of Sir Robert Morton (d.1514?), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/18/83. By her first husband, Ellen Roper had an only child, Mary Morton (15 February 1522-1568), who married Francis Smythe (d.1602?). See Steinman, G. Steinman, 'Some Account of the Manors of Whitehorse, Croham, and Norbury, in the Parish of Croydon, Surrey, and a Pedigree of Elmerugge', *Collectanea Topographica & Genealogica*, (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1838), Vol. V, pp. 164-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=qM0KAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA164>

See also 'The Woodforde Story' at:

<https://www.woodforde.org/margaret-woodford/>

See also the entry for Margaret Woodford at:

www.tudorwomen.com

Margaret Woodford (1479-80-1507) was the daughter of William Woodford of Ashby Folville, Lincolnshire (d. July 28, 1487) and Anne Norwich. When her father died, she inherited the manors of Brentingby, Wyfordby, Freeby, and Garthorpe. She was also the principal heir of her grandfather, Sir Ralph Woodford (1430-March 4, 1498). She married John Turville. When he died soon after their marriage, Margaret married his

brother, William Turville. John Morton, archbishop of Canterbury, found this marriage to be irregular and it was annulled. In about 1496, Margaret married Thomas Morton (d. December 15, 1516), a widower with a son who was also the archbishop's nephew. Most sources say they had only one son, John (1498-August 21, 1521), but one online genealogy also lists Thomas, William, Robert (d.1575), Cecilia, Agnes, and Helen. The manor of Bensham (also called Whitechapel) [sic] in Croydon, Surrey was settled on them and the marriage brought them into contact with the circle of Sir Thomas More.

Ellen Roper married secondly William Digby (d. by 1529), esquire, of South Luffenham, eldest(?) son of Sir John Digby (d.1533) of Kettleby by his first wife, Katherine Griffin (d. by 1517), daughter of Nicholas Griffin (d. 6 June 1482), esquire, and Katherine Curzon, by whom she had several children, including a son, John Digby. For Katherine Griffin, see Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. II, p. 288, Vol. III, pp. 86, 469, and the Griffin pedigree in Burke, Bernard, *A Genealogical History of the Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire*, New ed., (London: Harrison, 1866), p. 255 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=OpxfAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA255>

See also the Griffin pedigree in Nichols, J., *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, (London: 1798), Vol. II, Part II, p. 592 at:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000032377088&view=1up&seq=244>

For Sir John Digby, see his will, TNA PROB 11/31/309, in which he mentions his daughter-in-law, Ellen Roper:

Also I will that my daughter [=daughter-in-law] Elene Mountague, late wife to my son, William Digby of Luffenham, now deceased, and daughter of John Roper, late General Attorney to our Sovereign Lord the King

See also the transcript in Peacock, Edward, 'The Will of John Digby, of Eye Kettleby, Leicestershire, 1529' in *Leicestershire and Rutlandshire Notes and Queries*, (London: Elliot Stock, 1895), Vol. III, pp. 82-5,142-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=h8kGAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA82>

Ellen Roper married thirdly, as his third wife, Sir Edward Montagu (d.1557), Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, by whom she is said to have had at least five sons and six daughters, including Eleanor Montagu, who married George Tyrrell (d. 10 May 1571). For Sir Edward Montagu, see the *ODNB* entry, and his will, TNA PROB 11/39/74. For George Tyrrell, see the will, TNA PROB 11/32/613, of his father, Humphrey Tyrrell (d.1549), esquire, of South Ockendon, Essex. George Tyrrell's mother, Jane Ingleton, was a ward of John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford.

For Ellen (nee Roper) Morton Digby Montagu (d. May 1563), see her nuncupative will, TNA PROB 11/46/225, and the WikiTree profile at:

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Roper-331>

See also the entry for Ellen Roper at:

www.tudorwomen.com

Eleanor (Ellen/Helen) Roper (1500-May 1563) was the daughter of John Roper (c.1453-March 29, 1524), attorney general to Henry VIII, and Jane Fineux (1475-April 7, 1544). In about 1520, she married John Morton of Bencham, Surrey (1498-August 21, 1521). Their daughter Mary (February 15, 1522-1568) was born posthumously. Her second husband, as his second wife, was William Digby (d. by 1529). Their five children included William, Lebbaeus, Margery, and Isabella. Her third husband, as his third wife, was Sir Edward Montagu (d. February 10, 1556/7). Their five sons and six daughters included Edward (1532-1602) and Eleanor.

-**Agnes Roper** (buried 8 March 1573), likely the unmarried daughter, Agnes Roper, mentioned in her father's will. She married, in 1529, as his third wife, Sir Edward Maddison (d. 14 February 1554) of Fonaby in Caistor, Lincolnshire, who participated in the Lincolnshire uprising and is said to have lived to 100 years of age. By Sir Edward Maddison, Anne Roper had three sons, Edward Maddison (d.1560), Christopher Maddison and John Maddison, and a daughter, Alice Maddison. See Maddison, A.R., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees, Vol. II*, (London: Harleian Society, 1903), Vol. LI, p. 624 at:

<https://archive.org/details/lincolnshirepedi51madd/page/624/mode/2up>

See also the Maddison pedigree in Crisp, Frederick Arthur, ed., *Visitation of England and Wales*, (Privately printed, 1906), Vol. 6, p. 52 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=2JY5M_pcdvQC&pg=PA52

For the Maddison family, see also Maddison, A.R., *Lincolnshire Wills*, (London: James Williamson, 1888), p. 84 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=zuhMAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA84>

See also the monument to Sir Edward Maddison in the church of St Peter and St Paul in Caistor, Lincolnshire at:

<http://www.caistorparishchurch.co.uk/history/>

According to the pedigrees, Sir Edward Maddison's brother, John Maddison, who died without issue, was yeoman usher to Queen Katherine Howard.

-Margaret Roper (living 1545), who married Henry Appleton (d.1545), esquire, of South Benfleet, Essex, the son of Roger Appleton (d.1529), gentleman, and Jane Sulyard, daughter of Sir John Sulyard (d. 18 March 1488) and Anne Andrew (whose sister, Elizabeth Andrew, was the mother of Andrew Windsor (d.1543), 1st Baron Windsor, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/29/416). In his will, TNA PROB 11/30/568, Henry Appleton mentions his wife, Margaret, two sons, Roger Appleton (d. 26 February 1557) and Edward Appleton, and a daughter, Margaret Appleton. He also mentions the testator, William Roper (d.1578), John Pilborow (see below), and his cousin, Edmund Tyrrell, esquire, whom he appoints as overseer. For Edmund Tyrrell (c.1513 - 8 November 1576) of Ramsden Barrington, see his will, TNA PROB 11/58/499.

Margaret Roper's son, Roger Appleton (d. 26 February 1557), married Agnes Clarke, the daughter of Walter Clarke, gentleman, of Hadleigh, Suffolk (for whom see below).

For the Appleton family, see Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 101, Vol. II, pp. 468-9.

-Elizabeth Roper, who married firstly John Pilborow (d.1547?) of Lincoln's Inn, Baron of the Exchequer, by whom she had at least six children. For the will of John Pilborow, see TNA PROB 11/32/23. Elizabeth Roper married secondly Leonard Sandell (d.1570), for whom see his will, TNA PROB 11/52/495, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1509-1558/member/sandell-leonard-1533-70>

-Elizabeth Roper, mentioned as unmarried in her father's will, but not mentioned in her mother's 1542 will. According to Collins, she married John Dawney of Herke [sic?], second son of Sir John Dawney (d.1553) of Cowick, Yorkshire, and Dorothy Neville, daughter of Richard Neville (c.1467-1530), 2nd Baron Latimer, by whom she had a son, John Dawney. See Brydges, Egerton, *Collins's Peerage of England*, (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1812), Vol. VIII, p. 455 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=JFc5AAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA455>

See also the *ODNB* entry for Oxford's kinsman, John Neville (1493-1543), 3rd Baron Latimer.

In contrast, the Dawney pedigree in Foster states that John Dawney was of Heck in the parish of Snaith, Yorkshire, and makes no mention of a wife or son. See Foster, Joseph, *Pedigrees of the County Families of Yorkshire*, (London: W. Wilfred Head, 1874), Vol. III, at:

<https://archive.org/stream/pedigreesofcount03fost#page/n101/mode/2up>

See also Burke, John, *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*, 4th ed., (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1832), Vol. I, p. 384 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Cq8KAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA384>

-**Agnes Roper**, a nun at Dartford until the Dissolution, mentioned in the wills of her father and mother.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married, by licence dated 2 July 1521, Margaret More (1505-1544) of St Stephen's, Walbrook, eldest child of Sir Thomas More (1478-1535). See the *ODNB* entries for Margaret More and Sir Thomas More, and the History of Parliament entry for Sir Thomas More at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/more-thomas-i-147778-1535>

By Margaret More the testator had two sons and three daughters:

* **Thomas Roper** (1534? – 21 January 1598), esquire, of Eltham, Kent, eldest son, for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/roper-thomas-153334-98>

Thomas Roper married Lucy Browne, the daughter of Sir Anthony Browne (c.1500-1548), for whom see the *ODNB* entry and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/browne-sir-anthony-1500-48>

Lucy Browne was the sister of Anthony Browne (1528-1592), 1st Viscount Montagu, grandfather of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, dedicatee of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. See the Browne pedigree in Questier, Michael C., *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 521.

Thomas Roper was left £300 and a silver bowl in the will of Francis Sandbache (d.1582), for whom see below.

* **Anthony Roper** (d.1597) of Farningham, Kent, who married Anne Cotton (d.1618?), the daughter of Sir John Cotton (d.1593) of Landwade, Suffolk (formerly Cambridgeshire), and Isabel Spencer (d.1578). For Sir John Cotton, see his will, TNA PROB 11/84/83, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cotton-sir-john-151213-93>

Isabel Spencer was the eldest daughter of Sir William Spencer (d.1532) and Susan Knightley, aunt of Sir Richard Knightley (1533-1615), at whose home at Fawsley, Northamptonshire, Martin Marprelate's *Epitome* was printed in November 1588. For the will of Sir William Spencer, see TNA PROB 11/24/12.

For the monument to Sir John Cotton and Isabel Spencer, see:

<http://www.druidic.org/camchurch/churches/landwade.htm>

Anthony Roper was left a bequest in the 1587 will, TNA PROB 11/74/43, of Joan Tallis, widow of the musician and composer, Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585). For Thomas Tallis, see his will, TNA PROB 11/68/662, and the *ODNB* entry. See also Bennett, John, 'A Tallis Patron?', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, No. 21, 1988, pp. 41–44 at:

www.jstor.org/stable/25099392

Anthony Roper was also the owner of the Theewes claviorganum. See:

<https://laidman.one-name.net/getperson.php?personID=I21163&tree=Laidman>

See also Van Dyck, Marietta, 'Theewes a Company', *Sounding Board: The Magazine of the British Harpsichord Society*, No. 5, Winter 2011/2012, available as a pdf file online.

* **Elizabeth Roper** (1523-1560). According to the *ODNB*, she was the testator's eldest child. She married firstly John Stevenson, about whom nothing further is known, and secondly, as his second wife, Sir Edward Bray (c.1519-1581) of Shere, Surrey, eldest son of Sir Edward Bray (d.1558) and Beatrix Shirley. According to the will of her sister, Mary (nee Roper) Clarke Bassett, by her second marriage Elizabeth Roper had a son, Reynold Bray (baptized 1 May 1555), who is said to have married Elizabeth Covert, the daughter of Richard Covert. See the will, TNA PROB 11/42A/448, of Sir Edward Bray (d.1558), and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/bray-sir-edward-1492-1558>

See also the History of Parliament entry for Sir Edward Bray (c.1519-1581) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/bray-sir-edward-1519-81>

See also the WikiTree profile for Sir Edward Bray at:

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Bray-2347>

* **Margaret Roper**, mentioned in the will below, who married, as his first wife, William Dawtrey (d.1591), esquire, of Moor House, Petworth, Sussex, the son of Sir John Dawtrey (d.1550) by his second wife, Joan Skarfield, the daughter of William Skarfield of Skerveld. For the will of Sir John Dawtrey (d.1550), see TNA PROB 11/33/68. See also the Dawtrey pedigree in Bannerman, W. Bruce, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Sussex*, (London: Harleian Society, 1905), Vol. LIII, p. 31 at:

<https://archive.org/details/visitationscoun00banngoog/page/n45/mode/2up>

The pedigree erroneously identifies the testator as ‘William Rogers’, and erroneously states that Margaret Roper’s husband was Sir John Dawtrey’s son by his first wife, Christian More, daughter of Nicholas More (d.1496), who according to other sources died without issue. See the Wikipedia entry for Allington, Hampshire at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allington,_Hampshire

See also the Dawtrey pedigree in Bright, J.B., *The Brights of Suffolk*, (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1858), p. 97 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=qj0AAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA97>

For William Dawtrey, see his will, TNA PROB 11/78/329, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/dawtrey-william-1591>

[William Dawtrey’s] elder half-brother Richard, who succeeded their father contrary to his will in December 1549 at the age of 31 and was later declared an idiot, died unmarried on 10 Feb. 1554. Dawtrey then entered on his lands, but suits were brought against him in Chancery and in the Star Chamber by one Nicholas Dawtrey of Woodcote, Hampshire, who claimed to be the rightful heir. William replied that the lands had been conveyed to him before his father’s death, though part was subject to a settlement on his mother during her lifetime—a statement which was denied by the plaintiff. When Richard’s inquisition post mortem was taken in 1575 after a delay perhaps due to the dispute, it named Nicholas as his heir but remarked that ‘after the death of the said Richard, one William Dawtrey esquire intruded himself into all his possessions and has taken the issues thereof down to the time of this inquisition’. The ‘intrusion’ persisted, and William and his heirs continued to enjoy the disputed lands, as his father had evidently intended.²

For William Dawtrey, see also:

'Boxted: Manors and other estates', in *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10, Lexden Hundred (Part) Including Dedham, Earls Colne and Wivenhoe*, ed. Janet Cooper (London, 2001), pp. 59-62. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol10/pp59-62> [accessed 26 December 2020].

The manor passed from Thomas's widow Elizabeth to her second husband Sir John Wood (d. 1484), speaker of the House of Commons. On the death in 1503 of Wood's widow Margery the manor reverted to Elizabeth or Isabel Dawtrey, a daughter and coheir of his brother Thomas Wood. Her husband Edmund Dawtrey held the manor in 1503. (fn. 34)

The manor then descended from father to son in the Dawtrey family, being held successively by John, another John, and Richard. On Richard's death in 1544 William Dawtrey took possession of the manor, and in 1576 his son William Dawtrey the younger sold it to John Ive who in 1592 also bought out Nicholas Dawtrey, Richard Dawtrey's heir at law. (fn. 35)

According to the History of Parliament, Margaret Roper had died by 15 February 1578.

For Sir John Dawtrey (d.1518), see his will, TNA PROB 11/19/193, and:

<https://teamtudor.wordpress.com/2019/03/13/sir-john-dawtrey/>

Margaret Roper and William Dawtrey are mentioned in the 1572 will of her sister, Mary (nee Roper) Clarke Bassett.

An entry for 1 July 1565 records the testator's sponsorship of his grandson, William Dawtrey, at Lincoln's Inn:

William Roper, a Bencher, formerly obtained admission to his own chamber for his sons, Thomas and Anthony, Fellows of this House, and afterwards for William Dawtrey, his daughter's son, who was thus the junior, and not able to claim benefit thereof against the other two. Order for his quiet enjoyment.

See Hogrefe, *supra*, p. 524, and *The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn: The Black Books*, (Lincoln's Inn, 1897), Vol. I, p. 346 at:

<https://archive.org/details/blackbookrecord01lincuoft/page/346/mode/2up>

In his will, Francis Sandbache (d.1582), for whom see below, left copyhold lands in Surrey to John Dawtrey and Joan, his wife.

* **Mary Roper**, who married firstly Stephen Clarke, son of Walter Clarke, gentleman, of Hadleigh, Suffolk (see above), who in his will, TNA PROB 11/37/37, leaves a bequest to 'Mary Clarke, widow, late the wife of Stephen Clarke, my son'. There were no issue of the marriage. Mary Roper married secondly, by June 1556, Bishop Stephen Gardiner's

secretary, James Bassett (c.1526-1558), by whom she had two sons, Philip Bassett and Charles Bassett. For Mary (nee Roper) Clarke Bassett, see her will, TNA PROB 11/54/149, and the *ODNB* entry. For James Bassett, see his will, TNA PROB 11/42A/157, and the *ODNB* entry.

For Mary Roper, see also:

www.tudorwomen.com

Mary Roper (d. March 20, 1572) was the daughter of William Roper (1495-1578) and Margaret More (1505-1544) and the granddaughter of Sir Thomas More. As such, she was given a fine education, did many translations, and was an ardent catholic. She married Stephen Clarke (d.1554). Mary was at court under Queen Mary as a gentlewoman of the privy chamber. In around June 1556, she married James Bassett (1527-November 21, 1558). Their children were Philip (b.1557) and Charles (b.1559).

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For Sir Christopher Wray (c.1522-1592), see the *ODNB* entry.

For Sir William Cordell (1522 – 17 May 1581), Master of the Rolls, see his will, TNA PROB 11/63/590, the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cordell-william-1524-81>

For John Southcott or Southcote (d.1585), see his will, TNA PROB 11/69/259, the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1509-1558/member/southcote-john-ii-151011-85>

See also the will of his daughter, Elizabeth (nee Southcott) Walshe, TNA PROB 11/61/367.

For Edmund Plowden (c.1518-1585) see the *ODNB* entry and his will, TNA PROB 11/68/650. Edmund Plowden married Katherine Sheldon, the daughter of William Sheldon (d. 24 December 1570) of Beoley, Worcestershire, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/53/79. As noted above, William Sheldon's granddaughter, Katherine Sheldon (d.1633?), married Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham (d. 12 October 1626); another of William Sheldon's granddaughters, Elizabeth Sheldon, married the brother of Thomas Russell, overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon.

For the Sheldon family, see the pedigree in Phillimore, W.P.W., ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569*, (London: Harleian Society, 1888), Vol. XXVII, pp. 127-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01mundgoog#page/n143/mode/2up>

See also the Sheldon pedigree in Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1877), Vol. XII, p. 3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01britgoog#page/n26/mode/2up>

The testator's friend, Mr Thomas Tresham, has not been identified. He may have been Sir Thomas Tresham (1543-1605), son of John Tresham (c.1520–1546), and heir to his grandfather, Sir Thomas Tresham (d.1559). See the *ODNB* entries, and the History of Parliament entry for Sir Thomas Tresham (d.1559) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/tresham-sir-thomas-1500-59>

However in the *Langham Letter*, Thomas Tresham (1543-1605) is said to have been knighted during the Queen's visit to Kenilworth in 1575, which would call into question the identification of him as the testator's friend, 'Mr Thomas Tresham'.

For James Good (1527-1581), Doctor of Physic, see:

<https://history.replondon.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/james-good>

James Good, M.D., was born at Dimock, in Gloucestershire, and educated at New College, Oxford, where he proceeded doctor of medicine, 26th June, 1560. He was, while yet only a bachelor of medicine, admitted a Fellow of the College of Physicians, viz., 13th March, 1559. He was elected Censor and Elect the same day, 14th October, 1560, and was Consiliarius, 1564, 1569, 1570, 1571, 1572. [Dr Good was one of two physicians, Dr Atslowe being the other ?, sent by Elizabeth to Mary Queen of Scots at Sheffield in Dec. 1570. They remained about a month & then returned to London. Leaders Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity. 8^{oo} Sheffield 1880, p.158-163.] "He was imprisoned," says Wood, "in 1573 for holding secret correspondence by letters, with Mary, Queen of Scots." Dr. Good married Joan, daughter of Edward Glington, Alderman of Oxford. He died in 1581, aged 54, and was buried at West Drayton. His portrait was extant in 1805; (1) and then in the possession of Mr. John Simcoe, of Warwick Street.

The testator's friend and executor, Robert Hare, who is bequeathed a diamond in the will below, can likely be identified with the antiquary, Robert Hare (c.1530-1611), for whom see the *ODNB* entry. See also Maitland, Frederic William, ed., *Records of the Parliament Holden at Westminster*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893, 2012), p. xi at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=2n5IhUF9NxC&pg=PR11>

For Francis Sandbache (d. 1582), esquire, see his will, TNA PROB 11/64/121, and TNA KB 167, where he is described as one of ‘two secondaries, Francis Sandbache (d. 1582) and George Kemp (1530-1606), immediate subordinates of the chief prothonotary’, at:

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10099>

See also Howard, Joseph Jackson, ed., *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, 2nd series, Vol. II, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1888), p. 1 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=uFRIAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA1>

Francis Sandbache was appointed an overseer of will of the John Donne (d.1576), father of the poet. See Flynn, Dennis, *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 73 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=nUvvE-g0jScC&pg=PA73>

Christopher Rust, who witnessed the testator’s will, may have been a Catholic priest. See Flynn, *supra*, p. 73. He was left £100 in the will of Francis Sandbache.

For the musician Sebastian Westcote (d.1582), who witnessed the testator’s will, see the *ODNB* entry.

The ‘Mr Petyt’ mentioned in the will below was Cyriac Petyt (d.1591), the defendant in the lawsuit alluded to in the gravediggers’ scene in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. From the Wikipedia article on Sir James Hales edited by the author of this website:

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

In 1558 Hales' widow instigated legal proceedings against Cyriac Petit to recover a lease of land in Graveney marsh which had been made in 1551 to herself and her late husband. Since the coroner had earlier ruled Hales' death to be a felony, the case, Hales v. Petit, turned on the abstruse point of whether the felony, i.e. Hales' suicide, had occurred during Sir James' lifetime or after his death. In 1562 the court ruled in favour of Petit. Plowden published a full report of the case in 1571.^[11] According to Baker Hales v. Petit is "often held up as an extreme example of abstract legal reasoning", and it is considered that Shakespeare alludes to it in the gravedigger's speech in Hamlet.^[12]

First Clown Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good; if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

Second Clown But is this law?

First Clown Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

For Cyriac Petyt, see his will, Canterbury Probate Register C24, f. 24, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/petyt-cyriak-1517-91>

In September 1544 Petyt paid £476 for former monastic property in Canterbury and London, in the following year he was given charge of eight Kent manors belonging to the court of augmentations, and in 1547 he attended the funeral of Henry VIII as an esquire. He purchased no further lands under Edward VI, during whose reign he is recorded on only one commission, but in November 1554 Petyt and John Webbe paid £80 for the remainder of a lease at Boughton under Blean, which had reverted to the see of Canterbury (whose temporalities were then in the Queen's hands) on the suicide of Sir James Hales, son of John Hales I. That the lease was thus forfeit was unsuccessfully disputed by Hales's widow in the celebrated lawsuit, Hales v. Petit. Petyt and his family were living at Boughton by May 1557, when they acquired further lands at Faversham and Graveney.⁶ . . .

One of the Members for Winchelsea in the previous Parliament had been Sir Thomas More's son-in-law William Roper, whose brother Christopher Roper was Petyt's neighbour. Petyt must have been well known to the More family circle, several of whom had been involved in the prebendaries' plot. William Roper figures largely in John Webbe's will and his own will of 1577 refers to lands let to a Mr. Petyt.

MENTION OF THE TESTATOR IN THE WILLS OF OTHERS

The testator was appointed overseer of the will of his brother-in-law, John Pilborow (d.1547?), TNA PROB 11/32/23.

Together with William Rastell and Richard Heywood, the testator was appointed an executor of the 1556 will of John Webbe, TNA PROB 11/39/100. In the will, John Webbe refers to the testator as his master ('to Mr Welles and Mr Wade, my master Mr William Roper's chaplains, all my books of divinity'). For William Rastell (1508-1565), who married the sister of Sir Thomas More, see the *ODNB* entry. For Richard Heywood, see his will, TNA PROB 11/52/234, the *ODNB* entry for his brother, John Heywood (1497?-1578?), and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1509-1558/member/heywood-richard-1520-70>

The testator was appointed an overseer of the will of Richard Bower (d.1561), TNA PROB 11/44/299, father-in-law of Richard Farrant, for whom see his will, TNA PROB 11/63/120, and the *ODNB* entry.

The testator is mentioned in the will of his daughter, Mary (nee Roper) Clarke Bassett, TNA PROB 11/54/149.

The testator is mentioned in the will of Richard Heywood (see above).

TESTATOR'S LANDS

The testator's interest in the manor of Shelford, which Sir Edmund Rous sold to the Crown in the reign of Queen Mary, is unclear. He may have purchased his interest from Reginald Highgate and William Hanwick. See Philipott, Thomas, *Villare Cantianum*, 2nd ed., (Lynn: W. Whittingham, 1776), p. 174 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WXhbAAAQAAJ&pg=PA174>

For the manors of 'Shulford and Hedge Medegrove alias Brodeoke' in Hackington and Sturry and St Stephen next Canterbury, see TNA C 43/5/17 and TNA E 355/137. See also TNA SC 12/38/33, 'Medgrove alias Broadoak Shelford [in Hackington]'. See also:

Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: St Stephen's, alias Hackington', in *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 9* (Canterbury, 1800), pp. 42-55. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol9/pp42-55> [accessed 26 December 2020].

St. Stephen's, alias Hackington, lies the next parish northward from that of St. Dunstan's. . . . In the upper part of it, near St. Thomas's hill, is Beverley farm, a small part only of which is in this parish, it was formerly the estate of the Ropers, of St. Dunstan's. . . .

The manors of Shelford and Meadgrove, alias Broadoak, lie adjoining to each other, on the north side of this parish, next to Sturry. . . .

After which they remained in the crown till king Edward VI. in his 7th year, granted them to Reginald Lygate, to hold in capite, who quickly afterwards alienated them to Sir Edmund Rouse, during whose possession of them, in the reign of Philip and Mary, they came by extent into the hands of the crown, and in queen Elizabeth's reign Sir Roger Manwood seems to have been in possession of them by a grant for a term of years. . . .

For Sir Edmund Rous, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/rous-sir-edmund-1521-69-or-later>

LM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Roper

In the name of our merciful Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen. This is the last testament of me, William Roper of Eltham in the county of Kent, made the tenth day of January Anno Domini 1576:

First I, one most unworthiest creature of God, with a sorrowful heart for my sinful life and unkindness to my Lord God, whose infinite mercy giveth me nevertheless good hope of salvation through the most painful death of our merciful Saviour, Christ, in most humble wise do offer up unto the glorious Trinity and to all the holy company of heaven my most miserable and sinful soul;

And my body to be buried at Chelsea in the county of Middlesex in the vault with the body of my dearly beloved wife, whose soul Our Lord pardon, where my father-in-law, Sir Thomas More, whose soul Jesus bless, did mind to be buried, the determination of the time, order and other necessities to my funeral belonging, without pomp to be done, I wholly commit to mine executors;

I next bequeath to my right worshipful friends, Sir Christopher Wray, knight, Lord Chief Justice of England, and Sir William Cordell, knight, Master of the Rolls, to every of them a ring of gold of the full weight and clear value of three pounds six shillings and eight pence;

To the right worshipful Master Southcott, one of the Judges of the King's Bench, and Edmund Plowden, esquire, severally to every of them a ring of gold of the full value of fifty-three shillings four pence;

Further I bequeath towards the maintenance of the parish church of Chelsea aforesaid, if I be buried there, a hundred shillings;

And to the poverty of every the parishes of Chelsea and Eltham aforesaid forty shillings;

And of Saint Dunstan's next Canterbury in the county of Kent four pounds;

I bequeath also to my daughter, Margaret Dawtrey, threescore six pounds thirteen shillings four pence;

To the wife of Richard Fagge [=Fogge?] a hundred shillings;

To every of my household servants not in my will or testament named as much as their whole year's wages amounteth unto;

To my daughter [=daughter-in-law], Luce Roper, my basin and ewer of silver parcel gilt with the leather case;

To my friend, Mr Robert Hare, my pointed diamond;

To Anthony Wright, one of my clerks, four pounds;

To my friend, Mr Thomas Trausham [=Tresham?] the elder, Joan Moger and Alice Borye, sometimes my maidens, severally to every of them a ring of gold of the full weight and clear value of forty shillings;

And to Thomas Redinge and Alice, his wife, a hundred shillings;

Item, I will that the occupation of all the cattle, implements and household stuff in Eltham aforesaid shall there remain and be to my executors as long as the profits of my lands, tenements and hereditaments shall according to my last will hereafter expressed be to them committed;

And after [f. 212r] [-and after] I will the same cattle, implements and household stuff and all other the stuff at my house in Saint Dunstan's aforesaid shall be unto him that shall have my houses in Eltham and St Dunstan's aforesaid, he finding good sureties to mine executors for the time being before my said houses of Eltham and St Dunstan's shall come into his hands to pay to them, within three years next after the delivery of the same stuff, to the use of the two daughters of Mr James Good, Doctor of Physic, and to the survivor of them towards their preferment two hundred marks;

And if he so do not, then I will all the said cattle and household stuff unto the said two daughters and to the survivor of them;

I will unto the prisoners of the High Court of the King's Bench forty pounds;

Item, I give unto my Lady Wray my cross of gold;

And if any doubt shall fortune to arise about any matter or articles comprised in my last testament of my goods and chattels or in my last will of my lands, tenements & hereditaments hereunto annexed or in any matter, clause or articles in them or any of them contained, then by these presents I give full authority to the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench for the time being and to Edmund Plowden, esquire, to discuss and determine the same, and whatsoever shall therein be agreed and determined by them or any of them shall be taken for my true meaning and intent of the same my testament and will, any colour or scruple appearing within the said testament or will or any of them to the contrary notwithstanding;

I will also that all such my hangings of tapestry as be in my chamber where I lie at Mr Doctor Good's unto the said Mr Doctor Good and his wife;

And that all such evidences and writings as do remain in my custody at Lincoln's Inn and Eltham aforesaid concerning the hereditaments appointed by my will or otherwise assured unto my son, Anthony, be delivered unto him;

And all such evidences and other writings as belong to any other I will shall be delivered to the right owner;

And for the true performance of this my last testament and will I make my worshipful friends, Sir Christopher Wray, knight, Lord Chief Justice of England, and Edmund Plowden, esquire, my chief executors, and to every of them I give forty pounds;

I make also James Good, Doctor of Physic, Robert Hare, Francis Sandbache, gentleman, and John Bensted my other executors, to which John Bensted I give the residue of the years yet to come of my farm in Battersea in the county of Surrey;

I will that Mr Robert Hare and my other executors made touching the disposition of my goods, chattels and stock beyond the seas shall pay unto Thomas Roper, my eldest son, the sum of five hundred pound, and unto Anthony, my youngest son, five hundred marks, so that they do make a clear acquittance and discharge to my other executors made touching the disposition of all my goods and chattels within the realm of England;

The rest of my said goods, chattels and stock beyond the seas I leave to the disposition of such persons as I have by my deed appointed for the same;

And to every other of my said executors I give twenty pounds and a black gown;

Subscribed and published by the said William Roper as his last will and testament in the presence of these persons whose names be underwritten. William Weston. Per me Christoferum Rust, Michael Shaw, Henricum Collins, Sebastian Westcott. Per me (blank) Baxter. Per me, Thomam Harrington.

This is the last will and device of me, William Roper of Eltham in the county of Kent, made the tenth day of January Anno Domini 1576 concerning the disposition of all my manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments within the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Oxford, Stafford, the cities of London and Canterbury or elsewhere within the realm of England where I am possessed of such estate as I may by my will for a time dispose of;

And in the manors [+of?] Chestfield, Butler's Court, Clowes [=Clowse], Hackington, Wellhall, Easthorne, Farningham alias Franingham, Uppercourt, Nethercourt and Chentane(?);

And of and in the manors of Shafford and Christeney with their appurtenances;

And of and in all other lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances in Whitstable, Swalecliffe, Herne, Chislet(?), Reculver in the parishes of Cosmus and Damien upon the Blean in Ash next Sandwich, Woodnesborough, Hackington, River, Christney, Ewell, Saint Dunstan's without the west gate of Canterbury, Harbledown, Kingsdown, Maplescombe, Fawkham, Eynsford, Horton(?), Farningham alias

Freningham, Sutton at Hone, Horton Kirby, Chevening, Greenwich, Bromley, Leigh, Eltham, Mottingham, Bexley and Kidbrooke in the county of Kent and in the parish of West Gate of the city of Canterbury;

And of and in all other messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances in the cities of London and Canterbury;

And of and in the manors of Drayton within the county of Oxford;

And of and [f. 212v] in all other lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances in the same counties in which heretofore I had any estate of inheritance, I will that James Good, Robert Hare, Francis Sandbache and John Bensted, four of my executors and [+the?] overlivers and overliwer of them, shall have, hold and enjoy all my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments within the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Stafford, Oxford and the cities of London other than be appointed for the several jointures of my daughter, Luce Roper, wife of Thomas Roper, my eldest son, and of Anne Roper, wife of Anthony Roper, my younger son, for two whole years next after my death and also to the morrow next after the first of the two feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady that shall first happen after the end of the said two whole years next after my death without condition;

And nevertheless my whole trust and confidence is that my said executors and the survivors and survivor of them shall and will order, dispose, bestow and employ the rents, revenues, issues and profits of all the manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments and other the premises with the yearly woodsales of the same, except before excepted, to them by these presents willed and devised in manner and form following, that is to say:

With the same rents, revenues, issues and profits shall and will for the first whole year next after my death maintain and keep my house at Eltham for the sustentation of my household servants there with wages, meat, drink, linens, lodging and fuel necessary to th' intent that every of them may have more time to provide for themselves convenient service or otherwise;

And the profits of the second and residue of the said two whole years of the said manors & other the premises shall and will bestow and employ according to the trust reposed in them;

Also I will that mine eldest son shall suffer those that were my clerks at the time of the surrender of my late office of the prothonotaryship of the King's of [sic] Queen's Bench (without just cause of expulsion) quietly to enjoy their rooms as they before have done;

Also I will unto my son, Anthony, and to his heirs after the said two whole years past all my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Farningham, Horton Kirby, Kingsdown, Maplescombe, Fawkham, Eynsford, Sutton at Hone, Chevening and East Greenwich and all other my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments within the shires of Middlesex, Oxford and the City of London;

Also I will that my daughter [=daughter-in-law], Luce Roper, shall have to make up her jointure during her life these parcels following, viz.:

Of Mr Thomas Traushame [=Tresham?] the elder for the capital messuage and the park ten pounds;

For Brambletie in the parish of Hackington twenty-six shillings eight pence;

Of Robert Leonard for the house next the place sixteen shillings;

Of Sandys(?) for his house twelve pence;

Of Mr Massingborne for the Pittes eight shillings;

Of Fagge [=Fogge?] for the close at St Thomas' Hill thirty shillings;

Of Harrison for the cherry-garden with the lands in Shelford twelve pounds;

Of Thomas Trausham the younger for the manor of Shelford twenty pounds;

Of Mr Petyt for five acres at Harbledown thirty-six shillings and eight pence;

Of William Horseley of Harbledown twenty shillings;

Of Drayton for the manor of Hackington sixteen pounds thirteen shillings four pence;

Of Mr Lovelace for Hargesmeade at Shelford six pounds;

For a close within the manor of Hackington late in the occupation of Massingborne thirteen shillings four pence;

Of John Smythe for Butler's Court and Clowes nineteen pounds;

Of John Smelte for divers parcels in Whitstable eleven pounds four shillings;

For lands late in th' occupation of Allen three pounds;

For the lands purchased of Brampton forty shillings;

Of Smelte for a parcel of Southleese twenty-five shillings;

Of Mr Petyt for lands purchased of him in Whitstable forty-six shillings eight pence;

For lands of Mr Sethe purchased in Herne eight pounds;

And all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments within the said county of Kent not otherwise given or disposed I will unto my son, Thomas Roper, and to his heirs forever;

And also I will there be given to the honest needy parishioners where I shall be buried yearly during the same two years four pounds in money to have me in remembrance of their charity in their prayers;

And my mind and intent is that every of my said living executors and the survivors and survivor of them for their pains to be taken towards the performance of the premises in form aforesaid and for the true execution of his my last will shall have and take during the time of the said two years five pounds yearly to every of them of the rents, issues and profits of the premises by these presents unto them in form aforesaid willed and devised over and besides their necessary expenses to be taken in and about the same, the same several sums of five pounds to be had and taken by them and every of them as is aforesaid yearly until the morrow next after the first two feasts of St Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady that shall first happen after th' end of the said two years next after my death without condition;

And also my trust and confidence is that the residue and overplus of the said rents, revenues, issues and profits coming of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments [f. 213r] and other the premises by these presents willed and devised to my said executors and to the survivors and survivor of them shall and will be ordered, employed, bestowed and distributed by them and the survivor of them towards the performance and payment of my charges, debts and legacies comprised in my will and testament if my movable goods and debts owing me will not suffice thereunto;

And if it happen any surplusage of the said yearly rents, revenues, issues and profits, money and debts to remain in their hands over and above the sums of money that shall be bestowed and employed by them in manner and form aforesaid, then my trust and confidence is that the same surplusage shall be bestowed yearly according to my secret trust put in them;

I will that my son, Anthony Roper, shall have my lease and all my estate, interest and term of years yet to come of and in the parsonage of Harlington with the patronage of the same within the county of Middlesex to him, his executors and assigns forever, which said lease I have in mortgage from William Awberye;

Subscribed and published by the said William Roper as his last will and testament in the presence of these persons whose names be under-written. William Weston. Per me Christoferum Rust, Michaelum Shawe, Henricum Collins. Per me Sebastian Westcott. Per me (blank) Baxter. Per me Thomas Harrington.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i Testamentum Apud London Coram mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Drurye Legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuarien{sis} Commissario

Vicesimo primo Die mens{is} Junij Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Septuagesimo Octauo Iuramento Christopheri Robinson Notarij publici procuratoris Executorum in h{uius}mo{d}i Testamento no{m}i{n}ator{um} Quibus com{m}issa fuit Ad{ministra}c{i}o &c De bene &c Iurat{i}

[=The same testament was proved at London before Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-first day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-eighth by the oath of Christopher Robinson, notary public, proctor of the executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well etc.]