

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 31 May 1580 and proved 13 May 1583 of Francis Newdigate (1519-1582), the uncle of Anne (nee Newdigate) Saunders, whose husband, George Saunders, was murdered on 25 March 1573 by Oxford's former servant, George Browne. The murder was the subject of a pamphlet by Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding (1535/6-1606), *Brief Discourse of the Late Murther of Master George Saunders*, and an anonymous play, *A Warning for Fair Women*, performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

For the identification of the testator's niece, Anne Newdigate, the daughter of John Newdigate (1514-1565) of Harefield, Middlesex, and his first wife, Mary Cheney, the daughter of Robert Cheney of Chesham Bois, Buckinghamshire, as the Anne Newdigate who was the wife of the murdered George Saunders, see the pedigree of Saunders in Howard, Joseph Jackson and George John Armytage, eds., *The Visitation of London in the Year 1568*, (London: Harleian Society, 1869), p. 34; the pedigree of Newdigate in Crisp, Frederick Arthur, ed., *Visitation of England and Wales*, Vol. 7, (1907), p. 36, where it is stated that Anne Newdigate married George Saunders at Harefield on 10 February 1559/60, and that she was administratrix to her uncle, Anthony Newdigate, 12 July 1568 (for his will, see TNA PROB 11/50, f. 110); the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for Anne Newdigate's brother, John Newdigate (1542-1592); Joseph H. Marshburn, "'A Cruell Murder Done In Kent' and Its Literary Manifestations," *Studies in Philology* 46 (1949), 131-40; *Analytical Index to the Series of Records Known as the Remembrancia*, (London: E.J. Francis & Co., 1878), p. 309, which references letters between the Lord Mayor of London and Anne (nee Stanhope) Seymour (c.1510-1587), Duchess of Somerset, in which the Duchess states that the custody of Elizabeth Saunders, the daughter and orphan of George Saunders, deceased, had been committed to the custody of her uncle [=great-uncle], Francis Newdigate (1519-1582), the Duchess' late husband; and the will below, in which the testator requests that the Duchess 'do see my niece [=great-niece], Bess Saunders, brought up and bestowed'.

Anne Newdigate was hanged for complicity in the murder of her husband.

For the will of Francis Saunders, brother of the murdered George Saunders, see TNA PROB 11/68, ff. 273-6.

For the History of Parliament biography of the testator, see:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/newdigate-francis-1519-82>.

See also the entry for Anne (nee Stanhope) Seymour (c.1510-1587), Duchess of Somerset, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online.

For the extortion committed against Oxford's father, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, by the Duchess of Somerset's first husband, Edward Seymour (c.1500-1552), Duke of Somerset, see HL/PO/PB/1/1551/5E6n35. Two of the Duke and Duchess' sons,

Edward Seymour (1539?-1621), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Hertford, and Henry Seymour, were witnesses to the testator's will below.

The testator mentions his brother's involvement with the sale of lands for Henry Carey (1526-1596), 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain of the Household:

*Item, I give & bequeath as aforesaid to the Duchess all that my manor of Little Ashtead in Surrey, otherwise called Pryorn farm, lately purchased of my brother and another joined to sell the same on my Lord Hunsdon's behalf.*

The testator's brother, Robert Newdigate (1528-1584), had also been involved with Lord Hunsdon in the sale of the manor of Paris Garden on which Francis Langley later erected the Swan Theatre. See Ingram, William, *A London Life in the Brazen Age; Francis Langley 1548-1602*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 74-7:

*On July 10, 1578, at the request of her kinsman, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, the Queen granted the manor of Paris Garden, with its leasehold and copyhold tenants, its court baron and court leet, to Robert Newdigate and Arthur Fountayne.*

LM: T{estamentum} ffrancisci Newdegate Armiger

Our help is in God and in his Holy Name, into whose hands by this my last will and testament I first commend my soul to be saved only by faith in Christ's bloodshedding for me, my body to be buried as shall please the Duchess, and at Hanworth or elsewhere at her good pleasure, desiring and therewithal charging her Grace that it be done without any of these pompous mournings and charges of blacks as is wonted usually;

Chiefly my mind is that the poor and prison-houses may be somewhat liberally remembered on her Grace's behalf and mine, and yet referring the sums to her Grace's good devotion;

And according as I have received all my preferment by the Duchess' marriage, so do I in few words will and bequeath unto her all that I am able any way to give her, that is to say, all my goods, leases, chattels, plate, jewels, cattle, both horses, mares, geldings, oxen, kine, sheep, corn housed or sown, and all other my household stuff, stock and store which Whitinge or any others hath of mine, together with all such debts as are at this present or shall any way hereafter be due unto me from any person by bond, covenant or otherwise;

And also [+I] do give and bequeath to my said Duchess all and all manner of lands, both freehold and copyhold, which I have in England, as well that which is not set down herein by name as also that which followeth particularly by name, viz., my house at Canon Row purchased of the Lord Hunsdon in the city of Westminster and county of Middlesex; the inn at Thistleworth [=Isleworth] commonly called the Sign of the Bell

there, purchased of one Champneys in Middlesex aforesaid; the manor of Littleton in the same county purchased of Bartam [=Bartram?] of the Middle Temple; and all such copyhold as I have there or is leased out to one Rayner and now enjoyed by one Singer, taken for parcel of Shepperton lordship, and another piece thereof Uphalford [=Upper Halliford];

Item, I give & bequeath as aforesaid to the Duchess all that my manor of Little Ashtead in Surrey, otherwise called Pryorn [=Pryor's?] farm, lately purchased of my brother and another joined to sell the same on my Lord Hunsdon's behalf;

All which lands, tenements and hereditaments, as well named expressly or by general words given, together with all their appurtenances, liberties, franchises, royalties, profits, commodities and emoluments to the same manors, houses, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments and other the premises belonging or appertaining, I give wholly and fully to my said Duchess;

Nevertheless my desire is that her Grace will be good to her old servants on my behalf, specially Dickenson and the clerk Saunders, who have had small preferment for long service, and unto Saunders my full promise is to let him have twenty nobles a year till I provide him a farm for his life and his wife's or for one and twenty years, which if God send me life as I mean to perform, so my will is your Grace to accomplish the same;

My further desire is that her Grace do see my niece, Bess Saunders, brought up and bestowed;

And that your Grace bestow some rings of remembrance upon all my brothers and my sister Crafford, and upon such as she shall withsafe [=vouchsafe?] worthy thereof;

And thus committing all things to my said Duchess, whom I make my full and sole executor of this my last will and testament, I end the same, dated at Hanworth the last of May one thousand five hundred eighty, and in the two and twentieth year of Queen Elizabeth. Signed and sealed by me, Francis Newdigate, in the presence of Richard Saunders, William Dickonson.

The codicil annexed to the said will vicesimo sexto die Ianuarij Anno D{omi}ni 1581, being Friday about eleven of the clock in the forenoon of the same day, Mr Francis Newdigate was contented and did give the lands and tenements that he lastly purchased unto the right honourable the Duchess of Somerset and to her heirs forever, these being witnesses hereunto, E. Hertford, H. Seymour, Emanuell Maunsell, scrivener, Richard Saunders, John Browne, William Diconsonne.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram venerabili viro m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Drury Legum Doctore curie prerogatiue cantuarien{sis} commissario etc decimo tertio die mens{is} Maij Anno Domini mill{es}imo quingentesimo octogesimo

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tertio Iuramento Petri Johnson notarij publici procuratoris nobilis femine Domine Anne  
Ducesse Som{m}ersett Relicte eiusdem defunct{i} et executric{is} etc Cui com{m}issa  
fuit administracio bonorum etc De bene etc Iurat{i} ex{aminatur}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury etc., on the thirteenth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eight-third by the oath of Peter Johnson, notary public, proctor of the honourable Lady Anne, Duchess of Somerset, relict of the same deceased and executrix etc., to whom administration was granted of the goods etc., sworn to well etc. Examined.]