

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 7 July 1582 and proved 14 May 1584, of William Saunders (d. 14 July 1582) of Harrington. The testator was the first cousin of George Saunders, 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.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family, see the will of his father, Lawrence Saunders (d.1544), TNA PROB 11/30/232, and the pedigree of Saunders of Harrington in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire Made in 1564 and 1618-19*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), p. 45 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofnor00harvrich#page/44/mode/2up>

See also the pedigree in Winchester, Barbara, *Tudor Family Portrait*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 17.

See also Agutter, Doreen, 'Edward Saunders of Harrington and Rothwell, Northamptonshire', *Monumental Brass Society, Bulletin* 115, (September 2010), pp. 288-9, at:

<http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/Bulletin.html>

See also the pedigree of Saunders in Howard, Joseph Jackson, ed., *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, Vol. I, (London: Hamilton Adams, 1868), p. 159 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/miscellaneageneal12unse#page/n177/mode/2up>

For the will of the testator's uncle, William Saunders of Welford (d.1541?), Northamptonshire, father of the murdered George Saunders, see TNA PROB 11/28/488.

The testator outlived his brothers and sisters. In his will he leaves a bequest to his nephew, William Starkey, the son of his sister, Audrey Saunders, and her husband, William Starkey (d.1555). For the will of the testator's brother-in-law, William Starkey (d.1555), see TNA PROB 11/37/321. The testator appoints as supervisor of his will his nephew, Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591), the son of his sister, Alice Saunders. See the pedigree of Hatton in Metcalfe, *supra*, p. 27. As his executor, the testator appoints another nephew, Bartholomew Tate (c.1532-1601), the son of his sister, Anne Saunders (c.1512-1565). See the pedigree of Tate in Metcalfe, *supra*, pp. 198-9; and the History of Parliament biography of Bartholomew Tate at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/tate-bartholomew-1532-1601>.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

The testator married Frances Zouche, the daughter of William Zouche of Bulwick, Northamptonshire, and his wife, Jane Bradbourne. William Zouche was the son of John Zouche, 7th Baron Zouche (c.1440-1527) of Harringworth, who fought for Richard III at Bosworth, and the brother of John Zouche (d.1551), 8th Baron Zouche of Harringworth (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/34, ff. 79-80). By his wife, Frances Zouche, the testator had a son and a daughter:

* **Edward Saunders** (buried 1 December 1599) of Hackney, who married Susan Mackwilliam, the daughter of Henry Mackwilliam, a gentleman pensioner at the court of Queen Elizabeth, by Mary Hill (d.1616), daughter and co-heiress of Richard Hill, esquire, and widow of the scholar Sir John Cheke, tutor to Edward VI and brother-in-law of Lord Burghley, whose first wife was Mary Cheke (c.1520–1544). Henry Mackwilliam jousted against Oxford in a tournament at Westminster on 1-3 May 1571 (see Segar on this website). For Henry Mackwilliam's nuncupative will, dated 25 December 1586, see TNA PROB 11/70/244.

* **Audrey Saunders** (d.1588), who was the first wife of Sir George Villiers (1550-1606) of Brokesby, father of King James' favourite, George Villiers (1592-1628), 1st Duke of Buckingham. For the will of the testator's son, Edward Saunders (buried 1 December 1599), see Howard, *supra*, pp. 159-60. For the pedigree showing the descendants of the testator's daughter, Audrey Saunders (d.1588), see Bloomfield, Paul, 'The Descendants of Sir George Villiers', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2, (July 1947), pp. 63-7, available online at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2986424/>.

The testator's marriage to Frances Zouche linked the family, albeit distantly, to the Earls of Oxford. Catherine Zouche, the aunt of the testator's wife, Frances Zouche, married firstly, Sir Robert Brandon, son of Sir William Brandon (d.1491) and Elizabeth Wingfield, and secondly, John Carew (d.1528 at Pavia), the son of Sir Nicholas Carew (d. 13 September 1469) of Haccombe, Devonshire, fifth son of Sir Nicholas Carew (1409?-1448?) and Joan Courtenay (1411?-1465?), the daughter of Sir Hugh Courtney by his third wife, Philippe, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Warin l'Arcedekne. After the death of Sir Nicholas Carew (1409?-1448?), Joan (nee Courtenay) Carew married, by licence dated 5 October 1450, Sir Robert Vere (d.1461?), younger brother of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., (Salt Lake City, 2011), Vol. I, pp. 402-3, 548-9, and Vol. II, pp. 326-7; Vivian, J.L. and Henry H. Drake, eds., *The Visitation of the County of Cornwall in the Year 1620*, (London: Harleian Society, 1874), p. 31; and Betham, William, *The Baronetage of England*, Vol. II, (London: W.S. Betham, 1802), pp. 285-6.

TESTATOR'S LANDS

For the testator's manor of Walgrave, Northamptonshire, see:

'Parishes: Walgrave', *A History of the County of Northampton: Volume 4* (1937), pp. 217-222. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66352>.

For documents concerning transactions between the testator and his first cousin, Sir Christopher Hatton, see:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A/records.aspx?cat=154-fh_1-1&cid=-1#-1.

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

In the name of God, Amen. The seventh of July in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and two and in the four & twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc., I, William Saunders of Harrington in the county of Northampton, esquire, being whole of body and perfect in mind, do revoke all my former wills, and do make, constitute and ordain this my last will and testament to stand in full strength as hereafter shall follow:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the parish church of Harrington, not sumptuously but decently according to my calling;

Item, I will that my mortuary be paid according to the laws of this realm thereof made;

Item, I will and bequeath to the eldest son of John Cripes, sometime of Hampton Magesty [=Meysey Hampton?] in the county of Wiltshire, two hundred and ten pounds, to be paid to him or to his heirs within four years after my death, so it be truly paid as my trust is in my executor;

Item, I give to the poor in Harrington twenty shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Rothwell twenty shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Desborough ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Braybrooke ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Arthingworth ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Kelmarsh ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Maidwell ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Draughton ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor in Orton ten shillings;

Item, I will that all my household servants shall have, every one of them, of my gift their half year's wages over and besides their duty;

Item, I will that where I am indebted to Jane Ashwell, my maid, the sum of forty and four pounds, that it be made up of my gift threescore pounds;

Item, I will that John [f. 80r] Hathewicke, my man, have for his true service twenty pounds;

Item, I will that Thomas Bradshaw shall yearly during his life have one annuity or yearly rent of forty shillings to be going out of all my lands and tenements in Draughton in the county of Northampton, and to be paid to the said Thomas at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions during all his said life;

Item, I will that Robert Patston shall yearly during his life have one annuity or yearly rent of forty shillings to be going out of all my lands and tenements in Draughton in the said county of Northampton, and to be paid to the said Robert at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and the Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions during all his said life;

Item I will that where there is debt due to me by my son Villiers to the sum of threescore pounds or more, I do clearly forgive it, and do give to his wife, my daughter, ten pounds;

Item, I will that where divers and sundry of my poor neighbours have lent me money upon goodwill, as it doth appear by a bill of my debts, I will that before Christmas next they be all paid;

And I will that after my great debts be paid, which I hope will be within two years, that then my cousin, William Starkey, have five pounds by the year paid unto him out of Walgrave during his life;

Item, I will that presently after my death that my daughter-in-law, Susan, have an assurance out of all my lands according to my promise, fifty pounds yearly during her life;

Item, I will that all my creditors be paid with as much speed as may be;

Item, that where Joan Ashwell dwelt with me these ten years, and have received divers sums of money for the which she hath accounted justly and truly, I will that this stand unto her for a general acquittance from the beginning of the world unto this day;

Item, I will that all my plate after my death remain with my son during his life, and after his decease to be left to his heir;

Item, I will that all my leases remain with my son, after his death to remain to his heir if there be any years left;

Item, I will that all my household stuff at Harrington and at Walgrave come and be to the use of my son during his life, and after his death to his heirs;

Item, I will that Edward Saunders, my son, after my will is performed and my debts and legacies paid, that then he shall have all my goods and chattels;

And I will that my cousin, Bartholomew Tate, be mine executor to see this my last will performed, and to have for his pains five pounds and all his charges which he shall sustain and bear as well about my funerals as otherwise in the just and true performance of this my last will and testament;

Item, I give unto Sir Christopher Hatton, knight, one of her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, my best gelding, and he to be overseer of this my last will and testament;

Item, I will that my executors see that there be laid over me within one year after my decease one tomb of marble;

In witness whereof, I, the said William Saunders, have set to my hand and seal the day and year above-written. William Saunders. Witnesses: William Tate, Edward Dallyson.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London Coram venerabili viro mag{ist}ro Will{el}imo Drury Legum doctore curie prerogatiue cantuarien{sis} commissario etc Decimo quarto die mens{is} Maij Anno Domini mill{es}imo guingentesimo octogesimo quarto Iuramento Richardi Windor notarij publicj procuratoris Barth{olomoe}i Tate executoris etc Cui commissa fuit administrac{i}o bonor{um} 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 fourteenth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-fourth by the oath of Richard Windor, notary public, proctor of Bartholomew Tate, executor etc., to whom administration was granted of the goods etc., sworn to well etc. Examined.]