

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 29 January 1571 and proved 30 September 1573, of John Delves (d. 13 June 1571), whose wife was the aunt of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham.

The testator was the son of Sir Henry Delves (d. 2 August 1560) and Cecily Broke (buried 3 January 1562/3), the daughter and coheir of Sir Richard Broke (d.1529), Chief Baron of the Exchequer. She was the sister of Margaret (nee Broke) Whorwood Sheldon, to whom the testator entrusted the care of his daughter, Margaret (see below). For the will of Margaret (nee Broke) Whorwood Sheldon, see TNA PROB 11/75/190. For the William of William Sheldon (d. 24 December 1570) of Beoley, in which the testator's daughter, Margaret, is mentioned, see TNA PROB 11/53/79. See also 'The Inventory of Dame Cicely Delves, Widow', *Remains, infra*, pp. 28-34.

The testator's brother, Sir George Delves, became a gentleman pensioner. For a letter dated 14 May 1571 from Sir George Delves to Edward Manners, 3rd Earl of Rutland, describing the tournament of 1-3 May 1571 in which Oxford participated as one of four challengers, all of whom received a prize presented personally by the Queen, see HMC Rutland, v.1, p. 92.

For a letter dated 24 June 1571 from Sir George Delves to Edward Manners, 3rd Earl of Rutland, remarking on Oxford's high reputation at court, see HMC Rutland, v. 1, pp. 93-4.

The testator married Mary Sneyd, the daughter of Sir William Sneyd (d. 6 June 1571), grandfather of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. For the will of Sir William Sneyd, see TNA PROB 11/54/430.

According to the will below, the testator had four sons, Henry, Ralph, John and Hugh, and three daughters, Margaret, Anne and Eleanor. The testator's eldest son, Henry Delves, was aged 17 and more at his father's death. See Ormerod, George, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, (London: Lackington, Hughes, 1819), Vol. III, pp. 267-8 at:

<http://archive.org/stream/historyofcountyp03orme#page/268/mode/2up>.

The will provides that the testator's younger children were to be placed in the care of various persons until they reach the age of 16: Mary in the care of her mother; Margaret in the care of the testator's aunt, Margaret (nee Broke) Whorwood Sheldon (see above); Ralph and Eleanor in the care of the testator's father-in-law, Sir William Sneyd, and brother-in-law, Ralph Sneyd; Hugh in the care of his brother, Henry; and John in the care of the testator's brother-in-law, Thomas Trentham (d.1587), father of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, by Jane Sneyd. For the will of Thomas Trentham, see TNA PROB 11/72/372.

The testator's son, Henry Delves (buried 16 October 1616), married Frances Stanley, the daughter of Thomas Stanley, esquire, of Alderley, mentioned in the will below.

The testator's son, John Delves, was slain at the Blackwater in Ireland.

The testator's daughter, Margaret Delves, married Edward Bushell. See the pedigree of Bushell in Hotson, Leslie, *I, William Shakespeare*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 144; Ormerod, *supra*, p. 268; and the will of Edward Bushell's grandfather, Thomas Bushell (d.1558), TNA PROB 11/42A/53.

The testator's father-in-law, Sir William Sneyd, had a brother, Richard Sneyd, a Middle Temple lawyer who married a wife named Alice (nee Hinton?), but died c.1554 without issue. Alice then married Lawrence Woodnett of Godwinsley in Blakenhall, Chester, mentioned in the will below. See the will of Sir William Sneyd, *supra*, and the pedigree in Rylands, John Paul, ed., *The Visitation of Chester in the Year 1580*, (London: Harleian Society, 1882), Vol. XVIII, see p. 256 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=Q_wUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA256&lpg=PA256&dq=%22Lawrence+Woodnett%22&source=bl&ots=96wUPczuAZ&sig=YvzALTOuqUd2dJPGJbMoLY11qMk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiZ_NimvKnJAhXHl4gKHQRZAKMQ6AEILzAF#v=onepage&q=%22Lawrence%20Woodnett%22&f=false.

The modern spelling transcript below was prepared from 'The Will of John Delves of Doddington' in *Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester*, (Chetham Society, 1860), Vol. XI, pp. 48-52 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=KcE4AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=%22Will+of+John+Delves%22&source=bl&ots=jRmG70NTg6&sig=LRMUPfwQyFLLUAc82z zUYMwGjpM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjO_J7MnKfJAhUR62MKHYnDDuMQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=%22Will%20of%20John%20Delves%22&f=false.

In the name of God, Amen. The 29th day of January in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace etc. the 13th, I John Delves of Doddington in the county of Chester, esquire, being sick in body etc. and minding to leave my lands, goods and chattels to my wife and children, whom I would should quietly enjoy the same without all contention, do make etc.

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting and steadfastly believing that through the merits of his blessed and painful passion to be one of the number that shall inherit the kingdom of heaven whose names are written in the book of life;

Item, I bequeath my body to be buried in the church of Wybunbury in the Saint Mary chancel where my father and other my ancestors do lie;

Item, to Mary, my dearly beloved wife, all such lands and tenements as is to her assured by the conveyance between Thomas Stanley, esquire, and me, the said John Delves, to have and to hold during her natural life for and in the name of her jointure;

Also I give etc. to my said wife six of my best kine, six oxen, and one ambling gelding;

And further I do give etc. to my said wife and to Henry, my son and heir, all such implements, plate and household stuff as I shall have in and about my house of Doddington at the time of my decease upon condition that they shall agree and keep house jointly together with the rest of my children, as they shall think good;

And if it shall fortune my said wife to marry again and to take another husband, or also [sic?] that they will utterly refuse to keep house with my son according to my will, then she to use the benefit of the legacy touching all the said household stuff [+and?] plate with all other implements of household;

And if my said son, Henry, will use himself unreverently anent his said mother, and will not be contented to keep house with her according to this my said will, then it is my will that he lose his part of the legacies, all but of everything the best for and in the name of his heirlooms;

Item, to every of my younger sons, Ralph Delves, John Delves and Hugh Delves, one annuity or yearly rent of four pounds for and during their said natural lives;

Item, to my daughters, Margaret Delves, Anne Delves and Eleanor Delves, and to every of them one hundred pounds towards their preferments, leaving the same sums to be levied and received of such lands and tenements as be appointed for the payment of the same by the conveyance between Thomas Stanley, esquire, and me, the said John Delves;

Item, to Cecily Hassall, my sister's daughter, £20 in money;

Item, I will that a true inventory be taken of all my goods and chattels, quick and dead, and the same to be divided in two parts, the one part thereof to pay my debts and legacies before bequested, and the other part to remain to be equally divided amongst my younger sons and daughters, and if there by any overplus of that part that I do leave for the discharge of my debts and legacies, I will that the same overplus shall be likewise divided amongst my younger sons and daughters as before;

Also I will and bequeath my farm of Keel to be employed to th' use of my younger sons and daughters for and during all such years as I have in the same farm;

And if any of my said children shall fortune to depart this transitory life at any time before they shall accomplish the age of 16 years and not married nor make any will, then I will that all such goods and chattels as is bequested to the said child or children by this my said will shall be equally [-be] divided amongst the rest then living;

Item, I will that my said wife, Mary Delves, shall have the government and custody of Anne Delves with all her portion of goods and chattels until she shall accomplish the age of 16 years or come to marriage;

Item, I will and desire my right worshipful aunt, Margaret Sheldon, widow, to take my daughter, Margaret Delves, with all her portion of goods and chattels, and her to bring up and bestow as she shall see just cause;

Item, I desire my worshipful father-in-law, Sir William Sneyd, knight, and my brother-in-law, Ralph Sneyd, esquire, to take [+to] their custody and government my son, Ralph Delves, and my daughter, Eleanor Delves, with all their portion of goods and chattels, and to see them well brought up and bestowed as may seem to them for their wealth until they and either shall come to th' age of 16 years;

Item, I desire my well-beloved son and heir, Henry Delves, to take my son, Hugh, his brother, with all his portion of goods and chattels, and to see him well brought up and his goods well employed to the child's use according to my trust in him reposed until he shall accomplish the said age of 16 years;

Item, I desire my right worshipful and loving brother-in-law, Thomas Trentham, esquire, to take to his custody my son, John Delves, with all his goods and living, and him to keep to learning, and so to bestow his goods as shall seem best to and for my said child's profit until he shall come to the full age of 16 years as aforesaid;

Also my will is that if any of my trusty friends before named will refuse the government and charge of such of my said children and their goods as by this my said will I have bequested and desired, then I will that my said children and their goods shall be placed by the discretion of my executors whom I do leave in trust for the execution of this my said last will and testament;

Item, my will is that Lawrence Woodnett of Rope, gentleman, shall either quietly enjoy the blake(?) merestie(?) or meadow which he hath taken of me by indenture during the years therein contained, or else without any trouble or suit in the law to have the money repaid him which he paid to me for the same, being £24, which money was disbursed and paid for the purchase of certain lands in Gousley [=Godwinsley?] of the yearly rent of 13s 4d and belonging to the house where John Hotchkis now dwelleth;

And for the true accomplishment of this my said last will and testament I do ordain etc. my dearly-beloved wife, Mary Delves, my right worshipful and dear friends Sir William Sneyd, knight, and my right worshipful aunt, Margaret Sheldon, Ralph Sneyd, esquire, and Thomas Trentham, esquire, and Henry Delves, my son and heir, my true and lawful executors of this my said last will and testament etc., and for their painstaking I do give to every of them not having any legacy before bequested 20s in money to make every of them a ring for a token of remembrance, desiring their friendships in the execution of this my said last will according to such trust as I have in them reposed;

In witness whereof I, the said John Delves, to this my said last will and testament have put to my hand and seal of arms die et anno supradicto et anno Domini 1570;

Witness this to be the last will and testament of John Delves, esquire.