

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 31 July 1579 and proved 17 November 1579 of Richard Cooke (1531 – 3 October 1579), Groom of the Privy Chamber, brother of Oxford's mother-in-law, Mildred (nee Cooke) Cecil (1526-1589), Lady Burghley. In the will below the testator leaves a bequest to Lady Burghley's daughter, Oxford's first wife, Anne Cecil:

Item, I give and bequeath to the right honourable the Countess of Oxford one basin and ewer of silver of the value of fifty pounds.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the testator's family background, see the Cooke pedigree in *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, Vol. III, (London: J.B. Nichols, 1870), p. 306 at:

<http://www.lamas.org.uk/archives/transactions/transactions-vol03fs.html>

See also the Cooke pedigree in Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014).

Testator's parents

The testator was the eldest son and heir of Sir Anthony Cooke (1505 – 11 June 1576), son of John Cooke (d. 7 October 1516), esquire, of Gidea Hall and Alice Saunders. For the will of the testator's father, Sir Anthony Cooke, see TNA PROB 11/59/110.

The testator's mother was Anne Fitzwilliam, the daughter of Sir William Fitzwilliam (d. 9 August 1534) by his first wife, Anne Hawe, daughter of the London mercer and alderman, John Hawe, and his wife, Margaret. See the will of John Hawe, TNA PROB 11/18/336, and the will of Sir William Fitzwilliam, TNA PROB 11/25/205. For Anne Fitzwilliam, see also the entry at:

http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=675

Testator's siblings

The testator had three brothers and five sisters:

-Anthony Cooke, who is said to have died of the sweating sickness before 1555.

-William Cooke (d. 14 May 1589), esquire, who married Frances Grey (d.1608), the daughter of Lord John Grey (d. 19 November 1564) of Pyrgo (in Havering), Essex, uncle

of Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554), the ‘nine days Queen’, by Mary Browne (d. 4 February 1617), sister of Anthony Browne (1528-1592), 1st Viscount Montagu, and daughter of Sir Anthony Browne (29 June 1500 – 6 May 1548) and Alice Gage (d. 31 March 1540). See the will of Lord John Grey, TNA PROB 11/48/27; the will of Mary (nee Browne) Grey Capell, TNA PROB 11/130/133; the will of William Cooke, TNA PROB 11/74/523; and the will of Frances (nee Grey) Cooke, TNA PROB 11/111/120.

-**Edward Cooke** (d.1566), esquire, servant to Queen Elizabeth. See Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014), pp. 68-9, and his will, TNA PROB 11/48/663.

-**Mildred Cooke** (25 August 1526-1589), who married William Cecil, Lord Burghley. See the *ODNB* entry for William Cecil, and his will, TNA PROB 11/92/316. Their daughter, Anne Cecil (1556-1588), was Oxford’s first wife.

-**Anne Cooke** (c.1528-1610), who married Sir Nicholas Bacon (1510-1579), Lord Keeper. See the *ODNB* entries for Anne Cooke and Sir Nicholas Bacon.

-**Margaret Cooke** (d.1558), who married, as his second wife, Sir Ralph Rowlett (by 1513 – 20 April 1571). See the History of Parliament entry at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/rowlett-sir-ralph-1513-71>

According to the History of Parliament entry, Margaret Cooke died 3 August 1558. The Cooke pedigree, *supra*, thus appears to be in error in stating that she died and was buried 8 December 1551 in the parish of St Mary Staining, London.

-**Elizabeth Cooke** (c.1540-1609), who married firstly Sir Thomas Hoby (1530-1566), and secondly Lord John Russell, (c.1553 – 24 July 1584), second son of Francis Russell (1527 – 29 July 1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford. See the *ODNB* entry for Elizabeth Cooke, and the will of the 2nd Earl of Bedford’s second wife, Bridget (nee Hussey) Morison Manners Russell (1526-1601), TNA PROB 11/97/10.

-**Katherine Cooke** (d.1583), who married Sir Henry Killigrew (d.1603), whose nephew, Sir Maurice Berkeley (c.1577-1617), was the half brother of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. For the will of Sir Henry Killigrew, see TNA PROB 11/101/273.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married, by 1559, Anne Cawnton (buried 25 September 1617), the daughter of the London haberdasher, John Cawnton, esquire, alderman of Bishopsgate ward from 1523-8, and sheriff in 1525-6, who is said to have been among those ‘reduced to extreme poverty after exercising the offices of sheriff and mayor, or even one of them’. See

Beaven, Alfred B., *The Aldermen of the City of London*, Vol. II, (London: Eden Fisher, 1908), p. 35 at:

<https://archive.org/details/BeavenABTheAldermenOfTheCityOfLondonTemp.HenryIII.WithNotesOnTheParliamentaryRep/page/n63>

See also the will of John Cawnton's mother-in-law, Dame Elizabeth Thurston, dated 21 March 1520, in Bloom, J. Harvey, *Wayman Wills and Administrations*, (London: Wallace Gandy, 1922), pp. 6-10 at:

<https://archive.org/details/waymanwillsadmin00bloo/page/6>

By Anne Cawnton the testator had a son and daughter living at the time he made his will:

* **Sir Anthony Cooke** (c.1559-1604), dedicatee in 1594 of Michael Drayton's *Ideas Mirrour*, who married Avis Waldegrave (buried 5 October 1642?), daughter of Sir William Waldegrave (c.1540 – 25 August 1613) of Smallbridge, Suffolk, and Elizabeth Mildmay (d.1581), the daughter of Thomas Mildmay (d.1567?), esquire, of Moulsham (in Chelmsford), Essex, by whom he had three sons and four daughters. See the Cooke pedigree in *Transactions, supra*, p. 306. In 1572 Sir William Waldegrave, together with Oxford's first cousin, John Darcy (d.1581), 2nd Baron Darcy of Chiche, entered into guarantees amounting to £5000 for Oxford's debt to the Court of Wards (see TNA C 2/Eliz/T6/48). See the History of Parliament entry for Sir William Waldegrave at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/waldegrave-william-1540-1613>

b. c.1540, o.s. of Sir William Waldegrave[†] by Juliana, da. of Sir John Raynsford. educ. L. Inn 1560. m. (1) Elizabeth (d.1581), da. of Thomas Mildmay, 6s. inc. Sir William 4da.; (2) Grizelda, da. of William Lord Paget, wid. of Sir Thomas Rivett, s.p. suc. fa. 1554. Kntd. 1576.

See also the entry for Avis Waldegrave at:

http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=715

Avis Waldegrave (d.1612+), sometimes called Alice, was the daughter of Sir William Waldegrave of Smallbridge Hall, Suffolk (d. August 17, 1613) and Elizabeth Mildmay (d.1581). She married Anthony Cooke of Gidea Hall, Essex (1559-1604) and was the mother of Edward (March 3, 1579-July 20, 1625), Anne (c.1581-April 18, 1592), Hercules Francis (c.1585-November 1661), Elizabeth (b. July 1, 1589), William (July 9, 1590-July 9, 1650), Penelope (January 28, 1591-March 26, 1650), and Alice (July 8, 1595-May 14, 1596). She and her husband lived at Bedfords while her mother-in-law, Anne Caunton, remained at the family seat, Gidea Hall. According to Marjorie K. McIntosh's articles on the Cooke family, Avis was aggressive, articulate, and clever when it came to both business and politics. This did not prevent the family's descent into

financial difficulties. In 1612, she was obliged to allow her son Edward to sell off some of the lands she held for life.

For Avis Waldegrave, see also McIntosh, Marjorie K., 'The Fall of a Tudor Gentle Family: The Cookes of Gidea Hall, Essex, 1579-1629', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (August 1978), pp. 279-297 at:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3817073>

For the will of Thomas Mildmay, proved 29 January 1567, see TNA PROB 11/49/30.

* **Philippa Cooke**, who married Hercules Meautys (d.1588?), esquire, the son of Sir Peter Meautys (d.1562) of West Ham, Essex, a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber descended from an ancient French family which had come from Normandy with Henry VII. Sir Peter Meautys was the grandson of John Meautys, who is named as a target of the rioters in the anonymous play, *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, and who was granted the manor of Bretts, which was later owned by Oxford from 1584 until his death. For the will of Sir Peter Meautys, see TNA PROB 11/45/221. For the will of Hercules Meautys, see TNA PROB 11/73/110.

By Hercules Meautys, Philippa Cooke had a son and two daughters:

-Sir Thomas Meautys.

-Frances Meautys, who married Edward Shute. He was likely related to John Shute, mentioned in the will of Edward Cooke (d.1566), *supra*.

-Jane Meautys (1580/81–1659), who in 1608 married, as his second wife, Sir William Cornwallis (c.1551-1611) of Brome, Suffolk, eldest son and heir of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19-1604). Sir William Cornwallis purchased Oxford's interest in the mansion of Fisher's Folly in the parish of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate. His daughter, Anne Cornwallis (d.1635), has been identified as the 'Anne Cornwaleys' of the anthology of sixteenth century verse known as the Cornwallis-Lysons manuscript, now in the Folger Library (Folger MS V.a.89). See the Shakespeare Documented website at:

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/anne-cornwallis-poetical-miscellany-early-apocryphal-poem-shakespeare>

For the will of Sir William Cornwallis (c.1551-1611), see TNA PROB 11/118/441. For the will of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19-1604), see TNA PROB 11/105/106. See also the *ODNB* entries for Jane Meautys and Sir William Cornwallis, and the pedigrees of Cornwallis and Meautys in *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis 1613-1644*, (London: S. & J. Bentley, 1842), available online.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The testator appoints as one of his overseers his brother-in-law, John Russell (d.1584), Lord Russell, the second son of Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford. The testator's sister, Elizabeth Cooke (1540-1609), had married firstly Sir Thomas Hoby (1530-1566), who translated Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* into English as *The Courtier*. By him she had two sons, Edward Hoby and Thomas Posthumous Hoby (born after his father's death), and two daughters. On 23 December 1574, she married John Russell (d.1584), Lord Russell, and by him had two daughters, Anne Russell, who on 16 June 1600 married Henry Somerset (b. before 1590, d. 18 December 1646), son of Edward Somerset (d.1550-1628), 4th Earl of Worcester, and his wife Elizabeth Hastings (d.1621), fourth daughter of Francis Hastings (1513/14-1560), 2nd Earl of Huntingdon, at the Blackfriars with the Queen in attendance, and Elizabeth Russell, who died unmarried shortly after her sister's wedding. Elizabeth Hastings (d.1621) was one of the two daughters of Francis Hastings (1513/14-1560), 2nd Earl of Huntingdon, intended as Oxford's bride under the marriage contract entered into on 1 July 1562 by the 16th Earl and Henry Hastings (1536?-1595), 3rd Earl of Huntingdon (see HAP o/s Box 3(19), and the *ODNB* entry for Elizabeth (nee Cooke) Hoby Russell (1528-1609).

RM: T{estamentum} Rich{ard}i Cooke

In the name of God, Amen. The last day of July 1579 and in the one and twentieth year of the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth etc., I, Richard Cooke of Gidea Hall in the county of Essex, esquire, being of good and perfect memory and remembrance, thanks be to God therefore, do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First, I commend my soul into the most merciful custody and protection of th' Almighty, assuring myself through the precious death and passion of our only Saviour, Christ Jesus, to have free remission and pardon of all my sins, and after this transitory life ended, to be made partaker of the life everlasting with him and his elect, and my body I commend to the earth to be reverently and comely buried according to the discretion of my executors;

And as touching the disposition of my worldly goods and chattels, first I give and bequeath to my well-beloved wife, Anne Cooke, my best coach with two coach geldings and six other of my geldings, which she shall choose, and four hundred pounds of lawful money of England of such money and debts as I am possessed of or shall be due to me at the time of my death;

Item, I give and bequeath to my said wife my manor-house of Gidea Hall and divers other lands, tenements and hereditaments lying within the Liberty of Havering for the term of her natural life according to a former conveyance thereof made to her use by indenture made between me, the said Richard, on thone party, and George Noodes and Robert Badby, gent{lemen}, on thother part;

And I further give and bequeath to my said wife all my lands, tenements and hereditaments lying and being in Thetford [=Tetford?] in the county of Lincoln, to have and to hold to her and to her heirs forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to my son, Anthony Cooke, all my armour and weapons at Gidea Hall, with my whole library of books there, all the residue of my horses, mares, geldings and colts not before bequeathed, thone half of all my beds, bedding, linen and other household stuff whatsoever, the one half of all my plate, all my stock of sheep in Dors{er}t(?) in the county of Warwick, and all such other cattle as I shall have going in my grounds in Warwickshire at the time of my decease, thone half of all my milch kine, five score of such wethers as are going in my grounds within the Liberty of Havering, whereof fifty shall be of the fattest and the residue as they shall fall out one with another, ten steers or runts of the best, two yokes of oxen of my best draught oxen, one cart with all the furniture thereto, thone half of all my white meales(?), thone half of all my brass, pewter and of all other furniture of my kitchen, thone half of all my household stuff, and thone half of all my swine, and also five hundred pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I give and bequeath to my daughter, Philippa Cooke, towards th' advancement of her marriage, the sum of one thousand three hundred thirty-three pounds six shillings eight pence of lawful English money, so that she be ordered and ruled by my executrix and overseers hereafter named touching her marriage, to be paid within three months next after my decease, if it may be so soon levied of my money, debts and revenues to the hands of my said wife and of my overseers hereafter named, to th' use of my said daughter, and by them to be employed to her use for her maintenance until some convenient marriage may by their good means, procurement and furtherance be had and provided for her according to my especial trust reposed in them;

Item, I give and bequeath to the right honourable the Countess of Oxford one basin and ewer of silver of the value of fifty pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to my brother, William Cooke, esquire, the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I give and bequeath to my sister Killigrew a basin and ewer of silver of the value of fifty pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Mr Robert Cecil, the sum of twenty pounds, and to my niece, Mrs Elizabeth Cecil, twenty pounds;

Item, I give to my nephew, Mr Anthony Bacon, twenty pounds, and to my nephew, Mr Francis Bacon, twenty pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Mr Edward Hoby, twenty pounds, and to my nephew, Mr Thomas Posthumous Hoby, twenty pounds;

Item, I give to Mr Thomas Foster, my son-in-law, two of my garments, which he shall choose;

Item, I give to Mrs Mabell Brighte a mourning gown;

Item, I give and bequeath to Mr Francis Rame twenty pounds of lawful English money [+and] a mourning gown;

Item, I give to George Toone twenty marks;

And I give and bequeath to Mr Robert Badbye one mourning gown and one annuity of ten pounds by year, yearly during his life to be taken out of my manor of Chaldwell in the county of Essex at two usual terms or feasts in the year by even portions;

Item, I give and bequeath to every of my menservants hereafter named if they remain and continue with me at the time of my death as followeth: to William Hobson, five pounds; to Thomas Couwty, ten pounds; to Ralph Dickon, twenty marks; to Thomas Plompton, twenty marks and the choice of all such books as I have which were none of my father's; to Richard Gresham, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence; to Evans, forty shillings; to Stilman, five marks; to little Will Cooper, ten pounds, and fifty-three shillings four pence by year yearly during his life to be paid to him out of my manor of Rydden Court [=Redencourt?] in the Liberty of Havering at two usual terms in the year by even portions; to Thomas Browne, five marks; to John Turke, five pounds; to Horsnaile, five pounds; to Edward Savage, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence; to Stephen Brighte, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence; to Robert Fulwood, five pounds; to John Estcott, five marks; to Humphrey Wright, five marks, and to every other of my menservants being in household with me at the time of my death and which have served me by the space of one year or more the sum of forty shillings, and to every woman-servant not hereafter named which shall be in household with me at the time of my death and hath served me by the space of one year or more the sum of twenty-six shillings eight pence;

Item, I give to Mrs Ursula Norton five marks;

And to Mr Francis White, parson of Chaldewell, the sum of twenty pounds, in consideration that he shall preach yearly at Romford during the space of [-space of] five years next after my decease as often as he shall think convenient for the godly instruction of such as shall be there present;

And of this my present testament and last will I make and ordain my said wife, Anne Cooke, my sole and only executrix;

And further I do constitute and appoint the right honourable and my very good Lords the Lord Treasurer of England and the Lord Russell to be overseers of this my last will and testament, and I further give and bequeath to the said Lord Treasurer one jewel of the price of fifty pounds, and to the said Lord Russell the sum of fifty pounds, in consideration of their grave and faithful advice, counsel and pains to be employed and

taken by them about the execution of this my will, and especially towards my daughter, Philip[pa] Cooke;

And all the residue of my goods, chattels, ready money, plate, jewels and else whatsoever, my debts and legacies paid and funerals deducted, I wholly give and bequeath the same to my said wife;

And further I revoke and declare void all other my former wills and testaments heretofore by me made, and ordain that this my present will and testament shall be only in force and take effect. Richard Cooke.

Memorandum: That this was delivered and acknowledged by the within-named Richard Cooke, esquire, for his last will and testament the second day of August 1579, and then he revoked all former wills by him made in the presence of us, Francis Rame, Robert Gadby, Thomas Plumpton.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i Testamentum Apud London Coram mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Drury legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuarien{sis} Com{m}issario Decimo septimo Die mensis Novembris Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Septuagesimo nono Iuramento Thome Willett notarij publici procuratoris Anne Cooke Rel{ic}t{e} et executricis in h{uius}mo{d}i Testamento no{m}i{n}at{e} Cui commissa fuit Admi{n}istrac{i}o &c De bene &c Ad S{an}c{t}a Dei Eu{a}ngelia 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 seventeenth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-ninth by the oath of Thomas Willett, notary public, proctor of Anne Cooke, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]