

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 4 April 1605 and proved 2 August 1606, of Sir Edward Clere (b. 15 June 1536, d. 8 June 1606), who purchased Oxford's manor of Weybourne. For the licence dated 20 April 1580 authorizing Oxford to alienate his manor of Weybourne to Sir Edward Clere, see TNA C 66/1197, mm. 15-16. For the recognizance acknowledged by Oxford to Sir Edward Clere on 12 May 1580 in connection with this sale, see TNA C 54/1095, Part 25. For a copy of the lease of the manor of Weybourne granted by Oxford to his servant, Roger Clopton, on 10 December 1571, see Norfolk Record Office NRS 16422 32 C6. For a copy of the release, dated 20 March 1581, by Robert Christmas to Sir Edward Clere of his interest in the manor of Weybourne acquired under the 16th Earl of Oxford's will, see Norfolk Record Office NRS 10865 25 D4.

In his will below the testator leaves the manor of Weybourne to his second wife, Agnes (nee Crane) Clere, the daughter of Robert Crane of Chilton, Suffolk:

And I will that my said wife, over and beside the dowry I made to her, my manor of Weybourne with the appurtenances in the county of Norfolk . . .

The testator was the son of Sir John Clere (d.1557) and his wife, Anne Tyrrell, and the grandson of Sir Robert Clere (d.1529) of Ormesby and his second wife, Alice Boleyn, the aunt of Henry VIII's Queen, Anne Boleyn. The testator was thus a second cousin of Queen Elizabeth. He entertained the Queen at Thetford and Blickling during her progress through East Anglia in 1578 (a progress in which Oxford was in attendance), and was knighted by the Queen at that time.

The testator is mentioned as the recipient of an annuity of £20 in the inquisition post mortem of Oxford's father, the 16th Earl (see TNA C 142/136/12):

And the foresaid jurors say that the foresaid late Earl, by a certain deed of his sealed by his seal at arms and subscribed by his own hand dated the eighteenth day of November in the first year [=18 November 1547] of the reign of the late King Edward the Sixth, in consideration that John Clere, knight, had surrendered two several rents containing together thirty pounds which the same John Clere had of the gift of a certain Peter Watts by two several charters of the late Earl issuing of his manor of Thorncombe in the county of Devon during the natural life of the same Peter Watts, granted to Edward Clere, esquire, son of the said John Clere, one yearly rent of twenty pounds of lawful money of England issuing of his foresaid manor of Thorncombe & of all other his lands & hereditaments in Thorncombe aforesaid, to have the foresaid yearly rent to the forenamed Edward Clere & his assigns during the natural life of the said Edward, to be paid yearly at the feasts of the Annunciation of Blessed Mary the Virgin & Saint Michael the Archangel by equal portions, with a clause of distraint for non-payment of the said yearly rent, as by the foresaid deed to the foresaid jurors upon the taking of this present inquisition in manifest evidences more fully appears.

The testator married firstly, Frances Fulmerston, the daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Fulmerston, servant of Thomas Howard (1473-1554), 3rd Duke of Norfolk, steward to Oxford's uncle, Henry Howard (1516/17–1547), Earl of Surrey, and treasurer to Oxford's first cousin, Thomas Howard (1538-1572), 4th Duke of Norfolk. By his first wife the testator had three sons, Sir Edward, Sir Francis and Charles, and three daughters, Anne, Temperance and Elizabeth.

The testator married secondly, on 7 September 1580, Agnes Crane, the daughter of Robert Crane of Chilton, Suffolk, and his wife Bridget, the daughter of Sir Thomas Jermyn. The testator's second wife was the niece of Anthony Crane, the first husband of 'Mistress Crane' at whose manor of East Molesey the first of the Marprelate tracts was printed by Robert Waldegrave on a secret press in October 1588. For the will of Anthony Crane (d. 16 August 1583), see TNA PROB 11/65, ff. 340-1. Prior to her marriage to the testator, Agnes Crane had been the wife, successively, of Sir John Smith, Francis Clopton and Sir Christopher Heydon (d. 10 December 1579). By his marriage to Agnes Crane the testator had one son, Robert. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 2004), pp. 35-6, and the pedigree of Crane of Stonham and Chilton in *The Visitation of Suffolk*, 1561, pp. 6-9. For further details of the Clere family, see the will of Sir Thomas Tyrrell (1472?-1551) of Gipping, Suffolk, TNA PROB 11/34, ff. 172-4.

For the will of the testator's grandmother, Alice Boleyn Clere, dated 28 October 1538 and proved 23 January 1539, see TNA PROB 11/27, ff. 190-1.

For the will of the testator's father, Sir John Clere (d.1557), see TNA PROB 11/39, f. 252.

For the will of the testator's uncle, Thomas Clere, esquire, dated 6 June 1544 and proved 21 April 1545, see TNA PROB 11/30, ff. 192-3. Thomas Clere died on 14 April 1545 at the siege of Montreuil while attempting to save the life of Oxford's uncle, Henry Howard (1516/17–1547), Earl of Surrey. He was buried in the parish church of St Mary, Lambeth, where there is a monumental brass to his memory which formerly exhibited a tablet with an epitaph by the Earl of Surrey.

The testator is mentioned in the will of his great-uncle, Sir James Boleyn (c.1480-1561), Chancellor of the Household of Queen Anne Boleyn.

For the foregoing, see Bindoff, S.T., *The House of Commons 1509-1558*, Vol. I, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), pp. 456-7, 650-2), and Cooper & Cooper *Athenæ Cantabrigienses* 2 (1861): 440–441 (biography of Edward Clere), available online.

RM: Testamentum Domini Edwardi Cleere

4o Aprilis 1605.

In the name of God, Amen. The fourth day of April one thousand six hundred and five, I, Sir Edward Clere, knight, ordain this to be my last will and testament.

I commit my soul to God, hoping in his mercy only through the merits of Christ;

I will my debts and true demands in law and by good conscience answerable be paid;

I will that [-that] Agnes, my wife, have for term of her life all and singular my jewels, gold, silver, plate, apparel, household stuff and implements of household in my house in Blickling called Blickling Hall, and my mind is that my son, Robert, settle with her there;

I will also that Henry Clere, my grandchild, at his full age of one and twenty years, have delivered unto him my great chain of gold which Charles the Fifth, Emperor, gave to Sir John Clere, knight, my father;

Also I will that my son, Robert, after the said Agnes' death, have the propriety of that is willed to her, and that the said Robert likewise shall have my house and the goods therein at London, and my term and things at Holloway, and if he die, then to Henry, my grandchild;

And I leave to descend to my son, Edward, Thetford and Snareshill manors and lands;

Also to him and to Henry, his son, and their heirs in fee, all my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in Elveden with their appurtenances, and all the yearly rents I have reserved of my whole lordship or manor of Monkshall and of the tithes in Elveden, and I will that the said Henry have in fee simple that which I possess of the manors of Rusters(?) with the appurtenances, and the manors of Tacolneston, Williams and Rekilton(?), and the whole possessions of the nunnery or canons' possessions of Thetford or of either of them in Norfolk which I had of the late Queen Elizabeth;

And I will that Francis, my son, knight, shall have to him and his heirs forever all other my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the county of Suffolk, and those lands, tenements and hereditaments in the county of the city of Norwich which be passed in the assurance made to my brother Wroth, and other my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the hundred of Blofield, Walsham, Loddon and Clavering or either of them, and the leases, goods and chattels that I have there or in any of them except Ditchingham woods;

And I will that my said wife, over and beside the dowry I made to her, my manor of Weybourne with the appurtenances in the county of Norfolk and all other my purchased lands and rents entitled of new increase in Wymondham, and my manor of Thurston in Norfolk with the appurtenances, with my other purchased lands, rents and things in South Erpingham and North Erpingham hundreds or in either of them;

And after her decease the same, other than Thurston, to remain to Robert, my son, and to the heirs males of his body, and for default of such heir male to Henry Clere, my

grandchild, and to the heir male of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such heir male, to my heir male, and for default of such issue to the heirs males of the late Charles Clere of Stokesby, esquire, and for default of such issue to my right heirs forever;

And to the said Robert, my son, I give my lands, tenements and hereditaments I am possessed of at the day of my death in the hundred of Freebridge ex partibus Marshland, and in the hundred of Freebridge citra Lynn in Norfolk or in either of them;

And I will to my executors for fifteen years after the date hereof my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments and my rights, leases and goods in East Flegg, West Flegg and Hopping [=Happing?] hundreds or in either of them, the remainder to my grandchild, Henry Clere, and to the heirs males of his body, and for default of such heirs, to the heirs males of my body, and for default of such heirs males as Thurston manor and all other therewith before limited;

And I will to Edward Clere, son of Humphrey Clere, twenty pounds by year for purchase in Blickling as I signified the entail should be thereof;

And my leases and lands in East Dereham I will to the advancement in marriage of Clere Gilbert, my grandchild, after my decease;

Also I will that my annuity which I am to take by one hundred marks by the year according to my bargain with Mr Richard Harding, as also my lease that I should have of Master Oglethorpe, or the profits by suit to be had by reason of the not performing that annuity or recompense for the said lease be employed yearly, the one moiety to the execution of my present will and the other moiety to the maintaining and advancement in marriage of Katherine and Temperance, the daughters of my daughter Gilbert, the reversion of the said annuity and lease to Edward Clere, my godson, son of Thomas(?) Clere of Stokesby;

As for the inheritance and [-and] my right and possibility of it, and my leases and goods that I have in the county of Lincoln, besides such assurance as I have passed thereof for the better certainty of maintenance of my daughter-in-law, Dame Agnes Finch, I will the same to be taken to the performing of my will for twenty years next after my decease, and after that to the purchasing or erecting one fellowship and one scholarship in Saint John's College in Cambridge, and that such as be of my name as be there placed to be brought up in learning may be preferred from time to time to the same as the same or any of them be vacant;

I will also my lease of Pulham and the debts owing to me and the recognizances assigned to me be with that is to be had by the same or the statutes entered to me for the ready payment of my just debts, and those being satisfied, then choice to be made of five men of the poorest that have served me, and four of the women servants, and they to have yearly toward their relief frieze gowns, price of each thirteen shillings and four pence, and each of them thirteen shillings and four pence in money yearly;

All other my goods not formerly assigned or bequeathed I leave to the discretion of my executor, whom I name Agnes, now my wife, whom I desire she will endeavour may be performed, to whom I bequeath one hundred pounds, and will any way Sir John Parker and Fulmerstons be put from that they demand unjustly;

Also I desire Sir Drew Drury and Master Edward Wymark, my old well-tried friends, to be supervisors of my will, and to give their good advice and assistance for my wife her better performance of my said will, and to each my supervisors I give ten pounds;

And I have subscribed and sealed this my testament and last will the day and year first above-mentioned. Edward Clere.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro domino Iohanne Benet Milite legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistro custode siue comissario legitime consituto Secundo die mensis Augusti Anno domini Millesimo sexcentesimo Sexto Iuramento Domine Agnete Cleere Relicte et executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate Cui comissa fuit administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene et fideliter Administrando eadem Ad sancta dei evangelia Iurate

[=The testament above-written was proved at London before the worshipful Sir John Bennet, knight, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the second day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred sixth by the oath of Lady Agnes Clere, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer.]