

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 22 October 1611 and proved 27 November 1611, of Sir William Cornwallis (c.1551-1611), who is mentioned in allegations against Oxford made by Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel in 1581, who purchased Oxford's lease of the mansion of Fisher's Folly in the parish of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate in 1588, and whose daughter, Anne Cornwallis (d.1635), has been identified as the 'Anne Cornwaleys' of the short anthology of sixteenth century poetry known as the Cornwallis-Lysons manuscript, now in the Folger Library (Folger MS V.a.89). For a discussion of Oxford's interest in Fisher's Folly, see TNA PROB 11/61, ff. 362-3. For correspondence between the testator's father, Sir Thomas Cornwallis (d.1604) and Lord Burghley concerning the testator's purchase of Oxford's lease of Fisher's Folly, see CP 166/80 and CP 17/60. For mention of the testator in allegations against Oxford by Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel, see BL Cotton Titus C.6, ff. 7-8; TNA SP 12/151/45, ff. 100-2; TNA SP 12/151/46, ff. 103-4; and TNA SP 12/151/57, ff. 118-19.

According to the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, the testator has often been confused with his nephew, the essayist, Sir William Cornwallis the younger (c.1579-1614), the son of the testator's brother, the courtier and diplomat, Sir Charles Cornwallis (c.1555-1629):

*Confusion of Sir William Cornwallis the younger (c.1579-1614) with his uncle, Sir William the elder (c.1551-1611), father of Anne Cornwallis, has made nonsense even of recent discussions of his work, attributing to him his uncle's greater age, retired life, and friendship with Ben Jonson.*

The testator's relationship with Ben Jonson is attested to by Jonson's entertainment 'at Highgate in May 1604, to divert the king and queen at the home of Sir William Cornwallis' (see the entry for Jonson in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*), and the following description of the testator's mansion at Highgate):

*Presumably William Cornwallis himself built the mansion later famous as Arundel House in 1588 and received Elizabeth I there in 1589, 1593, and 1594. His house and its views were praised by Norden in 1593 and it was there that James I was entertained with the Penates, newly composed by Cornwallis's friend Ben Jonson, in 1604. See 'Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate', *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 6: Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate* (1980), pp. 122-135. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22519>.*

See also 'Arundel House, Old Hall and the Lawns', *Survey of London: Volume 17: The parish of St Pancras part 1: The village of Highgate* (1936), pp. 46-53. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=65011>

Maintaining Fisher's Folly and a mansion at Highgate, entertaining the Queen, and other expenses attendant on the life of a courtier depleted the testator's resources. According

to the entry for his daughter, Elizabeth, in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

*Her father's profligacy at court lost £20,000; he left debts amounting to £4000, to settle which five manors had to be sold. He even allegedly remarked: 'So that I may be about her Majesty, I care not to be groom of the scullery' (HoP, Commons, 1558-1603, 1.659).*

In 1589, the testator employed the poet Thomas Watson at Fisher's Folly as a tutor for his son and heir, John Cornwallis (d.1594), then aged 15. For a discussion of Watson's involvement in a Star Chamber suit resulting from his employment by the testator, see Chatterley, Albert, 'Two Sixteenth-Century East Anglian Families at the Court of Star Chamber', *Norfolk Archaeology*, Vol. 44, Part 1, (Hunstanton: Witley Press, 2002), pp. 119-128. The online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography* refers to comments made by the testator concerning Watson in connection with this Star Chamber suit:

*Although no plays by Watson are extant, his employer William Cornwallis wrote later that devising 'twenty fictions and knaveryes in a play' was his 'daily practyse and his living'.*

The testator's first wife was Lucy Neville (c.1549-1608), one of the four daughters and co-heirs of John Neville (d.1577), 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Latimer, the son of John Neville (1493-1543), 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Latimer and his first wife, Dorothy de Vere (d.1527), sister and co-heir of John de Vere (1499-1526), 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. The testator's purchase of Oxford's lease of Fisher's Folly may thus have been partly due to the fact that the testator's wife, Lucy, was related to Oxford, both through her maternal grandmother, Dorothy de Vere (d.1527), as well as through her sister, Dorothy Neville (1548-1609), who married Oxford's brother-in-law, Thomas Cecil (1542-1632/3), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Exeter, eldest son of Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley.

By his first wife, Lucy Neville, the testator had six children: a son, Thomas, who died in infancy in 1572; a son, John (1573?-1594), who was killed by a fall from his horse at Brome and buried there on 1 November 1594; a daughter, Frances, born in 1575, who married Sir Edmund Withipole (d.1619) of Christ Church, Ipswich; a daughter, Elizabeth (c.1578-1658), who married, firstly, Sir William Sandys (d.1629) of Mottisfont, Hampshire, and secondly, Richard Lumley (1589?-1661x3), Viscount Lumley; a daughter, Cornelia, who married Sir Richard Farmer (1575?-1642) of Somerton in Oxfordshire; and a daughter, Anne (d.1635), who married Archibald Campbell (1575/6-1638), 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll (see *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis, 1613-1644* (London: S. & J. Bentley, 1842), p.xxxvii). For the testator's daughters, Elizabeth and Anne, see the entries in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*. For the testator's daughter, Cornelia, see Blomfield, J.C., *History of the Present Deanery of Bicester, Oxon* (Oxford: Parker & Co., 1882), pp. 118-19.

For the involvement of the testator's daughters Frances and Anne, and their husbands, Sir Edmund Withipole and Lord Argyll, in the attempt by their first cousin, Elizabeth, Lady Hatton (the daughter of their mother's sister, Dorothy Neville and her husband, Thomas Cecil) to prevent the marriage of her daughter, Frances, to John Villiers in 1617, and her

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plan to marry Frances to Oxford's son and heir, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), see Longueville, Thomas, *The Curious Case of Lady Purbeck*, available online.

After the death of his first wife, Lucy Neville, who was buried at Brome on 5 May 1608, the testator married Jane Meautys (1580/1-1659), by whom he had only one child, a son and heir, Frederick, aged one year and three days at the testator's death.

LM: Testamentum Domini Willelmi Cornewaleis

In the name of God, Amen. The two and twentieth day of October in the year of our Lord God according to the computation of the church of England one thousand six hundred and eleven and in the years of the reign of our Sovereign Lord James by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., that is to say, of England, France and Ireland the ninth and of Scotland the five and fortieth, I, Sir William Cornwallis of Brome in the county of Suffolk, knight, being of good and perfect memory (thanks be therefore given to Almighty God), do now make, ordain and declare this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First, I commend my soul to Almighty God, hoping and assuredly believing by his free mercy & grace through the only merits of my Saviour, Jesus Christ, to have full remission of all my sins and to enjoy eternal blessedness in the kingdom of heaven;

And my body I commit to the earth to be buried in the parish church of Oakley in the said county of Suffolk near my mansion house of Brome aforesaid in decent and Christian manner on the right side of the chancel of the said parish church where the same most conveniently may be without any pomp or cost of funeral expenses, in which chancel my will and mind is to have one tomb or monument to be there made for myself with mention of both my wives, viz., of the Lady Lucy, my late wife, deceased, one of the daughters and co-heirs of the right honourable Sir John Neville, knight, Lord Latimer, also deceased, and of Dame Jane, my now wife, and of all my children, and also one other tomb or monument of plain stone to be there likewise made and erected in the said chancel for my great-grandfather, William Cornwallis, esquire, deceased, who lieth buried there with a stone over him;

Item, I will that all such debts and sums of money as I am indebted or do owe at the time of my decease and which are mentioned and expressed in a schedule to this my last will and testament annexed, amounting together to the sum of three thousand nine hundred threescore and eight pounds or thereabouts, shall be well and truly satisfied and paid as soon as conveniently may be after my decease and by all the best ways and means that the same conveniently may or can be done for the discharge of my conscience, and that as well out of my personal estate as of and by my lands, tenements and hereditaments or the issues and profits of the same as hereinafter is mentioned;

And to that intent and purpose my will and desire is that the said Dame Jane, now my wife, shall or may from and immediately after my decease during the minority of Frederick Cornwallis, my son and heir apparent, have, take and receive as guardian unto him, the said Frederick, all and every the rents, issues and profits of all those the manors of Brome, Oakley, Stuston, Thrandeston and Palgrave with their rights, members and appurtenances in the county of Suffolk and of all other manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the counties of Suffolk and Norfolk or either of them which after my decease are to descend, fall or come to him, the said Frederick, by force and means of certain conveyances heretofore made of the same by Sir Thomas Cornwallis, knight, my late father, deceased, and the same rents, issues and profits to employ and dispose for and towards the better payment of and satisfaction of my said debts and the performance of this my said last will & testament for and in such sort as all my household stuff, plate and other furniture of household now remaining and being now in and about my mansion house at Brome aforesaid may be preserved and kept until such time as the said Frederick, my son, shall accomplish and come to his full age of twenty and one years, and that then he, the said Frederick, upon reasonable request to him made after the accomplishment of his said age of twenty and one years, shall by his sufficient deed in law acquit and discharge the said Dame Jane, my wife, and her executors of, for & concerning all such and so much of the said rents, revenues and profits as by her shall be had or received of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the said counties of Suffolk and Norfolk towards the payment of the debts mentioned and expressed in the said schedule hereunto annexed, and that in lieu and recompense thereof he, the said Frederick, shall from thenceforth have and enjoy to his own proper use all my said household stuff, plate and other furniture of household now remaining and being in and about my said mansion house in Brome aforesaid;

Provided always and my will and mind is that if the said Frederick, my son, shall happen to die within age, or shall not upon such request to him made after the accomplishment of his said age of twenty and one years acquit and discharge the said Dame Jane and her executors of, for and concerning all such and so much of the rents, issues and profits of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the said counties of Suffolk & Norfolk as is aforesaid, that then she, the said Dame Jane, and her executors shall or may have, employ and dispose all and every of the said household stuff, plate and furniture to her own proper use in lieu and satisfaction of the value thereof by her to be paid and disposed towards the payment of my said debts and the performance of this my will;

And whereas I have by a sufficient deed and conveyance in the law by me made and executed conveyed and assured all that the manor of Wilton in Cleveland in the county of York with all and every the rights, members and appurtenances thereof, and the park of Wilton with th' appurtenances, and the advowson and right of patronage of the rectory, church or chapel of Wilton aforesaid, and all other my messuages, lands, tenements, rents, revenues, services and hereditaments whatsoever in Wilton, West Cotham [=Coatham?], Lackenby, Lazenby and Pinchinthorpe or elsewhere in the said county of York with their appurtenances unto the said Dame Jane, now my wife, for term of her natural life in augmentation of her jointure;

And have also by one other sufficient deed or conveyance by me likewise made and executed conveyed and assured the reversion and remainder of all the said manor of Wilton, advowson and right of patronage, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments in the said county of York unto my loving friends, Thomas Darcy, esquire, son and heir apparent of the right honourable Thomas, Lord Darcy of Chiche, Sir John Sulyard of Wetherden in the county of Suffolk, knight, Thomas Cornwallis, son and heir apparent of John Cornwallis of Soame in the county of Suffolk, esquire, and Henry Dade, one of the sons of (blank) Dade of Taddington [=Tattingstone?] in the said county of Suffolk, esquire, their heirs and assigns, forever, as by the said several deeds and conveyances more at large may appear, now I, the said Sir William Cornwallis, do hereby express and declare that the said deed and conveyance by me made to the said Thomas Darcy, Sir John Sulyard, Thomas Cornwallis and Henry Dade as aforesaid was and is by me made unto them upon trust and confidence that they & their heirs shall dispose and convey all the said manor, park, advowson, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversion, services and hereditaments in the said county of York to them conveyed as aforesaid to such uses, intents and purposes as I should or shall by my last will and testament in writing or any other writing under my hand and seal limit and appoint the same;

And therefore first I do hereby limit and appoint that if the said Dame Jane, now my wife, shall not in her lifetime and during the minority of the said Frederick, my son, have & receive so much lawful English money of and by the rents, issues and profits of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the said counties of Suffolk and Norfolk as shall amount to the sum of three thousand pounds towards the satisfaction and payment of the debts specified and contained in the said schedule hereunto annexed and the performance of the bequests and legacies herein by me given and devised, that then they, the said Thomas Darcy, Sir John Sulyard, Thomas Cornwallis and Henry Dade and their heirs or some of them, towards the payment and performance thereof, shall or may levy and receive so much lawful English money of and by the rents, issues and profits of the said manor, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the said county of York, or by the sale of so much thereof as shall be needful, as together with so much of the rents, issues and profits of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in the said counties of Suffolk and Norfolk as by her, the said Dame Jane, shall be received, shall be sufficient to raise and make up the said sum of three thousand pounds towards the payments of my said debts and the performance of this my will;

And also that they, the said Thomas Darcy, Sir John Sulyard, Thomas Cornwallis & Henry Dade and their heirs or some of them, after such time as so much lawful English money by any the ways or means aforesaid shall be had, levied or received by the said Dame Jane, now my wife, or by them, the said Thomas Darcy, Sir John Sulyard, Thomas Cornwallis and Henry Dade and their heirs or any of them, as shall amount unto the said sum of three thousand pounds towards the payment of my debts and the performance of my legacies and bequests hereby given and devised, shall sufficiently convey and assure, or cause to be sufficiently conveyed and assured, all or the residue of the said manor of Wilton, park of Wilton, advowson, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments in the said county of York, and the immediate reversion and

remainder thereof expectant upon the decease of the said Dame Jane, now my wife, unto the said Frederick, my son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs, to the heirs males of the body of me, the said Sir William Cornwallis, lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs, to Sir Charles Cornwallis, knight, natural brother of me, the said Sir William Cornwallis, for and during the term of his natural life;

And after his decease, unto Sir William Cornwallis the younger, knight, son and heir apparent of the said Sir Charles Cornwallis, for and during the natural life of him, the said Sir William Cornwallis, knight, the younger;

And after his decease, unto Charles Cornwallis, esquire, son and heir apparent of the said Sir William Cornwallis the younger, and to the heirs males of the body of the said Charles lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs, to such other person and persons, and of and for such estate and estates, and with such remainders over and in such manner, sort and degree as and unto whom the said manor of Brome in the said county of Suffolk in and by the said conveyances thereof made by my said late father, Sir Thomas Cornwallis, knight, deceased, is limited and appointed;

Nevertheless my will and mind is and I do hereby will and appoint that if need or occasion shall so require that any part of my said manor of Wilton, messuages, lands, tenements or hereditaments in the said county of York shall be sold for the raising of moneys towards the payment of my said debts and the performance of this my will as is aforesaid, that then in such case the said Frederick, my son, or such other of the persons aforesaid as by the true meaning of these presents were to have had the same in case no such need of sale thereof were to be made, shall have the offer and preferment of the bargain and buying of so much thereof as shall be so sold before any other person or persons, giving for the same as much ready money as any other person or persons (bona fide) will therefore give or pay without fraud or covin;

Item, I will the sum of ten pounds in money to be distributed to and amongst the poor at & about my mansion house situate in the parish of St Botolph without Bishopsgate, London, at such time as my body shall be removed from thence to be carried to the place of burial;

And I will the sum of forty pounds in money to be distributed to and amongst the poor in and about the towns and parishes of Brome and Oakley aforesaid where I have hereinbefore willed and appointed my body to be buried;

And of and for the execution of this my last will and testament I do ordain and make the said Dame Jane, now my wife and the said Frederick Cornwallis, my son, my full and sole executors;

And I do desire and appoint my very loving and kind friend, Sir John Hobart, knight, to be the principal and chief supervisor of this my last will and testament and to aid & assist my said executors with his good advice and direction in and concerning the same, and I do desire him to accept of one hundred French crowns which I do give unto him to be bestowed in a piece of plate for a remembrance;

And for that my trusty and faithful servant[s], Robert Morse, William Crowe, Christopher Nandicke and Walter Warde are best acquainted with my estate, I do also hereby desire and appoint them to be aiding and assisting to my said executors in the execution of the same my will, and I do give unto every of them, the said Robert Morse, William Crowe, Christopher Nandick and Walter Warde, the sum of ten pounds apiece in money for a remembrance of my love and goodwill towards them;

The residue of all and singular my goods, chattels and credits whatsoever I will to remain to my executors towards the performance of this my last will and testament. William Cornwallis.

Witnesses to the sealing, subscribing, publishing and delivery hereof by the said Sir William Cornwallis for and as his last will & testament, viz., John Hobarte, John Amye, John Mayle, Christopher Nandyke, Walter Warde.

In this schedule are mentioned and contained all such debts and sums of money due and owing by me, Sir William Cornwallis, knight, as are by me willed and provided for to be satisfied and paid in and by my last will and testament whereunto this schedule is annexed, viz.:

Imprimis, to Mr Peter Vanlore, three hundred and fifteen pounds;

Item, to Mr Wivell, three hundred and fifteen pounds;

Item, to the Lady Killigrew, two hundred and ten pounds;

Item, to Mr John Grove, two hundred and ten pounds;

Item, to Mr Ashby, one hundred and five pounds;

Item, to Mr Seabright, one hundred fifty-seven pounds & ten shillings;

Item, to Mr (blank) upon band of mine, and Mr Wraght, one hundred sixty-four pounds;

Item, to the Lady Carewe, four hundred pounds;

Item, to Mr Rookesbye, a thousand pounds;

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Item, to my cousin, William Cornwallis, four hundred pounds;

Item, to Mr Draper, ten pounds;

Item, to Mr Burlamarchi, one hundred pounds or thereabouts;

Item, to Mr Dixon, a harness-maker, ten pounds five shillings six pence;

Item, to Mr Hooker, goldsmith, fifteen pounds;

Item, to Mr Wright, mercer, thirty pounds or thereabouts;

Item, to Mr Warde, goldsmith, threescore pounds or thereabouts;

Item, to Mr Acton, silkman, two hundred pounds;

Item, to Mr Andrewes for hangings, thirty-two pounds and ten shillings;

Item, to William Niccolls for coal, five pounds;

Item, to Mrs Wilkes, thirty pounds;

Item, to Mr Harrison, draper, thirty-two pounds seventeen shillings;

Item, to Mr Warde, linen-draper, twenty-two pounds fourteen shillings and six pence;

Item, to Mr Haye, comfit-maker, forty pounds;

Item, to Mr Mason of the Exchange, twenty pounds four shillings;

Item, (blank) a silkman in Pater Noster Row, fifteen pounds twelve shillings ten pence;

Item, to Mr Lane the saddler, twelve pounds;

Item, to Mr Nasen, upholder, ten pounds eight shillings;

Item, to Thomas Saunders for wood, forty pounds or thereabouts;

Item, to Richard Norman which he paid to Mr Lannam, embroiderer, five pounds;

Summa totalis, three thousand nine hundred sixty-eight pounds and two and twenty pence;

Item, there is due to one Mr Blount during his life threescore pounds per annum, and which is payable quarterly. William Cornwallis.

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Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum Apud London coram Magistro Edmundo Pope Legum Doctore Surrogato venerabilis viri Domini Iohannis Benet militis Legum etiam Doctoris Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis Magistri Custodis siue Commissarij legitime constituti vicesimo septimo die mensis Novembris Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo vndecimo Iuramento Domine Jane Cornewaleis Relicte dicti defuncti et executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate Cui commissa fuit administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene et fideliter administrando eadem Ad Sancta Dei Evangelia Iurate Reservata potestate &c ffederico Cornewaleis filio naturali et legitimo dicti defuncti et alteri executorum etiam in dicto testamento nominatorum Cum venerit eam petiturus in debita Iuris forma admissurus Examinatum]

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before Master Edmund Pope, Doctor of the Laws, Surrogate of the worshipful Sir John Bennet, knight, also Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-seventh day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred eleventh by the oath of Lady Jane Cornwallis, relict of the said deceased 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 the same, with power reserved etc. to Frederick Cornwallis, natural and legitimate son of the said deceased and the other executor also named in the said testament, when he shall have come to petition the same in due form of law to be admitted. Examined.]