

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will of Oxford's first cousin, John Vere of Kirby Hall (alias Pitchards) at Castle Hedingham. The testator was the eldest son and heir of Oxford's uncle, Geoffrey de Vere (d.1572), fourth son of John de Vere (1482-1540), 15th Earl of Oxford. For the nuncupative will of the testator's father, Geoffrey de Vere (d.1572), see ERO C/ABW 38/187. The testator's mother was Elizabeth Hardekyn (d.1615), the daughter of Richard Hardekyn of Odewell and Wotton, in Gestingthorpe in Essex. The testator's maternal grandfather, Richard Hardekyn, may be the Richard Hardekyn, 'yeoman usher of my chamber', who is left a bequest in the will of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, wife of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/27, ff. 84-6).

The chief beneficiaries under the will are the testator's wife, Thomasine (d.1639), his mother Elizabeth (nee Hardekyn) Vere (d.1615), his sister Frances (nee Vere) Harcourt and her children, and his sole surviving brother, Horace [Horatio] Vere (1565-1635), Baron Vere of Tilbury.

The testator composed the main body of the will on 26 February 1612 [=1613], added several codicils, and crossed out certain sections (shown in italics in the transcript below). On 26 April 1615 he added a memorandum concerning his mother. On 26 July in the same year he added a codicil by which he granted an annuity of £40 for the education of his nephew Vere Harcourt, made further gifts to his wife Thomasine Vere, and provided for the payment of his debts. In 6 May 1616 he added a codicil concerning £200 owed by him to his youngest brother, Horace Vere (1565-1635), which he later cancelled after repayment of the money. On 13 February 1616 [=1617], he made other minor changes, and on 18 January 1618 [=1619] he added another codicil recording the fact that he had conveyed his manor of Pedean and Stonelodge in Kent, and his house in St Katherine Coleman in London, to his wife Thomasine because they had originally been her properties and had been given by her to him. On 19 October 1619, he added a further codicil giving his wife a hop-ground and household goods. On 3 or 4 March 1623 [=1624], he added yet another codicil, later cancelling '8 lines and 2 half lines' of it. Which lines these were is not entirely clear from the marginal note, but they likely constituted a clause in that codicil by which he had left Kirby Hall and other lands to Sir John Vere (d.1631), rather than to his brother, Horace Vere (1565-1635), since this clause is stipulated to have been crossed out on 17 March 1623 [=1624], the date on which the testator added a final codicil to his will. The inclusion of this latter clause has led to speculation that Sir John Vere (d.1631) was John Vere's illegitimate son (for his will, see TNA PROB 11/16, ff. 433-4).

At the time the testator made his will, the manors of Tilbury-juxta-Clare, Nortofts, and Skaths were still held by Elizabeth Murray as security for the payment of her jointure of £400 per year as the widow of the testator's younger brother, Sir Francis Vere (1560/61-1609). After the death of Sir Francis Vere in 1609, she had married Sir Patrick Murray (1570-1630).

The Edmund Pyrton mentioned in the will would appear to have been Edmund Pyrton (d.1617), nephew and heir of Edmund Pyrton (d.1609), the husband of the testator's first cousin, Constance Darcy, the daughter of Thomas (1506-1558), 1st Lord Darcy of Chiche, and his wife Elizabeth de Vere (d.1565), daughter of John de Vere (1482-1540), 15th Earl of Oxford. The testator died 12 April 1624. For the will of his widow Thomasine (d.1639), see TNA PROB 11/181, ff. 229-30. For the will of his youngest brother, Horace Vere (1565–1635), Baron Vere of Tilbury, see TNA PROB 11/168, ff. 7-8.

RM: Testamentum Iohannis Vere

In the name of God, Amen. The six and twenty day of February in the tenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord James by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith etc., and of Scotland the 46th. 1612 [=1613]. I, John Vere of Kirby Hall in Hedingham at Castle in the county of Essex, esquire, calling to remembrance that all flesh is mutually born to die and to depart out of this mortal life, the time whereof being unknown, do therefore make and declare this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First and principally I do commit my soul into the hands of my heavenly father, hoping and fully assuring myself that he will receive it into his merciful protection for the love and merit of his dear son and my only Saviour and Redeemer, Christ Jesus, and my body to be decently interred from whence it came, there to remain until the time appointed when it shall rise again to ascend with my Redeemer, Christ Jesus, into the holy kingdom of his heavenly father prepared for his chosen children, of which number, through the love of my Saviour Christ Jesus, I hope and am fully assured I shall be one;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Thomasine Vere, my well-beloved wife, all that my manor, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances commonly called or known by the name or names of Pedean and Stonelodge, or by what other name or names the same be called or known, situate, lying and being in the town, parish and fields of Stone or elsewhere in the county of Kent, to hold to her and her assigns for and during the term of her natural life without impeachment of waste, she keeping herself sole and unmarried;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said wife and unto Elizabeth Vere, widow, my most dear and well-beloved mother, all that my capital messuage or house called Pitchards, alias Kirby Hall, wherein I now dwell in Hedingham at Castle aforesaid, with the houses, orchards, gardens and yards to the same adjoining or belonging with the appurtenances, equally and indifferently to be divided and used twixt them for their several habitation for and during the term of their natural lives and the longer liver of them, provided always that the said Elizabeth Vere, my mother, shall not let or sell her moiety, part and portion of and in the said capital messuage, orchards, gardens and yards, nor any part or parcel of the same, to any person or persons during her life without the special assent, consent and agreement of my said wife first had and obtained;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Thomasine, my wife, all those my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, feedings and hop-grounds, with the pools thereof, belonging or in any wise appertaining unto my said capital messuage called Pitchards alias Kirby Hall, in what parishes soever the same do lie, together with that or those meadows or pastures with the appurtenances in Hedingham Castle aforesaid commonly called 'the Flash', and all those my lands, pastures and woods lying and being in Hedingham aforesaid or elsewhere in the county of Essex in or near one endware there commonly called Northie End, and all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever, as well free as copyhold, situate, lying and being in the town, parish or fields of Hedingham aforesaid, to hold all and singular the premises with their and every of their appurtenances to her, the said Thomasine [LM: & her assigns], for and during the term of her natural life, she keeping herself sole and unmarried as aforesaid (which clause of restraining of marriage I have inserted into this my last will and testament only at the special instance, desire and earnest request of the said Thomasine, my wife), out of all which lands and premises so given and disposed unto my said wife as aforesaid, my mind and will is that the said Thomasine and her assigns for and during her life, and after her decease those parties to whom the same lands and premises shall lawfully descend and come, shall yearly and every year satisfy, content and pay unto the said Elizabeth Vere, my mother, for and during her natural life the sum of forty pounds of lawful money of England at the feasts of the Annunciation of the Lady St Mary the Virgin and St Michael the Archangel by even and equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin and commence at that feast of the feasts aforesaid which shall next and immediately happen by and after my decease;

And I further will that whichsoever of the said Thomasine, my wife, or Elizabeth, my mother, shall fortune to overlive the other, that she so surviving shall have, hold and enjoy my whole and entire capital messuage, orchards, yards and gardens with the appurtenances called Pitchards alias Kirby Hall for and during the term of her natural life under the condition and proviso abovesaid;

And if it shall happen that the said Elizabeth, my mother, shall fortune to overlive my said wife, then I will, and my mind is, that she, the said Elizabeth, shall also have, hold and enjoy all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever situate, lying and being in the town, parish and fields of Hedingham Castle aforesaid, and the lands lying at Northie End, for and during the term of her natural life, she keeping the said capital messuage and the houses belonging unto the same in good and sufficient reparations during her said term, and committing or doing thereupon no manner of voluntary waste;

And that then she, the said Elizabeth, shall pay and answer and allow out of the same lands, tenements and premises unto my well-beloved sister, Frances Harcourt, now the wife of Robert Harcourt, esquire, the sum of forty pounds of lawful money of England yearly and every year for and during the natural life of her, the said Frances Harcourt, if my said mother shall so long live, and to be paid and answered unto her at the two usual feasts aforesaid by even and equal portions;

And I further will, and my mind and pleasure is, that if the said Frances Harcourt, my said sister, shall fortune to overlive the said Thomasine, my wife, and the said Elizabeth, my mother, that then she, the said Frances, and her assigns shall have, hold and enjoy my said capital messuage called Pitchards alias Kirby Hall with the appurtenances, and all my foresaid lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, and other the premises in Hedingham Castle aforesaid, and my lands at Northie End, for and during the term of her natural life, she likewise keeping and maintaining the said capital messuage and other the houses and buildings belonging unto the same in all good and sufficient reparations, & doing and committing thereupon during the said term no manner of voluntary waste;

And I further will, and my mind and pleasure is, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Thomasine, my wife, the said Elizabeth, my mother, and the said Frances, my sister, and every of them and their assigns to have, fell and take, in and upon the said lands and premises in Hedingham Castle aforesaid and Northie End, of such bolling trees and wood as have been heretofore usually lopped, cropped and felled for their necessary fuel, firebote, hedgebote, gatebote, ploughbote, and all other necessary botes, to be only spent and employed in and upon the said capital messuage and the lands and tenements belonging unto the same, and not elsewhere;

And also to have, fell and to take in and upon the premises convenient and necessary timber for the necessary repairing and upholding and maintaining of the said capital messuage and the houses and buildings belonging unto the same for and during such times and terms as to them and every of them is before by this my last will and testament limited, declared and expressed, and according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will and testament;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said wife all those my two houses, messuages or tenements with their appurtenances, the one of them situate and being upon St Lawrence Pountney Hill by London Stone in London, and now in the tenure, holding or occupation of one William Crompton, citizen and cloth-worker of London, or of his assign or assigns, and the other situate and being in London in the parish of St Katherine Coleman within Aldgate, and sometime parcel of Northumberland Place, and now in the tenure or occupation of one Richard Jackson, or of his assign or assigns, to have and to hold the said messuage or tenement in St. Lawrence Pountney Hill with the appurtenances to her and to her heirs forever, and to have and to hold the other messuage or tenement in the parish of St Katherine Coleman with the appurtenances to her and to her assigns for and during the term of her natural life;

And my will and mind further is that it shall and may be lawful to and for my said wife during her life to demise and let all the said lands, meadows, pastures, feedings and hop-grounds lying and being at Hedingham at Castle aforesaid or elsewhere, and belonging to my said capital messuage called Kirby Hall or any part thereof, together with so many of the outhouses belonging to my said capital messuage as shall be thought fit and convenient for the occupying and manuring of the same grounds and premises, and also the said grounds or pastures at Northie End, and also the said manor, messuages, lands and premises called Pedeane and Stonelodge, and the messuage in St Katherine Coleman

with their appurtenances, or any of them, to any person or persons, and to dispose of the rents reserved upon the same or any of them at her will and pleasure for and during the time and space of one whole year next after the decease of the said Thomasine, so as always there be no voluntary waste committed or done upon the premises or any part thereof during the said term;

And whereas the Lady Elizabeth Vere, widow, late the wife of my brother Sir Francis Vere, knight, deceased, hath and holdeth by way of her jointure, and for her better security of four hundred pounds by year to be paid unto her during her life, amongst other lands and tenements the manors of Tilbury near Clare, Nortofts in Tilbury, and the manor of Skaths in Belchamp St Paul in the county of Essex, now if it shall happen the said Lady Elizabeth Vere to die and to depart this present life before my said wife and my said mother, then I will and bequeath unto my said sister Frances Harcourt one annuity or yearly rent of one hundred pounds by year of lawful money of England to be issuing and going out of my said manors of Tilbury, Nortofts and Skaths, and out of the lands and premises to them or any of them belonging, for and during the natural life of the said Frances Harcourt, and to be yearly paid unto her by such person or persons as by and after the decease of the said Lady Elizabeth Vere the said manors and premises shall lawfully descend, come and be at the two usual feasts of the year, that is to say, the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady and St Michael the Archangel by even and equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at that feast of the feasts aforesaid which shall next and immediately happen after the decease of the said Lady Elizabeth Vere, according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will and testament;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Christopher Lanton of Hedingham aforesaid, clerk, and unto Thomas Fowle, Matthias Priyon(?) and Abraham Totnam th' elder and to their heirs, as feoffees in trust, all that my house or tenement situate and being in Hedingham at Castle aforesaid in one street there called the Nunnery Street now in the tenure of one Michael Whatlocke, and which I lately bought and purchased of one Edward Brewer, to have and to hold to them and to their heirs to th' only use, behoof and intent hereafter in this my present will and testament expressed and declared, that is to say, for the free and only dwelling and habitation of four of the most aged, impotent, poor and honest persons dwelling and remaining in the said town of Hedingham at Castle, and to be chosen and placed in the said tenements by the said feoffees with the advice, consent and good-liking and approbation of six other of the chief discreet and substantial inhabitants of the said parish of Hedingham at Castle, and further I will that whensoever four of the said feoffees shall fortune to die, that then the other feoffees then living, with th' advice and consent of the other six discreet persons of the same parish, shall choose and make four other feoffees of the said house to the uses aforesaid according to the true meaning of this my present will;

And for the better relief and maintenance of the said four aged and impotent persons to be placed in the said house as aforesaid, and for the well keeping and maintaining of the same house and premises in good and sufficient reparations, I do further give and dispose unto them and to that use and purpose one annuity or yearly rent of five pounds of lawful money of England forever to be issuing and going out and to be had, perceived and taken

out of all or any my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever (my lands in Castle Hedingham aforesaid and such other lands and tenements as I have formerly herein given and bequeathed unto my said wife only excepted and foreprised), and to be yearly paid and answered unto the vicar or parson and to the churchwardens and overseers for the poor for the time being of the said town of Hedingham Castle by the owners and possessors of my said lands and tenements (except before excepted) at the four usual feasts of the year, that is to say, the feast of St Michael the Archangel, the birth of our Lord God called Christmas, the Annunciation of Our Lady, and the feast of St. John Baptist, by even and equal portions, and the same yearly rent or payment of five pound so had and received by the said vicar, churchwardens and overseers as aforesaid equally and indifferently by them, with the advice, consent and good-liking of six of the most discreet and substantiallest inhabitants of the same town, to be given and distributed quarterly amongst the said four poor persons so to be placed in the said house as afore is said, the charge of repairing of the said house or tenement always being deducted;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Thomasine, my wife, all such linen and other household stuff, of what kind or quality whatsoever the same be of, which the said Thomasine brought with her unto me at the time of our marriage, and also so much of my best plate of silver as shall be well worth forty pounds of current money of England, to be had, taken and chosen out of all such plate as I shall have at the time of my decease at the free choice and pleasure of my said wife, and to dispose and use the same household stuff and plate to her own use forever;

Also I give unto my said wife the moiety or one half of all such household stuff and implements of household now being and remaining at my said capital message or elsewhere not being any part of the household stuff brought with her unto me as aforesaid, to use, occupy and employ the same at her pleasure during the term of her natural life, and I give and dispose th' other moiety or half of my said household stuff and implements of household (except as is before excepted), unto the said Elizabeth [RM: Vere, my mother] to use, occupy and employ the same likewise at her goodwill and pleasure for and during the term of her natural life, and after the decease of my said wife and of my said mother, then I will, and my mind is, that both the said moieties of my said household stuff which shall be then remaining (except before excepted), shall wholly remain and be unto my heirs forever, and that the glass, wainscot and other joined stuff, lead, copper and brewing vessels in and about my said capital message shall always remain and be as heirlooms to my said capital message and to my heirs forever;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Vere Harcourt, one of the sons of my said sister Frances, for and during his natural life, one annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds of lawful money of England [RM: This sum of forty pounds set down with my own hand the 13 of February 1616 [=1617]. John Vere], to be issuing and going out and to be had, perceived and taken out of all and every my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever except my capital message, lands and tenements in Hedingham Castle aforesaid, and except all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments formerly given and bequeathed herein unto my said wife, the same annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds [+to be] paid unto him, the said Vere Harcourt, at the two usual feasts, that is to say, the

feast of St Michael the Archangel and the Annunciation of the Lady by even and equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at that feast of the feasts aforesaid which shall next and immediately happen when the said Vere Harcourt shall accomplish and be of the full age of twenty and one years, and not before;

And whereas my cousin Edmund Pyrton of Elmstead in the county of Essex, esquire, doth now owe unto me the sum of five hundred pounds of lawful English money, the which hath of long time remained in his hands, I now give and dispose the same five hundred pounds unto the children of my said sister Frances Harcourt, to be equally divided amongst them by even and equal portions after my decease at their several ages of twenty and one years, or at the day of their marriages, which of them shall first happen next after my decease, and I further will that if any of my said sister's children shall fortune to die before he, she or they shall receive their part and portion of the said five hundred pounds in form aforesaid, that then his or her part and portions thereof so dying and not being paid shall be equally and indifferently paid and answered unto the residue of her children as shall be then living at such days and times and in such manner and form as the same should have been paid unto the other if they had lived;

[LM: This legacy is crossed by me, John Vere]

Item, I give and bequeath unto my loving friend Thomas Felton th' elder of Birdbrook in the county of Essex, gentleman, and unto Joseph Felton, his son, the sum of ten pounds of lawful money of England;

And to my servant John Holmes the sum of five pounds of lawful money, and unto all the rest of my servants, as well males as females, which shall be dwelling with me in my house at the time of my decease, to each of them forty shillings apiece;

And I also give unto my loving friend George Coo of Maplestead in the said county of Essex, gentleman, the sum of twenty pounds of lawful money of England, in consideration and to th' intent that the said George Coo shall join with Thomasine, my said wife, as one of my executors in the execution and performance of this my last will and testament, which said several legacies and bequests above-mentioned I will shall be paid and answered by my said wife within six months next after my decease;

And as touching all other my goods, chattels, moveables, apparel, money, plate, jewels, debts, corn and hay not before in this my last will and testament bequeathed, my debts and legacies paid, my funeral expenses discharged, and this my present will performed, I wholly give and dispose the same unto the said Thomasine, my wife, to use & dispose at her free will and pleasure;

And if it shall happen at any time hereafter that the said Thomasine, my said wife, or her assigns, or any of them, to be sued, troubled, molested or anyways impeached or hindered by my heir or heirs or any of them, or by any other by them or any of their means or procurements, of, for or concerning any the lands, tenements or hereditaments or any the goods, chattels or debts which I have formerly given & disposed unto her by this my last

will and testament, so as she cannot or may not lawfully, peaceably and quietly have, hold and enjoy the same and every part thereof according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will and testament, which I hope and am persuaded shall never be attempted for that I have so freely and carefully left all or most of my manors and lands to descend unto my said heirs, then I will, and my full mind is, that it shall and may be lawful to and for my said wife and her assigns, and every of them, to enter in and upon all, every or any other my lands, tenements and hereditaments within the said county of Essex, or in and upon any part or parcel of them, and the same to have, hold, occupy and enjoy until with the rents, issues and profits of the same she and they be fully satisfied, contented, answered and paid of all such loss, damages, costs and charges as she or they shall from time to time anyways have, sustain or undergo by or by reason of any such suits, troubles or encumbrances;

And if my said wife & her assigns shall not or may not enter in and upon the said manors, lands and premises in form aforesaid, either by reason of th' estate and interest which the above-named the Lady Elizabeth Vere hath of and in the same as afore is mentioned, or by reason of any other cause whatsoever, then I will, and my mind is, that it shall and may be lawful to and for my said wife at any time during her life, either by her last will and testament or otherwise, to demise and grant two parts of my said manors, lands and tenements, being in three parts divided, to what person or persons she shall think meet for and during the time and term of twenty and one years, or for any other time or term not exceeding the term of twenty and one years, to begin and commence at the feast of St Michael th' Archangel next after the decease of my said wife, and to dispose of the rents issue and profits thereof so by the said lease or leases to be reserved and payable at her free will and pleasure during the said term or terms without any let or contradiction of my heir or heirs, so as there be no manner of waste done & committed by them in and upon the same premises or any part thereof during the said term or terms according to the true intent and meaning of this my present will and testament;

And if it shall happen that I shall depart this present life without any heir of my body lawfully begotten, then for want and default of such issue of my body lawfully begotten, and for the full and well paying and answering of the four hundred pounds above-mentioned unto the said Lady Elizabeth Vere for and during her life, and to the intent also that my said wife, mother and sister, and also the said Vere Harcourt, shall and may the better lawfully, quietly and peaceably have, hold and enjoy all such lands, tenements and hereditaments, and such rents, annuities, gifts and payments which I have herein given and disposed unto them and every of them without any trouble or molestation according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will and testament, my will and mind is that my well-beloved brother, Sir Horace Vere, knight, now Lord Governor of the town of Brill in Holland, shall have and enjoy as well all my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever not heretofore herein otherwise bequeathed, as also the reversion and remainder of all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments except the house in St Lawrence Pountney Hill in London before given to my said wife and her heirs, to hold to him, the said Sir Horace and his heirs, for and under such conditions, reservations, limitations, provisos, payments and purposes notwithstanding as in this my

last will and testament are mentioned, expressed and declared, and according to the true intent and meaning of the same;

And I constitute, ordain and make the said Thomasine, my well-beloved wife, and the said George Coe, my trusty and well-beloved friend, executors of this my last will and testament, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above-written. John Vere.

Memorandum: My will and meaning is that the said Elizabeth Vere, my mother, shall not anyways intermeddle with the outhouses belonging to my said capital messuage without the consent of Thomasine, my said wife. John Vere.

Memorandum: That the four lines above-written were defaced by myself the 26th of April 1615. John Vere.

I do give unto Mr Henry Butts, minister of Birdbrook, a silver goblet and a cloak. Written the 13 Februarij. John Vere.

Read, subscribed, sealed and acknowledged to be the last will and testament of the said John Vere in the presence of Thomas Felton, Henry Butts.

These lines above-written were defaced by myself, and the seal broken. John Vere.

[CODICIL]

This codicil or writing now made the 26th day of July 1615, I will shall be annexed unto my last will and testament, and to be had, taken and reputed as part and parcel of the same, viz.,

Whereas I, John Vere of Hedingham at Castle in the county of Essex, esquire, have by my last will and testament in writing bearing date the 26th of February 1612 [=1613] amongst other things given and bequeathed under Vere Harcourt [RM: my sister's son] one annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds, to be issuing and going out and to be had and taken out of my lands, tenements and hereditaments for and during the term of his natural life, the first payment thereof to begin at the feast of St Michael the Archangel or the Annunciation of Our Lady which shall happen next after such time as he shall accomplish his full age of twenty and one years, as by my said will more at large appeareth, by which my said gift there is no order taken for any allowance to be had for and towards the education and bringing up of the said Vere Harcourt during his minority, my will and mind now therefore is that those to whom my said lands, tenements and hereditaments out of which the said annuity or yearly rent of forty pounds is to be paid in form aforesaid shall descend and come by virtue of my said last will and testament shall presently after my decease yearly and every year during the minority of the said Vere Harcourt, and until he shall come to his said full age of twenty and one years, yield, pay and answer out of the

said lands and tenements unto my executors made and appointed by my said will, and to the survivor of them, and to the executors or administrators of the survivor of them, the yearly rent or sum of forty pounds of lawful money of England at the two usual feasts of the year, that is to say, the feast of St Michael the Archangel and the Annunciation of Our Lady St Mary the Virgin by even and equal portions, the first payment thereof to begin at that feast of the feasts aforesaid which shall next and immediately happen after my decease, and that the said forty pounds so yearly to be had and received as aforesaid to be carefully spent, employed, and laid out every year by my said executors and the survivor of them, their executors, administrators and assigns, towards and for the good and well education, maintenance and bringing up of the said Vere Harcourt until such time as he shall accomplish his said age of twenty and one years, and then to cease and to be determined, and he, the said Vere Harcourt, then to have, take and enjoy the said annuity of forty pounds himself which formerly I have disposed unto him by my said last will and testament [LM: according to the true intent & meaning of these presents, & of my last will & testament] before declared;

Also I give and dispose to Thomasine, my wife, for and during the term of her natural life all those my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, feedings and woods commonly called or known by the name or names of Skeythes, Rumvells and Baynards fields or otherwise with the appurtenances, lying and being in Belchamp St Paul in the county of Essex or elsewhere which I lately had and purchased of and from one John Sewell, woollen-draper, and of Samuel Ward, clerk, and others, and also all those pieces and parcels of meadow, both free and copy, lying and being in Hedingham at Castle aforesaid in one meadow there commonly called 'the Flash' which I also late had and purchased of and from one Roger Robinson and William Butcher, or any of them, and after the decease of my said wife, I will that all the same premises with their appurtenances shall wholly remain, come and be to Sir Horace Vere, knight, my brother, and his heirs forever if I shall fortune to die without heir of my body lawfully begotten;

And I also give and dispose to my said wife all that tenement, barn, stable and other housings with their appurtenances, yards and gardens standing and being in Dragon Lane in Hedingham aforesaid which I lately had and purchased of one Robert Harvey of Hedingham aforesaid, husbandman, for and during such time and term as I have in the same;

And calling further to my remembrance how that I do owe divers and several sums of money to divers and several persons which I am desirous to have well, truly and faithfully paid and answered without sale of my moveable goods which before I partly have otherwise disposed by my said will, for the discharging whereof I have in my said will set down no certain or direct course, my will and mind now therefore is, for the better satisfying and paying of my said debts, that Thomasine, my said wife, her executors and assigns, shall have the free letting, setting, ordering and disposing of all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, feedings, hop-grounds and hereditaments whatsoever, of what kind, quality or condition soever the same be of, and wheresoever the same be lying and being within the realm of England, for and during the space and term of [+one] whole year after my decease, to commence and begin at the feast of St Michael

the Archangel or the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady St. Mary the Virgin, which of them shall first happen next after my decease, and to have, take and receive the rents, issues and profits rising, coming & growing of, from or by reason of the same, and of every or any of them, and of every part and parcel of them, for and during one whole year after my decease, to commence and begin as aforesaid, and that my said wife, her executors or assigns, do and shall with the same rents, issues and profits so rising and coming of my said lands, tenements and hereditaments as aforesaid, faithfully, truly and conscionably pay, answer and discharge all my honest, true and lawful debts which shall be owing to any person or persons at the time of my decease without further yielding or making any manner of account or other satisfaction to any person or person for the same according to the true intent and meaning of these presents, any clause, article or sentence contained or comprised in my said will and testament to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding, provided always that my said wife, her executors or assigns, nor any of them, do not during the said term commit any voluntary waste in and upon the premises or any part thereof;

In witness whereof I, the said John Vere, have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above-written. John Vere.

Read, published and declared by the said John Vere to be part and parcel of his last will and testament in the presence of Henry Butts, Thomas Felton.

[CODICIL]

This codicil or writing now made the 6th day of May 1616 I will shall be also annexed unto my last will and testament, and to be had and taken as part and parcel of the same, viz.,

[RM: I have paid the £200; notwithstanding my will is that Sir Horace Vere shall enjoy the lands after the decease of Thomasine [+my] wife, to him and his heirs forever. I[n] witness whereof I have cancelled all these lines that concern that matter written with my own hand. John Vere]

Whereas I, John Vere, do owe unto Sir Horace Vere, my brother, the sum of two hundred pounds which I borrowed of him, and whereas sithence I have purchased certain lands and tenements lying and being in Belchamp St Paul in the county of Essex, the reversion whereof after my wife's decease I have given and disposed unto my said brother and his heirs, and forasmuch also as I have appointed several payments of money to be made by my said wife after my decease, my will and mind therefore is that my said brother, his executors nor administrators, nor any of them, shall not anyways demand or challenge of my said wife, her executors or administrators, the said two hundred pounds or any part thereof, but shall within six months next after my decease make sale and deliver unto my said wife, her executors and administrators, a good, perfect and lawful release and discharge of the said two hundred pounds and every part thereof according to the true

meaning of these presents, which release I am fully persuaded my said brother for his part will, according to my desire, faithfully perform, but if the said release shall not be made accordingly, then I will, and my mind is that the said lands, tenements and hereditaments which I bought and purchased lying in Belchamp aforesaid shall wholly remain and be unto Thomasine, my said wife, and to her heirs forever, to sell and to dispose at their wills and pleasure;

These seven last lines were blotted out. John Vere.

Read, published and declared by the said John Vere to be parcel of his last will and testament in the presence of Andrew Turner, Henry Butts, Thomas Felton.

[CODICIL]

18th January 1618 [=1619]

Whereas I, John Vere, have by this my last will and testament bequeathed unto Thomasine, my wife, all that my manor, messuage, lands and tenements with their appurtenances commonly called Pedeanne and Stonelodge or otherwise lying and being in the parish of Stone or elsewhere in the county of Kent, and also all that my house and buildings with th' appurtenances situate, lying and being in the parish of St Katherine Coleman within Aldgate in the city of London, to hold to her and her assigns only during the term of her natural life, and whereas sithence the making of my will, seriously considering the premises and calling to remembrance that the said manor, houses, lands and premises were formerly the inheritance of the said Thomasine, my wife, and that for the great love and affection which she did bear unto me she had given the same to me and my heirs, I have thereupon sithence by writing under my hand and seal conveyed and settled the inheritance of the said manor, houses, lands and premises above-mentioned in and upon the right heirs of the said Thomasine, my wife, as I am persuaded I was bound so to do in all equity and good conscience, now to th' intent that all manner of doubts and controversies touching the premises might be stayed and prevented, I have thought it fit by this note or codicil to declare what I have done touching the state of the premises, and that my will & mind is that the same and every of them shall remain and be in the right heirs of my said wife according to the form and effect of the conveyances which I have made thereof as aforesaid, any gift or other clause in my said will contained to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding. John Vere.

[RM: If my wife shall have a mind to build an house for the poor in Castle Hedingham in the time of her widowhood, my will is she shall fell and carry timber for that purpose. John Vere]

Signed and acknowledged in the presence of Thomas Felton, Henry Butts, Richard Smith.

[CODICIL]

This codicil or writing now made and written with my own hand the 29th of October 1619 I do annex unto my last will and testament, and will that it shall be had, taken and reputed as part of the same, viz.,

I do further will and bequeath unto Thomasine Vere, my dear wife, the hop-ground which I had by my mother, purchased of Peter Poole, to hold during her natural life;

I do also give her my silver vessel to give and dispose of;

I do also give her full power and leave to give and dispose of so much of my household stuff as shall please her. John Vere. Henry Butts.

[CODICIL]

Another codicil annexed to my will made the fourth day of March in the year of Our Lord 1623 [=1624].

[LM: These 8 lines and 2 half lines I have cancelled with my own hand, and the four lines above and part of a fifth I do ratify and allow as part and parcel of this my last will and testament. John Vere]

Item, my will and meaning [+is] that my wife shall have and enjoy the benefit of all such manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments as I late had of the demise or demises of Dame Elizabeth Murray, late the wife of my brother Sir Frances Vere, knight, deceased, according to the several leases to me thereof made, provided always that if Sir Horace Vere, knight, shall give unto the said Thomasine, my wife, sufficient security that she, the said Thomasine and her assigns, shall hold and enjoy the manor of Little [-of Little] Bromley alias Church Hall with the appurtenances in the said county of Essex, and all other my lands and tenements in Little Bromley in the said county during the term of her natural life, and that the said Thomasine, her heirs and assigns, shall hold and enjoy the manors, lands and tenements called Pedean in Stone in the county of Kent, and all other the lands which late were the said Thomasine, my wife[‘s], situate & lying in Stone aforesaid, discharged or sufficiently saved and kept harmless of and from the rights, title and demand of the said Dame Elizabeth Murray and her assigns, that then the said Thomasine, my wife, and my executors shall assign and set over the said leases and remainder of all the said manors, lands and tenements thereby demised, except Little Bromley Hall alias Church Hall and Pedean and other the said lands, tenements and hereditaments in Little Bromley and Stone aforesaid, to the said Horace Vere, knight, or to such other person or persons as the said Sir Horace shall name or appoint;

[LM: This is crossed out by my directions the 17 of March 1623 [=1624]. John Vere]

Item, whereas in this my will I have formerly given and bequeathed the reversion or remainder of my capital messuage called Kirby Hall alias Pitchards, and of divers other lands and tenements in Hedingham at the Castle aforesaid after the decease of my wife and my sister Harcourt unto my said brother Sir Horace Vere and his heirs, my will and mind is that the devise in this my will formerly made of the said messuage, lands and tenements to the said Sir Horace and his heirs shall be void, and I do hereby give and devise all the said capital messuage and all my lands and tenements lying and being in Hedingham at the Castle aforesaid except one tenement in Nunnery Street from and after the decease of the said Thomasine, my wife, and my said sister Harcourt unto Sir John Vere, knight, to have and to hold the said capital messuage, lands and tenements to the said Sir John Vere, his heirs and assigns, forever, any gift or devise by me formerly made to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding;

The latter clause of the devise to Sir John Vere, knight, of my capital messuage and other lands in Hedingham at the Castle is put out as no part of my will. John Vere. [LM: iij Marcij 1623 [=1624] witness Peter Malbon, George Coo]

LM: Francis [=Frances?] Harcourt, George Coo, William Stephenson, James Richardson] Witnesses hereunto, Henry Butts, Edmund Brewer.

Item, my meaning is that the yearly sum of forty pounds which I have by this my will before given and devised to Vere Harcourt, my sister's son, and all other gifts to him given for his maintenance, shall be wholly void in respect that I have by my deed granted to the said Vere an annuity or yearly sum of forty pounds, as by the same may appear;

Item, my will and meaning is that my wife shall have the education of the said Vere till his age of 21 years, and shall in the meantime receive and take the said annuity of forty pounds to the said Vere by my deed granted towards the education of the said Vere;

Item, I give unto Mrs Frances Carew, widow, the sum of twenty pounds, and to Mr Edmund Brewer the sum of twenty pounds, and to Mr William Stephenson the sum of ten pounds, which said sums I will shall be paid in such manner and at such time as the same may be well spared by my executors. John Vere. Witnesses hereunto, Henry Butts, George Coo.

[CODICIL]

This codicil made and annexed to my will the 17th of March 1623 [=1624].

Item, I will and do hereby express my mind to be that my sister Harcourt shall have and enjoy the one hundred pound by year in this my will to her formerly given after the death of the Lady Murray only during the life of my wife, and no longer. John Vere.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum vnacum Codicillis annexis apud London Coram venerabili viro Domino Willelmo Byrd milite legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Commissario legitime Constituto Decimo octavo die mensis Junij Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo vicesimo Quarto Iuramento Thomasine Vere relicte dicti defuncti et vnus executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Cui Commissa fuit administratio bonorum Iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti De bene et fideliter administrando eadem Ad sancta Dei Evangelia vigore Commissionis Coram Willelmo Blythe Clerico in ea parte alias emanate Iurate Reservata potestate similem Commissionem faciendi Georgio Coe alteri executorum etiam in huiusmodi testamento nominato Cum venerit eam petiturus examinatus

[=The above-written will, together with the codicils, annexed was proved at London before the worshipful Sir William Byrd, knight, Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted, on the eighteenth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred twenty-fourth by the oath of Thomasine Vere, relict of the said deceased and one of the executors named in the same will, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same by force of a commission before William Blythe, clerk, in that respect issued at another time, with power reserved for a similar commission to be made to George Coe, another of the executors also named in the same will, when he shall have come to petition the same. Examined]