

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 7 March 1528 and proved 11 May 1528, of Thomas Saunders of Sibbertoft, Northamptonshire, uncle of George Saunders, murdered on 25 March 1573 by Oxford's former servant, George Browne. The murder was the subject of a pamphlet by Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding (1535/6-1606), *Brief Discourse of the Late Murther of Master George Saunders*, and an anonymous play, *A Warning for Fair Women*, performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

For the will of the testator's brother, William Saunders (d.1541x2), father of the murdered George Saunders, see TNA PROB 11/28/488.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the youngest son of Edward Saunders of Harrington by Joan Makerneys, the daughter of Richard and Felice Makerneys of Wolfhampcote. See the pedigree of Saunders of Little Bowden in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), p. 44 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofnor00harvrich#page/44/mode/2up>

See also the pedigree in Winchester, Barbara, *Tudor Family Portrait*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 17.

See also Agutter, Doreen, 'Edward Saunders of Harrington and Rothwell, Northamptonshire', *Monumental Brass Society*, Bulletin 115, (September 2010), pp. 288-9, at:

<http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/Bulletin.html>

See also the pedigree of Saunders in Howard, Joseph Jackson, ed., *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, Vol. I, (London: Hamilton Adams, 1868), p. 159 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/miscellaneagenea112unse#page/n177/mode/2up>

Testator's siblings

The testator had three elder brothers and three sisters:

-John Saunders.

-Lawrence Saunders (d.1544) of Harrington, Northamptonshire, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/30/232.

-**William Saunders** (d.1541?) of Welford, Northamptonshire. For his will, see TNA PROB 11/28/488.

-**Joan Saunders.**

-**Grace Saunders**, who married Maurice Osborne of Kelmarsh.

-**Isabel Saunders**, who married Walter Curson or Curzon (d.1527) of Waterperry, for whom see his will, TNA PROB 11/22/320, and:

'Parishes: Waterperry', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5, Bullingdon Hundred*, ed. Mary D Lobel (London, 1957), pp. 295-309. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol5/pp295-309> [accessed 18 October 2018].

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Margaret Cave, the daughter of Richard Cave (d.1538) of Stanford, Northamptonshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth Mervin (d. 9 August 1493) of Church Lawford, Warwickshire. After the death of the testator, Margaret Cave married Robert Chauntrell. See the pedigree of Cave of Stanford in Betham, William, *The Baronetage of England*, Vol. I, (Ipswich: Burrell and Bransby, 1801), p. 377 at:

<https://archive.org/details/baronetageengla00unkngoog/page/n394>

See also Waters, Robert Edmond Chester, *Genealogical Memoirs of the Extinct Family of Chester of Chicheley*, (London: Robson and Sons, 1878), Vol. I, pp. 74-6 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/genealogicalmem01wategoog#page/n112>

By Margaret Cave, the testator had six sons and six daughters:

* **Sir Edward Saunders** (1506-1576), Chief Baron of the Exchequer, eldest son, who married firstly Margaret Englefield (d.1563), and secondly Agnes (nee Hussey) More Curzon (d.1588). For his will, see TNA PROB 11/58/517.

* **Robert Saunders** (c.1514-1559), who married firstly, Margaret Staunton, and secondly, Joyce Goodwyn. See his will, TNA PROB 11/43/474.

* **Blase Saunders** (d.1581), who married a wife named Elizabeth. See his will, TNA PROB 11/63/486.

* **Joseph Saunders.**

* **Laurence Saunders** (d.1555), Marian martyr, for whom see the *ODNB* entry.

* **Ambrose Saunders** (d.1586), who married Mary Goodwyn. See his will, TNA PROB 11/69/469.

* **Christian Saunders**, who married Christopher Breton.

* **Sabine Saunders**, who married John Johnson.

* **Jane Saunders**, who married Clement Villiers. See the Villiers pedigree in Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Leicester in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1870), Vol. II, pp. 30-1 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount09britgoog#page/n49>

* **three other daughters.**

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The testator's executors, Sir Thomas Cave (d.1558) and Clement Cave (d.1534), were the sons of Richard Cave (d.1538) and his second wife, Margaret Saxby, and thus the half-brothers of the testator's wife, Margaret Cave. For the will of Sir Thomas Cave (d.1558), see TNA PROB 11/41/34. For the will of Clement Cave (d.1534), see TNA PROB 11/25/300.

One of the witnesses to the will was the testator's brother-in-law, Edward Cave, the only other child of Richard Cave (d.1538) by his first wife, Elizabeth Mervin (d. 9 August 1493).

LM: Test{amentu}m Tho{m}e Saunders

In the name of God, Amen. The 7th day of March in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred twenty and seven, I, Thomas Saunders, gentleman, whole of body and mind, having in good deliberate remembrance that the life of man of necessity must determine and have end [+and?] the hour and time of death is uncertain and much dreadful, willing therefore to be in readiness at all times when it shall please Almighty God, my Saviour, to call me from this transitory and wretched world, ordain, declare and make my will and testament as well for the disposition of my lands as my goods and chattels in manner & form following:

First I bequeath my soul to God Almighty, to Our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven, and my body to be buried in the parish church of Sibbertoft;

And to the reparation of the ornaments in the same church I give and bequeath 3s 4d;

Also I give to the reparation of these churches following, that is to say, Berisworth, Theddingworth, Marston, Lubenham, Farndon, Clipston, Welford, Naseby, Stanford, South Kilworth and North Kilworth, to every one of them 3s 4d;

Item, I bequeath to twenty towns about Sibbertoft such as mine executors think most need, £6;

Item, I will that at my burial mine executors shall dispose for the wealth of my soul in alms and wax and torches £6 6s 8d;

Item, I will that my feoffees now being seised of any manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments shall from henceforth stand and be seised to th' use and performance of this my last will & testament;

Item, I will that all the said feoffees and their heirs shall immediately after my death stand and be seised of the manor of Cropewell in the county of Nottingham, and of all my other lands and tenements within England to th' use of Margaret, now my wife, during her life natural, except certain lands and tenements to the clear yearly value of twenty marks over all charges which I will my son, Edward, which is now my eldest son, or he that after his death shall be my son and heir shall have to find him during the life of the said Margaret, my wife, and after the death of the said Margaret I will that all my foresaid manors, lands and tenements within the realm of England shall descend to my said son, Edward, and to his heirs forever;

Item, I will that Margaret, my wife, after my death shall have th' occupation of all my farms and cattle within and upon the same farms during the term of 16 years next after my death, and with the profits coming of the same I will that first she pay my debts within the space of three years if the profits of my cattle will so amount unto, and then I will that the same Margaret yearly during the said 16 years shall find to convenient learning all my children now being unmarried, except my son, Edward, or such other of my sons as shall fortune to be mine heir, to whom I have appointed a competent living of land and tenements, and also except all those children that shall be married within the said 16 years;

Item, I will that of the profits of my said farms coming yearly during the said 16 years, my debts paid, my children's finding deducted, and all rents, wages and liveries(?) and all other yearly charges borne, I will that every of my said sons at his full age of 20(?) years and every of my daughters at their marriage or full age shall have every of them one hundred marks to be levied of the issues [f. 249r] and profits of the said farms and cattle during the said 16 years, and if it fortune my said wife within the said term of 16 years to die, then I will that he that at the time of her death shall be mine heir, being of the age of 21 years, shall have th' occupation of all my foresaid farms to such intent and purpose as I have before willed and declared for my wife to do;

Item, I will that my said wife or he that shall be my son and heir of full age, or such of them as shall have th' occupation of my said farms, shall within one year next after my

death find sufficient sureties to the residue of mine executors hereafter named or to such person and persons as my said executors shall appoint and assign to make yearly a true and a perfect account and reckoning, and to perform this my will as well touching the disposition of the profits of my said farms to be ordered in such manner and form as I have before willed and declared as for the performance of all other things in the same will specified, and that my said wife or such of my sons as shall have th' occupation of my farms in manner and form aforesaid shall yearly make account to mine executors of the profits coming and growing yearly upon the same, and the same to be distributed to my children according as I have before appointed;

And further I will that if the said profits of my said farms amount to any more sum than after the rate of a hundred marks yearly clear above all charges to every of my said children, that then the overplus thereof to be equally divided among my said children at their ages as I have before appointed, and if it fortune any of my said children to die before he or they have their portions at the times and ages before appointed, then I will that the portions or portion of him or them that so fortune to die to be equally divided among them that shall remain on live, provided alway that if the clear yearly profits of my farms will not amount to perform the sum of a hundred marks to every of my said children, then I will that my wife or such other of my sons as shall have th' occupation of my said farms [-of my said farms] shall be charged to pay no more to my said children but after such rate and portion as shall come clearly to their hands over all yearly charges as is abovesaid;

And after the said 16 years ended and determined, and every child have his bequest in form aforesaid, then I will that my wife take to her own use during her life one of my farms which she thinketh best for her, discharging the rent of it during her life with all such cattle as the said farm is yearly occupied with, and after her death so to leave it stored as she findeth it, and to dispose it and all the other of my farms to such of my children as she thinketh best during the terms then to come, and to leave them stored as she findeth them in all sorts, and if it fortune my wife to die and my farms not distributed nor appointed by her to my children according to this my will, then I will that mine executors shall distribute and appoint my farms among my children to such of them as they think most meet;

Also I will there be no act done by my wife, my children, nother by my mine executors whereby any of the terms of any of my farms might or should be aliened, surrendered, forfeit or lost by reason of re-entry for non-payment of the rents nor by any surrender to be made by them or otherwise;

Item, I will that all such plate, household stuff and all such other necessary implements of household that I have within any place within England, and also all such debts as be owing to me, shall remain to my wife during her life, and after her death to remain to such of my children as my wife and mine executors shall think good;

And I ordain and make mine executors Margaret, my wife, my brother, Lawrence Saunders, Thomas Cave, Clement Cave, Edward Saunders, my son, and Sir Robert Mowyer;

And overseers of this my will I ordain and make my father, Richard Cave, and my brother, William Saunders, trusting that they will give counsel to mine executors to see this my will performed;

In witness whereof to this my present will I have put to my seal the day and year above-written, these being witness: my brother, William Saunders, my brother, Edward Cave, Edmund Pykerynke [=Pickering?], William Cherye, Robert Downes and many other.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascripti defuncti Coram prefatis Commissarijs in eccl{es}ia Cath{edrali} Diui Pauli London xjo die mensis Maij Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingen{tesimo} xxvijjo Iurament{o} Edwardi Saunders & D{omi}ni Roberti Mowyer Cl{er}ici p{er}sonal{ite}r p{rese}nt{ium} ac Margarete Relicte Laurencij Saunders Thome Caue & Clementis Caue In p{er}sona Ric{hard}i ffelde procur{ator}is sui in hac p{ar}te executor{um} in h{uius}mo{di} test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{orum} Ac Approbatum & insinuatum Et com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}stracio auct{oritat}e prefatoru{m} R{euerendissi}mor{um} patrum om{n}i{um} & singuloru{m} bonoru{m} Iuriu{m} & creditoru{m} d{i}c{t}i defuncti prefatis executorib{us} De b{e}n{e} et fidel{ite}r adm{ni}strand{o} Ac de pleno et fideli In{uenta}rio secundo die post festum sancte Trinitatis prox{imum} futur{um} exhibend{o} Necnon de plano & vero compoto reddend{o} Ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia in debita iuris forma Iurat{orum}

[The testament of the above-written deceased was proved before the forenamed Commissioners in the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, London, on the 11th day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 28th by the oath of Edward Saunders & Sir Robert Mowyer, clerk, personally present, and Margaret, relict, Lawrence Saunders, Thomas Cave & Clement Cave in the person of Richard Field, their proctor in that behalf, executors named in the same testament, and probated & entered, and administration was granted by the authority of the forenamed most reverend Fathers of all & singular the goods, rights & credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executors, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well and faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full and faithful inventory on the second day after the feast of the Holy Trinity next to come, and also to render a plain & true account.]