

SUMMARY: The document below is the nuncupative will, dated 11 September 1540 and proved 22 September 1540, of Sir Thomas Kitson (1485 - 11 September 1540) of Hengrave, Suffolk, whose son, Sir Thomas Kitson (1540-1603), was closely associated with Oxford's friends, Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel, and whose three granddaughters were praised by the poet, Edmund Spenser.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

According to the *ODNB*, the testator was born in Warton, Lancashire, the son of Robert Kitson.

The testator's sister, Margaret Kitson, married John Washington, the ancestor of President George Washington. See:

<https://www.sulgravemanor.org.uk/about-us/a-brief-history>

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

First marriage

The identity of the testator's first wife is unknown. By his first wife, the testator had a daughter:

* **Elizabeth Kitson**, who married Edmund Crofts (c.1520 – 4 February 1558) of West Stow, Suffolk, by whom she had two sons, Thomas Crofts (b. 12 June 1540, buried 14 April 1612) and Henry Crofts. After the death of Elizabeth Kitson, Edmund Crofts married secondly Eleanor Burgh, the daughter of Thomas Burgh, (c.1488 – 28 February 1550), 1st Baron Burgh, by whom he had a son, John Crofts (d. November 1558), and two daughters, Alice Crofts (buried January 1561) and Margaret Crofts, who married John Southwell of Barham, Suffolk. For the Crofts family, see *West Stow Parish Registers, 1558 to 1850*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: George Booth, 1903), pp. 148-50, 168, 179-80 at:

<https://archive.org/details/weststowparishre00hervuoft/page/148>

Second marriage

The testator married secondly Margaret Donnington (1510 - 20 December 1561), the only child of John Donnington (d.1544) of Stoke Newington by Elizabeth Pye. For Margaret Donnington, Countess of Bath, see her will, dated 10 December 1561 and proved 18 February 1562, TNA PROB 11/45/55; the *ODNB* entry for the Kitson family; and the entry for her at:

http://www.tudorwomen.com/?page_id=669

By Margaret Donnington the testator had a son and four daughters:

* **Sir Thomas Kitson** (1540-1603), born after the death of his father. He married firstly, in 1557, Jane Paget (d.1558), the daughter of William Paget (1505/6–1563), 1st Baron Paget. He married secondly, ‘at Kenninghall Palace in December 1560 under the auspices of the duchess of Norfolk’, Elizabeth Cornwallis (1546/7–1628), the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19–1604) of Brome (whose eldest son and heir purchased Oxford’s lease of the mansion of Fisher’s Folly). See the will of Sir Thomas Cornwallis, TNA PROB 11/105/106.

Sir Thomas Kitson (1540-1603) was responsible for the secret marriage, in 1577, of his nephew, William Bouchier (1557 – 12 July 1623), 3rd Earl of Bath, to Mary Cornwallis (see below). From the *ODNB*:

Kitson's efforts were not always crowned with success. In 1577 he had taken advantage of a visit from his young nephew William, fourth earl of Bath, then an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, to engineer his marriage to Mary Cornwallis, his wife's youngest sister. The marriage ceremony was performed late at night and the couple duly bedded. All seemed well until the young man returned to Cambridge and declared his delight in his new bride to his tutor. His mother was summoned to Cambridge, shut the bridegroom with her in her chamber, and, after what was evidently a scene worthy of her own mother, Margaret, dispatched him far from Hengrave. Although the marriage was judged to be valid, it appears eventually to have been set aside on grounds of disparagement, arising from Mary Cornwallis's Catholicism. Nevertheless, to her family and especially to Kitson, who acknowledged that the marriage had been of his contriving, she remained the rightful countess of Bath, receiving a handsome bequest of £300 under Sir Thomas Kitson's will and an annuity of £20 from her sister in 1626, which she was able to enjoy until her own death in 1627.

Sir Thomas Kitson was the subject of interrogatories put to Charles Arundel by the authorities in early January 1581 in connection with allegations made by Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard against Oxford at that time:

What papers and printings did you and the Lord Henry burn together? What did you at Sir Thomas Kitson's, and whether did you hear any Mass there, and whether did you burn any writings there?

To which Charles Arundel responded:

Other errand had we none at Sir Thomas Kitson's than to dine, and I some business with Sir Thomas Cornwallis.

See TNA SP 12/151/47, ff. 105-6 and TNA SP/151/48, ff. 107-8.

* **Frances Kitson** (buried 4 April 1586), who married firstly her stepbrother, John Bouchier (1529 – 28 February 1557), Lord Fitzwarin, son of John Bouchier (c.1499 - 10 February 1561), 2nd Earl of Bath, by his second wife, Eleanor Manners (buried 16 September 1547), by whom she had a son, William Bouchier (1557 – 12 July 1623), 3rd Earl of Bath, who succeeded his grandfather, the 2nd Earl of Bath, and married firstly, in a secret marriage at night, Mary Cornwallis (d.1627), the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (see above). William Bouchier, 3rd Earl of Bath, married secondly, on 7 August 1583, Elizabeth Russell (d. 24 March 1605), second daughter of Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford. For the will of Mary Cornwallis, see TNA PROB 11/151/729.

Frances Kitson's first husband, Lord Fitzwarin, died in the lifetime of his father, and after his death, Frances Kitson married, about September 1557, William Barnaby of Great Saxham, Suffolk, 'land agent to the Earl of Bath, which marriage gave great offence to her friends'. See Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. II, (London: St Catharine Press, 1912), pp. 16-18, and Vol. V, (London: St Catharine Press, 1926), p. 511. For William Barnaby, see Taylor, Martyn, *A-Z of Bury St Edmunds*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2016), at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=dWjWDAAAQBAJ&pg=PT130>

For the will of Frances Kitson, dated 1 March 1586 and proved 16 April 1586, see TNA PROB 11/69/188. For the will of Mary Cornwallis, see TNA PROB 11/151/729. For the will of John Bouchier, 2nd Earl of Bath, proved 22 April 1561, see TNA PROB 11/44/139. For the will of William Bouchier, 3rd Earl of Bath, proved 25 September 1623, see TNA PROB 11/142/325.

* **Katherine Kitson** (d. by 10 December 1561), who married Sir John Spencer (1524-1586) of Althorp, Northamptonshire, only son of Sir William Spencer (d. 22 June 1532) and Susan Knightley. See the will of Sir William Spencer, TNA PROB 11/24/12.

By Sir John Spencer, Katherine Kitson had four sons and eight daughters. See Collins, Arthur, *The Peerage of England*, Vol. II, Part I, (London: R. Gosling and T. Wotton, 1735), p. 229 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ITw-AAAACAAJ&pg=PA229>

Three of the daughters of Sir John Spencer and Katherine Kitson, (Elizabeth Spencer (1552-1618), wife of George Carey (26 February 1548 - 8 September 1603), 2nd Baron Hunsdon; Anne Spencer, Lady Mounteagle and Compton, and later Countess of Dorset; and Alice Spencer, wife of Ferdinando Stanley, 5th Earl of Derby), were praised by the poet Edmund Spenser as 'Phyllis, Charillis, and sweet Amaryllis' in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1595).

For the children of Katherine Kitson and Sir John Spencer, see also Gage, John, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave in Suffolk*, (London: James Carpenter, 1822), p. 109 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=xMpcAAAacAAJ&pg=PA109>

* **Dorothy Kitson** (1531 - 2 May 1577) who married firstly Sir Thomas Pakington (d. 2 June 1571), the son of Robert Pakington (1489-1536), great-uncle of Humphrey Martyn, the addressee of the *Langham Letter* describing Leicester's entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in the summer of 1575. See the will of Robert Pakington, TNA PROB 11/27/46.

Dorothy Kitson married secondly Sir Thomas Tasburgh (c.1554-1602), for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/tasburgh-thomas-1554-1602>

* **Anne Kitson**, who married Sir William Spring (d. 3 February 1600?) of Pakenham, Suffolk, son and heir of Sir John Spring (d. 12 August 1547) by Dorothy Waldegrave (buried 10 April 1564?), and grandson of the wealthy clothier, Thomas Spring (d.1523) of Lavenham, Suffolk (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/21/179). For the will of Sir John Spring, see TNA PROB 11/32/430. For the will of Dorothy (nee Waldegrave) Spring, see TNA PROB 11/47/337. See also Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 641-2.

By Sir William Spring, Anne Kitson had a daughter, Anne Spring (d. 7 May 1600), who married Thomas Hinson (c.1551-1614), both of whom are mentioned in the will of Frances Kitson, TNA PROB 11/69/188. See Collins, Arthur, *The English Baronetage*, Vol. II, (London: Thomas Wotton, 1741), p. 242 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=l2QUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA242>

See also the History of Parliament entry for Thomas Hinson at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/hinson-thomas-1551-1614>

b. c.1551, 1 2nd s. of Thomas Hinson (d.1570), yeoman, of Fordham, Cambs. 2 educ. Christ's, Camb. 1567, BA 1571, MA (Corpus, Camb.) 1574; incorp. Oxf. 1577.3 m. by 1579, 4 Anne (d. 7 May 1600), da. of Sir William Spring of Pakenham, Suff., 5s. (3 d.v.p.) 9da. (4 d.v.p.) d. 18 Apr. 1614.5

On 19 February 1583, Sir William Spring purchased Oxford's manor of Earls Hall (see TNA C 54/1171, Part 25).

For Sir William Spring, see also the Wikipedia article edited by the author of this website at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Spring_of_Lavenham

After the testator's death, Margaret Donnington married secondly, by settlement dated 10 November 1541, Sir Richard Long (d. 29 September 1546), of Shingay, Cambridgeshire, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/31/302.

By Sir Richard Long, Margaret Donnington had a son and three daughters:

-Henry Long (d. 15 April 1573), godson of Henry VIII, and first husband of Dorothy Clerke (d.1618), the stepdaughter of Lord Burghley's long-time servant, Roger Alford (c.1530-1580). See the will of Roger Alford, TNA PROB 11/62/442, and the will of Henry Long, TNA PROB 11/55/169.

-Jane Long.

-Katherine Long, who married Edward Fisher of Ichington, Warwickshire.

-Mary Long.

After the death of Sir Richard Long, Margaret Donnington, married thirdly, in December 1548, as his third wife, John Bouchier (c.1499 - 10 February 1561), 2nd Earl of Bath, by whom she had two daughters:

-Susan Bouchier.

-Bridget Bouchier.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For Henry Payne (d. 25 July 1568), see his will, TNA PROB 11/51/39, and:

<https://minerdescent.com/2013/02/14/william-payne-sr/>

For his role in proving the testator's will, see Copinger, W.A., *The Manors of Suffolk*, Vol. 7 (Manchester: Taylor, Garnett, Evans & Co. Ltd., 1911), pp. 523 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924092579600#page/n65/mode/2up>

Vicesimo secundo die mensis Septembris Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingentesimo quadagesimo In eccl{es}ia Cathedrali diui Pauli London Coram mag{ist}ro will{el}mo

Cooke legum doctore venerabilis viri magistri Richardi Gwent legum Doctoris Curie Prerogative Custodis siue commissarij Surrogato In persona(?) mei Thome Argall notarij publici actorum scribe et Registerij Magister Iohannes Talkarne exhibuit Procuratori suum litteratorie pro domina margareta Kytsonne Relicta et administratrice bonorum Thome Kytsonne militis Defuncti et fecit se partem pro eadem et exhibuit quandam scripturam voluntatem dicti domini Thome in se continentem de et super certis terris tenementis et hereditamentis eiusdem domini Thome in scriptis redactis et allegavit quod idem dominus Thomas Kytsonne in sua sana memoria existens voluit reliquit et disposuit dicte domine margarete Kytsonne prout in dicta scriptura continetur et quod dicta scriptura erat facta de mandato et expresso consensu dicti domini thome Kytsonne et coram eo in eius vita perfecta et per dictum dominum Thomam Kytsonne eidem domine Margarete pro facto ipsius domini Thomas tradita et Deliberata Cuius tenor sequitur et est talis.

[=On the twenty-second day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fortieth in the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul in London before Master William Cooke, Doctor of the Laws, Surrogate of the worshipful Master Richard Gwent, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the person [sic for 'presence?'] of me, Thomas Argall, notary public and scribe of the deeds and of the Register, Master John Talkarne exhibited his letters of proxy for Lady Margaret Kitson, relict and administratrix of the goods of Thomas Kitson, knight, deceased, and made himself a party for the same, and exhibited a certain writing containing in it the will of the said Sir Thomas of and concerning certain lands, tenements and hereditaments of the same Sir Thomas reduced to writing, and alleged that the same Sir Thomas Kitson, being in sound mind, willed, left and disposed to the said Lady Margaret Kitson as is contained in the said writing, and that the said writing was made at the command and with the express consent of the said Sir Thomas Kitson, and was read through before him during his lifetime, and by the said Sir Thomas Kitson was entrusted and delivered to the same Lady Margaret for the deed of the same Sir Thomas, the tenor of which follows and is thus:

LM: Voluntas Thomae Kitson militis

This is the last will of me, Sir Thomas Kitson, knight, made and declared the 11th day of September in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and forty and in the 32nd year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry the 8th concerning the disposition of my manors, lands and tenements and hereditaments:

First I will and give unto Margaret, my dear beloved wife, my manor of Hengrave in Suffolk with th' appurtenances, and all my lands and tenements in Hengrave, and also my manor of Feltones with th' appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the same manors, lands and tenements to the same Margaret for term of her life, these being witness of this my last will: John Crofts, esquire, Thomas Wendy, Doctor of Physic, Henry Payne, gentleman, Nicholas Lunne, Robert Watson(?) and other. By me,

John Croftes. Per me Henricum Payne. Per me Nicolaum Lunne. Per me thomam Wendy,
per me Edmundu {m} Croftes.