

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 20 June 1544 and proved 27 October 1544, of Lawrence Saunders of Harrington, 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.1541?), father of the murdered George Saunders, see TNA PROB 11/28/488.

The testator was the grandfather of Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591), Lord Chancellor of England and one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites (see below).

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the second son of Edward Saunders of Harrington by Joan Makerneys, the daughter of Richard and Felice Makerneys of Wolfhampcote. See the pedigrees of Saunders in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire Made in 1564 and 1618-19*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), pp. 44-5 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/miscellaneageneal12unse#page/n177/mode/2up>

Testator's siblings

For the testator's siblings, see the will, TNA PROB 11/22/481, of his eldest brother, Thomas Saunders (d.1528), who married Margaret Cave, see TNA PROB 11/22/481. After the death of Thomas Saunders, Margaret Cave married Robert Chauntrell, who witnessed the testator's will below.

MARRIAGE AND ISSUE

The testator married Alice Brokesby, the daughter of Robert Brokesby (b. c. 1450, d. 28 March 1531), esquire, of Shoby, Leicestershire, and his wife, Alice Shirley (c.1453-c.1500), by whom he had two sons and three daughters:

* **Thomas Saunders** of Haringworth, who married Mary Hastings, but had no issue by her. In Nicolas, Nicholas Harris, *Testamenta Vetusta*, Vol. I, (London: Nichols and Son, 1826), p. 373, Mary Hastings is said to have been the daughter of Sir Richard Hastings, son of William Hastings (c.1430-1483), 1st Baron Hastings. However it seems more generally accepted that she and her sister, Elizabeth Hastings (c.1504-1588), who married John Beaumont (died c.1556) of Thringston and Gracedieu, Leicestershire, were the daughters of Sir Richard Hastings' brother, Sir William Hastings (1470-1514), and his wife, Jane Sheffield (1474-16 March 1528), the daughter of Robert Sheffield (c.1430-1502) and his wife, Jane Lounde.

From the entry for John Beaumont (died c.1556) in the *ODNB*:

Elizabeth, whom he had married by 1540, was the daughter of William Hastings, younger son of William Hastings, first Baron Hastings, and uncle of George Hastings, first earl of Huntingdon and steward of the honour of Leicester.

The dramatist Francis Beaumont (1584/5-1616) was the grandson of Elizabeth Hastings and John Beaumont (died c.1556). See the History of Parliament biography of John Beaumont (died c.1556) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/beauumont-john-1508-5864>

See also Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Leicester in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1870), p. 26, which states that Jane Sheffield, the daughter of Sir Robert Sheffield, was the fourth wife of Ralph Shirley of Shirley and Staunton, Leicestershire, and that after his death she married William Hastings.

Sir Ralph Shirley was the brother of Alice (nee Shirley) Brokesby, who was the mother of Alice Saunders and the grandmother of Queen Elizabeth's Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 28-9, and Vol. I, pp. 329-30:

Alice Shirley married Robert Brokesby (or Brooksby), Esq., of Shoby, Leicestershire, son of William Brokesby, Esq., of Shoby, Leicestershire. They had two sons, Anthony, Esq., and Richard, and one daughter, Alice (wife of Laurence Saunders). Robert Brokesby, Esq., died testate 28 March 1531, and was buried in Saxelby, Leicestershire.

* **William Saunders** (d.1582), for whom see his will, TNA PROB 11/67/61.

* **Alice Saunders** (born c.1515), who married William Hatton (d.1546) of Holdenby, and was the mother of Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591), Lord Chancellor of England and one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites. See the pedigree of Hatton in Metcalfe, *supra*, p. 27 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofnor00harvrich#page/26/mode/2up>

Sir Christopher Hatton's sister, Dorothy Hatton, married, as her second husband, William Underhill (d.1570) of Idlicote, Warwickshire. In 1567 William Underhill purchased New Place, the second-largest dwelling in Stratford upon Avon. After William Underhill's death in 1570, the wardship of his son, William Underhill (d.1597), was purchased by Sir Christopher Hatton. In Easter term 1597, William Underhill (d.1597) sold New Place to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. For the will of William Underhill (d.1570), see TNA PROB 11/52/126. For the will of Dorothy (nee Hatton) Newport Underhill, see TNA PROB 11/52/36. The family of the testator's nephew, Robert Saunders (for whose will see TNA PROB 11/43/474), was also connected by marriage to the Underhill family: by her second marriage to Anthony Carlton (d. 18 January 1576), Robert Saunders' widow, Joyce (need Goodwin) Saunders, had a daughter, Bridget Carleton, who married Sir Hercules Underhill (1581-1658), son of William Underhill (d.1597). Sir Hercules Underhill confirmed the sale of New Place to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon in Michaelmas term 1602. See the Wikipedia articles on Sir Hercules Underhill and Elizabeth Hatton edited by the author of this summary.

* **Audrey Saunders**, who married William Starkey (d.1555), esquire, of Whitley, Warwickshire. For the will of William Starkey (d.1555), see TNA PROB 11/37/321.

* **Anne Saunders** (c.1512-1565), who married four times, firstly to Bartholomew Tate (d.1528x33) of Laxton and Delapre, Northamptonshire (for his will, see TNA PROB 11/24, f. 185); secondly, to Sir Thomas Longueville (d.1536) of Wolverton, Buckinghamshire (for his burial on 4 October 1536 see Burn, John Southerden, *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis, The History of Parish Registers in England*, (London: Edward Suter, 1829), p. 13); thirdly to Andrew Wadham, a younger son of Sir Nicholas Wadham (b. c.1472, d. 5 March 1542) of Merrifield near Ilton, Somerset; and fourthly (some sources say firstly) to a husband surnamed Befford. See the pedigree in Metcalfe, *supra*, p. 45, and:

<http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.genealogy.medieval/2006-08/msg01151.html>.

The testator is also said in the pedigree in Metcalfe, *supra*, to have had another daughter, Dorothy Saunders, who married George Belgrave, esquire, of Leicestershire. However a daughter named Dorothy is not mentioned in the will below.

See the Saunders and Tate pedigrees in Metcalfe, *supra*, pp. 45, 198-9; and Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 402.

RM: T{estamentum} Laurentij Saunders

[f. 126r] In the name of God, Amen. I, Lawrence Saunders of Harrington in the county of Northampton, esquire, being of perfect and whole mind, the twentieth day of June in the 36th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Henry the 8th by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland [+King], Defender of the Faith, and in earth of the Church of England and Ireland the Supreme Head, and in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred forty and four, make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God and to Our Lady Saint Mary and to all the holy company of heaven, and my body to be buried in the parish church of Rothwell or else in the parish church of Harrington within the county of Northampton, without pomp or pride to be had in the same according to the discretion of mine executors;

Item, I bequeath for my mortuary according to the laws of this realm;

Item, I bequeath to Alice, my wife, all my plate and household stuff;

Also I bequeath to my said wife, to Thomas Saunders, my son and heir, and to William Saunders, my youngest son, all my neat, sheep, horse, mares, foals and all other my cattle equally to be divided immediately after my death by th' advice of my said wife and Master Andrew Wadham, my son-in-law, and John Buttlyn of Holwell;

Item, I bequeath to the reparations of the church of Rothwell twenty shillings;

Also I bequeath to the church of Harrington (blank), and to the church of Arthingworth (blank), and to the church of Desborough (blank);

Also I bequeath to the church of Braybrooke (blank), and to the church of Little Bowden (blank), and to the church of Much Bowden (blank);

Item, I bequeath to the church of Langton in the county of Leicester (blank);

Item, I bequeath to the church of Shankton in the said county of Leicester (blank);

Item, I bequeath to my daughter Longueville five marks, and to my daughter Audrian fifty shillings, and to my daughter, Alice, forty shillings;

Also I will that my son, Thomas Saunders, shall have, occupy and enjoy all my interest and term which I have in the manor and township of Harrington, with all closes, meadows, leasows and pastures thereto belonging and other profits and commodities according to certain covenants of indentures of marriage made between William

Hastings, esquire, on the one party and me, the said Lawrence Saunders, on the other party;

And the residue of all my goods and chattels shall be ordered and disposed by the said Alice, my wife, Thomas and William;

And to perform this my last will and testament well and truly according to the true intent thereof I make, constitute and ordain the said Alice, my wife, Thomas Saunders, my son and heir, and William Saunders, my youngest son, my executors;

Dated the day and year above-written, these being witnesses: Robert Chaunterell, esquire, William Hatton, gentleman, Richard Dykyns, clerk, Sir Robert Dryver, parson of Harrington, John Godfrey, clerk, and Gregory Spenser.

RM: Codicillus d*omi*ni test*ament*i

Memorandum, that the said Laurence Saunders immediately after making and declaring of his said testament, being of good and perfect remembrance, willed and bequeathed to Alice, his wife, all such goods and chattels as were reckoned, accounted or known to be hers in the lifetime of the said Lawrence Saunders. Witness and present hearing the premises, Thomas Saunders, William Saunders and Robert Chauntrell, with other moe. William Saunders.

RM: Renunciac*io* Thome Saunders et Will*el*mi Saunders ex*ecutorum*

Vicesimo quinto die mensis Octobris Anno D*omi*ni mill*es*imo quingentesimo quadragesimo quarto coram d*omi*no in edibus suis &c Comp*ara*verunt p*er*sonal*ite*r Thomas Saunders et Will*el*mus Saunders Executores nominati in test*ament*o suprascripto ac ex certis causis &c oneri Exequuc*io*nis testame*n*ti h*uius*mo*di* expresse renunciarunt quam quidem Renunciac*io*nem d*omin*us ad eor*um* petic*io*nem admisit &c

[=On the twenty-fifth day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred forty-fourth Thomas Saunders and William Saunders, executors named in the above-written testament, appeared personally before the Lord in his house etc., and for certain causes etc. expressly renounced the burden of the execution of the same testament, which same renunciation the Lord admitted at their petition etc.]

Probatum fuit suprascriptum Test*amentu*m coram Domino apud London vicesimo septimo Die mensis Octobris Anno D*omi*ni mill*es*imo quingentesimo quadragesimo quarto Ac approbatum et insinuatum Comissaq*ue* fuit administrac*io* omniu*m* et singu*lorum* bonorum iuriu*m* et creditorum antedictum defunct*um* et eius

testamentum qual{ite}rcunq{ue} concernen{tium} Alicie Rel{ic}t{e} et executrici in h{uius}mo{d}i testamento etiam nominat{e} De bene et fideliter administrand{o} eadem Ac de pleno et fideli Inventario omniu{m} et sing{u}lorum bonorum iuriu{m} et creditor{um} d{ic}t{i} defuncti conficiend{o} Et secundo die post festum Sancti Martini Episcopi [f. 126v] prox{imum} futur{um} exhibend{o} Necnon de plano et vero comp{ot}o inde Reddend{o} ad s{an}c{t}a dei Eu{a}ngelia in p{er}sona xpoferi Robynson notarij publici procuratoris d{ic}t{e} Relicte et ex{ecutri}c{is} in hac parte sufficienter et l{egi}time constitut{i} iurat{e}

[The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at London on the twenty-seventh day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred forty-fourth, and probated and entered, and administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits whatsoever concerning the beforesaid deceased and his testament to Alice, relict and executrix also named in the same testament, sworn on the Holy Gospels in the person of Christopher Robynson, notary public, sufficiently and lawfully constituted proctor of the said relict and executrix in that behalf, to well and faithfully administer the same, and to prepare a full and faithful inventory of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, and to exhibit [+it] on the second day after the feast of Saint Martin the Bishop next to come, and also to render a plain and true account thereof.]