

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the nuncupative last will and testament, dated 5 October 1552 and proved 5 November 1552, of John Ryther. The testator served as controller of the household of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford. See the Countess' will, TNA PROB 11/27, ff. 84-6:

*Item, I give and bequeath to John Ryther, my controller of household, 2 pots of silver parcel-gilt which I lately bought of Master Lucas, weighing 64 ounces one quarter, and also 2 bowls of silver parcel-gilt of the value of £11 6s 8d, and for lack of the same bowls, he to have of my gift £11 6s 8d in ready money.*

At the time the Countess made her will, the testator was married to his first wife, Margaret, and had a daughter, Elizabeth, and a son, John:

*Item, I give and bequeath to Margaret, his wife, my trussing bed of blue velvet and crimson, my counterpoint of yellow Turkey satin and curtain of yellow sarsenet to the same; item, 2 featherbeds, 2 bolsters, 2 pillows, 2 pillow-beres, 2 pair of sheets and one pair of fustians.*

*Item, I give to my god-daughter, Elizabeth Ryther, five pounds in ready money, and to John Ryther, her brother, other five pounds in ready money.*

By the time the testator made the nuncupative will below Margaret had died, and the testator had several children by a second wife, Mary.

The testator's mother, Margaret Ryther (d.1542?), had been for many years in the service of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, as evidenced by this bequest in the Countess' will:

*Item, I give and bequeath to Margaret Ryther th' elder, for the true and faithful service that she of long continuance hath done to me, one hundred marks in ready money, 2 salts of silver and gilt with a cover and a Garter in the midst of them, weighing 26 ounces; item, 2 of my best featherbeds not before bequeathed; item, 4 pair of my best sheets, 2 bolsters, 2 pillows, one long, and 2 mattresses, 2 counterpoints, the one having the pictures of Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter and Saint Giles of counterfeit arras, used to be laid upon my bed, the other like unto the same of counterfeit arras; item, 2 pair of fustians; item, all my tappets of tapestry of damask-work, the ground green, with the Garter and my Lord's arms in them, used to be hanged in my chamber; item, 2 brass pots of 3 gallons, 2 small pans of brass, and one garnish of counterfeit vessel largest of pewter.*

For the will of the testator's mother, Margaret Ryther (d.1542?), see TNA PROB 11/29, ff. 63-4.

According to Higges, the testator's father had been in the service of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, although the testator's father is not mentioned in the latter's

will, and the testator himself had served as controller of the household of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. See Higgs, Laquita M., *Godliness and Governance in Tudor Colchester* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 49-50, available online:

*More obviously a protégé of [the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of] Oxford than were either [John] Lucas or [Anthony] Stapleton was John Ryther, who served with Lucas in Edward VI's first Parliament in 1547. There is no indication that Oxford dictated the selection of Lucas and Ryther, but it is quite possible that Oxford, as an active supporter of the Protestant Reformation, wanted the right people elected and used his influence to get them elected. Ryther's father had been a servant to the thirteenth earl, and Ryther began his service to the de Veres as comptroller of the household of Elizabeth, dowager countess, and after her death, comptroller of the sixteenth earl's household. Probably the Oxford connections helped bring Ryther to the office of cofferer of the household of Prince Edward and then of the royal household, but even earlier Ryther would have come to the attention of Colchester when he was appointed by Thomas Cromwell to report on the alleged embezzlement by one of the abbot's servants of the jewelry of Colchester abbey. Ryther served only in the 1547 Parliament for Colchester, as he died before another Parliament was elected.*

It would appear that the testator and his parents were members of the family of Sir Ralph Ryther (b. about 1451, d. 2 October 1520) of Yorkshire, and were thus family connections of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, although the precise relationships have not yet been determined.

Sir Ralph Ryther (b. about 1451, d. 2 October 1520), was the second of the six sons of Sir William Ryther (d. 19 July 1475) and his wife, Eleanor Fitzwilliam, a descendant of Geoffrey Plantagenet (1113-1151). Sir Ralph Ryther married, firstly Katherine, the daughter of Sir Robert Constable of Flamborough, Yorkshire, and by her had two sons, Robert (d.1508?) and Thomas, and a daughter Eleanor. Sir Ralph Ryther married, secondly, Maud Percy, the daughter of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and by her had a son, Henry, and a daughter, Elizabeth. His status as a powerful member of the Yorkshire gentry was confirmed by the marriages he arranged for his children. His elder son, Robert (d.1508?), was contracted to marry Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir William Gascoigne of Gawthorpe and his wife Alice Frogneil. They were children, and the marriage terminated with the death of young Robert Ryther, probably around 1508 or so. Little Elizabeth Gascoigne was then married (by 1510) to Robert Redman (d.1545), the son and heir of Edward Redman, who shared the lordship of Harewood Castle with Sir Ralph Ryther. The younger son, Thomas Ryther, then became his father's heir and a marriage was arranged for him by marriage settlement dated 2 April 1510 with Agnes, one of the younger sisters of Henry, 7<sup>th</sup> Lord Scrope of Bolton.

For information in the foregoing paragraph, see Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 2004), p. 623; the entry for John Scrope (1437/8–1498), 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Scrope of Bolton in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, and his will, TNA PROB 11/11, ff. 211-12; the entry for Henry Scrope (b. about 1468, d. 1506), 6<sup>th</sup> Baron Scrope of Bolton, in *The Complete Peerage*, p.

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546; the pedigrees of Gascoigne, Redman, Scrope and Ryder in Norcliffe, Charles Best, ed., *The Visitation of Yorkshire in the Years 1563 and 1563* by William Flower, Vol. 16, (London: Harleian Society, 1881), pp. 136, 280, 367, available online; and <http://newsgroups.derkeiler.com/Archive/Soc/soc.genealogy.medieval/2006-08/msg00722.html>.

LM: Testamentum Iohannis Ryder Armigeri

Memorandum: That the 5<sup>th</sup> day of October in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fifty and two John Ryther, esquire, & Cofferer of the King's Majesty's most honourable Household, declared and appointed to be contained in his will these articles following, that is to wit:

First that his five youngest children (besides his son and heir), viz., Henry, Edmund, Mary, Anne and Margaret, shall have five hundred pounds in ready money, that is to say, every of them a hundred pound apiece, and if any of them die, then the survivor to have his part or her part equally divided between them, and the men-children's portion to be delivered to them at th' age of 18 years, and the daughters to have their part at their age of 15 years or days of marriage;

Item, that his two sons, Henry and Edmund, to be preferred to the two wards of the said John Ryther, Dorothy Pycher and Margery Pycher, if they can agree in marriage, and if they cannot, then the said two sons to have the benefit of the marriages [+of] the same wards;

Item, that his executors shall take the profits of his lordship of Baltonsborough in the county of Somerset for the space of 14 years immediately after his decease towards the preferment of his testament and last will;

Item, maketh &(?) ordaineth Mary, his wife, John Wiseman of Much Canfield th' elder, esquire, William Pomisett, esquire, Anthony Brigham, gentleman, and Edmund Felton, gentleman, his executors, & giveth to every of them for their pains £6 13s 4d apiece.

Probatum fuit testamentum coram domino Cantuariensis Archiepiscopo apud London quinto die Mensis Nouembris Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo secundo Iuramento Marie Relicte et executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate Cui comissa fuit administracio omnium bonorum &c de bene &c Ac de pleno Inuentario &c exhibendo Ad sancta dei Euangelia Iurate Reseruata potestate alijs Executoribus cum veneri[n]t admissuris Iohanne Wiseman executore superius nominato Sexto die mensis predicti renuntiante

[=The testament was proved before the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury at London on the fifth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred

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fifty-second by the oath of Mary, relict and executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all the goods etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and to exhibit a full inventory etc., with power reserved to the other executors when they shall have come to be admitted, John Wiseman, executor named above, renouncing on the sixth day of the month aforesaid.]