

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 27 May 1557 and proved 13 December 1558, of Sir Robert Rochester (d. 28 November 1557), who 'may have been brought up in the household of the earls of Oxford'.

### ***TESTATOR'S CONNECTION TO THE EARLS OF OXFORD***

The testator's grandfather, Robert Rochester (d. 15 May 1508), esquire, was comptroller of the household of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. See Ross, James, *John de Vere, Thirteenth Earl of Oxford (1442-1513)*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 109, 183, 235.

See also ERO T/B 124/1, 'Purchase and provision of all victuals by Robert Rochester, Comptroller of the household of the very powerful lord, John Earl of Oxford from the first day of January in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of King Henry the seventh [1506/7] to the last day of January in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the said King [1507/8], viz, for one whole year'.

Another connection was through the Montgomery family. The testator's grandfather is said to have been an executor of the will of Sir Thomas Montgomery (see TNA C 1/366/56), and in the will was bequeathed £20 and a cup of silver gilt. Thomas Montgomery's brother, John Montgomery, esquire, was arrested on 12 February 1462, charged with treason in complicity with John de Vere (23 April 1408 – 26 February 1462), 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, in a plot to kill Edward IV. John Montgomery was beheaded on Tower Hill 23 February 1462. The Earl was beheaded on 26 February. See Ross, *supra*, pp. 39, 42, and Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. III, p. 262 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=8JcbV309c5UC&pg=RA2-PA262>

For the will of Sir Thomas Montgomery dated 28 July 1489 and proved January 1495, see TNA PROB 11/10/327, and King, H.W., 'Ancient Wills', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, Vol. III, (Colchester: Essex and West Suffolk Gazette, 1865), pp. 168-75 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ZUY-AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA167>

On 31 December 1507, the testator's grandfather was a witness to the will of Sir Robert Tyrell, another servant of the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl. See TNA PROB 11/15/683. For the career of Sir Robert Tyrrell, see Ross, *supra*, pp. 198-9.

According to the History of Parliament, the testator was granted lands in Stapleford Abbots by John de Vere (c.1482-1540) 15<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. He was receiver to John de

Vere (1516 – 3 August 1562), 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, and was appointed bailiff of the Earl's manor of Lavenham. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/rochester-sir-robert-1500-57>

*b. c.1500, yr. s. of John Rochester of Terling by Griselda, da. and event. coh. of Walter Writtle of Bobbingworth. unm. KB 29 Sept. 1553; KG nom. 23 Apr. 1557.1*

#### *Offices Held*

*Member, council of 16th Earl of Oxford in 1542, receiver by 1542, supervisor 1546-7; member, household of Princess Mary by Apr. 1547, comptroller by May 1550. . . .*

#### *Biography*

*The Rochester family had long been settled in Essex. Robert Rochester's father died young and although his mother had taken a second husband, Thomas West, before the death of his grandfather and namesake in May 1508, and a third, Edward Waldegrave, by June 1509, it is possible that he was brought up in the household of the earls of Oxford. The elder Robert Rochester had been comptroller to the 13th Earl and in the late 1530s the 15th Earl gave the younger man land in Stapleford Abbots, Essex, which had belonged to Wivenhoe chantry. It was probably from the 16th Earl, whose receiver Rochester had become by 1542, that he received the bailiffship of Lavenham, Suffolk.<sup>3</sup> Rochester was supervisor of Oxford's lands in 1546 but by the following April he had transferred to the service of Princess Mary. . . .*

See also the will, dated 30 May 1537 and proved 6 November 1537, TNA PROB 11/27/144, of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, second wife of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, in which the testator is bequeathed 10 marks:

*Item, I give to Robert Rochester, gentleman, for his good service unto me done, ten marks in ready money.*

The testator was also connected to the Earls of Oxford through the marriage of his sister, Lora Rochester, to John Waldegrave (c.1494 – 6 October 1543), esquire, by whom she had a son, Robert Waldegrave, who married the stepdaughter of Henry Golding (d.1576?), brother-in-law of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, and steward of his household. See the will of John Waldegrave, TNA PROB 11/29/459, and the will of Henry Golding, TNA PROB 11/59/98.

#### **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

As noted above, the testator was the grandson of Robert Rochester (d. 15 May 1508). A Latin will of 'Robert Rochester, senior, of Terling' dated 29 October 1503, may be the will of the testator's grandfather. See Essex Record Office D/ACR 1/76/3.

The testator was the son of John Rochester (d.1506?) and Grissel Writtle (d.1547). For the testator's mother and siblings, see the nuncupative will, dated 18 May 1547 and proved 22 June 1547, of the testator's mother, Grissel Writtle Rochester West Waldegrave, TNA PROB 11/31/550.

In the will below, the testator mentions his 'sister Rice' [=Ryce]. She appears to have been his half sister, Margery Waldegrave, who married, as his second wife, Robert Ryce (before 1487 – 10 August 1544), esquire, of Preston, Essex. See the will of the testator's mother, *supra*.

### **TESTATOR'S OFFICES**

The memorandum to the will below states that the testator bequeathed the office of keeper of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford's park of Lavenham and the office of bailiff of Lavenham to his nephew, Sir Edward Waldegrave (d. 1 September 1561) of Borley, Essex, on condition that the testator's sister be permitted to reside in the Lodge in Lavenham park, and that annuities be paid to ten of the testator's servants:

*And also where I have a patent of the right honourable John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, for the keeping of the park of Lavenham and th' herbage of the same, and also the bailiwick of the town of Lavenham aforeaid, I give and bequeath to my loving [f. 118r] nephew, Sir Edward Waldegrave, knight, all that my right, title and interest which I have of and in the said patent under this condition, that he, the same Sir Edward Waldegrave, his executors and assigns, shall suffer my sister Rice [=Ryce] to dwell in one part of the Lodge of the said park of Lavenham, and also shall pay or cause to be paid to such persons whose names hereafter ensueth such yearly annuities by year during their lives hereafter expressed, that is to say, to William Berners, five pounds; Anthony Trappes, four pounds; William Markham, four pounds; Gregory More, four marks; John Abell, five pounds; John Barbor, forty shillings; William Steven, forty shillings; Thomas English, forty shillings; Robert Harvey, forty shillings; and to old Dale of Colchester six & twenty shillings & eight pence of good and lawful money of England.*

In his own will, TNA 11/44/318, Sir Edward Waldegrave bequeathed his entire interest in these two offices to Sir Robert Rochester's servants:

*And whereas he had by the gift or devise of Sir Robert Rochester, knight, the patent and interest of th' office of Lavenham park and the bailiwick out of the which he would certain annuities to be paid to divers of the said Sir Robert Rochester's servants during the interest of that same patent, as by the last will and testament of the said Sir Robert Rochester plainly appeareth, he then gave and bequeathed his whole interest and patent thereof unto the said Sir Robert Rochester's servants to whom the said Sir Robert Rochester had willed any annuity, right or interest therein or of the same to the intent every man might recover his several duty therein or thereunto to every of them given or bequeathed.*

Despite the fact that Sir Edward Waldegrave clearly considered he could bequeath his interest in these two offices, the inquisition taken after the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford died in 1562 states that the Earl had granted the office of keeper of Lavenham Park to his servant, Robert Christmas (d.1584), on 10 December 1558, almost three years *prior* to Sir Edward Waldegrave's death. See TNA WARD 8/13, Part 23:

*And the foresaid late Earl by a certain deed of his sealed by his seal at arms & subscribed by his own hand dated the 10th day of December in the first year [=10 December 1558] of the reign of the Lady Elizabeth now Queen for & in consideration of good, true, & faithful service done & to be done to him by Robert Christmas, gentleman, gave & granted to the same Robert the keeping of his park called Lavenham park in the county of Suffolk with a certain house called the Lodge within the park aforesaid with herbage of 30 cows & 6 geldings, and appointed the said Robert keeper of his said park, to have & to hold to himself the said office with the foresaid herbage of 30 cows & 6 geldings with all profits & advantages to the same appertaining during the term of his life, to be occupied by himself or by his sufficient deputy, and the foresaid Earl also gave yearly £6 issuing & to issue of his manor of Lavenham with the appurtenances for term of his life for the exercise of the foresaid office, and the foresaid Earl also willed, if it might happen the foresaid annuity to be in arrears in part or in whole at any feast at which it ought to be paid, that it would be well allowed to the foresaid Robert & his assigns to enter & distrain in the foresaid manor with the appurtenances, & the distrains thus there taken licitly to carry off & detain until the foresaid annuity with the arrearages, if any have been, have been to the forenamed Robert & his assigns well & faithfully paid, as by the foresaid letters patents more fully appears.*

The inquisition also states that the Earl had granted the office of bailiff of the manor of Lavenham to Thomas Bacon (d.1577) two months after the Sir Edward Waldegrave's death. See WARD 8/13, Part 23:

*And the foresaid late Earl by a certain deed of his sealed by his seal at arms & subscribed by his own hand bearing date the penultimate day of October in the 3rd year [=30 October 1561] of the reign of the Lady Elizabeth now Queen for divers good and reasonable causes & considerations himself especially moving gave & granted to Thomas Bacon, gentleman, the office of bailiff or bailiwick of his manor of Lavenham in the county of Suffolk and of all & singular his lands, tenements, hereditaments, & possessions whatsoever within the foresaid manor & to the same manor in whatever manner belonging or appertaining, and made, ordained, & appointed him, Thomas Bacon, bailiff of the foresaid manor, to have, hold, enjoy, & exercise the foresaid office to the forenamed Thomas Bacon by himself or by his sufficient deputy or his sufficient deputies for & during the whole term of the natural life of him, Thomas, together with all & singular profits, commodities, advantages, & emoluments whatsoever to the same office in whatever manner belonging or appertaining and in so ample manner & form as Edward Glascock or any other or others for himself formerly has had, held, or enjoyed [+or] have had, held, or enjoyed, and the foresaid late Earl by his foresaid deed in consideration aforesaid gave & granted to the same Thomas Bacon*

*for the exercise of the foresaid office a certain annuity or yearly rent of £4 of lawful money of England issuing & to issue of the foresaid manor at two terms of the year, viz., at the feasts of the Annunciation of Blessed Mary the Virgin & Saint Michael the Archangel by equal portions, and also the second crop of the meadow of Lavenham aforesaid called the Lord's Meadow during the whole term of the natural life of himself, Thomas Bacon, and the foresaid late Earl by the foresaid deed granted that for non-payment of the said annuity or yearly rent it would be well allowed to the forenamed Thomas Bacon & his assigns to distrain in the foresaid manor of Lavenham, as by the same deed specified in the foresaid inquisition more plainly appears.*

For the will of Thomas Bacon (d.1577), Serjeant of the Acatry to Queen Mary, and bailiff of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's manor of Lavenham, see TNA PROB 11/59/473.

It thus appears that Sir Edward Waldegrave's bequest of these two offices did not take effect.

Concerning the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's servant, Robert Christmas, it should be noted that although the Earl appointed him as only one of six executors, in fact Robert Christmas was ultimately granted sole administration of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's will, the other five executors having refused to act for reasons which are unclear. Shortly after the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's death, Robert Christmas entered the service of the Queen's favourite, Robert Dudley, later Earl of Leicester, and the Queen granted Leicester the core lands of the Oxford earldom during the nine years of Oxford's minority.

For the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's executors, see also Green, Nina, 'The Fall of the House of Oxford', *Brief Chronicles*, Vol. I, (2009), pp. 41-96, available online as a pdf file at:

[https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp.../Green.Fall\\_of\\_House\\_Oxford.pdf](https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp.../Green.Fall_of_House_Oxford.pdf)

## ***OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL***

### ***Sir Richard Wilbraham***

For Sir Richard Wilbraham (by 1504-1558), see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/wilbraham-%28wilbram%29-richard-1504-58>

### ***Ralph Baines***

For the testator's executor, Ralph Baines (c.1504 – 18 November 1559), the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, see the Wikipedia entry at:

---

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph\\_Baines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Baines)

### ***Sir William Cordell***

For the testator's executor, Sir William Cordell (d.1581), see the *ODNB* entry and his will, TNA PROB 11/63/590. Sir William Cordell was one of five trustees appointed by Oxford in an indenture of 30 January 1575 prior to his departure on his continental tour. See ERO D/DRg2/25.

### ***Sir Edward Waldegrave***

For the testator's nephew and executor, Sir Edward Waldegrave (d. 1 September 1561) of Borley, Essex, see the *DNB* entry:

*Waldegrave, Sir Edward (1517?–1561), politician, born in 1516 or 1517, was the second son of John Waldegrave (d. 1543) of Borley in Essex, by his wife, Lora, daughter of Sir [sic] John Rochester of Essex, and sister of Sir Robert Rochester [q. v.] He was a descendant of Sir Richard Waldegrave [q. v.], speaker of the House of Commons. On the death of his father, on 6 Oct. 1543, Edward entered into possession of his estates at Borley. In 1 Edward VI (1547–8) he received a grant of the manor and rectory of West Haddon in Northamptonshire. He was attached to the Princess Mary's household, and on 29 Aug. 1551 was committed to the Fleet, with his uncle Sir Robert Rochester and Sir Francis Englefield [q. v.], for refusing to enforce the order of the privy council by preventing the celebration of mass at Mary's residence at Copt Hall, near Epping.*

Sir Edward Waldegrave was a Privy Councillor under Queen Mary, and died a prisoner in the Tower early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. For his will, dated 14 September 1559 and proved 23 September 1561, see TNA PROB 11/44/318.

### ***Reignold Hollingworth***

The testator's executor, Reignold Hollingworth, may have been the Reynold Hollingworth who was appointed executor of the will, dated 25 November 1546 and proved 24 January 1547, of Sir John Seyntclere. See TNA PROB 11/31/383.

### ***John Caryll***

For the testator's executor, John Caryll (c.1505-1566), see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/caryll-%28carrell%29-john-1505-66>

**TESTATOR'S MANORS**

In the will below, the testator bequeaths several manors to the prior of the house of Jesus of Bethlehem of Sheen in the county of Surrey. As Wright notes, the priory was suppressed the year after the testator made his will, and the manors were restored to William Parr, Marquess of Northampton, to whom they had belonged before his support for Lady Jane Grey's claim to the throne had resulted in his attainder. See Wright, Thomas, *The History and Topography of the County of Essex*, Vol. I, (London: George Virtue, 1836), pp. 463-5 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=SgQVAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA463>

. . . Sir Bartholomew Bouchier, who, on his father's death in 1400, succeeded to his estates and honours. He married, first, Margaret, widow of Sir John de Sutton; and, to his second wife, had Idonea Lovey, widow, first of Edmund, son of Sir John de Brooksbourne, afterwards of John Glevant. By this last, he had Elizabeth, his only daughter and heiress. He died in 1409, and his widow, having his whole estate in dower, survived him only one year. His daughter Elizabeth was married, first to Hugh Stafford, son of Hugh, earl of Stafford, who died in 1421; and her second husband was Lewis Robessart, a native of Henault, standard-bearer to King Henry the Fifth. They kept their first court at Stansted Hall, in 1430, but he died the same year; and the widow, lady Elizabeth, died also in 1433, having borne no children to either of her husbands. She was, therefore, succeeded by Henry Bouchier, earl of Eye, in Normandy, son of Sir William, and grandson of Sir William, the brother of Sir John, the father of Bartholomew, lord Bouchier, born in 1404; he was employed in various warlike expeditions; created knight of the garter in 1452, made lord treasurer in 1454, advanced to the dignity of Viscount Bouchier in 1457, and, in 1461, to that of Earl of Essex, in right of his grandmother, Eleanor de Bohun, wife of Thomas of Woodstock, eldest daughter of Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Essex. By Isabel, sister of Richard, Duke of York, father of King Edward the Fourth, he had seven sons. William, the eldest son, died before his father, having married first Isabel, daughter of John de Vere, earl of Oxford, by whom he had no children; but by his second wife Anne, sister, and one of the heiresses of Richard Woodville, earl Rivers, he had his only son Henry, and a daughter named Cecily. Henry, who succeeded his grandfather in honours and estates, was of a very active and warlike disposition, having attended Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, in their most important expeditions; he was also a man of a very superior understanding. He lost his life by being thrown off from an unruly horse, in 1540, having attained the age of seventy-seven years. He married Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Sir William Say, by whom he had Anne, his only child, who, in 1541, was married to Sir William Parr, baron of Kendal; and the same year they, jointly, levied a fine, to secure the estates to their heirs. This proved a most unfortunate match; for the Lady Anne lived in adultery with a person named Huntley, by whom she had several children, afterwards declared illegitimate by act of parliament; and, in 1551, another act passed annulling Lord Parr's marriage with Lady Anne, and ratifying a marriage he had newly contracted with

*Elizabeth, daughter of George Brook, lord Cobham. Yet, notwithstanding, the honours of the said Anne's father were conferred upon Lord Parr; he being created earl of Essex, in 1543, with the same place and precedence as Henry Bouchier, earl of Essex, had: and he was advanced to the title of Marquis of Northampton in 1546. In 1553, he was condemned as a traitor for espousing the cause of Lady Jane Grey; but, before the end of that year, he was restored in blood by act of parliament, though not to his honours nor to his estates; for Queen Mary granted the lordships and manors of Halstead, Stansted, Abels, Hedingham, Clavering, Lucases, Pritchards, and the capital house and park of Stansted, to Sir Robert Rochester, controller of her household, who, by will, in 1577 [sic for '1557'], gave the manors of Stansted and Abels to the poor [sic for 'prior'] of the house of Jesus at Shene, in Surrey; which house being suppressed the year following, Queen Elizabeth restored the Lord Parr, not only to his honours, but to the lordships of this town [=Halstead]; and he kept court here at Bois Hall, in 1561. In 1556, he purchased the reversion of these manors to him and his heirs for ever; and, four days afterwards, conveyed them to Sir William Waldegrave, of Smallbridge, in Suffolk: who sold the manor of Stansted to Arthur Breame, having previously sold the site of the mansion of Stanstead Hall, with the outbuildings and a great part of the land, to John Holmsted, master of the horse to the Earl of Oxford, at Hedingham.*

LM: T{estamentum} d{omi}ni Rob{er}ti Rochester mil{i}t{is}

In the name of God, Amen. The 27<sup>th</sup> day of May in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and seven and in the third & fourth years of the gracious reigns of my most redoubted Sovereign Lord and Lady, Philip and Mary, by the grace of God King and Queen of England, Spain, France, both Sicilies, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defenders of the Faith, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Burgundy, Milan and Brabant, Counties of Habsburg, Flanders and Tyrol, I, Sir Robert Rochester, Knight of the most honourable Order of the Garter, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Comptroller of our said Sovereign Lady the Queen's most honourable Household, being whole of mind and perfect of remembrance, thanks be given to God, do make, ordain and declare this my last will and testament for and concerning my manors, lands, tenements, possessions and hereditaments with the appurtenances and of and concerning my goods, chattels and movables in manner and form following:

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my Maker, Creator and Redeemer of the same, and to Our Blessed Lady, the dear mother of Christ, and to all the holy company of heaven;

And my body I will to be buried in the Charterhouse church of Sheen in the county of Surrey with all ceremonies according to the laudable custom of Christ's Catholic Church, the doing whereof I commit to the discretion of mine executors;

And I will that there be given and distributed to the poor people at the day of my burial by mine executors ten pounds, and as much at my month's day;

Item, I give unto the Queen's Highness, as a poor witness of mine humble heart, duty and service due to the same, one hundred pounds in angels;

Item, I give and bequeath to every of her Highness' women, mine old fellows which served her Grace before she came to this estate and being yet attending in her Majesty's service, one ring of fine gold of the weight of an old royal which I require them to wear as a token of my goodwill borne to them and to put them in remembrance to pray Christ to have mercy upon my soul;

Item, I will that all my servants whose names be written in my book shall have each of them a black coat of good cloth;

Item, I give and bequeath to my brother, William Rochester, esquire, my gown of black velvet furred with coney, one jacket of black satin lined with silk;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, John Rochester, his son and heir apparent, my gown of damask faced with sables, one jacket of tawny cassa faced also with sables, two of my good shirts, one of black work, thother plain, my bay gelding called Clinton, and also a salt and a cup of silver which I have delivered to him with mine own hands;

And also where I have a patent of the right honourable John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, for the keeping of the park of Lavenham and th' herbage of the same, and also the bailiwick of the town of Lavenham aforesaid, I give and bequeath to my loving [f. 118r] nephew, Sir Edward Waldegrave, knight, all that my right, title and interest which I have of and in the said patent under this condition, that he, the same Sir Edward Waldegrave, his executors and assigns, shall suffer my sister Rice [=Ryce] to dwell in one part of the Lodge of the said park of Lavenham, and also shall pay or cause to be paid to such persons whose names hereafter ensueth such yearly annuities by year during their lives hereafter expressed, that is to say, to William Berners, five pounds; Anthony Trappes, four pounds; William Markham, four pounds; Gregory More, four marks; John Abell, five pounds; John Barbor, forty shillings; William Steven, forty shillings; Thomas English, forty shillings; Robert Harvey, forty shillings; and to old Dale of Colchester six & twenty shillings & eight pence of good and lawful money of England;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Robert Waldegrave, my gown of black satin with a cape and faced with black genets, my jacket of black velvet faced with lusards, and one of my geldings at the discretion of mine executors;

And also whereas I have an indenture of Doddinghurst park in the county of Essex which I have granted to John Posland, my servant, during all my years to come therein contained, I give and bequeath ten pounds yearly to my said nephew, Robert Waldegrave, out of the said park during the said years to be paid by the said Poseland, his executors and assigns, to the said Robert, and if the same Robert Waldegrave depart this present life before the said term of years to come be expired, then I give and bequeath the said ten pounds to my executors to dispose the same yearly for the wealth of my soul in deeds of

charity by their discretions during the residue of my said years to come in Doddinghurst park aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, John Waldegrave, one of my geldings at the discretion of mine executors, and a cup of silver and gilt of the value of five pounds;

Also I give and bequeath unto my loving friend, Richard Wilbraham, esquire, Master of the Jewel House, my bed and bedstead of red cloth fringed with silk with featherbed, bolster and blankets;

Also I give and bequeath to the prior of the Blackfriars in London and to his brethren the sum of fifty pounds to pray for my soul, my father and mother's souls, mine ancestors, and all Christian souls;

Also I give to the warden of the Observant Friars in Greenwich and to his brethren the sum of fifty pounds to pray for my soul, my father and mother, mine ancestors, and all Christian souls;

And as concerning this my present last will and testament for and concerning my said manors, lands, tenements, possessions and hereditaments with their appurtenances in manner and form following, most humbly beseeching the Queen's Highness, my most gracious Sovereign Lady and Mistress, to whom I have borne my faithful and true service to the uttermost of my small power according to my most bounden duty in this my transitory life, that it would please her Majesty after my decease to give her royal assistance unto such as I shall put in trust that the same my said will may be performed and take place according to my true meaning, which as near as I can and as I trust in God is agreeable both with God's laws and with her Majesty's laws and in nothing contrariant to her Majesty's prerogative royal;

And first whereas I do hold divers of my manors, lands and tenements of her Highness by knight service in chief, by reason whereof I may not by her laws declare my will of any more than of two parts of all my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in three parts to be divided, or of so much of my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in certainty as shall amount to the yearly value of two parts of all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in three parts divided, and ought by her said laws to leave the third part of all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in three parts to be divided, or as much as shall amount unto a full third part of all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments in severalty, to descend and come to my next heir by course of inheritance to th' intent her Highness may thereof have such profit and prerogative as to her royal Majesty by the laws and statutes of this realm appertaineth, I do therefore leave to descend and come to my next heir by course of inheritance all those my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments hereafter specified, that is to say:

The manors of Ashfield Magna in the county of Suffolk with all and singular the appurtenances and all my lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances within the parishes, towns, villages and hamlets of Ashfield Magna [=Great Ashfield],

Badwell, Hunston, Ixworth and Elmswell in the said county of Suffolk or elsewhere in the said county of Suffolk;

And all that my manor of Milles set, lying and being in the county of Essex with all and singular th' appurtenances and all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments called or known by the names of Mylles in Stisted with th' appurtenances in the said county of Essex;

All which premises before rehearsed and left to descend to mine heirs as is aforesaid been a full and clear third part of all my manors, lands, tenements, possessions and hereditaments and more, and of those I do not declare any part of this my will or testament;

And as to all the residue of all my said manors, lands and tenements, I, the said [f. 118v] Sir Robert Rochester, by th' authority of the laws and statutes of this realm do thereof declare my last will and treatment in manner and from following, that is to say:

First to th' honour of God and his Son, Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, and for the better maintenance of his honour, glory and divine service, and of his Blessed Mother, the Virgin, and all the company of heaven, I do give, will and bequeath unto the prior of the house of Jesus of Bethlehem of Sheen in the county of Surrey all those my manors and lordships of Halstead, Stansted, Abells, Hedingham, Clavering, Lucas, Pritchards and Markes set, lying or being in the county of Essex with all and singular their appurtenances;

And all that my capital house or mansion of the said lordship and manor of Stansted and the advowsons, gifts, dispositions and rights of patronages of the churches of Stansted and Sible Hedingham;

And all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments called or known by the name or names of Bowchers wood in Gosfield in the said county of Essex;

And all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments called or known by the name or names of Abells, Clavering, Lucas, Pritchards and Markes with all and singular th' appurtenances set, lying and being in Halstead, Stansted and Braintree;

And all other my manors, lands, tenements, possessions, rents, reversions, services, parks, warrens, leets, courts, liberties, franchises, advowsons and other mine hereditaments whatsoever set, lying or being in the towns, fields, parishes or hamlets of Halstead, Stansted, Hedingham, Braintree, Pebmarsh, Gosfield, Twinstead, Henny Magna, Henny Parva, Middleton, Bulmer, Alphamstone, Maplestead, Foxearth, Belchamp Otten, Toppesfield, Colne Engaine otherwise Colnesgayne, Stisted, Sible Hedingham, Aldham, Pattiswick and Marks Hall in the said county of Essex or elsewhere within the said county which I late had and purchased of our said Sovereign Lord and Lady the King and Queen's Majesties to me and to mine heirs forever as by their gracious letters patents thereof unto me made bearing date at Westminster the 9<sup>th</sup> day of November

in the third and fourth years [=9 November 1556] of their most gracious reigns more plainly and at large it doth and may appear;

And all my letters patents and evidences concerning the same manors and premises or any part or parcel thereof, except and always reserved the park of Stansted and all those lands, tenements and hereditaments set, lying, being and enclosed within the said park of Stansted or known by the name of the park of Stansted park, to have and to hold all and singular the said manors, lands, tenements and premises with th' appurtenances, except before excepted, to the said prior and to his successors for evermore, desiring and requiring them for evermore to pray for the good estate of the King and Queen's Majesties while it shall please God to send them life, which I pray God may be long to his pleasure, and after their deceases for their souls and for the soul of me, the said Sir Robert Rochester, my father's and mother's souls and all mine ancestors' souls and all Christian souls;

Nevertheless I will that as well all and singular the woodsales as the annual rents, payments, sums of money and annuities by me hereafter in this my last will declared, willed and appointed to be paid, levied, perceived, going out, distributed or taken of the same premises shall be truly and quietly had, made, paid, levied and distributed and shall stand in effect and take place from time to time according to my true meaning and intent, the said gift and devise of the said manors and premises made to the said prior and his successors notwithstanding, that is to say:

I will that mine executors or the survivor of them or th' executors of the survivor of them shall and may within forty years next after my decease take, fell and cut down and enjoy as much timber and woods in and upon the premises as shall amount to the sum of (blank) towards and for the performance of my last will and testament, as well of my goods and chattels as of this my will of my lands and tenements, and for the payment of my debts due either in law or conscience as my funerals and legacies, anything before said to the contrary notwithstanding;

And also I do further will, give and grant out of the said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments to the abbess of Syon in the county of Middlesex one annual rent of twenty pounds by the year to be perceived, taken and going out of all and singular the same manors and premises of my gift, to have, hold and perceive the same rent unto the said abbess and convent of Syon and to their successors forever at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and the Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions yearly to be paid, and for the non-payment whereof I will it shall be lawful to and for the said abbess and convent and their successors from time to time to distrain in all and singular the premises, desiring the same abbess and convent and their successors for evermore to pray for the good estate of the King and Queen's Majesties while they live and for their souls after their deceases, and for the soul of me, the said Sir Robert Rochester, and for my father's and mother's souls, and for all other mine ancestors' souls & all Christian souls;

And furthermore whereas I have obtained a licence of the King and Queen's Majesties that I in my lifetime or mine heirs, executors or assigns after my decease may erect and

find one perpetual chantry within the parish church of Terling in the said county of Essex, and that I, mine heirs, executors or assigns either in my life or after my decease may endow the same chantry and may give to the same chantry priest and to his successor forever lands, tenements, rents, possessions or hereditaments to the yearly value of ten pounds over all charges and reprises, it is my will that the said chantry shall be erected and founded in as convenient time as may be after my decease according to the said licence by my [sic] mine executors or the survivor of them or the executors of the same survivor, and I do charge & require [f. 119r] my said executors that they erect, find and establish the said perpetual chantry according to the purport and effect of the said licence with all convenient speed after my decease, and without tract or delay;

And I will that the said chantry and the chantry priest thereof shall have assured unto them by the said prior and convent of Sheen or their successors for the time being for and in the name of their indument one annual rentcharge of ten pounds by the year in fee simple to be taken, perceived and going out of all the said manors, lands, tenements, hereditaments and premises and to be paid at two terms of the year for evermore by even portions with a sufficient clause of distress and power to distrain from time to time in the said manors, lands and the premises for evermore for not payment of the said rent, which assurance to make and to do I charge and require the said prior and convent of Sheen and their successors [-and] truly to see the same paid from time to time according to my meaning and intent as they will answer to God for the contrary;

And I will that the said chantry priest and his executors shall be bound to such orders, rules and divine service as by my said executors shall be limited and appointed according to their discretions and ordinances, amongst the which I will that he and his successors for evermore shall be bounden to pray daily for the good estate of the King and Queen's Majesties while they live and for their souls after their deceases and for the soul of me, the said Sir Robert Rochester, and for the souls of my father and mother and for the souls of mine ancestors and for all Christian souls;

And also I will, give and grant for evermore out of the said manors and premises unto the prioress and convent of Langley in the county of (blank) and to their successors for evermore one other annual rent of five pounds by the year to be taken and perceived out of the said manors and premises at the feasts of St Michael th' Archangel and th' Annunciation of Our Lady by even portions yearly to be paid, for the non-payment whereof I will it shall be lawful to and for the said prioress and convent and their successors from time to time to distrain in all and singular the premises, desiring the same prioress and convent of Langley and their successors for evermore to pray for the good estate of the King and Queen's Majesties while they live and for their souls after their deceases and for the soul of me, the said Sir Robert Rochester, and for my father and mother[ 's] souls ad for all other mine ancestors' souls and all Christian souls;

Also I do give and bequeath to mine executors named in this my last will and testament of my goods and chattels and to their executors all that my said park of Stansted and all the lands, tenements and hereditaments set, lying or being enclosed within the pales and bounds of the said park, to have and to hold the same to my said executors for and during

the term of (blank) years next after my decease if Steven Hadnoo do so long live, and over that until my last will and testament of my goods and this my last will and testament of my lands be and shall be fully performed to th' intent hereafter following, that is to say:

Whereas I, Sir Robert Rochester, for certain causes and considerations have granted one annuity or annual rent of fifty-six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence by the year to the said Steven Hadnoo for term of his life natural out of the said manors and premises, I will and require my said executors that they do and shall in as convenient time as may be after my decease dispart the same park of Stansted, and that they and their executors shall and do of and with the yearly rents, revenues and profits thereof and with the woods growing upon the same park content, satisfy and pay unto the said Steven Hadnoo the said annuity or yearly rent of £56 13s 4d by the year from time to time during the life natural of the said Stephen Hadnoo, and that the same mine executors and the executors of the survivors of them shall and do save and keep harmless the said prior and convent of Sheen and their successors of and from the payment of the said annual rent of £56 13s 4d;

And I will that after the said years ended or determined and this my said will of my said goods and chattels and of my said lands and tenements performed, that then the said park and lands contained and lying in the same park shall remain, go and be to the said prior and convent of Sheen and to their successors for evermore;

Nevertheless I will that neither my said executors nor the executors of the survivor of them be or shall be at any time impeached or troubled of or for any manner of waste in cutting down of any the woods in or upon the said park, but that my said executors and the executors of the survivor of them shall and may without any impeachment or molestation take the profits of the said park and the woods in the same towards and for the payment of the said annuity of £56 13s 4d and towards and for the payment and satisfaction of any other debt, payment, thing or things which shall be due either in law or conscience to be paid, recompensed or done for me;

And of this my present testament and last will I do ordain and make mine executors the Reverend Father in God, Ralph, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield; Sir Edward Waldegrave, knight, my nephew; William Cordell, esquire; John Carell [=Caryll], esquire; Thomas Lewen, clerk steward unto my Lord Cardinal's Grace; and Reignold Hollingworth, gentleman;

And I make overseer of the same my last will and testament my most singular good Lord, my Lord Chancellor of England;

And I give to every of my said executors for their painstaking in th' execution of this my said will and treatment, every of them the sum of ten pounds over and besides their costs and charges to be borne also at my charges;

And I give to my said overseer for his pains one cup of silver of five pounds and his costs and charges;

The residue of all my goods and chattels over and besides this my last will and testament truly performed and my funerals done and my debts truly contented and paid I give and bequeath to my executors to be bestowed in deeds of charity for the wealth of my soul and specially upon the house of Sheen;

In witness whereof I, the said Sir Robert Rochester, to this my present testament and last will of my goods and lands have [f. 119v] [-have] set my hand and seal the day and years first above-written and in the presence of divers persons hereafter expressed testifying the same. Robert Rochester. Rolandus Skurlocke Phic(?) Mauritius Charnoy. Ego Guilhelmus Bakehowse presbiter. John Henyngwey. Rich{ard}us Hick{es}.

Probatum fuit suprascriptu{m} test{amentu}m coram Mag{ist}ro Henrico Cole legu{m} doctore Curie prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Custode siue Com{m}issario sede Archie{pisco}pali ib{ide}m tunc vacan{te} decimo tertio die Mensis Decembris An{n}o d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo quinquagesimo octauo Iuramento Reginaldi Hollingwo{r}th Executoris in h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{i} Cui com{m}issa fuit admi{n}istrac{i}o &c De bene et fidel{ite}r admi{n}strand{o} Ac de pleno &c Ac de plano &c Iurat{i} Reseruata p{otes}tate R{eueren}do p{at}ri Rad{ulph}o Coven' et Lich' Ep{iscop}o Edwardo Walgrave Milite Will{el}mo Cordell Ar{miger}o Ioh{ann}i Carrell Ar{mige}ro Thome Lewen Cl{er}ico Ex{ecutori}b{us} etiam cu{m} venerint &c

[=The above-written testament was proved before Master Henry Cole, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of the Archiepiscopal seat there now vacant, on the thirteenth day of the month of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-eighth by the oath of Reginald Hollingworth, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well and faithfully etc., and a full etc., and a plain etc., with power reserved to the Reverend Father Ralph, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, Edward Waldegrave, knight, William Cordell, esquire, John Carrell, esquire, Thomas Lewen, clerk, executors also [+etc.] when they shall have come etc.]