

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will, dated 8 October 1566 and proved 15 October 1567, of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's friend and executor, Sir John Wentworth (1494-1567) of Gosfield Hall in Essex. By his last will and testament of 28 July 1562 (see TNA PROB 11/46, ff. 174v-6), the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl appointed the following six executors:

*And the executors of this my last will I do ordain, constitute and make my right loving and well-beloved wife, Margery, Countess of Oxenford, my son Edward, Lord Bulbeck, my loving friend Sir John Wentworth, knight, and he to have for his pains in that behalf twenty pounds, my trusty servants Henry Golding, Robert Christmas and John Turner.*

However when the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's will was probated on 29 May 1563, the sole executor to receive a grant of administration was Robert Christmas, who was already in, or about to enter, Leicester's service (see BL Lansdowne 6/34, ff. 96-7 and TNA SP 15/13/5). It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the other five executors, including the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's trusted friend, Sir John Wentworth, had been forced out.

In the will, the testator mentions items which he had purchased from Oxford's mother:

*One chalice of silver all gilt and 2 little candlesticks of silver which I lately bought of the Countess of Oxford.*

The Wentworths of Gosfield Hall were descended from Sir Roger Wentworth (d.1452) through his second son Henry Wentworth (d.1482) of Codham Hall in Essex. Henry Wentworth (d.1482) married, as his first wife, Elizabeth Howard, daughter of Henry Howard, uncle of John Howard, 1st Duke of Norfolk. Henry Wentworth and Elizabeth Howard had a son Sir Roger Wentworth (d.1539) of Gosfield Hall, Essex, who married Anne Tyrrell (d.1534) of Little Warley, Essex. Roger Wentworth (d.1539) and Anne Tyrrell (d.1534) were the parents of the testator, Sir John Wentworth (1494-1567).

Sir John Wentworth was Sheriff of Essex and Hertford in 1544 and 1553, and entertained Queen Elizabeth at Gosfield in August 1561. He married Anne, the daughter of John Bettenham of Pluckley in Kent. She died in November 1575, and was buried with her husband in Gosfield Church. They had four children: John, who died young; Margaret, who died unmarried in 1553; Mary, who married her paternal cousin, Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Wentworth (1525-1584), and died in 1554; and Anne, (1537-1580), Lady Maltravers, who inherited Gosfield Hall and entertained Queen Elizabeth there in August 1579.

Sir John Wentworth's brother was Henry Wentworth of Gosfield, who died circa 1545. He married Agnes, daughter and heiress of Reginald Hamond of Kent and of Mountnessing in Essex. She married William Wilford as her second husband, and was buried in Stepney Church on 3 September 1574. After the death of Mary Wentworth (see above), Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Wentworth (1525-1584), married her first cousin, Agnes, the daughter of Henry Wentworth (d. circa 1545) and Agnes Hamond. They had two sons, Lord William Wentworth (1555/6-1582) and Lord Henry Wentworth (1558-1593),

and a daughter. Lord William Wentworth (1555/6-1582) married Lord Burghley's younger daughter, Elizabeth Cecil, and was for a time Oxford's brother-in-law. Both Henry Wentworth (d. circa 1545) and his wife, Agnes, are mentioned in the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's inquisition post mortem (see TNA C 142/136/12):

*And the foresaid jurors say that the foresaid late Earl, by a certain deed of his sealed by his seal at arms & subscribed by his own hand dated the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October in the 35<sup>th</sup> year [=4 October 1543] of the reign of the late King Henry the Eighth, demised to Henry Wontford [=Wentworth], esquire, all that manor of Mountnessing Hall with its whole appurtenances lying & being in Mountnessing aforesaid & other towns to the same adjoining within the said county of Essex, excepted & reserved to the said Earl & his heirs all woods, underwoods & firewood growing in & upon any part or parcel of the said manor, and excepted & reserved to the said Earl all rents of assize, rents of villein tenants [+&] customary tenants, reliefs, wards, marriages, escheats & profits of courts, leets, fines & amerciaments to the said manor or to any parcel thereof appertaining or in whatsoever manner belonging, to have and to hold the said manor with all & singular the lands & appurtenances, except pre-excepted, to the said Henry & his assigns from the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel next & immediately following after the decease of Agnes, then wife of the said Henry and now wife of a certain William Wilford, until the end & term of twenty-one years from thence next following and fully to be completed, yielding thereof yearly during the foresaid term to the said Earl & his assigns £24 sterling at the two usual terms of the year, viz., at the feasts of the Annunciation of Blessed Mary the Virgin & Saint Michael the Archangel by equal portions, as by the foresaid deed to the foresaid jurors upon the taking of this present inquisition in manifest evidences more fully appears, which certain [ ] by a conveyance effective in the law is granted to a certain Robert Fulkes, as by the foresaid conveyance to the foresaid jurors upon the taking of this present inquisition in manifest evidences more fully appears.*

The testator also mentions his niece, Mary Cardinal, who was Mary Wentworth, the daughter of the testator's brother, Henry Wentworth (d. circa 1545) and Agnes Hamond. Mary's husband, William Cardinal the younger, is likely the William Cardinal mentioned in this clause in the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's inquisition post mortem:

*And the foresaid jurors say that the foresaid late Earl, by a certain deed of his sealed by his seal at arms & subscribed by his own hand dated the twentieth day of November in the [ ] year [=20 November 1558-61] of the reign of the Lady Elizabeth now Queen, granted to William Cardinal the office of receiver of all issues, profits & sums of money arising of his office of Great Chamberlain of England and by reason of the same office, to have & occupy the foresaid office by him or his sufficient deputy for term of life of the same William, and by the foresaid deed the foresaid Earl gave to the same William, as well for the exercise of the foresaid office as for the expenses of the same William sustained with regard to the care of such businesses & causes which in law he might happen to have, a certain yearly rent of forty pounds of lawful money of England issuing of the profits & issues of the same office, as by the said deed to the foresaid jurors upon the taking of this present inquisition in manifest evidences more fully appears.*

The friendship between Sir John Wentworth and the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl perhaps explains why the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl granted the farm of his office of Lord Great Chamberlain to William Cardinal, the husband of Wentworth's niece.

For some of the foregoing material in the foregoing paragraphs, see the entry for Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Wentworth, in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

LM: Testamentum Iohannis Wentworth millitis

In the name of God, Amen. The eight day of October in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred threescore and six and in the eight year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, I, Sir John Wentworth of Gosfield in the county of Essex, knight, being of whole mind and in my good and perfect memory, thanks be given to God, do make, ordain & declare this my present testament and last will concerning the order and disposition of all and singular my moveable substance, goods and chattels in manner and form following, that is to say:

First and principally I bequeath and commend my soul to the infinite and incomprehensible mercy of Almighty God, my very Creator and Redeemer thereof, and my body to be buried within 48 hours after my departing out of this world, if that my executors do think it possible or convenient so to be done, in the north aisle of the parish church of Gosfield aforesaid within the tomb which I already have prepared for the same;

Furthermore, I will and specially charge mine executors that they, within as short time as conveniently may be after my decease, do well and truly satisfy, content and pay all my true debts by me owing, and also make just and full restitution of all injuries and wrongs by me done to any person or persons that may be duly and honestly proved, if any such shall happen to be;

And I will also that my executors shall cause to be dealt and distributed to and amongst the needy poor householders and inhabitants within certain towns hereunder named one hundred pounds of good and lawful money of England, to be distributed and dealt in manner and form following, viz., to the town of Wethersfield yearly 40s; item, to the town of Gosfield yearly 20s; to the town of Halstead yearly 20s; to the town of Sible Hedingham yearly 20s; to the town of Bocking yearly 20s; to the town of Finchingfield yearly 20s; to the town of Shalford yearly 13s 4d; to the town of Walter Belchamp yearly 13s 4d; to the town of Little Horkeley yearly 13s 4d, whereof yearly 10s to the almshouse there; to the town of Gestingthorpe yearly 10s; to the town of Otten Belchamp yearly 10s, all which particular sums of money within-mentioned I will shall be delivered yearly during the term of 10 years to such honest men and persons as shall be thought meet by the discretion of mine executors or their assigns to the use and intent that they shall distribute the same to the most needy inhabitants and poor people of the said towns within-written, and the distribution thereof to be twice every year, whereof thone

half between the feast of St. Thomas th' Apostle and the Nativity of Our Lord, the other half yearly between the first Sunday in Lent and the feast of Easter;

And I will that my executors within two years after my decease shall cause to be employed and bestowed in and upon the making, renewing & amending of the most needy places in the highway between St. Anne's Chapel and the town of Braintree £20, viz., every year £10;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my loving daughter, Anne, the Lady Maltravers, my best basin and ewer parcel gilt, one pair of livery pots of silver and gilt, one nest of bowls of silver all gilt which I last bought at London, one pair of my best salts of silver all gilt, 2 silver spoons all gilt, and 2 beer-pots of silver all gilt with one cover, being part of the 3 beer-pots which I bought at London, six of my best silver candlesticks which I bought of the Master of the Rolls, one dozen of silver spoons with the 12 Apostles, one standing cup of silver and gilt, one dozen of silver candlesticks and 2 cruets of silver parcel gilt which served for my chapel, and one chalice of silver all gilt and 2 little candlesticks of silver which I lately bought of the Countess of Oxford, and one casting-bottle of silver all gilt serving for sweet waters;

And also I give to her the whole hanging for the parlour, and I give unto her the best tester and celure which hath been commonly used in the chief chamber, and also I give to her my best carpet of needlework which I bought of William Wilford, esquire, and two cushions of cloth of gold;

And where William Waldegrave of Smallbridge in Bures St. Mary in the county of Suffolk, esquire, hath by his indenture bearing date the 9<sup>th</sup> day of September in the eight year [=9 September 1566] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth assured unto me, the said Sir John Wentworth, and mine heirs forever the site of the manor of Bradfield Hall, with all the houses and edifices whatsoever in or upon the same built and being, and all the lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, ponds, fences(?) lying and being within the park called Bradfield park as it is enclosed with pale, in the towns and parishes of Bradfield, Wix and Mistley in the county of Essex, upon this condition following, that is to say, if the said William Waldegrave or his assigns do not make payment of the sum of five hundred pounds of good and lawful money of England to me, the said Sir John Wentworth, or to mine assigns at the site of the manor of Belhouse otherwise called Gosfield Hall in the said county of Essex upon the feast day of St. Michael th' Archangel next coming without any delay, that then the said site of the manor of Bradfield Hall with the said park and all other the premises aforesaid shall remain and be to the only use of me, the said Sir John Wentworth, and mine heirs forever, according as in the said indenture of assurance more plainly doth appear;

And for default of payment of the said sum of five hundred pounds at the said day and place aforesaid, then I will that Sir William Cordell, knight, now Master of the Rolls, shall have to him and to his heirs forever the said site of the said manor of Bradfield Hall with the said park with all the said premises as is aforesaid upon this condition following, that is to say, if the said Sir William Cordell do pay or cause to be paid to mine executors or

survivors of them, their executors, administrators or assigns of them or any of them, the sum of five hundred pounds of good and lawful money of England to be paid within three months next and immediately after the foresaid feast of St Michael th' Archangel;

And in case he refuse the having thereof, or do not make payment of the said sum of five hundred pounds within the three months according as is aforesaid, then I will that mine executors, administrators or assigns or th' executors, administrators or assigns of the survivors of them shall make sale of the said site of [+the] manor of Bradfield Hall with the said park and all other the premises as is aforesaid to the uttermost value the[y] can, and with two hundred pound, parcel of the said five hundred pounds, I will they buy such silver plate as hereafter followeth, viz., 2 fair basins with two ewers of silver parcel gilt, two nest[s] of silver bowls all gilt with 2 covers all gilt, one fair pair of silver salts all gilt with one cover, one dozen of silver trenchers parcel gilt, and the residue of the said two hundred pounds to be bestowed upon silver plate by the discretion of mine executors, and taking th' advice of mine daughter, the Lady Anne Maltravers, to whom I give all the forenamed plate to the said value of two hundred pounds over and besides all such plate as I have given to her in this my last will and testament, and the residue of the said five hundred pounds I will shall go to the performance of this my last will and testament;

And if in case my executors shall fortune to make sale of the said site of the manor of Bradfield Hall and the said park and all other the premises as is aforesaid, then I will that so much as they shall have or can get for the same above the foresaid sum of five hundred pounds they shall have and take the same residue of my gift for their painstaking, indifferently to be divided amongst them;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anne, my well-beloved wife, two basins with 2 ewers of silver parcel gilt, thone of them to be that which was my father's, one pair of my best livery pots of silver parcel gilt, one nest of silver bowls all gilt with one cover, one nest of silver bowls all white with a cover, one standing cup of silver all gilt with a cover, one pair of salts of silver all gilt with a cover, one nest of silver goblets all gilt with a cover, two goblets of silver with a cover parcel gilt, six candlesticks of silver all white which I caused to be made at London, one dozen of trenchers of silver parcel gilt, one flat piece of silver parcel gilt which was my father's, one casting-bottle of silver all gilt for sweet waters, and all the residue of my silver spoons being all gilt or parcel gilt which are not given or before bequeathed unto my daughter, the Lady Maltravers;

And also I give unto my said wife five hundred marks of lawful money of England;

And also I give unto her all that whole hangings, bedding and stuff commonly used to the chamber called the Lord Wentworth chamber, and the best tester and celure to the same, and two of my best long cushions of needlework, and 2 square cushions of the same work, and also my best long carpet of needlework which hath been commonly used in the parlor, and one of my best cupboard cloths of needlework or carpet-work, to be taken at her choice, and also 2 beer-pots of silver all gilt with two covers, whereof the one was Sir Giles Alington's, the other is one of the 3 whereof 2 are given to the Lady Maltravers;

And also I give unto her all that whole hanging of the story of Moses with also those 2 pieces of hanging which I bought at London to furnish up the dining-chamber there, and also the tester and ceiling of needlework which now hangeth in the chief chamber;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew, John Wentworth, the son of my late brother, Henry Wentworth, one pair of livery pots of silver parcel gilt, being with leopards' heads, one basin with one ewer of silver parcel gilt, being one of the two which I lately bought at London, to be taken at his choice,

And I also give to him all that the standing bed with the celure and tester to the same paned with cloth of gold and crimson velvet, with all the whole hangings, stuff and bedding which is commonly used in the chamber over the old parlor, and all the bedding and stuff in the inner chamber to the same, and also one demi-lance, six corslets and twenty Almain kyvittes(?), one dozen pikes, one dozen of livery bows, six sheaf of arrows, six halberds, six bills, and five javelins;

And also I give to him one hundred pounds of lawful English money;

All which plate, money, bedding stuff and all other things before in this my present testament to my said nephew, John Wentworth, given or bequeathed, I will he shall have the same upon condition following, that is to say, that he be bound by his deed obligatory in the sum of two hundred pounds to mine executors or the survivor of them and their executors, that he shall fully and truly suffer all such leases as I have at any time heretofore granted or made unto any person or persons of or in any such manors, lands or tenements whatsoever as shall come to him after my death, or after the death of me and my wife, or after the death of my daughter, the Lady Anne Maltravers, and that they and every of them shall or may quietly and peaceably have and enjoy all their said leases and term of years as they or any of them shall have, being not ended and expired, of my grant in any of the same lands whereupon the old accustomed rents or more is reserved, and I will that he shall make & deliver the same bonds unto my executors before any of the forenamed legacies be paid or delivered unto him;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew, Henry Wentworth, brother unto the said John Wentworth, forty pound in ready current money;

Item, I give & bequeath unto my nephew, John Wentworth of Bocking, son of my late brother, Roger Wentworth, one basin and one ewer of silver parcel gilt, being one of the two which I last bought at London as is aforesaid, one pair of livery pots of silver parcel gilt, also one of my best geldings, and I also give unto him £20 of ready current money;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew, Henry Wentworth of Bumpstead, the son of my late brother, John Wentworth, deceased, the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give and bequeath to Elizabeth Barne, one of the daughters of my late nephew, John Barne, esquire, deceased, one hundred pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give & bequeath unto Judth Bettenham, one of the daughters of my late brother-in-law, Thomas Bettenham, esquire, deceased, one hundred pounds sterling;

Item, I give and bequeath unto such one of the daughters of my nephew, Henry Wentworth of Bumpstead, which first shall come to the full age of eighteen years, towards the preferment of her marriage, one hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to her at the age of 18 years abovesaid, or sooner if she happen to be married;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every of my servants written and named in a schedule annexed unto this my testament such sum and sums of money as unto any of them is therein limited and appointed, and the same to be paid to every of them by mine executors within forty days next after my decease, provided always that if any of my said servants shall be departed out of my service when it shall please God to call me out of this world, being nominated & written in the said schedule, then I will that they so departed shall have no part of such legacy and money as unto them therein is assigned and appointed;

Item, I give and bequeath by this my said last will & testament unto my nephew, William Cardinal the younger, and to his assign[s], all that my right, title, interest, possession and term of all and singular such manors, lands and tenements, moveable goods & chattels with all and singular their appurtenances within the county of Essex as lately were delivered unto me, the said Sir John Wentworth, for and in execution of one recognizance of one thousand marks in the nature of one Estatute Staple knowledged and forfeited unto me by William Cardinal of Much Bromley within the county of Essex, esquire, father of the said William the younger, [+as] by one extent thereof taken & returned of record into the Chancery of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth more at large doth and may appear;

To have and to hold all and singular the premises with their appurtenances to my said nephew and his assigns for and during so long time and term as I, the said Sir John, my executors or assigns, now holdeth and enjoyeth, or by reason of the extent aforesaid by any ways or means hereafter might or ought to hold, occupy and enjoy the same and every part thereof, under this condition following, that is to say, that the above-named William Cardinal the elder and William Cardinal the younger or one of them at any time during the term of one whole year next and immediately after the death of me, the said Sir John Wentworth, observe, fulfil and keep all such covenants and agreements touching the assurances of the jointure of Mary Cardinal, my niece, wife of the said William the younger, as been comprised in one pair of indentures of ye marriage had and solemnized between the said William and Mary made between me, the said Sir John, on the one part, and the above-named William Cardinal the elder of the other party, which on the part of the said William the elder been to be observed, fulfilled and kept;

And also under this condition following, that is to say, that they, the said William and William or one of them, doth at all time save harmless or otherwise discharge me, the said

Sir John Wentworth, my executors and administrators, against Thomas Seckford, esquire, one of the Masters of Requests, for and concerning one execution I, the said Sir John, did lately take of and in the manors of Overhall and Netherhall in Dedham within the said county of Essex, parcel of the premises before bequeathed and given as parcel of the extent of the Estatute aforesaid;

Item, I will that mine executors shall sell my best chain of gold with all my aglets, buttons, brooches and jewels to the best value they can, and with the money thereof coming, I will they shall buy plate of silver, being all gilt, parcel gilt or white; the one half of the said plate I will shall be given to my nephew, John Wentworth, son of my late brother, Henry Wentworth, deceased, and the other half of the said plate to be equally & indifferently divided between my nephew, John Wentworth of Bocking, and my nephew, Henry Wentworth of Bumpstead, provided always that my said executors shall not sell any such chains, brooches, tablets or jewels which my wife hath heretofore kept, used or worn, all which said chains, brooches, tablets or jewels I give unto my said wife;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every of my executors, for the special trust and confidence that I have in them to see this testament and last will truly executed, performed, fulfilled and done, ten pounds over and besides their reasonable costs, charges and expenses sustained and borne about the same;

The residue of all my money, debts unto me owing, and all my beddings, hangings, napery and all other my stuff, store and implements of household, corn, cattle, necessaries of husbandry, and all and singular my moveable goods whatsoever in this my present testament and last will not otherwise given, willed, bequeathed or assigned, after my funerals conveniently done and all other charges concerning the execution of this my said will and testament borne, paid and performed, I wholly and freely give them unto Anne, my said wife, and to my daughter, the Lady Anne Maltravers, equally and indifferently to be parted and divided between them;

And of this my said testament and last will I do ordain, make and admit to be mine executors the abovesaid Anne, my well-beloved wife, [+and] my cousin, Rooke Greene, esquire. By me, John Wentworth. By me, Christopher Hill, clerk, Thomas Leaper(?), Arthur Breme. By me, Bartholomew Wayte, John Catterall. All these men whose names are above and within-written are witnesses to this my present testament and last will.

#### The Schedule of Servants

Inprimis. John Barnishe [=Berners], gentleman, 40s  
Bennett Cornewell [=Cornwall], 40s;  
Arthur Breme, £3  
William Cedwell, £3  
Robert Gosnold, 40s  
John Catterall, 40s  
Thomas Woode, 40s  
John Spencer, £3

Thomas Lawrence, 53s 4d  
 John Golding, 40s  
 Thomas Wayte, 40s  
 John Peach, 40s  
 Robert Rowse (blank)  
 George Cote, 26s 8d  
 William Osborne, 40s  
 John James, 40s  
 Robert Langdon (blank)  
 William Chapman, 20s  
 Agnes Blithe, £3  
 Alice Man, 20s  
 Thomas Leaper, 26s 8d  
 Bartholomew Wayte, 20s  
 John Kinge, 20s  
 James Mare, 20s  
 Robert Golding, 20s  
 Roger Golding, 20s  
 Cuthbert Toodd (blank)  
 Henry Hunte, 26s 8d  
 William Clarke, 26s 8d  
 John Reve, 20s  
 George Harde, 20s  
 James Clarke, 20s  
 Martin Newman (blank)  
 John Pasfelde (blank)  
 Thomas Bridge (blank)  
 John Sheppard, 26s 8d

Probatum [+fuit] huiusmodi testamentum Coram Magistro Waltero Haddon legum  
 doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Commissario Apud London xvto Die mensis  
 Octobris Anno Domini Millesimo Quingentesimo Sexagesimo septimo Iuramento Edwardi  
 Orwell procuratoris Domine Anne et Roti Grene executorum in huiusmodi testamento  
 nominatorum Quibus Comissa fuit administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum dicti  
 defuncti De bene &c Ac de pleno et fideli inuentario Necnon de plano et vero Compoto  
 Reddendo Ad Sancta Dei Euangelia Iuratis

[=The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws,  
 Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the  
 month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixty-seventh by the  
 oath of Edward Orwell, proctor of the Lady Anne and Rooke Greene, executors named in  
 the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods of  
 the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and to render a full and faithful  
 inventory, and also a plain and true account.]