

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 12 May, of Sir William Sneyd, maternal grandfather of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. The year in which the will was made appears to have been inadvertently omitted by either the testator or the scribe who copied it. According to the inscription on his tomb in Wolstanton church, Sir William Sneyd died on 6 June 1571. The testator provides a life estate for his second wife, Jane (nee Salter), the daughter of John Salter of Newport (d.1532) and widow of Thomas Chetwynd of Ingestre (d.1555), and leaves the rest of his estate to his eldest son and heir, Ralph Sneyd, also making provision for the marriages of Ralph's two daughter, Elizabeth and Mary. The testator makes no provision in the will for his son, George, or his daughters Elizabeth (who married Henry Touchet, Lord Audley), Mary (who married John Delves of Doddington), Anne (who married William Yonge of Kenton), Jane (who married Thomas Trentham of Meverell) or Margaret (who married John Somerford of Somerford), and it can be assumed that they had been provided for earlier. He appoints as executors his son, Ralph Sneyd, and his sons-in-law, Thomas Trentham and William Yonge. Thomas Trentham was the father of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. It seems likely that William Yonge was the father of the Giles Yonge who was a co-purchaser with Elizabeth Trentham and Ralph Sneyd of King's Place in Hackney in 1597 (see C 66/1476). Ralph Sneyd was appointed a trustee in several documents entered into by Oxford after his marriage to Elizabeth Trentham, and is bequeathed 'two gilt candlesticks' in Elizabeth Trentham's will (see PROB 11/121, ff. 74-5).

LM: Testamentum Willelmi Sneide

In dei nomine, amen. The 12th day of May in the year of the reign of Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c, I, Sir William Sneyd of Bradwell in ye county of Stafford, knight, being at this present something crazy (but thanks be given to God, of perfect mind and good remembrance), and knowing that there is nothing in this world so sure as the death natural of my body, and the time thereof most uncertain, and also minding to leave my lands, goods and chattels to my wife and children and such of my friends as I would should quietly enjoy the same, and renouncing all former wills heretofore made, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting and steadfastly believing that through the merits of his blessed passion and infinite mercy I shall be one of them that shall inherit the kingdom of heaven and life everlasting;

Item, I bequeath my body to be buried in Christian burial where my executors shall think most convenient;

Item, my will is that all and every my manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenance whereof I or any other person or persons to my use are or shall be seised at the time of my decease in fee simple, fee-tail general or special, shall be equally divided into three several parts, of the which I will that one part of ye said manors and lands so divided immediately from and after my decease shall wholly descend and revert, remain and come to Ralph Sneyd, esquire, son and heir apparent to me, the said Sir William, to ye only use and behoof of the said Ralph Sneyd and his heirs forever;

Also I will that the second part of all my said manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, reversions and services so being divided as aforesaid shall remain and be to Dame Jane, my wife, for and during her natural life, for and in recompense of her jointure and dower, the remainder thereof after her decease to my said son, Ralph Sneyd, and to his heirs forever;

And in like manner I will that the third part of all and every my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments, being divided as before, shall be and remain to such use, purposes and intents as are expressed and declared in and by this my last will and testament, and to and for the payment of my debts and legacies, discharging of my funerals, and to and for the further execution, performance and accomplishment of this my said last will and testament according to the true intent and meaning of the same as is aforesaid, the remainder of all the said third part of all my said manors, lands and tenements after my said last will and testament proved, performed and truly executed, I will shall wholly descend, revert, remain and come to my said son, Ralph Sneyd, and his heirs forever;

Also my will is that if it shall happen any of my manors, messuages, lands and tenements whereof I or any other person to my use stand or be seised in mortgage at this present hereafter to be redeemed, that my said son, Ralph Sneyd, or his heirs shall have the same money that shall be so paid for the redemption of the same to his or their only use and behoof forever (any clause in this my said last will and testament to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding);

Also, I do give and bequeath to Dame Jane Sneyd, my wife, three of my best featherbeds and bolsters with coverlets and blankets belonging to ye same, together with 6 pair of flaxen sheets;

The rest of all my household stuff both in Bradwell and in Chester I do give and bequeath to my said son, Ralph Sneyd, to his only use forever;

Item, I will that all such plate, corn and cattles as I have at the time of my decease shall remain to my executors towards the payment of my debts;

Also, my will is that all and every of my servants in household daily at the time of my decease shall have every of them one whole year's wages for and in ye name of a legacy;

Item, my will is and by this my last will I do give and bequeath to William Wynne, my servant, one yoke of oxen and one cow over and besides his year's wages, and also one cloth gown of my own with one doublet, one pair hose and one shirt, also my own, to be delivered to the said William by the discretion of my executors;

Also, my will is that whereas I have given to the said William Wynne one annuity or yearly rent of forty shillings during his natural life, that he, ye said William, shall quietly enjoy the same after my decease freely, whether he do service to my son and heir or no service;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Francis Turner, my butler, one of my cloth gowns, one pair of hose, one doublet, and one shirt of mine own, to be likewise delivered to the said Francis by the discretion of mine executors together with one cow and also a 40s in ready money if he be my servant at the time of my decease;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Anne Sneyd, my servant, daughter to one Walter Sneyd of Bridgnorth, deceased, a £10 in ready money towards her preferment of living;

Also, whereas I have granted to Alice Woodnett, wife to Lawrence Woodnett, and late wife to Richard Sneyd, my brother, deceased, one annuity or yearly rent of £6 out of all my lands and tenements in Willaston, to have and to hold for and during her natural life, my will is that she shall quietly have and perceive the same annual rent for & during her said life according to my said grant, as well after my decease as she hath in my lifetime;

Also I do give and bequeath to Elizabeth Sneyd, daughter to my said son and heir, Ralph Sneyd, six hundred marks of lawful English money, to be paid to her preferment in marriage, so that the said Elizabeth will be ordered, counselled and married by the consent of her said father and the most part of my executors, and if she will not so be married by their said counsel, but otherwise bestow herself, then my will is that she shall have but two hundred marks of the said six hundred marks, and no more;

Also I do likewise give and bequeath to Mary Sneyd, one other daughter to my said son, Ralph Sneyd, four hundred marks of lawful English money towards her preferment in marriage, so that the said Mary will be married by the counsel and consent of her father and ye most part of the rest of my executors, and if she will not be so ordered nor married, but otherwise bestow herself, then I will that she shall have but one hundred pounds, parcel of the said sum of four hundred marks, and no more;

Also, it is my will that Dame Jane, my wife, shall have all my new building standing in Bradwell in ye county of Stafford standing upon the east part of my court, and my new garden joining to ye same, with free egress and regress to ye kitchen, for and during all her natural life, so that she do dwell upon and inhabit the same;

Also, I do give and bequeath to every of my own daughters and to my daughter-in-law 40s in gold to make every of them one ring for a token of remembrance;

Also, I do likewise give and bequeath to George Sneyd, my son, 40s in gold likewise to make him a ring for a token of remembrance;

And for the true performance of this my said last will and testament I constitute, ordain and make the said Ralph Sneyd, my son and heir, Thomas Trentham, and William Yonge, my sons-in-law, my true and lawful executors to see this my said last will performed and accomplished in every point and article, and for their pains I do give to every of them not having any legacy before, a 40s to make every of them a ring for a token of remembrance;

In witness whereof I, the said Sir William Sneyd, to this my present last will have put my hand & seal, and the same delivered as my deed the day and year above-written. William Sneyd. Witness at the sealing and delivery of this will: Ralph Sneyd, William Yonge, George Sneyd, Lawrence Woodnett, William Wynne, John Somerforde.

Probatum fuit Testamentum huiusmodi Coram Domino Cantuariensis Archiepiscopo apud London xxijdo Die mensis Octobris anno Domini 1572 Iuramento Radulphi Sneyde vnius executorum &c Cui commissa fuit administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum iurium et Creditorum &c De bene &c iurato &c reseruata potestate reliquis executorum &c cum venerint &c

[=The same testament was proved before the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury at London on the 22nd day of the month of October in the year of the Lord 1572 by the oath of Ralph Sneyd, one of the executors etc., to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits etc., sworn to well etc., with power reserved to the rest of the executors etc. when they shall have come etc.]