

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 6 July 1575 and proved 27 September 1575, of Christopher Shernborne [Sharburne, Sharnebourne, Sharnborne, Sherborne] of Shernborne, Norfolk, first husband of Oxford's first cousin, Anne (nee de Vere) Shernborne Stubbe Stapley (d.1617), the eldest daughter of Oxford's uncle, Aubrey de Vere, and his wife, Margaret Spring, the daughter of John Spring of Lavenham, Suffolk. For the Shernborne pedigree, see Parkin, Charles, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol. X (London: William Miller, 1809), p. 358; and Rye, Walter, ed., *The Visitation of Norfolk* (London: Harleian Society, 1891), p. 246, both available online. For the brass of the testator's ancestor, Thomas Shernborne, Chamberlain to Queen Margaret of Anjou, 1458, see <http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/page315.html>.

As indicated in the will below, the testator and his wife, Anne, had only one child, a son, Francis.

After the testator's death, Anne married John Stubbe [Stubbs], author of *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf* which criticized Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to the Duke of Alencon. For the publication of this tract, Stubbe lost his right hand on 3 November 1579, and was imprisoned until 1581. For the will of John Stubbe, see TNA PROB 11/75, ff. 313-4.

After the death of John Stubbe, by whom it would appear she had no children, Anne married Anthony Stapley. For her will, dated 20 January 1617 and proved 4 June 1617, see TNA PROB 11/129, f. 567.

RM: Testamentum Christoferi Sherborne

In the name of God, Amen. The sixth day of July in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred seventy and five and in the seventeen year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, I, Christopher Shernborne of Shernborne in the county of Norfolk, gentleman, knowing by God's creation that I am naturally born and ordained to die and depart this transitory life, and therefore minding to set order for the disposition as well of all my messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments as also of all my movable goods and chattels, do therefore make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, most assuredly hoping and faithfully believing to be saved through the merits of the death and passion of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and my body to be buried in the church of Shernborne aforesaid in the chapel there by my father;

Item, I give and bequeath towards the reparations of the church of Shernborne twenty shillings;

Item, I give to the poor man's box of Shernborne ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor man's box of Snettisham ten shillings;

Item, I give to the poor man's box of Ingoldisthorpe ten shillings;

Item, I give to the curate of Shernborne for my tithes negligently forgotten three shillings and four pence;

Also I give and bequeath unto my brother, Henry Shernborne, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, to be paid unto him at the Annunciation of Our Lady come twelve month next after my decease;

Also I give and bequeath unto my brother, Anthony Shernborne, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence, to be paid unto him at the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady which shall next happen after my decease;

Also I give unto Geoffrey Lancaster my black curtal nag;

Item, I give unto John Doggette, my kinsman, twenty shillings in money and a pair of black hose and a white fustian doublet faced with red;

Item, I give to my sister, Dorothy, ten ewes now going in Shernborne ling;

Item, I give unto my mother my gold ring which is my signet;

Item, I give Elizabeth Sangram one stone of black wall;

And as touching the disposition of all my manors, messuages, lands & tenements, first I will that Anne, my wife, shall have my manor in Snettisham with the appurtenances called Dame Cecily's, and all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Snettisham aforesaid during the natural life of my mother, Blyth Smallpece, and after the decease of my said mother I will and my mind is that my said wife shall have the manor of Shernborne with the appurtenances and all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Shernborne aforesaid during the natural life of my said wife;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Anne, my wife, all those lands, tenements, marshes and hereditaments which I late purchased of Sir Nicholas Lestrangle lying and being in Snettisham and Ingoldisthorpe until such time as Francis, my son, shall accomplish his full age of one and twenty years, and then I will and my mind is that if the said Anne, my wife, cannot quietly enjoy and possess the said manor of Shernborne and other the lands, tenements and hereditaments in Shernborne aforesaid before devised unto her, that then my said wife shall have the foresaid manor of Dame Cecily's with the appurtenances and

all other my lands and tenements in Snettisham aforesaid, and also all the foresaid lands, tenements, marshes and hereditaments which I purchased of Sir Nicholas Strange lying in Snettisham and Ingoldisthorpe aforesaid for and during her natural life;

And if my said wife shall quietly possess and enjoy the said manor, lands and tenements in Shernborne aforesaid during her natural life, then I will that my said son, Francis, shall have all my foresaid manor, lands, tenements, marshes and hereditaments in Snettisham and Ingoldisthorpe aforesaid, he to enter the same at his age of one and twenty years;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Francis, my son, after the decease of my said wife, all my foresaid manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances, to have and to hold to him and to the heirs males of his body lawfully to be begotten, and if it shall happen my son, Francis, to depart this present life without heirs males of his body lawfully to be begotten, my said wife then living, then I will that my said wife shall have all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances aforesaid during her natural life, and after the decease of my said wife and of my said son without issue male of his body to be begotten, then I give and bequeath unto my brother, Henry Shernborne, all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances, to have and to hold to him and to the heirs males of his body lawfully to [+be] begotten, and if it shall happen my said brother, Henry, to depart this present life without heirs males of his body to be begotten, then I give and bequeath all my said manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with the appurtenances to my brother, Anthony Shernborne, to have and to hold to him and to the heirs males of his body lawfully to be begotten, and for default of such heirs males of the body of the said Anthony lawfully to be begotten, then I will all the said manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with th' appurtenances wholly to remain to the right heirs of me, the said Christopher, forever;

All the residue of my goods, chattels and movables not before bequeathed, I wholly give and bequeath them to the said Anne, my wife, whom I make and ordain sole executrix of this my testament and last will, she to pay my debts and bring up my son, and see this my said testament and last will well and truly performed;

Also I make Thomas Might, gentleman, my supervisor of this my testament and last will, to whom I give for his pains my young grey gelding;

Also I give unto Stephen Shortinge, servant to the said Thomas Might, twenty shillings. Christopher Shernborne. These being witnesses: Thomas Might, gentleman, Anthony Shernborne, gentleman, John Dogget, gentleman, and Stephen Shortinge.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum Coram domino apud London vicesimo septimo die mensis Septembris Anno domini millesimo quingentesimo septuagesimo quinto Iuramento magistri Georgij Harrison notarij publici procuratoris Anne relicte et executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate Ac approbatum insinuatum &c

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Commissaque fuit Administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum prefate executrici de bene &c Ac de pleno et fideli Inventario &c Necnon de plano et vero compoto reddendo &c Iurate

[= The above-written testament was proved before the Lord [+Archbishop] at London on the twenty-seventh day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-fifth by the oath of Master George Harrison, notary public, proctor of Anne, relict and executrix named in the same testament, and probated, entered etc., and administration was granted of all and singular the goods to the forenamed executrix, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and to render a full and faithful inventory etc., and also a plain and true account etc.]