

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 18 April 1581, together with a codicil dated 6 May 1581 and a nuncupative codicil dated 10 May 1581, proved 23 November 1581, of Sir William Cordell (1522 – 17 May 1581), Master of the Rolls, and one of the 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.

For a copy of the testator's will of lands, dated 1 January 1581, see Howard, Joseph Jackson, ed., *The Visitation of Suffolke*, (Lowestoft: Samuel Tymms, 1866), Vol. I, pp. 248-59 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ExI2AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA248>

In the will below the testator states that he had been executor to Sir Roger Cholmley (c.1485–1565), whose daughter, Frances Cholmley, was the first wife of Sir Thomas Russell (c.1520 - 9 April 1574) of Strensham, who by his second wife, Margaret Lygon, was the father of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon.

The testator was appointed supervisor of the will, TNA PROB 11/51/33, of Edmund Beaupre (d. 14 February 1568), esquire, for whose connection to John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, see the inquisition post mortem taken at Stratford Langthorne on 18 January 1563, five months after the Earl's death, TNA C 142/136/12:

And the foresaid jurors moreover say that before the death of the foresaid late Earl & after the making of the said Act of Parliament a certain Edmund Beaupre and Edward Thursby, esquire, recovered against the said late Earl the foresaid manors of Barwicks and Scotneys in the county of Essex by writ of the Lady Queen of forma donatio in le descendere, and by virtue of that recovery the same Edmund Beaupre and Edward Thursby were thereof seised in their demesne as of fee-tail, and thus being seised, the foresaid late Earl and the forenamed Lady Margery, his wife, now Countess of Oxford, purchased for them and the heirs of the same late Earl of the same Edmund & Edward the foresaid manors of Barwicks and Scotneys

For mention of Sir William Cordell in the will of Sir John Wentworth (1494 – 15 September 1567) of Gosfield Hall in Essex, friend and executor of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, see the will of Sir John Wentworth, TNA PROB 11/49/288.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

According to the *ODNB*, the testator was:

the eldest son of John Cordell, originally from Edmonton, who had become the principal servant to Sir William Clopton (d. 1531) of Kentwell in Long Melford, Suffolk, and

Lincoln's Inn. His mother was Emma, daughter of Henry Webb of Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire.

In the will below the testator leaves a bequest to his 'cousin, Margaret Webb'.

In an entail in his will of lands (*supra*, p. 255), the testator mention 'my cousin, Thomas Cordell of London, son unto Robert Cordell, late of London, beer-brewer, deceased'.

According to the will of the testator's mother, Emme Cordell, dated 3 November 1554 and proved 14 February 1555, TNA PROB 11/37/266, the testator had three younger brothers and two sisters:

-Francis Cordell. He appears to be the Francis Cordell buried at Melford on 31 November 1583. See Howard, *supra*, p. 247. However according to the History of Parliament, his brother, Edward Cordell, succeeded him in 1586, which suggests he did not die until that year.

-John Cordell. He may be the John Cordell buried at Melford on 7 January 1563 [=1564?]. See Howard, *supra*, p. 247. In her will, the testator's mother leaves a bequest to his wife, whose name is unknown.

-Edward Cordell (d. 9 December 1590), one of the Six Clerks in Chancery, who married firstly Elizabeth Harrison (d.1586) of Norfolk, and secondly Abigail Heveningham, a gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth. See Emerson at:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenH-He.htm>

Abigail Heveningham was the daughter of Sir Anthony Heveningham (d. 22 November 1557) by Mary Shelton (d.1571), and the widow of Sir George Digby (d.1587), by whom she had three sons and a daughter. See the will of Sir George Digby, dated 1 April 1586 and proved 11 May 1587, TNA PROB 11/70/268, and the History of Parliament entry for Sir George Digby at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/digby-george-1550-87>

For Edward Cordell, see his will, dated 7 December 1590 and proved 20 January 1591, TNA PROB 11/77/25, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cordell-edward-1536-90>

-Thomasine Cordell. In the will of her mother, Emme Cordell, she is referred to as 'Thomasine Watson, my daughter', and by her first husband appears to have had a daughter, Anne Watson. Emme Cordell leaves her daughter, Jane Cordell, 'my house on the green called Ives' on condition she pay 20s a year towards the bringing up of Anne

Watson until she reaches the age of 16. Thomasine married secondly Gilbert Gager (d.1590), by whom she was the mother of the jurist and neo-Latin poet and dramatist, William Gager (1555-1622). See the edition of Gager's works by Dana Sutton at:

<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/>

See also Dr Sutton's discussion of the relationship between the Gager, Alington and Cordell families at:

<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/gager/poetry/intro.html>

See also the *ODNB* entry:

Gager, William (1555–1622), Latin playwright and poet, was born on 24 July 1555, possibly in Long Melford, Suffolk, the son of Gilbert Gager (d. 1590) and Thomasine, sister of Sir William Cordell, master of the rolls. He had a sister, Mary, who was born in 1560, and a brother, John, who died in 1630. William Gager was educated at Westminster School and from there was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1574. He graduated as BA on 4 December 1577, MA on 5 June 1580, and took his BCL and DCL on 30 June 1589.

At Oxford Gager became well known both as a Latin poet and as a playwright.

For litigation brought by the testator's executors against Thomasine Gager and Peter Crisell and his wife Mary, see TNA C 2/Eliz/C15/60.

-Jane Cordell (d.1603?), who married Richard Alington (d.1561), Master of the Rolls, a younger son of Sir Giles Alington (1500-1586) of Horseheath by his second wife, Alice Middleton (buried 20 September 1563), widow of Thomas Elrington, whose mother, Alice Harpur Middleton, was the second wife of Sir Thomas More. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Thomas More:

In the summer of 1511 More's wife, Jane, died, and within a month he married Alice [see More, Alice (b. in or after 1474, d. in or before 1551)], the widow of John Middleton, a wealthy London merchant. She brought a daughter, Alice (c.1501–1563), later the wife of Sir Giles Alington, into the More household.

See also the *ODNB* entry for Alice Harpur Middleton More:

More [née Harpur; other married name Middleton], Alice, Lady More (b. in or after 1474, d. in or before 1551), second wife of Sir Thomas More, was born, probably at Epping, Essex, to Elizabeth (d. in or after 1510), coheir of Sir Peter Ardern of Markhall, Essex, and her second husband, Sir Richard Harpur (d. 1492). After her father's death her mother married Sir Andrew Dymoke (d. 1508). Before 1492 Alice married John Middleton, a London mercer, who named her co-executor of his will in 1509 and left his fortune to her and their daughters, Alice (c.1501–1563) and Helen (d. c.1510).

In 1511, about a month after his first wife's death, Alice married Thomas More (1478–1535)

. . . . She died on or before 25 April 1551 Her daughter Alice had three children with Thomas Elrington and nine with her second husband, Sir Giles Alington. Through the Alington line Alice was an ancestor of Elizabeth II.

See the will of Jane Cordell Alington, dated 15 July 1602 and proved 7 January 1604, TNA PROB 11/103/18; the will of Richard Alington, dated 4 April and 12 June 1561 and proved 3 February 1562, TNA PROB 11/45/31; and the monument to Richard Alington in the Rolls Chapel at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/52219527@N00/6044830283>

See also ‘Extracts from the Parish Registers of St. Dunstan’s in the West, London’, *Collectanea Topographica & Genealogica*, Vol. V, (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1838), p. 218 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=YScAAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA218>

[Richard Alington, a] younger son of Sir Giles Alington, of Horseheath, co. Cambridge, who died in 1586 (see pedigree in Clutterbuck’s Hertfordshire, vol. ii. p. 542). His wife . . . was Jane, daughter of John Cordell, and sister and coheir to Sir William Cordell, Master of the Rolls Richard Alington was buried in the Rolls Chapel in 1561; where a handsome monument was erected to his memory, with effigies of himself and wife, and three children; see the epitaphs in Stowe.

See also the pedigree in Maris, John, ‘A Genealogy Report for Sir Giles Alington’, February 2017, which can be downloaded at:

www.marisancestry.co.uk/Reports/Giles%20Alington.pdf

By Richard Alington (d.1561), the testator’s sister, Jane Cordell, had three daughters:

-**Mary Alington**, eldest daughter, who married Sir John Savage (d.14 July 1615), son and heir of Sir John Savage (d. 5 December 1597) of Rock Savage in Clifton, Cheshire by Elizabeth Manners (c.1530 – 8 August 1570), daughter of Thomas Manners (c.1497-1543), 1st Earl of Rutland, by whom she is said to have had five sons and two daughters, of whom only three children are mentioned in the will below:

(1) **John Savage**, eldest son, who appears to have predeceased his father.

(2) **Thomas Savage**, described in the will below as ‘second son of the said John Savage, esquire’, but eventual heir to his father. For his marriage see the *ODNB* entry for his wife:

Savage [née Darcy], Elizabeth, suo jure Countess Rivers (1581–1651), courtier and victim of popular violence, was the daughter of Thomas Darcy, third Baron Darcy of Chiche (d. 1640), later created Viscount Colchester (1621) and Earl Rivers (1626), and his wife, Mary Kitson (d. 1644), daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson of Hengrave, Suffolk. On 14 May 1602 she married Thomas Savage (c.1586–1635), with whom she had a large family of eleven sons and eight daughters. Savage was the eldest surviving son of Sir John Savage of Cheshire and his wife, Mary Allington, daughter and coheir to Sir Richard Allington, from which family he inherited the manor of Melford Hall, Suffolk. Savage inherited his father's baronetcy in 1615; in November 1626 he was created Viscount Savage. At his death, on 20 November 1635, Elizabeth inherited Melford Hall, which together with St Osyth Priory in Essex formed her principal residences. Her father died in February 1640 and was succeeded by her eldest son, John Savage, as Earl Rivers; fourteen months later, on 21 April 1641, she herself was created Countess Rivers suo jure, for life.

(3) Elizabeth Savage.

- **Anne Alington.** She is mentioned in her father's 1561 will, and was unmarried at the time the testator made the will below.

-**Cordell Alington.** She is not mentioned by name in her father's 1561 will, and was unmarried at the time the testator made the will below. It appears she was christened Cordell as a compliment to the testator, an impression strengthened by the fact that the testator bequeathed her a basin with his coat of arms 'to be gilt in the bottom thereof', and also bequeathed her, in reversion, his 'jewel of the unicorn's horn'.

Cordell Alington later married, as his first wife, Oxford's brother-in-law, Sir John Stanhope (see his will, TNA PROB 11/117/473), by whom she was the mother of Philip Stanhope, 1st Earl of Chesterfield, for whom see the *ODNB* entry:

Stanhope, Philip, first earl of Chesterfield (1583/4–1656), royalist nobleman, was the son of Sir John Stanhope (d. 1609) and his first wife, Cordell Alington. Aged seventy-two when he died, Stanhope must have been born in 1583 or 1584; he may well have been the Philip Stanhope, son of John Stanhope, baptized at Holy Trinity-the-Less, London, on 6 January 1584. In the reign of Elizabeth the Stanhopes of Shelford had become one of the leading families in Nottinghamshire with substantial estates in the south of the shire. Philip Stanhope was knighted in 1605 and in the same year married Catherine, daughter of Francis, Lord Hastings. After her death in 1636 he married again; his second wife was Anne (d. 1667), widow of Sir Humphrey Ferrers and daughter of Sir John Pakington of Westwood, Worcestershire, and his wife, Dorothy Smith.

For the testator's family background, see also the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cordell-william-1524-81>

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTATOR, THE CLOPTON FAMILY, AND THE EARLS OF OXFORD

See 'Some Interesting People from Long Melford' at:

<http://www.longmelford.co.uk/History/Melford%20people/>

Clopton

William Clopton (1383-1446) inherited Kentwell at the age of twenty from his mother, who had owned it before she was married. He fought at the battle of Agincourt (1415) for Henry the Fifth of England against France, and started the rebuilding of the great church at Long Melford before he died in 1446.

John Clopton (1423-1497), son of William Clopton, was a close friend of the Earl of Oxford, and was arrested with him in 1461 for treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London. (It was the height of the Wars of the Roses, and Edward of York had just seized the English throne, so "treason" here means loyalty to the previous regime.) The Earl and his son were executed, but John Clopton was released, and returned to Kentwell. Shortly afterwards he extended his father's work on the north side of the church, and later became the chief organiser, fund raiser and benefactor of the church rebuilding scheme. The church was finished in 1496, (more or less as we see it today) and John Clopton is buried there between the Clopton Chapel and the Sanctuary.

The Clopton family owned and developed Kentwell for many generations, and built much of the Kentwell Hall that can be seen today. . . .

Cordell

(Sir) William Cordell leased the manor of Melford Hall in 1547 for £100 a year, and acquired it outright from Queen Mary in 1554. He was a lawyer deeply involved in public affairs who eventually became Solicitor General and later was Master of the Rolls. He was knighted and became MP for Suffolk, and Speaker of the House of Commons. He must have been a remarkable man, as he served King Henry the Eighth and each of his children in turn, through all the political and religious turbulence of the Tudor period. In Long Melford he built the "Trinity Hospital" on the green in front of the church as an almshouse for twelve poor men and a warden from the village. In 1578 Sir William entertained Queen Elizabeth at Melford Hall in the grandest style, setting an (expensive) example to the rest of Suffolk. He died in 1581, leaving a widow but no children, and the Melford Hall estate passed to the Savage family.

For John Clopton (1423-1497) and John de Vere (1408-1462), 12th Earl of Oxford, see also Ross, James, *John de Vere, Thirteenth Earl of Oxford (1442-1513)*, 'The Foremost Man of the Kingdom', (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011), p. 42:

William Worcester mentions another man, John Clopton, who was arrested but not executed. Clopton certainly had a general pardon from the king on 27 February 1462, the day after the earl was executed, which would suggest involvement in the conspiracy. The pardon should not be taken as evidence of a reward for betrayal. Clopton was among those who had been enfeoffed by the twelfth earl in 1456, and although this is the only known connection between the two, he did go on to serve the thirteenth earl, which makes it unlikely that he betrayed the conspiracy. His devotion to the family was demonstrated by his commissioning of a stained glass image of Elizabeth, countess of Oxford, in the nave of his parochial church at Long Melford, Suffolk, along with images of John Montgomery and William Tyrell.

In the will below, the testator requests burial in the parish church of Melford near ‘the sepulture of John Clopton’.

MARRIAGE

The testator married Mary Clopton, the only child of Richard Clopton by his first wife, Margaret Bozun, daughter of Sir Richard Bozun (died 18 August 1524) of Barrowby, Lincolnshire, and Dorothy Dene, daughter and heiress of James Dene. According to the *ODNB*, the testator’s wife was ‘the granddaughter of his father’s master, being the daughter of Richard Clopton of Groton’. For further details concerning Mary Clopton’s family background, see her will, TNA PROB 11/68/545.

By Mary Clopton, the testator had two sons and two daughters who died during his lifetime.

TESTATOR’S EXECUTORS AND OVERSEERS

For Gabriel Goodman (1528–1601), Dean of Westminster, see the *ODNB* entry.

For the testator’s executor, Sir George Carey (c.1541–1616) of Cockington, Devonshire, Lord Deputy of Ireland, see the *ODND* entry, and the Cary pedigree in Colby, Frederic Thomas, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Devon in the Year 1620*, (London: Harleian Society, 1872), Vol. VI, p. 51 at:

https://archive.org/stream/VisitationOfTheCountyOfDevonInTheYear1620/VisitationCountyDevon_St.George_424pgs63179646#page/n63/mode/2up

For the testator’s supervisor, Sir Christopher Wray (c.1522–1592), judge and speaker of the House of Commons, see the *ODNB* entry.

For the testator’s supervisor, Sir Gilbert Gerard (d. 4 February 1593), Queen Elizabeth’s Attorney General, see the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/gerard-sir-gilbert-1593>

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

William Cecil

For William Cecil (1521/1-1598), 1st Baron Burghley, see the *ODNB* entry. His granddaughter, Dorothy Cecil (d. 10 November 1613), married Sir Giles Alington (buried 23 December 1638), great-grandson and heir of Sir Giles Alington (d. 20 August 1586), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/69/523. See also the History of Parliament entry for Sir Giles Alington (1500-1586) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/alington-giles-1499-1586>

Alington had made his will on 26 Feb. 1580, leaving cash, plate and other presents to his wife and family and £20 for division among the poor of four Cambridgeshire and Suffolk villages. The executors were his wife, his youngest son, who was also residuary legatee, a grandson, and Sir William Cordell, who had predeceased him. Lord Burghley, who was named supervisor, was left a cup worth £10 'for the duty, love and good will that I have ever borne unto him' and was asked to see that the marriage arranged between Alington's heir and a daughter of Burghley's heir-apparent Thomas Cecil should take place, as it later did.

Sir Roger Cholmley

For Sir Roger Cholmley (c.1485–1565), Chief Justice of the King's Bench, see the *ODNB* entry:

Cholmley, Sir Roger (c.1485–1565), judge, was the illegitimate son of Sir Richard Cholmley (d. 1521) of Thorndon on the Hill, Yorkshire, sometime lieutenant of the Tower of London, who died without legitimate issue. . . . About 1518 he married a widow, Christiana Hurst, who died in 1558. They had two daughters. It was probably the absence of a male heir that turned his mind to charitable enterprises, and in 1562 he founded what is now Highgate School.

As noted above, Sir Roger Cholmley's daughter, Frances Cholmley, married Sir Thomas Russell (c.1520 - 9 April 1574) of Strensham, who by his second wife, Margaret Lygon, was the father of Thomas Russell (1570-1634), overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon. For Sir Thomas Russell (c.1520 - 9 April 1574) see his will, TNA PROB 11/57/83, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/russell-sir-thomas-1520-74>

For Sir Thomas Russell (c.1520 - 9 April 1574), see his will, TNA PROB 11/57/83. For Thomas Russell (1570-1634), executor of the will of William Shakespeare, see his will, TNA PROB 11/165/424.

See also the will of Sir Roger Cholmley, dated 30 April 1565 and proved 4 July 1565, TNA PROB 11/48/205, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/cholmley-sir-roger-1495-1565>

Edmund Dudley

For Dudley, Edmund (c.1462–1510), grandfather of Queen Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, see the *ODNB* entry.

Matthew Parker

For Matthew Parker (1504–1575), Archbishop of Canterbury, see the *ODNB* entry.

Edward North

For Edward North (c.1504-1564), 1st Baron North, see the *ODNB* entry.

Sir Robert Rochester

For Sir Robert Rochester (d. 28 November 1557), see the *ODNB* entry and his will, dated 27 May 1557 and proved 13 December 1558, TNA PROB 11/42A/105.

Sir Robert Rochester was receiver to Oxford's father, John de Vere (1516 – 3 August 1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, and according to the History of Parliament entry, may have been brought up in the household of the Earls of Oxford. 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.³ 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), 13th Earl of Oxford, in which Sir Robert Rochester (d. 28 November 1557) is bequeathed 10 marks:

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

William Clecton

The name 'William Clecton' in the PCC copy of the will appears to a scribal error. In the testator's will of lands he is described as 'William Necton, her Majesty's feodary of London and Middlesex, Gentleman'.

The testator is mentioned in the will, TNA PROB 11/52/234, of Richard Heywood (d.1570), great-uncle of the poet, John Donne.

The testator was appointed overseer of the will, TNA PROB 11/60/379, of Alexander Denton (d.1578), husband of Mary Martyn (d.1574), half sister of Humphrey Martyn (d.1587?), the addressee of the *Langham Letter* which describes Leicester's entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in the summer of 1575. See the Langham page on this website.

LM: T{estamentum} Domini Will{el}mi Cordell mi{li}t{is}

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, one very true eternal and everlasting God without beginning or ending, to whom be all honour and glory world without end, so be it. I, Sir William Cordell of Long Melford in the county of Suffolk, knight, and Master of the Rolls of the Queen's Majesty's High Court of Chancery, being this present eighteen day of April in the year of Our Lord God 1581 and in the 23rd years of our said Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth whole in body and in good health and perfect memory, for the which I most humbly thank Almighty God, calling unto my remembrance the transitory, dangerous and incertain estate of our peregrination and life in this vale of misery, and that we be all, and through the disobedience and offence of our first parents, made subject to death and thereby ordained to depart this

world and to return unto our first mother, the earth, and for that the time thereof is not certainly prescribed and appointed unto us, to th' end we should so direct our lives and conversation that we may be found ready and worthy to enter with the bridegroom whensoever he cometh, therefore I have thought it my bounden duty before I shall depart this transitory life to put some order in such worldly goods the which it hath pleased Almighty God, far above my merits and worthiness, to bestow upon me in such ample sort and manner as his goodness hath not done to any other of my ancestors, to my knowledge, for the which as I am the more bound unto his divine Majesty, and do accordingly render unto him my most humble and bounden thanks for his said benefits, so I do acknowledge them to be his only gifts, and that all goodness cometh and is derived from him, most humbly beseeching his divine Majesty that he will for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake pardon and forgive me the evil spending or bestowing of such lands and goods as his grace and favour hath made me owner of, and that he will now give me the grace to order and dispose the rest of the same goods as may be to the due satisfaction of the world, to the comfort of my soul, and above all things to his glory and honour;

And in hope he will herein assist me with his grace, I do make and declare this my last will and testament concerning the disposition and order of all my goods and chattels, whatsoever they be, in manner and form following:

First I commend my soul unto the mercy of the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, the which my faith do recognize to be God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and yet not three gods, but one most true and everlasting God in equality and substance, who in the person of the said Son, my Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath redeemed my soul by the shedding of his most precious blood and by the merits of his most bitter death and passion from the tyranny of the Devil and from eternal damnation, fully trusting and believing that by the merits of the said death and passion and by the blood of my said Saviour, Jesus Christ, to have full pardon and remission of all my sins and iniquities, and to have by his only mercy and for his said Son Jesus Christ's sake, without the which the angels in heaven cannot stand sure before his divine Majesty, the fruition of his Deity and everlasting joy with his most glorious Mother and immaculate Virgin, Our Lady St Mary, and with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the rest of the holy company of heaven;

And if it shall please Almighty God to call me out of this world either within the town of Melford aforesaid or within the city of London or the suburbs of the same or within one hundred miles of the said town of Melford, then I will my body shall be buried within the choir of the said parish church of Melford on the south side thereof as nigh as can be going into the vestry of the said church right against the sepulture of John Clopton, esquire, who lieth buried on thother side where the sepulture at Easter time was [f. 335r] accustomedly(?);

And I will that my executors shall within two years next after my decease, or sooner if they can, cause a monument to be made within the said wall, and as nigh to the place as they can where my body shall be buried, and to bestow upon the same one hundred

pounds, requiring and charging my executors that the same be done with my arms and my wife's thereupon, and otherwise agreeable to my calling;

As for the residue of my funerals, I leave them to the order and discretion of my executors, willing them to do the same with such ceremonies as is accustomed to a man of my degree, and yet without any superfluous charge or pomp;

And I will and charge my said executors to give and distribute within one year next after my decease in money amongst the poor people, and especially the poor householders that have charge of children and amongst such as be impotent and aged, the sum of four score and five pounds of lawful money of England in this form following, viz.:

Amongst my poor men and women as shall be within my hospital at Melford at the time of my decease and which do weekly receive of my gift 12d apiece the sum of ten pounds, to be bestowed and employed about such necessary things, either in bedding or linen or such things as they and their house hath most need of, and not to their private uses;

And amongst the rest of the poor, needy and aged persons and amongst such as be most charged with children within the said town of Melford, the sum of twenty pounds;

And amongst the like persons within the towns and parishes of Sudbury and Lavenham, to every of the said parishes ten pounds, and to the poor people of the parishes of Acton, Alpheton & Shimpling and Great Freckenham within the said county of Suffolk in the which I have some land and living, to every of the said parishes five pounds of lawful money;

And to the relief of the poor prisoners within the gaol of Bury in the said county of Suffolk, to be distributed amongst them the Good Friday next after my decease in bread and drink and in shirts and smocks by the discretion of my executors the sum of ten pounds;

And amongst the poor and needy persons within the parish of Saint Dunstan's in the West nigh unto Fleet Street within the city of London the sum of five pounds, in the distribution whereof I will my executors shall have a special regard that vagabonds and idle persons receive not the benefit thereof, nor to make any common dole, but to be delivered at home at their houses either in ready money or in bread, coals, shirts, smocks, petticoats, [+and?] suchlike to that value by the good discretion of my executors;

Item, I will and give unto the parson of Melford for my tithes and offerings by me forgotten or withholden in discharge of my conscience the sum of twenty shillings;

And to the vicar of St Dunstan's in the West aforesaid for my like tithes twenty shillings;

Item, I will and give to the reparations of Melford church, to be paid unto the churchwardens of the said church by my executors where my said executors shall think it

may [+be?] best employed about the reparations of the same church, the sum of ten pounds;

I will also that my executors shall, the Good Friday next after my decease, give and bestow among the poor prisoners of Newgate thirty-three shillings four pence, and to other of the prisons, as the Fleet, Ludgate, both the Counters, the Marshalsea, the King's Bench, the White Lion and to the Gatehouse at Westminster, to every of them twenty shillings, which I would have bestowed in bread amongst them, respecting most chiefly [+those?] that do lie in the said prisons miserable for debts or for their fees;

Item, I do give unto the Hospital of St Bartholomews, the Greyfriars now called Christ's Church, and Saint Thomas in Southwark, to every of them five pounds;

Item, I will that my said executors shall likewise within one year next after my decease distribute and give to the poor scholars of the University of Cambridge the sum of ten pounds, and amongst the like in the University of Oxenford the sum of ten pounds, in the distribution whereof I will my said executors shall have the chiefest regard unto such as be most towards in virtue and learning and have most need of help;

I also require my said executors that they distribute the money which I have appointed to the poor scholars of the said universities by th' advice of the most grave and wise men that hath been or presently are of the said university, and that the said scholars be good, virtuous and honest, and no discon[illegible]wers from their books;

Also I will and give unto the marriages of poor maidens within the said parish of Melford and that were born in the said parish and have but poor friends to help them the sum of twenty pounds to be distributed amongst twenty of such poor maidens at the days of their marriages, to every of them twenty shillings;

Item, I give to the amending and repairing of the highways within the said parish where most need shall seem to be the sum of six pounds thirteen shillings four pence, and towards the repairing of the bridge commonly called Borley bridge and Radbridge the sum of ten pounds;

Item, I will that my executors shall at my costs and charges keep my house and all my family by the space of one month [f. 335v] next after my decease, and then I will and give unto every of my servants that hath wages of me one year's wages over and besides that which shall be then due unto them;

Item, I will and specially charge and require my executors that they shall make diligent search and inquisition to understand as shortly as they can after my decease if I have done any wrong or injury to any person, or that if any person can charge me with any injury done unto him by me or by my procurement, or that I stand indebted unto any either by specialty or bond, or can be otherwise justly proved that I owe unto him either for matter of building or otherwise, that then my said executors upon just proof made thereof shall cause due satisfaction to be made unto the said person, especially whom I have injured,

the which I trust be none, for God I call to witness, and I most humbly thank him therefore, my own conscience neither doth nor can accuse me thereof;

And likewise that they pay my said debts as shortly as can be after my decease;

Item, I will and require my said executors that they perform and cause to be satisfied and paid as much as is due unto any person by force of the several testaments of my mother, Eme Cordell, Mrs Margaret Cooke, Robert Cornish, Sir Robert Rochester and Sir Roger Cholmley, knights, and Sir Edward North, knight, late Lord North, to whose testaments I am executor, and to see the said several testaments justly performed in all things that is to do;

Also I will that my executors shall within two months next after my decease, or sooner if they can, make or cause to be made by the oaths of four or six honest persons a just and perfect inventory of all my plate, jewels, household stuff, and of all other goods and chattels, as well movable and unmovable, wheresoever they remain, and of the true and very value of them, my wife's apparel, chains, biliments, rings and other jewels which she commonly useth to occupy and wear only except;

And after my inventory so made, I will, dispose and give unto my said wife, Dame Marie Cordell, as much of my said plate and household stuff as shall be of and to the value of two hundred pounds of lawful money of England, whereof one hundred pound to be in household stuff and the other hundred pounds in plate, and for part thereof I will she shall have the basin and ewer parcel gilt with my arms and hers joined and engraven thereupon, if she will;

And the rest to that value I will shall be delivered unto her by my said executors;

Nevertheless my mind is that she shall have some part thereof at her choice and election, which she like best;

Item, I will and give to my said wife all her apparel and all such chains, biliments, bracelets and other jewels the which she hath in her possession [+and?] accustomedly use[th] to wear, and which I have before excepted not to be valued and put in my inventory, and though by the law they ought to be, yet I give them to my said wife;

Provided always and my will and mind is that my said wife shall, before she receive the said gifts and legacies by this my present testament devised unto her, she shall enter into bond unto such persons as I shall name to be executors of this my last will & testament in the sum of two thousand pounds that she shall not claim any dowry of any of the lands, tenements and hereditaments that I have sold or hereafter shall sell to any person whereof she ought to be endowed, but shall stand satisfied with such portion of land as I have by my will assigned unto her in recompense thereof, which is in my conscience a full third part of all such lands, tenements and hereditaments as I have been or am sole seised of in possession of my estate of inheritance since the marriage between us whereof she ought lawfully by the laws of this realm to be endowed of;

And I am sorry that my state is no better in respect of the debts which I owe and which in conscience are to be discharged that I cannot deal more liberally with her for th' increase of her living;

And if my said wife shall refuse to enter into bonds unto those whom I appoint to be my executors in the said sum of two thousand pounds, or if she shall either by writ of dower or by any other lawful mean recover or demand her dower of any the said lands, tenements and hereditaments as I have sold to any person or persons whereby I shall be in the danger of the forfeiture of my bonds or covenants I have made to divers, as I hope and trust she will not, then I will that all legacies and gifts that I have given unto her either by this my testament or by my last will in writing touching the disposition of my lands shall be utterly unto her void, and that all my said gifts and legacies given unto her by this my testament or by my last will shall go and be to the performance of this my testament or to such other uses as I have by other [=either] of them limited & appointed the same;

Item, I will and give unto my dearly beloved sister, Mrs Jane Alington, for a token and remembrance of my goodwill and brotherly love, my best standing cup which I had of the gift of the most reverend Father in God, Matthew, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, most heartily praying her to accept [+it?] in good part since my power and ability in respect of my debts is no better able to remember her, and for that I do also remember her in my last will touching my lands;

Item, I give unto my niece Savage, her [f. 336r] daughter, for a like remembrance another cup of the value of ten pounds, or ten pounds in money for it;

Item, I give unto my niece, Anne Alington, for a like remembrance one standing cup of the value of ten pounds, or £10 in money;

Item, I will and give unto my niece and god-daughter, Cordell Alington, one basin and ewer of silver parcel gilt of the value of thirty pounds wherein I will my executors shall cause my arms to be gilt in the bottom thereof, which I would have delivered unto her the day of her marriage, praying her on my blessing to keep in in remembrance of me;

Item, I will that my wife shall have the use, occupying and wearing of my jewel of the unicorn's horn which is set with stone during her natural life;

And if she die, living my said sister Alington, then after my said wife's decease I will my said sister Alington shall have and wear it during her life;

And after her decease, or if she die, living my said wife, then I will if my said niece, Cordell Alington, be then living, that she shall have the said jewel to do therewith her will and pleasure;

Item, I will that my executors shall, amongst other blacks that they shall give to my friends, kinsmen and servants by their discretions, they shall give unto the poor men and women that be in my almshouse and have weekly twelve pence apiece of me, and likewise to all thother poor folks that hath within the town of Melford four pence apiece weekly of me, and to as many more poor men and women within the said town of Melford as shall make up with them that hath now my said weekly charity the number of so many as I shall be years old at the time of my decease, being at the making hereof, as I do account myself, either fifty-eight or fifty-nine at the most, to either of them one gown of black cloth or of any other sad colour cloth of five shillings the yard, over and besides to every of the said women as much linen cloth as shall make them a kercher then to wear upon their heads;

And in choice of the said poor folks I will my said executors shall have special care to those besides my poor folks that be very aged, poor, blind and impotent, and the most of them to be men, if they can be found, within the said town of Melford, and for want thereof to supply the number of those that want with suchlike persons as shall inhabit within the said towns of Shimpling, Alpheton, Lavenham and Acton by the good discretion of my said executors;

Item, I will and give unto my nephew, John Savage, esquire, one of the best of my geldings to be taken by his own choice;

Item, I will and give unto my old servant, Robert Thauer(?), my gown of cloth furred with budge and guarded with velvet, and one of my nags or geldings by the assignment of my executors;

Item, I will & give unto William Clecton [sic for 'Necton'?), gentleman, for his goodwill ever borne unto me and for his pains taken always about my business and for his assistance and help to my executors in th' execution of this my present testament the sum of ten pounds of lawful money;

Item, I give and release unto my brother, Francis Cordell, the sum of one hundred pounds that he received of the sale of my lands in Tottenham;

And I give unto him all my doublets, coats, jerkins, cloaks and hosen that be of any kind of silk or be guarded or lined with velvet or with satin;

Item, I will that every gentleman that serve me at the time of my decease shall have a gown and a cloak of black cloth, and every other servant a coat of black cloth;

Item, I will that my executors shall, after my debts paid and my funeral charges and the legacies of this my testament discharged, give and distribute amongst my poor servants, specially those that have served me longest and have most need, the sum of one hundred pounds;

Item, I will and charge my said executors that they shall have a special care to deliver unto every man as shortly as they can after my decease all such deeds, evidences and other writings, whatsoever they be, remaining in my private custody and keeping as do appertain and belong to any man;

The residue of all my plate, money, debts, jewels and all other my goods whatsoever they be I leave unto the executors of this my last will and testament for and towards th' execution thereof, and for and towards the payment of my debts;

And I make, ordain and constitute to be my executors my said good sister, Mrs Jane Alington, my dear friend, George Carey of Cockington in the county of Devonshire, esquire, and my brother, Edward Cordell, one of the Six Clerks;

And I give unto my said friend, Mr Carey, for his pains to be had and sustained in and about th' execution of this my said testament, the least pair of my livery pots being all gilt;

And to my said brother, Edward Cordell, one piece of plate of the value of ten pounds or else ten pounds in money, with such other benefit as I have appointed unto him by my last will in writing, willing and requiring all my said executors, and specially my said dear and well-beloved sister, Mrs Jane Alington, and my said brother, Edward Cordell, that in respect they are so me [sic for 'near'] unto me in blood, and for the natural affection that they ought to bear unto me for the benefits I have bestowed upon them, and likewise I desire my said friend, Mr Carey, for [f. 336v] the goodwill and friendship that since the acquaintance between us I have borne unto him, that they will not refuse to take upon them the burden and charge to be my executors, and although they shall find my goods peradventure not sufficient to pay my debts and to perform this my testament, yet I have left and appointed such portion of my lands, tenements and hereditaments as I trust will be sufficient in time to supply the same to the uttermost;

And in witness that this is my last will and testament I have signed every leaf thereof both above and beneath with my name, and in the top and beginning thereof, and likewise here in th' end I have put my seal the day and year first above-written, these being called to be witnesses. Per me, William Cordell. Gabriel Goodman. Henry Russell. Humphrey Applegarthe. Per me, William Bawtrie.

The codicil. Memorandum: That the sixth day of this present month of May in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred four score and one and in the three and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, I, Sir William Cordell, knight, do will and appoint that this my present writing shall be added and fixed as a codicil to my testament, and that all and singular the gifts and legacies therein contained and expressed shall be executed and performed by th' executors of my said testament as freely and as amply to all intents and purposes as if the same were contained and declared in my said testament;

First I do give and bequeath to all my servants which doth not receive any wages of me and shall be in household with me at the time of my decease forty shillings and a black coat apiece, to be paid to them by my executors named in my last will and testament;

Also I give unto my sister [=sister-in-law?], Elizabeth Cordell, a piece of plate of ten pounds or ten pounds in money, to be paid by my executors at her pleasure;

Also I do give unto Richard Carey, gentleman, ten pounds in money to be paid to him by my said executors;

Also I do give unto my niece, Anne Alington, one hundred pounds in money to be paid unto her by my said executors at or in the day of her marriage;

Also I do give unto my niece, Cordell Alington, one hundred pounds in money to be paid unto her by my said executors at or in the day of her marriage;

Also I do give unto John Savage, son and heir apparent of John Savage, esquire, one hundred pounds in money, which I will that my executors named in my said testament or the survivor of them shall convert into a chain of gold to that value to be delivered unto him by my said executors [+or?] the survivor of them when he shall come to the age of one and twenty years and not before;

Also I give unto Thomas Savage, second son of the said John Savage, esquire, one hundred marks in money which I will that my said executors or the survivor of them shall convert into a chain of gold to that value to be delivered unto him by my said executors when he shall come to his age of one and twenty years and not before;

Also I do give unto Elizabeth Savage, daughter of the said John Savage, esquire, fifty pounds in money to be paid unto her by my said executors or the survivor of them at or in the day of her marriage and not before;

Provided always and nevertheless my mind and will is that if any of my said nieces to whom I have given my several legacies unto or any of the children of the said John Savage happen to die before their several days of marriages or their several ages in which I have limited and appointed their several legacies to be paid, then I will that the legacies of all such shall cease and be determined;

Also I give and bequeath unto my niece, Mrs Mary Savage, the sum of four score and ten pounds to be paid by my executors to be converted by them into a chain of gold for her;

And farther I will and give unto the right honourable Sir William Cecil, knight, Lord Burghley and Lord Treasurer of England, a book written in parchment being in a bottom of a chest in my study in the Rolls containing a matter between King Henry the Seventh and Edmund Dudley, esquire, humbly beseeching his Lordship to take the same as a poor remembrance of my goodwill towards him;

Also I do give unto my cousin, Margaret Webb, one hundred pounds to be paid to her by my executors after the rate of twenty pounds by year if I have not given her anything before, and if I have given her before in my testament, then I will my executors shall pay to her no more money than shall supply my said legacy of one hundred pound;

Also I do give unto Mrs Mary Camberlaine [=Chamberlain?], widow, twenty pounds in money to be paid unto her by my said executors, and one gown of black cloth;

Also I do give Thomas Horseman, gentleman, my gown and coat of silk gromam, and in money five pounds to make the said gown and coat for him to be paid by my said executors;

Also I make and ordain supervisors of this my testament and last will my very good and loving friends, Sir Christopher Wray, knight, Lord Chief Justice of England, and Sir Gilbert Gerard, knight, Attorney General to her Majesty, heartily praying them both as we have been of long time knit in old friendship together, so I heartily desire them both to be aiding and assisting my said executors of my last will and testament with their good counsel and advice from time to time;

And I do give either of them for their pains ten pounds in money, which I pray them to accept [f. 337r] as a poor remembrance of my goodwill towards them;

Further also my mind and will is that my debts shall be first paid before any legacies in my testament or in this codicil given by me shall be paid other than such legacies as I have given unto Dame Marie, my wife, and unto my executors of my last will and testament;

Also I do give unto John Forde, my servant, five pounds in money and such of my apparel, not being silk, as to my executors shall be thought meet and convenient;

Also I give and bequeath to Eme Barlie, my wife's chambermaid, five pounds in money to be paid to her by mine executors;

In witness whereof to this present codicil I have put to my hand and my seal, given the day and year first above-written, these being witnesses: Gabriel Goodman, Henry Russell, Humphrey Applegarthe. Per me, William Bawtrye.

Memorandum: That Sir William Cordell, knight, late Master of the Rolls, after the finishing and ending of his last will and testament and likewise after th' ending and finishing of his codicil which he appointed should be annexed unto his said will, he farther willed and declared the tenth of May or thereabouts Anno Elizabeth Regine xxiiij that his said executors should pay unto Mrs Marie Camberlaine, widow, the sum of four score pounds over and above the sum of twenty pounds given and bequeathed unto her in his said codicil, the same to be paid in like manner and form as is expressed in the said codicil touching the payment of the said twenty pounds;

And further the said Sir William Cordell the same day or near thereabouts willed that his executors should defray and pay such sums of money as his next heir should be charged for his primer seisin, with this proviso and upon this condition, that his said next heir should not any way or by any means impeach or infringe his said will nor claim or enter into any other lands other than that land which he hath appointed by his said last will to descend unto him in satisfaction of his thirds.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London Coram venerabili viro magistro Willmo Drury legum doctore curie prerogative Cantuariensis commissario &c vicesimo tertio die mensis Novembris Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo primo Iuramento francisci Clerk notarij publici procuratoris Jane Alington Georgij Carewe et Edwardi Cordell executorum &c Quibus commissa fuit administratio bonorum &c De bene &c Iurati

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-third day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-first by the oath of Francis Clerk, notary public, proctor of Jane Alington, George Carew and Edward Cordell, executors etc. to whom administration was granted of the goods etc., sworn to well etc.]