

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 1 August 1582 and proved 22 February 1585, of Sir John Brewes, nephew of Elizabeth (nee Scrope) Beaumont de Vere (d.1537), Countess of Oxford, second wife of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/27, ff. 84-6.

The Countess' sister, Jane Scrope, married Thomas Brewes (d.1514), of Little Wenham, Suffolk, son of Robert Brewes of Little Wenham (d. 7 December 1513) and Katherine Wingfield (d.1525), the daughter of Sir John Wingfield (d. 10 May 1481) of Letheringham and his wife Elizabeth FitzLewis (b. about 1426, d.1500?), and grandson of Sir Thomas Brewes (d. 17 June 1482) of Little Wenham, Suffolk, and his second wife, Elizabeth Debenham (d.1503). Jane Scrope and Thomas Brewes (d.1514) had three children: the testator, Sir John Brewes (b. 13 December 1512, d. 13 February 1585) of Little Wenham, Suffolk; Giles Brewes (d.1558/9) of Denton, Norfolk; and Ursula, a nun at Denny, buried at Little Wenham 9 December 1598. For the foregoing, see the Brewes pedigree in Crisp, Frederick Arthur, *Fragmenta Genealogica*, Vol. VIII (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1996), pp. 57-60, available online; the discussion of the Brewes family in Moreton, C.E., *The Townshends and Their World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 95-100; the will of Elizabeth (nee Debenham) Brewes (d.1503), TNA PROB 11/13, ff. 150-1; and the will of Thomas Brewes (d.1514), TNA PROB 11/18, f. 29.

The Countess remembered her sister, and her nephews and niece in her will:

*Item, I give and bequeath to my sister, Jane Brewes, a basin and an ewer chased gilt of the oldest sort, weighing five score and 6 ounces, having my Lord of Oxenford[']s arms in the bottom of the basin; item, a great goblet with the cover of silver, parcel-gilt, weighing 31 ounces, graven with crankettes and mullets, which she lately gave me after the chance of fire; item, my cross of gold ragged which was my father's, accustomedly worn about my neck; item, a trussing bed of black velvet and scarlet cloth engrained paned, embroidered with letters of cloth of gold and black velvet, a counterpoint of the same, one featherbed with a bolster, 2 pillows, 2 pair of sheets of 2 breadths dimidium, and one pair of fustians.*

*Item, I give and bequeath my nephew, John Brewes, my cross of gold with the Five Wounds and a flower-de-luce of diamonds.*

*Item, I give and bequeath to my nephew, Giles Brewes, a standing cup of silver and gilt with a cover, newly made, weighing 24 ounces dimidium, dimidium quarter.*

*I give and bequeath to Dame Ursula Brewes, my niece, to pray for my soul, 40s in money.*

It seems likely that the cross of gold bequeathed by the testator in the will below was the one bequeathed to him in 1537 by his aunt, the Countess of Oxford:

*Item, I give to my son, Edmund, a golden cross with the flower-de-luce of diamonds & pearls and other stones set on it.*

A ring of gold with a turquoise bequeathed by the testator had apparently been given to him by the son of another of the Countess of Oxford's sisters:

*And I give to the said Ralph Scrivaner for the like consideration five pounds in money and my ring of gold with the turquoise sometimes Sir Edmund Wyndham's.*

Sir Edmund Wyndham (d. 1569) of Felbrigg was the son of Sir Thomas Wyndham (d.1522) and the Countess of Oxford's sister, Eleanor Scrope, and thus a first cousin of the testator.

After his father's death, the testator became the ward of his father's uncle, Sir Richard Wingfield (b. in or before 1469, d. 1525). The testator's brother, Giles Brewes, was also in Sir Richard Wingfield's care, as indicated in these clauses from the latter's will (see TNA PROB 11/22, ff. 20-22:

*Item, I will also that mine executors shall have the custody of all such manors, lands and tenements and other hereditaments which I have now in my hands or hereafter shall come or fall by reason of the nonage of my nephew, John Brewes, with the marriage of the same without disparagement, and shall receive yearly the profits and revenues of the same by all such time as the custody thereof might have remained in my hands by virtue of the King's letters patents thereof to me made, with all such advantages and profits as in the same letters patents be expressed and contained, to th' use of and for the performance of this my last will and testament.*

*Provided always that mine executors during the nonage of my said nephew, John Brewes, and as long as the said manors, lands and tenements shall or might remain in their hands, shall yearly pay unto my sister, Katherine, at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and Easter forty pounds by even portions of the revenues and profits of the said manors, lands and tenements, provided also that whensoever my said sister, Katherine, die, then the said annuity of £40 to cease and continue no lenger.*

*Item, I will that the said Dame Bridget, my wife, shall have the governance and keeping of all my children and of my said nephew and his brother, Giles, trusting that she will see them virtuously brought up and found to school and learning.*

For the will of the testator's brother, Giles Brewes (d.1558/9), see TNA PROB 11/43, ff. 21-2.

The testator's first wife, Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Christopher Willoughby of Parham, Suffolk, was the mother of the testator's sons Thomas, William, Robert, Edward and Edmund. The testator married secondly, Cecily, the daughter of John Wilton, esquire, of Topcroft, Norfolk, the mother of the testator's son, Giles. She died 9 May 1590, and was buried at Little Wenham on 13 May 1590. See Crisp, Frederick Arthur, *Fragmenta Genealogica*, Vol. VIII (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1996), p.57-61,

available online. The testator's sons Thomas, William, and Robert, and his daughter, Jane, are mentioned in the will of the testator's brother, Giles Brewes (d.1558/9).

LM: Testamentum domini Iohannis Brewse militis

In the name of God, Amen. The first day of August in the four and twentieth year [=1 August 1582] of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Sir John Brewes of Little Wenham in the county of Suffolk, knight, being in perfect remembrance (praised be Almighty God), calling to my mind the frail estate of this mortal life and the uncertain end thereof, do therefore make and ordain my testament comprehending therein my last will in such manner and form as hereafter ensueth, that is to say:

First and most principally I bequeath my soul to the Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, trusting through his mercy and his most precious death and passion to have and enjoy eternal life and salvation, and as for my body, I bequeath it to the earth to be buried with so little charges as may be conveniently ordered by the discretion of my executrix;

Item, I will and bequeath to Dame Cecily, my well-beloved wife, the moiety of all and singular my goods and chattels whatsoever and wheresoever that hereafter in this my last will and testament shall not otherwise be bequeathed;

The other moiety of my goods and chattels I will and bequeath that presently, with as convenient speed as may be, shall be praised and sold towards the performance of this my last will and testament;

Item, I will and bequeath to my said wife all such rings and jewels as she hath in her custody concerning her own person;

Item, I will & bequeath to Thomas, my son, the posted bedstead of pear tree, and the bed in the chamber over the gatehouse of Topcroft, and all things thereto belonging, with the cupboard standing in the same chamber;

Item, I will and bequeath to the residue of my sons, to every one of them forty shillings;

Item, I will and bequeath to Elizabeth, my daughter, the white silver pot graven her name on the foot thereof;

Item, I will and bequeath that Jane, my daughter, shall be truly satisfied and paid of so much money as shall remain due to her of one hundred marks given before the making of this will, if it shall happen any of the said money to be unpaid at the time of my decease;

Item, I will and bequeath to Mary, my daughter, two hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to my said daughter within as convenient time as may be raised of my goods by my executrix;

Item, I will and bequeath to Anne, my daughter, two hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to her of my goods in like manner as is aforesaid;

And I will that their several portions as the same may be raised shall be converted to their most profit and commodity, provided that upon the payment of their said legacies to my said daughters last recited, either of them shall become bound to the other that if one [+of] them shall happen to depart this life unmarried, that then she departing unmarried shall leave to the use of the survivor of them twain the value of one hundred marks;

Item, I will and bequeath to Prudence, my daughter, two hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to her within so convenient time as may be raised of my goods after the legacies to her other two sisters last recited shall be paid;

Item, I will and bequeath to Margaret, my daughter, two hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to her within so convenient time as may be raised of my goods;

And I will that their several portions as the same may be raised shall be converted to their most profit and commodity in stock for them, provided always that upon the payment of the said legacies to my said two daughters last recited, either of them shall become bound to the other that if one of them shall happen to depart this life unmarried, that then she so departing shall leave to the use of the other, the survivor of them twain, the value of one hundred marks;

Item, I will and bequeath to Alice, my daughter, two hundred marks of lawful money of England, to be paid to her within as convenient time as may be raised of my goods, and the same to be converted to her most profit and commodity in stock for her, provided that upon the payment of the said legacy to Alice, my said daughter, I will that she shall become bound that if she shall happen to depart this life unmarried, that then she so departing unmarried shall leave to the use of her sister, Mary, then living, or she being dead, to the rest of her sisters, one hundred marks;

And I will that the said Alice, my daughter, and the residue of her sisters, viz., Mary, Anne, Prudence and Margaret, departing this life unmarried, shall be able to make their will of the residue of the money to them bequeathed, giving it to any of their sisters or to any other as it shall happen to any of them so to think good, provided always that if it shall happen any of my said daughters last recited to marry without the consent of their mother, then living, or being dead, without the consent of my supervisors of this my will and testament or the more part of them then living, then I will that any such so marrying without consent as is aforesaid shall lose the benefit of the one half of the said legacy to her bequeathed;

Item, I will and bequeath to my sister, Ursula Brewes, my tenement in Little Wenham called Porters now in the occupation of Thomas Sprunt alias Payne, to have and to hold the said tenement with the land thereunto belonging unto my said sister during her natural life;

Item, I will and bequeath to my grandchildren, the sons and daughters of my said two daughters, Elizabeth and Jane, to every one of them ten shillings;

Item, I will and bequeath to every one of my servants which hath continued with me for the space of seven years twenty shillings over and above their ordinary wages;

Item, I will and bequeath to every other of my servants six shillings eight pence over and above their ordinary wages;

Item, I will and my mind is that all my plate, timber, brick and all other my goods and chattels whatsoever shall be indifferently praised immediately after my decease, and that the said plate, timber, brick and whatsoever all other my goods and chattels before not bequeathed shall be sold with convenient speed toward the performance of this my will and testament and payment of my debts;

Item, I will and bequeath to every poor household in Little Wenham twelve pence at my burial, and that day twelvemonth more to every poor household of the said parish twelve pence;

Item, I will and bequeath to every poor household of Much Wenham and to every poor household in Capel eight pence, and to the ringers at my burial five shillings and a barrel of beer;

And as touching the order and disposition of two parts of all my manors, lordships, lands, tenements, rents, reversions, services and hereditaments whatsoever in three parts to be divided, in certainty this is my last will and testament of me, the said Sir John Brewes, that is to say:

I give and bequeath to the said Dame Cecily, my said wife, in recompense of her dower, all those my manors of Wenham, Vaux and Jerminges and the manor of Rentes situated of old time within the park, and my manor of Stratford with the rents, to have and to hold all the said manors with the appurtenances to the said Dame Cecily, my wife, during her life without impeachment of waste as touching the wood of the premises, provided that all such legacies and gifts here in this my last will and testament mentioned going out of the said manors aforesaid be duly accomplished and performed;

Item, I will and bequeath to William Brewes, my son, an annual pension of twenty pounds of lawful money of England yearly to be paid to my said son out of the manors aforesaid, to have and to hold the said annual pension to my said son during the natural life of my said wife, and if it shall happen my said son to be unpaid of his said pension as is aforesaid, then I will that it shall be lawful for my said son to enter in or upon any of

the said manors and there to distrain, and the distresses so taken to hold and keep until my said son of the said annual pension of twenty pounds with the arrearages shall be truly satisfied, contented and paid;

And that after the decease of the said Dame Cecily, my said wife, I will and bequeath to my said son, William, my manor of Vaux with all the lands now in the occupation of John Bure(?), to have and to hold the said manor with th' appurtenances to my said son and to his heirs males forever, yielding and paying therefore to my executrix toward the performance of this my will and testament twenty pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I give and bequeath to Robert Brewes, my son, my manor of Stodhaugh in Laxfield and my manor of Jakes in Mendham with their appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the said manors to my said son, Robert, and to his heirs males forever, yielding and paying therefore to my executrix towards the performance of this my last will and testament ten pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I will and bequeath to Edward Brewes, my son, my manor of Carlton Colville and my other manor of Bromeholme within the said town with their appurtenances in Carlton Colville aforesaid or elsewhere in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the said manors with their appurtenances to my said son, Edward, and to his heirs males, yielding and paying therefore to my executrix within five years after my decease towards the performance of this my will and testament six score pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I give and bequeath to Edmund Brewes, my son, my manor of Alborough [=Alburgh?] otherwise called Holbroke near unto Humberfield [=Homersfield?] with the appurtenances in the county of Suffolk, and my meadow near Humberfield bridge, to have and to hold the said manor with the appurtenances and the said meadow to my said son and to his heirs males forever, yielding and paying therefore to my executrix towards the performance of this my will and testament five pounds of good and lawful money of England;

Item, I will and bequeath to Giles Brewes, my son, all that my manor of Wyckes Ufford and Bures Fee with the appurtenances in Ipswich or elsewhere in the county of Suffolk, to have and to hold the said manor with th' appurtenances to my said son and to his heirs forever;

Item, also I give and bequeath to my said son, Giles, all that my meadow in Stratford called Stare meadow within the county of Suffolk now in the occupation of William Blasse, to have and to hold the said meadow to my said son during his natural life, yielding and paying therefore to my executrix toward the performance of this my will and testament five pounds of good and lawful money of England;

And if it shall happen that any of my said sons or any of the heirs of the bodies of them to make any default of or in any of the said payments contrary to the form aforesaid, then I will that after such default of payment my executrix shall enter into the manors and tenements of any of my sons or their heirs making such default, and the issues and the

profits thereof shall take towards the performance of this my will and testament until the same payment so behind, with the arrearages thereof, shall be satisfied and paid;

Provided that if it shall happen the said Dame Cecily, my wife, to depart this life before the performance of this my will and testament, then I will that the goods and chattels before bequeathed towards the performance of my will and testament and all the lands, manors and tenements to my said wife before bequeathed shall remain to my said sons, William and Edward Brewes, or to the survivor of them until this my said last will and testament shall be accomplished and performed;

Provided also that if my said wife shall depart this life or that she shall have received into her hand and possession goods, chattels or revenues of mine sufficient for the accomplishment of this my will and testament, all payments before appointed to be had, made and paid by any of my said sons out of any of the said manors, tenements or lands before to any of them given, willed or devised shall utterly cease and be determined forever;

Item, that after the decease of my said wife and after the performance of this my said will and testament, I will and bequeath those my manors of Wenham, Gerninges, Rentes and my manor of Stratford with their appurtenances, to have and to hold the said manors with their appurtenances, to my heirs males forever;

Item, I will that the said Dame Cecily, my wife, shall within two months next after my decease become bound in a bond of two hundred pounds to my supervisors that the said Dame Cecily shall take upon her the accomplishment of this my will and testament to execute the same as my trust is in her according to the true meaning thereof, and that the said Dame Cecily after the performance of this my said will shall yearly pay or cause to be paid out of the manors, lands or tenements to her before bequeathed to my heirs males twenty pounds of lawful money of England, and also that the said Dame Cecily at the time of her decease shall leave to the use of her said children begotten of me, the said Sir John Brewes, the value of all the goods and chattels before to her bequeathed in such sort as the same may be equally divided amongst them, which bond if my said wife shall refuse to enter into and confirm, then I will that all the gifts and legacies aforesaid to her before by me made or given, as well of the said manors and tenements as of goods and chattels, shall be utterly void and of none effect, and that then I will my said sons, William and Edward Brewes, shall have and enjoy my said goods and chattels before to her bequeathed toward the performance of this my said will and testament, and also that they, my said two sons, shall have, take and receive the issues and profits of all the said manors, lands and tenements to her before bequeathed toward the performance of this my said will and testament until the same shall be fully accomplished and performed;

Item, my intent and meaning is if it shall happen the said Dame Cecily, my wife, to marry, then I will she, the said Dame Cecily so marrying or being married shall have, in consideration of her dower of all the manors, lands and tenements to her before bequeathed, fourscore pounds of lawful money of England to be paid to her out of the said manors and lands during her natural life, and all the said lands and tenements then to

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remain to my sons, William and Edward Brewes, to have and take the issues and profits thereof toward the performance of this my will and testament;

Item, I ordain, make, name, appoint and constitute the same Dame Cecily, my wife, my sole executrix of this my last will and testament to execute the same according to the true meaning thereof as my trust is in her, and I appoint my said sons, William and Edward Brewes, supervisors, helpers and coadjutors to my said wife and of executing of this my will and testament;

Also I appoint my loving friends, Richard Kempe, esquire, and Ralph Scrivenor of Ipswich, gentlemen, supervisors of the same will and testament;

Item, I give to William Brewes, my son, in consideration of his pains about the execution of this my will and testament three pounds in money and one of my best young horses, and I give to Edward Brewes for the like consideration three pounds in money and one other of my young horses;

And I give to the said Richard Kempe for his pains in overseeing of this my will my best ambling gelding, and I give to the said Ralph Scrivaner for the like consideration five pounds in money and my ring of gold with the turquoise sometimes Sir Edmund Wyndham's;

Item, I will that my said sons, Edward & William, shall be allowed convenient costs and charges for the time they shall be busied in or about the matters of my will;

Item, I give to my said son, William, a brooch of gold with two diamond stones and a rock of ruby set into it, paying therefore to his brother, Robert, forty shillings and to his brother, Edward, forty shillings;

Item, I give to my son, Edmund, a golden cross with the flower-de-luce of diamonds & pearls and other stones set on it, paying therefore to my son, Giles, forty shillings;

Item, I give to my daughter, Anne, a brooch of gold with a white camuse stone on it, paying therefore to her sister, Prudence, ten shillings;

Item, I give to my daughter Alice, a brooch of gold with a French word written about it, paying therefore to her sister, Margaret, ten shillings;

Item, I give to Prudence, my daughter, two spur-royals;

Item, I give to Margaret, my daughter, two spur-royals;

In witness whereof I, the said Sir John Brewes, have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above-written.



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Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Willelmo Drury Legum Doctore curie prerogatiue cantuariensis commissario etc vicesimo secundo die mensis february Anno Domini iuxta cursum et computationem ecclesie anglicane millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo quarto Iuramento Iohannis Burroughe notarij publici procuratoris Domine Cecilie relicte et executricis etc Cui commissa fuit administracio bonorum etc De bene etc 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-second day of the month of February in the year of the Lord according to the course and reckoning of the English Church the thousand five hundred eighty-fourth by the oath of John Burrough, notary public, proctor of Lady Cecilia, relict and executrix etc., to whom administration was granted of the goods etc., Sworn to well etc.]