

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 19 March 1585 and proved 12 February 1586, of Edmund Bedingfield (d.1585). The testator was the eldest son and heir of Sir Henry Bedingfield (1509x11–1583), and his wife, Katherine (d.1581), the daughter of Sir Roger Townshend of Raynham, Norfolk and his wife, Amy Brewes [Brewse]. Sir Henry Bedingfield (1509x11–1583) and Katherine Townshend (d.1581) were married before 1535, and had five sons, Edmund (the testator below), Thomas, John, Nicholas and Henry, and five daughters.

For the will of the testator's grandfather, Sir Edmund Bedingfield (1479/80–1553), see TNA PROB 11/36, ff. 142-3. For the will of the testator's father, Sir Henry Bedingfield (1509x11-1583), see TNA PROB 11/66, ff. 126-8.

The testator was twice married. His first wife, Anne Southwell, was the daughter of Sir Robert Southwell (c.1503-1559), lawyer, Member of Parliament, and Master of the Rolls, and Margaret Neville (d.1575), daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Neville (1484?1542), fifth son of George Neville (1436-1492), 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Abergavenny. It is said that she was born in 1537 at Hoxne, Suffolk, and died in 1574 at Erwell, Norfolk, and that she married Edmund Bedingfield on 26 November 1555 at St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, Surrey. The testator's first wife, Anne Southwell, was thus the sister of the Francis Southwell who was involved with Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel in allegations against Oxford in 1581. For the will of Sir Robert Southwell (c.1506-1559), see TNA PROB 11/43, ff. 408-410. The testator's second wife, Anne Moulton (d.1595), was the mother of Bridget Paston (1565-1598), the first wife of Sir Edward Coke (1552-1643). See Boyer, Allen D., *Sir Edward Coke and the Elizabethan Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 207-9, available online.

For the will of the testator's eldest son and heir, Thomas Bedingfield (d.1590), see TNA PROB 11/76, ff. 203-4.

The testator's brother, Thomas Bedingfield (d.1613), mentioned as a residuary legatee in the will below, dedicated his translation of *Cardanus' Comfort* to Oxford (see STC 4607 on this website). For the will of Thomas Bedingfield, see TNA PROB 11/122, f. 21.

As noted in the probatum clause, the executors named by the testator all renounced execution of the will. As noted in the will, three of the executors were the testator's kinsmen. Sir Roger Townshend (c.1544-1590) of Raynham was the great-nephew of the testator's mother, Katherine Townshend (d.1581). John Holdich was likely related to the testator through Margaret Jerningham, the daughter of Edward Jerningham (d.1515) of Somerleyton, and his first wife, Margaret Bedingfield (b. about 1476, died 24 March 1504), the daughter of the testator's great-grandfather, Sir Edmund Bedingfield (1443-1496). Margaret Jerningham married, as her second husband, Robert Holdich (d.1558?) of Ranwell, Norfolk. Sir Miles Corbet (d.1609) of Sprowston was related to the testator through the testator's mother, Katherine Townshend (d.1581). Katherine Townshend's eldest brother, John Townshend (d.1540), married Eleanor Heydon, and Sir Miles

Corbet's first wife was Eleanor Heydon's niece, Catherine, the daughter of Eleanor's brother, Sir Christopher Heydon of Baconsthorpe. For the Townshend pedigree, see Moreton, C.E., *The Townshends and Their World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 6. For the Heydon pedigree, see Gurney, Daniel, *The Record of the House of Gournay* (London: Bowyer, Nichols, 1848), p. 412, available online. For the will of Robert Holdich (d.1558?) of Ranwell, Norfolk, see TNA PROB 11/42/A, ff. 151-154. For the will of Sir Edmund Bedingfield (1443-1496), see TNA PROB 11/11, ff. 63-4.

LM: Testamentum Edmundi Beddingfelde

In the name of God, Amen. The nineteen day of March in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and four and in the seven and twenty year of the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Edmund Bedingfield of Oxburgh in the country of Norfolk, esquire, being of perfect and whole mind and memory, and yet somewhat touched with the visitation of Almighty God, to whom I yield most hearty thanks, laud and praise for it, and not knowing the shortness of my time in this transitory world, and commanded by the saying of the holy prophets to put all things in order before death because I must die, do ordain, constitute and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, utterly renouncing all other wills and testaments before by me made:

Wherein first and principally I commend and commit my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my only Maker, Redeemer and Saviour, by the merits of whose most precious death and passion I only trust to be saved, and my body I commit to the earth from whence it came, which my will is shall be buried in the chapel of the parish church of Oxburgh aforesaid where my father and mother were buried, where I will have such a convenient monument made upon me as shall be thought good by my executors;

Item, I give to the reparation of the church of the said parish of Oxburgh ten pounds of lawful English money, to be paid within one year next after my decease;

Item, I give all that my tenement builded and all those lands, meadows and pastures with th' appurtenances which I lately purchased of Robert Starling and his wife wherein John Cooke now dwelleth, and now in the tenure of the same John, to the township of Oxburgh aforesaid forever, to the only relief and maintenance of the poor people dwelling and inhabiting within the same town forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to every one of my daughters being alive at the day of my decease one thousand pounds of lawful English money, to be paid to them and every of them by mine executors with as much convenient speed as may be after my debts been paid and discharged, which debts mine only meaning is shall be first discharged;

Further, my mind is and I will and devise that my manor of Sebivershe(?) and Henny with all and singular their appurtenances, and all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments within the county of Essex, and all those my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances which I late purchased and had of one John Wentworth, gentleman, lying and being within the county of Suffolk, and also all those my lands, tenements, heath-grounds and marsh grounds lying [sic?] either fresh or salt marshes called, known or reputed by the name of Dingle Heath or Dingle Marsh near Dunwich in the said county of Suffolk, shall be sold by my executors for and towards the discharge and payment of my debts and legacies;

And further I will and my mind is that my said executors shall also either sell away all those my manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments within the county of Oxenford sometime the Lord Marney's, reserving the old and accustomed rents according to the effect and meaning of the last will and testament of the said Lord Marney, or else to grant the same in fee-farm, reserving the said rents, for which lands and tenements I was offered one thousand pounds reserving the said rent that is now paid;

And further I will and my mind is that my executors shall have, perceive and take all the profits, revenues and commodities of all my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments within the county of Suffolk with all and singular their appurtenances until and during such time as all my debts and legacies shall be fully discharged and paid, upon condition that they or any of them shall not by any means commit, suffer or do or cause to be done or committed any manner of waste or spoil in or upon the same during the said term, and upon condition further that my said executors or any of them shall not fell, cut down or sell away any manner of wood, timber, trees or underwood growing or being in or upon the same but only for the necessary and convenient repairing in, about or upon the same to be done;

And further I will and my mind is that my said executors shall receive, perceive and take towards the payment of my said debts and legacies also all the revenues, profits and commodities of my manors of Ashill, Houghtone, Northwickenham, Stratton Hall, Wellhams and Resey, Swanton, Morle, Worthinge, Buxton and Hevingham and of all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances which I late purchased of the Lord Morley and of Sir Thomas Cecil, knight, within the county of Norfolk likewise until such time as my said debts and legacies be fully paid and discharged, and upon such conditions as is before expressed for my manors and lands within the county of Suffolk;

And after my said debts and legacies fully discharged and paid, I give and bequeath my said manors of Buxton and Hevingham with their appurtenances and all and singular other my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances which I purchased of the said Lord Morley lying and being in the towns, fields and parishes and hamlets of Buxton and Hevingham aforesaid, Brampton, Oxnead, Marsham, Stratton next Buxton, Lamas, Scottow, Soley, Westwick, Belaugh, Coltishall or elsewhere within the county of Norfolk mentioned and contained in the indenture of my purchase of the said manor of Buxton had from the said Lord Morley to Edmund Bedingfield, my second son,

and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Anthony Bedingfield, my youngest son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Thomas Bedingfield, my eldest son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then I will the same shall remain to the right heirs of me, the said Edmund Bedingfield, forever;

And also after my said debts and legacies likewise discharged, I give and bequeath unto my said youngest son, Anthony Bedingfield, all that my manor of Scottes in Westleton in the county of Suffolk with th' appurtenances, and all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments in the towns, fields, parishes and hamlets of Westleton aforesaid, Feverton, Middleton and Fordley in the said county of Suffolk, with all and singular their appurtenances, to have and to hold the same to the said Anthony and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to the said Edmund Bedingfield, my second son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to the said Thomas Bedingfield, my eldest son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then I will also that the same shall remain to my right heirs forever;

And further I will, devise and give all and singular other my manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances lying and being within the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk not in this my will mentioned and expressed, and also all other the residue of the manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments devised to my executors after my debts and legacies be paid and discharged and by me no further nor otherwise before devised nor assured, to the said Thomas Bedingfield, my eldest son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue of the body of the said Thomas Bedingfield, then to remain to the said Edmund Bedingfield, my second son, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue male of the body of the same Edmund lawfully begotten, then to remain to the said Anthony Bedingfield, my youngest son and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then I will all the last-recited premises shall remain to Thomas Bedingfield, my eldest brother, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to Henry Bedingfield, my youngest brother and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to John Bedingfield, my second brother, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Nicholas Bedingfield, my third brother, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue of the body [-of the body] of the same Nicholas then to remain unto Edmund Bedingfield, esquire, one of the sons of my uncle, Francis Bedingfield, deceased, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Adam Bedingfield, one other of the sons of the said Francis and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Henry Bedingfield, the third son of the said Francis and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Thomas Bedingfield, the youngest son of the said Francis and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to my cousin Lawrence Bedingfield, the eldest son of my uncle, Anthony

Bedingfield, and to the heirs males of the body of the said Lawrence lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Eustace Bedingfield, the second son of the said Anthony Bedingfield, my late uncle, and the heirs males of the body of the said Eustace lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to William Bedingfield, the third son of the said Anthony, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Bedingfield, the youngest son of my uncle Humphrey Bedingfield, deceased, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to Christopher Bedingfield, the only son of my uncle, Edmund Bedingfield, late of Wighton, deceased, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue then to remain to the right heirs of me, the afore-named Edmund Bedingfield, forever;

Provided always and nevertheless my will and mind is and further I will and devise that if it shall fortune that either my eldest son or his heirs males, or any other of my afore-named sons or their heirs males, or any other of the persons to whom I have devised any of my foresaid manors, messuages, lands, tenements or hereditaments by this my will either in remainder or otherwise, or any of their heirs or any of them, at any time hereafter [-to] do, suffer, knowledge, make or devise or cause to be done, suffered, knowledged, made or devised any act or acts, devises, conveyances or assurances, thing, matter or devise whatsoever whereby or by any means whereof th' entails, remainders or devises in this my last [+will] or testament made, set down or devised by me and every of them or any of them shall not or may not remain and take effect according to my intent and meaning and in such sort, manner and form as is contained in this my said will, then I will and my mind is that every such of my said sons and other the person and persons so offending and every of them shall from thenceforth lose & forfeit all their commodities, benefits and estates by me given and assigned to them and every of them, and that then all gifts, devises, legacies and bequests to them and every of them by this my will and testament given, devised and bequeathed shall be from thenceforth utterly void, frustrate and of none effect, and that then and from thenceforth it shall be good and lawful and my will and mind is that the next heir and heirs, person and persons, and every of them to whom I have devised or assured in remainder or reversion my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments or any part or parcel of them into every part and parcel of the same so devised, assigned or bequeathed to him or them so offending in the same either in possession, remainder or reversion to enter, and the same to have, hold and enjoy in such manner and form as before in this my said will is limited and appointed as well as if the person and persons so offending were deceased;

And also I give and bequeath unto my said eldest son, Thomas Bedingfield, all my corn, cattle, stock of sheep, household stuff, implements of household, corn, grain, swans, cygnets and swan-marks, furniture of houses and all other things which I have in Oxburgh aforesaid or belonging to my houses and chambers there and within my manors of Oxburgh, Cavenham, Shingham, Cley, Egboroughe, Neyghton, Raynham Dole towards the keeping and maintaining of his house and family;

And further I will and my mind is that my executors shall have th' occupation and take and receive the profits and commodity of all my manors, lands, tenements and

hereditaments before to them assigned (except before excepted) until such time as all other gifts and legacies as I shall fortune hereafter to give, bequeath or assign by any codicil to be annexed to this my said will be likewise fully discharged and paid;

And further my will and mind is that my said eldest son, Thomas Bedingfield, and his heirs shall at all and every time and times after my decease, upon reasonable request made to him or them by any of my other sons, Edmund and Anthony, or their heirs males, or by my executors or some or any of them, [-or] within one month next after every such request do, make, execute, suffer and knowledge all and every such act and acts, devises and assurances as shall be reasonably devised, advised or required by my said two younger sons, Edmund and Anthony, or their heirs males or any of them, or by my executors or any of them, for the better assurance and sure making of all such manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments as I have to them or any of them devised, assured or bequeathed by this my said will according to the true intent and meaning of the same will at the only costs and charges in the law of my said executors;

And also that he, my said son, Thomas Bedingfield, and his heirs shall from time to time and at all times after my decease upon like request join in sale with my said executors for selling of every the foresaid manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances that I have before devised and appointed to be sold by my executors, and also shall do, suffer and knowledge all and every lawful & reasonable act and acts, devises and assurances, whatsoever for the sure making of the same and every part and parcel of them to such person and persons as shall purchase the same or any part or parcel of them at the only costs and charges of the said executors or of the said [-said] purchasers;

And if it shall fortune my said eldest son, Thomas Bedingfield, or his heirs or any of them to refuse or deny the doing or performing of this my devise, or shall not perform the same according to my intent and true meaning, or else to do, procure or suffer any act or acts to be done whereby these my bequests, gifts, legacies or devises mentioned and expressed in this my said will and testament shall not or may not forever hereafter take effect according to th' intent and meaning thereof, or else shall by any other ways or means by themselves or any of them or by any other by their or by any of their assents, consents, agreements or attornments vex, sue, disturb, trouble or molest my said younger sons or their heirs males or any of them or my executors or any of them for any manner of thing whatsoever by me to them or any of them devised or assured, that then and from thenceforth I will that all my gifts, legacies, bequests and devises which I have before in this my will and testament given, bequeathed and devised to the same Thomas and his heirs shall be utterly void, frustrate and of none effect, and that then and from thenceforth I will and my mind is that my said son, Edmund Bedingfield, and his heirs males shall enter into all my said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments before by me given, assured and bequeathed to the said Thomas, my son, and the same to have, hold and enjoy to him and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, with remainder over as before in this my said will is appointed and devised, in such manner and form as if the said Thomas were departed this world without heirs males of his body lawfully begotten, so that the same Edmund and his heirs shall perform as much as I have devised the said Thomas and his heirs to do and perform, and also that he, the same Edmund, my son,

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shall have all other the legacies, gifts and bequests to the said Thomas given or bequeathed upon the same condition;

And further I give to the said Thomas, my eldest son, if he will and doth perform this my last will and testament according to my meaning, all my plate being at my house at Oxburgh aforesaid, and also my chain and crucifix;

And I will and my mind is that all my stocks of sheep and other cattle and also all my other household stuff which I have remaining at my said manors of Earswell [=Eriswell?] and Scottes in the county of Suffolk shall remain to such persons as I have assigned the same manors unto, or to such as shall or ought to have the same, and that my said executors shall have but only the profits and commodities of the same stock of cattle during such time as they have the manors by this my will, and further I will that my said executors shall leave the same cattle in such sort as they shall receive them, and as good and profitable cattle;

All the residue of my money, debts, jewels, plate, goods, chattels, household stuff and implements of household I leave to my executors to be disposed as hereafter ensueth, that is to say, my mind and will is that within some reasonable time after my debts be paid and all my legacies in this my will given and bequeathed been fully discharged, that then my said executors shall make a true account to my said sons or to such persons as they shall appoint and assign as well of all my said plate, jewels, goods, chattels, household stuff and implements of household which I shall leave unto them, and also of all the revenues and profits of my manors, lands & tenements by them received, and also of all my debts by them recovered or received, and also of all such money as they shall receive for any manors, lands, tenements or hereditaments by them sold, and likewise of all the said debts and legacies by them paid and discharged, and all such money as shall remain after all the said legacies and debts and my funeral charges been discharged and satisfied, I will the same shall be divided as followeth: to either of my two younger sons five hundred pounds, if there be so much, and the residue to remain to my eldest son;

Finally, I ordain and make my loving cousins and friends, Roger Townshend of Raynham, John Holdich and Miles Corbet, esquires, and my friend Robert Constable of Oxburgh, my executors, to whom I give for their pains to be taken about the execution of this my will and testament as hereafter ensueth:

First, to the said Roger Townshend, esquire, as much plate as shall be worth one hundred pounds, to be made after his own devise, with my arms to be engraven upon every parcel for a remembrance of me;

And to the said John Holdich, Miles Corbet and Robert Constable, to every of them one hundred marks of lawful English money, or else so much plate to every of them as shall be worth one hundred marks, to be made as is aforesaid, arbitrable at their pleasures to take either money or plate;

And also I will that my said executors and every of them shall allow themselves all their necessary and reasonable charges sustained about the executing of this my will out of my said goods, chattels and revenues;

Notwithstanding my mind and will is that if any of my executors before-named shall refuse to execute my said will and to take pains for the true performing thereof according to my trust reposed in them, that then they and every of them so refusing I will shall lose the benefit of my said will and testament and the legacies to him or them devised;

And also I do ordain and make Sir Christopher Wray, knight, Lord Chief Justice of England, my only supervisor of this my said will and testament, always to help and assist my said executors and to see the accounts of the said executors to the most benefit of my children, to whom I give for his pains and charges therein to be taken one nest of gilt bowls of the value of forty pounds, to be made by his own devise, with my arms to be graven upon every parcel of them;

Further my mind and will is that my house shall be kept at Oxburgh by the space of one month next after my decease in such sort as my father's executors did keep after my said father his decease;

And further I will and my mind is that my said executors shall allow and pay yearly and every year unto every of my said daughters towards their maintenance forty pounds of lawful English money until they and every of them be paid their legacies and besides their legacies, and when they or any of them shall have received the said several bequests, then that yearly payment to cease and be determined to her and them that so shall be satisfied;

Also I do give and bequeath to either of my said two younger sons one annual or yearly annuity of forty pounds, to be likewise paid to them yearly by my said executors out of my manors to them assigned until my said sons do, shall or may enter their said manors lands and tenements to them by me given and assigned, and when the time cometh that my said two younger sons, Edmund and Anthony, or either of them, shall or may enter into their said manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments to them by me given and bequeathed, and take the profits of the same, then this yearly annuity [+to him] that so shall or may enter to cease and be no more paid;

In witness whereof to every leaf of this my present will and testament, containing in all fifteen leaves, I have subscribed my name and put to my seal the day and year first afore-written. Edmund Bedingfield.

Duodecimo die mensis february Anno domini iuxta cursum et computationem ecclesie Anglicane Millesimo Quingentesimo Octogesimo Quinto emanavit commissio Thome Beddingfield filio et heredi dicti defuncti habentis etc ad administrandum bona iura et credita quecunque huiusmodi secundum tenorem testamenti eiusdem pro eo et ex eo quod Rogerus Townsend et Iohannes Holdiche armigeri ac milo Corbet et Robertus Constable

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generosi executores in eodem testamento nominati oneri execucionis dicti testamenti expresse renunciaverunt prout ex actis hodie expeditis apparet de bene etc Iurato

[=On the twelfth 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-fifth, a grant issued to Thomas Bedingfield, son and heir of the said deceased, having etc., to administer the goods, rights and credits whatsoever of the same according to the tenor of the same testament by reason and because Roger Townshend and John Holdich esquires, and Miles Corbet and Robert Constable, gentlemen, executors named in the same testament, expressly renounced the burden of the execution of the said testament, as appears by the acts provided(?) today, sworn to well etc.]