

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 30 September 1587 and proved 27 October 1587, of William Sheldon (1543-1587) of Wadborough Park, Worcestershire, whose niece, Katherine Sheldon (died c.1632), married Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham (buried 13 October 1626). For his will, see LRO B/C/11.

The testator was the younger son of William Sheldon (d. 24 December 1570) of Beoley, by his first wife, Mary Willington, the daughter of William Willington of Barcheston, Warwickshire. For the will of William Willington, see TNA PROB 11/42B/642.

The testator had an elder brother and four married sisters, for whom see the will of the testator's father, William Sheldon, TNA PROB 11/53/79.

The testator leaves bequests to the children of his sister, Anne Sheldon (d. 25 October 1619), by her first marriage to Francis Savage (d. 19 August 1557) of Elmley, Worcestershire: William Savage (d. 7 August 1616), Anthony Savage (d.1587), and Walter Savage (1558-1622), and two daughters, Mary and Anne.

After the death of Francis Savage, the testator's sister, Anne (nee Sheldon), married Anthony Daston (d. 19 July 1572) of Wormington, Gloucestershire, by whom she had a daughter, Anne Daston, who on 23 April 1584 married Ralph Huband (d.1605) of Stratford upon Avon, from whom in 1605 William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon purchased for £440 a half share in the Stratford tithes, the other half being owned by Thomas Combe (d.1609). 'My sister Daston' in the will below is the testator's sister, Anne (nee Sheldon) Savage Daston (d. 25 October 1619), and 'Anne Hibbert' in the will below appears to be the testator's niece and god-daughter, Anne Huband.

For further details of the testator's family, see the wills of his brother, Ralph Sheldon, TNA PROB 11/121/345.

The testator married firstly Elizabeth Leveson, the daughter of Sir Richard Leveson (d.1560) and Mary Fitton (1529-1591). See Keen, Alan & Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954), p. 116 and pedigree charts 2 and 3. See also the will of Sir Richard Leveson (d.1560), Staffordshire Record Office D593/C/5/1 and D593/C/5/2; the will of Mary (nee Fitton) Leveson (1529-1591), TNA PROB 11/78/48; and:

'Wellington: Manors and other estates', *A History of the County of Shropshire: Volume 11: Telford* (1985), pp. 215-221 at:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=18141>.

The identity of the testator's second wife, Jane, is not known. However it seems possible that she was Jane Giffard. In the will below the testator leaves bequests to his 'grandmother, Mrs Hodges', and to his 'uncle, Richard Gifford'.

*Item, I give to my grandmother, Mrs Hodges, a hogshead of wine lying at Wadborough aforesaid.*

*Item, I give to my uncle, Richard Gifford, my green velvet hose and hair-coloured satin doublet.*

Elizabeth Throckmorton, daughter of Sir George Throckmorton (d.1552), married John Gifford (d. 1 May 1563), esquire, by whom she had five sons and eight daughters, including a daughter named Jane. See the will of John Gifford, TNA PROB 11/46/230. For Oxford's friendship with her son, George Gifford, see TNA SP 12/151/42, f. 96. For her son, William Gifford (1557-8-1629), Archbishop of Rheims, see the entry in the *ODNB*. For the memorial brass to her second husband, William Hodges (d.1590), see:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bwthornton/6115927215/>.

For a portrait of the testator, see:

<http://www.welshleigh.org/genealogy/oakleyancestry/sheldonfamily.html>.

RM: T{estamentum} Will{el}mi Sheldon Armigeri

In the name of God, Amen. I, William Sheldon of Wadborough Park in the county of Worcester, esquire, being of perfect memory although at this present sick in body, do make my last will and testament in form following:

First I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God through Christ, my Redeemer, by the virtue and merits of whose death and passion I hope assuredly to obtain remission of my sins and life everlasting, and my body to the earth to be buried at the disposition of my executors;

First I revoke all former wills made before the date of these presents;

And by this my last will I give and bequeath unto Walter Savage, my nephew and godson, the sum of twenty pounds and my armour for my own body, with two head-pieces, my gilt dagger and girdle, my demi-lance staff, and my grey mare-colt of two years old, and my silk nightgown, my cloak guarded with velvet, and my black cloth cloak;

Item, I give to my nephew, William Savage, all my statute-books;

Item, I give my nephew, Anthony Savage, my black satin doublet and hose cut upon velvet, and my taffeta cloak lined through with tuftaffeta;

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Item, I give unto my cousin, Richard Daston, my roan colt gelt;

Item, I give unto my god-daughter, Anne Hibbert [=Huband?], a piece of plate of the value of forty shillings;

Item, I give unto my brother, Ralph Sheldon, my fine mare which Sir John Tracy gave me;

Item, I give to Sir John Tracy my young black horse;

Item, I give to Edward Porter my grey trotting nag and the best of my mare-colts the next year;

Item, I give to the poor people of Worcester town ten pounds, to the poor people of Pershore ten pounds, to the poor people of Stoulton ten pounds, to the poor people of Stoulton [sic?] ten pounds;

Item, I give to my grandmother, Mrs Hodges, a hogshead of wine lying at Wadborough aforesaid;

Item, I give to my uncle, Richard Gifford, my green velvet hose and hair-coloured satin doublet;

Item, I give to my sister Daston and to my sister Curzon five marks apiece as my wife requested me to do;

Item, I give to my servant, Richard Cooke, thirty pounds;

To my servant, Edward Sheldon, ten pounds;

Item, I give to my servant Bateman ten pounds;

Item, I give to Thomas, my brewer, twenty nobles;

Item, I give to my servant, Griffith the horse-keeper, twenty nobles;

[f. 181v] Item, I give to William Griffith twenty nobles;

Item, I give to my bailie, Thomas George, five marks;

Item, I give to John Nutting and his wife four pounds;

Item, I give to Thomas, my footboy, five pounds;

Item, I give to my boy in the kitchen five marks;

Item, I give to my wife's woman, Alice Draper, five pounds;

And to Anne Bolte, my chambermaid, five marks;

Item, I give to Wormington, my bailie, ten pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to my daughter, Mary, one thousand marks current money;

And further if my wife be now with child with a daughter, then I give to the said daughter wherewith she is with child one thousand marks more;

And if either of the said daughters die before they shall be married, then I will the survivors of the said daughters shall have a legacy of one thousand pounds, and that the former legacies of two thousand marks shall be void;

And if my said wife be not with child, or be with child with a son, then my will is that my said daughter shall have the sum of one thousand pounds and not any other legacy of money;

And if my said daughter die before she shall be married, then my mind is that my now wife shall have that portion of one thousand pounds given to my said daughter;

Item, my intent, meaning and will is that my wife, Jane, shall have the custody, government and education of my daughter, Mary, until the time of her marriage or until th' age of twenty years if she do not happen to be married before she accomplish the said age of twenty years;

And during the said time until my daughter, Mary, be married or come to twenty years of age, my will is that her portion shall be at the disposition of her said mother to be employed by th' advice of my overseers to th' advancement and commodity of my said daughter, so that Jane, my wife, put in good bands and security for the satisfaction of my said daughter's portion at the times aforesaid to the contentment of my overseers or the more part of them, provided always and my full purpose and will is that if it shall happen my said wife to marry again hereafter, and that my daughter, Mary, be not maintained and brought up to the good liking and contentment of my said overseers, that then my said daughter shall have allowed her forty pounds of yearly annuity payable by my said wife to my said daughter, Mary, towards her maintenance in some other place at the discretion of my said overseers;

Item, for the further benefit of my said wife and advancement of my daughter, Mary, I do hereby give and grant unto my said wife, Jane, and Mary, my daughter, all that my manor of Frampton with th' appurtenances, to have and to hold to the said Jane and Mary, their executors and assigns, from the day of the date of this present will until th' end and for the term of twenty and one years, paying to the heirs, executors and assigns of my father, William Sheldon, deceased, two hundred marks by year or so much more or less as is set

down and appointed in the last will of my said father whereby I am enabled to make this lease or grant in manner and form aforesaid;

Item, I give unto my said wife all my plate, jewels and household stuff whatsoever;

And I give to my daughter, Mary, ten featherbeds with the furniture;

Item, I give unto such of my daughters as shall be living at the decease of my said wife all such my term and terms for years as shall be then to come and unexpired of or in any lands or tenements whereof I have an estate or interest for any number of years yet unexpired;

And my debts, legacies and funerals being satisfied and paid, I give unto my wife all my goods and chattels not bequeathed;

And I do ordain and make my said wife, and Mary, my daughter, my executors of this my last will and testament, desiring my brother, Ralph Sheldon, and my cousin, Walter Savage, to be overseers of this my said will. Dated this last of September 1587.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Willmo Drury Legum Doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistro Custode siue Commissario etc vicesimo septimo die mensis Octobris Anno Domini Millesimo Quingentesimo Octogesimo Septimo Iuramento Stephani Staples notarii publici procuratoris Iane Sheldon Relicte dicti defuncti executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominatæ Cui commissaria fuit administratio &c De bene et fideliter administrando etc Ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurat Reservata potestate similem Commissionem faciendæ Marie Sheldon filie naturali et legitime eiusdem defuncti executrici etiam in huiusmodi testamento nominatæ cum venerit etc in debita iuris forma admissuræ

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-seventh day of the month of October in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-seventh by the oath of Stephen Staples, notary public, proctor of Jane Sheldon, relict of the said deceased, executrix named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc., with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to Mary Sheldon, natural and legitimate daughter of the same deceased, executrix also named in the same testament, when she shall have come etc. to be admitted in due form of law.]