

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 2 and 14 June 1600 and proved 12 January 1601, of Bridget (nee Hussey) (1526-1601), Countess of Bedford, with whom Oxford's daughters, Bridget Vere (1584-1631) and Susan Vere (1587-1629) were placed by Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612) after the death of Lord Burghley on 4 August 1598. Bridget Vere married the testatrix' grandson, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 2nd Baron Norris of Rycote, in the testatrix' house at Chenies in late April or early May 1599. See BL MS Lansdowne 87/34, ff. 96-7; TNA SP 12/270/91, f. 159; TNA SP 12/270/101, f. 176; and TNA SP 12/272/95, f. 150.

For a letter dated 9 January 1564 from Sir William Cecil to the testatrix mentioning Oxford, see Historical Manuscripts Commission, Twelfth Report, Appendix, Part IV, *The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland, G.C.B., Preserved at Belvoir Castle*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888), Vol. 1, p. 89.

The testatrix was born Bridget Hussey, the eldest daughter of John Hussey (executed 29 June 1537), 1st Baron Hussey of Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and his second wife, Anne Grey (d.1545/6), the daughter of George Grey (d.1503), 2nd Earl of Kent, by his second wife, Katherine Herbert (d.1503/4), third daughter of William Herbert (c.1423-1469), 1st Earl of Pembroke, and Anne Devereux, the daughter of Sir Walter Devereux (1411-1459). For the will of Anne (nee Grey) Hussey see TNA PROB 11/31/56.

The testatrix' sister, Elizabeth Hussey (d. 23 January 1554), married firstly, Walter Hungerford (1503–1540), Baron Hungerford of Heytesbury, and secondly, Sir Robert Throckmorton (c.1513-1581). For the will of Sir Robert Throckmorton (c.1513-1581), see TNA PROB 11/63/176.

The testatrix married firstly, in 1546, Sir Richard Morison (c.1510 – 20 March 1557); secondly, in 1560, as his second wife, Henry Manners (1526-1563), 2nd Earl of Rutland; and thirdly, on 25 June 1566, as his second wife, Francis Russell (1527-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford.

By Sir Richard Morison, the testatrix was the mother of a son and two daughters:

* Sir Charles Morison (1549-1599), who married Dorothy Clerke, stepdaughter of Lord Burghley's long-time servant, Roger Alford (c.1530-1580). For her background, see the will of Sir Charles Morison, TNA PROB 11/94/168. He predeceased his mother; in a letter dated 21 April 1599 to Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612), the testatrix mentions the recent death of her son, Sir Charles Morison; see TNA SP 12/270/91, f. 159. For a letter dated 3 February 1602 to Sir Robert Cecil concerning a proposed marriage between Sir Charles Morison's only son and heir, Charles Morison (1587-1628), and Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan Vere (1587-1629), see CP 85/8.

* Jane Sibilla Morison (1552-1615), who married firstly Edward Russell (d.1572), eldest son and heir of Francis Russell (1527-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford, (see below), and

secondly, as his second wife, Arthur Grey (1536-1593), 14th Baron Grey of Wilton. By her second husband she was the mother of Thomas Grey (1575-1614), 15th Baron Grey of Wilton, to whom the testatrix bequeaths £300 in the will below. For the will of Jane Sibilla Morrison, see TNA PROB 11/126/40.

* Elizabeth Morison (d.1611), who married firstly, William Norris (d. 25 December 1579), and secondly, Henry Clinton (1539-1616), 2nd Earl of Lincoln. By her first husband, William Norris, Elizabeth Morison was the mother of Oxford's son-in-law, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 2nd Baron Norris of Rycote. to whom the Queen stood godmother. In the will below the testatrix refers to 'Francis Norris, son of my daughter, Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln'.

The testatrix' first husband, Sir Richard Morison, also had several illegitimate children by his mistress, Lucy Peckham (1504 – 31 July 1552), daughter of Thomas Peckham, and wife of Sir George Harper (d. 8 November 1558). For Sir George Harper, see his will, TNA PROB 11/42A/75), and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/harper-george-1503-58>.

For Lucy Peckham, see Emerson at:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenP.htm>

The *ODNB* states that Sir Richard Morison, a Marian exile, died at Strasbourg on 20 March 1556. However a codicil to his will, TNA PROB 11/39/330, is dated 'the xv day of March 1556', which would be 15 March 1557, New Style, and his death was announced to Lord Burghley by John Hales in a letter dated 'the 23 of March 1556', which would be 23 March 1557, New Style (see CP 151/50).

The testatrix' second husband, Henry Manners, 2nd Earl of Rutland, had married his first wife, Margaret Neville (c.1525-1559), the daughter of Ralph Neville (1498–1549), 4th Earl of Westmorland (1498–1549), and Lady Catherine Stafford, at a triple wedding ceremony on 3 July 1536 at which the other two bridegrooms were Neville's eldest son and heir, Henry Neville (1525–1564), 5th Earl of Westmorland, and Oxford's father, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, who married Margaret Neville's sister, Dorothy Neville (d.1548).

By her second marriage the testatrix had two stepsons and a stepdaughter:

* Edward Manners (1549–1587), 3rd Earl of Rutland, the eldest son of the 2nd Earl and Margaret Neville (c.1525-1559), who became a ward of the Queen after his father died in 1563 in a time of plague. His only child, Elizabeth Manners (1576-1591), married Lord Burghley's grandson, William Cecil (1566–1640), 2nd Earl of Exeter. See the *ODNB* article on Edward Manners, 3rd Earl of Rutland.

* John Manners (d.1588), 4th Earl of Rutland.

* Elizabeth Manners, who married Sir William Courtenay (1553-1630) of Powderham, for whom see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/courtenay-sir-william-i-1553-1630>.

It is perhaps a testimony to the close relationship between the testatrix and the Cecil family that her step-grandson, Edward Russell (1572-1627), 3rd Earl of Bedford, was in 1591 suggested as a husband for Oxford's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Vere (1575-1627) (see TNA SP 12/238/69, f. 100); that her grandson, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 2nd Baron Norris of Rycote, married Oxford's middle daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631); and that her grandson, Charles Morrison (1587-1628), was proposed as a husband for Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan Vere (1587-1629) (see CP 85/8).

For the Morison tombs in the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Watford, Hertfordshire, see Brayley, Edward Wedlake, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, Vol. VII, (London: Thomas Maiden, 1808), pp. 299-303 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=KXFbAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA300&lpg=PA300&dq=%22The+Beauties+of+England+and+Wales%22+%22Morison%22&source=bl&ots=h3e9ebUOp6&sig=JNy71QmakXzia3uTqzgUmsMYFiA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ckKbU835H8nioASj4oEw&ved=0CBwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22The%20Beauties%20of%20Englan d%20and%20Wales%22%20%22Morison%22&f=false>.

In her will below, the testatrix appoints her grandson, Francis Norris, as her executor, and makes him her principal heir (see also TNA SP 12/278/27). In her will she asks a 'last motherly request' of him, language which suggests that Francis Norris was raised in her household.

By her third marriage to Francis Russell, 2nd Earl of Bedford, the testatrix had four stepsons and three stepdaughters, the Earl's children by his marriage in 1546 to Margaret Gostwick (d. 27 August 1562), the daughter of Sir John St John of Bletsoe, Bedfordshire, and his wife, Margaret:

* Edward Russell (d.1572), who about 1571 married the testatrix' daughter, Jane Sibilla Morison (see above). Administration of his estate was granted to his widow on 30 June 1572.

* John Russell (d. 24 July 1584), who on 23 December 1574 married Lady Burghley's sister, Elizabeth Cooke (1528-1609), for whom see the *ODNB* article and the biography of her by Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespeare and the Countess: The Battle That Gave Birth to the Globe*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014).

* Francis Russell (d. 27 July 1585), who on 15 July 1571 married Juliana Foster or Forster, by whom he was the father of Edward Russell (1572-1627), 3rd Earl of Bedford, who in 1591 was suggested as a husband for Oxford's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Vere (1575-1627). See TNA SP 12/238/69, f. 100.

* William Russell (c.1553-1613), 1st Baron Russell of Thornhaugh and Lord Deputy of Ireland, who on 13 February 1585 married Elizabeth Long (d.1611), daughter and heir of Henry Long (1544-1573) of Shingay, Cambridgeshire, and Dorothy Clerke, stepdaughter of Lord Burghley's long-time servant, Roger Alford (c.1530-1580), and wife of the testatrix' son, Sir Charles Morison (see above). The testatrix' stepson was the William Russell who arrived in Paris with Oxford in late March 1576 (see TNA SP 70/137, ff. 322-3).

* Anne (nee Russell) Dudley (1549–1604), Countess of Warwick, who was appointed as a Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth in 1559, and who married, at the age of sixteen in the Queen's chapel at Whitehall Palace on 11 November 1565, Leicester's brother, Ambrose Dudley (c.1530-1590), Earl of Warwick (c.1530–1590). See the *ODNB* entry.

* Elizabeth Russell (1558-1605), who married William Bouchier (1557-1623), 3rd Earl of Bath.

* Margaret Russell (1560–1616), who married George Clifford (1558-1605), 3rd Earl of Cumberland, by whom she was the mother of Lady Anne Clifford (1590–1676). See the *ODNB* entry.

For the testatrix' stepchildren by her third marriage, see also Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. II, (London: St Catherine Press, 1912), pp. 75-8, and Brydges, Egerton, *Collins's Peerage of England*, Vol. I, (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1812), pp. 272-4 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=vI6AAAIAAJ&pg=PA273&lpg=PA273&dq=%22Edward,+Lord+russell%22+%22jane%22&source=bl&ots=8SQ3elJgAJ&sig=aW8qjfe1ZhmykH4_AxUyR-krWoo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KbaQU_yRA8bfoATmzoDQCg&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Edward%2C%20Lord%20russell%22%20%22jane%22&f=false

The Earl of Bedford's three elder sons predeceased him, and his heir was his grandson, Edward Russell, 3rd Earl of Bedford, referred to in the will below as 'the honourable the Lord of Bedford'. In the will below the testatrix also leaves bequests to her three stepdaughters.

For the testatrix' stepchildren by her third marriage, see also the will of her son, Sir Charles Morison, TNA PROB 11/94/168.

For the testatrix' overseers Sir William Peryam (1534-1604), Sir Dru Drury (1532–1617), Sir John Brograve (1538-1613) and Sir Robert Beale (1541-1601) see the entries in the

ODNB. The testatrix refers to Robert Beale as her ‘cousin’; he was the son of Robert Beale and Amy Morison, a sister of the testatrix’ first husband, Sir Richard Morison. See the will of Sir Richard Morison, TNA PROB 11/39/30.

The Anthony Tyringham who witnessed the testatrix’ will may have been Anthony Tyringham (d.1614) who married Elizabeth Throckmorton, daughter of the testatrix’ sister, Elizabeth Hussey, and her second husband, Sir Robert Throckmorton (see above).

LM: T{estamentum} D{omi}ne Bridgitte Comitisse Bedf{ord}

In the name of God, Amen. The second day of June in the two and fortieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Bridget, Countess of Bedford, considering with myself that all creatures, the higher they be placed in estate, honour and degree in this world they are so much the more bounden to be thankful to Almighty God, the author and giver of all good things, and withal calling to my remembrance the great blessings and benefits of our heavenly Father bestowed upon me in this transitory life, do first and principally render unto his divine Majesty most lowly and hearty thanks for all his graces, acknowledging the same to proceed of his mere bounty and goodness, and myself altogether insufficient in every part to deserve the same, and do commend my soul to Almighty God, looking for salvation by the mere merits of my only Saviour, Jesus Christ, and in him alone, and in his death, without any merit or desert of mine own, to have peace and atonement with his Father and mine, my ransom being paid by him and my sins by his most precious blood cleansed, so as I rest by faith alone in him assured to appear before God as a loving Father, not as a severe judge, to receive through Christ the comfortable censure, ‘Come, ye elect before the beginning of the world to the place of comfort prepared for you’, and knowing myself to be as all mankind is, mortal and born to die, and that the uncertainty of the hour of death ought to work(?) an earnest care and special regard in the hearts of all true Christians to prepare themselves in readiness at what time soever it shall please God to bereave them of this life, and dispose their temporal substance and worldly goods in the time of health, that the settling thereof may not be any clog or impediment unto their minds from heavenly contemplations at such time as it shall please God to visit them with sickness, I therefore, being now, thanks be to God, of whole and perfect memory, do make and declare by these presents my last will and testament in manner and form following:

First I do give and devise unto my loving grandchild, Charles Morrison, all such my household stuff and implements whatsoever, and all such jewels and plate as are particularly set down, named and expressed in a schedule unto these presents annexed;

Item, I do give and devise all and singular such my household stuff and implements whatsoever, and all such money and plate as are particularly set down, named & expressed in one other schedule to these presents annexed unto Francis Norris, son of my daughter, Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln, to his only proper use forever, provided

nevertheless that if the said Francis Norris shall die before he shall accomplish the age of one and twenty years not having any child living at the time of his death, then my mind and will is, not leaving his wife with child at the time of his death, that Henry Clinton and Robert Clinton, half-brothers unto the said Francis Norris and sons of the said now Countess of Lincoln, shall have and enjoy all and singular the said last-mentioned household stuff and implements to their only and proper use and behoof forever;

Item, I do give & devise unto the honourable Anne, Countess of Warwick, a piece of plate of the value of forty pounds;

Item, to the honourable Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, a piece of plate of the value of twenty marks;

Item, to the honourable Elizabeth, Countess of Bath, a piece of plate of the value of twenty marks;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto the Lord Thomas Grey three hundred pounds;

Item, I will that my executor shall distribute at his discretion to and amongst the poor people of Chenies the sum of twenty pounds;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Laurence Hussey, Doctor of Law, twenty pounds;

Item I give and bequeath to Edmund Bussie twenty pounds and one gelding;

Item, to Henry Shaw, ten pounds and a nag of six pounds' price;

Item, to William Roberts, yeoman of my cellar, five pounds;

Item, to Roger Wilkins, yeoman of the pantry, five pounds;

Item, to Richard Pyneder [=Pinder?], now servant to my nephew, Francis Norris, twenty nobles;

Item, to widow Romyn, twenty nobles;

Item, to Mary Thompson, twenty marks;

Item, to my two laundry maids, ten pounds;

And my meaning and will is the foresaid legacies given to my servants shall stand if they do continue and remain in my service at the time of my decease, and not otherwise;

Item, my mind is that my executor shall distribute at his discretion twenty pounds amongst the meaner sort of my servants being with me at the time of my decease upon whom I have bestowed nothing in this my will or otherwise;

Item, my will is that all my household servants at the time of my decease shall be kept together by my executor by the space of three months next after my decease to the intent they may have convenient time to provide for themselves;

And my will is that my executor shall pay unto every of my ordinary and household servants at the time of my decease one year's wages within two months next after my decease;

Item, my will and mind is that there shall be bestowed upon my funerals five hundred pounds;

Item, I require my executor that immediately after my decease he make humble petition to the honourable the Lord of Bedford that his Lordship will be pleased to receive into his service Roger Wilkins, yeoman of the pantry, William Roberts, Richard Ward and John Tomson, in respect they have done good and long service to his grandfather and me;

And I constitute and make my well-beloved nephew, Francis Norris, my executor of this my last will and testament, and I require and charge my said executor for reasonable causes and considerations me moving that he will enter into bond in manner and form following, that is to say, that he will within one month next after my decease seal and deliver as his deed unto my overseers undernamed or two of them such a bond as my said overseers or two of them shall reasonably devise or cause to be devised for th' executing and fulfilling of this my will according to the true meaning thereof; the sum and quality of the bond I refer to the discretion of my said overseers or two of them;

And if my said executor shall refuse or not seal and make such delivery of the said bond, which God defend, contrary to this as the last motherly request, then my will is that he shall have no benefit of the legacies and profits given to him by this my will, neither to deal with th' execution thereof;

Moreover for the better execution of this my will I do appoint and heartily desire Sir William Peryam, knight, Lord Chief Baron of her Majesty's Court of Exchequer, Sir Dru Drury, knight, Mr John Brograve, esquire, Attorney of her Majesty's Court of the Duchy of Lancaster, and my cousin, Mr Robert Beale, to be overseers of this my will, earnestly praying them that they will assist and aid my executor with their best counsel and direction for the due performance of this my will;

And I do give to my said overseers for their pains as followeth, that is to say, to the Lord Chief Baron thirty pounds, to Sir Dru Drury thirty pounds, to Mr John Brograve twenty pounds, and to my loving cousin, Mr Robert Beale, twenty pounds;

And I will and dispose that, my funerals, debts, legacies and necessary charges being allowed to my executor, that as well the residue of my plate, goods and chattels as the residue of the eight years' profits and commodities of the manor or lordship of Tawton alias Bishops Tawton (the annuities granted by my deed made to Sir William Peryam,

knight, and others bearing date the twentieth day of May in the one and fortieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth etc. only excepted) shall go to my executor upon this condition notwithstanding, that my said executor shall and will enter into such bonds to my overseers as I have prescribed in my will as is aforesaid;

In witness whereof I have subscribed my name and put my seal hereunto the day and year above-written. Bridget Bedford.

A schedule containing and specifying such money, plate, household stuff and implements which I, Bridget, Countess of Bedford, have given by my last will and testament thereunto annexed to my loving grandchild, Francis Norris, named in my will. **[Schedule not transcribed]**

A schedule containing and specifying such money, plate, household stuff and implements which I, Bridget, Countess of Bedford, have given by my last will & testament thereunto annexed to my loving grandchild, Charles Morison, named in my will. **[Schedule not transcribed]**

Memorandum: That the fourteenth day of June in the year of Our Lord God one thousand and six hundred and in the two and fortieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., the right honourable Lady Bridget, Countess of Bedford, did declare before us, the witnesses hereunder written, that this within-written contained (the schedules accounted) in eight sheets of paper, which she sealed in our presence and affirmed to us that she had subscribed every leaf thereof with her own hand, should stand for her last will and testament, desiring us to subscribe our names as witnesses thereunto, which we did accordingly the day and year abovesaid. Anthony Tiringham, Edward Bussy, Edward Haulfarre, William Smithe, Abiathar Buckoke, Richard Pyneder.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro Magistro Iohanne Gibson Legum doctor Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis Magistro Custode siue Commissario legitime constituto duodecimo die mensis Ianuarij Anno domini iuxta cursum et computationem Ecclesie Anglicane millesimo Sexcentesimo Iuramento magistri Edwardi Barker in Legibus Bacchalaurei Procuratoris francisci Norreis Executoris in huiusmodi Testamento nominat Cui comissa fuit Administratio bonorum Iurium et creditorum eiusdem Defuncte de bene et fideliter administrand &c Ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurat

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master John Gibson, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twelfth day of the month of January in the year

of the Lord according to the course and reckoning of the English Church the thousand six hundredth by the oath of Master Edward Barker, Bachelor of the Laws, proctor of Francis Norris, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc.]