

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



*A. Hill del. Dove's Mill Water*

## The Local History Bulletin of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

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### ASSISTANT EDITOR

Jane Steer  
478 Duffield Road,  
Allestree,  
Derby,  
DE22 2DJ

### EDITOR

Dr Dudley Fowkes  
11 Sidings Way,  
Westhouses,  
Alfreton,  
DE55 5AS

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## A DERBYSHIRE FAMILY IN THE MIDDLE AGES: THE SHIRLEYS OF SHIRLEY AND THE SARACEN'S HEAD

(by Irene Brightmer, Hunt Lodge, Staunton Harold, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 1RU)

### Introduction

The Shirley family first came to Derbyshire in the early twelfth century and remained for nearly 900 years. They established their main seat in the village of Shirley but transferred it to Leicestershire in the fifteenth century. Their role as landowners and administrators in Derbyshire and elsewhere in the English Midlands was substantial throughout the Middle Ages. They were generous patrons of the Church and served and fought for king and country at home and abroad. The exploits of some of these Shirleys during the centuries they were based in Derbyshire are described here. The Saracen's Head, which has long been part of the coat of arms of the family, originated during the early years of their time in Derbyshire, and its use is traced up to the present day.

### The origin of the Shirley family

The ancient Shirley family can be traced back to the eleventh century in Ettington in Warwickshire, where a branch of the family still resides. The first recorded ancestor of the family was Sasualo, variously spelt (Sewallis is a later version of this name, and as such is still used as a forename in the Shirley family). There has long been debate over Sasualo's origin; Shirley historians and antiquarian chroniclers often claiming their Saxon descent, partly based on their Saxon-sounding names. But there is no evidence of a Sasualo in Warwickshire prior to the Norman Conquest. The story was probably created by the seventeenth century family historian and antiquarian Sir Thomas Shirley, and supported by his contemporary, the historian William Dugdale. Thomas's nineteenth century descendant claimed it was '*mere invention*'<sup>1</sup> but failed to offer his own version of Sasualo's origin.

It is now believed that Sasualo was a nobleman of Flanders, and c1000-1039 was Castellan (governor of the castle and its district) of L'Isle (now 'Lille' in northern France), who is known to have come to England in 1066.<sup>2</sup> This is a much more likely account of his origin, as it is improbable that if he were an Anglo Saxon the Normans would have granted the vast estates which Sasualo was recorded as holding in 1086. The records in the Domesday Book suggest that Anglo Saxon nobles throughout England had lost most of their land to the Norman incomers.

### The Shirley family in Derbyshire

In 1086 Sasualo is recorded in the Domesday Survey as living in Ettington in Warwickshire and holding six lordships under the Norman, Henry de Ferraris (henceforth de Ferrers), three in Derbyshire and one each in Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.<sup>3</sup> Henry had come to England with William I in 1066 and had been granted over a hundred manors in Derbyshire and many others throughout the Midlands. Sasualo's Derbyshire holdings were Hough (variously called Hoga or Hoon) Hatton and Etwall. It was Sasualo's son, Fulcher, who seems to have been the first to hold land in Shirley, granted in 1105 by Robert, son of Henry de Ferrers. The original land grant is held in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (henceforth LRO), and is prized as the earliest item in their collections (Fig. 1).

The deed is clearly legible and in excellent condition, although the seal is damaged.

*Robert de Ferrers, to all his faithful men, greeting. Be it known by my authority that the Prior of Tutbury and his Convent will convey to Fulcher son of Sewallis and his heirs in fee four bovates of land in Shirley for all the duties pertaining to the land and the rent of four shillings paid every year at the feast of Saint John the Baptist: and the mill that he has in Derby likewise will give to him and his heirs in fee by my authority for six shillings and eight pence paid twice a year, namely at Saint John the Baptist's feast three shillings and four pence and at All Saints' feast three shillings and four pence. As has been declared in their charter. Farewell.*

(translated from the abbreviated medieval Latin by the late Barbara Hutton)

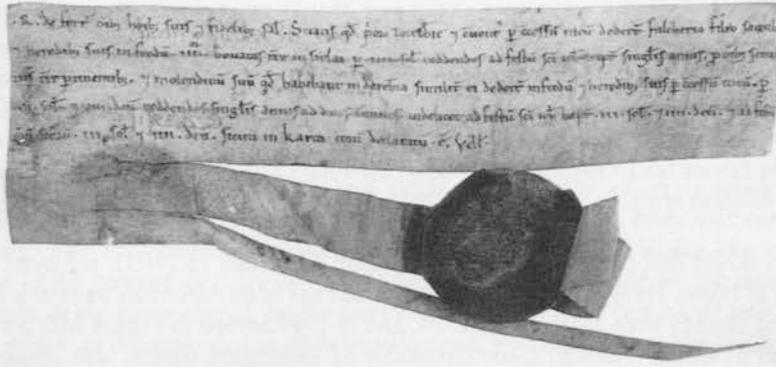


Fig 1: Shirley land grant from 1105.  
Leicestershire Record Office (DE2638/1/1-2).

Fulcher's son, Sewallis, was the third generation of the family and a key player in the early story of the family. It was he who transferred his main seat from Warwickshire to Shirley in Derbyshire, and was the first to designate himself of Shirley ('*de Scyrle*'), thus establishing the family name<sup>4</sup> '*Shirley*' as a place name is derived from scir leah meaning a '*bright clearing*' and is first recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey as '*Sirelei*'.<sup>5</sup>

Sewallis was the second son of Fulcher and continued the family line and titles. Curiously, Sewallis purchased his birthright from his elder brother Henry, whose son established the line of Ireton, named after their manor of Little Ireton in Derbyshire.<sup>6</sup> The original agreements for the transaction, in Latin, are in the Dugdale manuscripts now held by the Bodleian Library in Oxford and were transcribed by E.P. Shirley.<sup>7</sup> Sewallis is also in the records as witnessing numerous grants made by Robert de Ferrers, including the granting of land at Staunton Harold to Alan de Lecha.<sup>8</sup> Another important role of Sewallis, it is argued below, is that he went on Crusade and was thereby ultimately responsible for the Saracen's Head which was adopted much later as the Shirley crest.

From the time of this Sewallis and for the next eight or so generations<sup>9</sup> the Shirleys were a distinguished family in Derbyshire, until the fifteenth century when they moved their main seat from Shirley to Staunton Harold in Leicestershire. During those centuries based in Derbyshire, throughout the political turmoil of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the Shirleys not only maintained but increased their landholdings and influence, both within and beyond the county, often through judicious marriages. Their landholding in Shirley itself was extended around 1247 when Sir James Shirley '*and his heirs for ever*' were granted '*free warren*' (hunting rights), and eight years later they received the same in Ettington.<sup>10</sup> There is evidence from documents in the extensive Shirley archive held at the LRO that Shirley lands in Derbyshire at one time or another included Borrowash, Bradley, Brailsford, Castleton, Ednaston, Edensor, Hope, Kirk Ireton, Sturston, Thurvaston and Yeavely, as well as those already mentioned. Many of these gradually passed out of Shirley ownership over the centuries.

During their time in Derbyshire the Shirleys were active in affairs of state taking on administrative duties in the shires. They did not confine themselves to their Derbyshire base in either title or location but continued to use their ancient title '*Lord of Ettington*'. At different times they held offices as Sheriffs of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. Several Shirleys were appointed as Master Forester of Duffield Frith in Derbyshire, first granted to Henry de Ferrers by William I, which became part of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1266.

The Shirleys were generous donors to the church from the earliest years: Sasualo and his immediate successors in the twelfth century granted land and tithes to monastic establishments including Darley Abbey in Derbyshire, Kenilworth Priory in Warwickshire, Rufford Abbey in Nottinghamshire and Tutbury Priory in Staffordshire.<sup>11</sup> The documents for these grants still exist (see '*A Note on Sources*' below).

During the Middle Ages the Shirleys were also engaged as courageous knights on the battlefield at home and abroad, fighting under their overlords for king and country. As early as 1203 Henry Shirley, son of Sewallis, served in King John's army in France where he fought under William Earl Ferrers.<sup>12</sup> Later in the century his descendant Sir Ralph (d.1327) was especially active, regionally and nationally. He served as Sheriff for the counties of Derby and Nottingham, fought for Edward I in Wales and Scotland and subsequently served Edward II.<sup>13</sup>

Later Shirley knights went to France during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453). Sir Thomas Shirley, the seventeenth century antiquarian and family historian, claimed that his forebear and namesake Sir Thomas (dead by 1363) had fought at the battles of Crecy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) under Edward of Woodstock (later known as 'The Black Prince'). However, a later Shirley historian could find no evidence for this.<sup>14</sup> Original documents now more easily accessible may reveal that it was indeed the case, and it is intriguing to conjecture whether Shirley encountered in France his Derbyshire neighbour, Sir John Chandos of Radbourne, who headed one of the three divisions of the English army.

However, there is no doubt that Sir Thomas's son and heir, Sir Hugh (d.1403), achieved great fame on the battlefield, especially at home. He was a loyal Lancastrian and has been described '*as ever a faithful adherent of the red rose*'.<sup>15</sup> He had already been knighted by 1394, and in 1397 served in France with his own archers under the command of John of Gaunt. He was made Constable of Donington Castle, was Justice of the Peace for Warwickshire and was appointed Grand Falconer in Ireland for Henry IV.<sup>16</sup>

Sir Hugh met his death in 1403 at the Battle of Shrewsbury.<sup>17</sup> This battle was fought by the army of the Lancastrian King Henry IV against the rebel army of Henry ('Harry Hotspur') Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland. Henry IV had taken the throne from Richard II in 1399 with the assistance of the powerful Percy family. But the relationship had soured and the Percys were demanding payment of outstanding debts and rewards for their services. They then switched their allegiance away from the king and gathered other rebels to form an army and moved south, facing the king's army at Shrewsbury.

Sir Hugh was in the king's army at Shrewsbury and tradition has it that he was one of four knights wearing royal armour on the battlefield, who successively fell in single combat against George, Earl Douglas, one of the rebels. Sir Hugh's role in impersonating the king is referred to by Shakespeare in Henry IV Part I, in Douglas's speech to the king:

*Another King! They grow like hydra's heads:  
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those  
That wear those colours on them.- What art thou,  
That counterfeit'st the person of a King?*

Sir Hugh Shirley's name is immortalised, along with his two comrades who suffered the same fate, in the speech to Douglas made by Prince Henry, son of the king and the future Henry V:

*Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like  
Never to hold it up again! The spirits  
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blount, are in my arms;  
It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee;  
Who never promiseth but he means to pay.*

After several hours of combat Hotspur was killed, and with the loss of the rebel leader the battle ended. The king was victorious, although his forces sustained huge losses, greater than those of the rebels, and Prince Henry himself was seriously wounded. Politically it was the end of the power of the Percys. Militarily the Battle of Shrewsbury was important in being the first time that the deadly longbow was used by archers on both sides on English soil.

Two of Sir Hugh's children married into the important Derbyshire family, the Cockaynes of Ashbourne, also loyal Lancastrians at that time. Sir Hugh's son and heir Sir Ralph Shirley (1392-1443) married Alice, daughter of Sir John Cockayne (d.1438) by his first wife. Sir Hugh's daughter, Isabel, married Sir John Cockayne, becoming his second wife.<sup>18</sup> Sir John's father, like Sir Hugh, had also died at the Battle of Shrewsbury. It is therefore very likely that the families were well-known to one another. (Of course, over the centuries there have been many marriages of Shirleys with other Derbyshire families, too numerous to mention here.)

Sir Ralph, son of Sir Hugh, was a distinguished soldier and statesman like his father. He served with great honour under Henry V in France where he was one of the chief commanders. He was present at the siege of Harfleur but was prevented by illness from taking command of his retinue of eight men at arms and eighteen archers at Agincourt (1415). Nevertheless they went into action without him and one of his archers took the Duke of Bourbon prisoner.

Even before he was twenty one Sir Ralph had been knighted and soon after was made Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1420 he served as Sheriff for the counties of Nottingham and Derby. He was made Lieutenant of Duffield Frith in Derbyshire in 1426, and was appointed Constable of Melbourne Castle in Derbyshire in 1430.<sup>19</sup>

Sir Ralph returned again to France and died there in 1443:

*... a glorious and memorable end: and, besides the honour which he received in his life and death, it was not the least in his funeral pomp, for his body was carried into England, and his obsequies celebrated in our Lady Chapel within the collegiate church of the Newark in Leicester .... and his corpse was buried on the south side of the choir, in the same chapel, by the Lady Joan, his first wife, in a costly and beautiful tomb, which, at the suppression of the monasteries, was ruined and pulled down.<sup>20</sup>*

Meanwhile, in 1423, Sir Ralph's son, another Ralph, had made a marriage which was to affect the future of the family for the next five centuries. He married Margaret de Staunton after the granting of a papal dispensation, necessary because they were distantly related.<sup>21</sup> Ralph and Margaret's son John chose to settle in Leicestershire, and designated himself '*Shirley of Staunton Harold*', where the senior branch of the Shirleys remained until 1954.<sup>22</sup>

### The Shirley Saracen's Head

The importance of the twelfth century Sewallis in the history of the family has been discussed above, and it is believed that it was he who was responsible for the subsequent use of the Saracen's Head as the Shirley family crest right up to the present day. The Saracen's Head or '*Moor's Head*' is not unusual in the coats of arms of those old families which date their history back to the Middle Ages. The main reason accounting for its use is family tradition that an ancestor had travelled on one of the Crusades to the Holy Land. Another basis for the use of the Moor's head in heraldry is as a punning device by some of the families named More/Moor/Moore. For example Saint Thomas More's silver seal-die in the British Museum (on loan from the Society of Jesus since 2000) has his arms, which include moorhens, another punning device, and also his crest of a Moor's Head.<sup>23</sup>

There are usually slight differences in the detail and colours of the depiction: the Saracen's Head of the Shirley family crest is usually in profile, bearded and with a blue and gold twisted band around the temples (Fig. 2).

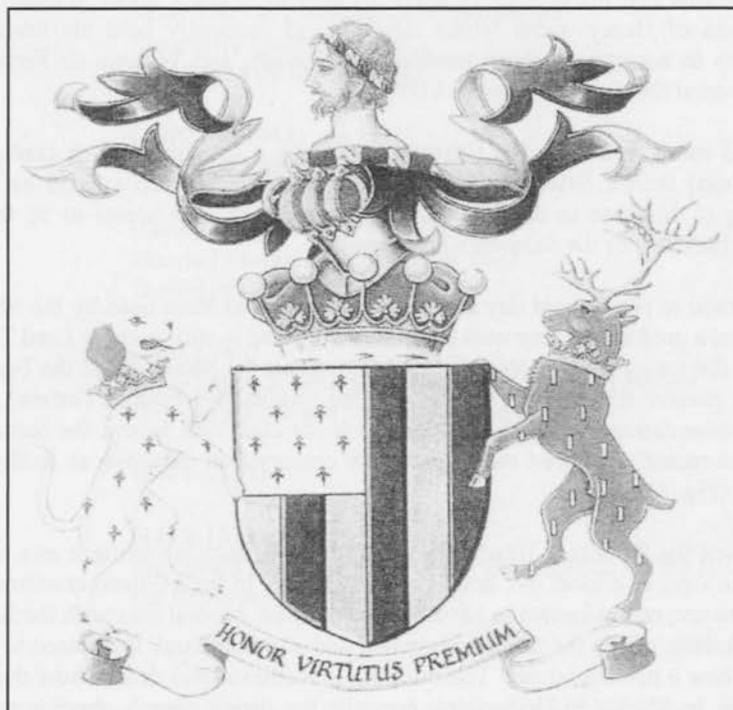


Fig 2: Shirley Coat of Arms with supporters, motto and Saracen's Head Crest

Two questions arise: which Shirley went on Crusade and which Shirley first used the Saracen's Head crest? The second is easier to answer than the first. According to E.P. Shirley (1812-1882), who in 1841 related the long history of the family in *Stemmata Shirleiana*, the first instance of its use was in 1330. This was when Sir Thomas Shirley (d.1363) used a seal with a Saracen's Head above his coat of arms on a deed dated that year (Fig. 3).<sup>24</sup> But the question as to which member of the Shirley family participated in which Crusade is more difficult to answer: the evidence appears only to be circumstantial.



Fig 3: Sir Thomas Shirley's seal, used on a deed of 1330; the first example of the Shirley crest (E.P. Shirley, p31)

E.P. Shirley (1873) understood from the work of the Warwickshire antiquarian William Dugdale (1605-1686) that Sewallis, son of Fulcher, accompanied King Richard I on the Third Crusade (1189-92).<sup>25</sup> This is perfectly credible because Sewallis and his brother Henry both held their lands under William de Ferrers, 3rd Earl of Derby, great grandson of Henry under whom Sasualo had originally held his lands in Derbyshire. It was customary for knights to accompany their overlord on Crusade, and William de Ferrers was certainly on the Third Crusade and died at the Siege of Acre in 1190.

However, this would mean that after the Crusade there was a gap of nearly a century and a half (and five generations of Shirleys) before Sewallis's descendants used the Saracen's Head as their crest. Perhaps Sir Thomas was seeking at this time to display his ancient ancestry? This seems to be the closest we can get to accounting for his belated use of the Saracen's Head crest.

From Sir Thomas's time to the present day the Saracen's Head has been used by the Shirley family in a variety of ways. For instance, a gold signet ring with the Saracen's Head is still worn by Lord Tamworth, eldest son and heir of Earl Ferrers, the senior Shirley. (see below 'A Note on the Shirleys and the Ferrers' for clarification of the link between the present title of Earl Ferrers and the original Norman de Ferrers). At Staunton Harold, as well as the many representations inside the chapel which are described below, the Saracen's Head is painted in black and gold on the recently restored early nineteenth century iron gateposts at Ashby Lodge on the southern approach to the park (Fig. 4).

The most public use of the Saracen's Head near a seat of those families using it as a crest is in the name, and often illustrated in the sign, of a local inn, hotel or public house. In the Midland counties most closely associated with the Shirleys there are, or are known to have been in the past, several inns with the Saracen's Head name. At Ettington in Warwickshire, where the family originated and still hold land, there used to be a coaching inn of the name, although it is now a private house. The building is medieval and deeds show that it was formerly owned by the Shirley family. In Shirley in Derbyshire, opposite the parish church, there is an inn with this name. In Staunton Harold parish in Leicestershire, where the Shirleys had their main seat until 1954, there was the Saracen's Head Inn at Heathend until early in the present century. It then became a private house, but observant passers-by will notice the Saracen's Head illustrated in the new house sign. In Weston in Staffordshire, on the

**GENERATIONS OF THE SHIRLEY FAMILY**  
**11th to 16th CENTURIES**

Sasualo	(living 1079-86) A nobleman from Flanders?
Fulcher	(dead by 1165) First to hold land in the village of Shirley
Sewallis	(living 1192) Bought his brother's birthright First to designate himself ' <i>de Scyrle</i> ', of Shirley Transferred his seat from Ettington to Shirley Did he accompany the Third Crusade?
Henry	(living 1205/6, died 1220) Fought in France with King John
Sir Sewallis	(living 1251/2)
Sir James	(living 1278) Acquired hunting rights in Shirley
Sir Ralph Shirley	(died 1327) Fought in Wales and Scotland
Sir Thomas Shirley	(dead by 1363) First to use the Saracen's Head crest in 1330 Known as ' <i>The Great Father of the Shirleys</i> '
Sir Hugh Shirley	(died 1403 at the Battle of Shrewsbury) Prominent Lancastrian Mentioned by Shakespeare
Sir Ralph Shirley	(1392 - c.1443) Fought in France
Ralph Shirley	(died 1466) Married Margaret de Staunton 1423 Buried in Brailsford Church
John Shirley	(died 1486) Transferred his seat from Shirley to Staunton Harold Designated himself ' <i>of Staunton Harold</i> '
Sir Ralph Shirley	(1461-1517)
Francis Shirley	(1515-1571) Purchased the Augustinian Priory at Breedon on the Hill as a burial place for the Shirleys of Staunton Harold



Fig 4: Gates at Ashby Lodge, Staunton Harold with the Saracen's Head surmounted by earl's coronet

edge of the Chartley estate which belonged to the Shirley family from the seventeenth century, there is still an inn named '*The Saracen's Head*'.

However, the most ubiquitous representations of the Shirley Saracen's Head are to be found in the churches associated with the family, especially on family tombs, funerary achievements, hatchments and in stained glass windows. There are examples in Derbyshire but it is not surprising that the most numerous are to be seen in Leicestershire, the main seat of the family from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. Perhaps surprisingly the church of St Michael in Shirley, Derbyshire, the parish so long associated with the family, has no depictions of the Saracen's Head on any of the memorials or windows, but, as mentioned above, the village has the Saracen's Head Inn opposite the church.

Following the first marriage of Sir Ralph Shirley (d.1443) to Joan Basset, daughter and heir of her father Thomas Basset of Brailsford, the manor of Brailsford in Derbyshire was associated with the Shirleys as landowners until 1777. There are alabaster grave slabs and a mutilated effigy which may be a medieval Shirley,<sup>26</sup> but there are no examples of the Saracen's Head. From early times until the twentieth century numerous Shirleys have served the church as priests, and Earl Ferrers is still the patron.

However, in the chancel of the Derbyshire Church of St Wilfred in West Hallam there is a very fine carving of a Saracen's Head. It is on the east side of the sixteenth century alabaster tomb of Walter Powtrell and his wife Cassandra, who was one of the daughters of Francis Shirley of Staunton Harold. The Powtrells were well-known Derbyshire recusants and suffered for following the Old Faith. On the tomb the coats of arms and crests of the couple are shown at their feet. The Shirley crest is the typical Shirley Saracen, in profile and bearded, with a twisted band around the temples (Fig. 5). It was probably formerly painted; other parts of the tomb still retain their bright colours.

Most depictions of the Saracen's Head associated with the Shirley family are to be found in Leicestershire, where two churches near the Derbyshire border are worthy of special note: Staunton Harold and Breedon on the Hill. The chapel of the Holy Trinity at Staunton Harold is the private chapel of the Shirley family, founded in 1653 by Sir Robert Shirley, 4th Baronet. It was placed in the care of the National Trust in 1953 by the 12th Earl Ferrers, prior to the sale of the whole of the Shirley's Leicestershire estate the following year. Hanging high up in the chancel of the chapel are several examples of the Saracen's Head in carved and painted wood, and the head is also depicted on pennants and banners. In addition, in the chancel and over the chancel arch are



The Saracen's Head on the tomb of Cassandra Powtrel (formerly Shirley),  
at West Hallam Church, Derbyshire

helmets, spurs, tabards, shields, swords and gauntlets. These various objects, known as '*funerary achievements*', were the heraldic arms of deceased members of the Shirley family, and would have accompanied their coffins and funeral processions.

Funerals of prominent men (I know of no women commemorated in this way) became grand and elaborate ceremonial occasions in the thirteenth century, conducted with great pomp, and continued in the same style into the seventeenth century. The funerary achievements which accompanied them originally signified the chivalrous and honourable nature of the life of the deceased.

*Achievements are not earned by prowess on the battlefield but are yours of right by heredity.*

(Letter to the late 13th Earl Ferrers from T. Woodcock, Garter Principal King of Arms, 7 July 2011, in response to the Earl's query on the meaning of the Shirley funerary achievements in Staunton Harold chapel).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries heralds were appointed by the Crown to police the bearing of arms and to authorise the granting of new arms. By then heralds also organised, attended and recorded the funerals of the nobility.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century items of armour were often specially made for the funerals of men who had never been active soldiers. We know this to be the case for some of the pieces of the Staunton achievements from the detailed descriptions of them when they were first given to the National Trust.<sup>28</sup>

Records show that the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Shirley Baronets had heraldic funerals and were buried in the church at Breedon on the Hill. So the Staunton Harold achievements belong to these Shirleys and therefore date back to the first half of the seventeenth century, predating the present chapel at Staunton Harold. The funerals of the 1st Baronet (d.1622) and 2nd Baronet (d.1632/3) are recorded in manuscripts in the College of Arms. However, the death in 1646 of Sir Charles Shirley, 3rd Baronet, occurred during the Civil War and this is the reason there is

no record of his funeral in the College of Arms.<sup>29</sup> But E.P. Shirley provides a detailed description of the elaborate funeral procession in his history of the family.<sup>30</sup>

After the funeral of the deceased his achievements would have been hung near his burial place, which in the case of the first three Shirley baronets, was in the parish church at Breedon on the Hill, as stated. They were subsequently removed from Breedon and rehung in the family chapel at Staunton Harold at some later date, as yet unknown, but probably in the nineteenth century, long after the present chapel was completed.

The tradition of funerary achievements is a special feature of families and churches in England and Wales. The custom declined in the eighteenth century, since when many, if not most, of these objects have been lost, especially from parish churches. Those placed in cathedrals and private family chapels have fared better: examples include the achievements of the Black Prince (d.1376) in Canterbury Cathedral, those of Sir Robert Dryden (d.1708) in his chapel at Canons Ashby (National Trust), and the Shirley achievements at Staunton Harold.

The Shirley funerary achievements are of national importance because they are so complete, and are associated with documented heraldic funerals for each of three known family members. Their importance was confirmed in November 1953 when Sir James Mann (1897-1962), Master of the Armouries at the Tower of London, wrote to the 12th Earl Ferrers:

*I do not think I have ever seen so complete a collection of achievements before, apart from those of the Black Prince, and I hope that even if copies are made, the originals will be preserved.<sup>31</sup>*

The centuries-long tradition of elaborate funerals attended by heralds waned after the seventeenth century. It continues today only for the Sovereign and for state funerals such as that of Sir Winston Churchill. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a custom emerged which also involved the display of the coat of arms of the deceased. This was a 'hatchment' (the word is a corruption of 'achievement'), a large wooden panel, painted with the arms of the deceased. It would originally have been placed on the coffin and then hung over the door of the deceased person's residence. Traditionally it would remain for up to a year before being removed to the church where he/she was buried. Four such funerary hatchments for members of the Shirley family, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, hang on the walls of the north and south aisles at Staunton Harold. They display the relevant motto and coat of arms of the deceased, two of which show the Saracen's Head crest (Figs 6 and 7). Such family hatchments are much more common than funerary achievements in churches throughout the country.



Fig 6: Hatchment in Staunton Harold Church for Robert, Viscount Tamworth (d.1830) with Saracen's Head crest



Fig 7: Hatchment in Staunton Harold Church for Washington, 9th Earl Ferrers (d.1859), with Saracen's Head crest

In the church of St Mary and St Hardulph at Breedon on the Hill, depictions of the Saracen's Head can be seen in glass, and also carved in wood and stone. This Norman priory church was purchased by Francis Shirley of Staunton Harold in 1539 at the dissolution of the monasteries as a place of burial for his family. The parish church at Breedon is what remains of the tower and chancel of the original priory church, and was given by Francis Shirley to the people as their parish church. The north aisle was reserved for Shirley burials and continued to serve this purpose for some members of the family even after the completion of the chapel and crypt at Staunton Harold in the 1660s.

Three fine sixteenth century alabaster tombs to members of the Shirley family are situated in the north aisle at Breedon, now surrounded by high railings. They include the memorials of Francis who purchased the priory church, and his wife, who both died in 1571. There is a memorial to Francis's son John who predeceased him in 1570, and to his grandson Sir George, the 1st Baronet (d.1622) and his first wife. Beneath the head of both Francis and John is a helmet and the Saracen's Head (Figs. 8 and 9).

The original contract dated 9 August 1585 for John's tomb, fifteen years after his death, is on vellum and still survives in the LRO.<sup>32</sup> It is an agreement for the sum of £22 between Richard and Gabriel Royley, tomb makers of Burton on Trent, and Sir George Shirley, son of John. It gives detailed instructions for the tomb: size, design, colours, epitaph, etc, even for the transport and installation, and specifies '*withe creste and helmet under his head*!.

The three-tier alabaster tomb of Sir George (d.1622) and his first wife (d.1585) is the most elaborate tomb of all, and has numerous depictions of the Saracen's Head in the heraldry (Fig. 9). It was installed in his lifetime to commemorate the death of his first wife.



Fig 8: Alabaster tomb of Francis and Dorothy Shirley (both died 1571) with Saracen's Head and helmet beneath Francis's head, in Breedon on the Hill Church



Fig 9: Saracen's Head beneath his head on the alabaster tomb of John Shirley (d.1570) in Breedon on the Hill Church



Fig 10: Saracen's Head crest on the coat of arms on the top of the three-tier tomb of Sir George Shirley, 1st Baronet (d.1622) in Breedon on the Hill Church

Also in the north aisle is a lancet window with a Saracen's Head, perhaps dating from the 19th century (Fig. 11).



Fig 11: Heraldic glass in the east window of the north aisle of Breedon on the Hill Church

A prominent feature of the church interior at Breedon is a huge private oak pew dated 1627, with detailed heraldic carving incorporating several examples of the Saracen's Head (Fig. 12). The pew celebrated the 1616 marriage of Sir Henry Shirley, the 2nd Baronet, and Dorothy Devereux, sister of the 3rd Earl of Essex. This was a significant alliance, bringing land, titles and a royal connection which shaped the subsequent history of the Shirley family.



Fig 12: Saracen's Head, one of several on the Great Shirley Pew in Breedon on the Hill Church, erected by Sir Henry Shirley, 2nd Baronet

### **Conclusion**

For many centuries the village of Shirley in Derbyshire was the main seat of the ancient Shirley family which has an unbroken lineage of more than nine hundred years. During their time in Derbyshire they flourished through land acquisitions and fortuitous marriage alliances, they held administrative roles in the county and region, and were active on the battlefield at home and abroad. The subsequent wealth and status of the Shirleys, after their move from Derbyshire, was thus assured, although the future was not a happy one for every generation. The family no longer has a base in either Derbyshire or Leicestershire, but their long involvement in the histories of these two counties can be traced in the villages and churches where the Saracen's Head can still be seen, providing a link back to the Shirley family's twelfth century Derbyshire ancestors.

### **A note on the Shirleys and the Ferrers**

Perhaps understandably, it is common for these names to be interchanged but it is quite wrong, and it is important to clear up this confusion. The family name has been Shirley since the early Middle Ages, and so it continues. The use of the title '*Ferrers*' by the Shirley family dates from the late 17th century and applies only to the senior member of the family and his countess. It is an interesting coincidence that successive generations of the early Shirleys, even before they adopted the name, held their land in Warwickshire and Derbyshire under Henry de Ferraris and his descendants, later de Ferrers, then Ferrers. Henry originally came from Normandy with William I, who had granted him extensive land as a reward for his support against King Harold.

The Shirleys and Ferrers were entirely separate families and remained so throughout the Middle Ages until 1616 when Sir Henry Shirley, the 2nd Baronet, married Dorothy Devereux, a Ferrers descendant. It was through her that her Shirley descendants were to acquire the title Baron Ferrers in 1677 and then Earl Ferrers in 1711.

Robert de Ferrers (d.1139), son of Henry, was created Earl of Derby, and his descendants retained this title until 1299. In that year John de Ferrers (d.1324/5), son of Robert the 6th Earl, was created 1st Baron Ferrers of Chartley. (The younger brother of Robert was William de Ferrers, from whom the Ferrers of Tamworth Castle and Baddesley Clinton were descended.) Several generations later Anne, daughter and only heir of William de Ferrers, married Sir Walter Devereux (died at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485), who, through his wife's family, took the title Baron Ferrers of Chartley. Thus the de Ferrers line and title continued through a female descendant as Devereux.

A sixteenth century descendant of Anne and Sir Walter Devereux, another Walter, became the 1st Earl of Essex, while retaining the title Baron Ferrers of Chartley. Essex's granddaughter was Dorothy, who married Sir Henry Shirley in 1616, thus uniting the Shirleys with the line of Ferrers.

The grandson of Sir Henry and Dorothy was Sir Robert Shirley, 7th Baronet who was made Baron Ferrers of Chartley in 1677 by Charles II. The king revived the Barony in Sir Robert Shirley's favour: it had become extinct with the death of Dorothy Devereux's brother. In raising Sir Robert to the House of Peers, Charles II was honouring a promise he had made twenty years earlier in 1657 while he was in exile in Brussels. He wrote a letter of condolence, secretly smuggled out, to the recently widowed mother of Sir Robert, after the death in the Tower of London of the 4th Baronet, acknowledging Sir Robert's loyal support as a staunch Royalist. The 4th Baronet was the builder of the family chapel at Staunton Harold, founded in 1653 in defiance of Oliver Cromwell.

Sir Robert, as Baron Ferrers, served the royal courts of Charles II, James II, William III and Queen Anne. In 1711 Sir Robert Shirley was further honoured when he was made Earl Ferrers and Viscount Tamworth by Queen Anne.

The 1st Earl Ferrers married a second time after the death of his first wife. At his death the children of the first marriage retained the estates in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, while the children of the second marriage retained the Warwickshire and other estates. The Earldom has continued for over three hundred years in the direct male line from the first wife until the present, so that the family surname is Shirley and the senior member of the Shirley family has the title of the 14th Earl Ferrers. His son and heir has the title Viscount Tamworth.

Summarised from pedigrees in E.P. Shirley, *Stemmata Shirleiana*, 1873

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to place on record my indebtedness to the late Mrs Barbara Hutton, a personal friend and a longstanding member of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society. Barbara was skilled and very much enjoyed transcribing and translating early documents in medieval Latin and medieval French as well as in English. This has been invaluable to me over the years in my study of Staunton Harold and the history of the Shirley family.

Alison Watson at the Royal Armouries in Leeds generously provided copies of records and correspondence relating to the 1953 donation to the National Trust and subsequent professional examination of the Shirley funerary achievements.

I am grateful to the editors and to Dr Joan D'Arcy for encouragement and advice on adapting this article to give it a Derbyshire focus.

### **A note on sources**

The extensive primary and secondary sources for studying the Shirley family offer enormous scope to researchers. The three main secondary sources on the history of the Shirley family are used here and are, chronologically:

1. John Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire*, Vol III, Part 2, 1804.

2. E.P. Shirley, *Stemmata Shirleiana*, 2nd Edition., 1873.  
(In the 115 Appendices are nineteenth century transcriptions of many of the original early manuscripts then still held by the Shirley family, and others held in national collections)
3. Alex Fielding, *The Shirley Family: One Thousand Years of English History*, 2015.  
(Commissioned by the 14th Earl Ferrers)

These three all make extensive use of primary sources in the prolific Shirley archives. Principal among these is the collection held in the LRO, most of which was at Staunton Harold until 1954 when it was deposited in the LRO.

Some Shirley papers are also held in the Record Office for Warwickshire, placed there by the Ettington branch of the family in the nineteenth century.

Shirley papers are also held in Staffordshire Archives, especially relating to the Chartley estate owned by the Shirleys for several centuries.

Other original documents relating to the Shirley family are to be found in national collections of manuscripts, including:

The Dugdale manuscripts, now held by the Bodleian Library in Oxford (until 1860 at the Ashmoleum Museum). William Dugdale, the seventeenth century Warwickshire historian, was a friend of Sir Thomas Shirley, the historian of the family.

The Harleian manuscripts in the British Library.

## References

1. E. P. Shirley, *Stemmata Shirleiana*, p6.
2. E. Fielding, *The Shirley Family: One Thousand Years of English History*, p18.
3. E. P. Shirley, p6 (extracts from Domesday Book quoted in Appendix)..
4. *ibid*, p9; John Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire*, Vol III, Part 2, p706.
5. K. Cameron, *Place-names of Derbyshire*, Vol 3, 1959, p599.
6. E. P. Shirley, p8.
7. *Ibid*, Appendices XII and XIII.
8. John Nichols, p706 footnote.
9. Because of the early dates and the use of the same forename in several generations it is difficult to be certain about the medieval Shirley pedigree. There are some discrepancies between the versions compiled and published by Nichols and E. P. Shirley, who both used original Shirley documents.
10. John Nichols, p707; E. P. Shirley, pp17-18 (grant in Latin transcribed in Appendix).
11. John Nichols, p706; E. P. Shirley, pp 5,8,10, etc.
12. E. P. Shirley, p12.
13. *ibid*, p20.
14. *ibid*, p26.
15. *ibid*, p33.
16. *ibid*, p33.
17. *ibid*, pp 34-5.
18. *ibid*, p36.
19. *ibid*, pp 40-41, 43.
20. *ibid*, p43.
21. *ibid*, pp 46-7.
22. *ibid*, p51.
23. *British Museum Magazine*, No 36, Spring 2000, p13.
24. E. P. Shirley, pp 26, 31.
25. *ibid*, p11.
26. *ibid*, pp 49-50.
27. Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *Heraldry in National Trust Houses*, 2000, p9.
28. Letters and reports dating from 1953 held by the Royal Armouries, Leeds.
29. Personal communication, Thomas Woodcock, Garter King of Arms, 17 June 2014.
30. E. P. Shirley, pp 141-2.
31. Copy of letter preserved at the Royal Armouries, Leeds.
32. LRO, Ref 26D53/2571, Agreement between George Shirley of Staunton Harold and Richard Royley and Gabriel Royley of Burton on Trent, tomb makers.



male to the left and the female to the right.<sup>5</sup> The first depicts the arms of Talbot impaling those of Hardwick, obviously intended to represent the marriage of the earl to Bess. The second depicts the arms of Cavendish impaling those of Talbot, an unequivocal reference to the marriage of Henry Cavendish to Grace Talbot.

Completely absent from the '*Eglantine Table*' is any reference whatsoever to the marriage of Gilbert Talbot and Mary Cavendish. If, as so often claimed, Hardwick's '*Eglantine Table*' was indeed commissioned to commemorate *three* marriages, then surely we are entitled to ask why there is no heraldic marriage impalement present to represent Gilbert and Mary's marriage? Is this merely a *mistake*, an *oversight*? Did those who crafted the table simply forget to include such an heraldic impalement?

Was it omitted because there was insufficient space for its inclusion? To even begin to contemplate such explanations is to stretch credulity to breaking point. There can be only one logical explanation for the omission. As evidenced by the two marriage impalements inlaid into the table itself, the '*Eglantine Table*' was commissioned to commemorate two marriages, those of Bess and of her eldest son. It was never intended to commemorate the third marriage, that of Gilbert and Mary.

Rank and position mattered to the Elizabethans and Bess was certainly status conscious. Among the more obvious examples of Bess's status consciousness are the huge '*ES*' monograms that top Hardwick's lofty towers. Bess also chose to frame the non-aristocratic Hardwick coat of arms with heraldic supporters and to display monograms and the Hardwick arms beneath the coronet of a countess. The over mantle in the Cut Velvet Room provides a further example in its depictions of the marriage impalements of all six of Bess's surviving children, three to the left and three to the right. These are not placed in any chronological order other than that of rank with each side being headed by one of Bess's two daughters who became countesses: Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, and Elizabeth, Countess of Lennox. Bess continued to style herself Countess of Shrewsbury until her own death on the 13th of February 1608, a situation which led to both Bess and her daughter, Mary, being addressed as Countess of Shrewsbury at one and the same time.

We may then ask why Bess chose not to include the marriage of Gilbert Talbot and Mary Cavendish when she commissioned the table.<sup>6</sup> When the three marriages took place, Gilbert's elder brother, Francis, Lord Talbot, was still alive. Married to the daughter of the Earl of Pembroke in 1562, Francis did not die until 1582. Gilbert was the '*spare*' and not the '*heir*'. In an Elizabethan aristocratic household the first-born male was considered the most important followed by daughters as on marriage they could be expected to attract substantial dowries. In terms of status, Gilbert and Mary's marriage was not in the same league as that of Bess and that of her eldest son. The Artemesia panel, one of what was once a set of five wall-hangings made at Chatsworth c1573, similarly displays impalements depicting Bess's marriage to George Talbot and Henry Cavendish's marriage to Grace Talbot. As a fifteen year-old second son, Gilbert's marriage to Mary was advantageous to both his father and to Bess. It further cemented ties between the Talbot and Cavendish families and their assets and marriage to Gilbert conveniently relieved Bess of the necessity of providing Mary with a dowry.

Once embedded into a narrative, it becomes notoriously difficult to dislodge historical myths. Does Hardwick's '*Eglantine Table*' commemorate three marriages? Put simply, three into two won't go.

Hardwick Hall, Doe Lea, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5QJ  
<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwick>

#### Notes/References

1. The building of Hardwick New Hall commenced within weeks of the death of George Talbot who died on the 18th November, 1590. Modern biographers tend to give Bess' year of birth as 1527 but contemporary evidence suggests that a date of 1522/3 is more likely. For a discussion of Bess' year of birth see Philip Riden's 'The Hardwicks of Hardwick Hall in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol 130, 2010, pp150-151.
2. Boynton. L. (Ed), *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601*, 1971, p27. The inventory also refers to a long, carved and inlaid, table in the Low Great Chamber. Displayed in a less prominent place at Hardwick Hall today is an Elizabethan inlaid table, the central feature of which is interestingly a single

- heraldic marriage impalement, that of Talbot impaling Hardwick. Though obviously representing the marriage of Bess to George Talbot, it is not known who commissioned this table.
3. Remarkably similar to Hardwick's 'Eglantine Table' is the 'Brome Table', part of Glasgow Museums' Burrell Collection. Dated 1569, the 'Brome Table' was also commissioned to commemorate marriage.
  4. Goldring. E., 'Talbot, Elizabeth [Bess of Hardwick], Countess of Shrewsbury (1527?-1608)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26925>].  
Goldring. E. 'Talbot, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, (c1522-1590)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, online edition, May 20, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26928>].  
Goldring states that the marriage of Bess and George Talbot took place in London on the 1st of November, 1567, over three months before the marriages of the children. David Durant concludes his discussion of potential dates by stating 'It is certainly safe to say that Bess and the Earl were married in the autumn of 1567....' Durant, D.N., *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast*, 1977, pp55-56. Mary Lovell argues that the marriage of Bess and Talbot took place after the marriages of the children sometime between the 9th of February and the 23rd of March, 1568, at a place unknown. Lovell. M.S., *Bess of Hardwick, First Lady of Chatsworth*, 2006, p200.
  5. In strict heraldic terms, as shields would be held on the arm and, thus, viewed by the holder from behind, the male's arms are said to be on the Dexter side [right] and the female to the Sinister side, [left].
  6. There is no actual proof that Bess commissioned the table but the inclusion of the Hardwick and Cavendish arms to depict the marriage of Bess and that of her eldest son, together with the words 'we stags exult to the divine', indicate that it was commissioned to celebrate the success of the Hardwick and Cavendish families, therefore making it unlikely that the table was commissioned by Talbot.

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## SIR SAMUEL SLEIGH 1603-1679

(by Roger Dalton, 3 Lawn Avenue, Etwall, Derby, DE65 6JB)

The Derbyshire branch of the Sleigh family<sup>1</sup> was well established in the upper Dove valley by the early sixteenth century holding estates at Pilsbury to the north of Hartington and nearby at Broadmeadow in Sheen in Staffordshire. The Sleighs were successful fellmongers and dealers in minerals, which, combined with opportune marriages, secured for them wealth and position. Towards the end of the sixteenth century members moved to the Derby area. Among these was Edmund Sleigh (1551-1615) who became significant in the Derby scene as a merchant stapler and a supplier of lead to the London market. He was followed by his lawyer cousin Gervase Sleigh (1560-1626) who in 1602 married Elizabeth Cholmondley of Ashby de la Zouche. In 1603 he purchased the manor of Ashe with its Hall to the west of Derby as a family home. The first of three sons, Samuel, the subject of this paper, was born in 1603 followed by Gervase (1607-1641) and Hugh (1627-1641). Like his cousin Edmund, Gervase was prominent in Derby society serving as bailiff, MP in 1604 and alderman in 1612.



Sir Samuel Sleigh of Ashe and Etwall Hall  
(The New York Public Library Digital Collection. Online.)

As the eldest son Samuel went up to Cambridge in 1621 and then to Gray's Inn in 1623 to follow his father as a barrister at law. His subsequent career was closely associated with Derby and Derbyshire and demonstrated political astuteness in plotting his way through the Civil Wars and the Restoration. He acquired a number of Derbyshire manors. He inherited Ashe from his father in 1641, the year in which he was knighted, and next he purchased Etwall from Sir Edward Moseley for £8,910 followed by Burnaston from the Bonningtons and then Dalbury and Dalbury Lees. In 1647 and 1650 he disposed of properties in Sheen in Staffordshire but acquired manors of Snelston and Parwich, lands in Dethick and tenements at Thurvaston and Ostleton.<sup>2</sup>

Samuel married three times. His first wife was Judith Boys of Betteshanger in Kent, for whom he bought Pool Hall near Hartington as a marital home. Judith bore him two sons, who both died young, while Judith herself died in 1634 aged 28. His second wife was Margaret Darcy daughter of Sir Robert Darcy of Blackfriars who died in 1647 having given birth to two sons and four daughters. Only the fourth daughter, Margaret (1645-1703) was to outlive Sir Samuel having married James Chetham of Turton near Manchester. In 1677, then aged 74, Sir Samuel married his third wife Elizabeth. She was the daughter of the Rev John Harpur of Morley and she died in 1738. Their daughter Mary was born after Samuel's death in 1679. Thus Sir Samuel was survived by only two of his nine children, Margaret Chetham and Mary who was marry Rowland Cotton of Bellaport in Shropshire. Consequently Samuel's line of the Sleigh family died out and in the settlement of his estate Margaret inherited Ashe Hall and manor while Mary had Etwall and Burnaston which then passed to her husband Rowland Cotton.

Later Cotton was to receive Ashe from Samuel Chetham son of Margaret and James. Ecclesiastically Ashe was associated with the parish church of St Michael at Sutton on the Hill which is distinguished by memorials to Sleigh family members including a notable alabaster monument to Samuel Sleigh's first wife Judith.

Sir Samuel's legal and public service career took place against the backdrop of the Civil Wars (1642-1651). Samuel nominally supported Parliament being a prominent Roundhead and Presbyterian.<sup>3</sup> However, he avoided active involvement in the conflict and is described by Turbutt<sup>4</sup> as one of those who '*found the political and economic climate congenial in which to operate*'. In 1648 he was Sheriff of Derbyshire and in 1654/5 MP for Essex. In 1656 he was MP for Derbyshire when potential members were vetted by Council as Cromwell sought to maximise support for himself.<sup>5</sup> However, although a Parliamentarian he opposed the Protectorate and is said to have advocated Restoration as early as 1653. He also facilitated the legal and financial affairs of Royalists. His path was thus cleared for further office under Charles II enabling him to become MP and High Sheriff for Derbyshire in 1666.

Following Samuel Sleigh's purchase of Etwall in 1646 he initiated the first major reconstruction of the presumed tudor Etwall Hall of the John Ports<sup>6</sup> using stone from the slighted Tutbury Castle. Further rebuilding was to take place in the early eighteenth century at the instigation of Sleigh's grandson Samuel Chetham. As no architectural record seems to have been made of Etwall Hall at its demolition in 1955 detail of earlier buildings is unclear. It is likely that Sleigh moved from Ashe to Etwall when the rebuild was completed. Certainly his library was at Etwall at the time of his death in 1679.

As Lord of the Manor of Etwall Sleigh was to take a close interest in the alms houses willed by the second John Port at his death in 1657.<sup>7</sup> Seemingly Port's executors had taken some time to build the alms houses, the construction date and nature of which is uncertain. However, they were in use well before 1621 in which year a Corporation was formed to administer the alms houses, otherwise Etwall Hospital, and also the school established at Repton under the aegis of the hereditary governors.<sup>8</sup> These were of the families Gerrard, Huntingdon and Stanhope, direct descendants of the husbands of the second John Port's three daughters.

The Corporation members enjoyed an annual dinner and for that held on October 26th 1658 the Master of the Hospital, Jo Jackson, sought from his friend Jon Gill a menu comprising '*a leg of boiled mutton, boiled beef and turnips, roast beef, a fat goose, three rabbits, four chicks and a good dish of apples and a piece of cheese. All the meat to be very good.*'<sup>9</sup> However, while the Corporation members enjoyed occasional high living in 1660 they found themselves petitioning the Hospital Governors '*to relieve ye poor Corporation from ye oppression and tyranny of Sir Samuel Sleigh of Etwall*'. On November 7th of that year Jo Jackson noted that '*six almsmen had been forcibly added to ye then number by Sir Samuel according to ye letters patent*'. John Port's will stipulated that 12 poor men be placed in the hospital six of whom were to be of Etwall parish. It was failure to ensure this last provision which was at the root of Sir Samuel's actions. In 1669 he was still agitating for the terms of Port's will to be properly enacted but made a positive gesture by offering land for the construction of new alms houses providing that six poor men from Etwall were housed. The land in question is that of the present alms houses which enabled expansion of the original site adjacent to Etwall churchyard. In December 1669 Jo Jackson and the Head of Repton School travelled to London to obtain orders from the Governors. However, it was not until 1680 that the Governors commissioned the pulling down of the original inadequate alms houses and the erection of new ones. It is possible that the architect George Eaton of Etwall<sup>10</sup> was engaged to design the new houses. These remain an important feature of the Etwall village life and are a direct legacy of Sir Samuel's time as manorial lord. In 1701 additional land was obtained to enable a wing of four more houses to be added which were first occupied in 1714.

The building of the new Etwall alms houses took place after Sleigh's death in 1679. His will,<sup>11</sup> witnessed by Jo Jackson and others, valued his possessions at £887 15s 10d. Sleigh sought burial alongside family members in the chancel of St Michael's at Sutton on the Hill. This part of his estate was to be disbursed to family, local gentry, deserving servants and members of the local community. The poor of Sutton, Dalbury and Etwall were to receive £5 each while his house servants had one year's wages and personal servants, Thomas Berkyn and Joseph Baker, respectively a farm and a house in Etwall and £4 yearly for life. For family and close friends there were a range of bequests. John Curzon, German Pole and Lady Hugh Bateman of Hartington, William Woolley and his wife, and his wife's brothers and sisters each received a mourning ring valued at 20s. Barbara Sleigh, Elizabeth Sleigh, James Chetham of Turton and his wife, John Harpur of Littlelover and his wife, John Jackson vicar of Etwall, his cousin Ralph Sleigh and son Gervase were each to receive mourning rings worth £10. The vicar of Sutton on the Hill was to receive £25 annually. The Chetham family into which his daughter Margaret had married variously benefited. The tithe rent from Sutton on the Hill, Ostleton and Thurstaston and

Ashe with its Hall and Manor went to Margaret. His grandchildren Samuel, George and Abigail Chetham were to receive £10 each. Samuel as the eldest grandson was also to receive Sleigh's library in Etwall but if the child Sleigh's third wife Elizabeth was carrying was female he would also receive lands in Etwall, Hardwicke, Ashe, Dalbury and elsewhere in England. In the event Sleigh's posthumous child was his daughter Mary so Samuel benefited from the lands stipulated while the residue of the estate was willed to his wife Elizabeth.

Craven and Stanley<sup>12</sup> describe Samuel Sleigh as a good rogue reflecting perhaps his ability to swim with the changing political and economic tides of the times in which he lived. In so doing he demonstrated that he shared with other family members an ability to develop a successful career enabling him to deal in land and property. He was active in Derby affairs for a number of years and as manorial lord of Etwall was concerned with the proper implementation of the will of the second John Port in relation to the alms houses so as to benefit the Etwall community.

## References

1. A.C.Sleigh, *The Sleighs of Derbyshire and Beyond: the History of an English family*, 1992. For the Sleighs of Ashe and Etwall see especially chapter 3.
2. Derbyshire Record Office, (DRO), D2827, D157/MT/1387.
3. Arthur Smith, *Etwall: Portrait of a Derbyshire Village*, 1990, p34.
4. G. Turbutt, *History of Derbyshire*, Vol 3, 1999, p1105.
5. William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period*, 1806-20, p1479.
6. M. Craven and M. Stanley, *The Derbyshire Country House*, 2004, p96.
7. Roger Dalton, 'The Ports of Etwall', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Spring 2014, pp 66-71.
8. R. Bigsby, *Historical and Topographical Description of Repton*, 1854, pp156-164.
9. DRO, 2375 M/46/1, *A Schedule of ancient and modern orders and other memorandums made by the Governors of Etwall alms houses 1660-1800*. This is the basis of the discussion of Samuel Sleigh's involvement in the occupation and reconstruction of the Etwall alms houses.
10. C. Hartwell et al, *The Buildings of England: Derbyshire*, 2016, p394. Anna Hallett, *Alms Houses*, 2004, p26 shows a photograph of the alms houses at Cossall in Nottinghamshire which are very similar in design to those at Etwall.
11. Will of Sir Samuel Sleigh, City of Birmingham Reference Library, W264.
12. Craven and Stanley, *op cit*.

## DIARY OF A SHIPLEY FARMER 1867: PART 4: JULY 20 - 9 SEPTEMBER

(by Malcolm Burrows, 2 Millers Court, Edward Street, Derby, DE1 3BN)

### Introduction

In the late 1960s and early 1970s I was tracing and interviewing former servants and gardeners who had been employed at Shipley Hall. On a number of occasions I was referred to people who had worked on the estate. One such occasion involved a visit to Sutton on Sea where I met John Fletcher who, together with several generations of his family, had been a tenant farmer on the Shipley estate. He it was who loaned me the original diary of his grandfather (another John Fletcher). NB: The original spelling and punctuation has been retained.

### THE DIARY

#### Saturday July 20<sup>th</sup>

Turning and trying to get some Hay dry but could not lead any have had an Irishman and I Ebberrn helping us  
Cows all going over again have had 3 Bullled today  
Dairy maid Walleye and Strawberry.

#### Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Carried 6 Waggon loads but the wind so very rough could not get on with the raking had to leave that till the next day.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Carried the raking and 3 loads today finishing up of the Hay.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Unloading 2 loads of Hay straightening up the stack Horse hoeing between Turnips.

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>**

Dragging Summers Fallows three Horses abreast.

Have bought a new saddle

27 staves for 13s 6d

New Wheelbarrow 16s 6d

Paid J. Green sough closes

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup>**

Have put an heap of Manure on the bottom field and the bottom end of the top Horse pasture have an Irishman knocking.

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>**

Taken the 4 Stirks through the Wood to Meynell close the Bull with them

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup>**

Cultivated this side of Shipley wood close set a man to hoe Turnips to give him 15d to hoe the lot twice over.

Sold 3 pigs for 18d each to Poundall Marpool.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>**

Finished thatching both stacks stand well for Hay.

Cultivating Fallow with 4 horses abreast

Dry weather

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup>**

Rhuben loping the fence on Shipley wood

Have had a man hoeing Turnips given him 15d for the lot

Father has sent 21 sheep to my Clover eddish at 6d per head a week.

**Thursday August 1<sup>st</sup>**

Began Manuring Summers fallows good Muck out of the Yard.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Manuring and Ploughing down with Ham have an Irishman filling one Horse cart.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Isaac Cocker Grammer Died

Recd of A.M.Mundy Esq. the sum of Seven Pounds ten Shillings for Nutbrook damages up to Lady day 1867.

**August 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>**

Topping Fences and Ploughing down on Summers fallows

7<sup>th</sup> Been to West Hallam Flower Show.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>**

Received a Card of Mrs Burbages Death Aged 69

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>**

Finished Ploughing up Fallows gave a good Manuring.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup>**

Topping the fence between Common piece and Mill Hill very hot day.

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>**

Have had the Wittawers R.Shaw and Joe Siddons repairing Horse tackle

had a Cart saddle stuffed and a collar.

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>**

Began of Cutting Peas Rhuben and man a very light crop.

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>**

Ilkeston Flower show but turned out a very whet day stoping every thing at night.

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup>**

Began of Cutting Oats in both closes  
Open hole set to Kemp & Co for 28d an 1 gall of Ale.

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>**

Cutting Oats and taking up has we go on.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup>**

Cutting Oats came a very heavy thunder storm in the night.  
Have J Green mending some gates and painting Harrows.  
Paid him for new Harrows and work £4 3s 0d.

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>**

Finished the Open hole Oats Paid Kemp 28d.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>**

My men have finished Oats turned Peas  
Been to Ilkeston Market settled with W. Judbury  
Butchers Bill and for 6 Sheep.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Man putting some Manure on Shipley wood Rhuben toping fence at the bottom and scouring Ditch out.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Paid for Cutting Bower Hill Wheat 3a 1r 1q at 14d £3 15s 6d  
Bessy and I have been to Nottingham to meet Joseph and Mrs Cresswell  
Had a private court day to pay Joseph of the Copyhold field at Little Hallam.

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup>**

Carried a stack of Oats of Open Hole put a Waggon load of Peas on the top for seed.

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>**

Carried the top end of Broad Meadow Oats a very light crop put the remainder of Peas on the top in very good order.

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup>**

Men all covering the stacks running 3 bands round the stack that I mean to thrash.

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup>**

Cultivating Pea ground with 4 Horses Rhuben has taken up a flat of Potatoes some of them going diseased.

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup>**

Began of Mowing the Bradley close Wheat a little at the top and that you may call a crop.

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup>**

Carried a Field of Wheat today Bower Hill a good crop put 9 Waggon loads on the middle frame 3 loads in a stack to thrash for seed covered and made all safe had 2 men helping us 2d each and Victuals.

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**

A deal of Thunder Lightning and rain  
Mr. and Mrs. Cresswell came to our House they wore quite weather bound.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>**

Rhuben mowing the 3 Acres Wheat a very poor crop only a bit down the ridges of the lands to give 8d per acre.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>**

Drawing up this side of Shipley wood and Ploughing the Addlands

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup>**

Mowing some bad Wheat bottom end of Bradley close nothing but rubbish.

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>**

Paid Rhuben for Wheat 16d for 2 Acres in Bradley close and 24d for the 3 Acres.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Finished the bad part of Wheat in Bradley close began of the Duty close in the Afternoon.  
Have a Yearling lamed in the hind leg as if it had bee fast in rails..