

THE WILMOTS OF LONDON BRIDGE & THEIR FAMILY CONNECTIONS

In the sixteenth century various members of the Wilmot family were drapers and mercers in Derby, dealing in the more expensive sort of textiles. The early 1600s saw Robert Wilmot junr move to Chaddesden where his descendants would become landed gentry, however this article begins with his brother, Edward, the younger son of Robert Wilmot senr of Derby. Edward also followed the occupation of mercer, but left Derby to work from premises on the old London Bridge. He makes an early appearance in the records of the Worshipful Company of Mercers in 1597 as '*Edwarde Willymat*', where he is stated to be a '*New Freeman*' thereby confirming his membership of the livery company, which he probably obtained by the process of servitude, in other words serving for a term of years as an apprentice to a member of the Company.¹ A further entry for Edward in 1622 is also interesting since it notes the presence of another new freeman, Henry Holden, who came from Wilne and was Edward's nephew (i.e. the son of Henry Holden senr and his wife Alice Wilmot).

London Bridge was a crucial part of the route from London to the south-east of England with the 500 or so occupants of the various properties that were actually built on the bridge itself forming a well-defined linear community, and unsurprisingly there were many links between the different families who lived and traded there. By 1611 Edward Wilmot was in his late 30s and living and working on the east side of London Bridge where he occupied the fifth property from the north bank.

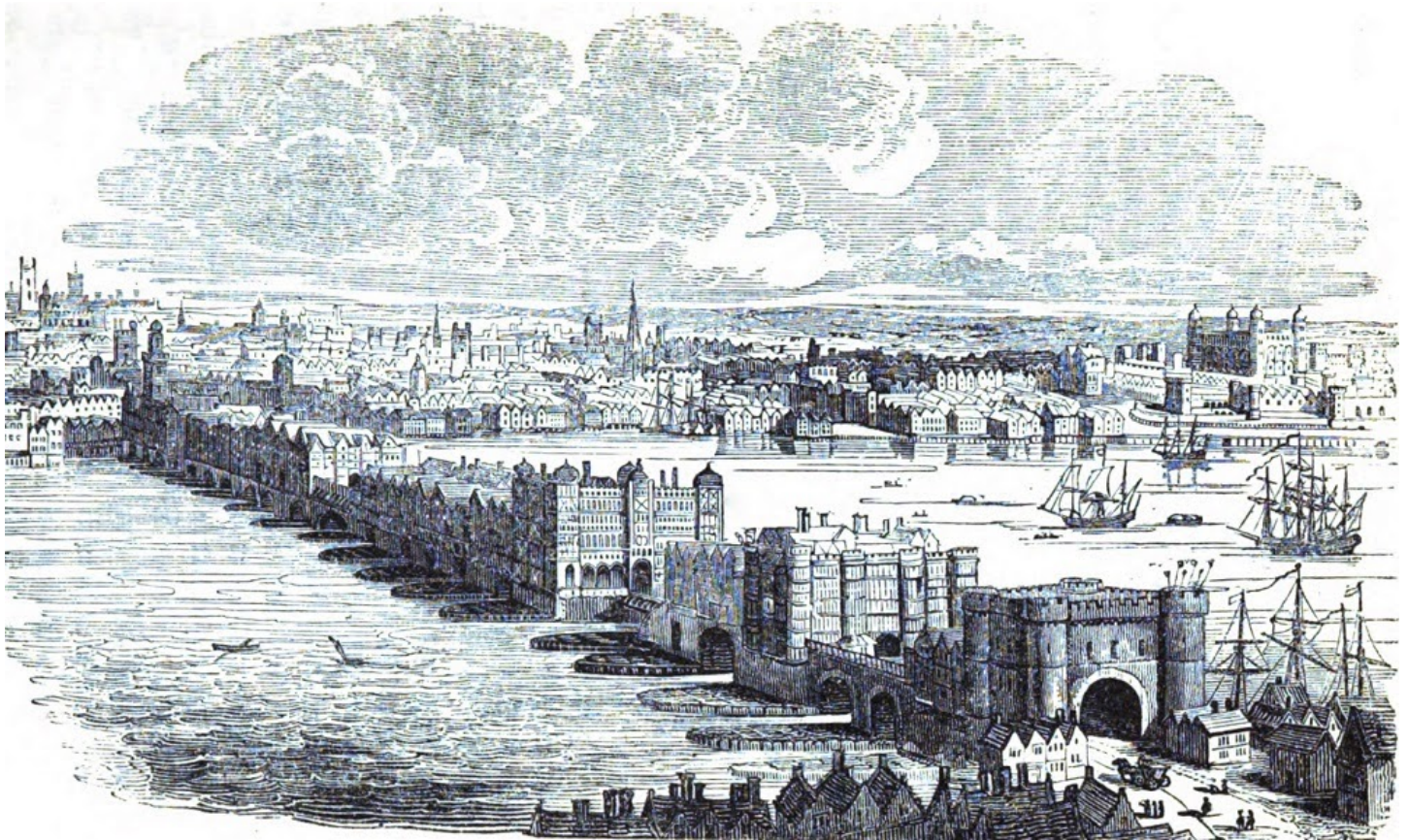


Fig. 1: London Bridge from the south, c.1599. From *Chronicles of London Bridge*, by Richard Thompson, 1839.

Almost exactly opposite him on the west side of the bridge were the premises of his brother-in-law, Samuel Armitage, who like Wilmot, was also a member of the Mercers' Company and is first listed as a new freeman in 1626, featuring again in 1627 and 1635. However, when his will was drawn up in 1636, Armitage described himself as a '*Citizen and Girdler of London*' rather than a mercer. Such an instance is not uncommon since the most important thing for a trader was to possess London citizenship by being a member of a Livery Company; once an individual had been granted membership he could then follow whatever trade he wanted. In Armitage's case he would have

¹ For Records of London's Livery Companies Online (*ROLLCO*), see: <https://www.londonroll.org/>

been involved in the manufacture of leather belts and similar items. He is also notable for having been one of the 200-plus original petitioners to Queen Elizabeth I requesting the incorporation of the East India Company (then known as *The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies*). Their application was successful and a Royal Charter issued on 31 December 1600.²

In his new and fascinating book *London Bridge and Its Houses, c.1209–1761*, Dr. Dorian Gerhold gives a wealth of valuable information about the individual properties on the bridge, and thus we learn that in 1611 Wilmot's shop measured 21 feet by 19 feet and the domestic accommodation he had over four floors included a hall over the shop, two butteries (storerooms), three substantial chambers, two kitchens, and a garret, totalling in all some 1,715 square feet. It seems that the hall window looked out over the River Thames.³

At this period in time London Bridge must have presented a truly amazing sight. The usable roadway was only in the region of 15 feet wide – just enough to allow two carts to pass, but the individual properties projected out considerably beyond the bridge on both its east and west sides. An examination of old pictures of the bridge (e.g. Fig. 1) will reveal that it was supported by nineteen massive stone piers, each typically measuring 70 feet (east to west) by 20 feet (north to south) and it was these which enabled the construction of such large properties on the bridge, for some of the houses and shops rested directly on the piers, whilst others were supported by an intricate network of massive hammer-beams (up to 18 inches by 14 inches in cross-section) laid from pier to pier parallel with the roadway.

Unfortunately by 1626 Edward Wilmot was not well, for when he wrote his will on 4 April he described himself as a '*Citizen and Mercer of London being sicke and weake in bodie but of gud and perfect mynde and memorie praised be Allmightie God ...*' (The National Archives, PROB 11/149/22). Under the terms of his will, Edward instructed that his estate be divided into three parts ... one-third for Susan his wife, one-third to be equally divided between his five children, and the remaining one-third to be disposed of by his own personal directions. Some idea of the wealth he had amassed by the time of his death is given by this entry in his will relating to the final third part of his estate: '*Whereas I have already given and delivered to the handes and possession of my daughter Sarah a certaine quantitie of pepper remayneinge and being in the shopp or Warehouse of or belonginge to my nowe dwellinge house upon London Bridge which beinge rated at the price at which it was taken out of the Easte India Companie I doe estimate to be worth the some or value of five hundred poundes or thereabouts.*' Further sums to be paid out of Edward's personal disposition included the necessary additional amount to make Sarah's marriage portion up to £1,500; and £400 each to his children Robert, Susan and Anne. The East India Company reference is especially interesting since the organisation was then still in its infancy and will feature again later in the article. The residuary legatees to inherit the remainder of Edward's estate were his wife, Susan, and his eldest son, Samuel.

When drawing up his will, Edward did not forget his Derbyshire family. He left his brother Robert Wilmot at Chaddesden '*the some of Five poundes to buy him a peece of plate to keepe for a remembrance of me.*' Similar sums went to '*my sister Alice Houlden widdowe*' and '*my brother Doctor Benbricke and my sister Marie his wief ...*' Edward died shortly after signing his will, for it passed probate on 3 May 1626. He left his wife, Susan, two sons (Samuel and Robert) and three daughters (Sarah, Susan and Anne). The Holden family records in the Derbyshire Record Office contain a document dated 24 November 1626 (D779/E/2/4) in which Susan Wilmot of London, widow, and Samuel Wilmot also of London, gentleman, as the '*executors of Edward Williamatt mercer deceased*', note that '*Robert Houlden of Shardlow yeoman has settled with them all sums due to Edward or to them.*' The family connection between the Wilmot and Holden families is made plain by the endorsement '*Aunte Williamott & Samuells general release*'.

² J. Shaw, 1887. *Charters relating to the East India Company from 1600 to 1761*, Madras, pp.1–2.

³ D. Gerhold, 2019. *London Bridge and Its Houses, c.1209–1761*, London Topographical Society, p.105.

When the Mercers' Company recorded Edward's death, the entry made in their minutes on 18 October 1627 notes he was '*Father of a freeman*' and simultaneously shows his son Samuel Wilmot being admitted as a new freeman. Samuel would later feature as a Master in 1629. On 1 June 1636 a Court of Committees of the East India Company noted that '*Mr. Samuel and Mrs. Susan Williamott, executors to the late Edward Williamott, transfer to Mr. Lewis Roberts £800 adventure and profits in the Third Joint Stock, as by deed under their hands and seals dated May 12, 1636, and now produced*'.⁴ Roberts was Susan Wilmot's son-in-law.

Edward's widow, Susan Wilmot, survived her husband by nearly a quarter of a century and although she had moved to Chester during that period, her will dated 22 October 1640 reveals she still had interests in London, for through her late husband she was entitled to a part or portion of a '*stock treasure or merchandise of the vallue of one thousand pounds or thereabouts ... being and remaineing in the hands Treasury or disposal of the East India Company of Merchants in and about the Cittie of London ...*' Susan Wilmot eventually died ten years later in 1650, her will being probated on 24 June that year (TNA, PROB 11/217/359).

Edward and Susan's oldest son, Samuel Wilmot, continued in the family occupation and also described himself as a citizen and mercer of London. By at least the early 1640s he and his mother had acquired the lease of the eastern half of what was one of the most imposing and elaborate properties ever to stand on London Bridge – Nonsuch House. This four and a half storey structure with its four corner towers and first floor cross building had been built over one of the bridge's piers between 1577–79 as a replacement for the old drawbridge tower; measuring 75 feet from east to west and 25 feet from north to south the house wholly covered the narrow roadway across the bridge which ran right through the centre of the building. The drawing below (Fig. 2), depicting the southern front and western side of the house is taken from Richard Thompson's *Chronicles of London Bridge* (itself based upon Wenceslaus Hollar's *Long View of London*, 1647).

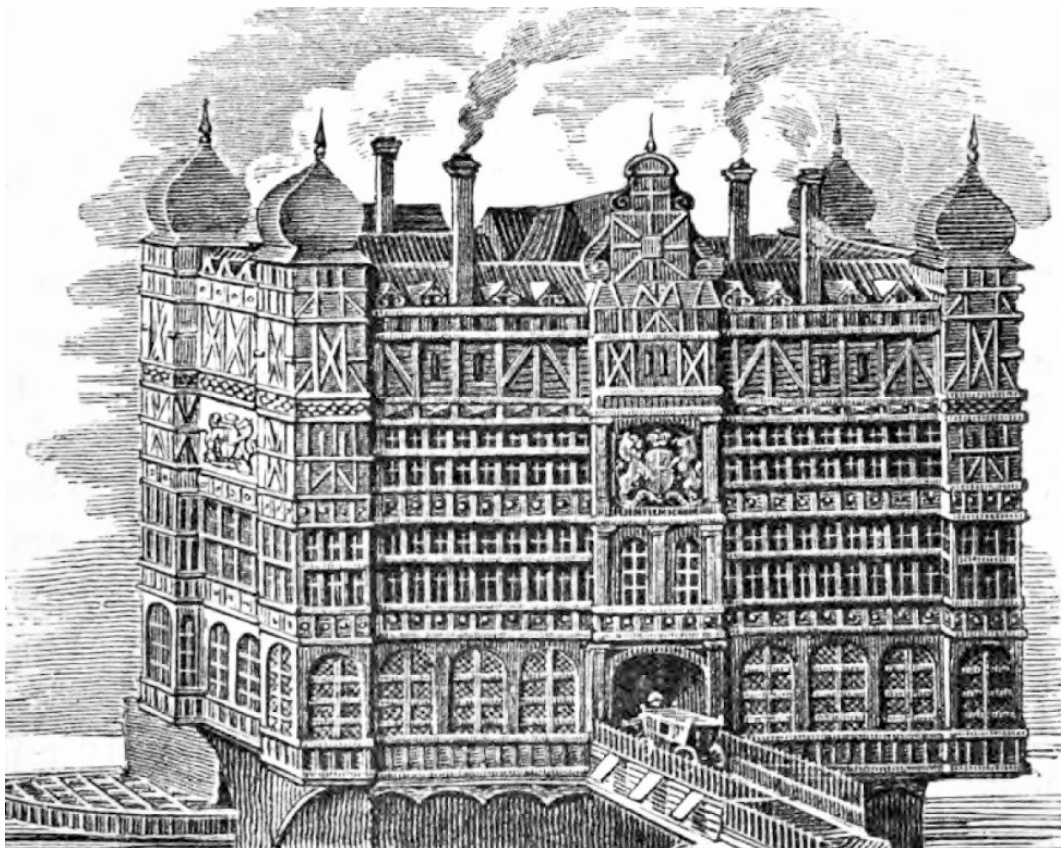


Fig. 2: Nonsuch House, London Bridge

⁴ E. B. Sainsbury, 1907. *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1635–1639*, Oxford, p.179.

A record of 1642 notes the Wilmots' interest in Nonsuch House and adds the information that it was then occupied by one Samuel Browne, citizen and cutler. At the bottom of the property was a cellar measuring 23' x 18'.⁵ On the ground-floor there was a shop, 31' x 25' and a small counting house adjoining the same. The first floor accommodation included a washhouse over the street, 12' x 7'; a chamber also over the street of the same length and breadth; a hall over the shop, 19' x 13'; a parlour on the same floor, length 22', breadth besides the two studies adjoining 16' 6". On the second floor there were two chambers over the washhouse and a chamber over the street of the same length and breadth; a chamber over the hall again of the same length and breadth; a kitchen and chamber over the parlour, and a waterhouse and closet. On the third floor, two further chambers were situated over the two chambers above the street; three garrets, a buttery and two closets over the chambers. On the fourth floor there were leads over the garrets 31' x 12' besides two turrets; and another garret over the street, 14' x 7'.⁶ A later document of 1647 notes that the Wilmots had converted one of the first floor rooms in Nonsuch House into a kitchen (in addition to the '*greate kitchen*'), and they were ordered by Bridge House, the organisation which administered London Bridge, to put it back to its original condition or '*otherwise to take up the pavement thereof*'.⁷

Samuel Wilmot's own will was written on 30 June 1658 during the Commonwealth period (TNA, PROB 11/282/253). Seemingly unmarried, he describes himself as a '*Citizen and Mercer of London*', and aside from various other properties, he notes he is possessed of '*a Lease or estate for the terme of Fifty five yeares or thereabouts of and in one house and divers buildings called Nonsuch or otherwise standing upon London Bridge*.' A little later in the document he goes into more detail and mentions '*the said houses and buildings shoppes cellers and other things standing and being upon the said Bridge*.'

Samuel died soon afterwards and the will was proved on 1 October 1658, one of the executors being his cousin Nicholas Wilmot of Gray's Inn, London, a successful lawyer and owner of Osmaston Hall just two miles south-west of Chaddesden. Coincidentally, the previous month had seen the death of Oliver Cromwell thereby hastening the end of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate regime, which only survived until mid 1660.

A separate PDF file entitled *The Wilmot family of Chaddesden and London Bridge* which can be accessed on Chaddesden Historical Group's website provides a chart showing most of the people mentioned in this article, and an examination of it will reveal that Edward Wilmot's brother and sisters all made advantageous marriages. The sibling we are most familiar with, his elder brother, Robert, married Dorothy Shrigley and founded the main Chaddesden branch of the family; his sister Mary married firstly Francis Babington of Derby and then John Bainbridge, who was both a physician and astronomer; and Alice married the prosperous Henry Holden of Wilne. Further details of these and other families related to the Wilmots are given below.

SOME WILMOT FAMILY CONNECTIONS

(1) THE BABINGTON FAMILY

Mary Wilmot evidently married Francis Babington sometime around 1594. Unfortunately Francis became ill shortly after the birth of their youngest son, and his will was drawn up on 21 September 1607. He died only a few weeks later in November and the will was subsequently proved at Lichfield on 28 Jan 1607/8.⁸ Francis Babington described himself as a gentleman of St. Peter's Parish in Derby and left his house and orchard to his well-beloved wife Mary '*for and duringe all such terme of yeares as I have to come in the same*' together with the sum of £100. His eldest son, also called

⁵ It might be wondered how a property on London Bridge could be described as possessing a cellar. Two distinct possibilities existed: (A) when, as here, the building was supported by one of the bridge's piers, a cellar could be excavated out of part of the pier; alternatively (B) a small 'hanging cellar' might be created by building a wooden structure underneath the property.

⁶ D. Gerhold, 2019. *London Bridge and Its Houses, c.1209–1761*, London Topographical Society, p.114.

⁷ D. Gerhold, as above, p.114.

⁸ Will in Staffordshire Archives Office

Francis, was to receive £100 and his other children Philip, Henry and Mary 100 marks each ... all the children were to be given their legacies when they reached the age of 21. Furthermore, Francis junr was to be bound apprentice in London. After naming his wife to act as his executrix, Babington appointed his brothers-in-law Robert Wilmot the younger and Henry Holden as overseers of the will. Robert Wilmot also witnessed the will and it is evident he kept in touch with Francis' three sons, for when he drew up his own will at Chaddesden in July 1638, he left his kinsmen Henry, Francis and Philip Babington the sums of £20, £10 and £10 respectively. Whether they actually received the legacies is questionable since they were to be paid out of the debt (mentioned later in the article) which John Milward owed to Robert Wilmot.

Despite the various family details given in his will, it has proved extremely difficult to assign Francis a place in one of the printed Babington pedigrees with any degree of confidence. It seems likely that he was a grandson of Rowland Babington of Derby (the fourth son of Sir Thomas Babington of Dethick, Derbyshire) and the son of Augustine Babington of Normanton near Derby, since all three men – Rowland, Augustine and Francis clearly had a special connection with St. Peter's Church and requested interment there. The Babington family had many disparate branches and there had been at least one previous marriage with a member of a Chaddesden family around the same period in time – this was when Mary, the daughter of Sir William Babington of Kiddington in Oxfordshire, married Thomas Newton. It would of course be tempting to associate Francis Babington with Babington Hall in Derby, which was also situated in St. Peter's Parish, but there is no evidence to support this.

(2) THE BAINBRIDGE FAMILY:

Several different branches of this family appear to have been descended from John Bainbridge, who seemingly moved from the north of England to Lockington in Leicestershire in the sixteenth century. Confusingly, many of the same Christian names repeat both horizontally and vertically throughout their combined family tree, but the heraldic visitation of Leicestershire, made by William Camden, Clarenceux King of Arms, in 1619 lists the children Robert Bainbridge of Ashby de la Zouch had by his first wife, Anna Everard of Shenton and notes that the couple's fifth son was John Bainbridge, Doctor of Medicine in London, who married '*Maria filia Rob'ti Willmet de Derby Pannaris*' (Mary, the daughter of Robert Wilmot of Derby, draper).⁹ Whilst factually correct, this statement is a little misleading since it does not take into account that at the time of the marriage Mary was actually the widow of Francis Babington.¹⁰ John Bainbridge was born in Ashby de la Zouch in 1582, duly acquired the degrees of BA, MA, and MD and began by practising medicine in his home town before moving to London. His real interest, however, seems to have been astronomy and he was appointed the first Savilian professor of astronomy at Oxford University in 1620. Keen to learn from the writings of earlier Arabian scholars, he took up the study of Arabic in order to translate the various works then available to him. By his will dated 20 October 1643, he left his wife Mary the use of his house and the sum of £1,000 plus an annuity of £20 p.a. (TNA, PROB 11/205/31). After bequeathing various mathematical books, etc., to Sir Henry Savile's '*Mathematicall Library*' at Oxford, he left the residue of his papers to his friend, Right Rev. James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland. He died on 3 November 1643 and was buried in the chapel at Merton College, Oxford.

(3) THE HOLDEN FAMILY:

This family is believed to have its origins in Lancashire and by the mid sixteenth century had migrated as far south as Findern.¹¹ In 1569 Henry Holden (born perhaps c.1548) was living at Wilne and became a prosperous yeoman farmer and founder of that village's branch of the family. After the death of his first wife, Henry married again, this time at All Saints' Derby on 11 August 1591, his bride being Alice, the daughter of Robert Wilmot, of Derby.¹² The couple had five sons and one daughter.

⁹ Harleian Society, 1870. *The Visitation of the County of Leicester in the Year 1619*, pp.181–2; 190–1;

¹⁰ The marriage took place at St. Peter's Church, Derby, on 25 July 1608 with the couple being described as '*Johanes Benbridg et Maria Babington, vidua*'. Coincidentally, this second marriage of Mary's is on the same register page as the entry recording the burial of her first husband, Francis Babington, some eight months previously!

¹¹ W. H. Holden, 1930. *The Derbyshire Holdens and their Descendants*, London.

¹² The actual register entry reads '*August 1591 ... Henricus Houlden et Alicia Wyllimott nup 11 die.*'

Henry died in 1609 and his will dated 9 August that year included the following minor legacies: *'Item I give to my brother Robert Willimotts Children twentie shillings equallie to be divided amongst them. Item I give to my brother Edward Willimottes children xxvs to be devided equally amongst them. Item I give to my sister Baynbridges children twenty shillings equally to be devided amongst them.'* Included in the names of the five individuals whom Henry wished to act as overseers of his will were *'Robert Willimott of Osmaston the younger and Edward Willimott of London [Bridge] my brother in lawe.'* His will was probated on 5 March 1609/10 (TNA, PROB 11/115/233). The Osmaston reference is particularly significant because it demonstrates that at this moment in time Robert Wilmot had not yet completed his move to Chaddesden.

The Holdens also appear from time to time in legal transactions associated with the Wilmot family. For example, an assignment of a lease dated 17 September 1605 in the Derbyshire Record Office (D3155/6330) is from Henry Holden of Wilne, yeoman, to Robert Wilmot of Wilne, the elder (i.e. Holden's father-in-law), and Richard Bucknall of Donington, husbandman, and concerns two messuages and land in Wilne for 60 years for use of his wife, Alice Holden, and sons John (for fifty years) then Henry Holden.

(4) THE SHRIGLEY FAMILY:

Most printed pedigrees refer to Lawrence Shrigley (died 1611) as being *'of Shrigley in Cheshire'*, however, in 1602 he features in Chancery proceedings relating to land at Egginton and was certainly living in Derbyshire in 1611, when he died at Sinfin, just over two miles to the south of Derby. In his will dated 11 September that year and probated soon afterwards on 30 September he requests burial in Barrow on Trent church and mentions his son Edward Shrigley, his son-in-law John Milward, his daughter Walton, and son Robert Wilmot.¹³ As was the custom then, the terms 'son' (or 'daughter') and 'son-in-law' (or 'daughter-in-law') tended to be used interchangeably, much to the confusion of later historians. Robert Wilmot was in reality Lawrence's son-in-law, having married his daughter Dorothy and Lawrence refers to him thus: *'Item I give to my sonne Robert Willemott & his wife and Children the some of ten poundes, whereof three poundes to my godson John Willemott & the rest to be equally devided'*. John Milward (Lawrence's 'sonne in lawe') and his wife and son were to receive fourteen pounds also to be equally divided amongst themselves ... Milward's exact relationship to Lawrence Shrigley will be examined in more detail below in the Milward family notes. Lawrence's daughter Walton was Isabel Crispe (nee Shrigley) before her marriage to William Walton of Doveridge, who was a member of the same family as Izaak Walton of *Compleat Angler* fame. The will contains no reference to Lawrence's wife so she had presumably predeceased him. After Lawrence Shrigley's death, three of his neighbours made an inventory of his goods on 18 September 1611 and amongst various items they noted *'One brasse pott & one brasse Candlesticke & two peeeces of pewter given to Dorothy Williamott'* valued at 5s, and *'One brasse Pann & two table Clothes given to Ann Milward'* valued at 22s.

The Derbyshire Record Office holds documents in which Lawrence Shrigley's son, Edward, is named in association with either Chaddesden or the Wilmot family. For example, D3155/6729 is a feoffment of 16 March 1606 from Robert Newton of Chaddesden, gentleman, to Edward Shrigley of Ashe, gentleman, regarding the Great Meadow in Osmaston and Chaddesden. A few months later, Edward Shrigley was one of the witnesses to an assignment of a mortgage (D3155/6592) dated 5 December 1606 from Francis Bucke, gentleman, son of Nicholas Bucke of Hill Somersall, gentleman, to Robert Wilmot of Osmaston, yeoman, concerning properties in Hill Somersall and Potter Somersall and a water mill in Hill Somersall.

When Edward Shrigley drew up his own will on 20 November 1633 (Probated 10 February 1633/4) he was living at Stapenhill and requested he be buried *'in the Quire in Burton [upon Trent] Church as neare as may bee to my Grandmother Susanna Blount and Captaine Robert Millward ...'* (TNA, PROB 11/165/146). He then continues *'I give to my brother in law Robert Williamott to his sonnes Robert Williamott To Edward Williamott To Dorotheie his wife and to her daughter Mary Millward to*

¹³ Will in Staffordshire Archives Office

John Williamott to Nicholas Williamott To Elizabeth Williamott To Edward Carelton [Charleton] and to Ann his wife to every of them Twentie shillings apeece to buy them rings as a small remembrance of my love'. Further bequests include 'my gold seale ring' to his brother in law John Milward and 'my best diamond gold ring' to Ann Milward, his sister. Edward's wife Anne Shrigley was to be his executrix and 'my loving nephew Robert Williamott' one of the two overseers of his will.



Fig. 3: The Shrigley coat of arms

Burton upon Trent Church once possessed a window commemorating John Blount and his wife Susanna, very probably Edward Shrigley's grandmother as mentioned in his will. Their son, Edward Blount, was formerly of Burton, but had moved to Arleston by 1617.¹⁴ Edward Blount's will of 15 September 1623 (proved 1 April 1624) mentions his wife, Lady Amye (or Ann) Blount, daughter of George Touchet, 11th Baron Audley and 1st Earl of Castlehaven (TNA, PROB 11/143/327).

(5) THE MILWARD FAMILY:

This family had two main branches, both in small Derbyshire settlements. The first was at Broadlowash half a mile to the south-east of Thorpe, and the other at Eaton Dovedale, situated approximately two miles to the north of Doveridge, overlooking the River Dove. Henry Milward (1537–1615), of the Eaton Dovedale side of the family, moved to Sinfin near Derby, and in *Churches of Derbyshire* Dr. J. C. Cox noted his memorial in Barrow upon Trent Church inscribed as follows: '*Here lieth buried ye bodye of Elizabeth, the wife of Henrye Milward of Sindfen [Sinfin], gent. Shee had issue 5 sons and 5 daughters by her said husband she deceased ye 27th day of September 1610 ye said Henrye deceased 25th of January 1615 and lyeth buried in St Warburghs Churche in Darbye. To whose memories John Milward of London their youngest childe hath erected these monuments*'.¹⁵ An eight line verse which accompanied the inscription and stated that Elizabeth died at the age of 72 after having been married to Henry for 52 years is not quoted here.

When dealing with St. Werburgh's Church in Derby, Cox mentions that there was once another memorial there to Henry and Elizabeth Milward with this inscription: '*Here lyeth buried the body of Henry Milward late of Syndfern Gen: who depected this Lyfe the 25th day of Janry 1615, the 79 years of his age, he had by his wife Elizabth daughter of George Hygham of Adlyngton in Cheshire Gen:*

¹⁴ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/staffs/vol9/pp46-48#h2-0002> incl.footnotes 6 & 7a. Arleston is only half a mile away from Sinfin, Lawrence Shrigley's home.

¹⁵ J. C. Cox, 1879. *Churches of Derbyshire*, London & Derby, Vol. 4, pp.24–5,

ten Children 5 sons and 5 daughters, & having lived lovingly together 52 yeares she deceased the 27th of Sept 1610 & lyeth buried in the Churche of Barrow upon Trent, to whose memory in filial duty John Milward their youngest child hath erected this Monument'.¹⁶

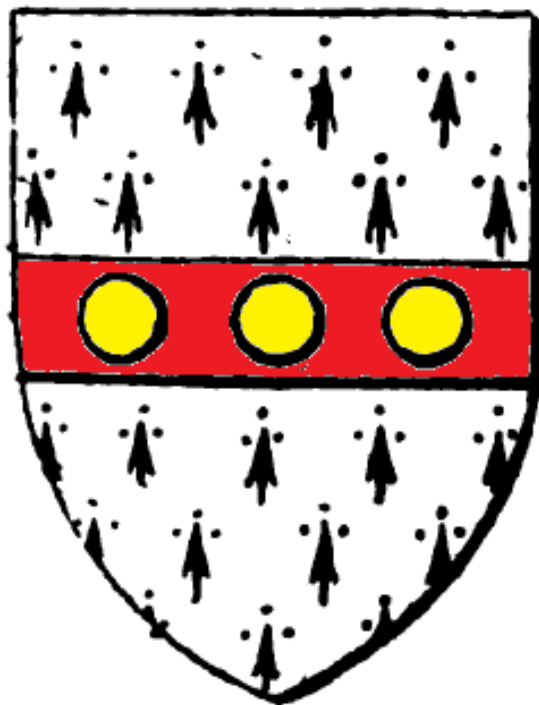


Fig. 4: The basic Milward coat of arms

John Milward – the dutiful son who paid for the two memorials to his parents – is mentioned in the 1638 will of Robert Wilmot of Chaddesden (husband of Dorothy Shrigley) thus: *'Whereas my brother in lawe John Milward of London Merchant & his sonne Thomas Milward stand bound unto mee for the payment of Sixe hundred & fiftie pounds or thereabouts the which summe is long since due & noe parte thereof yet payd I doe hereby give & bequeath theis Legacies following to be payd out of the said sum after the same shalbe receaved had recovered or by any wayes obtayned'*; the will then lists various sums totalling over £500 to be paid to specified beneficiaries if the Milward debt could be recovered (TNA, PROB 11/180/456). Elsewhere in the will, Wilmot refers to Milward as *'Chaptaine [i.e. Captain] Milward'* and *'my brother [not brother-in-law] John Milward & his saide sonne*. It is through Lawrence Shrigley (see above) that members of the Wilmot family were related to Captain John Milward, for Milward was the husband of Lawrence's daughter Anne. The heraldic visitation of London in 1663 reveals that John Milward of London was *'One of the Captaines of the Cittie of London and Governor of the Corporation of the Silkmen of England, Wales and Ireland, 1633'*. Unfortunately the visitation then erroneously shows his marriage to *'Anne, da. of ___ Lawrence of Sinfin'*, implying that Anne's maiden name was Lawrence, whereas of course she was actually the daughter of Lawrence Shrigley of Sinfin.¹⁷

The name John Milward is not a particularly unusual one which makes tracing any one individual rather problematic, but given that John Milward the husband of Anne Shrigley was Governor of the Corporation of Silkmen he can be found in the minutes of the East India Company after a dramatic fall in silk prices in the late 1630s seriously affected his finances and eventually bankrupted him. With this in mind, we may wonder whether Robert Wilmot of Chaddesden was ever repaid the £650 he had lent Milward and his son Thomas (see preceding paragraph) ... if he wasn't then several Wilmot beneficiaries would never have received their promised legacies!

On 14 May 1641, a Court of Committees of the East India Company noted John Milward's transfer to his son, Thomas Milward, John Langham, William Cockayne, and Humphrey Browne, of his

¹⁶ J. C. Cox, 1879. *Churches of Derbyshire*, London & Derby, Vol. 4, pp.177–8 (Recorded by Elias Ashmole in 1662). As with the Barrow on Trent memorial there are also several lines in verse which are not given here.

¹⁷ Harleian Society, 1883. *The Visitation of London, A.D. 1633–1635*, Vol.2, p.104

'adventure and profits in the Third Joint Stock', i.e. £12,093 15s 0d, out of which he had taken dividends totalling £9,069 16s 9d, leaving £3,023 18s 3d'.¹⁸ John Milward must have died within the next eighteen months, for a similar meeting held on 9 November 1642 noted a request of Thomas, son of the late John Milward for the money due upon his father's adventure.¹⁹

John Milward's serious financial situation was alluded to in an East India Company meeting held on 29 November 1642, for it was recorded that, '*Consideration had as to what discharge the Company should have for the money to be paid in by rebate to Thomas Millward, on behalf of himself and the creditors of his late father, John Millward; by Mr. Acton's advice, it is directed that Sheriff Langham, Messrs. William Cockayne [Deputy Governor of EIC], Humphrey Brown, and Thomas Millward, to whom the adventure of the said John Millward was formerly, on behalf of the creditors, assigned, shall give the Company a discharge for the same, and the rest of the creditors shall sign the release drawn up by Acton and then receive what is due to them; in the meantime the money is to remain in the Company's hands*'.²⁰

From around 1634 onwards, Captain John Milward's London home was Bryck Place in Hackney. Known these days as Sutton House, 2–4 Homerton High Street, this ancient Tudor property which was once threatened with demolition is now in the hands of the National Trust.²¹ Through his East India Company connections, Milward was able to decorate the house with rich furnishings, and traces of some of the painted surfaces he commissioned can still be seen today.

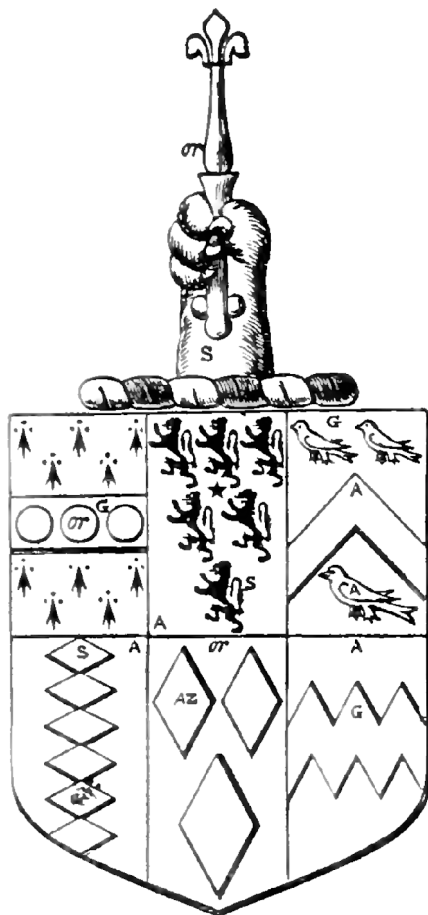


Fig. 5: A more elaborate version of the Milward coat of arms

The illustration above (Fig. 5), taken from the Visitation of London 1663–1665, shows a more detailed version of the Milward coat of arms surmounted by a wreath, on top of which is a lion's paw grasping

¹⁸ E. B. Sainsbury, 1909. *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1640–1643*, Oxford, p.164. William Cockayne, who became the Governor of the EIC in 1643 would almost certainly have been descended from the Cockaynes of Ashbourne and thus related, albeit at a distance, to the Cockaynes of Chaddesden.

¹⁹ E. B. Sainsbury, 1909. *A Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1640–1643*, Oxford, p.285.

²⁰ E. B. Sainsbury, as above, p.290

²¹ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/discover-sutton-house>

a leading-staff or sceptre, used as a formal baton of office.²² It is interesting to note that John Milward's initial involvement with the East India Company may have come about because one of his brothers, Humphrey Milward, was (like Samuel Armitage referred to earlier) another one of the individuals mentioned in the company's charter of incorporation dated 31 December 1600.

While researching this article I came upon a blog called '*A Brush With The Past*' which is dedicated to seventeenth-century portraiture. One of its features – [A Ceremonial Conundrum](#) – speculated upon the identity of a man in an ornate costume complete with lace ruff and holding a leading-staff in his right hand. The painting, sold by Bonhams in 2017 (see [Bonhams Auction Result](#)) was simply inscribed '*Etatis 40. Anno 1657*', which, if correct, would mean the sitter was born in 1617. However, this inscription may not be an original feature, because the costume worn by the sitter in the portrait appears to belong to a somewhat earlier period in time, but of course it is always possible that the costume was a treasured item brought out to wear on special ceremonial occasions. The sitter is not named and the only clue to his identity rests upon the interpretation of the impaled coat of arms displayed in a corner of the picture ... the blog's readers thought the arms were probably those of Milward and Shrigley (they certainly look very similar to Figs. 3 and 4 shown above), but they were not aware of a connection between the two families. The basic arrangement of the coat of arms in the portrait is Dexter side: *Ermine on a fesse Gules, three bezants Or*; Sinister side: *Sable, a chevron between three legs coupéd at the knee Argent*, implying that the man was a Milward and his wife a Shrigley, which hints at the possibility of the sitter being directly connected with the marriage of John Milward and Anne Shrigley. Could it perhaps have been John Milward himself or his son Thomas? If so we then have a subject who was related by marriage to the Wilmot family of Chaddesden and London. An obvious connection between the picture and the Milward family is the presence of a leading-staff, held by the sitter in the portrait and also used as a crest on the Milward coat of arms at the time of the London Visitation (Fig. 5).

Intriguingly, a second version of this same portrait is in the possession of the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust at Brighton (see [Brighton Picture](#)) and seemingly does not possess the '*Etatis 40. Anno 1657*' description carried by its Bonhams' counterpart, again lending credence to the suggestion that perhaps the date in the first picture was added afterwards. Both Bonhams' and the Brighton picture can be seen to good effect on their respective websites, and by zooming in even the details in the small coat of arms are quite clear.

(6) THE OTHER ROBERT WILMOT OF CHADDESSEN

Successive generations of the Wilmot family frequently used *Robert* as a Christian name and so Edward Wilmot of London Bridge was following tradition by giving his younger son the same title. Somewhat confusingly this Robert Wilmot then later returned to live at Chaddesden at the same period in time as both his like-named uncle and cousin, Robert Wilmot (died 1638) who was the village's main landowner, and Robert Wilmot (1604–1657), a barrister of Chaddesden and London.

Robert Wilmot (Edward's son) married Mary Newton, the daughter of Edward (or Edmund) Newton of Chaddesden and was probably only around 35 years of age at the time of his death in 1630. Robert's will, dated 15 February 1629/30 (TNA, PROB 11/157) is of interest since after declaring that he wished to be buried '*in the church or chapell of Chaddesden*', he then mentions his as yet unborn child in the following words: '*First I give and bequeath to the Childe which is now in my wives belly which she goeth with all if it please god it shall live the some of three hundred pounds of lawfull money of England to be paid unto the said childe whither it be male or female when it shall accomplish the age of one and twenty yeares or marriage which first shall happen.*' Just nine days later, on 24 February he was able to add a codicil to the effect that the child had now been born and she should therefore have the £300 at the appointed age.

²² Harleian Society, 1883. *The Visitation of London, A.D. 1633–1635*, Vol.2, p.104

It may well be that Robert Wilmot, his wife, Mary, and their new baby daughter were then living with Mary's father at Chaddesden, for Robert bequeathed 40s to his father-in-law, another 40s to Frances Newton (his wife's sister) and 10s to Elizabeth Mansfield, his father-in-law's maidservant. Other legacies included the gift of the gold ring which he usually wore '*to my brother Samuell Willyamot ... which I desire him to weare for my sake*', £10 to his mother, Susanna Wilmot, and 10s each to his three sisters. Robert did not live long after writing his will, for it was probated at London on 31 May 1630, however, his daughter, Susan, grew to adulthood and on 27 February 1654 married Thomas Greene at St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London. Greene was a member of the Clothworkers' Company of London and held several official positions there over the years. When he composed his will on 30 October 1679 he left a bequest of fifty pounds to the Company '*to buy them a peece of Plate*', and the resultant gift – a pair of inscribed Charles II silver gilt salts – can still be seen in the Clothworkers' Company art collection today. Thomas and Susan had five children including a son named Wilmot Greene in homage to Susan's family, but unfortunately he died only ten years after his father and was buried at the church of St. Martin's Outwich, London on 19 September 1689.

(7) THE BISPHAM FAMILY

Edward Wilmot's daughter, Sarah, had three daughters by her first marriage – Dorcas, Sarah and Alicia Smith. After the death of her husband she married again, this time to Samuel Bispham, who had been married twice previously. Bispham, a graduate of both Leiden and Oxford Universities, was a doctor of medicine, and in 1660 after the restoration of King Charles II he claimed to be '*the only surviving physician of the late King [Charles I]*'.²³

(8) THE ROBERTS FAMILY

Born in 1596 at Beaumaris in Anglesey, Lewes (or Lewis) Roberts was apprenticed to a London merchant and travelled extensively overseas. In 1626 he married Edward Wilmot's daughter Ann and within a few years became a citizen of London and a member of the Drapers' Company. He was also a member of the Levant Company, and briefly, in 1639, a director of the East India Company. A successful author, his books included *The Merchants Map of Commerce*, first published in 1638 and *The Treasure of Traffike, or A Discourse of Forraigne Trade* which followed in 1641. Through contacts with the Wilmot family he was acquainted with Izaak Walton and indeed both his brother-in-law Samuel Wilmot and Izaak Walton were amongst those who penned introductory verses which were inserted in *The Merchants Map of Commerce*.

CONCLUSION

Although the presence of the Wilmot family on London Bridge only lasted for two generations, numerous carefully-made marriages in the seventeenth century ensured that the descendants of Edward Wilmot (1572–1626) and his four siblings created a complex and entwined network of relationships which were clearly intended to enhance, or at the very least maintain, the family's social standing. Whilst the main Chaddesden branch of the Wilmot family continually improved their gentry status from generation to generation eventually acquiring a baronetcy in 1759, the rôle played by the City of London's livery companies together with the links to the East India Company demonstrate just how important business and trade opportunities were to other members of the extended family in securing prosperous futures for themselves.

© Peter Cholerton, 2021

²³ William Bispham, 1890. *Memoranda Concerning the Family of Bispham*, New York, p.101