

Here lieth Thomas Lord Darcy of the North and sometime of the order of the Garter Sir Nicholas Carew Knight sometime of the Garter and Lady Elizabeth Carew daughter to Sir Thomas Brian Knight and Sir Arthur Darcy Knight younger son to the above named Lord Darcy and Lady Mary Darcy his dear wife daughter to Sir Nicholas Carew who had ten sons and five daughters Her lieth Charles William and Phillip Mary and Ursula(?) sons and daughters to the said Sir Arthur and Mary his wife whose souls God take to his infinite mercy Amen

The church can be seen clearly on the Agas map of London c.1560 viewable at www.archivemaps.com.

A list of baptism dates from the IGI for the Darcy's of Hornby is as follows:

Henry 1532	Mary 1532 (in tomb)
	Ursula 1534 (in tomb)
Philip 1536 (in tomb)	Anne 1536
Thomas 1537	
Arthur 1538	Elizabeth 1540 (?)
Edward 1542	
Charles 1543 (in tomb)	
William 1544 (in tomb)	Jane 1544 (?)
Nicholas 1546	
John 1548	
Francis 1550	or Elizabeth 1553

The Will and Inquisition Post Mortem of Sir Arthur gives the list of surviving sons in age order as:

Henry, Thomas, Edward, Arthur, Nicholas, John, Francis. The baptismal dates for Arthur and Thomas might therefore be incorrect or it might be that baptism was delayed for Edward.

Thomas, First Lord Darcy of Templehurst and Temple Newsham 1467-1537

The Darcy family held lands in Lincolnshire from Domesday time and acquired by marriage lands in Yorkshire (Templehurst). Thomas is named as Lord Darcy in 1505. Thomas Cromwell appears to have been his friend and through him Thomas obtained the post of Captain or Governor of Jersey in 1534 for his second son Arthur.

Thomas Darcy was involved in the Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536 -7 and conceivably plotted against the King and Thomas Cromwell a couple of years earlier. The possession and distribution to the Pilgrims of a large number of badges of the five wounds of Christ is suspicious (*Hoyle, R., 2001. The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s, publ. Oxford*). Thomas tried to be upon both sides at once but was executed by beheading at the Tower in 1537.

He had two sons, Arthur and George; it is Arthur who is of concern for Langcliffe history. Sir George was the eldest son and was knighted at Flodden in 1513; he was Sheriff of Yorkshire 1535-6, (*LP Hen.VIII vol. XI; The Parliamentary representation of Yorkshire, 1886. G.R.Park, publ. Barnwell, London*) and eventually became Lord Darcy. He occupied Temple Newsham in 1535. Sir Arthur was knighted by the Duke of Norfolk in Scotland in 1522/3.

Although Sir Arthur had seven sons and eight or more daughters the title became extinct for lack of heirs in 1635. However Sir Conyers Darcy of another branch of the family asked Charles I a few years later to restore the Lordship and this was done!

The Duke of Leeds eventually inherited Hornby Castle by marriage to Amelia Darcy daughter of the 4th Earl of Holderness (*Yorkshire History Quarterly vol. 6, no. 3, February 2001*).

Sir Arthur Darcy 1505 -1561

Arthur was the younger son of Thomas Lord Darcy and was born at Aston in Yorkshire and knighted in 1522/3 in Scotland. He died at Brimham and is buried at St Botolph's without Aldgate, London, with other Darcy family members. His mother was Dowsabel Tempest who in turn was descended from Robert de Stainford who died in 1390 and who was buried at Giggleswick - so the Darcy's were closely linked with Craven (*Brayshaw & Robinson, 1932*). We have the Inquisition Post Mortem (*IPM vol. 26, Lists and Indexes vol.2; Court of Wards vol. 8, no. 102*) and signature on a letter (*Priory of Finchale, p74; E305/4/C40*) and other documents.

Image TNA E305/4/C40

Arthur married Mary Carew of Bedington in Surrey and had at least fifteen children, of whom six died without issue. Sir Arthur bought the Manors of Langcliffe and Nappay (part of the holdings of Sawley Abbey) at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536. He is said to have been an unscrupulous and grasping landlord, who undertook enclosures of land. The son Nicholas later came to inherit these two manors. Elizabeth, one of Arthur's daughters, married Sir John Cutte. Richard Cutts was a relative who played a part in the sale of the manor business.

Sir John Cutts, who was so noted for his housekeeping that Queen Elizabeth sent to him the Spanish Ambassador to be entertained during a sickness in London. Being more magnificent than prudent, he was obliged to sell his Estates. (Students admitted to the Inner Temple 1547-1660, W.H.Cooke, ed.)

The Spanish Ambassador said "*what Sir John lacked in length of name, he made up in the largeness of his entertainment.*" Expense was a permanent feature of the estate - Horham was sold in 1599 to help repair the finances.

Sir Arthur's will is dated September 1560 and he died April 1561 (*Surtees Soc. 1912, vol. 121 pt 1, p28. North country wills II 1558-1604*). The eldest son Henry was left all the site and desmesne lands of the late monastery of Salley, the moietie of the manor of Bolton, the Lordship of the manor of Aldendesbury, chantries in Thornebury (Gloucs.) and the manor of Hutton Rudby, defaulting to Thomas, Edward, Arthur,

Nicholas, John and Francis in order. Henry also had one third part by law of the manor of Brymbem with Dacre, manor of Beverley, manor of Gisborne and lands, grange of Ellingthorp, manor of Staynton, lands in Swynden, Galbergh, Newsam, Horton, Holgill, Remington, Newby, Rawthemell, Cleitopp, Gygleswyke, Lytton, Ilkeley, Farneley, Weston, all lands in Gargrave, rent for land in Grindleton, rent from Clitheroe Castle, lands in Fangfose, Ayton, Hundmondbye, Chippinge, Downham, Salisbury in Lancaster county, rectory and parsonage of Gargrave. Income: total £3768-12-8.

Thomas was left the manor of Stirton; Edward the manor of Stainforth Underbergh and the manor of Arneforth, yearly rent £39-11-11 including tithes; Arthur had the late monastery of Arden (Yorks.); Nicholas the manors of Langcliffe and Nappay, yearly rent £38-9-8, of which was paid yearly 21s to the Collectors of St Leonard in the City of York to the Queen's majesty. John had the manor of Potter Newton and lands in Ardenside; Francis had the manor and forest of Gisburne and land in Lincolnshire.

Sir Arthur's Inquisition Post Mortem of 1561 (*PRO WARD / 7/8; Surtees vol. 121, 1912; YAS vol. 48 p.153*) is in Latin.

.....leave all the said manors of lanclyf and Nappaye with all my cottages, lands, ... pasture, woods, underwoods ...frankpledge liberties... with all rents....to Nicholas Darcy son of the said Arthur...

.....the said manors of lanclyf and Nappay value per annum all revenues over and above deducted £27-8s -4d.

The picture of Sir Arthur Darcy?

Image Darcy National Portrait Gallery

This picture in the National Portrait gallery collection of photographs is held by the Hildyard family at Flintham Hall (*T.B.T. Hildyard,, Flintham Hall, Flintham Newark*). It is inscribed Sir Aubrey D'Arcy who is not known in the Darcy family tree. Sir Arthur was an ancestor of the Hildyard family. The picture is also inscribed "died Grace during the Siege 1563" which also does not make much sense. It may refer to the events in 1562-4 when Le Havre was occupied by the English and Caen besieged. The English were then expelled in 1563 and Calais relinquished in 1564.

However, another identical portrait is known which carries the name of someone else, (*C.R.Bead, Connoisseur 1931, vol. 87, p358-365*). This article by Beard shows two virtually identical paintings to the one at Flintham, one with the name John Mordaunt painted at the base and one with no name. Mordaunt was 1st Earl of Peterborough 1490-1562(?) at Drayton House, Northants. The second unnamed picture is said to be of Sir Edward Osborne 1530-1591, formerly at Hornby Castle, Duke of Leeds. He was a Clothworker and Lord Mayor of London.

However, Beard thinks that both identifications are wrong and that the paintings might be of John Neville 1490-1543. The photograph in the National Portrait Gallery is said to be of the painting at Flintham Hall and is essentially the same man in the

same armour with a slightly different background and the name Sir Darcy painted on it. This then is a third version of the same painting.

The armour pictured was made in Greenwich c.1535 and was only used by noblemen in the Court of Henry VIII. The armour probably became studio property for use in portraits. The fashion of the hair suggests 1540/5. The picture is reminiscent of Sir Nicholas Carew c.1536.

It was current practice of artists at the time to have a standard picture on which could be painted the face of the sitter, who chose the basic clothing and situation. This practice perhaps continued into modern times: a portrait of Sir Rowland de Lytton was a copy of Velasquez' 'Charles V' at Knebworth (*The architect and his wife*, 2002. J. Ridley, Publ. Chatto and Windus).

Sir Arthur is buried at St Botolph without Aldgate in London.

The church can be seen clearly on the Agas map of London C.1560 viewable at www.archivemaps.com.

The sons of Sir Arthur

We have the Inquisition Post Mortem (in Latin) of Thomas who died in 1581 (TNA C142/194). He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1577. Sir John Darcy of St Osyth (died 1581) may have been one of the sons (Emmison, F.G., *Elizabethan life: Essex Gentry's wills*, publ. Essex Co. Council, 1978, publication no. 7). Henry Darcy went to Gray's Inn in 1554 (is this correct?) (*Register of admissions to Gray's Inn*, J. Foster, publ. Hansard Ltd, 1889). It is notable that Sir James Pemberton, Alderman of London also was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1609 since Raphael Pemberton was involved in the sale of the manor of Langcliffe. Henry, eldest son of Arthur, was admitted to The Inner Temple in 1555; Edward was admitted 1561 and Arthur in 1564 (*Students admitted to the Inner Temple 1547-1660*, W.H.Cooke, ed). Of note is that Richard Cutts of Depdene in Essex was admitted here in 1578 - he too was involved in the sale with Raphael Pemberton. There is no record in Oxford or Cambridge admissions or to the Middle Temple of any of these people.

Edward the third son of Arthur was MP for Truro; Francis the seventh son was MP for Lymington, knighted in 1591 - he had a spell in the Tower for being secretly married. Henry the eldest son of Brimham was MP for Knaresborough in 1558 and was knighted in 1571 (is this correct?). In 1575 he exchanged part of his Yorkshire property and over coming years sold the rest (*The History of Parliament, The House of Commons 1558-1603*. P.W. Hasler, HMSO 1981).

Nicholas Darcy

Nicholas (the inheritor of the Manors of Langcliffe and Nappay) was born prior to 1561 (maybe in 1546, see www.familysearch.org) since his father died in 1561. Nicholas died in 1607 leaving a will (*PROB 11 109 quire 36, p276-278, PCC wills*) We have no record of his marriage to Jane. He is noted as living at St Martin's in the Fields in Middlesex when he died. He had one son Devorey and his brother Francis was one of the executors. He does not appear to have had an education at university or Inns of Court but his family were very well connected to wealthy families of the time.

The will of Nicholas Darcy - part only (Appendix 2)

The latter part of this will is most curious.

Residue of the said money after my said wifes decease if not such purchase shalbe made in her life the aforesaid debts beinge paid and done as aforesaid shall be and goe unto my onely sonne Devorey(?) Darcy his Executors administrators and assignes discharged of and from all incumbrances whatsoever had made or done by them the said two knights and my said wife or any of them. Item I doe give unto my said brother all my Armor pistolls and stuckinges (?) Item I doe give unto my welbeloved Cosen Sir Euseby Isham my best taffeta (?) wascoate wroughte and embroidered with gold, and to my said welbeloved wife my debts beinge paid I give all other my goods and Chattells whatsoever Item I ordaine and make Jane Darcy my aforesaid lovinge wife, and my aforesaid brother Sir Franncis Darcy Knight, and the aforesaid Sir Euseby Isham my welbeloved Cozen Executors of this my last will and Testament. And whereas about three or fower yeares last past I delivered at the request of the Right honorable the Lord Crompton unto him the said Lord Crompton a faire watch with a larum in the presence of divers persons, and thereupon the said Lord Crompton in consideration did then most faithfullie affirme and promise unto me to content satisfie and pay unto me my Executors or administrators the some of fortie poundes of Currant Englishe money for and in respect of the said watch and Larume, at the birth at his then next chield. And whereas also within or about three or fower yeares last past, at the request of the Right honorable the nowe Earle of Sussex delivered unto him the said Earle one peece of Coyne in gold called a Twentie shillinge piece, and which said Earle then and thereupon in consideration thereof faithfully assumed and promised to content and satisfie and pay unto me my Executors or administrators for and in respect of the said piece of gould the some of five poundes of Currant Englishe money, at the birth of his then nexte child, the which said severall somes of forty poundes and five poundes I have no doubt nor mistrust but that the said honorable personages will satisfie and paye the same unto my aforesaid welbeloved wife unto whome I give the same shee beinge one of my aforesaid Executors.

Euseby Isham

The Isham family were prominent in Kent and Northampton. Sir Euseby Isham of Picheley and Braunston (died 1626) mentioned in Nicholas' will was knighted by James I (*Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage, 1902*). John Isham (one of his uncles) was a prominent man in the late 16th C (*Northants Record Society 1962, vol. 21 : John Isham, mercer and merchant adventurer: two account books of a London merchant in the reign of Elizabeth I 1558-1572. ed. G.D.Ramsay*). John purchased English woollen cloths which were transported to London and sold overseas. He imported silks and luxury textiles. There were links with the Haberdashers company (as had Henry Billingsley, another player in the story). Euseby born 1552/3 came of age in 1572 and was heir to a substantial fortune. He went to Christ's College Cambridge in 1568 and Middle Temple in 1570. In 1584 he was High Sheriff of Northants and was knighted in 1603. He built the celebrated Pytchley Hall (demolished 1829 but see drawing in *Victoria County History Northants IV p 210 pub. Constable 1906*). He died in 1626.

Sir Euseby's uncle Giles had a daughter Jane who first married Leonard Barker but then Nicholas Darcy (VCH).

Henry Billingsley (c.1535 -1606)

The Aldermen of the City of London 1908. A.B.Beaven publ. Corp. of City of London
The History of the Haberdashers' Company, 1991. I.W.Archer, publ. Phillimore & Co.

Visitation of London, Harleian Soc. Publ. 1963. vols. 109, 110

Dictionary of National Biography.

Will of 30 December 1606 TNA PROB 11/108

Henry Billingsley was the son of Roger of Canterbury. Henry went to Cambridge in 1551 as a Lady Margaret Scholar to St John's College and also Oxford but did not graduate. He became apprenticed to a London haberdasher and rapidly became a wealthy merchant. He may have published, in 1570, the first translation of Euclid's Elements of Geometry from Latin but there is some controversy about authorship. (*British Library - The elements of geometrie shelfmark L.35/55*).

The elements of geometrie of ... Euclide ... now first translated into the Englishe toung, by H. Billingsley ... Whereunto are annexed certaine ... annotations ... of the best Mathematiciens ... With a .. preface ... by M.J.Dee, specifying the chiefe Mathematicale sciences, what they are, etc.

John Dee was a 16thC magician who was an influential thinker in the court of Elizabeth I - providing horoscopes (*The Queen's conjuror - the life and magic of Dr Dee, 2002. B.Woolley, publ. Harper Collins*). It was in Oxford that Henry is supposed to have developed a taste for mathematics.

He married Elizabeth Boone in 1572 and had a large family, eldest son named Henry (who was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1581/2 and knighted in 1603). She died in 1577. He was chosen Sheriff of London in 1584, Alderman of Tower Ward 1585 and MP (sitting in Parliament 1603-4)(*The Aldermen of the City of London, 1913. vols. I and II. A.B.Beaven, publ. Eden Fisher & Co*). It is perhaps the son Henry who is on the Gray's Inn Register for 1590/1 as one of the Aldermen of the City of London (*The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn 1521-1889, J. Foster publ. Hansard, 1889*). The father Henry was a Member of the Haberdasher's Livery Company up to his death in 1606 and was Master in 1584, 1590, 1595 and 1605. Haberdashers imported glasses, pouches, rings, caps, hats, brushes, laces, points, pins, snuffers, thimbles, pinpillows, needles, combs and buckles. He had many dealings in land (e.g. *Cal. Pat. Rolls Eliz. 1564, 1566, 1568*).

From 1589 he was one of the Queen's four 'customers' or farmers of customs duties at the Port of London. In 1594 he was President of St Thomas' Hospital (as possibly also had been Lawrence Atwill, another involved in the sale of the Manor). He was a Member of the Society of Antiquities, founded 1572.

In 1596 Queen Elizabeth made known her desire that Henry Billingsley who was next in line for being Lord Mayor should not be elected in the following year and he was not. However, the next Lord mayor died within two months so Henry was chosen as Lord Mayor 1596/7 and was knighted in 1597.

Henry founded three scholarships at St John's College Cambridge for poor students and gave the college two messuages and tenements in Tower St. and in Mark Lane, Allhallows, Barking for their maintenance.

After his wife Elizabeth died he married again - named Dame Suzan in his will. The reported marriage of Henry to Bridget daughter of Sir Christopher Draper who was Lord Mayor of London 1556/7 (1566?) probably refers to that of his son Sir Henry.

He died in 1606 and is buried at Bury St Edmunds. Sutton Court is said to have been the home of Sir Henry Billingsley (Queen Anne, wife of James I, visited in 1613 - after Billingsley's death - *Round about the little steeple - the story of a Wiltshire parson, 1989. I. Gandy, Publ. A. Sutton, Wiltshire CC*).

The will of 1606 (*TNA PROB 11/108*) shows that he was a wealthy man. He gave rings, chains of gold, jewelry and plate to his wife as well as money, furniture, cisterns of lead, pictures, maps and painted clothes. He refers to his dwelling house next to St Katherine Colman, Aldgate, London and gives £200 to the church for the poor of the parish. The church was demolished in 1926. He owned property lying near St Katherine's Christchurch *alias* Cree Church in Aldgate which is still in existence. He gives 100 marks to Emmanuel College, Cambridge to support one scholar. He supports the Hospital of St Thomas in Southwark, Christ's Hospital, and the four prisons in the City - two Compters (gaols attached to courts for debtors), Newgate and Ludgate. The will does not mention his burial place or any association with Bury St Edmunds.



The two churches can be seen clearly on the Agas map of London C.1560 viewable at www.archivemaps.com.

Raphael Pemberton (1543 - 1627)

Pemberton pedigrees, R.C.B. Pemberton, pub The Sidney Press, Bedford 1923 (Soc. Genealogists, London).

Dictionary of National Biography.

The Pemberton family were based in Rushden and Higham Ferrers, Northants from the early 15thC. They were closely connected to the branch that settled in St Albans in the 18thC. Many members held important civic posts.

Robert Pemberton of Rushden (bn c.1514 died 1594) married Margaret daughter of Richard Throgmorton some time before 1542. They had sons Robert (Gentleman usher), Francis, Sir Goddard (MP for Peterborough, Sheriff of Hertfordshire), John, Raphael (bn c.1543, died 1627) and three daughters. During Raphael's time Sir James Pemberton was Lord Mayor of London 1611-12.

There appears to be only one Raphael on the family tree. Other family branches have been documented (*The records of the Pemberton family, 1890. E. Babcock; Pedigree of Pemberton of Bainbridge - Holme and Barnes, no publisher or date; Pemberton of Warwickshire and Staffordshire Notebook, 1915, A.W.Matthews; Pembertons of Nevis and St Christopher via St Albans; all at Soc. Gen.*).

In the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series 1591-1594* appears a note about Edward Pemberton. In 1591 there is a statement of particulars of his journey to Douai where he met Wm. Latimer and carried letters to France. In 1593 he was pressed to serve Captain Flood but excused himself through weakness (referring to the Spanish at Calais). He was quizzed about three priests whose names he could not remember who came over from Rheims, and who were apprehended and executed (1593). Presumably he was suspected of Catholic plotting.

Pemberton pedigrees (*ed. R. Pemberton, 1923*) states that Raphael married, first Katherine Arges (or Ardis) and second, in 1601, Mary daughter of Sir Richard Lee and then widow of Humphrey Coningsby (www.familysearch.org, C5745 *Ancient deeds vol.6 Somerset p261*) (Mary died 1610). [www.familysearch](http://www.familysearch.org) gives him born in St Albans and wife Mary Lee. *Acts of Administration in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (1609-1619, vol. 5 (p72) PROB 6 vol. 6)* gives Mary Conisby of St Giles Cripplegate, London, administration to Raphael Pemberton esquire, husband, of St Stephen, St Albans, Herts., in 1612. In *Sixteenth Century Marriages (1538-1600, vol. 1, 1911. Ed. C.A.Bernau, Publ. by Editor, London)* there is no mention of a marriage to Mary. In 1501 *Ancient Deeds (vol. 6 for Somerset PRO C 5745)* notes an indenture between Humphrey Conyngesby serjeant-at-law and John Cutte which may show a distant family link of Raphael to Nicholas Darcy via the Cutts family.

He was not admitted to Inns of Court or university, or noted as alderman or MP. The part played by him in Langcliffe's story is probably one of lending money to his contemporary Nicholas Darcy.

Richard Cuttes (- 1608)

Essex Arch. Soc. vol. 4, 1869. Ch.2 p25 The descent of the Manor of Horham, and of the family of Cutts. H.W.King

Pedigree of the family of Cutts v. Cutte of Horham and Arkesden, co. Essex. G.H. Rogers-Harrison FSA, Windsor Herald. p43

The Cutts (Cutte or Cuttes) family have a long history with many distinguished members (*Burke's dormant and extinct peerages, 1883*).

Richard Cutts of Debden and Arkesden, son of Peter (died 1547) was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1545/6. Richard died 1592 and is buried at Arkesden. He left a will (15 Aug, 1592, proved 6 February 1592). His tomb in Arkesden Church of St Mary the Virgin is inscribed

"Here lyeth Richard Cutte Esquier. Sonne and heire to Peter Cutte Esquier. Sonne and heire to John Cutte Esquier. Sonne and heire to Richard Cutte Esquier which Richard was brother to sir John Cutte of horram hall in thaxted treasurer of the most honourable household of the mighty king henrie 8....."

The tomb is fronted by five kneeling children (three male, two female) whose heads are thought to have been knocked off by Oliver Cromwell's troops. The tomb was built by Richard the son.

In 1573 his son, also Richard Cutts, matriculated at Christ's College, Cambridge, eldest son of Richard of Debden, Essex. BA 1576/7. (*Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis*). He joined the Inner Temple 1578 (*Students admitted to The Inner Temple 1547-1660, W.H.Cooke, Ed.*). We have Richard's will of 1608 (*Inquisitions Post Mortem, List and Indexes vol. 31. Vol. 3 James I; PRO WARD 7 Court of Wards, vol. 33, no. 206; PROB 11/ 109 Quire 46 p360-2*). He is buried at Arkesden.

Sir John Cuttes of Horham and Childersley has been noted as having married Elizabeth Darcy, sister to Nicholas Darcy. Unfortunately a monumental inscription at Swavesey in Cambridgeshire about Sir John Cutts of Horham Hall says that Sir John of Childersley "first married Anne daughter of Sir Arthur Darcy" (rather than Elizabeth) "who had issue Elizabeth". This inscription is perhaps incorrect, confusing the next Sir John who married Anne Kemp (*Note on Cutts pedigree at Bury St Edmunds, p564*) (*Pedigree, Rogers-Harrison*). Richard, of Depdene, Essex, was a distant relative of this Sir John of Horham. He was brother to William and Francis (*Students admitted to The Inner Temple 1547-1660, W.H.Cooke, Ed*). William was knighted at some point. Nicholas Darcy was a near contemporary of Richard son of Richard. Richard the younger is found in the Licence and Final Concord of 1582 concerning the ownership of Langcliffe and its use as security for a loan to Nicholas.

Many later members of the family were admitted to the Middle Temple *Register of admissions to the honourable society of the Middle Temple. 1949. vol. 1 1501-1781. H.A.C.Sturgess, publ. Butterworth*).

Lawrence Atwill 1588

Citizen and skinner of London, parish St Ethelburga *PCC wills PROB 11/73/107*

*Image Exeter City Museums and Art Gallery catalogue no. 139/1998 anon 16thC
artist oil on panel c1587
see bbc.co.uk/arts*

Lawrence Atwell came of old Devon stock first recorded in Crediton in 1318. He was born in Exeter, where his grandfather had been Mayor five times, and a Justice of the Peace under four kings. The family was of some standing and had a coat of arms "argent a pile from chief and chevron sable in point countercharged" The exact date of his birth is unknown, there being no parish registers at that time, but an old portrait of

him bears the legend written on the background "aetatis su. 77. 1588", and there is little reason to doubt that he was born in 1511.

The earliest extant record of him is on a list among the archives of the Skinner's Company in London, the ancient guild to which he belonged. It gives short details of title deeds of an unspecified house in 1564. He was thus about 53, and must have come to London long before, to join the Company and make his fortune. Others, we know, had come from Exeter and other parts of Devon with the same purpose and the name Otwell, an alternative spelling often used of him, appears on a list of members as early as 1398.

The next reference to him was in June 1578, when the minutes of the Court of the Company report that it was agreed that he should be accepted into the Livery "as before". The implication of these two words is uncertain, but they suggest that he had been a member of the Livery earlier and had for some reason been obliged to withdraw. Indeed he was then 67 and would normally have joined the Livery in his thirties. A book written in 1736 by one Samuel Izacke on legacies left to the poor of Exeter says that Atwell "met with many losses and crosses in his worldly estate both by sea and land, yet it pleased Almighty God so to restore him again, as that he recovered a great estate". It may be, then, that he was for some years so hard up that he had to leave the Livery. The passage, which is all that Izacke has to say about his life, also gives a clue to one manner in which he made his money, by backing trading expeditions overseas, as many City merchants did. However it was, by 1580 the Court minutes relate that "Good Mr Atwell, being an ancient and good member of this Company, shall be preferred to the room (place) of Second Warden, next to the Master Warden". He did not ever become Master, but his progress in two years to the position of Warden argues a long membership before.

In 1581 his first wife died. In 1584 he was listed among the examiners of candidates for the Headmastership of Tonbridge School, founded by a fellow Skinner, Andrew Judd, in 1553.

On the 6th November 1588, "sick in body but of good and perfect remembrance", as he put it, he made his will. It was a long document, full of detail about his transactions, his property and his friends, and fortunately there is an 18th century transcript of it in the Skinners' archives. Reading and re-reading it one comes as close to the man as if he were of our own time. His scrivener, Thomas Lane, would have taken it down. To him, as to other close friends, he gave a black gown of 26s 8d the yard and a ring of 40s, and in addition his best nightgown and £20 in money.

After devout preamble upon the imminence of death and his sure hope of redemption from his sins, he set about disposing of "such transitory things as it has pleased God to endow me with", first asking to be buried "in the Church of St Andrew Undershaft where I late dwelled, so near the place where my last wife lyeth buried as conveniently may be". To his second wife Catherine - "my loving wife" - he gave all his household stuff, linen and plate and £2000 "of and with the first money that shall come in", but with the caveat that should she not be content with it, but claim any more, she should not have anything at all beyond what the custom of the City allowed.

There follow about 50 personal bequests to his kinsfolk, friends and servants. For most of them a gown, some at 26s 8d the yard, others at 20s, to one or two a ring or cup. To John Crocke his servant a cloak of 20s the yard and £20 in money as a reward for his good and faithful service - but to be paid him at the end of his apprenticeship. He did not forget Thomas Lane's servant William Green, who was left 20s.

To the Master and Wardens of the Skinners' Company he left his house and other

property in Fenchurch Street, another house in St Thomas Apostle near Skinners' Hall, his lands at Godalming in Surrey and a leasehold house in Christchurch, London. From the rents of all these they were to pay the above-mentioned allowance to daughter Jane; to pay for a Company dinner after his burial and to take £20 a year forever for a dinner on the Company's election day; and from the rest to form a stock or fund whereby poor people, and especially freemen of the Company, might be set on work.

To St Bartholomew's Hospital he left a property in Old Fish Street, provided that they paid from its rents £5 a year to St Thomas's Hospital and the same to Christ's Hospital "for the poor children there". Old Fish Street, now Knightrider Street, is only a few hundred yards from the Hospital, and the property was still held by them 250 years later. The £5 was paid annually to the two hospitals until 1924 when it was redeemed by the transfer to each of £200 in Consols.

Atwell had been a Governor of St Bartholomew's since 1584. He was one of their scrutineers, whose task it was to check that property bequeathed to the Hospital did in fact reach it. He was also asked to audit the Treasurer's accounts in 1584/5, and again in 1588. It was not known whether he had any special connection with St Thomas's or Christ's Hospital, or whether his evident kindness led him to remember them.

The will went on to list sundry other bequests and appointed his friend Alderman Henry Billingsley to be executor, to whom was left all the residuary estate. Billingsley was another prominent member of the Skinners' Company.

Mention has been made of a painting of Atwell. This, as recorded in the City archives, was bought by Exeter for 20s in 1598, and hangs there yet, in the Mayor's Parlour at the Guildhall. It is tempting to believe that this was indeed the man. Expert opinion, alas, dates the brushwork to within the last 100 years, although very likely executed over the original painting, which would have provided a suitable surface. The archives recording the purchase give no name of the artist or seller.

Of the lands he left to the Skinners, much of the City property was held until quite recently, and the Godalming land is still held in his name. The income from the trust is used to assist young men to make a start in life. The demand for this help today far exceeds the funds available. It was not always so, however, and in the 1880's substantial accumulations of unspent income were applied, with other funds owned or administered by the Company, to found a boys' school in Tunbridge Wells and a girls' school in North London, both of which still flourish.

He died on a date unknown, a few weeks before Christmas 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada. By his direction 67 poor men attended his body to the Church, and received each a gown of good cloth of 7s the yard at the least, and 12 pence apiece in money.

Further notes

The Skinners controlled the lucrative fur trade - lynx, ermine and marten on their coat of arms. The first charter was in 1327. The present building in London was rebuilt after the fire of 1666 and restored after the second world war.

Katherine Atwell widow of St Ethelburgh, London relict of Laurence Atwell, late of same "pelliparius" (1589 remarriage)
Harleian Soc. 1887, vol. 25 Marriage Licences, London 1520-1610

From *Historical Manuscripts Commission vol. 73 Exeter City Manuscripts HMSO 1916:*

1589 Thomas Spicer merchant in performance of will of Lawrence Atwill conveys to Mayor as trustees of Atwill's charity tenements and lands.

Will of Nov. 6, 1588 PROB 11 PCC

Poor people of Exeter may be set to work.

1589 Act Book rental of lands given to the city by Laurence Atwill for keeping of the poor of Exeter.

1653 Act Book Mr Atwill's money to buy a workhouse

1654 Johan Hernaman appointed School mastris of the newe schoole and workhouse - to keeping to worke and educating of poore girles therein - for tenn poore maides. £20 for herself and servant - money from Mr Attwill's money.

1661 to value a house for a Bridewell of House of Correction £539-10-0 paid on December 17, 1661 'for the keeping of the poore att worke' money out of gift of Mr Laurence Atwill

1771 Almshouses of Atwill's charity

1773 Atwill's charity

History of the Skinner's company, 1902. J. Foster Wadmore, Publ. Blades, East and Blades (in Guildhall Library)

Coat of Arms for Atwell and details of his will.

In 1880 charity used to build Skinner's Company Middle School for Boys in Tunbridge Wells.

In 1886 Middle School for Girls at Stamford Hill, London.