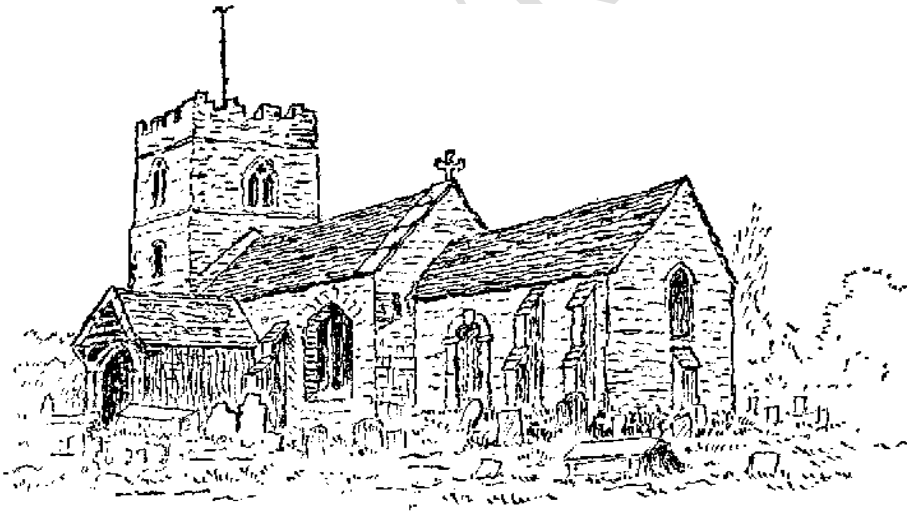


A History of the Cocks Family



Eastnor Church, 18th Century

J.V. SOMERS COCKS

1967

Revised Edition 1999

■ J.V. Somers Cocks
Crystalwood, Abbotskerswell,
Newton Abbot,
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Foreword to New Edition.

It is now over thirty years since *A History Of The Cocks Family* was published. I did little further research on the subject until about ten years ago when, largely through a number of coincidences, I began to acquire more information on certain branches until I reached a point when five of the original chapters seemed worth writing in greater detail. These were then typed and a few copies produced of each. They were not generally available (though one of each was deposited at Eastnor Castle for the archives there) and were in A4 format. They appeared between 1988 and 1996.

I am therefore delighted that Jonathan Somers Cocks of Ashhurst, New Zealand has used new computer technology to scan the whole of the original text and substitute the old chapters for the new incorporating them into one volume and am grateful to Alan Bromley Cocks of Pakuranga Auckland for his help in proof reading and correcting the scanned errors throughout.

My thanks are due to a number of people who have generously assisted in gathering of this new information.

They are : for Part II, ch.1 'The Settlement at Bishop's Cleeve and ch.5,'Woodmancote and Cleeve' - Norma Turnbull (whose family lives in Lt.Col.Charles Cocks's old house in Woodmancote), Eunice Powell and Hugh Denham; Part III, ch.2 'Cocks and Somers' - Julia Page; ch.4,'Dumbleton' - Adrian Phillips, David Hayton and Martyn Brown. To them all I am most grateful for their willing help and interest.

With further documents coming to light at Eastnor Castle there is certainly more to be discovered and written particularly on Castleditch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and on the Earls Somers in the nineteenth.

Finally a personal note. Writing up the family history has put me in touch with numbers of relatives and others, with few of whom I would ever otherwise have had contact. We have had the pleasure of meeting many of them here at Crystalwood and this has been a rewarding bonus of the many years researching our forebears.

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August 1997

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AUTHOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The great bulk of original research has gone into the first three parts of this history. The final part (which necessarily deals in more summary fashion with the recent generations) has been written in the main from secondary, printed sources, chief of which has been the family chapters in Henry Somers Cocks' *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills*, an invaluable work on which I have leaned heavily. Exceptions are that part dealing with the early New Zealand Cocks' which is based, on Edith Somers Cocks' fascinating and entertaining MS account of her grandfather, and the chapter on the banking branch which has been written from original material in my possession.

I am deeply grateful to many relations who have patiently answered questions and provided me with facts, and who have encouraged me in the writing and circulation of this family history. I should particularly like to mention Finola Lady Somers, Major and the Hon. Mrs. Hervey-Bathurst who kindly allowed me to make the sketch appearing on p.68 from a drawing of Castleditch at Eastnor Castle, Pamela Cocks who most helpfully undertook to check, so far as she was able, the genealogical table of the New Zealand Cocks', and Edith Somers Cocks who not only gave much general information on the same branch but allowed me to quote freely from her account of Henry Bromley Cocks. Gratitude is undoubtedly due also to those of my ancestors whose chronic inability to destroy papers has contributed so much to my knowledge of them and their times.

Crystalwood, Abbotskerswell, Newton Abbot, Devon.

March 1967

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Part 1

1. INTRODUCTORY

THE KENT-GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONNECTION

At least two previous attempts have been made to throw light on the earlier history of the family of Cocks or Somers-Cocks. The first appeared in the form of notes included in the Guide to Eastnor Castle written in 1889 by Lady Henry Somerset and Gwenllian Morgan. This pioneer account, however, not only was brief but contained a number of inaccuracies, and consequently cannot be relied upon for the period. Another and much more considerable work appeared in two chapters in the Reverend Henry Somers-Cocks' book 'Eastnor and its Malvern Hills' published in 1923. Much new material was gathered together here, but the actual connection between the Kent and Gloucestershire families was not precisely stated, and, more particularly, the relationship to the Kent Cocks' of the Thomas Cocks who appeared in Gloucestershire at the beginning of the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth remained an enigma. Although it was said that he was the son of Thomas of Cock Hall in Kent, neither the identity of this Thomas nor the whereabouts of the Hall was made clear. Did he live at Ospringe, or Tilmanstone, or neither?

Some thirty years later it seemed possible that, with the accumulation of public and private records and their easier accessibility to the student, further research based on that already done might solve this particular riddle. It has to be admitted that, after a long and fairly exhaustive search in many classes of records, the enigma still remains, and we cannot be absolutely sure who Thomas' father really was.

In trying to discover this vital key it was necessary to work backwards in time from the Gloucestershire end and forwards from Kent; to examine many families of similar name, to assume that they may have been for a generation in, perhaps, London on the way, and even to try the hypothesis that a Kentish origin was incorrect. None of the evidence so examined was conclusive one way or the other. The great difficulty lies in the frequency with which the surname occurs once the volume of records grows from the 14th century onwards, and in the truly astounding number of ways in which it was contrived to spell it (39 varieties have been noted) to say nothing of the fact that Thomas as a baptismal

name is so common that sometimes one cannot be sure which of several people is being referred to.

All this delving has at least resulted in the discovery of some further facts, and the correction of others, about branches of the family whether actual or supposed, and this information has been supplemented by searches in later records to try to fill in some details up to about the end of the 18th century. It seems time that the results of this research should be placed on record even if certain aspects of the story still remain tantalisingly obscure and discontinuous.

As it has always been said that the Cocks family originated in Kent, it may be as well to begin by considering the grounds for making such a claim. The first written statement to that effect is contained in Atkyns' history of Gloucestershire which he brought out in 1712. Other authorities, including Hasted in his history of Kent (who added that they left Kent in the 16th century), follow his statement without adducing much further evidence in support of it. There can be little doubt that Atkyns' authority was the inscription on the memorial slab to the first Thomas Cocks of Bishop's Cleeve in the church there. Unfortunately, the history of this stone is not quite as straightforward as one could wish.

In 1696 the steeple of Cleeve church collapsed and, according to the well-known county historian Bigland, destroyed the memorials to the Cocks family lying below it. The present inscribed slab is indeed slightly damaged, and it is possible that it is the original saved from the wreckage. On the whole, however, it is more likely, especially as one of the dates on it remains incomplete, that it is a replacement copied partly from fragments of the original and partly from memory. Curiously enough, Bigland quotes the inscription *verbatim* but omits the all-important line 'anciently of Cocks Hall in Kent' which can still be read. This has led others to believe that the Kent reference only appeared on the original, whereas Bigland must have seen the same stone which survives to this day in the floor of the vestry. Even if the stone is not contemporary, it must have been put there only about a hundred years later, when the memory of the Kentish tradition would still have been comparatively fresh, and there seems no reason why such a statement should then have been incorporated had it not been there in the first place. Though far from conclusive evidence, it does tend to support the long-held belief.

The name Cocks Hall cannot be traced in the county of Kent, and there is quite a possibility that the residence was never officially known by that name. In Elizabethan times it was not unusual for the gentry, particularly if they had only recently achieved that status, to wish to proclaim to the neighbourhood that they had not only a competent affluence but a respectable ancestry. The fine

sounding appellation Cocks Hall may have been little more than a pleasant fiction which came to be believed as solid fact in distant Gloucestershire.

One other circumstance strengthens the Kent theory. It is indisputable that the Cocks family who acquired property at Tilmanstone in the county in the late 15th century and who had considerable interests in Sandwich not far away, bore as their arms the same 'sable, a chevron between three stags attires argent' as was borne by the heirs of Thomas Cocks of Cleeve, save only that the former was 'differenced' with a 'mullet' (a star), indicating that they were a cadet branch from a third son. In 1558 Thomas Cocks of Tilmanstone ordered in his Will that his coat-of-arms should be put in glass in a window of nearby Betteshanger Church, and although the church was completely rebuilt in the 19th century the arms still exist in the chancel, though in a different window.

There are other Cocks armorial bearings elsewhere in the county, but these belong either to this same branch or to a date much later than the 16th century. The arms do not appear amongst those of the gentry of Kent in the cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral which date from about 1400, and heraldic records do not give much help.

As will be seen, the Tilmanstone Cocks' do not lead to Gloucestershire, and neither do those of Ospringe where a family of the same name held property from early times. One can only say that the latter are perhaps more likely to have called their home Cocks Hall than any other discovered branch, for it was at one time certainly referred to as Coks Manor. This discontinuity poses a problem. There is a possibility that some of the Kent Cocks' mentioned have no relationship to the family. Yet one can hardly leave out all reference to them on the ground that the connection is not proved, and so it has been thought best to describe what is known of both the Ospringe settlement and that at Tilmanstone and Sandwich. It must be borne in mind that no relationship between the two has been established, though it is not impossible that there was a connection perhaps not later than the early 1400's. But before reference is made to these, some comments on the name of Cocks, its origin and distribution, may be of interest.

ORIGIN, SPELLING AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE NAME COCKS

The name in its earlier forms must have arisen in several different ways. An Old English name Cocc or Cocca can be inferred from place-names, but this would have been in use long before surnames were current and is on the whole an unlikely origin. Much more probable is a nick-name 'Cock' or 'the Cock', its

early spelling as Cok or Kok or even Coq no doubt reflecting the influence of French in literate circles more than suggesting a continental origin, though immigration cannot be ruled out in every case. Nicknames at all events have played a large part in the formation of surnames. Most frequently of all, and this is borne out by its wide distribution, the name would have begun as a professional description, 'the Cook', or, as it is rendered in the French-Latin of many documents, 'le Cocus'. This was often abbreviated by the scribes to Coc', and as the owners of the name in those early days could seldom write, it is not difficult to see how the Coc or Cok spelling arose in the documents which to-day are our only means of studying these changes.

It is possible, by noting the spellings used in about 300 Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (covering the Southern half of England) and in the London and Kent ecclesiastical courts, to find out that there are certain well-marked trends. Before 1500, Cock, Cokke and above all Cok with their near variants are the most common - the Cook or Cooke rendering is also usual and remains so. Cock continues to be popular throughout, but Cokke and Cok disappear almost completely by 1530. Cocks, Cockes, Cokkes and Cokes, the genitive of the name, do not occur before 1450, but thereafter the first two become fairly common and supersede the earlier forms. From about 1550 Cox or Coxe begin to be used, and with great rapidity become by far the most usual of all, taking over a number of the Cocks-Cockes spellings in families which hitherto had used that rendering. The descendants of Thomas Cocks of Cleeve, however, nearly always called themselves Cocks or Cockes, though occasionally Coxe appears and it is not unknown for the name to be written in two or even three different ways in the same document. Except for the earlier Ospringe farmers, the Kent families being considered did not usually adopt the Cook, Cooke or Coke spellings. On the other hand, a lateral branch at Deerhurst in Gloucestershire always favoured Cox from about 1545 when they can first be traced. In general it seems safe to say that by the end of Elizabeth's reign the rendering of the name in any branch was well on the way to standardisation.

By the beginning of the 16th century the name in its several forms was almost universal all over the country, and had probably been so considerably earlier. Records reveal it as especially common in Kent and London, Gloucestershire, Bristol and Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Leicester, Essex and even Cornwall. The difficulties in trying to find the right branch in just one of these counties, Kent, may be seen when it is realised that up to 1558, on the

basis of examination of the Wills and administrations proved in the county's ecclesiastical courts, the name appears 207 times from 90 different parishes.

Curiously enough, the distribution is very uneven within the county, being far more common in the eastern parishes than the western. And it is to the eastern half of the county that we must now turn.

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2. OSPRINGE

FRANKLIN FARMERS

The parish of Ospringe lies about 9 miles west of Canterbury, its northern boundary defined by the ancient Watling Street which here divides it from the town of Faversham just to the north again. The great road from London to Canterbury, with its branches to the channel coast, had always been an important and busy thoroughfare, and during medieval times its normal traffic of merchant and noble, soldier and ecclesiastic, had been greatly increased by the large numbers of ordinary people of every sort making their pilgrimage to the magnificent shrine of the martyred Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.

In the first half of the 13th century hospices were built along the route capable of accommodating needy travellers from the King downwards, and one such was the Domus Dei, or Maison Dieu, erected in 1234, beside the road at Ospringe at the corner of Water Lane.¹ These establishments required gifts of money or lands for their endowment and upkeep, and so it comes about that in a charter enumerating grants of gifts to the Master and brethren of the Domus in 1247, 2 acres of land and a wood called the Shaghe are recorded as having been given by William Cocus of Ospringe.² Eight years later the Poor Nuns of Davington Priory in nearby Faversham were receiving an annual rent of 5d. from land in Ospringe given by the same William.³

Although these documents of Henry III's reign contain the earliest dated references to this branch of the Cocks', the family may well have been established there much earlier. At about the same time Philip Cocus, obviously of William's generation and probably his brother, was also holding land there. At Philip's death, which must have occurred in about 1250, it was reported that his farm consisted of 22 acres of arable and 3 acres of wood together with a house and rent of 43d. per annum, all of which was held directly of the King by service of 1/16 of a knight's fee, a knight's fee (often as here subdivided) being the highest form of tenure amounting virtually to a freehold. He had also to pay 7½d every 20 weeks for castle guard at Dover Castle.⁴ This was because Faversham was a 'limb' or outlier of the Dover Cinque Port, and personal service of guard had as a matter of convenience recently been commuted to a monetary payment. The Cocks' or Cocus' fraction of the fee seems really to have been 1/8, but

apparently it was often divided into further halves, each moiety usually being held by a different member of the family. Possibly William held the other half.

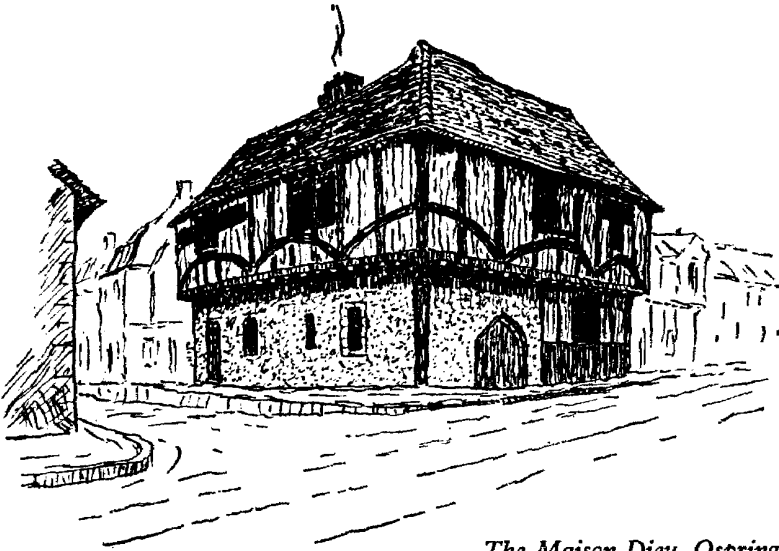
Thomas succeeded his father Philip at the age of 10 and was probably an only son as in 1284 he is returned as holding the whole 1/8 fraction, another 1/8 at Ospringe being held by Ralph of Esling, the Master of the Domus Dei.⁵ Two years later he had died and Walter le Cock his son was assessed for the lay subsidy at 6/3d for 1/16 of the fee.⁶ After this the position becomes somewhat confused; in 1305 the full fraction belonged to Basilia, wife of Roger Cocus, and another person⁷ but soon afterwards Basilia, now a widow, and Richard of Kent each held a moiety.⁸ By 1315 Thomas le Cook was described as heir of Roger and Basilia when he made a gift to the Domus of a wood 'lying in a place called Kenteysebusses'.⁹ One must conclude that Walter, Roger and the younger Thomas were all of the same generation, though whether brothers or cousins there is no means of telling. They must have been born between about 1260 and 1270.

Thomas himself died in 1339, and because he held property of the King the usual *inquisitio post mortem* was held.¹⁰ These inquiries could be completed remarkably quickly. In this case only ten days were to elapse between the issue of the writ ordering the escheator to take Thomas le Couk's land into the King's hand and the order for its delivery to Walter le Coch is son and heir who was then aged 40.

The farm still consisted of the 20 acres of the fee, but to this had now been added a further 17 acres of arable and 2 of woodland held of several other individuals for virtually nominal rents in money and in kind. We know from a document of 1345¹¹ that Walter, though holding 1/16 part of the fee, was in fact a chaplain. But no doubt Thomas le Keu or de Keu, perhaps his brother, who was assessed for his Ospringe land a year later, was the active farmer.¹² (The rendering 'le Keu' has, incidentally, caused confusion in some quarters. It has been misread as le Ken and taken to refer to another family, whereas it is yet another French variant of the Coc or Cook name). There is no hint at this time that the family held any land other than in the immediate vicinity and it would certainly have been recorded in the inquisitions had they done so - nor is there a suggestion that they were engaged in any other profession with a tenant in the farm. It is clear, therefore, that they were Franklin farmers and, one would think, reasonably prosperous ones at that. Each time their property is described it is seen that they had added more to it.

Where was their farm in Ospringe? We know from a lawsuit referred to later that the land was called Coks at the beginning of the 16th century, and

Cookes more than a hundred years after that. But by the time of the tithe apportionment survey in 1840 no farm or any portion of land in the parish bore the name, and one has to search for clues elsewhere. Peter de Cocsete is mentioned in the 1247 charter, but this evidently refers to one of the Coxett farms which can be eliminated. From some of the names of the land held, (and more are given by the end of the 15th century) and from the fact that parts were in the adjacent parishes of Throwley and Eastling, one can be sure that it lay somewhere in the southern part of the parish. From the Will of Arthur Whatman¹³ dated 1674 who refers to 'land called Cookes in Ospringe' it is possible to eliminate some other farms which are also mentioned by him, and one is left with only one likely contender, Scooks Farm. Not only is the name significant but no early forms for it are known, which means that it is either a late name or a much changed one.



The Maison Dieu, Ospringe

The present Scooks farmhouse is a comparatively modern building which may not be on exactly the same site as the original, though this is usually so. The holding of land would have undergone substantial changes meanwhile, but one may believe that the nucleus of the present farm contains the original.

Travelling southwards through the parish (now bisected by a motorway) one soon comes to gently undulating ground which rises eventually to the crest of the Downs away to the south. There are long, usually dry valleys running downwards to the coastal marshes, and Scooks farm stands on the hill slope on the western side of the one which goes past the manor of Queen Court to Ospringe village itself. Much of the land to-day is orchard or hop garden,

crops unknown in those far-off medieval times, and it requires an effort of imagination to picture it as it must have looked then, with the arable and pasture husbandry, the plough-oxen, and the Coks dwelling perhaps a timber-framed house of the wealden type of which some later examples still exist.

Walter was still alive in 1364 when he is recorded as liable to certain manorial services and the usual castle-guard payment.¹⁴ In 1380 Richard Cook was the holder and was moreover 'the King's chief minister for preserving the peace in the district', a fact known to posterity through his having lost from his custody a felon and the goods which he had stolen. A commission was granted to certain local landowners to enquire into the circumstances in which 'evil-doers' had removed the thief.¹⁵ The fact that he held such a position shows that he must have been a locally resident landowner of the middling sort, and in those heady days of the Peasants' Revolt in Kent the post was one of great danger. After this the records of the Coks' are silent for many years to come.

TALLOW-CHANDLERS

We have to wait for just more than a century before the next certain record emerges, though we are then given a backward glimpse. In an *inquisitio post mortem* held on Richard Cokkes in 1501 he is described as holding his land in the parish from 'Walter Coke, son and heir of Thomas Coke, of Ospryng'.¹⁶ It has been surmised that the latter may have been traders in London, but in fact nothing is known about them. Two generations are required to fill the gap between Richard Cook the country Justice of the Peace and this later Richard, and Thomas and Walter may have provided them. But one cannot be sure that Richard Cokkes was not a brother or cousin of Walter.

Fortunately, much more is known of Richard. The inquisition reveals that he was a London tallow-chandler by profession, and this enables us to identify him with the Richard Cokkes, tallow chandler, who is mentioned in a London deed of 1469 in Edward IV's reign.¹⁷ Four years later he received certain gifts from a fellow chandler Edmund Wotten, probably on the occasion of his marriage with Edmund's daughter Cecily.¹⁸ It is clear that the Cocks' were now primarily London traders who would only have gone to their country property when business was not too pressing in the City, or in order to escape from disease such as that in the years 1479-1480 when high mortality struck the crowded City tenements.

The tallow-chandlers were one of the lesser London companies. A citizen of this profession - in other words someone who had pledged himself to

obey the rules or orders of his 'mistry' - was nevertheless a substantial one ranking only below the great merchants of the main companies. In Richard Cokkes' time there were about 35 in livery in the City.

Richard died in 1497 and was buried in London at St. Magnus' church.¹⁹ He left two sons, Ralph, aged 36, and John, and a daughter Helen. The inquisition recites the land belonging to him at Ospringe. The 20 acres held of the King is still listed, but further expansion has occurred since the survey of over 150 years earlier when only 17 acres had been added. Now he owned another 48 acres and 'the whole pasture in Shaylerdesdowne' in Ospringe and Throwley, 16 acres of land in Cokysdayn, 20 acres in Waterham and 9 acres in Douneswood Feld together with some smaller holdings, all of which had increased the estate to one of more than 120 acres of arable and woodland. London profits had been put back into Kentish land. But there is one significant entry; the farmhouse is described as 'a certain toft or scite of a messuage' which probably means that it was derelict and uninhabited, the land being farmed from elsewhere. Clearly Ospringe now meant much less to the family than it had done in centuries past.

Ralph inherited this from his father and almost at once conveyed the estate to his brother John Cokke, another tallow-chandler, dying soon afterwards. He seems to have been unmarried. John's first wife Isabel had died young and he then married a Margaret. Apart from Kent, he also held land in Stony Stratford, Buckingham and Wolverton, that in the first-mentioned place being his as early as 1482.²⁰ But trouble soon arose at Ospringe. There was a dispute about the property which was taken to Chancery somewhere around 1510.²¹

It came about through the provisions of the Will of Richard Cokkes which itself, unfortunately, no longer exists. Richard was alleged to have appointed feoffees to hold Coks manor in trust for his wife Cecily, then to his daughter Helen and her husband Thomas Thornton jointly. The surviving feoffee, John More, had a suit brought against him by Thomas Thornton who argues that as both Cecily and his own wife Helen were dead, the manor should have come to him. John More was obviously reluctant to become involved in a family dispute and, as Henry Somers-Cocks in his Eastnor book remarks, was inclined to wash his hands of the matter. He further stated that 'one John Coke claymeth tittle to the same'.

John then puts in his interpleader in which he describes himself as tallow-chandler of London. He denies that the manor was ever enfeoffed and says that Richard Cokkes was sole seised of it in fee-simple; that 'the ryght tytyll & use thereof descended unto Raufe Cokkes as to the son & heyre of the seyde

Richard Cokkes; and the same Raufe entered into the same manor & was thereof seised;’ and that Raufe then conveyed it to himself, John.

He evidently won his case, for in 1517, when he died, the farm still belonged to him. He was survived by his wife and three under-age children to whom he left his Buckinghamshire land. The eldest, also John, was left the Stony Stratford property, his second son Henry had that in Buckingham, and his daughter Elizabeth the remainder. His will²² continued: ‘my land ... in Throwley and Ospringe in the county of Kent ... to be sold to best profit by my wife.’ With these few words the centuries-old connection of the Cokkes with Ospringe was finally severed, and the name had altogether disappeared from the district by the time the lay subsidy of 1523 was collected.²³

John requested burial near to his first wife in All Hallows the Little Church, and left money for masses to be said for his soul and that of Richard and Raufe. Nothing can be discovered about his children. It is evident that for a few generations trading and not farming had been the family interest, and the brothers are likely to have continued this trend. It was not usual for the same trade to be followed for more than two, or at most three, generations, and they may not therefore have been tallow-chandlers. There are references to more than one John Cokke or Cokkes as being merchants in London in the mid-16th century and acquiring land in the provinces, but the name is not uncommon and there is nothing to connect them with the Kent branch. One must regretfully conclude, therefore, that with the passing of John Cokkes, ‘talo-chaundler’, there passes also our knowledge of his line.

3. SANDWICH

EARLY HISTORY

On the 4th April 1285 an inquisition was held at Colchester to inquire into the circumstances in which Robert de Coke, a mariner of Sandwich, had been killed in the previous month.²⁴ Robert, it was revealed, had gone with his ship to Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex, and went ashore with others, including the mate, to buy oysters. There was a quarrel about who should buy them first, and in the ensuing brawl Robert was killed. This regrettable event is the first record of the Cokes of Sandwich, though there can be no certainty that he was connected with the Coks who next come into the picture more than a century after this inauspicious start.

In the early part of the 15th century Sandwich was perhaps at the peak of its prosperity, a thriving military, naval and trading port, hardly yet beginning to feel the effects of the slow silting-up of its harbour. It had been the most important centre for this part of Kent ever since the Roman invasion. Merchandise flowed through it to and from the continent, London was convenient of access either overland or round the North Foreland by sea, and of almost equal importance as its trading position was its use as a military embarkation port. It was usually from here that cross-channel expeditions set sail, such as that in 1342 when Edward III embarked to take Brittany. It was also one of the Cinque Ports.

MAYORS AND BARONS

Thus in 1424 when Henry Cok was mayor of the town, it may be deduced that he was an influential and prosperous merchant, a member of one of the leading families in a busy community. Two years later he was re-elected to the same office²⁵ and in 1429 was one of the two 'barons' representing the town when a parliament was summoned. John Cok, probably a brother or cousin, next has a brief mention when in 1437 he also sat for parliament,²⁶ but soon afterwards the name of Richard Cok appears, and he holds the scene for the next twenty years.

He was in all probability son of either Henry or John, following in their footsteps as mayor in 1441-2²⁷ and M.P. for Sandwich in 1442 when he was only 32. It was not unusual in those days to achieve high office at such an age. The next honour to come his way was his election as one of the Cinque Port barons who held the Canopy at the coronation of Queen Margaret, and after another spell as mayor he was nominated by the Lord Warden to be customer of Sandwich in both 1449 and 1450.²⁸ The office entailed the collection of customs dues in the port, and was undoubtedly a lucrative and sought-after appointment often held by a local merchant. Other members of the family were to enjoy the post over the ensuing years.. (The privilege accorded to the Cinque Port barons of holding aloft the Canopy at coronations continued, it is interesting to note, until the crowning of George IV, when the barons had fortified themselves too freely beforehand and consequently had difficulty in maintaining the canopy supports - and themselves - vertical.)

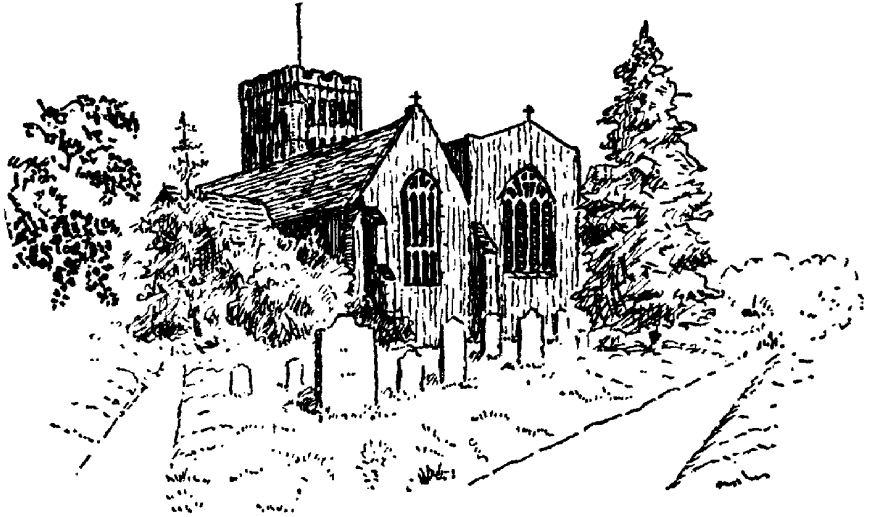
Richard's services continued in demand. He was a member of the 1450-1 parliament which met in three short sessions and passed, amongst other enactments, the Bill of Attainder against the rebel Jack Cade. In the next year, after being elected mayor for a third term²⁹ he evidently ran into some political trouble, for during his tenure the king ordered his arrest (his name is spelt Cokkes in the Roll).³⁰ Nothing untoward can have resulted and he soon became mayor again³¹ and then M.P. yet again. In both 1455 and 1458 a royal pardon was granted to him³² a procedure to be regarded more as an insurance policy in troubled times than as any evidence of wrong-doing.

The last post that this eminent citizen held was that of customer of the port in 1457,³³ a year of great trouble for the town. Some 4,000 Frenchmen attacked and pillaged it, murdering the mayor and many of its inhabitants, and the only reason we know that Richard Cok escaped is because he was granted the second pardon in the following year. He must have died about 1460 as a document of two years later³⁴ refers to 'John Coppledyke and Jane his wife, formerly wife of Richard Cok, late collector of customs in Sandwich'.

ROBERT COK AND HIS FAMILY

It was not long before another member of the Cok family made his appearance on the civic scene, one who was probably son of the Richard just mentioned. This was Robert who at the age of 34 was appointed customer in 1464³⁵ and thus was evidently already a man of influence. His public career followed closely that of Richard, for in 1469 he was one of the town's two representatives summoned to attend parliament. Due to have been held at York,

in fact it never met owing, it was said, to the danger of a Scottish invasion, though it was more generally believed that its cancellation was caused by the elections to it not having gone as the Earl of Warwick had intended. At all events Robert was saved a long, tedious and expensive journey north.



St. Clement's, Sandwich

Next year he was elected mayor³⁶, and again held the customership, but life during the Wars of the Roses was becoming more difficult. In July 1471 the town's sympathies with the once Yorkist and now Lancastrian Warwick incurred royal displeasure, the franchises being taken into the King's hands. Thus we find Robert appointed 'keeper of the town of Sandwich, a post also described as 'guardian', the office of mayor officially having been abolished.³⁷ Abolished or not, documents up to February 1472 describe him as mayor nonetheless. However, in November next year an ominous order went out from the government to the mayor of Rochester telling him to arrest Robert Cok of Sandwich, and no further mention of him appears thereafter.³⁸

None of the Wills of the Coks' so far mentioned appear to survive, and their occupation and exact relationship remain uncertain. Robert may have had a brother Thomas who died in 1472, a draper of St. Peter's parish,³⁹ and William Cok who comes into the civic records as mayor in 1492⁴⁰ is believed to have been Robert's son. We know rather more of this William's family. He must have died by 1504 as in that year one of his sons Henry, who died young, mentions in his Will⁴¹ that his father William was dead. William's wife Elizabeth survived

him for many years, it being clear from both her Will⁴² and Henry's that there was another son John.

John in later life spelt his name Cockes and was yet another of the Coks' to serve as M.P. (in 1509) and mayor (1511).⁴³ He is described in his mother's Will as 'Mr. Cockes' and in his own as 'jurat', one of the governing body of the town. He died in 1549, appointing Sir James Hales, sergeant-at-law, and John Sares, Common Clerk of Sandwich, to be overseers of his Will, and his wife Alice to be executrix, having, it appears, no children to succeed. Like most of the rest of the family he lived in St. Clement's parish, owning a number of properties there and in the countryside round about.⁴⁴ With his death the connection with Sandwich seems virtually to have ended.

There are other Cok, Cokke, Coke and Cooke Wills from in and around Sandwich which may in some cases refer to the same family., though there is insufficient evidence to prove it. One is of particular interest. It shows that there was a Thomas Cockes - the spelling is perhaps significant - who lived in St. Clement's in 1516 when he made his Will,⁴⁵ and who may well have been William's brother. In it he mentions only his wife Joan and his four daughters, but he must in fact have survived for long after this without drawing up a new Will or adding codicils because it was not proved until 1545; so there may in the meanwhile have been sons. It is just possible that he had one called Thomas born about 1530 who went to Bishop's Cleeve.

Another brother of William could have been Michael Cocke who at the beginning of the century, although living at Tilmanstone a few miles away, owned property in Sandwich and who bore the Cocks arms differenced with a mullet. If he was the third son, as his arms suggest, William may have been the middle son and Thomas the eldest, and the latter's descendants would have the undifferenced arms as borne by the Gloucestershire Cocks'. All this is, however, surmise, and we must now turn to Michael and his descendants where we are on firmer ground.

4. TILMANSTONE

MICHAEL COKES

By the beginning of the 16th century the port of Sandwich had become completely useless due to the silting of the River Stour, a state of affairs which must have hit the trade of the town and the prosperity of the merchants to a very considerable degree. The revival which came with the reclamation of land and the introduction of the cloth trade carried on by Low Country immigrants was not to start until after the middle of the century, and there was, therefore, a gap of some two or more generations in the town's fortunes.

Such an economic recession was no doubt partly responsible for the fact that at about this time several leading merchants, while continuing some business in Sandwich, moved out into the surrounding countryside where they bought estates and lived as country gentlemen. One of these was Michael Cokes, or Cocke, who is recorded in 1490 as holding South Court at Tilmanstone from Archbishop Morton.⁴⁶ Tilmanstone lies just off the main road about 4½ miles south of Sandwich in gently undulating country, and South Court stands close beside its church which remains, incidentally, largely as Michael must have known it in its main structural form.

In an *inquisitio post-mortem* on James Isaack who died in 1502⁴⁷ it is stated that he held 8 acres in Tilmanstone of Michael Cokes, gentleman, and this land must have been part of either the manor of South Court or the manor of Dane Court which Michael purchased at about this time. Dane Court (the present most attractive house cannot have been built for almost another two centuries), formerly belonging to Sir John Fogge of Ashford, is itself less than half a mile from the church in a shallow and sheltered valley, standing now, at any rate, in parklike surroundings. It is this valley, or dene, in fact which gives the property its name.

Michael still had tenements in Sandwich where he no doubt carried on a certain amount of business, with another holding in Statenborough on the road between Eastry and Sandwich. These were sold in accordance with wishes expressed in his Will,⁴⁸ but he left Dane Court when he died in 1513 to his wife Alice for one year, and South Court to her for life, thence in both cases to his sons Thomas, William or Robert and their heirs. Such a disposition strongly

suggests that Dane was the family's chief residence, South Court being more in the nature of a dower house or house for younger members of the family.

Apart from those already mentioned, Michael had four other sons, Roger, John, Edward and Michael, and four daughters, Christian, Joan, Elizabeth and Alice, all of whom were living in 1509 when his Will was drawn up. Unfortunately, of this large family we know nothing further except for Thomas who succeeded him, and William who became a clergyman. It seems that in 1509 none of the children, with the possible exception of Thomas, were of age.

THOMAS COCKES, GENTLEMAN

At about the time of his father's death, Thomas Cockes (he is also spelt Cocks, Cocke, Cok, Coks, Cokkes, Cokks, Cokkys and Coxe) married as his first wife Alice, daughter of Roger Lychfield of nearby Betteshanger. Almost at once Mr. Lychfield died, leaving Great Betteshanger to his grandson upon whose early death it passed to Alice.⁴⁹ A sixteenth part of the manor had remained outside Lychfield ownership, and this was bought in 1516 by Thomas Cockes for the sum of £40.⁵⁰ He was now in the position of enjoying three properties in the district, and on his wife's death in about 1520 he became the absolute owner of Great Betteshanger. At much the same time he was obliged to defend his title to Dane Court against Lord Cobham who had some deeds relating to it, and put forward the claim that he was the rightful owner, an assertion which he was unable to substantiate in court.⁵¹

From this time on Thomas became a person of some importance locally. He obtained the post of customer of Sandwich and Dover through the influence of Sir Edward Ponynge by paying £20 to the two previous holders, a sum for the non-payment of which he was sued in Chancery in about 1525, when he in turn sold to Thomas Alcock of the Exchequer.⁵² His signature still exists on a document of 1523 when he acknowledges, as customer, a certificate concerning the shipment of horses that year.⁵³

He seems from time to time to have enjoyed positions to which he was appointed by the King. Thus in 1539 he was with Richard Key, a Commissioner for the building of the 'Workes of the Kinges Casteile at Sandgate'.⁵⁴ - one of the chain of small castles built along the south coast of England by Henry VIII as a defensive measure. In September of that year he writes to Thomas Cromwell that this work 'within your lordship of Folkestone is well brought forward. Three towers are ready to be covered with canvas, pitch and tar,'

going on to suggest that lead would be better 'of which there is enough to cover the whole castle.'⁵⁵ He signs as comptroller in which position his pay was 4/- per day. (The castle was much altered in Napoleonic times.)

Apart from serving on one or two commissions, his next appointment seems to have been in 1545 when he was one of those chosen to take command of men to defend the coast near Sandwich in case of invasion.⁵⁶ It was in the same year that he became involved in another lawsuit from which we learn more about him, including the fact that he had remarried and that his wife was called Mary.

The case was heard before the Court of Star Chamber with Thomas Cockes plaintiff, wherein he is described as 'one of the Gentleman Ushers of your most Honorable Chamber', and Sir Thomas Moyle defendant.⁵⁷ It concerned the disposal of the goods and chattels, worth £40, of one Thomas Whytfeld, a husbandman of Tilmanstone, who 'dryven owte of his trew understanding and by the perswasion of the devyle lepte into a well' near his house and killed himself, whereby his goods were forfeit to the Crown. Accordingly the Crown took possession and then arranged, doubtless through Thomas' intervention with the agent of the Bishop of Worcester who was the King's Almoner, that they should be sold back to the widow. However, the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, in whose manor of Eastry the property lay, also laid claim to the goods, and Sir Thomas Moyle gave orders for them to be removed.

In the scene which followed, vividly described in the proceedings, we have a glimpse of life on that far-off April day. It so happened that Sir Thomas Moyle had sent four of his servants to seal up the widow Sylvestrine's barn where the barley and wheat were stored, and they were just about to drive her cattle away when 'by luck Thomas Cockes came rydyng from Sandwich' with two of his servants past the house, and Sylvestrine begged him to help her. Thomas asked Moyle's servants what they were doing, and on being told retorted: 'Masters, the Kynges Maiesty hath bene seased of thies goodes this fyve dayes' to the use of Whytfeld's widow, 'and I am the Kynges Maiesties servant and am charged in his behalf to assist this woman'. The case dragged on until the reign of Edward VI, and in common with all Star Chamber proceedings the judgment has been lost. Had it concluded in Henry VIII's reign one can hardly imagine that monarch allowing his authority to be undermined even by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

It has already been stated that Thomas' next oldest brother was the clergyman William. We do not know where he had been previous to 1540 when he was appointed rector of Betteshanger⁵⁸ though the name of William Cockes

appears as curate of Kingston-upon-Thames in 1536 when he was in some difficulty, petitioning Thomas Cromwell to redress wrongs suffered at the hands of Dr. Incent, prebendary of St. Pauls, with 'detenue of my goods and unjust imprisonments'. He goes on: 'I never was in such trouble, for we have been visited with the plague, and I am thought no more worthy of men's company than the mouth of the hangman of Calais is of any man's cup. But for my good Mr. Vicar's payment of my wages I should perish.'⁵⁹

If this was the same William, arrival at Betteshanger, to which the living of Tilmanstone was collated in 1546, and the patronage of his elder brother must have brought a welcome change. It was at this time that the bells of Betteshanger church were re-cast, each having the Cocks arms and inscriptions commemorating the fact that they were the gift of two brothers, the patron and the rector. The treble bell alone of the three survives.⁶⁰

When Edward VI succeeded to the throne, marriage became possible for clergymen who had hitherto been obliged to remain celibate, and William in common with many others took advantage of this. His wife was Anne Barlie, a son being born to them in 1552. Unfortunately, Queen Mary promptly withdrew this liberty again, and William found himself deprived of his livings and presumably entirely dependent on his brother. He died a year or two later⁶¹

Thomas himself apparently had no children, so it was a strange chance which so late in his life gave him a small child as a dependent; for when he drew up his Will⁶² in 1558, he made his nephew his heir, with the manors of Dane, South Court and Betteshanger going to his wife Mary for her life, then to Thomas and his heirs. Furthermore, he arranged with his 'loving frende' Sir Thomas Cornwallis that the latter should 'have the ordering for their better bringing up' of both Thomas and another ward, Thomas Hendy, from the age of 16.

He also owned land in Sholden, Sellinge and Worth which he left to various beneficiaries, none of whom bore his surname; nor were his servants neglected, each being given annual rents or, in one case, the house where he lived rent-free for life.

He desired his wife, whom he appointed executrix, within a year of his death to 'byld and make a new windowe in the Chauncell of Betteshanger Churche with thre lyghtes whereof in the myddell lyghte to be the pyctor of the blessed Trynitie and in the other two lightes the pictor of our ladye and Saynt Thomas the appostell together with the pyctures of me and my wyfe with our names and armes'. Further, his wife each year during her lifetime was 'to cause

to be caried and layd in the churchway between Sandwich and Eastrye' 100 loads of stones - a commentary on the state of the road which he must so often had to endure on his rides to and from Sandwich. The church was completely rebuilt in 1853-4, but in a chancel window of this tiny building peacefully set in its wooded surroundings there survives still the coat-of-arms to remind one of Thomas Cockes who died in February 1559, over four centuries ago, and to prove that his last wishes were indeed observed.

The inquisitio post-mortem was not held for another ten years.⁶³ It took place at Sevenoaks in October 1569, one of the jurors being John Coxes - almost certainly a relative and possibly another of his nephews - and his heir being given as his 'cousin' Thomas Cockes alias Barley, aged then 17 years and 9 months. It should perhaps be pointed out that in those days cousin was synonymous with kinsman, and did not have its present connotation.

THOMAS COCKES, AUDITOR

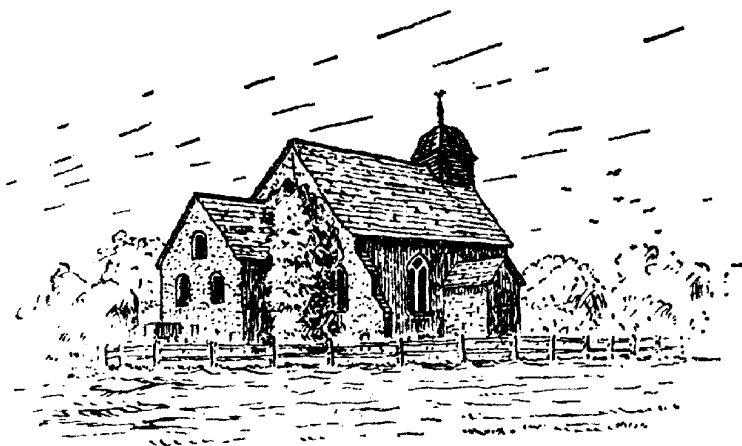
The young Thomas did not come of age until 1573 and there is no record of where he spent his boyhood, whether it was with Sir Thomas Cornwallis or elsewhere. Perhaps for a while after this he lived at Dane or Betteshanger, but for some reason he must have decided that the life of a gentleman on his country estates was not to his taste. And so in the 1570's he sold Dane Court and South Court to the Fogge family, and Betteshanger to John Boys of Canterbury.⁶⁴

We next hear of him in 1584 when he was appointed to the position of Auditor to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.⁶⁵ He had evidently married some years earlier and eventually had a family of two boys and six girls. A great deal of detail of the last years of his life is known from the fortunate fact that he kept a diary which survives in the cathedral archives.

It is clear that by 1607 when the diary begins his wife Mary Mylls was 'distracted of her witts' and no longer living with him, being looked after by Mrs. Walsall, wife of the vicar of St. Paul's Canterbury in their house. Thomas, who lodged in the Archbishop's Palace, paid her £22 per annum for this service and supplied her with firewood at a reduced price. There was probably some family connection because one of Thomas' daughters Mary, though first marrying a Gates, was by this time married to a Daunton (with two children John and Julyan mentioned in Thomas' will), and Mrs. Walsall before marriage had been Margaret Daunton. At all events Thomas was certainly on familiar

terms with her, frequently referring to her in his diary as 'my va', short for 'my valentine.'

Though living in the Palace, he boarded out -sometimes with friends, sometimes at the Sun Inn. He played bowls or at cards, went to the theatre and was not above indulging in some betting. He smoked a pipe, and, judging from his tailor's bills, obviously was smartly turned out when occasion demanded. We know too that he suffered from scurvy. His salary as auditor was only £12 a year, but apart from his personal income his job was worth considerably more both in various fees which he received and through a number of leases which he held at low rates from the Dean and Chapter and re-let at much enhanced prices.



St. Rumwold's, Bonnington

At the time of his death in 1611 his six daughters were all married, and his two sons Thomas and Roger had entered the Church. Roger, who inherited his father's 'seale ring with a red stone and my ring of gold called an aggatt', had been at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he wrote latin verse. There is a book published in 1630 by him in 'Answer to a book set forth by Sir Edward Peyton' entitled 'Hebdomada Sacra; a Week's Devotion', from which it appears that he was then a curate in Suffolk. Thereafter history is silent about him.

Thomas, his elder son, who inherited his 'best seale ring of gould', had graduated at Oxford, and in 1615 became rector of Bonnington, a small parish whose lonely church stands over a mile away from the village just above the old cliff line at the edge of Romney Marsh, and within a stone's throw of that great work of later days, the Royal Military Canal. Here he died in 1640 without, it seems, having married. His Will does not appear to survive, and the parish registers do not begin until 1679.

His father, who was buried in Canterbury Cathedral where there was once a memorial to him with the 'differenced' coat-of-arms,⁶⁶ mentions in his diary that he visited Frank and Henry Cocks of Mongeham, near Deal. It is likely that they were sons of one of his uncles, but once again nothing further can be discovered about them. With the death, therefore, of the Reverend Thomas Cocks at Bonnington the story of the Cocks' in Kent comes to an end - at least so far as present knowledge extends.

COPYWRITE

COPYWRITE

PART 2

5. THE SETTLEMENT AT BISHOP'S CLEEVE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE RELATIONS

Before turning to Thomas Cocks of Crowle and Bishop's Cleeve, other contemporary Gloucestershire Cocks' require brief consideration, for Thomas was not the only member of the family to be in the neighbourhood at that time.

We know he was living in Crowle in Worcestershire by 1559¹ but that no Cocks was there in 1551 when the Lay Subsidy was levied² so that his arrival there was somewhere between those dates. Where had his family come from? As a matter of fact there had been Cocks' in Bishop's Cleeve since at least 1535 when a Robert Cocks owned property in the manor of Gotherington³ (then in Cleeve parish), but this seems to have been a coincidence and it appears the two families were not related.

He definitely had connections at Tewkesbury, and also at Deerhurst where a branch was established by 1545. This relationship may best be seen by considering the Will of Isabel Coxe of Tewkesbury Park drawn up in 1569⁴. She was then the widow of William Coxe who had leased the property beside the Severn ('a fair maner-place of tymbre and stone' as Leland calls it), and she appointed her 'loving Cosyn' Thomas Cocks as one of the overseers of her Will. The cousin was Thomas of Cleeve, and her godson Peter that she mentions was in all probability his son of that name. Her own sons were Richard and John, the first-named having a son also called Thomas. She also left a legacy to William Coxe of Deerhurst, son of yet another Thomas, and she mentions a 'sister' (probably a sister-in-law) Johane Coxe of Clent on the borders of Worcestershire and Staffordshire. The Clent Coxes can be traced back to a Phyllyp who died in 1561⁵ but they do not seem to connect with any other branch.

That it was Thomas of Cleeve whom she appointed as overseer is plain from Thomas' own Will made in 1600⁶ in which he mentions 'my godson Thomas Cockes [spelt thus] son of my cousin Richard Cockes of Tewxberry'.

Although the word cousin meant kinsman, it is quite likely that the Tewkesbury Coxes were his cousins in the modern sense of the word.

The Tewkesbury - Deerhurst relationship is further confirmed from the administration of the goods of Thomas Coxe of Deerhurst granted in 1558 to his widow Margery and her children Richard, William, Ursula and Susan.⁷ Thomas having died intestate, the judge appointed their uncle William Coxe to be their guardian, and without doubt this William was the lessee of Tewkesbury Park. Isabel refers to three of the children in her Will as, apart from Thomas' son William already mentioned, Ursula and Susan (her godchild) were also her legatees.

This tangled skein will become somewhat clearer if studied in the accompanying table, but precisely how Thomas of Cleeve fits into the pattern unfortunately has not been discovered. A herald's visitation of the 1630s states that his father was another Thomas who married a Dymock. It is just possible that this Thomas was the one who died intestate in 1558 (though Thomas junior is mentioned neither in the administration nor in the Deerhurst Coxes' Wills). If so this would mean that Thomas's father and William of Tewkesbury Park were brothers. As will be seen from the chapter 'Woodmancote and Cleeve', over 200 years later Jane Bower, a descendant, said that the family tradition was that two merchant brothers had originally come to Gloucestershire. Although she believed that one was Thomas of Bishop's Cleeve, in which she was almost certainly incorrect - the brothers were one generation earlier -, in other respects the tradition does tend to support the belief that William Coxe of Tewkesbury and Thomas Cocks whose wife was a Dymock were the brothers referred to.

Regrettably William Coxe's Will no longer appears to survive, as it might have given some clue as to his relationship with other branches or even to his own ancestry. We do know however that there were Coxes in the neighbourhood of Tewkesbury for a number of years after this and that the descendants of some at any rate of the Deerhurst Coxes are living today. But we must now turn to Thomas of Crowle and Bishop's Cleeve himself.

THOMAS COCKS AND HIS FAMILY

Considering the difficulty in finding out much about Thomas Cocks's antecedents is remarkable how in 1559 he bursts upon the scene with almost dramatic suddenness and from that date on he appears and reappears constantly in the records and there is no difficulty in finding out where he lived and who his numerous children were.

The first record is an interesting one. In March 1559, when living in Crowle in Worcestershire, he obtained the lease of the parsonage manor of Bishop's Cleeve in Gloucestershire.⁸ Until the dissolution more than a decade earlier the property had belonged to the Bishops of Worcester, one of the very large number of estates with which that Bishopric was endowed. Henry VIII had taken it over and leased it out as did Elizabeth. Thomas acquired the lease from the incumbent Seth Holland, Dean of Worcester, and his brother Roger Holland, the patron, becoming the largest landowner in the parish. He paid a yearly rent of £84, reserving ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the parson while having to maintain the buildings, including a large tithe barn, in repair himself.

Seth Holland from whom he acquired the lease had been installed as rector in 1557. Thomas married his brother Roger's daughter Elizabeth and it seems highly likely that this property transaction was connected with his marriage which must have taken place in about 1559. The Hollands had come from Dalton in Lancashire, Elizabeth bringing Thomas what the county historians call 'a considerable fortune'. Undoubtedly he made a very prosperous match here and for much of the rest of his life he was buying up property in Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties. His rise in the world and his manner of achieving it were typical of the new gentry of that age.

We learn from depositions taken in a case in 1562, wherein Thomas and others were alleged to have come into unlawful possession of some title deeds of land in nearby Tredington, that Thomas was not only a 'gentleman of great power' but that he was Clerk of the Kitchen to the Bishop of Worcester.⁹ It would have been for this reason that he was then living in Crowle not far from the city, and it appears that even after obtaining the Bishop's Cleeve lease he continued to live there until about 1565 when he moved to Cleeve. At all events his first four children were baptised at Crowle.

Bishop's Cleeve is a parish a few miles north of Cheltenham in the vale of Severn at the very foot of the steep scarp which rises above to the highest point of the Cotswolds on Cleeve Common. It consisted of the village of Cleeve itself as well as a few hamlets including Gotherington and Woodmancote, the latter lying part-way up the slope. The manor house was also the rectory and had been the centre of an episcopal estate. As such it was a large and well-built structure for its day, a most interesting building whose medieval features can still be seen. In spite of the insertion of an upper floor in the 17th century, and some later work, the great hall is recognisable with the blocked doorways which once gave access to the buttery, pantry and kitchen leading out of it. Even with these later additions it does not require too much imagination to picture it as it must have looked when Thomas and Elizabeth came there more than four centuries

ago to bring up their large family. Externally with its buff-coloured stone quarried from the parish and its stone-tiled roof it can have changed rather less.
¹⁰ It remained the rectory until recently.



It continued to be the Cocks' home until Thomas' death, and here his remaining twelve children were born and baptised. This point needs making as by the 19th century the family belief had grown up that he lived in Woodmancote, as can be seen from the legend painted on one of the portraits at Eastnor. The portrait is said to be of Richard Cocks, the first settler at Castleditch, Eastnor (actually it is now known to be of Richard's son Thomas) and states that Thomas senior was of Woodmancote. But the writing was probably not added until the early 19th century when it was recollected that the elder branch of the family remaining at Cleeve had since the 1650s lived at Woodmancote (as described in the chapter 'Woodmancote and Cleeve'), and it was wrongly assumed that they had always done so.¹¹

The first of Thomas and Elizabeth's four children to be born at Crowle was Seth who was baptised there in December 1560.¹² This somewhat unusual name, recurring for several generations, was given as a compliment to Seth Holland who died about then. After being rector of Cleeve he had become Dean of Worcester but surprisingly enough at his death he was confined in the Marshalsea for debt.¹³ The administration of his estate was granted to his niece Elizabeth Cocks.

A year later Anne was born, followed in May 1563 by Thomas and in August 1564 by Richard. Shortly afterwards the move to Bishop's Cleeve was effected and here at intervals of not much over a year the next three children, Peter, Dorothy and Elizabeth, were born.¹⁴ Even now the family was not quite half complete as three more sons, Henry, Charles and Christopher, followed in 1570, 1571 and 1573, but Elizabeth died as a baby and another daughter who came next was also christened Elizabeth. After this there was a gap of nearly four years, unless the daughter whose name is unknown and who did not survive was born then.

There were now ten children living, all under fourteen, and it is not difficult to guess that even the capacious manor house must have seemed uncomfortably full at times. Even when the eldest were leaving home others were still arriving to keep up the numbers: George in 1578, Winifred two years later (though she died before she was three), James in 1582 and, last of them all in March 1584, a tenth son John. It was a proud boast that all ten sons and three of the six daughters grew up to be men and woman in their parent's lifetime.¹⁵ In the days when childhood mortality was so rife it was an unusual achievement; in this respect at any rate the Cocks' were not typical of their times.

In spite of family demands Thomas continued to invest his wealth in the purchase of land. He bought an estate near Evesham in 1576 consisting of four houses with over 200 acres in Burlingham, Comberton Magna, Eckington and Wollashall for which he paid £80.¹⁶ A year or so later he and his eighteen year-old son Seth were jointly buying land in Bredon in Worcestershire,¹⁷ while in 1587 he acquired the right of patronage of Cleeve church.¹⁸ Next, he and others obtained a rabbit warren in Cleeve (an important and useful asset in the days when meat was scarce in winter),¹⁹ and soon afterwards he took a long lease of Crowle manor from the Dean and Chapter of Worcester cathedral. It is clear too that at some time he had an interest and title in the parsonages and other lands at King's Norton and Bromsgrove.²⁰

The arable land, lying mostly in open fields and manured by farming sheep on them after the harvest had been taken, together with orchards on the fertile plain, would have been sound investments whose value would have been augmented considerably by the sales of wool and sheep from the great sheep-grazing estates of the Cotswolds close at hand. The fleeces produced from the area were of international fame and excellence which through the resulting cloth trade attracted buyers from far and wide. It is impossible to guess at this prosperous country gentleman's income but certainly it was sufficient to give a

good education to all his sons and to provide a handsome dowry for his three daughters.

The first girl to get married was Anne who in 1578 when she was hardly seventeen took William Barnesley as her husband. Dorothy married Edmund Hutchins (or Hutchings) of Dumbleton rather later in 1591 (more about her will be found in the 'Dumbleton' chapter), and the other surviving daughter Elizabeth in about 1602 married Edward Stanford of Pery Hall in Staffordshire.²¹

Something now must be said of those of Thomas and Elizabeth's sons who are not described in more detail in subsequent chapters. Not a great deal has been discovered about Seth the eldest. He lived on the Bredon property that had been acquired jointly with his father in the 1570s and evidently later fought in the Irish Wars. According to the inscription on his brother Thomas's memorial at Crowle he was killed in Ireland but according to the inquisition post-mortem after his father's death²² he died at Bredon. Perhaps the truth is that he died of wounds received in the war. At all events this happened in June 1599 and, as he had been unmarried, the younger Thomas became his father's heir.

Peter had been born in 1566 and took holy orders. His father had acquired the right of presentation to the living of Cleeve and duly presented Peter to it in 1592. Unfortunately the right was disputed by Sir William Hatton, cousin and heir of the great Lord Chancellor Sir Christopher Hatton, who maintained that he had the right and had granted the advowson to Edmund Hutchins.²³ Curiously enough this was the very person who in the previous year had married Peter's sister Dorothy. Sir William seems to have made his point though with little practical difference, for in the following year Peter was again presented, this time by his brother-in-law. Presumably he continued living in the parsonage manor as he remained single until after his father's death. With the tithes of the parish of Bishop's Cleeve and the chapelry of Stoke Orchard attached to it, he was very comfortably off indeed with the living being reported in the 17th century as worth £600 per annum, a huge sum if converted into today's values.²⁴

When his father died in 1601 he was left 'the bedstead in the green chamber at Cleeve with the feather bed in the same and the bolsters pillows etc. thereto belonging, also the bolster and bed etc. which is in the chamber next adjoining, also four pairs of flaxen sheets and two pillows'. Further he had the first choice of the cattle, household implements and farm gear in the parsonage 'paying so much as the same shall be reasonably praised to my executrix'. Apart from a dispute with his brother George about the right of presentation and about certain terms of their father's Will,²⁵ nothing more is known of Peter until his marriage in 1607 to Katherine Bridges the daughter of Charles, second son of

John, first Lord Chandos of Sudely. The subsequent history of their family will be found in the 'Woodmancote and Cleeve' chapter. It remains to add that Peter died when he was only 46 and was buried at Cleeve leaving all his possessions to his wife.²⁶

The last son to be mentioned here was George and little enough has been discovered about him. Born in 1578 he had taken holy orders by 1605 when in the dispute with his brother Peter he was described as 'clerk'. In his father's Will of 1600 he was left the moiety of the rectory of Eckington (about four miles north of Bredon) together with the profits and tithes etc and the tithe barn for the remaining term of years which Thomas had there. It is not known if he was incumbent there. He had died unmarried before 1629.

Thomas himself died on 3 November 1601 according to the inquisition post-mortem held at Pershore in 1602, but the Cleeve registers show that he was not buried at Cleeve until the 26th of November, suggesting he may have died when he was away from home. He left his son Thomas the manor of Crowle evidently now regarding it as the main family home. Charles, Christopher and John had his title and term of years in the parsonages of Bromsgrove and King's Norton provided they paid their sister Anne Barnesley £100 within three years. His daughter Elizabeth, still unmarried in 1600, received £800 while his godson and Grandchild Thomas, son of Richard of Castleditch, was left £100. His own son James was bequeathed lands in Northey together with the sum of £300. Other bequests included the one to Thomas, son of his cousin Richard Cocks of Tewkesbury. His wife Elizabeth survived him and was appointed executrix and residual legatee of his Will.²⁷ She lived out her widowhood at Bredon. Her burial took place at Bishop's Cleeve on 11 December 1605 as may be seen in the register there. This brings us to problems raised by the memorial to Thomas and Elizabeth in the floor of the vestry in the church.

The day of the month of Elizabeth's burial is incorrectly given on the stone as 6 December and the year as 16. . , the last two numerals never having been cut, a state that was recorded in the eighteenth century.²⁸ They have not been worn away. Then there is the meaning of the initials, probably TH, and the date 1692 that appear at the foot of the inscription though not forming part of it.²⁹

When considering the possible meaning of the above, it has to be remembered that in 1696 the steeple of Cleeve church collapsed and according to Ralph Bigland destroyed the Cocks memorials below it, though he does not specifically say that none survived anywhere else. There are four possibilities. First, the existing stone is the original early seventeenth century one. This can be ruled

out as it is impossible to believe that Elizabeth's date of burial would not be known. Next it could be a replacement for one lost in 1696. If so, why is the date 1692 on the stone? Thirdly it could have been a replacement cut in 1692 for an earlier one which somehow had been lost, the replacement surviving the collapse. This explanation is rather more plausible though it is difficult to imagine how a tombstone could be lost in ordinary circumstances.

The last possibility, and much the most likely, is that there never was a contemporary memorial to Thomas and Elizabeth, but that in 1692 the Cocks' at Bishop's Cleeve and no doubt at Castleditch and possibly Dumbleton too wanted to commemorate their forebears who had founded such a large family in Gloucestershire and accordingly decided to commission a memorial stone. It can be assumed that the initials are those of the mason who incised it and the date that of its execution. The family would have provided the information, the dates being obtained by consulting the burial registers. Evidently there was difficulty with Elizabeth's entry where the numeral xj was misread as vj, making a six instead of the correct 11 for the December date. The year was also a puzzle to those looking at the register - it has to be said that it is somewhat carelessly written up at that point - and was not filled in at the time to await clarification. As to the rest of the inscription it would have been information traditionally passed down the generations.

It is unfortunate that there should be some doubt as to the stone's provenance, for it remains the original source for the belief that the family had come from Kent. One could have wished that the date for such a belief had been voiced about a century earlier, and so nearer the original migration date, than appears to be the case.

6. LONDON

CHARLES COCKS OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE

In the days when young men were sent to one of the Inns of Court more often to learn the ways of a gentleman than to indulge in serious study of the law, it is a little surprising to find that Charles was not admitted to the Middle Temple until he was 32. On the 27 May 1603 the registers record his entry as '4th son of Thomas Cockes of Buysshoppes Cleve, Gloucestershire, Esquire, deceased', and that he paid an entry fine of £3.6.8.³⁰

There is nothing to show what he had been doing before this. His father had left him, jointly with Christopher and John, the rectory and parsonage of Bromsgrove and King's Norton, and very soon afterwards he and Peter had been made co-trustees of the Dumbleton Estate for their sister Dorothy's benefit. Once embarked on his legal career, however, his progress was rapid and lucrative. In 1609 he was appointed Exigenter of the Court of Common Bench, enjoying the use of 'a small upper chamber on the north of the Churchyard adjoining William Davies' house', and two years later he was called to the Bar and prospered still further.

The name of Charles Cocks appears amongst the records of the East India Company in 1618, and while it cannot be proved that it was that of the barrister, it is quite likely to be so when men of varying professions 'adventured' certain sums on trading expeditions in the hope of seeing a quick and substantial profit.

In 1626 John Cocks, son of his brother Richard, was admitted to the Middle Temple and was bound with his uncle Charles. Twelve years later another nephew John, son of John of Harkstead, was similarly bound with his two relatives, and in 1644 we find Charles asking the Court of the East India Company for the £600 due on his late brother John Cocks' adventure.³¹ It appears that he was now a Master in Chancery and must have been acquiring property at frequent intervals, though it was under his sister Dorothy's will that he became the possessor of the manor of Dumbleton. How much he was employed by his relatives in the various Chancery suits in which from time to time they became involved is not clear, but as he was himself quite often a party to them it may not have been as often as they would have wished.

Perhaps it was to commemorate almost half a century in the Middle Temple that he made a gift of some houses in London (possibly in Mayden Lane) for paying £40 per annum for the Temple's charitable uses, the Masters of the Bench in June 1652 being 'desired to meet in the garden on Monday night' to seal the deed. He also gave £100 for buying books for their library, and stipulated that if the library ceased the sum was to be paid to the overseers of Dumbleton 'to bind out apprentices and set poor children to work.'

He died unmarried on 16 August 1654, aged 83, said to be possessed of lands worth £1,500 per annum and a personal estate of no less than £20,000, though as these figures were put forward by an aggrieved relative they may possibly have been an exaggeration. Nevertheless it is clear from his Will ³² that he was a very rich man. He left his lease of the Rose Tavern and property near Chancery Lane to two nephews, and lands in Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire and Berkshire to other nephews. Dumbleton manor went to Richard, second son of Richard of Castleditch, as did his St. Pancras and Dulwich property, while land which he had bought at Woodmancote went to his nephew Lt.Col. Charles Cocks for life, a disposition which was later to cause some difficulty in the family. He also left various legacies and annuities totalling not far short of £1,000.

He was buried at Dumbleton where there remains a relief portrait of him on the chancel wall. It may not of course be a genuine likeness, but it shows a man in young middle-age with a rather sharp-featured, shrewd face - a face which one can have no difficulty in believing was that of a successful man of law. Next year Henry Cocks, a son of Richard of Castleditch, was admitted to his late uncle's part of a ground floor Chamber in Essex Court 'in commemoration of his uncle's merits'.

CHRISTOPHER COCKS AND RUSSIA

Christopher remains a shadowy figure except for one brief but interesting episode in his life. He is said to have been bred to the law,³³ but he does not appear to have taken a very active part in it, and seems to have been something more akin to an overseas trade agent. He also enjoyed the position at one time of Esquire of the Body to James I,³⁴ and it was perhaps this which caused him to be chosen by the King as an emissary to the Tsar of Russia.

By the end of the 16th century, English trade with Russia had been seriously diminished by the activities of the Dutch, and in 1622, the year before Christopher was sent out, was said to be 'almost wholly deserted and left off' and required the special favour and protection of the State. The attempts made to

conclude a treaty of alliance were, on the English side, rather half-hearted, and it was thought that we were really more interested in the possibilities of trade with the East than such an alliance might lead to, rather than with Russian trade and friendship as such. At all events the Dutch retained their commercial superiority for many years.

It was in these circumstances that Christopher set sail for Archangel in about June of 1623 accompanied by his nephew Richard. His mission has been stigmatised as incompetent,³⁵ and perhaps he did not quite display the necessary degree of diplomacy at times. Yet it is difficult to acquit the Government of all blame; not only were they halfhearted about wishing to expand trade, but they refused to learn from previous experience as to how the Tsar should properly be addressed - a small point though one which made for quite unnecessary friction. The Tsar had an excessively long and complicated title, any contraction of which was strongly resented. This had been a source of trouble for many years, the English sovereigns being accustomed to contracting theirs and refusing to make allowances for the petty idiosyncracies of foreigners. When Christopher arrived in Moscow armed with the Treaty of Alliance and also, it seems, acting as Agent for the Muscovy Company though he was not a brother of it - he at once ran into difficulties.

To begin with there was some confusion about the purpose of his mission, the Tsar supposing that he had come on behalf of the 'League of Amity' about which a messenger had been sent to King James, and Christopher's treaty 'for the better increas of trade & commerce between both our Kingdomes' was not quite what he had expected. The preamble continued '& because our Agent Fabian Smith haveinge continued many years in your Maj. Kingdomes with singular grace & favour from your majesty which we hartily acknowledge is now desirous to return to his country ... we have thought it very convenient & necessary for the better ordering and supporting our subjects wch. shall remain within yor Maiesties Kingdoms to have some other person of quallities & discretion to reside there.' Christopher Cocks was therefore being sent over 'to remaine within yor Maiesties dominions as our Agent'. The Tsar was also annoyed to find he was not a 'chief merchant' and at once - entirely predictably - found fault with the contraction of his own title in the document.

Christopher pointed out that the error did not proceed from in any 'disposicion in his Majestie to offer his Imperial Majestie the least distast', but added, somewhat tactlessly, that the title Defender of the Faith had been omitted in the Tsar's letter to the King 'which is a title of more honour than a Kingdom'. To this the Tsar loftily replied that 'they did never use to write it, nor doe acknowledg any but God.'

After much fruitless correspondence the Tsar requested Christopher to return to England with his answer to the King, while making it clear that if King James thought it would serve a useful purpose, he, the Tsar, would raise no objection to Christopher's coming back to Russia. Nothing final seems to have been concluded, and he never went back.³⁶ After this brief incursion into the world of diplomacy he remained in England. He was living in 1629 when he was described in his brother John's Will as 'gentleman, of London', after which he fades into complete obscurity.

THE MERCHANTS: RICHARD, HENRY AND JAMES COCKS

As the third son of Thomas Cocks, Richard could not expect to succeed to any of his father's estates, and so, like many another, went up to London to seek his fortune in trade and became apprenticed to one of the 'great' Companies of the City, that of the Grocers. As happened so often in that era of expanding commerce and economy, he prospered and became a wealthy merchant purchasing property in London, with a house in Mayden Lane where he probably lived when in town.

In September 1599, just before the East India Company received its charter of incorporation, a preliminary meeting was held at Founders' Hall attended by 101 principal merchants who subscribed the sum of £30,000. Richard Cocks, Grocer, is amongst 'the names of such persons as have written with their own hands to venture in the pretended voyage to the East Indies', the sum he adventured' being £200.³⁷ Richard thus was present at the very beginning of an enterprise which was much later to have the undreamed-of result of bringing India into the fold of the British Empire.

Later, as an Alderman of London, he was nominated to serve as Sheriff, but refused the post on the grounds that he was not worth £5,000. The reply was that he had made over his wealth to his children, and he had to pay a stiff fine of £400 before being discharged from that expensive, onerous and unpopular office.³⁸ Meanwhile, in about 1599 or 1600 he had bought the large estate of Castleditch at Eastnor near the Herefordshire town of Ledbury, and here he was destined to found what in the fullness of time became the senior branch of the family and which has remained there ever since. This development will, however, be described at a later point.

The life of the next brother to be mentioned, Henry, was a short one. Influenced no doubt by first-hand knowledge of the trade from his boyhood days at Bishop's Cleeve, he became a clothworker in the London parish of St. Michael

Paternoster, later going out to Pisa in Italy as a wool-factor. There in October 1597 at the age of 27 he was suddenly taken ill and died.³⁹ His Will acknowledged that he had received from his father Thomas 'great sums', and as he did not know his own present estate he asked that it should go back to his father 'who would show himself as loving to the rest of his children as he had been towards him', adding that he would particularly have wished to give something to his sister Anne's children. He was unmarried.

One hears so often of the merchants of Elizabethan and Jacobean times who rose on the flood tide of opportunity to a degree of fortune - Richard Cocks must be counted amongst their number - that it is almost a relief to turn to James who was representative of a type probably rather more common than is generally imagined. For James, sad to relate, was an unsuccessful merchant. Unlucky perhaps, but certainly unbusinesslike.

He was to begin with a member of the Muscovy Company, and his first trading venture with Russia ended in disaster. He employed as agent one Giles Hobbes whom he sent with various goods across to Archangel. For some reason not only were his goods seized there but Hobbes was thrown into prison, and James was obliged to enter into a bond not to trade with Russia in the future on the grounds that he had infringed the Company's Charter in some way. He protests that he was greatly wronged over this.

Next we hear of him adventuring sums on enterprises in the East India Company, once again with Hobbes as his agent. Hobbes seems in fact also to have been employed, with no fixed salary, as a messenger between the Company in London and their agent established to promote trade with Persia at Ispahan in 1617. After various incidents he wrote a plaintive letter from Ispahan to the Company in December 1620 'desiring your Honours will please to nominate me a certaine yeerly stipend'. Next year he died, whereupon James petitioned the Company not only for Hobbes' salary but also for £200 worth of pearls and jewels which he had taken with him. Whatever his grounds were for making such a claim he received no satisfaction whatever as a result.⁴⁰

The minute-book of the Company has many entries showing that he was continually asking for money due, the reply always being that he must first make up his account. This he was unable or unwilling to do, and his business became more and more muddled.

In 1642 he was in the Fleet prison for debt, petitioning the House of Lords for relief against Thomas Seaman and others upon whose suit concerning a bond he submits he was being unjustly detained.⁴¹ Money was advanced,

probably by his brother Charles, resulting in his release, but in 1652 he was back again ⁴² having in the meanwhile lost a claim to the manor of Harkstead made against his relatives. It would be unfair to assume that nothing had gone well for him in the interval simply because there is no record surviving to show it, yet the entries in the East India Company's Court minute-book make it evident that any success must have been modest and short-lived. He was something of a headache to that august body, and when his life ended in 1654 - still incidentally without his having prepared his account - there is one last, heartfelt entry that he died with his affairs 'much intangled'.

He lived in Broad Street, London, and had a son, also called James, who was under age in 1654 ⁴³ Nothing is known of his wife.

The younger James was a lawyer living in Gray's Inn. In the ensuing half-dozen years he brought several suits ⁴⁴ to try to recover what he believed was due to him from his father's confused estate, but after 1660 he cannot be traced and it is not known if he had any descendants.

7. HARKSTEAD, SUFFOLK

JOHN COCKS

The tenth and youngest son of Thomas of Bishop's Cleeve, John, also became a London merchant, and unlike James his affairs must have profited reasonably. When still a young man he acquired property in Suffolk, and at the heralds' visitation of Suffolk in 1612 the Cocks' arms appear as belonging to him.

At about this time he married Dorothea, the daughter of Beaumont Conyngsby of Harkstead, and it was in that village between the estuaries of the Orwell and Stour that he had his own estate. Probably he was now living at Harkstead Hall - certainly he did later, though in 1616 he and his wife bought another property there called Lucasses. In this deed he is described as 'John Cox of London, gent.', and in 1621 he was acquiring further land at Harkstead and in nearby Chelmondiston and Erwarton.⁴⁵

He and Dorothea had at least four children, three sons John, Charles and James, and a daughter Dorothy who was born in about 1615. She married firstly Adam Mainwaring of Exton in Rutland, and then, after his death, her first cousin Charles, the only son of Peter Cocks the rector of Bishop's Cleeve. By him she had several children as will be recorded in the chapter dealing with the Woodmancote branch.

The elder John died in 1631 at the comparatively early age of 47, before three, and possibly any, of his children had come of age.⁴⁶ The eldest, John, who is only mentioned once in his Will in connection with being left certain goods including a 'wrought carpet', had probably already been provided for by having an estate at Norton, a few miles east of Bury St. Edmunds, settled upon him. The other three children were left their father's part of the title in the parsonages of Bromsgrove, King's Norton and Eckington in Worcestershire, and also, equally divided, his adventures and their proceeds 'in the old East India Company's joint stock or any other adventures in the late Persian Voyages' together with the proceeds of his stock and goods in Harkstead. To Dorothy went 'my piece of gold called a portegue, also my ring with the pointed diamond, my green embroidered scarf, my wife's cloak of white damask and skirt both laced with

silver, a fair crimson taffetie' and other personal effects. John inherited the Harkstead estate.

NORTON

It appears that after their father's death the family made Norton their residence and let the Harkstead land out to various yeomen farmers. John, who remained unmarried, was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1638, being bound with his uncle Charles, and within a dozen years was himself a barrister-at-law.⁴⁷ He, too died young in 1655, his heir being his brother Charles.⁴⁸ From the fact that he was buried at Bishop's Cleeve it may be surmised that he died when visiting his cousins.

Charles then leased Harkstead Hall to Leicester, Viscount Hereford, and in January 1660 he married Susan, a daughter and co-heir of Borodell Milleson who also lived in Norton. Their son, born next year, was named Leicester or Lester no doubt as a compliment to Viscount Hereford who may have been his godfather. He was an only child and his mother died when he was less than three. After this the Norton branch soon withered, with Charles dying in 1679 and Lester himself in 1681 when he was not yet twenty.⁴⁹

There remains yet the youngest of the three brothers, James, and little enough is known of him. In 1667 he was made a trustee⁵⁰ of lands at Woodmancote settled on children of his sister Dorothy (who had died in 1664) and her husband Charles Cocks, and was then referred to as James Cocks of Hertford, gentleman. He does not appear to have married, and either he or Lester Cocks left the Harkstead estates to their Woodmancote cousins. The Norton property presumably was disposed of elsewhere.

8. CROWLE AND WORCESTER

THOMAS COCKS THE YOUNGER

It will be recalled how the Thomas who was employed by the Bishop of Worcester had lived in Crowle until about 1565 when he had moved to Bishop's Cleeve. In 1589 he took a lease of the manor of Crowle and the lands belonging to it from the Dean and Chapter of Worcester - probably for the benefit of his eldest surviving son Thomas, as he himself continued to live at Cleeve.

The younger Thomas can have spent little of his time there at first. He was then in his mid-twenties and a soldier, fighting in the Irish and Continental wars, and is unlikely to have settled down until about 1600 when he married Barbara Cotton of Warblington in Hampshire. At much the same time his father died and left him a considerable estate.

This included the lease of the manor of Crowle and its rentals, such estate as he had in certain woods in Crowle called Frithe, and 'divers manors, parsonages, lands (etc.) in co. Worcs., now or late parcel of the possessions of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster', together with all the utensils, implements of household, corn, cattle and so forth as he should have in the town and parish of Crowle at his death. Thenceforward the younger Thomas was firmly established as a country gentleman.

His first son John, the only one with whom this account will be much concerned, was born in 1602. There were later three others, George, Thomas and Christopher, (of whom the first two evidently died young), and four daughters, Mary, Frances, Catherine and Anne. Of these Mary died in 1630 aged 22.⁵¹

The Crowle Cocks' still clung to the ancient Catholic faith of their forefathers, a stubbornness which was to bring persecution in an age of religious intolerance. The year 1634 saw Thomas (then over 70) and his wife Barbara 'presented' for recusancy by a grand jury at Worcester, and with them were their three daughters, an unidentified Robert Cocks and a female servant.⁵² This would have saddled them with certain disabilities including restriction of movement.

When he died in May 1638, he left John all his lands and leases, and made a customary provision of an annuity of £100 to his widow to be paid out of his lands in Northey and Crowle.⁵³ Although at this date his son Christopher was living, nothing more is known of him.

SIR JOHN COCKS OF WORCESTER

In about 1630 John married as his first wife Anne Russell, the daughter of Sir Thomas Russell of Strensham, who however died in 1632. The memorial to John at Worcester says that she had no children, but there is some reason for believing that in fact there were two daughters. A few years later John married Joyce Wilsson of Newman Hall in Essex, and by her he had four sons and a daughter. Once again the sons did not for the most part survive long, only Charles being alive when his father died.

A time of great trouble was now ahead. John, a Catholic like his father, suffered accordingly, and he and Joyce were 'presented' for recusancy in 1642 when they were still living at Crowle.⁵⁴ Worse was to follow when he staunchly embraced the Royalist cause in the Civil War, defending the city of Worcester for the King. This and his recusancy cost him his estates for many years,⁵⁵ and from then on he seems to have lived in Worcester - indeed, he does not appear to have returned to Crowle even when his property was eventually restored to him.

However, there was some compensation for his suffering when, after the Restoration, he was made a Knight by Charles II. When Charles of the Middle Temple died, he made a provision in his Will for the payment of £100 apiece to his brother Thomas' daughters if still living, with the proviso that if John Cocks of Crowle disputed the Will the legacies to him and his sisters would be void. The legacy to John was a small annuity, and one might conclude that John was a difficult man and that his uncle Charles had reason to think that he might dispute the Will unless some deterrent clause was inserted. Evidently he was not deterred, for in 1657 Frances, one of his three surviving sisters, brought a suit in Chancery against him and the executors of Charles' Will alleging that he had 'confederated' with the executors to dispute the Will, thus depriving her of the £100, which she now claimed.⁵⁶

In this she probably succeeded, for her Will speaks of £100 due to her from Richard Cocks as executor of Charles' Will - moreover she gives £300 to her brother John, as though the quarrel had been resolved satisfactorily. She died at Worcester in 1660 leaving, amongst other sums, £4 to 'Mistress Wythey for her care of me in my sickness'.⁵⁷

John died fifteen years later at the age of 72. His Will does not mention any property at all in Crowle so that it is possible the lease had been surrendered before then. The only specific mention of land concerns four farms which he owned in the parish of Ashchurch near Northey in Gloucestershire, two of which were left to his wife for life, and the others sold for the benefit of his surviving son Charles and daughter Catherine.⁵⁸

He is described on his memorial as 'a Man of Exemplar Piety towards God; and Inviolable Fidelity to his Sovereign in whose cause he Fought', virtues which brought little but trouble to this scholarly papist. A century ago he was still believed to haunt Cocks Lane at Crowle Hill.⁵⁹

Though Charles' death has not been recorded it must have happened soon afterwards, for it is known that the line failed and the properties passed into others' hands. Of all the ten sons of Thomas of Cleeve, only Peter's and Richard's families were still surviving in 1680 so far as is known, and it is to the former that we now turn.

COPYWRITE

9. WOODMANCOTE AND CLEEVE

CHARLES COCKS

Peter Cocks, the rector of Bishop's Cleeve, had been married to Katherine Bridges for only just over five years before his death occurred in 1612 at the age of forty-five. In that brief time however they had produced four children of whom the eldest, Mary, died in infancy. The three survivors were Charles who was born in August 1609 and two daughters, Elizabeth and Dorothy born in 1610 and 1611 respectively.⁶⁰ Elizabeth married Thomas Williams of Monmouth when she was only sixteen-and-a-half but Dorothy remained single. She was certainly still living as late as 1662 though nothing is known of her.⁶¹

Charles was therefore only two years and eight months old when he lost his father, a loss that left his mother in a difficult position. The living of Bishop's Cleeve was an enviably ample one and Peter had lived in the Parsonage Manor as it was then called in a style that had included various female staff and no less than sixteen menservants⁶² at work both within the house and outside as grooms, coachmen and so forth. Katherine solved the problem as to how to bring up her fatherless children sensibly and neatly enough by a year later marrying Peter's successor at the rectory, Timothy Gate.

Virtually nothing has been discovered of Charles's earlier years with his mother and stepfather, but he may very well be the Charles Cox who matriculated from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, with a BA in February 1629.⁶³ Possibly he then spent a few terms at one of the Inns of Court in London as was quite a common practice for young men in those times in order that they should learn the ways of a gentleman and acquire a smattering of legal knowledge. This however is all surmise and in fact there is a complete gap in our knowledge of what he was doing during the 1630s.

In the next few years political events in the country and arguments between King and Parliament came to a head culminating in the outbreak of the Civil War. Charles soon joined the army on the Royalist side and may have fought at Edgehill. He certainly must have been with the King during the latter's unsuccessful attempt to enter London in the autumn of 1642, after which he marched via Reading to Oxford where the King took up his winter quarters.

It was from there that he scribbled a letter home sending the latest news on the military front. Dated the 29th of November it reads:

I wrote to you from Reddinge and from there we are marched to Oxford and doe hope shortly to see Gloucestershire: the army is not any thinge more than what I gave you intelligence of in my last, only of the coming of the Denmark Ambassador who brings offers both of men and mony, with an earnest of the last, £40,000 deepe: Wee were lately before Mallborough, with my Lord Dyggbyes regiment & some 40th Dragoones. Sir Nevill Poole held us in treaty till almost night and then my Lord Dyggby drew on his Dragoones toward the towne, who presently discharged som tenn wall musketts upon the Draggs, and caused then to retreat. The whole regiment stood whilst the towne discharged 50 musket within shott, where we had two horses shott, and on corporall in my Ld Chandos troop: his Ldshp is raysinge a regiment & does entreate all his ffrinds to send him in horse with all expedition. I am cornett of his Ldshp's own troope. I doe therefore desire you to send those horses you promised to me for his Ldshp's service ... I am in greate hast as you may guesse by my writing ... Henry Norwood has a commission to rayse a company of Dragoones in Gloc. and Worcestershires.

He ends (with the ink running out) by sending his compliments to all at Cleeve.⁶⁴ His mother had died in 1641 but Lord Chandos in whose troop he was serving was her close relative, so a family connection remained.

It is very doubtful if in fact he was soon to see 'Gloucestershire', for about a week after he wrote Lord Digby obtained approval for another assault on the important Wiltshire market town of Marlborough. Digby surprised his opponents by carrying out an early morning attack with a party of Dragoons who suddenly presented the defending Roundheads with 'a warm breakfast' as it was described. The venture was a complete success and some plundering subsequently took place including that of 'two hundred pounds worth of cheese, every pennyworth', or so the inhabitants indignantly complained. Of rather more importance, all the considerable quantity of wool and cloth in the town destined for the London merchants was diverted from the Parliamentarians to the Royalists who could then swell their coffers with the proceeds.⁶⁵

Unfortunately the rest of Charles's service to his King is unrecorded though he must have prospered as by the end of the hostilities he had been promoted Lieutenant Colonel. He was of course on the losing side. The next thing we know is that in about 1651 when aged forty-one he married his first cousin Dorothy Mainwaring,, the widowed daughter of his merchant uncle John Cocks who had owned the Harkstead estate in distant Suffolk. He was then it seems living temporarily with his uncle Charles in what was the Manor House in Dumbleton parish, now known as the Old Rectory. There is a deed dated 1 April 1651 in which Charles Cocks 'the younger' of Dumbleton is assigned land in Bishop's Cleeve. The Colonel is the only Charles who could be so referred to at this date though another deed a few months later indicates that the same land was sold to the barrister Charles as was indeed the case.⁶⁶ After his marriage he returned to Cleeve to live in one of the properties there and where his children were baptised.

Dorothy, before her first husband Adam Mainwaring's death in the 1640s had had a son Baptist who one presumes also came to Cleeve with his mother. He is mentioned in the Will of Charles Cocks of Dumbleton in 1654 but there is no further reference to him thereafter.

Charles the younger faced difficulties in acquiring land in the parish of his birth. As an active Royalist he was declared a 'delinquent' by Cromwell's men and was liable to have any property over £200 in value sequestered. He overcame this problem with the help of his uncle Charles with whom he had been staying. The latter agreed that various properties in the parish, made available by the Colonel's stepfather Timothy Gate who bought the Manor of Cleeve and a good deal of land in 1624,⁶⁷ should be purchased in his name but with money from his nephew who would pay him £40 p.a. rent 'to colour his possession'. Though placing his estates beyond the reach of sequestration he was storing up trouble for later.

Charles and Dorothy's first child was Mary, still living in 1667 but who had died unmarried by 1679. She was followed by two more daughters, Dorothy and Katherine. Dorothy married one Samuel or Sam Mawhood of London which was considered a poor match by her family. Her brother Thomas was later to leave £300 in his Will to soften what her relatives feared would be an impoverished old age, but as it turned out his generosity was somewhat misplaced as Sam soon landed an army contract and never looked back. When the Mawhood's only daughter was married it was said she had a marriage portion of no less than £10,000. As the Cocks' were themselves never very rich their descendants were still talking about it almost a century later when they recollected that Sam had been a tailor. But deeds of 1689 describe him as 'citizen

and fishmonger'. Whatever his profession he undoubtedly became very rich.⁶⁸ Katherine did not marry, dying in about 1680.

The three daughters were followed by three sons of whom the first two, Charles born in 1655 and John in 1656, died in infancy. Only the third, Thomas born in about 1658, survived boyhood. He obtained a BA from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1680 and soon afterwards married.⁶⁹

By 1657 political matters had settled down to the point where Charles felt it safe to dispense with subterfuge in acquiring property, and to buy in his own name. His choice fell upon a fine house in Woodmancote, a hamlet then in Cleeve parish, known as the Copyhold House, later as Manor Hall Farm and now as Woodmancote Manor. It had been owned almost continuously since at least 1528 by members of the Shewell family from Lypiatt in Gloucestershire and changed hands for £600.⁷⁰



Manor Hall, Woodmancote

The house is basically of the period with considerable alterations made in medieval 17th Century carried out by Charles himself as he did not move in for some eighteen months after purchasing it. The main body is L-shaped linked to an older service range and timber-framed building. Faced in limestone, almost certainly quarried up on Cleeve Hill, it is of two main storeys with an attic and has steeply sloping gables topped by ball finials. Some of the stone mullioned windows have round heads of Tudor date while one appears to be medieval. Inside there is a striking panelled parlour still with the Cocks shield above the fireplace, while on the first floor in what evidently had been the solar some most interesting and rare wall painting was discovered in 1994. Now in the process of being uncovered it dates from the time of Charles's occupation.⁷¹

It may have been in this house that Thomas was born, but all too soon in 1664 his wife Dorothy died leaving four small children. A year later Charles then aged fifty-five remarried. His new wife was called Joan but whose daughter she was seems not to have been recorded. Over the next seven years a further three sons were born of whom the first, also called Charles (an unlucky name it seems), died when nearly four. The other two, John born in 1668 and Peter in 1672, grew up, married and had families of their own as will be related.

The old Cavalier himself passed away in 1679 a little short of his seventieth birthday. His son Thomas was about twenty-one but the other two sons, Thomas's half-brothers, were still small children. In his Will, drawn up only just before he died and when he was too ill to sign his name, he left Joan his 'Messuage, Tenement or Dwelling House in Bpps Cleeve knowne by the name of the Coppyhold House and all singular barns stables cowhouses and all other buildings whatsoever thereunto belonging, and the ground neare adjoining one called Plotts and the other the Moors, three acres of arrable land etc in the Common fields...' (The parish was not enclosed until 1847.) After her decease it was to go to his son John and his heirs. As no other property is named and we know that John lived in the house now known as Woodmancote Manor, it is this Will that seems to prove that in Charles's day it was called the Coppyhold House.

He left his eldest son Thomas 'twenty shillings to buy him a Bible' (and also £60), a curious bequest that can perhaps be explained if one assumes that living as he then was in the Precincts of Worcester Cathedral Thomas was studying for the priesthood and was not interested in the Woodmancote property. Joan was left 'my twoe best cowes and my great table board and frame in the parlour, my twoe best beds and all that belongs to them, my great kettle and great brasse pan and six best dishes of pewter'. His son Peter was left the rest of the goods, cattle, 'household stuffe and implements of household and husbandry, corn growing and in the barn and all other goods...' Rather oddly Peter was also appointed executor of the Will. As he was then only six he could not of course so act; probate was granted in the Gloucester Consistory Court on March 1680 to his mother Joan on his behalf.

Thomas married in 1681 and in the same year inherited the Harkstead estate in Suffolk from his cousin Leicester Cocks, the last survivor of that branch, on the latter's death in May. He was not to enjoy it for long as unfortunately Thomas himself died as a young man in 1682, leaving everything to his wife.⁷² Some epidemic, probably an outbreak of the plague, evidently was raging, for a few days later his widow Mary followed him. She left her husband's property in Cleeve as well as the manor of Harkstead jointly to John and Peter

who, as they were still under-age, were living in Woodmancote with their widowed mother.

JOHN COCKS AND HIS FAMILY

There is evidence to suggest that John let his younger brother Peter remain in the Copyhold House for a while after he came of age. Peter married in 1696, two years before his brother, and it seems that until 1698 John was actually living in another Woodmancote house though it belonged to Peter who had inherited it in the division of property under his half-brother's wife's Will. In that year, with John's impending marriage, Peter decided to transfer it to his brother as he himself was moving out of the Copyhold House to live in another property down in Bishop's Cleeve itself ⁷³. John then moved into the main Woodmancote house. Their widowed mother Joan died in September of the same year when she was described as 'of Cleeve' and therefore no longer up at Woodmancote as the distinction between the two places was invariably made in the registers.

But this is to anticipate a little, for a few years earlier trouble had arisen over the land that had been bought in Cleeve in the 1650s by Charles in the name of his lawyer uncle of Dumbleton. The latter of course had been a willing participant in the sequestration-avoidance scheme, indeed he probably suggested it himself as all the Cocks' were Royalists, but his death in 1654 occurred at a time when an element of deviousness was still thought to be a prudent precaution. In his Will therefore he was obliged to leave these properties to his nephew for life, with the reversion to Sir Richard Cocks the first baronet of Dumbleton (another nephew of his) and to John, Richard's brother. These two certainly knew about the subterfuge and after the Restoration agreed to release to the Colonel all their title and interest in the estates which were described as consisting of ten houses with their gardens and orchards, 200 acres of lands, 40 acres of meadow and 100 acres of pasture. It was therefore a substantial holding.

It is not entirely clear how things had then gone wrong but apparently these releases were subsequently overlooked. Sir Richard had died leaving his grandson, also Sir Richard, as his heir, while John too had died leaving no issue. In 1685 the second Sir Richard, presumably unaware of the arrangements, had devised the same lands to his own brother Charles, the rector of Dumbleton, who was now claiming them. This was of course challenged. A suit was then entered under the heading of Charles Cocks v. Joan Cocks, widow, her elder son John still being under twenty-one. This legal case evidently was subsequently abandoned and arbitration agreed upon instead which began in 1689. By then

John was of age so that proceedings were now between Sir Richard Cocks and John Cocks.⁷⁴

In the arbitration held to try to resolve what was a family dispute a number of people came forward with evidence in support of the Colonel's children. Thomas Cocks from over at Castleditch deposed that he 'often heard Lieften't Collonell Charles Cocks of Woodmancote say that he bought the lands in Question in Bpps Cleeve with his own money of his father in Law Timothy Gate Clerke although in the name of his uncle Charles Cocks of Dumbelton Esqr. for these reasons, that he the saide Collonell Cocks was a Lieften't Collonell in King Charles the first his Army & at the time of purchase & for many yeares after was lyable to sequestracon'. Thomas Holland of Gotherington confirmed these facts, adding that they were common knowledge in the neighbourhood. Richard Webb of Cleeve further revealed that Timothy Gate had originally asked William Little of Cleeve and Richard Hobbs of Woodmancote to set out the land for the Colonel because he, Timothy, had owed his stepson a sum of money for a considerable time and had been unable to pay it back.

The result of the hearing is not given but later evidence seems to indicate that much, if not all, of the land remained with the Bishop's Cleeve Cocks'. Certainly the Revd. Charles Cocks's Will dated 1717 makes no mention of his owning any land in the parish at that date.

In 1695 in order to raise £160 with interest John mortgaged his property described as 'all that Capitall Messuage or Farme place in Woodmancott wherein the said John Cocks now dwelleth', including four meadows adjoining known as Lower, Middle and Upper White Breach and The Moor.⁷⁵ From its description it must have been the Copyhold House. Why it had become necessary to raise this sum can only be guessed at but one is left with the feeling that John and his family were never very well-off. One hopes that the legal arguments over his father's land had not too much drained his resources.

John married Mary Freeman of Greet (near Winchcomb) at St. Nicholas Church, Gloucester, on 7 June 1698 and had a large family of three sons and six daughters. Their eldest child Joan was born in 1699 but never married, nor did their third daughter Frances. Of the others, Mary born in 1700 took as her husband Walter Lawrence of Sevenhampton when she was twenty-four. A well-to-do farmer his family ultimately was to inherit the Cocks lands in Bishop's Cleeve. The next daughter Dorothy was born in 1707 and married in 1731 Thomas Hayward, described as yeoman of Bourton-on-the-Hill. The last two, Margery and Katherine, born in 1709 and 1714, had as their husbands Thomas

Mason of Tewkesbury and John Hyett of Cleeve respectively. The latter's only son Thomas was to become curate there.

John and Mary named their eldest son Charles. It is sad to record that yet again an attempt to perpetuate the name in this branch of the family was doomed to failure as Charles died when less than a year old. Their next son, called John after his father, was born in 1705 but survived only until his twentieth year. It is probably this John whose name can still be seen carved into a wall of the porch schoolroom in the church. A more certain memorial to him is the stone inscribed in Latin in the floor of the chancel of Cleeve church describing him 'lately Commoner of Pembroke College Oxford'. Only their youngest son James, born in 1711, was left and he was destined never to marry.

There is a complete lack of personal papers surviving from this time, so that unfortunately nothing exists to flesh out the bare bones of dry facts found in Wills and deeds.

John drew up his Will, at least in draft, in 1724 just before his eldest surviving son John died, so one cannot rule out the possibility that it was subsequently redrafted as John senior lived another five years. The only copy we have ⁷⁶ shows that his wife Mary was left all his household goods and furniture, also 'the use of any stock of cattle & implements of husbandry' during her widowhood, after which it was all to go to John. His other son James and his five as yet unmarried daughters (Mary, the sixth, had just married Walter Lawrence) were each to receive £200 with five percent p.a. interest when they were 30. His brother-in-law Thomas Freeman and his relative William Freeman were appointed trustees with power to hold the advowson of the rectory of Harkstead for the benefit of his son John and his heirs. They were further empowered to lease or sell any of the rest of his real and personal estate in the counties of Gloucester and Suffolk in order to raise sufficient funds to pay the above legacies, the remainder to be held in trust for John.

Significantly, nothing was left to, nor indeed was any mention made of, his brother Peter's children. One senses that there was some kind of a rift between the two families, possibly due to Peter believing that he had not received his fair share of his father's properties in Cleeve. Peter, who died before his elder brother, had rather ostentatiously left him one shilling in his own Will.

The Harkstead estate was in fact sold in 1739 to Andrew Wither, a lawyer of Gray's Inn, London. Mary probably continued to live at the Copyhold House until her death in 1746 as at that date she was described in the register as 'of Woodmancote'.

By the later 1740s the bachelor James and his two unmarried sisters were living in the house. Nothing has come down to us as how they lived their lives. We know that James was a churchwarden in 1740 as his name is on a church bell hung in that year.⁷⁷ In James's Will drawn up in 1756, though he did not die until 1782 when he was seventy-one, he left his property in the first instance to the use of his nephew Thomas Hyett, the curate of Cleeve and son of his sister Katherine, thence for life to Thomas's sister Mary. Only if all the lines of James's married sisters failed would the property go to his own spinster sisters. Joan in fact died in 1776 before her brother but Frances survived him dying aged eighty-six. As they too are described in the registers as 'of Woodmancote' one assumes they continued living together with their brother, or were they in some other house in Woodmancote?

After Thomas Hyett's death in 1792 the Copyhold House went first to Mary and then from 1815 to the Lawrence family. The Hyetts and the Lawrences however let the premises, never living there themselves.

The theory that there was some sort of ill-feeling between John and Peter receives further confirmation from James's Will. Whereas John had ignored his nephews and nieces, James left them all one shilling. None of his legacies was large but one shilling was a derisory sum and little doubt was meant to be seen as such.

PETER COCKS AND HIS DESCENDANTS

The youngest son of Col.Charles Cocks was Peter who was only six years old at his father's death in 1679. As has already been told, he remained at the Copyhold House until his brother John's marriage, two years after his own marriage in 1696 to Ann Webb, the daughter of a local family, at which time he moved to a house down in Bishop's Cleeve itself. Here his nine children, four boys and five girls, were born. Of the daughters the two youngest (both apparently called Joan) died as infants, while there is no information about the middle one Ann other than that she was baptised at Cleeve on 4 November 1702. The second daughter Jane, born in 1700, married Charles Badger of Cleeve when she was thirty-two, the eldest, Mary born in 1699, took another local man Thomas Yeend as her husband but died quite young in 1742.

The four sons were Thomas born at the end of 1696, Charles in 1704 (he was baptised on January 1st 1705), Peter in 1707 and Seth in 1714. Their father was a churchwarden in 1700 when his name appears on one of the first bells cast to replace those destroyed when the tower of the church collapsed in

1696, but he died at the comparatively early age of forty-seven when Seth was only four years old. Once again a mother was left to bring up young children on her own.

In his Will, ⁷⁸ wherein he described himself as 'Peter Cocks of Cleeve in the Co. of Gloucester Gentleman', he left £250 to each of his three younger sons to be paid to them six years after his death, his three surviving daughters having £150 in like manner. To his wife he left all his household goods for the duration of her widowhood; to his eldest son Thomas went all his houses and lands in Bishop's Cleeve together with cattle and corn crop as well as his share of the Harkstead estate and manor, with an obligation to pay the above legacies. He was also to keep the other children in food and clothes until they came into their money. Lastly he was appointed executor. The only other legacy was that already referred to, the one shilling to his brother John.

Unfortunately these arrangements were short-lived as Thomas followed his father about eighteen months later. In Thomas's own Will drawn up in November 1720 he passed all his lands and obligations to his next brother Charles, appointing as trustees until Charles came of age his uncle John (whatever he may have thought of him) and Anthony Webb. He also increased the legacies to his own brothers and sisters by £50 each.

The youngest of the brothers, Seth, who was born in 1714, joined the Royal Marines in the early 1740s. (Before 1755 the Marines were considered part of the Army and his name does not appear in the Army list for 1739-40.).⁷⁹ By 1746 he was serving as Lieutenant of Marines in HMS *Dreadnought* on the West Indies station. In a letter to his cousins at Castleditch, Eastnor, ⁸⁰ he wrote that 'our men-of-war on the Leeward Islands Station refitted. During the long wars of the last century many officers died from yellow fever and wounds'. Before the year was out he himself was dead. He was buried at Falmouth in the island of Antigua.

The middle of the three surviving brothers was named Peter after his father. He became an apothecary in Gloucester while apparently retaining some property in Cleeve. (An apothecary in those days was someone who kept a store which could have sold non-perishable commodities such as spices, sweetmeats and preserves, and certainly drugs which were probably prepared and sold on the premises for medicinal purposes.) He and his wife Elizabeth had three children, Jane who married John Bower of Newent and two sons, Seth and Peter. Seth died in his father's lifetime and was buried at Cleeve in December 1764, being described in the register as a Lieutenant in the 4th Regiment. He can only have

just joined as he does not appear in any Army List and the Regiment (the King's Own) has no record of him.⁸¹

Peter (the apothecary) survived until 1778 when he was seventy. In his Will he left everything to his 'dear wife' Elizabeth and her heirs. His other son Peter has no specific mention and that must be of significance. Elizabeth, after her husband's death, seems in her last years to have gone with Peter to live at Newent with her daughter Jane and husband. Her Will dated 1778 describes her as living in the city of Gloucester, but in the Cleeve burial register of 1782 she is recorded as 'of Newent'. She ordered her house in Gloucester to be put into the hands of trustees so that they might raise £26 p.a. from its lease towards Peter's maintenance for life, from all of which it may reasonably be inferred that he was incapacitated in some way and unable to fend for himself. Her choice of trustees is of interest. One, not surprisingly, was John Bower her son-in-law, but the other was Richard Cocks of the Inner Temple, a younger son of John and Mary Cocks of Castleditch. Evidently, In spite of the comparative difficulties of communication in those days, the two branches of the family though by now somewhat distant cousins were still in touch. There is in fact further evidence of this.

In about the year 1790 or just earlier Jane Bower received a letter from Elizabeth Cocks, Richard's older sister who never married but spent much of her time acting as housekeeper and generally mothering her younger bachelor brothers. She wrote from Acton where she was looking after Philip who was the rector there, inquiring if there had ever been an Isaac Cocks in the Bishop's Cleeve branch as his heirs might inherit some money if they could be traced. Jane replied:⁸²

Dear Madam

I should have answered your obliging Lr. sooner but waited for an answer from Cleeve where I have had the Register searched but in vain. There is no such name as Isaac to be found nor did I ever hear of one in the Family... I have often heard my Father mention the Origin of the Family came from Cocks Hall in Kent, that [there] were two Brothers Merchants, one came and settled at Cleeve the Rectory of which was formerly in the Family and likewise the Manor...

I esteem your condescension in acquainting me of this Affair as a Proof that I am not wholly forgot by you... As I have not had the Honor of hearing from you so many years [I] should certainly have wrote to have enquired after your Health had I known your address. I flatter myself it will not be

unpleasing to you when I inform you I and my Family are well. I have two children Boy and Girl both hearty. My brother [Peter] lives with us who with Mr Bower joins with me in most respectful Compliments to you. I am with the highest Sense of Gratitude ardently wishing health and happiness

Dear Madam your much obliged & most obedient humble
Servt.

Jane Bower

In a note with the copy of the letter Jane's father the apothecary is described as 'of the Stamp Office Gloster, but of Cleeve also'. It only remains to say that her brother Peter survived until 1791 when he too was buried at Cleeve, entered in the register as 'of Newent, gentleman', the last of all the Cocks' to be laid to rest there.

Of the three surviving sons of Peter, son of the Cavalier, it only remains to describe the family of the eldest of them, Charles. He lived it seems in the Upper House in Bishop's Cleeve itself and married in about 1728. He and his wife Sarah had three daughters and a son. Nothing is known about their daughters though the middle one Anne, unlike her sisters Mary and Elizabeth, was not apparently still living at the time of her father's death in 1758. The son, also called Charles, described by himself as 'gentleman' but by his father as 'yeoman', had an affair with Ann Potter, the daughter of a local maltster and yeoman James Potter, who apparently lived in Woodmancote near the Manor Farm there.

Charles senior strongly disapproved of this liaison. In his Will he left his wife an annuity of £15 and the Upper House with sufficient household goods for her lifetime. Richard Webb of Cleeve and his own brother Peter Cocks were appointed trustees of all his lands in Bishop's Cleeve or elsewhere and were to raise £200 for each of his daughters Mary and Elizabeth. The lands were mainly to be held in trust for his son Charles with full power for him to make settlement upon any woman that he may hereafter marry with (Except Ann Potter the daughter of James Potter of Bishops Cleeve, Yeoman) for her life with the remainder to his heirs lawfull begotten... Provided that if my said son Charles Cocks shall at any time intermarry with the said Ann Potter that immediately after such marriage the Devise of my said estate to my said trustees with respect to his use and benefit shall thenceforth cease and become utterly void.' Charles was only to receive his personal estate after payment of debts and funeral expenses.

Though not many survive, it was usual to make an inventory of a person's belongings at the time of death. Fortunately that made in Charles's case does still exist enabling us to understand something of what a gentleman's small estate could consist of at that date. As in his will he left the Upper House to his widow one presumes the inventory relates to that house.

His wearing apparel and ready money came to a modest £5, his linen to £ 11. 8s. 6d. Ten rooms are enumerated in which the furniture was valued at £70. 12s. in all. Farming activities were important and accounted for a major part of his estate. There were hogsheads of cyder in the cellar worth a healthy £21. 3s, his horses, harness, waggons, carts, ploughs etc. came to over £70 while a modest number of cows, sheep and lambs together with a solitary sow and piglets were together valued at £34. 5s. The inventory was taken at the end of September 1758 so that the harvest was complete, 200 bushels of pulse (beans) at 3s. a bushel, 240 of wheat at 5s. and 288 of barley at 2s. 6d. coming to another £126. Clover for seed was put at £3 and his hay crop at £23, bringing (with some other items) the total valuation of his whole estate to £377. 6s. 6d⁸³.

Exactly why he disapproved so strongly of Ann Potter we do not know but the outcome of this unfortunate business was predictable. A son, yet another Charles, was born to Charles junior and Ann out of wedlock before they married in 1762 only just before the arrival of a second son Thomas. Their third child Ann, born in 1765, died five years later. Nothing has been discovered about Thomas who, when an adult if not before, left Cleeve altogether. Charles junior, having been disinherited, died not much later in 1768 just before his mother Sarah. Ten months after that his widow Ann remarried, her husband being another local man John Yeend.

In his Will Charles Junior left his 'Silver Watch and Silver Seal with my Coat of Arms engraved to my natural son Charles Cocks born before marriage'. Intriguingly he left in trust for his wife a house and garden next to the churchyard that had been bequeathed to him by one Mary Harris, together with the reversion of an orchard, house, barn and gardens devised to him by Hannah Hobbs. After Ann's death the properties were to be divided equally amongst his children.

It was a sad way for this branch of the family at Cleeve to come to an end, for by the beginning of the nineteenth century there were no Cocks' there after a period of almost 250 years. (A James Cocks buried in 1801 seems not to have been of the same family.)

Some years ago the writer was contacted by someone in Gloucester, with Cocks forming part of the surname, who believed he was descended from

Charles and Ann's son Thomas but was unable to make the connection with any certainty. Further research may one day possibly reveal more, but for the present the story of the Cocks' of Bishop's Cleeve, beginning with the distant Thomas 'anciently of Cocks Hall in Kent' and his wife Elizabeth, has been taken as far as it is possible to go.

PART 3

10. CASTLEDITCH - 17TH CENTURY

HISTORY OF THE MANOR

It has already been mentioned that Richard Cocks, the third son of Thomas of Bishop's Cleeve, purchased the manor of Castleditch in Herefordshire in about the year 1600. Before going on to describe his family a brief account of the history and a description of the property may be of interest.

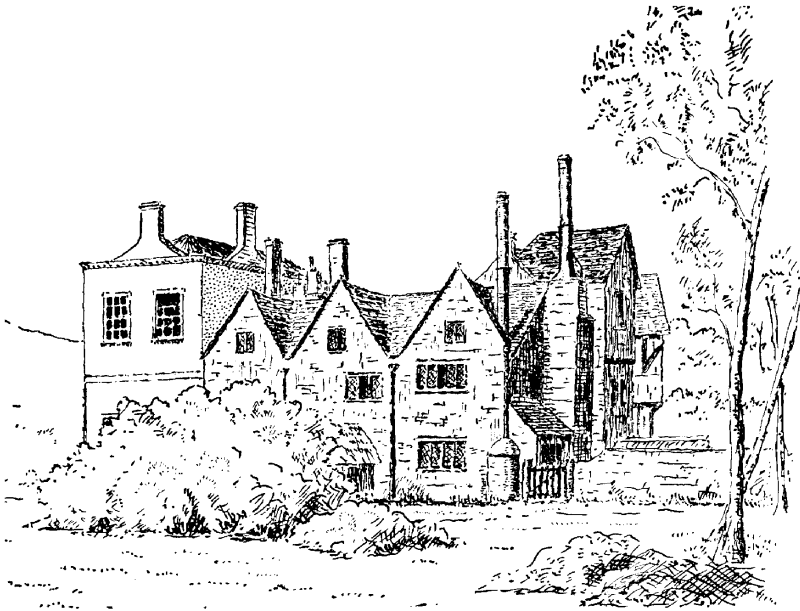
Castleditch was situated in Eastnor parish between the country town of Ledbury to the west and the southern end of the Malvern Hills to the east. The manor of Eastnor was not synonymous with the manor of Castleditch; the former was the property of the Bishops of Hereford in Saxon times and it remained so until comparatively recently. In the early 1500s its mesne lords were the Delaberes who had let it to the Branch family, the manor house being called Bury Court.¹

Mention of Castleditch is made in 1261 when Sir Ivo de Clynton is described as owner.² Just over a century later John Clynton, esquire, was granted a licence to celebrate mass and other services in an oratory in his manor of 'Casteldyche',³ and in 1537 William Clynton died seised of it, together with its gardens, orchards and mill.⁴ His son and heir was Thomas Clynton whose grandson Ivo as a young man sold it to Richard Cocks. Although usually described as a manor it was really a sub-manor of Eastnor which must at an early date have become entirely independent. It may very well be the same as the land assessed at a ½ hide which Domesday Book gives as being held of the manor of 'Etenofir' by a certain knight. The name strongly suggests that there was an earthwork in the immediate vicinity, probably some prehistoric 'camp', though just possibly a motte-and-bailey castle thrown up hastily in Norman times to overawe the local population.

Surviving pictures of Castleditch show it as a gabled, tall-chimneyed, brick and part half-timber house of middling size which looks as though it might have been built some time in the earlier part of the 16th century. It had a moat around it, as did several other houses of importance in the area, formed by a little stream which ran through the wooded grounds. Soon after Richard's

purchase a survey of the whole estate was undertaken,⁵ and from this we learn much about it.

Apart from the manor-house, moat and an outhouse, there were 'stables, barnes and the syder mill with the Courtes aboute them' of $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres in extent, while the garden and a pool contained just over $\frac{1}{2}$ acre. Then there were various other mills and pounds, and a pig close, totalling some 5 acres and being worth £20 per annum, and 80 acres of timber and coppice which with 180 acres of meadow, pasture and 'moor' were valued at £100. The tillage lay in three fields, the Rye, Poul and Followe (Fallow) Fields, each of roughly the same size and totalling 114 acres worth £26. This arrangement shows quite clearly that the old open-field strip system still operated here, though pieces had already been enclosed by consolidation of adjacent strips. Thus in the Rye Field Castleditch owned the Ham Field of 11 acres, a subdivision, but in the same Rye Field the 7 acres in Rudge Way contained about $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres, the first 'acres' in this instance referring to 'furlongs' or groups of strips which were not usually each an acre in areal measurement. The tillage owned, therefore, was scattered about in half dozen or so different parcels in each field. That this system was at work may also be seen from the Eastnor Terrier of Glebe land made about 25 years earlier.



Castleditch, c.1815

The whole estate was 380 acres which the surveyor, 'Yours always to bee commanded, John Cooke' of Tewkesbury valued at £145.13s. But he adds that 'upon further consideracon it may bee thought fit to araise the Rent of some parte & to abate the Rents of other partes. If yor Baylies shall follow my directions in the letting thereof, I doubt not but within theise fowre yeres God willing to increase the same.' Prompt payment of rent was recommended as of cardinal importance for the estate's successful management.

RICHARD

Richard Cocks' purchase of Castleditch is the only occasion it has changed hands in 700 years. The document recording it seems to have vanished but the date must have been a year or two on either side of 1600. It could have been just after his father died in 1601, and there is also the possibility that he bought it upon his marriage to Judith Elliot, the daughter and co-heir of a London merchant, in about 1598 when he was 34.

Judith and Richard had eight sons and six daughters, their first child Thomas being born in 1599⁶. Nothing much is known about the daughters except that Judith married Thomas Aylway and was alive as late as 1688⁷ and that two others, Elizabeth and Dorothy, were living in 1623. Two sons died young - Seth in 1617 and Robert apparently soon after his father. Apart from Thomas their other sons were Richard, who lived the first part of his life at Ledbury before going to Dumbleton and who as a young man in his early twenties accompanied his uncle Christopher on his abortive diplomatic venture to Russia, and the three lawyers John, Henry and Charles. More will be said of all these at later stages.

There was no question of Richard senior retiring to Herefordshire to live the life of a country gentleman for many years ahead. He continued as a successful merchant in the Grocers Company and became a City Alderman. Though he avoided the shrievalty of London by paying a fine, he became High Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1616⁸ by which time he was probably spending more time in the county.

In the course of a prosperous career he bought property (one of the few methods then available of investing money gained from trade or from merchant adventures) in other parts of Herefordshire, including Massington in nearby Colwall parish, and at Arlington near Bibury in Gloucestershire.⁹ When in London he lived in his house in Mayden Lane, and the journey between there and Eastnor was not one lightly to be undertaken in those days of appalling

roads. The coach took three days at least between Hereford and London, upsets were quite common and there were the additional hazards not only of lumbering goods wagons drawn by oxen on whose coming, heralded by blasts on the driver's horn, prudent travellers drew in, but occasionally also of cattle, sheep and even goats being driven from the Welsh hills eastwards to the eager London markets. Anyone in a hurry - such as Richard - rode on horseback; stage-coaches came after his time.

We catch a glimpse of the inside of early 17th century Castleditch in the surviving portion of the inventory made of his possessions for probate purposes immediately after his death.¹⁰ Apart from £89 in ready cash and wearing apparel valued at £20 (no small sums in those days), we see that in the Hall where the household ate there were two long and two square tables, six stools and two other forms, all 'joined' -that is to say made of wood pegged together. Next was the Great Parlour for the more formal entertainment, furnished with a joined draw-leaf table, another table, a cupboard, six 'joynd stools with green covers of cloth fringed', six others without covers and one red leather chair. There were also three Turkey carpets, curtains and rods, six green cloth cushions and three maps (the last item valued at 13s. 4d.), while the fireplace had 'three great brass Andyrans [firedogs], 2 small Andyrans & 1 fire shovell & a payre of tongues with brasen topps'.

Extra chairs must have been brought when required from the Little Parlour which was in all likelihood the room normally used by the family as it was more comfortably furnished with a table, cupboard, four chairs - two of them black leather - two red leather stools and three other low stools covered with Turkey work, two low chairs of green cloth and six other stools. Carpets, cushions and curtains completed the tally with the usual fire-irons. The value of all the furnishings in these three rooms was put at £20 16s. 8d. Handily placed in the Little Buttery next to the Little Parlour were six hogsheads and two barrels, 'certen beere and 1 great peece of lead'. Other than the fact that the Entry, what nowadays we should call the passage or hall, contained a few items we unfortunately know nothing further and are unable to see upstairs. He is likely to have had a number of books, for when William Saintbarbe the rector of Eastnor died he left Richard 'the Venetian historie & Stowes Chronicle [of London] augmented by Howes.'

Richard died in December 1623 at the fairly early age of 59 and was survived for another fifteen years by his widow Judith. She was buried 'to the greate grieve of all her poore neighbours'¹¹ to whom she had been ever generous in her lifetime. Both were buried in Eastnor church.

Though some of his nephews became merchants, so far as his own line went the first Cocks settler at Castleditch was also the last of the merchants. Thereafter the men joined the ranks of the squirearchy or the professions - lawyers, clergy, Service officers and the like; Richard's passing was a subtle but important landmark in the family's history.

LAWYER SONS: JOHN, HENRY AND CHARLES

The three younger surviving sons of Richard became barristers. John the third son entered the Middle Temple as a young man in 1626 and was bound with his uncle Charles. Henry did not enter until long afterwards in 1652, and a year or two later was admitted to his uncle Charles' part of his Essex Court chamber fallen vacant upon the latter's death.¹² It is uncertain what he had been doing before this time, but he appears to have taken some part in the Civil War on the Royalist side and may thus have found himself obliged to seek a profession. The sixth son Charles entered Furnivall's Inn and like his two other lawyer brothers remained unmarried.¹³

It is rash to jump to conclusions as to a man's character from the meagre facts which have come down to us over a few centuries, especially as the documents preserved tend to deal with disputes or difficulties rather than with what went right. Few of us would be happy to have posterity judge our own characters on the chance survival of some fragmentary correspondence with the tax inspector or an account of proceedings in a magistrates court for a motoring offence. Yet, while bearing this very much in mind, there can be no doubt that his contemporaries sometimes found John a difficult man to deal with, and there are entries in the Middle Temple records which reveal that he did not always comply readily with the desires of his superiors. On one occasion he fell from grace more heavily. In 1652 he shared chambers with Thomas Collett, a Master of the Bench, and one day becoming involved in an argument, he used 'opprobrious language' and laid violent hands on him. Such a swift and simple method of resolving disputes was unlikely to commend itself to the legal mind, and so it proved. 'John Cocks, esquire, Barrister' was forthwith expelled. Six months later he craved pardon of Mr Collett and attended before all the Masters of the Bench when, after no doubt receiving a stern warning, he was restored. But as late as 1670 there was difficulty over granting him a lease due to his refusal to treat with the governing committee.¹⁴ He must have died fairly soon afterwards.

Henry died only eleven years after his admission, leaving a few hundred pounds to the various children of his brother Thomas. His Dumbleton,

Crowle and Bishop's Cleeve relatives had £1 each - if they received anything at all - which stung his brother Richard to dispute, without success, his testamentary capacity.¹⁵ The belief that he had taken an active part in the Civil War derives from his memorial at Eastnor which states that he was loyal to his King in war and faithful to his country in the most unjust of times.

Charles, like his namesake uncle, lived to a good old age, dying in 1691. He left his London property to his nephew Thomas of Castleditch (son of his brother Thomas), and other bequests to the Castleditch Cocks'.¹⁶ Nothing remarkable is known about him.

THOMAS I AND THE CIVIL WAR

Other than Richard of Dumbleton who will be considered in the chapter under that name, the only son of the first Richard of Castleditch who married was the eldest, Thomas. In the next few generations this name appears so often that it has been thought best to refer to them as Thomas I or Thomas II etc. in order to try to avoid confusion.

Thomas I was born in 1599 and spent his childhood mostly in the family home at Eastnor. In about 1628 he married a young widow Anne Unett, daughter of Ambrose Elton of the manor house of Hasle close to Ledbury, and went to live at nearby Massington. Their first child Thomas II was born there in 1629, as were their two other sons John and Richard, and three of their four daughters. The children came at about yearly intervals, and Anne died giving birth in 1636 to their youngest daughter Katherine who also died.

On his mother Judith's death two years later Thomas I moved from Massington to Castleditch, and at about the same time he married Elizabeth Gower. By her he had two more sons Henry and Charles, and two daughters Anne and Catherine (who died in 1646), all born within the next few years.¹⁷ There was another son called Robert who was almost certainly born of this marriage. Charles has usually been assumed to have been a son of the first marriage, but this seems impossible. He was under-age in 1662 when his lawyer uncle Henry made his will and must therefore have been born after his father's first wife's death. He was only about two years old, though probably not the youngest member of the family, when the Civil War came literally to the door of Castleditch late in the year 1644.

The Cocks' were of course all Royalists, and it seems that the King's supporters, possibly with a Cocks amongst them, had taken over the seat of the

Roundhead Hoptons at Canon Frome some miles to the north. One of Sir Richard Hopton's sons obtained a commission on promising to raise 400 horse and to arm them at his own expense, and when he had succeeded in getting together about 60 horse and 40 foot this Captain Hopton suddenly marched on Castleditch with his force, 'intending perhaps to oppose the occupiers of his father's late residence,' and laid siege to it - and all this in direct opposition to orders given to him to desist by Massey who thought the place indefensible.

Its moat would have given it considerable protection against unexpected assault, but the house was not built to withstand a siege, and Thomas and his family must have had the most alarming experience of their lives as bullets thudded into the doors and balls splashed into the moat after bouncing off the walls. Fortunately all went well until nightfall when Thomas and his household (his immediate family could have numbered almost a dozen quite apart from servants) managed somehow to escape from their perilous position and take refuge in Goldhill, one of the estate farms. For the children it must have been a night to remember, and the front door of Castleditch remained studded with slugs and bullets until the house was pulled down some 200 years later.

Captain Hopton's success was short-lived. The news soon reached Royalist headquarters and a contingent came over from Hereford, invested the house and forced him to surrender with his men within twenty-four hours. 40 foot and 20 horse were carried prisoner back to Hereford, and the family resumed possession of their battered home.¹⁸

Thomas I was declared a 'delinquent' in 1646 but does not appear to have suffered a fine. Perhaps he persuaded the Committee that his part in the fighting had been purely involuntary, though his early death in 1649 may have intervened before a decision was made.

It is curious how little detail has survived of the lives of his children except Thomas II and Charles. John seems to have lived at Castleditch - he was still alive in 1688 - but he, like his brothers Richard, Robert and Henry, remained a bachelor. Both Dorothy and Judith were married to Traceys of Toddington, the former being the wife of the 2nd Viscount and having a marriage portion of £300,¹⁹ but their surviving sisters Elizabeth and Anne remained single. Charles, who went to live in Worcester, occupies such an important place in the family story as matters turned out that he and his

descendants will be described in the next chapter. Only Thomas II is therefore left of the third generation of Eastnor Cocks'

THOMAS II AND HIS FAMILY

With his father dying in middle-age, Thomas II succeeded to the Castleditch estates when he was 20. In a valuation made in 1652 his property was listed as being worth £140²⁰ according very closely with that made fifty years earlier for his grandfather. Soon afterwards he married Mary Hackett, daughter of the rector of Ross-on-Wye, and except that their family was rather smaller than that of previous generations it followed the familiar pattern of the majority of sons being bachelors all their lives. There were five in all, of whom Henry died soon after birth, the remainder being called John, Thomas III, Charles and Seth. There were four daughters, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Francis and Mary, all of whom married in due course.

Their father was a landowner of some importance in the neighbourhood and served two terms, in 1663 and 1669, as High Sheriff of the county. He was the Thomas whose evidence amongst others' was called upon in the arbitration on the dispute over his cousin Charles Cocks of Woodmancote's land. His wife died in 1675 and he then married his second wife Frances though he had no more children²¹. His influence in the county may be gauged from the fact that he was one of the 19 Herefordshire gentlemen who in 1681 secured an unopposed election of local MPs, following their writing to Lord Scudamore suggesting a conference to discuss ways of preventing 'the ill consequences and fatall misfortunes which have befallen this county by the high contests which have happened about the election of members in several foregoing Parliaments'²² - which rings a little strange to modern ears.

He survived his second wife by a year, dying at Castleditch in 1704 at the age of 75 and being buried in Eastnor church. His son Charles may have predeceased him, and another son Seth died two years later having married and had a child Thomas IV born in 1699. Thomas IV himself married one Elizabeth Hurdman but had no children and died in 1744.²³

The eldest son of Thomas II, John, who came into Castleditch on the death of his father in 1704, was one of the bachelors and is not known to have taken much part in public life. He seems to have been content to live quietly as a country squire, and there is a fine full-length portrait of him in Eastnor Castle sitting in scarlet coat and full-bottomed wig with his dog beside him. When he died aged 58 he left his nephew Thomas IV one shilling, from which it may be

surmised that he had perhaps acted as the boy's guardian on his father Seth's death and disliked him. He left the bulk of his property to his next surviving brother Thomas III.²⁴

Thomas III, who had been born in 1666, entered the Church and was married by the end of the century, though we do not know the name of his wife. They had but one child, a daughter Mary born about 1700, and at the time of inheriting Castleditch in 1718 they were living at Saddington in Leicestershire where Thomas was rector. When he drew up his Will²⁵ five years later he describes himself as 'of Castleditch, Esquire', and as he was still rector he was probably in latter years an absentee incumbent. He left a more realistic annuity to his nephew Thomas IV, as well as Massington for life, and ordered that in certain circumstances (which did not come about) he could succeed to the main estate, being the only remaining near male relative. The succession must have caused him anxious thought.

His daughter Mary would have inherited for her lifetime, but he was naturally keen that Castleditch should remain in the family if this could be arranged. Therefore he stated in his Will that his first preference went to his uncle Charles of Worcester's second son John, and that he should succeed provided that he married his (Thomas') daughter Mary within six months of his death. This younger branch was very well-off even if John as a younger son himself could not expect many of the plums. He was not in fact much older than Mary in spite of belonging to a different generation. Thomas III died in 1724 and on the 3rd of September in that year John and Mary duly married. This union was to have a profound effect on the family history, but before describing it we must first turn back a little to the family of Charles of Worcester.

COPYWRITE

11. COCKS AND SOMERS

CHARLES OF WORCESTER AND THE SOMERS FAMILY

In about the year 1642 a son Charles was born at Castleditch to Thomas Cocks I and his second wife Elizabeth Gower. He was one of the youngest of a large family and when grown-up went to earn his living in Worcester. It is not clear what profession he followed there where his great grandfather had once been Clerk of the Kitchen to the Bishop and where his cousin Sir John Cocks late of Crowle still lived. He is described in documents as a gentleman' and later 'esquire', but possibly he was a lawyer. At all events in 1680 when in his late thirties he married Mary, daughter of a well-to-do local attorney John Somers. It was another of those marriages which proved to have been of cardinal importance to the Cocks fortunes.

The Somers family was an old-established one in the neighbourhood, being settled for many years at Clifton in the parish of Severn Stoke.²⁶ For several generations one branch had lived at Whiteladies, the site of a dissolved nunnery just north of Worcester where John Somers had his office. In the Civil War he had been a Captain in the Parliamentary army and at one time was quartered at Upton. A story is told of how he was much annoyed when attending church at Severn Stoke by the parson's habit of preaching sermons violently opposing Cromwell's cause and upholding the Divine Right of Kings. Warnings proving futile the man was finally stopped in the full flood of one of these furious harangues by Captain Somers drawing his pistol and firing a ball which lodged in the sounding-board above the startled cleric's head.

As well as a son, John Somers and his wife Catherine Severn (or Ceavern) had five daughters, only two of whom long survived. Mary the elder, took Charles Cocks as her husband; Elizabeth married a close friend of her own brother, Joseph Jekyll, who ultimately became Attorney-General, Master of the Rolls and a Knight.

John's son, also named John, was born in 1651 and after attending Trinity College Oxford, entered the Middle Temple in 1669. Always exceptionally studious he was called to the Bar seven years later and thereafter his progress was brilliant with an increasing involvement in Whig politics. By the time his sister Mary had been married to Charles for a few years his

reputation was made, notably by his speech at the trial of the seven bishops, and at the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 he was elected MP for his native city. The appointments of Solicitor-General with a Knighthood, Attorney-General in 1692 and Lord Keeper followed in rapid succession until in 1697 he was made Lord Chancellor with the title of Baron Somers of Evesham.

To enable him worthily to maintain that dignity (he was not at the time a rich man) the King granted him various properties including the manors of Reigate and Howleigh in Surrey, Newington near Sittingbourne in Kent and land in St. Pancras, London, known to this day as Somers Town. His acceptance of these gifts was used as an excuse by his Tory opponents to attack him. This, combined with other circumstances such as his support for Captain Kidd, led to his eventual political eclipse though he did in fact make a brief return during Queen Anne's reign.

He was a towering figure. Macauley describes him as 'in some respects the greatest man of that age... equally eminent as a jurist and as a politician, as an orator and as a writer'. In 1701 he had bought Brookmans²⁷, a large house at Bell Bar near North Mimms in Hertfordshire, as a convenient country retreat and here he retired to spend the remainder of his days, enjoying visits by many eminent men of the time. He never married, dying in 1716 after several years of ill-health, leaving his two sisters as co-heirs. There is a fine memorial to him erected by Lady Jekyll in North Mimms church where he lies buried. His property was divided between his sisters, the Cocks' in particular having Reigate while Brookmans went to the Jekylls.

Charles meanwhile could hardly have failed to profit from such an illustrious connection. He took an important step in 1693 when he stood in the Whig interest as member for Worcester in the place of Somers, indeed as his nominee. Nevertheless it was a difficult contest with his opponent an ex-mayor of the city and currently High Sheriff of the county. Moreover it appears that Somers himself was too involved in legal business in London to support Charles in person, while Charles for his part kept urging him by letter to apply pressure on the present Lord Mayor to purchase cloth from the local Clothiers Company, whose influence at the polls was considerable, and to solicit the vote of the Quakers. It was a rowdy election; 'Wee drinke and fight and are all in confusion' he wrote; an expensive one too as it cost him the large sum of £700, in spite of which he found he had been defeated. He promptly contested the result, bluntly accusing the opposition of indulging in a string of electoral offences - rioting, bribery, abduction and the illegal swearing of freemen. 'There is an end of all free elections here if this be passed on' he fumed. Fortunately when it was heard his case was well argued and in February 1694 he was awarded the seat.²⁸ In the

election the following year he stood for Droitwich which he won, and was re-elected there in 1698 and 1699, remaining until 1707 when he retired.

Charles and Mary had two sons, James and John, and three daughters. Of the latter, Catherine the eldest, born in 1681, married James Harris of the Close, Salisbury, but died soon afterwards in 1705. A memorial tablet to her can be seen in the Cathedral there. Mary the middle daughter married Sir Nicholas Williams of Breconshire. It is possible that Charles did not altogether approve of him, for in his Will he ordered his trustees to pay certain sums half-yearly to Mary in such a way that 'the said Sir Nicholas Williams shall have no interest therein or anything to do therewith'.²⁹

In 1718 the youngest daughter Margaret was married briefly to William Lygon (probably of the family from Madresfield Court in Worcestershire) before he died. Philip Yorke, a promising barrister, then went to her father to seek the hand of this 'gay young widow' as she is described. Old Squire Cocks, so the tale goes, was unduly cautious about the young man's financial prospects and asked Philip, who was in turn to become Solicitor General, Attorney General, Lord Chancellor and 1st Earl of Hardwicke, to present his rent roll and enquired what means he possessed. To which Philip is reported to have replied modestly that he had 'a perch of ground in Westminster Hall'. Sir Joseph Jekyll was rather horrified to hear of the inquisition and begged Charles not to think of it and to agree to the match. Not only did he do so but he then wrote Philip a polite letter welcoming him into the family.³⁰ Margaret died in 1761 and was buried at Wimpole in Cambridgeshire, the seat for many years of the Hardwicks. Philip survived another three years.

Charles himself died in 1727 when well over 80. Inheritor of half the Somers fortune with land in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and of course at Reigate, he had continued to live in St. Helens in the city of Worcester. His elder son James was his heir. (As related elsewhere, his younger son John had married his cousin Mary Cocks the heiress of Castleditch.) In his will he gave careful instructions that the pictures which had come to him after the division of Somers's estate with the Jekylls should be listed and become heirlooms, but his share of the books he ordered should be sold for the benefit of his wife Mary who survived him. Though the banking branch of the family owns a miniature which possibly is portrait of him, there is no picture either of him or of Mary Somers at Eastnor, a curious gap in an otherwise extensive collection.

JAMES SENIOR

The elder of Charles and Mary's two sons, James, was born in 1685 presumably in St. Helens Worcester. When barely fifteen he entered Trinity College, Oxford, by no means an unusual age to do so in those times, from where he obtained a degree and was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1702.

Six years later he was called to the Bar and spent the rest of his career practising as a barrister.³¹ With an uncle still living who had been Lord Chancellor and a sister who was to marry another lawyer who himself in the course of time also became Chancellor, his path must have been smoothed for him and he doubtless enjoyed a successful professional life.

A year before becoming a barrister he had been elected MP for Reigate where the family now had influence, representing it until 1710. After a short gap he was re-elected in 1713 and again in successive Parliaments until his final retirement in 1747.³² He was the first of a long line of Cocks' to represent the borough and his place was then taken by his nephew Charles Cocks of Castleditch.

When thirty-three he married the thirty-year-old Lady Elizabeth Newport, a daughter of the second Earl of Bradford of Weston-under-Lizard, a village beside Watling Street on the borders of Staffordshire and Shropshire. James found Weston House a most congenial place. In August 1723 he was staying there with his Lady Betty (as he refers to her)³³ and writes to his newly-acquired brother-in-law Sir Philip Yorke begging for his family news and urging him to take a break from his work. 'Pray after yor. fatigue mount yor. pad, & get some country air. I wish you could fly to this place, you would be much pleased with ye country, it is as delightfull as any I ever saw, & ye situation of ye House the most agreeable, & chearfull, & in ye middle of ye winter, I believe you might ride twenty miles without being durty'.³⁴ (A pad was an easy-paced horse.)

The next year a son, also called James, was born to them, but in July 1732 when he was about eight his mother died after only fourteen years of marriage. Further tragedy struck not much more than eighteen months later when young James died. Both were buried in Weston-under-Lizard church.³⁵ Whatever his professional successes may have been, fate continued to dog James's personal life. He remarried in 1737, choosing Lady Ann, daughter of Lord Berkeley of Stratton, but she also died giving birth on 3 February 1739 to another James who however survived.

What arrangements he then made for bringing up his infant son, and whether this was at Worcester or at his house in Westminster where he must have spent much of his time, is not known; but his widowed and childless aunt Lady Jekyll who had continued to live at Brookmans died there in 1745³⁶ and with her death the rest of the Somers estates came to James, already in possession of one half of them. From this date his chief residence seems to have been Brookmans.

In his will, drawn up a year before he died, he appointed Viscount Deerhurst, his own brother John and John's son Charles, now an MP, as young James's guardians and trustees, stipulating that if James were to die underage then his estate was to pass to John and his heirs.³⁷ James senior died on 28 May 1750 and in accordance with his wishes was buried at Weston with his first wife. Amongst other legacies he left the manors of Leigh and Suckleigh in Worcester in trust for his son, sums to his three servants and £100 each to the parishes of Weston-under-Lizard, St. Helens Worcester and North Mimms for the relief of the poor there.

ENSIGN JAMES

At the age of eleven therefore James, an only son, found himself an orphan. Of his three guardians his cousin Charles, fourteen years his senior and still then unmarried, played the chief part in his upbringing. Charles may have gone to live at Brookmans when not attending his parliamentary duties in London; certainly he lived there for a while after his marriage in 1758, so it may have continued to have been James's home too.

He entered Christ Church, Oxford in November 1754 when three months short of his sixteenth birthday. Though records do not seem to show it, presumably he graduated with a BA three years later. Rather oddly however, since he cannot then have been a university studying graduate, he is noted as having been awarded an MA on 5 April 1758.³⁸ What influenced him we do not know, though doubtless it was in some measure a reaction from his carefully ordered upbringing, but while up at Oxford he decided that he wished to be soldier, news that was greeted with some shock and dismay by his guardians and relatives. Their reaction was not altogether surprising. They tended to represent the 'safe' attitude to life; he was potentially an extremely wealthy young man and soldiering was a risky and somewhat undesirable occupation for an heir. Moreover his uncle John or cousin Charles stood to inherit this wealth should he die underage, thus exposing themselves to pointed criticism of their stewardship should anything happen to their ward.

So Charles withheld the guardians' permission, much to James's fury, in the hope that the youth's ambition was no more than a passing phase and soon outgrown. But James saw matters quite differently and was utterly determined in his course so that arguments continued. It was this failure from the start to understand each other properly that caused relations between the two of them to become somewhat unhappy. Keeping up the pressure he wrote a letter to Charles from Oxford on 21 October 1756: '...As for the army I still continue as

much resolved as ever about it and hope that you now no longer oppose it... I shall always remain in the same opinion so that the only good that could result from hindering me from going in just now would be first that as I should never forgive any of you I should always live in a state of quarrelling with all my relations...'

Faced with this latest blunt, not to say naively discourteous, message Charles pondered the position and decided that some sort of compromise would have to be arranged. The guardians therefore would allow him to serve for a very short period under the King of Prussia, on hearing which James replied in November assuring him that 'letting me go into the King of Prussia's service is complying with the height of my wishes... I suppose... that by being at Berlin some time before the opening of the Campaign I might get a little acquainted with the Prussian Discipline and my own duty'. If Charles now hoped, as he almost certainly did, that an observance of the reality of soldiering as opposed to its romantic appeal would induce second thoughts in the young man's mind, he was doomed to disappointment.

Although in the following year after leaving Oxford James accordingly went abroad in the King of Prussia's service, it has not been established exactly what he did. He may very well have spent some of his absence in The Hague where he could be under the watchful eye of Lord Hardwicke's son Sir Joseph Yorke, the minister there, and where the British military staff liaising with the Prussians seem to have been based.³⁹ He can hardly have taken part in any campaign with them for Charles soon received several more letters from him, including the following written in suspicious mood:

From James Cocks to Charles Cocks Esq. M.P. to be left at Tom's Coffee House, Devereux Court, nr. Temple Bar, London. en Angleterre

The Hague, Sept 13, 1757

Dear Cousin ...I take this opportunity to repeat to you what I said in the latter end of [my last letter]leaving the history of my journey till I see you in England, which I hope will be very soon as I propose setting out by Saturday's Pacquet ... What I now repeat was that as you had promised me that when I had been a fortnight or three weeks in Campaign with the King of Prussia if I still continued my resolution to go into the army you would immediately apply for a commission for me, I expect tho I have not been that time with him that I shall find my commission if not obtained at least

applied for when I reach England or at least that you would immediately tell me that you absolutely not permit my going into the army at all which tho ' I assure you most solemnly I shall never forgive I shall take much more kindly than any put offs you can use. For upon my honour that way in which you have always treated me, not only as if I was a child but as an Idiot hurts me more than anything in the world can do, and I cannot bear with it any longer ... In the name of God if you have any the least regard for the ease and happiness of my whole life, do not put it off any longer for if I am not a soldier I shall never be happy, I know enough of myself to be assured of it, and I shall curse the author of my dissatisfaction I am afraid even at my last breath.

I am dear Cousin

Your affectionate friend and obedient humble servant,

J. Cocks⁴⁰

Even before receiving this latest anguished and bitter letter, Charles in his dilemma had written from his future wife's home in Cornwall to Philip to inform him of the position and to seek his advice. 'Your Lordship will see by these letters, which I have sent enclosed, in what a peremptory strain he writes, and insists upon the execution of a promise, which he has taken in a different sense from what I meant it...' The promise was, so he recalled, that provided James's relations, particularly his aunt Lady Hardwicke, agreed, he would no longer oppose his joining the army and would assist him in obtaining his commission. 'Tho I am very far from thinking the profession of Arms proper for him, yet I am at the same time convinced it will be in vain to oppose his inclinations any longer' he went on, pointing out that it had really become necessary to come to a firm and final resolution of this question which was of such importance to James and his guardians alike.⁴¹

Lord Hardwicke replied on the 18th September conveying his and Lady Hardwicke's concern that their nephew was still so strongly determined on an army career. That concern she emphasised, proceeded from a sincere regard for his welfare and happiness and from a desire that he should pursue his education in a way that would qualify him for his position in the world. He added that they had already stated their opinion that the army 'will possibly lead him into a way of life the most unimproving and improper for him in any respect and we are convinced it would have given great grief to his Father, for whom as well as for himself we retain a great affection'. Ultimately the guardians would have to decide; he himself could only give an opinion.⁴²

On having the position explained to them by Charles, the other two guardians realised that whatever their personal judgment they could withhold consent no longer. Obviously James remained utterly set on joining the army whose adventurous life so strongly appealed, and was quite unable to appreciate the motives of those who disapproved or to understand that they were trying to act in what they saw as his best interests. The army, they felt, might be a suitable career for younger sons but not for rich heirs whose duty it was to look after their estates, marry and produce heirs themselves. James merely saw them as unreasonable obstructionists bent on thwarting his perfectly legitimate aspirations. So Charles informed him that his guardians now gave their permission, though he himself does not seem to have lent his cousin much further assistance. The tone of the letters he had received cannot of course have done anything towards easing the friction that had developed between the two of them.

James then realised he had no idea how next to proceed, so wrote to his uncle Hardwicke in October informing him he had the necessary consents. 'Mr Charles Cocks ... said that the only difficulty now lay in having a proper application made ... As I am utterly ignorant and he professes not to know more of it permit me to ask your Lordships advice'.⁴³ Hardwicke who, though now retired from the Chancellorship, still had the ear of everybody who was anybody, promptly replied offering to apply to his Majesty, on hearing which James was effusive in his gratitude. Shortly afterwards a vacancy occurred in the 3rd Regiment of Guards, and by the middle of November 1757 he was gazetted Ensign. His immediate ambition had at last been achieved.

Having found Hardwicke co-operative James continued to use him rather freely whenever he thought he could assist. It is fair to add however that he was genuinely fond of his uncle and infallibly punctilious in expressing thanks for his help and appreciation of his guidance. Indeed in one letter he assures him that he will readily acquiesce in his advice, 'in this and every other affair, as I am sure it is both my duty and interest to do, as I am convinced you both can and will give me better advice than any other person'. There can be no doubt that he established a rapport with Hardwicke that, sadly, he had found impossible to do with Charles.

Busy man though the ex-Chancellor was, for his part he always found time to help his nephew even though he must have considered him on occasions a trifle importunate. However much he may have regretted James's choice of career he never allowed that to colour his dealings with him or to diminish any effort made on his behalf. In this personal relationship he comes across as a wise

and kindly man, just the sort of person whom the headstrong James badly needed to be able to trust and consult.

In April of next year Hardwicke was thanked for his 'goodness in speaking to Lord Ligonier and the Duke of Marlborough; I own that I am extremely desirous to go upon this expedition, as I think it of the utmost consequence to an officer to see service ' But a few weeks later he had decided that it would be better to join the troops going to Germany. In a second letter to that effect he wrote to Hardwicke from his camp in the Isle of Wight on 15 July 1758, speaking of his 'extreme desire' to go there 'which is a real service and of that kind that one such campaign, and under such a general, would be of infinitely more service than twenty such expeditions as the last towards forming an officer...' Hardwicke was unable to help here and campaigning in Germany was not to be.

Instead on 23 July a raiding force embarked at Spithead in a fleet commanded by Lord Howe though it did not actually sail before 1 August. By the 6th. it was close to Cherbourg where the troops landed and effectively demilitarised what fortifications there were before sailing for home on the 18th. Unfortunately in the initial landing there was some fighting and James was almost immediately struck in the shoulder by a nearly spent musket ball and after treatment on shore had to be re-embarked. Hardwicke soon heard of it and wrote from 'Wimple' (Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire) on the 13th to Major General Alexander Dury, commander of the Regiment of Guards on the expedition, asking for news and requesting the General to 'afford him your particular attention' and describing him as 'a young Gentleman of great hopes' without a mother or father.⁴⁴

General Dury passed the message on to James who promptly replied to his uncle on the 17th from 'The Thomas & Mary Transport off Cherburgh' to thank him warmly for his enquiries. He explained that he had sustained a slight wound 'which however has been pretty troublesome to me, but now I think I am much better & hope to be well enough to land the next time with the Regiment. I hope we shall meet with as good success there as we have done here, and I think no people could be more fortunate than we have been upon this occasion.'

The General on board the 'Active', also replied to Hardwicke, reporting that he had seen James just after he had been wounded. 'I was at first very uneasy on that Gentleman's account after he had received his wound ... I can assure your Lordship Mr Cocks is universally beloved & esteemed by all the Officers of the Regiment, & that they expressed great concern on the first report of his being wounded ... & that as to myself I shall with the greatest pleasure

embrace every opportunity of showing the regard & respect I have for that young Gentleman, so eminently distinguished by the many valuable & amiable Qualities he is possessed of.'

One would much like to know what General Dury and James's brother officers really thought of him. Dury may of course have been speaking truthfully, or nearly so, but one cannot escape the suspicion that writing as he was to such an eminent and influential person as the ex-Lord Chancellor he tended to say what he thought his correspondent would like to hear about his nephew whom in fact he had probably scarcely known.⁴⁵

The force, including the now recovered James, spent little time in home waters but sailed again on the last day of August, this time with St. Malo as the objective near to which it landed on 4 September.⁴⁶ A reconnaissance of the town revealed that it was manned and fortified to a greater degree than had been anticipated, and as the British had no siege guns ashore it was decided to abandon any idea of reducing it. The army then marched a few miles round the coast to the west and camped there uncertain what to do next. On the 10th came news that a considerable French force was approaching. It was therefore decided to re-embark the troops as speedily as possible into the transports that were ordered to lie as close inshore to the sandy beach at St. Cas (or nowadays St. Cast) as they safely could.

The march began at 4am on the 11th. but so disorganised was it that it took the army five hours to cover three miles. The delay proved fatal. Soon after the embarkation began the French caught up with them. A rearguard action to cover it then took place with some 1500 troops including the Grenadier Guards fighting near and on the beach with no great hope of ultimate escape. They fought bravely until the ammunition gave out, whereupon the ranks broke and it was every man for himself with the French in pursuit. When it was all over the British had lost about 700 men killed, drowned or taken prisoner, and one of the dead was James. He was not yet twenty.

'Lady Hardwicke's nephew Mr Cocks, scarce recovered from his Cherbourg wound, is killed' wrote Horace Walpole to Henry Conway. 'He had £7000 a year, and was a volunteer. I don't believe his uncle and aunt advised his venturing so much money.'⁴⁷ If there was any criticism of his trustees and relatives, it was certainly misplaced. But criticism of the conduct of the expedition was both justified and general. Typical of it was that contained in a

letter written from Bushey Park by the Earl of Halifax on 2 October to his friend Francis Vernon at Nacton, Suffolk.

... I have no news to send you, as I suppose it is none, that the conduct of our late Expedition on the coast of France is universally censured. I don't find any Body (and I have talked the Matter over with those best capable of giving me information) can tell me why our Troops landed where they did. Why, unless they despised the Enemy who were advancing, they did not hasten their March; or, if they did despise the Enemy, as consisting chiefly of Militia, & inferior in Numbers, why they did not attack them, are Questions to which I have not yet heard any answer. It seems that we were not brave enough to fight, nor wise enough to run away. The small Number who were obliged to fight behaved well till they were overpowered ...⁴⁸

It can have been no comfort to his relations and trustees in their anguish to realise that James's young life had been thrown away on a military adventure that was as pointless as it was disastrous. It was a mercy that his father was not still alive to see the final curtain rung down on his tragic family.

James's death had a considerable material effect on the Cocks' of Castleditch. John now inherited the Somers wealth and used some of it to consolidate his landholding around Eastnor. Interestingly, more of the capital was used to finance the setting up of the family banking house of Cocks, Biddulph & Co in the following year with two of John's sons, James and Thomas joining their Ledbury neighbour Francis Biddulph as partners. (Two of them had begun just earlier in a small way but the enterprise was under-capitalised.) Also, once Brookmans had been sold in 1784, all of the Lord Chancellor's pictures came to Castleditch and can still be seen in Eastnor Castle, including the portraits of Somers himself by Lely and Kneller as well as those of many notables and friends of his era. And there too is the great 17th century ebony cabinet given him by his old friend the twelfth Earl of Shrewsbury.

Across in St. Cast there is a column, surmounted by a greyhound for France trampling the English leopard, commemorating the action in 1758, and from it there is a view of the *Grande Plage* on which James fell.⁴⁹ He himself is commemorated not only by his portrait but also by an inscription on the south face of the Obelisk in Eastnor Park erected many years later by the 2nd Baron Somers, son of the same Charles who had found his ward so difficult. It records

that 'possessed of an ample patrimony, he preferred honour to security' and died fighting for his country.

Whatever disagreements he may have had in life, with that epitaph he would surely have been content.

COPYWRITE

12. CASTLEDITCH - 18TH CENTURY

JOHN AND MARY COCKS' FAMILY

If the marriage between John, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and his cousin Mary Cocks was to a great extent a contrived one to meet a particular situation, surviving letters leave no doubt that it was also a happy one. Certainly it was very fruitful. Charles the eldest child was born within a year, followed by Thomas (who died when he was three) and two girls, Mary and Elizabeth. Somewhat remarkably they continued with eight further sons but no more daughters, born between 1731 and 1743 and named John, Joseph, James, Philip, Thomas Sommers, Richard, Robert and Timothy. With such a large and spread-out family the eldest were of course almost grown up by the time the youngest was born.⁵⁰

Yet they were a close-knit family even so, a characteristic which needs emphasising in an account which tends to deal with the careers of each individually. Much of the credit for this must go to their mother, a remarkable and much loved person. Her memorial makes this plain: 'There never was a better mother of children,' it runs, 'she taught them all to read herself, and trained them up most diligently in the way they should go, by example as well as by precept . . . No-one throughout life was more beloved.'

She and her husband had their share of misfortune. Of their children, the second son had died young, Mary was an invalid all her life ⁵¹ and John enjoyed very indifferent health. Timothy the youngest joined the Royal Navy but was accidentally killed when he was only 16. Lastly, his next elder brother Robert after studying medicine at Oxford, Edinburgh and the London Hospital, died of a malignant fever aged 24.

Of the seven surviving brothers, John, Philip and Richard remained unmarried. John settled down comfortably as rector of Suckley in Worcestershire and latterly occupied a prebendary stall in Bristol Cathedral, though almost all his life, we are told on his memorial in Eastnor church, was a continual struggle with disease and pain. Philip, too, entered the church after matriculating at Oxford, and lived in Acton ⁵² where he was rector until his death in 1797. He was a Prebendary of Lincoln in which diocese Acton then lay.

Richard qualified as a barrister, and on retiring went to Hollybush Manor House at Berrow close to Eastnor where he outlived all his brothers and sisters, dying at the age of 81. At one time he employed a manservant who on his death-bed confessed to being a murderer.⁵³ Their sister Elizabeth likewise stayed single. In later years she was a great friend - as indeed were all the family - of Sir Joshua Reynolds who as a boy painted her portrait

Joseph, too, was bred to the law. He married Margaret Thorniloe and went to live in the London parish of St. George the Martyr. He had two daughters, Mary and Margaret, who took as their husbands William Russell of Powick, Worcestershire, and Joseph Smith of Shortgrove in Essex (there is a charming Reynolds portrait of Margaret with her sister Mary's child in the Iveagh Bequest at Ken Wood), but no sons before he died at the early age of 42.⁵⁴

John Cocks senior meanwhile was managing the estates and performing the duties which fell to the lot of a wealthy landowner, including those arising from being chosen High Sheriff for the county in 1732. From time to time he purchased land in or near Eastnor parish, particularly after coming into James Cocks' fortune in 1758, an example followed by one or two of his sons, thus still further consolidating the family's now pre-eminent position.⁵⁵



Eastnor Church, 18th Century

He died in 1771 aged about 80 leaving the bulk of his property to his eldest son Charles, with legacies of £1000 each to his surviving children with the exception of Mary for whom special provision had already been made. He

ordered that a number of estates should be sold to pay his debts and legacies.⁵⁶ His widow Mary survived him for another seven years, taking the greatest interest to the end in her children and grandchildren. She lived to see one son created a baronet and two others successfully start a family bank. Writing to her son Thomas Sommers from Castleditch in 1775 in her neat and very legible hand she regrets that his situation in life 'will not permit me to have so much of yr. company as I should be glad to have,' going on to commiserate with him and his wife on their losing the children's nurse. Philip, she reports, 'is sometimes tolerably well but gains ground very slowly indeed. I hope time will do more for him than Physick for I think that has done very little', and she finishes with a message for a granddaughter on the progress of the Castleditch ducklings.⁵⁷

The survival of many family letters from about this time onwards makes one regret all the more the loss of personal details from earlier years. Such details may be trivial so far as the broad outlines of a history are concerned, but so often they throw a revealing light on some individual and clothe the bare, dry facts with a real, living personality.

PARTNERS IN THE BANK (For fuller detail see Chapter 17)

The Biddulphs of Ledbury were friends of the Cocks', and it so happened that in the year 1757 Francis Biddulph contemplated started a banking business in London and made enquiries to find out if any of John Cocks' numerous sons would be interested in entering into a partnership with him. James, then aged 23, agreed to do so and they began in a small way in premises at St. Paul's Churchyard.

Two years later they moved to Wallingford House at 43, Charing Cross, once the residence of the Duke of Buckingham, and took Thomas Sommers (Thomas V) into partnership with them, though as he was only 20 he did not become an equal partner until 1760. But it was with this move that the history of the banking firm of Cocks, Biddulph & Co. can be said to have begun.⁵⁸ Here again there can be little doubt that the necessarily considerable capital required to begin such a venture was made available on the Cocks side due to the untimely death of Ensign James on the coast of France a year or so earlier.

The Articles of Agreement were drawn up between the partners 'in Consideration of the Mutual Trust and Confidence they have and Repose in one another', and 'in order to Procure their mutual Benefit and Advantage have agreed to be ... Partners and Joint Traders in Profitts Charges and Losses in the

said Trade or Business of Bankers . . . ' The name of the Bank changed according to the names and the seniority of the partners; thus it was agreed initially that the 'said Copartnership shall Go and be Carryed on under the name of Biddulph and Cocks',⁵⁹ but later after some other changes it was known for a while as Biddulph, Cocks and Ridge, and it was not until very many years later that it finally settled down as Cocks, Biddulph & Co.

The introduction of George Ridge as a partner after some years had one interesting result. An ancestor of his had been paymaster to the Cromwellian army, and his pay-chest was brought to the Bank either for use or for adornment - where it still remains.

Of the two Cocks partners Thomas V was the first to marry when in 1768 he took as his wife Anne, one of the two daughters of Alexander Thistlethwayte of Southwick Place in Hampshire, by whom he had a number of children (described in the next Part of this History). It is of interest to note that he always signed himself 'T.Sommers Cocks' as though Sommers (a name given him to commemorate his grandmother's family and to distinguish him from the other brother Thomas who had died young) was a part of his surname. Although living with his family in Downing Street in London which was very conveniently situated for the Bank, he spent what time he could at Castleditch where he had a room of his own. A letter written in the 1780's to his eldest surviving daughter describes a winter day's routine there: 'I rise at half past seven, Breakfast at nine, read till twelve, ride or walk till ½ past two, dine at ½ past three, drink tea at seven, play at cards till ½ past nine, then to Supper and to Bed at Eleven'.⁶⁰ The country house routine does not sound too arduous.

Although at the time of his death in 1796⁶¹ his only son Thomas VI was not yet old enough to succeed him as a partner, the family was represented by a son of the other partner James. James had married in 1772 Martha Watson, daughter of Vice Admiral Charles Watson, and four sons and four daughters were born to them. Two sons died very young, a third, Charles, when just grown up so far as can be discovered, while James the eldest lived for many years, becoming a partner in the Bank and in 1828 M.P for Reigate, but he died unmarried so that this branch failed in the male line.

All four daughters found husbands, Anne marrying her first cousin Reginald, the son of Charles Cocks (by then created Baron Somers), so becoming the ancestress of many of the Cocks' who survive to this day. The youngest daughter Jane married a Norfolk rector the Reverend George

Waddington, after whose death many years later she married Reginald's elder brother John, Earl Somers, whose wife had also died.

The descendants of Thomas V remained in the Bank for a number of generations, but the subsequent history of the business begun by the two brothers and Francis Biddulph, its setbacks and successes, must wait until a later chapter.

CHARLES, MP AND BARON

Alone of John and Mary's children little has so far been said of their eldest child Charles who was born in 1725 and was destined to achieve some distinction - and also, incidentally, to outlive all his brothers save one. In 1747 he succeeded his uncle James of the Worcester branch as MP for Reigate (a seat which was held almost continuously by one or another member of the Cocks'), representing it for the next thirty-seven years.⁶²

Following closely on his father's death in 1772 he was honoured for his political services and for his steadfast support of the Hanoverian cause by being created a baronet. Though he was content to remain a back-bencher in the Commons, he is known to have argued against Burke's bitter and powerful attack on the government's Ordnance expenditure shortly before his own tenure in the house came to an end. This occurred when he was elevated to the peerage with the style and title of Baron Somers of Evesham, a revival in fact of that held by the Lord Chancellor Somers a century earlier.

He was twice married, first to Elizabeth Eliot of Port Eliot in Cornwall by whom he had three sons and three daughters, and after her early death in 1771 to Anne, the daughter of Reginald Pole of Stoke Damarel in Devon, who gave him two more sons and a daughter. He was unlucky in the children of his first marriage. Two of the sons were twins, born a little surprisingly in Marseilles, one of whom was called Charles Edward and who died soon after birth. The other, Edward Charles, 'grew as a lily in the field' but was accidentally drowned in the Thames when he was a boy of 14 at Westminster School in spite of his elder brother John's attempts to save him. Two of the three daughters also died in infancy so that only John and a daughter Harriet remained of the six. The two sons of his second wife, Philip James and Reginald, as well as daughter Anne Maria grew up and married (though Reginald died in his twenties just before his father), and it is from these two sons' marriages that all the Cocks' living today have descended, with the exception of the descendants of Thomas V the banker.

From the 1760's onwards Charles was further consolidating his position by buying land in and around Eastnor. In 1785 he obtained a private Act enabling him to exchange land in Eastnor belonging to the Bishop of Hereford with that owned by him in Much Marcle; and within a few years of the family coming into the Cocks and Somers properties it became possessed of yet more estates following upon the death of the last Cocks of Dumbleton. It had come a long way since Richard had made his original purchase of Castleditch.

The house itself underwent some alteration at the end of the century. It was old and probably not very convenient - indeed we have a hint of an unsatisfactory state of affairs in a letter written by Thomas V to another of his daughters ⁶³ in which he confesses that he has just spent the morning hunting rats. Charles added a new wing of plain white stone whose Georgian style contrasted sharply with the main Tudor building of brick and timber. It had a handsome doorway surmounted by a pediment and flanked on either side by two projecting semi-circular wings. Around it was a fine lawn with a rivulet flowing on either side, while the deer park approached it in the front. The grounds, we are told ⁶⁴ were disposed into walks winding through very thick shrubberies, the park containing some fine oaks and the surrounding heights being covered with woods.

Here Charles died at the beginning of 1806 at the age of 81, having been a member of one or other of the Houses of Parliament for over fifty-eight years. He was succeeded by his eldest son John as the second baron. His wife, who was twenty-seven years his junior, also lived until she was 81.

13. THE COCKS FAMILY of DUMBLETON

EARLY HISTORY

The small parish of Dumbleton lies in north east Gloucestershire between the scarp of the Cotswolds to the east and Bredon Hill to the north west. The family's connection with it dates from the end of the sixteenth century and so it is necessary to go back that far to explain how they later came to own it.

The manor, comprising the whole parish, belonged to the Abbey of Abingdon from pre-Conquest days until the dissolution in 1543 when it was sold by Henry VIII to Lord Audley and Sir Thomas Pope for £82 13s 2d. Two years later Sir Thomas became the sole owner and in his death in 1556 he bequeathed it to Edmund Hutchins (or Hutchings), the son of one of his sisters. Hutchins was twenty-two and had just been elected to the Society of Scholars of Trinity College, Oxford.⁶⁵ Towards the end of the century he had become patron of the living of Bishop's Cleeve and acquainted with the family of Thomas Cocks who leased the parsonage manor there. It was thus that in 1591 when he was fifty-seven he came to marry Dorothy, the twenty-four year old daughter of Thomas, and to bring her back to the manor house at Dumbleton. If he had been married before, he certainly had no surviving children.

There cannot be much doubt that the manor house was the building known today as the Old Rectory, a handsome structure standing a little way north of the church. Externally its half-timbered south wing appears to be of sixteenth century date and older than the rest which however was rebuilt in Cotswold stone around 1700. But there is some newer work in this wing and likewise some older work in the centre and north wing, indeed it is said that the south wing before the sixteenth century rebuilding was a dormitory for the monks of the Abbey.⁶⁶

The Hutchins' childless marriage lasted some eleven years until his death in 1602 shortly after acting as one of the overseers of the Will of his father-in-law Thomas Cocks. A few months earlier, in February 1602, 'for the great love and affection' he bore to Dorothy he had executed a deed appointing her brothers Charles Cocks the barrister and Peter Cocks the rector of Cleeve as trustees to hold the manor for her benefit for 99 years from the date of his

death.⁶⁷ His action in making this lease started an unfortunate dispute with the families of his sisters, particularly with Edward Ansley the son of his sister Jane Hutchins. It caused much bitterness and ended up in the Court of Star Chamber in 1603.⁶⁸

From the pleadings in the case we can follow what happened. Even before Hutchins had executed the lease Ansley, with a co-defendant William Dobbyn, tried to stop him making it at all, believing that the desirable estate of Dumbleton should come to him. Promptly after his uncle's demise the two procured a Chancery writ of *diem clausit extremum* (an order authorising inquiry into the land held by a deceased landowner) and did so in such secrecy that the plaintiffs (Dorothy's trustees) knew nothing about it. But Ansley had omitted to mention the 1602 lease in his writ and so the plaintiffs when they discovered what had happened brought a suit in the Court of Wards against him and Dobbyn by which the latter were 'defeated of their leud and malicious purpose'. Next the pair of them with no less than ten others joined together to plague the trustees with, to quote the proceedings again, 'a multiplicite of accions and suits'. Finding that this form of harassment also failed, the defendants resolved upon direct physical action; they obtained the help of others 'forth of Wales and other remote places armed with swordes daggers calevers and pistoles', assembled in Dumbleton, broke into the manor house and took it by force.

One wonders if they were really expecting the sort of strong resistance from its occupants that would have justified the use of such an armoury. The plaintiffs would of course have been eager to put the defendants' behaviour in the worst possible light, but even so it was a very high-handed action and Ansley, a powerful man who had married a daughter of Anthony Throckmorton of Chastleton, then had to try and explain it. He argued that Hutchins had 'wished' the manor after his death to come to him and pointed out that the Will had made no mention of the just earlier lease. He also alleged that Hutchins 'being a very weake man and growen into greate age was persuaded to espouse' Dorothy, 'she being then a very yong woman', describing him just before his death as 'att the tyme of his life...but a weake person both in mynd and body'⁶⁹ and consequently unfit to make the lease to Dorothy.

Charles and Peter Cocks refuted such suggestions, arguing that Hutchins knew perfectly well what he was doing, was fully entitled to act as he did and that the occupation was a flagrant breach of rights. Though all Star Chamber judgments have been lost it is clear that the complainants prevailed over physical possession and that Dorothy was once more able to resume

peaceful occupation of her house. It would be interesting to know where she was when the break-in occurred. Had she been held prisoner in her own home`?

She did not long remain a widow. Soon after this contretemps she married Sir Charles Percy, third son of the eighth Earl of Northumberland, who then came to live in Dumbleton. Sir Charles had had a stirring and eventful life. He had been with Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, on an expedition to help Henry of Navarre and had served in Ireland in 1598. He was also involved in the Essex rebellion two years later but unlike Essex was subsequently pardoned, and in 1603 took the news of the Queen's death to James VI of Scotland in Edinburgh. After all this it is hardly to be wondered at that the pace of life in Dumbleton, a quiet village even today, was found to proceed rather too slowly for such an active man. In a letter to a friend he begs for news from London, complaining 'if I stay here long in this fashion, at my return I think you will find me so dull that I shall be taken for Justice Silence or .Justice Shallow'. In fact he is thought to have been a friend of Shakespeare who may have obtained some of the stories of the Percys from him.⁷⁰ (There is an allusion to 'Master Dumbleton' in the second part of King Henry IV.)

The Percys had one child, a daughter Anne who died young. Sir Charles died in 1628 and Dorothy eighteen years later, having lived in the manor house for no less than fifty-five years. There is a fine and recently restored painted monument of Sir Charles, Dorothy and Anne on the north wall of the chancel of the church. Presumably it was erected by Dorothy's brother Charles to whom she left the estate.

Charles, a bachelor, was of course the self-same barrister, later a Master in Chancery, who had been made her trustee in 1602 but was now seventy-six and retired. In the course of a long and prosperous life he had acquired considerable property elsewhere but decided to spend his last days at Dumbleton where he lived for another eight years, dying in 1654 when nearly eighty-three. He too is commemorated in the church in the form of a classical relief bust surrounded by a decorated cartouche with a Latin inscription below. Though it may not be a likeness it reveals a thin-faced, shrewd-looking man with bushy hair, moustache and spade beard. It was executed in gratitude by his nephew Richard Cocks whom in turn he had made his heir.⁷¹

In 1657, a few years after Charles' death, one Thomas Martin whose father had been a relative of Edmund Hutchins brought a suit against Richard. The document is now almost illegible but it appears that Martin still believed that the estate should never have gone to the trustees, and now that Charles, the last survivor, had died he thought it worth one more attempt to regain it.⁷²

Whatever his reasoning he was no more successful than his predecessors had been and the Cocks' title to Dumbleton henceforward remained unchallenged.

THE FIRST BARONET

Not a great amount of detail is known about Richard II's life which seems for the most part to have been uneventful. He had been born in the family home at Castleditch, Eastnor in 1602, the second son of Richard Cocks (Richard I) and his wife Judith. There is no record of his having attended a university, but when he was twenty-one he accompanied his uncle Christopher Cocks on a voyage to Archangel on Christopher's inconclusive diplomatic mission to the Tsar of Russia. This one excursion into the outside world seems to have sufficed for him, and on his return he settled down for what he expected to be a peaceful life in Ledbury where he made his home. In about 1632 he married Susanna, the fifth daughter of Ambrose Elton of Hasle, Ledbury, widow of Richard Hall and sister of the wife of his own brother Thomas of Castleditch.⁷³

A year later his first child Richard III was born, followed by two daughters Judith and Elizabeth in 1634 and 1635. There may have been another son who did not survive but there then comes a long gap that can probably in part be accounted for by the Civil War in which Richard II according to his memorial was 'a great Sufferer for his Love to the Royal Family, and for his zeal for the Laws and Established Religion of his Country'. But exactly what part he took in it and how he suffered is not known though presumably he faced a stiff fine as a delinquent. At the conclusion of hostilities he was back in Ledbury where in about 1645 another son was born whom, perhaps defiantly, he named Charles, followed after some three years by a third, John.

As already stated, on his barrister uncle Charles' death in 1654 he found that as a recompense for having suffered in the Royalist cause he had been left the Dumbleton estate with a good deal of other property besides, and it was to the manor house at Dumbleton that he now moved with his family. His elder daughter Judith was then twenty but died unmarried in her parent's lifetime; Elizabeth, a year her junior, married Sir John Fust of Hill, raised a family and was still alive in 1684. Richard II's second son Charles went up to Oxford where he obtained a BA at All Souls in 1664 and a MA four years later.⁷⁴ He entered the Middle Temple and became a barrister in 1673 but died unmarried in his early thirties and was buried at Dumbleton. By contrast his brother John enjoyed a very long life. He was awarded his BA at Oriel College, Oxford in 1666 and also became a barrister. He seems to have practised not

only in London but, at any rate latterly, in Gloucester where he had chambers, owning land at Taynton near Newent and in 1703 leasing Brookthorp Manor just outside Gloucester, a largely Elizabethan house with a fine three storied half-timbered projecting gable.⁷⁵ In later years he was living in a house in the precincts Gloucester Cathedral where he died in 1728 aged eighty. He too requested burial at Dumbleton. In spite of three marriages he had no children. His first wife Elizabeth died around 1700, whereupon he married Anne Savage in 1703 and, after her death, Mary Unett who survived him.⁷⁶

Richard's eldest son Richard III entered Oriel College when he was still living in Ledbury. He obtained his BA in 1653 and in 1659 became a barrister of the Middle Temple. A few years earlier he had married Mary, the youngest daughter of Sir Robert Cooke of Highnam Court near Gloucester, by whom he had four sons and four daughters. The eldest son, yet another Richard (IV), was born in 1658 or 1659, the next, Robert I, in 1660, the third, Charles, about 1662, while his eldest child Dorothy was born in 1657, all of whom will be referred to in due course. His other daughters were Mary (1663) who died unmarried, Susanna (1665) who married her first cousin Sir Edward Fust of Hill and Jane (1667) who took Edward Price as her husband, both these married daughters being alive in 1711. Finally in 1668 a son Arnold arrived, but then one of those tragedies all too common a few centuries ago struck the family. Richard III, his wife Mary and infant Arnold all died in October 1669 within a few days of one another, leaving three sons and four daughters aged between twelve and two without parents. From the fact that the children were all baptised at Dumbleton one assumes that the family was living there, but whether in the capacious manor house or, as seems more likely, elsewhere in the village is not known.

In 1662 Richard II had been created a baronet by King Charles to reward him for his Royalist support and in 1665 was chosen as High Sheriff for the county of Gloucester, the only office apart from that of Justice of the Peace that he ever held. He was always content to live quietly on his country estate and had few ambitions. A portrait of him is in Eastnor Castle. With the death of his eldest son the heir to the baronetcy became his ten-or-eleven-year-old grandson Richard IV. Sir Richard himself died in 1684 at the good old age of eighty-two leaving his widow to survive him for another five years. In his Will he requested burial in the chancel of Dumbleton church 'until the vault is made for a burying place for myself and family'. Dame Susanna was to have the manor house for her life.⁷⁷ A lengthy and very ornate baroque memorial to the pair of them can still be seen in the church there.

THE SECOND BARONET: THE EARLIER YEARS

The sudden reality of having seven young grandchildren without a mother or father must have caused a problem to old Sir Richard and his wife but we do not know exactly how they overcame it. Presumably Sir Richard became their guardian though as he was sixty-seven and his wife only three years younger someone else must have been in actual charge. What is certain however is that within a short time the eldest child Dorothy assumed the role of mother, particularly to her younger sisters. The brothers would have spent less time at home being either at school or university, yet even so, being a deeply religious young lady, she had considerable influence on them too and perhaps especially on Richard; for when she died in 1714 he erected a memorial to her in the church which acknowledges his debt to her and makes clear the high regard in which he held her. After indulging in one of those mildly eccentric phrases to which he was always prone, that she was 'of middle stature, endowed with great Ornaments of Body and with far greater of the Mind', he explains that she 'bred up her brothers and sisters in piety and religion', spending a good part of her life in devotions and prayers for herself her friends and her country and that 'she chose to be mother to her younger sisters rather than to be engaged in another family'. From whom she herself learnt this piety we do not know but she must have been a remarkable woman. With such an influence in the home small wonder that Richard also grew up with strong religious beliefs that coloured his whole life, and that her other two brothers both took holy orders.

Richard entered Oriel College in about 1674 where, in spite of commenting in unfavourable terms on his tutor, he seems to have graduated with a thorough knowledge of the classics.⁷⁸ Presumably he then returned to Dumbleton and after his grandfather's death in 1684 succeeded him at the age of twenty-five as the second baronet and owner of the entire estate. In March 1690 his grandmother also died and he then took over the manor house. Just before this he had married Frances Neville, the daughter of Richard Neville of Billingbear near Wokingham in Berkshire and niece of Henry Neville of the Grecian Circle of classical republicans. Her own brother was to become a fellow Whig MP of Sir Richard's. These connections with his wife's family were, on the political side, augmented by his own ties with Lord Chancellor Somers through his cousin Charles Cocks of Worcester (another MP) who had married Somers' sister Mary. In fact he was well acquainted with Somers, robustly defending him in parliament in 1701 upon which occasion he declared that he had known him for as long as he had known anybody.

But before taking active steps to become an MP he was in 1692 appointed High Sheriff for Gloucestershire and two years later was a Deputy

Lieutenant, thus enhancing his local standing in the community, a matter of some moment to him since, possibly as a subconscious reflex to his own small physical stature, he displayed what David Hayton has described as an almost pathological self-importance throughout his life. By good fortune we now know a good deal about him from the fact that he was a compulsive writer and from the early 1680s had entered a whole variety of his thoughts in the form of paraphrases of Biblical stories, prayers, sermons, essays and even meditations into two memoranda-books which were fairly recently discovered and are now in the Bodleian Library.⁷⁹ Into these books too he transcribed many of his publicly- given charges to Grand Juries at quarter-sessions, some of which had attracted not altogether favourable criticism from others including fellow Whigs. It was not long before he took the inevitable decision to enter parliament in the Whig cause, trying and failing to capture Tewkesbury in 1695 but being elected as a knight of the shire three years later.

Before dealing with his career as an MP events at Dumbleton need recording. In the 1690s he embarked upon a building programme in the village. The manor house was then partly reconstructed, or at any rate refaced in stone, except for the still extant south wing, in the prevailing contemporary style more or less as it survives today, and it is likely that other houses were being built or refurbished at the same time. Most importantly of all he began work on an entirely new manor house on a fresh site just west of the church.

The house that arose is well depicted in the engraving by the Dutchman Johannes Kip published, along with a considerable number of other Gloucestershire mansions in about 1710 and drawn in his usual fashion showing a bird's-eye view of the house, its gardens and the village with its church.⁸⁰ It was a medium-sized, symmetrical building of Cotswold stone in the post-Restoration or William and Mary style much in favour with the country gentlemen and aristocracy of the day. A front of two main storeys of five bays width was flanked by narrow projecting wings, the whole surmounted by a pediment in the centre of which was sculpted the Cocks badge of a stag *couchant regardant*. It was a handsome building but surviving papers do not reveal the name of the architect concerned, if indeed he did not draw up his own plans for it. There were several practitioners then active in that part of England, William Rudhall and Robert Hooke to name but two, who were employed by local landowners anxious to house themselves in the latest fashion, any one of whom could have been responsible if Sir Richard himself were not. What is certain is the date when it was completed, for Richard composed a prayer duly entered into his book 'upon the finishing and building my house' on 22 October 1699.

But no such house would ever have been considered complete without a suitable garden to set it off to best effect and, if the architect of the house is unknown, we may be reasonably sure that Dumbleton's garden was laid out by George London of the Brompton firm of royal garden designers London and Wise. London travelled round the country for the part of each year designing for wealthy patrons⁸¹ in the fashionable Dutch manner that owed something to the rather more formal style of France, and Kip's print shows that this is what was adopted here. The main part was planned to lie in compartments on the west side of the house and consisted of herbs and flowers (including no doubt in due season the now popular Dutch bulbs) in box-hedged parterres and of judiciously planted shrubs. A waterway or 'canal' formed roughly three sides of a square and was flanked by terraces on the edges of which were ornamental plants growing in tubs or pots put out for the summer. At the end of one of the terraces a summerhouse was built in which the family and their guests could sit and admire the reflections in the still waters. To the south of this lay a walled flower and shrub garden; to the north an ample walled kitchen garden and a dovecote, to the west of it an orchard; for as was the custom it all had to be not only pleasurable but also productive. A double avenue of trees led up to the main front of the house across part of the park, the easterly side being continued for a long distance beyond in the further park which itself was stocked with deer. In the print Sir Richard can be seen riding to hounds in pursuit of one of them.

However pleasing, it must have been costly to construct and very expensive to maintain. The engraving of 1710 shows the whole design in a state of maturity that in fact could not by then have been achieved, nor can it be said with certainty that it was ever completed in its entirety though probably it was. Meanwhile Sir Richard now had a house and fine garden perfectly consonant with the sense of his own importance in the locality as he perceived it and which could bear comparison with those of any of his neighbours of like standing. Clearly he was proud of the place and loved it.

One result of this new building was that the old manor house, which can be seen in the engraving, now became the rectory. It too had a small formal garden to the west and an orchard and dovecote to the north. From the road a pathway or drive gave access through gateposts topped with ball finials across a lawn to an entrance in the centre of the house. Exactly opposite these gates on the other side of the road were a matching pair belonging to a house of more modest dimensions, suggesting that it too may have been one of the Cocks homes.

In fact until 1699 it could alternatively have been the rectory, and it was to the living that Richard as patron appointed his youngest brother Charles in 1687. Charles had been born in about 1662 and like his brothers went up to Oriel College from where he graduated in 1684, receiving his MA three years later. He may have married soon after he came to Dumbleton, but if so nothing is known of his wife and he had no children. He certainly married Anne Archer of Wood Bevington in Warwickshire in 1711, though again there were no children. In his Will ⁸² he speaks of 'my now wife implying it was a second marriage. He died in 1718, Anne surviving him for another fourteen years. Unless the old manor house had doubled as a rectory (as at Bishop's Cleeve) up to 1699, he was the first rector to occupy it as a rectory.

At Eastnor Castle there is a portrait of Charles Cocks of Dumbleton, according to its caption added in about 1820, which however identifies him with the barrister Charles who died in 1654. This is an error as it must be dated at least three-quarters of a century later and quite certainly portrays a cleric rather than a barrister. Probably it was known to be Charles Cocks when it came to Castleditch after 1765, but some fifty years later it had been forgotten which one it was. Assuming that Charles is correct, it is almost certainly the rector of Dumbleton though there is a difficulty in that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, its approximate date, a Church of England clergyman would usually be depicted wearing a wig which the sitter is not. A possible explanation of this anomaly may lie in the fact that non-conformist ministers preferred to be portrayed wearing their own hair. His patron, Richard, being very low church as will be seen, Charles followed suit and so may have been painted wigless as being more in tune with what seemed proper in the family. Whatever the explanation it is a fine portrait.

THE SECOND BARONET: THE LATER YEARS

To parliament, when he was elected to it in August 1698, Sir Richard brought a number of qualities. He was a very honest man with what amounted to a near-obsession with the practice of morality in both public and private life. He attacked graft, disapproved of placemen and condemned bribery at elections, all of which practices were then very prevalent, seeing as his ideal the incorruptible country gentleman of social leadership who might through election to parliament serve a public far more widespread than those in his own neighbourhood. He was very well-read not only in the classics but, more so than many of his fellow MPs, in contemporary writings on politics and religion, though it appears that he did not always fully digest their arguments. He was a

strong believer in exercising common-sense and reason in overcoming problems rather than relying on moral or political dogma.

Some of his qualities were less advantageous. He was a fierce and unyielding critic of Roman Catholicism and indeed of High Churchmen in general whom he regarded as little better than papists in disguise, denouncing them as 'mischievous and ambitious', an attitude that stemmed partly from his early puritan instincts and partly from his experience of 1688 when he believed the country had nearly reverted to Catholicism and French ways. He had therefore strongly supported the Revolution and continued to believe in a monarchy so long as certain safeguards existed. But his speeches one feels must often have lacked the incisiveness that would have given them a sharper debating edge; moreover he was prone to making verbal slips which caused mirth amongst his listeners and he had an unfortunate habit of rendering tediously long quotations from classical literature that he thought apposite but which quickly reduced his fellow members to boredom. With his undoubted eccentricity it is hardly surprising that although a country Whig he did not quite fit any exact category of Whiggism, particularly at the beginning of his parliamentary career.

On his first being elected he was over-optimistic in his expectations to be found in the House. He allowed that there would be those whom he once scathingly described as 'the wits, the half-wits, and those that know no Lawmaker' but had no doubt that their antics would be submerged by the great and honest majority who served their country's interests rather than indulging in personal or sectional advantage. Within a short time he found himself disabused of such a notion. 'Instead of judicious and honest I found them all upon parties, in so much that if they did not totally banish judgement I am sure they did honesty. Then as for the gravity and sobriety it is intolerable, there is such a noise one can scarce hear or mind what is said...'

Nevertheless he had a modestly successful career in three parliaments, making his maiden speech in January 1699 when he spoke against the retention of a standing army but in favour of raising locally based militia. He was a regular attendant, frequently took part in debates and sat on many committees, mainly those dealing with the less controversial and 'country' issues, and at the beginning of 1702 helped draft the Address. It seems likely that in all this he benefited from his friendship with Somers. He kept a kind of parliamentary diary in his memoranda-books, an invaluable record as although at first only recording his own speeches he later expanded it to include those of others together with general comment.⁸³ Characteristically he tended to exaggerate the weight and importance of his own contributions to these debates. He strongly supported the

Hanoverian succession at a time when the subject was causing anxious thought in the country.

In the 1702 election he switched his allegiance to Tewkesbury and was defeated. Three years later he tried for Evesham and lost again in a contest where there was 'a great deal of foul play'. He had been encouraged to re-enter parliament by Somers but in 1708 after again being unsuccessful in standing for the county he retired to contemplate life in the country quiet of Dumbleton. He must have found rejection hurtful though his reputation for eccentricity cannot have helped. Retirement by no means stilled his voice; more letters, addresses and charges to Grand Juries continued to pour forth from his active pen. As a final effort he put himself forward in 1715 as a candidate for knight of the shire but was not selected. He had become too much out of touch

A few years later the so-called Bangorian controversy was raging around the theory that most duties performed by priests could just as well be performed by laymen. With his strong prejudice against priestcraft and his puritan leanings Richard could and did enter the lists with zest, making his arguments and views known in a series of pamphlets published over the next few years. The first appeared in 1721 with the title, in metaphorical vein then so much in favour, *A Perfect Discovery of the Longitude*, followed the next year by three more, *The Church of England Secur'd, Over Shoes, Over Boots*, being a continuation of the last, and *A Farewell Sermon*. In truth they were not particularly well thought out, descending at times to mere abuse, and his opponents could have ignored them as of small consequence especially as Richard in any case was never one to be much influenced by the arguments of others. Nevertheless there were some who chose not to ignore them and mounted counter-attacks through more pamphlets, notably one in 1723 written by someone who described himself as 'A Lover of the Clergy' under the resounding title *A Pair of Clean Shoes for a Dirty Baronet, who was Lately Terribly Mir'd by Wading beyond his Depth in Controversy* wherein Richard was disparaged as 'that puny scribbler'. Another rather more briefly worded effort was Z.Gray's *The Knight of Dumbleton Foiled at his own Weapon*. It is doubtful if any of these pamphlets contributed much of substance or value to the arguments of either side.

By now he was growing old and suffered periodically from gout. In the beginning of 1724 his wife Frances died having had no family. He erected a large but fairly plain memorial tablet to her on a wall inside the church in which he eulogised her virtues at length, recording that 'she lived more than 35 years in Praise, Harmony and Tranquillity with her Husband as far as human imbecilities common to the best of Mortals would permit', a delightful qualifying phrase

that owes as much to his innate honesty as it does to his eccentricity. Within a few months he had taken Mary Bethell as his second wife, a marriage of brief duration as 'the Knight of Dumbleton' died there in October of 1726 in his late sixties.

He had drawn up his Will ⁸⁴ two years earlier but ten years after his death probate had still not been sought by any of his six executors, none of whom was a member of the Cocks family and only two of whom were then still living. These two, Viscount Tracy of the neighbouring Stanway and his own brother-in-law Hugh Bethell, were induced to sign a declaration of renunciation and Sir Richard's nephew Robert was then able to obtain letters of administration from the Consistory Court and prove the Will in May 1737. The reason for the delay can only be guessed at, but knowing the testator's reputation each may have hoped that one of the others would take the initiative, fearing involvement in some unwanted difficulty.

As it happened the Will, in his own hand, contained nothing very untoward. His brother Robert succeeded to the title but Dumbleton went direct to the latter's son Robert. Such a disposition was a little curious in that Robert was the second surviving son, and had the eldest, Charles, survived his father or had a son (neither of which in fact he did) the baronetcy and the estate would have become more or less permanently divorced from each other. Indeed Charles would only succeed to the estate if the lines of the other sons failed. If all the issue of the Dumbleton Cocks failed then the property was to go to Charles Cocks of Worcester MP and his heirs, then to remoter cousins still living in Bishop's Cleeve. He also expressed a wish that if William, the third surviving son of his brother Robert, took holy orders he should be presented to the living of Dumbleton at the next vacancy thereafter.

The Will has an unusually lengthy preamble in part of which he voices his opinion on the desirability of making the necessary dispositions in good time while still in reasonable health, pointing out that 'in weakness & disordering of body & mind lawyers & divines are uneasie company'. Below his and the witnesses signatures he has added a kind of epilogue of no legal force:

I dye a Christian & my religion is to love every one & to doe all the good I can to freind & foe to defraud & wrong nobody & I desire my freinds & relations to serve God in a manner worthy of him & not to disturb the peace of their country with party & idle distinctions which in weak persons is only the effect of their folly in cunning of private interest and ambition I desire them to love one

the other to be kind to their neighbors & be faithfull & loyall to King George & to have more regard to the protestant interest than to any private views whatever.

A country gentleman Whig of the old school he is difficult man to categorise, but his own epilogue epitomises his beliefs and may perhaps serve instead. A man of deep religious faith he tried to leave a world a better place than he found it in ways that seemed best to him. He was the most interesting of the Dumbleton Cocks' and that by no means due to the fact that we know more about him than the others. He had a lively, if at times quirky, mind and whatever his faults was never dull. His portrait hangs at Eastnor. It shows a robed, bewigged, full-faced man in his prime, gazing confidently out onto the world with a faint air of well-bred superiority.

SIR ROBERT I

When Richard's younger brother Robert succeeded to the title he was already sixty-six. After his childhood at Dumbleton during which he too came under the influence of his sister Dorothy, like his brothers he went up to Oriel College where he obtained his BA degree in 1678 and an MA from Brasenose three years later. He was then ordained but the next we hear of him is in 1695 when he was made a Doctor of Divinity and was appointed rector of Great Rollright, a village in Oxfordshire close to Chipping Norton and some twenty miles east of Dumbleton.

At about this time he married Anne Fulks of Oxford who bore him seven sons and five daughters. Sadly, most of their lives were short, two sons and a daughter dying in infancy and four of the five other sons and two daughters probably when they were in their twenties. Infant mortality was common enough in those days, yet for so many to die in their prime seems unusual especially as they died at different times and presumably in different places. His two longer-surviving daughters were Anne who married William Busby and was still living in 1762 and Sarah who remained single but was alive in 1766. The two who died young were Mary Sophya and Dorothy. Of the five sons, John was born in 1698, graduated with a BA from Oriel in 1718 and entered the Middle Temple where he died in 1719.⁸⁵ Of the second son Charles (born 1699) and the next Richard (born 1701) we know nothing except that the former was dead by 1728, the latter by 1724. ⁸⁶ Robert II, the fourth son, will be referred to later while the youngest, William, was born in about 1708 and obtained an MA from Brasenose in 1732. As his uncle Richard had desired, he took holy orders and succeeded the Revd Thomas Baghott as rector of

Dumbleton in 1733, but his tenure there was very short for in the following year he became yet another of the family to die prematurely.

In 1715 Dr. Robert Cocks was appointed rector of Bladon-cum-Woodstock in addition to Great Rollright and it was to Woodstock, seven miles north west of Oxford, that he now moved with his family. He certainly knew the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough whose vast Blenheim Palace had recently been erected nearby and it was probably through this connection that in about 1720 he became chaplain to the King's or 1st Regiment of Foot, an appointment he held until 1730.⁸⁷ A few of his sermons were published as pamphlets. One of 1721 was preached at Woodstock but of two others one was given at the Temple church in London in 1714 and the other at the Warwick Assizes of the following year. It appears that like his elder brother Richard he was a low church Whig though it is not known how much, if at all, he approved of his brother's pamphleteering efforts. He was also for some time Chancellor of the diocese of Gloucester.

It was in 1726 that he succeeded as the third baronet. As the estate went to his son Robert he himself remained at Woodstock where he died nine years later in February 1736, by which time Robert was his sole surviving son and so inheritor of the title.

SIR ROBERT II AND THE AFTERMATH

Robert II had been born about 1705 at Great Rollright, moving to Woodstock with his parents when he was ten. Though there seems no record it can be assumed that he had the normal upbringing of the family and attended Oriel College. Up to that time he cannot have expected to have much to do with Dumbleton; but on his uncle's death he found he had been left the entire estate. Within a few years he had settled down there and had married Elizabeth, the daughter of James Cholmeley of Easton in Lincolnshire. Children soon followed.

Unfortunately the family curse of premature deaths once more began to manifest itself. Their first child Robert III died in 1740 when he was ten, the next, Catherine, also survived first infancy. But the curiously named Chubb and daughter Elizabeth only lived for about a year, the last named being born soon after her father had succeeded to the title. In the decade 1740-1749 three more children, Anne, Charles and Dorothy, arrived to restore the numbers to four. Then appalling calamity struck. In the space of only seventeen disastrous days near the beginning of 1750 Sir Robert lost his wife Elizabeth, his only son

Charles and daughters Anne and Catherine of 'a fevered throat', ⁸⁸ from which one may deduce that something like a diphtheria epidemic swept through the household. Of all his family he was left with just one daughter, Dorothy, born the previous year.

Although at the time he was only forty-five he never remarried. He must have feared a repetition of such a savage blow had he done so and decided he could not face it, preferring to live quietly at Dumbleton with his growing daughter and to contemplate on what might have been. Yet even now fate had not finished with them, for in 1765 when he was out riding he was thrown from his horse and killed. The baronetcy was extinct. The sixteen year old Dorothy was left a considerable annual sum out of the estate ⁸⁹ but did not long enjoy it. On the 24 April 1767 while living in Cheltenham she too died. Her unmarried aunt Sarah was probably still living ⁹⁰ and was thus the very last survivor of a once numerous family; otherwise they had all gone with dreadful suddenness.

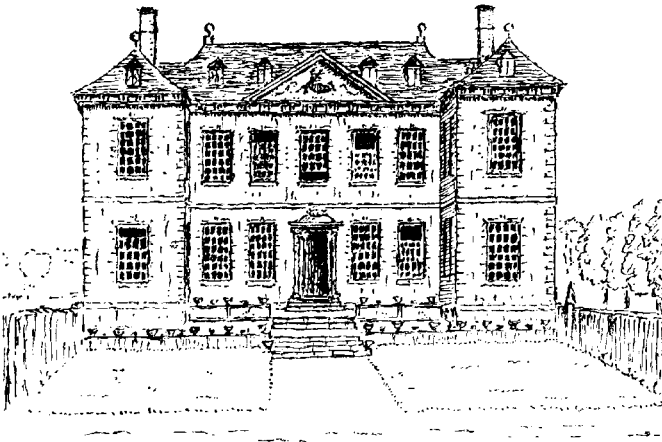
There is no portrait at Eastnor of any member of the last two generations, and that raises an intriguing question. Bigland, the Gloucestershire historian, records a tombstone in Deerhurst church to one of the children of Thomas and Mary Cox of Dumbleton. What they were doing there in the 1740s is a mystery, but there is a known connection from the early sixteenth century between the Deerhurst Cox's (their preferred spelling) and the Cocks' of Bishops Cleeve. W.J.Warry in his booklet *The Cocks Family of Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire* published in 1952, though wrongly dating the connection, mentions that a Sydenham Cox, a descendant of Thomas and Mary, had portraits of several of the baronets of Dumbleton in his possession when he died in 1914, so perhaps they may still exist somewhere.

Under the terms of Sir Richard's 1724 Will the property devolved upon the heir of Charles Cocks of Worcester in the person of his younger son John. Many years earlier John had married his cousin Mary Cocks, the heiress of Castleditch, and so was living there though now nearly seventy. Dumbleton thus came to him hard on the heels of his having inherited the Somers estates from his own nephew killed at St. Cast, making him a very wealthy man. Seven years later he was succeeded at Eastnor by his eldest son Charles who in 1772 was created a baronet and in 1784 elevated to the peerage with the recreated title of Baron Somers. Although six of his brothers were alive none went to live at Dumbleton. They could well have felt that there was some sort of curse on the place, the house peopled with the ghosts of young children. As it lay empty and decaying, in the 1780s Lord Somers gave orders for it to be partly pulled down (though another story has it that it was burnt down) and refitted as a farm.⁹¹

The gardens were now derelict, the house, less than a century old, gone for ever. Old Sir Richard would have been aghast at it all.

A steward had been left to run the estate but the impression is that the Cocks' did not have much personal interest in it and the village tended to stagnate.⁹² Only about a quarter of the still uninclosed parish was in tillage though the home farm was used by Castleditch as a stud for breeding their horses. We know that because after Charles had died in 1806 and his son John Somers Cocks had become the second baron, John's eldest son, the promising young cavalry officer the Hon. E.Charles Cocks, just before going abroad in 1808, wrote to his mother from Woodbridge to say that he was sending his servant back in charge of his unwanted horses and asking that grass be procured for them at Dumbleton. Next year on the march to Talavera he wrote home requesting his sister to find out how the horses were doing, especially the brood mares.⁹³

John soon decided that Castleditch was not a suitable house for a peer: it was too old and rambling. His ideas for replacing it were very grand indeed with the result that the huge pile known as Eastnor Castle arose nearby. Begun in high hopes, by the time it was nearing completion the economic climate had greatly changed and some of its interior detail had to finished in a temporary manner'. The whole enterprise had somewhat drained his capital resources and it was therefore not altogether surprising that in about 1822 he placed Dumbleton on the market. Two hundred and twenty years of Cocks ownership had come to an end. It was bought for £80,000 by the noted agriculturalist Edward Holland who removed all traces of house and garden, built a new farm and yet another manor house on a new site across the park which was then freshly landscaped⁹⁴.



Dumbleton House, c.1700

Today it is still possible to see a smooth plot in the park where the old house stood, and a little to the west of it there used to be a small pond with one curiously square corner, perhaps marking one of the angles of the garden 'canal'. The original manor house, now the Old Rectory, still stands, otherwise it is to the church that one must turn to be reminded of the Cocks' long tenure. Many of their memorials adorn its walls, from Lady Dorothy and Sir Charles Percy kneeling at their faldstool with Anne at their feet, right through to Sir Robert the last baronet whose simple tablet records that 'after sustaining with Christian fortitude and resignation the most Affecting Loss of an Amiable wife and three Children, in the Course of a few Days, by a cruel Distemper which Attaked his Family, had the Misfortune to Loose his own life, by a fall from his Horse in April 1765, and lies Buried near this place'.

ADDENDUM

[Through the kindness of Martyn Brown of Woodstock I have obtained further details of the Revd. Robert Cocks, the third baronet. The sources are the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, Vol. 12, for general remarks, and the Revd. E. Marshall's The Early History of Woodstock Manor (1875) for the obituary quotations.]

Robert Cocks was rector of Bladon-cum-Woodstock from 1715 until his death in 1735/6. He is recorded as having preached fairly frequently at Bladon between 1716 and 1718, repeating the same sermon several times. His patron at Woodstock where he was presented on 10 December 1715 was the Duke of Marlborough; he was a political adherent of the Duke, going so far in 1721 as preaching a sermon at election time reminding the townspeople of their duty to the Marlboroughs.

Robert and his family lived in the Rectory at Woodstock, a house built of local stone about thirty years earlier at the Park gate on a cruciform plan. In the early eighteenth century tower-like blocks were added in the eastern angles of the cross. It has recently been restored and is now the Bishop's House.

Locally he is chiefly remembered for having won £800 in the state lottery in 1719 all of which he donated for local charitable purposes including an annual sermon, distribution of bread to the poor and assistance to poor scholars seeking an education. These are all now incorporated with various other local charities so still exist albeit in a different form. Needless to say £800 was a very large sum in those days, worth several tens of thousands at present values.

Sir Robert died at Woodstock on 9 February 1735/6 and was buried there four days later in the chancel where there is a memorial stone to him. His abilities were not universally admired - he was once even described as a 'blockhead'. The London Evening Post in an obituary carried on 11th February says rather quaintly of him that he 'lived well respected by most people, and tho' not accounted the most eloquent preacher, his memory is somewhat valuable as a good-natured facetious neighbour. The Morning Post was more disparaging, but a letter written by 'C.J.' disagreed with that journal, speaking of him nonetheless as an 'elegant preacher'. He continued: 'He was not so formally orthodox as many of his brethren, but was more essentially so than most of them, for his charity was more extensive than any man's of his time.'

A number of his sermons are in the Rawlinson collection in the Bodleian Library, and it is Rawlinson who quotes from one. 'Single misfortunes never come alone, but the greatest misfortunes are ever followed by a greater.' When one recollects that the majority of his children died in their twenties, perhaps he had good reason for this pessimistic observation. He and his wife knew much personal grief.

1997

PART 4

14. THE EARLS SOMERS

JOHN AND EASTNOR CASTLE

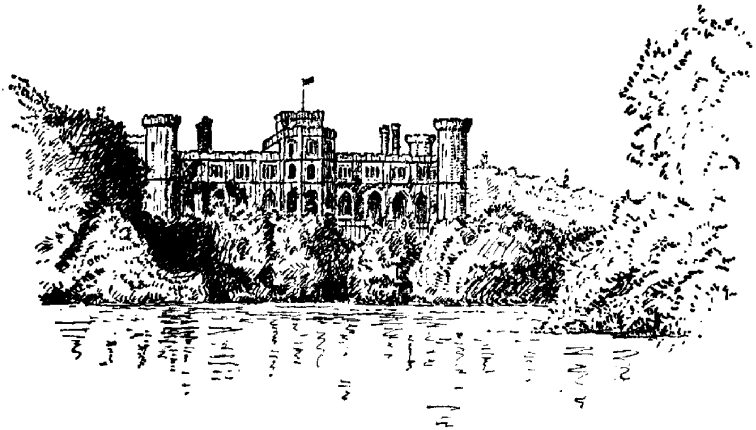
John Somers Cocks succeeded his father Charles as second Baron Somers of Evesham in 1806 when he was 46. He had entered parliament over twenty years earlier, becoming member for West Looe in 1782 and being returned for another Cornish 'rotten borough,' Grampound, through the influence of his uncle Lord Eliot two years later. In 1785 he married Margaret Nash, the daughter and heiress of the noted Worcestershire historian Dr. the Reverend Treadway Russell Nash of Strensham, and at the time of his succession had three sons and a daughter.

The careers of the eldest son Edward Charles, named without doubt after his own younger brother whom he had unsuccessfully tried to save from drowning as a schoolboy, and John Somers who was ultimately to succeed to the titles, will be described a little later. The third son James Somers was born in 1790 and entered the Church. He became a Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral and for twenty six years was a Canon of Worcester Cathedral where a window and tablet commemorate him. He died unmarried at Mathon in 1856 and was buried at Eastnor. The youngest child was a daughter Margaret Maria born in 1791. She also remained single, dying in 1853.

John had not long inherited the barony when he turned his mind to building anew at Eastnor. There were a number of reasons for this. First of all Castleditch was basically a house dating back some 300 years. It had had some alterations and additions in that period including changes around 1700¹ and the building of the Georgian wing already referred to nearly a century later, but it cannot have been very convenient and was in a low-lying situation. As further building-on seems to have been ruled out, it was natural that a higher site would be considered an advantage. (The tall chimneys on Castleditch go beyond mere ornament and suggest they were an attempt to overcome down draughts.) And in that age of prosperity and expansion, when a nobleman's residence was expected adequately to reflect his own position and importance in the world, John, Lord Somers could scarcely allow some of his acquaintances - mere gentry or at most baronets - to be better housed than he

was. Something on grand lines must be planned, 'for the master and house will be then on a scale,' as his daughter Margaret Maria wrote in a revealing line² when John himself laid the foundation stone of Eastnor Castle on 23 June 1812.

The foundations had begun to be marked out the year before to the plans of Sir Robert Smirke R.A., a distinguished architect who worked mostly in the Classical style. Here, however, he decided to build, in the currently romantic Gothic idiom, a baronial castle in the manner of Edward I, 'combining,' as was said, 'the comfort and convenience of a modern home with the stately grandeur of a feudal fortress'³ - qualities which later generations have found are not wholly compatible with one another.



Eastnor Castle

Grand it certainly was. Its length was no less than 225 feet with a breadth of 125, and it was partly surrounded by ramparts; each corner of the battlemented walls was flanked by a round tower with machicolated battlements, and in the centre a keep rose 90 feet above the ground floor level. During the height of its building some 250 men were employed with as many again in the quarries and ironworks. Several thousand tons of building stone were brought from the Forest of Dean - on muleback it is recorded at a cost of some £12,000, and even before completion 16,000 tons of limestone and mortar had been used, as well as 600 tons of wood cut from the estate. At one time the weekly costs and wages bill was running at the staggering total of £750.⁴ Inside the Castle the elegant decoration was designed on an equally lavish scale, though some of the work by Fox and Pugin was not carried out until a

later date. Many family portraits and treasures could now be advantageously displayed.

Outside, the terraces and gardens were laid out and added to from time to time. By about 1820 the work was sufficiently advanced for the family to have moved in, though it was not completed until 1824. Castleditch, which had seen so many generations of Cocks' come and go, was then pulled down, and by the expedient of damming the small stream a 22-acre lake was formed. There, on an island, part of the foundations of the old house may still be seen.

Near the beginning of all this activity John received a grievous blow upon learning that his eldest son and heir Edward Charles had been killed in the Peninsular War. He of course had two other sons, but it may have been this tragedy, or perhaps it was the sheer cost of it all, which later caused him to abandon some of the refinements planned for the Castle and its grounds. The economy of the country by 1820 was very different from that a decade earlier, and his grand design altogether can have cost him hardly less than £100,000.

In 1821, no doubt mainly for his support for the Hanoverian cause and for political services, though it is tempting to see in it too a reward for his massive building enterprise, he was honoured by being created Earl Somers and Viscount Eastnor. To his legal office of Recorder of Gloucester there were soon added the posts of High Steward of Hereford (which he resigned in 1835) and Lord Lieutenant of the county of Herefordshire itself. The family in the person of its senior representative had reached the zenith of position and power, and that perhaps in the very age above all others when the greatest importance was attached to such things.

Ten years later his wife Margaret died, and in his old age he married his cousin Jane, widow of the Reverend George Waddington and daughter of his uncle James Cocks. He himself died early in 1841 and was buried in the family vault in Eastnor Church. Jane outlived him by many years.

MAJOR THE HON. EDWARD CHARLES COCKS

Charles, eldest son of John and Margaret, lived for only twenty six years, yet in that short span established a reputation as a soldier of great brilliance. He was born in 1786, and although heir after his grandfather's death to the Castleditch estates, he chose the hazardous career of an army officer in the Napoleonic Wars. He was also MP for Reigate from about 1807 until his death or shortly before, and to begin with was frequently absent from his

regiment, the 16th Light Dragoons, attending parliamentary business in London.⁵

Then in 1808 orders came for his regiment to prepare for overseas service, and from that moment Charles was a changed man. Meticulous in the performance of his military duties as a Captain, he learnt Spanish and soon mastered that language. He actually sailed with the 14th Light Dragoons who embarked first but rejoined his own regiment, albeit briefly, soon after they arrived in Portugal.

He quickly gained a name for himself as an outstanding commander of outpost troops during the retreat of the Spanish and British armies to Torres Vedras, and even wrote an able treatise on the employment and training of cavalry. Rejoining his regiment before the advance on Talavera, he obtained command of a squadron in the field when his commander was killed during the battle. By now he had come to Wellington's notice and was frequently employed in special services to gain intelligence of the enemy. It must have been at about this time that he transferred to the 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, remaining with them until he was killed.

There was no doubt in his mind that he had chosen the right career. Writing to his father (by then Lord Somers) in September 1811 he begs him to dispose of his Reigate seat in parliament, saying that it was too valuable a gift to be thrown away on someone who derived neither use nor amusement from it. 'I wish to be a soldier and all a soldier and only a soldier. Happy shall I ever think myself in having selected a profession so congenial to my disposition . . .', and he thanks his father for having placed no obstacles in his way.

A year later, now a Major, he took part in the siege of Burgos. Lord Wellington ordered him to drive the enemy from some advanced works, upon the successful accomplishment of which he was chosen to lead one of the night attacks on the hornwork of the Castle of Burgos. He so distinguished himself in this task that Wellington recommended him for the rank of Brevet Lt. Colonel. A few days later he made arrangements to purchase the Lt. Colonelcy of the 79th, but within a fortnight he was killed during the continuing siege of the fortress. 'At three in the morning of the 8th (October),' wrote the Commander-in-Chief to the Secretary of State, 'we had the misfortune to lose the Honourable Major Cocks of the 79th, who was Field Officer of the trenches and was killed in the act of rallying the troops, who had been driven in I consider his loss as one of the greatest importance to this army and His Majesty's Service.' Writing to Lord Somers, he said that he considered that Charles 'possessed acquirements, and was endowed with qualities, to become

one of the greatest ornaments of his profession,' an opinion shared by other distinguished officers who lamented his loss.

He was buried with full military honours in the presence of Wellington himself who is said to have been unable to hide his feelings on this sad occasion. Back at Eastnor Lord Somers placed a memorial to his loved and gallant son on the obelisk just erected high in Eastnor Park

THE SECOND EARL

After Charles' death at Burgos his brother John became heir to the family title and estates. Only 18 months younger, he too served for a while in the Peninsular War, and as James is known to have been travelling in Spain in 1812 it seems that all three brothers at one time were out there together.

In 1815 he married a distant cousin, the 20-year-old Lady Caroline Yorke, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, and they had one son Charles Somers and four daughters. The eldest daughter Caroline Margaret was Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria near the beginning of her reign, and in 1849 married the Reverend and Honourable Charles Leslie Courtenay, a Canon of Windsor and Chaplain to the Queen, and a son of the Earl of Devon of Powderham Castle. He also held the living of Bovey Tracey in Devon, and memories linger there today of the impressive style in which this particular incumbent and his wife lived - of their innumerable servants and of their driving in the carriage between the two churches preceded by an outrider sounding a horn. She died in 1894.

The next daughter, Harriet Catherine, married Francis Richard Wegg-Prosser of Belmont, Herefordshire. Her younger sister Isabella Jemima died aged 10, and the youngest of all, Emily Maria, became a Sister of the Society of St. Margaret at East Grinstead.

Meanwhile their father had become Viscount Eastnor in 1821 on the creation of the Earldom. He was a Major in the Worcestershire Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, and that the holding of such a position was no sinecure may be judged from the fact that in 1817 the mayor and magistrates of Worcester sent him an urgent summons to muster his regiment immediately 'for the oppression of a riot now vigorously acting'. Duties in aid of the civil power are always unpleasant, and in this instance particularly so as the disturbance, known as the Freeman's Riots, was occasioned by the enclosure of commons on Pitchcroft Ham so that the men's sympathy must have lain with the rioters. Their intervention was not too successful as next day another

summons for help was issued by the City 'for the ultimate suppression of the renewed grievances.'⁶

John was over 50 when he came into the Earldom on his father's death. He immediately assumed the surname of Somers-Cocks by royal licence, the only branch of the family formally to do so. He also succeeded his father as Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Herefordshire and in addition was Colonel of the Hereford Militia.

He died aged 64 leaving Caroline and four surviving children, and was buried at Eastnor with all the pomp befitting the passing of an Earl in those High Victorian days.

CHARLES SOMERS, THE LAST EARL, AND HIS DAUGHTERS

John and Caroline's only son had been born in 1819 and christened Charles Somers. He was 21 when he took the title of Viscount Eastnor at his grandfather's death and became MP for Reigate, a seat which he held only until 1847.

From his mother in particular he had inherited considerable artistic talent and an enquiring mind; politics cannot have held much interest for him. He was a talented painter who might have become a professional artist had it not been for his mother's strong disapproval conveyed in her dictum that 'it was not considered the thing for a gentleman to draw too well like an artist; a gentleman might do many things pretty well, but nothing too well.'⁷ He was thus obliged to remain a gifted amateur and connoisseur of the beautiful, travelling widely in Europe and the Near East in search of new interests and new experiences.

In the 1840's his parliamentary duties did not prevent him becoming a member of the Travellers' Club, exploring and sketching the ruins of ancient Nineveh and Babylon with Mr. Layard, and visiting Greece with Robert Curzon. At home he was friendly with such figures as Ruskin and Turner, Thackeray and Watts, and arranged for the further decoration of the interior of Eastnor Castle, the construction of the terraces and the collection from distant parts of the notable specimens of trees which now adorn the grounds.

One day in 1849 he particularly admired G. F. Watts' portrait of a great beauty, Virginia Pattle, hung in the Royal Academy's exhibition that year. Being precluded as a gentleman from painting her, he decided to wed her

instead. His proposal was accepted and they were married in the following year.

Virginia came of a remarkable family. Her father James Pattle was a man of tremendous energy and force of character, a wealthy Indian merchant known as Jim Blazes to his friends and as the biggest liar in India to others. He had married the daughter of a French emigré and had seven daughters who inherited their father's vitality in full measure. Virginia was the youngest, and her marriage to Charles was a very happy one, sharing as she did so many of her husband's interests and his love of beauty and travel.

Travelling indeed seems to have been an incessant feature of their lives for many years to come. Between marriage and the birth of their first daughter Isabella in August 1851 they had been to Madeira. Between that event and Adeline's birth in the following year a visit to the Bedouin Arabs had been fitted in, and soon after he had come into the Earldom in 1852 their third and last child Virginia was born. Even when in England Charles and his wife seem constantly to have been moving between Eastnor, Reigate, London and elsewhere. He served as Lord-in-Waiting from 1853 to 1857, and was in attendance when Napoleon III with the Empress Eugénie visited the Queen and the Prince Consort in 1855, being presented with a snuff-box by the French couple to mark this successful occasion.

Visits were paid to Europe, some in company with his friend Mr. Holford of Westonbirt, when he eagerly, but with discrimination, bought many valuable objects to beautify Eastnor. In 1856 and 1857 he was in Rome and in Mytilene, yachting in the Mediterranean with Sir Coutts Lindsay, and sketching with Edward Lear.

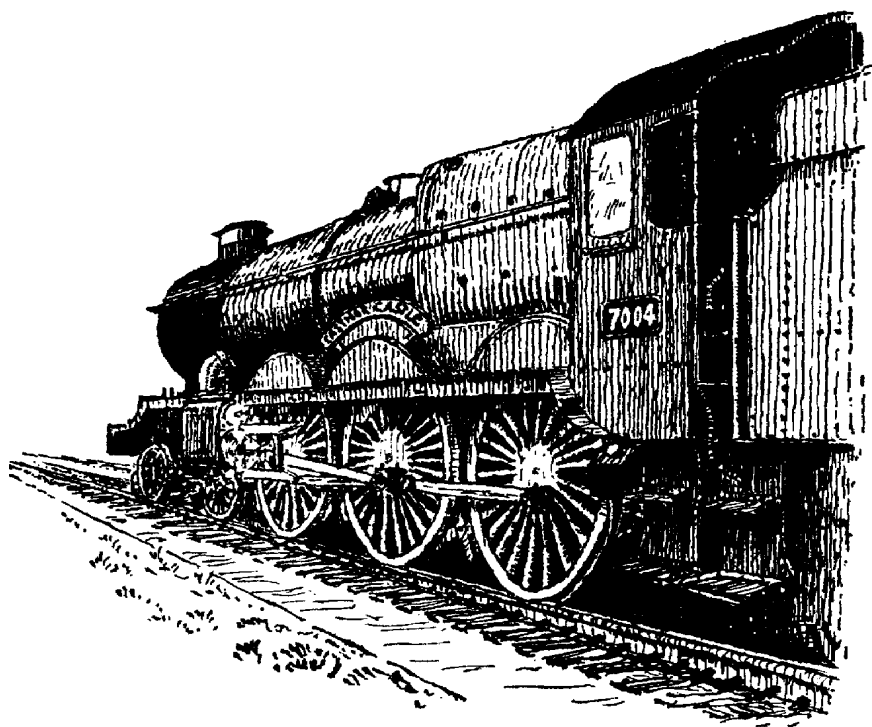
During one of these trips abroad their youngest daughter Virginia died of diphtheria, and thereafter on their mother's orders the other two daughters were subjected to an even more oppressively sheltered upbringing than had been their lot before. They did not see much of their parents but were looked after by a long succession of governesses who, when not helping to teach them, were taking them around between the various family seats or occasionally visiting the seaside.

Isabel had not long come out of the schoolroom when she became engaged to Lord Henry Somerset, the second son of the Duke of Beaufort. She found Badminton a vastly different establishment from Eastnor Castle, and on her visits there after marriage she was always a favourite with the Duke and Duchess. Unfortunately after several years she was separated from her husband, and was given the legal custody of her son only after a Court action

which gave rise to distressing public scandal. Thereafter a large section of society cut her. It was this ostracism which led her into various women's movements by which she was so well known in later life. Her sister Adeline married in 1876 George William Russell, Marquess of Tavistock, who succeeded to the Dukedom of Bedford in 1891. She too became a well-known public figure before her death in 1920.

Their father, 3rd Earl and 4th Baron Somers, died in 1883 in his early sixties, and with his passing the earldom became extinct. The barony devolved upon Philip Reginald Cocks, his first cousin of one generation earlier, being the eldest surviving son of one of the 1st Baron's sons. Meanwhile Isabel (or Lady Henry Somerset as she was known) who had been living at Reigate found herself the owner of all the family property, and for the next seven or eight years went to live at Eastnor to try to cope with the management of the estates for which she had had no training. She became more and more interested in social work, particularly in the temperance movement and in moral issues in which she was far in advance of her time. She was a noted speaker much in demand both in this country and America, and a tireless worker in combating social evils. Though her visits to Eastnor became less in later years, she was a great benefactress to the parish and opened the Castle to visitors on certain days.

She died in 1921 aged 69, only ten years after her mother, Virginia Countess Somers. The estates passed then to Arthur Somers Cocks, 6th Baron Somers and great-nephew of the 5th Baron.



The other Eastnor Castle



COPYWRITE

15. THE BARONS SOMERS

THE HON. PHILIP JAMES COCKS AND FAMILY

Charles Cocks, the 1st Baron Somers, had had two sons by his second marriage to Anne Pole of Stoke Damarel, the elder of whom was born in 1774 and christened Philip James. He joined the 1st Foot Guards (later the Grenadier Guards) in 1790, and like the sons of his elder half-brother John, he served with distinction in the earlier part of the Peninsular War. Before this he had been with military expeditions to the Continent, was present at the Battle of Limelles, and by 1806 when he took part in the expedition to Sicily he had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He commanded the 1st battalion Grenadiers during the retreat to Corunna under Sir John Moore, but appears to have retired in the following year⁸

He went to live at Stepple Hall, a house just north of Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire, having in 1812 married Frances Herbert of Brewsterfield, co. Kerry, and by her had four sons and a daughter. He also became MP for Reigate, probably in succession to his nephew after the latter's death at Burgos. He died in 1857.

Their eldest child Charles Richard Somers entered the Church when grown up and became rector of Neen Savage, close by Stepple Hall, and vicar of Wolverley which then lay in Shropshire but was later transferred to Worcestershire. The two parishes are some 10 miles apart so that a curate must have been largely responsible for church affairs at Neen Savage. He did not marry, but lived most of his life at Wolverley. Owing to his dark complexion he was known to the family as Black Charles. It is said of him that once when travelling on a Rhine steamer his hat fell overboard. A German passenger was misguided enough to laugh at this mishap, whereupon Charles dropped him overboard too - which, if true, is certainly a striking example of the Church Militant. He died in 1876.

Their second son Philip Reginald, born in 1815, also chose a military career, joining the Royal Artillery and ultimately rising to the rank of Colonel in that regiment. When he was 44 he married Camilla, the only daughter of the Reverend William Newton of Old Cleeve in Somerset, but they had no children. They lived at Cliffords Mesne, Taynton, a village near Newent in

Gloucestershire, and after the death of the 3rd Earl Somers in 1883 he was the senior male representative of the family and thus became the 5th Baron for some years before his death in 1899.

The only daughter Frances was the next to be born. Usually known as Fanny she married in 1847 Philip Allen of Liscon Hill, co. Cork, who at one time was the Treasurer of Natal, South Africa, and had several children before her husband's death in 1866. She lived latterly in London.

The other two sons, Arthur Herbert and John James Thomas Somers, both married and had children. Arthur was born at Brand Lodge, Colwall near Ledbury in 1819 and went to India when he was only 18, entering the Bengal Civil Service. Here he quickly made his mark and was one of the administrators sent to Napier after his conquest of Scinde in 1844, earning praise from him for his abilities in that direction. On the outbreak of the second Sikh war in 1848 he was attached to Lord Gough's headquarters as political officer, and in spite of his civilian status became involved in the unfortunate battle of Chillianwallah, as a result of which he earned for himself a mention in dispatches. Amongst other adventures he had a remarkable experience in the battle of Gujerat. A Sikh horseman was threatening to attack the Commander-in-Chief and his escort, whereon Arthur rode off from the staff and engaged the Sikh in a successful hand-to-hand fight though he himself was wounded. Lord Gough was so impressed that he presented him with his own sword and awarded him the Punjaub War Medal for his services. In 1860 he was made a CB and three years later retired. It has been said of him that his talent for administration and the extraordinary affection he won from the Indians would have enabled him to have reached the top of his profession had he so desired it.⁹

In 1847 he had married Anna Marion Jessie Eckford, the second daughter of Major-General John Eckford CB, and upon his return to England they went to live at Dunley Hall, a few miles south of Stourport in Worcestershire. He died in London in 1881 leaving three surviving sons and three daughters, the eldest son John Patrick Somers having died unmarried in 1875 after serving in Burma and elsewhere in the 67th Regiment. His widow lived until 1914.

The youngest child of the Hon. Philip James Cocks was John James Thomas Somers born in 1820 who entered the Church and became rector of the parish of Shevocke in Cornwall. His ministry there ended abruptly in 1856 when he joined the Roman Catholic Church. He did not remain a priest, but

married Anne Simpson, daughter of the rector of Horstead, Sussex some eighteen months afterwards and had six children - of whom more later.



Col. The Rt. Hon. Philip, 5th. Lord Somers

ARTHUR HERBERT COCKS' DESCENDANTS

Each of Arthur's children and the sons' descendants will now be considered in turn. His eldest surviving children were his three daughters, Frances Rhoda, Caroline Yorke and Mary Dorothy, born between 1850 and 1857, all of whom were very long-lived. The first-mentioned married in 1872 Edward Wallace Evans of Alfrick Court and Whitbourne Hall near Suckley in Worcestershire, and had a son Edward. After her husband's death in 1901 she remarried in 1903 Frederic de Burgh Newington of Newbury, dying in 1931.

The middle daughter Caroline married in 1880 Robert William Banner who died in 1903, leaving two children, Isabel and Cecily. She herself lived until 1949. The youngest daughter Dorothy married in 1895 Dr John Reginald Harmer, Bishop of Adelaide, and from 1905 until 1930 Bishop of Rochester,

and had a daughter Adeline. Dorothy died in 1949 shortly before her elder sister.

The eldest surviving son was born in 1861 and named Herbert Haldane Somers. After Sandhurst he entered the Coldstream Guards on the influence of his distant cousin Charles Cocks of Treverbyn Vean, Cornwall, later transferring to the 4th battalion the Worcestershire Regiment and rising to the rank of Captain. He took part in the Egyptian campaign of 1882 and fought in the battle of Tel-el-Kebir.

A year later he married Blanche Margaret Standish, daughter of Major Herbert Clogstoun VC, and granddaughter of the eldest of the Pattle sisters (the youngest being Virginia Countess Somers). They had three children of whom the eldest, Ishbel Joan, died when just one year old. Adeline Verena Isabel was born next in 1886, marrying in 1905 Herbert, Lord Hyde, afterwards 6th Earl of Clarendon who for many years held the position of Lord Chamberlain and having two sons and a daughter.

The youngest child, Arthur Herbert Tennyson Somers was born in 1887 at The Briary, Freshwater, Isle of Wight where his parents lived, and was only 7 when his father died from injuries received as the result of an earlier fall from his horse near Worcester. On 26 December 1895, exactly a year later, his mother died too. When his great-uncle Philip Reginald, Lord Somers, of Cliffords Mesne died in 1899, he succeeded him as the 6th Baron at the age of 12. After Charterhouse and New College, Oxford, he joined the Life Guards in 1906, retiring six years later but soon rejoining when the Great War broke out. He served with distinction, transferring first to the Leicestershire Yeomanry in 1917 as a Major and then to the Tank Corps, ending the war as Lieutenant-Colonel and having been awarded the MC and DSO and made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur. In 1921 he married Daisy Finola, daughter of Captain Bertram Charles Meeking of the 10th Hussars, and at the same time inherited Eastnor Castle and estates upon the death of Lady Henry Somerset. Their daughter Elizabeth Violet Virginia was born in the following year.

After being Lord in Waiting to the King for two years, in 1926 he was made KCMG on being appointed Governor of Victoria, Australia, a post which he held until 1931, acting for a short while as Governor-General. Soon after his return to England he became Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire. A man of many talents and interests, he was at one time joint-Master of the Ledbury Hunt, and captained the Worcestershire County cricket side, later becoming Deputy Chief Scout and succeeding as Chief Scout when Lord Baden-Powell died in 1941. He himself died in 1944, leaving his widow Finola Lady Somers, who was

made CBE in 1950, and his daughter Elizabeth who inherited the Eastnor estates. The title then devolved upon Arthur Percy Somers, the only living brother of his own father.

After war service in the W.R.N.S. Elizabeth married Major Benjamin Hervey-Bathurst, son of Sir Frederick and Lady Hervey-Bathurst of Somborne Park, Hampshire, in 1947, and they had two sons James Felton Somers and George Arthur Somers born in 1949 and 1952. They lived in a wing of Eastnor Castle, Elizabeth dying in 1986.

The second surviving son of Arthur Herbert, Henry Lawrence Somers born in 1862, was destined to enter the Church. He spent some early years after his ordination pioneering in Canada¹⁰ and while a curate he met an American girl, Deas Thusnelda, daughter of Llewellyn Haskall of Orange, N.J., to whom - in spite of her well-founded misgivings about the coldness of English rectories and vicarages - he was married in 1891. Their first and third children, Lawrence Somers and Dorothy, both died when only a few hours old; the middle child, Reginald Somers, was born in 1894 and grew to manhood, while his father successively became rector of Staple Fitzpaine (1893 - 1895) and Street in Somerset (1895 - 1902), from there going on to be rector of Eastnor until moving to the vicarage at Edenbridge in 1907 where he remained until coming back to Eastnor in 1915.

When war broke out Reginald was a student at Aspatria Agricultural College and on his way to spend a vacation in Canada. He immediately returned and enlisted as a trooper in West Somerset Yeomanry, later being commissioned in the Somerset Light Infantry and going to the front in 1915. In January 1918 he married Flora Margaret, daughter of Henry King Sturdee of Norton Fitzwarren, but a few months later, soon after winning the MC as a Staff Captain, he was killed near Poperinghe and buried in Lijssenhoeck Cemetery. His father purchased Midsummer Hill in the Malverns from Lord Somers and gave it to the National Trust as a memorial to his son - the third, and possibly fourth, Cocks to be killed in action in the service of his Country.

Henry remained for some years more at Eastnor and then moved to Devon where he became vicar of Instow before retiring there. He died early in 1940 and was survived by Daisy for about six more years.

Arthur Herbert's youngest son, Arthur Percy Somers born in 1864, after being educated at Charterhouse also went to Canada where he farmed from 1883 to 1890 in the north-west, and from 1893 to 1900 in Colorado, U.S.A. During this latter period he married Benita, daughter of Major Luther

Sabin of the United States Army, and their first daughter Dorothy Helen was born out there, followed by Helen Judith. After leaving Colorado he returned to England to become agent of the Eastnor Estates until 1909, and during this period their son John Patrick Somers was born. In 1911 he returned to Canada once more to farm in Ontario but in 1915 he enlisted in the 198th Canadian Regiment and served two years with them before becoming a Sub-Commissioner of the Board of Agriculture until the end of the War. He eventually returned to England, and when Arthur, 6th Baron Somers, died in 1944 the title came to him when he was aged about 80. His wife Benita died in 1950, and nearly three years later he himself died.

Of his three children, Dorothy Helen did not marry and died in 1963; Helen Judith married firstly, in 1949, Everett Malen of Gloucester, Massachusetts and secondly, Earl G. Henry of San Francisco. John, composer and music teacher, succeeded his father as 8th Baron Somers in 1953. He had married Barbara Marianne, daughter of Charles Southall of Norwich, in 1935, and after her death in 1959 he married Dora Helen, daughter of the late John Mountfort of Sydney, New South Wales, in 1961. She died in 1993 and John in February 1995.

THE FOREIGN OFFICE COCKS'

Under this heading will be considered the children of John James Thomas Somers who, it will be recalled, had married Anne Simpson in 1858. They had two sons and four daughters, the eldest of whom was Agnes Mary born in 1859 who married William Arkwright of Sutton Scarsdale near Chesterfield. She died in 1940. Next to arrive was the elder son Philip Alphonso Somers, who will be referred to below, followed by the other three daughters: Jane Margaret born in 1865 who became a nun, Frances Paulina born a year later who in 1882 married Francis Egerton Harding of Market Drayton in Shropshire but lived only another five years, and Anne Hariot Mary born in 1867 who took as her husband Alphonse, Baron Despine of Aix-les-Bains, dying in 1953. Their son Jean was killed in the Great War while serving in the French Army.

The youngest child was Charles Sebastian Somers born in 1870. He followed his elder brother into the Foreign Office in 1894 and acted as Third Secretary in the Diplomatic Service a few years later when he was made secretary to the British delegation attending the International Industrial Property Conference. Next he was secretary to the Special Mission to China which met at Shanghai, and after promotion to Acting Second Secretary he

was made a CMG for his services on this China Mission. His other posts included that of Private Secretary to Earl Percy in the Foreign Office, and Assistant Secretary in the Indian Forest Department from 1904 to 1906. After retirement he lived for many years with his sister Agnes Arkwright in London. He was unmarried and died in 1951.

Philip was born in 1862 and entered the Foreign Office when in his early twenties, some nine years before his younger brother. In 1907 he was appointed Consul General in Lisbon where he remained until 1918, having meanwhile been made a CMG, before transferring to a similar post in Naples where he served until his retirement in 1926.

He married Gwenllian Blanche Williams, daughter of David Williams of Hirwaun, Glamorganshire, in 1906, and had a son John Sebastian Somers born in the following year. His artistic wife, who was afflicted by deafness, had the remarkable ability of being able to lip-read fluently in four languages and passably in two more, and outlived Philip, who died in 1940, by seventeen years.

Educated at Ampleforth and Balliol College, Oxford, John also joined the Foreign Office, and after various lesser posts served as H.M. Consul General in Munich from 1954 until 1959, when, like his father, he became Consul General in Naples. A gifted pianist and musician, he was made CBE in 1959 and CVO two years later, but died in 1964 in Naples. He had married Marjorie Olive Weller in 1946 and they had three children - Philip Sebastian Somers born in 1948 (who became the 9th Baron Somers in 1995), Anne Gwenllian Somers in 1950 and Frances Mary Somers in 1953.

COPYWRITE

16. NEW ZEALAND

REGINALD COCKS AND HIS SON HENRY

The younger of the two sons of Charles, first Baron Somers, by his second marriage was born in 1777 and was christened Reginald in honour of his maternal grandfather Reginald Pole of Stoke Damarel. In 1802 he married his first cousin Anne, the second daughter of James Cocks the banker, and their only child Henry Somers was born in the following year. Unfortunately Reginald suffered from tuberculosis, a disease which it seems he passed on to his wife. At all events he went to Cornwall to try to recuperate in its milder climate but died there aged 28 in 1805, and Anne lived only just over another four years.¹¹

Henry was already being looked after by his uncle John, the second Baron, at Castleditch, and this arrangement now became permanent. He was thus brought up with his cousins and witnessed the erection of Eastnor Castle above the old house. On reaching manhood he took Holy Orders and was given the family living of Leigh in Worcestershire which had come to them from the Worcester branch in the previous century. In 1829 he married Frances Mercy, daughter of Henry Bromley of Abberley Lodge in Worcestershire (even a hundred years ago it was unusual to marry far out of the district), and they had eight children all told.

The eldest son Henry Bromley is referred to fully below. The other three were named John Somers, Reginald and James, but virtually nothing is known about them. Reginald and James almost certainly died young, while John is known to have lived until 1856. The two youngest daughters Margaret Anne and Mary Millicent also appear to have died prematurely (T.B. was evidently still a terrible scourge), but the eldest daughters both married, Elizabeth Harriet firstly in 1855 to Captain Hill James Thomas Tomkinson of the Royal Artillery and secondly in 1861 to John Bagnall of Marshfield co. Tipperary, and Jane, also in 1855, to the Reverend Henry Stone. Then in 1856 when his surviving children were grown-up, Henry Somers Cocks died at Leigh.

HENRY BROMLEY COCKS AND HIS FAMILY

Like so many in his family Henry Bromley had a weak chest, and as a boy was considered delicate and was somewhat spoilt. He went up to Oxford, obtained an MA in classics and theology and in due course was ordained. His was a many-sided character in which arrogance, impulsiveness, charm and generosity all joined. Succeeding to his father's calling he might have been expected to settle down to the life of a country parson in a fairly conventional way; his life in fact turned out completely differently.

In July 1861, when at Powick in Worcestershire where he seems to have been curate, he married Harriet Elizabeth, the daughter of Colonel Philip Wodehouse (grandfather of P.G.Wodehouse) who ultimately bore him fifteen children. But it so happened that the Church of England not long before had formed a Society to pioneer a Church settlement at Christchurch, New Zealand. Taking an active part in its affairs was Earl Somers, and it was natural, therefore, that the family (who were also connected by marriage to the Godley family) ¹² should have taken a keen interest in the project. Henry at once decided to go out there and promptly put himself, his wife and his baggage aboard the first available ship. Surviving the hazards of such a sailing voyage they duly arrived in 1862 when a daughter Lucy Elizabeth was born.



HENRY BROMLEY COCKS

Christchurch was still in its infancy with only a comparatively few reasonable buildings and shops. Though the cathedral was far from complete, Bishop Harper had been sent out to put the new diocese on a proper footing, and to him Henry offered his services. He was soon appointed the first curate of all Christchurch and he built himself a large wooden house, part Georgian part Victorian named Abberley after his mother's home. Here he stayed for rather more than a year before deciding to return to England again. This was in 1863 and once more the long and uncomfortable journey was accomplished successfully, Henry returning to Powick and soon having a son called Reginald Wodehouse to swell the family.

He then went to his father's old living at Leigh where he remained for nearly nine years while his health deteriorated. Here a further seven children were born, Frances Mercy (Mercy) in 1864 being followed at yearly intervals by Henry Somers, Philip John and Basil who survived only a few weeks. After this there was a gap until 1870 when James Bromley arrived but died immediately. The last to be born at Leigh were Frederic Armine and Edgar Bromley in 1871 and 1872. There was thus a five year gap between the elder and younger parts of the family. Probably because of his poor health Henry decided next year finally to emigrate to New Zealand and to give up the living of Leigh. Yet again the family now with seven children and a nurse - packed everything up and sailed away on the long voyage across the world.

On his arrival Henry found Christchurch in a more advanced state of building though far from properly developed. A large area of shacks where numerous poor lived had sprung up on the outskirts and was known as Sydenham. Just beyond lay the more fashionable area called Cashmere Hills, and Henry was offered this combined parish. He accepted and built himself a new house at the foot of the Hills which he called Burfield. It was a square, wooden building in a somewhat ill-proportioned Regency style with about sixty acres of land bordered on one side by a stream and on the other by the hills, the house standing at the end of a quarter-mile drive beside which he planted oaks. This remained the family home for about fifty years.

Between his return and 1882 a further six children were born, starting with two daughters Harriet Lydia Muriel (Muriel) and Mary Millicent, then Charles Richard, Katherine Agatha and Monica, and finally Arthur Eustace who was thus nearly twenty years younger than his oldest brother. To look after this large brood a nurse called West was employed, a fierce Welsh woman at least in her more active days - who had come out from Leigh with the family.

Meanwhile their father was employed in trying to minister to the needs of a parish which consisted in part of what was little better than a slum. One feels that his forceful character was well suited to such a task. At home he could live and entertain with his wife in some style when required, yet he became a legend in his lifetime in Sydenham. There he could and did rage and storm at drunkenness and other evils, putting, quite literally, the fear of God into those whom he felt needed it, yet at other times dispensing help and generosity in food, fuel and clothing to the needy on a scale bordering upon the heroic. He was an excellent preacher with a large congregation who loved him.



Burfield

But his children saw a different side. To them he was severe and almost mean in the matter of food and clothing, and the elder half of the family recalled the difficult time they had when their mother was still busy with babies and they were bullied by West and domineered by their father around whom the whole life of the household had to revolve. The boys went to school at Christ's College which was based on the pattern of an English public school. While others were driven there in smart equipages of varying sorts, the Cocks' to their shame were driven on wet days by their father (who always wore a check dressing-gown-like garment and a top hat green with age for the run) in a second hand milk-float which he had picked up as a bargain off a bankrupt dairyman and from which the dairyman's name had never been removed.

Innumerable stories are told about him. On one occasion he had retired to bed early on Christmas Eve when he was awoken by some carol singers beneath his window. Seizing his stock-whip which he always kept handy he ran shouting down the stairs and out onto the drive. The singers heard him coming and bolted. Henry pursued them in nightgown and tasselled nightcap cracking his whip and caught up with them by the gate, by which time

his temper had so far cooled that he invited them back into Burfield and entertained them with food and drink.

The most famous story of him concerns his dealings with a ne'er-do-well who drank away his wages and caused misery and hardship to his family. Severe admonitions and rebukes brought repentance lasting no more than a day or two. Then one evening Henry was walking back near his home when he saw a body dangling from a rope tied to a tree. Rushing over he took the weight off the noose only to find that it was the drunkard who was not only still alive but still conscious. It was too good an opportunity to miss. Grasping him by the legs he there and then preached a hell-fire sermon, letting the man's weight come back on the noose whenever he wished to emphasise a point. This done he cut him down, helped him home to bed and ordered provision and fuel on a lavish scale for the starving family. As an immediate contribution he obtained a three course meal from a local hotel for them, but ironically the man was unable to eat it as his throat was far too sore. Hardly surprisingly conversion this time was permanent and his family prospered accordingly.

Henry's eldest son Reginald was sent to Oxford where, unfortunately, as a reaction from home life he lived in such style that he quickly ran up debts and borrowed freely from his English relatives. Eventually the College authorities had to take action and his father came to hear of it. Enraged by his conduct he paid his debts and cut him off with a shilling. After staying with his grandmother in Cheltenham, Reginald went to Mexico and Canada, after which he disappeared from his family's knowledge. Many years later he was traced, through a book he had written, to New Orleans University where he was a much respected professor of botany. He died in 1926 leaving his wife with almost no money, but a memorial was erected and an avenue of trees planted to his memory.

After this no further sons were sent over to England. Henry Somers, the next oldest, a fine athlete with an excellent brain unhappily died of T.B. quite young in 1897, while a younger son Edgar Bromley lived only until 1900 and Mary Millicent until 1906. Henry himself resigned his living due to worsening health, and not long afterwards in 1894, when walking to a farm he had bought on the other side of Christchurch where his son Armine was manager, he suddenly collapsed and died within a few hours. All Sydenham mourned his passing.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Harriet continued to live at Burfield until her death many years later in 1920. In the early part of the century there were therefore surviving only four sons and four daughters of the original fifteen children, of whom Mercy had married Walter Septimus Fisher in 1894 and had two sons and three daughters. The other daughters did not marry, remaining at Burfield until their mother's death when they moved to Wroxton Terrace in Fendalton. Muriel, who died in 1953, was for many years Regional Commissioner for Girl Guides. The last surviving daughter Monica died in 1964.

The youngest son Arthur Eustace never married. He made a career with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company and lived until 1956. Charles Richard, the next youngest, married Fanny Hubbard of Dunedin in 1926 and had a son Charles Bromley who entered the legal profession.



Philip John Cocks



Fredrick Armine Cocks

Armine's wife was Mary Louisa Parsons and they had four sons born between 1899 and 1905 - Douglas Edgar West, Armine Christopher Somers, Charles John Somers and Patrick Somers all of whom married and lived in Christchurch. They in turn had children, details of whom are given in the accompanying table. Armine himself was the last survivor of Henry's children, dying when he was only a month short of his ninety-sixth birthday.

The eldest son John entered the Church, holding in turn a number of livings near Christchurch, becoming an honorary Canon of the Cathedral and a Fellow of his old school Christ's College. In 1895 he married Mary Hannah,

daughter of John Gebbie a farmer of Little River in Canterbury Province, and they had four sons and two daughters, one of the latter dying in infancy. In 1932 he came over to England and became rector of Clovelly in north Devon, holding the living until 1938, in which year he died

The eldest of his sons was christened Henry Bromley and became an engineer; the next was John Reginald, followed by Edgar Basil and Hubert Maurice. All married and, except for Basil, another engineer who lived latterly in England and who died early in 1967, had children, some of whom are themselves married with children. (Full details will be found in the appropriate genealogical table.) Hubert Maurice entered the Church and is an honorary Canon of Christchurch Cathedral like his father before him, Archdeacon of Christchurch and Assistant to the Bishop. As one of his own sons, Michael Dearden Somers, has followed his father's calling, there have now been five successive generations of fathers and sons serving the Church.

John's only surviving daughter Edith May Somers was the youngest of the family. She was with the New Zealand nursing service in the Middle East in the second World War and later lived at Baltonsborough in Somerset in England dying in 1991

It will thus be seen that by far the greater number of Cocks' alive today have their home in New Zealand.

COPYWRITE

17.THE BANKING BRANCH

FAMILY LIFE AND THE BANK, 18TH CENTURY

Just before Christmas in the year 1737 a seventh son and ninth child was born at Castleditch, Eastnor to John and Mary Cocks. He was christened Thomas Sommers - Thomas since this was always a favourite name, and Sommers in honour of his paternal grandmother. The adoption of a second Christian name, unusual in those days, was doubtless in order to distinguish him from another son named Thomas who had died in infancy.¹³

The eldest child Charles was already twelve; the youngest was not to be born for another six years. With a young family of ten boys and two girls growing up, Castleditch must have been a lively place for years on end. In spite of her other preoccupations their mother nevertheless found time to teach all the children herself in the arts of reading and writing, and 'trained them up most diligently in the way they should go, by example as well as by precept'.¹⁴ She was a very remarkable woman.

Thomas had finished his education and was nearly twenty when a neighbour, Francis Biddulph of Ledbury, asked John if he thought any of his sons could assist him in starting a banking business in London.¹⁵ James aged 23 agreed to do so and in 1757 they began in a small way in premises at St. Paul's Churchyard. Two years later they moved to Wallingford House at no. 43 Charing Cross, once the residence of the Duke of Buckingham, and it is with this move that the history of the banking house which has borne the partners' names for so many years can be said to have begun. Thomas joined them immediately but was not accepted as a full partner until 1760, partly on account of his age and probably partly also because of the difficulty in raising the necessary capital which only became available after his father had inherited the fortune of Ensign James Cocks killed at St. Cas in 1758.

Articles of Agreement were drawn up between the three men, and Thomas's part dated 17 September 1760 still exists amongst the family papers.¹⁶ Setting out as it does the purposes of the partnership and the means and methods by which it was to be conducted, it is an interesting document, the preamble of which runs as follows:

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN Francis Biddulph and James Cocks of the parish of Saint Martins in the Fields in the county of Middlesex Bankers of the one Part and Thomas Somers Cocks of Castledich in the County of Hereford Brother of the said James Cocks of the other part WITNESS that the said Parties for and in consideration of the Mutual Trust and Confidence they have and Repose in one another and in order to procure their mutual Benefit and Advantage have Agreed to be and by Virtue of these Presents are actually become Partners and Joint Traders in Profitts Charges and Losses in the said Trade or Business of Bankers and the said Copartnership is hereby Agreed to and shall be Carried on by and between them the said Francis Biddulph James Cocks and Thomas Somers Cocks for and during the Term of Fourteen Years to begin and be Accounted from the First Day of October next....

There follow thirteen articles 'for the better Carrying on the said joint Trade or Business', of which the third states that 'the said Copartnership shall Go and be Carried on under the names of Biddulph and Cocks'. Thomas signs his name as T.Sommers Cocks on the document, a spelling and style he invariably used throughout his life.

With an increasing business and, quite soon, an extensive and influential clientele the Bank's affairs prospered reasonably though it was still a small concern and Thomas was far from rich. At the age of thirty he became engaged to the twenty-year-old Anne, younger daughter of Alexander Thistlethwayte of Southwick Park in Hampshire, and was duly married to her in August of 1768. Mr Thistlethwayte had lived for many years at Winterslow in Wiltshire as had several generations before him. He had married a Miss Randoll of Salisbury, said to be an innkeeper's daughter, in what can only be described as a highly secretive not to say furtive manner, there being no guests at the London church and quite improperly no entry made in the register. Whatever the reason for this extreme privacy it brought difficulties later when in order to prove that he had legal offspring he was obliged to seek out the officiating priest and obtain his written confirmation that he had been married at all. After his marriage he had gone to live at Southwick, a large mansion not far from Portsmouth, and had two daughters Catharine and Anne together with a third who died young. There is a fine family portrait of the four of them by Thomas Hudson which remained in the Cocks family until recent years.

Within a year of marrying Thomas, Anne's first child, also called Anne, was born at Perry Street, St. Pancras. Whether this was the family home at the time is not certain but it was very shortly afterwards that they acquired the house in Downing Street (traditionally said to have been the modern No.11). Here all the subsequent children were born. The next to arrive was another daughter Catharine, born in 1774, and was followed by Margarett Sarah, Maria and Selina. However there is a persistent story in the family that a son was actually the second child but that he choked to death on his christening cake. It would be hardly surprising if such an avoidable catastrophe was not much referred to later.

Visits to Castleditch still took place as business allowed though the journey was a long one especially for young children. That these family reunions when they occurred were a great joy to the now-widowed Mary may be judged from a letter she wrote to Thomas in her very legible script dated 20 May 1775 giving news of other members of the family:

My dear Thomas - I was exceedingly glad to hear by yours that you got safe to your journey's end; your company to me is always agreeable, I shou'd have [been] very glad if you could have stay'd longer but must be contented as your situation in life will not permit me to have so much of yr. company as I shou'd be glad to have whenever its convenient. . . I am sorry that you are likely to lose your nurse, she shou'd have stay'd till poor little Chatherine was a year old. I hope she has got pretty well agen & will continue so...

I am sorry to hear poor Richard has bin out of order agen, I hope he is better as I hear he intends coming to this place next week... Philip is sometimes tolerably well but gains ground very slowly indeed, I hope time will do more for him than Physick for I think that has done very little; he has bin twice in the water which he thought was of service to him. I hope you received 2 potted Lampreys which were sent about a fortnight ago. I received the veal cheeses and crab from Gloucester very safe. Mrs. Cocks I hope is well... I beg my kindest compliments to her, I am much oblig'd to her for coming in that hurry to me, I shall always remember her kind attention to me upon every occassion with gratitude. My love to Anne & tell her the 2 ducks in the Garden hatch'd ten which are all put to one duck & I believe she would be very well entertain'd with feeding them.

Now I believe you are almost tyr'd with this scribble so
 will conclude with my best wishes of all kinds, my dear
 Thomas's most affec: mother
 - M.Cocks

Mary's death in 1779 was a great loss to the family. Despite the grief of losing one son in infancy and two more when young men, and having one daughter who was evidently severely mentally handicapped, she had the satisfaction of seeing the others firmly established in their chosen careers, as member of Parliament, bankers, merchant, the Church and Law; moreover for his loyal support of the Hanoverian cause Charles had been honoured by his Sovereign with a revival of the baronetcy of Dumbleton. But undoubtedly her greatest reward was found in the respect and affection in which she had always been held by her sons and daughters. 'There never was a better mother of children', says their lengthy memorial to her in Eastnor Church, 'no-one in life was more beloved'.

Thomas and Anne sustained another loss in the next year when their eldest daughter Anne died, while Selina survived less than three years. But at last in 1781 a son was born, named after his father, Thomas. He was followed in turn by the last member of the family, Eliza Jane. Downing Street continued to be their home while the children were growing up though they also took a house in Bath where part of the time was spent. And of course they continued to visit Castleditch occasionally where Charles who had become a great man and was now Lord Somers had added a new if incongruous portion to the old mansion, two projecting semi-circular wings with a portico in front.

Some of the girls received their schooling at a kind of Academy for Young Ladies at Acton, a convenient arrangement since Thomas's brother Philip held the living there. Correspondence from their father gives some glimpses of life at this time. In a letter to eleven-year-old Margaretta staying at Castleditch he hopes she is keeping up what French she has so far learnt and tells her to inform Master Thomas that he is an idle boy for not writing to his poor Papa as promised, going on to wish he could walk with her to the top of the Malvern Hills to see who could get down first. To Catharine at the age of fourteen he writes from Castleditch on 22 November 1788:

I received your letter & was very happy to hear you were entirely recovered of your Illness & able to go to School again, & hope you will have no return of it on every account, as I should be very sorry you should be any more absent, as this is the time for your improving yourself as much as you can, & which time can

never be recovered... The weather has been so very fine, that I have never been prevented going out on Horseback since I have been here, Miss Maclan who has been at Castleditch ever since I came here left us last Wednesday, & very sorry was she to leave it, & I was sorry to part with her, as she is an Exceeding pleasant good Humoured Girl, & used to ride out with us every day, there is nobody left in the House now, except the Family, but Miss Copley who is very indifferent.

I have no news to send you from hence, as Every day is spent much in the same manner. I rise at half past seven, Breakfast at nine, read till twelve, ride or walk till 1/2 past two, Dine at 1/2 past three, drink Tea at seven, play Cards till '1/2 past nine, then supper & to Bed at Eleven, I have entirely recovered my health & hope to continue it - I beg my best Compliments to Miss Stoner, & Love to your Sister, & believe me, my dear Catharine,

Your most Affectionate Father - T.Sommers Cocks.

'Pray in your next give me some account of your military musick' he writes to her in another letter dated 1 November 1791 . 'I hope you practice a good deal on your Harpsicord and dont neglect your Drawing. I shall Expect to find you much improved on my return to Town.' These serious matters out of the way he continues: 'Pray tell your Squirrel I have not forgot Him as I have been getting a Cargoe of Acorns for him this morning which I hope He or you will thank me for, when I bring them to Town', and he ends by pleading for a letter in return more lively than his dull one, 'full of all the Tittle Tattle & News of the Town which is a Great Treat to us Country Gentlemen'. That life in a country gentleman's house had its rougher side too may be guessed from another remark written a year later that he had spent the morning at Castleditch hunting rats. 'The quantity is innumerable about the house, tho' the destruction that was made among them was not so great as I expected.'

A day's visiting in the country, also in November 1791, is described to Margaretta. He went over to Worcester with Capt. Pole one morning to see the Cathedral and the china works. At the latter they saw a pattern of one of the Duke of Clarence's plates, 'very beautifull indeed, they cost two Guineas & half each, the whole set came to Eight Hundred Guineas'. They left Worcester at 3 pm and set out to dine with Mr Lygon at Madresfield. It must have been a convivial meal as they stayed till about 8 and

endeavouring to find a new way home, We lost ourselves, & after We had rode through the most horrible roads that can be Conceived for One or two hours, We then found that We were

11 miles from Ledbury , & called at a Farm House, they directed Us over a Common, which they told Us was three miles over & if We did not know it, might probably lose ourselves again, however We at last got safe home at past 11 o'clock, tho' I was never so tired in my life as I was obliged to ride a Horse that I hired, which went very hard and unpleasant, & I suppose We rode on the whole above forty miles that day.

Meanwhile Thomas, now in his fifties, had appointed his son to succeed to his interest and share in the Bank upon his death, an action he was entitled to take under the new Articles of Agreement which had been drawn up. After several changes the firm's style was now Biddulph, Cocks & Ridge, for the partnership had been strengthened from time to time by the admission of new members, including George Ridge. But the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic War in 1792 heralded a prolonged period of financial instability, when the business of banker must have brought its share of worry and uncertainty. War with France was something of a tradition but never before had she thrown up a Napoleon, nor for over two centuries had England found herself threatened with invasion as she did in 1796 and 1797. In the latter year there was a run on the banks and this was followed by a sharply increased rate of taxation to pay for the war.

Just at the beginning of these times of growing difficulty Thomas, who had suffered occasional ill-health, died shortly before his fifty-ninth birthday in 1796 leaving behind him Anne and the five children. The three eldest daughters, Catharine, Margaretta and Maria, were grown up or nearly so, but Thomas was only fifteen and still at school and unable therefore to succeed to his father's share in the Bank for several years more. In his Will drawn up eight years earlier he regretted 'that I have it not in my power to make more ample provision for [my children] only comforting myself that it is not owing to any extravagance of my own that they are so ill provided for'. The house in Downing Street was sold for £3,500, and from now on and for many years to come the family's residence was to be at 47 Harley Street. The financial position considerably eased when their uncle Philip left each of the children £600 about a year later. It is clear that from this time, in spite of his youth, Thomas was looked upon as the head of the family.

Though the country was at war, on the surface at any rate their life continued in much the same way, the visits to Bath, the parties, the balls, all the gay social round of a society that set great store by such matters and was determined to enjoy them to the full. Catharine tells of a visit to a play at Ramsgate where the audience made a far more interesting subject for

discussion than the performance and she has some forthright comment for Thomas's benefit.' Mr. Bishop told me Mr. Varley was in the House. I instantly discovered him as being the only Gentleman I could see, I am very quick sighted at a real Gentleman.' The Margate Ball produced more gossip: 'Such a set & mixture I never saw. Two minuets were danced, one by Mrs. Bristow and another Lady with Le Bus, I think it is time for Mrs. Bristow to leave off when she had two daughters & a son in the room dancing.' She herself had a dance with a pleasant Captain Duckett of the Essex Militia and 'my Hair came down in the Middle which was most distressing'. And then at the age of twenty-four she fell in love with a young man some years her junior, one of the Methuens of Corsham Court. Maria who could afford to take a fairly detached view of proceedings paints a none too optimistic picture of the affair when writing to her brother in London:

As I have taken a Black Dose this morning which prevented me from attending church, I take the opportunity of dedicating the time to you... We miss your company much, but I hope it will not be long before we join you, at present we talk of setting off Tuesday, but I shall never think anything certain till we are at least 20 miles from Bath. Methuen yesterday received a most violent letter from his Mother, saying he was too unsteady & inexperienced to think of marrying & if the Lady had no or 30,000pd she should think the same, but that is impossible to believe, she said that if he would come to Town, everything should be made as comfortable to him as possible, which is a sign it was not so before. Mrs. M. said she believed Miss Cocks might be of good family but she pitied any Lady that would marry him, very Motherly I think. As I didn't see the letter, I cannot tell you more particulars, but I know it was very violent and in some parts very impertinent to the Lady. So that things are not a bit forwarder than when you went. The only thing is for Methuen to persevere. He wrote an answer to his Mother as violent as hers so that it appears as if it would be a most desperate and violent piece of Business; as his Father has given his Consent when he comes of age, it will be impossible to retreat from that. There is a letter expected to come from the Father to-day which I suppose will be violent too. Catherine is all in a worry and in short I think there seems to be nothing else but worry all over the house, I wish the business well ended.

Maria was correct about the uncertainty of the Tuesday start, for Catharine on that day wrote to Thomas making it clear that the 'tiresome

journey of 3 days' was to begin the next day, and imploring him to see Methuen to tell him to come round on the Friday evening to Harley Street; for his father had arrived unexpectedly from Corsham that very morning and had whisked him off to Town. She was in agony of suspense lest Papa Methuen should have made him change his mind in the interval, though she could not doubt his word that nothing would make him recede.

What happened that week-end and after we do not know, except that she never married him. Poor Catharine! She was soon to be the bride of a man thirty years her senior. It was no doubt considered an excellent match.

WAR AND THE NAVY, 1802 - 1815

James Gladell Vernon was a wealthy widower of fifty eight. He was a member of a younger branch of the Vernons of Haslington, his uncle being Francis, Earl of Shipbrook and his great-uncle the well-known Admiral Edward Vernon. At one time he had been private secretary to William Pitt though by February 1802 when he married Catharine at St Margaret's, Westminster he had retired and was enjoying at leisure the fruits of his not inconsiderable income. His Town residence was at 15 Hereford Street but he paid regular visits to such places as Malvern, Bath and, most frequently, Tunbridge Wells where he could sip the waters and listen to the music on the Pantiles; for his diary, tantalizingly silent on most points, makes it abundantly clear that he was a periodic sufferer from severe attacks of the gout.

We know little of the Vernons' life together; certainly the entertaining, the wine bills, the game sent from his Norfolk and Lincolnshire farms and from his relative's estates leave no room for doubting that they lived well and that Catharine was in a position to indulge every whim. In June they moved to Ramsgate for the summer season. A Piano Forte was hired for her and life was gayer than ever with the signing of the treaty between an exhausted England and France at Amiens.

That the leisured classes had been able to enjoy their life largely uninterrupted by ten years of war was almost entirely due to the ships and men of the Royal Navy who despite all the enemy's endeavours had maintained their customary sure defensive shield and furthermore had prevented the French from breaking out of Europe to indulge in military adventure elsewhere. Now with the coming of peace ships were being paid off and there were many officers who found themselves ashore on half-pay for the first prolonged period for a matter of years. One such was thirty-nine-year-old Captain James Nicoll

Morris who early in 1802 had returned from the Mediterranean in command of the frigate *Phaeton*. It must have been soon afterwards that he became engaged to Margaretta for they were married towards the end of October. Morris, a godson of James Vernon, had joined the Navy as a boy of fifteen and had been serving afloat in various parts of the world almost continuously ever since, the last seven years in command.¹⁷ Any hopes that he may have entertained of now being able to settle down to a peaceful married life were quickly dispelled when within six months war broke out again and invasion once more seemed imminent.

The government lost no time in re-embodiment the Volunteers and appealing for men to enrol in defence of England's shores. Thus it was that young Thomas came to join the somewhat exclusive Prince of Wales' Volunteers 'carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of 1st Lieutenant by exercising and well disciplining both the inferior Officers and Soldiers' according to his commissioning warrant. How much actual training he did is problematical as the government's appeal was so far successful that an enormous number of men enrolled within a few days which inevitably produced chaos.

Captain Morris found himself in command of the Sea Fencibles, a naval land force, between the Blackwater and the Stour. To one who had been used to the tilting quarterdeck of an English man-of-war for some twenty-five years it must have seemed a curious change of scene; no doubt he was glad to be appointed before long to command *Leopard* and thence the 74-gun *Colossus* on blockade duties. Such duties were of vital importance, but the work itself was wearisome in the extreme as month after month the 'distant storm-beaten ships' kept their stations in all weathers before the north-west French ports and watched Ferrol, Cadiz and Toulon for signs of the enemy's squadrons.

After a year spent mainly off Cadiz *Colossus* returned to Plymouth Dock to refit and her Captain had a welcome spell ashore. Fate soon intervened again; it became known that a French squadron had contrived to escape from Toulon just at the time when a British expeditionary force was on its largely unprotected way to the Mediterranean. *Colossus* was therefore hurriedly fitted for sea and manned as best she might be. The Navy, short as ever of enough ships to carry out its multifarious duties, was stretched to the limit and obliged to make shift in a way that caused Captain Morris to grumble loudly at his apparent poor fortune. Writing to Thomas early in May 1805 from off Ushant he reports:

We join'd the Fleet yesterday Morning, and found Sir Jno. Orde & Squad'n had also join'd, but does not bring any particular acct. of the Toulon Squad'n further than they saw it off Cadiz, therefore there is still doubt if it went in there or if it has been join'd by Spaniards or what is become of it. We are at present 26 sail here but the Neptune & others must go in to get supplied with Water in lieu of what they are now furnishing those of the [English] Toulon Ships for foreign Service that have not been in port, thus robbing Peter to pay Paul and is hard on both Officers and Men as some have been near three Months out & want any thing. The Confusion up aloft seems to pervade anywhere & we are in a bad way, however lucky in having Lord Gardner and Adm. Thornborough with us. Sir Jno. Orde's has been the Golden Squad'n they say he will make much above £100,000, they have got in cash, & I think it is likely we foreigners shall be sent to do the work they have left as they are short of water in which service I hope we shall join Ld. Nelson, this is all guess.

After comment on the political situation which he found scarcely more inspiring, he continues: 'All I want is a fair chance with the others of Prize Money and to get on shore handsomely after this Campaign if I see it out & if I should come home from abroad not to be prevented from it. Margaretta will tell you this fitting has put me to additional expense for the Moment, but little different in the run. I am quite vexed the attack Mr. V has of the Gout; it is quite unlucky this time of gaiety & Mrs. V's routs' His dissatisfaction at the naval dispositions was to prove short-lived.

But before relating the events of a few months later, it is necessary to anticipate matters somewhat by recording that in 1811 Maria was married to another naval officer, Rear Admiral William Hargood. He had joined the Navy as a boy of eleven and three years later was serving in HMS *Bristol* commanded by James Morris's father when the latter was mortally wounded. There can be little doubt that Hargood had known James Morris for many years. His service had taken him to many parts of the world, and he had served with HRH Prince William for five years, a fact that was to have a bearing on his later career.

Now, in 1805, he was captain of the 74-gun *Belleisle* and was serving in Nelson's fleet in his chase of Villeneuve to the West Indies and back again. In September he called at Plymouth for a rapid refit, hastening to rejoin

Nelson off Cadiz where he arrived on 10 October. Captain Morris was already there, the *Colossus* acting as an intermediary to relay signals between the frigates watching the combined French and Spanish fleet in Cadiz and the English fleet waiting some fifty miles out in the Atlantic for news of their emergence. Nelson knew that Villeneuve would attempt to break out into the Mediterranean and had laid his plans accordingly.

On 19 October the *Colossus* was able to pass the long-awaited signal that the enemy was leaving port, whereupon the fleet steered for the Straits to cut him off.¹⁸ Owing to the time the French and Spanish ships took to leave harbour the opposing fleets did not sight one another until daybreak on the 21st, though James Morris still doing duty as a frigate had watched from his quarterdeck the night before a great line of lights as thirty-three enemy ships steered south. Soon after daybreak Villeneuve sighted the English and promptly ordered his fleet to wear together in an attempt to regain Cadiz; the twenty-seven sail-of-the- line which he found against him had exceeded his estimate. He was too late. Two lines of English ships were slowly but inexorably bearing down upon him.

Both the *Belleisle* and *Colossus* were in the southern division under the command of Admiral Collingwood. William Hargood was astern of the *Tonnant*, the second ship in the line, but as the latter was not sailing well he received permission to overtake her. As he slowly overhauled Captain Tyler the crews cheered each other, the band struck up a patriotic tune and there was a shout of 'A great day for old England, we shall have one apiece by to- night!' As the sombre ochre and black hulls with their snowy white canvas closed the more gaily painted and ornate enemy, the captains gave their last minute orders. Hargood pointed out the black-hulled *Santa Ana* to his officers; 'Gentlemen,' he told them, 'I have only to say that I shall pass close under the stern of that ship; put in two round shot and then a grape and give her that. Now go to your quarters and mind not to fire until each gun will bear with effect.' Shortly afterwards, at about a quarter to twelve, the enemy opened fire upon the leading ships which by their angle of approach were not able to reply and consequently had to endure a galling and damaging fire for some twenty, long minutes.

Soon after twelve the *Belleisle* broke through the line as intended, at once engaging two enemy ships in fierce combat and sustaining considerable damage. Her Captain was struck on the chest by a flying splinter and knocked over, but apart from severe bruising was unhurt. The *Colossus* had broken the enemy's line nearer its rear and was likewise engaged on both sides. The closeness of the action may be judged from the fact that a French ship in

coming alongside knocked off several of her gun-ports. There was a grim fight of ten minutes before the former was forced to drop astern, during which time Morris was shot in the leg. He applied a tourniquet and refused to go below.

The battle was now raging fiercely all along the line, and the *Belleisle* seemed to be surrounded by the enemy. In just over two hours she engaged in single-handed combat five different ships in the course of which she became totally dismasted. At last other English ships came to draw off the enemy's fire, the [English] *Swiftsure* manning the rigging and giving her a special cheer. Unable to manoeuvre and there being nothing in range of her guns, she was obliged to cease fire. Almost simultaneously a Spaniard struck her colours to her and William Hargood had the satisfaction of being offered her commander's sword on his quarterdeck. Morris had also been engaged with five ships. A Spanish 74, the *Bahama*, had already surrendered to him, and the final stages of the action are described in the log. 'The French ship [*Swiftsure*] at this time endeavoured to bear up under our stem, but we wearing quicker only received a few of her larboard guns before giving her our starboard broadside, which brought her mizzenmast down, and the *Orion* at this moment giving her her first broadside, her mainmast also fell, and they made signs to us of submission. Hauling up, our mizzenmast fell over the starboard quarter.' Morris sent over for the two enemy captains and then, with the action virtually over all along the line, he was helped below to his cabin to have his wound seen to.

Thus ended the immortal fight off Cape Trafalgar. Soon the report passed round most of the Fleet that Nelson had died in the moment of victory, but with the ships in such a battered condition there was much else to be thought of. Both the *Belleisle* and *Colossus* had received tremendous damage and casualties, the former being the only English ship to be totally dismasted, the latter having the highest casualty figures. Both were taken tow for Gibraltar, the *Belleisle* by the frigate *Naiad*, the *Colossus* by Sir Edward Berry in the *Agamemnon*. Next day as they laboured towards harbour in a rising sea and wind James Morris, lying uncomfortably in his cabin, managed a brief letter to Margaretta to assure her of his safety:

You will hear we had a fight yesterday. I am thank God doing very well altho' wounded in the thigh a little above the knee which makes me keep my bed and being at best a bad scribe of it, make a bad hand of it. The Colossus thank God has played its part but we have suffered greatly, Thistlethwayte has had a musket ball in his arm but doing well. My next shall be longer. Look out for a cottage, after our repairs at Gibraltar I think I

must come home. I have a French & Spanish Captn. on board in my cabin & am satisfied with myself & very happy remembering my duty to all. Lord Nelson is killed, such the report.¹⁹ It has been a most determined victory. I have no fever and little pain.

That evening the long-heralded storm broke upon the damaged ships and the *Belleisle* avoided shipwreck only by the narrowest margin. The next few days however saw them all safely in Gibraltar, headed by the *Belleisle* which was the first to arrive on the 24th, and where James Morris was taken ashore to hospital. After temporary repairs Hargood in his ship had the sad duty of escorting the *Victory* with Nelson's body still on board back to England.

News of the action reached a fog-bound London in the early hours of 6 November. Thomas was in Town, as were the Vernons who had just returned from Tunbridge Wells. Margaretta, her sisters and mother were staying at Glyndebourne in Sussex where they read in the newspapers the brief account of the battle contained in Collingwood's preliminary despatch. But several anxious days passed before James Morris's letter arrived to give Margaretta the first details of his wound. Young Eliza copied out the letter and sent it on to Thomas, adding her own remarks in an outburst of pride:

I really think it ought to be made known in the papers how Captn. Morris & Thistlethwayte have signalized themselves. Really Captn. Morris has done next to Lord Nelson & no-one can know it as it being put that he is slightly wounded. If it had not been for Sir Ed. Berry he must have lost his ship, as he towed it into Gibraltar. Captn. Morris has a French & Spanish Captn. on Board which few others have. Mrs Morris says you may read her husband's letter to anybody, but pray do not read my remarks, but you may say about Thistlethwayte & about Sir Ed. Berry towing his ship in. I am almost a second Aunt Milborne. I think it a shame the world should not know what he has done, but those who do least are most puffed ... We are at Mrs. Tutte's the Paper & Pens are so bad I cannot write & added to my agitation cannot hold my Pen. This is a pretty Place but more of this another time ... Mrs. Morris bore it with fortitude, but as you may suppose, greatly agitated.

Aunt Milborne was their mother's sister Catharine, renowned for her forthright letters, and whose reputation as a difficult woman and impossible snob lingers to this day. She appears again a little later.

In early December when staying in Brighton Margaretta suddenly received a summons to go to Portsmouth where her husband had unexpectedly arrived in the *Colossus*. She rushed off in a Chaise and Four (rather to Maria's amusement) as just earlier she had had another letter from him saying that he did not now think he would lose his leg - the first she had heard that such a thing was even a possibility. Thomas also went down a few days later, and Maria hoped he would find Captain Morris better as on coming ashore 'he has found himself much weaker but think it may in part be owing to the agitation of seeing his wife'.²⁰

Morris spent some time in England recovering from his wound before being appointed to the *Formidable*; but his service in her was of comparatively short duration and his next command was not to be until 1811. Hargood remained in the *Belleisle* after her permanent repairs for another two years, mostly spent in the West Indies or off the North American coast, after which he was transferred to the *Northumberland*. In the interval he had refused the post of Paymaster Captain at Portsmouth, having a notable antipathy to anything concerning money matters. He became Second-in-Command at Portsmouth in 1810 with the rank of Rear Admiral, and in the following year married Maria as already related. A spell as Commander-in-Chief, Guernsey, and promotion to Vice Admiral in 1814 must have appeared as the final stages in his distinguished career; for with the victorious ending of the Peninsular campaign the long war with France was virtually over and employment for senior officers at a premium. He and Maria could look forward to retirement at fashionable Bath where they had taken a house in the Royal Crescent.

James Morris received promotion a year later than his brother-in-law when he hoisted his flag in the *Vigo* as Second-in-Command of the North Sea Fleet. This was to be his last appointment but both he and Hargood had the satisfaction of being created a KCB in 1815. The Morris's were now settled at Thames Bank, a pleasant looking large Georgian house which, as its name implies, stood beside the broad Thames in the small Buckinghamshire town of Marlow. Here they entered into the local society and endeavoured to help old shipmates who had fallen on hard times.

The autumn of 1812 had brought sad news for Thomas when he learnt that his great friend and cousin Major the Hon. Charles Cocks, son of the second Lord Somers, had been killed at the siege of Burgos in Spain. He was a

brilliant young soldier and had used Morris not only to look after his financial affairs but as a general confidante. He sent him many informative letters from the campaign which Thomas kept and which, after temporarily escaping from the family, are now safely in the Eastnor Castle archives.

During all these years Thomas had continued working in the Bank at Charing Cross. The country's economic difficulties were slowly becoming worse due both to disruption of trade and to Pitt's borrowing to pay for the war, and it was probably when under some financial stress in about 1812 that a disagreement occurred amongst the partners. It seems to have arisen as a result of divided loyalties, for Thomas drafted out proposals for the basis of a new partnership. They were between James Cocks (son of the co-founder), himself, George Ridge, John Biddulph and George Cooper Ridge, and included a clause that John Biddulph should have a full share (instead of two thirds) on his giving up all interest and concern in the House of Messrs. Gordon.' Thirdly; it shall be stipulated that on no account shall any son of John Biddulph have a share in the Banking House and Messrs. Gordon's, but on the contrary on a son being admitted into messrs. Gordon's, John Biddulph shall give up his interest in that House'. After a further proposal that the Bank's house, no.43 Charing Cross, and the neighbouring one at Spring Gardens should always remain the joint property of the partners, the document continues:

We have given these proposals the fullest and fairest consideration in our power, and on the perusal of them it must be allowed that we have not considered our own interest so much as a desire to act candidly by all parties with a view to an amicable arrangement which we consider so desirable and advantageous to all parties concerned, and we should recommend therefore that all that has passed between the partners in moments of Heat should be forgot, and that for the future the interest of one should be considered as the interest of all.

Whatever the trouble the partnership continued as before, and when new articles of agreement were drawn up in 1817 their names were unchanged save for the omission of George Cooper Ridge. In this episode, and on other occasions, Thomas reveals himself as a wise and mature young man of considerable diplomatic skills.

In February 1813 when he was thirty-one he married twenty-one-year-old Agneta Pole Carew, a daughter of the Rt.Hon.Reginald Pole Carew who had an ancient estate at Antony in eastern Cornwall and whose Cornish

ancestry could be traced back for many generations. Within a year a daughter, Jemima Anne, was born to them. The name Anne was bestowed in honour of her grandmother whose first grandchild she was, for none of Thomas's sisters had any children. Thomas himself was to make amends by having eight.

The visits to Castleditch which still were paid by the different members of the family would have had a certain poignancy in these last few years. Their cousin John who had succeeded his father Charles as Lord Somers was engaged in building a large mansion close by to satisfy a somewhat exaggerated sense of his own importance and to house in grand style his growing collection of portraits and other works of art. In 1815 work at Eastnor Castle as it was called, was sufficiently advanced for it to be lived in. And so the old moated manor house, home of the family for more than two centuries, which had seen so many Cocks's born and die within its walls and which had survived alike the assaults of man and nature, was humbled at last by the work of the demolition men until only traces of its foundations remained. Old Richard Cocks the merchant must have stirred uneasily.

YEARS OF PEACE, 1815 - 1854

If the year 1815 marked the end of an era at Eastnor, it also heralded the beginning of another for Thomas; for in February a second child, a son, was born and named, inevitably, Thomas. He was followed twenty months later by Reginald Thistlethwayte.

The choice of young Thomas's godparents was productive of an unfortunate contretemps. It should first be explained that Aunt Milborne was now Aunt Pelham. On the death of Mr Milborne she had for some reason taken the name of Thistlethwayte Pelham by deed-poll, though the Thistlethwaytes' connection with the Pelhams was an extremely tenuous one through a marriage several generations earlier. She was undoubtedly proud of the name nevertheless and had suggested herself as a suitable godparent to the baby. Thomas, who had already made other arrangements, had politely declined her offer and must therefore have been disagreeably surprised to receive the following reply to his tentative enquiry about her becoming godmother to the next and shortly-expected infant. Dated 31 July 1816 from Bemerton it read:

Sir - Your Father thought me worthy of being Sponsor to his second child, and of my name being given to her; supposing myself entitled to the same attention from you, I offered myself in the same capacity to your

second child, which being a Son, I thought could not be disgraced by the Ducal name of Pelham in addition to your own. You contemptuously refused my offer, and I have great reason to suppose I was superseded by my own Goddaughter who being richly connected was thought more worthy. Wealth may be your Idol; Honour and Independence are mine. I am, Sir, Your obedient humble Servant, - Catharine Thistlethwayte Pelham.

Thomas could be forgiven had he ignored this sulphurous blast. But reply he did, and fortunately made a draft on the back of his aunt's letter of his surprisingly moderate but firm riposte.

Dear Aunt - Your letter of the 31st July in answer to mine has surprised me not a little as after your letter to mine announcing Miss Thistlethwayte's death, I little expected that you bore any ill will on account of my having been obliged to decline your offer of being Godmother to my boy. The Godfather & Godmother on my side were Lord Somers as head of my family & Mrs. Vernon my eldest sister & I have certainly yet to learn that in making that election I preferred her wealth to honour & Independence. The child was named after my father, & no consideration should have made me change my intention, & I also considered it as a compliment due to his memory to have one of his own Children as Sponsor. I declined your offer & thought I had so in as respectful a manner as I could & also stated satisfactory reasons. Had you condescended to have been Godmother to the new-coming Babe, I had intended Christening, in compliment to you, should it be a Boy, Reginald Thistlethwayte or Pelham - I should have preferred the first; or should it be a girl, Agneta Catharine after its Mother & Yourself. I am sorry not to be on terms of friendship with all my Relations, but I cannot on this occasion take any blame to myself and only makes me more sure that the more one wishes to please, all the less one can succeed.

As Reginald's second name was indeed Thistlethwayte it seems that Aunt Pelham calmed down later.

Thomas's family grew steadily in number over the next few years as Charlotte Agneta was followed by Charles Lygon, and Walter Carew by Henrietta Maria. But there were losses too, for his long-widowed mother Anne died in 1817 in Bath and was laid to rest in the Abbey. It was at Bath that the Vernons and Hargoods now lived for most of the time, and two years later James Vernon himself died there at the age of 75 and was also buried in the Abbey. He left to his still comparatively young widow all his wealth and property, including the Norfolk and Lincolnshire farms which were looked after by his agent there, Mr Houchen.

Alone of the sisters Eliza had remained single, a companion for her mother's old age. Some years after the latter's death she too married, her husband being Thomas Raymond Barker of Hambledon, a village in the Chilterns not many miles from the Morris's home at Marlow. She was then aged 40 and thus was only five years younger than her sister Catharine had been when widowed. Almost nothing has survived to throw any light on this household other than occasional mention of the mutual visits between Hambledon and Thames Bank. Unlike her sisters, she had married someone of almost exactly the same age as herself and who was to outlive her by some years.

It was inevitable that the state of business at the Bank should be reflected in Thomas's personal affairs since the fortunes of the two were inextricably linked. 1825 had been a particularly disastrous year for banks in general, no fewer than seventy-nine having to suspend payment. The last quarter was the worst, and on one Saturday towards the end of November there was near panic in the City largely as the result of news being received of the failure of the Plymouth Bank. Provincial houses sent up to their London agents for gold on the Sunday, partners were sought out from churches and anxious crowds gathered at the unusual sight of the post-chaises on such a day. This financial crisis, though weathered by Cocks, Biddulph, was to have its repercussions some months later when Thomas found himself temporarily embarrassed at a time when his family was still expanding. Despite his best endeavours he was obliged to go round to Catharine in Hereford Street one June morning in 1826, swallow his pride and ask her for a substantial loan to tide him over a critical period. Catharine readily assented and in writing the same afternoon to thank her again for her kindness he describes the morning as one of the most painful he had ever had, 'for I cannot bear the idea that by my request I shall deprive you of any pleasure or the means of doing in any way what you wish'. The retirement of the senior partner James Cocks had, he pointed out, aggravated the position; he went on:

I cannot reproach myself with any unnecessary extravagance and still less my dear wife who is a much better manager than myself and as she is totally unacquainted with my request to you pray do not say anything to her or anyone else and certainly as far as I can see I shall never have occasion for another. My relations should take into account that I paid above £20,000 in one quarter besides paying annuities to the amount of £700 a year - this cannot be recovered immediately by any management or economy. I should also add that for the last ten years I have been laying by as a Fund for the House from £5 to £700 a year, a considerable drawback from my income.

He ends by requesting her to burn the letter when she had read it. It still exists of course.

Henrietta was born in this rather inauspicious year, but matters then slowly improved which was perhaps as well since in 1829 a fifth son and eighth child arrived. With a certain lack of originality he was christened Octavius, and also Yorke in honour of his maternal grandmother's family. The formality of Octavius never became him and his boyhood name of Taff or Taffy stayed with him for the rest of his days. It was natural that in such a large family he should find companionship with the one nearest to him in age. He and Henrietta in fact were to remain devoted to one another all their lives. But before relating more about Thomas's young family it is necessary to revert once more to the older generation.

Sir James Morris who had been living in well-earned retirement at Thames Bank died there in 1830 in his sixty-seventh year. He had been promoted Vice Admiral some while before but as such had never hoisted his flag, having remained unemployed since the end of his North Sea appointment in 1813. His death severed a link with the Navy's greatest days of sail, from the earlier war with France in the seventies and eighties to the end of the Napoleonic War.

But one family link with the Royal Navy yet remained. Sir William Hargood and Maria were living likewise in retirement in their house at Bath. Sir William, for all his sixty-eight years and an accident in which he had broken a leg, was still hale and hearty and taking a close interest in maritime affairs. He had occasional visits from his old shipmate Prince William, Duke of Clarence, with whom he had always remained on friendly terms, and when the Duke

succeeded to the throne as William IV Hargood soon found himself the recipient of further honours. First he was given the Guelphic Cross of Hanover, a personal mark of esteem by his sovereign; next he received promotion to Admiral of the Blue and finally, to crown one splendid year, he was advanced from KCB to GCB. But Bath, at any rate in those days, was far removed from the Navy and so it was with the utmost satisfaction that early in 1833, just sixty years since he had joined his first ship *Triumph* in the Medway as a midshipman, he received the appointment of Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth.

He and Maria spent three busy and happy years there, entering with zest into the activities of the town in which they were popular and respected figures. Very early in his tenure of office the youthful Princess Victoria, accompanied by her mother the Duchess of Kent, paid an official visit to Plymouth and the neighbourhood. The journey by coach being long and tedious they came by sea, but the visit very nearly ended in disaster before it had really begun.²¹

When the royal party arrived in the Sound in their cutter-yacht the *Emerald* there was little wind, so Sir William ordered a steam tug to tow the yacht to her berth in the dockyard. With one or two other high-ranking officers he met the yacht in his barge and repaired aboard to pay his respects. As the paddle-tug towed them up the Hamoaze, guns boomed, crowds ashore cheered and sailors manned the yards of every available ship to do honour to the royal progress. Unfortunately the tug failed sufficiently to shorten in her tow, and when she eased her engines in the comparatively calm waters near the appointed berth the yacht with her distinguished complement was still receiving the full benefit of a strong flood tide and was soon sweeping upstream out of control. Before anything could be done about it she collided heavily and nearly broadside on with a moored hulk and in doing so severed her rigging on one side. Scraping round the hulk's bow she was only brought up by her mast fouling the projecting cat-head where she remained held fast. The situation was one of great danger for those on the yacht's quarterdeck, for the mast with the boom topped up was taking the entire strain and was to all intents held solely by the forestay. It seemed only a question of time before this stay parted and mast and boom crashed down on those below.

The Commander-in-Chief hastily ordered up his barge which had been following some distance astern and meanwhile tried to reassure his distinguished visitors. The Princess was escorted by the Flag-Captain to the comparative safety of the bows, but in the ensuing flurry she became parted from her mother and burst into tears until reunited with her in the Admiral's barge. The last few hundred yards were completed without further mishap,

though they arrived at a berth different from where the reception committee were waiting, causing an undignified scramble to ensue when the latter realised their error and hastened to rectify it in time. It had been an unlucky and embarrassing start to the visit. The good name of the Navy was quite restored a few days later, however, when Sir William ordered a frigate to take the royal guests on a successful and enjoyable cruise round the Eddystone.

The visit was one of many which Victoria made both before and soon after her accession. She was invariably accompanied by her mother, and it is of interest that on at least one occasion the latter secured a large loan from one of the partners of Cocks, Biddulph & Co to help finance these travels.

Another story is told of how an officer requested the C-in-C's permission to employ a tug to take his ship out of port, the wind being foul. The Admiral was in any case a sailor of the old school and something of a legend, and even if he had not previously regarded steam as an invention of the devil his experience just related must have made him have second thoughts. The request was of course turned down and the unfortunate officer had then to endure being told in scathing terms that if he, Sir William, had been unable to beat his way out of the port in quite as difficult conditions in the old *Belleisle*, he would have missed the battle of Trafalgar.

The Hargoods left Plymouth in 1836 with the sincere regrets and good wishes of the local populace and returned to retirement amid the terraces of Bath. Sir William was not to enjoy his leisure for much longer, for in another three years he died after only a very brief illness. Today, some one hundred and fifty years later and Bath now a naval establishment, the Navy places a wreath on his memorial in the Abbey upon each anniversary of Trafalgar. Shortly before he died, a naval friend presented him with a set of wine coasters made from the oak of his old ship, a gift that delighted him. They remain in the Cocks family as does a fine painting of him in uniform and accompanied by Maria buying fish in Plymouth market in 1836.

Piecing together the activities of Thomas and Agneta and their children in the thirties one is struck forcibly by the number and frequency of the visits paid both far and near. The eldest boys Tom and Reginald (possibly Walter too) were at Westminster or up at Christ Church for much of the time, but the others and more particularly the girls seem to have paid almost daily calls on neighbours when in Town, to drink tea with Aunts Vernon or Morris or to visit some newly arrived baby. There were drives en famille in the Park and exhibitions to be viewed, sightseeing at the wonderful new tunnel being

driven under the Thames by the Brunels, or entertaining at their home in Harley Street.

In the holidays they travelled extensively over southern England, mostly by coach; for all that the roads were being vastly improved this was still a comparatively slow and uncomfortable business. The age of railways was only just beginning; in her diary for 15 September 1830 Charlotte notes: 'Liverpool and Manchester Rail Road opened. Rt. Hon. Wm. Huskisson was killed'. Sometimes they roamed even further as, again in 1830, when some of them spent a couple of days in France during a summer holiday at Dover. There were visits to their mother's home at Antony, and this was on at least one occasion achieved by embarking on a steam packet in London and disembarking in Plymouth after two nights at sea. Charlotte records her joy at arriving there in 1834 when they were met by their Uncle and Aunt Hargood. The return journey was made by land, with visits to their mother's relatives in Devon and then on to Burford and Marlow.

Young Charles was much taken with Cornwall on these visits; later it was to become the county of his adoption. After early schooling at Brighton, with a zest for martial matters he entered Sandhurst in 1835 determined on an Army career. His interests were wide and varied however and by no means centred on the art of war. From his youth he collected minerals and was soon to acquire a sound knowledge of archaeology, architecture and botany. Taff also was sent to the Revd Dr Everard's school at Brighton, and when old enough he too was to choose, though with less conviction one feels, the Army as a career, while Reginald after coming down from Oxford spent some years abroad in Germany and elsewhere to gain a wider experience of the world before joining his brother at the Bank. Walter also spent time abroad.

Agneta's untimely death in 1836 when she was only forty-four was a severe blow. Taff was then only seven and Jemima, in her early twenties, had perforce to take her mother's place as best she could. It is curious that although much survives about the others, Jemima remains a shadowy figure. Alone of the family no portrait of her exists and she is not often mentioned in journals or letters, and then sometimes in a disparaging manner. It seems probable that in taking over her mother's position in the household she acquired an authority over her brothers and particularly her sisters that they did not relish, thinking she had become a little too superior.

Another major change took place at about this time when Thomas came into possession of Thames Bank. Oddly enough the family had never had a country house since they had branched off from Castleditch eighty years

earlier. Being quite close to Town it was a great advance on having only the Harley Street house, especially now when London was growing ever larger and busier. Moreover the new Great Western Railway had been built to Maidenhead and beyond; with a carriage drive from Marlow over the newly completed suspension bridge, and from Paddington village to Charing Cross, it was possible to reach the Bank very quickly.

When he was fifty-six Thomas, like his father before him, drew up a deed appointing his two eldest sons to succeed equally to his share and interest in the Bank upon his death so that the family connection should remain unbroken. Both Tom and Reginald however were to spend some years there before being made full partners, for their father took an active part in the business until about the middle of the century. The Bank had always had its fair share of distinguished clients on the books; it was further honoured in 1841 when an account was opened for the infant Duke of Cornwall. This account remained open until, as King Edward VII, he died nearly seventy years later.

Just before he was twenty-seven Tom became engaged to Sarah Wynne whose house was at Voelas beside the Conwy a few miles from Betws-y-Coed in what was then Denbighshire. Married in 1842 they went to live at 15 Hereford Street which Catharine Vernon had left to the family on her death, along with most of the rest of her property and wealth. Voelas was a far cry from London or Marlow, but again the rapid advent of railways was making long journeys much more easily undertaken than hitherto, though the expense involved in such a visit was not small especially if one wished to take one's own carriage on the train as was common practice then. Thomas and Sarah travelled thus with a maid and groom to Wales soon after they were married, as far as Birmingham on the London and Birmingham Railway, thence on other lines to Chester which was reached in about ten hours. With a horse as well as their carriage expenses for the whole railway journey came to £22 10s, while the remainder, including posting fifty miles to Voelas via Wrexham and Llangollen and then along Telford's Holyhead coach road, brought this figure up to £30.²²

Charles had now passed out of Sandhurst and had received his regular commission in 1840 in the Coldstream Guards. He was actually gazetted to the 54th Regiment but served only a very short time in it before transferring to the more exclusive - and expensive - Coldstream, the regiment of his choice. Most of the rest of the family continued to travel as tirelessly as ever. In March 1845 there was another trip to France. After a bad crossing from Southampton to Havre, Charlotte records they went next day 'by steam' up to Rouen and so to Paris by rail where they spent ten days in seeing the sights before returning to Rouen and down the Seine again to Havre. The Channel was no better than

before. 'Oh, what a dreadful night at sea!' she exclaims of the crossing home. In July they were off again on a tour of the West, to friends at Forthampton, to a cousin at Neen Savage, visits to the ancestral parishes of Dumbleton and Bishop's Cleeve, back again to Tewkesbury and Gloucester, and even a visit to Bath to take tea with ageing Aunt Hargood. Next they had to hurry back to Aldenham in Hertfordshire for Reginald's wedding in September to Henrietta Pole Stuart, the daughter of William Stuart of Aldenham Abbey. This over, Charlotte and her sisters returned to Marlow and London where they at once resumed the normal round of calls and drives.

Reginald and his wife made their home in Hertford Street, London, and next year their first daughter Agneta was born. She was quickly followed by Amabel and in 1849 by Mary. The first of Tom's three children was born in 1850 at Hereford Street and was christened, rather curiously, Thomas Somers Vernon. After eight years of marriage his arrival must have been a matter of great rejoicing, and next year another son, Alfred Heneage, was born. His name of Heneage was given him in honour of his mother's brother. Alice Agneta completed the trio two years later.

Their father had added to his duties by becoming the Tory member for Reigate Borough in 1847, one of the two seats at Reigate which had been held by one or another of the Cocks' almost, if not quite, continuously for over a hundred years. The representation dated back to the time when the manor, a part of the Somers' estates, had passed to the Cocks' upon the Chancellor's death. Besides his attendance at the House of Commons Tom's work at the Bank was increasing with the virtual retirement of his father. The latter continued his visits to London up to about 1850, often being met at Maidenhead on his return by one of his daughters with the carriage and driving back with her through the beech woods to Marlow. But a serious illness in 1851 kept him more or less confined to Thames Bank after that date. He was then seventy, and of his sisters only Eliza Raymond Barker was still living; Maria Hargood had died at Bath two years earlier.

The youngest of the family, Taff, had gone to Chatham in 1847 and had Joined the 4th Foot, the King's Own Royal Regiment, as an Ensign. There is nothing to show why he chose that regiment in particular, certainly there was no obvious family connection to account for the choice. For several more years both he and Charles continued the not too arduous training demanded of a military career in those days, the weapon training, lectures, exercises, field days with brigade and division and, so far as Charles was concerned, the periodic duty of commanding the guard at the royal residences in London and Windsor, all interspersed with plenty of sport and leave. Then, in 1854, war clouds once

more rolled up over the horizon after nearly forty years of peace and soldiering suddenly took on an entirely new significance. Charles and Taff were, like all other soldiers, not too concerned at the prospect. They hoped to cover themselves with glory in some foreign campaign and return as conquering heroes, and the country at large, with the Wellington tradition still very much alive, took it for granted that the Army was superior to any other that could take the field.

The campaign that followed was to provide everyone with some dreadful shocks.

CRIMEAN INTERLUDE, 1854 - 1856

Whatever the immediate causes of the declaration of war with Russia may have been, the underlying aim of the Allies, mainly Britain, France and Turkey, was to halt the westward expansion of Russia particularly based on the power of her Black Sea fleet. She had already attacked Turkey. To this end the government decided for a start to send an expeditionary force to the area around Istamboul and the Sea of Marmora, using Malta as a staging post.

Of the two brothers Charles was the first to leave when, on 22 February, he marched out from Chichester with the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards to embark on the steamship *Orinoco* at Southampton.²³ He records that their departure was 'loudly cheered by a large concourse of people who were enthusiastic to a degree not often seen in an English Mob'. Ten days later they landed in Malta where the Brigade of Guards was quartered in barracks at the Lazaretto in Valetta. There followed several weeks of parades, marches and much sightseeing, with fresh troops arriving almost every day. On 25 March the arrivals included Taff with the 4th Regiment, the brothers spotting each other through their respective telescopes as the *Golden Fleece* sailed into harbour.

Taff had embarked off Leith near to where the battalion had marched from their barracks in Edinburgh. Of the march he writes: 'Anything like the enthusiasm of the people I never saw. We could hardly get on and had it not been for the band 7th Hussars being mounted, I don't think we should ever have got here. As it was we took an hour and a half to come about two miles to Granton. Most of the shops were shut up and Granton crowded with Gentlemen's carriages, flags flying out of all the windows of the houses ... altogether a most extraordinary scene.'

Four days later they called in at Plymouth where he managed a visit to Antony, observing that the building of the railway bridge over the Tamar at Saltash had already 'reached a most uncomfortable height', before re-embarking for Malta. He spent only just over a fortnight in the island and he too did much sightseeing, usually with Charles, when duty allowed it. He thought Valetta a very picturesque town but looking 'more like a stone-mason's yard than anything else'.

Leaving Charles still in Malta, Taff sailed again on 10 April arriving at Gallipoli a few days later where the battalion camped, moving in May temporarily to Boulahir and enduring great heat. In the latter part of June he obtained leave to visit Istamboul where one morning he started about 4am to see the Sultan go to the Mosque. 'Met him on the road and followed him in to our own astonishment and that of everyone else in the Mosque. After a grand consultation a fat Pacha took us out to a window in the gallery from which we had a good view.' After returning to Gallipoli they were once more moved to Boulahir where it was still extremely hot and where they even saw a plague of locusts 'almost darkening the air and making a noise like a violent storm'. And, ominously, cholera broke out. On 20 August he sailed once more, this time to Varna. But before following him further it will be convenient to return to Charles's movements.

Charles remained in Malta until 22 April on which date he left with his battalion for Istamboul. Always ready with graphic descriptions he reported seeing on entering the Dardanelles 'a curious rattletrap looking castle on the European side with large casemated embrasures, the whole looking as if a good cricket swipe would knock the whole fortress to ruins'. Gallipoli, off which they paused, he described as 'a very higgledy-piggledy looking wooden affair with red low pitched roofs of tile interspersed with some Cypress and other trees'. On arrival at Istamboul they camped in a picturesque site by the water's edge where however it was extremely hot.

His activities during May were seriously hampered by a badly sprained ankle, but by June he was sufficiently mobile to visit the Seraglio and the Mosque of S.Sophia. The latter he found most impressive.

The first entrance ... is the very most striking thing I ever saw, an immensity of space upon the floor, the effect of which is grand in the extreme, and the lofty dome is very striking (180 feet). In fact no words can convey the smallest idea of the impression of extreme beauty and grandeur, and the dividing objects being clusters and groups of magnificent marble and coloured granite, having what were the side-

Chapels on the further side, and then again above there is what in Pointed Architecture would be called a triforium of immense size.

In mid-June they left for Varna on the Black Sea, thus leap-frogging Taff who had not yet arrived there and whom he was not in fact to see for a year. After a couple of weeks they moved a short distance to a place called Aladyn where they camped amongst 'a dense scrub of Berberis, Oak, Hornbeam, Ash, Wild Cherry and Pear bound together in parts by Smilax, winding about from tree to shrub', and where there were also immense Stagshorn beetles of formidable appearance.

However, in the middle of July he heard news that he had got his company without purchase, making him a Lt. Col. because of the method of calculating rank in the Guards, and that he had been posted home. 'Mounting guard at St. James' after this warlike excitement will be very flat dull and unprofitable' he complained. He expected to travel overland via Belgrade and Vienna, but whether he did so or not is unknown as his diary stops abruptly at this point and is not resumed until the following spring. Nor are there any surviving letters to fill the gap.

Taff's stay in a stifling Varna was brief. On the last day of August a great flotilla of 27 ships, including the *Terrible* with the 4th Regiment, set sail eastwards. Next day he confided to his diary: 'perhaps the last month of my existence'. All rumours and doubts were finally dispelled when the invasion of the Crimea was announced. The training and manoeuvres were over; from now on it was war.

They landed near Eupatoria and it took a few days for the whole army to disembark so that the march towards Sevastopol did not begin until 19 September. At once the shortcomings of the Commissariat that were to be such a scandalous feature of the campaign manifested themselves. 'Under arms 15 hours with hardly anything to drink and nothing but a small piece of biscuit. I dropped twice and with the greatest difficulty crawled after my Regt.' - and all this in great heat. By the time the Army halted for the night they were exhausted. Yet next day they had to force the crossing of the River Alma in the teeth of Russian opposition. The 4th were in support of the Coldstream who suffered considerable casualties; Taff, who did not fire a shot in anger all day, was only too thankful that Charles had gone home when he did. By the end of it all the Russians were in full retreat back towards Sevastopol. A week later the Allies arrived on the Heights overlooking the town, whereupon the British commander Lord Raglan accompanied by Sir John Burgoyne made a

reconnaissance 'and I believe found nothing to impede us but 2 small forts which will take a day or two to batter down'. His optimism was further buoyed by finding he had been gazetted Captain.

But inexplicably the general expectation of a quick assault before the Russians had had time to strengthen their defences was not realised; instead caution was to be the order of the day. The Army could not understand it. The bombardment did not begin until 17 October, three weeks later, and was not a great success when it came. 'We all agree that we gave them too much time to throw up defences as it must come to a rush at last and better to storm at once before they had so many batteries up and had not got confidence ...' And ten days after the bombardment: 'We are all longing for the finale, the tedium not to say work is horrible and we are in daily dread of awaking to a winter's frost.' The work of trenching towards the ever-strengthening Russian fortifications was also dangerous; every day men were killed by enemy shelling.

On 5 November came the bloody battle of Inkerman fought in a fog to the east of the town. Taff's regiment took no part in it but amongst the many killed was Sarah's brother Heneage Wynne. The British Army 'was becoming increasingly dispirited and sick at heart' he wrote. Morale was still further lowered by the hurricane of 14 November which not only wrecked many store ships waiting in Balaclava Bay that perversely had been refused entry into the port by the naval authorities but also blew down all the tents on the Heights. Writing to Henny, Taff told how he spent the entire day sitting on his tent in the rain to prevent it blowing away and implored her to do all she could to stop Charles coming out. 'I am perfectly certain he would never stand the work and exposure', adding a little mischievously that there were out there no public houses with glasses of sherry etc.'. In between his duties he penned a line to Reginald.

The roads are almost impassable and the Commissariat arrangements in carriage shamefully bad so it is a wonder we get anything. The papers have not got the right end of the story regarding the inefficiency of the Medicos, which is simply that the top-sawyers are a set of old pedants who think of nothing but red-tape; reports and returns occupy time and people that ought to be devoted to practical matters. Writing out the case of one patient (which they are obliged to do in every case) takes up time which might be occupied in attending 6 others, a very good practice in Hospital in a country quarter but quite out of place in the field, but all our people seen to

think foolscap! (why so called?) paper a most important muniment of war.

Taff managed to survive the Crimean winter. Cholera had broken out again, there was a great deal of rain before it turned bitterly cold and when intermittent thaws came they produced appalling mud. He had many days and nights in the trenches as the British advanced their works with a deliberation more akin to a medieval siege than a mid nineteenth-century war. There were distractions though, in the form of visits made often on his pony to friends in other parts of the Camp. The family at home kept him in touch with events and sent out much-appreciated comforts. By March the weather was beginning to turn warmer, and although the bombardment of the town continued it seemed largely ineffectual. He then received news that Charles was on his way out and he duly arrived at the beginning of May 1855.

Charles had sailed with a draft of Guards reinforcements, having travelled with them by train from Waterloo to Portsmouth where they embarked on the *Alma*. Some days previously they had been inspected at Wellington Barracks by Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge before marching past the Queen in Buckingham Palace courtyard. On the day after his arrival at Balaclava he met Taff who showed him around. His diary records that two days later he dined with Lord Raglan, no less. This almost certainly came about through Caroline Estcourt, the wife of the Adjutant-General, being his mother's half-sister. She was in the Camp at that time.

The very next day Taff got himself involved in an absurd incident. He had as so often before gone down on duty to the trenches and posted the sentries. However on this occasion there was some alarm and they ran in. Just as they did so Brigadier General Eyre, a much disliked choleric martinet, turned up and accused Taff of failing to post them. He of course contradicted him and was then accused in so many words of cowardice. That was more than Taff could stand and, to use his own words, 'replied rather warmly', whereupon he was arrested and marched off to the army clink. Later in the day Eyre decided to release him saying he thought it had been an error of judgement on Taff's part. Taff thought he had been insulted and moreover had had his honour impugned in front of his men and refused to come out of arrest until a Court of Inquiry had decided on the matter. The court sat on the 7th and promulgated its findings on the 9th which exonerated him completely. What Charles thought about it all he unfortunately does not record. It became a matter of some amusement in the Camp generally though.

After more fearful rain and mud it now turned very warm and all parades had to be held early in the morning. Cholera was rife. Charles describes action in the trenches, with the men firing their rifles at the enemy ... 'Then would come a round shot just over our heads followed a minute or two after by a shell ... and down we all went, and after the explosion one often heard the bits spluttering about in the air.' In the same letter he recounts a ride over the plain to the Monastery of St. George at the top of high cliffs near the entrance to Balaclava harbour:

It is a lovely view from this place, the sea is very blue if at all calm and the red bold cliffs covered in tufts with small firs, junipers, judas trees and herbaceous plants down to the water's edge. The vegetation as yet fresh and green on the plain is beautiful, acres of red poppy, large patches of very brilliant larkspur, white silene, crimson gladiolus, yellow mustard rank and wild, growing as tall as ones chest when riding ... and then suddenly coming on a large bed of creeping roses a light pink only four inches from the surface of the ground diversified by some large bushes of a smaller white rose, and immense tufts of brilliant bugloss and borage three feet high, and a beautiful bright yellow echium hanging its long curved tubes in great profusion from amongst its hairy grey foliage, mignonette in quantities and occasional spikes of broom rape. I have not seen the ghost of a fern or a heath though the absence of the latter is somewhat made up for by wild thyme ...

It is an unusual view of the Crimea and reveals his surprisingly wide knowledge of botany.

There was another major but unsuccessful attack and bombardment of Sevastopol on 8 June witnessed together by Charles and Taff who fortunately were not involved as there were many casualties. Next day Taff learnt to his surprise that he had been posted home in charge of invalids. He gave Charles his pony and tack and in a few days was off in the *Saldanha*. Charles was greatly relieved to see him out of harm's way at last.

His ship anchored off Spithead on 5 August and there to welcome him home were Reginald and his wife with Amabel and Agneta, and also of course Henny. They were taken over the ship and reported that Taff had been housed in great luxury. The children had never been on board a large ship before 'and

the sailors singing amused them very much. The deck looked very picturesque, the various costumes and long beards and swarthy faces ...' He returned to Thames Bank to recount his adventures to his ailing father, and while on leave had two pictures taken of himself, one in uniform for Tom, the other for Reginald and Henny 'in my old shell jacket, revolver etc. and Greco [a cloak, a present from Caroline Estcourt] in a striking attitude, intended to represent defiance to all my foes from Eyre to the mildest Ruski fifer'.

In the Crimea, 18 June 1855 marked the start of what can only be described as a depressing ten days. Another assault on Sevastopol had been expected and duly took place on that day. Charles's letter to a Cornish relative tells it all. 'I promised to give you a full, true and particular account of our great victory and downfall of Sevastopol ... but instead I should have to write of our utter and entire defeat, for call it by what name you please, repulse, failure etc. it was neither more nor less than a thorough good licking, disastrous enough but I think not disgraceful ...' There were heavy losses and several good friends were killed. He himself was in reserve and hardly came under fire.

Two days later he was taken ill with jaundice and dysentery, and no sooner had that misfortune struck when he heard that the Adjutant-General had been attacked by cholera. Ill though he was he managed to get over to see Caroline but her husband died within about forty-eight hours. He attended the funeral walking with Caroline, while the General's sister who was also out there was escorted by General Barnard. Hardly had this taken place when Lord Raglan himself died. He obtained leave to accompany the Estcourts back to Therapia, but while there he became ill again and had to spend almost a fortnight before being able to get a ship to take him back to Balaklava. Cooler weather then helped him to recover.

Back at home a letter from Henny written in August reflects the strains that could occur between sisters in the same household with insufficient outlets for their talents. She wrote from 47 Harley Street that Jemima was going to Marlow for a few days and hoped she would stay longer as 'she is becoming unbearable... 'There has been a grand row in the house here (luckily while I was away) & Robson is going to leave; the best of the joke is the row began before prayers: there was an Armistice concluded for Prayers & then the explosion came as soon as they got up from their knees, & I am told Charlotte gave it to Jema. more handsomely than she had ever been known to do it before!!! ... Philip Cocks appeared in London yesterday: he came overland: looking thin and ill but talked faster than I ever remember him'. There is no

doubt that letters from home, whatever their content, were eagerly awaited in the Crimea.

On 8 September the British and French once more attacked Sevastopol. The French met with considerable success but the British again failed in their objective, partly because the fortifications were more formidable than had been expected and partly because the troops were too inexperienced. Charles then signed a petition with seven other Guards officers for a meeting for the purpose of allowing the Brigade of Guards to attack the Redan next day to salve the honour of the British Army. 'I really could sit down and cry with vexation and shall be ashamed to look a Frenchman in the face after the gallant way in which they have done their work.' Such a fire-eating enterprise luckily was unnecessary. That night the Russians blew up key points in the town and evacuated the south side of the Dockyard Creek where most of the buildings lay. Sevastopol had fallen.

Next day by dint of quickly managing to have himself appointed, very temporarily, as someone's staff officer he was able to write that he had been riding round the blazing town which he described as 'interesting beyond anything I ever saw before', though somewhat dangerous because of exploding magazines.

It is very pretty Town, clean white stone something like Cheltenham, all the houses in a sort of Grecian style. The houses are only two or three storeys and mostly have a sort of garden court planted as an entrance with broom, acacia, ailanthus and Judas trees - some of the larger ones had walnut trees ... The town is built up and down the sides of hills and ravines making it very picturesque ... One could hardly realise the fact that we were riding round the bugbear Sevastopol in flames. I went into the court of Menschikoff's house and very nice it appeared though much burnt and destroyed. I don't think I saw a single house without shot holes, and many, if not most, completely riddled, sides roofs and windows, and the larger portion on fire or already gutted.

(Prince Menschikoff was the local Russian commander.) He managed to buy some Russian drums, also a decanter for Tom and Sarah. The drums and a large slab of polished dark granite which he eventually had made into a top for a sideboard he sent home together with specimens of round shot. Some items were shipped thanks to his friend Captain Wilson of the *Orinoco* with whom he dined or whom he entertained whenever his ship was in Balaklava. But although

Sevastopol had fallen the war was not over. There was still a Russian army in the vicinity which was able to bombard the town. Parades, field days and roadmaking occupied much of his time, with visits and explorations fitted into his off-duty periods.

In October Taff wrote to Charles from Parkhurst to let him know of his posting at the end of his leave.

I am at length turned into a depot-squatter, a post wh. I do not much like, luckily Trevor keeps me company, there are but few other fellows of one's own age ... What I most dislike is the having to act as bearleader. I am so good an example of that perfect submission to authority myself that you can hardly wonder at my despairing efforts among a crew of newly caught ensigns. I have just been administering a lecture to one Billington, for his highly improper conduct in always being late at drill. I was obliged to confess that I was hardly a proper person to mention such a trifle, having been occasionally in the habit of forgetting myself. The Spartans used to make their slaves drunk to frighten their children, in like manner, I suppose I am pitched upon as an example of what to avoid.

In November it turned wet and cold and it became obvious that they were all going to have to endure another winter on the Heights. Huts had now been sent out instead of tents but Charles had to report that they were far from satisfactory. 'Our huts make but little progress and particularly the officers', and on putting on the roof it is found that the roof is 4 inches shorter than the body from some mistake in the setting out the work in England ... but it does not much matter if it is not more weathertight than it seems to be at present, the rain coming through at every point. The pieces of roof are only put edge to edge and plenty of daylight between, having no laps at all.' So another bitter winter drew on. There were storms, rain and mud followed by snow and intense cold. On duty there were cases of sentries freezing to death overnight and many of frostbite, and the weather continued bleak right through to February.

In January, amongst other letters from home he received one from Henny giving interesting news:

Walter will of course write to you himself to announce his intentions regarding Miss Isabella Alderson, but you may like to hear all about it from me. The day Walter started for

Paris he wrote to Lady Alderson requesting her to direct to him at Paris, which she did, giving her consent, so last Monday took his opportunity with the young lady on what he flattered himself was an empty staircase!! But from what Edward Dean tells me it appeared that several people being up to the fun were looking over the banisters! The poor young lady in a highly agitated state crying!! ... Tom had an interview with the Baron on Wednesday and said he gave his consent but would first submit it to Mylady as £600 is rather small for a London income. Mylady writes to Walter Wednesday and says it would not be prudent but hopes he will go there as usual which put Walter into a dreadful state. However Tom trudged there once more and had an interview with her Ladyship who evidently is an artful dodger and thought she could get more by her note but had not the smallest intention of giving it up ... I am told the bride elect has a very good temper which I am very glad to hear. Lady A. tells Walter that she knows nobody like her and that she is the Saint of the family!!! Walter quite believes her ...

Tom, in a letter received by Charles a few days later, commented 'I wish I could see my way to the perfection of his happiness, poor fellow, but their Income must be so limited that I do not see how they are to marry'. He wrote primarily to thank Charles for the decanter which he described as magnificent and which Sarah duly labelled. (The decanter with its original label is still in the family.) He goes on: 'Well I am afraid that we are really going to have peace, we are all very sulky about it, feeling we have been done in some way or other ... we feel too that we are making peace with our prestige lowered, we have not a Trafalgar or Waterloo to repose on - the feeling in France on the other hand is pre-eminently peaceful ... My father has pretty well got over the attack he had but he is very weak, certainly more so than he ever was before & sometimes wanders a little, another symptom of weakness ...'

The hostilities against Russia at last ended in March with the signing of an Armistice. Gradually troops were withdrawn. At the end of the month he managed a sightseeing trip to Kertch in HMS *Medusa* through knowing her Captain, but as late as 12 May he wrote:

We hear we are to be one of the last Regts. to leave the Crimea ... we are all wondering what has become of the boasted transport of England as nothing appears to be

arriving to take us away ... It would be a great satisfaction to the Army if we could have a great fight with our Allies the French, nothing would give me or the Army universally so much pleasure. We should all go at it with a will. Our alliance has certainly widened the breach which I really begin to believe must exist between us ...

But on 4 June 1856 the Coldstream finally embarked on board HMS *Agamemnon* and in just over three weeks they were home in Aldershot. Charles and Taff had both survived unscathed, the objects of the war had mostly been achieved. But the Army had not come out of it with distinction, let alone the glory it had anticipated.

All in all it had not been a good campaign.

THE LATER 19TH CENTURY, 1856 - 1899

Charles probably bought his Cornish property, the farm of Pengelly, in the late 1840s and on it he began to build a new house. It lay just above the confluence of the St. Neot stream with the Fowey at the Liskeard end of the Glynn valley, but work progressed slowly owing to the limited amount of cash available. While he was serving in the Crimea matters were looked after by his agent and general factotum George Couch; although a sketch made in the Crimea shows the house which he called Treverbyn Vean (usually known simply as Treverbyn) as virtually complete, in fact this was simply as he saw it in his mind's eye. In 1859 the *Orinoco*, the ship in which he had sailed on the first part of his journey to the east, was broken up and Charles managed to secure some sound timbers which were incorporated into beams in what became the dining room. The whole building project was completed in about 1864.

The stone house which to a great extent he designed himself was in a pleasing neo-Jacobean style with mullioned windows, the glass in some ground floor-rooms having family coats-of-arms incorporated in them. The fireplace in the drawing room had on the lintel a representation of the legend of St. Neot carved in stone by a local craftsman, and there were two fine tapestries. The hall was galleried and here he put the colours and drums from the Crimea together with hunting trophies, the whole being obviously very much influenced by the hall at the Mt. Edgcumbe's Cotehele which he knew well. There was also a lodge at the bottom of the drive.

He was still in the Army and in 1857 was commanding the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards in Dublin, but in about 1859 he sold his commission and retired. He must have been living in part of Treverbyn by then as in the same year he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for Cornwall, and in 1860 was further appointed as Lt. Col. of the 2nd Battalion The Cornwall Rifle Volunteers.

But having completed the house Charles found himself scarcely able to afford to use it as his home which caused him considerable worry. Nevertheless the place soon became a great favourite of his nieces Agneta and Amabel. Agneta, after they had stayed there in his absence in August 1865, had to write to him to confess they had contrived to overturn the dogcart when turning a sharp corner coming down to St. Neot. She had not felt inclined to write immediately though 'as we did not want you to hear of our upset till we had left as we were afraid you might stop us driving ... I hope you will let us go to Treverbyn next year, it is the nicest place I know . We came to Marlow Wednesday. The boys are certainly very much improved especially Vernon's appearance ... Alice has grown up so much since the Spring ... Aunt Netee [Henny] is anything but well, she looks as if she had been dipped in curry'.



Thames Bank

Taff seems to have treated his brother's financial straits with a certain amount of levity, suggesting for example he might try marrying an Armenian; 'you were always one for the unusual.' And writing from Corfu where he was stationed in 1863 he said that he remained on the lookout for a rich heiress for him. Some improvement came next year when Charles received a legacy from his aunt Eliza Raymond Barker's marriage settlement made over to him by her widower in advance of his own death. In 1866 at the age of forty-five he became engaged to Josephine Chichester-Nagle of Templeton near Tiverton in Devon who was twenty years his Junior, but still had not enough income to marry her.

He was offered the Chief Magistracy of New South Wales, declining it as he thought that Josephine (Phinie) would not like it.

On hearing of his engagement Agneta aged twenty wrote:

I suppose you expect me to write & congratulate you. If you have been wearing the washing neckcloths you did at Cannes I can't think Miss Chichester-Nagle has an eye for tidiness but I can only imagine you have been wearing the bottle green one with red spots which so suited your bilious complexion she could not help admiring you. I hope she has a partiality for reading the newspaper uncut or doing anything else you particularly dislike as you want bullying out of your various fidgets though I think you have improved a little under our training.

The notion that the Victorian young always treated their elders with dutiful deference clearly requires some revision in the light of this letter.

By 1870 money matters were at last sufficiently resolved for him to marry Phinie though Treverbyn was let from time to time. Twin daughters, Josephine and Honoria, were born to them in February 1873, the former always being known as Ffine, the latter as Nora. Charles himself was soon appointed to serve on the committee concerned with the building of Truro Cathedral and was a very active member, particularly in 1880 and 1881, in selecting which stone should be used. He was able to put at the authorities' disposal his very considerable knowledge in this sphere and visited all the sizeable quarries in Cornwall, estimating the suitability and cost of over seventy different types of stone.

Sadly his married life was comparatively brief as a few years later he suffered from periodic bouts of illness which culminated in his death in Bournemouth in 1885. He was buried at St. Neot. There were many tributes to his fine character. A letter to Phinie from General Sir Percy Fielding, a comrade from Crimean days, spoke of his popularity and his usefulness to the Coldstream even after his retirement. 'On service in the Crimea there was no better soldier, and though he elected to mess by himself, he always found a readiness to accept his invitations to the little dinners he gave, although the menu was invariably the same, the dinner being cooked by his servant Blythe whose 'Wakefield steaks' and 'Sir Watkin pudding' were celebrated throughout the camp.' He felt he had lost one of the truest friends he had ever had. Phinie was to continue living at Treverbyn for many years to come; she was only forty-five when widowed. In

fact Charles was not the first of his generation to die as his sister Jemima had predeceased him ten years earlier.

After the Crimean War was over Taff was posted to Dublin and may have been there at the same time as Charles as in May 1857 he sailed thence for India via Mauritius at the time of the Mutiny. He returned home from Karachi next year by which time he had been promoted to Major. But before leaving he wrote to Henny from Baroda in March to say that the previous day the Gaikowar had given them a day's hunting with his cheetahs. He found that it quickly became boring 'and one's sympathies moreover are much more on the side of the black buck than the cheetahs, who are too much like their owners to please me much, currish, cruel & treacherous'. After describing the Gaikowar driving a bullock cart dressed in a sky-blue jacket with brown facings, white linen shorts and bare legs, he continues:

On arrival at the Meet ... we were put into small bullock gharries and away we went, cheetah carts in front, then bullock gharries and on all sides an omnium gatherum of grooms, soldiers and blackguards of all kinds ... We were rather amused in the middle of the day by a horse getting loose and kicking up a row which brought the King and his court out of their tent in a great hurry, where, by the state they turned out in, they must have been sitting with nothing but bracelets on, something after the manner of your friend Mrs. Crow. The most striking figure was the Prime Minister as he was enormously fat and of a salmon-out-of-season sort of colour.

He retired from the Army in 1865, taking a London flat at 41 Pall Mall as a kind of pied-a-terre while he indulged his passion for travelling both at home and abroad. At the beginning of 1874 he was on his way to Egypt when he received a message that virtually all his possessions had been lost in the Pantechnicon fire in London. Having learnt that nothing had been saved he saw no purpose in returning so carried on. Fortunately for posterity his Crimean diaries and letters were in Henny's safe keeping and so survived. He was in Cairo at the time of the marriage of the Khedive's daughter. 'Bride taken to her husband's house with a grand cortège, a wonderful mixture of costumes, Greek, Turk, Arab. Body of Cavalry in chain armour & British footmen with powdered hair behind the carriages' he writes. In the evening he went to see the illuminations that included an arcade about half a mile long leading to the palace covered with lamps and candles, and there were fireworks 'going off in the most promiscuous manner.' He returned home via Alexandria and Gibraltar.

In the autumn of the same year he went to America. Writing to Charles from Palmer's House, Chicago, he explained that because he found rail travel uncomfortable he had abandoned the idea of going across to San Francisco. Instead he was going on to Cincinnati, thence to Washington, Baltimore, Richmond and so to New York. Niagara which he had seen was finer than he had expected, especially the Horseshoe Falls. He goes on:

I was pleased with Quebec as far as situation and surrounding goes but otherwise it is a melancholy place, half in ruins. Montreal disappointed me. Ottawa will some day be a fine city, the position very fine, it is curious to see a town in process of manufacture ... From Niagara I went to Detroit, & here. This is a wonderful place, not the least wonder is this hotel, where money is laid on thick, the drawing rooms hung with satin, gold & bronze everywhere & comfort nowhere, very much what the house of a nouveau riche might be expected to have ... N. York is a curious place unlike anything I ever saw or rather like a mixture of everything one has ever seen. Boston is a nice town much like an English country town on a large scale. My betes noires are the hotels & railways which to a quiet man are detestable ... The people I find excessively civil & obliging but some of their manners & customs are beastly ... I fancy they are very much what our forefathers were, even to dining early & eating supper. They most of them suffer from indigestion which considering their piggish mode of eating I don't wonder at & can't feel sorry for, looking upon it as just retribution for the enormities they commit.

Each year he travelled abroad until 1885 when he had a serious illness because of which he stayed in this country, going to Treverbyn for Charles' funeral and visiting there again next year. Thereafter his foreign travels continued until 1890 after which he remained in England. He died in 1893 in London aged hardly sixty-four. Henny was devastated. 'All his nieces and nephews say he had such a young spirit that he could always enter into their amusements, & all loved him dearly' she wrote. Others described him as a slightly shy but humorous and kindly man.

In spite of the family's pessimism about Walter's financial position, he duly married Isabella in October 1856 at which time he was employed as Auditor of the India House accounts. They made their home in Queensbury Place, London, and they eventually had five children, two sons, Edward Lygon Somers born in 1858 and Arthur Reginald Carew born two years later, and daughters

Mary Katherine Agneta, Ethel Mildred Susan (always known as Meme) and Monica Beatrice Lucy who died an infant

Very little has survived about this family in the 19th century. In due course Edward joined Cocks, Biddulph becoming a full partner in 1891 in the place of his uncle Reginald; but before this, in 1887, he had married Amabel, daughter of Sir Charles Watson-Copley Bt. by whom he had two children, James Charles Somers born in 1888 and Amabel Caroline Somers born a few years later. Walter's other son Arthur entered the Church. After a curacy in Stepney and chaplaincy of St. Mary's Hospital, Great Ilford, he became vicar of St. Bartholemew's in Brighton in 1895. Neither Mary nor Meme married, living together in London at South Eaton Place. Walter himself died in 1898 at the age of seventy-four. Edward, through his marriage to Amabel, came to inherit an estate called Bake in east Cornwall near Hessenford, thus adding to the family connection with that county.

With their father's death in 1859 Reginald and Tom inherited his share in the Bank and were the Cocks partners for some thirty years more. Reginald took a keen interest in geography and, having been elected an FRGS in 1849, he succeeded Mr Biddulph as the Treasurer of the Royal Geographical Society in 1863, holding the post until 1891 when he was in turn succeeded by his nephew Edward. This family connection can be explained by the fact that the Bank held the Society's account. When Reginald retired from the Bank in the same year he sold his share for £3000 plus an annuity of £2400 - a considerable sum.

The youngest of his three daughters, Mary, had died as a small child. Agneta and Amabel's visits to Treverbyn have already been recorded. In 1874 the latter married William Newcombe Nicholson of Balrath, co. Meath, a tall man (Amabel was short) with an Irish brogue and what the family thought was a startling choice in neckties. The couple spent most of their time abroad, particularly the Riviera, Italy, Gibraltar and in 1885 Tangier, but Amabel died when she was only forty-three. Agneta, like so many Cocks daughters, never married. In 1887 Taff took her to see the Queen's Golden Jubilee Naval Review at Spithead from the deck of a P & O steamer in which they afterwards went on a short cruise to Portland and back.

In his old age Reginald suffered a double blow. Not only did he lose Amabel but his own wife Henrietta as well as Tom's wife Sarah died in the influenza epidemic that raged at the beginning of 1894. He himself died just a year later.

With the Bank taking up a increasing amount of his time Tom ceased to be an MP in 1857. His children were growing up; Vernon who was educated at Eton (a break with the Westminster tradition) and Christ Church travelled at home and abroad gaining experience before joining the Bank. His overseas trips included one in 1871 to America and Canada visiting the Hudson River, Niagara, Quebec and Mt. Washington. On all his travels he made delightful watercolour sketches which still survive of the places he was staying at, ranging from Alpine flowers to Hanley Castle near the Malverns and from the almshouses at Ewelme to his mother's family's other Welsh home at Cefn Amwlch on the Lleyl Peninsula.

Alfred who also went to Eton and Christ Church had a strong natural history bent, though he developed many other interests too. When a boy he used apparently to keep a pet seal which swam in the river at Thames Bank, and it is said that on one occasion it was put in the sink in the housemaid's pantry while the family attended church. Unfortunately it contrived to turn on the tap while lying on the plug-hole so that on returning from its devotions the party was greeted by a small waterfall coming down the staircase.

There is another story which probably relates to this period. Tom was a magistrate and as such had to read the Riot Act at Marlow when there were disturbances at elections or at other times and even authorise the use of force. As a mild-mannered person he very much disliked this and it seems that someone, probably the children, hit on the idea that if one primed a sporting gun with a small quantity of powder and a large quantity of raspberry jam and gave it to the military to fire if necessary, then the effect on the rioters would make them believe there had been carnage without in fact anyone actually being hurt. Unfortunately the expected riot never developed and so it was decided to fire the gun at the front door of Thames Bank to test the visual effect. It was indeed realistically spectacular, but when the mess was being cleared away it was discovered that the raspberry pips had appreciably penetrated the solid oak.

In 1872 the Bank moved temporarily across the road while the old premises were demolished and new ones to the design of Richard Coad were built. These were completed in 1874 and the move back accomplished amid considerable security. Taff wrote to Charles, 'I don't think Tom likes it much, he is too good a Tory to like novelties'. It was about now that Tom and Sarah's London home which had once been at 15 Hereford Street moved to 42 Great Cumberland Place having possibly also been at 47 Harley Street for a while. He was now getting elderly and less active in the Bank. In April 1886 he writes from Thames Bank a little sadly to Phinie to thank her for sending him a gift of Sherry and Maraschino:

We are at length getting through the winter, though it seems unwilling to part with us. Though vegetation is backward everything is looking well. We move to London on the 4th of May - for our season. I cannot walk about so much as I used & my friends at the Club are all dead, so that I had just as soon remain here, but no doubt a little shaking up does us all good. We live in critical times, think of Gladstone turning Home ruler in his old age, whether he carries it out or not, he has done a great deal of mischief.

His son Vernon (the name by which he was usually, and later invariably, known) who had become a partner in Cocks, Biddulph meanwhile, in October 1888 married Ethel Fellowes, the daughter of Horace Fellowes and sister of Dr Edmund Fellowes who was to become the leading expert on Tudor music. She was also an excellent watercolourist. It is believed they first met when Vernon was staying with his New Zealand cousins at Burfield near Christchurch. Initially their London home was at 47 York Street where their first child Margaret Agneta was born in 1889, but shortly afterwards they moved to 13 Montagu Place where two further daughters, Jane Ethel Mary and Muriel Emily were born in 1891 and 1892. Finally after nearly seven years of marriage a son Charles Vernon Somers arrived.

As already related, Tom lost his wife in the 1894 influenza epidemic so was a widower until his own death in August 1899 when he was aged eighty-four. In the same year his daughter Alice who four years earlier had married the Revd Walter Hill of Medmenham also died. The last seven years of the century had seen the passing of seven members of the family.

THE 20TH CENTURY

At the dawn of the new century two members of an earlier generation, Charlotte and Henny, were still alive. The former died in 1903 but Henny, known to the younger generation as Aunt Netie and who for years had been very deaf, lived on to a great age. Her great-niece Margaret recalls playing ring-a-roses with her and her own sisters at the Glade, Marlow, and when they all fell down her aunt was unable to get up again. The butler, summoned by the young in a panic, got her to her feet and ordered the children and Aunt Netie with equal severity never to play that game together again. She eventually died in February 1915 aged eighty-nine and was buried in Marlow churchyard next to Taff. Born just over ten years after Waterloo she survived long enough to see aeroplanes used in combat, an extraordinary span.

With Tom's death a major change occurred in that Vernon sold Thames Bank. His reasons for doing so are not entirely clear. Certainly it flooded occasionally when the river ran exceptionally high and it was large and somewhat expensive to maintain; but the property purchased in its place, the fifty-year-old Uplands at Hughenden near High Wycombe, though rather less large, had a considerable acreage attached to it even if the farm and most of the fields were let off. Its two main rooms, the drawing and dining rooms, were for example connected by a passage which, including the hall, was twenty-two yards long, the length of a cricket pitch, and there was a library, a billiards room, the large hall and a box and gun room apart from the kitchen quarters. Upstairs there were some eight bedrooms. The entire water supply was obtained from the extensive roofs which drained into a large underground tank, and the water had then to be hand-pumped up to the storage tanks in the roof space. The gardens were extensive with a croquet lawn, a large walled kitchen garden, a long herbaceous border and a wood. There were also stables round the yard and two cottages lived in by the gardener and the coachman (later to become the chauffeur) respectively. There was also an indoor staff of at least half a dozen. Either now or possibly earlier Alfred bought a small estate called Poynetts or Poynants at Fingest in the Chilterns near Henley where he kept various animals.

Vernon together with his cousin Edward were now the Cocks partners at 43 Charing Cross. In 1908 the former moved from 13 Montagu Place to 31 Lowndes Street which he retained until 1922. His daughter Jane recalls: 'It was a bright sunny little house spread over part of the corner of the street which gave it a quaintness all its own, with a beautiful dance floor. And we moved there just as Margaret was 'coming out' at 17 years old, and there we gave many dances and dinner parties and tea parties, and had all our wonderful gay young days.' The house was demolished by a bomb in the Second World War.

Agneta, the survivor of Reginald's daughters, was by then living at Hurlands at Puttenham in Surrey, a semi-invalid until her death in the later 1920s. Walter's younger son Arthur, after doctrinal differences with his bishop, resigned his Brighton living and joined the Roman Catholic Church as a priest, eventually rising to the rank of Monsignor. He lived until 1954 when he was aged over ninety. His sisters Mary and Meme latterly left their London flat and went to live in Hove where Meme died in 1949 and Mary three years later. Henny had left Taff's Crimean diaries and letters to Mary, and Mary in turn bequeathed them to Vernon's son Charles although the two branches of the family did not often meet.

Phinie was still living at Treverbyn. When the Duke of Cornwall (later George V) visited the Duchy in 1909 it was for some reason decided to revive the ancient custom whereby his tenants who held their manors by suit of service

had to present him with certain gifts on his crossing into Cornwall. Phinie was the Lady of the Manor of Pengelly which had to present him with a grey riding-cloak provided by Lord Clifden as Lord of another manor. There was a great deal of research and discussion as to who did what, various learned authorities being consulted before a decision was taken. Alfred as something of an antiquary was asked for his views but was surprised to hear that Phinie's Charles in his lifetime had anticipated such an event and had had a cloak put away in the belief that he would have to provide it. He counselled caution about using it. 'With respect to the cloak you have had by for so long,' he wrote, 'it would not do to present HRH with anything looking not quite new. Is the lining material not a little faded in places? Or the buttons if metal not a little tarnished? I suppose the moths have not had a taste out of it?' In the end all went well and the ceremony of receiving various interesting but quite useless dues took place on the bridge over the Tamar near Launceston, the twins presenting the Duchess with a bouquet. A signed photograph of the Prince actually wearing the cloak still exists. A similar ceremony in which Ffine presented the cloak took place in Launceston Castle in King George VI's day. Ffine herself in 1912 married a planter Wilfred Rolt and went to live in Ceylon, but the marriage quickly failed and she returned to Treverbyn again.

When war once more broke out in 1914 Charles had already gone up from Eton to Christ Church but had difficulty in being accepted for the Army owing to his having had rheumatic fever as a boy. However he found someone who was recruiting for a regiment whose doctor was not asking too many questions and so quite by chance was enrolled in the 42nd Highlanders, the Black Watch. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion and reported to Nigg in Ross-shire at the very end of 1914. Here he remained until the following September when he was sent to the Western Front to be attached to the 2nd Battalion, arriving in mid-October and being promoted to Lieutenant. Some weeks later it was decided to send the Indian Corps, of which the battalion was a part, to the Middle East to go to the relief of General Allenby besieged by the Turks in Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia.

They sailed from Marseilles on 5 December in the troopship *Royal George* transferring to a smaller steamer in the Persian Gulf which took them to Basra on the Shatt-al-Arab. Here they transferred again onto barges towed by a river boat, taking them to a small town on the Tigris where they disembarked on 5 January 1916. There was no time to acclimatise; next day they marched twenty miles across the desert, and on the 7th Charles records in a very laconic diary: '2.30 came under rifle fire after being told we were nowhere near the enemy .. great many casualties. Got bullet through left arm, broken and knocked down ... 4.30 went back to first aid post ... End of first day of battle of Shaikh Sa'ad.

Almost all platoon wounded or killed.' Next day he felt very poorly lying in an uncomfortable tent, 'no dressing, no food, no doctor, men dying'. In the evening he embarked on a river boat but his arm received no dressing until he arrived back at Basra late on the 11th suffering from dysentery as well. It was not for another week when he was put on a hospital ship for Bombay that his arm was properly splinted. The whole medical fiasco was a scandal that was raised in Parliament.

Some fifty years later he graphically recalled it all.²⁴

We had ... only two machine guns, and were on absolutely flat ground, no vegetation or cover of any kind ... We then advanced in rushes, about half the platoon at a time while the others gave covering fire. The Turks were in trenches and quite invisible, and their artillery was putting over shrapnel, very unpleasant as each shell when it burst sent out a lot of iron in a half-opened fern shape, and the nosecaps came off whole and hit the ground every 100 yards or so, making a noise like a giant turkey.

However, taking part in a charge with the men shouting and the pipes playing was something never to be forgotten. It was a curious feeling, knowing one was bound to be hit at any moment, but I can't remember being particularly frightened. Anyway the end came with a tremendous bang on my left which sent me flying. My topee came off but I quickly put it on again and took a few moments to get my breath back. I thought I had been knocked over by a blast from a shell ... I prepared to get up and catch up ... I was just conscious of a violent pain and electric shock, and passed out. About an hour later, as near as I could reckon, I came to gradually ... and as a few bullets were still coming past I decided to get up and walk back to find a doctor ... After a mile or so I found our MO and joined the queue waiting for first aid. He slit my sleeve and put a piece of ammunition box on as a sling, and I walked back with another man to find a hospital tent further on.

He arrived in a Bombay hospital on 22 January where his arm did not improve much. A fortnight later it was X-rayed when it was discovered that the bullet was still in it and had to be removed. The operation was not entirely successful and as a result of lack of proper early treatment he permanently lost the use of it. (He recalled that the saying amongst the officers in the hospital was that the initials RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps] stood for Rather A Mixed

Crowd, and IMS [Indian Medical Service] for Infinitely More So.) He left India in mid-March and after spending ten days in Alexandria he embarked on the hospital ship *Dunluce Castle* and arrived in Southampton on 18 April to begin six months leave at Uplands. Being unfit for further active service he spent much of the rest of the war seconded to the Cipher Room at the War Office, being promoted to Captain in March 1917.

In the same year he became engaged to Genifer Mary Butler Gaunt who lived not far from Uplands with her stepfather. Married on 29 March 1918 in London they were to have two children, Katharine Anita Somers born in London in January 1919 and John Vernon Somers in October 1921, by which time they had moved to Shothanger in the village of Felden near Boxmoor, now merged with Hemel Hempstead.

At Cocks, Biddulph & Co momentous events were afoot. Conditions had changed by the end of the war and the partners were giving serious thought as to whether there was any future for a private bank. As a result, on 28 November 1919 they circulated an historic letter to all their clients:

We have the pleasure to inform you that a provisional agreement has been entered into for the amalgamation of our Bank with the Bank of Liverpool and Martins Limited, which, as you are doubtless aware, is an Institution of the highest standing, with its head office at Liverpool, and an important City office at 68 Lombard Street, E.C.

The Bank has 259 Branches and sub-Branches in this Country, and possesses intimate and extensive business connections in all parts of the World.

Ever since the establishment of the Clearing House, Martins Bank has acted as our agents, and for many years we have had close business relations with them, which have continued since their amalgamation with the Bank of Liverpool a year ago.

We regret that after many years of active business life

LORD BIDDULPH

MR. GEORGE TOURNAY BIDDULPH

AND

MR. THOMAS SOMERS VERNON COCKS

take this opportunity of retiring, but the remaining partners

MR. EDWARD LYGON SOMERS COCKS

THE HON. JOHN MICHAEL GORDON BIDDULPH

AND

THE HON. THOMAS HENRY FREDERICK EGERTON

will continue as heretofore to manage the business at 43, Charing Cross, with the assistance of the existing Staff, all of whom will continue in the service of the Bank. You may therefore depend upon continuity in the personnel of the Bank, and upon the friendly and personal relations which have existed between our Bank and its Customers for upwards of 160 years, remaining undisturbed.

After announcing that Mr. E.L. Somers Cocks and the Hon. J.M.G. Biddulph were to join the London Board of Liverpool & Martins Ltd the letter went on to say that subject to ratification' the amalgamation will take place as from the 1st July 1919' - a curious error for 1920. Thus, sadly but no doubt inevitably, the independence of Cocks, Biddulph & Co came to an end. Though the premises were redesignated as 16 Whitehall and Martins in turn have been swallowed by Barclays Bank, the branch was still called the Cocks, Biddulph Branch, a pleasing reminder of its distant origins and of the families who founded and continued to serve it through bad times and good. But it was sold in 1993 and has become a restaurant.

Charles Joined the Bank at about the time of the merger, the fifth consecutive generation to do so, and continued to work there until the 1930s. His parents sold their Lowndes Street house in 1922 and took a flat at Hyde Park Gate, quite sufficient for their needs as Vernon now had no business that would keep him from Uplands for lengthy periods. Moreover his health had suffered; he had arthritis so severely in one knee that it necessitated the leg's amputation. Thereafter he always used two sticks as artificial limbs were then comparatively crude affairs. He is recalled as a quietly humorous man who seemed latterly to spend much of his time sitting alone in his library at Uplands surrounded by some magnificent books. He died in 1932 aged eighty-two and was buried at Hughenden.²⁵

His younger brother Alfred had died a year or two earlier at Poynetts. He was a man of many parts (sometimes called by his second name Heneage), a collector, antiquarian, the discoverer of Roman remains, an expert on campanology and a noted natural historian who had virtually a private zoo at his home, with Eagle Owls, Wild Cats, a herd of White Chartley cattle and a collection of stuffed bats. The disposal of some of these after his death caused problems for his executors though the cattle were sold to the Duke of Bedford. In later years he was considered rather eccentric; for example he used to sleep with a device rigged up so that if an intruder opened his bedroom door at night a shotgun would automatically be discharged at him. Fortunately for all concerned that never happened.

It is odd to recall that when Edward's daughter Amabel married Charles McGrigor (afterwards Sir Charles, Bt.) in 1919 and had the first of her two sons she became the first of all the Cocks daughters descended from Thomas the co-founder of the Bank to have had children. It will be convenient to record here that Edward did not long survive after the Bank's merger, dying in 1923. His widow lived on till 1938. Their son James, who had served in the Coldstream Guards in the 1914-1918 war, retained Bake until after the 1939-1945 war when he sold it. He lived abroad unmarried until his death in Switzerland in 1960. Amabel outlived him by twenty years.

A little further west in Cornwall Phinie remained at Treverbyn right up to her death in 1926 when she was aged eighty-six. From all accounts she was a lively and amusing hostess to the last. Her younger twin daughter Nora followed her only three years later leaving Fifine on her own. Consequently she employed a companion to live with her, one Miss Buckland, a delightful person who remained with her until Treverbyn was sold in 1947. The drums, colours and some other trophies brought back from the Crimea ninety years earlier were then offered to, and gratefully accepted by, the Coldstream Guards. Fifine went to live in Bodmin where she died in 1955, and her death marked the end of the family's link with Cornwall.

Although Amabel McGrigor was the first Cocks daughter to have had a child, she was soon followed by two of Vernon's daughters. In 1922 Muriel married Prescott Willoughby Lowe, a tea-planter in Ceylon, and had four children; Margaret who a few months later married Gordon Fenton from Fiji, a pioneer of air services in that part of the world, had six.

Vernon's death once again brought considerable changes. Uplands was too large for Charles's family and, as the six-days-a-week train journeys to and from London were taking a toll on his health, he decided virtually to retire and look for somewhere else to live. He and Genifer favoured Devon, and so after some searching they built a house near Chagford on the edge of Dartmoor. Uplands was sold and the move took place in 1934 though Denshams was not completed until 1935. It was an ideal spot for children to grow up in with its oak wood, river and a rough rocky area with a superb view of Dartmoor which could be walked or ridden over.

Ethel died in 1936 while Charles and his family were having their annual holiday in North Wales. She collapsed at Hunstanton while playing in a croquet competition, a game in which she was an expert. Though kindly to her grandchildren she was in some ways a somewhat austere figure in the Victorian mould (Uplands in her day still had hip-baths in the bedrooms) who brought up

her own children with a degree of frugality which seemed quite unnecessary in a reasonably affluent household.

After the outbreak of war in 1939 Katharine worked chiefly on the land and in 1941 was married to James Proudman, a Royal Artillery Officer, but their marriage was dissolved after fifteen years. She then travelled extensively before returning to live near Chagford. John joined the Royal Engineers straight from Eton in 1940. Commissioned a year later he went out to India in the troopship *Capetown Castle* via Durban, landing at Bombay and being posted to the splendidly named Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners in Bangalore. But in November 1943 he contracted polio which left him seriously disabled and he was invalided out in 1945 after returning to England by hospital ships with a two months delay in Egypt en route.

Denshams was sold in 1953 and, after a few years living in two other houses, Charles and Genifer bought Baileys Hey in Chagford itself where they lived until old age forced another move. Charles died in 1977 when only six months short of celebrating his diamond wedding anniversary, and Genifer followed in 1985. Charles had outlived two of his sisters, Jane and Margaret who had died in 1968 and 1969. Jane had for long had her home at Radnage near High Wycombe while Margaret who on the outbreak of war had gone to New Zealand lived the rest of her life there. Muriel since before the war had lived in Oxford but spent the last few years of her life with her son Patrick in Cartmel near Grange-over-Sands where she died aged eighty-nine.

In 1956 John married Jenny (Jane) Elizabeth Watt, daughter of Charles Frederick Watt, a music publisher of Ealing. They went to live at Ilsington on the east of Dartmoor where Richard Vernon Somers and Charlotte Mary Somers were born in 1957 and 1960. Two years later they moved to Abbotskerswell where Thomas Charles Somers was born in 1963. Some thirty years on Richard is at present an RAF navigator, Charlotte an outdoor management development trainer and Thomas who trained as a textile engineer works for Courtaulds Textiles.

COPYWRITE

APPENDIX

Notes and References

Documents.

COPYWRITE

PART 1

Notes and References

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- 23 P.R.O., Lay Subs. Returns, Kent, 124/189 (in *Arch. Cant.* vol. XII)
- 24 P.R.O., Misc. Inquisitions, File 44(33)
- 25 Boys: *Collections for a History of Sandwich*, for these mayoral dates
- 26 J.Wedgwood: *History of Parliament, 1439-1509* for this and subsequent parliamentary references :
- 27 per Town Clerk, Sandwich (from Sandwich MSS at Maidstone)
- 28 P.R.O., Fine Rolls, Hy. VI, m. 26-7
- 29 *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Hy. VI, vol. 5
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 Town Clerk, Sandwich, as above

- 32 Wedgwood: *op. cit.*
 33 P.R.O., Fine Rolls, 35 Hy. VI, m. 19
 34 Wedgwood: *op. cit.*
 35 P.R.O., Fine Rolls, 4 Edw. IV, m. 13
 36 Town Clerk, Sandwich, as above
 37 *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, Edw. IV - Hy. VI
 38 Wedgwood: *op. cit.*
 39 Maidstone R.O., Archdeaconry Ct. Cant. Wills, 2, f. 81
 40 Town Clerk, Sandwich, as above
 41 Maidstone R.O., Arch. Cant. Wills, 10, f. 229
 42 *ibid.*, 24, f. 85
 43 Town Clerk, Sandwich, as above
 44 Maidstone R.O., Arch. Cant. Wills, 26, f. 37
 45 *ibid.*, 23, f. 249
 46 Hasted: *History of Kent*
 47 H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills*
 48 Maidstone R.O., Arch. Cant. Wills, 12, f. 263
 49 Hasted: *op. cit.*
 50 P.R.O., Kent Feet of Fines, CP25(2), 19/109
 51 P.R.O., Early Chancery Proc., bundle 484, 23 (1518-29)
 52 *ibid.*, bundles 484, 16 and 529, 62
 53 *Letters & Papers of Hy. VIII Foreign & Domestic*, vol. 3, pt. 3
 54 B.L., Harleian MSS, 1647, 44i
 55 *Letters & Papers of Hy. VIII, Foreign & Domestic*, vol. 14, 1539
 56 *ibid.*, vol. 20, 1545
 57 P.R.O., Star Chamber Proc., 2/10/C.89-91, 2/28/C.130 and 3/3/6
 58 *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. XXI
 59 *Letters & Papers of Hy. VIII, Foreign & Domestic*, vol. II
 60 *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. XXI
 61 H. Somers-Cocks: *op. cit.*
 62 P.C.C. Wills, 55 Welles
 63 P.R.O., I.p.m. C.142/151/61
 64 W. J. Warry: *The Cocks Family of Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire*
 65 For all details of Thomas and his family, see: J. Meadows
 Cowper: *Diary of Thomas Cocks, 1607- 10*
 66 B.L., Add. MSS 5524, f. 204b

DOCUMENTS

A. INQUISITIO POST MORTEM ON THOMAS LE COUK OR LE KOC OF OSPRENGE

Writ dated 8 June 1339, Inquisition held 14 June 1339

Osprenge: He held a messuage and 20 acres of land of the King in chief, by service of 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. yearly for the ward of Dover Castle.

Also 8 acres of land held of the minister and brethren of Modyndene, by service of 12d yearly; 4 acres of land held of Thomas de Ponyng by service of 8d, 2 hens and a cock yearly; 3 acres of land held of John Petyman by service of 12d and 2 hens yearly; 2 acres of land held of the prioress of Davynton by service of 4d and two hens yearly; and 2 acres of wood held of William de Klynton, as of the manor of Eslyng, by service of 2d yearly. Walter, his son, aged 40 years is his next heir.

(C.Edw. III, File 59(7))

B. INQUISITIO POST MORTEM ON RICHARD COKE OR COKKES

Writ dated 1501 (?), Inquisition held 1501

Kent: At the time of his death on 31 October 1497 and long before he was seised of the undermentioned land etc. in fee: A certain toft or scite of a messuage and 20 acres of land in Ospryng, formerly of Walter Coke, son and heir of Thomas Coke of Ospryng, worth 6s., held of the King in chief, service unknown; 48 acres of arable and 1 rood of wood with the soil thereof and with the whole pasture in Shaylerdesdowne, which, together with the site etc. above, extend in the parishes of Ospryng and Throwley; also 16 acres of land lying in Cokysdayn, 20 acres of land lying in Waterham, 9 acres of land lying in Douneswood Feld, 1 rood of wood lying in Wredeswood, 2 acres of land lying in la Reede, and 3 acres of wood lying in Est Wode; and of certain services and commodities, worth 30s, held of the Dean and Chapter of the free Chapel of St. Stephen's Westminster in socage, by the rent and service of 17d yearly.

Ralph Cokkes, aged 36 and more, being his son and heir.

(C.Series II, vol. 15 (49))

C. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF CECILLE COKKES OF LONDON, DATED 15 MAY 1504

Cecille Cokkes, widow, late the wife of Richard Cokke, citizen and tallow-chandler of London.

To be buried in the churchyard of St. Magnus by my said husband.

The sum of 3/4d to the said church.

To the church of St. Andrew Hullard in Estchepe, 2d.

My tenement in St. Benets Wharf to John and William Thornton, late the children of Elen Thornton my daughter now deceased. If they die without

issue, then to John Wotton my brother's son, and if he also die without heirs, the tenement next the church of St. Benet to Roger Grave.

Bequest also to Thomas Thornton my son-in-law, and to Cecile Cou'leye my goddaughter, bedding.

Residue to aforesaid Roger, to be disposed of for masses for souls of myself and my husband - he to be executor.

Witnesses - William Peirye, priest of St. Andrews,
Richard Semer, tailor,
Hugh Marshe, butcher, and
Thomas Egerton, tailor.

Proved 25 May 1508, to Roger Grave, executor.
(P.C.C. Wills, 36 Adeane)

D. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF JOHN COKKE, CITIZEN AND TALLOW-
HANDLER OF LONDON, DATED 24 MAY
1517

To be buried in All Hallows the Little church near where my wife Isabel is buried.

My lands in Stony Stratford co. Bucks which Wm. Ray now holds, John Cooke my son when 21 shall have them - he or his heirs; and I will that Henry Cokke my son when 21 shall have my tenement and appurtenances in Buckingham, and I will that Margaret my wife shall hold and receive all profits etc. from sd. lands during the nonage of my sd. sons. Also I will that Elizabeth my daughter and her heirs shall hold all residue of my lands etc. in Wolverton & Lynford when it shall come to her marriage. Also my land etc. in Throwlay & Ospring co. Kent now in the occupation of - Snell to be sold to best profit by my wife, executrix of this my will, and by my overseer; and after debts paid etc. £6.13.4 to some priest for masses for my soul, Richard Cokke and his wife's souls, Rafe Cokke's soul in the church of St. Mary at Hyll, London, for one year.

Residue of goods etc. to my wife Margaret.
Overseer: Robert Fuller to whom 6/8d.
Witnesses: John Rutter's & Wm. Browne.
Proved 22 June 1517 to executrix named.
(Commissory Ct. of London Wills, Bennet 34)

E. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF HENRY COK OF SANDWICH,
DATED 3 JAN. 1504

To be buried in the church of St. Clement, Sandwich.

To Agnes my wife my corner house in St. Clements for life. To my said wife all that part of the goods bequeathed to me by William Cok my father, which now rest in the hands of John Cok my brother.

Residue to my said wife.

Executors: Sir William Meryman & William Johnson.

Witnesses: none named.

Proved May 1507 to executors named.

(Arch. Canterbury Wills, 10 f. 229)

F. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF THOMAS COCKES OF ST. CLEMENT, SANDWICH, DATED 28 OCT. 1516

To be buried in the churchyard there beside my children.

To Elizabeth my eldest daughter £6.13.4 at marriage. To Elizabeth my second daughter £5 etc. at marriage. To Alice my third daughter £5 etc. at marriage. To Johane my youngest daughter £5 etc. at marriage. To William Colled my wife's son 40/- at his coming forth of his apprenticeship. Other bequests to William Tylman, to Anes Hurst my servant, to Selland a jacket.

Residue to Jone my wife and she to be sole executrix.

Further Will concerning my houses and tenements in Sandwich: All to my wife for life.

Witnesses: Sir Thomas Swynnerton, John Taylor, Henry Oran and William Norrys.

Proved 19 January 1544/5.

(Arch. Canterbury Wills, 23 f. 249)

G. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF ELIZABETH COKE, WIDOW, OF ST. CLEMENT'S IN SANDWICH, DATED 17 DEC. 1543

To be buried by the side of my late husband William Coke.

To Mr. John Cockes wife a ring etc. To Agnes Peke a ring. Bequests to Stevyne a'Woodes wife, Stanys wife, John Robinsons wife; to Alice Pokier, servant to Thomas Pynnocke; to Thomasyn Roke my servant; to Thomas Pynnocke's children, John, Benjamin, Jerram, Thomas and Jane. To Sir John Watson 3s. 4d. Robert Stamp shall pay no farm where he dwelleth for a year.

Residue to Julyan my daughter, wife of Thomas Pynnocke, and to him my house and garden in fee simple, and he to be sole exor.

Witnesses: Sir John Watson, priest, and William Hunt.

Proved 9 September 1545.

(Arch. Canterbury Wills, 24 f. 85)

H. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF JOHN COCKES, JURAT, OF
SANDWICH, DATED 19 DEC. 1548

To be buried in the parish church of St. Clements where William Cockes my late father was buried.

Bequest to godchildren, to Elizabeth wife of Richard Quylter £4, to John son of Francis Eden.

Residue to Alyce my wife and she to be sole executrix.

Sir James Hales kt. sergeant at law, and John Sales, Common Clerk of Sandwich, to be overseers.

Further Will, concerning my lands, tenements and marshes etc. in Sandwich etc.

To Agnes, wife of Thomas Lee, shoemaker, my tenement in the High Street. To my wife Alice my messuage etc. in Worthe and my messuage wherein John Black, tailor, inhabits in St. Clements in Stronde Street, and other lands next the lands of Harbard Fynch called Archelowe.

Witnesses: Thomas Pynnockes & John Blake of Jame, yeoman.

Proved 9 February 1548/9.

(Arch. Canterbury Wills, 26 f. 37)

I. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF MICHAEL COOKE OF TILMANSTONE,
GENT., DATED 20 MARCH 1508/9.

To be buried in the church of St. Andrew, Tilmanston, before the Crucifix.

Bequests to pious uses, to John Edward my servant and to John Goragh.

Residue of my goods to my wife Alice and Sir John Couragh, clerk, they to be executors. Gregory Lichfield supervisor.

Further Will concerning my property in Kent: My manor of Dane Court in said parish to my wife Alice for one year, then to Thomas Cocke my son the elder and his heirs; if he dies without heirs male, then to William Cocke my son; if he so die then to his brother Robert. My manor of Southcorte in the same parish to Alice my wife for life, and after to Thomas Cocke my son the elder and his heirs, and so in manner above. The moiety of the tenement of Statyng-borough in the parish of Eastry to be sold, and the money arising therefrom to be divided between my sons Robert, William, Roger, John, Edward and Michael at 20. My tenements in Sandwich to be sold, and the money to be distributed between my three daughters Christian, Joan, and Elizabeth. Alice my wife shall keep and feed Alice my daughter the younger until of age.

Proved 26 November 1513. (Arch. Canterbury Wills, 12 f. 263)

J. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF THOMAS COCKES OF TILMANSTONE,
GENT., DATED 4 SEPTEMBER 1558

To the Vicar of Tylmanston for tithes and oblations together 20s. To the railing of the churchyard of Tylmanston aforesaid 20s.

I will that mine executrix within one year after my decease shall build and make a new window in the chancel of Betshangar church with the lights whereof in the middle light to be the picture of the Blessed Trinity and in the other lights the picture of our Lady and St. Thomas the Apostle together with the picture of me and my wife with our names and arms. I will that my executrix at her proper costs and charges every year during her life shall cause to be carried and laid in the high way between Sandwich and Eastrye one hundred loads of stones.

To Robert Rutter son of Edward Rutter one cow. To Thomas Paynter and Joseph Paynter children of John Paynter to every one of them a cow. To my cousin John Wollet £4, to Thomas Good's wife one cow, to Gregory Ride one cow, to Thomas Hunt for his pains 20s. The residue of all my leases, goods, chattels etc. whatsoever I give to Mary Cockes my wife she to do for me as she thinks most beneficial for the welfare of my soul and all Christian souls, which Mary I make sole executrix. I will that my wife immediately after my death shall give to every of my servants some reward to be rated at her discretion.

Sir John Cornwallis knight, Thomas Hamond gent., and Walter Bradforde to be overseers and I bequeath to every one of them 40s.

Witnesses: John Cornelyus, gent., Thomas Hamond, gent., Thomas Boyes, gent., Thomas Hunt, Thomas Wood and others.

This is the last Will of me the above named Thomas Cockes made the day and year above said touching the disposition of my manor, lands, tenements etc. in the parish of Tylmeston or elsewhere in the county of Kent or realm of England in form following: I give all my said manor, lands, tenements etc. unto Mary my wife to her and her assigns for life and after her death I will that my manors, lordships or farms of Dane, Southcot, Beteshanger shall remain to Thomas the son of Anne Barlie the daughter of John Barlie, otherwise called Anne Coxe reputed to be the wife of William Coxe, clerk, my late brother deceased, and to the heirs of the body of the same Thomas the son lawfully begotten. And for default of such issue to remain to Thomas Hendie son of John Hendy and the heirs of the same Thomas Hendy for ever.

I will that after the death of the said Mary my wife, all my French marsh lying in the parish of Sholden shall remain to my cousin Thomas Paynter and his heirs for ever. That after the death of the said Mary my land at Byllaryca in the parish of Sellinge shall remain to my kinsman Walter Fuller and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten and for default of such to remain to the said Thomas son of the said Anne and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten and for default of such to my right heirs for ever. That after the death of the said Mary all my marsh land lying at Harklynge shall remain to Thomas Hendye son of John Hendie and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, and for default of such to the said Thomas son of the said Anne and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten and for default of such to my right heirs for ever.

To the said Thomas Hendie and his heirs for ever one annual rent of £4 out of the said manors etc. of Dane, Betsanger and Southcot payable at the feast of the Annunciation and of Saint Michael by even portions, the first payment to be at such of the said feasts as shall be next after the death of the said Mary. To my kinswoman Johane Elam and her heirs for ever an annual rent of £4 as above. To my kinsman Robert Rutter and his heirs for ever an annual rent of £4 as above. To my servant Edward Wilforthe one annual rent of 40s for life as above. To my servant Elizabeth Harvy one annual rent of 20s. during her life as above. To Sir John Swarte my old chaplain one annual rent of 20s. during his life as above, and to Richard Pettie during his life one annual rent of 40s. as above. To my servant Robert Knott my house wherein he now dwelleth for the term of his life freely without any rent to be paid.

I will that after such time as the foresaid Thomas the son of Anne Barly and the above named Thomas Hendy shall come either of them to some convenient growth and discretion, to say 16 years, that then and thenceforth Sir Thomas Cornwallis (if living) shall have the ordering of them for their better bringing up. And the said Sir Thomas to have £10 by year towards their finding which £10 I will shall go out of the manors above mentioned and they to continue under his government until the age of 21 years.

To Walter Bradford during his life one annual rent of 40s. out of my said manors as above.

This was written the 6 (?) September above said at which time the said Thomas Cox appointed the said Sir Thomas Cornwallis Thomas Hammond and Walter Bradford his overseers.

Witnesses: Thomas Paynter, gent., Edward Willisford.

Proved 10 March 1558/9 by Edw. Brudnell procurator for Mary Coxo relict and executrix.

(P.C.C. Wills, 55 Welles)

K. A LIST OF VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THE NAME COCKS
IS SPELT (prefixes de or le excluded)

Ceu	Cokes	Coq
Coc	Cokk	Couk
Cock	Cokke	Cox
Cocke	Cokkes	Coxe
Cockes	Cokks	Coxes
Cockis	Cokkys	Coxse
Cocks	Coks	Coxx
Cockys	Cokys	Coxxe
Cocq	Cook	Keu
Cocus	Cooke	Kok
Cocxe	Cookes	Kokkes
Cok	Cooks	Koq
Coke	Coose	Kox

PART 2

Notes and References.

- 1 Cant. (? Worcs.) Dean & Chapter Reg. U2 fo. 107 (Hockaday's Abstracts in Glos. City Lib.)
- 2 PRO, Lay Subsidies, E. 179/200/176a
- 3 PRO, K.R. Misc. Books, vol. 39
- 4 Glos. RO, Glos. Probate Register Wills
- 5 Worcs. RO, Worcs. Probate Register Wills 1561, no. 123
- 6 PCC Wills, 30 Montague
- 7 Glos. Consistory Court Records (Hockaday's Abstracts in Glos. City Lib.)
- 8 As for ref. 1 above
- 9 PRO, Ct. of Requests 2/103/55
- 10 I was shown over the rectory in 1960 through the kindness of the then incumbent the Revd K.C. Edmunds and Mrs Edmunds.
- 11 See also Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc. *Transactions*, Vol. L.
- 12 This and subsequent Crowle baptisms from Crowle registers
- 13 Foster, J.: *Alumni Oxonienses*, and *Dict. Nat. Biography*

- 14 This and subsequent Cleeve baptisms etc. from Bishop's Cleeve registers
- 15 M.I., Bishop's Cleeve Church
- 16 PRO, Feet of Fines, Glos. C.P. 25(2) 243
- 17 *Victoria County History of Worcestershire*
- 18 P.R.O., Chancery Proc., C.2/Jas I/c.30/49
- 19 PRO Close Rolls, Eliz. C.54/1280
- 20 Both refs. from PCC Wills, 30 Montague
- 21 Relevant parish registers
- 22 PRO, Ipm C. 142/270/103
- 23 PRO, Chancery Proc., C.2/Eliz/H.1/81
- 24 Notes on Holkham MSS shown to me by Revd. K.C. Edmunds
- 25 PRO, Chancery Proc., C.2/Jas.I/C. 1/81
- 26 PCC Wills, 42 Fenner
- 27 PCC Wills, 30 Montague
- 28 Atkyns, Sir Robt. *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* 1712
- 29 I am most grateful to Eunice Powell for searching the Bishop's Cleeve burial registers for the entries relating to Thomas and Elizabeth, and for her careful examination of their memorial stone.
- 30 J. Hutchinson: *Middle Temple Records*, as are all other refs. to legal career
- 31 *Calendar of Minutes of E. India Co.*
- 32 P.C.C. Wills, 410 Alchin and 21 Aylett
- 33 Rudder: *History of Glos.*
- 34 Pedigree in College of Arms
- 35 M. S. Anderson: *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553:1815*
- 36 This account from H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills*
- 37 *Calendar of Minutes of E. India Co.*
- 38 H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor etc.*
- 39 P.C.C. Wills, 28 Lewyn
- 40 This account from H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor etc.*
- 41 Hist. Manuscripts Commission, 5th report, Appx. (House of Lords MSS) P. 11
- 42 *Calendar of Minutes of E. India Co.*
- 43 P.C.C. Wills, Alchen 388
- 44 P.R.O., Chanc. Proc., Bridges, C.5/41/24, C.5/34/12, C.5/41/28
- 45 Glos. City Library, Evans-Lawrence MSS, T.94
- 46 P.C.C. Wills, 84 St. John
- 47 J. Hutchinson: *Middle Temple Records*
- 48 B. Cleeve Registers and Evans-Lawrence MSS
- 49 Norton, Suffolk, Registers

- 50 Glos. City Library, Evans-Lawrence MSS, T.94
 51 Crowle parish Registers and Will of their father Thomas
 52 H.M.C. 15th Report, vol. I, p. 310
 53 P.C.C. Wills, 114 Lee
 54 H.M.C. 15th Report, vol. I, p. 319
 55 *Cal. of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents*
 56 P.R.O., Chanc. Proc., Bridges, C.5/598/123
 57 P.C.C. Wills, 166 Nabbs
 58 P.C.C. Wills, 136 Bence
 59 H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor etc.*
 60 Names and dates are from Bishop's Cleeve registers and from Wills
 in the Gloucester Consistory Court at Glos. RO unless otherwise
 stated.
 61 Mentioned in that year in Will of Henry Cocks of the Middle Temple,
 London (PCC 35 Bruce)
 62 Smith, J., *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire, 1608*
 63 Foster, : *Alumni Oxonienses*
 64 BL Add. MSS 18,980 f 10
 65 Wedgewood, C.V., *The King's War*
 66 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F10
 67 Aldred, David H., *Cleeve Hill*
 68 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F7 and /T84
 69 Foster, *Supra*
 70 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F10 and *Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc.*
 Vol. L
 71 I saw inside the house in 1959 thanks to Mrs Organ then living there.
 Many further details have recently (1995) been brought to my
 attention through the kindness of Norma Turnbull whose family now
 owns it.
 72 This Thomas is sometimes claimed as ancestor of the Deerhurst
 Cox's, but he has been confused with another Thomas also married to
 a Mary. (See e.g. Warry, W.J., *The Cocks Family of Bishop's Cleeve*
 Gloucestershire.) The relationship between the Cox and Cocks
 families dates from several generations earlier.
 73 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F8
 74 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F10
 75 Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F8
 76 *Ibid.*
 77 Powell, Eunice, *The Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels,*
 Bishop's Cleeve, 1994
 78 PCC Wills, 80 Shaller

- 79 The Archivist, Royal Marines Museum, Southsea, kindly provided me with this information.
- 80 Quoted by Somers-Cocks, H in: *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills* who however gives no reference or location for it. It may come to light at Eastnor Castle when all the archives there have been sorted.
- 81 I am indebted to the Curator of the Regimental Museum in Lancaster who checked their records for me.
- 82 A copy of the letter is in Glos. RO, Bundle D444/F8
- 83 My thanks are due to Eunice Powell who furnished me with a copy of this Inventory in Glos. RO.

DOCUMENTS

A. ABSTRACT FROM ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS OF THOS. COXE OF DEERHURST, DATED 7 OCTOBER 1558

Administration of the goods of Thos. Coxe, late of Durhurste, was committed to Margery Coxe of Durhurste, the relict, and Richard, William, Ursula and Susana, natural children of the deceased.

The judge assigned Wm. Coxe, uncle of the said children to be guardian (the mother not desiring to be this), 7 October 1558.

(Glos. Consistory Court - taken from Hockaday's Abstracts)

B. ABSTRACT FROM INDENTURE OF LEASE OF PARSONAGE MANOR AT BISHOP'S CLEEVE TO THOMAS COXE OF CROWLE, DATED 18 MARCH 1558/9

Indenture of the lease of the parsonage, tithe, glebelands, tenements, meadows, leasures, pastures etc. of Bishop's Cleeve in the county of Gloucester, from Seth Holland, parson of Bishop's Cleeve, and Roger Holland, of Crowle in the county of Worcester, patron of the said church, to Thomas Coxe of Crowle, for thirty years at a yearly rent of £84, reserving always to the said parson and his successors all ecclesiastical jurisdiction etc., the said Thomas covenanting to keep the buildings in the property in repair and to find bread, wine, wax, bellropes, the tryndall and tapers at Candlemas and making of mounds about the church yard. Dated 18 March 1 Elizabeth. Confirmed by the Bishop and Dean and Chapter of Worcester 18 March 1558/9.

(Cant. (?) Dean & Chapter Reg. U2, fol. 107 - taken from Hockaday's Abstracts in Glos. City Library.)

C. WILL OF ISABEL COX OF TEWKESBURY, DATED 7 JAN. 1568

In the name of Godd Amen, the vij daye of January 1568, I Isabell Cocks of Tewksbury parke nere Tewksbury in the Countie of Glouc, wydowe, somewhat syke of body but of perfect memory do ordeyn and make my last wyll & testament.

I bequeath my bodye to be buried in the Church yerde of Tewkesbury nere unto the buryall of Willm. Cooks my derely beloved husband. I bequeath unto the pore people of Tewkesbury Ten shillings and towards the reparacon of the parische church of Tewkesbury iij s. iiij d.

I bequeath to Ric. Cooks my sonne ffour of my best oxen, my waynes and iron bounde wheles, my ploughs and harrowes etc.

I geve unto my doughter Isabell Ingram tenne pounds of lawfull money of England.

I geve to my doughter Anne Cooks over and beside xx £ that I doe owe to her for her father's bequest another twenty pounds.

Also to my doughter Jane Cooks over & besides xx £ that I lykewise owe her for her father's legacye other twenty pounds.

I geve to my doughter Johane Sefill my best gowne & my best petycoate and a peyr of good shetes.

I geve to my doughter Susan' Poyner one peyr of ffyne shets and one of my best kercheiffes.

I geve to Edward Sefill one of the sonys of my foreseyd doughter Johane Sefill v s.

To Willm. Sefill & Gyles Sefill sonys of my seid doughter Johane, to either of them ffourtie shillings, and to Isabell Sefill, doughter of the seid Johane vj £. xiijs. iiij d., to my Cosyn Mawde Ellys her doughter x s., To Peter Cocks my godsonne one heyfer.

I geve unto Willm. Cocks of derehurst son of Thomas Cocks xx s.

To my Godd doughter Isabell Kemble ij Ewes and to my Godd doughter Isabell Welks other ij Ewes. To my godd doughter Isabell, doughter of Ric. Syrrett one Ewe, to my godd doughter Isabell doughter of John Sirrett one other Ewe.

To my godd doughter Isabell Chaundler and to my godd doughter Johane Syrrett, doughter of Willm. Syrrett one other Ewe each. To my cosyn Margrete Kemble my best sylke hatt and to my syster Johane Cocks of Clent my second best Cassock and to my Cosyn Ursula Cocks one yereling ewe calf.

To my godd doughter Susan Cocks one Ewe and to my godd doughter Ann Gryndall one hoggshepe or els one Ewe.

I geve to my sonne Richard Cocks my best coverlett and my best brass potte. And for the better fulfilling of the last wyll of the said Willm. Cocks my late husband which I desier to have feythfully performed I give to my said sonne

Ric.Cocks as well my howse which I have or which late husband hadd & ground called Tewkesbury park, sedgley & litle Cowthorn, heyemen mede and the moyte of grete Southam and all other ground adjoining to grounds called Tewkesbury park with their appurtenances, to have and to hold to the seid Ric. his executors and assigns directly after my decease, paying out of the same unto my daughter Isabella Ingram, Susanna Poyner, Jane Cocks, that is to say to every of them vj £.xiiij s.iiijd. of good and lawfull money of England.

I give all the residue of my goods, chattles and debts not bequeathed, to my sones John Cokks & Richard Cooks to be equally devyded, between them and I do appoynt my welbeloved sonne John Cocks myne executor and my loving Cosyn Thom's Cocks, gent., and my ffrend Ric. Onygrue (?) to be overseers of the same.

Witnesses: my seid Cosyn Thomas Cokks, Ric. Onygrue, Willm Drinkwat', Xtopher Kemble & Robert Welks.

Proved: 2 November 1571, Consistory Ct. Glos.

D. PART OF ARBITRATION BETWEEN SIR RICHARD COCKS BARONET AND JOHN COCKS ETC. RE ESTATE OF CHARLES COCKS OF WOODMANCOTE, 5 JULY 1689

Thomas Cocks of Castleditch in the county of Hereford Esqr. said that he often heard Lieftent Collonell Charles Cocks of Woodmancot say that he bought the Lands in Question in Bpps Cleeve with his own money of his ffather in Law Timothy Gate Clerke altho in the name of his unckle Charles Cocks of Dumbleton Esqr. for these reasons that the saide Collonell was a Lieften't Collonell in King Charles the first his Army & at the time of purchase & for many yeares after was Lyable to sequestrac'on.

(signed) Tho. Cocks.

(Glos. City Lib., Evans-Lawrence MSS, F7.)

E. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF CHARLES COCKS OF BISHOP'S CLEEVE DATED 24 JULY 1767

I give and bequeath my Silver Watch and Silver Seal with my Coat of Arms engraved, to my natural son Charles Cocks born before marriage.

And as to the house and garden adjoining to the Church yard in the parish of Bishops Cleeve left to me by the last will of Mary Harris and my reversion to a certain Orchard with a house, barn and garden situate in the said parish devised to me by the last will of Hannah Hobbs after the decease of Thomas Lane and all my Cattle, Stock, Crops and personal estate in the county of Glos. or elsewhere I give and bequeath to James Potter of Bishop's Cleve,

Malster, in Trust for the use of my wife Ann Cocks during her natural life and after her death to be equally divided between my said natural son Charles Cocks and my two other Children Thomas Cocks and Ann Cocks born after marriage and any other Child or Children I may have by my said wife Ann Cocks.

I appoint the said James Potter and Joseph Potter executors of this my last Will and Testament this 24th day of July 1767.

Witnesses: Will'm Strachan, Hester Smith, Thomas Kemmet.

Proved: in Peculiar Court of Bishop's Cleeve 8th August 1769 by James Potter and Joseph Potter sworn before Thos. Hiett, Curate of Cleeve.

(Glos. City Lib., Peculiar Ct. of Bishop's Cleeve Wills.)

F. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF JAMES COCKS OF WOODMANCOTE, BISHOP'S CLEEVE, DATED 21 MAY 1756

I give and bequeath unto my Niece Mary Hyett, daughter of my brother in law John Hyett of Bishop's Cleeve, yeoman, one annuity of Twenty pounds during her natural life.

I give and bequeath all my Freehold Messuages, Lands, Tenements etc. in the parishes of Bishop's Cleeve and Tewkesbury or elsewhere unto my brother in law John Hyett and my cousin Thomas Freeman of Greet co. Glos., gent., upon trust for the use of my nephew Thomas Hyett, only son of my said brother in law John Hyett for his natural life, and to the Heirs male of his body, and in default of such heirs to the daughter and daughters of the said Thomas Hyett as tenants in common and to their heirs, and in default of such heirs then to the use of my niece Mary Hyett daughter of my said brother in law John Hyett and to her heirs, and in default to the use of my sisters Joan Cocks and Frances Cocks for their lives as tenants in common, and after their decease then to the use of the several persons by me hereinafter immediately named, that is to say my sister Mary the wife of Walter Lawrence of Sevenhampton, yeoman, my sister Dorothy Hayward, widow and relict of Thomas Hayward, late of Bourton on the Hill, yeoman, deceased, and my sister Catherine, wife of the said John Hyett and all other the children of my late sister Margery deceased who was the wife of Thomas Mason, sometime of Tewkesbury, Gentleman.

I give unto Charles Cocks of Bishop's Cleeve, yeoman, and every child of his Body the sum of one shilling each.

I give to Peter Cocks of the City of Gloucester, Apothecary, and to every child of his Body, one shilling each.

I give unto my two brothers in law Walter Lawrence and Thomas Mason the like sum of one shilling each.

I give unto my two Trustees John Hyett and Thomas Freeman the sum of Five Guineas each.

All the rest and residue of my goods and chattels I give and bequeath unto my nephew Thomas Hyett whom I appoint sole Executor.

Witnesses: William Reid, Thos. Kittermuster, Jno. Parsons jun.

Proved: 28 September 1782 by Thomas Hyett nephew & Exor. (Glos. City Lib., Evans-Lawrence MSS, F.7.)

PART 3

Notes and References.

- 1 H. Somers-Cocks: *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills* (H.S.C.)
- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 Harleian MSS, Reg. John Gilbert, p.52
- 4 I.p.m. 28 HyVIII, C. ser. ii, vol. 82 no. 54
- 5 H.S.C.
- 6 Eastnor parish registers
- 7 P.C.C. Wills, 186 Vere
- 8 Duncumb: *History of Herefordshire*
- 9 P.C.C. Wills, 21 Byrde
- 10 H.S.C.
- 11 Eastnor parish registers
- 12 J. Hutchinson: *Middle Temple Records*
- 13 P.C.C. Wills, 186 Vere
- 14 Hutchinson: *op. cit.*
- 15 P.C.C. Wills, 37 Bruce
- 16 P.C.C. Wills, 186 Vere
- 17 H.S.C. for all these details
- 18 Webb: *Memorials of the Civil War in Herefordshire*, vol. II and H.S.C.
- 19 H.S.C.
- 20 Harl. MSS. 6766
- 21 H.S.C.
- 22 Duncumb: *op. cit.*
- 23 P.C.C. Wills, 38 Seymer
- 24 P.C.C. Wills, 80 Browning
- 25 P.C.C. Wills, 31 Romney
- 26 Details of Somers family from Cooksey, W.: *Life of Lord Somers*, and Campbell: *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*.
- 27 Cussans, J.E.: *The History of Hertfordshire* (1870-1)

- 28 See Sachse, William L.: *Lord Somers, a Political Portrait*
 29 PRO, Wills, PCC 83 Farrant
 30 BL Add. MS.35359 (Hardwicke Papers under year 1719)
 31 Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*
 32 *ibid*
 33 Portraits of them both are at Eastnor though since the early 19th
 century that of Lady Elizabeth has been wrongly identified as Lady
 Elizabeth Jekyll
 34 BL Add. MS.35359, f.48
 35 M.I.'s in church there
 36 Cussans, *op.cit.*
 37 PRO, Wills, PCC 290 Greenly
 38 Foster, *op.cit.*
 39 I owe this suggestion to Julia Page
 40 These letters quoted in Somers Cocks, H.: *Eastnor and its Malvern*
Hills
 41 BL Add. MS.35359, f.278
 42 BL Add. MS.35359, f.280
 43 For James's letters to the Earl of Hardwicke see BL Add. MS. 35359,
 ff.281,283,286,296,298,300,303 and 306
 44 BL Add. MS.35359, f.305
 45 BL Add. MS.35359, f.308
 46 Descriptions of the expeditions from Cust, Edw.: *Annals of the Wars*
1739-59 (1862)
 47 Quoted in Somers Cocks, H., *op.cit.*
 48 Original letter in possession of author
 49 Information kindly supplied by Mr and Mrs.P.B. Watt
 50 Eastnor parish registers
 51 See her father's Will (P.C.C. Wills, 333 Trevor)
 52 P.C.C. Wills, 631 Exeter
 53 H.S.C.
 54 P.C.C. Wills, 133 Alexander
 55 H.S.C.
 56 P.C.C. Wills, 333 Trevor
 57 Cocks letters and papers in author's possession
 58 *Cocks, Biddulph and Company, 1759 - 1920* (privately printed
 booklet)
 59 Author's MSS
 60 *ibid.*
 61 P.C.C. Wills, 9 Exeter
 62 H.S.C. for most details
 63 Author's MS S

- 64 *Beauties of England and Wales* (1805)
- 65 Ellis-Mitchell, J. (revis. P.L.C.Richards), *Lands called Dumbleton* (1986)
- 66 Ellis-Mitchell, *supra*, and *ex inf*: Mr A.Phillips who lives in part of it and to whom I am grateful for his architectural comments
- 67 PRO Close Rolls 44 Eliz. Pt. 14, C.54 1719
- 68 PRO Star Chamber Proc. Jas.I, 8/105/20
- 69 The reading 'att' rather than 'all' is probably correct
- 70 Somers-Cocks, H., *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills* (1923)
- 71 PCC Wills, 410 Alchin and 2 1 Aylett
- 72 PRO Chancery Proc, C/5/401/89
- 73 Somers Cocks, J.V., *A History of the Cocks Family* (1966-7)
- 74 Foster, J., *Alumni Oxonienses*, and for details of Oxford Colleges throughout
- 75 Bristol & Glos. Archaeol. Soc., *Transactions XIII*
- 76 PCC Wills, 152 Auber
- 77 PCC Wills, 90 Exton
- 78 Unless otherwise stated, details of Richard's career are based on: Hayton, David, 'Sir Richard Cocks: the Political Anatomy of a Country Whig' in *Albion*, Vol.20, no.2, Appalachian State University (1988), giving an appraisal of his beliefs and politics
- 79 Bodleian Lib., MS Eng. Hist. b.209-10
- 80 It appears in Atkyns, Sir Robt. , *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* (2nd edn.1768)
- 81 National Trust, *Hanbury Hall* (guide)
- 82 Consist. Ct. of Bp. of Glos. Wills, 1719
- 83 *The Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Cocks ,1698 - 1702*, edited by David Hayton (OUP,1996)
- 84 Consist. Ct. of Bp. of Glos. Wills, 1737/105
- 85 PCC Wills, 4 Shaller
- 86 Not mentioned with other children in Wills of John Cocks (1728) and Richard Cocks (1724)
- 87 Foster, J. *op. cit.*
- 88 M.I. Dumbleton Church
- 89 PCC Wills, 211 Rushworth
- 90 She is mentioned in Will of Dorothy Cocks dated 1766 (PCC Wills,128 Legard)
- 91 Bigland J. *History of Gloucestershire*
- 92 Ellis-Mitchell, *op. cit.*
- 93 I am grateful to Julia Page for these references from the Eastnor Castle archives.
- 94 Ellis-Mitchell, *op. cit.*

DOCUMENTS

A. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF RICHARD COCKS OF CASTLEDITCH, ESQ., DATED 29 NOV. 1623

To be buried in the North Ile of the Chancell of the parish church of Eastnor.

Wife, Judith, -my mansion and capital messuage in Eastnor and all my manors, messuages etc. in said parish, for life ... in recompense of her dower, with remainder, together with my manors etc. in parishes of Ledburie and Colwall in co. Hereford, to Thomas, Charles, James and John Cocks, my brothers, and to their heirs etc., they taking the profit of sd. messuage etc. towards the maintenance of my children, payment of my debts etc.

Also to my sd. brothers and their heirs my messuage and tenement in the parishes of Winnall, Allensmore and Draxton, co. Hereford, and all messuages etc. in Arlington, parish of Biburie, co. Glos., and my house in Maiden Lane, London, and all other messuages etc. in co. Glos. and City of London whereof I am seized of any estate in fee simple ... to be sold for payment of debts, - remainder of sd. money to be for benefit of surviving children and aforesaid wife.

Also to sd. brothers, manors, messuages etc. in the parish of Burghill, co. Hereford, to be conveyed to one other of my sons to whom the other lands - intended to be entailed - have not been conveyed, and the last remainder to my right heirs.

Residue of goods and chattels to sd. wife, who is to be executor.

Witnesses: Thomas Barnesley, Robert Pecoock, Wm. Siar, jo. Webley.

Proved: 2 March 1623/4, to sd. executrix.

(P.C.C. Wills, 21 Byrde)

B. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF CHARLES COCKS OF FURNIVALL'S INN, LONDON, GENT., DATED 8 OCT. 1688

To my nephew Thomas Cocks of Castleditch, eldest son of my brother Thomas Cocks deed., all my lands and tenements in London and Middlesex.... paying yearly to my nephew John Cocks his brother £60, to my niece Elizabeth Ireland £20, and to my nephew Thomas Aylwey her brother £10 - all for life in 4 equal portions.

To my brother Thomas Aylwey, my nephew Charles Dingley and my cozen Samuel Heming, what they owe me.

To my sd. nephew John Cocks, my nieces Judith Tracey and Judith Carpender and to my kinsman and clerk John Heming, £50 apiece, to be paid within 3 months of my death, and to sd. John Heming all my books and presidents goods and furniture in my chamber and garrett at Furnivall's Inn.

To my godsons Charles, son of my sd. nephew Thomas Cocks, Charles, son of my sd. nephew Charles Dingley, and Charles, son of my niece Judith Carpender, £5 a piece.

To my nephews John, son of my brother Sir Richard Cocks deed., and Elizabeth his sister, my nephews Charles and James Dingley, and my cozen, the wife of Dr Arthur, 20/- apiece for rings.

To the Principal and Ancients of Furnivall's Inn, £10 for benefit of that Society. To Stewards and Butler of same House 20/- apiece, and to the porter and gardener 10/- apiece. To my laundress Mrs Legg 40/-.

Residue of goods etc. after debts paid to my sd. nephew Thomas Cocks, he to be executor. Desiring my nephews Robert Tracy, Esq., and Charles Cocks of the City of Worcester, Gent., to assist to the executor, to each of them £10.

Witnesses: Edward Umfrevile, James Daillon, Sam. Goade, John Heming.

Proved: London, 24 Nov. 1691, to executor.

(P.C.C. Wills, 186 Vere)

C. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF JOHN COCKS OF CASTLEDITCH, ESQ., DATED 19 SEPT. 1718

To my brother Thomas Cocks all my manors, messuages etc. not disposed of in this my will. Also all my goods, plate etc. not disposed of, and horses, cattle etc.

To Frances, daughter of Richard Coucher, deed., my new built house in Malvern Chace and appurtenances, also parcels of land called Broomy Hill, Fair Oaks Ground and Davises Ground, also my lands in parish of Castle Morton, co. Worcester, and all goods and furniture in sd. new built house, all for the term of

her life, also some pieces of silver (named) to be at her own disposal, also broad pieces of gold that I die possessed of, and a gold watch.

To my sister Elizabeth Pingree a yearly rent of £10 for life by my sd. brother Thomas Cocks. If not paid, sd. Elizabeth can enter any of the lands of sd. Thomas Cocks until she is paid. To Mrs. Dorothy Dingley, £20 p.a. as above.

To the children of my sister Dorothy, £50 apiece at 22 years, the interest thereof to be paid to their parents. If any die, their portion to be divided equally amongst the others. To the children of my sister Elizabeth likewise.

To my godson John Coucher, son of Richard Coucher of Welland, gent., £50 when 22 years, the interest to his parents. If sd. John die before receiving legacy, then the £50 to his father Richard.

To Elizabeth, Mary and Dorothy, daughters of John Hackett, late of Kettilby, co. Leics., Esq., deceased, £20 apiece. To my nephew Thomas Cocks, son of my brother Seth Cocks, 1/-. To two poor children of Eastnor £10 to place them as apprentices. To my sister Elizabeth Pingree and all her children, £5 apiece for mourning.

Trustee and joint executors: William Coldwell of Morton Court, co. Worcs.; James Cocks, eldest son of Charles Cocks of the City of Worcester; Robert Cocks of Woodstock, D.D.; John Cocks, eldest son of sd. Robert Cocks; and Major Richard Roberts. I hereby give them £5 apiece and bequeath them my debts, monies, securities and all that is not disposed of in my will, to enable them to pay legacies, funeral expenses etc. To children of my sister Dorothy, a further sum of £5 apiece for mourning.

Witnesses: Richard Roberts, Charles Cutler and Henry Wright.

Administration: Granted to Thomas Cocks, testator's brother, London, 26 May 1719, and further granted to Mary Cocks, wife of John Cocks Esq., daughter of Thomas Cocks above, London, 31 May 1738.

(P.C.C. Wills, 80 Browning.)

D. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF THOMAS COCKS OF CASTLEDITCH, ESQ. DATED 9 DEC. 1723

All manors etc. and real estate in counties of Hereford, Gloucester, Worcester and Middlesex to my cousin John Cocks, 2nd son of my uncle Charles Cocks of the City of Worcester, Esq., provided that he intermarries with my daughter Mary, and not otherwise, - for the term of his life, and after the

determination of the sd. estate, then I give the sd. manors etc. to Robert Biddulph of Ledbury, co. Hereford, and Michael Biddulph of Lincolnes Inn in sd. co. Mx., Esq., and their heirs during life of sd. John Cocks upon trust ... to preserve the contingent uses and estates hereinafter limited from being defeated or barred and for that purpose to make entries etc. as the case require, but to permit the sd. John Cocks to receive the rents and profits of sd. premises for his own use.

After decease of sd. John Cocks, I give the sd. manors etc. to my daughter Mary Cocks for life, the sd. Robert and Michael Biddulph holding it in trust during the life of the sd. Mary etc. allowing her to receive rents etc.

After death of both John and Mary Cocks, I devise the sd. manors etc. to the 1st son of sd. John Cocks and Mary and to the heirs male of the body of such son. Failing such issue, then to the 2nd son of John and Mary Cocks, and failing such issue, then the issue of every such son in seniority of age, the elder of such sons to be preferred before the younger, and if there be no such male heir, I empower the sd. John Cocks by deed or will to raise out of sd. premises by mortgage and to charge the same with £1000 apiece for daughter or daughters of sd. John and Mary.

If sd. John Cocks do not intermarry with my daughter within 6 months after my death, then I revoke the devise made to him and give such manors to my daughter Mary for life.

My lands etc. at Eastnor to be charged with the yearly sum of £100 to my nephew Thomas Cocks, son of my brother Seth Cocks, to be paid to him quarterly during life of my sd. daughter Mary.

If sd. nephew Thomas shall, during time of sd. daughter, marry, with the consent of my trustees, then I direct that my daughter Mary shall execute any deeds as the council of the sd. Thomas shall advise, for settling the farm called Masington as a jointure upon such wife as sd. Thomas shall intermarry with, and rents and profits of such farm be had by sd. Thomas and wife.

And if John and my daughter Mary do not intermarry, or my daughter die without male issue, or if such male issue die without male issue . . . then I devise all aforesaid manors etc. to my nephew Thomas Cocks for life, being in trust with sd. Robert and Michael Biddulph, Thomas receiving rents and issues therefrom. After decease of sd. Thomas Cocks, I give manors etc. to the first son of the sd. Thomas, and for default to the 2nd son, and thereafter to every other son of the sd. Thomas. If he die without male issue, then I devise sd.

manors etc. to my sd. cousin John Cocks, for life, he to have rents etc., and so on as before, to 1st and every son in order of John Cocks

. If sd. John Cocks die without male issue, then I leave sd. manors etc. to - Cocks, 2nd son of Robert Cocks of Woodstock co. Oxon. D.D., for life, and after his decease to his first son etc. etc. If no issue I then devise estate to eldest son of my cousin John Cocks of Woodmancott, co. Glos., for life, and after to each son successively ... Failing such issue to my right heirs

My lands at Eastnor to be charged with yearly rent of £16 to go to my servant Mary Payne for life, and estate of Castleditch and lands at Eastnor to be charged with yearly rent of £5 to be paid to my sister Pingrey for life.

If my daughter *do* intermarry with sd. John Cocks, then my estate in Eastnor be charged with yearly rent of £30 to my nephew Thomas Cocks for life, etc To my sd. daughter Mary, furniture in the great and little parlours and other furniture at Saddington, co. Leics., with books, silver etc. Residue of household goods at Saddington to sd. Mary Payne my servant.

To my sister Pingrey £5, to her 2nd son £10, to her 3rd son James Pingrey £30, and to her three daughters £10 apiece, and to all issue of my sister James £10 apiece, all within 6 months of my death.

£5 for poor of Eastnor and Ledbury, £5 apiece to all my servants. Michael and Robert Biddulph, James Cocks eldest son of my uncle Charles Cocks, and Richard Hopton of Cannon Froome, co. Hereford, appointed trustees and overseers. Daughter Mary exor.

Witnesses: John Treherne, rector of Eastnor, Fra: Morton, Thomas Brydges.

Proved: London, 16 Feb. 1724/5 to Mary Cocks.
(P.C.C. Wills, 31 Romney)

E. ABSTRACT OF PART OF WILL OF CHARLES COCKS OF WORCESTER, ESQ., DATED 1 AUG. 1724

I give to my sd. wife (Mary) custody of the pictures of my sd. sons James and John, and of my daughter Cath. Harris deed., and of my sd. daughter Yorke. After her decease I give the pictures of my sons to them, and that of my sd. daughter Cath. Harris to my granddaughter Cath. Harris, and that of my daughter Yorke to her, which were some of the pictures of the late Rt. Hon. John Lord Somers deed. whereof he died possessed and which came to me upon the division of them between Sir Joseph Jekyll and Elizabeth his wife, and me

and my sd. wife, except the picture of my sd. son John Cocks for which I paid Mr. Richardson myself.

And I ordain that a catalogue and two true copies be made of the pictures which came to me ... and sd. pictures to go to sd. son James Cocks and his heirs male, and lacking such issue to sd. son John Cocks ... as heirlooms ... and for want of all such issue then to my right heirs.

The share of books etc. from the library of the late Lord Somers that came to me shall be sold and money paid to my sd. wife if she survive me, and she to have the interest therefrom ...

(P.C.C. Wills, 83 Farrant.)

F. ABSTRACT OF WILL OF JOHN COCKS OF CASTLEDITCH, ESQ., DATED 6 AUG. 1762

Under power granted by settlement before marriage with my dear wife Mary to limit and appoint such part of sum of £12,000 thereby provided for the portion of our younger children as not yet appointed, £5 of sd. sum for daughter Mary Cocks and £1650 to her in trust residue of £12,000 to be equally divided between sons John, Joseph, Philip, Richard and Robert, and daughter Elizabeth.

Furniture and goods at Castleditch to wife for life, then, except pictures, to be considered part of personal estate. To her absolutely 'jewells and ornaments of her person', coaches and carriages with a set of six coach horses and 3 saddle horses of her choice with harness, saddlery etc. and farm implements, stocks of corn, cattle, liquor and stores in house, and £1000.

To sons John, Joseph, James, Phillip, Thomas Somers, Richard and Robert Cocks, and daughter Elizabeth Cocks £1000 apiece. £100 to executors to pay to Governors of Worcester Infirmary, £50 to poor of Eastnor, same to poor of Ledbury and South Mimms, £100 to Mr. John Thorniloe of City of Worcs., to servant Thomas Snelson £40, and years wages to all servants in my employ at my decease.

Lands and tenements etc. at Monkland co. Hereford, Dodenhams, co. Worcs., Farm at Clifton in parish of Severn Stoke co. Worcs., Goring Farm in parish of Reigate, co. Surrey, Farm at Much Marcle co. Hereford and tithes of Kynaston in Much Marcle, Farm in parish of Welland co. Worcs., to be held in trust and trustees to sell same for payment of debts and legacies, any surplus to be divided among my younger children equally. If sales produce insufficient money, then I charge deficiency on estates in parishes of Eastnor and Ledbury lately purchased of - Hagar Esq. and Mr. George Holder, and also on Farm at

Castle Morton, co. Worcs. called Hurst Farm, and my other farms in sd. parish called Cutlers and Casey ... (Other lands to eldest son Charles in trust).

Books in Law, Physick and Divinity to such of my sons who are or shall be of those professions, residue of books to eldest son Charles.

(Other legacies etc., remainder of land etc. to eldest son Charles and his heirs, failing which to his other sons and their heirs in order of seniority, directions about leases at Leigh and Suckleigh, co. Worcs., and Reigate, co. Surrey.)

I direct that the pictures in my house at Castleditch after decease of my sd. wife and also those at my house at Bell Barr co. Herts. to remain in sd. houses or one of them and be considered as heirlooms.

Wife Mary sole executrix.

Witnesses: W. Marston, Wm. Bigg, Gascoigne Frederick.

Proved: London, 10 Aug. 1771 by relict.

(P.C.C. Wills, 333 Trevor.)

G. ABSTRACT OF INDENTURE BETWEEN EDMUND HOWCHINS OF DUMBLETON, GENT., AND PETER AND CHARLES COCKS, DATED 27 FEB. 1601/2

Indenture made 27 Feb. 44 Eliz. Between Edmond Howchins of Dumbleton co. Glos., gent., of the first part and Peter Cocks clerk & Charles Cocks, gent., brother of sd. Peter of the second part. Sd. Edmond for the great love and affection he beareth to Dorothy his wife farm lets to sd. Peter & Charles the manor of Dumbleton from the death of sd. Edmond for 99 years in trust for sd. Dorothy etc.

(Close Roll 44 Eliz. Pt. 14, C. 54/1719.)

H. ABSTRACT OF STAR CHAMBER PROCEEDINGS, PETER COX AND CHARLES COX V. EDWARD ANSLEY AND OTHERS, DATED 13 JULY 1603

That Edmund Hutchins, gent., deed., was seized in his demesne as of fee of lands and tenements etc. in Dumbleton co. Glos. and of site and mansion house of the same manor. And by a lease of 27 Feb. 1601/2 (see G. above) granted sd. manor to his wife Dorothy in trust for 99 years following upon his death.

But the defendants Edmond Anesley and William Dobbyn had tried to hinder Edmond Hutchins in making the same lease. Shortly after his death they procured a writ of *diem clausit extremum* out of Chancery and procured it to be executed so secretly that the plaintiffs knew nothing about it. At the Inquisition the defendants left out the sd. lease made to the plaintiffs, therefore the plaintiffs and Dorothy brought a suit in the Court of Wards against Anesley and Dobbyn and the sd. defendants 'were defeated of their lend and malicious purpose'.

In Feb. 45 Eliz. 1602/3 the defendants assembled with the other defendants (10 in number) and annoyed the plaintiffs 'with a multiplicite of accions and suits'. Afterwards Ansley and Dobbyn procured the help of the other defendants 'forth of Wales and other remote places armed with swordes daggers calevers and pistoles'. Shortly after the Queen's death they assembled at Dumbleton, broke into the sd. manor house and took possession of it.

Answer

That Sir Thomas Pope, knt., had conveyed the manor of Dumbleton in trust to Edmund Hutchins and his heirs.

About Feb., 30 Eliz., 1587/8, in consideration of the marriage between the sd. Ansley and Margaret daughter of Anthony Throckmorton of Chastleton, Oxon, Esq., Ansley being son of Jane, Edmund Hutchins' sister, the sd. Edmund having no issue wished the manor to descend to Ansley and his heirs. The marriage took place and Ansley had many children. Shortly after the marriage, Hutchins 'being a very weake man and growen into greate age was persuaded to espouse' the sd. Dorothy, she 'being then a very young woman'.

Hutchins refused to make any estate to her. About January 44 Eliz., 1601/2, Hutchins 'who att the tyme of his life was but a weake person both in mind and body' was prevailed upon to make a lease of the sd. manor to Dorothy for life. But he made his will in Feb. 44 Eliz. without mentioning the lease.

Elizabeth wife of William Dobbyn, Anne wife of William Wallington and John Martin were the sd. Hutchins' cousins and heirs.

St. Ch. Proc., Jas. I, 8/105/20.)

I. ABSTRACT OF THE WILL OF SIR RICHARD COCKS OF DUMBLETON, BART., DATED 29 NOV. 1724

... in perfect Health of Mind & no ways worse than I have been for some Yeares passed, and believing that a Death Bed Repentance ought in no prudence to be relyed on and that a Soul continuing in Wicked Courses to the last is hardly worth Bequeathing to Heaven etc.

Brother Hugh Bethell, Mr. Stephens of Sodbury, the Lord Tracy, Mr. Tracy of Stanway, Mr. De La Bere of Southam and Sir Edward Fust of Hill to be executors and trustees. All my estate in Dumbleton not mentioned or settled for my dear wife Mary and her issue to my heirs male, and if no son but only one or more daughters then executors to keep my estate and raise £20,000 from it for them.

And in regard to the great love I bear to my wife Mary for her obliging behaviour and Sweet Temper and Christian virtues she is endued with, executors to pay her £100 out of rents of my estate for her present support and sum of £100 quarterly, and the use of my plate and jewels, and if she die without lawful issue born before or after my decease, then real and personal estate to my nephew Robert Cocks now the second son of my brother Dr. Cocks of Woodstock, then to his son or sons in priority of birth, and in default to William the youngest son of my brother Robert Cocks for life, then to his son or sons etc., in default to Charles the eldest son of my brother Robert and his son or sons, and in default to James the eldest son of my cousin Charles Cocks of Worcester and his son or sons, in default in like fashion to son of my cousin Seth Cocks of Castleditch etc., or to cousin John Cocks of Woodmancote, or to son of my cousin Peter Cocks of Cleeve, or to Sir Edward Fust of Hill, and in default to my right heirs for ever.

My wife shall have my best coach and four horses. I bequeath my books, pictures, furniture, jewels, plate after my wife's death to be heirlooms, and to descend and go by virtue of this my will and not to be disposed of in any other manner whatsoever. I give £10 to every servant that has lived with me four years, and to Lawrence my Coachman £5 to be paid quarterly for his natural life.

Witnesses: W. Codrington, P. Bethell, Rich'd Codrington.

Proved: Gloucester 19 May 1737 by Sir Robert Cocks, nephew.
(Glos. Consist. Ct. Wills, 1737.)

PART 4

Notes and References

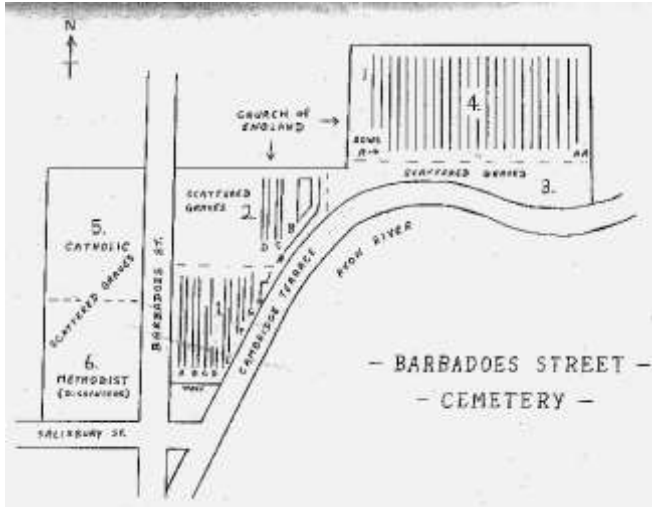
- 1 This may be seen from a drawing of Castleditch in Eastnor Castle
- 2 Quoted in H. Somers Cocks: *Eastnor and its Malvern Hills* (H.S.C.)
- 3 Lady Henry Somerset: *Eastnor Castle*
- 4 Eastnor Castle MS quoted by H.S.C.

- 5 H.S.C. for most details of Charles. An excellent military biography of
Charles has now appeared in: *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsular*
by Julia Page (1986)
- 6 *Victoria County History of Worcestershire*
- 7 Kathleen Fitzpatrick: *Lady Henry Somerset* for this and other details
- 8 Hamilton's *History of the Grenadier Guards*
- 9 H.S.C. for this and much other detail in the rest of the chapter
- 10 See his *Trials of a Tenderfoot*
- 11 Most detail in this and next section from Edith Somers Cocks' MS
account of her grandfather the Rev. Henry Bromley Cocks
- 12 John Robert Godley's wife was sister to Sara Wynne who married
Thomas Somers Cocks the banker in 1842
- 13 This Chapter has been written in far more detail than the others in
order to make full use of the many documents available for this
branch.
- 14 Monumental Inscription, Eastnor Church
- 15 In: Anon: *Cocks, Biddulph and Company 1759-1920* (privately
printed 1959) it is stated that Charles asked his *sons*, an obvious error.
If Charles is correct then it must have been his brothers who were
consulted, but I think John as head of the family is probably the most
likely to have been intended.
- 16 Except where stated, all family papers, diaries and letters are in the
Crystalwood files and archives. Many have been transcribed in ts in
green springback folders.
- 17 For biographical details of Morris and Hargood see: Allen, Joseph:
Memoir of the Life and Services of Admiral Sir William Hargood,
GCB, GCH (privately printed 1841)
- 18 This account of the battle is an abridged version of the writer's ts
paper The Belleisle and Colossus at Trafalgar, itself from *Memoirs*
(supra), Ships Logs in PRO and other printed sources.
- 19 Eliza's transcript of Morris's letter is all we have. His writing as he
admits was indifferent and it is possible he actually wrote 'sad to
report'. But I leave it in the form that still exists.
- 20 Letter from Maria Cocks to Margaret Maria Cocks at Eastnor.
- 21 *Memoir* (supra) and local press for this and following story.
- 22 These calculations are an ms addition on the original timetable sheet.
- 23 The chapter is based on the full transcripts of the Crimean diaries and
letters of Charles and Taff contained in two folders.
- 24 In 'Some Reminiscences', (ts)
- 25 This and later recollections and opinions are the writer's.

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**The location of the grave of Rev. Henry Bromley
Cocks and his wife Harriet Elizabeth at the
Barbadoes Street Cemetery, Christchurch, N.Z.
Area 4, ROW V, No. 707**



Henry Bromley COCKS was born in England in 1832 and died at Amberley on 13 March 1894. He came from a well-to-do English family, gained an M.A. at Oxford University and, from 3 Apr. 1862 - 1863 curate Christchurch S Michael's diocese, and 1879-1892, was the first Vicar of Sydenham. That his was a prosperous family is shown by the fact that the 1882 Return of the freeholders of New Zealand put the value of his land at 7885 pounds.

*(These details were obtained from
<http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Library/Cemeteries/index.asp>)*



Photographed by M.D.S.Cocks

Henry Bromley Cocks
Born at Leigh
Worcestershire, England
Died Amberly, Canterbury
March 13 1894 in his 63rd year.
First incumbent of St. Saviors Sydenham.

Harriet Elizabeth Cocks
 wife of Henry Bromley Cocks
 who died Nov.....1920.
 Aged 79