

'Horseheath and the Alingtons'

by Arthur Hervey
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Lord Arthur Hervey (1808-1894) was the fourth son of the 1st Marquis of Bristol. Having been ordained both deacon and priest in 1832, he was instituted to the small family living of Ickworth-cum-Chedburgh, Suffolk, with which he was associated until 1869. In 1862 he was appointed archdeacon of Sudbury. In 1869 he was consecrated as the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

HORSEHEATH AND THE ALINGTONS.

THE chief interest of the parish of Horseheath arises from its having been for between two and three centuries the residence of the knightly family of the Alingtons. "Among the woods (wrote Camden, when this family was culminating to its zenith) lies Horseheath, long time the property of the ancient and famous families of the Argentines and Alingtons, and still the residence of the latter." *Britann.* p. 213. They beautified the place with their stately mansion, and well-timbered park; they filled the parish church with the monuments of their dead, and made its pavement and its windows rich with memorials, in brass and in glass, of the virtues and heraldic glories of their house; and they threw around the very street and lanes of the parish those associations of interest and reverence which attach themselves, whether we will or not, to the spot where a long line of ancestry have discharged from generation to generation those neighbourly and patriotic functions which are distinctive of an English gentleman. The mansion, the park, the gardens, the name, are all gone now; the monuments, the brasses, the stained glass in the church, are falling into decay; but that is the very reason why the conservative hand of archæology should be stretched out to arrest as it were time's work of demolition, and to preserve what can be preserved of the history of an ancient house. I propose, therefore, with your permission, to tell you as briefly as I can, what I have been able to discover of the family of the Alingtons, of Horseheath.

On referring to Vincent's *Visitation of Cambridgeshire*, at the Herald's college, I find the first seven names in the Alington pedigree destitute of any of those accompaniments of date, reference to deeds, or other details, which stamp

such documents with authenticity. But the eighth on the list, Thomas, "called Allington, from the place of his birth, in the county of Devon" (according to Mr. Shirley, Allington, in Cambridgeshire), seems to be a real personage, and the first known ancestor of the family. He must have lived about 1350. His son, William Alington, was settled at Bottisham, co. Cambridge, and was the father of another William Alington, of Bottisham, who was Treasurer of Ireland, temp. Henry the Fourth, and of Normandy, temp. Henry the Fifth, and died A.D. 1448, and is thought (*Sir Egerton Brydges' Topogr.*) to have been buried at Horseheath, probably because styled "of Horseeth," in the list of Sheriffs, temp. Henry the Fifth. Evidently the family was beginning to rise into consideration, and these Treasurerships were likely to help it on.

But it was in the next generation that the great step was taken by which the house of Alington became so notable amongst the landed gentry of England. The baronial and knightly family of ARGENTINE had flourished with considerable splendour from the time of David de Argenton, one of the Conqueror's bravest knights. In the reign of Stephen, the inheritance of the Fitz Teeks had fallen to them by marriage, and among other possessions the manor of Gt. Wymondely, co. Hertfordshire, which was held by the tenure of grand serjeantry, and gave the holder the right of presenting to the king the first cup at his coronation; an honour said to be alluded to in the Argentine bearing of three cups in their coat of arms. The Argentines were also lords of Horseheath; and they were as distinguished for their valour and conduct in war, as they were for the extent of their possessions. But at the close of the reign of Henry the Fifth the male line failed, and the two daughters and co-heirs of Sir John Argentine became the sole heirs of the house. They married two brothers, Alingtons; but eventually Elizabeth, the wife of the elder brother William Alington, knight, became sole heir, and brought the whole Argentine inheritance to the Alingtons. It was probably in consequence of this great accession that this William

Alington (son of William the Treasurer) was knighted, and became Sheriff of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon 16th and 19th Henry the Sixth, and Knight of the Shire 7th or 12th Henry the Sixth (*Gough*). He fixed his residence at Horseheath, and dying in the 28th (38th *Clutterbuck*) Henry the Sixth, was buried at Hayndal.

His son was Sir John Alington, knight, Sheriff of Cambridge and Huntingdon, 1st Edward the Fourth, who married Maria, daughter of Laurence Cheiny, of Long Stanton, co. Cambridge. Cole mentions a brass in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Barker, Rector of Horseheath in his time, which had been removed from the church on occasion of some restoration or improvement, and which contained an inscription to the memory of this Maria. As this is the earliest sepulchral inscription extant belonging to an Alington, of Horseheath, perhaps I may be excused if I read it, though it is in Latin.

Nobilis ecce pia jacet hic formosa Maria,
 Quæ Laurence Cheyne præsit à genere,
 Uxor et Alington quondam fuit illa Johannis,
 Armigeri, superest marmoris ecce lapis.
 Post mundi tenebras concede Deus bone lucem,
 Quâ vivat tecum qui sine fine manes.

This John would seem from the above not to have been knighted till after his wife's death. He was Sheriff of Cambridge and Huntingdon 1st Edward the Fourth, and died in the same reign, and is said to be buried at Horseheath.

His son, Sir William Alington, fell at the battle of Bosworth, fighting on King Richard's side, and was succeeded by his son Sir Giles, a name derived from the Argentines, and henceforth of very frequent occurrence in the family. His stately monument is in the church, and records his marriage with Mary, daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Gardiner, knight, and his death April, 1522. He, too, was twice Sheriff of the counties, 3rd and 11th Henry the Eighth.

His son and heir was another Sir Giles, who was three

times Sheriff, 22nd and 37th Henry the Eighth, and 6th Edward the Fourth. His first wife was Ursula, daughter of Sir Robert Drury, of Hawstead, knight. A very singular circumstance connected with this Sir Giles is that he survived both his son Robert, and his grandson Sir Giles (husband of Margaret, daughter of Sir John Spencer Calthorpe, knight), and was succeeded by his great grandson, Sir Giles Alington, knight. Clutterbuck, in his valuable *History of Hertfordshire*, vol. ii, p. 540, thus alludes to the circumstances. "Sir Giles, having survived both his son and grandson, died in the eighty-sixth year of his age, August 22nd, 1586, and was succeeded by his great grandson; a circumstance so extraordinary that I do not recollect to have met with any other parallel but that of the succession of Louis XVth of France, to Louis XIVth." The same monument serves for him as that above-named to his father.

His great-grandson Sir Giles, who was born 1572, and died 1638, married Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter, and Dorothy, his wife, daughter and co-heiress of Neville Lord Latimer, a marriage which brought the blood of John of Gaunt, and of Thomas of Woodstock, and consequently of Edward the Third, to the succeeding generations of Alingtons. "A very noble and expensive monument," to use Cole's words, which was already falling into decay from the sinking of the ground, when he wrote, was erected by Sir Giles to her memory, in which he records that she "made him a joyful father of ten children." "To whose dear memory her sorrowful husband mindful of his own mortality erected this monument." She died in 1613. It must have been of this Sir Giles that Camden wrote as follows, under the head of Wymondeley in Hertfordshire: "The male issue (of Argentine) failing in Henry the Sixth's time (Henry the Fifth), Elizabeth Argentine, who increased the large estate, brought it in marriage to Sir William Alington, from whom GILES ALINGTON, heir of this family, is the seventh in descent, a youth of most amiable and generous disposition, who I trust will add new splendour to this

eminent family." If Camden penned this sentiment as early as 1600,* Giles would have been about twenty-eight, and therefore might well be called *juvenis*, though the English word *a youth*, implies something younger; anyhow as this Sir Giles was in possession of Horseheath from 1586 till 1638, he must have been the person pointed at by Camden, and the application of the passage in vol. ii, p. 378, of our *Proceedings*, to that Giles Alington, who married Mary, daughter of John Hervey, of Ickworth, and Frances Bocking, and sister of Sir William Hervey, is clearly a mistake. Nor is it easy to say who the Giles Alington, of Horseheath, who married Mary Hervey, was; he could not be that son of the above Sir Giles, who was born in 1601, since his wife, Mary Alington, became the mother of Frances Alington in 1613 (*Nowton Parish Register*). From their residence at Nowton, I should conjecture that he was descended from Sir Giles Alington, and Ursula Drury, through some younger son. But this by the way. I may also correct another probable error in the same page, viz. the conjecture that the William Alington there mentioned, is the same person as William Lord Alington. He was more probably a descendant of Sir Giles Alington, by his second wife, Alicia Middleton, since William Alington of that line, settled at Westley, followed the profession of the law, and had descendants.

But to return to the main line—Sir Giles was succeeded by his second son, also Sir Giles. In his days trouble came upon his house, partly by his own fault, partly by the detestable tyranny of that odious court, the Star Chamber. It seems that Sir Giles married a lady who was legally his niece, though the exact relationship is very obscure. In a note in the Alington pedigree (*Vincent's Cambridgeshire*) she is called "the daughter of — Dalton, and sister to Mr. Gibbs, and so Sir Giles's own niece," for which incestuous marriage he was grievously censured and fined in the High Commission Court, A.D. 1631. "Ambo subierunt sententiam

* The first edition of *Britannia* was published in 1586; the fifth edition in 1600. I have not the means of ascertain-

ing in which edition this notice first appeared.

archiepiscopi." But Clutterbuck gives some further details which make the sentence more like a persecution than a judicial process. "The prospects of this gentleman," says the author of the *Life of Sir Julius Cæsar*, "were clouded, and his revenues embarrassed by an unfortunate marriage, or rather by a most unjust persecution, for which it furnished the pretext. April, 14th, 1631, to use the words of Mr. Charles Cæsar's *Common Place Book*, Sir Giles Alington was censured and fined in the Star Chamber thirty-two thousand pounds, only for marrying the daughter of his sister by the half blood. He paid the fine to Sir Thomas Hutton (qy. Hatton) a young courtier." In Vincent's pedigrees a daughter by this marriage was the wife of Sir Thomas Hatton; another daughter, Ann, married Thomas, afterward Viscount Fanshawe.* But there is some grievous error either in the dates or the persons which I have not had time or opportunity to unravel. Another account states that the fine was divided between the Queen Dowager, *i.e.* Henrietta Maria, then Queen Consort, and another person.

William, brother of this Sir Giles, fourth son and ninth child of his father, was the first of the family who was ennobled, being created by Charles the First, in 1642, Baron Alington, of Killard, co. Cork. He was succeeded in this Irish honour by his son William, who was by Charles the Second (1682) further advanced to an English peerage, by the title of Baron Alington, of Wymondley, and who "carried the King (Charles the Second) his first draught of drink in a silver gilt cup" at his coronation (*Blount's Ancient Tenures*, p. 78), on account of his tenure of the lordship of Wymondley by grand serjeantry. He was Constable of the Tower, and Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, and died in 1684.

By his first wife Juliana, daughter of Baptist Noel, Viscount Campden, William Lord Alington had a son who died an infant, and a daughter Juliana, who married Curzon Vis-

* An error in Clutterbuck, followed by Burke (*Extinct Baronetcies*), makes the successors to the title children of this marriage. They were descended from

Elizabeth Cockayne, his second wife, to whom he was married in 1629. He had one daughter, Anne, by his first wife, baptized at Ware, July 29th, 1628.

count Howe, and carried the third part of the Wymondley inheritance to the Curzons. By his second wife, Diana, daughter of William first Duke of Bedford (ob. 1705), he had Hildebrand and Argentine, who died infants, and Giles, who succeeded him in his titles and possessions, but died *s.p.* a minor, in the year 1693 (when the English barony became extinct), and two daughters, Catharine, wife of Sir Nathaniel Napier, and Diana, wife of Sir George Warburton, who inherited each a third part of the Wymondley property. Diana Warburton's third passed through her daughter Diana (who married Sir Richard Grosvenor, of Eaton, co. Chester, Knight), to the Grosvenor family, and Sir Richard purchased the other two thirds from Lady Howe and Lady Napier respectively. At the coronation of George the Third, Richard Lord Grosvenor presented the cup to the King as Lord of Wymondley, but in 1767, sold the estate to Colonel Crachode. At the coronation of George the Fourth, William Wilshere, Esq., being the owner of the manor, performed the same office.

But to return to the Alingtons. On the death of the youthful Lord Giles (who, by the way, presented the cup to King James the Second at his coronation by proxy, his uncle Hildebrand officiating for him), he was succeeded as Lord Alington, of Killard, by his uncle Hildebrand, with whom the peerage, and the male line came to an end. This lord was buried at his own desire at Withersfield, in Suffolk, anno 1722, Horseheath having been sold by him to the Honourable John Bromley, Esq., grandfather of the first Lord Montfort.

As regards the mansion at Horseheath, and the sale of the property to the Bromley family, Cole gives us the following account in different parts of his MSS., not without some slight contradiction however. "My Lord Montford's grandfather (ob. 1707) Honourable John Bromley, purchased this estate of the last Lord Alington." "John Bromley, ob. 1758, M.P. for co. Cambridge, of whom William Whiston speaks (*Memorandum of Life*, p. 347) as 'the greatest benefactor he ever had,' was my lord's father." "The

present noble seat of my Lord Montford in this parish was built in 1665, by Webb, an élève of Inigo Jones, for my Lord Alington (*i.e.* William, second Lord and first English Peer), whom it cost seventy thousand pounds, and Lord Montford's father (*qu.* grandfather) bought the house and estate along with it for forty-two thousand pounds. After he bought it, there were thirty thousand pounds more laid out on the house to make it what it is at present, so that it cost in the whole, one hundred thousand pounds. The present owner has laid out, and still continues to lay out annually, both within and without, and in the park, very large sums, and indeed it may vie with any nobleman's house in England for stateliness and nobleness, both of the building and situation. The aforesaid particulars I had from my Lord Montford himself, who also told me the Heralds had sixty pounds of him for altering his coat of arms at his being created a peer. The Park contains eight hundred and eighty acres." Cole was at Horseheath in August (12-16) 1742, and again in October, 1745, on a visit to Lord Montfort. On both occasions he visited the church, and made copious notes on the monuments, painted windows, &c., and made extracts from the registers. These, however, belong to my neighbour's manor,* on which I must not poach further than I have already done.

It only remains therefore for me to add with regard to Horseheath, that, just thirty years after Cole's second visit, all this "stateliness and nobleness," not unaccompanied, I fear, from some hints Cole drops, with profligacy, came to an end. Gough, in his additions to Camden, after mentioning the purchase of the estate by John Bromley, and the raising of his only son to the peerage, by the title of Lord Montfort, Baron of Horseheath, in 1741, adds, "everything here was sold in 1775, the Park let to farm, the dwelling-house to be pulled down."

As regards the Alingtons, the blood and name still survive. In Mr. Shirley's *Noble and Gentle Men of England*, we are told that the present representative is

* Paper on Horseheath church.

George Marmaduke Alington, Esq., of Swinhope, co. Lincoln, descended from a younger son of Sir Giles Alington, meaning, I presume, the first Sir Giles temp. Henry the Eighth; for, he adds, that this branch were seated at Swinhope in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.* He gives as the coat of arms, Sable, a bend engrailed between six billets Argent, which is the same as that in Vincent's Pedigree of Alington, and which was borne by all the later generations. But Cole tells us that the shield of Robert Alington who married Margaret Coningsbie (in the church), was charged with twelve billets, and that on another coat in the chancel there were ten billets.

I have now only to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me, and to express my regret that circumstances made it impossible for me to prepare anything more worthy of your attention.

ARTHUR HERVEY.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from Cole's MSS., vol. vii.

Being at the Right Hon^{ble} Lord Montford's y^e begining of October, 1745, I walked down to the church, and made the following remarks:—

The south side is exactly the same as the north, save that there is a small door in the chancel, and a porch opposite where vestry stands.

There are two brasses in the chancel also, which I sketched out at this time. The first lies in the rails of the monument, just before the rails of the altar, in the middle, between the two monuments, on each side of the wall, and is of a person in armour, having a dog at his feet. Above his head was a canopy in brass, supported by two angels, whereof only one remains. On a piece of the label that surrounds the figure is only this part of an old French inscripⁿ.

De Novembre l'an del Incarnacion.

There were two shields above the canopy, but the brass work is reaved. In all probability it belonged to the Argentine family. See vol. I, p. 7;

* The head of the family at the present time (1867) is the Rev. R. T. Allington, Rector of Swinhope. This branch sprung

from George, second son of Sir Giles Alington, who died 13th Henry the Eighth.

vi, p. 65; v, p. 130. The other brass lies at y^e foot of an old stone as you enter the chancel, and has the Figure complete, except the head, which is gone, of a person in a gown, & was designed for Robt Alington, Esq., son of S^r Giles Alington, Knt., who married Margaret, da. of Judge Coningsby, & who died May 22, 1552. The inscription at his feet is gone, but 2 shields by him have these arms:—1, *Alington*, bend engrail^d int. 12 billets & a label of 3 points for a difference of an eldest son. On other side, 4 quarterings of *Alington* (i, p. 7) with label of 3 points, impaling 3 conies sejant & a crescent for difference, & border engrailed for Coniesby. The family has since born only 6 billets, and in the chancel lies another with 2 Coats, but the figures are despoiled. On the first coat are the arms of Alington with 10 Billets.

In chancel hang 2 old atchievements. First, for (Wm. 2^d) Lord Alington, 6 quarterings (1) *Alingt.* (6 billets.) 2? Gules bend Sable (Arg?) 3, *Argentins.* 4? 5, *Gardnor.* 6, *Middleton*, impaling *Russell.* The other for Lady Alington, Lozenge. Another, quite fresh, has A. on bend G. 3 eaglets displayed O. impaling *Alington.*

Vol. i, p. 5. Aug. 12-16, 1742.

“A pretty chancel in which are several monuments, & some of them of great antiquity. This is divided from the body of the church by a sort of wooden screen, & over it are the Royal arms. On each side of the wall, without the rails of the altar, are 2 very noble monuments for the ancient family of the Alingtons, formerly Lords of the Manor. That on the south side is the more ancient. It is entirely of stone, handsomely painted and gilt.

Middle rim.

Here under lyeth buried Sir Giles Allington, K^t, who died Aprilis A. 1522 [1552?] He married Mary, only da. & h of Sir Rich. Gardener, K^t, &c.

Lower rim.

Sir Giles Alington, K^t sonne & heir of Sir Giles Al., Kt. died Aug. 22, 1586, & in the y^r of his age 86. He first married Ursula, da. of Sir Rob. Drury, K^t, & by her had issue Robert. Secondly, he married Alice, da. & h. of John Middleton, Esq. (wid. of Erlington (Thomas), and had issue Thomas, Richard, William, Philip, Anne, Frances, Elizabeth, Jane, & Margaret. He married 3, Margaret, da. of John Tallakarne, Esq., before wife of Thos. Argall, Esq., & had no issue.

“Giles Alington, Esq., sonne and heir of Robt. Alington, Esq., and heir apparent to Sir Giles Alington, K^t, died Nov. 25, 1573. He married Margaret, da. of Sir John Spencer, Kt., & by her had issue Giles, John & Margaret, which Giles last named being Great Grandchild unto the said Sir Giles, was at his decease his next heir.”

In a window. 1, *Alington* (12 billets). 2, *Argentins* impaling Barry of 6 or 8 Ermine & Gules, & others.

EXTRACTS FROM REGISTER OF HORSEHEATH.

- Aug. 23, 1586. Gyles Allington Miles.
 Feb. 17, 1613. Mr. Gyles Allington, son of Sir Gyles A.
 Dec. 23, 1638. Sir Giles Allington, K^t.
 Aug. 26, 1647. Mr. John Allington.
 Oct. 25, 1648. William Lord Allington.
 March 5, 1653. Charles, son of Sir Henry & Lady Susan Felton, bapt.
 18, do. do. buried.
 March 20, 1659. Giles Lord Alington.
 Dec. 4, 1662. Catherine Lady Alington.
 March 24, 1666. Mrs. Diana Alington.
 April 14, 1673. Elizabeth Lady Alington.
 March 25, 1682. Hildebrand, son of W^m & Diana L^d & L^{dy} Alⁿ.
 Feb. 20, 1683. Argentine, son of L^d Alⁿ.
 Feb. 17, 1684. W^m L^d Alⁿ Const. of Tower of L^s, L^d L^t of co. Cambridge.
 Sept. 22, 1693. Giles L^d Alⁿ.
 Oct. 29, 1705. Mrs. Alington.
 Dec. 24, 1705. R^t Hon. Lady Diana Alington, ob. Dec. 13.

Horseheath, Oct. 10, 1769.

Whereas the 2 last years have been wet, and occasioned a great rot among the Hares, & prevented the Partridges from breeding such numbers as usual in the manor of Horseheath, West Wickham, Gt. & Little Linton & Niguellots, L^d Montfort, the owner of those several manors, desires all Gentlemen & others not to sport there this season.—*Cambridge Chronicle*, Oct. 14, 1769.

Horseheath, Advowson in Allingtons, 20 Edw. IV & 6 Hen. VI.

INSCRIPTIONS IN BOTTISHAM CHURCH.

(Furnished by the kindness of the Rev. John B. McClellan.)

(1.) "Here lieth Margaret, the Daughter of Wm. Conningsbye, of King's Lynn, one of the Justices of the Common Pleas, at Westminster, who married with Roberte Allington, Esq., son and heir of Sir Gyles Allington, of Horseheth, Knight, by whom she had five sons and six daughters, that is to say, William, John, Gyles, James, and George, Alice, Ann, Margaret, Elizabeth, Frances, and Beatrice, and after she m[arried with] Thomas Pledger, [Esq., of with] whom she lived, he [] is an[d] years, and died 16th day of May, A.D. 1598, An. ætat. 7 [8], and the said Thomas Pledger died the 13th day of March, A.D. 1599, and in the 70th year of his age, who lieth here buried &c., &c." (The remainder referring to Pledger's Will.)

(2.) To two infant Allingtons.

“Stay, passenger, and wonder whom these Stones
Have learned to speake—two infant Alingtons;
These the world’s strangers came not here to dwell,
They tasted, liked it not, and bade farewell.
Nature hath granted what they begged with tears,
As soon as they began, to end their years.”

Jacemus hic Leonellus et Dorothea Eximiorum Gulielmi et Elizabethæ
Alingtonum, Filius Filiaque, Fato Succubuimus An. Sal. 1638.

INSCRIPTIONS IN THE CHURCH OF WESTLEY WATERLESS.

1. Here lyeth Giles Alington, the sonne of Richard Alington, Esquier, which Giles died the 26th day of April, A° 1592. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

2. Here lyeth Susan Alington, late the wife of Giles Alington, the son’e of Richard Alington, Esquier, which Susan died the 14th day of June, A° Dni, 1594.

3. Here lieth the body of Thomas Alington, the sixth son of Giles Alington, late of St. Edmund’s Bury, Esquier. He departed this life the 6th day of November, A° Do’ni, 1669.

NOTE.

In the preceding pages I have supposed from the circumstance that the Giles Allington who married Mary Hervey, resided in Nowton, that he was probably descended from the Sir Giles Alington, who married Ursula Drury, and may probably have acquired some property in Nowton by this marriage. This is in some degree confirmed by the fact that Henry Payne, lord of the manor of Nowton, by his will, dated June 14, 1568, made that Sir Giles Alington, supervisor of his will, and also left him “his best gelding, and his Chaucer written in vellum, and illumined in gold.” (See *Visitation of Suffolke*, vol. ii, p. 70.) This looks as if Sir Giles was connected with Nowton. It also appears by the will that the Drurys had sold some land in Nowton to Payne.