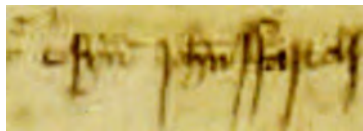
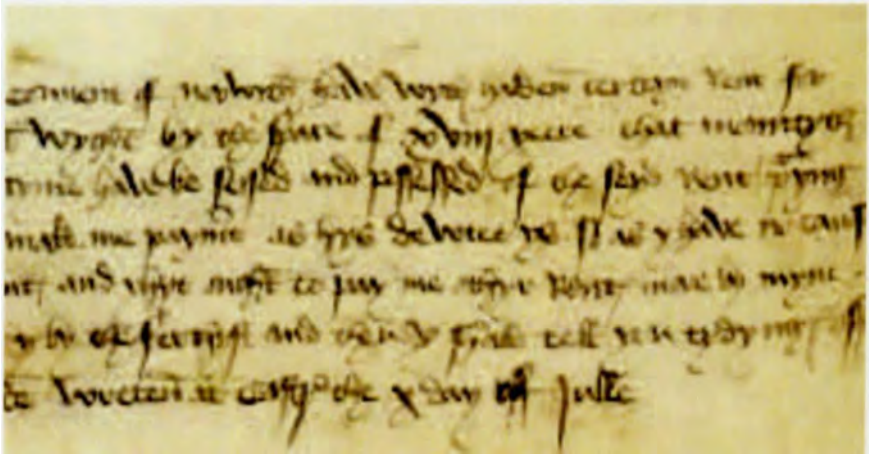


# A PASTON LETTER



## THE MAGAZINE OF THE PASTON HERITAGE SOCIETY

No.1 Autumn 2014

# A PASTON LETTER

is published by The Paston Heritage Society

for circulation to members.

Edited by Rob Knee ([r.knee@icloud.com](mailto:r.knee@icloud.com))

Contributions will always be welcome. Please email copy and please send images as separate attachments to the editor.

Copyright The Paston Heritage Society and individual members.

All opinions expressed in the articles in *A Paston Letter* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor or Trustees of the Paston Heritage Society.

*Layout and production by Philippa Sims of the Norfolk Heraldry Society*

Back cover photograph courtesy of our Chairman: Oxnead Hall

## THE PASTON HERITAGE SOCIETY

Patron: Sir Henry Paston-Bedingfeld Bt.

Company No: 07233342      Registered Charity No: 1140292

Trustees, Officials and Committee:

Chairman	Dr Rob Knee
Hon Treasurer	Peter Stibbons
Minutes Secretary	Tim Lenton
Founder Trustee	Lucy Care

Membership Secretary: Carole Martin ([martincf@talktalk.net](mailto:martincf@talktalk.net))

Registered Office: Crowhurst, 2 Station Road, North Walsham,  
Norfolk NR28 0EA

[www.pastonheritage.co.uk](http://www.pastonheritage.co.uk)

## Chairman's Letter

PHS members,

I greet you well and welcome you to this first edition of 'A Paston Letter'.

We are fortunate to have contributions from two experts in very contrasting fields. Susan Curran is a successful author and her most recent book The Marriage of Margery Paston is an engrossing and detailed account, of a difficult episode in difficult times for Margaret Paston and her family. Susan has also spoken about the marriage of Margery and Richard Calle to one of our occasional meetings at Bacton Village Hall.

In this spirit of reconstruction I have pieced together, from various sources, an imaginary 'week in the life' of Richard Calle, which is intended as a complementary footnote to Susan's essay.

James Mindham provides his own introduction in his first article on the reconstruction of Paston Hall. This is a project that testifies to James skills as an archaeologist and as an expert with computer generated graphics. This is the first chapter in the quest to understand where this great house was situated and how it may have evolved to express the social ambitions of Judge William Paston and his descendants, perhaps through to the timing and causes of its eventual ruin.

Whilst our thoughts are upon the village of Paston, this is a good moment to report on progress with the restoration and renovation of nearby St Margaret's Church. To date, the roof has been repaired and the walls strengthened. This has included making good and safe the wall that supports the tomb of Lady Katherine Paston. During the work, further wall paintings have come to light and the aim is to seek sponsorship to restore these. Further discussions are under way to see how the church can be equipped with basic facilities.

St Margaret's Church could become a focal point for visitors to the so called 'soft cliff' coast between Happisburgh and Weybourne. PHS has supported a recent and large outline bid with the Norfolk Coastal Project to preserve and promote this stretch of historic, yet endangered coastline. As much of the coast was once in Paston hands, the PHS has much to contribute!

Another significant piece of work involves our partnership with the University of East Anglia and the 'Preserving Place' project. We are working with Dr Karen Smyth, Senior Lecturer of Medieval Literature in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing. The overall aim is to develop a virtual, digital museum, which allows the user to virtually 'experience' the Paston Letters through the eyes of key members of the Paston family. Users will also be able to access other 'rooms' where they can visit places that are mentioned or encounter related aspects arising from the text. Part of the project is to push into new areas through the use of archaeology, documentary research and reconstruction. The virtual experience would be accessible through the web and through screens, possibly located at key points such as St Margaret's Church or perhaps St Peter Hungate Church in Norwich.

Norwich locations could be particularly significant if the city is to bid for UNESCO status in connection with the unique medieval heritage that remains. The 'museum' project would aim to build on the work that James Mindham has begun. Schools intending to teach pupils about the medieval period would be able to allow classes to virtually step back into the medieval world with Margaret Paston and with her letters to guide them. The museum would also provide a hub to access all of the existing references and research on the Paston Letters that has been accumulated over the years. Please get in touch if you have any ideas or suggestions for inclusion in this project.

In August 2014 I had the great pleasure of accompanying Keith Pearshouse on a London walk he has devised that takes one round some of the key sites mentioned in to Paston Letters. Keith observes that many of the family spent much of their time there and many were in fact buried in London. The walk begins at St Paul's, where Sergeant at Law William would have stood by a pillar (in old St Paul's) and waited for business. From the cathedral, the walk proceeds to Warwick Inn, home of Agnes and William, then past Newgate Prison towards the Fleet Prison where John Paston was detained on a number of occasions. The walk moves through the Inns of Court where many of the family were educated and trained, to skirt both Whitefriars (where John Paston was buried) and Blackfriars (where his brother William was buried).



*St Paul's cathedral  
(Rob Knee)*

Arriving back at St Pauls one can visit the remarkable sculpture of Dean John Donne by Nicholas Stone, the sculptor who provided so many wonderful works for the family's Norfolk homes and tombs. We intend to put a version of the walk, which takes about an hour and a half, on the web site as a printable PDF.

On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September we held a 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party for the PHS at Oxnead Hall. This event took place thanks to the kind permission and support of the owners, Beverley and David Aspinall. We also launched a book of poetry by Chronicle (Caroline Gilfillan, Rob Knee and Tim Lenton) inspired by the Hall and previous Paston occupants. Chronicle performed some of the poems from their book 'Oxnead: A Paston Treasure' and a number of extracts from the later Letters. Chronicle's authentic Restoration costumes were made by Penny Knee. The event took place on a beautiful afternoon and the 85 visitors were able to explore Oxnead's wonderful gardens. A birthday cake, baked and decorated by Christine Damen, provided the centrepiece for a wonderful tea party, with other cakes and sandwiches provided by members of the PHS, all coordinated brilliantly by Ruth Bird. The cake was fittingly cut by Lucy Care, the co-founder of the PHS.



*Cake cutting and tea (paul damen)*

Our thanks to all those PHS members and friends who have supported these events. Please keep in touch through email ([r.knee@icloud.com](mailto:r.knee@icloud.com)) and do send in any contributions for the next edition of 'A Paston Letter'.

Rob Knee

North Walsham. November 2014.

# PASTON HALL - A NEW APPRAISAL

by James Mindham

*Background: James Mindham is a freelance graphic designer specialising in 3D modelling/animation for the oil industry. He has spent many years fieldwalking and conducting small scale excavations in the parish of Northrepps and helped with the Dig and Sow day. Unfortunately his archaeological activities have since been curtailed by a move away from this part of Norfolk and parenthood!*

Back in 2012, Peter Stibbons approached me with the idea of creating a 3D model of Paston Hall along with the church and barn as part of the project funded by the HLF (not sure of the correct project name!). The problem was, no-one really knew what the hall looked like or where it was positioned - the canvas was well and truly blank!

The starting point had to be the collation of the existing evidence, which meant revisiting the documentary evidence and trying to test hearsay, and it was during this process that the original Boydell water colour sketch was discovered.

After the initial euphoria of the discovery, it soon became apparent that the composition was not all that it appeared to be and, in actual fact, raised more questions than answers. At this point I decided to draw on the available descriptive evidence and test them against each other and the Boydell watercolour. Close scrutiny of the documentary evidence combined with a Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPR) would surely help me with a starting point and narrow down the likely layout and position of the hall. I started writing an essay called 'Paston Hall- A New Appraisal'.

This first article deals with the Boydell watercolour and the concerns raised by John Tilney-Spurdens about its composition. Further articles will look at the Anson and Mack periods, the GPR results and my basis for the reconstruction.

## TILNEY-SPURDENS AND BOYDELL

By far the most helpful source we have in terms of describing the Hall complex, is the testimony of the **Reverend John Tilney-Spurdens** with his thoughts on the print which appears as a plate within the Fenn Papers vol 5 (*fig.2*). This print was based on based on Josiah Boydell's 1790 watercolour.



Fig.2 The print that Tilney-Spurdens refers to

Tilney-Spurdens recalls that the ‘offices’ flanked the north and south sides of a courtyard, and we could interpret this as a series of buildings or rooms making up the service wings, within which, the day to day running of the mansion was carried out. He said that the mansion itself occupied the east of the courtyard (with the hall to the left and the kitchen on the right) and a large turreted gateway to the west.

Tilney-Spurdens said that the print was ‘*very inadequate*’ in terms of conveying an idea of the ruins when he visited them around the year 1796, six years after Boydell painted them. He describes a layout which would fit the typical plan of a Tudor Mansion (fig.3) or College and Anthony Norris (1711 - 1786) who compiled detailed, but unpublished, histories of the eastern hundreds of Norfolk, said that the hall,

*“much resembles that of a college and indeed, the marks of its ancient magnificence are still everywhere to visible”*



Fig. 3 Oxburgh-Hall layout

Francis Blomefield (1705-1752) visited the site sometime during the 1730's and stated that;

*"the buttery hatch, with the hall, is still standing, but the chamber over it, and the chapel, are in ruins."* 2

The buttery hatch was a half door between the buttery/ kitchen and the hall. The term 'Hall' often referred to the whole mansion even though it was a distinct room within the mansion. So we can suppose that the hall had a chamber over it, and that there was a distinct chapel.

Taking all three sources into account, it seems we can be fairly certain that the Hall complex was the standard type based around a central courtyard where everything is expected to be.

However, enter Josiah Boydell in 1790. His watercolour sketch (Fig.4) presents us with a confusing picture. Although we can only see parts of the north and east sides of the complex, and it seems that there is very little we can pin down in terms of the previous descriptions of the ruins. I believe we need to think of in terms of where the scene was painted and what is missing.

Fig.4 Josiah Boydell's watercolour sketch dated 1790

In short, I believe Boydell is positioned in the south western corner of the courtyard. The Barn and Church enables us to get a quick location fix, but I also believe that the well within the 'inner court' that Blomefield refers to below, is the structure just in front of the low wall.

*"The old hall of this family stands near to the church, and had two courts; in the inner court there is a well;"* 1

On later maps, a well is indicated in this vicinity and is possibly still be seen today as a concrete slab in the grass in front of the new hall.

In terms of the 'inner court', it is possible that Blomefield is interpreting the northern range as a separate court defined by the low wall in Boydell's picture. We cannot be sure that this wall is in fact anything to do with the original complex and may be a later addition for agricultural purposes as it doesn't seem ruinous enough.

1 The Educated Pin by Marjorie Mack p.16

2 An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: vol 11 (1810), pp. 57-59

However, we cannot discount the idea that the northern range was essentially another courtyard containing service buildings. Indeed, the building with the chimney (used as a blacksmith's shop at the time of the painting) does look as though it had always been a 'standalone' building and not part of a wing, and it seems to bear a scar where a perhaps a tall enclosing wall may butted against it.



*Fig 4*

An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: vol 11 (1810), pp. 57-59

Tilney-Spurdens never mentions two courts – just ‘the court’, and we can be sure that he means the space in the foreground of the Boydell print because he also states that the building used as a blacksmiths’ shop was taken down to its string course and used as ‘*a passage from the court to the farm buildings*’. The farm, of course, was to the north.

So now that we have established where the picture was painted, we can now assess what we should be seeing.

Clearly the large flint gateway to the west is missing because it's to the left of the scene and ‘out of shot’. Yet we should have a clear view of the eastern range which contained the mansion. We can see ruins of a building or buildings that are maybe three stories high and we can be fairly sure that these have something to do with the mansion. But where is the Great Hall and kitchen, that both Blomefield and Spurden recall?

Tilney-Spurdens account may help us. He states that; *'There is a turreted porch in the centre of the front'*. It is not entirely clear what he is referring to; *'the centre of the front'* of what? But I believe he is talking about the Mansion, specifically what we see in the middle right of the Boydell watercolour (Fig.5).



*Fig 5*

This seems to corroborate the point that Tilney-Spurdens was making, so although nearly 60 years had passed since the visits of Norris and Blomefield, it seems likely that the ruins had not changed a great deal at the time of Boydell and Tilney-Spurdens. In this regard I think we can be fairly confident that Boydell has omitted the Great Hall, Kitchens and the first floor chambers.

An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: vol II (1810), pp. 57-59

## 2 Original letters...John Fenn published 1823 page lxxv

The question is, what else is artistic license? It appears that the building with the chimney (the forge) the low wall and the well are represented faithfully, as these can possibly be seen on the enclosure map and the well plotted in later maps. What about the 'turreted gateway' (fig.6) seen at the back of the picture? Could this be another case of artistic license by Boydell?

Fig 6



Fig 7



Tilney-Spurdens only mentions one turreted gateway;

*"There were some traces of a turreted gateway on the west. It was a large building of flint with quoins of free-stone, very irregular in its plan, with very spacious vaulted cellars."*

The 'Account of the Plates' from the Fenn Papers Volume 5 states that the gateway seen in the print was used as a blacksmith's shop, and I believe that it was referring to the building with the chimney (fig.7). It seems much more likely that a blacksmith would use an intact building rather than a ruin.

Fig.6 We also know that Tilney-Spurdens referred to the building with the chimney as 'the arched gate' and that it was "a passage from the court to the farm buildings".

As it was destroyed down to the string course and used as a pig sty during his visit, we can safely assume that it was no longer used as a blacksmith's shop by 1796. So what is the ruinous building in fig.6? To me it does not seem to sit comfortably in the scene. When trying to reconcile the Boydell ruins in 3D, this building appeared to be beyond the limits of the Hall and far too close to the barn.

Is it possible that there was a northern turreted gateway which has gone unmentioned in the contemporary accounts? Or is it possible that Boydell has sprinkled another large dusting of artistic license?

We now know that Boydell was painting with an aesthetic motivation rather than a faithful one. With this in mind, it is not inconceivable that he has actually painted the turreted gateway to the west (as it was too good a subject to leave out) and ‘shoe-horned’ it in at the top of his painting.

There is also a clear colour differentiation between the church/barn and the ruins which initially seems to be a different treatment of flint and brick, however, I believe this is more of an artistic differentiation between the ruins and surrounding buildings. We know the gatehouse was built of flint with quoins and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the original hall would have been built of the same materials.

The ‘Rose coloured mansion’ refers to the William Paston rebuild of the southern wing which was clearly of brick and what I believe is represented in isolation on the William Paston portrait (Fig.8).

In conclusion, it seems that Tilney-Spurdens had every right to feel aggrieved at this representation of Paston Hall. It seems clear that Boydell has employed large slices of artistic license within his composition, but I do believe he is architecturally accurate in what he has sketched.



*Fig 8*

# **Power, passion, money and marriage: Richard Calle and Margery Paston**

**by Susan Curran**

It must have been a major source of gossip in Norwich in September 1469, when Bishop Lyhert called Richard Calle, land agent to the Paston family, and Margery Paston – sister to the head of the family, Sir John Paston – to him in the cathedral, and questioned them both on whether they had contracted a valid betrothal. If perhaps not entirely public, the questioning was certainly not private: there were witnesses, Margery's mother Margaret received a full and prompt account (definitely not from either Margery or Richard) of what had been said, and plenty of others would have heard the story too.<sup>1</sup>

The aftermath must have been equally enthralling, with the Paston family barring Margery from their house, and the bishop's servants forced to cast around to find the girl somewhere to stay. (A former lord mayor, Roger Best, and his wife stepped in to give her a bed for a few nights, then later she was despatched to Blackborough Nunnery, near Middleton in west Norfolk.) Those following the case would have known that Bishop Lyhert was taking his time in giving a verdict, and they surely realized why. The answers Richard and Margery had given so publicly made it clear that the betrothal was indeed valid, so the bishop could only invalidate it (as he would clearly have preferred to do) if one of the couple recanted their testimony. His servants put pressure on them, but neither changed their story, and eventually the bishop confirmed that the pair should marry.

How embarrassing all this would have been for the Pastons. Nor was it their only cause for embarrassment over the years – or even the greatest at this very time, since while Bishop Lyhert was deliberating, the duke of Norfolk's men were assembling at Caister to besiege the Paston men who held the castle. And it was only a couple of years since the duke of Suffolk's men had thrown the Pastons out of the estates they claimed at Drayton and Hellesdon, terrorising their tenants, sacking Hellesdon church and reducing the manor houses to ruins.

Was this typical for a family of their time, or were the Pastons uniquely accident-prone? And was this proposed marriage so disastrously unacceptable that they really had no choice but to go to great lengths to try to prevent it, even at this time of crisis in their affairs? Just because we have so much more information on the Pastons than on other comparable families of their era, it is never easy to judge how exceptional (or unexceptional) they were; and for all we know about medieval love and marriage, it is no easier to comprehend the complex social nuances that made one match acceptable, and another one not so.

Many commentators have taken it that Margery did make a terrible misalliance. Richard Calle thought the opposite. As he wrote to her (at some time in 1469 before the scene in the cathedral), 'I mervell moche that they schulde take this mater so heedely as I vndrestonde they doo, remembering it is in suche case as it can not be remedyed, and my desert, vpon eury behalf it is for to be thought ther schulde be non obstacle a-yenst it.'<sup>2</sup>

He would, wouldn't he, we might retort. But if Richard thought others agreed with him, it seems to me he was probably right. He was no blithe young lad; he was an experienced professional man, probably in his thirties at this time. He could clearly afford to marry, and to keep a wife in the style that a woman from the Pastons' class might expect. Meanwhile, Margery was no heiress who could look to attract a husband from the aristocracy, or even the upper levels of the gentry. Her mother and brother were so short of cash at around this time that they owed Richard a good year's wages.<sup>3</sup> After the fall of Caister Margaret Paston was casting around to borrow or beg money wherever she could, for both herself and her son, and facing the prospect of letting go long-established servants (which she did indeed do) because she could not afford to pay their keep.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances there was no realistic prospect of the family putting together the kind of dowry that would have been needed to get Margery a richer or more distinguished husband – as she was doubtless very well aware.

True, the Calles were not a grand family, and it seems the Pastons reckoned mere respectability (which they certainly had<sup>5</sup>) was not enough. Another part of the trail of evidence about the affair makes it clear their objections were at least in part snobbish ones: John Paston III (Sir John's and Margery's brother) wrote to his mother that he had told a friend of Richard's 'he shold neuer haue my good wyll for to make my sustyr to sell kandyll and mustard in Framlingham'.<sup>6</sup> This is hardly an objection we should take literally: Richard cannot have worked in his family's grocer's shop in Framlingham for many years (if he ever did), and there was no real

prospect that his wife would have to tie on her apron, get behind the counter and sell candles, mustard or anything else. Arguably it was more of a problem that the Calles were firmly allied to the duke of Norfolk (whose seat was at Framlingham), when the Pastons had set themselves in enmity to him.

*Medieval image of a chandlers shop*



But were either of these issues really enough to set the Pastons adamantly against a decent marriage for Margery – not to mention one she clearly much wanted – and to lead them to quarrel with their all but indispensable land agent? Were there other reasons for them to take this stance – reasons that the letters that survive do not make as apparent to us?

These were among the issues that fascinated me when I first read what survives of Margery and Richard's story. If it were simply a tale of star-crossed lovers, risking penury for the sake of being together, it would be moving enough. And though this was not an era when lovers tended to gush, the couple's passion is apparent in what survives: Richard writing that 'I had leuer than all the goode in the worlde I myght be wyth you',<sup>7</sup> Margery with the bishop, saying 'yf thoo worddys mad yt not suhere, she seyde boldly that sche wold make yt suerhere ore than sche went thens'.<sup>8</sup> But it is also an integral part of the tale of a family fighting to maintain and build on its position, willing to risk much in order to prevent any damage to that position – and as often as not, getting it wrong.

Richard Calle and Margery Paston went on to marry; the Paston family, battered even more by other disasters than by this incident, nevertheless survived and thrived in later generations. And for all the trove of papers they left us, many of their thoughts and their deeds too are lost forever. But what remains reveals levels of motivations, of intrigue, of calculation and politicking, that I much enjoyed researching, and that I hope others will enjoy reading about in the book I wrote as a result.<sup>9</sup>

### Notes

- 1 The account we have is Margaret's to Sir John, given in N. Davis, *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, Vol. 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 341–4.
- 2 Richard Calle to Margery Paston, in N. Davis, *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, Vol. 11* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 500.
- 3 'And of all this twelmothe I haue not had on peny for my wages.' Richard Calle to Sir John Paston, 22 May 1469 (Davis, Vol. II, p. 395).
- 4 'Item, as fore money I kowde gette but x li. vpon pledgys, and that is spent for zowr materes here... and I woot not were to gette non, nowther fore suerte ner fore pleggys. And as for myn owyn lyuelod, I am so symppely payed thereof that I fere me I xale be fayn to borow fore my-sylfe or ell to breke vp howsold, ore bothe.' Margaret Paston to Sir John Paston, 22–30 September 1469 (Davis, Vol. 1, pp. 346–7).
- 5 Some information on the Calle family was assembled in Charles S. Romanes, *The Calls of Norfolk and Suffolk, their Paston Connections and Descendants* (London: privately printed, 1920).
- 6 Davis, Vol. 1, p. 541.
- 7 Davis, Vol. II, p. 498.
- 8 (That is, if her account had not made it certain that the betrothal was valid, she wished to do whatever was necessary to ensure that it was.) As reported by Margaret: Davis, Vol. 1, p. 342.
- 9 Susan Curran, *The Marriage of Margery Paston* (Norwich: Lasse Press, 2013). See [www.lassepress.com](http://www.lassepress.com)

## An imagined diary of a 'week in the life' of the Paston's bailiff

### *Monday*

I rode away from the Norwich house in Princes Street outward bound for Mautby, to interview tenants for Paston lands. We are having trouble securing good men who are reliable and who can make the most of the excellent soils. These are hard times and we need to get the best yields. We need more than 4 bushels of barley per acre especially with prices so low. I rode down to the river and crossed at Bishop bridge -on to Mousehold and out by Blofield, crossing the Thurne at Acle - arriving at my Mistress Margaret's family home by mid morning. I interviewed and appointed John Begge, who happily knew how to manage these superior soils -the tilling, sowing and weeding. I rode on to Caister in the afternoon to collect rents, the Castle as tall as ever but still sombre, cast in the grief and uncertainty following the Master Fastolf's passing. I checked the fish stocks in the moat, checked the stores in case of trouble, which I fear is in the air. I spoke to Steward John Daubeney about the castle defences should Mowbray be as good as his word and attack. Dined on goose in the Great Hall with my assistant Pecock, Pamping and Wykes.



*Caister Castle*

### *Tuesday*

Rode down to Yarmouth to arrange sale and shipment of barley. Am troubled by the arrears of many of our tenants and strive to keep monies coming in whilst we chase the payments. The grain is now stored and payments can be made – if not now then better not in winter. Managed to get a good price for sale to a merchant in Newcastle who will also have some bales of wool. Left time for my journey back up the coast to Paston Hall where I am to lodge. I get the chance to look over the holdings in Flegg, Bastwick, Stokesby before threading my way across the marshland up to Happisburgh and the family lands that stretch up the coast to Cromer. I have time to ride by Huntingfield Hall in Bakton, which my master purchased this spring – much work needed here although it is the holdings and the title that Master John was after, he has a fine house not 2 miles distant in Paston. I meet Chaplain Gloys at Paston Hall, we are to hold a court in Paston on the morrow. I attend a Feast Day service in the church.

### *Wednesday*

After a chilly but reasonable night in the Hall – which seems to be always under construction, we deal with the long line of villagers and tenants. The air is better here now although the anger about Lady Agnes's wall lingers in many a memory. The family is still viewed with suspicion, even though we now own much of the surrounding land and do our best to carry out our duties. We confiscate cattle in lieu of late rents and tithes, settle disputes, list those who will need to see the judge who will use his power of Oyez and Determine to pass judgement. Usual issues with tenants as to who bears charges for fencing – although responsibility was agreed when the land was let, some tenants claim to have completed repairs to fencing and so claim a reduction in rent. I Work with Gloys on the accounts which Master John has asked to see – his Latin is better than mine although I am better with tallying.

*medieval man on horseback*



### *Thursday*

I ride back to Norwich, stopping at Ebridge Mill to look over the milling and malting as well as the pastures, which are becoming very heavy with the early autumn rains. In Walsham I do business with the merchant and with the smith I order cart wheels and spokes. I ride on to Oxnead where Lady Agnes has summoned me to look out the fish stocks. She fixes me with that unwavering eye. I also have to look over the mares and tally the hay stocks. It is late afternoon when I ride back towards Norwich, passing through Buxton to cross the river and on towards the city. I grow tired and think on the busy months that have occupied me since I arrived from Framlingham to take up the position of Bailiff. In this last year, I have had to grapple with the many of the 70 odd estates that were left to Master John by our Lord Fastolf. I wonder how many miles I have ridden. It is a good post for me although the family can be somewhat aloof – except of course dear sweet young Margery, who always has a smile for me.

### *Friday*

I ride to Hellesdon to inspect the family flocks – we have a thousand head on the heaths beyond the village. The lodge at Drayton offers me refreshment and I return to Norwich where I must complete my records and reports. I have to make a journey to London with a letter for Master Clement and to get his news by return – Master John is keen to know how the Yorkists fared at Wakefield. I shall be able to stop by the estates at Huntingfield and Cotton on my way down and Lady Agnes has asked that I look in on her lands at Stansted and Horwellbury. I mind not a visit to the capital with all its bustle and talk. Lady Agnes has made provision for me to stay at her house in Warwick Inn. I hope I can see young Master John who I know is a member of the Royal Court and there is talk of his knighthood for him in the New Year. Once I have the reply from Master Clement I shall ride back in haste for I like not the lack of good tenants when our land needs so much preparation and with the future so troubled with war and local unrest.

*Drawn from various letters and other sources by Rob Knee*

## A Yorkshire connection by Rob Knee

Predictably, Judge William's eldest son John is often the focus of the Paston narrative in the critical years of the 1440's and 1450's. We also hear about the troubles surrounding the finding of a match for daughter Elizabeth but the other offspring, William and Clement are often a little further from the lime-light .

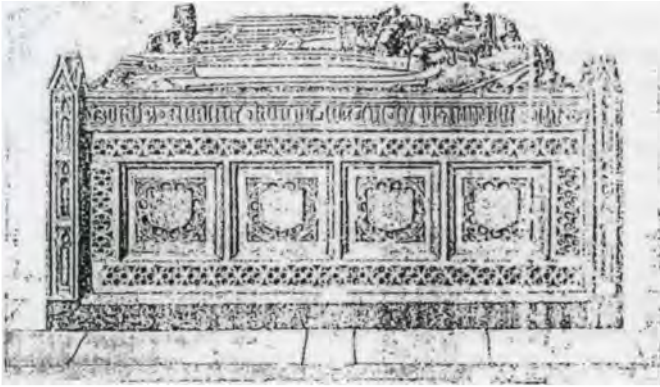
William had been educated at Cambridge and at the Inns of Court. He lived mainly at Warwick Square, near St Pauls, either with or near his mother Agnes. On the death of Agnes, William asserted his claim to his mother's considerable estates and was in dispute with his nephew, John Paston II. This dispute rumbled on and was only resolved with an intervention from an unlikely source. John's son William was to marry Bridget Heydon and despite a previous bitter dispute between the families, Sir Henry Heydon smoothed the way for his daughter by assisting John in his argument with his uncle. Bridget's mother was Ann Boleyn, aunt to Anne Boleyn, second wife to Henry VIII, who played such a significant role in our history.

Uncle William had married Lady Anne Beaufort of the John of Gaunt royal line, a match that brought more prestige than wealth. William died in 1496 and was buried at Blackfriars Priory in London.

William and his daughter Elizabeth were brought to my attention in a letter I received from PHS member Celia Dodd earlier this year:  
*Celia writes.....*

*I thought I would get in touch to say thank you for the recent Paston Edition of the Norfolk Heraldry Society magazine which I have found of interest. I was grateful for the link to the Norfolk Archives website as my husband and I had talked about visiting Norwich to see the Paston exhibition last winter but never managed it.*

*My connection is through Elizabeth Paston (niece of John & Margaret) who married Sir John Savile of Thornhill. I believe her to be an ancestor. Her mother was Ann Beaufort who had royal blood. I guess it was a good match, depending on which side you supported in the Wars of the Roses! Elizabeth is buried in an oak tomb in the Savile Chapel at Thornhill church. I have been checking my guidebook to see if there is heraldry in the chapel. The medieval windows are religious but the sides of the oak tomb have panels containing shields and it has been suggested that these were once painted but sadly no traces of the paint remain.*



Tomb of Sir John Savile in Thornhill Church.

The tomb of Sir John Savile in Thornhill church in Yorkshire has oak effigies of Sir John and his two wives, Alice Vernon and Elizabeth Paston (taken from 'Old Yorkshire')

*My husband's parents lived in West Yorkshire so we used to go there regularly and Thornhill is worth a visit. I remember that, across the road from the church, there were some ruins remaining from Thornhill Hall where the Saviles lived. The information from the church guidebook is online now and maybe you have found it.*

My thanks also to Celia for this extract from an article in Godson family newsletter of 1996:

*The tomb of Sir John Savile in Thornhill church in Yorkshire has oak effigies of Sir John and his two wives, Alice Vernon and Elizabeth Paston (taken from 'Old Yorkshire')*



*Thornhill church*

*But what is exciting is that Lady Elizabeth Savile's parents were Sir William Paston (of the famous Norfolk family whose correspondence has survived as 'The Paston Letters') and his wife, Lady Ann Beaufort. Lady Ann Beaufort's father was Sir Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, slain at the Battle of St Albans in 1455. He was a grandson of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford, and John of Gaunt's father was King Edward III.*

*One interesting document is a letter written by Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and mother of King Henry VII, sometime between 1497 and 1503. It is addressed to a member of the Paston family, probably Sir John Paston III, who was delaying the handing over of certain lands to Sir John Savile, Knight and Gilbert Talbot, Esquire, following the death of Sir William Paston. (Gilbert Talbot, related to the Earls of Shrewsbury, had married Elizabeth Paston's sister, and this is why the Earl of Shrewsbury is a supervisor of her will.)*

The letter explains the agreement which had been made 'for divers lands which they ought to have in the right of their wives, daughters and heirs to William Paston esq, their late father deceased, which lands ye by mighty power keep and withhold from them without any just title as they affirm' and goes on to request that Sir John Paston attends the court of arbitration: 'and that ye will thus do in any wise, so as we be not driven (through your default) to put our hands for further remedye to be had in the premises' (Gairder Vol 6 no 1063 p 158)

It is not clear as to what ensued as a result of this royal pressure.

### **Elizabeth PASTON genealogy**

Born: 1460, Paston, Norfolk, England      Died: 1 Feb 1488

Father: [William PASTON \(Sir Knight\) son of Judge W](#)

Mother: [Anne BEA FORT](#)

Married 1: **John SAVILE (Sir)** (b. ABT 1478 - d. 1504, Feast of St. John) (son of **John Savile** and [Jane Harrington](#)) (w. of [Alice Vernon](#))

Children: 1. **Anne SAVILE** (m. **Sir Henry Thwaite of Lund**)

2. **Henry SAVILE** (m. **Margaret Barkston** - m.2 **Elizabeth Soothill**)

3. **Elizabeth SAVILE** (m. **Thomas Conyers**)

4. **Margaret SAVILE** (m.1 **Thomas Wortley** - m.2 **Richard Corbett**)

Married 2: [Richard HASTINGS](#)



# A PASTON LETTER

1<sup>ST</sup> ISSUE AUTUMN 2014

	<i>page</i>
<b>CHAIRMAN'S LETTER:</b>	
21 <sup>st</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT OXNEAD HALL A LONDON WALK, PROJECT WITH THE UEA	1
<b>PASTON HALL: A NEW APPRAISAL</b> JAMES MINDHAM	4
<b>MARGERY AND RICHARD</b> SUSAN CURRAN	11
<b>A WEEK IN THE LIFE</b> OF RICHARD CALLE	15
<b>ELIZABETH PASTON AND THE</b> YORKSHIRE CONNECTION	18



*Oxnead Hall*