

My father was fourteen when he first heard the name Garnstone referred to as 'the old family seat'. Neither his father nor his grandfather had ever mentioned the subject although the Peplows had lived there for nearly 250 years; they both knew only too well the tragedy behind its loss and to them the affair was a closed book.

Fifty years later I was looking through some nineteenth century papers I had retrieved from the family solicitors at Hereford when my father said to me "I wonder what my grandfather would think if he could see you now!". At the time I said I didn't know but I now believe he would have been pleased; enough years have passed to allow us to look back at the past dispassionately, and I have therefore 'reopened' the book and I hope it will be of some interest to future generations.

The village of Peplow is in Shropshire within the parish of Hodnet, but no early records have been found of anyone living there who actually bore our surname. It seems probable that men acquired the name after leaving the village but they were not necessarily related to each other or even removed themselves at the same period. Hugh de Peppelowe, deacon, was rector of Moreton Corbett, the parish immediately north of Shawbury in 1300, and a subsidy roll of 1327 refers to Ric'o de Peppelowe paying tax at High Hatton. A deed of 1470/71 refers to a messuage and half a virgate of land leased by Katherine Bonefass at Hulston in the parish of Myddle to William Peplowe, but he did not hold it for long as in 1478 there is a record of a "release and quit claim from William Peplowe to David Gytens of Salop" for the same plot. In 1502/3 the same William Peplowe, or maybe his son, held at will "one messuage and land paying for the same thence annually to the Lord five shillings", and he also held at Moreton "one pasture called 'le more' and pays per annum thence to the Lord 3 shillings".

However one story narrated by an aged Shropshire woman to our ancestor Chancellor Peplow in 1753 suggests a more romantic origin for it tells of an ancient family of Peplow of Peplow Castle in Cheshire which some of the name captured by killing a Danish giant. This tale is commemorated by the three wivral horns of Cheshire on the family coat of arms, although the site of the castle was unknown even then and there is no mention of it in print or manuscript.

Near to the village of Peplow stands Peplow Hall, which was entirely rebuilt in 1725 on the site of an earlier building dating from the 12th century. However there is no documentary evidence to show our family ever owned the building although at one time the Peplow family crest was carved on the mantelpiece above the fireplace in the front hall. There is also no reason to suppose a castle once existed on the site or that it has any connections to a Danish Giant!

It therefore seems probable that the family had rather more prosaic origins as yeoman farmers who for generations were closely associated with the Norman family of Corbett who had since the conquest of 1066 owned most of the land in this part of Shropshire. Some time before 1450 a family called Peplowe settled at Shawbury, a small, rather nondescript village about 7 km south west of Peplow, and in 1494 William Peplowe of Shawbury was witness to a deed concerning land at Cokshote nearby. In 1533 another William Peplowe, presumably his son, was Churchwarden at Shawbury and he appeared at a muster on Muster Hill, near Newport, as a billman with Roger and George Peplow, bowmen - probably his brothers. George lived at Besford in the parish of Shawbury where he died in 1570.

William of Shawbury was a tenant of Sir Andrew Corbett and his will proved at Lichfield on 20th May 1552 mentions various children:

"to Margerie my daughter £4 over and above her parts of goods that she knows her own"

"to Roger me sohne 20s"

"to Omfrey me sohne 40s over and above his own goods now known"

"to John me sohne 26s8d"

"to Hughe me sohne 4 marks"

"to Wylliam me sohne £3.6s.8d.1"

To Wylliam he also left "the panne that was my fathers, my great broche in the keeping of Robert Bayne with golberts" and the residue or half of his goods were left to Anne, his wife. The witnesses were Thomas Asheton, Vicar of Shawbury and Master Frauncys Wortley and the executors Annes my wife, John Barker of Culsys and John Jannys of Shawbury. As none of his children were named as executors it seems possible that they were all under twenty one in 1551.

William also desired in his will that "my Lady Dame Elizabeth Corbett and my Master Sir Andrew Corbett be overseers of my will". An inventory with a value under £10 taken on 17th May 1552 comprised a yoke of oxen, 3 kine, a mare, a score of sheep, bedding, brass and pewter. Anne, his widow was buried at Shawbury 15 March 1565.

Considerable research into old parish records suggest that all males alive today with the surname Peplow or Peplow should be able to trace their origin back to this Peplow family of Shawbury, but recent DNA testing has shown that there are in fact two distinct lines and one is in all probability a very early illegitimate branch of the other. The Worcester Peplow family of Jewellers and the Peplow family of Newington near Oxford who later ran a large coaching business in London during the 19th century can both trace themselves back to William of Shawbury 1551. Our family descending from Bishop Peplow, the Peplows of Great Stanmore in Middlesex and also that of Samuel John Peplow the Scottish Colourist hail from Hugh Peplow who lived in the attractive village of Chaddesley Corbett in Worcestershire and who married An Jordeine in 1565. Little else is known about Hugh and An of Chaddesley Corbett except that they were yeoman farmers who also kept bees, and that they had three sons, Hugh d. 1636, John, b. 1571 and Humfrey born 1580 who married Isabell Underhill.

Hugh the middle son married Ursula Baylies and they had a son Edward who later settled at Great Stanmore in Middlesex and died there in 1689. He became a prosperous farmer and from him descend a very large number of Peplows many of whom lived for generations in the London area.

Our branch is descended from the third son Humfrey or Humphrey and his wife Isabel who settled at the Lyne in Bromsgrove after their marriage. She was a daughter of William Underhill also of the Lyne in the parish of Bromsgrove who styled himself as a gentleman in his will, the first person of our family to do so, although in legal documents he is usually referred to as a Yeoman. Both Humphrey, his brother Hugh, and Humphrey's father in law William Underhill appear to have been somewhat abrasive people and quite willing to pick a fight whenever necessary. In 1628 'Humphrey Peplow Yeoman and Hugh Peplow Husbandman of Bromsgrove were indicted for assaulting John Brooke at Bromsgrove', and in 1634 'William Underhill Yeoman and Humphrey Peplow Yeoman both of Bromsgrove were indicted for obstructing a watercourse in a place called the "Lecklie" by digging a trench in the King's highway in the Parish of Bromesgrove.' Perhaps their descendent Bishop Peplow inherited some of these adversarial characteristics for he too earned himself as a formidable battler within the church.

William Underhill died in 1634 and a considerable amount of property entered into the Peplow family as a result of his will:

- To be buried in Bromsgrove Church Yard.
- To Humfrey Peplow, one of the sons of his son-in-law Humfrey Peplow, the property at Dog Lane, Allechurch (Alvechurch) currently in the occupation of John Parsonage, together with the garden, orchard and field attached. The deeds to this property were formerly given by William Underhill to his son in law Humfrey Peplow and his wife Isabell (William Underhill's daughter) but had later been given back to William Underhill's wife Elizabeth for safekeeping.
- To Thomas Peplow, one of the sons of Humfrey Peplow one cupboard and three joined stools now in the parlour of my house at the Lyne, and which I lately bought off the administrator of the goods and chattels of John Underhill, my late son.
- To son in law Humfry Peplow my two riding coats, and to William, John and Humfry Peplow, his three sons, all my clothes to be equally divided between them
- To John Peplow, son of my grandchild William Peplow two ewes (from the flock of sheep which I bought of Hugh Peplow) - one of them to be the sheep which beareth the bell, and the other the one that follows the one that beareth the bell and of the same age.
- To Elizabeth my wife three shillings and four pence, and to son Ambrose and daughters Mary and Francis twelve pence a piece.
- Thomas and Jonas Peplow the sons of my son in law Humfrey Peplow to be executors of the will.
- Richard Smith of Chaddesley Corbett, Sythesmith, and son in law Humfrey Peplow to be overseers to the will and for their trouble they are to be given 12 pence each.

Humphrey and Isabel had 5 boys; William who married Joane Edwards of Daywell in Shropshire and whose descendants continued to live in that area as lesser gentry until the mid 19th century, Jonas from whom a large number of the Peplow family of Bromsgrove appear to spring, Thomas Peplow of Alvechurch, John Peplow of Whittington, and Humphrey Peplow who married Jane Podmore of Dawley Parva in Shropshire from whom we descend.

For some reason there was a considerable movement of people between Bromsgrove in Worcestershire and Dawley and Shropshire at this time even though they are geographically at least 50 kms away from each other. William Peplow of Daywell's daughter Margaret married a baker called William Richards of Bromsgrove and they too settled at Dawley.

Humphrey Peplow and his wife Jane, the daughter of John Podmore, appear to have lived in fairly humble circumstances at their leasehold property known as the Middle Leasow in Dawley, and he described himself in his will dated 31st May 1665 as a husbandman.

The name Podmore is an old Shropshire/Staffordshire surname and the church records show that one branch lived at Dawley at this date. The couple produced two sons - Podmore and John, and in his will Humphrey left his clothes to his brothers William, John and Thomas, a brass panne to Nathan son of Podmore and two swine, two calves and fifteen sheep to his son John. The residue went to his wife Jane and the value of his estate was £78-8-10.

John, the younger son, became sufficiently well educated to be admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge on 21 February 1667 as a 'subsizar'. The college has no evidence that he ever took a degree, and he may in fact have spent only one year at Cambridge. On 28 February 1668, John Peplow 'Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge' subscribed on becoming schoolmaster at the free school of 'Idsall or 'Shifnal', just 2 kms away from his parents at Dawley. Subsequent subscriptions vary, either omitting any reference at all, describing him as 'e' (from) Trinity College, Cambridge', or as 'Bachelor of Arts, of Trinity.

Like many of his well educated but poor contemporaries there was little option but to progress into the church, and he was ordained deacon in September 1673 by Thomas Wood, bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. The following year in January 1674 he was admitted 'to read prayers at the parish church at Penkrich and to teach school there', and also at Castlechurch nearby. Whether or not John was responsible for the parish school, it may be supposed that he did some teaching there, as the rules for a later charity school stipulated that the teaching of the doctrine of the Church of England was considered an essential part of the curriculum.' It seems he also had pupils from outside Penkrich including Robert Peplow, a descendant of William of Shawbury 1551 who later became vicar of Moreton Saye in Shropshire, and a Francis Stevenson of Trinity College, Cambridge whose school was given as 'Pancras' with 'Mr Peple'. Robert Peplow's descendants continued to maintain contact with our family until the early 19th century and came to be called the Peplow Forwards after a marriage into that family. They believed the relationship to the Samuel Peplow, Bishop of Chester was a close one but DNA evidence has proved otherwise - from the Bath Chronicle:

Miss Peplow of Moreton, a near relative of the late Dr Peplow, Bishop of Chester died May 29th 1792

This family are interesting in that some generations spelt their name Peplow whilst others the more old fashioned Peplow. In 1727 Bishop Peplow's eldest daughter signed herself Mary Peplow in her bible and so there appears to have been no definite rule as to the spelling of the surname and it was up to individual family members to make their own choice.

At one time the students were taught in a room above the porch of Penkrich Church which still exists, but a dedicated school room was finally established during John Peplow's time as vicar.

He was also responsible for the education of his own children and thereby established quite a clerical dynasty. His three sons, John, Amos and William were all admitted to Emmanuel College Cambridge, whilst his two eldest daughters Jane and Mary 'helped their father with clerical work'.

It would seem his appointment at Penkrich had an uncertain start, for in August 1674 over one hundred parishioners wrote to Sir Edward Littleton commending Peplow's: 'conformitie to the Rules and usage of the Church of England and his abilities in preaching the Gospell and his good conversation' and requesting that Littleton confirm his position as minister of Penkrich and give

him all encouragement.’ This rather suggests that John Peploe’s appointment was conditional, and the support of his parishioners was required to clinch the deal.

Despite Peploe’s long service in Penkridge, the evidence for his activity in the parish is not extensive apart from the usual parish registers entries. However probate records show that on a number of occasions he granted probate for wills of persons within his parish suggesting he may at times have presided over the church court.

In view of the early testimony to his conformity and his responsibility to maintain Church discipline, it is surprising to find that he was later charged with breaking it himself at Castle Church by performing clandestine, or secret, marriages. Canon law required that marriages should be performed in public, either after banns or by licence, in the parish church of one of the parties and within specified hours to ensure that families approved and that there was no other impediment to the marriage. Clandestine marriages conducted in breach of these requirements were regarded as valid but irregular, and the minister responsible was liable to three years’ suspension. For the couple a clandestine marriage might be a way of avoiding the risk of family disapproval or the three weeks’ delay while banns were read; for clergy with poor stipends the additional fees were welcome despite the risk of suspension. In 1705 Peploe was charged with the clandestine marriage of a named couple, ‘Joseph Smith and Ann his now wife’ and ‘divers other persons’ over a period of ten years. John had complained of his ‘ruefully small stipends’, and so perhaps the prospect of earning a little extra money made him yield to temptation.

There is little evidence that John Peploe’s relations with Penkridge were anything other than peaceable and there was no organised dissent from the few non-conformist parishioners. One piece of evidence that his ministry was appreciated appears in the will of Elizabeth Hinde, daughter of his predecessor Nathaniel: ‘I give unto Mr Peploe one piece of Broad Gold to preach my funerall sermon’. He had earlier received a similar bequest under the will of his father-in-law, William Southall — ‘for my funeral sermon twentie shillings’ — and was also appointed overseer of the will, an obvious sign of Southall’s confidence in his son-in-law. This will eventually led to an action in Chancery brought by Jane Lench, Southall’s granddaughter, against various members of the family including John Peploe whom she accused of purchasing in an underhand manner various leasehold estates which were actually bequeathed to her.

Documents relating to this case show that John had substantial funds at his disposal. He already held part of a leasehold estate granted to him by Southall for ‘for the love and affection he had and did bear to (John) and his children’ In addition he had bought two other parcels of land for £195 in total. How did Peploe acquire these resources? His first wife, Elizabeth, having died in 1692, he had by this time remarried and it is possible that his second wife, Jane, provided the capital. She is named with him as a party to the indenture for the larger of these purchases.

Certainly John Peploe and his father in law John Southall shared many religious and political attitudes and the bond between them was very close. Southall had been referred to as ‘the Priest Hunter’ during the dark days of the Commonwealth, although it is unlikely that John Peploe’s anti-popish views were quite so extreme.

John Peploe’s arrival in Penkridge in 1674 coincided with a period in which religion and politics were inseparable. In 1673 the non-compliance of James Duke of York with the Test Act made public the fact that he had converted to Roman Catholicism and in the same year he married the Catholic Mary of Modena. As James was heir to the throne, through the childlessness of Charles’s queen, should James and Mary have a son it raised the prospect of a continuing Catholic succession to the throne. In the light of these events an opposition party emerged, soon to be known as Whigs, who pressed for James’s exclusion from the throne. Some of their number promoted the cause of Charles II’s eldest illegitimate son James Duke of Monmouth who was a Protestant.

In September 1682 the Duke of Monmouth visited Stafford and in his account of the events, the Tory Mayor of Stafford, Sampson Byrch, reported that among: ‘the most remarkable persons that came with the Duke were.....Mr William Southall and Mr Peploe, the phanaticall parson of Penkridge.’

John Peploe was a man of strong religious and political views. As members of the low church he and his father-in-law were natural Whigs who supported the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, and vehemently opposed any meddling from the Catholic Church and particularly the Pope in Rome. He was fortunate in that he does not appear to have suffered for his support of Monmouth

unlike twenty-eight leading Cheshire Whigs who a year later were bound over on bail of £500 each for various 'Dangerous and seditious activities including having assembled with Schismatics and disaffected persons in the public reception of James Duke of Monmouth.'

John died in 1729 and his will is clearly concerned to provide financially for his family. His estate falls into two parts, the first a lease held from Lord Brooke left to his nephew Paul Peploe to hold on trust and from which annuities are to be paid to his two daughters, to his son Nathaniel, and to William's two children when they come of age, the balance to be held on trust by Paul for the benefit of the third son, John Peploe. The remainder of his estate was left to his other executor, his son John, to pay funeral expenses and to 'place out' the rest, using the interest for the education and maintenance of William's children, the principal to be divided between them at the age of 21; in the event of their not surviving then Paul was to have the interest. Any money which Peploe himself had out at interest was to go to other grandchildren: John's son William, and the children of Elizabeth Chamley. The condition placed on the annuities left to Elizabeth and Nathaniel suggest that Peploe may have had limited confidence in them - payment would cease if they were sold or transferred — while the small annuity of £1 left to Mary Ward suggests that she was adequately provided for in other ways.

Only two household items are mentioned, a bed "with appurtenances" to his son, John, and a silver tankard to John's son, William. John Peploe's successor at Penkridge, the Revd Thomas Perry, itemising the benefice income for 1728, notes that the house had cost him 'upward of £60 in repairs 'and alterations in his first year. If this was the house previously occupied by John, it suggests that it had become dilapidated, at least in later years, perhaps not surprisingly in view of his advancing years and widowerhood. It is at least possible that his son, William, and family, had lived with him as William's own inventory contained very few items of furniture.

Meanwhile John's elder brother Podmore continued to live at Dawley Parva and sometime around 1660 he married Mary Greene, the daughter of William and Mary Greene of Little Wenlock closeby, a reasonably well connected family whose cousins included one Thomas Hazlehurst of Bridgnorth, attorney at law. Podmore rented 76 acres of leasehold land from William Earl of Craven, and according to a lease dated 1662 these included 'barns, stables, gardens, pastures and a blacksmith's shop lately built on half an acre of land'.

Podmore and Mary had four sons - Nathan born 1661, Jonathan born about 1664, Samuel born 1667 and Paul born 1670, but only the eldest and the youngest continued as yeoman farmers to farm the land as their ancestors had done for generations.

In 1681 Jonathan was apprenticed for seven years to a renowned London Sword Cutler by the name of John Hawgood and it is likely that his cousin Abel Woodruffe of Clee St Margaret was apprenticed at the same time. When Abel Woodruffe died in 1695 Jonathan organised for his will to be sent to their cousin Thomas Hazlewood the attorney in order that probate be granted and it had the following note attached to the outside:

Will of Abell Wodruffe, citizen and cutler of London 17 April 1695.

"Loving Coz I have sent you the will of honest Coz: Abell. I have nothing, only my love to you and your wife and all friends I remember - yr loving kinsman whilst I am Jonathan Peploe"

"Directed to Mr Hazellwood an Atorney at Law att his house in Bridgnorth in Shropshire, with care."

John Hawgood (1642-1708) was 'His Majesties Sword Servant and Sword Cutler in Ordinary' to Charles II, James II, William and Mary and Queen Ann. He was a Master of the Cutler's Company and a sword cutler to the Office of the Ordinance, and was recorded as operating in the Strand and later in Charing Cross, Westminster. In 1689 he supplied the swords for the coronation of William and Mary and in 1692 he delivered 'a rich State Sword with a Crimson Velvet Scabbard' costing £50 for his Excellency the Lord Sidney, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and this was no doubt the present Irish start Sword now housed with the Crown Jewels.

It is unclear how Jonathan and his cousin Abel Woodruffe obtained such prestigious apprenticeships with the Hawgood family but most probably through a connection of the Greene family. In 1689 Jonathan made a very advantageous marriage by marrying Martha, the daughter of his employer John Hawgood but there were no children from this union, although he continued to receive important commissions through his connection to the family - from a book about the short

life of Queen Anne's son entitled 'The Memoirs of Prince William Henry' (1689-1697) by his servant Jenkin Lewis:

April 1694

'About this time, there came Scotch regiments of dragoons to be viewed by the King in Hyde Park; they were as good troops to the fight as ever I saw; the officers being accoutred, like the troops, with caps and fuzees, and great basket hilted swords, very long: everybody was saying what fine troops they were. The Duke, taking notice of the fashion of their swords, turned to me, and ordered me to go to his sword cutler, Mr Peploe, and tell him to make such a one for him. I said, Yes, to please him; but was afraid to go without Mrs Atkinson's orders. Mr Peploe, coming to Camden House the Sunday following, the Duke asked him, if his sword was ready, who answered his Highness, that he knew nothing of it; he turned to me very angrily, and asked me why I had not bid his orders; and went crying to Mrs Atkinson, to tell her that he must have such a sword; which he obtained, and would often swagger the presence room with it on.

A little later the sword was given by the five year old Duke of Gloucester to Lord Churchill, the young son of the Duke of Marlborough:

'My Lord Churchill was a bold spirited youth, and not above two or three years older than the Duke when he was admitted by him a Lieutenant General. Mrs Atkinson invited Lady Harriott and Lady Anne Churchill one day to dine with her in her chamber, and spend the day; Lord Churchill came with them. Mrs Wanley asked his Lordship if he would go with the Duke (of Marlborough, his father)? who answered briskly, "Yes I will!" - "What if you are killed?" said she. "I do not care!" which the Duke (of Gloucester) hearing took a secret delight in him from that moment. My Lord Churchill admired the Duke's Highland Sword, which was readily bestowed on his Lordship by the Duke although he was very fond of it saying he would bespeak another.'

I tried contacting the archivist at Blenheim Palace to see if there was any record of Jonathan Peploe's sword but received no answer.

Martha died quite soon after her marriage to Jonathan and in 1689 he married Elizabeth Bushell by whom he had two children William baptised at St Margaret's Westminster in 1701, and Elizabeth.

A Mr Peploe was employed on 8th March 1708 at 5 shillings daily as a part time musician at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket and it has been suggested that it might have been Jonathan. Many musicians lived in St Margarets Westminster at this time and the contract seems to have ceased about the time Jonathan died in July 1709. Certainly Jonathan appears to have used rather theatrical flowery language but I doubt he would have had the time to work at the theatre as well making swords for the Royal family.

Some time at the beginning of 1709 Jonathan and his family were struck down with ill health. Elizabeth died in April 1709 and Jonathan survived her by only 5 months leaving two infant children. His will suggests he did not expect them to survive for long:

'And if it shall soe happen that my sone and daughter shall depart this life before they come the the enjoyment of their portions as before allotted to them, my will is that the child or children of my brothers Nathan Peploe, Samuel Peploe and Paul Peploe shall have the same estate divided among their share and share alike. And I do hereby nominate my loving brothers Nathan Peploe, Samuel Peploe and Paul Peploe the executors of this my last will and testament to every of whom I give the sume of five pounds.'

He also mentions 'the property called Perkins rent which was left to William by his grandmother Bushell and 'the estate of Week Green of my own purchasing comes to him by custom both of which make twenty four pounds per annum.' Elizabeth was to have the two houses in Pie street in London with the gold watch that was her mothers and William was given the silver one that was his fathers.

There is a large family of Peploes, many of whom were engaged in the London coaching business during the 19th Century, and they firmly believed they were descended from another son

of Podmore called Richard who lived in the little hamlet of Newington just outside of Oxford and who died in 1707. However recent DNA testing has shown there is no relationship between our two branches and they in fact descend from William Peploe of Shawbury 1551. Furthermore Jonathan in his will nominates the children of his three brothers Nathan, Samuel and Paul the ultimate beneficiaries in the event of his own children's death and there is no mention of Richard's children, nor have any contemporary documents ever been found to corroborate the story.

Notwithstanding the lack of evidence these descendants of Richard Peploe considered themselves to be the rightful heirs of Podmore Peploe, and when Samuel Peploe of Garnstone died in 1845 they expected to inherit not comprehending that the estate had originally been a Birch property. During the 1920'ties a Mrs Susan Frances Woodwell contacted my great grandfather Hal Peploe about the estates that should have come to the heirs of Richard Peploe:

60 Randlesdown Road
Bellingham
Nr Catford SE6

To Mr D.H.T.Peploe

Dear Sir

I hope you will pardon me for writing to you.

In about 1871 I remember my father and uncles speaking of some estates that had been sold and the money held in trust for the heir of Richard Peploe, nephew of Samuel Peploe, a former Bishop of Chester.

My father said he was the right heir and only straight line of Peploe's.

He was unable to make a claim through want of funds.

I had some correspondence with the late Rev Webb-Peploe from 1912-16 and events have happened since then that confirm the belief that there must be some truth in the story.

I have been advised that you are conversant with what I am going to ask. Will you please be kind enough to tell me whether this "trust money" has been claimed or can it be claimed by the right heir or if there is any money likely to come to the right heir without making a claim? If I knew it would stop the unrest in my brother's family.

We are nothing to do with the Peploe's who made a claim in about 1848 and received a sum of money from the Rev John Birch Webb of Weobley, Herefordshire.

The descendants of these Peploe's in 1917 were getting their pedigree with a view to claim but found they had descended from an illegitimate issue. I must again ask you to pardon me troubling you.

Yrs respectfully

Frances Woodwell (17.3.27)

To Mr D.H.T.Peploe

Dear Sir

I received your letter of the 22nd and thank you.

I will explain as plainly and briefly as possible what has come to my knowledge through some very old papers we have and searching.

Padmore Peploe of Dawley Parva, Shropshire had 2 sons. 1 son was in the army and went abroad (leaving his son in Oxford) and was never heard of again.

The 2nd son was Samuel Peploe, Vicar of St John's Church, Preston in 1715 during the rebellion and for his loyalty to the then reigning King he was made Bishop of Chester. Estates were given to him and his heirs at law for ever.

By the Bishop's first marriage he had 1 son and daughters. His second marriage was to Ann Birch (no issue). the Bishop's son by his first marriage married Elizabeth Birch, this was an irregular marriage, and illegal in those days from an ecclesiastical point of view.

The Bishop left 4 estates, first to his son and Heir, after to his brother's descendants making his wife, son and daughter executors to his will.

This son died in 1781, he being the last of the Peploe's in that line.

Richard Peploe, the Bishop's nephew, lived at Oxford and was acknowledged by the Bishop's son as his cousin in 1735 and 36.

The descendants of Richard failing to make their claim on the death of the Bishop's son in 1781.

The 4 estates, 2 nr Wimbledon, 1 East Grinstead, 1 at Stony Stratford, went into Chancery, and were sold out in 1809 or 10 and it is money from these Estates that my father was entitled to.

I quite understand that the Garnstone Castle Estate has come from the Birch family, and has nothing to do with claims that have been made by this other line of Peploe's who stopped payment from the bank as they were under the impression when Samuel Peploe died in 1845 without issue they were the Heirs.

The Rev John Birch Webb wrote to them that they were wrong and that the Peploe's money was in trust, so it was really the Rev John Birch Webb that spoke of this trust money.

Apparently it was alright in about 1848, if it has not been claimed it should be somewhere still. In 1860 my Grandfather's brother made enquiries and traced my Grandfather as the straight descendant and right Heir. He was unable to do anything for want of funds so no claim has been made in my line.

I was advised to go to the Chancery Court and see the proceedings of Peploe and Peploe in 1758 which would have told me the old story and recited the Bishop's Will. I tried but the attendants said they could not find them but I could see the answer to the proceedings. I have the Peploe's Pedigree from 1668.

I trust you will pardon me for troubling you but am very anxious to settle the unrest in my brother's family.

Believe me yrs respectfully

Frances Woodwell (31.3.27)

Dear Sir

Received your letter of the 2.4.27 and thank you. I think I ought to tell you why I have applied to you for information.

In my correspondence from 1912 to 1916 with the late Rev Webb-Peploe, he said we were apparently connected and mentioned MR D.H.T.Peploe as his elder brother's son, and to his grief and pain that the Garnstone Castle Estate was sold to Sir Joseph Verdin by his nephew and the name of the Lawyers in Hereford who affected the sale.

Later on he wrote he hoped had had not failed in his duty or erred in his part, as he wished to do what was right, but he was a younger son and had nothing of it, that he had given me such information as he was able to offer and had better be considered out of it. These are extracts from the Rev Gentleman's letters.

The following year 1917 enquiries or claims were made by some Peploe's but they were of illegal issue, they were descendants of the claimant who obtained a sum of money from the Rev John Birch Webb in about 1848. I do not know these Peploe's or should I have known anything about them, but a person was enquiring for Peploe's and had a pedigree of them from 1668.

Upon good authority I have been advised that Mr D.H.T.Peploe or his Lawyer are conversant with all, and that the pedigree had been sent round to see if all the claimants were the same.

It has been acknowledged that my line is a straight one of Peploe's.

The proceedings in Chancery of Peploe v Peploe that would recite the Bishop's Will and tell all; the attendant says is lost.

I have a copy of the answer to them – it says Samuel Peploe Bishop of Chester by his will appointed Ann Peploe his wife, Mary Jodrell his daughter and Samuel Peploe, his son as executors to his will. The said Samuel alone proved the will, the Bishop's wife Ann and daughter declining to meddle in the Estates.

I am very sorry you say you do not know anything about it and it has nothing to do with you.

It is very unsatisfactory and my nephew cannot be blamed for trying to find out the truth. However I will not trouble you further.

Yrs respectfully

Frances Woodwell (7.5.27.)

A further letter was sent to D.H.T. Peploe from another descendent who seems to have been in somewhat straightened circumstances:

Letter from John Mills, 3 Dartmouth Place, Hardens Manorway, Charlton, S.E.7,

To Squire Peploe Peploe Webb

Dear Sir

My reason for writing this is owing to the fact of my being out of employment for the last twelve months, and being the last of the original Peploe family (my mother was Jane Peploe, and my Grandfather was brother to the late Samuel Peploe). I would be very grateful for a little financial help as things are very bad with me and mine.

If you are interested in the old letters e.t.c. pertaining to the family of PEPLOE, I would willingly send them to you. Trusting to have a favourable reply.

I am yours faithfully

John Mills

(post mark 15th Sept 1922)

In 1935 Lousa and Agnes Peploe, two descendants of Richard communicated with each other about the estates thought to be in chancery:

'Richard Peploe brother of Samuel, (Bishop of Chester) was in the army and went abroad leaving his son Richard Peploe in charge of a nurse and her husband in Oxford and was never heard of again. Richard Peploe and son of the the Bishop of Chester's son where acknowledged cousins at Oxford in 1735. Richard Peploe the son should have succeeded the Bishop's son. We are decendents of Richard Peploe (this is where we lost out) Agnes.)

Mrs. Woodwell's mother lent some papers to a musician named Reynolds living in the same house, they were never returned this was over 40 yrs ago.(this was copied out in 1919) according to these papers the Bishop's son dies and the property went into chancery as there were no proofs of marriage between the Bishop's son and Elizabeth Birch; also that Major Peploe went abroad and was never heard of again, leaving his son in charge of a nurse and her husband who was a coachmaker. They became so attached to the boy they would not part with him, his descendents are the only Peploes (we descend from him) He was our grandfather John Peploe (1808-1875) (this means grandfather of Louis, gt grandfather of Agnes) who spent 30 pounds trying to get the money out on chancery. John Peploe died March 30 1875. My father Richard John Peploe was son of John Peploe. Lawyers for the estate were Messrs Fordersham (Bodenham), Herefordshire. Tablets in memory of the Peploe Birch family can be seen Weobley Church Herefordshire I have a certificate of the marriage of Richard Peploe the Bishop's nephew which took place Nov 5 1748 also certificate of his son Richard born 1750, he was the one that the originals of some parts of the old papers refer to. He was born in the Bishop's lifetime (Mrs Woodwell).'

It now seems probable that Richard Peploe of Newington, the supposed brother of Bishop Peploe, was born at Shawbury in 1668 as the son of Andrew Peplowe of Little Withiford. His son Richard may well have made contact with Samuel Peploe, Podmore's grandson, as he studied at Oxford not far from Newington in the 1720'ties, and this was how the confusion arose. In any case it is absolutely certain that there were no estates of Bishop Peploe in the places mentioned by Mrs Woodwell, no Chancery case between the heirs of Richard Peploe and Bishop Peploe in 1758, no son of Podmore who entered into the army. and there are no funds that have been held in Chancery since 1809.

Podmore Peploe's eldest son Nathan married An Hall and continued to live at Dawley until his death in 1733 leaving one surviving daughter called Elizabeth married to a David Brierley. Nathan seems to have lived very simply as the inventory of his household furnishings makes clear; they were valued at just £28.1.0:

He had the following in his parlour:

- pair bedsteads
- 1 feather bed

- 1 Chaf bed
- 1 rug and 2 blankets
- 1 bolster 2 pillows and a hanging
- 3 log chairs
- 1 table

and in the chamber over parlour:

- 1 chest
- 4 pairs flaxen sheets
- 1 pr hemp sheets
- wearing appareil and money £20

Podmore's youngest son Paul established himself at the the nearby village of Madeley and married Jane Bartlam. He lived to be 90 years old and also left one surviving daughter called Elizabeth who married Edward Whittingham of Elenhall. Paul Peploe was described as a gentleman in the will of his uncle, the Rev John Peploe of Penkrigde and appears therefore to have



Penkrigde Church showing the room above the porch where Samuel Peploe had his first lessons.

been rather more successfull financially than his eldest brother Nathan.

Podmore himself died a widower in 1714 leaving only £14-13-6 and so one can conjecture he himself lived in fairly humble circumstances. He was in fact described on the occasion of his second son Samuel's entry into Oxford as a pauper.

It is from Samuel born at Dawley Parva in 1668 that our branch descend and at quite an early age he was sent away to live with his uncle the Rev John Peploe at Penkrigde to be educated by him there. He had his first lessons in the porch above the main entrance to Penkrigde Church and he



Monument to Thomas Browne and his wife Appolonia in Bradley Church

appears to have been an able child for in May 1687 he entered as a Battler of Jesus College, Oxford, graduating as a B.A. in 1691 and M.A. in 1695. Encouraged by his uncle he took Holy Orders and is said to have been a curate at Penkrige although no official record of this appointment exists. In May 1695 he was presented to the Rectory of Keddleston by Sir Nathaniel Curzon and at the same time became chaplain to John Lord Delawar.

It may have been during his stay at Penkrige that he first became acquainted with the Browne family who lived at Bradley some 2 miles away across the fields as the crow flies. The Brownes were an old, Staffordshire family of lesser gentry whose senior branch had lived at nearby Caverswall since about 1500. This, the junior Bradley branch, had purchased the Shredicote estate about 1614 and the first members of the family to reside there were Thomas Browne, a Proctor of the Arches Court of Canterbury and co governor of the Hospital of King James 1 in Charterhouse, and his wife Apollonia, daughter of John Southaicke of London. The Brownes were not particularly wealthy and their small estates at Shredicote were situated on low lying, marshy land which even today is rather unproductive. Never the less they were definitely gentry which Samuel was not, and a marriage into the family was advantageous from a social point of view.

Shredicote is within a mile of Bradley church and when George Blacker Morgan visited the house in 1888 whilst researching for his book 'The Genealogical Memoirs of the Browne family of Caverswall, and also the Peploe family of Garnstone' there was not much to see of interest:

'the house appears to have been rebuilt and converted into a farmhouse, as beyond an old wall of some thickness, there is nothing indicative of antiquity. It stands within a short distance of Shredicote Hall which appears to be an ancient structure likewise converted into a farmhouse.'

Shredicote Hall has now disappeared altogether apart from some converted barns, and Shredicote House is a 19th century looking building sitting very close to the road calling itself Shredicote Lane.

Thomas Browne, the original proprietor of Shredicote, was also granted an estate in return for a consideration' of £2,600 by James 1 at Hungry Bentley, near Ashbourne in Derbyshire and here he built Bentley Hall between 1612 and 1614. This charming grade 2 listed house can still be seen and was recently sold for £2.75 million. If Shredicote was in any way comparable to Bentley Hall then its loss is a very great shame.

There is a delightful carved marble monument to Thomas Browne and his wife Appolonia in Bradley Church and they are depicted facing in each other in the kneeling position at prayer. They both wear fancy ruffs and between them is a carved coat of arms to the Browne family.



Anne, daughter of Thomas Browne of Shredicote who married Samuel Peploe circa 1700

Samuel Peploe was married to their granddaughter Anne on the 6th June 1699 and the witnesses were Paul his younger brother and Mary Peploe daughter of Rev John Peploe of Penkridge. Samuel is described as of Keddleston whilst Anne appeared to have been living at Penkridge so perhaps the Browne family had sub let Shredicote at this time. Little has survived which can reveal Anne's character, although she seems to have been a sincere Christian and frequently recorded her private religious thoughts. Some poems written by her have survived and also show she had some literary talent. Their first son was born at Penkridge at 6 o'clock in the morning of April 19th 1700 and he was named Samuel (Junior) after his father.

Samuel Senior was by now 27 years old and already had the reputation for being a strong Whig in politics. He belonged to a school of liberal and philosophical theologians which existed in the latter half of the 17th century called the Latitudinarians who believed that matters of doctrine, liturgical practice, and ecclesiastical organisation were of relatively little importance. It was probably due to his fairly radical low church beliefs that he attracted the notice of Sir Charles Hoghton.

Hoghtons had been domiciled by the River Ribble in Lancashire since pre-Norman days and 'from times immemorial had occupied positions of privilege and power in that county.' Sir Charles Hoghton, a strenuous supporter of Presbyterian principles in Lancashire, was at the same time a strong opponent of the Jacobites. Curiously later generations became famed for their ardent Catholic beliefs.

Fortunately for Samuel the Hoghtons were patrons at this period of the important Vicarage of Preston and consistently nominated low church clergy who subsequently acted in the Hoghton interest in local politics. When in 1699 the previous Rector, the Rev Thomas Birch, resigned, Samuel was appointed to succeed him, and he proved to be a strong ally of Sir Charles Hoghton throughout the latter's political career. Indeed, it was claimed that in 1711 Peploe had allowed Hoghton to finance the building of a new gallery in Preston church and vested the power of

disposing of the new pews in Hoghton, which the latter allegedly used 'to support and maintain his interest in the said borough as member for parliament'.

The old market town of Preston consisted of a network of narrow streets radiating out from the market place, it was situated by the River Ribble and had a justified reputation for being a stronghold of the Jacobites to whom Samuel was uncompromisingly opposed. This, coupled with a somewhat overbearing manner, rapidly made him unpopular in the town, although he made great efforts to improve both the educational and religious conditions of the area. One of his first projects after moving to the town was to build a Bluecoat School where children of poor parents could receive an education funded by charity. Samuel quickly became well known throughout Lancashire as an energetic man evincing great force of character, and "exact[ed] an amount of deference from his parishioners which accorded more with his wishes than theirs, as his patrons were minute observers of the dissenting form of worship."

By 1705 Samuel's wife Ann had had three further girls one of whom, Jane, died as an infant. Death in those days was a common occurrence and the same year Anne herself died aged only 36. The register of burials at Preston records that 'Anne, the dear wife of Samuel Peplow, Vicar of Preston, was buried on December 5th 1705', they had been married less than ten years. A short time later the bereaved Samuel had taken on responsibility for William and Elizabeth, the two infant children of his brother Jonathan who died in 1709, but the girl died a year later in 1710 and was buried at Preston. Samuel throughout his life showed a great determination in overcoming his difficulties and his conscientious manner ensured his duties did not suffer as a result of a personal tragedy. His parish work continued uninterrupted and he helped found Cadley School in 1707.

In May 1710 Samuel bought the Shredicote Hall estate from a Mr James Horton. This small estate neighboured the Browne's estate at Shredicote and it had been owned by the Hortons for many generations. The following year Samuel's brother-in-law, George Browne, died unmarried and in his will he directed that the Browne's Shredicote estate should also be sold to Samuel under a fair valuation. The proceeds of this sale were to be distributed in certain legacies: viz., £200 to each of the four children of Samuel and his late wife Anne, and the remainder was to be distributed into equal proportions between the children of Jane Browne (deceased) and of John Browne, brothers of George Browne. Samuel Senior could now consider himself a landed gentleman but it is certain he never resided at either Shredicote or Shredicote Hall. His work was in the north and both estates continued to be tenanted out to local farmers.

Samuel Senior throughout his life firmly believed the family unit was essential in the development of a child's religious character. It may have been with this in mind that he decided to marry in 1712 Ann Birch, daughter of his predecessor at Preston.

The Rev Thomas Birch had become Vicar of Preston in 1682 and like Samuel had been presented by Sir Charles Hoghton, he later became Prebendary of Westminster and chaplain to the House of Commons. His daughter Ann was present at his death on January 13th 1700, and later in life she recorded her memories of the occasion:

Obid 13 JAN 1700. 67 years of his age.

'Tuesday Jan 9th, My ffather upon his departure as he thot (thought), said:

To S(amuel Birch(son)): The Lord guide thy way without which thou canst not prosper.

—afterword, gae drefs thy self and show no sign of mourning.

Answered my mother, "Why should he not mourn for his ffather, he cannot help it", she replied to his weaknefs.

To my mother when she was bitterly weeping over him: Let no thot (thought) prowed out of ye heart but which gives Glory to God. Ye great Highneffe stands at ye right hand of God therefore consign me in peace — thinking it had been Sunday he said: 'I shall have a bleffed day of rest.'

To Mr S(amuel Birch) to ask whether he approved in making up Ann's portion out of yr £200 set out in my name, Samuel was not thinking of his interest, I consented and twas done.

Then a friend upon takeing hands with him said: God, he is your comforter. Answered of him 'comfort and all is well'

'Remember the groans of a dying father'

The Birches had by the beginning of the seventeenth century lived and prospered on the borders of Cheshire and Lancashire for nearly four hundred years. Fourteen generations of Birches had worked managing their estates and extending them by advantageous marriages as opportunity presented itself. In time their northern boundaries drew close enough to the thriving township of Manchester to encourage intermarriage with the established families of merchants and clothiers whose preoccupation with the new religion introduced the Birches to the study of Reformation.

The Rev Thomas Birch had been one of the products of the Birches contact with these low church ideas and Samuel would have considered a marriage into the family ideal both from a religious and social point of view. To celebrate his elevated position in society Samuel commissioned the Preston artist Hamlet Winstanley about this time to paint his portrait.

During this period Lancashire contained more Catholics than any other shire in England and a petition was sent to the House of Lords 'complaining of 'the intolerable Boldness . . . of the Romish Priests and Papists' in openly practising their religion there. Popery was similarly strong in Preston — Samuel estimated that there were six hundred and forty three Catholics in the parish in 1717, and complained 'they too made no secret of their faith'. During the last years of Queen Anne's reign, Lancashire's Tory justices protected them from the various persecuting laws, but, following George I's accession, it seemed that the magistracy would be obliged to implement the penal code, since the central government, concerned about the Papists' Jacobite affiliations, favoured such action.

Samuel adhered to this view and therefore brought an indictment at this time against two local priests and seven Catholic laymen as 'seducers and recusants'. Unfortunately for him, the test case did not produce the desired result as the Tory J .P.s still in office 'were so favourable as to discharge the Persons indicted, upon their appearing by an Attorney, and paying off the costs and charges of the suit'.

In the early eighteenth century, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had a watching brief on 'the practices of priests to pervert Her Majesty's subjects' to Popery and acted as an official spearhead in the drive against Catholicism in England. It consequently sought to monitor Popish evangelising in the provinces, and encouraged Anglican parsons to provide it with detailed information about the strength and structure of Catholicism in their respective localities. The Society's fine archive contains much information of this kind including a copy of a letter from Samuel, written in 1714, and printed below. In it, he delineated the chief problems the Anglican clergy faced in wrestling with Popery in north Lancashire. Clerical poverty obliged Anglican parsons and curates to take on demeaning secondary occupations, thereby reducing their status in the eyes of their flocks. Since the civil authorities showed little inclination to enforce the penal laws, the Papists could continue to practise their faith publicly, supported by the powerful Catholic landowners of the district. Above all, large parishes meant that many people simply could or would not come to Anglican services, but instead resorted to Popish mass houses 'at next door'. This problem continued to dog the Church of England until the nineteenth century, when many new parishes were created; but Samuel was active in highlighting it, and in 1724 was successful in procuring the erection of a chapel of ease on the western outskirts of Preston. Indeed, Samuel's analysis is overall cogent and lucid, and could be repeated with respect to many other places in this period.

The original spelling and punctuation of Samuel's letter have been retained:

To Mr. H. Newman" Preston in Lancashire. 29 Janry 1713/4.

Good Sir

I would have answer'd Yours of the 17th. of November in the time you proposed (viz. before Lent) but on the receipt of your last, I thought it might be well to make return to both at once. The Preachers you enquire after, are (I suppose) those appointed by Q. Eliz. with an allowance of £50 each pr ann. to study and preach against Popery in this County. The Preachers at present are Mr. Marsden, of Walton, Mr. Shaw of Warrington, Mr. Haddon of Great Bolton, and Mr. Kippax of Ormskirk; all which live in the South part of Lancashire - 50 miles at least from those parts where their labour for the money allowed by the Crown was originally intended to be employed: Besides, those Preachers, I am credibly informed, were design'd to be itinerant, not fixed Clergymen, as they have been for some time: They make a tour in Strawberry time (as is now merrily said of that excellently intended Bounty) into the North, but most commonly stop short of those places where there's most need of them. I speak not this against any of my Brethren in that Post, but am well satisfy'd that the good is not done by that Gift as was design'd and may Yet be done by it; If such persons had that allowance as should be oblig'd to preach from place to place, and spend their time and Labour in the dark parts of this and the neighbouring County, it is not to say what advantage it would be of, by the Blessing of God, to Religion, and to the Souls of Men. Some Protestant Gentlemen in these parts complain of the great Corruption of this Gift, and are entirely of opinion that it will be of little or no service, till either its dispos'd of to such as preach constantly from church to church among them, or be given as an augmentation to several poor Benefices there. And indeed £200 would break into so many parts as would make a Competency to several churches quite destitute of it; Many Churches and chappels having little or nothing belonging to 'em: Nothing is more common than for the clergy in many places there, to keep ale, and follow very Servile Employments: This renders the clergy there very contemptible, and gives the enemy great advantage against our Religion.

I come now, Sir, to Your 2d. Letter.

The account You have had of the place and County with regard to Popery is too true: We have 5. or 6. Houses in this town where the Papists meet, sometimes at one, sometimes at another, and pretty often in 2. or 3. at once: In these Houses they have Chappels deck'd with all the Popish Trinkets. They go as Publickly to their Meetings as we go to Church, and on Sabbath Days they go by our Bells. One Knight is the only Priest that lives in the Town, who sometime ago came from Ireland. There are others who come in to officiate every Sunday and Holy Day. In the Country part of this parish, which is made up of 12 large Townships, there several Priests who live among them: Their Names as far as I can discover them are Tootel, Melling, Kendal, Richardson, Smyth, Vavasor, who is now Sr. Walter as some say." Tootel and Melling live together, and have a publick chapel. Since I came to Preston which is about 12. Years I have observ'd that a Popish Bishop one Layborn, has kept his regular Visitations, and there is not a month passes, but I am credibly inform'd, there is a great number of Popish Priests who meet in this Town, on Market Days, to consult together. There are several good Estates in this one Parish which we are Satisfy'd serve to Superstitions Uses, but as things are we cannot tell how to come at or discover 'em.

It may reasonably be suppos'd that in so large a Parish as mine is, and among so many Papists as it has always been unhappy in, there are some who shift sides in Religion: We both get and lose, and I think are not much on the suffering hand, tho there's great odds against us on several accounts. This I can say, & I bless God heartily for it, I cannot tell one who has left our church out of Principle, but for some private Ends. A few Years ago, I took the number of Papists in this Parish, and there was then near 700 Souls in it. It must with Grief be said that there were no Endeavours used by the Civil Authority to lessen the Number of them, but rather, from the favourable usage they find, resort more and more to us. A little time since, they brought a Corpse out of the Country, and coming thro the Town kneel'd at the Market Cross to say their prayers; and when they came to bury their dead refus'd doing it till they had patter'd them once again at the Cross in the church yard, which is the first thing of that kind in my time; I hope I have taken a way to prevent it for the future. 'Tis but a year since a Priest had the hardiness to come to my House on occasion of a young man's disastisfaction in their way: We had some discourse before the Young man, and others. I bless God I had the happyness to gain the Person who is an Honour in his Station to our church. I tell you this to let you see the height Popery is at with us. I have but one

chappel in this great Parish, and that but slenderly provided for. We want more if it were possible to procure them. 'Tis a vast advantage to the Romish party, that Subjects our People to great Temptations, the places of our Worship are too remote, many having 3. 4. and 5. Miles to church, while they may hear Mass at next Door: This is what I look on to be the Original and continued Course of Popery in these parts. The best Estates in this Country are in the hands of Papists. Their priests swarm in it, and the Romish Party is of late, very uppish; I pray God disappoint their hopes and defeat their Designs upon us. It would be very happy if any Method could be set on foot to lessen the Interest of Popery in these parts; & may God put it into the Hearts of those who may be happy Instruments to that purpose. I have endeavoured to promote the Education of the poor, and the Instruction of Youth in this place, as the likeliest Course in my way to fence against the seductions of these Men, but I want those supplies, I know there are in other places.

I beg, Sir, that you'll let a prudent use be made of my Name in this or any other accounts that I shall be needy to give for the Service of my church and Country against Popery. I am Your (and all others you shall communicate the contents of this to)

Faithfull & very Humble Servant
Saml. Peploe

(from Samuel Peploe and Catholicism in Preston by Colin M. Haydon)