

The Poulet Family and its links to Sampford Peverell

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The Poulet family, whose surname is also variously rendered as Poulett, Paulet(t) and Pawlet(t), held an interest in the parish and Manor of **Sampford Peverell**, Devon for almost three centuries. An unassuming and unpretentious village nestling in the Devon countryside, to its residents **Sampford Peverell** must have felt very much a rural backwater. But members of this branch of the Poulet family were far from being rustic lords of the manor. As will be seen, the family moved in the highest social circles of the land, and were trusted by and received patronage and honours from successive monarchs.

Sir Hugh Poulet who in 1538 first purchased an interest in the parish was Governor of the Island of Jersey – as were two of his descendants. With a couple of exceptions, members of the Poulet family did not reside in **Sampford Peverell**, though they took care to pass and secure the inheritance of the family interest in this and other parishes over at least nine generations. While later descendants lived in London, the family seat remained at Hinton St George, Somerset, where many members were laid to rest in the family tomb in the parish church of St George.

This note records some details of those family members directly connected with **Sampford Peverell**, drawing on sources in the public domain including Arthur Collins' commentary on the family in his work "*The Peerage of England*", Vol III first published in 1741 and updated in 1756, and from selected wills held in the National Archives. I also gratefully acknowledge sources and assistance provided by the Sampford Peverell Society. In general the version of the surname cited herein is that used in the relevant source document, though even in individual documents it was not always rendered consistently.

Sir Hugh Poulet/Paulet (abt 1500-1573)

The earliest record of a link between **Sampford Peverell** and the Poulet family dates from 3 Nov. 30 Hen. VIII (*ie* 1538). It concerns the Grant in Fee for 1000 l (*ie* pounds) to Sir Hugh Paulett of "**the Manor and Borough of Sampforde Peverell Devon, the advowson of the church of Samforde Peverell, and the moiety of the hundred of Holberton (ie Halberton), Devon**". (Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 13 Part 2, August-December 1538. Originally published by HMSO, London, 1893)

Hugh was born about 1500/1510, the eldest son of Sir Amias Paulet of Hinton St George Somerset, by his second wife Laura Kellaway. His education led to membership of the Middle Temple, following which he held a number of public posts in the south-west of England, served as Member of Parliament, and was Governor of Jersey. Further details of his career can be found here:

Sir Hugh married in about 1530 Philippa Pollard, a daughter of Sir Lewis Pollard (c.1465–1540), Justice of the Common Pleas, of King's Nympton, Devon. She bore him five children:

- Sir Amias Paulet (1532–1588) a diplomat, Governor of Jersey, and the gaoler of Mary, Queen of Scots. (see his personal notes below)
- Nicholas Paulet, of Minty, Gloucestershire
- George Paulett, Bailiff of Jersey from 1583 to 1611.
- Anne Paulet
- Jane Paulet, 2nd wife of Christopher Copleston of Copleston, Devon

It appears Hugh was well regarded at the royal court as he was knighted by Henry VIII in July 1536. As an indication of the prominence of Hugh and the Poulet family, he was invited to the baptism of Henry's son Prince Edward, the future King Edward VI.

Hugh's father Sir Amias Poulet made his will on 1 April 1538, a short document partly in Latin and running to just half a page. (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/27/275). Therein he left charitable bequests to the cathedral church of Wells; to the parishes of Hinton, Chafcombe, Chard, Ilminster, Crewkerne, South Petherton, and Dymmington; and to the monastery at Ford. Sir Amias referred to his moveable and immoveable estate, but without mentioning specific locations. He also referred to his sons John and Henry, whose benevolent care he commended to his eldest son and heir Sir Hugh Poulet, who he appointed residuary legatee and sole Executor. Sir Amias died shortly after making his will, which was proved in London on 25 June 1538. An Inquisition Post Mortem was undertaken the following year. (National Archives doc ref C142/61/14). Since Sir Amias left no charitable bequest to **Sampford Peverell**, we might surmise the Poulet family had no prior interest there, and that Sir Hugh simply purchased the interest therein in the wave of land and estate transfers following the dissolution of the monasteries under King Henry VIII.

Sir Hugh immediately took advantage of his purchase of the advowson (*ie the right to nominate the incumbent*) of the church of **Sampford Peverell**. Research by the Sampford Peverell Society shows that John Powlett was presented as Rector there on 5 March 1540 by Sir Hugh Powlett, Knight. Shortly afterwards on 26 July 1542, John Poulet clerk, rector of **Sampford Peverell**, made a grant to John Pasinere and Christopher Sampford Gents of the glebe of the Rectory of **Sampford Peverell** and its appurtenances, with the Rectory itself, garden and two woods reserved to the Rector. The grant was confirmed the next day by John Voysey, Bishop of Exeter. (West Sussex Record Office, doc ref Add Mss 7110)

These records almost certainly relate to Sir Hugh's younger brother John, though the duration of his tenure is unclear. The Clergy of the Church of England database (CCEd) shows his tenure at **Sampford Peverell** as the single year 1541. The Alumni Oxonienses database records that John was awarded BA 22 Nov 1530; MA 6 June 1532; and Proctor

1534, though makes no mention of which college he attended. The same source states he was the incumbent of **Sampford Peverell** 1540-1559; and of Hinton St George concurrently with Seavington St Michael 1558-1568. (*Note the CCEd differs on these dates*) The Alumni source also states John was “*perhaps Dean of Jersey*”, and it appears that he did indeed hold that post, probably aided by the appointment of his brother Sir Hugh and subsequently the latter’s son Amias as Governors of Jersey. The Society’s research shows the next Rector of **Sampford Peverell** John Wolton was not presented until August 1565. From these sometimes conflicting dates, we may assume John served as Rector of **Sampford Peverell** and was presumably resident there for at least ten years.

In 1544 Sir Hugh was treasurer of the English army at the siege of Boulogne. Shortly after 1550, he was appointed Captain of Jersey and Governor of Mont Orgeuil Castle there, positions he held for 24 years, though from 1559 he performed these functions through a lieutenant, his son Amias (see the latter’s notes below).

Sir Hugh’s wife Philippa pre-deceased him, and in December 1560 he married as her third husband Elizabeth Blount, daughter of Walter Blount of Blount's Hall, Staffordshire. Her first husband was Anthony Beresford, to whom she bore a son John Beresford. Anthony pre-deceased Elizabeth, and in 1540 she married Sir Thomas Pope, a prominent public servant, wealthy landowner, MP and founder of Trinity College, Oxford. Thomas and Elizabeth had no issue, and his death in 1559 left her widowed for a second time.

Sir Hugh made his own will on 1 December 10 Elizabeth (*ie 1567*), styling himself as “*of Georghenton (ie Hinton St George) in the Countie of Somerset knight*”. The transcript runs to some 12 pages. (National Archives doc ref 11/56/98) He directed that he should be buried in a family tomb at Hinton St George next to his first wife Philippa, and beside the tomb of his parents Sir Amias and Dame Lore Poulet. Much of his will concerns very detailed provisions for the financial security of his second wife Dame Elizabeth in accordance with the Indenture of their marriage settlement dated 12 Nov 1560 which is specifically cited in his will. In particular she was to enjoy a lifetime interest in his extensive estate, which included mansion houses in Hinton St George & Currymalet (*ie Curry Mallett*), and farms and other properties in almost 20 other parishes or manors in Somerset - though **Sampford Peverell** was **NOT** specifically mentioned. In the event that her enjoyment in any part thereof should in any way be impaired, he directed his son Amias and the latter’s son Hugh to compensate her accordingly. Sir Hugh’s will was also worded such that he and his sons Amias and Nicolas, his and their heirs should be kept and saved harmless from any obligation arising out of the marriage contract; the executorship of the will of Elizabeth’s second husband Sir Thomas Pope; the wardship of the Beresford daughters; or any other commitment – and failing such keeping and saving, then all bequests to Dame Elizabeth to be null and void

It appears that Sir Hugh continued to be held in high regard at the court of Queen Elizabeth. His estate also included properties in St Albans, Herts and Bradley Ashe (??), Derbyshire. These latter were properties of the queen which came to him as part of an engagement for the wardship of Elizabeth and Mary Beresford, daughters in their minority of John Beresford deceased, his wife Elizabeth’s son by her first marriage. The Testator acknowledged that he stood indebted to Her Majesty by the sum of £150 in that behalf. Sir Hugh and his son Nicholas were joint bondsmen for due performance of the wardship. The

Testator stated explicitly that he was **NOT** indebted to Her Majesty in respect of any of his activities in her service in Boulogne, Newhaven or the Castle of Jersey.

Sir Hugh bequeathed to his son George his properties in Jersey, and to son Nicholas a farm in Lopen, Somerset together with an annuity to be taken from the issues and profits of the Testator's interest in the Manor of Halberton.

Sir Hugh appointed his son Amos and the latter's son Hugh as joint residuary legatees and Executors. Sir Hugh died on 6 Dec 1573 and was buried in the family tomb at Hinton St George as his will directed. The will was proved at London on 20 Feb 1573/4 by Amos Poulet, Executor named in the will. Amos' son and joint Executor Hugh Poulet is not mentioned in the proving of Sir Hugh's will, and had presumably died by then.

Dame Elizabeth outlived Sir Hugh by some 20 years. It appears she was living in her mansion house in Clerkenwell, London when she made her will on 16 April 1593 with a codicil made 16 Sept 1593. (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/83/130). The said will is mainly concerned with bequests and directions to the Governor, President, Fellows and others members of Trinity College, Oxford, founded by her first husband Sir Thomas Pope, where he was interred and where she directed she be laid to rest beside him. As an indication of her social standing, she left legacies to John Pickering, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England and to Lord Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer. She also left family bequests to her two sisters Mary, Lady Syddenham and Ann Blounte, and to various nephews and nieces. The will made **NO** reference to any estate in **Samford Peverell**, and the only mention of the Poulet family was a bequest made in the codicil to her will of an annuity to Abraham Poulet who we have been unable to identify. Lady Elisabeth Paulet died on 27 Oct 1593 at Ridge, Hertfordshire, and was buried at Trinity College in accordance with her wishes. Her will was proved on 8 Feb 1593/4 by John Burrough, notary public, on behalf of the four joint executors named in the will.

Sir Amias Paulet (Abt 1532-1588)

Amias was the first child of Hugh Poulet and Philippa Pollard who were married in about 1530. He was probably born about 1532 at the family seat in Hinton St George, Somerset. We have found no record of Amias' education – his name does not appear in the lists of alumni of Oxford or Cambridge.

Amias accompanied his father to Jersey in 1550 upon the latter's appointment as Governor there and acted as his assistant. He was formally appointed as Lieutenant Governor in 1556. Like his father, Amias was strongly anti-catholic and he welcomed Huguenot emigres to the island.

Sometime in the mid-1550's, Amias married Margaret Harvey, a daughter of Antony Harvey, of Columbjohn in Devon, by whom he had three sons and three daughters:

- Hugh Paulet (b. 1558), the eldest son, who predeceased his father.

- Anthony Paulet (b. 1562), eldest surviving son and heir, (see his personal notes below),
- George Paulet (b. 1565), who married his distant cousin Elizabeth Paulet, daughter and heiress of Edward Paulet of Goathurst, Somerset.
- Joan Paulet, who married Robert Haydon of Bowood, Epford and Cadhay House, Devon.
- Sarah Paulet, who married as his second wife Sir Francis Vincent, 1st Baronet of Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey. (Note, she is not mentioned in Collins' Peerage of England, a clear omission as she is expressly referred to in Amias' will – see below)
- Elizabeth Paulet, who pre-deceased her father, apparently unmarried.

Upon his father's death in 1573, Amias succeeded him as Governor of Jersey, a position he held until his own death. In 1576 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth, and she appointed him resident Ambassador to France, a post he held for 3 years.

In October 1582, Sir Amias wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary. Addressing him not by name but as "Right Honourable", Sir Amias informed Walsingham that he had spent the last 2 or 3 years at his house in Somerset. Concerned lest the winter climate there be injurious to his health, Sir Amias explained that he had intended to pass the greater part of the winter "season" in London. However, learning of the continued presence in London of the "sickness" (perhaps the plague??) and dissatisfied with his lodging arrangements there, he had resolved to move to his house in **Sampford Peverell** "where I shall be assured to live among good neighbours and to dwell in a good and wholesome air". (Source: Calendars of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth 1581-1590; Volume 155 October 1582, folio 77)

In the same letter, Sir Amias also solicited Walsingham's patronage in two regards. The first concerned a lease on a (un-named) church in Bristol which he held for a term of 80 years to follow the death of Sir George Speake (the latter was sometime High Sheriff as well as MP for Somerset. He died in 1584). Sir Amias reminds Walsingham that he had broached the matter with him "at my last being at Barnelmes in the presence of the now Dean of the said church of Brystoll". This is evidently a reference to a visit by Sir Amias to Barn Elms, a Thames-side Manor House in Barnes, southwest London, the lease of which was bought by Queen Elizabeth in 1579 as a gift to reward Walsingham for his services. The Queen is recorded as having visited him there on three occasions.

The second matter concerned **the advowson of Sampford Peverell**. It seems that Sir Amias may have inherited the advowson upon the death of his father, as he presented a number of rectors there identified by the Sampford Peverell Society as John Wolton, 1565; Lewis Swete, 1571; and Lawrence Bodlye, 1579. But in his letter, Sir Amias stated the advowson "had fallen unto Her Majesty by lapse more than seven years past" (ie pre-1575). It is unclear how this lapse had occurred, but it appears the advowson was restored to him, through Walsingham's intervention or otherwise, as the Society also identified that Sir Amias presented Francis Pownall, 1584 and Emmanuel Massie, 1586 – the latter going on to serve the parish for some 47 years.

In January 1585, Sir Amias was appointed gaoler of Mary Queen of Scots at Chartley Castle. After Mary's conviction, Walsingham reportedly wrote to Paulet requesting him to

arrange the assassination of Mary, to spare Queen Elizabeth from involvement in her death. In his response, Paulet refused to *"make so great a shipwreck of my conscience, or leave so great a blot to my poor posterity, as shed blood without law or warrant"*. Sir Amias remained her keeper until Mary's execution at Fotheringay Castle on 8 February 1587, an event at which he was present as is depicted in a sketch of the execution by Robert Beale, Clerk of the Privy Council. (British Library, Additional Manuscript 48027, folio 650 from Robert Beale's *The Order and Manner of the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*, Feb. 8, 1587)

Sir Amias made his will on 2 January 28 Elizabeth 1 (*ie 1585/6*). He directed that he should be buried in the parish where he died, and within one or two days of his death. (*but see below*). The very first bequest in his will was the sum of 40 shillings to the parish of **Sampford Peverell**, perhaps an indication of a personal attachment he felt towards the place. He left the same amount to the parish of "Currymallet", (*ie Curry Mallett*)

His first born son Hugh predeceased him and hence is not mentioned in the will. He bequeathed to his son George Paulett the reversion of his mansion house in the Manor of Halberton and other copyhold lands there. He bequeathed to his son Anthony Paulett all his goods and chattels at his house in Currymallet. Reflecting part of Amias' career he also left to Anthony *"all my armour, munitions and furniture for the warrs that is to say corselette, callivers, daggers, halberd, partisans (sic), pykes, bills, bowes and sheafes of arrows, and all other my armour"*.

He left to his daughter Sara the sum of £2000 to be paid at her marriage, with an annuity of 20 marks until she attained the age of 15 and thereafter of £20 until her marriage. He left all his silver and gold plate to be divided between his wife Dame Margaret and son Anthony. Dame Margaret was also the beneficiary of all the livestock in the Testator's demesne of **Sampford Peverell**, all the household effects in the mansion house there, as well as a gold chain and other jewellery and effects. He exhorted Dame Margaret and Anthony to respect and ratify the many leases he had executed on his extensive landed estate, and confident from his knowledge of their character they would do so, he explicitly declined to include in his will any penalty for any failure in that regard.

He left to each of his son George, daughter Sara and daughter Joane Heydon (*she was the wife of Robert Heydon*) one dozen silver spoons. They were to be engraved on the stem with *"the saying of my predecessors gardes la foy"* (*ie keep the faith*) and on the knappes with the initials of the recipient and of the Testator. Note he made no bequest to daughter Elizabeth who had probably died by then.

Among other miscellaneous bequests, he left £20 to Marie Billinghaye *"my wife's gentlewoman"*, presumably a companion. (Styling herself *"of **Sampford Peverell** gentlewoman"*, Marie made her own will in 1593, in which she bequeathed rings to *"my Lady Pawlett"* and to the latter's children – Mr Anthony, Mr George, Mrs Heydon (*ie Joan*) and Mrs Vincent (*ie Sarah*). She also left a bequest of a ring to Mr John Pawlett, probably Anthony's son & heir)

As sole Executor, Sir Amias appointed his son Anthony, and as Overseers his *"trustie and wellbeloved friends John Popham esquire her Majesties Attorney Generall and John Coles of Barton esquire"*. Unusually, no witnesses to the will were named.

A memorandum dated 26 Sept 1588 was added to the will apparently capturing some of Sir Amias final words in which he bequeathed to his wife his house in “Twycknam” (Twickenham ??). Witnesses thereto were Richard Smithe, Doctor of Phisick; Nicholas Stallinge; Lawrence Partbene; and James Fforte. Sir Amias died in London on 26 September 1588, the same date as on the memorandum. He was buried in the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields. However, his remains and monument were later removed to the Church of St George, Hinton St George.

His will was proved in London on 8 February 1588/9 by John Robinson, notary public acting for Anthony Paulett, Executor.

It is appropriate to note here that it appears this and another branch of the Poulllet/Paulet family had a long standing interest in properties in Twickenham as is confirmed by records at the Twickenham Museum – although the references cited on the Museum’s website do not reach back as early as Sir Amias’ will:

<http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/detail.php?aid=218&ctid=1&cid=15>

<http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/detail.php?aid=131&ctid=2&cid=1>

Dame Margaret survived Sir Amias by almost 15 years. It appears that she lived at least part of that period in **Sampford Peverell**, as she stated she was of that place when she made her will on 26 May 1602, in which she left a charitable bequest to the poor there. (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/100/178). She also left bequests to her surviving children and grandchildren, taking care to name them as follows:

- To son Anthonie’s children Elizabeth, John (eldest son & heir), Ames, Henrie, Thomas, Phillip, Anne, Margerie, Susanna, and Margaret. (*Note Anthonie and his wife Catherine were NOT beneficiaries - both pre-deceased Dame Margaret*)
- To son George, her estate in North Tawton, to his wife Elizabeth and their children Margaret, Edward, Hugh, Elizabeth and Katherine
- To daughter Joane Haydon, to her husband Robert Haydon and their children Margaret Everie (*presumably married*) and sons Gideon, Amiace and Drew
- To daughter Sarah Vincent, to her husband ffrancis Vincent and their children Anthonie, Thomas, ffrancis and Amiace.

Dame Margaret evidently maintained a large household in **Sampford Peverell** as she left bequests to some 17 named servants. She appointed son George and son-in-law ffrancis Vincent as joint Executors. Dame Margaret died on 28 May 1602, just two days after making her will which was proved in London on 4 September 1602. The date of her death is confirmed on a memorial plaque in the church of St John the Baptist, Sampford Peverell, erected in her memory by her said son and son-in-law, beneath which she was interred. A transcript of the Latin text of the memorial by the Sampford Peverell Society, who kindly authorised its re-production here, reads as follows;

Upon the death of the most devout Lady Margaret Poulett, wife of Squire Amias Poulett, Knight.

I, Margaret, was a mother blessed in my off-spring, and, as a wife, in my husband while the gift of life remained. I had everything that could make me happy – a husband, children, noble parentage, charm, an estate, wealth, many servants, and a house that was ever-open for the poor; I had a bountiful heart and was given to good works.

I have lived endowed with these gifts, beloved of men and God, and I have borne the lot which destiny has assigned me. Now in death I have given back my soul to God, its only master; and beneath this grave lies my empty body.

Francis Vincent soldier and George Poulett esquire, sons and executors of the Lady Margaret Poulett, who died 28th day of May 1602, erected this memorial as a duty to the dead and a witness of a thankful heart.

The memorial is surmounted by the coat of arms of the Harvey family from which Margaret descended:

Quarterly 1 & 4 gules on a bend argent 3 trefoils slipped vert, 2 & 3 perpale gules and azure 3 lion-cels or.

A brass engraving on the memorial depicts in the centre a pious lady kneeling in prayer. To the left is a male with three other males behind him, one of the latter clearly smaller than the other two, all also kneeling prayer. To the right are three ladies, one smaller than the other two, all similarly at prayer. We might infer the central figure represents Dame Margaret herself; the males her late husband and three sons, one of whom died in infancy; and the ladies her three daughters, one of whom also died in infancy. Note this is speculation on the author's part, and there is no allusion on the memorial nor in any of the Society's records to support this conjecture.

A panel beside the memorial states that it was renovated by the 5th Earl "*in whose family the manor and church of Sampford Peverell remained vested from the days of Henry VIII to the 55th year of the reign of King George III*" (ie 1815). (please see personal notes for the 5th Earl below)

Anthony Pawlet (Abt 1562-1600)

Anthony was born about 1562, the second but eldest surviving son of Sir Amias Paulet and his wife Margaret nee Harvey. Sources in the public domain state he was born in Hinton St George, though the parish records there pre-1632 have not survived, so we are unable to validate any baptism there. Given that his father was in Jersey from 1550, it seems more likely that he was born there.

Anthony accompanied his father to France where the latter served as Ambassador 1576-1579. His father took into his household there Jean Hotman, son of an eminent author and professor of law as tutor to Anthony and his brother George. On their return to England, Hotman came with them and lived with his two pupils during their studies at Oxford. Anthony and George were enrolled at Christ Church college, where their matriculation is entered under the same date 10 April 1580, Anthony aged 18 and George aged 15.

Anthony was perhaps created MA 10 July 1598 and was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1593. (Alumnus Oxonienses)

Sometime around 1583, Anthony married Catherine Norreys, daughter of Sir Henry Norreys, 1st Baron Norreys (*also rendered as Norris*). She bore him ten children viz five sons John, Amias, Henry, Thomas and Phillip; and five daughters Elizabeth, Anne, Margerie, Susanna, and Margaret – the latter's baptism recorded in the fragmentary Bishops Transcripts for Hinton St George as 1 Nov 1597. His sons John, Amias and Henry would follow him for their education at Oxford. His daughter Elizabeth married Sir Henry Hawley of Wiveliscombe; Margerie to John Sydenham of Combe; Susanna to Sir Peter Prudeaux of Netherton; and Margaret to Sir Edmund Fowell of Fowelscombe.

Anthony served as Lieutenant to his father as Governor of Jersey, becoming full Governor upon his father's death in 1588, a post he then held until his own death. His rule was extremely severe, and his uncle, George Paulet, the Bailiff of Jersey, encouraged him in his autocratic policy. In 1589 he imprisoned the three jurats of Jersey (*they were judges of fact rather than law*) for disputing his authority. In 1590 commissioners were sent from London to inquire into the grievances of the islanders against Sir Anthony and his uncle George. Both officers were fully exonerated from blame.

Styling himself as “Anthonie Pawlet of Henton Sainte Gregory” – and not mentioning his title - he made his will on 21 May 1600, the transcript running to seven pages.

He bequeathed to his wife Dame Katherine at Curry Mallet various household effects as well as half the Testator's pewter vessels and plate in England, Jersey or elsewhere, together with £400 and his coach and horses. She was also to receive the tithes of his parsonage in Petherton, in trust for sons John or Amos or other heir.

He bequeathed to his daughter Elizabeth £1200 and to his daughters Anne, Marjery, Susanna and Margaret £1000 each at their respective ages of 18 or day of marriage, and in the meantime annuities for their maintenance. He directed that they were to conform to the counsel of their grandmother, mother, eldest brother and the Testator's Executors in choice of husband.

He left his son Amos £200 to repair his house and stock his farm at Grindham and other property, and annuities to his sons Henry, Thomas and Phillip – all four minors. Anthony had an extensive estate in the Manors of Chaffcombe, Knoll, Illeigh, Stocklinch, Shepton and Stalleigh in Somerset; one third of each of the Manor of Marshwood in Dorset and the **Manor and Borough of Sampford Peverell**; lands in Clerkenwell, London; and the Manor of Curry Mallet, all of which he bequeathed to his son and heir John.

Anthony appointed as Trustees “*my very approved and trustie good friends*” Sir Edward Norries (*probably his wife's brother*), John Colles, Edward Hext, Frances Vincent, William Gibbes and Robert Hackshawe and devised unto them the remainder of his landed estate until 1610, upon trust that during this time they would employ the issue and profits thereof to settle his debts and legacies.

As executors of his will, Sir Anthony appointed the same individuals as were appointed Trustees until such time as his son John or other heir should attain the age of 21 and provide security to each of the executors so named for the settlement of any debts and

legacies then still outstanding. As his Overseers, he appointed Sir John Popham Knight, Lord Chief Justice of England; Sir Drew Drury Knight; and Sir Hugh Portman Knight.

Anthony made a codicil to his will on the 28 May in which he directed his Executors to arrange for a tomb to be built at Hinton for himself, his wife and children. (*see also below*) He further requested them to forward the financial accounts of his activities in continuing the fortifications in Jersey and against the Spaniards to the Lords in Council that his dues might be discharged by them. He also requested that "*humble suit*" be made to the Queen for "*consideration*" (*ie financial*) of the long service of his uncle George Pawlett and the garrison in Jersey. For the settlement of his affairs in Jersey, he requested his brother George Pawlett and Robert Hackshawe to travel there, sell what they could of his effects, and bring the remainder to Hinton. The codicil made several other modest legacies, which were further refined by a second shorter codicil dated 10 June.

Two other points in his will perhaps show something of the character of Sir Anthony. He directed that each of his many servants should receive one year's wages, and that his household be maintained for six weeks after his death to allow them time to find alternative employment. He also directed that every soldier in the garrison at Jersey should receive one month's pay from the Testator's assets there.

The parish register of St Mary Magdalene church in Richmond, Surrey, records that Sir Antony Paulet Knight died at Kew on 24 July 1600 "*whose bowells were interred at Richmounte*" (*ie Richmond*). He was aged only about 38 at death. It appears his remains were later re-interred at the Church of St George, Hinton St George in the tomb constructed there in accordance with his wishes. His will was proved in London on 3 Dec 1600 by Anthony Catton, Notary Public, appointed by the Executors.

Dame Catherine did not long survive him. A memorial on Findagrave states she died on 24 March 1601/2 and is interred with her husband at St George's Church, Hinton St George.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/52219527@N00/15225767153/in/photostream/lightbox/>

John 1st Baron Poulett (1585-1649)

Anthony's eldest son John was born about 1585, possibly in Jersey where Anthony was then Lieutenant Governor. John and his brother Amias were educated at University College, Oxford, the matriculation of both entered under date 12 June 1601, John aged 15 and Amias aged 14. Their younger brother Henry went up to the same college, his matriculation entered under date 13 May 1603 aged just 13. (*Alumnus Oxonienses*)

However, John did not go on to graduate. In 1603 he obtained a licence to travel abroad and visited France. He became a Cavalry Colonel in 1608, and in 1610 entered as a member of the Middle Temple. In the same year he was elected MP for Somerset at a by-election, though three months later this Parliament was dissolved. He also represented Somerset in 1614

In about 1614, John married Elizabeth, the daughter (born posthumously in 1593) of Christopher Kenn of Kenn, Somerset by his third wife Dame Florence Stallenge. Elizabeth bore him three sons and five daughters, their names confirmed in John's will (*see below*) Note Collins in his Peerage of England edition of 1741 p7 erroneously cites Elizabeth's forename as Christian, but corrected that in the edition of 1756. He goes on to provide details of their childrens' respective marriages and offspring:

- Sir John Poulet, eldest son and heir. (see his personal notes below)
- Francis Poulet, second son. He married Catherine, daughter of Robert Creighton, Bishop of Bath. He died 26 Jan 1688 and Catherine on 17 October 1694. They are buried in Corpus Christi Chapel in Wells Cathedral.
- Amias Poulet: He was baptised 2 June 1622 at Hinton St George, recorded as Amos in the fragmentary Bishops Transcripts for that parish. He was buried there on 7 Nov 1669 aged 47, noted as the third son of the 1st Baron Hinton St George.
- Florence (Piggott). She married Thomas Smyth of Long Ashton by whom she had a son Hugh later created Knight of the Bath, and four daughters Florence, Mary, Helena and Anne. After Thomas' death she re-married to Colonel Thomas Piggot of Ireland by whom she had further children whose baptisms are recorded in Long Ashton parish records as Martha (Oct 1645); son Paulett (Oct 1646, buried Feb 1646/7)); a second son Paulett (Dec 1647), John (Jan 1648/9), Elizabeth (July 1650), and Thomas (Nov 1651, buried Dec 1651). Florence died in November 1667 and was buried at Long Ashton church. The Smyth-Piggot's established their seat at Brockley Court and Brockley Hall where they continued for over two centuries.
- Margaret (Cholmeley). Margaret married Denys Rolle in the late 1620's and by him had a son Denys who died in infancy, and five daughters Florence, Margaret, Anne, Elizabeth and Frances. After Rolle's premature death in 1638, Margaret re-married to Col Richard Cholmeley – hence the reference to her by this surname in her father's will. Cholmeley was Governor of Axminster for King Charles in the Civil War, and died in October 1644 from wounds sustained in a skirmish near Axminster. Margaret married for a third time to Colonel Edward Cook of Highnam, Gloucestershire.
- Susan (Wharton). She married Sir Michael Warton of Beverley, Yorkshire by whom she bore three sons Michael, Ralph and John and two daughters Elizabeth and Mary. Susan died in Beverley on 7 Nov 1682.
- Helena Poulet. After her father's death, she married William Wilmot of Charleton, Berkshire. She died on 12 May 1651 and was buried in Wantage Church
- Elizabeth Poulet. The youngest daughter of Lord John Poulet and Elizabeth, she married William Ashburnham, the eldest son and heir of John Ashburnham and his first wife Frances – they were thus in effect half-brother and half-sister following the second marriage of John Ashburnham and Elizabeth Poulet (*see below*), though **NOT** involving consanguinity and hence not illegal. She bore him a son John. William Ashburnham died in 1655, pre-deceasing his father and Elizabeth, such that his son John inherited the estate and was later created the first Baron Ashburnham. After William's death, Elizabeth re-married to Sir William Hartrop of Leicestershire.

In 1618 John served as Sheriff of Somerset, and in 1621 MP for Lyme Regis. Further details of his parliamentary career can be found here:

<http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1604-1629/member/poulett-john-1586-1649>

In 1625 Charles I visited John at Hinton. At the King's request John entertained for nearly a year the defeated Huguenot Admiral, the Duc de Soubise. He discharged his duties as host so much to the king's satisfaction that he was raised to the peerage by letters patent of 23 June 1627 with the title of Baron Poulett of Hinton St. George. He took his seat in the House of Lords on 20 March 1627/8.

John apparently inherited from his father **the advowson of Sampford Peverell**. Following the death of Emmanuel Massie after serving for some 47 years, his successor Thomas Collins was appointed Rector on 20 July 1633, presented by the Rt Hon John, Lord Powlett. Collins was to be another long-serving appointee, ministering for 32 years. (Sampford Peverell Society records)

Also in 1633, John Baron Poulet was granted the right to hold a market at **Sampford Peverell**. The grant was apparently from the crown, as the record in the Somerset archives includes fragments of the Great Seal and a royal portrait. (SWHT Taunton doc refs DD/PT/S1742/2; A/CRS/1; A/CRS/1/1; and A/CRS/1/2)

On 30 May 1635, John Poulet was appointed to the command of the "Constant Reformation", a 40 gun Second Rate ship with a crew of 250 which formed part of the Channel Fleet assembled to protect British commerce from the French and Dutch. His reputation for hospitality was maintained. Elizabeth visited him on board in June, when an officer recorded "*My lady Paulet and other ladies and many gentlemen and gentlewomen of great quality came aboard, and were nobly feasted and entertained*". John was knighted on 23 September that year by the Earl of Lindsey, Lord High Admiral, aboard the Mary Honour.

Lord John Poulet and his eldest son John both engaged in the Royal cause in the civil war. Lord John was one of the leaders of the siege of Lyme Regis in April 1646. The town held out, and when the siege was lifted he retreated to Exeter of which city he was made Commissioner, and where he was taken prisoner when the city surrendered. He was taken to London in extreme ill-health and imprisoned, but on the intercession of Sir Thomas Fairfax was permitted to live in his own house in Chiswick. He was subject to financial penalties for the damage caused to Lyme Regis and to Lady Drake whose house he had burned down. (McMullen Rigg, James; Poulett, John (1586-1649), Dictionary of National Biography 1885-1900 Vol 46)

John Lord Poulett made his will on 25 May 1648 (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/207/530). He directed that he be buried in Hinton "*that my bones may lie among those of my ancestors*" and "*that a tomb may be set over it for me and my wife the Lady Elizabeth Poulet*". To each of his youngest daughters Helena and Elizabeth he left £3000 for their "portions" or dowries, and to each of his three married daughters £50. To son Frances he bequeathed £300 and an estate in houses and tenements in Curry Mallett, **Sampford Peverell** and Yenston (Yatton ??). His provision to son Amias included confirmation of a bequest left to him by Amias Poulet, the latter's uncle, as well as the

interest in the parsonage of Chard and a farm at Ileigh. (His said son Amias died and was buried in Hinton on 7 Nov 1669)

To his wife Elizabeth, he provided for her to “*continue all such estates made upon the lands I had by her*”, and the benefit and use for her life of the contents of his house at the Court of Weeke (*Wick, Yatton ??*). He also left her £1000 and a lifetime interest in his house in Chiswick. After Elizabeth’s decease, the £1000 was to be re-paid and the house in Chiswick was to revert to his eldest son Sir John Poulet, whom he made residuary legatee and sole executor – and with the interesting caveat that should son Amias seek to interfere with the bequest of the house in Chiswick, then the legacies to him were to be null and void.

Lord John Poulet reportedly died on 20 March 1649, and was buried in Hinton St George Church, though the local parish register page is missing for that year. A stately chapel was dedicated to his memory – though as will be seen, his wish that his wife Elizabeth be buried there too was not fulfilled. His will was proved in London on 13 April 1649 by his son and Executor John, Baron Hinton.

Dame Elizabeth Poulett, John’s widow, re-married as his second wife John Ashburnham of Ashburnham in Sussex. Like Lord John Poulet, John Ashburnham was a staunch Royalist. Although some of Elizabeth’s inheritance had passed into the Poulet family on her first marriage, she was apparently still wealthy in her own right. A survey of her estates in 1659 showed property in Bishopport, Churchill, Kenn, Kingston Seymour, Pensford, Rolston alias Painbarton, Shipham, Walton in Gordano, Wick St Lawrence and Yatton . (Typescript transcript of a survey of the Estates of the Heiress Elizabeth Poulett, 1659, SWHT Taunton doc ref DD\X\LLY/28, 39 & 40)

Elizabeth died in 1663 aged about 70. We found no will for her. Sir John Ashburnham died on 15 June 1671. They are interred together with Sir John’s first wife in a tomb in the chancel of St Peter’s, Ashburnham, which bears the following memorial inscription:

The said Mr John Ashburnham married the Daughter and Heir of William Holland of Westburton in this County Esq; who lies also here interr’d, and by whom he had these eight Children. She made the first Step towards the Recovery of some Part of the Inheritance wasted by the said Sir John, for she sold her whole estate, to lay out the Money in this Place. She liv’d in great Reputation for Piety and Discretion, and died in the seaven and thirtieth Year of her Age. The second wife to the said Mr John Ashburnham, who lies also here interr’d, was the Widow of the Lord Poulett of Hinton St George in the County of Somerset. She was Daughter and Heir to Christopher Kenn of Kenn in that County, Esq who left her a great Estate in Lands now in the Possession of the Lord Poulett. She was worthy of Imitation by all her sex, for her honourable and religious Conversation: She brought great Advantages to the Family of this Place and died at the Age of seaventy years and four Months: And her Memory is precious to all considering Persons that knew her. This Mr John Ashburnham was of the Bedchamber to their Majesties Charles the First and Charles the Second, who when he had performed the service to God in building this Church at his own Charge, died in the sixty eight year of his Age on the fifteenth day of June in the Year of Our Lord 1671”

John 2nd Baron Poulett (1615-1665):

The next heir in this branch of the Poulet family was John, the oldest son of John & his wife Elizabeth nee Kenn. He was born about 1615, and was probably baptised at Hinton St George on 30 May 1615, as recorded in the damaged fragment of Bishops Transcripts for that parish and year in which the child's forename is missing but surname is clear.

John was educated at Exeter College, Oxford where he matriculated on 20 April 1632 and was created Doctor of Medicine on 31 Jan 1642/3 – the latter perhaps an honorary degree.

A summary of John's subsequent career is included with his father's entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. John was knighted along with his father in 1635 when he would have been only around 20. He was returned to parliament for Somerset on 12 Oct. 1640, but vacated his seat in 1642 by joining his father in Somerset, and was impeached on 16 Sept. On the outbreak of hostilities in Ireland he served in Munster in command of a regiment of foot, which, on the conclusion of the armistice in 1643, was transferred to Bristol, and formed part of the garrison of Winchester Castle on its surrender to Cromwell on 5 Oct. 1645. He afterwards joined his father at Exeter, and following the surrender of that city was allowed to compound for his activities. He was fined £9,400 but since his wife's sister was fortuitously married to Lord Fairfax, he paid only £1800. He was suspected of complicity in the royalist plot of 1654–5, and went abroad in February 1657–8. On the Restoration he was made deputy-lieutenant for Somerset. (Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Vol 46)

John married Catharine, daughter of General Sir Horatio Vere and widow of Sir Oliver St John, by whom he had two sons John and Horatio, and three daughters Elizabeth, Vere and Catherine. After his wife Catherine's untimely death he re-married to Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Brown of Walcote, Northamptonshire by whom he had two further sons Amias and Charles, and four daughters Anne, Florence, Mary and Margaret. As will be seen, several of these children were **NOT** named beneficiaries of his will, and it seems likely they died in infancy.

Styling himself John Lord Poulett, Baron of Hinton St George, John made his will on 7 March 1663/4 (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/321/387). He bequeathed to his (second) wife Lady Ann Poulett his "*best coach and six horses*", and a lifetime use of his jewels and plate, and after her death, then to his Executor. To his daughters Vere and Katherine he gave legacies of £4000 each on the earlier of reaching their respective majority or marriage, and in the meantime an annuity of £300 for their maintenance. He left to his daughter Lady Elizabeth Sydenham £10. His will refers to an extensive landed estate including Manors or Lordships of Halberton Deane, Devon and Stonely, Stockland and Yatton in Somerset; the parsonage of Yatton and a property in Merriett, all of which he directed that his beneficiaries should have the right to distrain in the event his Executor should fail to satisfy his legacies. He appointed his son and heir John as sole Executor. As his Overseers he appointed his "loving brothers" Francis Poulett and Amos Poulett, and his steward Robert Merefield.

On 20 July 1665, John made a codicil to his will in which he amended his bequest to his wife, such that she should enjoy a lifetime interest in several household and personal effects listed in the codicil, and of which she was possessed at the time of their marriage. After her death, the said items were to pass to his youngest daughter Margaret.

We should note that John made no explicit reference to **Sampford Peverell** in his will, although he did refer to the Manor of Halberton Deane. However, it appears that he had inherited from his father the advowson of **Sampford Peverell**, for he presented Christopher Coward as Rector on 25 July 1665 following the death of the previous incumbent Thomas Collins who had served for 32 years. As will be seen, Coward's was to be a much shorter tenure. (Sampford Peverell Society records)

John died on 15 Sept 1665 at Court de Wick, Yatton, Somerset and was buried a few weeks later at Hinton St George on 24 October. From him were descended the later Poulet Barons and Earls. His will was proved in London on 7 August 1666 by his Executor, his son & heir John who inherited the title, Baron Hinton St George.

John 3rd Baron Poulett (Abt 1641 – 1679)

The next heir in this branch of the Poulett family was another John, the eldest son of John & Catherine nee Vere. We have found no record of his education among the records of alumni of Oxford or Cambridge. He sat as a Knight of the Shire for Somerset between 1662 and 1665 when he entered the House of Lords on the death of his father, and at which time he inherited the title as 3rd Baron. In 1674 Lord John was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, a post he retained until his death.

An explanatory note in the Hinton St George parish register in 1663 records that Lord John Poulett married on 21 June 1663 Essex Popham, daughter of Alexander Popham, who bore him two daughters Catherine and Laetitia. We find the entry for the baptism of Catherine in March 1664/5, but we find no entry for Laetitia. Laetitia was not mentioned in her father's will (see below), but is recorded as their daughter in Collins' Peerage of England Vol III (edition of 1741, p8) as the wife of Sir William Monson of Hertfordshire. We find the record of their marriage in St Giles in the Fields Holborn on 16 July 1688. Lady Essex died prematurely on 12 March 1666/7 and was buried in Hinton St George.

Lord John married again on 16 July 1668 in Wilton, Wiltshire, to Lady Susanna Herbert, eldest daughter of Phillip Herbert, 5th Earl of Pembroke & 2nd Earl of Montgomery. This was a significant match for Lord John. Susanna's ancestor William Herbert was brother-in-law to Henry VIII. (*William was married to Ann Parr, sister of the King's 6th wife Catherine Parr*). Henry evidently valued William highly, for he granted him Wilton Abbey near Salisbury, where William built Wilton House, which after 19 generations is still in the Herbert family in 2021. Henry also appointed William as an Executor of his will, and he became a guardian of the young King Edward VI who created William 1st Earl of Pembroke. Lady Susanna bore Lord John three daughters, all of whom died in childhood viz Susanna b 1669 d 1683; Diana b 1671/2 d 1673; and Vere b 1672 d 1682.

She also bore him a son, another John bapt 1675 who survived into adulthood and succeeded his father.

Lord John apparently inherited from his father the **advowson of Sampford Peverell church**. He presented John Gawler as Rector on 10 June 1668 following the death of Christopher Coward who had served less than 3 years. Gawler was originally from South Petherton and was awarded BA from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1666. We should note here that the Hinton St George parish register records the marriage on 25 June 1668 of John Gawler, **Rector of Sampford Peverell** and Catherine Poulett. The Catherine referred to here *may* have been John's sister Katherine, though subsequently in a bequest in his will John refers to her by the surname Poulett. If Gawler did indeed marry John's sister, he was a very fortunate man in view of the dowry left her by her father.

Styling himself "John Lord Poulett, Baron of Henton St George", he made his will on 29 May 1679. John left to his (second) wife Lady Susanna his coach and six horses, together with her jewellery, clothing and other effects given to her at their marriage by her father who he cites as "Phillip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery deceased". He bequeathed to his daughter Katherine Poulett "all the jewels which were her late mother's the Lady Essex Poulett deceased". To his two youngest daughters Susanna and Vere he bequeathed £4000 each as their marriage portions in accordance with a deed of trust executed the day before he made his will. He made no bequest to daughter Diana who died in infancy – nor did Susanna and Vere benefit from their dowries, both dying in childhood. As Executors in trust of his will, he appointed the same Trustees as in the deed, namely his uncle Francis Poulett; brother-in-law Sir John Sydenham; Sir Thomas Putt; Sir Thomas Carew; Edward Coke and Edward Strode, pending his son or other heir attaining the age of 21 and providing security for the discharge of his legacies as pre-conditions of assuming the Executorship.

He referred in his will to the sum of £7,000 which he held as Trustee in connection with the purchase of a farm in Scarborough to be made by Sir John Strode, and gave directions to the Executors in Trust of his will as to how that should be discharged.

He left charitable bequests to the poor of Hinton, Crewkerne and South Petherton – but made no mention of **Sampford Peverell**. He left one year's wages to each of his servants.

In a codicil dated 4 June 1679, he added a bequest of £1000 to his sister Katherine Poulett; to Mrs Margaret Destouch an annuity of £100; and an annuity of £50 to William Poulett of Hinton St George.

Lord John Poulett died less than one month after he made his will and was laid to rest in Hinton St George on 20 June 1679. His will was proved by his Executors in Trust on 2 Dec 1679.

Lady Susanna survived him by 13 years. She was buried in Hinton St George on 7 May 1692. We have found no record of a will for her.

Lord John Poulett, 4th Baron & 1st Earl Poulett (1668-1743)

Lord John Poulet was succeeded in the barony by John, his only son and sole surviving child born of his second marriage to Susan Herbert. In various sources in the public domain John's birth is given as ca 1668, though the Hinton St George parish register has a clear entry for his baptism on 2 May 1675 – with his birth given as 26 April, and while the year of birth is illegible, it was probably also 1675.

Although John succeeded his father to the title in 1680, he did not take his seat in the House of Lords until 24 November 1696, and then only under threat of committal for non-attendance. He married in April 1702, Bridget, only daughter of Peregrine Bertie of Waldershare in Kent, and niece of Robert Bertie, 3rd Earl of Lindsey. In 1706 he took part in the negotiations for the Act of Union with Scotland, and was created Viscount Hinton St George and Earl Poulett 29 December 1706. He was First Lord of the Treasury 1710-1711, Lord Steward of the Household 1711-1714 and Custos rotulorum (*ie principal justice of the peace in a county*) of Somerset from 1712-1714. He was elected Knight of the Garter 25 October 1712. As he had not shown himself active on behalf of the Hanoverian cause, he lost his places at the accession of George I. (British Armorial Bindings, The Bibliographical Society of London)

Lord John Poulett apparently inherited from his father **the advowson of Sampford Peverell**. He presented George Drake as Rector on 5 August 1697 as successor to John Gawler who had served for almost 30 years.

Lady Bridget bore him four sons John, Peregrine, Vere and Anne (*sic – this latter forename might be thought to be an error eg for Amias, but as Collins notes in his Peerage of England, the son was given this forename by his godmother, none other than Queen Anne*). Lady Bridget also bore him four daughters, Bridget (*noted in his will as Lady Bridget Bastard*), Catherine (*idem, Lady Catherine Parker*), Susanna and Rebecca.

Styling himself “*the Right Hon'ble John Earl Poulett, Viscount and Baron of Henton Saint George, Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*”, he made his will on 30 October 1741. (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/730/92) The transcript in the National Archives runs to some six pages from which it appears he inherited certain named properties from his father.

Acknowledging that she brought him “*a great fortune*” under their marriage settlement dated 11 April 1702 cited in his will, he bequeathed to his wife Bridget, Countess Poulett all her wearing apparel and plate; his coach and seven horses; the interest of a bond for £2000 on a house in Albemarle Street, London, from which after her death his daughters Lady Susanna and Lady Rebecca were to receive £1000 each; and all his plate, jewels, money and securities. His will also states that under the marriage settlement he covenanted to provide his wife with a jointure of £3000 per annum, equivalent to the full amount of the assets he inherited from his father, the latter having settled the remainder of the family estate upon John Poulett, the eldest of the Testator's four sons.

The Testator had acquired for himself a very extensive landed estate in Somerset, Devon and Dorset part of which he distributed among his said four sons with part held by Trustees. The full details thereof need not concern us here, although a few points are worthy of note. Parts of the said estate were charged with sums of £5000, which further amounts were to be paid to each of Lady Susanna and Lady Rebecca after their mother's death. He bequeathed to his second son Peregrine the Manor of Halberton Deane and to

his third son Vere the Rectory of South Petherton, both apparently inherited from his father. He bequeathed to his eldest son Lord John Poulett his two water grist mills called Sampford Mills with the meadow called Plashett Mead lying in **Sampford Peverell**.

Under a power vested in him under his marriage settlement, he directed his Trustees to sell part of his estate to raise what in those days must have been the huge sum of £30,000. Moreover, he directed that £29,900 thereof should be paid to his fourth son Anne, and the remaining £100 to be distributed among his other children, male and female, married and un-married, as a bar to any claim they might make to a share of his estate other than the legacies he had bequeathed unto them. He appointed the said fourth son Anne his residuary legatee and sole Executor, with the direction the latter should satisfy all his debts. He bequeathed to each of his household servants one year's wages, and directed that at his funeral "*according to the new rule of mourning none of my servants or my children's servants do wear black*".

Under his right of the advowson, John Earl Poulett presented Bertie Henley as **Rector of Sampford Peverell** on 8 December 1741, successor to George Drake who he had presented in 1697 and who had ministered for over 40 years. (Sampford Peverell Society records)

John, 1st Earl Poulett died on 28 May 1743. The Hinton St George parish register records that the Right Honourable Earl Poulett was laid to rest on 3 June. His will was proved in London on 11 November 1743 by the Honourable Anne Poulett Esq, son and Executor. (*Anne sat as Member of Parliament 1769-1785. He outlived his father by some 42 years. Apparently unmarried, he made his will on 26 June 1780. He was buried in Hinton St George on 22 July 1785*)

The Right Honourable Bridget Countess Poulett survived her husband by just over 4 years. She made her will on 17 June 1745 in which she directed that she should be buried beside her late husband. Her assets at Hinton Saint George and "*in town*" (*presumably London*) consisted largely of her plate and diamond and other jewellery which she distributed among her children, viz sons John, Peregrine, Vere and Ann, and her daughters Lady Susanna and Lady Rebecca (apparently still un-married), and Lady Bridget Bastard and Lady Catherine Parker. As residuary legatee and sole Executor she appointed her son Vere Poulett with the direction he should satisfy all her just debts. The Hinton Saint George parish register records the burial of "Bridgit Countess Poulett" on 30 March 1748. Her son Vere proved her will in London on 1 April 1748.

John 2nd Earl Poulett (1708-1764)

John, 1st Earl Poulet, was succeeded by his eldest son by Bridget (nee Bertie), Countess Poulett – another John. It appears he was a twin with his brother Peregrine, for the St Martin in the Fields parish register records the baptisms on 1 January 1708 (*ie 1 Jan 1708/9*) of John Lord Viscount Hinton and Peregrine Poulett, sons of John E(arl) Poulett and Lady Bridget, the date of birth for both cited as 10 December (*ie 1708*).

John was educated at Taunton Grammar School. In 1734, he was summoned to Parliament in his father's barony of Poulett by writ of acceleration and was a Lord of the Bedchamber until 1755. On his father's death in 1743, he succeeded to the title as 2nd Earl Poulett. He was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Somerset in 1744, colonel of the 1st Somerset Regiment of Militia from 1759, and was sometime Recorder of Bridgwater.

Also in 1744, The Right Honourable the Earl Poulett was the first in a list of those in the parish of **Sampford Peverell** assessed for an aid granted to His Majesty the King. He was also the first in a list of those similarly assessed in 1756. The original records are faded and the amounts cannot be firmly established, but from later records the properties probably include **Sampford Peverell** Barton and Mills. (Sampford Peverell Society records – please see also comments for 1780 in the notes for his brother Vere, 3rd Earl Poulett below)

Styling himself “*the Right Honourable John Earl Poulett, Viscount and Baron of Henton Saint George*”, he made his will on 21 Nov 1752, a short document which with four short codicils runs to just two pages. (National Archives doc ref PROB 11/905/75). It is unclear what caused him to make his will at this time as he was to live for another 12 years. We might speculate that it was prompted by the death in August 1752 of his twin brother Peregrine Poulett, apparently unmarried and who sat as Member of Parliament for Rossiney 1737-1741 and for Bridgwater 1747-1752.

He bequeathed all his real and personal estate and advowsons to his younger brother Vere Poulett, who he appointed as his sole Executor and on condition that he settle all his legacies. He granted a year's wages to his servants, one of whom Francois Labastide was apparently French.

He directed that “*as the livings of **Sampford Peverell**, Uplowman (both in the Diocese of Exeter) or Lympsham (Diocese of Bath & Wells) shall become void, that the Reverend Mr William ffewtrell clerk shall be presented to such two of them as he shall think fit to choose*”. The Rev. William ffewtrell was Chaplain to John, 2nd Earl Poulett and apparently benefitted from his patronage as he held posts of incumbent wholly or partly concurrently at Chaffcombe, Hinton St George, Stocklynch Ottersey and Angersleigh. However, it appears he did not come into the livings at any of the parishes proposed in Earl Poulett's will. Moreover, the Earl presented John Adney as **Rector of Sampford Peverell** on 23 September 1760, as successor to Bertie Henley who had ministered in that post for 19 years. As will be seen, it appears that Adney was the last of the Rectors to be presented by the Poulett family – please refer to the notes for John, 4th Earl Poulett below. (Clergy of the Church of England database; and Sampford Peverell Society records – note the two record sets differ somewhat on dates for this point)

In the codicils, he gave his wearing apparel to his servant Labastide and £4000 (*sic four thousand pounds*) to the latter's son, as well as the passage back to France for his cook Russoe (*Rousseaux ??*). He also bequeathed £1000 each to his sisters Lady Susanna and Lady Rebecca, and £2000 to his nephew Baldwin Pollexfen Bastard, presumably the son of his married sister Lady Bridget Bastard. Also in the codicils was a direction to his brother Vere, into whose hands all the Testator's papers would fall, that Vere should

“make me amends for his former behaviour by concealing such writings as may not be proper to be seen”.

John, 2nd Earl Poulett died unmarried and childless in 1764. The Hinton St George parish register records the burial on 13 November of *“The Right Hon’ble John Earl Poulett”*, the register signed by W Fewtrell, Rector. John’s titles passed to his brother, Vere, who proved his will in London on 7 January 1765, recorded as *“The Right Honourable Vere Earl Poulett, Viscount and Baron of Hinton St George”*

Vere 3rd Earl Poulett (1710-1788)

Vere, the third son of John, 1st Earl Poulet by his wife Bridget nee Bertie, was born on 18 May 1710 and baptised 26 May at St Martin-In-The-Fields, London, He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford where he matriculated on 19 May 1729. (Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886, p 1135). He was admitted to Lincoln’s Inn in 1733.

He was elected Member of Parliament for Bridgwater in 1741, a seat he held until 1747, when having quarrelled with his eldest brother, he was replaced by his elder brother Peregrine. The latter died unmarried in 1752, though Vere did not stand for election again. (History of Parliament, Poulett Hon Vere, accessed 25 May 2021)

The parish register of St George in the Fields records that *“The Honourable Vere Poulett of St George Hanover Square and Mary Butt of St Giles in ye Fields were married by special licence from ye Abp of Canterbury at Mr Lloyd’s house in Lincoln’s Inn fields March 4th 1755 by me John Lloyd”*. Mary was to bear him two sons, John and Vere

Vere was appointed recorder of Bridgwater in 1764. On his eldest brother John’s death that year, as the eldest surviving male heir Vere succeeded to the title becoming 3rd Earl Poulet. Vere was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Devon in 1771, which latter post he held until his death.

In 1780, the Rt Hon’ble Earl Poulett was one of those assessed for properties in the parish of **Sampford Peverell** – including £23 4sh 8d for the Barton, the highest single value in the parish, and £2 14sh for the mills. Personal correspondence with the Sampford Peverell Society establishes that there are two sets of records for this year’s assessment, and provides some important clarification on these and assessments for previous years. The earlier of the records for 1780 is dated 6 June and gives a single column list of names of individuals and the property for which each person was assessed. The second record is dated 12 August and presents a two column list of names of both the proprietors and the occupants of the individual properties on which they were assessed. Although the names do not appear in the same sequence, we can confirm the two record sets are otherwise identical, as the total amount of the assessment is the same in both records - £209 14 shillings 8 pence.

Comments from the Society clarify that although liability for the tax lay with the landowner, apparently local agreements with the tenant could mean that the tenant paid the

tax and then deducted that from the rent that they paid to the owner (Source; magazine of the Friends of the National Archives, vol 22, no 3, Dec 2011). What this means as far as the extent of ownership of the manor and borough by the Poulett family is concerned, is that the pre-1780 Land Tax assessments which present only a single column of names, **CANNOT** be relied upon as evidence that in all cases the name is that of a property's owner rather than of the tenant or occupier

In the same correspondence, the Society refers to another pre-1780 source for ownership of some of the properties, namely 4 survey books which survive. These form part of the Poulett estate papers held in the Somerset archives and date from ca 1650, 1696, 1700 and 18th century, the latter undated, but probably ca. 1750 and much altered by subsequent changes. These list amongst other things the properties for which the Pouletts collected rents; the amounts of those rents; and the names of the lives upon which the leases were determined. The survey books provide details of the ownership of those properties, but not of their occupiers or tenants, for which the first comprehensive list is in the "new" style 1780 Land Tax assessments. The number of leases, including a few copy holdings, from each of the survey books for ca. 1658 amount to 102; in 1696 there were 99, in 1700 there were 98 and in the c1750, before alterations, there are 109. As properties were split and / or combined over the years, in the Society's opinion it would be reasonable to deduce that the number of properties in the Poulett's ownership remained fairly stable over this period of a century or so. In summary, we can safely conclude the Poulett's were the largest land owners in Sampford Peverell throughout the period 1650-1750 covered by these survey books, and as will be seen beyond 1780

Styling himself "*Earl Poulett, Viscount and Baron of Hinton St George*", Vere made his will on 28 May 1787. He subsequently made thirteen codicils thereto, such that the National Archives record runs to some 20 pages, the fine detail of which we need not dwell on here. Vere was evidently possessed of a very large estate, partly inherited from his brother John, which included properties in central London and Twickenham. He appointed as Trustees to receive monies and execute certain aspects of his will George Powlett and John Polloxfen Bastard, the Testator's nephew. His will made careful provision for his sister Lady Susan Poulett. Among other legacies, he bequeathed a lifetime annual income of £2000 for his wife Mary, and referring to their marriage settlement notes that she brought a fortune of £20,000 to their marriage.

Much of the will is given over to detailed provisions for his two sons and their heirs male in order of primogeniture. The Testator referred to the multi-thousand pound sums already paid to his son Vere to purchase rank in the army and settle debts he had contracted, and to a legacy of £2000 from his late brother Anne Poulett to purchase the rank of Lieutenant Colonel for the said Vere.

In a fascinating small detail, the two line text of the 3rd codicil made on 30 June 1787 reads "*The care of Pompey my cropped poney (sic) & my green parrot, I commit to Mary Countess Poulett my beloved wife*"

Earl Poulett also bequeathed to his son John his house at Hinton St George together with the artworks therein, as listed in a catalogue of over 100 items annexed to the will as the

4th codicil . He was evidently a man of some discernment for the catalogue includes works by Titian, Tintoretto, Parmigiano, Van Dyke, Reubens, Albrecht Durer and Holbein.

He appointed as his executrix and joint executors his wife Countess Mary and his aforementioned trustees.

Earl Poulett made **NO** reference to properties in or advowson of **Sampford Peverell** or any other parish by name – perhaps there were simply too many to refer to individually

The Hinton St George parish register records that The Right Hon'ble Vere Earl Poulett was buried on 25 April 1788. His will was proved in London on 30 May 1788 by Mary, Countess Dowager Poulett and her two co-executors.

The Right Honourable Mary Countess Dowager Poulett survived her husband by some 30 years. She made her will on 6 March 1817, the original document running to 17 pages and the transcript at the National Archives to 10 pages. The fine detail of her will need not concern us. Suffice to note that she had a large landed estate in Twickenham and Isleworth in west London. She appointed as Trustees the Rev. Duke Younge clerk of Cornwood, Devon and Roger Langdon. She bequeathed a lifetime interest in her London estate to her only surviving son, John who had succeeded his father thus becoming 4th Earl Poulett. After her son's death, the estate was to pass to his eldest son and heir apparent, another John then known as John Lord Viscount Hinton, and the latter's heirs male in order of primogeniture. In default of such issue, then it was to pass to her son John's second and only other son the Honourable George Poulett and his heirs male, likewise. In further default, the estate was to pass to the Testatrix' other grandson, yet another John, the only son of her (younger) son, the late General Vere Poulett. (*The latter died in 1812 after a career in the army and twice serving as MP for Bridgwater*)

In other provisions, Countess Mary left bequests to her niece Ann Tudor; Countess Margaret, wife of her son John Earl Poulett; grand-daughters Lady Mary Poulett, Lady Augusta Poulett, Sophia Lady Viscountess Barnard; Lady Ann Baroness Nugent; and Mary Ann, Vera and Charlotte Poulett, daughters of Testatrix's son Vere deceased. She left charitable bequests to the poor of Twickenham and Lyme Regis where she owned other properties. She bequeathed a lifetime interest in the latter to her niece Ann Tudor, and after Ann's decease to Mary Ann, Vera & Charlotte, daughters of the late General Vere Poulett. She also left a sum of £400 to erect a monument to her late husband in the church at Hinton Saint George, with the direction that she be interred there beside him in the family tomb. She appointed her niece Ann Tudor and Duke Younge joint executrix and executor of her will. In a codicil to her will, she appointed as Trustee John Robert Langdon, son of Roger Langdon, replacing the latter who had died. But nowhere in her will did she make any reference to property held in **Sampford Peverell**.

The Hinton St George parish register records the burial on 8 May 1819 of The Right Hon'ble Dowager Countess Poulett aged 87, her residence noted as Lyme Regis, Dorset. Her will was proved in London on 21 May 1819 by Ann Tudor, with powers reserved to the Rev. Duke Younge clerk, the joint executor.

John 4th Earl Poulett (1756-1819).

The next heir was John, the elder son of the 3rd Earl Vere Poulett and his wife Mary Countess Poulett. An entry in the Hinton St George parish register records that John, son of the Right Hon'ble Vere Earl Poulett was born 3 April 1756. It also notes the birth of his younger brother Vere on 10 May 1761.

John had a career as a militia officer, serving from 1779-1798 as Colonel of the East Devon Militia and in 1803 of the 1st (East) Somersetshire Militia and East Somerset Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry.

The parish register of St George Hanover Square, London records John's marriage on 22 July 1782 to Sophia, daughter of Sir George Pocock. The bride was then a minor and the marriage was solemnised at the home of Sir George in Berkeley Square, London by special licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Sophia was to bear John 10 children.

John succeeded to the title becoming 4th Earl Poulett on the death of his father in 1788. In 1792 he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, a position he held until his death. On 30 May 1794 he was invested a Knight of the Thistle, and on 19 Nov 1795 was appointed a Lord of the Bedchamber to King George III.

In 1796, Earl Poulett commissioned a survey of his property **the Manor of Sampford Peverell**. Then survey was undertaken by F Charlton and completed at a scale of 8 chains to one inch. (SWHT Exeter doc ref 1044B-O/M/E/90)

In 1807, the land tax assessment for the parish of **Sampford Peverell** showed the Right Honourable Earl Poulett was assessed as proprietor for Sampford Barton, again the largest single assessment in the parish, and Sampford Mills in the sums of £24 7sh 11d and £2 16s 8d respectively. It appears that Earl Poulett still owned most of **Sampford Peverell** as he was also assessed as the proprietor of many other named properties including "West Pitt" and "Turbevilles". However, a personal communication with the Sampford Peverell Society based on their review of the land tax records suggests that by 1807, Earl Poulett began disposing of some individual properties. What appears to have happened over the period 1780 to 1807 was that a few of the more prosperous residents of the parish had been busy acquiring the long leases of properties as and when they could do so. For example, a certain John Cowlen had established a portfolio of 12 properties, though not necessarily purchased from Earl Poulett

In 1808, John Earl Poulett executed a lease and release for the **Manor and Borough of Sampford Peverell** on 28 September with John Edye Manning of Exeter Gent, and on the following day 29 September with Thomas Hellings of Tiverton Esq and James Hellings of Holcombe Rogus. A record in the public domain states that Thomas Hellings solicitor also served as Town Clerk for Tiverton for 16 years. James Hellings issued an acknowledgement dated 29 September 1808 that although he was listed as the purchaser, he was acting as Trustee for John Manning, the real purchaser. (SWHT Exeter doc refs: 1716/M/T/10, /11 and /12)

In 1811, Countess Sophia died when she was only in her late 40's. She was buried on 2 Feb 1811 at Hinton St George, where a number of their children who died young were also laid to rest.

Also in 1811, personal correspondence with the Sampford Peverell Society confirms that Earl Poulett was **NOT** listed in the land tax assessment for that year. It appears that Earl Poulett had disposed of all of his estate in **Sampford Peverell**. However as will be seen, he seems to have continued to hold the Lordship of the Manor until 1815, suggesting that role may have been held independently of the ownership of any real estate in the manor.

Reference was made earlier to the memorial plaque to Dame Margaret Poulet who was interred in the parish church in 1602. An adjacent plaque states that the original was restored by “the 5th Earl Viscount Hinton and Baron Poulett of Hinton St. George Somersetshire in whose family the ancient **manor and church of Sampford Peverell remained vested from the days of Henry VIII to the 55th year of the reign of King George III**”. The said 55th year corresponds to 1815.

In 1815 a new Rector of **Sampford Peverell** was appointed. As noted earlier, John 2nd Earl Poulett presented John Adney as Rector in 1760 - the latter was taxed for the Rectory in the assessments of 1780 and 1807. When Simon (Sydenham ??) Pidsley was appointed as Adney's successor in 1815 – presumably after Adney's death after a remarkable tenure of 55 years – he was **NOT** presented by the Earl Poulett. That would be consistent with the text on the plaque erected by the 5th Earl that the church was no longer vested in the Poulet family. Moreover, a contemporary notice from the Exeter newspaper states that “*a dispensation has passed the great seal to enable the Rev S. Pidsley, Rector of Uplowman and Chaplain to the Right Rev The Bishop of Norwich, to hold the adjoining Rectory of Sampford Peverell with that of Uplowman, both in his own right and as true patron*”. (Clergy of the Church of England database; and Sampford Peverell Society records including a clip from the Exeter Flying Post from 15 June 1815. Note the dates in the CCED and Society records are not fully consistent on this point)

Following Countess Sophia's untimely death, John re-married on 23 July 1816 in St George Hanover Square, London to Dame Margaret Smith Burges, widow of Sir John Smith-Burges.

Shortly after this second marriage, John styling himself “*Earl Poulett and Baron Hinton St George*” made his will on 17 August 1816, to which he added four codicils. The whole runs to some 15 pages in the transcript held at the National Archives and the detailed content need not concern us here. The Testator cited his quadri-partite marriage settlement dated 22 July 1782 (*ie his first marriage*) under which two annuities of £1000 and two capital sums of £20,000 were to be held in trust for John and his wife Sophia and their heirs. The main body of the will concerns the lifetime entitlement to these sums of John and Sophia and the subsequent distribution of these monies including interest and profits of investments arising therefrom between their children then surviving, viz John Viscount Hinton, eldest son and heir apparent; Lady Sophia Viscountess Barnard, eldest daughter and wife of Henry Viscount Barnard; the Honourable George Poulett, second and only surviving “younger” son; Lady Mary Poulett and Lady Augusta Poulett, youngest daughters.

John bequeathed to his (*second*) wife Dame Margaret a lifetime interest in his residence in Piccadilly, London together with the enjoyment of the artworks left as heirlooms by the will of his father Vere. He bequeathed his mansion house at Stratford Place Middlesex to his wife Dame Margaret and son George, the same to be sold.

He made no specific reference to the Manor or Advowson of **Samford Peverell**. He bequeathed to his son John Viscount Hinton all his “freehold, leasehold and copyhold estates in the counties of Somerset, Dorset and Devon”, as well as furnishings and other effects and assets at the mansion house of Hinton St George. The Testator subsequently modified that bequest through a codicil in which he bequeathed at least part of those estates in the said three counties to John, son of his deceased brother Vere Poulett.

A letter from 1818 is held in the Devon archives in Exeter from V. Langworthy of Ilminster to Thomas Hellings, solicitor of Tiverton “*informing him that Lord Poulett held a court leet for **Sampford Peverell borough**, a court baron for **Sampford Peverell manor** and another court baron for **Sampford Peverell parish**”.*

It is unclear from the source citation whether the correspondence refers to courts held during 1818 or to sittings held in previously. Given the 5th Earl’s remark on the plaque in the parish church that the vesting of the Manor in the Poulet family ended in 1815, it seems likely the correspondence referred to courts held in previous years. At about this time, Thomas Hellings acquired the right of lordship and styling himself Lord of the Manor took advantage of the privileges that entailed. These turned out to be few, but included appointment of an ale taster; a bailiff; and fining people for non-attendance at his court, which must have seemed absurd to the local population, harking back to medieval times. The archive citation notes that “*all the records were transferred to Mr. Feltham who was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Beagly*”. (SWHT Exeter doc ref 1716/M/E/23)

The Hinton St George parish register records that The Right Honourable John Fourth Earl Poulett died on 14 Jan 1819 aged 63 and was buried on 26 January. His will was proved in London on 5 Feb 1819 by the Honourable George Poulett, son & executor, and George Booth Tyndale esq, executor added in the second codicil, with powers reserved to the Right Honourable Margaret Countess Poulett, executrix.

Thomas Hellings apparently retained the title of Lord of the Manor of **Sampford Peverell** until at least 1834. A undated record in the Devon archives concerning a legal case with Counsel’s opinion notes that “*Mr. Hellings, Lord of the Manor, having sold three out of four of the estates comprising the manor, **has not held a court since 1834**, that the last appointed Bailiff refuses to deliver up possession of the pound and that Mr. Hellings proposed to take it by force*” (SWHT Exeter doc ref 1716M/M/39).

We have found no documentary evidence for how long Mr Hellings continued to hold the Lordship of the Manor. FreeBMD has a credible record for his death in Tiverton District in 1853 Q1. The Devon Archives hold an attested copy of the will of Thomas Hellings of Tiverton, gentleman dated 11 Feb 1853, and of the probate dated 2 April 1853. The will refers to the Manor of Halberton Deane, but makes **NO** mention of **Sampford Peverell**. (National Archives doc ref PROB11/2170/23 and SWHT Exeter doc ref 1716M/F/2-3)

After the death of the 4th Earl Poulett, the earldom survived for another four generations. For completeness, a summary of the succeeding earls is presented below.

John 5th Earl Poulett (1783-1864) and his heirs

John, the eldest son of John Earl Poulett and Countess Sophie nee Pocock was born on 5 July 1783. He was educated at Harrow and Brasenose College, Oxford where he matriculated on 12 June 1801. Upon the death of the 4th Earl in 1819, John succeeded to the title as 5th Earl Poulett. He followed his father into a career in the militia, succeeding him as colonel of the 1st (East) Somersetshire militia.

The Hinton St George parish register cites the details of a marriage certificate recording the marriage on 28 August 1820 of the Right Honourable John Earl Poulett, Viscount Hinton and Baron Hinton St George, and Charlotte Fanny Portman spinster solemnised at the house of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Paris according to the rites of the Church of England & Ireland. It is unknown why Earl Poulett was then in Paris, but it appears he stayed at least one year. Their son John Rolle Poulett was baptised there by the Embassy chaplain on 14 June 1821. The couple apparently returned home shortly afterwards as the parish register also records that their second son Vere was baptised at the family seat Hinton House on 22 September 1822. Countess Charlotte was to bear him a daughter Margaret Charlotte who died in infancy and a third son Amias Poulett. All three sons had military careers, and all three pre-deceased their father.

On the 5th Earl's death in 1864, he was succeeded as 6th Earl by his nephew William Henry Poulett (1827-1899), third son of John's younger brother Admiral the Honourable George Poulett.

On William Henry's death, a dispute into the succession arose, with the outcome that the earldom and other titles were awarded to the 6th Earl's son by his third wife, William John Lydston Poulett, who became the 7th Earl Poulett. He fought in the First World War as a Captain in the Royal Horse Artillery and died of influenza in 1918.

He was succeeded by his only son George Amias Fitzwarrine Poulett (1909-1973) as the 8th Earl, who was brought up by his mother, a former actress. After Eton he trained as a railway engineer. Although married three times, he was childless. In 1968 the 8th - and last - Earl Poulett sold the Hinton estate, after which he and his wife settled in Jersey, Channel Islands. He thus returned to the place with which his ancestor Sir Hugh Poulet was so closely connected, and who some 430 years previously had first purchased the family interest in **Sampford Peverell**.

George 8th Earl Poulett of Lille Hus, Gorey, St Martin, Jersey made his will on 10 April 1973. On his death later that year with no heirs – his sister Lady Bridget Poulett de Robledo was also childless - all his titles became extinct. Thus came to an end this line of the Poulet family. Lady Bridget died in Bogota, Columbia on 31 July 1978. George's third

wife Countess Margaret Christine survived him by some 45 years. She died aged 81 in Jersey General Hospital on 27 March 2018.

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