The Breretons of Cheshire, England

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INTRODUCTION

This history is part of a larger 2002 document, titled ‘In Search of My Ancestors’ which I dedicated to my father Albert Lionel (Bert) Brereton who served in the Navy, during the First World War and as a Sergeant in the 3rd Canadian Infantry, Princess Patricia’s Regiment, during the Second World War. He returned to Canada in 1945, on a hospital ship and died when I was eight years of age.

Unable to learn about my Brereton ancestors from my father or his parents over the years I searched for links to the past; at times travelling to Brereton sites. My journey has been both fun and rewarding.

On our first trip to England, in 1993, my husband Bob and I visited Royal Leamington Spa in England and saw the home of my Great Aunt Ina Glass at 2 Clarendon Crescent (my Grandmother Brereton-Smallwood also resided there until her death at the age of 101 years).

We also visited Brereton Hall in Cheshire, England and met with the owners of the property Mary and Derrick Creigh. For many years, under their ownership Brereton Hall had functioned as a private girl’s school. However, by the 1990’s much updating was needed to continue as a school and the decision was made to return the hall to its original function, as a private residence. During this trip we also visited the Bear’s Head Inn and Brereton Heath Park. For me it was such an exciting encounter!

During our second visit, in 1999, we returned to Brereton Hall to find that it had been sold, as had the Creigh’s former private residence. Other parts of the once grand estate had also been severed, including the Gate House, the Coach House and a few houses around the perimeter of the building; some parcels had already changed hands.

Over the years many of the single residences and farms, originally part of the Brereton holdings had been sold. It was sad to see the dismantling of the once grand Brereton estate.

During our 1999 trip we also travelled to Ireland visiting the town of Bantry, in County Kerry, birthplace of my grandfather David Leslie Deane Brereton, also Dublin, the home of my great-great grandfather, Dr. David Brereton as well as other towns and villages particularly in the south-west part of Ireland.

The journey in search of the Breretons continued in the summer of 2001, when we attended Worldwide Brereton Reunions (coordinated by Pamela and Derek Brereton) which was held in Cheshire. As a group we visited many sites including, Brereton Hall, Oswald’s Church and Handforth Hall (this time having a tour of the property together with my fellow Breretons). We also toured Bowden Church, Altrincham; St. Mary’s, Church Nantwich; St. Oswald’s Church, Brereton Chapel; St. Mary’s Church, Astbury; Gawsworth Hall; Malpas and a church in Harthill which was home to Breretons. What a great time we had visiting these marvelous churches, homes and monuments.

Closer to home, we have visited the site where my great grandfather, Captain James Westropp Brereton, his wife Caroline Ursula Elizabeth (formerly Harnett) and their four children homesteaded, circa 1879, in what was then the Northwest Territory of Canada. We actually picked a very chilly fall day to travel by canoe to see the property, now situated in the Whiteshell Provincial Park, in the Province of Manitoba. What fun to come across a sign identifying the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) stop of ‘Brereton’. We also visited a wonderful spot, Brereton Lake, in Manitoba - named for my great-grandfather.

Others visits have taken us to Gleichen, Alberta the home of my grandparents (David Brereton and Margaret Martin-Brereton) who homesteaded in the days when the Blackfoot, Sarsee and Crow (Canadian aboriginals) were still hunting buffalo and living in the traditional way.
My search, which appears to be an never ending quest, has also involved visits to the National Archives of Canada, in Ottawa where I was able to see the official documentation signed by Queen Victoria appointing Captain James Westropp Brereton as a Dominion Commissioner of Police; to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary where I reviewed both my grandfather and great grandfather's diaries; and to a small museum in Gleichen, just outside Calgary, which houses some mementos of the Brereton and Martin families. A trip to the provincial archives in Manitoba provided the details of land deeded in perpetuity to my great-grandfather.

While I have included some information about Brereton Hall the Irish Brereton connection in this document, there are other documents, including *The Breretons of Ireland, Volume 1 and 2, David Brereton of Killurin, King's County and The Brereton Hall Estate* which provide additional information about the family. All are available at breretonhistory.ca

This history is not intended as an authoritative guide nor is it intended for sale or publication. The project grew out of my long-standing interest in history and, in particular, my Brereton ancestors. It is also my dream that the information I have gathered and will share with my family will take them on a wonderful journey - and perhaps encourage them to read about the history of the Breretons, whether in England, Hong Kong, Africa, New Zealand, Australia, West Indies, Ireland, the United States, Canada - everywhere they travelled imagining the untold story of the families.

Throughout this history, I have attempted to validate dates and other information. However, given the scope of years covered and the amount of information that has been reviewed, it is inevitable that some inconsistencies of data will occur. I have tried, whenever possible to ensure dates and links between parents, siblings and others were reasonable and logical. Some readers may question the spelling of names. For ease, in editing I have written the family name as Brereton or de Brereton throughout, recognizing that earlier versions may have differed. Other names such as Alyse/Alice or Thorton/Thornton differ depending on the source - consequently, the spelling I have used may not always be exact but I have made what I believe to be a reasonable choice. I have also used Canadian spelling for some words (valour, colour etc. rather than color, valor).

**SOURCES OF INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION**

When I began to write about the Brereton family, there were a number of very important sources of information that inspired me and helped me in gathering and validating Brereton information.

1) A thesis written by Anne Coltman entitled ‘A Comparative Study of the Breretons of Wisconsin and the Breretons of South Africa. Their Pedigrees and Biographies, Photographs and Maps’. I first came across this document, during our 1993 visit to Brereton Hall. Anne had sent the Creighs a copy of her competed work. When I returned to Canada I contacted Anne’s mother and was able to obtain a copy of the thesis. Knowing that another Brereton ancestor was similarly interested in writing about the history was amazing. At the Cheshire Reunion of 2001, Anne and I met for the first time (but not the last) and as I was particularly interested in the Irish Brereton connection, she directed me to the work of Patrick Montague-Smith.

2) Notes prepared by Mr. Patrick Montague-Smith, a London genealogist and editor of Debrett’s Peerage and a Brereton through his mother’s line. His goal had been to write a history of the Brereton’s which would be global in its scope. To this end, in the spring of 1948, letters and articles appeared in the major newspapers throughout the British Empire and its former colonies appealing for information to help solve the mystery of the unclaimed title of Lord Brereton, Baron of Leighlin, created by King James I. Patrick was interested in biographies, life stories and reminiscences as well as pedigrees and apparently, he received hundreds of letters, diaries from England, Ireland, the United States, Canada, the West Indies, South Africa, Rhodesia, Australia, New

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1 Debrett’s Peerage and Baronetage has a long and proud history as a premier publisher of biographical reference books. It originated in 1769 when John Debrett produced The New Peerage, the present state of Nobility in England, Scotland and Ireland, a Guide to the British Aristocracy.
Zealand, Egypt and Hong Kong. I understand he also received countless visits from Breretons who *came home* and called to give them their genealogies or pedigrees and to find out where they fit in the family tree. Over the years he gathered volumes of information which he painstakingly typed into a series of biographies and personal sketches, ordered by family branches. At the time of his death, his notes remained; however, to the best of my knowledge a Brereton history was never published. His notes provided wonderful bits of history and I hope he would be pleased that his research not only helped me to link various Brereton branches together but also provided hints which led to me further research and new information – and a History of the Breretons, at least my version.

3) In 1951, Miss Dorothy Yarde\(^2\) and her mother (a Brereton by birth) placed a letter in a British magazine, called *Everybody's*, which had a readership covering the globe. As a result of their letter they exchanged information with over fifty interested Breretons. At some point Miss Yarde and Patrick Montague-Smith attempted to compile a comprehensive tree of all the various branches and generations of the Brereton family from 1066 to the present.

4) The book titles, *Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas* written by Dr. E. W. Ives. We were fortunate to have Dr. Ives speak to us at the 2001 Reunion and on a personal note I was able to obtain a copy of his work. The majority of this material covers the accounts and documents of William Brereton of Malpas from 1528-30 and 1534-45. The surviving records also include business documents (approximately twenty-four letters addressed to Brereton and three by Brereton himself) which were seized in 1536 when William was hanged along with Anne Boleyn and four other men. According to Dr. Ives *William Brereton is one of the best documented men of his rank in the early Tudor period*. One of the penalties for treason (refer to the section of Malpas in this document regarding his association with Anne Boleyn and King Henry VIII) involved the loss of personal property. Although the papers of the other men involved in this *affair* have disappeared, perhaps having been restored to their families, the private papers of William Brereton were preserved in the archives of the Crown. What a fascinating tale of intrigue, ultimate power, patronage and revenge the letters tell.

5) The booklet, *The Story of Brereton Hall, Cheshire*, written by Arthur Moir. It was written during his time St. Oswald’s Church at Brereton and provides a particularly good history of Brereton Hall and environs.

6) Special thanks must also go to Derek and Pamela Brereton for initiating the idea of a reunion - and more importantly for all their work in carrying the idea forth to fruition. Without their efforts I would have missed wonderful opportunity to meet Breretons from around the world and share, together, our common history.

\(^2\) Apparently, Montague-Smith and Miss Yarde were distant cousins stemming from the Irish Breretons
The Romans established their northwestern fortress on a low sandstone hill at the head of the estuary of the River Dee and named it Deva. From this vantage point they held a strategic position against attack from both North Wales and the northern frontier. This site also provided a port, which was part of a valuable trade route.

According to a visitor information publication from the City of Chester, Present-day Chester stands on the site of an ancient Roman fortress, built in about AD 79 as a base for military operations against the Welsh. The fortress was constructed on a sandstone plateau in a bend of the River Dee (hence 'Deva') where the river formed a natural moat on two sides. The fortress was first occupied by the 2nd Adiutrix Legions and then by Agricola's XX Valeria Victrix Legion. Later it became a 'citizen fortress' rather than a centre of active campaigning. The Romans relied on local produce and materials - salt from Cheshire, minerals from North Wales and Anglesey - so Chester undoubtedly became a trading centre. Coal was unloaded at Heronside - the first recorded instance of the Romans using coal. The Romans withdrew in AD 383 and little is known of this 'fortress of the legions' for several centuries. It was probably never completely deserted and the first Saxons are believed to have settled there in AD 650. King Aethelred of Mercia is credited with founding two churches: St. John, outside the walls, and St. Peter and St. Paul, on the site of the present cathedral. King Egbert is recorded as taking Chester in AD 829 and his son Aethelwulf as being crowned there ten years later. It would thus appear that the Saxons were firmly established in the city by this time, although scarcely anything remains of their wattle, clay and timber buildings. At the beginning of the 10th century the Norse-Irish community, which had been given land by Aethelred, Aeldorman of Cheshire allied with the Danes in an unsuccessful attack on Chester. His wife Aethelflaeda (the 'Lady of the Mercians') restored the fortress, rebuilding and extending the walls, and raised a castle near the river, outside the former Roman defences. (Chester was one of many towns or 'burhs' which were fortified at this time.) She also re-dedicated the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul to Werburgh and dedicated a chapel to St. Oswald and a church to St. Peter. The present Chester Cathedral stands on the site of the Anglo-Saxon church of St. Werburgh, where Hugh d'Avranches, aided by Bishop Anselm, founded a great Benedictine Abbey in 1092. The Abbey flourished as a centre of monastic life, attracting many pilgrims, until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540. A year later, the Abbey Church became the cathedral of the newly formed diocese of Chester.

This land also saw the Normans invade and conquer England in 1066. William of Normandy, who became king on Christmas Day, marched across the rich plains of Cheshire to Chester and in 1070 subdued the village. Under the Normans, Chester became an important town, the administrative centre of the Palatine earldom. The port became the most important on the northwest coast, facilitating trade with Ireland, Scotland, France and Spain. Later, the silting of the River Dee caused trade to decline.

William the Conqueror stayed in the City of Chester between 1069 and 1070 and the Barony of Kinderton was established during this time. Confiscated lands were divided up and granted to Norman knights who had rendered service to William. Edwin, Earl of Mercia was replaced by Hugh d'Avranches kinsman of William Brereton who became the first Earl of Chester. Flintshire, Denbighshire (now in Wales), Lancashire and part of Yorkshire were within Cheshire whose boundaries stretched to the border of Scotland. The Seven Earls of Chester were powerful and within Chester they exercised almost as much power as the king.
THE ORIGINS OF THE BRERETON NAME, IN CHESHIRE

The name Brereton is of toponymic origin.\(^7\) In this instance, the name denotes one who came from Brereton, the name of two villages, one in the parish of Knaresborough, Yorkshire and the other, three miles from Sandbach, Cheshire. Brereton is derived from the Old English word braer, brer meaning briar and tun meaning enclosure or homestead. It has also been suggested that the original name was Breto and the family can claim descent from the Bretons commemorated in Rouen Cathedral. The name was spelled various ways in the early centuries, including, Breturn, Breto, Breton, Breerton, de Brerton, de Brereton.

The first mention of the name Brereton occurs in the Domesday Book.\(^8\) The name Brereton appears as one of the six dependencies or manors of the Barony of Kinderton at Middlewich, which was obtained by Gilbert de Venables\(^9\). It would appear that the taking of land from the Saxon landowners and giving it to Norman followers was completed before the 1086 Domesday survey was completed.

Records indicate that Brereton and Gilbert de Venables came with William the Conqueror and Hugh Lupus\(^10\) or Hugh d’Avranches (who became Earl of Chester). Under Norman rule Chester was virtually an independent kingdom with its own laws, taxes, nobility, army and courts of justice. Many castles were built for defense in strategic locations along the Welsh border, i.e. at Beeston Hill and Malpas. A fortress castle at Chester was enlarged and a bridge built over the River Dee.

The earldom of Chester passed into the hands of a succession of eight Norman earls until the death of the last earl, in 1237, following which the earldom of Chester reverted to the Crown.

VENABLE – BRERETON CONNECTION

The names Venable and Brereton are found in the roll of Battle Abbey\(^11\), a contemporary list of the names of Norman barons, knights and esquires at the Battle of Hastings.\(^12\)

While the author has not seen any definitive reference to a common family ancestor the close ties between the two families is evident in the coats of arms. The Venables coat of arms is azure (blue) with two bars argent (silver) while the Brereton’s is argent (silver) with two bars sable (black). Further, a dispensation was required before a marriage was permitted between the Venable and Brereton families; this was based on the grounds of consanguinity (common ancestry).

For centuries, the Venables sponsored and funded Breretons who took holy orders. Some writers have suggested that the First Sir William Brereton was probably a younger son of the Venables who assumed the Brereton name when he was granted his dependence in return for services to William the Conqueror.

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\(^7\) Derived from the place where the initial bearer once lived or held land.
\(^8\) William I, the Conqueror who invaded England in 1066, commissioned the Domesday Book in December 1085. The first draft, which was completed in August 1086, contained records for 13,418 settlements in the English Counties south of the Rivers Ribble and Tees (the border with Scotland at that time). The book serves as the starting point for the history of most English towns and villages.
\(^9\) Gilbert de Venables, alias Vanator I from Venables in Normandy was a younger son of the Count of Blois. He arrived in Britain with William the Conqueror and became a large landowner in Cheshire & elsewhere.
\(^10\) Lupus, a nephew of William I the Conqueror, was given the city and county of Chester and had conferred upon him the honour and dignity of the County Palatine with Barons, a Chamberlain or Chancellor of all his courts as well as all other attendants needed for a principality. He was the first of the Earls Palatine of Chester.
\(^11\) The Roll is housed in a magnificent Benedictine Abbey which commemorates one of the most famous events in English history, the Battle of Hastings on 14th October 1066. The altar of the Abbey Church was positioned, by the orders of William I, at the spot where the Saxon King Harold was believed to have been killed on that fateful day.
\(^12\) William, Duke of Normandy took on the Saxon King Harold, in what was to be a desperate struggle for the Throne. It was the last time the British Isles suffered a successful invasion.
THE FIRST BRERETON ESTATE IN CHERSHIRE

The first Brereton estate consisted of two manor houses; the Great and Little Saughall and Shotwick Castle located near the Dee River in, The Wirral.¹³ In honour of William the Conqueror, William became a recurring family name, thereby causing historians considerable difficulty in distinguishing between them.

SIR RANDULPHUS BRERETON

Early reference to the Brereton family identifies a Sir Ranulphus Brereton (or Radulph or Ralph de Brereton) as witnessing a deed of Gilbert de Venables during the reign of William II, Rufus. William Rufus, who reigned from 1089-1100, was the son of William the Conqueror, King of England from 1066 to 1087, and Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. The Brereton name was also recorded in England when one Richard de Brereton was listed in the Yorkshire Charters of 1176. The name, William de Brereton was also recorded in 1175. Reference to Ralph de Brereton also appeared, in 1176, when he was listed as a witness to a grant of Marton and is listed by Ormerod as being, the founder of the traceable Brereton pedigree. Recognizing the difficulty in validating the correct information of the early family, after some research I have chosen the following lineage: Radulphus Brereton had a son Radulphus who married Cecile St. George. They had two sons; William Brereton who married Margery de Torhaunt, daughter of Ralph FitzPeter de Torhaunt (or Tarhaunt) and Gilbertus Brereton. Randulphus later married Lady Ada of Huntingdon daughter of David, Earl of Angus and Huntingdon and Earl of Galloway and relict of Henry Hastings. I have identified William Brereton, son of Margery and William, as the first Sir William Brereton.

BRERETON – HUNTINGDON CONNECTION

Raymond Richards described St. Mary’s Church, Astbury¹⁴ in Cheshire: as one of the most beautiful churches in the county. While the earliest parts of the church go back to Saxon times, there are no longer any remnants of the early Saxon construction; which would have been wattle construction with thatched roof. However, there is considerable evidence of the Norman Period: visible in the north doorway into the church, with its semi-circular arch. There is also evidence of construction undertaken during the early English period.

Although the structure has evolved over the years, the current form dates to the fifteenth century. On the south side of the church is a porch and above it a priest’s chamber which would have served as living quarters for rectors and monks of Astbury residing there when it was a monastery.

Other features of note include the great west door beneath a stately tower, the spire (rebuilt in 1838 to replace an early English one destroyed by lightning), the massive battlements and the 13th century canopied tomb of Sir Radulph and Lady Ada Brereton. The exterior of the church is decorated with grotesque gargoyles - to keep away evil spirits and devils. The figures also act as outlets for rainwater from the roof.

The interior of the church is beautiful with towering ceiling supported by stone arches and a wooden nave roof extensively restored in the Jacobean period. There are stunning stained glass windows, the remains of a 15th century wall-painting showing the Blessed Virgin blessing St. George before his battle with the dragon (there is no other known example depicting this scene in St. George's life) and wonderful carved wood, some dating to the 1600's. The south aisle roof is spectacular with many carved wooden roof bosses.

¹³ An area between the Dee and Mersey Rivers
¹⁴ References: Parish of St. Mary’s Church Information Booklet¹⁴ produced by the Parish of St. Mary’s Church and provided by Mr. Sam Moore (member of the congregation) during a tour of the church in 2001. The booklet is written by the Rector and Wardens of St. Mary’s Church, Astbury, St. Mary’s Church (Old Vicarage Publications, Reades Lane, Congleton, Cw12 3LL - printed by Jarrold Publishing, Norwich. 1995). Mr. Sam Moore, a member of St. Mary’s Church provided additional information during our tour of the church.
The Brereton Coat of Arms can be found on both the exterior and interior of the church. It is one of a number of coats of arms which decorate the ceiling molding. The Brereton family of Astbury died out before the church was completed in the 14th century.

In the cemetery, on the grounds of St. Mary's Church, Astbury you can see a fine canopied tomb of Sir Randulphus Brereton and Lady Ada Brereton - with the following inscription:

**HIC JACENT RADULPHUS BRERETON MILES; ET DOMINA ADA, UXOR SUE, UNA DAVID COMMITIS NUNTING DONIC** (Here lie Radulph Brereton, Knight, and the Lady Ada his wife, one of the daughters of David Huntingdon)

The canopy which is open on two sides covers two stone effigies; a knight cap-a-pie\(^{15}\) with his feet resting on a lion, and holding a shield on his left arm. His lay has her hands folded over her breasts and her feet resting on a dog. As this monument was built at the direction of Sir William Brereton, Baron of Malpas, circa 1618, the tombs were probably moved from inside the church to the cemetery at that time.

Ralph de Brereton (Randulph) was the son of William Brereton and Margery de Touraut/Thornton. He built the first chapel at St. Oswald, Brereton - granting the land of Smethwick for the chapel. Later, Ralph married Lady Ada.

\(^{15}\) Refers to being armed head to foot ready for battle
There is some controversy concerning Ada, the wife of Randulphus Brereton and her link of the Brereton family with the Kings of Scotland. Some researchers believe that she was the daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon (also noted in the tomb inscription) and that her father's ancestry can be traced to David I, King of Scotland and her mother's family to the first Celtic King of Scotland. Other writers suggest that Ada was actually the daughter of a King of Scotland. In the booklet Scotland’s Kings and Queens, the writers indicate that Lady Ada was the daughter of William de Warenne, Earl of Surrey and married Henry, Earl of Huntingdon. Henry was the son of David Huntington, The Saint (1124-1153) and Matilda, daughter of Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon. Further they indicate that Ada and Henry had at least three sons: Malcolm IV (1153-1165); William I the Lion (1165-1214) and David Earl of Huntingdon; all future Kings of Scotland. Henry died in 1152. David, Earl of Huntingdon (? - 1216) married Matilda (? - 1233), daughter of Hugh Keveliok, Earl of Chester.

From information contained in the grant issued when the First Lord Leighlin of Brereton Hall was knighted in 1588 in Flushing, Netherlands, it would appear that David and Matilda also had a son John and daughter Ada. Following is a portion of the grant, which references Sir William Brereton link with Ada:

Sir William towards us and our Crown and that he is sprung from an ancient noble and most renowned family in as much he is descended through many illustrious ancestors from Ada, Sister of John (surnamed Scot) seventh Earl of Chester and Daughter of David Earl of Angus and Huntingdon Lord of Galloway within our Kingdom of Scotland younger brother of William then King of Scotland.

If Ada, daughter of David and Matilda married Randulphus Brereton, it would be highly unlikely that they had issue as Ada would have been born prior to the death of her father David, in 1216, making her at least 52 years of age when her first husband died in 1268.

Apparently, Ormerod was doubtful about their marriage and in the 1603 Erdeswick's Survey of Staffordshire recorded Ada as marrying secondly Sir William Handsacre not Sir Brereton. Notwithstanding Ormerod's recording, the tombs and inscription at St. Mary’s Church, Astbury, in Cheshire provide a different tale. Further, in St. Oswald’s Church, Brereton, Sandbach we can find the indisputable linking of the Brereton arms with those of the Earls of Chester and Huntingdon.

In an attempt to resolve the controversy around Ada, Patrick Montague-Smith (who was editor of Debrett’s Peerage and a Brereton descendant) suggested that the marriage did occur, but there were no children. To further complicate matters, I have found reference to, Isolda Brereton, the daughter of Ada and Randulphus. Isolda was given land, in Brindly, upon her marriage to Gilbert de Stoke.

In writing this 'history' I have chosen to agree with Patrick; Ada and Randulphus married by there were no issue. Consequently, William Brereton would have been the son Randulphus Brereton and his first wife de Cecilie de Sandbach.

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16 Scotland’s Kings and Queens, published by Pitkin Unichrome Ltd. 1992 Pictorials
17 William refers to William I, the Lionhearted, born 1143; he reigned from 1165 to 1214. He succeeded his unmarried brother Malcolm IV.
Photo by the author - black and white image from the St. Mary's booklet
EARLY BRANCHES OF THE BRERETON FAMILY

William Brereton

As indicated previously William Brereton married Margery Torhaunt, daughter of Ralph FitzPeter of Torhaunt. They had issue:

- Gilbertus Brereton
- Sir William Brereton I

Sir William Brereton I

Sir William Brereton I lived during the time of King John\(^\text{18}\) and King Henry III\(^\text{19}\). He married Margaret Groes and had issue:

- William Brereton
- Gilbert Brereton
- Margaret Brereton married Sir John Delves (King Henry’s brother)
- John Brereton
- Ralph Brereton, Rector of Davenham
- Robert Brereton
- Hugh Brereton
- Jane Brereton married Lord Adam de Bostock

William de Venables, Baron of Kinderton by right of being a superior Lord granted the wardship of two of William and Margaret’s children, William Brereton and Gilbert Brereton to Sir Richard de Sandbach. As a result of this wardship, William de Venables was able to facilitate the marriage of William Brereton to Cecile de Sandbach and Gilbert Brereton to Alice (perhaps another daughter). William became Sir William Brereton II upon the death of his father.

Gilbert Brereton became Rector of St. Mary’s Church, Astbury, in Cheshire. They had issue:

- Henry Brereton
- Sibilla Brereton married William de Boults\(^\text{20}\)

Sir William Brereton II (? - 1346)

Sir William Brereton II and Cecile de Sandbach (daughter of Sir Richard de Sandbach) had two sons,

- Harno Brereton
  - William Brereton married Roesia de Vernon

Harno Brereton became Rector of Brereton in 1344 during the reign of Edward III.

In 1321, William Brereton married Roesia de Vernon, daughter of Ralph de Vernon of Shipbrooke. In 1336, the feudal bond between the Venables and the Breretons was broken when Hugh Venables, Baron of Kinderton released to Sir William Brereton II:

\[\text{His right in all services by which the said William Brereton held lands from him within}\]

\(^{18}\) Reigned from 1199 to 1216 and was signatory to the Magna Carta
\(^{19}\) Reigned from 1216 to 1272
\(^{20}\) He was the son of Adam Boults who owned land in Withenshaw
During the time of King Richard the Lionhearted\textsuperscript{21}, Sir William procured the grant of a weekly market and an annual fair for the township of Brereton. This market and the annual fair continued for 400 years, until 1722 when the last Lord Brereton of Brereton, died. Sir William Brereton and Roesia de Vernon had issue:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Richard Brereton (married Agnes daughter of Henry, Profit of Appiltrewyk)
  \item Peter Brereton
  \item John Brereton Rector of Wallasey
  \item Nicholas Brereton married Margaret and had issue John Brereton and William Brereton
  \item Margery Brereton (married John Davenport in 1302 and divorced him in 1303-05)
  \item Matilda Brereton (married John Dunville)
  \item Margaret Brereton
  \item William Brereton (? - 1343) married Margery de Bosley (the daughter of Jane Fulford and Richard de Bosley).
\end{itemize}

As William Brereton died in 1343 (prior to the death of his father Sir William Brereton II, in 1346) his son became Sir William Brereton III.

\begin{center}
**Sir William Brereton III (died 1391/2)**
\end{center}

In 1354, Sir William Brereton III, son of William Brereton and Margery de Bosley, became Baron of Malpas through his first marriage to Ellen Egerton. Ellen, daughter of Philip Egerton was the sister and heiress of David Egerton, representative of the Norman Barons of Malpas. Ellen and Sir William had issue:

\begin{itemize}
  \item William Brereton (1359-1426) born at Egerton and baptized at Malpas.
\end{itemize}

Sir William III fought at Crese and in Spain with King Edward III, the Black Prince and John of Gaunt.

Following the death of Ellen Egerton, Sir William III married Margaret Donne, daughter of Henry Donne Utkinson (the widow of John Davenport of Henbury).

William and Margaret had issue:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Elizabeth Brereton married William de Cholmondeley
  \item Joan Brereton
  \item Randle Brereton married Alicia Ipstones (the daughter and heiress of William de Ipstones)
\end{itemize}

Randle Brereton\textsuperscript{22} became founder of the Malpas Breretons. Malpas is located thirteen miles northeast of Chester and southwest of Brereton Hall. (See section on William of Malpas)

Sir William Brereton III was the Chamberlain of Chester for twenty-six years, during the reigns of King Henry VII and King Henry VIII. He was also knight to the body of the king. Henry VIII made him Knight Banneret as a reward for bravery at the Battle of Spurs, in France. Sir William Brereton III died in 1391/92.

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\textsuperscript{21} Reigned from 1189 to 1199
\textsuperscript{22} See section of William Brereton of Malpas

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The Bretons of Cheshire

EGERTON – BRERETON CONNECTION

According to Omerod\textsuperscript{23}: \textit{Egerton Hall was about one mile north-east of the 13th milestone on the Whitchurch road from Chester. Egerton Hall after being long abandoned to decay is now completely destroyed and its moated area of about a statute acre is leveled with the plough. The only remains being the ancient chapel, retaining its pointed east window and fragments of architecture, completely desecrated and used as a common barn.}

The Egertons eventually settled at Tatton Park near Knutsford where they built a Georgian mansion in the parkland. They remained at Tatton Park for 250 years. The last Lord Egerton, a bachelor, died in 1958, leaving the house and grounds for \textit{the education and delight} of the public, in the care of the National Trust and the Cheshire County Council.

Tatton Park had become linked with the Breretons, in 1353, during the reign of Edward III with the married of Sir William Brereton III and Ellen Egerton. Ellen's father Lord Phillip Egerton of Egerton Manor, Cheshire and her brother Phillip; Baron of Malpas died prior to 1363. Her sister Isabel died childless leaving Ellen as the sole heir.

William Brereton, the eldest son of Ellen and Sir William Brereton was born at Egerton and baptized at Malpas in 1350. He inherited the Egerton estate and became Baron of Malpas.

When William married Anylla Venables, daughter of Sir William Venables, lawyers took a particular interest in the legal side of this marriage because the bride and bridegroom were such close relatives that to make sure it was legal, a dispensation was granted by Richard de Donnes, the Prior of the Carmelites at Chester. The wedding took place at Audle.

\textbf{Sir William Brereton IV (1359 - 1426)}

William Brereton, son of Sir William and Ellen Egerton, was married twice, the first time to Elena Mascey (or Massey), daughter of Sir William Mascey or Massey of Tatton. They had issue Thomas Brereton.

Thomas was Rector of Brereton Church in 1433. He became heir to his mother's estate.

In 1386, William Brereton married Anylla Venables daughter of Sir Hugh Venables, Baron of Kinderton. As William and Anylla were related through a mutual descendant, Sir Ralph de Vernon\textsuperscript{24}, a dispensation was required before they could marry.

In 1386, Richard de Donnes, Prior of the Carmelites of Chester granted the dispensation, apparently, in part as recognition for the service of Sir William Brereton III to Edward, Black Prince and Earl of Chester during the war against Henry of Castile in Spain.

William became Sir William Brereton IV upon the death of his father. He fought in France under Henry V (reigned 1413-22) and became Governor of Caen, France under King Henry VI (who reigned 1422-1461, again in 1470-71 and was murdered in prayer at the Tower of London). Sir William IV was killed in 1425 after the Battle of Pontoisan, Holinhesh, Normandy.

Following Sir William's death Anylla married a Byron (reputed to be an ancestor of Lord Byron).

The children of Sir William Brereton and Anylla included;

\begin{itemize}
\item George Ormerod, L.L.D. F.R.S and F.S.A. 1819, \textit{The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester}
\item Ralph was the father of Roesia de Vernon who married Sir William II in 1321
\end{itemize}
The Breretons of Cheshire

William Brereton married Alyse Corbett (circa 1380-1430)\(^{25}\)

Elizabeth Brereton who married Sir John Savage (the son of John Savage and Maud Swinerton)

- Nicholas Brereton
- Hugh Brereton
- Matthew Brereton
- Henry Brereton

Marjory Brereton\(^{26}\) married 1st Richard Patton and married 2nd William Waynflete or Wainfleet.

William Brereton

William Brereton (son of Sir William and Anylla) married Alyse Corbett and had issue:

- William Brereton (1413 - ) became Sir William Brereton V
- Ralph Brereton
- Randall Brereton
- Alice Brereton married Peter Corbett, of Leighton
- Joan Brereton married John Aston, of Park Hall.

In 1415, while serving with King Henry V at Harfleur, in France, William Brereton\(^{27}\), died, thereby predeceasing his father. Consequently, his son, another William Brereton became Sir William Brereton V upon the death of his grandfather.

Sir William Brereton V (? - 1485)

Sir William Brereton, son of William and Alyse Corbett, married Phillipa Hulse, daughter of Sir Hugh Hulse and sister of Thomas Hulse. They had issue:

- William Brereton
- Sir Andrew Brereton
- Robert Brereton
- Roger Brereton
- Henry Brereton
- Matthew Brereton

Hugh Brereton married Anne Donne \(^{28}\)

William Brereton became Sir William Brereton VI upon the death of his father.

His brother Hugh Brereton and Anne Donne had issue:

- Roger Brereton
  - John Brereton of Wybunbury, Rector of Greatworth, North Hants
  - Thomas Brereton
  - William Brereton
  - Jane Brereton married Roger Rawsonne

- Isabelle Brereton married 1st William Confur and married 2nd Sir Whittington of Offerton

Hellen Brereton married Mayn-Warine de Crocket

Henry Brereton (? - Sept 10, 1585)

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\(^{25}\) Alyse was the sister and heiress of Richard Corbett of Leighton in the Barony of Caux

\(^{26}\) Margory and Waynflete had a son William of Wainfleet who became Lord High Chancellor, founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1458. He was also co-founder of Eton. William of Wainfleet died in 1486.

\(^{27}\) His widow married Thomas Holles, in 1416

\(^{28}\) Daughter of Robert Donne of Flaxyan
The Breeretons of Cheshire

Note: Hugh Brereton and his son Henry Brereton are buried at St. Oswald's Church, Brereton. Hugh Brereton of Wimbersley, Middlewich and Hassall Green, Sandbach, Cheshire was probably the youngest son of Henry Brereton who was buried at St. Oswald’s.

After the death of Sir William V, in 1485, his son William became Sir William VI.

Sir William Brereton VI (? - 1507)

Sir William Brereton VI became Esquire of the Body of Henry VII and married Katherine Byron daughter of Sir John Byron. When Sir William childless, in 1507, without issue his nephew, Andrew Brereton son of Andrew Brereton (? - 1497) became his heir and Sir William Brereton VII.

Sir Andrew Brereton (born 1475)

Sir Andrew Brereton married Agnes Legh, daughter of Robert Legh of Adlington and had issue:

William Brereton
John Brereton of Leek in Staffordshire
Andreas Brereton de Leecke
Matthew Brereton
Johanna Brereton married Lawrence Dutton of Marshe
Hellen Brereton married John Fitton of Gawsworth
Alice Brereton married 1st William Moreton of Little Moreton and married 2nd John Brereton
Elizabeth Brereton married 1st Philip Leigh and married 2nd John Carington
Catherine Brereton married Thomas Smith of Hugh Miles
Matilda Brereton married John Davenport

Sir William Brereton VII

Sir William Brereton VII, son of Andrew Brereton and Agnes Legh, was a staunch Royalist. He was born at Brereton and died at Kilkenny, Ireland.

The following information has been taken from Ann Coltman's thesis:

Sir William risked much when Henry VIII dissolved Norton Abbey during the Reformation in the 1530’s. The abbot and canons of Norton Abbey resisted the consequent destruction and were assisted by about 300 of the local citizens, who turned on Henry’s commissioners, forcing them to take refuge in a tower of the abbey. The sheriff, Sir Piers Dutton, a servile tool of the king afterwards sacrificed by the ungrateful tyrant, like all his other minions, succeeded in subduing this minor insurrection and was instructed, with Sir William, by Henry VIII, without any manner further delays, to cause the said late abbot and canons to be hanged, as most arrant traytors. Sir William refused to permit these executions, calling upon the amnesty granted to the rebels in Yorkshire by the Duke of Norfolk. Sir William’s stand was probably influenced by the fact that among those scheduled to be hanged was Rondall Brereton, Baron of the King’s Exchequer of Chester, a kinsman.

Sir William later served with much distinction in Ireland, in 1534 with his son John and 250 soldiers subduing the Fitzgerald Rebellion. (Refer to the section on Breeretons in Ireland). Sir William became Lord High Marshall, Lord Justice and Acting Deputy of Ireland.

29 Reigned 1485-1509
30 Brother and heir of Sir Thomas Dutton, of Dutton
31 They had a son Edward Fitton
Sir William Brereton VII married Alice Savage and had issue:

William Brereton
Margaret Brereton married 1st William Goodman, Mayor of Chester, in 1550 and married 2nd William de Moston
Henry Brereton
Katherine Brereton married 1st Edward Felshurst, of Crews and married 2nd Roger Brereton
Andrew Brereton
John Brereton married Katherine Berkeley of Beverston
Richard Brereton married Jane Massey
Matthew Brereton
Roger Brereton
Robert Brereton
Henry Brereton
Anne Brereton married David Kynaston, of Hanney.

Sir William Brereton later married Elenor Brereton of Ipstones, daughter of Sir Randall Brereton of Ipstones (widow of John Egerton of Wrenhill). They had issue:

Richard Brereton\(^{32}\) married Thomasine Ashley
Mary Brereton married Sir John Warburton of Arley\(^{33}\) - they had a son Peter Warburton
William Brereton (1567-1630) married Jane Warburton (1563-1627).

**BRERETON, ASHLEY AND WARBURTON CONNECTION\(^{34}\)**

During the reign of Henry VIII, the Ashley estate came into the possession of the Brereton family, through the marriage of Thomasine Ashley, daughter and heiress of George Ashley, to Richard Brereton the younger son of Sir William Brereton VII.

The eldest son of Richard Brereton and Thomasine Ashley was William Brereton. William was Sheriff of Cheshire in 1609; his eldest son Richard Brereton, who died unmarried in 1649, was Sheriff in 1632 and Mayor of the Borough of Altrincham from 1632-1634 and 1650-1652.

Their second son Thomas Brereton was probably a magistrate.

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**Monument to William Brereton and Jane Warburton-Brereton**

William Brereton and his wife, the former Jane Warburton, are commemorated in a monument in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Bowdon, Cheshire.

On the north transept of the east wall of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Bowdon\(^ {35}\) is a brown and cream mottled alabaster memorial with an *entablature* supported by columns which stand on a tomb chest. It is a monument to William Brereton of Ashley. Two black columns with plain shafts and gilded Corinthian capitals support the corniced entablature. On the underside of the flat soffit of the half tester there are eight plaster putto: the front

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\(^{32}\) Thomasina was the daughter of George Ashley of Ashley. William and Thomasina had issue including George Brereton who had two sons, George Brereton and William Brereton

\(^{33}\) They had a son Peter Warburton

\(^{34}\) Written notes provided at the church indicated that some of the above information was taken from the book, *A History of Altrincham and Bowdon*, by Alfred Inghem (?), first published in 1879. (Writing unclear)

\(^{35}\) Note: much of the following information has been taken from an unpublished handout provided during a tour of St. Mary the Virgin Church
four face to the right and the four behind face to the left. Two Tudor roses in relief and painted red are placed immediately above the capitals. The recessed semi-circular arch of 54 cm in depth has nine panels on the curved soffit, each containing a red or blue painted flower with gold centre on a black background and gilded and red frame. The spandrels on either side have a frieze in the arabesque with impaled escutcheons: the Brereton and Warburton arms co-joined.

The Blazon is described as follows:

Brereton impaling Warburton Arms - agent two bars sable, on the upper bar a crescent or for difference (Brereton of Ashley)/Quarterly, 1 and 4 - argent\textsuperscript{36}; 2 and 3 gules\textsuperscript{37}; in the 1st quarter a crescent sable (Warburton of Arley).

Within the arch is the achievement and inscription in black in roman caps. Raised and gilded decorative scrollwork and embellishment of Tudor roses and a smoking urn and scroll surround this on either side. The inscription is written in Latin in white on black with a gilded frame supported by scrolled and foliate carving in the alabaster in roman caps. Below the inscription the two recumbent effigies in prayer are placed on two steps. The upper male figure representing William Brereton has his head resting upon white, blue and gold tasseled cushions – he has half-length curly hair, a moustache and goatee. There is a quadruple compressed ruff around his neck and he is wearing a tight black jacket closely buttoned in front finishing below the waist in a splay fastened with a bow. The full sleeves are fastened tightly round the wrist with a series of small buttons. Over this is a mantle trimmed with fur reaching to the feet and with wide sleeves cut off at the elbow but with long tails hanging down to the knees. The edges are trimmed with needlework in a series of horizontal bay leaves finishing at the edge with large buttons. The boots are almost square in the toe and the lower garments are hidden under a cloak. The hands in prayer are bare. William Brereton of Ashley died in 1630.

The female figure is in prayer but her hands are missing (this could have occurred by an act of vandals). Her head is also resting on white, blue and gold tasseled cushions. Her curly hair protrudes from either side of her caul, which comes over her head to a point in front. She wears a large open ruff. The bodice has a low square neck with a rosette or brooch in front fastened in the centre - the bodice coming down in front to a point. The waist is encircled by a sash tied in a bow. The sleeves are extremely full, puffed and slashed with embroidery at the edges of the slashing. There are cords tied around the elbows and fastened with a rosette at the side and the cuffs are turned back. The skirts are full and the protruding shoes have rounded toes.

At the same level as the female figure but at the base of the columns on the plinth are two crests:

Blazon:

i) Out of a ducal coronet a bear's head (black), muzzled (red for Brereton)

ii) On a wreath of the colours a Saracen's head affronte, coupled at the shoulders proper, wreathed around the temples (silver and black for Warburton). There should be 3 gold ostrich feathers issuing from head but these are missing.

On the front side of the lower plinth of the tomb chest below the effigy of Jane Brereton, is a row of carved weeping figures in profile representing the children of the deceased. The first of the male weepers kneels at a Litany desk. The figures vary little, most having half-length hair, moustaches and short beards. The third figure carries a skull denoting that this child pre-deceased his/her parents. They have deep ruffs; close-fitting surcoats closely buttoned in front and finished in a splayed waist. The trunk hose is very full and pleated. They kneel upon cushions and mantles hang from their backs. The female weepers hold their hands in prayer. There are three girls and an infant. The hair of the first is concealed by a close fitting cap trimmed with lace, the second and third with long hair coiled round the back. They have short stiff collars with capes covering the shoulders, trimmed with deep pointed lace and edged puff sleeves tied at the elbows and completed with a rosette at the side, the cuffs turned back. They are dressed in close bodices buttoned down the front and coming to a point with loose squared epaulets at the back of the shoulders. The skirts are full and shoes not shown. Between the first and second female is an infant dressed in chrisom/swaddling clothes as he died in infancy. The condition is

\textsuperscript{36} Silver

\textsuperscript{37} Gules usually refers to the colour red – at times also sable – black or gold
good, although repair work is evident in places with the exception of the missing hands of the female effigy. Jane Brereton of Ashley died in 1627.

The monument, originally erected in 1627-1637, is 313 cm high by 270 cm in width and 170 cm in depth. It was first installed in the Carrington Chapel (now the Vestry) of the Tudor church. However, when the church was rebuilt in 1860 the monument was moved to the northeast corner of the church and in 1887/8 during Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, the monument was moved to its present position in the north transept. It is, therefore, now questionable as to whether the following inscription is correct in stating that the Breretons are buried under the monument:

**SACRED TO THE MEMORY**

*Under this marble lie buried the bodies of William Brereton, of Ashley in the County of Chester, Esquire and of Jane, his wife, the former of whom derived his race and descent from the ancient and illustrious family and lineage of Breretons of Brereton in the aforesaid County; the other sprang from the celebrated and ancient family of Warburtons and was one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Peter Warburton of Arley, in the aforesaid County, Esquire, recently dead. They bore male children, Richard, Thomas, William (peacefully sleeping in the Lord) and Peter. Female children Frances, Mary (also freed from the bonds of the flesh) Ann and Catherine. They had the mutual enjoyment of pure wedded love; they received the poor and strangers with liberal and kind hospitality; they kept bright the bond of friendship with their household; they steadily adhered to the pure and orthodox religion and when they had traveled the course of this life devoutly and reverently (as befitted Christians) they exchanged life for death, now awaiting the glorious and joyful resurrection of the body of Christ. Both, passing from the living reached the haven of peace, of peace indeed, actually on the Lord's Day, Jane to wit on March 2nd in the year of the Lord 1627, aged 63 years and William on August 29th in the year of the Lord 1630, also aged 63.*
William Brereton (died 1534), son of Sir William Brereton and Alice Savage, married Anne Boothe, daughter of Sir William Boothe of Dunham. They had issue:

William Brereton (born in 1521, at Brereton) married Jane Warburton  
John Brereton married Katherine Lynch of Knock, Ireland  
Robert Brereton  
Arthur Brereton  
Edward Brereton of Loughtioge Castle (1530-1599) m Edith Byiche of Byiche Co, Lancaster in 1547  
Robert Brereton  
Elien Brereton married 1st John Carington and married 2nd Laurence Winnington of Hermitage  
Jane Brereton  
Margaret Brereton  
Andrew Brereton (known as the General of Ulster) married Catherine Fitzsimon of Ireland

William Brereton died in 1534 predeceasing his father by seven years. Consequently, his son, William, husband of Jane Warburton, became Sir William VIII.
St. Mary’s Church, Bowden (photo by author)
LORDS OF BRERETON AND LEIGHLIN

Sir William Brereton VIII (1521 - 1559)

Sir William Brereton VIII and his wife Jane Warburton had at least six children:

- William Brereton (b. 1550 and baptized on February 6, 1550 at Brereton Hall) married Margaret Savage
- Jane Brereton (baptized July 16, 1549) married John Leigh of Boothes
- Elizabeth Brereton (died June 1591 and is buried at Middlewich) married Thomas Venables
- Mary Brereton (baptized December 4, 1552 at Brereton)
- Susanna Brereton
- Anne Brereton married Sir Thomas Smith

BRERETON – SMITH CONNECTION

Anne Brereton married Sir Thomas Smith, Lord of the Manor of Hough38, Mayor of Chester in 1586 and Sheriff of Chester, in 1614.

When Sir Thomas Smith died December 21, 1614 and was laid to rest in Wybunbury Church his wife Anne provided the magnificent canopied monument, which incorporates effigies of Sir Thomas and Anne, together with those of their two children who are represented as weepers.

In 1978, the Wybunbury Church was demolished and the Smith monument was dismantled and placed in storage, where it suffered some damage. Fortunately this beautiful monument was restored and eventually placed in the transept of St. Mary's Church, Nantwich.

St. Mary’s Church, Nantwich

St. Mary’s Church which was built primarily in the 14th century of warm, red sandstone has been identified as one of the finest medieval town churches in England and the cathedral of South Cheshire.

St. Mary’s Church, Nantwich, Cheshire

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38 Smith owned considerable lands in the area of this manor
During a tour of the church we were told that the town and the church had a strong connection going back to the days of the Norman army, the Saxons, and Rufus, Norman Earl of Chester. He also indicated that for 700 years the Breretons were an important family in the area; including the Breretons of Brereton, Sandbach, the Breretons of Tatton, the Breretons of Alford, the Breretons of Ashley and the Breretons of Handforth.

During the Civil War, Royalists leaders saw the town as an important location on the road system. So in 1642 they arrived and occupied the town; using the church as a prison. This occupation continued until January 25, 1644 when Lord Byron, head of the Royalist forces was defeated by the Parliamentarians.

The community believed that their connection of the Brereton family was the reason that the Town of Nantwich and St. Mary’s Church were not destroyed by the Royalists as they withdrew from the town.

**Monument to Sir Thomas Smith and Anne Brereton - Smith**

Anne Brereton, (daughter of Sir William Brereton and Margaret Savage) married Sir Thomas Smith and their lives are commemorated in the Nantwich Church by a handsome alabaster and limestone memorial, dated 1614, to Sir Thomas Smith of Hatherton, Mayor and Sheriff of Chester and his wife Anne. The inscription of the tombs is as follows:

*Here lieth Sir Thomas Smith of Hough and Dame Anne his wife, daughter of Sir William Brereton of Brereton who had issue one Son and one daughter Sir Thomas died the 21 of December 1614. Whose laddie in remembrance gave him this monument.*

Sir Thomas Smith and Anne Brereton - photo by author
On the right side of the crest over the Smith-Brereton tombs are shields represented the Brereton, Belward, Malpas, Egerton, Corbet and, Orreby families – probably referencing the Lady Brereton-Smith. Malpas and Belward arms are exhibited on the left side.

It is interesting to note that four of the six daughters of the second Lord Brereton are buried in the Wilbraham Vault in the South Transept of Nantwich church. The Parish Registry records the burial of these aged unmarried Brereton women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 16, 1711/12</td>
<td>Hon. Mistress Frances Brereton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 1716</td>
<td>Hon. Mistress Mary Brereton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1718/19</td>
<td>Hon. Mistress Anne Brereton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 1720</td>
<td>Hon. Mistress Jane Brereton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sir William’s VIII died on September 4, 1559, at the age of 38 and was buried at Brereton.

Following his death, his widow Jane married Sir Lawrence Smith at Brereton, on January 20th, 1561. On the occasion of this marriage her young William Brereton became a ward of Sir John Savage of Clifton, near Runcorn, in Cheshire. This man would become Sir William Brereton IX and the first Lord Brereton of Leighton.

**FIRST LORD BRERETON OF LEIGHTON**

Sir William IX, born 1550, baptized at Brereton on February 6, 1550, inherited his father's estate at the age of nine. He was not lonely for he had a friend and playmate in Margaret Savage, daughter of Sir John Savage and his wife Lady Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Rutland.

The two children must have been thrilled watching the building of the mansion that Sir John Savage was constructing to replace the old hall of his ancestors. It was a romantic site, perched on a crag where is afforded a view of the hills of Wales and the River Weaver were it joined the estuary of the Mersey, bound for the open sea.

Gradually the old Clifton Hall disappeared, and the new hall ‘Rock Savage’ took its place. Instead of being constructed of wood and plaster the new building was brick and stone, with all the latest Tudor ideas in the matter of architecture. In the centre of the front façade were twin towers marking the main entrance. Today, only a fragment of a wall remains of the glories of Rock Savage.

By the time the hall was completed William and Margaret were no longer children but had reached the age of romance. In 1571, Sir William Brereton married long time friend Margaret Savage. She received a marriage portion of 1,000 marks.

William Brereton then set out to re-build his ancestral home at Brereton in the Cheshire Plain, and took Rock Savage as his model. The Hall was built where giant beeches grew beside St. Oswald’s Church, ancient even at that time. As with Rock Savage, a small river flowed by the hall, eventually emptying into the River Weaver. As such this river eventually passed by Rock Savage on its way to the sea.

William Brereton and Margaret Savage-Brereton had issue:

- **William Brereton**, born August 11, 1579 (he died childless)
- **Robert Brereton** (baptized at Brereton June 29, 1584 - died March 1, 1586)
- **William Brereton** (baptized at Brereton February 13, 1586 - died Feb. 14 1586)
- **John Brereton** (25 Feb. 1591 - 31 Dec. 1629) married Anne Fitton of Gawsworth

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39 Margaret was born 1549 and died April 7, 1597.
Mary Brereton, baptized at Brereton December 28, 1584, married Henry O’Brien, Lord Inchiquin, Earl Thormond on July 13, 1608.

Elizabeth Brereton (November 30, 1581 - March 28, 1586)
Margaret Brereton (June 20, 1586 - September 21, 1586)

The Earl of Leicester knighted Sir William IX in 1588 at Flushing, Netherlands, after serving under Leicester against Spain in the Low Countries and in 1624 was created Baron Brereton of Leighlin (or Laghlyn) by King James I. Following is a transcription of the grant of creation to Sir William Brereton, Knight, in the twenty-second year of James' reign.

The King...to Archbishops Dukes Marquises Earls Viscounts Bishops Barons Knights Reeves Freemand and all our Officers Ministers and Subjects whatsoever to whom these Presents shall come GREETING Among the Ornaments of the Regal State that power and prerogative shines the brightest whereby the splendour rank and ensigns of Honor and Dignity are known to flow and be derived from the Royal source as from a fountain and WHEREAS it sufficiently appears to us that by distributing honors with too great a readiness the value of such honors is lightly esteemed and on the contrary by conferring them with too much forbearance and caution Mens exertions relax and become wearied but when Men renowned for valour and worth and able and fit to sustain the reputation and burden of honor and dignity are ennobled and graced with the same titles it necessarily follows that the Royal spendour itself is diffused and increased as well as great Men are encouraged in virtue by the rays of honor We considering with mature deliveration and the free and true services which our most dearly beloved and faithful Sir William Brereton of Brereton in our County of Chester Knight hath manifoldly done and performed as well for our most dear Sister Lady Elizabeth late Queen of England almost from the beginning and throughout the whole course of her reign as for ourself and which he continues daily to perform and also considering the said Sir William’s generosity of mind and kind of life brought to old age with dignity and greatness and activity valour and fidelity of the said Sir William towards us and our Crown and that he is sprung from an ancient noble and most renowned family in as much he is descended through many illustrious ancestors from Ada Sister of John (surnamed Scot) seventh Earl of Chester and Daughter of David Earl of Angus and Huntingdon Lord of Galloway within our Kingdom of Scotland younger brother of William then King of Scotland and because Sir William de Brereton Knight Great Grand Father of the aforesaid Sir William was Esquire of the body of our most renowned Ancestor Lord Henry the Eighth late King of England afterwards knighted at the Siege of Terravenna and afterwards appointed Justice of Ireland in the absence of the Viceroy and then ordained Marshal

41 Married on July 13 1608

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of the said kingdom the said Sir William at length dying in Ireland is Buried at Kilkenny we esteemed the aforesaid Sir William worthy of being recorded in the number of Peers and Nobles of our said Kingdom of Ireland KNOW YE THEREFORE that of our especial grace and of our certain knowledge and mere notion have erected appointed and created the aforesaid Sir William Brerton Knight to the state degree style title dignity and honor of a BARON in our said Kingdom of Ireland that is to say of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn in the County of Carlow in our Kingdom of Ireland And do by the tenor of these presents do bestow give and grant to the said Sir William the name state degree style dignity title and honor of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said name degree state style dignity title and honor of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid to the aforesaid Sir William and the heirs male of his body issuing for ever Willing and by these presents granting for us our heirs and successors that the aforesaid name state degree style title dignity and honor of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid and shall be successively called and named by the name of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid And that the said Sir William and his heirs aforesaid shall be successively holden to be in all things Barons Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid and they and every of them shall be treated and reputed as Barons of our Kingdom of Ireland And they and every of them shall have hold and enjoy a Seat place and voice in the parliament and public assemblies and Councils of us our heirs and successors within our Kingdom of Ireland among other Barons as Barons of parliament and public assemblies and councils AND ALSO the said Sir William and his heirs male aforesaid and every of them all by the name of Baron Brereton of Laghlyn aforesaid enjoy and use all and singular such rights privileges preeminences and immunities to the state of a Baron of our Kingdom of Ireland in all things truly and of right belonging which other Barons of our said Kingdom of Ireland have heretofore better more honorably and quietly used and enjoyed or do now enjoy and use We will also...without fine in our Hanaper... Although express mention...IN WITNESS whereof.

WITNESS the King at Westminster the eleventh day of May BY WRIT OF PRIVY SEAL

Brereton Hall was the home of Sir William for nearly 45 years. He died, in 1630, at the age of 81. As his three elder sons failed to grow to manhood the youngest son John Brereton became his heir.

42 Located in Ireland
ST. OSWALD’S CHURCH in BRERETON

Adjacent to Brereton is the beautiful parish church of St. Oswald's.

According to the booklet provided to Brereton Year 2001 Reunion attendees by the Parish of St. Oswald, Brereton nothing remains of the earlier church built about the time of Richard I (1189-99). It was built as a chapel within the parish of Astbury, and was likely to have been a timber-frame structure. The list of incumbents, over the south door of the present church, goes back to 1297.

It is said that a Brereton setting out on a Crusade vowed that if he returned in safety he would build a Church to the glory of God. He returned and kept his vow, building Brereton Church. There is no proof of this story, but it rings quite true. Inside the Church, over the south door, is a list of Rectors which includes:

- Gilbert de Brereton 1297 (noted as Albert de Brereton in the Parish book)
- Randle de Brereton 1313*
- Mathew de Brereton 1330*
- Harno de Brereton 1344
- Thomas de Brereton 1433
- Robert Brereton 1459

* Randle (or Ralph) de Brereton and Matthew de Brereton were probably younger brothers of the Brereton heirs. They entered the church, as an alternative to military service, as this was the time of primogeniture and normally only the oldest son of the family would inherit any substantial amount. Sir William Brereton, who became the first Lord Brereton, set up a monument in the chancel.

43 More information about the Church, Brereton Hall and other estate properties can be found in a separate document
44 St. Oswald Brereton, Welcomes the Breretons on Their Visit 2001
Initially, St. Oswald's Church, Brereton was a *chapel of ease* to Astbury and a domestic chapel to the Brereton family; however, Henry VIII made it a parochial church. At the time of the change the Advowson of the rectory was attached to the manor meaning that the Breretons could now appoint their own rectors to the chapel. Previously it had been, *at the pleasure* of the Venables. The change also meant that burials in the chancel would now be allowed.

The building can be dated only by its style, late Perpendicular, which is said to belong to the last flowering of Gothic architecture in Cheshire (which itself took place later than in the rest of the country). *An unusually complete late Perpendicular church*, comments the Department of Environment report of 1967.

The church was built in two stages perhaps before and after 1500. The chancel seems to have been built first to judge by the evidence of the 'grazed ear' seen in the exterior corner of the chancel and south aisle. There is no vestry and no porch although a wooden porch (with attic) may be deduced from the presence of the small outward opening door situated to the east of the main south door.

The two stages of building may be seen in the uncoordinated interior. For example, when standing beside the pulpit and looking out it is possible to see that the chancel roof is longer than the floor by about four feet. The clumsy connection between nave and chancel is emphasized by the absence of a chancel arch; instead a massive carved beam supports the roof, and, on the outside a half-timbered gable end. Outside parapets to the nave are plain while those to the chancel are crenellated.

The church is constructed from coarse East Cheshire sandstone with large blocks of various colours. There is also an attractive marbling effect which can be seen, for example, in the north tower pillar. The pillars themselves are plain and sturdy and each with a slightly different capital. The lack of a ringing chamber gives space for a soaring tower arch. The continuous windowing of the clerestory is typical of late Perpendicular churches, so are the transoms placed halfway up the window in the chancel.

The shallow cambered roofs are also of late Perpendicular design. None of the original timbers of the nave room were saved when it was restored in 1903. The chancel roof was restored in 1684 (a tie beam bears the date) and, once again in 1903. Just below the chancel roof are six angels, which are not represented conventionally, but rather show the hairstyle and dress of 17th century English gentlemen. They belong perhaps to the time of the first roof restoration.

A small replica angel is attached to the book-rest of the pulpit and the original oak rood is carved, *Thomas Whittingham, erector, 1684*. The current rood is a facsimile of the original.

A window of particular interest to Breretons is the plain window of the south aisle where there is a roundel of the Brereton crest; the muzzled bear's head.

There are 12 heraldic shields in the church, with the following Latin inscription:

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Antquis temporibus quando haec
ecclesia de Brereton fuit capella
donativa intra parochiam de
Ashurie, antecessores Gulielm
Brereton militis, baronis de Malpas
et hujus monumenti fundatoris
anno Domini 1618 sepulti erant in
coeferio de Asburie, ubi antiqua
quorundam eorum monumenta
ad huic extant Anglice no’i ta
Knightes burialls, sed portquam
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dicta capella ecclesia parochialis facta fuit, antecessores dicti Gulielmi Brereton militis, hujus ecclesia de Brereton patroni, in hac cancella sepulti fuerunt, proe ter eos qui in externis regnis et comitatibus moriebantur.

The above can be translated as follows:

In ancient times when this Church of Brereton was a donative chapel (i.e. presented by a patron without reference to the bishop) within the parish of Astbury, the ancestors of William Brereton, knight, Baron of Malpas, who erected this monument in 1618 AD, had been buried in the Churchyard of Astbury, where ancient monuments of some of them still remain at this date, marked in English with the words Knights burialls. But after the said chapel was made a parochial Church, the ancestors of the said William Brereton, knight, patron of this Chapel of Brereton, were buried in this chancel, except those who died in kingdoms and countries abroad.

**Sir William Brereton Monument**

In his book, *The Story of Brereton Hall*, Arthur Moir\(^{45}\) states that there is a magnificent Brereton Monument (1618) on the north wall of the sanctuary. The flambuoyant carvings surround a table which records, in Latin, the exhumation of the remains of Sir William Brereton's ancestors from Astbury churchyard and their re-interment in the chancel of Brereton church. The Brereton arms, with twelve quarterings, are particularly fine. The family crest (the muzzled bear) is featured several times in the surround, as is the Brereton shield (two horizontal black bars.) Above the monument are certain pieces of funerary armour from the Brereton family: a helmet (surmounted by a black muzzled bear's head), a pair of gauntlets, one spur and a decorative band.

Moir's also reported in his booklet that: I dimly remember that tattered silk hanging from the wall in the chancel in Brereton Church, but it has since disappeared. My father in his capacity as churchwarden of the church had the armour and gauntlets restored from their dilapidated condition and cleaned by experts in 1905. Today there remains a pair of gauntlet, a helmet, rowel (spiked revolving disc) spur and a decorative band. There is also a muzzled bear featured above and below the funerary armour.

**Monument to William Smethwicke and Frances Colclough Smethwicke**

Another interesting monument, located in the south aisle, is that of William Smethwicke and his wife, Frances Colclough. Both figures were painted and have Jacobean ruffs. The hands would have been clasped, a hood is thrown over the lady's head and a book placed on each side of her. The hands, however, have been broken off (according to the Parish booklet - presumably by puritan enthusiasts, who found pious gestures offensive).

Under the male figure on a tablet of black marble is inscribed:

*Here lieth interred the body of William Smethwicke, of Smethwicke, who mindful of his death, erected this monument for himself and his wife, pious to God, pious in good works.*

William Smethwicke was born October 1 1551 and died June 6th, 1643. He and Frances were married for 58 years, a remarkable achievement in those days.

\(^{45}\) Arthur L. Moir, Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral (Dedicated to the Staff and Scholars of Brereton Hall School) *The Story of Brereton Hall, Cheshire* (Reproduced by Johnsons of Nantwich Ltd., 1989)
Church Bells

In the church there is a peal of five bells, with dates and inscriptions as follows:

1. Treble. 1634 Jesus be our speed.
2. 1634 God save this Church.
3. 1634 Glory be to God.
4. 1727 Prosperity to this Parish. (Re-cast 1905)
5. Tenor 1738 Cast at the expense of Sir Lister Holte, Bart.

An ancient bell, with inscription, ER 1597, was presented to the church in 1992 and is housed in a niche by the south door. Its history has been extensively researched: supposedly it was not part of a peal, but incorporated in a clock mechanism in Brereton church, then in Brereton Hall.

Other artifacts that remain include six massive silver pieces that are no longer used for liturgical purposes and are no longer kept on the church premises. They consist of a tankard (1664); chalice (1653) with Smethwick arms; paten (1642 or 1664) with Brereton arms impaling another crest; chalice (1722) with Brereton arms and two patens (1722) inscribed The Hon Mrs. Elizabeth Brereton. Note: 1722 was the year in which Francis, fifth Lord of Brereton died.

Thomas à Becket Window

The 17th century antiquarian Randle Homes the Younger was commissioned by Sir William Brereton in 1608 to make a sketch of a window which was then in the north of the chancel. It apparently showed the murder of the Archbishop Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. Under the window was the following inscription:

Ricardus Breto, Necnon Martelis Hugo. Willms Traci. Reginald Fitzurci Martorum Thoma, fieri fecere, beatum anno nullens contens, septuagenon. The full names of the murderers were; Sir Richard Brereton, Sir Hugh de Morville, Sir William de Tracy, and Sir Reginald Fitzurse. This rather confusing Latin inscription means that these four men murdered the blessed Thomas Becket in 1170. Sir Richard Brereton would be a relative or contemporary of Sir William with whom the Brereton pedigree states.

The erection of this window required sanction of Parliament and the Royal Assent.

History records that King Henry II became an intimate friend of Thomas a Becket. The two became inseparable in sport and feast. Becket loved pageantry, excelled in sport, and was astute in managing the finances of the kingdom. So delighted was the King with his friend that when the vacancy occurred it did not seem incongruous to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. This the King did in 1162, despite Becket's protests. From that moment Becket changed. Pageantry and frivolity were put aside; he wore a hair shirt next to his skin, and exulted in penance and being scourged. He washed the feet of thirteen beggars every night and lived the life of a saint. His relations with the King were changed. A quarrel arose over clerical privileges. At Christmastide in 1170 King Henry was in Normandy, with his Court, and in fury he denounced Becket, What sluggards and cravens I have nurtured and bred in my realm. They keep no faith to their lord, when they allow him to be mocked so foully by a lowborn clerk. Four Knights heard the words and went at once to Canterbury Cathedral, and there on the steps of the north transept they slew Thomas Becket, as he declared himself, No traitor, but archbishop and priest of God. The King was overcome with grief. For three days he kept to his room, neither eating nor drinking and in 1174 did penance by making a pilgrimage to Canterbury, where he submitted to a public scourging by the monks.
SIR JOHN BRERETON

Sir John Brereton\(^{46}\) (1591-1629) married Anne Fitton of Gawsworth (? - 1648) the daughter of Sir Edward Fitton. The children of John Brereton (son of the 1st Lord Brereton) and his wife Anne Fitton included:

William Brereton (February 28, 1611 and baptized at Gawsworth May 8, 1611 - died in 1629) As John died a few months before his father, his son William, a youth of nineteen, became the 2nd Lord Brereton.

John Brereton who became known as Captain Brereton of Nantwich (baptized at Brereton November 21, 1624 - died October 23, 1656)

Mary Brereton (buried at Brereton March 5, 1642) married Sir Michael Hutchinson

Jane Brereton (? - 1648) married Sir John Holte\(^{47}\)

GAWSWORTH HALL AND THE FITTON - BRERETON CONNECTION

Gawsworth Hall, ancient home of the Fitton family, is located in Cheshire near Brereton Hall. Initially the property was held by the medieval family of Orreby. Wonderfully, the estate remains a community in its own right. There is a manor house, woods, wilderness garden, pleasure garden, church (still used as a meeting place for the village), rectory, medieval fishponds and the rookery.

The marriage between Anne Fitton and Sir John Brereton was not the only marriage to join the two families. Many years before, Hellen Brereton, sister of Sir William Brereton VII (grandfather of the builder of Brereton Hall) married John Fitton\(^{48}\) of Gawsworth. According to the owner\(^{49}\) of Gawsworth, the Brereton and Fitton families were entwined over a 500 year period.

Gawsworth Hall was originally built as a quadrangle, however, in the 1700's half of the house disappeared. According to the present owner, the smaller size makes the property more manageable.

Gawsworth\(^{50}\) Hall is an ancient Cheshire black and white Manor House wrapped in romance, intrigue and great charm On a tour of Gawsworth’s historic rooms, you will see fine paintings, furniture, sculpture and stained glass. In this beautiful house is the Fitton family chapel, first licensed in 1365 and still used by the family today. The Hall was the subject of the most famous duel in English history, when in 1712, Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton fought over the estates and both were killed.

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\(^{46}\) The son of the First Lord Brereton and Lady Margaret Savage builders of Brereton Hall

\(^{47}\) The Holte family eventually became successor to Brereton Hall

\(^{48}\) They had a son Edward Fitton

\(^{49}\) In 2001

\(^{50}\) Comment from brochure: *Gawsworth Hall, Cheshire; Ancient Manor House* (Produced and Published by Heritage House Group Ltd. Heritage House, Lodge Lane, Derby)
In 1316 Isabel de Orreby married Thomas Fitton of Boleyn and from this union began the most famous family to live at Gawsworth. Initially the family lived in a wooden stockaded building in the Rookery; however, around 1480 the present house was built. It is similar in style and size to nearby Little Moreton Hall.

Another Thomas Fitton fought in the Wars of the Roses and was knighted at the Battle of Blore Heath near Market Drayton. The Fittons were typical of so many Tudor families whose men were knighted under the Tudor kings as a consequence of the Wars of the Roses.

The third Sir Edward Fitton was knighted in 1566 and appointed Lord President of Connaught and Thomond in 1569. He succeeded his father in 1579 and was equally distinguished, holding office for some years as Lord President of Munster. Edward Fitton married Alice Holcroft, daughter of Sir John Holcroft and had issue:

Anne married Sir John Newdegate of Arbury

Mary Brereton, as a result of her father's influence at Court, was appointed in 1596 Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth I. Famed for her beauty, Mary Fitton is said to be Dark Lady of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

Apparently, many of Alice Fitton’s letters survive, particularly those written to her two daughters.

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51 This is one of a number of photos taken at Gawsworth Hall
52 The Battle of Blore Heath was the first major battle of the War of the Roses and took place 23 September 1459
53 31 (of 66) men were killed at this battle
2nd WILLIAM, LORD BRERETON (1610 - 1664)

Brereton - Goring Connection

In 1630, William Brereton became the 2nd Lord Brereton and two years later, at the age of 22, he married Elizabeth Goring, daughter of George Goring.

George Goring, known as a remarkable character was celebrated at court as a wit. He was also famous as a Cavalier leader in the Civil War and was raised to the Earldom of Norwich. He also participated in negotiating the marriage of King Charles I with Henrietta Maria. Goring took over the Mulberry Gardens in London from Lord Aston and established Goring House which was renamed as it changed owners, become Arlington House, Buckingham House, Queen's House and finally Buckingham Palace.

In 1641 the income of George Goring was estimated at 26,000 pounds a year; however, when he died in 1662 he left only 450 pounds a year to his heir.

Mantle-piece commemorating the marriage of Lord Brereton and Elizabeth Goring

A little zest may have been added to the celebrations owing to the fact that the marriage must have caused intense annoyance to the Malpas Breretons who were not favorably disposed towards the Royal Family or to the generals in the King's Army. The Brereton's of Brereton who were loyal to the Crown were even more bound to the King through the marriage of Lord Brereton to Elizabeth, daughter of the courtier-general George Goring.

Meanwhile, the Malpas branch had adopted strong Parliamentarian views - perhaps in part because just a century ago, his ancestor William Brereton had been ruthlessly executed by Henry VIII (in connection with the Anne Boleyn episode).

In 1642, civil war broke out between Royalists and Roundheads. This gave Sir William Brereton of Malpas, a man of experience who had travelled a great, a chance to prove his military prowess. In time, he was appointed a commander of the Parliamentarian forces and by early he had defeated the Royal Army, relieved Nantwich and was advancing on Brereton Hall.

There is a legend that he besieged his relative who was in residence there. Whether Lord Brereton waited within the walls for a siege or not is uncertain, but the conclusion was that the Royalist Lord William fled from Brereton Hall with his wife and son to the fortified Biddulph Hall in Staffordshire. It is said that the young heir of Brereton scratched on one of the window panes in the Hall the defiant verse, found in an old ballad -

On yonder hill my uncle stands
But he will not come near
For he is a roundhead
And I am a cavalier

At the end of three months the besieging forces, still being unsuccessful in breaching the wall of Biddulph Hall, fetched a large cannon from Stafford, named Roaring Meg and planted on the west side. Later, having been informed by the locals that the east side of the hall was more vulnerable, the gun was moved. An ancient record states that from this side the artillery-men battered furiously for some time, then at last a cannon ball accidentally struck the end of a beam supporting the Biddulph Hall, giving the building such a shake that its defenders thought it would fall down. Upon the earnest entreaties of a very frightened Lady Brereton, they surrendered on February 20th, 1644.
Lord and Lady Brereton, their son and heir, Captains Biddulph, Shackerley and Minshull and about 150 soldiers were taken prisoners and transported to Stafford. Lord Brereton was compelled to pay a ransom for the release of his family; his estates were also sequestered. Eventually, Lord Brereton was exchanged for Sir John Harcourt, a Parliamentarian leader captured by the Royalists.

After the war, Lord Brereton and the Earl of Derby were made joint Lord-lieutenants of the County of Cheshire. Lord Brereton II also represented Chester in the first parliament after the war.

Lord and Lady Elizabeth Brereton had at least eleven children

- William Brereton (the 3rd Lord Brereton)
- Henry Brereton who is buried at Brereton;
- George Brereton (Baptized at Brereton August 26, 1638 - died in 1672)
- Thomas Brereton (Baptized June 1639 at Brereton) married Christiana, in March 1668
- Margaret Brereton
- Anne Brereton (Baptized November 7, 1633 - died January 4, 1718, at Nantwich) - unmarried
- Mary Brereton (Buried at Nantwich December 1, 1716) - unmarried
- Elizabeth Brereton (? - 1736) unmarried. It is said that Elizabeth occupied Brereton Hall after the death of the 5th Lord Francis
- Jane Brereton (Buried May 14, 1720)-unmarried
- Frances Brereton (Buried at Nantwich in 1711-12)

John Brereton (Born 1645) was known as the son of Captain John Brereton of Nantwich. John married Elizabeth and this branch is known as the Breretons of Bedford

Lord Brereton founded the oldest bell ringing society in England, the Ancient Society of College Youths, which in 1937 celebrated its 300th anniversary.

3rd LORD BRERETON (c 1630 - 1679)

William Brereton was around thirteen years of age when his family made the adventurous flight from Brereton Hall to Biddulph Hall. No doubt he had seen enough of war so he took to study instead. He may have shown signs of special ability for a few years later his paternal grandfather, the Earl of Norwich sent him Holland for his education: his maternal grandfather, Lord Goring provided financial aid.

He was about nineteen years of age when his portrait was painted by a Dutch (or Flemish) artist, possibly Cornelius Janssens van Ceulen. In 1664, William’s father died and he became Lord Brereton III.

William married Frances Willoughby, daughter of Francis, Lord Willoughby of Parham. They had issue:

- John Brereton who became the 4th Lord Brereton
- William Brereton who died childless
- Francis Brereton became the 5th Lord of Brereton upon the death of his brother John

Lord William was a man of learning and influence and is considered a founder of the Royal Society, along with John Evelyn. According to an historian named Sprat, Brereton was one of a number of learned and eminent persons who held meetings at Gresham College, before the Royal Society was formally incorporated.

In 1664, when Lord Brereton III inherited the estate from his father he found it to be so heavily in debt (as a result of high expenses incurred by his father during the Civil War) that William was forced to sell the barony of Malpas and other parts of his estate, livings (leases etc.) and holdings. A selection of original letters preserved in

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54 Named Sprat
the Bodleian Library mentions his talents and accomplishments. Lord William died in London in 1679, and was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.55

4th LORD BRERETON (? - 1718)

Brereton-Tipping connection

As a young man John Brereton joined the army and served abroad. He became the Fourth Lord Brereton upon the death of his father, in 1679.

John married Mary Tipping, the daughter of Sir Thomas Tipping of Oxford County late if life and died without issue, in 1718.

5th LORD BRERETON (? - 1722)

When John Brereton the 4th Lord of Brereton died without issue, the title would have gone to his brother William Brereton. However, as William had already died the next in line was a younger sibling Francis Brereton. He was 32 years of age when he became the fifth Lord Brereton. Francis died a bachelor in 1722 and was buried at Brereton April 11, 1722; consequently, the title of Lord Brereton of Leighlin.

Jane Brereton-Holte (? - 1648)

According to Ormerod the property then passed to the Holtes of Aston in Warwickshire, in right of Jane Brereton, wife of Sir Robert Holte, daughter of Sir William Brereton, and great-aunt, and finally heir of Lord Francis. Jane had died in 1648. Consequently her Brereton property transferred to her son.

Under the complicated will of Sir Lister Holte, who died October 12th 1769, the manors of Brereton and Aston with other estates were settled on his brother Sir Charles Holte for the remainder of his life, remainder to issue male, remainder Heneage Legge, Esq. with similar remainder, remainder to Lewis Bagot, clerk (successively Bishop of Norwich and St. Asaph) who died without issue, remainder to Wriothesley Digby Esq., remainder to Sir Lister Holte.

Sir Charles Holte left only one daughter, Mary Elizabeth, representative of the families of Holte and Brereton, and of the eldest line of the Egerton family. She and her husband Abraham Bracebridge held leases of Brereton Hall and associated properties and of other parcels of the estate.

On the death of Sir Charles Holte, his daughter was ultimately heir of Heneage Legge who succeeded on the death of Sir Charles Holte to the estates comprehended in the will of Sir Lister.
THE HOLTE FAMILY OF ASHTON HALL

Bracebridge connection

Sir Thomas Holte took a cleaver, and hytt his cook with the same cleaver upon the headde, and clave his headde, that one syde thereof fell upon of his shoulders, and the other syde on the other shoulder and this I will verifie to be trewe - so said the scandalmonger of a bygone age. The particulars of proceeding against this slander are recorded in the Plea Rolls (5 James I, Easter Term, roll 462). Sir Thomas Holte (1571-1654) was married to a woman named Grace who bore him eighteen children, nine survived.

The Sir Thomas Holte (1571-1654) of the cleaver case was the founder of an Elizabethan mansion, Aston Hall, Birmingham, County of Warwickshire. This residence, originally built in the country, is now within the confines of the City of Birmingham and is a civic museum and art gallery, and has given its name to the famous football club and ground within its original demesne, Aston Villa.

On an inscription, on an ornamental panel at the entrance of the Hall, is written as follows:

Sir Thomas Holte of Duddeston in the County of Warwick Knight and Baronet began to build this house in Aprill in Anno Domini 1618, in the 16th year of the raigne of King James of England, etc., and of Scotland the one and fiftieth, and the said Sir Thomas Holte came to dwell in this House in May in Anno Domini 1631, in the seventh year of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord King Charles, and he did finish this house in Aprill Anno Domini 1635: in the eleventh year of the raigne of the said King Charles.

The red hand of Ulster originated early in the seventeenth century when James I created Knights Baronet to induce the English gentry to settle in the province of Ulster.

When the mansion was completed it was impressive. While typically Elizabethan, it had a slightly projecting centre and more pronounced projecting wings giving it an ‘E’ formation. There were bold windows with decorative parapets, towers with cupolas, and a courtyard.

In 1642 Sir Thomas Holte welcomed King Charles I who was accompanied by Lord Lindsay and Lord Falkland to his, poor house of Aston. The meeting took place while the King was marching from Shrewsbury to relieve Banbury Castle. The guests stayed for two night and five days later the Battle of Edge Hill was fought and it marked the beginning of the Civil War. Just after Christmas, in 1643 other visitors arrived at Ashton Hall - the Roundheads, one thousand strong. They assaulted the hall, and apparently the marks of their cannon can still to be seen. Aston Hall and its owner suffered heavily through the Civil War.

In 1646 Robert Holte, a grandson of Sir Thomas, married Lady Jane Brereton, granddaughter of the first Lord Breteron thereby linking Breteron Hall and Aston Hall. Unfortunately Jane died two years later while giving birth to a son Charles. Although her marriage was brief, the impact of her marriage to Sir Thomas Holte was significant with respect to the Breteron inheritance.

Sir Charles Holte, third Baronet and son of Sir Robert Holte and Lady Jane Brereton had a son Sir Clobery, 4th Baronet.

On the death of the last Lord Brereton in 1722 the male line became extinct, and Breteron Hall passed through the female line, that is through Jane Brereton to her descendants the Holtes of Aston Hall, namely Sir Clobery Holte, 4th Baronet of Aston Hall. He inherited over 4,000 acres from his Breteron ancestors.

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56 The arms of Baronets are distinguished by an augmentation of a human hand gules, borne on an escutcheon in the centre of chief of the shield.
57 As was Breteron Hall
58 King Charles I was executed in 1649.
When Sir Clobery died in 1729 he left two sons Sir Lister Holte, 5th Baronet and Sir Charles Holte, 6th Baronet.

Sir Charles, who died in 1782, was married to Anne Jesson and they had at least one daughter Mary Elizabeth Holte who married Abraham Bracebridge. In 1817 Mary Elizabeth died. Her son Charles Brereton Holte Bracebridge married to Selina Mills. He died in 1872 without issue.

According to records, in 1817 the Holte estate was vast and beautiful, consisting of approximately seventeen thousand acres of fields, groves, lakes, parks and lodges. Although Aston Hall has survived and the vast park is still splendid (surrounded by the remnants of stables and the home farm) much of the fields and groves, lakes and lodges have not.

THE BRERETONS OF MALPAS, SHOCKLACH, CUDDINGTON, ECCLESTON & NORFOLK

Breretons of Malpas

Many Breretons look to Brereton Hall, Sandbach in Chester when searching for their ancestors as I did. However, by doing so we may miss the opportunity to learn about Cheshire Breretons who held positions of importance and influence were knighted, built wonderful manor houses and have an equally interesting story to tell.

Three such men, from the Malpas branch, were Uryan Brereton who built Handforth Hall; William Brereton, Proconsul of the North, who was beheaded along with Anne Boleyn and Sir William Brereton, the Parliamentary General during the Civil War. The Malpas family land holdings were extensive and at the time of Randle II, encompassed the southwestern part of present Cheshire and a number of Welsh townships. They held properties at Ipstones, Shocklach, Tatton, Cheshire and others locations.

Sir Randle Brereton I was the son of Sir Wm Brereton III, Baron of Malpas and Margaret Donne. Randle married Alicia Ipstones and had a son Randle Brereton II who married Catherine Bulkely of Eaton. Catharine and Randle’s children included Randle Brereton of Ipstones who married Emma Carrington; Ralph Brereton who married Margery and Bartholemew Brereton who married and had a son Humphrey Brereton.

The children of Randle and Emma included;

Humphrey Brereton
Randle Brereton of Malpas
Ellen Brereton who married Nicholas Bruyn.

THE BRERETONS OF CUDDINGTON, ECCLESTON & WETTENHALL

Sir Randle II of Ipstones later married Joan Holford and had least two sons:

Owen Brereton
Randle Brereton

Owen’s marriage resulted in the Cuddington Branch and Randle’s the Eccleston and Wettenhall branches. Sir Randle Brereton III of Malpas married Elenor Dutton, daughter of Piers Dutton of Halton. They had issue:

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59 A Brereton with whom I have corresponded identified some discrepancies as regards this accounting of the Brereton history and the book ‘Opitulante Deo’ The Brereton Family of Cheshire AD 1100-1904 written by Robert Maitland-Brereton in 1904; published by Irwin Hudson Co. of Portland, Oregon. E.g. Opitulante Deo identified Sir Randle Brereton IV as marrying Eleanor Dutton.
The Breeretons of Cheshire

John Brereton who became Parson of Brereton Church at Astbury (? -1642)

Richard Brereton who married Jane Massey of Tatton Hall

Thomas Brereton

Peter Brereton who became Canon of Westminster and Master of Barts Hospital

Elizabeth Brereton who married Randal Mainwaring; Anne Brereton who married John Fershall

Uryan Brereton\(^63\) who married Margaret Honford in 1530 (he later married Alice Trafford) and started the Handforth branch

Roger Brereton (Stewart of Holt and Flint) who married Katherine

William Brereton was beheaded by King Henry VIII.

Son John Brereton, Rector of Malpas, Astbury, Bedinton and St. Mary's married Alicia. Their son William Brereton of Hoxne\(^61\) married Elizabeth Greene starting the branch of family known as the Norfolk Branch.

Sir Randle III and his wife Eleanor Dutton are buried in elaborate tombs at St. Oswald's Church, Malpas.

ST. OSWALD’S CHURCH, MALPAS\(^62\)

Brereton and Cholmondeley

From its strategic position on a spur of the Broxton hills, Malpas has played a dominant role in the history of southwest Cheshire. The Romans had a station here and when the Norman, Hugh Lupus, was granted the Earldom of Chester by William the Conqueror, the Barony of Malpas was given to his illegitimate son Fitz Hugh. He was one of the eight barons who formed the Earl's parliament or court, and the fact that he held the premier position reminds us of the importance of Malpas in those days. First, there was the richness of the land and therefore the wealth of those who held it and secondly, it held a strategic position with regard to the Welsh.

Perched on its hill with a view of forty miles into Wales, Malpas was well placed to play a major role in curbing the constant raids on the rich farms of south Cheshire. It was part of a defense system which included the castles at Shocklach and Oldcastle. These castles, dating from about 1100, were earth mounds surrounded by ditches, fortified with timber stakes and topped by timber towers from which the archers could command a wide area. The mound just to the north of the church is all that remains of Malpas Castle.

The church of Saint Oswald's, Malpas, is dedicated to Oswald\(^63\), King of Northumbria and Martyr. While the present church was constructed in the second half of the 14th century it was built on the site of an earlier 12th of 13th century church. There are no structural remains of the early church; however, a list of rectors has survived.

\(^{60}\) Sometimes spelled Urian

\(^{61}\) Sometimes spelled Hoxne (according to 'Opitulante Deo')

\(^{62}\) Much of the following information has been taken from the booklet, *An Illustrated History of St. Oswald's Malpas*, which was available at the Church

\(^{63}\) Oswald (c 604 – 5 August 642), son of Æthelfrith of Bernicia was King of Northumbria from 634 until his death. Oswald brought the two Northumbrian kingdoms (Bernicia and Deira) back under one single ruler, and promoted the spread of Christianity in Northumbria. He was venerated as a saint.
There is also a record showing an agreement between the rectory and Hugh Lupus, dated 12th November, 1285, granting him the right to have a fit chaplain to celebrate Divine Service in his chapel of Cholmondeley under certain conditions.

The interior of the present church has a nave of six bays with wide aisles, eastern chapels, a three-bay chancel, a vaulted treasury and a massive tower. The zeal and energy of the medieval church builders was truly astonishing, as demonstrated by the large and magnificent church in this comparatively small town. In 1488 Richard Cholmondeley the younger left a sum of money to Malpas Church and in 1508 Sir Randal Brereton gave the tenor bell.

In the present church the chapels are screened off at the east end of the north and south aisles. The changes which occurred over the years are very apparent around of the chantry chapels where the screening butts into the middle of windows and on the south side the screening cuts across the sedilia\(^{64}\) making them unusable.

At one time there were at least six altars, four connected with chantries\(^{65}\). These included the high altar, the rood altar (placed within the loft) and the altars of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Katherine, St. George and St. Nicholas. Two chantries remain; the Cholmondeley Chapel in the north aisle, and the Brereton Chapel in the south aisle.

\(^{64}\) Sedilia refers to a set of seats, usually three, provided in some Roman Catholic and Anglican churches for the use of the presiding clergy, traditionally placed on the beside the choir near the altar, and in Gothic-style churches they were often made of stone and built into the wall.

\(^{65}\) Chantry is the English term for a fund established to pay for a priest to celebrate sung masses for a specified purpose, generally for the soul of the deceased donor. Chantries were endowed with lands given by donors, the income from which maintained the chantry priest.
Sir Randal Brereton specified in his will, dated 1530, that he should be buried in the Lady Chapel (which given the location of the tomb we can assume is on the south side). How the various altars were placed is not known.

There are two piscina on the south wall of the Brereton Chapel, where one would have been sufficient. This may indicate a subdivision of some kind.

66 A piscina is a shallow basin placed near the altar of a church, used for washing the communion vessels.
Note muzzled bear

In the Cemetery of St. Oswald's Church, Malpas is the handsomely carved tomb of Sir Randal Brereton IV (? – c. 1530). Together with the tenor bell Sir Randal donated to the church in 1508 are all that remain of his considerable estate and charity. There is a stone carving of the muzzled bear on the exterior of the Church.

In addition to supporting the church, Randal also established and supported a school and hospital in Malpas - nothing remains of these buildings. The Brereton of Malpas mansion is also gone, having been destroyed by fire, over two hundred years ago.

**Brereton Chapel and Cholmodeley Chapel**

Preserved within each of the chapels is a fine alabaster tomb, still in remarkable undamaged state. Upon the head-beam of the Brereton screen is the following inscription:

*Pray good people for the prosperous estate of Sir Rondulf Brereton Knyght Baronet of thys werke edificatour whyth his wyfe Dame Helenour and after this life transytorie to oblayne eternal falicitye.  Amen.  Amen.*

**The Brereton tomb/monument,**

This tomb, which is dated 1522, is a masterpiece of the carver's art and a truly superb example of Chellaston workmanship. It is ranked by experts as one of the finest in existence. The tomb was erected during Sir Randal's lifetime, some eight years before he died in 1530.

The carving on the tomb has Randal’s head resting upon a helm which is decorated with the Brereton crest (the head of the muzzled bear) and his feet are upon a lion (apparently having the feet resting upon a lion indicates closeness to the monarchy).

His lady's head rests upon cushions supported by attendant angels. Her shirts have two small pet dogs in the folds. The figures round the chest are the weepers - the children of the knight and lady and those who owed them allegiance, including four *bedesmen* from the hospital he founded and the priest and schoolmaster. The daughters are dressed like their mother and the sons as knights, having their swords before them.
Around the edge of the tomb is the following inscription (translated from the original Latin):

Here lie Randal Brereton Knight Banneret and Chamberlain of the County of Chester and the Lady Eleanor his wife, which said Randal and Eleanor, while yet living, had this tomb made, to wit at the feast of St. Michael the Archangel AD 1522, on whose soul may God have mercy. Amen.

Sir Randal was knighted for conspicuous valour at the battles of Terouanne and Tournay, France (and possibly at the Battle of Spurs) which occurred during this campaign. He was knight banneret to King Henry VII, and also held important positions in the county of Cheshire. His son, the unfortunate William Brereton, was accused by King Henry VIII, of being too friendly with Anne Boleyn, and was executed on 17th May 1536.

The church, miraculously survived the devastation of the Civil War which occurred in the 17th century. Captains George and Thomas Malbon with their two companies marched to Malpas and a battle was fought at Oldcastle, about a mile from the Malpas church. Apparently, the Royalists would have won the day were it not for the arrival of Colonel Brereton and his men who turned the battle.

It has been suggested that it may well be due to the presence of a Brereton that the church and its Brereton monuments escaped damage.

**The Cholmondeley tomb**

The Cholmondeley tomb located in the north chapel was erected in 1605 (close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I). While, this tomb is similar in form to the Brereton tomb the style is quite different. The figures which represent Sir Hugh Cholmondeley (who died in 1596) and his second wife Mary are much stiffer and the proportions less pleasing. However, both tombs (which would originally have been painted) provide excellent examples of English monumental art before and after the Reformation.

The Cholmondeley inscription (in Latin) surrounding the north chapel:

Pray for the good estate of Richard Cholmondeley and Elizabeth is wife who built this chapel AD 1514.

Note: According to Burke’s Peerage William de Cholmondeley, Lord of Cholmondeley (son of Hugh de Cholmondeley) assumed the title in 1361 when still underage. He married his cousin, Elizabeth daughter of William Brereton of Brereton, knight. They had a son Richard de Cholmondeley.

**WILLIAM BRERETON circa 1490-1536**

Much of the following information concerning William Brereton has been taken from, *Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas*69

William Brereton, Proconsul of the North, was born in 1490 to Sir Randolph Brereton III of Malpas and Elenor Dutton, daughter of Piers Dutton of Halton. William was the sixth of twelve children. Four of the children were knighted; including Uryan Brereton of Handforth, while three went into the church.

It is said that he was an adventurer who lost his heart to a Queen and his head to the King. He was executed in 1536 over a charge of adultery with Anne Boleyn. Brereton, one of Henry's favored servants until his alleged indiscretion with the King's second wife, was among the most powerful figures in 16th century England.

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67 In ‘Opituante Deo’ The Brereton Family of Cheshire, Maitland identifies Elizabeth Brereton as marrying Cholmondeley, then Mainwaring

68 *Burke’s Peerage and Gentry:* The definitive historic guide to Britain’s Titles and Landed Families

69 *Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas,* Edited by E. W. Ives, BA, Ph.D., Printed for the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 1976 (Printed by Gresham Press Old Woking, Surrey, England)
Originally the King lived communally in a chamber with many courtiers; however he began to want more privacy. Consequently he initiated a privy chamber, thereby reducing the number of attendees/servants living directly with the monarch to 12. William was one of the members of the privy chamber. While the position held by William would not be seen as important to us today, his closeness to the King provided enormous opportunities for ‘perks’ and power. Over time William Brereton became Chamberlain of the country and steward of the principal royal holdings in Cheshire and North Wales. His control of land and estates was so great that his word was law over an area stretching from Carligan Bay to the Pennines.

Although Brereton's property was confiscated by the crown following his execution, he left behind a special kind of legacy; namely his personal letters, documents and accounts. These personal effects were seized after Brereton's death and lay undisturbed in the Government archives for four decades until Dr. Eric Ives, Senior Lecturer in modern history at Birmingham University, stumbled upon them and decided to edit them. In 1976 Dr. Ives and The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire published, The Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas. The business papers, which represent the most complete set of papers surviving for an individual of the Tudor period, provide glimpses of the dealings, the political scandals, the murders and the intrigues that were a part of that era.

The story of the life of William Brereton, from his noble birth at Malpas Hall in 1490 to his gruesome end on Tower Hill, 46 years later, coincides with a particularly vital chapter in Cheshire's history. Brereton's rise to power came at a time when the county was virtually an independent territory with its own judicial machinery, its own laws, charters and taxes; it did not send representatives to Parliament and men freely spoke of crossing from Cheshire into England. The fall of William Brereton cleared the way for Government reforms, which, in 1536, brought the county into line with the rest of the nation.

For generations the Brereton family and its various branches exercised wide influence: their official pedigree - all 14 feet of it - lists soldiers, clergymen, administrators, politicians and courtiers.

William Brereton's start in life was, by comparison, inconspicuous. He was born in 1490, the sixth of nine sons of Sir Randolph Brereton of Malpas (chamberlain of the county palatine) and Eleanor (daughter of Piers Dutton of Halton). He was born in a time when primogeniture was the norm so his chance of an inheritance was remote. Consequently, William along with three of his brothers looked to the royal household of Henry VIII, the most glittering of all Tudor ways to wealth for advancement. By 1521 William had become groom of the king's chamber and by 1524, groom of the privy chamber. As holder of the latter post he was in close contact with the monarch and by 1530 he was the greatest royal servant in Cheshire and North Wales, enjoying the wealth and power that came with his position. The most lucrative of Brereton's grants from the crown arose from his connection with the Savage family of Clifton, later Rocksavage.

According to Dr. Ives, William Brereton's, position in Cheshire and North Wales was the result of deliberate calculation and he used his authority with a good deal of freedom...not only to benefit his family but also to influence Cheshire politics where he seems to have been active as the head of the currently ruling faction.

Behind his spectacular leap in status was Brereton's ability to secure the favour of his royal master. By 1530 he held the monopoly of crown offices in the northwest, beginning in 1523 with the role of Custodian of the Records of Chester and Flint and culminating seven years later in the county Chamberlainship on the death of his father. The year previous, he had added to his wealth and sphere of influence by marrying Elizabeth, Lady Savage, the widow of grandson of Sir John Savage of Clifton, later Rocksavage. The union brought into his possession the whole of the property of the Savage family, which included eight manors and lordships in Cheshire (mainly in the Dane and Weaver Valleys from Bostock and Minshull Vernon to Clifton), important estates and coal mines in Derbyshire, and lesser holdings in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. Thomas Savage, brother of Sir John was Archbishop of York and president of Henry VII's council. An earldom which the family received under Charles I was jeopardized by the behavior of Sir John's son and grandson, forcing the
family first into debt and then to temporarily surrender it's lands to the crown. William Brereton secured the lease and as noted previously married the grandson's widow, Elizabeth, thereby securing the wardship of the heir. Elizabeth was the daughter of Charles, Earl of Worcester and Lord Chamberlain. He was a cousin of Henry VIII. The marriage was followed by further grants from the crown, which gave Brereton and Lady Elizabeth control over the Savage fortune, until 1547.

According to Dr. Ives, the offices and grants which brought such substantial revenues and reveal symptoms of England of that supposedly continental disease, the venality of office, conferred upon William Brereton a wide political authority also. The bare facts are impressive enough. By 1530 Brereton was sheriff and eschetoer of Merioneth, steward in the lordships of Chirk, Bromfield and Yale and the Holt; and chamberlain of Chester - offices which gave him authority extending from Cardigan Bay to the headwaters of the Mersey. In 1532 he ceased to be directly active in Merioneth and instead became in his own right sheriff of Flint, thus exchanging authority in the west and centre of Wales for the confirmation of his authority over Cheshire and the Dee basin. Nor was it a matter of influence only in a number of lordships and counties. In Cheshire and in the Marcher lordships William had complete monopoly of major office. With hindsight the temptation is to assume that this authority was hollow; the days of Marcher and Cheshire independence were numbered. But Brereton material tells a different story, of local power very much alive.

In addition to the public offices, Brereton held crown stewardships and leases, in particular as steward of the principal Duchy estates in the county, the honour of Halton and steward of Longdendale. The extent of Brereton's power (he held 36 offices in Cheshire and North Wales) should not be measured solely by his holdings but to this must be added the wide influence he possessed through relatives, friends and dependants who were in positions of importance. Brereton's base of power was Holt Castle. However, as Brereton expanded his empire and power his enemies also increased; his eventual tragic death was the final downfall. The forces of Thomas Cromwell (Henry's chief adviser after the dismissal of Cardinal Wolsey in 1530) and Brereton's uncle, Sir Piers Dutton of Halton a life-long adversary, played a role. As far back as 1504-5 Sir Randolph Brereton had supported the Abbot of St. Werburgh against Dutton and in the course of that quarrel he imprisoned Dutton in Chester Castle. When Laurence Dutton, the last legitimate male of the elder line of the Dutton family, died in 1527, a struggle for property between Piers Dutton and Brereton ensued.

In 1530 when Cardinal Wolsey was 'sacked' and the King wanted a letter to go to the Pope asking that his marriage to Catharine of Aragon be dissolved. William Brereton was given the task of getting signatures (from people in the whole of England) affixed to the letter. The box, which held all the papers, has been saved and is in the Vatican archives.

The end for William Brereton of Malpas came on Wednesday, May 17, 1536, when he was beheaded on Tower Hill - fortunately King Henry VIII spared him the usual bestiality of hanging, drawing and quartering. The alleged crime was high treason and his offence adultery with Queen Anne Boleyn. Four other men George Boleyn (Viscount Rochford Anne's brother); Sir Francis Weston (close friend and page to the king); Sir Henry Norris and Mark Smeaton (court musician) were executed with William Brereton. Two days later the queen herself was executed.

Little has been written about William Brereton's involvement in this affair and according to Dr. Ives, Brereton was even forgotten when the Norris family, the Westins and supremely the Boleyns were restored to fortune. Yet, by an irony, William Brereton is incomparably better recorded than any of his fellow victims. Dr. Ives also writes that the involvement of so successful a courtier and local politician in the fall of Anne Boleyn can be ascribed to two factors. The first was faction at the royal court, which, indeed, is the key to the whole Boleyn tragedy. In the early spring of 1536, courtiers opposed to Anne saw an opportunity in the king's casual interest in Jane Seymour. They organized a powerful faction to put pressure on Henry, while others rallied to the queen. Cromwell intervened against Anne; Henry was eventually persuaded to listen

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70 Letters and Accounts of William Brereton of Malpas, Edited by E. W. Ives, BA, Ph.D. Printed for the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 1976 (Unwin Brothers Limited, The Gresham Press Old Woking, Surrey, England). Note: to view Dr. Eric Ives lecture delivered to the worldwide Brereton Family Reunion, 30 July 2001 visit website bruceb@brereton.org
to her critics and they then dragged the queen down by using some of her supporters, Brereton included. The allegation of adultery was a pretext, but a devastating one.

Apparently when Brereton went to the gavel his last words were *the cause whereof I die, judge not, but if you do, judge me right*. He had proclaimed his innocence. In the 17th century to die with a lie on your lips was a terrible thing - consequently everyone at the beheading knew he was denying the accusation. Upon studying the dates when Brereton was to have been involved in the misconduct, Dr. Ives indicates that on November 27, 1533 Queen Anne was, in all likelihood still in seclusion following the birth of daughter Elizabeth, and on December 8, 1533, when they were to have been together at Hampton Court - court was being held elsewhere. It also appears that Brereton's arrest was an afterthought. The First man charged was arrested on a Sunday, another three on Monday, Anne Boleyn on Tuesday and finally William Brereton on Wednesday.

Facts did not appear to matter, as there was another factor, which brought Brereton down, namely, his position and record in Cheshire and North Wales. In the county palatine, William Brereton had all the, *holle rewle and gouernaunce under owr souereigne lord the kynge's grace*. He also represented the traditional policy by which the crown sought to rule in areas of particular difficulty by delegating power to loyal 'men of worshi', despite the risk that this power might also be used for private ends. The new thinking on a unitary sovereign state was quite contrary and Brereton was thus an obstacle to progress; it is hard to conceive how Tudor policies towards Cheshire and Wales would have worked had he been allowed to survive.

On his death the crown made sure that no one succeeded to his power; his offices were divided and few were given to local men. Thus, with the all-powerful Chamberlain disposed of, his property confiscated and his lands dispersed, Cromwell was able to present to Parliament the legislation that eventually lead to the integration of Cheshire into the English political nation. The final ironic chapter to this tragic but fascinating tale came in 1540 when Cromwell, the man who had contrived to break Brereton, also fell victim to Henry's wrath and the executioner's axe.

**SIR RANDLE BRERETON V**

Butler, Dod and Massey-Tatton Branch

Sir Randle Brereton VI (son of Sir Randle Brereton V and Isabel Butler) married Mary Griffith. They had issue Randle Brereton. Sir Randle VI later married Eleanor Egerton and had a daughter Anne Brereton who married Randal Dod of Ashley

Anne and Randal Dod had a son Richard Brereton who married Jane Massey. This family became known as the Tatton Branch.

According to Burke's Peerage, Sir Philip Egerton, a knight, married Eleanor Brereton, daughter of Sir Randle Brereton, of Malpas and was succeeded by his son John Egerton in 1563.

**SIR RANDLE BRERETON VII**

Sir Randle Brereton VII (son of Sir Randle Brereton VI and Mary Griffith) married Frances Throckmorton and had issue:

*Mary Brereton (1570-1618) who married Sir Richard Egerton* 

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71 William's brother, Roger Brereton was Deputy at the Holt and shared with William the post of Sheriff of Flint. Roger was also steward of Oswestry, bailiff of the Cheshire hundreds of Buxton and Nantwich and the royal estates at Drakelow and Rudhealth, also constable of Halton Castle.

72 His ancestor Sir Ralphe Egerton was knighted at the battles of Terouanne and Tournay along with Randal Brereton IV.
THE LAST OF THE MALPAS LINE

The following information has been taken from an article prepared by Derek P. Brereton with assistance by J. C. Wooley Dod of Edge Hall.

The last of the Malpas line, Sir Randal Brereton VII was said by local tradition to have been able to ride from Malpas to Cheshire, a distance of about fifteen miles, without overstepping his own property. His estate was involved in a dispute upon his death, and was the subject of an interesting article by Fred Crossley, F.S.A., A Disputed Will of the Early 17th Century from the Star Chamber Proceedings, in the Chester Archaeological Society Journal V.37, pt 1, 1948. - Mr. Anthony Wolley DOD.

Mary Brereton-Egerton stood to inherit her wealthy father's entire estate, meaning it would pass out of the Brereton family and to the Egertons, when she died. Her uncles, Sir Randal's brothers, Richard, William and Thomas had no enthusiasm for such prospect, and conspired to induce the elderly and failing Sir Randal to alter his will. Their method was seduction, their accomplice the forty year old Lady Dorothy Townsend, wife of Sir Henry Townsend, aged 73. The charming Lady Townsend was so confident of her persuasions that she had her twenty-two year old niece marry Richard Brereton on the strength of the prospect of inheriting the Brereton estates through him if Lady Townsend met with success.

The Malpas estate at that time included Malpas, Cuddington, Wigland, Over and Nether Fulwich, Bradley, Agden Chidlow, Tussingham, Masefen, Hampton, Larkton, Great and Little Edge, Overton, Chorlton, Bickerton, Broxton, Cawarden, Tilston, Horton, Barton Adlesley, Crook, Cuddington, Clutton, Lea Newbold, Christleton, Rowton, Shocklach, Oviatt, Church Shocklach, Caldecot, Crewe, Congleton, Cholmondeley, Stockton, Acton, Cholley, Runcorn, the Manor of Ipstones and the huge estate of Tatton Park Knutsford and the Staffordshire estates of Ipstones. Across at ancient Brereton, about half a day's leisurely ride by horse, lay more land reaching with that branch into Lincolnshire and Warwickshire.

Today, while travelling in the counties of Staffordshire, parts of Shropshire, Wales and Cheshire one would be travelling on lands once owned by the Breretons.

Sir Randal Brereton died on May 8th, 1611 at the home of Lady Townsend, having recently burned his original will. Some say the Townsend conspirators burnt it for him. As he lay dying another will was concocted, and became the subject of the trial. On May 9th Sir Randal’s daughter, Mary Brereton-Egerton, went into labour and on May 11th Sir Randal was buried during the night at St. Oswald’s. On the 15th, Star Chamber awarded Mary and Richard Egerton the inheritance on condition that they prosecute before November 14, which they did. The case involving several witnesses, consumed 106 large sheets of parchment. Mary Brereton Egerton won her case against her scheming uncles by accusing Lady Townsend of, insinuating herself into great familiaritie with Sir Randal in order to alienate him from Mary.

As Lady Townsend's plot was not complete by the time Sir Randal became unconscious it has been suggested that the culprits composed a new will - quite favorable to themselves - placed a pen in Sir Randal's hand, and signed the will by guiding his hand across the page. The defendants also bribed a ne'er-do-well, who later confessed, to testify that he had witnessed the proper signing of the will. The worst, however, was still ahead of them. It was custom in those days to remove the viscera from a body so the remains could be preserved, with resins and bran, until the funeral. But the connivers seem to have been a bit overhasty. Dr. Davies testified at the trial at the body was disturbingly warm, bloody, in fact, when he began to perform his services. Did the brothers murder Sir Randal to prevent any possible recovery, and the discovery of the forged will? They apparently never faced trial, but neither did they succeed in their scheme to deprive Mary of her inheritance.

Mary Brereton-Egerton died in 1618, just about the time her third son, Richard, came to his majority and promptly gambled away his entire patrimony.
All this, however, was but act one of a two-act drama. Though the scandal itself may be most personally interesting to Breretons, the legal aftermath had the greater impact in terms of the development of English law. It has been described by Thomas G. Barnes (1981) in, *A Cheshire Seductress, Precedent, and a Sore Blow to Star Chamber, on the Laws and Customs of England* (Morris S. Arnold, ed. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.)

The dispute between Mary Brereton Egerton and the Townsends turns out to have been of considerable importance to English courts in defining the role of precedent in adjudication. Star Chamber had been instituted in the Middle Ages to allow the court to adjudicate on its own terms, guided by fairness instead of precedence as in courts of common law.

In Brereton’s *Case*, Star Chamber held Lord Townsend liable for damages resulting from the crime of which his wife had been convicted. The Townsends appealed on grounds of lack of precedence for such indirect liability. The state’s case was argued by no less a personage than Sir Francis Bacon, Attorney General and author of *Novum Organum* (1620), the treatise that launched the scientific revolution. First, Lady Townsend refused to cooperate with the court, and sat out her subpoena in Fleet Prison. Then her husband, himself a judge in a different court, opted to do the same. The counsel for Mary Brereton Egerton then moved that damages and costs be levied against the Townsend properties. The defendants’ counsel argued that the court had no jurisdiction to grant such unusual relief, but the court took this as a challenge to its own power and authority. The sides were to argue their respective positions on 29 June 1614. As Barnes puts it, ‘Bacon had been attorney general for eight months. He had trounced duelers, seditioners, and slanderers of the great, but had not yet found an issue where he could vaunt the greatness of Star Chamber and establish the magnitude of his power - and that by a display of erudition and oratorical splendor’. This was his object in Brereton’s *Case*.

The court had framed the issue as one of precedent. Bacon, for his own reason, cast it as high as possible, asserting that the king himself, were he present, had the right to sit on the bench. As strategy Bacon cited three cases which, in a different trial, one of the judges before whom he now argued had held up as establishing precedent. But the cases he cited were old, related to fines not damages, and pertained to courts other than Star Chamber. Bacon’s argument was far from overwhelming. Against him the defense hinged its case on the fact that a husband could not suffer corporal punishment for crimes of his wife, and thus, could not be imprisoned to compel payment of her debt.

The ensuing judicial debate resulted in a close, 6-4 victory for Bacon, in which the day was carried, ironically, not by any argument concerning precedent. Judge Ellesmere opined, instead, from policy; a court that could give judgment of damages ought also to have the means to execute its own judgment. Townsend could be imprisoned. The court could have avoided such debate and challenge to royal authority by referring the case to a referee, and though Bacon won, he never again risked allowing issues of institutional moment to be debated openly in Star Chamber. Two years later, in 1616, King James I himself appeared before the court to voice his concern for its continued integrity, and referred specifically to the threat that had been posed by the issues, in *Brereton’s Case*. Royal pleading notwithstanding, Star Chamber was abolished at the outbreak of the Puritan revolt, in 1641. It had originally been established precisely as a judicial vessel, which could dodge the weeds of precedent that snagged court of common law. Yet it eventually floundered partly because of its own foregrounding, in *Brereton’s Case*, of precedent. Star Chamber had cast doubt on its own legitimacy.

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73 Bacon’s involvement had implications for the Breretons of Sandbach for, in 1660, William Brereton III helped found the Royal Society which was organized expressly for the implementation of Bacon’s inductive methodology.

BRERETONS OF HANDFORTH HALL

Sir John Stanley

All is Vanity was the favoured motto of Sir John Stanley who fought at Flodden\(^75\) and whose story is strangely connected with Handforth Hall, or rather with the property before the Hall was built. Sir John Stanley was the son of James Stanley, Warden of the Manchester Collegiate Church, Bishop of Ely and Warden of Manchester.

When the Bishop died, his son completed Derby Chapel (which his father had begun), and also Chantry Chapel in the Collegiate Church (where his father is buried). The inscription, which was in the original glass of the east window of Brereton Chapel in Cheadle,\(^76\) was very similar to the one over the Ely Chapel in Manchester.

People were asked:

to pray for the souls of Sir John Stanley knight and the lady Margaret his wife, and for the souls of James Stanley Bishop of Ely and William Honford and of thir parents and ancestors and of all the faithful departed on whose soul God may be merciful. Not unto us O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name give the praise. In the year of our Lord 1525.

The only fragment of old glass in St. Mary’s Church, Cheadle, is the imperfect Stanley coat of arms containing the Honford star, on the lower left hand side of the east window in the chapel.

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\(^75\) The Battle of Flodden or Flodden Field was a conflict between the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland. It was fought in the county of Northumberland in northern England on 9 September 1513.

\(^76\) There were three townships in Cheadle: Cheadle Moseley, Cheadle Bulkeley and Handforth-cum-Bosden. Between 1233 and 1236 Robert de Stokeport, Baron of Stockport, granted the area of Bosden to Henry de Honford of Handforth. From subsequent records it is evident that the Honford family had possession of the manor of Handforth at least from the late 13th century. The Honford family died out in the male line in 1513 and the manor passed to the Breretons on the marriage of Margaret Stanley (nee Honford) to her second husband Urian/Uryan Brereton.
In 1513 Sir Stanley married Margaret Honford\textsuperscript{77} the 12-year-old daughter of William Honford or Handforth, who had fought and was killed at Flodden.

It appears that Sir Stanley became embittered against earthly matters following a serious property dispute with Cardinal Wolsey. Neighbouring landowners were not always on friendly terms, especially when property was in question. Leghe of Adlington and Sir John Stanley quarreled over the Presbury tithes. Cardinal Wolsey sided with Leghe and Sir John lost his case and for a time his liberty. In 1528, Stanley obtained a divorce and decided to become a monk in Westminster Abbey. Sir Stanley and Margaret signed an agreement, to relinquish all and singular the pomps, vanities, pleasures and delectations of the world.

Margaret intended to enter the Nunnery of Barking\textsuperscript{78}; however her ideas changed or perhaps her ideas of pomps and vanities differed from her husband as she did not enter the abbey. Instead, in 1530 she married Sir Uryan Brereton. Margaret Honford-Stanley, a widow with property, was considered a good catch for a groom of the king’s chamber.

Following his marriage Uryan Brereton left the Court of King Henry and moved into Handforth Hall. It was also around this time that his brother Sir William Brereton was executed by King Henry.

In 1544, Sir Uryan Brereton was knighted for military service against the Scots.

\textsuperscript{77} Margaret Honford was the sole heiress of William Honford, the last male heir of the Honfords of Handforth Hall.

\textsuperscript{78} Possibly the reference is to Barking Abbey in the village of Barking which is located in the London, England in the Borough of Barking, Dagenham. It was founded in 675 and dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539.
Uryan Brereton and Margaret built the present Handforth Hall in 1562 and incorporated the Brereton crest (the bear's head, muzzled) over the door. Above the crest is a brier and barrel or tun (a pun on the name).

Sir Uryan Brereton died at Handforth Hall on 19 March 1577 and it is thought that he was buried at the chapel of St. Mary’s Church, Cheadle. In the south chapel are three recumbent figures. Two effigies, in alabaster are thought to represent members of the Honford family. The Third represents Sir Thomas Brereton who died in 1674, the last of the male line.
ST. MARY’S PARISH CHURCH, CHEADLE, CHESHIRE

Savage and Brereton connection

St. Mary's Church, Cheadle, Cheshire is basically a 16th century building, however it was built on the remains of previous church that was described in 1532 as *lately in great ruin and decay and now a-building*. The early church was probably a black and white, timber structure.

St. Mary’s Church, Cheadle, Cheshire (photo by author)
Savage Chapel

While the Breretons are linked to other families of this church the 16th century Savage and Brereton Chapels in the church are of particular note.

Sir John Savage and his wife Elizabeth79 had endowed the Savage Chapel in 1523 when they promised, to find an honest and discreet priest to sing and say mass for their good estate and prosperity. While the declared purpose was in part to rebuild the church, it has been suggested that it was also to salve their consciences and souls.

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79 His wife was Elizabeth Brereton, daughter of Sir Wm Brereton IV and Amylia Venables. The Brereton and Savage families were joined once again when the First Baron of Leighlin, Lord Brereton of Brereton married Margaret Savage of Roch Savage.
In 1520 Sir John Savage and his father (also Sir John) had been indicted for murder. However, through the intervention of Cardinal Wolsey and the crucial help of the Earl of Worcester80, Chamberlain to Henry VIII (and payment of a substantial fine of 4,000) Sir John Savage the younger was granted the King’s pardon.

The inscription around the screen of the Savage Chapel (translated from the original Latin) is: *Pray for the souls of Sir John Savage and Elizabeth his wife their sons and their daughters who caused this chapel to be made in the year (dating) from the delivery of the Virgin 1529.*

Savage died in 1528, just prior to the completion of the screen for the Savage Chapel, leaving his widow Elizabeth with two sons and two daughters to support. Once again, court connections were useful. Elizabeth’s brother had become Earl of Worcester and his wife Elizabeth, was Lady-in-waiting to Anne Boleyn. Consequently, the four children of Elizabeth Savage became wards of the King and she moved to London and married William Brereton of the Malpas Branch who was one of the grooms in the Privy County of King Henry VIII. Considerable information has already been provided regarding her husband and his untimely death at the hand of King Henry VIII.

**Brereton Chapel**

The Brereton Chapel, with a finely carved screen, is located on the south side of the nave. Upon the upper part of the screen you will find an engraving of tuns (or wine barrels) entwined with briar leaves and branches, and the initials, V.B. The base of the screen has some fine linen-fold panels each individually carved.

In this chapel are two 15th century alabaster effigies. Given their age they were probably installed initially in an earlier St. Mary’s Church building. The bareheaded effigy which is closer to the window, is probably that of Sir John Honford of Handforth (1392-c1460) and the helmeted effigy may Richard Bulkeley81, (1392-1454), great grandfather of Lady Katherine Bulkeley who commissioned the Chancel in 1556.

80 Worcester was Savage's father-in-law  
81 Breretons also married into the Bulkeley family
BRERETON MOTTO, CREED AND COAT OF ARMS

**Brereton Motto**

*Opilulante Deo* - With the aid of God or with God's help

**Brereton Creed**

Tho thou be for thy pedigree accompted 
as ancient as Saturn, in wisdom as wise 
as Solomon, in power as mightie as 
Alexander, in wealth as rich as Croesus, 
and for thy beautie as Flora, yet if thou 
be careless of religion and neglect the true 
service of the ever living God thou art a 
catiff most vile and miserable.

Doe nothing this day whereof thou mayest regret tomorrow

Know him well whom thou makest thy counsel lest he betray thy secret.

**Blazon of Arms**

Argent, two bars sable - Argent is white silver and denotes nobility, peace and trust; 
Sable is black and signifies night and repentance; the bar of conscience, religion, and honour.

**Brereton Crest**

Out of a ducal coroanet, a bear’s head couped sable, muzzled gold 
sometimes written as a bear’s head proper issuing from a ducal coroanet\(^\text{82}\).

**Muzzled Bear**

The following is one story told about the bear’s muzzle: An old butler, when asked to explain the muzzle, said that the bear bit one member of the family, Sir William Brereton. Apparently, the bear also bit Sir George Booth who was the Commander-in-chief, Parliamentarian forces, Cheshire.

\(^\text{82}\) Note: a ducal coroanet is a simple circllet with 5 leaf-points and small points being inserted between. The coroanet of a Baron would show 4 pearls upon a circllet. Except in the cases of arms and crests matriculated in Lyon Register as an ancient origin and in use before 1672 (as was the case with the Brereton Crest) or confirmed on the strength of user by Ulster, King of Arms, the ordinary ducal crest coroanet and the chapeau are no longer granted in ordinary cases.
BRERETONS - a time line of random dates and events

Most of the information can be found in the body of the document. I have added this time line as a quick reference to dates and people.

1090  Knight, Sir Rafe de Brer appears in a title deed for land in Marston, Cheshire.

1100  Ralph de Brereton signed deeds of Gilbert de Venables thereby acquiring land.

1170  Sir Richard de Brereton was thought to be one of the four knights who murdered St. Thomas a Becket thinking they were acting at the wish of the King. In penance for this act, Breretons erected a stained glass window in St. Oswald's the parish church. During the Civil War of the 1600 the window disappeared. According to Mr. Patrick Montague-Smith's research, the knights were all Normans who went back to France after the murder and. One of the knight's was named le Breton not Brereton and according to Patrick he was no relation to the Brereton's of Chester.

1176  Richard de Brereton is listed in the 1176 Yorkshire Charters. Sir William de Brereton I, son of Cecile St. George and Ralph Brereton, lived during the time of King John and King Henry III. Sir William Brereton I married Margery de Thornton .

1215  Sir William Brereton I later married Margaret Groes. They had at least two sons, Sir William Brereton II and Gilbertus de Brereton.

1215  Ralph de Brereton, son of William Brereton and Margery de Touraut/Thornton built the chapel at St. Oswald at Brereton - granting the land of Smethwick to the chapel. Later, Ralph married Lady Ada. Some researchers believe that she was the daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon. Her father's ancestry went back to David I, King of Scotland and through her mother to the first Celtic King of Scotland. On an ancient canopied tomb in Astbury churchyard, there is a note that Ralph de Brereton married Lady Ada.

1257  Ralph de Brereton later married Cecile de Sandbach, daughter of Sir Richard de Sandbach.

1297  Gilbert de Brereton, brother of William Brereton II was appointed rector of Astbury, by Roger de Venables.

William Brereton, son of Sir William Brereton II and Cecile Sandbach, married Margery de Bosley.

1344  Harno de Breerton, son of Sir William Brereton II, became Rector of Brereton Chapel, St. Oswald's.

1345  William Brereton died young, leaving a son who became Sir William Brereton III following the death of his grandfather, Sir William Brereton II, in 1346. Sir William Brereton III fought at the battle of Sluys (1340) and Crecy (1346).

1354  Sir William Brereton III became Baron of Malpas through his marriage to Ellen Egerton heiress of the Egerton family. She was related to the Earls of Chester (Kelelioc).

Sir William Brereton IV, son of Ellen Egerton and Sir William Brereton III, lived circa 1355 to 1425. He became the Governor of the Port of Calais. He married 1st Anylla Venables, daughter of Sir Hugh Venables and married 2nd heiress Elena Mascey of Dunham Mascey. This line of the family became known as the Tatton Branch. As a knight William was appointed to arrest anyone disturbing the peace; at the time bands of armed men were terrorizing the residents.
Sir William Brereton III was granted permission to hold a market every Thursday, on Brereton Green and to hold an annual fair on the Feast of St. Peter (August 1st). The market continued until the 17th Century.

Sir William Brereton IV was commissioned by Henry, Prince of Wales, and instructed to take men-at-arms and archers to Broxton: to defend the royal lands on the Welsh borders. He was continually involved in these disturbances. William was later appointed Sheriff of the County. Sir William and his son Thomas Brereton were both granted an annuity of 100 shillings; the king having engaged them in his service for life. While fighting in William was knighted.


Sir William Brereton IV was Governor of Caen for a while and under Lord Scales, defeated the French, near Mount St. Michael. William returned home with glory and increased fortune (during the reign of Henry V). (Note - in 1951, because Sir William Brereton had been Governor of Caen, his descendants invited to attend the Festival Celebration, in France.

Sir William Brereton IV and Anylla Brereton had a daughter Margery who married Richard Patton.

William of Waynflete, daughter of Margery Brereton and William Waynflete, became Bishop of Winchester, Lord Chancellor of England, and the Head of Eton College (in its early years). He was founder of Magdalen College.

The grandson of Sir William Brereton and Anylla Venables, another Sir William Brereton V, became the next heir to the family estate. He, along with the Rector of Brereton gave all their possessions in Lincolnshire to a cousin and to Magdalen College.

Thomas Brereton, son of Sir William Brereton IV and his second wife Elena Mascey became Rector of Brereton Church.

Sir William V married Phillipa Hulse.

The 1st Sir Randle Brereton, Knight banneret<sup>83</sup> died and was buried in the vault at St. Oswald’s, Malpas next to his Cholmondeley cousins. Randle built the Hall at Malpas in the last years of the reign of Richard II. Several branches stem from here; the Burros line of Denbigh, the Grafton branch and the Iscoed branch.

Upon the death of his first wife, Sir Randle Brereton married heiress, Catherine Bulkeley, of Eaton.

Master Humphrey Brereton, son of Bartholomew Brereton was born at Grafton, near Malpas. He was Esquire to Lord Stanley.

Sir William Brereton V died at the height of the family power. It is said that his first wife was from the Byron family who gave us the poet Lord Byron centuries later. Although son Andrew Brereton was knighted, he did not inherit his father's estates; he did have his own Coat of Arms.

William Brereton, son of Alice Savage and Sir William Brereton VII was born. He married Anne Boothe.

<sup>83</sup> A knight banneret, sometimes known simply as banneret, was a Medieval knight ("a commoner of rank") who led a company of troops during time of war under his own banner.
Sir William Brereton VI died without issue. His heir became William Brereton (born circa 1475) son of his brother Andrew Brereton and his wife Agnes Legh. Sir William Brereton VII married 1st Alice Savage of the Royal Plantagenet line and married 2nd Eleanor of Ipstones. This Sir William became Lord High Marshall of Ireland.

William Brereton married Lady Elizabeth Savage, daughter of Charles, earl of Worcester (Henry VIII’s cousin and Lord Chamberlain).

William Brereton, son of Randolph Brereton and Eleanor Dutton, was arrested, held in the Tower of London and beheaded on order of King Henry VII, on May 17, 1536 for all alleged affair with Anne Boleyn.

Urian Brereton and Andrew Buckingham grooms of the Kings Chamber were granted the surveyor ship of office of Ranger of Parkhurst Carisbrooke. (Information from ‘Cromwell's Remembrances – 1538’)

Sir William Brereton IX was born to Sir William VIII and Jane Warburton.

Sir William Brereton VII, who had been appointed Lord High Marshall and then Lord Justice of Ireland, also Chamberlain of Chester (a position held today by the Duke of Westminster of the Grosvenor line) died at Kilkenny on 4th February and was buried in the church there. The suit of armour he wore at the battle of Maynooth hangs in Brereton Chapel. His son and heir died before his father. Consequently, his grandson, also a William became the heir.

Peter Brereton, bachelor son of Sir Randle Brereton and Eleanor Dutton, died. He had been the King’s Chaplain and later Canon at Westminster and Master of Barts Hospital. In his old age he returned to Malpas and the Rectory. It may also have been Parson at Heswall and Oswestry.

John Brereton, brother of Peter, died. He had been Parson of Brereton Church, in Astbury.

Edward Brereton of Loughtioge, Ireland married Edith Birche.

Edward Brereton (and his wife Edith Byiche) were granted the castle of Loughtioge, Ireland and the towns of Loughtioge, Shannenmullen, Raheenisky, Monine and Ballenagarbanagher.

Loughtioge Castle, two miles south-west of the little town of Stradbally, was home to Edward and Edith Brereton until it was burned to the ground by Irish insurgents.

John Brereton of Rahamarque (approximate spelling), in Queen’s County, Ireland in the parish of Ballyadams was born. He married Amy Barrington and had four sons: two of whom entered Trinity College of Dublin.

Edward Brereton was chosen Provost Marshall of Connaught, Ireland.

Sir William Brereton IX married Margaret Savage, daughter of Sir John Savage.

Sir William Brereton IX built Brereton Hall on a slight rise, near the Little River Croco.

Lord William Brereton I was knighted at Flushing by the Earl of Leicester on, 1 of May 1588. Flushing, a coastal town which controlled the approach to Antwerp, was held by the English from 1585 to 1616. Brereton was created Baron Brereton of Leighlin; the 1st Lord Brereton of Brereton Hall.

Sir William Brereton IX died at the age of 81 having lived in Brereton Hall for almost forty-five years.
1602 John Brereton wrote about his journey to the "New World" sailing with Captain Bartholomew Gosnold. This was the first British expedition to what is now the eastern seaboard of the United States.

1607 Captain John Smith upon reading the published diary of John Brereton was so inspired that he led a group of colonists to Virginia and started the first permanent British settlement in America, at Jamestown.

1611 Sir William Brereton's grandson, also a William, was born. He became the second Lord Brereton and married Elizabeth Goring, daughter of George Goring, a cavalier and leader in the Civil War.

1613 Arthur Brereton, son of Edward and Edith Brereton, became a Member of Parliament for Ballinakil, Ireland.

1627 John Brereton of Rahamarque, Ireland became Commissioner of Queen's County.

1642 Two sons of John Brereton of Rahamarque entered Trinity College of Dublin, and became Rectors in the Church of Ireland. Both were murdered during the 1642 Rebellion.

1642 When the Civil war broke out in England, Lord Brereton, a Royalist, loyal to his king fought against his cousin, Sir William Brereton of Handforth Hall, who was a Parliamentarian. Lord Brereton became Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Cheshire and the southern counties.

Sir William Brereton of Handforth, Cheshire traveled throughout England and also on the Continent. He was created a baronet and for his services to the country, he received great wealth and land, including Croydon Palace (residence of a bishop). He died at Croydon on April 7, 1661 and apparently his body was to be taken to Cheadle Chapel for burial. But tradition has it that on the way as they crossed a flooded river the coffin was swept away. However, it was found and he was buried at Croydon on April 29, 1661 according to the parish register.

The younger Brereton branches in Chester were Parliamentarians. This led to the unfortunate situation of Sir William Brereton of Malpas, as Commander-in-Chief of Cromwell’s Puritans invading Brereton Hall. The Breretons of the Hall were actually captured and held for ransom by the Malpas Breretons, in 1644.

There is a legend that says John Brereton was next in line to Brereton had Puritan tendencies but was denied the title of Baron Brereton of Leighlin by a Catholic aunt. She apparently destroyed all papers that might give John any claim to the title. For some reason John never attempted to make a claim to the title, deciding instead to leave Cheshire and start the Brereton branch of Bedford,

1664 The 2nd Lord Brereton died and was buried at Brereton.

The 3rd Lord William Brereton was forced to transfer the Barony of Malpas due to financial difficulties. He was a studious man and a founder of the Royal Society. He delivered lectures at Gresham College, was a poet, musician and composer

1679 The 3rd Lord Brereton died in London and is buried at St. Martins-in-the-Fields.

John Brereton became the new Lord Brereton and upon his death the title passed to his brother Francis, the 5th Lord. Neither brother married.
1722 Lord Francis Brereton's death ended the generations of the male Brereton's living at Brereton Hall. Francis left the hall to his aunt Jane Brereton, who had married Sir Robert Holte and it passed to a descendant who married Abraham Bracebridge who it appears was no manager and after about 700 years it passed out of a Brereton descendant's hands.

1744 John Brereton, a magistrate and rector, was born in 1744 and died in 1811.

1782 John Brereton, son of the magistrate and rector was born 1782. He became the headmaster of Bedford College. Dr. John's nephew, Alfred Henry was a surgeon and the father of Alfred William, born in 1862. William was a soloist at St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. In 1886 he moved to South Africa with his mother. John died in 1862.

1857 George Brereton Jr, the eldest son of George Brereton was a tenant farmer in Flitcham, a tiny village near Landingham and home of England's Royal Family. He came to know the Royal family as friends and taught the future Kings, George V and George VII to shoot and for about fifty years shot with King George V. He was also able to pass on his knowledge of farming and breeding of stock to the future king. Later King George V purchased the property George Brereton farmed. At the personal request of King George, George Brereton continued to live there until his death at the age of 96 years.