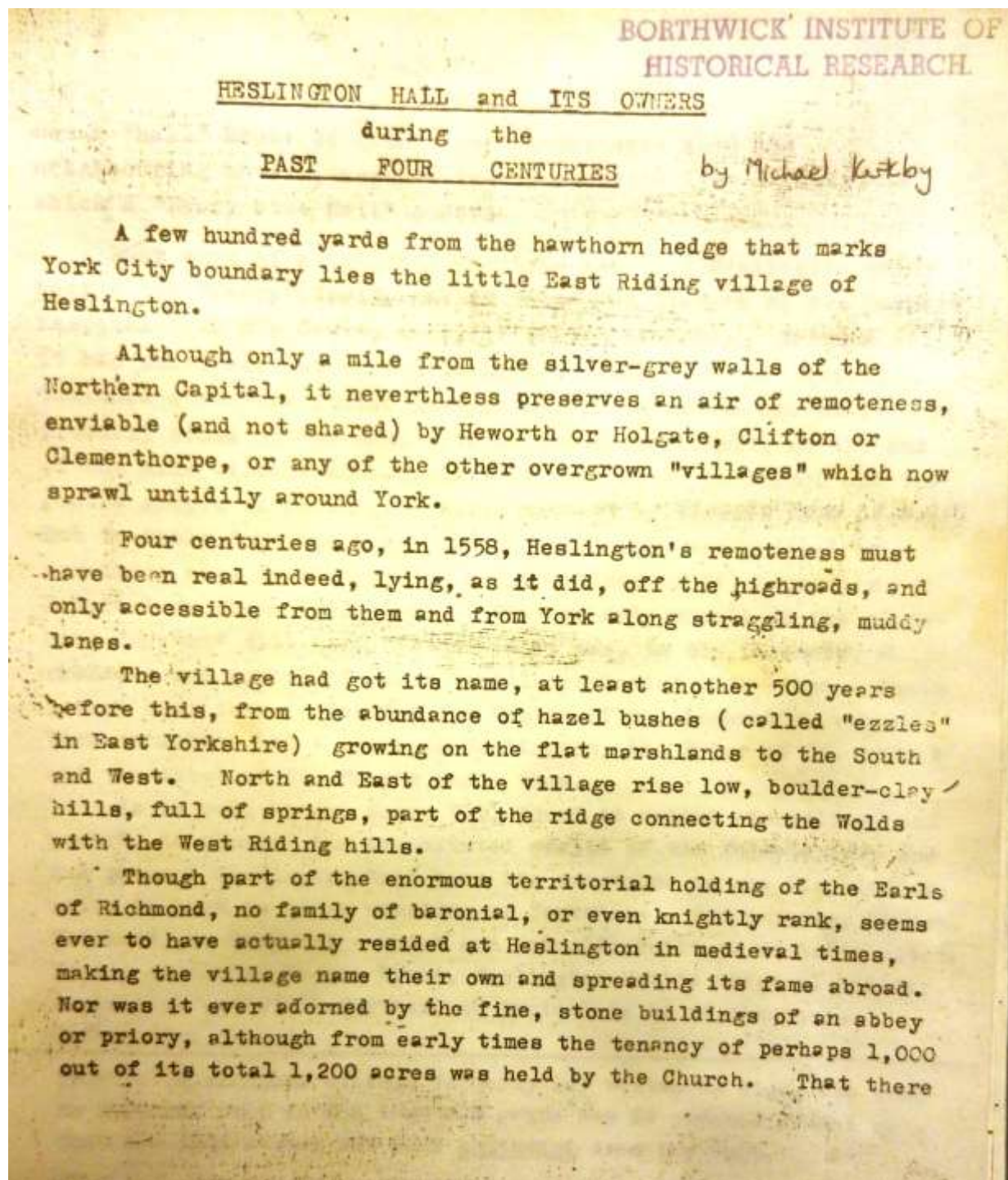


# Heslington Hall and its owners during the past four centuries

Michael Kirkby. 1958.

(copy held by the Borthwick Institute, University of York: Q42.74 HES)



was a "hall" house of rather more importance than the neighbouring hovels, appears from a taxation list of 1342, in which a "Henry atte Hall" occurs.

What sort of a building was this medieval Heslington Hall, near which "Henry" dwelt, and in which the Steward of St. Leonard's Hospital held his Court, as chief feudal tenant?. 'Nothing of it has survived, but we can imagine a simple, timber-framed, thatched structure filled in with the local hazels and clay. It probably stood on the same site as the present Hall, at the end of the wide village street, (F.N 1) near St Pauls Church and the gentle slopes of Heslington Hill, crowned by Siwards Howe (P.N.11) But in those days the view, for the village<sup>s</sup>, was spoiled by something else on the skyline - the gallows of St. Leonard's Hospital on Green Dykes Lane. What we only recall in the place-name "Garrow" Hill (and, <sup>perhaps</sup> "Thief" Lane) was, to the peasants, a reminder and symbol of their feudal overlords' life - and - death powers over them. Besides the Master of St. Leonard's, other York churchmen had a share in Heslington, the Prior of St. Andrew's, and the Abbot of St. Mary's among them.

As is well known, Henry VIII found it suited his policy, and pocket, to plunder the accumulated wealth of the Monasteries; and the present Heslington Hall owes its existence to the Dissolution, quite as much as those mansions of Yorkshire - for example, Watton, Thickett, or Newburgh - which are actually built on monastic sites. In the career of Thomas Eynns, Heslington Hall's original builder, bears this out still further, so typical is he of the post-Reformation period.

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(P.N.1) Heslington village formerly lay westwards along the road to Fulford; only in the last 200 years has it pivoted around so that the main street now runs southward from the Hall.

(P.N.11) The tumulus, with its trees, is now (1958) completely dwarfed by "Siward's Castle", the York Waterworks Company's enormous new storage tower)



THE EYNNS' - 1557 - 1601

Thomas Eynns (c.1508 - 1573) was born at Church Stretton, in Shropshire, where his mother, (Joice) (formerly Gatacre) had inherited property. The Eynns, or Heynns, family traced their descent back to a Welshman, with the improbable sounding name of 'Trehayne val Gwyrdde Glynn', (F.N.i) of Montgomeryshire.

How did this gentleman from the Welsh borders transform himself into a Yorkshire Squire?. As the building of Heslington Hall was part of that process of transformation, it is worth while attempting to answer that question by an outline sketch of Eynns' career.

Under the early Tudors, Welshmen held the same favoured position that Scotsmen were to do under the Stuarts a century later, and, in seeking employment - probably in the later 1520's - at the Court of Henry VIII, young Thomas Eynns would be following a well-trodden path from the West. He appears to have been appointed, either on arrival, or later, to the household of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, (F.N.ii) and this appointment was the first cause of Thomas Eynns coming to live in Yorkshire, for in 1525 the six-years-old Duke was made "Warden of the Marches of Scotland", and the household formed round him at Sheriff Hutton Castle was, in effect, the "Council of the North".

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(F.N.i) Perhaps, because he was not a native of Yorkshire, Thomas' surname has been consistently mis-spelt ever since he migrated here. It is mis-spelt in the Minster, where he and his wife sleep; and again - in letters of stone, this time - on the walls of the house they once lived in. The usual variant is "Eymes", but it has been writted Hennes, Ennis, Ems, and even Kymes! Thomas Eynns' own spelling, and his wife's was always "EYNNS".

(F.N.ii) Illegitimate son of Henry VIII..

In due course, Eynns was appointed the young Duke's Secretary, and when the boy died, in 1536, it was a natural promotion for Eynns to become Deputy-Secretary to the Council of the North itself.

After the suppression of the Monasteries, in 1538, the Council was reorganised and strengthened to deal with a discontented countryside; in short, "to govern and administer justice in the North". Before the end of 1538, the Lord President and his Council removed from Sheriff Hutton to York and took over, as their permanent headquarters, the house recently vacated by the Abbot of St. Mary's. Thomas Eynns thus became a citizen of York. (F.N.iii). We do not know at what stage of his career he married, and though Mrs Elizabeth Eynns was the daughter of an ancient and powerful Northern family (who had, in fact, once been owners of Sheriff Hutton), her father, Sir Edward Neville, lived mostly in Kent and Berkshire. He was a Courtier - "one of the Privy Council to King Henry VIII". (F.N.iv), and it was probably at Court that Thomas and Elizabeth first met, sometime before Sir Edward's disgrace and execution in 1538.\*

As we have seen, it was about this time that Thomas Eynns became Deputy Secretary of the Council, and, though not officially appointed Secretary until 1550, he was probably acting as such at least ten years earlier.

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(F.N.iii) Thirty years after this, a certain Edward Eynns is buying land at Sheriff Hutton and, in view of the rarity of the name, one would expect him to be in some way connected with Thomas, who, however, left no known children).

(F.N.iv) See Elizabeth Eynns' Memorial brass in the Minster).



The executive power of the Council of the North lay ~~with~~ with those few members who lived near enough to "The King's Manor" (F.N. v) for effective attendance.

As the Council's most important official, Secretary Eynns would certainly have to live near his office. In fact, at his "house within the Minster Close" he would only be a few steps away. And when long and lucrative tenure of that office enabled him to acquire a country seat, this also must be within an easy ride of the King's Manor. Heslington perfectly fulfilled this condition.

Though the basic salary of Eynns' Secretaryship was a mere £33 per annum, he was entitled, in addition, to all the fees payable for drawing up the shoals of official papers issued by the Council. And his other post, "Keeper of the Signet", was probably equally lucrative, for it brought him in 6d (worth at least 10/- today) everytime he impressed the Council's Seal on a document. (See F.N. vi). In addition, Thomas Eynns was in an exceptionally favourable position for acquiring Church lands, since sale on behalf of the Crown of the confiscated monastic possessions was one of the Council's main tasks. And so perhaps it is not surprising to find that nearly all his Yorkshire properties had formerly belonged to the Church. (F.N. vii)

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(F.N. v) As the Abbot's house was called after becoming the Lord President's Headquarters.

(F.N. vi) That unique Seal, whose supporters 'two hands bearing upright swords' symbolised the Council's often ruthless policy).  
(Illustration)

(F.N. vii) Besides Heslington itself, he obtained estates (primarily ecclesiastical) at Lowthorpe and Bugthorpe in the East Ridings and had a grant from the Crown of the tithes of St. Olave's, Clifton and Heworth.)

Only once do we find him buying property from a private individual, in the open market, and this was probably merely a small purchase to round off an estate already acquired by other means. (F.N. ) And although Thomas Eynns refers, in his Will, to " The house and scoyte of Heslyngton which I did lately purchase of Christopher Hatton Esq.," there seems to be no reference to this transaction in the contemporary record of property sales.

One gets the impression that Thomas was, politically and financially, a man of caution. To have remained "Council Secretary during four troublous decades, and under no less than six Presidents, undoubtedly shows a high degree of tact; while to have accumulated land and money for twenty seven years before beginning to build indicates considerable prudence. Indeed, the uncertain times of Edward VI and Mary must have caused many prudent people, besides Eynns, to delay their building programmes, especially if their land and wealth were derived, as his was, from monastic sources. However, by the mid-1560's (the traditional date for the building of Heslington Hall), the Elizabethan settlement had allayed such people's fears, and confirmed them in the possession of their bargains. Another tradition is that the house was deliberately built for the reception of Queen Elizabeth, and " A special room on the ground floor" used to be pointed out as one of those assigned for her occupation. It is not really likely that a house which took several years to build could have been so hopefully planned for any specific Royal visit.

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(F.N. )( In 1562 Richard and Grace Tyrel sell Thomas Eynns " A cottage and lands in Heslington).

Page 7 needs to be inserted...



It resembled, too, dozens of other contemporary country houses in owing its charm not to Renaissance rules or applied ornament, but to generally pleasing materials and harmonious proportions of window and wall; the only "classical" feature on the whole exterior of Heslington Hall was the Corinthian Porch. (F.N. ix)

It should be remembered all along that the Hall as it now exists is by no means <sup>as</sup> Thomas Eynns left it. Langdale's Guide Book of 1822 could doubtless speak of it with some justice as "a remarkable fine specimen of the Age of Elizabeth, having remained with little alteration"; but to describe the house to-day as "scarcely altered since the time it was built - though in 1854 some parts were restored and enlarged" - is a masterly understatement. The truth is that the enlargement of Heslington by Yarburgh (Greame) Yarburgh in 1854 was on such a lavish scale that much of the Elizabethan character of the house, particularly of the interior, was obliterated and replaced by a Victorian one; only with imagination can we now visualise the Great Hall, the Parlours, and the other "lodgings" as they were in Elizabethan and Stuart times.

Happily, there survive several exterior views of the Hall before rebuilding, and, though it had stood for a century and a half when the earliest of these was painted, its original elevation and layout had probably not altered much in that interval.

But with the interior it is another matter; and some imaginative effort is needed to ~~visualise~~ <sup>see</sup> the rooms as they were in 1570.

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(F.N. ix) The one we see to-day is a Victorian replacement; the original has been relegated to the walled garden)



All new houses have a certain rawness, and Elizabethan ones were no exception. It is harder now to remember that rain-worn stone and mellowed brickwork were once sharp and bright; blackened oak panelling, floors, and beams, once a clear honey colour; and the massive tables, buffets, and court cupboards hardly darker than the silver-gilt vessels that adorned them. Bare floors and sparsity of furniture were characteristic of these new Elizabethan mansions whose owners, being themselves "new men", had seldom much inherited gear to put in them. The accumulation of miscellaneous furnishings and, above all, of books and pictures - which give these mansions their opulent and 'well-lived in' look now, was then just beginning; and, as if to make up for this deficiency, the interior fabric of the house itself was made as decorative as possible - extensive panelling, painted windows, lavish ceilings of pendant plaster, and riotously carved chimneypieces. And, wherever possible, the owners' heraldic emblems were employed, so that at Heslington, both inside the house and out, the arms of Eynns, and Blyke, Gatacre, and Neville, will have been displayed (F.N. X).

For the typical Elizabethan, there was no point in being rich if one did not let one's neighbour know the fact; and a favourite method of Thomas Eynns and his contemporaries was the purchase and display of as much ornamental silver plate as possible. Even the list of his plate is impressive, amounting, as it does, to 759½ oz. (Troy), and including massive "Ewers, Bowles, Bassens, Goblets, Jugges, Potts, Trenchers, Candlesticks", and a "Standing Cuppe and Cover". Most of this was gilt, and the total effect must have been magnificent, if a little like living inside a goldsmith's shop!

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(F.N. X) Inside the Hall, the Eynns shields have been replaced by those of its later owners).

In these surroundings of splendor, Thomas Eynns and his wife passed their solitary old age, for in that era of huge families, Thomas and Elizabeth were childless; From the dynastic point of view, all the ambitions and thrift which went to the building and embellishing of Heslington Hall had been in vain. There was no son to inherit the name and estate, to marry a local heiress, and to establish the Eynns among the great families of the East Riding.

A bare ten years after the completion of the house, its builder died; and seven years later, in 1585, his widow followed him. They were both buried in the Minster, and the memorial brass of Elizabeth can still be seen, with her potrait ( F.N. xi) in the South aisle of the Choir, near Archbishop Lamplugh's monument.

For the next sixteen years, the estate was in the hands of four Eynns' brothers - Thomas, William, Richard, and John, nephews of the Secretary (F.N. xii) but there is no evidence that any of these ever made the Hall his home, and it was perhaps let, or empty, during this period. Possibly the four brothers could not agree amongst themselves - at all events, in the Summer of 1601, Richard Eynns was commissioned by the others to sell the property. The purchaser was Sir Thomas Hesketh; and three and a half centuries were to pass by before Heslington Hall was again offered for sale.

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(F.N. xi) " A prim old lady in the starched ruff and pinched-up coif of the days of Good Queen Bess!"

(F.N. xii) Sons of his elder brother Thomas Eynns of Church Stretton.



THE HESKETHS - 1601 - 1708

Sir Thomas Hesketh (1548-1606) had more than his Christian name in common with Thomas Eynns.

He, too, was no Yorkshireman, but belonged to a family who, for centuries, had been landowners in various parts of Lancashire. (F.N. i). Like Thomas Eynns, he was nearing the end of his life when he acquired Heslington, and he and his wife, Juliana, were childless also. Sir Thomas Hesketh (he was knighted in 1603) was likewise a Royal Official, his position being "Attorney of the Queen's Court of Wards and Liveries". This was a Court set up by Henry VIII in 1540, two years after the Council of the North. (F.Nii)

Moreover the resemblance was completed by Sir Thomas Hesketh's eventual appointment as a member of that very Council, of which Thomas Eynns had so long been Secretary!

During the short period (1601-7) of Sir Thomas' ownership, it is unlikely that any changes were made to the Hall; he, himself probably only used the house for occasional visits, for in his Will he speaks of a property in Preston, Lancs. as "the house wherein I dwell". One project, however, which he initiated, still flourishes in the Village, the Almshouses:-

In March, 1604, King James had granted Sir Thomas Hesketh the "five water corn mills on the River Foss, known as the Castle Millnes", and out of the rents of these, Sir Thomas (we are told) "had in his lifetime a purpose and intent to erect and found an Hospitall in Heslington, to consist of the Master, seven brethren, and one sister, (which godly and charitable purpose was prevented by his death)".

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(F.N.i) His birthplace was in Aughton, Lancs., and in 1597 he had been elected Member of Parliament for Lancaster.

(F.N.ii) Like the Council of the North, it was designed to increase Royal power and revenues-in this instance by exploiting the King's feudal rights over wards. The Court was always very unpopular, and was abolished under Cromwell.



Although his widow, Lady Juliana, almost immediately married again, she conscientiously carried out this project and "did in her lifetime at her own cost and charges erect and build a convenient Hospital with a parth and backside" in Heslington. This foundation of 1610 was in the grounds of the Hall; moved and rebuilt in its present site in 1795, it still survives, as Sir Thomas' chief memorial. (P.N. iii)

By her marriage in 1607, Lady Juliana forfeited the Heslington estate, which now passed to the late owner's younger brother, Cuthbert Hesketh (1550-1629). He was an Attorney-at-Law- what we should now call a Solicitor - and he lived on an estate at Goosenargh in Lancashire, known as Whitehill. There he had married two cousins(~~P.N.ii~~) and had brought up a family of three sons and six daughters. There was little likelihood that, at the age of fifty-seven, he would give up his Lancashire home and practice, and come to live near York, so he enters into the story of Heslington Hall even less than his brother, Sir Thomas.

However, this Cuthbert Hesketh had more than one son to provide for so, although he did not wish to live there himself, the bequest of Heslington property will have been a welcome one.

Reversing the usual custom, the younger son, Gabriel, stayed at home, in Lancashire, and eventually inherited Whitehill, while the elder, Thomas, had the richer, more splendid, Heslington estate settled on him, and was sent off across the Pennines to take possession.

~~(P.N.iii) They were Janet(i) daughters of John Parkinson of Whinney Clough, and (ii) Anne Daughter of Edmund Parkinson of~~

~~(P.N.iv) The middle son had meanwhile died without offspring.~~

(P.N.iii) ( Sir Thomas also has a memorial in Westminster Abbey, with a full sized recumbent effigy of him in his "tufted-down". Lady Juliana's description of him as " Her dearest love" and of herself as "The most miserable of widows" seems oddly at variance with her re-marriage inside six months!



Exactly when Thomas Hesketh started to live at Heslington is uncertain, but presumably it will not have been until after Lady Juliana's re-marriage in 1607. As a thoroughly eligible bachelor, he will not have lacked offers of marriage from the fathers of York girls, but the lady of his choice was an orphan, one of the eleven surviving members of a family of sixteen. Her father was Robert Brooke, a York merchant who had been Alderman, twice Lord Major, and Member of Parliament for the city. Her mother (F.N.v), daughter of a North Riding husbandman, had died during the York plague of 1604. A portrait of this prolific <sup>lady</sup> with her Mayoress' gold chain, is still at Heslington. (PLATE)

The marriage of Thomas Hesketh and Jane Brooke took place on 16th September, 1606, at Pocklington, and within a year or two, Heslington Hall echoed to the cries of the first child born there since its completion forty years previously.

Something of her parents' fecundity appears to have been transmitted to Jane Hesketh, for Thomas, the eldest surviving child was followed by twelve more brothers and sisters. One would have thought this a more than adequate provision of heirs! - nevertheless within forty-four years of the youngest child's birth, there was, in fact, no surviving male Hesketh to inherit the estate.

Anyone who examines the family tree on page 13 cannot help noticing the child mortality at Heslington during the 17th and 18th centuries, but, however horrifying this seems to us, we have to remember that our forebears regarded frequent deaths among their wives and children as the normal, expected course of events.

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(F.N. v) She was Jane, daughter of Christopher Maltby, of Thornton-le-Dale.)

Still another look at the pedigree reveals that the deficiency of heirs was not only due to these premature deaths, but also, in many instances, to the apparent sterility of many who did survive child-hood. In round figures, of the fifty Heskeths and Yarburghs born at Heslington between 1610 and 1771, barely half-a-dozen survived and had children. As Dr. Buchan, a popular "Home Doctor" (F.N. vi) of the 18th Century remarked in his "Domestic Medicine"; "Miserable indeed is the lot of Man in the state of infancy!". What diseases were at work, we can only guess; we do not know. After all, Heslington is a healthy (if slightly damp) situation and, in comparison with the overcrowding and frightful sanitary conditions of their poorer neighbours, the little Heskeths' and Yarburghs' upbringing was relatively hygienic.

In 1634, four years after his thirteenth child was born, Thomas Hesketh 2nd, died, and his eldest son and namesake inherited Heslington. As head of the family, this young man of 24 will have felt it his duty to look for a partner; and one can imagine that his choice may well have been limited to the comparatively few ladies willing to take on a husband with so many young brothers and sisters!. Thomas, the father, had found a wife in the York marriage market, but the son looked eleven miles beyond - to the North Riding Village of Alne, where a branch of the Herefordshire family of Bethell had recently established themselves

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(F.N. vi) The Heslington Hall copy is now in the Castle  
Museum).



Here he courted Mary, one of the five Bethell daughters, and on the last day of January, 1637, Thomas Hesketh and Mary Bethell were married at the Church of St. Michael le Belfrey, York. The new mistress of Heslington Hall was a niece of that distinguished Yorkshireman, Sir Henry Slingsby, of Red House, who, in 1658, was to forfeit his life for his loyalty to the King. Sir Henry was in York during the long siege, and his diary is perhaps the best eyewitness account of military operations in and around the city.

Indeed, from the time of Thomas Hesketh's marriage, events were leading swiftly up to the Civil War. With two years, York had become Charles I's headquarters, and local gentry like the Heskeths were transformed by the Royal presence from rustic provincials into, if not courtiers, at least people at the centre of affairs. Undoubtedly, Thomas Hesketh would subscribe the numerous addresses of loyalty with which the gentry and freeholders of Eastern Yorkshire responded to the King's gracious overtures towards them.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to remain neutral; In April, 1642, Sir John Hotham, acting for Parliament, shut the King out of Hull and, after that, most Yorkshiremen felt compelled to take one side or the other. In the East Riding, the division was mainly geographical - inhabitants of York and its neighbourhood were perforce "Royalists", in the same way that those of Hull and district were "Parliamentarians". It is unlikely, however, that the owner of Heslington Hall was merely a nominal Royalist; most probably he put his purse and his house unreservedly at the King's disposal, even though the prospects of repayment (F.N. vii) were dim, and the expenses of his own family considerable (F.N. viii)

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(F.N.vii) Charles candidly announced, in April 1642 "As to that which is owing to the County for billet money, the truth is, I cannot repay it - only I will say this, that if all the water had come to the right mill, upon my word, you had been long ago satisfied".)

(F.N.viii) By this time, Thomas and Mary Hesketh's fifth child had been born.

The King's urgently needed money and war materials arrived at York in March, 1643, having been collected on the Continent by Queen Henrietta Maria, and landed at Bridlington Quay. Guns were now mounted on York's defences and, from this time on, the city prepared itself for a siege.

From the Heskeths' point of view, the position had worsened, as their mansion now lay in a "no-man's-land", outside the city defences. The whole year 1643-44 must have been an uneasy time for them. In the Spring of 1644 their fears were confirmed, when three Parliamentary armies converged on York. But at least Heslington was spared invasion by the Scots and other "foreigners", since the troops occupying this Heslington area were those commanded by that daring Yorkshireman, Sir Thomas Fairfax ("Black Tom"). (F.N. ix). Their lines extended from the Ouse at Fulford along to Heslington, and then across the Hull Road through Tang Hall to Layerthorpe, thus commanding the ridge of High ground to the South East of the city.

But we can assume that the Hesketh family did not stay to see their house and gardens over-run with troops and horses. Thomas Hesketh was probably engaged in the King's service; his wife could find refuge for herself and her infant sons, either at her own home at Alne, or in York - where she would be under the protection of her "Uncle Slingsby".  
*And* Sir Henry Slingsby's diary gives a vivid picture of events at this juncture:-

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(F.N. ix) Although on the opposite side, Sir Thomas Fairfax was a close friend of Sir Henry Slingsby's, and probably knew the Heskeths as well.



"When the enemy had thus besieged us, he began to make his approaches and raised a battery upon the Windmill Hill (F.N.x) as the way lies to Heslington; plants upon it five pieces of cannon and plays continually into the town. They come nearer to us and take the suburbs (F.N.xi) without Walmgate Bar, plant two pieces in the street against the bar and another at the dove cote within a stone's throw of the Bar. Then he works under ground close by the Bar and makes his mines in two different places.....

So, during some six weeks, Heslington Hall heard the guns of both sides dealing destruction and (unlike the two neighbouring Churches of St. Nicholas and St. Lawrence) remained unscathed. Then came the decisive Battle of Marston Moor and, a fortnight later, on 16th July, 1644, the King's garrison quitted York. (F.N. xi).

By the back-end of that year, the County was virtually lost to Charles' cause, and the victors had begun to despoil the defeated Royalists - or "Delinquents", as they were now called - by levying heavy fines on their property. It is odd, and inexplicable, that among the extensive lists of Yorkshiremen fined during the next ten years, the name of Hesketh does not appear. (F.N. xii). Perhaps the military occupation of their property during the siege was reckoned sufficient penalty; or possibly Thomas Hesketh had friends on the County Committee who secured his indemnity.

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(F.N. xi) Drums beating, colours flying, matches lighted on both ends, bullets in their mouths, ~~bag~~ and baggage" - as the surrender terms put it.

(F.N. xii) Indeed, in 1642 and 1645, Thomas Hesketh was actually buying land in Fulford, from Henry Marshall; but this may have been to assist his relatives, the Marshall's whose estates had been sequestrated.)



Considering his family history and connections, it is hard to believe that his sympathies were not with the Royalist faction, and we know that his own brother, Cuthbert, was "ever loyall to his Prince". (F.N. xiii)

About the time of Charles 1's execution (January, 1649), Mary Hesketh died and, though she had borne her husband seven children, only two sons survived her. The elder one, named after his father, was sent in September, 1650, to Pocklington School - which was then the leading educational centre for boys from well-to-do East Riding families; and as soon as he was old enough (10), Cuthbert, the younger son (F.N. ix) joined his brother there.

We can surmise that the occasion of the boys being sent from home may well have been their father's re-marriage. His second wife was Mary, daughter of Thomas Coundon, Esquire, of Willerby - a village at the North-Eastern corner of the Wolds. But this lady's wedded life was brief indeed, for by February, 1654, her husband was dead. (F.N. xv).

Her stepson, Thomas Hesketh, Junior, was only fourteen when he entered upon his inheritance, and Puritan England of the Commonwealth (1649-60) was often a difficult and unsatisfactory environment for a lad in his position. Such a one (as G.M. Trevelyan writes - F.N. xvi)

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(F.N. xiii) Monument in Moor Monkton Church.

(F.N. ix) (Cuthbert Hesketh died at Riccall in March, 1661, aged 17.)

(F.N. xvi) Despite of (or because of?) this brevity, Mary Hesketh's tribute to her husband is enthusiastic:-  
Reader, would'st know what goodness lyeth here?  
Go to the neighbouring town and read it there!  
Tho' things in water writ away do glide,  
Yet there in wat'ry characters abide  
His memory and, here writ, vertues look  
Surer in tears and ink: in eyes than look."

(F.N. xvi) ~~...~~ ("England under the Stuarts"-  
page 350.)



"If youth and obscurity had enabled him to remain at home without parents or money - was often brought up among the grooms, with no instruction in morals and dignity of conduct...."

However, in addition to his stepmother, young Thomas had an Uncle, who would doubtless instruct and guide him. This was the Reverend Cuthbert Hesketh who, as he served the nearby Parish of Dunnington, probably shared the family home at Heslington with his nephew. (F.N. xvii).

Thomas Hesketh IV's fifty-three years' ownership of Heslington Hall is the longest in its history, lasting, as it did, from Commonwealth times almost into the Georgian age.

After the deaths of his brother Cuthbert (1661) and Uncle Cuthbert (1665), life at the Hall must have been lonely for Thomas; yet he waited until the mature age of 31 before marrying. His wife, Margaret Calverley, came from an ancient Lancashire and Yorkshire family, a branch of which had settled at Eryholme, almost on the Durham border. Thomas IV had therefore a much longer ride to his wedding (1670) than Thomas ~~and or last~~ II or III.

As in previous generations, the rate of child mortality continued appallingly high, and neither of the first two girls, nor the only boy, survived childhood. So when, in 1678, Mary Hesketh was born, she was the last of her line and, with her elder sister, Ann, thus became co-heiress of the Heslington estate.

(F.N. xviii) ( In 1665 the Rev. Cuthbert Hesketh became Rector of Moor Monkton, the Slingsby's Parish. He died there the next year.)

Thomas Hesketh IV makes no great stir in the history of his time: A deputy-Lieutenancy for the East Riding seems to have been the only post he ever held, and we can imagine him looking after his estate, joining in the social life of York and, in general following the placid existence of a country gentlemen. In 1688 the King (hoping to restore Catholicism) requested all county magnates to pronounce their views on "Liberty of Conscience"; Squire Hesketh's statement was typically non-committal. "I think it my duty", he wrote, "to live Friendly and Peaceably with all men, as becomes a good Christian and a Loyall Subject." So James II's pro-Catholic policy got no support here! And after the "Glorious Revolution" was safely consummated, a more domestic, but none the less weighty, problem began to engage Thomas Hesketh's attention; the bestowing in marriage of his two surviving daughters.

Co-heiresses to an estate so snugly and conveniently situated as Heslington would undoubtedly not be lacking in suitors from the moment they were of marriageable age. By 1692 the elder girl, ANNE, was already betrothed - aged 16 - to James Yarburgh, of Snaith Hall - ex-page of James II, and now a Guards Officer and A.D.C. to the Duke of Marlborough. He was twelve years her senior. In the Autumn of that year they were married; and about the time of the wedding, the younger daughter, Mary - not to be outdone - also became engaged. The bridegroom this time was a youth of 18, Fairfax Norcliffe, son of Sir Thomas Norcliffe, and heir to the nearby Langton Estate. He was just down from Oxford (F.N.) and about to enter the army which, like James Yarburgh, he made his career.

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(F.N.) ( He had matriculated at Christ Church in May, 1691.)



Surprising though it seems to us, Mary Hesketh, at the date of her marriage, was still only 14, her first child being born when she was 15. (P.N. xix).

For Thomas and Margaret Hesketh it was indeed a case of "not losing a daughter, but gaining a son"; or, rather, two sons, for apparently both the young couples settled at Heslington Hall after their marriage. From 1693 and 1694 respectively, Yarburgh and Norcliffe grandchildren began to arrive (with the customary regularity), and the fact that they were all baptised, not at Snaith or Langton, but at St. Lawrence's, York indicates that the two young mothers continued to dwell in the parental home. Both their husbands were now serving in the Army, and would visit Heslington whenever their military duties permitted. Thus at the dawn of the 18th century, Heslington Hall evidently sheltered an assorted family group of at least 14 people. These included Anne Hesketh (relict of the Rev Cuthbert), together with her unmarried daughter, Mary; Thomas and Margaret Hesketh, themselves; their two daughters, two sons-in-law on occasion, and their eight grandchildren. To these must be added at least as many domestic servants!

Evidence that there was room and to spare comes from the Hearth-return, householders at this period being taxed according to the number of hearths or fireplaces in their homes. Most houses ~~had~~<sup>returned</sup> one hearth only; and, while the substantial East Riding yeoman or gentlemen might return 5 - 8, Thomas Hesketh's mansion is assessed with no less than sixteen Hearths. (P.N. xx)

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(P.N. xix) ( In the Marriage Licence, her age is wrongly given as 18. Portraits of Fairfax and Mary Hesketh, done in later life, may be seen in the Castle Museum, York.)

(P.N. xx) ( Though Boynton - with 23, Howsham with 24, and Burton Agnes with 32 hearths, leave even Heslington 'in the cold'!)

Having survived his wife nearly three years, Thomas Hesketh died, aged 68, in 1708; and with his death, a new chapter opens in the history of Heslington Hall, since his two daughters and their husbands now inherited the property.



THE YARBURGHS - 1708-1852

THE NORCLIFFES - 1708-1793

During the reign of Queen Anne, the eighteenth century settled down into the even ~~(but far from "noiseless")~~ tenor of its way. The exuberance of the late 17th century gave way to a more sedate elegance. In the domestic arts, the last wave of Dutch influence spent itself, and England was at length free to develop a truly vernacular classical tradition.

All over England, bluff-faced old manor houses were now concealing their irregular mullions and rambling roof lines behind polite facades, whose symmetry of window and classical proportion proclaimed their owners to be men of informed taste. The Yarburghs, however, either lacked the inclination, or the means, thus to improve their new home, and for a further century and a half Heslington Hall remained substantially in its original form.

Who were these conservative Yarburghs? Like the Heskeths, they originated outside the bounds of Yorkshire, taking their name from the Lincolnshire village of Yarburgh, or Yarborough, (F.N.1) where they had settled at the Conquest.

In 1611, Edmund Yarburgh married the heiress of Balne and Snaith Halls, in the Ouse marshlands, and their children were thus the first Yorkshire-born Yarburghs.

The eldest son, Sir Nicholas, married into the Dawnay family, and, after being fined £600 for his support of the King, gave up Balne and moved to Snaith Hall about 1648.

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(F.N.1) (Lord Deramore is still Lord of the Manor of Yarburgh, and patron of the living.)

His heir, Thomas Yarburgh, was knighted by Charles 11, and in 1663 married Miss Blague, a god-daughter of the Queen-Mother. This lady not only brought the name "Henrietta Maria" into the Yarburgh family, but presented her husband with 16 children, of whom the eldest was the James Yarburgh we have already met as husband of Mary Hesketh. He, too, possessed a Royal god-parent - the Duke of York, afterwards James 11 - and, as two of his sisters were Maids of Honour, the new owners of Heslington were evidently "well in" at Court.

Moreover, (like the Austrain Hapsburgs) (F.N. ii), these 17th century Yarburghs evidently had a flair for marrying heiresses, and thereby acquiring a progressively better dwelling. Thus they deserted their ancestral home in Lincolnshire for Balne, Balne for Snaith, and now, in 1692, Snaith for Heslington.

But after this final achievement, their ambition seems to have wilted. Knighthoods, heiresses, and Court appointments came their way no more, and this branch of the family lived out the remainder (F.N. iii) of its existence with only the mild sophistications of York to alleviate the rural quietude of Heslington.

Only two of Colonel James Yarburgh's twelve children were married during his lifetime; one obscurely, the other brilliantly. Thomas, the son and heir, was cut off with the proverbial shilling, not perhaps only for having chosen a poor clergyman's daughter, but (as the Colonel puts it in his Will) for "having very unhandsomely disposed of himself in marriage without consulting me". (F.N. iv)

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(F.N. ii) ("Bella gerant alii; tu, felix Austria nube.")  
~~been rendered: "Fight those who will, let happy Austria wed  
the conqueror in the marriage bed."~~

(F.N. iii) (For though the last three generations (1664-1771) produced 22 males (let alone 19 girls), still the succession went into another family.)

(F.N. iv) Lacking the paternal blessing, this union was also not blessed with offspring.)



SIR JOHN VANBRUGH

With his eldest ~~son~~<sup>daughter, however,</sup> it was a different story, for Miss Yarburgh married the playwright and outstanding architect, John Vanbrugh, and thus, in all the long line of Yarburghs, she alone (by virtue of her husband's fame) has a place in national biography.

Named Henrietta Maria, after her grandmother, the future Lady Vanbrugh was born in 1693, and so was still a child in 1702 when, as architect of Castle Howard, Vanbrugh became a regular visitor to Yorkshire. If they met at all in these first years of the 18th century, it will not have been at Assemblies and among Lord Carlisle's set, but at Henrietta's own home.

Whenever it began, by about 1712 the courtship was sufficiently well-advanced, for that queen of gossips, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to inform her sister " 'Tis credibly reported that Mr Vanbrugh is endeavouring at the honourable estate of matrimony, and vows to lead a sinful life no more - but you know that Van's tastes were always odd, and his inclination to ruins has given him a fancy for Miss Yarburgh ..." ( F.N. v )

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(F.N. v) (She continues - and it is a revealing glimpse of contemporary York society - "He sighs and ogles so that it would please your heart good to see him; and she is not a little pleased, in so small a proportion of men amongst such a number of women, that a whole man should fall to her share".)

It should be noted that at this time Henrietta Maria, known as "Harriot", was sixteen - scarcely a "ruinous" age! Can it be that the object of Vanbrugh's "inclination to ruins" was not his lady's personal aspect, but rather the picturesque appearance of her home? (F.N. vi)

As "Van" did not actually marry the lady of his fancy until 1719, there must have been at least seven years during which he was in and around Heslington; and if ever the Hall missed its chance for re-building or re-styling, it was then: for although his more grandiose projects usually involved a clean sweep of any old building on the site ( and in these circumstances, would Thomas Eynns' house have been such a loss?), - there were also lesser occasions on which Vanbrugh showed himself capable of grafting his peculiarly individual additions or alterations on to an existing structure. (F.N. vii)

But at Heslington, alas; neither wing nor gallery; not even a fireplace or gateway, remain to testify the great man's close connection with that place. (F.N. viii)

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(F.N. vi) ( Or is Lady Mary cryptically, but none the less cruelly, mocking a young face ravaged, perhaps, by the smallpox?. And a third possibility is that the "Miss Yarburgh" referred to in 1712 was not Henrietta Maria at all, but her Aunt Faith Yarburgh (at this time a spinster of 30), and that Vanbrugh subsequently transferred his affections from the aunt to the niece. This is perhaps the most likely explanation.)

(F.N. vii) (As, for example, at Gilling Castle, in Yorkshire.)

(F.N. viii) ( The sole structure at Heslington that can, with any likelihood be attributed to Vanbrugh, is the large "Queen Anne" doll's house recently presented by Lord Deremore to the Castle Museum, York.)



The Vanbrugh-Yarburgh wedding took place at St. Lawrence's Church on 14th January, 1719 (F.N. ix) and, for their seven years of married life, the Vanbrughs lived mainly in London, with an occasional trip to Scarborough.

Nine months before Harriot's wedding, her mother had died giving birth to her twelfth child. Colonel Yarburgh survived his lady - "of whom" (as he said) "the world was not worthy" - by thirteen years, dying in March 1731. In his Will, he bequeathed various items of furniture to his children - the erring Thomas, of course, excepted. Even the Hall itself received a bequest - "my cabinet in the great Dining Room to remain there as an heirloom to the family for ever." (F.N. x)

Save for the eldest girl and youngest boy, these Yarburgh children appear to have been a rather dull lot.

(Portrait)

If they managed to survive adolescence, it was only to succumb in early middle age and, in this way, between 1731 and 1754, the estate passed in rapid succession from one brother to the next. "My life", as the Colonel remarked <sup>in his will</sup> (~~in his will~~) "hath been for the most part retired and private"; and his sons carried on the tradition with their own placid, bucolic existences (F.N. xii) in which eating, drinking, and various forms of sport doubtless played a considerable part.

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(F.N. ix) (Vanbrugh is described in the Parish Register as "of Castle Howard", so doubtless the Earl of Carlisle was best man. Three weeks before the wedding Sir John forecast the event in a letter from Castle Howard to a friend. "Dec. 25th, 1718. There has now fallen a snow up to one's neck -- in short, 'tis so bloody cold, I have almost a mind to marry to keep myself warm...")

(F.N. x) (This had probably been a Royal wedding present.)

~~(F.N. xi) (James Yarburgh's Will, 1729.)~~

(F.N. xii) (Vanbrugh's play "The Journey to London" presents a faithful contemporary portrait of rustic Yorkshire gentry; one would like to think he drew it from his own in-laws, but its date is a little too early.)

We hear, in this connection, of "the Pocklington Cup, being a Plate won there..." and it is significant that three mementoes which have survived from this period are a large brass dog-collar (engraved with Hesketh Yarburgh's name) a treatise on sheep, and a silver-mounted huntsman's horn. (P.N. xiii)

[F.N.]  
"In the Georgian era" - as one imaginative writer puts it - "when York was a special rival of London, Heslington was a well-conditioned country seat, the centre of contentment, and of ease. For some three generations it slumbered in prosperity, sending its patched and commoded daughters to walk minuets at the great County balls in the Assembly Rooms at York, and its sons into the Militia or to the racecourse and the cockpit".  
E GARDENS But another, more productive, activity of these early Yarburghs was undoubtedly gardening. Part of the garden lay-out - which to-day constitutes the Hall's chief attraction for many of its visitors - was done in the time of James Yarburgh and his sons; for people who, as they did, think twice before rebuilding their houses, are often less hesitant when it comes to re-modelling their gardens!

Here, the focus and centre piece of the new design was a red-brick Gazebo, a delightful sort of cross between a look-out tower and a summerhouse. It is the only piece of Georgian building belonging to the Hall, and, unlike the Hall itself, it has survived in original condition. This Gazebo would be built around the middle of the 18th century, and one gets the impression that the "Prospect of the Hall and gardens from the North East" (PLATE) was deliberately commissioned to "show it off".

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(P.N. xiii) ( In York Castle Museum.)

F.N. (Wheatley Historic Mansions of York)



This painting is of considerable interest, and seems to date from about 1753, when the two sportsmen in the foreground, on the slopes of Heslington Hill, might well be Hesketh Yarburgh with his brother, Charles; and the children playing by the garden wall, the latter's eldest boy and girl.

On the left, nestling in trees, is Sir Thomas Hesketh's "convenient Hospitall house" (F.N. xiv), and from the dark mass of Spring Wood on the right a syke, or spring, fills, first a small fish pond, and then an ornamental water aligned with, and reflecting the Gazebo. A narrow canal leads from this to a boathouse.

As for the yew trees, whose massive topiary now lends such dignity to the gardens, they feature in this prospect as quite modest fingers of green "continually repeated, not unlike a funeral procession", as Alexander Pope remarked. The same poet satirises (F.N. xv) a garden of this sort within whose confining walls, "Judging by their size in the 1753 picture, the yew alleys will have been planted in the days of Queen Anne (F.N. xvi), when stiffly formal gardens veritable fantasies of the drawing board", were fashionable.

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(F.N. xiv) (The site is still marked on the large scale Ordnance Maps.)

(F.N. xv) ( In the "Epistle to Lord Burlington" his Yorkshire patron. "No pleasing intricacies intervene.

No artful wildness to perplex the scene:

Grove nods to grove - each alley has a brother

And half the platform just reflects the other".

(F.N. xvi) ( or, perhaps, during the reign of George 1st., seeing that the Yarburghs tended to be old-fashioned folk!)

The gardens to-day are not altogether as the early Georgians left them. The yew alleys and garden-house remain, for, as Laurence Whistler writes, "mercifully no one at Heslington was even up-to-date enough to destroy them when, later in the 18th century, a house was only beautiful if it stood in the middle of a large bare field, not far from an irregular sheet of grey water." But in the layout around and beyond, a limited amount of "artful wildness" was eventually introduced, as we shall see later.

To return to the Yarburgh family, the brothers Thomas, Henry and Hesketh, having inherited Heslington by turn, were, by 1754, all dead and buried in St. Lawrence's Church. Since they were childless, and since his four other elder brothers were likewise dead, the succession now went to the eighth, but only surviving son, Charles Yarburgh, aged 38. This Charles seems to have been cast in a different mould from his numerous kindred. First, unlike them, he lived to the good old age of 73; then again, he made up for his brothers' matrimonial and procreative deficiencies by marrying twice and fathering fourteen children. Thirdly, he went through a University education, taking his M.A. degree at Oxford in 1741. In the 18th century, this did not imply the attainment of a very high academic level, but Charles will at least have seen something of England beyond Yorkshire. He even ventured to choose his wives outside the county, his first being Mary, daughter of Sylvanus Griffin, of Wirksworth in Derbyshire. Of her seven children, only two survived; soon after her death, Charles Yarburgh married Mary's sister, Sarah Griffin, and once again only two out of the seven reached their majority. Thus, for all his fourteen sons and daughters, Mr. Yarburgh had only two grandchildren, and these did not bear his ancient name, but the comparatively recent one of Greame.



There is little to remark in these tranquil years, since the Yarburghs do not seem to have participated in public life as enthusiastically as their position in the County warranted. During the 18th century none of the family appears to have held office, either in York as Lord Mayor or Sheriff, or in the East Riding as High Sheriff or Deputy Lieutenant. But service on the bench of Justices was one duty they can scarcely have escaped, for however deficient otherwise in public spirit, the head of a county family generally found his interest as a landlord sufficient inducement to serve as a J.P.

HOUSE and ESTATE MANAGEMENT

According to a Tax Return, five menservants were employed at Heslington Hall in 1780 - a modest <sup>FN xvii</sup> number, since it included both inside and outside men. (~~F.N. xviii~~)

However, to these five must be added at least twice as many female servants, and the total number in and around the Hall was probably not far short of twenty. Administration of this household and, still more, his single-minded devotion to sport, must have occupied much of Charles Yarburgh's time; what was left, he gave to the care of his half of the Heslington estate. There survive some letters of 1779 from his cousins, the owners of the other half, and these do not show him up as a particularly "improving" landlord. "Heslington would have been inclosed several years ago by Act of Parliament", comments Sir James Norcliffe (F.N. xviii) "if Mr Yarburgh had not prevented it"; and he contemplates doing the work himself and paying for it "by sale of the Hedge Row Wood, which (tho' inconsiderable) is going totally to decay...". In 1775 out of the 528 acres already enclosed, 242 belonged to the Norcliffes and only 194 to the Yarburghs, which to some extent bears out Sir James' remarks. As one would expect, in the four "open" fields, (Low Gravel, Brend, and Kimberlow) the Yarburgh holdings were correspondingly larger.

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(FN xvii) Against the 23 employed at Hynamy Hall or the 62 at Wentworth Woodhouse.

(F.N. xviii) ( This Sir James was a Scots baronet named Innes Kerr, who took the name Norcliffe on marrying the Langton and Heslington heiress. He remarried within a week of her decease and (having successfully claimed the Dukedom of Roxburgh) had a son and heir at the age of 80.)



THE PAINTED PANELS in THE GREAT HALL

Like his father, Charles Yarburgh had a lively interest in genealogy and heraldry, and ( in 1774 ), having drawn up an elaborate pedigree of the Yarburghs back to the Conquest, he conceived the idea of using their numerous shields of arms to decorate the wainscot of the Great Hall. First, the large panels over the fireplace were completed: On the left, nine Yarburgh quarterings; on the right, twenty Hesketh ones; and in the centre panel, Charles Yarburgh's own personal shield - in which Yarburgh and Hesketh impale a large silver Griffin.

Next, each of the top row of five heights panels right around the Hall was painted with an Adam style shield of arms, the names of the families concerned being shewn below the shields. These fifty-seven (F.N. 1) panels were apparently intended to commemorate every Yarburgh marriage since the 11th century, and include "coats of arms" of worthies who flourished years before armorial bearings were ever thought of!

Still, their general effect when freshly painted must have been very rich; nor is their subsequent history without interest. In 1822, the shields were noticed by Langdale in his "Topographical Dictionary", but sometime later they disappeared under a coat of white paint. Then, perhaps around 1880, oak came into fashion again, and the white panels were painted brown and grained to resemble what, in fact, they already were! Finally, in this century, the wainscot was stripped of its coats of paint, and the shields may now be seen much as Charles Yarburgh left them, except that the tinctures have inevitably lost some of their brilliance.

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(F.N. 1) ( There are also two shields over the doors; one in honour of Eustachius de Yarburgh, founder of the family; the other for William the Conqueror himself.)

THE GREAME - YARBURGH MARRIAGE  
CHARLES YARBURGH'S WILL

Sometime during the 1770's a certain Thomas Greame, squire of Towthorpe on the Wolds, began to rent a house in Heslington village. He was the younger son of a family who, for one hundred and fifty years, had been acquiring property and consolidating their estate at Sewerby, near Bridlington, and who (like the Yarburghs) had been persistently clever at marrying heiresses. Thus, after inheriting Towthorpe from his mother's family (F.N.i), Thomas Greame himself married an only child (F.Nii). By this marriage, he had two daughters, but it is with his son, John, baptised at Wharram Percy in August 1759, that the Heslington story is concerned, for twenty-three years later, on August 6th, 1782, the following announcement appeared in the 'York Courant':-

"On Thursday last was married John Greame, Esq., son of Thomas Greame, Esq., and nephew of John Greame, Esq., of Sewerby, to Miss Sally Yarburgh, daughter of Charles Yarburgh, Esq., of Heslington, near this City - a most amiable and accomplished young lady."

Of all her generation, only "Miss Sally" had any children, so her marriage to John Greame turned out more than just a match between a younger daughter (her portion was £4,000) and a neighbouring squire. Seventy years later, her son Yarburgh Greame, and his sister, Alicia Maria, were to become, in turn, heirs of the whole Heslington estate!

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(F.N.i) ( His mother was Mary, daughter of Thomas Taylor, from an old Wolds yeoman family.)

(F.N.ii) ( Christiana Clark, of Pickering.)



John and Sally Greame's married life at "Wimbledon" (F.N. iii) lasted only three years, for the young mother died in 1785, the day after her son, Yarburgh, was christened; the child whose passion for building was one day to embellish Sewerby and, alas, - so thoroughly to disfigure Heslington! John Greame outlived Sarah by fifty-five years, having married again in 1787, and inherited Sewerby House from his uncle in 1798.

When he made his Will in 1785, Charles Yarburgh could not foresee the future descent of the Heslington Estate with any certainty. Bereft as he already was of nine children and two wives, there were still living two sons who might be expected to carry on the name. The elder, Henry, was 37, married but childless; the younger, Nicholas Edmund, a boy of 14 at boarding school. Next in succession came a widowed and childless daughter, Mary Coates; then Sarah Greame herself, and, lastly, ten-year-old Henrietta Maria (F.N.iv).

The mass of legal verbiage required for Charles Yarburgh to secure the estates to this mixed collection, and to their heirs in the right order, meant a Will of 35 pages, of which the clause most lasting in its effect was that requiring all heirs through the female line "to assume and take upon themselves the Surname and Arms of Yarburgh only, and to write and stile themselves upon all occasions by that surname only and no other." In obedience to this order, three gentlemen <sup>would eventually seem</sup> ~~thought~~ it worthwhile to change their names - Yarburgh Greame, George John Lloyd, and George William Bateson. The latter was <sup>later</sup> ~~eventually~~ permitted to couple his own patronymic with the ancient name of Yarburgh, and thus found the Yarburgh-Bateson family.

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(F.N. iii) ( Presumably the North Riding village, not the Surrey one.)

(F.N. iv) ( Like her sister, Sarah, Henrietta Maria - the last of that name - died before her father.)



Henry Yarburgh succeeded his father in August 1789, a few weeks after the fall of the Bastille and the outbreak of the French Revolution. He was then over forty and had formerly served in the 20th Light Dragoons, retiring with the rank of Captain; during his service he had married Miss Anne Agar, the daughter of a Canterbury parson. Having been a soldier, Captain Yarburgh will undoubtedly have taken active part during the long years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in the organisation of the Volunteers and Militia, especially from 1803 onwards, when the whole country was in arms against the expected invasion of the French. His junior brother, Nicholas Edmond, graduated at Oxford in 1793 and as a young bachelor was also liable to be balloted into the Militia; this perhaps decided him to copy Henry and become a Regular. Nicholas eventually became Major, and until his death in 1852 was always known by this title; while Henry Yarburgh, senior in age but junior in military rank, apparently dropped his "Captain" when the war ended.

Heslington Hall, meanwhile, remained unchanged; an Elizabethan mansion house in a Queen Anne layout. Moreover, what had merely been "unfashionably old" in the classicists of the 18th Century was in process of becoming "desirably old-fashioned" to the Romantic Revivalists of the early 19th. The Hall was particularly admired by the Yorkshire topographer, James Langdale, for its "appearance of much antiquity"; while in 1815, a local rhymester, Charles Atkinson by name, humbly dedicated a Rural Poem to Henry Yarburgh Esquire with the auspicious first line "Heslington sweet spot! my muse shall sing" (P.N. v)

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(P.N. v) (Printed and "embellished" by Mr. Carrall of the Walmgate Circulating Library, this poem has interesting references to the Retreat, Bleachfield Farm, York Barracks, etc.)



Rich, childless, and probably not overmuch addicted to intellectual pursuits, Henry and Nicholas Yarburgh ( the former died in 1825) continued whole-heartedly the family absorption with Sport, and views of the house at this period invariably have their complement of horses and hounds. (PLATE)

Racing. The particular object of Major Yarburgh's devotion was undoubtedly the Turf, and his purple and crimson racing colours were found on many courses. From the time he became Squire - and thus had full liberty to indulge it, - his special craving was, (in the words of a contemporary racing journalist) "to gain the great Doncaster St. Leger; which desired object he attained, as it would appear, step by step, with steady perseverance". In 1827 the Major gained 3rd, in 1828 2nd place, but he had to wait eleven years for that great occasion in 1839 when his brown colt "Charles XIth" carried off the Stakes after the first dead heat in St. Leger history.

(F.N.vi) Major Nicholas was a Deputy Lieutenant of the East Riding and in 1836 High Sheriff of Yorkshire. He apparently continued racing at least until his 80th year.

One thing is certain: the "steady perseverance" of the final Yarburgh and of his predecessors in open-air pleasures occupied their time and energies, and in effect drew them away from domestic pursuits. During 60 years, family distractions and feminine influence were negligible. Home, under the direction of a housekeeper (F.N. vii) was a place where one returned, weary after the day's sport, to eat and sleep; that it was antiquated, and had few pretensions to style and elegance, did not trouble these devotees of Turf and Chase (F.N.viii).

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(F.N.vi) ( From "Charles XIth's" victory one of Heslington's inns get its unusual name. And is it a coincidence that the "Charles XIth" stands only three quarters of a mile away from a public House dedicated to "Bees Wing" the celebrated St. Leger winner of 1836?)

(F.N.vii) (Heslington Hall was ruled for many years by a lady named Anne Haines: she eventually received an annuity of £50.)

(F.N.viii) ( For the classic portrayal of a masculine sporting household see chapters 5 and 6 of "Rob Roy" by Sir Walter Scott.)



But great changes were at hand for the old house, and a single proprietor of intellectual, antiquarian tastes was about to transform in three years what his simple sporting forebears had left unaltered for nearly 300.

Yarburgh Greame: The Hall is rebuilt. Nicholas Edmund, last of the old Yarburgh stock, died in 1852, and his 67 year old nephew, Yarburgh Greame Esq., of Sewerby, near Bridlington, inherited the Heslington estate. He was, it will be remembered, the only son of John Greame and Sally Yarburgh, and he succeeded to Heslington under the terms of his maternal grandfather's Will. (See pages 34 to 35). A bachelor of upright life, considerable wealth, and benign appearance, he is nevertheless the "Villain of the piece" in the story of Heslington Hall, for to him is due the wholly unnecessary rebuilding of the old mansion. His motives are inexplicable: he already possessed a spacious home (F.N. ix) where for 11 years he had pursued "an almost uninterrupted programme of construction and improvements" - employing the then little known Gilbert Scott as his architect (F.N.x).

Nor was Heslington Hall in such decrepit condition as to require its demolition and reconstruction. Paintings and photographs of the old house show a edifice, ancient indeed, but apparently not in the least ruinous: continuously occupied by rich families there is no reason why it ever should have fallen out of repair.

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(F.N. ix) (Since their purchase by Bridlington Corporation in 1934, Sewerby House and its cliff top setting have become known to thousands of visitors.)

(F.N.x) ( See informative booklet " Sewerby House and Park" by Francis Johnson, Esq., )



Although Yarburgh Greame had only indirect heirs to his estate (the sons of his sister, Alicia Maria), it is possible that one of his reasons for rebuilding Heslington Hall was to equip the older nephew, George Lloyd, with a home in no way inferior to Sewerby House, the portion of the younger nephew. Or perhaps, having so "improved" his paternal property, Mr Greame felt he now owed the same duty towards his mother's ancestral home. Whatever his motives, the result was the old Hall's virtual extinction between 1853 and 1855, and the emergence of a pile of masonry hardly distinguishable from hundreds of other early Victorian mansions. The water colour by Mary Mostyn gives us a good idea of the Hall soon after rebuilding, with its unsympathic purplish brick and black Lancashire slate. What is not apparent from any single view, is the programme of sheer enlargement carried out by Yarburgh Greame. The old house had, besides the Great Hall, a drawing room and "several other apartments". (F.N.xi). Above was a range of "lodgings" or bedrooms, some of them formed out of the old gallery; while in the wings were stabling and domestic offices. After 1855, however, there clustered around the Great Hall dining, drawing, morning, billiard, and smoking rooms, besides a large library and schoolroom wing. And in his provision of domestic offices the architect was equally lavish, for the semi-basement floor now contained no less than 42 rooms - an interminable warren of kitchens, pantries, larders, sculleries, laundry and miscellaneous stores.

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(F.N.xi) (Langdale's Topographical Dictionary, 1822.)

By adding to the reception and domestic accommodation a proportionate quantity of bedrooms of all shapes and sizes, a grand total of 109 rooms is reached and although this is certainly fewer than the greater country houses (F.N.xii), it is still impossibly large for modern requirements. Thus the rebuilding is regrettable not only aesthetically and historically but also because, had Heslington remained its original size, it might well have been lived in to this day.

It would be satisfying to know who was the architect of all these changes. So far no definite evidence has yet appeared, though it may well do so. Ordinarily, one would expect Gilbert Scott, (see page 38) to have remained in Mr Greame's service but at Sewerby (according to Scott himself) "difficulties arose from the fads of my employer", which might well mean that their relationship was discontinued. In any case, Scott considered "Tudorism" unsuitable for country houses because it did not admit of large plate glass windows; and Tudor is essentially the dominant style at Heslington. Nor does Heslington appear in the list of Scott's works.

Six miles away at Thicket Priory, is a more promising clue. Rebuilt in about 1850 this mansion strongly resembles Heslington both in materials and architectural idiom, and is known to have been rebuilt by the celebrated Victorian architect, Edward Blore, designer of old Buckingham Palace. Yarburgh Greame may well have seen and approved this nearby reconstruction.

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(F.N.xii) ( For instance, Knole in Kent has 365 rooms!)



Externally, the court yard front of Heslington is perhaps the most pleasing, <sup>PLATES</sup> for here only the roof lines depart from the original and the rest is a faithful copy of the Elizabethian work. The garden elevations, (north and west), however, are unashamedly 19th century with a plethora of plate glass staring lifelessly from heavy mullions. The flat roofed, taller projections which gave the old house something of a peel tower look were engulfed by Victorian masonry; to offset this, the architect heightened these turrets and capped them with a pair of stumpy concave spires. And where the chimneys had formerly peeped unobtrusively, now a dozen or more massive brick stacks impaled the sky.

Nevertheless, the new building had some redeeming features. The reception rooms are generally well proportioned and the views from them <sup>the gardens and up the slopes of Heslington Hill are more extensive</sup> over those afforded by the old mansion. <sup>since</sup> The woodwork in these rooms is handsomely executed in oak, most of the panelling being of the simple sunk square type, copied from the original: chimney pieces, doors, and casings, however, are rather more ambitious and richly "Tudor" in conception, with a liberal use of linenfold and geometrical panels. A rather unusual material, boiled leather (cuir bouilli) was used for the bas-relief panels over the West Drawing Room mantel-piece.

The plasterwork of the principal rooms is equally rich for, though the only original ceiling to survive is the one in the Great Hall (F.N.iv), the Victorian architect drew on Elizabethian originals for the ceilings of the other reception rooms.

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(F.N.iv) (The pendants of this ceiling strongly resemble those in the Hall of Gilling, and may well have been ~~made~~ by the same plasterer.)

Elsewhere in the house, the ceilings are plain, with simple classical mouldings. In three apartments shields of arms of the Hesketh, Yarburgh and Greame families have been incorporated as decorations. The library and billiard room ceilings are particularly handsome, and in the latter Yarburgh Greame paid tribute to his predecessor by including in the plasterwork the Eynns arms and crest and the date 1577. Heraldry was also employed to illumine the great window of the Hall (dated 1855) in which 25 stained glass shields display Mr Greame's personal "quarterings".

Yarburgh Greame (F.N.v) kept a careful account of his purchases for Heslington and he evidently considered the old Hall needed adornment, since between November 1852 and June 1853 he laid out over £1,000 ( a very much larger sum in modern money) on furniture, silver and works of art.

Though no firm traditions survive on the matter, the re-modelling of the gardens was probably contemporary with the rebuilding of the house. Here the main alterations was the replacement of the formal sheets of water by an irregular shaped fishpond. The spoil from this excavation was very likely used to lengthen the great north terrace whose pierced brick retaining wall certainly seems to date from the 1850's.(F.N.vi) Other outside changes about this time were the rebuilding of the boathouse-dovecote, the erection of conservatories in the kitchen garden, <sup>and</sup> at the front of the Hall, the extension of the courtyard forward to the highway.

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(F.N.v) ( he changed his name to Yarburgh Yarburgh by Royal Warrant dated September 25th, 1852.)

(F.N.vi) ( Pond and Terrace appear in an Estate Map of 1875, and by then had probably been in existence for some years.)



The statue of Diana which stands here will be one of Yarburgh's numerous acquisitions, since it does not appear in earlier views of the front.

It is doubtful whether Yarburgh ever inhabited the rebuilt Hall, for he lived only a few months after its completion. Indeed, during all this time he may have been a sick man, since one of his epitaphs (F.N.vii) tells us that his death (January 25th, 1856) followed "a painful illness borne with peaceful calmness and resignation", - building, like Bess of Hardwick, to the last!

~~She inherited the Hall.~~ Next in succession to Heslington was Yarburgh's sister, Alicia M. Greame, but as she and her husband, George Lloyd (1787-1863) were already well provided with residences, they declined the honour of changing their name to Yarburgh in favour of their eldest son, George John Lloyd, who now inherited Heslington in their place.

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(F.N.vii) ( There are monuments to him in both Bridlington and Sewerby Churches.)

THE LLOYDS 1856-1875

Like most of the families in Heslington's story, the Lloyds came from outside Yorkshire; originally Welsh but long settled in Manchester, their first connection with the County was the marriage of George John's grandfather with Elizabeth Naylor of Wakefield (F.N.viii). Before long, the Lloyd family had acquired at least half a dozen properties (F.N.vix) in the North and East Ridings, both under their own name and under the aliases of Yarburgh (Heslington) and Greame (Sewerby) (F.N.x)

When Mr and Mrs Lloyd moved with their two daughters from nearby Lingcroft, to Heslington, they found the building programme "projected by the late lamented Yarburgh Yarburgh" still incomplete, for his plans had included, as at Sewerby, a school and a new Church. Provision had been made for these in his Will, and the projects were carried out by his devoted sister, Alicia Maria, who built the school in 1856 and the Church two years later. The existing Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul, though it possessed Norman features, was described in 1825 as mainly "late and poor" work; the new structure is doubtless a more fitting neighbour for the rebuilt Hall, whose occupants from now on worshipped here, and not, as in previous centuries, at St. Lawrence's outside Walmgate Bar. Indeed, one of the first weddings in the new Church was that of George John Yarburgh's eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth (F.N. xi) whose marriage to George William Bateson on May 8th, 1862 opens the most recent chapter in the private ownership of Heslington Hall.

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(F.N.viii) ( This family's toast was "The Heywoods were, the Milnes are, the Naylors will be." )

(F.N.ix) ( Besides Heslington, there was Stockton, Acomb, and Lingcroft, near York; Fort Hall and Sewerby Hall near Bridlington; & Cowesby Hall, Northallerton. )

(F.N.x) ( The most distinguished living member of this family is the Earl of Swinton. )

(F.N.xi) ( Born a Lloyd, this lady was Yarburgh 1857-62, Bateson 1862-76, Bateson de Yarburgh 1876-1884; had she lived to 1890



THE BATESONS. 1875-1956

As elder co-heiress, Mary Yarburgh inherited the Heslington estate on her father's death, and so brought it into the Bateson family, whose property (excepting the Hall itself) it still remains (1958).

Like the Heskeths, page 11) and the Lloyds, the Bateson family were Lancashire folk. Some time in the reign of George 2nd, George Bateson (1706-1791) from Catterall near Garstang, emigrated to Northern Ireland where he and his elder brother, Richard, eventually acquired estates. In 1780 Thomas' heir and namesake re-crossed St. George's Channel to marry Elizabeth Lloyd of the Manchester family already mentioned (page 44) (F.N.xii). Their son, Robert Bateson was created (1885) Baron Deramore. As he had no son, the title came to his brother, George William, at Heslington; and the present (fifth) Lord Deramore, is the latter's grandson.

During his tenure of the property from 1893-1936( the ~~second~~ longest in its history) the third Lord Deramore effected several changes. He removed the spirelets from the towers, and about the time of the First War replaced the Hall's black slate roofs with the more congenial tiles we see today (F.N. viii). He also cleared away the large conservatory from the western end of the terrace; but a lily garden, expensive to maintain, and of equally debateable propriety, was laid out in its place by his second wife.

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(F.N.xii) ( George William Bateson and George John Yarburgh, see page 44, were thus second cousins.)

(F.N.xiii) ( This, in spite of his large shares in a Welsh slate company!.)

Following Sir Thomas Hesketh's example of three centuries before, the third Lord Deramore also founded a set of almshouses. Erected in the memory of his first wife ( died 1901), these stand at the bottom of the village and are in admirable taste for their period.

Lord Deramore was a well-known figure in the East Riding, being at one time Lord Lieutenant, and for long Chairman of the County Council. On his death in 1936 he was succeeded by his brother, who, however, only held the estate for seven years. The present (fifth) Lord Deramore is the latter's eldest son.



