THE DUTCH JAMES FAMILY OF IGHTHAM COURT

By Edward Bowra

The Ightham branch of the family of Dutch James held the Manor for three hundred years over a span of eight generations, but has had little notice in the volumes of *Archæologia Cantiana*. Its story does, however, afford much of interest and merits recording, not least in its relation to Kentish, and, indeed, national history.

The court rolls, fortunately preserved, record the first court in the name of William James in 1600. The manor and estate, situated thirty miles south of London, had been bought by him from Percival Willoughby, whose family seat (long since destroyed) was at Bore Place, Chiddingstone, not far off. The manor house, then called Court Lodge, was comparatively new, being built by the Willoughbys in the mid-sixteenth century. It still stands, substantially the same; with its mellowed brickwork it is a particularly charming example of a medium-sized Tudor house. The Manor dates back to the thirteenth century, so no doubt a previous house stood on the site.

William James was an example of Lambarde's well-known comment, in his *Perambulation of Kent* of only a generation earlier, concerning the gentlemen of Kent being 'not so ancient stocks as elsewhere, especially in the parts nearer to London, from which city courtiers, lawyers, and merchants be continually translated, and do become new plants among them'. He was not only a merchant, but by origin a foreigner, and his wife was also a foreigner. His father, Roger, had fled from the Low Countries to London, no doubt to escape the Spanish domination at the time and the persecution of the reformed religion. He was a younger son of Jacob van Haestrecht of Cleve, near Utrecht, and of Gonda, in Holland, a family of prominent landowners. In 1566 he acquired the Ram's Head brewery, with the Thames-side wharf called Clare's Quay, off Lower Thames Street, close to the Tower of London. He called himself Jacobs, but this soon became anglicized to James, and the family became known as the Dutch James. Beer was the universal drink and times were prosperous for brewers. In spite of competition from twenty major brewhouses on Thames-side in the City, Roger James, when he died in 1591, left a considerable estate.

Roger had married Sarah, only daughter and heiress of Henry Morskyn, of Liège, who had also settled in London. They had a house by the brewery, where no doubt the family were all born and the sons brought up to the brewing trade. The eldest son, Roger, inherited the

Ram's Head property, and the second son another brewhouse, in Whitechapel. William was the third surviving son, and with five younger brothers, had a share of his father's other properties, distributed in several places in Essex, Hertfordshire and Kent. Roger James is commemorated by a brass in his parish church of All Hallows-by-the-Tower, Barking. The effigy is full length and shows him with beard, wearing ruff, doublet, and fur-trimmed gown. The brass bears the arms of the Worshipful Company of Brewers, of which Roger was Third Warden when he died.

William James (*c.* 1570-1627)

When William came to Ightham he was about thirty years old. His young wife, Jane, was the only daughter and heiress of Henry Kule, a wealthy merchant of Bremen. The son and heir, William, was born soon after their arrival and was followed by five more children. He soon settled down as a country squire, taking his share of public duties. In 1611 he and his brothers were granted arms by James I: *argent a chevron between three mill rinds traverse sable, crest a garb argent banded vert.* This was appropriate to the brewing industry, the mill rind being the core of the great millstone which ground the barley for beer, and the garb being the sheaf of barley. The Jacobean box pews in Ightham Church were the family pews, erected by William James, his recently acquired arms being repeated as part of the motif of the carving of the decoration. The church still possesses the silver chalice which he presented, with the hallmark London 1616, and inscribed in Latin as his gift.

In 1612 the Court Rolls record 'Sir William Selby, sen., who lately held of the lord of this manor the messuage of the Mote and divers lands thereto belonging has died since the last Court'. This was the first of the Selbys, who had come all the way from the Scottish border country, where his family were hereditary lords of the marches. He was elderly, unmarried, retiring after a long military career, starting at the siege of Edinburgh when a boy of thirteen. He had acquired Ightham Mote only shortly before the arrival of the Jameses at Court Lodge and the two families remained as near neighbours for many generations, the last Selby owner dying in 1889.

William James died in 1627 and was buried in the church. In his will he gave 'to ye poor People of Ightham 12 penny loaves every Sunday for ever'—a thank-offering to God for his blessings. The inventory of the contents of Court Lodge, taken at the time, confirms that he was, indeed, in comfortable circumstances. The charity survived for three hundred years. He was succeeded in the Manor by five generations of direct descendants.

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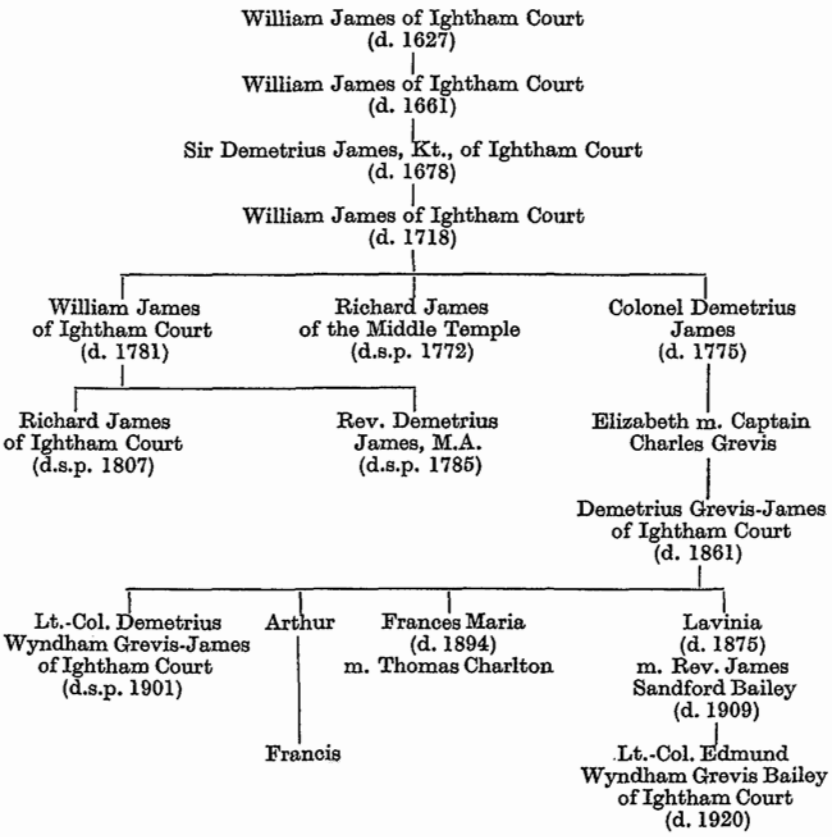
The Succession



Abbreviations: d. = died. d.s.p. = died without issue. m. = married.

William James (1602-61)

Although William James was only the second generation of his family in Kent he was accepted by the old-established County gentry and took an active part with them in the eventful times of Charles I and the Commonwealth. His first appearance in politics was in the elections of the famous Long Parliament, in 1640, when, along with his influential friend, Sir John Sedley, of the adjoining estate of St. Clere, he supported the candidature of Sedley's cousin, Sir Edward Dering, in moderate opposition to King Charles. The next step was in 1642, when another friend and neighbour, a prominent political figure in the County, Sir Roger Twysden, of Royden Hall, canvassed him in connection with the proposed County petition directed against the policies of

the House of Commons. Twysden had a high regard for James's intelligence and integrity and was disappointed not to obtain his support. The result of the petition was that Twysden and other signatories were arrested as delinquents. Mr. James was appointed to the County Committee for the administration of Kent, including the sequestration of delinquents' estates. He showed his magnanimity, however, by remaining loyal to Sir Roger, pleading his cause and eventually regaining his estates for him.

James was now a declared Parliamentarian, along with other County gentry of only recent connection with the County. It would seem that this was less from religious or political conviction than from a desire for the safety of his estates. These he greatly extended by purchasing the adjoining manors of Wrotham and Stansted from John Byng.

In July 1643, after the outbreak of the Civil War, James found himself involved in a Kent Royalist rising, sparked off in his own village. As a result of the discovery of the Royalist plot by Edmund Waller, of Groombridge Place, in Kent, Parliament directed the County Committee that an oath of allegiance be read in all churches and sworn to by all clergy and their congregations. The Rector of Ightham, the Rev. John Gryme, M.A., refused to obey. A party of horse was sent to arrest him, and in the scuffle in which the parishioners attempted his rescue one of them was killed. This was the signal for the discontent throughout the countryside to break out into open rebellion. An excited crowd of perhaps four thousand gathered on the common at the Vine, at Sevenoaks, motley, ill-armed and undisciplined, but in angry mood. Sir Henry Vane, the elder, of Fairlawn, deputed by Parliament, summoned hastily the nearest members of the Kent Committee, including James and Sir John Sedley. The small party of five rode off to the Vine to parley with the leaders. They refused to lay down their arms without the redress of their grievances and, amidst the altercation, the Committee men found themselves held captive and in danger of their lives. Fortunately a local demagogue, one Grandsden, was persuaded to effect their release. Undaunted, they now joined company with the troops sent down from London, who drove the dwindling numbers of rebels down the road towards Tonbridge. At the swollen Hilden Brook they came under fire and the Committee men distinguished themselves in a gallant charge to regain the bridge. After several hours of fighting, with losses on both sides, Tonbridge was entered and the rebellion broken up, the men dispersing to their homes.

James is noted by Hasted in his *History of Kent* (1782) as 'in five years thrice chosen Knight of the Shire for Kent'. Although the three parliaments in which he sat were short lived, they were during a momentous period of English constitutional history. In 1655, Cromwell,

now Protector, convened a Parliament of which James, as a trusted Cromwellian, was a member. He, however, along with several other Kentish members, would not accept, as it stood, the 'Instrument of Government' by the Protectorate, so were 'secluded' from the House. Subsequently, James sat in Richard Cromwell's Parliament, in 1659, and in the Rump of the Long Parliament, recalled shortly after, preceding the events leading up to the Restoration.

William survived the Restoration by only a year, dying in 1661. He is recorded as a Justice of the Peace for the County and, according to his contemporary, John Philipott, Somerset Herald, he was distinguished for his 'affection to learning and antiquity'. But his best epitaph is, perhaps, a note by his Rector against his name in the Burial Register 'My worthy and free patron'.

William had married Jane, daughter of Nicholas Miller, of Horsenells, Crouch, a neighbouring landowner. By her he had ten children, but only one survived to have descendants—Demetrius, the eldest, who succeeded. Seven of the children died young, and the two daughters who lived to marry died childless.

Sir Demetrius James (1629-78)

Demetrius was the first of the family to bear the name. This may have been connected with his Dutch kinsmen and the reunion with them when he adopted the arms borne by the Haestrecht family since the Crusades—*argent two bars castellated counter castellated gules*. These arms were admitted by the Royal College of Arms in 1663, shortly after his accession to the Manor; they denoted his ancient ancestry and the castellated battlements of the family seat at Haestrecht. The relatives in the City of London were still prospering as brewers, so the quartering of the arms of 1611, the millrinds of the brewing industry, were retained.

Demetrius's wife, Anne, was the daughter of Dr. George Bate, M.D. (1608-69), of Hatton Garden, London. He was an eminent physician-in-ordinary to Charles I, to the Protector Cromwell, and to Charles II, and was one of the earliest Fellows of the Royal Society. Anne bore Demetrius nine children, but five died young. The marriage taking place at the time of the Restoration, and being into the family of such a well-known Court physician, may well have established the James family in favour with the King, Demetrius James's father's Cromwellian allegiances being forgotten. In any case, Demetrius was knighted by Charles soon after his marriage, the only member of his branch of the family to be thus honoured.

William James (1667-1718)

In the tradition of marrying for wealth and social status, this, the third William James, made the best match of all, bringing blood royal into the family. In 1697 he married Anne, daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Wyndham, of Trent in Somerset, who traced her descent from Thomas Plantagenet, fifth son of Edward I, by his second wife, Margaret, daughter of King Philip III of France. The Wyndhams were a family distinguished in the service of the Crown. Sir Thomas's father was Colonel Sir Francis Wyndham, who had befriended Charles II at Trent Manor when he was fleeing in disguise after his rout at the Battle of Worcester.

This William James is mentioned as Lord of the Manor of Ightham in Harris's *History of Kent* (published in 1719), together with his ancestry and a double page illustration of Court Lodge, etched by the noted Dutch engraver, Johannes Kip. The bird's-eye view is over the front of the house, with courtyard and outbuildings, and a large garden, in the neat and formal style of the period, meticulously drawn. Adjoining to the north is the wilderness, planted with trees and curiously landscaped with a circular island in the middle of a circular lake. In the distance are serried orchards and a view of the North Downs. Harris also refers to the large Manor of Wrotham being in possession of the 'Worthy William James' and records, in his time, the chance find upon the grubbing up of a tree at the 'Camps', of a quantity of broken pieces of brass, presumed to be old weapons or armour, and, in his father's time, a similar discovery of a hoard of 'British silver coins'. The finds were in each case seized by the Lord of the Manor, in accordance with his rights of treasure trove.

William died in 1718 and was buried in the church. His hatchment, with the James arms (1633) impaling the three lions' heads Wyndham, is the oldest of the five of the family which hang in the nave.

William James (1704-81)

This, the fourth William James, carried on the family tradition of public service. He was a Justice of the Peace, High Sheriff of Kent in 1732, and Usher of the Black Rod in Ireland in 1751. The succession of James as justices of the peace showed their standing in the County, being over a period when the office was an important one, filled by the more substantial County gentry. In addition to their judicial functions they had a great variety of administrative responsibilities exercised through the parish vestries. James was appointed High Sheriff by the Crown at the early age of twenty-eight, in control of the whole organization for the County.

William considerably enhanced his family fortunes by marrying, in 1743, his cousin Elizabeth, the only daughter and heiress of Haestrecht James of the Reigate, Surrey, branch of the family. This was the senior branch, being descended from Roger James's eldest son, Roger. Haestrecht James had just inherited the estate of his cousin, Sir John Cane-James, 2nd Bart., of Chrishall, Essex, the junior branch. Sir John had died unmarried and left his property to three London hospitals, but under the Mortmain Act of George II the will was declared invalid, Haestrecht winning his suit in the Court of Chancery in 1742. On his death, ten years later, all the properties became united in the Ightham branch. The accessions were extensive—in the counties of Essex, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire, as well as London.

Any private papers of the James family have disappeared, with one exception, a small calf-bound diary, the pages ruled for entries, a forerunner of the modern diary. This was presented to Elizabeth James in January 1750 and entered up by her throughout the year. It gives a vivid account of life in a country manor house at the time, with her husband and young children—the household chores, the many servants, horses and carriages, farming activities, visits to the neighbouring great houses and to London, a cricket match Ightham versus Wrotham, the church going and hospitality to the Rector, the whist in the evenings. The frequent ailments of the family were recorded, with their simple remedies, and Elizabeth even notes the rare occasions when she 'was wash'd all over'. Early in the year the son and heir, William, soon after his sixth birthday, was taken ill (probably with meningitis). The treatment was blisters to the head and arms, and the warm carcases of pigeons bound to the soles of the feet, to draw the 'peccant humours' from the brain. The little boy died in a few days.

Elizabeth's husband went shooting and fishing and was active in his magisterial duties. These led him to the site of a murder on Oldbury Hill, in the parish, which caused much excitement at the time. An Irishman, named Ogilvie, was apprehended for killing a local man, William Wooden. He was brought before the assizes at Maidstone, convicted, and condemned, as was the custom, to be hung publicly in chains at the site of the crime beside the highway over the hill. James had to supervise the erection of the gallows and the execution of the law. An enterprising local builder erected stands to let out to spectators and Elizabeth records that a great number of people attended. Six weeks later she wrote that Ogilvie dropped from his chains during the night. The event was of sufficient interest for Hasted, in a plan of Oldbury Camp in his *History of Kent* (*op. cit.*), to mark the site of the gibbet. The field name *Gibbets* survives.

Hasted mentions this William James as Lord of the Manor of Ightham, and gives his pedigree. He may well have known him per-

sonally. In his 'Anecdotes of the Hasted Family' he tells how his father, Edward Hasted, senior, and William James were at school together, at a grammar school at Luddesdown, not far from Rochester. The Rector of Luddesdown, the Rev. Stephen Thornton, ran the school and with such success that it attracted the sons of the gentry from all this part of the country. One of these was William Selby, the same age as William James, the sixth generation of the Selbys of Ightham Mote.

In 1751, the year following Elizabeth's diary and the sad death of his eldest son, William went to Dublin as Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to the Irish Parliament. This was clearly due to the patronage of his neighbour at Knole, Lord Sackville, 1st Duke of Dorset (1688-1765), who had just been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by George II, an old friend of his who, when Prince of Wales, had stayed at Knole. The Dublin Parliament was corrupt and unrepresentative, its affairs managed by the Court Party entirely in the English interest. The Duke and his favourite son, Lord George Sackville, whom he made Chief Secretary to the Government, were disliked by the Irish people and it was during the Duke's term of office that serious parliamentary opposition to the English began to be organized.

In 1759, during the Seven Years War, and with the threat of invasion from the Continent, Pitt's government reconstituted the Militia, for home defence. The West Kent Regiment was one of the first to be raised, in which William James was commissioned as a captain along with other country gentlemen, although now fifty-four years of age: he was put in command of the Bromley Company, fifty men. The Regiment was at once embodied for full-time service and remained so for three and a half years, until the War ended. They moved from town to town in Kent, and apart from parades and training exercises, their main duty was the guarding and escorting of French prisoners of war, notably at Sissinghurst Castle. Captain James resigned in 1763.

He died in 1781, his wife in 1798. Both their hatchments hang in the church. As his branch of the family bore the same arms as his wife, his hatchment has the two shields juxta-posed, each James (1663). Her hatchment has the coat James (1663), with the same arms as her husband, borne as an escutchment of pretence, as she herself was an heiress.

Richard James (1746-1807)

Richard succeeded to the Manor owing to the death in childhood of his elder brother William. He was a Justice of the Peace, a Receiver-General for the County revenues, and a Colonel of the West Kent Militia.

In 1774 he followed his father's example and was commissioned in

the West Kent Militia as a lieutenant. The routine of twenty-eight days annual training was interrupted in 1778, when war broke out with France due to her alliance with the American Colonies in the War of Independence, and the Militia was promptly called out. Captain James marched with his Regiment to Hampshire to join a large force for the defence of the South Coast, concentrations of the enemy being reported on the French shore and the Spanish fleet having joined the French in the Channel. On the scare blowing over, the West Kents were in billets north of London when, in 1780, they were called upon to aid in quelling the Gordon Riots. An excited mob of fifty thousand, led by the anti-Catholic agitator, Lord George Gordon, had run riot for several days with pillage and arson before the Lord Mayor of London called upon the military. The Militia remained embodied until the Treaty of Versailles, in 1783, a period of five years.

Ten years later, after the French Revolution, the Militia were again called out, for war once more with France. Richard James was soon promoted to command the Regiment, with the rank of Colonel, due to the retirement of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset. In 1797 the West Kents were stationed at Portsmouth when the mutiny of the Fleet broke out at Spithead. Attempts were made to seduce the garrison, but without effect: the senior sergeants of the West Kent Militia published a declaration on behalf of their brother soldiers 'holding in abhorrence all such base and scandalous proceedings'. The first signature was that of John Pitt, of Colonel James's Company. The following year, when the Regiment was at Canterbury, rebellion broke out in Ireland, with French troops landing in support. The Militia was not obliged to serve out of England, but Colonel James addressed his men on parade on Dane John Field and called for volunteers to step forward. They gave three cheers and promptly all did so. Before their departure the Regiment was reviewed on Barham Down. Their Colonel, wearing his scarlet coatee with silver gorget and blue facings (preserved in Maidstone Museum), must have been proud of his command —a thousand well-trained men, each sporting for the occasion a sprig of green oak in his bicorne hat, a token of Kent. After a year of service in Ireland keeping law and order they returned to Kent, to the coast, in preparation for an invasion by a large force being assembled by Napoleon at Boulogne. The Treaty of Amiens, 1802, however, put an end to hostilities, and the men returned to their homes, having been away for nearly nine and a half years. Colonel James retired the next year, having served for twenty-nine years in the Regiment, of which no less than thirteen and a half were embodied service.

Richard James was appointed Receiver-General for West Kent in 1792, with the responsibility for raising all taxes and duties, his commission enjoining him 'to take especial care that the whole sums to be

received by him, or his Deputies, be paid into the receipt of His Majestery's Exchequer'. He held the office for thirteen years, although much of the time he was absent from Kent on military duties. His area covered about a third of the population of the County, then three hundred thousand, and the work involved was considerable. The collection of the revenue ranged from land and property taxes to duties on horse dealers, windows and lights, male servants, carriages, horses and dogs, and even clocks and watches, hair powder, and armorial bearings. In 1801, in the Revenue Accounts, appear items for 'certain duties upon income for granting an aid and contribution for the prosecution of the War'. This marked an historical event, the first ever income tax having been introduced by William Pitt.

Richard had reached sixty years of age when, in 1806, he married Letitia Gibbons, of Cranbrook, Kent, who had long been his housekeeper at Court Lodge. The next year he died, without issue, the last in a direct line of his branch of the family. He is commemorated in Ightham Church by his hatchment and a handsome marble mural, erected by his wife, which records that 'As a soldier he was much beloved by both officers and privates, and as a magistrate he was just, charitable, and benevolent'.

He was the last of the family to hold the right of patronage of Ightham Church, ten rectors having been appointed in the six generations. In 1773 he granted the living to his brother Demetrius, who had held a Greek scholarship at Wadham College, Oxford. He survived, however, only eight years, dying at the age of thirty-one, unmarried.

Demetrius Grevis-James (1776-1861)

On the death of his brother Demetrius, Richard had no male heirs. His uncle Richard, a barrister-at-law, of the Middle Temple, had died unmarried. His other uncle, Demetrius, a colonel of the 43rd Foot, who had fought with General Wolfe at Quebec, left two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. They became co-heirs, but he outlived them both and so bequeathed his estates to Demetrius Grevis, Elizabeth's son by Charles Grevis. The Grevises were an ancient family formerly seated for centuries at Moseley Hall, Worcestershire. Demetrius was a captain in the Royal Marines and as a young officer had taken part in Nelson's victory over the Danes at Copenhagen. He served in the frigate H.M.S. *Amazon*, Captain Edward Riou, was highly thought of by Nelson and selected by him to lead the small craft in shallow waters to attack the heavy batteries along the shore. The enemy bombardment was severe and the situation became so critical that the Admiral, Sir Hyde Parker, signalled to disengage. This was the famous occasion when Nelson

turned his blind eye to the telescope. Demetrius escaped unhurt, but witnessed, amidst much carnage, the gallant Captain Riou torn in half by a chain shot, an experience from which he never fully recovered.

When thirty-six years of age Demetrius married Mary, only child and heiress of James Shutt, of Humbleton Hall, Holderness, Yorkshire. They had been married for five years when they found themselves at Ightham Court, possessed of the considerable properties of the Jameses, with the lordships of the manors of Ightham, Wrotham and Stansted. In accordance with Richard James's will, Demetrius Grevis, by Royal Licence dated 1817, took the surname of Grevis-James and assumed the arms of James in addition to those of Grevis. He duly became a Justice of the Peace, Deputy-Lieutenant for the County, and, in 1833, High Sheriff.

Both Richard James and Demetrius Grevis-James attended the Magistrates' Court held at the Swan Inn, West Malling. Documents signed by them have survived dealing with a wide variety of cases—misdemeanours and petty crime, wage and labour disputes, poor relief and vagrancy, common rights and much else. They also both served on their Parish Vestry, during the hard times of the Napoleonic wars and aftermath, coping with the problems of pauperism and the small and overcrowded Parish workhouse, until, under the Poor Law Act of 1834, the Malling Union took over the responsibilities. In 1815 the Vestry decided to raise subscriptions to build a Parish schoolroom, under the auspices of the National Society for the Education of the Poor. Up till then the only provision for the education of the poor in the village was the Elizabeth James Charity. Elizabeth James (1662-1725) was an elder unmarried sister of the third William James. In her will she provided for the teaching of poor children to read, and for the buying of Bibles and other books. The James family operated the bequest and, in Demetrius's time, six girls, named 'off Mrs. James' list', were sent to a teacher employed at 6d. a week for each girl. When the village school started, the responsibility for the six girls was taken over by the dowager Mrs. Richard James, now married to Captain Samuel Newell. She subscribed five guineas a year to the School and paid the fees of 1d. a week for each girl to be taught reading, writing, and 'the use of the needle and knitting'. This charity still exists, in modified form, and is a lasting memorial to the James family and a testimony to their traditional care of the poor, founded by the first William James.

The year 1833, when Grevis-James became High Sheriff, was a landmark in political history, elections being held for the first parliament under the much contended Reform Bill of the previous year. In his duties as returning officer he was involved in a redistribution of the eighteen seats throughout the County, on a fairer democratic basis, and a considerable increase in the electorate.

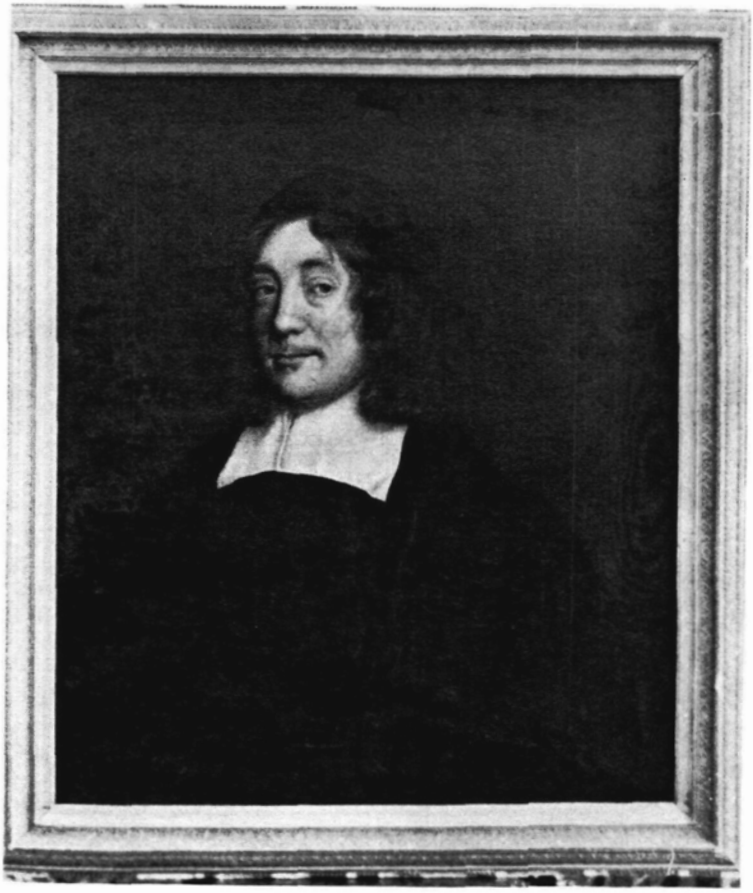
Demetrius was proud of his family of eight children and particularly devoted to and ambitious for his eldest daughter, Frances Maria. Frances, however, when she was twenty-eight, fell romantically in love with a tenant farmer on the estate, Thomas Charlton. In spite of her father's protests she married him, at the village church, in 1842. Demetrius was so distraught by this that he decided to shut up Ightham Court. He moved to Tunbridge Wells, where he built himself a fine house in spacious grounds, which he called Oakfield Court.

He lived there until he died in 1861, aged eighty-five. He and his wife are commemorated in the church by a stained-glass window depicting scenes in the life of Saint James, together with a brass tablet with the arms James (1611), James (1633), Grevis, and Wyndham (of the Royal descent). His hatchment hangs in the nave, the last of the family hatchments.

Demetrius Wyndham Grevis-James (1819-1901)

Demetrius Wyndham succeeded as the eldest son, his two older brothers having died young. He was forty-two, a brevet lieutenant-colonel in the 2nd Foot, the Queen's Royal Regiment, and had returned the previous year from the war in China, where he had been promoted for his services in the field. He brought back with him silks and curios from the sacking of the Imperial Summer Palace at Peking which served to beautify the Court. He had had long service with the Regiment, having taken part in the arduous guerilla campaign of the Kaffir Rebellion in South Africa, in 1852-53, and as a young officer he had distinguished himself for gallantry in recapturing the regimental colours in hand-to-hand fighting in India—this was probably in operations against the Mahrattas in 1845. The battalion was then stationed in Bombay, where Demetrius took up horse racing, achieving great success in the 1846 season with his Arab stallion Monarch. A treasured heirloom is his trophy for winning the Bombay Staff Plate, a statuette of the Duke of Wellington, mounted on his favourite charger Copenhagen which he rode at Waterloo, a fine piece of silver. In spite of the hazards of the long voyage under sail, Demetrius brought Monarch home and stood him for stud at the Court.

Demetrius Wyndham never married and, in his latter years, he preferred to live in London, at his house in Bolton Gardens, South Kensington. He died there in 1901, aged eighty-two, the eighth and last generation of Ightham James. He was laid to rest in the old family vault beneath the Manor pews, along with some forty of his forbears, and the entrance sealed. He has no memorial.



William James, of Ightham Court
(1602-61).

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Demetrius Grevis-James, of Ightham Court
(1776-1861).

Mary, wife of Demetrius Grevis-James.

On the death of Demetrius Wyndham, the Grevis-James family expected the inheritance to go to his nephew Francis, the son of his deceased younger brother, Arthur. In the will of Richard James of 1807 he had left the Ightham estates to Captain Demetrius Grevis and 'all such heirs' as should be born to him. This clause turned out to be held in law to mean that the possession of the properties was limited to his sons only, and thus ceased with the death of Demetrius Wyndham, the only surviving son and without issue. Francis contested the will, but lost his case, and the claims of other James descendants were admitted. To meet these, the whole of the estates had to be sold and the proceeds distributed. The property comprised the manor house and over two thousand acres of land, with the farms and cottages, extending over three parishes. Along with the sale of the house went the whole of the contents—the ancestral portraits, the furniture, the silver. Ightham Court and a few acres round it, and the manorial rights of Ightham, Wrotham and Stansted were bought in by Lieutenant-Colonel Edmund Wyndham Grevis Bailey, whose mother, Lavinia, was a daughter of Demetrius Grevis-James. He lived until 1920, when the property and manorial rights were sold in the open market.

Although the family portraits were sold, and important ones went to the United States, Colonel Bailey succeeded in retaining for his family several of much interest. The earliest may be safely identified as William James (1602-61). He has long hair and is wearing Cromwellian costume, with the bib collar, and is middle aged, at the period of the Civil War—clearly a forcible and astute character (Plate I). The best of the collection is, no doubt, that of Richard James, a typical Hogarth. Richard was a younger brother of the fourth William, a barrister of the Middle Temple; he never married. The portrait of Major Haestrecht James, 35th Foot, is of interest as the father of Elizabeth who married the fourth William and thus united the families' fortunes. The latest of the portraits is the pair dated 1833 of Captain Demetrius Grevis-James, D.L., J.P., Royal Marines (Plate II) and his wife Mary (Plate III). He is an impressive figure, fifty-seven years of age, his hair greying, in the scarlet frock-coat of High Sheriff, and wearing the blue and white ribbon of his war medal for Copenhagen, 1801.

Seldom can a family's fortunes have turned on an issue so slender as the one word 'such'. Over a course of more than two centuries the prestige and prosperity of the family had been built up on the ownership of lands, marriages with heiresses, their ancient ancestry, the quarterings of arms, the Royal descent. Together with this went, nevertheless, the obligations of a country squire—the careful management of the estates, the welfare of the people, and generous public service for the County. With the vicissitudes of fate, however, the male line ended after six generations and after a further two the estates withered away.

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