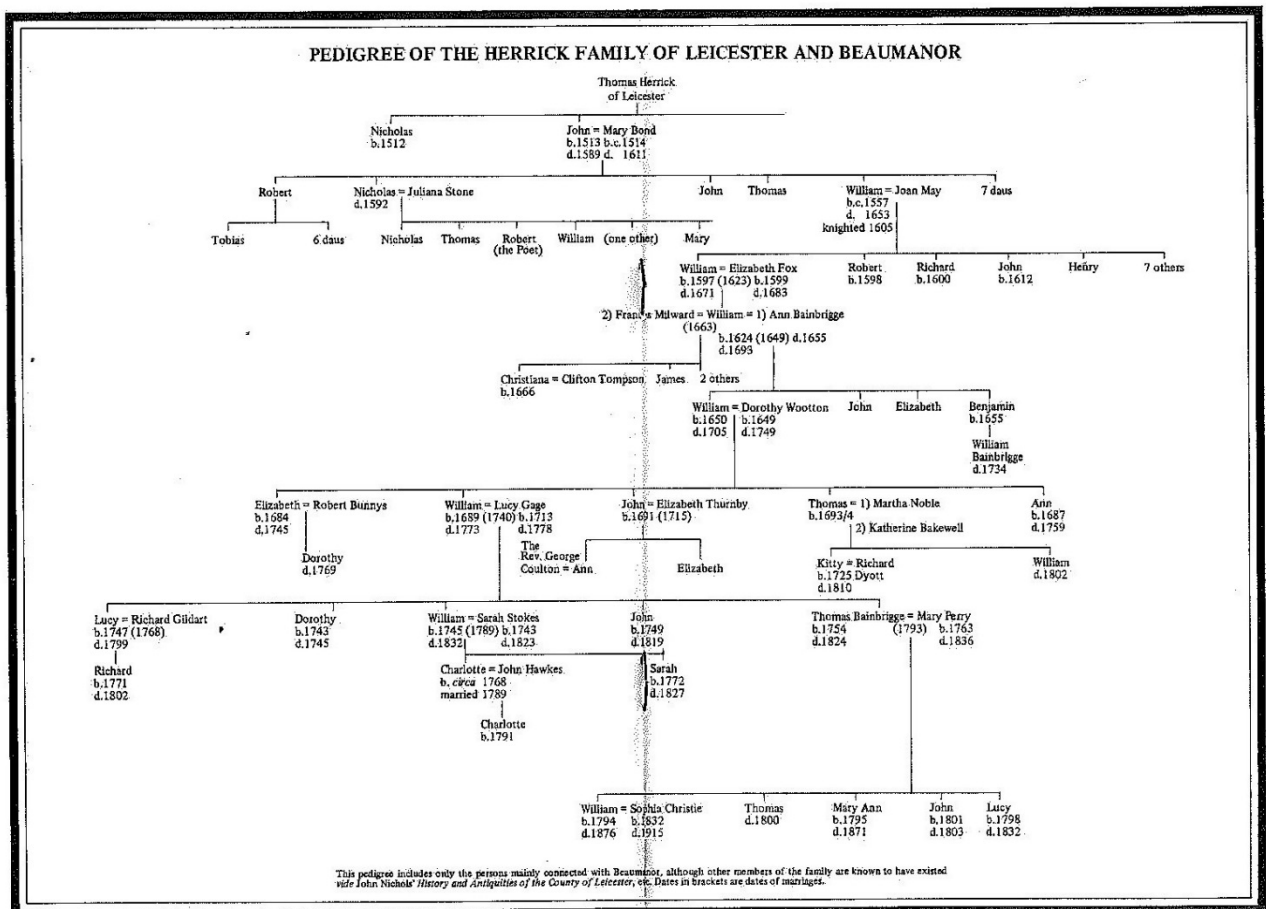


The Herrick Family

By Fiona Reed

The pedigree of the Herrick family can be traced back to Sinwald, King of Denmark (Brookman: 1979). Beaumanor in Woodhouse first came into the possession of the Herrick family in 1595 when it was transferred to William Heyricke (born circa 1557). He was a wealthy London goldsmith, son of John and Mary Herrick who were prosperous Leicester ironmongers. William became Court Jeweller to King James I, and in 1605 became Master of the Goldsmiths and received a knighthood. There were five further generations of William Herricks before William Herrick VI died without a male heir in 1832. The estate passed to his nephew, William Herrick VII. William VII's parents were Thomas Bainbrigg Herrick and Mary Perry, who through Mary had inherited vast estates in Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Wales (including mansions and ancient castles). (Wessel: 2012)



Pedigree of the Herrick Family (by permission of Leicestershire County Record Office)

Figure 1 – Pedigree of the Herrick Family of Leicester and Beaumanor. Reproduced from Brookman, M. *The Woodhouse Echo* (Loughborough: 1979) (centre pages between pages 19 and 20).

William Perry Herrick

William Herrick VII was born on 29th June 1794 (LRO DE93/14) in Wolverhampton. His sister Mary Ann was born in 1795 and Lucy was born in 1798. He also had two brothers, Thomas and John, but both died in infancy (Brookman: 1979). The family lived at Merridale House near Wolverhampton (now Bantock House Museum). William went to Rugby School in 1807. A letter from his uncle Thomas Perry at school in 1810 indicates both the strong moral influence of his uncle and William's good character even at this young age:

“It affords your Parents and Friends no small degree of pleasure to hear of your being so well respected, persevere in the line of conduct which has lead to these commendations , and you will not fail to be respected in society, and much beloved by your relations and friends, a large school such as you are in will fit you for life, being the world in miniature, only with this advantage, that you can learn the natural differentiation of young people, sooner than when they attain a more mature age, which will enable you with greater certainty to select such characters as are naturally of amiable and good dispositions, the friendships of such is worth cultivating, as they not only hereafter in life may make you agreeable companions, but may prove of real service to you, on the other hand you will find that the greater part of your companions differ in sentiment manners and pursuits to your own and with whom you cannot contract habits of friendship but to such you should behave with civility, and good motive, when you see and know things to be wrong and have an opportunity, always have resolution to show your marked disapprobation of them, the parties who feel your admonition may resent it for the moment, but upon reflection will admire your rectitude of sentiment and virtuous principals. You will always receive marked attention and kindness from me when ever you deserve it, and be assured I shall not withhold my disapprobation in matters I see you are wrong in, were I to pass over your foibles without noticing them, I should cease to do my duty by you, and I am persuaded that you have too good a head and heart to think otherwise.” (LRO DG9/2552).

William went on to study at University College Oxford, graduating with a BA in 1815 and an MA in 1821. After this he studied law at Gray's Inn and later became a Justice of the Peace, High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. (Wessel: 1988)

When his uncle died in 1832, William VII moved to Beaumanor with his mother and sisters Mary Ann and Lucy. Lucy however died almost immediately afterwards and their mother in 1836 (Wessel: 1988).



Figure 2 – Beaumanor Hall (By Tony Jarram)

A fragment of a newspaper obituary (LRO M989/2/2) by Rev Canon Burfield about William describes how after arriving in Leicestershire:

“It was not long before his influence was felt in the county, and in conjunction with a nobleman, whom he loved almost as a brother, he was foremost in assisting every good work, and was successful in giving – by no means an easy thing to do – a certain high tone to the society in which it was his duty to mingle.... Quite apart from his wealth, he would still have been no common individual. Gifted with singular judgement, with great industry, with far-sighted wisdom, he was just the man whom others are ready to trust, and upon whose sound and generally unerring advice they learn naturally to rely. Not hasty, but deliberate; not impulsive, but cautious, he would weigh well the bearings of any question which came before him – and then with no uncertainty at all, give you his decision... He did not shut himself up amidst the shelter of the spreading oaks for which his broad acres are proverbial, but was keenly alive to everything that affected this large and growing community, and any scheme for the prosperity, or for the improvement of Leicester would have his ungrudging support. He was a link, and a very strong one between this place and the county, and no man, however much he might differ from his political or religious views, could for one moment doubt that the welfare of Leicester was very dear to his heart.”

The good works described in the obituary included envisaging the building of St Paul’s Church in Woodhouse Eaves and Copt Oak Church, both of which were consecrated in 1837.

However, at this point perhaps William did not have so much disposable income because funds were raised by voluntary contributions from *many* of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood including the Earl of Stamford (Hodge: 2006). The land itself was given by Miss Watkinson (Hodge: 2006). The building of the churches may have introduced William Herrick to the architect William Railton.

In 1852, William's uncle Thomas Perry died leaving his estates to William. Under the terms of his uncle's will, William took the surname Perry Herrick and a Grant of Arms was given in 1853. The work on the current mansion at Beaumanor, designed by Railton, began in 1842 "with the promise of his Uncle's fortune in mind". (Wessel: 2012) William and Mary Ann moved into the completed mansion in summer 1948 (Wessel: 1988). Beaumanor features a twenty-one panelled armorial stained glass window commissioned by William to record his ancestry, inspired by his grandmother Lucy Gage who had also undertaken much research into her family history.



Figure 3 - Armorial window at Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire

Aug. 13. At St. James's, Paddington, Wm. Perry Herrick, esq., of Beau Manor-park, Leicestershire, to Sophia, youngest dau. of J. H. Christie, esq., barrister-at-law, of Lincoln's-inn, and of Stanhope-st., Hyde-park-gardens.

William Perry Herrick married Sophia Christie in 1862 when he was around 67 and she was around 29.

Figure 4 - A notice announcing William and Sophia's wedding in *The Gentleman's Magazine*

William and his sister Mary Ann later supported the building of two churches in Leicester, firstly St Matthew's in 1865. They then entirely funded the building of St Mark's Church "amongst the poor" at Belgrave Gate in Leicester. Work began in 1870 and the church was consecrated in 1872. The Herricks also built schools adjoining the church and the vicarage (LRO M989/3, Hodge 2006). Four stained glass windows in St Paul's Church (St George's Chapel) were placed there in tribute to William Perry Herrick and his sister by their neighbours and friends. One depicts St Peter holding a model of St Mark's Church in Leicester. Another, also dedicated to William Perry Herrick, depicts the Faithful Servant.



William Perry Herrick died around four years after his sister Mary Ann on 15th February 1876 (date recorded on stained glass window). That day he had joined the Quorn Hounds at Woodhouse Eaves on horseback and appeared well. A fox was found near Buddon Wood and William took part in the chase to the Brand. The hunt moved on over the Beacon to Bradgate Park but William then complained of feeling unwell and turned for home. He reached Beaumanor and walked into his study where Mrs Herrick joined him, but as she helped him to his chair he died in her arms (Wessel: 1988). William was laid to rest in the family vault in the Woodhouse churchyard (now St Mary in the Elms).

Figure 5 – Window in St George's Chapel, dedicated to William Perry Herrick (By David Morley)

Mary Ann Herrick

Born 9th June 1796 in Wolverhampton, died 25th December 1871.

Mary Ann worked alongside her brother in his charitable engagements. Windows depicting Dorcas, the woman in the Acts of the Apostles known for her charity, and the Parable of the Leaven (or yeast) were given in tribute to Mary Ann. She gave generously to St Paul's and donated Communion plate consisting of a silver chalice (cup), a paten (plate) and two flagons to the church when it was first built (Hodge 2006).

She was also responsible for a number of her own projects. For example, Mary Ann built the Herrick Homes almshouse in Woodhouse in 1857 at a cost of £1,395, for the elderly poor of Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves and Woodthorpe. (The Herrick Homes still existed as Charity 217598 in 2013). (Information from Sue Young's visit to Charnwood Roots exhibition at Beaumanor.)



Figure 6 – Herrick Almshouses

In 1860 she got the local community behind her to build a new schoolhouse for Woodhouse Eaves, giving £458 from her own funds and inspiring other donations. (LRO L920/HER)

She also maintained her charitable links with Wolverhampton, particularly Wolverhampton Orphan Asylum. In 1863 she gave £3465 for the right to nominate six Leicestershire boys to the asylum, providing clothes and books when needed. She took a personal interest in the progress of these boys, and seems to have helped one ultimately to become a doctor (LRO L920/HER).

Mary Ann died on Christmas Day 1871 and the condolence letters sent to William indicate how highly-regarded she was: *“In the retrospect however of that long career of unobtrusive benevolence, self renunciation and unaffected piety you must find the balm for so great a*

sorrow, and in the conviction that the change is for her indeed a blissful one your best consolation” (LRO DG9/2570/13).



Figure 7 – Window in St George’s Chapel, dedicated to Mary Ann Herrick (By David Morley)

Mary Ann remembered many friends and charitable causes in her will, including £1000 for the Rev Thomas Street Millington, vicar of Woodhouse Eaves, £50 for blankets for the poor of Woodhouse, £800 to governors of Loughborough dispensary, £100 each to Leicester Infirmary, Leicester Lunatic Asylum, Home for Penitent Females, Leicester Infant Orphan Asylum, £50 to Blue Coat School, Wolverhampton and the Provident Benefit Society and £1000 to Wolverhampton Orphan Asylum (LRO DG9/2330).

Mrs Sophia Perry Herrick

Born 1832 in Bayswater, Middlesex.



Figure 8 – Sophia Perry Herrick (Used with kind permission of the Quorn Village On-line Museum)

Sophia married William Perry Herrick in 1862 when she was only 29 and William was 67. She was a very religious lady and a strict teetotaler, ensuring that there were no public houses on the Herrick estates (Wessel: 1988). She started one of the first soup kitchens from her back door to serve the poor of the district. The local children would be given an orange and halfpenny piece on St Valentine's Day and a hot-cross bun and a new penny when they came to the hall on the Thursday before Easter. However, the men of the village would be expected to touch a forelock and the women to curtsy when she rode to church in her donkey cart each Sunday (Brookman: 1979)!

After William's death, Sophia inherited all the Herrick estates including Penhow Castle and Pencoed Castle in Wales and the Perry family home at Eardisley Park in Herefordshire. Sophia visited Eardisley twice a year: at New Year to present Bibles to the Sunday School children; and to provide prizes at the Summer Prizegiving Day at the village school.

Sophia continued to give to £10 per year to St Paul's in Woodhouse Eaves (doubling to £20 in 1905 when the church was struggling to make ends meet! (LRO DE1604? Easter Vestry Meeting 1905).

She also donated land across the road from St Paul's Church as a burial ground in 1910. William Curzon-Herrick donated further land (the old school playground) next to this (Hodge: 2006).

The Parish Magazine published a tribute on her death at the age of 83: "As a faithful steward of the riches entrusted to her, she will be long remembered, but her friends, rich and poor alike, will always recall other qualities even more, the extraordinary simplicity of her life in

all personal details, her genuine interest in all with whom she came into contact, her deep affection for friends and relations, her fairness in all things (she thought super-tax perfectly right though it diminished her income considerably) and her real spiritual devotion. There was one, the son of a great friend, but not a relative, who was greatly impressed to find that she prayed for him every day and he must have been one of many. And her prayers were effective, they had real power.” (Brookman: 1979)

Sophia died in 1915. After this the Beaumanor estate passed to the son of Colonel the Honourable Montague Curzon of Garats Hey, William Curzon-Herrick who took the name of Herrick in honour of his benefactor (Brookman 1979). William Curzon-Herrick is thanked for his gift of £5 to St Paul’s church funds in the Easter Vestry meeting of 1916 (LRO DE1604 Easter Vestry Meeting 1916). However in 1945 the estate passed to a cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel to Asshely Curzon-Howe-Herrick but to pay the death duties the estate was sold in 1946.



Figure 9 – Guests at a party at Beaumanor, including Mr W. Montagu Curzon-Herrick, seated centre. From ‘The Sketch’, 8th December 1926, p. 496.

References

Books

Brookman, M. *The Woodhouse Echo. A Short History and Account of the Village of Old Woodhouse, Leicestershire; and of the Hall of Beaumanor, Seat of the Herricks* (Loughborough: 1979).

Drinkall, P. *A Brief History of Beaumanor Hall and Park* (Leicester: 1978).

Hodge, M. *St. Paul's Church, Woodhouse Eaves: A Guide to the Church* (2006).

Wessel, C. *Proud Owners of Beaumanor 1086 – 1974* (2012) (Pamphlet published for the LAHS History Fair at Beaumanor Hall).

Wessel, C. *Portrait of Beaumanor. An Illustrated Account of the Ancestry and Heraldry of the Herrick Family, and of their home at Beaumanor, Woodhouse, Leicestershire* (Herricks & Beaumanor Society: 1988).

The Record Office of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

LRO DE93/14 News cutting reporting the funeral of William Perry Herrick [24 Feb 1876].

LRO M989/2/2 Fragment of obituary of William Perry Herrick 1876.

LRO M989/3 Newspaper cutting 'Death of W. Perry Herrick, Esq.'.

LRO DG9/2330 Probate copy will of Mary Ann Herrick.

LRO DG9/2552 Letter from Thomas Perry, Wolverhampton to William Herrick, Rugby.

LRO DG9/2570/13 Sympathy letter to William Perry Herrick from Lord John Manners (later 7th Duke of Rutland), Belvoir Castle, 31st December 1871.

LRO L920/HER 'Notes on the Herrick family in the nineteenth century taken from lecture to Herrick Soc.' (Feb 1977) NB Full reference to be checked in paper catalogue at LRO.

LRO DE1604 'Minutes of Vestry Meetings held in St Pauls Church Woodhouse Eaves from and including 1899', Easter Vestry Meeting 1905.

Other Sources

'Consecration of St Mark's Church', *Leicester Chronicle* (Saturday 27 April 1872) p. 8.

Charnwood Roots exhibition at Beaumanor Hall, May 2017

[<http://www.charnwoodroots.org/>].