

**THE MARRIAGE OF MARY HARLEY (1668 -
1724) OF OSGATHORPE TO JOHN BAINBRIGGE
(1658 - 1717) OF LOCKINGTON HALL**



**AN ENGRAVING OF LOCKINGTON HALL IN 1797 MUCH AS IT WAS WHEN IT
WAS BUILT IN 1668 BY JOHN BAINBRIGGE ON THE SITE OF THE OLD
NETHER HALL**

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - NOVEMBER 2023

PREFACE

Thomas Harley, the father of his only known child Mary Harley who was born during his third marriage to the widow of Samuel Blount, the Rector of Walton was responsible for the building in Osgathorpe of the endowed free grammar school and the Almshouses for the widows of clergymen. The author has written several publications relating to him and the 'Thomas Harley Osgathorpe Charity' which was established in line with instructions given in his will and is still in existence today. These can be found on the author's website samuelstewart.com under the village of Osgathorpe - subsection - 'The Thomas Harley Osgathorpe Charity'.

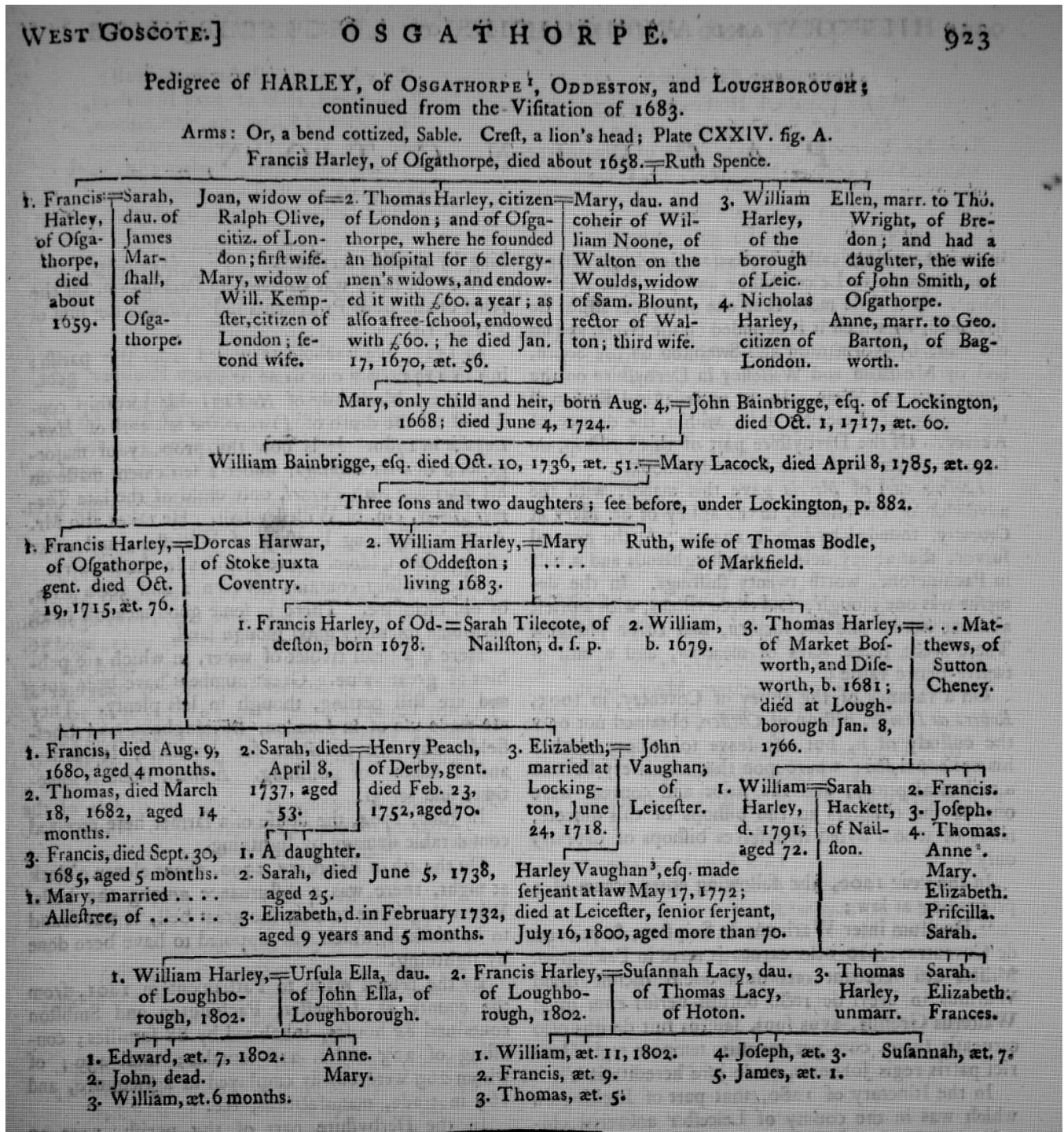
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LEADING UP TO THE BIRTH OF MARY HARLEY (1668 - 1724)



Thomas Harley was born to Francis and Ruth Harley (nee., Spence) of Osgathorpe, Leicestershire, the second child in a family of four boys and two girls. It seems likely that the Harley's were the typical small landowning family that was the backbone of rural life, the local worthies who organised the village community, dispensed poor relief, set a good example, and might aspire to becoming Lord of the Manor one day, although that didn't materialise for reasons given later. Francis, the eldest son who would inherit the majority share of any estate, stayed at home. The others needed to seek their fortunes elsewhere – Thomas went to London, as did youngest son Nicholas, but William only went as far as Leicester. Ellen married Thomas Wright of

Breedon at Breedon-On-The-Hill, they had a daughter who married John Smith of Osgathorpe who became an executor in Thomas Harley's will. Anne married George Barton of Bagworth at Bagworth.

Camden's Britannia described Thomas simply as: "Thomas Harley, citizen of London". Whether he was in business and if so what type is unknown, but he did marry and survive two wives, Joan Olive and Mary Kempster (married names). Both had been widows of 'citizens of London', originally married to Ralph Olive and Will Kempster. It is possible that Thomas inherited his wealth from Mary Kempster, although we have no concrete proof of that sufficient to say that a branch of the Kempsters were respected stone masons in London and also operated stone quarries. A Christopher Kempster was much admired and employed on buildings designed by Christopher Wren. Widows were subject to being recycled, due to the average low male age at death, and their acquired property often made them a more attractive proposition than a single young woman with a dowry.

For sure, Thomas Harley made considerable wealth somehow whilst 'a citizen of London, resulting in his return to Osgathorpe where he purchased a considerable amount of land and properties in Leicestershire. His third marriage was to yet another Mary, and yet another widow of Samuel Blount, Rector of Walton. This Mary was the coheir of William Noone of Walton-on-the-Wolds.

Perhaps because he had no children of his own at the time, Thomas Harley assigned some of his holdings to a fund in order to eventually found a free school in the village of Osgathorpe for local children. The intention was ultimately to send Divinity students to Cambridge.

Unexpectedly, it was said, early in 1668, Mary found that she was pregnant, and understandably Thomas wanted to drop the school plans to make provision for his new heir. Mary not only persuaded him to continue with the project, but, as she had been the widow of a Rector, must have been instrumental in adding a home for 'clergymen's widows' to the scheme, greatly increasing the expense.

Thomas and Mary's daughter, another Mary, was born on August 4th 1668, and survived. Her mother must have counted herself fortunate in her remarriage, most clergymen's widows immediately lost the family home, which went to the new cleric, of course, and could find themselves in dire straits, especially if left with young children. Daughter Mary proved to be Thomas Harley's only heir as he died in January 1670, at the advanced age of fifty six years. His wife Mary was widowed for a second time, which was not unusual in those days, and with a sixteen month old child that would never know her father, but would live to the same age.

MARY HARLEY AND JOHN BAINBRIGGE

It is not unreasonable to assume that what attracted Mary to John Bainbrigg of Lockington Hall was the families wealth or was it the other way round with Mary being sole heir to the Harley estate. We will never know.

There follows some background history on the Bainbrigg family up to the time of John Bainbrigg's marriage to Mary Harley:-

We have to go back to the Bainbrigg's of Lockington Hall and Woodseat Hall in the 16th century. This family are said to have been of great antiquity in the north of England, but first came to the manor of Lockington in north Leicestershire in the 1540s. They were probably yeoman tenants at that time, but William Bainbrigg (c.1535-1614), who was married at Lockington in 1562, purchased the manor in 1576 and in 1583 obtained the grant of a crest in addition to his ancient arms. The two manors of Lockington, viz Nether Hall and Over Hall were anciently held by the Abbot and Convent of Leicester. Both were sold after the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the Bainbrigg family. A new manor house was built in 1688 on the site of the former Nether Hall by John Bainbrigg (1658 - 1717). The family name was spelt in an uncommon variety of ways: the most usual was 'Bainbrigg' and this has been used consistently in this account, but other forms, including Bainbridge, Baynbrigg, Banbridge, Benbrigg and even Bembridge have been found.

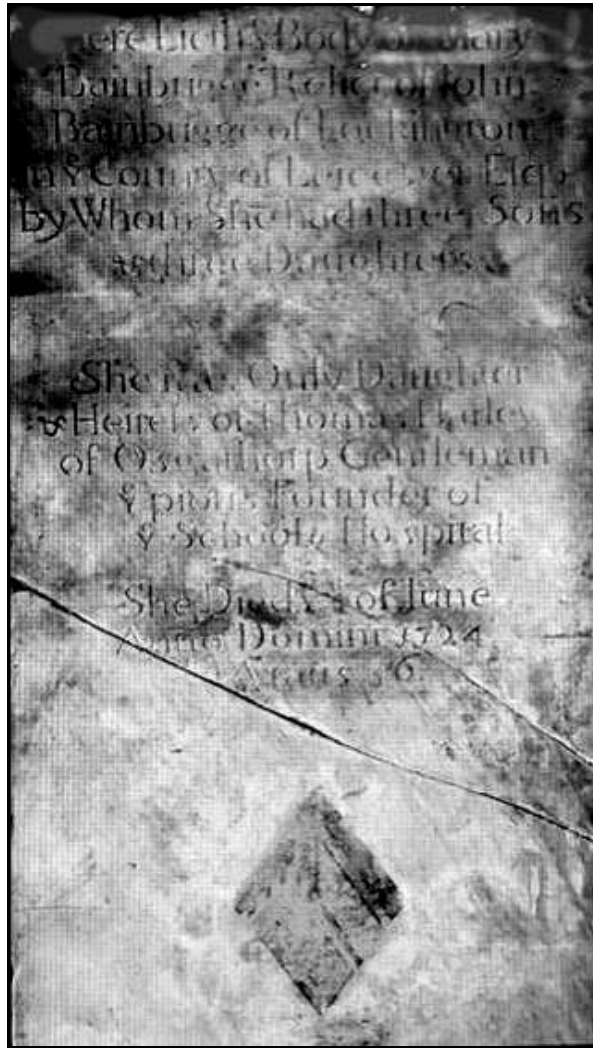
William Bainbrigg's large family was recorded on the tomb he built for himself and his wife in Lockington church in 1614. His eldest son, John Bainbrigg (1573-1643) inherited the estate in 1617, having apparently lived elsewhere in his father's lifetime, perhaps on one of the other properties - at Kegworth and Long Clawson (Leics), and Sutton Bonington and Little Leake (Notts) - which the family acquired during the 16th and 17th centuries. He apparently had only one son and one daughter who survived to maturity. The son was William Bainbrigg (1605-69), who served as High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1648-49 and whose third wife was the sister of General Henry Ireton.

On these grounds, it may be presumed that he was sympathetic to the Parliamentary regime, but neither he nor his father can be discerned as taking any active part in the Civil War. William produced a total of nine children by his second and third wives; but his eldest son, John Bainbrigg (1628-59), died in his father's lifetime, and it was therefore John's only surviving son, John Bainbrigg (1658-1717), Mary Harley's future husband, who inherited the Lockington estate in 1669. All of William Bainbrigg's (1605-69) sons who survived to maturity were apparently provided with landed property, and several of them either married into or bought additional land. In this way William Bainbrigg (c.1644-79) laid the foundations for the cadet branch of the family which became established at Woodseat in Rocester (Staffs) in the 18th century.

John Bainbrigg Esq., (1658-1717) inherited Lockington as a child of eleven, and his long minority may have allowed some capital to be accumulated by his trustees. **He came of age in 1679, and in 1683 married an heiress Mary Harley at the age of 15 who brought him the Harley estate at Osgathorpe. They had a son William in 1685 who died on October 10th 1736, aged 51.** In about 1688, John Bainbrigg embarked on the building of a new Country House at Lockington, known as Lockington Hall and which forms the core of the present building. Their marriage took place at St. Mary's Church, Osgathorpe by License on the 8th of November 1683. There is no record of Mary Harley in the Osgathorpe baptisms as there were no Bishop's Transcripts kept from the Civil War and Commonwealth period from 1640 -

1668. John Bainbrigge died 1 October 1717 and was buried at Lockington, 3 October 1717; his will was proved at Leicester, 27 March 1718.

Mary Bainbrigge died on June 4th 1724 at Nottingham, aged 56, and was buried in the graveyard at St. Mary's, Osgathorpe, on 9th June 1724. A plaque incorporating the Harley and Bainbrigge Arms was erected to her memory. In May 2017, work took place to replace the wooden flooring on the north side of St. Mary's Church, Osgathorpe aisle. This revealed a memorial stone to Mary recording her death in 1724. The stone is in too poor a condition to contemplate removal but its position under the rear most pew is recognised by a brass plaque.

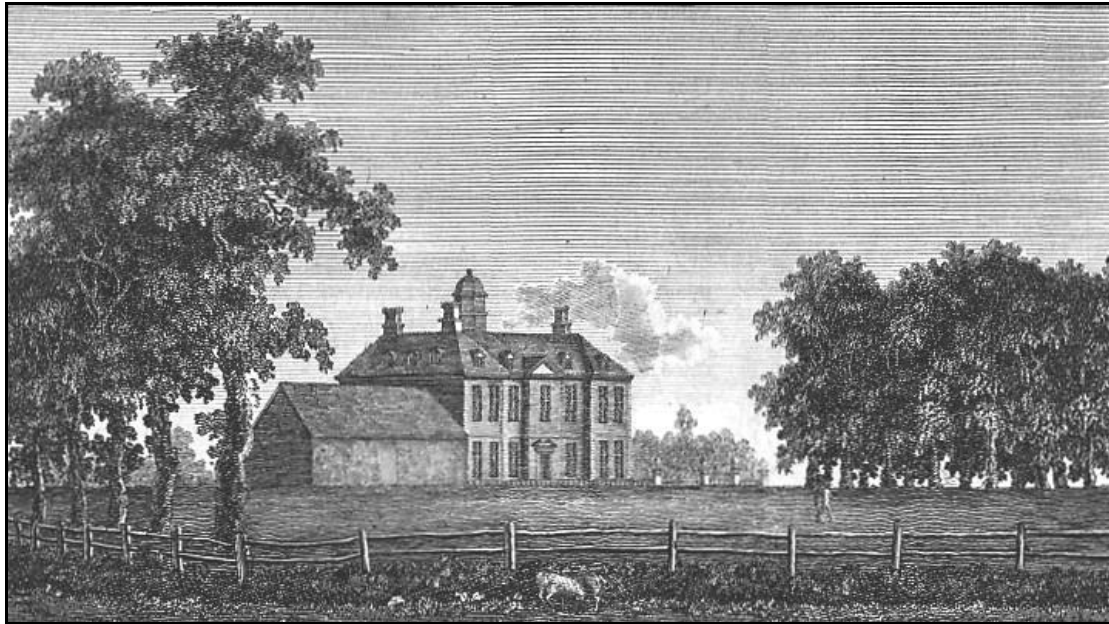


“Here lieth the body of Mary Bainbrigge, relict of John Bainbrigge, of Lockington, in the county of Leicester, esq., by whom she had three daughters . She was the only daughter and heiress of Thomas Harley, of Osgathorpe, gentleman, the pious founder of the school and hospital. She died the 4th June, A.D. 1724 aged 56.”

Thomas Harley was buried at St. Mary's and later a plaque incorporating his Arms and a fulsome testament to his life and generosity was erected on the South chancel wall by his trustees. This has now been relocated onto the North wall.

Near to this place lieth the body of THOMAS HARLEY, of Osgathorpe, gentleman, a just, charitable and good man, a loyal subject, and a sound Christian, according to the profession of the Church of England; to the doctrine and discipline whereof he

was always religiously conformable. The said Thomas Harley empowered Francis Harley and John Smith, both of Osgathorpe, as trustees to that purpose, to found and erect a free-school and almshouses in Osgathorpe aforesaid, at the charge of the said Thomas Harley. To which foundation the said Thomas Harley gave these endowments following; viz £40. per annum for ever to the free school, and £60. per annum for ever to the said almshouses for the maintenance of six ministers widows therein. He departed this life most piously 17th January, 1670. To the memory of the aforesaid Mr. Thomas Harley, his said trustees erected this monument, that posterity may have the benefit of his good example”.



AN ENGRAVING OF LOCKINGTON HALL DATED 1797

THIS NEW COUNTRY HOUSE, KNOWN AS LOCKINGTON HALL, WAS BUILT BY JOHN BAINBRIGGE IN 1688 ON THE SITE OF THE OLD NETHER HALL

The hall, situated at Main street, Hemington, Lockington, Leics, currently a Grade II listed building and converted for office use in 1973, was much improved and extended in later centuries as shown in the early 20th century photograph below, although the 1688 building still formed the core of the new building.

The Bainbrigge line expired in about 1797 (the date of the above engraving) and the estate passed to Rev Phillip Story who remodeled the house, adding an attic storey and stucco rendering and a Tuscan colonnade to the seven bayed east front between 1797 and 1804. The Rev. Philip Story took over the mantle of becoming the Lord of the manor of Osgathorpe and the Story Arms public house in Osgathorpe was named after the Story family line. When the Rev. Philip Story died in 1819, Lockington passed to his son, John Bainbrigge Story (1779-1827), who was killed by the fall of a ship's mast while travelling between Geneva and Lucerne. He was succeeded by his son and namesake (1813-72, became High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1842)), but after he died the property was sold to Nathaniel Charles Curzon (1829-97) of Breedon Hall (a descendant of the brother of Sir John Curzon, first of the Curzon Baronets of Kedleston Hall. Curzon greatly extended the house, adding two service wings and a porte-cochere to the five bayed north entrance front.



AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPH OF LOCKINGTON HALL



**LOCKINGTON HALL : THE HOUSE AS REMODELED BETWEEN 1797 AND 1804,
WITH THE LATER SERVICE WINGS IN THE BACKGROUND**