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Biography of Francis Willoughby F.R.S. (1635-1672)

Francis was the only son of [Sir Francis Willoughby](#) and his wife Cassandra. The alternative spelling of 'Willoughby', by which he is generally known, is not the official spelling of the family name. He grew up at Middleton in Warwickshire and was educated at Sutton Coldfield School and Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1652. He was awarded a M.A. in 1659. He was a noted mathematician and natural historian. He was a very early associate of the Royal Society, proposed for membership by John Wilkins in November 1661. He was admitted on 4 December 1661, seven months before the date of the Society's first charter on 15 July 1662. Willoughby was elected as a Fellow of the Society on 20 May 1663. The Middleton archive includes illustrations of birds, fishes and flowers collected by him and by his Cambridge tutor, friend and colleague, the scientist John Ray (1627-1705). They travelled within Britain and abroad in the 1660s, and the taxonomical system they developed forms the basis of current classification of plants and animals. Herbarium specimens are preserved within some volumes. Willoughby also did much work, along with Ray, in sorting and classifying the family archives. He died at Middleton on 3 July 1672.

Family

He married Emma Barnard (1644-1725) in January 1667/8, and had:

- [Francis, later 1st Baronet \(1668-1688\)](#)
- [Thomas, later 2nd Baronet and 1st Baron Middleton \(1672-1729\)](#)
- [Cassandra \(1670-1735\) m 1st Duke of Chandos in 1713](#)

Emma married 2ndly Sir Josiah Child in 1676.

Archive Collections

- Title deeds, settlements, estate and legal papers relating to Francis Willoughby's ownership of the Willoughby estates are part of the [Middleton Collection](#) held in Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham.
- Manuscript volumes compiled by Francis Willoughby, including a commonplace book, his notebooks recording illustrations of birds, fishes and flowers, and his 'book of games', are in the Middleton Collection, in series [Mi LM](#) .
- Letters to and from Henry Oldenburg, with some other papers including 'Experiments concerning the Motion of the sap in Trees made this Spring 1669' by Francis Willoughby and John Ray, are held in the [Royal Society](#) archives.

Published Works by Francis Willoughby

[Available as eBooks to University of Nottingham Library members via the Library's [online catalogue](#)]:

- *Ornithologia* was edited by John Ray and published posthumously in London in 1676. An English version, *Ornithology* , was published in London in 1678
- *De Historia Piscium* was also edited and published by John Ray (Oxford, 1686)
- Willughby's 'History of Insects' was prepared by Ray, edited by William Derham, and published by the Royal Society as *Historia Insectorum* in 1710
- 'A Relation of a Voyage made through a great part of Spain, etc', by Francis Willughby, was published as part of John Ray's *Observations ... made in a journey through part of the Low Countries, etc.* (1673)

An edition of Willughby's 'book of games' was published in 2003:

- Cram, David, Forgeng, Jeffrey L. and Johnston, Dorothy, *The Book of Games of Francis Willughby (1635-1672). A Seventeenth-century Treatise on Sports, Games and Pastimes* (Aldershot, 2003) [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Not 1.W8 WIL]

Published Sources

Correspondence and details relating to Sir Francis Willughby are contained within Cassandra Willoughby's two-volume history of the Willoughby family, part of the [Middleton Collection](#) held at Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham (reference Mi LM 26-27), and published as:

- Chandos, Cassandra, Duchess of, *History of the Willoughby Family* . Published in Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Report to the Commissioners on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton Preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire* (1911) [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Em. D2 HIS]
- Chandos, Cassandra, Duchess of (ed. Wood, A.C.), *The Continuation of the History of the Willoughby Family* (The University of Nottingham, 1958) [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Not 4H.V38 WIL]

Willughby is also referred to in the following biographies and articles:

- Derham, W. (ed), *Philosophical letters: between the late learned Mr Ray and several of his ingenious correspondents* (London: W. & J. Innis, 1718) [Available as an eBook to University of Nottingham Library members via the Library's [online catalogue](#)]
- Denham, J.F., 'Memoir of Francis Willughby', *Naturalist's Library* , 16 (1843), 17-146
- Welch, M.A., 'Francis Willoughby F.R.S. (1635-1672)', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* , 6 (1972), 71-85

- Welch, M.A., 'Francis Willughby of Middleton, Warwickshire, and Wollaton, Nottinghamshire: A Seventeenth-Century Naturalist', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* , 81 (1977), 33-40 [King's Meadow Campus East Midlands Collection Periodicals]
- Boulger, G.S., rev. Michael Hunter, 'Willughby, Francis (1635–1672)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* , Oxford University Press, 2004 [available online to subscribers at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29614>]