

The Willoughby Family of Wollaton and Middleton: A Brief History

The Willoughby family can trace its descent back to Ralph Bugge, a Nottingham merchant, who bought lands in Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, Nottinghamshire, in the thirteenth century.

The Willoughbys acquired various other properties through marriage and purchase, chief among which were the Wollaton and Cossall estates in Nottinghamshire, in the fourteenth century, and the Middleton estate in Warwickshire, in the fifteenth century.

Sir Francis Willoughby (d 1596) completed the building of Wollaton Hall in 1588. Sir Francis had no sons, and the greater part of the estate passed to his son-in-law Sir Percival Willoughby of Bore Place, Kent (d 1643), husband of Sir Francis's eldest daughter Bridget, and a descendent of the Willoughby de Eresby family. From then on, the estate has passed in unbroken male succession to the present day.

The descent of the main Middleton and Wollaton estates until the creation of the Barony in 1712 was as follows:

- Ralph Bugge (d 1248). *Succeeded by his son:*
- Richard Willoughby (d 1293). *Succeeded by his son:*
- Richard Willoughby (d 1325). *Succeeded by his son:*
- Sir Richard Willoughby (c.1290-1362) . *Succeeded by his son from his second marriage:*
- Edmund Willoughby. *Succeeded by his grandson:*
- Sir Hugh Willoughby (c.1380-1448) . *Succeeded by his son:*
- Richard Willoughby (d 1471) . *Succeeded by his half-brother:*
- Robert Willoughby (d 1474). *Succeeded by his son:*
- Sir Henry Willoughby (1451-1528) . *Succeeded by his son:*
- Sir John Willoughby (d 1549). *Succeeded by his nephew:*
- Sir Henry Willoughby (d 1549) . *Succeeded by his son:*
- Sir Francis Willoughby (1546-1596) . *Succeeded by his son-in-law:*
- Sir Percival Willoughby (d 1643) m Bridget, daughter of Sir Francis Willoughby. *Succeeded by his son:*

- Sir Francis Willoughby (1588-1665) . *Succeeded by his son:*
- Francis Willoughby, F.R.S. (1635-1672) . *Succeeded by his son:*
- Sir Francis Willoughby, 1st Baronet (1668-1688) . *Succeeded by his brother:*

Barons Middleton

- Thomas Willoughby, 2nd Baronet, and 1st Baron Middleton (1672-1729)
- Francis Willoughby, 2nd Baron Middleton (1692-1758)
- Francis Willoughby, 3rd Baron Middleton (1726-1774)
- Thomas Willoughby, 4th Baron Middleton (1728-1781)
- Henry Willoughby, 5th Baron Middleton (1726-1800)
- Henry Willoughby, 6th Baron Middleton (1761-1835)
- Digby Willoughby, 7th Baron Middleton (1769-1856)
- Henry Willoughby, 8th Baron Middleton (1817-1877)
- Digby Wentworth Bayard Willoughby, 9th Baron Middleton (1844-1922)
- Godfrey Ernest Percival Willoughby, 10th Baron Middleton (1847-1924)
- Sir Michael Guy Percival Willoughby, 11th Baron Middleton (1887-1970)
- Digby Michael Godfrey John Willoughby, 12th Baron Middleton (b 1921)

Other Notable Family Members

- Cassandra Brydges, née Willoughby, Duchess of Chandos (1670-1735)
- Admiral Sir Nesbit Josiah Willoughby (1777-1849)
- Captain Francis Digby Willoughby (1819-1846)
- Henry Ernest Digby Hugh Willoughby (1882-1916)
- Francis George Godfrey Willoughby (1890-1915)

Genealogical Sources

- *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*
- *Debrett's Peerage*

- *The Complete Peerage*
- *Dictionary of National Biography*
- *Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire*
- *Dugdale's Visitation of Nottinghamshire, 1662-1664*
- Cassandra, Duchess of Chandos, *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)
- Internal evidence from the collection