



Willoughby Coat of Arms

EXCERPT: "Family Histories and Genealogies"

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WILLOUGHBY

The foregoing pages embrace the principal facts which are known

respecting Col. William Willoughby, and Deputy-Governor Francis

Willoughby. We will now give the results of our investigations in respect

to their English ancestry.

We began by analyzing the arms which, as we have seen, were borne

both by Col. William Willoughby and by his son Francis handed down

to us on the mural monument of the former, in the Church of St. Thomas

at Portsmouth, and on the seal of the latter. We have a water-color copy, and a photograph, of the monument ;

and a clear copy in wax of the seal.

As the result of Mr. Greenwood's investigations and our own, in

regard to the arms, we give the following. The arms of the early

Willoughbys de Eresby were undoubtedly Or fretty Azure. These were

borne by Robert de Wilegby, afterwards Lord Willoughby de Eresby, at

the siege of Caerlaverock in December 1299, when he attended King

Edward I. The earliest crest mentioned in the collections of Glover,

the Somerset Herald of the time of Elizabeth, who drew up an account

of the Willoughby family, is a bat or demi-bat volant, the wings fretty. On

the monument of Richard Bertie Esq. and his wife Catharinell Willoughby

(Duchess of Suffolk by her first marriage) daughter and sole heiress of

William Willoughby Baron de Eresby, there is an escutcheon of

Willoughby and Beke quartered, with "a bat displayed," as the crest of

Willoughby. The bat is also found with Willoughby among the armorial

bearings on the monument of their son Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby

de Eresby, where the mantlings are, as described, " Gules, doubled

Argent." But from a manuscript in the Library of Canterbury, we have

his arms as borne in 1590, in which the crest is the full, round, fierce head

of a lion, with wings of a bat on either side, fretty. This later crest with

a distinct lions face and a bat's wings Or fretty Azure is engraved in

Edmondson's " Baronagium Genealogicum " as that carried by Robert

Bertie, the son of Peregrine Bertie Lord Willoughby, who succeeded his

father as Lord Willoughby de Eresby in 1601, and was created Earl of

Lindsey in 1626. By consulting our Pedigree of Willoughby it will be seen

that Robert Bertie descended from Sir Christopher Willoughby, who was

also the ancestor of Thomas Willoughby Esq., Sheriff of Kent in 1590, and

of Sir Percival, who married Bridget daughter of Sir Francis Willoughby

of Wollaton, and niece of Margaret Willoughby Maid of Honor to Princess

Elizabeth. Finally, Lady Georgina Bertie, in her "Five Generations of a Loyal House," shows us, as Willoughby arms, fretty Or and Azure, a full-faced helmet, over which a wreath, and on it the crest a lions head and neck couped at the shoulders, with wings expanded and fretty. It will thus be seen that the bat's face of the early Willoughbys had been changed to that of a lion, while the bat's wings had been retained. The bat's face having fallen into disuse, no care appears to have been taken to retain the exact form of bat's wings. For Sir Francis Willoughby, knighted in Ireland in 1610, used for crest a lions head guardant couped at the shoulders Or, between two wings expanded Or fretty Azure, the kind of wings not being described. Now what were the arms borne by Col. William Willoughby and his son the Deputy-Governor, emblazoned on a conspicuous monument to the former on the interior wall of a church; and used publicly by the latter, as shown by his seal attached to a business-paper? In the first place, the shield is Or fretty Azure; secondly, the crest is distinctly a lions head guardant, couped at the shoulders Or, between two wings expanded. Mantled Gules, doubled Argent that is, the arms of the mural tablet and seal are those which belonged from the first, and have always belonged, to the Willoughbys de Eresby, with that modification, as to crest, which was used by Peregrine Bertie, a descendant in the fourth generation from Sir Christopher Willoughby of the de Eresby line. While this crest is still retained among the family devices, and thus belongs to Lord Middleton, and others, it has been generally displaced by a man's bust ducally crowned, now used by the lines of Willoughby de Eresby.

There is but one discrepancy between the two emblazonments that is, that the high, stiff, bat-like, but indistinct, wings of the lion, on the mural tablet, are painted Gules. This is easily accounted for. Any one who in these days has had dealings with heraldic draughtsmen, knows the difficulty of securing accuracy, even now, and can easily understand how the mistake might have been made, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, by the original heraldic painter, or, more probably, by some later restorer, in painting the wings Gules, when the mantlings which surrounded them were partly of that color.

We find that Col. Willoughby was thirteen years of age when Peregrine Bertie, tenth Lord Willoughby de Eresby, died; that Peregrine's son Robert, eleventh Lord Willoughby de Eresby and first Earl of Lindsey, died in 1642, and was succeeded by his son Montague, twelfth Lord Willoughby de Eresby and second Earl of Lindsey, who died in 1666, leaving successors. Of course, the Colonel and his son, as well as the public at large, were familiar with the armorial bearings of these noblemen; and they could not have used the same arms without full assurance that they were of the same de Eresby lineage.

The shield and crest of Deputy-Governor Francis Willoughby are the same as those of Peregrine Bertie Lord Willoughby de Eresby, and of the Colonel, better drawn than those of the latter. In the minute cutting

on the seal we can discern the " fretty " on the wings. The seal shows the " closed visor in profile " appropriated to esquires and gentlemen ; not the open bars of the "grated helmet in profile" (common to all degrees of the peerage under a duke) of his father's arms. As the distinction between the helmets of noblemen and gentlemen had not become fixed in Col. Willoughby's time he used the full arms as they had come down from his early titled ancestors."

Page 507:

Arms: Or fretty Az.; Crest: a lion's head guardant coupé at the shoulders Or, between two wings expanded Or fretty Az. Mantled Gu. doubled Arg. (Willoughby de Eresby).

Page 547:

"The Deputy-Governor, as well as his father, used the old Willoughby de Eresby arms, as appears by a seal attached to his signature on a bond issued by him February 1, 1667, bearing Fretty (metals and tinctures not indicated) ; crest : a lion's head between two wings expanded."

*FOOTNOTE:

"³⁵ This seal was discovered by Mr. Henry FitzGilbert Waters in his researches among the files of Middlesex County Court some years ago. See Essex Inst. Histor. Coll., Salem, 1879, xvi. 261-62."

Additional information about this story

Description

Date

Location

Attached to

William Willoughby (1588 - 1651)
Francis Willoughby (1613 - 1671)

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