

SUMMARY: The document below is an excerpt from a pedigree of the Cobham family from the time of Henry III to 1565 emblazoned by Robert Glover (1543/4 – 10 April 1588), Somerset Herald. According to McKeen, the pedigree was drawn up by Glover at the request of William Brooke (1527-1597), 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham; see McKeen, David, *A Memory of Honour; The Life of William Brooke, Lord Cobham*, (Salzburg: Universitat Salzburg, 1986), 2 vols., pp. 5, 21, 291.

### ***SHAKESPEARE'S SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE***

Many modern sources assert that the Lord Cobham of Queen Elizabeth's day, William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, was a direct descendant of Sir John Oldcastle (executed 14 December 1417). However the pedigree compiled by Robert Glover establishes that, on the contrary, William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, was a direct descendant of Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434), Lady Cobham, by her *second* husband, Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405). Although Joan de la Pole did indeed marry Sir John Oldcastle as her fourth husband, she had no issue by him. Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434) had, in fact, five husbands. She married firstly Sir Robert de Hemenhale (d. 25 September 1391); secondly Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405); thirdly Sir Nicholas Hauberk (d. 9 October 1407); fourthly Sir John Oldcastle (executed 25 [sic?] December 1417); and fifthly Sir John Harpenden (d. May 1438). See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 124-5, 377-9.

On the basis of the alleged descent of William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, from Sir John Oldcastle, many modern sources claim that he found Shakespeare's portrayal of Oldcastle in *Henry IV* personally offensive, and forced Shakespeare to change the name of the character to Sir John Falstaff. However since Sir John Oldcastle was not an ancestor of William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, and had only held the title Lord Cobham in right of his wife, Joan de la Pole, and only for a few years at that, and had been executed in 1417, a century and a half before Shakespeare's play, there is reason to question whether William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, would have taken personal offense at Shakespeare's portrayal of Oldcastle.

The *ODNB* is among the sources which allege that William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, took personal offence and forced Shakespeare to change the name of the character, but the *ODNB* goes no further than stating that Oldcastle was 'a previous holder of the title', rather than asserting that he was a direct ancestor of William Brooke, 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham:

*The perceived insult to a previous holder of his title led to protests by the tenth Baron Cobham, which in turn caused Oldcastle's name to be replaced by that of Falstaff (itself adapted from that of the fifteenth-century soldier Sir John Fastolf).*

However the *ODNB* article then offers a much more plausible reason for the change in the name of the character from Oldcastle to Falstaff. Oldcastle, largely forgotten for

more than a century after his death, had been brought to national prominence by the publication in 1563 of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. It thus seems likely that it was the general public, and predominantly Elizabethans with Puritan leanings, who were offended by the depiction of a prominent Protestant martyr as the 'malign companion of Henry V's youth'. From the *ODNB*:

*Protestant opinion must also have favoured the change, which in 2 Henry IV resulted in the epilogue's being extended to include a formal disclaimer, 'for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man'.*

### ***EXCERPTS FROM THE PEDIGREE***

Excerpts from the pedigree compiled by Robert Glover demonstrating that William Brooke (1527-1597), 10<sup>th</sup> Baron Cobham, was directly descended from Joan Braybrooke (d. 24 November 1442), the daughter of Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434), Lady Cobham, and her *second* husband, Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405):

*Joan, Lady Cobham, above-written, daughter of Sir John de la Pole, knight, being at the age of 30 years when John, Lord Cobham, her grandfather, died, and having had two husbands, videlicet, Sir Robert Hemenhale and Sir Reginald Braybrooke, knights, who were both deceased at the time of the death of her said grandfather, the whole right of the Barony of Cobham vested in her as true and sole heir to the said John, Lord Cobham, her grandfather, that is to say, daughter and heir of Joan de la Pole, her mother, who was sole daughter and heir of John de Cobham, Lord Cobham aforesaid, the which Joan, Lady Cobham took to her third [sic] husband Sir John Oldcastle, knight, who in her right was seised of the barony of Cobham, which Sir John through the hatred of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, and others of the clergy was for the testimony of his faith brought out of the King's favour, and after most cruelly put to death, Anno (blank) of Henry the Fifth, after whose decease the Barony of Cobham did descend to Sir Thomas Brooke, knight, in the right of Joan, his wife, daughter of the foresaid Joan, Lady Cobham, by Sir Reginald Braybrooke, knight, her second husband, in whose offspring the said Barony of Cobham is honourably continued to this day.*

The marriage of Joan Braybrooke (d. 24 November 1442), the daughter of Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434), Lady Cobham, and Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405), is recorded in the pedigree as follows:

*Joan, daughter and sole heir of Sir Reginald Braybrooke, knight, & of Dame Joan, his wife, Lady Cobham, [married] Sir Thomas Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham in the right of his wife, [who] sat in the Parliament as Baron Cobham in the time of King Henry the Fifth and Sixth.*

The children of Joan Braybrooke (d. 24 November 1442) and Sir Thomas Brooke (d. 12 August 1439) are recorded in the pedigree as:

*Hugh Brooke fifth son, married Petronella, daughter of (blank) and had issue.*

*Elizabeth Brooke, eldest daughter, was married to John Saint Maure, esquire.*

*Reginald Brooke, third son, dwelt beside Ipswich in Suffolk, and married (blank) daughter of (blank) and had issue.*

*Margaret Brooke, 3 daughter, Christian Brooke, fourth daughter, died sans issue.*

*Joan Brooke, second daughter, was married to John Carrant, esquire, son and heir of William Carrant.*

*Thomas Brooke, second son, Robert Brooke, fourth son, died sans issue.*

*Sir Edward Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, son and heir of Thomas, Lord Cobham, married Elizabeth, daughter of James, Lord Audley, and of Elizabeth, his wife, daughter of William, Lord Roos.*

Of Sir Edward Brooke (died c. 7 July 1464) the pedigree states that:

*This Sir Edward Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, sat in the Parliament as Baron Cobham in King Henry the Sixth's days and in the beginning of the reign of King Edward the Fourth. He had a second wife, Joan, by whom he had no issue. She was after married to Christopher Wrottesley, and lastly to Palmer. The said Edward, Lord Cobham, died in the fourth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth, leaving Sir John Brooke, knight, his only son and heir, to succeed him in the Barony of Cobham.*

The children of Sir Edward Brooke (died c. 7 July 1464), Lord Cobham, and Elizabeth Audley are listed in the pedigree as:

*Elizabeth Brooke, was married to Robert Tanfield, esquire.*

*Sir John Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, son and heir of Edward Lord Cobham, [married firstly] Margaret, daughter of Edward Neville, Lord Abergavenny, son of Ralph, the first Earl of Westmorland, & uncle to King Edward the Fourth; [married secondly] Eleanor, daughter of (blank) Ansty of Suffolk, second wife to John Lord Cobham, had no issue.*

Of Sir John Brooke (d. 9 March 1512), Lord Cobham, the pedigree says that:

*This Sir John Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, sat in the Parliament as Baron Cobham in the time of King Edward the Fourth, Richard the Third, Henry the Seventh and in the beginning of King Henry the Eight. He died in the third year of the reign of King Henry the Eight in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred and eleven.*

The children of Sir John Brooke (d. 9 March 1512), Lord Cobham, and Margaret Neville (d.1506) are listed in the pedigree as:

*George or Leonard Brooke, second son, married Eleanor [sic?], daughter of Sir William, sister & heir to Sir John Peche, knight, widow of Thomas Hart.*

*Mary Brooke, eldest daughter, was married to Robert Blagge, one of the Barons of the Exchequer.*

*Dorothy Brooke, second daughter, was married to William Isacke of Kent, esquire, and died sans issue.*

*Edward Brooke of Denton, knight, was third son to his father and made knight in his father's life. He married a woman of Ireland and had no issue.*

*Sir Thomas Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, [married firstly] Dorothy, Lady Cobham, daughter of Sir Henry Heydon, knight, first wife to Thomas, Lord Cobham [the pedigree states further that Dorothy Heydon's mother, Anne Boleyn, was the sister of Sir William Boleyn, great-grandfather of Queen Elizabeth]; married to his second wife Dorothy [sic], daughter of Sir Philip Calthorpe of Norwich, knight, and by her had no issue; [married thirdly] Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas and sister to Sir Percival Hart, knight, third wife to Thomas, Lord Cobham, by whom she had no issue.*

Of Sir Thomas Brooke (d. 19 July 1529), Lord Cobham, the pedigree says that:

*This Sir Thomas Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, sat in the Parliament House at Westminster as Baron Cobham in the seventh, thirteenth & fourteenth years of the reign of King Henry the Eight. He died the 19<sup>th</sup> day of July in the year of Our Lord God 1529.*

The children of Thomas Brooke (d. 19 July 1529), Lord Cobham, and Dorothy Heydon are listed in the pedigree as:

*Faith Brooke, second daughter, was married to William Okenden.*

*Margaret Brooke, eldest daughter, was married to Sir John Fogge, knight, Marshal of Calais [the pedigree states further that their son and heir, Edmund Fogge, married the widow of Ellis of Kennington in the county of Kent].*

*Elizabeth Brooke, third daughter of Thomas, Lord Cobham, [married] Sir Thomas Wyatt, knight, son of Sir Henry Wyatt, knight; [married] Sir Edward Warner, knight, one of the Squires for the Body to King Edward the Sixth.*

*Thomas Brooke, 3<sup>rd</sup> son, married the daughter of Cranmer of Aslerton [=Aslockton, Nottinghamshire] and had issue Thomas [the pedigree states further that this Thomas Brooke died sans issue], and by the widow of Clerke he had a son called Cranmer Brooke.*

*John, eldest son, and William Brooke, fourth son, died sans issue.*

*Sir George Brooke, Knight of the Garter & Lord Cobham and Lord Deputy of Calais, [married] Anne, daughter of Sir Edmund Bray, Lord Bray, one of the sisters and heirs of John, Lord Bray, who died sans issue.*

Of George Brooke (1497 – 29 September 1558), Lord Cobham, the pedigree states that:

*This Sir George Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, sat as Baron Cobham in the Parliaments holden at Westminster in the 21, 22 etc., 28, 31 etc. years of the reign of King Henry the Eight, and also in the Parliaments holden in the reigns of King Edward the Sixth and Queen Mary. He was installed Knight and Companion of the most honourable Order of the Garter the 13<sup>th</sup> day of December in the third year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, and he died the 29<sup>th</sup> day of September Anno Domini 1558, anno 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of Philip and Mary.*

The children of George Brooke (1497 – 29 September 1558), Lord Cobham, and Anne Bray are listed In the pedigree as:

*Anne Brooke, second daughter, born in March 1531, died sans issue.*

*Elizabeth, eldest daughter, born on Monday the 12 of June 1526, was married to William Parr, Marquis of Northampton, & died sans issue.*

*John Brooke, 5 son, born on Thursday the 22 of April 1534, married the daughter and heir of Cobbe, widow of Sir John Norton.*

*Thomas Brooke, 4 son, born the 30 of December on Tuesday, 1533, married Catherine, daughter of Sir William Cavendish.*

*George Brooke, 3 son, born on Monday the 27 of January 1532, married Christian, daughter of Richard Duke.*

*Henry Brooke, second son, born at Cooling in September Anno Domini 1529, died sans issue.*

*Sir William Brooke, knight, Lord Cobham, son & heir of George, Lord Cobham, born on Friday the first of November 1527, now living in anno 1571, & Lord Warden of the Five Ports, [married] Dorothy, Lady Cobham, daughter of George and sister to Henry, Lords of Abergavenny, first wife to William, Lord Cobham; [married] Francisca, Lady Cobham, daughter of Sir John Newton, knight, second wife to William, Lord Cobham.*

*Edward Brooke, sixth son, born in September Anno Domini 1536 and died sans issue.*

*Henry Brooke, seventh son, born on Monday the 5 of February Anno Domini 1537.*

*Thomas Brooke the younger, eight son, born on Tuesday the 22 of April anno 1539.*

*Edmund Brooke, ninth son, born on Saturday the 31 of October 1540.*

*Edward Brooke, tenth son, married (blank).*

*Mary Brooke, 3 daughter, born on Friday the 3 of October 1542, died sans issue.*

*Catherine, fourth daughter, born on Monday the 7 of April anno 1544, was married to John Jerningham, son of George.*