

An interesting exercise in family connections: The Staig connection to Wolryche-Whitmore

Family connections are endlessly fascinating. Some time ago, I was watching a documentary which featured a piece on Dudmaston Hall in Shropshire, the ancestral home of the Wolryche family. This 800 acre estate came into the possession of the Wolryche family when one Robert ‘Wolrich’ married the heiress of the Dudmaston estate (Margaret de Dudmaston, daughter of Hugh de Dudmaston) in 1403.¹ By 1603, the family held 4,500 acres and in 1641 they attained a baronetcy when Sir Thomas Wolryche became the 1st Baronet of Dudmaston.² Sir Thomas was a Colonel in the Royal Army during the English Civil War and a “zealous supporter of the King (Charles I)”.³ The baronetcy became extinct on the death of Sir John Wolryche, 4th Baronet who drowned at the age of 32 in 1723 while trying to cross the Severn on horseback.⁴



Attribution: Dudmaston Hall by Chris Allen

A William Whitmore (d.1816) had inherited Dudmaston Hall on the death of his uncle, George Whitmore who had himself inherited it from one Thomas Weld in 1774.⁵ This William Whitmore was a great grandson of Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter (1661-1686/87) and his wife Ann Weld (b.1655) who was the aunt of the aforementioned Thomas Weld who died in 1774⁶, see pedigree of Whitmore on the following pages. Elizabeth Weld (1671/72-1765)⁷ was the mother of Sir John Wolryche, 4th Baronet and the sister of Thomas Weld (d.1774).⁸

1 *The Visitation of Shropshire taken in the year 1623*, Part II, London, 1889. Page 509. See also: <https://historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/wolryche-thomas-1598-1668> and: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/dudmaston/history-of-dudmaston>

2 *Complete Baronetage*, G.E. Cockayne, Vol. 2, 1625-1649, 1902, page 124.

3 *Ibid*, page 124.

4 *Ibid*, page 124.

5 See: <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/whitmore-william-1787-1858> and also: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/dudmaston/history-of-dudmaston>

6 *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 2, John Burke & John Bernard Burke, 1847. Page 1579.

7 *Complete Baronetage*, G.E. Cockayne, Vol. 2, 1625-1649, 1902, page 124.

8 *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 2, John Burke & John Bernard Burke, 1847. Page 1579.



William Whitmore was the father of William Wolryche Whitmore (1787-1858), portrait at left, who was a Member of Parliament for Bridgnorth (1820-32) and Wolverhampton (1832-34).⁹ He has a very extensive biography on the History of Parliament online website (see reference in footnotes).

The following extract on William Wolryche Whitmore is taken from Wikipedia:

In 1810 he (William Wolryche Whitmore) married Lady Lucy Bridgeman, daughter of the Earl of Bradford. The young couple set out on a Grand Tour, which included a visit to Napoleon Bonaparte, exiled on Elba. On the death of his father in 1816, William inherited Dudmaston and five years later he took up the family's parliamentary seat of Bridgnorth.

William quickly became a major spokesman for the liberal causes of Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation. He spoke against the power of the West Indian sugar planters and looked forward to the ending of Caribbean slavery. He warned of the disastrous consequences for the Indian economy of British colonialism. After the Reform Act of 1832, he won the new parliamentary seat of Wolverhampton for the Whigs after a bitterly contested campaign. One of his major concerns was providing new opportunities for working-class people through emigration, and he strongly opposed the use of convict and slave labour everywhere. His last contribution in parliament was on the subject of emigration to South Australia.

Despite the fact that it could be considered against the interest of himself and his class, he campaigned long and hard for repeal of the Corn Laws. The great majority of his contributions in parliament were on this subject. He continued to campaign even after he left parliament. His successor in the Wolverhampton seat was Charles Pelham Villiers, another radical Whig who continued his anti-Corn Law work. The repeal was not achieved until 1846, when the Tory leader, Robert Peel, split his party to force the measure through with Whig support.

While continuing his political campaigns, William remodelled the house and the estate (Dudmaston Hall) on more modern lines, diversifying the economic activities and improving conditions for his workers and tenants. This was at great cost, however, and he left mortgages totalling £60,000 to his nephew, Francis Laing, who inherited the estate on his death.

William Wolryche Whitmore was one of the founders of the colony of South Australia.¹⁰ Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia has one of its city squares named after him – Whitmore Square.¹¹

One of William Wolryche Whitmore's sisters, Georgina, married Charles Babbage (1791-1871) the famous Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge University who is credited with building the first calculating machine or computer.¹²

As I watched the documentary that featured Dudmaston Hall, I wondered if there was any connection to the Staig family. The Staig family of Dumfries, Scotland has connections to many families in the British aristocracy and landed gentry. I have found some sort of connection on many occasions when watching documentaries on stately homes and the like, so it was not an unusual thought. Sometimes I have found rather distant connections, other times there is no connection at

⁹ See: <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/whitmore-william-1787-1858>

¹⁰ Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 3, 1969. See: <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/babbage-benjamin-herschel-1550>

¹¹ See: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B%2022971>

¹² Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 3, 1969. See: <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/babbage-benjamin-herschel-1550>

all. However, in the case of Dudmaston Hall, I found a reasonably close connection almost immediately.

When looking for these sorts of connections, it pays to have a good memory for the families and surnames in your family tree. Even when (in the case of the wider tree I have), it contains in excess of 10,000 individuals and over 3,000 surnames.

On searching the internet for Dudmaston Hall, I quickly saw that it had been inherited by William Wolryche Whitmore in the early 19th century.¹³ Further, his wife was (Lady) Lucy Elizabeth Georgiana Bridgeman, daughter of Orlando Bridgman, 1st Earl of Bradford.¹⁴ I knew the Earls of Bradford were in my tree – they were connected somewhere along the line. But before we come to that, let's take a look at William Wolryche Whitmore's paternal ancestry.¹⁵

William Whitmore of Lombard Street, London, Citizen and Haberdasher, eldest son of Richard Whitmore of Aston in Claverly, co. Salop, gent, and Frances his wife (who re-married William Barker of Aston); arms granted to him and his three sons by William Dethick, Garter, 13 November 1593; died 8 August 1593, bur. at St. Edmund-the-King, Lombard Street. Will dated 6 August 1593, proved 10 August 1593 (P.C.C. 60 *Nevell*). Inq. p. m. taken at Shrewsbury 29 July 1594 (C. Vol. 238, No. 78).

Anne Bond, dau. of William Bond, Citizen and Haberdasher, Alderman of London; executrix to her husband 10 August 1593; died 9 October 1615, bur. at St. Edmund-the-King, Lombard Street. Will dated 21 January 161 $\frac{3}{4}$ and 14 January 161 $\frac{1}{4}$, proved 17 October 1615 (P.C.C. 93 *Rudd*).

Sir William Whitmore of Apley, co. Salop, knight; born 4 November 1573; executor to his mother 17 October 1615; High Sheriff of Shropshire 1620; knighted at Greenwich 24 June 1621; M.P. for Bridgnorth 3 January 162 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 August 1625; died in December 1648. Administration granted 11 February 165 $\frac{3}{8}$ (P.C.C.)

Dorothy Weld, dau. of John Weld, Citizen and Haberdasher of London, and Dorothy Greswold his wife, dau. of Roger Greswold, Citizen and Merchant Taylor. 2nd wife.

Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, co. Gloucester, esquire; born 21 June 1614; renounced administration to his father 11 February 165 $\frac{3}{8}$; executor to his sister Dorothy 5 November 1649; Sheriff of co. Gloucester 1667; died 20 August 1667, bur. at Lower Slaughter. M.I. Administration granted 5 November 1667 (P.C.C.)

Catherine Deards, dau. and coheir of Richard Deards; administratrix to her husband 5 November 1667; died 30 November 1673, bur. at Lower Slaughter. M.I. She married 2ndly John Wheeler of Minster Lovell, co. Oxford, gent. 2nd wife.

Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter; born in November 1661. Administration granted 6 February 168 $\frac{4}{7}$ (P.C.C.)

Anne Weld, (?) dau. of Sir John Weld of Willey, co. Salop (*see page 11*), by Elizabeth his wife, dau. of Sir George Whitmore; bapt. at Willey 21 May 1655; administratrix to her husband 6 February 168 $\frac{4}{7}$.

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13 See: <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/whitmore-william-1787-1858>

14 Visitation of England & Wales (Notes), Vol. 13, 1919. Pages 6-15.

15 Ibid, pages 6-15.

Continued from the previous page:

William Whitmore of Lower Slaughter and of Apley, co. Salop, esquire; aged 5 months in 1682; of Christ Church, Oxford, matriculated 16 April 1698, aged 16; M.P. for Bridgnorth 11 May 1705 to 21 September 1710, and 1 September 1713 till death; executor to Sir William Whitmore 11 November 1700; died 24 May 1725. Will dated 13 January 172 $\frac{3}{4}$, proved 4 August 1725 (P.C.C. 184 *Romney*.)

Elizabeth Pope, dau. of Roger Pope of Wolstaston, co. Salop, esquire; bapt. at Wolstaston 24 January 168 $\frac{8}{9}$; marr. there 13 August 1707; executrix to her husband 4 August 1725. Will dated 6 May 1730, proved 19 November 1735 (P.C.C. 241 *Ducie*.)

Charles Whitmore of Southampton, co. Hants, esquire; aged 24, 2 August 1742; died 13 April 1770. Will dated 12 June 1760 to 25 March 1770, proved 22 May 1770 (P.C.C. 217 *Jenner*).

Mary Kelly, marr. at Marylebone 3 August 1742, marriage licence (Bishop of London) dated 2 August, then aged 21; executrix to her husband 22 May 1770. Will dated 19 February 1794, proved 13 February 1799 (P.C.C. 156 *Howe*).

Frances Lyster, dau. of John Lyster of Lysonby, co. York; died 28 April 1792. 1st wife.

William Whitmore of Dudmaston Hall, co. Salop, esquire; died at Portsmouth, co. Hants, 24 August 1816.

William Wolryche Whitmore of Dudmaston Hall, esquire; Lieut.-Colonel Shropshire Militia; M.P. for Bridgnorth 7 March 1820 to 3 December 1832, and for Wolverhampton 15 December 1832 to 29 December 1834; died, aged 70, at Dudmaston, 11 August 1858.

Lady Lucy Elizabeth Georgiana Bridgman, dau. of Orlando, 1st Earl of Bradford; marr. at Weston, co. Stafford, 29 January 1810.

Now coming to the connection to Staig, as given above, Lucy Elizabeth Georgiana Bridgeman was the daughter of Orlando Bridgeman, 1st Earl of Bradford. The 1st Earl of Bradford's sister was Elizabeth Diana Bridgeman who married Sir George Gunning, 2nd Baronet of Eltham (as shown in the tree below)¹⁶.

John Gunning (1801-1845), a Major in the East India Company and the youngest son of Sir George Gunning and Elizabeth Bridgeman married Jessie Miller Babington (1804-1881), the daughter of Lilius Staig (1778-1827) and Charles Maitland Babington (1775-1841).¹⁷ Lilius Staig was the (third) daughter of David Staig (1743-1826), Provost of Dumfries (and agent for the Bank of Scotland)¹⁸ and Lilius Stewart of Shambellie (1753-1809).

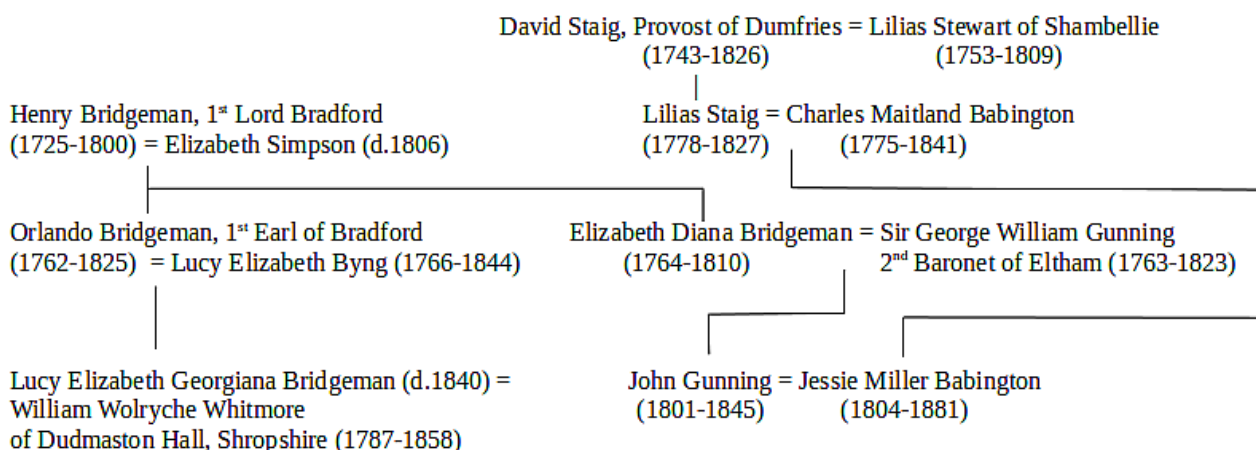
To state this in a less complicated manner, Lilius Staig's son-in-law, John Gunning was the first cousin of (Lady) Lucy Elizabeth Georgiana Bridgeman, the wife of William Wolryche-Whitmore. And there you have it - a not too distant connection. The tree on the next page shows this relationship.

16 *Burke's Genealogical & Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, 99th Edition, 1949. Page 901.

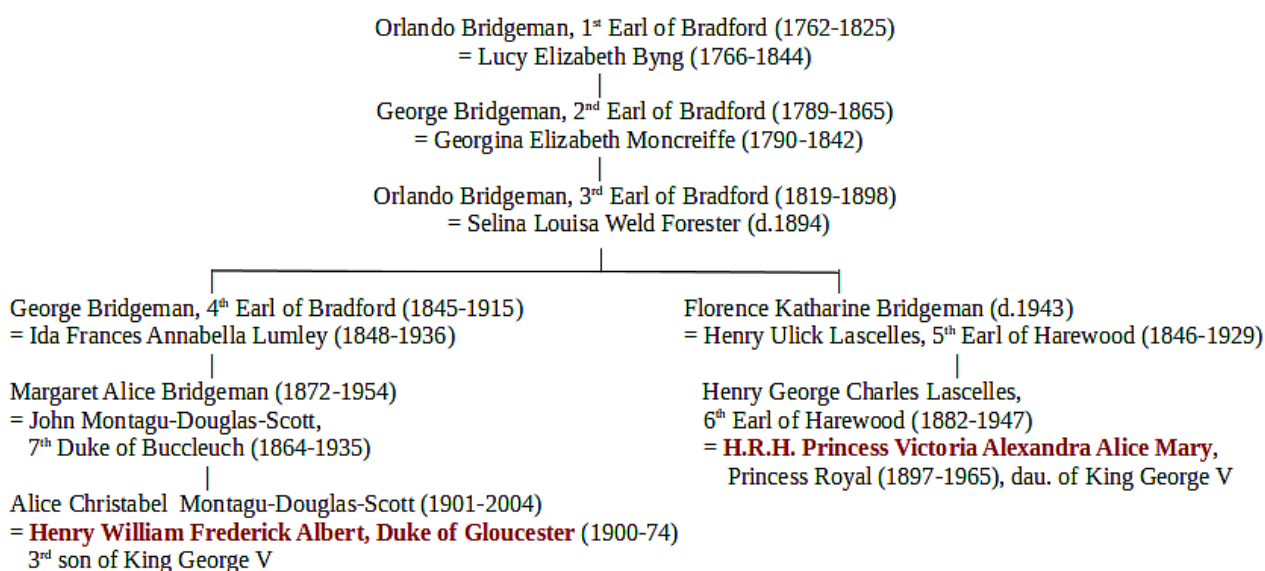
17 *Ibid*, page 901. See also: *The Snell Exhibitions: From the University of Glasgow to Balliol College, Oxford*, W. Innes Addison, 1901. Page 70.

18 *The Snell Exhibitions: From the University of Glasgow to Balliol College, Oxford*, W. Innes Addison, 1901. Page 70.

Staig connection to Wolryche-Whitmore and Earls of Bradford



To add some further interest to the tree shown above, two of the 1st Earl of Bradford's descendants married children of King George V, shown in the tree below.¹⁹



The great grandson of John Gunning and Jessie Miller Babington, Sir Robert Charles Gunning (1901-89), 8th Baronet of Eltham, inherited the baronetcy on the death of Sir Charles Vere Gunning, 7th Baronet of Eltham without male issue.²⁰ Sir Robert Charles Gunning was a 4th cousin (once removed) to H.R.H. Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester (Alice Christabel Montagu-Douglas-Scott) and a 4th cousin to Henry George Charles Lascelles, 6th Earl of Harewood.

¹⁹ *Britain's Royal Families: The Complete Genealogy*, Alison Weir, 2008. Pages 321-322. And: *Burke's Genealogical & Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, 99th Edition, 1949. Pages 247 & 949.

²⁰ *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, 107th edition, Vol. 2, 2003. Edited by Charles Mosley. Page 1708.

The coat of arms of Wolryche-Whitmore

William Wolryche Whitmore²¹ died without issue and on his death, Dudmaston Hall was inherited by his brother-in-law, the reverend Francis Laing (1773-1861), B.A. and M.A. of Balliol College, Oxford University, who married William Wolryche Whitmore's sister, Mary Dorothea Whitmore.²² On Francis Laing's death in 1861, Dudmaston Hall was passed to his son, Francis Henry Laing (1819/20-1908), Rector of Quatt, B.A. and M.A. of Wadham College, Oxford University, who assumed the surname and arms of Wolryche-Whitmore by Royal Licence dated 26th November 1864.²³



Attribution: staigfamily.wordpress.com

Arms: Quarterly 1st and 4th vert fretty or for WHITMORE, 2nd and 3rd azure a chevron between three swans rousant argent in chief a cross crosslet for difference for WOLRYCHE.

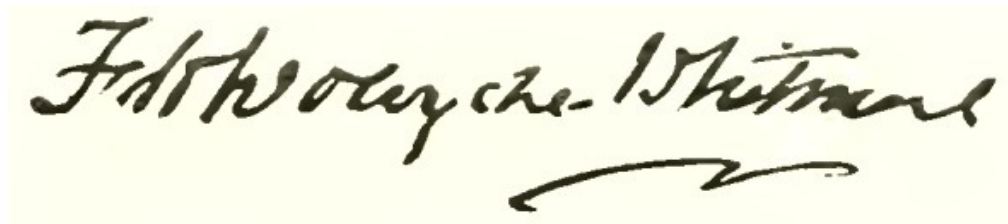
Crests: 1st WHITMORE Upon the stump of an oak tree sprouting to the dexter a falcon close all proper beaked and belled or, 2nd WOLRYCHE An oak tree fructed proper charged for difference with a cross crosslet gold.

Motto: Incorrupta fides.

²¹ According to <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/whitmore-william-1787-1858>, he was given the name Wolryche as a baptismal (middle) name, it was not a hyphenated surname until his nephew had adopted the hyphenated surname of Wolryche-Whitmore by Royal Licence.

²² *Visitation of England & Wales*, Vol. 17, 1911. Page 115.

²³ *Ibid*, page 115. The coat of arms is also depicted in this publication.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "F. H. Wolryche-Whitmore". Below the name is a decorative flourish consisting of a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Signature of Francis Henry Wolryche-Whitmore (1820-1908) J.P. B.A. M.A. (Oxon.)
Rector of Quatt, Shropshire.

A note on sources:

There are numerous sources for many of the footnotes that are provided in this article. In most cases, I have simply chosen one such reference and used it as the source, rather than quoting several references.

This article was published on the site: www.staigfamily.wordpress.com