

Richard Josslyn/Josselyn/Jocelyn c1528 – 1575.

'Builder' of Hyde Hall.

This article is intended as a second 'follow up' to my earlier article of November 2018 entitled Hyde Hall/Great Hyde Hall and deals with the first resident of the 'new' house there.

Note. I have found numerous instances of the death year for Richard Josselyn being given as either 1604 or 1605, especially on genealogical family websites. It would seem that there has been some confusion between him and his son of the same name. Indeed, even W Page in his great 1912 Victoria County History work *'A History of the County of Hertford'* also makes this mistake and cites just the one person. It is possible that many of the subsequent mistakes come from this source. I have carefully chosen my dates from the *'History of Parliament'* by A Davidson and cross referenced with extant church records and others.

The Josselyn family appear to have come to England with William I and the Norman invasion of 1066. The family first being granted lands in and around Sempringham in Lincolnshire. They first definitely appear in the Sawbridgeworth area in the middle of the 13th century when Thonus/Thomas Josselyn married Maude, the daughter of Sir John Hyde of Sawbridgeworth in the year 1248. However, his father John Josselyn may already have been living here at that time. Thus, the Hyde Hall estate was in the ownership of the Josslyn/Josselyn/Jocelyn family from at least the 13th century. This is further evidenced by the interior of Great St. Mary's church where there are two early funerary monuments.



Funerary Brass set in the floor of Great St. Mary's church showing Jeffrey Josselyn (d. 1470) with his two wives, Joan (left) and Katherine (right)



Tomb of Sir John Josselyn (c1449-1524/5) and his wife Philippa inside Great St. Mary's church

There are no surviving records from the time, but Richard was born in about the year 1528 and he was almost certainly born in Sawbridgeworth at the Hyde Hall estate. He was the first of Sir Thomas' sons to survive, there being at least one son born previously.

Richard's parents were Sir Thomas Josselyn and his wife Dorothy, who was the daughter of Sir Geoffrey Gates of High Easter. Sir Thomas became a Knight of the Bath upon the accession of King Edward VI on 28 January 1547 and was appointed a Privy Councillor to Queen Mary I in 1554.

Like his father, Richard Josselyn was baptised a Roman Catholic. However, his father Sir Thomas was clearly an astute person and Sir Thomas' Catholicism was obviously 'flexible' as is evidenced by both the ardent Protestant King Edward and the equally ardent Catholic Queen Mary both bestowing Sir Thomas with honours. This was not a time to be too forthright in one's views. Indeed, Richard's maternal uncle Sir John Gates died 'sine prole', being beheaded for High Treason due to his role in the affair of Lady Jane Grey. Nonetheless, when referring to Richard's religion, Richard was noted by his younger brother John (an avowed Protestant) as being raised 'in most deep darkness of superstition and idolatry'.

In the year 1554, Richard's father Thomas purchased from Sir William Stafford, the Baronial Estate of High Roding. This estate was to remain in the possession of the Josselyn family for the next 200 years and included the large property of New Hall which is still extant and is now a farm. It was here that Richard and his family would have resided whilst the old mediaeval house at Hyde Hall was demolished and rebuilt in 1572.



New Hall, High Roding in a sketch of 1921

Unlike his father who was very prominent, Richard made no real effort to enter public life. The sole exception was his election as a Member of Parliament for Scarborough in 1558. The manner of his election showing what Parliament was like in Tudor times. An election then was simply a gathering of 'important' townspeople who would endorse a nominated person. The original nominee in 1558 for Scarborough was a Christopher Smith. However, his name on the nomination was struck through and replaced by that of Richard Josselyn. This can be explained in that Christopher Smith was acquainted with Sir Henry Gates who was Richard's uncle and who was highly influential in the town. There is no surviving report of Richard's actions in Parliament and it is possible he never actually attended. It has to be remembered that Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne on 17 November 1558. Being a Catholic, Richard sensibly would not have wanted to draw attention to himself via Sir Francis Walsingham's spy network.

Richard succeeded his father Sir Thomas who died 24 October 1562 and was buried in Great St. Mary's Church. Sir Thomas' Will was proven in 1564 at Canterbury Prerogative Court. Richard's mother Dorothy survived until much later, indeed outliving Richard. Her Will was not proven until 1582.

In about the year 1555, Richard married Alice who was the daughter of Sir John Shelton of Shelton, Norfolk. They were to have at least one son together. Edward was baptised at Great St. Mary's (as a Protestant) 11 October 1562. Sadly though, Edward died young.

Richard's second wife was Anne, daughter of Thomas Lucas of Little Saxham, Suffolk. It is unclear when Richard and Anne married. Some sources reckon the year 1570, but given baptismal dates for their children it is much more likely to have been 1563, which indicates that Richard's first wife died in childbirth or shortly afterwards through complications.

The children of Richard and Anne, all of whom were baptised as Protestants at Great St. Mary's Church, were; Richard, baptised 30 August 1564 and who succeeded to the estate. Ambrose, baptised 2 June 1567. Wenefryde, baptised 10 February 1570 and John, baptised 18 August 1573. Note though that some sources claim there were two more children without giving details.

In 1572, it was Richard who had Hyde Hall rebuilt. The house now though bears little resemblance to his structure, which was of a relatively simply quadrilateral plan. Indeed, very little of Richard's house can be discerned at all through the later additions. Richard and his family were to spend only a short time in the new house though.

Richard made his Will on 7 August 1575. In it he provided for his wife and children with his wife and his father-in-law as executors and his brother John as overseer. Later, on 10 September 1575, Richard died and was buried next to his grandfather within the church of Great St. Mary's. Richard's Will was proven nine days later.

Richard was succeeded by his second son also called Richard, and who was initially placed in the wardship of the Gate's family. Richard's widow Anne went on to marry Henry Heigham, a cousin of Sir Clement Heigham.



Richard's son, also named Richard (1564-1625) with his second wife Joyce and son Robert, painted c1625 just before Richard's death

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