

Eye's Hatchments

Visitors to Eye church could be forgiven for overlooking four dark and dusty heraldic monuments mounted high on the wall of the west gallery. Probably removed to this out-of-the-way location during the restoration work of 1867-8, these memorials once enjoyed greater prominence, as Henry Creed's 1859 description of the church for the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology attests.¹ The smallest panel – depicting the arms of Cornwallis impaling those Townshend and mounted in an ornately carved and gilded frame – may once have adorned an organ-loft that was installed in front of the tower arch, which Creed observed to be “blocked up with plaister ... and painted, in very questionable taste, to represent drapery.”² The remaining three are funerary hatchments: diamond-shaped boards, often approximately four foot square, painted with the arms of the deceased. Although the panels are not named, several features besides the arms themselves can be used to attribute them to an individual. The background against which the arms are painted is usually black (*sable*, in heraldic parlance) to represent death; in the case of the impaled arms of a married couple, the background may be white behind the side of the shield representing the surviving spouse. The shape of the shield is also relevant: the conventional shield shape for a man and a diamond (or *lozenge*) for a woman. Hatchments carried in funeral processions and displayed outside the house of the deceased for as long as a year, before being repaired and moved to the church as a permanent memorial.

Medieval origins

Hatchments have their roots in the funerals of medieval knights, which were carefully managed by heralds according to protocol. The deceased knight's *achievements* (his helmet, shield, sword, tabard, etc.) would be carried by mourners in a grand procession, reminding the congregation to pray for the soul of the deceased, and afterwards were mounted on the church walls. Heraldic funerals were commonplace until the Elizabethan era, after which their tremendous expense and the theological changes of the Reformation diminished their popularity. After the Restoration, however, the tradition of painted funerary hatchments evolved, reaching a peak during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Compared to the numbers that must have been produced, relatively few survive, due to their inevitable decay and their removal during the church restorations of the late nineteenth century. Eye has three surviving hatchments, and investigation into their history resurrects something of the Georgian gentry society for which the town was once a focus.

Eye's Hatchments – Jonathan Lodge



Figure 1 Heraldic monuments mounted in the west gallery at the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye.³



Figure 2 Close-up of Cornwallis-Townshend heraldic panel.⁴

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¹ Creed, Henry. (1859) The Church of St Peter and St Paul Eye. *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History. Vol. II.* pp. 125-148. <https://suffolkinstitute.pdfsvr.co.uk> : accessed 14 September 2024.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

³ Images: Photograph. Funerary hatchments in Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye. 2023. Eye, Suffolk, England. Jonathan Lodge.

⁴ CORNWALLIS-TOWNSHEND heraldic panel. Early C18th. Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk, England. Photographed in 2024 by Jonathan Lodge.

Identifying Eye's armigers – Part 1

The oldest of Eye's three hatchments displays on a lozenge the arms of the Deye family (*Or on a chief indented azure two molets Or*) impaled with those of Cooper (*Gules a bend engrailed between six lions rampant Or*). The use of a lozenge indicates that the hatchment was painted for the funeral of a woman, and the black background behind both sides of the impaled arms suggests that she was a widow. This hatchment can therefore be attributed to Mary Deye, née Cooper, who was buried on 1 January 1750.⁵ Interestingly, the arms match those painted on a recently rediscovered decorative armorial, similar in design to the Cornwallis panel described earlier, on which the colours are still vivid. This is surely the very panel described in Martyn's Church Notes that once decorated a gallery in the church's north aisle, bearing the following inscription in gold letters: "This Gallery was put up by Nat[hanie]l Deye gent. 1705."⁶



Figure 3 Deye-Cooper hatchment.⁷



Figure 4 Decorative heraldic panel bearing the arms of Deye impaling Cooper.⁸

The Deyes were an ancient family who had long been resident in and around Eye. It is difficult to make sense of the numerous entries in early parish registers of Deye baptisms and burials, often repeating the same few Christian names. The monumental engravings in Eye church offer some clarity, as do two genealogies of families who intermarried with the Deyes: Milner-

Gibson-Cullum's 1928 *Genealogical notes relating to the family of Cullum*⁹ and Doughty's 1905 *The Betts of Wortham in Suffolk*.¹⁰

Doughty notes that, at the time of the Civil War, two Thomas Deyes were prominent in the town: Thomas Deye the younger of Moore Hall and his uncle, Thomas Deye the elder of Stayer House.¹¹ In 1674, 'Mr. Deye' of Eye was taxed for ten hearths (only one householder had more), and 'Thomas Deye Esq.' of Sutton and Langton (hamlets of Eye) was taxed for seven.¹² Sometime c.1688, Nathaniel Deye (presumably from the Stayer House branch) married Mary Cooper, although no record of their marriage has been found besides Mary's hatchment. Nathaniel and Mary brought eleven children into the world, of which seven seem to have survived into adulthood, including sons Thomas (baptised 1689), Nathaniel (baptised 1694) and Francis (baptised 1699).^{13,14,15} When he made his will in October 1718, Nathaniel Deye had sufficient property in Eye, Braiseworth, Thornham Magna, Ilkeshall, Moulton and Soham to distribute amongst his surviving children.¹⁶ Mary outlived her husband by thirty years, dying on 27 December 1749.¹⁷

Meanwhile, a Thomas Deye (presumably 'the younger' of Moore Hall) had married Temperance, apparently a sister of Robert Britiffe, Recorder of Lynn (c.1693-1749).^a Upon writing his will in 1713, Thomas directed that his substantial property in Eye and Braiseworth (including a brewery and several cottages) should be sold for the benefit of his widow Temperance and his daughter Ann.¹⁸ Thomas died and was buried in Eye on 9 October 1717.¹⁹ Nine months later, Temperance remarried at Braiseworth to Nathaniel Deye junior – it seems logical to suppose that this was the second son of Nathaniel Deye and Mary nee Cooper.²⁰ The parish register notes Temperance's residence as Moor Hall, Eye. No children appear to have been born to Nathaniel and Temperance. When she died a decade later in November 1727, she was buried at Eye church.²¹

In 1724, Nathaniel's elder brother Thomas had married Dioness, one of the heiress-daughters of William Cullum of Thorndon.²² Six months after Temperance's death, Nathaniel married Mary, Dioness' sister and co-heiress to their father.²³ Thomas and Dioness baptised and buried three children in Eye before her untimely death at the age of 33.²⁴ Nathaniel and Mary were scarcely more fortunate, baptising seven infants in Eye of which only two lived into adulthood. Their son Thomas attended Cambridge University and became Rector of Palgrave.²⁵ According to Doughty, Rev. Thomas D'Eye had a reputation for pomposity, and it was he who first affected to use an apostrophe in his surname.²⁶ Meanwhile, Nathaniel and Mary's daughter Martha married into the Betts family of Wortham.^{27,28} Nathaniel and Mary lived at Moore Hall until their deaths in 1758 and 1756 respectively.^{29,30}

^a In his will, Thomas Deye named his wife Temperance and his brother-in-law Robert Britiffe. Britiffe's first wife was Judith, daughter of Henry Edgar of Eye.

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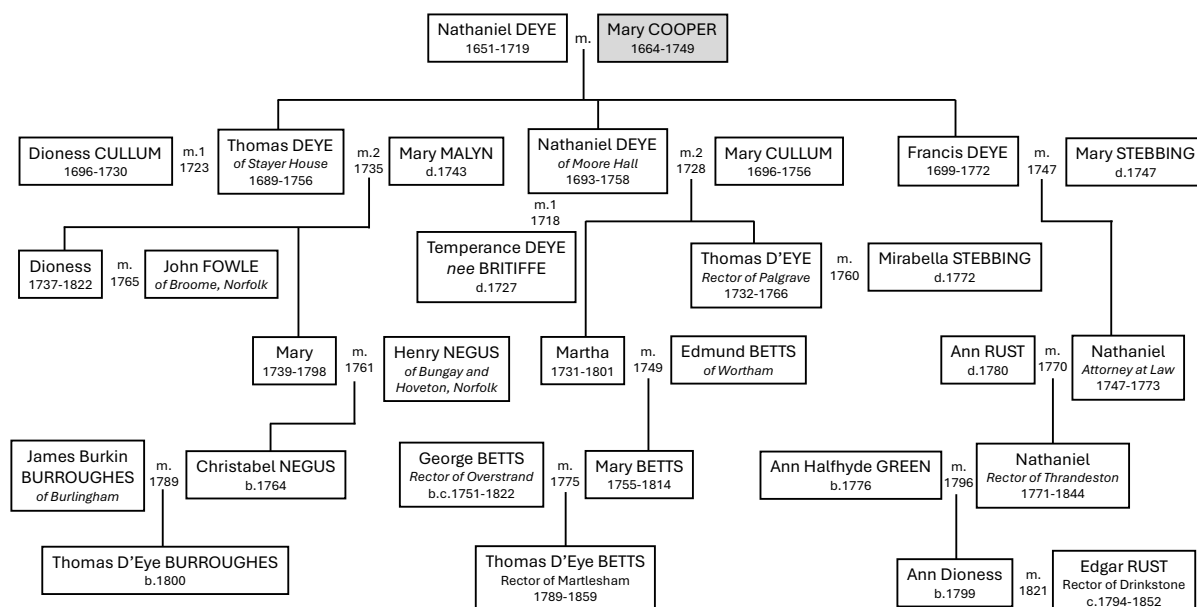


Figure 5 Dye Family Tree (simplified).

After Dioness' death, Thomas Deye remarried at Occold to Mary Malyn³¹ (probably a sister of Robert Malyn, Rector of Occold and Mellis^b), with whom he had two surviving children: daughters named (confusingly) Dioness and Mary.^{32,33} In 1756, the sisters (then aged around twenty) were living at Stayer House, which they believed themselves to have inherited from their late father. Mary was then engaged to the Bungay attorney Henry Negus, whose uncle Daniel Negus was also an attorney at Eye. With access to family papers, Doughty describes a dispute that occurred between the sisters and their cousin, Rev. Thomas Deye. Simultaneously, Daniel Negus was employed by the sisters, who intended to divide their estate in preparation for marriage, and by Rev. Thomas Dye, who was also preparing a marriage settlement. Initially, Negus informed Rev. Thomas that, upon seeing the title deeds to the Stayer House estate, he had become aware that it was in fact entailed in the male line and the sisters were therefore unable to inherit it from their father – thus, Rev. Thomas was the rightful heir. He suggested, however, that Rev. Thomas might accept a payment of £1,000 from the sisters to relinquish his claim on the estate. Rev. Thomas accepted this proposal at first, and signed a letter to that effect addressed to his cousin Dioness. After consulting with his wife, however, he reconsidered his decision, which he publicly revoked at Eye Assembly. Keen to avoid a complicated lawsuit, Rev. Thomas then offered to pay the sisters £1,000 each in exchange for their claims to the Stayer House estate, which they in turn refused. The matter proceeded to chancery and Rev. Thomas ultimately won the title to the estate, with the sisters compensated on less favourable terms than they had previously been offered by their cousin.³⁴

^b Doughty (*op. cit.*, p. 217) says that the Miss Deyes of Stayer House were nieces of Rev. Malyns (sic.), Rector of Eye. *Alumni Cantabrigienses* shows a Robert Malyn as Rector of Occold and Mellis 1727-36 and his son, also Robert, as Vicar/Curate of Occold and Rector of Braiseworth at the time of the Stayer House property dispute.

The sisters soon married: Mary to Henry Negus, who later inherited his family's property at Hoveton, and Dioness to John Fowle Esquire of Broome in Norfolk, an excise auditor.^{35,36,37} Rev. Thomas took possession of the Stayer House estate and broke the entail through the legal process of 'common recovery'.³⁸ His victory was short-lived, however – he died childless in 1766 at the age of 34 and the property was inherited by his sister Martha Betts.³⁹ After being widowed herself, she married in 1789 to Thomas Wayth, an attorney of Eye.⁴⁰ By January 1790, Mr Wayth was advertising his former residence on Broad Street to be let from his new offices at Stayer House on Castle Street.⁴¹

Ultimately, although the family died out in the male line, the name of Deye lived on through its daughters. One of Martha Betts' grandchildren was named after his great-uncle: Thomas D'Eye Betts, Rector of Martlesham.⁴² Christabel Negus, daughter of Henry Negus and Mary Deye, married into the Burroughes family and named one of her sons Thomas D'Eye Burroughes, presumably after her grandfather rather than the cousin who had wrested Stayer House from her mother.⁴³ Francis Deye, the third surviving son of Nathaniel Deye and Mary Cooper of Moore Hall, had a son and grandson both named Nathaniel, the younger of whom became Rector of Occold and Thrandeston.⁴⁴ His only child, Ann Dioness, married the Rev. Edgar Rust, Rector of Drinkstone.⁴⁵ Their children were heirs to their grandfather on condition that they assumed the additional surname of D'Eye, one of whom was the soldier and Suffolk artist Edward Henry Rust D'Eye.^{46,47}

The Deyes must have had a host of hatchments made during the eighteenth century for the funerals of senior members of the family. Of them, Mary Deye's is the only one to have survived, hanging on the church wall for nearly three centuries. It made the news in 1972, when it was restored by local artist Cavendish Moreton, although it currently appears to be the most decayed of the three hatchments.⁴⁸

⁵ Burials (PR) England. St Peter & St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 01 January 1749[/50]. DEYE, Mary. [Transcription] Collection: England Deaths & Burials 1538-1991. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 27 August 2024.

⁶ Milner-Gibson-Cullum, G. Gery. (1928) *Genealogical Notes Relating to the Family of Cullum ...* London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke. p. 46.

<https://archive.org/details/genealogicalnote00miln/page/107/mode/1up> : accessed 05 October 2024.

⁷ DEYE-COOPER funerary hatchment. 1750. Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk, England. Photographed in 2024 by Jonathan Lodge.

⁸ DEYE-COOPER heraldic panel. 1705. Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk, England. Photographed in 2024 by Jonathan Lodge.

⁹ Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Doughty, Katharine Frances. (1912) *The Betts of Wortham in Suffolk, 1480-1905*. London: John Lane The Bodley Head. <https://archive.org/details/bettsofworthami00doug/page/n10/mode/1up> : accessed 14 September 2024.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 179.

¹² Hervey, S. H. A. (1905) *Suffolk in 1674, being the hearth tax returns*. Woodbridge: George Booth. pp. 104-5. <https://ia601407.us.archive.org/17/items/suffolkin1674bei00shah/suffolkin1674bei00shah.pdf> : accessed 21 September 2024.

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- ¹³ Baptisms (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 14 February 1688[/9]. DEYE, Thomas. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁴ Baptisms (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 26 January 1693[/4]. D'EYE, Nathaniel. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁵ Baptisms (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 11 September 1699. DEYE, Frances. [Transcription] Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁶ Testamentary records. England. 03 February 1718[/19]. DEYE, Nathaniel. Will. Archdeaconry of Sudbury Probate Records (c1400-1928). IC500/2/78/436. Suffolk Archives, Bury St Edmunds, England.
- ¹⁷ Monumental inscriptions. England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 27 December 1749. D'EYE, Mary. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- ¹⁸ Testamentary records. England. 16 October 1717. DEYE, Thomas. Will. Archdeaconry of Sudbury Probate Records (c1400-1928). IC500/1/171/64. Suffolk Archives, Bury St Edmunds, England.
- ¹⁹ Burials (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 09 October 1717. DEYE, Thomas. [Transcription] Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ²⁰ Marriages (PR) England. St Mary, Braiseworth, Suffolk. 22 July 1718. DEYE, Nathaniel and DEYE, Temperance. [Transcription] Suffolk Marriage Index (1650-1753) for the Deanery of Hartismere. Suffolk Family History Society.
- ²¹ Burials (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 07 November 1727. DEYE, Temperance. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ²² Marriages (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 04 February 1723[/4]. DEYE, Thomas and CULLUM, Dioness. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ²³ Bannerman, Bruce, ed. (1918) *Allegations for marriage licences in the Archdeaconry of Sudbury in the county of Suffolk in the years 1684 to 1754. Part I*. London: The Harleian Society. p. 97. Collection: Britain, Marriage Licences. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 20 October 2023.
- ²⁴ Monumental inscriptions. England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 02 September 1730. DEYE, Dioness. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- ²⁵ Venn, J. A., comp. (1922-1954) *Alumni Cantabrigienses*. DAY, Thomas. London: Cambridge University Press. A Cambridge Alumni Database. University of Cambridge, England. <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/intro.html> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ²⁶ Doughty, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- ²⁸ Marriages (PR) England. Tivetshall St Mary, Norfolk. 07 September 1749. BETTS, Edmund and DAY, Martha. Archdeacon's Transcripts. Ref: AT TIVETSHALL ST MARGARET AND ST MARY. Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, England. Collection: Norfolk Banns And Marriages. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 28 August 2024.
- ²⁹ Monumental inscriptions. England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 04 November 1758. D'EYE, Nathaniel. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gilson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- ³⁰ Monumental inscriptions. England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 22 December 1756. D'EYE, Mary. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gilson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- ³¹ Marriages (PR) England. St Michael, Occold, Suffolk. 11 June 1735. DEYE, Thomas and MALYN, Mary. [Transcription] Collection: Suffolk Marriage Index (1650-1753) Deanery of Hartismere. Suffolk Family History Society, Suffolk, England.
- ³² Baptisms (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 14 August 1737. DEYE, Dioness. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ³³ Baptisms (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 04 March 1738[/9]. DEYE, Mary. [Transcription] In: Milner-Gibson-Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ³⁴ Doughty, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-218.
- ³⁵ Marriages (PR) England. All Saints, Stuston, Suffolk. 09 April 1761. NEGUS, Henry and D'EYE, Mary. [Transcription] Collection: Suffolk Marriage Index. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ³⁶ Marriages (PR) England. Broome, Norfolk. 07 May 1765. FOWLE, John and D'EYE, Dioness. Archdeacon's Transcripts. Ref: AT BROOME. Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, England. Collection: Norfolk Banns And Marriages. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ³⁷ Marriage announcements. (1765) *Ipswich Journal*. 11 May. FOWLE, John and D'EYE, Dioness. p. 3a. Collection: British and Irish Newspapers. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ³⁸ Doughty, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

- ³⁹ Death announcements. (1766) *Gentleman's Magazine*. July. D'EYE, [Thomas]. p. 343a. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015018395353?urlappend=%3Bseq=385%3Bownerid=13510798882329224-355> : accessed 14 September 2024.
- ⁴⁰ Marriage announcements. (1789) *Ipswich Journal*. 10 October. WAYTH, Tho[mas] and BETTS, [Martha]. p. 2b. Collection: British and Irish Newspapers. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 30 August 2024.
- ⁴¹ *Ipswich Journal*. (1790) To be let... *Ipswich Journal*. 02 January. p. 3a. Collection: British and Irish Newspapers. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 30 August 2024.
- ⁴² Doughty, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
- ⁴³ Lundy, Darryl, comp. *The Peerage. Christabell Negus*. No. 556714. <http://www.thepeerage.com/p55672.htm#i556714> : accessed 31 August 2024.
- ⁴⁴ Venn, J. A., comp. (1922-1954) *Alumni Cantabrigienses. DEYE, Nathaniel*. London: Cambridge University Press. Collection: Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ⁴⁵ Marriages (PR) England. St Margaret, Thrandeston, Suffolk. 26 July 1821. RUST, Edgar and D'EYE, Ann Dioness. [Transcription] Collection: Suffolk Marriage Index. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 29 August 2024.
- ⁴⁶ Venn, J. A., comp. (1922-1954) *Alumni Cantabrigienses. RUST, Edgar*. London: Cambridge University Press. Collection: Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 14 September 2024.
- ⁴⁷ *Suffolk Artists. D'EYE, Edward Henry Rust (c.1834 – 1907)*. <https://suffolkartists.co.uk/index.cgi?choice=painter&pid=4510> : accessed 14 September 2024.
- ⁴⁸ *Diss Express*. (1972) Eye Hatchment Restored. *Diss Express*. 31 March. p. 4a-c. Collection: British and Irish Newspapers. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 14 September 2024.

Identifying Eye's armigers – Part 2

The second hatchment is blazoned by John H. Sperling in *Notes and Queries* as *Gules, a chevron ermine between three sea-mews argent (Sayer) impaled with: Argent, two chevrons azure, a border engrailed gules (Tyrell)*.⁴⁹ The background behind the Sayer arms is black, but it is white behind the Tyrell arms, indicating that the deceased left a widow.

John Sayer was buried on 8 January 1761,⁵⁰ and is also commemorated by a flatstone in the floor of the nave:

John Sayer, Esq., died Jan. 3, 1761, aged 89. Grace, his relict, daughter of Thomas Tyrrell, of Gipping Hall, Esq., died Nov. 13, 1775, aged 61.⁵¹



Figure 6 Sayer-Tyrell hatchment.⁵²

John and Grace had married on 7 October 1754 at Stowmarket.^{53,54} He was 82 years old and a widower, whilst she was around 40. They seem not to have had any surviving children, and upon writing his will on 7th July 1760, John left his wife a lifetime interest in his property, bequeathing it afterwards to his godson John Palgrave, son of the doctor William Palgrave of Ipswich, upon condition that John and his heirs assume the surname Sayer. Grace was named as his sole executor.⁵⁵

There was also a family connection between John Sayer and John Palgrave. Both families had long been resident in Pulham, where the Sayers were lords of the manor.⁵⁶ Genealogies of the Sayer family become slightly muddled around the time of the early sixteenth century, but if Walter Rye's 1891 edition of the *Visitation of Norfolk* is correct, then John Sayer may have been a fourth cousin of John Palgrave's father William, who had attended Cambridge University and was a physician at Ipswich.^{57,58} There was also a closer between the two men, by marriage rather than by blood: in 1695, John Sayer had married Dorothy Burton, the daughter of a Yorkshire landowner.⁵⁹ Dorothy's brother, who became Vicar of Halifax, had a daughter Elizabeth, and in 1727, Elizabeth Burton married William Palgrave at Gray's Inn chapel.^{60,61,62} The couple had at least three children: John (born c. 1730, for whom John Sayer stood godfather),⁶³ Dorothy (born c. 1732, who died young),^{64,65} and William (born c. 1735, who ended his career as rector of Thrandeston, Thornham Magna and Palgrave).^{66,67} Hence, besides being distant cousins, John Palgrave was nephew-by-marriage to John Sayer of Pulham.

John Sayer's wife Dorothy died in May 1752 and the parish register of Eye records her burial on 24 May.⁶⁸ With no children of his own, John Sayer decided to make his godson and nephew-by-marriage his heir, as previously noted. After his death in 1761, his funerary hatchment was mounted on the church wall, originally in the north aisle.⁶⁹ The connection between the families was further strengthened after John Sayer's death. On 21 April 1766, having assumed the name Sayer in accordance with the terms of his late godfather's will, John Palgrave (as was) married Mary Tyrell, at Worlingham.⁷⁰ Mary's father Edmund was the brother of Grace Tyrell, who had become John Sayer's second wife and whose family arms were impaled with his on his funerary hatchment.

John and Mary set up home at Wrentham Hall, but sadly their marriage was not a long one. John may have become ill in the summer of 1767 – he wrote his will on 5 July.⁷¹ His death, which occurred on 29 November, was announced in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and he was buried at the church of St Mary Magdalen, Pulham Market, on 5 December.^{72,73} In his will, he left £100 to his "aunt" Grace Sayer of Eye.⁷⁴

Grace Sayer died on 13 November 1775 and was buried with her husband in Eye.⁷⁵ An auction of the contents of her house was advertised in the *Ipswich Journal*, and included: "sacking bottomed bedsteads, with mahogany posts, morine and other furnitures; fine goose feather beds, bolsters and pillows; blankets and quilts; mahogany chests with drawers; pier and dressing-glasses; mahogany, wainscot, and other tables; walnut-tree bureau and book-cases; mahogany and walnut-tree chairs; exceeding good Wilton and other carpets; an eight-day clock; brewing utensils; kitchen furniture; plate, &c. with a variety of other valuable and useful things."⁷⁶ A margin note on the registered will of the elder John Sayer states that his estate remained unadministered by Grace at the time of her death, and administration was granted

to her nephew, Rev. Charles Tyrrell, in 1811. Charles died soon afterwards and ultimately administration was granted to his widow Elizabeth in 1812.⁷⁷

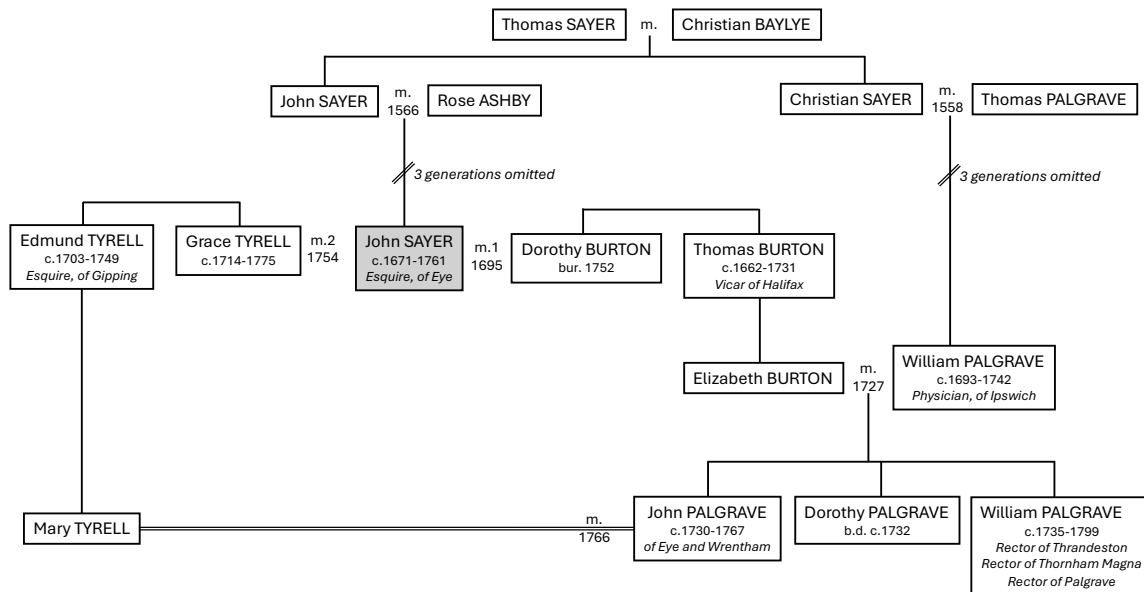


Figure 7 Family tree of John Sayer, Esquire, of Eye (1671-1761).

- ⁴⁹ Sperling, John H. (1863) A Visitation of the Monumental Heraldry of Suffolk. Part IV. XIV. Eye. *Notes and Queries*. No. XXV. March. pp. 311-312.
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=jxgjAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA312&lpg=PA312&dq=john+sayer+1761+eye+suffolk&source=bl&ots=k05kbwiW9Z&sig=ACfU3U0utN27gaa_7zxMXXZu4rsXHLLYA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjPOfams5-BAxWzV0EAHSo3Bx04ChDoAXoECAIQAg#v=onepage : accessed 15 September 2024.
- ⁵⁰ Burials (PR) England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 08 January 1761. SAYER, John. [Transcription] Collection: National Burial Index For England & Wales. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 11 September 2023.
- ⁵¹ Monumental inscriptions. England. St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk. 03 January 1761. SAYER, John. [Transcription] In: Creed, Henry. (1859) The Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye. *The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History*. Vol. II. <https://suffolkinstiute.pdfsrv.co.uk> : accessed 10 September 2023.
- ⁵² SAYER-TYRELL funerary hatchment. 1761. Church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye, Suffolk, England. Photographed in 2024 by Jonathan Lodge.
- ⁵³ Marriages (PR) England. Stowmarket, Suffolk. 07 October 1754. SAYER, John and TYRELL, Grace. [Transcription] Collection: Suffolk Marriage Index. <https://www.findmypast.co.uk> : accessed 11 September 2023.
- ⁵⁴ Bannerman, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
- ⁵⁵ Testamentary records. England. 09 March 1761. SAYER, John. Will. Prerogative Court of Canterbury: Wills of Selected Famous Persons. PROB 11/864. National Archives (Great Britain), Kew, England. Collection: England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 11 September 2023.
- ⁵⁶ Blomefield, Francis. (1806) 'Hundred of Earsham: Pulham.' In: *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Vol. 5*. London: W. Miller. pp. 387-405. <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol5/pp387-405#anchorn35> : accessed 12 September 2023.
- ⁵⁷ Rye, Walter, ed. (1891) *The Visitation of Norfolk ... SAYER*. London: The Harleian Society. pp. 240-1. <https://archive.org/details/visitacionievisi32ryew/page/240/mode/2up> : accessed 15 September 2024.

- ⁵⁸ Venn, J. A., comp. (1922-1954) *Alumni Cantabrigienses*. PALGRAVE, William. London: Cambridge University Press. Collection: Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk> : accessed 11 September 2023.
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Identifying Eye's armigers – Part 3

The third hatchment clearly matches the coat of arms on a detailed memorial on the wall of the north aisle, above which it was once mounted. Writing in *The Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, Statistics, and Natural History* in 1859, Henry Creed blazons these arms as: "Argent a bishop's pall between two castles sable... [impaled with] per fess, 1st, Argent, a fess sable, in chief three grenades flamed Or; 2nd Ermine, on a fess gules, a lion passant Or."⁷⁸



Figure 8 Cunningham hatchment.⁷⁹

The memorial identifies the armiger as Rear Admiral Sir Charles Cunningham, K.G.H., who died 11 February 1834 at the age of 79.⁸⁰ Sir Charles had a distinguished naval career, which is summarised on the memorial and recounted in greater detail in the 1835 edition of *The*

Annual Biography and Obituary (which is freely available on Google Books and forms the basis of his Wikipedia page).⁸¹

Charles' obituary states that Charles was a native of Eye, but he seems not to have been baptised there.⁸² The Cunningham arms used by Charles would suggest he had Scottish ancestry and a baptism record has been found for a Charles Cunningham with parents Charles and Elizabeth on 21 August 1755 at St Olave, Southwark.⁸³ Whether or not this is the correct record, his obituary states that he was much taken with the idea of life at sea and, with the encouragement of the Cornwallis family, he entered the navy as a midshipman in 1775, aged about 20.^{84,85} He proved an able seaman, and within four years he was senior lieutenant on the *Hinchinbroke* under Nelson's command. In 1790, he was made commander of the *Ariel* by Sir William Cornwallis, then Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies Station.⁸⁶

Charles' father was resident in Eye at this time, and newspapers record his election to the office of town coroner in 1777 and 1781.^{87,88} At the time of his death in 1788, he was described as a gentleman and one of the town's "capital burgesses."⁸⁹ He also has a memorial plaque in the north aisle bearing similar Cunningham arms.⁹⁰

Charles junior had married Mary Boycott, daughter of the Rector of Burgh St Peter, Norfolk, on 4 January 1785.⁹¹ Mary soon gave birth to two daughters,^{92,93} but died at Eye on 1 November 1794, aged 35, and was buried in the Boycott family vault at Burgh St Peter.^{94,95} The arms of Boycott are the first of the impaled arms on Charles' hatchment and memorial in Eye church.

Throughout the 1790s, Charles was captain and commanding officer on various ships during the French wars. He was in Eye long enough to serve as town bailiff in 1795.⁹⁶ On 10 February 1797, he married Beatrice Proby, the daughter of the Commissioner of Chatham dockyard whose nephew was the Earl of Carysfort – hence the arms of Proby also appear on Charles' hatchment.^{97,98} Their first child, a daughter named after her mother, was born the following year.⁹⁹ Charles' seagoing career ended in 1804, by which time he had achieved the rank of commodore.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Beatrice gave birth to another three children, including a son baptised Charles Proby Cunningham at Eye in 1802.¹⁰¹

Charles' house in the centre of Eye and its contents were sold by auction in November 1803.¹⁰² He then held civil appointments as Commissioner of Victualling 1803-06; Commissioner of Deptford and Woolwich dockyards 1806-23; and Commissioner of Chatham dockyard 1823-29.¹⁰³ The newspapers of the period note his presence at royal inspections and "splendid balls" held at his residence at Chatham dockyard. Charles Proby joined the Royal Navy, but must have become ill and died at his father's house at Woolwich on 11 November 1822.¹⁰⁴ Four years later, Charles' wife Beatrice died "after a few hours illness" at his house in Chatham.¹⁰⁵

Eye's Hatchments – Jonathan Lodge

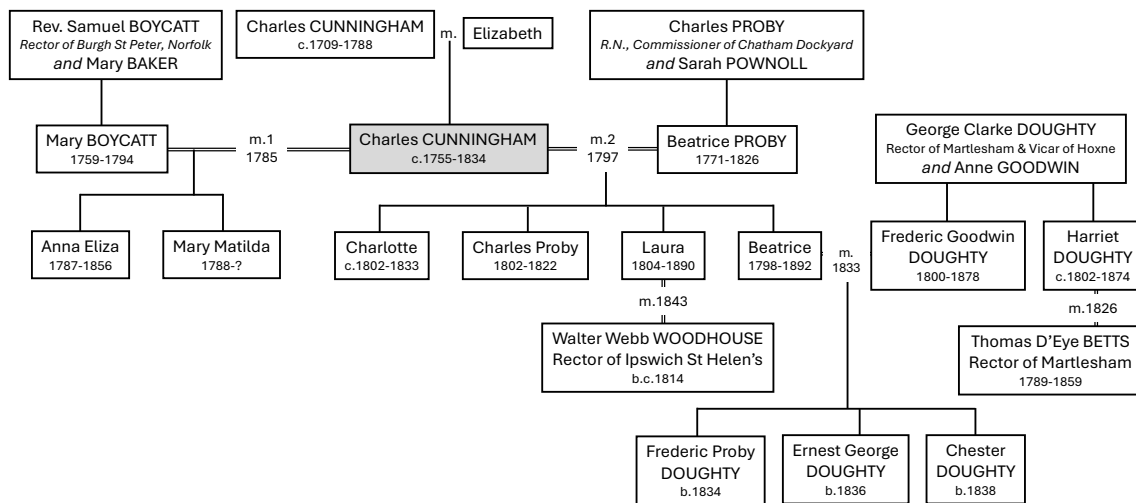


Figure 9 Family tree of Rear Admiral Sir Charles Cunningham, KGH (1755-1834).

Charles retired in May 1829 with the rank of rear-admiral and in 1832 he was created knight commander of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order.¹⁰⁶ Returning to Eye, he took up residence at Oak Lawn House, Hoxne, where he lived with his unmarried daughters. Fourth daughter Charlotte died on 15 May 1833, aged 33, and is memorialised with her father in Eye church.¹⁰⁷ Charles' name appears in Suffolk newspapers during the early 1830s as steward of subscription assemblies at the White Lion Inn. Perhaps it was at one of these events that his third daughter Beatrice formed an attachment to Frederic Goodwin Doughty, younger son of George Clarke Doughty who was Rector of Martlesham and Vicar of Hoxne.¹⁰⁸ Frederic and Beatrice married on 21 August 1833 and set up home at Frederic's properties in Woodbridge and Martlesham, where they raised three sons.¹⁰⁹ Through the Doughtys, the Cunningham family became connected to the Betts and Deye families – Frederic's sister Harriet Doughty married the Rev. Thomas D'Eye Betts, Rector of Martlesham, and grandson of Martha Betts nee Deye.¹¹⁰

Charles Cunningham had his portrait painted by Henry Wyatt sometime around 1833. The portrait, which depicts him wearing rear-admiral's undress uniform with the star and neck order of a Knight Commander of Hanover, is in the collection of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and can also be seen on his Wikipedia page.¹¹¹ He died at Oak Lawn House, Hoxne, on 11 February 1834, aged 79.¹¹² By July, Oak Lawn House was advertised to be let.¹¹³ His eldest daughter Anna Elizabeth remained unmarried and appears to have lived at Bassett Down House, Wiltshire, with her friends the Story-Maskelynes, to whom she made significant bequests in her will.¹¹⁴ Charles' youngest daughter Laura married Walter Webb Woodhouse, who later became Rector of St Clements, Ipswich.¹¹⁵ The couple had no children and retired to the South West, where Laura died at Weston-Super-Mare in 1890.¹¹⁶ Beatrice was the longest-lived of Charles daughters, dying in Woodbridge in 1892 at the age of 94.¹¹⁷

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- ⁷⁸ Creed, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
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Reflections

Eye's hatchments are a window into the town's Georgian past, when families such as the Sayers, the Dyes and the Cunninghams were notable in the society of the town and its neighbourhood. As has been shown, a combination of high infant mortality and poor life expectancy conspired against these families in their attempts at longevity. When the deaths of adult family members occurred, their funerary observances must have been magnificent to behold. And if these three families were accustomed to the display of funerary hatchments, then of course it must also have been the vogue amongst their social peers. Hatchments such as those surviving in Eye church must have been painted in their hundreds, regularly adorning the town's more substantial residences, carried aloft ahead of funeral processions and adorning the church walls.

As the nineteenth century ushered in the Victorian age, new families rose to prominence in the town. The recently-ennobled Kerrison baronets purchased Hoxne Hall (later renamed Oakley Park) in the early 1820s and acquired Brome Hall in 1823.^{118,119} Meanwhile the Tacon family – brewers by trade – arrived in the town early in the nineteenth century and prospered. Both these families were closely associated with the restoration of the church in 1867-8 and subsequent additions, and the faded and dusty hatchments commemorating extinct families cannot have fit within the scheme – hence their removal to a more discrete location. It is hoped that this research will reconnect the surviving hatchments with a sense of the individuals that they were made to commemorate and their families.

Those interested in seeing other surviving hatchments connected with those at Eye can travel to the church at Bungay, where a hatchment commemorates the married daughter of Matthias Kerrison, father of the 1st baronet. At Gipping is the hatchment of Edmund Tyrell, brother of Grace Tyrell who married John Sayer of Eye; her nephew, Rev. Charles Tyrell, has a hatchment at Stowmarket. The Rev. George Betts has a hatchment at Wortham, and in Norfolk, several members of the Negus family are commemorated by hatchments at Hoveton St. Peter, including Henry Negus and his wife Mary nee Deye. Meanwhile, at Bredfield, the married daughter of Henry Edgar of Eye is remembered, and Ann, the married daughter of Robert Denny of Eye, has a hatchment at Woodbridge. Near to Eye, the churches Thrandeston and Yaxley each have two hatchments, and Thornham Magna has seven.¹²⁰

N.B. This list of hatchments is taken from Peter Summers' Hatchments in Britain series which was published in 1976. Readers should make their own enquiries as to the survival of these hatchments in the locations that Summers recorded them in 1976 to avoid disappointment.

With thanks to The Rev'd Dr Guy Sumpter for his time and enthusiasm.

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September 2024

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