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First Prev 30

E(GB)

1629-1934

ELWES (GREAT BILLING)

The Elwes family, for more than a century, owned estates both in Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. The records for the Lincolnshire estate (excluding a small number of records noted later) are held at Lincolnshire Record Office (summary list available at N.R.O.). These include a small number of records (mostly eighteenth century and nineteenth century estate surveys) which were transferred by the N.R.O. in 1966 (a list noting what was transferred is available). The records within this collection were received in 1931 with the exception of a number of title deeds to the Billing estate which were transferred from Lincolnshire Record Office in 1966.

Robert Cary-Elwes of Roxby, Lincolnshire, acquired the Billing estate in 1800 (see E(GB) 84/1-2 & E(GB) 26-27) from the proceeds of the sale of his estate in Throcking, Hertfordshire. The estate expanded over the next century until it was sold in 1931 (see SC 549 and Map 4207) and with the proceeds the family purchased Elsham Hall, Lincolnshire, from Kings College, Cambridge. It was envisaged that Billing Hall would be used as a home for indigent musicians (in memory of Gervase Elwes) but the scheme failed and after further unsuccessful ownership it was sadly demolished in 1956. There is little of note within the collection relating to the Hall except a few bills and receipts for work undertaken between the 1860s and the 1890s (E(GB) 356-365); a specification for alterations made in 1885 (E(GB) 360); and a few letters mentioning repairs undertaken. External to this collection are three George Clark pencil sketches of the Hall dating from 1852 (see GCPS Book 8 pages 11-13) plus a handful of photographs in our pictorial collection.

This collection contains a substantial number of title deeds pre-dating the purchase of the estate by the Elwes family (such as those of the Dukes of Devonshire) as well as deeds showing additions to the estate in later years (such as land and property purchased from James Dunn in the mid nineteenth century). Scattered amongst these title deeds are some personal and probate papers of previous owners and occupiers. There are very few manorial records for the Billing estate: from the middle of the eighteenth century hardly any courts baron or leet were held. However, there survives a survey of the Lordship of Great Billing taken in 1758 (E(GB) 301) as well as the odd particular and valuation of the estate dating from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Other records pertaining to the Billing estate include: two quality books of c 1777 (E(GB) 319-320); lists of owners and tenants in the 1780s (E(GB) 324-325); a field book of 1807 (E(GB) 340); a mid eighteenth century plan of the paddock (E(GB) 21); an undated plan of the Roman Catholic Church at Great Billing (E(GB) 563).

As explained earlier there are not many Lincolnshire estate records within this collection. What little there is includes: a few instructions regarding the upkeep of the estate; a cash book for 1908-1912 (E(GB) 582); nineteenth century copies of eighteenth century deeds; a valuation of the Bigby estate in around 1867 (E(GB) 579); and an inventory and valuation of the manor house at Brigg, 1893 (E(GB) 585). Additionally some correspondence is extant (see below). Outside of the Lincolnshire section (E(GB) 570-739) there is an account book (E(GB) 743) of Francis Grojan, executor for Cary Elwes, of lands in Lincolnshire (as well as in Yorkshire), 1785-1793; and a cash ledger book (E(GB) 788) of Valentine Cary-Elwes noting rentals, game accounts, etc for Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, 1906-1911.

Correspondence can be found within three sections of this collection: Northants; Lincolnshire; and Personal. The Northants correspondence (E(GB) 370-543), mostly letters received by Valentine Cary-Elwes between 1859 and 1909, is understandably dominated by family events and estate matters. However, there are also a number of letters revealing the contemporary views of his family, friends and acquaintances. Such topics that are touched upon include local and national politics, social activities, travel at home and abroad, the building of the Roman Catholic Church at Billing in the 1880s and Catholicism itself. The latter is particularly well represented being mainly concerned with faith and religious practice but does also include a few letters on the administration and politics of the Roman Catholic Church in England, and to a lesser extent, Rome itself. The Lincolnshire correspondence (E(GB) 586-722) - again mostly letters received by Valentine Cary-Elwes - from 1863 to 1908, is also dominated by estate and family matters as well as including broadly the same topics noted above. However, it also contains a little correspondence on local schools (including a disagreement on the teaching of Christianity) and on the Christian missionary at Brigg. Lastly, there is some correspondence (E(GB) 966-1372) within the personal section of the catalogue. This has more recipients (although Valentine Cary-Elwes is still the main recipient) than the previous two sets of correspondence and dates from 1840 to 1912. Correspondence is of a more private nature but still includes topics already mentioned notably local and national politics, travel and Catholicism. A small portion of the remaining letters discusses the genealogy of the family.

The personal papers of the family include diaries, journals and financial records. Travel is well represented. There is an account book (E(GB) 939) of Charles Elwes from 1823 to 1824 which includes entries regarding his "Continental Journeys" principally through France, Switzerland and the Low Countries. There are three accounts by Valentine Cary-Elwes of his travels. Firstly there are some "Jottings" in a journal (E(GB) 962) of his voyage to the Cape of Good Hope in 1851 whilst in the 12th Royal Lancers (towards the end of the Kaffir War). Secondly, a diary and journal (E(GB) 963) of the same period recording his journey to South Africa and later to the Mediterranean and Egypt. Thirdly, a partial account (E(GB) 964) of a journey, in about 1854, to the Mediterranean, Egypt and ultimately Western Australia (the latter part has not survived). Additionally, a large run of bills and receipts (E(GB) 802-938) - mainly for Valentine Cary-Elwes but including a number for Gervase Elwes - dating from 1860 to 1920 detail expenditure on travel and accommodation (both at home and abroad) as well as on household and personal items, school fees, social events, etc.

A small number of photographs (E(GB)1573-1592) of the places the family visited, of themselves and of Billing Hall have survived. These principally date from the mid to late nineteenth century. Finally, there are two dispatch books (E(GB) 944-945) of Charles Fitzgerald, governor of Gambia and later Western Australia, for the years 1844 to 1851. Fitzgerald was married to Valentine's sister Eleanora.

A wealth of genealogical material regarding the Elwes family - as well as related families - can be found within this collection primarily as a result of the work undertaken by Dudley Cary-Elwes between the 1860s and the 1880s. This material includes his notes, extracts from primary sources (parish registers, manuscripts held by companies & institutions, etc), press cuttings, correspondence with other genealogists, and the like. There are also a handful of seventeenth century and eighteenth century deeds he obtained, presumably because they include the name Elwes (or variant spelling of). Additionally, there is also a small unconnected amount of genealogical material (E(GB) 789-801) comprising of birth certificates and press cuttings. A pedigree of the family can be found in the VCH: Northamptonshire Families, ed. Oswald Barron (1906).

Amongst the miscellaneous material within the collection the following are of note. A small collection of booklets, pamphlets, lectures, etc regarding Roman Catholicism (E(GB) 1606-1617), 1865-1909. A number of programmes of concerts held at Chateau Valrose, France, in 1880 and 1881 (E(GB) 1629-1630). (Unfortunately there is no material within the collection relating to the career of George Elwes (d.1921), international tenor. The N.R.O. does, however, hold a copy of Winefride & Richard Elwes biography Gervase Elwes: The Story of his Life (Grayson & Grayson, 1935)). Lastly, there is a copy of John Speed's map of Nottinghamshire (E(GB) 1645).

Within this collection there are still ten boxes (c 4 cubic feet) of uncatalogued nineteenth century and twentieth century letters and papers of the estate agent - these are only available by advance notice. Related to this collection, but received from another source and by a different arrangement, are a number of family diaries (principally those of Alice Geraldine Cary Elwes) from the mid eighteenth century until the early twentieth century. A manuscript list is available at the N.R.O. Furthermore, a box list of the Rye of Culworth collection - comprising primarily of the papers of Rear-Admiral Peter Rye - is also available at the N.R.O. (Ellinor, daughter of Rear-Admiral Rye, married Cary Charles Elwes on 17 August 1826).

Following this introduction is a tabulated overview of the contents of this collection.

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<u>FH</u>	<u>c1250-1953</u>	Details
<u>FINCH HATTON (KIRBY)</u>		
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ZB 345 1918-1968

Papers relating to J.W. Anscomb's work as a railwayman at Woodford Halse

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<u>Indenture Mortgage (Demise) (1) Rt Hon Barnaby Earl of Thomond To (2) Rt Hon Charles Cokaine of Rushton, Viscount Cullen For 'certaine summe...</u>	
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<u>E(GB)/2</u>	<u>'3 June 1656'</u>
<u>Indenture Redemise For term of 499 years, 11 months Viscount Cullen To Earl of Thomond 'In pursuance of intent declared in --- Indenture' of...</u>	
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Indenture mortgage (1) Rt Hon Henry Lord O'Brian (2) George Cole of London, merchant Benjamin Portlock of Middle Temple, Gent. To (3) Henry...

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E(GB)/9

22 Apr 1675

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E(GB)/12

24 March 33 Chas II 1680 [1681]

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E(GB)/13/2

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E(GB)/14

24 March 35 Chas II 1682 [1683]

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Original Will of Henry, Earl of Thomond Declaring that honours, baronies and manors in Ireland have been lately settled on son's marriage and...

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- [E\(GB\)/15/2](#) [14 Oct 1738](#)
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- [E\(GB\)/19](#) [8 Feb 1744 \[1745\] 18 Geo II](#)
Copy of Decree Rt Hon William O'Brien, Earl of Inchiquin K C B Plt. Versus Robert French, Esquire Percy Wyndham O'Brien, Esq. Sir Wm Dudley...
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- [E\(GB\)/20](#) [2 Nov 1752](#)
Indenture Assignment of a Mortgage (1) Lucy de Lamerie widow of Paul de L. Goldsmith, of Westminster John Malliett of St Marylebone, Gent...
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- [E\(GB\)/21](#) [After 1667](#)
Plan of Paddock at Great Billing 36" x 15" planted by George Attwell in 1667 showing iron gates & layout of walks Memo. that this plan was given...
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- [E\(GB\)/22](#) [3 Sept 12 Geo III 1772](#)
Copy of Deed of Assignment (1) Rt Hon William, Earl of Inchiquin (2) Rt Hon Percy O'Brien, Earl of Thomond To (3) Rt Hon John, Earl of...
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- [E\(GB\)/23](#) [1778](#)

'An Act For Dividing, Allotting and Inclosing the Open and Common Fields, Common Pastures, Common meadows, Heath, and other Commonable Lands and...

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E(GB)/24

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E(GB)/25

12 April 18 Geo III 1778

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E(GB)/26

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Indenture Assignment and Conveyance (1) Rt Hon Lord Frederick Cavendish (2) Most Noble William Duke of Devonshire To (3) Robert Cary Elwes of...

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E(GB)/27

4 Oct 40 Geo III 1800

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[Details](#)

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