

SIR STAPLETON COTTON, 1st VISCOUNT COMBERMERE

A SUMMARY OF THE
HERALDRY

at

COMBERMERE
ABBHEY

8 Compiled by Peter A. Marshall,
Brooklands, Low Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7HA.
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INTRODUCTION and SUMMARY



HUGH DE MALBANC FROM 12TH CENTURY

COMBERMERE ABBEY ESTATE



COTTON FROM 16TH CENTURY

The Library at Combermere Abbey contains one of the most extensive displays of family heraldry to be found in a country house. The following pages describe the heraldry together with the details of the marriages of the Cotton family through a remarkable sixteen generations. This work is not intended to be a description of the building and neither is it a biography of the first Viscount Combermere who was responsible for the decoration of the library. However, many of the honours bestowed on this noble gentleman are commemorated by crests and shields both in the Abbey and in local churches.

The two long walls of the library contain on the coving 22 large shields commencing in the 12th century. Records are few and far between from that period (and spellings of names vary), but from the 15th century every generation of the family is shown. Despite not having access to the Internet or modern publications, the Viscount provided a very accurate summary of his ancestors, although some of the marriage dates do not agree with current research. The fascination of building up the genealogical table is enhanced by the occasional mysteries which come to light. For instance, Robert, father of the 1st Baronet, appears in published records to have been married twice – but here there are shields for these two spouses but with another shield between them for which there is no obvious connection other than to assume that he had in fact been married a total of three times.

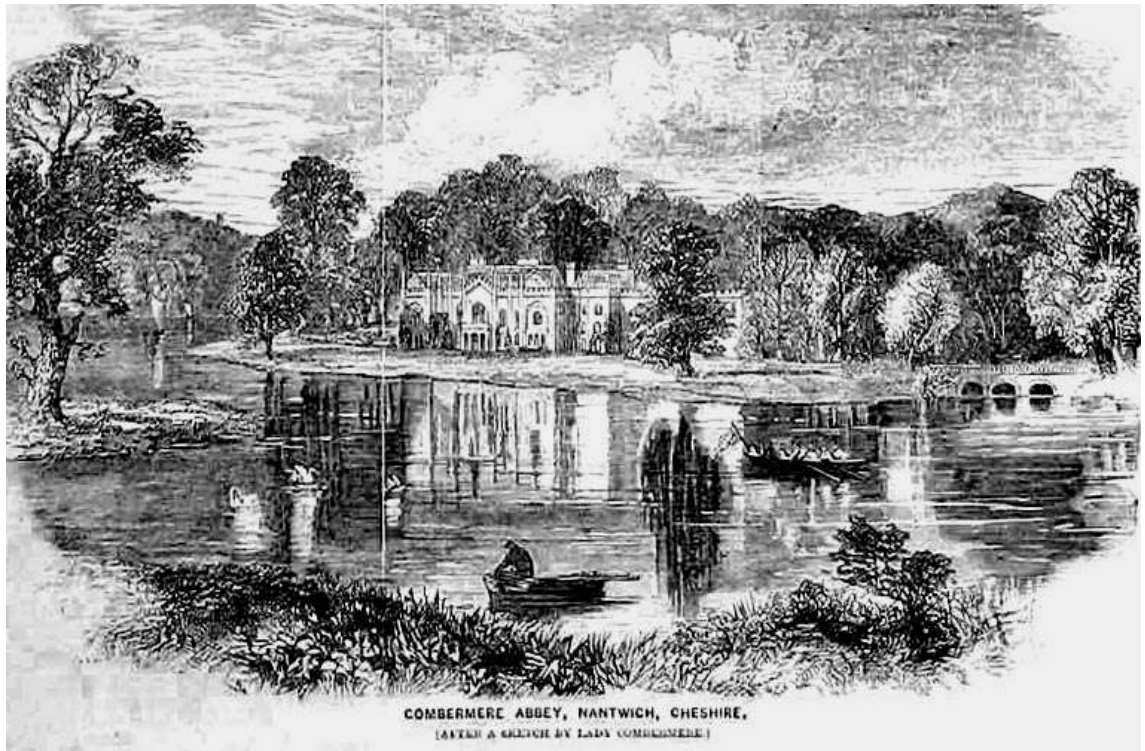
The shields must have been erected late in the 1830s, but another intrigue is that there was exactly room for the 3rd wife who married the Viscount in 1838 to have a shield included. On the ceiling, however, we see a monogram “C.C.” for his 2nd wife from whom he separated in 1830 and who died in 1837, but there is no similar decoration for her successor – nor indeed for her predecessor.

The screen wall contains one empty space which might have been intended for the marriage of his younger daughter, but this did not take place until 1853. However, an indistinct Victorian print does show a shield in this location. Her elder sister and other female relatives of the Viscount adorn the screen together with a multi-quartered shield erected a hundred or so years earlier. The smaller shields on the north wall relate to the landed gentry of the area, but some cannot be positively identified either because of similar shields used by different families or due to the inevitable discolourisation over the years..

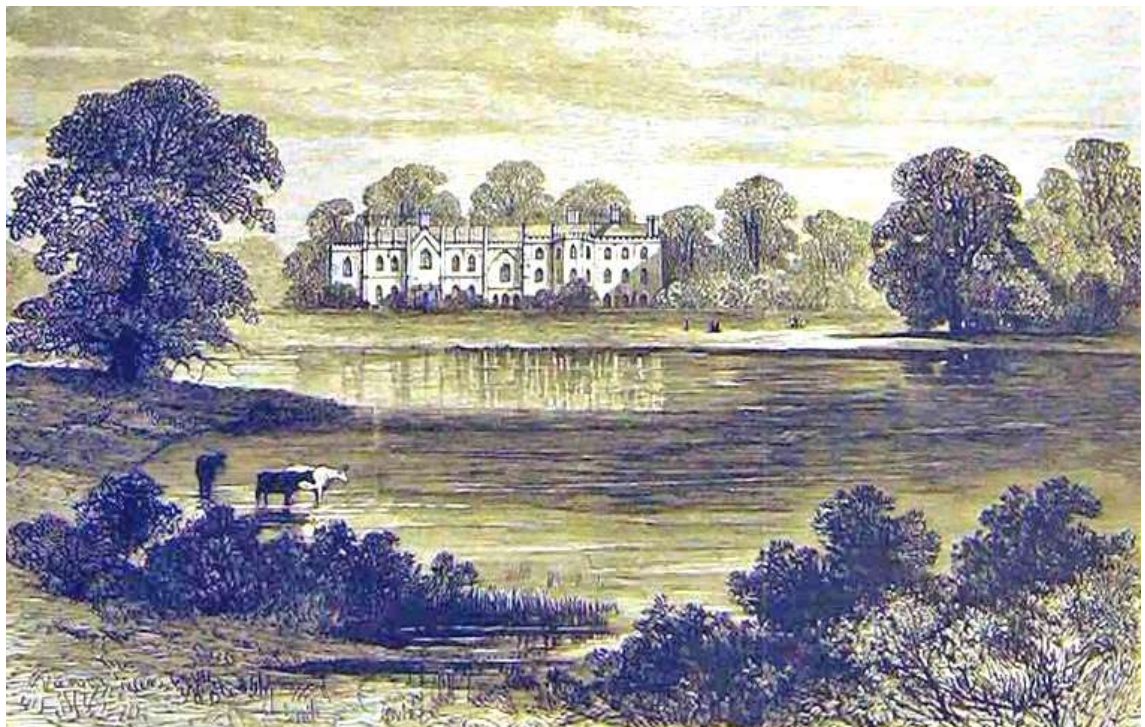
Memorials in local churches are also included and that for the Viscount in Wrenbury carries the quote “*The paths of glory lead but to the grave*”. Eventually they do, but for this great soldier, who was described as somewhat of a military dandy and who served in the army for 73 years and fought in 17 battles, they were very long paths indeed.

The quote on the monument is the final line of a verse from Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* – the full verse is quoted here as a final epitaph to his achievements – both heraldic and military:

*“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”*



Combermere Abbey sketched by Lady Combermere and published in February 1859 in the *Illustrated News of the World* together with a portrait of the Viscount.



Combermere Abbey, published in the *Illustrated News of the World* in 1881.



Combermere Abbey in about 1880.



Combermere Abbey in early 1900s.



Combermere Abbey on a postcard of 1911.



Combermere Abbey in 2006.

A (very) brief summary of the ownership of the estate.

An abbey on this site at Combermere was first recorded in 1133, being founded by Hugh de Malbanc. The Cistercians enjoyed the estate until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century, when it became the property of Sir George Cotton. It remained in the Cotton family, the subject of the heraldic display, until 1919, when it was purchased by Sir Kenneth Irwin Crossley, Bt.

Unfortunately, no further heraldry was added at that time, but, to complete the record (and in case a Crossley family shield ever comes to light), it would have been as follows:

Azure, a chevron between in chief two Tau crosses
and in base a hind statant, all Or,
in centre chief the Baronet's badge of the red hand of Ulster.
Crest: A hind's head Or holding in the mouth a Tau cross Azure.
Motto: Credo et amo. (*I believe and love.*)



Following descent through the Crossley family, Combermere Abbey is now in the hands of his great grand-daughter, Sarah Callander Beckett and her husband, Peter.

A major programme of renovation is in hand and a recent contribution to the comprehensive heraldry collection is a painting depicting

“THE ARMS OF THE FAMILY OF BECKETT
ACQUIRED IN THE HOLY WARS”.

Sable, semeé of cross crosslets fitchéé Or,
a fess between three boars' heads coupéé Or.
Crest: a boar's head coupéé erect Argent.

(Several branches of the family have different, but similar, arms.)

THE NORTH WALL OF THE LIBRARY VIEWED FROM THE MAIN ENTRANCE DOOR



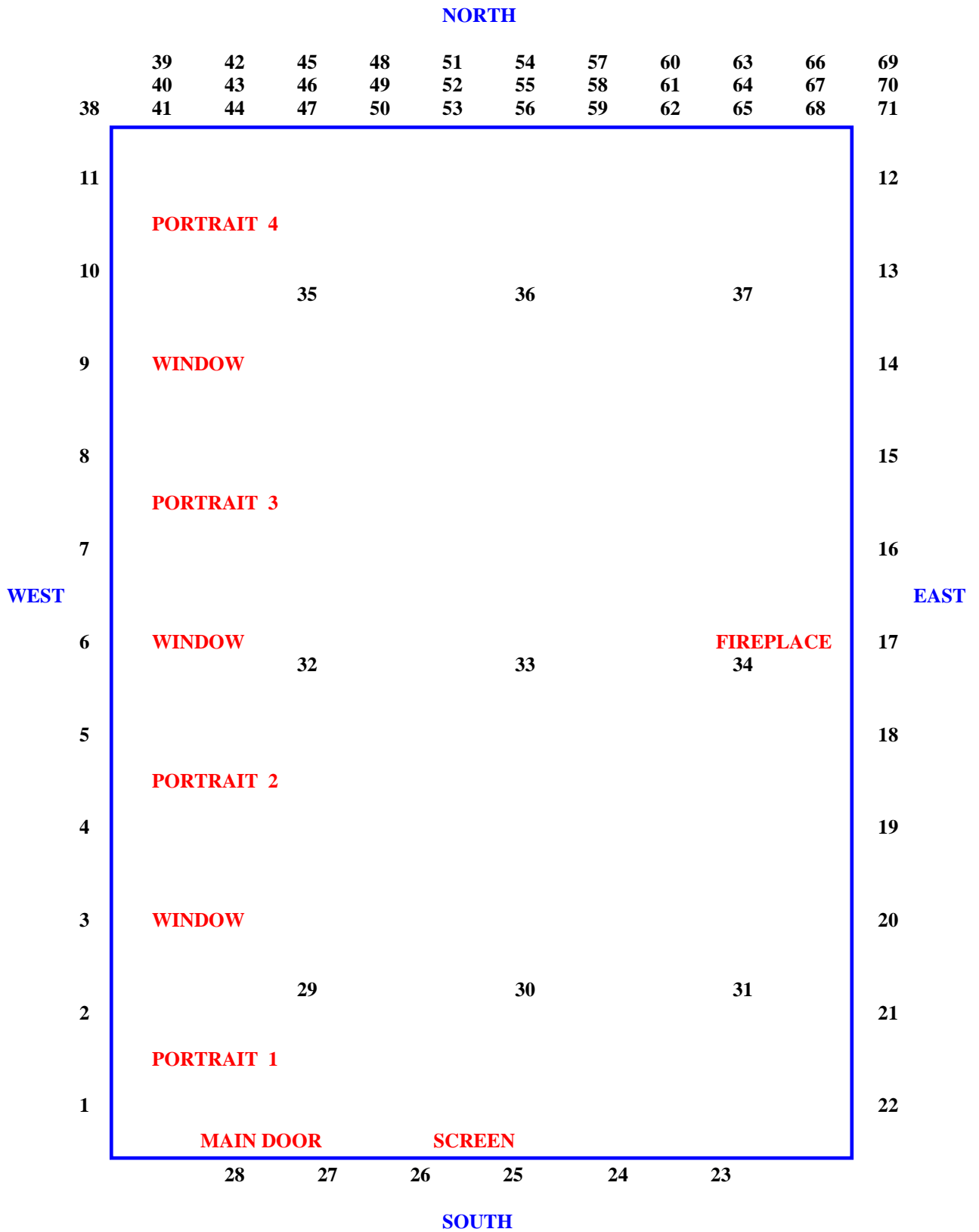
Commencing on the left shields on the west and east walls cover over six centuries of direct descent of the Cotton family. Heraldry on the north wall relates to many local and Welsh families, only a few of whom married the Cottons.

LOOKING BACK TO THE ENTRANCE AND SCREEN WITH THE FIREPLACE ON THE LEFT



Shields on the ceiling should be viewed from the main doorway end of the room, but strangely the crests in roundels are mounted to be seen from the other end of the room – and two of these are mirrored images.

LOCATION OF THE SHIELDS



N.B. The crests which appear in coloured roundels on the ceiling are also to be found as silhouettes around the walls. They do not however relate to any adjacent shields.

SHIELDS OF ANCESTORS ON
THE WEST WALL



(1) undated.
Azure, a chevron
between three hanks of cotton Argent.
(COTTON)

HUGH de COTON
of Coton, Co.Shropshire,
12th century.



(2) dated 1245.
COTTON
impaling
Azure, on a fess between
six cross-crosslets fitché Or
three escallops Sable.
(TITLEY)

Sir Hugh Cotton, son of (1),
married
Elizabeth, dau. of Hammond
Titley of Titley, Co.Chester.



(3) undated.
COTTON
impaling
Or, three bendlets Gules.
(HACKETT)

Not identified,
probably son of (2).



(4) undated.
COTTON
impaling
Quarterly Argent and Gules,
a cross patonce
counter-changed.
(HAYDON)

Hugh Cotton, son of (3?),
married
Isabel de Haydon (or Heyton).



(5) undated.
COTTON
impaling
Gules, crusileé of cross-crosslets fitchéé,
two lions passant Argent.
(ACTON)

Alan Cotton, son of (4),
married
Margaret de Acton.



(6) dated 1461.
COTTON
impaling
Or, three roses Gules
(YOUNG)

William Cotton, son of (5),
married
Agnes, dau. of William
Young of Cainton, Co.Chester.



(7) dated 1500.
COTTON
impaling
Gules, two bars Argent.
(MAINWARING)

John Cotton, son of (6),
married
Cecilia, dau. of Thomas
Mainwaring of Salop.



(8) dated 1545.
COTTON
impaling
Or, three piles in point Gules,
on a canton Argent a mullet
pierced Sable.
(ONGLEY or ONLEY)

Sir George Cotton, P.C., son of (7),
Chamberlain of the House of Prince Edward,
obtained Combermere at the Dissolution,
born 1505, died c1550,
married (Burke shows 1537)
Mary, dau. of John ONLEY
of Cateby, Co.Northants.



(9) dated 1570.
COTTON
impaling
Gules, two bars Argent.
(MAINWARING)

Richard Cotton, son of (8),
born 1539, died 1602,
married 1st
Mary (d1577), dau. of Sir Arthur
Mainwaring of Ightfield.



(10) dated 1596.
COTTON
impaling
Azure, a fess engrailed
between three whelk shells Or.
(SHELLEY)

Richard Cotton, as last,
married 2nd in 1578 (no shield shown)
Jane Suliard, who died 1596,
and married 3rd
Philippa, née Shelley,
relict of --- Dormer.



(11) dated 1600.
COTTON
impaling
Quarterly per pale dovetailed
Gules and Or.
(BROMLEY)

George Cotton, son of (9),
married
Mary, dau. of Sir George Bromley,
Chief Justice of Chester.

SHIELDS OF ANCESTORS ON
THE EAST WALL



(12) undated.
COTTON
impaling
Argent, a bend engrailed Azure
between two bucks' heads
cabossed Sable.
(NEEDHAM)

Thomas Cotton, son of (11),
married 1st
Frances Needham, dau. of
Viscount Kilmorey.



(13) dated 1625.
COTTON
impaling
Barry nebulee of six
Or and Azure.
(BLOUNT)

No marriage recorded,
but the position between
(12) and (14)
suggests an
additional marriage
for Thomas Cotton.



(14) dated 1630.
COTTON
impaling
Argent, a fess Gules between
three calves Sable.
(CALVELEY)

Thomas Cotton, son of (11),
married 2nd (or 3rd ?)
Elizabeth, dau. & co-heir of
Sir George Calveley
of Lea, Co.Chester.



(15) dated 1677.
COTTON (with Baronet's badge of Ulster)
impaling
Gules, a lion rampant
ducally crowned Or between
three mullets Argent.
(SALUSBURY)

For Sir Robert Cotton, M.P., son of (14),
created 1st Baronet 1677, d1712,
married
Hester, sister and heir of
Sir John Salusbury,
3rd Baronet of Llewenny.



(16) dated 1704.
COTTON
impaling
Sable, three
leopards rampant Argent*.
(LYNCH)
*now discoloured to Gules.

Sir Thomas Cotton, 2nd Bt., son of (15),
married 1689
Philadelphia, dau. and heir of
Sir Thomas Lynch,
Governor of Jamaica.



(17) dated 1730.
COTTON
impaling
Argent a fret Sable.
(TOLLEMARCHE)

Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, 3rd Bt.,
son of (16), born 1695, d.s.p. 1748,
married
Elizabeth, dau. of Lionel
Tollemarche,
2nd Earl of Dysart.



(18) dated 1740.
COTTON
impaling
Azure, a chevron between
three hanks of cotton Argent.
(COTTON)

Sir Lynch S. Cotton, 4th Bt., brother of (17),
married 1734
Elizabeth, dau. of Rowland
Cotton of Etwall, Co.Derby.
(A distant cousin)



(19) dated 1768.
COTTON
impaling
Argent, a lion rampant
Sable.
(STAPLETON)

Sir Robert S. Cotton, 5th Bt., M.P.,
son of (18), married 1767
Frances, dau and co-heir of
James Russell Stapleton.



(20) dated 1800.

COTTON
impaling

Qtrs. 1/4. Argent, six cross-crosslets
fitché Sable, on a chief Sable
two mullets Or pierced Gules.

Qtrs. 2/3. Azure, three pelicans preening Proper
quartering Gules two demi-belts with
buckles erect Argent, an honorary
Augmentation granted to Sir John Pelham
for capturing the King of France.
(CLINTON qtr. PELHAM)

For Sir Stapleton Cotton, 6th Bt.,
son of (19), born 1773, died 1865,
married 1st on 1.Jan1801

Lady Anna Maria Pelham-Clinton,
dau. of 3rd Duke of Newcastle.
She died in 1807 with no surviving issue.

Sir Stapleton Cotton was later
created Baron Combermere in 1814 and
Viscount Combermere of Bhurtpore in 1827.
He undertook the rebuilding of the Abbey
in 1830-40, which included
the extensive heraldry display
in the library.



(21) dated 1814.

COTTON (now with a medal in chief)
quartering STAPLETON
impaling

Sable, on a cross engrailed Or
five pellets, a border engrailed Or.
(GREVILLE)

For Baron Combermere,
married 2nd 1814

Caroline, dau. of William Greville.
She died 1837, leaving a male heir
from whom the present
peerage is descended.



(22) dated 1838.

COTTON (with a medal in chief)
quartering STAPLETON
in pretence

Sable, a bend between three
fleurs-de-lis Or, two in chief and one in base.
(GIBBINGS)

For Viscount Combermere,
married 3rd 1838

Mary Woolley, dau. and heir of
Robert Gibbings of Co.Cork.
The Viscount died in 1865
and his widow in 1889.

SOUTH WALL
SHIELDS OF FEMALE RELATIVES



(23) undated.
Ermine, on a chief Gules
a fleur-de-lis between
two boars' heads erect Or.
(TAYLOUR)
impaling
COTTON.

Sir Thomas Taylour, 1st Bt.,
married 1682
Anne, d1710, dau. of Sir Robert Cotton 1st Bt.

(Anne was a sister of the great grandfather
of the 1st Viscount Combermere.)



(25)EARLY SHIELD MISSING-
Possibly intended for
the 1st Viscount's younger daughter
which would have appeared as:
Argent, three bugle horns bendways Gules,
garnished and furnished Vert.
(HUNTER)
impaling
COTTON.

John Charles Frederick Hunter,
of Londonderry, married, 1853,
Meliora Emily Anna Maria Cotton.



(24) undated.
Qtr.1. Argent, on a bend Azure
three stags' heads cabossed Or.
(STANLEY)
Qtr.2. Or, on a chief indented Azure
three plates. (LATHOM)
Qtr.3. Gules, three legs in armour
joined in fess point Or.
(LORDSHIP of MAN)
Qtr.4. Chequy Or and Azure.
(WARREN)
Qtr.5. Gules, two lions passant
Argent. (STRANGE)
Qtr.6. Argent a fess and a
canton Gules. (WYDVILLE)
Qtr.7. Or a cross engrailed Sable.
(MOHUN)
Qtr.8. Azure, a lion rampant
Argent. (MONTALT)
impaling
COTTON.

Sir Edward Stanley, 3rd Earl of Derby,
(d1572) married before 1562,
Mary (d1580), dau. of
Sir George Cotton
who obtained
Combermere Abbey in the
16th century.

See no.31 for her 2nd marriage.

(Mary was a sister of the 5 times great
grandfather of the 1st Viscount
Combermere.)



(26) undated.
Or, a raven Sable, in dexter chief a Baronet's badge.
(CORBET)
impaling
COTTON.

Sir Corbet Corbet Bt., of Adderley Hall (d 1823), married Hester Salusbury, dau. of Sir Lynch Cotton, 4th Bt.

(Hester was an aunt of the 1st Viscount Combermere.)



(27) undated.
Argent, a bend engrailed Azure between two bucks' heads cabossed Sable.
(NEEDHAM)
impaling
COTTON.

Robert Needham, 11th Viscount Kilmorey, married 1792 Frances, dau. of Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, 5th Bt.

(Frances was a sister of the 1st Viscount Combermere.)



(28) undated.
Qtr.1. Sable, on a fess Argent between three lions passant Or, as many escallops Gules. (HILL)
Qtr.2. Per bend sinister Ermine and Ermines, a lion rampant Or. (TREVOR)
Qtr.3. Argent, a lion rampant Gules, on a chief Sable three escallops Argent. (RUSSELL)
Qtr.4. Gules, crusiléé Or, a saltire Argent. (WINDSOR)
impaling
COTTON.

(28) continued:
For Arthur Wills Blundell Sandys Turnbull Windsor Hill, 4th Marquess of Downshire, married 1837 Caroline Frances (d1893), eldest daughter of the 1st Viscount Combermere.

SHIELDS ON
THE CEILING



(29)
Or, a fess Gules between,
three calves Sable.
(CALVELEY)
Details as no.14.



(30)
COTTON
impaling
Or, three roses Gules.
(YOUNG)
Details as no.6.



(31)
Argent, three bars Azure
in chief three torteaux.
(GREY)
Quartering
i/iv. Or, a maunch Gules
(HASTINGS)
ii/iii. Barry of ten
Argent and Azure,
ten martlets Gules.
(GREY)

Mary Cotton (see no.24)
married 2nd Henry Grey,
6th Earl of Kent.



(32)
Or, a raven Sable.
(CORBET)
Details as no.26.



(33)
COTTON
impaling
Gules, two bars Or,
(MAINWARING)
Details as nos.7,9.
(Bars usually Argent.)



(34)
Argent, on a fess Azure
three stags' heads
cabossed Or.
(STANLEY)
Details and quarterings
as no.24.



(35)
Gules, two helmets
in profile Argent,
in base a garb Or.
(CHOLMONDELEY)

Local landowner, but
no marriage into
Cotton family noted.



(36)
COTTON
impaling
Or, three piles in point
Gules, on a canton
Argent a mullet
pierced Sable.
(ONLEY)

Details as no.8.



(37)
Argent, a fret Sable.
(TOLLEMARCHE)

Details as no.17.



MOTTO:
In utraque fortuna
paratus.
*(Prepared for either
good or bad fortune.)*
(COTTON)



CREST:
A falcon wings expanded P
Proper, belled Or, in
dexter claw a belt
Azure buckled Or.
(COTTON)



MOTTO:
Honor Deo.
(Honour be to God.)
THE MERCERS' COMPANY
(incorporated 1393,
the first of the Great Twelve
City Companies of London.)

CRESTS ON THE
CEILING IN COLOUR

AND ON THE WALL IN
SILHOUETTE FORM.



A cradle Azure
containing a child
swaddled Gules,
thereon a eagle
preying Proper.
STANLEY



A talbot Argent
spotted Sable
(here shown Or).
HAYDON



The head of an ass,
reined Gules,
on its neck a
crescent Or.
MAINWARING



A demi-griffin segreant
Sable beaked and
winged Or,
between the claws a
helmet Proper,
garnished Or.
CHOLMONDELEY



An elephant Argent
armed Or, on the back
a tower Or.
CORBET

(The elephant should
be heading to the left
and is here shown as
a mirror image.)

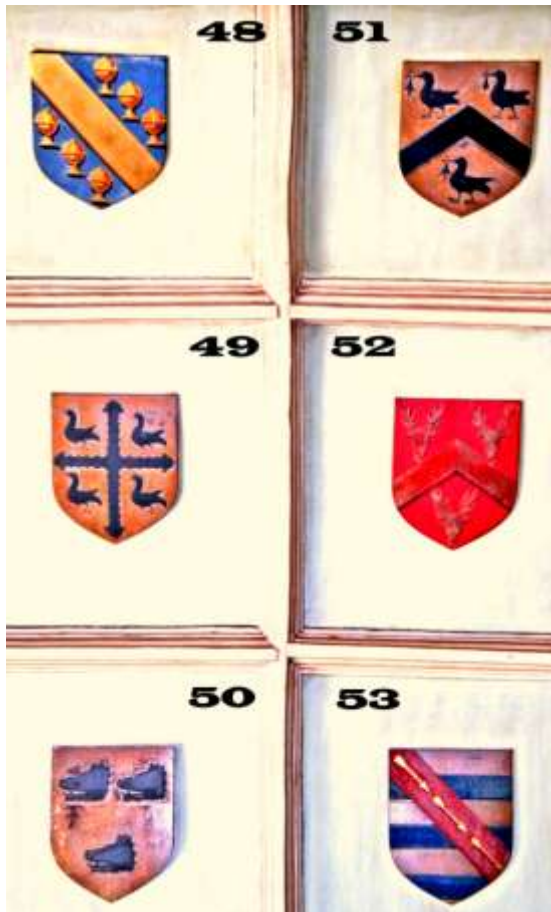


A falcon Proper, wings
expanded and
belled Or, in
dexter claw a belt
Azure, buckled Or.
COTTON

(The falcon is also facing
in the wrong direction.
How unfortunate for
the Cotton crest to be
incorrect!)

SHIELDS ON THE NORTH WALLVIEWED FROM LEFT TO RIGHTSHIELDS OF LOCAL FAMILIES

- In several instances the shields on this wall have suffered from discolourisation. This can inevitably result in an uncertain identification. Some of the blazons are attributable to more than one surname, but appear to relate to neighbours in Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales. Amendments to these attributions will be welcomed.
- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 38 | Gules, a man's head coupé at the neck Argent.
SODEN | 42 | Argent, a cross pointed engrailed Sable, between four Cornish choughs.
(as no.49 but charges at an angle on the shield).
EDWARDS, PARRY or WYNN |
| 39 | Sable, three spearheads Argent.
MORGAN | 43 | Gules, three lions passant Argent.
GWYNEDD of Anglesey |
| 40 | Vert, a stag passant Argent, attired Or.
FOWBERY | 44 | Gules, a lion rampant Argent crowned Or, between three crescents Or.
SALUSBURY |
| 41 | Gules, a chevron Or between three bezants.
ANNERS | 45 | Azure, on a bend Argent three chaplets Vert.
BLENCOW |
| | | 46 | Gules, a lion rampant, a border indented Or.
DEE |
| | | 47 | Azure, a lion passant Argent.
PARGRAVE |



- | | |
|--|--|
| 48 Azure, a bend between six covered cups Or.
BUTLER. | 54 Gules, a chevron between three lions rampant Or.
OWEN. |
| 49 Argent, a cross pointed engrailed Sable,
between four Cornish choughs.
EDWARDS, PARRY or WYNN | 55 Paly of ten Argent and Sable.
BURGATE. |
| 50 Argent, three boars' heads coupéd Azure.
EVANS | 56 Gules, three pallets Or, a border pellety Or.
LLOYD? |
| 51 Argent, a chevron Sable between three
Cornish choughs in the beak of each
an ermine spot.
LEWIS of Anglesey. | 57 Gules, a chevron Sable (Argent?) between
three helmets Argent.
CHOLMONDELEY |
| 52 Gules, a chevron between three stags' heads
coupéd Or.
GRIFFITHS of Penrhyn | 58 Vert, a stag rampant Proper attired Or.
PARKER of Cheshire |
| 53 Barry of six Argent and Azure, on a bend
Gules three arrows Or.
DONE | 59 Quarterly 1/4. Argent a bend Sable.
2/3. Gules a fret Or.
SPENCER. |



- 60 Blank.
- 61 Per bend sinister Ermine and Ermings, a lion rampant Or.
TREVOR.
- 62 Gules, a lion rampant Or.
PRICE
- 63 Gules, a chevron Or, a chief Ermine.
DAVIES or LLOYD.
- 64 Sable, a lion rampant Gules (Argent?).
If lion Argent, langued Gules,
VAUGHAN, ancestor of Salusbury.
- 65 Argent, a lion rampant Or between
five sprigs Vert.
JORWORTH of Llanywlyn.



- 66 Argent, a lion rampant Sable.
STAPLETON.
- 67 Argent, on a bend Azure three
stags' heads cabossed Or.
STANLEY.
- 68 Azure, an eagle wings displayed Argent.
COTTON of Ridware.
- 69 Blank.
- 70 Gules, a lion rampant between three
roses Argent.
FOWLE.
- 71 Vert, a chevron between three
wolves' heads Argent.
LLOYD of Shropshire.

THE FIREPLACE OVERMANTLE



This magnificent 16th century panel includes portraits of three monarchs King James 1st, Queen Elizabeth and King Henry VIII, together with the Royal Arms of the period:



The Royal arms from Henry IV, who in 1405 replaced France Ancient with the Modern version, continued through to Elizabeth I.

(Although Henry VIII became styled King of Ireland in 1542 the existing Royal Arms were not amended.)



Qtr.1/4. (Azure) three fleurs-de-lis (Or)
FRANCE MODERN
Qtr.2/3. (Gules) three lions passant guardant (Or).
ENGLAND
Within the Order of the Garter.
Supporters: Dexter a lion, sinister a dragon,
as adopted by Henry VIII.

In 1603 when James 6th of Scotland became James 1st of England, he brought with him the Scottish lion rampant. France/England were placed in quarters 1 & 4 and the opportunity was taken to include a suitable charge, namely a harp, for Ireland.

In addition there is the portrait of Richard Cotton which is dated 1579 and shows his age as 37:



Shield 1: Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent. COTTON
 Crest: A falcon wings expanded Proper belled Or the dexter claw holding a belt Azure buckled Or.
 Motto: In utraque fortuna paratus. (*Prepared for either good or bad fortune*).

Shield 2: Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent. COTTON
 impaling Qtr.1/4. Argent, two bars Gules. MAINWARING
 Qtr.2/3. Chequy Argent and Sable. BROOKE

Shield 3: Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent. COTTON
 impaling Qtr.1. Azure, a chief Ermine. SULIARD
 Qtr.2. Gules, a cross Argent. COBHAM?
 Qtr.3. Sable, three lions rampant Argent langued Gules. ENGLEYS
 Qtr.4. Gules, a lion rampant Or. ?

For Richard Cotton (1539-1602),
 son of Sir George Cotton (who obtained Combermere in the 16th century),
 who married 1st Mary (d1577) dau. of Sir Arthur Mainwaring. (see no.9)
 Richard Cotton married 2nd Jane Suliard, who died in 1596,
 and 3rd Philippa, neé Shelley. (see no.10)

ON THE FIRE SURROUND: Two crests and a monogram:



Crest: A falcon wings expanded Proper belled Or the dexter claw holding a belt Azure buckled Or.
 COTTON



“S. C.”
 surmounted by a
 Viscount’s coronet.



Out of a ducal coronet,
 a Saracen’s head coupé at
 the shoulders affronté
 wreathed at the temple
 STAPLETON

All for Sir Stapleton Cotton, 1st Viscount Combermere, who installed the heraldry in the Library.

THE SCREEN
(south wall)



The screen on the south wall is dated 1580, but it is dominated by a multiquartered heraldic panel which was inserted over 100 years later.

This represents the marital arms for Sir Robert Cotton, who was created a Baronet in 1677 and whose wife was Hester, the sister and heir of Sir John Salusbury, Bt., of Llewenny (see shield no.15).

Their marriage date is not recorded, but it would have been c1660.

The inclusion of the Baronet's Badge indicates that the panel is after 1677, but would have been prior to the Baronet's death in 1712.

The origin of this impressive number of quarters is explained on the next page, but the blazons are as follows:

Quarter 1.	Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent.	COTTON
Quarter 2.	Argent, a fess engrailed Sable between three mullets Gules.	COTTON ancient
Quarter 3.	Argent, a fess Gules between three calves Sable.	CALVELEY
Quarter 4.	Sable, on a chevron Argent between three cross crosslets Or, three cinquefoils Gules.	MOTTRAM
Quarter 5.	Argent, on a bend Sable nine annulets Or interlaced in threes.	HUBERK
Quarter 6.	Ermine, a fess Gules, a crescent Or for difference.	BARNAKE
Quarter 7.	Argent, on a saltire Sable five swans Argent.	BURGH
Quarter 8.	Sable, two hinds counter-trippant in fess Argent.	COTTINGHAM
Quarter 9.	Azure, a cutlass in bend Argent hilt and pommel Or, all within a border engrailed Or.	TATENHALL
Quarter 10.	Argent, on a mount Vert a hind lodged Gules.	HARTHILL
Quarter 11.	Sable, a chevron between three bulls' heads coupéd Argent.	BULKELEY
Quarter 12.	Gules, a chevron dancetée Ermine between three bugle horns Or.	COTGREVE
In pretence	Gules, a lion rampant ducally crowned Or, between three mullets Argent.	SALUSBURY

Stone above the front Entrance to the Abbey Arms on Library Screen



Although badly eroded, this is a replica of the multi-quartered shield on the screen in the library. It is interesting to compare this heraldry with a later, but inaccurate, memorial board in Wrenbury Church.

Heraldically, an heiress is a lady who has no brothers (or sons of deceased brothers) and she is entitled to pass down to her children the arms of her father – and any other previously inherited quarters.

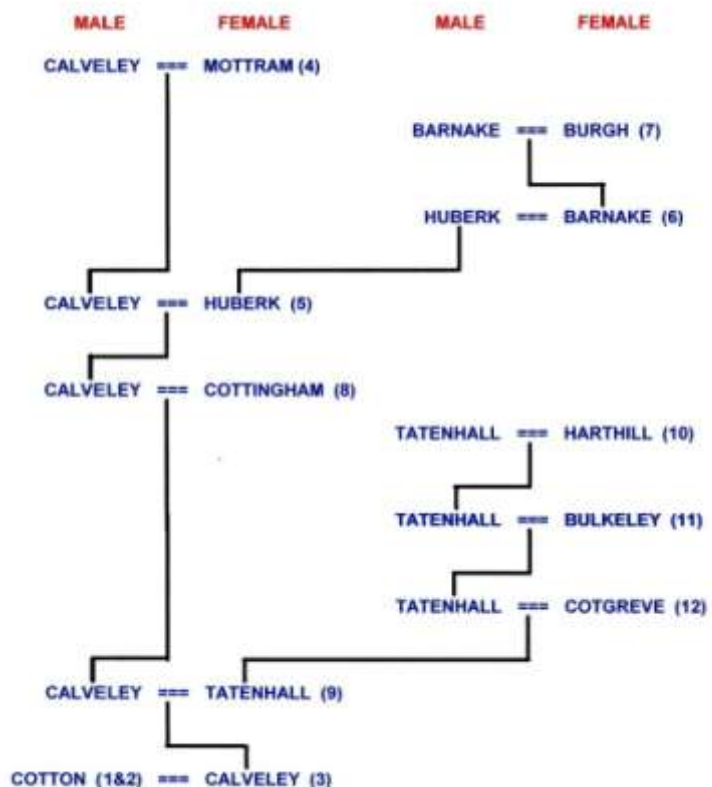
The only condition is that the link to the pronominal family must always be shown. Apart from the original Cotton arms, all of the inherited quarters on the shield for the 1st Baronet came to the Cotton family through the marriage of his father and Elizabeth Calveley (see shield no.14).

As this is such a perfect example of accumulated quarters, an abridged genealogical table for the Calveley family is included here. The purpose is to illustrate the effects of marriages to heiresses, so all others are omitted.

Position in quartered shield

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

THE ACCUMULATED QUARTERING OF THE CALVELEY FAMILY BY THE 17th CENTURY



On the back of the Library screen
Facing the main stairs.

The two late 16th century figures seen here are conveniently named.
Their connection with the later Cotton family is not recorded, but both families married into that of Salusbury.



Argent, two bars Sable.

CATHERINE BRERETON



Sable (usually Azure) a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent.

JENNETT COTTON

PAINTINGS ON THE WEST WALL



Portrait no.1



Per fess Or and Sable, in chief two roses Gules and in base a fleur-de-lis Or.

As stated on the painting, this represents Andreas von Gail, born 1526 and died 1587. A Councillor to Emperor Maximilian II, he was a German Judge and legal scholar who influenced the development of Dutch law procedure.

Portrait no.4

This portrait carries no indication of the identity of the gentleman portrayed.

There is no apparent heraldry, but could it be possible for a shield to have been overpainted in the curious red area above his left elbow – or is this a burning city?





Portrait no.2



Per fess Argent and barry wavy of six Sable and Or,
in chief three hatchets
one in pale and two in saltire.

Again, no identity is given and, so far,
the foreign heraldry has not been identified.

Portrait no.3



On a lozenge,
Per fess Argent and barry wavy of six Sable and Or,
in chief three hatchets
one in pale and two in saltire.
impaling
Sable, three roses(?) Argent.

This lady appears to have been married to the
gentleman in portrait no.2.

The marital arms on a lozenge indicate
she was by this time a widow.



Again the foreign arms have not yet been traced.

[THIS COMPLETES THE SURVEY OF THE HERALDRY IN THE LIBRARY.](#)

THE STABLES

The early 19th century stable block to the east of the Abbey has now been converted into luxury holiday apartments. However, it still boasts a total of three crests which, despite some erosion over the years, include some interesting and unusual mottoes.

The crest illustrated here is above the entrance to the stable yard and the other two are on the front of the adjoining houses on each side.



Crest beneath the coronet of a Viscount:

A falcon wings expanded (Proper) belled (Or) the dexter claw holding a belt (Azure) buckled (Or). COTTON
The crest is within a garter carrying the motto:

Tria Juncta In Uno. (Three joined in one).

ORDER OF THE BATH.

For the 1st Viscount Combermere, who was admitted to the Order of the Bath by King George III in 1815. This Order was first created in 1399 and was revived by King George I in 1725. It can be awarded to both Civil and Military recipients. The Military badge, which does not appear here, consists of a Maltese cross which has in the centre a rose, a thistle and a shamrock issuing from a sceptre between three Imperial crowns. This prestigious Order is included on the 1st Viscount's hatchment in Wrenbury Church (see section: "Churches").

Crest above the left hand dwelling:

Out of a ducal coronet (Or) a Saracen's head
couped at the shoulders affrontée
wreathed at the temple (Argent and Sable). STAPLETON

When Baron Combermere was raised to a Viscount in 1827 he added Stapleton to his surname, this being the maiden name of his heiress mother. (Full details appear on the Library pages.)

The crest is surrounded by the motto:
Nec Aspera Terrent. (Difficulties do not daunt.)
THE ORDER OF THE GUELPH



General Baron Combermere was admitted to this Order in 1817. It had been instituted in 1815 to commemorate the raising of Hanover into a Kingdom. Kings of England were also Kings of Hanover until the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, at which time the Order ceased.

The badge consists of the Hanoverian white horse "courant" (i.e. running) on a red background. It appears on the hatchment for the 1st Viscount in Wrenbury Church (see section: "Churches").



Crest above the right hand dwelling:

Upon a mount (Vert), a soldier of the 3rd Regiment of Light Dragoons mounted (all Proper) in the act of charging, and over this on an escroll (Azure) the word "SALAMANCA" in letters of gold.

This is the Crest of Augmentation awarded to Lt.-General Sir Stapleton Cotton after the Battle of Salamanca in 1812.

Surrounding this crest is the motto:
Valor e Lealdade. (*Valour and Loyalty.*)
THE ORDER OF THE TOWER AND THE SWORD

The Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Tower and the Sword was founded in Portugal in 1459. It was renewed in 1808 and Sir Stapleton Cotton was one of the recipients, receiving his membership between 1812 and 1829. The Order was further amended in 1832. The badge, which can be seen on the Viscount's hatchment in Wrenbury Church, includes a five-pointed star enclosed by an oak wreath, with, at the top, a tower and ring from which it can be suspended (see section: "Churches").

The three crests and mottoes described above were in due course joined by a fourth Order awarded to the 1st Viscount.

This does not appear on the stable block, presumably because his 1837 designs for the building did not anticipate that over 20 years later, in 1861, he would be one of the first members of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India.

Queen Victoria created this new Order which was earned by Princes or Chiefs of India or British subjects who gave important service to the Indian Empire – such as capturing the fort at Bhurtpore.

The badge was a cameo of the Queen, with the motto "Heaven's light is our Guide".

The Order ceased to be awarded in 1947 when India achieved independence.

THE LODGE



Quarterly Or and Gules,
a bendlet Sable,
overall a crosier erect.
Surmounted by
a mitre.

For the Cistercian Abbey of Combermere founded by Hugh de Malbanc in 1133, which remained here until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century.

The two shields on the Lodge house beside the main entrance to Combermere Abbey summarise the ownership of the estate over hundreds of years.

Both shields have the tinctures indicated by the universal system of hatching, which ensures that they are visualised in the correct colours.



Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent, in chief the Peninsula medal earned at Salamanca, in dexter chief the Baronet's badge of Ulster. Surmounted by a coronet (which shows only 6 of the 8 pearls due to an Earl). The medal consists of a gold cross with a clasp added for the Salamanca victory. For the 1st Viscount Combermere, whose ancestor, Sir George Cotton, received the estate from King Henry VIII in the 16th century.

THE OBELISK



The above view on a spring afternoon in 2006 was seen from the upper window looking south to the estate. The Abbey buildings are in the trees to the left of the lake.



The dedication informs us that the obelisk was erected in 1890 on the direction of his widow, Mary, Viscountess Combermere, who had died in the previous year.

Her late husband, who had died in 1865, is here credited with his impressive array of honours:

- G.C.B. Knight Grand Cross of the Bath
- K.S.I. Knight of the Star of India
- K.T.S. Knight of the Tower and Sword (Portugal)
- G.C.H. Knight Grand Cross of Hanover
- P.C. Privy Councillor

His shield, including the addition of the representation of the Salamanca medal and the Baronet's badge of Ulster, is seen above the Cotton family motto:

In utraque fortuna paratus.
(Prepared for either good or bad fortune.)



LOCAL CHURCHES: WRENBURY

The monument lists the Battles and regions in which the Field-Marshal served:

Flanders, 1793,
Cape of Good Hope,
Maclavelly,
Seringapatam,
Douro,
Talavera,
Busaco,
Leira,
Villa Garcia,
Fuentes d'Honor,
El Bodon,
Castrejon,
Salamanca,
Orthez,
Toulouse,
West Indies,
Bhurtapore, 1825.



“THE PATHS OF GLORY LEAD BUT TO THE GRAVE.”

The monument commemorating the 1st Viscount Combermere carries a portrait and a brief summary of his achievements, but no heraldry is included. This omission is however eclipsed by the impressive hatchment in this church.

WRENBURY

HATCHMENT: Sinister background white, indicating that the wife is still living.

Dexter roundel within a cirlet of the Order of the Bath, enclosed by two branches of laurel Proper issuing from a scroll in base bearing the words "Ich Dien" and encircled by the collar of the Order of the Bath with its pendant badge flanked on dexter and sinister respectively by the badges of a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order and of a Knight Grand Cross of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword.

Qtr.1/4. Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent and in chief a medal consisting of a cross formy Or suspended by a ribbon Gules fimbriated Azure.

COTTON with Augmentation.

Qtr.2/3. Argent, a lion rampant Sable.

STAPLETON

in fess point the Badge of Ulster.

Sinister roundel within a decorative cirlet, (N.B. His wife was not a member of the Order of the Bath so her arms could not appear inside its cirlet.)

The arms as in the dexter with, in pretence, Sable, a bend between three fleurs-de-lis Or.

GIBBINGS

A Viscount's coronet with three crests:

Dexter: A falcon wings expanded Proper belled Or holding in the dexter claw a belt Azure buckled Or. COTTON

Centre: On a mount Vert a soldier of the 3rd Regt. of Light Dragoons mounted all Proper in the act of charging and on a scroll Azure above the Word SALAMANCA in letters Or. CREST OF AUGMENTATION

Sinister: Out of a ducal coronet Or a Saracen's head couped at the shoulders affronté wreathed at the temples Argent and Sable.

STAPLETON

Motto: In utraque fortuna paratus.

Supporters: On either side a falcon wings expanded Proper murally collared Gules and belled Or holding a spear Proper from which flies a pennon, the dexter Azure semy of estoiles Or. the sinister Or and Gules

For Field-Marshal Sir Stapleton Stapleton-Cotton, Bt., created 1st Viscount Combermere, who married, as his 3rd wife, Mary Woolley, only daughter and heiress of Robert Gibbings, of Cork, and died 21st February, 1865. (See Library shield no.22.)

The Viscount, with his passion for family heraldry, might have been remembered by an even more involved shield: The 15 Cotton inherited quarters could have impaled the coats of the first two of his wives (one being subquartered) and with, as seen here, the coat of his 3rd wife in pretence.

WRENBURY

HATCHMENT: Dexter background white, indicating that the husband is still living.

Dexter roundel within a cirlet of the Order of the Bath, and encircled by the collar a Knight Grand Cross of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and with pendant badge flanked on dexter and sinister respectively by the badges of a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath and of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order.

Qtr.1/4. Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent and (on qtr.1 only) in chief a medal consisting of a cross formy Or suspended by a ribbon Gules fimbriated Azure.

COTTON with Augmentation.

Qtr.2/3. Argent, a lion rampant Sable.

STAPLETON

in centre chief the Badge of Ulster.

Sinister roundel within a decorative cirlet of laurel branches,

The arms as in the dexter impaling:

Sable, on a cross engrailed Or five roundels Sable, a border engrailed Or.

GREVILLE

A Viscountess's coronet.

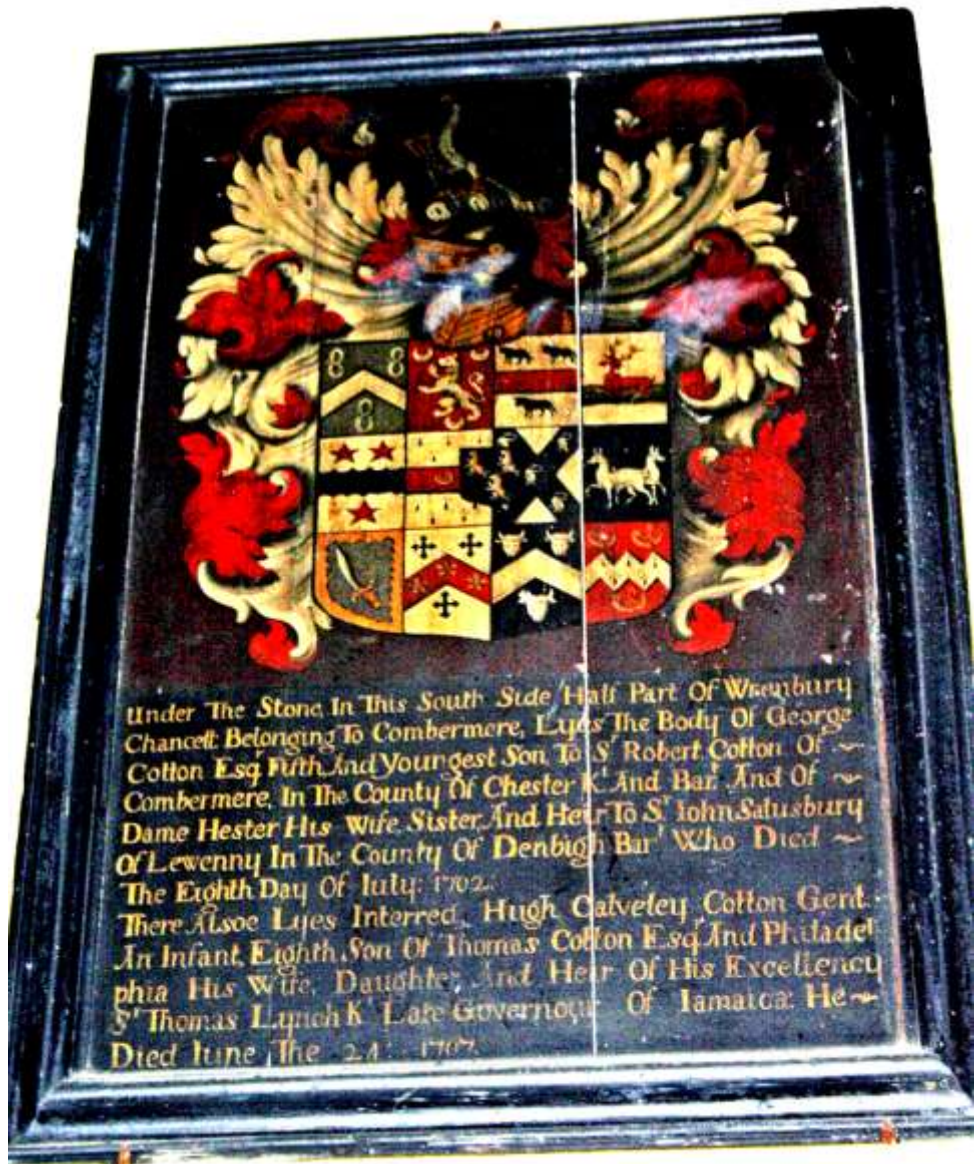
Motto: In utraque fortuna paratus.

Supporters: On either side a falcon wings expanded Proper murally collared Gules and belled Or holding a spear Proper from which flies a pennon, the dexter Azure semy of estoiles Or, the sinister Or and Gules.

For Caroline, daughter of William Fulke Greville, who married in 1814, as his second wife, Sir Stapleton Cotton, 1st Viscount Combermere, and died on 25th January 1837.

(See Library shield no.21.)

Strangely the Viscount's shield is surrounded here by the collar of the Order of the Tower and Sword and not by the British Order of the Bath.

WRENBURY

The memorial board in the chancel displays the marital arms of Thomas Cotton and his heiress wife, Philadelphia Lynch, in 1707, i.e. before he succeeded to the Baronetcy in 1710. (see Library shield no.16). When compared with the multiquartered panel of his father on the library screen (see page 24), the heiress mother of Thomas Cotton has correctly now been included, but several of the other coats appear in an incorrect order:

Quarter 1.	Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent.	COTTON
Quarter 2.	Gules, a lion rampant ducally crowned Or, between three mullets Argent.	SALUSBURY
Quarter 3.	Argent, a fess Gules between three calves Sable.	CALVELEY
Quarter 4.	Argent, on a mount Vert a hind lodged Gules.	HARTHILL
Quarter 5.	Argent, a fess engrailed Sable between three mullets Gules.	COTTON ancient
Quarter 6.	Ermine, a fess Gules, a crescent Or for difference.	BARNAKE
Quarter 7.	Argent, on a saltire Sable five swans Argent.	BURGH
Quarter 8.	Sable, two hinds counter-trippant in fess Argent.	COTTINGHAM
Quarter 9.	Azure, a cutlass in bend Argent hilt and pommel Or, all within a border engrailed Or.	TATENHALL
Quarter 10.	Argent, on a chevron Gules between three cross crosslets Sable, three cinquefoils Or. (Colours changed)	MOTTRAM
Quarter 11.	Sable, a chevron between three bulls' heads couped Argent.	BULKELEY
Quarter 12.	Gules, a chevron dancetée Ermine between three buglehorns Or.	COTGREVE
In pretence	Sable, three leopards rampant Argent.	LYNCH

WRENBURY

Amongst the selection of Cotton memorials in the Church, mostly carrying the Cotton shield only, there is one for Sir Lynch Cotton, who died in 1775, and his wife Dame Elizabeth who was the daughter of Rowland Cotton of Etwall.

As recorded on Library no.18, the marital shield includes the unusual arrangement of husband and wife with identical arms.



The wall mounted brass for the 2nd Viscount Combermere includes Cotton quartering Stapleton, together with the supporters which are seen on his father's hatchment.

There is, however, no impalement for his wife, Susan Alice, daughter of Sir George Sitwell of Renishaw,, who had died over 20 years earlier.

The brass was erected by the Viscount's daughters, Carolina Peel and Hester Paget.



Within this Church, the doors of some of the pew boxes carry shields – and the Cottons are in very good company!



Chetwode, Bt.,
Oakley, Staffs.



Earl of Rocksavage,
Cholmondeley Castle



Earl of Dysart,
Peckforton, Ches.



Viscount Kilmorey,
Shavington Hall



Starkey,
Wrenbury Hall



Cotton, Bt.,
Combermere Abbey



Wicksted
Nantwich

BURLEYDAM

The monument to the 1st Viscount Combermere in this Church includes a bust of him in his uniform. As in Wrenbury, this wall monument does not include any heraldry.

A monumental brass to the 3rd Viscount, Robert Wellington Cotton, who died in 1898, includes a shield, quartered Cotton and Stapleton, together with the three crests and supporters which appeared on the hatchment to his grandfather in Wrenbury Church.



This Church was built in 1769 by Sir Lynch Cotton as a private chapel. It became a separate parish in 1869.

NORTON-IN-HALES

Although not immediately connected with Combermere Abbey, this local monument to a member of the Cotton family has obvious heraldic interest.

This is in memory of Frances, daughter of Sir Robert Needham and wife of Sir Rowland Cotton. She died in 1606.

Sir Rowland was several generations down from Alan Cotton who married Margaret de Acton, (see Library shield no.5).

His brother, William, had a grandson, Rowland, who married Mary Sleigh of Etwall (see hatchment following) and their daughter Elizabeth Abigail married Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, as seen on Library shield no.18 and on the monument in Wrenbury Church.

There are several shields on the monument and they are summarised on the following example:



Qtr.1/4. Azure, three hanks of cotton
Argent. COTTON

Qtr.2/3. Or, an eagle's leg erased
Gules, on a chief Azure
a mullet between two roundels
Argent. TARBOCK

impaling

Qtr.1/4. Argent, a bend engrailed
Azure between two bucks' heads
cabossed Sable. NEEDHAM

Qtr.2/3. Quarterly per fess indented
Gules and Or. BROMLEY

In centre point a mullet Gules as a
mark of difference for a 2nd son.

NORTON-IN-HALES



Behind the figures there are arms for the families of Cotton and Needham (quartering Bromley), and above these the marital arms of Sir Rowland Cotton and Frances Needham.

ETWALL, Co. Derby

This hatchment is for Mary Sleigh, who married Rowland Cotton and died in 1761.
 Their daughter, Elizabeth Abigail, married Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton,
 as seen on Library shield no.18 and
 on the monument in Wrenbury Church.

The lozenge indicates that Mary was a widow when she died,
 but the heraldic arrangement of her marital arms on an escutcheon in the centre,
 surrounded by her late husband's accumulated quarterings is very unusual.

Qtr.1.	Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent.	COTTON
Qtr.2.	Argent, a fess engrailed Sable between three mullets Gules.	COTTON
Qtr.3.	Or, an eagle's leg erased Gules, on a chief Azure a mullet between two roundels Argent.	TARBOCK
Qtr.4.	Argent, a chevron Sable between three laurel leaves Vert, a chief Sable.	SHABERY
Qtr.5.	Gules, a chevron between three owls Or.	SLEIGH
Qtr.6.	Gules, three cross crosslets fitchée Sable, a chief Or.	ARDERN
Qtr.7.	Or, a fess between three cross crosslets fitchée Sable.	RYLEY
Qtr.8.	Or, a lion rampant Vert.	SUTTON
in pretence		
	Azure, a chevron between three hanks of cotton Argent.	COTTON
	impaling	
	Gules, a chevron between three owls Or.	SLEIGH

(The inclusion of Sleigh in quarter 5 indicates an earlier marriage with the Cotton family.)

LOCAL INN SIGNS

For a light hearted finish to this heraldic survey, we look at the Inn Signs in the area around Combermere Abbey.



THE BHURTPORE INN,
WRENBURY (side 1).



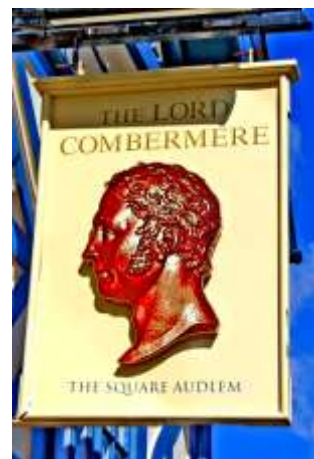
THE BHURTPORE INN,
WRENBURY (side 2).



THE COMBERMERE ARMS,
BURLEYDAM.



THE COTTON ARMS,
WRENBURY.



THE LORD COMBERMERE,
AUDLEM.

1st VISCOUNT COMBERMERE, Career summary:

Mr. STAPLETON COTTON

- 1773 Born (14 Nov.) at Llewenny Hall in Denbighshire, son of Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, 5th Bt. and Frances, daughter and co-heir of James Russell Stapleton.
1790 2nd Lieutenant.
1791 1st Lieutenant.
1794 Lieutenant Colonel in the 25th Light Dragoons.
1800 Colonel.
1801 Married 1 Jan. (1st wife) Lady Anna Maria Pelham-Clinton, dau. of Duke of Newcastle.
1805 Major-General.
1806 Member of Parliament for Newark (to 1814, despite being out of the country).
1807 Death of 1st wife (31 May) (no surviving issue).

SIR STAPLETON COTTON, 6th Baronet

- 1809 Succeeded to Baronetcy on death of father on 24 Aug.
1812 Lieutenant-General.
1812 (Battle of Salamanca).
1812/3 Granted an additional Crest as an Augmentation to his arms.
1812/1829 (date not identified) Knight of the Portugese Order of the Tower and the Sword.

(Sir Stapleton Cotton) BARON COMBERMERE of Combermere

- 1814 Created Baron Combermere of Combermere (17 May) and added the Salamanca medal to his arms, which were by then quartered with Stapleton..
1814 Married (18 Jun) 2nd wife, Caroline, dau. of William Fulke Greville.
1815 Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. (G.C.B.)
1816 Governor General of Barbados (to 1820).
1817 Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Guelphs. (G.C.H.)
1822 Commander of the Forces in Ireland (to 1825).
1825 General.
1825 Commander in Chief in India (until 1830).
1825 Capture of the fort at Bhurtpore.

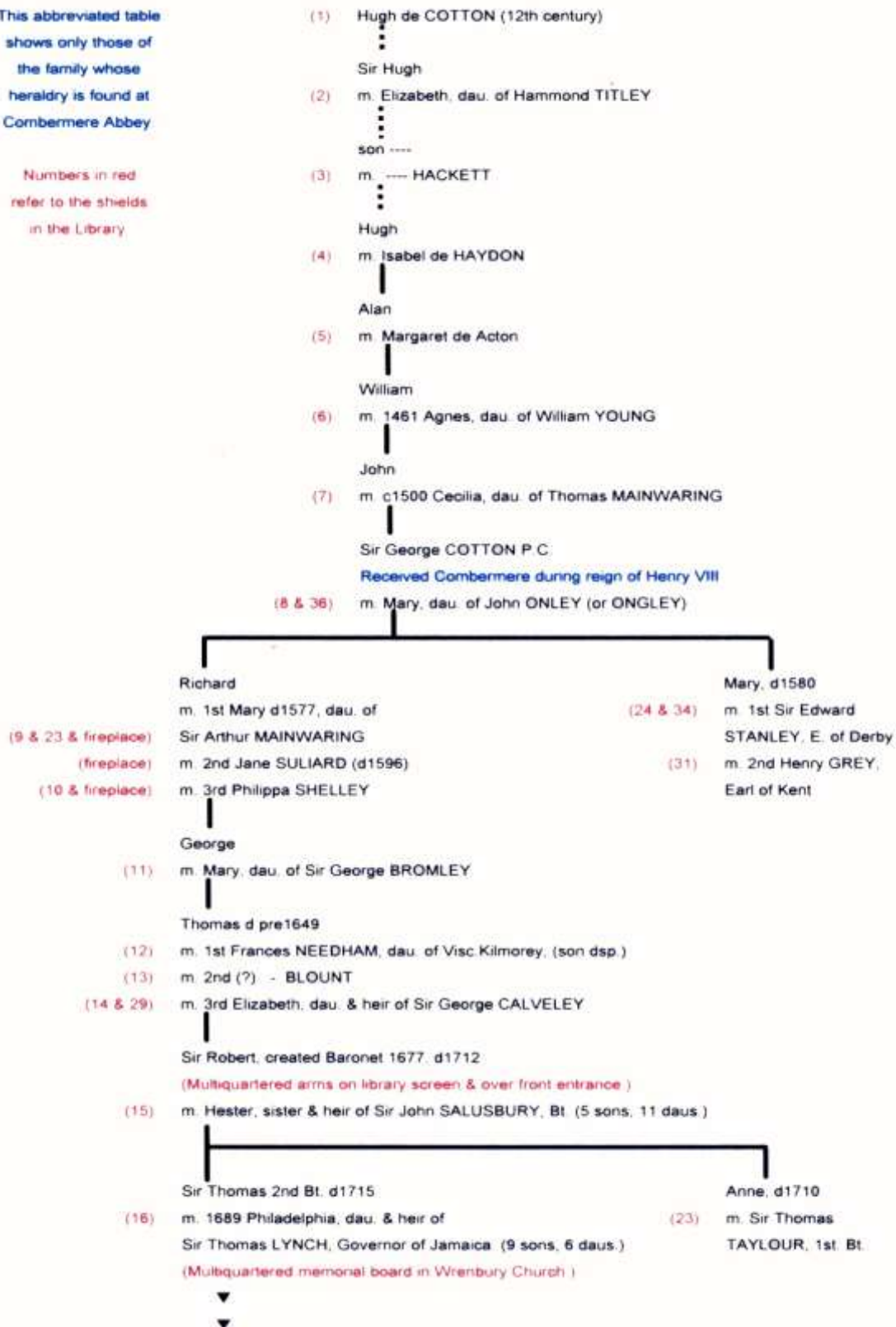
(Sir Stapleton Stapleton-Cotton) VISCOUNT COMBERMERE of Bhurtpore

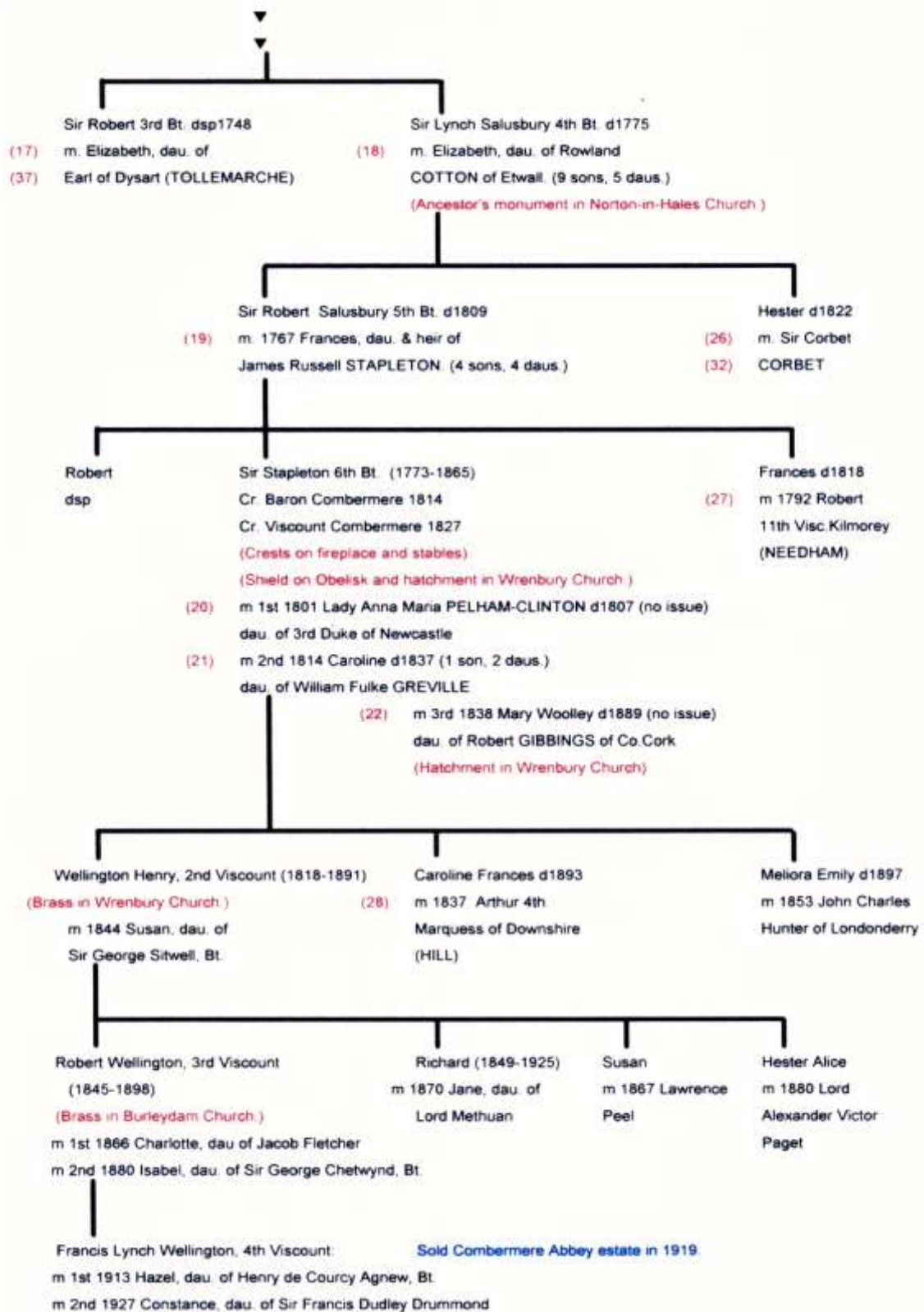
- 1827 Took the name of Stapleton in addition to that of Cotton.
1827 Created Viscount Combermere of Bhurtpore in the East Indies and of Combermere in Co. Chester.
1830 Returned from India and parted from his wife. (D.N.B. refers.)
1834 Privy Councillor (16 Dec.) (P.C.)
1837 Death of 2nd wife (25 Jan.) (leaving son, Wellington, and daughters, Caroline and Meliora).
1838 Married 2 Oct. (3rd wife) Mary, dau. of Robert Giddings of Co.Cork.
1852 Constable of the Tower of London (to 1865).
1855 Field-Marshal (2 Oct.).
1861 Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India. (G.C.S.I.)
1865 Death of 1st Viscount Combermere (21 Feb.) at Clifton, after 73 years in the Army and 17 battles.
1889 Death of 3rd wife (31 Aug.).

COTTON FAMILY PEDIGREE (1)

This abbreviated table shows only those of the family whose heraldry is found at Combermere Abbey.

Numbers in red refer to the shields in the Library.



COTTON FAMILY PEDIGREE (2)

MISCELLANEOUS COTTON MEMORIALS

- Norton-in-Hales In memory of Rowland Cotton of Etwall d1753 and his wife Mary Sleigh d1761, whose 2nd daughter married Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton.
- Wrenbury Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton d1748 and his wife Lady Elizabeth d1745.
- Stephen, brother of Robert Salusbury Cotton d1727 aged 27,
and Vere youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Cotton d1780 aged 17.
- Henry Calveley Cotton, 9th son of Sir Lynch S.Cotton d1877 aged 81,
also Matilda his wife, daughter of John Lockwood,
and Robert Salusbury Cotton, 8th son of the above d1824 aged 23,
also Rowland Edward Cotton, 4th son of the above d1823 in Jamaica aged 28.
- Staunton Harold Hatchment for Catherine, dau. of Rowland Cotton of Etwall, who married 1754, Robert, 6th Earl Ferrers and died 1786. (Cotton quartering Torbuck/ Shabery/ Sleigh).
- Etwall Hatchment probably for William Cotton of Etwall Hall, who died unmarried in 1819.
- Hatchment for Rev. Charles Evelyn Cotton of Etwall Hall, who married 1828 Frances Maria, daughter of Francis Bradshaw of Barton Hall, and died 1857.
- Tremeirchion Hatchment for John Salusbury of Bachegraig who married Hester Maria, daughter of Sir Robert Cotton, Bt. of Combermere, and died 1762.
- Easton (Suffolk) Hatchment for Dr. Ralph Cotton, M.D., of Great Yarmouth who died unmarried in 1705.

AN INFORMAL DESCRIPTION OF SOME HERALDIC TERMS USED IN THE TEXT

- Achievement.** The total heraldic display consisting of shield, supporters, crest, mantling and motto.
- Dexter/sinister.** In the description (“blazon”) of a shield left and right are described as they appear to its holder, so dexter is seen by everyone else on the left – and sinister on the right.
- Impalement.** The usual marital shield, where the arms of the husband are in the dexter half (left when looked at) and the wife has hers impaled adjoining them on the sinister side.
- In Pretence.** The arms for an heiress (see below) are placed on a small escutcheon “in pretence” in the centre of her husband’s shield. Both can then be handed down to their children (see quarterings).
- Heiress.** An heraldic heiress is a daughter who has no brothers, or deceased brothers who left children. Heiresses (all sisters are treated equally) can pass the family arms down to their offspring. A lady can become an heiress when other immediate branches of a family die without issue.
- Quarterings.** Children of an heiress can quarter the arms of father and mother and if either of these has already been quartered, a multiquartered shield develops. Not all inherited quarters have to be shown, but the line of inheritance of any particular quarter must appear in full.
- Added surname.** Sometimes a person who has inherited an estate etc. from a relative or from his wife’s family adds a second surname to his own, together with the corresponding arms. (Sir Stapleton Cotton became Sir Stapleton Stapleton-Cotton in 1827.)
- Lozenge.** Whilst arms are usually on a “shield shape”, those for a spinster or a widow are on a lozenge. (See portrait no.3 in the Library.)
- Families.** Arms registered for a particular surname can be used by the direct descendants of that family, but not automatically by other people who happen to have the same surname. Branches of a family frequently have shields which differ merely by an extra charge, or a change of colour.
- College of Arms.** All new grants, and the management and restriction of existing arms, are governed by the College which was founded in 1484. Even today there are many calls for new (and ever increasingly complicated) grants for Life Peers and businesses and for the many changes in local councils.
- Mark of difference.** In theory, no two people should have identical shields so each son should add a mark of difference, e.g. a label for 1st son, a crescent for 2nd, a mullet for 3rd, etc. On the death of the father the label of the eldest son disappears, but the other marks remain. Children of the next generation should theoretically have two marks, but this is seldom found. (The monument at Norton-in-Hales includes a red mullet (star) for a 2nd son, Sir Rowland Cotton.)
- Charges.** The geometric divisions, known as ordinaries, e.g. chevron, saltire, fess (a horizontal band), pale (a vertical column) or a chief (the top part of the shield) can be found carrying, or be located between, sundry charges, e.g. beasts, crescents, birds, etc. Generally these appear to be random, but they can relate to an ancestor’s occupation or a past event in the family’s history.
- Canting arms.** These are where the charges represent a visual pun on the name of the owner of the shield. (The Library includes Cotton hanks for Cotton, sea shells for Shelley, calves for Calveley – and a raven known locally as a “corbie” for Corbet.)
- Tinctures (colours).** The most common colours are red (gules), azure (blue), green (vert) and black (sable). There are two metals: gold (or) and silver (argent), which normally appear as yellow and white. No item tinctured as a metal should be placed on another metal, and no colour on another colour. This ensures a clearer distinction between them. Furs, such as ermine, can go anywhere.

HERALDIC TERMS continued

- Hatching. When arms are displayed carved in stone or wood, colours cannot be shown, so hatching is used for blue (horizontal lines), red (vertical lines), black (horizontal and vertical lines), green (lines at an angle from top left), purple (lines diagonally from top right).
For the metals, gold is shown as a series of dots and silver is left plain.
(As seen for Hugh de Malbanc and the Viscount at the Lodge.)
- Crests. Usually just one, but additional surnames or quarterings can bring along others.
- Supporters. Generally restricted to the Peerage, but some ancient families are authorised to display them.
- Mottoes. Optional, and not a part of an official grant of arms – except in Scotland – so any mottoes can be used by other families.
- Baronets. They display the Red Hand of Ulster on their shields.
- Augmentations. Special charges, quarterings or crests granted for meritorious service to King or Country.
(Sir Stapleton Cotton was granted a crest of augmentation in 1812 – and he added a charge of a medal on his shield at that time. A Pelham augmentation appears on Library shield no.20.)
- Ribbons of Orders. Impaled arms must not be shown within ribbons of Orders (Bath, Garter, etc.) as the wife is not a member in her own right. (As noted on the hatchments for the 1st Viscount and his wife in Wrenbury Church.)
- 2nd marriages. For normal use, only the arms of the “current” wife are included with those of the husband. However, on memorials or portraits which depict a life story all spouses can be shown either on a combined shield or as separate ones.
The same rules apply for wives who marry on more than one occasion.
- Hatchments. Portable memorials made usually of wood and canvas for display outside the home of the deceased for a period of mourning (6/12 months).
Many have survived by being taken later to a local church for safe keeping.
The background of that part of the shield relating to the deceased is painted black and that of a survivor is white. No writing appears on a hatchment – just the heraldry.
(See hatchments in Wrenbury Church.)
- Memorial boards. Not to be confused with hatchments, these are painted on wood and give a description of the deceased and his family, usually together with the applicable heraldry.
(See board in Wrenbury Church.)
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