

# **A short history of the Gill ancestors of Mary Gill**

## **Introduction**

What follows is not mentioned to be a complete history of the Gill family. There is much scope for further research, particularly into related families.

To my knowledge there have been three Gill pedigrees published. The only one of note is that enrolled in the College of Arms and contained within *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* Vol 2 1876 page 26. It includes the marriage between John Ginn and Mary Gill.

The object of my research has been to go through the various links of this pedigree, check them in so far as I can and to add what biographical detail I am able to.

## **The first GILL**

All sources agree that the Gill family came from Cambridgeshire. There were Gills in southern Cambridgeshire (north of Royston) from at least 1270. However the first man who can be directly linked into the Hertfordshire family is a Richard Gill who is credited with being the father of the first Gill of note.

Richard Gill is virtually unknown save for his name. He is mentioned in a deed of 1483 which mentioned his son as a party and that, sadly, is about it. It is (in my view at least) possible that this Richard was not the father but the brother of John below, but that is another story.

## **John Gill of Buckland in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire**

Very little is known about this man. He certainly owned a good deal of land in Cambridgeshire.

He married Joan the daughter of William Horne\* (see below) of Buckland in Herts. Some say the guy was Sir William Horne but this seems unproven.

The couple had twelve children six sons and six daughters. There was reputedly a monumental brass at Buckland to the couple but I think it now gone. John Gill died in January 1499/1500.

His will (National Archives) mentions land but little cash. He mentions both sons Richard and William in his will, the latter claimed to be the eldest son.

*\*The Horne family are very old in the area. They were related to families that held land in the area from the 1300s and we know that a Horne farmed the manor of Buckland in 1421 . The family held Horne Manor in Buckland of their own right*

## **William Gill of Buckland**

The college of Arms pedigree states this William as the next heir, but, in my view, it could just as easily have been his brother Richard – I suspect nobody is sure.

We know that John (below) had a brother Leonard. A Richard Gill of Buckland (dying c 1502) left a will which I have read (PCC) and in it he mentions his sons Richard, John and Leonard. My suspicion is that HE was the next heir and not the William mentioned here, but we will stick to what the college of arms pedigree says.

In any event, the heir, whether Richard or William is said to have married a daughter of Leonard Hyde of Throcking, hence the son Leonard Gill. This obviously seems certain as Leonard became a family name.

We do not have a death entry for William, but if it was Richard then obviously we know the guy died in 1502 or so.

*\*Hyde of Throcking – the Hyde family went back a fair way in Throcking. In 1395 or so the Manor of Throcking was granted to William Hyde, Citizen and Grocer of London. In 1437 he and his wife Joyce had the advowson (right to appoint the Vicar). In 1460 the manor was held by George Hyde and his widow Agnes appointed the Vicar in 1472. In 1486 Robert Hyde had the manor from whom it descended to Leonard. Eventually, some of the Hydies were knighted, but they disposed of the manor in about 1630. No memorials seem to be known*

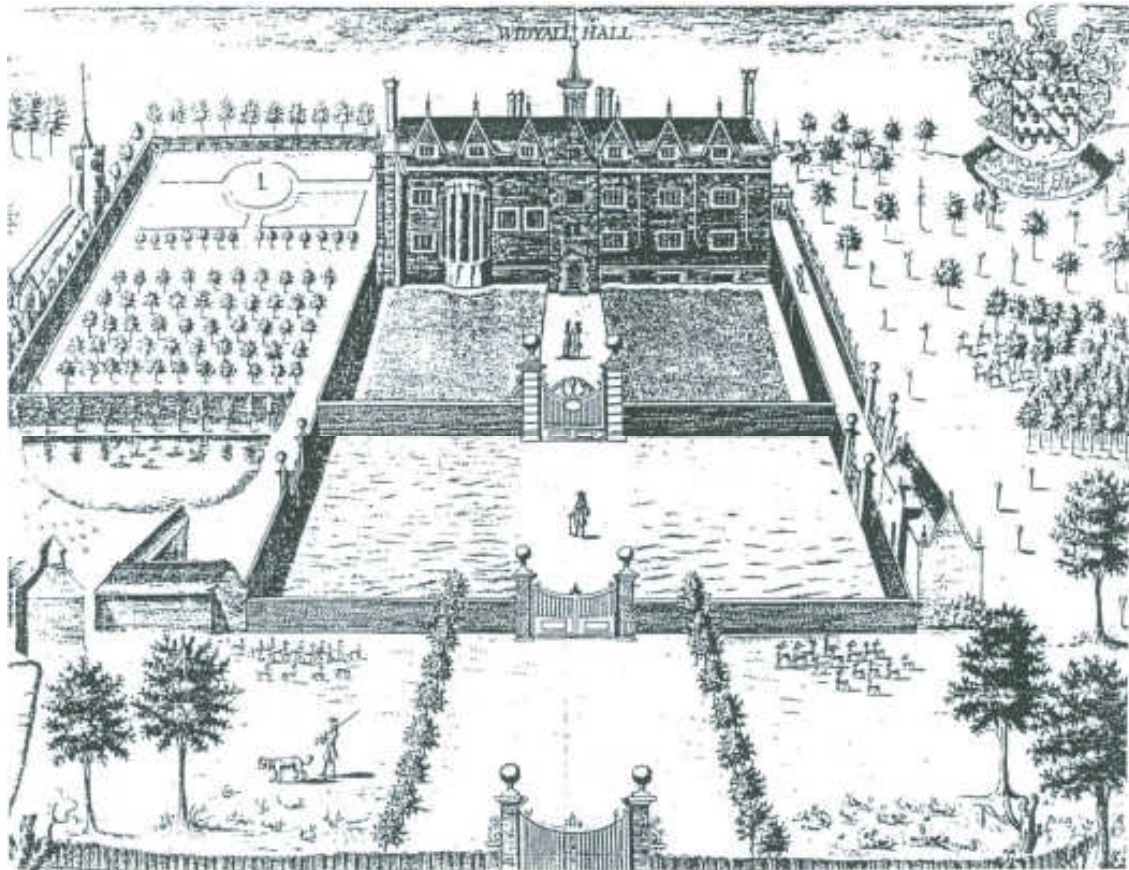
## **John Gill of Buckland & Wyddial**

John Gill was his father's heir. He held minor government/civil service posts during the reign of Henry the 8<sup>th</sup>.

In 1508 he married Margaret Cannon or Canon. She was the daughter of George Cannon of Cambridgeshire. She was also his heiress, and thus a good match for John.

In 1528, George Cannon and John Gill bought the manor of Wyddial, including Wyddial Hall. George Cannon died in 1534 and Wyddial Hall passed to the Gill family. In 1535, John Gill bought the manor of Bandons in Anstey.

I enclose a couple of illustrations of Wyddial Hall. The engraving shows the original Hall of John Gill's day (which burned down) and the photograph shows the Hall as it was rebuilt, effectively rebuilt on the same site and plan.



John Gill died on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1546. A brass was commissioned to commemorate him, his wife and their formidable 13 children. Ironically, Margaret is not buried with John, she remarried a John Wrengham in 1547 and is said to have died in 1580 at Swanton Morley.

The inscription on the memorial reads

*Of ye (your ) charite praye for the soule of John Gill Esquyer late Lorde of this towne and patron of the same who departed this worlde the XV day of Marche the XXXV11 yr of the raynee of oure Soverayne Lorde Kyng Henry the Eight on whose soule thy have mercy*

The shield in the memorial shows the arms of Gill quartered with those of Cannon.

In his will (PCC) John Gill mentions his father in law George Cannon and his brother Leonard Gill, a scholar at Cambridge. He also mentions the manor of Bandons at

Anstey which he left to his wife for life. Amongst many personal belongings, is mention of his “velvet jacket of tawny” which was left to son George.



*\* Cannon of Wyddial – The Cannon family were from Cambridgeshire. George Cannon, like all good catholics of his time was greatly concerned with his soul Although he did not buy a half-share in the manor of Wyddial until 1528, he spent a lot of money on the church there in the following six years. Much of Wyddial Church was built with Geogre Cannon,s money. The North Chapel (in his day “St George’s Chapel”) was wholly due to him. It was completed in 1532 and in his will of 1534 George requested he be buried there. This was granted and in his will (PCC) George provided that a priest, four clerks (lesser clerics) and four children of the parish should say prayers for his soul for the next twenty years (to see him safely through Purgatory. A brass, somewhat mutilated, identifies today where George was buried in St George’s Chapel, Wyddial.*

## **George Gill of Wyddial**

Son and heir of his father. Held, and probably improved Wyddial Hall.

In 1535 he married Gertrude Perient, daughter and coheir of Sir John Perient of Hatfield and the couple proceeded to have seven children who survived infancy, including three sons.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 1545 Gertrude died at Wyddial. George remarried Ann Whethill, daughter of a Robert Whethill of Calais (we still held it then). Ann gave George at least four more children.

Save the above, I know nothing of George. He died on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1568, he was 58. He has a surviving brass at Wyddial Church, the inscription reads:

*Under this stone was buried George Gyll Escuyer being Lorde of this town which had II wyves be whom he had XIII children and dyed the 29<sup>th</sup> day of October the 58<sup>th</sup> yere of his age In the yere of or Lorde God 1568*

The shield shows the arms of Gill quartered with those of Perient. Nothing is further known of Ann, she was alive in 1568.

In his will (PCC) George mentions much land in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. There is no mention of son Edward that I can see, although may likely have already given him a lease of Bandons in Anstey.

As well as Wyddial Hall, George also had a town house in London (he may well have attended Court on occasion). If his daughter Ann's bequest is typical then he was pretty well off as he left her 300 marks (£200)

*\*Perient – see Appendix*

### ***Edward Gill of Anstey and “Littlecourt” in Buntingford***

One of the younger sons of his father. In 1557/8, in his teens, Edward Gill matriculated and went up to St John's College, Cambridge. He obtained his BA in 1561/2 and was admitted as a Barrister (Middle Temple) in 1564/5.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 1574 he married Margaret Brograve, widow of Henry Brograve of Buntingford. Margaret's maiden name was Campion being the daughter of Thomas Campion of Essex.

At some point in his life Edward acquired a lease of the Manor of Bandons in Anstey, likely from his father or his brother George of Wyddial Hall. He also acquired his own coat of arms, derivative from the Wyddial family and illustrated in a number of County histories of Hertfordshire.

One of Edward's elder brothers, John, who was High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1574, had built a large house at Buntingford called "Littlecourt" and for some reason Edward is also associated with that house, referred to as "Edward Gill of Littlecourt" in some documents.

Both Edward and Margaret were not so young when they married and only had the two surviving children – Thomas and Edward.

Margaret Gill died in February 1605. In 1607, in London, Edward remarried a Barbara Fludd (nee Bradbury). She was a widow who had already buried two husbands, both knights. They had no children.

Edward Gill was buried May 1616. Barbara had once again lost a husband, she died in 1618.

In his will (PCC) Edward left his eldest son, Thomas, the sum of £800. Thomas died unmarried in 1625. Edward was left the lease of the manor of Bandons with "divers years yet to come".

The rest of the belongings, mainly the silver plate, went to Barbara to be disposed of at her death to the two sons.

*Campion – the Campion family deserve some research. The College of arms pedigree states that Margaret came from the Campions of Essex, which would appear to be the Witham family.*

*The Dictionary of National Biography links the Campions of Witham with 1. Thomas Campion the Poet and Musician at Queen Elizabeth's court and 2. The Edmund Campion the fervent catholic who was hung, drawn and quartered by the same Elizabeth for trying to convert the English back to popery at the time of the Spanish Armada.*

*Interestingly, the book "Anstey-a Hertfordshire Parish" at Hertfordshire Record Office claims that Thomas Campion, the poet and musician, was an Anstey Campion. Now I originally thought this was rubbish, but it does seem to be true – Campion's biographer Vivian claims the same and the "New Grove Dictionary of Musicians" also backs the Anstey claim. So it seems likely that the Anstey and Witham Campions were the same family and Edward came to know Margaret through the link*





This is a portrait of George Gill of Wyddial Hall in 1578. This would appear to be Edward Gill of Anstey and Littlecourt's eldest brother



## **Edward Gill of Anstey**

He married Mary Smartfoot widow of Richard Smartfoot of Puckeridge – her maiden name was Mitchell. Mary was the daughter of Edward Mitchell of Standon.

The couple had five recorded children, including three sons – the eldest of these being Edward (below).

Edward lived at Bandons all his life. From what I can deduce this was not some grand Hall but a manor house farm, Bandons being a small manor, and the house may survive. I have seen a photograph but been unable to add it to this note.

Edward died in October 1642. Mary died in November 1675, she was 90.

Edward's will perhaps reflects the diminishing financial clout of this branch of the Gill family. By his time two others of the Gill family were knighted.

In the will, he leaves his daughter Susan £100, his son George £250 should he live to be 23 and his wife inherited the lease of Bandons for life, then to Edward jnr.

Edward the heir inherited the "star of diamonds" and "34 golden buttons" old Edward was obviously a bit of a dandy.

*Mitchell of Standon – the family have not been researched*

## **Edward Gill of Anstey**

Again, held Bandons all his life, or at least I assume so.

In 1631, then aged seventeen, Edward entered Trinity College, Cambridge – he never completed his degree – not unusual at this time.

In 1638 he married Ann Swann, daughter of Robert Swann of Cambridgeshire. The couple married in Barkway Church.

The couple had just two daughters, Ann (1639) and Mary (1641) then Ann snr seems to have died in childbirth. She is buried at Barkway.

Edward remarried Lucy Bolnest of Great Hornead by whom Edward proceeded to have five more children.

A major shock likely struck Edward in 1651 when the Gills of Littlecourt sold up and moved to the West Country. One of them became an MP down there. I have wondered whether Edward lost the lease of Bandons when they moved. The reason I ask is that the Victoria County History of Hertfordshire is vague as to what happened to Bandons at this time, Edward does not seem to have left a will and the family seem to have suffered a catastrophic loss of fortunes in the 1640s and 1650s. We will probably never know – the point deserves further research.

In any event, Edward Gill died in December 1658, he was 44. Lucy lived on until 1664 – she thus oversaw the marriage of Mary Gill to John Ginn.

Lucy has little money and does not seem to have held Bandons Manor House after Edward died. My theory is that the family were poor and that Lucy was only too happy to marry off one of her stepdaughters to the offspring of a declining Yeoman family.

There is one final point of note – the College of Arms pedigree has John Ginn and Mary Gill marrying in November 1662, if that were true Mary would have been pregnant. It is not true, the couple married in November 1661, the entry is in two church registers, both in Anstey and Buntingford Chapel and there is no doubt of the marriage, as Mary is referred to as “Miss Mary Gill”

*Swann of Cambridgeshire – this family seem to link to the Swann family of Foxton in Cambridgeshire (see “The Common Stream” by Rowland Parker) which would appear to confirm the link*