

Sir Hugh Brawne—Vintner

Branch ?

Janet Few

We recently became aware of Hugh Brawne, who was knighted on 23 July 1603, one of the first knights created by the James I, in a ceremony that took place two days before the new king's coronation. It is always difficult to find out about these very early members of the family and we cannot be certain that he or his family ever used the Braund spelling of the name but his interesting story is worth telling. Maybe one day we will track down one of his many male descendants and we can see if there is a genetic link with the Braunds using DNA tests.

The first firm evidence for Hugh is his marriage to Frances Gurney on 21 July 1590 at St Michael's Crooked Lane, London. This church no longer exists but it was sited in Candlewick ward. After Hugh's time, the parish was notorious for being the first where a case of plague was identified in 1665. The church was destroyed the following year in the Great Fire of London but was subsequently rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren, only to be demolished in 1831 during redevelopment of the area, in order to create a wider access to London Bridge. This was probably not Hugh's first marriage and it seems that his first wife was called Margery. A Hugh Browne married Margery Gurney in Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire in 1575 and this is almost certainly his first marriage, with his second wife being related to the first. There were known to be Braunds in Buckinghamshire in the 1300s. The will of Jane Fenn née Gurney mentions all Hugh's children. Some are described as nieces and nephews and others as cousins, suggesting that Hugh's two wives were cousins.

Some websites give Hugh's date of birth as c. 1537 but this is probably a guess. Hugh is described as a citizen and vintner of Farringdon without, in London. *A New History of London Including Westminster and Southwark*, published by R Baldwin, London, (1773), describes the ward, or district, as follows:- *"This large ward forms the western extremity of the city of London; and is bounded on the east by the ward of Farringdon-within, the precinct of the late priory of St. Bartholomew near Smithfield, and the ward of Aldersgate; on the*

north, by the Charter-house, the parish of St. John's Clerkenwell, and part of St. Andrew's parish without the freedom; on the west by High-Holborn, and St. Clement's parish in the Strand; and on the south by the river Thames." The area includes modern day Fleet Street.

Hugh's inn was The Greyhound in Fleet Street, which is mentioned several times in Samuel Peyps' diaries, although the Brawnes were no longer in residence by then. It was believed to have been on the south side of Fleet Street, near Salisbury Court; it too fell victim to the Great Fire of London. In 1591, Hugh was elected sheriff and he became an alderman of London in 1599. The following year he was responsible for having the north aisle of St. Mary's Newington, where his monument is situated, built. Hugh also held property outside London. He is described as being 'of Poole Hall', in Sutton Coldfield. From 1606, he held the Manor of Alvescot or Alscot on the Gloucestershire-Warwickshire borders. In 1607, he bought the neighbouring manor of Preston on Stour. This estate passed to his son, Richard, who was Lord of the Manor from 1615 until 1650. It was Richard who had the bridge built over the River Stour. It is thought that the family may have been Parliamentarian, as the



Theodosia Brawne
From www.wikigallery.org

estate remained in the family after the English Civil War, passing to Richard's daughter Lucy and her husband Thomas Marriet.

Although his elaborate tombstone suggests that Hugh's two wives gave him four sons and five daughters, his will mentions a sixth daughter. It seems that all four sons and at least three daughters were the offspring of Hugh's second wife, Frances. The eldest son, Richard, who inherited the title and Alscot manor, was born about 1596 and studied law at the Inner Temple. In 1622, Richard married Theodosia Dixon at St Martin in the Fields, London and they had several children there before moving to Kings Langley in Hertfordshire. There is a portrait of Theodosia,

described as the second wife of Richard, that has survived but no record of a first wife has been found. Richard's sons died without issue, so his daughters inherited his estate.

Hugh's second son, John, is recorded as being the rector of Saintbury, Gloucestershire and marrying Elizabeth Bishop. Two sons were baptised in Saintbury but not until the 1650s, suggesting that maybe two generations have been confused here.

Hugh's third son, Edward, appears to have married Jane. The youngest of Hugh's sons was, Edmund, who also studied at the Inner Temple and married Elizabeth Mountney in Hatfield, Hertfordshire in 1632.

Hugh's daughters are harder to trace. Nothing is known about Frances or Mary. Ann, who was almost certainly the daughter of Margery, married Evan Jones. Ursula, another daughter of the first marriage, was married to James Ambler by 1614. It is likely that they lived in Brimsfield, Herefordshire before moving to Saintbury. Hugh's daughter Jane married George Smyth of Shropshire.

Margaret, Hugh's fourth daughter, is the best known; she married Francis Layton of Rawden in Yorkshire. Francis was one of the Master Yeomen of the Tower of London's Jewel House. Margaret is notorious for her jewelled jacket, which still survives. More can be found about the jacket at <http://stalkingthebellepoque.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/historys-runwaymargaret-layton-jacket.html>. Both the jacket and the painting are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is thought that Margaret was lady in waiting to Queen Anne of Denmark, the wife of James I. Margaret died in 1641 and her husband, Francis, was heavily fined for his Royalist sympathies in the English Civil War.

Hugh died in 1614/5 and his lengthy will mentions his children. He left them sums of money, bedding and table linen each. For example: bedsteads, feather beds, taffeta quilts, pillow covers, towels, damask table cloths, cupboard cloths and napkins.

So is Hugh related to the Braunds of Devon? The short answer is that we don't know. Hugh does feature as a common forename in the early generations of Braund family trees but no

information survives that can help us to identify Hugh the vintner, whose birth probably predates the start of baptism registers.