

Admiral Henry Killigrew. Politics, Marriage and Family life in St Albans.

A previous paper¹ described the naval career of Admiral Henry Killigrew, summarised in the first section of this one. It is followed by his retirement to St Albans, with its political intrigues. The final part draws on his letters and those of his wife before and after marriage, providing a sketch of contemporary life.

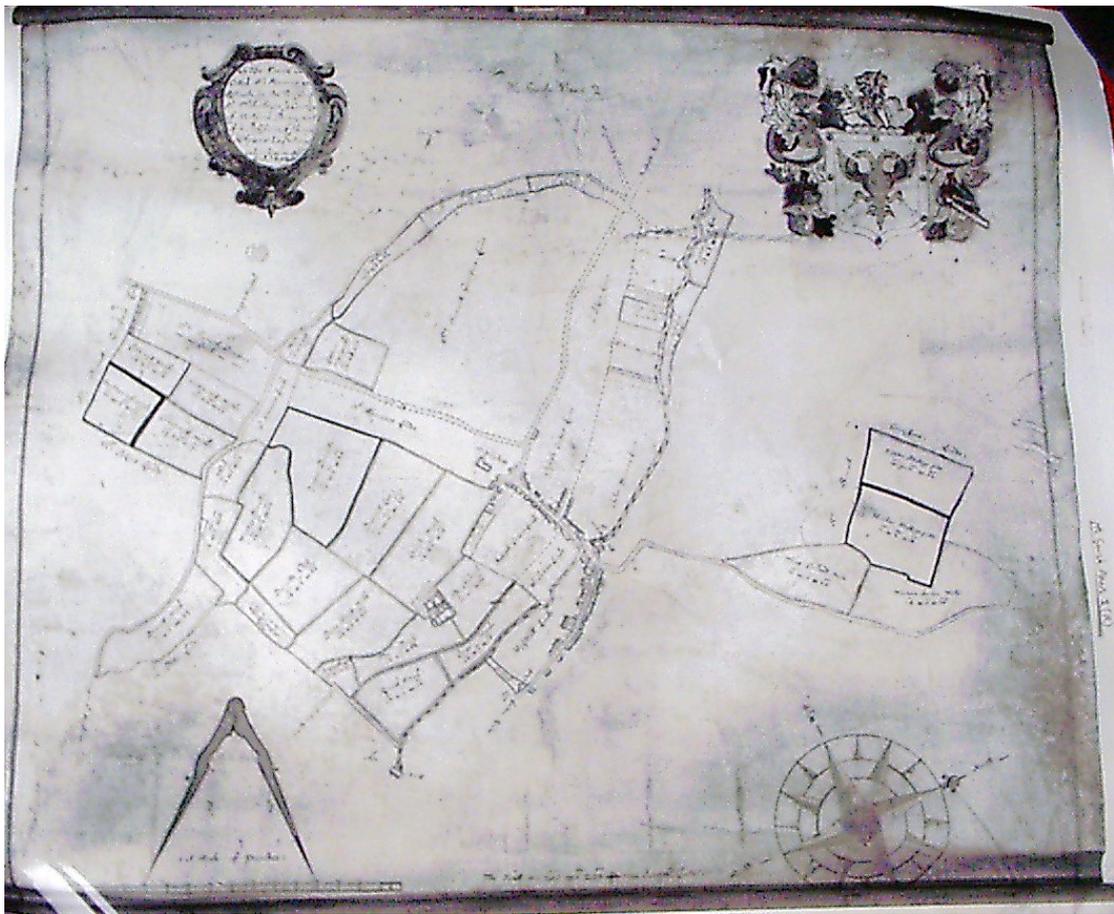
Introduction

A popular and courageous officer, Henry enjoyed the confidence of Charles II during the Dutch and French wars, serving on over fifteen ships. He was also entrusted with the transport of Queen Catherine's monetary dowry to England, as well as the management of a diplomatic mission to the Barbary Coast pirates. However, as outlined in the paper quoted, he was later charged with others for the loss of the Smyrna Convoy, to that date the most valuable merchant fleet to leave these shores, although the fault lay with his superior officers. Later, contrary weather and the poor state of his ships resulted in his being unable to take part in the Battle of Beachy Head (1690) in which the French were victorious. This was after the accession of William and Mary and, as a known Jacobite sympathizer and because of his alleged involvement in the Convoy incident, he was arraigned before Parliament on a charge of 'notorious mismanagement of the fleet'. The chief witness against him was later prosecuted for perjury.

Although exonerated by the House of Lords, this was the end of his naval career and he was never to have a command after 1694. In 1700 he petitioned for the half-pay due back to 1694 and, although being granted a pension of £700 in 1702, 'in consideration of his good service at sea', he did not receive the arrears from 1694-1697. He was also unsuccessful in obtaining the prize-money his brother, Capt James Killigrew, should have been awarded posthumously after the sea battle in which James died.

Retirement to St Albans

In 1686 Henry had purchased a sizeable area of land from Sir John Cotton², the copyhold having passed through the Court Baron of Sir Samuel Grimston³. The property, collectively known as St Jermain's, included what is now Verulamium Park. He would have been familiar with the area as his father had been rector of St Helen's, Wheathampstead, and, more particularly, through his brother-in-law, John Lambe, the next incumbent, who was his agent for the transaction. The conveyance is complemented by a finely illustrated map from the Gough collection at the Bodleian Library⁴, dated 1692, and described as "The Farme called St Jerminsbeing part of the possessions of Henry Killigrew (*sic*)..."



St Germain's Farm 1692
© Bodleian Library, Univ. of Oxford

In 1691, he was described as "of St Germain's" when he bought his residence, St Julian's, from a John Ellis for £6600.⁵ For part of this he apparently took out a loan via a mortgage from a Dame Martha Bowyer, Katherine Windham and Sir John Copley⁶ and others? Before the widespread use of banks and the establishment of Friendly Societies this was a common way of raising cash as well as a means of investing money by those with some to spare.

St Julian's replaced a house pulled down in 1649 and stood opposite the demolished Hospital of the same name. The house was "to the South of the Barn", on Watling St and now (2010) the site of Tithe Barn Close. At the same time, the avowdson of St Stephen's was conveyed to Henry. So by the end of the 17th Century, Henry was established as a considerable landowner in the Town and, in 1702, an appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant of the County was confirmed.

Henry and the Political Scene

Although lengthy, this section is important, in that it is devoted to the part played by religious beliefs, as well as politics, in national and local government and forms the background to, and account of, Henry's short time as MP in the turbulent atmosphere of St Albans, over 100 years before the more familiar loss of franchise in 1850.

His brother-in-law, Thomas Jervoise, an Oxford graduate and lawyer of London, had the controlling interest in the constituency of Stockbridge, Hampshire, a notoriously corrupt 'rotten borough'. Thomas was MP for Stockbridge (1691) and

Hampshire (1698-1702 & 1705–1710) and it was through Thomas's influence that Henry was one of its two MPs from 1702-1705. About this time he was considering standing for St Albans, which meant entering much choppier waters.

In 1704, Tory and High Church members of the House of Commons brought forward a proposal to "tack" an Occasional Conformity Bill onto the Land Tax Bill (1704). The former measure was aimed at those Dissenters who qualified as members of the Church of England merely by attending service once a year. This compromise with their principles enabled them to hold public office and so stand for Parliament. The Bill proposed fining any person for every day that he continued to hold such an office after resorting to 'a Conventicle, Assembly or Meeting'.

The tacking stratagem was a ruse to overcome the resistance of the Whig majority in the Lords to the Bill. This assault on the authority of the Upper House, and the means being attempted, resulted in a rift between High Church and moderate Tory members and the attempt failed. However, the dispute had repercussions in many constituencies, the reselection of some candidates depending on whether they were Tackers or Non-Tackers. Henry voted against the Tack while MP for Stockbridge In St Albans, which returned two members to Parliament, the period from 1680 through the first decade of the 1700s was a time of political and municipal upheaval.

The convoluted story is described in detail in *The History of Parliament*.⁷ The trouble was initiated in the 1680s by rivalry between the Grimston and Churchill interests. A main point of contention in the town was the attempted manipulation of the franchise by the Mayor, John Selioke, and his followers. This involved the introduction into the electorate of High Church, non-resident, honorary freeman, who then had the vote. However, the 90s were relatively peaceful, with George Churchill and Samuel Grimston, representing the town in Parliament. The death of Grimston in 1700 disturbed the uneasy equilibrium and brought to the fore the continuing splits in the Corporation.

Apart from domestic issues, these divisions essentially concerned, on one side, the Tory/High Church faction, supported by the Churchills and comprising John Selioke, and his group, of which a prominent member, John Gape Jnr., stood for the vacant Parliamentary seat (George Churchill remained the leading MP until 1705). On the other side were the Dissenters, a strong element in the town, including Joshua Lomax, the alternative candidate.

It was into this arena that Henry hoped to step, in the 1701 election, encouraged by Churchill. As a result of justifiable accusations of bribery on both sides, it was expected that Gape would be excluded. Henry wrote to Thomas Jervoise that he was amazed that "Mr Gape was touched with bribery [since Henry was in sympathy with his group] whereas Lomax was free ...", although he later learned that Lomax was also guilty. Lomax was returned, but a Parliamentary elections committee annulled his election, which raised Henry's hopes of candidature. Rather surprisingly, Gape was not banned from standing again and, in a repeat poll, took the seat.

The defeat of Lomax led to more assertive action on the part of the High Church party in the Corporation. Again, the accusations of malpractice, suspensions of aldermen, prosecutions, even of the ex-mayor, are portrayed in the *History of Parliament*. Petitions and counter-petitions reached even the Attorney-General. A remarkable act of defiance was ex-Mayor Seabrooke's refusal to hand over the Town Plate at the end of his year of office.

In May 1704, as the time of the next election approached, Henry wrote to Thomas, who had promoted his candidature at Stockbridge again. After expressing thanks, he wrote,

“ *I have now a fair prospecte to gett in att St Albans wch place I much Desire to gett in att, the matters their are much changed since ould Gape [John Gape snr] is deadI must be shure if you aprove of my standing att both places (as you did before) and thatt I may be chosen att St Albans relinquish the other itt will be favor to me and I hope no disservice.to your interest and the Burrow of stockbridge*”

[This is quoted as an example of Henry’s prose style, although a couple of more obscure phrases are omitted. Most of the future extracts are ‘translations’].

It was possible at that time to stand for two constituencies and, if elected at both, to choose the more favoured one. In this case, Henry prefers St Albans to the safe seat of Stockbridge and, with his raised hopes, apologises for the possibility of having to concentrate on the former. He signs off, as in other letters, with the sentence, “We hope your fireside is well”, a homely alternative for ‘family’.. In August of the same year, Henry wrote to Thomas saying that he had publicly declared his intention to stand at St Albans and could not avoid being present there on election day as his friends were “making their best efforts”. He went on to apologise, after Thomas had gone to so much trouble at Stockbridge, suggesting that the latter was a “man of so much good nature to suffer me by giving me encouragement that you have nobody to thank but yourself”, which one feels could have been more tactfully expressed.

The candidates for the 1705 election were George Churchill, Gape (the two sitting members) and Killigrew. Up to this point, the Duke of Marlborough had handed his ‘interest’ (local patronage and followers) to his brother George, while his wife, Sarah, had refrained from getting involved. However, the disclosure that Gape had voted for the Tack, combined with his Toryism, galvanized Sarah into entering the fray with her usual vigour.

On April 17th, she wrote from St James’s,

“Having heard that Mr John Tombes [steward at the Marlborough Sandridge estate] has an interest in the Town of St Albans I give you the trouble of this to desire you will speak to him from me to use in promoting Mr Killigrew’s election as well as my brother’s [brother-in-law, George]”. She went on to proclaim that, *“the Duke of Marlborough would recommend [it] if hee were here”*.

She then went down to their residence in the town, Holywell House, to use her personal influence, suggesting that her friendship with Queen Anne rendered her especially authorised to express the latter’s opinions and that the Tackers were in danger of damaging the State. In spite of her invocation of such a distinguished name, she succeeded in arousing the vocal opposition of the townsfolk and clergy. At the election the Mayor, both a Gape supporter and *ex officio* the Returning Officer, declared Gape elected by three votes. The result was acclaimed by the Tory element in the town, not least because of the rejection of Sarah’s perceived interference.

In spite of her humiliation, she persisted, being advised by the prominent Whig Lord Halifax that, ‘in view of the history of disputes regarding the St Albans franchise’, Killigrew would stand a good chance if he were to petition against the result. The Duke of Marlborough protested at her further involvement since their Tory enemies in Parliament would take every opportunity to attack them. However, Killigrew petitioned on the grounds that Gape had used illegal votes. Two late sittings of the Committee of Elections followed, the Whigs using them as another chance to confront the Tackers.

Killigrew won his case but, when the Commons were informed of the result, the Tories, as Marlborough had predicted, used the occasion to criticize Sarah for again using her status as the Queen's favourite to condemn the Tackers. Heated exchanges in the House ensued, with the usual accusations that the Tackers were Jacobites and Papists. However, Killigrew's position was confirmed and he replaced Gape as MP in Nov 1705.

Sarah stayed away for the subsequent election (for which Killigrew did not stand), when she might have supported Lomax, the Duke having advised her that the town was too hostile and she would be laying herself open to further insult and, just as importantly, to him and his reputation.

The only record of Killigrew's short spell as a St Albans MP appears to be a vote for Speaker, a Court candidate.

This has been discussed at some length because of the effect of the Tack on local and parliamentary elections, the Byzantine manoeuvres involved in the St Albans franchise, leading to national attention such as the impassioned debates in the Commons and Lords and, not least, the efforts of the formidable Duchess Sarah, always open to Parliamentary criticism. Killigrew's campaign in St Albans turned out therefore to be more than "a little local difficulty".

The Letters

All the letters quoted are included in the voluminous Jervoise of Herriard Collection belonging to this distinguished Hampshire family and held at the Hampshire Record Office⁸. They were written before and after their marriage, by Henry and by Lucy Jervoise to Thomas, Lucy's brother, who returned them to Herriard, the family home, although it is probably not the complete correspondence. The letters are also 'one-sided'; those that Thomas himself wrote to his sister and to Henry have apparently not survived. Lucy refers to having burned one so presumably that applied to many others. The subject discussed in each is therefore often difficult or impossible to deduce but a small selection of extracts has been made in an attempt, first, to give a personal impression of Lucy and then of married life in St Albans.



Lucy Killigrew
© The Jervoise Family of Hampshire

An extensive search has failed to discover a portrait of Henry but that of Lucy is of interest in that, apart from those of the Duchess of Marlborough, it is the only one so far found in the public domain of a female resident of 17th Century St Albans. It is tempting to observe that the anonymous artist has depicted a confident and shrewd personality.

Lucy Jervoise before marriage

Lucy's letters show great affection for Thomas. One, expressed in a characteristic breathless sentence reads,

“I must beg of you to be so kind to write to sum of us every post for certainly was people so freighted [frightened] as we are all in not here [hearing] from you this post ... for myself I am sure never shall be wel [until] I have letter from you of your health wich is and ever will be the hartty prayers of your affectionat sister and servant till death.”

An early letter of Lucy from London to Thomas at Oxford, says she did not want to write too often so as not to bother him at his studies. However, her great news now was “how wicked men are” [in the Capital, at least].

“Four are to suffer for killing their wives one, a baker baked his wife in the oven, a tailor clipped her throat out with his shears, a shoemaker killed his with an agle [needle] and an innkeeper cut his wife’s throat from year to year. I am your servant and sister Lucy Jervoise”.

Although her portrait shows her in a somewhat serious pose, her earlier letters reveal that she was as interested in gossip and match-making as any young lady. She had a wide social relationship with other gentry families and, although the letters are not always headed with an address, the context suggests she is staying at their houses on many occasions. These included the prominent St Barbe family, whose family seat was Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire. It seems apparent that Sir John and Lady St Barbe also resided in Salisbury for some time in the late 17th Cent. and frequent references to ‘my Lady’ occur in Lucy’s correspondence. She asked whether they could stay at Herriard during alterations at Broadlands.

It was during one of these visits that she dictated a letter describing an eye problem that rendered her capable of ‘just discerning light but nothing else’. It was a tribute to their mutual friendship that

‘I shall return as soon as my Lady will let me go from under her care. She saith it may be above half a year before I may have my sight perfectly but saith she doth not question but I shall have it as well as ever I had’.

During this visit, she emerged once to church but ‘they do sing out their prayers that I do not know what to make of it’. She also sent detailed instructions regarding the whereabouts of bed linen and other materials at Herriard and what required washing, later describing the patterns of a nightgown and petticoat she needed to replace as well as who was to sew them. This attention to household detail occurs in several letters and suggests she was influential in the running of the household at Herriard,

The eye trouble apparently disappeared after some months, the only treatment she mentions is “the bloud voins cutt” [bleeding, the usual remedy for so many ailments] and drops, of an unknown kind. She later recommends a remedy, the only one that may help her invalid brother, Richard, namely ‘snail water’, the recipe for which was in ‘mother’s black book’ and of which variants can now be found on the internet in all their disgusting details.

Lucy refers to several of her aristocratic acquaintances as ‘cousins’, although it is not clear whether they are actually kinsfolk. Writing to Thomas, staying with her cousin Anthony Guidott, she describes the clothes a Lady Fuller is buying in London for her son’s wedding to a Miss Grey and is worth quoting at length as it gives a flavour of her earlier letters and of her opinions. The spelling has been corrected although it loses something in so doing.

“Yesterday I went to see Miss Grey to give you the best account I could of her. She is come up to town to buy her wedding clothes in order to be married to my cousin Fuller, and the Lady Fuller is come up to buy her son his wedding clothes. His shirt that he is to be married in is the same to your waistcoat that was last new

bought. His waistcoat to this shirt is white silver tabey [tabby] and he have holland waistcoat laced very well with white lace and a stuff coat lined with a very rich silk, flowered with gold and silver and waistcoat of the same this all, his linen is very good the same answerable to the rest of his clothes, the Lady Fuller will not let her son come up now his Lady [Miss Fuller] is in town, Mr Fuller and his mother are both extremely laughed at about his not coming to town, it is thought by a great many wise people to be very ridiculous Miss Grey is a very broen [brown?] woman I cannot see one feature in her face that one can say is tolerably handsome, she have very grey eyes and a large nose and sallow complexion my cousin Guidott's height and a great deal bigger and shorter waisted and no breeding and in short, I think her one of the plainest that I ever see in my life".

Perhaps Lady Fuller was wise in not letting her son come to town. Note the lack of a fashionable pale complexion. Lucy finishes by sending her 'servoise' [service] to him, confirming the traditional pronunciation of the family name, Jervoise.

In 1688, she reports that a maid in another upper class house in which she is staying has intercepted the letters Lucy has written, in case there was anything about the maid's neglect of a child in the latter's care. Before the days of postal delivery, letters were taken to and collected from a recognized centre, often an inn and, in the case of St Albans, the White Hart.

"I must tell you how ill I have been used by the maid that looks after Lord Carlisle's child She hath intercepted all my letters for this month or more fearing I should give an account of her great neglect of the child she now confesses she used to walk betwixt 11 and 12 o'clock at night to go to the post house and bring back my letters. She used to make excuses to the postmaster that something was forgotten in it. Last Monday she was found out.....She was seen go to the post house and when she was seen to come home the postmaster sent to demand my letter as she had fetched them. She denied with a great many bitter wishes but Mr Hurst maid her produce it at last. I should be very glad her lady knew of it but for Lady St Barbe's sake I will never meddle with anybody's servant... I have written one letter to my Grandmother and two to my cousin and now believe they have received neither of them."

There are several letters devoted to the recurring themes of matrimony, match-making, dowries and similar topics. Of particular interest is the following, when Thomas was considering marrying a Mistress Maynard who, Lucy was told, 'would bring only £7,000' [as a dowry].

"I cannot think it is possible for you to be happily married without your wife bring you £10,000. They that hath £7000 will think to live as high as if they had brought £20,000". Later, "But if she hath £10,000 I fancy you will be as happy in this lady as in any other".

These represent an enormous amount of money. If it is a reflection on Lucy's opinions regarding Thomas's money problems, and hence a disguised and somewhat sarcastic rebuke, it is difficult to say.

Lucy and Henry's letters after marriage

For the record, there is some confusion in the dating of Lucy's first letters signed as 'L.Killigrew'. Two carry the dates, June 27 1691 and Jan 5 1692 (in which

she mentions ‘Mr Killigrew’). According to the DNB and the portrait, she was married in Feb 1692

Surprisingly, among the letters that Thomas kept and returned to Herriard, there is none referring to the couple’s wedding. In view of Lucy’s lively earlier letters quoted above, they would have provided fascinating details of how she met the Admiral at the age of 31, since as late as May 1691 there had been no indication of this in a letter to Thomas,

“... I believe all the world is to be married but you and I. [*perhaps*]... we have an ilfate hang over our heads but we may be hapyer for it”

One letter to Thomas a few months after her marriage, however, may throw some light on the subject. She reported what she had been told by an unnamed person,

“... you desire to know what Mr A. Guidott said of our family [Jervoise]. He told Lord Marl [borough]. that I was ‘to be married in his county and all the town talks of a fortune of five thousand pounds’, that he ‘knew the family very well and what they were able to give her’ and made as if I had not near so much. I was told that he spoke neither honourably nor handsomely of the family. Afterwards the great Lord made us a visit and then to [my informant’s] house and said he believed Mr Guidot did not know Mr Jervoise’s family, for I was strait and not an old woman”.

We have seen that Lucy considered even £7000 as an inadequate dowry to bring to a marriage although there is no indication of her own.

Guidott had been described as ‘cousin’ and, possessing properties in Hampshire, his family had indeed had long associations with the Jervoises, so his remarks are inexplicable. However, he was not only a wealthy landowner and an MP but, in 1700, was involved in the sale of the Manor of Newlane Squillers in St Albans to the Duchess of Marlborough. In view of Henry’s association with St Albans and with the Duchess, have we a clue here as to how an introduction to Lucy may have occurred? Their marriage lasted for 21 years but the number of letters that survive for that period is relatively small and, of these, space allows only a few extracts in order to indicate some aspects of their life at St Julian’s but unfortunately none of them is concerned with social activities in the town even though, as a considerable land-owner and sometime MP, Henry and his family must have been involved.

Although the relevant correspondence is rather too complicated and lengthy to describe here, Henry spent a considerable time, as mentioned in the previous paper, personally and through correspondence, in trying to obtain the service pension that was his due, as well as the prize money owed to his brother, killed in action. In 1707 he asked Thomas to intercede with the Duke of Marlborough, saying, ‘whoever said half pay was not taxed knows nothing of the matter’, striking a thoroughly modern note. Henry was partially successful, being awarded a pension based on half-pay.

However, he had the opportunity to receive a further income by renting out his land for pasture at St Julian’s and St Germain’s. An interesting light is thrown on the acquisition of stock for his own use. In 1694, he wrote to Thomas in Hampshire asking the latter to send ‘sixty sheep of your small Downes mutton about six-stone weight as well as thirty Westerne ewes from your own stock of Burford’. His instructions were that Thomas’s bailiff was to enquire after a Robert Rich who would be found at the great Wayhill Fair, described by Daniel Defoe as ‘where the greatest fair for sheep is kept that that this nation can show’. Rich would undertake to drive them to St Albans. Henry, in asking the price, said he would ‘not keep above twenty

for my own eating'. Presumably the rest would be sold for profit. Unfortunately, the time they took for the drive was not noted. A similar procedure was apparently carried out in the following year, as 'I have nineteen sheep. One died by the way as appeared by his skin ... they were drove with ewes big with lamb, consequently could not be overdrove'. Apart from its interest in the context of Henry's activities, it is probable that the drive of these flocks to St Albans is the first of which we have a record and one of a distance not considered unusual, in this case, at least sixty miles. No drove roads, as such, are known but the possible route was through an area with very few towns, which could be by-passed, before a likely river crossing at Maidenhead and following roads through the sparsely-populated back slopes of the Chilterns. ⁹

This contact with Thomas and the rural side of his activities continued when Lucy thanked him for bacon, a collar of brawn and a turkey, which was 'the best I ever ate in my life'. She reciprocated by sending him a teapot 'I think it very cheap. The price is 6 shillings' and she hoped it was not too good to use (presumably silver). Details of Henry & Lucy's family life are sparse. Henry, on board HMS Britannia in 1693, had notified Thomas that his wife had 'brought a girl into the world'. She was the first of possibly five children, of whom Judith, Mary and Lucy survived to adulthood. Peter Killigrew, christened at St Stephen's in 1701, died in his teens but no mention of him occurs in the letters. This is also the case with Alisha, christened in 1702, of whom nothing else appears to be known.

Judith (Judy) and Mary (Moll) were reported as contracting smallpox but 'Judy is perfectly recovered.... I believe she will be not much marked, her eyes are very well. I hartily pray that my dear Brother and my Nephew may never have small pox. If ever either of you should have it and I live where you are I will come and nurse you. I pray God keep you both from it'.

The correspondence contains many references, largely irrelevant here, to Lucy's relatives. However, it is apparent that she had many of their interests at heart. For example, it seems she was looking after her nephew when his father Thomas spent some time abroad because of debt problems. She had sent his son, Richard, back to school, although "I could hartily wish you would take him from Oakingham [Oakham?] school. He was apparently developing into 'an enthusiastic Whig', like her daughters and herself. Apart from the expression of their good wishes at the end of many letters, there are no other references to the children. The later letters of the early 1700s are few and far between. As described earlier, they are concerned with Henry's political aspirations and his pension negotiations.

During this period, Henry became increasingly incapacitated. Lucy writing on his behalf said that he was 'taken very ill in his lame leg'. Henry wrote,

"I am exceedingly overcome with Gout so much that I cannot go or stand but am lifted by two men out of my bed and into it. God knows when I shall be able to get down stairs. I would say no more because of the pain and weakness I am now in". Later. "am so weak at present that I cannot go [out] but am drawn in a chair".

The exceedingly painful affliction of gout must have been exacerbated by the terrible cannon ball injury received in the Mediterranean, described in the previous paper.

There are no more letters of substance concerning the family's time at St Julian's, where Henry died in 1712, leaving Lucy his property of St Julian's and St Germain's. She died in 1729, leaving her whole estate to Judith, Mary having married Edward Barker and Lucy, James Cooke. The estate was subsequently dispersed and this branch of the family carrying the name Killigrew ended, being commemorated only in that of a local school.

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