Genealogical Table

Nicholas Sir Robert
Sir Thomas

Sir Thomas de Lathom whence

EARLS OF DERBY

Illegitimate. Robert Lathom
John Lathom

1) Anne, dau. of Sir Thomas = Thomas Lathom = (2) Eliz. Preston, dau of Chris. Preston of Easfield of Sussex. 1587-1623 No issue

Christopher died in infancy Richard Lathom = Katherine Massey, dau of Sir Wm. Massey of Pud

25 Thomas Richard William Christopher Elizabeth Frances Katherine 2 Georges Alice
1647-1700 1653-1730 a Priest

27 2 daughters.

19 (1) Anne, dau. of Sir Thomas = Thomas Lathom. = (2) Eliz. Preston, dau of Chris. Preston of Easfield of Sussex. 1587-1623 No issue

22 Christopher died in infancy Richard Lathom = Katherine Massey, dau of Sir Wm. Massey of Pud

25 Thomas Richard William Christopher Elizabeth Frances Katherine 2 Georges Alice
1647-1700 1653-1730 a Priest

27 2 daughters.

35 (1) ? = Richard Berry = (2) Sara Lathom. 1728-1819 1729-1782

37 Peter Berry = Jane Pilkington. 1772-1853

39 Richard Berry = Ellen Mercer. James Berry
1806-1906

43 Others and James Berry 1837-1867

45

Peter Berry 1660-1700

Peter Berry of Lathom 1700-

(1) ? = Richard Berry = (2) Sara Lathom. 1728-1819 1729-1782

Peter Berry = Jane Pilkington. 1772-1853

Richard Berry = Ellen Mercer. James Berry
1806-1906

Jane Berry = James Bromley No issue.

Others and James Berry 1837-1867
ROBERT DE LATHOM = Joan -1286
Sir Robert de Lathom = Katherine -1324
Sir Thomas de Lathom = Eleanor -1370

THOMAS LATHOM OF MOSSBOROUGH.

EDWARD LATHOM OF PARBOLD.

Robert Lathom - ? 1446
Edward Lathom
Robert Lathom - ? 1516
William Lathom - ? 1532
William Lathom
Richard Lathom

Sir Piers Leigh of Lyme. 1619 Endows Free Grammar School at Winwick.

THOMAS LATHOM OF MOSSBOROUGH.

PETER LATHOM OF BISHAM. Founder of Charity 1651-1701

Compiler of the Pedigree To face page 85.
Robert de Thornom of London School at Winwick.

- 2 daughters.

- 2 daughters.

- Rachael. Anne.
AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SUPPOSED CONNECTION OF THE FOUNDER OF PETER LATHOM'S CHARITY WITH THE LATHOMS OF PARBOLD. *

By R. J. A. Berry, M.D., F.R.S.E.

Read 26 May, 1945.

Of the present day charities for the County of Lancashire, one of the most widely operative is that known after its founder as "Peter Lathom's Charity". To-day it is centrally administered from Ormskirk and covers a wide area of South-West Lancashire. Yet of Peter Lathom himself but little is known. From his will, which he signed in his own handwriting, and other legal sources we learn that he called himself Peter Lathom, yeoman, of Bispham; that the will was dated 2nd April, 1700, with a codicil dated 19th February 1700-1; that the "Testator departed this life October, 1701," and finally that the will was proved in the Consistory Court of Chester on the 11th February, 1701-2. With so few details available it is hardly surprising that there should have grown up around the personality of the man a number of local beliefs and traditions, to test the probabilities of which the present enquiry has been undertaken.

According to the Victoria County History (A) it is a popular belief that Peter Lathom was a descendant of the Lathoms of Parbold. Stewart Brown (B) also refers to the same belief, but very justly adds that the connection between Peter Lathom and the Lathoms of Parbold "is not at all clear". We are thus at the outset confronted with the necessity of enquiring into the family history of the Lathoms of Parbold, at least in so far as it may concern Peter Lathom of the Charity. The details which follow, as well as the appended genealogical tree, are based on information derived from the County History and Stewart Brown's book.

* References from the text to the genealogical tree are indicated by numbers which accord with those in the tree itself.

References to Authorities quoted are indicated by letters, and the appended bibliography gives the original sources.
The Lathoms of Parbold, the Lathoms of Mossborough, and the present Earls of Derby, all derive from a common stem—from Robert, son of Henry Torbock, son of Siward, son of Durning, who founded Burscough Priory and died in 1198 during the reign of Richard I.

The Lathoms of Parbold, the younger branch, find their founder in Edward (7), a younger brother of that Sir Thomas de Lathom from whom eventually descend the Earls of Derby. The father of these two brothers was Sir Thomas de Lathom (5) who died in 1370. As the head of the then Lathom family, Sir Thomas recovered the whole of the Parbold estate from the alien hands into which it had fallen and granted it to his younger son Edward (7)—Edward Lathom of Parbold.

This Edward (7) was still further endowed by his elder brother, Sir Thomas (7), with a fourth part of Wrightington. His grandson, another Edward (9), added to the property by acquiring, some time in the 15th century, further land and the manor of Allerton. Thus early did the Lathoms of Parbold enter into possession of their three manors of Parbold, Wrightington, and Allerton. Subsequent generations of the Parbold Lathoms seem to have interchanged their residences at these three manor houses, and Peter Lathom, it may be noted, spent most of his life in the immediate vicinity of the first two.

The next five generations of the Lathoms of Parbold (10-15) are of no importance for present purposes, but with the children (19) of Richard Lathom (17) we are crucially concerned, for if Peter Lathom of the Charity is not a direct descendant of one or other of Richard Lathom’s younger children I can see no possibility of any connection at all between him and the Lathoms of Parbold.

Richard Lathom (17), who was born in 1563 and died in 1602, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Piers or Peter Legh of Lyme, by whom he had several children. In an enquiry such as this, concerned as it is, not with the eldest sons who inherit, but with the younger sons and their possible descendants, we are at once confronted with some serious, almost insuperable difficulties. The genealogists seldom mention other than the heir, and if they do speak of any younger sons their accounts are usually incomplete. For example, Gillow (C) only mentions Thomas (19) the eldest
son and heir, and Richard, who was killed at Lichfield in 1643, fighting for the Royalists during the Parliamentary siege of the town.

That there were other children besides those mentioned by Gillow is, however, certain, as it is proved by both Richard Lathom and his wife. The former made a post-nuptial settlement of Allerton, during his lifetime, on his wife and younger sons, but does not tell us either the numbers or the names of these younger sons. (Stewart Brown).

During her long widowhood, Elizabeth the wife, occupied Allerton Hall, and by her Will and Codicil, both executed in July, 1624, gave her second son, Edward, the occupation and profit of “this my hall in Allerton,” and the houses and lands for three years after her death for the better discharging of her debts and to keep her other sons, Richard and John, “with dyet,” and until her grandson, Richard (22), then an infant of about two years and the heir of Parbold and Allerton, came of age. She also forgives her cousins—whichever these may have been—Richard and Edward Lathom of Wrightington, their debts. Of her eldest son, Thomas, she makes no mention, nor does she speak of any sons called Peter or William, or of any daughters, but then daughters are usually ignored. (Stewart Brown.)

A pedigree subsequently entered at Dugdale’s Visitation in 1664–5, by Richard Lathom (22) her grandson, is equally uninformative about the precise numbers of his uncles and aunts, for as Price remarks, the pedigree he entered is very imperfect.

A former member of this Society, the late Mr. James Bromley, J.P., was of the belief that his wife was a descendant of the Lathoms of Parbold, and the coat of arms of the family was over one of his bookcases. In support of this belief, he actually commenced an investigation, which he never finished. From the manuscript notes he left behind, now in the County Record Office, Preston, he quite correctly gives the genealogical tree from Dugdale’s Visitation, but adds to the name of Thomas, the son and heir, those of Edward, Peter, Richard, John and Katherine.

From the Duchy of Lancaster Inquisitions Post-Mortem XVIII No. 44 (see the Victoria County History, Vol. VI, p.179, note xi) we learn that Richard Lathom (17) made a settlement of Allerton on behalf of his wife and his younger sons, Edward, H
An Enquiry into the supposed connection of the founder
Peter, William, Richard, and John. As this seems to be the most complete account of these children it has been adopted in the genealogical tree.

The importance of these children for the present enquiry is two-fold. If Peter Lathom, founder of the Charity, is really a descendant of the Lathoms of Parbold, it is, as will be seen later, almost impossible to escape the conclusion that it is from one of these younger sons that he descends, and the same applies to Mr. Bromley's belief that his wife had a similar descent.

Incidentally it is the first time that the Christian name "Peter" occurs in the Lathom lineage.

The Charity Commissioners Report (L) refers to "Sir Peter Legh of Lyme, knight," and says that in 1619 he endowed the Free Grammar School at Winwick, having in the previous year built a house and school for the Master. "If the said school should become vacant by the death of the schoolmaster and so continue for the space of a whole year or more, the said rent accruing during such vacancy should be employed for the use and advancement of Francis, Thomas, and Peter Legh, the younger sons of the said Peter Legh."

In 1723 a Peter Legh of Lyme still further endowed the school, and in 1822 a Mr. Legh is still the patron of Winwick and appointed the Revd. J. Williamson to be master, who, the Commissioners thought, paid so little attention to his duties, that he ought to resign.

With the next Lathom, Thomas (19), we are not concerned, but to the children (25) of his son Richard (22) attention must be directed, because they were actual living contemporaries of the founder of the Peter Lathom Charity, with the further possibility that they are beneficiaries under Peter Lathom's will.

Richard Lathom (22), son and heir of Thomas (19), was eight months old when his father died, and was buried at Eccleston on the 31st October, 1667. He had died of "a terrible dropsy". William Blundell of Crosby writing one of his annual mortuary letters, dated 13th September, 1668, to his friend Laurence Ireland of Lydiate says: "I fear he hath not left the value of 5s. either in goods or lands among his eight poor children, yet I hope his wife will have some £40 per annum by title of dowry". (B). Like so many of the Lathoms, Richard was a Royalist and a recusant
and took part in the attack on Lancaster in 1643. His wife was Catherine Massey, daughter of Sir William Massey of Puddington and the number of their children is variously given as eight, ten, and eleven.

The most authentic account of these children appears to be that quoted by the *Victoria County History*, Vol. VI, p.179, note 16, from the Piccope Pedigree (in the Chetham Library), wherein it is stated that Thomas (25), the eldest son, left two daughters and that he had five brothers, Richard, William, Christopher, George, and George and five sisters. Some of these probably died in infancy, which, if so, would explain the discrepancies in the numbers given above. These several children are not only Peter Lathom's contemporaries, but may possibly be his cousins as well, and as they are also the children of "Mistress Katherine Lethem," they are presumably those to whom Peter Lathom in his will left a bequest of £40.

William, the third son, who eventually succeeded after his elder brother's death some time after 1670, was born in 1653, and died in 1730. Christopher became a Priest and was chaplain to his cousin Mr. Massey of Puddington Hall during the reign of James II and was still serving the Mission in 1697.

As the disappearance of the Lathoms of Parbold from the records of history is almost coincident with the life and death of the Founder of Peter Lathom's charity their ultimate fate may be briefly described.

In 1649-50 the estates of Richard Lathom (22) were sequestrated by the Parliamentary commissioners and finally confiscated on account of the treason of the owners. In 1680 Parbold was acquired by a John Crisp whose descendants held it for another century. In 1791 the Crisps sold both Parbold and Wrightington to the Dicconsons of Wrightington, ever since which Parbold has descended with Wrightington. Writing in 1896, W. F. Price (F) says, "I have not so far been able to identify the Parbold residence of the Lathom family. The present Parbold Hall was not built till the beginning of the 18th century when the Parbold estates passed to the Crisp family." He adds the significant statement that "the Parbold branch of the Lathom family not only held the Manor but were resident in Parbold," and the founder of the Charity lived barely a mile away from the Manor.
As regards Allerton, the commissioners sold it in 1654 to a John Sumpner of Midhurst, Sussex, for £2,700. Notwithstanding that the Lathoms, father, mother, and children, now dispossessed, were frequently convicted of recusancy and suffered the penalties accordingly, they contrived to hang on to both Parbold and Allerton a little longer. Indeed it was not until 1670 that the Sumpners managed to eject the Lathoms, and only then by increasing the amount of the original purchase price.

With the loss of all three of their Manors, the Lathoms of Parbold, though many of them still continued to live in the district, disappear into a mediocre obscurity, the last of whom there is record being that William Lathom (25) who died in 1730, nearly thirty years after the death of Peter Lathom of the Charity. Assuming for the moment that Peter was himself a Lathom of Parbold, then William and Peter are indeed the last of the breed. Whilst I can find no positive evidence in favour of such an assumption, all the few ascertainable data seem to suggest it and to leave no other reasonable alternative. For these data we have to look to the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Commencing, for the period in question, with the most likely Parish Registers, those of Upholland, Croston, Eccleston, Standish and Ormskirk (G), we are at once confronted with the further difficulty that these registers show that there were several Peter Lathoms alive at the same time and in the same district. This, however, in view of the known fact that there were numerous members of the Lathom family then living in the Parbold district is hardly surprising, but the difficulty is to ascertain which, if any, of them founded the Peter Lathom Charity.

Of these several Peter Lathoms two are mentioned in the Upholland registers (G). One, the son of Peter Lathom of Billinge, was baptized on the 29th November, 1653. The other, a son of Henry Lathom, also of Billinge, was baptized on the 10th December, 1665. At the time of the signing of the will the former would have been about 47 years of age and the latter 34. Although several townships are mentioned in the foundation of the Charity neither Billinge nor Upholland are amongst them. It seems, therefore, improbable that either of these Lathoms founded the Charity.

In the same (Upholland) parish registers there is recorded
the death on the 7th March, 1706-7 of Alice, who had married a Peter Lathom of Haigh. Beyond the fact that this man may have been alive at the time of the making of the Will there is no further available evidence to suppose him to have made it.

Yet another Peter Lathom was alive on the 12th November, 1701, but as he could not possibly have been the maker of the Will, who died in October of that year, he need not detain us. (H).

In the Standish Parish Registers there is an entry of possibly greater significance. On the 28th September, 1651, there is recorded the baptism of "Peterus, f. Willihelmi Lathom de Heie."

In the Croston Registers there is another significant entry, the burial at Croston on the 14th October, 1701, of Peter Lathom of Mawdesley. As the maker of Peter Lathom's Will died in that same month of October, 1701, it seems not improbable that here lies buried the Founder of the Charity. If the Standish register of baptism, just mentioned, refers to the man buried at Croston, then we have both the birth and the death of that Peter Lathom who founded the Charity. Unfortunately there is no absolute certainty that they do refer to the same man. It is quite possible that they do not, for the Peter Lathom baptized at Standish may be the same person whose wife, Alice, was buried at Upholland in 1706-7.

From the negative evidence of the Will, wherein is no mention of either Haigh or Upholland; from the fact that none of the Trustees named in the Will are from these townships; from the topography of the beneficiary districts, and finally from the fact that the entries in the Standish and Croston Parish Registers of baptism and burial fit the required chronology, and are apparently the only ones that do so, we may leave it as an assumption that Peter Lathom of the Charity was born, as the son of William Lathom of Haigh, in the year 1651, as a certainty that he died in October, 1701, and as almost a certainty that he was buried at Croston on the 14th of that month. (See note from Rector of Croston in References). Even though all this be granted it still does not prove that the Peter Lathom of the Charity was actually descended from the Lathoms of Parbold. Before speculating on the probabilities of such descent it may be helpful to record some of Peter Lathom's presumed activities during his lifetime.

If a record in the Recusant Rolls (J) refers to him then he rose
from the status of husbandman in February 1678–9 to the more dignified one of yeoman in 1682. This fits in well enough with his supposed descent from the recusant Lathoms of Parbold and their then impoverished financial condition, whereas his own economic state seems to have been on the upgrade.

In 1686 the Croston Annals (K) record a decree in Chancery whereby Peter Lathom, Thomas Lathom, Peter Ayscough and others all of Mawdesley and Bispham are compelled to pay tithes on their potatoes to the Reverend Charles Layfield, Rector of Croston, of which Peter Lathom’s share was £1 14 3½, considerably more than that of any of his fellow defaulters, and again a possible indication of his now advanced status of “yeoman.”

In 1700, the *Victoria County History* (A) states that Burscough Hall, which in the seventeenth century was the property of the Longs, recusants, was granted to Peter Lathom of Bispham, “founder of the now very important Lathom Charity,” and that early in 1700 he leased it for 999 years at a rent of £10 to John Heyes, and that this was in trust for the St. John Roman Catholic Mission.

On the 2nd April, 1700, Peter Lathom made his will establishing the charity which still bears his name. His death, burial, and date of probate of the Will have already been mentioned.

In the Charity Commissioners Report (L) there is some posthumous information, which, though it throws no further light on Peter Lathom himself, may be mentioned.

In 1732, an information was exhibited in the Court of Chancery of the County Palatine of Lancaster, in the name of the Attorney General for that County, at the relation of Thomas Addison and others, against Robert Scarisbrick and William Halliwell, as the then surviving trustees; and by a decree made on the 9th March in that year, it was ordered, that such part of the trust estates as were leasehold, should be sold, and the money thereby raised laid out in the purchase of lands of inheritance, to be settled to the said uses.

Further actions of the like nature and with the same objective apparently to secure more money for the beneficiaries under the Will follow in 1743 and 1744. The only interest of these posthumous statements for the present enquiry is that they prove that of Peter’s eight original trustees, only two were alive in 1732.
In 1822, the Charity Commissioners record a fact of considerable local importance, that is, the discovery of coal under the lands originally forming part of Peter Lathom’s estates. They say (L), “an attempt had lately been made to improve the funds of the Charity by obtaining a profit from coal, lying under the land, at Wrightington, occupied by Peter Ellison. In 1822, William Holding, who had opened a coal mine in the adjoining lands, made, with the permission of the trustees, two passage ways under the charity lands, with a view of ascertaining the state of the coal there. In 1824 an agreement was drawn up, under which he was to pay for getting the coal under those lands, after the rate of £140 per acre, during a term of nine years, but he was at liberty to decline working the mine under the charity lands, if the coal was not found to answer his expectation. Holding having since died, his son is in possession of the mine; but as the coal under the charity lands has decreased from three feet to one foot six inches in thickness it is doubted whether it will be worth his while to continue to work it in that quarter.”

The then Charity Commissioners clearly could not foresee the enormous development which was subsequently to attend this discovery of coal under Peter Lathom’s estates, and which later made possible the great Wigan and Skelmersdale coal mining industry. So far as I am aware no one has yet written any account of these once great coal fields, and in my opinion it wants doing. Peter Lathom and his charity will clearly have to find a place therein.

Peter Lathom’s Will is readily accessible in various transcripts. Its main features are thus given in the Victoria County History (A).

“The charity founded by Peter Lathom of Bispham by his Will of 1700 now has over £380 a year for the townships of Croston, Mawdesley, Bispham and Ulnes Walton. In accordance with a scheme made by the Charity Commissioners in 1870 the trustees are authorized to distribute the income in a great variety of ways, including subscriptions to cottage hospitals or dispensaries, or to funds of provident clubs of Friendly Societies, gifts of money, clothes, bedding, tools, food, medical aid etc., and also fees and prizes for education, and the provision of school libraries and evening classes. Peter Lathom is supposed to have been a des-
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cendant of the Lathoms of Parbold and to have lived by begging, the townships benefiting by his gifts being those in which he made his rounds. They are Bispham, Mawdesley, Ormskirk, Newburgh, Burscough, Dalton, Rufford, Wrightington, Parbold, Ulnes Walton, Croston, Welch Whittle, Scarisbrick, Skelmersdale, Bickerstaffe, Eccleston, and Heskin. Lathom has since been added to the townships participating. The lands of the Charity are in the townships in italics. In 1828 the rental amounted to £339 10 o, and there was also money in the Bank, but the development of coal mines on the estate, especially during the last 40 years, has caused a vast increase in the sum available, the income being about £1,500 in 1897.

"The founder directed his trustees to give the income to the poor in gifts of cloth (linen or woollen), corn if it should be dear, or such like charitable acts, but no public officer or overseer of the poor was to be employed in the distribution. A gift was also to be made to poor prisoners of Lancaster Castle."

That Peter Lathom could have made and accumulated all the by no means inconsiderable property mentioned in his will by either begging or peddling, as mentioned above, and as locally believed, seems altogether too improbable for credence, and I can regard it as nothing more than another legend attaching to his name. From all we know of his history it seems more in accordance with the times and conditions under which he lived that he made it by hard and careful work on the land, which enabled him in time to become a man of property and a yeoman of England. In either case there is no proof either way, but the one is more probable than the other.

Peter Lathom's life (1651–1701) was cast in very stormy times. He grew up during some of the most disturbed periods of English history. He saw the confiscation of the Parbold, Wrightington, and Allerton estates; he witnessed the extremes of poverty into which this confiscation had thrown the Lathom family; he saw them scattered and dispersed over the district in which he lived all his life; he saw some of them with not the value of 5/- either in goods or lands, and constantly harried by religious and civil strife; and seeing all these things it is hardly surprising that he leaves money for the benefit of the poor—among whom the Lathoms of Parbold were now to be numbered; that he re-
members the St. John Roman Catholic Mission in which Christopher Lathom, the priest and a possible relative (25), is interested; that he bequeathes £40 to the children of another possible relative, ‘Mistress Katherine Lethem’ (22); that he forbids any public officer to be employed in the distribution of his charity—an understandable family dislike of the officialdom which had oppressed the Lathoms of Parbold—and that he does not forget even the poor prisoners in Lancaster Castle, in which again he may have had some family interest.

Is it conceivable that he could have made such a will if he had not been intimately connected with the Lathoms of Parbold? Peter Lathom’s choice of Executors is not that of a man who had earned his fortune by peddling or begging. His Executors are eight in number, of whom six are described as gentlemen, and only two are husbandmen. With the exception of Robert Scarisbrick of Scarisbrick and John Heyes, Gentleman of Ormskirk, all hail from the immediate vicinity of Parbold and Wrightington. The former was probably that Robert Scarisbrick who is mentioned in the Victoria County History as having been a Jacobite and imprisoned therefor, though eventually his estates were returned to him. All the Lathoms were Jacobites and recusants, so Peter’s choice of another Jacobite is again suggestive of a connection between them and him. As has already been mentioned Robert Scarisbrick was one of the only two survivors of Peter Lathom’s trustees in the year 1732.

The legacies to the Dicconsons, revoked and altered in the codicil, are also a curious feature, especially in view of the later purchase of some of the Lathom property by a family of that name. In the hope that they might throw some light on Peter Lathom himself some enquiry was made into the antecedents of Peter’s Dicconson legatees, but again nothing substantive emerged.

Edward Dicconson, who became Bishop of Malta in March, 1741, had a brother William (1655–1743), who was tried for high treason in 1694. (E.) It is just possible that this William Dicconson may have been the father of Eleanor and Margery Dicconson, legatees under Peter Lathom’s Will.

Having now examined all the available evidence we are in a position to discuss the supposition that Peter Lathom of the Charity was a descendant of the Lathoms of Parbold.
Could the missing link between William Lathom of Haigh (22) and one or other of the younger sons (19) of Richard and Elizabeth Lathom (17) have been found, or having been found, established, then the descent of Peter Lathom from the Lathoms of Parbold would have been proved beyond doubt. It was not found, and it seems doubtful if it ever will be. Certainly not in the parish registers of the period.

Nor does there seem much hope of Peter’s descent being proved from contemporary documents, because as Price (F.) remarked in 1896, “until the Lathom and Wrightington deeds become accessible much valuable historical information relative to this [Parbold] district must remain in obscurity.” There is reason to believe that the Lathom ones have already been lost and the Wrightington ones do not help us.

With what may be described as the circumstantial evidence it is far otherwise. Everything ascertainable about Peter Lathom always seems to be leading up to his connection with the Lathoms of Parbold. Always suggestive it never actually establishes it. It is like the physiological process known as “the summation of stimuli,” and in Peter Lathom’s case seems to add up to the fact that he was so connected.

But if he was so connected, how was he connected?

Without first making a careful examination of the pedigree of the Lathoms of Parbold it is impossible to suggest any answer at all. Hence the appended pedigree takes first place in any study of Peter Lathom’s ancestry, and its reproduction is of importance. It proves two things.

First, that Peter Lathom was not in the direct line of descent. During his own lifetime neither he nor anyone else apparently bothered to establish his pedigree. Younger sons or their offspring were, like daughters, of no genealogical importance.

Second, the appended Lathom pedigree establishes the further fact, that if Peter Lathom be really descended from the Lathoms of Parbold it can, chronologically, only be through one or other of the younger sons (19)—Edward, Peter, William, Richard or John—of Richard and Elizabeth Lathom (17). At the time this paper was read I did not know which, but in the discussion which followed the Revd. C. F. Russell pointed out a frequent custom, of which I had not previously been aware, of naming the eldest
son after the grandfather and the second son after the father. A later re-examination of the many pedigrees given by Dugdale showed the widespread nature of this custom. In the appended pedigree of the Lathoms of Parbold, Mr. Russell's suggestion has been adopted, and the reader can see for himself how it tends to support, though it by no means proves, the supposition that Peter Lathom was descended from the Lathoms of Parbold through his grandfather Peter Lathom (19), himself a grandson of Sir Piers Legh of Lyme (15).

Unproven though the supposition is it places us on the horns of a dilemma. Either we must accept Peter Lathom's descent from one or other of the younger sons of Richard and Elizabeth Lathom, even though it is, as yet, incapable of definite proof, or we must deny it altogether. As I am not prepared to accept that responsibility I am led to the final conclusion, that as regards Peter Lathom's descent from the Lathoms of Parbold, an unproven affirmative is the correct and only possible answer.

That many people now living in South-West Lancashire or elsewhere are descended from the Lathoms of Parbold is certain, although of few indeed could any evidence now be brought of their ancestry; but this enquiry into Peter Lathom's life history has elicited the possibility that the late Mr. James Bromley's belief that his wife was also descended from the Lathoms of Parbold was correct, and if so it must have been through a certain Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick (25), who was a contemporary of Peter Lathom the founder of the Charity. Assuming for the moment that both men descend from the Lathoms of Parbold, though it must again be emphasised that there is no actual proof of the relationship, then both men were grandsons of the children of Richard Lathom and Elizabeth Leigh (17). Between Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick, the undoubted ancestor of Mrs. James Bromley and myself, and any of the Lathoms of Parbold there is a missing generation, of whom I have no evidence. Mr. Russell has made the intriguing suggestion that the gap might be filled in the manner indicated in the pedigree, following the custom already referred to in regard to names. In the pedigree these hypothetical ancestors are in italics.

Of the date of birth of Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick (25) there is unfortunately no evidence, just as there is none of that
of William Lathom of Haigh (22), the assumed father of Peter Lathom. We know they existed, but know nothing more. But the similarities of time, place, general conditions, and the astonishing repetition of the Parbold Christian names—Edward, Thomas, John and Richard—coupled with the repetition of "the grandfather's name, then the father's" in Peter Lathom's case as also in Mrs. Bromley's, with a similar absence of evidence of birth at precisely the same time and place in the genealogical tree would appear to be too unusual to be lightly dismissed as just a mere coincidence.

Be this as it may the fact remains that the only break in the long line of descent from the Founder of Burscough Priory through the younger branches of the Lathom family to the present time (1946) occurs between the children of Richard and Elizabeth Lathom (17) and Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick (25). This single break apart, the genealogical tree is complete, thoroughly established and well documented. In its later phases it comes about in this way.

Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick (25) had four sons, Edward, Thomas, John and Richard—once more the grandfather's name, then the father's—baptized at Ormskirk Parish Church in the years 1692, 1694, 1697 and 1699 respectively.

Richard Lathom (27), born in 1699, and the youngest son of Thomas Lathom of Scarisbrick (25), had at least eight children, (29) Elizabeth, Richard, Sara, Rachael, Anne, Alice, Alice and Martha. Their dates of birth range from 1726 to 1741. Two of these girls, Sara and Rachael, were my great great grandmothers, Sara on the father's side and Rachael on the mother's.

Sara Lathom (29) was christened at Ormskirk Parish Church on the 8th April, 1729. At the age of 42 she married at the same church on the 7th April, 1771, Richard Berry, of whom she was the second wife. Like most of the women of her time Sara could not write so made her mark in the register. Her husband, a son of Peter Berry of Lathom, was christened at Ormskirk Church on the 28th May, 1728. He died in 1819 at the age of 91, and is buried in Ormskirk churchyard, where his tombstone now forms part of the side walk leading to the Derby chapel. Both his father and grandfather were called Peter, the former born about 1700, whilst the latter was christened at Ormskirk on the 1st
April, 1660. Of the Berry's or Buries there are, in the Ormskirk Parish registers, even earlier records, though whether these refer to the same family as the Peter Berry just mentioned is by no means certain. A Peter Berry or Burie was christened at Ormskirk on the 16th May, 1574, and yet another on the 31st July, 1580.

Richard Berry and Sara Lathom had a son, Peter, (37) born in 1772, who died at the age of 81, he too is buried at Ormskirk. He married Jane Pilkington by whom he had a son Richard, (39) Mrs. Bromley’s uncle, and my grandfather, who was born in 1806 and died at Burscough in June, 1906 at the great age of 100 years and four months.

Rachael Lathom, (29) Sara’s younger sister, was christened at Ormskirk Parish Church on the 16th July, 1731. She later married, also at Ormskirk, a man called Heyes. To him she bore a son, Richard, whose second child, Margaret (39) married my maternal grandfather, John Barlow, Head Master of Upholland Grammar School.

The three Berrys just mentioned, Richard, Peter, and Richard, afford a remarkable instance of longevity, as they cover a period of 178 years, from 1728 to 1906. At the time of the battle of Waterloo, Richard Berry, the centenarian, was a boy of 9 years, and he has often related how well he remembered being taken to Ormskirk Church on Sunday morning to hear the village blacksmith or other worthy, perched on a tombstone, telling of the latest news about Napoleon Bonaparte. He in his turn could recall some of his grandfather’s recollections of the local doings attaching to the invasion of England by the young Pretender in 1745.

Had the Lathoms of Parbold been then in existence they would almost certainly have been found under Prince Charlie's standard, and with that speculation may be concluded this account of the mystery of Peter Lathom's Charity.

That it still remains a mystery is certainly no fault of those who have generously given me every assistance in the present investigation, and of whom Mr. R. Sharpe France and Mr. F. A. Bailey, are by no means the least. We can however, certainly claim to have gathered together the few relevant facts still ascertainable about Peter Lathom, the Founder of Peter Lathom’s Charity, and at this distance of time I doubt if even that little will soon be surpassed.
REFERENCES


(D) Dugdale's Visitation of the County Palatine of Lancashire. Remains Historical and Literary connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester. Published by the Chetham Society. Vol. LXXXV, 1872.


(G) Upholland Parish Registers. (LPRS) Vol. XXIII. pp. 10, 28, 186. Also the registers of Croston, Eccleston, Standish and Ormskirk.

(H) From a bundle of deeds relating to Newburgh, near Ormskirk, in the possession of Mr. W. A. Cross, Solicitor, of Prescot. Information kindly supplied by Mr. F. A. Bailey.

(J) Recusant Rolls. 1678 and 1682. QDV/5 and 6. County Record Office, Preston.


Letter from the Reverend R. A. Rawstone, Croston Rectory, Preston. dated 20th November, 1944. "I was aware of the record of the burial of a Peter Lathom, believed to be the founder of the Peter Lathom Charity, in Croston Churchyard. But I have never seen in the churchyard any tombstone in his memory, and my sexton who knows the ground and the stones fairly well does not believe that there is such a tombstone."