

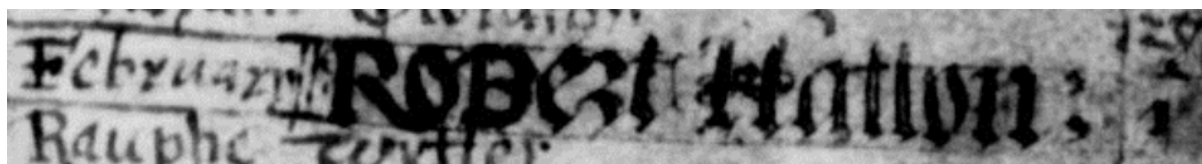
## The Ancestry of Rev. Robert Hatton, Rector of Lymm

Robert Hatton was appointed Rector of the first moiety of the parish of Lymm in Cheshire on 15 June 1611.<sup>1</sup> The new vicar was a graduate of Oxford University, having matriculated to Christ Church College on 15 July 1586, aged 20. In his admission record he was described as being “of Cheshire, pleb.”<sup>2</sup> “Pleb.” indicates that his father was not a cleric.

Prior to his appointment to the Rectory of Lymm, Robert Hatton ran a school at Frodsham in Cheshire, which he had opened on 13 January 1601/02.<sup>3</sup> Three of his seven children were baptised at Frodsham and one at Lymm. The eldest three children were born before he settled at Frodsham. They may have been baptised in whatever parish Robert Hatton served as a Curate.

The fact that Robert Hatton attended Oxford University and that he was wealthy enough, or had a wealthy enough patron, to open a school, suggests that he was of gentle birth. As he opened his school at Frodsham, it also suggests that either he, or his patron, was connected with Frodsham.

The Registers of Frodsham record the baptism, on 1 February 1565/66, of a child named Robert Hatton.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately the baptisms of this period did not mention parents’ names. Curiously, at some later stage, the entry has been rewritten in larger letters, indicating that this child became someone important in the parish.



This Robert Hatton would have been aged 20 in July 1586, when Rev. Robert Hatton matriculated to University, and as the man who opened the school in 1601/02 was an important man, the baptisms of whose children were also written in large letters, it is extremely likely that they were the same person.

The only direct information on Robert’s parents is in the Register of Lymm, where, on 11 June 1626, “Elizabeth mother of Robert Hatton Rector” was buried.<sup>5</sup> Robert named his eldest son William, which could indicate that his father had that name.

### William Hatton of Hellesby

In 1611 the will of William Hatton of Helsby was proved at Chester.<sup>6</sup> The original will is torn and both the profession of William Hatton and the date of the will are lost. The Inventory of William Hatton of Helsbie, yeoman, was dated 17 October 1611.<sup>7</sup>

In his will William Hatton made bequests to his daughters, Elizabeth Bushell, Jane Rutter and Katharine Witter, to his wife, Elizabeth, and to his son, Robert. While the names Elizabeth and Robert are suggestive they do not prove any immediate connection to the Rector.

If William were the father of the Rector he would have been born before 1545 as the Rector was baptised in February 1565/66.

Unfortunately the baptismal Registers of Frodsham record only the name of the child. As there were several contemporary Hatton families it is difficult to identify the parents of each child christened and so the children of William and Elizabeth Hatton cannot be identified easily.

On 31 Jan 1624/25 Elizabeth Bushell of Mickledale, widow, was buried at Frodsham. She was the widow of John Bushell and had six children, one of these, Randle, was baptised at Frodsham, 23 September, 1579.<sup>8</sup> However, documents prepared following a dispute over her will give her age as about 80. She cannot be the daughter of William Hatton.

There are two potentially relevant marriages at Frodsham in 1610 and 1619 of woman named Katherine Hatton to men with the surname Witter, being William and Edward respectively. The 1619 marriage to Edward Witter can be identified as that of Katherine, daughter of John Hatton of the Woodhouse, Frodsham<sup>9</sup> and occurs after William Hatton's death. William Witter of Frodsham had children baptised at Frodsham between 1610 and 1620.<sup>10</sup> This makes it unlikely that his wife was born any earlier than 1580. As Katherine was the last named daughter she was probably the youngest and so the Katherine married in 1610 so could be the daughter named in William Hatton's will.

The baptism of Robert in 1566 and the birth of Katherine Witter in the 1580s indicate that William Hatton of Hellesby was the father of children born in the later 1560s and 1570s and the early to mid 1580s.

A couple named William Hatton and Elizabeth Whitby appear in the Visitation of Cheshire in 1580.<sup>11</sup> They do not have any children listed. However, the research papers of Lawrence Bostock, collected in 1572, and the basis for the pedigrees in the 1580 Visitation, records the same family with the comment "They have fower children."<sup>12</sup>



The Arms of Hatton of Woodhouse & Hellesby, as detailed in the Visitation of Chester 1580

This means that William Hatton and Elizabeth Whitby had four children born prior to 1572. Robert, Rector of Lymm, was born in 1566, so his parents, William and Elizabeth of Hellesby could have had four children living in 1572.

This raises two questions:

*1. Is there any record of a second William Hatton of Hellesby.*

William Hatton de Helesbie was baptised at Frodsham, 27 September, 1570. He was one of seven children baptised between 1563 and 1585 and called "de Helesbie." There is no other person named William Hatton of Hellesby in the Frodsham Registers until a baptism in 1625.<sup>13</sup>

*2. Could William Hatton of Hellesby, yeoman, be the armigerous William Hatton, who appears in the Heralds' Visitation?*

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century a yeoman was a farmer who owned land. They were not landed gentry, but often indistinguishable from them. In the case of the Hattons of Hellesby, their status as gentry was recognised in the Visitation of Cheshire, 1580. They appear as a minor branch of Hatton of Woodhouse, a family whose members included Robert Hatton, Vicar of Backford, Cheshire, 1583 – 1591.<sup>14</sup> As there was no attempt in Bostock's

research to identify their exact connection to the greater Hatton family, the results of his investigations may, in this case at least, be viewed as unbiased and likely to be accurate.

In the absence of another William Hatton of Helsby it is likely that William Hatton of Helsby, who married Elizabeth Whitby and had four children prior to 1572, was the same person as William Hatton of Helsby, yeoman, whose will was proved in 1611.

### Summary & Conclusion

- In 1611 William Hatton of Helsbie, yeoman, left a widow, Elizabeth, an adult son, Robert and three married daughters.
- In 1626 Elizabeth, mother of Robert Hatton, Rector of Lymm, was buried at Lymm. As the Rector was born in 1566 and aged 60 in 1626, his mother would have been aged about 80 at her death, so born in or before 1546. Robert's eldest son was named William, so his father could have had that name.
- In 1572 William Hatton of Hellesby was married to Elizabeth Whitby and had four children. Elizabeth, mother of the Rector would have been aged at least 26 in 1572, so could have had four children.
- No evidence has been found to suggest that there were two men named William Hatton who were both "of Helsby" in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

While these four points cannot prove the parentage of Robert Hatton, Rector of Lymm, the strongly suggest that Robert was the son of William Hatton of Hellesby. William was descended in the ninth generation from John Hatton of the Woodehouses, Frodsham, who had settled there in the reign of Edward II (1307-1327).<sup>15</sup> John Hatton was said to be descended from the Hattons of Warton, from whom all the main lines of the Hatton family claimed descent.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> *Alumni Oxonienses* Part 1, Volume 2, page 673

<sup>3</sup> Frodsham Parish Register <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Lymm Parish Register <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

<sup>6</sup> *An Index to the Wills and Inventories now preserved in The Court of Probate at Chester 1545-1620* (The Record Society 1879), page 87

<sup>7</sup> Original will available at <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

<sup>8</sup> The wills of John Bushell (1613), Elizabeth Bushell (1624) and their son Randle (1614) are available at <http://www.findmypast.co.uk>

<sup>9</sup> Pedigree of the family of Hatton of Woodhouse, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, ZGMC 5

<sup>10</sup> Frodsham Parish Register

<sup>11</sup> Visitation of Cheshire 1580, page 120

<sup>12</sup> *The Dyscent or genealogye of the Hattons of Hellesby* The British Library, Harley Manuscript 139, folio 87 verso.

<sup>13</sup> Frodsham Parish Register

<sup>14</sup> Pedigree of the family of Hatton of Woodhouse, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, ZGMC 5

<sup>15</sup> Visitation of Cheshire 1580, page 119