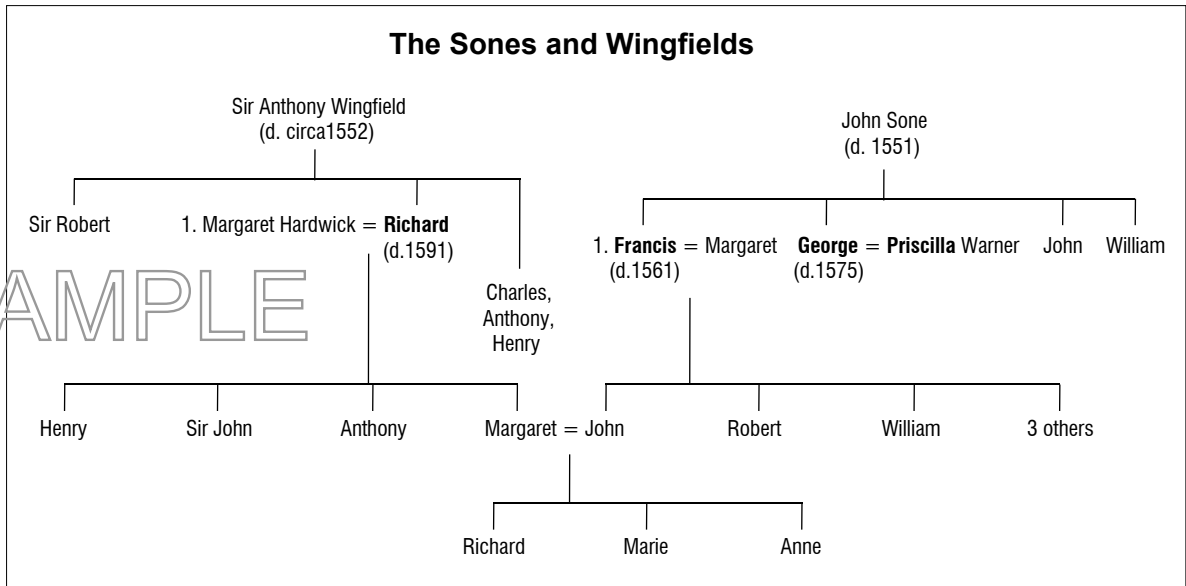


The Sones and Wingfields



Priscilla Sone

Francis' younger brother, George Sone, wed Priscilla Warner and farmed Alderton Manor. George had a stock of 600 ewes and lambs, but only had occupation of the property until John Sone, the heir, was aged twenty four. In the spring of 1575 George and his wife were on a business trip to Copdock when he unexpectedly died. She believed that her husband was legally seized of the Manor and instructed her servants, chiefly Erasmus Smythe, to keep possession of the house and lands while she was away making the funeral arrangements.

Richard acts and Priscilla makes charges

Richard saw his duty was to seize control of the Alderton property as soon as possible,

because he was the executor of Francis whose deathbed wishes were contained in an indenture of 8 November 1561. By this not only George, but Richard Wingfield and his brother Anthony, had a shared responsibility for the manor until John inherited.

Richard's precipitate actions while she was still grieving in Copdock angered and distressed Priscilla to such a degree that she brought an action against him in the Court of Star Chamber. The proceedings survive as large undated, unsorted and grubby bundles in The National Archives. The challenge is not only to unroll the old skins and read Tudor handwriting tightly written on lines up to two feet wide, but to make sense of the repetitive legalese. In the documents appear a cast of dozens of people living in the Sandlings Triangle in that summer of 1575. There are comings and goings at night and violence is threatened and used. The events are described so vividly by both sides that we are presenting extracts and allowing the reader to judge the rights and wrongs on each side.

Priscilla claimed that Richard arrived while she was still in Copdock and demanded the keys to the Alderton house. Although denied entry by her servants, he had forcibly entered and locked several internal doors. She did not know whether he was acting in his capacity of Justice of the Peace or of 'pretended title'. Also, while her

The manor-house of Alderton Hall where the drama unfolded after George Sone's death in 1575. It is situated behind the church.

