

JOSEPH BOULTBEE THE FIRST OF GRIFFYDAM

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - FEBRUARY 2021

It has been established that circa 1700, a Joseph Boulton the first, head of a local family, with many branches far to complex to consider for inclusion here, entered upon a 99 year lease of Stordon Grange, Osgathorpe, which was held under the ancient family of the "Beaumonts of Coleorton". Here he established his eldest son, Thomas Boulton the first (1663-1750) who was still living at Stordon Grange at the time he died in 1750 at the age of 88. He was buried in Breedon-on-the-Hill grave yard. We will refer to him as Thomas (A).

Joseph Boulton, the first of **Griffydham**, was the testator of the following Will, which is transcribed from the original in the Leicester District Registry. *Joseph was partly a farmer, and also a skilled craftsman, who made baskets and other such things at Griffydham, which was in the parish of Breedon at that time. Joseph Boulton, the first (b.c.1640 – buried February 8th, 1718) appears in the ever widening Boulton family saga as having come from the north as a political refugee, bringing with him the belief that his forbears were collateral kinsmen of two medieval barons, Nicholas and Adam de Bolteby, from the Yorkshire village of Bolteby, near Thirsk, who in succession were Barons of Tindale, in Northumberland. Old Joseph was buried as "Joseph Boulton senior of Griffydham" while in the Will, still extant, he was "Joseph Boulton of Griffydham". Earlier versions of his name appear in the Breedon registers. (The Connoisseur Magazine 1933 Edited by F. Gordon Roe)*

THE TRANSCRIBED WILL OF JOSEPH BOULTBEE OF GRIFFYDAM

*In the name of God, Amen. I, **Joseph Boulton of Griffydham in ye liberty of Worthington, in ye Parish of Breedon in ye county of Leicester**, calling to mind ye uncertainty of life, and certainty of death and being of sound mind and memory, praised be God, do make this my last Will and testament in manner following. First, I commend my Soul into the hands of Almighty God who gave it me, and my Body to ye earth of which it was made, to be decently buried by ye discretion of my Executors in hopes of a joyful Resurrection into Eternal Life through the alone Merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, and as for my Worldly Estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me, I dispose thereof as followeth, Imprimis **I give unto my son Thomas Boulton** ye sume of five pound at my decease. Item, **I give unto my son William Boulton** ye sume of five pound. Item, **I give unto my son Joseph Boulton** ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my daughter Mary Draper ye sume of fivety shillings. Item, I give my daughter Ann Shaxper ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my daughter Hannah Shaxper ye sume of five pound. Item I give to my daughter Elizabeth Ellicock ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my Grandson Richard Baly ye sume of three pound to be put to him to Prentice, but if he does not go to a trade, then to be paid to him when he comes of ye age of eighteen years. And ye rest of my goods and cattle quick and dead, I give to my son Thomas Boulton and my son Joseph Boulton in trust for my dear and loving wife during her life and all ye remainder at her decease to be equally devided amongst all my grandchildren that are living, and this I make to be my last Will and testament*

Witness my hand and seale ye 7th day of October 1717.

The mark X of Joseph Boulton (seal plain)

Witness Will Boulton. Jo Boulton.

Proved on the 26th February 1718 by the oaths of Thomas Boulton and Joseph Boulton.
(In modern style this would be written 26 February, 1719. The legal year at that time ended March 25th)

Thomas **A** (son of Joseph, the first), and apparently a man of some character who continued to establish a family in the county had two brothers Joseph and William, the latter being buried at Osgathorpe in 1757 aged 92. The following extract taken from the Osgathorpe Poor Law and Parish Charity records refers to William Boulton of Stordon Grange, suggesting that he was lodging with his brother Thomas (**A**) at the time:-

After having given inadequate accounts in 1715 as churchwarden, Benjamin Waldrum further exhibited his shortcomings as overseer in 1722. The parish meeting refused to accept the details of his accounts again because they were so unreasonable and ordered that they be "*not entered here for others to copie after*". **Even the inadequacies of Ben Waldrum do not compare with the escape of William Boulton of Stordon Grange:-**

"William Boulton served the office of overseer of ye poor for ye year 1723, his accompts was given up and the spare money was drunk at Bradfords by ye persons there met (etc) but he took them home (I not being there) and afterwards lost ye same".

Thomas Boulton (**B**), the second son of Thomas Boulton (**A**), became the well known country **Rector of Brailsford**, who died in 1780. He was a man of considerable wealth for those days who loved sports and was reputed to be 6ft 4ins and wonderfully strong.

Thomas Boulton (**B**) also had a son named Thomas (**C**) b.1724 d. 1785, who subsequently fathered twin sons Thomas (**D**) and John who both became renowned artists. Thomas was a portrait painter, and apparently the less talented of the two. John was a sporting artist and described as follows in the Leicester Mercury dated 24th May 1967:-

John Boulton, who studied under Sir Joshua Reynolds, was the son of the squire of Stordon Grange, and would have been a young man in the 18th century - "his finest hour came, when King George III appointed him as his animal painter, and gave him a house in Windsor Great Park.

Thomas Boulton (**C**) subsequently became the official lessee of Stordon Grange under the terms of his "grandfathers" Will. He was aged 26 at the time of his grandfather's death and continued to live at Stordon. He, like his father was an imposing gentleman of 6ft 2 ins in height by all accounts. He married Jane Bage in 1749 who was 21 years of age at the time, eight years younger than her husband. They had 11 children by this marriage, between 1753 and 1769. Thomas died in 1785, and his wife Jane died in 1789 at the ages of 61 and 57 respectively.

It would appear that the Stordon lease still had some years to run when Thomas (**C**) died, and his son Robert apparently became the lessee for the remaining years. Robert was succeeded by his son Thomas, who left Stordon with his wife Sophia in 1818. Stordon Grange was thought to have been occupied by four consecutive generations of the Boulton family.

In their latter years of occupancy, it is possible that the Boultons' rented Stordon Grange from the Beaumont's on an annual basis only and there seemed to have been some conflict of ownership in the early 1800's. Thomas Boulton and his family were apparently not socially proud and the children inherited little or nothing after the parents died.

The author recommends reading his book entitled "Stordon Grange" as a companion to the above. This is free to download and read on griffydamhistory.com or the authors own website <https://samuelstewart940.wixsite.com/mysite>

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