



Sir William Paston III

Born 1610, Norfolk

Died 1663

Married: Lady Katherine

Bertie m. 1631, d. 1636

Six children

Second wife: Margaret

Hewitt d.1658

William Paston was the eldest son of Sir Edmund Paston and Katherine Knevett. Born in 1610, he was 19 when his mother died, and 22 when his father died, and he became Lord of Oxnead Hall.

He married Katherine Bertie in 1631 and they had six children. But sadly, their time together was short lived, and Katherine died in child-birth in 1636. William was heartbroken, and he left his young children behind to travel Europe and the Middle-East.

During his travels William started collecting objects of all kinds – including stuffed crocodiles from Egypt and a ‘magic’ stone to aid childbirth

which he would lend to women to avoid the consequences his wife suffered.

After the beginning of the English Civil War in 1642, William fled to the Netherlands where he stayed in exile from 1643 to 1644.

While abroad, a portrait of William was painted in 1644 containing a picture of a man running away from a crocodile that was eating another man. William was a royalist in self-exile so maybe the crocodile was an allusion to William fleeing from Cromwell and Parliament (the crocodile) while the man being eaten was his country.

On his return, William was given a hefty fine and labelled as a ‘delinquent’. In 1660, however, Charles’s son, Charles II was returned to the throne and William’s fortunes improved. Much of his lands and money were returned and William became a man of importance in Norfolk.

His collection of objects from around the world were so numerous Oxnead Hall was described as ‘treasure house’ full of statues, furniture, paintings, and marvelous works of art.