

Bridgett Applewhaite (nee Nelson) and her story

By June Brereton



St Andrew's Church Bramfield
Pre 1872 as it would have been in Bridgett's life¹

Ledger-stone or slab:

'When the art and use of monumental brasses declined in the first half of the C17, sculpture in stone began to come into its own in our churches. But while splendid monuments may catch the eye, it often pays to drop one's gaze to the ground to those dark, massive slabs in pavements of chancel, nave and aisles, incised with arms, crests and epitaphs. These are ledger-stones, a study in themselves, and many carry quite marvellous inscriptions which can so easily be over looked'.

From the excellent glossary of D.P.Mortlock's *The Popular Guide to Suffolk Churches No. 3 East Suffolk*

In 1846, the Ecclesiological Society thought that Bridgett's stone was

'so very revolting and profane that we shall not defile the pages of our publication by reproducing it'.²

Nowadays, Bridgett's stone attracts a great deal of interest and with those of the rest of the family, gives a glimpse of life in Bramfield from the mid 17th century for a hundred years.

After many years of contemplating Bridgett I knew I would have to collect and organise everything that was obviously available from the stones in order to satisfy the many visitors to the church who have said there was a novel to be written about Bridgett and her family. I agree, but only if you are prepared to fill in the gaps with fanciful facts and I find myself quite unable to do that. The nearest that I have achieved was to mount an evening of music and words using the historical material with myself as narrator and a very sympathetic actress as Bridgett and this was very well received. But of course it had a touch of the 'horrible histories' about it with the appearance of characters like 'The Vicar of Bray', imagined scenes of the visit of William Dowsing's agents not to mention the sound effects of the Battle of Sole Bay and not suitable for The Suffolk Review! So what follows are the bare facts but I hope that you will find them as fascinating as I have done.

People intending to write a biographical story usually base their information on a diary or a collection of letters which, when their interest in an historical figure is aroused, seem like a heaven sent source of social background and the historical events which shaped their lives.

Unfortunately I have not been lucky in that area, but in some ways there is more than I had thought possible and it is to be found in an unusual place right under my feet in Bramfield Church. And what a lady to want to investigate! The Bramfield Nelson family, along with the Rabetts with whom they intermarried, has left an extraordinarily full account of their lives on a remarkable series of fourteen ledger stones.³ There are great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, a brother, cousins and a scheming father-in-law, all recorded and for the most part we just walk over them. Among other things we can find what their political persuasions were, the medical ailments they suffered from, character traits, ambitions, and an eye-opening view of the position of women in the early eighteenth century. But there are no family portraits remaining and I have no firm idea of where they lived so there are important gaps in my knowledge of the family. Interestingly there is a detailed description of a portrait of John Hayne (Bridgett's great-grandfather) in Reginald Rabett's entry in *Authorised Arms*⁴

...a very finely finished full length portrait, in oil of his ancestor, John Hayne, Esq (or Sir John) of Islington who is represented as sitting in his robes of office, which are profusely lined with dark brown fur (perhaps he belonged to the Fishmonger's Company), his green staff, or wand, at the back of his chair. A garter of gold is round his right leg, below the knee: his chair is covered with a rich white and green silk and bound with handsome gold fringe: several books, bound in red morocco, are placed by the left side of his chair: the Arms of his Company are placed at the top of the frame of his portrait and his Family Arms are at the bottom. The portrait of John Hayne looks like one of Holbein's best, (the date over his head on the canvas is 1678, aet 74) and would be admired if placed in the very first collection of paintings.

Obviously it was not painted by Holbein (1497 – 1542) and was sold into private hands after the death of the last Rabett to live at Bramfield Hall.

When I first became absorbed in the story of Bramfield I thought that I would be finding most of the interesting information about the historical and social life of Bramfield from the Rabett family. However, apart from information from manorial extents and rentals on their land holdings and the rather plain inscriptions in the church, very little of the character of members of the Rabetts is left

to us. The last Reginald Rabett to live at Bramfield Hall who died in 1860 had a deep interest in the numbers 666 and is unexplored, may turn out to be an exception! Now the Nelsons are quite different. They were living in Bramfield for less than a hundred years compared to the four hundred of the Rabetts, and yet a much fuller picture can be drawn of their life and times. Their family relationships and medical conditions are there for us all to see, written in stone on the floor of the church. Consequently they have been worth studying in more depth giving us an intimate picture of Bramfield during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This has been helped by the existence of the Churchwarden's Accounts⁵ for that time also, which is particularly important as the Church registers are missing for nearly the whole of the 17th century.

First, something about ledger stones. As mentioned above they became popular during the mid seventeenth century due to the decline in the use of brass and there being also a ban on the customary inscription of 'Orate pro animabus' or some such, when purgatory was abolished during the Reformation and praying for the souls of the departed was deemed unnecessary. As a sequence of pieces of information the Bramfield stones tell of the lives and loves of three generations of a middle class family from 1623 to 1744. These are the dates of the first birth we know about through to the end of the Nelsons in Bramfield. Sadly, they were not a healthy family and the last generation either failed to marry or died childless, thus not leaving any descendants. So working with what seems to be available, I have attempted to flesh out the bare bones of their story with information gleaned from various other sources so that the life I want to acquaint you with will have a context.

My story is principally of a woman born⁶ at the end of the seventeenth century on the cusp of the modern era in a small Suffolk village. Her epitaph is famous and indeed notorious. It is cited in many publications and countless people visit St Andrew's to see her extraordinary memorial. Looking at it with 21st century eyes, they smile wryly at the sentiments expressed there; it tells of a disastrous marriage 'born by her with incredible patience', hopes of ensuing happiness with a second marriage and her final tragic end. Perhaps I am trying to find out why she had such an unfortunate life.

It is an historical chronicle and probably one left behind by a family who were indeed, intensely interested in telling their story. I am quite sure that they (possibly in the person of 'Uncle Edward') meant the future people of Bramfield were to understand that the Nelson family was not to be misrepresented. The family obviously held strong religious views during a time of religious and political upheaval⁷. I wonder if I am the medium that they envisaged? In truth, I am not entirely favourably inclined towards the Nelson family as I think it is probable that the reason they left such an account of their lives is because they were not perhaps a well-regarded family. The stones are glowing accounts of a not very important group of people related by marriage to an ancient family. The Rabetts, the family into which they married were a very old established Suffolk family and had been in Bramfield for more than two hundred years when the Nelsons arrived. They had a more distinguished pedigree and certainly installed ledger slabs during the same period, but in a much more restrained style. There may have been something of a tinge of 'old and new money' concerned here. Some of the substance of the Nelson family funds stem from the will of Bridgett Rabett⁸ where she leaves to her daughter Mary wife of Edward Nelson,

'tenements land and hereditaments in Kelsale & Carlton and all goods and chattells, plate, household stuff & jewels & ready money'.

The ledger stones with their abundance of lettering are evidence of considerable wealth⁹ or was it also an opportunity to explain away the failure of the family to make the progress up the social ladder that they might have made, given their auspicious beginnings. Perhaps. But maybe it was the desire to use the prevailing fashion. The stones do seem excessively full of detail though and to me, conceivably evidence of a pedantic fussy bachelor. When you read the memorial of the last Edward Nelson¹⁰ you do get the impression that he was perhaps a frustrated man without a successful story to leave for posterity.

To give Bridgett's life a context something about Bramfield should come first. Bramfield itself is an unremarkable village which has always been an agricultural workhorse, with only one modestly grand house, Bramfield Hall, and no wealthy courtiers or royal connections, save for a short time earlier in the 17th century, Arthur, the second son of Sir Edward Coke the Lord Chief Justice¹¹. His well-known grand memorial with his wife on the North wall of the chancel, only lived here for five years in a gifted house, Brook Hall. Were the Nelsons important enough to bother recording the minutiae of their lives from rather fragmentary evidence? Probably not in the grand scheme of historical knowledge, were it not for the one particular woman whose story catches the imagination, Bridgett Applewhaite. I think she is important as an example of 'the middling' sort. Much is known about the political activists and the wealthy but not so much about those buried in rural areas and this seemed a good opportunity to record an instance of the ruthless ill treatment of women in the early eighteenth century.

Bridgett has led me into a period of history about which I knew very little. I was aware that there had been a civil war, regicide, restoration of the Monarchy, plague, the Great Fire of London and wars against the Dutch but had not thought about the effect all these events might have had on people living in Bramfield. This family lived through all these tumultuous times of financial upheavals, religious turmoil, continental wars and because I wanted to know more of her background and what led to her tragic end, I decided to see if there was enough material to produce a coherent and historically useful account of her life and times. It also revealed the precarious state of the unmarried woman in the eighteenth century.

Bridgett's social background.

Today, Bramfield 2 miles west of the A12, lies on the A144, a busy cross-country connecting route through to Bungay and Norwich. But until the turnpike was established in 1785¹², other than a footpath to Darsham¹³ there was only a link to Halesworth and Bungay to the north and to Yoxford in the other direction, along extremely badly kept tracks. London would have been approached via Walpole, Peasenhall and Yoxford. Reading Kirby's Suffolk Traveller and looking at his maps of 1736 – 1766¹⁴ (see below) it is obvious that Bramfield falls squarely in the middle between several more well used and established routes. These routes are usually aimed at some more important destination like a market, grand house, coaching route or port. Bramfield did not really qualify for any of these. When coaches did become more evident in the late 18th century the route was from Halesworth via Walpole and Yoxford to London.



Bramfield

In medieval times Bramfield had been on a connecting route from Bury St Edmunds to Dunwich¹⁵ but with the ruin of Dunwich and closure of Blythburgh Priory this road, running at right angles to the present communication axis, went out of use leaving Bramfield rather isolated. As will be seen later, as far as the Nelsons are concerned, connections with Bungay and across the Waveney were obviously better but both commercial and social intercourse was difficult.

There were, during her lifetime, several families of land owning gentry living within five miles of Bramfield at Kelsale, Yoxford, Thorington, Darsham, Heveningham and Chediston and indeed the first connection was through such a marriage that the local story begins.

Why do I mention all this topographical detail? It must surely have had an influence on the life of my tragic heroine. The roads were atrocious especially in winter. Aside from walking, travel would have been solely by horse. Carriages were for the wealthy with meaningful journeys to make. Did the mainly male household that Bridgett lived in, encourage a woman to ride a saddle horse? Travelling of any sort must have been undertaken with some trepidation if the following report from the Ipswich Journal in 1725¹⁶ when our heroine was 30 and still unmarried.

'On November 9th Hon Prise Devereux & lady going from Ipswich to Sudbourne Hall in chaise and 4, 2 highwaymen jumped out near Staverton Park and demanded them to stop & upon refusing dismounted the servant by knocking him down and discharged 2 loaded pistols at Mr D but missing him took the servant's mare, rid off and made their escape. Handsome reward for Brown Bay with hanging mane & short whisked tail about 13 hands high, white speck or star on forehead.'

The fact that Thomas Watts was found guilty of the assault and sentenced to be executed would not have been very reassuring and this sort of incident may mean that socialising was severely restricted.

Family background in the early 17th century

This is a period during which the legal profession grew and flourished and I have called these people middle class. This as a group was beginning to emerge, creating a distinct class more

likely to be found in towns but which is quite a new concept in rural areas, somewhere between the large landowners and yeoman farmers. Unlike the yeoman farmer who back in Tudor times had been the bridge between the magnate and the peasant this was a new, professional class often called the 'middling sort'. By the middle of the sixteenth century the prosperous country landowner or successful City merchant as in the case of the originator of the Bramfield Nelsons, had been able to afford to send his sons to the new grammar schools and small local academies. Edward Nelson, Bridgett's uncle had been to Woodbridge School prior to attending Emmanuel College Cambridge.¹⁷

The Nelson men as far as I can ascertain did not attend any Inns of Court and remained rural attorneys unlike Reginald Rabett (her great uncle) who entered Grays Inn¹⁸ in 1648. Edward (1) Nelson was to marry Reginald's sister, Mary. Their rise up the social scale in the sense of 'new money' could be due to the huge growth of legal work available. Since the Dissolution of the Monasteries there was a great deal of land on the market and those lucky enough to have finance and be in the right place at the right time, needed expertise in handling the sale and consolidation of land, some still retaining the shape and distribution from the strip farming of the middle ages. So this particular period saw the flowering of successful and lucrative careers as lawyers, drawing up Indentures, leases, releases, mortgages etc. for the new landowners and as death was ever present, making wills protecting the legitimacy and rights of heirs. Banks had yet to be established so wealth had to be held as property or goods.

A few of Lambert Nelson's letters remain detailing minor transactions for some substantial Norfolk families the Oliver Neve of Great Witchingham¹⁹ and his sister Lady Knyvett²⁰ living at Darsham Hall. One of these missions was the supply of " half a dozen Cardinal flowers (Lobelia Cardinalis) wch Mr Leukar's care & a little of a Gardiner's pains may increase in 2 years time to half a hundred".

From London

The story starts with Matthew Nelson, Citizen of London, a member of the merchant Tailors Company living in the parish of Christchurch London^{21*} He married first Anne Aldridge in 1620 who bore him six children, John, Anne, Matthew, Mary, Martha and Edward. He re-married a widow, Mary Thomason who had two daughters Anne and Rebecca. Matthew died in 1630 in London, leaving a substantial will divided between his six children and two step daughters. Edward the youngest and the product of his first marriage, was only seven when his father died and his portion consisting of land and tenements in Staffordshire, was left to his uncle Nicholas Aldredge for his life and thence to Edward. Edward, who was to be brought up and educated by his elder brother John, was also left £50 to be paid to him at the age of twenty-one and meantime into the Chamber of London.

They were a strongly Royalist family with fervent connection with the Church of England²² and Edward was brought up to follow them, ultimately into the King's Army where he enlisted as a cornet aged 16 He was in Collonel Sir Jacob Astley's troop, with Lt Col. Sir Nicholas Selwin and Bernard Astley as S. Major. The Earl of Northumberland, was Captain general for this expedition in 1640 and the above information is taken according to the Muster Roll after the Retreat from Newcastle into Yorkshire.²³ So we know that Edward fought in the second Bishop's War on the side of the King and his ledger stone tells us that when his obligation was over he left the army. At this stage he was a young man and probably started his legal training. His grandson's memorial tells us that he was learned in the civil law²⁴.

I haven't been able to ascertain what exactly brought them to Bramfield but there is circumstantial evidence to account for their settlement in the area. First many Suffolk heads of families were members of the Fishmonger's Company and many of the young people were apprenticed to Fihmongers. By this time membership of a livery company did not mean that they were engaged in any particular trade so Matthew Nelson may not have been involved in trading in cloth or

clothing any more than John Hayne was involved in selling fish. These people were important Citizens of London and so moved in the same circles. There seems to have been an East Anglian/legal connection in that Matthew Nelson's will was witnessed, by among others, John Hayne, (later his son-in-law) a notary. John Hayne, born in Chelmsford, served as Prime Warden of The Fishmonger's Company ²⁵ in 1682 and later his daughter Mary, married Reginald Rabett (a lawyer) of Bramfield, becoming Bridgett's grandmother. So it is probable that Edward, the first of the Bramfield Nelsons, could have met Mary through a family and professional connection. John Hayne is an interesting forbear of Bridgett's being a substantial citizen of London and leaving a will in which he leaves to all his family individually, books from his library. Most important-

All the rest and residue of my psonall estate I give unto my granddaughter Mary Rabet (Bridgett's mother).

The atmosphere of London's puritanical society was oppressive and uncomfortable to a Royalist and that may have been another reason Edward decided to move to Suffolk in spite of the area's reputation for Puritanical sternness in the middle of the seventeenth century. London also contained the ever-present threat of pestilence. Being in the centre of the City much of the family property would have perished in the Great Fire. Taking into account that there was no banking system until the very end of the 17th century the only place to invest money was in land and property. A young man with an inheritance, intending to marry and raise a family would be looking out for some land and a house.

Having traced the possible route by which Edward Nelson came to Bramfield and given him a reason for leaving the capital and his army career having come to an end, it may seem strange to come to Suffolk at all, considering that the Eastern Association with its strong Puritan influence had been active here, and it may be significant that he did not arrive until the Protectorate was running into problems. The Cokes at Thorington Hall are not mentioned on lists of Puritan families and had eschewed the Eastern Association; those landowners who had joined had become increasingly less supportive of the Commonwealth Administration by 1653. In fact Roger Coke of Thorington was party to a Royalist plot with Colonel William Rolleston in 1657. When news came that the King Charles II was preparing to land in England Rolleston suggested that Coke should go to London to buy arms which were brought to his house in Suffolk by ship. The house was searched but although no arms were found, Coke's father and brother were arrested²⁶. Locally in the next village therefore there were fellow Royalists.

Bramfield church had shown resistance to the acceptance of Bartholomew Allerton (see below) as a replacement for their evicted parson (Thomas Wright) in 1644. Certainly in Bramfield, the people, or anyway those who influenced things, were very ready to welcome back a 'disgraced' parson (in 1660) so in spite of the ongoing grumbling on the Nelson stones about the state of the Protestant church, it must have suited Edward to leave London and settle and found a branch of the family here.

Edward next appears at the age of 30 in 1653, in Bramfield acquiring land by private sale²⁷. This consisted of, a house, a toft, 40 acres of land, 8 acres of meadow and 34 acres of pasture and common of pasture in Bramfield and Wissett.

presumably living in Bramfield Hall. True this was before the Queen Anne enlargement of the Hall.

Coming to Suffolk for an avowed Royalist in the period following the execution of Charles I could have been problematic. A catalogue of possibly unwelcome changes to some members of the community had been unleashed on the people of Bramfield. Only nine years before, William Dowsing had left his mark on Bramfield

Entry 238. Bramfield, April 9. 24 superstitious pictures; one crucifix, and a picture of Christ; and 12 angels on the roof; and divers Jesus's, in capital letters; and the steps to be levelled, by Sir Robert Brook³⁰.

In 1644, 4 pieces of memorial brass which had been taken up from the gravestones were sold in 1649 to mend the windows which may have been smashed by Dowsing's men in order to eradicate the 'superstitious pictures'. Thomas Wright the vicar³¹ had been sequestered from the living and in his place was Bartholomew Allerton (a passenger on the Mayflower), who had returned from America. Bartholomew would presumably have been a passionate Puritan added to which he married a member of the Fairfax family of Rumburgh. Nearby an Independent group of worshippers were active in the Cookley and Walpole area obtaining permanent premises in a farmer's house in Walpole. Lady Brooke of Cockfield Hall Yoxford (the wife of the very Robert who was to level the steps in Bramfield Church was a fervent and active Puritan.³² So all things considered it would not seem an auspicious time for an ardent Royalist and adherent of Church of England to be coming to Bramfield to marry and raise a family. Perhaps this was a common state of affairs in the turbulent times of the Commonwealth.

The first we hear of Edward's public duty is as surveyor of the highways in Bramfield in 1656³³. By now he was 33 years old, living in Suffolk and a well established ratepayer and titled as a gentleman. In 1658 Edward married Mary Rabett. Mary's brother Reginald had married Mary Hayne daughter of the aforementioned John.

Edward and Mary had three children; Lambert (Bridgett's father, born in 1660, her uncle Edward in 1670, and her aunt Bridgett in 1672. Also living with them was Mary's mother Bridgett, widowed in 1654 who spent her last 23 years with them. During this time Bramfield Hall was occupied by Mary's widowed brother Reginald and his second wife Jane with their children, Reginald, and earlier, Mary. Brook Hall (the other substantial property) was lived in successively from 1640, when Ralph Rabett paid ship money*, by William Dunston and John Pulham leaving the only other significant house Holly Farm, as a likely place for the Nelson family to settle. Later wills show that Uncle Edward the last of the Nelsons owned the land which to this day goes with Holly Farm. I am very frustrated that I cannot find for sure the property in which the family dwelt but perhaps as there was so much uncertainty and fragility of life, periods may have been spent in Bramfield Hall with their Rabett cousins.

Having established where they most probably lived we can presume that life would have revolved around the close family ties with the people at the Hall. As I have gleaned from reading contemporary novels much time was spent walking, probably visiting friends and family every day thus developing close family ties. In the twenty-first century we tend to live such dispersed lives, when even seeing one's children involves a major expedition it is difficult to envisage a daily round of a walk and a visit to one's nearest and dearest as the only way to relieve the tedium. Much time was spent by the women of the household supervising the duties of the dairy, the brewing and the poultry. Leisure was filled with teaching the girls to read and possibly write, sewing and reading religious books.

Bramfield joined in the nationwide fast on October 10th 1666 and a day of Thanksgiving noted by John Evelyn.

Between the years of 1680 and 1681 tragedy hit the Nelson family. Bridgett Rabett (Bridgett's great grandmother) and her Grandfather and Grandmother died leaving Lambert 21, (Bridgett's father), Edward 11 (Bridgett's uncle) and Bridgett 9 (Bridgett's aunt) parentless. Lambert was already away at Cambridge so it is possible that the two younger children lived at Bramfield Hall with Reginald and Jane Rabett and their two children Jane and Mary, who were their first cousins. Edward, her uncle later attended Woodbridge School matriculating in 1687 and followed his brother to Emmanuel College Cambridge in 1687 BA 1690 –MA 1694 .

It is difficult to imagine life without the constant stream of news that we get nowadays from newspapers, radio and television but I wonder how connected the people here felt to the troubles of London or the problems of Government or King, in the mid 17th century? The following event though, needed no newspaper report as it happened right on Bramfield's doorstep -the scene of **extremely** noisy and sometimes **chaotic warfare**, the Three Dutch wars.

There was deep-seated commercial antagonism between the Dutch and English over expansionist ambitions concerning exotic cargoes of spices, slave running and land holdings in far flung corners of the earth and from 1652 for 20years our harbours were hardly free of naval activity.

Battle honours went to and fro between the Dutch and English and whenever there was a lull in the fighting Dutch prisoners would be put ashore which caused alarm among the inhabitants because of the fear of the spread of plague which was rampant in Holland. Sometimes casualties were horrific and in the church accounts for 1666 – 1667 we find the churchwardens paying out one shilling to 9 seamen "that came by page". That is, with a paper certifying that they were genuine sailors who had been turned off their ship and were making their way from parish to parish on their way home or to find another ship. The navy was not yet fully professional.

In one reprisal the Dutch actually landed at Felixstowe. The militia seemed to be sent from crisis point to crisis point and Sir John Rous of Henham took **his** company to Southwold. It is possible that Bramfield was represented in that group.

On May 28th1672, at dawn, the Anglo -French fleet under the command of the Duke of York and the Earl of Sandwich were caught napping having put into port for refitting and many of the men were asleep in Southwold's ale houses. In tremendous haste the English tried to hoist sail and manoeuvre away from the shore but the enemy opened fire. This was clearly visible from the shore and the noise tremendous and would have been very audible to Bramfield residents. The Royal James was blown up by a Dutch fireship igniting her magazine with the loss of the Earl of Sandwich. Thus ended the Battle of Solebay. This was deemed inconclusive but brings home to us the close connection there was between the east coast and the continent both for trade and war.

Lambert Nelson (the second generation of Bramfield Nelsons) married his cousin Mary Rabett in 1683 and probably also lived in Holly Farm and giving a home to his younger brother and sister. They seemed all set now for a happy domestic life in a quiet Suffolk village. Lambert was busily occupied in his local legal employment, over-seeing the never-ending land transactions, wills, manorial court business and church affairs. He carried out legal work for various Norfolk and Suffolk families including the Le Neves and Knyvets.

Five children were born; Bridgett the eldest, baptised July 26th 1694, John baptised October 4th 1695 and only living a bare 7 months, Lambert baptised September 29th 1696 and, according to his father's ledger stone dying not long before his father, Anne baptised February 9th 1697 and the youngest Edward baptised January 24th 1699. The Rabett family, John and Mary, uncle and aunt to the Nelson children, was also growing, Reginald baptised a few months before Bridgett, George in the next year and Frances, Sarah, Elizabeth and Prudence followed until 1701. Bramfield seemed to be full of newborn infants and growing children, all very closely related. I imagine that the children spent a good deal of time

together and shared lessons. The parish priest would have drilled the older children in their catechism. The girls would have spent most of their time learning the skills of needlework. Some of this would have been decorative but shirt making and household linen was considered a necessary accomplishment. Girls were taught to read and write and I suspect that Aunt Bridgett might have had a hand in this. Bridgett's signature on her brother's will shows a confident hand. In all the wills I have studied there has been no mention of any musical instruments but it is very likely that musical teaching would have been part of life for these families. The young lives of all the girls were serious preparation for finding a marriage partner.

Just a small note telling us something of the social life of the neighbourhood from a letter written by Mary Knyvett of Darsham Hall to her brother Oliver le Neve at Great Withchurchingham.

July 11th 1702

"full of company at cards according to custom. We now have with us my cousin Knyvetts family & my nephew Glemham. We keep up our visiting nights and of Friday conclude at Mr Becks which I'm glad of. I dont love being out so late & have the toothache by (I thank God) nothing worse. Tonight we are invited to supper with John Ralphe where we meet Cockerell family which you may imagine is no small pleasure to me.

There is no mention of the Nelson family which may be just coincidence though Lambert (Bridgett's father) is cited in another letter as copying out her brother's will. Perhaps this may account for Bridgett's later difficulty in moving in the right circles.

Events went well for Lambert, Mary and their family until Mary died suddenly of apoplexy (ledger stone no.8) in August 1710 leaving him with four children Bridgett, Lambert, Edward and Ann. At this stage it must be pointed out that Lambert Nelson and Mary Rabett were first cousins and this may have had the effect of influencing their daughter's untimely death by the same attack. This was such an unexpected death when the most feared bringer of sadness was smallpox which was virulently active during the 18th century.

I think this must have been when Aunt Bridgett took on the duties of wife and mother (tho never married). This lady, if her ledgerstone (13) is anything to go by, must have been a real bundle of joy to live with but not unusual for religious women of that time and certainly as recorded on many memorials. The eighteenth century was generally regarded as a seriously religious time following the rigours of the middle of the seventeenth century but the impression given in the Two East Anglian Diaries, listed below, of a couple of gentlemen seems to show that the sins of the male members of society were easily forgiven by attendance at church the next Sunday.

We must now consider the position of a single woman during this period. It was imperative both for her, and her family, that she should get married and to set up a household of her own. Unless she was an asset as a housekeeper in the case of a mother's death, she would have been considered a drain on the family's finances. A hundred years later Jane Austen reminds us of the fact when Elizabeth Bennett's friend Charlotte Lucas who was 27, says "I only ask a comfortable home..." when about to marry the impossibly pompous Mr Collins. According to Jane Austen, Charlotte was happy keeping out of Mr Collins's way and tending to her poultry and arranging the house to her own satisfaction.

Here was Bridgett aged 16, just when her mother would have been busily making plans and strategies for getting her suitably married and she was left with a busy, distraught father and in the care of a sickly, maiden aunt. Between her mother's death and her father dying in 1710 her brother, the eldest boy, Lambert also died.

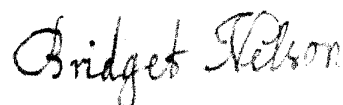
What would Bridgett's life have been like at this point? Her father had business with local gentry but according to his stone (9) did not engage with the men of high office who might have widened his influence and indeed have opened up avenues of families with eligible

sons. I hope that once again the Rabett family will have come to the rescue with company and social support but sadly her uncle John Rabett died in 1702 leaving his wife Mary with a large young family. Bridgett's aunt Mary took over the family home of Bramfield Hall but re-married in 1708 and may have spent time in Great Ellingham where her new husband John Coleman lived.

Poor, poor Bridgett! Not only had her mother died when she was 16 but 4 years later her father died when she was 20, and she was then, with her younger brother and sister, most probably under the care of her maiden aunt Bridgett, who according to her memorial * *She freely underwent the Care of a wife and a Mother And often the Fatigue of a True Friend.* How was this girl ever to meet anyone suitable to marry? Living with a *devout member of the established church who was often afflicted with great sickness*, doesn't sound a hopeful situation. Maybe she was not a beauty, maybe she had inherited her father's reluctance to 'network' and was shy but she must have led a sad and lonely life. Also she was not an heiress until her brother died. When you consider the number of her family who had died in quick succession she would hardly have time to be out of mourning. She had family through the Nelsons and Haynes in London so perhaps opportunities did arise for socialising in the capital during her twenties but the continual threat of smallpox could well have been a deterrent to a country girl unused to mixing with strangers.

Edward Nelson III, her brother died a sad death. (10) Perhaps Uncle Edward hoped he would make up for the un-ambitious life his father had led but he obviously tried hard to take a serious part in the civil life of the County. His health was fragile and he died after catching a chill on one of his business journeys. He was an Under Sheriff of the County which required him to travel about on the legal work of the High Sheriff who was Hustings Wilkinson of Linstead.

When Edward died Bridgett became an heir to the accumulated wealth of the Nelson's of Bramfield. One hundred and fifty acres copyhold land in Blyford, Bulcamp and Henham, and five acres in Wenhaston. Seventy acres in Bramfield and a freehold messuage and barns etc.³⁴ This is all noted on her ledger stone. As well as these holdings there may also be land in Kelsale inherited from her mother.



Bridgett's signature on her brother's will

Did she suddenly become eligible? Anyway after two years Bridgett married Arthur Applewhaite. A marriage Bond was made securing all the contents of the Capital house to Bridgett.³⁵

So she was already thirty-five before she made this unhappy marriage on December 31st 1728 at Thorington Church. Unhappy that is, according to the person who was the author of the ledger slabs. Many marriages at this time were of convenience and the new wife might be considered a useful appendage for a bachelor or widower.

Marriage. The following two quotations bring some idea of the prospects facing parents when looking for a suitable match for a daughter.

Lawrence Stone *Road to Divorce: England 1530 – 1987* (Oxford, 1990), p13

her property, both real and personal, her earnings, and her children all passed on her marriage into the absolute control of her husband. The latter could use her sexually as he wished, and beat her (within reason) or confine her for disobedience to any orders.

A married woman was the nearest approximation in a free society to a slave

P102

Anonymous author *The Art of Governing a Wife, with Rules for Bachelors* (1747), pp44,55. wrote in 1747 that the husband 'must govern with absolute power' while the duty of wives was 'not...to understand, but to obey'

Notwithstanding the unlikely possibility of a love match, when all the intricacies of the marriage settlement still have to be addressed, it was a delicate situation requiring astute management. Widowers in search of a 'housekeeper' were a very common solution taken by families with an ageing spinster on their hands. Often the proximity of two bordering estates was taken into account but where there was a surfeit of girls to be married off and paucity of eligible bachelors or widowers the amount that could be scraped together for a suitable dowry could be a difficulty. And the two parties still had to have the opportunity to meet. This might have been Bridgett's problem. That is, to meet the right man; obviously Arthur Applewhaite was not 'Mr Right'. Having considered the lack of suitably helpful women in the Nelson's circle I have always wondered in the light of the fulsome ledger slabs extolling the minutiae of their lives and the complete extinction of the line in Bramfield, was there a desire to paint a picture of a family that was not altogether well regarded in the neighbourhood? Perhaps Bridgett was not seen as a potential bride being a dependent female. Arthur and Bridgett would certainly have known each other being in adjacent parishes so it seems obvious that something triggered the plunge into marriage but the words 'at length the sole heiress' maybe pertinent.

What sort of a man was Arthur Applewhaite? He was not exactly 'gentry', though Applewhaites of Suffolk had been concerned with the plantation trade in the West Indies. He may not have been bringing much in the way of wealth to the marriage because reading his probate inventory it seems a marriage bond was made which strictly made a distinct division between the goods belonging to Arthur and those of Bridgett. He was definitely under the influence of his father and brother who may have been the instigators of the marriage when Bridgett became an heiress but it is they who persuaded him not to leave a will. What was the purpose of that? His father was bailiff for various owners of the Heveningham estate. The Hall that we can see today was not started until the 1770s and replaced an earlier much more modest property. In the early part of the century Arthur's father would have been quite a powerful man locally, enforcing rent rises and dealing with all the tenanted farms on behalf of absent landlords. Probably not a very popular man though the family filled the post of Churchwarden for successive years..

I leave to your imagination the circumstances that forced Bridgett to undergo the marriage with 'incredible patience' and having read above the powers that a husband had over his wife it is not surprising to find there is evidence in the Ipswich Journal on December 9th 1725 of a case that shows she was not alone in this unhappy situation.

'On Sat last, a cause was heard before the Chancellor of London at Doctors Commons, bet a gentlewoman & her husband, for Cruelty & Adultery on his Part. The Court gave Sentence of Separation & Divorce, and ordered him to pay her 350l. a year Alimony.

Her troubles were not at an end even with Arthur's death. Leaving no will, all the land in Bramfield and Blyford had to be regained through a Chancery Suit – a deliberate plan to cause more trouble. One can only imagine the local gossip!

With no evidence at all of how she spent the 'freedom of an easy and unblemished widowhood' it did give her at last, at the age of forty some independence and relief from the unhappiness of her previous life. Perhaps her Nelson or Hayne relatives in London took her from the quietness of Bramfield and who knows, 'her intended' may have been from far away.

And indeed I hope that having the choice of being an independent widow or a wife may mean that she was about to embark on a well considered happy marriage. I do not know who her "intended" was but the words 'catch't and supported by her intended' does sound like a caring relationship. There was an unmarried cousin George Rabett, very close in age and living locally, who remained a bachelor until his death in 1766 so might have been a close and gracious partner. The description of her apoplectic fit (death forbade the banns), shows I think that it is realistic to suppose, that it happened during the reading of the banns. It is very moving and in our dramatic presentation made a powerful end to her story. It should not go un-noticed that her ledger stone is marked only with the Nelson arms.

To finish their story, Edward Nelson II, Bridgett's uncle born in 1670 remained a bachelor and became Bridgett's heir (though no Will nor Inventory can be found, probably due to her sudden death at a relatively young age) and eventually left every thing to Reginald Rabett his great nephew. Any wealth inherited by the Nelsons through marriage from the Rabetts went back to the family.

A learned man he was admitted at Emmanuel College in 1687 having been schooled at Woodbridge.

He matriculated in 1687 BA 1690 –1 MA 1694 and was also an attorney. He seems to have shouldered the pride of the Nelson family and made sure to the very last that they should be remembered in a very dignified and positive way by creating his memorial in 1734 and erecting it in 1736, though not dying until 1744 still fulminating about "Ministerial high Treason".

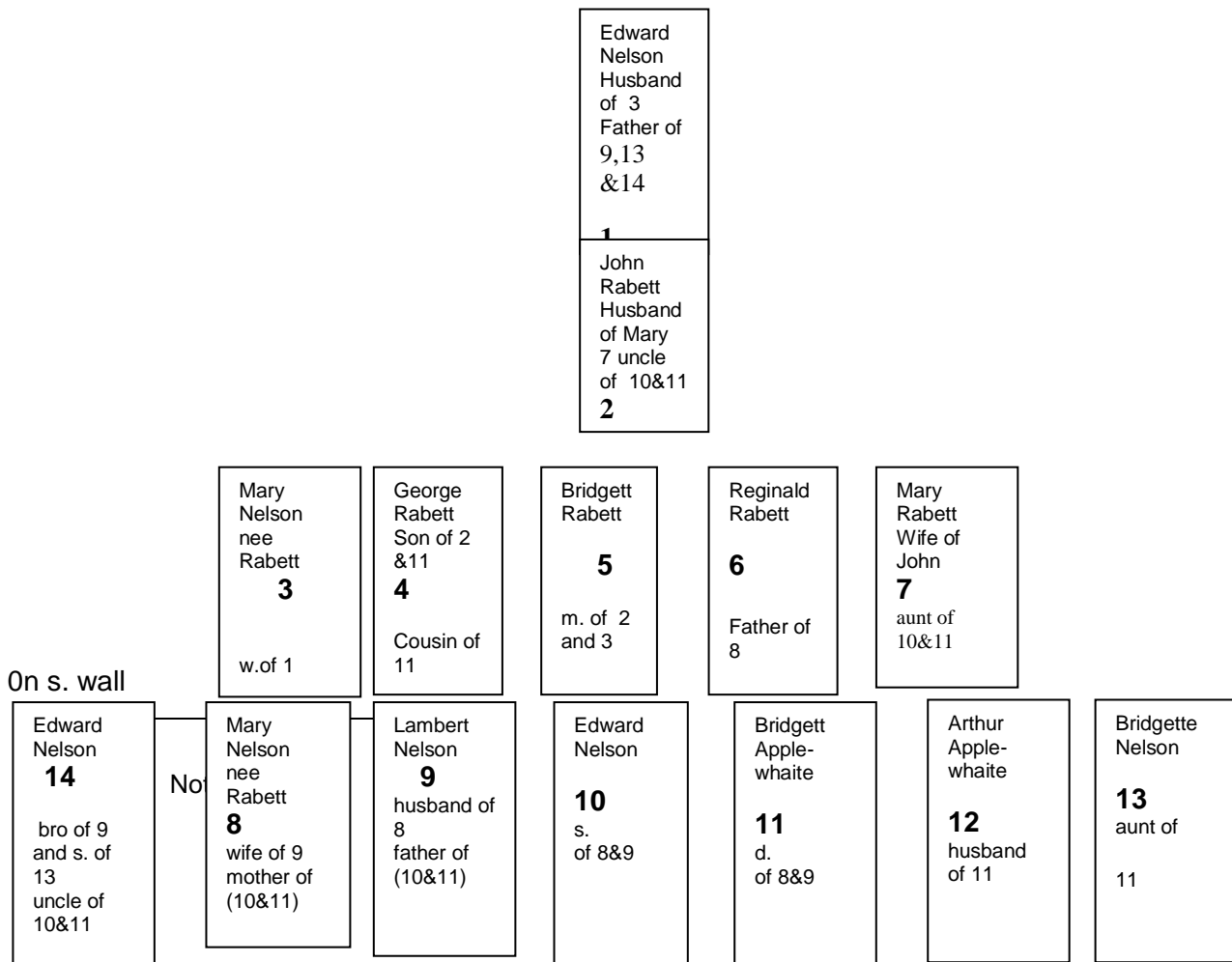
In conclusion this tale of an unfortunate girl of good family for whom luck seems to have looked the other way was not an unusual one in the early eighteenth century. Making a marriage of any sort, usually engineered by powerful male members of a girl's family seems to have been preferable to being unmarried.

Here on the ledger stones in Bramfield church is such a story.

Rabett (rabbits) and Nelson arms as on Mary Nelson's (nee Rabett) ledger stone



Appendix 1
Plan of ledger stones in the chancel of St Andrew's Church Bramfield



Watercolour painting in St Andrew's vestry, artist unknown, date before 1872 re-ordering of the church.

² *The Ecclesiologist*, VI N.S. III) 1846 page 240

A correspondent (from whom we hope to have more communications) has sent us two monumental inscriptions of so very revolting and profane a kind that we really cannot defile our pages by printing them. The one is from S. Nicholas, Great Yarmouth in memory of a man who died of cancer. The other commemorates a woman who died of apoplexy and is in S. Andrew, Bramfield Suffolk. Why do no incumbents keep a better watch against the erection of such defilements as these: and why are such not removed?

³ Ipswich Journal 5 December 1882 British Newspaper Archive

⁴ Authorised Arms 1860 Vol 2 page 139/40 Sir Bernard Burke.

⁵ S.R.O. (I) Churchwardens Accounts FC66/A1/1

⁶ ed. Rev Thomas Hill 1894 *Registers of Bramfield 1539 – 1596 and 1693 – 1889*.

⁷ Ledgerstone no.1 line 8

⁸ Will Bridgett Rabett SRO (I) 1c?AA1/110/155

⁹ Average cost £6

Engraving and Carriage &c for Mrs Barbara Strutt

as p Receipt appear 09.5.0 (£708.46 in today's money)The receipts survive and give the price of the slab, £5, the cost of engraving the arms and inscription, £2 3s, and transport from King's Lynn to East Barsham, £1. Most of the remaining £1 2s was for polishing and 'laying up' (storage?).

Paston, Norfolk, to Samuel Claydon (cost £6 6s)

¹⁰ Ledger stone no.14

Monument on chancel N wall St Andrew's Church

¹¹ Turnpike Act Journals of House of Commons 1785 Vol. 40 p.990

¹² Rabett estate map 1745 SRO(I) HD42/332

¹³ SRS 47 *John Kirby's Suffolk His Maps and Roadbooks*

¹⁴ Survey Bramfield alias Brookhall 1478/9 Mettingham College SRO (I) HB26 371/71

¹⁵ Ipswich Journal SRO (I) microfilm N1

¹⁶ Edward Nelson Cambridge Alumni venn.lib.com.ac.uk/cgi-bii

¹⁷ Reginald Rabett admitted Grays Inn 19.4.1648

¹⁸ Calendar of Correspondence relating to the family of Oliver le Neve NRO. *ed. the late*

Francis Rye

¹⁹ Letters from Mary Knyvett to her son Oliver le Neve. NOR KNY895-927 372x6

²⁰ Will Matthew Nelson 1630 NA Perog Canterbury PROB11/159 Ref

²¹ Ledger stone no.1

²² Rushworth's Historical Collection Pt 11 Vol 2 p.1243

²³ Ledger stone no.10

²⁴ John Hayne elected Prime Warden of Fishmonger's Company June 29 1680. Court minutes 1666-1683 (CLC/L/FE/B/002/MS05571/001

Portrait described in Reginald Rabett's entry in Burkes Authorised Arms 1860

²⁵ Blackwood, Gordon, *Tudors and Stuart Suffolk*, p.194 (Lancaster, 2001)

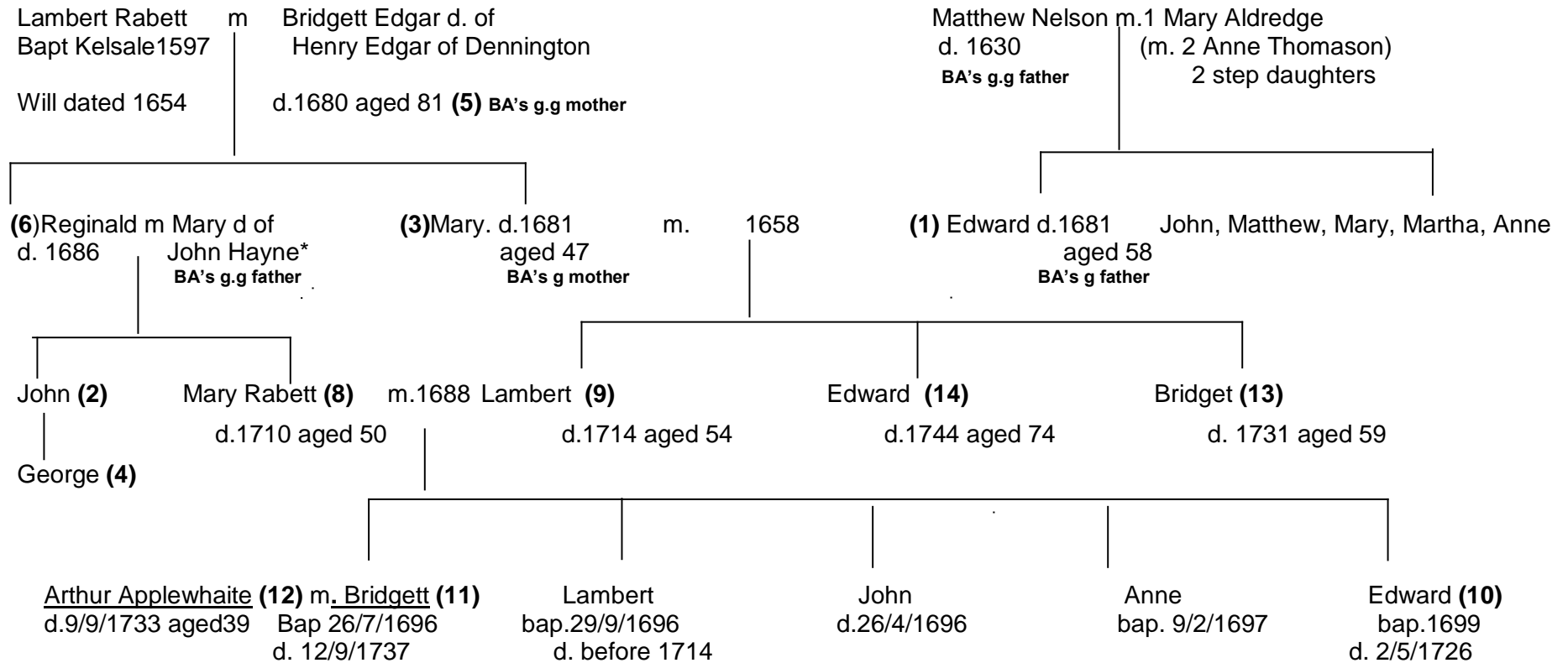
²⁶ Edward Nelson land D.E.Davy 143 R Indenture

²⁷ Reginald Rabett will Bramfield Manor Court Book HD1433/6

²⁸

Appendix II

Bramfield Nelson and Rabett family tree



* John Hayne b.1604 in Chelmsford witnessed Matthew Nelson's will in 1630 married Anna Thomason 9.8.1635 Matthew's stepdaughter denoting a close connection in the City.

Appendix III

(1.) Edward Nelson (Bridgett's grandfather) translated from the latin

Here lies Edward Nelson, the son of Matthew Nelson, (will 1631)

citizen of London, and of Mary his wife,

the daughter of Roger Aldredge, gentleman.

He was born on the 30th day of May in the year of the lord 1624.

He had parents, each one most blameless,

from whom he learnt when of mature years

(under the recent most treasonable despotism)

to serve with his whole heart the Church of England and cause of the King.

His fate at last called him from a military career to public duty,

in which long experienced and at length by which exhausted,

deprived of the partner of his marriage

and wearied of existence, he put off this life on the 10th day of October

in the year of the Lord 1681

in the 58th year of his age.

(2) John Rabett Bridgett's uncle

Under this stone lyeth the body of JOHN RABETT
Gent (Eldest son of Reginald Rabett late
of this Parish Gent. Deceased & of Mary his wife Eldest
Daughter of JOHN HAYNE, late of Islington in
ye County of Middlesex Esq.) who by MARY his
wife one if the daughters of JOHN CORNWALLIS
late of Wingfield in this County Esq. Had Six
Children now living Reginald, George, Mary, Frances,
Elizabeth and Prudence which sd JOHN RABETT
changed his life for Immortality the 25th day
of September Anno Dom
1702.
Aetatis Sua 39.
Disce Mori

(3 Mary Nelson nee Rabett (Bridgett's grandmother)

here lies the body of
mary the wife of Edward Nelson
By whom she had three children

Lambert, Edward and Bridget
 and after 23 years of marriage left a mournful widower
 the 23rd day of August dni 1681 aged 47
 A daughter dutifull, a loving wife
 a careful mother happy in her life
 longer to us these blessings ffate deny'd
 her mother's urn she shut & then she dy'd.

and from the Latin

Stay, traveller, let your eyes, dry from much weeping, flow. A true woman has died, a rare woman lies beneath. She, happy for long but ailing at length, rejoices. She left a daughter and soon the dutiful child, sadly surviving, had closed the open tomb as the colic closed the life of her dear one and here you have the sad stone to bear witness.

(4) George Rabett Bridgett's cousin

GEORGE RABETT Gent
 Youngest Son of JOHN RABETT
 Of Bramfield Hall Esq
 Died 29th of Dec 1765
 Aged 70 years

(5) Bridgett Rabett (Bridgett's g.grandmother, mother of Mary R and grandmother of Mary R)

bridgett ye daughter
 of henry edgar of dynnington
 gent & wife of Lambert rabett
 of kellishall (who were interr,d
 in ye churches there) by whom
 she had reginald her son & mary the wife of edward nelson, with
 whom she lived 23 years in her
 widowhood, piously returned
 her dust from whence it came
 & her spirit to god who gave it
 ye 8th day of January ad

(6) Reginald Rabett Bridgett's grandfather

Here lies Reginald son of Lambert Rabett of Kelsale
 & of Bridgett his wife, who married Mary

the daughter & heiress of John Hayne
 of Islington Citizen of London
 who he left to survive him with numerous offspring.
 He was a man most dear & equally most loving to his own.
 He died on 25th day of July in the year of the Lord
 1686,
 in the 61st year of his life.

(7) Mary Rabett nee Cornwallis Bridgett's aunt

Here lies interred the Remains
 Of MARY the late wife of
 JOHN RABETT ESQ.
 And Daughter of
 JOHN CORNWALLIS of
 Wingfield Esq who departed
 This life March the 4th 1718
 Aged 53 years

(8) Mary Nelson (nee Rabett Bridgett's mother) translation from the Latin

Here are buried the remains of MARY the second child of REGINALD RABETT Gentleman and afterwards the most dear consort of LAMBERT NELSON, Gentleman, who, (after more than twenty-two years spent by no means unhappily in the fellowship of marriage) carried off finally by an apoplectic fit, yielded to unforeseen death on the 4th day of August in the year of the Lord 1710 in the 50th year of her age.

(9) Lambert Nelson (Bridgett's father)

The body of
 LAMBERT NELSON Late of this parish Gent
 Was buried here Oct ye 4th AD 1714
 Aged 54
 He married Mary the daughter of REGINALD RABETT
 Of the Parish Gent
 Who left him with four Children
 Lambert buried before his Father
 BRIDGETT ANNE & EDWARD
 He was a Man of bright Parts, Sound Judgement,
 Good Breeding and Pleasant Conversation;
 Master of the Learned Languages & all ye Liberal Arts,
 Yet a very Valuable & right honest Attorney:

He was Second to None in the Strokes of the Pen
 Or Turns of Witt
 A True Son of the Church and a Conscientious Subject
 Of the Crown of England:
 In either of which Capacities,
 He was fit for any Emploiment
 Had he been less Reserv'd himself,
 Or better known in time to any Great Minister,
 Whose Height might expose him
 To the Necessity of leaning Sometimes
 Upon so Steady a Propp,
 And the Bosom of so Resolute a Confidant

(10) Edward Nelson (Bridgett's brother)

Translation from the Latin

Reader under your feet are buried the remains of Edward Nelson, most recently gentleman of this district, who had lying close by a father, Lambert Nelson, and a grandfather, Edward Nelson, (both) skilled in the civil laws of England, with which he himself was not unacquainted. For the purpose of increasing his experience of which in the last but one year of his life he readily but unwisely took upon himself the under-shrievalty of this county – for unequal to dealing with such a mixture of business on behalf of both himself and of others, a young man already weakened by illness and by the wasting of his body, he caught by night a severe and feverish chill and, afflicted by the daily pressure of corrosive care and daily depression, he succumbed to a debilitating cough and raging fever and a daily wasting away. Scarcely at length had he discharged his office with the greatest praise than eaten away by consumption of the lung (oh sorrow) he died. Nor had he been given his Quietus in the King's treasury than under this stone he obtained his eternal quietus, finally it could be said fit were not that he will be roused from the sleep of the tomb, to be awoken, revived and restored by the sound of the last trump at the second coming of our Redeemer once again to rejoice in the union of body and the soul after their long separation when he will receive the reward for his deeds in their former union according to the righteous and heart-searching judgement of Christ. He died on May 2nd in the year of our Lord 1726 in the 27th year of his age.

(11) Bridgett Applewhaite (nee Nelson)

Between the remains of her brother EDWARD
 and of her husband ARTHUR
 Here lies the body of BRIDGETT APPLEWHAITE
 Once BRIDGETT NELSON
 After the Fatigues of a married life

Born by her with incredible Patience
 For Four Years and three Quarter bating three Weeks;
 And after the Enjoyment of the Glorious Freedom
 Of an Easy and Unblemished Widowhood
 For four Years and Upwards
 She Resolved to run the Risk of a Second Marriage-Bed
 But DEATH forbad the Banns.
 And having with an Apoplectic Dart,
 (The same instrument with which he had formerly
 Despatched he Mother)
 Touched the most Vital part of the Brain;
 She must have fallen Directly to the Ground,
 (as one Thunder – strook)
 If she had not been Catch't and Supported
 By her intended Husband
 Of which invisible Bruise
 After a struggle for above Sixty Hours,
 With that Grand Enemy to Life,
 (But the certain and merciful Friend to Helpless Old Age,)
 In Terrible Convulsions Plaintive Groans, or stupefying
 Sleep Without recovery of her Speech, or Senses,
 She Dyed the 12th day of Sept in ye Year of our Lord 1737
 and
 Of her own age 44
 Behold I Come as a Thief Rev: 16th Ch 15th V
 But Oh! Thou Source of pious Cares
 Strict Judge without Regard
 Grant, tho'we Go hence Unawares
 We Go not Unprepared. Amen

(12) Arthur Applewhaite (Bridgett's husband)

Here lies the Body of ARTHUR APPLEWHAITE
 Second Son of HENRY APPLEWHAITE
 Of Huntingfield in this County Gent
 (Who was Favourite and Bayliff to
 HENRY HEVENINGHAM, HENRY HERON,
 And JOHN BENCE Deceased, and remains
 So to ALEXANDER BENCE and GEORGE
 DASHWOOD All Esquires, and Successively
 Owners of the Heveningham-Hall Estate)
 Who died on the ninth day of September
 A:D 1731 And in the 39th Year of his Age
 He Married BRIDGETT the Eldest Daughter
 And at length, Sole Heiress of LAMBERT
 NELSON late of this Parish Gent, By whom
 He had no Issue. And to whom (Having by
 His Father's Instigation made no will)
 He left no Legacy, But a Chancery-
 Suit with his Eldest Brother For her

Own paternal estates In this Town,
And Blyford

(13) Bridgett Nelson (Bridgett's aunt)

The Body of Mrs Bridgett Nelson
Born in this Parish June 6th AD 1672
Was buried here September the 19th 1731
Tho never Married
She freely underwent the Care of a wife and a Mother
And often the Fatigue of a True Friend
For any of her acquaintance in Sickness or Distress,
She was a Devout Member of the establishd Church, Charitable, Prudent
Chast, Active and remarkably Temperate;
Yet often Afflicted with great Sicknesses
And for above three Years before her Death with a Dropsy
[Of which she died having been tapped five times
And for the last fortnight of her life suffering
Torments intolerable
Had she not been supported by this solid rock
(Discernible indeed by the twilight of reason
But the rising of the Sun of Righteousness
Rendered very conspicuous & beautiful)
That there is (in vindication of Divine providence in relation
To the unequal distribution of Justice to Mankind here)
of necessity there must be, a future state, or a personal
Compensation of endless rewards for the Just,
And utter woes for the wicked
In proportion
To the universal success, exorbitant wealth amiable pleasures
Which the favourite sons of Fortune enjoyed
And to the discouraging wants, Pain, Sickness & various distresses
Which the patient children of virtue endured
In there respective States of probation on earth.
If simple prosperity and adversity here
Shall surely meet with to enact a counterbalance there;
How much more shall Piety, benevolence and (eyed?) Virtue on the one
hand
And (?) Tyranny and unlimited Treachery on the other.
Reader cast up, then trembling weigh thyself.]

The words in [] taken from the Church notes made by Henry Jermyn
and David Elisha Davy. They are now hidden under the altar steps.

(14) Edward Nelson (Bridgett's uncle)

Translation from the Latin

After 74 years and 258 days in the course of the pilgrimage of this life
EDWARD NELSON M.A.,

Taking leave of this existence, has returned to the earth from which he sprang, in this parish, close to the outside of the south-east corner of this church, on the 18th day of November in the year of the Incarnation of Christ 1744. Whose soul, firmly reunited to his body by the undoubted Resurrection, will be openly called to account: to whom be gracious, O Judge enthroned on high. Amen

Not knowing the length of his days, he ordered this stanza in English to be added to the above.

He lov'd his Country, scorned the bribing Court
Yet hated Ministerial high –Treason
A Man of Truth, and steady faith in short
Not endless Cavils, or presumptuous Reason

Epitaph made 1734 AD

Monument erected 1736

(6) Reginald Rabett Bridgett's grandfather

Here lies Reginald son of Lambert Rabett of Kelsale & of Bridgett his wife, who married Mary the daughter & heiress of John Hayne of Islington Citizen of London who he left to survive him with numerous offspring. He was a man most dear & equally most loving to his own. He died on 25th day of July in the year of the Lord 1686, in the 61st year of his life.

(2) John Rabett Bridgett's uncle

Under this stone lyeth the body of JOHN RABETT Gent (Eldest son of Reginald Rabettlate of this Parish Gent. Deceased & of Mary his wife Eldest Daughter of JOHN HAYNE, late of Islington in ye County of Middlesex Esq.) who by MARY his wife one if the daughters of JOHN CORNWALLIS late of Wingfield in this County Esq. Had Six Children now living Reginald, George, Mary, Trances, Elizabeth and Prudence which sd JOHN RABETTchanged his life for Immortality the 25th day of September Anno Dom 1702. Aetatis Sua 39. Disce Mori

(4) George Rabett Bridgett's cousin

GEORGE RABETT Gent
Youngest Son of JOHN RABETT
Of Bramfield Hall Esq
Died 29th of Dec 1765
Aged 70 years

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