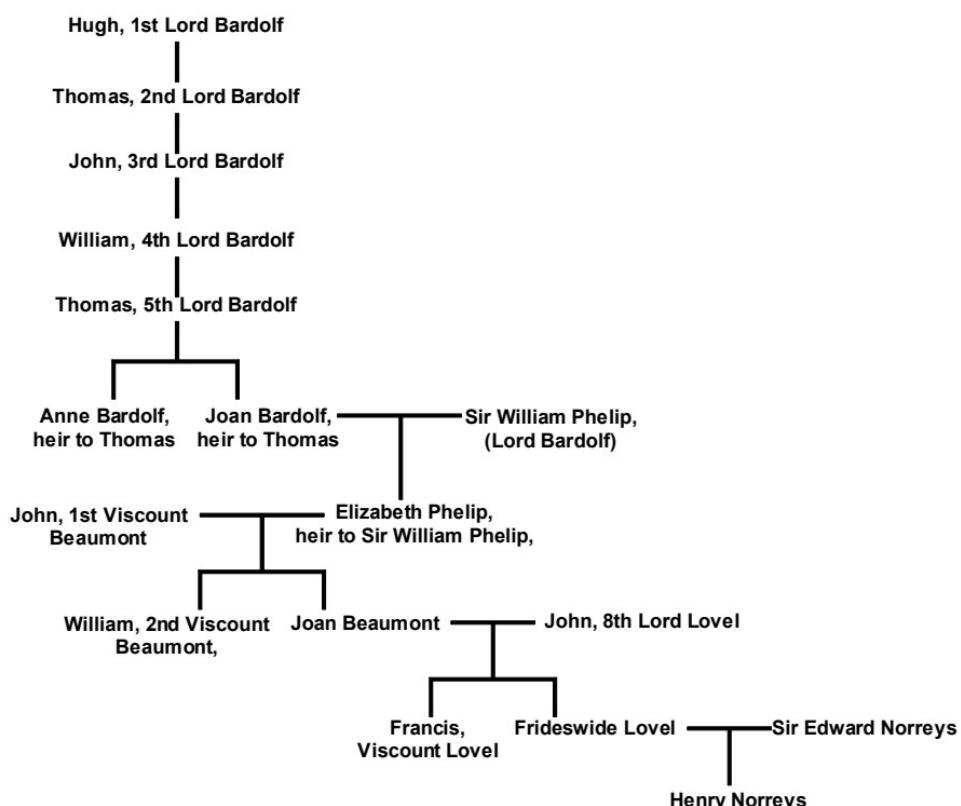


Lords of the Manor of Gedling 1300-1700, their Tenants and the Lovel slab

The object of this investigation is to determine whether the alabaster slab that Lawson Lowe suggested may have commemorated Francis Viscount Lovel may instead have commemorated a Lord of the Manor of Gedling or possibly one of their tenants.

Information from Charles Gerring's book *A History of the Parish of Gedling, Notts*, (1908), *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, *History of Parliament Online* and George Cockayne's *Complete Peerage*, are used to present chronologies showing the identity of the Lords from 1300-1700 with the location of their burials where known. A chart showing the number of incised alabaster slabs produced in each decade is shown on the same scale. The data for this chart comes from Appendices D1-to D4 of Raymond State's book *The Alabaster Carvers*, (2017). The Lords of the Manor over this period came from the Bardolf and Stanhope families.

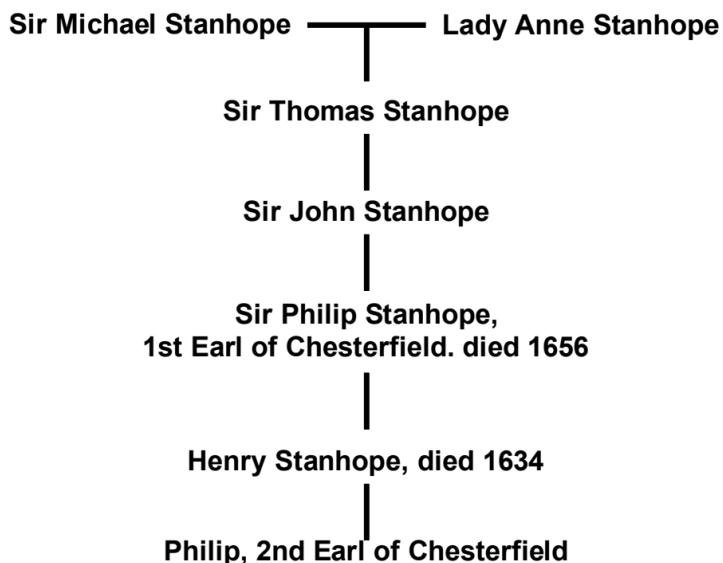
The Bardolf Family



The Lordship was passed from father to son from Hugh, the first Lord Bardolf to Thomas, the fifth Lord. Thomas had no sons so the Manor passed to his daughters Anne and Joan. Anne herself had no children so the Manor passed to Joan who had married Sir William Phelip of Dennington, Suffolk, who was granted the courtesy title of Lord Bardolf. Joan and Sir William also had no sons, so the Manor passed to their daughter, Elizabeth who married John the first Viscount Beaumont who later passed it on to their son William, the second Viscount.

William's Joan married John, the eighth Lord Lovel and was the mother of Francis, Viscount Lovel. Francis' sister Frideswide married Sir Edward Norreys and their son Henry was the last Lord of the Manor to claim descent from the Bardolf family.

The Stanhope Family



Sir Michael Stanhope was granted the Lordship in 1537 and, after he was beheaded, his widow Lady Anne held it temporarily until their son Thomas came of age. It was then passed from father to son but Henry, Lord Stanhope died before his father, Sir Philip, the 1st Earl of Chesterfield, so the Lordship missed a generation and Henry's son Philip became the next Lord

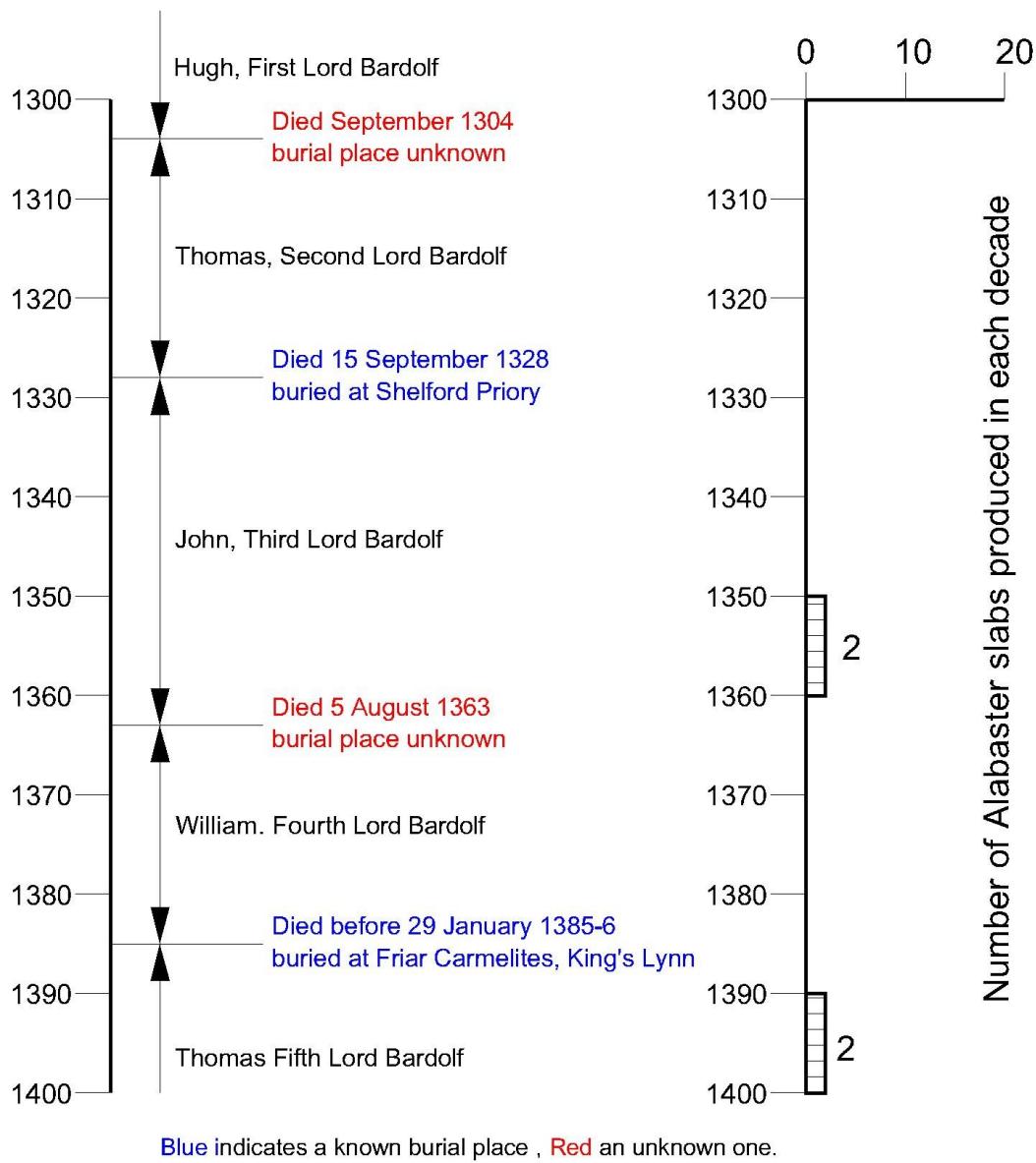
Royal Lords of the Manor

In Medieval times there were occasions when landowners took part in revolts against the king. If the revolt did not succeed, the king declared them to be traitors and confiscated their lands, thereby depriving them of their source of income because the manorial rents were then paid to the king.

This happened to Thomas, fifth Lord Bardolf, John first Viscount Beaumont and to William, second Viscount Beaumont who was declared to have no heir because of Francis Lovel's participation in the revolt against Henry VII. In addition, Sir Henry Norreys was beheaded for treachery so there were four periods totalling about sixty years when the king was Lord of the Manor.

After retaining the Manor for some time kings would grant it to some-one they wished to favour. In the case of Sir Michael Stanhope, the manor was granted to his widow very soon after her husband's execution

The Fourteenth Century



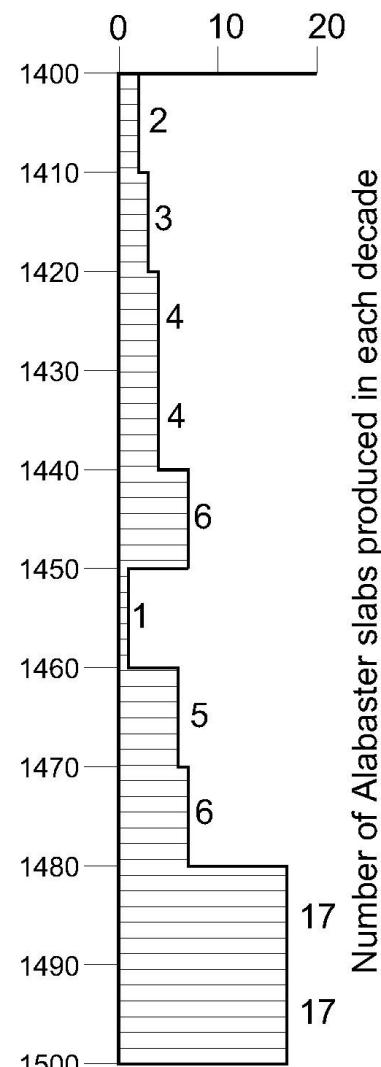
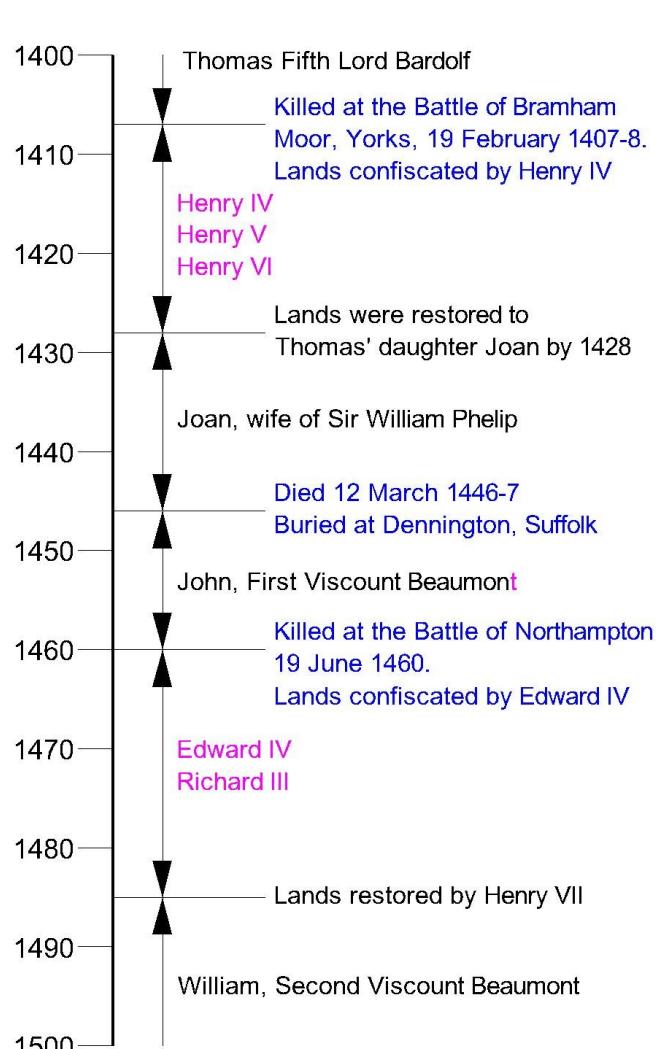
Five generations of the Bardolf family were Lords during the fourteenth century. The second and fourth lords were buried in known places but there is no information where the first and third were buried. Thomas the fifth Lord survived into the next century.

The Bardolfs had a manor house (incorrectly called a Castle) at Stoke Bardolf which was excavated by the Peverel Archaeological Group in the 1950s and found to have been a timber framed building with a stone extension which was abandoned about 1350.¹

The production of incised alabaster slabs was in its infancy and only four were made in the entire century so it is very unlikely that one would have been used to commemorate the first and third Lords Bardolf.

¹ R. M. Butler. Archaeology in Nottinghamshire - Achievements and Prospects, *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*. Vo1. 58, (1954) page 14
Peverel Archaeological Group Annual Reports, 1953-1955

The Fifteenth Century



Magenta indicates when the lordship was possessed by the king.

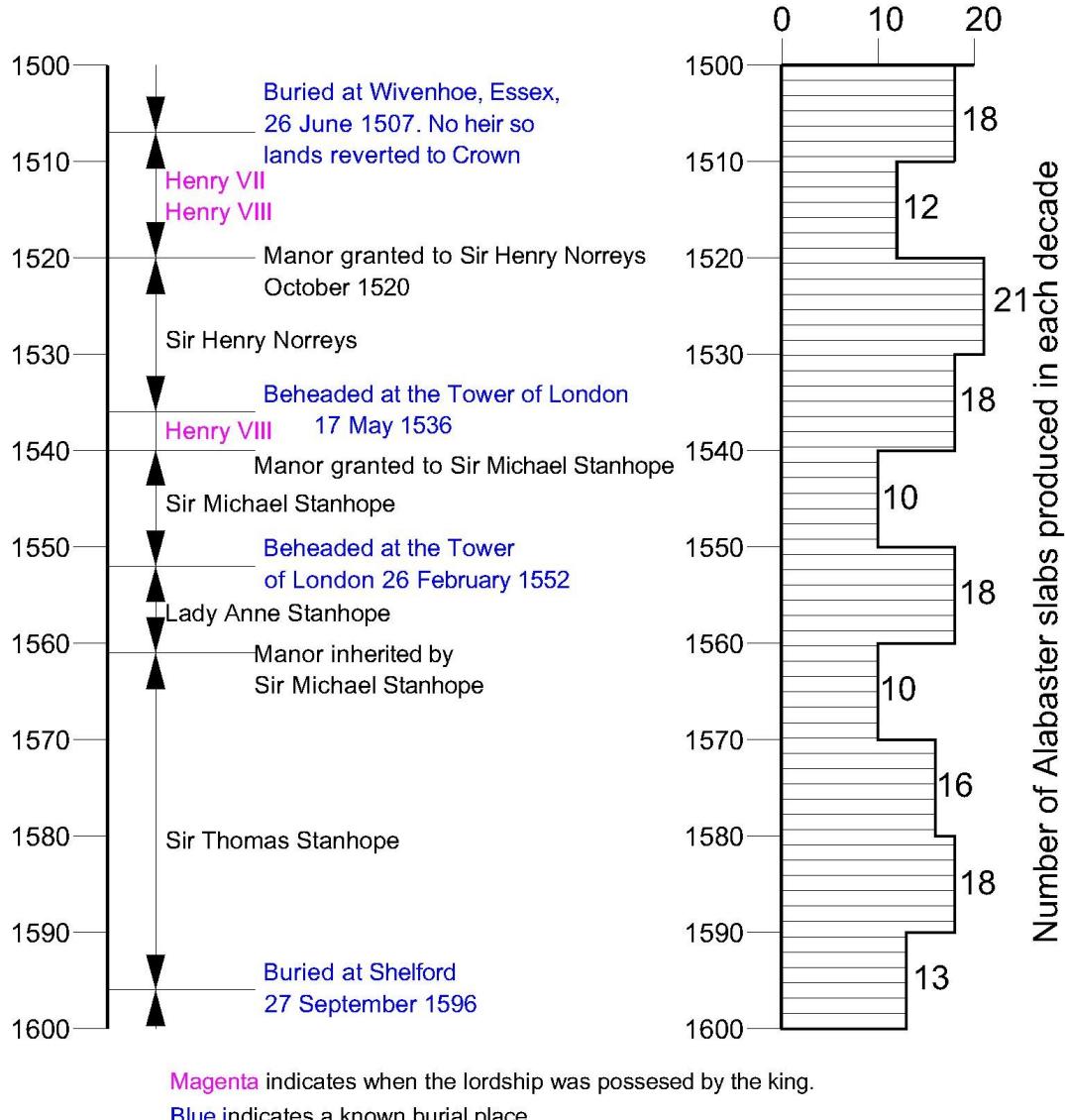
Blue indicates a known burial place

This century saw a steady rise in the production of incised slabs but there is no reason to believe that any were used at Gedling because the two lords who were killed in battle would have been buried on the battlefield and Joan was buried at Dennington with her husband, Sir William Phelip

Thomas, the fifth Lord Bardolf was found guilty of treason because he fought for the rebel Earls of Northumberland against Henry IV. John, the First Viscount Beaumont was similarly found guilty for fighting for the Lancastrians against Edward IV so in each case, their lands were taken from them and were held by the king but were later restored.

William was judged to have been demented in 1487 and the custody of his lands was handed over to John de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

The Sixteenth Century

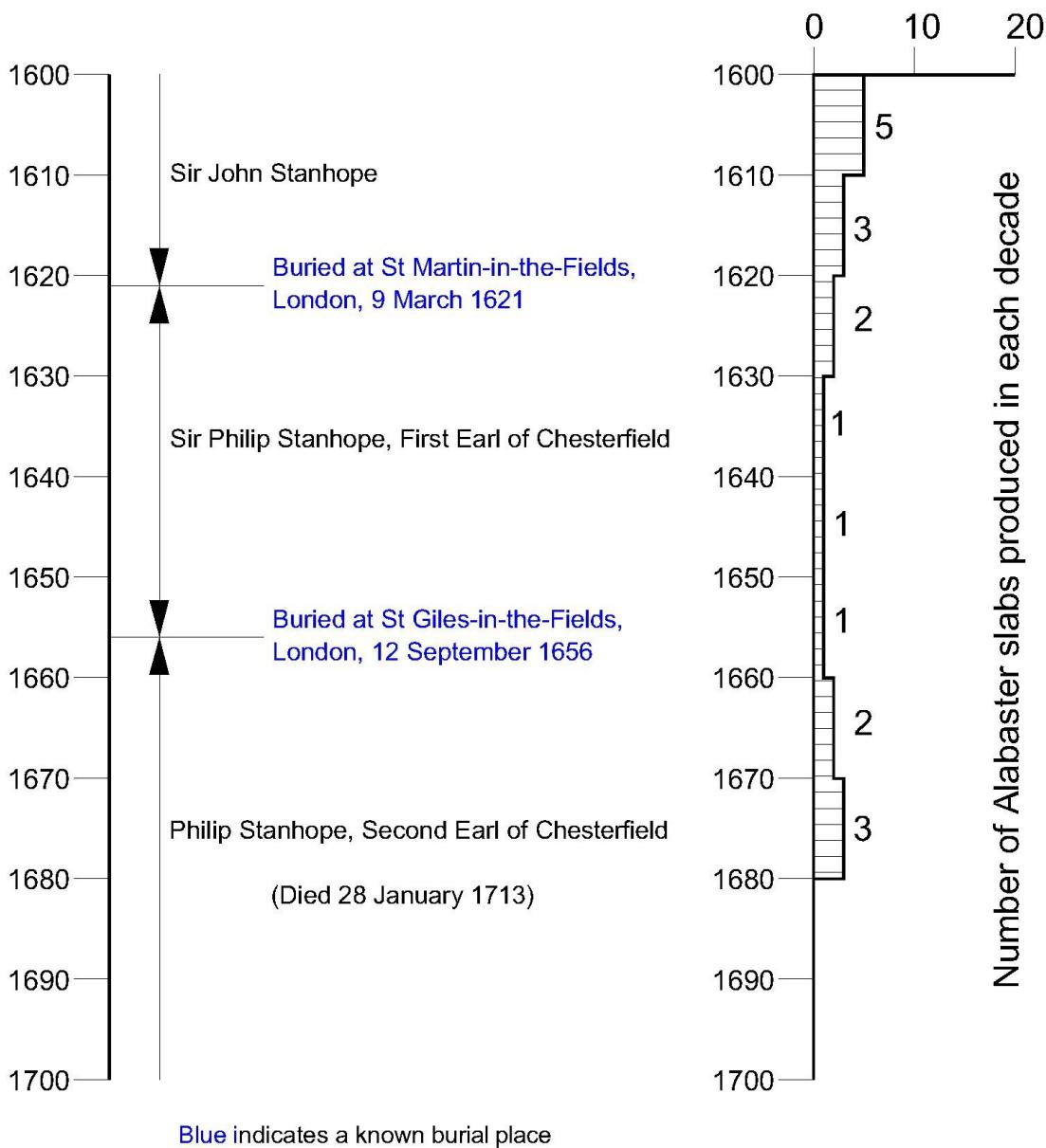


William, the second lord Beaumont who held the Bardolf estates from 1486 to 1503 was Francis Lovel's uncle and was buried at Wivenhoe, Essex. Francis would have been his heir but he had been found guilty of treason by Henry VII for the part he played at the battles of Bosworth and East Stoke, so even if he had been alive to claim the inheritance, it would have been denied him. Again the Bardolf estates became Crown property.

In 1520 Henry VIII granted the Manor to Francis' nephew, Sir Henry Norreys, but had him beheaded in 1536 for his association with Anne Boleyn thereby ending the connection between the Manor and the Bardolf family.

In 1540, the Manor was granted to Sir Michael Stanhope of Shelford but he too was beheaded in 1552. His widow took over the lordship which was passed on to her son when he came of age in 1560. Sir Thomas was buried at Shelford in 1596 so the sixteenth century offers no possible candidates for the incised slab at Gedling in spite of such memorials being produced in larger quantities at that time.

The Seventeenth Century



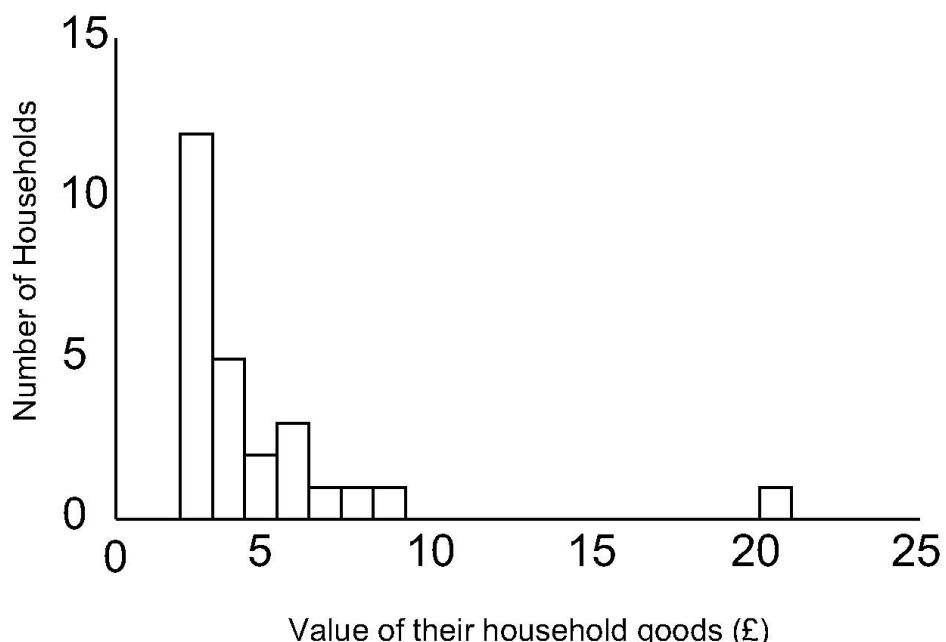
As the Stanhope family became richer and took a greater part in national affairs, they moved to London. The house they had built on the site of Shelford Priory was destroyed by Parliamentarian forces in 1645 and they chose not to rebuild it.

Their burials in fashionable London churches took place during the time when the production of incised alabaster slabs was declining and ended in about 1680.

Their Tenants

The alabaster slab in Gedling church could have been a memorial to one of the tenants who would have had the right to have been buried in the church or churchyard because they lived in the parish. These tenants would have been much less wealthy than their landlords and their ability to purchase an alabaster slab can be assessed using taxation records.

In 1525, Henry VIII ordered a taxation called the *Lay Subsidy* which was based on the value of goods each household possessed. The results of the valuation for the parish of Gedling are shown on the plot below which shows the value of the household goods possessed by each of the 26 families that had goods worth more than £2.



Raymond State has estimated that the cost of mining and cartage for an uncut slab prior to it having the image incised upon it was between ten and twenty pounds.²

The plot above shows that 25 of the tenants had goods worth less than half the cost of an uncut slab so such a purchase would have been quite beyond them. Even the one individual who had goods worth £21 would have had to sell almost all of them just to obtain an uncut slab and he would have needed to make further payments to have the inscription cut. In addition there would have been the cost of having the slab installed in the church floor as well as the cost of the burial.

² Raymond Henry State, *The Alabaster Carvers*, (2017), page 849

Conclusions

- 1) Throughout the period during which time incised alabaster slabs were available, there were thirteen Lords of the Manor of Gedling of whom eleven are known to have been buried elsewhere.
- 2) The two whose burial place is unknown, died before alabaster slabs were commonly available so it is very doubtful that they were commemorated by such a memorial.
- 3) Consequently, the alabaster slab attributed to Francis Viscount Lovel can not commemorate any of the Lords of the Manor of Gedling.
- 4) None of their tenants living in the parish could have afforded an alabaster slab for themselves.