

William de Brundeley, his brother Hugh de Brundeley and their grandfather John de Brundeley

I first discovered William and Hugh (Huchen) Brindley in a book, *The Visitation of Cheshire, 1580*.¹ The visitations contained a collection of pedigrees of families with the right to bear arms. This book detailed the Brindley family back to John Brindley who was born c. 1320, I wanted to find out more! Fortunately, I worked alongside Allan Harley who was from a later Medieval re-enactment group, the 'Beaufort companye'.² I asked if his researchers had come across any Brundeley or Brundeleghs, (Medieval, Brindley). He was able to tell me of the soldier database and how he had come across William and Hugh (Huchen) Brundeley, archers. I wondered how I could find out more about these men. The database gave many clues including who their captain was, their commander, the year of service, the type of service and in which country they were campaigning.

<u>First Name</u>	<u>De</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Captain Name</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Nature of Activity</u>	<u>Reference</u>
William	de	Brundeley	Archer	Calveley, Hugh, Sir	Buckingham, Thomas of Woodstock, earl of Buckingham,	1380-1381	Exped France	TNA E101/39/9
Huchen	de	Brundeley	Archer	Calveley, Hugh, Sir	Buckingham, Thomas of Woodstock, earl of	1380-1381	Exped France	TNA E101/39/9

According to the medieval soldier database (above), the brothers went to France in 1380-1381 with their Captain, Sir Hugh Calveley as part of the army led by the earl of Buckingham. We can speculate that William and Hugh would have had great respect for Sir Hugh, as he had been described as, 'a giant of a man, with projecting cheek bones, a receding hair line, red hair and long teeth'.³ It appears that he was a larger than life character and garnered much hyperbole such as having a large appetite, eating as much as four men and drinking as much as ten. Further that he was kind and chivalrous, honoured among men and of great strength. Finally, that he was a religious man and whenever he seized booty he had it sprinkled with holy water, to absolve him of his sins in taking it! In later life, he became a generous benefactor to St, Boniface Church at Bunbury.⁴

It is very likely that the Calveleys would have known of the Brindleys as their manor was less than 6 miles from the township of Brindley. The ageing Sir Hugh, born c. 1320, was a similar age to William and Hugh's grandfather, John Brindley, who had once served the Black Prince during the Hundred Years War (see below).

To further my investigations, I turned to Froissart's account of where the Earl and the Captain were in 1380 and found that they were at the unsuccessful siege of Nantes, along with William and Hugh Brindley. In July 1380, William and Huchen were ferried to the English continental stronghold of Calais in France. They marched with Buckingham's army westwards wreaking havoc, burning and pillaging enemy territory, this terror tactic was known as a *chevauchée*. *The chevauchee* was designed to draw the enemy into battle. The tactic failed as the French had too much respect for the English army after being badly defeated at the battle of Poitiers in 1357 so showed a reluctance to engage in a pitched battle. The French may have been using "Fabian tactics", a tactic to demoralise an opponent by delaying and evading a confrontation, in the style of the ancient

¹ *Visitation of Cheshire in the year 1580, Brindley of Wistaston p.40 - Brindley pedigree*

² <http://www.beaufort-companye.org.uk/>

³ <http://www.bunbury.org.uk/johnpapers/sirhugh1frame.htm> Sir Hugh Calveley by John Elsworth Churchwarden Dated 23 May 2000

⁴ See http://www.bunbury.org.uk/papers/Sir_Hugh_paper.htm for C. Blair, 'The Effigy and Tomb of Sir Hugh Calveley'.

Roman general Fabius. They would have attacked English stragglers and foragers but not the main army.

In November 1380, after being largely unopposed, Buckingham laid siege to Nantes and its vital bridge over the Loire. Buckingham's army did not have enough men to encircle Nantes, so placed men at each gate along the walls. William and Huchen were posted outside the gate of Richebourg along with their captain, Sir Hugh Calveley. (*There is nowadays, a Rue de la Richebourg in Nantes, which leads to its castle, however it seems the original gate has disappeared*).

The English at Nantes were awaiting the arrival of their ally the Duke of Brittany's army, before a major attack on the town. The Duke had promised to lay siege to Nantes alongside the Earl of Buckingham within 15 days of the coming of the Englishmen to Nantes. During the wait, many skirmishes ensued. In the skirmishes William and Huchen and their fellow archers were used to shoot at the French crossbowmen, the archers faster rate of loosing arrows must have given them superiority in these clashes. The use of archers in this manner may have been to neutralise the effect of the crossbowmen. The powerful crossbow could have inflicted great damage to the armoured knight if not first suppressed by the English and Welsh archers.

The following account by tells of a skirmish at the gate of Richebourg, which would have involved, Hugh and William Brindley:

On our Lady day in Advent, at night, the Frenchmen went to counsel, determining to surprise the host the same night, because they had so long been still. So there issued out of the town two hundred spearmen, whereof Sir Aimery of Clisson, cousin-german to the lord Clisson, and the lord of Amboise, were captains and governors: and so they entered into the host, where Sir William Windsor was lodged: they issued at the gate of Richbourg, and the same night Sir Hugh Calveley kept the watch. The same time, the lord of Amboise was made knight, and Sir Aimery of Clisson made him knight. Then men of arms, Frenchmen and Bretons, came in with a fierce will, and at the first coming they won the barriers of the watch, which were kept by Sir William of Cossington. There was a severe skirmish, and many a man overthrown. Sir William Windsor and Sir Hugh Calverly, being in their tents, hearing the noise, armed themselves, and came where the chief noise was; there both parties fought valiantly. The Frenchmen and Bretons entered again in at the postern Richbourg, where they had issued out, without having received any material injury; and they had taken a knight prisoner, and ten other men of arms; and of their own men there were but three taken.⁵

The Earl of Buckingham without the Duke of Brittany's help was unable to form an effective stranglehold on the town. It was eventually realised that the Duke of Brittany had changed allegiance and was reconciled to the French King. The alliance between the Earl of Buckingham and Duke of Brittany had come to an end and starvation and dysentery were ravaging the English soldiers. Buckingham abandoned the siege on 12th January, 1381. William made it back to England and was married to Margery Bulkeley coheir to Thomas Bulkeley of Wolstonwood.⁶ What became of his brother Hugh, I do not know.

John de Brundeleg, Clerk and Royal Castle Constable

William and Hugh had a grandfather who had served the Black Prince in the mid 14th century, John de Brundeleg, clerk of the Abbot of Combermere. John would have been born c. 1320, his father was Piers de Brundeleg.⁷ John is first mentioned in 1347, September 19th in the Recognizance Rolls of Chester, as being a clerk, making a rcognizance to Master Thomas de Bynyngton, rector of the church of Astebury. Astbury church is near Congleton, Cheshire, and was a burial ground for some of John's Brereton family. John's great grandmother was Isolda Brereton and the church is famous for its medieval Brereton tombs. These tombs have been moved out of the church and into the graveyard.

⁵ *Froissart's chronicles, translated from the French by Thomas Johnes Esq.*

⁶ *Visitation of Cheshire in the year 1580, Brindley of Wistaston p.40 - Brindley pedigree*

⁷ *Genealogical gleanings in England 1883, p.383. Randall Holme's Heraldic collections for Cheshire, Harleian MS; No. 2119 British Museum. Based on a 17th-century collection of some 520 Cheshire coats of arms.*



Medieval Brereton tombs at Astbury church

(www.thornber.net/cheshire/htmlfiles/astbury.html)

John was a learned man, a clerk of the church. He would have been able to read, write in French, Latin and English, he would also have kept accounts. In the Middle Ages the clergy were part of the literate classes and were often employed as scribes, secretaries, or notaries.

John, in 1359, was required to go with the (Black) Prince of Wales, Earl of Chester, on expedition to France.⁸ John at this time was in the service of the Abbot of Cumbermere, who was very unpopular with some local Cheshire families: *Order to John de Delves, lieutenant of the justice of Cestre, London. and Master John de Brunham, chamberlain there, — on information from the abbot of Cumbermere that a certain John le Clerc of Brundeleghe, his servant, who has been chosen to go with the prince to the war as one of the archers of the county of Cestre, has so many enemies among the said archers that he has grave fears for his (life) if he be detailed to go in their company, - to remove the said John from the list of archers, if the said information is true, and release him from going with the prince.*

There was a good reason why John feared for his life as during the 14th century the abbey and its members were involved in local disorder. A long-lasting feud had begun and in March 1309, Richard of Fullshurst and others of Nantwich had assaulted the abbot in the town, killed the prior, burnt the abbey's houses, and carried off goods worth £200. Fullshurst evidently appealed to the abbot of Savigny who appointed visitors to investigate accusations against the abbot; Edward II asked the visitors to desist in their attempts to remove the abbot and annul his complaint to the royal commissioners, especially as the abbot could not return to the abbey because of the ambushes laid by his opponents. The final outcome of this four-sided dispute is not known but it may have inaugurated a long-lasting feud as on 13th June, 1360, the abbot of Cumbermere was accused of leading an attack on the property of Sir Robert Fouleshurst whilst he was away in Winchelsea. Robert made a complaint which led to an inquiry regarding destruction to his land and terrifying his people by a "great array", assembled by the abbot of Cumbermere.⁹

Regarding the Abbot requesting the removal of John from the list of archers to go to France, it may have been true that John was unpopular with the said archers as the Abbot, would have called upon John's military skills in defence of his Abbey. Some of these local men, at odds with the abbot, would have been in the company of Archers destined to go with John and the Prince to France. Robert Fouleshurst, enemy of the Abbot and no doubt of John Brindley, was also with the

⁸ Register of Edward, the Black Prince, Preserved in the Public Record Office: Palatinate of Chester, A.D. 1351-1365. p.353

⁹ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39977> Houses of Cistercian monks, the Abbey of Combermere. Also the Household and military retinue of Edward the Black Prince, a thesis presented to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, November 1998, vol II p. 69.

Prince and abroad in 1360.¹⁰

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Brindleys had land disputes with the Fouleshursts which culminated in a case at the Court of the Star Chamber in 1530 when William *Brundley* of Wistaston in Cheshire filed a bill before *Sir Thomas More* asserting that he had been seised of lands by Fouleshursts.¹¹ These disputes may have had their origins in the Foulshurst/Cumbermere disputes of the 14th century.

It is assumed John never went to France because of the recorded protestations of the Abbot of Cumbermere in the Black Princes register of 1359. I believe this assumption may be wrong as John was an archer and was made constable of the Black Princes Beeston castle, surely not the job of a clerk without military experience. John was also made the receiver of St. Pierre lands. The St. Pierre estates were known for being used as rewards given to men who had served the Black Prince, in his campaigns overseas. John's wages for being constable was £4 a year and turf from Peckforton Moss. He was ordered to reside in the castle and would have probably lived in the Gatehouse. John's responsibility was to look after the castle in the Earl of Chesters absence.

The Constable would have had a number of people who worked beneath him. There was the garrison, whose members would vary in status, and could include, knights, men-at-arms, archers, and engineers. He was also responsible for the grooms, watchmen, porters, cooks, and even the scullions, who did the washing up in the kitchen.¹²



Beeston castle, the Inner Bailey Gatehouse, from an early 19th century engraving

John Brindley was made constable of Beeston castle in 1361. He had been in the service of the Black Prince, probably in 1359, rewards for service were usually given quite promptly.¹³

Both the Constables before John, Robert Haughton and the constable after John, Sir Alan Cheyne, had seen military service with the Black Prince.¹⁴ Alan Cheyne was one of the few people remembered in the Black Princes Last Will and Testament, Proved 4 June, 1376, and was given one of the Prince's beds, as follows: *to Alayne Cheyne our bed of camora powdered with blue eagles*. Beds were considered a great luxury and were often left in Wills even until the 18th

¹⁰ Booth and Carr - Account of Master John de Burnham the younger, Chamberlain of Chester, of the revenues of the counties of Chester and Flint, 1361-62.

¹¹ Lancashire and Cheshire cases in the court of the Star Chamber, Part 1, p. 53.

¹² Castle constable, a description by Richard Holmes, Military historian.

¹³ Cheshire Recognizance Rolls 67 and George Ormerod's History of Cheshire Vol. II p.336

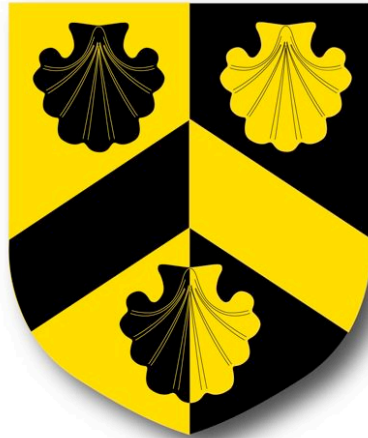
¹⁴ Booth and Carr - Account of Master John de Burnham the younger, Chamberlain of Chester, of the revenues of the counties of Chester and Flint, 1361-62. Robert Haughton, p.147/8. Sir Alan Cheyne, p.128

century.¹⁵ So John Brindley was in good company and had only been superseded by a man who had been a bodyguard of the Black Prince at Poitiers and may also have been on the Iberian Campaign. Alan Cheyne was so favoured that he was worthy of recognition in the Last Will and Testament of the Black Prince.

Unfortunately, I have not come across a surviving record of John's service, other than he was asked to serve. John was described as an archer in 1359, a Cheshire archer, England's finest at the time. He was also at some point allowed to bear a coat of arms which was later quartered with Bressy and Crewe by his son Thomas. His arms have the symbol of the pilgrim/crusader, the Scallop shell or escallop of St. James. The escallop was popular with pilgrims on the Way of St. James to the apostle's shrine at Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

Coat of Arms of Brindley as Featured in The Vale Royal of England first published by Daniel King in 1656, also the Visitations of Cheshire, 1580.

This was the coat of arms used by John Brindley, most likely, pilgrim to the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela.



Arms: Per pale Or and Sable, a chevron between three escallops counterchanged.

It is possible to speculate that John Brindley had been on the Iberian campaign in the middle to late 1360's and it was during this campaign that he was allowed to bear arms and adopted St. James' Scallop shell as his emblem.

*For the scallop shows in a coat of arms,
That, of the bearers line,
Some one in former days hath been
To Santiago's shrine.*

Robert Southey (1774 –1843) - The Pilgrim to Compostella

The English poet, Southey's research into this subject, shows that the Scallop shell was only to be used by pilgrims specifically visiting Santiago. The scallop was not a badge for all pilgrimages and in fact three medieval popes, Alexander III, Gregory IX & Clement V, in their bulls granted a faculty to the Archbishop of Compostella that they may excommunicate any who sells these shells to pilgrims other than in the city of Santiago. They assign this reason as because the shells are the badge of the apostle Santiago. That the scallop belonged exclusively to the Compostella pilgrim, is certain, according to Southey.¹⁶

The Iberian campaign in 1367, passed along the route of the pilgrim way to Santiago de Compostela, through Logrono and Najera in north west Spain.

¹⁵ Ancient, Curious and Famous Wills - By Virgil M. Harris, p.30.

¹⁶ Poetical works of Robert Southey: Notes to the Pilgrim to Compostella, p.562.



St. James from a pilgrims guide, early 14th century. Scallop shells can be seen on his wide brimmed hat.

The campaign to unite Spain and Aragon, who had been at war for 14 years, was described as a holy expedition, a crusade. This intervention was to redress the military power in Spain which favoured Pedro I, also known as the cruel, who had allied himself with the Moors.

Chandos the Herald records that: "he (Geusclin) sent tidings to the King of Castile (Pedro the cruel) by a messenger, how he should accord and swear peace to Aragon, and that he should open the passage for them to go on a *holy expedition* in which all good feats of arms might fortune against the enemies of God."¹⁷

The expedition had the backing of Aragon, France and the Papacy. These three powers enlisted and shared the cost for the services of the free companies who were under the command of Bertrand du Geusclin and Hugh Calveley.¹⁸ These men were to help Enrique of Trastamara also known as Henry the bastard, take the throne of Castile from his half brother, Pedro the Cruel.

John Brindley, as a Cheshire neighbour of Hugh Calveley may have been part of the free companies involved in the "holy expedition". John would have been considered an experienced soldier, he had been in charge of a garrison at Beeston so was used to organising soldiers and servants. He was also a clerk and may also have helped in the running of an army in an administrative roll or recording settlements after a battle.

Pedro was easily defeated with the help of the free companies. Pedro, however, did not waste any time in enlisting the support of the Black Prince. Prince Edward believed Pedro to be the true heir/bloodline to the throne and not his half brother, Enrique of Trastamara, so promised his support.

Sir Hugh Calveley and the free companies including John Brindley, were required to show allegiance to their natural leader, the Black Prince and now fight for Pedro the cruel. Most of these men had been paid off and released from service by Enrique as Pedro had fled to Portugal and appeared no longer to be a threat.

The main battle of this time was the battle of Navarrete-Nájera, in 1367. At this battle the English along with the Gascons defeated Pedro the cruel's half brother, Enrique of Trastamara. Once

¹⁷ Chandos the herald: <http://elfinspell.com/Chandos2.html>

¹⁸

again the English archers helped win the day providing a withering storm of arrows, "archers shot thicker than rain falls in winter time."¹⁹

It was after this battle that John may have visited the shrine of St. James, perhaps to thank the Saint for his life and victory in battle, whilst the Black Prince waited in Spain for payment for war debts from his ally, Pedro the cruel. During this time the English army was quartered in Northern Castille throughout the hot summer months and would have had much time to kill, a company Captain's nightmare. These men had been encouraged to wreak havoc, burn and pillage, now they were expected to wait patiently for payment from their unreliable ally, Pedro the Cruel.

A trip to the Galician Sea and the shrine of St. James, may have been a welcome change. The English were not well fed during these months of waiting, a pilgrim could receive food and drink from Christian refuges on his way to the holy shrine. John as an abbey clerk, perhaps believed himself to be fortunate to be so near an important place of pilgrimage and surely, would not have wanted to miss the chance of a visit to Santiago de Compostela. In the Christian world, Jerusalem and Rome were the only two places to be considered holier than Santiago de Compostela. Hugh Calveley himself was a very religious man, see description earlier. Although capable of extreme violence, Sir Hugh Calveley, "who gladly smites with his sword"²⁰ may have encouraged bored and hungry soldiers to go to the shrine, if they so wished.

In Autumn 1367 the Prince and his army evacuated the peninsula and returned home to Aquitaine. His belief that he would see Pedro return with a settlement for his Anglo/Gascon allies had completely disappeared. Pedro the cruel had promised much for the Black Princes support against his half brother, Enrique, Count of Trastamara, but in the end he delivered nothing. When the Black Prince returned to England, John and the free companies remained in Aquitaine waiting for payment, no doubt as a reminder to Pedro of what what may occur if he did not pay. The Free companies had a reputation of wreaking havoc in the territory of their enemies, they have been described as "the dogs of war".

The Black Prince felt obliged to the Free Companies as they had served him so well and desired that they should receive their payment as soon as it could be raised.²¹

John, abroad at this time, is not mentioned on any rolls or registers that I have come across after his constablership of Beeston in 1361/2. It may be worth noting that it was not until 1371 that the Black Prince returned to England from Aquitaine and it was not until 1372 that we hear of John Brindley again in England. He was described as farming at Delamere, a royal forest and hunting ground for the Earl of Chester (Black Prince). He farmed the herbage (pastureland), agistment (grazing land for a fee) and pannage (turning out of domestic pigs in a wood or forest to forage) at Delamere, Cheshire.²² It could be, that John had stayed behind with the free companies in Aquitaine awaiting payment from Pedro and may only have returned to England with the Prince and his army in 1371.

In 1385 John Brindley is described as being of Wistaston and receives a recognizance (fine) of 40s from his cousin, Robert Haughton, one time constable of both Beeston and Chester castles.²³

As mentioned earlier, John Brindley and Sir Hugh Calveley would have been of a similar age, born c 1320. The Calveley's and Brindley's only lived a few miles apart and Hugh Calveley's church at Bunbury, where Sir Hugh was buried, is only 4 miles from Brindley township. This link to Sir Hugh may have been why two of John's three grandsons also went to war in Calveley's company in 1380, it may have even been considered an honour by the family. John's son Thomas, born c 1340, inherited his fathers coat of arms and may also have been on campaign. Three generations of Brindleys may have all served alongside Sir Hugh Calveley during the Hundred Years War.

¹⁹ Chandos the herald: <http://elfinspell.com/Chandos3.html>

²⁰ Chandos the herald: <http://elfinspell.com/Chandos2.html>

²¹ Froissart Chronicles vol III chapter 241 p.334 translated by Thomas Johnes, 1805

²² Booth and Carr - Account of Master John de Burnham the younger, Chamberlain of Chester, of the revenues of the counties of Chester and Flint, 1361-62. John le Clerc (of Brindley), p.129

²³ Booth and Carr - Account of Master John de Burnham the younger, Chamberlain of Chester, of the revenues of the counties of Chester and Flint, 1361-62. Robert Haughton, p.148