

The De Chedder Family of Bristol and Cheddar.

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THE De Chedders were merchants of wealth and influence in Bristol in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. John de Cheddre was Steward of Bristol in 1288-9, and 1291-2; and M.P. for Bristol in 1298; he being the second parliamentary representative of that town whose name has been preserved.

In 1334, John de Cheddre, son and heir of Richard de Cheddre, conveyed a shop in Redcliff Street, and other property, to John Bernard.¹ He was probably the John Cheddre who, with Edmund Blanket (of "blanket" fame), sat for Bristol in the Parliament of 1369.

Robert Cheddre was Bailiff of Bristol in 1351-2, and Mayor in 1360-1. He is the first of the family who is mentioned in the Register of Cheddar Charters in the British Museum, as holding possessions in that parish.² In September, 1362, "Robert de Cheddre de Bristoll," as executor of William Hussee, gave a bond to Ralph, Bishop of Bath and Wells, for "£200 left to the church by the said William." On receipt of the above legacy a chantry was established in the parish church of Cheddar, "on behalf of our present King Edward, etc., and the benefit of his soul after his death."³ This would be the "Chantry of our Lady," of which the Chedders and their descendants held the advowson for more than a century.

(1). *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, ii, 225.

(2). *Harl. MS.* 316, ff. 14, 15.

(3). *Report on the MSS. of Wells Cathedral*, by the Rev. J. A. Bennett, 1885, p. 125.

The will of William Cheddre (brother of Robert Cheddre, Mayor of Bristol in 1360-1) is registered in "The Great Book of Wills," now in the Council House at Bristol. It is dated November 21st, 1382, and was proved February 27th, 1383. The testator desired to be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Mary in the parish church of Cheddar, and left legacies to the prior and convent, "domus Cartus' in Selwode;" to the prior and convent of "Worspryng" [Woodspring]; to poor people holding houses and lands in Cheddar and Axbridge, and the needy poor near to those parishes; and to the fabrics of the churches of Cheddar and Holy Cross Temple, at Bristol. The residue of his goods he left to Agnes, his wife, and appointed his brother, Robert Cheddre, one of his executors.¹

The will of Robert Cheddre, dated March 21st, 1382, and proved June 30th, 1384, is also registered in "The Great Book of Wills." He directs that he shall be buried in the chapel of St. Mary, in the parish church of Cheddar, "de nouo fundata." He left legacies to the four orders of Friars in Bristol; to the Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene, Bristol, and to those of "Mochenbarugh" [Barrow Gurney.] To his son Richard, "vi Ciphos vocat' Bolles de argento," and other plate; to William Draper, clerk, a third best cup, which was then at Cheddar. The residue of goods to Joan, testator's wife. She, William Draper, clerk, and William Bierden to be executors.²

By his wife Joan, Robert Chedder had four sons: Richard, born at Bristol, 9th September, 1379,³ who was returned as one of the Knights of the Shire for this county in 1407, 1413, 1417, 1421, and 1426; Robert, born at Bristol, 28th October, 1380,⁴ and was living in 1425; William, born at Bristol, 14th December, 1381;⁵ and Thomas, of whom see below.

(1). Rev. T. P. Wadley's *Notes of Bristol Wills*, 1886, p. 10.

(2). *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.

(3). Cheddar Charter, *Harl. MS.* 316, in the Calendar.

(4). *Ibid.*

(5). *Ibid.*

Joan, the young and rich widow of Robert Chedder, married, secondly, Sir Thomas Broke, or Brooke, of Brooke-juxta-Ilchester, Knight, by whom she had issue two sons: Sir Thomas Brooke, in right of his wife Lord Cobham, and Michael Brooke.¹ At her death, 15th Henry VI (1436-7), Lady Brooke held, *inter alia*, the manor of Cheddar "vocat' Chedders maner'" and the advowson of the chantry of the Blessed Mary in the parish church there.² A fine brass, containing effigies of Sir Thomas and Lady Joan Broke is in Thorncombe church, near Axminster.

Thomas Chedder, Lady Brooke's heir, was her fourth son by Robert Chedder (died 1384), and not, as stated by Collinson, the son of Robert Chedder, born in 1380;³ the latter was Thomas Chedder's elder *brother*, and died *s.p.*⁴

At the time of his death, 21st Henry VI (1442-3), Thomas Chedder held 84 messuages in Bristol, the manor of Cheddar, and several others in Somerset; also estates in Gloucestershire, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall.⁵ Joan and Isabel, his daughters by Isabel, his wife—who survived her husband for more than twenty years—were his heirs. At the time of their father's death, Joan was the widow of Robert Stafford (she married, secondly, John Talbot, Viscount L'Isle), and Isabel was the wife of Sir John Cradock, *alias* Newton, of Court de Wyke, in Yatton parish.

This Thomas Chedder was the last heir, male, of the Chedders of Bristol and Cheddar. The brass on the altar tomb in the chancel of Cheddar church is said to be to his memory. On the floor of the chancel is a memorial brass of his widow Isabel.

(1). W. H. H. Rogers, *Ancient Sepulchral Effigies of Devon*, 1887, p. 245.

(2). *Cal. Inq. P.M.*, 15th Henry VI, No. 62.

(3). *History of Somerset*, iii, p. 576. Collinson's account of the Cheddar family is vexatiously inaccurate.

(4). *Harl. MS.* 6157, f. 11.

(5). *Cal. Inq. P.M.*, 21st Henry VI, No. 55.