

## Rev. Henry Brereton, father-in-law of Jane Claiborne

by Matt Redman; Chestertown, Kent Co., MD; Feb 2022

As recently as 2019, veteran compilers Peden and Wright (Heritage Books) included an informative history of the Brereton family in Vol. 12 of *Colonial Families of the Eastern Shore*. Thomas Brereton, who married Col. William Claiborne's daughter Jane, is assumed to be the brother of William Brereton of Somerset County, Maryland. The fact that both men recorded their cattle marks in Somerset County on the same day gives weight to that probability. "Major Thomas Brereton Marke, vizt; Cropt on the right ear and A hole in the left recorded the 11th day of June A D 1675." "William Brereton's Marke; vizt Swallowe forked on the right & Cropt on the left ear recorded the 11th day of June A D 1675." Somerset County Livestock Marks, 1665 - 1722. [Archives of MD Online: Volume 54, Page 765]. Thomas Brereton received land for transporting William Brereton and several others to Virginia around 1666 (*Northumberland Co. Record*

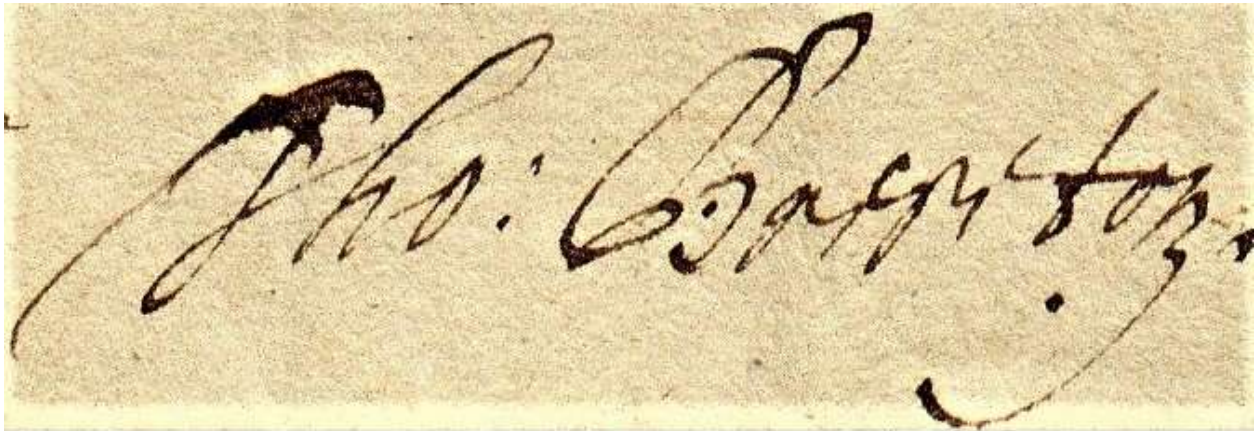
*Bk. 1706-1720*, pp. 189-91). At the very least, by their name, their proximity, and their status, one might conclude that the two men are kin. But how can there be any doubt that they are brothers when on 15 November 1671, as he was divesting property to his children prior to marrying his second wife Grace, Major Thomas Brereton gifted a 2,000 acre estate to his son Thomas, "being part of ye Dividend where I now live, to begin at a place called or knowne by ye name of Fleets Point &



**Red Arrow:** Major Thomas Brereton gifted his son 2000 acres of Fleet's Point; inset from Survey of the Northern Neck of Virginia, for Lord Fairfax, 1736-7, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

soe run upwards to ye quantity aforesd. including ye Plantacon where my Brother William Brereton now lives.” [1670-1672, *Northumberland County, Virginia Record Book, Part 2*; Antient Press; pp. 204-205]. Furthermore, William Brereton was a witness to the deed. In the *Colonial Families* write-up, there was no attempt to speculate upon who the parents of Thomas and William Brereton might be. One could hardly expect that sort of treatment in a book focused on offering established, sourced facts. But some lately-received copies of documents from the Bristol Archives provide information that can answer the question with proof. I think there can be little doubt that the father of both Thomas, in Northumberland Co., Virginia, and William, in Somerset Co., Maryland, was Rev. Henry Brereton, the Vicar of Henbury, Gloucestershire, England, who died in 1666.

The following three items offer the essential proof: 1) Bargain and Sale, 10 Feb 1668, Henbury, Gloucestershire, England - Henry Brereton to Anthony Brereton of Bristol, upholsterer, son of Henry - messuage and land, part of premises in preceding deed (Rent 1s., part of fee farm rent of 2s. reserved by previous deed) - *Bristol Archives Reference AC/AS/35*; 2) Quitclaim, 4 Dec 1677, Henbury, England - Thomas Brereton of Virginia, eldest son of Henry Brereton, late of Henbury, to Anthony Brereton, his nephew (same premises) - *Bristol Archives Reference: AC/AS/35/4*; and 3) Bargain and Sale, 3 Feb 1684, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England - Thomas Brereton, son & heir of Thomas Brereton of Wickacomaco in Virginia, gentleman, (dec.) to Sir Samuel Astry of Henbury (Consideration: £240) - *Bristol Archives Reference: AC/AS/35/6*.



Signature of Thomas Brereton; 24 Dec 1677, Brereton's Tenement Mortgage - Thomas Brereton to Henry Roach of Bristol, mariner; Bristol Records Office AC/AS/35/5(d).

The children of Jane Claiborne and Thomas Brereton were: 1) Thomas Brereton, b. 17 Aug 1647; and 2) Elizabeth Brereton who married Capt. Thomas Winder. We know for certain that their maternal grandfather was Col. William



Claiborne and now we can say with assurance, following the records, that their paternal grandfather was the minister and bibliophile Henry Brereton of Gloucestershire who was appointed Vicar of Henbury on 18 Jan 1628. The source for this fact, confirming his clerical vocation and position, is the *Bristol Record Office*, EP/A/10/1/2 (*Subscription Book*); PRO, E331 Bristol/3 (Returns to First Fruits Office); Ordinary / Jurisdiction: Wright, Robert/Bristol, 1623-1632.

The following paragraph about the heritage of the Vicars of Henbury is from the *Notes on the Ecclesiastical History of the Parish of Henbury* by Professor A. Hamilton-Thompson, M.A., F.S.A., published in 1915:

The Manor Henbury in the Saltmarsh came into the possession of the See of Worcester by a succession of gifts of land made to the Bishops by the Mercian Kings. The first was made by King Ethelred between 692-697 to OFTSOR, second bishop of Worcester. It is possible therefore that the Church of Henbury was built by one of the Saxon Bishops of Worcester (who had a house here) for the benefit of his tenants. The first definite



mention of a Church occurs in a charter of Bishop Wulfstan, in the year 1093, when it was mentioned among the endowments of the monastic Church at Westbury-on-Trym. Soon after, Wulfstan's successor, Bishop Sampson replaced the monks of Westbury by a Dean and secular Canons, who were corporately Rectors of Henbury and served its Church as Chaplains, of whom Alwyn (c. 1140) is first named. By 1270 it had acquired a Vicar.... The Bishops of Worcester continued to keep the presentation of the Vicarage in their own hands and Vicars were instituted by Episcopal collation until 1542 when Henbury became part of the newly created Diocese of Bristol. Between 1544-48 the Manor and Hundred of Henbury, with the advowson of the Church, was

granted to Sir Ralph Sadleir (d.1587) by King Henry VIII. His heirs retained the advowson until 1675 when it was sold to Thomas Yate of Grays Inn and Gregory Geering of Denchworth, Berks. In 1680 it was sold to (Sir) Samuel Astry whose heirs continue to hold it.

Sir Ralph Sadleir (1507 – 1587), who was first granted the advowson (basically, the right to recommend a member of the Anglican clergy for a vacant benefice, or to make such an appointment) was a famed English statesman who counseled Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I. When Henry Brereton was appointed to the vicarage at Henbury church he was sponsored, following tradition, as follows:

On January 18th, 1627-8, Henry Brereton, M. A., was instituted to the vicarage on the presentation of Ralph Sadler, the grandson of Sir Ralph. The vicarage at this time was valued at £30 yearly. The new vicar was also admitted on July 27th, 1633, to preach the Word of God within the deanery and city of Bristol [p. 169, *Transactions of The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Vol. 38, ed. By Edwin Sidney Hartland, Bristol, 1915].



St. Mary's Church, Henbury Parish, Gloucestershire, England; the nave and lower tower date from around 1200.

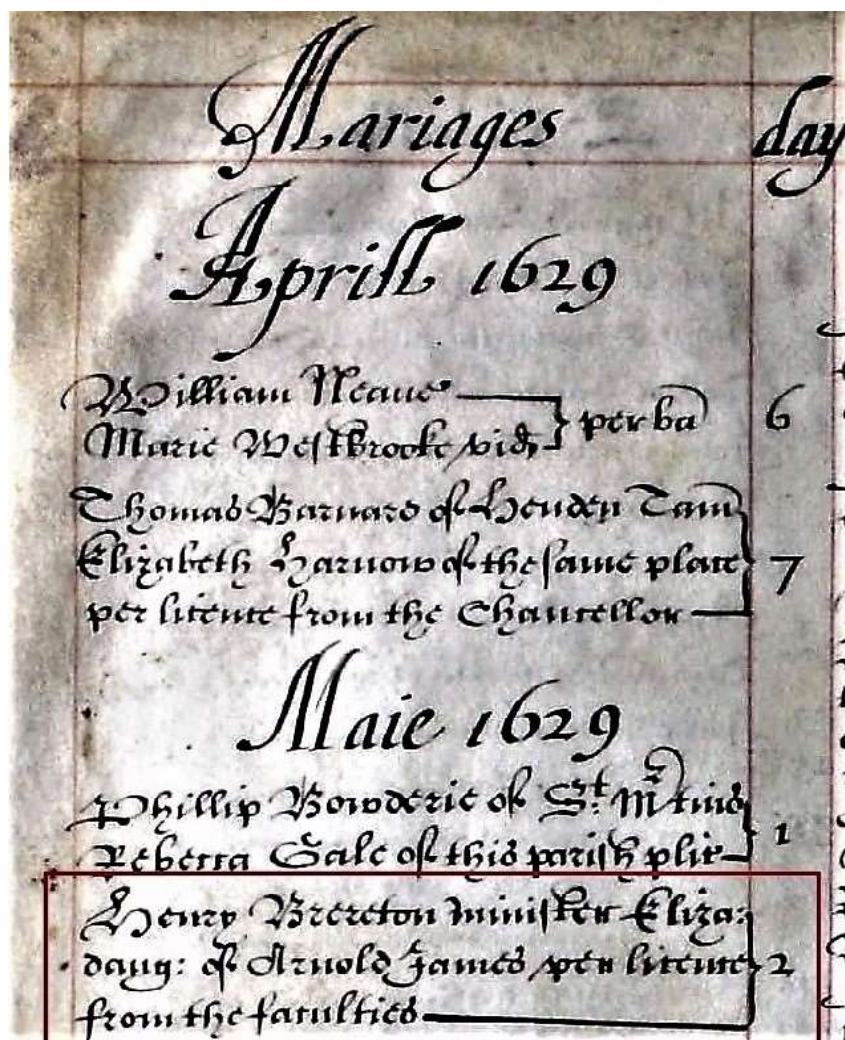
When Oliver Cromwell came to power, fortunes changed for many in England and Henry Brereton was no exception. Hartland, in his account, puts it starkly and simply: "Henry Brereton was compelled to retire from his benefice in consequence of the Civil War" [p. 170]. But this would not be the end of the minister's career, as we shall see.

The earlier career of the vicar has been difficult to trace. Certainly, he was university educated but from which establishment he graduated is unclear. A gent named Henry Brereton graduated with a B.A. degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1617; another man with the same name, aged 17, matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford in 1617.

Searching for a marriage record, one finds the following entry in the register

for St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, London, England: "Mariages, Maie 1629, day 2, Henry Brereton Minister Eliza: daugh: of Arnold James per license from the faculties". While this record might not be judged conclusive it does have the benefit of establishing that a clergyman named Henry Brereton was the groom.

The children of Arnold James and his wife Mary Van Hulst, daughter of Hans Van Hulst, are recorded in *The Visitations of Herefordshire, Made by Robert Cooke...in 1572, and Sir Richard St. George...in 1634* with *Herefordshire Pedigrees from Harleian MSS. 6147 and 1546*, ed. by Walter C. Metcalfe, London, 1886, p. 69: Susan James m. Mr. Driver; Sarah



Marriages, Register for St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, London, England



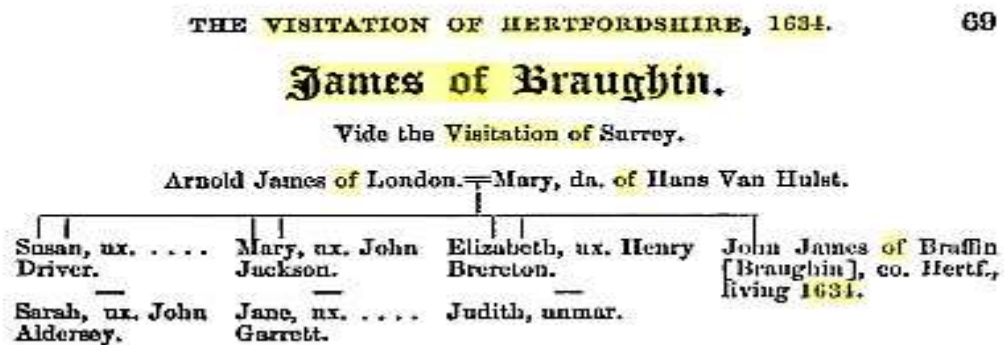
James m. John Aldersey; Mary James m. John Jackson; Jane James m. Mr. Garrett; Elizabeth James m. Henry Brereton; Judith James, (unmarried); John James of Braughin, Co. Hereford (living 1634). The wife and children of Arnold James are also mentioned in his will: "I give and bequeathe unto my children, John Suzan Marie Sara Marie Jane Elizabeth Judith and the child or children that the said Mary my wife now growth, with all equallie to be divided between them parte and part like" [PROB 11/109/456; National Archives, London].

Furthermore, Arnold James, the father of Henry Brereton's wife Elizabeth, was the brother of Roger James who was the stepfather of Col. William Claiborne. For confirmation, see "James, of Creshall", *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland, and Scotland*, compiled by John Burke and Sir John Bernard Burke (London: Wm. Clowes & Sons, Ltd., 1964 - reprint of 2nd ed., 1844), p. 280:

### Lineage

The JAMES'S were originally...called *Haestrecht*, from a lordship of that name near Utrecht, of which they were proprietors.

ROGER, son of JACOB VAN HAESTRECHT, came into England...being known after the Dutch manner by the name of ROGER JACOB, that name finally settled in JAMES, and he was called Roger James. He m. Sarah, daughter and heir of Henry Morskin, esq. of London, and had issue,



Visitation of Hertfordshire, p. 69

- I. Roger James, of Upminster, in Essex, father of SIR ROGER JAMES of Rygate...

- II. Arnold James, of London, m. Mary, daughter of John Vanhulst, of that city...
- III. William James, who purchased...the manor of Ightham Court...
- IV. Thomas James
- V. RICHARD JAMES [m. Gertrude, daughter of John Smyth]
- VI. John James, of Grove Manor, who m. Susanna, daughter...of Peter Vandewall of Antwerp...
- VII. George James...m. Audrey, daughter of John Smith, esq....

Another source, p. 111, "The Dutch Family of James of Ightham Court", *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. 83, by Edward Bowra, 1968, conveys the importance

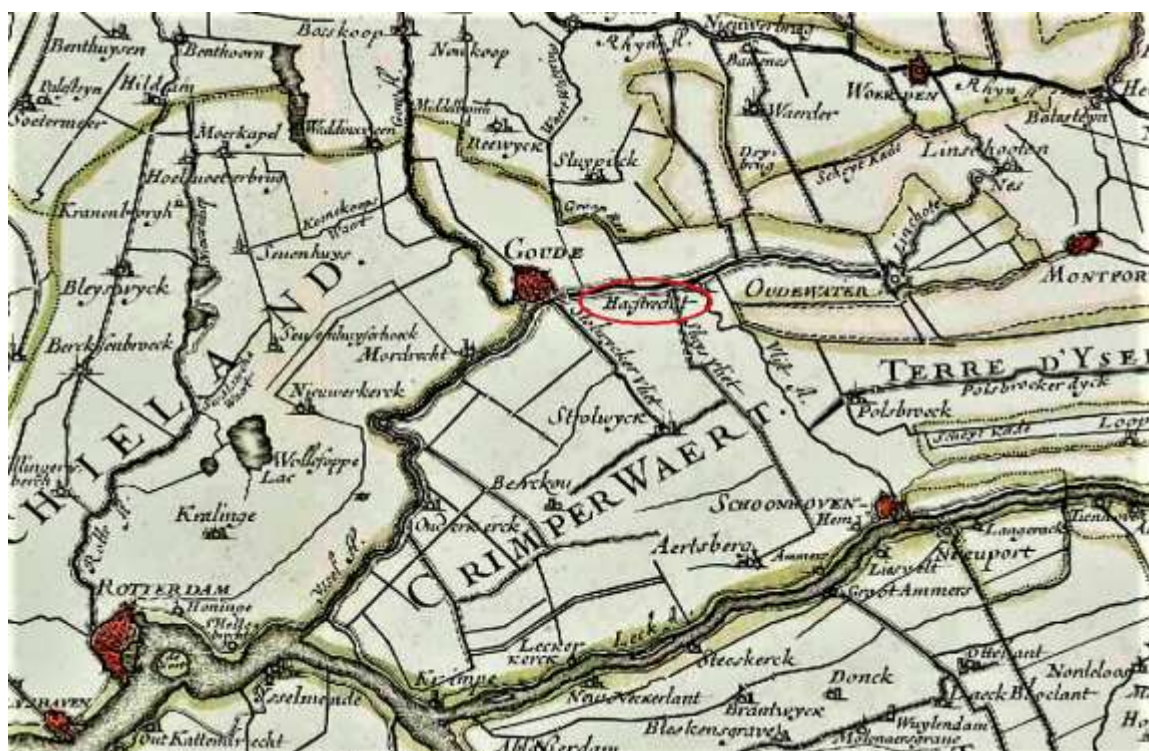


Map of the Southern Part of Holland, Guillaume Sanson and Alexis Hubert Jaillot, 1673, showing central location of the Haestrecht lordship.



of the James family and how their influence might have contributed to the outstanding authority that Col. William Claiborne seemed to wield in London and the English colony of Virginia:

...Roger [James], had fled from the Low Countries to London, no doubt to escape the Spanish domination at the time and the persecution of the reformed religion. He was a younger son of Jacob van Haestrecht of Cleve, near Utrecht, and of Gouda, in Holland, a family of prominent landowners. In 1566 he acquired the Ram's Head brewery, with the Thames-side wharf called Clare's Quay, off Lower Thames Street, close to the Tower of London. He called himself Jacobs, but this soon became anglicized to James, and the family became known as the Dutch James. Beer was the universal drink and times were prosperous for brewers. In spite of competition from twenty major brewhouses on Thames-side in the City, Roger James, when he died in 1591, left a considerable estate.



Inset from 1673 Map of the Southern Part of Holland showing the location of Haestrecht.

The memorial brass for Roger James, who was very likely the great-grandfather of Major Thomas Brereton and his brothers, is described, as



follows, in the *Survey of London: Volume 15, All Hallows, Barking-By-The-Tower, Pt II*. (Originally published by London County Council, London, 1934):

11. ROGER JAMES, brewer, 1591–2, aged 67.

Full length effigy, 39 inches in height, in civil dress. Foot inscription, 25 × 5 inches, in five lines, black letter, and shield, 6½ × 5½, of the Brewers' Company. (Plate 73.)

Roger James, slightly inclined to the left, is represented with beard and moustaches, wearing ruff, doublet and fur-trimmed gown.

Arms: (*Gules*) a cheveron (*argent*) between three pairs of barley sheaves in saltire (*or*) with three kilderkins (*sable*) hooped (*or*) on the cheveron, for THE BREWERS' COMPANY, grant of 1544, where the cheveron is engrailed.



Rubbing from the Brass Memorial of Roger James,  
All Hallows-by-the-Tower Church, Co. Middlesex, London



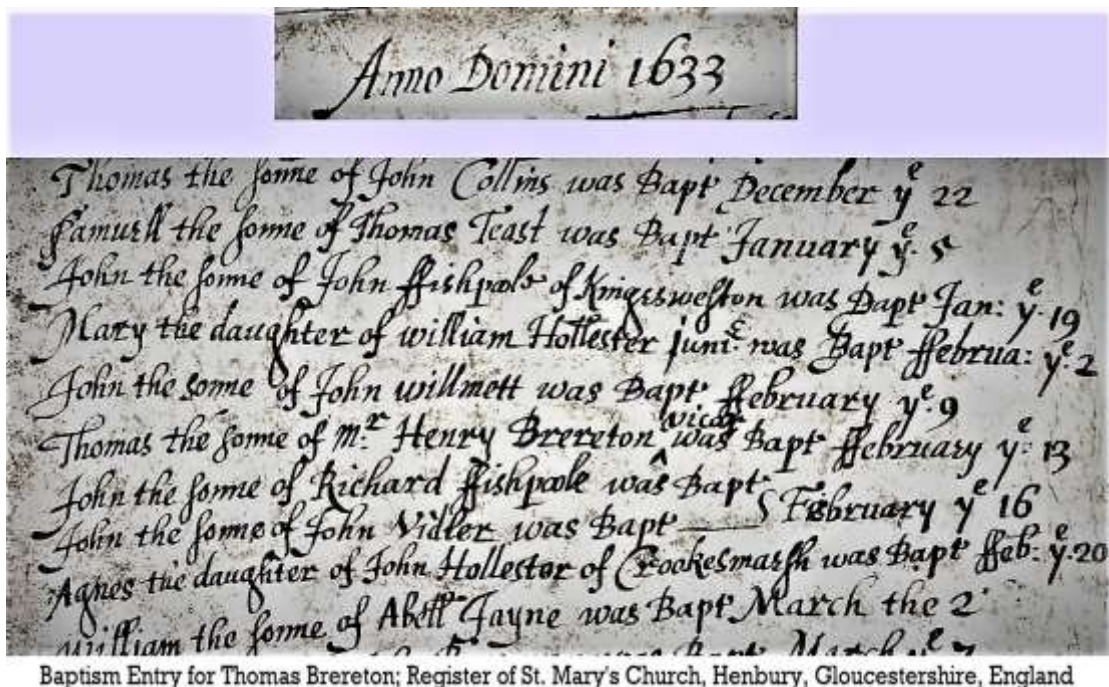
High Resolution image of upper portion of the Brass Memorial  
for Roger James at All Hallows By-the-Tower Church, London.

Inscription: Here under lyeth ye bodye of Roger James late of London Brewer whoe beinge of the age of threeskore and seven departed this lyfe the second daye of March in the yeare of our lorde one thowsand five hundred foure skore and Eleaven leavinge behind hym Sara his wyfe eight sonnes and one daughter.

Relaid in a new slab, 48 × 30 inches, and fastened by large nails.

He was a son of Jacob von Haestrecht in the Duchy of Cleve near Utrecht, and established a brewery at Clare's Quay. It was in 1566 that he purchased the quay from Thomas Wylson, together with a house thereon, late in the occupation of Elizabeth Alderton and then in the tenure of Thomas Edwards. He also owned the "Ram's Head," adjoining Clare's Quay on the east. He owned extensive properties in London, Essex, Kent, etc., and married Sara, daughter and sole heiress of Henry Morskin of London.

From the available records, it seems clear that Col. William Claiborne's stepfather, Roger James (son of Roger depicted above in the brass memorial), had a brother Arnold James whose daughter Elizabeth married a minister named Henry Brereton. What are the odds that Col. William Claiborne could have a son-in-law whose father was Rev. Henry Brereton, but there *not* be a James connection? It is possible but not probable. More research will likely prove that the mother of Major Thomas Brereton of Virginia was Elizabeth James of London.





The children of Rev. Henry Brereton and his wife Elizabeth were as follows: Elizabeth (Brereton) Walker (b. by 1630–d. ?); Mary Brereton (b. by 1631–d. 1670); [Major] Thomas Brereton (b. by 1633–d. 1683), of Virginia; William Brereton (b. by 1636–d. 1690), Sheriff of Somerset Co. MD ; and, Anthony Brereton (b. by 1637–d. 1677). The Henbury Parish Register, Gloucestershire provides the following individual baptismal entries: “Anno Domini 1630, Elizabeth the daughter of Mr. Henry Brereton vicar was Bapt Aprill ye 29.” “Anno Domini 1631, Mary the daughter of Henry Brereton vicar was Bapt February ye 28.” “Anno Domini 1633, Thomas the sonne of Mr. Henry Brereton vicar was Bapt February ye 13.” “Anno Domini 1636, William the sonne of Mr. Henry Brereton vicar & Elizabeth his wife was Bapt May the 4.” “Anno Domini 1637, Anthony the sonne of Mr. Henry Brereton vicar Elizabeth his wife was Bap Fe: the 15th.”

Not only did his sons Thomas and William become invested in the New World but the vicar himself, on two occasions, indentured Virginia-bound servants. *The Bristol Registers of Servants Sent to Foreign Plantations, 1654–1686*, compiled by Peter Wilson Coldham (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1988) records the following instances: (p. 74; 7 Aug 1658) Margaret Waters, spinster, to Henry Brereton of Westbury, clerk, 5 yrs Virginia; and (p. 14; 15 Oct 1665)



Map showing the location of Henbury, Gloucestershire, England;  
Birthplace of Major Thomas Brereton, husband of Jane Claiborne.

William White of Hereford, metal man, to Henry Brereton of Westbury, Glos, clerk, 4 yrs Virginia. The same source indicates that Anthony Brereton, brother of Thomas and William and son of Henry, sent Howell Morgan to serve in Virginia for 4 years (p. 228; 21 Dec 1666).

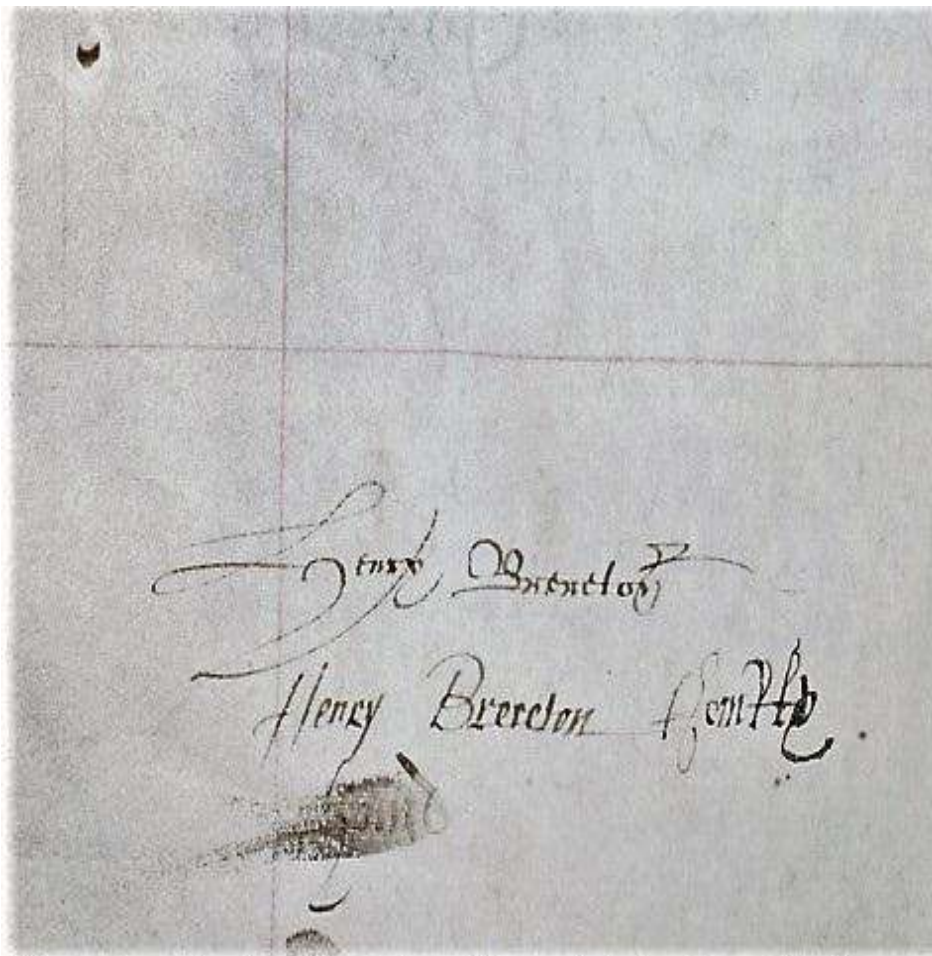
After the restoration of the monarchy in England, Henry Brereton was able to regain his position as Vicar at Henbury when Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity on 19 May 1662. He was officially reinstated on 18 Aug 1662 [Bristol Record Office, Ep/A/10/1/4 (Subscription Book); Ordinary / Jurisdiction: Ironside, Gilbert/Bristol, 1661-1671]. Among other things, the Act of Uniformity required that the Book of Common Prayer “be truly and exactly Translated into the British or Welsh Tongue”. It also demanded that all ministers be ordained, a requirement which had to be reintroduced since the Puritans had dissolved many features of the Church during the Civil War. Bishops, Deans and Chapters had been abolished; the Elizabethan Prayer Book had been replaced by the Directory of Worship. As a reaction to the Act of Uniformity over 2000 ministers refused to swear the oath and left the Church of England. This reaction was known as the Great Ejection of 1662 and was the impetus for increasing non-conformity within English society.



Holy Trinity Church Cemetery, Westbury on Trym, Bristol



Henry Brereton died in October 1668 and was buried at Holy Trinity, Westbury on Trym, (his name is transcribed in the record as Brewerton); he was described, at the time of his passing, as Minister, of Westbury, Wiltshire. Brereton's probate inventory includes "all the bookes" in the study, which also contained a desk, a small table board with a cloth, and shelves, valued at £10, from a total estate valued at £109 1s [see Moore, J. S. (ed.), *Clifton and Westbury probate inventories 1609-1761*, Bristol, 1981, 107-9; and also George, E. and S. (eds.), *Guide to the Probate Inventories of the Bristol Deanery of the Diocese of Bristol (1542-1804)*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton Pub. Ltd., 1988, p. 28].

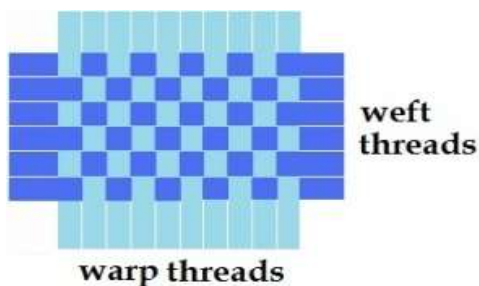


"Henry Brereton" written in two different styles. Found in the back of a copy of *Scala perfectionis* by Walter Hilton (1595). Given to Trinity College, Cambridge, by alumnus Geo. Wilmer (Matric 1598). Book 354 of The James Catalogue of Western Manuscripts

Carl B. Estabrook, on p. 170 of *Urbane and rustic England: Cultural ties and social spheres in the provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), comments as follows: Henry Brereton of Westbury-on-Trym was exceptional among rural book owners in the extent to which his wealth was devoted to book ownership. He was worth over £109 in 1668 and had books worth £10, or 9.2 percent of his total wealth.

Present-day book sellers are aware that the Vicar left behind a rather large library and, although on the lookout, so far none of his books have been identified, according to David Pearson, Book Owners Online [last modified 16 May 2021; [bookowners.online/Henry\\_Brereton\\_d.1688](https://bookowners.online/Henry_Brereton_d.1688)]. Notwithstanding, there is a manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge, that was apparently owned at some point by Henry Brereton whose name is entered in the back of the volume twice, first in a cursive hand [see doctoral thesis of Daniel W. Bargen, *The English Manuscripts of Walter Hilton's Scala perfectionis: An Assessment of Reception* (U. of Alberta, 2017), p. 46 and p. 50].

Elizabeth, the wife of Rev. Henry Brereton, died about a month after her husband and is also buried in the churchyard at Holy Trinity. Mary Brereton of Gloucestershire, a daughter of Henry and Elizabeth, signed her will at about the time of her father's death and while her mother was still living, on 20 Oct 1668. The will was proved 9 Feb 1670 [National Archives, Kew, Co. Surrey, England, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858*, Ref. 11/335/201]. In the will Mary



Schematic drawing of a tabby weave.

mentions her brother Anthony Brereton and his wife; her brother, Thomas Brereton, his wife Jane, and their son Thomas; her brother William Brereton; her sister Elizabeth Walker; and, lastly, her widowed mother, still living in October 1668 (though she passed away a month later). [Note: Tabby weave (or plain weave) was prized for being fashionable yet strong and durable]:

I Marie Brereton of Westbury in the County of Gloucester spinster being sicke and weake of Body yet in perfect memory praised be Almighty god doe make this my last will and testament. Imprimis I commit my Soule to God that gave it And my body to the earth to be buried in decent manner and doth dispose of all my goods chattels and debts whatsoever in manner following. Item I doe make ordayne constitute and appoint my brother Anthony Brereton my sole and whole executor of all my goods chattels and debts exct such as are disposed in manner following Item I doe give and bequeath my great stone ring to my Brother Thomas Brereton, And the gold Signet to Thomas his sonne Also I doe give and bequeath my green Stone ring with two diamonds and also my sky colour Tabby laced Petticote to Jane his wife Item I give & bequeath my blacke Enamelled ring to my brother William Brereton Item I give and bequeath



my Joynted Gold ring to my sister Elizabeth Walker Item I give and bequeath one Gold Bodkin marked M: B:, And one small Dyamond ring to my brother Anthony's wife Item I give the disposall of my linnen to my mother as she shall think fitt And I do make my last will and Testament and witness my hand this twentieth of October 1668. Mary Brereton witnes William Lyoyns Iohn Eckley [a short Probatum in Latin followed the will which I do not here transcribe].

The will of Marie Brereton is currently available as a free download simply by ordering it on the website for The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, TW9 4DU. For anyone interested in examining the collection of digitized documents from the Bristol Record Office concerning the Rev. Henry Brereton and his family, I recently deposited copies of these records with the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD.

- AC/AS/35/1 Records of the Smyth family of Ashton Court Astry Papers Brereton's Tenement Bargain and Sale - 1) Lord Aston, heir of Ralph Sadleir 2) Henry Brereton of Westbury-on-Trym, clerk - 2 messuages and lands (field names given) in Henbury. Consid. £90. Rent 2s. 1665 Oct. 17.
- AC/AS/35/2 Records of the Smyth family of Ashton Court Astry Papers Brereton's Tenement Bargain and Sale - 1) Henry Brereton 2) Anthony Brereton of Bristol, upholsterer, son of Henry - messuage and land, part of premises in preceding deed. Rent.1s., part of fee farm rent of 2s. reserved by previous deed. 1668 Feb. 10.
- AC/AS/34/5 Records of the Smyth family of Ashton Court Astry Papers Appledram (Appleduram, Aplethram, Ablethram, etc.) Bargain and Sale - 1) Henry Brereton of Henbury, clerk 2) Nicholas Pitt of Redwick, Henbury, esq. - one acre in same meadow and place. 1666 Oct. 4.
- AC/AS/35/5 Records of the Smyth family of Ashton Court Astry Papers Brereton's Tenement Mortgage - Thomas Brereton to Henry Roach of Bristol, mariner - mess. and land, part of premises in AC/AS/35/1. Endorsed: 4 Jan.1682/3. Assignment to Samuel Astry. Annexed and enclosed: bonds and papers, 1677 Dec. 24.
- AC/AS/35/6 Records of the Smyth family of Ashton Court Astry Papers Brereton's Tenement Bargain and Sale, 3 Feb 1684...1) Thomas Brereton, son & heir of Thomas Brereton of Wickacomaco in Virginia, gentleman, (deceased) 2) Sir Samuel Astry of Henbury Premises as AC/AS/35/5 Consideration: £240.