

The plan proposes a chapel in a new range to the south. However, this proposed new range was not built, and it is possible that the chapel has always been in its present location (though later enlarged) where it would have been easily accessible both to the family and to the servants. The glass in the chapel windows is of various dates and was reset and probably added to in the eighteenth century, but it includes a fine suite of panels by one of the van Linge brothers who made windows for several Oxford colleges in the 1620s and 30s. In 1741 the connoisseur George Vertue recorded seeing the glass in the house, and noted a date of 1632.²¹ The date can no longer be seen, but if it right, then it must have been put in by the 1st Earl's son Thomas.

2 Troubles: the second and third Earls of Downe

William Pope, 1st Earl of Downe, died in 1631 with the house unfinished. His eldest son might well have finished it had he lived, but he had died in 1624, and the 1st Earl left as his heir and the inheritor of his title his grandson Thomas, a child of eight. In his will, the 1st Earl bequeathed everything to his second, and surviving son, also named Thomas. No mention is made of his eldest son's child as he presumably had family lands settled on him already. But under the terms of the 1st Earl's will, the lease of Wroxton Abbey itself, together with other land that he still retained, had been bequeathed to his son Thomas.

The young Earl would inherit extensive estates in north Oxfordshire but would never live at Wroxton Abbey. He led an unhappy life, first as ward of an unscrupulous guardian and then in a forced marriage. He died in 1660 aged only 38, leaving his affairs in considerable confusion.²² Lacking a direct male heir, his uncle succeeded as 3rd Earl of Downe.

Sir Thomas (he had become a baronet), who occupied Wroxton Abbey all this time, was a royalist, acting as receiver of local taxes for the King in 1642, and actual host to his sovereign on 13th July 1643.²³

3 Two brothers

Thomas, the 3rd Earl, died in 1665, and his son, the 4th Earl, survived him by only a few months, leaving the Wroxton estates – the lease of the house and his freehold lands – to be divided between the 3rd Earl's three

²¹ *Walpole Society*, XXIV, 1935-6, 192.

²² The 2nd Earl's sad life and attempted divorce are to form a separate article.

His uncle spent £7500 on settling his debts. National Archives C22/623/58.

²³ Alfred Beesley, *op.cit.*, 348; *Cake & Cockhorse*, XV.7, 2002, 237.