“An Industrious Mind”
The Worlds of Sir Simonds D’Ewes
(1602-1650)

The D’Ewes wall monument (1624) is on the south wall of the chancel of St. George Stowlangtoft, Suffolk. Paul D’Ewes is flanked by his two wives. The children (all borne by his first wife, Sissilia Symonds) are below (sons on the left and daughters on the right).

All photos in this series are by J. Sears McGee unless another source is indicated.
Simonds D’Ewes was twenty-two and a law student at the Middle Temple in London when his father signed the contract for the wall monument in 1624. He could have accompanied his father to a meeting with the sculptor, and it is possible that this image does represent him with some degree of accuracy. Immediately behind is his deceased brother, Paul, followed by his brother, Richard.
Notice that little Paul (on the left) and Sissilia (on the right) carry skulls to indicate that they died before the monument was made.
St. George Stowlangtoft was built between 1370 and 1400. Its fanciful carved pew ends include a unicorn and a boar playing a lute. Simonds was buried on the north side of the chancel, near his parents and his first wife, Anne.
D’ewes’s last school before he went to St. John’s College Cambridge in 1618 still stands in Bury St. Edmunds, although the building is no longer used as a school.
St. Johns’ College, Cambridge: Entry and Chapel. Simonds studied at St. John’s from 1618 to 1620.
Middle Temple Hall (built in the 1560s and early 1570s) – Exterior and Interior. Simonds studied the English Common Law at the Middle Temple from 1620 to 1626.
Middle Temple Hall – stained glass window and “the cupboard” (used for such ceremonies as the “call to the bar” which Simonds enjoyed in 1623.)
The Temple Church: the 12th-century round church and the 13th-century nave. It required extensive restoration after World War II due to bomb damage. But Simonds would surely have approved of the prominent pulpit and the restrained altar.
The wall monument on the north side commemorating Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston (d. 1653) and his wife Jane (d. 1669). They are looking toward the pulpit.
The Kediton pulpit (c. 1610) from which Abraham Gibson preached a powerful sermon heard by Simonds in 1624 and the hatchment commemorating Dame Ann Barnardiston (Anne Clopton D’Ewes’s grandmother and guardian.)
Another view of the pulpit (note the hour-glass stand) and the Barnardiston family pew (c. 1610 but including panels from a parclose screen, c. 1430).
Lutons Hall (aka Kentwell Manor) near Long Melford, the childhood home of Anne Clopton D’Ewes, and a window in the dining room with the D’Ewes quatrefoils (probably a later addition).
More views of Lutons Hall.
Simonds paid to erect a stained-glass monument in the parish church of St. Michael Bassishaw in London honoring his paternal great-grandparents, Adrian D’Ewes and his wife Alice. The church was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Simonds arranged that an engraving of it appeared in John Weevor’s book, *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (London, 1631). For his father Geerardt, he had a monument installed in the parish church of St. Laurence in Upminster, Essex. The window is no longer there, but an engraving of it is also in Weevor’s book (see next slide).
Note the use of the wolf’s head with a collar device on the monument to Geerardt. When Simonds got a coat of arms for his father in 1627, he used this along with the quatrefoils because it had been part of the family’s traditional heraldry.
British Library Harley Roll O 8 is a “descent” for the D’Ewes family down to Simonds’s time that begins with his great-great-great grandfather Gheerardt Des Ewes, Lord of Kessel. It is reproduced here by permission of the British Library in three parts. Much of the text is in the hand of his assistant, whose letters slope slightly go the right. But the heading and numerous additions are in Simonds’s hand, which is italic with letters that go straight up and down. Note that in the bottom section of the third image Simonds wrote of his brother Richard that he was “still living in 1627,” an indication that this was the year that the roll was completed.
Simonds began working on his treatise entitled “Great Brittaines Strenght and Weakenes” on May 5, 1628. All that remains of it in his papers is a 1,500 word introduction, the first page of which appears here by permission of the British Library. It is a good example of how legibly he could write when he was making a “fair copy” of a document. Compare his hand here with his insertions to the “descent” on the preceding images. The citations in the margin demonstrate his insistence on thorough documentation to support his assertions.
Portrait of Anne Clopton D’Ewes (c. 1626). By permission of the West Suffolk Anglo-Saxon Village Trust.

Window in the Clopton Chantry of Holy Trinity Church in Long Melford combining D’Ewes and Clopton devices.
The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Lavenham, Suffolk, and the Ambrose Copinger family wall monument. Copinger preached the funeral sermon for Paul D’Ewes in 1631.
The “baby brass” under which lie three infant sons of Anne and Simonds is immediately in front of the altar at Lavenham and overlooked from the north by the Copinger wall monument.
Great Thornham Hall (near Eye, Suffolk) was the home of Wiseman Bokenham, Esq., who married Simonds’s sister Grace in 1625. This is a 16th-century painting of his home, which was pulled down in the 18th century and replaced with the current hall.
Boxted Hall, Suffolk (four miles northeast of Long Melford) is a moated 14th-century manor house. It was the home of Sir William Poley, who married Simonds’s youngest sister, Elizabeth (Betty), in 1636. Their portraits, which hang in the house (still the property of the Weller-Poley family) appear in the next slide.
Sir William Poley and his wife Elizabeth.
Marie (or Mary) D’Ewes married Sir Thomas Bowes of Much Bromley, Essex, in 1626. Simonds later made Sir Thomas the executor of his will.

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St. Margaret’s Church (15th-century) in Parliament Square, just north of Westminster Abbey. It has long been known as “the parish church of the House of Commons,” and Simonds heard many parliamentary fast sermons here during the 1640s.
During the 1640s, Simonds had lodgings in what was called “the old palace yard,” quite near the present “dean’s yard” depicted here. He was only a few minutes’ walk from St. Stephen’s Chapel in the Palace of Westminster where the House of Commons met.
Visitors to the Manuscripts Reading Room of the British Library in St. Pancras, London, pass by a bust and a portrait. The bust is of Sir Robert Cotton, Simonds’s’s mentor and friend in matters political and bibliographical. The portrait is of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, who bought D’Ewes’s huge library in 1705. Harley’s collection, purchased in 1753 by Parliament, is a major building block of the BL collection.