

Sir John Hynde of Madingley: From Whence He Sprung?

A synopsis of the article by Elizabeth Cumming

Elizabeth Cumming's article, "*Sir John Hynde of Madingley – From Whence he Sprung?*", explores one of the enduring mysteries of Tudor Cambridgeshire history: the obscure origins of Sir John Hynde (c.1480–1550), lawyer, judge, parliamentarian and builder of Madingley Hall. While Hynde became one of the most influential figures in Cambridgeshire during the reign of Henry VIII, remarkably little is known about his family background. The article assembles documentary clues to suggest that his rise was not entirely self-made but may have depended upon a network of influential Cambridgeshire patrons established before he first appears in the historical record.

The starting point is **Madingley**, where Hynde established himself as lord of the manor and from 1543 constructed the magnificent **Madingley Hall**, one of the finest surviving Tudor houses in Cambridgeshire. Although Hynde is today inseparably associated with Madingley, no documentary evidence places him there before his appointment as a Justice of the Peace in 1512. The article therefore asks where he spent the missing years between his education and his arrival as one of the county's leading office holders.

The first Cambridgeshire connection concerns **Cambridge** itself. Hynde is believed to have attended King's College before entering Gray's Inn, although the author notes that this remains an assumption rather than an established fact. What is certain is that by 1512 he possessed sufficient standing to become a Justice of the Peace for Cambridgeshire. Such appointments normally went to established local landowners, suggesting that Hynde had already become embedded within the county's governing elite before entering public office.

One of the article's most intriguing geographical investigations centres on **Harlton**, five miles south-west of Cambridge. Within the Church of the Assumption survives medieval graffiti bearing the name "Thomas Hynde", traditionally attributed to John's brother Thomas, later Rector of Girton. Cumming questions this interpretation, arguing that Thomas never actually

served at Harlton church. Instead, she suggests the graffiti may point towards a deeper family association with Harlton itself. This becomes significant because nearby **Harlton Manor** came into the possession of John Hutton, whose family provides one of the strongest possible links to Hynde's obscure origins.

The neighbouring village of **Dry Drayton** emerges as another crucial location. The Hutton family's principal estate lay here, and the article demonstrates extensive connections between the Huttons and the later Hynde family. The Venerable Thomas Hutton accumulated considerable estates around Dry Drayton and appointed numerous trusted feoffees to administer them. Among these appear two men named John and Thomas Hyne, raising the possibility that these were the future Sir John Hynde and his brother during their youth. If so, the Hynde brothers may have entered Cambridgeshire under Hutton's protection following the death of their father.

The evidence becomes stronger through the manor of **Elsworth**. Documents relating to Hutton's estates record both John Hyne and Thomas Hyne acting as feoffees for Elsworth manor. Thomas is described as a "clerk from Cambridge", a description that accords well with the later career of Thomas Hynde, who became Rector of Girton. Cumming suggests that possession of interests in Elsworth may even have provided John Hynde with the property qualification required for appointment as Justice of the Peace in 1512. Elsworth therefore occupies a central place in her reconstruction of Hynde's early career.

Another important Cambridgeshire site is **Over**, where the Boxworth manor of Overhaul appears in the documentary record. This manor subsequently passed through the intertwined ownership of the Huttons, the Hyndes and later the Cutts family, illustrating how these prominent Cambridgeshire dynasties became increasingly interconnected through land transactions and marriage alliances over several generations.

The village of **Girton** enters the story through John Hynde's brother, Thomas, who became Rector there. His long incumbency survived the upheavals of both the English Reformation and the accession of Elizabeth I. Although Thomas's clerical career is well documented, the article argues

that his earlier association with Harlton and possibly with the Hutton estates may hold important clues to the family's beginnings.

Several further villages appear through the Hutton network. **Comberton**, **Great Eversden** and **Boxworth** supplied trusted local men who acted as feoffees for Thomas Hutton's estates. These settlements collectively demonstrate the geographical concentration of the social network within which the young Hynde brothers may have been raised and introduced to county society. Rather than arriving in Cambridgeshire as complete outsiders, they may have entered an already well-established circle of influential local landowners.

The article also draws attention to **Childerley**, where Sir John Cutts purchased the manor during the early Tudor period. The Cutts family later became close neighbours and allies of the Hyndes. Hynde's daughter Sybil married into the Cutts family, and later generations continued to exchange estates including Boxworth. These marriages illustrate how Hynde became fully integrated into the highest ranks of Cambridgeshire society.

Within **Cambridge** itself, the article identifies several significant institutional connections. The Lent Assizes held at Cambridge Castle are mentioned in connection with Sir John Cutts's death following illness contracted there, while Hynde himself later exercised judicial authority across the county. Cambridge University also appears through Thomas Lovell's influence over university appointments and through Thomas Hynde's clerical career. These links demonstrate how the county's legal, ecclesiastical and academic institutions overlapped within the same governing elite.

Although much of the article examines national politics involving Richard III, Henry VII, Wolsey and Cromwell, its principal contribution lies in reconstructing a distinctly Cambridgeshire landscape of patronage. Rather than seeing Hynde simply arriving at Madingley as an ambitious lawyer, Cumming proposes that villages stretching from Harlton through Dry Drayton, Elsworth, Boxworth, Over, Girton and Childerley formed an interconnected network that nurtured his early career long before he entered the historical spotlight.

The article concludes cautiously. No document yet identifies Sir John Hynde's father or birthplace, and the mystery of "from whence he sprung" remains unsolved. Nevertheless, by following property transactions, feoffees, ecclesiastical appointments and local alliances across western Cambridgeshire, Elizabeth Cumming provides perhaps the strongest case yet that Hynde's remarkable rise depended upon an influential Cambridgeshire patronage network centred on the Hutton family. Her work transforms what was previously a genealogical puzzle into a geographical one, showing that the answer may ultimately lie hidden among the surviving archives of villages surrounding Cambridge rather than in the better-known records of Madingley itself.