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The Hyde Family

of North & Mid-Berkshire

The Hyde family is one of the most ancient of Berkshire families and, happily, there are still descendants using the name today. They take their name from the minor manor of Hyde in the southern part of [Denchworth](#) parish, near [Wantage](#). It is said to have been given to the first Hyde by King Canute. A hide is a Saxon measurement of land, originally the amount sufficient to support a single household. The Berkshire family should not be confused with the Hydes of Southern Wiltshire who became Earls of Clarendon and of Rochester and originated from Hyde and then Norbury in Cheshire. Branches of that family also lived in Berkshire, notably the [2nd Earl of Clarendon](#) at [Swallowfield Park](#). Eventually the two families did intermarry.

The earliest recorded Berkshire Hyde appears to have been a John Hyde who died in Denchworth in 1135. His great grandson, a younger son also named John, is said to have been [John de Cella](#), the well-known Abbot of St. Albans who rebuilt the abbey's west-front. He rose through the ranks at the daughter house of [Wallingford Priory](#). John's nephew, Roger, was the man who gave his name to the manor of La Hyde in [Purley](#), although it was not his main home and he sold up in 1234. Despite having a famous abbot in the family, the Hydes of Berkshire remained only minor landed gentry for the next three hundred years. In the 14th century, they moved from Hyde near Circourt to Hyde Farm in the north of Denchworth parish. By the end of the century, in the 1380s, they also purchased the manor of Lovedays and, sixty years later, this was joined by those of South Denchworth and Circourt. All three are in Denchworth parish and Denchworth Manor became their main home.

The first Berkshire Hyde to really make his mark was Oliver Hyde who lived in the reign of King Henry VII. His younger son, Thomas, founded the [Long Wittenham](#) branch of the family. Whilst another son, John (not to be confused with his nephew of the same name), moved to [Sutton Courtenay](#) and Blagrove in Cumnor. John's grandson, Richard was knighted and made Sheriff of Berkshire. One of his great grandsons, Humphrey, emigrated to Fairfield in Connecticut during Queen Elizabeth's reign. The family didn't know if he was dead or alive, but he prospered and has many descendants in the US. In the UK, this branch eventually married the heiress of the Hydes of [Northcourt](#) in [Abingdon & Sutton Wick](#) in Drayton (see below) and continued in Blagrove and Northcourt until 1712.

Oliver's eldest son, William (died 1557), continued in Denchworth. He served in the King's army against the rebels during the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 and was one of the Berkshire gentry sent to greet Anne of Cleves upon her arrival in England three years later. He was also appointed Sheriff for the county in 1551 and elected MP two years later. William had twenty children and was the progenitor of many family branches. Of his sons: Oliver of Banbury Court, Abingdon was MP for that town and became instrumental in setting up Christ's Hospital there, but had no children; Thomas' family lived at Hinton House in [Hurst](#) until 1670 (his son was sheriff in 1622), another branch at Hyde End Manor in [Shinfield](#) until 1713; Lovincott lived at Hall Place in [Woolstone](#) but had no children; Peter lived in [Letcombe Regis](#) but had no children; Roger moved to Romsey in Hampshire and his family were still there in the 1640s; John's family lived at Northcourt in Abingdon and Sutton Wick in Drayton. They were Sheriffs for the county and Royalists during the Civil War but died out in 1677 - the last heiress married a cousin (see above); Hugh lived at [Antwicks Manor](#) in Letcombe Regis. Hugh's family moved to [Pangbourne](#) and then his son, Francis, inherited, from his wife's family, the manor of La Hyde in Purley named by his ancestor (see above). He built Hyde Hall (now [Purley Hall](#)) there in 1609 and his descendants were resident until 1720. They were a famous recusant Catholic family. A younger branch moved to Marlborough in Wiltshire before purchasing Hyde End House at [Brimpton](#) in the early 1700s. This property took its name from Hyde Abbey at Winchester and a different family called De la Hyde lived there in the 17th century. The Hydes continued at Hyde End until 1917.

William Hyde (died 1557)'s eldest son, another William (died 1567), was unfortunately - it has recently been discovered - not the man who befriended and played constant host to the future Earl of Leicester's wife, [Amy Robsart](#), before her mysterious death in 1560. He had five sons: Edward's family were in [East Hendred](#) until the 1650s, while Arthur lived at Hardwell in [Uffington](#). Arthur's son founded the Irish branch of the family from Castlehyde near Fermoy and elsewhere in County Cork. One of them was the Governor of Sierra Leone. Eventually, in the 19th century, the family went bankrupt. Clarendon Hyde, from this branch, moved back to Berkshire. He settled at Longworth House and became Sheriff of the county. His descendants are the FitzWilliam-Hyde family.

William (died 1567) purchased the [old castle](#) at Kingston Lisle and the place became the main family home during the time of his grandson, Sir George, a Knight of the Bath. He almost certainly tore down the medieval house and replaced it with a fine Jacobean mansion. His brother was Sir Robert Hyde of Charlton, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench. Of Sir George's eight sons, John, lived at [Maiden Erlegh](#) and David at [Erleigh Court](#), but only the latter had children: three daughters. His eldest son, Humphrey, was a Royalist during the Civil War and his son, another Humphrey, built the [present house](#) at Kingston Lisle in 1677. The family continued there until 1749.

The Hydes quartered their arms with those of Lovincott. They married into most of the great families of Berkshire. The family appears in the Heralds' Visitations of Berkshire for 1566, 1623 and 1665/6. There are twenty-eight wills and seventeen administrations listed for Hyde in the records of the Archdeaconry of Berkshire between 1508 and 1710. There are sixty-four Berkshire wills listed in the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. They have several memorials in [Denchworth Church](#), [Longworth Church](#) and [Abingdon St. Helen's](#). Those in [Shinfield Church](#) and [Sutton Courtenay Church](#) are no more.

