

Charles DINGLEY (1711-1769)

Charles Dingley was christened at St Helen, Bishopsgate, London on 1st November 1711

Charles and his elder brother Robert were freemen of the Russia Company and traded as partners with an agency in St. Petersburg, where, with other merchants they financed two sugar refineries. Charles added considerably to his Hampstead inheritance. In 1762, Charles's house, called in turn Wildwoods, North End, and Pitt House was set in 2½ acres, mostly on the southern side of the village, and included a coach house, stabling, garden, grotto, wilderness, and four other houses. Politically ambitious, Charles DINGLEY invited William PITT the elder to North End in 1763. He built a new wing and a gymnasium for PITT's children by 1766, when PITT first moved in.

Charles DINGLEY played a leading role in the building of new roads in and around N.E. London, including the roads now called Marylebone, Euston and Pentonville Roads. Dingley Road and Dingley Place leading off the City Road, EC1, were named after him. He also played a leading role in canal building and making rivers navigable, including a stretch of the river Stort between Bishop's Stortford and the river Lee. He also owned considerable riverside property and wharfs, particularly in Limehouse, which was used for his import and timber businesses.

Charles DINGLEY built a wind-powered sawmill in Limehouse and was awarded a gold medal in December 1767 by the Society of Arts for his public spirit in erecting it. However, in May 1767 "A large body of sawyers assembled, and pulled down the saw-mill lately erected by Mr DINGLEY, at Limehouse, on pretence that it deprived many workmen of employment." He later received compensation of £2,000.

A perspective and political view of the timber-yard at Lee', 1769. Charles Dingley is sawing through the Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights. Dingley, who patented a saw mill in Limehouse, was a rival candidate to John Wilkes in the Middlesex constituency at the general election of 1769.

Credit: City of London / HIP / TopFoto engraving

In March 1769, "Several merchants and others met at the King's arms tavern in Cornhill, in order to sign an address to his majesty, which lay ready for that purpose ; on which a warm debate ensued upon the propriety of that measure; and in the end, from words they came to blows. Charles DINGLEY, esq., a zealous advocate for the address, struck Mr REYNOLDS, attorney to Mr. WILKES, and as warm an advocate against it; and Mr REYNOLDS, in return, knocked Mr. DINGLEY down; the fray



beginning to spread, the address was withdrawn, and the chief promoters of it followed it..." A drawing of this event, "The Battle of Cornhill",



A few days later, "...at Brentford, the second re-election of a knight of the shire for Middlesex, when Charles DINGLEY, esq.; made an offer to oppose the popular candidate, but, being very roughly handled by the populace, he was advised to retire; upon which, Mr Wilkes was chosen, a third time, without opposition."

Charles married Elizabeth Bois in 1746 and they had three children. Richard was buried on 18th May 1854 and Elizabeth on 7th March 1859 but in 1768, Susannah married a young man, John Smith MEGGOTT who became, briefly, Charles's trading partner.

Charles DINGLEY was buried at St Helen's Bishopsgate on 20th November 1769.

This is his last Will and Testament:

I Charles Dingley of Golders Hill in Hendon Middlesex do revoke and annul all former Wills and declare this to be my last Will and Testament. I request to be interred with my Dear Wife and beloved Relations, in the forenoon, and that my funeral Expenses exceed not thirty or forty pounds and that my Executor hereafter named give memento things to my several Relations and friends not exceeding forty to fifty I leave fifty pounds to my Domestic Servants to be distributed and given to such as my Executor shall think proper I give to my Sister Townsend twenty pounds for Mourning fifty to my Brother Robert Dingley for himself my sister Dingley ded's son and daughter the like sum to Bro. and Sister Hills and their Children Mr and Mrs fforster the like sum for them and their children and the like sum for the children of my Niece Chapman deceased, to Mrs Mary Bays ten pounds, to Mrs Roberta Meggott ten pounds, and to Mr Giles formerly my servant five pounds, debts with all just demands being paid liquidated or secured to the satisfaction of all the parties I Will and Bequest to my Son in Law John Smith Meggott the residue and whole of what I die possessed of, subject to

the following Legacies, to my Brother Robert Dingley the sum of two hundred pounds and to my Nephew Robert Henry Dingley five hundred pounds and the further sum of one thousand pounds to my Brother Robert Dingley to be invested in Trust in long annuities that he may receive the Income during his life in like manner five hundred pounds for my Sister Townsend to receive the Income during her life which

thousand and five hundred pounds I give to my Nephew Robert Henry Dingley to be put in possession of upon the decease of his ffather and Aunt aforesaid and to be paid four per cent by my Executor and Residuary Legatee until these sums of two hundred five hundred pounds to be paid and the fifteen hundred pounds be invested In Trust and I hereby appoint my son John Smith Meggott to be the sole executor of this my will confiding in him he will be ~ ~ ~ a friend and relation to mine and I set my hand and seal to this my last Will and Testament this day the seventeenth day of October one thousand seven hundred and sixty nine (*sig.:*) Charles Dingley. This was signed sealed and declared by Charles Dingley to be his last Testament and Will in the presence of us who in his presence are witnesses (*sigs.:*) Saml Spagg, T Stone, William Stokes, Joserph Osbold Stokes.

Legacies	£	Rings		
My servts	50	Mr and Mrs Spencer		2
Mrs Townsend Mourning	20	Mrs Mary Pitt	1	
Mr Dingley and others	50	Mr Wythie	1	
Mr & Mrs Hills &c	50	Mr & Mrs Sprage	2	
Mr & Mrs fforster &c	50	Mr Jackson		1
Chapman children		Mr Masterman		1
Mr Giles	5	Earl Chatham Grace of }	4	
Mr Boys	10	Grafton Lord <i>Soundon</i> and }		
Mr Meggott	10	North	}	2
Bro R Dingley	200			
Nephew -Do-	500			
Br R Dingley	1000			
Sister Townsend	<u>500</u>			
	£ 2495			

and to such Relations and ffriends as my Executor shall think proper

This Will was proved at London on the twenty third day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty nine before the Worshipful ffrancis Simpson Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Worshipful George Hay Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the by the oath of John Smith Meggott Esquire the sole Executor named in the said Will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the said described having been first sworn duly to administer In the name of God Amen.

