

Beheading

In 1912 a book titled "The Jerrard Family And Its Chideock Branch" was written by Frederick Bartholomew Joseph Jerrard. F.B.J. Jerrard was a Chideock Jerrard. A major contributor to the book was Alfred William Gerrard, a Beaminster Gerrard.

On Page 3 the author describes some Origins And Traditions. One of those he describes as follows: "As to the second tradition, a member of the Sandford Orcas family was undoubtedly executed for conspiracy -vide "Clarendon" and a pamphlet in the British Museum entitled "A true and impartial relation of the death of Mr. J[ohn]. Gerhard who was beheaded on Tower Hill, July 10th, 1654." [[Pamphlet now located at the British Library.]]

"This John "Gerhard" was the eldest son, (Visitation Of London 1634) of Nicholas Jerard of London, who was, (Visitation of Somerset 1623, p.4) a son of Robert Jerard of Samford Orcas".

"There is little doubt as to the identity of this John, as in his dying speech on the scaffold he forgave his brother Charles but one authority at least describes him as first cousin of Lord Gerard of Brandon."

Current research shows that this "tradition" is wrong. It appears, from secondary sources, that John Gerhard did have brothers Charles and Gilbert and a cousin who was Lord Gerard of Brandon. It would have been interesting to our family to have been connected with this John Gerhard but this is not to be. F.B.J. Jerrard's book is not materially affected by having this information clarified, however, a shadow is cast over "family traditions" and we must be much more circumspect when citing "family traditions" as prima facia proof that a fact or facts must be true.