

# DAVID PAPILLON, PHILIP BURLAMACHI AND THE ROEHAMPTON SET

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FIG 1 —  
Unknown artist, *David Papillon* (1581-1659) aged seventy-three, 1654, oil on canvas.  
(Image courtesy of Leicestershire County Museums Service)

As a result of the influence of three inter-related Huguenot families the small rural hamlet of Roehampton between Richmond Park and Putney on the south bank of the River Thames became a favoured country retreat for wealthy courtiers and jewellers in the early years of the seventeenth century. The families had all sought refuge in Italy and France and they were all involved in dealing in precious stones amongst other commercial activities which enabled them to establish substantial fortunes. The ties between them were strengthened by marriage as well as business. Two of the families, that of Philip Burlamachi and Jean Calandrini, were in partnership and by 1620 were the joint occupants of a large house in Putney High Street. Philip was married to Elizabeth Calandrini, Jean's daughter, and shortly after they had taken up residence in Putney they were joined by David Papillon who five years before had married Anna Maria, another of Jean's daughters [Fig 1]. Amongst his other business activities, Papillon was a developer and he seems to have identified the potential of Roehampton as soon as he moved to the locality.

Papillon's arrival in England had been particularly dramatic. He was the younger son of the Captain of the Guard to the future Henry IV of France. In 1588 his mother fled France in a small boat with the seven year old David and his two older sisters.<sup>1</sup> Tragically the boat was shipwrecked off Hythe and his mother was drowned but the three children were all rescued. They were brought up in the French community in London. The two sisters, Anne and Esther, were married on the same day in May 1594 to two brothers, David and Abraham Chambrelan, who came from

a merchant family originally based in Rouen. Papillon himself was apprenticed to a master jeweller in 1597 and on the completion of his apprenticeship in 1604 he left England for a European tour to study contemporary fortifications in the company of Philip Burlamachi. Burlamachi was to become the leading banker to the Stuart court and a major figure in European finance but at this stage in his career he was principally a dealer in precious stones. He had been born in France of Italian stock and had been active in the Netherlands before settling in London in 1605. His friendship with Papillon had presumably been forged within the jewellery trade and was later cemented by marriage into the Calandrini family.

Papillon remained in Europe for a lengthy period and did not return to London until 1609 when he set up in business trading in precious stones. A book of his letters and accounts dating from 1609 to 1612 shows that most of his dealings were with his brother-in-law David Chambrelan, who had returned to Rouen, but he also did a significant amount of business with the Calandrini family. Papillon became a deacon of the French church and in 1611 he married Marie Costel, the daughter of the pastor. She died in May 1614 and in the following July he married Anna Maria.

No doubt using the profits from his jewellery business, Papillon established a side-line in property speculation and was involved in a number of housing developments in the City and the suburbs including projects in St Giles, Islington and Finsbury. Shortly after his marriage to Anna Maria he moved south of the river from his house in Islington to Putney to join the Calandrini and Burlamachi families. Philip Burlamachi had established himself as an

1. A F W Papillon, *Memoirs of Thomas Papillon of London, Merchant*, London, 1887 provides a thoroughly researched family history which draws on records that are no longer available. The most comprehensive modern account is Malcolm Airs, 'David Papillon: Architect, Military Engineer, Developer, Author and Jeweller', *The Georgian Group Journal*, XXV, 2017, pp 1-14. This is fully referenced so the sources are not repeated here.



FIG 2 —  
Robert Mylne, *George Heriot*, Heriot's Hospital,  
Edinburgh.  
(Image courtesy of Malcolm Airs)

indispensable source of finance to the Crown. In 1613 he had loaned James I £6,000 and it is testimony of his value to the government that in 1619, when he was fined £2,000 in the Star Chamber for illegally exporting gold, his fine was remitted in return for a further loan of £10,000 to the King. These large sums pale into insignificance in comparison to his dealings during the war years of 1624-9. During that period he loaned the Crown more than £127,000, much of it to finance English and foreign military operations. In addition he stood security for the government for its borrowings and provided funds for the payment of English ambassadors abroad and the purchase of art treasures for the royal collection.<sup>2</sup>

It was into this world of high finance that Papillon moved when he joined his brother-in-law south of the river. He bought an estate in Roehampton adjacent to Putney in January 1620 and built himself a large house later known as Elm Grove which was rated at twenty hearths under the Hearth Tax of the 1660s.<sup>3</sup> Whether he intended this as a speculation is not clear, but he only lived in it for two years before selling it to George Heriot. Heriot was part of the Scottish court of James I which moved to London in 1603 when he succeeded Elizabeth I as monarch. He was a goldsmith and jeweller who had effectively acted as banker to Queen Anne, wife of James I, in response to her insatiable love for jewellery. He lent her significant amounts of money, often secured on jewellery he himself had sold her. It was estimated that between 1593 and 1603 he did £50,000 of business with her. When the court moved to London he was appointed Jeweller to the King on a modest annual stipend of £150. He continued to make loans to the Queen from which he drew sizeable amounts of interest. He had a town house in the Strand and he only enjoyed his

country retreat for two years before dying in 1624. His principal legacy was Heriot's Hospital in Edinburgh which was begun in 1628 to provide free education for the children of deceased burgesses in that city<sup>4</sup> [Fig 2].

Having sold Elm Grove, Papillon immediately built himself another house on an adjacent plot where one of his sons was born in 1623. Again, he only lived in it for a short period before selling it in 1625 to Sir Richard Weston, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Portland [Fig 3]. Whether Burlamachi's court connections were responsible for attracting Heriot to Roehampton is uncertain but, given his close business relationship with Weston it is highly likely that he introduced the latter to Papillon. Weston had been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1621 and he played a key role under Charles I in finding ways of



FIG 3 —  
Studio of Sir Anthony van Dyck, *Sir Richard Weston, 1st Earl of Portland*, circa 1638, oil on canvas.  
(National Trust, Kingston Lacy)

2. A V Judges, 'Philip Burlamachi: A Financier of the Thirty Years War', *Economica*, no. 18, 1926, 285-300. See also the entry for Burlamachi *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004.

3. For the various houses in Roehampton see the following publications by Dorian Gerhold; *Putney & Roehampton Past*, 1994, *Villas and Mansions of Roehampton and Putney Heath*, 1997, *Roehampton in 1617*, 2001. I am deeply indebted to him for generously sharing his extensive knowledge of the locality with me.

4. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004.

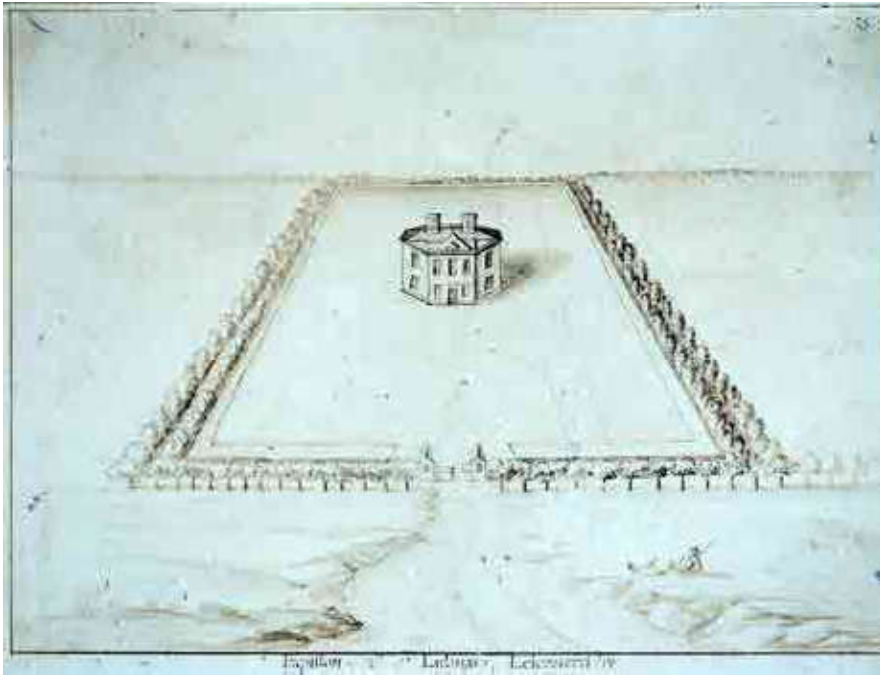


FIG 4 —  
Papillon Hall, Lubenham, Leicestershire.  
(Image courtesy of Leicestershire County Record  
Office)

securing the revenue necessary to support the Crown during the period of personal rule.<sup>5</sup>

He was directly responsible for the enormous loans negotiated with Burlamachi and in June 1626 he spoke in Parliament in favour of a petition from Burlamachi for the reimbursement of the money he had secured on behalf of the Council of War, stating that the “armies in the Low Countries could not have subsisted” without Burlamachi’s credit. Having purchased Papillon’s house, he enlarged it with a private chapel, extended the surrounding park, and laid out formal gardens under the supervision of Balthasar Gerbier, another Huguenot. It is a mark of its status that the Great House, as it was later called, was by 1674 the largest private house in Surrey with fifty-six hearths and was owned by the dowager Countess of Devonshire.


During the brief period that Papillon was living in the Great House he built himself a third house in Roehampton which he let to Samuel Neast, a London goldsmith. This was undoubtedly a

speculation and in 1624 he sold it to Anthony Thayre, a citizen and leather seller of London. All three houses were later demolished and sadly no images survive of any of them. He almost certainly designed them himself and, given his subsequent architectural projects, they probably had a very distinctive form. By 1626 he had severed his ties with Roehampton and in the following year he purchased a country estate at Lubenham in Leicestershire. He continued to retain a London house in Islington and remained active in the jewellery trade. In 1629 he accompanied Burlamachi on an expedition to Amsterdam to sell the crown jewels at a commission of 2% which netted him £272. His Leicestershire estate cost him £2,010 and he spent a further £800 on building a country house and laying out the gardens. Compared to the enormous sums that Heriot and Burlamachi were lending the Crown, this was a relatively modest investment. He named his new house Papillon Hall and it was later enlarged by Lutyens before being demolished in 1950.

Its singular design caused a great stir in the county [Fig 4]. It was octagonal in plan with a viewing platform on the roof and it was set within a rectangular moated enclosure. Here Papillon re-invented himself as a country gentleman. He took on the office of Treasurer of Leicestershire and pursued a cultured life with a particular interest in political theory and theology, publishing a number of books on these subjects. His advice on architectural matters was solicited by Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex in 1636 when he was making improvements to his country seat at Milcote in Warwickshire.<sup>6</sup> Cranfield was Weston’s predecessor as Lord Treasurer to James I and it was Papillon’s brother-in-law, Pompee Calandrini, who conveyed Cranfield’s appreciation to Papillon for his “sage advis & conseil”. Clearly the world of government finance provided

5. Michael Van Cleave Alexander, *Charles I’s Lord Treasurer: Sir Richard Weston, Earl of Portland, 1577-1635*, London, 1975, and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

6. The house was demolished in 1644. See Geoffrey Tyack, *Warwickshire Country Houses*, Bognor Regis, 1994, pp 255.



the connection between the patron and the architect. Later in 1651 Papillon was consulted by his near neighbour Sir Justinian Isham on plans for extending his house at Lamport in Northamptonshire. Some of his ambitious designs for Lamport Hall survive although Isham eventually rejected them in favour of a more modest extension by John Webb.

During the Civil War Papillon took the Parliamentary side and used the experience that he had gained more than forty years earlier on his European tour with Philip Burlamachi to publish *A Practical Abstract of the Arts of Fortification* in 1645. On the strength of the book he was commissioned to fortify Gloucester, Leicester and Northampton against the Royalist forces. He died in 1659 a wealthy man. From a traumatic start in a sinking refugee boat in the English Channel he had risen to become a respected member of county society. His business acumen as a jeweller had been the foundation for his later achievements as a property developer, author, architect and engineer. His relationships by marriage with the Calandrini and Burlamachi families had brought him into court circles and had helped to establish Roehampton as a fashionable location for the country seats of successful business men. Philip Burlamachi was the catalyst who had made all this possible and had first introduced him to the development opportunities in Roehampton. Papillon used his wealth wisely but Burlamachi was not so fortunate. The coming of peace on the Continent had ended his usefulness to the government and he was massively in debt. In 1632 it was calculated that he owed interest payments of £14,763 and in the following year he was declared bankrupt, largely as a result of the failure of an undertaking by the Lord Treasurer to keep up payments to him. The Treasurer was, of course, Richard Weston his near neighbour in one of Papillon's houses in Roehampton.

Burlamachi was given royal protection from his creditors and in March 1633 Weston signed an order to repay him £200 which he had spent on the king's behalf in payment to the painter Van Dyck. The Crown's principal debt to him was discharged in 1637, two years after the death of Weston. His claim for interest and expenses, however, was not allowed. In 1641 he was imprisoned for alleged defiance of a parliamentary order and he died in penury in 1644. It was a sad end for a man who had once effectively been the banker to the government and who was noted as the first person to propose a national clearing bank. That project only came to fruition in 1694 with the establishment of the Bank of England.

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