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Forster, Edward – the elder, and family.

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Edward Foster (the elder) 1730 – 1812 was a banker and antiquary. His brother was **Benjamin Forster** (1736 – 1805) who was later Rector of Boconnoc, Broadoak & Cherichayes in Cornwall (1770). Benjamin died in 1805.

Edward married **Susanna Furney** and they had three sons and a daughter. Their daughter was Susanna Dorothy, who married the Rev J Dixon (Rector of Buncombe, Dorset). The sons were **Thomas Furly** (1761 – 1825), **Benjamin Meggot** (1764 – 1829) and **Edward** (1765 – 1849) **Forster**.

Edward Forster the elder eventually settled in Walthamstow (1764), having previously been at Bond Court in the City of London. Edward specialised in trade with Russia and in linen. He is said to have been responsible for the introduction of bearded wheat from *Smyrna*. He was a member of the Mercers' Company, a director of the London Docks, a governor at the Royal Exchange. He was a great admirer of Rousseau's work / principles.

Thomas Furly was born in Bond Street, Walbrook, and from his uncle (Benjamin) he acquired an interest in antiquities, coins, prints and **plants**. His interests were further encouraged by contact with John Dixon, and Richard Warner – author of '*Plantae Woodfordienses*'. He worked for some years on the plants in the garden of Thomas Sikes (at Tryon's Place, Hackney), and married Mr Sikes' niece – Susanna Williams, and lived at Clapton till 1823. He was one of the first fellows of the Linnean Society, and published a Flora Tonbridgensis (which is dedicated to **Sir J E Smith**) – which he visited nearly every year. He moved to Walthamstow on the death of his mother in 1823 – till his death in 1825. He kept records of the weather, contributed to the Linnean's Transactions, amassed a significant collection of algae, plants and fossils. He was not only a member of various scientific societies but also various philanthropic ones. His friends included (part from Sir J E Smith) Joseph Banks, [Dryander](#), Dickson, Robert Brown and [Afzelius of Uppsala](#).

Benjamin Meggot Forster was the second son of [Edward Forster, the elder](#). He was educated at Walthamstow with his brothers, and in due course, was a member of the family firm **Edward Foster and Sons – Russia Merchants**. However, he was not greatly drawn to business life but focussed his energies on science – specially Botany and Electricity. He was particularly interested in **fungi**, producing many fine drawings of these and communicated with Sowerby on the subject. He contributed articles to the 'Gentleman's Magazine', and was an advocate of the abolition of the slave trade, a refuge for the destitute and opposed to field sports. He did not marry and lived with his parents – until their death. Then, he moved to a cottage – called Scotts, at Hale End, Walthamstow.

Edward Forster – the younger was the third son of [Edward Forster – the elder](#). He spent some of his early years in Holland, where he received a commercial education. Together with his brothers, he cultivated (in his father's garden), nearly all the herbaceous plants then grown. He entered the banking house of Forster, Lubbocks, Forster and Clarke. He married **Mary Jane Greenwood** in 1796. He was an early member of the Linnean, and became treasurer in 1816, and vice president in 1828. He was an 'early riser' – working on his plant collections before banking hours, and then devoting his evenings to reading and the care of his herbarium – collected from many parts of the country. He died of cholera in 1849, two days visiting the refuge (for the destitute, established by himself and his brothers) where there had been an outbreak of disease. At the time of

his death, he was living at *Ivy House, Woodford*. He contributed to the ‘Transactions’ of the Linnean, the ‘*Phytologist*’ and collected material towards a flora of Essex. His library and herbarium were sold after his death, the latter was purchased by Robert Brown and presented to the British Museum.

material / information condensed from

- The Gentleman’s Magazine, 1860, p 514 and
- The ONDB / [Oxford Index](#)
- Material from [archive.org](#)
- and J of Botany (see below) Vol 26.

Forster, Benjamin Meggot (1764–1829): b. Walbrook, 16th Jan., 1764; d. Scotts, Hale End, Walthamstow, 8th March, 1829; bur. at Walthamstow. Sent plants for Eng. Bot. Fungologist, electrician, and philanthropist. Brother of the two following. ‘*Peiza cuticulosa*,’ 1786. ‘Introduction to the Knowledge of Fungusses,’ 1820. ‘Epistolarium Forsterianum,’ ii. pp. xiii.–xv. Pritz. 110; Jacks. 546; Nich. Illustr. viii. 553; Gent. Mag. xcix. (1829), 279.

Forster, Edward (1765–1849): b. Wood Street, Walthamstow, 12th Oct. 1765; d. Ivy House, Woodford, Essex, 23rd Feb. 1849; bur. at Walthamstow. F.L.S., 1800; Treas., 1816; V.-P., 1828. F.R.S. Banker. Contributed to Gough’s Camden, Phyt. i., ii., iii.; E. B. S. i., ii., iv. (2790); Mag. Zool. Bot. ii. (1839), 95; Ann. & Mag. viii. (1842), 433; &c. Herbarium purchased by R. Brown, and presented to Mus. Brit. Pritz. 110; Jacks. 262; R. S. C. ii. 669; Proc. Linn. Soc. ii. 39; Gent. Mag. xxxii. (1849), 431; Nich. Illustr. viii. 554; Gibson, Fl. Essex, 448; ‘Recueil de ma vie,’ T. I. M. Forster, 1837; ‘Epistolarium Forsterianum,’ ii. p. xv. Oil portr. by Eddis, Linn. Soc. Portr. in Ipswich Mus. series. *Lucula Forsteri* DC. *Sedum Forsterianum* Sm.

Forster, Thomas Furley (1761–1825): b. Bond Court, Walbrook, 5th Sept. 1761; d. Walthamstow, 28th Oct. 1825; bur. Walthamstow. F.L.S., 1800. Joint-author with two preceding of the plant-lists in Gough’s ‘Camden.’ Additions to Warner’s ‘Plantae Woodfordiensis,’ 1784. ‘Flora Tonbrigensis,’ 1816. Discovered *Asplenium lanceolatum* and *Viola lactea*. Eng. Bot. 240, 445, &c.; Pritz. 110; Jacks. 547; Gent. Mag. xxxii. (1849), 481; R. S. C. ii. 671; ‘Recueil de ma vie,’ T. I. M.

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