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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

School of History

**The Wydeviles
1066-1503
A Re-assessment**

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Who were the Wydeviles? The family arrived with the Conqueror in 1066. As followers in the Conqueror's army the Wydeviles rose through service with the Mowbray family. If we accept the definition given by Crouch and Turner for a brief period of time the Wydeviles qualified as barons in the twelfth century. This position was not maintained. By the thirteenth century the family had split into two distinct branches. The senior line settled in Yorkshire while the junior branch settled in Northamptonshire. The junior branch of the family gradually rose to prominence in the county through service as escheator, sheriff and knight of the shire. These roles enabled them to meet and work with men who had influence at court. The Wydevile that gave the family their entrée into royal service was Richard (ii), appointed steward to King Edward III's daughter Isabella and then as steward at the king's castle of Moor End. His son John (iii) maintained a similar pattern of service within the county and managed to negotiate the difficult years of Richard II's reign and the usurpation of Henry IV without diminishing the family standing within the county. It was his sons who were to work closely with the royal family. Thomas and Richard (iii) served the Lancastrian royal princes loyally. Richard (iii)'s position led to a knighthood for his son Richard, so that by 1426 the family were at the highest level of the gentry, just below the aristocracy. Accused of being an ignoble family their status is traced from 1066 to the early fifteenth century.

In 1448 Sir Richard Wydevile brought the family into the ranks of the nobility through an advantageous marriage. His secret marriage to Jacquetta of Luxembourg, widow of the duke of Bedford made him a member of the royal family, albeit a minor member. This connection led to his creation as lord Rivers in 1448. Rivers continued the family tradition of loyal service to the crown. His service in France and in England enabled him to find suitable marriages for three of his children by 1460/61 into baronial families. Like his great-grandfather Richard (ii), he managed to negotiate a change in king, moving smoothly from service to the Lancastrians to service with the Yorkists under Edward IV. In 1464 his daughter Elizabeth secretly married King Edward IV. It was this second secret marriage that led to the assault on the Wydeviles' reputation and questioned their status. The political instability of the period required scapegoats each time a king was overthrown. The propaganda this generated is traced to establish if there is any truth in the charges of greed and covetousness made against the Wydeviles.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Lynda J. Pidgeon

declare that the thesis entitled

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and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:

Date:.....

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Definitions and abbreviations

BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library
CCR	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i>
CChR	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls</i>
CFR	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls</i>
CP	<i>Complete Peerage</i> , George E. Cockayne (London, 1959)
CPR	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
CSPM	<i>Calendar of State Papers Milan</i>
DKR	<i>Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of Records</i> (London, 1880-81)
EETS	Early English Text Society
EEBO	Early English Books On-line
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
InqMisc	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i>
InqPM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
MED	<i>Medieval English Dictionary</i> (online edition)
NRS	Northampton Record Society
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , general editors C. Matthew, B. Harrison and L. Goldman (online edition, www.oxforddnb.com , 2004- present)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PLP	<i>Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century</i> , ed. N. Davis (3 vols, EETS, 2004-05)
POPC	<i>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed., Sir Harris Nicholas, vol. 3 (London, 1834)
PROME	<i>Parliament Rolls of Medieval England</i> ed. C. Given-Wilson et al., CD-ROM Scholarly Digital Editions (Leicester, 2005)
RP	<i>Rotuli Parliamentorum Ut Et Petitiones Et Placita in Parlamento Rolls 1472-1503</i> , vol. 6, ed. J. Strachey (1777).
TNA	The National Archives
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
TJRL	<i>Transactions of the John Rylands Library</i>
VCH	<i>Victoria County History</i>

The original spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, etc have been retained in quotations, except to change 'f' to 's' for ease of reading.

In spelling the family name I have preferred to use 'Wydevile'. This is how it has appeared in some of the documents signed by members of the family. Where sources have been quoted, the original spelling of the name has been retained to demonstrate the wide variety of spellings that occur.

Place names have been modernised where identification has been possible. Where the modern place name is uncertain it is shown in brackets after the name given in the documents. Where a modern place name cannot be identified at all the original spelling has been used.

All photos were taken by myself unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

Who were the Wydeviles? This is a question that might never have been raised if an advantageous marriage had not been made in the fifteenth century. When Elizabeth Wydevile secretly married King Edward IV in 1464, the family was suddenly brought to national prominence. Questions about their social status became louder in 1469/70 when hostility to the marriage was fanned during a new wave of rebellions against the king. At the same time the family was charged with greed and undue influence over the king. Interestingly a similar question over the status of the Wydeviles had been raised by the earl of Warwick in 1460, aimed at Elizabeth's father, Richard, lord Rivers. The latter had also made an unusual marriage in 1436/37 when he secretly married Jacquetta of Luxembourg, widow of the duke of Bedford, Henry VI's uncle.

To most twentieth-century commentators, the Wydevile family is well known, even notorious. According to Keith Dockray, the Wydeviles 'have long had a most unsavoury reputation as a family of grasping upstarts who single-mindedly exploited their connections with the crown ... in a thoroughly blatant and unscrupulous manner'.¹ Michael Hicks goes further, suggesting that 'even their biographers have hardly concealed their dislike and have accepted improbable charges made against them'.² Winston Churchill believed they were 'viewed with resentment or disdain' throughout England.³ When discussing the breach between Edward IV and Warwick, Cora Scofield suggested that 'far better would it have been for the Woodvilles in the long run, to say nothing of the king himself, if they had been less grasping'.⁴ The Wydeviles' greed and the widespread dislike of them were thus seen as the cause of Edward IV's problems during his own reign and ultimately the reason for the downfall of his sons.

This view has a longer pedigree. Early in the seventeenth century William Cornwallis, when referring to Elizabeth Wydevile, spoke of the 'Queenes blood dailey to rise' simply because 'they weare of her blood', and spoke of 'theire basenes beinge thus sudainely exalted'. He was especially interested in the events of 1483 and the minority of Edward V, and believed that the young king 'was likely to be gouerned by his mother & by her kindred the dukes (i.e. Richard, duke of Gloucester's) mortallest enimies ...' who

¹ Keith Dockray, *Edward IV A Source Book* (Stroud, 1999), p. 40.

² M.A. Hicks, 'The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483', in *Patronage Pedigree and Power*, ed. Charles Ross (Gloucester, 1979), p.60.

³ Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*, vol. 1, *Birth of a Nation* (London, 1956), p. 378.

⁴ Cora L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, vol. 1 (London, 1923), p. 398.

because of the 'lownesse of their birth ...' were unfit to govern. Richard (III) therefore had little choice but to act against them.⁵ In the nineteenth century David Hume continued this theme of the queen elevating her family and friends to the exclusion 'of the earl (i.e. Warwick), whom she regarded as her mortal enemy'. As a result 'the nobility of England, envying the sudden growth of the Woodvilles, were more inclined to take part with Warwick's discontent...'⁶ Thus along with greed, lowness of birth has formed part of the Wydevile's reputation. Richard, earl of Warwick and Richard, duke of Gloucester are named as their implacable enemies and seen as the wronged heroes of the hour.

The majority of historians writing on the period of the Wars of the Roses and particularly on the reign of Richard III have therefore commented negatively on Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Wydevile and have emphasised the problems created by the Wydevile family's rapid rise at the expense of the true nobility. However some have been less convinced. In an article in 1963 Lander commented that 'Deceptively clear ideas, abound on the "Yorkist party", the significance of Warwick the Kingmaker and the scandalous greed of the Wydevilles. The Wydevilles have come down to posterity with an evil reputation'.⁷ Yet Lander argued this was the result of 'meagre chronicles and from a few collections of letters in which exaggerated gossip and wild rumours have been, all too often, confused with facts'. He went on to say that 'The reputation of the Wydevilles has almost certainly been distorted in the sources which have survived ...'.⁸ More recently Christine Carpenter has commented that 'the Woodvilles, although undeniably not well loved, were less rapacious on their own account than is often supposed'.⁹ There have also been a number of biographies written in the past 200 years on Elizabeth Wydevile which have attempted to redeem at least her reputation as an individual.¹⁰ Even so, the overall image of an unpleasant and greedy family still remains.

The aim of this dissertation is therefore twofold. Part one will look at the history of the Wydevile family from as early as possible through to Sir Richard's marriage to

⁵ Sir William Cornwallis, *The Encomium of Richard III*, ed. A.N. Kincaid (London, 1997), pp. 7-9.

⁶ David Hume, *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, vol. 1 (London, 1823), p. 491.

⁷ J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: the Nevilles and the Wydevilles', in his *Crown and Nobility 1450-1509* (London, 1976), p. 94.

⁸ Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 119.

⁹ Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses Politics and the constitution in England, c. 1437-1509* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 204

¹⁰ These include Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England* (1844); Katharine Davies, *The First Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1937); David MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492): Her Life and Times* (London, 1938); David Baldwin, *Elizabeth Woodville Mother of the Princes in the Tower* (Stroud, 2002); Arlene Okerlund, *Elizabeth Wydevile the Slandered Queen* (Stroud, 2005).

Jacquetta in 1436/7. This will assess the truth of their supposed lowly status. Space does not permit a detailed historical background to the events through which they lived. A broad outline alone can be given of their origins and their place in society based on government records and surviving charters and chronicles. There is not a Wydevile family collection of papers; however a collection of charters for the Mowbray family contains a number of references for the Wydeviles in the twelfth century. The *History of Parliament* also contains brief biographies of those members of the family who were knights of the shire in the fourteenth century.¹¹

Part two will look at the development of their reputation in the fifteenth century. The marriage of Jacquetta to Sir Richard Wydevile and Elizabeth to Edward IV will be examined to see how they were perceived by the commentators of the day. In particular, I will assess the role of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, who according to the Paston Letters, spoke disparagingly of Sir Richard and his father in 1460, suggesting the family had been ‘made by maryage’ – in this case the marriage of Sir Richard to the widow of the king’s uncle.¹² Warwick also led rebellions against Edward IV in 1469-70 in which there seems to have been a deliberate assault upon the reputation of the Wydeviles.¹³ In 1486 a Wydevile heiress became queen of England through the marriage of Elizabeth of York to Henry VII. Her death in 1503 marks a useful point at which to conclude this review. The early years of the Tudor dynasty are also important to the reputation of the Wydeviles. This was another period of dynastic change where the warring houses of Lancaster and York merged to form the Tudor dynasty. The accession of Henry VIII in 1509 saw the first monarch on the throne who could claim to be a descendant of Lancastrians, Yorkists and Wydeviles.

To quote Charles Ross the later fifteenth century is ‘singularly ill-served by contemporary writers of history’.¹⁴ Therefore to establish the changing reputation of the Wydeviles, the surviving written records, chronicles (both English and continental), letters, propaganda pamphlets and government documents will be looked at. It will also be necessary to try to assess the effect that any ‘exaggerated gossip’ may have had. The available records provide their own problems. It is not always possible to know who was

¹¹ Roskell, J.S., Linda Clarke, C.Rawcliffe, eds., *History of Parliament The Commons 1386-1421*, 4 vols (Stroud, 1992).

¹² *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 88, pp. 160-63. For discussion see pp.167-74 below.

¹³ For this discussion see pp. 209-17 below.

¹⁴ Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1975), p. 429. Ross describes the reign of Edward IV as a ‘limbo between the voluminous monastic chronicles ...and the developed “humanist” or “politic” histories of the sixteenth century and later. The gap thus left is only very partially filled by the vernacular city chronicles, mainly of London origin’

writing a chronicle, at what time, or even for what purpose. As chronicle writing moves further from the time the authors are recording they become more influenced by hindsight. It is impossible to know if they were working from notes made at the time, other personal records or the work of others. They may have been heavily influenced by the propaganda of the time or by events for which we have no surviving record. Documents of state may help to fill gaps, but they are the official record of government. Whilst they may confirm names, dates and basic details the full picture may not be given or could be missing. The clerk recording proceedings did not always note everything verbatim. He may have recorded only what he could keep up with or what he considered to be the important points.¹⁵

Very little survives materially to give an impression of the family. There are a few commemorative brasses, but virtually nothing else remains, with the exception of a portrait, some images in stained glass and manuscript illuminations of Elizabeth. There is a miniature of Antony and there are the books he translated. There are also four wills: those of Thomas Wydevile (d. 1437/8), his half-brother Richard (d.1441/2), Antony (d. 1483) and his brother Richard the last earl Rivers (d. 1490) (See family trees at fig. 16. p.77 and fig. 28 pp. 138-9). These do not necessarily give us a true picture of any of them either individually or collectively. Indeed they may only provide the image that the Wydeviles wished to project of themselves. There are no magnificent tombs, chantries or houses to give an impression of the wealth or status of the family and both of the homes in Grafton and Maidstone have long since disappeared. There is no collection of Wydevile family archives beyond a few papers in the National Archives relating to Antony Wydevile in the 1480s. The extent and value of Jacquetta's dower will not be covered in detail as this was dealt with in my MA dissertation, which informs discussion here.¹⁶

Despite these limitations, by looking at the surviving records I hope to illuminate the events which brought the family to the attention of chroniclers, historians, the government and letter writers such as the Pastons. The views expressed on the

¹⁵ The introduction in the individual printed sources provides a useful background to the dating of the source being edited and possible author(s). There are also a number of books which provide a useful guide to chronicles and other sources; these include Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles. The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London, 2004). Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), Denys Hay, *Annalists & Historians Western Historiography from the Viiith to the Xviiith Century* (London, 1977). Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century A Revolution in English Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), V.J. Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1971).

¹⁶ Lynda J. Pidgeon, 'A Family 'Made by Maryage', Sir Richard Wydevile and Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford', unpublished MA, Reading (2005)

Wydeviles will be looked at in the context of events to see what impact this had on their reputation, on the opinions that were formed and on what conclusions were drawn. A review of the fifteenth century will therefore provide the basis for the Wydeviles' earliest reputation. By the early sixteenth century there is not only a change in dynasty but a change in the way in which history was written under the influence of humanism. Importantly, it was a humanist historian, Polydore Vergil, who was sponsored by Henry VII. Elizabeth of York gave the Tudors a legitimacy they otherwise lacked. We might therefore expect the emphasis to change, concentrating on her descent from Edward IV rather than her Wydevile descent.

We are all conditioned by our society, its expectations and values. Each age produces its own beliefs, prejudices, and political agenda. My intention is to examine how this has influenced the view of the Wydeviles in both the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and, if possible, to discover when and how their 'evil reputation' became established. It may be that Lander's view has been unjustifiably ignored and that a reassessment is long overdue.

PART I. A question of status

(1) Domesday to the thirteenth century¹

(i) Origins – the evidence of Domesday

The Domesday Book for Northampton shows that the town had sixty burgesses in the time of King Edward with ‘as many mansions’. At the time of the Domesday survey only forty-seven remained.² Both town and county had gone through a period of decline following the harrying of Northampton by Morcar’s army in 1065, although by 1086 things were beginning to improve.³ The clergy figured prominently amongst the householders, most of whom now had Norman names, but it was William Peverel who was one of the largest lay householders, holding thirty-two houses. Peverel along with many of the other householders in Northampton had arrived in England with the Conqueror’s army.⁴ Included amongst the householders in 1086 was ‘Hugo de Widuile’ who held two houses for which he rendered thirty-two pence.⁵ Keats-Rohan suggests the name is of Norman origin, and comes from Iville, in the region of Le Neubourg (see fig. 1).⁶ It is therefore likely that Hugo de Widuile also arrived with the Conqueror’s army and was rewarded with lands in Northampton along with the other Normans. Hugo also appears in Domesday as a tenant of Hugh de Grandmesnil in Leicester where he held five houses.⁷ The French origins of those arriving in England with the Conqueror, ‘determined their tenurial and familial links, and hence ... who they were’.⁸ The lesser known men were likely to have been the tenants of greater lords in France, just as they were to become in England. As the tenant of Hugh de Grandmesnil in Leicester it is therefore likely that Hugo de Widuile was one of Grandmesnil’s men in France. The extent of Grandmesnil’s land holding in France is unclear, but it is

¹ See CDRom Appendix 8. This lists the accumulated data for the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The people involved are shown against entry in an attempt to gain a picture of the Wydeviles social and political circle.

² *Records of the Borough of Northampton*, vol. 1 (London, 1898), p. 3.

³ H.C. Darby, & I.B. Terrett, eds., *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 402.

⁴ *Records of the Borough of Northampton*, vol. 1 pp. 2-6. According to a footnote (p. 5, fn.14) William Peverel may have been an illegitimate son of the Conqueror. He was given a large amount of land in Northamptonshire and founded the priory of St James, Northampton and Lenton, Notts. He died c. 1140.

⁵ *Records of the Borough of Northampton*, vol. 1, p. 6.

⁶ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday people: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents 1066-1166: I Domesday Book* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 267.

⁷ *VCH Northamptonshire*, vol. 1, ‘The Domesday Survey’, p. 302 shows Hugo de Witvile holding five houses in Leicester of Hugo de Grentmesnil.

⁸ Keats-Rohan, vol. 1, p. 7.

reasonable to assume that rewards in England matched service to a lord in France.⁹ Grandmesnil was rewarded by the Conqueror with lands across six counties including Northamptonshire; he was also sheriff of Leicestershire where he held sixty-seven manors.¹⁰ A link to Grandmesnil would explain Wydevile holdings in the same two counties.¹¹



Figure 1. Map of Normandy¹²

⁹ Iville is about fifty-two miles from Grandmesnil (France). Without knowing more about the extent of Grandmesnil's holdings in France, it is no more than a possibility that he had links to Iville. David Crouch, 'Normans and Anglo-Normans: A Divided Aristocracy?' in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, eds., David Bates and Anne Curry (London, 1994), pp. 52-53, Crouch refers to the magnates as having 'networks of power and influence which often included several dozen of lesser landowners' and that tracing these networks is difficult given the 'patchiness of the documentation'. Grandmesnil was from one of the greatest Norman families, yet despite his prominence his succession 'is irrecoverable' after 1103.

¹⁰ ODNB, 'Grandmesnil, Hugh de (d.1098)', K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, (accessed 23 May 2010).

¹¹ Crouch, 'Normans and Anglo-Normans', p54, Crouch states that the men who took power in Leicestershire and Warwickshire in the late 1060s and early 1070s had cross-Channel possessions and therefore had communities of followers who were dependent upon them before arriving in England. Hugh de Grandmesnil, lord of Grandmesnil and Leicester, settled several of his dependents around Leicester.

¹² The map shows the relation of Iville to the major towns in Normandy and to the various land holdings of Grandmesnil and Beaumont.

In *Domesday Descendants* Keats-Rohan lists five Wivilles, t of whom she links to Hugo (Hugh) de Widuile/Wiville: Ralph, Robert and William, all brothers, who appeared in a charter for St Andrew's priory, Northampton, early in the twelfth-century. Robert granted land in Welford, Northamptonshire, to St Andrew's, with his brothers acting as witnesses. In the charter he mentioned his wife Heloise and his nephew Richard, who was William's son.¹³ Keats-Rohan states that Robert was 'apparently successor' of Hugh de Wiville, and was 'probably' Hugh's son. The fifth, another Robert de Wiville, was active in Hampshire, and it is possible that he was a relative.¹⁴ Alternatively Robert could be one of several men recruited from Iville who came over with the Conqueror, but who had no relationship with each other beyond their place of origin.¹⁵

The Northamptonshire Survey produced sometime before 1120 and updated in the reign of Henry II (1154-89), shows three possible Wydeviles who could be these three sons of Hugh. Robert son of Hugo held half a hide and a third part of a hide in 'Pippewell' (Pipewell), in the hundred of 'Rowell' (Rothwell).¹⁶ Ralph de Waundeville held one hide and two small virgates in 'Braddene Paganus' (Bradden) in the hundred of Norton.¹⁷ Thirdly, 'Willelmus de Wyuill' held four hides and a great virgate in Welford, in the hundred of Guilsborough of the fee of 'Roger de Mouubry de Gildecote', (Chilcote?).¹⁸ In 1129/30 Robert de Wiville was holding lands from his father, presumably in Welford, since it was lands in Welford that he granted to St Andrews. The continuity of association with Welford and the three men being linked in the same charter to St Andrew's makes their relationship to Hugh of 1086 more likely than not.

¹³ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday descendants: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents 1066-1166: II Pipe Rolls to Cartae Baronum* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 793.

¹⁴ Keats-Rohan, vol 2, pp. 793-4.

¹⁵ Keats-Rohan gives a number of references that may help to provide descent of fees and therefore family connections, e.g. Ivor Sanders, *English Baronies A study of their origin and descent, 1066-1327* (1960) & Lewis C. Loyd, *The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families* (Leeds, 1951). Neither of these included the Wydeviles. William Farrer, *Honors and Knights Fees* (London, 1925), provides information on the Wydeviles from the thirteenth century but provides no information on any Wydeviles in the post conquest era, which is the main thrust of the first two books given. A potential Wydevile link to Hampshire and Devon is discussed later; see below p. 49, fn. 137.

¹⁶ Keats-Rohan, vol. 1, Appendix II Northamptonshire Survey, p. 108. The lands are in the right area.

¹⁷ Keats-Rohan, vol. 1, Appendix II, p. 102.

¹⁸ Keats-Rohan, vol. 1, Appendix II, p. 105. According to Darby & Terrett, chapter IX, 'Northamptonshire', p. 392, a vill was generally assessed at 4 hides in the county. For measurements of land see p. 395, one virgate equals a quarter of a hide and smaller units such as a small virgate equal one tenth of a hide. What a great virgate equalled is unclear.

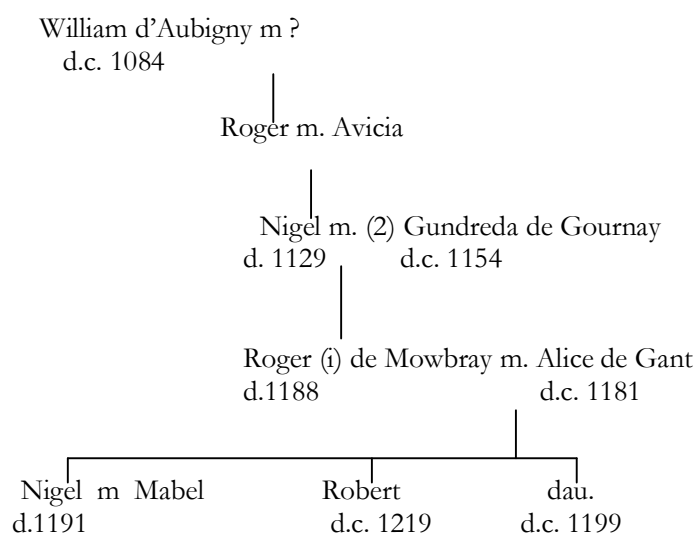
(ii) The twelfth century

Whatever the relationship was between Hugh de Grandmesnil and Hugh Wydevile when they first arrived in England, it had changed by 1109 when the Wydeviles had become attached to the Mowbrays.¹⁹ This may have been due to the action of Grandmesnil's son Ivo, who had chosen to support Robert Curthose, duke of Normandy in the war of succession rather than his younger brother Henry I. This decision had cost Ivo his lands. In order to obtain a pardon he had mortgaged them to Robert de Beaumont, and had agreed to the marriage of his son Ivo to Beaumont's niece, which led ultimately to the Beaumonts becoming earls of Leicester. Wydevile as a tenant would answer to his lord. Whether he supported Grandmesnil against Henry I or not, it would not have affected Wydevile's tenancy; his service would be due to his new lord. Amongst those supporting Henry I was Nigel d'Aubigny. Robert Curthose had invaded England in 1101 in an attempt to claim the throne; Henry retaliated in 1106 and attacked his brother in Normandy. Following the battle of Tinchebray in September 1106 Robert was captured and imprisoned. Nigel d'Aubigny received large rewards for his support. It is possible this may have included some of the Grandmesnil lands, thereby creating a link with the Wydeviles. Nigel's son Roger was better known as de Mowbray (see fig. 2 for Mowbray / d'Aubigny descent), taking his name from the French town of Montbray, the *caput* of the honour.²⁰ From 1107 Nigel received regular grants from Henry I, including lands in France as well as England. Forfeiture of Robert de Stuteville's estates brought Nigel lands in Leicestershire and Warwickshire and a block of lands in the Isle of Axholme. In the north he was granted lordships in Lancashire, Westmorland and Yorkshire, and some manors in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.²¹ The Wydeviles occur regularly in Mowbray charters, mainly as witnesses, and mostly in connection with Mowbray's estates in Yorkshire.

¹⁹ Crouch, *Normans and Anglo-Normans*, p. 53 & fn. 8. Crouch discusses the 'patchiness of documentation' during this period, with little evidence after Domesday until later in Henry I's reign, a gap of forty years. In the case of Grandmesnil, Orderic Vitalis is the major source until 1103, when he ceased to write about them. The next evidence for the family occurs in the reign of Henry II when Robert de Breteuil, son of Earl Robert II of Leicester, married Pertonilla, heiress to the Grandmesnil estates. However the exact relationship between her and Hugh de Grandmesnil is unproved. Given this lack of information on Grandmesnil, the transfer of the Wydeviles' support to Mowbray can only be speculation.

²⁰ *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray 1107-1191*, ed., D.E. Greenway (London, 1972), p. xvii.

²¹ Greenway, pp. xix-xxiv.

Figure 2. Mowbray / d'Aubigny descent

The Mowbray Connection in Yorkshire

As a supporter of Henry I, d'Aubigny was regularly at his side fighting in England and France. All that he owned was dependant upon his continuing good relationship with the king. In the period 1107 to 1118 he exercised power as local justiciar in Yorkshire and Northumberland, the centre of his administration being at York castle, of which he was custodian. Nigel took advantage of his position to acquire more land, regardless of its ownership, either secular or religious.²² There was also a tendency to change his tenants' lands around as it suited him, which must have been unsettling for his men who were dependant upon his favour. During the period June 1109 to February 1114 Nigel fell seriously ill and had an attack of conscience which caused him to try to redress some of his more questionable land transactions.²³ One of the earliest charters from this period mentions Robert de Wivile, and contains Nigel's instructions to his brother William to return some lands,

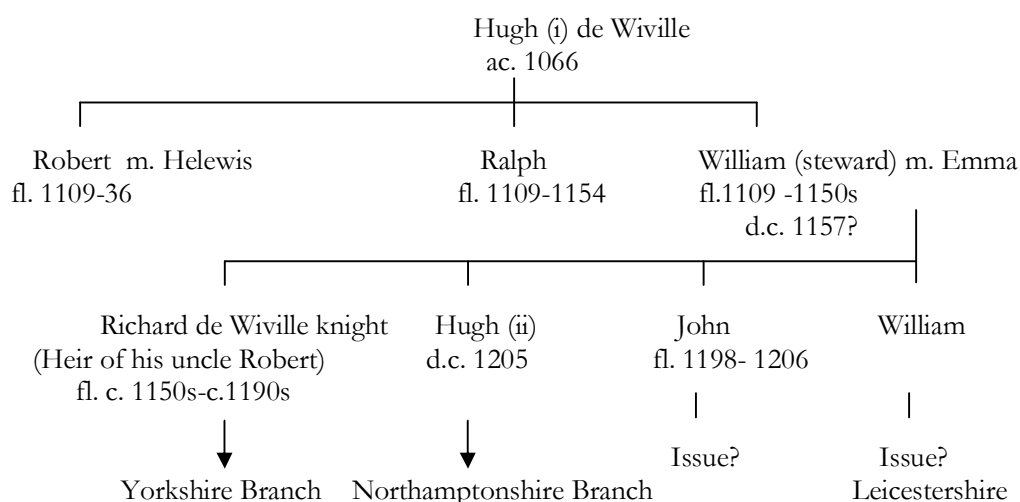
These are the lands which I have given back to the people
disinherited, namely all his land to Rodbert de Cambos and his
heirs, with this arrangement, that R. de Cambos or his heirs are to

²² Greenway, pp. xxiv-xxv.

²³ Greenway, p. xxxvi-xxxvii, Greenway suggests that Nigel exchanged land and rearranged tenancies to adapt to local circumstances and that this was possible because the relationship was between the lord and his man and was not dependant upon the tenancy.

hold it from Robert de Wivile; and to R de Wivile himself I have given Langthorpe and Kirby and Milby and the service of Liulfus concerning the land of Grafton. ... And you, my brother William, give back to Robert de Walvile his exchange to its value to its term, and he is not to do service, except for one knight, until he has this.²⁴

Figure 3. The early Wiviles/Wydeviles



The Wivile/Walvile family of Yorkshire must be the same Wyville/Widville family as the one in Northamptonshire. The same names appear in Yorkshire and Northamptonshire, and the lands in Northamptonshire were also associated with Mowbray. How did a tenant of Grandmesnil in Northamptonshire come to the attention of d'Aubigny? The most likely explanation is that d'Aubigny was also granted the lands of Grandmesnil in Northamptonshire which Hugh Wiville originally held as his tenant.²⁵ Robert Wivile was certainly in Nigel d'Aubigny's service and was amongst the select group of men being given larger grants of land.²⁶ Robert was Hugh de Wiville's son (see fig. 3).

During the period 1109 to 1114 Robert witnessed two of d'Aubigny's charters which restored land to the bishop of Durham. He appears high in the list of witnesses,

²⁴ Greenway, no 3, pp. 8-9. Langthorpe, Kirby Hill and Milby are all in the North Riding; Grafton is in the West Riding of Yorkshire. My thanks to Dr L Boatwright for providing a translation of the Latin.

²⁵ Greenway, p. xxxiv, fn. 1, quotes a genealogy of Mowbray which shows the vavassoria of Wyville was given to Nigel d'Aubigny.

²⁶ Greenway, p. xxxiv, Wyville held five fees, Moreville five, Daiville four and Montfort three and three quarter fees. Camville held the most. In the 1166 return he is shown as holding nine fees. These names occur regularly in the same charters as Wyville.

on one occasion coming third after the archbishop of York and William de Lyle. His position in the witness list suggests that he was a member of Nigel's close household. In the 1130s Robert appears in the Pipe Rolls rendering an account of ten marks for the profits of the forest of Pickering. He also rendered an account for twenty-five marks, of which ten were paid, five were remitted by the king and ten were still owed. As well as making returns in Yorkshire he rendered accounts for the farm of Roger Mowbray's land in Northampton and Polebrook (along with Henry Montfort).²⁷ This evidence from the Pipe Roll therefore confirms that the Widvilles in Northampton are the same as those in Yorkshire.

This is the last mention of Robert. His brothers William and Ralph now begin to appear as witnesses to charters and in a charter dated between February 1142 and June 1143 they are named as brothers. They frequently head the witness lists, again demonstrating the family's position in the Mowbray household.²⁸ In 1147 Ralph was granted land in Thorpe le Willows by Roger Mowbray to hold on the same terms as they had been held by William de Meisnihermer.²⁹

William occurs more frequently than his brother Ralph. This may be explained by a charter of 1154 in which William de Wituill is shown as 'dapifer', i.e. steward.³⁰ When exactly he was appointed is unclear. His predecessor Hugo Malbestia is shown as 'dapifer' in a charter dating 1147-54.³¹ In the period 1138 to 1154 Ralph witnessed seven charters of Roger de Mowbray. Ralph was probably dead by the end of 1154 as he does not appear in charters after this date. William witnessed twenty-one charters for Roger during the period 1138 to 1157, as well as two charters for Gundreda de Gourny, Roger's mother and one for his wife Alice. The majority of these related to gifts to the churches and monasteries of York and Yorkshire. In 1147-54 Roger Mowbray confirmed the gift of the vill of Thorpe le Willows to St Mary Byland by William de Wydevilla, within the same boundaries of land, wood and water as he had given it to Ralph de Wydevilla and his brother William.³² Ralph Wiville had only been given Thorpe le Willows in 1147, therefore the family had not enjoyed it for long. Byland had received a number of grants from de Mowbray; William may therefore have been

²⁷ *Pipe Roll 31 Henry III*, pp. 26, 29 & 137.

²⁸ Greenway, no. 195, p. 138. Roger de Mowbray made a gift of land to St Andrew's church York, for the souls of himself, his wife and parents. 'Radulfo de Withvilla et Willelmo fratre suo' came fifth and sixth in the list of witnesses, followed by Richard the butler.

²⁹ Greenway, no. 400, p. 255.

³⁰ Greenway, no. 237, p. 163.

³¹ Greenway, no. 49, pp. 37-8.

³² Greenway, no. 50, pp. 38-39.

following his lord's example. To ensure that there was no mistake a further charter was issued outlining the exact boundaries of the abbey's holding at Thorpe le Willows.³³ In 1154-69 Roger also confirmed a grant of one carucate of land in Sherburn which had been given by Robert de Wyvile to the church of St Mary Bridlington.³⁴ The date of Robert's original grant is unknown. Figure 4 shows the extent of the family land holdings in Yorkshire (see also appendix 4).

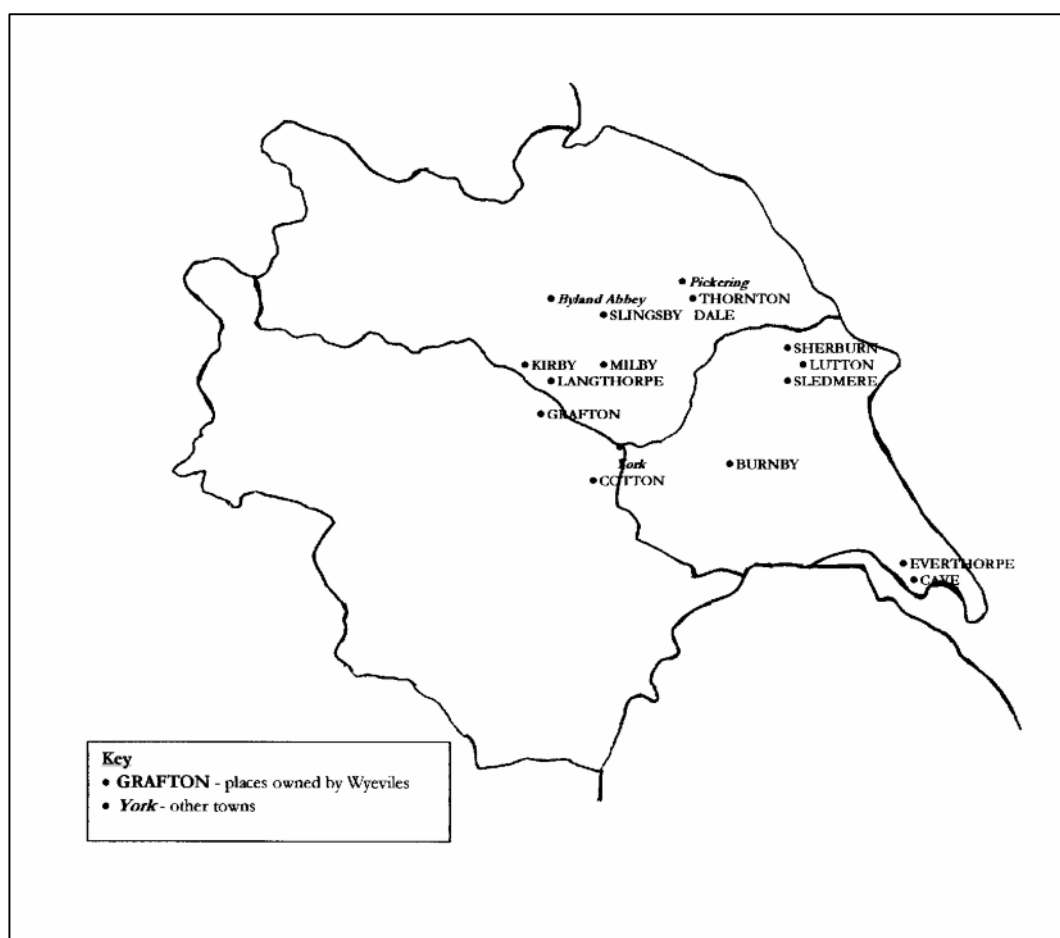


Figure 4. Wyvile land holdings in Yorkshire

³³ Greenway, no. 51, p. 39.

³⁴ Greenway, no. 22, pp. 21-2.

Religious Foundations in Northamptonshire

These gifts of land by the Wydevile brothers to the church in Yorkshire fit in with similar grants being made in Northamptonshire. According to the Victoria County History one William de Wideville founded a Premonstratensian abbey at Sulby in 1155 by giving to the canons the church of Welford and nine carucates of land in Sulby.³⁵ Originally the abbey was thought to be located in Welford and then moved the short distance to Sulby when Sir Robert de Paveley granted the canons the church and manor of Sulby sometime during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272).³⁶ Since the two places are extremely close and the names appear to be interchangeable in many of the documents, an actual physical move of building has been questioned.³⁷ Sulby is the name by which the foundation is most commonly known, and by which it appears on maps (see fig. 5). The Premonstratensian order was founded by St Norbert, an evangelical preacher, from Prémontré (France) in 1120. The first foundation established in England was at Newhouse (Newsham), Lincolnshire in 1143.³⁸ It therefore appears that Wideville was one of the earliest patrons of this new order in England.

Colvin located a number of charters of the twelfth century relating to Sulby.³⁹ The original foundation charter is missing but the name of the founder is commemorated in an obit on 28 September. He was named as William de Withville, and his grant to the order was later confirmed by his son Richard.⁴⁰ In a charter addressed to the Bishop of Lincoln in c. 1155 'Guillelmus de Withvilla' confirmed his charter made to God and St Mary for the remission of his sins, and for the salvation of his own soul, that of his son and of his ancestors.⁴¹ The exact date when Richard confirmed his father's grant is not noted but his name is given as de Widevill.⁴²

What this foundation suggests is that William Wideville was sufficiently endowed with property to be able to give some of his land to the canons. Wideville can be put in

³⁵ A carucate is the amount of land that can be ploughed in a year by a team of eight oxen. According to Walter de Henley in his *Boke of husbandry* written in the 1270s it should be possible for a plough team to till eight or nine score acres a year. Based on Henley therefore, the land granted was approximately 1400 to 1600 acres.

³⁶ *VCH Northampton*, 'House of Premonstratensian canons: The abbey of Sulby' vol. 2 (1906), pp. 138-42, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40237>> (accessed 13/1/10).

³⁷ David Knowles & R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales* (London, 1971 edition), p. 192.

³⁸ Lionel Butler and Chris Given-Wilson, *Medieval Monasteries of Great Britain* (London, 2nd edition 1983), p. 48.

³⁹ H.M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 77-82.

⁴⁰ Colvin, *The White Canons*, p. 77.

⁴¹ Colvin, *The White Canons*, p. 338 quotes Lansdowne MS. 447, f. 40. A transcript was made by Richard St. George in 1624 from the original document.

⁴² Colvin, *The White Canons*, p. 338. Lansdowne MS. 447, f. 40.

context against a group of religious benefactors in Ralph Turner's study in which he looked at fifty-two 'civil servants' during the period 1170-1239.⁴³ Turner's sample was chosen from a cross section of men ranging from justiciars to knights of the county, and archbishops to men in minor orders. Twelve of these benefactors founded new houses, five of which were Premonstratensian, only one of which was founded by a secular administrator, Sir William Briwerre (d. 1226), who founded Torre Abbey in Devon.

Turner's suggestion is that 'self made men such as these preferred regular canons' because the size of their houses was smaller. This reduced the cost of any endowment, especially as this was a period when less land was available. Such men 'may also have felt that canons followed the apostolic life more devotedly than did the Black or White monks'.⁴⁴ The nature of their patronage ranged from an entire manor to a few acres of land, or the advowson of a church. Turner suggests that the main consideration when choosing to give a grant was proximity to the donor's estates or a foundation that already had ties to the family; alternatively a member of the family might be amongst the religious order endowed.⁴⁵ However the main purpose of the donation was the 'purchase of self-respect and of the respect of others'.⁴⁶

Among the secular civil servants looked at by Turner only Sir Simon of Pattishall (d.1216/17) had links with Northamptonshire; Pattishall was a sheriff and royal justice. Compared to his fellow 'civil servants' his patronage was relatively small, a gift to Pipewell Abbey a Cistercian foundation, where he was also buried. Perhaps William Wideville had a similar intention and wished to establish a family connection with Sulby, although there is no evidence that the family retained any continuing interest in the abbey. The evidence of the Mowbray charters also suggests that he was following an example of benefaction set by his lord.

The Social Circle of the Wydeviles

There are tantalizing glimpses of William and Richard de Widevill and the circles in which they moved which help to build an impression of their status in the county. These include the other benefactors of Sulby namely William de Dive (d. c. 1185), Mary de Muschamp and Halnath Papillon who granted the advowsons of churches in Northamptonshire. William Buttevillain who founded Pipewell Abbey in 1143 may be

⁴³ Ralph V. Turner, 'Religious Patronage of Angevin Royal Administrators, c. 1170-1239', *Albion*, vol. 18, no. 1 (spring, 1986) pp. 1-21.

⁴⁴ Turner, 'Religious Patronage', p. 3.

⁴⁵ Turner, 'Religious Patronage', p. 8.

⁴⁶ Turner, 'Religious Patronage', p. 13.

the same William Buttevillain who granted land in Watford and Thornby to a cell of Sulby in Kalend, which was only six miles from the abbey.⁴⁷ While William Wiville patronised Sulby his son Richard patronised Pipewell Abbey. In a charter of confirmation of lands to Pipewell Abbey, made by Henry III on 16 June 1235, is a gift made by Richard de Widevill of four virgates of land in Childecote.⁴⁸ Other benefactors of Pipewell included Robert de Stuteville. Buttevillain is therefore linked to both of the foundations in which the Wydeviles were interested, while the gifts to Pipewell provide a link with Stuteville and Pattishall.

As for feudal ties, in the Cartae Baronum of 1166 William de Widwille is shown as owing service of half a knight to Robert Foliot of Northamptonshire, while Richard de Wiville held five knight's fees from Roger de Mowbray in Yorkshire.⁴⁹ Roger de Mowbray can also be linked to Sulby Abbey. He confirmed the endowments made by Wydevile and other benefactors as well as being a benefactor himself, and although the original document is lost, it was reconfirmed by Edward II. This shows that amongst those giving gifts to the abbey was 'Ralph, son of James, and his wife Emma, "with the counsel and assent of Sir William de Withville their lord", of half a carucate of land in the fields of Welford', as well as three small dwellings and two virgates, given by Ralph "in his last illness when he became a brother *ad succurrendum*".⁵⁰

William Wydevile appears as a witness in Mowbray charters over a long period of time. Greenway suggests that he was Mowbray's steward until c.1157.⁵¹ If his office ended at this time it is probably because of age. He was most likely the youngest of the three brothers, which is suggested by the descent of lands. The eldest brother, Robert, named William's son Richard as his heir while in the charter relating to Thorpe le Willows Ralph is named before his brother William. It is unlikely that he is the same William Wydevile owing half a knight's service to Robert Foliot of Northants in the 1166 survey, as he would have been in his 70s or 80s. It is much more likely that he is William the steward's son, and Richard's younger brother. As Richard was holding the five knight's fees from Mowbray in 1166, it is possible that William the younger was given his father's Northamptonshire lands. During this period it was still common for estates to be divided between sons rather than descending in their entirety to the eldest

⁴⁷ Colvin, *The White Canons*, pp. 81-82. Dive granted the advowson of East Haddon church, Mary de Muschamp Great Harrowden and Papillon Little Addington.

⁴⁸ *CChR 1226-57*, vol. 1, pp. 206-8.

⁴⁹ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed., Hubert Hall, Rolls Series (London, 1896), vol. 99, pp. 331-2 & pp. 418-21.

⁵⁰ Colvin, *The White Canons*, p. 79 & fn. 4, taken from Add. Charter 22,514.

⁵¹ Greenway, p. lxii.

male heir. The William de Widvilla appearing in the Pipe Rolls for 1162/3 making payments to the sheriff for the farm of Northampton is therefore most likely the younger William.⁵²

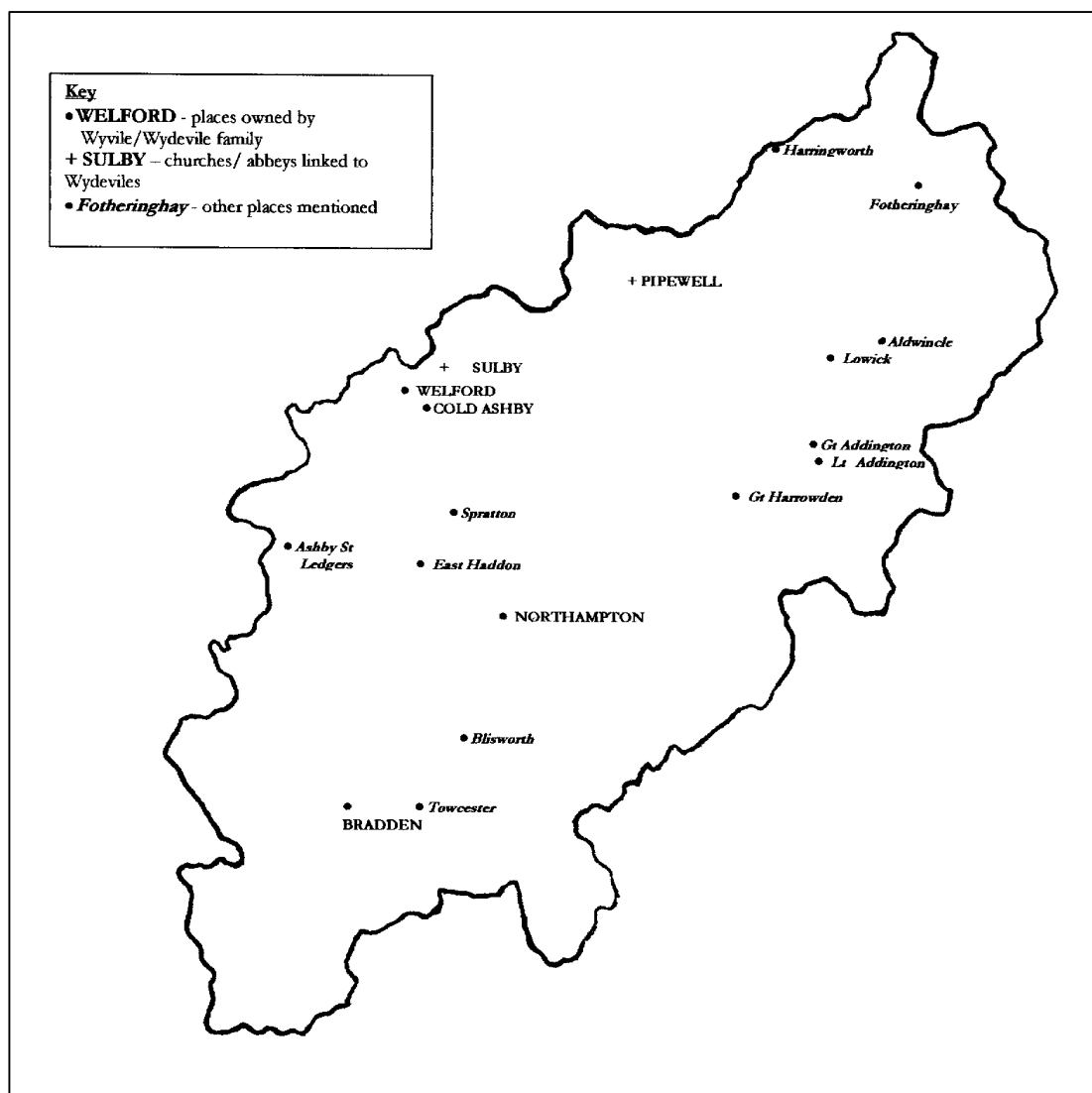


Figure 5. Wyvile/Wydevile land holdings in Northamptonshire in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (see also appendix 4)

⁵² *Pipe Roll 9 Henry II*, p. 34. Robert had rendered account for the farm of the Mowbray lands in Northampton in 1130, it is likely that William the younger was carrying out the same office for Mowbray in 1162/3.

Richard de Widevilla appears as a witness to charters from 1163 to c.1190. These related to further gifts made by Roger Mowbray to the church in Yorkshire and later to gifts made by his son Nigel Mowbray. Richard also acted as a witness in several grants involving the archbishop of York. While Mowbray was not concerned in any of these transactions it may well be that Richard was included because of his position in the Mowbray household; the land involved in the transactions possibly being in the areas of Mowbray interest. In a number of these charters Richard's fellow witnesses are also linked to the Mowbray family. More importantly in c.1181 to 1189 Richard de Wivill is described as a knight along with a number of the other witnesses.⁵³ This is a rare occurrence of a Wydevile being shown as a knight in any of the documents of this period.

The Wydevile position in the witness list is an indicator of their continuing importance to the Mowbray family in this period. The closer to the top of the list, generally the more important the person was considered to be. From the various charters Richard can be seen to be closely associated with the Mowbray family and household, and with the prominent clergy of Yorkshire. Confirmation of the link to Grandmesnil and a division in the family areas of interest is provided in David Crouch's work 'The Beaumont Twins The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century'. Crouch defines honorial barons as those with a number of fees and who attended the lord's curia, and goes on to suggest a social test as a better means of identifying honorial barons. The honorial baron adopted his superior's fashions and founded 'houses of the more economical orders, Augustinians, Cistercians and Premonstratensians.' Alternatively he might patronise the house of his lord and if he was wealthy he divided his estate on death. The baron 'served one lord and usually possessed a lineage going well back into the eleventh century.'⁵⁴ All of these could be applied to the Wydeviles. Crouch goes on to identify the honorial baron with split allegiance and here he specifically mentions the Wyvilles. As well as being Mowbray men they had interests in 'the honors of Warter and Foliot in Yorkshire and Northants' and they also held two

⁵³ *Early Yorkshire Charters*, ed., William Farrer, Yorkshire Archaeology Society, Record Series (Edinburgh, 1916), vol. 3, no. 1882, pp. 491-2. In a grant made by Ralph de Surdevall of land in Giling in Ryedale to his son, the witnesses are given as, 'Henrico de Gorham, Roberto de Surdevall, Drogon de Herum, Ricardo de Wivill, Ricardo de Sproxton, Osmundo Cruer, *militibus*' (my italics) and vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1914), no. 345, p. 200, 1191-94, a grant by the prior and convent of Hexham to William, chaplain to the archbishop of York, of a messuage in Goodramgate, York. The lay witnesses were 'Radulfo de Wellewic, Hugone Gernagot, Ricardo de Wivill, Ricardo de Luterinton, Ricardo de Hudeleston, Henrico de Muhaut, *militibus*'.

⁵⁴ D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 115.

and a half fees in the honor of Leicester. Crouch dates this back to 1086 when ‘Hugh de Wyville held land in Shangton and Stonton Wyville from Hugh Grandmesnil’.⁵⁵ This appears to add to the five houses mentioned previously that Hugh held in the borough of Leicester. Crouch suggests that William de Wyville, a younger son of William the steward, used the Leicester connection to enter the service of Earl Robert (ii) in the 1160s ‘and later flourished as a *familiaris* of Earl Robert III.’⁵⁶ This additional information confirms the Leicester connection of the family as suggested in the genealogy above (fig. 3), as well as helping to establish the family status at this period as ‘honorial barons’.

The Wydevile family would thus have been widely known and recognised within several counties. With the end of the Mowbray charters in 1191 references to the Wydeviles once again become fewer and relationships less certain, although they do continue to appear in the records for both Yorkshire and Northamptonshire during the next century.

By the end of the twelfth century the Wydeviles held a number of lands, the majority in Yorkshire (see figs. 4 & 5 and appendix 4). They were also closely associated with two important lords and held important positions within the household. At least one Wydevile appears to have been a knight and following the definition given by Crouch they might also be placed amongst the ‘honorial barons’. At the very least they were important members of county society.

⁵⁵ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, p. 129. The link to Stonton Wyville still existed in c. 1230 when ‘R. de Wivele, militem’ presented Master John to the church of ‘Stauntone’ in *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles Episcopi Lincolniensis 1209-1235*, Lincoln Record Society (1913), vol. 6, p. 311. It is unclear if this Richard was a son of William or was a member of the senior Yorkshire line. See also, *Early Yorkshire Charters The Trussebut Fee and Ros Fee*, ed., C.T. Clay, Yorkshire Arch. Soc. Record Series, Extra Series, (1955), vol. 10, pp. 107-9, regarding the Warter Fee. At Michaelmas 1168 the sheriff accounted for fees for an aid for the marriage of the king’s daughter. Richard son of William de Wiville was assessed at half a mark for half a knight’s fee.

⁵⁶ Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, p. 129.

(iii) The thirteenth century

The division of estates between William's sons provides an explanation for the records which survive in the thirteenth century. The name Richard appears regularly in connection with Yorkshire while William appears in Northamptonshire. With the end of the Mowbray charters a Richard de Wivill can be found in the Curia Regis Rolls and Pipe Rolls, mostly in relation to Yorkshire. In 1175/76 Richard was fined for offences against forest law and rendered ten marks to the treasury but still owed ten.⁵⁷ In 1200 he paid three marks in silver for a writ relating to his right to eight carucates of land in Ivertorpe and Cane; later in the same year he paid a mark to have it recorded that an agreement had been made between himself and Thomas Hay before Robert de Turnham, of his purchase of the land when Thomas went overseas in the service of the king.⁵⁸ In 1203 he acted as a juror in an action taken by Alan de Scruteville to protect his rights over two carucates of land in 'Pascle' Yorkshire.⁵⁹ In 1205 he stood pledge for ten marks for Ronald son of Alan, Constable of Richmond to have seisin of his lands; amongst those standing pledge was Hugh Malebisse a familiar name in Mowbray charters.⁶⁰ In 1209 he paid a fine to the king of £6 16s 8d, which may relate to the ten marks pledged for Ronald.⁶¹ To be able to make this payment suggests that Richard had a reasonable level of income, at least sufficient to support knighthood.

A more serious matter for the family involved Richard's daughter Alice. In 1211 Richard owed ten marks to have William de Mowbray summoned before the king's court. He claimed that William had married his underage daughter without his licence or consent to someone other than Roger Mowbray. Presumably this was William de Mowbray's brother rather than his son. The latter did not come of age until 1241 so could not have been alive in 1211.⁶² The payment was carried over into 1212 and the case vanishes from history. Presumably Richard came to some arrangement with William over who Alice eventually married. The case does suggest that the Wydeviles were still closely attached to the Mowbrays and that they considered themselves to be of

⁵⁷ *Pipe Roll 22 Henry II*, p. 113.

⁵⁸ *Pipe Roll 2 John*, p. 110; *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi Tempore Regis Johannis* (London, 1835), p. 52 & p. 105.

⁵⁹ *Curia Regis Roll 1203-1205*, p. 2. It has not been possible to identify 'Pascle', however de Scruteville held lands in Routh in the East Riding of Yorkshire. 'Pascle' may therefore be in the East Riding.

⁶⁰ *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus*, p. 253.

⁶¹ *Pipe Roll 11 John*, pp.130-1.

⁶² *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 29. Ricardus de Wiuile debet x m. ut Willelmus de Molbrai summoneatur coram R. ostensurus quare maritavit Aliciam filiam (suam) ipsius Ricardi. Sicut [sine?] licentia et assensu Ricardi. que infra etatem est. alii quam Rogero de Molbrai. My thanks to Dr Boatwright for help with the translation. See the ODNB entry for details regarding William's son, 'Mowbray, William de (c.1173-c.1224)', James Tait <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>> (accessed 27/3/10).

sufficient status to provide a bride to the Mowbrays, albeit to a younger son. It places them alongside the Pattishalls, Matilda Pattishall married William de Mowbray's eldest son Nigel.⁶³ The Pattishalls were also linked to Northamptonshire. This demonstrates the extent of the Mowbray circle and the Wydeviles connections to, and place within that circle.

The next mention of a Richard de Wyvill occurs 21 March 1216 when he agreed to pay the king 200 marks (£133 6s 8d) and four palfreys for the king's grace and benevolence. Once he had sworn his oath to the king and provided pledges for the money he was to be granted seisin of his lands in Yorkshire and Northamptonshire. He may have been paying for the king's grace because he had joined William de Mowbray in rebellion against King John. Perhaps more likely, he was paying to have his inheritance acknowledged following the death of his father Richard. In 1219 he still owed 200 marks to have the king's grace and benevolence in Yorkshire; it was finally paid in 1221.⁶⁴ This was a large sum of money for Richard to find; Magna Carta had limited the payment for a baron to claim his inheritance at £100.⁶⁵ The amount of the fine would appear to be a residual legacy of the sort of exactions King John had been making before Magna Carta. The level of the fine places Richard in the same financial bracket as a lesser baron. The nearest comparison for a baronial income is based on figures for the years around 1300, when a barony was estimated to be worth £200 - £500. The income level at which a man could be distrained for knighthood was set at £20 - £30 until 1292, when it was increased to £40.⁶⁶ In 1235-6 a Richard de Wyvill was holding one and a half knight's fees at Cold Ashby, Elkington, Sulby and Welford in Northamptonshire and three fees at Burnby, Sherburn, Sledmere, Coulton, Slingsby, Thornton Dale and Thorpe le Willows in Yorkshire in 1284-85. These are the same knight's fees the family had been holding in 1166.⁶⁷ The Wydeviles would therefore appear to be more than simply men of knightly resources at this time.

⁶³ *Fine Roll* 17/22 (13 November 1232) fine of Hugh of Pattishall, uncle of Matilda de Mowbray re her dower and for her to marry or remain single as she wished.

<http://www.frh3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_032.html#it022_010> (accessed 25/3/10).

⁶⁴ *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus* p. 588 and *Pipe Roll 3 Henry III 1219*, p. 196 and *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III 1221*, p. 129 & p. 138.

⁶⁵ David Carpenter & Celine Dignan, 'The fine of Nigel de Mowbray in March 1224, Magna Carta and Hubert de Burgh', *Fine of the Month*: October 2009, in <<http://www.frh3.org.uk/content/month/fm-10-2009.html>> (accessed 10/6/10). 'Chapter 2 of Magna Carta 1215 limited the 'relief' (the inheritance payment) of a baron to £100'.

⁶⁶ C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, reprint, 1990), pp.29-30.

⁶⁷ Greenway, p. 264. As the Wydeviles were linked to these fees in the previous century, then the Yorkshire fees are most likely to have been in Richard's possession in 1235-6 also. The 1166 survey shows five knights fees held by a Richard de Wideville. See figure 6 for a proposed descent of the Yorkshire branch of the family. However from the data gathered (see appendix 4), if the Wyvill family still held the

Richard's income was sufficient not only for him to meet the fine but also to stand pledge for others. In November 1233 he stood surety of fifteen marks for Hugh d'Aubigny. This is less than many of the others standing surety, however it is enough to place him in the company of William, earl Ferrers, John de Stuteville and Hugh Wake.⁶⁸ The Stuteville name has occurred before in connection with the Wydeviles, while Ferrers and Wake are names associated with Northamptonshire. In 1219 Richard was charged five marks scutage in Nottinghamshire but answered in Northamptonshire, for the king's campaign in Poitou, which he paid in 1220.⁶⁹ An unnamed Wivill owed 100s scutage for one fee at Merstone, Northants in 1224 relating to the Poitou campaign.⁷⁰ As this is in Northamptonshire it may also relate to Richard. The last entry for Richard is 16 June 1235 when he granted four virgates of land in Childecote to St Mary's Abbey Pipewell.⁷¹ This suggests Richard may have been making preparations for the benefit of his soul and possibly preparing for death. There are no further mentions of him after this date. He may have wished to be buried at Pipewell as well.

fees in the 1280s it was not a Richard Wyvill. There is limited evidence for a Richard Wyvill in this period; the information given by Greenway is one of only two entries for a Richard after 1235/36.

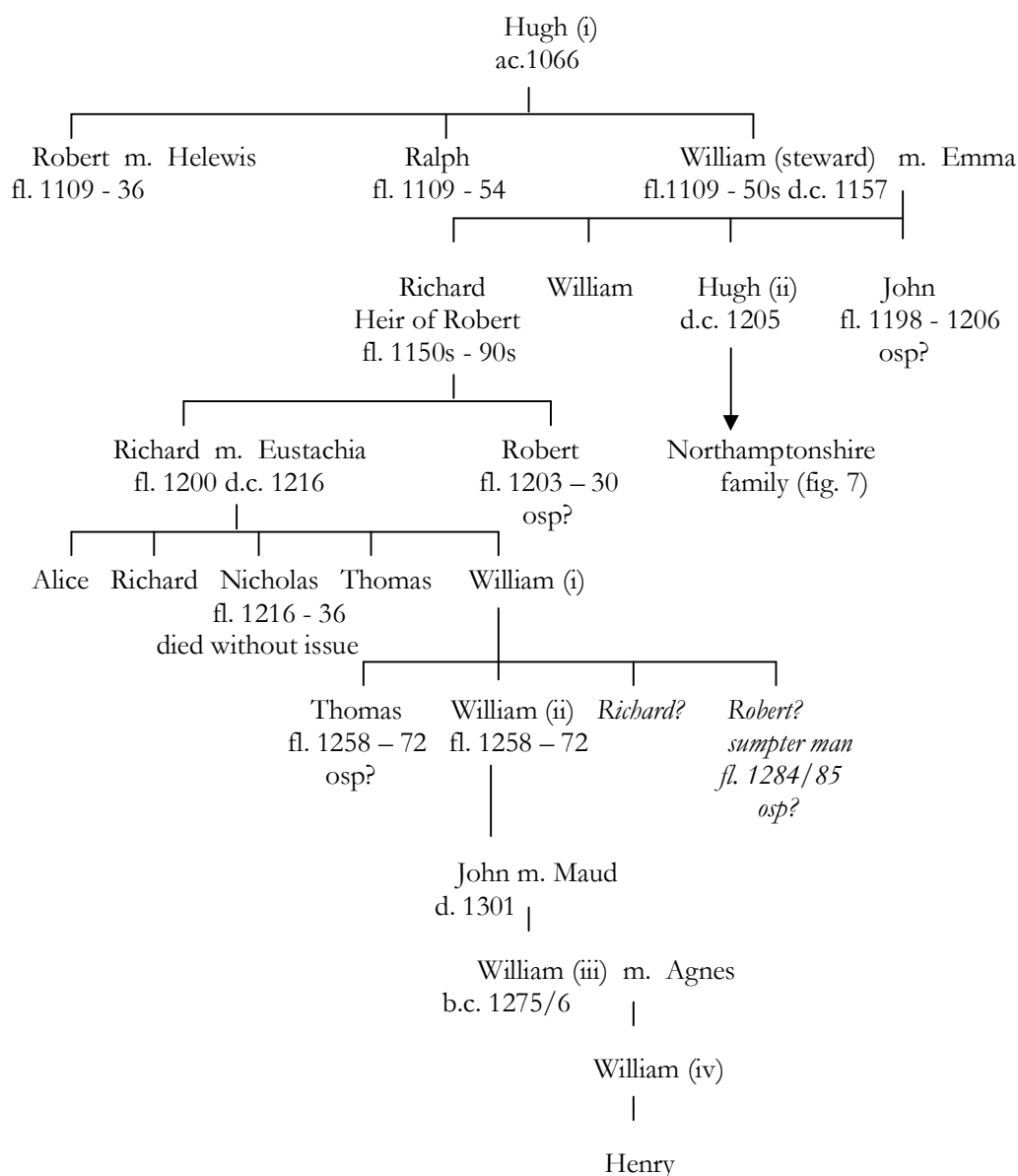
⁶⁸ *Fine Roll* 18/18, 8 November 1233,

<http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/contnet/calendar/roll_033.html#it018_011 (accessed 25 March 2010).

⁶⁹ *Pipe Roll 3 Henry III*, 'De Scutagio Pictavie' pp.82 & 96 and *Pipe Roll 4 Henry III 1220*, p. 18 respectively.

⁷⁰ *Pipe Roll 8 Henry III*, p. 130.

⁷¹ See p. 18, fn. 48.

Figure 6. Suggested descent of the Yorkshire Wiviles

The genealogy for the senior branch of the Wivile/Wydevile family in Yorkshire is based upon the data gathered and shown in the appendix. Those names in italics relate to those Wiviles who may have had only one or two mentions in the records. The existence of a Richard Wivile in the 1280s seems unlikely on the evidence (see above fn. 67).

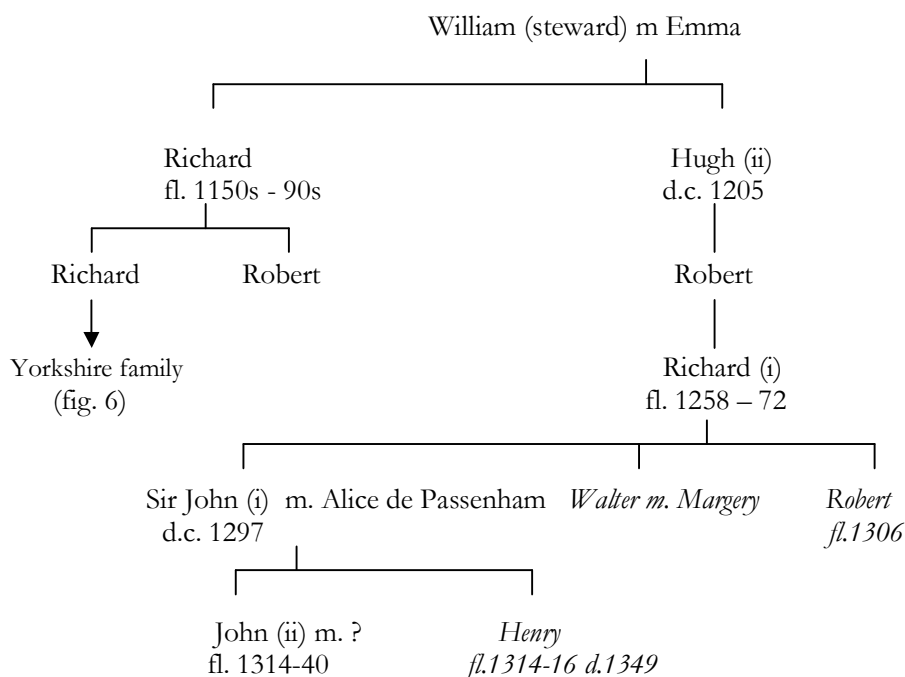
The family land-holdings in Northamptonshire in the thirteenth century seem to centre on Welford and Sulby although lands in other counties are mentioned. It is unclear when these lands were acquired or by whom, especially Grafton, which later became the family's traditional seat. Welford and Sulby lie at the other side of the county to Grafton, and although only fifteen miles, is still some distance from the main area of Wydevile interest in the twelfth century. We know from an inquiry carried out in 1204 -1205 that William held land in Grafton, Northamptonshire, which may have been acquired through his marriage to Emma. The grant of Grafton made in the previous century relates to Grafton in Yorkshire. The acquisition of land in Northamptonshire with the same name is perhaps just a curious coincidence. According to the 1204-05 inquiry William 'steward' paid 25s a year to the abbot of Grestein for the lands in Grafton. The same inquiry found that his son Hugh continued to do homage to the abbot for them (see genealogy, fig. 7).⁷² William had granted Hugh an assart of three or four acres, the jurors were unsure exactly how much, so that he might build a house on it when he married. Hugh's son Robert claimed these lands which he said his father had held in demesne but that Richard de Wivil (Widevile) was disputing this. Robert claimed that as well as a virgate of land his father also held a capital messuage, and four acres of assart. In a further plea made against another Robert de Wiville, brother of Richard, he claimed a further two and a half virgates which his grandfather William and grandmother Emma had granted to his parents on their marriage.⁷³ His uncle Richard appears to have done his best to evade appearing in court to answer Robert's claim. He claimed illness, and the case was deferred until one month after Easter 1205, when he once again failed to attend. William Bruno, William de Forho and Ralph de Hertwell all confirmed he was ill and the case was again deferred. At the third hearing they once again confirmed his illness and the case was adjourned for a year. Finally in 1206 Robert had his day in court and agreement was reached with Robert paying half a mark for Richard's pledge.⁷⁴

⁷² *Curia Regis Roll 1203-05*, pp. 240-1, *Curia Regis Roll 1205-06*, p. 125, George Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, vol. 2 (London, 1836), p. 161.

⁷³ *Curia Regis Roll 1205-06*, p. 125.

⁷⁴ *Curia Regis Roll 1205-06*, p. 266, p. 328, & p. 342.

Figure 7. Suggested descent of the Northamptonshire Wydeviles



William (the steward) may have been providing for Hugh in Northamptonshire, away from the interests of his elder brother Richard. At some point in time William also acquired land in Buckinghamshire. A charter from the period c. 1198 – June 1219, confirmed William de Wideville's grant of a messuage with a croft and vineyard to Herbert the weaver in Bullingdon End and a grant of rents to Robert Maudit in the same place. In the charter to Herbert, William says it is just as his father had witnessed when he held the land.⁷⁵ In about 1198 a John de Wudevilla appears as a witness to a charter made by William son of Hamo, of the church of Thornborough to Luffield Priory.⁷⁶ In 1206 a John de Widevill appears as a juror in Buckinghamshire.⁷⁷ Given the few references and the locations it is possible that he was also William's son and he too was provided with smaller holdings away from the main family interests in Yorkshire (fig. 6).

The Wivills could be litigious when it came to protecting their lands and rights. As well as the action taken by Robert de Wivill against his cousins Richard and Robert, action was taken in 1203 by Robert de Wivill against his tenant, William de Ferendon,

⁷⁵ *Pipe Roll Beauchamp Cartulary* (London, 1980), NS 43, pp. 124-5. '...sicut carta patris mei testatur, quam inde habet.'

⁷⁶ *Luffield Priory Charters*, part 2, NRS, vol. 26 (1975), no 547, p. 223.

⁷⁷ *Curia Regis Roll 1205-06*, p. 149.

for failing to render service for a tenement in Farendon, Northants. Unfortunately Robert had failed to file his writ correctly. William de Ferendon was able to show that the tenement was his wife Amiable's marriage portion, and that he could not therefore answer for her, nor was she named in the writ. The judgement was that he should not reply and that Robert could reissue an amended writ if he wished.⁷⁸ No further action is recorded so the final outcome is unknown. Robert was also involved in a dispute with William de Harinton. In 1205 Harinton paid 20s for a licence of agreement and Robert made a pledge to guarantee their agreement.⁷⁹ In 1207 Robert owed half a mark for a licence of agreement with Simon de Pateshull, which he finally paid in 1208.⁸⁰ Litigation did not come cheaply. His land holding and income must have been considerable if the assessment on him for the expedition to Ireland in 1210 is anything to go by. For this he was assessed at 100 marks and two palfreys in Leicestershire. He could not immediately find the money, or more likely, he preferred not to pay all at once. It was paid sporadically over the next ten years and occasionally showed the debt being due in Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Robert paid thirty-nine pounds and half a mark in 1211, five marks in 1214, and 40s in 1222. In 1222 the two palfreys were assessed as worth fifteen marks. Robert's debt to the treasury then stood at seventeen marks as continued from the previous rolls.⁸¹

Was this the same Robert or is this the elder Robert, from the Yorkshire branch of the family? In 1224 Robert de Wivile owed 100s in Warwickshire and Leicestershire for his holding in Shangton, Leicestershire as a tenant of the honour of the earl of Leicester, and in 1230 fourteen and half marks scutage for the honour of Chokes, Northamptonshire.⁸² It is tempting to assume that these actions and the land holdings relate to the senior Yorkshire branch of the family and that the action of Robert de Wiville against his two uncles was the action of a junior member of the family trying to hold on to the little that he had. The senior branch of the family remained active in the north of Northamptonshire. In 1235/36 Richard de Wyville was holding knight's fees clustered around Welford.⁸³ By 1252 he was dead and his brother William appears to have inherited. On 20 October 1252 William de Wyvill and his heirs were granted a

⁷⁸ *Curia Regis Roll 1203-04*, p. 82

⁷⁹ *Curia Regis Roll 1205-06*, p. 307.

⁸⁰ *Pipe Roll 9 John*, p. 136 & *Pipe Roll 10 John*, pp. 177-78, respectively.

⁸¹ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 95; *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 192; *Pipe Roll 14 John*, p. 138; *Pipe Roll 16 John*, p. 111; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 51; *Pipe Roll 4 Henry III*, p. 32; *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III*, p. 217 and *Pipe Roll 6 Henry III*, p. 3.

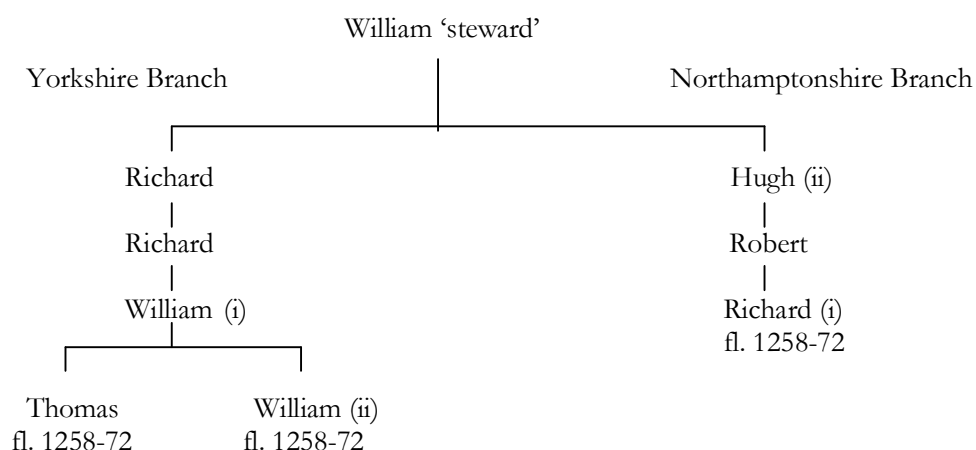
⁸² *Pipe Roll 8 Henry III*, p. 202 & *Pipe Roll 14 Henry III*, p. 205.

⁸³ Greenway, p. 264.

weekly Friday market and an annual fair ‘on the vigil, the feast and the morrow of the Assumption’ at his manor of Welford.⁸⁴

The religious interests of the Wydeviles start to appear in the Grafton area. In an undated charter from the reign of Henry III but placed in the period 1258-1272, a Thomas, William and Richard de Wydville witnessed a grant to the hermitage of St Mary and St Michael, Grafton, made by Robert de Tuyford. These were most likely the sons of William (fig. 6), although it is possible that Thomas and William represented the senior branch of the family and Richard was their uncle from the junior branch (fig. 8). While the junior branch held Grafton, the elder branch may have retained an interest, hence the involvement of the two branches in the matter of the hermitage. It is possible that the two branches of the family began to work together in the county after the earlier dispute over Grafton was settled.

Figure 8. Suggested relationship between Thomas, William and Richard de Wydville



In the same period 1258-72 William and Richard de Videvill witnessed a grant by William de Bonde of Alderton.⁸⁵ At some point the Wydeviles acquired the right to present the master of the hermitage. In 1268 Richard of Herleston was presented by James Wydeville.⁸⁶ The exact date when the hermitage was founded is unknown. It was mentioned in a charter of 1180-1205, when ‘Helia, hermita de Grafton’ witnessed a charter for the Abbot of St James Northampton. St James was an Augustinian

⁸⁴ *CChR 1226-1257*, p. 405.

⁸⁵ Geoffrey Parker, ‘The Medieval Hermitage of Grafton Regis’, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, vol. 6, no. 5 (1981), pp. 248-9 & fn. 6.

⁸⁶ Parker, ‘The Medieval Hermitage of Grafton Regis’, pp. 248-9.

monastery which had only been founded in the 1140s.⁸⁷ This is the only mention of a James Wydeville, whereas the same family names of Richard, Robert and William occur regularly. From this later period the name John begins to appear, so it is possible that James was a scribal error or it has been misread by the editor.

On 20 June 1262 John de Wiuille was one of a number of witnesses to a charter at Westminster relating to Hailes abbey in Gloucestershire.⁸⁸ He may be the same John who was summoned to perform military service for the bishop of Durham 2 August 1282.⁸⁹ In 1297 John de Wydeville esq., was said to hold lands to the value of £20 a year in Northamptonshire when he was summoned to perform military service on 7 July.⁹⁰ It seems more likely that the John called upon to do service for the bishop of Durham was not the same person as the John called upon to do service in Northamptonshire. A John de Wivill of Northamptonshire was summoned to perform military service on 24 June 1301 against the Scots.⁹¹ It is likely that these are three different Johns: the John called to do service for the bishop of the Durham was a member of the senior branch, living in Yorkshire and died in 1301 (see fig. 6); the John who was called up in 1297 and possibly died about this time was from the junior branch; while the John called up in 1301 was his son, John (ii) (see fig. 7).

Descent of Lands

According to Greenway a Richard de Wyville held three knight's fees in Burnby, Sherburn, Sledmere, Coulton, Slingsby, Thornton Dale and Thorpe le Willows in 1284/85.⁹² As discussed previously, there is little evidence for a Richard Wyville at this date, although it is possible he was a brother of William de Wyville (fl. 1258-72). In 1278/79 William's father, also called William had taken action against the Abbot of Rievaulx over property in Thornton, Pickering. In the action William claimed the land through his mother Eustachia, stating that her sons Richard, Thomas and Nicholas had all died without issue, thus leaving himself as the heir.⁹³ This statement therefore precludes the Richard de Wyville of 1284/85 from being William's uncle.

⁸⁷ Parker, p. 247

⁸⁸ *Pipe Roll Cartae Antiquae* (The Pipe Roll Society, 1939), NS17, pp. 120-1.

⁸⁹ *Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons*, ed. F. Palgrave (1827), vol. 1, p. 910.

⁹⁰ K.F. Plummer, *The Church of St Mary and village of Grafon Regis* (1959), p. 25 and *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 1, p.903.

⁹¹ *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 1, p. 910.

⁹² Greenway, p. 264. See map fig. 4, p. 15 above.

⁹³ *Yorkshire Lay Subsidies*, ed. William Brown (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1896), vol. 21, p. 46, fn. 2.

The continuing presence of Wydeviles in Yorkshire is shown by the Yorkshire Lay Subsidy for 1301, which shows William paying 10s 2d and Thomas 10s in Slingsby while Leticia de Wyville paid 4s 1d in Thornton le Clay.⁹⁴ This is the one of the few references to a female member of the family in the records. Possibly she was William's widow.

The junior branch of the family appears to have been increasing their holdings in the Northamptonshire area (compare fig. 5 and fig. 9, see also appendix 4). In 1274 a Walter de Wydville was listed as the lord of the hundred of Cleley in Northamptonshire. This name then disappears.⁹⁵ However Cleley remained in the hands of the junior branch of the family. Whether this was acquired by marriage or purchase is unknown.

A Robert de Wideville who acted as a witness to a charter in Yorkshire in 1294 is possibly the same Robert who became knight of the shire for Leicester in 1295.⁹⁶ An inquisition carried out in Northampton following the death of Edmund, the King's brother, found that Robert de Wyvile held Merston Trussel and Thorp for one knight's fee and in Leicester Stonton Wyville, Shangton and Herdwik for one and a half knight's fees, doing scutage and suit of court every three weeks.⁹⁷

The Wydevile descent is becoming less certain by this period. It is possible that the original estate was broken up between brothers and that part of the family retained an interest in Yorkshire while the remainder held the Northamptonshire estates, but this is far from certain. Relationships are rarely mentioned. The same family names recur amongst cousins and uncles. It is also possible that as one family line died out the lands were rejoined into one branch of the family and then subsequently redistributed amongst younger sons. The genealogy at figure 3 has therefore become much more problematical by the mid thirteenth century and can only be a best guess, based on dates, average life spans and relationships where mentioned. What the records do demonstrate is that the family was well established in both counties, had sufficient income to be considered of baronial status and were beginning to serve in county administration by the end of the thirteenth century.

The connection to the Mowbray family had given them a good start with five knight's fees, three and a half in Yorkshire and the remaining one and a half in Northamptonshire. Various members of the family built on this to extend further into Northamptonshire and the neighbouring counties. If the Wydeviles supported the

⁹⁴ *Yorkshire Lay Subsidies*, vol. 21, pp. 46 & 115.

⁹⁵ Helen Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls* (London, 1939), p. 275.

⁹⁶ *CChR 1257-1300*, p. 445 and *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 1 p. 903.

⁹⁷ *InqPM Edward I*, vol. 3, pp. 309 & 318.

Mowbrays during their rebellion against King John it does not seem to have done them any great harm. Nor do the fines exacted by King John appear to have drained their income to the extent that they had to start selling lands. On the contrary, they seem to have been able to give land away to the church, although there is always the possibility that these were debts disguised as 'gifts'. The family moved in influential office holding circles during this period as their appearance as witnesses to various charters demonstrate. It remains to be seen if they were able to maintain or improve this position over the following centuries, or if they sank down to the lower ranks of the county community.



Figure 9. Wiville/ Wydevile land holdings in Northamptonshire in the thirteenth century

(2) The fourteenth century⁹⁸

While the exact descent of the family in Yorkshire and Northamptonshire remains unclear, it would appear that the spelling of Wydevile was becoming more standardised. In Yorkshire the Wyvile/Wyville variant was retained. Exactly when this occurred is difficult to pinpoint. Certainly by the fourteenth century references to Wydeviles in Northamptonshire are becoming more consistent than Wyviles. From the information provided in Crouch it appears that a branch of the family may also have existed in Leicestershire where the Wyville spelling again appears to have been retained. Information for this branch of the family remains sketchy, and therefore the concentration will be on identifying the Northamptonshire branch of the family and their social position.

Confirmation that the family retained links in both Yorkshire and Northamptonshire can be found in the inquisitions *post mortem*. A writ was issued on 6 June 1301 to the escheators of the counties of Northampton and York to hold an inquisition into the lands of John de Wyvill. The inquisition held in York on 11 June found that John held a capital messuage with eighteen bovates of arable land and eighteen acres of meadow in demesne, a 'several' pasture and rents from bondsmen, free tenants and cottars. He also had two water mills and a windmill, along with woods called 'le Fryth' and 'Thurkelwode' in Slingsby held of John de Mowbray for the service of one knight's fee. In addition, John had three bovates of land and six acres of meadow which he held of the heir of John Wake by homage and attendance at Wake's court of Buttercramb every three weeks. Additional lands were held in 'Northolm' (North Holme?), Colton, Sherburn and Nunwick. The land in Colton was considered to be waste and worth nothing. The jury found that John's heir was William who was aged twenty-six the previous Easter. The inquisition in Northampton took place on the following Friday. The jurors found that John held the manor of Welford, a 'several' pasture, another pasture and two water mills, one of which was ruined, and a market let to farm. The land was held of the heir of Roger de Mowbray, a minor, for the service of one and a half knight's fees. John's heir was said to be aged twenty-four and more.⁹⁹ The York jury appeared to be much better informed about the heir, which suggests the family spent more time in their demesne at Slingsby. The lands in both counties

⁹⁸ See CDRom appendix 9.

⁹⁹ *InqPM Edward I*, vol. 4, no. 32, pp. 14-15.

conform to those held by knight service in 1166. John's son William (iii) was joint lord of Slingsby in 1316. His son, William (iv), sold two thirds of the manor to Sir Ralph Hastings in 1343, with remainder of the third which his mother Agnes, held in dower.¹⁰⁰ An inquisition taken in May 1341 following the death of Adam de Everyngham found that de Everyngham held the manor of Sherburn except for fourteen bovates which William (iii) de Wyvill held and which Gilbert de Ayton held of him for 40s a year.¹⁰¹ William (iii) must therefore have died between May and July 1341; an inquisition in July following the death of William de Roos of Hamelak found that Agnes de Wyvill held ten bovates in Sledmere from him by service of an eighteenth part of a knight's fee.¹⁰²

From the descent of these lands it appears that the senior branch of the family retained closer links with Yorkshire and continued to hold the original land granted by the Mowbray family. The divergence into two distinct family groupings, one in Yorkshire and one in Northamptonshire, which ultimately led to the emergence of the Wydevile family of Grafton, Northamptonshire, may well have started when William the steward granted his son Hugh (ii) land in Grafton in the twelfth century. With his eldest son Richard named as his brother's heir, it is not unreasonable to assume that William wished to provide for his younger son. By establishing Hugh in an area where the family currently had a lesser interest, he was also able to spread and expand the family influence in the county. Some of the land in Grafton seems to have come through Emma, William's wife. Unfortunately this is the only mention of her. It may also be possible that she was in fact William's second wife and that the land therefore went to her son Hugh.¹⁰³ Such a descent would also explain the success of Robert's claim against his cousins. Robert Wivile's action in 1205 against his cousins to prove his claim to the land, as discussed earlier, demonstrates he had sufficient income to pursue his case through the courts.¹⁰⁴ Despite any animosity that this might have caused within the

¹⁰⁰ *VCH York North Riding*, vol. 1 (1914), pp. 557-61

<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64804&strquery=wyvill>> (accessed 18/6/10). According to the VCH, the Wyviles of Slingsby are described as the parent branch of the Wyvills of Osgodby. Ralph Hastings to whom they sold the manor was the ancestor of William, Lord Hastings, one of Edward IV's closest confidants.

¹⁰¹ *InqPM Edward III*, vol. 8, no. 327, p.226.

¹⁰² *InqPM Edward III*, vol. 8, no 474, p.345.

¹⁰³ Baker, vol. 2, 161. Baker provides full details of the 1205 court case taken by Robert against his cousins Richard and Robert Wivile.

¹⁰⁴ Anthony Musson, *Social Exclusivity or Justice for all? Access to Justice in Fourteenth-Century England*, <<http://www.eric.exeter.ac.uk/exeter/bitstream/10036/68433/2/social%20justice.pdf>> (accessed 22/10/10), Musson discusses access to justice for those of lower status and wealth and argues that it was possible for the poor to access justice. The article looks specifically at the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is possible that turning to the law may not always be a good indicator of available money and wealth. Cheaper, local levels of justice might be pursued first, and the higher courts only used if this failed.

family, Robert would still have had access to any wider family connections within the county to promote himself and his family, as their continuing growth demonstrates. It is also worth remembering that at this time the family only held various parcels of land in Grafton. They did not yet hold the actual manor of Grafton.¹⁰⁵

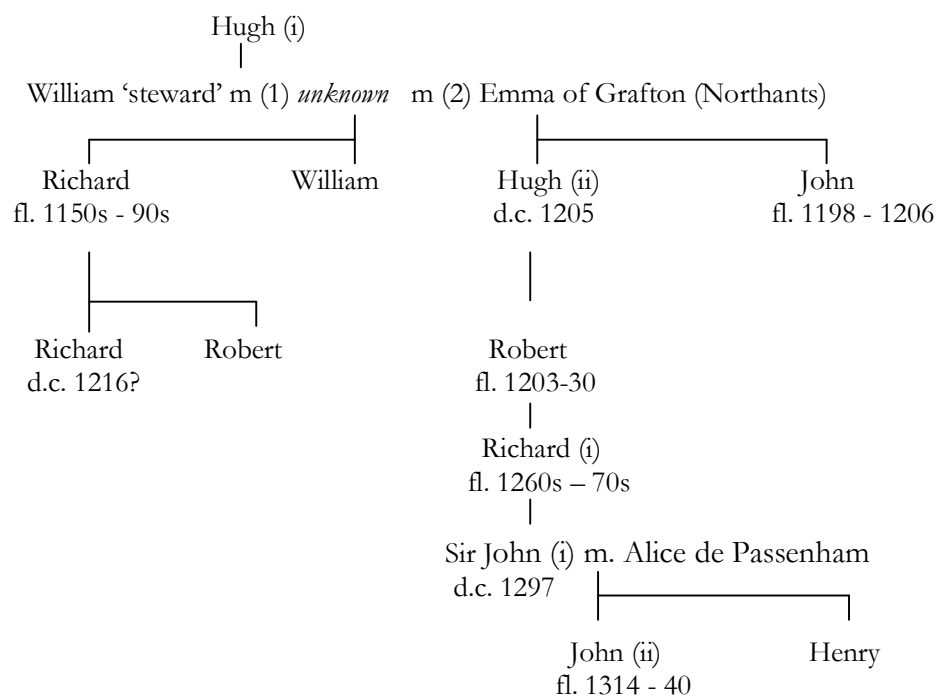
Wydevile lands at Grafton

It appears from the descent of the family lands that the elder branch of the family retained the original Mowbray grants in Yorkshire and in the north of Northamptonshire around Wellford. This is suggested by the lack of evidence for these lands appearing in the land holdings of the junior branch.

The Wydeviles connection to Grafton, Northamptonshire (not to be confused with Grafton in Yorkshire) occurred in the thirteenth century. What exactly they held and from when is unclear. The hermitage at Grafton is mentioned in 1268 when a 'James' Wydeville presented a new master. However his relationship to Thomas, William and Richard Wydevile, who witnessed a charter giving land to the hermitage sometime in the 1240s or 1250s, is unclear.

It is clear from Robert Wydevile's action in 1205 that his father Hugh held land in Grafton and that this came from his grandmother Emma. It would therefore appear that the link to Grafton is provided by William's wife (fig. 10). The junior branch appears to have built an independent base around Grafton and in the surrounding counties. There is no evidence that they held any lands in Yorkshire. It is this branch which now concerns us as the ancestors of Elizabeth Wydevile.

¹⁰⁵ *TNA* SC8/53/2650. In 1316/17 Roger del Isle petitioned the king for the return of his half of the manor of Grafton which was in the king's hands. The case concerning who held the manor and why it was in the king's hands continued for a number of years, with his son John del Isle continuing to pursue the petition until 1328/30. SC8/53/2641 & SC8/206/10291.

Figure 10. Suggested descent from William 'steward'

The above descent seems more probable from the evidence of the legal action taken by Robert against his cousins, Richard and Robert. It would also explain the division of lands between the two branches of the family.

(i) John (ii) Wydevile of Northamptonshire (fl. 1314 - 40)

On 24 June 1301 John de Wiville was summoned in the county to perform military service against the Scots.¹⁰⁶ Initially this may seem to have been an error, given that a John Wyvill had died earlier in the month. However, on 15 August 1314 a John de Wiville was again summoned to perform military service against the Scots.¹⁰⁷ It is therefore more likely that this John was a member of the junior branch of the family established in Northamptonshire by Hugh (ii). John (ii) was the son of Sir John Wydevile and Alice Passenham. Sir John may have died in c.1297. The family's wider connection in the county comes from an Inquisition taken on the 30 September 1315 following the death of Guy de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick. The jurors found that Warwick held the manor of Potterspury and that John de Wydevyle held from him the hundred of Cleley which was attached to Potterspury. John paid 20s rent at the hundred court in Potterspury.¹⁰⁸ However in 1329/30 in an action of *Quo warrant* John was summoned to answer by what right he claimed the hundred. John claimed that William Ferrers had enfeoffed Hugh and his heirs with it. John claimed to be the descendent of Hugh who was the father of his great-great-grandfather. William Ferrers had held the hundred of the king and his descendant was Thomas Ferrers to whom John paid 10s a year for the farm. John had been unable to provide any deed relating to a transaction which the justices deemed to be illegal as a 'hundred cannot be held of anyone but the king'. John returned to court in 1331 and asked if he could make a fine to be readmitted to the hundred, but the case was deferred.¹⁰⁹ The matter must eventually have been agreed in the Wydeviles favour. In 1434 it was mentioned along with other lands belonging to Thomas Wydevile when he made his will. Thomas was John's direct descendant.

The Wydeviles appear to have had links with the Ferrers over the centuries. In November 1233 Richard de Wyavill had pledged fifteen marks to ensure Hugh d'Aubigny met a fine for his lands. Amongst the others giving their pledge was William, earl Ferrers.¹¹⁰ This also demonstrates that the Yorkshire and Northamptonshire branches of the family maintained the same contacts. This particular Richard de Wyavill was a member of the Yorkshire branch of the Wydeviles.

¹⁰⁶ *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 1, pp. 349 & 910

¹⁰⁷ *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 2, pt. 2, no. 40, p. 428.

¹⁰⁸ *InqPM Edward II*, vol. 5, pp. 397-400. Baker, vol. 2, p. 161.

¹⁰⁹ *Eyre of Northamptonshire 3-4 Edward III*, Selden Society (London, 1983), vol. 1, pp.136-7.

¹¹⁰ <http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_033.html#it018_011> (accessed 25/3/10).

As John (i) had died in about 1297 it must have been John (ii) who was called upon to perform military service in 1314. It must therefore be the same John (ii) who was bailiff of the Hundred of Cleley and who acted as a juror in the sessions of the peace held during 1314-1316. Henry de Wydevill of Grafton was also listed as a juror in the same session roll for the period 1314-16, and was probably his brother.¹¹¹ The only other mention found for a Henry de Wyville, may therefore be the same man. Henry held tenements in Churchfield, Oundle, Stoke and Liveden, Northamptonshire from the abbey of Peterborough for half a knight's fee. He died in 1349, which, given the date, suggests he may have been a victim of the Black Death.¹¹²

As well as being lord of the hundred of Cleley, John was also one of the lords of the township of Ridlington, Rutland, along with Robert de Hoyland.¹¹³ Thus by the early fourteenth century the Wydevilles had increased their interests in the midlands area. Whether this was achieved through marriage, service, purchase or a combination of all three is unclear. Unfortunately very little is known about any of their marriages and therefore what lands a wife might have brought into the family. Given their connections it seems likely they would have been making beneficial marriages, as the case of Passenham demonstrates.

The Manor of Passenham

In 1322, John (ii) petitioned the king and council over his right to the manor of Passenham. He claimed that his maternal grandfather, William de Passenham, had held the manor; however William's son and heir, William, had been made a ward because of his idiocy and the manor had been alienated. The earl of Lancaster then entered the manor as chief lord. Henry Spigurnel, Roger Beler and John de Wilughby were ordered to examine any deeds, charters and muniments held by the earl, however they could find nothing relating to the manor, and a further enquiry was therefore ordered.¹¹⁴ On 6 July 1322 a writ was issued for a panel of jurors to be gathered. They met at Northampton on Wednesday 3 August. The jurors found that William de Passenham was the grandfather of John de Wydevill of Grafton and that John was his heir (fig. 11). William had died seised of the manor and it had descended to his son and heir William. Because

¹¹¹ *Rolls of Northamptonshire Sessions of the Peace: Roll of the Supervisors 1314-1316 and Roll of the Keepers of the Peace 1320*, ed., Marguerite Gollancz, NRS (1940), vol. 11, pp. 2-3.

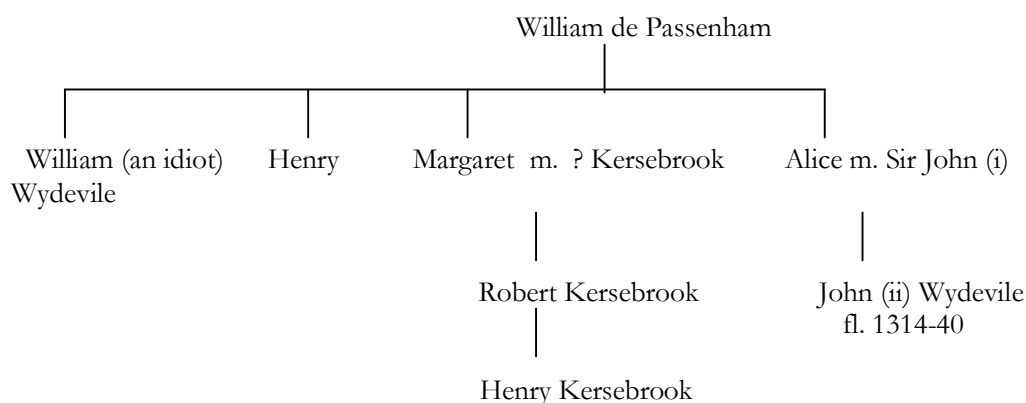
¹¹² *Henry of Pytchley's Book of Fees*, ed., W.T. Mellows, NRS (1927), vol. 2, pp. 120-21, p. 121 n8 & p. 146.

¹¹³ *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 2, no. 6, p. 390, 5 March 1316 lord of the hundred of Cleley; no. 1, p. 393, 5 March 1316 lord of the township of Ridlington.

¹¹⁴ *TNA*, SC8/77/3833 & SC8/77/3834.

William was *non compos* the king had made him a ward, granting the wardship to Hugh son of Otto, who was steward of the king's household.¹¹⁵ After Hugh's death the wardship went to Thomas de Sudynton. Following William's death his brother Henry entered the manor; however Henry was dispossessed by Sudynton. Henry prosecuted Sudynton but died before the case could be settled and Thomas, earl of Lancaster seized the land as chief lord, the manor forming part of his honour of Tutbury. Following the earl's rebellion the manor was taken into the king's hands.¹¹⁶ On 6 April 1332 an inquisition was ordered into whether the manor was part of the honour of Derby. John de Wydevill and Henry Kersbrook claimed it was not and asked the king for justice. However John, son of Walter le Blunt claimed he held it for life by a grant from Henry, earl of Lancaster. The earl confirmed the grant to Walter, claiming that he held it by a grant of his grand-father, Henry III to his son Edmund, Henry, earl of Lancaster's father.¹¹⁷ The case was only concluded in 1333/34 when John quitclaimed his right in the manor to Henry, earl of Lancaster and William Baret.¹¹⁸ The pursuit of his claim had gone on for ten years. John was nothing if not determined in trying to establish his rights, pursuing his claim whenever the opportunity arose, despite the might of the opposition.

Figure 11. The Passenham family



Family tree illustrating John (ii)'s claim to the manor of Passenham through his mother Alice.

¹¹⁵ *CPR 1272-81*, vol. 1, pp. 280 & 367. 27 October 1278 Hugh son of Otto, steward of the household, was granted custody of the lands of Thomas, son and heir of William de Passenham tenant in chief, who was *non compos*, saving reasonable maintenance of the said heir. The grant was reconfirmed 29 March 1280, when its value had increased to £27.

¹¹⁶ *InqMisc 1308-1348*, vol. 2, no. 580, p. 146.

¹¹⁷ *CCR 1330-33*, p.457.

¹¹⁸ *TNA*, DL25/916 dated 7 Edward III.

Friends and Associates

A rare example of John's personal relationships can be found in an inquisition into proof of age held in June 1354 regarding John de Pavely who had been born at Houghton, near Northampton. He was the brother and heir of Laurence de Pavely, and his lands were in the custody of William de Stury. Witnesses confirmed his age as 21. Thomas Pavely remembered quite clearly the day John de Pavely was born, the feast of saints Processus and Martinianus. He remembered this because he, and the boy's father Robert, were at the county court in Northampton and a groom had come from Houghton to report that Robert's wife had given birth to a son. Roger Pavely agreed, he remembered because there was a great fire at Little Houghton by Houghton and the whole town nearly burnt down. The baby, who had been lying in his cradle, was carried out to the field for fear of the fire. John de Cogenho confirmed that his mother had stood as godmother to John and that he had been present when the child was baptised. William de Pyrye knew this to be true because John Goddes de Pyrey was godfather and he had been present at the baptism. Richard de Hardeshull had also been present, with the other godfather, John de Wydevill. He remembered also that immediately after, Robert the boy's father had gone into Scotland with the king's army to Halidon Hill. Each witness brought forward agreed the boy's age, establishing the date in relation to some other event that they had witnessed. Thus we know who the godparents were, and we have a picture of life in the village. The bailiff had submitted his accounts the same day, another man had been brought before the sheriff for trespass, another had witnessed an assault and yet another had been summoned to appear before the bishop for not enclosing the churchyard. Each of these men were all said to be in their late fifties and sixties. The inquisition not only provides a glimpse into village life at the time of John de Pavely's birth but also the closeness of its community. John Wydevile was a friend of the Pavelys and would have known and been associated with the families of the other godparents. What is also interesting are the ages given by each of the witnesses. Not only had they survived the Black Death, they also appear to be long lived, bringing into question the common perception that people rarely lived into their fifties or sixties.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ The common belief that people were lucky to live into their 40s has become rather ubiquitous. However proofs of age are a good example of just how questionable this belief is. John Bedell, 'Memory and Proof of Age in England 1272-1327', *Past and Present*, no. 162 (Feb., 1999), p. 15. Bedell reviewed proofs of age for the periods 1272-1307 and 1307-27. He shows that during the first period jurors aged 50-59 numbered 155; aged 60-69 were 60 and over 70 were 9. In the second period they were 246, 170 and 20 respectively. Given the small number of inquisitions held these are quite remarkable figures. As jurors could be taken from across the local community they were not restricted to those from a higher

As well as the men from Houghton John Wydevile would have known his fellow jurors from around the hundred of Cleley, while as bailiff he would have known the people working the land, the other tenants and their lord. The lack of records relating to John provides only brief glimpses of individuals who crossed his path, and whose names only appear once.

One of the last references to John occurs in May 1339 when he acknowledged a debt of £40 to Sir Thomas de Ferrariis. If he failed to pay, the cost was to be levied on his lands and chattels in Northamptonshire.¹²⁰ Sir Thomas was a near neighbour, living at Moor End, Northamptonshire.¹²¹ Sir Thomas was connected to the royal court, and along with Theobald de Mounteny, king's yeoman, had been granted the wardship and marriage of the heirs of John de Moeles.¹²² Sir Thomas de Ferrariis is probably the same Thomas Ferrers to whom John paid 10s a year for the farm of Cleley. John may have turned to Ferrers' for a loan because he was not only his landlord but also a neighbour. Ferrers would also have had the means to assist John and, as his landlord, would have known about John's ability to repay the loan. It was a considerable sum of money, John may have needed it to meet the cost of his legal actions or it may have been for a property transaction. While there is nothing to indicate the loan was eventually paid, neither is there evidence of further action against John to recover the money. Whatever the cause of the debt it demonstrates that John had the means to be able to repay it, as well as the connections to borrow the money. This provides an indication of his position and status within the county; John would certainly have had sufficient income to sustain knighthood as his father had. At least John had managed to come through the period of famine, seemingly unscathed.

When exactly John died, who he married or where he was buried is unknown. It must have been prior to June 1354, when the inquisition was held into the proof of age of John de Pavely. John (ii) is mentioned as the child's godfather by a witness, but his absence as a witness suggests he was dead. It is possible John was buried in the local church of St Mary's Grafton. His parents Sir John and Alice Passenham are thought to be buried in St Mary's, but there is no tradition for the church providing the family

social group who might be expected to be better fed or cared for. Jurors were of course restricted to men so this does not represent the female members of the community.

¹²⁰ *CCR 1339-41*, p. 214.

¹²¹ *CPR 1345-48*, p.270. Licence for Thomas de Ferrariis to crenellate his dwelling place of La Morende, co. Northampton. Licence for him to also impark a plot of land and wood adjoining the said dwelling place, 20 March 1347.

¹²² *CPR 1334-38*, p. 530.

mausoleum, and only one other member of the family is known to be buried there, his grandson John who died in 1397/98.¹²³

Alternatively he could have been buried in the Hermitage. His father, John (i) had held the advowson and had put forward Walter Frusellu as master in 1284.¹²⁴ Despite the monks' challenge to his nomination, the bishop of Lincoln upheld John's right to present. Frusellu died in 1313 and was replaced by Adam of Banfield. John (ii)'s nomination was also challenged, this time by rivals claiming the right to present. John had to take the matter to the king's court, before his right was upheld. In 1340 John (ii) nominated William of Radeford to replace Adam and things seem to have gone smoothly this time.¹²⁵ Given that John had the right to nominate it would suggest that the family were important patrons, if not founders, of the Hermitage. Such a close tie and John's insistence upon his rights, makes it possible that he may have wished to be buried at the Hermitage, thus exerting patron's rights in death as well.

As members of the younger branch of the family they had started with less to build upon. They had obtained land in Grafton most likely from the marriage of William 'steward' to Emma. It would appear to be an odd, albeit confusing, coincidence that the family had been given land in a place called Grafton in Yorkshire by d'Aubigny in 1114. Links to the Ferrers provided land in the hundred of Cleley, and they appear to have had the right of presentation to the Hermitage at Grafton. Richard's grandfather had been summoned to perform military service with 'horse and arms' in July 1297, and the returns for Northampton show that he held land and rents to the value of £20 or more.¹²⁶ The summons was however as 'armiger', either this was an error or he was never in fact a knight. It has been estimated that there were between 1,100-1,500 men who were knights or eligible to be knight at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Those who held directly from the Crown were estimated to be wealthier than those who were sub-tenants, the average revenue being put at £40 and £8.25 respectively.¹²⁷ 'Sir'

¹²³ *Grafton Regis History and Heritage* (2004), CD 1, 'church tour', Fr. Jerome Bertram. Altar tomb, with two incised crosses side by side. The tomb has been moved from its original location in the church and only one side is now visible. There are two panels divided into four niches, two of which contain a shield. Unfortunately there is no heraldry remaining to aid identification. The style of the crosses and the use of ballflowers have been used to date the tomb to c. 1300, hence the attribution to Sir John, who died c. 1297.

¹²⁴ *Rolls and Register of Bishop Sutton 1280-1299*, ed. Rosalind M.T. Hill, Lincoln Record Society, vol. 43, pt 2 (1950), p. 41. 'Walterus Frussellu capellanus presentatus per Johannem de Wyvile in Grafton' ad Heremitagium de Grafton' vacans per mortem Ricardi ultimi magistri'

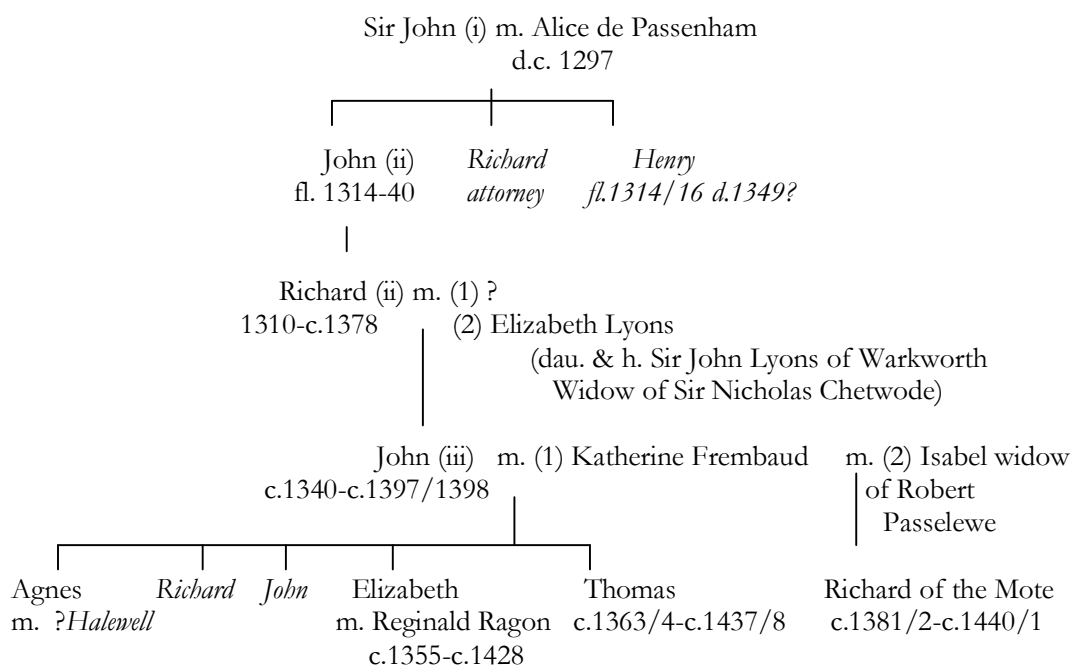
¹²⁵ Parker, p. 250.

¹²⁶ *Parliamentary Writs*, vol. 1, p. 903.

¹²⁷ Bruce M.S. Campbell & Ken Bartley, *England on the Eve of the Black Death An Atlas of lay lordship, land and wealth, 1300-1349* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 72-4.

John's income at £20 placed him somewhere in the middle, suggesting that his eligibility for knighthood on the grounds of income may therefore have been marginal.

Figure 12. Wydevile descent from the fourteenth century¹²⁸



The famine of 1314-16 may have caused difficulties for the family, but worse was to come. The Black Death of 1348/49 was to have a devastating affect on everyone, with large numbers of the population dying and land falling into disuse. Northampton lay on the main road from London; the plague had arrived in Coventry, some twenty-five miles away, in late February 1349, it reached Leicester in March and finally arrived in Northampton in April or May. It is estimated that three quarters of the population of Leicester died, with Northampton suffering similar losses.¹²⁹ From the town it spread out into the surrounding countryside with similar devastating effect. Grafton lies a little over nine miles from Northampton, and the plague would have arrived sooner rather than later, especially if the surviving population attempted to escape the inevitable by fleeing into the countryside. The Wydeviles appear to have been fortunate; they

¹²⁸ For comparison with my proposed genealogy see the genealogy at the end of the chapter drawn up by George Baker (fig. 27), taken from *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (London 1836-41), vol. 2, p. 166. There appear to be a number of errors in Baker's genealogy especially in relation to Thomas and Edward.

¹²⁹ Benedict Gummer, *The Scourging Angel. The Black Death in the British Isles* (London, 2010, paperback edition), pp. 139-40.

survived, although it is unlikely that they did so unscathed. John (ii)'s absence from the record at about this time raises the possibility that he was a victim of the plague. William of Radeford, the master John had chosen for the Hermitage died of it, as did many monks and nuns. Given Radeford's death from the plague we can be certain that the people of Grafton would not have escaped either.¹³⁰

John (ii) may have had two brothers Henry and Richard (see fig. 12), although the evidence is scant. The only mentions for Henry are that he was a juror in the 1314/16 sessions, although he and John (ii) are both described as 'of Grafton'; he may just as likely have been a cousin. A Henry de Wyville is also listed in Henry of Pytchley's Book of Fees. This was drawn up for Peterborough Abbey in 1346-48 when the Abbey was in dispute with the king over collection of an aid for the knighting of the Black Prince. Henry is shown as holding half a knight's fee for tenements in Churchfield, Oundle, and Stoke, Northamptonshire for which he paid homage to the Abbot.¹³¹ Henry may have also fallen victim to the plague as there is no further mention of him. The evidence for Richard being a brother or cousin is based solely on the fact that the earliest piece of information for a Richard Wydeville active in the Northamptonshire area dates from 16 Feb 1330, and it would seem unlikely he is the same Richard (ii) who was active up until 1378. The record for Richard the attorney makes him active at about the same time as Henry and John. In February 1330; Richard was acting as an attorney in Cosgrove.¹³² If Richard (ii) was born in about 1310 he is unlikely to be acting as an attorney by 1330. Richard the attorney may therefore be the uncle of Richard (ii).¹³³ Given the date it was probably also the elder Richard de Wodewille, who acted as a witness in February 1331 when John de Aqua parson of Pointington church, Somerset released his right to property in the manor of Yarcombe, Devon. The document was dated in London and John had been requested to come into chancery so it is probable that Richard was in London rather than the West Country, although a link to Devon cannot be entirely

¹³⁰ Gummer, p. 157. As well as Radeford, Katherine Knyvet, abbess of Delapre died, as did William of Piddington, master of the hospital for the infirm in Northampton. A large number of the heads of religious houses died in the county, Gummer therefore assumes that half or more of their community must also have died.

¹³¹ *Henry of Pytchley's Book of Fees*, p. xiv & pp. 120-21.

¹³² *Eyre of Northamptonshire, 3-4 Edward III*, Selden Society, vol. 98 (London, 1983), pp.571-2. Case of Serjaunt v. Tyngewyk. 'Richard of Wydeville' acted as attorney for a number of tenants in Cosgrove and Furtho in a case brought by Maud, widow of William le Serjaunt and her attorney Simon of Kesewyk.

¹³³ It is unclear when talking of attorneys exactly what the records mean. Was an attorney someone who had undergone a period of study in the law or was he someone who was literate and had a general understanding of the law? The Middle English Dictionary gives a definition in law as 'a person formally designated or appointed to represent a litigant in court or to transact official business, an official agent or representative.' A general definition is also given as someone who acts as a 'mediator, intercessor, a business representative or factor'. See also p. 67, fn. 209 below.

discounted.¹³⁴ In 1346 a Richard Wodewill was assessed 10s as his contribution towards the knighting of Edward III's eldest son, which was raised on the hundred of Southmolton, Devon. Richard with John Loterel held a quarter of a knight's fee in 'Dustygh' (Anstygh?) Regni held of the honour of Okehampton.¹³⁵ Given the spelling of Wodewill and the location in Devon this could relate to the same family if not to Richard of Northamptonshire.¹³⁶ Links to places outside Northamptonshire could have come through an extended Wydevile family of which little or nothing is known, or through marriage. Wives are frustratingly absent in the records.

¹³⁴ *CCR 1330-33*, p. 274.

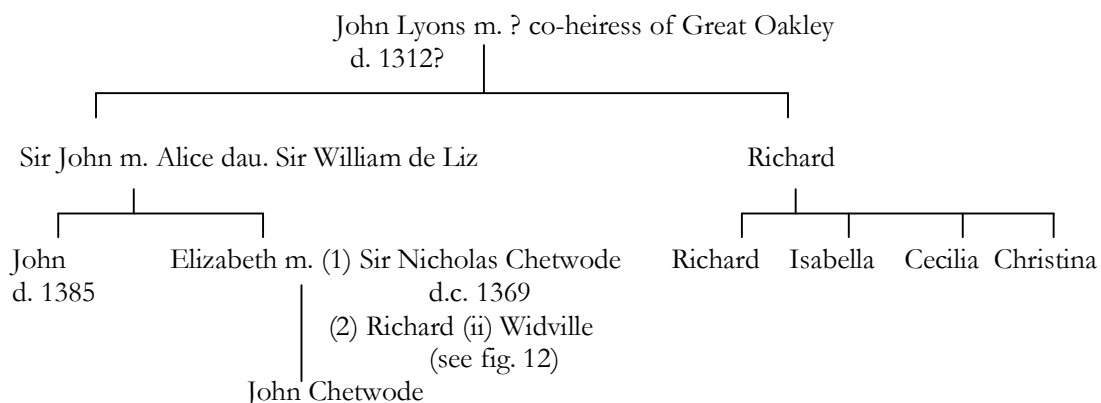
¹³⁵ *Fendal Aids*, vol. 1, p. 418.

¹³⁶ A West Country link cannot be entirely ruled out. There were Wyvilles/Wydeviles in Hampshire listed in Domesday. In the late fourteenth and fifteenth century there are links to the West Country. This suggests there are therefore contacts in the region, if not familial ones. See below p. 65, fn. 202.

(ii) Richard (ii) Wydevile of Grafton (c.1310 – c.1378)

‘Sir’ John’s grandson, Richard (ii) continued the process of building up the family income and raising their position within the county. The Black Death may well have helped. As the death rate rose, there were fewer people available to carry out administrative duties for the crown in the provinces; those that survived were thus in a good position to take advantage of the situation. Richard (ii) had a long career of service in the county. He served on commissions, was escheator for the counties of Northamptonshire and Rutland and served as sheriff and knight of the shire. He also acted as a witness and an attorney in the local community. There is little doubt that he was a member of the Northamptonshire branch of the family. All his offices were performed within the county, and he is shown holding land in the county. It is not known whether he had brothers, sisters or a large extended family. Despite the increased information regarding his career, there is no mention in the record of his wife although he is named several times with a son John as his heir. Richard (ii) appears to have married twice. The name of his first wife is unknown; however he married Elizabeth Lyons some time after 1369. She was the widow of Sir Nicholas Chetwode who died in 1369, and was the daughter and heir of Sir John Lyons of Warkworth, Northamptonshire (see fig. 13).¹³⁷ Richard’s son and heir must therefore have been born to his first wife, as he was already serving in the county before his father’s marriage to Elizabeth (fig. 12).

¹³⁷ *VCH Northamptonshire* (1970 reprint), vol. 1, p. 404-5. Sir John Lyons’ tomb in Warkworth church is described with heraldry on the side of the tomb which includes that of Sir Nicholas Chetwode, d 1369. Duchess of Cleveland, *The Battle Abbey Roll*, ‘Loions’, <http://www.1066.co.nz/library/battle_abbey_roll2> (accessed 1/10/10), The Lyons family had branches in Long Ashton, Somerset and in Hampshire. In the thirteenth century a William de Lyons witnessed a charter by William Redvers to Christ Church Priory, Hampshire. In the twelfth century a Robert Widvil’ witnessed a charter by Richard Redvers to Lyre Abbey, Isle of Wight, this was one of a number of charters witnessed by a Hugh and Robert Widvil’/Witvilla/ Wauvilla/ Withvilla/Guitvilla. The editor interprets these various spellings as Whitefield. *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon 1090-1217*, ed. Robert Bearman, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, NS (1994), vol. 37, pp. 69-70. Other familiar names from the Mowbray charters also occur in these charters, e.g. Peverel and Morevile. The common link between these men would appear to be their arrival in England at or shortly after the conquest. The Widvile groups were connected by place of origin, if not by a common ancestor. This also serves to demonstrate how small the circle was within which these men moved.

Figure 13. The Lyons family of Warkworth, Northamptonshire

The Career of Richard (ii)

Richard's first known commission was in March 1347, just before the Black Death struck. Edward III required yet more money to prosecute the war in France throughout the coming summer, and if he failed to maintain the war, the king warned that any gains made might be lost. Parliament therefore agreed to aid the king with a loan of 20,000 sacks of wool apportioned over various counties. Northampton was assessed at '547 sacks, 1 stone'. Along with Richard de Wydevill, were Sir Thomas Courson, Sir Thomas de Bucton, Andrew de Landwath, William de Lyvedenne and John Campeon.¹³⁸ Either they carried out their duties inefficiently or they sympathised with those who failed to contribute, for in the following September they were all summoned to appear before the council at Westminster, to explain their contempt in not advising the king of the names of those who refused to pay.¹³⁹ There is no record of the outcome, or if they even appeared before the council. The next commission Richard served on was not until December 1349, suggesting that either his services had not been required because he had proved inadequate in 1347, or the arrival of the Black Death caused a hiatus in the normal administration. By 1349 the plague had arrived in the area, and very close to home. The master of Grafton Hermitage Richard Radeford, had died and was replaced by Simon of Olney.¹⁴⁰ How many others died in the area is unknown, however it is interesting that none of Richard's fellow commissioners from 1347 appeared on any

¹³⁸ *CFR Edward III 1347-56*, pp. 1-3.

¹³⁹ *CCR 1346-49*, p. 393.

¹⁴⁰ Parker, p.250. See also p. 46 fn. 130 above.

future commissions with him, and the pool of suitable candidates was undoubtedly much smaller by 1349.

Edward III had begun to issue commissions of the peace from 1 July 1349 starting in the south at Dorset and working north. The commission for Northamptonshire was issued on 28 December. Richard (ii)'s fellow commissioners were Sir Richard Blundel, Sir John Mordak, Sir John Griffyn, George Longevill, Richard Knyvet and Thomas de Byfeld.¹⁴¹ Yet it was to be nearly ten years before Richard served on another commission according to the records. During this period Richard may have been occupied as an attorney, although this can only be supposition. On 18 February 1350, prior to embarking on the king's service in Ireland, Richard de Maundevyll appointed Richard de Wodevill and John de Caldon as his attorneys in England for one year.¹⁴² A month later Richard is again associated with Sir Richard Blundel, when on 15 March 1350 he acted as a witness to a grant made to the priory of Luffield by John Grene and Simon Scott of lands granted to them by Matilda, widow of John Blundel. The gift was for the benefit of souls of Richard Blundel and his wife, John Blundel and his wife Matilda and Sir Richard Blundel and his wife.¹⁴³

On 21 July 1354 he again acted as a witness with Sir Roger Hillary, Sir Robert Herle, Sir Ralph Basset and others when Thomas de Aldeschels gave his bondman John Baret his freedom.¹⁴⁴ In February 1357 Richard (ii) along with John de Newenham, parson of Ekton Church, acted as guarantors for £100, for Sir Thomas Swynford. Swynford granted the manor of Newton Blossomville, Buckinghamshire, to William de Burgh, and John de Newenham during the life of Nichola de Swynford his wife. In return they were to pay Thomas and Nichola twenty-eight marks a year for her life. With the documents completed to everyone's satisfaction the recognisance was void.¹⁴⁵ Richard (ii)'s work as an attorney and witness brought him into contact with important members of the legal profession. Sir Roger Hillary was chief justice of the bench in 1354, and as well as serving the king was a member of the Black Prince's council. He held lands in Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire.¹⁴⁶ Sir Robert de Herle was either the brother or son of Sir William Herle (d.1347). The latter served as a justice in

¹⁴¹ *CPR 1348-50*, pp. 382-3.

¹⁴² *CPR 1348-50*, p. 478.

¹⁴³ *Luffield Priory Charters Part 1*, ed., G.R. Elvey, NRS, vol. 22 (1968), no 221, p. 213. Lands and tenements in Towcester, Burcote, Caldecote, Stoke Bruerne, Shutlanger, Easton Neston and Hulcot had been gifted and enfeofed to John Grene, chaplain and Simon Scot by Matilda Blundel.

¹⁴⁴ *CCR 1354-60*, pp. 91-2.

¹⁴⁵ *CCR 1354-60*, p. 388 & pp. 390-1.

¹⁴⁶ *ODNB*, 'Hillary, Sir Roger (d. 1356)', J.S. Bothwell (accessed 25/10/10).

eyre for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire as well as serving as a judge of the common pleas. William and his brother both had links to Leicestershire.¹⁴⁷ Such connections may well have led to Richard's appointment to a commission of oyer and terminer on 15 April 1358, when he served with Henry Grene and Gilbert Chasteleyn to enquire into an assault on John Mallore (Mallory). 'Evildoers' had allegedly attacked Mallory while he was hearing mass in the church at Welton, Northampton; his men and servants were also assaulted.¹⁴⁸

Richard's career appears to have taken off from this point; he was appointed to two more commissions of oyer and terminer in June of the same year. On 16 June he was serving once again with Henry Grene, and William de Shareshull, William de Notton, William de Warenne and William Skypwyth, to enquire into the murder of Sir George de Longevill at Little Billing.¹⁴⁹ On the 30 June Richard, along with Henry Grene and Peter de Brugge, enquired into a complaint by Isabella, the king's daughter, that her servants had been attacked and robbed of £20.¹⁵⁰ In October 1358 Richard served on a commission with Peter de Salford and John de Braundeston in Bedfordshire to look into the findings of the escheator regarding manors held by John de Wodehill deceased. The inquisition, which required they question Wodehill's wife and search in the chancery rolls, took until 26 February 1359 to complete.¹⁵¹

Richard was now working with men who were highly placed in the legal profession, and who also had links to the royal court. Sir Henry Green had worked with William Shareshull and Roger Hillary in 1331, becoming a serjeant-at-law in 1342. Green served Queen Isabella, and like Hillary was a member of the Black Prince's council and in 1354 he became a justice of the bench. He was a Northamptonshire man and also had lands in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, similar areas of interest as the Wydeviles.¹⁵²

Robert de Herle served as steward of the household of the king's children and Gilbert de Chasteleyn was steward of the household of the king's daughter Isabella.¹⁵³ Such contacts may have brought Richard closer to royal notice. On 17 April 1360 Richard was discharged from a commission of array in Northampton because he was

¹⁴⁷ ODNB, 'Herle, Sir William (b.in or before 1270, d. 1347)', Paul Brand (accessed 25/10/10).

¹⁴⁸ CPR 1358-61, pp. 73-4.

¹⁴⁹ CPR 1358-61, p. 79.

¹⁵⁰ CPR 1358-61, pp. 80-1.

¹⁵¹ CPR 1358-61, pp. 152-3 & CCR 1354-60, pp. 561-2.

¹⁵² ODNB, 'Green, Sir Henry (d. 1369)', Henry Summerson (accessed 25/10/10).

¹⁵³ CPR 1354-58, p. 451. A commission of oyer and terminer on 17 July 1356 lists Robert de Herle and Gilbert Chasteleyn and shows their positions within the royal household.

steward of the lands in various counties, belonging to the king's daughter, Isabella. While he was thus occupied on Isabella's business he was unable to attend the array.¹⁵⁴ In the period 1343-59 Isabel had received numerous grants of land from her father, including in 1358 an annuity of 1,000 marks.¹⁵⁵ The full extent and location of her lands is unclear; however some at least must have been in the Midlands, if Richard was acting as her steward. There was certainly one grant, made to Isabella in 1353, which included the manor of 'Wedon Pynkeneye' in Northamptonshire.¹⁵⁶ How long Richard remained her steward or if he was steward for all her lands or just those locally is uncertain. It is possible that he was already acting as steward hence his appointment to the commission in June 1358, or perhaps more likely the commission brought him to royal attention and his appointment as steward followed. On 1 February 1359 Nicholas Dammory was appointed steward of Isabella's household and all her manors, lands and farms. In January 1362 Thomas Tirel became steward of her lands with a payment of thirty five marks a year, he appears to have still been in post in February 1373.¹⁵⁷ However in a petition against Alice Perrers, made probably in 1378, Isabella's steward was named as Robert Sturmy.¹⁵⁸ It is therefore likely that Richard (ii) was either appointed locally covering specific properties, or his duties were the same as Dammory's. In which case, Dammory either died or was replaced sometime between February 1359 and April 1360 when Richard is mentioned as steward. Richard would appear to have held the post for two years until Tirel's appointment.

It therefore seems likely that Richard stood down as steward about this time. He was becoming increasingly active with other duties in the counties of Northampton and Rutland. In March and April 1361 he was performing duties as sheriff of Northampton and on 7 August was appointed escheator for the counties of Northampton and Rutland, replacing Thomas de Navenby.¹⁵⁹ He appears to have held both positions until 1370.

In his work on *The Fourteenth-Century Sheriff* Gorski discusses the way in which a sheriff might be appointed. By the fourteenth century he argues they were coming from

¹⁵⁴ *CPR 1358-61*, p. 349.

¹⁵⁵ *ODNB*, 'Isabella, countess of Bedford (1332-1379)', James L. Gillespie (accessed 25/10/10).

¹⁵⁶ *CPR 1350-54*, p. 504.

¹⁵⁷ *CPR 1358-61*, p. 166. On 1 February 1359 Nicholas Dammory was appointed Isabella's steward of the household 'as well as of all her manors, lands, farms, rent, fees and liberties, during her pleasure'. *CPR 1361-64*, p. 146 & p. 316, on 8 Jan. 1362 Thomas Tirel was appointed steward of Isabella's lands. 20 Feb 1363 the exchequer was ordered to pay him thirty five marks yearly while he held the office, this was extended for life when he took the order of knighthood. *CPR 1370-74*, p. 252, Tirel was still acting as steward 2 Feb 1373.

¹⁵⁸ *TNA*, SC8/41/2011. Petition relating to lands in Kendal.

¹⁵⁹ *InqPM Edward III*, vol. 11, no. 108, pp.82-3 & no. 123, 118-19; *CFR 1356-68*, pp. 154-5.

the lower rungs of the aristocracy, i.e. knights, esquires and others. Being 'useful friends to have' it was generally considered that a magnate would appoint 'his man'. The role of sheriff was an important one in local affairs; as the person exercising royal authority the sheriff acted as a link between the centre and the locality. The sheriff supervised the election of the coroner, verderer and knights of the shire and also enforced the king's rights regarding land and privileges. It is therefore understandable how important it was felt that the 'right man' should be given the position.¹⁶⁰ The sheriff of Nottingham as depicted in the stories of Robin Hood may appear a caricature, but power in the wrong hands could be a corrupting influence. A number of ordinances had been passed to try and prevent such corruption in the early years of the century, as well as limit the length of time a sheriff served. A year was considered the most appropriate length of service. Many argued that long service led to abuses and corruption. A petition in 1340 argued that a long serving sheriff would 'do many oppressions to the people' without fear of retribution. It was proposed that sheriffs and escheators should therefore be rotated annually. The counter argument was that long service led to greater efficiency. Petitions were issued in 1354 and 1368 repeating the argument to reduce a sheriff's service. Throughout this period the average length of service for a sheriff was just over two years.¹⁶¹

The qualities that were looked for in a sheriff included his reputation, experience, family tradition and a willingness to serve. Patronage was also an important feature as the individual had to be brought to the crown's attention so that he might be appointed. The reliance on patronage was criticised for being open to abuse and the system had been revised in 1311. A new ordinance required the appointment be made under the Great Seal by the chancellor, treasurer and council or by the treasurer, barons of the exchequer and justices of the bench if the chancellor was absent. However this still required that information on potential applicants should reach the appointments committee. The king would also have had an opinion which he would have formed from information gathered from his household men. Little would therefore have changed in terms of patronage.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Richard Gorski, *The Fourteenth-Century Sheriff* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 2-28.

¹⁶¹ Gorski, pp. 37-8.

¹⁶² Gorski, pp. 11-12. Gorski argues that localities lacking a dominant magnate meant that knights and esquires could enjoy greater independence of action and that this turned into dominance by the end of the century. But in looking at a variety of county studies the picture appears to differ from county to county e.g. Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401-1499* (1992), E. Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c. 1422-c.1485* (1992), Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (1981) to list just a few. In the case of

If this was the process commonly followed for appointments then it would appear to be the connections Richard made in the 1350s which provided his route to his positions in the shire. There is little evidence for any major magnate influence in the county at this period and there is nothing to suggest that Richard himself had any such links beyond perhaps Ferrers. While there appears to be a continuing link with the Ferrers family in relation to land holdings, there is nothing to indicate connections to any of the higher nobility within Northamptonshire or the surrounding counties, and Ferrers would not appear to fall into the category of a major magnate. While the Wydeviles may have had links to the Mowbray family in previous centuries there is no evidence for this link continuing into the fourteenth century. The links that the Wydeviles established in this period are to the knightly and gentry classes. Richard's links to men such as Green, Hillary and Herle are his most obvious route to his nomination as sheriff. His work as an attorney gave him these links and if a man wished to progress then his willingness to serve would no doubt be a given. While there is little evidence for a family tradition of service on a large scale, Richard became sufficiently established to enable his son to continue these services. While previous generations had built up their position through service to one lord, Richard was increasing the family's status through service within his county and to the king. His appointment as escheator was probably made in a similar way and the two offices could sometimes go together, as appears to be the case for Northamptonshire. However the appointment of a sheriff to Rutland operated on a different basis. It was a 'private fee' and the appointment of the sheriff lay in the hands of 'Edmund, earl of Cornwall, Hugh Audley, Edmund, earl of Kent, Humphrey de Bohun, Robert de Vere, and Edward, earl of Rutland', during the fourteenth century.¹⁶³ When it came to the appointment of the escheator their involvement is less clear, although their opinion if not direct influence, might be expected. There is little evidence to link Wydevile to any of them, although he had contact with the Bohuns and de Veres in his role as sheriff and escheator of Northampton. Richard appears to have served as escheator for both counties concurrently.

Northamptonshire and from just this brief look at the Wydeviles it would appear that the county did lack a dominant magnate and Gorski's argument is more likely to apply in this case. There is currently no work on the county to match those listed by Gorski for other counties.

¹⁶³ Gorski, p. 34. Five counties were private 'fee' shrievalties, where the sheriff could be appointed for life or have hereditary tenure. They were Cornwall, Lancashire, Rutland, Westmorland and Worcestershire.

Table 1**Richard (ii) Wydevile: appointment as escheator** ¹⁶⁴

Date	County
7 August 1361	Northamptonshire & Rutland
20 March 1362	Removed from Rutland
20 June 1362	Rutland
11 December 1370	Removed from both counties

In his role as escheator Richard would have come into contact with many more members of the gentry and knightly classes which would have extended his connections further. He would also have been in a position to know what land was held by whom, on what terms and what might become available on the market. It was insider knowledge that could prove useful and was likely to be one of the abuses of which people complained. On 20 March 1362 Richard was replaced as escheator of Rutland by William Wade, while remaining escheator of Northampton. However on 20 June he was once again made escheator of Rutland.¹⁶⁵ There is no explanation for this brief change, either Wade proved incompetent or died suddenly, alternatively it might have been a warning to Wydevile that what was given could be removed. Without more information it is mere speculation. Wydevile continued to operate as escheator in both counties throughout the 1360s. He must have proved his value and attracted little criticism to have continued for so long in the same position.

There is some information to suggest that Richard was able to increase his land holdings arising from some of the cases in which he had been engaged as escheator. At the very least his knowledge as escheator would have helped. In December 1364 a third part of the manors of Stoke Bruerne and Alderton were taken into the king's hands following the death of Alice de Staunton.¹⁶⁶ Two years later on 8 October 1366 Walter de Chesthunte, son and heir of Sir Walter quitclaimed a third part of the manors of Stoke Bruerne and Alderton along with the annual rent of £10 to Richard Wydeville and his heirs. The deed was dated at Grafton and witnessed by Nicholas Grene amongst others.¹⁶⁷ Nicholas Grene may have been a relative of Sir Henry Grene; it would seem that Richard's links with the family had increased.

¹⁶⁴ *CFR 1356-68*, pp. 154-5; p. 213 for March and June 1362 and *CFR1369-77*, p. 102 respectively.

¹⁶⁵ *CFR 1356-68*, p. 213.

¹⁶⁶ *CCR 1364-68*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁷ *CCR 1364-68*, p. 297.

On 14 July 1366 Richard had dealt with the manor of Wykehamond (Wicken). It was taken into the king's hands because the heir was a minor. An inquisition found that Joan, widow of Sir John de Wolverton held it until her death, when it reverted to Margery and Elizabeth, her daughters and heirs. However a further inquisition was held which found that Sir John had also had a first wife, also called Joan by whom he had had three daughters, Joan, Sara and Cicely. John Wake the son of Joan Wolverton put in a claim as one of the heirs as did Thomas de Couelee the husband of Elizabeth, who was the daughter of Cicely (see fig. 14). Following a suit made to Chancery the determination was that the manor should be divided into five parts.¹⁶⁸ Having left matters for a year, on 8 July 1367 Richard paid a licence to the king of £20 for John Wake, Roger Louthe and his wife Margery, William de Cogenho and his wife Elizabeth, Adam de Basyng and Thomas de Couelee and his wife Elizabeth to enfeof Richard, his son John and the heirs of John with the manor of Wicken, which was held in chief.¹⁶⁹ On the 13 October 1368 Richard and John Wydville paid 100 marks to John Wake, Elizabeth, Adam, Thomas and Elizabeth for the manor excepting one fifth, presumably the part belonging to Margery and Roger Louthe as they do not appear in the agreement. The other heirs rendered the manor to Richard and John and the heirs of John for ever.¹⁷⁰ It is more than likely that Richard was able to take advantage of any weaknesses in a claim or as in this instance where problems were caused by there being too many claimants to a property, to obtain it for himself. In each case he seems to have waited a year, possibly to allow for any other queries regarding title to emerge before making his offer. As escheator he would have gained a reasonable picture of the ownership of any property, its value, any entails or service attached. The time between his enquiry as escheator and his purchase could have been used to ascertain any other information regarding the land, for example if it was mortgaged or if the heirs were in any difficulties and needed to make a sale.¹⁷¹

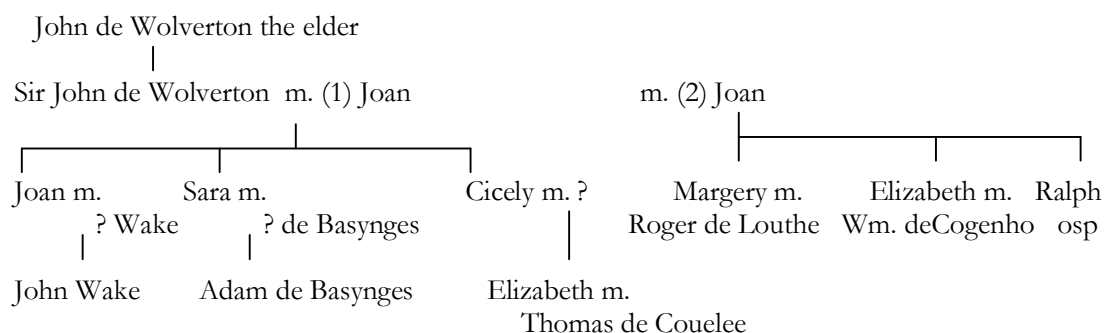
¹⁶⁸ *CCR 1364-68*, pp. 241-2.

¹⁶⁹ *CPR 1364-67*, p. 418, also below p. 69, fn. 215.

¹⁷⁰ CP25/1/178/84, number 605, feet of fines,

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_178_84.shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

¹⁷¹ The following advice to investors in land was written in the fifteenth century but would have been equally true in the fourteenth century. 'Jesu, as thou art Heaven's king, / Send us grace to have knowing, / Who will beware in purchasing / Consider the points here following: / First see that the land be clear / In title of the seller; / And that it stand in no danger / Of any woman's dower; / See whether the tenure be bond or free; / And see release of every feoffee; / See that the seller be of age, / And that it lie in no mortgage; / See whether an entail thereof be found / And whether it be in statute bound; / Consider what service belongs thereto, / And what rent out of it must go; / And if it moves of a wedded woman, / Remember covert baron than; / And if you may in any wise, / Make your charter of warrantise / To your heirs and assigns also / Thus shall a wise purchaser do. / In 15 years if you wise be, / You shall

Figure 14. Claimants to the manor of Wykehamond (Wicken)

Richard's value, and the trust in which he must have been held is further demonstrated in his regular appointment as sheriff during the same period. There is no record of his appointment as sheriff in 1361 but it is possible he may have been acting as sub-sheriff during that year. 1361 also saw a return of the plague which may explain the lack of his appointment; it was a time of emergency and Richard may have stood in. His standing in the county was obviously increasing; he also served as knight of the shire for Northamptonshire during the 1360s and 70s. Richard most certainly demonstrated his willingness to serve.

While he extended his contacts with the neighbouring gentry, cases also arose while he was both escheator and sheriff which brought him into contact with some of the nobility, for example Humphrey son and heir of William de Bohun, earl of Northampton, in 1363, Thomas de Vere, earl of Oxford in 1366 and the earl of Warwick in the same year.¹⁷² Coming to the attention of the nobility would be no bad thing in terms of his career, although these men tended to be more important in other counties, with more minor interests in Northamptonshire.

again your money see'. BL Royal MS. 17B, xlvii, f. 59a, printed in *English Historical Documents 1327-1485*, ed., A.R. Myers (London, 1969), vol. 4, pp.1012-13.

¹⁷²CCR 1360-64, pp.457-8 and CFR 1356-68, p. 338, and see p. 59, fn. 1766 below.

Table 2**Richard (ii) Wydevile: appointment as sheriff**¹⁷³

Date	County
20 November 1362	County and castle of Northampton
20 November 1363	County and castle of Northampton
17 November 1365	County and castle of Northampton
28 November 1370	County and castle of Northampton

Table 3**Richard (ii) Wydevile: knight of the shire**¹⁷⁴

Date		County
13 Oct - 17 Nov 1362	with William de Quenton	Northamptonshire
6 - 30 Oct 1363	with William de Quenton	Northamptonshire
4 - 12 May 1366	with Theobald Trussell	Northamptonshire
1 - 21 May 1368	with Theobald Trussell	Northamptonshire
21 Nov - 10 Dec 1373	with Thomas de Baa	Northamptonshire
27 Jan - 2 March 1377	with Thomas Latymer	Northamptonshire
13 Oct - 5 Dec 1377	with Thomas de Preston	Northamptonshire

Despite his numerous duties as escheator and sheriff, Richard still appears to have found time to act as an attorney. On 8 September 1367 John de Bermyngham of Haversham appointed Sir Fulk de Bermyngham and Richard as his attorneys in England for one year while he went on pilgrimage ‘beyond the seas’.¹⁷⁵ Richard had served with Sir Fulk earlier on 8 July 1366 on a commission of oyer & terminer, when Thomas de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick complained that his parks had been broken into and that fish and deer had been taken.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ *CFR 1356-68*, p. 236 20 Nov. 1362; p. 268, 20 Nov. 1363; pp. 315-6, 17 Nov. 1365 and *CFR 1369-77*, pp.98-9, 28 November 1370 respectively. John Bridges, *The history and antiquities of Northamptonshire*, ed., Peter Whalley, two vols (digital reprint 22 October 2010), vol. 1. p. 6, Richard Wydevill served as sheriff for the years 35-41 of Edward III’s reign (Jan 1361- Jan 1368) and was followed by Thomas de Preston for two years when Richard again became sheriff for one year 44 Edward III (Jan 1370 – Jan 1371).

¹⁷⁴ *CCR 1360-64*, p. 439, payment of expenses authorised to knight’s of the shire at a rate of four shillings a day, 17 Nov 1362, thirty-seven days; pp. 556-7, 30 Oct 1363, twenty-nine days. *CCR 1364-8*, pp. 272-3, 12 May 1366, twelve days; pp. 479-80, 21 May 1368, twenty-five days; *CCR 1369-74*, p. 611, 10 Dec 1373, twenty-five days; *CCR 1374-77*, pp. 535-6, 2 Mar 1377, thirty-nine days; *CCR 1377-81*, pp. 105-6, 5 Dec 1377, fifty-eight days.

¹⁷⁵ *CPR 1367-70*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ *CPR 1364-67*, p. 356 & 1 August 1366, p. 359.

On 11 December 1370 Richard handed over his office as escheator for Northamptonshire and Rutland to Simon Warde.¹⁷⁷ By now Richard was in his late 50s if not early 60s and it appears his duties in the county were reducing. Richard had served as escheator for so long in the county that the clerk issuing instructions may have forgotten the change in personnel, because on 10 February 1371 Richard is again instructed as escheator.¹⁷⁸ As Richard was still sheriff it was, perhaps, an easy mistake to make, especially as Richard had held both positions together. Two days later it was followed by a commission to Richard, as sheriff of Northampton, Thomas Murdak and Laurence Hauber, sheriff of Rutland, to choose and array ten men at arms and twenty archers. The men were to be taken to Southampton by the first week of Lent at the latest to join the company of Robert de Assheton captain of Southampton.¹⁷⁹ How long Richard remained in Southampton is unknown. The appointment was to remain in Southampton for its safekeeping and that of the surrounding area until Martinmas (11 November). The situation in Guyenne and the return of the Black Prince in January must have led to fears of a French attack and presumably Richard remained in Southampton for the full term. He appears to have had no further duties until 4 July 1372 when he served on a commission of the peace, oyer and terminer and array for Northamptonshire. From the wording it is possible that Richard was called upon to replace someone else, as the commission also named Thomas de Preston to be 'associated' with the commission 'in the room of the said William (de Quynnton), who is so infirm that he cannot labour about the premises'.¹⁸⁰

The closing years of Richard (ii)'s career

November 1370 was Richard's last appointment as sheriff. The record of his duties greatly diminished from those of the 1360s when he was escheator, although he features more regularly on commissions during this decade, notably commissions of the peace in 1373 and 1375 and on commissions of the peace and oyer and terminer in 1377.¹⁸¹ During the 1360s and 1370s Richard also served as a knight of the shire for Northamptonshire at seven parliaments. On 13 December 1377 he was appointed steward of the king's castle and manor of Moor End.¹⁸² Moor End was only a few miles

¹⁷⁷ *CFR 1369-77*, p. 102.

¹⁷⁸ *CCR 1369-74*, pp. 207-08.

¹⁷⁹ *CPR 1370-74*, p. 102.

¹⁸⁰ *CPR 1370-74*, p. 237.

¹⁸¹ *CPR 1370-74*, pp. 304-5, 12 December 1373; *CPR 1374-77*, p. 135, 13 February 1375, p. 138, 6 December 1375 and *CPR 1377-81*, pp. 44-7, 6 November 1377, p. 91, 12 November 1377.

¹⁸² *CPR 1377-81*, p. 82.

from Grafton and had originally been held by Thomas de Ferrers who sold it to Thomas le Despenser. It was then obtained by Edward III in 1363. Edward III then set about extensive building works on the castle, spending £1,000 on repairs and new buildings, which were completed by 1369. Shortly after, Edward granted the castle to his mistress Alice Perrers. Edward appears to have spent some time at the castle, possibly because it was located in the royal forest of Whittlewood.¹⁸³

This was not Richard's first association with the castle. In October 1363 he was surveying the work being carried out on the castle by the king's clerk John de Newenham. Richard was to ensure that the work was done and was also required to check de Newenham's accounts and control payments.¹⁸⁴ His proximity to the site as well as his position as sheriff and escheator may have led to this earlier appointment. In 1369 custody of the castle had been granted to John of Ypres for life; however, in December 1377, it was granted to Richard Waldegrave.¹⁸⁵ It seems the new young king, Richard II, or at least his council were making a clean sweep following the fall of Alice Perrers. On the 17 December 1377 Richard was requested to sell at the best possible profit all the crops on the manor and report back to the exchequer.¹⁸⁶

On 29 May 1378 Richard, along with the sheriff of Northampton Thomas de Preston and John Asshewell, the king's serjeant-at-arms, was appointed to inquire into the castle and other lands and tenements which the king held in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, which had been held by John de Ipre (Ypres) and then by Alice Perrers.¹⁸⁷ The inquisition taken by the escheator John Karnele on 25 February 1378 found that Alice had held the manor of Morende for life. It was worth £30 a year, and held of Thomas, earl of Warwick and Ivo Gobion. The jurors found that Alice paid the earl 32s and a pound of pepper a year and Ivo 12 ½ d and a pound of cumin. Alice had no goods at the castle as far as Karnele was able to discover 'except boards, trestles and forms' which were 'in the keeping of Hugh Springoneld, keeper of the manor, by an indenture between him and Richard Wydevill, the steward of the said manor by the king's letter patent'.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ H.M. Colvin, ed., *The History of the King's Work The Middle Ages* (London, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 742-5.

¹⁸⁴ *CPR 1361-64*, pp. 417-18.

¹⁸⁵ Colvin, *The King's Works*, vol. 2, p. 744.

¹⁸⁶ *CFR 1377-82*, p. 50.

¹⁸⁷ *InqMisc 1377-1388*, vol. 4, pp. 6-9 and *CPR 1377-81*, p. 250.

¹⁸⁸ *InqMisc 1377-1388*, vol. 4, p. 9.

Alice Perrers

Richard's career had brought him into contact with a number of the local gentry and judiciary, which led to positions in the shire which brought him into contact with the king. It is not unreasonable to suppose that while Edward III was at Moor End he would have had contact with Richard, not only because of his position within the county, or his residence nearby, but because of his employment at the castle. Richard's position at the castle most likely brought him into contact with Alice Perrers as well, although this association was less happy.

Alice Perrers achieved considerable notoriety during this period, becoming the king's mistress in about 1364; her name became a byword for greed. Thomas Walsingham was venomous in his language against her. Alice was 'that unspeakable whore' who 'always satisfied all his [i.e. Edward III's] desires of the flesh. She did absolutely nothing for the salvation of his soul, nor did she allow others to do anything...' While Edward lay on his death bed he accused Alice 'the shameless hussy' of pulling the rings from his fingers and leaving him to die alone except for a priest.¹⁸⁹ With the death of Edward she was wide open to attack and it did not take long for the revenge to begin. In the first parliament of Richard II's reign they banished Alice, 'since she, ... had been bold enough to go to the king's court to urge him to grant her whatever it was she happened to want. Although she had bribed several of the lords and all the lawyers of England, who defended her publicly as well as in private ...' she was exiled and all her property and goods were assigned to the treasury.¹⁹⁰

Parliament also agreed that if Alice had 'purchased any lands or possessions by force or duress, be it by fine, or by deed, at large, or made, enrolled, or otherwise, that that purchase shall be held at naught; and let the parties who feel aggrieved recover them by process in chancery...'. The mayor and sheriffs of London were also ordered to issue a proclamation that those wishing to 'sue Alice Perrers for offences against the king and people shall present their petitions to the council...' This was to be done before the 21 November 1377.¹⁹¹

Richard was one of the MPs present at this parliament, and it is more than likely that he joined with his fellow MPs in agreeing the action taken against Alice. Richard

¹⁸⁹ *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham (1376-1422)*, Trans., David Preest, intro., James G. Clark (Woodbridge, 2005), p.32.

¹⁹⁰ *Chronica Maiora*, p. 47.

¹⁹¹ Geoffrey Martin, ed., 'Richard II: Parliament of October 1377, Text and Translation', in *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed., C. Given-Wilson et al., CD-ROM, Scholarly Digital Editions (Leicester, 2005) (hereafter PROME), item 42.

too, it seems, had suffered at her hands. In October 1378 Richard petitioned the king and council for redress. In his petition Richard claimed he had been wrongly imprisoned and that Alice had promised to use her influence with the king to secure his release. Richard had a house in Northampton which he had enfeoffed with the intention of having his feoffees re-enfeoff it to his will. His imprisonment occurred around the same time and his feoffees were persuaded by Alice to enfeoff it to others for her benefit, in return for her help in obtaining Richard's release. The date of his imprisonment may have been during either 1374 or 1376; both of these years show no activity for Richard on commissions or in public office.

Richard claimed that once Alice had his house she did nothing and he remained in prison until the king learned the truth and he was released. Richard therefore requested he have his house returned.¹⁹² Why he had been imprisoned and how the king subsequently learned the truth, if not through Alice's assistance, is not made clear. There are a number of possibilities; Alice engineered the charge for Richard's arrest and then offered her services in return for the property, whereupon she spoke to the king and Richard was released; Richard was imprisoned for an actual breach of the law, at which point he made an arrangement with Alice to secure his release without trial, which she carried out and then, in return, received the house; or lastly that the charge had been engineered as a means to obtain the house and Alice failed to carry out her part of the bargain, and Richard therefore found someone else to go to the king on his behalf and obtain his release. The fact that there was now an avalanche of petitions against Alice asking for restitution meant that any claim, whether false or true, might possibly be believed against Alice. Whatever happened to land Richard in jail, he did obtain his release.¹⁹³

The timing of Richard's petition could not have been worse. In the parliament of October 1378 a judicial hearing admitted an error in the complaint against Alice in the previous parliament and she was pardoned. The petition had been put forward by Alice's husband Sir William Windsor, who wished a reversal of the judgement made

¹⁹² *TNA SC8/147/7350*.

¹⁹³ *TNA SC8/138/6876*. This is another petition from the same date made by Henry Rokhawe, a goldsmith. He also claimed that Alice Perrers had unjustly had him imprisoned in 1370. There is no mention of a quid pro quo for his release. A goldsmith would have been a useful person to try to extort. These are the only two such cases in approximately forty surviving petitions dating from the period 1377-80 which seek redress against Alice Perrers. This lends some weight to Richard's claim that he was unjustly imprisoned.

against her.¹⁹⁴ In March 1380 Richard's tenement in Northampton was one of several properties granted in fee simple to William de Wyndesore, Alice's husband, in consideration of William going to Brittany with the earl of Buckingham, and taking 100 men at arms for six months at his own expense.¹⁹⁵ This would seem to suggest that Richard's petition failed, and may imply that the house had been legally transferred to Alice and that she had then carried out her promise; it was undoubtedly the case that someone had spoken to the king to secure Richard's release. The suspicion is that Richard may have been misrepresenting his claim in order to get his property back. The most likely explanation though is that Richard was once again a victim of someone who had the ear if not of the king, of one of the king's counsellors. Sir William Windsor's petition asked that consideration be given to the service he had done to both the king's father and grandfather.¹⁹⁶ It was also a convenient way of paying for men to be taken to Brittany at little expense to the crown.

The loss of Richard's house in Northampton is one of the last recorded events in his lifetime. While Richard's public life and career can be seen through the various records of government, his private life is less visible. Friends and connections can only be assumed from those people he worked with. There is nothing to indicate who his first wife was or if he had more than one child, his son John. He married a second time, to Elizabeth Lyons, some time after 1369. This can be determined only by the fact that she was a widow and her first husband had died in 1369. It is only the late date of their marriage that suggests Richard must have had a previous wife who bore his child/children. Richard may have known Elizabeth through her father Sir John and her brother John de Lyons. Richard had been due to serve with John de Lyons in April 1360 on a commission of array. In August 1366 Richard served on a commission of oyer and terminer with Sir John.¹⁹⁷ A John Lyons often appeared on commissions with Henry Grene and this provides another link to Richard's circle. Their paths must also have crossed in the course of Richard's duties as escheator and sheriff.

The Lyons family had their home at Warkworth near Banbury about fifteen miles from Grafton. Sir John held a quarter of a knight's fee of the bishop of Lincoln in Warkworth. He had also founded a chantry in St Augustine's, Northampton, for the benefit of himself, his wife and children and the souls of his ancestors. Sir John's son

¹⁹⁴ Martin, ed., 'Richard II: Parliament of October 1378, Text and Translation', *PROME*, items. 36-37; *TNA* SC8/18/890 & 891; SC8/148/7370 & SC8/146/7265.

¹⁹⁵ *CPR 1377-81*, p. 503.

¹⁹⁶ *TNA* SC8/146/7265.

¹⁹⁷ *CPR 1358-61*, p. 349 and *CPR 1364-67*, p. 359 respectively.

had married Margery de St John but had no children. Sir John's heirs were therefore the children of his daughter Elizabeth who had married Sir Nicholas Chetwood of Buckinghamshire.¹⁹⁸ As Richard and Elizabeth were both marrying for a second time it is more than likely that this marriage was one of personal choice and affection, rather than arrangement. Marriage to Elizabeth brought no lands to the Wydeviles, but it would have strengthened Richard's position within the local community. The families also had a similar background, both having had ancestors that came over with the Conqueror.¹⁹⁹

Richard also appears to have had links with Devon; in August 1377 Robert Hull, escheator for Devon was ordered to deliver various lands of the late Hugh de Courtenay, earl of Devon to his widow Margaret, as her dower. Included in the list of lands was a knight's fee in Frodeston, Meyneston and Westcote held by the heirs of Richard Wodewylle.²⁰⁰ Earlier, in 1346 Richard had been assessed on a quarter part of a knight's fee with 'Johanne Loterel', in 'Dustygh Regni', part of the honour of Okehampton, held of the king in chief. The assessment was made towards an aid for knighting the king's son.²⁰¹ As there are no other references to the Loterels or the knight's fee, in connection with the Wydeviles, their relationship is therefore unknown; it may be possible that the connection was through marriage, or it is possible that the connection was a family one. In 'Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon 1090-1217' the names 'Wauvilla' 'Witvilla' 'Withvilla' and 'Widvil' appear. Linked mainly to the Redvers holdings in Hampshire it is possible the Wydeviles also had lands in Devon from the Redvers. This may explain the knight's fee which later appeared in the hands of the Courtenay earls of Devon as well as the 'Dustygh Regni' holding. The editor of the Redvers charters translates the name as Whitefield in all instances, rather than Wydville.²⁰² Some of the variant spellings also appear in the Mowbray charters and as the spelling of the name appears to have split geographically in this instance between Yorkshire and Northamptonshire, it is possible that the 'Whitefields' of Hampshire is

¹⁹⁸ Bridges, vol. 1, pp. 216-7.

¹⁹⁹ Duchess of Cleveland, *Battle Abbey Roll* vol. 2, Loions (electronic edition 2007) <http://www.1066.co.nz/library/battle_abbey_roll2/subchap143.html> (accessed 1/10/10).

²⁰⁰ *CCR 1377-81*, pp. 13-16.

²⁰¹ *Fendal Aids 1284-1431*, vol. 1, p. 418.

²⁰² *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon 1090-1217*, Robert Bearman, ed., Devon and Cornwall Record Society, NS (1994), vol. 37. The charters show land held in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight with donations made to Quarr Abbey on the island, all relate to the twelfth century, pp. 68-70, 115-118, 161, 186, 191-97. A familiar name from the Mowbray charters which also appears in the Redvers charters is that of Moreville, who was linked to Yorkshire. Hugh Peverel also appears in a charter with Redvers, this family was linked to Northamptonshire. This serves to demonstrate what a small and interlinked community of barons existed at this time. It is therefore not perhaps too far fetched to think that the Wydeviles also had links reaching into the West Country. See p. 47, fn. 136 above.

another variant and they may at one point have been connected to the same family. The link between Hampshire and Yorkshire is further strengthened by the grant of 'Roger Mobrai' to the abbey of St Mary, Quarr, Isle of Wight, of land in 'Berding (Brading) that William de Widvill gave him'.²⁰³ However it came about it would seem that the Wydeviles had an interest in lands in Devon. The Wydevile land holdings were gradually increased by Richard through the acquisition of lands at Stoke Bruerne and Wicken. An inquisition taken in June 1368 following the death of Sir William Pateshull found that he held Shaw Wood which contained forty acres of which twenty were devastated. Pateshull held it of Richard Wydevill by knight's service and rendering a pair of gilt spurs or 6d yearly.²⁰⁴ Richard also held a third of a knight's fee in Stoke Bruerne and Alderton of John de Hastings, earl of Pembroke.²⁰⁵ Richard was obviously trying to consolidate his holdings during his life time; Shaw Wood was common to the people of Stoke Bruerne and Shutlanger, and Richard held court at Stoke Bruerne. Both were areas close to Grafton.

Richard presumably died in the early 1380s, but his place of burial is unknown. His grandfather was buried in Grafton church so it is possible he chose burial in the church as well. Alternatively he may have requested burial in St James Abbey because of his association with the Hermitage. The suggestion is that the Hermitage had been amalgamated with St James Abbey, Northampton and the abbot then became responsible for appointments.²⁰⁶ There are no appointments recorded after 1373 in the Lincoln registers. The Wydevile interest may therefore have ended, perhaps because the disputes encountered by his father and grandfather over the appointment of the master were eventually lost. However there is evidence in the fifteenth century for the Wydeviles retaining an interest in the Hermitage. If they were not buried in the Hermitage then the abbey may have been the alternative.

²⁰³ *TNA E40/1408*. One of the witnesses is William de Moraville. No date is assigned to this document; it must be the twelfth century from the names of those involved.

²⁰⁴ *InqPM Edward II*, vol. 12, no. 241, pp. 220-21.

²⁰⁵ *CCR 1374-77*, pp. 189-91. The escheator of Northants, John Carneles was ordered to deliver Anne Hastings her dower of various lands which included 'one knight's fee in Stokebrewere and Aldryngton which was held by Isabel Seint Johan, Richard Wideville and John Chastiloun at 100s'.

²⁰⁶ *VCH Northampton*, vol. 2, p. 137. The will of Thomas Wydevile in 1434 shows the family still maintained connections with the Hermitage.

(iii) John (iii) Wydevile (c.1340 - c.1397/98)

One of the earliest mentions of John (iii) is 1361. The mayor and constables of the Staple at Westminster petitioned the chancellor to summon Robert Baroun to answer them concerning a debt due to some merchants of the staple. John 'Wodevyll' was one of those named in the petition.²⁰⁷ He may have been one of Baroun's guarantors along with Fulk Horewode; unfortunately Baroun did not appear when requested and the merchants wanted a remedy. On 24 February 1367/8 John was acting as a witness to a quitclaim of the manor of Mulsho, Buckinghamshire by Fulc de Coudray to William de Mulsho.²⁰⁸ The document was signed in London, so it is possible that in the early years of his career he was in London, perhaps learning the law.²⁰⁹

As John appears to be acting independently of his father it is safe to assume that he was of age, certainly by 1362 if not before. This places his birth in 1340/41 at the latest. There is also a record in February 1366 to show that he was married. On 7 February John and his wife Katherine and their heirs were granted 'free warren in all their demesne lands' in Bromham, Biddenham and Hulcote, Bedfordshire and Caldecote and Bow Brickhill, Buckinghamshire.²¹⁰ The grant was sealed at Moor End, during one of Edward III's visits to the castle and may well have been obtained for John through the agency of his father. This supports the possibility that Richard had access to the king while he was surveyor of the works on the castle. Alternatively the grant may have been through the assistance of Alice Perrers, with all the implications that was to have for Richard.

John and Katherine Frembaud were therefore married sometime before 1366 and all the lands named in the 1366 grant must have come through John's marriage to Katherine. They do not appear in Wydevile landholdings prior to this. Katherine's father was John Frembaud, while her uncle Sir Thomas was escheator for Bedford and Buckinghamshire in 1349 and 1350. It is therefore likely that a relationship existed

²⁰⁷ TNA SC8/298/14892.

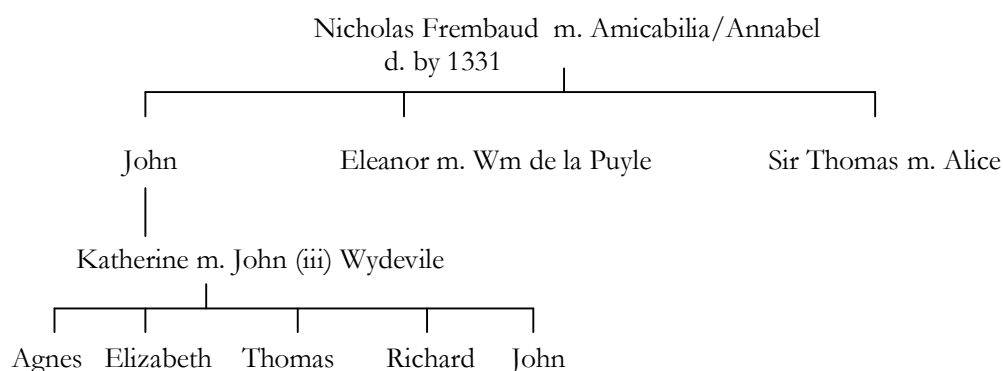
²⁰⁸ *Hampshire Record Office Jervoise family of Herriard* 44M69/C/149.

²⁰⁹ J.H. Baker, *The Third University of England The inns of court and the common-law tradition*, Selden Society (London, 1990), pp. 8-9, attorneys may have been 'apprentices of the bench', they learnt law in court. The Inns of Court were not named until 1388, although it is possible an Inn may have existed c.1340. In his book *An Introduction to English Legal History* (third edition, London, 1990), pp. 178-82, he argues that the apprentice at law emerged in the thirteenth century, with some form of school existing, although this is only inferred from surviving texts. There is no evidence that apprentices were articulated to anyone and if they did not become a serjeant-at-law they continued to be known as an apprentice. As such they were a junior part of the profession and practised as counsel to the public or as private advisers to great landowners. Part of their duties would include taking out writs and managing suits. They may be compared to the barrister and solicitor of today. See p. 46, fn. 133 above.

²¹⁰ *CChR 1341-1417*, vol. 5, p. 193.

between Sir Thomas and Richard (ii), if only a working one, which led to the marriage. In terms of land it was a very good marriage, increasing the Wydevile land holdings considerably into neighbouring counties. An inquisition taken at Bedford on 20 March 1367 following the death of William de Pateshull found that Pateshull held Bromham, part of the barony of Bedford. The inquisition also found that a quarter of a knight's fee in Bromham was held by John de Wydvill, presumably from Pateshull.²¹¹ This gives an indication of the extent of some of the holdings and confirms that his father-in-law had died by 1366 at the latest as John was now in possession of the lands.

Figure 15. The Frembaud family of Bow Brickhall



There are few references found to John in the 1360s, and most of these tend to relate to land. An inquisition held in September 1362 found that Walter Mauntel of Hartwell had alienated land to John de Calkewell parson of 'Asshe church' and John Wydevyll and their heirs without licence. It consisted of a messuage, a carucate of land, forty-five acres of wood and 6s rent in Little Missenden, Buckinghamshire. The land was held of the king and following Walter's death the escheator had taken it into the king's hands. Calkewell and John paid a fine of 100s to obtain the king's pardon and return of the land.²¹² They may have been acting as feoffees for Mauntel, although to whose benefit is unclear, possibly for the church.

²¹¹ *InqPM Edward III*, vol. 12, no. 74, pp. 53-4.

²¹² *CPR 1361-64*, p. 252.

Career

John may have been building a career in London in the 1360s, which would explain the lack of references to him in the Midlands. In the 1370s he appears to have been residing on his wife's estates in Buckinghamshire, where his assessment for a contribution towards a war loan was levied on him. He was assessed at 100s which was due to be repaid before Martinmas (11 November) 1379.²¹³ There are, however, two records showing letters of protection being issued in August and September 1372 to serve at sea. That of August showed John Wydevile serving in the company of Thomas Hoggeshawe, when John was said to be of Olney Buckinghamshire. The second was serving with Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick.²¹⁴ Warwick may have been the commander-in-chief, which might explain the two letters of protection. There is no other indication of military service.

It is clear that John had a growing family by 1368. When his father acquired part of the manor of Wicken, it was done with remainder to his son John (iii) and Richard and John the sons of John, with remainder to his heirs male.²¹⁵ The 1370s is something of a void regarding any records for John. It was at some point in this period that his father was imprisoned and this may explain the short hiatus in his career; possibly he was concentrating his efforts on his father's release, or he may indeed have gone to fight. However by 1379 he was in England and contributing to the war loan. In November of the same year he was appointed escheator for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.²¹⁶ Unless it was due solely to his connections John must have had some relevant experience to lead to his appointment, perhaps legal expertise, service with a lord or possibly military service. Either way the role of escheator was a stepping stone to other offices within the county. John was still acting as escheator for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire in July 1380 when on 18 October that year he was appointed sheriff of Northamptonshire and the castle of Northampton.²¹⁷

²¹³ *CPR 1377-81*, pp. 328 & 635.

²¹⁴ *TNA C76/55* m 21 and m 22 respectively,

<http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protodb.php> (accessed 2/6/11). Hoggeshawe, was a king's knight and had previously served in Ireland in 1362. A protection for himself and Robert Tuyllet and Walter de la Ewerie, who were serving under him, is dated 1 & 6 July, *CPR Edward III 1361-64*, p. 234 & 226 respectively. Hoggeshawe also received a letter of protection for service in France 30 May 1369 and for naval service 24 July 1372, *TNA C76/52* m19 & *C76/55* m23 respectively, <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protodb.php> (accessed 2/6/11).

²¹⁵ *TNA C143/362/10* See above p. 57, fn. 169.

²¹⁶ *CFR 1377-82*, pp. 171-2, 5 Nov 1379.

²¹⁷ *CFR 1377-82*, p. 212, 11 July 1380 instructions issued to John as escheator for Bedfordshire; p. 220 appointment as sheriff of Northamptonshire 18 October 1380.

It is possible that John's father Richard died around this time and John then moved onto his Northamptonshire estates. This would account for his appointment in Northamptonshire, although he seems to have continued to operate as escheator for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire until at least October 1381.²¹⁸ John's move to Northamptonshire is confirmed as having taken place by the end of December 1381 at the latest. He is described as 'of Northampton' in that month when he acted as a guarantor along with Sir Nicholas Lillyng, for Sir Henry de Arden in his purchase of the marriage of Richard Baskervyll, a minor, for 100 marks.²¹⁹ On 2 November 1381 he was one of several witnesses to a charter dated at Hanyngton, Northamptonshire when John Wakyrley granted all his lands and rents in Hanyngton to Sir Richard Waldegrave.²²⁰

The 1380s saw an increase in John's appointments. In July 1383 Queen Anne made him a grant of the wardship and marriage of William, son and heir of William Furtho.²²¹ This suggests he had good connections linked to the court; as escheator John would have known about the wardship, and it is possible that he requested it and it was granted. The Furtho lands were close to his areas of interest, and it is possible he also hoped for a marriage between a daughter and William Furtho. This was the generally expected outcome of a grant of wardship and marriage, and Richard had two daughters by his marriage to Katherine Frembaud. Although their ages are unknown, they may have been in their teens by 1383; it is also possible that he had a daughter by his second wife by this time.

Table 4
John (iii) Wydevile: appointment as escheator²²²

Date	County
1379-1381	Bedfordshire & Buckinghamshire
1382-1384	Northamptonshire & Rutland

²¹⁸ *CPR 1381-85*, p. 51. John is described as 'late escheator' in an inquisition.

²¹⁹ *CFR 1377-82*, p.276, grant dated 13 December 1381. Richard Baskervyll was the son and heir of Richard Baskervyll, a minor in the king's ward.

²²⁰ *CCR 1381-85*, pp.92-3.

²²¹ *VCH Northamptonshire*, vol. 5, pp. 127-42,
<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22783&strquery=woodville>> (accessed 23/3/08).

²²² *CFR 1377-82*, p.171-2, appointment for Beds and Bucks. *TNA E136/146/5* escheator's accounts submitted to the exchequer for Northamptonshire and Rutland for the years June 1382 to June 1384. Richard's appointment as escheator presumably took place at some time in this period. He was certainly acting as escheator for Rutland on 26 November 1382, *CCR 1381-85*, p. 198.

Table 5
John (iii) Wydevile: appointment as sheriff ²²³

Date	County
18 Oct 1380 - 1381	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
1 Nov 1383 - 1384	Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire
20 Oct 1385 - 1387	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
7 Nov 1390 - 1394	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire

On 14 December 1381 John served on a commission of the peace to put down rebels and suppress assemblies. This was followed by another commission in March 1382 to establish peace and arrest rebels for treasonable activities.²²⁴ In 1382 he was appointed escheator for Northamptonshire and Rutland.²²⁵ This was followed by his appointment as knight of the shire for Northamptonshire in the October 1382 parliament.²²⁶ 1383-84 saw a return to duties in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire as sheriff, but after this his appointments were concentrated on Northamptonshire where he served as sheriff during 1385-87 and 1390-94. In the intervening years he served as knight of the shire for Northamptonshire at four parliaments.

Table 6
John (iii) Wydevile: knight of the shire ²²⁷

Date		County
6-24 October 1382	with John Tyndale	Northamptonshire
23 Feb - 10 March 1383	with John Tyndale	Northamptonshire
26 Oct - 26 Nov 1383	with Roger Perewyche	Northamptonshire
3 Feb - 4 June 1388	with Sir Giles Mallore	Northamptonshire
12 Nov - 3 Dec 1390	with John Mulso	Northamptonshire

²²³ *CFR 1377-82*, p. 220, appointed 18 Oct 1380. He was still acting as sheriff 18 April 1381, *TNA C/131/28/12*, action to imprison Thomas Purve for debt; *CFR 1383-91*, p. 6, 1 Nov 1383 appointment Beds & Bucks. He was still acting as sheriff 10 Sept 1384, *CPR 1381-85*, p. 503. The appointment as sheriff for Beds & Bucks must have ended before his appointment as sheriff of Northampton was made 20 Oct 1385, *CFR 1383-91*, pp. 106-7. He was acting as sheriff regularly up to his re-appointment 7 Nov 1390, *CFR 1383-91*, p. 341. John is last noted acting as sheriff 23 Oct 1394, *CCR 1392-96*, pp. 322-3.

²²⁴ *CPR 1381-85*, p. 84 and pp. 138-41 respectively.

²²⁵ *TNA E136/146/5*. The exact date of his appointment is uncertain however he submitted his accounts to the exchequer for the two years 1382-84.

²²⁶ *CCR 1381-85*, p. 227.

²²⁷ *CCR 1381-85*, p. 227, 24 Oct 1382, expenses for attending parliament for twenty-three days; p. 290, 10 March 1383, twenty days attendance; p. 414, 26 Nov 1383, thirty-six days attendance; *CCR 1385-89*, pp. 494-5, 4 June 1388, 107 days attendance; *CCR 1389-92*, pp. 305-06, 3 Dec 1390, twenty-six days attendance.

A time of upheaval

John's duties were concentrated on those of sheriff for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and then Northamptonshire during 1383-1387. He therefore avoided the 'Wonderful Parliament' of October 1386. This parliament saw the impeachment of Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, and the imposition of restrictions upon Richard II in the form of a continual council to oversee the king's household and his expenditure. Those leading the attack against the king's favourites were known as the Appellants and were led by the duke of Gloucester and the earl of Arundel. The king's anger over this attack on his favourite, Michael de la Pole, had led to rumours that 'the king and household made a plot that some of the knights of parliament, who had most opposed even the king's request for financial help or had been enemies of Michael, together with the duke of Gloucester should be invited to supper at the house of a citizen of London and there suddenly [be] murdered.'²²⁸ Such rumours suggest that the king was very aware of who had supported the move against his favourite.

While John (iii) had not been present at the 1386 parliament he was appointed to the 1388 parliament along with Sir Giles Mallory. Writs were issued by the king on 17 December summoning lords and commons to parliament. They included a clause ordering the sheriffs to ensure those who were returned were 'entirely neutral in the present disputes'. This attempt at neutrality was amended by the Appellants on 1 January 1388 as being 'contrary to the accustomed form'.²²⁹ The majority of those returned to parliament under the new writ appear to have had connections to the Appellants, or were at least more eager to see the 'traitors' convicted, many of them having sat in the parliament of 1386.²³⁰

It is possible that John was one of the few members appointed to that Parliament with connections to one of the appellees. The manor of Grafton had been acquired by Michael de la Pole in 1350 from the Abbey of Grestein, probably through an intermediary. In 1380 Michael granted the manor to his son William for life and then in 1384 amended the grant to tail male.²³¹ John would thus have become the tenant of the

²²⁸ *Chronica Maiora*, pp. 242-3.

²²⁹ Chris Given-Wilson, (ed.), 'Richard II: Parliament February 1388, Introduction', *PROME*. The Appellants consisted of Thomas, duke of Gloucester, Thomas, earl of Warwick, Richard earl of Arundel, Henry earl of Derby and Thomas Mowbray, earl of Nottingham.

²³⁰ Given-Wilson, 'Parliament February 1388, Introduction', *PROME*. According to Given-Wilson 259 members of the commons are known for this parliament, made up of 74 knights and 185 burgesses. Of these 72% had sat in at least one previous parliament with 65 of them having sat in the Wonderful Parliament. More of the MPs appear to have had connections with the Appellants than with the appellees.

²³¹ *VCH Northamptonshire*, vol. 5, 'The Hundred of Cleley', pp. 148-9. The manor eventually descended to William de la Pole and his wife Alice Chaucer. In 1440 they conveyed the manor to Richard Wydevile and

de la Poles rather than of the abbey of Grestein, who had been the Wydeviles' landlord since the thirteenth century.²³² John's stance in the 'Merciless' parliament, as it became known, is difficult to judge with so little information to go on. One of the Appellants was Thomas Mowbray, and it might therefore be argued that the Wydeviles owed their position to the Mowbray family; hence his support would be due to the Appellants. However the Northamptonshire branch of the family may not have felt such a strong connection to the descendants of a patron from several generations earlier. The reality was that de la Pole was of more immediate importance to the family than any memory of past patronage. Also de la Pole was a royal favourite and the recent increase in the Wydevile family fortune might be argued to have derived from a connection to the royal court, however tenuous. It should be remembered that John's father had held a royal appointment as steward of Moor End castle and also as steward for Princess Isabella.

Abstaining may not have been an option, nor may it have been possible to go against the majority in the commons who supported the attack on the appellees; but there was also the reaction of the king to consider. If the rumours were to be believed following the 'Wonderful' Parliament, the king knew very well who was against him and his favourites, and he had a long memory. There was also the stance of John's fellow knight of the shire to consider. Sir Giles Mallory was a retainer of the earl of Warwick, and it has been suggested that Warwick tried to influence the election of his retainers to this parliament.²³³ John may also have had a connection to Warwick following his military service in 1372. It may also be possible that the electors for Northamptonshire decided to choose a representative from both camps to try and give an appearance of neutrality.

The outcome of the 'Merciless' Parliament inevitably went against de la Pole and his fellow appellees. Following the Parliament government was conducted by the Appellants and council. Whatever John (iii)'s position in the parliament had been, he continued to serve the county as sheriff. He was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer in July and a commission in August which looked into the lands that were

his wife Jacquetta. In 1348 Grestein Abbey sold its English lands to raise money for their patron Jehan de Melun who had been captured at Crecy, and needed to raise a ransom. In November 1348 Grestein demised Grafton and seven other manors to Tidemann de Lymbergh for 1000 years. In 1350 he obtained a licence to grant the estates to any Englishman; four years later Grafton was demised to Michael de la Pole.

²³² See above p. 27, fn. 72.

²³³ J.S. Roskell, Linda Clarke, C. Rawcliffe, eds., *History of Parliament The Commons 1386-1421*, 4 vols (hereafter *History of Parliament*) (Stroud, 1992), vol. 2, p. 672.

forfeited by Robert de Vere in the 1388 parliament.²³⁴ It would seem that John had, after all, managed a successful balancing act between the two sides. While the choice of available people to serve on commissions may have been limited in the county it seems that John was considered an acceptable choice.

Then on 3 May 1389 the king 'announced his assumption of personal responsibility for the governance of the realm'.²³⁵ John's appointments in 1388 were followed by a commission of the peace on 15 July 1389 and on 28 June 1390 by appointment to a commission of the peace and oyer and terminer. On 7 November he was reappointed sheriff of Northampton, and November to December he served once again as knight of the shire for the county, this time with John Mulsho.²³⁶ During the period of Appellant government John (iii) appears to have maintained his links with those men of the county who were close to the king. John had served on a number of commissions with William, Lord Zouche and his son William the younger since 1381.²³⁷ The association continued with William the younger when he succeeded to his father as third baron Zouche in 1382. Like his father, William Zouche served the king. In fact his association with the king was such that in 1388 the Appellants had removed Zouche from the court 'as a malign influence'.²³⁸ On 27 October 1389 John had stood surety along with Sir Ralph Cromwell for Sir William la Zouche of Haryngworth in the sum of £100.²³⁹ In March 1392 a link to another of the king's friends can be established. Thomas Clifford was another member of the court who had been removed by the Appellants.²⁴⁰ He died in October 1391, and the following March (1392) the king assigned Clifford's wife her dower which included one knight's fee in Anescote and Edenscote in Pateshull. The fee was held by John Wydeville, and valued at £13 6s 8d.²⁴¹ How long John had held these lands is unknown, but it would certainly predate Clifford's death in 1391.

The last time John (iii) attended parliament it was with John Mulsho and Mulsho too was very much a king's man. Although there is no evidence that Mulsho and John

²³⁴ *CPR 1385-89*, p. 545 & pp. 547-9 12 July 1388 and 22 August 1388 respectively. *CInqMisc 1387-93*, no. 194, pp. 131-2, 22 August 1388.

²³⁵ Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp. 196-203.

²³⁶ *CPR 1389-92*, pp. 135-6 and pp. 341-3, *CFR 1382-91*, p. 341 and *CCR 1389-92*, pp. 305-6 respectively.

²³⁷ *CPR 1381-85*, pp. 84 & 138-41. 14 December 1381, commission to preserve the peace and arrest those who congregate in unlawful assemblies or incite insurrection and put down the rebels; 8 March 1382, commission regarding treasonable risings, to establish the peace. Also appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer.

²³⁸ *ODNB* 'Zouche family (per. c. 1254-1415)', Eric Acheson (accessed 16/4/09).

²³⁹ *CCR 1389-92*, pp. 81 & 97. Zouche undertook that neither he nor his men would hurt or harm John Arblaster esquire, his men or his servants, on pain of a fine of £500.

²⁴⁰ *ODNB*, 'Thomas Clifford, sixth baron Clifford', Henry Summerson (accessed 24/3/11).

²⁴¹ *CCR 1389-92*, pp. 454-5.

had worked together before, they were both connected to William, Lord Zouche of Harringworth. Mulsho was his tenant as well as having a family connection to him.²⁴² It is therefore likely that Mulsho and John knew one another.²⁴³ The final link to the royal party comes from an inquisition post mortem taken on 12 October 1392 following the death of Thomas, earl of Stafford. It appears that John obtained Bow Brickell and Caldecote, Buckinghamshire, through his marriage to Katherine Frembaud, which were held for one knight's fee from the earl.²⁴⁴ Thomas's elder brother Ralph, who died in 1385, was a favourite of both King Richard and his Queen.²⁴⁵ All these connections link John to the court party rather than to the Appellants.

The parliament of November 1390 was far more conciliatory towards the king.²⁴⁶ A possible indicator of John's stance in the 1388 parliament may be the fact that he did not request a pardon following the chancellor's statement in the September 1397 parliament regarding a general pardon for those who had acted 'against their allegiance'. Significantly his fellow knight of the shire in 1388, Sir Giles Mallory, did.²⁴⁷ John's connections to the king's party may explain why, although it is possible he may have been ill or at least feeling his age: John died some time between July 1397 and August 1398.²⁴⁸

²⁴² *History of Parliament*, vol. 3, pp. 804-06. As well as family connections, Zouche left Mulsho a bequest in his will.

²⁴³ See CDRom appendix 9 which provides data showing the people the Wydeviles were associated with.

²⁴⁴ *InqPM Richard II*, vol. 17, no 223, Buckingham, pp. 100-1.

²⁴⁵ ODNB archive, 'Stafford, Ralph de, First earl of Stafford (1299-1372)' Thomas was third earl of Stafford; his father Hugh, second earl Stafford, died in 1386, after his eldest son Ralph who was killed by Sir John Holland. <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/templates/olddnb.jsp?articleid=26211>> (accessed 26/10/10).

²⁴⁶ Given-Wilson, PROME, 'Richard II Parliament November 1390, Introduction'.

²⁴⁷ *History of Parliament*, vol. 1, p. 190. Appendix C1, pp. 186-191 discusses the composition of the 'Merciless' Parliament and supporters of the king and Appellants. John Wydevile is shown as an associate of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick. In the list of MPs who sued for pardon, John Wydevile is absent. In the individual entry for John Wydevile, vol. 4, pp. 913-15, it is suggested that Wydevile had a connection to Warwick, the evidence for this being a payment of £41 13s 4d 'for business of the lord touching the manor of (Long) Buckby in Northamptonshire' made on 27 November 1394. It should be noted that this particular association is after the parliament of 1388. Anthony Goodman *The Loyal Conspiracy* (London, 1971), p. 36, Sir Henry Grene of Northants was granted a pardon according to the patent roll 'for adhering to Gloucester and Arundel', 39 applicants for a pardon have been identified in Northamptonshire, which included Sir John Trussell as well as Malory and Grene. Goodman believes the number to be this high because of the influence of the earl of Warwick in the county, four men coming from his manors of Potterspury and Cosgrave, p. 39. Giles Malory and John Wydeville are both listed as being possible Warwick retainers in Northamptonshire, p. 43. Interestingly besides the three knights Goodman also lists Thomas Wydeville esquire.

²⁴⁸ *CPR 1396-999*, p. 297. 14 July 1397 John was suing John Gardyner, parson of Chakenden, Oxford for a debt of £40. He is next mentioned 29 August 1398, *InqPM Richard II*, vol. 17, no 1312, pp. 506-7, inquisition into Sir John de la Warre who held land in 'Stokebruer, Shettilhangre and Alderton', of the heirs of John Wodevill deceased, for 19s yearly. Further confirmation is in the Inquisition Post Mortem taken in early 1399 in to William brother of Thomas, late earl of Stafford, where the knight's fee in Bow Brickall and Caldecote is now held by Thomas Wodevill. *InqPM Richard II*, vol. 17, no. 1275, p. 489.

Wives and children

There is no record of an inquisition following John (iii)'s death, nor is there a will. From other evidence it is clear that John had made arrangements for any male children of his second marriage during his lifetime. By 6 December 1382 John had been married to his second wife Isabel long enough to produce at least one child as he can be seen making arrangements for their son. This was the first move in changing the descent of the manor of Wicken. John paid a licence to the king to 'enfeoff Philip de Catesby, clerk, Thomas de Watford, Thomas Hoo and John Hastynges clerk, of his manor of Wicken held in chief except one acre of land... The feoffees were then to re-enfeoff John and Isabella his wife thereof, in tail male with remainder to his right heirs'.²⁴⁹ Probably quite soon after, and certainly by June 1383 John by an inquisition, settled his 'manors of Wicken on himself, Isabel his wife, and the heirs male of their bodies, with remainder to his own right heirs ...'²⁵⁰ This amended the earlier arrangement made with his father in January 1368 when the heirs to the manor were named as John and his sons Richard and John. It would seem likely Richard and John were the younger sons from his marriage to Katherine Frembaud and that Thomas was the eldest son. It was Thomas who would have inherited the Wydevile estates as well as the manor of Wicken but for this arrangement. Richard (ii) had obviously been making arrangements for his younger grandsons. It seems therefore that Richard and John had died and John (iii) was continuing the arrangement to provide for a younger son, in this instance his son Richard by his second wife (fig. 16). Virtually nothing is known of Isabel. The earliest mention of John and Isabel being married is 8 April 1380. They granted the manor of Drayton Passelewe, Buckinghamshire, to William and Elizabeth Purcell in return for £18 15s 10d a year during Isabel's life and forty hens at the feast of St Thomas the Apostle.²⁵¹ Isabel was the widow of Robert Passelewe who died about 1379; Elizabeth was Robert's daughter and heir.²⁵² Elizabeth may therefore be Isabel's daughter from her first marriage; Drayton Passelewe must therefore have been Isabel's dower from her first husband.

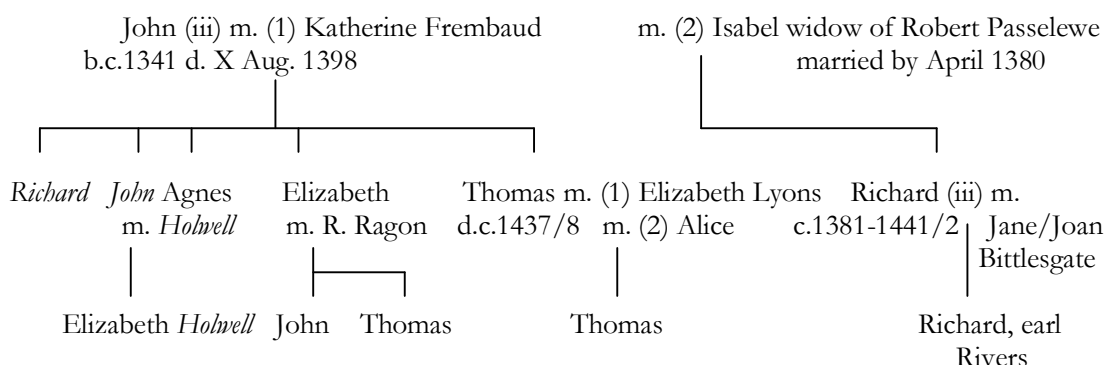
²⁴⁹ *CPR 1381-85*, p. 212. See above p. 69, fn. 215 and p. 57, fn. 169.

²⁵⁰ *TNA C143/400/22*

²⁵¹ *CP 25/1/21/103*, no. 16 <www.medievalgenalogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_21_103/shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

²⁵² *VCH Buckinghamshire*, vol. 3. pp. 345-8,

<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42575&strquery=drayton+parslow>> (accessed 14/4/11).

Figure 16. Descent from John (iii) Wydevile

It is possible that the Passelewe family also had links with the Frembaud's, the family of John's first wife. The manor of Biddenham, Bedfordshire, which John (iii) held by right of his wife Katherine Frembaud had been held by a William Passelewe until 1337 when he conveyed it to Nicholas Frembaud and thence to Katherine's father John.²⁵³ It seems likely that John (iii) was trying to accumulate lands in these areas and marriage was one way of doing so. Although in this instance Isabel does not appear to have held any land which she could pass on to her children by Wydevile, hence John's provision for a son who would otherwise be landless. However her dower provided a good annual income during her life time.

There is a hint as to Isabel's family from the heraldry on the tomb of her son Richard (iii) of the Mote. The Wydevile arms are quartered with an eagle displayed. Given that the tomb of his half-brother Thomas shows only the Wydevile arms without any quartering, it is likely that the arms are derived from Isabel.²⁵⁴ This suggests that Isabel was an heraldic heiress and raises the possibility that she would have inherited land as well. Unfortunately her arms have been variously attributed to the Prewes/Prowes family, the Gobion family or the Godards.²⁵⁵ It is therefore difficult to identify exactly who she was and where any land may have been.

²⁵³ *VCH Bedford*, vol. 3. pp. 36-7,
<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42377&strquery=biddenham>> (accessed 10/12/10).

²⁵⁴ R.H. D'Elboux, 'Some Kentish Indents IV', *Archaeologica Cantiana*, vol. 64 (1951), pp. 121-4.

²⁵⁵ D'Elboux, p. 123, states that William St John ascribed it to Prewes/Prowes. Herbert L. Smith, 'Notes of Brasses formerly existing in Dover Castle, Maidstone and Ashford Churches', *Archaeologica Cantiana*, vol. 1 (1858), p. 178, suggests Gabyon, which D'Elboux shows as Gobion. However the brief genealogy provided by Smith shows Richard as the son of Henry Wydeville so the identification of the arms could be equally inaccurate. Godard is suggested by Col. Charles M. Hansen and Neil D. Thompson in their article 'The Wydevills' Quartering for Beauchamp', *The Coat of Arms*, N.S. vol. 9, no 159 (1992), pp. 178-187.

John (iii) chose to be buried in the church of St Mary the Virgin in Grafton. He is depicted in armour, with two shields to either side of the engraving and shields in the niches around the tomb, which are now unfortunately blank (fig. 17). The inscription around the tomb reads, 'John Wydville who by God's good grace built the Bell Tower, now at its foot, lies beneath this stone. Be gracious, O God, and by thy grace afford him thine aid: O God, do thou protect thyself, and thy Mother also. Amen.'²⁵⁶ Although there is little to suggest that John took up knighthood, he obviously desired to be depicted as a member of the knightly class rather than as a 'civil servant'. The tomb provides a visual demonstration of his status and perhaps tells us something about how he wished to be perceived by those who saw his tomb. The tomb gives no indication that he was buried with either wife, and there is no indication they were buried elsewhere in the church. It is entirely possible that arrangements had been made for his second wife to be buried with her first husband, Robert Passelewe.

John and Isabel appear to have had only the one child, Richard. John did have at least one surviving son from his first marriage, Thomas and two daughters, Agnes and Elizabeth. Although there is mention in the provision of 1368 regarding the manor of Wicken for two sons Richard and John it may be presumed they died young, given the later arrangements made for the manor. By the time of John's death his elder children were already married and his youngest son Richard may have had his marriage arranged, even if it had not yet taken place. The marriages were made with families within John's geographic and administrative circle.

Elizabeth was married to Reynold Ragon (fig. 18). The Ragon family had lands in East Haddon, Northamptonshire and Backnoe, Bedfordshire. John (iii)'s service in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire would have brought him into contact with the Ragon family, with both father and son serving as knights of the shire for Bedfordshire. Sir John Ragon and his son were also closely connected to Lord Grey of Ruthin.²⁵⁷ It

Hansen & Thompson were unable to confirm the Prowes identification but were able to identify a Godard family using it in the medieval period, one of whom held half a knight's fee at Swanbourne, Buckinghamshire, in 1379. The Passelewes also had lands in the area and they therefore concluded 'that Robert Passelawe's widow, Isabel, was a Godard', p. 179 & p. 184 n. 2.

²⁵⁶ Church Monuments Society Newsletter, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer, 2007), p.17. The tomb is regarded by English Heritage as one of the finest medieval tombs of its period. The tomb was moved in 1889 from its original position to its current position at the west end of the north aisle up against the wall so that only one side is now visible.

²⁵⁷ *History of Parliament*, vol. 4. pp.171-3, biography of Reynold Ragon (1355-1428), knight of the shire for Bedfordshire in 1385, 1394, 1402 and 1404. His father Sir John had been a knight of the shire for Bedfordshire seven times. Sir John died in 1377. John Wydevile's service as knight of the shire for Northamptonshire does not correspond to any of the times served by either Ragon although he did serve as sheriff and escheator for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire in the period 1379-81; he is likely to have known Reynold if not his father.

may have been this connection which was to serve the family well later.²⁵⁸ Less is known about the marriage of his daughter Agnes but it is safe to assume that she was also married to someone from the same social network.

His son Thomas was married to Elizabeth Lyons. Her family were from Ashton in Somerset but it is possible that they were distantly related to the Lyons family from Warkworth, Northamptonshire.



Figure 17. John (iii) Wydevile, St Mary the Virgin, Grafton

The picture shows John Wydevile in armour of the period, with part of the inscription. The blank shields on the only visible side of the tomb can also be seen. The remaining niches may have contained further shields or figures of mourners, which have now been lost. His head rests on a helm supported by angels. His feet rest on a lion.

By the late fourteenth century the Wydevile family in Northamptonshire had become established as members of the county gentry through administrative service to the crown. There is little surviving evidence to suggest any of the family had been military men, or had served in any of the major wars in France, which dominated this period. There had been commissions of array, and two letters of protection had been issued for John (iii), so he may have served briefly, which may explain the gap in

²⁵⁸ John (III)'s gt-grand-daughter Elizabeth later married into the Grey family (fig. 28).

information during the 1370s. The definition of a gentleman is open to much discussion. Knighthood, land holding, office and service are all suggested as possible indicators. The Wydeviles met all these, except knighthood. It is possible they had refused to take up the title, even though they met the income requirement to support it.

They were certainly not members of the baronage. The senior branch of the family has certainly been referred to as barons by both Turner and Crouch and this may have applied briefly in the early twelfth century. However after this date the Yorkshire branch fits the description of county gentry much better than baron. The Northamptonshire Wydeviles, as the junior branch had to work much harder to establish themselves in the same social sphere as their senior kin. This may explain Robert's determination to establish his rights in the early thirteenth century.

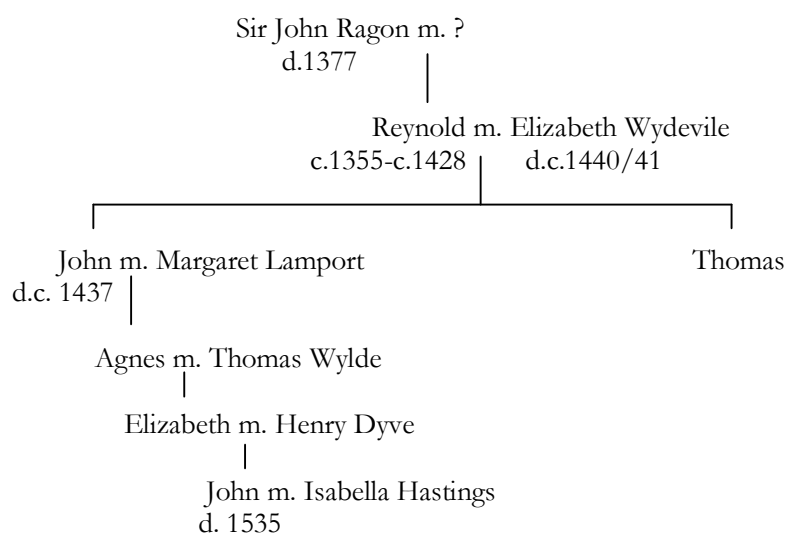
By the late fourteenth century the Wydeviles had made links with people in the shire who were close to the king and this would have helped to establish their position in the county. Marriage had brought some lands in neighbouring counties and there are some attempts to try to consolidate these holdings. From what little information there is regarding wives, their marriages appear have been with families from a similar background to their own. They were also from within a relatively close geographic area and a network of working relationships. However the marriages of John (iii)'s two sons extended the connections into counties further away than those neighbouring onto Northamptonshire. This may be due to a link with the Lyons family. Alternatively it may be the result of their increased social standing, which would apply to Richard (iii).²⁵⁹

Some of the links that were made appear to have been with families who could also trace their family back to the time of the Conquest. This may simply be the effect of a small pool from which to select marriages. Alternatively it could suggest a memory of family ancestry, and an attempt to maintain or strengthen relationships within this group. The same names and associations occur across the generations, as do the associations within other counties, which can be linked back to the family's arrival in the Conqueror's army and their first land holdings. This suggests a strong oral tradition within the family of exactly who they were and where they came from. Such far reaching connections was something which families in the next century would attempt to

²⁵⁹ Anne Polden, 'The social networks of the Buckinghamshire gentry in the thirteenth century', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Dec. 2006), pp. 371-94. Polden gives an interesting overview of work carried out on a number of county communities and their feudal ties. Taking Buckinghamshire she has tried to determine the distance over which family's maintained links, and sought out wives. The higher a family's status the wider their connections might be. Generally wives might be found within a ten to twelve mile radius, but could extend to twenty miles where a family had higher status and ties with national interests in administration and justice. Therefore ties could extend into neighbouring counties.

demonstrate visibly by having a family genealogy drawn up, something which the Wydeviles, sadly, do not appear to have done, or it has not survived. An interest in their family history can perhaps be inferred from their marriages and the land holdings which they later acquired and which seem to echo earlier interests and connections. If the painting on the coat of arms on John's tomb had been preserved it might have been possible to see these connections visually represented. Saul has suggested that tombs could be used as evidence of family, and that until the 'thirteenth century this information was almost certainly transmitted in the memory of the family.'²⁶⁰

Figure 18. The Ragon Family



²⁶⁰ Nigel Saul, 'Bold as Brass: Secular Display in English Medieval Brasses', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, eds., Peter Coss & Maurice Keen (paperback, Woodbridge, 2003), p.188.

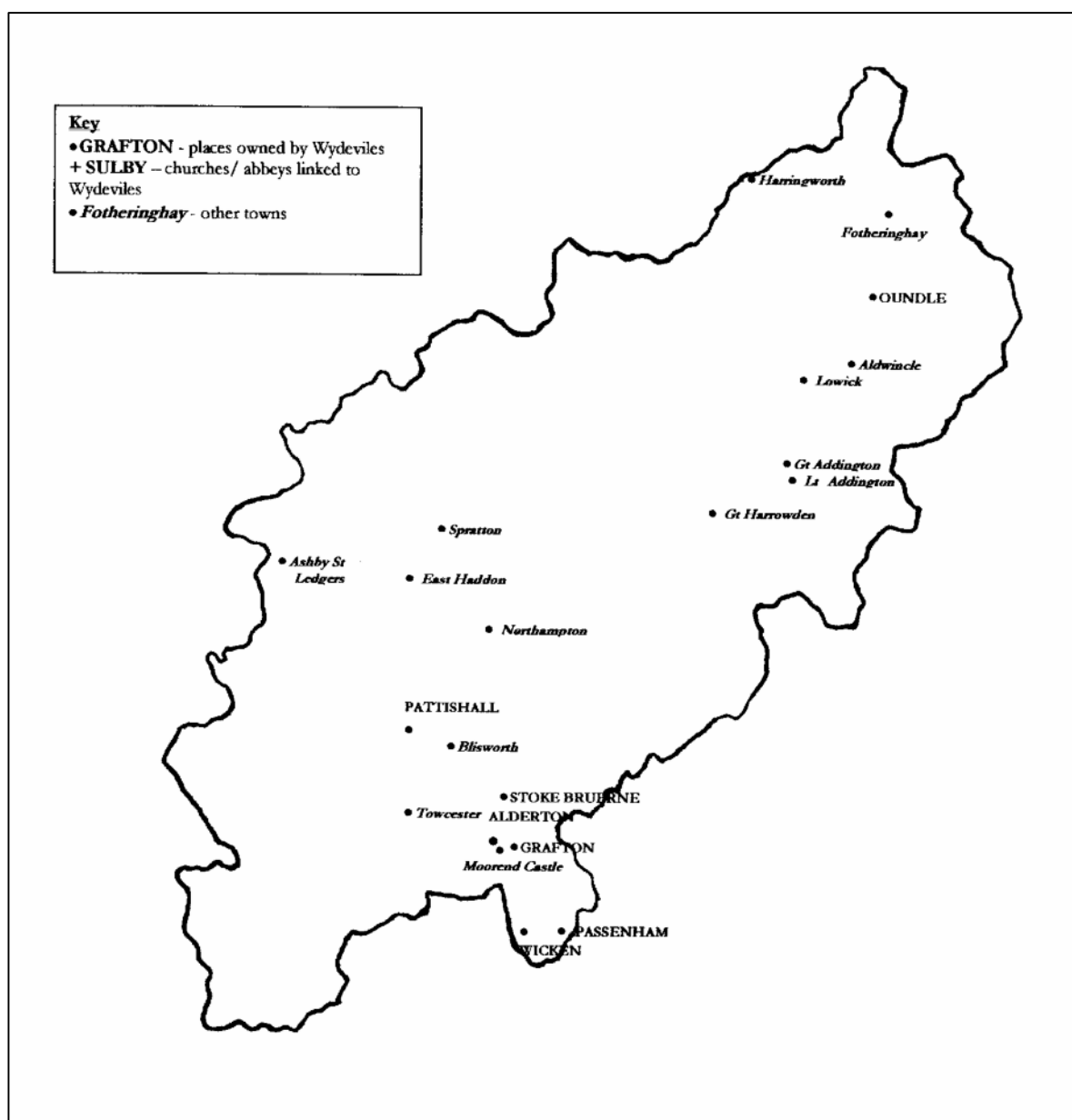


Figure 19. Wydevile landholdings in Northamptonshire in the Fourteenth Century

The map shows how far the junior branch of the Wydeviles had extended their interests within the county. (Compare with the map on page 34 (fig. 9) for the thirteenth century. Appendix 4 also provides a list of properties and the dates on which they were held).

(3) The early fifteenth century²⁶¹

By the end of the fourteenth century the family had become well established in Northamptonshire, serving as knights of the shire and sheriffs and establishing connections to the crown. John (iii) had provided a springboard for his sons to take the family higher. John had also acquired sufficient property that he could also endow his younger son and thus provide him with a good start in life.

They were not restricted to Northamptonshire. While they were making marriages or obtaining lands within a geographic area close to Grafton, this in fact extended their links into neighbouring counties. Grafton is well placed. Not far from Stony Stratford and the main road to London which was some sixty miles away, it is located on a spur of the county which has Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire to either side. There are also suggestions of links to the south west, although it is unclear whether these links were due to marriage or through extended family members.

(i) Thomas Wydevile (d. 1437/38)

Thomas was the eldest surviving son of John (iii)'s marriage to Katherine Frembaud. When Thomas's mother, Katherine died is unknown, but it must have been before 8 April 1380 when his father John, and his second wife, Isabel were mentioned in connection with land at Drayton Passelewe, Buckinghamshire. Isabel remarried quickly, her first husband having died in 1379. If the change in arrangements over the manor of Wicken was more than wishful thinking, then John and his second wife Isabel had produced at least one male child by 1382. The arrangement for the manor to go to the heirs of their bodies certainly presupposes a male child by this date, presumably Richard (iii) (d. 1441). If the earlier arrangement over Wicken in 1368 was to provide for John's younger sons by Katherine, i.e. Richard and John, then Thomas was probably born sometime in 1363/4, and his two younger uterine brothers had most likely died by 1382. By the time of his father's death in c. 1398, Thomas would have been in his early thirties and already married to Elizabeth Lyons.

There is very little information on Thomas relating to these early years. Up to 1406 he does not appear to have been nominated to any offices within Northamptonshire or the surrounding counties. In 1397 he felt it necessary to sue for a

²⁶¹ See CDRom appendix 10.

pardon from the king following the activities of the Appellants some ten years earlier. As had Sir Henry Grene, who was the king's knight.²⁶² It may therefore have been no more than a precaution on Thomas's part, especially as his father had not requested one. Perhaps they felt one member of the family suing for pardon was sufficient to satisfy the king.

It seems that Thomas was the first member of the family to serve in the household of a major peer and undertake military service rather than serve in the county as an administrator. The information to suggest this is somewhat scant. The first hint that it may be the case is a letter of protection valid for one year. This was issued on 21 April 1399 for Thomas to go to Ireland on the king's service, in the company of Edward, duke of Aumale.²⁶³ On 5 May Thomas made preparations for his departure. He nominated Reginald Ragon and John Boseno as his attorneys while he was in Ireland.²⁶⁴ Reginald Ragon was married to Thomas's sister Elizabeth while John Bosenho was a near neighbour from Hanslope.²⁶⁵

It is therefore possible that Thomas was a member of the duke's household. Edward, duke of Aumale was one of Richard II's favourites as well as his cousin. Thomas's grandfather Richard (ii) had enjoyed close links to the court party when serving Edward III at Moor End. More recently in 1392 his father John (iii) had served on a commission which included the duke of York, Aumale's father. In November 1396 while Aumale was still earl of Rutland, John had been a witness to a charter for William, Lord Zouche along with the earl himself.²⁶⁶ In addition, a number of Northamptonshire men with whom John (iii) was associated were king's knights.²⁶⁷ John was therefore well situated to arrange his son's placement in the duke's household.

Thomas may have been part of Aumale's household by April 1394 at the latest. On 5 April 1394 he had stood surety with William de Mitford and John Asploun of Northumberland and Richard Hoton of Yorkshire for John Scrope who was being sued

²⁶² See above p. 75, fn. 247.

²⁶³ *CPR 1396-99*, p. 523.

²⁶⁴ *CPR 1396-99*, pp.576-7.

²⁶⁵ *History of Parliament*, vol. 2, p. 296. John Bosenho, of Hanslope and Hartwell, Bucks. In 1409 Bosenho and his wife Eleanor conveyed her Luton estate to feoffees, which included Thomas Wydevile.

²⁶⁶ *CPR 1391-96*, p. 292. 20 September 1392 commission of the peace and oyer and terminer in the county of Northampton, reissued 12 March 1393. *CCR 1396-99*, p. 66. 13 November 1396 Witness to charter with warranty of lands to various feoffees for William la Zouche, to fulfil the will of Sir William la Zouche.

²⁶⁷ These included Henry Green (1397) who was also retained for life by the king, Thomas Latimer (1385), and John Paveley (1394). See Chris Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity* (London, 1986), pp. 282-6 for a full list of Richard II's knights.

for debt by William Euot, a London draper.²⁶⁸ This link to Yorkshire and the north of England may suggest that there was still some contact with the Yorkshire branch of the family. More likely it is a military link; either they had served together or they perhaps shared a common link with Rutland's household. Sir John Scrope served on the Scottish expedition in 1400 with his brother Sir Stephen Scrope, who had also served in Ireland during 1395-7.²⁶⁹ Rutland had been on the Irish campaign of 1394-5.²⁷⁰ Therefore military service with the earl could go back some years, although no evidence has come to light so far that Thomas served on the 1394 Irish campaign.

Another possible connection with Aumale and his father Edmund, duke of York, occurred in 1398 or 1399 when Thomas was granted a messuage and land in Olney, Buckinghamshire, along with others, by William and Agnes Scot. Thomas was most likely acting as a feoffee.²⁷¹ In October 1398 Edmund, duke of York, had been granted the manors of Potterspury, Northants, Hanslope and Shenley in Bucks, and more relevant, the reversion of Olney upon the death of Joan, widow of Ralph Basset.²⁷² The Wydeviles had relatively limited connections in Buckinghamshire and it therefore seems likely that William Scot may have chosen Thomas as a feoffee because of the connection to the duke of York. There is, however, the tantalising suggestion of a closer link with Olney, since a letter of protection in 1372 places Thomas's father John, as being of Olney.²⁷³

Thomas's close association with Aumale is further confirmed in December 1399. Thomas, along with Aumale who was now reduced to earl of Rutland following an act of resumption by Henry IV, Sir Hugh le Despenser, Sir Thomas Shelley, John Mulsho, John Verdon, Nicholas Bradshawe and others were granted a pardon for entering into lands granted by Richard Basset without licence. They were also granted a licence to enfeof the same lands in Northamptonshire to others.²⁷⁴

Thomas's service in Ireland in 1399 had been short lived. The king had been forced to return to England following Henry Bolingbroke's invasion. Aumale returned with Richard II in July and landed in Wales. Thomas would therefore have been

²⁶⁸ *CCR 1392-96*, p. 276.

²⁶⁹ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_musterdb.php> (accessed 2/6/11).

²⁷⁰ *ODNB* 'Edward[Edward of Langley, Edward of York], second duke of York (c.1373-1415)', Rosemary Horrox (accessed 25/4/11). Edward, earl of Rutland became duke of Aumale in September 1397. He had also been sheriff of Rutland until 1397. In 1402 he became duke of York following his father's death.

²⁷¹ *TNA E210/9950*.

²⁷² *CPR 1396-99*, p. 400. See below re other lands relating to Ralph's son Richard Basset, December 1399, fn. 2744.

²⁷³ See p. 69. fn. 214 above.

²⁷⁴ *CPR 1399-1401*, p. 325, 12 December 1399. *ODNB* 'Edward, second duke of York'.

amongst Aumale's men. Aumale played an equivocal role. Whether he betrayed Richard II or simply changed sides when he realised that Richard II had lost remains a matter of debate. Whichever side he was on, by December he had been accepted by Henry IV, and was beginning to receive signs of favour. That Thomas was acting as a witness along with Rutland in December, suggests that he continued in the service of Rutland. This may account for the lack of more information relating to Thomas until 5 November 1406 when he was appointed sheriff of the county and castle of Northampton. This gap in information corresponds with Rutland's military appointments under Henry IV.²⁷⁵ It is therefore likely that Thomas was serving with the duke of York, as Rutland had become following his father's death in 1402. The new duke had been made Henry IV's lieutenant in Aquitaine, and was based in Bordeaux until May 1403. He then campaigned in Wales and was appointed lieutenant of South Wales in October.²⁷⁶ In February 1405 York had been imprisoned on suspicion of plotting against the king. Thomas's career in the duke's service seems to have ended around the same time. From 1406 Thomas can be seen taking an active part within the county. He served as sheriff eight times over the next twenty years, was knight of the shire twice, escheator once and served regularly on commissions.

Table 7
Thomas Wydevile: appointment as sheriff²⁷⁷

Date	County
5 Nov 1406	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
29 Nov 1410	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
1 Dec 1415	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
16 Nov 1420	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
1 Oct 1422	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
4 Nov 1428	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
5 Nov 1433	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire
7 Nov 1437	Castle of Northampton and Northamptonshire

²⁷⁵ Thomas does not appear in the medieval soldier muster data base. There are no surviving musters for the 1394 or 1399 Irish campaigns. Therefore the only knowledge we have of his military service is the letter of protection to go to Ireland.

²⁷⁶ *ODNB* 'Edward, second duke of York'. York was back in favour by October and had his lands restored by 8 December. November 1406 he was made constable of the Tower and continued to be active in Wales.

²⁷⁷ *CFR 1405-13*, p. 53 & p. 204. Thomas' appointment in 1410 shows him replacing Thomas Mulsho as sheriff; *CFR 1413-1422*, p. 129 & p. 358; *CFR 1422-30*, p. 12 & p. 245; *CFR 1430-1437*, p. 176; *CFR 1437-1445*, p. 4.

Table 8
Thomas Wydevile: knight of the shire²⁷⁸

Date	County	
30 April - 29 May 1414	with Nicholas Merbury	Northamptonshire
1 Feb – 1 June 1426	with Sir Thomas Grene	Northamptonshire

Table 9
Thomas Wydevile: appointment as escheator²⁷⁹

Date	County	
8 Dec 1416	Northamptonshire and Rutland	

Thomas can be seen as associated with York later however, serving on commissions of the peace with him twice in 1412 and 1413 and once in 1414.²⁸⁰ On 10 July 1415 he was amongst a number of men appointed by William, Lord Zouche to hold the latter's lands in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.²⁸¹ The others included Henry bishop of Winchester, Thomas, Lord Berkeley, Edward, duke of York, Ralph Grene, Roger Flore and Robert Isham. Zouche was preparing to depart for France and had appointed this group of men to act as his feoffees, should anything happen to him while his son was still a minor. It seems likely they were all gathered in the Winchester area at this time.

Henry V was at Winchester on his way to the south coast and met with French ambassadors who arrived on 30 June. Henry, bishop of Winchester had been present at the meetings during the first week of July. After a week of discussions which had led nowhere the bishop was instructed to tell the French that Henry intended to regain his French possessions.²⁸² Henry then left for Porchester and took up residence in the castle while his army mustered for embarkation to France. On the 31 July Henry was advised of a plot to overthrow him by men that he trusted; the earl of Cambridge, Lord Scrope

²⁷⁸ *CCR 1413-1419*, pp. 183-4, paid 4s a day for thirty-two days to attend parliament at Leicester; *VCH Northamptonshire, Genealogical Volume* (London, 1906), p. 375.

²⁷⁹ *CFR 1413-1422*, p. 169

²⁸⁰ *CPR 1403-13*, p.483; *CPR 1413-16*, p. 421.

²⁸¹ *InqPM 1413-1418*, no. 414, p. 127. Inquisition taken at Northampton on 27 November 1415 found that William le Zouche had granted various lands in Northamptonshire on 10 July 1415. See also *CCR 1413-1419*, pp. 260, 262, & 263 and *CPR 1413-1416*, pp.395-6, relating to the different lands granted by Zouche to them.

²⁸² T.B. Pugh, *Henry V and the Southampton Plot of 1415* (Alan Sutton edition, 1988), p.60.

of Masham and Sir Thomas Gray of Heton. All three were quickly arrested and placed in prison in Southampton castle to await trial.²⁸³ William, Lord Zouche was amongst those commissioned to deal with their trial. On 2 August Gray and Cambridge confessed but Scrope denied any involvement in the plot and demanded to be tried by his peers. As Gray had confessed he was executed straight away but Henry was obliged to set up a court of lords to deal with Scrope and Cambridge. Zouche once again stood as a member of the court. Both men were tried and condemned on the same day, 5 August.²⁸⁴ It is unclear if Zouche then continued to France with Henry or remained in England. Zouche died 3 November 1415 aged about 42; he may therefore have been invalided home as a victim of the dysentery that was rife in the English army, or have suffered injuries during the campaign. Zouche had served as a captain in 1402-3 and for a short period had been lieutenant of Calais. Thomas, Lord Berkeley had also served in France. Therefore William's choice of feoffees was taken from comrades in arms while Grene and Isham were local men from Northamptonshire.²⁸⁵ There is nothing to indicate that Thomas served in the Agincourt campaign, although there is no information to show he was active in Northamptonshire either, until December 1415 when he was appointed sheriff.

The death of William, Lord Zouche and the duke of York (at Agincourt) in 1415 brought Thomas's most influential connections to an end. The matter of Zouche's grant continued to involve the remaining feoffees into the following year. In February 1416 the escheators for Bedfordshire and Warwickshire were ordered to give livery of the lands to the surviving feoffees. At the same time they were given a pardon of 20s for entering into the manor of Eyton, Bedfordshire without licence. While they may have had control of Zouche's estates in the midlands, Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland held the marriage of Zouche's heir William who was thirteen at the time of his father's death.²⁸⁶ It is therefore likely they would have had dealings with Westmorland in relation to the boy's lands.

²⁸³ Pugh, *Southampton Plot*, pp. 61-2.

²⁸⁴ Pugh, *Southampton Plot*, pp. 123-4.

²⁸⁵ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_musterdb.php> (accessed 28/4/11). William la Zouche is shown as a captain in the escort to France in 1402/03 as is Thomas, Lord Berkeley. Although Wydevile, Grene and Isham do not appear, it would seem likely that they had served together at some stage. Ralph Grene does appear, receiving a letter of protection for service in France on 6 October 1417. Grene is also linked to Northamptonshire, see ODNB 'Zouche family' Eric Acheson (accessed 16/4/09). Grene, Isham and Wydevile appeared together on a commission for the peace in Northamptonshire in April 1416, *CPR 1416-22*, p. 456.

²⁸⁶ *CPR 1413-16*, pp. 395-6 for pardon; *CPR 1413-16*, p. 381, 13 December 1415 the marriage of William Zouche was granted to Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland.

Thomas's appointments in the county brought him into contact with Reginald, Lord Grey of Ruthin, a link that would have been strengthened through his brother-in-law Reginald Ragon. Ragon's father Sir John had been steward of the Grey household for seventeen years and Reginald was also retained by Lord Grey.²⁸⁷ They regularly served on the same commissions, along with Thomas and Ralph Grene and Roger Flore who was also chief steward of the duchy of Lancaster. While Thomas still moved within the same circles it was primarily at the county level, although some of his associates still had links to the court. It is likely that such connections led to his appointment in 1433/34 as steward to the abbey of Peterborough at a fee of 100s. By this time Thomas was in his early seventies. The wardrobe accounts also show a fur was purchased for Thomas and William Tresham, the cost for both being 4s 6d. Tresham's service to the abbey is not given, but his fee for the year was 40s.²⁸⁸ Thomas's regular appointments in the county and his frequent service as a feoffee would have amply demonstrated his usefulness to the abbot.

Appointments as Feoffee

Thomas can be found acting as a feoffee for a number of local families. Such activities not only demonstrate his social network but also the level of trust in which he was held.²⁸⁹ On 21 September 1414 an inquisition taken after the death of Joan Pavely, widow of Sir John Pavely, found that on 12 July 1403 Joan had granted her manor of Paulerspury to John Seynt John, his wife Isabel and their son Oliver, Thomas Wydevile, John Wylkotes, William Poulet and John Bovere for her life, except for a court and 'gatehouse', the advowson of Paulerspury, a herbage, fishery and hunting in the park, a meadow called 'Le Newmedwe' and a garden next to the churchyard. She also retained free access to and from these.²⁹⁰ Following the inquisition an order was issued 15 October for the manor and advowson of 'Westpirye' to be given to Sir John Seynt John and his wife Isabel. The inquisition also found that on 8 February 1395 Sir Lewis de

²⁸⁷ *History of Parliament*, vol. 4, pp. 171-3.

²⁸⁸ *Peterborough Obedientary Accounts*, ed. Joan Greatrex, NRS (1984), pp. 164-9. Greatrex suggests the position was honorary and advisory because of the small fee. A later example of someone who held the position from 1504-06 was Sir Richard Empson, who was 'a prominent county man, M.P. for Northamptonshire and speaker of the House of Commons in 1491-92, whose counsel and influence would have been useful...' p. 9.

²⁸⁹ Steven Gunn, 'The Structures of Politics in Early Tudor England', *TRHS*, 6th series, vol. 5 (1995), p. 72. In a discussion of sources used by fifteenth century historians and their usefulness in gaining an understanding of how individuals interacted, Gunn points out that 'it remains a safe assumption that no-one would entrust the formal ownership of his landed livelihood in an enfeoffment ... to another whom he regarded as his mortal enemy...'.
²⁹⁰ *InqPM 1413-18*, vol. 20, no 127, pp. 41-2. Writ issued 19 Feb 1414 for an inquisition to be held at Northampton 21 September.

Clyfforde, Sir Richard Stury and Sir Thomas Latymere and others had granted Joan the manor and advowson for a year with reversion to themselves. They held the manor by the feoffment of John Pavely. After a year the reversion went to Isabel, wife of Sir John Pavely the younger, now Isabel Seynt John, and her heirs. Joan Pavely became Isabel's tenant by the deed of 12 July 1403; following Joan's death the manor reverted to Isabel.²⁹¹ It would seem that in 1403 Joan had moved into the manor of Westpirye in exchange for the manor of Paulerspury, while also retaining a house in Paulerspury for herself.

The Pavely family has occurred before in the history of the Wydeviles. In the 1330s John (ii) had acted as godfather to John Pavely, there was also a William Stury who had custody of the lands of Laurence Pavely while he was a minor. These three families appear to have retained their connections over the years.

In March 1418 Thomas, along with John Barton the younger and others had the 'keeping' of Thomas Grene, the son and heir of Sir Thomas Grene. They were to find fit maintenance for the child and his property during his minority.²⁹² The Grene's were another local family with whom the Wydeviles had a long association, starting with Richard (ii). Richard had served on commissions with Henry Grene, Sir Thomas Grene's father, while John (iii) served regularly on commissions with both Henry and Thomas Grene.

Three generations of Wydeviles can also be found in connection with the Bermyngham family. In 1366 Richard (ii) served on a commission of oyer and terminer with Sir Fulk and the following year acted as attorney with Fulk for his son John, while John went on pilgrimage for a year.²⁹³ Richard (ii)'s son John (iii) acted as a feoffee for Sir John Bermyngham and his grandson Thomas acted for John's widow Elizabeth. Thomas along with John Longevile, John Barton and others were appointed feoffees by Elizabeth, Lady Clinton on 9 July 1414 when she granted them her manor of Fisherwick.²⁹⁴ By this time Elizabeth had been married four times. She was only nine when she had been married to John Bermyngham, while her sister Katherine was

²⁹¹ *CCR 1413-19*, pp. 138-9.

²⁹² *CFR 1413-22*, p. 224. Others were William Rothewell, Robert Aleyn, John Code and William Mason clerks.

²⁹³ *CPR 1364-67*, pp. 356 & 359. 8 July 1366 Richard Wydevyle served on a commission of oyer and terminer to look into a complaint by Thomas Beauchamp earl of Warwick that his parks at 'Hampslap, Buckinghamshire' had been broken into and deer and hares taken, and that his fishery had had fish taken, his parks at 'Boeleghe, Worcestershire and Sutton in Colefeld, Warwickshire' had similarly been attacked. The other commissioners included Fulk Bermyngham, William Catesby and John Knyvet. On 1 August the commission was repeated in relation to 'Hampslap' only, and the commissioners included Sir John de Lyouns. See CDROM for a full list of commissioners.

²⁹⁴ *InqPM 1422-27*, no. 341, pp. 311-12.

married to Fulk's brother William. Katherine and Elizabeth de la Plaunche were the daughters and co-heirs of William de la Plaunche. Both sisters married a number of times although only Katherine had any children by her husband William Bermyngeham.²⁹⁵ The manor of Fisherwick had descended to Elizabeth through her mother Elizabeth Hillary (see fig. 20). Elizabeth Hillary's brother Sir Roger had died in 1400 and his widow Margaret held the manor until her death in 1411; the manor had therefore only recently descended to Elizabeth. However in 1419 Robert Cook and his wife Alice entered into the manor and then granted it to John Mynors. Alice claimed the manor as heir of John Durdent, but their ancestor Roger had granted the manor to Lady Clinton's ancestor Roger Hillary.²⁹⁶

In June Thomas Wydevile and the feoffees issued a writ claiming that 'evil doers' had forced entry into the property. An order was issued by John, duke of Bedford to the justices to go to the manor and arrest any such 'evil doers' found there. The justices Richard Vernon and John Bagot reported that they could find no evidence of forced entry but only found the bailiff of John Myners there, who was occupying the property following the feoffment of Cook and his wife Alice.²⁹⁷ Accordingly in November Thomas and his fellow feoffees took the case to court claiming their right to the property. The manor was placed in the keeping of Sir William Trussel and Richard Harecourt until the matter was settled.²⁹⁸ In the event it took nearly two years for a settlement to be reached. On 13 May 1421 John Myners (Mynors) quitclaimed the manor to Thomas and his fellow feoffees.²⁹⁹ Elizabeth died shortly after in 1423 and the inquisitions taken following her death confirmed that Fisherwick had been granted to Thomas and the rest of her feoffees as had her lands in Snarestone and Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire and the manor of Stretton on Fosse in Warwickshire.³⁰⁰ Thomas's involvement as feoffee finally came to an end in November 1425 when the feoffees delivered seisin of the manor of Stretton on Fosse and lands in Erdyngton and Sutton

²⁹⁵ *VCH Warwickshire*, 'The City of Birmingham', vol. 7, pp. 58-72

<[http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22962&strquery=edgbaston erdyngton lady elizabeth clinton](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22962&strquery=edgbaston+erdyngton+lady+elizabeth+clinton)> (accessed 29/4/11). See also genealogy of de la Plaunche/Hillary (fig. 30) and Bermyngeham (fig. 29).

²⁹⁶ *VCH Stafford*, vol. 14, pp. 237-252

<[http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42360&strquery=fisherwick elizabeth lady clinton](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42360&strquery=fisherwick+elizabeth+lady+clinton)> (accessed 29/4/11).

²⁹⁷ *InqMisc. 1399-1422*, no. 588, pp. 343-4.

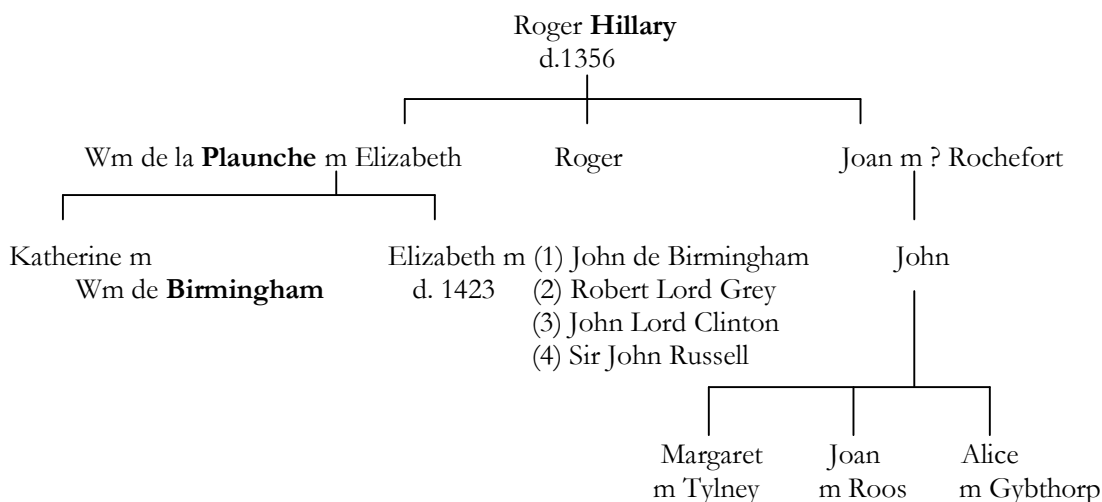
²⁹⁸ *TNA C1/4/142* dated as between 1386-1486, but must relate to November 1419 & *CPR Henry V 1416-22*, p. 253, 15 November 1419.

²⁹⁹ *CCR1419-22*, pp. 192 & 197.

³⁰⁰ *InqPM 1422-27*, nos. 341, 343 & 344 pp. 311-16. Inquisitions held in Staffordshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire.

to Sir Robert Roos and Philip Tylney, who were the heirs of Roger Hillary (see fig. 20).³⁰¹

Figure 20. The Hillary Family



Relationships within the county and surrounding area

Thomas was much in demand as a feoffee, arbiter and witness. These activities along with his official duties as sheriff and knight of the shire brought him into contact with many of the landowning families in Northamptonshire and the surrounding counties. As we have seen his brother-in-law Reginald Ragon provided a contact with the Greys of Ruthin. His links to the Zouche family also continued.

In July 1427 Thomas with Walter FitzRichard was granted the keeping of the lands of Joan, widow of Sir Robert Nevyle, during the minority of her son John, along with the grant of his marriage. Following the death of Joan two years later, in December 1429 Thomas was granted the custody of further lands in ‘Gothurst’ and Stoke Goldington, Buckinghamshire, along with William Tresham. The grant of Joan’s land which she had from her father was charged at £13 6s 8d per annum. They were also granted her mother’s third when she died at a cost of £6 13s 4d per annum. The marriage of her son cost them eighty marks unless anyone else was willing to pay more

³⁰¹ *Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vol. 4, nos. A7585 & A8476, pp. 188 & 315 respectively. See genealogy of Hillary family.

for the grant. In June 1436 Thomas added the custody of land in Prestwold, Leicestershire which belonged to John Nevylle.³⁰²

A number of Thomas's connections can be traced through inquisitions post-mortem. An inquisition taken on 4 August 1421, following the death of Margaret, widow of Edward Latymer (died 1411), refers to a fine in 1417 and another in 1418, which shows the involvement of Thomas.³⁰³ Thomas was acting with John Gryffyn, who was the kinsman and heir of Edward Latymer through Latymer's sister Elizabeth. Edward was the younger brother of the Sir Thomas Latymere mentioned previously in relation to Joan Pavely. Sir Thomas was a suspected heretic, associated with known Lollards. When he died in 1401 he was buried in the church at Braybroke, which was a centre of heresy for some years after.³⁰⁴ Following Edward's death Margaret remarried Nicholas Merbury, who was holding the lands in her right. In April 1417 Nicholas and Margaret acknowledged that the castle and manor of Braybroke were the right of John Gryffyn. In return John and Thomas granted the same to Nicholas and Margaret for their lives in return for 20 marks payable to John and his heirs yearly. After their deaths the castle and manor would be held by feoffees for one year after which it would remain to the right heirs of Richard Gryffyn.³⁰⁵ On 20 January 1418 a similar fine was made in relation to land in Chipping Warden, the heir in this instance being Robert Heele. Thomas Wydevile was again a feoffee, along with Robert Heele and Thomas Byllyng who were also feoffees for Braybroke.³⁰⁶ Nicholas Merbury died soon after his wife in 1422. The inquisition following his death shows only that he was holding Braybrooke and repeated the fine of 1417.³⁰⁷

Thomas appears to have been chosen as a feoffee through longstanding family attachments, but also influential may have been his associations with the duke of York and his retention of friends about the court and from the days of his military service. In the case of Braybrooke, Nicholas Merbury is most likely the same man who served in France in 1415 and was master of the ordnance.³⁰⁸ In this case Thomas was chosen as a man acceptable to both sides in the arrangement over the property.

³⁰² *CFR 1422-30*, p. 173 & pp. 289-90 & *CCR 1435-41*, p. 22, respectively.

³⁰³ *InqPM 1418-22*, no. 835, pp. 291-2.

³⁰⁴ ODNB 'Sir Thomas Latimer (1341-1401)', Maureen Jurkowski (accessed 5/12/09).

³⁰⁵ CP/25/1/179/92 no. 24

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_179_92.shtml> (accessed 12/5/11).

³⁰⁶ CP/25/1/179/92 no. 34

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_179_92.shtml> (accessed 12/5/11).

³⁰⁷ *InqPM 1418-22*, no. 934, pp. 333-4. Inquisition taken 10 May at Northampton, shows his wife died 2 June 1421; his own death is given only as 1422. His heir was his brother Sir Laurence Merbury.

³⁰⁸ Anne Curry, *Agincourt A New History* (Stroud, 2005), p.60.

Custody of French prisoners

Although Thomas is not known to have served in France in any of Henry V's campaigns, it may well have been his friendship with those who had, or through his half-brother Richard, that led to his being given the custody of two French prisoners, the lords d'Estouteville and Gaucourt. Thomas submitted regular accounts, the first covering the period March 1417 to March 1420 and then another for the period up to July 1422. Thomas was to be paid 6s 8d per day for the safe keeping and maintenance of each prisoner.³⁰⁹ It therefore appears that the prisoners were in Thomas's custody for nearly six years. Presumably they were held at Grafton.

The two lords had surrendered to Henry V following the siege of Harfleur which lasted from 17 August to 22 September 1415. When the French failed to provide a relieving force for the people within the town, Gaucourt and d'Estouteville with their fellow commanders and other lords formally surrendered to Henry.³¹⁰ The various chroniclers disagree over which of the French commanders agreed to a truce and the final surrender, but the town was full of sickness and disease. The people within the town suffered as much as the besiegers from dysentery.³¹¹ The prisoners were released on their honour to surrender at Calais in six weeks on 11 November. On the same day the king wrote to London advising of his success at Harfleur. The people of the town seeing his strength,

‘made much effort to have divers agreements with us ... and in order to avoid the shedding of human blood on both sides, we were inclined to hear their offer. ...the sire de Gaucout, the sire d'Estouteville, the sire de Hacqueville and other lords and knights who had the government of the town, ... swore on the body of Our Lord that they would make full delivery of our town ...’³¹²

While the French knights kept their word Henry was less than faithful. When Gaucourt and the other prisoners arrived in Calais, as agreed in November, the battle of

³⁰⁹ TNA E101/49/13 & E101/49/18.

³¹⁰ I am grateful to Dr Ambühl for providing me with an extract from the relevant chapter of a future publication of his, which covers information relating to the two prisoners, also his unpublished PhD, ‘Prisoners of war in the Hundred Years War: The Golden Age of Private Ransoms’, University of St. Andrews (2009), <<http://hdl.handle.net/10023/757>>.

³¹¹ Anne Curry, *Agincourt*, pp. 78-9, 85, 89-91 & 109. English, French and Burgundian chroniclers all give varying opinions on what was happening in the town and who forced the surrender.

³¹² Anne Curry, *Agincourt Sources*, p. 441.

Agincourt had just taken place. As Gaucourt understood it, the agreement was that if they attended on the agreed date and paid a ransom they would be free to leave. However he was told he had been misinformed and they were now prisoners.³¹³ Estouteville and Gaucourt were singled out; they were advised that if they wished to be free then they had to ransom English prisoners who had been captured by the French, between seven and eight men. On top of this Henry wanted the return of his goods that had been looted from his baggage train during the battle of Agincourt; this included his crown, a piece of the true cross and chancery seals. As if this was not enough, Henry also asked for 200 casks of Beaune wine.³¹⁴ Estouteville and Gaucourt's fellow prisoners advised them to concede to these demands if they ever wished to be free. Gaucourt was provided with a safe conduct on 3 April 1416 to leave for France; he then returned on 25 January 1417 having complied with all the demands made.³¹⁵ Given the lack of good faith on Henry's part it is all the more surprising that Gaucourt not only complied with the demands but reported to the king in London, rather than simply remaining in France. Despite the great cost borne by Gaucourt he was still not freed.

It would appear that it was shortly after Gaucourt's return in January 1417 that he was placed into Thomas's safekeeping. It seems that Estouteville had remained in England while Gaucourt carried out the terms of their ransom, and was perhaps already in Thomas's custody.

The last account issued by Thomas, or at least the last to survive, is for the period ending in July 1422. From Gaucourt's own statement made to the Paris court sometime after d'Estouteville's death in 1435, 'd'Estouteville and myself remained prisoners till after the death of the said King of England...' While Gaucourt does not state where he was held prisoner, the death of the king does seem to be a changing point in his imprisonment. Gaucourt continues his story, '... After the death of the said King, my relations and friends arranged with the earl of Huntingdon, who was a prisoner in France, that in setting about his own release he should obtain mine ...'³¹⁶ It would appear that Henry had been the stumbling block in his ransom; with the king's death things could now progress towards his release. At the parliament in October 1423 a petition was submitted on behalf of the earl of Huntingdon, who had been a prisoner

³¹³ Ambühl, quoting, F. Devon, ed., *Issues of the Exchequer; being a collection of payments made out of his majesty's revenue, from king Henry IV to king Henry VI inclusive* (London, 1837), pp. 344-5.

³¹⁴ Sir Harris Nicolas, *The History of the Battle of Agincourt; and of the expedition of Henry the Fifth into France: to which is added, the Roll of the Men at Arms in the English Army* (second edition, London, 1832), pp. 25-6.

³¹⁵ Ambühl, PhD p. 71.

³¹⁶ Nicolas, p. 27.

for two and a half years and who ‘still languishes in a harsh prison to his great ruin and final destruction’. Parliament was asked to provide a ‘remedy for his deliverance by the exchange of any prisoner from France ... by way of charity.’ It was agreed that the ‘Sire de Gaucourt and the Sire d’Estouteville, the king’s prisoners, shall be handed over to Sir John Cornwall, knight, to help with the delivery of the earl of Huntingdon who was captured in the wars ... On condition that the said Sire de Gaucourt shall be kept in England throughout the next summer following and the king shall be discharged of the costs of the said Sires de Gaucourt and d’Estouteville from the day of their delivery ...’³¹⁷ This confirms that the two prisoners belonged to the king until their formal transfer to Sir John Cornwall. It would seem, however, that for a period of time they were in the custody of Sir Thomas Burdon and Robert Scot esquire, certainly by October 1423, probably from July 1422. A further petition made to parliament in 1425 referred to the arrangement made on 20 October 1423 for the two French prisoners to be handed over to Sir John Cornwall, by ‘virtue of your letters under your privy seal addressed separately on this to Thomas Burdon, knight, and to Robert Scot, esquire, that the said prisoners whom they then had in custody, be handed over to the said John Cornwall... and they remain in his custody still’. Huntingdon is obviously becoming anxious, the petition stresses that he is still a prisoner and that ‘he is unable to be released’ until Gaucourt and Estouteville are, and that both have agreed to pay ‘5000 marks for the full amount of their ransom...’. Huntingdon then asks that the duke of Exeter be allowed to act as mediator with Gaucourt and d’Estouteville. Meanwhile it had also been arranged that the duke of Orleans, the duke of Bourbon and the count of Eu would act as pledges for the ransom payment of the two Frenchmen.³¹⁸

If the prisoners were held at Grafton throughout the six years 1417-22, with the possibility of d’Estouteville being there from late 1415, it may have been frustrating but it would not have been harsh. It did prove expensive for Thomas however. £619 was still owing to him for their expenses at his death. By 1440 his executors were pressing for payment of £619 due to Thomas by the exchequer ‘for the keeping of the lords’ of d’Estouteville and Gaucourt. The final account had originally been submitted by Thomas on 1 March 1425.³¹⁹ An inquisition held on 8 October 1451 shows that Thomas’s executors had been granted £40 a year on 1 March 1440 until the full amount had been repaid. It further states that the money was due ‘for the keeping and expenses

³¹⁷ Anne Curry, ed., ‘Henry VI: Parliament of October 1423’, *PROME*, 247, item 34.

³¹⁸ Anne Curry, ed., ‘Henry VI: Parliament of April 1425’, *PROME*, 284, item 25.

³¹⁹ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 387.

of Lords de Gauncourt and d'Estouteville, king's French prisoners at Grafton Regis for six years.' The executors included the abbot of St James's abbey Northampton. Together they had used the money to provide for a chaplain and six poor men to pray for the souls of Henry V, Queen Katherine, Thomas Wydevile and all their benefactors.³²⁰ In November 1454 £99 was still outstanding. The £40 a year granted to the executors out of the farm of Thorp (Kingsthorpe) had ended when it was granted to Queen Margaret instead. The executors were now granted £19 16s from the farm of Northampton until the full amount was paid.³²¹

Marriage and children

Thomas had married his first wife Elizabeth Lyons by 1396 at the latest. This is based on the date when it is thought his mother-in-law Margaret Lyons made her will. In this, Margaret bequeathed her lands to her daughters, Isabel and Elizabeth.³²² Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas Lyons of Ashton, Somerset. It is probable that they were connected to the Lyons family of Warkworth, Northamptonshire. Thomas's grandfather had married an Elizabeth Lyons of Warkworth, as his second wife (see fig13).

Thomas and Elizabeth had at least one child, a son also called Thomas. Father and son are mentioned in a pardon of 10 November 1408.³²³ From this we learn that Thomas Lyons held thirty acres of meadow and forty acres of wood in Ashton, Somerset, Thomas Wydevill the elder held the reversion for life with reversion to Thomas Wydevill the younger and his heirs. Remainder was to the right heirs of Thomas Lyons. Thomas Wydevile had entered into the lands without licence following the death of Thomas Lyons and had paid 50s for a pardon for the trespass. Thomas Wydevile junior must have predeceased his father; there is no other mention of him unless he is the same Thomas Wodyl, knight who had a letter of protection 10 October 1419 to serve with Thomas, duke of Clarence.³²⁴ There is no mention of any other children. The record is equally silent regarding Elizabeth Lyons' death and Thomas's second marriage.

³²⁰ *InqMisc 1422-85*, no. 221, pp. 135-7. The executors were John abbot of St James, William Tresham esquire, now deceased and Richard Willoughby.

³²¹ *CPR 1452-61*, p. 199 & *CCR 1454-61*, pp. 4-5.

³²² *Testamenta Vetusta*, ed. Nicholas Harris (London, 1826), p. 138. Margaret, wife of Thomas Lyons of Ashton, reversion of lands between Isabel my daughter, wife to Walter Redeney (Rodney?), Knight, and Elizabeth, wife to Thomas Wodvile, Knight, my sons; Edmund Plunket (Blanket), late my husband; to Isabel, my daughter. It is unclear from this if this refers to a daughter by her first husband. She refers to both her 'sons' as 'Knight', however Thomas Wydevile was never knighted, as appears from his will.

³²³ *CPR 1408-13*, p. 21.

³²⁴ I am grateful to Professor Adrian Bell for bringing this reference to my attention. <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_musterdb.php>

The Will of Thomas Widevill ³²⁵

Thomas left a long and detailed will. As can be seen above regarding the arrears of money due for the custody of the French prisoners his executors did not have an easy job. This was not to be the only dispute over Thomas's will. Although he made his will on 12 October 1434 he was still active until 1436 and must have died sometime between 25 June 1436 and 30 October 1438.³²⁶ Perhaps he had been taken ill in 1434, or possibly this was when his second wife died, and this caused him to draw up his will. In the opening lines of his will he leaves us in no doubt of the fact that he was a squire,

‘To the worship of God owre Lady and of all the company of
Heven, this is the wille of me Thomas Widevill of Grafton in the counte of
Northampton Squyer ... made at Grafton Aboveseyd the xij day of the
monethe of Octob(e)r the yere of the regne of Kyng Herry the sixte after the
conquest the thertenth.’³²⁷

We can therefore safely say that he had not been knighted, despite the fact that he met all the suggested criteria. His income was sufficient, he was active in local government and he had performed military service.

It would appear from his will that Thomas had placed his lands in the hands of feoffees, specifically for the provision of his will. Once they had ensured all debts had been paid then they were to provide Thomas's half brother Richard with ‘my maner and all oder my londes and tenements rents revercons and sarvises w[ith all] ther apurtynannces whatsoever they ben in Grafton beside Aldrynnton with the hundred of Cleyle...’. If Richard failed to produce male issue ‘lawfully begtten’ then the manor and tenements etc would revert to Thomas's right heirs. Without surviving male heirs of his own, Thomas's half brother Richard was the only surviving male Wydevile heir. It appears that Thomas wished to keep a Wydevile on the Grafton lands thereby maintaining family continuity with what had become their ancestral home.

³²⁵ George Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (London, 1822), vol. 2, part 1, pp.162-5, gives a full transcript of the will. Northampton Record Office *Fermour Hesketh* F36/1 will of Thomas. The county archivists have noted that the will suffers from holes made by mice; a seal is attached in red wax. The archivist also noted that the version printed in Baker has only small errors.

³²⁶ *CCR 1435-41*, p. 22. 25 June 1436, mentions Thomas in connection with the wardship of John Nevville age 15. *InqPM 1437-42*, no. 223, p. 146, 30 October 1438, inquisition Buckinghamshire, into John Nevville, Thomas Widevill is described as ‘now deceased’.

³²⁷ See appendix 1 for a transcript of the full will as given by Baker.

To his 'right heirs', that is his sisters Elizabeth Ragon and Agnes Halewell/Holwell and their children, Thomas left all his lands which he had purchased, including tenements, rents and services, in Westpury (Northants), Hulcote (Beds) and Burton Mills (Bucks), in compensation to them for the grant to his half brother. If the right heirs died without issue then the lands were to revert to the right heirs of his father John Widvill. While this may be a standard phrase it may also suggest aunts, uncles or cousins. This would help to explain the occasional reference to other Wydeviles in the records but who cannot be directly linked to this family. The right heirs would also relate to any descendants from all of John's children, including from the second marriage, who were not directly male descendants, as well as the descendants of any antecedents. However, in this instance, it is most likely his brother Richard and his heirs that Thomas intended.

With his debts paid and his heirs recompensed for the grant to his brother, Thomas required his feoffees to make 'lawfull astate to my right eyres and to the eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotten yn and off all my maners londes and tenements rents revercions and sarvyses with all other her apurtynannces whatsoever they ben in the townes and in the felde'.

These could be found in Northampton, Horton, Eston (Easton Neston?), Hulcote (Holcot?), Thurneby (Thornby?), Ashton, Roade, Hartwell and Quinton 'or in eny other place the whiche ben undevised in the seyd counte of Northampton'. In the absence of any heirs then once again they should revert to his father's right heirs. The feoffees were to retain the manors of Stoke Bruerne and Alderton with all the rents, lands, tenements, advowsons of the churches, reversions and services attached to them and also all the appurtenances of Shutlanger until they had raised 200 marks (£133 6s 8d), which was to be paid to the executors to carry out the will. Alternatively, whoever of the right heirs claimed the right to these lands could make the payment of the 200 marks. The 200 marks were then to be paid to the executors.

The feoffees were also required to make an annuity of 100s to the parents of John Aylewurd, parson of Stoke Bruerne church. The annuity was to be paid for the term of their lives out of the manor of Stoke Bruerne. Once this had been secured in a deed, then the heir could have title to the estate.

To the abbot and convent of St James, Northampton, Thomas left Grafton Hermitage, Shaw Wood, the manor of Avescote and lands, rents, services, etc., in Evescote, Pattishull, Derlescote and Escote in Northamptonshire and Fighelden in

Wiltshire for 'ffifty winters' after the date of the deed. If possible Thomas wished the lands to be made over to the abbot and convent in perpetuity. In return the abbot was to provide for five poor men and a 'keeper'. Prayers and other 'certeyne obsurvannces' were to be carried out in the abbey 'to the worship of God and for the helth of the soules' of Thomas, his wives Elizabeth and Alice, his parents, Thomas and Margaret Lyons, all his friends and all Christians.

The feoffees and executors were also to purchase land to the value of 200 marks in further compensation to his right heirs for the lands given to Richard. This was followed by bequests to servants. To John Beck, his oldest servant, a place and six acres of land in Grafton which he already possessed and an annuity of one mark for life. To Robert Paker he left a place and six acres of land in Grafton and an annuity of 20s for life. The annuities were to be paid out of the lands in Grafton, and the deeds were to contain a clause regarding default of payment. John of the Botery was to receive a place and all the lands and tenements with their appurtenances which Thomas had purchased from John Warwick in Westbury. John was to hold these for life upon payment of a rose to the feoffees at the feast of midsummer, and bearing all costs on the property.

Only two women are mentioned by name in the bequests. Thomas's niece Elizabeth Howell was to receive an annuity of six marks for life. A servant, Margaret Broke, was to receive an annuity of 20s for life. These were to be paid out of the lands at Hartwell and Roade respectively, with the standard clause regarding default of payment. Thomas then returned in his will to his male servants. William Boteler was to have all the land and tenements with the appurtenances in Horton for life. Thomas Barbor was to have all the land and tenements with appurtenances in Quinton for life and William Mannyng all the lands and tenements in Estneston (East Neston) and Hulcote, 'beside Towcester', for his life.

The will gives a good indication of the amount of land that Thomas had either inherited or purchased. He appears to have extended the family land holdings quite considerably and to have had a large income for someone who was only a squire. As well as providing for his brother and recompensing his right heirs, he was also generous to his servants and to the abbey of St James.

As well as the lands detailed in the will, while his wife Elizabeth lived he would have had the benefit of her lands which had been left by her mother Margaret Lyons. There was also the meadow and wood in Ashton from Thomas Lyons. A tenement in

the parish of All Saints, Bristol, may have provided rent of 13s 4d a year.³²⁸ There were also four manors in Somerset, Long Ashton, Burton, Milton and Woolvershill which were valued in the feudal aid of 1412 at £40, while land and rents in Bristol were valued at the same sum. The same feudal aid valued lands and tenements in Holcote and Bromham, Bedfordshire at £40.³²⁹ If the assessment for the feudal aid was accurate then Thomas had an income that would have been much higher than £120. His holdings in Northamptonshire based on the Bedfordshire values would have brought in much more than £40, and the assessment is likely to be undervalued rather than overvalued. There were also lands in Buckinghamshire; it is therefore possible his income was in the region of £200 a year. This level of income would have placed him alongside the wealthier knights.

The qualification for knighthood was assessed at £40 so Thomas could have taken it up. From the seal attached to his will he already had a coat of arms, argent a fess and canton gules (i.e. silver and red). This may have first been held by his great-great grandfather John (i), who was a knight although there is no evidence for his having a coat of arms. It was not until the mid fourteenth century that esquires were allowed to take up coats of arms.³³⁰ Both Thomas and his father chose to be depicted in armour on their tombs and to have their coats of arms shown as well. While his father was buried in the church at Grafton, Thomas's brass is in Bromham church (fig. 21). Whether this was its original location is open to debate. The brass was re-used by one of Thomas's descendants Sir John Dyve who died in 1535. The two female figures were therefore allocated to Dyve's wife Isabella and mother Elizabeth. Did Sir John bring the brass from its original location in either Grafton or the abbey of St James at Northampton? Regrettably Thomas did not specify where he wished to be buried in his will. St James has been suggested because of his benefaction to the abbey, while Grafton was thought likely because this was his home. Bromham has previously been discounted because it was thought Thomas had no links to the area.³³¹ However his father John (ii) did hold

³²⁸ *Bristol Archives* P.AS/D/CS/A/15 <<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/records-and-archives-0>> (accessed 17/4/11). Relating to the parish of All Saints Bristol. Details of a tenement belonging to Thomas Hallewey 26 June 1416. The description of the tenement places it next to that held by Thomas Wodeville. Hallewey's feoffment of the tenement to Joan Clowde gives a rent of 13s 4d. Thomas's tenement is likely to have had a similar rental value. The tenement had originally belonged to Edmund Blanket, P.AS/D/CS/A/5. The description of the tenement in 1373 matches that of 1416. Edmund Blanket was Margaret Lyons' first husband.

³²⁹ *Feudal Aid*, vol. 6, pp. 509, 448 and 397 respectively.

³³⁰ Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (Trowbridge, 1996 edition), p.70.

³³¹ John Gough Nicols, ed., 'A Summary Catalogue of Monumental Art Existing in Parish Churches Bedfordshire', *The Topographer and Genealogist* (London, 1846), vol. 1, pp. 159-60. Gough suggests St James

land in Bromham through his mother Katherine Frembaud. The dissolution of St James Abbey did not take place until after August 1538. Therefore if it was reused by the Dyve family it was several years after Sir John's death.³³²



**Figure 21. Thomas Wydevile between his wives Elizabeth and Alice.
St Owen's church, Bromham**

An article from 1940 in *The Bedfordshire Times & Standard* reported on the restoration and repair of the brass. This provides a piece of inscription, found on the reverse of the brass,

Lo, here lies a husband between his wives the noble Alice along
with the beautiful Elizabeth; to whose spirits may the realms of
heaven be open, according to the prayers of James, by the
intercession of Mary.³³³

Abbey; in a footnote he gives the view of 'Lysons that the Wydevile family had no link to Bromham' and so thought that the brass was brought from Grafton.

³³² *VCH Northamptonshire*, vol. 2, 'Houses of Austin canons: The abbey of St James, Northampton', pp. 127-30 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40231>> (accessed 13/1/10).

³³³ *The Bedfordshire Times & Standard*, 12 January 1940. An article by W. N. Henman reported on the restoration of the brass by Professor A. E. Richardson. The restoration took place in 1939 at a cost of £15. The then Clerk of the County Record provided the transcription and translation. 'Sponsus sponsaru[m] medio jacet ecce suaru[m] nobilis Alicie simul Elizabeth speciose Quoru[m] spiritibus pateant cel(estia) regna Pro Jacobi precibus intercedente Maria'

This article also suggested that the brass originally came from St James Abbey. The inscription which had been hidden since the sixteenth century does make this a more likely proposition. Request for the ‘prayers of James’ matches the dedication of the abbey; Bromham church is thought to have been dedicated to St Andrew in the medieval period.³³⁴

As well as being depicted in plate armour Thomas wears the livery collar of SS, showing an attachment to the house of Lancaster (fig. 23). The shields to either side of his head show the arms of Wydevile impaled with that of his respective wives. The shield on the left shows Wydevile argent a fess and canton gules impaling a chevron between three lions dormant, which may represent Lyons (fig. 22).³³⁵ The shield to the right is Wydevile impaling [colour unknown] on a chief a fleur-de-lys. Unfortunately the colours are missing and the identity of the shield on the right is unknown. The identity of Alice therefore still remains to be discovered.



Figure 22. Detail of Thomas showing livery collar and shields



Figure 23. Detail of livery collar

The will, while detailed in terms of lands is less detailed regarding his family. There is no mention of prayers for his son although he does mention his wives. His son Thomas, and if there were any other children may be covered by the ‘certeyne obsurvances’. His right heirs are not named either, although he does mention his niece,

³³⁴ *Walk round guide to St Owen's Church* (revised 2009), p. 2. The church only became known as St Owen's in the nineteenth century

³³⁵ The arms for the Lyons of Warkworth are argent a lion rampant gules. The heraldry therefore does not help in providing any indication that they may be a related family.

who was most likely the daughter of his sister Agnes. Of course all these things would have been known to his executors and feoffees and so Thomas would not have felt the need to be more specific in the will. It would appear from these ‘certeyne obsurvannces’ that something was already in place, and this may well have included his own funeral arrangements. The executors and feoffees are also absent from the will which again strongly suggests that arrangements had already been put in place with full instructions given.

The attempt by executors to obtain payment from the crown relating to the two French prisoners demonstrates just how long it could take to settle an estate. From this action we know the names of the executors, John, abbot of St James, Northampton, Richard Willoughby and William Tresham. However by 1454 Tresham himself was dead. Aspects of the will were still in dispute in the years 1467 to 1472. Richard and John Goderich prosecuted John Mauntell and Richard Wylloughby as feoffees of Thomas’s will. They claimed that they were bondmen in Thomas’s manor of Roade and that by his will he had given them their freedom, which the feoffees had failed to carry out.³³⁶ The response to their action is not known, and the will that survives certainly makes no mention of a Richard and John Goderich or of a grant of manumission. Given the action was being taken so long after the event perhaps they were hoping that they might get away with a false claim. Wylloughby’s record as executor and feoffee suggests he was a less than trustworthy choice. In 1452/4 Thomas Wylde the husband of Agnes, the heir of Thomas’s sister Elizabeth, made a claim against Nicholas Wymbussh and Richard Willoughby for failure to provide the money bequeathed by Thomas.³³⁷

³³⁶ *TNA C1/38/29*. Refusal of Mauntell to execute a deed of manumission as directed.

³³⁷ *TNA C1/19/330, 331 & 332*.

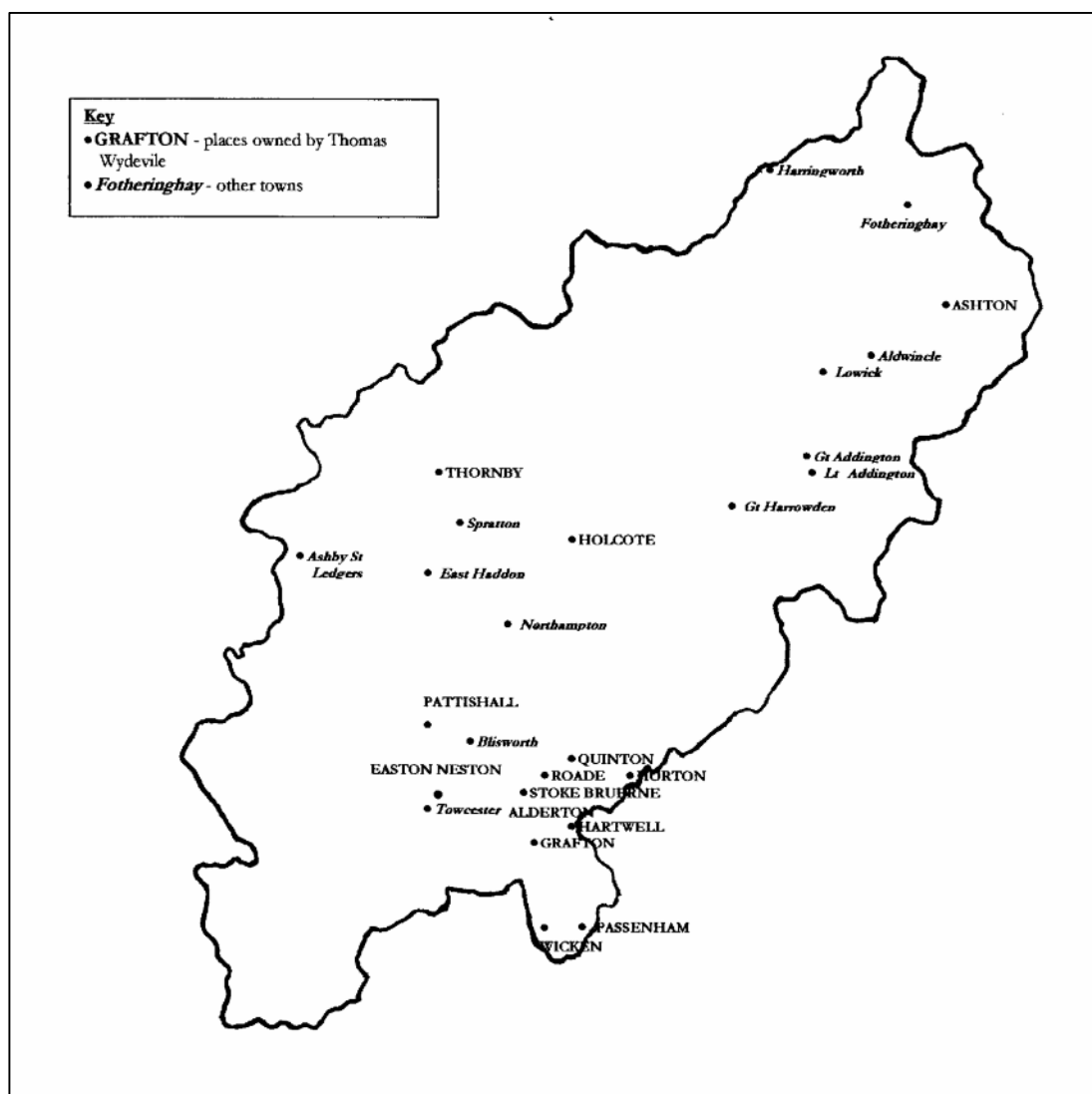


Figure 24. Northamptonshire showing the landholdings of Thomas Wydevile
(See also appendix 4)

(ii) Richard (iii) Wydevile (c.1381/2 - 1441/42)

From the date of his parents' marriage sometime in early 1380 Richard may have been born about 1381/82. This would have made him eighteen years younger than his half-brother Thomas. By the time Richard was born Thomas would already have been in service. Their father John (iii) had done as much as he could to secure the future of his sons. Very soon after Richard's birth John had made arrangements to settle the property at Wicken on him, thus avoiding the problems inherent in being a landless younger son. While John's connections had provided Thomas with a career in a noble household, it would seem at first glance that his younger son was destined for a career in local administration. On 22 November 1405 Richard was appointed sheriff of the county and castle of Northampton, replacing Ralph Grene.³³⁸ Richard only retained this position for a year, until replaced by his brother Thomas on 5 November 1406.

However it is possible that Richard took on the office of sheriff only until Thomas was free to do so. As already discussed Thomas was serving with York (Aumale) up until this time. The office of sheriff in Northamptonshire had become something of a Wydevile tradition; it may have been convenient for Richard to take up the post until his brother was available to do so. While this is Richard's first public role within the county, he was now in his early twenties. So far no evidence has come to light concerning his activities before this point. There is however an indication of what Richard may have been doing from a grant made on 27 June 1408. Richard and his wife Joan Bittlesgate were granted £40 a year by Henry, Prince of Wales, so that they would not be retained by anyone else.³³⁹ The high value suggests that Richard had already been serving in the prince's household for some years. The fact that Richard and Joan are mentioned together in the grant on condition that neither should be retained by anyone else suggests that Joan was also a member of the prince's household. Perhaps the annuity was paid upon their marriage, so that they would both remain in the prince's service. It seems likely that it was Thomas who had been able to secure a place for his younger brother into the household of the young prince Henry. The grant from the prince in 1408 provided Richard with a substantial annual income which was supplemented in January 1409 by a grant for life to Richard 'the king's esquire and Joan his wife', of all the king's tenements in Calais. The tenements were located between the tenements of John Mulsho and Prince Henry's inn. Richard was to take 20 marks from

³³⁸ *CFR 1405-13*, p. 18.

³³⁹ *CPR 1413-16*, p. 53. The grant was confirmed in June 1413 by Henry when he was king and refers to the original grant dated at Hereford 27 June 1408.

the rents, the remainder being given to the exchequer. The same grant also states that Richard was already in receipt of a grant of 80 marks a year from the receiver of the duchy of Lancaster.³⁴⁰ This mention of a grant from the duchy of Lancaster suggests that Richard's early service may originally have been in the household of John, duke of Lancaster and that he then moved into the household of Prince Henry when his father became King Henry IV.

It is not known exactly when Richard was first retained in the prince's household, but he was certainly being well rewarded. Given-Wilson suggests the fee paid by an earl to a knight was between 20 marks and £20 while an esquire was paid half this. 'The king's sons might pay more: both Gaunt and the Black Prince, for example, often paid annuities of about £40 to their knights and £15 or £20 to their esquires... The king's annuities were higher still, averaging close on £60 per knight and £25 per esquire.'³⁴¹ Richard's annuities were commensurate with those of a knight rather than an esquire, in total he was receiving £106 13s 8d a year, although it should be remembered that the grants were to Richard and his wife jointly. Had Richard been considered a suitable companion for the prince? Richard was at most only five years older than Henry, and such a position might explain the higher payments. A position in the prince's household, possibly even before his father acceded to the throne, would explain the jibe made in 1460 by the earl Warwick. When taunting Richard, Lord Rivers, Warwick called his father 'but a squyer and broute vp with Kyng Herry the vte'.³⁴²

Following Prince Henry's accession as king in March 1413 he quickly confirmed the letters patent of June 1408 and January 1409 that had been granted to Richard and his wife Joan 'so that they be not retained by anyone else'.³⁴³ What exactly Richard was doing in this period is open to interpretation. Richard submitted accounts for the tenements in Calais covering the years 1408-10, which may imply he was in Calais,

³⁴⁰ *CPR 1408-13*, p. 43. Richard's career might be compared with that of another esquire to Henry IV, John Norbury, who had been retained by Henry while earl of Derby for £20 a year. After 1399 he benefited from the king's generosity and was able to marry well, his second wife being the sister of Ralph Botiller, Lord Sudeley. 'A great transformation had thus occurred in Norbury's career. From being a mercenary ... he had become a man with a social position to maintain...', pp. 67-68. In 1413 he received £40 'so that he be not retained with anyone else', p. 72 and fn.1, Madeline Barber, 'John Norbury (c.1350-1414): An Esquire of Henry IV', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 68, no. 266 (Jan., 1953).

³⁴¹ Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household*, p. 263. 'King's knight' first used to describe knights attached to the king in Richard II's reign, they received annuities rather than fees at the exchequer ranging from £20-£100, generally £40-£60. These were knights around the county who were attached to the king although not of the royal household, p. 211. King's esquires were generally of the household, although after 1377 could also apply to those who were not. 'Individually, some of these king's esquires were just as important as many of the king's knights, but collectively, the superior wealth and status of the knights made them the leaders of the royal affinity in the localities.' p. 212.

³⁴² *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 88, 28 January 1460, pp. 160-63. This is discussed more fully in part 2.

³⁴³ *CPR 1413-16*, pp. 44 & 53.

although Prince Henry was captain later, during 1410-13. However, a letter patent of 20 May 1414 suggests an alternative, Richard and his wife may have been in Ireland. The patent confirmed an earlier letter patent of 16 September 1408 which was witnessed by Thomas of Lancaster, lieutenant of Ireland. This granted Richard and Sir John Kyghley the office of ‘customer and collector of customs and cokets in all ports in Ireland for life’, along with the office of searcher in the ports. They were to receive £50 a year from the customs with the same proviso that they were not retained by anyone else. On the same day the king granted Richard and his wife £20 a year for life from the fee farm of Drogheda so that they were not retained by anyone else. This confirmed the original grant which had been made on 12 August 1408, and was reconfirmed on 16 June 1415.³⁴⁴ The joint income of Richard and Joan had now increased to approximately £150 a year, in addition to any landed income.³⁴⁵

Service in France

While Richard was retained by the Prince of Wales and the King it appears his service included the royal sons generally. On 9 January 1411 Richard had a letter of protection to serve for a year at Guisnes under Thomas of Lancaster.³⁴⁶ Lancaster had been appointed captain of Guisnes throughout 1407, but he does not appear to have returned to France until August 1412. If Richard’s movements match those of Lancaster then he may initially have been in Ireland with him. Lancaster had been appointed Lieutenant of Ireland in July 1401, but was only there briefly until November 1403. In 1406 Lancaster indented for a further twelve years service in Ireland but did not leave for Ireland until 1408. He was only in Ireland for a matter of months until news of King Henry’s illness caused him to return to England in January 1409.³⁴⁷ Lancaster had been in Ireland long enough to witness the grant to Richard and Kyghley. Richard may possibly have been in Ireland for the same period of time, returning to England with Lancaster in 1409. Richard may then have remained in England until going to France with Lancaster. In July 1412 Lancaster had been made duke of Clarence, and shortly after set off for France to lead an expedition in support of the Orleanists against the duke of Burgundy. Clarence returned to England in April 1413.³⁴⁸ There follows a gap in the records which may suggest service overseas, either in Ireland or France. It seems most likely that

³⁴⁴ *CPR 1413-16*, pp. 195 & 336.

³⁴⁵ This assumes that Wydevile and Kyghley shared the £50 equally.

³⁴⁶ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protodb.php> (accessed 2/6/11).

³⁴⁷ *ODNB*, ‘Thomas, duke of Clarence’ G.L. Harriss, and archive entry (accessed 10/6/11).

³⁴⁸ *ODNB*, ‘Thomas, duke of Clarence’.

Richard was still in the service of the duke of Clarence. What little information there is for Richard over the next few years relates to France.

While there is no evidence that Richard took part in the Agincourt campaign he did take an active part in Henry V's 1417 campaign for the conquest of Normandy. The initial objective of Henry's campaign was the capture of Caen which was achieved with the support of his brother Clarence by early September 1417.³⁴⁹ The *Chronica Maiora* of Thomas Walsingham describes Henry as 'showing tremendous energy ... [he] captured on the continent more than a hundred cities and walled towns with their castles and defences. He entrusted the guarding of the town of Caen with its castle to lords Talbot and Umfreville, ... and the city of Lisieux with its castle to Richard Woodville...' ³⁵⁰ That Richard was given such a role suggests he had already proved himself to be a capable soldier. The next mention of Richard comes in March 1418 when on behalf of the duke of Clarence, he took part in surrender negotiations, along with Sir John Cornwall and Ralph Cromwell, with the captain of the castle of La Rivière Tibouville.³⁵¹

The records for the years up to 1422 show Richard was extremely active in Normandy. His activities can be traced through appointments and rewards. Throughout 1419 he appears on commissions working with other captains to array men.³⁵² On 1 March 1419 he was granted Preaux and Dangu, which according to Newhall were 'great lordships'.³⁵³ While the lands may have had significant value in peace time, the effects of war often meant they generated little income for their new owners. However the king still received military service in return. Allmand suggests that the size of land given was commensurate with the rank and military standing of the recipient, and that land of military importance was given to those with social or military eminence.³⁵⁴ If Newhall is correct in relation to the value of Préaux and Dangu then this grant confirms Richard's standing. Dangu was part of the defensive line between Paris and Normandy, which with other towns along the line was given to 'prominent English captains'.³⁵⁵

On 8 January 1420 Richard replaced Sir Hugh Lutterell as seneschal of Caen; this was followed on 19 February with the position of bailli for Chaumont and Poissy. On

³⁴⁹ R.A. Newhall, *The English Conquest of Normandy 1416-1424* (New Haven, 1924), pp. 58-60.

³⁵⁰ *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, trans., David Preest (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 426.

³⁵¹ *Rotuli Normanniae In Turri Londinensi*, ed., T. Duffus Hardy (London, 1835), vol. 1, pp. 292-4.

³⁵² DKR, 42, pp. 314, 322, 324 & 326.

³⁵³ A.C. Vauthier, *Extraid du registre des dons, confiscations, maintenues et autres actes faits dans le Duché de Normandie pendant les années 1418, 1419 et 1420, par Henri V, rois d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1828), p. 63. Préaux and Dangu were previously held by Pierre de Bourbon, chevalier. Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 167.

³⁵⁴ C.T. Allmand, 'The Lancastrian Land Settlement in Normandy 1417-50', *The Economic History Review*, n.s. vol. 21, no. 3 (Dec., 1968), pp. 463 & 478. Allmand further suggest that few did well out of France, while those of lower rank were given lands chiefly to provide them with an income rather than profit.

³⁵⁵ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 220.

the same day he was given licence to decide cases brought before the bailiff of Senlis, the current bailiff having refused to give his fealty to the king.³⁵⁶ Henry was prepared to maintain local men in office as long as they gave him their fealty; the moment they refused they were replaced by those men that Henry could trust. Accounts submitted to the exchequer by Richard for the period March 1420 to March 1422 show that by early 1420 he was also captain of Gisors and la Tour de Chaumont.³⁵⁷ On 10 April he was appointed a commissioner with Sir William Philip, Thomas Bruns and John Botiller to treat with the French over the siege of Meulun Castle.³⁵⁸ Then in January 1421 he was appointed seneschal of Normandy. Duties of the seneschal included the supervision of 'all commanders of towns and strongholds in the duchy as to their provisions, munitions, and artillery, to take musters from time to time in order to hold captains to the terms of their indentures, ...' and make a report to the treasurer-general. He was also to inquire into the conduct of soldiers and the administration of all officials.³⁵⁹

Richard's duties in Normandy appear to have left him little time to return home. But there are two occasions which may suggest he briefly visited home. In both he is acting with men who had served in the king's household as well as in France and were probably friends.³⁶⁰ On 26 October 1420 Richard witnessed the will of Sir Roger Salvayn of York. The other witnesses included Sir William Philip and William Lister, while the executor was William Kynwolmerssh, although this could equally have taken place in Normandy.³⁶¹ The second occasion was some time in the period February 1421 to September 1422 when Richard was shown with William Kynwolmerssh, treasurer of England, Sir William Haryngton and others in an action against Hamon Askham and

³⁵⁶ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 217 & DKR, 42, pp. 345 & 360, respectively. Newhall consistently refers to 'Sir Richard Woodville'. Given the dates, there can be no doubt that this is the elder Richard Wydeville that is meant.

³⁵⁷ TNA E101/49/37 & E101/50/5.

³⁵⁸ DKR, 42, p. 368.

³⁵⁹ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 246.

³⁶⁰ ODNB, 'Killamarsh, William', J.L. Kirby (accessed 14/6/11). Killamarsh was named as king's servant from 1405 and in 1406 became clerk in the wardrobe of the king's household. Retained to serve at Agincourt, he was invalided home before the battle. December 1415 he became clerk of the treasurer, and then treasurer in February 1421. ODNB, 'Phelip, William', Helen Castor (accessed 14/6/11). Sir William Phelip, Baron Bardolf, b. 1383/4, entered the service of Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter, and then that of Henry IV. Bardolf fought at Agincourt. During 1417-22 he was serving in France and was captain of Harfleur. He was knighted in 1413 and made KG 1418. In 1421/22 he was treasurer of the king's household. *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, John Burke (London, 1833 Digitized by Google), vol. 1, p. 534. Sir Roger Salvayn was made a knight of the Bath at the feast of St George at Caen, 6 Henry V. One of the knights of the body, he was named a legatee in Henry V's will. Sir Roger died 7 March 1422. Salvayn was knighted along with Louis Robesard, John Stewart, Robert Schotesbroke and John Montgomery, *Chronica Maiora*, p.428.

³⁶¹ F.J.Furnival, ed., *The Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate 1387-1439* EETS (London, 1882), pp. 52-4.

Margaret Askham, widow of Walter Askham, over some messuages and shops in York.³⁶² It is possible that Richard returned to England with King Henry early in 1421.

In the king's absence the duke of Clarence acted as his lieutenant in Normandy. Fears of a possible Franco-Scottish invasion led Clarence to attack Anjou. At the battle of Baugé on 22 March 1421 the duke was killed.³⁶³ At this point Richard may have transferred to the service of the duke of Bedford.

Service with the duke of Bedford

It is likely that Richard joined Bedford's household following Clarence's death. His service to the royal household had always been flexible, working either for the king or his brothers as needed. Following Henry V's death on 31 August 1422 Bedford became regent of France, Richard was therefore attached to the duke from this date, if not before. On 15 December 1422 the annuity of £40 paid to Richard and his wife Joan was once again confirmed.³⁶⁴ Richard may have returned to England for the king's funeral, and while in London asked for the annuity to be re-confirmed by the new government, before returning to France. On 1 September 1422 Richard replaced William Alington as treasurer-general of Normandy, directing receipts and disbursements and taking orders from the regent. Richard held this office until January 1423 when he was replaced by Hamon Belknap.³⁶⁵ On the 11 March 1423 Richard was re-appointed seneschal of Normandy, with extra authority to oversee garrisons.³⁶⁶ During 1424 the records show Richard as captain of Caen.³⁶⁷ But there is little other indication of his activity in these years.

Richard was once more in England in 1425. On 26 February 1425 he was given custody of the Tower by the king's council. In the order Richard is described as the duke of Bedford's chamberlain.³⁶⁸ According to Griffiths the 'situation in the capital was sufficiently unstable to warrant the employment of a man of military experience and, as the duke of Bedford's chamberlain, political importance.'³⁶⁹ The duke of Gloucester had

³⁶² TNA C1/5/107.

³⁶³ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, pp. 275-6.

³⁶⁴ CPR 1422-29, pp. 12-13. Confirmation of letters patent dated 28 June 1 Henry V, made when prince of Wales dated 27 June 9 Henry VI granting for the lives of Richard his esquire, and Joan his wife £40 a year out of the issues of Kirketon, Lincs.

³⁶⁵ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 178 & p. 246 fn. 277.

³⁶⁶ Newhall, *The English Conquest*, p. 246.

³⁶⁷ DKR, 42, pp. 227 & 229.

³⁶⁸ *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (hereafter POPC), ed., Sir Harris Nicholas, vol. 3 (London, 1834), p. 167.

³⁶⁹ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 72.

been absent from England dealing with his wife's affairs in Hainault. Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, had taken the opportunity thus provided to dominate the council.³⁷⁰ On Gloucester's return he had found that 'partisan rule' was 'so pronounced that [he] found its consequences intolerable'. A struggle for power within the council followed, with Bedford appearing to take the bishop's side.³⁷¹ A point amply illustrated by the fact that the council had chosen Bedford's man to take custody of the Tower.

In early 1425 Richard was commissioned to help muster an expeditionary army. This was to take place at Dover on the 25 May.³⁷² In November, in what must have been a welcome break from the tensions in London, Richard joined his brother Thomas in the parish church of Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. Together with Sir Simon Felbrigge, Sir Thomas Wauton and various churchmen they witnessed archbishop Henry Chichele found a college of eight chaplains, four clerks and six choristers. The archbishop outlined his desire to found a college in the place where he had been baptised and having obtained the permission of both King and Pope he had now gathered together those with an interest to obtain their consent to his proposal. Thomas Wydevile also acted as one of the witnesses to the archbishop's grant of land to the college.³⁷³ The two brothers were gathered together with the important people of the county to approve and witness the archbishop's proposal.

The dissension between Gloucester and Beaufort did not come to a head until the end of October 1425. *An English Chronicle* states that 'on the morowe after the feste of Symon and Iude aros a grete debate' between Gloucester and his uncle 'so that all the cite of London wasse therof troubled and sore meved agaynes the bisshippe'.³⁷⁴ The *English Chronicle* is equally brief but agrees that the city of London joined with Gloucester against Beaufort. Neither mentions the Tower and Richard's appointment.

³⁷⁰ *Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483 From manuscripts in the British Museum* (Llanerch reprint, Felinfach, 1995), p.113, Gloucester had gone 'to taken possession of hys wyfves herytage, where he was worschipfully receyved and taken for chif lord...'. The manuscripts used are BL Harleian MS 565 which ends in 1442 and was written about this time. The second manuscript, Cottonian MS. Julius B. I continues to 1483 and the death of Edward IV. The section after the accession of Edward IV is brief. It is assumed that the compiler wrote up to the death of Henry VI and that another anonymous continuator then took over, p. v. *The Great Chronicle of London* (Guildhall Library MS.3313), eds., A.H. Thomas & I.D. Thornley (microprint edition, Gloucester, 1983), repeats the same story almost word for word, p. 136. The first portion of the manuscript ends 1439 and was written 'in a hand of the middle of the fifteenth century', the second sections goes to 1496, p. xix.

³⁷¹ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 71.

³⁷² *CPR 1422-29*, pp. 299 & 300.

³⁷³ *CPR 1422-29*, pp. 472-4.

³⁷⁴ *An English Chronicle 1377-1461, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 21608, and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lyell 34*, ed., William Marx (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 58-9. This chronicle was written in phases, the first 1377-1437 'was produced in a Lancastrian political climate' although not necessarily pro-Lancastrian. The section 1440-1461 is 'a separate continuation and a strongly Yorkist text composed probably soon after 1461'. p. xiv.

The *Great Chronicle*, although a later source, appears to be better informed and places the start of the troubles in February, the time at which Richard was appointed. This agrees with the action taken by the council in appointing Richard in February. The reason for the appointment was disquiet in London which appears to have started with an attack on Flemings in the city. It also demonstrates that the city was not happy with Beaufort either,

‘Also that yere the xiiij day of Feverere at nyght were caste mony billes in the Citee and in the Subarbes a yens the flemmynges And somme were sette upon the Bysshoppes gate of Wynchestre and on other B. gatys. And on the morowe the Bysshop of Wynchestre sente Richard Wydevyle squyer to kep the toure of london with men of armys as thogh it hadde been in londe of werre. And so endured til the feste of Symon and Jude next after’.³⁷⁵

Richard’s appointment in February can therefore be seen in the light of unrest in the city rather than as support of Beaufort against Gloucester. However following further disturbances in October when Gloucester attempted to enter the Tower it looks as though Richard was taking sides. He refused Gloucester entry. It seems Richard was only obeying his orders, but Gloucester was unlikely to forget such an affront to his honour and position as protector. Richard must have felt very secure in the support of Bedford.

Once again it is the *Great Chronicle* that provides the details. Beaufort wrote to Bedford asking him to return quickly to England to deal with matters. Bedford arrived in January 1426 and the council assembled. ‘And the xxj day off Feverere began the counseill ate seynt Albones but there come not the Duke of Gloucestre.’ The council was then reconvened for Northampton and finally met on ‘the xxv day of Marche next after beganne the parliament ate Leycette’.³⁷⁶ An attempt was made to settle the dispute between Gloucester and Beaufort and it is in Gloucester’s articles of complaint that more information is given about Richard. Gloucester as ‘protector and defender of this land’ wished to lodge in the Tower, however,

Richard Woodville, esquire, having at this time the charge of keeping

³⁷⁵ *The Great Chronicle*, p. 136.

³⁷⁶ *The Great Chronicle*, pp. 137-8.

the said Tower, refused his request, and kept the said Tower against him unduly and against reason by the command of my said lord of Winchester, and afterwards in approving the said refusal protected the said Woodville and cherished him against the estate and worship of the king and of my said lord of Gloucester.³⁷⁷

In response Beaufort said that Gloucester had left the country, without first supplying the Tower as was thought necessary. Following the disorder in February,

For the surer keeping of the Tower, Richard Woodville esquire who had been much trusted by the late king, as is well known, who also was chamberlain and councillor of my lord of Bedford ...

was assigned to garrison the Tower. He was also charged by the council,

that during the time of his charge he should suffer no man to be allowed into the Tower who was stronger than himself, unless he had the special charge or command of the king and by the advice of the council.³⁷⁸

What is interesting is that Richard felt able to stand up to Gloucester. He was acting under orders from the council and more specifically Beaufort, but he must also have been sure of Bedford's position in relation to his brother Gloucester. More importantly, Richard is named in this account in the *Chronicles of London* as a person trusted by Henry V. Beaufort also reminded everyone that this was well known. This may have been rhetoric on Beaufort's part to justify his actions. However a statement before parliament and in the presence of those who would have known the facts implies there must have been some truth in this statement. Certainly Richard's career to date, the annuities he received, his association with Henry V as prince, and later with his brother Clarence, as well as his current position as chamberlain to Bedford, confirms it. Given that Richard was held in such trust by Henry V it is perhaps curious that he was not knighted along with Roger Salvayn and others in April 1418 following the fall of

³⁷⁷ Anne Curry, ed., 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1426, Introduction, Appendix 1426, 1', *PROME*. BL Cotton MS Julius BII, folios 72r-81v, printed in C. L. Kingsford, *The Chronicles of London* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 76-88.

³⁷⁸ Anne Curry, 'Appendix 1426'.

Caen the previous September 1417.³⁷⁹ It is possible that Richard declined, assuming it was ever offered. Knighthood had been in decline for some years, although those able to support the position were numerous, and Richard would have met the income and military service requirement.³⁸⁰

The 1426 parliament had illustrated the grievances and tensions that existed between some of the lords. Bedford therefore took the opportunity with everyone still gathered in Leicester to restore a sense of unity, by holding a knighting ceremony. The young king was knighted by Bedford, and the next day 19 May, the king dubbed those who had been selected.³⁸¹ *The Great Chronicle* lists thirty-six men starting with the duke of York, followed by earls and the sons of earls and then a larger number of esquires which included Richard Wodeville the younger.³⁸² Richard would have been about fifteen or sixteen years old in 1426 and was amongst a select group of young men, a number of whom were of a similar age, although at least two, James Botiller and Henry Grey of Tankervyle were nearer to the young king's age,³⁸³ while Thomas, Lord Roos, was the ward of the duke of Gloucester and a member of the king's court.³⁸⁴

During the same parliament on 2 May Richard's grant for life of the office of customer and collector of the customs in Ireland was also confirmed.³⁸⁵ The summons for those selected for knighthood had gone out on the 4 May, with a further summons for additional candidates going out a week later.³⁸⁶ The timing suggests that the grant of

³⁷⁹ See p. 111, fn. 360 above.

³⁸⁰ Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 37-47. An annual income of £40 was used to determine eligibility for knighthood. However many refused to take it up, preferring to pay a fine. One reason suggested for this was the cost of the ceremony; another was that knighthood was connected to public office, or military service which people preferred not to take up. Distrainment of knighthood was also seen as a means of collecting money in fines when those assessed at the £40 requirement refused the title.

³⁸¹ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 80.

³⁸² *The Great Chronicle of London*, pp. 149-50. *The Chronicle of London* gives thirty-eight, pp. 114-115. Those knighted according to the *Great Chronicle* were: Duke of York, s & h duke of Norffolk, erle Oxenford, erle Westmerland, s & h erle Northumbrelond, s & h erle of Urmonde, lord Roos, Sire James Botiller (Boteller), lorde Mawtravers (Mautravers), Sir Herry Grey of Tankervyle, *Sir William Newyle lord of Faucomberge, Sir George Newyle lord of Latymer*, lorde of Welles, lorde of Berkeley, s & h lord Talbot, Sir Rauff Grey of Werk, Sir Robert de Veer, Sir Richard Grey, Sir Edmond Hungerford, Sir Water Wyngfeld, Sir John Botiller, Sir Reynold Cobham, Sir John Passhelewe, Sir Thomas Bunstall (Tunstall), Sir John Cydeok (Chidiok), Sir Rauff Langstre (Langeford), Sir William Drury, Sir William ap Thomas, Sir Richard Carbonell, Sir Richard Wodeville (Wodevyl), Sir John Shirdelowe (Shardelowe), Sir Nicholl Blunket (Blouket), Sir Rauff Botiller (Radclyff), Sir William Cheyne, Sir William Bekyngton, Sir John Juyn, Sir Robert (Gilbert) Beauchamp, Sir Edmond Trafford. Those in italics are additionally listed in the *Chronicle of London*.

³⁸³ ODNB entries for both show their dates of birth as 1420.

³⁸⁴ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 86.

³⁸⁵ CPR 1422-29, p. 353.

³⁸⁶ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 80. Griffiths suggests that as well as young magnates 'distinguished war commanders' were also knighted, he lists these men as Sir Edmund Hungerford, Sir William ap Thomas, Sir Richard Woodville and Sir Ralph Botiller, p. 81. He is mistaken however in thinking that it was

knighthood to Richard's son and son-in-law may have been part of his reward for his good service in Normandy. Richard's son-in-law John Passhele had married Richard's daughter Elizabeth two years earlier when he was aged about twenty-six.³⁸⁷

Following the parliament Richard returned to Normandy.³⁸⁸ As well as his military duties Richard also acted as an ambassador on behalf of the king and council. On 16 July 1426 Sir William Oldehale, Richard Wydeville and John Estcourt were instructed to go on an embassy to the duke of Burgundy, who was then in Flanders, to discuss various concerns. Oldhall and Richard were to be paid £50 for the journey while Estcourt would receive 50 marks.³⁸⁹ The embassy had taken place between the duke of Burgundy and the duchess of Gloucester. Presumably they had discussed the attempts by Jacqueline of Hainault, duchess of Gloucester, to reclaim her duchy from the duke of Burgundy. On 6 February 1427 the ambassadors petitioned the council for reasonable recompense. They had incurred costs while they awaited replies from the duke and the duchess and also in crossing and re-crossing the sea. A warrant was subsequently issued to the exchequer authorising payment.³⁹⁰ According to the *Bourgeois de Paris*, Bedford had been in England sixteen months 'in the hope of making peace between the Duke of Burgundy, who was his wife's brother, and his own brother, the Duke of Gloucester, but he had not as yet managed to do so'.³⁹¹ Richard's embassy was presumably a part of this negotiation. Bedford did not arrive back in Paris until 5 April 1427.

On the 11 February a further warrant was issued to the exchequer to pay Richard £20 expenses for carrying messages between Calais and the council.³⁹² Presumably this was in addition to the payment for the embassy. It suggests that Richard travelled back and forth across the Channel to maintain a link between the two countries. This had doubtless been necessary given Bedford's prolonged absence from France. As the *Bourgeois* complained, 'All this time the Regent of France was still in England – there was no lord in France at all.'³⁹³

Richard Woodville the elder. He is consistently referred to esquire after this date and it is clearly his son Richard who was knighted.

³⁸⁷ N.H. MacMichael, 'The Descent of the Manor of Evegate in Smeeth with Some Account of its Lords', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 74 (1960), pp. 35-6. John Passhele was born c. 1397/98.

³⁸⁸ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_musterdb.php> The muster roll for 1425/26 shows Richard Woodville as the captain with fifty-two men-at-arms and ninety-eight archers and crossbowmen for garrison duties.

³⁸⁹ *POPC*, vol. 3, p. 201.

³⁹⁰ *POPC*, vol. 3, pp. 244-5. *TNA E101/322/14*.

³⁹¹ *A Parisian Journal 1405-1449*, trans., Janet Shirley (Oxford, 1968), p. 212.

³⁹² *POPC*, vol. 3, p. 245.

³⁹³ *A Parisian Journal*, p. 211.

On the 27 February 1427 the grant of £20 from the fee farm of Drogheda was reconfirmed at Richard's request.³⁹⁴ This suggests that payment had been slow or not been made at all and that perhaps Richard was becoming short of money. There was no let up in his duties in France. In March Richard was listed as one of the commissioners along with Thomas Chaucer and Richard Buckland with others to carry out an inquisition in Calais into all lands and tenements belonging to the king.³⁹⁵ Richard was not alone in being short of money; the government too was in need of income.

Conflict with the earl of Warwick

The earl of Warwick had been captain of Calais since 1417 and during Bedford's absence from France in 1425-27 had been the senior commander. When Bedford returned to France in March 1427, Warwick's role was diminished with Bedford replacing him as captain of Calais. By the 28 June 1427 Richard was acting as lieutenant of Calais.³⁹⁶ This brought him into conflict with Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick. Warwick's appointment as guardian of the young king on 1 June 1428 did not make Warwick feel any less slighted. In a series of five letters which have been dated to this period it appears Warwick held Richard Wydevile, Lewis John and Richard Buckland, treasurer of Calais, responsible for his removal. These letters throw some light on Richard and his friends and associates in Calais.

The first letter is from the three men to Bedford; they had been instructed by the Treasurer of England that Bedford was now captain of Calais,

‘Whereupon he desireth us, youre poure servants, to sue it forth;
whiche we dare not take upon us, with outen special commandement and
supportacion of yow therin; considering that nowe oure lorde of Warrewik
sheweth himself alwaye hevy lorde to Wydevile, Lowis John, and
Richard Bokeland, surmetting upon thayme that they were causers therof...’³⁹⁷

Bedford replied with a calming letter saying he had spoken to Warwick and written to him on the matter. Bedford continued that he had asked Warwick to ‘be yowr

³⁹⁴ *CPR 1422-29*, p. 395.

³⁹⁵ *CPR 1422-29*, p. 404. 8 March, the other commissioners were John Park, Thomas Misterton and Thomas Asshewell. Two of them were required to carry out the inquisition and one of the two had to include Wydevile, Bokeland or Chaucer.

³⁹⁶ *DKR*, 42, p. 250. My thanks to Professor Curry for this reference.

³⁹⁷ *Letters of Margaret of Anjou*, p. 37.

goode lorde, and remoeve his saide hevynesse from yowe.’ Bedford must have replied to each of them individually, as this letter appears to have been written to Buckland in his role as treasurer. This suggests that the problem related to payment that was due to Warwick. Bedford’s letter continues ‘... we wol and pray yow, that, by youre goode discrecion, ye gouvern yowe in suche wise therin, as that ye thenke that ye owe to doo of right and reason; tendering in asmuche as that ye goodely may ... in his forsaide payments’.³⁹⁸

Despite Bedford’s attempts the relationship between Warwick and the three men did not improve. At least not from Buckland’s point of view. Buckland certainly appears to be the most anxious one of the three. However as the only letters available are those to and from Buckland it is only his view that we have. In a letter to a friend who is with Bedford he asks him to advise Bedford of the situation and obtain his good lordship for Buckland in this matter. Buckland goes into detail explaining that, despite their best efforts and ‘lowly submission’, Buckland has learned that Warwick ‘surmittethe to me as for cause principal of his offense and hevy lordeshipp to me wardes, like as he doeth to my cousin Wydvyle and to Lowis John, but principally to me’. Buckland then refers to the payment due to Warwick for his service. Buckland assures his friend he would make payment if possible but ‘that all thassignements of Caley’s wol noght suffice yerely to paye my lorde and his soudeours’. Buckland adds that he might manage to pay him but it would mean ‘the preferment of my saide lorde of Warrewyk’ which would mean Bedford and his men would suffer.

Warwick’s displeasure is as much about the failure to pay wages for himself and his men as his loss of position as captain. It would certainly explain why Buckland in particular was feeling persecuted. He was the treasurer and as such was the nearest person to hand to blame for lack of payment. Buckland’s friend replies in equally soothing terms that Bedford had written to Warwick and also that Bedford advised Buckland should make his payments ‘in such wise, as that ye owe to doo of right, and as that goode feith and conscience wolde, ...’ Little wonder that Buckland was feeling vulnerable. This was hardly support or a clear instruction, but a politician’s answer.

The final letter is from Buckland to Richard Wydevile. In it Buckland says he has heard that when Warwick had the letter telling him he was relieved as captain he had said,

³⁹⁸ *Letters of Margaret of Anjou*, p. 38.

‘that ye had be besy to excuse youreself unto his lordeship, and surmitted the defaulte hooly upon Lowys John and me; the whiche notwithstanding, he hathe yow never the more excused, as it is saide...’

It is possible that Warwick was trying to cause dissent between the three men, or that Buckland’s informant was. It may be that Warwick was aware that someone was feeding back information, hence the varying claims over who said what. Buckland continues that Warwick had the letter, or had seen a letter, that Lewis John and Buckland had written to Richard against Warwick ‘yn that matier’. Buckland says he is amazed because he had not said anything against Warwick,

‘For God knoweth that, yf a cas felle, that touched my worship, or the contrarye, as mucche as were possible, I durste right well disclose hit unto yow, as for truste of trouthe and secretness, as mucche as to any persone liffyng. And, treuly, I can not remembre me, that ever I wrote to yow any thing that shulde cause my saide lorde of Warrewyk to be thus displeased ...’³⁹⁹

The letters demonstrate how much gossip and rumour there was in Calais and how faction could cause an oppressive atmosphere of distrust. Although Buckland cannot remember writing anything critical of Warwick, the assertion that he had has clearly left him uncertain about his friends. However, Buckland continues that he trusts Richard completely, and if he was going to confide in anyone it would be him. The responses of Richard and Lewis John are unknown, and there are no more letters from Buckland. Whatever the truth of the matter it does not seem to have affected their careers, or their friendship. Both Buckland and Richard were part of Bedford’s council, and Buckland continued as treasurer until 1436. The two men continued to work together on commissions and in 1431 Buckland was one of the knights of the shire for Northampton, having previously represented Northamptonshire in 1425. They therefore had connections at home as well as in France. In March 1430 they had been required to carry 12,500 marks to the duke of Burgundy, for which they were to be paid 100 marks for the journey.⁴⁰⁰ The dangers inherent in such a journey would have

³⁹⁹ *Letters of Margaret of Anjou*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁰⁰ *Rymer Foedera* (London, 1873), vol. 2, p. 648. *POPC*, vol. 4, p. 31, 9 March 1430 to Richard Wydeville and Richard Bokeland payment of 100 marks to take the money to Bruges to the duke.; pp. 32-3, 9 & 11

required the men to trust each other and be able to get along. It would seem that Buckland retained his belief and trust in Richard; we must suppose that Richard's reply to Buckland had been convincing.

While Richard and Buckland are Bedford's men, Lewis John's career was assisted by Thomas Chaucer. Chaucer was closely associated with Cardinal Beaufort, and therefore so was Lewis John. Of greater interest is the suggestion that Lewis John had been 'a boon companion of the future Henry V and his brothers'.⁴⁰¹ Certainly John appears to have associated with Henry before he became king. It may therefore be possible that Richard and Lewis John had known each other from this time and followed a similar career path in the service of Henry and his brothers. Their relationship does not seem to have suffered in the Warwick affair either. They can still be seen working together up until Richard's death.

Once again there is a gap in the record and Richard's location is unknown. He was lieutenant of Calais during 1427. It seems likely given the absence of any records for service in England that he remained in France. He appears as captain of the garrison at Caen in November 1427 and November 1428.⁴⁰² Henry VI arrived in France in April 1430 following his coronation the previous November. On 17 March 1431 a warrant was issued to the treasury to pay Richard £100 for attending the king's council in person in his kingdom of France for six months.⁴⁰³ On 24 April the Lord Chancellor and members of the council appointed Richard Wydeville, Robert Darcy and Robert Whityngham to hear the grievances which the mayor of the Calais Staple, John Reynewell, had with other members of the Staple. The hearing must have concluded quickly for on the 28 April John Reynewell was reporting the outcome to those members of the king's council remaining in England.

March the king 'a noz chers et bien amez esquires Richard Wydeville et Richard Bokeland saluz. ...Pour vous deliverer la somme de dousze mille et cinque centz marcs pour faire carier et amesner ycelle somme a noz perill et aventure taunt par terre comme par eau et ycelle deliverer a notre treschier et tresame uncle le Duc de Bourgne.'

⁴⁰¹ A.D. Carr, 'Sir Lewis John – A Medieval London Welshman', *Bulletin of Celtic Studies*, vol. 22 (1968), pp. 261-2. Carr's quote comes from Stow's *Survey of London* (Everyman edition), p. 216. However he seems to be overstating the case slightly. What Stow actually says is 'I read, that in the reign of Henry IV., the young prince Henry, Thomas Duke of Clarence, John Duke of Bedford, and Humpfrey Duke of Gloucester, the king's sons, being at supper among the merchants of London in the Vintry, in the house of Lewes John, ...' The careers of John and Wydeville make an interesting comparison. Both appear to have served in the royal household; however John appears to have been the better businessman. He amassed a large income and built up an estate, regularly purchasing land in Essex, particularly in the area of West Thorndon. The 1436 taxation assessed him at £350. He also had income from the ferry between West Thurrock, Essex, and Greenhithe, Kent. He also married well, (1) Alice, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford. (2) Anne, daughter of John Montagu, Earl of Salisbury.

⁴⁰² <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_garrisondb.php> (accessed 2/11/11).

⁴⁰³ *POPC*, vol. 4, pp. 81-2.

According to Reynewell, they ‘so notably, so indifferently, and so truly laboured theese materes, that all manere hevynesse and grievances been concluded to parfite reste and pees betwixt the saide parties and me...’ Therefore the council could forget his complaints and he would pay the necessary fees and costs to establish peace between himself and the men of the Staple.⁴⁰⁴ While Reynewell may have been obsequious in his praise for Richard and his colleagues before the council, it is probable that they were considered to be fair and judicious. It would not have been in the council’s interest to select arbitrators that neither side in a dispute could accept. Richard, Whittingham and Darcy would have had proven skills for negotiation and diplomacy.

When Henry VI returned to England in January 1432, Richard appears to have returned at the same time. The rising costs of the French war meant that the crown was in continual financial difficulty. Cardinal Beaufort was one of the biggest lenders to the crown taking some of the crown jewels as surety. In July 1432 Beaufort lent the crown £6,000 followed by £8,667.⁴⁰⁵ Amongst those who took out bonds to secure the Cardinal’s loan was Richard Wideville in the sum of £166 13s 4d.⁴⁰⁶ This was greater than his annual income from annuities paid by the crown. Given the state of the exchequer it is questionable how much of his annuities he received each year. Unless he had substantial income from his estates, Richard’s financial position cannot have been good.

In July 1432 Richard was one of eighteen men listed with William Estfeld, a London mercer, who obtained the farm of land in Chesham. The land was in the king’s hands following the death of Thomas Reynes. This was renewed in June 1434 to extend to the following Easter. In November 1432 the estate of Thomas Enot of Ealdyng, Kent came into the king’s hands and appears to have been broken up; a third part of the manor of Westbramlyng went to John Enot, presumably a relative, while meadow, pasture, a fishery and woodland in Ealdyng and Brincheley was placed into the hands of a group of local men.⁴⁰⁷ Their tenure was limited until the following Michaelmas (29 September). The Treasury expected to make a profit out of the transaction but given their numbers these men could hardly expect to make much profit.

With Richard’s return to England on a more permanent basis his main area of interest lay in Kent, while his brother Thomas was fully engaged in Northamptonshire.

⁴⁰⁴ *POPC*, vol. 4, pp. 85-6.

⁴⁰⁵ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 120.

⁴⁰⁶ *TNA SC8/144/7181 & SC8/144/7182*. Included on the list were William Lynwode, Sir William Phelip and Lord Cromwell who each stood surety for £133 6s 8d.

⁴⁰⁷ *CFR 1430-37*, pp. 100, 202 & 120 respectively.

Richard still had duties which would take him to France and Kent would provide him with easier access to the continent. In February 1433 he was one of the commissioners of oyer and terminer in the county, looking into a complaint by the archbishop of York, William Scot and John Pyrye that William Partriche of Tunbridge, with others, had broken into their park and houses at Beerlyng, assaulted the tenants and taken away goods.⁴⁰⁸ In November he became sheriff of Kent while his brother Thomas was appointed sheriff of Northamptonshire.⁴⁰⁹

The duke of Bedford had returned from France at the end of June, and 'the period from July 1433 witnessed a deliberate attempt on the part of Bedford and his uncle (Beaufort) to extend their own power in the realm by gratifying the ambitions of their clients'.⁴¹⁰ One way of doing this was the placement of their men as sheriffs; this included Robert Whittingham in Essex-Hertfordshire and Thomas Darcy in Lincolnshire as well as the two Wydevile brothers.⁴¹¹ Richard also served as one of the knights of the shire for Kent, with John Pyrye in the same year.⁴¹²

On 5 July 1434 Richard witnessed a grant of land in Preston and Suffleton in Aylesford Kent, to William Garnet by Elizabeth Wotton daughter of Sir Thomas de Cobham. Not long after he was back in France.

In March 1434 Lord Talbot had taken a small force to France and taken Creil-sur-Oise. Bedford followed with an army in July.⁴¹³ On 3 June 1434 Richard had been commissioned to take a muster at Dover on 14 June of men-at-arms and archers before they proceeded to France.⁴¹⁴ His son Sir Richard mustered with his retinue of twenty men-at-arms and sixty archers in Calais on 18 June. A further muster took place at Dover on 12 July.⁴¹⁵ The army led by Bedford numbered 1,400 and, according to Griffiths, it 'included retinues which had fought there in 1431 and 1432 – those of Sir Richard Woodville and Lord Clifton, for example'.⁴¹⁶ From this it would seem that father and son had both been serving in France from at least 1431, if not earlier. Sir Richard would have been aged about nineteen or twenty in 1431. It is reasonable to assume that his father had found a place for him in Bedford's household before this.

⁴⁰⁸ *CPR 1429-36*, pp. 273 & 352.

⁴⁰⁹ *CFR 1430-37*, p. 176.

⁴¹⁰ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 98.

⁴¹¹ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 99.

⁴¹² *CCR 1429-35*, pp. 270-1.

⁴¹³ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 197.

⁴¹⁴ *CPR 1429-36*, p. 356.

⁴¹⁵ *CPR 1429-36*, pp. 359 & 424-5 respectively.

⁴¹⁶ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 197.

Richard's last years 1435-1441

Upon his return to Calais Richard was involved in another diplomatic mission. Instructions were issued on 14 February 1435 to Robert Shortesbrok, John Stokes, Stephen Wilton and Richard Wydeville with eight others to go to the duke of Burgundy. They were to discuss changes to the statutes of the Calais staple with the duke and the Four Members of Flanders.⁴¹⁷ There is nothing to indicate what was discussed or the outcome of those discussions. The relationship between England and Burgundy had been slowly deteriorating since the death of Bedford's wife Anne, sister of the duke of Burgundy. Trade in cloth through the Staple was another victim of the political situation.

In the first week of May 1435 Richard received bad news. Rue had fallen to the French. Bedford therefore instructed the earl of Arundel to go to its relief. According to the Burgundian chronicler Monstrelet, Arundel only partly obeyed. During the journey Arundel heard that the French were repairing the fortress of Gerberoy. He therefore decided to make a detour and prevent the French from completing their work. Severely defeated, with most of his men dead, Arundel was badly wounded and captured along with 120 of his men. Amongst those captured and held for ransoms were 'sir Richard de Dondeville (Woodville), Mondot de Montferrant, and Restandif (Sir Ralph Standish) ...'⁴¹⁸ How much ransom was demanded for Sir Richard or how long it took to secure his release is unknown. It could not have been long. Sir Richard received a protection to serve with the duke of Suffolk in France in May 1436 so he was certainly free by this date.⁴¹⁹

The year continued to get worse; the congress of Arras opened on 12 August and achieved nothing beneficial to the English. Instead the French and Burgundians formed an alliance and the duke of Burgundy withdrew from his English alliance. This was followed by the death of the duke of Bedford on 14 September and a Franco-Burgundian treaty was signed on 21 September.

Troops were continually arriving from England; on 18 July Richard, along with Richard Buckland and others, had taken the muster of men arriving in Calais before they moved on into Normandy.⁴²⁰ Following Bedford's death on 1 October Richard was appointed lieutenant of Calais and the next day he took out a letter of attorney for

⁴¹⁷ *Rymer Foedera*, vol. 2, p. 659.

⁴¹⁸ *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, trans., Thomas Johnes (London, 1840), vol. 1, pp. 637-8, de Dondeville has been identified as Woodville by Johnes. See p. 142, fn. 7 below.

⁴¹⁹ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protodb.php> (accessed 2/6/11).

⁴²⁰ *CPR 1429-36*, p. 476.

service in France.⁴²¹ A week later he was commissioned with Sir John Styward and William Baron to take a muster of the soldiers Bedford had serving with him at Calais on the day of his death.⁴²²

In December Richard was again called upon to use his skills in diplomacy when he was commissioned with Buckland, Richard Sellyng, John Stokes and Thomas Borowe to deal with the master of Prussia and the Hanse regarding redress of injuries.⁴²³ Meanwhile the duke of Gloucester succeeded Bedford as captain of Calais and gradually began to replace Bedford's appointees. In February Buckland was replaced as treasurer by his son-in-law Robert Whittingham and in March Richard was replaced as lieutenant by Sir John Radcliffe.⁴²⁴

By 7 May 1436 Richard had returned to England and was taking a muster at Winchelsea of the retinue of 260 men-at-arms and 1,400 archers of the earl of Salisbury. At the same muster were the earl of Suffolk with forty men-at-arms and 160 archers and the duke of York with 500 men-at-arms and 2,200 archers. Richard's son Sir Richard had taken out a letter of protection to serve in Suffolk's retinue.⁴²⁵ On 9 July the Burgundians laid siege to Calais. The King quickly began to raise an army, summoning all those in receipt of his fees and enlisting those who had recently served in France.⁴²⁶ Amongst those called up were Richard and his son-in-law William Haute. In August they received payment for one month's service as joint captains for the relief of Calais.⁴²⁷ The siege did not last long; by the end of July the Burgundians had withdrawn. The army which had been sent to secure Calais under the duke of Gloucester was one of the largest to arrive in France since the death of Henry V.⁴²⁸

This appears to be Richard's last military action. In October 1436 and March 1437 he was acting as a justice of the peace in Kent. In January 1437 he had been appointed constable of Rochester Castle, with the accustomed profits and fees.⁴²⁹ In November he was appointed sheriff of Northampton. His brother Thomas was now in his seventies, so Richard may have taken on the traditional family role in Northamptonshire. He

⁴²¹ *Rymer Foedera*, vol. 2, p. 660 and

<http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protdb.php> (accessed 2/6/11).

⁴²² *CPR 1429-36*, p.489, 8 October, 1435.

⁴²³ *Rymer Foedera*, vol. 2, p. 660.

⁴²⁴ *ODNB*, Themes, 'Commanding officers at Calais' lists Gloucester as captain 1435-42, with Sir Thomas Rempston becoming his lieutenant in 1437. Griffiths *Henry VI*, p. 202.

⁴²⁵ *CPR 1429-36*, pp. 535-6 and <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protdb.php> (accessed 14/12/08). Letter of protection for Sir Richard to go to France in the service of William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk.

⁴²⁶ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 204.

⁴²⁷ *TNA E403/7/24/m13* – my thanks to Professor Curry for this reference.

⁴²⁸ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 203.

⁴²⁹ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 41.

seems to have been dividing his time between the two counties. Later the same month he was back in Kent on a commission enquiring into goods sent abroad without the payment of customs.⁴³⁰ During this year Richard was also appointed a steward of duchy of Lancaster lands in Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire and parts of Buckinghamshire, which had been set aside for the fulfilment of Henry V's will. Richard was appointed along with William Tresham by Henry V's feoffees. In November 1443 Tresham was confirmed in the office for life with his son Thomas who had replaced Richard.⁴³¹

Richard served on a number of commissions. On 12 February 1438 he inquired into the failure of goods to pass through customs and in October 1439 an inquiry in Kent into the hoarding of large stores of corn.⁴³² On 19 March 1439 he was one of the commissioners in Northampton to raise a loan for the king.⁴³³ He also served as a justice of the peace Kent in November 1438, July 1439, July 1440 and February and July 1441.⁴³⁴ His involvement in both national and local affairs was gradually declining and it seems as though Richard was now slowing down, even though he was only in his late fifties.

On 4 July 1441 he was given power of attorney along with Sir Louis John, William Tresham and William Garnet by his son Sir Richard who had indented to serve with the king in France. Sir Richard was in a hurry and wrote from Battle Abbey on 4 July requesting that the attorney be granted by letters patent,

... for asmuche as hit is wele knowen to your seid lordshipp that I am disposed in hast with goddes mercy to passe the see ...by cause that my leyser asketh not now to come in propre persone to your presence to certifie yow the names of suche persones as I haue ordeyned therto. I beseche yow lowely that hit like yow to receyue lowes Iohn knight my ffader Richard wydevyll Squyer william Tresham and william Garnet. And that I may haue the said letters Patentis therof made in due for me: And This my writyng signed with my Signe manuell. and Seald with my Seall. vnder whiche I haue endented with the kyng oure soueraigne lord. I will holde ferme and stable.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ *CPR 1437-45*, p. 4 and *CPR 1436-41*, pp. 584, 145 -6 respectively.

⁴³¹ John S. Roskell, 'William Tresham of Sywell' *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, vol. 2, (1954-9), p. 194. R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. 1 1265-1603 (London, 1953), p. 586.

⁴³² *CPR 1436-41*, pp. 147 & 369, respectively.

⁴³³ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 249-50.

⁴³⁴ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 584.

⁴³⁵ *TNA SC1/44/11*, transcribed in *An anthology of Chancery English* available at

In November Richard (iii) made his will. He was not yet sixty. This confirms the suspicion that he was unwell given his lack of activity in the preceding years. He was dead by July 1442 as his widow Joan was granted a licence to hold the manor of Wicken for life.⁴³⁶ In his will dated 29 November 1441 Richard requested burial in All Saints church Maidstone. All his moveable goods were left to his wife Joan so that she and his executors could arrange his burial, pay his household servants and his other debts. Richard also requested that his manor of Salford, Bedfordshire should be sold to pay his debts, with any residue going to his wife. His executors were his son-in-law William Hawte, Sir Robert Abbot 'de Graciis' and Richard Barbor. He also asked his son to be an executor and 'to be protector and helper to Johanne my wife his mother all his life as he would wish to rejoice before God and my blessing'.⁴³⁷

Income and property

As discussed previously the majority of Richard's income came from annuities paid by the king, totalling just over £106. On 9 May 1440 the annuity of £40 paid to himself and his wife had once again been confirmed.⁴³⁸ On 25 June 1438 there is a rare example of Richard and his son working together to recover a debt of 200 marks which was owed to them and William Garnet and Edward Clayton by John Sweredere, a husbandman in Great Leighs, Essex and his son Simon Swerdere of White Roding, Essex.⁴³⁹ William Garnet was one of Sir Richard's attorneys in 1441. If Richard was chasing debts owed it suggests he may have been in financial difficulties, some of which might relate to meeting his son's ransom. His only other income would have come from the farms he acquired in 1432, but these were only for one or two years. He would also have received some income from the offices he held and money from his lands. The income from lands in Normandy may have negligible.

On his father John (ii)'s death Richard had inherited the manor of Wicken, but it was not until the death of his brother Thomas, only a few years before his own, that he inherited land at Grafton. The feudal aid of 1428 shows Richard as holding one quarter of a knight's fee in Wicken, Northamptonshire and in right of his wife a sixth of a knight's fee in Ashton, Somerset that Edmund de Lyons previously held. Johanne

< <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/ChancEng/1:209?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> > (accessed 22/6/11).

⁴³⁶ *CPR 1441-46*, p. 97.

⁴³⁷ *Medieval & Tudor Kent Wills at Lambeth*, book 23, p. 240

<<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/Wills/Lbth/Bk23/page%20240.htm>> (accessed 6/3/06).

⁴³⁸ *CCR 1435-41*, p. 314.

⁴³⁹ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 115.

Wodevil also held half a knight's fee in Ashton that Elizabeth de Asshton formerly held and a knight's fee in Clevedon, Somerset, previously held by Edmund de Clyvedon.⁴⁴⁰ The relationship between his wife and Elizabeth de Ashton and Edmund Lyons is unclear. The information in the feudal aid would seem to suggest a relationship between Thomas's wife Elizabeth Lyons and Richard's wife Joan.

In his will Richard asked that his manor of Salford, Bedfordshire be sold to meet his debts. Holcot which was another Wydevile property is in the same parish. There is nothing to indicate when Richard purchased Salford. According to the Victoria County History, in 1428 the manor belonged to Ankareta, wife of Thomas Drakelow. At this date Oliver Groos and other trustees relinquished their rights to Thomas Widville and others. Ten years later this manor formed part of the endowment of Archbishop Chichele to All Souls College Oxford. This provides a link between the manor and Wydevile. It is possible that Richard purchased the manor through the agency of his brother. It is therefore possible that the sale was to Chichele in 1441/2 and not earlier.⁴⁴¹ As the property nominated for paying his debts, it probably had no meaning for him as a home and may have been a recent acquisition.

On 18 May 1425 Richard purchased the manor and tenements of Lee (Leigh?), Shrofold in Lee (Shrawfield?), Bankhurst and Detling, along with two mills, land, meadow, pasture and wood in Lee, Lewisham, Mottingham (in Eltham) and Detling. It was purchased from John de Kent and Joan his wife for '300 marks of silver'. The purchase was made with the duke of Bedford, William Fortho, John Gyfford, John Bosenho, John Barton and Richard Willoughby acting as feoffees.⁴⁴² Most of these men appear to be Northamptonshire men with connections to Richard's brother Thomas. It is possible that Thomas arranged the deal on Richard's behalf.

The property most commonly connected to Richard is the Mote at Maidstone. His acquisition of the manor is somewhat confused (see appendix 2). It seems likely that the property was purchased by Richard at the same time as the other properties in Kent. The various properties which Richard is known to have purchased are quite widely dispersed. Leigh is close to Tonbridge while Mottingham and Lewisham are closer to Greenwich and London. Detling is the only one of these properties close to Maidstone and the Mote. As much of Richard's time was spent travelling back and forth between

⁴⁴⁰ *Feudal Aids*, vol. 4 pp. 43 and 381.

⁴⁴¹ *VCH Bedfordshire*, vol. 3, pp.424-5 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42458>> (accessed 23/6/11).

⁴⁴² *Feet of Fines* CP 25/1/114/298 no. 105, <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_114_298.shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

Calais and the council in London, it would have been convenient to purchase land in Kent. It would make travel much easier to both London and across the Channel. Richard may have been purchasing whatever land happened to become available in the area before deciding to settle at the Mote. The Mote was possibly the most suitable property for his status. A previous occupant, Topclyve had done work on the property, including the crenellations, so it may have been the most modern of his properties.

Wife and children

As discussed earlier, a possible date for Richard's marriage is 1408. There has been some confusion over his wife Joan's identity. The Complete Peerage says she was Joan Bedlisgate, daughter of John Bedlisgate and Mary Beauchamp. Mary was said to be the daughter and co-heir of William Beauchamp of Somerset. However on the brass to Richard and his wife in All Saints church is her family coat of arms and this provides an alternative identification. All that remains today of the brass is an indent in the stone slab; fortunately, in 1631, Sir Edward Dering made a drawing of the tomb. This shows her arms to have been quarterly 1 and 3 or on a bend sable 3 bedles argent, 2 and 4 vair. The first represents Bittellesgate and the second Beauchamp of Lillesdon, Somerset.⁴⁴³ The heraldry allowed Hansen and Thompson to convincingly demonstrate that Joan's father was Thomas Bittlesgate of Devon and her mother was Joan Beauchamp. Joan Beauchamp was the sister of Sir Thomas Beauchamp of White Lackington, a cadet branch of the Beauchamps of Hache. They further suggest that it was Sir Thomas Beauchamp, a close supporter of Henry IV, who arranged the marriage of his niece Joan Bittlesgate to Richard Wydevile. The connection to Bittellesgate is confirmed in a petition by Antony Wydevile in c.1475 over land in Devon. He claimed to be 'Cosyn & heire to Thomas Bittellesgate, Esquier, Lord of Knyghsteton ...'⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ Charles M. Hansen & Neil D. Thompson, 'The Wydevills' Quartering for Beauchamp', *The Coat of Arms*, NS, vol. 9, no. 157 (1992), p. 179.

⁴⁴⁴ Hansen & Thompson, p. 182.

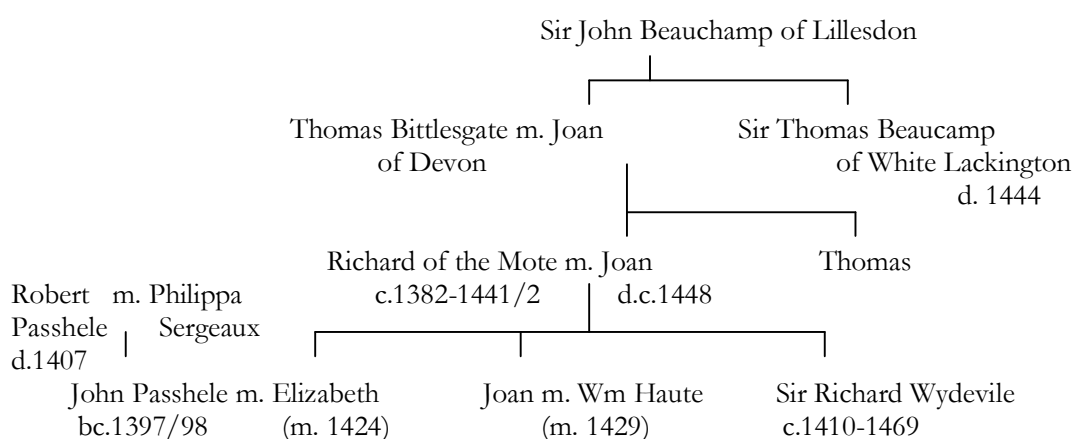


Figure 25. Drawing (taken from Dering), of Wydevile tomb in All Saints Maidstone (Archaeologia Cantiana vol. 1, 1858)

Joan survived her husband for at least another seven years. On 19 August 1446 confirmation was given of the grant made by Henry in 1408 of an annuity paid from the fee farm of Drogheda.⁴⁴⁵ Instructions were also given that any arrears arising since 20 May 1414 should also be made. This was the date on which the grant had been re-confirmed by Henry when he became king. On 17 July 1448 letters were issued nominating Richard Bermyngeham and John Chyver as her attorneys in Ireland for one year as Joan was staying in England. John Kirkeby received the attorneys 'until the coming of the nominator to Ireland'.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ CCR 1441-47 p. 340

⁴⁴⁶ CPR 1446-52 p. 163.

Figure 26. Genealogy of Joan Bittlesgate

Richard and Joan had three surviving children, Richard born about 1410, and two daughters Elizabeth and Joan. Elizabeth was married to Sir John Passhele, probably in 1424. In February of that year Sir John had placed his manors of Thevegat in Smeeth and Passhele in Sussex, in the hands of feoffees. The feoffees were Robert Cavendish, Walter Bodelgate and William Joyntour. They then enfeoffed Sir John and 'Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Wydewylle' in the same manors for life with remainder to their heirs. To ensure Elizabeth would be provided with these manors or others to the net value of forty marks a year, Passhele took out a bond of 1,000 marks, which he was to pay to Richard if he defaulted on the agreement.⁴⁴⁷ Sir John was some years older than his wife. If the date of Elizabeth's parent's marriage was 1408, the earliest she could have been born was 1409 in which case she was no older than fifteen, but she may have been as young as twelve, and her husband was twenty-six or twenty-seven. Sir John's father, Robert had died in 1407. His mother Philippa later married William Swynborne, esquire. When William Swynborne died in May 1422, he left twenty marks in his will to the two daughters of Richard Wodeville, esquire.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ MacMichael, p. 35-8. In 1429 Sir John granted all his manors and lands in Kent, Sussex and Oxford to feoffees, Richard Wodeville, William Haute, Thomas Bodolgate and Edward Clayton. In 1431 He made another agreement with his feoffees to re-enfeoff himself and his wife in 'Thevegat, Passhley and Chipping Norton', but to let at farm the manors of 'Moote, Rigge and Frenssh Court'. The feoffees farmed the manors to Nicholas Dixon, Roger Heron and Richard Bokeland and John Olney. When Sir John died in 1453 the inquisition returned for Sussex showed that amongst the lands he held in the county was a manor called 'La Moote' in Iden parish. His son also named John quitclaimed the manor of La Mote to amongst others William Beaufitz of London. The names Heron and Beaufitz occur in relation to a manor in Sussex with the same name as the Mote in Kent, which adds to the confusion over Wydeviles' purchase of the Mote near Maidstone. However it does illustrate that the people involved were all connected to one another in various land arrangements and adds to the suspicion that the arrangement over the Mote was less than valid.

⁴⁴⁸ MacMichael, p. 35.

Richard's second daughter, Joan, was married to William Haute of Kent. The marriage settlement was signed 18 July 1429. The agreement provided Joan with a jointure of lands or rents to the value of 100 marks a year 'whch he saith he haith in feesymple'. Richard also required Haute to find a way to transfer the lands which should have gone to his heir by his first wife Margaret, 'in als strange wyse as the Councelle of the foresaid Richart and William can best devyse'. William insisted however that he would not do it at the expense of making his daughter 'a woman of Religion'. For her dower William was to provide Joan with land or rent to the value of £40 a year of the 'best and the suerest that the said William haith to be choseyn by the devyse of the foresaid Richart...' In return Richard would give Haute 400 marks on the day the feoffment was signed. Richard would also pay all costs for the marriage which was to take place in Calais, and provide his daughter with 'hir Chambre as a gentlewoman aught for to have and after the astaete of the foresaid Richart Wydeville'.⁴⁴⁹

Richard seems to have engaged in some sharp practice to ensure that his daughters had a secure income. That Passhele and Haute were prepared to accept this indicates Richard's importance and influence if not his own wealth. Richard was thus establishing his own sphere of influence in Kent. It is probable that at this stage he did not expect to acquire any more lands in Northamptonshire beyond Wicken. If his brother did have a son Thomas, then he may still have been alive at this time. Richard's actions are what might be expected of a younger son establishing himself and his family as securely as possible in a new area, away from the senior family line. Given the arrangements made for his daughters, and it seems likely this was done as soon as they were of marriageable age, it is quite possible that Richard had also thought about his son's marriage. If anything had been arranged it came to nothing. By 1437 Richard had made his own marriage - a marriage that was beyond anything his father might have planned or thought possible.

The decision by Thomas and Richard or their families to depict them in brass is informative of their view of themselves, their family and their position within their community. According to Nigel Saul brasses 'were integral to the strategies of legitimation by which families affirmed their position in the elite'. Apart from inscriptions asking for prayers for the soul the brass acted as a visual display of status. The ability to afford such a memorial was in itself a good indicator.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Samuel Bentley, ed., *Excerpta Historica or Illustrations of English History*, (1831), pp. 249-50.

⁴⁵⁰ Saul, 'Bold as Brass', p. 171.

The tomb of their father John (iii) made a similar statement. Although an engraved marble slab, it has many of the features to be found on the brasses of Thomas and Richard, in that he is shown in armour with an inscription. If the niches around the sides still held their decorated shields we might also understand more about his family connections. It was in the depiction of themselves that ‘the deceased’s membership of one of the divinely ordained estates could be indicated through attire – cope or mass vestments for members of the first estate, armour for the second, and civilian attire for the third’.⁴⁵¹ While John (iii)’s sons could claim to be members of the military estate, there is little indication that John (iii) was. This may explain why he is depicted as a knight; to demonstrate that this was the estate to which he belonged. Perhaps he had in mind the disparaging comments of John Thirlwall during the Scrope v Grovesnor enquiry, that Richard Scrope’s father was ‘no gentleman ... because he was a man of law’.⁴⁵² Whatever Thirlwall may have thought about the estate of a gentleman, John (iii) certainly considered himself to be one. If his depiction in armour was insufficient then any coats of arms adorning his tomb may have made up any deficiency.

Both his sons utilised heraldry to demonstrate their right to bear the Wydevile arms, and to display their wives’ pedigree. Thomas is also depicted wearing a collar of SS to demonstrate his ties to the house of Lancaster (see fig. 23).⁴⁵³ In 1401 Henry IV made the collar of SS a royal livery. The king’s sons, dukes, earls and barons were entitled to wear it both in the king’s presence and his absence. Knights and esquires were only entitled to wear the collar in the king’s presence.⁴⁵⁴ The collar was a reward for valour or high achievement in civil service. Before Agincourt Henry V ‘declared that all those not of noble birth who were willing to fight bravely would be given the SS collar’.⁴⁵⁵ There is nothing to indicate that this is how Thomas received his collar; most

⁴⁵¹ Saul, ‘Bold as Brass’, p. 171.

⁴⁵² Andy King, ‘What Were Amounteth’: The Military Experience of Knights of the Shire, 1369-1389’, *History*, vol. 95, issue 4, no. 320 (Oct. 2010), p.420. The comment from Thirlwall came during the hearing of the Scrope v. Grosvenor case in the Court of Chivalry which took place during 1385-90.

⁴⁵³ Saul, ‘Bold as Brass’, pp. 186-7. In the last quarter of the fourteenth century, ‘Receipt of a magnate’s livery or collar was held to confer worldly honour on the person who wore it.’ Increasing use of the collar led to its increased depiction on brasses. Use of such motifs could ‘indicate the commemorateds’ connections and social standing ...’

⁴⁵⁴ Doris Fletcher, ‘The Lancastrian Collar of Esses: Its Origins and Transformations Down the Centuries’, in *The Age of Richard II*, ed., James L. Gillespie (Stroud, 1997), p.192. Most collars had a pendant which consisted of a trefoil-shaped turet with a ring hanging from it, p. 195 (see the picture of William Phelip, lord Bardolf). The owner of an SS collar could attach a family emblem, fashionable pendant or a religious image to the ring, p. 196. From Thomas Wydevile’s brass it appears he attached an emblem of his own choosing, but there is nothing to indicate it was a family emblem.

⁴⁵⁵ Fletcher, ‘The Lancastrian Collar’, p. 199.

likely it was for service, but perhaps he chose to be depicted wearing it to show his ‘faithfulness and true nobility’.⁴⁵⁶

The drawing of Richard’s brass does not show a collar (see fig. 25), but it might have been expected that he would be depicted with the collar of SS. His links to the house of Lancaster were greater than those of his brother. It is quite possible he and his wife both displayed the collar of SS, as his comrade in arms Sir William Phelips, Lord Bardolf (d. 1441) and his wife Joan had done on their tomb (see fig. 27).



Figure 27. Tomb of William Philip, Lord Bardolf and his wife Joan, Dennington, Suffolk. Both are shown wearing a collar of SS.

Can the Wydeviles be described as ‘gentlemen’ and as members of the ‘gentry elite’? This is certainly how they saw themselves if their tombs are an indication of their perception of themselves. In the absence of any personal written records, this is all we have to go on. The only other indication that Richard (iii) defined himself as a gentleman is in the marriage settlement of his daughter Joan. In this he describes Joan as ‘a gentlewoman’; the corollary must therefore be that he was a gentleman.⁴⁵⁷

A number of county studies have been undertaken which have looked at the gentry. These have identified a ‘defined stratum of “upper gentry” in the English shires, at least by the end of the fourteenth century if not earlier.’ Within the total number of gentry for a shire is a smaller number of ‘upper gentry’ who can be defined both by the

⁴⁵⁶ Fletcher, ‘The Lancastrian Collar’, p. 202 quoting John Gower who described what receipt of the collar meant to him.

⁴⁵⁷ *Excerpta Historica*, p. 250. ‘Also the said Richard shall gyffen to the foresaid William and to Jahan his doughter hir Chambre as gentlewoman aught for to have and after the astaete of the foresaid Richart Wydeville’.

extent of their land holding and those who took on the 'greater shire offices such as sheriff, M.P. ...' etc. The gentry provided the king's retainers. This meant that 'there was a sprinkling of local bigwigs directly attached to the crown' in the shires.⁴⁵⁸

The links between the grant of knighthood and a certain level of wealth, military service or local government service, suggest that the Wydeviles should have become knights in the fourteenth century.⁴⁵⁹ There may have been reasons why they did not take up knighthood, but the most likely may have been the cost. They certainly did not shy away from service; on the contrary they seem to have actively sought service. In this way they steadily increased both their status and their public profile throughout the century. They would therefore qualify as one of the 'local bigwigs' for most of the fourteenth century.

The service of Richard (iii) to the crown provided his son with the opportunity to raise the family still higher. In 1460 Richard Neville, earl of Warwick claimed that Richard (iii) was a 'knave' who had been 'broute up with Kyng Herry the Vte'⁴⁶⁰ While this was doubtless exaggeration, Richard cannot be considered a 'knave'; he was far from being a menial, and there is some truth in his having been brought up with Henry V. Richard appears in Henry's service by 1408 at the latest and is being described as 'king's esquire' in January 1409.⁴⁶¹ Service in France led to Richard (iii) holding a number of important offices, seneschal of Normandy in 1421, treasurer-general of Normandy 1422-23 and lieutenant of Calais in 1427. He served on the king's council in 1430 and was Bedford's chamberlain. Richard was therefore able to bring his son into Bedford's service also.

By the time of his death, Richard (iii) had also been able to purchase a number of properties as well as inheriting the family estate at Grafton from his brother, at the expense of his half-sisters. However the brevity of Richard's will and the fact that he gave instructions for a manor to be sold to meet his debts, suggests that Richard was not as wealthy as his brother Thomas had been. Richard's total income from property

⁴⁵⁸ Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household*, pp. 265-6. County studies undertaken include Eric Acheson *A Gentry Community Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c.1422-c.1485* (paperback, Cambridge 2002), Susan M. Wright *Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century* (Chesterfield, 1983), Christine Carpenter *Locality and polity A study of Warwickshire landed society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge, 1992) and Nigel Saul *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1981).

⁴⁵⁹ See various county studies as above, fn.458 and Benjamin M. Daw, 'English knighthood in decline: the last years of the Hundred Years War, 1435-53', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 83, no. 3 (Autumn, 2001) pp201-220. Each attempts in various ways to define what constituted membership of the gentry and knighthood. A monetary criteria of £40, was long established, and assessments could be undertaken by kings to see who was eligible and then fine those who declined the honour. This was seen as a way of raising money by some monarchs.

⁴⁶⁰ See below p. 169 and fn. 107.

⁴⁶¹ *CPR 1408-13*, pp. 43 & 53.

was unlikely to be high and he was probably dependent upon his annuities from the crown. His lands in France do not appear to have provided him with income and were probably lost as the war turned against the English. This may explain his actions in securing good marriage settlements for his daughters.

If future success and good marriages came from influential connections then Richard Wydevile had certainly been in the right place. The family had seen a gradual rise in its position with each generation. And yet despite his place as Henry V's esquire, and despite his position around the king's brothers, Richard had not done as well as his friends and colleagues in terms of money or marriage. The marriages of successive Wydeviles had continued to be to wives from a similar social background, with a similar level of income. The most spectacular marriage of a Wydevile happened just before Richard (iii) died, when his son Sir Richard married the widowed duchess of Bedford, and this was simply the result of luck. Sir Richard had been in the right place at the right time, and perhaps he took a chance on his reputed good looks which paid off.

When compared to his friends Richard Buckland and Lewis John, Richard (iii) does not seem to have done very well at all, either in terms of land, wealth or marriage from his connections. Richard was a military man, while Buckland and John were merchants and administrators; they were therefore more natural businessmen and perhaps more astute. Buckland was very wealthy when he died, with the crown owing him £3,433. He had property in London, the midlands and a manor in Essex.⁴⁶² Lewis John, who died shortly after his friend in 1442, did even better. He had amassed lands in five counties and was wealthy enough to leave Waltham Abbey £100 in his will. He had also married well. His first wife was Alice, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, earl of Oxford. They had five sons and four daughters. His second wife Anne was the daughter of John Montague, earl of Salisbury.⁴⁶³

While the king may not have had land to give away, he would have been able to organise a beneficial marriage which would have supplied the deficiency. There cannot have been a lack of suitable wives, as the case of Lewis John shows. Richard was able to find marriages for his daughters which provided them with considerable income and land. The fact that both of Richard's son-in-laws were prepared to accept marriage settlements that did more for their wives than for themselves suggests that they felt Richard was a highly suitable patron, with influential connections.

⁴⁶² ODNB, 'Richard Buckland', Susan Rose (accessed 5/12/09).

⁴⁶³ Carr, *Sir Lewis John*, pp. 263 & 269. His second son, Henry married Mary, sister and co-heir of Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset. Their daughter Mary married Anthony Wydevile as his second wife. P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, (London, 1768), vol. 1, p. 252.

It is tempting to think that Richard may have married Joan for love, especially if they had both been part of the royal household. But his attitude towards his own daughter's marriages demonstrates a very pragmatic attitude, one which adds to the contradictions regarding his own marriage and career. Richard was capable of playing the marriage game to improve the family position for his daughters. Why was he incapable of taking advantage of the patronage that should have come from his association with the king and his brothers? Was he too busy carrying out his duties to promote himself? Was he seen as an efficient officer who got on with the job regardless? Was he less forceful than his contemporaries so could be overlooked? This latter would seem to be contradicted by the amount of the annuities he and his wife were paid and the fact that they were regularly reconfirmed with each change of monarch. It therefore suggests that he was satisfied with his rewards. Richard's network of friends and associates should have provided him with a much greater level of patronage. It would seem he preferred to use his reputation and connections to secure his daughters futures and make sure they were well provided for. As for his son, Sir Richard had secured his own future. The fact that Sir Richard had not married until he was in his late twenties suggests he had either rejected any proposed wife, or that his father had not managed to find a suitable wife for him. In fact there appears to be little evidence of the necessary determination to manipulate patronage to their advantage.

Summary

The Domesday Book and Mowbray charters have provided the first glimpses of the Wydevile family. Arriving with the Conqueror in 1066, they held property in Northampton and Leicestershire. As household servants to the d'Aubigny/Mowbray family they acquired property in Yorkshire and north Northamptonshire. Their close association with the Mowbrays is evident from their position in the witness lists to the many Mowbray charters, and the fact that William (d.c. 1157) was the Mowbray steward. With sufficient land and income they were able to emulate their lord and make donations to the church in Yorkshire, as well as founding a small Premonstratensian abbey with an endowment of land held at Sulby, Northamptonshire. The Mowbray connection had provided them with a total of five knight's fees: three and a half in Yorkshire and one and a half in Northamptonshire. The senior branch of the family could therefore be numbered amongst the barony in the thirteenth century, according to

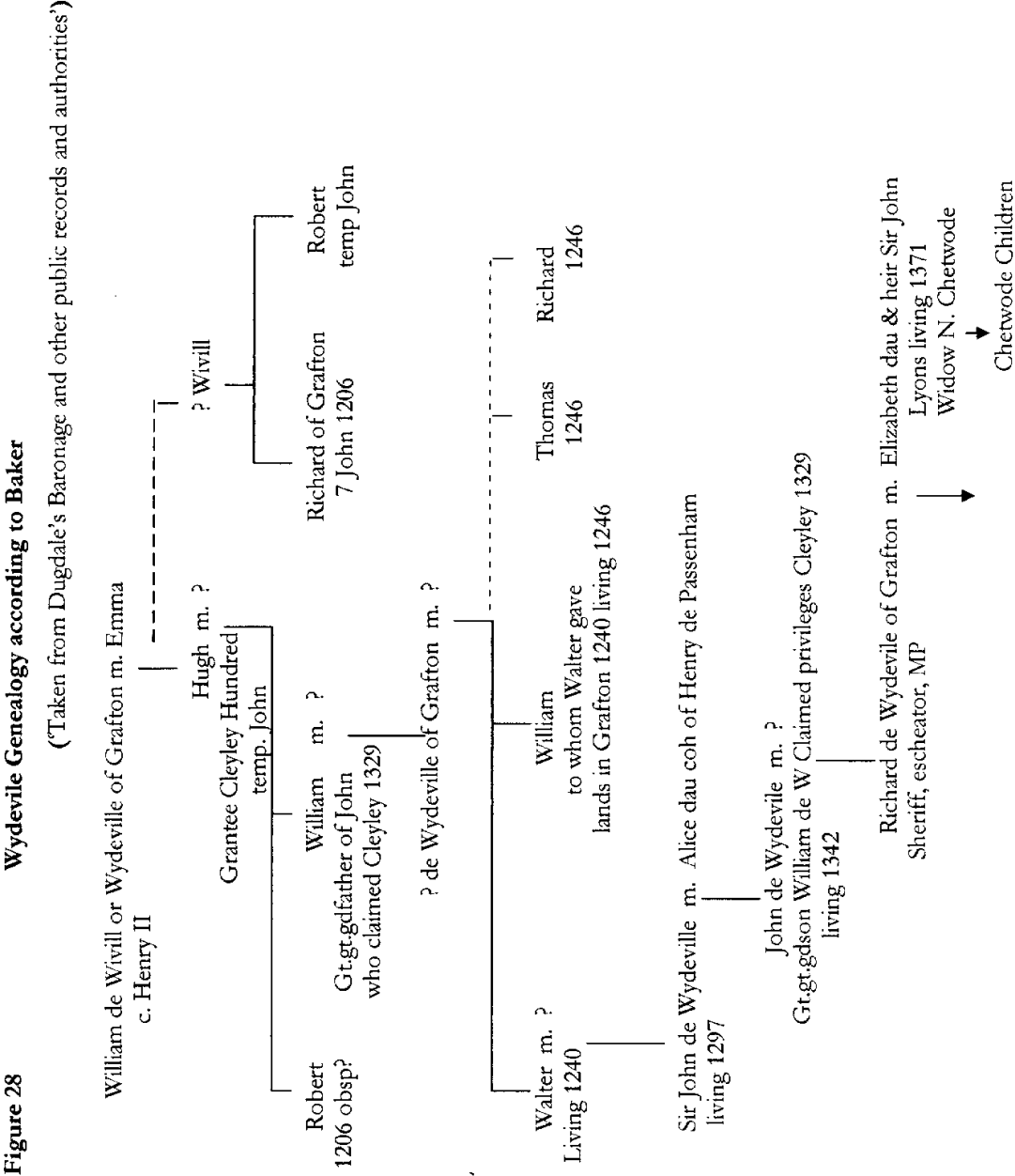
the definition given by David Crouch. However in subsequent centuries they were reduced to the knightly class, although they seem to have maintained this position.

The junior branch of the family was settled in Grafton, Northamptonshire by 1204-5. Although less well endowed with property, by 1314-16, John Wydevile was acting as bailiff for the Hundred of Cleley as well as serving as a juror. In an act of *Quo warranto* in 1329 he claimed that he held the hundred from Thomas Ferrers, and that his ancestors had similarly held the hundred from the Ferrers family. Although this branch of the family could claim an association with a local lord, by the early fourteenth century, there is nothing to demonstrate that they maintained a link to the Mowbray family. Instead, they were establishing their own contacts locally. Whether it was thanks to the connection to Ferrers, or the opportunities arising out of the Black Death, by the end of the fourteenth century the family had become involved in local office holding, serving as escheators, sheriffs, and knights of the shire. From the available evidence their main contacts appear to have been amongst the knightly and gentry class. A number of these contacts, e.g. Green, Herle and Chasteleyn, were connected to the royal court, and they may have helped the Wydeviles secure some of their appointments. A boost to the standing of the family came when Richard (ii) was appointed steward initially to Isabella, Edward III's daughter, and then at the king's own castle of Moor End. Proximity may also have played a part in this appointment as the castle was only a few miles from Grafton.

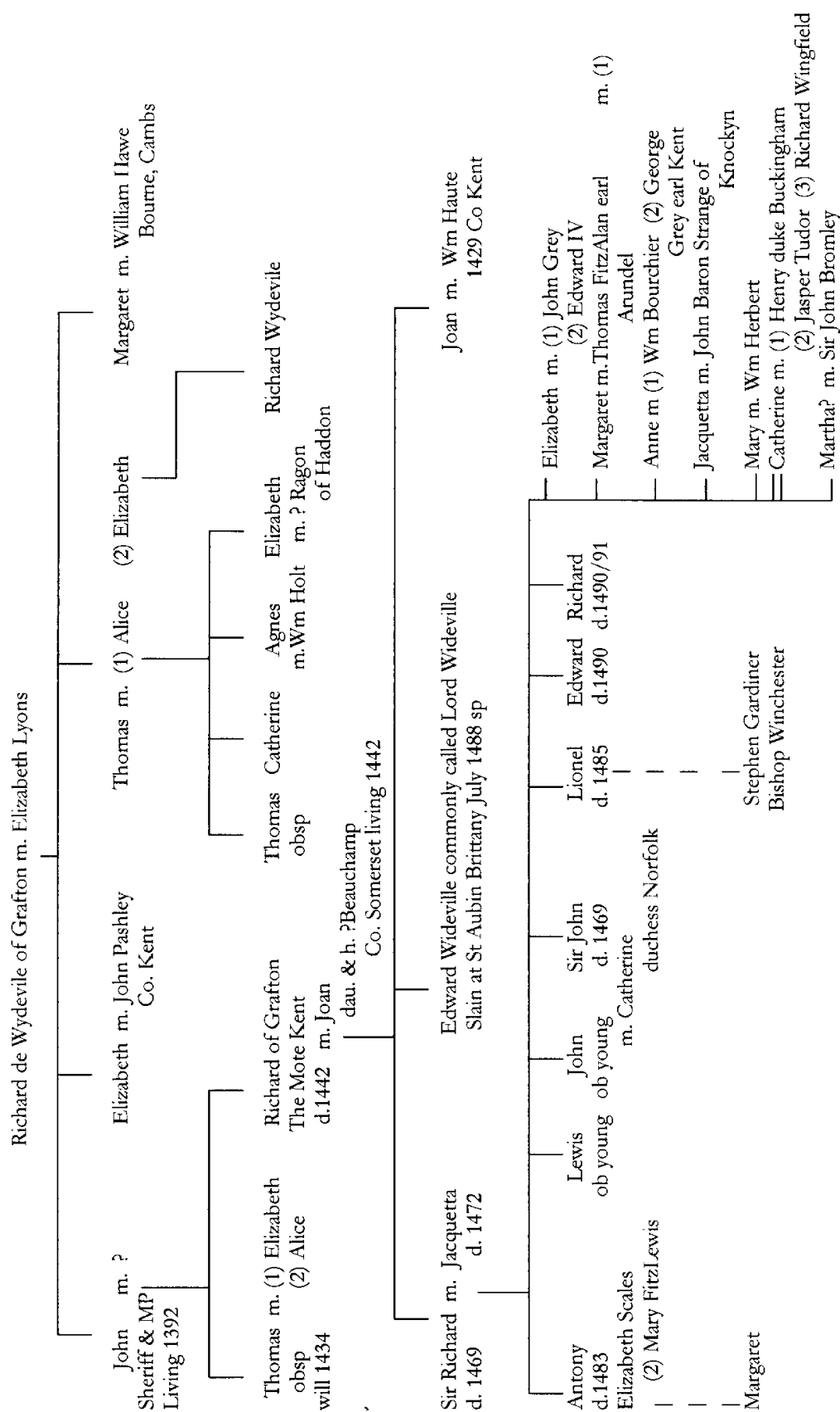
Whether it was Richard (ii)'s own association with the royal court or through his neighbours' connections, Richard (ii)'s grandson Thomas appears to have had a place first in the service of Edward, duke of Aumale, later duke of York, and then in the household of John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster. It was undoubtedly Thomas's association with the Lancastrians that provided a place for his younger half-brother, Richard (iii). Richard's close association with the sons of Henry IV, particularly prince Henry, although the exact link is not known, brought him to the centre of royal government and placed him in a position of trust, a situation boosted by his service in the war in France under Henry V. By his death in 1441 the family's status had gradually increased. He had been able to have his son knighted in 1426, following the dubbing of the young king Henry VI. Richard's position in the household of the duke of the Bedford after 1422 was certainly advantageous in giving his son opportunities to move up the social scale. This son, Richard (iv) married Bedford's widow, Jacquetta of Luxembourg.

Unfortunately there is a lack of information regarding wives in the Wydevile story. They are only mentioned rarely in relation to legal action or a property transaction. From a legal case in 1204-5 we know that the land in Grafton came through William Wydevile's marriage to Emma in the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century John Wydevile had married Alice Passenham. This too is only known from his son's action to try and claim the manor of Passenham. John (iii) (d. *c.* 1397/98) married twice, firstly Katherine Frembaud and then Isabel, the widow of Robert Passelewe. Again it is from land transactions that we learn their names and family relationships. Both wives appear to have had land in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and would also appear to have had connections in common. From this sparse information it can be seen that through marriage the Wydeviles acquired further land and connections within the gentry community, not only in Northamptonshire but in surrounding counties.

The junior branch of the family demonstrates that social status could gradually be increased through the right connections, and a willingness and ability to serve within the county. From a small holding in Grafton in the early thirteenth century the family had extended its hold over land in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. By the time Thomas died in c.1437/8 he was not only able to leave his younger half-brother the Grafton lands, he left property to his sisters and sufficient money to purchase land in recompense for those left to their half-brother as well as making generous bequests to his servants.



Baker Continued



Part 2: Marriage and reputation

Sir Richard may have been the first Wydevile to hold the title of knight since Sir John (i) (d. 1297), but he was descended from the knightly class, a social position that had been reiterated on the tombs of his immediate ancestors. Through visual imagery they proclaimed themselves to be members of an elite group.¹ What the display of their coat of arms on their tombs ‘denoted above all was status; status and family pride’.² Sir Richard’s knighthood demonstrated that the family were now at the level of society just below the aristocracy. In the eleventh century the senior branch of the family may briefly have been considered a part of the baronial class. The junior branch of the family had gradually managed to put themselves in a position to make a return to the status of their ancestors.

(1) Sir Richard and Jacquetta: ‘Made by maryage’?³

We first encountered Richard aged about sixteen when he was knighted at Leicester in 1426. There is nothing to suggest that he had been placed in a lord’s household, but given the careers of his father and uncle, it seems most likely that he had. The most likely position for him would have been in Bedford’s household along with his father.

Given his father’s service and his own early knighthood, a military career was the most obvious choice for him. In June 1434 he mustered at Calais with his retinue of twenty men-at-arms and sixty archers.⁴ According to Griffiths, Sir Richard’s retinue had been fighting in France in 1431 and 1432.⁵ While the start of his military career cannot be pinpointed exactly, it is more than likely that he served in the retinue of a peer prior to the 1430s. A document thought to date from 1435 lists Bedford’s retinue in the French wars and has amongst them ‘Richard Wideville, knight bachelor in the regentes court’, which suggests Sir Richard’s whereabouts in the 1430s.⁶ As we saw, Sir Richard

¹ Peter Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England 1000-1400* (Stroud, 1993), p.99. Coss suggests that heraldic display could only be deciphered by the ‘gentle’, p. 94.

² Coss, p.86.

³ See CD Appendix 11 listing chronicles for the period 1400-1463.

⁴ *CPR 1429-36*, p. 359.

⁵ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 197.

⁶ J. Stevenson, ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France During the Reign of Henry the Sixth of England*, Rolls Series, no. 22, vol. II pt.1& 2 (London, 1864), pp. 433-7. The document was found in Harl. MS. 782, fol 52b but is a sixteenth century transcript of the original.

led a retinue in Bedford's 1434 expeditionary army, and it was during fighting in France in May 1435 that he was captured and held to ransom.⁷

It is with the death of the duke of Bedford in September 1435 that Sir Richard's fortune changed. Bedford's first wife, Anne of Burgundy, had died on 13 November 1432 during an epidemic that had broken out in Paris.⁸ Following her death Bedford quickly remarried. As the *Journal of the Bourgeois of Paris* notes on 20 April 1433, 'He took to wife the Count of St Pol's daughter, niece to the Chancellor of France'.⁹ This was Jacquetta of Luxembourg, who was only seventeen, while Bedford was in his forties.

The *Bourgeois of Paris* noted that Bedford did not 'come back to Paris after his wedding'; instead he returned to Rouen where he had held his court since October 1429.¹⁰ On 24 June 1433, Bedford and Jacquetta left for England, and in the July parliament Jacquetta was granted letters of denizenship.¹¹ Bedford also arranged for Jacquetta to be created a lady of the garter, an honour which his brother Humphrey, duke of Gloucester had arranged for his wife Eleanor Cobham the previous year; obviously Bedford did not wish his own wife to be any less honoured.¹²

On their return to France in July 1434 Jacquetta probably spent her time at Bedford's court in Rouen. The marriage only lasted two years with Bedford dying on 14 September 1435. Jacquetta's whereabouts after this are unclear, most likely she remained in Normandy. The formalities following Bedford's death had to be carried out and, although she was not named as an executor in his will, she would have needed to be present to deal with her dower and any bequests made to her. In early September, shortly before his death, Bedford had left her some of his lands - the county of Harcourt with Le Neubourg, La Rivière-Thibouville and Combon, and she may have spent some of her time living on these estates.¹³

It may have been at Rouen that Jacquetta and Sir Richard became acquainted, where he may have been in regular attendance about the duke and his court. The exact nature of their early relationship and how quickly they married may never be known. Sir Richard was only five or six years older than Jacquetta, and they may have had a mutual

⁷ See above p. 124, fn. 418. In the account of Richard's capture he is called 'de Dondeville'. In both Wavrin and Monstrelet they spell Richard's name as Doudeville. There can therefore be little doubt that this is one and the same man.

⁸ *A Parisian Journal*, pp. 281-2. According to the Bourgeois of Paris the mortality rate was highest amongst young people and small children. The duchess was 'good and beautiful, and of a beautiful age too, being only twenty-eight when she died'.

⁹ *A Parisian Journal*, p. 284.

¹⁰ *A Parisian Journal*, p. 286 and Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 194.

¹¹ Anne Curry, ed., 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1433, Text and Translation', PROME, 439, item 26.

¹² L.J. Pidgeon, *MA*, p. 9.

¹³ Jenny Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories* (London, 1993), p. 27.

attraction before Bedford's death, perhaps cloaked in the game of chivalric love, but this can only be speculation. Sir Richard might have come to Jacquetta's attention at a tournament; challenged in 1441 by Sir Peter de Vasques, a Spanish Knight, he must already have acquired a reputation as a jouster, as there would have been little point in issuing a challenge to an unknown knight.¹⁴

On 6 February 1436 Jacquetta had been granted permission to 'sue out livery of her dower' provided she did not marry without the king's consent.¹⁵ A further proviso in obtaining her dower was that she had to give her fealty to Henry VI through her uncle the bishop of Théroutanne and Lord Talbot. This seems to confirm that she was still living in Normandy in the early months of 1436, possibly even Rouen, and that she was expected to remain there for the foreseeable future. If she was already married to Sir Richard by the time she gave her fealty, then it was a well kept secret throughout 1436. However by March 1437 the secret was out and Jacquetta was petitioning the king for a pardon for having married without consent. It was granted to Jacquetta and Sir Richard on 23 March but at a price, £1,000. Sir Richard was thus the king's uncle by marriage.¹⁶

Jacquetta's position as dowager duchess of Bedford in theory made her first lady at court until Henry VI married in 1445, although there is little evidence for her attendance at court in the years before his marriage. After Henry VI's marriage to Margaret of Anjou in 1445 Jacquetta could claim another link to the royal family; her sister Isabel had married Margaret's uncle, Charles d'Anjou, duc du Maine.

Entries in the *Coventry Leet Book* show that Jacquetta and her husband attended upon the Queen when she was in Coventry. In 1456 the town put on a pageant for Queen Margaret; those members of the king's household present were given 20s and the mayor paid for a glass of rose water for 'my lord Ryvers'. Whether Jacquetta was in

¹⁴ CCR 1435-41 p. 397; Rymer Foedera, vol. 2, p. 669. The tournament appears in several chronicles of the day. *The Historical Collections of A Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, ed., James Gairdener (London, 1876) (here after *Gregory's Chronicle*), p. 183. 'Ande that same yere were the barrys in Smethefylde new made, for Syr Rycharde Woodevyle, knight, was chalengyd of a knight of Spayne for to donne certayne points of armys in the felde'. *Six Town Chronicles*, 'Bale's Chronicle', ed., Ralph Flenley (Oxford, 1911), p. 115 'Also the same yere was the feet of armes doon in Smythfeld betwene Sir Richard Wodevyle and a knyght of Spayn'. However 'A Short English Chronicle' in *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, ed., James Gairdner (London, 1880), p. 63, records the outcome. 'And in that yere was a chalange made of a knight of Spayne and Sir Richarde Wodfelde, knight, whiche was done in Smythfeld a for the kynge and the lordys. And the kynge toke it in his honde with in iiij strokes, and so was ended'. According to Gairdner this is a 'regular city chronicle ... down to the reign of Henry V the record of each mayor's year is a very bald one'. The latter part of the chronicle has most value as the chronicler is no longer copying previous works, but has become an independent authority for the reign of Henry VI and Edward IV, ending at Edward's marriage, pp. iii & v.

¹⁵ CPR 1429-36, p. 516. It was a requirement of English law that the widow of a tenant-in-chief should obtain the king's licence to remarry. See Geoffrey Hand, 'The King's Widow and the King's Widows', *The Law Quarterly Review*, vol. 93 (Oct., 1977), p. 506.

¹⁶ CPR 1436-41, p. 53.

attendance on this occasion is not stated. However, in May 1457 when the Queen again visited Coventry ‘there were with her then these lordes and ladyes ... the lord Revers and my lady hys Wyf...’¹⁷ The Wydeviles did therefore attend upon the queen and the court but they are rarely mentioned as doing so. One reason for this may be Jacquetta’s regular pregnancies. She produced twelve surviving children by about 1460.¹⁸

The evidence of Margaret’s New Year gift giving suggests there was a lack of any real attachment between Margaret and Jacquetta. Accounts only survive for the four years 1446/47, 1447/48, 1449/50 and 1452/53, and gifts were only given to Jacquetta in the years 1447/48 and 1452/53, although it appears that Jacquetta sent Margaret a gift each year as there are payments made to Jacquetta’s servants, presumably for carrying a gift to the queen.¹⁹ Jacquetta’s Burgundian family played a major part in the wars against France, which may help to explain any lack of attachment between them.²⁰

Sir Richard and Jacquetta may have been regarded as minor members of the royal family but rewards were infrequent. The earliest office that Sir Richard appears to have received was that of chief rider of the forest of Salcey, Northampton, on 11 July 1437.²¹ This suggests that the king was not too angered by their marriage; Sir Richard is described in the grant as ‘king’s knight’. The value of the office is unknown but, as the grant came shortly after their pardon for marrying it does suggest their acceptance.

¹⁷ *The Coventry Leet Book*, ed., Mary Dormer Harris, EETS (1907-1913), pp. 292 & 300.

¹⁸ Pidgeon, MA, p. 13, fn. 41. See also appendix 7.

¹⁹ A.R. Myers, ‘The Jewels of Queen Margaret of Anjou’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 42 (Sept., 1959), pp. 114; 119-20 & 124. Elizabeth Grey is shown as one of Margaret’s ladies in waiting who received a ‘chopyne’ in 1451/52, p.126. In his article ‘The Household of Queen Margaret of Anjou, 1452-3’ *BJRL*, vol. 40 (March, 1958), p. 404, n2, Myers queries if this was Jacquetta’s daughter; there were other ladies called Elizabeth Grey, including in 1445, Elizabeth ‘late the wife of Ralph Grey’ (*CPR 1441-46* p. 353). If this was Elizabeth she would have been aged about 13 or 14. Her date of marriage to Sir John Grey is uncertain but was possibly before 1455. It therefore seems unlikely that the lady in waiting was Elizabeth Wydevile.

²⁰ Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. 3 (London, 1845). Strickland claims that Margaret had been betrothed to Pierre of Luxembourg, count of St Pol. His squire had cut her father René down at the battle of Bulgnéville (1431) and the duke of Burgundy then held René to ransom, p. 182. Presumably the marriage proposal was part of the ransom arrangement. If this is correct then this may also explain any lack of affection on the Queen’s part for Jacquetta. Margaret would not have been very old at the time; she was born in February 1430, her sister Yolande in November 1428. See also Margaret L. Kekewich, *The Good King René of Anjou and Fifteenth Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 81-2. Discussing Margaret’s feelings for the English, Kekewich suggests she probably detested them because the problems of the French and Angevins could be blamed on the English. If Margaret felt like this towards the English, she may have felt much more strongly against the family that were responsible for her father’s period of imprisonment while he was arranging his ransom.

²¹ *CPR 1436-41*, p. 72. He could hold the office himself or appoint a deputy, and was to receive ‘the accustomed wages fees and profits’. Chief rider is presumably the same as the ‘regarder’, a knight responsible for checking the ‘metes and bounds of the forest’ every three years and everything connected to the king’s rights in the forest. Christopher Corèdon & Ann Williams, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases*, (Cambridge, 2007 reprint), p. 237.

One of the few English chronicles to mention Sir Richard Wydevile during this period is *Robert Bale's Chronicle*. Bale was a lawyer and judge in London. The chronicle which bears his name commences in the reign of Richard I and ends in 1461, when it was most likely written. The part covering the years 1438 to 1461 has been attributed to Bale, and it is this contemporary portion of the chronicle which is of most interest. Typically for a London Chronicle, it tends to favour the Yorkists and Richard, earl of Warwick.²²

Bale does not mention Sir Richard's marriage to Jacquetta but does record his creation as 'Baron and lord of Ryvers' at the same time as the elevation of William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk to duke on 2 June 1448.²³ Unfortunately, *Bale's Chronicle* ends before the next Wydevile marriage, that of Elizabeth to Edward IV in 1464, so we cannot see if there was any change in attitude towards Sir Richard. However, as a chronicle written before 1464, it is useful to note that there are no criticisms against the Wydeviles. When Sir Richard was elevated to the rank of baron in 1448 there is no suggestion in *Bale's* account that it was in any way undeserved or had occurred simply because of his marriage.²⁴ Baron was the lowest rank of the nobility, so it was not an excessive elevation. Richard may have taken his title from his wife's lands at La Rivière-Thibouville. It may also have been influenced by the fact that it was close to Iville, the Wydevile place of origin.

It is significant that it was not until after Henry VI's marriage that Sir Richard was created a baron. This may have been influenced by Jacquetta's additional family connection to Margaret of Anjou.²⁵ Griffiths also suggests that Henry needed to give himself more credibility as king of France. Mainly they were benefiting from Henry VI's policy of attempting to create a royal family, although not as much as the king's Tudor half-brothers or the Beauforts benefited.²⁶ It is possible that chroniclers overlooked the minor elevation of Sir Richard Wydevile when there was a better target for criticism, i.e.

²² *Bale's Chronicle*, p. 72. Flenley suggests the chronicle from 1440 is 'partial to the Yorkist cause, as might be expected of a London citizen' and that praise of Warwick also represented feeling in London. He considers Bale to have been an eyewitness to many of the events.

²³ *Bale*, p.123. Although Bale gives 2 June *CPR 1446-52*, p. 185, shows that it was in fact 9 May.

²⁴ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 185. Sir Richard was created baron Rivers 9 May 1448.

²⁵ Henry was married to Margaret of Anjou by proxy 24 May 1444. Charles of Anjou married Isabel of Luxembourg 1443.

²⁶ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 358-9. John Beaufort, earl of Somerset was created a duke 1443, John Holland, earl of Huntingdon created duke of Exeter Jan., 1444; Jasper and Edmund Tudor were granted earldoms a little later in 1452. Griffiths suggests Wydevile was elevated not just because of Jacquetta's relationship to the queen but because Henry VI's credibility as king of France was in jeopardy. He suggests Wydevile chose his title from a Norman barony once held by his father; however the holdings of Richard (iii) Wydevile were Preaux and Dangu. See above p. 144, fn 13.

William de la Pole the new duke of Suffolk. It would seem that Wydevile's elevation in 1448 was connected to Henry's policies rather than any personal attachment. The time it took Jacquetta to finally establish her full dower rights gives the impression that the family had no close personal relationship with the king or queen which might have given them a real advantage.²⁷

²⁷ Pidgeon, MA, I argue that the marriage of Sir Richard to Jacquetta did little to enhance his position. Grants of various portions of Bedford's lands suggest there were others who had the king's ear and who benefited at the expense of Jacquetta. For example, in Dorset her dower rights were commuted to an annual payment so that Henry Beaufort could have the land. The same occurred in Northumberland to the benefit of Henry Percy, *CPR 1436-41*, pp. 479 & 438, respectively. They did not manage to acquire the rights to any of the dower lands after Jacquetta's death except West Thurrock, which was a property that Bedford had purchased and had left to Jacquetta for life.

(i) Chronicle accounts of the marriage Richard and Jacquetta²⁸

Interestingly the marriage of Sir Richard and Jacquetta aroused no comment from English chroniclers until after the couple's daughter, Elizabeth, married King Edward IV in 1464. It is only in the European chronicles that we find Jacquetta and Sir Richard mentioned.

The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet are the closest contemporary source; the first part was written during the period 1444-1447. Monstrelet presented the chronicle to Philip the Good in 1447, he 'described himself in his prologue as the continuator of Froissart and consequently took up his account of events in 1400'. The section covering the years 1444-67 was the work of an anonymous continuator.²⁹ According to Monstrelet,

In this year [1436], the duchess of Bedford, sister to the count de St. Pol, married, from inclination, an English knight called sir Richard Woodville, a young man, very handsome and well made, but, in regard to birth, inferior to her first husband, the regent, and to herself.

He continues:

Louis de Luxembourg, archbishop of Rouen, and her other relations, were very angry at this match, but they could not prevent it.³⁰

In the very next line Monstrelet goes on to say 'About the end of the following November, Jacqueline of Bavaria ... died, after a long and lingering illness'.³¹ If he has the sequence of events correct then Sir Richard and Jacquetta were married prior to November 1436. Jacqueline actually died in the October so this would make the marriage potentially earlier in that year. Monstrelet does not say that they married secretly although it is implied by the statement that her family had been unable to prevent it.

²⁸ See CD, appendix 11 for concordance of chronicles covering the years 1400-64.

²⁹ Graeme Small, *George Chastelain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 104.

³⁰ *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, trans., Thomas Johnes (London, 1840), vol. 2. p. 46. Louis of Luxembourg was Jacquetta's uncle and Chancellor of France for the English. Louis had arranged for Jacquetta's marriage to Bedford despite the wishes of the Duke of Burgundy. It was this marriage which contributed to the breakdown of relations between the Duke and Bedford.

³¹ *Monstrelet*, Johnes, vol. 2, p. 46.

The chronicler Jean de Wavrin often repeats Monstrelet almost word for word, although he says that her family had to ‘tolerate’ the marriage.³² Wavrin’s chronicle *Recueil Des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretagne, A Present Nomme Engleterre*, starts in the mythical past and ends in 1471. The author began writing in 1445 with the work reaching six volumes by the time of his death in 1474. For his early work he relied on Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Brut* and Froissart but, as Wavrin came nearer to his own time, he turned to the *Grandes chroniques de France*, Monstrelet’s chronicle and newsletters.³³ As well as using the reports of others Wavrin also reported on events that he had himself witnessed.³⁴ It is possible that, although he appears to have copied Monstrelet, his position at the Burgundian court and a meeting with Antony and potentially other members of the Wydevile family led him to believe the report was correct. He would undoubtedly have seen for himself if Sir Richard Wydevile was ‘handsome and well made’ and may have heard stories regarding Jacquetta’s second husband and his rank in relation to hers. What is most interesting is that both Monstrelet and Wavrin place the marriage unequivocally in the year 1436. Given the clandestine nature of their marriage, the date can generally be placed at any time between the death of Bedford in September 1435 and the pardon and fine by Henry VI, in March 1437. If Jacquetta was discovered to be pregnant in 1437 then the marriage may well have taken place in 1436. It is possible that it may only have taken place when Jacquetta herself realised she was pregnant. Another reason for dating the marriage to 1436 is the belief that their eldest child Elizabeth was born in 1437. If she had been born close to or before the time of the pardon then the marriage would have had to have occurred in 1436 as the Burgundian Chroniclers believed. The fact that Elizabeth’s exact birth date is unknown should not in itself be seen as suspicious; dates of birth were rarely recorded.

The secrecy around the marriage and the uncertainty surrounding the dates of birth for Jacquetta’s eldest children has contributed to the idea that Elizabeth at least may have been illegitimate, in as much as she may have been conceived before the

³² *Recueil Des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretagne, A Present Nomme Engleterre par Jehan de Wavrin seigneur du Forestel, from 1431 – 1447* (ed.), W. Hardy & L C Hardy (London, 1884), vol. 5, p. 207.

³³ Livia Visser-Fuchs, ‘Jean de Wavrin and the English newsletters: the *Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire*’, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. 47 (2003), pp. 217-35. The article gives some background to Wavrin and a very useful description of a ‘newsletter’, as a description of an event, ‘they were no doubt meant to be accurate and trustworthy. ... They were written to inform ...’, p. 218.

³⁴ He had been in England in June 1467 for the Smithfield tournament between the Bastard of Burgundy and Antony Wydevile, and he therefore met Antony. I am grateful to Dr Visser-Fuchs for her remarks on Wavrin as a ‘reporter’ rather than a ‘commentator’ on events and that he would have met Antony Wydevile in England.

actual marriage. This appears to be confirmed by a later entry in Wavrin's chronicle under the year 1464, where he is discussing the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Wydevile,

... her mother [i.e. Jacquetta] had been married to a knight *of*
whom she had two children *before* her marriage, ...³⁵

It is curious that Wavrin did not mention this earlier under 1436/7 when he first records the marriage and the anger of her family. After all, children before marriage would have gone further to explain their anger. It might be expected that this information would have been seized upon by later writers as evidence of the Wydeviles, and specifically Elizabeth's, unsuitability. However, far from being new information added by Wavrin, it is a misreading of one of the original copies of his chronicle, and it is this text which has subsequently been printed and which has led to this particular passage becoming more widely known. In another version of Wavrin's chronicle, Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS. français 20358, the text is the same until the point where Elizabeth's suitability as a wife for Edward is discussed, where it then says,

Firstly she is not the daughter of a duke, also she had been
married before to a young knight *by whom* she had two children,
 and even though she is the daughter of the duchess of Bedford ...³⁶

This clarifies who Wavrin meant when discussing two children. Logically the first version makes no sense; for Jacquetta to have had two children before marriage would have been almost impossible unless she had twins. As Dr Visser-Fuchs remarks, a Bruges scribe copying the manuscript in the 1480s would be unaware of his error and seems to have produced another scandal.

What is interesting is Wavrin's comment on Elizabeth's suitability as the wife of a king. He considers the status of Elizabeth's father to be important in determining her suitability, but not that of her mother. Not only was Jacquetta a duchess by marriage but

³⁵ *Wavrin*, vol. 6, p. 455. 'et que sa mere avoit este marice a ung chevalier duquel elle avoit eu deux enfans avant son mariage, ...'.

³⁶ I am grateful to Dr Visser-Fuchs remarks on these extracts and for this version of the *Recueil* BnF fr 20358, f. 220 'Premierement, il scavoit assez quelle nestoit pas fille de duc, ne de conte et quelle avoit este marice a ung chevalier duquel elle avoit eu deux enfans, ja soit ce quelle fust fille de la ducesse de Bethfort...'

she was also a member of the Burgundian nobility. This seems to suggest that Wavrin considered status to be carried through the male and not the female line. This may have been a European view based on Salic law and laws of heredity. Elizabeth's previous marriage which produced two children ranks as a secondary consideration regarding her suitability.

The fact that Burgundian but not English chroniclers mentioned Jacquetta's marriage had more to do with Jacquetta's status in Burgundy. From a noble Burgundian family who were closely allied to Philip, duke of Burgundy Jacquetta was disparaged by this marriage, as it would seem were her children, at least from the Burgundian point of view. The marriage had social and potentially political implications for the family. Duke Philip had already been angered by the family's arrangement for Jacquetta's marriage to the duke of Bedford. How might he react over this latest marriage? In England they saw things differently, judging that Sir Richard had made a successful marriage for himself to a woman with both status and income, which was no doubt seen as another benefit which could be reaped from the wars in France. As Bedford's widow, Jacquetta also held a position within the English royal family, although one without influence. The fact that Sir Richard received no immediate rewards from his marriage and that Jacquetta's dower rights took time to sort out attest to that. As such the marriage was probably not viewed as that controversial by the English chroniclers at this time; it was certainly not that remarkable.

Comparable marriages

While much has subsequently been made of the difference in status between Sir Richard and his wife Jacquetta, it excited no comment at the time in England, as it was not unusual for a wealthy aristocratic widow to marry a knight. It was seen as one way for a man to improve his own position, and there were precedents. Sir John Cornwall had married Henry IV's sister Elizabeth of Lancaster. Elizabeth's first husband John Holland, earl of Huntingdon died in 1400 and by December of the same year she had married Cornwall. As the son of a younger son the latter had had to make his own way, although he could claim a respectable ancestry. His father and grandfather were both knights and his grandmother was reputedly the niece of John de Montfort, duke of Brittany. Royal patronage followed their marriage, with the confirmation of his wife's dower. Cornwall's war profits from ransomed prisoners, along with his wife's income,

enabled him to purchase a large estate at Ampthill, although it was not until 1432, in Henry VI's reign, that he was created Lord Fanhope.³⁷

A more recent example was the marriage of Katherine Neville, dowager duchess of Norfolk, to a knight in her late husband's service, Sir Thomas Strangways. The story of her marriage has a number of similarities to that of Jacquetta and Sir Richard. The date of her marriage is uncertain but is thought to have taken place some time between 1440 and 27 January 1442 when they were fined for marrying without permission. Strangways was dead by August 1443 but they already had two daughters by this time. They had therefore managed to keep their marriage a secret for some years, or else the daughters were illegitimate.³⁸ This marriage is all the more interesting because Katherine was the sister of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick. She was to go on to have two more marriages, one of them to a Wydevile.

While the Burgundian chroniclers questioned Sir Richard's suitability, it was not unknown for such marriages to occur in Burgundy either. Armstrong, writing on the cultural exchange between the English and Burgundian courts noted that it was the marriage of Jacquetta and Sir Richard that caused Edward IV to favour Burgundy. Armstrong describes Sir Richard as being a member of the 'petite noblesse' whose marriage was a coup that lifted him into the ranks of the cosmopolitan aristocracy. He continues that clandestine marriage between rich heiresses and the sons of the petty nobility were not rare and gives the example of the marriage of Catherine of Burgundy, the daughter of Philip, duke of Burgundy to Maximien de Ribeaupierre in about 1419. Her first husband Leopold IV, duke of Austria had died in 1411.³⁹

The most astonishing, even audacious, marriage must be that of Owen Tudor to Queen Katherine, the king's mother. Katherine seems to have been able to keep her pregnancies and children hidden for some time before the story became public. Again, the chronicles make little comment; a *Chronicle of London* written in about 1442 only records the barest facts, claiming that no one knew of the marriage or children until after Katherine was dead. Regarding Owen, the chronicler simply says that he was 'no man of birthe nother of lyflode'.⁴⁰ Polydore Vergil is kinder to Owen, though slightly less so to Katherine; although it should be remembered that Vergil was writing in the

³⁷ ODNB, 'Cornewall, John, Baron Fanhope', S.J. Payling (accessed 11/6/08).

³⁸ ODNB, 'Neville, Katherine, duchess of Norfolk', Rowena E. Archer (accessed 22/5/08).

³⁹ C.A.J. Armstrong, *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983), p. 404.

⁴⁰ *Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483*, p. 123. The entry is dated to the year xvj. Katherine's marriage and children were only mentioned in relation to the escape of Owen from Newgate. The death of Katherine was noted in the previous year.

sixteenth century under the auspices of their grandson Henry VII. Writing about her death and burial in Westminster he continues,

This woman, after the death of her husband, king Henry the Fifth, being but yonge in yeres, and thereby of lesse discretion to judge what was decent for her estate, married one Owen Tyder, a gentleman of Wales, adorned with wonderfull giftes of body and minde, who derived his pedigree from Cadwallider, the last king of Brittons, ...⁴¹

Vergil makes no outright criticism of their social differences; Tudor is a gentleman and is noble of mind. Importantly for the sake of Tudor propaganda, Vergil claims that Owen could claim descent from the ancient kings of Britain thereby establishing that ancient nobility, despite present circumstances, was also important. However Katherine was immature and did not know any better. She was in fact twenty-one when Henry V died in 1422. The suggested date of her marriage to Tudor is after 1430, so she would have been twenty-nine or more, hardly 'yonge in yeres'.⁴² Vergil still manages to hint at disparagement by questioning Katherine's maturity. What determines nobility is a vexed question. An important element is acceptability, and whatever people may have thought about the marriage, Henry VI accepted his half-brothers. While there was some anger over the marriage it had more to do with power and who held it than Tudor's status. The duke of Gloucester was especially anxious over who Katherine might marry. He feared that a husband might exert undue influence over the young king, an influence which might lead to his own exclusion.

Concern over the possibility of Katherine's remarriage to Edmund Beaufort had led the parliament of 1427 to produce a statute relating to the marriage of queen-dowagers. It was also to act as an example. Aimed at ladies of the 'blood-royal' it was doubtless expected to be an example to noble ladies as well,

[The statute] will give the greatest comfort and

⁴¹ *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History: Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III*, ed., Henry Ellis (London, 1844 Camden Society, Kessinger Reprints), p. 62.

⁴² Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 12 -13, describing Katherine after the death of Henry 'Even if she had not been a twenty-one-year-old woman,' and pp. 60-61 discussing her marriage to Tudor, suggests she would have been in the king's household until 1430 so was unlikely to have married Tudor during that time. Given that she had four children by him however Griffiths suggests they must have married by 1431/2.

example to other ladies of rank who are of the blood royal that they might not be so lightly disparaged.⁴³

Anyone who married the queen without permission would have all their lands and possessions forfeit. However the council was also aware that any children born of such an alliance would be members of the royal family.⁴⁴ This suggests that whatever the status of the man, the mother's status did have implications for the status of the children. This was of course specific to the royal family, who were seen as an example to the country at large. The fact that people aped their betters was repeatedly demonstrated in the need for sumptuary laws. Marriage practice would be no different, something that the statute acknowledged by hoping that it might provide an example.

The absence of Richard and Jacquetta's marriage from English chronicles during this time suggests that the Wydeviles quietly took their place within county society. Sir Richard continued to serve the king at home and in France, and it is probable that Jacquetta joined him, visiting her estates there.

⁴³ Anne Curry, ed., 'Parliament 1427, Text and Translation', appendix 2, PROME.

⁴⁴ Griffiths, R.A. 'Queen Katherine of Valois and a Missing Statute of the Realm' *The Law Quarterly Review*, vol. 93 (April 1977), p. 253.

(ii) Sir Richard's career in the 1440s and 1450s

Following his marriage Sir Richard continued to serve regularly in France. He was due to muster his retinue at Winchelsea from the 18 June 1439, along with Sir William Peyto and Sir William Chamberlain. They were expected in France by the 27 June.⁴⁵ It is at this time that Sir Richard appears in an English Chronicle.

The Chronicle of William Gregory, in common with other chronicles of the time, contains the work of previous chroniclers; Gregory, who was mayor of London for the year 1451/52, is the presumed writer of that part of the chronicle which starts in 1440/41 and ends in 1452, hence its title. The chronicle was continued up to 1469 by an anonymous continuator, although the chronicle retains the title of *Gregory's Chronicle*.⁴⁶ This chronicle is thus contemporary with *Bale's Chronicle* up to 1461, although the continuator to 'Gregory' is less detailed. Both were written in London, fairly close in time to the events they are describing, but they differ in what items seemed to interest each chronicler. This suggests that each chronicle was a more personal record of what was happening, with the chronicler only noting down those events which caught his attention or which he considered important. Under the year 1439/40 Gregory records that '... the same yere went Syr [Richard] Woodevyle in to Normandy and Syr Wylliam Peytowe, and many moo othyr, whythe a fayre mayne'.⁴⁷ It may have been the size of the army going to France that led Gregory to record it, or the cost. According to Griffiths, the leadership of this army, hastily assembled for France, was given to Sir Richard who had provided the largest retinue. The army totalled about 900 men and cost £6,000.⁴⁸ Sir Richard may have remained in France for a year; there is no record of any activity in England until June 1440 when he was involved in the purchase of Grafton.⁴⁹

In July 1440 Richard, duke of York was appointed to go to France as lieutenant general. The war was going badly, Paris had been captured and the French were closing in on Rouen, and it was not until the council of Rouen pleaded that without assistance

⁴⁵ *CPR 1436-41*, pp. 312 & 314. The muster would be taken again on their arrival by Sir John Montgomery and John Stanlowe the treasurer of the duchy of Normandy. A search of 'The Soldier in Later Medieval England' protection database shows that there were ten men who took out letters of protection to serve with Sir Richard in 1439. From the few that show their place of origin Sir Richard recruited from a wide area, Lancashire, Devon and Yorkshire. Interestingly one of the men was called John Wieville, possibly a relative?

<http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protodb.php> (accessed 14/12/08).

⁴⁶ Keith Dockray, *Edward IV: A Source Book* (Stroud, 1999), p.xii, and *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. ii-xxii.

⁴⁷ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 182.

⁴⁸ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 458.

⁴⁹ See appendix 3 p. 277.

they would soon fall, that York left England. He entered Rouen on the 25 June 1441 with an army of 5,000 men. In York's retinue were the earl of Oxford, Lord Bourghier, Sir James Ormond and Sir Richard Wydevile. They were also accompanied by their wives, indicating that they must have anticipated spending some time away from home.⁵⁰

Sir Richard did not reach Rouen as soon as York, although it would appear that he was in a hurry to get there. On 4 July he was at Battle Abbey and writing to the Chancellor 'as hit is wele knowen to your seid lordship that I am disposed in hast with goddes mercy to passe the see.'⁵¹ Presumably he had spent time at Battle on his way to the coast to take ship to France. His letter of protection for service with the duke of York is dated 12 July 1440.⁵²

Richard was in France regularly for the next five years. In January 1442 he was captain of the garrison at Fresnay, with Andrew Trollope acting as his lieutenant. In July he was on detachment in the field serving under York and Talbot. This was followed in September 1442 with the captaincy of the garrison of Alençon; Richard seems to have held this post until at least March 1447.⁵³ In 1443 Burgundy concluded a truce with England and, although Somerset's campaign of that year had done little to restore the English in France, the French were interested in peace. Negotiations therefore began for a marriage between Henry VI and a French princess. In March 1444 Suffolk arrived in Normandy to begin talks. Margaret of Anjou was suggested as a suitable wife by Charles VII and she was brought to Tours for the English ambassadors to see her. During the meeting in Tours the wedding of Charles of Anjou, duke of Maine, to Isabelle of Luxemburg was celebrated. Pierre de Brézé, Lord of Varenne and Suffolk organised a contest between French and English archers as part of the entertainments.⁵⁴ Isabelle was Jacquetta's sister and given the large English presence in Tours at this time it is not unreasonable to suggest that Sir Richard and Jacquetta also attended the celebrations.

Sir Richard may have returned briefly to England on the death of his father at the end of 1441, early 1442, otherwise he and Jacquetta do not appear to have returned

⁵⁰ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p.459-60.

⁵¹ Designation of Power of Attorney, see above p 126 fn. 435.

⁵² <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_protdb.php> (accessed 18/6/10).

⁵³ <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/search_garrisondb.php> (accessed 2/11/11). The data base shows that men were recruited to the garrison at Fresnay in January 1442, to garrison detachment in the field July 1442 and to the garrison of Alençon in September 1442, March 1443, June 1445 and March 1447. Sir Richard was the captain throughout this period.

⁵⁴ Kekewich, *The Good King*, pp. 92-3.

home until April 1445 when they were part of Margaret of Anjou's escort to England.⁵⁵ It may have been in preparation for this event that Sir Richard had ordered 'twenty pieces of woollen cloth of divers colours' for clothing for himself and his household. The order included three barrels of salmon, a hundred 'lynges' fish and two hundred 'stokfysshes' and half a last of herring which were also for his household's consumption. These were to be shipped from England free of customs.⁵⁶ The instruction to the collector of customs in the port of London was reissued on 16 October 1444. This provides more detail about the cloth - nineteen ells of broad cloth 'scarlet', with seventeen cloths and four short ells without grain, and two cloths of half grain.⁵⁷ 'Scarlet' was an especially fine, rich wool cloth, and was the type provided at major events such as coronations to important officers and members of the household. Nineteen ells of scarlet may have been sufficient for robes for Sir Richard and his wife.⁵⁸

Sir Richard spent longer spells in England after this, frequently serving as a justice of the peace for Northamptonshire. His role as captain of the garrison at Alençon does not therefore appear to have required his permanent presence; perhaps only returning at each new muster for the garrison. In 1446 he visited Calais twice on the king's business. On 8 June of that year his sons were granted a rent of £20, 'in survivorship' which Jacquetta currently held in dower for her life. The grant is interesting in that, for the first time, we encounter some of their children. The grant names four sons, 'Antony, Richard, John and John'.⁵⁹ Unless the clerk made an error in naming two of the sons John, it must be presumed that one of them died young. Only one John is known later, but it does raise a query over the age of the surviving John, if there had indeed been two of them.

Sir Richard, now Lord Rivers, was rewarded for his 'good service in the wars in France and Normandy' with the grant in tail male of the manor of West Hall in West Thurrock, Essex in December 1448.⁶⁰ Although the reward was not that generous the

⁵⁵ *Complete Peerage*, 'Rivers', p. 20. Although 1444 is the date given, it was April 1445 when Margaret arrived in England.

⁵⁶ *CCR 1441-47*, p. 240. 'lynges' (ling) is salted cod and 'stokfysshes' is possibly haddock, also salted. Dorothy Hartley, *Food in England* (paperback edition, 1999), pp. 252-3 & 341.

⁵⁷ *CCR 1441-47*, p. 253.

⁵⁸ Anne. F. Sutton & P.W. Hammond, eds., *The Coronation of Richard III the Extant Documents* (Gloucester, 1983), p. 91-2, gives a description of robes given to officers and servants for the coronation of kings and queens. Robes of scarlet were given to the archbishop and bishops, dukes, earls, barons, duchesses, countesses and gentlewomen. For the coronation of Henry IV the lengths of the cloths are given. To make a robe required five ells of scarlet for those being knighted. Dukes received twelve ells, earls ten and barons and knights six. Ladies required more material, duchesses receiving fourteen ells of scarlet, pp.95-7.

⁵⁹ *CPR 1441-46*, p. 453.

⁶⁰ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 205.

manor had been left to Jacquetta for life by her first husband. It had been purchased for the duke of Bedford by Sir John Fastolf, who was refusing to hand it over. The case was still under discussion in September 1465 between Jacquetta and the Pastons, who claimed to have inherited Fastolf's estate.⁶¹ The grant should have augmented the £14 4s which was all that Sir Richard had received upon his creation as Lord Rivers to sustain his title. It was only Jacquetta's dower which sustained their growing family and Sir Richard's new title. Sir Richard's income from the lands he had only recently inherited from his father (d.1441/42) in Kent and through his uncle Thomas (d. 1437/38) in Northamptonshire would have been insufficient.⁶²

As major grants from the king were not forthcoming, Rivers and Jacquetta may have been trying to build up their land holdings in Northamptonshire. On 11 May 1449 they purchased the manor and tenements of Wick Dive (in Wicken) with land, meadows and woods from Richard, duke of York and his wife Cicely for £100. The property was held by Sir William Lucy for life by gift of the duke, with remainder to Lord Rivers.⁶³ This was therefore something of a gamble as it could be some years before Sir William died, and Rivers could make full use of it.

Cade's Revolt

In September 1449, Rivers was one of several commissioners in Northampton to raise loans for the war in France. The political situation was rapidly changing within England following disasters in France. In April 1450 Rivers, with John Prisot, Thomas Danyell, John Say, Thomas Tresham and Thomas Thorp were appointed 'to make inquisition in the county of Northampton touching all treason, felonies, rebellions, etc' ...

'committed by John Harries of Teryngton'.⁶⁴ This was one of the first murmurings of a larger rebellion to come. In June a further commission was issued to Rivers, John, viscount Beaumont, William Lovell, John, Lord Dudley and Thomas, Lord Scales 'to

⁶¹ *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 77, p. 140.

⁶² Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility*, p.66. 'For lesser peers, about £250 *per annum* was probably the minimum compatible with parliamentary status'. Pidgeon, MA. The appendices provide a list of known properties held by Richard in his own right and from Jacquetta's dower. Figures are not known for all the properties held; where figures were available his income from land came to less than £200. In his will Thomas wanted his 'right heirs' compensated in the sum of 200 marks [£133 6s 8d] for the lands which he gave to his brother. This was presumably the purchase value of the land. Any annual income from it would therefore have been less.

⁶³ *Feet of Fines*, CP25/1/179/95, no. 122,

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_179_95.shtml> (accessed 19/5/11).

Sir William Lucy had been a servant in the household of Edmund, earl of March. When March died in January 1425 his nephew, Richard duke of York inherited his estates and his servants. Sir William Lucy continued to serve the duke. P.A. Johnson *Duke Richard of York 1411-1460* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 1 & 16.

⁶⁴ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 383.

call together all the king's lieges ... to go with them against the traitors and rebels in Kent and to punish and arrest the same'.⁶⁵

Cade's rebellion, as this became known, is mentioned briefly by *Bale*. The rebels were arrayed at Blackheath on 12 June and the same day 'cam the duk of Bokyngham and lord Ryvers into the cite wt greet power of peple...' Some days later 'the lorde Ryvers' was amongst the men sent to the heath to capture Cade.⁶⁶ Once the action moves out of London and into Kent *Bale* provides less information. There is no mention of the action taken in Kent by Rivers which caused the men of Kent to petition the King against him and others for their treatment of the rebels.

The petition was made very quickly after the event and referred to acts committed during 18-20 June 1450 when Rivers, Lord Dudley, Sir Thomas Stanley and Thomas Danyel were in command of forces pursuing the rebels into Kent. Rivers was the only one of the four with lands in Kent, but they all had connections to the duke of Suffolk. However, according to Griffiths, all four men were 'hated favourites' which had led to their London houses being ransacked by the rebels.⁶⁷ There was perhaps more behind the complaint than just accusations of bad treatment by the royal army in Kent. A commission was therefore set up by the King to investigate; amongst the commissioners were the archbishops of York and Canterbury and the duke of Buckingham. The case against the four men was heard in Rochester in August.⁶⁸ As this was outside London it may explain why *Bale* failed to mention it. While government records can supplement the chronicles, the actual indictment does not survive, and the exact nature of the wrongs committed therefore remains unknown. A few weeks after the hearing the king granted the 'baillieffs and citezeins of oure cite of Rochester xl li'. This was with the advice of the council; amongst the councillors present was Lord Rivers.⁶⁹ It can only be supposed that the commission came to a satisfactory conclusion and this was the city's reward.

August was proving a busy month. On the fourth Rivers was elected a knight of the garter on the nomination of Lord Scales, replacing Sir Walter Hungerford, first Lord

⁶⁵ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 385.

⁶⁶ *Bale*, pp. 129-131.

⁶⁷ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 624.

⁶⁸ R. Virgoe, 'Some Ancient Indictments in the King's Bench Referring to Kent 1450-52', *Kent Records*, vol. 18 (1964), pp. 215-6.

⁶⁹ *POPC*, vol. 6, p. 101.

Hungerford who had died in 1449.⁷⁰ On the eighth Rivers was collecting a subsidy in Northamptonshire for the defence of the realm, he was in Rochester in the middle of the month for his hearing and then back to London for the council meeting.⁷¹

Whatever the feelings of the commons of Kent may have been towards Rivers it had no impact on his position. If Richard was indeed a favourite, as Griffiths suggests, it would have been for reasons other than marriage into the 'royal family'. There was his connection to Suffolk who was certainly a favourite, and it was only in 1440 that Suffolk had ceased to be his landlord and had sold him the manor of Grafton. An important factor may have been the trust in which his father had been held. Richard (iii) had served the king's father and uncles well and this would have reflected well on Rivers. While in Northamptonshire there was a long family tradition of service to the crown, which would inevitably have led to his appointment to commissions in that county. That he was a 'hated favourite' is debatable. The parliament that met in November 1450 petitioned the king 'to remove certain persons from the royal presence'; Rivers was not one of them, although Danyell, Stanley and Dudley were.⁷² Given Rivers' absence from the list, it is possible that the charge against him the previous August only arose because of his association with the other three in subduing Kent. Rivers and his wife were also exempted from the act of resumption made in the same parliament. It therefore seems likely that Rivers was a person who could be trusted to do his duty to the king. If he was a favourite he does not seem, from the evidence of the petition, to have been hated by the commons.

Seneschal of Aquitaine

Henry VI's desire for peace with France had led to an agreement in 1445 to surrender Maine to René of Anjou. In April 1446 the truce agreed at the Treaty of Tours was due to end and negotiations began to extend it. The English would retain Normandy and Gascony but give up their claim to the French throne. The French would accept the claim to Gascony but not Normandy. However there was considerable opposition amongst the English to Henry's plan, especially from those who held land in Maine. Obstructions were put in place to prevent its surrender. Negotiations continued, and in

⁷⁰ William A. Shaw, *The Knights of England A Complete Record from the Earliest Time to the Present Day of the Knights of all the Orders of Chivalry in England, Scotland and Ireland and of Knights Bachelors* (London, 1906) vol. 1, p. 12.

⁷¹ *CFR 1445-52*, pp. 167-72.

⁷² Anne Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1450, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 16. The persons named were said to have behaved improperly around the king 'and in other places'. They were not only to be removed from the royal presence, but were not to come within twelve miles of the king.

the end Charles VII launched an attack on Le Mans in early 1448. The surrender of Maine quickly followed but not the peace that Henry desired. Discussions between both sides continued, until finally, in August 1449, Charles VII invaded Normandy. The English garrisons which had been allowed to fall below strength gradually fell to the French as reinforcements failed to arrive in time. By August 1450 Cherbourg had fallen and with it the whole of Normandy was lost, leaving only Calais.

In response to these disasters, a commission was issued on 30 August to arrest ships within the port of London to take Rivers and his soldiers to Aquitaine. They were instructed to be at Plymouth ready to depart by 21 September at the latest.⁷³ In late October/early November Rivers was still in London when, with Lord Scales, he received the duke of York at Westminster.⁷⁴ On 18 December Rivers was appointed as a justice of the peace for Northamptonshire, so he could not be expected to depart any time in the foreseeable future.⁷⁵ Throughout December commissions were still being issued to provide ships to take Rivers to Aquitaine, and he was now being referred to as seneschal of Aquitaine.⁷⁶ The choice of Rivers as seneschal was probably due to the fact that he was not tainted by the debacle that had taken place in Normandy. Somerset had failed to hold Normandy and was held in little regard in England, so was unlikely to be appointed. Henry may also have trusted Rivers to do as he was instructed, something Somerset had failed to do over Maine. Commissions continued to be issued on a regular basis in the first half of 1451.⁷⁷ The retention of ships, mariners and soldiers for such a long period of time in the West Country was causing problems and the ship owners and captains had to be recompensed for the delays.⁷⁸ Lack of payment and the

⁷³ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 376.

⁷⁴ Anne Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1450, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, appendix 10. Letter of Hans Winter to the Grandmaster of the Teutonic Order, dated 8 November.

⁷⁵ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 592.

⁷⁶ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 437.

⁷⁷ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 389, 30 August 1450; p. 437, 23 Dec., 1450; p. 410, 24 Jan., 1451; pp. 411, 438-9 & 456, Feb., 1451; pp. 441 & 444, March 1451; p. 478, June 1451.

⁷⁸ *CPR 1446-52*, pp. 437-439 & 447-8. Numerous entries in the calendar demonstrate the government's desperation to get sufficient ships to Plymouth, and to keep them there once they arrived. 23 December 1450, the need for ships was extended to ports along the Devon and Cornwall coast as well as Bristol, to be in Plymouth by 20 January. On 9 February 1451 demands went out to ports in Devon and Cornwall commanding that ships masters and mariners should not leave, but must remain until Rivers and his men had been transported to Aquitaine. If they left they would suffer imprisonment and forfeiture. 19 February 1451 a further demand for ships was issued in the port of London, to be in Plymouth by 1 March. 8 June 1451, gives a list of ships and their masters with money due to them. As ready cash was not available they were granted customs and subsidies on any wool and merchandise in the port of London to the value of the money owed. On the 3 June it was felt necessary to keep the masters happy by granting them the portage of all merchandise carried on their impounded ship for three years. Meanwhile there were a large number of men being kept waiting in the ports and surrounding area. On 2 June 1451 the keepers of the peace and sheriff of Cornwall were told to issue proclamations, that all men not domiciled

inability to gather the number of ships and men needed had caused a disastrous delay.⁷⁹ This was a repeat of similar failures encountered in previous years in trying to raise an expeditionary army.⁸⁰

Bordeaux was captured by the French on the 12 June. Even the surrender of Bayonne on 12 August does not seem to have given any extra impetus to the departure of the army, and it seems Rivers may not have reached Calais until the end of 1451. On 26 January 1452 a commission was issued to Lords Welles, Rivers and Mountford to arrest ships in Calais and to serve the king against his enemies.⁸¹ However it appears Rivers may have been back in Northampton in July when he was commissioned to serve as a justice of the peace.⁸² He may have been going back and forth to Calais or possibly he did not actually serve on the commissions; either way he was in Calais in 1453. He was exempted from attending parliament in March because he was 'overseas at the king's command'.⁸³ In February he heard a petition on a charge of debt against a Calais brewer and in May 1454 he was enquiring into the capture of a ship from Dordrecht.⁸⁴ It would appear that any action in Aquitaine had again been delayed. Little had been achieved at very great cost. In 1452 the earl of Shrewsbury was appointed lieutenant-general in Gascony and led an army there to recover lost territory.⁸⁵ Rivers had been diverted to the protection of Calais instead.⁸⁶

If the situation in France was bad, it was little better in England. In August 1453 Henry VI descended into madness. In October his only son Edward was born, which placed Margaret in a stronger position as mother of the heir; she therefore now hoped to have some say in matters of government. The example of her grandmother meant

or born in the county and not retained to go with Rivers should go home 'until they provide themselves with an honest occupation'; those refusing to leave were to be imprisoned.

⁷⁹ *CPR 1446-52*, pp. 446, 456-7 & 472. £1246 13s 4d was lent to the king for the speedy expedition to Gascony and paid to Rivers in part satisfaction of his wages and that of his retinue. Further payments were made on 19 June 1451, when Thomas Pounce and Robert Burton were appointed to receive jewels and vessels of gold and silver from the treasurer and to pledge them and deliver the money to Rivers.

⁸⁰ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 518-9. The four years 1448-51 each had the same problems with assembling men and equipment, a problem made worse by the lack of pay for the men mustered. With each year the problems increased.

⁸¹ *CPR 1446-52*, p. 537.

⁸² *CPR 1446-52*, p. 592.

⁸³ Anne Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1453, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 46.

⁸⁴ *CPR 1452-61*, pp. 42 & 173.

⁸⁵ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 530-1.

⁸⁶ *CPR 1442-52*, p. 537. On 4 January 1452 Rivers and Lord Saye were preparing for an expedition to Calais and the castle of Guisnes for the safe-keeping of the town and castle and to resist the king's enemies. David Grummitt, *The Calais Garrison* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 58, Rivers took 120 men-at-arms and 530 archers to Calais in 1451, following fears of a Burgundian attack.

that Margaret would not have expected anything less.⁸⁷ The council did not hold the same view, nor could they hope to keep Henry's illness a secret for much longer, and they were eventually persuaded to appoint the duke of York as Protector in April 1454.

One of York's main aims was to gain control of Calais. Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset had become captain in 1451 and made Rivers his deputy.⁸⁸ In May 1454 the garrison mutinied over non payment of wages and seized wool and food stored in the town as compensation. Lords Rivers and Welles, as commanders of the garrison, were also involved. The mutiny was not only over pay, it was also an attempt to resist York's authority.⁸⁹ In an attempt to settle matters Henry, viscount Bouchier was sent to Calais with some money to pay the soldiers. Bouchier's orders were to give money only to those soldiers who remained at their posts.⁹⁰ In June he was further commissioned to muster men-at-arms and archers at any suitable place near Calais, along with the duke of Somerset's deputies, Welles and Rivers and their retinues.⁹¹ Matters appeared to have been settled and York was about to be admitted to Calais, when the king suddenly recovered.

York's protectorate ended with the king's recovery in December 1454. Henry VI quickly restored those favourites who had been removed by York, and Somerset, now released from the Tower, prepared to return to Calais. The conflict between York and Somerset came to a head on 22 May 1455 when the two sides confronted each other at the battle of St Albans, where Somerset was killed. In November 1455 the king suffered another collapse and York began his second protectorate, quickly appointing Warwick as captain of Calais.

Rivers' whereabouts during this period are unclear. In December 1454 he had served on a commission of the peace in Northamptonshire with York and Warwick.⁹² But he must have been back in Calais in January 1455 when the mayor of Calais was ordered to pay Jacquetta's dower with arrears dating back to 23 March 1437, when Rivers had been pardoned for his marriage.⁹³ Whether he was at St Albans is unknown. By early June 1456 he was on a commission in Kent with Jasper, earl of Pembroke,

⁸⁷ Kekewich, *The Good King*, p.5, René's mother Yolande of Aragon was a key figure in French politics for thirty years; p. 17, Yolande governed Provence, negotiated for Louis III to become king of Naples and regularly sat on the royal council. She also negotiated with Brittany and Burgundy.

⁸⁸ Grummitt, *Calais*, p. 68.

⁸⁹ Grummitt, *Calais*, p. 98.

⁹⁰ G.L. Harriss, 'The Struggle for Calais: An Aspect of the Rivalry between Lancaster and York', *EHR*, vol. 75, no. 294 (Jan., 1960), pp. 36-7.

⁹¹ *CPR 1452-61*, p. 176.

⁹² *CPR 1452-61*, p. 673.

⁹³ *CCR 1454-61*, pp. 85-6.

Richard, earl of Salisbury and others, including William Haute esquire his brother-in-law, to investigate any treason committed since the previous Christmas. This was followed by a further commission on 3 July to arrest named persons in Northamptonshire, some of whom were from Passenham, close to Rivers' own estates at Grafton.⁹⁴ Even though York had resigned his second protectorate in February 1456, by July Warwick was in Calais as captain, the arrears were paid to the garrison and their leaders replaced. Rivers, Welles and Stourton all surrendered their posts.⁹⁵ This suggests they felt they could not work with Warwick in Calais.

Despite the council's efforts to restore calm, disturbances continued. On 16 July 1457 commissions were issued to trusted leading men across the midlands to suppress unlawful gatherings and rebels. Rivers, with Sir Edmund Grey of Ruthin, was commissioned in the counties of Northampton, Bedford and Buckingham. This was followed in September with commissions of array.⁹⁶ Rivers received a couple of small rewards: in March he and his heirs had been granted free warren in their Northamptonshire lands, and anyone found hunting there illegally would be fined £10, with half of the fine going to Rivers; and on 12 November he was appointed keeper of Rochester Castle for life, to hold with the usual fees and wages.⁹⁷ His father had held the office of constable in 1437.

The unrest of the 1450s meant that Rivers was being called upon to serve more frequently in his home counties of Northampton and Kent. Some of these commissions brought him into conflict with the Nevilles. On 31 July 1458 he sat on a commission at Rochester to look into the actions of the earl of Warwick against a ship of Lubeck. At the end of October he was commissioned with Sir Thomas Broun and the mayor of Sandwich to resist the duke of York and the earls of March, Salisbury and Warwick and to arrest all of Warwick's ships in Sandwich and take them for the king's use. In December they were asked to muster men at arms and archers near Sandwich to enable Sir Gervase Clifton to safeguard the sea.⁹⁸

In the previous summer of 1457 the French had sailed the Channel unhindered and on 28 August Pierre de Brézé had sacked Sandwich. It was evening before Sir Thomas Kyriell had cleared the town of French invaders, although not before the French had taken prisoners, plunder and three warships. The Government had

⁹⁴ *CPR 1452-61*, pp. 307 & 308.

⁹⁵ G.L. Harriss, 'The Struggle for Calais', p. 47.

⁹⁶ *CPR 1452-61*, pp. 370 & 402-3.

⁹⁷ *CChR 1427-1516*, p. 128 & *CPR 1452-61*, p. 394 respectively.

⁹⁸ *CPR 1452-61*, pp. 443 & 555.

responded by sending out ships in October, and in November had tried to commandeer more ships. The duke of Exeter was appointed admiral although it was December before he set sail. This failure to respond quickly and successfully gave Warwick the opportunity he had been waiting for. In November he agreed to keep the seas for three years. Part of the agreement was that he could keep any ships taken but he should not attack friends or subjects. Warwick's actions in the Channel, although verging on piracy, were seen as a success by the people of Kent and applauded.⁹⁹ In comparison, the government's slow response looked bad.

⁹⁹ Colin F. Richmond, 'The Earl of Warwick's Domination of the Channel and the Naval Dimension of the Wars of the Roses, 1456-1460', *Southern History*, vol. 20-21 (1998-99), pp. 1-19.

(iv) Sandwich 1460: The earliest known attack on the Wydeviles

Armed conflict had once again broken out between the Yorkists and the king's supporters. At Ludford Bridge on 12-13 October 1459 the Calais garrison, in which Warwick had placed so much faith, deserted him in the night,

Ande the same day Androwe Throllope consayvyd that the Erle
of Warwyke was goyng unto the Duke of Yorke and not unto the kynge,
and utterly for-soke hym and come unto the kynge and was pardonyd;
and that made the duke fulle sore a-frayde when he wyste that sum olde
soudyers went from hym unto the kynge...¹⁰⁰

The Yorkist lords fled, Warwick, Salisbury and Edward, earl of March to Calais and York and his younger son Edmund, earl of Rutland to Ireland. A parliament held in Coventry on 20 November was packed with the Queen's supporters and became known as the 'Parliament of Devils'. The indictment accused the Yorkists of treason. York, it claimed, had been 'cherished and favoured' by the king yet 'contrary to his ligeaunce' he had conspired against the king, first with Cade and, when this failed, he joined with Warwick and the earl of Salisbury, finally leading up to the events at Ludlow where,

... the seid duc of York and erles sodenly from that most
presumptuouse pryde to the most shamefull falle of cowardice that
coude be thought, so that aboute mydnyght than next suyng they stale
away oute of the felde,...¹⁰¹

Accused of being cowards and traitors the Yorkists were attainted, along with any suspected associates. Their estates were confiscated and their heirs disinherited. The wives of those attainted were exempted from the act, 'Aleise wyf of the seid erle of Salesbury oonly except'.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 205.

¹⁰¹ Rosemary Horrox, ed. 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1459, Text and Translation', *PROME*, 349, item 19.

¹⁰² Horrox, ed. 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1459, Text and Translation', *PROME*, 349-50, item 20-24. York, Warwick, Salisbury and York's sons, Edward and Edmund were 'reputed, taken, declared, adjudged, demed and atteynted of high treson, as fals traitours and enemyes ...' Salisbury's wife Alice was also charged with having 'traiterously labored, abetted, procured, stered and provoked the seid duc of York, and the seid erles of Warrewyck and Salesbury, to doo the seid tresons, ...' on the 1st August. It is interesting that Alice is charged with taking an active role in the rebellion but not the wives of Warwick or York.

Lord Rivers does not appear in the list of those taking the oath of loyalty to the king following the Coventry Parliament. It seems likely he was not present but was busy in Kent. On 14 October he had been sent on a commission to confiscate the rebels' possessions in the county; this was followed on the 30 October with a commission of array to resist York, Warwick and their accomplices. Then, on 10 December Rivers was ordered to Sandwich to muster men to safeguard the sea.¹⁰³

Warwick continued to resist attempts to be dislodged from Calais and went onto the offensive in January 1460 by attacking Rivers at Sandwich. According to the continuator of *Gregory's Chronicle*,

... the Erle of Warwyke come unto Sondewyche, and there he toke the Lord Ryvers with hys ladye, the lady and Duchyes of Bedforde, and brought hem to Calys, for he was commaundyd to have londyd at Calys by the kynge, but he was brought there sonner then hym lekyd.¹⁰⁴

The *Short English Chronicle* is a little more detailed,

This yere the kynge graunted the Duke of Somersett for to be Capteyne of Caley. [This was Henry, son of Edmund, duke of Somerset who died at St Albans in 1455] And anone he made him redy thedirwarde; but the Erle of Warwyke was ther a fore, and kepte him that he myght not londe there; ... And than he sent in to Englonde to the kynge for more pepull. And so the kyng sent the Lorde Ryveres and his sonne Antony with iiije men for to strenthe the Duke of Somersett. And as they were at Sandwyche the Erle off Warwyke had knowleche, and anone he made a sawte over with a godely felloweshippe and loded at Sandwyche, and toke the lord Reveres and his sonne and distrussyd all his pepull. And so they were brought to Caley a yenes her will.¹⁰⁵

Gregory's Chronicle and the *Short English Chronicle* both differ over who was captured. It seems unlikely that Jacquetta would have been present when her husband was

¹⁰³ *CPR 1452–1461*, p. 555 & p. 561.

¹⁰⁴ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 206.

¹⁰⁵ Gairdner, 'Short English Chronicle', p. 72

preparing for an attack. This is confirmed by the inquisition held into the matter just after Easter 1460,

... many other false traitors, rebels and enemies unknown of Henry VI ... made war as in a land of war against the king, their supreme lord, contrary to their allegiance, and took away with them in their ship to Calais Richard Wydevyll, knight, Lord Rivers ... and Anthony Wydevyll, knight, Richard's son, being there in peace as prisoners against their will as in a land of war, ...¹⁰⁶

A fuller report can be found in William Paston's letter to his brother John. The Paston Letters record the events and gossip of the day soon after they happened. The dating is therefore more accurate and the information more immediate. This is the earliest mention of the Wydeviles in the letters. William was passing on an interesting piece of news which he had heard while in London. His letter is dated 28 January 1460, just thirteen days after the event at Sandwich according to the dating of the inquisition,

As for tydyngs, my Lord Ryvers was brought to Caleys, and by-for the lordys wyth viij^{xx} torches, and there my lord of Salesbury reheted hym, callyng hym knaves son that he schuld be so rude to calle hym and these other lordys traytours, for they schull be found the Kyngys treue liege men whan he schuld be found a traytour, &c. And my lord of Warrewyk reheted [hym, and] seyde that his fader was but a squyer, and broute vp wyth Kyng Herry the V^{te}, and sethen [hym-self] made by maryage and also made lord, and that it was not his parte to have swyche langage of lordys, beyng of the Kyngys blood. And my lord of Marche reheted hym jn lyke wyse, and Ser Antony was reheted for his langage of all iij lordys jn lyke wyse.¹⁰⁷

This is at the end of a long letter discussing the Pastons' business in London. William was in London to see the Lord Chancellor. On his arrival he had sent his man

¹⁰⁶ *InqMisc 1422-1485*, (London, 2003), no. 256, pp. 161-2. Also C.L. Scofield, 'The Capture of Lord Rivers and Sir Anthony Woodville, 19 January 1460', *English Historical Review*, no. 37, (1922) pp. 253-5. Although Scofield dates the event to 19 January in the title, the entry in the Calendar gives 15 January, 'quinto decimo die Januarii', as given in the original document quoted by Scofield.

¹⁰⁷ *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 88, pp. 160-63.

to 'jnquyre after my lord Chaunceler and Maister John Stokys and Malmesbury'. Unfortunately the Chancellor 'was departed fro London [and] was redyn to the Kyng ij dayes or we were come to London; and as we vnderstand he hasted hym to the Kyng by-cause of my Lord Ryuers taking at Sandwyche ...'

From this it appears that Rivers was captured some days before 28 January and that the news was enough to make the chancellor rush to the king. William Paston provides a lot of detail but without making any personal comment. At first sight this appears to be the hot topic on the streets of London, yet the 'reheting', i.e. berating, is not mentioned by *Bale*, *Gregory*, or the *Short English Chronicle*. *Gregory* only says that Rivers was abducted and is the only chronicler to say that Jacquetta was also taken. He does not mention Antony or give further information. *Bale* does not even mention it.

It therefore appears this was news that Paston's man had picked up in the chancellor's household, hence the detail; it was not gossip from the street, and reads like the report from an eye witness. The fact that *Gregory* mentions Jacquetta being captured can only be because he is writing some nine or more years after the event. The continuator simply did not know the detail. The other chroniclers also appear to have had only a cursory idea about the event. The immediacy of William's letter is such that, if Jacquetta had been present, then he would surely have mentioned it. In the same way the inquisition would have mentioned her capture, which would have added to the crimes of the traitors in taking a woman prisoner, especially one who was related to the king.

The fact that *Bale* is so quiet on the matter is curious; after all, this was an heroic action by Warwick. Possibly *Bale* was less inclined to support Warwick when he was in direct conflict with the king, which might also explain his lack of criticism of the king's favourites earlier. The absence of detail from *Gregory* and the *Short English Chronicle* may be explained by the fact that they were written after Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Wydevile. Edward was one of the men that had so soundly 'reheted' the Wydeviles. After his marriage to Elizabeth Wydevile it may not have seemed appropriate to mention his role. It seems unlikely that the full details were unknown and it is too good a story for Paston to have been the only one to have heard it.

This raises interesting questions about information and gossip, how quickly it was disseminated, by what means, its value, and why some chose to pass it on and others did not. In this instance it looks like Paston was in the right place at the right time. As he was recording the event as it happened, he was not influenced by the benefit of

hindsight as the chroniclers had been. It was certainly a public berating. Rivers was brought before Warwick with 'viii xx [160] torches'. The impression is of a large crowd gathered to witness the return of Warwick's men from Sandwich. Whether this was done before the Calais garrison, the townspeople or both is unclear from the report. However, a large number of people would certainly have witnessed the event and talked about it later. There is no recorded animosity between Warwick and the Wydeviles prior to this event, and the Pastons appear to have had no particular affiliation to any of the Yorkists.

This 'reheting', is the first English record of an attack on the status of the Wydeviles, calling Rivers a 'knave's son' and claiming that he was 'made by maryage'. A 'knave' has several definitions ranging from a boy employed as a servant to a menial or someone of low condition. It can also mean a commoner or good-for-nothing. The actual meaning appears to rely on context.¹⁰⁸ As discussed earlier the charge of being a knave was exaggerated, as a squire Richard (iii) was not a menial. However, there was some truth in Richard (iii) being brought up by Henry V, in that he was promoted by him. As to being made by marriage, as has been shown, Rivers had been promoted to baron in an attempt to create a royal family, but this was not an excessive elevation. Nor were any of these things unique to the Wydeviles. The family had gradually risen through service to the crown; promotion to baron would have been the next step which Richard may have hoped to achieve anyway through his good service. His marriage may simply have speeded up the process.

Unfortunately Rivers just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and whoever had been captured at Sandwich may have received similar treatment. The public 'reheting' was a piece of theatre engineered by Warwick for propaganda purposes. Warwick restated both his loyalty and his relationship to the King before the Calais garrison, part of which had recently betrayed him. Like Henry VI, Warwick and his father could claim John of Gaunt and therefore Edward III as an ancestor.¹⁰⁹ Warwick therefore considered himself of the 'blood royal', even though it was through the illegitimate off-spring of Gaunt. Such a link had positively benefited the Beauforts, at the expense of both York and the Nevilles.

¹⁰⁸ The *OED* defines 'knave' as boy or lad employed as a servant, or a menial in general; one of low condition. The *MED* suggests a commoner, a villain, wastrel or good-for-nothing.

¹⁰⁹ Warwick's grandfather, Ralph Neville had married as his second wife Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt and his mistress Katherine Swynford. It was this marriage which enabled Ralph to provide good marriages for all his children. This included his youngest daughter Cecily to Richard duke of York, while their eldest son Richard was married to Alice the daughter and heiress of Thomas Montagu, earl of Salisbury (Warwick's parents).

This display before the garrison enabled Warwick to demonstrate that he was not a traitor, and in this way he hoped to secure the future support of the Calais garrison. The capture of Rivers had provided Warwick with someone who could easily be ridiculed in this way. By referring to Richard (iii) Wydevile as being ‘broute up with Kyng Herry the Vte’ and including Sir Richard’s own rise through marriage, Warwick was placing Rivers into the group of men targeted by the Yorkist propaganda of 1450. Cade had proclaimed against ‘fals and of nowght browght up’ persons about the king, and York had repeated this in his articles issued to the king in autumn 1450.¹¹⁰ The articles were once again repeated in a proclamation issued in Kent in 1460 when the Yorkists arrived from Calais, shortly after the ‘berating’. Warwick did not say outright that Rivers was ‘broughte up of noughte’ but the implication was there; such men, it was suggested, were by their very nature greedy and offered wicked counsel which misled the king.¹¹¹ Those members of the nobility excluded from royal counsel justified their rebellion by blaming such ‘lesser men’, while their rebellion rescued the king from himself and these ‘evil counsellors’. By having the misfortune to be the one captured at Sandwich Rivers provided Warwick with a perfect propaganda opportunity. Warwick could not have foreseen how useful this would prove in the future after Rivers’ daughter married Edward IV. Inadvertently the idea that the Wydeviles were greedy and ‘lesser men’ had been planted.

Wavrin provides a slightly different account about what happened at Sandwich and Calais. He claims that Rivers sent a ship to Calais to get news of Somerset and that no one knew that Warwick was now in control of the town. The man Rivers sent to Calais for news was actually in the service of the earl of March and quickly advised them of what was happening in Sandwich. This ‘gentleman’ advised that Sandwich would not put up any resistance and that only Rivers was there, lodged at the friars, while Antony had gone to London with master Ormond. When Warwick’s men landed in Sandwich Antony had only just returned and was attacked and almost killed before he was recognised and taken prisoner, Rivers was then captured at the friars. However in this

¹¹⁰ Sarah L. Peverley, ‘Political Consciousness and the Literary Mind in Late Medieval England: Men “Brought up of nought” in Vale, Hardyng, *Mankind*, and Malory’, *Studies in Philology*, vol. 105, no. 1 (Winter, 2008), pp.6-7. York’s articles were repeated in 1460 when the Yorkists arrived from Calais and published in Kent. Men ‘brought up of nought’ meant men ‘raised out of insignificance or poverty’, see especially p. 4 fn 11 which gives further definitions from the MED, all of which generally mean created out of nothing. See also appendix 5.

¹¹¹ Peverley, pp.3-5, ‘the association of wicked counsel, with “cliques of lesser men” who encroach on the authority of the nobility, appears to be more specific to England, where the topoi of greedy counsellors and low born men who rise above their station are merged to justify civil and baronial rebellion’. Peverley goes on to say that this idea of men of ‘nought’ was most used in the 1440s and 50s and especially in 1449-50 against Suffolk, and the weakness of Henry VI’s regime.

version of events, when they returned to Calais there was no public reception. According to Wavrin they did not dare to take Rivers and Antony in to the town because they were much loved by the ‘commun’. There might be some truth in this; Richard (iii) had served in Calais for a number of years and there was also Rivers’ own support for the garrison when they mutinied over pay in 1454. The fact that Rivers’ wife was a member of the Burgundian nobility may also have been a factor.¹¹² Wavrin continued that Warwick and Salisbury were upset by some words that Rivers and Antony said about March.¹¹³ What these words were was not repeated. But it is intriguing given the later stories that emerged over Edward’s legitimacy.

Wavrin’s report has little in common with that of Paston. The only points of similarity are the attack on Sandwich and the capture of Rivers and his son. The exchange of words according to Wavrin was initiated by Rivers, but it took place in private and not before a large audience. If Wavrin’s account came from Warwick then it is likely that Warwick re-wrote events so that they reflected well on him. Warwick certainly seems to have been directing targeted propaganda at two very different audiences, the Calais garrison and the duke of Burgundy. Warwick wished to be seen in a positive light by both.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Grummitt, *Calais*, pp. 99-102. The close relationship between the Calais garrison and Burgundy is discussed with regard to cultural and military links. Many from the garrison moved into Burgundian service and vice versa.

¹¹³ Wavrin, vol. 6, pp. 276-308. In particular for their arrival in Calais, p. 284, ‘Quant doncques les gens d’armes furent descendus et les navires a lancre les comtes de La Marche, de Salsebery et de Warewic ne volrent point que le seigneur de Rivieres et son filz entraissent en la ville, pour doubte du commun qui ne les amoit point, jusques sur le vespre ; si estoient moult esbahis pour aulcunes parolles quilz devoient avoir dit du comte de La Marche lesqueles leur furent ramenteues present le comte et les autres, et lors furent menez ou chastel adfin que nulle rumeur ne sen ensievist par les sauldoyers, ou ilz furent lonque espace prisonniers ...’. I am grateful to Dr Visser-Fuchs for directing me towards her thesis on Wavrin and Warwick where she discusses Wavrin’s report on these events as coming from Warwick himself. See fn. 114 below.

¹¹⁴ Carolina Thodora Livia Visser-Fuchs, ‘Warwick and Wavrin: Two case studies on the literary background and propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian relations in the Yorkist period’, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College London (2002), p.38. Wavrin’s source may have been ‘Warwick’s Apology’, which Warwick produced and distributed to give his version of events.

(vi) 1461-1464 Reconciliation with the Yorkist Regime

Exactly when Rivers and his son were released is unclear. Wavrin is the only author who mentions the Wydevile prisoners. He gives details of a meeting between Warwick and Somerset at St Pierre outside Calais, to discuss the position over Guisnes, where Somerset agreed not to take up arms against Warwick. Shortly after, Warwick returned to England taking with him Rivers and his son, who had been his prisoners for a time in Calais.¹¹⁵ Following celebrations in Sandwich Warwick continued on to Greenwich, taking his wife, mother and the Wydeviles with him. He then presented the Wydeviles to the king and they were all pardoned; they then travelled on to London where Warwick was given a grand reception.¹¹⁶ It seems that Rivers and his son may have been back in England by June 1460; however their meeting with the king and subsequent pardon is confusing. Henry VI was not in London at this time; therefore it appears that this particular episode relates to a later date.¹¹⁷ If this is a true account, it is more likely to relate to events after the battle of Towton in March 1461, when the Milanese ambassador reported that the Wydeviles were prisoners of Warwick. The king giving a pardon would therefore have been Edward IV and not Henry VI, which makes more sense given Rivers' loyalty to Henry VI in 1460.

In any event Antony, and possibly Rivers, seem to have been at Henry VI's side for the battle of Towton on 29 March 1461. This is based on a report following the battle in which Antony was mistakenly listed amongst the dead.¹¹⁸ Following Towton, Edward was crowned, while King Henry fled to Scotland. Reporting on these events to Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan on 31 July 1461, Giovanni Pietro Cagnola mentions Rivers,

I have no news from here except that the Earl of Warwick

¹¹⁵ Wavrin, vol. 6, pp. 306-9, 'si emmena avec luy le seigneur de la Riviere et son filz qui avoient este bonne espace prisonniers a Callaix. ... il prinst congie de ceulz de la ville et tyra son chemin vers Londres, ... au estoit le roy adcompaignie de tres grant triumphe de seigneurs, dames et damoiselles quy tous ensamble ... Et illec presenta le comte sa mere et sa femme a la personne du roy ... lui presentant aussi le seigneur de Rivieres et son filz, ausquelz fut illec tout pardonne.'

¹¹⁶ *John Stone's Chronicle: Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, 1417-1472*, translation and introduction, Meriel Connor (Kalamazoo, 2010), p.104, on 26 June 1460 the earls of Salisbury, March and Warwick came to Canterbury from Calais with Lord Fauconberg, and a great company of people. Unfortunately Stone does not name the Wydeviles as being amongst the company.

¹¹⁷ Caroline Baron 'London and the Crown 1451-61' in *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century*, eds., J.R.L. Highfield & Robin Jeffs (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 96-7, 2 July 1460 London admitted the three earls to the city; however King Henry was not in London.

¹¹⁸ *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 90, pp. 165-6. The letter was from William Paston dated 4 April 1461 (Towton was fought 29 March 1461); again William is in receipt of information from an important source, 'tydyngys as my lady of York hath by a lettre of credens [vnder the signe manuel of] oure souerayn lord Kyng Edward...'

has taken Monsig. De Ruvera and his son, and sent them to the king, who had them imprisoned in the Tower. Thus they say that every day favours the Earl of Warwick, who seems to me to be everything in this kingdom...¹¹⁹

On 30 August Count Ludovico Dallugo was writing to say that,

... The lords adherent to King Henry are all quitting him, and come to tender obedience to this king, and at present one of the chief of them has come, by name Lord de River, with one of his sons, men of very great valour. I held several conversations with this lord de Rivers about King Henry's cause, and what he thought of it, and he answered me that the cause was lost irretrievably.¹²⁰

If Warwick held the Wydeviles prisoner after Towton it would clarify Wavrin's report. As Somerset had been granted his freedom in August 1460 on condition he did not fight against Warwick, it seems reasonable to assume that a similar arrangement had been made with the Wydeviles. If Warwick had released them on this condition, then it would explain why he was holding them prisoner in 1461, because they had broken their word by fighting for Henry at Towton. If they were sent to the Tower it was not for long as Count Dallugo is reporting his conversation with them shortly after. Rivers' attainder in May 1461 was quickly followed by a pardon on 12 July and on 10 December Jacquetta had her dower confirmed and re-granted.¹²¹ Their son Antony, 'knight, of Scales' received a similar pardon on 23 July.¹²² Antony was Lord Scales in right of his wife, Elizabeth Scales; who was the daughter and heir of Thomas Lord Scales who died in 1460.¹²³ These dates correspond well with the Milanese reports. Rivers may well have been imprisoned during the period from his attainder to his pardon. On his release in July he was then free to meet and speak with Count Dallugo. From Dallugo's report we

¹¹⁹ *CSPM 1385-1615*, vol. 1, p.100. *Dispatches with Related Documents of Milanese Ambassadors in France and Burgundy*, eds., P.M. Kendall & V. Illardi (Ohio, 1971), vol. 2, p. 406 fn 2. Cagnola was secretary to Count Lodovico Dallugo and Zanone Corio, who had been sent by the duke of Milan to England to congratulate Edward IV on his accession to the throne.

¹²⁰ *CSPM*, pp. 101-2.

¹²¹ *CPR 1461-67*, p. 35, order for all of Rivers' possessions to be taken into the king's hands. p. 97 and pp. 169-70. See also Pidgeon, MA, p. 15.

¹²² *CPR 1461-67*, p. 97.

¹²³ Elizabeth Scales had married as her first husband, Henry Bourchier; he had died c. August 1458. Therefore Antony and Elizabeth must have married sometime between August 1458 and the date of Antony's pardon on 23 July 1461, when he is referred to as 'knight of Scales'.

have a positive description of Rivers and Antony, as ‘men of great valour’. Dallugo also believed that Lord Rivers was one of the ‘chief’ Lancastrians. An important point from the Milanese reports is that Warwick was seen as the man in charge at the beginning of the new reign.

On 12 December Rivers was reappointed ‘rider of the king’s forest of Saucy ... from the time when he had the same by letters patent of Henry VI’. This was followed by the grant of the office of steward of the same forest.¹²⁴ The rapid confirmation of Jacquetta’s dower meant that they did not suffer any financial hardship from the change in regime. This was followed in April 1463 with an exemption from an act of resumption, which confirms that, as far as Edward was concerned, they were no real threat to the Yorkists and could be included in his reconciliation efforts with supporters of the previous regime.¹²⁵ Although Henry VI had included them in the extended royal family, along with his half-brothers, they were obviously not seen as being totally committed to the deposed king in the same way that the Tudors were. It would seem that they had convinced Edward as well as Count Dallugo that they believed Henry VI’s cause was lost. Their family history also demonstrated that they gave loyalty to the de-facto king. Rivers had been held in trust by Henry VI, probably because he had shown that he could work with Suffolk, Somerset or York as required, without fear or favour. It was likely that such loyalty and trustworthiness had prevented Rivers from being named in the 1450 parliament as a person to be removed from the king’s presence. This ability to work with both sides would also have stood in his favour with Edward.

Rivers and his son Antony were gradually integrated into the new regime, serving Edward IV on various commissions of oyer and terminer in 1463 and 1464.¹²⁶ In May 1462 Antony and his wife Elizabeth were granted the manor of ‘Le Syche’ in East Lynn, Norfolk, worth £20 a year from the forfeited estates of Thomas Tudenham.¹²⁷ This may

¹²⁴ *CPR 1461-67*, p. 81 & p. 83.

¹²⁵ *PROME*, Rosemary Horrox ed., ‘Edward IV: Parliament of 1463’, v-524, ‘Provided that this acte extend not nor be prejudiciall to Richard Wydevyll, Lord Ryvers, nor to Jaquett duchess of Bedford his wife, nor to eny of theym, by what maner name or names they or any of theym be called, ...’. Similar exemptions had been given by Henry VI. *PROME*, Anne Curry ed., ‘Henry VI: Parliament of 1450’, v-222, act of resumption ‘... shall not extend or be prejudicial to Richard Woodville, knight, Lord Rivers, nor to our cousin Jacquetta, his wife, widow of our noble uncle John, late duke of Bedford, ...’. In the parliament of 1455 an exemption was made following a grant to the king’s son Edward, *PROME*, Rosemary Horrox ed., ‘Henry VI: Parliament of 1455’, v-294, ‘this acte of lyvere made to oure said sone be not prjudiciall to Richard Wydevyll lord Ryvers, ne to Jaquette duchesse of Bedford, wyf to the same Richard ...’. Jacquetta continued to be known as duchess of Bedford for the rest of her life. It was common practice for women to retain and use the highest title acquired through marriage. The duchess of Norfolk is another example having re-married several times men of lesser title, after the death of her first husband the duke of Norfolk.

¹²⁶ *CPR 1461-67*, p. 279, 8 June 1463; pp. 303-304, 25 Jan. 1464, 8 & 18 Feb. 1464; p. 390, 15 Dec. 1464.

¹²⁷ *CPR 1461-67*, p. 188.

have been as much for Elizabeth's benefit as Antony's. Her late father, Thomas, Lord Scales, had been greatly respected as a soldier by the Yorkist lords.¹²⁸

By the early 1460s Rivers had managed to overcome any problems that might have arisen from his secret marriage to Jacquetta. He had become established as a minor member of the royal family with his creation as lord Rivers in 1448. His career of service followed a similar pattern to that of his father before him, one of loyalty to the crown. Rivers' position had enabled him to find suitable marriages for three of his children. The first marriage he arranged was for Jacquetta, who was about four years old, to the six year old John le Strange. This had taken place by March 1450 at the latest. John was only five when he succeeded his father Richard as eighth Lord Strange of Knockin and fourth lord Mohun de Dunster (see fig. 30).¹²⁹ According to Given-Wilson they were one of 'the greastest [families] never to receive an earldom'.¹³⁰ Richard le Strange had died in August 1449 and, unless there was already an agreement for the two children to marry, Rivers had moved very quickly to secure such a wealthy heir for his young daughter. His eldest daughter Elizabeth had married Sir John Grey of Groby (see fig. 29), by whom she had two sons, Thomas born in c.1455 and Richard who may have been born shortly before his father's death at the second battle of St Albans in February 1461. Rivers' eldest son, Antony, was married to Elizabeth Scales. Her first husband had been Henry Bouchier, a younger son of Henry, earl of Essex. Essex had also been amongst the young men knighted at Leicester in 1426. These families were all connected, through marriage (see fig. 31) and through service in France. Elizabeth's mother-in-law had married as her second husband Sir John Bouchier, brother of Henry, and was therefore Elizabeth Scales' brother-in-law. The Wydeviles therefore had connections to both the Lancastrians and the house of York. This may also have helped with Rivers' acceptance by Edward IV.

Despite the comments by the Burgundian chroniclers Monstrelet and Wavrin on the marriage of Richard and Jacquetta, they had been accepted, at least by the lesser English nobility, as the marriages of their three children demonstrate. Their acceptance by Henry VI would have helped, but friendships forged in France would also have

¹²⁸ Lynda Pidgeon, 'Antony Wydevile, Lord Scales and Earl Rivers: family, Friends and Affinity. Part 2' *The Ricardian*, vol. 16 (2006), p. 17.

¹²⁹ *CPR 1446-52*, pp. 311-12. Elizabeth widow of Sir Richard le Strange, enfeoffed the manor of Midlyngton (Middleton?) Oxford for John and his wife Jacquetta and the heirs of their bodies. The feoffees included William Haute, Robert Isham and Thomas Tresham. Tresham and Isham were associated with the Wydeviles and William Haute was a relative.

¹³⁰ Given-Wilson *The English Nobility*, p. 64.

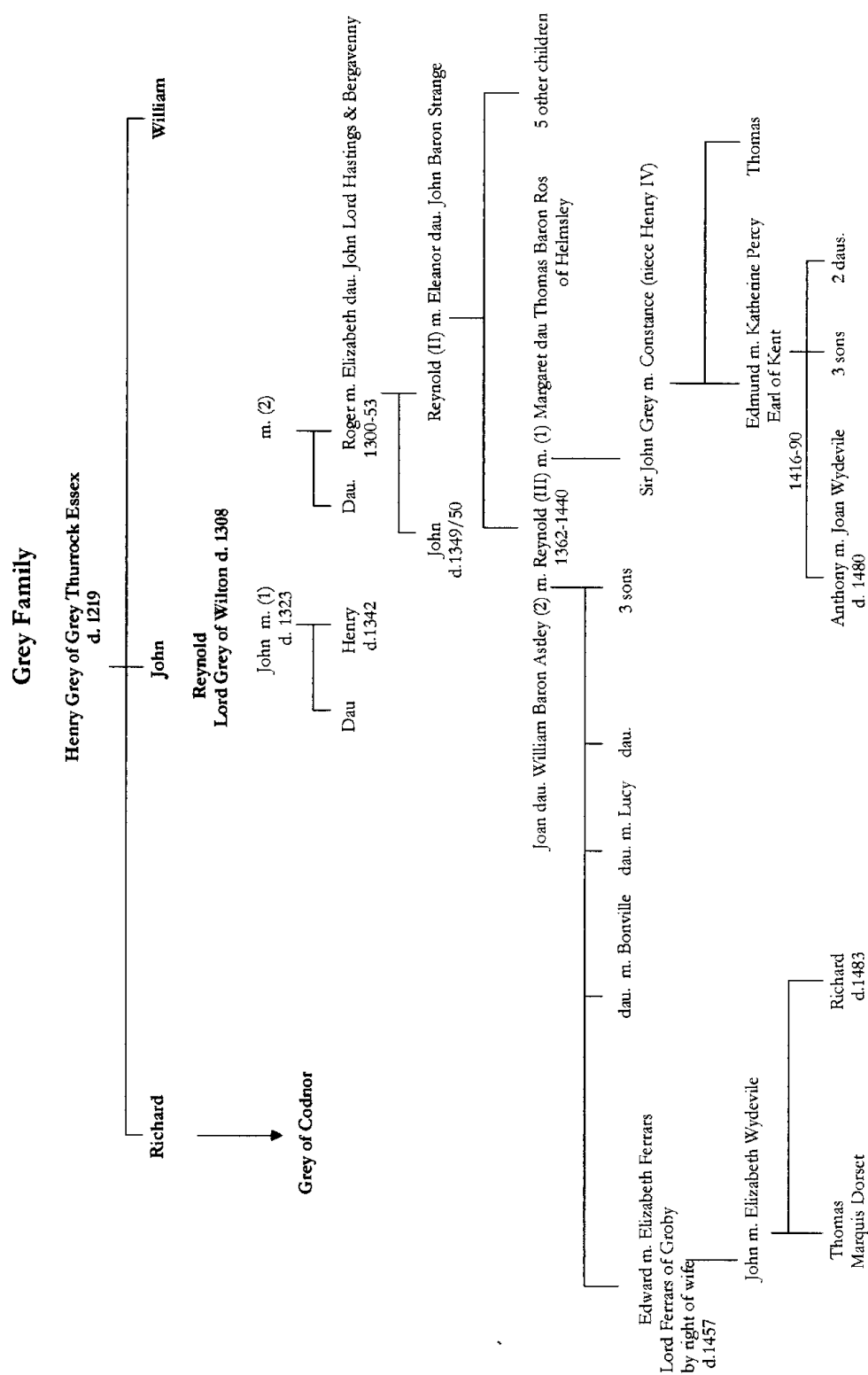


Figure 29

played a role. The event at Calais in 1460 should be seen for what it was - a piece of propaganda, enacted by Warwick. Following his victory at Towton Edward wished to be reconciled with as many of Henry VI's supporters as possible; the Wydeviles were only one family among many to be reconciled with the Yorkists. As the Wydeviles had shown in the past, following the usurpation of Henry IV, they could work well for who ever occupied the throne.

Figure 30. The Le Strange Family

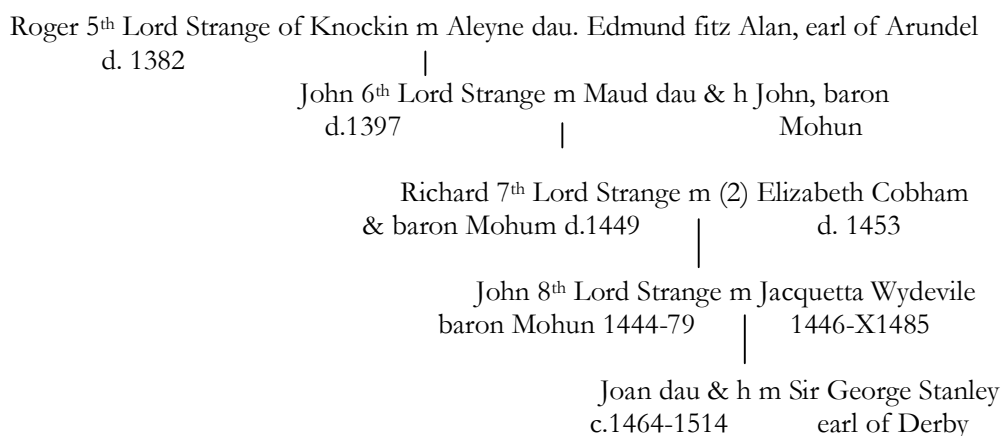
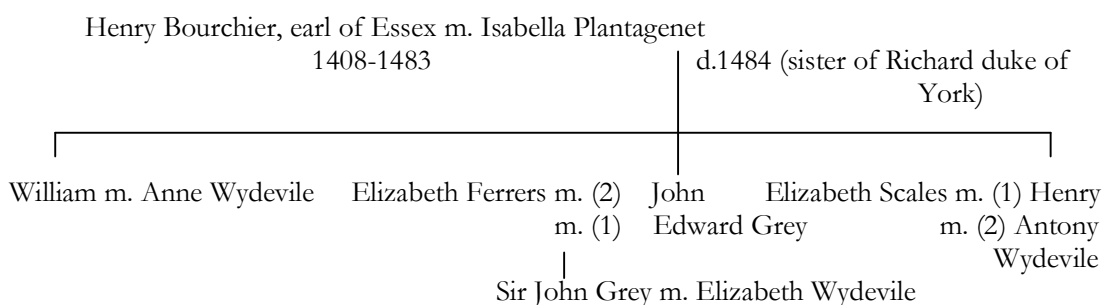


Figure 31. Bouchier Family



(2) A Wydevile Queen: A second clandestine marriage¹³¹

How Elizabeth Wydevile and Edward IV met and subsequently married has become the stuff of legend. Suggestions of romantic trysts under an oak tree, which could still be pointed out in Grafton Regis in the nineteenth century, have only added to a myth, which has grown in the re-telling. There is no known record of their meeting prior to 1464 but there is no reason to suppose that their paths had not crossed when they were younger. They may have met in Normandy, if their families had joined their fathers while on service there. They may even have met in England given the occasional association of Rivers with York. One possible time they may have met was 25 January 1464 when a royal commission of oyer and terminer was dated from Northampton. Lord Rivers was one of the named commissioners and Grafton is not very from Northampton.¹³² What is generally accepted is that Edward was in the Stony Stratford area on 30 April and remained there for a few days, secretly marrying Elizabeth on May Day at Grafton Regis. The only people present were Jacquetta, a priest and possibly three or four others. Edward was said to have used the pretext of going out hunting to explain his absence.

(i) Chronicles and records for the period 1464-1469

Whatever the truth of the story, Edward kept his marriage a secret until he was forced to admit it to the council meeting at Reading in September. Negotiations had been taking place to arrange his marriage. In March Warwick and Lord Wenlock had negotiated a truce with France, and Warwick intended to discuss an extension to the truce and a possible marriage treaty in St Omer in April. King Louis was suggesting Bona of Savoy as a possible bride. In the event Warwick was detained in England and the meeting was postponed to October 1464 and subsequently cancelled, following the news of Edward's marriage.¹³³ Reactions to Edward's announcement first appear in the continuator to *Gregory's Chronicle*. He begins with a warning,

Nowe take hede what love may doo, for love wylle not nor
may not caste no faute nor perelle in noo thyng. That same yere,

¹³¹ See CD appendix 11 for concordance of chronicles covering the years 1464-1499 and Burgundian chronicles.

¹³² *CPR 1461-67*, p. 303.

¹³³ Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 90-91.

the fyrste day of May be fore sayde or wrete, oure soverayne lorde the Kynge, Edward the iiij, was weddyd to the Lorde Ryvers doughter; hyr name ys Dame Elyzabethe, that was wyffe unto Syr John Grey, sone and heyre unto the Lady Ferys of Groby. And thys maryage was kepte fulle secretely longe and many a day, that no man knewe hyt; but men mervelyd that oure soverayne lorde was so longe with owte any wyffe, and were evyr ferde that he had be not chaste of hys levyng. But on Alle Halowe day at Redyng there it was knowe, for there the kynge kepte hys comyn counselle, and the lordys mevyd hym and exortyd hym in Goddys name to ben weddyd and to lyffe undyr the lawe of God and Chyrche, and they wold sente in too sum stronge lond to inquere a quene good of byrthe, a-cordyng unto hys dygnyte. And thenn our soverayne myght not no longer hyde hys maryage, and tolde hem howe he hadde done, and made that the maryage shuld be oppynde unto hys lordys.¹³⁴

Although the continuation to *Gregory's Chronicle* finishes in 1469, it was written after this date, so should be treated with some caution. The warning about the effects of love appears to have been written with the benefit of hindsight. It hints that all is not as it should be, so the author is obviously aware of the consequences of Edward's marriage. He notes the marriage was a secret and there is a hint of Elizabeth's unsuitability in his description of the lords' request that Edward should marry 'a quene good of byrthe'. *Gregory* also suggests Edward's promiscuity, something that the Milanese ambassador had hinted at earlier.¹³⁵

What should also be noted is that *Gregory* does not mention an embassy having been sent out to arrange a marriage for Edward. On the contrary, according to *Gregory*, the lords were only now pressing for Edward to find a wife and suggesting that they would look abroad. The author also claims that Warwick was in the north 'the same somer' laying siege to Alnwick castle.¹³⁶ *Gregory* therefore appears to be well informed regarding Warwick's whereabouts at the time.

¹³⁴ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 226-7.

¹³⁵ *CSPM 1385-1615*, vol. 1, p.100. Giovanni Pietro Cagnola to Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, writing on 31 July 1461. The king's desires seem to me to be directed towards having some sort of pleasure. ...

¹³⁶ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 227. *Gregory* states the marriage took place in May, hence 'the same somer', although the discovery of the marriage was not until 'Alle Halowe day', that is 1 November. Later chronicles also place Warwick in France arranging a marriage for Edward at this time.

Following the marriage of Elizabeth and Edward a retrospective comment on the marriage of Jacquetta and Sir Richard begins to appear in the continental chronicles. That marriage has now become much more important, especially in terms of their status, and their daughter's suitability as Queen. The 1469 continuator of *Monstrelet's Chronicle*, when commenting on Edward's marriage to Elizabeth, refers back to the marriage of Richard and Jacquetta,

In this year, between Christmas and Easter, Edward king of England, surnamed Long Shanks, one of the handsomest knights of his kingdom, took to wife the daughter of lord Rivers, an English knight of middling rank, who, in his youth, had been sent to France to serve the duchess of Bedford. ... sister to the count Louis de St. Pol, an exceedingly handsome lady. After the death of the duke, his widow following her own inclinations, which were contrary to the wishes of her family, particularly to those of her uncle, the cardinal of Rouen, married the said lord Rivers, reputed the handsomest man that could be seen, who shortly after carried her to England, and never after could return to France for fear of the relatives of this lady. She had several children by lord Rivers, and among them was a daughter of prodigious beauty, who, by her charms, so captivated king Edward that he married her, to the great discontent of several of the higher nobility, who would, if possible, have prevented the marriage from taking place. But, to satisfy them that the lady's birth was not inferior to theirs, king Edward sent letters to the count de Charolais, to entreat that he would send him some lord of the family of the lady to be present *at her wedding*. The count sent him sir James de St. Pol, her uncle, grandly accompanied by knights and gentlemen, ... who, on their arrival at London, put an end to the murmurings on this marriage, and gave great satisfaction to the king.¹³⁷

While echoing the earlier entry in the chronicle, the continuator expands on it. He does not say that Sir Richard was inferior but of 'middling rank'. While a rather indeterminate description of status, it is less disparaging to 'inferior'. Seeking to explain

¹³⁷ *Monstrelet*, Johnes, ed., vol. 2, p. 396.

this first marriage the continuator describes how good looking they were. Sir Richard is the ‘handsomest man to be seen’; he was sent to serve the duchess and this explains how they met. Her family’s disapproval has certainly been exaggerated; Richard and Jacquetta regularly returned to France after their marriage. The continuator may simply be using family disapproval to make a more subtle comment on the disparity in their rank given the recent royal marriage.

Elizabeth, the beautiful daughter of beautiful parents, captivates Edward. Despite the discontent of the nobles, Edward is then able to demonstrate that his wife is not his ‘inferior’. This apparently satisfies everyone as ‘murmuring’ against the marriage then stops. Thus the question of inferiority has been satisfactorily disproved by the emphasis on Jacquetta’s family background. The St Pols, as members of the Burgundian nobility, were now connected to the crown of England. To disparage Elizabeth would therefore disparage them, something a Burgundian chronicler was unlikely to do in the improved circumstances of Jacquetta’s marriage. Importantly, in this account, Elizabeth’s suitability as queen was acquired through the status of her mother.

What should be noted is the suggestion that the marriage caused discontent. Like *Gregory*, the author is probably writing with the knowledge of Warwick’s later action against Edward IV in 1469/70. Curiously the *Monstrelet* continuator mistakes the event which the Burgundian lords attended. It was Elizabeth’s coronation, which took place on 26 May 1465, not her marriage.¹³⁸ Perhaps the author only knew that the St Pol family had gone to England for an important celebration or perhaps he wanted to show that an open and acknowledged marriage had taken place. Two secret marriages in two generations may have seemed too unlikely for the chronicler, or too questionable.

Wavrin is less diplomatic. Reporting on the marriage of Edward and Elizabeth he too refers back to her parents and reflects on her suitability as queen. For Wavrin Jacquetta’s status makes no difference,

... she was beautiful and good, [that is Elizabeth] but not the sort of woman appropriate in any way for such a high prince as he is, as he knows well, because she was not the daughter of a duke or earl, her mother had been married to a knight of whom she had two children before her marriage, even though she was the daughter of a duchess

¹³⁸ A contemporary account of the coronation exists and was published by George Smith in 1935, *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville Queen Consort of Edward IV*, this was reprinted by Gloucester Reprints 1975. The manuscript was in private ownership until purchased by Smith; its current location is unknown.

and niece of the count of St. Pol, notwithstanding all things
 considered she was not the woman for him, nor to such a prince
 ought to appertain.¹³⁹

As discussed previously, in this version of the chronicle Wavrin appears to be saying that it was Jacquetta who had had two children prior to her marriage, which would make Elizabeth illegitimate. This particular story has been shown to be a scribal error and it is unfortunate that this version is the one which has come into print. This particular slur on the reputation of the Wydeviles can now be dismissed. It is significant that this story was never used against Elizabeth, as one might expect if it had any foundation, especially when the legitimacy of her own children with Edward was raised in the 1480s.

The disparity between the two Burgundian chroniclers over status is interesting. For Wavrin, Jacquetta's status as a duchess was insufficient, implying that status could only come through the male line. Wavrin is quite clear; Elizabeth was not a suitable wife for a king. It was not just that she had been married before and had children, the main problem was that she was not the daughter of a duke or earl; being the daughter of a duchess was irrelevant. The entry in the chronicle takes the form of a discussion between Edward and his councillors regarding Edward's choice of wife. Given that Wavrin used information provided by Warwick in 1460, it may be Warwick's view over Elizabeth's suitability that is being recorded. After all Warwick had pretensions for the marriage of his daughters, so it is interesting that the author suggests that a wife from the nobility would be acceptable, so long as it was from the upper nobility, and the claim was through the male line. Wavrin was dependent upon Warwick at this time for some of his information, and had 'for a while admired him'.¹⁴⁰

Wavrin goes on to describe eight days of entertainments following a marriage and that, at the same time, Lord Rivers arranged the marriage of his son to the daughter of Lord Scales, as well as arranging the marriages of his daughters to the great lords of the realm.¹⁴¹ In fact this is partly erroneous because Antony's marriage had occurred prior to July 1461, well before Elizabeth's marriage to Edward. The marriages of Rivers'

¹³⁹ *Wavrin, 1447–1471*, vol. 5, p. 455. See p. 149, fn. 35 above.

¹⁴⁰ C.T. Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Warwick and Wavrin: Two case studies on the literary background and propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian relations in the Yorkist period*, unpublished PhD 2002, p. 20. The possibility that Wavrin used sources which were sympathetic to Warwick is discussed in the thesis. However, Wavrin did not have any personal sympathy with Warwick, although he had for a while admired him. pp. 38-40.

¹⁴¹ *Wavrin, 1447–1471*, vol. 5 pp. 456-7.

daughters took place after the coronation. While Wavrin and Monstrelet both have a common theme regarding Edward's marriage, they differ over Elizabeth's suitability. If Wavrin was dependent on Warwick for some of his information at this time, it might explain the disparity between the two Burgundians over status. Given the lack of agreement it suggests that acceptability was the most important factor, and that the rest may be seen as snobbishness or jealousy.¹⁴²

The Burgundians were not the only Europeans to have picked up rumours regarding discontent over the king's marriage. In the Calendar of State Papers Milan is to be found a newsletter from Bruges dated 5 October 1464. This reports news brought by Venetian merchants coming from London only days after the marriage was made public at Reading,

They also say that the marriage of King Edward will be celebrated shortly ... the espousals and benediction are already over, and thus he has determined to take the daughter of my Lord de Rivers, a widow with two children, having long loved her. The greater part of the lords and the people in general seem very dissatisfied at this, and for the sake of finding means to annul it, all the nobles are holding great consultations in the town of Reading, where the king is...¹⁴³

The Milanese ambassador to France passed on a similar story to the duke of Milan,

It is asserted that King Edward has married a widow of England, daughter of a sister of the Count of St Pol ... This had greatly offended the people of England.¹⁴⁴

The source for both was most likely the same; rumours from London. These reports may start to explain where the Burgundians got their information, especially Wavrin who collected newsletters. The Italian accounts are more immediately

¹⁴² While it may have been unusual for English kings to choose a wife who was not a foreign princess, Scottish kings frequently chose a wife from the nobility. In the thirteenth century John Balliol married Isobel, daughter of John de Warenne. Robert the Bruce chose both his wives from the nobility, while David II's second wife was the daughter of Sir Malcolm Drummond and the widow of Sir John Logie. She had previously been David's mistress. James I had married Joan Beaufort, daughter of the earl of Somerset.

¹⁴³ *CSPM 1385-1615*, vol. 1, p. 113.

¹⁴⁴ *CSPM 1385-1615*, vol. 1, p. 114.

contemporary with the event and yet they too have a wedding taking place. Could it be that in the rumours and misunderstanding of language they believed a celebration was to take place and assumed it was to be a wedding? This would make sense of the report that a celebration of marriage was to follow an espousal. The Milanese report also confirms the dating of the council in September and demonstrates the errors that can creep into a retrospective chronicle. The assertion that Edward had 'long loved her' may have been an attempt to explain the inexplicable. This marriage had come out of nowhere and this would explain the actions of a king who should have been looking for a wife with political benefits in mind. Also who could believe that a man, let alone a king, would choose to marry a woman he had only recently met?

Caspar Weinreich, a German merchant, was also recording the same events in his *Danzig Chronicle*. He recorded local and European events, especially where trade was affected. The news that reached him is similar to the ambassadors' reports and they are likely to have had a similar source, gossip and information from other merchants. In 1464 he recorded,

Item in this winter King Edward in England took a gentleman's wife to queen, and ... was crowned, too, against the will of all lords. People said that her husband was killed in battle; some said he was pushed off the bridge at Rochester; ... He was a mere knight; and the king fell in love with the wife when he dined with her frequently. And although royal custom in England demands that a king should marry a virgin, whoever she may be, legitimately born and not a widow, yet the King took this one against the wish of all his lords.¹⁴⁵

Weinreich provides some interesting contextual detail, including reports on how Elizabeth's first husband died and how Edward met her. The comment about a wife being 'legitimately born' is interesting. This may reflect uncertainty over Jacquetta's secret marriage and the date of Elizabeth's birth. Rather than reflecting 'royal custom' Weinreich appears to be listing Elizabeth's deficiencies as a royal wife. Weinreich's story agrees with the Milanese reports on rumours about the English lords' unhappiness about the marriage, which undoubtedly meant her suitability. However, unlike the Burgundians, it is the status of Elizabeth's late husband, rather than that of her father, as

¹⁴⁵ Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'English Events in Caspar Weinreich's *Danzig Chronicle*, 1461-1495', *The Ricardian*, Vol. 7, No. 95, Dec., (1986), p. 313. (Hereafter *Danzig Chronicle*)

a 'gentleman' and 'a mere knight' which Weinrich reports. Their interpretations differ; while the Burgundians were concerned about status, Weinrich and the Milanese appear to be more concerned about the fact that Elizabeth was a widow.

An interesting feature raised by Weinreich is that a king should marry a virgin and not a widow, and that this was English tradition. Weinreich is the first chronicler to introduce the idea of a queen's virginity. If this was English royal custom then its lack of mention in English chronicles is strange. The idea may rest on the belief that a virgin would be young, and would be able to produce the necessary children over a longer period than an older queen. There was also the concern that a widow would already have children who would become involved in affairs at court. Perhaps more relevant is the idea that virginity was a gauge of a woman's reputation, with queens being regularly portrayed in similar terms to Mary, Queen of Heaven.¹⁴⁶ Weinreich's ideas may be linked to those of the Coronation of the Virgin and the Queen of Heaven, ideals to be aspired to rather than a belief in the pre-requisite for a virgin queen.¹⁴⁷ Realistically it was the diplomatic value of a young foreign princess that mattered, not a widow from one's own country who would bring no advantages to the kingdom.

The speed with which news circulated and reached Europe is also interesting. The events of the council meeting and Edward's announcement would appear to have been widely known very quickly. It suggests that discussion was taking place in private, out on the street and in pubs and council rooms to enable the Milanese to have heard the story and pass it on as fact by early October. The information certainly appears to be a mixture of fact and supposition. The two Burgundians were possibly writing some time after 1464, using accumulated information and would therefore have acquired more gossip and rumour to add to their story; over time the actual sequence of events became more muddled. Given that the Milanese reports are the most contemporary, we can perhaps say with a little more certainty that the marriage was not universally seen as popular. However the immediate concerns come from European commentators not English writers. This suggests that Elizabeth's status was less of an issue in England at this time, although Edward's request for the presence of Jacquetta's family would appear to suggest that he was concerned to demonstrate Elizabeth's suitability.¹⁴⁸ This may be seen as a response to criticisms, if not openly voiced at least whispered. The *Monstrelet*

¹⁴⁶ J.L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, (Oxford, 2004), pp. 59-62.

¹⁴⁷ See below note 171 J Chamberlayne for discussion on this idea.

¹⁴⁸ Scofield, *Edward IV*, p. 372, fn. 2, quoting French Roll 4 Edw. IV, m. 7, 8 Oct. Issue of a safeconduct to Jacques de Luxembourg to bring 100 people with him of any nationality except French. Jacques de Luxembourg was Jacquetta's brother.

continuator rather optimistically claimed that the presence of the Burgundian nobility had the desired effect. However the presence of a contingent from Burgundy would also have helped to bolster links with that country. This may therefore have had more to do with Edward's future foreign policy than with emphasising Elizabeth's status.

A visual demonstration of Elizabeth's European ancestry was also made in the coat of arms she assumed following her marriage. Along with the arms for Wydevile were added five from her mother's family (see fig. 32).¹⁴⁹ Heraldry as a means of displaying family connection was not new. It had become common practice for the heraldry of a wife to be included in that of a husband, especially where she or one of her ancestors had the greater status.¹⁵⁰ Rivers had similarly enhanced his coat of arms from the simple Wydevile arms to one that included his mother's maternal Beauchamp arms rather than her lesser paternal arms (fig. 33).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ C.W. Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry* (London, 1950), pp. 154-5, p. 171 & p. 179. Described as Quarterly of six, 1 Luxembourg, 2 Baux and France Ancient quarterly, 3 Cyprus (Barry of ten pieces argent and azure, over all a lion rampant gules), 4 Ursius (Gules, three bends argent, on a chief per fess argent and gold a rose gules), 5 St Pol (Gules, three pallets vair, a gold chief surmounted by a label of five points azure), 6 Widville (argent a fess and canton conjoined gules). Some of the descriptions given for her mother's arms do not quite agree with those given by Gray. See illustration p. 178. Lusignan were kings of Cyprus, this is 5 in the illustration. Ursius would appear to equate to 11, Orsini. The Orsini coat of arms is also displayed in Fotheringhay church. The greater significance of Orsini is unclear.

¹⁵⁰ Maurice Keen, 'Heraldry and the Medieval Gentlewoman', *History Today*, March 2003, pp. 21-7. As early as the twelfth century men were including their wives' arms with their own; where a wife was from a more noble family then her arms may be placed in the prime position on the shield in preference to the man's. Heraldic display could demonstrate numerous important ancestors, with their positioning arranged suitably in order of priority. Warwick the Kingmaker was equally susceptible to this form of demonstration. In 1464 he commissioned the Salisbury Roll specifically to demonstrate descent from Edward I through an ancestress.

¹⁵¹ Hansen & Thompson, 'The Wydevills' Quartering for Beauchamp', *The Coat of Arms*, ns. vol. 9, no. 157, 1992, pp. 178-87. His arms are displayed on his garter stall plate in c. 1450. 1 and 4 quarterly, i and iv, argent, a fess and quarter gules (Wydevill), ii and iii, gules, an eagle displayed or (Prowes?); 2 and 3, vair (Beauchamp), on an escutcheon of pretence gules, a griffin or (Rivers). According to Scott-Giles the quartering with Wydevile represented Prowes. Unfortunately neither comment on the Rivers quartering; this presumably links to his title and may explain where/why Rivers took this title. The Prowes is also unexplained; this may link to his father Richard Wydevile esquire being called 'Lord of Preaus' by 'Gregory'. He had been given land at Preaux in 1419. Alternatively this was from his mother's coat of arms.

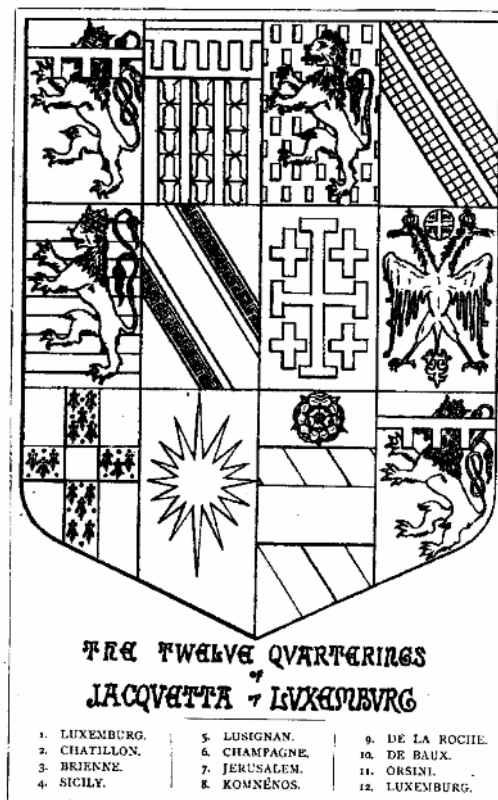


Figure 32. Illustration from Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire (1889)¹⁵²



Figure 33. Lord Rivers coat of arms.
Garter plate, St George's Windsor.¹⁵³



Figure 34. Antony Wydevile,
wearing a surcoat with his arms
displayed.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Andrew E.P. Gray, 'Foreign Quarterings in Lancashire Shields', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. 3 (1889), pp. 1-10.

¹⁵³ W.H. St John Hope, *The Stall Plates of the Knights of the Order of the Garter 1348-1485* (1901). The picture is taken from the illustration in the book, I am grateful to Mr P.W. Hammond for providing the photo.

¹⁵⁴ The illustration of Antony Wydevile's coat of arms comes from an engraving of 1842. This was taken from the miniature in *The dictes or sayings of the philosophers* translated by Antony Wydevile, Lambeth Palace MS265. Antony's arms are a mixture of his father's Wydevile, Beauchamp and Rivers arms along with his

Antony included his first wife's arms along with some from his mother (see fig. 34).¹⁵⁵ Only one quarter in all of them link them to Wydevile and each other. This also serves to demonstrate that, even before Elizabeth's marriage to Edward, Rivers was proclaiming his connections to higher nobility. The tradition of using heraldry to demonstrate family and connections may help to explain why the disparity between Sir Richard and Jacquetta's status caused such little comment in England.¹⁵⁶

There is one other European source on Edward's marriage, a poem written in 1468 by Antonio Cornazzano.¹⁵⁷ His poem *De mulieribus admirandis* was dedicated to Francesco Sforza's wife Bianca. The poem is divided into two books containing the lives of twenty-eight women, grouped in pairs. Book one is about beautiful women while book two deals with chaste women. Cornazzano bases his stories on similar works by Boccaccio, *De claris mulieribus* and Plutarch's *De mulierum virtutibus*. The 'Queen of England' appears in Cornazzano's second book on chaste women. The only other contemporary example is an Italian woman called Idalia. The remaining women come either from classical mythology or the Bible.¹⁵⁸ However the two contemporaries are not paired together as Elizabeth is paired with Hersilia, one of the Sabine women.¹⁵⁹

In this story of Elizabeth, Edward falls in love with her and tries to seduce her. When she refuses his advances he threatens her family. Elizabeth then produces a dagger and asks the king to kill her rather than dishonour her. He is so impressed that

mother's de Baux (gules, a star of sixteen rays argent) and Luxembourg (argent, a lion rampant with a forked tail gules with a gold crown) and his wife's Scales arms (Gules, six escallops argent). The illustration does not appear to be entirely in accord with the description of his arms.

¹⁵⁵ Hansen and Thompson give 'one version' of Antony's arms – Wydevile, Scales from his wife, Luxembourg and Baux from his mother, Rivers and Beauchamp from his father. However they give no alternative versions. Scott-Giles gives this as the only version.

¹⁵⁶ An outstanding example of such claims to heraldic ancestry can still be seen on the tombs in Ewelme church to Alice Chaucer, duchess of Suffolk and her father, Thomas, where they include links to the royal family. This was another family that attained nobility through service to the king.

¹⁵⁷ Cornazzano was in the service of Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan. Given the duke's interest in English affairs, Cornazzano was quite probably writing from information that was given to the duke by his ambassadors. Cornazzano was in the duke's service until 1466, so he was at the court during the relevant period to obtain his information.

¹⁵⁸ Conor Fahy, 'The 'De mulieribus admirandis' of Antonio Cornazzano', *La Bibliofilia*, vol. 62, (1960), pp. 161-2. The story of Idalia took place in June 1443. Francesco Sforza's troops were besieging 'Sant Natoglia' (Esanatoglia), and rather than be raped by one of Sforza's soldiers, she threw herself out of a window and died. The story was probably current around the court as it is not found in any contemporary chronicle.

¹⁵⁹ Fahy, 'The 'De mulieribus admirandis'', p.160. Cornazzano bases his story of Hersilia on Plutarch and Livy. He adapts the story slightly to suit his needs. Plutarch says that she was one of the Sabine women who were raped and she speaks for all the victims. Cornazzano omits the fact that she was married so that his heroine can appear more young and virtuous, (this relates to the idea of virgins being young). He adds in Livy's account that the Sabine men refused to give their women in marriage to the Romans, thus they were raped and used as concubines. Cornazzano then has Hersilia asking their fathers to kill them because their honour is lost. Instead the Sabine men agree to the Romans marrying their women thus restoring their honour and giving a happy ending.

he marries her secretly, later making the news public to her great honour. Mancini, another Italian writing in 1483 about the usurpation of Richard III, changes this story slightly so that it is Edward who is holding the knife. He places the knife at her throat to make her submit to his desires.¹⁶⁰

Cornazzano must have heard the Milanese ambassador's report of 1461 as he mentions Edward's use of concubines, the ambassador's more subtle 'pleasure',

- 22 In a western province of England
 There rules one called Edward
 24 Young, handsome and of royal blood
 ...
 28 And, ruling without a queen
 It is believed that he often secretly
 30 Took himself off to concubines¹⁶¹

He describes how Edward met Elizabeth, and fell in love. Elizabeth however is uninterested,

- 37 A movement of the eye, a look and he lost his heart ...
 52 But having lost her husband she lost the taste
 For her youth, and she remained
 At her father's house, each lovely thought now downcast
 55 She had praiseworthy brothers, an honest mother

¹⁶⁰ C.A.J. Armstrong, *The Usurpation of Richard the Third* (Gloucester, 1984), hereafter referred to as *Mancini*, pp. 60-61. Mancini may have taken the idea from Antonio Cornazzano. Such action by Edward fitted the description of a womaniser

¹⁶¹ Conor Fahy, 'The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville: A New Italian Source', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 76, no. 301 (Oct., 1961), pp. 660-672. The verses on pp. 667-672 cover the 229 lines which relate to Elizabeth, and are in Italian, I am grateful to Anne Linsley for a translation of the verses. Fahy dates Cornazzano's manuscript to 1468 based on the fact that the work was dedicated to Bianca Sforza, died October 1468. He suggests that, as the work only survives in one manuscript, it is uncertain if there was ever a completed copy and that it is unlikely to have been widely read. Therefore it is unlikely that Mancini would have read it. However the Sforzas secretary Giovanni Simonetta was also an historian at the ducal court from 1450-1479. He used the records in the ducal chancery as well as the *Commenaries* (composed 1462-64) of Pope Pius II (1458-64) to compose his own *Commentaries*. It was thought that the Pope's *Commentaries* had been seen by almost no one before the late sixteenth century, and yet Simonetta had seen them. Gary Ianziti, 'A Humanist Historian and His Documents: Giovanni Simonetta, Secretary to the Sforzas', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, (winter, 1981), pp. 491-516. This suggests that there was a movement of works between the various Italian courts and the papal court. It is therefore possible that Mancini at least knew of, if he did not see, the work of Cornazzano. Mancini's patron Angelo Cato had been a pupil of Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84), and this may provide a possible route for Mancini to know about Cornazzano's poem.

She ennobled the house
 57 With her beauty and gentle manner
 ...
 62 And the more worthy he understood her to be
 The more she re-ignited his youthful years ¹⁶²

Elizabeth is beautiful and modest and her family praiseworthy and honest, but is there perhaps a suggestion that they were not noble? The poet seems to be suggesting that it was Elizabeth's beauty that ennobled them. Edward presses her to submit to his advances and even speaks to her father suggesting a less than chivalrous arrangement; however, Elizabeth refuses,

83 And she put it to him that death was more honourable
 Than to give in to such unheard of ignominy.
 85 "Not my beauty, but terrible fate"
 she said, "has given me a face and an aspect such
 as to make me suitable for being a court prostitute.
 But my honour, my blood and intellect
 89 Demand that I refuse ...
 100 Now all the courtesans and all the barons
 Know about her refusal
 102 And about the king's amorous passion
 ...
 106 Finally the king, placed in despair,
 Made the mother force her with such great threat
 That she fulfilled his wishes
 And she held out her arms to her daughter
 110 And begged her to give up this stubbornness
 So that the house would not be ruined¹⁶³

Jacquetta has now entered the story but Cornazzano gives a slightly different version from later chronicles which suggest that she arranged for them to marry in

¹⁶² Fahy, 'The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth'.

¹⁶³ Fahy, 'The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth'.

secret. Cornazzano's version may contain an element of truth in it. A secret marriage arranged by the mother may have been an attempt to satisfy both parties. It was not unknown for a man to pretend marriage to make a woman submit to him and then claim there had been no marriage,

- 172 The young woman, at that, reveals a knife
Which she modestly held out to him
Taking little account of her life.
- 175 She had had it hidden under her vest
When she left the house with her mother
Only with the intention of dying honestly.
...
- 201 In the end he acted like the gentle signore.
Having left the knife in her hand, so as to
restore her unconquered modesty
...
- 206 "God" he said, "Lord of the heavens you are my witness
as to how she is my married woman"
...
- And alone does the marriage vows
- 210 And alone performs the ceremony;
He was her bridesmaid and her pageboy
...
- This secret act in every respect
- 215 Took the king some time; finally the marriage
Gravely done by her, came into effect.
All the lords in the neighbourhood were invited to the feast
...
- 220 She, among them, no longer dressed in black
Was crowned ...¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Fahy, 'The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth'.

Cornazzano's description of Edward performing the marriage conforms to the church's requirements regarding marriage. There was an exchange of vows which was the promise of intent to marry and 'finally the marriage ... came into effect'.

The poem has elements of the story which do not appear in chronicle sources until later in the century. How much of the story of Edward and Elizabeth's courtship and marriage is therefore based on romance, mythology and rumour, rather than fact? Cornazzano does appear to be including some facts. He knows Elizabeth was a widow but not that she had children. He therefore knows some things but not perhaps in detail. Information reached the duke of Milan but it varied in detail and quality. Cornazzano pictures Elizabeth risking death rather than dishonour and thus virtue is rewarded with marriage. This example of a chaste Elizabeth fits the requirements of his poem as well as the expectations of how a noble woman should behave. It should be remembered that he used two real events in his poem. The story of Idalia was known at the Milanese court. It is therefore possible that Cornazzano used two recent events to make his poem relevant to Bianca, for whom it was written. The poem needed to be reasonably factual as he would assume that Bianca would know the truth of the stories.¹⁶⁵

The European writers seem to be trying to make sense of the reports. They feel the need to have a public wedding and a discussion of the marriage, which are elements missing from the few English reports of this time. Cornazzano is the only writer to report that the marriage was made in secret although it was later celebrated and followed by a coronation. Therefore his poem is closer to the known facts.

Gregory, in comparison, is rather restrained, merely saying that the marriage was kept secret. The Pastons, who might be expected to comment on something so important, are silent. The only other English chronicle of this period to comment is *Ingulph's Chronicle* of the Abbey of Croyland. The chronicle begins in 655 and was the work of a number of continuators. After a gap, the chronicle resumes in 1388 and continues until 1469.¹⁶⁶ According to this text,

After this, king Edward, prompted by the ardour of youth,
and relying entirely on his own choice, without consulting the
nobles of the kingdom, privately married the widow of a certain

¹⁶⁵ See above p. 193, fn. 158, re Idalia.

¹⁶⁶ *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers*, trans., Henry T. Riley (London, 1854), pp. v-ix. The last continuator covered the period 1459-1486 and this portion is better known as the *The Crowland Chronicle*.

knight... who, though she had only a knight for her father, had a duchess for her mother, and shortly after he had her solemnly crowned queen. This the nobility and chief men of the kingdom took amiss, seeing that he had with some immoderate haste promoted a person sprung from a comparatively humble lineage, to share the throne with him.¹⁶⁷

One aspect on which continental chronicles agree is that the marriage was disliked by the lords. Given that Wavrin, Monstrelet and Ingulph are writing with the benefit of hindsight, it is tempting to dismiss the idea that there was much contemporary criticism of Elizabeth's status. However the correspondence of the ambassadors was much more immediate and they do state that people were offended - although it is unclear if the offence was because the marriage was made in secret, or because there were plans for a foreign marriage which were thwarted, or because Elizabeth was unsuitable because of her origins. There is also disagreement about exactly why Elizabeth was considered unsuitable. Only Cornazzano takes a more positive view. This may have been because Elizabeth conformed to the ideal of a 'worthy', 'noble' and 'modest' woman which he was promoting in his poem. Importantly in this period the only English chronicle to mention the nobles' discontent and Elizabeth's 'comparatively humble lineage' was *Ingulph*, although he does acknowledge that her mother was a duchess, which suggests a level of acceptability for status conferred through her mother.

Clandestine marriage

The actual details of the meeting and marriage of Elizabeth and Edward are unlikely to ever be known.¹⁶⁸ Clandestine marriage had inherent difficulties. Had Edward really meant to enter into a marriage or was this a ploy he used simply for sex? Edward's

¹⁶⁷ *Ingulph*, pp. 439-40.

¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth had already approached William, Lord Hastings for help in settling her son's rights to his father's estate. On 13 April 1464 Elizabeth and Hastings signed an indenture agreeing a marriage between her son Thomas or if he died his brother Richard and Hastings' daughter, if one was born in the next five or six years, otherwise a daughter of his brother Ralph, failing that a daughter of his sister Anne Ferrers. The agreement included recovery of her sons' title to their late father's estate. If any lands belonging to Sir William Asteley or Elizabeth, Lady Ferrers of Groby were recovered then half of any rents and profits arising were to go to Hastings while Thomas was under the age of twelve. Hastings was to pay 500 marks for the marriage; if a marriage did not take place then Elizabeth was to pay him 250 marks (George Smith, pp. 30-32). If Elizabeth was seeking powerful support against her in-laws this arrangement suggests that she and Edward did not meet until after 13 April. She would not seek the assistance of Hastings if she had the king's assistance available. If the date of their marriage was 1 May, then the King really was infatuated, or possibly Elizabeth was smarter than Edward's previous conquests. Cornazzano's romantic notion of chastity rewarded may have a kernel of truth after all.

behaviour as a womaniser featured in a number of the reports, and it may be this aspect of the marriage that was the real cause of offence. Edward could not be trusted around women and had made a fool of himself, his counsellors and the crown. He had finally encountered a woman who would not succumb to his advances, and one who would not be put aside as easily as others may have been. Alternatively Edward was honest in his intent but reluctant to admit the truth of his marriage immediately because he was aware of the implications. The validity of their secret marriage may have been the real cause of any discussion.

The church view was that marriage ceremonies should not be held in secret. Instructions regarding marriage were accordingly designed to try to circumvent what was obviously a common occurrence. Ideally, the correct form of words should be used, a priest should be present to ensure this and banns should be read prior to the marriage so that it was made public. The church tended to tolerate clandestine marriages once they were discovered, but insisted on penance and approval being sought.¹⁶⁹ Cases taken to court to prove marriage were very specific in their questioning regarding the words used between the couple, which formed the basis of their true intentions.

Whatever took place between Edward and Elizabeth, the marriage had eventually been made public and was acknowledged. There is nothing to suggest that the church had intervened and ordered them to perform any penance. The fact that Elizabeth was crowned the following year would suggest that the church had accepted the marriage as valid. The church regulations may explain some of the detail that starts to appear in later writings on the marriage, such as the presence of witnesses and a priest. In the sixteenth century English histories begin to fill in details which reduce the possibility of there being any doubt as to its validity.

There may be an early commemoration of the marriage in stone at Merton College, Oxford. Accounts show that work was carried out on the gatehouse between

¹⁶⁹ Conor McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England Law, Literature and Practice*, (Woodbridge, 2004). Chapter 1 outlines the principles of consent and discusses clandestine marriage, pp. 22-8, Gratian, *Decretum* or *Concordance of Discordant Canons*, outlined the basic principles; marriage was in two stages, consent and consummation. Peter Lombard amended the requirements to simply being one of consent however specific words had to be said to make the marriage, 'I accept you as my husband, and I you as my wife'. Pope Alexander III made this the basis of the marriage doctrine. This made present consent a valid marriage. Future consent to marry was not considered valid unless it was followed by intercourse. Force and fear invalidated a marriage. These ideas were incorporated into the Decretals of Gregory IX and formed the second part of *Corpus Iuris Canonici* in 1234. The *Corpus* formed the basis of the rules enacted by English clergy although modified by local custom and the court, p. 29 Lateran 4 (51) condemned clandestine marriage and insisted that church approval had to be sought and penance undertaken. p. 30, English councils and synods described four types of Clandestine marriage, (1) exchange of consent outside the church and with few or no witnesses, (2) marriage without banns, (3) marriage ceremony in secret or secret location, (4) marriage where the persons to be married are unknown locally.

August 1464 and April 1465. The decorated vault contains bosses depicting the badges of Edward IV as well as several Lancastrian ones (fig. 35). The initials T.B. on one of the central bosses represent the patron of the work; one possible candidate is Thomas Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury who crowned both Edward and Elizabeth.¹⁷⁰

Yorkist badges surround an image of the Virgin; not only is the college dedicated to the Virgin, but the Virgin is also a model for Queenship. Was this to be read as a symbolic illustration of the marriage of the Queen and Edward?¹⁷¹ As the work was already underway it is possible that the opportunity was taken to turn it into a demonstration of support for the Yorkist king and his wife. The bosses would be seen and understood by people entering the college. Politically it would have done no harm and might have attracted royal support for the college. If this was used as a public celebration of the marriage, it indicates that there was no question over its validity.

There are few surviving objects relating to Elizabeth and her family, but there is still some stained glass which commemorates Elizabeth as queen along with Edward and their children. The best known is in Canterbury cathedral; however in Little Malvern Priory is another set of windows, dated to 1480-82. These were installed by Bishop Alcock, who was Chancellor and president of the royal council. As bishop of Worcester he had reformed the priory at Little Malvern. Originally displaying the whole family, along with bishop Alcock, the window of Edward with his younger son and Alcock is missing, while the window of Queen Elizabeth only partially survives (Figs. 36 & 37). The windows are 'an example of a late fifteenth-century predilection for prominent representation of the royal family in sacred spaces'.¹⁷² The depiction of the royal family in the cathedral and priory suggests that whatever questions may have arisen over the marriage, it was accepted and publicly acknowledged by the church.

¹⁷⁰ Alan Bott, *Merton College A Short History of the Buildings*, (Oxford, 1993), pp. 5-6. T.B. may also represent Thomas Bloxham, who had been in charge of the building work or Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells who was a friend of the Warden. When he died in 1465 he left land to the college. Bouchier was 'Visitor of the College'. A.J. Bott and J.R.L. Highfield, 'The Sculpture over the Gatehouse at Merton College, Oxford, 1464-5', *Oxoniensia*, vol. 58 (1993), p. 239. The authors suggest that the initials are more likely to relate to Bekynton. He died 14 January 1465, his executors made arrangements with Lincoln College and Merton for exequies and a requiem mass for Bekynton. Warden Sever of Merton had known Bekynton when both had been attached to Henry VI's household; he used the work on the vault to celebrate Bekynton. They further suggest that the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Wydevile was celebrated in the vault. Mixed with the Yorkist symbols is a Lancastrian emblem, an antelope which was the badge of Henry IV, and a tree stock used by Edward III and his three successors. The Woodvilles being Lancastrian provided the excuse for placing a Lancastrian emblem beside the Yorkist ones.

¹⁷¹ Joanna L. Chamberlayne, 'Crowns and Virgins: Queen making during the Wars of the Roses', in *Young Medieval Women*, eds., Katherine J. Lewis, Noel James Menuge & Kim M. Phillips, (Stroud, 1999), pp.47-68. Discusses the concept of virginity, Queenship and the coronation and the way in which queens were symbolically portrayed.

¹⁷² Richard Marks & Paul Williamson, eds., *Gothic Art for England 1400-1547* (London, 2003), p. 176, no. 37.



Figure 35. Central boss of the Virgin surrounded by Yorkist emblems, the rose, fetterlock, sun in splendour and the Lancastrian antelope.



Figure 36. Surviving glass at Little Malvern Priory (l-r) Prince Edward, Queen Elizabeth, Princess Elizabeth and sisters



Figure 37. Detail of prince Edward and his sister Elizabeth with their younger sisters behind her.

1464-1469 Warwick's 'displeasure'

Following the announcement of his marriage at Reading Edward quickly arranged Elizabeth's coronation which took place on 26 May 1465. The English chronicles make no mention of the coronation. *John Stone's Chronicle* which covers the period 1417-72 is the nearest contemporary English report, since he began writing in 1467. He simply states that Elizabeth was 'the daughter of Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers' and 'was crowned queen of England and France at Westminster by the archbishop of Canterbury'. He adds that at the coronation, Edward invested forty-eight knights.¹⁷³ *Gregory* simply names the five aldermen who were knighted to the 'grete worshcyppe unto alle the cytte' and gives no more detail.¹⁷⁴ The ceremony, celebrations in the city and the presence of a Burgundian contingent are not mentioned and it is possible that this silence was a sign of disapproval. A monk in Canterbury is less likely to be

¹⁷³ *John Stone's Cronicle Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, 1417-1472*, selected, translated and introduced by Meriel Connor (Kalamazoo, 2010), p.112. A fifteenth century copy of Stone's manuscript survives as Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 417. There is a printed edition in Latin, ed. W.G. Searle, *Chronicle of John Stone: Monk of Christchurch Canterbury, 1415-1471* (Cambridge, 1902). The Chronicle was begun by Stone in 1467, he died in 1480. His chronicle is mainly concerned with the life of his house, e.g. liturgy, rituals, election of archbishops. He records personal observations and notes the visits of the powerful and influential. Some information would have come from visitors and monks whose duties took them outside the cloister. Information may also have come from newsletters. Stone records Lancastrians and the events affecting them, but tends to be silent on the Yorkists and Warwick. Christ Church Priory was strongly Lancastrian and allied to the Beauforts. Silence on some matters may have been considered wise. See also Meriel Connor, 'The Political Allegiances of Christ Church Priory 1400-1472: The Evidence of John Stone's Chronicle', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 127 (2007), pp. 383-406.

¹⁷⁴ *Gregory*, p. 227. The five aldermen were Sir Hewe Wyche, mercer, Thomas Coke and Raffe Gosselyn, drapers, Sir John Plomer and Sir Harry Whafyr. www.british-history.ac.uk accessed 8/9/08.

interested in any pageantry, but a London chronicler might be expected to describe a major event in his city, beyond those who were knighted.

The *Annales Rerum Anglicarum* wrongly attributed to William Worcester provides more information relating to events after Edward's announcement of his marriage. The dating of the chronicle is problematic. It covers the years 1324 to 1468 with minor continuations up to 1491, and is dedicated to Edward IV, but it also exalts the duke of Bedford as regent of France.¹⁷⁵ Equally important was Edward's relationship 'unto the moste highe souvereyn princesse the queneyns modyr, dame Jaques, ducesse of Bedforde...'.¹⁷⁶ The dedication suggests a date of writing prior to 1491; therefore it will be accepted as being reasonably contemporary with the events described up to 1468.¹⁷⁷ For ease the *Annales* will be referred to as 'Worcester' hereafter. According to 'Worcester',

... on Michaelmas day (i.e. 29 September 1464) at Reading the Lady Elizabeth was admitted into the abbey church, led by the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick, and honoured as queen by the lords and all the people.¹⁷⁸

Warwick had presumably returned from the north for the council meeting. Worcester says that Elizabeth was 'honoured' by everyone, and gives no hint of discord, at least not at this stage. Worcester continues listing grants made to the new Queen and her family. In October 1464 the marriage of the queen's sister Margaret to Lord Maltravers, son and heir of the earl of Arundel was arranged. In December at a great council held in Westminster, with the assent of the lords, Edward assigned lands and lordships to the Queen worth 4,000 marks. This was followed in January 1465 with the

¹⁷⁵ Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1913), pp. 163-4. Describes the *Annales* as derived in the early part from a London Chronicle; 'Worcester' is thought to have made his contribution from about 1460. However Kingsford is basing this on the assumption that the work is by Worcester. This has been shown to be wrong and was compiled by someone at work in 1491. Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 432.

¹⁷⁶ 'William of Worcester's Collections' in Stevenson, J. ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France During the Reign of Henry the Sixth, King of England*, Rolls Series, no. 22, vol. 2, pt. 2 (London, 1864), p. 524. Chronicle is *Annales Rerum Anglicarum*. According to Dockray (1999) the material for the years 1461-68 contains material not found elsewhere, and that the tone is pro-Neville regarding the Woodvilles, pp.xii-xiii.

¹⁷⁷ Entries post 1468 are much more sporadic, Ross describes the *Annales* as a 'scrapbook', p. 432. It is possible these were later additions after the main body of the text had been written or were added later by another person. According to Kingsford the dedication was changed to Richard III by Worcester's son, p. 164, so the manuscript, and at least the introduction has undergone a number of amendments.

¹⁷⁸ Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. 48. Worcester, p. 783. See above p. 182 fn. 136, Gregory has the announcement taking place on all hallows and that Warwick had spent the summer in the north.

‘diabolical marriage’, what Worcester calls the ‘maritagium diabolicum’; of Katherine, dowager duchess of Norfolk, a ‘youthful’ (juvencula) girl of eighty, to John Wydevile who was twenty. John was Elizabeth’s younger brother.¹⁷⁹ This was only the beginning. The coronation followed with the creation of knights, which included Richard and John Wydevile. While celebrations for the queen’s coronation were held, the earl of Warwick was sent on an embassy to the duke of Burgundy and the king of France.¹⁸⁰

In February 1466 the queen gave birth to her first child, Elizabeth. The godparents were the earl of Warwick and the duchesses of York and Bedford. More Wydevile marriages followed; Henry, duke of Buckingham to Catherine ‘to the secret displeasure of the earl of Warwick’; William Bouchier the son and heir of the earl of Essex to Anne (see fig. 31.) and Anthony Grey of Ruthin, son and heir of the earl of Kent to Joan.¹⁸¹ On 4 March 1466 Lord Rivers was made treasurer of the exchequer with the usual fees, replacing Walter Blount, Lord Mountjoy. Once again this was done, according to Worcester, ‘ad secretam displicentiam comitis Warrwici’ as well as the displeasure of the rest of the lords, although Blount does not appear to have been unduly upset.¹⁸² In his will made in 1474 he requested prayers not only for the souls of his ancestors, himself, wife and children, but also for Richard, earl Rivers and his son Sir John Wydevile.¹⁸³ This does not suggest that he bore Lord Rivers any ill will.

Worcester had not yet finished with people’s displeasure; at the feast of Pentecost 1466 the king made Lord Rivers an earl ‘to the honour of the queen and displeasure of the community of the realm’.¹⁸⁴ This contrasts to Rivers earlier elevation to baron under the Lancastrians which caused no comment at all. In September William, the son and heir of Lord Herbert married Mary Wydevile, this again allegedly incurred Warwick’s displeasure.¹⁸⁵ However there were those who saw it as an honour. The Welsh poet

¹⁷⁹ Worcester, p. 783. Katherine, duchess of Norfolk was Warwick’s aunt.

¹⁸⁰ Worcester, pp. 784-5.

¹⁸¹ Worcester, p. 785 & Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. 48. Anthony Grey is shown as marrying Eleanor Wydevile, but her name was Joan. See R.I. Jack, *The Grey of Ruthin Valor* (Sydney, 1965), p. 113, fn. 3. Anthony predeceased his father Edmund, earl of Kent and his wife in 1480.

¹⁸² *CPR Edward IV 1461-67*, p. 516, Worcester, p. 785.

¹⁸³ Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, vol. 1 (London, 1826), pp. 334-5. The will was made 8 April 1474; the prayers were to be said at the hospital of St Leonard which was between ‘Alkemonton and Bentley’, Derbyshire. Humphrey Stafford, duke of Buckingham was also included in the prayers. Stafford had been the first husband of Blount’s wife. Blount’s wife was Anne, duchess of Buckingham; she was the daughter of Ralph Neville, earl of Westmoreland and another of Warwick’s aunts.

¹⁸⁴ Worcester, p. 785; Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. 48; *CChR 1427-1516*, 24 May 1466, p. 214.

¹⁸⁵ Worcester, p. 786. D.H. Thomas, *The Herberts of Raglan and the Battle of Edgecote 1469* (Enfield, 1994), pp. 104-6, gives a full transcript of the indenture for the marriage, which was drawn up on 20 March 1466. It was between Richard Woodville, lord Rivers, Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales and Sir John Woodville, and William Herbert, Lord Herbert, Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers, Sir Richard Herbert and Thomas Herbert esquire. They witnessed that Lord Rivers and Lord Herbert ‘at the instance of our sovereign lord

Hywel Swrdwal wrote a celebratory poem about the knighting of William at Windsor and his ensuing marriage,

- 61 The stag of noble Raglan is strongest,
 A mighty reach, against any mere fawn
 No man under his authority
- 64 Will take his golden collar away to play with it.
 The foremost king of Britain and its realm
 Gave his sister to him.
 He held a great wedding-feast in Windsor
- 68 For this man, in his royalty,
 A generous feast for our lord who is of our tongue,
 May he be seen again as a prince!¹⁸⁶

The Herberts were great patrons, making Raglan a centre for poets. Poetry would be recited before the assembled household. The poets based their poems on what they had witnessed themselves or from accounts given to them by members of the household. It is unlikely that the poets would recite events before an audience that knew or believed differently.¹⁸⁷ The Herbert household at least seems to have felt honoured by a marriage that linked them to the king. But Warwick's relationship with the Herberts was already less than cordial.¹⁸⁸ Competing with them for authority in Wales, the

the king' agreed to the marriage of William Herbert and Mary. Herbert was to grant his son and Mary and the 'heires of their bodyes' the manor of Dunster and other lands in Somerset and Suffolk worth £400 a year. Lord Rivers for his part would pay £1,666 13s 4d. If William died before the marriage was made 'or after that marriage had and afore fleshly knowledge betweene them' then Mary was to marry Walter, the next heir. Rivers would meet all the costs of the marriage. After the marriage they were to live with lord Herbert until William reached the age of 21. Rivers was also to persuade the king to grant to Herbert the castle town and lordship of Haverfordwest, paying to the king 100 marks a year for the same. Also that if the king granted William and Mary the manor of Kilpeck, then lord Rivers would ask the king to grant the reversion to Herbert of the third part of the Forest of Dean, which Jacquetta held in dower. Rivers would pay all the costs for the grants. Lord Rivers, Scales, Sir John and Sir Richard Woodville bound themselves to the agreement in the sum of £2,000.

¹⁸⁶ Dylan Foster Evans, ed., *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'I Denlu* (Aberystwyth, 2000), poem 6, 'Urddo Wiliam Herbert Ieuanc yn Farchog o'r badd gan Hywel Swrdwal' pp. 39-41. I am grateful to Dr Barry Lewis for the reference and translation into English. The poem begins with a description of the knighting ceremony, which is, in itself, very interesting.

¹⁸⁷ Barry Lewis, 'The Battle of Edgecote or Banbury (1469) through the eyes of contemporary Welsh poets', a paper given at the Fifteenth Century Conference, Southampton, 2 Sept. 2010, due to be published in the *Journal of Medieval Military History* (2011).

¹⁸⁸ T.B. Pugh, 'The magnates, knights and gentry' in *Fifteenth Century England 1399-1509*, eds., S.B. Chrimes, C.D. Ross and R.A. Griffiths (Stroud, 1995), pp. 92-3. Herbert supported Edward at Mortimer's Cross, 3 Feb 1461. After Edward's accession he was made chief justice and chamberlain of south Wales. A feud broke out between the Herberts and Warwick and was 'one of the chief causes of the new outbreak of civil war in 1469'... 'In less than ten years this grossly ambitious and grasping Welsh country

marriage of William to Mary Wydevile gave Lord Herbert an extra edge in that he too was now a member of the wider royal family. Worcester provides another reason for discord between Herbert and Warwick. According to him a 'person' was captured in Wales carrying letters from Queen Margaret. Herbert sent this 'person' to Edward, along with the suggestion that people overseas were saying that Warwick supported Margaret, although 'this came to nothing'.¹⁸⁹

Warwick may well have been displeased. How far this displeasure extended beyond him and his household is less clear. Marriages were being arranged which placed his own daughters at a disadvantage in the marriage market. However he had had plenty of opportunity to make arrangements for their marriage prior to 1464. Also would Warwick have considered any of the husbands found for the Wydevile sisters suitable for his own daughters? The duke of Buckingham was probably the only marriage he would have thought sufficient. Some of his displeasure may have arisen from the fact that it involved members of his family, as both the duchesses of Norfolk and Buckingham, were his aunts. Given the insults at Calais in 1460, he may well have felt that they were being disparaged and, in the case of Katherine, badly used.

In October 1466 a marriage was arranged for Sir Thomas Grey, Edward's stepson, to Anne, the daughter and heir of the duke of Exeter and Edward's niece. Warwick had hoped to marry her to George Neville, his brother's son. The queen had paid 4,000 marks for the marriage.¹⁹⁰ Even worse for Warwick, was Edward's refusal to allow his brother George, duke of Clarence, to marry Warwick's daughter Isabel.¹⁹¹ In October 1467 Warwick stayed away from the council meeting to show his disagreement when Margaret, the king's sister, agreed to marry Charles of Burgundy.

Discord between Edward and Warwick was becoming more and more of an open secret. Warwick was no longer the man in charge of Edward and his actions. Suddenly Warwick had competition for rewards and influence and he did not like it. It was also unfortunate for him that Elizabeth had quite so many sisters. The marriages provided a way for Edward to reward his supporters at little cost to himself. He may not

squire had turned himself into an English magnate ... the marriage ... was a treaty of alliance between two upstart magnate families.' p. 92.

¹⁸⁹ Worcester, p. 788. Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. 61.

¹⁹⁰ Worcester, p. 786. This marriage was to the '*magnam secretam displicentiam*' of Warwick. Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 93.

¹⁹¹ Worcester, p. 788. Edward suspected that Warwick planned the marriage. '*Secreta displicentia coninuabat inter dominum regem et dominum comitem Warrwici pro assecuratione matrimonii inter ducem Clarencie et filiam dicti comitis, quod maritagium fiendum rex semper habuit suspectum*'. Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. 61.

have had large amounts of land to give but he could bring them into the royal family, with all the future promise that held.

Disagreement between Edward and Warwick was noted by the *Danzig Chronicler*,

Item the King of England had the Queen's friends and brothers live with him and made great lords of them And Warwick and his friends, who helped to make him King, he no longer regarded at all. Because of this Warwick hated him greatly and so did many noblemen, and the common people, who grumbled against the Hanse merchants, supported those lords who supported them. And so discord between the lords started.¹⁹²

The *Danzig Chronicler* gives another reason for discord: trade, something that would have especially interested the author. Therefore the Wydeviles are not given all the blame. In the *Milanese State Papers*, there is confirmation of the rumours about Warwick. In February 1467 Giovanni Pietro Panicharolla the Milanese ambassador to France reported back to his duke a discussion between Louis XI and Duke John, brother of Margaret of Anjou. The discussion turned to the earl of Warwick, whom the duke called a 'traitor' who 'only studied to deceive'. Louis however replied that the 'earl had always been a friend to his crown'.¹⁹³ Over the following months the Milanese reports regularly mention Warwick and Louis's hope for his assistance.¹⁹⁴

How accurate were these complaints against the Wydeviles? They had certainly managed to arrange a large number of marriages over a short period of time, but how widespread was the resentment over this? Warwick is frequently cited as being displeased, and it is the same source that suggests that Buckingham was also unhappy with his marriage to a Wydevile. However, the Herbert family appears to be more than happy with a Wydevile marriage. What of the family's greed and excessive rewards? It was not until the sixteenth century that a specific example of their greed appeared in any

¹⁹² *Danzig Chronicle*, p. 314.

¹⁹³ *CSPM 1385-1618*, pp. 117-22, entry 146, 14 Feb 1467, www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92253 (accessed 2/8/11).

¹⁹⁴ *CSPM*, pp. 117-22, entry 151, 19 May 1467, Louis was going to meet Warwick at Rouen to talk about marriage negotiations between England and Burgundy. 'If this takes place, they have talked of treating with the Earl of Warwick to restore King Henry in England ...'; entry 154, 12 Sept 1467, 'The king's ambassadors have lately returned from England and as the Earl of Warwick met with many opponents to his plan, they found him unable to effect what he had promised'; pp. 122-8 entry 157, 14 Feb 1468, 'In England the country is in arms. The Earl of Warwick has drawn over a brother of the king against the king himself...'

detail in the chronicles. Robert Fabyan mentions the case of Thomas Cook and the queen's gold (discussed below), although any greed is mostly attributed to the Queen's parents.¹⁹⁵ Similarly the story that the family were 'hugely exaltd' is regularly repeated.¹⁹⁶ Fabyan and the Great Chronicle form the basis for the story which appears over the succeeding centuries without variation. It was not until the twentieth century that an analysis of any of the benefits arising from Elizabeth's marriage was made by historians. In 1967 A. R. Myers published an article on 'The Household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466-7'.¹⁹⁷ This is the only year for which an account of Elizabeth's household survives. There is also only one complete account for Margaret of Anjou. In a comparison of the two accounts Myers found that not only was Elizabeth's income less than Margaret's but that she had 'much greater parsimony in expenditure.' Traditionally English queens had been granted a dower of 10,000 marks, and this is what Margaret received. However Edward IV only granted Elizabeth £4,500.¹⁹⁸ Myers concluded that Elizabeth's household was much more strictly controlled. While Elizabeth may have employed many of her relatives in her household, their pay was kept in line with that paid to the previous officeholders. Nor did Elizabeth appear to create appointments specifically for her family.

A useful contribution to a queen's income was queen's gold, which had brought in large sums for earlier queens. Queen's gold was 'one-tenth of the value of any voluntary fine made in any of the king's courts'. A much-resented payment, Queen Margaret and Queen Elizabeth made little from this right.¹⁹⁹ It was the Thomas Cook affair in 1468 and the matter of queen's gold which was the only example given by near contemporary chroniclers of the Wydeviles' greed. In 1978 two articles appeared which detailed the case of Cook.²⁰⁰ Anne Sutton traces the story of Cook through the chronicles and the records of his indictment for treason and demonstrates that he was far from innocent. Appropriation of his goods was carried out to meet his fine, and was undertaken by the Treasurer, who just happened to be Lord Rivers. Nor were Cook's losses as great as

¹⁹⁵ See below p. 250. While Warkworth mentions the arrest of Cook for treason he does not mention the Wydeviles in connection with either his arrest or loss of goods and money.

¹⁹⁶ *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds., A.H. Thomas & I.D. Thornly (Gloucester 1983, microprint edition), p. 202.

¹⁹⁷ A.R. Myers, 'The Household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466-7', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 50, (Autumn, 1967), pp. 207-35 and vol. 50 (Spring, 1968), pp. 443-81.

¹⁹⁸ Myers, 'The Household of Queen Elizabeth' (1967), pp. 208-9. Myers suggests that Edward, or at least his government, realised the need for a return to solvency, and careful finance.

¹⁹⁹ Myers, 'Queen Elizabeth' (1967), pp. 210-11. In 1466-7 Elizabeth received £37 from this source.

²⁰⁰ Anne F. Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook and his 'troubles': an Investigation', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, vol. 3 (1977-9), pp. 85-108 and M.A. Hicks, 'The Case of Sir Thomas Cook, 1468', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 93, no. 366 (Jan., 1978), pp. 82-96.

were claimed, on his release he was able to return to trade and to continue expensive building works. Cook's close association with the Lancastrians and the resulting action taken against him for treason has been lost in the attempt to demonstrate his innocence and to blacken the Wydeviles. An interesting aspect of the article is the role of Warwick in the whole affair, and his possible links to the Lancastrians. Warwick's use of propaganda against his enemies is suggested as a factor in the reporting of the case.²⁰¹ Sutton also reminds us that the Duchess of Bedford 'was herself not unpopular in London'.²⁰² With regard to the actual payment of queen's gold, it seems that Cook took out a lawsuit against payment and following discussion with the queen's solicitor it appears that the fine was not paid.²⁰³

Michael Hicks in his article reviews the same chronicles and records as Sutton, as well as the works of the twentieth-century historians Cora Scofield and C. D. Ross, both of whom agreed with the conclusions of Fabian and the *Great Chronicle*, that 'Earl Rivers and his wife ... wanted to get rid of Cook'.²⁰⁴ Hicks' review of the documents draws similar conclusions to those of Sutton, accepting that Cook was guilty and was a Lancastrian sympathiser, and that Rivers was only acting in his capacity as Treasurer. However, Hicks' opinion over queen's gold differs, he suggests that Elizabeth was making an exceptional demand, which was demonstrated by 'the abnormal procedure: she sued Cook at the exchequer of pleas. The case was never decided in court, perhaps because it was 'unprecedented'. While Hicks acknowledges that 'treason threatened the queen and her offspring' he treats her pursuit of queen's gold as harassment and an attempt to punish Cook twice.²⁰⁵ As Myers has said, the pursuit of queen's gold was not exceptional; Elizabeth was just more successful in making good her claims.²⁰⁶

If the Cook case has been exaggerated and distorted in the chronicles what of the other claims? In 1963 J. R. Lander published an article 'Marriage and Politics in the

²⁰¹ Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook' pp. 100-2. Suspicions had been raised in 1467 that Warwick may have been looking favourably towards Margaret of Anjou, and in May 1468 Sir John Fortescue was recommending they should enlist Warwick's support. This was only one month before the Cook affair broke. The 'pursuit of popularity was only one aspect of Warwick's use of propaganda, and was the one most visible to his contemporaries. Hidden to many of them was his use of agents. Hidden to us is the extent of his use of propaganda against his enemies' characters, his fomenting of distrust and dislike of those he resented about Edward IV and whom he called "seducious persons"'.
²⁰² Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook', p. 103. Jacquetta asked for the support of the mayor and Aldermen in August 1469 over the Wake affair and the charge of witchcraft made against her. They promised to help as much as they could.
²⁰³ Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook', p. 91. This was according to the *Great Chronicle* and Fabian. There is no record of any payment being made amongst surviving documents.
²⁰⁴ Hicks, 'The Case of Thomas Cook', p. 85. C. L. Scofield, *Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London, 1923) and C. D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974).
²⁰⁵ Hicks, 'Sir Thomas Cook', p. 96.
²⁰⁶ Myers, 'Queen Elizabeth' (1967), p. 211.

Fifteenth Century: The Nevilles and the Wydevilles', in which the marriages made by both families and the financial rewards received from Edward IV are compared.²⁰⁷ Lander suggests that the Wydeviles profited through advantageous marriages and 'to a much smaller extent, from royal grants'. Seven marriages had been arranged with noble families following Elizabeth's marriage to Edward and Lander divides them into two groups, three which Worcester noted without comment and four which were disapproved of but were marriages which affected Warwick.²⁰⁸ When comparing the marriages of the children of Ralph Neville and Joan Beaufort, the sons 'had collected four baronies and four earldoms and the women between them had married six barons, one viscount, six earls and three dukes'. The Wydeviles, including Elizabeth's two sons from her first marriage 'acquired only two baronies, one earldom, one dukedom and two rich dowager duchesses (one royal) for their males, and two barons, three earls and one duke for their females'. If the marriage of John Wydevile to the elderly duchess of Norfolk was 'diabolical' how did this compare to the marriage of 'William Neville to an idiot child of fifteen?'²⁰⁹ Lander also concludes that the Wydeviles 'were not lavishly endowed with royal grants' especially 'when compared with those made to supporters like Lord Hastings and Lord Herbert'. However, the Nevilles had been well rewarded. 'Although an exact comparison of values is impossible, apart from the marriages (i.e. of the Wydeviles] of the mid 1460s the Nevilles took more from the royal bounty in titles, lands, offices and money grants than the Wydevilles'.²¹⁰

In contrast, Hicks writing in 1979 came to a different conclusion.²¹¹ Accepting that Lander's interpretation was based on a comparison of grants made to other favourites, he questioned 'what provision was appropriate for the Wydevilles and what had Edward to give?' Because Edward had given away most of what he had before 1464, Hicks suggests that he could not endow the Wydeviles on the same scale and that the comparison is therefore 'inapplicable'.²¹² This led to their reward through marriage, though Hicks claims that 'strong inducements' were needed and that Edward 'had nothing to gain' from the arrangements.²¹³ Ross however thinks that 'Yorkist noblemen

²⁰⁷ J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: The Nevilles and the Wydevilles', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. 36, no. 94 (Nov., 1963). This was reprinted in a collection of essays by Lander, *Crown and Nobility 1450-1509* (London, 1976).

²⁰⁸ Lander, 'Marriage and Politics' (1976), pp.109-114.

²⁰⁹ Lander, 'Marriage and Politics' (1976), pp. 124-5.

²¹⁰ Lander, 'Marriage and Politics' (1979), pp.118-9.

²¹¹ M.A. Hicks, 'The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483', in *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, ed., Charles Ross, (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 60-86.

²¹² Hicks, 'Changing Role', p.65.

²¹³ Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 69.

had no scruple about allowing their sons or daughters to marry the queen's kinsfolk.' Ross also agrees with Lander's conclusion that 'Edward did little to advance the material interests of the queen's relatives.'²¹⁴ It would seem that opinion on the Wydeviles' greed and their excessive marriages is still divided and that interpretation still rests on the perception of what constitutes a fair reward and what formed the basis for a good marriage settlement in the fifteenth century.

With the outbreak of rebellion in 1469 attacks on the Wydeviles increased and the family begins to appear more frequently in the chronicles. Elizabeth's marriage to Edward and the malign influence of her family upon the king is given as the cause for rebellion. It is this perception of the Wydeviles from 1469 that will now be discussed.

Warwick's attack on the Wydeviles

1469 was a tumultuous year. Neville power in the north had increased at the expense of the Percies, but the defeated Lancastrians were never very far away. Those who had been dispossessed wished to regain what they had lost. It was John Neville's work in suppressing Lancastrian rebellion in the north which had led to his reward of the earldom of Northumberland. When there was renewed rebellion in May 1469 on behalf of the Percies, it was John Neville who dealt with it. Further rebellion followed in June, this time initiated by Warwick. Known as the rebellion of Robin of Redesdale, it began in Yorkshire.

Edward, unaware of Warwick's involvement, went on pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds and Walsingham. On the 18 June he decided to make his way north to deal with the unrest but was in no hurry, expecting John Neville to once again deal with it. By early July Edward realised that the rising was far more serious than he thought and requested the muster of men from the midlands, Wales and the West Country. Along with news of growing rebellion came rumour of Warwick's involvement and Clarence's intention to marry Isabelle, Warwick's eldest daughter. The marriage took place in Calais on 11 July and was performed by George Neville, archbishop of Canterbury.²¹⁵ On the 12 July they issued their manifesto, claiming it to be a 'billis of Articles' which they had received from the king's 'true subgettes of diverse parties of this his realme',

...rememberynge in the same the disceyvabille covetous rule and
gydyng of certeyne ceducious persones; that is to say, the Lord Ryvers, the

²¹⁴ C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), pp. 94-5.

²¹⁵ Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 128-30.

Duchesse of Bedford his wyf, Ser William Herbert, Erle of Penbroke, Humfrey Stafford, Erle of Devenshire, the Lordis Scalys and Audeley, Ser John Wydevile, and his brethren, Ser John Fogge, and other of theyre myschevous rule opinion and assent ...²¹⁶

It went on to claim that these people had caused the king and the country to fall into poverty and misery, perverted justice and enriched themselves. Then came a warning about what had arisen when a king became estranged from the lords of his blood. There were plenty of examples, Edward II, Richard II and most recently Henry VI. The king had received 'as gret lyvelode and possessions as evyr had kyng of Engelond' and given them to those named, 'above theire disertis and degrees'. Herbert was a target, not only because of his relationship to the Wydeviles but also for his growing power in Wales at Warwick's expense. Sir John Fogge was married to Alice Haute and was therefore related to the Wydeviles. Stafford and Audley had been involved in the attempt to remove Warwick from Calais in 1460. Stafford and Audley subsequently joined the Yorkists with Stafford becoming one of the king's favourites. Stafford received large rewards in Devon, including some of the Courtenay lands and title. This was Warwick's first physical attack against those who were replacing him in the king's confidence. As the king's in-laws, the Wydeviles headed the list of those criticised, followed by those who were promoted 'to offset the excessive power of the Nevills'.²¹⁷ The one favourite not included in Warwick's attack was William, Lord Hastings. As a long standing supporter of the Yorkists, this may explain his omission. Hastings had earned his reward over time unlike these arrivistes.

Warwick did not have to look far for the wording of his manifesto. In 1459 and 1460 he had issued similar articles (see appendix 5). All that had been changed was that the 'certeyne' persons considered to be responsible for leading the king astray were now named. As was usual, the emphasis was on the king being rescued from himself. The manifesto is one of the few documents that can be dated to a specific month and year.

²¹⁶ *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV*, intro., Keith Dockray (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 68-71, the manifesto issued by Clarence, Warwick and the archbishop, from MS Roll in the Ashmolean no. 1160. See also appendix 5.

²¹⁷ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 82. According to Ross not all of them were heaped with rewards. 'The heaping of material rewards on members of this group was largely confined to men who were expected to have special responsibilities in certain regions and was inspired by essentially political considerations.' In this group belonged Hastings, Herbert and Stafford.

It is also a document that was widely disseminated and this may account for the similar attitude taken by the chroniclers.²¹⁸

The *Ingulph* Chronicler appears to have seen a copy of the manifesto, based on his description of events in 1469,

... there arose a great disagreement between that king and his kinsman, Richard, the most illustrious earl of Warwick ... The reason of this was, the fact that the king, being too greatly influenced by the urgent suggestions of the queen, admitted to his especial favour all the relations of the said queen, ... enriching them with boundless presents and always promoting them to the most dignified offices ... at the same time, he banished from his presence his own brethren, and his kinsmen sprung from the royal blood, together with the earl of Warwick himself and the other nobles ... who had always proved faithful to him. ... a whirlwind again came down from the north ... these complained that they were grievously oppressed with taxes and annual tributes by the said favourites of the king and queen...²¹⁹

The chronicler claims that Edward heard the news while on pilgrimage and so made his way to Crowland abbey where he spent the night before moving on to Fotheringhay where the queen was waiting. The chronicler must have picked up rumours from the royal party regarding what was happening and the panic and apparent confusion over the rebel's plans. He continued,

²¹⁸ *The Coventry Leet Book*, pp. 340-1, a letter from the king to Coventry dated 1 July says 'it ys come to our knowlache that dyvers malicious & ille disposyd persones, contrai vnto God & theire dueties, have cast & sowe in many & dyuers places of this our reame, and yit continue dayly, vnfittyng and sedicious tale and langage amongus oure lege people...' Warwick's movements in this period are given in *Stone's Chronicle*, pp. 124-7. According to this chronicler George Neville, archbishop of York was at Canterbury on 9 June 1469, and on the 12 June blessed the ship *The Trinity*, recently built by Warwick. Present were Clarence and Warwick. On the Wednesday 14 June the duchess of York arrived in Canterbury and the next day went to Sandwich to join her son, returning to Canterbury on the following Monday where she remained a week before leaving the following Monday. On Wednesday 28 June Clarence and Warwick returned to Canterbury and went on to Queenborough the next day. On the 4 July Clarence, Warwick, the archbishop and John de Vere earl of Oxford came to Canterbury and two days later at Calais the archbishop solemnised the marriage of George and Isabel. Stone names the wrong sister, saying it was Anne. De Vere's presence is not mentioned after Canterbury. The suggestion has been made that Cecily was attempting to persuade Clarence to return to his allegiance to Edward. If plans were already well advanced by this stage then it is likely that the manifesto was in circulation before 12 July, the date on the Ashmolean copy of the manifesto.

²¹⁹ *Ingulph*, p. 445.

...the above mentioned relatives [of the queen] her father
namely, and her three half-brothers ... were in great alarm for their
safety, and took refuge in different castles, some in Wales, and some
in Norfolk ...

He finishes with the battle at 'Hegge-cote' (Edgecote) and the capture of the earl of Pembroke and 'other gentlemen from Wales', who were beheaded at Northampton on Warwick's order.²²⁰

The chronicler makes some basic errors in dates and relationships which cast doubt on his accuracy. He must have been a witness to some of the most recent events because he certainly captures the panic of the royal party, but how accurate is the rest? There is no mention of Rivers and his son, Sir John who were also executed at Northampton. He appears to know only half the story, yet these two deaths must have been the more important ones given the tone of the manifesto and their relationship to the queen. His reliability as a chronicler was certainly questioned by his continuator, who chose to start his continuation from 1459, to include those things 'which were omitted ... by the said prior-chronicler – either because of his commitment to holy religion which usually ignores worldly matters or for the sake of brevity ...'²²¹

The chronicler appears to accept Warwick's manifesto unquestioningly; the 'illustrious' earl, it would seem, could tell a convincing story. Warwick was harnessing not only wider concerns about taxation and the economy but was reworking ideas that had already been planted in the popular mind. *Ingulph* is the closest chronicle to the events of 1469 and the proclamation of Warwick's manifesto. It is also the earliest mention of the enrichment of the queen's family in an English chronicle as well as repeating the idea of her 'humble lineage'.

Whatever truth there may have been in the stories, they seem to have become widespread. A report from Luchino Dallaghiexia to the duke of Milan on 16 August 1469 gives a similar story. Being in London he must also have seen the manifesto. He reminded his duke that Edward had taken 'to wife a widow of this island of quite low birth' and continued,

²²⁰ *Ingulph*, pp. 445-6

²²¹ *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-1486*, eds., Nicholas Pronay & John Cox, (London, 1986), pp. 108-09. See also p.109, fn. 2, in which the editors note that the Crowland continuator uses 'chronographo priore' in 'an ironic, even sarcastic way'. He describes his predecessors work as a "chronicle" while his own is a "history".

Since her coronation she has always exerted herself to aggrandise her relations ... she had five brothers and as many sisters, and had brought things to such a pass that they had the entire government of this realm ... the earl of Warwick, who has always been great and deservedly so... made a plan rendering himself the chief man in the government, ... he has married his two daughters to the king's two brothers ...

He then reports on Edgecote, in which a number of lords were captured,

[the] earl of Pembroke, his son and heir, two of his brothers, the treasurer, the queen's father and one of his sons. The duke and earl [i.e. Clarence and Warwick] had all these beheaded. ... It is said that they have since taken the Earl of Devencioc [Devonshire], Monsignor de Schalex [Scales]. If this is true it will be known soon and it is considered certain that they will make an end as they mean to be the rulers at all costs ...²²²

Dallaghiexia added that Warwick was at the king's side but that 'they say the king is not at liberty', while the queen was in London and 'keeps very scant state'. Warwick and Clarence intended to call a parliament 'in that they will arrange the government of this realm. Every one is of the opinion that it would be better not'. This last comment would seem to suggest that not all of Warwick's actions were approved of. Some of Dallaghiexia's report was correct, and he exercised caution where he was unsure. The marriage of Warwick's two daughters to Edward's brothers was an aim but not

²²² *CSPM 1385-1618*, www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=92255 (accessed 2/8/11), 16 August 1469, pp. 122-34. During 1468 Milanese ambassadors had continued to advise their duke of relations between England, France and Burgundy. On 14 February they advised that Warwick had written to Louis XI but the situation in England was so unstable that the king 'has no need for any anxiety from the English'. The marriage between Margaret and Charles the Bold was progressing, and on 2 July the marriage was announced. Panicharolla was advising his master from France that duke Charles was 'informed of what more and more people know, to wit that his future consort in the past has been somewhat devoted to love affairs, indeed in the opinion of many she even has a son'. In the same report he added that Margaret, 'the deposed queen' should request help from Louis as Lord Pembroke (i.e. Jasper Tudor) had entered Wales and was gathering as many partisans as he could. This indicates the build up of hostility against Edward in England, and Louis's approach towards Warwick. Warwick it appears was only useful when he could be used to cause instability in England and frustrate a Burgundian alliance, while unpleasant rumours about Edward's family were not restricted to the Wydeviles.

something that Warwick had actually yet achieved, however, as a reflection on what was being said in London, it cannot be entirely dismissed.

Following news of the defeat at Edgecote, Edward was deserted by his army and captured by Archbishop Neville who sent him to Warwick castle as a prisoner. The *Coventry Leet Book* confirms the execution of Rivers and his son which was said to have taken place on 12 August at 'Gosford Green', Coventry, following their capture at Chepstow. Lord Herbert and Richard Herbert with others were 'taken in a battle by Banbury on S. James' Eve' (24 July) and taken to Northampton where they were beheaded, while Lord Stafford of Southwick, i.e. the earl of Devon, was executed at Bridgwater.²²³ The Welsh poet Guto'r Glyn in his elegy to Lord Herbert provides the date of his execution as the Thursday after the battle, which would have been the 27 July.²²⁴

Although Warwick held the king, he found maintaining power and control difficult. He had little support from other nobles and law and order soon began to break down. This lack of support demonstrates how far it was seen as Warwick's personal dispute and that it was not a generally accepted view. Rioting broke out in London and the duke of Norfolk took the opportunity to seize Caistor from the Pastons. The Lancastrians also saw their chance and revolted in the north. Warwick now had to produce the king so that an army could be levied to suppress the revolt, and Edward took the opportunity thus presented to free himself from Warwick.

Witchcraft

With Rivers and John Wydevile dead Warwick's next move was against Jacquetta, the only woman named in his manifesto. Warwick brought before the king Thomas Wake of Blisworth, who had evidence to accuse Jacquetta of witchcraft. Wake was a near neighbour of the Wydeviles in Northamptonshire but more importantly he was one of Warwick's men. The events come to light in a petition made by Jacquetta, on the 10 February 1470, before the king and his great council. In her 'supplicacion' she claimed that Thomas Wake 'of his malicious disposicion ... long tyme continued' intended the destruction not only of her reputation but of her person.²²⁵ Jacquetta recited what had

²²³ *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 346.

²²⁴ William Gwyn Lewis, 'The Exact Date of the Battle of Banbury, 1469' *BIHR*, vol. 55 (1982), pp. 194-6.

²²⁵ *Rotuli Parliamentorum ut et Petitiones et Placita in Parlamento*, ed., J Strachey (1767-77), rolls 1472-1503, vol. 6, p. 232. Your humble and true liegewoman Jaquet Duchesse of Bedford, late the Wyf of your true and faithfull Knyght and liegeman Richard late Erle of Ryvers; that wher shee at all tyme hath, and yit doth, treuly beleve on God according to the feith of Holy Chriche, as a true Cristen Woman owith to doo, yet

occurred at Warwick. Wake had produced an image of lead 'lyke a Man of Armes'. This, he claimed, Jacquetta had made to use with 'Wichcraft and sorsory'. Wake had also asked the parish clerk of Stoke Bruerne, John Daunger, to say that there were two more images made by Jacquetta to represent the king and queen. However Daunger had failed to confirm this. The manor of Stoke Bruerne had belonged to the Wydeviles until the death of Thomas Wydevile, so it may be no coincidence that Wake chose to involve Daunger in his story. Jacquetta had asked that her accusers be sent to the bishop of Carlisle and other lords to be examined.

The statements of both men were presented to the king on 20 January 1470. Thomas Wake claimed that the image had been left in Stoke with 'an honest person' and delivered to the parish clerk. It was then shown around the neighbourhood of Stoke and Shytlang (Shutlanger). Wake claimed he knew nothing of this until it was sent to him by Thomas Kymbell from the clerk, who he believed to be John Daunger. However Daunger claimed that Wake had sent Thomas Kymbell to him and demanded the image of lead. Daunger claimed that he had 'herd never noo Wiccheecraft of my Lady of Bedford', but that he had been given the image by Harry Kyngeston of Stoke, who had found it in his house after soldiers had left. He also claimed that Wake had asked him to say that there were two more images of the king and queen, but he had refused to say so.

The use to which the images were to be put is not mentioned. The fact that they represented the king and queen was probably suggestion enough. If the intention had been to imply that they were used to bewitch Edward, causing him to fall in love with Elizabeth, then it was not something that Edward would want publicly proclaimed. It could only bring his marriage further into question.

Wake and Daunger were both from areas close to the Wydeviles at Grafton which might have lent credence to their story, which was probably why Warwick chose them. Jacquetta claimed that Wake had long been ill disposed towards her and, presumably, her family. There is nothing to suggest any ill will or that there were any disputes

Thomas Wake Squier, contrarye to the lawe of God, lawe of this Land, and all reason and good consciens, in the tyme of the late trouble and riotous season, of his malicious disposicion towards your said Oratrice of long tyme continued, entending not oonly to hurt and apaire her good name and fame, but also purposed the fynall distruccion of her persone, and to that effecte caused her to be brought in a commune noyse and disclaundre of Wycheecraft thorouout a grete part of this youre Reaume surmytting that she shuld have usid Wichecraft and Sorcerie, insomuche as the said Wake caused to be brought to Warrewyk ate your last being ther, Sovereigne Lord, to dyvers of the Lords thenne being ther present, a Image of lede ...' *CPR 1467-77*, p.190, gives additional information and provides the names of those who heard the case.

between the families. However, tension between two families vying for control and lands in the same area is not improbable. Warwick would have used any tensions between Wake and the Wydeviles to his advantage and, he would not have needed much persuading as Wake was his man. Fortunately for Jacquetta Daunger does not appear to have gone along with the story. Either he was telling the truth or he feared what might happen once the king was free to act. In the event, he was right and Jacquetta was exonerated, although no action appears to have been taken against Wake.

Witchcraft was a useful line of attack against a woman, especially a noble woman where a charge of treason was more difficult to make. There was certainly precedent, Joan of Navarre had been accused by Henry V of using witchcraft against him and was imprisoned for three years, only being released when Henry V died. Alice Perrers had been accused of using witchcraft to gain Edward III's affection through the use of wax images. More recent was the case of Eleanor Cobham, duchess of Gloucester. It may have been this case that Warwick had in mind. The charges against Eleanor resulted in her imprisonment and the annulment of her marriage. It is possible that the attack on Jacquetta was only the first stage in Warwick's plan. The accusation of witchcraft would throw doubt on Edward's marriage and he had the authority of the church in his brother, the archbishop of York, to pursue it to its logical conclusion, i.e. a divorce.²²⁶

Warwick wanted to remove favourites from around the king. Herbert and Stafford had received large rewards and were interfering in areas that Warwick wanted to control. His attitude towards the Wydeviles starts to appear more vindictive and personal. The verbal attack on Rivers in 1460 appears to have been propaganda and it was just unfortunate that it happened to be Rivers who was at Sandwich. Warwick was well informed on Rivers background; it was a small world, especially for those who had seen service in France. There is little evidence that the paths of the Wydeviles and Warwick had ever crossed except in the course of duty. Rivers may have been seen as Somerset's man at this time which would not have endeared him to the Yorkists; but Rivers had also served with York, so he was very much the king's man. A potential area

²²⁶ H.A. Kelly, 'English Kings and the Fear of Sorcery', *Medieval Studies*, vol. 39 (1977), p. 211. Witchcraft was dealt with in church courts. This explains why the Bishop of Carlisle headed the enquiry into Wake's allegations. For the case against Alice Perrers see p. 215; Joan of Navarre, pp. 218-9; Eleanor Cobham pp.219-28. One of the charges was that she had 'enforced the foresaid duke of Gloucester to love her and to wed her'. Those accused of aiding her had used 'images of silver, of wax, and of other metals'. At the end of her trial Archbishop Chichele delivered sentence and then, with other clerics, "divorced and departed the Duke of Gloucester and Dame Eleanor Cobham, as for matrimony made before between them two". The court had upheld the charge 'that Eleanor had coerced the duke into marrying her by means of sorcery, and that therefore they found the marriage null and void from the beginning'. William R. Jones, 'Political Uses of Sorcery in Medieval Europe', *Historian*, vol. 34, no. 4 (Aug., 1972), pp. 684-5, for the case against Jacquetta and Warwick's political motives.

of conflict could have been Jacquetta's dower lands in Richmondshire, her third reverted to the Nevilles upon her death. The accusation of witchcraft could have had a double benefit, ending the king's marriage and the resumption of Jacquetta's dower lands. Both would have benefited Warwick.

The Wydeviles were the tip of the iceberg. By marrying Elizabeth's sisters into the families of his supporters Edward had built up a large family network which challenged the Neville network. Edward had demonstrated that he was no longer tied to the Nevilles. Add to this a foreign policy that directly contradicted Warwick's and the only conclusion Warwick could come to was that he was no longer a part of the inner family circle, and that he was no longer the king's right hand man. A further problem for Warwick was that these 'favourites' were new men. They had not been long time supporters of the Yorkists because they had supported the Lancastrian regime. Not only was Warwick being replaced, but he was being replaced by men who did not have the same track record of loyalty that he had. His record of Yorkist loyalty probably saved Hastings from being added to the list of greedy counsellors. The lack of noble support for his cause emphasises the fact that no one else had the same problem with these 'favourites'. Warwick's rebellion may have failed but he still had the king's brother George, duke of Clarence on side. For the moment, Clarence was the heir and he was Warwick's trump card. Clarence does not appear to have had any personal antagonism towards the Wydeviles but he was happy to follow Warwick's lead, especially if this led to his own elevation as king.

(ii) Chronicles and records for the period 1470-82

At the end of 1469 Edward granted Warwick and Clarence a full pardon for their offences committed against him.²²⁷ He then began filling the gaps left by the death of his supporters. William Herbert was replaced in Wales by Richard, duke of Gloucester who also replaced Warwick as chief justice of South Wales. Although Warwick lost his offices in Wales, his brother John was well rewarded with the estates of Lord Stafford in Devon.²²⁸ Then, in March 1470, Richard, Lord Welles led an uprising in Lincolnshire, and once again Warwick and Clarence were involved. Edward moved rapidly and defeated the rebels at 'Lose-Cote Field'. Warwick and Clarence fled to France and Edward seized their lands.

Warwick and Clarence had received little support from the nobles, and even Warwick's brother, John gave him no support. But Edward now made a major mistake. In an attempt to restore order in the north, on 25 March 1470 he restored Henry Percy to the earldom of Northumberland. John Neville was recompensed with the higher title of marquis Montagu but Edward had lost his loyalty. The Devon lands did not compare with those of Percy. Even the provision of a royal bride for Montagu's son George, who had been created duke of Bedford the previous January, did little to soften the loss.²²⁹ Edward's daughter may have been a Wydevile but she was also Edward's eldest daughter and potentially his heir. The elevation of George to duke of Bedford may also have held the promise of the reversion of the Bedford lands which Jacquetta currently held in dower, especially as a number of these were in the north of England.

Warwick's exile in France was brief. Clarence had joined him in the expectation that he would replace Edward as king however, Warwick now joined forces with the exiled Lancastrians. In return for his support in overthrowing Edward, his daughter Anne was married to Prince Edward, Henry VI's son on 25 July 1470.²³⁰ Whatever happened, Warwick could expect to have a daughter who would become Queen. Warwick returned to England in mid September when it became Edward's turn to flee

²²⁷ Ralph, ed., Flenley, 'Gough's Chronicle' in *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 163, 'This yere after alhalontyde there was proclamacions made in London by the kyngis commanndement that the kyng had pardoned all the Northynmen for their Rysyng and all other as well for the deth of the lorde Ryvers as other: ...' Also *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, p. 233, Edward, in a proclamation to York 31 March 1470 against Warwick and Clarence, rehearsed the fact that he had 'graunted unto George Duke of Clarence and Richrdd Erle of Warrewyk, his Pardon generall of all offenses committed and oon ayenst hym afore the fest of Cristemasse last past ...'

²²⁸ Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 136-7.

²²⁹ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 145. CSPM, pp. 128-34, 12 April 1469, Dallaghiexia reported that 'The princess, that is the first daughter, [of Edward] who is three years old, is contracted to the Earl of Northumberland, who is brother of the Earl of Warwick...'

²³⁰ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 147.

into exile. Warwick and Clarence declared for Henry VI, but his return was short lived. With Burgundian help Edward was able to reclaim his throne, and Warwick was defeated at Barnet on 14 April 1471. His brother John was also killed in the battle. Clarence had been persuaded to rejoin his brother - an easy choice as the return of the Lancastrians had made his hopes for the throne recede. In May the remaining Lancastrian army was defeated at Tewkesbury. Edward of Lancaster was killed in the battle and Henry VI was back in prison in the Tower. Edward now returned to London where he joined his wife, who had given birth to their first son, Edward, while in sanctuary in November 1470.

Despite the overthrow of Warwick and the restoration of Edward, there is little change in the way the chroniclers report on the Wydeviles. *The Chronicle of John Warkworth* which covers the years 1461-74 was written some time between 1478 and 1483 when a copy was presented to Peterhouse, Cambridge. This chronicle is unusual in that it has a northern interest. It is also sympathetic to Henry VI.²³¹ Warkworth suggests that Warwick's displeasure over Edward's marriage was because,

... the Erle of Warwyke was sent into Fraunce for a maryage
for the Kynge, for one fayre ladye, suster-doughtere to the Kynge
of Fraunce, whiche was concludede by the Erle of Warwyke. And
whiles the seyde Erle of Warwyke was in Fraunce, the Kynge was
wedded to Elisabethe Gray ... doughtere to the Lorde Ryvers; and
the weddyng was prevely in a secrete place, the first day of Maye ...
And when the Erle of Warwyke come home and herde hereof,
thenne was he gretely displesyd with the Kyng; and after that rose
grete discencyone evere more and more betwene the Kyng and hym ...²³²

Warkworth is the first to suggest an actual date for the secret marriage. Interestingly, he does not comment upon Elizabeth's status. This is also the first mention that Warwick was away negotiating a marriage for Edward. As we know from 'Gregory', Warwick was in the north besieging Alnwick in the summer of 1464.²³³

²³¹ Dockray, *Three Chronicles*, pp. viii-xii.

²³² 'A Chronicle of the first thirteen years of the reign of King Edward the Fourth by John Warkworth', ed., James Orchard Halliwell, first published by the Camden Society (1839), in Dockray, *Three Chronicles*, pp. 25-6. The sister in question was Bona of Savoy.

²³³ See the article by A L Brown and Bruce Webster, 'The Movements of the Earl of Warwick in the Summer of 1464 - A Correction', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 81, no. 318, Jan., (1966), pp. 80-82.

Warkworth may therefore have confused a later proposed embassy to France in October 1464 with the discussions that had been held for Edward's marriage earlier.²³⁴ It does however provide the chronicler with an explanation for Warwick's later actions. If Warwick had been arranging a marriage at this time then it would have made him look a fool with Louis XI, an insult Warwick could not have forgiven. It also suggests that Elizabeth's suitability and the discontent of other nobles over the marriage was not such a widespread issue, if it was an issue at all.

Hearne's Fragment gives a succinct account of events. Although written sometime in the period 1500–1522, the writer gives his credentials as a witness to events, and it is therefore included here rather than under sixteenth-century commentaries. He may have been a member of the Howard household which would have placed him in a good position to know about events. He thus provides a different perspective to that of the city chroniclers. The anonymous writer explains the problems in knowing exactly what happened, but states he intends to show the reasons, as he knows them, for Warwick turning against Edward.²³⁵ According to the author, in 1468,

This discusses an embassy that took place in 1464 and the fact that Warwick was not present at the negotiations as originally intended, but was in the north of England.

²³⁴ According to Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 84–91, negotiations for Edward's marriage began as soon as he ascended the throne. In October 1461 Lord Wenlock was pursuing an alliance with Philip of Burgundy's niece, Mademoiselle de Bourbon. Then, in 1462 Warwick suggested a marriage to Mary of Guelders, the Scottish regent. This came to nothing because the duke of Somerset was thought to have been one of her lovers. In 1464 the Burgundians were coming round to the earlier suggestion by Wenlock, to counter a suggested French marriage to Bona of Savoy. Also, in February 1464 Henry the Impotent of Castile was putting forward his sister Isabella. Warwick and Wenlock were expected to go to France in October to discuss a French truce and marriage treaty. It would seem that there was no shortage of marriage proposals, which may explain the confusion over Warwick's involvement, as well as the total surprise when Edward made his own choice.

²³⁵ 'Hearne's Fragment', pp. 3–30, in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, ed., J.A. Giles (original London, 1845, Lampeter, Facsimile reprint 2004). The anonymous writer was assumed to be a member of the Howard family; he names Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Treasurer of England, as his witness. This gives the dates for his writing. 'Oftimes it is seen that divers there are, the which foresee not the causes precedent and subsequent; for the which they fall many times into error, that they abuse themselves and also others, their successors, giving credence to such as write of affection, leaving the truth that was in deed. Wherefore, in avoiding all such inconveniences, my purpose is, and shall be, to write and shew the which I have heard of his own mouth. [i.e. Edward IV] And also in part of such things, in the which I have been personally present, as well within the realm as without, during a certain space, most especially from the year of our Lord 1468 unto the year of our Lord 1482... And in witness whereof the Right Illustrious Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Treasurer of England, as most personally present... in the house of the said right noble prince... can more clearly certify the truth of all such acts and things ... Therefore, in avoiding all inconveniences, coloured chronicles, and affectionall histories, my purpose is to shew the truth, to avoid all ambiguity of the first motive, and original cause, wherefore Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, withdrew himself from the amity of the foresaid King ...'. pp. 22–23. It can also be found in *Thomae Sprotti Chronica*, 'A Remarkable Fragment of an Old English Chronicle or History of the Affairs of King Edward the Fourth Transcrib'd from an Old MS', ed. Thomas Hearnius (Oxford, 1719), hence its description as Hearne's Fragment. If not a member of the Howard family he was most likely a member of the household.

... the said Richard, Earl of Warwick, was sent into Normandy as Ambassador with others, whose secret counsellings betwixt the French King and him (*self*) alone, brought him greatly in suspicion (*suspicion*) of many things, inasmuch that his insatiable mind could not be content, and yet before him was there none in England of the half possessions that he had. ... and yet he desired more. He counselled and enticed the Duke of Clarence, and caused him to wed his eldest daughter, Isabel, without the advice or knowledge of King Edward. Wherefore the King took a great displeasure with them both, and thereupon were certain unkind words betwixt them ...²³⁶

The problem, according to this writer, was Warwick and his desire for ever greater rewards and power. He also suggests Warwick had been having secret negotiations with the French king on his own behalf, which caused Edward to be suspicious. This is similar to Warkworth in relation to an embassy conducted by Warwick, but the reason for the embassy and dissension between Warwick and the king differ, as do the dates. Warwick had been sent on an embassy to France in May 1467, however, an embassy had also been sent to Burgundy. A marriage was agreed between Edward's sister Margaret and Charles, the duke of Burgundy's son. This had caused Warwick's humiliation. An ardent Francophile, who disliked Charles of Burgundy, he had promised Louis of France more than he could deliver.²³⁷ Hearne's dating may be slightly out but the events are reasonably accurate. Importantly, the author does not mention the Wydevile marriages or their greed. If the author was a member of Howard's household, then he was presumably a Yorkist and probably a Ricardian. Given the later history of Richard III, which the writer would also have witnessed, then this would have been a good point at which to mention the Wydeviles and any criticisms. However there is a possible reason for this absence: by 1500 there was a Wydevile queen. Thomas Howard had worked hard to be rehabilitated under the new regime. It might not have been safe for anyone linked to his household to criticise the Wydeviles.²³⁸ It certainly gives the

²³⁶ Hearne, p. 23.

²³⁷ A.J. Pollard, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (London, 2007), pp. 60-61.

²³⁸ Hearne, p. 15. The writer does appear to be doing his best to be accurate. Earlier he corrects those that report Warwick was abroad in 1464. 'Howbeit that some there be, that affirm the Earl of Warwick should have been Ambassador for him in Spain, to have Isabell, sister of King Harry of Castile, the which affirming is not truth, for the Earl of Warwick was never in Spain, but continued all this season with his brother, John Marquis Montague, in the North parts'; he regularly criticises other chroniclers for lack of

report of this author an interesting new dimension compared to the others. He offers an alternative view to those chroniclers who appear to have been influenced by Warwick. Unfortunately what survives of his chronicle ends in 1470.

For the years after Edward's return there are no contemporary chronicles once Warkworth ends in 1474. There are a few mentions in Burgundian chronicles and an interesting comment from Georges Chastelain (d. 1478) indicates the extent to which Warwick disliked the Wydeviles. Chastelain claimed that Warwick would have killed Elizabeth and her unborn child if he could have got hold of her.²³⁹ This presumably relates to Elizabeth's period in sanctuary in 1470/71. The Burgundians were not very sympathetic towards Warwick so it should be treated with some caution, but it does indicate the strong impression Warwick had made in his attitude towards the Wydeviles. Chastelain was writing his history for Duke Philip and therefore had access to court papers and courtiers. Amongst his associates were members of the Luxembourg family, including Jacques, Lord of Richebourg, Jacquetta's brother.²⁴⁰ He may therefore be the source for Warwick's attitude towards the Wydeviles. Richebourg may have received the information from Elizabeth or more likely Antony. A further remark by Chastelain suggests that comments regarding status should also be treated with caution. "How could a king of France, ... take for a comrade in arms" an Englishman [i.e. Warwick], a criminal, corrupt, lowborn and not at all his equal, an enemy of his crown and his estate, "and all that only to undo the house of Burgundy..."²⁴¹ The use of 'lowborn' here is interesting, with ignoble behaviour rather than status perhaps being equated with 'lowborn'. The context of its use is as relevant as its literal meaning. It also raises the question whether Warwick would do all that, just for the sake of undoing the Wydeviles?

The death of George, duke of Clarence

Despite his pardon, Clarence continued to pose problems for Edward. In the end Edward had no alternative but to try him for treason. A hearing before parliament in January 1478 included the following charge,

knowledge. This is not necessarily proof of his own lack of bias, and he does not correct other reports on the Wydeviles. He also dates the marriage of Edward and Elizabeth to 1 May 1463, so he does make errors.

²³⁹ Visser-Fuchs, PhD, p. 57 -61, provides some examples from Georges Chastelain who d. 1478. His comments relate to Warwick. 'The Count of St Pol, uncle to Queen Elizabeth Woodville, refused to come to court as long as Warwick was there'. 'Chastelain says Warwick would have killed Elizabeth and her unborn child if she had not escaped to "Sante Catherine, une abbaye"'.

²⁴⁰ Small, *George Chastelain*, p.79.

²⁴¹ Visser-Fuchs, PhD, p.62.

(he) laboured also to be noysed by suche his Servauntez, apte for that werk, that the Kyng oure Sovereigne Lorde, wrought by Nygromancye, and used Crafte to poyson his Subgettes, suche as hym pleased; ... that he ne lived ne dealid with Subgettes as a Christien Prynce. And overe this, the said Duke being in full purpose to exalte hymself and his Heires to the Regallye and Corone of Englande, ... upon oon the falsest and moost unnaturall coloured pretense that man might imagine, falsely and untruely noysed, publisshed and saide, tha the Kyng oure Sovereigne Lorde was a Bastard, and not begottene to reigne upon us; ...²⁴²

This is another accusation of witchcraft, this time aimed at Edward, coupled with the suggestion that he lived a less than Christian life. Was Clarence implying that Edward was a womaniser, or that as a king he did not administer justice, or that as someone allegedly using witchcraft he could not be a true Christian? In Jacquetta's petition she had emphasised the point that she was 'a true Cristen Woman' and as such she could not be involved in witchcraft. Possibly all of these were intended. Clarence's attack was apparently wide ranging. He also introduced a new element to the story; Edward was a bastard. What should also be noted is that men were sent out especially to spread these rumours. Like Chinese whispers, stories merged and changed as the gossip and rumour spread, contributing to later events. The eventual decision by Edward to execute his brother was to be blamed on the Wydeviles in 1483.

The years 1470-82 had seen dramatic changes in the fortunes of the Wydeviles. Warwick's brief period of control in 1470/71 saw the issue of a writ on 2 October against Antony Wydevile for his arrest. This was over a debt of £2,000 which he allegedly owed to Geoffrey Gate.²⁴³ This must have related to the transactions over the Isle of Wight. While Warwick was anxious to destroy the senior members of the Wydevile family, Antony's youngest brothers were treated more kindly. On 30 October Edward received an appointment in the port of Yarmouth.²⁴⁴ While on 2 November Sir Richard received a pardon for all offences committed before the previous 29 October.²⁴⁵ This may have been due to their age; they had received very little reward from Edward,

²⁴² *RP* vol. VI, pp. 193-5, also on *PROME*, appendix to the 1478 parliament.

²⁴³ *CCR 1468-76*, p. 157.

²⁴⁴ *CPR 1467-77*, p. 231.

²⁴⁵ *CPR 1467-77*, p. 228.

and they had not figured in a displeasing marriage. The execution of Rivers and his son seems to have been the end of the bloodletting against the family, probably because the remainder that Warwick wanted were out of his reach. The treatment of the youngest boys suggests that Warwick did not view the entire Wydevile family as an enemy to be eradicated and that he was very specific in his target.

Clarence's action during 1477 appears to have been aimed at Edward rather than the Wydeviles. At least according to Edward's charge against Clarence, in which he claimed that Clarence had declared him to be illegitimate. There does not appear to have been a repetition of Warwick's claims for the Wydeviles' greed and covetousness, or their control of the king. Any charge of illegitimacy would have made more sense if it was raised against Edward's children, based on the secret marriage. The fact that it was not suggests that such questions were not an issue in England. This would explain the lack of such comments in the English chronicles. It also suggests that Warwick's propaganda about them had not taken any real hold. However the truth of what Clarence claimed is only known from what Edward claimed before parliament. If there were stories of illegitimacy being spread, one aimed at Edward's own legitimacy was the most easily refuted version, especially if Clarence's desire for the throne was his motivation. With the removal of Warwick and Clarence it must have seemed as though the attacks on his reign and his family had finally come to an end.

(iii) Chronicles and records for the period 1483-99

The Yorkist dynasty must have seemed more secure following the removal of Clarence. Edward was now firmly in charge, all threats were removed and he had an expanding family which included two male heirs. However the unexpected death of Edward IV on 9 April 1483 changed all this. His heir, now Edward V, was only twelve years old, and the prospect of another minority caused anxiety, conflict and ultimately his removal. 1483 was another turning point in the reputation of the Wydeviles.

Dominic Mancini

One of the most detailed accounts for this period comes from Dominic Mancini. He arrived in England in 1483, speaking little English. His information was gathered from contacts in London, members of the Italian community and from people who could communicate with him in Latin.²⁴⁶ Mancini probably wrote up his account of events in London by December 1483.²⁴⁷ Although writing soon after the events, it is an account that was based as much on the rumour and gossip in London as the stories circulating in Europe at that time. Because of his lack of English, it was also an account that was mediated by sources who may also have lacked a deep understanding of what was happening.

To explain events in 1483 Mancini had to return to the recent past to show how the Queen's family had affected Richard, duke of Gloucester's action in assuming the throne,

... because it seems that in claiming the throne Richard was actuated not only by ambition and lust for power, he also proclaimed that he was harassed by the ignoble family of the queen and the affronts of Edward's relatives by marriage ... Edward married a ... lady of humble origin ... despite the antagonism of the magnates of the kingdom, who disdained to show royal honours towards an undistinguished woman promoted to such exalted rank. ...not only did he alienate the noble [i.e. Warwick] with whom he afterwards

²⁴⁶ A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, Vol. 38 (1994), pp. 152-6. Pollard suggests that he was in England on a spying mission and that the death of Edward IV changed his plans. Dr John Argentine, physician to Prince Edward, has been suggested as one of his sources as well as rumour and the various public announcements and proclamations being made by the duke of Gloucester.

²⁴⁷ Dockray, *Edward IV*, p. xviii. Mancini was later recalled to France by his patron, Angelo Cato, archbishop of Vienne. It was here that he probably wrote up his account.

waged war, but he also offended most bitterly the members of his own house. Even his mother fell into such a frenzy, that she ... asserted that Edward was not the offspring of her husband ... but was conceived in adultery...²⁴⁸

Mancini reiterates Elizabeth's low birth and the discontent of the nobles at the marriage, information which he may have picked up from the French court. Warwick had attended the French court both as an ambassador and while in exile. Discontent over an 'undistinguished woman' seems insufficient cause for rebellion. However Mancini's patron, Angelo Cato, archbishop of Vienne, was Louis XI's physician and counsellor.²⁴⁹ Cato would have been aware of Warwick's earlier activity in France and would not therefore have needed full details on this point. The royal family's horror at Edward's marriage is revealed in Cecily's 'frenzy' claiming Edward was not her son. The story of Edward's illegitimacy could have come from the charge against Clarence in January 1478, although there was a similar story circulating at the French court in 1475.²⁵⁰ It is interesting that Mancini has Cecily making the claim of bastardy, not Clarence, which may reflect the 1475 story. He continues that both brothers were 'displeased' but that George, duke of Clarence,

...vented his wrath more conspicuously, by his bitter and public denunciation of Elizabeth's obscure family; and by proclaiming that the king, who ought to have married a virgin wife, had married a widow in violation of established custom. ... The queen then remembered the insults to her family and the calumnies with which she was reproached, namely that according to established usage she was not the legitimate wife of the king. Thus she concluded that her offspring by the king would never come to the throne, unless the duke of Clarence was removed; ...²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Mancini, pp. 60-3.

²⁴⁹ Armstrong, p. 4. Mancini was writing his account for his patron Angelo Cato, archbishop of Vienne. It is suggested that Cato had some influence on Louis XI. After Cato's death state papers were found amongst his possessions which covered both domestic and foreign affairs. Cato was also a patron of Comines. Comines also wrote his *Mémoires* for him, pp. 26-7.

²⁵⁰ See below p. 235 fn. 2699.

²⁵¹ Mancini, pp. 62-3.

Mancini needed to provide a reason why Elizabeth desired Clarence's death and therefore suggests that Clarence said much more than that the king was a bastard. Clarence claimed the king's marriage to a widow was not legal and that kings should only marry a virgin. He also repeated some of the charges raised by Warwick about the Wydeviles' status and greed. Mancini seems to be mixing a variety of sources; stories that appeared in Europe, particularly information from the French court, Warwick's attack in 1469/70, and claims made on behalf of Richard III. However, if there was any truth in Chastelain's story that Warwick had intended to kill Elizabeth and her child, she may well have suspected Clarence of a similar intent. Whatever the reality, by suggesting that the Queen was responsible for Clarence's death Mancini is able to set the stage for Richard's revenge. Following Clarence's death, Mancini writes,

... the queen ennobled many of her family. Besides, she attracted to her party many strangers and introduced them to court, so that they alone should manage the public and private businesses of the crown, surround the king, and have bands of retainers, give or sell offices, and finally rule the very king himself ...²⁵²

This was essentially the complaint made in 1469 by Warwick. In fact the Wydeviles had made few additional gains following the death of Clarence; the main beneficiary had been Richard, duke of Gloucester. However, Mancini has noted the crux of the problem: patronage, access to it and exclusion from it. By placing this in his narrative after Clarence's death, Mancini does not need to discuss Warwick's rebellion in detail because it would already have been known by Cato; Mancini's principal aim was to explain why Richard III usurped the throne.

Mancini says that three Wydeviles, Elizabeth's two sons and a brother, were particularly 'hated by the populace on account of their morals, but mostly because of a certain inherent jealousy which arises between those who are equal by birth when there had been a change in their station'. He continued that the nobles 'detested' the Wydeviles 'because they, who were ignoble and newly made men, were advanced beyond those who far excelled them in breeding and wisdom.'²⁵³ Later Mancini appears to absolve Elizabeth and the Wydeviles from any involvement in the attack on Clarence. 'They had to endure the imputation brought against them by all, of causing the death of

²⁵² Mancini, p. 64-5.

²⁵³ Mancini, pp. 67-9.

the Duke of Clarence.²⁵⁴ Having listed the complaints against the Wydeviles he provides an alternative view. He proceeds to name others who greatly influenced the king, namely the chancellor, Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York, John Morton, Bishop of Ely and Lord Hastings, who as councillors made and carried out the king's policy.²⁵⁵

Mancini also relates that there was a deadly feud between Hastings and the queen's eldest son, the marquis of Dorset, 'the dissension of these two' being over a mistress.²⁵⁶ Dorset was married to Hastings step-daughter Cecily Bonville. However the real feud was between Antony and Hastings. Antony had been made lieutenant of Calais in 1470, a post which Hastings wanted and which was granted in 1471, replacing Antony. Both men had embarked on a campaign of vilification against each other. Antony kept copies of a confession made by John Edwards, who admitted that the stories put out by Hastings were untrue.²⁵⁷ Mancini states that the feud was an important factor in the usurpation, for Hastings 'was hostile to the entire kin of the queen'.²⁵⁸ Hastings is shown to be the major catalyst at this stage in trying to remove the Wydeviles by playing upon Richard's need for revenge.²⁵⁹ There is a certain ambiguity in the way Mancini reports on the Wydevile family. He seems to exonerate Elizabeth, disapproves of her son Dorset who receives the most criticism and admires her brother Antony. 'Lord Rivers was always considered a kind, serious, and just man ... he had injured nobody, though benefiting many'.²⁶⁰ Dorset was licentious and self important. At the council meeting called after Edward's death Mancini reports Dorset as declaring 'We are so important, that even without the king's uncle we can make and enforce these decisions'.²⁶¹

Mancini seems to be suggesting that, while some of the attacks on the Wydeviles may have been justified, others were not. There is perhaps a tension in explaining Richard III's actions, which required the vilification of the Wydeviles while making those claims appear to be unjustified. This may also explain why he chose to show Dorset as the man behind the feud with Hastings rather than Antony; a feud over a

²⁵⁴ Mancini, pp. 68-9.

²⁵⁵ Mancini, pp. 68-9.

²⁵⁶ Mancini, pp. 68-9, Hastings, 'maintained a deadly feud with the queen's son, whom we said was called the marquess, and that because of the mistresses whom they had abducted, or attempted to entice from one another.'

²⁵⁷ Pidgeon, 'Antony Wydevile, part 2' p. 30. TNA, E315/486/6, 12, 13 and 14 relates to four separate copies of Edwards' statement. See also Grummit, *Calais*, pp. 100-101 for the garrison's support of Hastings and their attitude towards Antony.

²⁵⁸ Mancini, pp. 70-1.

²⁵⁹ Mancini, pp. 72-3, 'Besides, it was reported that he had advised the duke to hasten to the capital ... and avenge the insult done him by his enemies.'

²⁶⁰ Mancini, pp. 66-9.

²⁶¹ Mancini, pp. 74-5.

mistress is rather trivial, however it would reflect badly on Hastings' morality as a counsellor. Mancini had already named Hastings as one of Edward's primary advisors. Mancini emphasised the real reason why the Wydeviles were maligned. This was because,

... these two dukes [i.e. Buckingham and Gloucester] were seeking at every turn to arouse hatred against the queen's kin, and to estrange public opinion from her relatives, they took especial pains to do so on the day they entered the city. ... many knew these charges to be false...²⁶²

There appears to be little doubt in Mancini's mind that it was Richard and Buckingham who were behind the stories against the Wydeviles. This was the start of Richard's attempt to claim the throne, although, according to Mancini, few people believed the charges. A petition which had been presented to Richard asking him to be king is reflected in Mancini's report. The petition formed the royal title. This provides the source for the information used by Mancini.

The 1484 Parliament

The bill, *titulus regius*, was presented to the parliament of January 1484. It recorded a petition that had been presented to Richard earlier asking him to take the throne and it was most likely this petition that Mancini had heard about and which informed his report to Cato.²⁶³ The bill questioned 'the ungracious feigned marriage' between Edward and Elizabeth, 'as all England has reason to say'.²⁶⁴ Further it claimed the 'order of all politic rule was perverted', in that the queen ruled the king which led to 'murders, extortions and oppressions'... 'civil war' and the 'destruction of noble blood'. The bill is claiming that not only was there not a legal marriage, but that everyone knew this was the case. The natural order was also perverted when a man was ruled by a woman, thus leading to the breakdown of law and order.

²⁶² *Mancini*, pp. 82-83, on entering London, the dukes sent ahead wagons containing weapons bearing the devices of the Queen's brothers and sons. It was intended to suggest that they were part of an attempt to attack Gloucester and kill him on his way south. Mancini claimed that people knew the weapons had been collected for the war against Scotland.

²⁶³ *PROME*, 'Richard III: Parliament of 1484, Text and Translation', ed., R. Horrox, item 1.[5]. Introduction to the bill, 'Recently, that is to say before the consecration, coronation and enthronement of our sovereign lord King Richard III, a roll of parchment, containing in writing certain articles of the tenor written below, was presented ... in the name of the three estates of this realm...'

²⁶⁴ *PROME*, '1484', Horrox, item 1. [5].

... when those who had the rule and governance of this land, delighting in adulation and flattery and led by sensuality and concupiscence, followed the counsel of insolent, vicious people of inordinate avarice, despising the counsel of good, virtuous and prudent people ... we consider more particularly how, ... after the ungracious feigned marriage, as all England has reason to say, ... the order of all politic rule was perverted, ...

This is using the complaints made by Warwick in 1469/70 and putting them together with the complaints about Edward's sensuous nature (although the Wydeviles are not specifically named until Edward's marriage is elaborated on).

This 'feigned marriage' was,

made without the knowledge and assent of the lords ... and also by sorcery and witchcraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford, as is the common opinion of the people ... And we also consider here how the said feigned marriage was made privately and secretly ... in a private chamber ... not openly in the face of the church ... but contrary ... to the laudable custom of the church of England.²⁶⁵

The earlier, abortive attack on Jacquetta has been taken and extended to include Elizabeth, thus proving the 'common opinion' regarding the use of witchcraft as a love charm, and causing Edward to fall for an unsuitable bride. Three separate reasons are given for making the marriage illegal; secrecy, the use of witchcraft to procure it and, if these failed, then there was a pre-contract of marriage. At the time of his secret marriage to Elizabeth, 'King Edward was and stood married and troth-plighted to one Dame Eleanor Butler'.²⁶⁶ From each and all of these grounds it followed that the children of the marriage were illegitimate. The petition further emphasised the illegality of the marriage by referring to Elizabeth as 'sometime wife to Sir John Grey' rather than wife

²⁶⁵ *PROME*, '1484', Horrox, item 1. [5].

²⁶⁶ *PROME*, '1484', Horrox, item 1. [5].

'And we also consider here how the said feigned marriage was made privately and secretly, without the publishing of banns, in a private chamber, a profane place, and not openly in the face of the church according to the law of God's church, but contrary to it and to the laudable custom of the church of England. ... If all that is true, as in very truth it is, it clearly appears and follows that during his life the said King Edward and the said Elizabeth lived together sinfully and damnably in adultery...'

to Edward, and saying that Elizabeth ‘named herself queen of England’. The secret nature of the marriage and the lack of the lords’ consent had been dealt with in 1464 at the Reading Council. It was not seen as an issue at the time by the chroniclers. This is later confirmed by the Crowland chronicler writing in 1486 that the ‘marriage was praised and approved’.²⁶⁷ Likewise the charge of witchcraft against Jacquetta had been dealt with by an enquiry in 1470 and dismissed. The charge of witchcraft was not something that chroniclers had picked up at the time either so it seems unlikely that this was in fact widely known. The third reason was less easy to refute being intrinsically believable. Edward’s fondness for the ladies was well known and had been commented upon by chroniclers and ambassadors from the moment he assumed the throne. His secret marriage to Elizabeth was also widely known, therefore a pre-contract to another woman would not appear to be that unlikely.

The allegation made by Clarence that Edward was illegitimate was also hinted at. Edward had been born in Rouen whereas Richard was ‘born within this land ... and all the three estates ... have more certain knowledge of your aforesaid birth and parentage.’ This was a typical argument, place of birth being a better indicator of legitimacy than acceptance by the putative father. It presumes that being born in England made the birth more public and therefore provided more trustworthy witnesses.²⁶⁸

The story of Edward’s illegitimacy was not new in Europe, which may also help to explain why being born in England was so important. Commynes describes a scene at Louis’ court in 1475 when a servant of the Constable of France imitated the duke of Burgundy ‘...stamping his feet on the ground, swearing by St George and calling the king of England Blaybourne, son of an archer of that name,...’²⁶⁹ The Constable of France, Louis de Luxembourg, count of Saint-Pol, also happened to be Elizabeth Wydevile’s maternal uncle, so it is a curious story for someone from his household to be telling. Importantly Elizabeth’s legitimacy was not questioned, despite her parent’s secret marriage. Given that much was made of Elizabeth’s secret marriage to overturn the legitimacy of her children it is all the more surprising that her parent’s marriage was not raised as well. This was a claim that could surely have been made to increase the

²⁶⁷ *Crowland*, pp. 114-15, and see below, p. 236.

²⁶⁸ *PROME*, ‘1484’, Horrox, ‘... we consider how you are the undoubted son and heir of Richard, late duke of York, ...and how you were born within this land, by reason of which, we judge that you are more naturally inclined towards its prosperity and common weal...’

²⁶⁹ *Phillippe de Commynes Memoirs*, trans., Michael Jones, (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 249. See also Michael K. Jones, *Bosworth 1485 Psychology of a Battle*, (Stroud, 2002), pp. 65-76. Jones attempts to prove that York could not have been Edward’s father by showing when and where York was in France and whether Cecily was likely to have been with him. He also suggests that when York went to Ireland in 1459 he took Edmund with him not Edward and this was a tacit acknowledgement that Edward was illegitimate.

sense of her unsuitability. However, Warwick had not used it, so it may explain why it was not used by Richard.

The *Crowland Chronicle*

The *Crowland Chronicle* is a less ambiguous account. Writing in 1486 the author had the benefit of hindsight but is less influenced by the rumour and propaganda of the day. He may have been a member of Edward's administration, although who he actually was is open to debate.²⁷⁰ He first sets out to explain those things omitted by his predecessor, and to 'summarise the rest of what happened ... as briefly and honestly as we can.'²⁷¹ In July 1467 Edward's sister Margaret had married Charles, duke of Burgundy; he saw this as significant,

It is my belief that this was the real cause of dissension between the king and the earl [i.e. Warwick] rather than the marriage between the king and Queen Elizabeth as previously stated [i.e. by Ingulph]. Although the earl had grumbled a bit because he had been trying to bring about a marriage between the king and the widowed queen of Scotland, nevertheless, long before this particular time the royal marriage was praised and approved, solemnly, by the earl himself and by all the prelates and great lords of the realm at Reading. The earl, indeed, continued to show favour to all the queen's relatives until her kindred and affinity, in accordance with the king's will, arranged the marriage of Charles and Margaret and many other affairs likewise, against the earl's will.²⁷²

Warwick had first put forward the idea for a marriage between Edward and Mary of Guelders, the Scottish regent, in 1462.²⁷³ This came to nothing; however the

²⁷⁰ Nicholas Pronay & John Cox, ed., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-1486* (London, 1986), hereafter referred to as *Crowland*. See the introduction for a discussion of the identity of the continuator; one suggestion is Bishop John Russell, pp. 3-34. See also Michael Hicks 'The Second Anonymous Continuation of the Crowland Abbey Chronicle 1459-86 Revisited', *English Historical Review*, vol. 122, no. 496 (April, 2007), pp. 349-70, lists all the proposed authors, as put forward by various historians; Piers Curteys, Dr John Gunthorpe, Dr Richard Lavender, Dr Henry Sharp and Russell. Hicks proposes another possible candidate, Richard Langport, clerk for the council 1458-83.

²⁷¹ *Crowland*, pp. 108-9.

²⁷² *Crowland*, pp. 114-115.

²⁷³ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 85. Warwick suggested the marriage to the Scottish regent but it was blocked by the Scots, supposing it was ever a serious suggestion. Mary was older and had a 'dubious reputation – the Lancastrian duke of Somerset was reckoned amongst her lovers'.

suggestion that Edward should marry a widow does make nonsense of the theory that a king should only marry a virgin. Warkworth's suggestion was that it was Warwick's attempt at arranging a French alliance that had caused upset, although it had not seriously jeopardised relations with France. It was Margaret of York's marriage to the duke of Burgundy, with its alliance against France, which went against all that Warwick had been trying to achieve. Warwick also 'bore a bitter hatred' for Duke Charles.²⁷⁴ The claim that Warwick and the lords at Reading had accepted the marriage confirms the lack of criticism found in the pre 1469 English chronicles and also agrees with 'Worcester' that the queen was 'honoured'.²⁷⁵ The claim that it was Elizabeth who had brought about the death of Clarence does not appear in *Crowland*. The author places the blame solely on Edward. 'No-one argued against the duke except the king ... After this deed many people deserted King Edward who was persuaded he could rule as he pleased ...'²⁷⁶

In discussing the council meeting following Edward IV's death, *Crowland* claims that the 'wiser members of the Council' were suspicious of the Wydeviles.²⁷⁷ Was there fear as well as suspicion? If so how widespread was it? A minority provided the pre-conditions for suspicion, dissent and mistrust amongst nobles and especially within the royal family. Similar problems surrounding Henry VI's minority would have been remembered. The Wydeviles would be seen as the obvious people to want control as the boys' close family. If Elizabeth was believed to have the most influence already then this would add further to the council's misgivings. A woman in control was simply inconceivable; it had been Margaret of Anjou's attempts to exert control first on her husband's behalf and then her son's that had led to the most personal attacks against her.²⁷⁸ *Crowland* states the person most concerned was Lord Hastings, who feared the

²⁷⁴ *Crowland*, p. 115.

²⁷⁵ See above p. 203, fn.178.

²⁷⁶ *Crowland*, pp. 144-7.

²⁷⁷ *Crowland*, pp. 153-5. 'The more foresighted members of the Council, however, thought that the uncles and brothers on the mother's side should be absolutely forbidden to have control of the person of the young man until he came of age. They believed that this could not easily be achieved if those of the queen's relatives who were most influential with the prince were allowed to bring his person to the ceremonies with an immoderate number of horse'. This agrees with Mancini's interpretation of events.

²⁷⁸ Examples of criticisms made about Margaret: Marx, *An English Chronicle*, p. 75. 'The xxxvj yere of Kyng Harry, in the moneth of Ianuary, dyed the Erle of Deuynshyre in the abbey of Abyndon, poysened, as men sayde, and being there at that tyme with Quene Margarete'. This seems to be suggesting she was guilty of poisoning Devonshire. From the same source an attack which has marked similarities to those on Elizabeth, 'with such as were of her affynyte rewled the reame as her liked, gaderyng ryches innumerable. The office[r]s of the reme, and specially the Erle of Wylshyre, tresorere of Engeland, for to enryche himself, peled the pore peple, and disheryted ryghtefulle eyres, and dede many wronges. The quene was defamed and desclaundered, that he that was called Prince, was nat hir sone, but a bastard gotten in avoutry, p. 78. *Bale's Chronicle*, p141, on the birth of her son Edward, 'Of whoos birth the peple

Wydeviles would take revenge, as ‘ill will’ had ‘long existed between’ them.²⁷⁹ *Crowland* and *Mancini* both agree that it was Hastings who feared the Wydeviles most.

However *Crowland* states that ‘the benevolent queen’ was prepared to compromise. His language regarding Elizabeth’s actions over the following months suggests she was trying to be conciliatory. ‘In her kindness’ she allowed her son Richard to join his brother in the Tower: ‘she willingly agreed’ to the proposal. *Crowland* shows Elizabeth acting in the approved role of a queen, that of mediator. But it is also possible the continuator was less disapproving of the Wydeviles.

He makes no mention of the Wydeviles’ greed or lust for power and claims it was Herbert who had been dominant in the counsels of both king and queen until his death in 1469 and that the Wydeviles acted in accordance with the king’s will.²⁸⁰ Nor does he implicate the Wydeviles in the Clarence affair, although he does blame Edward. The chronicler does not criticise the Wydeviles for any of the things charged against them in 1469/70. Following Edward’s return in 1471 *Crowland* believes it was Edward who ‘ruled as he pleased’.²⁸¹

The *Crowland* continuator was writing in 1486 so he knew the outcome of events in 1483-85. By removing any criticism from the Wydeviles he may have sought to emphasise Richard’s guilt, which was required to justify the usurpation of Henry Tudor. A new Wydevile queen, in the person of Elizabeth of York, may have required a more positive portrait of the family. Alternatively, *Crowland* was doing exactly what he said, producing an honest summary. *Crowland* shows that, as king, it was Edward who was ultimately responsible. One of Richard’s first moves in his bid for power was to remove the ‘three strongest supports’ of Edward V.²⁸² These were the same three men that *Mancini* claimed had the greatest control over Edward IV, Hastings, Thomas, archbishop of York and John, bishop of Ely. The similarities between *Crowland* and *Mancini* are such that it raises doubts about the level of criticism that had actually existed in relation to the Wydeviles. *Crowland* and *Mancini* would have had access to some of the same sources in 1483, so their agreement on events during this pivotal

spake strangely’, which seems to be a hint that the child was illegitimate, although *An English Chronicle* is more open about it.

²⁷⁹ *Crowland*, pp. 154-5. ‘He was afraid that if supreme power fell into the hands of the queen’s relatives they would then sharply avenge the alleged injuries done to them by that lord. Much ill will, indeed, had long existed between Lord Hastings and them.’

²⁸⁰ *Crowland*, pp. 114-15.

²⁸¹ *Crowland*, pp. 146-7, ‘After this deed many people deserted King Edward who was persuaded that he could rule as he pleased throughout the whole kingdom now that all those idols had been destroyed to whom the eyes of the common folk, ever eager for change, used to turn in times gone by’. i.e. Warwick and Clarence.

²⁸² *Crowland*, pp. 158-9.

period may not be that unexpected. *Crowland* was able to draw upon his knowledge and experience of events prior to 1483. Any knowledge *Mancini* had prior to this date came from French sources which were influenced by Warwick. *Crowland* also agrees with the interpretation found in the *Hearne* fragment. It is unlikely that the three would have seen either of the others work. Their interpretations must therefore be based on the information they had to hand and what they had witnessed. The petition to parliament did not name the Wydeviles specifically, simply relying on the reference to events which were 'obvious and well known throughout this realm'. This was open to wide interpretation and could equally have referred to those counsellors mentioned by *Crowland* and *Mancini* as having excessive influence. Hastings had been executed in July 1483; the charge of 'sensuality and concupiscence' applied to him equally as well as to Edward. Importantly the attack on Clarence was only mentioned because his attainder was used to debar his son from the succession. The blame for his death was not attributed to anyone.

The removal of Edward V did not require any previous animosity to have existed between the Wydeviles and Richard.²⁸³ Richard was simply being pragmatic in using whatever means he could to justify his actions. The case put before parliament in 1484, used all the elements that Warwick had deployed along with additional information that was said to have come from Clarence. This created a narrative on which later chroniclers and historians could build, and in the absence of any other information relating to the Wydeviles provided an attractive source. Richard was in many ways Warwick's heir and it is evident that he learnt a valuable lesson in propaganda from the earl. Not only did he repeat the themes of more than a decade earlier but he uses common rumour and subtle suggestion. As the charge against Clarence demonstrated, it was not just the distribution of propaganda leaflets that caused rumours and misinformation; people could be specifically sent out to spread stories. *Mancini* was quite clear; Buckingham and Richard were deliberately turning public opinion against the Wydeviles. Edward had provided them with a believable story and his reputation for womanising together with his secret marriage gave it added credibility. Add to this the earlier attacks on the Wydeviles along with other examples of witchcraft used to ensnare a man and a picture is painted to provide reasonable doubt about Edward's marriage and the Wydeviles' reputation.

²⁸³ See Lynda Pidgeon, 'Richard and the Wydeviles', *Ricardian Bulletin* (Winter, 2008) also <http://www.richardiii.net> (under Richard III/The Controversy).

(3) The Tudors: Rehabilitation?

Following Richard III's coronation, rumours arose about the fate of Edward V and his younger brother prince Richard. According to *Crowland* 'people of the South and of the West ... began to murmur'; amongst the rumours it was said some advised that,

... some of the king's daughters should leave Westminster in disguise and go overseas so that if any human fate... were to befall the male children, nevertheless through the saving of the persons of the daughters the kingdom might one day return to the rightfull heirs.¹

The acceptance of a daughter to restore the 'rightful heirs' acknowledges an acceptance of a female's ability to confer status. In this instance it also implies that being a child of Elizabeth Wydevile was not a bar either. *Crowland* was writing in the knowledge that Henry Tudor had agreed to marry Elizabeth of York. *Crowland* claims that 'those who begun this agitation', i.e. a rebellion against King Richard, 'remembered Henry, earl of Richmond' who was invited to 'England as fast as he could reach the shore to take Elizabeth, the dead king's elder daughter, to wife and with her, at the same time, possession of the whole kingdom'. The acceptability of a female, especially the daughter of Elizabeth Wydevile, was very much conditioned by the changing circumstances. Henry bought Yorkist support with his agreement to marry Elizabeth. Amongst those who joined Tudor at Bosworth was Edward Wydevile, 'a most valiant knight'.² Edward's older brother Richard, earl Rivers does not appear to have joined him at Bosworth. Their nephew Thomas, marquis of Dorset was left in France by Tudor as security for the assistance he received from the French to invade England. On 22 August 1485 Henry Tudor became King Henry VII.

Attacks on the Wydeviles' reputation had occurred at moments of political stress; first Warwick's rebellion in 1469 and then, in 1483, when Richard, duke of Gloucester claimed the crown. English chronicles written after the fall of Richard III provide an alternative view, placing less emphasis on the greed of the Wydeviles. Regarding Tudor's victory at Bosworth *Crowland* says that Richard III's body was treated with 'insufficient

¹ *Crowland*, pp. 162-3.

² *Crowland*, p. 181, 'Edwardus Wīdevyll, frater Elizabeth reginae, valentissimus miles'.

humanity' and that Tudor had 'remarkably won', but Tudor had freed the populace 'from the evils which had hitherto afflicted them'. *Cronland* repeated his intention to have set down 'in so far as the course of events was known to us, without any conscious introduction of falsehood, hatred or favour'. He concluded his history with the coronation of Henry and his marriage to Elizabeth on 18 January 1486. He claims he stopped here because he did not wish to write about living persons 'lest the description of faults should arouse hatred while the recital of virtues be judged the fault of adulation...'³ He is perhaps being disingenuous here. After all, many of the Wydeviles were still very much alive. Perhaps he thought he had dealt fairly with them in his history, since he shows neither favour nor hatred for them.

It was left to his successor to give the details of Tudor's accession. His continuator finds something to write daily 'which, if it were not immediately committed to writing, would doubtless be forgotten or be related without sufficient accuracy'.⁴ As with his predecessor, the continuator is concerned to write accurately. The chroniclers stated intention provides us with an idea of the process of writing undertaken by them, but does this make it any more reliable? We can only give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that from their perspective what they wrote was the truth, which can only ever be subjective. Whatever the case they do provide a different viewpoint.

³ *Cronland*, pp.182-3.

⁴ *Cronland*, pp. 194-5.

(i) A second Wydevile queen

The *Cronland* continuator begins with a report on the first parliament of Henry VII's reign,

‘In this Parliament the king’s royal authority was confirmed as due to him not by one but by many titles so that he may be considered to rule rightfully over the English people not only by right of blood but of victory in battle and of conquest.... in that same Parliament, and with the king’s consent, there was discussion about the marriage to the lady Elizabeth ... in whose person, it seemed to all, there could be found whatever appeared to be missing in the king’s title elsewhere’.⁵

The Parliament Roll confirms some of this. In Henry’s address to parliament he demonstrated his right to the crown,

... was as much by lawful title of inheritance as by the true judgement of God in giving him victory over his enemy in battle.⁶

There is nothing in Henry’s claim in the parliament roll, however, which mentions Elizabeth. This was left to parliament to push forward,

...the commons ... humbly petitioned ... the same royal highness should take to himself that illustrious lady Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward IV, as his wife and consort, whereby, by God’s grace, many hope to see the propagation of offspring from the stock of kings, to comfort the whole realm.⁷

This can be read as suggesting that, without marriage to Elizabeth, Henry’s children would not be ‘from the stock of kings’, but this deficiency could be made up by Edward IV’s blood. This suggests that parliament saw no impediment in Edward’s marriage or in his wife’s suitability as the mother of the Queen. It also suggests that they were not entirely convinced by Henry’s claim. However Henry did not emphasise a claim that was in any way connected to Elizabeth. The ‘chronicler was probably

⁵ *Cronland*, pp. 194-5.

⁶ *PROME*, ‘Henry VII: Parliament of 1485, Text and Translation’, ed., R. Horrox, item [3].

⁷ *PROME*, ‘1487’, Horrox, item [9].

signalling his disapproval of what he considered the marginalisation' of Elizabeth.⁸

Henry did not marry Elizabeth until January 1486.

The 1485 parliament concentrated on reversing the attainders of Richard III's reign and attainting those who had fought for Richard.⁹ 'Richard Woodville, earl Rivers', was the only Wydevile in the list presented to the king for reversal of his attainder.¹⁰ He was also included in the list of those exempted from the act of resumption.¹¹ Specific individuals are mentioned later in detail and included Katherine Wydevile, widow of the duke of Buckingham, who had married the king's uncle Jasper Tudor by November 1485. Jasper had been created duke of Bedford on 28 October.¹² Katherine's dower as duchess of Buckingham was also confirmed and her son Edward petitioned for restoration of his title as duke.¹³ Elizabeth, as Edward's widow, was considerably lower on the list. Richard III's act against her was cancelled so that she had 'all such estate, dignity, pre-eminence and name' but this did not include any lands. It was March 1486 before she was granted six manors in Essex.¹⁴ It was only after the discussion of a petition from Italian merchants that a petition from Thomas, marquis Dorset was heard. His attainder was reversed, but he was not restored to all of his lands or exempted from the act of resumption and was given only those lands acquired by inheritance and marriage.¹⁵

Henry's treatment of the Wydeviles suggests that he did not entirely trust all of them. When Elizabeth left sanctuary and allowed her daughters to attend Richard III's court it was seen by Henry as her coming to terms with Richard III. When she encouraged her son Dorset to return from France and join her, this was seen as further evidence of her acceptance of the new regime. Her actions were doubtless pragmatic. It was not unusual for opponents of a regime to come to some sort of accommodation to survive, while biding their time for another change. Richard, earl Rivers is mostly absent

⁸ *PROME* 'Introduction Parliament 1485', ed., R. Horrox.

⁹ *Cronland*, pp. 194-5. The simple expedient of dating his reign from 21 August had the effect of making everyone who fought for Richard a traitor. Perhaps this was what the *Cronland* continuator had in mind when he said that he wished 'it had all been done well' in the Parliament.

¹⁰ Horrox, '1485', *PROME*, 275-6, item [8].

¹¹ Horrox, '1485' *PROME*, 376. Protected any grants made to his father and his heirs, the market at Grafton, tenements in Calais and the office of chief rider of Salcey

¹² *ODNB*, 'Tudor, Jasper [Jasper of Hatfield], duke of Bedford (c. 1431-1495)', R. S. Thomas.

¹³ *PROME*, '1485', Horrox, item 11 [16] & item 13 [18].

¹⁴ *PROME*, '1485', Horrox, item 17 [22]. See also the introduction; on 12 November, according to the Colchester journal, Elizabeth had petitioned parliament 'for restoration of her "castells and oder possessions that she was possessed of in King Edward's day"'. This was turned down it was March 1486 before she was granted six manors in Essex.

¹⁵ *PROME*, '1485', Horrox, item 44[49], & introduction.

from the records and seems to have avoided taking any side. Richard III appears to have viewed him as unimportant as he granted him a general pardon in March 1485.¹⁶

Edward Wydeville, who fought for Henry, was rapidly rewarded within weeks of Bosworth.¹⁷ As one of the youngest Wydeviles he had not attracted much attention during Edward IV's reign.¹⁸ He had been made a knight banneret by Richard, duke of Gloucester in July 1482 while on the Scottish campaign. His brothers Richard and John had been made knights of the Bath at their sister's coronation in May 1465; Edward may only have been four or five at the time.¹⁹ Edward also fought for Henry at Stoke in 1487 and on 13 May 1488 John Paston (iii) was advising that Edward was going to Brittany to aid the duke against the French.²⁰ He died there in July 1488.²¹ Edward had consistently demonstrated his loyalty to Henry. The fact that Edward and Richard Wydeville were younger may explain why they escaped the notice of Warwick and were not included in the round of marriages after Elizabeth's marriage to Edward IV. This may also explain why they rarely appear in the chronicles.

Interestingly, amongst those attainted with Richard III for 'traitorously intending, plotting and conspiring the destruction' of Henry, was Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers and John, Lord Zouche. Devereux had witnessed the marriage agreement between Richard, earl Rivers and William Herbert while Zouche had been Rivers' ward.²² The

¹⁶ *CPR 1476-85*, p. 532. Pardon to Sir Richard Wideville alias Wydeville alias Wodeville, late of Wynnyngton, Beds.

¹⁷ *CPR 1485-94*, pp. 112 & 117. 16 September he was granted in tail male the Isle of Wight and castle and lordship of Carisbroke and the keeping of the town and castle of Porchester. This was the same grant that his brother Antony had held from Edward IV, although Edward had received the grant of Porchester from Edward IV in March 1480, on the same terms as his brother had held it, *CPR 1476-85*, p. 180, it was removed by Richard III and granted to William Mirfeld in February 1484, *CPR 1476-85*, p. 425; William Campbel, ed., *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, vol. 1 (London, 1873), pp. 562-3. ²⁴ September 1485 he was granted £50 a year until it could be replaced with land providing rent of an equivalent value. It was granted to Edward and his heirs; if he failed to produce an heir, it would go in succession to his brother and then his younger sisters, Anne, Margaret, Joan and Elizabeth the daughter of Mary and their heirs, and finally to Queen Elizabeth and Katherine duchess of Buckingham, and their heirs; *CPR 1485-94*, p. 154. On 13 March 1487 he was granted the manors of Swanston, Thorley, Welowe and Brexton on the Isle of Wight during the minority of Edward, earl of Warwick.

¹⁸ Edward was born c. 1458/59. There is a recent biography of Edward by Christopher Wilkins, *The Last Knight Errant Sir Edward Woodville and the Age of Chivalry* (London, 2010). This adds very little to the article by Roger B. Merriman, 'Edward Woodville – Knight-Errant; A Study of the Relations of England and Spain in the Later Part of the Fifteenth Century', *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 16 (1903), pp. 127-144.

¹⁹ William A. Shaw, *The Knights of England A Complete Record from the Earliest Time to the Present Day of the Knights of all the Orders of Chivalry in England, Scotland and Ireland and of Knights Bachelors*, 2 vols, (London, 1906), vol. 2, p. 17 & vol. 1, p. 134 respectively.

²⁰ *PLP*, vol. 1, letter 411, pp. 655-6. 'Also, where as it was seyde that my lord Woddevyle and other schulde haue gone ouer in-to Breten haue eyded the Duke of Breten,...'.

²¹ *CPR 1485-94*, p. 154.

²² Horrox, 'Parliament 1485', 275-6, item 8. See above p. 204, fn. 185 re Devereux and *CPR 1467-77*, p. 97 re Zouche. On 1 september 1468 rivers 'for certain burdens undertaken' was granted custody of the

links to the Zouche family had existed over several generations, while Devereux's links were primarily with the Herberts. It might therefore be expected that they would have supported the Wydeviles. It is possible that the Wydevile connection had not proved as beneficial to them as they might have hoped. Was this because the Wydeviles did not have the influence with Edward IV that was believed, or because they did not actively exercise good lordship on behalf of their associates? This may be an indicator of their greed and selfishness in that they did not wish to share their rewards. Alternatively, they may have simply accepted Edward's decisions as they were still reliant on his generosity. With the loss of Jacquetta's dower they had no real income of their own to sustain their position, mainly because they had not received any substantial grants of land, only offices.

The Historia Regum Angliae

The *Historia Regum Angliae* is an early Tudor account written by John Rous shortly before his death in January 1492. He was a chantry priest in Warwickshire. An earlier work by Rous, *The Rous Roll*, is primarily interested in the history of the earls of Warwick and occurs in two versions, one written during Richard III's reign and the second in Henry VII's. The attitude towards Richard III changes dramatically after Bosworth; consequently Rous cannot be entirely trusted since he was prepared to rewrite history.

In the *Historia*, he mentions the execution of Antony Wydevile and his nephew Richard Grey at Pontefract in June 1483 and provides a story about Antony which appears nowhere else. He claimed that after his execution Antony was found to be wearing a hair-shirt, which was hung before the image of the Virgin at the Carmelite Friary at Doncaster.²³ Antony has generally fared better at the hands of the chroniclers.

honours, castles, lands etc of William, Lord Zouche during the minority of his son John, along with John's marriage.

²³ Alison Hanham, *Richard III and his Early Historians 1483-1535* (Oxford, 1975), p. 120. On pp. 118-124 Hanham provides a translation of the portion of Rous relating to the reign of Richard III. *Joannis Rossi Historia Regum Angliae* (Oxford, 1745), printed from a manuscript in the Bodleian library, E. Codice, pp. 213-4, 'Sed dominus comes de Rivers Antonius Woodvyle morte instante cilicio ad nudam carne, ut diu ante usus fuerat, indutus est repertus. In tempore tamen incarcerationis apud Pontem-fractum. ... Comitibus Antonii factum cilicium diu post coram ymagine beatissima virginis Mariae apud fratres Carmelitas de Doncastre appensuta est'. The Carmelite friary, Doncaster, was founded in 1350. John of Gaunt is regarded as one of the founders, and Henry Bolingbroke and Edward IV both stayed there. In 1472 Edward licensed the friars to acquire lands to the value of £20 p.a. because it was 'the foundation of the king's progenitors and of the king's patronage. The friary had 'a wonder working image of the Virgin' and many bequests were made to 'Our Lady of Doncaster'. Rous may have thought this was a suitable location for Antony's hair shirt because he knew of his devotion to 'Our Lady' and it was probably the nearest place he knew to Pontefract, where Antony was executed, that had a special image of the Virgin. Rous probably knew of the friary through his work on the history of the Nevilles. Sir Robert Willis who took part in Warwick's rebellion in 1469 was buried there along with wife Elizabeth, daughter of John

This particular account stresses his piety, while the hair shirt takes on the appearance of a relic. This may have been an attempt to show the Wydeviles in a better light although more likely Rous' intention was to further denigrate Richard III for executing such a pious man as Antony.

However there is another document which if not confirming the hair-shirt, suggests that Antony did have a better reputation. On 10 August 1493 Thomas Clarell, citizen and grocer of London, made his will. In it he left to the church of Rotherham 'my steyned clothe of the batell by twene the lord Skallys and the Bastard, to pray for the sowles aforeseide'.²⁴ The stained cloth presumably depicted the tournament in 1467 between Antony and the Bastard of Burgundy. Whether the cloth was specifically ordered by Clarell or it was a mass produced 'souvenir' of the event is uncertain. Either way it suggests an interest in the event and possibly Antony, most likely for its 'chivalric' value.²⁵ To present this particular item to a church may suggest that there was some affection for Antony, although a connection between Clarell and the Wydeviles has not yet been found. It is possible that Clarell intended his 'steyned cloth' to act as a *memento mori* for Antony.

The friary at Doncaster with its image of the Virgin was a popular stopping place for kings. In 1486 Henry VII stopped off at Doncaster on his way to York, where he 'harde masse at the freres of Our Lady and evensong in the parishe chirche'. Accompanying him on his progress were earl Rivers, Sir Richard Haute and Sir Robert Poyntz. Perhaps it was more than the image of Our Lady that they stopped to see.²⁶

Bourchier, Lord Berners and Margaret Cobham wife of Ralph Neville second earl of Westmorland who was buried there in 1484. *VCH York*, vol. 3, pp. 267-70, www.british-history.ac.uk accessed 22/8/11. In his will Antony requested to be buried before an image of 'Our Lady', and wished his heart to be buried at Our Lady of Pew, Westminster. For a full transcript of the will see Pidgeon, 'Antony Wydevile, part 2', pp. 42-5

²⁴ *TNA PROB 11/10* (register Vox). My thanks to Professor Hicks for forwarding this information, received from Dr Philip Morgan. The Clarell family originally came from the Rochester area. Clarell also left a 'clothe of aras of the passion of our lord to hang a fore the Rodelofte'. This is a tapestry while the 'steyned cloth' was painted fabric, and would have been much more expensive. Its theme was also more suitable for hanging in a church than a battle scene.

²⁵ The tournament had produced a lot of interest. Bluemantle Pursuivant wrote a lengthy account of it. See S. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*. Sir John Paston also collected accounts of the tournament in his 'Grete Boke', see G.A. Lester, *Sir John Paston's 'Grete Boke' A Descriptive Catalogue, with an introduction, of British Library MS Lansdowne 285* (Cambridge, 1984).

²⁶ Cavell, pp. 71-2. The king had set out in March 1486 on his progress. A week or two after Easter he arrived in Doncaster on the Saturday, heard mass on the Sunday and the next day moved on to Pontefract. Both Haute and Poyntz were relatives by marriage to Antony Wydevile. Antony's illegitimate Margaret had married Robert Poyntz in 1480.

(ii) The chronicle of Robert Fabyan and the *Great Chronicle of London*

Robert Fabyan was a London draper who died in 1513. His *New Chronicles of England and France* ends in 1504 and was first printed in 1516, with further editions in 1533, 1542 and 1559. Described by McKisack as having ‘Lancastrian sympathy’ of being ‘derivative’ and the ‘heir of the London Chroniclers’ his work was also ‘very popular and it became the principal medium through which the London chroniclers were known to the Elizabethans’.²⁷

The *Great Chronicle of London* covers the period to 1496. Kingsford suggests that both have a common source to 1485, although he believes the *Great Chronicle* to be the better of the two. He suggests the portion 1440-1496 was written in 1510 with additions added later, taking it to 1513. Kingsford further suggests that Fabyan compiled his work from the *Great Chronicle* as well as other London Chronicles.²⁸ The editors of the *Great Chronicle* show that although Fabyan is generally the briefer of the two, it includes some information not in the *Great Chronicle*. The *Great Chronicle*, being the superior work, provided more detail although the editors suggest it may also be the work of Fabyan with another, using now lost city chronicles.²⁹ The use of one or more earlier chronicles to create the latest version requires decisions to be made over what will be included, added, changed or excluded. It is therefore impossible to say what opinions may have been found in these lost chronicles in relation to the Wydeviles. What we do have is the version which the latest writer preferred, for whatever reason, be it entertainment, political, or because he believed it represented the truth.

How were the Wydeviles represented by Fabyan and the *Great Chronicle*? Neither chronicle picks up on Elizabeth being of low birth. The only surviving English source to have mentioned it in the fifteenth century was *Ingulph*. Elizabeth’s status seems to have been more of a preoccupation with European writers.

Both chroniclers believed it was the marriage of Edward and Elizabeth that caused opposition from Warwick although the proposed wife varies between a French, Scottish or Spanish princess. This difference suggests that this part of the story was not known for certain. But it did provide the chronicler with an explanation for Warwick’s unhappiness and later rebellion.

²⁷ May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 95-7.

²⁸ Kingsford, pp. 99-105.

²⁹ *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds., A.H. Thomas & I.D. Thronley (Gloucester 1983, microprint edition), introduction especially pp. lxxiii-lxxvi.

Fabyan is the only one to hint at witchcraft. He also gets the person “right” in that it was Jacquetta who had ‘enchanted’ the king. Dramatic scenes in the Tower were yet to come. With Henry Tudor on the throne any reasons put forward by Richard III for claiming the throne appear to have been dismissed. Thus the charge of witchcraft against Elizabeth was not worth mentioning. Neither of them mentions the pre-contract or the story of illegitimacy, either of Edward or his children. Ralph Shaa’s sermon was treated as slander, and he suffered the approved verdict of God shortly after. Nor do the chroniclers connect the Wydeviles to the death of Clarence.

Both chronicles recognise that there was disagreement between the Wydeviles and Warwick. Fabyan is the only one to discuss similar disagreements between the Wydeviles and the king’s family after Edward’s death, but the *Great Chronicle* is the only one to mention how ‘greatly exalted’ they became after the marriage. But it is Elizabeth’s parents who bear the brunt of a charge of greed and not Elizabeth herself. This arose in 1468 when Thomas Cook was accused of treason. Rivers, with Sir John Fogge, treasurer of the king’s household searched Cook’s house for evidence. As well as ransacking the house they seized his goods, some passing into the king’s hands and the rest allegedly stolen, including a tapestry which Jacquetta coveted. Cook was acquitted but fined for concealing treason. The Queen was entitled to a percentage of the fine, known as ‘Queen’s Gold’.³⁰ In the *Great Chronicle* Elizabeth appears to be exonerated from any imputation of greed over ‘Queens Gold’. The case of Thomas Cook is the only example provided of Wydevile greed. Fabyan’s version differs in tone and is much stronger in condemning Rivers, while he leaves out Jacquetta’s desire for a rich tapestry. There is some debate over how much Fabyan contributed to both chronicles and also whether he was an apprentice to Cook, thus having insider knowledge of the case. If Fabyan was involved in the writing of both, either he revised his opinion or he did not wish to impugn Henry VIII’s grandmother.

The English chronicles in the early years of the sixteenth century are less strident in attacking the Wydeviles. Little use is made of the charges that appeared in the propaganda of Warwick or of Richard III for greed, undue influence, witchcraft or illegitimacy. The *Great Chronicle* has the elevation of the Wydeviles as causing envy and

³⁰ Anne F. Sutton & Livia Visser-Fuchs, ‘A ‘Most Benevolent Queen’ Queen Elizabeth Woodville’s Reputation, her Piety and her Books’, *The Ricardian*, vol. 10, no. 129 (June, 1995), pp. 216-217, for a brief discussion of the Cook Case. ‘Queen’s gold’ was the ten percent on top of a fine for misprison of treason, to which the queen was entitled. There are two articles which give more detail on Cook, M.A. Hicks, ‘The Case of Sir Thomas Cook, 1468’ *EHR*, vol. 93, no. 366 (Jan., 1978), pp. 82-96 and A.F. Sutton, ‘Sir Thomas Cook and his ‘troubles’: an investigation’, *Guildhall Studies in London History*, vol. 3 (1978), pp. 85-108.

leading to the rebellion, so there is a hint of the propaganda, but it is not pursued in detail to suggest they were overly promoted. The questions over the legitimacy of Elizabeth of York and her siblings are left out or shown to be false. Political stability and the safety of the 'Tudors' claim to the throne of course depended upon their legitimacy. It is interesting how suddenly the marriage of Elizabeth and Edward, whilst being secret, was attended by a growing number of people according to these texts. The marriage could not therefore be challenged through lack of witnesses. While Henry VII may not have been happy with his Wydevile relatives his son, Henry VIII held a different view. According to Starkey 'Henry's feeling about the house of York was very different from his father's corrosive suspicion. They were his mother's side of the family, and his own ancestors and blood relations'.³¹ It appears that the Wydeviles were now identified as Yorkists, not as a distinctly separate group whom Ricardians had seen as a threat equal to that of the Lancastrians.

³¹ David Starkey, *Henry Virtuous Prince* (London, 2008), p304.

(iii) Polydore Vergil: Henry VII's Historian

Polydore Vergil provides what might be seen as the approved version of recent history. Vergil arrived in England in 1502 and was encouraged by Henry VII to write a history of England. Vergil took his history up to 1513.³² Printed in 1534 there were three editions the last being printed in 1555; Vergil therefore had time to add to his history bringing it up to 1537.³³ As a humanist Vergil brought a new method to the writing of history which differed from the chronicles. He was the 'first to write a general history of England that was judicious critical and deliberately literary in style'.³⁴ It was also a 'series of moral judgements' with Henry Tudor as the 'providential climax'.³⁵

Vergil makes no mention of the attacks made against the Wydeviles by Warwick in 1469. But he does mention Edward's marriage to Elizabeth,

...which marriage because the woman was of a meane caulynge
he kept secret, not onely from the nobyltye of his owne bloode and
kynred, but also from Rycherd hir father.³⁶

Vergil makes the marriage appear even more secret in that no-one, not even Elizabeth's father, knew about it although he may be implying that her mother did. The marriage is put forward as Warwick's primary reason for rebelling, so he needs it to be secret. Vergil was treading a delicate path, and included the fact that Elizabeth was unsuitable and that the marriage was secret. He did not mention the role of Jacquetta, either as arranging things, such as Cornazzano suggested, or her use of witchcraft to manipulate Edward, but there is perhaps a hint at her role by specifically mentioning the absence of Rivers. Vergil may have felt that the secrecy of the marriage was too well known to try and gloss it. Importantly there is no mention of greed or the many

³² Hanham, p. 125.

³³ Denys Hay, ed. & trans., *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil AD 1485-1537*, Camden Series vol. 74 (London, 1950), p. xiii. All three editions were printed in Basle, the second edition was printed 1546. Vergil left England in 1553 and died in Urbino in 1555. This version of Vergil comes from a manuscript in the Vatican Library, and varies from the printed editions. Hay gives notes to the various versions and the differences in the texts. This edition covers the years 1485-1513 and was written by 1514. The text published in 1534 was completed by 1524, the second edition of 1546 had further revisions but ended in 1509, while the last edition stops at 1537 giving detail of the reign of Henry VIII. For a review of the Hay edition see Helen M. Cam, *Speculum*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Jan, 1951), pp. 161-63.

³⁴ McKisack, p. 103.

³⁵ McKisack, p. 101.

³⁶ Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History: Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III*, ed. by Henry Ellis from an early translation in the Old Royal Library of the British Museum, Camden Series, vol. 29 (London, 1844, Legacy Series Edition reprint), p. 117.

Wydevile marriages. When it comes to Clarence's death he prevaricates over who was responsible,

And as touching the cause of his death, though I have
enqueryd of many, who wer not of leest authoritye emongest
the kinges cownsaylle at that time, yeat have I no certaintie therof
to leave in memory. ... But yt ys very lykly that king Edward right
soone repentyd ... (as men say) whan so ever any sewyd for saving
a mans lyfe, he was woont to cry owt in a rage, "O infortunate
brother, for whose lyfe no man in this world wold once make a
request;" affirming in that manifestly, that he was cast awy by
envy of the nobylytie.³⁷

Vergil can find no reliable information but there may be a hint of the Wydeviles in the expression 'envy of the nobylytie'. As Vergil moves closer to current events the Wydeviles appear as the victims of Richard III. The capture of Antony is followed by fear, with Elizabeth and Dorset going into sanctuary.³⁸ Richard then persuaded the archbishop of Canterbury and others to speak to Elizabeth and obtain Prince Richard from sanctuary. This was followed by a meeting of the council in the Tower. Vergil provides Richard with a dramatic speech,

... I might shew unto you in what great danger of death I
stand; for by the space of a few days past nether nyght nor day
can I rest, drynk, nor eat, whel for my blood by little and little
decreaseth, my force fayleth, my breath shorteneth, and all the
partes of my body do above measure, as you se (and with that he
shewyd them his arme), faule away; which mischief verily procedeth
in me from that sorceres Elyszabeth the quene, who with hir witchcraft
hath so enchanyd me by thanoyance thereof I am dissolvdy'.³⁹

³⁷ Vergil, vol. 29, pp. 167-8.

³⁸ Vergil, vol. 29, p. 175. ...especially Elyzabeth the quene was much dismayed, and determynyed forthwith to fly; ... to thintent she might delyver her other children from the present danger, she convayed herself with them and the marquise into the sayntuary at Westmynster.

³⁹ Vergil, vol. 29, pp. 177-80.

The response of Hastings to this tale makes it evident the story was not to be believed, for Hastings is executed soon after. It appears that Vergil was aware of the charge of witchcraft made against Elizabeth and is attempting to demolish it. Witchcraft was one of the reasons given in 1484 for making her children illegitimate and it was important that the illegitimacy charges should be shown as false.

Vergil demolishes the various claims one by one. Cecily's adultery was dismissed and Richard charged with 'dishonour' for accusing 'a woman of most pure and honourable 'life'.⁴⁰ As for the pre-contract and the legitimacy of Edward's children,

But ther ys a common report that king Edwards children
wer in that sermon caulyd basterdes, and not king Edward, which
is voyd of all truthe;...

Vergil returns to the slander of Cecily and dismisses it, with the preacher Shaa dying of shame for promoting such a lie.⁴¹ Vergil needs to demonstrate the legitimacy of Elizabeth so that Henry's children would not suffer, but was he uncertain about how to approach the Wydeviles? The claims against them of greed, undue influence and causing Clarence's death were dismissed although he retained the story of Elizabeth's unsuitability and the secret marriage. As Henry's historian he may have been unsure of exactly what Henry would accept. Henry needed to keep the Yorkists on side but he did not want to be overshadowed by his wife's claim to the throne. Elizabeth's legitimacy was important for the sake of any children, especially when Henry's parentage in both the maternal and paternal lines was questionable.

Vergil is the first to mention that Queen Elizabeth and Margaret Beaufort conspired together to unite their children in marriage and thereby join the two sides. But there is then a contradiction in Elizabeth's actions. She surrenders herself and her daughters to Richard and asks her son to return,

... withowt mucche adoe they began to mollify hir (for so
mutable is that sex), in so mucche that the woman herd them
willingly, and finally sayd she wold yeald ... forgetting injuries,
forgetting hir faith and promise geaven to Margaret ... than aftir
by secret messengers advysyd the marquise her soon, who was

⁴⁰ Vergil, vol. 29, p. 184.

⁴¹ Vergil, vol. 29, pp. 184-5.

at Parys, to forsake erle Henry...⁴²

This serves to explain Elizabeth Wydevile's later treatment by Henry, but her daughter could not be shown to have acquiesced. When Richard proposed marriage to her, she abhorred the idea. After Henry's success at Bosworth, he moved swiftly to have Elizabeth brought from Sheriff Hutton to London, and then married her. The urgent demands of parliament for this to happen are not mentioned,

He then took in marriage Elizabeth ... a woman indeed
intelligent above all others, and equally beautiful... by it the two
houses of Lancaster and York were united and from the union
the true and established royal line emerged which now reigns.⁴³

On most matters Vergil rehabilitated the Wydeviles. This was necessary with Richard and Edward Wydevile being supporters of Henry and with Elizabeth of York as queen. However Elizabeth, the queen dowager, was an exception. The Simnel revolt in 1487 saw her deprived of her possessions. Vergil claimed that this was because she had made peace with Richard, and 'so that she should offer an example to others to keep faith'.⁴⁴ In the 1555 edition Vergil adds that 'in her light-mindedness the queen earned herself great unpopularity, and, after achieving this, she henceforth led a wretched life'. Curiously Vergil ameliorates this by adding that 'Our affairs are always as inconstant as we ourselves are. But fortune could not diminish one of her accomplishments', her foundation of Queen's College.⁴⁵ It seems Vergil was uncertain over the queen dowager's unpopularity or how deserving she was of condemnation.

When Henry's first son Arthur was christened at Winchester in September 1486 the Wydevile family were given a prominent role. Elizabeth was god-mother; her daughters Cecily and Anne were present, as was her brother Edward and other members of the Wydevile and Yorkist establishment. As Cavell suggests, this was 'indicative of Henry VII's desire both to encourage and publicly display their loyalty to the new regime and to confirm Arthur's place as heir to the Yorkist claim to the throne'. Cavell further

⁴² Vergil, vol. 29, p. 210.

⁴³ Vergil, vol. 74, p. 6-7.

⁴⁴ Vergil, vol. 74, pp.18-19.

⁴⁵ Dana F. Sutton, Polydore Vergil *Anglica Historia* (1555 edition) A hyper critical text edition, University of Carolina, www.philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/ accessed 24/8/11, book 26, Henry VII, 6.

points out that, on this occasion, pride of place went to Elizabeth Woodville and not to Margaret Beaufort.⁴⁶

Henry now had an undisputed heir who linked the houses of Lancaster and York. He had fulfilled his obligations as far as the Yorkists were concerned. He may have thought that he could deal with some of the Wydeviles as he felt appropriate. He trusted those who showed their support; those who had done anything questionable were to be kept dependent upon his goodwill. The best way to do that was to remove their income.

Following Simnel's rebellion in 1487 Elizabeth Wydevile appears to have been excluded from royal occasions. With the rebellion suppressed and a male heir, Henry finely arranged for his 'der wiff, eldeste doughter and heire of the famous prince [of] excellent memorye of King Edward iiiijth' to be crowned at Westminster on 25 November 1487.⁴⁷ There is no mention of the queen dowager's presence at this event, although other members of the Wydevile and Yorkist families were there.⁴⁸ The Christmas celebrations at Greenwich in 1487 included Katherine, duchess of Bedford and the 'countesse of Ryvers', the Queen's aunts. The queen dowager was once again absent.⁴⁹ The next, and possibly last time, that she was allowed to attend a court function was in November 1489. The queen was in confinement awaiting the birth of a child, when an embassy from France arrived, and they wished to see her. Amongst the ambassadors was 'Francois monsieur de Luxenburg' a kinsman of the queens'.⁵⁰ It was his presence which must have led to Elizabeth being amongst the queen's ladies. It was an extraordinary thing to allow men into a queen's presence once she had gone into confinement. As for Dorset he had been placed in the Tower during the Simnel rebellion and was not released until after the battle of Stoke on 16 June.⁵¹ Although Vergil suggests that he was taken to the Tower 'so that, if he were a friend (as in truth he was) he would scarcely take amiss this small indignity for the sake of his own safety;

⁴⁶ Emma Cavell, ed., *The Herald's Memoir 1486-1490 Court Ceremony, Royal Progress and Rebellion* (Donnington, 2009), p. 35.

⁴⁷ Cavell, pp. 120-21.

⁴⁸ Cavell, pp. 134-48, details the ceremony and following feast. Present were the duchess of Bedford, Cecily the queen's sister, the duchess of Suffolk, lady Strange, Richard earl Rivers, countess Rivers – presumably Antony's wife, Sir William and Sir Richard Haute. Edward Wydevile is not listed.

⁴⁹ Cavell, pp. 151-3.

⁵⁰ Cavell, p. 175, 'Within alittell season aftir their came a great ambassade out of Fraunce – among the which ether was a kinsman of the queens called Francois monsieur de Luxenburg, the prior of Saint Mattelyns and Sir William de Zaintes (bailly of Senlis), and Monjoie King of Armes of Frenshemen – whiche desired to se the quene, and so they dide and in her awne chamber. Ther was with hir hir modir, Quene Elisabeth, and my lady the kinges modir, ...'.

⁵¹ ODNB, 'Grey, Thomas, first marquess of Dorset', T.B. Pugh (accessed 23/9/06).

or, if he were an enemy, lest he work harm'.⁵² Henry had suspected Dorset ever since his mother recalled him to England from France. It was one of the reasons he had left Dorset as security for his French loan, he was a hostage he could afford to lose. Like his mother, Dorset was *persona non grata* at court.

As he was writing for the king should we take Vergil's ambivalence towards the Wydeviles as a reflection of the king's attitude? Henry obviously remained very anxious about his position. At regular intervals during 1486-87 he had the papals bull read out publically regarding his right to the throne.⁵³ For the moment he could not afford to alienate the Yorkists or too many of the Wydeviles. While Elizabeth of York was his wife and he treated her with respect as his queen, the Yorkists would continue to support him. While he treated Edward and Richard Wydevile well, he may have felt it was safe to deal more harshly with Dorset and the queen dowager because of their reputation. They had been the main focus of fear and criticism in 1483 so there may have been distrust of them amongst the Yorkists. The king's attitude appears to be one of wary acceptance. Parliament had forced the marriage but he delayed in having his wife crowned.

The papal bull he obtained from the Pope appears to have given Henry a 'let out' clause. It is therefore unlikely the whole bull would have been read out in 1486 and 1487, especially when he still needed Yorkist support against the Simnel rising. The Pope's confirmation of his right to the throne and his lawful marriage was probably as far as the public proclamations went. The clause relating to Henry's heirs by anyone other than Elizabeth was unlikely to have been read out.⁵⁴ Was Henry ensuring that his right to the throne would remain, without Elizabeth, just in case she died and they did

⁵² Vergil, 1555 version, book 26, Henry VII, 7, '...de itinere in turrim Londinensem duci iussit ut, si esset amicus (sicuti revera erat), illud tantillum indignitatis vius salutis causa subire haud aegre ferret; sin inimicus ne noceret'.

⁵³ Cavell, pp.88-89, May 1486 at Worcester, the bishop of Worcester read out the pope's bull after his sermon; p. 110, Coventry, feast of St George, 1487, the archbishop of Canterbury, bishops of Winchester, Ely, Lincoln, Worcester and Exeter and the prior of Coventry, read out the pope's bull and cursed with 'boke, bell and candell al thoo that dyd any thyng contrary to ther right, and approving ther tytles good'.

⁵⁴ *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, 1484-1492*, pp. 1-4, www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=105229&strquery=HenryVII (accessed 24/8/11). 2 March 1485/6, the Pope gave his dispensation for their marriage, based on a need to end the dissent between the two houses. As they were related in the 'fourth and fourth degrees' a dispensation was required. The Pope also allowed them to marry without banns, 'the offspring thereof being hereby pronounced legitimate'. This was followed on 27 March 1486 with a confirmation of the dispensation for a marriage or 'already contracted' marriage. This would have been necessary as they had married in the January. However the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII was more detailed. 'Forthermore he approueth confirmeth and declareth. That yf hit please god that the side Elizabeth whiche God forbade shulde decesse withoute Issue bytwene oure souerayn lorde and hir of thair bodyes borne than suche Issue as bytwene hym and hir whome after that God shall ioyne him to shalbe bade and borne [] heritours to the same croune and realme of Englande...', J. Payne Collier, 'Bull of Pope Innocent VIII', Camden Society, Miscellany (1847). From a copy printed by Caxton, copy at www.tudorhistory.org/primary/h7marriagebull (accessed 24/8/11).

not produce an heir, or did he hope to be able to put her aside once his position was secure? As far as the Yorkists were concerned their support was always conditional upon a Yorkist heir being on the throne. Without his wife or a surviving child by her, his position remained precarious.

By 1503, whatever Henry may have felt, the Wydeviles had ceased to be relevant. Edward had died in 1488, Richard, earl Rivers in 1491, Elizabeth the queen dowager in June 1492, Thomas, marquis of Dorset in 1501 and Queen Elizabeth herself in February 1503. Henry no longer needed to worry about Yorkist support being conditional upon his queen, especially now that he had an heir who combined both Yorkist and Lancastrian claims to the throne.

(4) Conclusion

This thesis began with the question, ‘who were the Wydeviles’? From the available records it has been possible to establish that the family arrived in England with the Conqueror in 1066. Over the following centuries the Wydeviles gradually established themselves, initially through service to a lord, then within the county, and finally in the royal household. If we accept the definition given by Crouch and Turner, for a short period of time in the thirteenth century they qualified as barons. The family initially established themselves, through service to the Mowbray family in Yorkshire, which was where the majority of their lands lay. They also held a smaller amount of land in the north of Northamptonshire, where they founded a Premonstratensian priory at Sulby in 1155. By the thirteenth century the family had split into two distinct branches. The senior branch remained on their lands in Yorkshire, and by the thirteenth century they had become settled in the knightly class, spelling their name as Wyvile.

The junior branch of the family settled in Northamptonshire, from which Elizabeth Wydevile was descended. Therefore it is the status of this branch of the family which is important. A court case in 1204/05 has shown that land had been held and lived on in Grafton, Northamptonshire, for several generations with inheritance through marriage being the most likely explanation for settlement in this area. The Wydeviles, as they became known in Northamptonshire, gradually established themselves in Grafton and the surrounding region. Active locally within the hundred, they served as bailiff and juror and performed military service, and the Black Death may have provided the opportunity to take on higher office within the county. Initially serving on commissions of the peace and oyer and terminer in the 1350s, Richard (ii) (d. *c.* 1378) went on to become escheator, sheriff and knight of the shire. While engaged in these roles he met, worked with, and became friends with men who had influence both within the county and at court; it was through such connections that further offices were obtained. Richard (ii) was the first Wydevile to serve the king’s household, first as steward to Edward III’s daughter Isabella and then as steward at the king’s castle of Moor End. Access to the king’s household marked a turning point for the family. Richard’s son John (iii) (d. *c.* 1397/8) held a similar pattern of service within the county, managing to negotiate the difficult years of Richard II’s reign and the usurpation of Henry IV without diminishing the family standing within the county. It was his sons, Thomas (d. 1437/8) and Richard (iii) (d. 1441/2), who gave loyal service to the

Lancastrian royal princes; in return they received offices and annuities. Unlike a number of their contemporaries, e.g. Sir John Fastolf, or friends Lewis John or Richard Buckland, they did not exploit their connections or opportunities in the same way to increase their personal wealth or status. This may have been because they were satisfied with the rewards they received or they may have been less adept at manipulating patronage. Whatever the reason, they did not rise above esquires. However, Richard (iii) numbered amongst the more important members of the community. His position in the royal household had led to important appointments, including lieutenant of Calais, constable of the Tower and chamberlain to the duke of Bedford, regent of France, which suggests that he might have been expected to rise above the rank of esquire. It was undoubtedly his position in royal service and the trust in which he was held that led others to believe he had access to patronage. The marriages he arranged for his daughters demonstrate how he was able to provide for them at the expense of their husbands, who can only have agreed in the expectation of some return. The Wydeviles had provided active members of the county gentry for generations and had rubbed shoulders with princes and nobles without their status being questioned or without being considered as in any way menial. They benefited from a system which not only used wealth and inheritance as an indicator of status, but which also valued service, especially direct service to the crown. In these circumstances they may not have felt the need to claim knighthood, even though they were qualified on the grounds of income alone.

However in the fifteenth century attitudes towards status began to change. In discussing nobility and what was meant by the term 'noble', Kate Mertes has suggested that the idea of good service as a definition of nobility changed. 'By the fifteenth century ... it was not a dialogue between rich and poor, but between nobles of greater and lesser degrees ...'⁵⁵ The period had become one in which people were increasingly uneasy about slurs on their status, as evidenced by the Pastons, who did their utmost to show that they were not descended from bondsmen.⁵⁶ These changes within society may explain why Richard (iii) accepted, or perhaps asked for, a knighthood for his son. The Wydeviles sat uneasily in a no-man's land between gentility and nobility; the point had been reached at which title began to matter more than service and ability. For the younger Richard to succeed he needed the outward symbols of status. His knighthood

⁵⁵ Kate Mertes, 'Aristocracy', in *Fifteenth-century attitudes. Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England*, ed., Rosemary Horrox (Cambridge, 1994), p. 48.

⁵⁶ Caroline Barron, 'Who Were the Pastons?' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 4 (1972), pp. 530-35).

in 1426 appears to be the only example of Richard (iii)'s attempt to raise the family's status; the family were now formally positioned at the highest level of the gentry, just below the aristocracy. Interestingly they do not appear to have tried to raise themselves through the other traditional route of marriage, until Sir Richard Wydevile (d. 1469), who brought the family into the ranks of the nobility by making an advantageous marriage. The impact of this on the perceptions of the Wydeviles has been explored in part two of this dissertation.

Sir Richard's secret marriage to Jacquetta of Luxembourg, widow of the duke of Bedford, made him a member of the royal family, albeit a minor one, and led to his creation as Lord Rivers in 1448. Richard continued the family tradition of loyal service to the crown, and by 1460/61 had been able to find suitable marriages for three of his children into the baronial families of le Strange, Scales and Grey. His early career mirrored that of his father Richard (iii), i.e. service in France, a variety of commissions in Kent and Northamptonshire and membership of the king's council. Despite the advantage of marriage to the king's aunt, his rewards were not excessive, generally being only for his lifetime. Without the lands inherited from his uncle, Thomas, he would not have held much beyond what his father had purchased in Kent, as the lands granted in France were gradually lost as the French recovered territory. To maintain their position the family was therefore dependent upon the income received from Jacquetta's dower. Sir Richard's marriage to Jacquetta had aroused little comment in 1437. They had paid their fine and were accepted into the royal family by Henry VI. They also appear to have been accepted by their contemporaries. There were examples of similar marriages; therefore Sir Richard's marriage above his status would not have appeared exceptional. As far as the English were concerned, he had made a good marriage, and amongst English chroniclers the status of the Wydeviles was not a major issue.

Throughout the political stresses of the 1450s Rivers seems to have remained neutral, not choosing between the conflicting sides growing around the king, but demonstrating an ability to work with York, Suffolk and Somerset as required. Nor was he named in the petition of November 1450 as one of the people to be removed from the king's circle, which suggests that, although he was seen as a trusted servant of the king, he was not regarded as one of the despised favourites. It was 1460 before the first English comment on Rivers' status was recorded. Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, with his father Salisbury and cousin Edward, earl of March, berated Rivers as the 'son of a knave' and of being 'made by maryage'. Rivers' three critics all had one thing in

common: they could claim royal blood. Edward III's many children, particularly his son John of Gaunt who had numerous illegitimate offspring, had created a large number of families who could make this claim. Not only did this mean that the potential number of claimants to the throne was increased, it also meant there were a large number of men who felt this should give them special privileges from the king. The Nevilles were linked by blood and marriage to many of the noble families in the country, including the dukes of York and Somerset. Warwick tended to emphasise his link to the 'Kyngs blood'.

Therefore it is not surprising that he should be so derogatory of Rivers who had obtained his promotion first through the service of his father, who was 'broute up with Kyng Herry the Vte', and then through his marriage. The minority of Henry VI doubtless contributed to a belief in nobility over service, when men claiming a family connection jockeyed for position and influence around the young king. Their sense of deserving special recognition would have increased when the king attempted to create a royal family about him. By turning to a select group of men with royal blood and giving them precedence, Henry also created a group who felt excluded from the rewards of kinship, which left them feeling aggrieved, eventually leading to their rebellion.

While service may no longer have been seen as an acceptable route to promotion, being 'made by marriage' was neither as unusual, nor seen as unacceptable as Warwick's attack might suggest. Marriage to a wealthy heiress or widow of higher social status than the husband was a legitimate route that had been taken by many men to increase their status. References to disparagement generally occur in the patent rolls when the wardship of a young heir is being granted; it invariably insists that the ward's marriage should be made 'without disparagement'. The frequency with which this occurs increased during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, which may reflect a period of uneasiness over the rights of inheritance caused by Henry IV's overthrow of the king.⁵⁷ If a widow remarried and made a disparaged marriage, concerns might arise where a young heir was involved. The case of Richard, first baron Scrope, provides an example of the sort of depredations that could be made to a family estate by an unscrupulous

⁵⁷ With the availability of the calendar of patent rolls on line covering the years up to 1452, it is possible to carry out a search by word or phrase. A review of the years 1327-1452 looking for the word *disparage/disparagement* found the following results. In the reign of Edward III 1327-1377, 38 instances over fifty years; Richard II 1377-1399, one instance in twenty-two years; Henry IV 1399-1413, 113 instances in fourteen years, Henry V 1413-1422, 36 instances over nine years and finally, Henry VI 1422-1452 one instance in thirty years. From this very rough survey it appears that *disparagement* was more of an issue during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V. This may reflect a greater number of minors occurring in these years, but it is more likely that it reflected a greater unease over inheritance exacerbated by Henry IV's usurpation. By the end of Henry V's reign there may have been less anxiety, helped by what appeared to be a secure and successful dynasty.

second husband. Scrope must have thought he had arranged good marriages for his sons Roger and Stephen when he married them to his wards Margaret and Millicent, joint heiresses of Robert, Lord Tiptoft. What Scrope could not have foreseen was the early death of his sons, leaving minors. Margaret's subsequent marital history was most likely due to the size of her estate. Two men claimed to have married her, while a third, John Ninezergh or Nysander was accepted, somewhat reluctantly, as her husband. Shortly after their marriage Nysander was indicted for Margaret's abduction and rape, although he was acquitted. Abduction was one way to force a marriage. Nysander then took possession of some of his stepson Richard's lands. When Richard reached his majority he attempted to regain his estate by reviving the charge of rape, but he and Nysander both died soon after. Therefore based on the fact that her husband had been acquitted of her rape, Margaret petitioned parliament for the return of her dower lands.⁵⁸

Margaret's sister Millicent made an equally disastrous second marriage as far as the Scrope estate was concerned. She married her husband's butler, John Fastolf and gave him a life interest in all her estates, thus depriving her son Stephen. Fastolf also sold Stephen's wardship for 500 marks. Stephen was only able to enter into his inheritance when Fastolf died, claiming later that he had suffered greatly from Fastolf 'who bought me and sold me as a beste, ayens al right and lawe, to myn hurt'.⁵⁹ It was exactly this sort of disparagement of an heir that the grants of wardship were trying to prevent. Whatever legal constraints may have been attempted, as K. B. McFarlane so succinctly put it, the 'loophole' was the 'susceptibility of dowagers ... to disparage themselves'.⁶⁰

It was in such circumstances that families tended to complain about disparagement. The status of the individual was less a factor than their wealth; a poor man being considered more likely to damage an heir's inheritance. In the case of Richard and Jacquetta, the heir was the king, therefore he and his council were in a stronger position to protect his rights as heir, and to control Jacquetta's access to her dower. Warwick's complaint was not that Jacquetta had been disparaged by her marriage but that Rivers had gained access to the king. However apart from Warwick's remarks,

⁵⁸ Roskell, et al., *History of Parliament*, <www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/ninezergh-john-1420> (accessed 17/3/12), TNA, SC8/24/1176, documents on line (accessed 8/8/08).

⁵⁹ ODNB, Jonathan Hughes, 'Scrope, Stephen (1397-1472)' (accessed 7/8/05).

⁶⁰ K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1980 reprint), p. 11.

the family had received little attention from the chroniclers regarding their status or influence.

This changed in 1464 when the Wydevile family was catapulted into the highest rank of society. Rivers' daughter Elizabeth, now a widow, secretly married King Edward IV. This altered everything for the Wydeviles far more extensively than her father's marriage had done. A monarch who chose to make a disparaged marriage was rather more unusual, although heirs to the throne had occasionally done so. By 1464 there had been a succession of monarchs whose mother had been an English noblewoman: Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and even Edward IV. The important difference was that none of their mothers had ever been queen. The idea that a monarch might have an English wife was therefore not beyond the realms of possibility. The suggestion made by some European chroniclers that the queen should be a virgin can be dismissed by the example of Richard II's mother, Joan of Kent. Joan had had a colourful marital history, as well as children from a previous marriage.⁶¹ When Edward, the Black Prince married her there must have been an expectation that she would one day be queen. Edward's early death coupled with his father's long life could not have been anticipated when they married. As the grand-daughter of Edward I, and the daughter of an earl, her status may have been less of an issue than her marital history. That Edward was the heir and that his father Edward III accepted his son's marriage may have played a part in her acceptance. Importantly, once Edward III was aware of what his son had done he arranged for the couple to be publicly married.⁶² Questions over Elizabeth Wydevile's status may have rested on her father, but her mother was a duchess and a member of the Burgundian higher nobility. Inheritance through the female line was accepted by the English, and was something on which both monarch and noble depended; it had been the basis of Edward III's claim to the French throne and Edward IV's claim to the English throne. While Edward's marriage may have seemed ill-considered, it may not have appeared quite as exceptional to the English as is often supposed.

⁶¹ Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The clandestine marriages of the Fair Maid of Kent', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 5 (1979), p. 203. Joan was only twelve when, in 1340, she entered into a clandestine marriage with Sir Thomas Holland. While Holland was absent fighting in Prussia, her family married her to the earl of Salisbury. When Holland returned he tried to re-claim his wife but lack of money prevented him pursuing it in the courts until 1347. In 1349 the curia found in favour of Holland and Joan's marriage to Salisbury was declared invalid. After Holland's death in December 1360 Joan married Prince Edward secretly. They were married publically in October 1361. Joan's marriage not only provides an example of two clandestine marriages, but the first was to an impoverished knight, who was not her equal, and the second was as a widow with children to the heir of the throne. In one person we have an example of marriages comparable to that of Sir Richard Wydevile and then that of his daughter Elizabeth.

⁶² Wentersdorf, p. 203.

European chroniclers expressed more interest in the relative status of Richard and Jacquetta, and hence their daughter. English concern was more about access to the king and the influence of the Wydevile family. At first, when Edward announced his marriage, William Worcester claimed that Clarence and Warwick had led Elizabeth into church and that she was honoured. Later Worcester provides the first criticisms regarding the many Wydevile marriages, yet the 'displeasure' felt was mainly by Warwick. As Lander points out, the 'assertions' made that the marriages were 'socially disparaging to the families thus united with them, and that the nobility as a whole regarded them with great hostility, are not entirely convincing'. The idea of an 'old nobility' is also something of a misconception; noble families regularly died out in the male line.⁶³ The idea that families could only survive through the female line or by marriage from outside the nobility was therefore an accepted fact of life. This too may help to explain the earlier lack of criticism of Richard and Jacquetta's marriage.

Mertes has suggested that 'Families which ... jumped the ranks of good lordship ... were often disliked ... The Woodvilles were hardly the upstart clan contemporaries accused them of being; ... But when Elizabeth Woodville married Edward IV the family obtained a good lordship supposedly reserved for the highest nobles'.⁶⁴ This brings us back to the complaint of Warwick, both in the reign of Henry VI and in that of Edward IV, that those with royal blood were the proper councillors of kings, and not arrivistes, such as the Wydeviles. If Edward had been married to Elizabeth before he became king she may not have appeared to be an unsuitable wife. Also queens, whatever their background, were often prone to criticism for promoting their attendants or family. Criticism of the queen was seen as a device to criticise the king.

It might be argued that the increased factionalism of the fifteenth century, with the removal of a king by his nobles, contributed to this changing attitude towards status. The increasing number of men around the throne who could claim to have royal blood, especially through Gaunt's liaison with Katherine Swynford and their Beaufort descendants, would have added to the sense of importance of nobility over service. A noble might therefore overturn the crown on the basis of having some royal blood, however far removed. This explains the paranoia of the Tudors over any person claiming royal blood. Warwick regularly referred to his own royal blood, gained through the female Beaufort line, whenever he was involved in rebellion. There was an increased

⁶³ Lander, *Crown and Nobility*, p. 123.

⁶⁴ Mertes, p. 48.

expectation that those with royal blood should be included within the royal circle and should be the recipients of royal patronage, and it was this expectation which had eventually led the duke of York to rebel.

The perception of the Wydeviles which developed in the fifteenth century chronicles can be seen to change after 1464. The attack made on them in 1460 had not been picked up or used by any of the chroniclers as evidence of their low status, nor were they seen to pursue office or excessive rewards. The failure of the petition made by parliament in November 1450 to include Rivers amongst the hated favourites further supports the view that, during this period, Rivers was not seen to be actively using his position as a member of the king's council for his own benefit. Even in 1464 following the announcement of Edward's secret marriage, the only contemporary chronicler, Worcester, claims that Warwick and Clarence honoured Elizabeth. This all changed a year later after Elizabeth's coronation and the marriages of her sisters. Worcester's view may have changed, but the view he seems to be putting forward is that of a displeased Warwick. Herbert was happy to link his family with that of the queen's, as can be seen from his poet's celebration of it. There is no evidence that the marriages made by the heirs of the earls of Essex, Arundel or Kent were seen as in any way disparaging, and certainly not by the families involved. They remained consistently loyal to the Yorkists, which suggests they did not feel in any way slighted. Warwick may have been unhappy with the marriage between John Wydevile and the duchess of Norfolk, but the duchess's marital history suggests she may have agreed to it. The real problem was the disparity in their ages, which makes this marriage stand out, and would explain some of the criticism. The only person actually said to feel disparaged by their marriage to a Wydevile was the duke of Buckingham, but again the only evidence is provided by Worcester. Following the accession of Henry VII, Buckingham's widow, Katherine, was married very quickly to the king's uncle, Jasper Tudor. The Stafford lands in Wales were part of Jasper's reward. It also created an alliance between the new royal house of Tudor and the Wydeviles. No chronicler recorded whether Jasper felt disparaged by his marriage to a Wydevile. The event demonstrates that marriage to a Wydevile was seen as a way to connect people to the royal family and was not seen as in any way disparaging.

Without the support of Edward IV the Rivers' earldom could not be sustained. His main income came from offices once Jacquetta's dower was lost. They had received no large grants of land, and none of their sons had married wealthy heiresses to bolster the title. The grants made to the Wydeviles and to Warwick, and the marriages arranged

for them, have been compared and examined in detail by Lander and Hicks, both of whom have interpreted the information differently. This demonstrates the effect that the chroniclers' perception of the Wydeviles has placed on our perception today. Only Elizabeth's eldest son, Thomas, received large rewards and marriage to a wealthy heiress. On 18 April 1475 Edward IV made a grant to Thomas Grey, with the intention of dignifying his children's 'uterine brother,' by creating 'him marquis of Dorset...'⁶⁵ Just as Henry VI had ennobled his uterine half-brothers so Edward IV did the same for his step-son. Whether Elizabeth had urged this action or not, it was a typical response by a king to ensure that close members of the royal family were appropriately provided for.

In 1469 the Wydeviles were caught in the middle of a power struggle between Warwick and the king. To remove the king required an excuse. It was the usual one of 'evil counsellors' which Warwick fell back on, with the Wydeviles as the obvious target. The many Wydevile marriages, coupled with Elizabeth's suitability and ancestry, were useful propaganda tools. Warwick's propaganda in 1469 was the first complaint about the Wydeviles' greed and covetousness. Coupled with Worcester's list of Warwick's displeasure over the marriages, the idea of their greed has been picked up and repeated by subsequent chroniclers. The fact that Warwick also named Herbert and Stafford amongst those who offered 'disceyvable covetous rule' to Edward has been overlooked.⁶⁶ The case of Thomas Cook and the Queen's gold is the only example to have been produced by any chronicler to demonstrate their greed, and this did not appear until the sixteenth century. The arguments put forward in the 1469 manifesto were those used by the Yorkists in 1459 and 1460 but on this occasion the evil counsellors are named. It was pure chance that Warwick had berated Elizabeth's father and brother at Calais in 1460. However, it meant they were already associated with the standard charges of greed, covetousness and undue influence through the idea of their having been 'brought up of nought'. It is only in the chronicles which appear after 1469 that these charges are applied specifically to the Wydeviles. Ingulph's chronicle and the Milanese report appearing immediately after July 1469 repeats the charges in Warwick's manifesto. The status of Elizabeth's parents also begins to appear alongside the criticisms, with the emphasis on the exclusion of those of the 'blood royal' from the king's council; this makes her lack of royal blood more pointed, while Ingulph emphasises that she was sprung of 'comparatively humble lineage'.

⁶⁵ *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, ed., William Campbell, vol. 2 (London, 1877), p.58.

⁶⁶ Dockray, *Three chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV*, p. 68.

It was not until 1483 when Richard, duke of Gloucester, usurped the throne that further charges start to appear against the Wydeviles. The concentration was on the legitimacy of Edward's marriage, which was embodied in the 1484 parliament roll. The allegation of witchcraft made against the queen and her mother was based on Warwick's attack against Jacquetta in 1469. Chroniclers writing soon after 1483 and 1485 picked up the allegation. Mancini, writing in 1483, also repeats the suggestion of the Wydeviles' low birth, although he tends to exonerate Elizabeth from the other complaints or simply fails to mention them further.

The origins of the Wydeviles' poor reputation can be found in the propaganda used by Warwick and then by Richard III, as the Wydeviles provided them with convenient scapegoats to justify the removal of a king. Chronicles appearing soon after Bosworth tend to exonerate the Wydeviles, starting with Crowland. The author claimed to write without favour, but is what he reports any less propaganda? Henry's usurpation was bought with the promise of marriage to Elizabeth of York. Once married he needed to emphasise the legitimacy of Edward IV's children to counter Richard III's claims. This did not require the exoneration of the Wydeviles from charges of greed or undue influence. Both Mancini and Crowland name other more influential men around Edward IV, and the Wydeviles' greed and covetousness do not feature. However Mancini does suggest that there was some jealousy over the excessive elevation of the Wydeviles.

It is with the history of Polydore Vergil that the stories surrounding the Wydeviles take on a renewed life. He elaborates on events while appearing to defend the Wydeviles, and in providing the participants with dialogue he elevates his history above the bland record of the chronicles. His history has become a morality tale, making his characters much more black and white. Vergil repeats the claim about the Wydeviles' low status, a subject that exercised continental chroniclers rather more than the English, and which may have influenced him. The legitimacy of Edward's marriage, and therefore of his children, is satisfactorily dealt with, while the charge of witchcraft is illustrated in such a way that it can be dismissed as a fabrication by Richard III. English chroniclers writing at the same time take a similar stance. The Great Chronicle of London repeats how 'greatly exalted' the Queen's family had become, but talks of the jealousy and envy this aroused, which therefore helps to explain Warwick's actions. The only charge of greed made against Elizabeth, i.e. that of taking the Queen's gold, is

dismissed, while Robert Fabyan preferred to 'passe over' the witchcraft story but repeated the Thomas Cook affair at length.

The chronicles can be seen to reflect the propaganda at the time, and adduce no further evidence against the Wydeviles for greed and covetousness beyond the Cook case and the numerous Wydevile marriages. In the early sixteenth century, a new story was required to justify Henry VII's usurpation. Therefore writers turned against Richard III. The legitimacy of Edward's children also needed to be emphasised, and this led to increasing detail being provided for his marriage to Elizabeth.

Space does not permit a review of the Wydeviles' reputation into the reign of Henry VIII. During Henry VII's reign English chronicles did not universally paint the Wydeviles as greedy and grasping, nor were criticisms over Elizabeth's suitability and the discontent of the nobles prominent. Much of the emphasis on the Wydeviles status and their reputation is given as a way of explaining Warwick's sudden volte face against Edward IV. Thomas More, writing in Henry VIII's reign, probably preferred the accounts of his fellow humanists as a source for his history. This included the story of Elizabeth's low birth and accusations of witchcraft, not just against Jacquetta, but also against Elizabeth, and was even extended to Edward IV's mistress, Jane Shore. The work of the chroniclers Hall and Holinshed was based upon the works of Vergil and More, which subsequently had a major impact on the history of England, especially when used to such dramatic effect by Shakespeare. The advent of printing meant that it was these later versions which became widely read. A possible factor in the later elaboration of the stories about Edward's sensuous nature, his secret marriage, and Elizabeth's involvement in witchcraft may have been the close parallel to the story of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. If Tudor writers were unable to comment on Henry they could talk about Edward, and the wife that lured him into marriage by witchcraft.

Our perception of the Wydeviles is derived from the chronicles, especially those dating from after 1469. Warwick was the charismatic, even heroic, figure. To explain his actions in 1469 required an explanation that led to the denigration of the Wydeviles, with the result that Warwick's own explanation was taken at its face value. While Worcester's view has been accepted about Warwick's displeasure and the Wydevile marriages, his earlier statement that Warwick honoured Elizabeth when Edward admitted his marriage is overlooked. Despite attempts to identify the Crowland continuator and place him at the heart of Yorkist government, his less damning view of the Wydeviles also tends to be ignored, even though the writer of the Hearne fragment

shows agreement over Warwick's true motivation. By the sixteenth century it is the more colourful story put forward by Vergil that was taken up, first by Hall and Holinshed and eventually by Shakespeare. It is this version which has proved more influential in shaping the common perception of the Wydeviles.

Appendix 1

Will of Thomas Widevill⁶⁷

“To the worship of God of owre Lady and of all the company of Heven, this is the wille of me Thomas Widevill of Grafton in the counte of Norhampton Squyer as it shewyth more pleyuely benethe be parcelles made at Grafton Aboveseyd the xij day of the monethe of Octob(e)r the yere of the regne of Kyng Herry the sixte after the conquest the thertenth.

In the first, I woll that my ffeffes of my londes make non astate of hem to maner Aman unto the tyme that my dettes ben payed, my wille and my testament fully performed, and tho [this] done, I woll that my seyde ffeffes of my londes maken a lawfull astate to my broder Richard Widevill and to the eyres males of his body lawfully begotenyn and off my maner and all oder my londes and tenements rentes revercons and sarvises w[ith all] ther apurtynannces whatsoever they ben in Grafton beside Aldrynnton with the hundred of Cleyle in the seyde counte of Northampton. And if the seyde Richard my broder dye withowten yssu male of his body lawfully begotten than I woll that all the seyde maner londes and tenements rentes revercons and sarvises with all oder her [their] apurtynannces whatsoever they be in Grafton abovesed togeder with the seyde hundred of Cleyle reverten holly to my right eyres. Also I woll that my seyde ffeffes maken a lawfull astate to my right eyres yn and off all my londes and tenements as well of my purchases of ffesympull rentes revercions and sarvises with all other her apurtynannces whatsoever they ben in Westpury in Hertwell in the seyde counte of Northampton in Hulcote in the counte of Bedford in Burton milles in the counte of Bokyngham to holden to hem and to the right eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotten for evermore in party of recompensacion of the seyde maner of Grafton with the apurtynannces. And if my seyde right eyres dye with owten eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotten than I woll that all the seyde londes and tenements of my purchas and ffesympul with rentes revercons and sarvises with all oder her apurtynannces whatsoever they ben revert to the right eyres of John Widvill my ffader. Also I woll that after my dettes ben payed my will and my testament fully parformed that than my seyde ffeffes maken a lawfull astate

⁶⁷ George Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (London, 1822), part 1, pp. 162-3.

to my right eyres and to the eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotten yn and off all my maners londes and tenements rents revercions and sarvyses with all other her apurtynannces whatsoever they ben in the townes and in the felde of Northampton, Horton, Eston, Hulcote, Thurneby, Asshen, Roade, Hertewell, and Quynnton or in eny other place the whiche ben undevised with in the seyd counte of Northampton. And if my seyd right eyres dyen withouwtne yssu of her bodyes lawfully begotten than I woll that the same londes and tenemnetes rentes revecons and sarvyse with all other her apurtynannces holly reverten to the rygt eyres of my seyd ffader John Widevill. Also I woll that my seyd ffeffes keypen the maner of Stoke Brewerne and Aldrynton and all other londes and tenements medewes lesewes and pastures rentes revcons and sarvises with the avowsons of the chirch of the seyd Stoke and Aldrynton, and all other apurtynannces in the seyd Stoke, Aldrynton, and Shittehange in the counte of Norhampton stille in her hondes unto the tyme that they have reseyved theroff cc m(a)rk [£133 6s 8d] and payed it to my executors to purforme with my wille or elles till the tyme that they that pretenden tytell to enheryten the seyd maner of Stoke with the apurtynannces be taye as it is aboveseyd hav payed to my seyd executores the seyd cc m(a)rk and this payment of this cc m(a)rk in the forme aboveseyd hadd and an annuyte of an cs be my seyd ffeffes to be graunted to the ffader and the moder of mayster John Aylewurd now parson of the chirch of the seyd Stok in case tht the seyd parson dye lyvyng his seyd fader and his moder of on of hem, may be made seker [secure] to hem yerely to be taken of the seyd maner of Stoke with the apurtynannces to hem or ton of hem longest lyvyng to the terme of her lyves at the termes specified in a dede ther of to hem to be made be my seyd ffeffes, all this trely and effectually parformed than I woll that my seyd ffeffes maken astate to theyme that pretend to have the enherytaunce of the seyd maner be taye acordyng ther to. Also it is my wille that my seyd ffeffes maken astate to the abbot of Seynt James besyd Northmpton to the convent of the same place and to theyre successors, in the Ermytage of Grafton, Schawe Woode, and in the maner of Avescote and all oder londes and tenements rentes revercons and sarvises in Evescote, Patteshull, Derlescote, and Escote, with all her apurtynannces wheresoever and whatsoever they ben in the counte of Norhampton and in Fighelden in the counte of Wiltshir or owghtwhereelles to the terme of ffifty winter after the date of the dede be my seyd ffeffes ther of to hem made, and if the same londes may ben enpropered to hem in the mene tyme for evermore for to ffind with v poremen and a keeper fo hem anf for to do other certeyne obsurvannces in the seyd abbey to the worship of God and

for the helth of the soules of me the seyð Thomas Widevill my wives Elizabeth and Ales my fader my moder my graunser Thomas Lyons, Margarete his wyf, and allother my ffrendes and all crysten dewryng the seyð terme of ffifty winter and for evermore if the seyð Ermytage woode and maner with the apurtynannces may ben enpropered to the seyð abbot and to his successors in the forme that shal ben comprehended in a peyre endentures therof to be made between the seyð abbot and to his successores and my seyð ffeffes. Also I woll that my seyð ffeffes and my executoes purchessen as mych lond as they may have for cc m(a)rk ande geve it to my seyðright eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotten I full recompensacon of the seyð maner in Grafton aboveseyd, and if my seyð right eyres dyen with owte eyres of her bodyes lawfully begotenthā I woll that the seyð londes be my ffeffes and executors with my goode so purchessed revertē to the right eyres of my fader John Widevill. Also I woll that my seyð ffeffes gnnten to John Beck my olded sarvant a place and vj acres of lond with the apurtynaunces in Grafton aboveseyd, in the which he is processed now and an annuyte of 1 m(a)rk be geve be dede to be takyn to hym terme of his lyf of my seyð maner and all my l[ondes in Gra]fton at usuell termes in the seyð dede conteyned with a clause of distresse for defawte of payment. [p. 163] Also I will that my seyð ffeffes gnnten to Roburd Paker my sarvant a place and vj acres of lond with the apurtinannces in Grafton aboveseyd and an annuyte of xxs be yere be dede to be takyn to hym terme of his lyf of my maner [and] my londes in Grafton aboveseyd and at usuell termes in the seyð dede conteyned with a clause of distresse for defaute of payment. Also I woll that my seyð ffeffes granten to John of the Botery my sarvant a place and all the lindes and tenements with her apurtynannces the which I purchessed of John Warwick squyer in Westpury to hym terme of his lyf yeldyng therof yerely a rose flower to my seyð ffeffes at the fest of midsomer terme of his lyf and beryng all other chargesto the seyð place and lond longyng during the seyð terme. Also I woll that my seyð ffeffes graunten to my nece Elizabeth Holwell an annuyte of vj m(a)rk to be taken to her terme of her lyf of my maner in Hertwell with the apurtynannces called Morwelles maner and of all other my londes and tenements in the seyð towne with the apurtynannces wheresoevethy bewith aclawse of distresse for defaue of payment. Also I woll that my seyð ffeffes gnnten to Margaret Broke my sarvannt an annuyte of xxs to be taken to her terme of her lyf of my maner and all my londes and tenements in Roode with the apurtynannces wheresoever they be with a clause of distresse for defaute of payment. In the witnesse of the which thing to this parte of my wille trypartite endentud my seall I have put to. Yeven the day

and the yer and the place aboveseyd. Also I woll that myn executors schal reveyven and haven to performe my wyll al maner of rentes and p(ro)fytes coming of my londes tenements rev(er)sionnes and s(er)vices the which my ffeffes shall holden in her hondes on to my seyde wyll be ffully p(er)formed. Also I woll that my seyde ffeffes granten to Wyllyam Boteler my s(er)vaunt all my londes and tenements with the apurtynaunces in Horton by dede to be taken to hym terme of hys lyf. Also I woll that my seyde ffeffes gnnten to Thomas Barbor my s(er)vaunt astate in all my londes and tenements with the apurtynannces in Quynnton to terme of hys lyfe. Also I woll that my seyde ffeffes granten to Wyllyam Mannyng my s(er)vaunt all the londes and tenements that I have in Estneston and Hulcote bysyde Towcest(e)r in the counte of Norht. To terme of hys lyf’.

Appendix 2

The purchase of the Mote, Maidstone

Apart from the manor of Grafton, this is the only other property Richard Wydevile esquire, is known to have lived in. The manor was previously known as Shofford manor, alias Le Mote. There appears to have been early confusion over who purchased the manor. *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* dating from 1798 claims 'John de Wydevill seems to have possessed this seat in the reign of Richard II.... and is said to have been buried on the north side of the chancel of Maidstone church... His son, Richard de Wydevill succeeded him, he was ... seneschal of Normandy without licence, married Jaquet de Luxembourg.'⁶⁸ This is a veritable confusion of Wydeviles. If we assume that the Wydevile buried in Maidstone church is the one that purchased the manor, then we have Richard (iii) as the purchaser. This makes more sense. If it was his father John (ii) who had bought it, then the manor would have descended to Thomas and would have appeared in his detailed will. A clue is given to help identify the manor; the original name was Shofford.

Mention of the manor is made in 1369 when Robert Vyntier of Maidstone made his will. He wished to establish a chantry in the church of St Sepulchre's Priory, Canterbury. For this purpose he granted 'his manor of Shofford called the Mote in Maidstone'.⁶⁹ What then happened to the manor is unclear; Vyntier's request was that the manor should be let 'at perpetual farm to William Topclyve or any other suitable person'. Topclyve appears to have been living in the property in 1382 when he was granted a licence to crenellate.⁷⁰ At some subsequent point the manor must have changed hands. On 1 July 1423 John Beaufitz, his wife Alice, John Felde and his wife Elizabeth quitclaimed the manor of Shofford to Roger Heron and his heirs for life.⁷¹ Presumably the manor had become the joint property of sisters, Elizabeth and Alice, although the sale would appear to have been illegal, as Vyntier had granted the manor to

⁶⁸ 'The town and parish of Maidstone: Town and manors', *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, vol. 4 (1798), pp. 260-307, www.british-history.ac.uk, accessed 26/12/2009.

⁶⁹ *Canterbury Cathedral Archives* CCA-DCc-ChAnt/s/413, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=054-cadchant_7&cid=3-451> (accessed 9/6/11).

⁷⁰ 'Maidstone Mote House'

<<http://www.castlefacts.info/contentpages/castledetails/castledetails.asp?country=England&c>> (accessed 9/6/11). Licence to crenellate, see *CPR Richard II 1381-85*, p. 132. William de Topclyve was granted licence at the supplication of William de Courtenay archbishop of Canterbury, 'to crenellate and fortify a small 'place' called 'Shoford' in the parish of Maidstone, lately levelled by the insurgents.

⁷¹ *Feet of Fines*, CP25/1/114/294 no 16

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_114_294.shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

Canterbury unless Topclyve had purchased it at some point. The sisters then granted it to Roger Heron. Therefore Richard Wydevile cannot have acquired the property until after July 1423. However in 1428 there was an agreement between Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury and ‘Ricardum Wydevyle Armigerum et Johannam uxorem ejus’. This was a lease for fifty years of the manor of Oulebergh, which is as yet unidentified, but which was described as adjoining the archbishop’s mansion of The Mote.⁷² This seems to contradict the sale of 1423 - was the archbishop’s mansion in fact the same property? There is a property in Maidstone near the river which was the archbishop’s palace so it is possible that it was this property which was meant, and not ‘The Mote’.

On 4 October 1488 there is an ‘indenture of agreement’ between Richard third earl Rivers and the archbishop of Canterbury, whereby the archbishop purchased “the scite of the manor of Shoford, otherwise called the Mote, and all the messuage called the Mote, and all the londes and tenements of the seid manor of Shoford lying and being withyn the part or pale called the parke of the Mote, in the parysshe of Maydeston, conteyning c. acres by estymacion, and all other londes and tenements of the seid erle in the seid park for a certeyne sum”.⁷³

Given this later transaction it would seem that the property was purchased by the Wydeviles, possibly by Richard (iii) at the same time as he was purchasing other properties. What is interesting is that an Alice Topclyve had married as her third husband Sir John Passhele, who had previously been married to Elizabeth Wydevile, Richard’s daughter. The purchase by the archbishop was addressing a problem over its sale which had arisen in 1423. It just took the archbishop a while to realise he had lost the property.⁷⁴

⁷² *Historic Manuscript Commission 9th Annual Report*, part 1 (London, 1883), p. 113.

⁷³ Campbel, ed., *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, vol. 2 (London, 1877), p. 353.

⁷⁴ In 1488 Archbishop Morton purchased the lands of the Mote from Richard, earl Rivers in an action of recovery. This was a device used to ensure title and end any other claims or disputes in the property. *The Fee Tail and The Common Recovery in Medieval England 1176-1502*, Joseph Biancalana (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 319-20 and 378-9. In his will 22/10/1500, Morton left a large part of his property to his nephew Thomas, except ‘the lands included within the Mote Park near Maidstone’ and the mill near there which he had bought from the Marquess of Dorset. These lands were to go to the church of Canterbury on condition that the prioress and nuns of St Sepulchre were paid eight marks for a chaplain to celebrate mass. ‘Sede Vacante Wills’, ed., C.E. Woodruff, *Kent Archaeological Society*, vol. 3 (1913), p.91. This seems to suggest that somewhere in the series of sales of the Mote there was an illegal transaction, possibly by Topclyve or his heirs. This would have been at the expense of the chantry at St Sepulchre; Archbishop Morton appears to have corrected this. It may be that Alice and Elizabeth were the daughters of Topclyve. An Alice Topclyve married (1) William Ryman, (2) John Beaufitz and (3) Sir John Passele who had married, as his first wife, Elizabeth Wydevile. MacMichael, ‘Descent of the manor of Evegate’ pp. 37-8.

Appendix 3

The purchase of Grafton

On 10 June 1440 licence was given to William, earl of Suffolk and his wife Alice to grant the manor of Grafton, Northampton to Sir Richard Wydvyll and his wife, and the heirs of Richard. The manor was worth £24 a year and they paid 1000 marks of silver (£666 13s 4d) for the manor.⁷⁵ On 6 October and 20 January 1441 an agreement was drawn up between Cardinal Beaufort, the archbishop of York, the earl of Suffolk, Robert Whityngham, Theobald Cales and William Port and Sir Richard and Jacquetta to sell the manor of Chareleton Camvile and lands in Dorset and Wiltshire to the Cardinal and his heirs for £1000.⁷⁶ This may have been an arrangement to pay off their fine for marrying, however the timing is interesting, as is the involvement of Suffolk. It is possible that there were more complex arrangements in place and the £1000 was to pay for Grafton as well as some of the fine. Possibly Suffolk was also involved in lending them money and this accounts for what seems a high price for the manor. The general assumption is that it would take twenty years to recover the purchase price; if this was the case, then £24 over twenty years comes to £480.⁷⁷ It does therefore look as though the price might involve a high element of interest.

This was followed, on 9 February 1441, by an arrangement with Thomas Lyffyn and Thomas Goly over 'the manor of Grafton called *le Bury*'. This was presumably the same property they had just purchased from Suffolk, although this is the first time it has been referred to as *le Bury*. Sir Richard and Jaquetta quitclaimed the manor to Lyffyn and Goly for £400.⁷⁸ The manor appears to have been used as surety. On 12 February Goly and Lyffyn then took out a recognisance for £800. They would make feoffment of the manor to Sir Richard and his heirs provided they were not made liable for any

⁷⁵ *CPR Henry VI 1436-41*, p. 426. This refers to letters patent dated 20 March 1436 granted to William and Alice to sell the manor. The grant of 20 March is *CPR Henry VI 1429-36*, p. 508 which gives permission to William and Alice to sell any of their land held of the king, up to a value of £400 a year to anyone they liked. Feet of Fine dated 25 June 1440 plea of covenant between Alice and William and Richard and Jacquetta, in which they acknowledge the manor to be the right of Richard and Jacquetta for which they paid 1000 marks of silver, (£666 13s 4d), *CP 25/1/179/94*, no. 99
<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_179_94.shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

⁷⁶ *Somerset Feet of Fines Henry III-Henry VI*, Somerset Record Society, vol. 22 (1906), pp.195-6. The manor of Charleton Camvile except five messuages and five and a half virgates of land.

⁷⁷ K.B. McFarlane, 'The Investment of Sir John Fastolf's Profits of War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 7, (London, 1957), p. 110. In a discussion of the money spent on purchasing property against returns in rents, executors and feoffees, it was expected to take twenty years before seeing a return on expenditure.

⁷⁸ *Feet of Fines CP 25/1/179/95* no 102

<http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_179_95.shtml> (accessed 23/7/10).

money owed by Sir William Philip, lord Bardolf, in relation to the estate of Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter. Lord Bardolf along with Thomas Walber and John Bartram were the executors for the estate.⁷⁹ This was followed by two further agreements on 17 February. The first appears to relate to a loan made to lord Bardolf and his fellow executors of 400 marks, which was due to be repaid on Midsummer Day 1442, and a further 400 marks a year later. If payment was not made then, the manor belonged to Lyffyn and Goly. On the same day an indenture of defeasance was made for 500 marks, in which Sir Richard was bound before William Estfelde mayor of the staple of Westminster, on the same conditions relating to 400 marks lent to the executors by Goly and Lyffyn.⁸⁰ Thomas Beaufort had died in 1426 without an heir and his lands held in tail male reverted to the crown, while the remainder of his property was sold by his executors for £6,787.⁸¹ It would seem this took some time if the executors were still dealing with matters in 1441. Lord Bardolf died in June 1441, presumably with his duties as executor still unfinished. Most likely Sir Richard was one of several people standing surety for the executors. He does not appear to have had links himself with Bardolf so he may have done this for his father who had served with Bardolf. Alternatively, as Exeter was Cardinal Beaufort's brother it may have been connected to Sir Richard's position in relation to the fine and his other property deals with the Cardinal and Suffolk. At this stage Sir Richard's financial position was totally dependent upon the successful receipt of his wife's dower. The Cardinal may well have had Sir Richard over the metaphorical barrel. As Grafton remained in the family it can only be supposed that the surety was not called in.

⁷⁹ *CCR Henry VI 1435-41*, p. 465.

⁸⁰ *CCR Henry VI 1435-41*, pp.458 & 464-5.

⁸¹ *ODNB*, 'Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter' G.L. Harriss (accessed 13/7/11).

Appendix 4

Wivile/Wydevile landholdings

Properties which have been identified as being held by members of the Wyvile/Wydevile family are given below.

The date relates to each occasion on which the property is mentioned, with the name of the Wyvile/Wydevile who held the property at that date.

BEDFORDSHIRE

1366	Bromham	John (iii), ¼ knight fee held of William Pateshull
1366	Biddenham	John (iii) and wife Katherine
1366	Hulcote	John (iii) and wife Katherine
1420s	Shelford	Purchased by Richard (iii) and sold to meet debts

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

1366	Bowbrickhill	John(iii) and wife Katherine
1392	Bowbrickhill	John (iii), knights fee held of Thomas, earl of Stafford
1399	Bowbrickhill	Thomas, knights fee held of William brother of Thomas, earl of Stafford

1366	Caldecote	John (iii) and wife Katherine
1392	Caldecote	John (iii), knights fee held of Thomas, earl of Stafford
1399	Caldecote	Thomas, knights fee held of William, brother of Thomas, earl of Stafford

1434	Burton Mills	Thomas
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GLOUCESTERSHIRE

1412	Bristol	Thomas Wydevile
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KENT

1425	Bankhurst in Lewisham	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1425	Detling	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1480s	Detling	Richard, third earl Rivers
1425	Lee	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1480s	Lee	Richard, third earl Rivers
1425	Lewisham	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1425	Mottingham	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1425	Shrawfield in Lee	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1420's	The Mote	Purchased by Richard (iii)
1488	The Mote	Sold by Richard, third earl Rivers

LEICESTERSHIRE

Domesday	Borough of Leicester	Hugh de Wyville held 5 houses
Domesday	Shangton	Hughd held of Hugh de Grandmesnil
1224	Shangton	Robert
1298	Shangton	Robert
Domesday	Staunton Wyvile	Hugh, held of Hugh de Grandmesnil
1230	Staunton Wyvile	Richard, 'militem', nominated 'master John' to the church
1298	Staunton Wyvile	Robert
1224	Chokes	Robert
1298	Hardwick	Robert

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

1109-54	Bradden (Greens Norton Hundred)	Ralph
1484	Dittons land parish of Bradden	Forfeited by Antony

1109-36	Welford / Sulby (Guilsborough hundred)	Robert
1155	Welford / Sulby	William
1166	Welford / Sulby	Richard
1235	Welford / Sulby	Richard
1242/3	Welford / Sulby	Eustacia 1 ½ knight's fee
1252	Welford / Sulby	William
1298	Welford / Sulby	John 24 virgates of land
1301	Welford / Sulby	William
1362	Welford / Sulby	William

1109-36	Pipewell	Robert
1150-90	Pipewell	Richard

1166/1235	Elkington (Guilsborough hundred)	Richard
1203	East Farndon (Rothwell hundred)	Richard

1204/06	Grafton (Cleley Hundred)	Robert
1434	Grafton	Thomas
1440	Grafton	Sir Richard
1490s	Grafton	Richard, third earl Rivers

1268	Grafton Hermitage	James presented to the Hermitage
1284	Grafton Hermitage	John
1434	Grafton Hermitage	Thomas
1483	Grafton Hermitage	Antony

1224	Marston Trussel (Rothwell hundred)	? de Wivill
1298	Marston Trussel	Robert

1235	Chilcotes	Richard
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1235	Coldashby	Richard
1362	Coldashby	William

1274	Cleley Hundred	Walter
1315/16	Cleley Hundred	John
1434	Cleley Hundred	Thomas

1298	Thorpe	Robert
1322	Passenham (Celey hundred)	John claimed the manor, but right denied
1460s	Passenham	Granted to Queen Elizabeth who gave it to her father
1330/40	Stoke Bruerne (Cleley hundred)	Henry holding tenements
1366	Stoke Bruerne	Richard 1/3 manor
1368	Stoke Bruerne	Richard
1376	Stoke Bruerne	Richard part of a knight's fee with Alderton
1330/40	Oundle (Polebrook Hundred)	Henry
1330/40	Churchfield	Henry
1366/76	Alderton (Cleley Hundred)	Richard part of a knight's fee with Stoke Bruerne
1368	Wicken	Richard
1382	Wicken	John
1434	Wicken	Thomas
1392	Anescote (Pattishall parish, Towcester hundred)	John part of a knights fee held of baron Clifford
1392	Edenscote (Pattishall parish, Towcester hundred)	John part of a knights fee held of baron Clifford
1434	Ashton (Cleley Hundred)	Thomas
1434	Hartwell (Cleley hundred)	Thomas
1484	Hartwell	Forfeited by Antony
1434	Mowelles Manor Hartwell (Cleley hundred)	Thomas
1434	Roade (Cleley hundred)	Thomas
1484	Roade	Forfeited by Antony
1434	Shutlanger (Cleley hundred)	Thomas
1434	Thornby(Guilsborough hundred)	Thomas
1434	Westpury (Hertwell parish, Cleley hundred)	Thomas

1434	Easton Neston (Towcester hundred)	Thomas
1434	Holcot (Towcester hundred)	Thomas
1434	Horton (Wymersley hundred)	Thomas
1434	Quinton (Wymersley hundred)	Thomas
1434	Astcote	Thomas
1434	Derlescote	Thomas
1434	Escote	Thomas
1434	Shaw Wood	Thomas

RUTLAND

1198/1219	Bullington End Hanslope	William
1316	Ridlington	John
1434	Burton Mills	Thomas Wydevile

SOMERSET

1412	Burton	Thomas Wydevile
1412	Long Ashton	Thomas Wydevile
1412	Milton	Thomas Wydevile
1412	Woolvershill	Thomas Wydevile

WILTSHIRE

1434	Fighelden	Thomas Wydevile
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YORKSHIRE

1114	Kirby	Granted to Robert by Nigel d'Aubigney
1114	Langthorpe	Granted to Robert by Nigel d'Aubigney
1114	Milby	Granted to Robert by Nigel d'Aubigney

1147	Thorpe le Willows	Ralph
1166	Thorpe le Willows	Richard
1284/85	Thorpe le Willows	Richard

1166	Burnby	Richard
1284/85	Burnby	Richard

1166	Coulton	Richard
1284/85	Coulton	Richard
1301	Coulton	John held 3 carucates

1166	Sherburn	Robert
1284/85	Sherburn	Richard
1301	Sherburn	John
1320	Sherburn	William son of John

1166	Sledmere	Richard
1284/85	Sledmere	Richard
1301	Sledmere	John held 11 carucates
1336	Sledmere	Richard & Agnes his wife, gift of land in Sledmere to the church
1349	Sledmere	Agnes (Inq d. 20 Aug wife of William son of William)

1166	Slingsby	Richard
1284/85	Slingsby	Richard
1301	Slingsby	William, Thomas & John held 7 ½ carucates
1323	Slingsby	William held a messuage & 6 bovates

1166	Thornton Dale	Richard
1284/85	Thornton Dale	Richard
1278/79	Thornton Dale	William
1301	Thornton Dale	Letitia & William de Wyvill held 3 carucates of Roger de Mowbray

1200	Cave	Richard
1200	Iverthorpe	Richard
1286/87	East & West Lutton	William
1301	Northholm	John
1301	'Northwykethorne'	John

Appendix 5

Yorkist manifestoes

There are four manifestoes from the years 1459-69. Only those points in each manifesto have been included which can be seen to have a common theme in each.

1459 Articles of the earl of Warwick, on his way from Calais to Ludlow.⁸²

1. ... the commone wele ... good politik lawes ... the due and evunly minestering of justice and rightwisnesse with inne the lande beene piteouslye overturned...

2. ... the mighte crowne of the king ... ys soo unmesurable and outerageously spoiled and robbed from his lyvelodes and possessions ... grete charges of necessite be required for his estate, but by unlefull meanes deceivably and ageinste all Goddis lawe be soughte be novelries by oon waye into the grete hurte of mechauntes and by another weye upon the pore peopull, grete extorcion of their goodes and cattalles by the ministers of the kinges housolde ...

3. ... gret abhominable murders, robires, periuries and extorcions in many wise with maynntenances of the same openly used and contened in the reaume with grete violence be not punysshed but favoured and cherished. ...

4. ... Yet certayn persones for their owne covytise, their singular reule their proper wille they have to shewe their uttirmeste malice ageins suche as God knowithe beene the verreye lovers of the seide commone wele ...

5. ... no lande ... may longe endure in prosperite whereof the prince is so robbed of his livelode and knoweth not the wrecchednesse of his lande and subgettes thourthrowyng of his lawes and good reules, the exile of justice ... the contynuell murders, robberies, periuries, extorcions and myntenances therof, ne the violente malice of persones so rigorously disposed ... remedies be the hastelier founden...

⁸² Kekeovich, M.L. et al, eds., *The Politics of Fifteenth Century England: John Vale's Book*, (Stroud, 1995) pp. 208-10

1460 Articles of the commons of Kent at the coming of the Yorkist lords from Calais⁸³

Preamble - These bene the pointes, mischeves and causes of the gadering and assembling of us the kinges trewe liegemene of Kente ...

1. First we considering houghe that the king our souveraigne lorde by thensaciable covetouses, maliciouses pourpouses and false *broughte up of noughte* certayne persones daily and nightly aboute his highnesse, the same dayli is enfourmed that good is evull and evull is good ...

2. They seye that our souveraigne lorde is above his lawe and that the lawe ys made but to his pleasure ... The contrarie is trewe... we conseyye for the higheste pointe of threason that ene subgiēt may do ageinste his prince to make hym reigne inperiurie...

3. They seye ... the king shulde lyve uppon his communes so that all theire bodies and goodis bene his. The contrarie ys trewe ...

4. They enfourme the king how that the communes wolde firste destroye the kinges frendes and afturward hym selfe and thenne to bringe inne the duc of Yorke to be thaire king. So that by here fals meanes and lesinges they make hym to hate and to destroye his verray frendes and love his fals traytores that calle hem selfe his frendes. And yif ther were no more reason to kowe afrende by, he may wele knowe hym by his covetyse.

5. They seye hit were agrete reprove to the king to reasume that he hath geven ... So that they nouthur will suffer hym tahave his owne ... but that they wol aske it anoone of hym. Or elles they wol take money of other persones to gete it for hem.

6. It is to be remembred how that the fals traytours will suffre no manne to come into the kinges presence for no cause with outen he will geve a brybe

7. ... the good duc of Glowcester was empeched of threason by oone fals traitor ... and that *fals tritor Pole* ... mighte nat be suffred to dye as the lawe wolde butt rather these seide traitoures of the *seid Poles affinite* ... wolde that the king ... shulde holde bataill in his owne reaume ...

⁸³ John Vale's Book pp. 210-12

8. They whome the king woll shalbe traytours and whome he wyl not ... for yif they the same traitors so being aboute hym maligne ageinste any man, highe or low, they will anoone fynde fals meanes that he shall dye as a traytor to that entente that they may possede and have his londes and goodes ...

10. They saye [the king] may wele understande that he hathe had fals counsaile for his lawe is loste ...

13. We wil that itbe knowen that we blame no all the lordes nor althoo that biene aboute the kinges persone ... but oonly such as maybe founde guilty by a juste and atrew enquerre bi the lawe. ...

1460 York March Warwick and Salisbury to a/b Canterbury and the commons of England⁸⁴

Addressed to A/B Canterbury and commons of England

1. ... grete oppressyone, extorsion, robry, murther, and other vyolencys doone to Goddys church...

2. The pouerte and mysery that [the king] standeth inne, nat hauyng any lyuelode of the croune of England ... by the takers of hys seyde howsholde, whyche lyuelode ys in theyre handes that haue be destroyers of his seyde estate, and of the seyde commune wele.

3. ... hys lawes been parcially an vnrightfully guyded, and that by thayme that sholde moste loue and tendre hys sayde lawes ... that alle rightwysness and justice ys exyled of the sayde lond...

5. ... ofte the seyde communes haue ben gretely and merueylously charged with taxes and tallages to theyre gret enporysshynge, ... the kyng hathe left to his part nat half so moche and other lordes and persones, enemyes to the sayde commune wele, haue to

⁸⁴ Davies, *An English Chronicle*, pp. 86-90

theyre owne vse, suffryng alle the olde possessyons that the kyng had in Fraunce and Normandy, ... [etc] to be shamefully loste or solde.

7. ... the kyng hathe now no more lyfelode oute of his reame of Englund but onely the londe of Ireland and the toune of Caleys ...

9. ... the same lordes wolde put the same rewle of Englund, yef they myghte ... in to the handes ... of the seyde enemyes.

10. ...murther ... of Glouceste ... hit hathe be labored, studyed, and conspyred to haue dystroyed and murthryd the seyde duke of York, and the yssew that it pleased God to sende me *of the royalle blode*; and also of vs the sayde erlys of Warrewyk and Salysbury, for none other cause but for the trew hert that God knoweth we euer haue borne ... [to the king]

11. ... *the erles of Shrouesbury and Wylshyre, and the lorde Beaumont, oure mortalle and extreme enemyes*, now and of long tyme past, hauyng the guyding aboute the most noble persone of oure sayde souuerayn lorde, whos hyghenes they haue restrayned and kept from the liberte and fredom that bylongethe to his seyde astate ... dredyng the charge that wolde haue be layde vppone theym of the mysery, destruccione, and wrechednesse of the sayde reame, wherof they be causes ...

12. *The erles of Wylshyre and Shrouesbury, and the lorde Beaumont, nat satysfied nor content with the kynges possessyouns and hys good, stered and excited his sayde hygheness* to holde hys parlement at Couentre, where an acte ys made by theyre prounocacoun and laboure ayenst vs the sayde duk of York, my sones Marche and Rutlande, and the erles of Warrewyk and Salysbury ... and meny other ... *to thentent of oure destruccione and of oure yssew*, and that they myghte haue oure lyfelode and goodes, as they haue openly robbed and dyspoyled alle oure places and oure tenementes, ... and wolde therinne shew the largenesse of theyre vyolence and malyce as vengeably as they can ...

12 July 1469 Clarence, a/b York and Warwick⁸⁵

Preamble. ... true subgettes of diverse parties of this his realme ... delivered to us certeyn billis of Articles, ... rememberynge in the same *the disceyvabille covetous rule and gydyng of certeyne ceducious persones; that is to say, the Lord Ryvers, the Duchesse of Bedford his nyf, Ser William Herbert, Erle of Penbroke, Humfrey Stafford, Erle of Devenshire, the Lordis Scalys and Audeley, Ser John Wydevile, and his brethren, Ser John Fogge, and other of theyre myschevous rule opinion and assent, wheche have caused oure seid sovereyn Lord and his seid realme to falle in grete poverte of myserie, disturbynge the mynystracion of the lawes, only entending to thaire owen promocion and enriching. ... callyng uppon us and other lordes to be meanes to oure seid sovereyne Lord for a remedy and reformation ... we, thenkyng the peticioun ... resonabyll ... to shewe the same to his good grace ...*

1. ... the seid Kynges [i.e. Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI] *estraingid the gret lordis of thayre blood from thaire secret Councell, ... And taking abowte them other not of thaire blood, and enclynynge only to their counselle, rule and advise, the wheche persones take not respect ne consideracion to the wele of the seid princes, ne to the comonwele of this lond ... enrichyng of themself and their bloode, as welle in their greet possessions as in goodis; by the wheche the seid princis were so enpoveryssed that they hadde not sufficient of lyvelode ...*

2. ... seid seducious persones ... caused the seid princes to lay suche imposicions and charges as welle by way of untrue appecementes to whom thye owed evill will unto, as by dymes, taxis and prestis noblis and other inordinat charges upon their subgettes and commons, to the grete grugge and enpoveryssyng of them...

3. ... the seid seducious persones by theyre mayntenaunces where they have rule, wold not suffre the lawes to be executed, but where they owe favour moved the seid princes to the same; ... no lawes atte that tyme deuly minstred, ne putt in execucion, wheche caused gret murdres, robberyes, rapes, oppressions and extorcions, as well by themselves, as by theyre gret mayntenaunces ...

4. ... oure soveraigne lorde hathe hadde as gret ... lyvelode of the Crowne ... grete forfaytis, beside Tunage and Poundage ... *The lorde Revers, the Duchesse of Bedford his nyf,*

⁸⁵ Dockray, *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV*, pp.68-73

and thayre sonnes, Ser William Harbert, Earle of Pembroke and Humfrey Stafford, Erle of Devonshire, the Lord of Audely, and Ser John Fogge, and other of thayre myschevous assent and oppinon, whiche have advised and causid oure seid sovereigne lord to geve of the seyd lyvelode and possessions to them above theire disertis and degrees, So that he may nat lyf ... withinne this lond ...

5. ... the seid seducious persones ... by subtile and discevable ymaginacions movid and causid oure sovereyne lord to chaunge his most ryche coyne, and mynysshed his most royalle household ...

6. ... seid seducious persones, continuyng in theire most deseyvable and covetous disposicion, have caused oure seid soverayne lord to aske and charge us his trewe commons and subgettis wyth suche gret imposicions and inordinat charges ... impechementes of treasounes to whom they owe any eville will; So that ther can be no man ...or any other honest persone, in surete of his lyf, lyvelode, or goodis, where the seid seducious persones, or any of them, owe any malice or eville wille to the grete drede and importabyll charges, and the utter empoverysshyng of us his treue Commons and subjettes ...

7. ... the seid seducious persones have caused [the king] to spende the goodis of oure holy fadir [the Pope], the wheche were yevyn hym for defence of Cristen feyth ...

8. ... seid seducious persones, be thayre mayntenaunces in the cuntreyes where they dwelt or where they here rule, will not suffre the Kynges lawes to be executyd ...the lawes be not duly mynystered, ne put in execucion; by the wheche gret murder, robbres, rapes, oppressions and extorcions, as well be them, as by thayre gret mayntenaunces of theire servauntes, to us daly done and remayne unpunysshed ...

9. ... seid seducious persones hath causid oure seid soverayne lord to estraing the true lordis *of his blood* from his secrete Councelle, to th'entent that they myghte atteyne and brenge abouth theyre fals and dysceyvable purpos ... to the gret enrychyng of themselves, And to the gret hurt and poverté of oure seid sovereyne lorde, ... his trewe subgettis and commons ...

Appendix 6

Two contemporary poems relating to Elizabeth Wydevile

In addition to the poems of Cornazzano and Hywel Swrdwal there are at least two others which mention Queen Elizabeth during difficult times.

1. 'Storm and affliction ebbing away' Guto'r Glyn writing c. 1471/2.

Guto'r Glyn wrote this poem for Ann Herbert after the death of her husband William Herbert at the battle of Edgecote in 1469. Glyn writes of the widow's grief, and compares Ann to a number of unhappy women.⁸⁶ As with the Cornazzano poem the comparisons are with women from biblical sources or mythology or in this instance, Welsh history. As with Cornazzano he has a contemporary example, Queen Elizabeth, whose father and brother were also killed after Edgecote,

You are an Isolde fiercely grieving for Tristan
 32 after your husband, Ann,
 a Martha in the vigour of martyrdom,
 a mournful Mary after her brother's death,
 the sleeplessness of the queen
 36 on account of her father, one with the hue of
 Maytime and fair weather.
 The same fortune as happened to her part
 has pursued its course over you;
 storm and affliction ebbing away
 40 all over Raglan's land, rain yielding to sunshine.⁸⁷

It is not known if Glynn ever saw Elizabeth, however her sister was married to William Herbert the younger so he may at least have heard something about her. The description of her suggests a woman with a complexion that today may be described as

⁸⁶ I am grateful to Dr Barry Lewis for providing the relevant part of the poem and translation into English. Barry also provided the following information on the Welsh comparisons. Esyllt (Isolde) was the daughter of Cynan Dindaethwy of Gwynedd, ninth century. It is thought she married Merfyn Frych, first king of the second dynasty of Gwynedd, she brought him Gwynedd. The poet is suggesting metaphorically that Ann Herbert has Gwent as her inheritance after her husband's death

⁸⁷ Guto 26, 'Storm and affliction ebbing away' Comfort for Ann Herbert, countess of Pembroke after the death of her husband.

peaches and cream. This conforms to the generally accepted description of Elizabeth as being fair haired and beautiful although it may also be the standard medieval depiction of a beautiful woman. However it is significant that he is comparing Ann's grief with that of Elizabeth. By association Elizabeth's grief over the loss of her father and brother can also be compared to the same women.

2. Anonymous

An anonymous poem written by a Londoner at the same time following Edward's recovery of the throne also shows Elizabeth at a time of grief and despair,

O quene Elizabeth, O blessid creature,
 O glorijs God, what payne had sche?
 What langowr and angwich did sche endure?
 When hir lorde and sovereyn was in adversité.
 To here of hir wepyng it was grett peté,
 When sche remembirde the kynge, sche was woo.

 And ever, good lady, for the love of Jhesu,
 And his blessid modir in any wise,
 Remember suche personus as have be trewe,
 Helpe every man to have justice....⁸⁸

These poems offer a much more sympathetic view of Elizabeth. While they may be formulaic in the depiction of grief, it did not require that Elizabeth herself be included, especially in the poem of Glyn. The London poem suggests that the Londoners helped the Queen while she was in sanctuary and were asking that she now remember that help.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Thomas Wright, ed., *Political Songs and Poems relating to English History composed during the period from the Accession of Edward III to that of Richard III*, 2 vols. Rolls Series (London, 1859), vol. 2, pp. 281-2. Quoted in Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, pp. 224-5, see note 4 below.

⁸⁹ Anne F. Sutton & Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen" Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, Her Piety and Her Books', *The Ricardian*, vol. 10, no. 129 (June, 1995), pp. 214-45. This article goes through the attacks made on Elizabeth's character and offers an alternative depiction, which shows that in London at any rate there was sympathy for her.

Appendix 7

The children of Richard, earl Rivers (c1410-1469) and Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford (c.1416-1472)

Jacquetta's estimated age at the birth of each child is given in brackets after their name.

Elizabeth (21)

c. 1437-1492

Married: 1. Sir John Grey of Groby d. February 1461

Married 1455⁹⁰

Children: Thomas b.c. 1455-1501

Richard b.c. 1460/61-1483

2. King Edward IV d. April 1483

Married 1 May 1464

Children: Three sons Edward, Richard and George

Seven daughters Elizabeth, Mary, Cecily, Margaret, Anne,

Katherine and Bridget

Antony (24/26)

c. 1440/2 -1483

Married: 1. Elizabeth daughter and heiress of Thomas, Lord Scales d. September 1473

Married by 1461

No surviving children

2. Mary FizLewis b.c. 1465/68

Married 1480

No children

Antony had an illegitimate daughter, Margaret by his mistress Gwentilian

Stradling, daughter of Sir William Stradling of Glamorgan. Margaret married

Robert Poyntz of Iron Acton.

⁹⁰ Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Archer of Tamworth, DR37/2/Box 73/34

<http://www.a2a.org.uk/search/documentxsl.asp?com+1&i=0&nbKey=3&stylesheet=x>

A document dated 8 Jan 1454/5 refers to a letter patent from Richard, duke of York in which it is stated that Richard Castleford clerk, has sworn in his presence that release was made of the manor of 'Mew and Gyngjoyberdlaundry' (Buttsbury) Essex to Edward Gray, Lord Ferrers for the settling of a jointure on his son and the daughter of Lord Rivers. The settlement is to be disavowed if it is found to prejudice Edward Ferrers of Tamworth.

John (28)

c.1443/4⁹¹ -1469

Married: Katherine Neville, duchess of Norfolk in 1465.

Richard (29/30)

b. before 1446⁹² -1490

Never married

Jacquetta (30)

c.1446-1481XSept 1485

Married: John le Strange, son and heir of Lord Strange of Knockin bc.1444

Married by 1450.

Only child Joan, bc.1463 married 1468 to George Stanley, son and heir of Lord Stanley. Became Lord Strange in right of his wife.

Anne (34)

c.1450-1489

Married: 1. William, viscount Bouchier, son and heir of earl of Essex b.c.1432

Son, Henry earl of Essex b.c. 1472. Married 1466

2. Sir Edward Wingfield

3. George Grey, second son of Edmund Grey of Ruthin, earl of Kent

Margaret (37)

c.1453-c.1491

Married: Thomas, Lord Matravers, son and heir of earl of Arundel, b. 1450

Married 1465

Son William, Lord Matravers b.c. 1476

Lionel (37)

c. 1453-X 19 Dec. 1484

Cleric, elected dean of Exeter in 1478 aged 25, Bishop of Salisbury 1482.

⁹¹ John was said to have been aged twenty when he married in 1465.

⁹² CPR 1441-46, a grant dated 8 June 1446 mentions Sir Richard's four sons Antony, Richard, John and John.

Joan (38)

c. 1454 –c.1491

Married: Antony Grey son and heir of Edmund Grey of Ruthin, earl of Kent, b.c.

1440/43

Married 1465

Mary (39)

c. 1455-c.Sept 1488

Married: William Herbert, b. March 1455, son and heir William, Lord Herbert

Married Sept 1466. Created lord Dunster

Daughter Elizabeth, Lady Herbert

Katherine (42)

c.1458-1513

Married: 1. Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham

Married 1466

Son Edward

2. Jasper Tudor, duke of Bedford

Married 1485

3. Sir Richard Wingfield

Edward (42/3?)⁹³

c. 1458/9? – 1488

Never married

Lewis b? died young

John. It is possible there was another child name John based on the CPR entry for 1446, however it is more likely an error by the scribe.

Martha

Said to be a daughter of Richard and Jacquetta. This is based on the genealogy of the Bromley family of Shropshire, which can be found in a Visitation of Shropshire

⁹³ Christopher Wilkins, *The Last Knight Errant Sir Edward Woodville and the age of chivalry* (London, 2010) Suggest a date of birth in 1458 or 1459.

undertaken in 1623.⁹⁴ It is unlikely she was one of their children; there is no other mention of a Martha.

⁹⁴ George Grazebrook and J.P. Rylands, eds., *The Visitation of Shropshire 1623* (London, 1889), pp. 71-8.

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