

A STUDY OF A MEDIEVAL KNIGHTLY FAMILY: THE LONGFORDS OF DERBYSHIRE, PART 1

by Rosie Bevan¹

ABSTRACT

Little has been published about the Longford family since S P H Statham wrote a detailed genealogy in 1937. The present study, in two parts, aims to complete the Longford family history where Statham left it, and correct mistakes in the Longford pedigree from the 1569 and 1613 Herald's Visitations of Derbyshire, which are confused for five consecutive generations occurring in the 15th century. These errors in the pedigree provide an important lesson for genealogists of the necessity to verify information from independent contemporary sources.

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Introduction

In 1937 Statham (1937) wrote a detailed genealogy of the early Longfords, but little has been published about the family since then. This has resulted in the dependence on the Longford pedigree presented in the 1569 and 1613 Herald's Visitations of Derbyshire, which unfortunately are confused for five consecutive generations occurring in the fifteenth century. This study, in two parts, aims to complete the Longford family history where Statham left it, and correct the mistakes in the Visitation pedigree.

The Longford family needs no better introduction than the exuberant words of Joseph Tilley (1893), the nineteenth-century historian of Derbyshire, who wrote,

From the reign of the first of the Plantagenets to that of the last of the Tudors, a period of four hundred and fifty years, the Longfords have entry on all the glorious Rolls of the nation; on the first Inquisition ever held in the shire; on the earliest emblazoned scrolls of the heralds; on the oldest returns of Parliamentary representatives. Nicholas Longford was amongst those members in 1323, who secured the Act which gave to them an equal voice with the peers in the nation's legislature. From the marriage of Nigel de Longford with Cecilia de Hathersage, about the middle of the thirteenth century, till the decease of Sir Nicholas – the last of his race – in 1610, they held lands in all of the hundreds of the county; they allied themselves with the Deincourts, Ferrars, Fitzherberts, Okeovers, Poles; they had a park in Barlborough of eight hundred acres, and another at Longford, of which the licence to enclose was obtained in 1251. They were knights by compulsion from their estates, while on their tombs they are shewn wearing the collar of S.S. This collar was a celebrated Lancastrian badge, first introduced by Henry IV, and conferred for some great service rendered to the crown.

All that now remains of the Longford family are those tombs in the parish church of St Chad, Longford, the village from which the family took their name when Margaret de Longford, one of the two heiresses of Ralph fitz Ercald, married Nigel de Gresley. By a

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partition made in 1198, Longford, Bupton, Malmerton, Thurvaston, Woodhouses in Derbyshire, and Ellastone, Calwich and Prestwood in Staffordshire², became the nucleus of the family estate. Margaret had been a ward of Geoffrey de Clinton, Chamberlain to Henry I and founder of Kenilworth priory, to which she gave the church of Longford. Further, in 1149 she and her husband founded a small Augustinian convent of Black Canons at Calwich, one mile east of Ellastone, Staffordshire, as a cell of Kenilworth (Dugdale, 1817-30). The Longfords continued to be patrons of this religious house, maintaining a close relationship with the priors who acted on their behalf in family affairs for the next four centuries. The family holding in Longford consisted of a capital messuage of 120 acres, a park and a water mill, and was held for the service of a knight's fee of the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, in whose wardship Longford minors were traditionally placed. However, it appears that Ellastone with its cluster of hamlets, just over the Derbyshire border, was their chief residence, where they would have maintained a large manorial household.

By further marriages with prominent knightly families, namely Hathersage, (through whom they acquired their Lancastrian tenancy and the manor of Withington, Lancashire, and moieties of the manors of Barlborough, Killamarsh and Hathersage, Derbyshire.) Byron, le Botiller, Deincourt, and Sulney, the Longfords secured a considerable but scattered estate throughout Derbyshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. The Longfords were fortunate to avoid depredation of wealth and integrity of their lands caused by a minority of an heir throughout the fourteenth century. However, between 1415 and 1440 the family suffered two consecutive minorities with widows simultaneously drawing their third income in dower from the estates.

Following the usual custom of medieval society, Longford marriages were pursued within a tight knit circle of existing connections, to advance political security and wealth for following generations. The Longford family found partners for their heirs not only in Derbyshire, but also in Cheshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire, within the affinity of families serving the earls of Lancaster³. Closer to home in southwest Derbyshire where the daughters tended to be partnered, the gentry network had become so cohesive through intermarriage that even royal intervention to penetrate the power bloc proved futile. The gentry controlled every aspect of local law and order even (and sometimes especially) if it meant taking disputes outside of the court. The Longfords participated in most major acts of violence in Derbyshire in the fifteenth century, including the sack of Alveston in which they were pivotal. The change to Yorkist, then Tudor dynasties, brought social stability to Derbyshire and its northern neighbours but resulted in impersonal allegiance to the royal house. The fatal blow to the Longfords, was not caused by politics per se, but religion, for like many northern knightly families they continued to adhere to the faith of their ancestors after Henry VIII reformed the English church. A desperate but failed attempt to buy the lands of the dissolved Calwich priory, plus exorbitant recusancy fines meant that piece-by-piece their estate was gradually sold off. By the time the last Longford male died in 1610, there was precious little left except for Longford itself.

² Manchester University, Crutchley Muniments ref: CRU/182.

³ The Longford family was one of only eight families in the service of John of Gaunt, which could claim to have originally been in the retinue of Thomas, earl of Lancaster. (Walker, 1990, p.28)

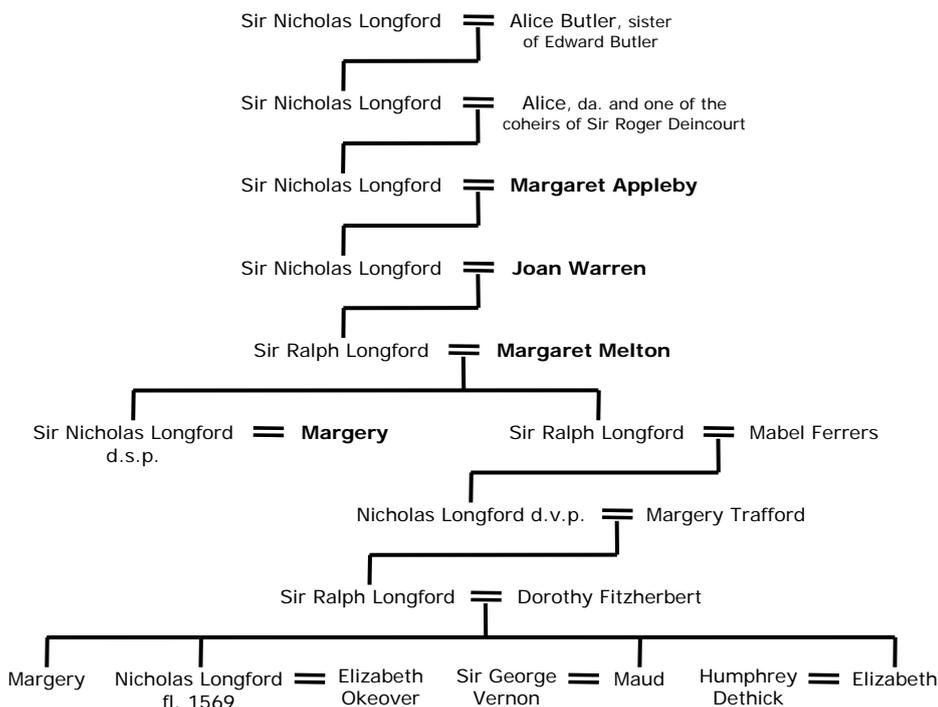


Fig 1. **A Section of the Longford Family Pedigree from the Herald's Visitation of Derbyshire, 1569 and 1611⁴, with erroneous information shown in bold. A generation is missing between Sir Ralph and Sir Nicholas Longford VI.**

The Family Genealogy

Sir Nicholas Longford I, born around 1288 and the first of four consecutive heads of the family so named, was the son of Sir John Longford, who died in 1304, and Joan Byron, daughter of Sir John Byron of Cadney, Lincolnshire (Moor, 1930, vol.1, p.172) and Joan, daughter of Baldwin Tyas⁵. In June 1301, when 14 years of age, a marriage was arranged for him - perhaps somewhat hastily as intimated by his father's inquisition post mortem (IPM), for the young couple had not been properly seised of their estate - to Katherine Brailsford, daughter of Sir Henry Brailsford (d.1304) of Brailsford, Derbyshire (Statham, 1938).

... the summer before he went to the king in Scotland there was an agreement (prelocucio) made between the said John and Sir Henry de Braylesford that their sons and heirs should marry their daughters respectively, so that after the said espousals the said John should give to Nicholas his son and heir with Katherine daughter of the said Henry 20 pounds of land in the manors of Kenewoldemerche and Barleburgh to hold to them and the heirs of their bodies and accordingly such a charter was made by the said John, but seisin was

⁴ The full pedigree was published (1891) in *The Genealogist*, N.S. **8** (1): 17-18.

⁵ The Tyas family name was also recorded as Tyeys, Teys and Teutonicus. The pedigree of the Byron family can be found in Thoroton (1790-1796).

*never given to the said Nicholas and Katherine in the life of the said John, who died seised thereof, and the charter is therefore void.*⁶

Under this same agreement Margery, sister of Nicholas, was wife of Ralph, Henry Brailsford's son and heir. By Katherine Brailsford Nicholas had a daughter named Katherine⁷ (Garratt, 1985, No.831).

Of Nicholas' early career, little is known – in 1313, along with many other knights in the retinue of Thomas, earl of Lancaster⁸, he received a pardon for his part in the death of Piers de Gavaston, Edward II's favourite, and in 1321 he was pardoned for acts against Hugh Despenser, Piers' replacement in affection. However, Nicholas was captured at the battle of Boroughbridge on March 16 the following year, supporting the rebellion against the Despensers. He narrowly escaped sentence for treason, of being hanged, drawn and quartered, passed on other followers of the earl of Lancaster (who was himself beheaded), but his estates were confiscated and he was forced to find mainpernors (sureties for his appearance before the law) and guarantors to pay a fine of 200 marks, to keep his life and his lands, which were subsequently restored to him on 6 November 1322⁹. Nicholas was allowed to pay off the fine at 50 marks a year - 25 marks at Easter and 25 at Michaelmas - which must have been a strain on his estates. There are certainly indications of later indebtedness, for in 1331 he sold the advowson of Whitwell church to his kinsman Sir Thomas Goushill for 100 marks of silver (Garratt, 1985, No.737), and the same year an order was made to excuse him from some financial demands because he was in the king's company¹⁰. In 1337 a release was made of a bond made to the prior of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in Clerkenwell, for the repayment of 100 shillings which may have been in connection to a license he had obtained in 1333 to alienate land in mortmain to the hospital to pay for divine service daily for the souls of himself, his ancestors and John de Ecton¹¹.

The return to favour in 1322 after Boroughbridge may have coincided with Nicholas' second marriage to Alice, daughter of William, Lord le Botiller, of Wem, Shropshire, and Oversley, Warwickshire (Cokayne, 1912), and Ela, daughter of Sir Roger de Herdeburge of Great Harborough, Warwickshire, and Ida de Odingsells of Maxstoke, Warwickshire¹². Alice's brother Edward le Botiller, a cleric, was certainly leasing Nicholas' manor of Withington in Lancashire as early as 1323¹³. Alice's grandmother, Ida, by a second marriage, had become wife of John, Lord Clinton, and held an influential post as lady of the chamber to Queen Isabella (Blackley and Hermansen,

⁶ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.4, No.202 (HMSO, 1913).

⁷ A fine in 1346, over property in Longford and Brailsford indicates Katherine was married twice, first to William de Hintes of Hints, Staffordshire by whom she had a son, and secondly Edward de Montgomery, son of Sir Walter Montgomery of Cubley, by whom she had three more sons.

⁸ As a fee he received 20 marcs *p.a.* from the mill at Newcastle-under-Lyme. (Holmes, 1957, p.135)

⁹ Manchester University. Rylands Charters. RYCH/2221.

¹⁰ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1330-1333*, Vol.II, p.348 (HMSO, 1898b).

¹¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1323-1327*, p.394 (HMSO, 1904).

¹² A descent from William Longespee, illegitimate son of Henry II, and Ela, countess of Salisbury is indicated by the occurrence of the names Ela and Ida in the family. This descent was most likely William Longespee--William Longespee--Ida Longespee--Ela fitz Walter--Ida de Odingsells--Ela de Herdeburge.

¹³ PRO: C 143/155/7.

1971)¹⁴. The Longfords had a long-standing connection with the Clinton family, which appears to have been renewed in 1390¹⁵.

Nicholas' fall from grace did not affect his usefulness to the king, for shortly afterwards in 1324 he was in Edward II's service in Aquitaine¹⁶. His military career also included service in the war against Scotland in 1334 in the retinue of Richard, earl of Arundel (Wrottesley, 1889a), and Edward III's campaign in France in 1346 at the battle of Crécy on 26 August 1346, which resulted in a decisive victory against the French, followed by participation in the successful eleven-month long Siege of Calais which resulted in the acquisition of Calais into English hands, where it remained until 1558 (Page, 1907). Anticipating a significant role in the action, on 19 May 1346, before Nicholas embarked overseas with Stephen Curzon, Edward III had made him a knight banneret. Although appointed several times commissioner of the peace, commissioner of array, and commissioner of oyer and terminer for Derbyshire between 1323 and 1355, Nicholas also found himself on the wrong side of the law when accused of beating up the clerk of Ellastone in 1310¹⁷, and taking part in a popular gentry pastime of raiding a neighbour's park and being accused of stealing a beast from Thomas de Furnival's deer park at Alton in 1324 (Wrottesley, 1889b, p.50).

Holding substantial property in both Derbyshire and Staffordshire, Nicholas was eligible to be returned to parliament for both counties, and was consequently summoned to the Great Council at Westminster on 9 May 1324 as Knight of the Shire for Derbyshire and Staffordshire (Moor, 1930, Vol.3, p.12). On 19 November 1341 he was appointed sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and in 1342-43 was the king's escheator for the same counties (Anon, 1963). Royal favours abounded, for in 1333 he was granted for life, for his good service, a moiety of the manor of Thurvaston which had been forfeited by Hugh le Despenser the elder, (commuted in 1339 to include Nicholas' heirs), and later that year the receipts of the bailiwick of the hundred of Totmonslow, Staffordshire¹⁸. In 1345 he was granted permission to empark his wood in his manor of Withington in Lancashire and awarded the custody and marriage of the heir of William Sacheverel, possibly for a daughter¹⁹. In May of the same year Nicholas and Alice were granted a papal indult to choose a confessor at the hour of death²⁰, which must have been of some religious comfort to them throughout the period of the Black Death which followed in 1349. The family appears to have survived it unscathed and on 10 December that year, following the social unrest caused by the ravages of the plague, Nicholas was created one of the extra commissioners of the peace²¹.

¹⁴ Evidence for the marriages of Ida de Odingsells was discussed in the thread "*Ida de Odingsells's Herdeburgh and Clinton Marriages: Further Evidence*" in the newsgroup soc.genealogy.medieval on 27 Sept 2001.

¹⁵ When Sir John Clinton acted as a feoffee for Sir Nicholas Longford III. Derbyshire Record Office: *Every of Egginton*. Ref: D5236/9/13.

¹⁶ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1323-1327*, p.328 (HMSO, 1898a).

¹⁷ Nicholas and his mother, Joan, were accused of having beaten, wounded and ill-treated Henry le Marschall, clerk of Ellastone for which he claimed £40 in damages (Wrottesley, 1889b, p.7).

¹⁸ *Calendar of Fine Rolls*, Vol.IV, pp.344, 440; Vol.V, p.123 (HMSO, 1913-15).

¹⁹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1343-1345*, p.534 (HMSO, 1902).

²⁰ *Calendar of Papal Letters*, Vol.3, p.210 (HMSO, 1893-1989).

²¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1348-1350*, p.586 (HMSO, 1905).

Sir Nicholas died on the 8 February 1356²² and the escheator was ordered to take the fealty of Alice, his widow, for a moiety of the manor of Barlborough, which was then held in chief owing to the minority of the overlord²³. Apart from his son Nicholas, said to be aged 23 and more, it is believed he left a daughter Alice - according to Fitzherbert pedigrees, wife of William Fitzherbert of Norbury (Mosley, 1999) - although chronology might suggest that Alice was of the next generation of the Longford family²⁴. Another son, Thomas, was presented to the living of North Wingfield church in 1360 by Nicholas II (Cox, 1879, Vol.4, p.385)²⁵ and was one of the feoffees for his brother in the manor of Longford in 1362²⁶. Although it is not known what Alice brought to the family on her marriage, Sir Nicholas Longford III, her grandson, was one of the four heirs of her brother, Edward le Botiller, on his death in 1376, and received a share of a small amount of property originating from the paternal inheritance of Ela de Herdeburge²⁷. Part of that inheritance included tenements in Great Harborough, which appear to have passed to a younger son, for in 1413 John, son of Henry Longford, and Agnes his wife sold their premises there for 100 marks (Dugdale, 1730).

Alice took Sir John de Hyde of Norbury, Cheshire, as her second husband and together they made a final concord in early April 1359 enfeoffing William de Salford, parson of Longford, in two messuages, 140 acres of land, 10 acres of meadow, 60 acres of wood, 100 shillings rent in Ellastone and a moiety of the manor of Barlborough, (representing her dower), which he granted back to them in turn for the life of Alice, with remainder to her son Sir Nicholas Longford and his heirs (Wrottesley, 1890, p.189). Sir John Hyde and Alice were still living in 1364/5 and this marriage opened up new Cheshire connections, which would be significant for future Longford marriages. Sir John Hyde, lord of Norbury, Halghton and a moiety of Hyde, served in the French wars under the Black Prince. Referred to as the 'prince's bachelor', he had served in France in the same campaign as Sir Nicholas, and in March 1347 indentured to serve with the prince for a further year with two esquires, in return for payment and recompense for any loss in war²⁸. He fought again in 1359 with the prince in France; afterwards being owed an astounding sum of 80 marks for a horse, which Prince Edward had bought from him there²⁹. His first wife was Margery Davenport by whom he had several children including his third son and heir who was married to a daughter of Robert Staveley, a connection of the Radcliffes. A kinsman of Sir John's was Thomas Legh of Bagley and Levenshulme, and it would have been during this period that Thomas gained a foothold in the Longford interest in Levenhulme in the manor of Withington, when he was enfeoffed in 10 messuages,

²² *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.10, no.308 (HMSO, 1921).

²³ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1354-1360*, Vol.10, p.263 (HMSO, 1908). This was John Darcy, who was then six years old, son and heir of John, Lord Darcy of Knaith who had died that year. The former died in 1362, aged 12, leaving his brother Philip as next heir.

²⁴ Her grandson, Nicholas Fitzherbert, was born c.1410.

²⁵ Thomas evidently died in 1369 when a new rector was appointed in his place.

²⁶ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/208.

²⁷ Alice's sisters were Ankaret, wife of John Le Strange of Blackmere, Ida wife of William Trussell of Odiham, and Denise wife of Hugh de Cokesay. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.14, no.100 (HMSO, 1952).

²⁸ *Register of Edward the Black Prince*. Part I (1346-1348) pp.13, 84, 127 (HMSO, 1930).

²⁹ *Register of Edward the Black Prince*. Part IV (1351-1365) pp.355, 361 (HMSO, 1930). The prince's clerk and receiver-general, Sir Peter de Lacy, refused the order to pay Sir John this debt probably on account of its exorbitant nature. 80 marks (£53) represented a small fortune in 1360 and there is clearly an untold story behind this entry in the prince's register.

200 acres of land and 40 acres of meadow for 20 marks per annum³⁰. According to Ormerod (1882, vol.3 p.810), Sir John Hyde had a son by Alice, named Thomas, who is mentioned in 30 Edward III, the regnal year of which ended on 24 January 1357. If this was the same Alice who was Nicholas Longford's widow, she must have married and conceived Thomas immediately after her first husband's death, and would have been at least 40 when he was born. Thomas de Hyde married Mary, daughter of William de Tabley of Nether Knutsford, who was coheir of her brother William in 1372, but it is not certain whether Thomas was father of Mary's daughter and heir, Joan.

Sir Nicholas Longford II was born around 1334 and married Alice Deincourt, daughter and coheir of Sir Roger Deincourt of Knapthorpe, Nottinghamshire and Park Hall, Derbyshire, the last male of a cadet line of the Barons Deincourt, and Matilda, daughter of Ralph Bugge³¹ and sister of Richard de Bingham of Nottinghamshire (Foulds, 1994). Unusually, their mothers negotiated the contract for the marriage of Nicholas and Alice because their husbands were serving in France with Edward III. By the terms drawn up on 29 September 1346, Alice was to bring land in Duckmanton, Derbyshire, to be held at a rose rent, as her marriage portion, and the couple was married by 3 April the following year (Jeayes, 1906, Nos.1107, 1108). When her father died about 1351, from a lingering illness which caused him to be relieved of the office of sheriff in 1348, the inheritance consisting of the manors of Knapthorpe, Park Hall in Morton, Hasland, Gildeford, Boythorpe, North Wingfield with the advowson, and lands elsewhere, was divided between Alice and her sister, Joan, wife of Sir Robert Neville of Scotton and Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire. In 1371 Sir Nicholas and Alice arranged to lease for 40 years, to their niece Maud Neville, sole heir of her parents, and her ill-fated first husband Sir William de Cantelupe³², "*their purparty of Le Parkhall manor with appurtenances; saving all manner of rents, advowsons, profits of courts, their purparty of mills and the woods and pastures of their parks, and their purparty of Colebotirley, Asshouere, Chestirfeld, Aluy Wod, Grayhirstmore, Brampton Wode, and Molotgroue, of lands and tenements, rents and services in le Peek and of the reversion of Boythorp manor with appurtenances; rent, 66s. 8d. p.a., payable at the two terms of the year*"³³.

Following family feudal obligations, the year of his father's death saw Sir Nicholas serving in the retinue of Henry, Duke of Lancaster in Brittany, and again serving under him in France in 1359 in Rheims, Burgundy and Paris (Wrottesley, 1887, p.102). During the years 1369 and 1370 Nicholas returned to France, this time in the retinue of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, supporting the Black Prince in Guienne (Wrottesley, 1887, p.112/113). In 1372, receiving £40 p.a., Nicholas was one of Gaunt's highest paid retainers (Walker, 1990, p.273)

Alice and Nicholas may have favoured their property in Withington, their most valuable single estate, for in 1360 the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield granted them an oratory there. The manor certainly had the luxury of a deer park, because in 1352 Nicholas I had accused Sir John Daniel and another for breaking into the park and carrying off the deer³⁴. Nicholas died on 23 May 1373, leaving a son and heir Nicholas aged 22 years, and a son William, for whom he had enfeoffed Deincourt tenements in

³⁰ Farrer and Brownbill, 1911, VCH Lancaster, Vol.4, p.310n.

³¹ Son of Ralph de Nottingham. Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/23.

³² Maud and her lover are said to have murdered Sir William Cantelupe in 1375 (Roskell, 1992, Vol.2, pp.449-450).

³³ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/18.

³⁴ Farrer and Brownbill, 1911, VCH Lancaster, Vol.4, p.289n.

Bakewell, Darley, Rowsley, Stanton, Lee, Calton, and Chatsworth worth 105s. 2d. annually³⁵. A Roger de Longford, possibly another son, also appears on records in connection with an assault on Sir Peter de la Pole in Derby³⁶.

Nicholas' widow, Alice, remarried Oliver de Barton, another of Gaunt's retainers who had served overseas in 1369, 1370 and 1373³⁷. He was party to an agreement over her dower made with her son in 1376 in a third part of the manors of Longford, Hathersage, Withington, and Ellastone and a moiety of the manors of Barlborough and Killamarsh. Oliver and Alice granted and quitclaimed to Nicholas and his heirs all their right in a third part of these estates, which they held for Alice's life as dower, for which Nicholas gave them 200 marks for the concession, and 85 marks annually (Wrottesley, 1890, p.192). Oliver appears to have put this income to good use for in 1380 he bought a third of the manor of Ensor for 100 marks, the manor of Ash for £100 in 1383, and in 1387 he bought a messuage in Derby for £20 (Garratt, 1985, Nos.946, 953, 964). Alice and Oliver probably spent their remaining years on the Deincourt estates, for in January 1385 Alice is known to have been in residence at Park Hall³⁸ and most of her property dealings were concerned with her inheritance. Both Alice's husbands presented rectors to her advowson of North Wingfield church – Sir Nicholas in 1360 and Oliver in 1378 (Cox, 1879, Vol.4, p.485). Alice was still living mid 1385 when she was named in a settlement of the Deincourt estates with her niece, Maud Neville, and Maud's third husband John Bussy (Garratt, 1985, No.955). Around this time Oliver acted as a feoffee in the manor of Harthill for Sir John Cokayne (Garratt, 1985, No.961), and the following year he was given power of attorney with his stepson, Nicholas, over the affairs of Philip Okeover, their neighbour in Okeover, Staffordshire, while he served in Spain with John of Gaunt (Wrottesley, 1893). This trust is strongly indicative of a family tie, which will become evident further into this study. In 1388 Oliver was one of the commissioners investigating the damage caused by the flooding of the river Idle, with a brief to effect dredging of the waterway³⁹, and he was still living in 1390 when he acted as a feoffee for Nicholas III⁴⁰, and this would suggest that they were on friendly terms.

Nicholas Longford III was born around 1351 and was married by 1373⁴¹ - though probably well before then⁴² - to Margery, daughter of Sir Alfred Sulney (d.c.1380) another of Gaunt's retainers, sister and coheir with Alice (d.1423), of Sir John Sulney, who died in 1390. Alice was successively wife of Sir Thomas Stafford, Sir Robert Pype, William Spornore and John Mulsoe, but her only issue, Thomas Stafford, died in 1425, leaving a son and sole heir who died in boyhood. Alice appears to have sold most of her half share of the Sulney inheritance in 1421, with Pinxton and Normanton ending up in the possession of the Babingtons of Chilwell⁴³. The Sulney family originated from Soligny, Normandy - hence the derivation of the name - and had

³⁵ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.13, No.256 (HMSO, 1952).

³⁶ PRO C 1/7/179.

³⁷ Between 1374-1382 he was paid a fee of £20 p.a (Walker, 1990, p.263)

³⁸ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.18, No.999 (HMSO, 1987).

³⁹ <http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/piercy1828/idle.htm>

⁴⁰ When Nicholas' wife, Margery, came into her Sulney inheritance.

⁴¹ Nicholas IV, his son and heir, was born around 1373.

⁴² Nicholas witnessed a grant by feoffees to Alfred de Sulney in 1369 (Jeayes, 1906, No.1865).

⁴³ Jeayes (1906) No.1873.

established a cadet line in Newton Solney, and Broughton, Derbyshire in 1205⁴⁴. Owing to conflicting pedigrees it is often assumed that Margery was a member of the Appleby family. This confusion was caused by the fact that Sir Alfred Sulney (d.1346) had four daughters by Margaret, daughter of Sir John Trussell of Kibblestone – Ermentrude, wife of Sir Ralph Lathbury, Agnes wife of Sir Edmund Appleby, and two other daughters who were nuns⁴⁵. The married daughters each received a moiety of Newton Solney as their inheritance. After the death of their father, Agnes and her husband agreed to quitclaim their interest in Newton Solney, in exchange for the manors of Bilby and Ranby in Nottinghamshire with their cousin Sir Alfred Sulney, and in the following year this was formalised by a final concord⁴⁶. By a collusive assize of novel disseisin in 1380, Ermentrude Lathbury and her second husband, John Foucher, and Sir John Sulney “*agreed between them to have manor of Newton Sulny valued and divided by ‘four good and wise men’, moiety assigned to Foucher and his wife to be granted by them to Sulney for their lives*”⁴⁷, effecting a recovery of title in Newton Solney to Sulney possession⁴⁸. However, after Sir Alfred’s son, John, died in 1390 without issue, the Appleby family reneged on their agreement and claimed title in the manor. This was still being disputed in 1447⁴⁹, leading to the assumption by later historians that to have a claim Agnes Appleby must have been a sister of John, and that Margaret was a daughter of Agnes.

Nicholas continued family obligation as a knight and is known to have served under Thomas of Woodstock, the king’s uncle, in France in 1380 (Wrottesley, 1893), and was commissioner of the peace for Derbyshire the following year (Roskell, 1992, Vol.3, p.662). On 11 November 1394 he was appointed sheriff of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, but does not appear to have been active after this (Anon, 1963). In 1376 he had been co-heir of his great-uncle Edward le Boteler to a small inheritance (which comprised a quarter share in the manor of Willy, land in Great Harborough, Warwickshire, and a fourth turn in appointment to the advowson of the church of Weston Turville, Buckinghamshire), and in 1390 Margery his wife came into her substantial inheritance, which consisted of a quarter share of the manors of Newton Solney and Blackwell, a moiety of the manors of Pinxton and Normanton, Derbyshire, lands in Basford, Nottinghamshire, and £4 6s 8d annual rent in Willingham in Orby, Lincolnshire. On 24 August 1390 these assets, excepting Normanton and Pinxton, were placed in the hands of their trustees Richard Scrope, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, John de Clinton and Philip de Okeover, knights, Oliver de Barton, John de Aston and John Shaye⁵⁰.

⁴⁴ Jeayes (1906) No.1753. Ralph de Argouges gave Newton to Alfred (Alured), keeping the lands in Normandy for himself.

⁴⁵ Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Egginton D5236/9/6.

⁴⁶ Garratt (1985) No.841. In this agreement the Applebys quitclaimed their interest to Alfred, son of Alfred Sulney in their moiety of Newton Sulney for 100 marks of silver.

⁴⁷ Derbyshire Record Office. Every of Egginton D5236/4/32

⁴⁸ Derbyshire Record Office. Every of Egginton. D5236/9/8, D5236/4/33

⁴⁹ When John Appleby paid a bond to Sir Nicholas Longford to abide by the award of John Portington, one of the Justices of the Common Bench in the dispute over the title of the fourth part of the manor of Newton Sulney. Derbyshire Record Office. Every of Egginton D5236/4/38.

⁵⁰ Derbyshire Record Office. Every of Egginton. Ref 5236/9/13. Pinxton and Normanton were still being held by Thomas Foljambe and Robert Longham who did not release them to Margery and Alice until the following year (Jeayes, 1906, No.1867).

The Longfords do not appear to have been called upon to be feoffees very often, but on 8 July 1401 Nicholas, along with Sir Thomas de Wendesley, Sir Nicholas Goushill, Sir John Cokayne, Sir Roger Leche and Henry Booth, acted as a feoffee for Henry de Mansfield of Chesterfield of his lands in Chesterfield, Boythorp, Dronfield, Walton, Hasland and Brampton⁵¹. This was one of Nicholas' last deeds for a few weeks later he was dead. His Derbyshire inquisition post mortem records that he died on 31 August 1401, and his son, Sir Nicholas, aged 28 years and more, was his heir⁵². Margery and Nicholas are known to have had a family of six sons – Nicholas, John, Thomas, Alfred, Henry and Ralph - and at least two daughters, Joan and Ellen.



Fig 2. Sir Nicholas III (d.1401) lies under a canopy of roses on an altar tomb wearing an early form of Lancastrian SS livery collar over camail and jupon, typically worn over the period 1360-1410. This tomb with its armorials would have been originally brightly painted. (Photograph copyright © Peter Sutton)

John Longford appears to have been the second son and most likely named for Margery's brother. A papal dispensation was obtained for him to be instituted as rector of Longford in 1393 even though aged only 15, on condition that he proceed to Oxford and not take up residence until he was 18. However, a new rector replaced him in 1395, which may indicate an early death, as he does not appear in records

⁵¹ Nottinghamshire Archives: Foljambe of Osberton DD/FJ/1/64/133. This feoffment and the fact that Nicholas held lands in the same places as Henry Mansfield suggests that he may have married an undocumented Longford daughter. Margery spent her last years in Chesterfield, possibly with this daughter.

⁵² *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.18, No.620 (HMSO, 1987).

after this time (Cox, 1875, vol.1, p.188). Thomas the third son was also destined for the church, and in 1402 when he was 17 was granted a papal dispensation to hold a benefice with or without cure⁵³.

Alfred⁵⁴, the fourth son, named after his maternal grandfather, was appointed rector of Longford in 1401 while in minor orders (Cox, 1875, Vol.1, p.188), and the following year was granted a papal dispensation not to be bound to take holy orders for seven years while he was studying at a university⁵⁴. He must have resigned the living for in 1414/15 as a 'squyer' he was appointed one of the tax collectors for Derbyshire (HMSO, 1934). He accompanied his eldest brother, Nicholas, to France in 1415, surviving him to take part in the battle of Agincourt as a lancer in the retinue of Sir John Grey (Porter, 1923), but had the task of administering Nicholas' will on his return home. In 1426 he was party to the following covenant concerning his cousins, the Fitzherberts of Norbury, Derbyshire, whose grandmother was Alice Longford. His partners to this contract were people whose significance will become apparent further on.

*Covenant between John Cokayn, knight, Thomas Oker [Okeover], esq., Alvered de Longeford, esq., and Thomas Dawkyn, chaplain and John de la Pole de Hertynghon [Hartington] and Henry de Bothe, esq., by which de la Pole and Bothe agree that, if Nicholas son and heir of Henry Fitzherbert lives to become of age or to be married by them in his minority, then they will pay £40 to Alice, Joan and Elizabeth, sisters of Nicholas, in return for which Cokayn, Oker, de Longeford and Dawkyn grant to de la Pole and de Bothe, the manor of Norbury with advowson of the church of the same place, which they held by gift and feoffment of William Avener and Richard Angers, clerks, for 15 years: after the term of 15 years, the manor reverts to Nicholas Fitzherbert and his heirs.*⁵⁵

The latest Alfred appears on record is in late 1434 when he transferred lands, which he had acquired as a feoffee for Sir Thomas Blount, son and heir of Sir Walter Blount, receiving 20 shillings per annum for life for his services⁵⁶.

Henry Longford was settled at the family manor of Basford, Nottinghamshire, but it is his murder, which occurred as a result of being caught up in the feud between his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Pierrepont, and Thomas Foljambe, for which he is most noted. In retaliation to a previous murderous assault on himself, Foljambe and a band of followers attacked Pierrepont and his party during a service in Chesterfield church on New Year's Day 1434, killing two of his companions - Henry Longford and William Bradshaw - and mutilating Pierrepont by cutting off the fingers of his right hand. Henry and Ellen's son, Henry, took revenge the next day at Chesterfield on a member of Foljambe's party (Wright, 1983, p.128).

Ralph Longford was the youngest son and little is known except he was living in 1430 when his name appears in the quitclaim of his mother to him and his older brothers, of lands in Newton Sulney, Basford, Orby and Willingham.

The daughters of Nicholas and Margery married into influential and wealthy landowning families. In 1391 a marriage contract was drawn up for Joan Longford to be married to Nicholas Montgomery, son and heir to Sir Nicholas Montgomery of Cublely and Marston Montgomery, Derbyshire, whereby the latter agreed to support

⁵³ *Calendar of Papal Letters*, Vol.5, p.483 (HMSO, 1893-1989).

⁵⁴ This name is seen in contemporary record as Alvredus, Alured, Alvred or Avery.

⁵⁵ Derbyshire Record Office: Okeover of Okeover D231M/E451. Nicholas Fitzherbert subsequently married Alice, daughter of Henry Booth, and they had eight sons and five daughters.

⁵⁶ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/163.

Joan Longford for four years after her marriage and to pay the couple an annuity of 20 marks for life. Sir Nicholas Longford paid a dowry of £153 and agreed to obtain the necessary papal dispensation, (granted on 7 Mar 1392), because the couple was doubly related in the fourth degree of consanguinity i.e. they shared great great grandparents in common⁵⁷. This relationship is possibly found in a common descent from the Sulney and Foljambe family, as indicated by the fact the young Nicholas Montgomery had a great-uncle by the name of Alfred Foljambe. The Montgomery family proved to be a close and trusted neighbour and acted as feoffees and witnesses for the Longford family well into the fifteenth century despite their Yorkist affiliation.

Ellen Longford is said to have married Sir Henry Pierrepont (d.1452) of Holme Pierrepont, Nottinghamshire (Marshall, 1871). Henry Longford being in the company of Sir Henry on that fateful New Year's Day in Chesterfield, and Thomas Longford's presence with Pierrepont in a related attack, does suggest a family relationship. Sir Henry appears as a witness in a few Longford deeds but did not act as a feoffee for the family. However, his grandson, also named Sir Henry, acted as a feoffee for the Longfords in the 1460s and 1470s. The feud must have caused tensions within the Longford family, being related to both parties.

Sir Nicholas Longford's widow, Margery, remarried, as his second wife, Sir Robert de Legh of Adlington, Cheshire (Roskell, 1992, Vol.2, p.601), a retainer and favourite of Richard II and constable of Oswestry castle. By Robert, Margery, who must have been in her forties, had a daughter and namesake who married Thomas de Davenport of Henbury in 1413 (Ormerod, 1882, p.661). In 1405 Margery and Sir Robert were both mentioned holding land in Killamarsh⁵⁸, and presided over the manorial court of Newton Sulney⁵⁹. The same year there was a dispute over the right of presentation of the Sulney advowson of South Normanton church⁶⁰, which was later conveyed to Sir Robert's family (Cox, 1875, Vol.1, p.284). In an attempt to recover it, Sir Nicholas Longford VI brought an unsuccessful suit against the Leghs to the King's Court in 1477 (Wrottesley, 1903). Sir Robert Legh died in 1408 and during her second widowhood, on 11 November 1408, Margery, with the consent of her son and his wife, enfeoffed the abbot of Welbec, the prior of Thurgarten and three clerics occupying Longford advowsons, in a portion of lands in Pinxton and Normanton to pay for a chaplain to pray for the soul of her father Sir Alfred Sulney in the church of Newton Sulney. This act, witnessed by John Darcy, Thomas Chaworth and Henry Pierrepont, was a fulfillment of an indenture of defeasance made in 1391 between Margery and her sister Alice and Thomas Foljambe and Robert Langham, that within twenty years they would establish a perpetual chantry of two priests in the church of Newton Sulney to pray for the soul of Sir Alfred Sulney⁶¹.

Margery, by now a wealthy widow, was again married before 29 February 1410, without licence, to Richard Clitheroe of Salesbury, Lancashire⁶² who had been another

⁵⁷ Roskell (1992) vol.3, pp.760-762;
Calendar of Papal Letters, Vol.4, p.442 (HMSO, 1893-1989).

⁵⁸ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.19, No.11 (HMSO, 1992).

⁵⁹ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/544.

⁶⁰ Derbyshire Record Office: Turbutt of Ogston. D37 M/RL1.

⁶¹ *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1389-1392*, pp.342-343 (HMSO, 1891). I am grateful to Peter Stewart for providing this information.

⁶² Richard was a younger brother of Sir Robert Clitheroe, whose daughter and heir, Sybil, was wife of Richard de Radcliffe of Ordsall. Richard's heir (not by Margery Sulney) was his

of Gaunt's retainers. This was not a successful match, for in 1419 Archbishop Chichele excommunicated her for refusing to restore conjugal rights to her husband (Roskell, 1992, Vol.2, p.601), not long after her grandson Ralph Longford, accompanied by Thomas Okeover, Nicholas Goushill, William Hondford, and Maud de Legh, had successfully abducted her away from him⁶³. Margery had (probably secretly) entrusted her jewels and plate with the prior of Gisborough, Yorkshire, for safekeeping, presumably to prevent her husband obtaining possession of them, and when Ralph reached his majority in 1421 he petitioned for their surrender. When Margery sued for divorce in 1424, Henry Bothe and Robert Hollington, prior of Calwich acted on her behalf as legal representatives⁶⁴. In 1426 Ralph gifted Margery her whole Sulney inheritance in Pinxton, Normanton and Bakewell with remainders to his uncles Alfred, Henry and Ralph. Margery later released all rights in property in Newton Solney, Basford, Orby and Willingham to her three youngest sons, with Alfred occupying Newton Solney and Henry occupying Basford. Margery was still living in 1431, in Chesterfield, when she was assessed at the inquest of knight's fees for the county of Derby, and reported to be holding a quarter of a knight's fee in Newton Solney, and tenements in Derby and Ashover⁶⁵.

Nicholas Longford IV was born around 1373 and was termed a knight at his father's inquisition post mortem, indicating he was already receiving an income giving him knightly status (£40 p.a). It is chronologically impossible that he was married to Joan Warren as given in the Herald's Visitations, for Joan's father was not born until 1394⁶⁶. Nicholas' widow's name was Alice, her family unknown, but all the clues as the mother of Ralph, Nicholas' son and heir, point to her being a daughter of Sir Edmund Cokayne of Ashbourne and Elizabeth Herthill⁶⁷. A close affinity emerged between the Longfords, Cokaynes and Okeovers, from the mid 1380s, which may pinpoint the time of a marriage contract. Thomas Okeover, whose mother was sister of Sir John Cokayne⁶⁸, was with Ralph when they abducted his grandmother, Margery, from her husband, and Sir Ralph Shirley of Ettington, husband of Alice Cokayne, was Ralph's feoffee in the 1420s. Evidence of a Longford/Cokayne marriage is further intimated by the introduction of the names Edmund, Elizabeth and George (the name of one of Sir Edmund's sons) into the Longford family, but of particular significance is the appearance of the Longford arms on the tomb of Sir Edmund Cokayne, along with others representing his ancestry and children's alliances⁶⁹. This marriage would have been politically advantageous within the Lancastrian fraternity as Sir John Cokayne

daughter Isabel, wife of John Talbot (Langton, 1876). I am grateful to Henry Sutliff for the identification and providing the relevant sources.

⁶³ PRO C 1/6/195 Richard Clitheroe claimed that Ralph had attacked him with band of 200 followers.

⁶⁴ PRO C 1/6/318.

⁶⁵ *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids*, Vol. 1, pp. 282, 289, 308 (HMSO, 1899).

⁶⁶ Joan Warren was actually married to Nicholas' grandson.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth was daughter and heir of Sir Richard Harthill and Alice Astley, daughter of Sir Giles Astley and Alice Wolvey. The Astleys are covered in Cokayne, G.E (1910) *Complete Peerage*, 1: 283.

⁶⁸ Derbyshire Record Office. Okeover of Okeover, D231M/T22. This was a gift of land in Okeover in 1420 by Sir John Cokayne to Thomas Okeover, to whom he refers as his nephew. The fact that Thomas Okeover's mother brought land in Ashbourne and Mappleton to her marriage to Sir Philip Okeover supports this identification.

⁶⁹ Cox (1877) Vol.2, p.382. The Longford arms were *Paly of six, or and gu, over all a bend, arg.*

was Gaunt's seneschal and one of the executors of his will in 1399 (Raine, 1836, p.234).

Nicholas continued in the service of the house of Lancaster, the head of which was now King Henry IV, son of John of Gaunt, and was summoned to Parliament as knight of the Shire for Derbyshire in 1404. However, his personal life was beset by a number of disputes for in 1405 he and his mother were sued for the custody of Nicholas Goushill by Elizabeth Darcy⁷⁰, in 1408 the prior of St Thomas' Stafford sued for feudal services, and more seriously in 1406, he and Sir Richard Radcliffe bound themselves in mutual securities for keeping the peace. Before September 1411 the justices of assize had been instructed to pardon Sir Nicholas and Ralph Radcliffe of Prestwich for "*various trespasses, misprisions, and rebellions*" for which they were indicted. This may have been related to the accusation by the rector of Manchester that Nicholas had raided his property and taken away his corn (Roskell, 1992, Vol.3, p.662). In 1412, with Sir John Dabridgecourt, Ralf Makerel, then sheriff of Derby, and William Ulkerthorpe, escheator, Sir Nicholas was responsible for the assessment of those receiving an income £20 or more a year from the county of Derby. He was himself assessed holding lands worth £40 p.a, as was his stepfather Richard Clitheroe holding Derbyshire lands in right of his wife⁷¹. A year later Sir Nicholas granted a moiety of the manor of Pinxton, Normanton, and quarter of manor of Newton Solney and Blackwell with property in Basford to "*Richard Cliderhowe esquire and Margery his wife*", with Sir Nicholas Montgomery, Sir Roger Leche, and Peter de la Pole acting as witnesses⁷².

In 1414/15 Sir Nicholas was sheriff of Lancashire but that year indentured to serve with Henry V, John of Gaunt's grandson, in France with a retinue of 50 archers. His name appears on a retrospective roll as head of a retinue serving in France, "*The retinu of Sir Nicholas Longford, which God Assoile*"⁷³. He did not return to England alive, but died on 17 September 1415 at the siege of Harfleur, probably one of over 2000 men, representing a fifth of Henry V's army, dying of dysentery contracted from the sewage and waste flowing from the town near where the English were camped. His brother Alfred was left to execute his will, which involved suing his co-executor John Hollington, prior of Calwich for a £40 debt (Wrottesley, 1896, p.107). There were three county inquisitions post mortem pertaining to Sir Nicholas – one for Derbyshire taken in 1415 for Thurvaston, held of the king in chief, and Longford, held of the bishop of Chester⁷⁴; one taken in 1422 for Ellastone, Staffordshire, which was held of Humphrey de Stafford, son and heir of Edmund, earl of Stafford, a minor in the king's wardship⁷⁵; and one for Withington, Lancashire⁷⁶. Sir Nicholas is known to have had three sons; Ralph, Thomas, and George; and one daughter, Elizabeth.

⁷⁰ Nicholas Goushill was possibly near kin owing to a Goushill/Longford marriage. The Longford arms appeared on the tomb of Sir Robert Goushill at Hoveringham (Baylay, 1903).

⁷¹ *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids*, Vol.6, pp.412, 414 (HMSO, 1920).

⁷² Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Eggington, D5236/9/18.

⁷³ *Family Chronicle*, March/April 1997.

⁷⁴ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.20, No.486 (HMSO, 1995). The published inquisition says that Ralph, his heir, was a quarter year old at the time of his death. He was, in fact, fourteen. The mistranslation is not surprising given the poor legibility of the document (PRO C138/17/59) caused by creasing, staining and fading of ink.

⁷⁵ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.21, No.711 (HMSO, 2002). I am grateful to Paul Reed, FASG, for this information.

⁷⁶ Farrer and Brownbill, 1911, VCH Lancaster, Vol.4, p.289n.

Thomas Longford was a witness to a quitclaim by Thomas Okeover and Henry Booth as feoffees of the manor of Harthill to Ralph Shirley and his wife Alice in 1430 (Wright, 1983, p.212). Named as Sir Ralph's brother in a grant, Thomas was given the proceeds of the manor of Longford by family trustees in 1433 after Ralph's death, until Nicholas came of age⁷⁷. The gift was licensed by the king for his service in the defence of the realm, but it may have been partial compensation for the fact that Ralph had attempted to enfeoff him in a moiety of Boythorpe manor, but the escheator rejected the legality of this during the inquisition post mortem for Ralph in 1432⁷⁸. It was this Thomas who joined in an attack with Sir Henry Pierrepont on Thomas Bradshaw at Langley in August 1434, in what may have been revenge for the murder of his uncle Henry. He and Pierrepont appeared before the justices of assize, but were acquitted by a jury clearly stacked in their favour (Wright, 1983, p.133). Thomas is last mentioned in a quitclaim of land to him in Longford in 1435⁷⁹.

George Longford acted as attorney for Ralph in 1429 to deliver seisin (formal possession) of the manors to Ralph's feoffees⁸⁰. He was again mentioned in an unusual grant in trust by Ralph's feoffees to Sir Thomas Chaworth, of rents out of the manors of Pinxton, Normanton and Blackwell to take effect in the event of the death of Ralph, Margaret his wife, and George Longford, until the majority of the heir⁸¹. As all three conditions did not occur during Nicholas' minority, the grant never took effect. He acted as attorney again for Nicholas Longford V in 1458, to deliver seisin to Nicholas' feoffees of his tenements in Newton Solney⁸². George married and appears to be the ancestor of the Longfords of Mansfield and Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, as given in the 1569 Nottinghamshire Visitation by Thomas Longford of Sutton, who claimed, "*George Longford a younger brother of Longford of Longford in Com. Darby*"⁸³ as his great grandfather. This family bore the arms of Longford of Longford with an annulet sable for difference.

Elizabeth married John de la Pole of Hartington, younger son of Peter de la Pole of Radbourne⁸⁴. Between 1419 and 1421 Peter de la Pole received the income from Sir Nicholas Longford's estate until the majority of the heir. The Poles and Okeovers enjoyed a close relationship acting as feoffees for each other throughout the 1440s⁸⁵.

On 4 June 1416, some time after her husband's death, orders were given by Joan of Navarre, the queen mother, to John Ashby, her steward in Staffordshire, to assign dower for the "*mother of Ralph fitz Nicholas Langford*"⁸⁶. Alice remarried William Chauntrell, a lawyer and Placitor Regis for Chester⁷⁷, but she may have died not long afterwards, as she is not mentioned in any Longford deeds, although it is noteworthy that John Stanley, who had the farm of Withington during Ralph's minority, was godfather to William Chauntrell's son (Roskell, 1992, Vol.4, p.457).

⁷⁷ Jeayes (1906), No.1592.

⁷⁸ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/30.

⁷⁹ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/223.

⁸⁰ Jeayes (1906), No.1589.

⁸¹ Jeayes (1906), No.1868. This charter is wrongly dated 1399. It should read 1422.

⁸² Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Eggington. D5236/4/40.

⁸³ Marshall (1871) p.32.

⁸⁴ Cox (1877) Vol.3, p.258. This statement is unsupported.

⁸⁵ Derbyshire Record Office: Okeover of Okeover, D231M/E471, D231M/E477, D231M/E478, D231M/E479.

⁸⁶ *List of Ancient Correspondence of the Chancery and Exchequer*, p.795 (HMSO, 1902).

Ralph Longford was born at the manor of Calwich, Staffordshire, on 27 October 1400. Although the details of his baptism in Ellastone church, given by the twelve witnesses for his proof of age, are somewhat formulaic, they present an interesting vignette of a medieval baptism. The bailiff of the manor of Calwich said he was sent to fetch Katharine Malegrave to nurse Ralph. One witness carried a ewer and basin of silver from the manor of Calwich to the church to contain water, in which Ralph's godparents could wash their hands after raising him from the font. Another witness said he carried a large candle from the manor of Calwich and held it in his hand during Ralph's baptism. Richard Bromley of Abbot's or King's Bromley was parish clerk of Ellastone at the time, and held a book before the priest at the font. Yet another witness said he carried two measures of silver containing 'Clarreye' and 'Malveseie' wines and 4 silver cups from the manor of Calwich to the church for the godparents and others standing around. Ralph's godfather was Ralph Weston who gave Ralph a little silver-gilt cup and to Ralph's nurse, 6s. 8d. (half a mark), and his godmother was Mary Fulham who gave him a silver bell, and his nurse 6s. 8d. The last witness said he remembered many men and women coming from the church, who told him that Ralph had been baptized amid great rejoicing⁸⁷.

Probably when 14 years of age, as was customary for male heirs of property at the time, Ralph married Margaret Radcliffe⁸⁸, daughter of Sir Richard Radcliffe of Astley and Winmarleigh, Lancashire, by his wife Margaret⁸⁹. This alliance was most likely arranged via his grandmother's third marriage to Richard Clitheroe, whose niece was married to Richard Radcliffe of Ordsall. The Radcliffes were a prolific clan with many branches, and their continuing involvement with the Longfords is evident for most of the fifteenth century. As already noted, Sir Richard Radcliffe had dealings with the Longford family as early as 1406 when he and Sir Nicholas bound themselves in mutual securities of 1000 marks⁹⁰. In 1424 Ralph Longford presented George Radcliffe, (later archdeacon of Chester), to Longford Church when rector of Wymeslow, in an exchange of benefices with Richard Radcliffe, then incumbent rector of Longford (Cox, 1877, Vol.3, p.188). The latter acted as one of Ralph's feoffees in 1424⁹¹. Margaret, as a widow, later presented Robert Radcliffe to the living of Longford in 1433. Her brother was Sir Thomas Radcliffe (d.1440), knight of the shire for Lancashire in 1421, and affiliated to the Lancastrian cause⁹². His second wife was Katherine Booth, niece of Henry Booth, who acted as Margery Sulney's attorney during her divorce. In 1439 Thomas' son and heir, Thomas, was killed by his kinsman William Radcliffe of Todmorden during an intrafamilial feud (Roskell, 1992, Vol.4, p.166).

⁸⁷ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.21, No.882 (HMSO, 2002). I am grateful to Paul Reed, FASG, for providing this information.

⁸⁸ Margaret Radcliffe is identified as sister of Sir Thomas Radcliffe in a suit after Sir Ralph's death, *Margaret that was the wyfe of Rauf of LONGEFORD, knyght, v. Thomas of RADCLYF, knight, her brother.: Refusal to make a defeasance to a statute merchant made that the said Mergret shuld not be ravysshet.*: PRO C 1/1507/4.

⁸⁹ After her husband's death in 1431 she sued "*Nicholas Botiler and Katerine his wife, late wife of Thomas Radclyffe, and Richard Radclyffe, son of the said Thomas and Katerine*" for an annuity payable for lease of her dower and lands in Clitheroe and Astley: PRO C 1/39/46.

⁹⁰ Identified as Richard son of Thomas Radcliffe in *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1405-1409* (HMSO, 1931, p.246). I would like to thank Peter Stewart for providing this information.

⁹¹ Jeayes (1906) No.1874.

⁹² Their grandfather had been constable of Lancaster Castle to John of Gaunt, who had referred to him as one of his "*trechers Esquiers*" in his will made in 1399 (Raine, 1836, p.238).

When Sir Nicholas died in 1415, his son and heir was a month short of his fifteenth birthday. A dispute arose over the custody of Ralph between the bishop of Chester, who had traditionally held the wardship of Longford minors, and the king⁹³. Judgement fell in favour of the latter and custody of most of his Derbyshire lands was given to Sir Roger Leche, steward of the duchy of Lancaster and treasurer of the royal household, while John Stanley had the custody of Withington (Roskell, 1992, Vol.4, p.456). Queen Joan appears to have given Ellastone to John Ashby until 1419, when Peter de Pole took custody until Ralph's majority⁹⁴. On 27 October 1421 Ralph reached his legal majority but it was not until 7 February 1422 that an inquiry into his proof of age was taken, and 20 February that the duke of Bedford, acting as Protector of England, ordered the escheator, "... to take the fealty of Ralph Langeforde, and to give him seisin of the manor of Elaston; as it is found by inquisition, taken before the escheator, that Nicholas Langeforde knight at his death held that manor of Humphrey de Stafforde, son and heir of Edmund earl of Stafforde, a minor in ward of the king, by the service of the fourth part of one knight's fee, and that the said Ralph is his son and next heir; and he has proved his age before the escheator"⁹⁵.

Ralph served with the duke of Bedford in France and on 17 Aug 1424 took part at the battle of Verneuil in which the English gained a bloody victory against the French and Scots attempting to prise the English from Normandy. The action effectively destroyed the Scottish forces knocking Scotland out of the war. The five-year old Henry VI, following his own knighthood by the duke of Bedford, knighted Ralph on 19 May 1426 amongst a company of 44 who had served in France (Shaw, 1971).

On 28 June 1424, shortly before Ralph had left for France, his feoffees - Richard de Radcliff, rector of Longford, Nicholas de Clayton and William de Byrches - made a grant to him of the manors of Pinxton, and Normanton, Newton Solney and Blackwell with lands in Basford, witnessed by Nicholas Montgomery, kt, Henry Booth, and Richard Browne⁹⁶. His service in France may have interrupted the intent behind this grant for after his return, on 28 September 1426, Sir Ralph gave the lands to his grandmother, ensuring Margery's financial security and that of her younger sons while they lived.

*"Gift by Ralphe Longeford, kt, to Margery, widow of Nicholas Longeford, kt., his grandfather, of moieties of the manors of Penkeston, Normanton and Blakewell, co. Derby, with all his lands and tenements in Neuton Sulne, co. Derby, Orby and Willyngham, co. Linc., and Baseford, co. Nott., for term of her life, with remainders to Alvered Longeford, Henry Longeford and Ralph Longeford, esquires"*⁹⁷.

Three years later on 7 June 1429 Sir Ralph appointed all his lands to new feoffees,

*"Feoffment from Ralph de Longford, kt., to Thomas, Bishop of Durham, Ralph de Shirley, Nicholas de Mountgomery and Richard de Radclyf, kts., and Roger Venables, parson of Routhstorn, of his manors of Longford, Hathirsege and Ellaston and all other his lands, etc. in cos. Derby, Stafford, Lincoln, Notyngham and Warwik, with the remainder of all the lands which Margaret, widow of Nicholas de Longford, kt., holds for her life"*⁹⁸.

⁹³ PRO C 44/24/15.

⁹⁴ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.21, No.711 (HMSO, 2002). I would like to thank Paul Reed for providing this source.

⁹⁵ *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1419-1422* (HMSO, 1932, p.185). I am grateful to Peter Stewart for providing this source.

⁹⁶ Jeayes (1906), No.1874.

⁹⁷ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/580.

⁹⁸ Manchester University: Crutchley Muniments CRU/219; Jeayes (1906), No.1588.



Fig 3. The effigy of Sir Ralph Longford (d.1432) lies in the foreground wearing the Lancastrian SS collar with a dependant jewel. Next to him is Nicholas II (d.1373) wearing the typical camail and jupon of the period. (Photo copyright © Peter Sutton)

As was the practice, feoffees were usually chosen within a circle of trusted family members, or were clerics, and this pattern can be seen here - Thomas, Bishop of Durham was Thomas Langley of Langley in Middleton, Lancashire, later cardinal Langley, who appears to have been distantly related to the Radcliffes; Sir Ralph Shirley was husband of Alice Cokayne, cousin of Sir Ralph; Sir Nicholas Montgomery was his uncle by marriage; and Sir Richard de Radcliff was his father-in-law - although his usefulness was limited by the fact he did not long outlive Ralph, dying on 4 September 1431. Witnessing this feoffment were John de Pole, brother-in-law of Sir Ralph, Thomas de Okeover, his cousin, and John de Bradbourne whose association may be derived through the Davenport family. The same day Sir Ralph gave power of attorney to his brother George and Nicholas Clayton, (presented as rector of Longford by Sir Ralph's widow in 1433), to give his feoffees seisin of his lands⁹⁹. Later that year Ralph, recorded as, "*Ralphe de Longeforde, knt, son and heir of Nicholas de Longforde, mil, 'quarti'*", so as not to be confused with Ralph, son of Nicholas III who still living, granted for life to Thomas Booth, undoubtedly a relation of Henry Booth, a messuage and land in Longford and Bupton¹⁰⁰. Six months later, on 12 April 1430, his feoffees leased Sir

⁹⁹ Jeayes (1906), No.1589.

¹⁰⁰ Jeayes (1906), No.1590.

Ralph the manor of Longford, with all the lands in Longford, Bupton, Mammerton, Woodhouses, Bentley, Hollington, and Shirley for a period of 20 years¹⁰¹.

On 26 February 1432, Ralph in his 32nd year met an untimely death, leaving at least four sons – Nicholas¹⁰² (already betrothed to Joan, daughter of Lawrence Warren of Poynton, Cheshire (Ormerod, 1882, p.685)), Edmund, Richard and John. No daughters are known.

Margaret Radcliffe took Seth Worsley, a lawyer and associate of the Booths, as her second husband. In the Trinity term of 1431, perhaps reflecting her new husband's influence, Margaret found it necessary to make several formal suits for dower in the Longford properties. For Derbyshire the suit demonstrates the extent of their landholdings in that county at the time, which included the manor of Longford, and moieties of Hathersage, Pinxton, Normanton, Killamarsh, Barlborough and Boythorp, a quarter of the manor of Blackwell and 45 messuages, 670 acres of land, and 224 acres of meadow in Whitwell, Hasland in Scarsdale, Morton Hall, Wingfield, Pilsley, Egstow, Brampton, Duckmanton, Skegby, Newton Solney, Ashover, Chatsworth, Calton Lees, Bakewell, Darley, Park Hall, Tupton, Steynsby, Stanton, Rowsley and Edensor (Wrottesley, 1896, p.140).

Margaret outlived Ralph for many years and was still living in 1470 when her grandson came into his Longford inheritance. Seth is recorded in 1471 acting as a feoffee for Richard Booth¹⁰³. Whether or not Margaret and Seth had children - as Margaret would have been well within childbearing age - is unknown. Relations between the Worsleys and the Longfords may not have been particularly cordial during Margaret's widowhood – the king instructed the sheriff to have the Worsleys return a third part of a third part of the manor of Newton Solney to Alfred Longford which Margaret had claimed in dower¹⁰⁴; Sir Lawrence Warren, father-in-law of the young Nicholas, accused Seth Worsley of false imprisonment¹⁰⁵, and around 1470 Margaret and her husband accused her grandson, Nicholas VI, of inducing Longford tenants to refuse paying rents to them¹⁰⁶. This friction reflects the political turmoil experienced in the final years of the Wars of the Roses, which would shake the Longfords, along with the other supporters of the House of Lancaster, out of their complacency and force them to adapt to political change. This will be discussed in the second part of this study, which will also include a corrected pedigree chart covering the Longford family from 1300-1610.

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¹⁰¹ Jeayes (1906), No.1591.

¹⁰² He was recorded as aged 14 at his father's inquisition (Train, 1949, pp.193/194).

¹⁰³ Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch: The Iveagh (Phillipps) Suffolk Manuscripts HD 1538/145/19.

¹⁰⁴ Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Eggington D5236/4/44.

¹⁰⁵ PRO C 1/12/255.

¹⁰⁶ PRO C 1/74/69.

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Appendix: additional photographs



Fig 4 Sir Nicholas Longford II



Fig 5 Sir Nicholas Longford III



Fig 6 Sir Ralph Longford



Fig 7 Longford church