

A STUDY OF A MEDIEVAL KNIGHTLY FAMILY: THE LONGFORDS OF DERBYSHIRE¹, PART 2

by Rosie Bevan²

ABSTRACT

This is the second part of an account of the Longford family of Derbyshire, correcting the 1569 and 1611 Herald's Visitation pedigree and enlarging on the family history. The medieval pedigree is brought forward into the 16th century with links to the modern period.

Foundations (2005) 1 (5): 344-372

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Nicholas Longford V

The most turbulent years in Derbyshire in the fifteenth century coincided with Nicholas V as head of the Longford family. As a minor aged 16 in 1434, he had an early introduction to feuding, when the older generations of his family were involved in the dispute between Henry Pierrepont and Thomas Foljambe in which his great uncle was killed. A passionate partisan of the Lancastrian cause, Nicholas' distrust of, and contempt for, Yorkist ambition, and its supporters, was the impetus in his leadership of the sack of Elvaston in 1454, in which many of his kinsfolk and tenants took part.

When Nicholas was 12 years old his marriage was arranged to Joan, daughter of Lawrence Warren (d.1444) of Poynton, Cheshire, and Margaret, daughter of Richard Bulkeley of Cheadle and Margery Venables of Kinderton (Ormerod, 1882, pp.199, 627). The Warrens claimed descent from John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, who died without legitimate issue in 1347, but had fathered illegitimate children by Maud de Nerford. One of these, Edward (recipient in the earl's will of a bequest of £20 (Raine, 1836)), had married Cicely daughter and heir of Sir Nicholas de Eton, through whom Poynton and Stockport became the nucleus of the Warren family estate³.

By the marriages of his wife's sisters the Longfords were connected to the Davenports of Bramhall, Honford, Stafford and Holand families, and through her nieces to the Mainwarings of Peover, Ardernes and Athertons (Earwaker, 1880, p.286). Joan's brother, John Warren, whose wife was Isabel Stanley⁴, was to play a supporting role in Longford affairs, both as a witness to deeds and in the disturbances of the 1450s.

¹ For part 1 of the article see *Foundations* (2004) 1(4): 211-231.

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³ Ormerod (1882) pp.680-687; CP 12-1: 511, note (k)

⁴ Isabel was aunt of Sir Thomas Stanley, later Earl of Derby, third husband of Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII.

At the time of Nicholas' minority there was tension between Seth Worsley⁵, his lawyer stepfather, and his father-in-law, Lawrence Warren, which is evident by a plea by Lawrence from prison that Seth Worsley, wanting to delay a suit in court between them, had laid false charges against him, so that the London sheriffs would arrest and keep him in gaol. Lawrence pleaded John Frank, Keeper of the Great Seal, to issue a writ of *habeas corpus* so that he could come to court, have the charges examined and dismissed, and get on with pursuing the original suit⁶.

Evolution from Lancastrian lordship to kingship meant that Kings Henry IV and V had broadened their focus on maintaining a mutual relationship with all their subjects, not just their indentured retainers, so that at a local and personal level the Longford interests were no longer being accommodated. Ralph Longford had served under the Duke of Bedford who, as Regent, supported the monarchy during the minority of his nephew Henry VI, but after Bedford's death in 1434, Nicholas needed to look for a successor to maintain the family's influence locally.

Like many other Lancastrian families, the Longfords found that advancement could best be furthered by aligning themselves with the house of Stafford, to which they had once been allied by marriage. Humphrey, Earl of Stafford, (created Duke of Buckingham in 1444) was a zealous Lancastrian, having married Ann, daughter of Ralph Neville and Joan Beaufort, legitimated daughter of John of Gaunt⁷. He was a natural successor to the vacancy left on the death of John, Duke of Bedford, providing a tangible political link with the house of Lancaster, and, as Buckingham was overlord of the Longfords in their manor of Ellastone, reinforcing a traditional feudal tie. Indeed, it seems that the wardship of Nicholas' estates was given to Stafford during his minority because of this⁸. In 1444 Sir Nicholas was awarded £10 for life by indentures to serve Buckingham at home and abroad (Rawcliffe, 1978), and during this period in 1449 he headed a commission to levy and collect tenths and fifteenths in Lancashire⁹.

A number of other prominent Derbyshire families were also in Buckingham's service – Sir Thomas Blount, son of Sir Walter who had been Gaunt's chamberlain, Blount's in-laws the Gresleys of Drakelow, the Curzons of Kedleston, and the Vernons of Haddon, two daughters of which had married into the Cokayne family. That the Blounts and Longfords had formerly been on good terms is evident by the Blounts witnessing family charters¹⁰.

However, by the mid 1450s the rivalry between Lancastrian and Yorkist factions had caused serious rifts amongst the gentry in Derbyshire, and relations between the younger generation of Blounts and Longfords broke down. Triggering violence was

⁵ Seth, a renowned lawyer, was intimate with the Booths and an executor and beneficiary of the will of William Booth, Archbishop of York in 1464.

⁶ National Archives, C 1/12/255. I am grateful to Chris Phillips for this information.

⁷ Ironically Ann was also the sister of Cicely, wife of Richard, Duke of York and mother of Edward IV and Richard III.

⁸ Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, Staffordshire Record Office: The Stafford family collection, D641/1/2/53. Rents were collected from Ellastone in 1433/34 by the Stafford bailiff.

⁹ CFR 1445-1452, 18: 130

¹⁰ Manchester University. Crutchley Muniments, CRU/224. In 1438 Sir Ralph Shirley re-eneffed the Longford estates with Robert Hollyngton, prior of Calwich, and Laurence Catton, vicar of Mayfield, in a charter witnessed by Sir Thomas Blount, Sir Thomas Gresley, Sir John Byron and Sir Laurence Warren.

Henry VI's mental breakdown in July 1453 and the reaction to Richard, duke of York, being appointed Protector of the Realm on 3 April 1454. Around this time a number of defections amongst Buckingham's retainers took place including the sons of Sir Thomas Blount who joined the retinue of the Duke of York. Whether or not this was the sole cause of the antagonism between the Longfords and Blounts is not known, but their defection must have seemed doubly outrageous to a community in which fidelity to one's lord was integral to one's personal honour; for the Duke of York had proven himself traitorous to his own lord, the king, by his attempted rebellion in 1452. Even the Longfords' relationship with their kinsman Ralph Shirley, who had married Elizabeth a daughter of Thomas Blount, took a sour turn¹¹.

The first indications of violence¹² occurred on 30 July 1453 when four of Nicholas Longford's servants ambushed and attacked Thomas Blount, younger son of Sir Thomas, who was visiting a nunnery in Derby. Blount was stabbed and seriously injured. Retaliation must have taken place sooner than that known to have occurred on 30 April 1454, when Walter and Thomas Blount and Nicholas Gresley led a raid to Longford and assaulted Sir Nicholas' tenants. In turn on 17 May Sir Nicholas Longford took reprisal with a party who attacked Thomas and Walter Blount at Sutton so that they feared for their lives. In the meantime on 11 May 1454 letters were sent out from Westminster to the sheriffs of Derbyshire and Lancashire instructing them to deliver royal letters to Nicholas Longford and Walter Blount requiring them to appear before the king's council (at which the Duke of York presided) to answer for their actions. A week later the letter was handed to Nicholas staying at his manor of Hough in the parish of Withington, Lancashire, but he refused to accept it from Christopher Langton, the sheriff's servant. The indictment gives the messenger's version of the contempt shown towards the letter and rough treatment he received,

...and turning aside suddenly he [Nicholas Longford] went off and hid in his park there, until divers of the servants of the said Nicholas had taken the aforesaid Christopher, and had compelled him to depart thence against his will, together with the letter of privy seal of the Lord the King, otherwise they threatened to slay him. And for fear of their threats the said Christopher then left the place, and on the morrow returned to the said manor, and sitting upon his horse, put the said letter of privy seal of the Lord the King directed to the said Nicholas upon a little bench next the entrance of the hall of the said manor, calling upon divers servants of the said Nicholas then standing about to bear witness of what he had done and to inform the master thereof. And having done this, he started on his way again, and forthwith one John Longford, late of Longford in the county of Derby, esquire, called to him several of the servants of the aforesaid Nicholas to the number of twenty persons, some of them being horsemen and some footmen, and they followed the said Christopher with swords, staves, lances and other weapons, and seized him by the gate of the park aforesaid, and then made an assault upon him, and beat and wounded him with a staff and dagger and ill-treated him, so that his life was despaired of, and they tried to force him to eat the said letter of the Lord the King; and when he chose to die than to do this, they spat on the letter in contempt, and forced him to break and tear it into a number of little pieces. And afterwards they brought him back to the manor aforesaid, and then and there imprisoned him, putting both his feet in the stocks, and carried him off from the place to the manor of Poynton in the county of Chester, the manor of John Warren, esquire, and there imprisoned him. (Bowles, 1913, pp.229-230).

From there, on 27 May, John Warren, Nicholas Longford's brother-in-law, accompanied by a hundred men armed with swords, cudgels, bows and arrows, took

¹¹ Ralph Shirley accused the Longfords, Twyford and Montgomery of poaching in his park (Wright, 1983, p.135).

¹² The details for this account of the sack of Alveston are drawn from Bowles (1912, 1913); Storey, (1966); Wright (1983, p.135).

Langton from Poynton, Lancashire to Longford where Sir Nicholas Longford and his brothers Edmund, Richard and John, and a host of their friends including the Vernons, Cokaynes, Fitzherberts, Boningtons were waiting. Langton was assaulted again and incarcerated in Longford's prison for two days.

By the following day a large contingent - virtually a small army, said to number a thousand men - had amassed, summoned by Nicholas Longford from amongst his kinsfolk, neighbours, relatives, tenants and servants¹³. Marching under Lancastrian banners to trumpets and tabors they entered Derby and sacked the unoccupied apartments of Walter Blount in the House of Black Friars. Their hostility towards the Protector, the Duke of York, is evident not only by previous contempt shown to his letter, but also upon being confronted by the sheriff, Sir John Gresley, who read them his commission as justice of the peace from the Duke of York, Longford replied that no lord or sheriff or any other minister of the king would have their obedience or prevent them from carrying out their plans. The fact that Gresley was Walter Blount's cousin would have done little to help Blount's cause at this point.

Frustrated at not finding Blount in Derby, the party marched four miles to his manor at Elvaston, but he was not there either (he was possibly with York in northern England), so they had to satisfy themselves with wreaking as much damage as they could, smashing doors and windows, forcing open chests to tear up documents, breaking furniture, slashing furnishings, and breaking open barrels of wine and ale. Hanging in the great hall they found three pieces of tapestry with Blount's arms which they each cut into four pieces with the observation that, "*for that said Walter Blount was gone to serve traitors, therefore his arms shall thus be quartered*" (Bowles, 1912, p.47), a reference to the punishment of quartering given for treason. They did the same to cushions bearing the arms of Blount and Byron¹⁴. Following the sack of the manor the crowd dispersed taking with them 100 gallons of red wine, a bed of red and white silk and two ballista. A couple of days later Walter and Thomas Blount, Nicholas Gresley, son of the sheriff, and a hundred others made an ineffectual raid on the manor of Longford forcing themselves into the grounds and wounding four of Longford's servants. Later in July Thomas Blount and John Agard were held in Marshalsea charged with attempting to slay John Cokayne, Roger Vernon and Nicholas Montgomery.

The king's council again ordered Nicholas Longford and Walter Blount to appear before it, with a threatened penalty of £1000 if they committed any further breaches of the peace.

Sessions were held in July 1454 before Richard, Duke of York, John, Earl of Shrewsbury and two judges at Derby. They continued in September and March the following year but without the duke present, resulting in the sheriff being unable to assemble sufficient jurors to try the principal offenders. So many members of the gentry and their tenants had been involved on either side of the affray that it was

¹³ First named in the indictments were the four Longford brothers Nicholas, Edmund, Richard and John followed by George, Hamnet, and Edward Carrington of Chester, Alexander Radcliffe of Ordsall, John Dukenfield of Portwood, John Honford, John Bramley, John and Randolph Mainwaring of Peover, Ralph Mainwaring of Moberly, Robert Foulshurst of Foulshurst, Roger and Reginald Legh of Bothes, Hugh Egerton of Madewy, William, Edmund, Roger and Robert Vernon of Haddon, John and Edmund Cokayne of Ashbourne, Nicholas Montgomery the elder and younger of Sudbury and Cubley, William and John Bonnington of Bearwardcote and a multitude of other names. John Curzon of Kedleston, Nicholas Fitzherbert of Norbury and Thomas Foljambe of Walton were accused of aiding and abetting the company.

¹⁴ Walter Blount's wife was Ellen, daughter of John Byron, distantly related to the Longfords.

difficult to recruit impartial juries from men of standing in the shire. Nicholas was indicted as an insurrector and disturber of the peace and briefly imprisoned and released on bail. He was eventually fined £193 and having paid it immediately obtained a royal letter of pardon on 20 August 1455 (Bowles, 1913, p.225). The violence had not ended with the sessions, however, for in April 1455 Rowland Blount was killed in Derby in an attack led by Curzon and Nicholas Longford's friends. As late as 1468 the sheriffs of Derbyshire were continually ordered to bring the large number of perpetrators to justice or else outlaw them, but they were incapable of the task. Nicholas' three brothers Edmund, Richard and John failed to appear before the sheriff and, with the Carrington brothers¹⁵, were outlawed four times between 1467 and 1473 (Bowles, 1913, p.225).

Perhaps related to the disturbances, Nicholas joined in a lawsuit with the prior of Calwich in 1457 and accused two men from Ellastone of breaking into their close at Calwich, cutting down the underwood and depasturing cattle on their grass. The defendants did not appear and the sheriff was ordered to arrest them (William Salt Arch. Soc., 1901).

The unrest and lawlessness of the time escalating into the Wars of the Roses, the Longfords probably fought on the Lancastrian side under Buckingham during the first battle of St Albans on 22 May 1455. It was disastrous for their patron, not only because the Duke of York captured the king, but also because Buckingham's eldest son was killed in the fighting. Buckingham was to lose his own life a few years later at the battle of Northampton in July 1460. After the bloody Yorkist victory at Towton, the Longfords must have been outraged to see Buckingham's widow marry Walter Blount, their former enemy, and to watch him prosper and rise in power under Yorkist rule¹⁶.

But Nicholas was not to live very long under the reign of Edward IV and died early in 1463 at the age of 45. Writs of *diem clausit extremum* were issued to the escheator on Jan 28 and Feb 8, but if his inquisitions post mortem took place, they have not survived¹⁷.

Nicholas and Joan had a family of at least five children – Nicholas, their son and heir, Ralph, John, Margery and Margaret¹⁸. Of the sons, Nicholas died without issue in 1481, leaving his brother Ralph as his heir. John was appointed rector of North Wingfield in 1465 by his brother Nicholas (Cox, 1879, p.485), and acted for him as a feoffee in Newton Sulney and Hathersage in 1474¹⁹.

By 15 November 1453 any lingering animosity between the Foljambes and Longfords must have been put aside for Margery, named as the eldest daughter of Sir Nicholas Longford, was contracted to marry Thomas, son and heir of Thomas Foljambe of Walton and Jane Ashton²⁰. In a deed of 1456, witnessed by Thomas Meverell, John

¹⁵ The Carringtons of Carrington, Cheshire, appear to have enjoyed a close relationship with the Longfords, perhaps indicative of a family connection occurring via the Warren family, as they had landed interests in Stockport.

¹⁶ Walter Blount was made Treasurer of Calais in 1461, Treasurer of England in 1464 and created Lord Mountjoy in 1465.

¹⁷ CFR 1461-1471, 20: 66.

¹⁸ There may have been another daughter called Joan (Jane) daughter of Sir Nicholas Longford who appears in pedigrees as wife of John Dukinfeld of Dukinfield, Cheshire (Earwaker, 1880, p.19). I am grateful to Henry Sutliff III for this information.

¹⁹ Jeayes (1906) no.1764.

²⁰ Nottinghamshire Archives: Foljambe of Osberton: Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/4/5/1.

Longford, George Carrington, Roger Foljambe, William Basset and John, vicar of Longford, Nicholas leased the couple all his lands in Killamarsh, Barlborough and Boythorpe in Derbyshire and Basford in Nottinghamshire²¹. When Thomas Foljambe died without issue in 1467 his brother, Henry succeeded him to the Foljambe estates. By July 1468 Margery had married Thomas Odell (Woodhall), and by a deed witnessed by Henry Vernon, Nicholas Longford, Henry Pierrepont, Robert Barley, and Peter Freschville, would receive a yearly allowance of £24 in lieu of dower out of the manors of Walton and Brimington, lands in Chesterfeld, Hulme, Brampton and Litton, and from his manor of Riby, Lincolnshire²². She was still in receipt of dower in 1478 when she was described as the widow of Thomas Odell²³. It is not known when she died or if she left issue.

Margaret was the wife of Humphrey Bradbourne, as shown by a deed of 1480 between his parents, John Bradbourne²⁴ and Ann Vernon of Bradbourne, Derbyshire and their various kinsmen²⁵ who acted as feoffees to an estate created to support a priest attached to the Bradbourne chantry in Ashbourne church²⁶. The priest was to pray for the Bradbourne family, including,

the good estate of Humphrey Bradburne, son and heir of said John and Anne, and of Margaret, wife of said Humphrey daughter to Sir Nicholas Longford and sister to Sir Nicholas Longford, Knt. that now is... (Cox, 1877, pp.412-413).

Humphrey and Margaret had several children as well as their son and heir, John, who married Isabella, daughter and co-heiress of Richard Cotton of Ridware, Staffordshire.

Nicholas Longford VI

Nicholas succeeded during an uneasy period of adjustment to the early part of the Yorkist reign of Edward IV and joined the retinue of George, duke of Clarence, brother of the king²⁷, ending 150 years of continuous military service to the House of Lancaster by the Longford family.

Possibly a difficult time financially, he ordered the tenants of Longford not to pay their rents to his grandmother, Margaret. Her husband Seth Worsley appealed for redress from the court of common pleas, saying that Margaret had been endowed with the manor for life and had,

*stonden peasible posseset without interupcion all the lyfe of hir son Nicholl Longford knight unto now late that Nicholl Longford son to the said Nicholl Longford knight has charget the tenauntes of the said Margaret that thei shall not paie to hir hir Rent ...*²⁸

²¹ Jeayes (1906) no.1512.

²² Nottinghamshire Archives: Foljambe of Osberton: Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/4/5/5.

²³ Jeayes (1906) no.2528.

²⁴ John Bradbourne was a feoffee of Sir Thomas Ferrers the elder, of Tamworth - a connection to be of significance to the Longford family.

²⁵ Sir Nicholas Longford, Henry Vernon, Nicholas Montgomery, John Cokayne, Richard Kniveton of Underwood, John Fitzherbert, Ralph Okeover and Robert Bradshaw.

²⁶ Margaret is wrongly described as daughter of Sir Ralph Longford, the elder, in the 1569 Derbyshire Visitation pedigree of Bradbourne (Metcalfe, 1890, p.12).

²⁷ Storey (1966) p.158.

²⁸ National Archives, C 1/74/69. I am grateful to Chris Phillips for this transcription.

Perhaps as an attempt to alleviate his financial position in May 1463 Nicholas obtained from the abbot of Beauchief the lease of all the lands within the bounds of the abbey for three years for the rent of one pair of gloves annually²⁹. In 1464 he appointed Henry Reddish to the living of Barlborough only two years after his father had appointed the same Henry to the church of Whitwell³⁰. He also appointed his brother, John Longford, to North Wingfield in 1465. Perhaps for a financial consideration, in 1464 he quitclaimed to the abbot of Burton his interest in lands in Burton, which were once held by his ancestor Alfred Sulney. Interestingly Sir Walter Blount and Sir John Gresley witnessed this act, indicating a period of reconciliation³¹. Nicholas also appears on the parliamentary roll of 1464 receiving a grant of £13 6s 8d (Strachey, 1777).

On 1 June 1470 - in a deed witnessed by Henry Vernon, Ralph Shirley, John Curson, and Nicholas Fitzherbert - Henry Reddish conveyed to Nicholas Longford, son and heir, of Nicholas Longford, knt, the whole Longford family estate³². This was immediately transferred into the hands of his two feoffees, John Fitzherbert and William Ryely³³.

Nicholas was recruited into the Yorkist retinue of William Hastings and was knighted by Edward IV on the battlefield of Tewkesbury on 3 May 1471 (Shaw, 1971, p.5). His choice of lord appears to have been an entirely fortuitous one, for the aftermath of the battle marked the collapse of Lancastrian hopes - Prince Edward, son and heir of Henry VI, had been killed in the fighting, his mother, Margaret of Anjou captured and imprisoned, and Henry VI was murdered by the Yorkists in the Tower of London 17 days later. Nicholas served in the retinue of Hastings going to France with Edward IV and providing his own company of 6 spears and 60 archers (Dunham, 1955, p.40).

Nicholas was occupied in the service of the crown being appointed to a commission to enquire into all felonies, murders, homicides and other offence and to arrest and imprison the offenders, for the county of Derby in 1470³⁴. Two years later he was appointed as a commissioner of array for the same county³⁵ and in 1473 to a commission to investigate the non-payment of dues by the sheriff³⁶. He also served as a commissioner for the peace for Derbyshire several times between 1471 and 1481³⁷.

In March 1472 he was in conflict with Elena Delves, widow of Sir John Delves who sued Nicholas, his brother John the parson, and four others of breaking into her close at Uttoxeter and taking goods and chattels to the value of £20. The sheriff was ordered to distrain Nicholas Longford, who had found bail, and arrest the others. Other parties were also involved in harassing Elena Delves but the cause of it is not apparent (Wrottesley, 1901).

²⁹ Nottinghamshire Archives: Foljambe of Osberton: Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/50/1.

³⁰ Cox (1879) vol.4, p.482.

³¹ *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 1937, p.174. Burton cartulary.

³² Crutchley Muniments, CRU/230.

³³ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/931; Jeayes (1906) no.1599.

³⁴ CPR 1467-1477, p.248.

³⁵ CPR 1467-1477, p.349.

³⁶ CPR 1467-1477, p.398.

³⁷ CPR 1467-1477, p.611.

Nicholas does not appear to have been married at the time he succeeded his father, or perhaps he was married, but childless, and his wife died young. Whatever the case, on 1 October 1472 the archbishop of York gave a dispensation for the rector of Aston to marry Sir Nicholas Longford and Margaret Melton (Raine, 1883). Margaret was probably daughter of Sir John Melton (d.1474) of Aston who had been a feoffee of Richard duke of York. Her aunt, Thomasia, was the wife of Sir Henry Pierrepont who was murdered in 1457, a kinsman of Nicholas. His son, a younger Sir Henry Pierrepont was one of Nicholas' new feoffees when he settled his estates shortly before going to France in 1475³⁸.

Nicholas had no living issue by Margaret by the time he died on 3 April 1481, and it was recorded at his inquisition post mortem that his brother, Ralph, was his next heir and was aged 24 years and more (Renshaw, 1956).

Ralph Longford II

William Hastings must have been anxious to retain the services of the Longford family as only three weeks after Nicholas' death, Ralph indented to serve Hastings for life. The contract reads,

This indenture made the xxv day of April the xxi year of the reign of King Edward the IV between William Hastings, knight, Lord Hastings, on the one part, witnesseth that the said Ralph agreeth, granteth, and by these present indentures bindeth him to the said lord to be his retained servant during his life, and to him to do true and faithful service, and the part of the same lord take against all men in peace and war with as many persons defensively arrayed as the same Ralph can or may make at all times that the same lord will command him, at the said lord's costs and charges, saving the allegiance which the same Ralph oweth to the king our sovereign lord and to the prince. And the said lord granteth to the said Ralph to be his good and favourable lord and him aid and support in his right according to the law. In witness hereof the foresaid parties to these present indentures have interchangeably set their seals and signs manual the day and year foresaid. Ralph Longford. (Dunham, 1955, p.139)³⁹.

In addition, Ralph was given in marriage Hastings' niece, Isabel⁴⁰, daughter of Anne Hastings and Sir Thomas Ferrers of Tamworth (d.1498), son and heir of Sir Thomas Ferrers (a younger son, but heir male, of William, Lord Ferrers of Groby) and Elizabeth Freville, one of the three sisters and co-heirs of Sir Baldwin Freville of Tamworth (d.1418) (Thoroton, 1796)⁴¹.

After Ralph's succession he leased back the dower lands of his widowed sister-in-law, Margaret, for £83 per annum⁴². She seems to have been embroiled in disputes with

³⁸ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/931. Other feoffees were John, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, Sir John Trafford, William Davenport, esq., Robert Calverley, gentleman, and William Ryley, yeoman.

³⁹ Henry Longford also indented on the same day but his precise relationship to Ralph is not known. He may have been a younger brother. A Henry Longford was also bailiff and collector of rents for Ralph Longford in 1494/95 (Crutchley Muniments, CRU/238).

⁴⁰ Isabel is mistakenly called Mabel in the Longford pedigree in the Derbyshire Visitation of 1569 (Metcalf, 1891).

⁴¹ Sir Ralph Longford heads the list of overseers of the 1498 will of Sir Thomas Ferrers of Tamworth along with the other son-in-law, Sir Thomas Gresley, and John Ferrers, his grandson and heir (National Archives, PROB 11/11 463/312). The family of Ferrers of Groby is given in CP 5: 340-363. For the Freville family see Montague-Smith (1984).

⁴² Crutchley Muniments, CRU/548.

the Longford feoffees, Sir Henry Pierrepont, Sir John Trafford, William Davenport, and Robert Calverly who refused to apply the revenues of the manors of Longford and Newton Sulney, the Hough, and other lands towards paying Sir Nicholas' debts as directed in his will⁴³. Ralph seems to have had his own problems with one of Nicholas' feoffees, John, bishop of Chester, of whom he complained to Thomas Rotherham, the Lord Chancellor in about 1482, that he refused to make an estate for him as Nicholas Longford's heir. The bishop said he'd never agreed to be enfeoffed in the lands, and claimed expenses for his "*wrongefulle vexation*" for having to appear before the king in the Chancery (Wrottesley, 1904, p.262). In a related issue in May 1488 a writ went out to the sheriff of Derbyshire to arrest Sir Henry Pierrepont and bring him before the Chancery to answer for his contempt of the court and other matters against him. Ralph Longford, John Trafford and William Davenport were also to be arrested and brought before the court (Wrottesley, 1904, p.384). As three of them had been feoffees of Sir Nicolas Longford, the case was probably related to his widow's complaints. The case was finally settled under arbitration under Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby in 1489⁴⁴.

In 1502 Ralph Longford changed his feoffees and instructed John Reddish, John Foljambe and John Wood to receive seisin on his behalf from William Davenport of Bromhall, of the manors of Longford, Newton Solney, Morton, Barlborough, Hathersage and Killamarsh in Derbyshire, Ellastone, in Staffordshire, The Hough in Lancashire, and Basford, Nottinghamshire, and of all messuages there and in Orby and South Willingham, Lincolnshire⁴⁵.

Ralph was summoned to be knighted at the coronation of Edward V on 22 June 1483 (Nichols, 1854), but in the three weeks intervening the young prince was deposed and imprisoned, Sir William Hastings, Ralph's lord and uncle by marriage, was executed and Richard III usurped the crown, preventing the ceremony. Ralph would have had little reason to be enamoured with the new king, but in August received a commission to assess certain subsidies and appoint collectors so that the taxes could be gathered from Derbyshire by Michaelmas. He was twice appointed a commissioner of array in 1484, and served as a commissioner for the peace four times in 1483 and 1484⁴⁶.

Although it is not known what part Ralph played at Bosworth, he was knighted by his new lord, Henry VII, at Stoke Field on 16 June 1487 in the aftermath of the final battle of the Wars of the Roses. Henry VII, the natural Lancastrian successor⁴⁷ married Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, and by uniting both houses, founded the new Tudor dynasty. Under this new regime the Longfords were to enjoy a long period of favour at the royal court until the accession of Elizabeth I.

Between 1485 and 1497, reflecting his increased standing amongst Derbyshire gentry, Ralph served more times than anyone else as commissioner of the peace in the county. In 1488 he was appointed one of the commissioners to take musters of archers for the king's army for the expedition to relieve Brittany, and in 1493 he was commissioned to deliver the Derby gaol⁴⁸. Other commissions for Derbyshire included

⁴³ National Archives, C 1/65/152.

⁴⁴ Jeayes (1906) no.1603.

⁴⁵ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/239.

⁴⁶ CPR 1476-1485, pp.395, 400, 488, 490, 557.

⁴⁷ His mother was Margaret Beaufort, great granddaughter of John of Gaunt.

⁴⁸ CPR 1485-1494, Henry VII vol.1, pp.278, 280, 484.

oyer and terminer in 1495, two inquiries into the concealments of lands of the king in 1495 and 1496⁴⁹, and a muster of arms against the Scots in 1496. In 1500 he served the county as Sheriff (PRO, 1898, p.104), and in 1504 he was appointed to a commission to enquire into the lands of John Ireland and determine who was his next heir⁵⁰. On the accession of Henry VIII he was one of the Knights for the Body of the king (Brewer, 1862, 2: 871).

His labours on behalf of the crown did not go without reward and in October 1485 the king granted him for life the office of lieutenant and steward of the royal hunting forest of Duffield Frith within Derbyshire and the offices of parker, with all the remuneration that went with it (Campbell, 1873). The following year he was also granted 40 marks (£26 12s 8d) for life (Campbell, 1877).

The administration of his own estates at this time, were in the hands of two members of Derbyshire gentry as bailiffs and collectors of rents, Peter Pole for Longford, and John Foliambe for North Wingfield, Hathersage, and fourteen other manors⁵¹. Sir Ralph must have prospered despite the demands of a large family, for in response to an appeal by his distantly related kinsman John Lathbury of Newton Solney (with whom he shared the lordship of the manor), he lent him £23, with half the weir over the river Trent, leased by Thomas Fitzherbert of Melton, as security in 1498⁵². Two years later he acted as John's feoffee in the manor, indicating that perhaps the loan had not yet been paid off⁵³.

In 1510 disaster struck the Longfords when Nicholas, Ralph's eldest son and heir, died. Because his grandson and heir apparent, Ralph, was only one year of age, it meant that the family could face a long minority on Sir Ralph's death. Perhaps not in good health himself, he urgently set about making a number of settlements to secure long-term financial security for his family. On 10 September 1510 he enfeoffed trusted family members, John Fitzherbert, Humphrey Bradburne, John Bradburne, Anthony Fitzherbert, sergeant-at-law, Nicholas Fitzherbert and Edward Redfern, vicar of Longford, in all his manors and estates in Derbyshire except Longford, Killamarsh, Hathersage, Newton Solney⁵⁴. On 19 September 1510 he enfeoffed the same people in the manors of Hathersage and Newton Solney in trust for himself for life, and on his death they were to go to his sons Richard, Thomas, John, Henry and William⁵⁵.

A few months later on 13 January 1511 he made his will, and the next day enfeoffed the same feoffees again in his manors and messuages of Longford, Bupton, and Mammerton, Killamarsh, Derbyshire and Basford, Nottinghamshire, and the advowson of Longford church⁵⁶.

The will was lengthy and had been constructed carefully together with Geoffrey Blythe, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and Richard Salter, Doctor of Canon. Ralph made his eldest son, Thomas Longford, Master Thomas Fitzherbert, Doctor of Canon,

⁴⁹ Ironically a similar inquiry into the concealed lands of the king in Nottinghamshire revealed that Ralph had intruded into the manor of Basford on the death of his brother, without suing for livery from the king (CIPM, Henry VI, vol. 3, no.151).

⁵⁰ CPR 1494-1509, Henry VII vol.2, pp.33, 66, 68, 88, 379.

⁵¹ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/237.

⁵² Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Egginton, D5236/4/43.

⁵³ Derbyshire Record Office: Every of Egginton, D5236/4/45.

⁵⁴ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/20.

⁵⁵ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/89.

⁵⁶ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/241.

John Fitzherbert, and Edward Redfern vicar of Longford his executors. It was witnessed by Ralph Cantrell Doctor of Canon, Richard Hooton, Bachelor of Divinity, Ralph prior of Calwich, William Wilton, Master of Art, Anthony Fitzherbert, Sergeant-at-Law, Thomas Cokayne, George Stanley, John Blount, Nicholas Fitzherbert, Henry Hudson vicar of Ashbourne, Henry Cokayne, Thomas Strete, priest and Edward Martin, bachelor of law and papal notary.

Having the input of such important legal and religious heavyweights, it is no surprise that his will contained a potentially controversial element. He directed that in accordance with the old customary right of the bishopric to the custody of the Longford heir, owing to ancestral tenancy from the bishopric, he bequeathed to the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, "*the Custodie rule wardship rule and marriage of Rauf Longford Cosyn and next heire apparant unto the said Sir Rauf during his nonage of xxj yeres...*"⁵⁷.

Also bequeathed was the rule and custody of his younger sons until they reached the age of 20. His feoffees were to be seised of the manors of Newton Solney, Normanton, Pinxton, Duckmanton, Boythorpe and Ellastone for the benefit of "*my sonnes lawfully begotten of the bodies of me and the fore named dame Isabel for terme of ther lyves*".

Ralph followed up this will with an indenture on 22 September 1512 whereby he formalised the arrangement by selling the marriage and custody of his grandson to the bishop for 100 marks, with the proviso that the bishop should pay the executors of Sir Ralph 1000 marks following the majority of the heir⁵⁸. These measures were clearly designed to prevent the encroachment of the crown over the wardship of the heir, a fate that had, it could be argued, illegally befallen the Longford family during the last two minorities.

On 20 January 1513 Ralph's last act was to enfeof his lands in Willingham, Orby and elsewhere in Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Wales with his feoffees⁵⁹. Twelve days later on 1 February 1513 he was dead⁶⁰. He had directed to be buried in the church of "*seynt Chad of Longford by the body of dame Isabell late my wyff*", but if a memorial was ever erected it has not survived. The couple had produced a large family of at least 11 children - six boys; Nicholas, Richard, Thomas, John, Henry and William, and five girls; Anne, Isabel, Elizabeth, Dorothy and Margery.

Nicholas had been contracted to marry Margery, daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford⁶¹ of Trafford, Lancashire in 1492 by a double alliance between eldest sons and daughters of the two families⁶². After the premature death of Nicholas, Sir Ralph created an estate in the manors of Hough, Withington and Didsbury worth 40 marks a year for Margery's use for life⁶³. She married secondly Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn, Lancashire, who obtained the custody of her son, and had several children by him including his

⁵⁷ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/1/4/30.

⁵⁸ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/1/4/30.

⁵⁹ Manchester University, John Rylands Library: Rylands Charters, RYCH/2214

⁶⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/1/4/30.

⁶¹ A pedigree of the Trafford family can be found in Baines (1836).

⁶² The Trafford family had been leasing land in Withington from the Longfords for an annual rent of 17 shillings since 1317 (Farrer and Brownbill, 1911). The double alliance was considered so favourable that another Longford /Trafford match was arranged between siblings.

⁶³ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/1/4/30.

son and heir, Thomas⁶⁴. Sir Thomas died in 1523 and she married thirdly Sir John Porte of Etwall who died in 1540. Margery survived him by only two months and desired to be buried with him in Etwall church⁶⁵.

Richard Longford is mentioned first in a settlement made by his father on 19 September 1510⁶⁶ but had evidently died without issue by 13 January 1511 by the time Sir Ralph made his will and referred to Thomas as his eldest son⁶⁷. With the loss of both Nicholas and Richard around the same time, it is possible the family had been struck by illness.

On the death of his father in 1513, Thomas⁶⁸, now the senior male of the Longford family was one of the executors of his will, but probably not much older than 20 years of age as he had been a minor in 1511. In 1521 Thomas was given a lease for life by the Longford feoffees of the family holding in Duckmanton, Ellastone and a messuage in Newton Sulney, but when his nephew came of age he and his brother William were sued for the title deeds of these properties⁶⁹. Thomas is said to have married a daughter of the house of Lawrence of Withington, and they had two sons, Richard and William, who were later named in the will of Nicholas Longford VIII as his near cousins. This family resided in Longford parish long after the senior male line died out⁷⁰.

John Longford is possibly the individual John Longford of Longford who, in his will dated 16 July 1550, desired to be buried in the church of Longford. He mentions principally his son "*Nycolas Longforth*", who is given his farm and tenements, and the children of Nicholas. He also mentions his son-in-law "*Wyllya[m] Haulle*" and his wife "*yzabell*", Edmund Longford "*one of my bast' gotte' sonn[e]s*", his brother George Longford, another illegitimate son, his daughter "*Alys Goodale*", "*Ellyn Longforth*" and his godson John Longford⁷¹. Cadet branches of the Longford family continued to flourish in the parish, for another John Longford of Mammerton in the parish of Longford, requesting to be buried in Longford church, mentions in his will of 1596 his brother Ralph, his sons Nicholas, John and William and daughters Jane Brandon, Dorothy and Martha. The latter had 40 marks towards their marriage portions. The children of Nicholas were named John, Martha, Ann, and Mary, while John's children are named Nicholas, William and Margaret. John left to his wife, Margaret, half the farm, and made "*my wor[shipful] Mr Nicholas Langford Esquire*" his sole executor⁷¹

⁶⁴ In 1521 at the age of 12, Ralph Longford was witness to the settlement of Middleton on his half sister Anne Gerard before her marriage to Richard Ashton (Greater Manchester County Record Office: Assheton of Middleton, E7/6/1/6).

⁶⁵ Mentioned in Margery's will are her sons Sir Ralph Longford and Thomas, Peter, William, Henry and James Gerard, and her daughters Margaret, wife of Sir Peter Legh of Lyme, and Katherine Houghton (Edwards, 1998, pp.80-81).

⁶⁶ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/89.

⁶⁷ Staffordshire Record Office: The Stafford family collection, D(W) 1734/1/4/29.

⁶⁸ Not to be confused with Thomas Longford of Mansfield, a great grandson of Nicholas Longford IV, who served as under-sheriff to Sir Ralph Longford III and was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Lowe of Alderwasley.

⁶⁹ National Archives, C 1/1026/11-14.

⁷⁰ Apart from the Longfords of Mansfield, another armigerous cadet branch of the family occurred in Shrewsbury in 1623, bearing the same Longford of Longford arms (Grazebrook, 1889).

⁷¹ Consistory Court of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Original wills, 1550, (FHL) film #95,450. I am grateful to Paul C Reed for the transcription of this will.

Anne was married to Simon Montford of Kingshurst in Coleshill, Warwickshire, son of Thomas Montford by Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Gresley of Drakelow, Derbyshire. This family stemmed from an illegitimate branch of the Montforts of Beaudesert and had suffered confiscation of lands during the Wars of the Roses. Simon recovered the family fortunes and was a servant of Queen Catherine of Aragon (Bindoff, 1982, pp.641-642). Sir Ralph Longford mentions Simon in his will leaving him a promissory note for 40 marks, which Sir Edward Hastings⁷² had given him. Anne predeceased her husband who died in 1538, leaving his son and heir, Francis, a minor whose mother was most likely Simon's second wife.

Isabel, wife of William Coke of Trusley (d.1518) is mentioned in Sir Ralph's will receiving a bequest of 20 shillings, which supports the Coke family account that she was his daughter (Burke, 1906). A marriage contract had probably been arranged by 1491 when Sir Ralph and his brother-in-law Sir Thomas Gresley acted as feoffees to the Trusley estate for William Coke⁷³. The Cokes had settled at Trusley (three miles from Longford) in the early 1400s on account of a marriage with a daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Odingsells, and it must have been of satisfaction to the Longfords to marry off a daughter who would be living in such close proximity. In 1567 Isabel's grandson, Richard Coke, would buy the old Sulney estate of the manor of South Normanton from Nicholas Longford VIII⁷⁴.

Elizabeth married Sir Edmund Trafford, son and heir of Sir Edmund Trafford (d.1514) and Margaret Savage of Clifton, and had a large family including their son and heir, another Sir Edmund Trafford (d.1564)⁷⁵. Sir Ralph Longford's will makes it apparent that he and Sir Edmund Trafford had agreed by indenture to create an estate worth £20 per annum out of their lands to be settled as jointure on the wives of their respective daughters-in-law, Margery and Elizabeth. Elizabeth died on 27 January 1548 having outlived her husband by 15 years.

Dorothy Longford was contracted to marry Nicholas Fitzherbert, son and heir of John Fitzherbert and Benedicta Bradbourne of Norbury in 1501 with provision that if Dorothy died Nicholas would marry her sister⁷⁶. Dorothy brought a dowry of £140 and was given an immediate jointure of £13 6s 8d⁷⁷, but the marriage proved childless and Nicholas died without issue in 1517, during the lifetime of his father. Dorothy survived Nicholas⁷⁸ and evidently remarried, for she appears in the 1533 Visitation of Lancashire and Cheshire (Langton, 1876, p.53) as wife of Sir Thomas Holt of Grislehurst, and mother of his three sons Francis, Ralph and Richard. Sir Thomas died in 1562 and mentions his wife Dorothy in his will.

Margery appears to have been the youngest daughter, as she was not yet married in 1511. Sir Ralph made provision for her in his will to have 10 marks a year while she

⁷² Sir Edward was the son and heir of Sir William Hastings executed in 1483.

⁷³ Jeayes (1906) no.2400.

⁷⁴ Derbyshire Record Office: Turbutt of Ogston, D37 M/RT25.

⁷⁵ *"Edmounde Trayford of Trayford maryed Elizabeth, daughter to Syr Raffe Longford knyght. & they had yssue, Edmounde, George, Harry, Thoms., Ric., Margret, Siscelye, Alice, and Elizabeth. Edmounde, maryed to Anne, daughter to Syr Alexr Radclyffe as ys aforsaid. George ys married to Ellyne, daughter and heyer to William Robarde of Holbyche Heron in Lyncolnshire. Margaret ys maryed to Wm, sonne and heyer to Sr Alexhandr Radclyffe as ys aforsaid. Ciseleye ys maryed to Rob. Langley of Agecroft, & they have yssue, Dorothy."* (Langton, 1876, p.66).

⁷⁶ Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, Staffordshire Record Office. The Stafford family collection, D641/5/TS/1/1.

⁷⁷ Wright (1983) p.207, citing S.R.O. D641/5/T(S)/1/1.

⁷⁸ Garratt (1985) no.1209.

remained unmarried and 400 marks (£266 13s 4d) towards her marriage. She was to marry William Trafford, younger son of Sir Edmund Trafford, and brother of Edmund and Margery (her brother-in law and sister-in-law), becoming the progenitors of the Traffords of Swithamley and Oughtrington. She survived her husband, William (who was still living in 1540 when he acted as overseer of the will of his sister Margery), and married secondly Sir John Markham of Cotham (d.1559) as his second wife (Bindoff, 1982, p.568).

Ralph Longford III

On the death of Sir Ralph, the king's escheator conducting his inquisition post mortem considered that the enfeoffment and the sale of the wardship to the bishop had been made to defraud the king. On 5 March 1513, Henry VIII granted the wardship of Ralph to Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley while a commission was appointed to investigate the possessions of the deceased Ralph⁷⁹. To meet the intent of Ralph's will, the bishop had to pay Lord Ferrers £420 to obtain the custody of the Longford estates⁸⁰.

Sir Ralph had charged the bishop that,

*"...the said Reverend Fader shall not mary or cause to be married the said Rauf the heire apparent nor noon other that is or hereafter shalbe heire apparant to the said Sir Rauf to every any gentilwoman but unto suche that is of as goode blode and like in birth and degree without disparagement..."*⁸¹

The bride meeting such specifications was Dorothy, daughter of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert of Norbury (d.1538) and Maud Cotton⁸², and in 1522, when Ralph was 13, the contract for Dorothy's jointure was drawn up between Thomas Longford acting on behalf of his nephew, and Sir Anthony on behalf of his daughter⁸³. The Fitzherberts were very close to the Longfords - Dorothy was first cousin to Nicholas Fitzherbert who had been married to Dorothy Longford, Ralph's aunt, and this new marriage was the third match between the two families since the mid 1300s. Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, Judge of the Common Pleas, was a younger son but succeeded to the Norbury estates after the death of his brother without a male heir⁸⁴. His legal reputation well established, Sir Anthony served as a judge for 16 years, wrote several books about the law, was a visitor of the monasteries, and subscribed to the articles of impeachment against Cardinal Wolsey, and was one of the commissioners appointed to try Cardinal Fisher and Sir Thomas More. His influence and advice to his son-in-law would come in very useful, but Ralph did not always heed his advice, and had a tendency towards hot headedness, as events were to show.

Ralph was knighted at the age of 20 at Whitehall on 3 November 1529 by Henry VIII (Shaw, 1971, p.47), and as soon as he came of age in 1530 he immediately enfeoffed some of his lands in Derbyshire and Lancashire with the husbands of Dorothy's

⁷⁹ Brewer (1862) 1: 503, 589.

⁸⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/J/930.

⁸¹ Staffordshire Record Office, D(W) 1734/1/4/30.

⁸² Maud was the sister of Isabella Cotton who had married John Bradbourne, son of Margaret Longford.

⁸³ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/552.

⁸⁴ His brother's heir general was a daughter, Elizabeth, who married into the Draycot family.

sisters, William Basset, the younger, of Blore and John Sacheverell of Morley, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Fitzherbert, son and heir of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert⁸⁵. Five years later he enfeoffed all his lands in Derbyshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, and in the Marches of Wales, excepting Dorothy's jointure of 40 marks from North Wingfield and elsewhere, to his kinsmen - his uncle Sir Edmund Trafford, half-brother Thomas Gerard, stepbrother John Port, son and heir of Sir John Port, and brother-in-law Thomas Fitzherbert⁸⁶.

The Longfords had been the patrons of Calwich priory since 1148, and although the family were not buried there, had continually supported it, along with the Fitzherberts, Okeovers and Sacheverels also contributing to its upkeep. However, by the 1500s it was tiny, having only a community of two, consisting of a prior and a canon. The death of the prior in 1530 left one canon and, against the advice of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, Ralph claimed right of presentation sending a canon of Darley with money, to London to press his claims⁸⁷. However under the direction of Cromwell it was decided to close the priory, becoming one of the first religious houses to be suppressed. In April 1532 Ralph Longford, "*esquire of the King's body*", and the king agreed by indenture that Ralph could have the lands in tail male subject to rent⁸⁸. Richard Strete a servant of Cromwell reported to him in May that Ralph still owed £60 for Calwich and that he was "*very slack*" and needed to be spoken to, but three months later he still owed over £46⁸⁹. Ralph had to raise the funds partly by selling other property and in June sold woods in North Wingfield and Brampton to Sir Godfrey Foljambe for £6 6s 8d.

The following year Sir Anthony sent a letter to Cromwell thanking him for his kindness to himself and Ralph, and asking that Ralph have the corn and cattle at Calwich, adding that Ralph would "*remember his goodness*"⁹⁰.

Continuing in service at court Ralph was one of the knights to attend as a servitor from the dressers at the coronation of Anne Boleyn on 1 June 1533⁹¹, but Ralph harboured grievances, which manifesting themselves came to the attention of Cromwell in September 1535. Ralph's kinsman, George Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury⁹², wrote to Cromwell asking to be a good master to his servant John Bekeley who was coming to show the king the misdemeanour of Sir Ralph at the king's property in Staffordshire. Ralph had likewise "*misused*" himself in Derbyshire, and Shrewsbury asked for a commission to inquire about Ralph's misdemeanour, and then the king would know whether his complaint was true or not⁹³. Whatever the substance of the matter, in November by special request of Henry VIII, Ralph was appointed sheriff of Derbyshire, showing that despite his misbehaviour he was still well regarded by the king⁹⁴. Ralph's kinsman, Thomas Longford of Mansfield, acted as under-sheriff but

⁸⁵ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/247.

⁸⁶ Public Record Office (1915).

⁸⁷ Brewer (1876) 4(3): 2836.

⁸⁸ Richard Strete drew up the inventory in 1533 valuing the priory's assets at £117 4s. 10d., with its demesne lands worth £23 12s. per annum (Wright, 1843).

⁸⁹ Gairdner (1880) vol.5, pp.453, 475, 615.

⁹⁰ Gairdner (1882) vol.6, p.296.

⁹¹ Gairdner (1882) vol.6, p.247.

⁹² George Talbot was great-grandson of Sir William Hastings.

⁹³ Gairdner (1886) vol.9, p.94.

⁹⁴ Gairdner (1886) vol.9, p.309.

died not long afterwards for Ralph had to sue his widow and son owing to their refusal to release vouchers relating to the accounts while he was sheriff⁹⁵.

More evidence of Ralph's financial problems surface around 1536, when he was found to be owing £40 in rent at Calwich⁹⁶. Life at court and mixing in a social circle far above him in wealth was proving to be a strain on his purse despite Ralph's comfortable income of around £500. Again in July Sir Anthony Fitzherbert intervened on Ralph's behalf with Cromwell, thanking him for his goodness (probably for allowing time to raise money to pay the debt) to Ralph, adding (in vain) that he trusted Ralph would reform and live within his income⁹⁷. Ralph again sold property to raise cash. This time it was the manor of Boythorpe, which he sold to Sir Godfrey Foljambe in September⁹⁸. His situation was no better the following year when he sold the manors of Barlborough, Killamarsh, and Hathersage to Sir William Hollis, alderman of London, for £700, who leased them back to the Longfords for £70 per annum with an option to buy back at the same price before 1542⁹⁹. A large proportion, £500, was allocated for the use of Ralph's heir, and the rest towards paying off debts. In 1539 Ralph leased the Hough and other lands in Manchester to William Brown, citizen and mercer of London¹⁰⁰.

By 1541 both Cromwell and Anthony Fitzherbert had died, so when he again found himself in financial mire not entirely of his own making, Ralph received little sympathy from the Privy Council. The priory land at Calwich had been given to Merton priory along with Ralph's lease, but on its dissolution in 1538 the king's escheators sued Ralph for the rent that he'd already paid to Merton (and it was not until 1540 that he received an acknowledgement that he'd paid all his dues, but only received receipts for up to 1536). In 1542 when it was still found that Ralph owed unpaid rents, cattle were distrained from his property at Calwich. Unfortunately the cattle did not belong to Ralph so the Privy Council ordered Ralph to enter into a bond for £200 to restore the cattle and recompense the true owners within a month. Unable to recompense the cattle owners and therefore liable for the bond of £200, Ralph found himself in Fleet prison for debt by October 1542¹⁰¹.

Ralph borrowed money from Anthony Cope with Calwich as security and in the meantime entered an agreement whereby he would sell the manor of Hough to John Gate of the Privy Chamber for £650, when on completion a bond of £6000 would be cancelled. In February Cope demanded repayment, threatening to take possession of Calwich, so Ralph made a desperate plea to John Gates for a loan to repay Cope,

*"If you have the Hoghe of me, as I trust you shall, and this [Calwich] be taken from me, I shall be unable to keep house and must forsake my native country."*¹⁰²

⁹⁵ National Archives, C 1/1026/6-10.

⁹⁶ Gairdner (1888) vol.11, p.562.

⁹⁷ Gairdner (1890) vol 12 (1), p.439.

⁹⁸ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/31.

⁹⁹ Garratt (1985) no.1277.

¹⁰⁰ National Archives, C 147/182.

¹⁰¹ The date of a letter Dorothy sent to him in prison saying she had had discussions with "*Sir John and Elcocke*" who would come and see him, and expressed a hope of redeeming him from prison. She later visited him in London (Public Record Office, 1932).

¹⁰² Gairdner (1901) vol.18 (1), p.205.

Cope stayed his threat of taking Calwich, while Gates, wanting further assurances, dragged his feet over lending the £200. Finally, on 2 April 1543, Ralph's desperate situation was suddenly eased by his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Fitzherbert. Ralph wrote to Gates,

*"This Monday at the Fleet has been with me Thomas Fitzherbert, who stands enfeoffed of all my lands and has stayed my matter in the Parliament House all this time. He offers with his friends to enlarge me of my imprisonment and pay my debts."*¹⁰²

However, Ralph was still languishing in prison two months later, when on 2 June he wrote to Gates that,

"Thomas Hollez and his friends stayed the bill which the King "assigned me" to pass by Parliament which should have brought my enlargement out of prison and payment of my debts. And now at the ending of Parliament Hollez sent me a letter (herewith) in his own hand that I and Mr Gossenalle who is of his counsel should deliver his letter to my lord Norfolk and so to the Parliament Chamber; but Norfolk would not look at the letter unless Hollez should be there personally who had that morning ridden out of town." (Public Record Office, 1932)

He begged Gates to inform the king how spitefully Hollis had treated him.

Ralph was presumably out of prison by 23 August when a certificate of deer killed in Longford Park was issued by his parker¹⁰³. In September the king awarded him an annuity of £10 out of Calwich manor and Ellastone rectory,¹⁰⁴ but the following January the lease of Calwich was sold to John Fleetwood and passed out of Longford hands forever.

Ralph met a premature death on 23 September 1544 at the age of 35¹⁰⁵ - perhaps brought about by his months in prison. He and Dorothy were parents of one son, Nicholas, and four daughters, Margery, Maud, Anne and Elizabeth. Dorothy remarried, as his second wife, Sir John Porte of Etwall (d.1557), her second cousin, becoming the second consecutive Longford widow to marry into the Porte family. She survived her second husband and was living in June 1558 when she was in receipt of dower in Etwall, Ash, Dalbury, and Repton¹⁰⁶. Sir John referred to her as, "...my entirely beloved wife Dame Dorothe Porte..." and mentions his brothers-in-law Sir Thomas Fitzherbert of Norbury and William Fitzherbert of Swinnerton in his will¹⁰⁷. Thomas Babington, a lawyer of the Fleet¹⁰⁸, Dorothy's kinsman, was one of the executors of Sir Ralph's will, and disputes ensued over Sir Ralph's assets. He sued Dorothy over the seizure of corn from a barn in Longford¹⁰⁹, and Ralph's daughters sued Babington over detention of a conveyance of lands in Hough made by their father¹¹⁰, indicating a legacy of continuing financial problems.

¹⁰³ The deer were given to Mr Foljambe's son [in-law], Mr Meverell, Sir Humphrey Ferrers of Tamworth and the Warden of the Fleet [Prison] (Gairdner, 1902, vol.18 (2), p.32).

¹⁰⁴ Gairdner, 1902, vol.18 (2), p.457.

¹⁰⁵ National Archives, C142/68/53.

¹⁰⁶ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/84.

¹⁰⁷ The will was proved on 26 June 1557 (Edwards, 1998, pp.108-114).

¹⁰⁸ Edith Fitzherbert, sister of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert was wife of Thomas Babington of Dethick.

¹⁰⁹ National Archives, C 1/945/4.

¹¹⁰ National Archives, C 1/1140/4.

Margery, the eldest daughter¹¹¹, died unmarried at the age of 46, probably not long after she made her will in February 1578. She requested to be buried in Longford church, and after bequests to servants, she bequeathed the residue of her goods to her brother Nicholas, whom she made executor¹¹².

Maud married Sir George Vernon of Haddon (known as 'King of the Peak' for his autocratic magnificence and hospitality), as his second wife, becoming stepmother to his two daughters, Margaret, the wife of Sir Thomas Stanley, and the celebrated Dorothy, who married John Manners. In 1565 George Vernon settled two manors and a considerable amount of other land on Maud for life (Wrottesley, 1892). She is remembered affectionately in his will of 1565 as, "*My most dear and entirely beloved wife Dame Maude*" and was left a handsome dower consisting of eight manors and other tenements in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, as well as the greater part of his chattels, plate and jewels. Of particular note is that George also left her sister, Elizabeth, a hundred marks towards her marriage, and her brother, Nicholas Longford, was bequeathed a "*skewed gelding with a white ear*", and as an executor of the will received £20 (Edwards, 1998, pp.160-163).

Maud married secondly Sir Francis Hastings¹¹³, brother of Henry and George Hastings, consecutively third and fourth earls of Huntingdon, a marriage undoubtedly brought about by the fact that George was married to Dorothy, daughter and heir of Sir John Porte, step sister of Maud. Sir Francis having only a patrimonial income of £41 per annum must have welcomed the income from Maud's dower. Perhaps owing to how perilously close they might be considered a threat to the house of Tudor, both he and his elder brother George were staunch puritans. Francis was known for his zeal towards the continuing reformation of the church and this connection may have helped Nicholas Longford. Maud died without issue in 1595 and was buried alongside her first husband in Bakewell church (Lawrance, 1929, pp.335-337).

The other surviving daughter of Ralph and Dorothy was Elizabeth who married Sir Humphrey Dethick (d.1599) of Newhall, Derbyshire by 1567¹¹⁴. Despite having three sons and five daughters, only one daughter, Katherine, wife of Alexander Reddish¹¹⁵ of Lancashire, became the heir to both the Dethick and Longford inheritance. After Humphrey's death Elizabeth married her distant cousin, Sir Humphrey Ferrers of Tamworth (d.1608), and was heir to her brother Sir Nicholas Longford in 1610, surviving him but for a short time¹¹⁶. Her daughter, Katherine, had two daughters and

¹¹¹ Margery was born by 1532/3 and was their only child at a census of the archdeaconry of Stafford (Kettle, 1976).

¹¹² Consistory Court of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Original wills, 1583, FHL film #95,452. I am grateful to Paul C Reed for providing a transcript of this will.

¹¹³ A biography of Sir Francis is given in Bindoff (1982, pp.270-272). His mother Katherine, daughter of Henry Pole, Lord Montague, whose family had been purged by Henry VIII owing to their legitimate Plantagenet descent (from George, Duke of Clarence), might have been considered rightful heir to the throne of England, had the children of Edward IV been illegitimate as charged, and Henry VII not seized the crown by conquest.

¹¹⁴ Manchester University, John Rylands Library: Phillips Charters, PHC/329. The couple had a lease from Thomas Findern dated 10 March 1567.

¹¹⁵ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/672. In 1591 Sir Humphrey acknowledged a debt of £160 to Alexander Reddish being the remainder of Katharine's marriage portion.

¹¹⁶ As Dame Elizabeth, Lady Ferrers of Walton, she made her will in 1610, CRU/747. She died on 1 April 1611 according to the inscription on her tomb in Hartshorne, which is described in Lawrance (1929) pp.343-345.

co-heiresses, Sara, wife of Clement Coke, younger son of Sir Edmund Coke, and Grace, wife of Sir Robert Darcy¹¹⁷.

Nicholas Longford VIII

Nicholas, born around 1533, was a minor aged 11 when he succeeded to his reduced patrimony. His three marriages were to daughters from Catholic families - his first wife being Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Ralph Okeover and Maud Basset. The marriage would have come about through his mother's sister, wife of William Basset of Blore. After Elizabeth's death, he married Martha, daughter of Robert Southwell of Wyndham, Kent, who died without issue on 24 October 1594 (Green, 1872, p.514). By 30 July 1595 Nicholas had married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Markham of Kirby Bellars, who survived him when he died without issue in 1610¹¹⁸. She died in 1620 and their effigies lie in the church of St Chad, Longford¹¹⁹.

From the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I in 1558 the Longford family were subject to the punitive fines and imprisonment for non-attendance of church, intended to persuade Catholics and non-conformists to convert to English Protestantism. At first the Longfords were not affected too severely, but later into the reign they were to suffer considerable hardship when recusancy fines were increased to £20 a month in 1581 (£240 annually from an income of about £400). Further restrictions against Catholics travelling more than five miles from home without permission were introduced in 1593. Impoverishment, imprisonment and disgrace resulted in social isolation – an ignominious fate for a family that was kin to aristocracy and gentry in several counties and had formerly attained a respected position by service to king and county. Instead of politics being a social uniting factor, it was now religion, for many of the descendants of the Lancastrian cause became the staunchest of Catholic families in Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire by previous intermarriage. The Longfords, Fitzherberts, Gerrards, Bassetts, Sacheverells, Babingtons, Markhams and Draycotts were closely interrelated and developed a network of underground support to each other during the persecution of Elizabeth's reign. As a consequence of being Catholic, Nicholas was never knighted like his forebears¹²⁰, and only served briefly in a public capacity, once as a commissioner to inquire into the lands of his Catholic cousin John Sacheverell who had fled abroad¹²¹, and once as sheriff of Derbyshire in 1568¹²². His tenure as the last Longford is marked by the piecemeal dispersion of the family estates under the regime of the last Tudor monarch.

Nicholas came under scrutiny of the Privy Council by close kinship with the Fitzherberts. He was godfather to his cousin and namesake, Nicholas Fitzherbert, who was in exile as a gentleman servant in the household of Cardinal William Allen in Rome. His uncle, Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, the same who had delivered Sir Ralph

¹¹⁷ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/540.

¹¹⁸ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/871.

¹¹⁹ They are described in Lawrance (1929) pp.349-350.

¹²⁰ Which must have been considered an unjust deprivation for his epitaph (now destroyed) described him as *equestris ordinis* (of knightly rank), and his effigy wears a full suit of body armour (Cox, 1879, vol.4, p.523).

¹²¹ CPR 1563-1566, p.260.

¹²² Public Record Office (1898) p.31.

Longford from prison, was sent to the Fleet prison in 1561 by crown commissioners, along with Thomas' kinsman John Draycott and brother-in-law, John Sacheverell. He spent the next 30 years in and out of prison, despite the fact that nothing more than a charge of recusancy could ever be brought against him, and died in the Tower in 1591. The Fitzherberts lost two thirds of their estates through fines, and robbery of cattle by the same commissioners who put them in prison. John Fitzherbert died in prison after two Catholic priests were discovered at his residence in Padley in 1587¹²³. His brother Richard was also incarcerated, as well as two of Richard's three sons. Another of Thomas' brother-in-laws, William Basset of Langley and Blore, also spent long periods in prison. The remaining brother, William Fitzherbert, had died by Elizabeth's accession but his two sons and daughter were also imprisoned (Cox, 1885)¹²⁴.

Perhaps protected by influence at court, it was not until July 1585 that Nicholas was sent to Marshalsea prison (Catholic Record Society, 1906). The family had been under surveillance, with Nicholas' servants being interrogated in 1584 by Sir Ralph Sadleir. One of them, Humphrey Bridges, had fancifully claimed that,

*The Scottish Q[ueen] had written to Mr Langeford that he shulde stick to his religion, and she wolde make him a duke, and make Robert Gray archbishop of Canterbury.*¹²⁵ (Questier, 2004).

In 1586 his life was further endangered when the plot orchestrated by Anthony Babington to kill Elizabeth I and put Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne was discovered. Endorsed by the written approval of Queen Mary (an act which brought about her own downfall), it was intended that Queen Elizabeth would be assassinated by six of Babington's friends, and Mary rescued by ten other associates. When questioned whom the ten associates might be, Babington admitted that he'd only found two people willing to help – Sir Thomas Gerard and Thomas Salisbury – but had hoped for the aid of John Draycott, the Fitzherbert family and Nicholas Longford (Turbutt, 1999). As Nicholas appears to have been under confinement during this time, nothing could be proven against him.

In September 1587 Nicholas, who had been living in Fulham, Middlesex, under close watch with his wife since June 1585, was given permission to travel back to Derbyshire to receive his rents and arrange to pay his debts to the crown for recusancy, with the provision he returned by 1 December (Dasent, 1897). He had already sold his land in Duckmanton to Francis Leeke¹²⁶ and property in Normanton and Pinxton to his distant cousin Richard Coke for 155 marks in 1565¹²⁷. Parke Hall, North Wingfield and messuages in Pilsley and Morton, and moieties of the advowson of the churches of Northwingfeld, Morton and Pinxton had gone in 1577, sold to his

¹²³ They were Nicholas Garlick and Robert Ludlam who were hanged, drawn and quartered. Afterwards Richard Topcliffe, the unscrupulous agent of the Privy Council, temporarily managed to obtain Padley as his reward but failed in his bid to obtain Norbury.

¹²⁴ In 1594 Topcliffe had drawn up a family tree of the Fitzherbert family in which all members except one were labelled "*trator*" or "*daingeroos*". The one person labelled "*a good subject*" had informed about the two priests at Padley.

¹²⁵ Robert Gray, a Catholic priest, had been a protégé of the Fitzherberts.

¹²⁶ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/82.

¹²⁷ Derbyshire Record Office: Turbutt of Ogston, D37 M/RT25. This comprised the manor of South Normanton, 15 messuages, 6 cottages, 10 tofts, 20 granaries, 20 gardens, 20 orchards, 500 acres of land, 200 acres of meadow, 300 acres pasture, 5 acres of wood, 300 acres of heath and briar, and 12s. rent in South Normanton and Pinxton.

kinsman George Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, who required Nicholas to make a will containing confirmation of the sale¹²⁸. While in Derbyshire he and Martha conveyed landholdings in Derbyshire and Lancashire to Richard Barnefield¹²⁹. Also in an attempt to ensure that Martha would have an adequate dower in event of his death, Nicholas proceeded to settle all of the property in Lancashire, which included the manors of Hough and Withington, and lands in Manchester, Didsbury, Chorlton, Rusholme, Haughton and Denton on themselves for life. Remainders under an entail placed by Sir Ralph Longford in 1511 were to Richard Longford and his brother William, sons of Thomas Longford (son of Sir Ralph Longford d.1513), Maud his sister wife of Sir Francis Hastings, Francis Dethick, son of Humphrey Dethick and Elizabeth his wife (Farrer and Brownbill, 1911). Further depredation of his estate occurred in 1591 when the moiety of Newton Solney was conveyed to John Longford of St Germans, Cornwall¹³⁰.

By September 1593 the Longfords were back in Derbyshire, for Richard Topcliffe on the trail of Francis Rydell, a Catholic priest on the run, reported that Rydell had fled to "Wm. Bassett's at Langford, co. Derby, where he had conference with Mr Langford, the Papist, and Bassett's cousin germaine...". More seriously Robert Gray, a Catholic priest, confessed under torture in November that he had said mass "at Mr Langford's house, at Langford, Derbyshire, when Mrs Langford his wife, Dyonisius Loache, a resident, and lady Gerard of Etwell were present" (Green, 1867)¹³¹. The confession must have had dire consequences for the Longfords, for this was a treasonable offence.

The recusant rolls for 1593-94 show that Nicholas owed £120 in fines, and that year two thirds of the manor of Withington had been distrained by the crown to pay them (Bowler, 1965, p.68)¹³². Also seized by the crown were two thirds of his mansion house or manor of Longford, which produced profits of just over £98 (the whole property giving an income of £147), but it was in the hands of John Manners who kept a friendly eye on matters (Bowler, 1965, p.17).

Making his situation more perilous, early in 1594 Nicholas received a letter smuggled into the country from his godson, Nicholas Fitzherbert, in exile in Rome. It found its way into the Privy Council's hands.

Excusing his long silence which now he breaks because he thinks he has better assurance, than heretofore, of safe delivery. Good Godfather, assure yourself I am ever to you, wheresoever you be, as a most dutiful son and kinsman ought to be, honouring you as a father, loving you as a cousin, and daily remembering you as a most faithful and bound friend ought to do. It is so long and many years since I heard now out of England as I remember not the time I have once had so much as commendations from thence, or any relation of any friend I have there. Quietness I doubt me, in these hard times you enjoy not so great as I would wish, but your cause of suffering being such as it

¹²⁸ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/862-869.

¹²⁹ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/178.

¹³⁰ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/554.

¹³¹ Lady Gerard was Elizabeth Porte, wife of Sir Thomas Gerard of Kingsley and Bryn (d.1601) cousin of Nicholas via Margery Trafford, their shared grandmother. Elizabeth's stepmother was Nicholas' mother, Dorothy Fitzherbert and her sister was married to George Hastings, earl of Huntingdon.

¹³² The extent of the estate at Withington was described as the manor plus 100 messuages, 100 gardens, 2 water mills, 200 acres arable land, 100 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 500 acres of moor and moss-land and £10 in rents, with a park - total annual value of £216 19s.

*is, I fear not but your inward comforts which shall be everlasting do countervail your exterior disgraces which can dure and molest you but a while. And I here, a poor exiled man, though I suffer as one living of other men's charity, having nought of my own, yet by God's goodness I sustain not such want but that I have greater cause to thank God it is no worse with me than to lament the little I have, considering the little I am to deserve.*¹³³

Before her death Martha had sold her reversionary rights for £500 to Sir William Hatton¹³⁴, who had sold them on to Cecil for £2660. On 17 June 1594 Nicholas Longford sold Longford Park to James Stuffine and Anthony Nevill¹³⁵, and having promised to sell the Hough to Sir Robert Cecil for £1750, he tried to pull out of the arrangement shortly after Martha's death on 22 September. On 25 November 1594 Cecil wrote to Thomas Thacker, Nicholas' servant with a veiled threat that if the sale did not go through it would be the worse for Nicholas,

*Whereas you brought me a message from Mr Longford, when the Court lay at Greenwich last, assuring me that he would sell me all his estate in the Hoghe, whereof Sir Wm. Hatton had the reversion, for 1750l. at the first wood, assuring me further that I should not need to doubt to go on with my bargain with Sir Wm. Hatton, which then I told you was upon conclusion ; forasmuch as hereupon I have gone through, and now do find by a letter from Mr Longford that this was more than you had commission, which seemeth to me very strange considering that he spake the same to others ; let him know that I do look to be better satisfied than to be thus juggled withal by him or by you, and therefore do require him to make his repair hither upon this my sending to him in courtesy, which if he shall forbear or trifle with me in, I know some better reason to fetch him up in another manner ; and to the intent he may the better believe you, you shall do well to shew him this under my hand.*¹³⁶

This must have been a dark time for Nicholas; now in his sixties with his wife recently deceased, having stood his ground through many years of persecution, he capitulated by conforming with the outward formalities of protestant worship. We can only speculate about what measures were brought to bear, but Nicholas was not the only Catholic to waver at this time, for the resolution of Thomas Gerard, his kinsman and staunchest of Catholics, was also bent by the manipulation of the agents of the Privy Council. If Nicholas could convince the authorities that his conversion was sincere, then past treason would be pardoned. Knowing exactly what Cecil was about, Nicholas sent a careful reply,

*Before this time I have, for some scruple of my own conscience, broken her Majesty's law in not coming to church as myself and every other subject are required. Being in that behalf by some of my learned friends, [I] have already shewed myself conformable to the law by my several repairs to divine service in divers public presences; which duty, first towards God and secondly to her Majesty and her laws, I do intend to continue whilst I live. My suit is that as you have power so you will help to deliver me from those former dangers and troubles I have incurred by my recusancy. For sithence my determination (under God) is that way to offend no more, I am desirous to apprehend the means whereby I may redeem myself from the things that are past.*¹³⁷

¹³³ Public Record Office (1892).

¹³⁴ Green (1872) p.514.

¹³⁵ Crutchley Muniments, CRU/267.

¹³⁶ Public Record Office (1894), p.23.

¹³⁷ Public Record Office (1894), p.31.

His change was not so much crisis of faith as a pragmatic ploy to remove the danger he was in, regain control of his property, and stem the considerable fiscal bleeding of what was left of his estate. Predictably, once the threat to his life had passed, within a few years he stopped attending protestant church.

The price offered to Nicholas for Hough was very low being part payment of fines, and partly a bribe for favourable treatment by Cecil. A year after the sale went through, Cecil sold it at an enormous profit for £8000 to Rowland Mosley, who was already a tenant there (Farrer and Brownbill, 1911).

When Nicholas remarried in 1595, the manor of Longford and other lands belonging to it were settled on Margaret, his new wife, for her life in a tripartite agreement between Thomas Markham of Kirby Bellers, her father, and Robert Cecil¹³⁸. A period of calm followed this marriage until the year 1600 when word of a serious accusation against Nicholas reached the Privy Council. A letter had been sent to the Justice of Assize in Derbyshire saying that Nicholas had harboured a "*seminary preyst*" in his house. Upon investigation by Sir Humphrey Ferrers and Thomas Gresley, distant kinsmen of Nicholas, it was judged that, "*One Edward Baker, servaunt unto the said Langelorde, is accused to have uttered very slaundersous and vile speeches*", and was punished for these indiscretions against his old master (Dasent, 1906).

Whatever the truth of the matter, by 1602 Nicholas owed £30 in recusancy fines. He again appears in May 1606 having been convicted for non-attendance and fined £240 for the year - far more than his annual income had now become (LaRocca, 1993). The last time he appears on record is as an unconvicted recusant in 1609¹³⁹.

By the time Nicholas drew his last breath in September 1610 he was deeply in debt to the tune of £268 2s 9d, with the Longford estates reduced to Longford manor itself, and parcels of land in and around the parish¹⁴⁰. His sister, Elizabeth, was briefly his sole heir, but his widow had a right to the manor for her life. Margaret appears in 1614 being given permission by the Privy Council "*to goe out of the compass of her confinement*", of five miles radius to travel to London to pursue a suit in the Court of Wards¹⁴¹. In 1615 she and Elizabeth's heir, Katherine Reddish, agreed to sell their rights to the manor of Longford and the lands in Bupton, Thurvaston, Mammerton, Shirley, Hollington, Rodsley and Ardsley, as well as the advowson of Longford church, to Sir Edmund Coke, the Chief Justice. His younger son, Clement, had married Katherine's daughter, Sara, and their descendants were to continue living at Longford until 1707 when their male line died out. Under an entail, the manor reverted to the Coke family of Holkham with which it remained until the twentieth century, passing into the Crutchley family by the marriage of Sybil Mary Coke¹⁴² to Maj-Gen Sir Charles Crutchley (d.1920).

¹³⁸ CRU/871.

¹³⁹ Green (1872), p.519.

¹⁴⁰ The inventory details taken on 1 October 1610 show that his chattels were worth a total of £360 16s 4d, and the manor house was a large self sufficient establishment with a mill, brew house and slaughter house. The house itself had towers, one of which had a bell (Lichfield wills [FHL film # 95,455]). I am grateful to Paul C Reed for this information.

¹⁴¹ Public Record Office (1921).

¹⁴² Sybil (d.1939) was the only daughter of the Hon. Henry John Coke (Koke) of Longford Hall, younger brother of Thomas, 2nd Earl of Leicester of Holkham.



Fig 1. *Once placed on a raised table tomb in the north aisle the effigies of Nicholas and Margaret have been removed to the south aisle. The face of Nicholas Longford appears to be a realistic portrait, and like those of his ancestors his effigy sports a beard and moustache and is in full armour. The monument would appear to have been set up after the death of Margaret by her sister, Anne, according to the inscription recorded by Bassano. (Photographs copyright © Peter Sutton)*

O

D
 Nicolas Longford
 Equestris ordinis
 Post illustrem fidei confesio-
 nem post vitam diu se innocenter
 actam moritur prope octogenarius
 XI cal: octobris Ano Domi
 MDCX

Anna Smith

M

Margareta Longforde
 Nicolai uxor Thomae.
 Cum uno vixit annos 16 genti cum
 Custimoriae laude pauperis muni-
 fica in avita fide constans in D in
 pia vive ne defuit Ano Chris: MDCXX
 pridoe jadas janueris aetatis sue
 Margarete Soror

The Longfords deserved better than the ignominious end to which their family was subjected. While there was always a reciprocal aspect to a knight's faithful and true service, the Longfords of Derbyshire adhered to an age-old feudal code of honour by which they served their family and community, and could be passionately loyal under extreme circumstances, not only to their king, but also their religion. In the final years, when forced to choose between the two, it was unbending loyalty to the faith of their ancestors and refusal to navigate the moral rights and wrongs of the Elizabethan age that brought about their inevitable downfall.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the assistance of Paul C. Reed, Chris Phillips, Eric Parker, Sonia Addis-Smith, Henry Sutliff III and Peter Sutton whose generous help made the task of presenting this history easier.

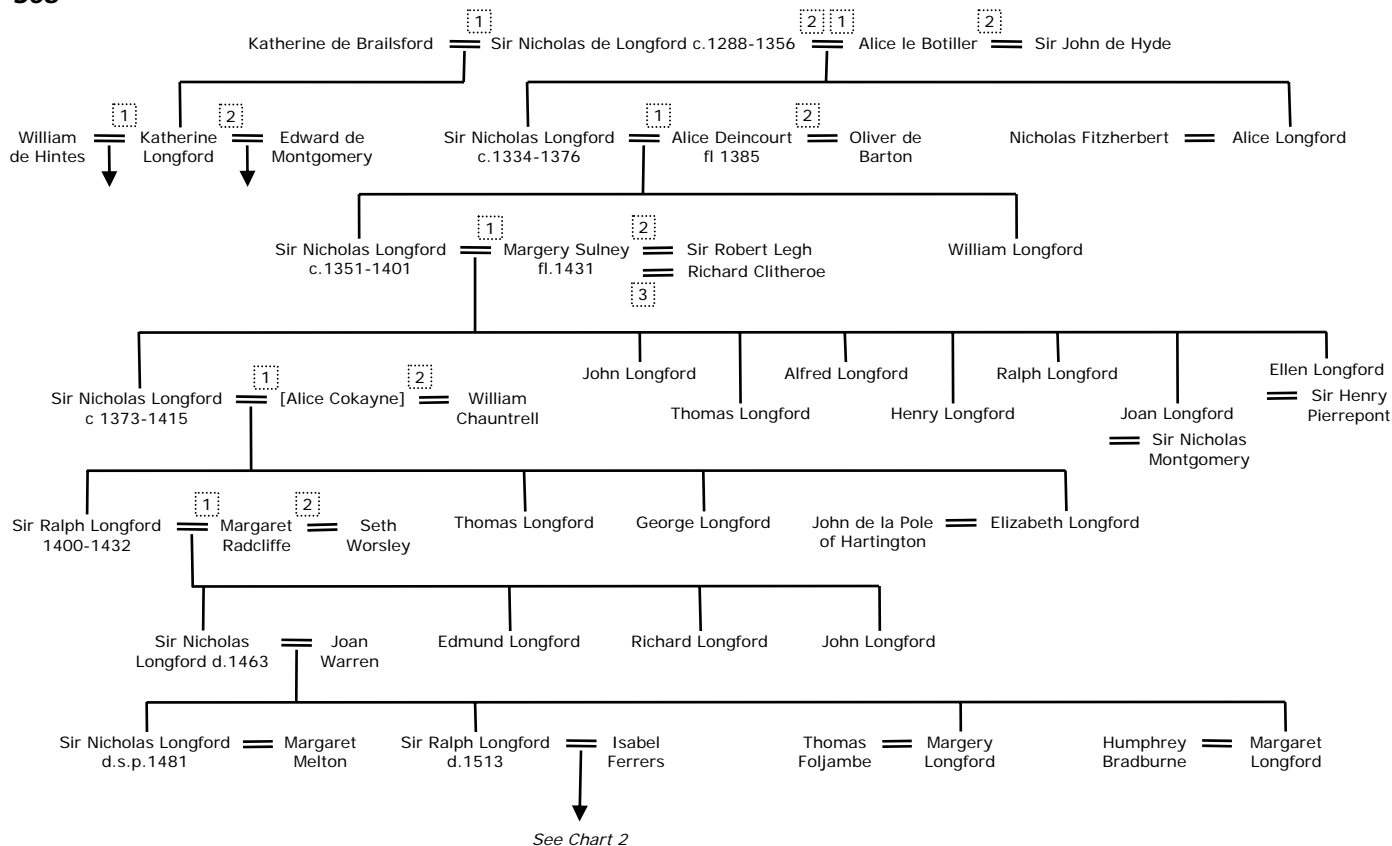


Fig 2. Pedigree of the Longford family 1300-1610 – Chart 1

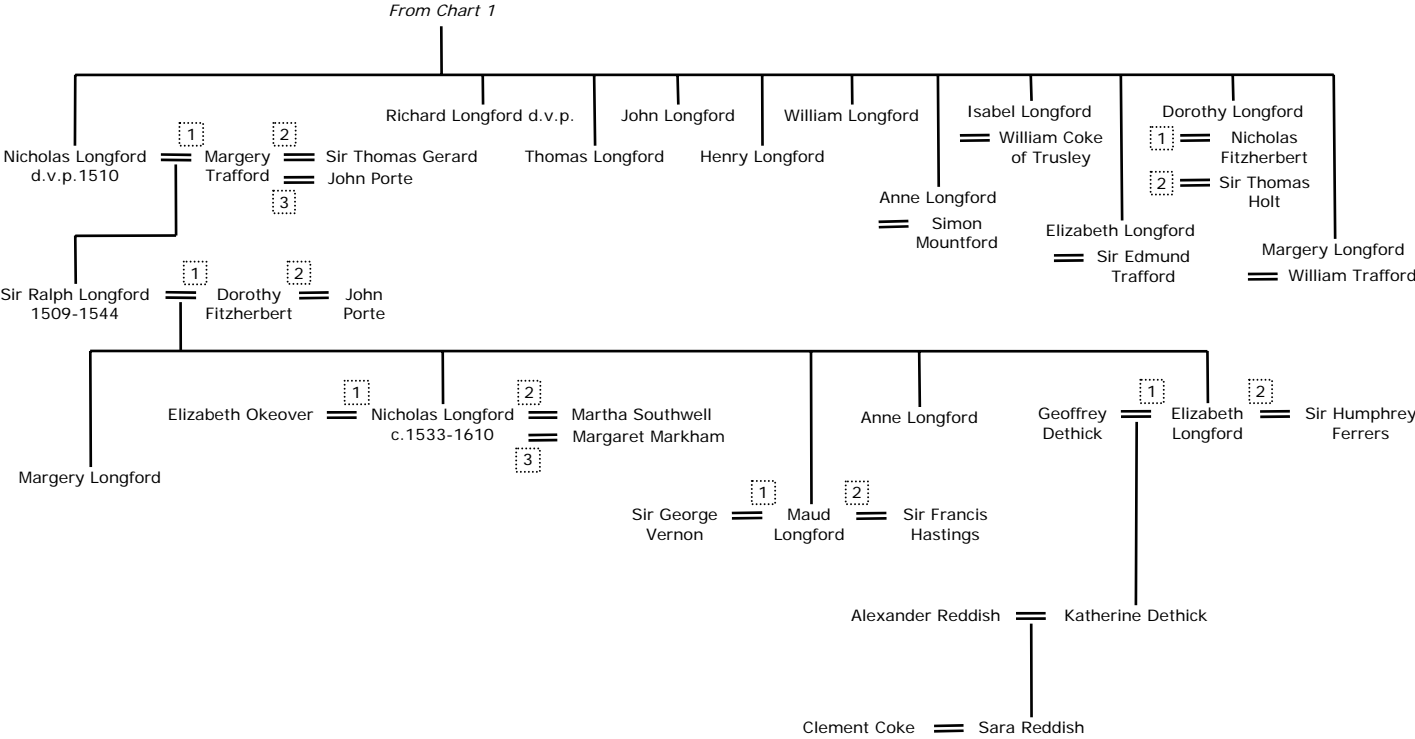


Fig 2 (continued). Pedigree of the Longford family 1300-1610 – Chart 2

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¹⁴³ **Note:** see inside rear cover of the journal for standard abbreviations of frequently cited sources.

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