# ELLIS OF LEPTON AND BARNBOROUGH

***By John M Ellis*[1]**

## ABSTRACT

An attempt to discover the identity of Richard Elys of Lepton in the West Riding of Yorkshire, who, in 8 Hen. V (21 Mar. 1420 - 20 Mar. 1421) entailed his lands on his eldest son Richard and his three younger sons John, Robert and William.

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## Richard Elys

Richard Elys of Lepton heads the pedigree of *Ellis of Barnborough* (Barnbrough) in Glover's Visitation of Yorkshire 1584-5, the Arms entered being Or, on a cross sable 5 crescents argent, a crescent for difference (Foster, 1875, p.135). The addition of the crescent for difference appears to indicate that Richard Elys was the second son (or descended from a second son) of a member of the Ellis family of Kiddal Hall in the parish of Barwick-in-Elmet, Arms - Or, on a cross sable 5 crescents argent (Foster, 1875, p.328).

The youngest son of Richard Elys is entered in the said pedigree of Ellis of Barnborough as: *4. William, see post*. There is no further mention of William in that pedigree, so the words "see post" are something of a mystery! The only other Ellis pedigree entered in Glover's Visitation is that of *Ellis of Kiddall,* printed on p.328 of Foster (1875), which shows no apparent connection with the Barnborough family other than the Arms. The Kiddall pedigree so printed begins with William Ellis of Kiddall, who died 27 Mar 1535, and he could not have been the “William, see post”, who was entered in the Barnborough pedigree. The Kiddall pedigree (printed in Coleman, 1908, pp.243-260) contains no William Ellis who could be identified with Richard’s fourth son.

Richard Elys was no doubt of full age and his four sons were living when he created the entail in 1420/21, and they could have been minors or of full age at that time. He could of course have been of an advanced age when he deemed it prudent to create the entail. It is therefore difficult to estimate his probable date of birth - he could have been between 30 and 60 when he created the entail, or even older. A birth date between 1360 and 1390 would appear most likely.

## Lepton

Yorkshire Archaeological Society state that they believe that Lepton was a part of the manor of Shelley, that they hold the records of that manor and that the Court Rolls survive from 1631. The Royal Commission On Historical Manuscripts state that the Manorial Documents Register has information concerning the records of the manor of Lepton, which reveals that West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees District Archives, Huddersfield, hold Court Rolls from 1536-1813, lists of pains from 1555-1597, a rental of 1633 and estreats from 1648-1656, all of which are included in the Beaumont of Whitley

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archives. These are held by the Kirklees Service, who state that the history of the manor of Lepton is rather confusing because by the early 1300s the manor had been split into two fees. From 1314 one fee was held by the Beaumont family of Whitley and they presume that the documents they hold relate to the Beaumonts' half of the manor.

In his *Yorkshire Notes* on the Wapentake of Agbrigg (Yorkshire Journal, 1882, p.409) the antiquarian Roger Dodsworth, (24 July 1585 to August 1664), under *Lepton*, stated that in Bernsley court rolls in the custody of Sir Gervace Cutler, in 3 Hen. VI (1 Sep 1424-31 Aug 1425), Robert Ellis held two knights fees in Birkin, Farrburne, Havercroft, Stainburgh, Lepton, Mirfield, Shepley, Shallow and Frisinghall, lately Sir Adam de Everingham's.

Note 23 to that statement (Yorkshire Journal, 1882, pp.409-410) reads as follows: *Lepton is a township in the parish of Kirkheaton …… A considerable estate at Lepton came to the Everinghams from the heiress of Birkin snd William Elys chev. (knight of the shire 1390) had this with Joan, the elder co-heir of that baronial house. Robert Elys, esq., mentioned above was their son, but though most of his lands went to his sister's heirs, the Lepton estate reverted to a surviving branch of the Everinghams. Robert Elys, however, while in possession seems to have granted lands in Lepton to his kinsman Richard Elys who in 8 Hen. V, entailed them on his sons, Richard, John, Robert and William. In 1316, Lepton appears to have been demesne of the honor of Pontefract*.

Tolson (1929) gives the following statement: - *Lepton:- Adam de Everingham, son of Sir Robert de Everingham by his wife Isabel daughter of John de Birkin, heiress to the great inheritance of her brother Thomas de Birkin. From the Everinghams their Lepton Fee passed to Sir Wm. Elys of Parlington, whose son Robt. Elys of Everingham died without issue in 1463, having previously granted part of his Lepton estate to his kinsman Richard Elys of Lepton. The other portion of the Fee reverted to a surviving branch of the Everinghams and descended to Sir Henry Everingham Kt., lord of Birkin, who sold all his lands in Lepton and Flockton to Richard Beaumont of Whitley Hall for Xli., 33rd Henry VIII, 1541/2.*

A detailed pedigree of the baronial family of Everingham is contained in the *Complete Peerage*, (Cokayne, 1926, pp.184-192), and that can of course be amplified by referring to the sundry Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPM) taken upon the deaths of members of the family contained in the Calendars of such Inquisitions.

## The Everinghams

Robert de Everingham died in June 1246. He married Isabel de Birkin, daughter of John de Birkin and sister and heir of Thomas de Birkin who died without issue shortly before 10 Oct 1230. John and Thomas were of Laxton and Birkin and were Keepers of Sherwood Forest. Robert and Isabel had livery of her inheritance 21 Nov 1230, and after his death she did homage and had livery of her lands 10 July 1246. Isabel died shortly before 14 July 1252 the date of the Writ for her IPM[2] (Cokayne, 1926, pp.184, 185).

The Lepton estate is first mentioned in the IPM of Robert and Isabel's grandson, Sir Robert de Everingham, of Laxton, Everingham, Kiplingcotes, Sherburn, Westborough, etc. He was born about 1256, and did homage and had livery of his father's lands 9 Feb. 1280/1. He died shortly before 21 July 1287, the date of the first Writ for his IPM. Sundry Writs for further Inquisitions and the actual Inquisitions were dated 1287-1289[3]. They detailed his extensive manors and estates in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. The Inquest at York on Friday after Epiphany (6 January), 16 Edw. I, (1288) contains the following:- *Lepton. 1 carucate land, whereof 10 make a fee, held by Cecily and Agnes de*

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2 Calendar of IPM (1904). Vol.1, Hen.III, No.255

3 Calendar of IPM (1906), Vol.2, 1-19 Edw. I, No.385, No.638 (pp.389-394).

*Lasceles by knight's service; and 3 bovates, whereof 8 make a carucate, and 10 carucates a fee, held by William son of Robert de Flocton and Simon son of Henry, in the same, by knight's service.* This estate, apparently amounting to 1 carucate and 3 bovates, and held of Sir Robert by knight's service, was approximately 165 acres.

Tolson (1929) stated that some of the under-tenants of the Lepton estate were: Cicely and Agnes de Lascell, 1287; Nicholas de Lascells, 1306 and 1334.

The grandson of Sir Robert was Sir Adam de Everingham (the second and last Lord Everingham) who was born about 1307, and died Saturday 8 Feb 1387/8 at Laxton, aged about 80. Writs for his IPM were dated 10 and 12 of that month and they listed his manors and lands in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire[4]. The Lepton estate was not specifically listed therein. His son and heir apparent was Sir William de Everingham, of Skinningrove, who died in his father's lifetime on 16 or 21 Aug 1369, having married before 28 Jan 1353/4, Alice, daughter of Sir John de Grey, of Codnor (Lord Grey), by whom he had a son, Robert (who died 25 or 27 Dec 1370, aged 2), and two daughters, co-heirs of their grandfather the last Lord. These were (1) Joan, aged 25 and more in 1388, and then wife of Sir William Elys of Parlington, later of Everingham, (2) Katherine, aged 23 and more in 1388, and then the wife of John de Etton (afterwards knight) of Gilling in Rydale, who survived her and died 25 Mar 1433 (Cokayne, 1926, pp.190, 191).

## The Ellis Family

Sir William Elys married Joan de Everingham before 1378-9, but it could not have been long before this as she was only eight years old on the death of her brother Robert in 1370. They were taxed 6s. 8d. in the Poll Tax Return under Parlington, and she could have been no more than sixteen in the year of the taxing. (Coleman, 1908, p.244). She was born about 1363. She was Lady of Everingham, Westborough, Brotton in Cleveland, and one moiety of North Leverton. She was living 15 Sep 1399.

On 27 Apr and 7 May 1388, Lord Everingham's co-heirs, Joan and Katherine, had livery of their purparties of the inheritance. On 27 April the King took the homage, and the Chancellor, the Bishop of Ely, the fealty of Sir William Elys. The sheriff of Yorkshire was ordered to divide the inheritance into two equal parts and give to Sir William and Joan livery of their purparty (Cokayne, 1926, pp.190-192). The Order of 27 April was to the escheator in Yorkshire to make a partition into two equal parts of all the lands in his bailiwick which Lord Everingham held of the King in chief, provided that Sir William and Joan have in their purparty a share of the lands held in chief, and so be the King's tenants[5].

Sir William was a member of the family of Ellis of Kiddal: the pedigree of that family does not contain any Richard who could be identified with Richard Elys of Lepton.

In 1390 Sir William was returned one of the knights of the shire, and in 1391 he was summoned on military service, and on his way to Calais he died at St Albans, having made his will at Everingham on 10 Oct of that year, which was proved at York on 31 of that month, and he desired to be buried in the chancel of Everingham church. On his death in Oct 1391, an Order was made on 14 of that month to the escheator in Yorkshire to take into the King's hands the lands held of the King in chief on the day of his death, and to make inquisition of such, and his heir[6].

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4 Calendar of IPM (1974). Vol.16, 7-15 Richard II, Nos. 541-543.

5 Calendar of Fine Rolls (CFR) (1929). Vol.10, Richard II, 1383-1391, pp.220-221.

6 CFR (1929), Vol.11, Richard II, 1391-1399, pp.45-46.

In his Will he named his wife Joan, and his children Joan, Hawise, Richard, Robert and Stephen, in that order, but whether in order of seniority is not known (Coleman, 1908, p.245). The Complete Peerage listed the children as Richard, Robert, Stephen, Joan and Hawise, the males probably in order of seniority, and the females likewise, preferring the males as was customary. (1) Richard, who died without issue before 17 Jan 1424/5; (2) Robert Elys of Everingham and Westborough, who died without issue 17 Mar 1463/4; (3) Stephen, who died without issue before 30 Jun 1434; (4) Joan, living 24 Nov 1415. She married Sir John Poucher, of Drax, West and Middle Rasen, and Purton. They had issue, Joan who married John Sothill, and they in turn had issue, John Sothill of Everingham, etc., who was 30 plus in 1464, and who died 14 Nov 1494 and was buried in Everingham church; (5) Hawise, who died without issue before 20 Jun 1434[7].

Following the death of Sir William Elys in Oct 1391, his widow Joan married Robert de Waterton of Methley and Waterton before Aug 1398, as his first wife, and consequently he had a life tenancy in the Everingham estates until his death on 18 Jan 1424/5 (Cokayne, 1926, pp.189-192). Joan seems to have died before 1419 when George de Everingham, her surviving uncle, released all right in the manors of Everingham, Farburne, etc., to Robert de Waterton and Robert son of William Elys. When Robert de Waterton died, Robert Elys, then aged 40 and more, came into his inheritance at last and went to live at Everingham (after 1427, as he was living at Methley in that year (Thoresby Society, 1909)), and held the estates for 38 years (Coleman, 1908, p.245). Robert was born prior to 1385.

Robert Elys was twice married, first to Katharine (who occurs 1434), and secondly to Elizabeth who survived him and is named in his will dated 12 Mar 1463, made as *Esquire and Lord of Everyngham* and proved at York 21 May 1464. He desired to be buried in the church of Everyngham, and died without issue 17 Mar 1463/4 (Coleman, 1908, p.245; Index of Wills, 1888).

Duchy of Lancaster:- Barkeston. In 1401/2 two fees in Birkin, Ferburne, Havercroft, Staynburgh, Lepton, etc., lately held by the lord Ade (Adam) de Everingham, were in the lord's hand because of the minority of Robert Elys, son and heir of Sir William Elys, in the custody of Robert Waterton Esquire (HMSO, 1920).

On 7 Dec 1407, Robert Elys was one of those commissioned to collect a tax in the West Riding of Yorkshire[8].

Robert Waterton's Inquisition Post Mortem was taken at Wakefield on 11 June 1425 (Thoresby Society, 1909).

On 21 June 1425 an Order was made to the escheator in Yorkshire *to take the fealty of Robert Elys son and heir of Joan late wife of Robert Waterton, esquire, he to have full seisin of all the lands in his bailiwick which the said Robert Waterton held on the day he died by the courtesy of England of the inheritance of the said Joan, as the King for 20s. had respited his homage until the quinzaine of St. Michael next* (13 Oct 1425). Orders were made in like terms to the escheator in Lincolnshire (omitting the clause touching the taking of fealty), and to the escheator in Nottinghamshire[9].

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7 See chart "The Heirs of Everingham" in the *Complete Peerage* (Cokayne, 1926, following p.192).

8 CFR (1933). Vol.13, Hen. IV, 1405-1413, p.91.

9 CFR (1935), Vol.15, Hen. VI, 1422-1430, p.102.

On 16 Mar 1464 writs of *Diem Clausit Extremum* were directed to the escheators in the counties of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire after the death of Robert Elys who held of the king in chief[10].

## Conclusions

1. The identity of Richard Elys of Lepton has not, as yet, been established. It can however be stated with reasonable certainty that, in view of the similarity of the Arms, he was a member of or was descended from the Ellis family of Kiddal the most prominent of the numerous Ellis families in Yorkshire, and that the use of the christian names of Richard, John, Robert and William in both the Kiddal and Barnborough families in the fifteenth century, is a further indication of probable relationship, even though the use of such names was common generally. The statements in Note 23 to *Yorkshire Notes* (1882), and by Tolson (1929) that Robert Elys was the kinsman of Richard Elys appears to be a mere supposition, and not based upon any evidence, though it could be a correct relationship, as the word 'kinsman' also covered remote relationships.

2. To attempt to determine the amount of land in Lepton which was given to Richard Elys presents some difficulty, as will be appreciated on perusal of the evidence set out in this article, which illustrates the conflicting statements relating to the history of Lepton and the ownership of its entirety or of its divisions. These cannot as yet be reconciled to any satisfactory degree. What is certain is that lands at Lepton passed to Robert de Everingham (died June 1246) upon his marriage to Isabel de Birkin (died shortly before 1252), sister and heir of Thomas de Birkin of Laxton and Birkin, and Lepton lands amounting to approximately 165 acres were specifically mentioned in the 1288 Inquisition Post Mortem of the grandson of Robert and Isabel, Sir Robert de Everingham of Laxton, Everingham, etc.

3. The Lepton lands of the Everingham family passed to Sir William Elys upon his marriage (c.1378/9) to Joan de Everingham, the elder granddaughter and co-heir of the last Lord Everingham (died 8 Feb 1387/88). They formed part of Joan's half share of the Everingham estates of which Sir William and Joan had livery by order dated 27 Apr 1388, he having done homage and fealty for them.

When Sir William died in October 1391, his widow Joan married Robert de Waterton before 1398, who, *by the courtesy of England*, had a life tenancy in the estates until his death on 18 Jan 1424/5. Joan's son and heir by Sir William was Robert Elys who was born c.1384. He came into his inheritance on Waterton's death, his fealty for such being taken in accordance with an order of 21 Jun 1425, and his homage was respited until 13 Oct of that year. Robert was in the custody of Waterton during his minority, and attained his majority c.1405. He died without issue on 17 Mar 1463/4.

4. Despite Waterton's life interest in the estates, Robert would have been their 'true' lord from the time of his mother Joan's death (probably prior to 1419), and have been competent to grant lands in Lepton to his kinsman Richard Elys some time between 1419 and 1420/21. Of course Joan, with Waterton's approval (and Robert's approval after attaining his majority c.1405), could possibly have made such a grant to Richard some time between Oct 1391 (when Sir William died) and c.1419 when she died. Another possibility is that Richard Elys was a sub-tenant of Robert Elys the true lord, of land in Lepton, and Richard would probably have been able to entail the land he held as such. Further detailed research is necessary in order to explore these possibilities.

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[10] CFR (1949). Vol.20, Edw. IV, 1461-1471, p.126.

## Gazetteer of Places Mentioned in this Article

Abbreviations : Derbys – Derbyshire; dist - district; E - east; Lincs – Lincolnshire; m - mile; N - north; Notts – Nottinghamshire; par - parish.; R – Riding; Riv – river; S - south; tn - town; vil – village; W – west; Yorks - Yorkshire.

- Barnborough (Barnbrough):- par. and vil. W. R. Yorks. 6m. W. of Doncaster.
- Barnsley (Bernsley):- S. Yorks. on Riv. Dearne, 12 m. N. of Sheffield.
- Barwick-in-Elmet:- par. W. R. Yorks. 7 m. N.E. of Leeds.
- Birkin:- N. Yorks. vil. 3 m. N.E. of Knottingley across Riv. Aire.
- Brotton-in-Cleveland:- tn. 2 m. S.E. of Saltburn.
- Codnor:- Derbys. vil. 2 m. S.E. of Ripley.
- Drax:- N. Yorks. vil. 5 m. S.E. of Selby.
- Everingham:- 3½ m. W. of Market Weighton, E.R. Yorks., now in Humberside.
- Farrburne:- Fairburn N. Yorks. vil. 2 m. N. of Ferrybridge.
- Flockton:- W. Yorks. vil. 6 m. E. of Huddersfield.
- Frisinghall:- Frizinghall. W. Yorks. dist. of Bradford. 2 m. N.W. of city centre.
- Havercroft:- W. Yorks. coal mining loc. 3 m. N.E. of Royston.
- Kiddal:- Kiddal Lane End. W. Yorks. 1½ m. N. of Barwick-in-Elmet.
- Kirkheaton:- W. Yorks. vil. 3 m. E. of Huddersfield.
- Laxton:- Notts. vil. 4 m. E. of Ollerton.
- Lepton:- vil. W. R. Yorks. 4¾ m. E.S.E. of Huddersfield.
- Methley:- W. Yorks. vil. 5 m. N.E. of Wakefield.
- Middle Rasen:- Lincs. vil. 1½ m. W. of Market Rasen.
- Mirfield:- W. Yorks. tn. on Riv. Calder. 3 m. S. W. of Dewsbury.
- North Leverton:- Notts. vil. 5 m. E. of E. Retford.
- Parlington:- W. Yorks. 1½ m. S.E. of Barwick-in-Elmet.
- Shepley:- W. Yorks. vil. 3 m. E. of Holmfirth.
- Shelley:- W. Yorks. vil. 5 m. S.E. of Huddersfield.
- Skinningrove:- Cleveland. loc. on North Sea coast, 1 m. N. W. of Loftus.
- Stainburgh:- (Stainborough). S. Yorks. loc. 3 m. S.W. of Barnsley.
- Westborough:- Lincs. vil. 7 m. N.W. of Grantham.
- West Rasen: - Lincs. vil. 3 m. W. of Market Rasen.

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