A REAPPRAISAL OF THE MEDIEVAL ANCESTRY OF THE CRANMERS OF ASLACTON

by Matthew Hovious [1]

ABSTRACT

The three Cranmer brothers born in Whatton in the late 1400s derived interesting connections from two descents, one generally acknowledged, one usually overlooked. This study aims to explore both lines, developing the known Aslacton lineage, and documenting and expanding the lineage of the Marshalls and their allied families. It attempts to unify previous publications, in a variety of scattered sources, regarding each family; and to sketch the careers of Cranmer's ancestors in each lineage, to the extent that they can be determined by surviving records.

Foundations (2008) ***2*** *(5):307-341* *© Copyright FMG and the author*

The gentry origins of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer are mentioned in passing in almost any biography of the martyr, as is his paternal family, the Cranmers of Aslacton[2], in a great many histories of Nottinghamshire. Despite this widespread consciousness of the Cranmer family's status, little attention seems to have been paid to their ancestry, perhaps because of a (wholly understandable) perception that the archbishop outshone all of his forebears. To a genealogist, however, the Cranmers are an interesting subject for further research, not least because of the notable descendants of the three Cranmer brothers: Thomas, the Archbishop; Edmund, the Archdeacon; and their elder brother John, who inherited the family's Nottinghamshire estates. These descendants range from the successive wives of Thomas Norton (1532-1584), the noted London man of business, dramatist and scourge of Catholic dissenters, to the present Duke of Norfolk.[3]

Most biographical and genealogical publications mention that the Cranmers were the heirs of the Aslacton family, whose arms they impaled with their own. Yet their apparent descent from another Nottinghamshire visitation family, the Marshalls of Muskham, has heretofore not been examined. The causes of this genealogical neglect are diverse. The Aslactons became extinct relatively early in English history, and anyone who can claim a descent from them can probably also trace a line to many other, more notable medieval families. The Marshalls, on the other hand, do not seem to have become a manorial family almost until the Tudor period, and even then were better known as merchants; so the medieval genealogist is unlikely to become aware of them in the sources most often used for genealogy before the advent of parish registers.

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[1] Matthew Hovious is a professional genealogist based in Madrid whose career specialty is Spanish family history research, though research into his own ancestry entails the study of English and German families.

Contact details: mh@spanish-genealogy.com

[2] Modern day Aslockton, Nottinghamshire.

[3] Through the marriage of Alice Cranmer, great-grandniece of the Archbishop, to Thomas Molyneux of Teversal; they were the parents of Sir John Molyneux Bt., whose descendant Juliane Molyneux married in 1764 Henry Howard, the male-line ancestor of the present Duke. See descendancy charts for Alice Cranmer and Thomas Molyneux, online at www.genealogics.org [June 2007], citing Burke (1938).

The boundaries for this article are those families specifically named on the visitation pedigrees, although through more thorough study of them, additional ancestry may eventually be added to this lineage – for example, that of the Bozun family through the Aslactons.

A curious discovery that resulted from this research is that, as will be seen, the Nottinghamshire city of Newark turned out to be the place that brought all of these families together, in spite of Newark's not having been mentioned in connection with any of these families in any of the visitation pedigrees.

It should be borne in mind that the correctness of the visitation pedigrees is uncertain. Every effort has been made to confirm or contradict the relationships they indicate, and where contradictions are found, they will be discussed below. Unfortunately, while nearly all of these families figured in visitations of the 16th century, none of them were very prominent in the preceding century, which is the period of interest to this study. As always, readers should bear in mind that the visitations chronicle only family lore at the time the pedigree was recorded, and should not themselves be considered proof of a relationship. In practical terms they provide a starting point with which to begin more comprehensive research, and are a useful, arbitrary boundary for the breadth of the present study.

A First Look

The first and in most cases only contact that many researchers will have had with the Cranmer pedigree is that of the *Visitation of the County of Nottingham.*[4] It shows the lineage of the Cranmers as follows:

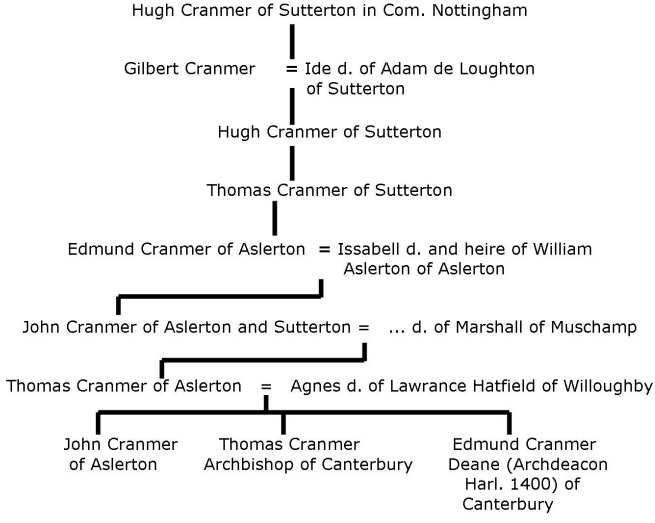


Fig.1 ***A section of the Cranmer pedigree from the Herald's Visitation of Nottinghamshire, 1569 and 1614.***

[4] Marshall (1871, pp.70-71). I have copied the visitation exactly as it is printed, including the spelling errors (*viz*. Aslerton for Aslacton) and factual errors (*ie*. the placement of Sutterton in Nottinghamshire).

Elsewhere in the same volume the above pedigree is corrected and in theory augmented considerably by that of the Marshalls of Muskham, which makes no mention of the Cranmers but specifies that the wife of Laurence Hatfield of Willoughby was Agnes Marshall, a daughter of John Marshall and Elizabeth Byngham. This pedigree (Marshall, 1871, p.166) appears, in part, as follows:

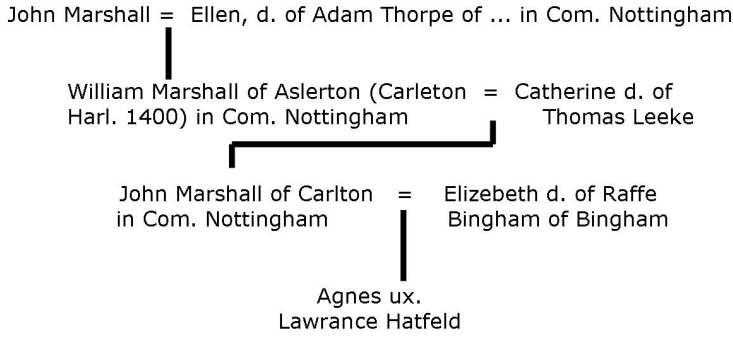


Fig 2. ***A section of the Marshall pedigree from the Herald's Visitation of Nottinghamshire, 1569 and 1614.***

The published Marshall pedigree gives an additional six earlier generations of the family, but this will be discussed later under the section pertaining to them. For now let's go back and look at the Cranmers' Aslacton forbears.

Aslacton

Argent a fess fusilly Gules, on each fusil an escallop Or (Marshall, 1871, p.190).

Establishing a chronology of the Aslactons is made difficult by the fact that they most often appear only as a party to the transactions of others; despite their being an ancient family, it is only in the later generations that their litigation becomes frequent enough to shed more light on their activities. The last of the family seems to have been Isabella de Aslacton, who brought her arms to the Cranmers; they were found impaling Cranmer on the tomb of Thomas Cranmer, father of the Archbishop, in Whatton church (Thoroton & Throsby, 1797, I:269).

The earliest known member of this family whose descent can be traced is Reginald de Aslacton, presumably the same Reginald who witnessed a charter granted by Lady Adeliza de Whatton to Belvoir Priory. Adeliza was a cousin and contemporary of Isabel de Whatton. Her father, Walter de Whatton, seems to have been a knight of the second Crusade and was the father of three children including '*Isabel, who married Reginald de Haslacton, with whom he had a gift of the manor, and hence derived his surname.*' (Whatton, 1825). I am not entirely sure of the placement of this Reginald as the one said to have married Isabel de Whatton, but he seems the best chronological fit. A Newmarch descent for Reginald has been suggested due to the similarity of their arms, but there seems no other evidence of this at present. Aslacton Charters. Fo. 36d: '*Gift by Adhelina, lady of Watton, to Belvoir Priory, of a bovate of land and toft in Aslacton, which were held by Ulfkil Dencus, with Ulfkil's son Geoffrey and his wife, sons and*

successors. She also confirms the gift of a meadow, next the meadow of Eleton, by her father. Hiis testibus: ... Reginaldo de Aslactona…' [5]

Reginald's only apparent child seems to have been Sir Simon de Aslacton, who must have been born before 1231, as he served as a juror on the Inquisition Post Mortem of Isabella de Albini, 1252 (Standish, 1914, p.106).

Sometime after 1255 he was mentioned on a mortgage document at Wispington, to which the witnesses were '*lords Adam de Novo Marcato, John de Bosevile and Robert de Burstall, Symon de Haslacton, Richard de Thwyforth, William de Novo Marcato, Robert Buridchayn.*'[6] He acted as a security for an agreement between Robert de Ros and his wife Isabel, and the prior and convent of Belvoir, at Belvoir on 13 May 1258.[7] He was a knight by 1260, when he witnessed a document at Worksop in the company of Mr John Clarell, Sir Richard de Sutton, Sir Robert de Stotevill, Walter de Ludham, Reginald de Annesley, and Galfr. Barri, among others (Holland, 1826). Simon was Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1259 and 1260 (Cox, 1890). '*Simon, son of Reginaldus de Aslacton, gave to the priory of Thurgarton, a toft, and croft [in Aslacton], which was Ordric's, and one acre of meadow, of the fee of Oliver Dayencourt, and a great Land, or selion, wheron was a wind-mill; all which H., prior of that place, gave to Maud, the wife of Simon de Aslacton, and the heirs on her begotten.*' [8]

Simon was the father of another Reginald de Aslacton, who seems to have already been of age in 1277, when he was a juror on the Inquisition into the estate of Thomas de Mellys held at Wyverton (Standish, p.86). In 1280, '*Reginald de Aselacton, William de Birton, Alexander de Le, Geoffrey le Botyller, William le Mascy and Matilda la Botillere hold 1 knight's fee in Byrton, Gedling, Stokis, Carleton, and Colewyk by the service of 1 knight*' at the time of the death of Adam de Everingham (Standish, p.14). In that year he also served as a juror on the Inquisition of Alice de Bottlesford at Bengham (Standish, p.8). In 1284-5 Richard de Barri and Reginald de Aslacton held the town of Tollerton for one fee, from the heirs of Robert de Veteri Ponte, and the same held from the king (PRO, 1906, IV:92; Potter, 1929, p.64). In 1287 a jury found that '*Reginald de Haslacton held in Carleton, and Colwick, of Robert de Everingham, the 6th part of a knight's fee, valued then at 5 marks...*' [Esc. 15 E 1, Nº 28] (Thoroton & Throsby, 1797, III:10).

Reginald married into another knightly family, the Bozuns. '*Raph Bozun... gave to Reginald, son of Simon de Aslacton, 22s. yearly Rent, out of Thurverton, and Skerington, with Maud, his sister, in frank Marriage.*' [9] In 1302-3 Ralph Barry and Matillis, wife of Reginald de Aslacton held in '*Torlaxton one knight's fee of the honour of Tykel*' (PRO, 1906, IV:101; Potter, 1929, p.64). Maud seems to have still been alive in 1308, when land '*of the fee of Matilda of Aslacton*' was mentioned in a charter (Potter, p.71).

This couple's son was to become the most successful member of the lineage. Another Reginald, he (rather than his father) was presumably the Reginald de Aslacton who served as a juror on the Inquisition Post Mortem of Edmund de Mortimer in 1305 (Standish, 1914, p.195). He seems to have received his first royal commission, albeit as a replacement, on 12 January 1320: '*Commission to Walter de Goushull and Reynold Aslakton to levy the scutage of the king's army of Scotland of 4 Edward II in the county of*

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5 Rutland MSS, IV:117 (Round et al., 1905).

6 Lincolnshire Archives, ref. 2ANC1/33/3.

7 Rutland MSS, IV:147-48 (Round et al., 1905).

8 Thoroton & Throsby (1797), I:261, citing Reg. de Thurgarton, p.25.

9 Thoroton & Throsby (1797), I:261, citing Autog. Pen. Tho. Rosell, Ar.

Nottingham, as above... in the room of Richard de Whatton and Robert de Crophull, appointed to levy the same, who have no leisure therefor.' [10] Another commission is recorded in the patent rolls on 16 Nov 1323.[11] In 1328-9 John Barry and Reginald de Aslacton hold the same fee in Tollerton mentioned above (Potter, p.64). Reginald was a knight by December 1329, when he served on an inquisition taken at Nottingham regarding a royal grant to Richard de Strelleye, and in the following year was a Burgess of Nottingham (Blagg, 1939, pp.107, 193).

In that same year *'Reginald de Aslacton, knight ... by fine, between himself and Roger de Aslacton, parson of Hawkesworth, 2 E III, settled this Manor of Aslacton on himself for life, then to his son John, the elder, and the heirs of his body; for want of which, to John, the younger; then to Simon; then to Roger, his other sons, and the respective heirs of their bodies, successively; for want of which, to the right Heirs of himself '* (Thoroton, I:260). Thoroton incorrectly specified the eventual descent of this land, as will be seen below. '*Reginald de Aslacton served in Parliament as one of the knights of these shires in 1344*.' [12]

Reginald's eldest son and heir, John, is relatively well-documented through legal proceedings mentioned in the Patent Rolls.[13] John seems to have had no surviving children and so the Aslacton lands eventually passed to his younger brother Simon, mentioned above. In 1346 James Barry and Simon de Aslacton held '*one fee in Torlaston which Master Ralph Barry and Matillis who was the wife of Reginald de Aslacton formerly held*.' [14] They each paid 20s. scutage (Potter, p.40). A suit filed by Edmund Cranmer and his wife Isabella de Aslacton in 1427-8 shows that Simon was the brother and heir of John de Aslacton, and the father of William de Aslacton (Wrottesley, 1905, p.335), where Thoroton had erroneously ascribed William's paternity to John de Aslacton.

Simon's only known child was William de Aslacton. What little is known about William derives from litigation over his land, which began when he was still a minor: *'John de Aslacton* [Pl. cor. reg. Mich. 30 E 3, ro. 88], *Clerk, was impleaded by Nicholas de Langford, Jr., and Alice his wife, and John Ryvell, Chr., and Joan his wife, daughters and heirs of Roger Deyncourt, for violently ejecting them from the Custody of the Land and heir of John de Aslacton, being then under age; which John died, seized of one Hundred acres of land, forty of meadow, and the third part of the manor of Aslacton, which he held of the said Roger Deyncourt, by Knight's service, viz. by Homage and scutage, for a Knight's Fee, wherupon the jury gave them 20 l. damage, and they desired Execution and had it. This Heir, then in minority, was William it seems...*' (Thoroton, I:260). William is mentioned in the IPM of William Deyncourt in 1364: *'William Deyncourt the elder held one and a half knights' fees from the king in chief which William de Aslakton and the abbot of Welbek held, worth 7£ 10 s/.*' (Blagg, 1939, p.57).

The next record we have of William again concerns litigation over land. Thoroton reports that *'John Barry, of Torlaston, 17 EII + 3 E 3, claimed against Reginald de Aslacton 28 Bovats of land, 28 acres of meadow, and 10 messuages, except the 6th part of a messuage in Torlaston... William de Aslacton, in 50 E III, recovered his seisin by Assize and Jury of the manor of Torlaston, called Aslocton's manor, against Robert Barry, Chr. and Roger de Clifton, Parson of Ketworth, and 40 L. for damages; upon which Sir Robert said, the Jury had made a*

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[10] CFR, Edward II, Vol. III, p.14.

[11] CPR, Edward II, Vol. IV, p.381.

[12] Waters (1877, p.2). This work was simply an extract of Waters' then-unpublished Chester of Chicheley, which was published the following year (Waters, 1878).

[13] See for example CPR, Edw III Vol.3, p.335; Vol.8 pp.54, 171.

[14] PRO (1906) IV:120. See also Potter p.64, which gives the wrong year.

false Oath, and a jury of 24 came to convince, etc., but no judgment at the time was given.' [Pl. cor. Reg. apud Winton, Trin. 51 E III, rot. 33]. It seems that Torlaston's Manor came to the family of Aslacton.[15] Potter (p.64) adds: '*It is then stated "John de Aslokton now holds the said tenement".*' This would seem to indicate that William died shortly after this litigation in 1377. He was in any event dead by 1391. Coroners' Roll No.125 m.7 contains what may be the only reference to a wife of William de Aslacton, whose name was Amice. Already a widow in that year, she is mentioned in connection with one John Tropet of Torlaston whose goods and chattels she held after his flight following a murder in the village (Potter, p.54).

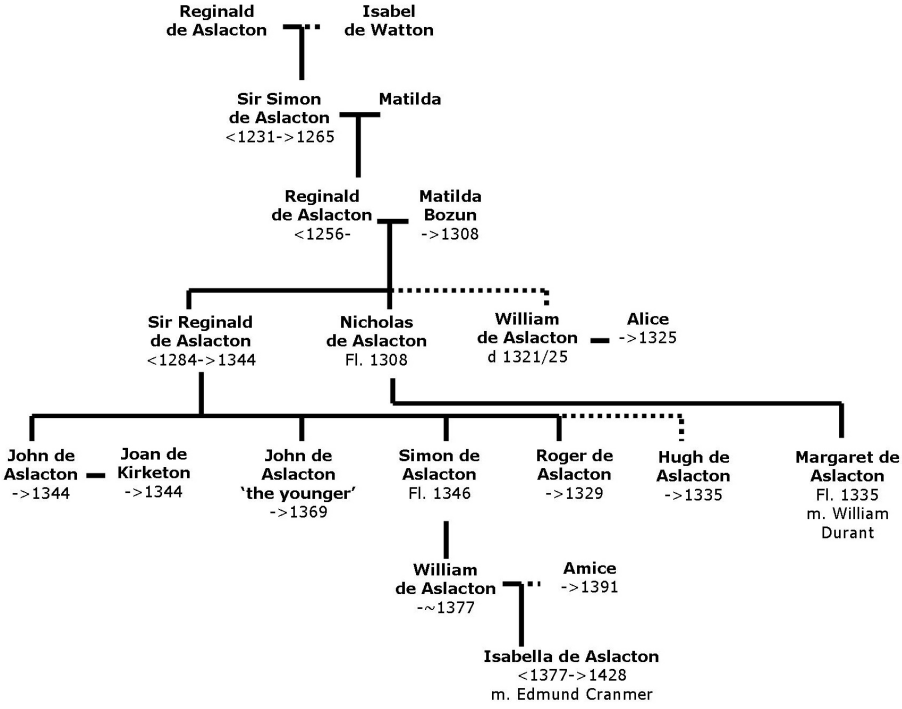


Fig 3. ***The pedigree of the Aslactons, as set forth in this article.***

William and Amice's daughter and heir was Isabella de Aslacton, who married Edmund Cranmer. '*Edmund Cranmer of Aslacton and Isabell his wife, 4 H 6, claimed against William de Sibthorp esquire, two messuages, one toft, 26 acres of land, and two of meadow, in Aslacton.*'[16] Edmund must have died just after this claim was recorded; '*In 1428 Elizabeth, lately wife of Edmund Cranemere, and Edmund Barry hold one fee in "Toralston" which James Barry and Simon de Aslacton formerly held.*' [17] They each paid 6s. 8d. scutage (Potter, p.40). Isabella and Edmund's son John Cranmer was the grandfather of the Archbishop.

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[15] Thoroton & Throsby, I:171, citing Pl. de Banc. Pasc 17E2, ro. 30; & Pl. et Jur. et Ass. apud Not., 3 E3, ro. 2.

[16] Thoroton & Throsby, I:260, citing Pasc. 5 H 6 rot 112.

[17] Potter, p.64, citing PRO (1906) p.132.

Turning to the other families ancestral to the Cranmers, let's begin with the Marshalls, for it is they who, through successive marriages, unite the several family lines that were ultimately joined to the Cranmers.

Marshall

Sable three bars Argent, a canton Ermine (Marshall, 1871, p.166).

It is not immediately apparent at what point this Marshall family became identified with a family of this name seated at Pickering in Yorkshire, a confusion that is represented in the first several generations of the published Marshall pedigree in the 1569/1614 *Visitation of Nottinghamshire*. George W Marshall, York Herald, disputed the tenuous connection and threw out the grafted generations, which he attributed to '*a pedigree which will be found in a MS marked EDN 10, in the College of Arms, and in various other MSS (not in the College) professing to be copies of a Visitation of Lincolnshire*' recorded in 1592 (Marshall, 1883-88, I:2, 91). That pedigree linked the Marshalls of Muskham to the Yorkshire family through a chronologically impossible link, making the John Marshall who married Ellen Thorpe (as shown above) a son of one Robert Marshall, who seems to have been born about a century too late for this, and a daughter of John Browne Esq. of Hull. The published version found in the *Visitation of Nottinghamshire*, as cited above, echoes the Browne connection but this time refers to the son of a *William* Marshall and Agnes, the daughter of *Robert* Browne. There is no primary evidence that this Marshall family ever claimed a descent from those of Yorkshire, and when Henry Marshall of Muskham asked William Hervey, Clarenceux, for a crest in 1563, the grant that he received states merely that Henry was '*descended in ye right line of the Marshalls of ye said Counte of Nottingham*' (Marshall, 1883-88, I:90).

In fact it is clear that the Marshalls of Muskham were the same family that for generations traded wool from Newark as merchants of staple of Calais, and their ascent into the gentry was perhaps partly due to advantageous marriages made possible by the wealth generated from their woollen ventures. Though inscribed in the Visitations as the Marshalls *of Muskham*, it appears that their connection with the area was by Cranmer's time quite recent, perhaps no more than one or two generations. For most of the 1400s, they may more rightly have been designated as the Marshalls of Newark.

John Marshall is for now the earliest known progenitor of this family. He may have been the John Marshall who around 1405 had business dealings with William Moren, tanner of Newark and Christopher Cosgrave, vintner of London.[18] In any event, John was probably still alive in 1427, when his grandson John was referred to as '*John Marshall of Southmuskham, junior*' (Marshall, 1883-1888, p.74). According to the printed Marshall pedigree in the *Visitation of Nottingham*, John married Ellen, a daughter of Adam Thorp; and as will be seen below, there is reason to believe that this is correct. John and Ellen had two sons: William, probably born before 1384, and Stephen; both were still alive in 1458.

William is mentioned in the Close Rolls in 1431, in connection with a suit relating to his commercial activities at the staple of Calais: '*Hamon Sutton of Lincoln "marchant," Thomas Cumbreworth of Somerby co. Lincoln knight, Roger Knyght of Lincoln "marchant" and John Langholme of Conyngesholm co. Lincoln "gentilman" to the king. Recognisance for 400£*

[18] National Archives, C 1/64/24. This record's catalogue entry has recently been amended to suggest it dates from 1475-85, an attribution with which I disagree. In any event, it is not entirely clear whether this John Marshall was of Newark or London.

to be levied etc. in Lincolnshire. Condition, that the said Hamon shall appear in chancery in person or by attorney in the quinzaine of Easter next, ready to answer... William Marsshall of Muscham [et al.]... touching a demand for 923£ 14s. 5d. by them made against John Levynge, John Hamer and the said Hamon, as affirmed against Master William Sewet and Richard Veer before the mayor and constable of the staple of Calais in the court of the staple there.…Note that at that day he did appear in person in chancery, and ... William Marsshall... came not.' [19]

William Marshall is also mentioned in the Patent Rolls in 1454, when his trade seems to have been caught up in a diplomatic row: '*Whereas Philip, duke of Burgundy, at the request of certain his subjects injured touching their ships, goods and merchandise by Robert Cave and his accomplices, subjects of the king, contrary to the truce between the king and duke, caused all goods, merchandise and debts of any merchants of England then in Flanders to be arrested and taken into his hands... the king by letters patent dated 7 June, 29 Henry VI, granted, by advice and assent of the lords spiritual and temporal in parliament, to...merchants of the said society...the king, wishing payment to be made according to an act in the last parliament made on the petition of the mayor and merchants of the staple by advice and assent of the lords spiritual and temporal therein, has granted ... that they may ship in the said port as many sacks and cloves of wool and woolfells, whereof the subsidies would amount to 133£ 15s. 1½d. and carry the same to Calais, as above.*

The like to the following merchants of the staple, in payment of the following sums in the following ports: (...)

Whereas a grant was made as above by letters patent dated 2 June, 29 Henry VI, to ...William Marshall, John Marshall, Thomas Alestre... John Plumtre and John Garbarton, merchants of the said society, that they might ship in the port of Kyngeston upon Hull wools as above, whereof the subsidies would amount to 3000 marks, whereof 1,805£ 8s. 10½d. are still due... the king has granted that they may ship wools as above, whereof the subsidies amount to the said sum due to them.

The like to the following merchants of the staple, in payment of the following sums in the following ports: (...) William Marshall, Stephen Marshall and John Barton, 73£ 16s. 5¼d., Kyngeston upon Hull.' [20]

Brown (1904, I:186-187) also records a petition made in 1455 by the Merchants of the Staple of Calais to the King stating that '*whereas the soldiers of Caleys have received and taken at Caleys of the money coming of the sale of wools of your said beseechers more than £8,000, may it please your highness to ordain that ... two obligations of Stephen Marshall, of North Muskham, William Marshall, of South Muskham, and John Berton of the same, merchants, bound to the King and to the collectors of the subsidy of wool in £53 13s. 8d. and £26 15s. 10d., be utterly discharged; also an obligation of Richard Sutton of Aram, Squire, Edward Bernard of the same, merchaunt, and William Marshall, the younger, of Newerk, merchant, in £10 5s. 3d.*' Another contemporary mention of the family is in a fine cited by Thoroton (III:154): '*William Fayrfax and Elena his wife by a fine [Hillary Term] 32 H. 6 wherin William Marschall, Robert Doyle, esq., Stephen Marschall, and Francis Furnivale, clerk, were complainants, conveyed the manor of North Muskham, called Haryngton's manor, with the appurtenances in North Muskham, Batheley and Holme, to the said William Mareschall and his heirs.*'

Another record cited by Brown (I:177), refers to a transaction in 1458: '*Stephen Marshall, of North Muskham, gives to William Marshall, merchant, his brother, his tenements on the bridge, a toft and a dove cote in the Potter Dyke, and his tenements in Barnebygate and*

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[19] CCR, Henry VI, Vol.II, pp.112-113.

[20] CPR, Henry VI, Vol.VI, pp.210-212.

Stodmerstret'. One can speculate that this transaction late in these men's lives had to do with Stephen's lack of a male heir. Stephen Marshall is not mentioned in the heralds' pedigrees, which is perhaps understandable given the fact that he left no heirs male and is not the ancestor of later Marshalls. A document in the National Archives[21] mentions Stephen Marshall and his daughter and heir Agnes. If Stephen was the father of the man known as William Marshall the younger, of South Muskham, the younger William likely died between 1455 – the last time mention is made of him[22] - and 1458, when Stephen transferred the property to his brother. The John Berton mentioned above in connection with the Marshalls' business activities was likely a kinsman of William Barton, who married Agnes Marshall.[23]

William Marshall married Katherine, the daughter of Thomas Leek: her origins are discussed at length below. One of this couple's sons was John Marshall. On 16 March 1450 John, along with his father William and uncle Stephen, witnessed a land conveyance at Muskham (Stevenson, 1883). Four days later he was included among the merchants of the staple of Calais who received a royal grant of exemption from a certain amount of tax, in payment of a £2000 loan that the merchants had made to the crown.[24] It may be significant that John is mentioned among the Marshall wool merchants in 1450-51, as shown above, but not in the subsequent Patent Roll entries three years later; perhaps he had died by then. In any event, John left a large family, presumably by Elizabeth Bynghamm, the only wife associated with him in any record[25]. They included his son and heir Ralph Marshall (probably named for his grandfather Ralph Bynghamm) who carried on the family's wool trade and its prolific descent in the male line; and a daughter, Agnes, who married Laurence Hatfield. They were grandparents of Archbishop Cranmer.

Apparently it was in the first third of the 1400s that these Marshalls became wealthy enough through the wool trade to enter the ranks of the manorial gentry. In the generations immediately preceding this social shift they had probably lived in Newark, in proximity to and in association with some of the other families discussed here. And before that? The precise origin of these Marshalls remains an open question. George W Marshall, later to be York Herald, was clearly bedevilled by this family's origin. In 1864 he published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* a first study which at least with regard to the Muskham and Newark Marshalls can today only be dismissed as useless, inasmuch as it attempted to tie together several apparently unrelated Marshall families using nothing more than conflicting pedigrees with no cross-referencing to primary sources (Marshall, 1864). He remained intrigued by this family, and would return to the topic decades later in *Miscellanea Marescalliana,* as we have seen.

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21 National Archives, C 1/56/195.

22 CPR, Henry VI, Vol.VI, p.262, concerning his non-appearance to answer for a debt of of 33£. 2s. 2d.; and to answer to the executors of the will of Thomas Forster of Newark.

23 Borthwick Institute for Archives, Prerogative Court of York, Will of Alice Marshall, 1473, Prob. Reg. 4, Fº 209 r.

24 CPR, Henry VI, Vol.V, p.323, 20 Mar 1450.

25 Only the Marshall pedigree in the Visitation of Nottingham identifies Elizabeth Bynghamm as John's wife and the mother of his children.

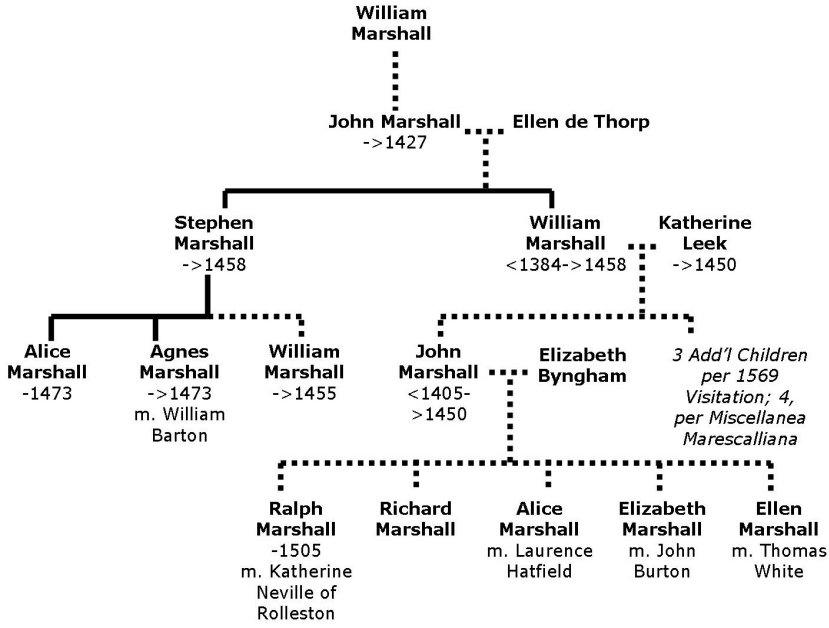


Fig 4. ***The pedigree of the Marshalls, as set forth in this article.***

The key to identifying the true descent of these Marshalls of Muskham and Newark may be in the 1505 IPM of Ralph Marshall (Marshall, 1883-88, I:326-327), which states that among other possessions he held land in the Nottinghamshire village of Eakring, then commonly spelled Eykeryng. Perhaps this is what led to some confusion with Yorkshire's Pykeryng, or Pickering. The Savile of Rufford papers include a few grants and indentures showing a Marshall family that owned land at Eakring as far back as the end of the 13th century.[26] If in fact the land mentioned below is the same land that was in the possession of Ralph Marshall in 1505, the surviving records allow but the most rudimentary of descents to be reconstructed, which would look something like this:

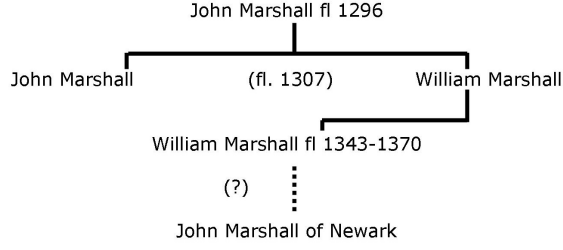


Fig 5. ***The Marshalls of Eakring, as reflected in surviving charters, and their possible descent to the Marshalls of Newark and Muskham.***

[26] Nottinghamshire Archives, Savile of Rufford: Deeds and Estate Papers. DD/SR/102 – 96, 113, 173, 175, 182 and 218.

Getting back to Newark, that 1455 Entry in the Patent Rolls also provides one instance of a connection there between the Marshall and Forster families, requiring that '*William Marsshall late of Muskham alias of Southmuskham, co. Nottingham, the younger, merchant alias "yoman" ... answer William Barker, Beatrice Forster and Robert Lytell, executors of the will of Thomas Forster of Newerk, touching a plea that he render 5 marks.*' [27] In the same way that the Marshalls provide the ties that bind many of the families herein discussed to the Cranmers, so do the Forsters link many of these families through their business dealings in Newark, as will be seen in the next section.

Thorp

Azure a fess Argent between three lions rampant Or
(Thoroton & Throsby, 1797, I:352).

The earliest known member of this lineage is Sir John de Thorp, who was dead by 1295 when the following charter was granted: *'Eliz. widow of Sir John de Thorp to Richard de Thorp, son and heir. All claims to dower in lands etc. in Thorp, Neuwerk, Stokis and Binington, and acquittance for £10 and bond to spend it in building. Given at Neuwerke, Eve of Feast of St. Thomas Apostle, 24 Edw. I.*' [28]

Richard de Thorp was referred to as Lord of Thorp in 1310: *'Sir Wm. de Galmethorp, chaplain, rector of Thorp next Newerk, covenants not to lease rectory of T. from Easter 1311 except to Rich. de Thorp, Lord of T., or with his consent.*' [29] He was described as *'Rich. de Thorp next Stok.*' in 1314-5 when he granted land at Newark to one Richard le Neubakster.[30] *'In the record of Nomina Villarum, 9 E II, Thorp and Cotum answered for a whole Villa, and Richard de Thorpe, and John de Mounteney, were certified to be lords.*' (Thoroton, I:351). The following year he demised some land in Stoke and Thorp[31], a demise witnessed by one Simon de Sibthorp, who also occurs in other documents mentioned below.

Richard's heir and, apparently, son was Stephen de Thorp, although their precise relationship is not indisputable. A Stephen de Thorp is by inference mentioned posthumously in a 1348 grant of land made by one of his grandsons: *'John le Venour of Stoke by Newark, Robert Moge, William son of William son of Stephen de Thorpe, Simon de Sibthorpe, and Gilbert son of Lecia de Holme juxta Newerk to grant land in Stoke and Holme to the master and brethren of the hospital of St. Leonard at Stoke. 21 Edw III.*' [32]

Stephen's son William, mentioned above, seems to be the Sir William de Thorp often mentioned in records of this area between 1320 and 1350. It appears that his mother or perhaps his wife had connections to the North Yorkshire city of Ripon, because from William's time till about a century later the same Thorps seem to occur in records of both places.

In 1320-21 there was recorded a '*Grant by William de Thorp of Ripon, to Thomas de Eyvill of Bikerton, and Isabella his wife, and the heirs of Thomas, of the grantor's life estate in a messuage in Thorp. Tuesday after the translation of St. Thomas the Martyr, 14 Edward II.*'

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27 CPR, Henry VI, Vol.VI, p.262.

28 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/2.

29 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/3.

30 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/22/5.

31 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/4.

32 National Archives, C 143/286/8.

(PRO, 1890). William was already married by 1329-30, when he and his wife figure in this fine: '*William de Thorp, knt., and Margaret his wife and Hugh de Goushull parson of the church of Radcliffe on Trent, a farthing of rent and a rent of 4 hens and 6 geese in Stoke, Eylestone, Newark & Northgate.*' [33] A record dated 7 Edward III refers once more to his parentage: '*William de Landeford of Flintham, William Freman of Bennington, Hugh Moweger of Stoke, Richard le Fevre of Stoke, William son of Stephen de Thorp, and Simon de Sibethorp to grant a messuage, land, and rent in Stoke to the same, retaining messuages and land there.*' [34]

William's wife Margaret made her will on 17 November 1347, and it was proved on 27 July 1348. The will reveals little of interest, the only bequests being to the church of Thorp and its rector; the executors are named as '*Dominum Phillippum Spenser et Dominum Adam de Everyngham de Rocklay*'.[35]

In April 1350, the Patent Rolls record the granting of a '*Licence for the alienation in mortmain by William de Thorp juxta Newerk, knight, of a messuage and 3 acres of land in Thorp by Newerk, co. Nottingham, and 84 acres of meadow in Merflet, within the liberty of Holdernesse, co. York, to a chaplain to celebrate divine service daily at the altar of the Holy Trinity, in the church of St. Laurence, Thorp by Newerk, for the good estate of the said William, for his soul when he is dead, and for the soul of his late wife Margaret.*' [36] Subsequently '*Wm. de Thorp next Newerk, kt., [granted] to Sir John de Fenton, chaplain. A messuage and land in T. and 34a. meadow in Mereflete, Holderness (Yorks.); for daily services at altar of the Holy Trinity in St. Lawrence's Church, Thorp, for souls of Sir William and late wife Margaret, their children and others.*' [37]

The last records I can find that refer to William de Thorp of Thorp by Newark are two charters made in 1350 concerning arrangements for after his decease. He was eventually laid to rest next to his wife in the church on his family's estate. '*In the Church was an ancient Tomb, whereon lay one in Armour and Mail, crosslegged, and on his sheild Azure, a Fesse arg., betwixt three lions rampant or, which is oft also in the window, Thorpe; and the inscription is, Hic jacet Dom. Willelmus de Thorpe, miles, & Domina Margareta uxor sua...*' (Thoroton, I:352).

I believe that the fact that the timing of William's requiem arrangements coincides with the disgrace of the Lord Chief Justice in that year is a clue to the origins of the jurist; perhaps he had an idea of what was coming. The names Thorp and Thorpe being common in England, I have not seen it previously suggested that the corrupt Chief Justice put in the Tower in 1350, whose current entry in the ODNB (Kaeuper, 2004) states that he was '*of obscure origins*', was in fact *this* William de Thorp, the lord of Thorp by Newark. As a young man, the jurist had the dubious honour of being the protagonist in what surely must be one of the most embarrassing episodes ever recorded in the development of the English legal system. In 1318 William de Thorp, '*the king's sworn clerk*', was walking to the Court at Westminster in the company of some colleagues. As the party proceeded along Fleet Street, William was attacked '*with force of arms and beat, wounded and ill-treated*' by a fellow named Mackerel, who also trampled him underfoot while on the ground and then urinated on him (*urinam super ipsum* in the original). Ever the attorney, William not only sued Mackerel for

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[33] Brown (1904) I:141. A more detailed extract is in Thoroton, I:351.

[34] National Archives, C 143/225/21.

[35] Borthwick Institute for Archives, Prerogative Court of York, Prob Reg 10, Fº 529r, 27 Jul 1348. A transcript was published in *Testamenta Eboracensia*, I:36 (Raine, 1836).

[36] CPR, Edward III Vol. IX, P. 503.

[37] Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/5.

damages but in his suit established legal precedent, claiming that the nature of William's position and the proximity of the Court at Westminster made Mackerel's actions constitute contempt of the king and his court. William was awarded damages of 100 shillings.[38]

1350 was certainly an *annus horribilis* for the Chief Justice. Charged with corruption, he '*confessed that he had received bribes from five persons indicted before him at Lincoln.*' [39] From November onwards the rolls are rife with mentions of his disgrace and the forfeiture of his properties. For example, '*Order to the sheriff of Lincoln to take into the king's hand and keep safely until further order the lands and goods of William de Thorp, knight, late chief justice, which are forfeit to the king on account of certain misdeeds whereof William has been convicted by process in the King's court...The like to the sheriffs of the following counties: Essex and Hertford; Nottingham and Derby; Surrey and Sussex; Cambridge and Huntingdon; Wilts; Rutland; Northampton; Oxford and Berks; Bedford and Buckingham; Middlesex; York; Leicester and Warwick; and Kent.*' [40] This was followed by a Commission to William de Gategang and Richard Blundell, Sheriff of Northampton, and the Sheriffs of Rutland, Cambridge and Huntingdon, Lincoln, and Essex and Hertford; to locate, assess the value of and seize all *'lands, farms, moneys, jewels, animals, charters, writings, rolls, memoranda and goods*' William de Thorp possessed *'at Michaelmas last'* [41] and a few days later by an '*Order to the prior of Spaldyng - on information that very many goods, jewels, moneys, charters, rolls and memoranda of the said William de Thorp, knight, are in his priory - to have all such, whether they be in the priory or in his keeping elsewhere, similarly handled.*' [42]

On the express instructions of Edward III, William was sentenced to hang by the committee that tried him, but the king subsequently spared his life[43] and ordered him committed to the Tower; then in March 1351, '*recalling with due gratitude his previous services and compassionating from his heart his desolation, the king ... pardoned him the trespasses and misdeeds contrary to the form of his oath and the execution of the said judgement as well as the forfeiture of his goods, and restored to him all his lands, jewels, and goods, with the issues of the lands from the time of the taking of these into the king's hands (the manor of Changton, co. Sussex, which is of his purchase, the lands demised to him by Roger Bavent, and the goods in the said manor and lands, only excepted) and he shall not be excluded from any action in respect of these by reason of the judgement aforesaid.*' [44] What became of William after that is unclear. ODNB suggests that he was the same man appointed second baron of the exchequer the following year, and who received a variety of high-profile royal commissions over the next decade; but another William de Thorp[e] received royal commissions at this time, and specifically while the condemned jurist was in the Tower, so clearly there were two men of this name simultaneously active at court. The great Norfolk historian Francis Blomefield (cited by Stephen & Lee, 1973) suggested the latter commissions referred instead to a brother of Sir Robert de

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[38] Goodrich (1996), citing 74 *Selden Society* p.79, and also Dugdale, *Origines Juridiciales,* London, Newcomb, 1666/71 ed., Fo. 99 a.

[39] Stephen & Lee (1973, editors). The older and the current editions of the ODNB feature completely different biographies of William; I have found worthwhile information in each not included in the other, and so cite both.

[40] CFR, Vol.6, p.265.

[41] CFR, Vol.6, p.266.

[42] CFR, Vol.6, pp.266-267.

[43] CPR, Edward III Vol.9, p.30.

[44] CPR, Edward III Vol.9, p.62. Older versions of the DNB erroneously state that *only* the Sussex manor was restored to him.

Thorpe, the Lord Chancellor. It seems that William de Thorp, the onetime judge, died on 27 May 1361 (Kaeuper, 2004).

The heir of the Newark estates was Adam de Thorp, whom I first find mentioned in a document dated 1372: *'Thos. Symound, vicar of Thorp, John de Fenton, chaplain; to Adam, son of Wm. de Thorp, and wife Katherine, in tail manor of Thorpe and appurtenances there and in Stoke, Eyleston and Newerk*.' [45] At about the same time another fine recorded that *'Adam de Thorp to make sufficient estate to Henry Lescropp of lands in Yorks which belonged to Wm. Lescropp. Henry Lescropp to make estate for life to Adam of £22 p.a. land and rent in Muskham and Carleton. Given at York, 4 March*' 46 Edward III.[46] He was probably the same Adam de Thorp shown on a 1379 Subsidy Roll for the Yorkshire parish of Ripon: *'Markettesteed in Rypon: Adam de Thorp & vxor ejus iiij.d.*' [47] Adam was dead by 1400; he must have been buried in Thorp church, where in Thoroton's time *'An old stone remember[ed] Adam de Thorp, figured with his shield and helmet*.' (Thoroton, I:352). At Newark in 1400 *'Katherine widow of Adam Thorp [made estate] to Hugh de Thorp her son, manor etc. as above*.' [48] This Katherine was perhaps the woman mentioned in the 1401 will of her daughter-in-law Elizabeth, who left her a fillet of pearls (Raine, 1836, I:281).

The contention that the Adam de Thorp of Ripon was one and the same as that of Nottinghamshire is reinforced by the Administration of the estate of Katherine de Thorp of Ripon granted by the Prerogative Court of York in 1428.[49]

Adam's heir Hugh de Thorp had business dealings with Henry Forster, as shown for example by a deed dated 28 July 1414 when '*Hugh de Thorp granted to Henry Forster of Newark a messuage in Carter Gate, and another in Le Beaumond*.' (Brown, I:72). Another conveyance is among those listed by Brown (I:173) as deeds among the Newark Corporation papers: '*1 May 1415. Indenture whereby Hugh de Thorpe, Esquire, grants to Henry Forster, draper, and Katherine his wife, a tenement in Cartergate, between the messuages of Robert Benyfeld on the North, and William Clifford, Chevalier, on the South. [On the seal, which is nearly perfect, is a shield bearing on a fess between 3 lions rampant, with the legend S. Hugonis de ..*.' This transaction is later alluded to in '*A Rental Roll of the Bishop of Lincoln's Tenants in Newark*' published by Brown (I:162):

> ***Henry Foster*** *for a ten. lately Robt Benyfeld 16d.*
>
> *The same for a ten. lately* ***Katherine Thorp****'s 2s.*

Another transaction linking these two gentlemen took place on 11 May 1421, when Hugh de Thorp leased to Henry Forster of Newark '*lands etc. in Newerk and in Northgate there late held by John de Mee. For 10 yrs; 1 rose p.a. for 1st. 6 yrs; then 13s.4d. p.a.*' [50]

The Marshalls too appear on the above rental list, nearby in the same Ward, '*William Mareschale*' paying 2d. for a tenement lately belonging to John Barton, very likely the same John Barton who was one of William's fellow Newark wool merchants, as

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45 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/6.

46 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/4.

47 Transcribed at http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/Misc/SubsidyRolls/WRY/Ripon.html, from *The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journals*.

48 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/7.

49 Borthwick Institute for Archives, Prerogative Court of York., Prob. Reg. 2, Fº 529 rº, 16 Apr 1428.

50 Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/7/7/1.

mentioned in the Patent Roll entries cited above. Stronger evidence that Forster actually had dealings with the Marshalls is shown in this record: *'6 Apr 1428. Dominus Henry Pierpount, knt., & Hamond Sutton, citizen & merchant of Lincoln, appoint Philip de Bailey, of Roldeston, and Henry Forster, of Newerk, to deliver to William Marshall, of Southmuskham, John Marshall, and William Bessewyk, clerk, seizin of all the messuages, lands, etc, which they of late had by gift of Robert de Hansardeby , citizen and merchant of Lincoln. Dated April 20, 6 Henry VI.*' [51] That there was an enduring link between the Forsters and the Marshalls for many years is suggested by the will of Katherine Forster, surely the widow of Henry named above: as mentioned above, this will included a bequest to Katherine Marshall of Muskham. As will be seen in the next section, both Katherines were likely Newark natives.

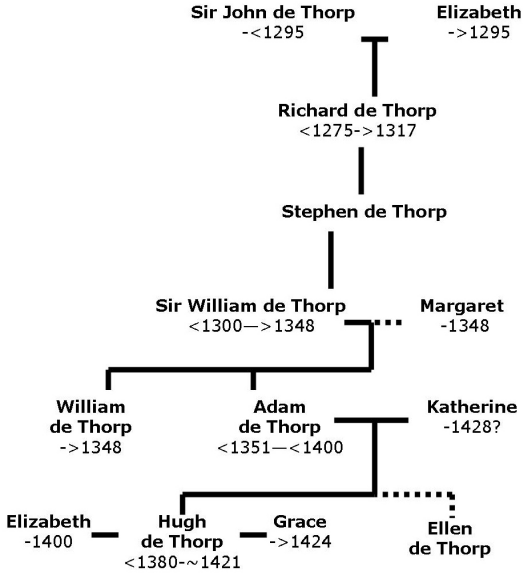


Fig 6. ***The pedigree of the Thorps, as set forth in this article.***

One crucial question in attempting to determine just how far back the assorted Marshall pedigrees referenced herein are valid is the precise point at which the connections claimed break. At some point, it was claimed that William Marshall of Carlton, Nottinghamshire, was the son of John Marshall and Ellen, the daughter of Adam Thorp. As is often the case with the earliest generations of any Visitation pedigree, no places, dates or additional facts are given. Perhaps the most interesting item in Thoroton's section (I:352) on the village of Thorp is his description of the arms displayed in the church. He blazons and identifies several of them, but does not attribute this coat: *'Barry of six or Az. a canton Ermine'*. Could this not in fact have been the coat of the Marshalls? Most interestingly, this very coat appears on the monument erected in Canterbury's church of St Mildred to Thomas Cranmer Esq, nephew of the Archbishop, following the death of the younger Thomas in 1604 – '*Az., three bars Or, in*

[51] Brown (1904) I:173. In that same ward he also paid 6d. for a tenement lately John Horspoole's, and in Barnebygate 6½d. for another tenement from the same owner; in the latter ward '*John Marschale*' paid 4d. and 12d. respectively for two tenements.

dexter chief, a canton, Ermine' (Cozens, 1793). This in fact may indicate that these are the correct original tinctures for the arms of this family of Marshall, and that those later recorded in the Visitation of Nottinghamshire are a variant. It is also possible that they refer to the family of Goushill; we have seen above that William de Thorp, his wife Margaret and one Hugh de Goushill were parties to a transaction in 1330. Some branches of the Goushills seem to have used these arms, though the tinctures were more frequently Gules and Or. This raises the question, though, if absent any other apparent Goushill descent for the Cranmers, these arms would still have appeared on a monument erected in 1604; the Marshall ancestry would have been more recent in family lore. In any event, it would certainly be a remarkable coincidence, if it were only that, for a coat so strikingly similar to the Marshalls' to appear in Thorp church when in fact they were believed to be linked to the Marshalls by marriage.

According to the Marshall pedigree in the *Visitation of Nottinghamshire*, John Marshall married Ellen, a daughter of Adam de Thorp, and they were great-great-great grandparents of Archbishop Cranmer. My research shows that there really was an Adam Thorp, that his known chronology makes it possible for him to have been the grandfather of William Marshall, that Adam's widow and son held property in close proximity to the Marshalls, that the Marshalls and Thorps shared a business associate and perhaps friend in the person of Henry Forster of Newark, and that there is a single tantalising item of heraldic evidence to suggest a marital link between the Marshall and Thorp families.

Leek

Argent on a saltire engrailed Sable nine annulets Or (Thoroton, III:158).

The Leek line of interest to this study has surprisingly obscure roots, considering that from it in time sprang the line of the Earls of Scarsdale. Thoroton wisely opts for prudence when treating this line. Some men in this family held the office of Sheriff early in the reign of King John (Thoroton, I:48). The main line of their descent is traceable as far as Sir Alan de Leek, who was a knight around 1362; but, Thoroton says regretfully, he would need '*further light to discover his posterity*'; a few lines later he again laments that with regard to the Leeks, he '*cannot perfect the descent as [he] would in this Place*'. It appears that none of the ancient lands of this family were inherited by Sir Simon de Leek, who was perhaps born around 1330. Roskell (1992) states that *'Sir Simon Leek... represented Nottinghamshire in no less than ten parliaments, as well as serving two terms as sheriff and sitting on a number of royal commissions. Although his marriage to his cousin, Margaret Vaux, was contracted "without banns, knowing they were related", Sir Simon obtained a papal dispensation in June 1351 legitimating their offspring, who may already then have included Sir John, their eventual heir.*' Simon Payling (1991) identifies Margaret as the daughter of Sir John de Vaux of Cotham, but gives no detail on the ancestry of either man. He does suggest that it was an advantageous match for Simon. Margaret de Vaux brought the following properties to the marriage: '*Cotham and lands over the Lincolnshire border at Westborough, Dry Doddington, Stubton, and Thorp.*' With regard to the earlier Leeks, he writes '*It was not until the mid-fourteenth century and the marriage of Sir Simon Leek (d.c.1382) to Margaret, the daughter and heiress of Sir John Vaux (d.c.1349) of Cotham near Newark, that the family made any progress up the social scale.*' [52] Simon was a knight by 1362, as shown in the Fine Rolls: *'Commitment*

[52] Payling, p.44. Margaret seems to have still been alive in 1383; see National Archives, SC 6/954/7.

to Simon de Leke, chivaler, and William de Leke, clerk' of the wardship of the lands of William Bulneys, a minor. Simon was Sheriff of Nottingham by 1364. He is mentioned in the IPM of William Deyncourt: *'Symon de Leyk Knt. holds of [William Deyncourt] a knight's fee in Cotes worth 100s. a year held of the king in chief*'. On 23 July 1369, Sir Geoffrey de Staunton and Sir Simon de Leek, knights, instituted Thomas de Bingham as rector of Bingham (Godfrey, 1907). Simon also bought land in Hertfordshire:[53] *'Robert de Blithe possibly alienated the manor to Sir Simon de Lek of Cottam, co. Nottingham, for in 1377 he enfeoffed of it William Batesford, Richard Halle, Roger Assheburnham and Edmund del Clay, who released their right to Walter Frost and others.*' In April 1377 Simon was collector of tax in Nottinghamshire's Thurgarton and Lythe Wapentake. Simon and his wife had at least three children: Sir John Leek, Sheriff & MP; William Leek, about whom more below; and Thomas Leek. Given the Cotham connection it seems most likely that the latter was the '*Thomas de Leyk, Knt., 38 E III, [who] was certified to hold a Knight's fee in Cotham, of William Deyncourt*', but he seems to have died young; in any event, no branch of the Leek family claims him as an ancestor.

Simon's eldest surviving son Sir John Leek, a knight by May 1380, Sheriff of Nottingham and Derbyshire on diverse occasions, is of but passing interest to this study, and that chiefly because he owned land in Newark. Brown (I:173) mentions a deed dated 2 May 1403: '*John Hornyngwould, William Seme & John Fraunces, grant to John Brown and William Lott a messuage in Carter Gate, abutting on a messuage of John de Leek, knight.*' This same land is mentioned a few years later (Brown, I:166): In 14 Henry IV, Sir John de Leek held a messuage in the Cartergate ward of Newark. John's descent is proven, among other records, by a document dated 1413 naming him as '*Sir John of Leek of Cotom*' and referring to land that had belonged to '*Sir Simon of Leekes, father of Sir John.*'[54] We, however, shall follow the families of two of Sir John's brothers. Roskell (1992) wrote, '*As the son of one prominent Nottinghamshire MP and the brother of another, William Leek was sure of an influential position in county society*'. An extensive chronology follows: marriage to an heiress, MP in 1399, Escheator of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1403 and 1404 (Roskell, 1992, III:586-87). What we may best remember William for today, however, is a document that he left in 1418 that would become invaluable for documenting the composition of his family. '*William de Leek, of Kirketon, 6 Henry V (or Skreveton) passed lands in Kercolston, Bingham, Aslacton, and Flawbergh to Simon de Leek, Raph, his own son and Johan, his wife, to Raph, his brother, and John, his said brother's son; and to Nicholas his brother, and Thomas, son of that Nicholas; his seal to it hath nine Annulets upon a saltire, engrailed within a bordure*' (Thoroton, I:249).

Thoroton, Roskell and others have interpreted this document as indicating that '*Nicholas his brother*' means '*Nicholas, the brother of William's son*', and in fact Thoroton drew a pedigree chart showing this relationship. It seems to me this should instead be interpreted to mean that Nicholas was a brother of the grantor, *ie* another son of Sir Simon de Leek. Next to nothing is known about Nicholas Leek, and in fact only three references prove that he existed at all. First and most important is the above settlement made by his brother William Leek. A reference however to '*Nicholaus Lok*', seems to link him to land at Scarrington in 1377 on E 179/159/31/13 (Fenwick, 1998). This is most likely the person mentioned in passing by Thoroton (I:230), *sub* Scarrington, as follows: *'It seems to me that Nicholas de Leek, of Scarrington, had this land*

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[53] VCH Hertford **3**:91-111, *sub* manor of Gacelyns, citing CCR, 51 Edw. III, m.14. Available online at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43587 [accessed Jan 2008]

[54] Nottinghamshire Archives: Portland of Welbeck (1st Deposit): Deeds and Estate Papers, 157 DD/P/8/1

in the time of Henry the Fourth; and that afterwards it was Bingham's, of Carcolston.' If Nicholas held land on his own in 1377, and in the absence of any evidence of another Nicholas in this close-knit family, chronologically it seems to make more sense that this Nicholas was the brother rather than the son of William Leek of Screveton.

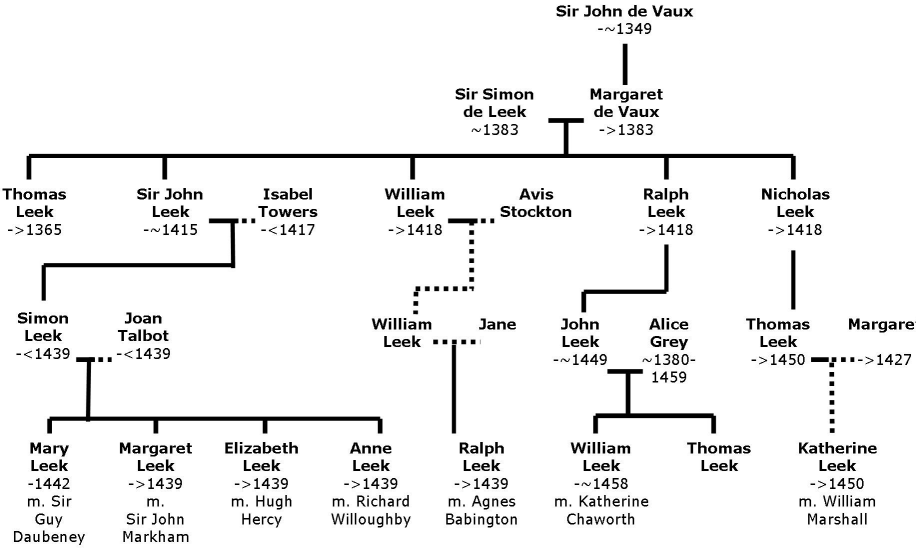


Fig 7. ***The pedigree of the Leeks, as set forth in this article.***
The line of William Leek and Avis Stockton, and their immediate descendants, would benefit from further specialised study, not being as clearly set forth as the other lines either in Thoroton's work or in the most readily available primary sources.

Nicholas Leek had but one known child, the son mentioned in the 1418 charter cited above: Thomas. Fortunately, this Thomas seems to have kept a considerably higher profile than his father. Thomas must have been born before 1395, for the earliest known mention of him regards his service on the inquisition post mortem of Sir Giles Daubeney, held at Newark on 26 October 1416 (Blagg, 1939, P.158). He next turns up in a fine levied in 1426-27, from which we can see that he had already developed a relationship with the Marshalls: '*Between William Marshall of Southmuskham, William Besewyk, Vicar of Southmuskham, and John Marshall of Southmuskham, junior, plaintiffs, and Thomas de Leek of Holme, next Newerk, and Margaret his wife, defendants. Thomas and Margaret receive 100 marks for land in Southmuskham, etc.*' (Marshall, 1883-88, II:74).

One of Thomas' distinguishing characteristics is that he was much involved in the affairs of his family, who at this time seem to have been a clannish bunch at any rate. On 16 October 1426, Thomas Leek, Esq., witnessed, at *'Estbriggeford'*, Notts., along with Ralph Leek, Esq., a charter to which Simon Leek, Esq., and Richard Byngham were parties.[55] He is again mentioned in a letter of attorney dated 1439 after the death of his cousin, the second Simon Leek: '*Sir Thomas Rempston, Sir John Pygot, Nicholas Wymbyssh, William Rempston, George Plumpton, Robert Stokwyth, clerks, Robert Rempston, esq., Ralph Leek of Kirton, Hugh Wymbyssh, John Leek of Halom, and Richard*

[55] CCR, Henry VI, Vol.I, p.315.

Wakefield of Newerk to Thomas Leek and John Byngham esqs: to deliver seisin to Mary, wife of Sir Giles Dawbeney (eldest daughter of Simon Leek esq., dec'd.):-- manor of Cotom, 40 ac. in meadow called Stokemede, and all other property in Hawton which they with others had of the gift of S.L. --: to Mary and heirs of her body...' [56]

Of paramount importance to this study is Thomas' residence in Newark, to which several records attest. He paid tax in Baldertongate Ward: '*Thomas Leke for 3 tenements lately Robert Holme's, 2s. 3/4d.*' in 1439 or some time thereafter.[57] Thomas is mentioned in the Patent Rolls on 1 May 1440: '*John Clerk of Newerk, co. Nottingham, "glover", for not appearing before the king, when sued with Thomas Leyke, of Newerk, "gentilman", to answer Roger Foxhole, touching a plea of Trespass.*' [58] Thoroton (III:165) also cites a document mentioning Thomas: '*Sir Thomas Rempston, knight, Richard Bingham, Thomas Leek of Newark, William Scrimshire, &c. Conveyed to William Foljambe one messuage &c. in Willoughby, which they had of the gift of John Lysours, or of Peter Lysours, father of the said John*.

The last known mentions of Thomas date to 1450, when he is again active in family matters: he is mentioned on 6 January 1450 in a Power of Attorney from '*Alice, widow of John Leek of Landford, esquire, to James Sympsone [Simpson], clerk, and Richard Shawe, to deliver seisin to John Leek of Hallam and Thomas Leek of Newark, of the manors of Sutton in le Dale [Sutton cum Duckmanton], Sandiacre and Kirk Hallam, co. Derby.*' [59] A few months later, on 20 June 1450, Thomas executed a similar document, '*Power of attorney by John Leek of Halom and Thomas Leek of Newerk to John Halgh to deliver seisin to Alice widow of John Leek of Landford, esquire of their manor of Crownest Regehall, and in all their lands in the parish of St. John's, Worcester.*' [60]

The Marshall (1871, p.166) pedigree in the *Visitations of Nottingham* shows the wife of William Marshall as Katherine, daughter of one Thomas Leek; and given these families' evident association as shown by the fine cited above, as well as their neighbourly proximity and shared associates, I believe her father was almost certainly *this* Thomas Leek, the man of that name active around Newark between 1416 and 1450. Of Katherine, as most untitled medieval ladies, little is known except that she died after 1450: the will of Katherine Forster of Newark, widow, made 26 March 1450 included a bequest to Katherine Marshall of Muskham (Brown, I:357).

Byngham

Or on a fess gules three water bougets argent (Marshall, 1871, p.121).

There have traditionally been a variety of problems with determining the Byngham lineage, among them the tiresome repetition of a handful of Christian names among the family's men, and the allegation that this family died out in the male line at some point in the early 15th century. Heraldic and other evidence seems to refute this. Joseph Foster, the great antiquary and heraldist, attempted to sort out the Byngham

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[56] Nottinghamshire Archives: Portland of Welbeck (1st Deposit): Deeds and Estate Papers, 157 DD/P/8/3

[57] Brown, I:162: ('*A Rental of the Bishop of Lincoln's Tenants in Newark'* [Surveys & Rentals, Nº 538]) That this list dates to 1439 or afterwards is shown by the numerous references to the late Simon Leek and his heirs, clearly identifiable through the 1439 letter of attorney cited above.

[58] CPR, Henry VI, Vol.III, p.329.

[59] British Library, Wolley Charter i.75.

[60] Birmingham City Archives: Papers of Zachary Lloyd family of Areley Hall, MS 3688

pedigree, among many others to which he devoted his attention.[61] He lacked however what I believe are the crucial pieces of evidence in clarifying the Bynghamof Car Colston lineage: documents within the Durham Cathedral Muniments, and in particular the seals applied to those documents by members of the Bynghamfamily.

There is at least agreement regarding the identity of the family's progenitor, Sir Richard de Bynghamm. He was perhaps born around 1240, and was identified in a deed of 44 Henry III (1260) as Richard, son of Ralph Bugg, a wealthy Nottingham wool merchant (Bailey, 1852, I:128). In 22 E I (1294-95) Richard had a charter of Free Warren in Bingham, Clipston, and Kinoulton (Thoroton, I:138). He became knight of the shire in 1297 (Bailey, I:130, 178). Before 1307 he had begun a relationship with Alice Bertram, and though she is referred to as his wife in a fine prepared that year, questions concerning the legality of their relationship would cause no small number of headaches for their descendants. The fine in question is most revealing both with regard to the composition of Richard's family and of his estates: '*Richard de Bynghamm, and Alice his wife, Quer., and Mr Alan de Neuson, Deforc., of the manors of Bynghamm and Clipston, and of nine messuages twenty-eight Acres, and eight Bovats of land and an half, and twelve Acres of Meadow, with the Appurtenances in Guthorpe, Kinalton, Gotegrave, Nottingham, and Rotington, and the Advowson of the Church of Rotington, thereby settled on the said Richard, and Alice, and the Heirs Males, which the said Richard should beget on the Body of the said Alice; remainder to William, son of Alice Bertram, of Bingham, and the Heirs Males of his body; Remainder to Richard, younger brother of William and his; Remainder to Thomas, Brother of the said Richard the younger, and the heirs males of his; remainder to the right heirs of the said Richard de Bynghamm.*' (Thoroton, I:138). As Thoroton says (I:238), '*It appears by another fine... that he first had these sons by her, and afterwards took her to wife.*' Elsewhere (I:46) he remarks that Richard '*was dead, without heirs very legitimate.*' Richard died before 26 February 1312, date of a *'commission to Robert de Pykering, canon of York, to receive the vow of chastity of Alice, widow of Sir Richard de Bingham, knight*' (Dixon, 1863). He was buried in the church at Bingham, where his tomb survives today.

Alice was to have a lengthy widowhood; she was, perhaps, born much after her sometime husband. A market and fair were granted in 1314 to '*Alice late the wife of Richard de Bynghamm and William son of Richard de Bynghamm and the heirs of his body. To be held at the manor.*'[62] As Dame Alice, Lady of Bingham, she instituted John de Loudham as Rector of Bingham on 14 April 1329, and his successor, Richard de Notyngham, on 5 Nov 1342 (Godfrey, 1907). She must have died before her son William instituted the next rector in 1348.

Richard and Alice left three sons – William, Thomas and Richard – and a daughter, Alice. From William descended the senior branch of the family, who were to die out in the male line around 1400. Thomas became a priest, though again, not without some unpleasantness caused by the nature of his parents' relationship: '*1326, 4 Kal. Oct., Avignon: To Thomas son of the late Richard de Bingham, knight, of the diocese of York, the illegitimate son of a married man. Dispensation to be ordained and hold a benefice.*' (Bliss, II:234). Young Alice was to marry Richard Sutton, whose descendants would in time lay claim to some of the Bynghamproperties.

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[61] Joseph Foster, *Pedigrees of various families etc vol. 2* [Manuscript.], Society of Genealogists, London, Call Number Store A (FH/FOS)

[62] Letters, Samantha, *Online Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England Wales to 1516*, http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html [accessed Jan 2008].

The full record of an inquisition taken by order of the Bishop of Lincoln in 1345, if it could be found, would perhaps yield other interesting information about this family. Its existence is mentioned in the Patent Rolls: *'William [son of Richard de Bynghamj, by his attorney, demands against Roger de Asshovre of Bynghamm 8 acres of land and 3 acres of meadow in Bynghamm, whereof Ralph Bugg, whose grandson and heir he is, was seised in the time of Edward I, at whose death the fee descended to one Richard, as son and heir, and then from the last named to the demandant. Roger answers that William is a bastard. And because cognisance of such a cause belongs to the ecclesiastical court, the bishop of Lincoln is commanded to take an inquisition herein. Afterwards... the bishop sent his letters patent testifying that it is found by inquisition that William is legitimate and not a bastard. Therefore the parties are summoned again to be here in the octaves of Midsummer, at which day judgment is given for the demandant.*' [63]

William is chiefly of interest to this study because of a fine levied in 21 E III (1348-49) *'between William de Bynghamm, Chr. Quer., and Roger de Eyncourt, and Matilda his wife, deforc., of one Virgat and two acres of Land, and 7 L. and 21 d. of rent, with the appurtenances in Bingham, Neuton and Sibethorpe, and the advowsons of the Church of All Saints, and the Chapel of St. Elen, of Bingham, thereby settled on the said William, and the Heirs Males of his body; remainder to Richard, brother of the said William, and his, &c., and for want of such to Matilda, daughter of Richard, son of Raph Bugge, and her heirs.*' (Thoroton, I:270-73).

This fine proves that Richard de Bynghamm, son of Sir Richard, lived at least till 1348; the only other known mention of him places him precisely at the home of those later Bynghams ancestral to Thomas Cranmer – Car Colston. On 23 November 1337, Roger de Whatton of *'Kercelston'* sold Richard, son of Sir Richard de Bynghamm *'a toft, 8a. arable, 2a. meadow, and common of pasture in Car Colston which [de Whatton] had in remainder after death of Ranulph son of Hen. de Kylington and wife Aleysia. Witnesses John in le Wylughs, John Moryn, Walter attekyrke etc. Given at Car Colston, Sunday the Feast of St Clement, 10 Edw. III.*' [64]

The mere topographical connection of Car Colston is the strongest reason for believing this Richard to have been the father of Thomas de Bynghamm of that place; but it is not the only reason. Perhaps significantly, the visitation pedigree of the early Bynghams published in the *Visitations of Nottinghamshire* in the section dealing with the Sutton family does not attach to Richard de Bynghamm, son of the first Sir Richard, the 's.p.' used in indicating the failure of the rest of his posterity.[65]

With regard to this proposed descent of the Car Colston Bynghams from the main line, it is most interesting that with regard to the Advowson of Ruddington, purchased by the first Sir Richard de Bynghamm in 1307, as seen above, Sir Richard the Justice seems to have felt he had a claim to it, and was even in possession of some papers that could have been used to stake such a claim. The Durham Priory Registers now held at Durham University Library include a *'Letter by John, prior of Durham, {to the warden of Durham college, Oxford}, having been told by Robert Rodees that he has discussed the church of Ruddington with justice Bynghamm, who has agreed to show the warden such evidence as he has and also that the warden should come to his place to show him the evidence which he*

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[63] CPR, Edward III, Vol.6, p.554.

[64] Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/4/1.

[65] Marshall (1871) p.144. A garbled version of this pedigree appears in the *Visitation of the County of Leicester*, pp.53-54 *sub* Turville, which not only confuses the descent of the extinct main line of the Bynghams but appears to be irregular in any event, since the arms that the Turvilles claimed to quarter through an heiress were those of the Bugge line, not those of the Bynghams, differenced by the tincture of the fess. See also Nichols' Leicestershire, VII:252.

has before he, the justice, goes to London; willing that the warden ride in all haste and speak with the justice, and take his evidence with him, since the church might otherwise, the prior has been informed, be recovered and lost to him.' [66]

Returning to the line of interest to this study, there were two contemporary Thomas de Bynghams: one, the rector of Bingham, clearly the son of Sir William;[67] the other, apparently his cousin, and the Cranmers' ancestor. A Thomas de Bynghame was a commissioner to collect a subsidy in Nottingham in 1379.[68] *'Thomas de Byngham of Kyerkyelston*' served on the IPM of Thomas Roos of Hamelak on 13 Jul 1384 (Train, 1952, pp.97-98). Thomas' cousin Sir Richard de Bynghame held land of Thomas' at Car Colston: the knight's IPM, taken on 19 December 1387, mentions that *'he held [illegible] in Kercolston of Thomas de Bingham of Kercolston.*' (Train, p.103).

Thomas died before 1392, and the only knowledge that we have of his wife is imparted by a document dated in that year: *'In the year 1392, 16 R. 2, Maud, the Relict of Thomas de Byngham, of Kercolston, passed her interest in all the lands which were of the gift of Robert, Son of John-in-the-Willows (which Robert was Parson of Freton, in Norfolk) to Raph, son of Thomas de Byngham*.' (Thoroton, I:240).

Ralph de Bynghame may be construed to have been born around 1371. His industriousness surely played a part in improving the fortunes of his collateral line of the Bynghams to the point that one could, in the next generation, become a Justice of the King's Bench and successively marry into the Rempston and Freville families. In 1411, Ralph attended the shire elections (Roskell, 1992, I:232). As Ralph de Bynghame of Car Colston, he received his first royal commission in 1416, to collect the fifteenth and tenth.[69] A document dated the following year records that *'Hugo de Wyllughby, armiger of Wollaton gives power of attorney to John Clerk of Wollaton, Ralph Bynghame of Car Colston and Edmund Taillor of Cossington to place Sir Thomas de Gresley, Thomas Foliambe, William Poucher, Thomas Coke clerk, William Byrton of Nottingham and William Werner in full and peaceful seisin in his manor of Cossington, his manor of Car Colston ...*' etc.[70] In 1421, he was again one of the Commissioners to collect the fifteenth and tenth.[71] In 1422-23 he held land in Alverton, as will be discussed in more detail below (Thoroton, I:322). Ralph '*held office as Coroner of Nottinghamshire; on 8 July 1429 the sheriff was instructed to arrange the election of a replacement for Ralph, then said to be sick and aged.*' (Roskell, I:232).

Curiously, the last known record of Ralph is his inclusion on 1 May 1434 in a list of people '*who should take the oath not to maintain peace breakers referred to*' in an act of the last Parliament. '*Ralph Bynghame of Carcoston*' is one of those named in Nottinghamshire.[72]

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66 Durham University Library, Durham Cathedral Muniments, Durham Priory Register IV, Page: f.134v, Date: 4 January [?1460];
searchable through http://flambard.dur.ac.uk/dynaweb/handlist/ [Accessed June 2007].

67 As he identified himself on his seal. Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections: *Medieval seals (based on Greenwell & Blair's catalogue)*, Nº 258, accessible through http://flambard.dur.ac.uk/dynaweb/handlist/ddc/dcdmseal/ [June 2007].

68 CFR, Vol.9, P. 145

69 CFR, Vol.14, p.151.

70 University of Nottingham Manuscripts Collection, The Family and Estate Papers of the Willoughby Family, Lords Middleton, Mi/D/4736.

71 CFR, Vol.14, p.416.

72 CPR, Henry VI, Vol.II, pp.370, 409. Refers to Rolls of Parliament, Vol.IV, pp.422, 455-57.

Confusion surrounds the identity of the mother of Ralph's children. Thoroton (I:242) names Ralph's wife as Elizabeth in his brief pedigree chart of the Car Colston Bynghams, but says nothing of her origins and does not give a source for the name. Elsewhere in the antiquary's work (I:322) we see that '*Simon de Leek [in 1422-23] made a letter of attorney, to take seisin of Agnes, who had been the wife of William, Son of Roger de Thurverton, in one Moiety of a toft, and three Bovats of land, seven Acres of Meadow, etc., in Alverton, which descended to the said Agnes, by Right of Inheritance after the Death of John Morin, of Kercolston, her father; and in the reversion of the other Moiety after the Death of Raph de Bingham, of Kercolston, who then held it by the Law of England, after the Death of Elizabeth, late his Wife, all which the said Simon had of the Gift and Grant of the said Agnes, according to the Force and Effect of a certain Instrument or Chartel therof by her made to him*.' The above seems to indicate that Agnes and Elizabeth were coheirs of their father. In that case, provided there had previously been some issue of the marriage (even if none survived) Ralph would have had a life interest in Elizabeth's half of the inheritance by the law/courtesy of England, but it would revert to Agnes or her heirs at his death. In any event, the practical import is to indicate that Elizabeth Morin had no issue living in 1422, and so can probably be ruled out as the mother of any children of Ralph Bynghamm.

Ralph's other wife is stated by Thoroton to have been Felice, the illegitimate daughter of Hugh de Willoughby, a clerk, and a woman known as Joane de Riseley. Felice, the granddaughter of Sir Richard de Willoughby of Wollaton, is said to have first married John Armstrong of Thorpe, probably around 1388 when Hugh passed land at Wysall to the Armstrong family. Thoroton writes (I:67) that Felice held a knight's fee in Wysall and that she was '*afterwards the wife of Raph Bingham*', who appears in its court rolls in her right during the reign of Henry VI. This reference is clear and specific, though Thoroton does not show the marriage in his broad, page-length graphic chart of the Willoughbys; not the only internal inconsistency in the antiquary's nevertheless invaluable work, and he also did not place Ralph's wife Elizabeth in the family chart showing Agnes Morin, mentioned above. He does however mention (II:211) Felice's first marriage, noting that '*this Hugh [de Willoughby] the Clergy-man had a wife (or Concubine) called Joane de Riseley, by whom he had a daughter named Felice, married to John Armstrong of Thorpe*.' Payling (1991, p.34) refers to the Willoughby estates having been greatly diminished as a result of the '*illegal conveyances made by… Hugh [de Willoughby], a clerk… to secure an hereditary estate for his issue by his concubine, Joan Spencer, at the expense of Hugh's younger half-brother Sir Edmund*.' Unfortunately, evidence of a primary source for the identity of this Felice de Willoughby is lacking. Thoroton (II:211) cites '*Glover, Ex. Coll. S. Lo Kniveton'*, apparently referring to a pedigree chart then in private hands; but the existence of this Felice Willoughby, or at any rate her identity as a daughter of Hugh de Willoughby the cleric, is not upheld by the most thorough study of this Willoughby lineage. M R Bloom, in a doctoral thesis completed in 1985, names four sons and one daughter of Hugh's, but makes no mention of Felice, or of Ralph Bynghamm;[73] on the other hand, Thoroton omits the

[73] Bloom, M R (1985). *The careers of Sir Richard II de Willoughby and Sir Richard III de Willoughby, Chief Justice of King's Bench (1338-1340), and the rise of the Willoughbys of Nottinghamshire.* Doctoral Thesis, Oxford, pp.342-344. Bloom does mention the existence of a Papal dispensation granted by Boniface IX in 1391, which declared legitimate Hugh and Joan's offspring; I have not examined the document, archived at Oxford's Bodleian Library as MS. Dodsw. 90, fol. 58r.-60v. In any event, even if it names all of Hugh's children, rather than just mentioning them as a group, it is unlikely to shed any light on the identity of the mother of Ralph Bynghamm's children.

daughter and three of the four sons mentioned by Bloom.[74] As Bloom's study focuses much more narrowly on the Willoughbys (and in particular on Hugh's fragmentation of their estates) than did Thoroton, with his broader history, I am inclined to favour the family composition given by Bloom and so assume that the origin of Felice must be sought elsewhere. Perhaps she was an Armstrong.

The 1417 Power of Attorney granted by another Hugh de Willoughby, cited above, suggests that Ralph enjoyed an association with the Willoughbys, and a Willoughby wife – even from the wrong side of the bed – would probably have been considered a good catch by Ralph Bynghamof Car Colston, who perhaps would have seen her connections as an asset if he wanted his family to regain some of the prominence that it enjoyed before the senior branch died out in the male line. These putative connections may indeed have played a role in enabling a member of the comparatively obscure Car Colston Bynghams to ascend to the King's Bench: Sir Richard Bynghamm, a nephew of Ralph.

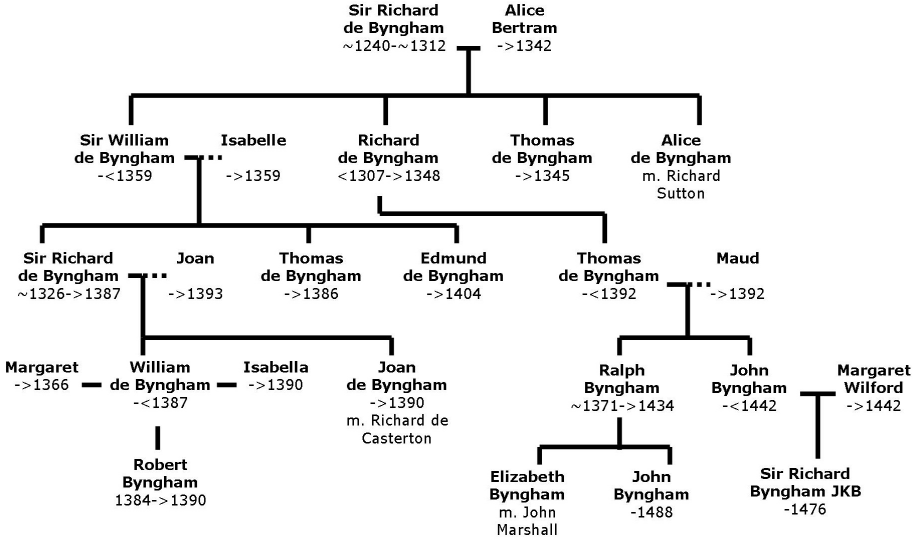


Fig 8. ***The pedigree of the Bynghams, as set forth in this article.***

In any event Thoroton (I:76) suggests that Felice's first husband John Armstrong lived till 1421,[75] and if that is the case and the rest of the dates and facts given by

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[74] Thoroton states that Hugh the cleric was the ancestor of the Willoughbys of Risley, which family would eventually be elevated to the peerage through a baronetcy granted by James I; but Hugh was subsequently disclaimed as an ancestor by some (see Burke, 1838). Documentation of Hugh's family is exceedingly scant but it is interesting that three years after his death his eldest son seems not to have used the Willoughby name, being known instead as Hugh de Rysley; see Jeayes, I H, Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters in Public and Private Libraries and Muniment Rooms, London & Derby: Bemrose & Sons, 1906, p. 252.

[75] But as he does not mention a funeral monument or other source for this statement (and does for other Armstrongs discussed in that section), one wonders if he had an actual reason for stating that date, or merely inferred it from Ralph Bynghamm's figuring in the court rolls. And

Thoroton are correct, then it seems almost impossible that Felice could have been the mother of Ralph's daughter. For the time being, and without the discovery of additional evidence, it appears that Ralph must have had another wife, besides Elizabeth and Felice, and whose identity is yet unknown.

Ralph's daughter Elizabeth and her husband John Marshall are identified in the *Visitations* as great-grandparents of Archbishop Cranmer.

Hatfield

Ermine, on a chevron Sable three cinquefoils Or (Marshall, 1871, p.117).

The Hatfield ancestry of Thomas Cranmer is one of the lineages closest to him, being his mother's family; and yet also the most obscure. Little more is known of Cranmer's grandfather than that his name was Laurence Hatfield. Thoroton cites a single record in which Laurence is mentioned; assorted published pedigrees of the Hatfields of Holderness, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, do not include a Laurence. Unfortunately, as GW Marshall pointed out in his edition of the 1563 *Visitation of Yorkshire*, that work's Hatfield pedigree is far from ideally complete (Norcliffe, 1881, p.157). Yet there is heraldic evidence that the Hatfields of Willoughby in Nottinghamshire descended from those of Holderness, or at least believed that they did. The 1569 and 1614 *Visitations of Nottingham* record for this family the same arms used by those of Holderness. Even Potter's (1929) commendably thorough little book on the history of Tollerton provides nothing more than a citation of the same oft-quoted 1455 fine mentioning Laurence. As far as I know the first publication to make a firm statement regarding Laurence Hatfield's ancestry was Poulson's (1841) work on the history of Holderness. In a pedigree chart (I:442-43) of the family he specifically declares Thomas Hatfield, son of William Hatfield (d.1402) and youngest brother of Robert Hatfield (d.1451) to be the gentleman '*from whom the Hatfields, of Willoughby, Co. Notts, are descended*'; and further says that '*He is stated to have married Margaret, daughter of John Reresby, of Lincolnshire, Esq.*' Of this statement Waters (1878, II:368) wrote '*it has been alleged that the family sprung from a cadet of the lands of Hatfield in Holderness but this descent is neither proved nor probable.*' Joseph Hunter made Laurence a son of the Stephen Hatfield who married Isabel Russell, and who was Sheriff of Gloucester in 1431; and this Stephen in turn a son of the aforementioned Thomas de Hatfield, stated to be '*of Newnham, co. Oxon.*' and his wife '*Margaret, dau. Of John Reresby of co. Linc., Esq.*' (Walker, 1936, p.91). Apart from the fact that this chronology seems a very tight fit, this pedigree also displays considerable geographical mobility for the 15th century. The Reresby link at least came from Poulson, though where he came by it is unknown; I can find no reference to a Reresby-Hatfield union in the above-mentioned books of pedigree charts compiled by Foster, which deal with Reresbys in some detail, nor anywhere else.

Despite its evidentiary weakness, the claim that Laurence Hatfield was a son of this Stephen Hatfield was widely accepted until recently; in my opinion, much more sensational was Hunter's claim that Laurence had three wives, given the fact that only *two* documents to which he was a party are even recorded to have existed.[76] Both of these, it seems, named his wife as Alice; the published Marshall visitation pedigree names her as Agnes, daughter of John Marshall and Elizabeth Byngham, while elsewhere, in a chart detailing the ancestry of the Whalley family, Thoroton

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did Thoroton mean that someone *other* than Ralph figured in the court rolls *until* 1422, or were those just the earliest surviving ones that he could find?

[76] The two oft-cited fines mentioned in Thoroton, III:165.

(I:248) makes her Isabel, daughter of *William* Marshall and *Alice*_____. Hunter seems to have felt this was sound enough evidence to support the existence of three wives. For my part, I believe the number to be no more than two; and given the fact that all of the pedigrees cited in this research can be proven to have some flaws, my opinion is that the majority of the evidence favours the mother of Laurence's children having been a Marshall, probably named Alice, not Agnes; but conclusive evidence would be desirable.

Unfortunately there is a dearth of documents to which Laurence Hatfield and any relations of his may have been a party. The failure to develop any additional information about Laurence has been perhaps the most irksome aspect of the research undertaken in preparation for this article. He may have been dead by 1489, when his son Stephen and Stephen's brother-in-law Thomas Cranmer, the father of the Archbishop, were to purchase land together in Cromwell.[77] Blagg (1930) reports that subsequently in 1528 '*Thomas Cranmore*', Doctor of Theology, was a trustee in the marriage settlement of Henry Hatfield;[78] this perhaps reinforces the idea of a relationship between the two families.

Cranmer

Argent, on a chevron Azure between three pelicans Sable as many cinquefoils Or [79]

Nearly every biography of Archbishop Cranmer includes the same potted history of his family: impoverished village gentry, fortunate enough to have acquired the lands of the Aslactons through marriage to the last heiress of that family, etc. The Archbishop's father, Thomas Cranmer, '*styled himself esquire in his will of 1501, although his wealth was probably dangerously modest to claim such a status, and the curiously fluid nature of Cranmer's later heraldic display reflected this slightly uncertain social position.*' (MacCulloch, 2004).

Some have suggested that perhaps Edmund Cranmer, great-grandfather of the Archbishop, sold his family's ancestral lands at Sutterton in Lincolnshire when he moved to Nottinghamshire to occupy the lands of his wife. In fact, Edmund seems to have had little say in the matter of his removal from Sutterton to the Aslacton estates. It appears that the Cranmers were simply swindled out of their land. Two chancery suits filed by John Cranmer, the Archbishop's grandfather, reveal that John's grandfather Thomas had enfeoffed his lands at Sutterton to some local gentlemen, including one John Gilbert, intending that they should make estate to his son and heir Edmund Cranmer once the latter attained his majority. Thomas had died, Edmund was now dead as well, but John Gybon, a son of John Gilbert, was occupying the lands and as John Cranmer explained, '*your saide besecher has oft tymes required the saide Gybon to make astate to your same besecher of the saide landes and tenementes after the forme of the saide will and the saide John Gybon has refused to make him astate of the same landes [and]*

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[77] University of Nottingham Manuscripts Collection, First deposit of the Newcastle (Clumber) Collection, NE D 1230.

[78] Blagg mixes up the men's relationship; they were apparently cousins, not uncle and nephew.

[79] Marshall (1871) p.70. An oft-repeated story appearing in nearly every biographical treatment of Archbishop Cranmer tells how Henry VIII instructed him to alter his arms, replacing the cranes with pelicans in piety, so that the blood shed by the birds ripping at their own chests would symbolise Cranmer's sacrifices along the path to building an English church. It appears, from this visitation and other records, that all of the Archbishop's kin eventually adopted the pelican variant. See for example the discussion of Alderman Cranmer's arms in the 1632 *Visitation of London*: Waters (1878) II:60.

appurtenaunces and yet refuseth ageyn trouth goode seche and conscience and .... like disheritaunce of your saide besecher bot if he have your gracious helpe in this case.' [80]

Gybon's answer, if any, has not survived. These two suits are very valuable in that they provide contemporary confirmation of the accepted Cranmer lineage, and refute the scepticism expressed by Waters, (1878, II:367) who wrote that there was no evidence to prove the existence of these persons, except that the name of Hugo de Cranmere had been found painted in the west window of the Sutterton Church, and that the earliest provable ancestor of the Cranmers was the Edmund who married Isabella de Aslacton. These suits add one more generation, the Thomas Cranmer who made the imprudent enfeoffment, and brings the lineage a step closer to Hugh de Cranmer who in fact figures in a 1334 lay subsidy taken at Sutterton.[81] On the other hand, the two Chancery suits do not do much to add to the known chronology of this family, which is distressingly vague. The suit cited above is directed to the '*Right Honourable Bishop of Bathe and Welles Chaunceller of England*', which is somewhat helpful, but could still refer either to John Stafford (1425-1443, when he was made archbishop) or Robert Stillington (1467-73) (Campbell, 1845, I:346, 385). Otherwise, the early Cranmers left a remarkably obscure legacy: no commissions of Oyer and Terminer, no knights, not even any wills save that of the Archbishop's father. The will of the first Thomas Cranmer, alluded to by John in the above Chancery suit, apparently has not survived.

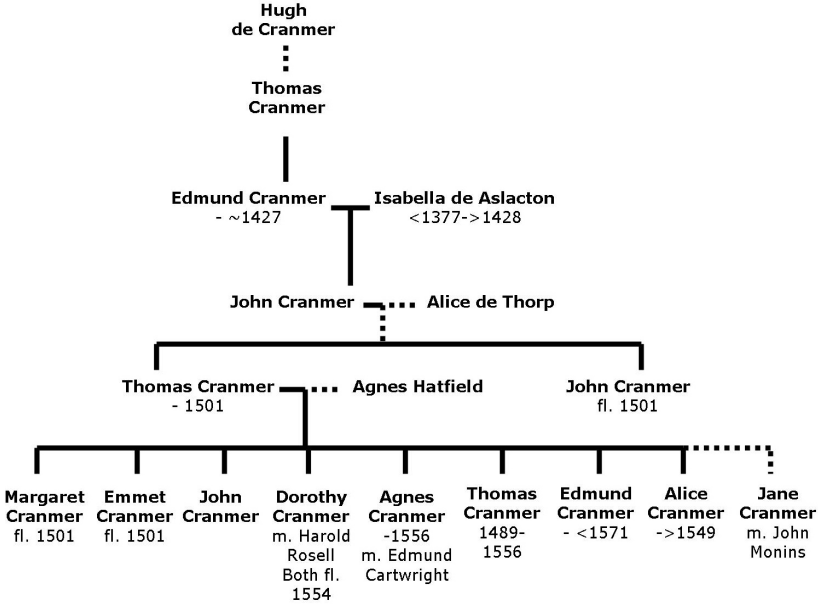


Fig 9. ***The pedigree of the Cranmers, as set forth in this article.***

[80] National Archives, C 1/41/210. The other suit, C 1/70/150, is badly damaged, but appears to simply restate the same information provided in the first one, and is even more chronologically vague in its greeting to the 'Chancellor of England' with no other title.

[81] National Archives E179/133/14-16, Transcription online at http://www.le.ac.uk/english/pot/lincsutt.html [Accessed 2006].

Perhaps the addition most valuable to documenting the Cranmer pedigree is one never published by Waters, who in other respects prepared an admirably detailed study of the Archbishop and his immediate family. The British Library holds what was Waters' own copy of the *magnum opus* he published in 1878, *Genealogical memoirs of the extinct family of Chester of Chicheley, their ancestors and descendants*. In addition to a hand-painted bookplate showing that Waters quartered the coats of Aslacton and Cranmer with his own arms, the books reveal that he never stopped working on these families, for he had his copy bound with blank sheets of notepaper between the pages, in order to keep adding new discoveries.

The *Visitation of Nottinghamshire* pedigrees for Cranmer and Marshall carry an apparent contradiction: John Cranmer's wife is identified in the Cranmer pedigree, shown above, as an unnamed Marshall of Muskham: Laurence Hatfield is mentioned in both the Cranmer and Marshall pedigrees, but while the former is silent regarding Laurence's wife, the latter specifies that he married Agnes Marshall, but makes no mention of a Cranmer connection.

Sometime after publishing his work, Waters discovered the existence of a deed pertaining to John Cranmer. He noted in his own copy of his book that '*If Alice Marshall was the mother of John Cranmer's children, she was not his only wife of the name of Alice, for there is a deed in the Bodleian by which Robert Doyle Esq of Thorp near Newark and his wife Grace, formerly wife of Hugh de Thorp Esq, demised to John Cranmer of Aslacton and his wife Alice daughter of the said Hugh de Thorp all their lands in Newark and Northgate near Newark for five years at the annual rent of one red rose on St John the Baptist's day. This deed is without date, but Grace widow of Hugh de Thorp Esq gave a bond for £26.13.4 to Robert Merflete Rector of Sutton Yorkshire on Friday before St Simon and Jude, 1424.*' [82]

This adds considerably to the known Cranmer lineage. It is not clear why Waters thought that John's wife was named Alice, whose Christian name does not seem to figure in any other document; perhaps he was simply following Thoroton, who in this respect was not as thorough as one would like, and wrote (I:261) that John Cranmer, '*by Alice, the daughter of ____ Marshall, of Muscam, had a son named Thomas Cranmer, who married Agnes, the daughter of Lawrence (or Stephen) Hatfeild of Willoughby*.' The mention of a Mr Marshall, Christian name unknown, reveals that Thoroton was simply following the Cranmer visitation pedigree cited above, and it *does not name John's wife at all.* Here Thoroton has not bothered to correct the spelling of Muskham or settle on a father for Agnes Hatfield (whose father is identified elsewhere in the same work, firmly, as Laurence), so it does not seem reasonable to allow his unsourced mention of an Alice to outweigh evidence provided by the deed cited above and the

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[82] Waters, Robert E C, handwritten note between pp.368-69 of *Chester of Chicheley*, British Library, Ref. HMNTS 09915.tt.10. The bond referred to must be a related document to that presently catalogued in the National Archives as C 241/217/23. It seems the original debt had been acknowledged 23 Sep 1418 for repayment 11 Nov 1418, but had not been repaid, so that the mayor and his clerk requested that the chancellor write to the sheriff of York to ask him to make Hugh de Thorpe repay it. The document is dated 27 April 1424, so we assume that Hugh was still living then (or, if not, the authorities at Hull were unaware of his death). If the reference found given by Waters means that by 27 October 1424 Hugh was dead, it seems that his widow had repaid half the debt and had given a bond for the repayment of the rest of the debt. Unfortunately Waters' handwritten note does not disclose the location of the bond he mentions, and one wonders if he may have misread C 241/217/23, or subsequently misread his notes pertaining to it. Waters must have discovered the undated deed mentioning John Cranmer when the *Calendar of Charters and Rolls Preserved in the Bodleian Library* was published in the very year after Waters' work, the deed appearing on page 276 of the *Calendar*. [Thanks to Chris Phillips for examining C 241/217/23 and summarising its contents.]

Marshall pedigree: that is, that John Cranmer's wife was Alice de Thorp, and the Marshall line entered the Cranmer family through Agnes Hatfield.

This valuable knowledge does allow the Cranmer chronology to be tightened up a bit. We have encountered Hugh de Thorp above, when examining the Newark business dealings of the Thorp, Marshall and Forster families; Hugh was the son and heir of Adam de Thorp, and apparently the brother of Ellen de Thorp, who married John Marshall. This would make the Archbishop's parents second cousins twice removed. As seen earlier, Hugh's first wife Elizabeth died in 1400, probably childless (Raine, 1836, I:281), and very shortly thereafter[83] Hugh married again, to a woman named Grace. It appears that Hugh died in 1421, survived by Grace his widow, and John his son and heir, then aged sixteen years and more (Hunt, 1960).[84] If we assume that Hugh's daughter Alice was born around the same time as his son, she would perhaps have married between 1420 and 1430; Edmund Cranmer died around 1427; so the Chancery suits above are almost certainly directed to John Stafford, early in his tenure as Chancellor of England, and in any event between 1427 and 1443.

One effect of this revised chronology is to suggest that the Archbishop's father probably married at a relatively late age for the period. Even assuming a very broad range of 1402-1421 for the birth of Alice de Thorp, her son Thomas Cranmer would likely have been born no later than, say, 1460 at the outside. Given health care and customs of the time it is more logical to think he married, perhaps even for the second time, at what would then have been considered a late age (his late thirties, perhaps forties) than that his mother gave birth late in life.

The Cranmers' Genealogical Legacy

Having now, I believe, better documented the ancestry of the Cranmers up to the time of the Reformation, it may be of interest to note in closing some issues surrounding their descendants.

The three brothers Cranmer had several sisters: Waters and the published Visitations seem to disagree concerning their number, but at least some of them certainly married and left issue.

John Cranmer, the eldest brother, inherited the family's lands and successively married two well-connected ladies, first Joan Frecheville and, after her death, Margaret Fitzwilliam. John's grandson Thomas Cranmer, heir to the lands, died in 1578 (Waters, 1878, II:78). He too remarried once widowed, but left only daughters from both marriages; one of his daughters from the second marriage made an advantageous match which in time gave rise to a distinguished posterity in the Howard family and their descendants, as mentioned above.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer is believed to have no living descendants. Of his three children known to have reached adulthood, none left issue.

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[83] Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe of Osberton: Deeds and Estate Papers, DD/FJ/1/36/10, dated 25 Feb 1401/2.

[84] Hunt's article ends by discussing other Thorp/e families contemporary to that which interested him. The source document cited was presumably C 138/55/3 (Thorp, Hugh, esq: Yorks 9 Hen V).

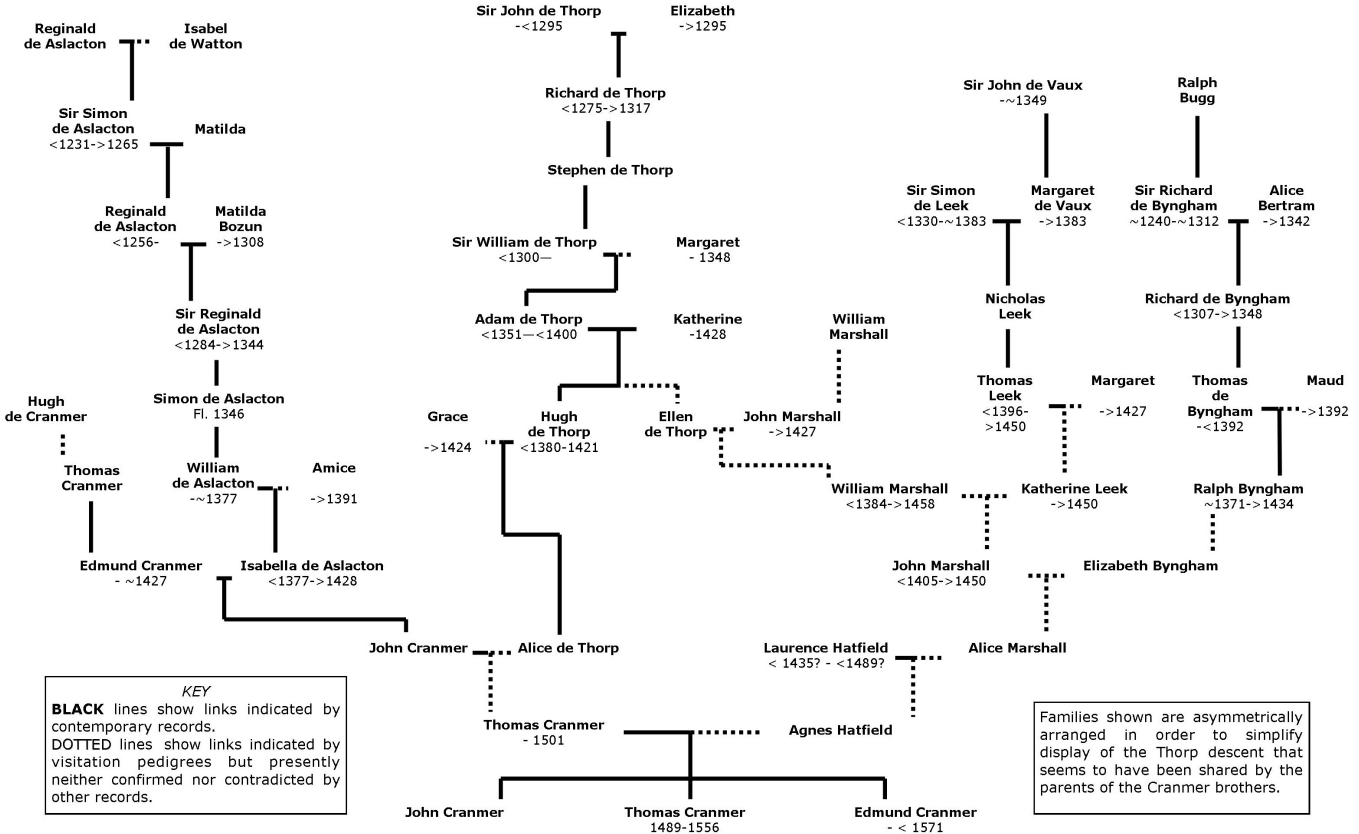


Fig 10. ***The ancestry of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and his siblings, to the fullest extent covered by the present study.***

Archdeacon Edmund Cranmer seems to have been the most prolific of the three brothers, and Waters fills several pages with charts of his descendants. Perhaps this makes it all the more surprising that the identity of Edmund's wife remains an enigma. Waters (II:397) resolutely states that '*His wife belonged to the respectable and widely-spread family of Sands, or Saunds, of Kent. She is called Anne in the pedigrees, but her real name was Alice, and she is so called in a lease for 90 years of Overland Rectory in Kent, which was granted to her at a nominal rent on 4 April 1544 by the Provost and Canons of Wingham College.*' The actual document is now catalogued through Access to Archives, and it should be noted that Edmund Cranmer was in fact the Provost overseeing the transaction; it seems odd that apparently he does not mention his relationship to the grantee.[85] Unfortunately Waters has confused Edmund's sister with his wife, for a later document in the same archive reveals that in 1549 Alice Cranmer granted to '*Thomas Cranmere, son of Alice Cranmere's brother, Edmund Cranmer; George Cranmere, son of Alice Cranmere's brother, Edmund Cranmer; Christopher Cranmere, son of Alice Cranmere's brother, Edmund Cranmer; Richard Cranmere, son of Alice Cranmere's brother, Edmund Cranmer; Edmund Cranmere, son of Alice Cranmere's brother, Edmund Cranmer. Her term of years in the chapel of Overland [in Ash] and all the lands and profits belonging to it. Endorsed with description, referring to Alice as "my sister alice", in mid 16th cent hand.*' [86] This does at least sort out the number of sons Edmund and his wife had by 1549. Waters (II:448) attributed to Edmund children named Thomas, George, Alice, Anne, and perhaps also Richard, Samuel and a Johanna baptised at Aslacton in 1561 as the son of Edmund Cranmer. Waters felt that in the absence of anyone else named Edmund Cranmer, this christening record suggested that the Archdeacon returned to Nottinghamshire in 1561 to visit family; in view of the 1549 charter cited above, it also seems possible that this child could have been a daughter of the younger Edmund, and so a grandchild of the Archdeacon.

The identity of Archdeacon Edmund's as yet unknown wife may in time be revealed by heraldic evidence on the monument erected to her son, Thomas Cranmer Esq, who died in 1604. As mentioned above at the end of the passage on the family of Thorp, this monument, in addition to multiple Cranmer coats, bore a coat that appears to be either Marshall or Goushill; and two further coats, one, '*Er. a cross engrailed gules*', which Cozens (1793) identified as Norwood; another, '*Az. on a fess between three lozenges, Sab. an annulet*', which he did not identify. Even if the instant Thomas' wife, identified in Waters' chart of this branch as one Anne Carpenter, belonged to an armigerous family, it seems likely that the remaining 'unclaimed' coat or coats could refer to Thomas' mother.

With regard to Waters' claim of a connection to the Sandys family, for the moment one can only speculate as to whether the eventual association of Sir Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer was due to some degree of kinship between them, apart from their shared life experiences stemming from their families' ecclesiastical connections.

Interest in descent from the Cranmers flourished in the mid-19th century. A gentleman signing with the initials C.D.F., and claiming to descend from the Archbishop's father through a female line, wrote to *Notes and Queries* in 1851 expressing an interest in learning of any male-line descendants of the Archbishop.[87] He was answered at length a couple of months later[88] by another gentleman known as

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85 Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Dean and Chapter Archive, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/O/142.

86 Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Dean and Chapter Archive, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/O/143.

87 *Notes and Queries*, (4 Jan 1851) **3** (62): 8.

88 *Notes and Queries,* (8 Mar 1851) **3** (71): 189.

R.E.W., surely Robert Edmund Chester Waters, who at that time was still a quarter century away from publication of his impressive work dealing with the Cranmers and some allied families; perhaps it was the query sent by C.D.F. that provided the creative spark for what would become the definitive work on Cranmer descents. In 1867 an anonymous correspondent supplied *The Gentleman's Magazine* with the news that the then 'legal representative' of the Archbishop was one William Simpson Esq. of Mitcham, Surrey; he and all of his family having converted to catholicism in the 1840s.[89] These are just a few examples of communications concerning the Cranmers scattered through journals of the time, and for the most part they reveal how little was known about the ancestry of and descent from the Cranmer family before Waters' work saw the light.

In fact, descent from the Cranmers of Aslacton and their forebears is so broadly shared that many if not most of those who possess it are probably ignorant of it; in at least some cases, one suspects, because more 'interesting' ancestors claim their attention. On easily loses track of Cranmer descendants in less exalted spheres, but Waters (1877, pp.78-84) showed how the Cranmers, through descendants of John and especially of Edmund the Archdeacon, were eventually ancestral to the Dukes of Norfolk, the Earls of Berkshire, Carnarvon and Liverpool, the Barons Howard of Glossop, Howard of Penrith, and the Baronets Boevey of Flaxley Abbey, Molyneux of Teversal, Holte of Aston, Ogilvy of Inverquharity, Trollope of Casewick, and Noel of Kirkby Mallory, to name but some, as well as his primary interest, the family of Chester of Chicheley. Some of these titles had already become extinct in Waters' day, but with a copy of Debrett's one could see how their families carried the Cranmer descent and watch it spreading through the peerage by means of successive births and marriages.[90] Just as the church Archbishop Cranmer shaped would eventually influence most areas of English life, so descendants of the Cranmers and their ancestral families can likely be found today in all walks of life and in every territory where English men and women have settled.

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89 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (March 1867), p.368.

90 See for example Debrett's for 1876, in particular pp. 76, 107, 126, and 477, which illustrate the spread of the Cranmer descent across the peerage through their Grimston descendants.

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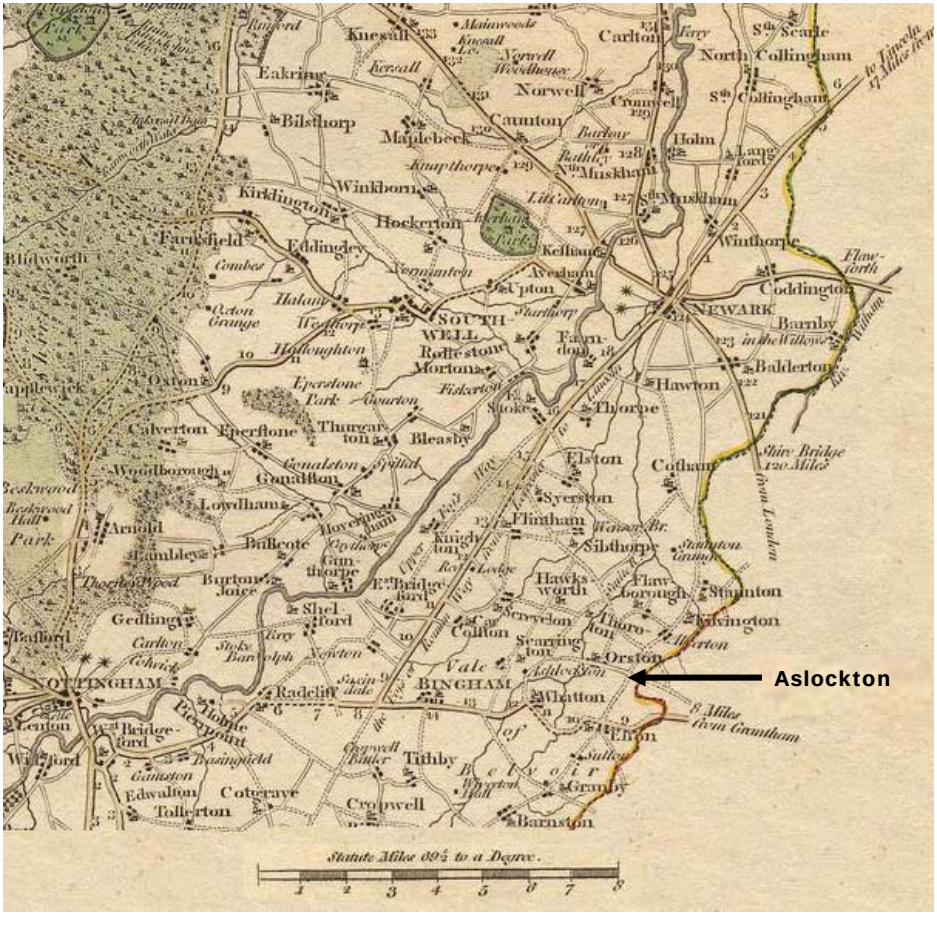


Fig. 11 ***Map of south-eastern Nottinghamshire from John Cary's 'New and Correct English Atlas' (1787)***

The portion of the map shown includes most of the key places mentioned in the article including Carlton and Muskham in the north, moving south past Newark and Thorp to the nucleus in the south east formed by Scarrington, Car Colston and Whatton, including Aslockton, and finally to Tollerton at the bottom left.