

The History of the Manor of Lackham - Volume 1

The Bluets

a baronial family and their historical connections 1066 - 1400



Tony Pratt

and

Karen Repko

(online edition)

Updated: 23 March 2019

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The Authors

Tony Pratt and Karen Repko have been researching the history of the Lackham estate, and its owners, for over a decade - initially independently and latterly jointly. In that time Tony has produced several works on various aspects of the estate and the families connected with it. An increasing interest in the medieval period led to the current work. It started life as a re-write of the Bluet section for the next (fourth) edition of the major history *The Manor of Lackham* but took on a life and direction of its own, as these things usually do. The work before you is the result of many years of trans-Atlantic collaboration; what would we do without email?

Tony came to the English county of Wiltshire over 25 years ago. He has been associated with the Lackham estate near Lacock since 1990, where he did his PGCE teaching practice in the Horticultural department of what is now Wiltshire College, Lackham. He was a lecturer in horticulture at the start of this association and is now a member of the Gardens Staff using, rather than teaching, his gardening skills. He started investigating the history of the Lackham estate after completing a research Masters (M.Phil) in 1997, having become used to having no spare time. This has resulted in three editions so far of the main history of the estate, and several other smaller publications, as well as the only current history of the Wiltshire village of Alderton! He tries to keep busy, often giving talks within and outside the College on the history of the estate. He spends a lot of time bothering the staff at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre and is very happy they have moved to Chippenham and are open on Saturdays. He is currently trying to improve his Latin, which gives him something else to do and keeps him out of the hair of his long-suffering partner, Lynne Thomson.

Karen lives in Ohio, in the United States of America. Karen retired from a career as a Quality Engineer in 2001, a career which was largely responsible for her devotion to detail and her enjoyment in doing research. Even before she retired she devoted large amounts of time and effort to researching her extensive family tree, and places the responsibility for this devotion on her maternal grandmother, who was a Montagu. Karen spent many wistful afternoons listening to tales of knights and lords of the manor from the stories that had been passed down in the Montagu family told by her grandmother. She is an excellent genealogist, and has travelled extensively to use national research libraries in both the USA and, during a recent visit, in England - when she was also able to visit some of her ancestral homes, including Lackham. She is a descendant of Sir Ralph Bluet via her descent from Admiral John Montagu, RN, whose family also owned the estate. It was while she was researching her Lackham Montagu, Baynard and Bluet forebears that she and Tony first worked together. In almost seven years of association, Tony and Karen discussed the Bluets extensively, but they were backburnered for more pressing research. Finally the Bluet information and citations took on a life of their own, and the history of this family had to be told. Karen's world wide connections with other genealogists, and

her ability to see both the flaws and the strengths of an argument, have been invaluable in the present study. She was previously very involved with the local Historical Society of Lorain Co., Ohio and the Local research department of the Elyria Library's Medieval Resource Department. Due to poor health her researches are now largely web and correspondence based, being a regular and knowledgeable contributor to various online forums, in particular Soc.Genealogy.Medieval and the Montague forum on Genealogy.com. and she often addresses queries from both forums.

Acknowledgements

The story presented here is the result of years of research and discussion with many people, and builds on work previously done. It is impossible to acknowledge all who have influenced and helped but a few specific thanks are in order:

The librarians and archivists at the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office in Trowbridge (formerly) and Chippenham (recently) were unfailing helpful and encouraging throughout the study as were those in the County Record Offices in Winchester (Hampshire), Gloucester (Gloucestershire), Taunton (Somerset), Woking (Surrey) and Reading (Berkshire) as well as at the Public Record Office, Kew.

Library staff at Chippenham and Marlborough Public libraries, those of Wiltshire College Lackham and the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society in Devizes and Bath Reference Library in B&NES were incredibly helpful, as were the staff at the British Library in London.

So many individuals have helped but special thanks to Michael and Matthew Blewett, Dr David Crouch ¹ (Professor of Medieval History, University of Hull), Andrew Davies (formerly Museum Curator Lackham Museum of Agriculture and Rural Life Trust, now Curator for Manor Farm Country Park, Hampshire), Dr. Lorna Haycock (Sandwell Librarian at WANHS), Paul Reed FASG, Leo van de Plas, and last but not least Douglas Richardson of Salt Lake City ². Special thanks to Pam, Manfred and Lynne.

Illustrations are by Tony Pratt unless otherwise credited. The kind permissions to use images are gratefully acknowledged, especially Brian Timms for permission to use heraldry from his excellent website.

As far as we are aware no images are used without permission and all

¹ Author of many excellent books but especially *Tournament* (2005) and *William Marshal: Knighthood, War and Chivalry 1147 - 1219* (2002)

² Author of *The Plantagenet Ancestry* (2006)

copyrights are acknowledged. However if we got it wrong and are using one of your images improperly please accept our very sincere apologies and get in touch so that we can correct things.

There are a number of places where we differ from previous suggestions on how the family of the Bluets developed and in many cases the evidence is inconclusive. We have tried to give fair weight to all sides of the arguments but have eventually had to decide what we believe - this is always going to be open for discussion and we would be very happy to be proved wrong! Any thoughts, comments, or (particularly) additional information would be gratefully received. You can contact us by mail, Tony's address is chetwynd222@aol.com and Karen is at KarRpk@aol.com, or you can write to: Tony Pratt, c/o Gardens Staff, Wiltshire College Lackham, Lacock, Chippenham Wiltshire, SN15 2NY, UK. We would love to hear from you.

Chippenham, Wiltshire and Elyria, Ohio 2008

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Introduction to the revised online edition, February 2009

Further research, by ourselves and others, has given us much additional information and has corrected, or developed, some of what was already in place. It is unlikely that a new print edition will be forthcoming in the near future and so it has been decided to make this information available on-line. New material has been inserted in blue so that you can avoid re-reading what is already known.

The text has been developed to take advantage of electronic publishing features, specifically by the use of hyperlinks to take you to the figures and references. Hyperlinks to figures are shown in [blue underline](#) -

Hopefully the mistakes in the previous edition have been corrected and not too many new ones have been added. As always the help of everyone who has contributed their expertise and knowledge is gratefully acknowledged. If we have scrambled the information that is our fault, not theirs.

Please do get in touch with comments, either by the links [above](#) or through the [Lackham](#) website

Tony Pratt and Karen Repko
February 2009

Introduction to the revised online edition January 2011

Having lost our Word version of the text (don't ask) we had to recover the

document from the pdf file on the web, the 2009 version. Whilst annoying (to put it mildly) this has allowed us to correct errors and incorporate new information into the text, and for this reason we are uploading this new edition. It may well be that some of the blue "new" text was new to 2009, our apologies for this. We have tried to return all the text enhancements, such as italics etc but will certainly have missed some, please do let us know where we have missed things. It is appropriate to launch our most up to date version now, as the final version of the History of Lackham (volume IV) has just been launched

[19th & 20th Century owners of Lackham 1815-1950](#)

Our thanks to Peter Haworth for his valuable assistance with the Bluet heraldry

Tony Pratt and Karen Repko
January 2011

For the 2015 update we have reduced the font size from 12 to 11 and this has resulted in fewer pages, nothing has been lost in fact there is more than ever!

2018 - Small revisions have been made and the hyperlinks to other volumes in the history corrected after the College changed its website.

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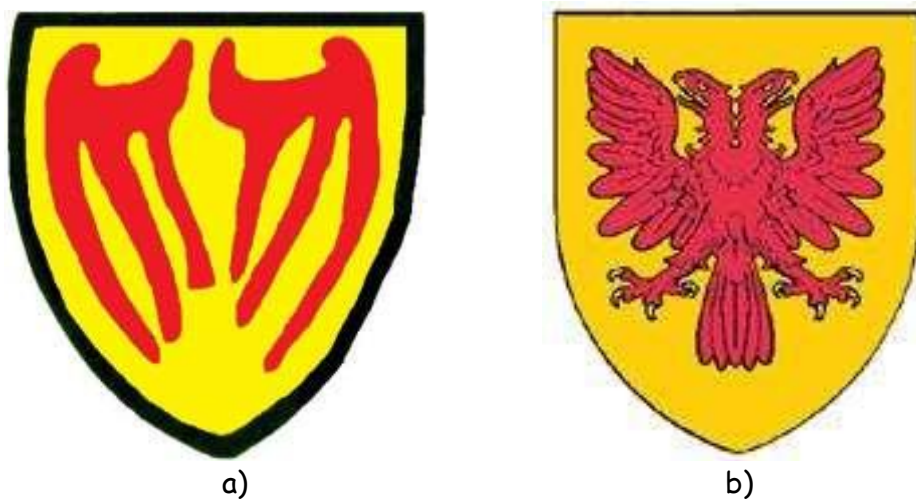


Fig. 1 Arms of the Bluet family *³

The period between 1066 and the end of the thirteenth century was a volatile and immensely important one for England, its near neighbours and the English and Norman people. There have been many studies of the major landholders, the movers and shakers of that history, but less work has been done on the under

³ Fig.1 a) before 1297 or two wings conjoined gules b) after 1297 or an eagle displayed gules from the wall painting at Sichester both by permission of Brian Timms a) at at Galloway Roll 230 <http://www.briantimms.fr/Rolls/galloway/galloway3.html>

If visiting from below click [here](#) to return to the discussion

tenants, the families who supported the major players and without whom they could not have prospered. The Bluet family was one such, holding land in the south and west of England and the Welsh Marches. The following is not a full one name study, not every member of the family is covered, and the main focus is on the branches of this Norman family that were active in Wiltshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset. Their Manors of Daglingworth (Gloucestershire), and Hullavington as well as Chepstow (and its castle) are given particular importance here and their owners are discussed in depth. It is not possible to discuss a family involved in the national life as often as the Bluets without referring to that national life, and so the background to selected historical incidents is given.

After the Norman Conquest of 1066 land was divided up and held by direct supporters of the King. These tenants in chief then granted land to their followers and so on, with each tier owing service to the land-holder above them and exacting it from those below. The Bluets were a well-established Norman family at the time of Duke William's conquest of England. In 1084 Domesday recorded that they held land from William, the Count of Eu, amongst others. Count William held land in 10 counties in the south and west of country. In Wiltshire he held 15 manors ⁴, and in Gloucestershire ⁵ 10 as tenant in chief.

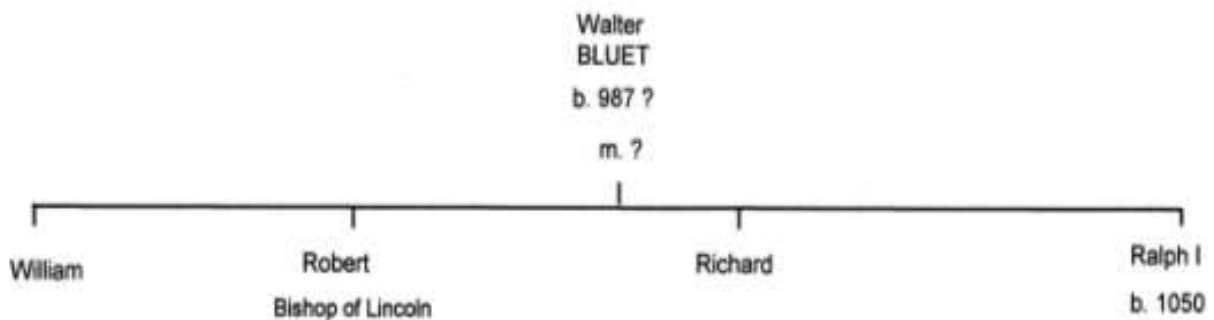


Fig. 2 Bluet family tree - first two generations *

After the d'Eu family lost their English lands the Bluet family continued to hold former d'Eu manors but they probably had more than one overlord, which wasn't

⁴ Thorn, C and Thorn, F (1979) *Domesday Book : 6 Wiltshire Phillimore sections* 31, 32

⁵ Taylor, Rev CS (1889) *Analysis of the Domesday survey of Gloucestershire* Bristol & Glos, Arch. Soc. pp260, 276, 280, 288, 292, 320, 324 and 325

that unusual. William d'Eu's honour ⁶ of Striguil ⁷ was given by Henry I to a younger branch of the de Clares ⁸ *the rest of his land in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire was given to Gilbert de Clare Marshal of the King's Household* ⁹

The earliest member of the line shown in [Fig. 2](#), Walter, has been identified as *the Viking* but he is somewhat doubtful, as he is said to have been born in about 987 ¹⁰. [In our original volumes we felt that this was too early to have a son with the Conqueror but Karen has recently re-calculated and shown that if Walter's son was born when Walter was 30, in about 1017 then that individual would have been 49 in 1066, so it is not impossible and the extra generation we suggested is unnecessary.](#) ¹¹

There is a possibility that this was the Walter known as Walter Balistarius (military engineer¹²). He held the Gloucestershire manors of Rodley ¹³, Ruddle ¹⁴ and Bulley ¹⁵ at the time of Domesday ¹⁶, and they were later granted to St

⁶ By convention, the term Honour is used to describe all the manors held by a tenant-in-chief. It is, however, a conventional, not a technical term and is sometimes used interchangeably with fief, itself more commonly used to describe those manors held by a tenant-in-chief in a single county

⁷ the medieval name for Chepstow, Gwent, and its surrounding area. The honor included manors in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Hampshire

⁸ Barkly, Sir Henry (1888) Additional notes on the Manor of Daglingworth in Bazeley, WM (1888) Notes on the Manor and Church of Daglingworth Trans. Brist. & Glos. Arch. Soc Vol 12 p57

⁹ Barkly, Sir Henry (1888) *ibid* p56

¹⁰ Blewett, M (2004) Blewetts document downloaded from www.bluett.com/blewett/EarlyEnglandResearch.pdf. Michael has done enormous amounts of good research into the Bluet/Bloet/Blewett family and made his results available to anybody who is interested. We gratefully acknowledge his work and assistance, whilst not always agreeing with all of his conclusions.

¹¹ [Our thinking earlier seemed correct at the time but is now untenable \(2018\)](#)

¹² Kerr, RJ (1895) *Notes on the Borough and Manor of Nemham* Trans. Brist. & Glos. Arch. Soc vol XVIII p170 —The *balistarii* were the military engineers of their day and chiefly engaged in working the ballistae and other missile discharging machines! Other sources, eg The Hutchinson Encyclopaedia (2007) Helicon Publishing Ltd, gives this as crossbow man, but this is incorrect.

¹³ South east of Westbury on Severn, in the bend of the River Severn

¹⁴ VCH Gloucestershire vol X (1972) p37
South west of Cinderford, on the downstream side of the same bend as Rodley

¹⁵ West of Gloucester, just off the current A40

¹⁶ Taylor, Rev CS (1889) *Analysis of the Domesday survey of Gloucestershire* Bristol & Glos, Arch. Soc. Vol XIII pp320-321 doesn't show Bulley but has instead Pertian, which he identifies with Poulton in Aivre, in Bludstone Hundred

Peter's Monastery, Gloucester, by Ralph Bluet I - this led Barkly to believe that Ralph had become Balistarius' heir, most probably he had married his daughter but it is at least possible that Walter was Ralph's father or uncle ¹⁷. It is certainly possible, but probably the most that can be said is that Ralph was supposed to have been a relation, a son, a nephew, a son in law ¹⁸. Whether this Walter is the start of the tree in Fig. 2 remains unclear; the four people shown in the next generation, however, are documented and known, to a greater or lesser extent.

All these Bluets were born in France, possibly at the family seat of Briqueville la Blouett ¹⁹.

There is a William Bluet who is given as being a companion of William the Conqueror ²⁰, however it is not certain this is true as the source is not entirely reliable. Even if it is true it is very unlikely this was William the first son in generation two.

The William in generation two of Fig. 2 is well known; he supported Henry I, when Earl Robert rebelled against the King in 1102 ²¹, as did his brother Robert. It is during this rebellion that William is first seen in a national context. Earl Robert, the Earl of both Belesme in Normandy and Shrewsbury in England, was accused of committing offences of deed or word against [Henry I] ²²

Realising he couldn't defend himself against these charges (mainly because they happened to be true, and the King had the proof) he fled to Normandy and was pronounced a public enemy. Earl Robert set about strengthening his castles and called for assistance from his kinsmen and allies in Normandy and England, at which point the King summoned the [English] Army. After capturing Arundel castle in Sussex Henry besieged Bridgnorth. Oderic Vitalis records that Earl Robert had also made treaty with the Welsh, and entered into alliance with their

¹⁷ Barkly, Sir Henry (1888) *Additional notes on the Manor of Daglingworth* in Bazeley, WM (1888) *Notes on the Manor and Church of Daglingworth* Trans. Brist. & Gos. Arch. Soc Vol 12 p56

¹⁸ Kerr, RJ (1895) *Notes on the Borough and Manor of Nemham* Trans. Brist. & Gos. Arch. Soc vol XVIII p170

¹⁹ King, HS (1874) *The Norman People and Their Existing Descendants in the British Dominions and the United States of America* reprinted 1975 p162

²⁰ Crispin, MJ (1994) *The Falaise Roll Recording Prominent Companions of William Duke of Normandy at the Conquest of England* (with additions and corrections by Moriarty, GA) Genealogical Pub. Co Inc p 87

²¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 1102

²² Vitalis, Oderic *On Henry I* from the *Ecclesiastical History* trans. Burr

Kings Cadwgan and Iowerth, the sons of Rhys²³

William Bluet was entrusted with the reduction of Tickhill²⁴ in Yorkshire early in the year. It is interesting to note that his brother, Bishop Robert of Lincoln, founded the stone castle there (it was previously a simple earthwork motte and bailey) and added a stone curtain wall to the massive bailey rampart²⁵

Earl Robert eventually lost, threw himself on the King's mercy and was banished to his lands in Normandy, where he created havoc for everyone around him.²⁶

The second son, Robert Bluet, was chancellor to both William I and William Rufus (William II); it was the Rufus who made him Bishop of Lincoln.²⁷ Bishop Robert later fell out of the King's favour. He died suddenly in 1123²⁸. His son, Simon, was later Dean of Lincoln.

Robert appears frequently in the records, especially the Close and the Curia Regis rolls.

The only things known about the third son, Richard is that he lived at Helston in Cornwall and apparently had a daughter Sybil.²⁹

²³ Vitalis, Oderic ibid www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/oderic.html

²⁴ Victoria County History *Yorkshire* vol III p 398. It is noted that Tickhill is associated with different owners of the Bluet's Wiltshire manor of Lackham, or their immediate family, no less than five times in the Manor's history.

²⁵ http://www.castleuk.net/castle_list_north/111/tickhillcastle.htm

²⁶ See Vitalis [Vitalis, Oderic www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/oderic.html] and Carpenter [Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* OUP ISBN 0-19-522000-5] for details of this period

²⁷ In 1093, succeeding Bishop Regimius [Crispin, MJ (1994) *The Falaise Roll Recording Prominent Companions of William Duke of Normandy at the Conquest of England* (with additions and corrections by Moriarty, GA) Genealogical Pub. Co Inc p84]

²⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* part 7 AD 1102 - 1154 record from AD 1123
In this year was the King Henry, at Christmastide at Dunstable, and there came to him the ambassadors of the Earl of Anjou. And thence he went to Woodstock; and his bishops and his whole court with him. Then did it betide on a Wednesday, which was on the fourth day before the ides of January, that the king rode in his deer-fold; the Bishop Roger of Salisbury on one side of him, and the Bishop Robert Bloet of Lincoln on the other side of him. And they rode there talking together. Then sank down the Bishop of Lincoln, and said to the king, "Lord king, I die." And the king alighted down from his horse, and lifted him betwixt his arms, and let men bear him home to his inn. There he was soon dead; and they carried him to Lincoln with great worship, and buried him before the altar of St. Mary And the Bishop of Chester, whose name was Robert Pecceth buried him <http://omacl.org/Anglo/part7.html>

²⁹ Blewett. M (2004) Blewetts document downloaded from www.blewett.com/blewett/EarlyEnglandResearch.pdf — born about 1146, at Helston, Cornwall, England but the source for this has not been seen

The fourth son, Ralph, was the ancestor of the Lackham and Silchester Bluet line. Little seems to be known about him although he appears to have been born in 1050 and died in 1112.

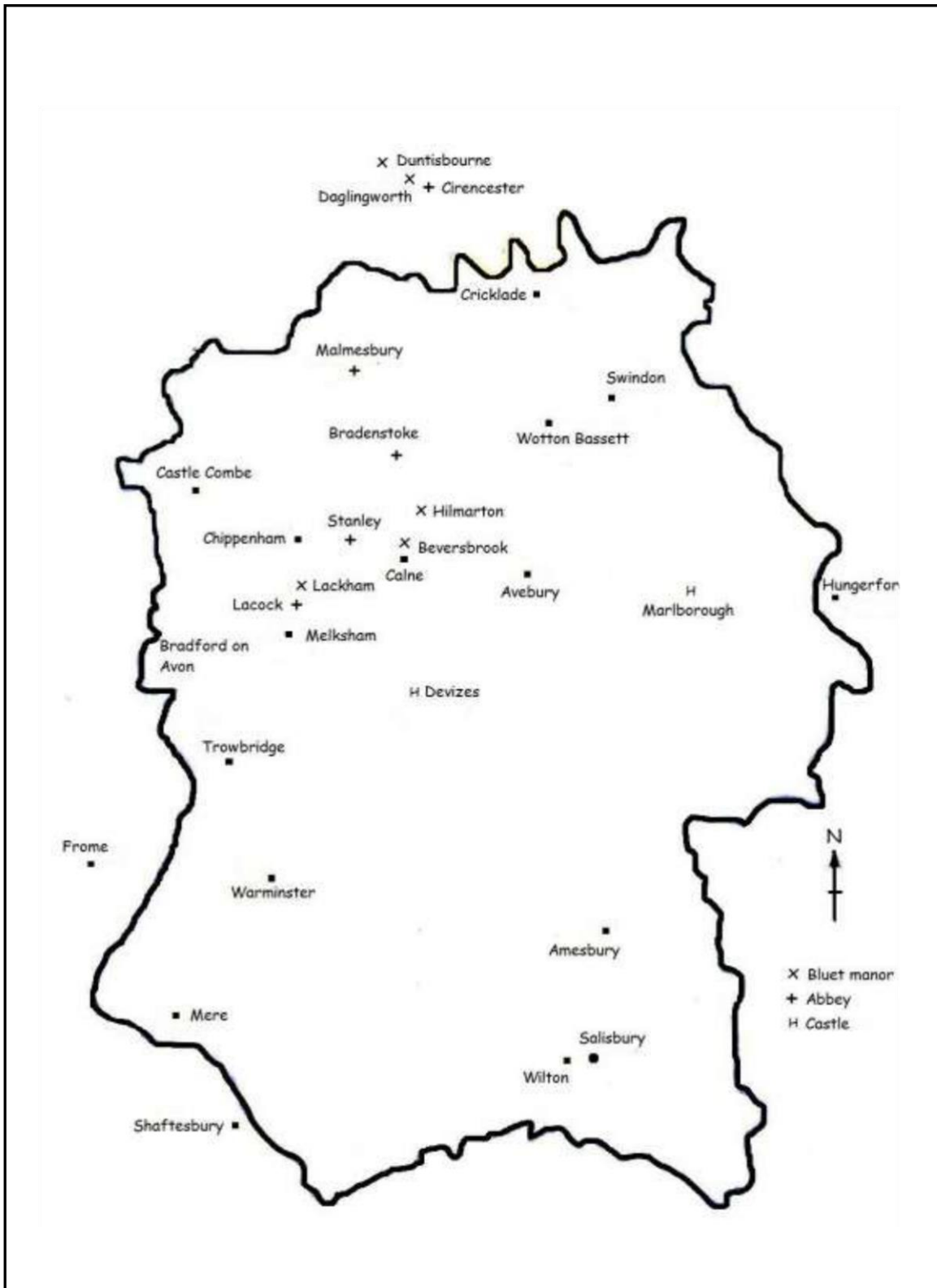


Fig. 3 Wiltshire, showing some places mentioned in the text *

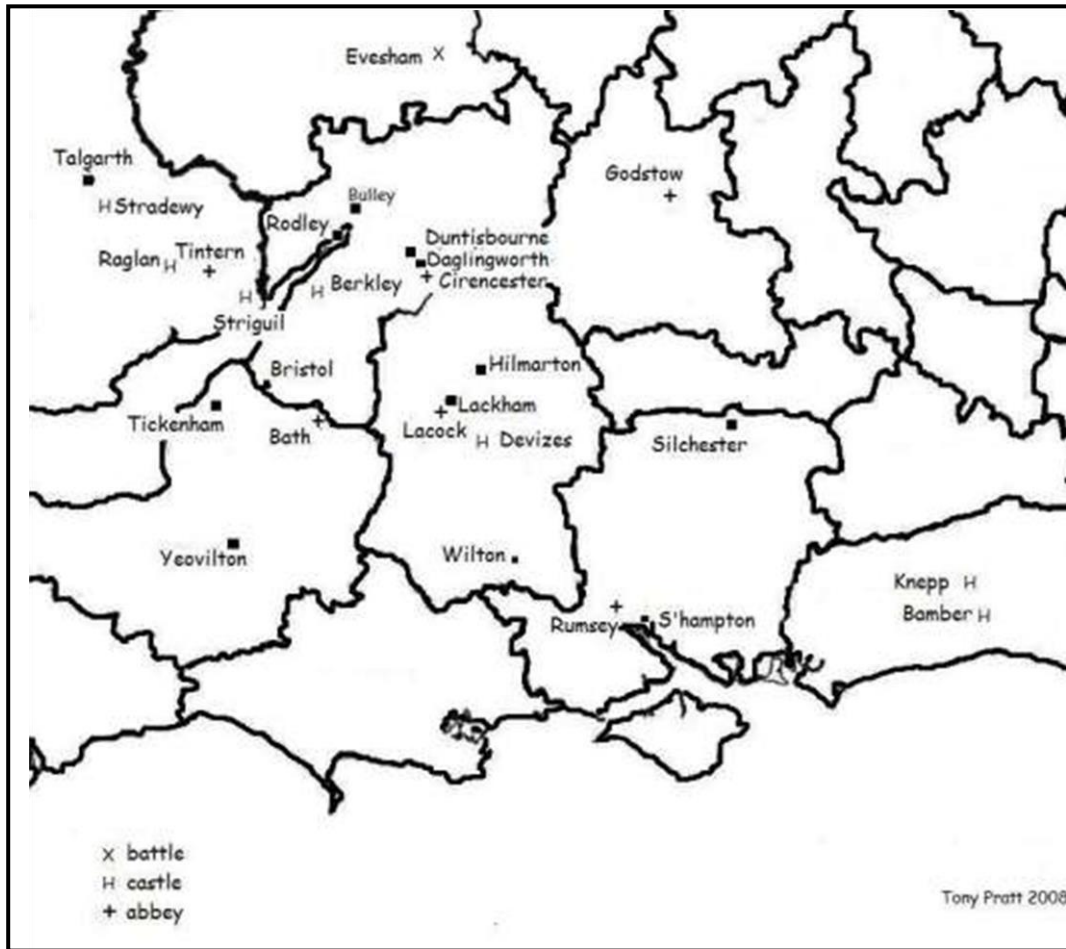


Fig. 4 Area map to show some places mentioned in text *
 If visiting from below click [here](#) to return to the footnote

From Domesday it is known that he held five manors from the Count of Eu³⁰. It is possible that the Ralph shown as holding of William d'Eu at Lackham in Domesday is Ralph Bluet, but it has also been suggested³¹ that it was Ralph de Mortemer. This is not impossible but there is no more evidence for de Mortimer than Bluet. Given that Lackham was later held by the Bluets it is likely they held Lackham of William d'Eu. Locally Ralph also held Duntisbourne at the time of Domesday -

Ralph Blewitt holds this manor of William and pays tax but he keeps back the tax on 3 hides. Durand also holds 2 hides in Duntisbourne

³⁰ *Domesday Explorer* (2000) Domesday on CD ROM Phillimore ISBN 1860771637

Silchester in Hampshire, Hilmarion and Lackham in Wiltshire, Yeovilton and Hinton Blewett in Somerset and Duntisbourne in Gloucestershire

³¹ Kite, E (1858) *The Baynard Monuments in Lacock Church Wiltshire* Archaeological Magazine (henceforth WAM) journal of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Devizes (henceforth WANHS) vol 4 no X p1

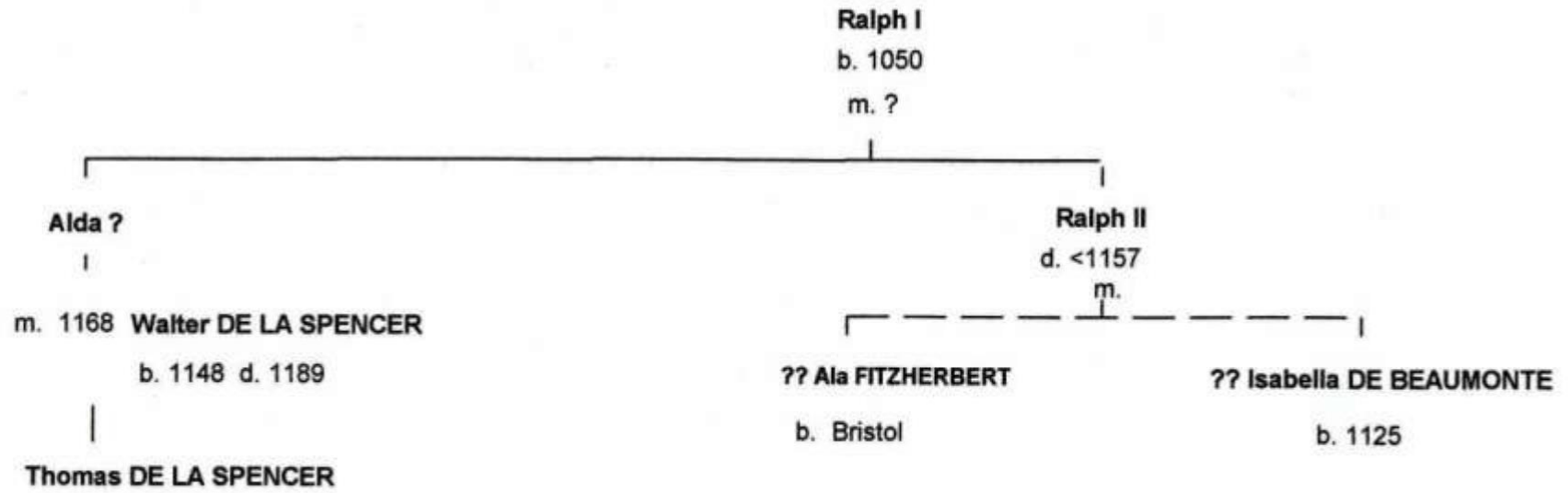


Fig. 5 Children of Ralph I *

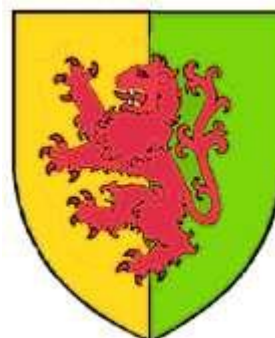
an example of holding land of more than one overlord in the same manor. Duntisbourne is north west of Cirencester, and it included the manor of Daglingworth as well. Both Duntisbourne Abbots and Duntisbourne Lee are now very small hamlets slightly further from Cirencester than Daglingworth and exquisite examples of south Gloucestershire rural communities. The lovely church at Duntisbourne Abbots has Norman pillars in the nave and all three of the churches in this area are worth a visit.

Fosbroke maintains that a junior branch of the Bluet family held Daglingworth, the senior branch being settled in Wiltshire ³³ which probably means Lackham. Daglingworth is now another small, quiet and very attractive village, its early house platforms clearly visible to the south of the narrow lane that leads to the village from Cirencester. Unfortunately the church here, as at Duntisbourne, was improved by the Victorians and little remains from before the mid 19th century, save three lovely Saxon carvings built into the walls.

The Bluets, as might be inferred from what has already been seen, were an important family at this period; as indicated at the start they were not usually one of the families that were tenants in chief, holding directly of the Crown, but of considerable weight on the national scale. They were part of the *mesnie*, household knights, of the de Clares before that family's lands passed to William Marshal by his marriage to Isabel de Clare (née de Beaumont)



de Clare ³⁴



Marshal ³⁵

Fig. 6 Arms of de Clare and Marshal ³⁶ *

³² *Domesday Explorer* (2000) Domesday on CD ROM Phillimore ISBN 1860771637 extract from Duntisbourne, Gloucester (search parameter *Blewitt*, searching on *William Eu* misses the hides held by Durand).

³³ Fosbroke (1807) *Abstracts of records and manuscripts respecting the county of Gloucester*; Formed into a history, correcting the very erroneous accounts, Vol 1 p23

³⁴ *De Clare or three chevrons gules*

³⁵ *Marshal Per pale or and vert overall a lion rampant gules*

³⁶by permission of Brian Timms

They became household knights with the new and powerful Earl of Pembroke. He was

*one of the most noteworthy knights of the Middle Ages. After almost being killed by King Stephen when he was a child, William grew up to be a prominent tournament competitor, and then a soldier, serving in several campaigns. After the death of King John in 1216, William fulfilled the task of regent for the young Henry III, and led English forces to victory at the Battle of Lincoln in 1217.*³⁷

and so it is not surprising that it has been said that

*The tenants who appear in the Marshal's entourage... were all very significant men.*³⁸

Ralph I was succeeded by his son, Ralph II, of whom a bit more is known and even more surmised.

Ralph Bluet I's wife is something of a problem. Smyth³⁹ states clearly that he married Ala Fitz-Harding the daughter of Nicholas Fitz-Robert Fitz-Harding and his wife Ala de Gloucester⁴⁰. Ala Fitz-Harding was born in Bristol. She has also been called Alice of Berkeley⁴¹ and the records of the Lords of Berkeley Castle⁴² show that Nicholas FitzRobert, of Tickenham in Somerset, had

issue Henry, who after mans estate, died without issue. And

³⁷ Crouch, D (1993) *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 - 1219* p139

³⁸ Crouch, D (1993) *ibid*

³⁹ John Smyth of Nibley wrote *The Berkeley Manuscripts*, which is elsewhere referenced under it's editor, Sir John Maclean

⁴⁰ Originally Ala was from Tickenham; The Berkeley family records show that "This Nicholas [Berkeley] had to wife Ala daughter and coheire of Guido also widowed son of Tecius lord of Tickenham by which marriage his estate in Tickenham and in divers fair lands in the counties of Somerset, Cambridge &co was greatly advanced. This Ala in many of her Deeds of widowhood reverenced her husband's memory with these words dominus vir meus Nicholaus and dominus meus Nicholaus my lord and husband; my lord Nicholas and the like"

⁴¹ <http://www.radicalruss.net/family/web/ancestors/pafg58.htm#41564>
Born about 1120 in Bristol. Mr Belville identifies Ala's mother as being Alice de Berkley, which doesn't totally contradict Ala de Gloucester, the marriage being in 1134

⁴² Maclean, J (ed) (1883) *The Berkley Manuscripts Vol I The Lives of the Berkeleys* p46

Roger, Jordan and Ala [Alice] married to Ralph Bloet with whom her said father gave in marriage theManor of Langstan ⁴³.

Support for this marriage may be found in the fact that 4 generations later the Manor of Langston was still held by the Bluet family ⁴⁴.

All well and good, and then Karen's research brought to our attention a charter in the PRO at Kew, which mentions *Williamus Bloet fra[ter] Comes Richard* ⁴⁵ The only Earl Richard at this period is Richard (Strongbow) de Clare There are two possible marriages to would allow this. Firstly it might be that Ralph Bluet II married Isabel de Beaumont (the widow of Gilbert de Clare sometime after her husband's death in 1148 and that the William referred to is his son ⁴⁶. Or it might be that William himself married one of Isabel's daughters. Direct evidence of either is missing, but circumstantial evidence for Ralph marrying Isabel can be found. In the charters of Tintern Abbey (founded in 1131, by Walter de Clare ⁴⁷) there is a list of benefactors of the abbey ⁴⁸. Richardson notes that this

... list of obits is for the founders ["fundatorum"] of the Abbey [that is, the Clare family], and their near kinsfolk ["genere propinquo eorum"]. Included among the people on this list is Walter FitzRichard founder of the Abbey, and many of his other well known Clare relations. Curiously, this list includes an obit for Ralph Bluet the younger, whose obit was commemorated on the 13th of July, presumably the date of his death: "Radulfus Bloeth junior

⁴³ Maclean, J (ed) (1883) *ibid* A footnote mentions that – Two manors of Tickenham are mentioned in the Somerset Domesday. One was held by William d'Eu in demesne and the other by Arnulph de Hesding The first was afterwards held of Striguil, and the other was a parcel of the honour of Gloucester. One was purchased by Fitzharding and one was acquired by marriage with the co-heir of Guido son of Tecius This Guido was Roger FitzNicholas' maternal grandfather, so Tickenam passed to Roger through his mother, who was also called Ala

⁴⁴ Sir John Bluet is shown holding Langston and Wytestone in 1315 [*Inquisition Post Mortem* vol V Edw II no 538 IPM of Gilbert de Clare earl of Gloucestershire and Hertford 7 held at Monmouth 28 Sept 8 Edw II (1315), John held by service of two knights fees]

⁴⁵ PRO E327 / 298

⁴⁶ Richardson, D at http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/44902731e8083f9f/acd4426c3ffb0d41?hl=en&lnk=gst&q=bluet#acd4426c3ffb0d41 ay 11 2007

⁴⁷ Notably the grandson of Walter FitzPatrick who was then Count of Eu

⁴⁸ Dugdale, Sir W (1825) *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales* Vol 5 p266 see Appendix I for transcription

obiit xiiij die Julii." *While the inclusion of Ralph Bluet's obit in this list of Clare kinsfolk is not concrete proof of an intermarriage between Isabel de Beaumont and the Bluet family, this is certainly good supporting evidence that the Bluet and Clare families were*⁴⁹
near related to one another.

It should be noted that not everyone on the list was a de Clare relative, the King and Queen of France for example,⁵⁰ but it is significant that every single one of those mentioned is either major aristocracy or a Marshal of England, with the exception of Ralph Bluet..... [See [Appendix 1](#) for a transcription of this document, taken from Dugdale.]

Even more telling is a charter, located by Douglas Richardson, which the Countess Isabel de Beaumont witnessed for her son, Earl Richard Strongbow, in about 1170. Immediately following Countess Isabel's name is that of her illegitimate daughter Isabel, followed by Ralph and Walter Bluet⁵¹. This can be seen as strongly suggestive that they were important, maybe even evidence that they were her sons by Ralph Bluet II. If so this would make Ralph Bluet III a half brother of Strongbow. From a timeline point of view there is enough time for Ralph to have married both Ala and Isabel, but whether he was married to one, or the other, or both is unclear. Isabel appears to have survived as late as 1172.

However Dr. Crouch has suggested⁵² that this relationship between William and Count Richard could be explained by William marrying one of Isabel's two daughters. The first, Basila was a full daughter to Richard. If William married her he would certainly have been *frat Comes Richard*. She actually married twice but neither of her husbands was William. The first was Raymond FitzGerald⁵³, (le Gros) and the second Geoffrey FitzRobert, Lord of Kells and

⁴⁹ Richardson, D at

http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/44902731e8083f9f/acd4426c3ffb0d41?hl=en&lnk=gst&q=bluet#acd4426c3ff_b0d41_jbid

⁵⁰ MA-R at

http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/44902731e8083f9f/acd4426c3ffb0d41?hl=en&lnk=gst&q=bluet#acd4426c3ff_b0d41 May 11 2007

⁵¹ Richardson, D Pers. Comm May 2007

⁵² In several places, for example Crouch, D (2006) *William Marshal, Knighthood, War and Chivalry 1147 - 1219* p149 and, in more detail, Crouch D (1986) *Strategies of Lordship in Angevin England and the Career of William Marshal* in Harper-Bill, C and Harvey, R (1986) *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood II*. Papers from the Third Strawberry Hill Conference 1986 p17 fn 54

⁵³ Died c1188 and celebrated as a *prudomme* - a man of vivacity and fine intelligence (*animi virtus*) by his cousin Gerald of Wales [Crouch, D(2005) *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900 - 1300* Pearson Longman, Harlow p45]

Leinster⁵⁴. Isabel's other daughter was not Earl Gilbert's at all, but was one of the many illegitimate children of King Henry I. By the King Isabela had the daughter who was also called Isabel⁵⁵. This sounds promising, as a marriage to an illegitimate daughter of the countess would not give William any rights to lands, and so would not excite much notice and might account for it not being widely recorded. However it is known that Isabel did not marry but lived with her mother even after the death of Earl Gilbert⁵⁶. Another point against William marrying Isabel is that she was a daughter of King Henry I, albeit an illegitimate one, and the marriages of his illegitimate children are known⁵⁷. It is very unlikely that William could marry a royal bastard without it being noted, even when there were as many around as there were for Henry I. At the moment it is not possible to say which of the explanations is correct. Figs. 5 & 7 show both possibilities, with question marks to emphasise that neither can be proven. We hesitate to offer even a guess at which is more likely.

Assuming that the marriage to Ala did take place this gives a link between the Bluet family and the family which includes the Berkeleys, although they are on a different line. Fig 7a (next page) is presented to show this possible linkage.

In the charters of Godstow abbey there is one that is almost certainly by Ralph II⁵⁸; it deals with the gift of the alms of the church at Duntisbourne, which has already been seen to have been one of the Bluet's manors at Domesday.

This charter can be dated to Ralph II because, unusually, it mentions someone whose dates are known and very limited - John Paghham the Bishop of Worcester between 1151 and 1157⁵⁹. Any date within this range is too early for a charter of Ralph III. This charter is useful in that it mentions that Ralph Bloet his mother and his brethren gave the alms of the church to Godstow. This is the only reference found so far to Ralph II having brothers.

⁵⁴ Cokayne, GE *Complete Peerage* Vol 10 Appendix H

⁵⁵ Cokayne, GE *Complete Peerage* Vol 11 Appendix D

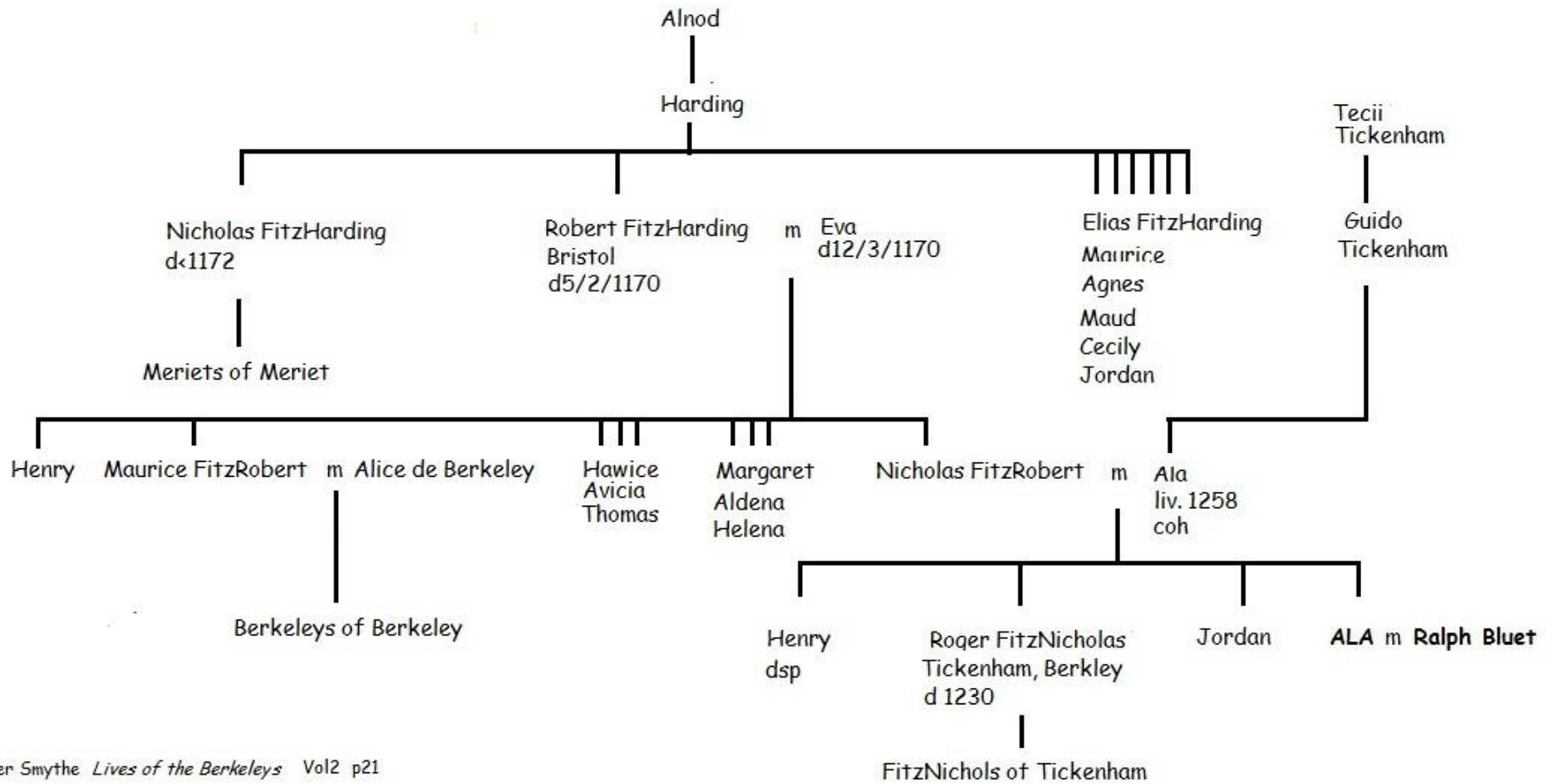
⁵⁶ Cokayne, GE *Complete Peerage* Vol 10 Appendix H

⁵⁷ Cokayne, GE *Complete Peerage* Vol 10 Appendix H

⁵⁸ Clark A (1905) *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery* Part 1 no 155 pp134-135

⁵⁹ Le Neve, J & Hardy, JD (1854) *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* vol III p49

Consecrated 4th March 1151, died at Rome 31st March 1157. It is noted that Rott. Profess. has him being consecrated 6th April 1151 not the 8th



After Smythe *Lives of the Berkeleys* Vol2 p21

Fig 7a Berkeley - Bluet link *
 Note that Nicholas FitzRobert is chronologically between Thomas and Margaret

This charter confirms that the alms were a nun's dower for their sister to serve god and Saint John at Godstow. Who this was is unclear. It has been suggested⁶⁰ that Ralph Bluet II had a sister Alda, born 1149, who married Walter de Spencer but it has not been possible to confirm this. If this date is correct then it is possible that the sister mentioned in this charter was Alda entering Godstow around age 7. The young Oderic Vitalis was originally going to have been that age when he entered the monastery, but it wasn't possible until he was 10⁶¹. Children were entered into religious orders, there was even a term for them - child oblates .

*The children vowed and given by their parents to the monastic life, in houses under the Rule of St. Benedict, were commonly known by the name during the century and a half when the custom was in vogue, and the councils of the Church treated them as monks—that is, until the Council of Toledo (656) forbade their acceptance before the age of ten*⁶²

It is noted that under the rule of the Council of Toledo Alda could not have been entering Godstow as an oblate until 1159 (if her birth date was 1149), which is too late for the dates for this charter. If this charter refers to Alda's nun's dowery then she must necessarily have been born before 1147, at the latest. It is noted that oblates had free permission to leave the monastery, if they wished, when they reached the age of puberty⁶³ and so she could have left the nunnery and married de Spencer as suggested. However it is not possible for this sister to be a young girl; Ralph I died around 1112, and even if this is not entirely correct he would have been close to 100 in 1149, certainly not fathering children.

She cannot be a daughter of Ralph II because that would make the charter by Ralph III, who is too young to be issuing charters in 1151-1157. She must, therefore, be a sister to Ralph II and have been born by about 1110, which would make her between 40 and 50 at the time of this charter. It is possible that she entered Godstow after William de Spencer died. Unfortunately no trace of William de Spence.r apart from the reference by Gearhart, has been found⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Gearhart, T; LDS (Church of Latter Days Saints) submission Search: 2549474-0115104090804 ; CD-ROM: Pedigree Resource File - Compact Disc #84, as notified to us by Michael Blewett, our thanks to him for clarifying the source. It should be noted, however, that this is an LDS submission file, and so should be treated with extreme caution (as should much of the LDS data) as these are not usually checked or peer reviewed in any way at all. No other evidence for Alda has so far been found and assertions of her existence must be speculative at best.

⁶¹ Chibnall, M (1984) The World of Oderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights p16

⁶² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oblate_\(religion\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oblate_(religion))

⁶³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oblate_\(religion\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oblate_(religion))

⁶⁴ There is a William de Spencer at the right period (born 1100) but he didn't marry a Bluet, he married Alix Ala de Bourgogne.

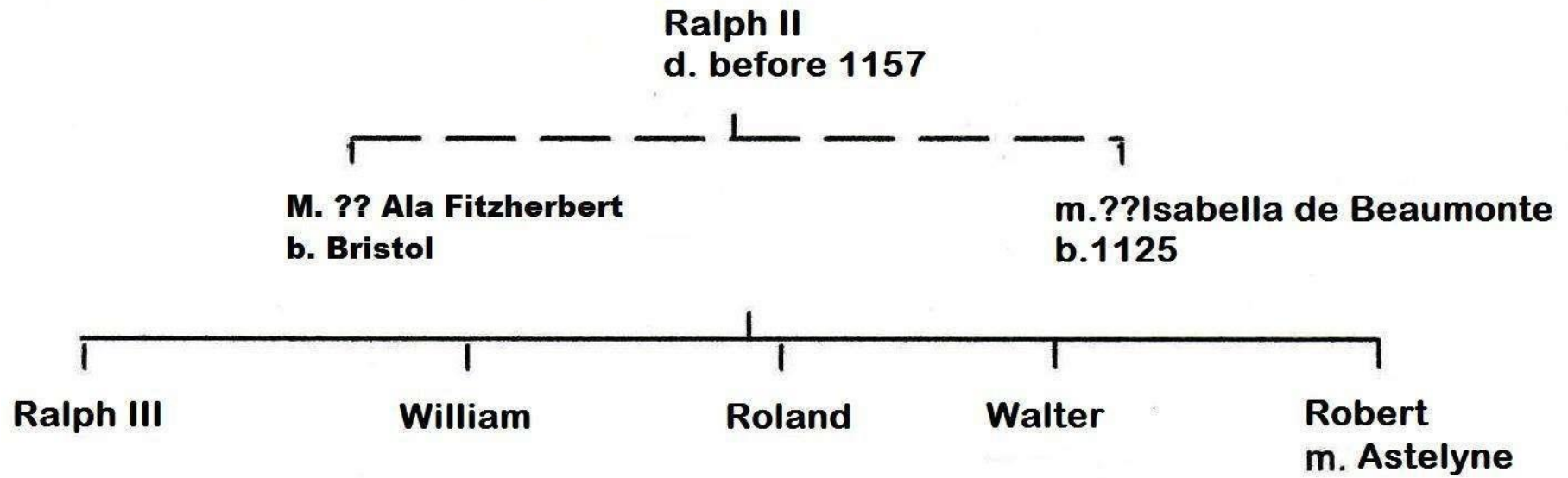


Fig. 7b Children of Ralph II *

To return to the text click [here](#)

either and the supposed date of his death is unknown. All that can be said with any degree of conviction is that Ralph II had a sister who was a nun of Godstow, she might have been called Alda but this cannot be substantiated.

To turn to the children of Ralph II (see Fig. 7b above) and whichever of his suggested wives was their mother - Ralph II died before 1157 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Ralph III, who was important man in the Marches. He took his father's place in the Marshal household.

It has been said that Ralph III was the most important ⁶⁵ of William' Marshal's tenants, indeed he had been one of the people who delivered the honor of Striguil and its Castle (Chepstow) to the Marshal when Marshal inherited it in 1189. How Ralph came to be responsible for the honor is a little involved ⁶⁶; the original heir to the honor was Gilbert de Clare a minor, and in 1185 custody of the honor had been given jointly, ⁶⁷ to William Bluet, and Ralph III who was one of the barons of the honor and, if the suggestion that Ralph II had married Isabel is correct, they would have been Gilbert's (step or half) uncles. Gilbert died young in 1185 and his sister Isabel, whom the Marshal married in 1189, became the heiress. William Bluet also died in 1185 and the honor was then administered jointly by William de St Leger and Ralph Bluet on behalf of Isabel before her marriage. Isabel herself was a ward of the King and kept in the Tower before her marriage. It would have been these men [Bluet and St Leger] who delivered ⁶⁸ *seisin* of the honor to William Marshal in 1189. Ralph III wasn't only important in the Marches, he inherited Lackham and Silchester - and other estates, of course.

[Previously](#) it was a given that Ralph III only married Nest, a sister of the ruler of Caerleon. However research by Paul Reed ⁶⁹ has suggested that Ralph III

⁶⁵ Crouch, D (1993) *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 - 1219* p134

⁶⁶ Crouch D (1986) *Strategies of Lordship in Angevin England and the Career of William Marshal* in Harper-Bill, C and Harvey, R (1986) *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood II. Papers from the Third Strawberry Hill Conference 1986* p17

⁶⁷ Pipe Rolls 31 Hen II Pipe Roll Society (1903) Vol XXXIV (most of the entry is omitted)
HONOR DE STRIGVIL, de
anno integro.

Radulfus Bloet et Willelmus Bloet reddt. comp. de .xx. 1. de firma de Striguil..... Et in liberatione .iij. vigilum et janitoris castelli .xviij. s. Et comitisse de Strigoil .ij. m.

Et debet .xxij. I. et .ij. s. et .iiij. ob..

⁶⁸ Crouch, D (1993) *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 - 1219* p134

⁶⁹ Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) 395-397

had another wife before this, the mother of his eldest son Ralph IV, who was born before 1178⁷⁰ and probably his daughter Emma who may have been his eldest child⁷¹. Nothing is known of this period of his life, who his wife was or when they married and it remains unproven. At about the same time as his eldest son's birth Ralph granted the Avowson of his manor at Daglingworth, being run by his brother William, to the Abbey of Godstow in Surrey.

Nest's parents⁷² were possibly Iowerth ap Owain, Lord of Caerleon, and Angharad, daughter of Uchtyrd the Bishop of Llandaff⁷³; it has been maintained that Angharad [was] Gruffudd's mother, and his wife [was] Ealdgyth, daughter of Aelfgar of Mercia⁷⁴ but it seems likely that the descent given above is correct. Iowerth's association with Caerleon was that of conquest⁷⁵. He was the son and heir of Caradog ap Gruffudd⁷⁶. It is said that [Iowerth] and his brother Morgan ambushed and killed Richard de Clare near Abergavenny in 1135⁷⁷

⁷⁰ The actual birth date for Ralph IV is not known, but as he was of age in 1199 he must have been born by 1178 at the latest, maybe considerably earlier

⁷¹ A birth date for Emma of before 1187 seems possible. Although not proven [Fig 9](#), shows Paul Reed's suggested lineage

⁷² We would like to express our gratitude to Paul Reed for patiently pointing out serious errors in our original version of this section and for his help and encouragement

⁷³ Bradney, Sir Joseph A. (1904-33) *A history of Monmouthshire : from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time. Vol 3 (Hundred of Usk) p190* [Facsimile edition pub Merton Priory Press, 1993]

⁷⁴ Shortridge B (2004) in *Corrections to K S B Keats-Rohan's, "Domesday Descendants"* p846 at <http://fmg.ac/Projects/Domesday/Desc3.htm>. The authorities quoted are given as Lloyd, J E (1911). *History of Wales, 2*: p367 n.31, chart p767, Davies, J (1993). *History of Wales* p83, chart 101 and Williams, A (1995). *The English and the Norman Conquest* p52 chart, p53 n.33. Note that the authorities listed here have not been checked and are not included in the bibliography

⁷⁵ Raviolus, J.P. posting in GenMed at http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/b8953f98e693336a/6600295db78c8eaa?lnk=gst&q=iowerth+caerleon#6600295db78c8eaa

⁷⁶ Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p396

⁷⁷ Ravilious, JP posting on [soc.genealogy.medieval](http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/b8953f98e693336a/3d37a429e6c47ee1?lnk=gst&q=nest#3d37a429e6c47ee1) [http://groups.google.com/group/soc.genealogy.medieval/browse_thread/thread/b8953f98e693336a/3d37a429e6c47ee1?lnk=gst&q=nest#3d37a429e6c47ee1] Dec 2002, giving a link to a report from Cardiff University Theoretical Archaeology Group, Cardiff 1999, which at the time of writing was non functional

Iowerth fought against the English at other times -

In 1172, Iorwerth, with a large body of Welshmen, destroyed all the country with fire and sword to the gates of Gloucester.
78

Then in 1175 the King held a great Council for the quelling of the Welsh⁷⁹ . *And Iowerth did homage to Henry II at Gloucester*⁷⁸ .

It is said that Nest was mistress of King Henry II and wife of Sir Ralph Bluet⁸⁰ Henry II had a number of illegitimate children⁸¹ and it is known he

*had a son, Morgan, by a noble Welshwoman called Nest , the wife of Sir Ralph Bloet, a northern knight who had settled on the Welsh Marches*⁸²

although why Weir claims Ralph was a northern knight is not clear, in the *Annals Dunelmenses* is found only

Henricus rex pater Iohannis regis genuerat eum de uxore cuiusdam militis Angli dicti Radulfi Bloet

*King Henry, father of King John, engendered him [Morgan] on the wife of a certain English knight called Ralph Bloet*⁸³

[the Angli / English here is noted - it is often debated when the Normans started thinking of themselves as English. Certainly that is the case here but it is not surprising considering this was getting on for 150 years, and several generations, after the Conquest].

From the *Annals* it appears that Nest was married to Ralph III at the time, and Morgan was certainly known as Morgan Bloet, but it isn't proof; as Crouch

⁷⁸ <http://www.britannia.com/history/city/glos.html> - *History of the City of Gloucester, Gloucestershire Roman Town to Parliamentary City*

⁷⁹ <http://www.britannia.com/history/city/glos.html> *ibid*

⁸⁰ Bradney, Sir Joseph A. (1904-33) *A history of Monmouthshire : from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time. Vol 3 (Hundred of Usk) p190 [Facsimile edition pub Merton Priory Press, 1993]*

⁸¹ Batrum, PC (1980) *Welsh Genealogies AD 300-1400.*

⁸² Weir, A (1999) *Eleanor of Aquitaine Cape p98*

⁸³ in Barlow, F (1945) *Durham Annals and Documents of the Thirteenth Century Surtees Soc vol clv pp1-2.* Our thanks to Dr. Crouch for making this information available to us

says⁸⁴ at best it implies it.

It is possible that Nest and Henry met when the king visited her brother Towerth, in either 1172 or again in 1175. The date at which Ralph Bluet and Nest married is not known, from a consideration of when Ralph's son Ralph came of age it might have been 1175. Henry II does not appear to have been in the habit of seducing wives; as far as is known all his mistresses were unmarried at the time but that doesn't mean Nest was free. It is likely that the chronology will never be known with certainty, if pressed we would probably come down on Morgan being conceived around 1172 and before Nest married Ralph Bluet, but we emphasize this is speculative. Whatever the case Morgan would appear to have been brought up in his mother's household, and would have been a half brother to Ralph and Nest's children. It would seem likely that he was named after Nest's uncle.

Morgan is well known and documented, apart from his date of birth, he was appointed provost of Beverly Castle in 1201 and bishop elect of Durham in 1213⁸⁵. His appointment was contested on the grounds of bastardy and, in 1213,

*he sought papal confirmation for his election to the see of Durham. It was not altogether an auspicious year in which to be pursuing an appointment which had King John's blessing, for, until Pope Innocent received John's abject submission in June, the interdict which had blighted the spiritual and political life of England for some years was not lifted and Innocent was hardly likely to be generous with dispensations for bastardy in the English king's favour. Apparently Pope Innocent felt sorry for Morgan, for he had come all the way to Rome in good faith hoping for the papal blessing, and now found himself unexpectedly disappointed. The pope therefore called him aside, and told him that if he was prepared to swear that he was really the son of Ralph and his wife Nest, rather than of the king and Nest, then he would very readily confirm him as bishop of Durham, but that if he continued to insist that he was the son of King Henry, then his illegitimate birth obliged Innocent to refuse confirmation. This put poor Morgan in a quandary: whether to deny his royal blood, or to forgo his hopes of a bishopric. He retired to consult with a friend. The friend's advice was unequivocal: on no account must a man deny his royal blood, a far more worthy endowment than a bishopric. So Morgan returned to the pope, told him that it was unthinkable that he should deny his father the king, and went away a disappointed man.*⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Crouch, D (2003) Bluet article in Dictionary of National Biography vol 6

⁸⁵ Given in -Wilson, C & Curteis, A (1984) The Royal Bastards of Medieval England Routledge & Keegan Paul ISBN 0 7102 0025 0 p99

⁸⁶ Given in -Wilson, C & Curteis, A (1984) The Royal Bastards of Medieval England Routledge & Keegan Paul ISBN 0 7102 0025 0 p99

Morgan later resigned his benefices after taking the cross and died on Pilgrimage before 1217. He was buried in Fountains Abbey⁸⁷

In Wiltshire it is Ralph III who is the neighbour in an agreement with the Earl of Salisbury⁸⁸ concerning the church at Lacock sometime between 1168 and 1179⁸⁹. In this charter Earl William and Ralph agree that, as they have common patronage of St Cyriac's church at Lacock, they will formalise how the priests are appointed to do away with all discord, which would imply there had been some. They agreed that

*one of them shall have the gift of the church for one turn and present a suitable parson to it, on whose death the gift shall come back to the other patron... it is further agreed that neither of them... shall give the church to religious or otherwise so that one by means of the other may lose the gift*⁹⁰

This agreement has been quoted at length as it led to later issues for the Bluets.....

One of the witnesses to this agreement was Richard, the Sheriff Richard de Wilton was Sheriff of Wiltshire between 1164 and 1181

In the second half of the twelfth century Ralph granted the church at his manor of Daglingworth to the nunnery at Godstow⁹¹. Clark dates this to about 1155 but the only dating evidence is that one of the witnesses is Matthew the archdeacon of Gloucester, who died in 1177 so any time before this is a possible date. The other witnesses⁹² survive into the next century, so don't help with the dating,

⁸⁷ Barlow (1945) (ed) *Durham Annals and Documents of the Thirteenth Century Surtees Soc.* 115 1-2, p130

⁸⁸ William de Evereux, 1150 - 1196, his second wife was Ela, of whom much more later

⁸⁹ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* Wiltshire Record Society, (hereafter WRS) *Devizes* ISBN 0 9091333 115 no 29 p18 dated 1168 - 1179

⁹⁰ Rogers, KH (ed) (1980) *ibid*

⁹¹ Clark A (1905) *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery* Part 1 p130 no 146

⁹² These were Robert de Meysi, and Robert de Evercide Meysi is found in various charters, for example he is mentioned in the charters of Sibton Abbey in Suffolk [Brown, P (1987)(ed) *Sibton Abbey Cartularies & Charters*, Part III, vol VIII p215., Suffolk Records Society] and from this it is known that he was married to Joan of Bramfield in about 1200 and had a brother Roger (d <1211) and a daughter Nicola who married Roger de Leiston. Less is found for de Averci but his heiress was married to Sir Ralph de Wilington and de Averci held land in Gloucester and Worcester in 1208, including some at Yate, near Bristol [<http://www.celtic-casimir.com/webtree/6/32819.htm> *Sir Ralph DE WILINGTON of Ablington & Yate*

although they might indicate a date closer to 1177 than 1155.

On the same sheet as the Daglingworth charter is another in which Ralph grants the church at Duntisbourne to Godstow as well. According to Clark the wording is exactly the same as the Daglingworth one. As already seen Ralph's brother Walter confirmed the grant⁹³, interestingly Ralph the donor is a witness to this confirmation.

Little is known of Ralph II's son Robert, but he appears to have married Astelyn who pre-deceased him⁹⁴. He was of age by, at latest 1203, and survived until at least November 1260 and witnessed a number of Wiltshire charters⁹⁵; examples are a charter of Everard de Aruges between 1193 - 1203⁹⁶, another referring to Chaddington between 1213 and 1241, a charter of Walter Crook of Hazelbury dated no later than 1232⁹⁷ and two charters of Nicholas Waz dated 1260, which give the upper date for his life⁹⁸. He also witnessed charters relating to Weslecott that date to between 1257 and 1271 but there is no evidence for these to post date 1260⁹⁹

Interestingly Robert Bluet also witnessed a charter by Roger de Berkeley in about 1232, other witnesses included Robert de Berkely the nephew of Sir Roger and Roger's brother Oliver Humphrey Cook, brother of Walter (above) was also a witness¹⁰⁰.

Robert certainly held land of the Bassett family; sometime between 1244 and 1271 he undertook not to sell any of his lands to one Stephen Froumond, or any others, without the consent of his liege lord, Philip Bassett¹⁰¹

General Notes] unfortunately this site does not give the references for the charters from which this information was obtained

⁹³ Clark A (1905) *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery* Part 1 p130 no 147

⁹⁴ London, VMC (1979) *The Bradenstoke Cartulary* WRS no 65 p46
Gift in alms by Robert Bluet for the soul of Astelyne his wife. The grant is undated but the witness list places it sometime between 1236-56

⁹⁵ London VCM (q1979) (ed) *The Bradenstoke Cartulary* WRS vol XXXV p45 no 61

⁹⁶ London VCM (1979) (ed) *The Bradenstoke Cartulary* p82 no 346

⁹⁷ London VCM (1979) (ed) *ibid* p111 no 225

⁹⁸ London VCM (1979) (ed) *ibid* p47 no's 67-8. No 68 is dated c1260 but no 67 has the exact date of 8 November 1260

⁹⁹ Rogers, KH (1979) (ed) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS vol34 p79 no's 308-11 and 313

¹⁰⁰ London VCM (1979) (ed) *ibid* p130 no 424

¹⁰¹ *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 4* (1902), pp. 84-96 Deeds: A.6801 - A.6900. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64383>
Undertaking by Robert Bluet, knight, that he will not sell or alienate any of his lands or rents to Stephen Fromund, or any other, without the licence of Philip Basset, his lord,

It is possible that Robert and Astelyn had a son called William. Evidence for William's existence comes from the Godstow charters; in the first quarter of the thirteenth century William Bluet confirmed the gifting of Daglingworth church to Godstow which Ralph III made, and "*which his uncles Ralph and Walter gave and granted and confirmed*"¹⁰² For both Ralph and Walter to be his uncle this William has to be the son of one of the other children of Ralph II and not Ralph II's son, and Robert is the most likely candidate. Proof of this is lacking and it is speculative, but other issue of Ralph I are known, and Walter does not appear amongst them.

Not much is known of Walter of Ragland, another son of Ralph II, except that he and his brother died in the continuing warfare in Wales after the withdrawal of the French forces in 1217 and the ascendancy of the Bluet's patron, William Marshal. Several of his descendents, however, were involved in national events and are worth discussing.

The first was Walter's son Ralph, who witnessed a charter of Grace Dieu abbey in 1267. Paul Reed¹⁰³ has shown that this cannot be either Ralph IV or Ralph V and is an unrecognised Bluet having previously been assumed to have been Ralph IV or Ralph V.

Nothing else is known of him for certain but his son Ralph married Amicia, daughter and heir of John Picard¹⁰⁴. Their lands were mainly in the Marches; they were granted the Manor of Thurcleston, in Herefordshire, by Amicia's father on their marriage and in 1308 "[Ralph Bluet's] wife Amicia and himself" were possessors of Almay after the death of John Picard¹⁰⁵. Two years previously John Picard had been tasked with providing a levy of 100 footmen to attend the king at Montgomery¹⁰⁶. This was part of a general levy of the local area. It is not clear from whom they held the manor; in 1310 Ralph is seen holding

under penalty of any such lands or rents so alienated being entered upon by his said lord for satisfaction. Witnesses:—Sirs William de Insula, and Robert de Camera, Gilbert de Gerpundevile, and others (named). Seal

¹⁰² Clark, A (1905) *ibid* pp130-131 no. 148 dated about 1220 by Clark

¹⁰³ Reed PC (2008) Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p395 fn27

¹⁰⁴ Anon (1878) The Picards or Pycards of Straddewy (now Tretower) castle and Scethrog, Brecknockshire Goldney & Lawrence p34, digitised at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/FH10&CISOPTR=68552&REC=9>

¹⁰⁵ Anon (1878) *ibid*

¹⁰⁶ *Calendar of Welsh Rolls Edw I yrs 5 to 23* pp280-281 dated March 21 1283

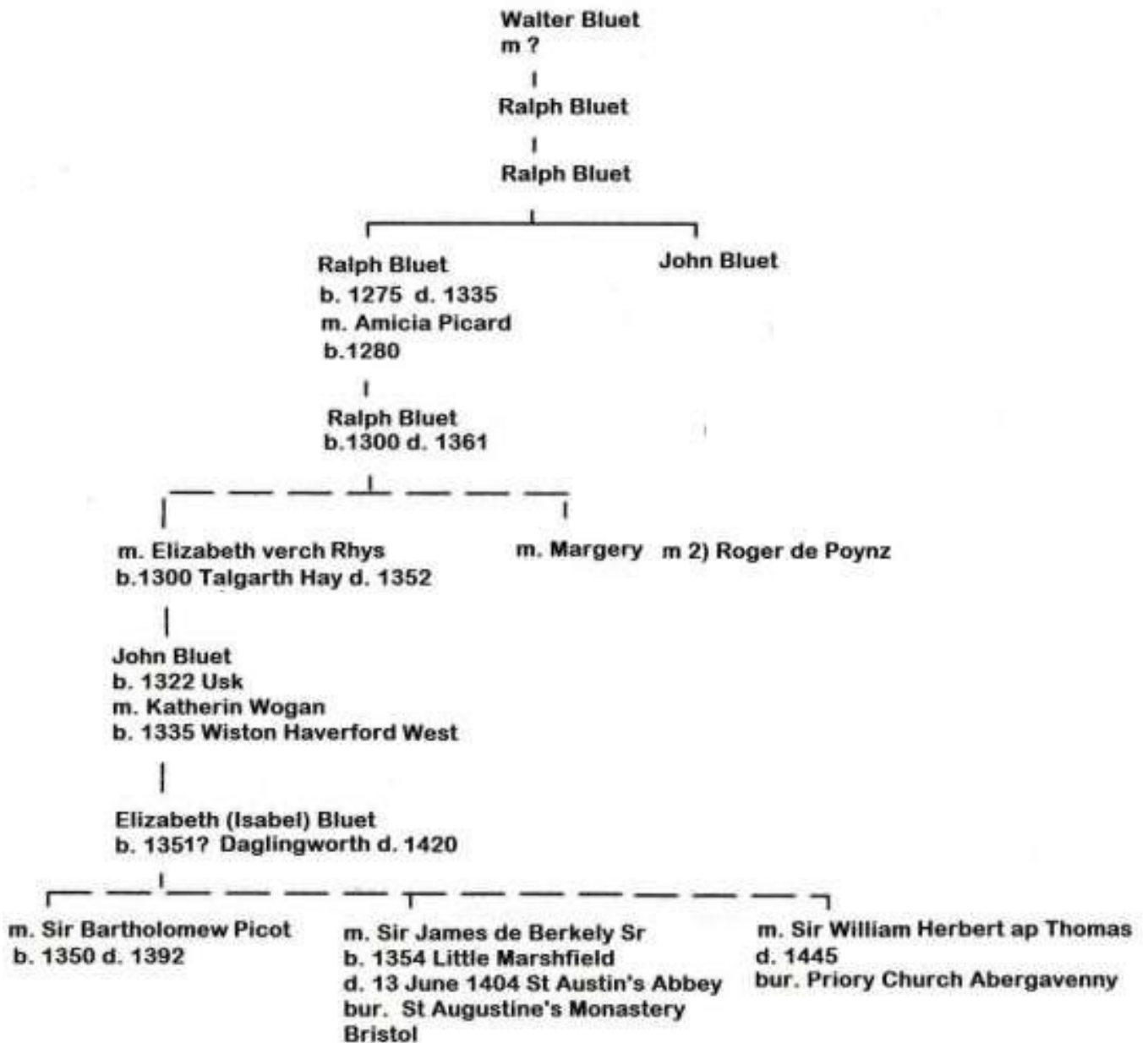


Fig. 8 Descendents of Walter Bluet *

If visiting from Elizabeth below click [here](#) to return to the footnote

If visiting from Petronella below click [here](#) to return

from John son of Reginald ¹⁰⁷ but the surname is not given. Ralph was holding land in Raglan in 1315 ¹⁰⁸,

Ralph and Amicia were affected by the turbulent history of the early fourteenth century; in 1321 Thomas, earl of Lancaster, Leicester, Lincoln and Salisbury and

¹⁰⁷ *Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol V Edw II no 205 p106 IPM of John son of Reginald deceased Hereford 4 July 3 Edw II [1310] Straddeuw y : the manor held by Ralph Bluet for 3 knight's fees.

¹⁰⁸ *Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol V Edw II no 538 p336 IPM of Gilbert de Clare earl of Gloucestershire and Hertford, inquisition held at Monmouth, 27 Sept 8 Edw II [1315] Raglan 1 fee held by Ralph Bluet

King Edward II's cousin, sought to take advantage of a climate of discontent with the king (brought about by his favouritism and weak rule over many years) and rebelled against the King, drawing his support from barons in Wales and the north of England

Uncharacteristically Edward II acted with a sense of purpose ¹⁰⁹ and first dealt with the rebels in the Welsh Marches. He then moved against Thomas and the two armies clashed at Boroughbridge in March 1322, many of Thomas' troops rapidly deserted, and Lancaster was captured. He was executed at his own castle of Pontefract in March 22nd ¹¹⁰. That "No battle on British soil made less impact on British history" ¹¹¹ may be a bit of an exaggeration as it led to Edward II being in a position to continue giving his favourites free licence to abuse their power but its effects were very limited. Even if it wasn't a major battle it did, however, have an impact on Amicia.

Exactly what happened is unclear, but Amicia's lands - the castle, town and lands of Straddewy ¹¹² were under put under the control of Edmund Gacelyn ¹¹³.

King Edward II,

¹⁰⁹ David Carpenter felt that Edward was a less than successful king, saying at one point *the most hopeless king to sit on the English throne* [Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* OUP ISBN 0-19-522000-5 p525]

¹¹⁰ MacCisack, M (1959) *The Oxford History of England : The Fourteenth Century 1307 - 1399* OUP p69

¹¹¹ Green, Lt Col H (1978) *Guide to the Battlefields of Britain & Ireland* Constable, London ISBN 0094592802

¹¹² *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw II* vol 4 1321-1324 p49 dated 7th February 1322 Straddewy / Tretower is north of Crickhowell. For an excellent account of the development of the castle and manor house see <http://www.castlewales.com/tretwr.html>. It's worth a visit when you are in Wales. See [Fig 4](#) for location

¹¹³ Interestingly Edmund, born probably in 1281, served in the Earl of Pembroke's retinue at around the same time as the Berkeleys and Thomas Gurney and so may well have known the Bluets, who were after all his near neighbours at Usk and Raglan and indeed at Lackham; Edmund owned Sheldon Manor just outside Chippenham and only 4 miles from Lackham.

Roger Gascelyn, either a cousin or brother, was captured fighting against the royal army at Boroughbridge, and Edmund was granted his manor of Catmore, Berkshire, as well as other lands of his, on 1 June 1322. On 6 April 1322, Edmund's lands had been restored to him, having been seized by the Contrarians, Edward II's baronial opposition

We are indebted to Kathryn Warner for permission to use the results of her extensive research, which can be seen at her excellent website

<http://edwardthesecond.blogspot.com/2007/08/rioters-and-ruffians-dunheved-gang-2.html>

*in the belief that [they were] in the hands of Contrariants, had lately caused [them] to be seized into his hands and to be delivered to the said Edmund*¹¹⁴

However once he had dealt with the Marcher rebels, but before Boroughbridge, Edward II realised that this was a mistake and that *the said Amicia [had] acted faithfully towards him*. Consequently in February 1322 he ordered Gacelyn to hand Straddewy back to Amicia.

Ralph supposedly died in 1335¹¹⁵, if so it was late in the year as a charter of October that year refers to Ralph Bluet and his heirs¹¹⁶.

Amicia was in Rumsey Nunnery in Hampshire in 1333¹¹⁷ which happened to be the year when a new Abbess was elected.¹¹⁰

Their son, yet another Ralph, married Elizabeth verch Rhys, born in Talgarth¹¹⁸, a few miles southwest of Hay on Wye and about 4 miles north of Straddewy, in 1300. It is probable that he is the Ralph Bluet who, in 1349, was one of those who held the *Commission to levy in Gloucestershire the 10th and the 15th granted in Parliament summoned at Westminster Monday after Sunday mid Lent 22 Edw III*¹¹⁹. His fellow commissioners - those charged with collecting the tax and submitting it to the Treasury - were John de Acton son of Odo de Acton, Walter de Gloucestre, William de Eynode, Edmund Blount, William Hathewy of Ruardyn and Henry de Clifford

¹¹⁴ *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw II vol 4 1321-1324 p49 dated 7th February 1322*

¹¹⁵ Anon (1878) *The Picards or Pycards of Straddewy (now Tretower) castle and Scethrog, Brecknockshire* Goldney & Lawrence p96

¹¹⁶ *Calendar Charter Rolls 1-14 Edw 111 1327-1341 vol iv p339 dated Oct 5 1335* grant of special grace to Ralph de Bluet and his heirs of free warren in all their demesne lands of Dagelyngworth co Gloucester

¹¹⁷ Hearne T (1725) *The works of Thomas Hearne MA vol III p ccii Num. XVI Extract of a Letter, written to the Publisher from Winchester July 4/A. 1724. by the Reverend Mr. Richard Furncyt relating to the Election of an Abbess of Rumsey Nunnery in Hampshire Anno D. 1333 which confirms what is asserted in this Chronicle, that the said Nunnery was founded by K. Edgar for an hundred Nunns.*

¹¹⁸ Tradition has it that it was the capital of the kingdom of Brycheiniog a small independent kingdom of South Wales in the Early Middle Ages. It often acted as a buffer state between England to the east and the powerful south Welsh kingdom of Deheubarth to the west. It was conquered and pacified by the Normans between 1088 and 1095, though it remained Welsh in character (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brycheiniog>)

¹¹⁹ *Calendar of Fine Rolls vol VI Edw III 1347-1356 p91 dated July 16 1349*

In the following year seven extra Commissioners for Gloucester¹²⁰ were appointed as "the King wishes to hasten the levy and collection as far as possible"¹²¹

A month later the King lost patience and sacked the commissioners

because no part of the said 10th and 15th is yet levied in the county of Gloucestershire and the commissioners¹²² are inefficient of levying them William deWhytyngton knight, John de Solers, of Shypton, William Maunsel Thomas Prykke of Stareton, Matthew de Button, John Stevens of Lydeney, John Joce of the Forest of Den [sic], Henry le Draper of Gloucester, Walter de Elmer of Gloucester, John de Wycombe of Bristol and John le Spicer of Bristol are appointed in their room¹²³

Elizabeth died in 1352 and Ralph then married Margery de Gyse¹²⁴. There were no children from this marriage Ralph died in 1361 and Margery in 1377¹²⁵. From her IPM¹²⁶ she had held the manor of Throgelstone [Thurcleston / Thurleston] in Herefordshire by gift of Walter Bluet and William Scernecote. Although Margery's brother, also called Anselm like her father, was her heir,

¹²⁰ These being Thomas de la Mare of Ryndecombe, John Sage, Robert Brys, Robert Onderhull, Hugh Mustel, Ralp ap Eygnon and Henry de Brokwort

¹²¹ *Calendar of Fine Rolls* vol VI Edw III 1347-1356 vol VI p222 Dated March 20 1350

¹²² Ralph Bluet, Walter de Gloucestre, William de Evnlode, Edmund Blount, William Hathewy of Rodmoor (was this a misspelling or had he moved in the previous year?) John de Acton, Thomas de la Sage, Robert Brys, Robert Onderhull, Hugh Mustel, Ralph ap Eygnon and Henry de Brokworth

¹²³ *Calendar of Fine Rolls* vol VI Edw III 1347-1356 p234 dated April 21 1350

¹²⁴ *VCH Bedfordshire* (1912) vol 3 pp338-343 'Parishes: Aspley Guise', Her father was Anselm de Gyse, son of John de Gyse who died in 1363. For some reason John left his manor of Apsley Guise to his grandson, Margaret's brother, also Anselm de Gyse who was a minor and only gained his inheritance in 1375. He is shown holding a moiety in Daglingworth in 1397 [*Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* (1985) Vol XVII 15 - 23 Ric II Inquisition of Richard Talbot, knight pp335-339, no 914 p337 Gloucester and the March of Wales Inquisition taken at Gloucester 11 Oct 20 Ric II]

¹²⁵ Monday before the Annunciation 50 Edw III (5th April 1377). Her second husband was Roger de Poynz (see below)

¹²⁶ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* Vol XIV Edw III (1952) no 311 p298 *Margery late the wife of Ralph Bluet in a Writ touching the lands held by her of the heirs of Humphrey de Bohun late earl of Hereford, minors in the king's wardship. 23 January 50 Edw III, inquisition taken at Hereford Thursday before Palm Sunday 41 (recte 51) Edw III (8th April 1378)*

the manor was inherited by Ralph's granddaughter, Elizabeth

Ralph and Elizabeth's son, John ¹²⁷, inherited. He married Katherine Wogan. Little is known of John, but he held part of Daglingworth by service of a knight's fee of Elizabeth Talbot in 1373 ¹²⁸.

A charter of John and Katherine's daughter, Elizabeth, confirms the descent outlined above and shown in Fig.8 ¹²⁹. Various dates for Elizabeth's birth have been suggested - 1358 ¹³⁰ or 1351 ¹³¹ and, given the information in her mother's IPM, ¹³² neither seems impossible.

Although the transcription of Margery Bluet's IPM ¹³³ names him Bigot, Elizabeth's first husband was Bartholomew Picot ¹³⁴ (1350 - 1392). Little is

¹²⁷ Born 1322

¹²⁸ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol XIV Edw III (1954) no 213 pp196-198 Elizabeth, late the wife of Richard Talbot, knight; p197 Gloucester and the adjacent March of Wales Inquisition taken at Gloucester 7th Dec 46 Edw III (1373) Daglyngworth A moiety of a knight's fee, held by John, son and heir of Ralph Bluet. The said fees are of the inheritance of Aymer de Valencia late earl of Pembroke. She [Elizabeth] held all the premises of the king in chief

¹²⁹ *Calendar Patent Rolls 1 Hen IV* vol 1 1399 - 1401 p181, dated December 15th 1399 (Henry IV's accession year) confirming Ralph in right of his wife Elizabeth kinswoman and heir of the undermentioned William and John. The first charter is one of Henry II (1154 - 1199) which was itself confirming the grant to Walter Bloet of the Villam de Ragalen by Earl Richard de Clare, son of Earl Gilbert, the second is a charter of Edward I (*Calendar Patent Rolls* 26 EdwI dated 5th April 1298) granting to John Pychard that he and his heirs shall have a market and fair at their manor of Straddewy in the cantred of Talgarth

A cantred was an administrative Welsh area, roughly equivalent to an English hundred, in Welsh Cant = hundred tref = dwellings

¹³⁰ Blewett. M (2004) Blewetts at www.Blewett.com/blewett/EarlyEnglandResearch.pdf p34

¹³¹ Richardson, D & Everingham, KH (2005) *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* Genealogical Publishing Com, 2005 p96 she was of full age in 1377 reference not given

¹³² *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* Vol XIV Edw III (1952) no 311 p298 Margery late the wife of Ralph Bluet in a Writ touching the lands held by her of the heirs of Humphrey de Bohun late earl of Hereford, minors in the king's wardship. 23 January 50 Edw III, inquisition taken at Hereford Thursday before Palm Sunday 41 (recte 51) Edw III (8th April 1378) states that Elizabeth the wife of Bartholomew Bigot, knight, is 20 years and more

¹³³ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* Vol XIV Edw III (1952) no 311 p298 Margery late the wife of Ralph Bluet as above

¹³⁴ Anon (1878) *The Picards or Pycards of Straddewy (now Tretower) castle and Scethrog, Brecknockshire* Goldney & Lawrence p34

known of their life together but, according to Bazely¹³⁵ Elizabeth and her husband alienated Daglingworth in 1368. Bazely does not give the source for his assertion but in the Calendar of Close Rolls for Edward III is recorded a

*writing of Bartholomew Pycot and Elizabeth his wife, daughter and heir of John Bluet of Rageland, being a quitclaim with warranty to Lionel, duke of Clarence, his heirs and assigns of the manor of Daglyngworth co. Gloucester*¹³⁶

As this is dated 1368 it is just possible that Elizabeth was born in 1351¹³⁷ but 1358 is obviously incorrect. It is interesting that the quitclaim is dated February 1368, and Lionel married in May of that year¹³⁸. The betrothal negotiations had been going on for some time and it is likely that the marriage date was known in the early part of 1368, so was the alienation something to do with the impending marriage?

It would appear that Bartholomew and Elizabeth got the lands back after Lionel's death very soon afterwards.

At some later date Bartholomew and Elizabeth jointly sued Roger de Poynz for the return of Thurleston manor¹³⁹. de Poynz apparently obtained the manor through marrying Elizabeth's grandfather's widow Margery / Margaret Bluet.

Elizabeth Bluet then married Sir James de Berkeley. In 1390

¹³⁵ Bazeley, W (1888) *Notes on the Manor, Avowson and Church of Daglingworth* Trans Bris. & Glos. Arch. Soc. vol xii pp53-55

¹³⁶ *Calendar Close Rolls* vol XII Edw III 1364-1368 p466 Dated Feb 4 1368

¹³⁷ Which is what is shown in [Fig 8](#)

¹³⁸ *Dictionary National Biography* (1915) vol xi pp1214-1217

Lionel of Antwerp earl of Ulster duke of Clarence 1338-1368 He was the third son of Edward III and his wife Philippa of Hainault. Lionel was born in Antwerp 29th Nov 1338 during the long stay in the Low Countries by his parents by reason of the war against France (the early part of the Hundred Years War). He was created earl of Ulster in 1347 and duke of Clarence in 1362 the title was derived from the town of Clare in Suffolk which Lionel's wife Elizabeth had inherited along with other shares in the divided Clare Gloucester estates. After Elizabeth died he married Violante, daughter of Galeazzo Visconti, lord of Pavia May or Jun 1368. He died in Italy 7 Oct 1368

¹³⁹ Richardson, D & Everingham, KG (2005) *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* Genealogical Publishing Com p96 [date not given, record not found] Bartholomew Picot and his wife Elizabeth sued Roger de Poynz, Chivaler, and his Margaret [sic] for the manor of Thurleston which Roger Pychard gave to Amice his daughter and heirs of her body [Amice's son Ralph, first husband of Margaret and Ralph's son John, father of Elizabeth]

The extent of the manors held by John and Katherine can be seen from the list of Elizbaeth's property that James Berkeley gained the use of from his marriage to her - "by whom he had the Welsh manors of Raglan , Talgarth, Tore, Edishall, Straddewy and others"¹⁴⁰. It is noted in the Berkeley history that the couple lived at these Welsh manors. From her Bluet - Ap Rees connections Elizabeth also inherited the Welsh manors of Bremles, and Langoyde,, and the Seigniorship of Cantreshelley , which also went to the Berkeley family through her marriage to Sir James ¹⁴¹

In 1399/1400 Henry IV

confirmed the town and Castle of Raglan in the County of Monmouth which earl Richard son of earl Gilbert gave in the time of king Henry II to Walter Bloet and his heirs to hold by one Welsh knights fee and further confirmed to this Sir James and Elizabeth the grant of a market and fair in their manor of Straddewy in the Cantred of Talgarth which king Edward I in the 26 of his reign granted to John Picard and his heirs; To both which ancient families the Elizabeth (says the record) is heir

They had a son, James de Berkeley II, to whom most of Daglingworth and Raglan descended. The arguments over Daglingworth with the de Poyntz family continued in this generation with Sir James Berkeley maintaining that Robert de Poyntz, Roger's son, did not have rights to Daglingworth ¹⁴². Neither, of course, did the Bluets any more. This dispute was not resolved until 1514 when it was judged that Daglinworth rightly belonged to Lord Berkeley ¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Smyth J (1883) *The lives of the Berkeleys* Vol II p375

¹⁴¹ Smyth J (1883) *The lives of the Berkeleys* Vol II p375

¹⁴² Smyth J (1883) *ibid* p164

Ralph Bluet (in whose name the said Manor had continued for many discents) entailed the same upon Ralph his son and Elizabeth his wife, and the heirs of the said Ralph the son begotten on the body of the said Elizabeth; who had issue John Bluett, who had issue Elizabeth married to Sir James Berkeley, who had issue James, Lord Berkeley father of the said Marques and of this lord Maurice. That James Berkeley afterwards enfeoffed Richard Venables and others of the said manor to certain uses; and after by fine the said lord James and Isabel his wife, granted the same to Nicholas Poyntz and Elizabeth his wife and to the heirs of the said Nicolas, who was the father of Sir John Poyntz, father of this Sir Robert; the estate of which Richard Venables and his fellow feoffees the said Marques Berkeley had from whom the said manor descended to this lord Maurice as to his brother and heir, who entered and thereby was remitted to the entaile made by Ralph Bluet, the father. And so is seized; And so also, that the said lord James his father and other parties of the said fine, had nothing in the said manor at the time of the fine levied.

¹⁴³ Fendley, J (ed) (2005) *Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parson* Brist. & Glos. Arch. Soc Gloucester Record series vol 19 p68 "This manor [Daglinngworth] came to the Berkeleys by the marriage of Elizabeth the daughter of Sir John Bluett Kt with James the second son of Maurice the 4th Lord Berkeley

After the death of Sir James¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth finally married Sir William Herbert ap Thomas¹⁴⁵ who had been her steward. William held a number of important positions - steward of Abergavenny, steward of the lordships of Usk and Caerleon and sheriff of counties Cardigan, Carmarthen and Glamorgan at different dates¹⁴⁶

Elizabeth and Bartholomew had no children and she apparently died in 1420¹⁴⁷

To return to the senior line - Ralph Bluet III died in 1199; in 1201 Nest was in dispute with her uncle Robert over a half hide of land and appurtenances¹⁴⁸ at Daglingworth, sometime between January and Easter¹⁴⁹.

The right to land associated with a wife was somewhat complicated and involved two terms that can easily be confused.

The wife was given a *dowry* by her family on her marriage; these were lands that they gave to her and her new husband. This was called the wife's *maritagium*:

If marriage is mentioned the land so given may be called a maritagium. A gift of this kind is made before marriage, sometimes

There was a great contention about this manor between the Lord Berkeley and Sir Richard Poyntz but by the award of Sirt Edmund Tame Kt, Sir John FitzJames, Chief Baron, and Robert Browning 24 Feb 5 Hen VIII this manor was adjudged to the Lord Berkeley

¹⁴⁴ 1404

¹⁴⁵ Cadw guidebook to Raglan Castle (1996) [quoted at <http://www.castlewales.com/wmaptho.html>] William ap Thomas was the member of a minor Welsh gentry family and was responsible for beginning the construction of Raglan Castle as we recognize it today. He obtained Raglan through his marriage to Elizabeth Bloet, widow of Sir James Berkeley shortly after 1406. When Elizabeth died in 1420, ap Thomas retained Raglan as a tenant of his step-son James, Lord Berkeley, and in 1425 Lord Berkeley agreed that he could continue to hold Raglan for the duration of his life

¹⁴⁶ Richardson, D & Everingham, KG (2005) *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* Genealogical Publishing Com p93

¹⁴⁷ Richardson, D & Everingham, KG (2005) *ibid* p96

¹⁴⁸ *Curia Regis Rolls* vol 1 Richard 1 - 2 John 1189 - 1201 p154 Hilary term 1 John dated 1200 but would have been January 1201, the year starting in April, so dates between January and March in one year are dated to the year before at this period,.

¹⁴⁹ The date isn't precise as it is not given in the record. It is dated to Hilary term 1 John. The legal year is divided into four terms : Michaelmas from October to December, Hilary from 11 January to Easter, Easter from Easter to May and Trinity from June to July. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_year]

*at the marriage, sometimes after it.*¹⁵⁰

On his part the new husband gave, at the marriage, a *dower*, to his wife

*There is a gift of another kind made on the marriage day by a husband to his wife at the church door, which is not properly called a donatio but the constitution or nomination of dower*¹⁵¹

an assignment of land - which was not necessarily his but lands of his family so might actually belong to his parents or brothers etc. The dower lands only came to the wife when she became a widow, they were there to support her after her husband died:

*Since it is proper, for a number of reasons, that women be endowed, a gift of propter nuptias is made her by her husband from his own property, or that of his father or mother, brother or sister, or another, with their leave and consent, which is called dower, which cannot be complete before the husband's death, [because] though it may be constituted in the husband's lifetime, it cannot be assigned before his death.....Dower is that which a free man gives his spouse at the church door [on the marriage day], because of the burden of matrimony and the future marriage, for the maintenance of the wife and the nurture of the children when they are born should the husband predecease her*¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ *De Legibus Et Consuetudinibus Angliæ* (Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England attributed to Henry of Bratton, c. 1210-1268) vol 2 p77, online version at <http://hls15.law.harvard.edu/bracton/Unframed/English/v2/77.htm>

¹⁵¹ *De Legibus Et Consuetudinibus Angliæ* ibid

¹⁵² *De Legibus Et Consuetudinibus Angliæ* (Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England attributed to Henry of Bratton, c. 1210-1268) vol 2 p265 at <http://hls15.law.harvard.edu/bracton/Unframed/English/v2/265.htm>

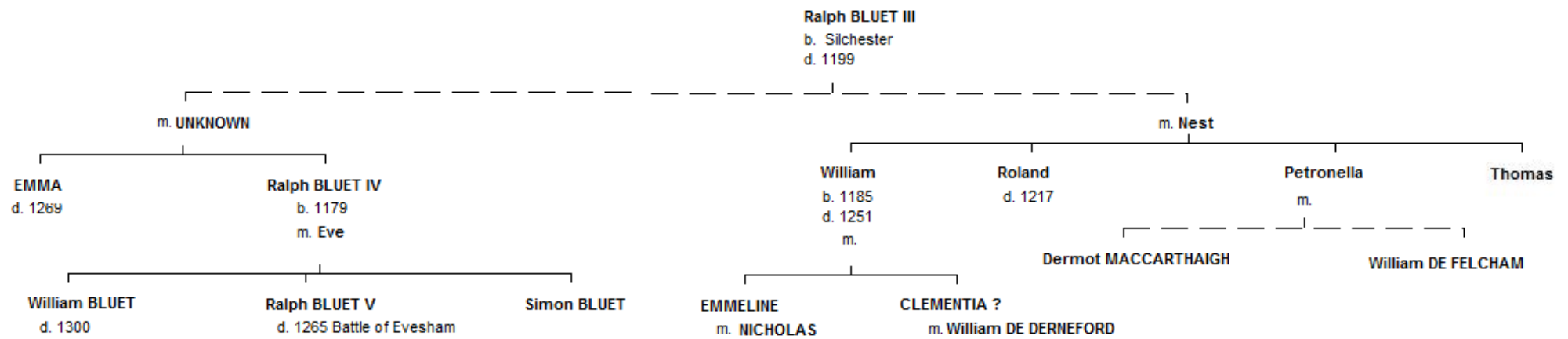


Fig. 9 Descendants of Ralph Bluet III *

If visiting from above click [here](#) to return to the footnote

If visiting from below (Lacock Abbey land) click [here](#) to return

As Nest is here seen suing her uncle in law Robert this was for lands that were hers by dowry. Robert didn't turn up - he was excused attending court, apparently - and because of this the king took the disputed land into his own hands¹⁵³, which is common in this sort of dispute. Robert was given until a month after Easter to attend. He would appear to have actually attended much later, the next record shows him being at court between October and December 1201¹⁵⁴ but he "refused to say anything against her"¹⁵⁵ and so Nest recovered the land.

A year later Nest was in dispute with her brother Hoel in connection with the town and lands of Caerleon. She made a claim between January and Easter 1202¹⁵⁶.

Hoel was also excused court appearances and didn't come "Nor even send witnesses", so the king ordered the land taken into hand and Hoel to attend in person in the middle of Lent to explain.

It seems that this land was also part of Nest's dowry and she was suing because she had not received it, the land had been promised on her marriage but the family had not delivered it up. The sheriff duly took charge of the disputed area and the hearing was set for¹⁵⁷ the Saturday immediately before the Chair of St Peter¹⁵⁸. A marginal note seems to indicate that Hoel offered a mark to settle things.

Before Easter it was recorded¹⁵⁹ that

¹⁵³ Ideo terre capiatur in manum domi regis etc

¹⁵⁴ *Curia Regis Rolls* vol 1 Richard 1 - 2 John 1189 - 1201 p362 Michaelmas term 2 John p 362 dated 1201

¹⁵⁵ et ipsa et noluit loqui quicquam adversus eum

¹⁵⁶ *Curia Regis Rolls* vol 1 Richard 1 - 2 John 1189-1201 p362 Michaelmas term 2 John dated 1201

¹⁵⁷ *die Sabati proxima* [sic] ante *Cathedram sancti Petram*; the *proxima* here is entirely redundant as it has essentially the same meaning as *ante*, but is incorrectly used. *Proxima* usually means close to the place / location whereas *ante* is immediately before. It is recorded as being used in c1188 to mean soon, in the phrase in *proximo est ut* [Latham, RE (1965) *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* OUP p380], but it is still redundant

¹⁵⁸ Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter = 22nd February [Waters, C (2003) *A Dictionary of Saints days, Fasts, Feasts and Festivals* Countryside Books p35]

¹⁵⁹ *Curia Regis Rolls* vol 1 Richard 1 - 2 John 1189 - 1201 p397 Hilary Term 2 John dated 1201

*The Lord king and his justiciar have pledged that Hoel de
Caerleon will pay to Nest Bloet £10, between the middle of May
and the middle of the Feast of St John*¹⁶⁰

Eventually Hoel settled the manor of Salisbury [in Netherwent] on Nest in satisfaction¹⁶¹. Nest paid gilt spurs to the Exchequer for the land¹⁶² and willed it to her younger son William before her death. Reed has suggested that this is evidence that Ralph IV was not Nest's son¹⁶³, maintaining that otherwise Ralph would have inherited under primogenitor. This follows from the idea of *maritagium*:

*Maritagium was a grant of land made by a woman's relative, usually her father, nominally to her husband with her upon or because of her marriage. As a grant made because of the woman, maritagium, in a society of male primogeniture, served as the woman's inheritance, inheritable only by her*¹⁶⁴ children.
¹⁶⁵

Reed's argument would seem to be that, as the land went to William and not Ralph IV, this shows that Ralph IV wasn't her offspring but was from another marriage; if Ralph had been her child he would have been awarded the land anyway and it is only by the fact that the land is part of Nest's *maritagium* [dowry] that she can give it to William¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁰ Which one is unclear, but it was likely the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist, which was June 24th

¹⁶¹ Reed PC (2008) Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p396

¹⁶² Reed PC (2008) *ibid* fn34 Nesta Bluet reddidit ad Saccariam Calcaria deuarata pro terra de Salesburi in Nederwent taken from E 368/7 m1. This is online at http://aalt.law.uh.edu/aalt1/H3/E368no7/aE368no7fronts/IMG_2653.htm, 6th line up from the bottom of the image, note that "Nesta" looks more like "Hefta"

¹⁶³ See also the discussion on William and Roland below

¹⁶⁴ Our emphasis

¹⁶⁵ Biancalana, J (2006) *The Fee Tail and the Common Recovery in Medieval England, 1176-1502* Cambridge University Press, p7

¹⁶⁶ Whilst very cautious of disagreeing with an authority of Mr Reed's stature we are not entirely sure of this; as we understand from Bracton, [De Legibus Et Consuetudinibus Angliæ (Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England attributed to Henry of Bratton, c. 1210-1268) vol 2 p77, online version at <http://hls15.law.harvard.edu/bracton/Unframed/English/v2/77.htm>,] and other sources [eg Biancalana, J (2006) *The Fee Tail and the Common Recovery in Medieval England, 1176-1502*] it was possible for a widow to dispose of her dowry land as she found fit, especially if her other body heirs agreed. However elsewhere Bracton (vol 2 p190, 028 to p191 003) would appear to support Reed's argument.

Whoever his mother was, Ralph IV was born at latest in 1178 and may have died in 1241. He married Eve and had three children, William, Ralph Bluet V and an unnamed daughter

Ralph IV was also a knight of William Marshal, and it is probably he who was the first witness to William Marshall's grant of the patronage of the church at Easton Royal in Wiltshire to the canons of Bradenstoke Priory between 1199 and 1207¹⁶⁷. It is just possible, given the date of Ralph III's death that it was his father but it is more likely to have been Ralph IV.

As one of the Marshall's major supporters Ralph IV was also known to the Kings the Marshal supported; in 1204 Ralph gave the King [John] a palfrey for license to *inclose his park at Silchester*¹⁶⁸ and it is known that King John stayed with Ralph at Silchester in 1215¹⁶⁹, a month before John signed Magna Carta and a year before the king's death.

Ralph IV was evidently with William Marshal II from the start of his tenure as earl of Pembroke, after his father's death in 1219; in that year Ralph was witness to a charter of William II that confirmed charters made by William I to the burgesses of Haverford, in Pembroke¹⁷⁰. The original charter had also been witnessed by a Ralph Bluet¹⁷¹, probably Ralph III, although the date of the original charters is not known.

Ralph IV later supported William II's brother, Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, in his rebellion against Henry III in 1233-34. In 1232 Henry III sacked his Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, who had been Regent after William Marshal's death in 1219, and appointed the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Peter des Roches in his stead. des Roche installed many fellow French-Normans (as opposed to English-Normans) in positions of power. One of these was Peter de Maulay and in February 1233 Henry III took the Wiltshire manor of Upavon from Gilbert Basset and gave it to de Maulay. As Carpenter points out

¹⁶⁷ London VCM (2979) (ed) *The Bradenstoke Cartulary* WRS vol 35 p92 nos 264-5 dated 1188 - 1207 and no 266 dated 1199 - 1217

¹⁶⁸ Morgan, O & Wakeman, T (1864) *Notices of Pencoyd Castle and Langeston Monmouth and Caerleon* Antiquarian Ass. p27

¹⁶⁹ Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (2004) *Conservation Area Appraisal Silchester* p3

¹⁷⁰ *Calendar Charter Rolls 1-14 Edw 111 1327-1341* vol iv p228 A charter confirming grants [by William Marshal I] by William Marshal II, dated Striguil 6 Ides Sept 3 Hen III [9 September 1219] witnessed by Ralph Bloet. The charter here was a reconfirmation of the 1219 reconfirmation and was dated 4 June 1331

¹⁷¹ *Calendar Charter Rolls 1-14 Edw 111 1327-1341* ibid

*no-one was closer to Bishop Peter than de Maulay ; few families
were closer to the Marshals than the Bassets¹⁷² .*

Richard Marshal, only recently installed as Earl of Pembroke, could not afford to desert one of his major vassals and supported Gilbert fully. He had good reason to resist des Roches, who had

managed to get Richard's representative at court, William de Rodune, dismissed and to replace all the English ministers of King Henry III with foreign advisors. ... and took the lands of Gilbert Basset and Richard Siward¹⁷³ Richard's strong supporters, and gave them to his own son Peter des Rievaux¹⁷⁴

and had also instructed that the Earl's messengers from France were to be stopped and searched on entering the country.

The disposition of Upavon had been a royal decree, which meant Richard was in rebellion against the king and his advisors. Rebellions were not that uncommon in the medieval world; Dr. Crouch has noted that

when medieval magnates put their castles in defence against their king or lord it was not generally for the sort of ideological reasons that the modern mind associates with rebellion; it was more of an aristocratic protest riot...where a magnate felt he was not getting the respect and the privileges he regarded as his right, he was making an armed demonstration to bring home a personal protest.¹⁷⁵

However this was not the case here; one of the major clauses of Magna Carta¹⁷⁶ was that "No freeman shall be acted against save by lawful judgement of his peers or the law of the land"¹⁷⁷ and specifically forbade arbitrary *dissisin* by

¹⁷² Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p313

¹⁷³ Richard Siward was Gilbert Basset's brother in law [Way, J (1839) *Chronicle of The Devises* p88]

¹⁷⁴ http://www.castlewales.com/mar_chld.html

¹⁷⁵ Crouch, D (2004) *The Normans: The History of a Dynasty* pp111-112

¹⁷⁶ Originally signed, as has been seen, in 1115, it was updated and developed in 1123, less than 20 year before these events and well within living memory

¹⁷⁷ Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p314. The online translation of the Carta has it slightly differently although the sense is the same :

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with

the will of the king. By taking Upavon, and other manors, away from their owners without lawful excuse Henry had acted against the laws that were designed to limit his powers and Magna Carta itself seemed at stake¹⁷⁸. All of this was seen not only as tyranny but tyranny by foreigners; it is noteworthy that Richard Marshal's two greatest supporters were Basset and Seward, not de Basset or de Seward, they have English names. The Marshal was not alone.

The rebels demanded that Henry dismiss his inner council of foreigners. Carpenter points out that Marshal was being less than consistent, he had benefitted himself from Henry's actions and only complained when they touched his man Gilbert Basset¹⁷⁹. This did not make him any less popular, however. Roger of Wendover said that

*he fought for the cause of justice, and the laws of the English race
against the oppression of the Poitevins*¹⁸⁰

des Roches would not have denied the charge of encouraging foreigners at the heart of power; he

*scorned the idea that the king should govern through native
subjects... he needed ministers .. who would punish the latter's
pride and perfidy*¹⁸¹

and so civil war broke out yet again. It appears that Ralph Bluet supported his lord the Earl of Pembroke and rebelled. Much of the action took place in Ireland and elsewhere in England but there were local events, for example when Hubert de Burgh was liberated from incarceration in Devizes by Marshal supporters in October 1233¹⁸² specifically by Basset and Siward¹⁸³

force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land. [<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/translation.html>]

¹⁷⁸ Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p314

¹⁷⁹ Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p314

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Carpenter, D (2003) *ibid*

¹⁸¹ Carpenter, D (2003) *ibid*

¹⁸² Smith, B (1999) *Irish Politics 1220-1245* in Prestwick, M Britnell, R & Frame, R (eds) (1999) *Thirteenth century England : Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1999* It is tempting to think that Ralph, based close by at Lackham, was involved but it was actually Gilbert Basset and Richard Seward [Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p315]

¹⁸³ Way, J (1839) *Chronicles of the Devizes* p90

Ralph Bluet's lands were taken by the King in 1233¹⁸⁴. This would have included his Irish lands in Leinster.

A Close Roll entry from September of that year may result from this; in it Henry III is giving the income from Ralph's land "at Daglingworth (which are in fee to himself) to the Countess of Pembroke for as long as it shall please the king"¹⁸⁵. Another landowner is mentioned in the entry, one Ricardi Sulard, almost certainly Richard Siward

Ralph IV was certainly with Richard Marshal at the battle of Wycombe¹⁸⁶; he appears in a list of "divers people who were against the king with the Earl Marshal at Wycombe with horses and arms"¹⁸⁷. In this charter the lands of Richard's supporters are to be taken by the local sheriffs and given to king's men. Ralph Bluet's lands in Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire were seized and given to Mathias Bezil¹⁸⁸. It seems that Daglingworth, however, was looked after by the sheriff of Gloucester, Simon de Dryby¹⁸⁹. These records would seem to indicate that Crouch was being unduly cautious when he spoke of Ralph as being *suspected* of supporting the rebellion¹⁹⁰.

It is unknown whether Ralph was with Richard Marshal during the fighting in Leinster when Richard lost his life (1234), but it is very likely; the Bluets held land of the Earl there. Richard Marshal's death effectively ended the rebellion and Henry was secure. He was not vindictive, indeed

When news reached [Henry III] of the death of Richard

¹⁸⁴ Crouch, D (2005) Bluet entry, *Dictionary of National Biography* online at www.oxforddnb.com/article/54499

"Ralph [IV] was suspected of supporting the rebellion of his lord, Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke (d. 1234), against Henry III and had his English lands confiscated in 1233 as a result, although they were soon restored."

¹⁸⁵ *Calendar of Close Rolls Henry III 1231- 1237* pp256-257 1st September 1233

¹⁸⁶ It is noted that Wycombe was the manor of Gilbert Bassett of Wycombe, who married Isabel Marshal, Richard's sister, and whose manor at Mapledurwell in Hampshire was given to Peter de Rivallis.

¹⁸⁷ *Calendar of Charter Rolls Hen III 1231- 1237*. The original text is to be found in *Calendar of Close Rolls Henry III 1231-1234* (1905) p258 Pro comite Rogero le Bigod et aliis de reseisina Quia rex reddidit R le Bigod comiti Norf' terras suas, que capta fuerunt in manum regis, eo quod dicebatur ipsum fuisse apud Wycumbe contra regem cum comite R Marescallo cum equis et armis;....

¹⁸⁸ *Calendar of Close Rolls Henry III 1231-1234* (1905) p273 dated 23 Sept 1233 Pro Macy Besill de terra Radulfi Bloet, excepta auctoritate propria

¹⁸⁹ Rot. Orig. in Curia Scacarii (1805) p263

¹⁹⁰ DNB (2006) David Crouch section on Bluet family

*Marshal...there was no rejoicing at the fate of a rebel. Henry burst
into tears and ordered masses to be said for Richard's soul*¹⁹¹

and he dealt leniently with the rebels, restoring their lands and making Gilbert Marshal, Richard's younger brother, the new Earl of Pembroke. He admitted denying judgement by peers and committing *disseisins*, and his court restored Upavon to Gilbert Basset.¹⁹²

The restoration of lands didn't happen immediately, but by 1236 Ralph IV was back in control.

This year was the start of a long, drawn-out series of events, the Appropriation of Lacock Church by Lacock Abbey. The Abbey wanted total disposition of the living of St Cyriacs because

*by the time of the foundation of Lacock Abbey...the
appropriation of benefices was a recognised method of increasing
the income of a religious house*¹⁹³

The nuns held the right of assignment that had been with the Earl of Salisbury, Ela's son William . On 12 February 1236 he agreed he would arrange to obtain from Sir Ralph Bluet "*the avowson which he has in the parish church of Lakoc so that Ela may give [it] to the nuns*"¹⁹⁴ . This undertaking was referred to in another charter between Ela and her son in July of the same year¹⁹⁵

Ralph obviously didn't agree to this; it was 75 years before things were at last going smoothly - in an official letter to the abbess in March of 1312 Simon, the Bishop of Salisbury¹⁹⁶ , decreed that both Sir John Bluet and the abbess were to surrender their rights and that "*the bishop will grant the whole church, with all its rights, to the abbess the next time it shall be vacant*"¹⁹⁷ . Finally, in

¹⁹¹ Prestwicke, M (2005) *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* p82 OUP

¹⁹² Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: The Penguin History of Britain 1066-1284* p316

¹⁹³ Clark-Maxwell (1904) *On the Appropriation of Lacock Abbey* WAM 33 p359

¹⁹⁴ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 pp11 - 12, no. 9, dated 12 Feb 1236

¹⁹⁵ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 pp 12 - 13 no. 12 dated 22 July 1236

¹⁹⁶ Simon of Ghent was Bishop of Salisbury between October 1297 and September 1315. He was also Chancellor of Oxford University and Archdeacon of Oxford

¹⁹⁷ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p20 no 33, dated 6 Mar 1312

August 1312, John Bluet granted his rights to Joan, in consideration of "*certain alms for him and the souls of his ancestors and heirs*"¹⁹⁸.

Effectively this gave control to the Abbey, but they could not gain from it until the current priest died. Before this happened, Bishop Simon himself died, in 1315, at which time the appropriation of the Church was not finished¹⁹⁹. The process was not actually completed until 1337²⁰⁰.

The Manor of Lackham and the Abbey of Lacock had a very long history as neighbouring estates. An early antiquarian, Sir William Dugdale included the Abbey in his survey of Religious Houses in 1643

Lacock in Wiltshire

*Founded by Ela Widow of William Longspata, for Nuns, among whom she her self took the Habit, An 1236 and after became Abbess of this House. This William Longespee was Son of Henry the II and Earl of Rosmar and Salisbury in Right of Ela his Wife, descended from Walter de Ewrons, to whome King William gave the said Earldom of Salisbury*²⁰¹. *The said Countess Ela founded two Monasteries in one day, viz. 16 Cal Mai, Anno. Dom. 1232. Namely Henton for Carthusians, and this Lacock for Canonesses. The said Ela became Abbess here, An 1240, resigned An 1257, died 1261 aged 74.*

[Valued at 168l 9s 2d per Annum]²⁰²

Dugdale²⁰³ says that she ordered the body to be buried in the abbey church at Lacock and that in his time the inscription still remains.

Bowles maintains that the memorial stone is to be found in the Cloisters, having been removed from the altar of the destroyed choir and that it read

Infra sunt defossa Ela venerabilis ossa,

¹⁹⁸ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p21 , no. 35 dated 16 Aug 1312

¹⁹⁹ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p21, no 40, dated 3 Jun 1315

²⁰⁰ Clark-Maxwell (1904) *On the Appropriation of Lacock Abbey* WAM 33 Appendix XIV p374

²⁰¹ Marsh AEW (1903) *History of Calne* p240 fn1

Ela had a brother, Stephen, who became Justice of Ireland and Earl of Ulster in right of his wife. He was killed by the Irish in 1260 His remains were brought over to England for internment, his body being buried at Lacock and his heart at Bradenstoke

²⁰² Dugdale, Sir W. (1643) *Monasticon Vol II of the Canons Regular of St Augustin* p170. This is not the 19th century, new edition

²⁰³ Dugdale, Sir W (1643) *Monsaticon 1830 edition Vol VI* p500

*Quae dedit has sedes, sacrae monialibus aedes,
 Abbatissa quidem, quo sancta vixit ibidem*²⁰⁴
Et comitissa Sarum, virtutum plena bonarum

It is noted that the surname of William Longespee translates into modern English as Longsword; the *espee* is an early version of *epee*. For a long time it was believed that his mother was the lady whose transcendent beauty has become proverbial under the name of Fair Rosamund²⁰⁵. This was Rosamund Clifford, the daughter of Walter de Clifford and granddaughter of Walter FitzPonce. She was believed to be one of Henry II's mistresses.

This is, however, romantic nonsense. William Longespee was actually the son of King Henry II by another of his mistresses, Ida, afterwards the wife of Roger Bigod (died 1221) 4th Earl of Norfolk, a noted Magna Carta baron²⁰⁶. Evidence that he was the son of Countess Ida comes from two charters of Bradenstoke Priory²⁰⁷ in which William specifically names his mother as Countess Ida. Moreover, among the prisoners captured at the battle of Bouvines in Flanders in 1214 was a Ralph Bigod whom contemporary records specifically call "brother" [i.e., half-brother] of William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury²⁰⁸.

He assisted in laying the foundations of the Cathedral of New Sarum (Salisbury), it is known that he placed the fourth foundation stone and Ela the fifth. He was also the first person buried there.

*Upon his death [Ela] reigned alone in her castle at Old Sarum; and in fact ruled the county, for she filled the office of High Sheriff for seven or eight years*²⁰⁹. *At last, being weary of feudal dignity and*

²⁰⁴ Bowles, WL (1835) *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey* p 5 which he translates, rather freely, as

Beneath, the venerable Ela's bones / Are buried; she, these scenes of sacred peace - / Countess of Salisbury gave the Nuns, / Herself the Abbess here, and full of deeds / Of Holy Charity

²⁰⁵ Michael, W (1901) *Historic spots in Wiltshire* pp63 - 64

²⁰⁶ For the Bigod family, see *Complete Peerage*. (1936) vol 9 pp586-589 (sub Norfolk) and Thompson, A.H (1928) (ed.) *Liber Vitae Ecclesiae Dunelmenis* (Surtees Soc. vol. 136)

²⁰⁷ London, VCM (1979) *The Cartulary of Bradenstoke Priory* WRS pp99-100 numbers 301 & 302

²⁰⁸ .W. Baldwin (1992) (ed.) *Les Registres de Philippe Augustus* in *Miscellanea* no. 13. These details have been taken from postings on Medgensoc newsgroup.

²⁰⁹ Jackson, Rev Canon J E (1856) *The Sheriffs of Wiltshire* WAM III pp 194-195 Actually only 5 - 1227-1228 and then 1231-1235, which is a strange mistake to make seeing Jackson wrote both articles, and he is usually impeccably accurate with his facts

*its burdens, she retired to one of the monasteries she had built, and became Abbess of Lacock, where she died, as it has been said, at nearly 100 years of age*²¹⁰



Fig. 10 Arms of William, earl of Salisbury²¹¹ *

Which contrasts with the 74 given by Dugdale

To return to the children of Ralph III; he and Nest had three sons. One, Roland, is an interesting figure and involved in the trials and tribulations of King John. The earliest mention of him, which is also the earliest mention of a fine at St Briavel's²¹² in the Forest of Dean (which was then a Royal Forest) is dated to the first year of John's reign, 1213. This record states that

*Roeland Bloet made a fine with the King of 300 marks and 7 palfreys for the lands of Roger de Meisythe King being at St Briavel's [Castle] that day.*²¹³

Roland was at times in charge of the Castles of Bramber and Knepp²¹⁴. These are both in West Sussex. There is no mention on Knepp Castle before 1210, although there was a house there in 1206. It was probably originally built as a hunting lodge

²¹⁰ Jackson, Rev Canon J E WAM XX, no LVIII p 30

²¹¹ Azure six lions rampant or by permission of Brian Timms at <http://www.briantimms.fr/Rolls/charles/charles01.html>

²¹² <http://www.wyenot.com/stbriavels.htm>

"St. Briavels Castle was built for King John between the years of 1209 to 1211"

St Briavel's was the main manufactory of cross-bow bolts later in the century; during Edward I's campaign against Llywelyn in 1276 he ordered 200,000 cross-bow bolts from here [Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King : Edward I and the forging of Britain* p146]

²¹³ *Feet of Fines 14 John 1* dated 29 Nov 1213, quoted in Taprell-Allen, Rev W (1879) *St Briavel's Castle* Proc Brist. Glos. Arc. Soc. vol 3 p 350. This agreement appears again, see below

²¹⁴ Blewett. M (2004) Blewetts document downloaded from www.bluetts.com/blewett/EarlyEnglandResearch.pdf . p 18

by the de Braose family but was forfeited to King John from 1208²¹⁵ and

*In 1214, [he] founded the stone castle, when adding a two storey keep or hall-house to the natural low mound. Surrounded by a moat, with a counterscarp bank, the keep and a chapel were also encased by a curtain wall, flanked by a gatehouse. Sited in an important centre for hunting, it was used more as a fortified hunting lodge than a castle.*²¹⁶

Bramber is situated 9 miles south of Knepp, and is an

*interesting stone motte and bailey. Built in the Norman layout of two baileys with the motte in-between and, unusually, its chapel in a small ditched enclosure below the gatehouse. To the west the curtain wall has a strong deep ditch and bank in front of it and the only entrance is guarded by the remains of a tall Norman gatehouse, which was blocked off to become a keep.*²¹⁷

*From the beginning [of Norman rule the Castle] served as the centre of administration in the Bramber Rape*²¹⁸,

The Rape was an administrative division of the county of Sussex.

The six Rapes of Arundel, Bramber, Chichester, Hastings, Lewes, and Pevensey, were the primary divisions of the county of Sussex, intermediate between the county and Hundred. In this respect, they were similar to the Lathes of Kent and the Ridings of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

In other respects, however, they were dissimilar. Each Rape was a castlery, centred on a castle; each was in the hands of a single tenant-in-chief; and each had

the honour court being usually held there. During the forfeiture of the rape between 1208 and 1215, and also for a time afterwards, the castle was in the keeping of a succession of royal henchmen, including Rowland Bloet (recorded 1210, 1214-15), John of Monmouth (1215), and Robert le Savage (1217). King John visited the castle in 1209, and in the following year the castle was extensively repaired.

The Rapes also had an artificial profile, running in roughly parallel strips between the coast and the northern boundary of the county, each controlling

²¹⁵ Victoria County History *Sussex* (1986) Vol 6 part 2 p111

²¹⁶ http://www.castleuk.net/castle_lists_south/198/kneppcastle.htm

²¹⁷ http://www.castleuk.net/castle_lists_south/198/brambercastle.htm

²¹⁸ An good review of the administrative unit of a rape is to be found at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/glossary/>

one corridor of communication between London and the Channel. The vital routes between England and Normandy were therefore in the hands of six of the Conqueror's most trusted relatives or lieutenants; but no one or two of them could block his way.

The Rapes were not a Norman innovation since Domesday Book itself refers to their existence in 1066. Their characteristic features in 1086, however, mean that they had certainly been drastically remodelled in the intervening years, with military considerations uppermost in the minds of those responsible for the changes, a fact emphasised by the many references in Domesday Sussex to fragments of manors 'lost' to an adjacent Rape since 1066. Whoever carved out the new Rapes showed a cavalier disregard for the manorial structures of Anglo-Saxon England.

This period under the control of Roland Bluet was the only time that it was outside the ownership of the de Braose family until the line died out in 1324. It was William de Braose who built Bramber castle in about 1070 to defend an important port on the River Adur

²¹⁹

King John came to the throne in 1199 after the death of his brother Richard the Lionheart. He had, of course, been regent while Richard was on Crusade. It was not a happy reign; he was involved in a war in France, for which he was mostly responsible as had its own sheriff, who answered to the tenant-in-chief not the Crown: no royal sheriffs are recorded before the twelfth century.

King John refused to attend the French King ²²⁰, his overlord as ordered and as a result John eventually lost Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and parts of Poitou to the French king.

With virtually all of his French holdings gone, John was forced to stay in England, where his prestige had dropped due to the loss of lands, amongst many other things, which accounts for his popular name of John Lackland. In an attempt to make up for his reduced revenue, he cracked down on finances, taxing revenues, taxing the Jews (although it was his father who was the first to realise he could simply tax the Jews instead of taking out loans which then, at least in theory, had to be repaid ²²¹) conducting investigations into the royal forests and feudal tenures, and exploiting his prerogatives, all of which would later serve as the basis for the charges of tyranny brought against him. The barons, never particularly fond of John, had grown more discontented; they had lost their French lands and had to stay in England and concentrate on their

²¹⁹ <http://www.theheritagetrail.co.uk/castles/bramber%20castle.htm>

²²⁰ Although the French king was looking for a reason to fight and the disappearance of Arthur, John's nephew and the only other possible claimant to the English throne, probably didn't help

²²¹ Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* OUP p252

estates here, or to give up their English lands and stay in France²²². One example of this, relevant to Knepp, is Roger de Courci who

*preferring to retain his Norman lands, forfeited his claim to Warblington, [in Hampshire] which became an escheat to King John, of whom it was held by his ardent supporter Matthew son of Herbert, sheriff of Sussex under John... in exchange for lands which he had lost in Normandy.*²²³

There are a number of interesting letters to Roland with regard to Knepp Castle, mostly from King John²²⁴. Many of these relate to the arrival of hunting parties sent by the King to Knepp to hunt game there. But in 1214 there is a change in the communications - in June 1214 there is mention of carpenters being sent into Knepp forest to fell timber to be carried to Dover, for the works on the Castle there²²⁵ and in August of the same year even more timber was called for, with additional men being supplied to Roland by the Sheriff of Sussex, the Matthew fitzHerbert seen above. This directly relates to John's problems with his barons and a threat of invasion by France; it was essential that he secured Dover Castle and the timber from Knepp was to be used to repair it.

By 1215 many of the English Barons were in revolt against King John, and he moved against the rebel Spencers; Thurstan de Spencer was captured and given into the custody of Sir Rowland Bluet.²²⁶ Thurstan's brother was married to Roland's sister Alda²²⁷

In May the rebel barons were received by the city of London and John mobilised his forces close to the capital to withstand them. In a letter to Roland Bluet²²⁸ John wrote

The citizens of London have surrendered the city of London to

²²² The above is an extremely simplistic and rapid overview of some of the factors in this complicated time, see Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* for a useful consideration of the entire period

²²³ Victoria County History *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1908) Warblington Manor Vol 3 p134

²²⁴ Burrell, CM (1850) *Documents relating to Knepp Castle Sussex Archaeological Collections* Vol III pp 1- 1

²²⁵ Burrell, CM (1850) *ibid* p7 dated 12 August 1214

²²⁶ Collins, A (1735) *The Peerage of England* vol 1 pp 340-344

²²⁷ Click [here](#) to go to the relevant section, use the link in the footnote to return

²²⁸ Burrell, CM (1850) *ibid* p8 dated 18th May 1215

our enemies,...of their free will. Wherefore we command you, without delay, to transfer all the stores which you have at Knapp... to Bremble [Bramber castle] and that you fortify that house in the best possible manner you can, while resident in that castle; that you destroy altogether the houses at Knapp

It is noted that the instruction here was to destroy the *houses* at Knepp, not the Castle itself. It may have been spared because hostilities ceased after June 15 1215 when, at Runnymede, King John accepted the terms in the document known as the Articles of the Barons. This document was further revised over the next few days, until both John and the barons accepted the provisions embodied within it, and it became known as the Magna Carta (the Great Charter).

John almost immediately appealed against the charter to the pope, who took the king's side, and yet another civil war ensued. John captured Rochester castle and devastated the northern counties and the Scottish border lands. But then Prince Louis of France (later King Louis VIII), at the barons' request, invaded England.

Knepp Castle was still in existence in 1216, when the French invasion of southern England was in full swing, with Roland still in charge of the forests at Knepp. This is clear because King John was looking for war engines and instructed that Roland should

Cause to be made, without delay, in the forest of Knappe as many good engine-towers called Turkese²²⁹ as you can....[manuscript defective]... to Dover ready and prepared with ropes and other

²²⁹ This term is difficult but "the mention of a new 'Turkish' engine just prior to Henry III's reign and the 'great engines' of Louis' invasion of England in 1216 have been accepted as evidence for the advent of the heavy counterweight trebuchet in the West. 'Turkish' engines ...[probably] referred to traction trebuchets" <http://medievalhistory.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/chap3.html> .

"The TRACTION TREBUCHET was a smaller, shorter range and more portable machine that was "human powered", and therefore, was much easier to construct and move from place to place and siege to siege. Instead of a massive counterweight, the "Traction Treb" employed a group of people pulling down on ropes attached to the rear or short end of the Virga (throwing arm) to provide the weapon's throwing power. The mechanical action was the same; but the weight of the projectiles was much less and the rate of discharge was much faster, up to several shots a minute, as opposed to several minutes to "tens" of minutes per shot with a large counterpoise type machine.

The smallest Traction Trebs could be powered by the weight and pulling strength of one person using a single rope; but most were designed and sized to utilize from 20 to 100 men and/or women, generally two per rope, using their combined weight and pulling strength to power the weapon. These Teams would frequently be local non-combatants (women, children, older men) assisting in the siege or in the defense [sic] of their town. Traction Trebuchets had a range of from 200 to well over 300 feet (60 to 100+ meters) casting weights up to 130 pounds (60kg) <http://www.legionxxiv.org/trebuchetpage/>

*things belonging to them*²³⁰

A grant of safe-conduct to Roland's men later in the same year may suggest that the Castle could no longer be held²³¹ John fought on until he died in October 1216. His death and the military successes of the Marshal paved the way for peace; the rebels were restored, John's son Henry was assured the succession, and Louis withdrew his forces²³². William Marshal became the infant Henry's regent.

The latest mention found for Roland is an Exchequer roll, where he is associated with Robert de Meysi dated 1232²³³

The Bluets had continued their association with the Earls of Pembroke. Ralph III' and Nest's son William

*entered the household of the Marshal's eldest son; he was the Young Marshal's banner bearer at the Battle of Lincoln in 1217*²³⁴

After the death of King John William Marshal led the English forces against the French army that was besieging the castle of Lincoln, and on May 20th the two sides met in battle. The Marshal personally led the attack against the French forces and defeated them. William Bluet is specifically mentioned

*The King's men*²³⁵*began to get the upper hand; there was no question of putting up a defence there, for they knew and could see only too well that they had completely lost. William Bloet, who held the banner of the young Marshal, had no wish to be left behind; indeed, he spurred his horse so quickly that he landed in the press, which was very dense and violent, so heavily and head on that he fell over the side of the bridge he and his horse with him; a man who launches such an attack is no coward. He had not come there to lie down, however; any man who had seen him leap to his feet, would have born*

²³⁰ Burrel, CM (1850) *Documents relating to Knepp Castle Sussex Archaeological Collections Vol III p 11 dated 3 May 1216*

²³¹ Victoria County History *Sussex* (1986) Vol. VI, Part 2, p111

²³² a range of sources, eg

²³³ Allen Brown, R (ed) (1991) *Memoranda rolls [Exchequer] Michaelmas 1231 - Michaelmas 1233* HMSO London p205 no. 2835

²³⁴ Crouch, D (1993) *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 - 1219* pp 139-40

²³⁵ i.e. the English forces

witness to his fleetness of foot, his valour and prowess ²³⁶.

The Battle of Lincoln and the sea battle off Sandwich, when the French re-supply fleet was destroyed, removed any hope of a French victory, the Marshall negotiated an end to the French invasion, and they withdrew. The civil war was essentially over but not entirely; the Welsh prince Morgan ap Howel, or Morgan of Caerleon as he frequently styled himself, did not cease fighting but waged a damaging war in Gwent. Two members of the Bloet family, Walter and Roland, fell in the hostilities along with several other knights ²³⁷

In the thirteenth century, as much as now, people were borrowing money, and there is evidence that William was no exception; in 1233 he owed a debt of 8 marks to Urcello, son of Hamon of Hereford, the Jew [Judeo] ²³⁸. King Henry III took over the debt and William had to repay the Exchequer at the rate of 2 marks per year, one at the feast and the only people commonly involved were the Jewish communities. For which they were reviled, of course. This grant by Henry III would seem to indicate that he was helping William out by taking over the debt from Urcello. (It is a moot point as to whether Urcello was paid the money owed to him of course. There is no indication the debt was being paid off, just that William would now pay the Exchequer 2 marks per year).

As ever there were times when usury was the appropriate name, and abuses were common. To try and improve things Henry had passed a new law earlier in 1233 ²³⁹. The turbulence and violence of the times is graphically illustrated by

²³⁶ The deeds of William the Marshal were recorded for posterity a few years after his death in the *Histoire Guillaume le Mareschal*, a verse account of 19,214 lines in rhyming couplets, written in Middle French. This excerpt from the account was translated by Stewart Gregory, with the assistance of David Crouch and can be found at <http://www.deremilitari.org/RESOURCES/SOURCES/marshal3.htm>

²³⁷ Crouch D (2002) *William Marshal : Knighthood, War and Chivalry 1147 1219* 2nd ed p137

²³⁸ Calendar Close Rolls Henry 111 1227-1231 dated 12 June 1233, p72

²³⁹ Rothwell, H (1996) *English Historical Documents 1189 - 1327* p350
In the seventeenth year of the reign of king Henry son of John on the fourth day of April on the morrow of Easter [12 April 1233], it was ordained by the same king at Canterbury that no loan may be contracted with Jews by tally, but by chirograph, whose other part the Jew shall have, with the seal of the Christian contracting the loan appended, and the other part let the Christian contracting the loan have, The third part, however, that is called the foot, let that be placed in the chest to be safely kept by the chirographers, Christian and Jew, and a chirograph whose foot shall not have been found in the chest, as stated, shall not be valid.

No Jew may lend anything by penalty, but let him take interest at twopence per pound per week and no more, so that nothing is put to hazard save the sum first loaned.*

No Jew may remain in our kingdom unless he is such that he can be of service to the king and find good pledges for his loyalty. Other Jews, who have nothing with which they can be of service to the king, shall leave the kingdom before Michaelmas of the seventeenth year of the aforesaid king's reign [Michaelmas 1233]. If they stay longer let them be cast into prison and not released without the king's special mandate.

No Jew may make an advance henceforth on church plate or on cloths that are

the fact that the moneylenders were expressly forbidden to make an advance henceforth on church plate or on cloths that are bloodstained or sodden or holed as if by violence

The Close roll entry is also interesting because in it the word that we have translated as *Exchequer* was *Scaccarium* , which is directly related to the reason why the *Exchequer* is so called :

The Scaccarium in England was the chequered floor of the king's financial centre, the taxation and revenue accounting department. It was due to the chequered floor of this office that it took on the name, "Scaccarium", which has since changed in dialect and spelling to become "Exchequer".²⁴⁰

William Bluet witnessed a charter of 1235 ²⁴¹ in which

Gilbert Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, [assigned] to his sister lady Eleanor, countess of Pembroke, of all the issues of the manors of Creadon, Stokholt, Kingewud Inteberg, and Clafford

It is noteworthy that William and his co-witness *Ralph, son of Richard* are given as knights of the Countess , not the earl. The other witnesses indicate that William was associating with the great and the (not necessarily very) good of the country ²⁴².

There appears to be a wide spread believe, especially among some transatlantic Bluet descendants, that the Bluets were the early Earls of Salisbury. A careful reading of the evidence makes it quite clear that this is not, never was, and never will be, the case.

It is surprising that the confusion arises at all; the Earldom of Salisbury has been extensively investigated by medieval genealogists and it is accepted that the very first Earl of Salisbury was Patrick, 2nd son of Walter FitzEdward of Salisbury. Patrick was created Earl of Wiltshire, and styled Earl of Salisbury.

bloodstained or sodden or holed as if by violence.

this equates to 43.5% per annum. And this was an improvement?!

²⁴⁰ <http://www.medievalhistory.net/page0010.htm> although other derivations have been put forward

²⁴¹ *Calendar Patent Rolls Henry III vol 3 1232 - 1247 p125* dated April 29th 1235

²⁴² *Calendar Patent Rolls Henry III vol 3 1232 - 1247 p125* The other witnesses were : Sir R. Earl of Poitou and Cornwall, Sir Hubert de Burgo, Earl of Kent, Roger le Bigod, Earl of Norfolk and Suffolk — Sir R, Earl of Poitou and Cornwall, is Richard, brother of Henry III, but he was only styled Count of Poitou at this time. However the French rank of *Compte* equates to an English Earl (My thanks to Leo van de Plas for his assistance with this

He was attesting charters as Earl of Salisbury by 1142-1147, so we may assume he was also created earl by 1142, by Queen Maud / Matilda. The original creation continued through the last female of this line, Ela, the daughter of Earl William who had equal rights in the avowson of St. Cyriac's church in Lacock, see above. After her father's death in 1196 she was given in marriage to the bastard brother of Richard I, one William de Longespee²⁴³. The earldom was part of Ela's inheritance, and William became Earl of Salisbury, (and also Earl of Wiltshire). His line is also well documented; it ended with the last heiress Margaret marrying Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. Their line ended with a single heiress named Alice who passed it to the Audley family. Neither the Lacys nor the Audleys used the title and, because of this, the king ²⁴⁴ assumed that the title had reverted back to the crown, and he granted it to his friend William de Montagu on 16th March 1337. It stayed with the Montagu family until it passed to the Nevilles, then the Poles and then the Browns ²⁴⁵. Not a Bluet in sight.

The Visitations of Cornwall ²⁴⁶ may be the culprit in the confusion; they start off showing Ralph III and Nest's son, William Bluet, as Earl of Salisbury²⁴⁷. William actually held Salisbury Manor, probably in Netherwent as the manor was part of Nest's Caerleon dowry.

William Bluet is one example of Henry III's household knights. The accounts ²⁴⁸ for Henry's reign include a number of references to William; the entry for 1244 ²⁴⁹ reads Liberate to William Bloet 100s for Michaelmas term in the 27th year of his yearly fee of 100s, which gives a start date of 1217 which was when he entered the service of the Regent's son, William Marshal the Younger. One of the earliest records for William is in December 1216 when he

*made fine with the king by 60 m[arks]. for having the custody
of the land and heir of Roger de Meysey ²⁵⁰*

²⁴³ see the discussion on Ela, Lacock Abbey and William, below, for more details

²⁴⁴ Edward III

²⁴⁵ Repko, K The section above is taken, almost verbatim, from the concise and knowledgeable synopsis that Karen provided from Cokayne's *Complete Peerage* vol 9 pp75-103.

²⁴⁶ Exeter, Lt. Col. JL (1887) *The Visitations of Cornwall: Comprising the Heralds' Visitations of 1530, 1573, and 1620* p35

²⁴⁷ And then goes on to give the pedigree of Roland and his descendants.

²⁴⁸ *The Calendar of Liberate Rolls of the Reign of Henry III held in the Public Records Office*

²⁴⁹ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 2 1240 - 1245* p233

²⁵⁰ *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1 Henry III* at http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/cocoon/frh3/content/calendar/roll_008.htm [l:#it002_002](#) dated December 17th

Originally William's brother Roland had made a fine, in 1213²⁵¹, with King John, the king's father for the custody of de Meysy's heir but this obviously fell through when John died. William's sureties for the money were Robert son of Payn and Ralph of Broughton²⁵²

It appears that William did not join his brother Ralph in supporting earl Richard Marshal's rebellion in 1233; at the same time as Ralph's manor of Daglingworth was being handed over to Mathias Bezill William was gaining control of another rebel manor, Arlington²⁵³ in Gloucestershire, from the king²⁵⁴. It was confiscated from John le Sor. He appears to have held considerable land, in 1202 he had 28 knight's fees in the honor of Gloucester²⁵⁵.

Interestingly William Bluet is seen associating with the entourage of Gilbert Marshal, earl of Pembroke, and his household in 1237 when he was one of the witnesses to a charter of Gilbert. That the Marshal household had not been seriously reorganised after Richard Marshal's rebellion a few years earlier is evident in that the witness list also includes many of Richard's supporters,

²⁵¹ if visiting from above click [here](#) to return

²⁵² Calendar of Fine Rolls 1 Henry III as for previous footnote, at http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/cocon/frh3/content/calendar/roll_008.html#it002_002 Broughton is just outside Banbury in Oxfordshire, nice castle well fortified manor house. Later the seat of the Montagu family

²⁵³ Located about 8 miles northeast of Cirencester on the road to Burford, Arlington is the neighbouring village to the better known Bibury.

²⁵⁴ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1231-1234* p333 dated 7 Nov 1233. See also VCH *Gloucestershire* vol 7 (1981) p28

Either his or his son's arms appear in the St George Roll

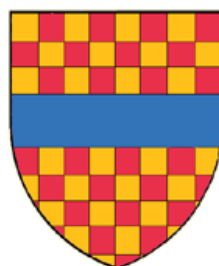


Fig 11 John le Sor St George's Roll part 5 no 350 *
(reproduced by kind permission of Biran Timms from <http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms1/rolls/StGeorgesE5.html>)

²⁵⁵ Clark, GT & Michel, F (eds) (1862) *Gesta regum Britanniae* Cambrian Archaeological Association

including Gilbert, Philip and David Basset

William was abroad in 1244 on the King's business overseas²⁵⁷ and he was let off a fine of 100 *solidis* which he owed the king - which was the amount he was being paid a year²⁵⁸ in 1236, the first year for which information can be found²⁵⁹. It is likely that he was being paid this from when he started; it is certain that he was still being paid the same amount when he disappears from the accounts, years later.

He continued to serve but, finances often being difficult for everyone, including kings, there were occasions when he didn't get paid on time. For example in 1246 he was owed a fair amount. In January he was paid £10, this being

100s for Michaelmas term in his 28th year and 100s for Michaelmas term in the 29th year of his yearly fee of 100s²⁶⁰

This was a lot of money to be owed - in 1236 £10²⁶¹ was the amount given to

*Hugh Giffard Constable of the Tower of London to make payment to the king's crossbowmen and to his smith working in the Tower, and to find the smith iron and charcoal and other necessaries for his work*²⁶²

A month later William was paid another 100s for all the arrears due for the

²⁵⁶ This was a high powered gathering, the witness list includes Sir John de Lacy earl of Lincoln Walter Marshal, Ansell Marshal, Gilbert de Minered, Gilbert Basset, Philip Basset, David Basset, Hugh de Watford, Aumary de Sancto Amando, Richard de la Hid [sic], Walter de la Hyd and Gilbert de Kenett

²⁵⁷ *Calendar of Close Rolls Henry III 1242 - 1247* p181 says he venit in servicium regis ad partes transmarinas

²⁵⁸ =£5

²⁵⁹ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 1 1226 - 1240* p242. Records for the payments are seen for 1239 (p236) 1240 (p497), 1241 (*Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 2 1240 - 1245* p76)

²⁶⁰ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251* p61

²⁶¹ This had the equivalent purchasing power of over £2,660 (in 2005 money, based on the currency calculation provided by the National Archives at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>)

²⁶² *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 1 1226-1240* p242

whole time [he was] in the king's service in the march of Wales²⁶³ which also shows him serving in an area where his family were powerful. Finally, in November, he received 100s for his 30th yearly fee²⁶⁴. The payment for 1248 [Year 31] seems to be missing, but he was paid for the 32nd in January 1249²⁶⁵.

In these accounts all sorts of interesting items appear, but most of those for William are very standard payment records, as has been seen. However in July 1249 the bailiffs of Bristol were instructed to buy a tun²⁶⁶ of wine in Bristol and deliver it to William Bluet of the king's gift²⁶⁷, the money to come out of the king's income from the city. William received another tun in January 1250²⁶⁸.

In 1249²⁶⁹ William was given exemption from being put on juries, assize or recognitions for life.

In December 1250 he was paid his usual 100s but "*There is still money due to him for last year as he says*"²⁷⁰. The payments were again caught up in February 1251, when he was paid 100s for the 33rd year and

*he has his fee for Michaelmas term in the 34th year as appears in this roll, and so is quit down to Michaelmas of this year*²⁷¹

²⁶³ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p26* (this would seem to be out of sequence, with February's payment being pages earlier than that for January. This may be because it was transcribed out of sequence or that the original roll has it thus. The information here is taken from the published transcriptions / translations, not the original roll.)

²⁶⁴ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p92*. In this record five other knights are mentioned, who were also being paid for their 30th year - Hugh de Boelles, Hugh Groundun, Matthew Morel, Walter de Brion, and William Haket

²⁶⁵ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p217*

²⁶⁶ A tun cask contained 252 gallons (954 litres)

²⁶⁷ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p244*

²⁶⁸ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p276*

²⁶⁹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Henry III vol 4 1247 - 1258*, p50 dated 6th October 1240

²⁷⁰ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p323*

²⁷¹ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 3 1245 - 1251 p335*

In the transcription of the record for the fee of 1252²⁷² it is noted that in the margin there is a heading for the knight's of the king's household²⁷³ This shows that William was not unusual in being in the same retinue for decades, all these knights were being paid for their 36th year of service.

In the same year William brought a suit against Maredudd ap Gruffudd, the grandson of Morgan of Caerleon over land in Llewenich which had been rendered to William's brother Roland, whose heir William was²⁷⁴. Reed points out that this suggests that Ralph IV was not a full brother to William and Roland, otherwise he would have been the heir, not William²⁷⁵ The argument could be made that

No man can be both lord and heir of the same tenement. The way in which the courts actually handled this to mean, no man can be both lord and heir of the same tenement at the same time. Thus the eldest son can be heir to the second son, because he is not yet the lord as long as his father is alive²⁷⁶

But as Ralph IV was dead by 1252 the argument is academic.

In 1253 William Bluet is listed as being in King Henry's expedition to the rebellious province of Gascony. This was the last English possession in France and had been a troubled area for many years. Henry had been there in 1243 but that was a disastrous campaign. In 1243 only

a limited amount of territory between the Dordogne and the Pyrenees alone acknowledged Henry. This narrower Gascony was a thoroughly feudalised land: the absentee dukes had little authority, domain, or revenue: and the chief lordships were held by magnates, whose relations to their overlord were almost formal, and by municipalities almost as free as the cities of Flanders or the empire.

²⁷² *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III vol 4 1251 - 1260 p80, dated October 1252*

²⁷³ The other knights were Hugh de Bueles, John de la Bruere, William Gacelin and Matthew Morrel. John de Busceby is also shown, although he is separated from the 36th year group for some reason. From the previous list it is certain that he had also served the same length of time so this is a puzzle, although it is indicated in the transcription that this part of the roll is unclear.

²⁷⁴ *Rolando Willelmus cuisis heres est" Kings Bench Plea roll, quoted in Reed PC (2008) Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset Foundation (2008) 2 (6) pp396-397 fn34*

²⁷⁵ Reed PC (2008) *ibid* p397

²⁷⁶ <http://vi.uh.edu/pages/bob/elhone/rules.html> Marriage portions 7.1 (3) fn90 The rules being considered here are based on Glanville, Bracton's source

The disastrous campaign of Taillebourg²⁷⁷ lessened the prestige of the duke, and Henry quitted Gascony without so much as attempting²⁷⁸ to settle its affairs.

Henry sent his brother in law Simon de Montfort to Gascony as governor to control the province, but de Montfort utterly disregarded impartiality or justice while doing so. Henry III ignored his methods at the time but continued complaints from the Gascons eventually forced him to act and he and Simon eventually fell out. de Montfort was forced to vacate his office in September 1252 but the tumults of Gascony raged with more violence than ever now that his strong hand was withdrawn²⁷⁹. The interference of the new king of Castile, Alfonso X, didn't help the situation²⁸⁰ and King Henry had to go to Gascony himself in 1253. He took his Army, which included William Bluet, with him. The problems were eventually sorted out diplomatically, mainly by Henry III betrothing his son Edward I to Alfonso's half sister, Eleanor of Castile in 1254.

William was naturally also involved in Henry III's wars in Wales. After taking control of areas of north Wales in the early 1250's Henry III put his son, the future Edward I, in control of them in 1254, including Crown lands. However the self-proclaimed²⁶⁷ prince Llewellyn ap Gryyudd, grandson of Llewellyn the Great, declared himself ruler of North Wales in the following year.

In 1256 Henry called for his knights to assemble on the Feast of St Peter and Vincula.²⁸¹ "To oppose Llewelyyn son of Gryyudd and his supporters, our enemies²⁸² Amongst those instructed to attend was "Willelmo Bluet, se solo, Glouc" - William Bluet himself alone. The last record showing William was made in November 1257, when he and two other knights were paid the fees for their

²⁷⁷ When Henry's army had been decisively beaten by the French under Louis IX in 1242. An even more decisive battle was fought at Saintes two days later

²⁷⁸ Tout, TF *The History of England from the Accession of Henry III. to the Death of Edward III. (1216-1377) : Political Retrogression And National Progress* at <http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=s&p=h&ID=1971>

²⁷⁹ Tout, TF *The History of England from the Accession of Henry III. to the Death of Edward III. (1216-1377) : Political Retrogression And National Progress* at <http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=s&p=h&ID=1971>

²⁸⁰ Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain* Hutchinson, London p17

²⁸¹ 1st August

²⁸² *Calendar Close Rolls Henry III 1256 - 1259 pp139-140*
contro Lewelium filium Griffini ey fautores suos, inimcos nostros

41st year of service!²⁸³ . He doesn't appear in later Calendars.



Fig. 12 Arms of Llewellyn ap Gryyudd *²⁸⁴

It is possible that it is this William who had a son Rowland who married Lettice Ragland, but this is not certain and is not shown in Fig. 9. Certainly Rowland's great grandson Peter held Midgham, in Berkshire which he gained from his wife Lucy Bastard²⁸⁵ . Records show Peter and Lucy holding land elsewhere; in October 1281 they were holding land in Saltharpe and Miggeham in Berkshire and, Wekelescote in Wiltshire from Peter Bluet²⁸⁶ . In 1312 they were still holding in Saltharpe,²⁸⁷ but from a Roland Bluet and Wekelescote in 1337 from Edward de Bohun²⁸⁸ . Peter held Midgham until Lucy's death in 1338, when it passed to their daughter Thomasina²⁸⁹ . It is likely that this is the line that resulted in the Bluet families in Somerset and Devon later on.

It is likely²⁹⁰ that the manor of Salisbury passed from the Bluets to the St

²⁸³ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Henry III* vol 4 1251 - 1260 p406
The two others were John de Bosceby and John le Bruer

²⁸⁴ by permission of Brian Timms at Quarterly 1 & 4 or a lion passant guardant gules, 2 & 3 gules a lion passant guardant or
<http://www.briantimms.fr/Rolls/stgeorges/stgeorges1.html>

²⁸⁵ 272 *Victoria County History Berkshire (1923) Manor of Thatcham : Midgham* vol I p322

²⁸⁶ Pugh, RB (1939) *Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II* Wilt. Rec. Soc. Vol 1, Devizes pp13-14 dated Octet of Michaelmas 12 Edw I (6 Oct 1281)

²⁸⁷ Pugh, RB (1939) *ibid* p80 dated Octet of Michaelmas 5 Edw II (5 Oct 1312)

²⁸⁸ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol VIII Edw III (1913) no 54 p25, IPM of Edward de Bohun, dated Thursday after St Nicholas 10 Edw III (11 Dec 1337)

²⁸⁹ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem ibid* no 90 p56 IPM of Lucy Bluet, dated 10 August 1338. Thomasina was born 1298.

²⁹⁰ Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p397

Maur family of Penhow through the marriage of either William de St Maur, or his son Roger, to a daughter of William's. As Reed points out she would not only have been heir to his lands (which would be the case if the Roland above is fictitious) but also a heraldic heiress as well. Reed noted that the arms of the St Maur /Seymour family of Penhow were *gules two wings conjoined in lure or*²⁹¹

and that this is one of the rarest heraldic devices in the medieval period

²⁹². He went on to show that the St Maur's immediate neighbours, Sir William Bluet²⁹³ and Sir William de Dernford²⁹⁴ bore arms that differed only in tinctures



Fig. 13 Arms of Bluet, de Dernford and St Maur *

Sir William de Dernford held the manor of Crick (east of Penhow along the road from Striguil to Caerleon) and Sir William Bluet held Langston (immediately to the west of Penhow on the same road).

Both Bluet and de Dernford witnessed charters for William St Maur, William Bluet, his brother Ralph and de Derneford all witnessed a charter of William, abbot of Grace Dieu in 1267²⁹⁵ and the same three knights witnessed an

²⁹¹ See Fig. 13

²⁹² Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p392

²⁹³ Or two wings conjoined in lure gules http://karlwilcox.com/parker/?page_id=3153

²⁹⁴ Or (or argent) two wings conjoined in lure sable These are to be found on the St George's Roll [de Dernford E318; bellows those of Sir William Bluet E307 <http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms1/rolls/StGeorgesE4.html>. There is another William de Derneford on the same roll but his arms are *sable an eagle displayed argent* and so is of a different family.

²⁹⁵ *Calendar Charter Rolls Hen III - Edw I (1257-1300)* vol 2 p304 a revalidation of the charter of 1267, revalidation dated 25 June 1285,

(undated) charter of Bartholomew de Mora²⁹⁶. William Bluet and de Derneford also both served in the Scottish campaigns of Edward I. No other families have been found in the medieval rolls of arms that bore this device²⁹⁷. It seems very likely that three families associated in the same area with such similar devices were related by blood.

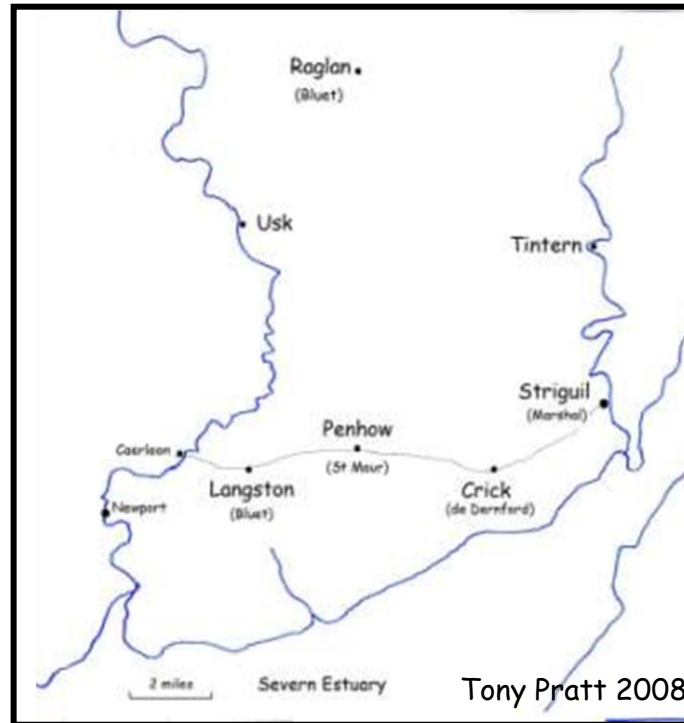


Fig. 14 Part of Netherwent *

Ralph III and Nest's son, Thomas, married Margary de Coglan and they had a son Peter. He was also involved in his sister Petronella's marriage to King Dermot (see below)

The daughters of Ralph III also married well. Petronella married a King, although it was a political marriage. as many between those of high birth were. She was married to Dermot McCarthy (or Diarmid mac Carrthaig) king of Cork in Ireland²⁹⁸. Dermot came to the throne in 1138 and then

²⁹⁶ Calender Charter Rolls Edw I - Edw II (1300-1326) vol 3 p98] The original charter was undated but the revalidation occurred in 1306. One of the other witnesses to this charter was the Steward of Striguil, Clement de Wyrwod. de Mora is given as being of Crick and was Sheriff of Glamorgan 1266 [Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p407]

²⁹⁷ Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) p407

²⁹⁸ Crouch, D (1993) *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 - 1219* p198 has Desmond, but the original sources clearly give him as King of Cork.. There was Dermot King of Desmond but he died later than this and the dates do not fit. Blewett gives Cork, sourced to the Butlers (Blewett. M (2004) *Blewetts document* downloaded from www.bluett.com/blewett/EarlyEnglandResearch.pdf .)

*began the long, eventful and disastrous reign of Dermot, whose most unenviable lot it was to be the first of the Irish princes who swore fealty to Henry 11, and whose latter days were darkened by the execution of a rebellious son*²⁹⁹

King Henry II had landed at Waterford on 18th October³⁰⁰ 1172 and then

*The king tarried a few days at Waterford, &c- After came the kinge of Corks, Dermot McCarty, and yeldet himself to the kinge, and did him homag, and sware gret othes, and delywred him ostage for to be his subject, and gawe him sartayne evary yere of his land.*³⁰¹

This upset many of Dermot's subjects and eventually his son rebelled, but was caught and executed. The son involved was not Petronella's, as Dermot married her when he was 75³⁰² and she was young. She and Dermot had no children. This was the year after Dermot submitted to Henry II and it is very likely this marriage of a daughter of Henry's former mistress, Nest, was contracted at the meeting of Henry and Dermot in 1172 to cement the alliance. It might be that Petronella was of an age to allow the marriage to be consummated but most likely she was far too young. According to canon law consummation should not

²⁹⁹ MacCarthy, D (1858) reported in *Proceedings of the 1858 November Meeting Jour. Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society. Vol. II p209*

³⁰⁰ St Luke's Day

³⁰¹ MacCarthy, D (1858) reported in *Proceedings of the 1858 November Meeting Jour. Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society. Vol. II p210* but quoting the words of the unknown author of the *Book of Howth*. "HOWTH HILL, overlooking Dubhlinn or Dublin Bay not far from Eblana, Dublin, and rising 578 feet above the water, was a hallowed spot long before St. Patrick was at Tara. It was the Ben Edir or Edair of the Fenians, a so called from its oaks. The Danes destroyed its Halls in 819. The Book of Howth chronicles events from 432 to 1370" [<http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/idr/idr30.htm>]

In previous versions of this history one of us (TP) identified Howth with Tara. It isn't, they are two totally separate places. We are grateful to Colleen McDuling [a descendent of Dermot's contemporary Dermot MacMurrrough, King of Leinster who paid homage to Henry II at the same time] for pointing out this error and correcting the misunderstanding.

³⁰² <http://www.libraryireland.com/Pedigrees1/MacCarthyMor.php>

Dermod-Mór-na-Cill-Baghain, Prince of Desmond, and King of Cork, A.D. 1144 to A.D. 1185: his son was the first of the family that submitted to the Anglo-Norman yoke, A.D. 1172 was b. A.D. 1098; and m. twice, the second wife being a young Anglo-Norman lady named Petronilla de Bleete (or Bloet), "dame issue d'une noble famille d'Angleterre," with whom the family of Stack came to Ireland, and through whose influence they obtained from Dermod MacCarthy extensive possessions in the county of Kerry. Dermod was 75 years old when he contracted this second marriage.

take place before the girl was 12 years old³⁰³. Petronella's date of birth is not known with certainty but she can't have been much over this, if she wasn't considerably younger in 1173. Noble children were often married young,

*when a seigneurs daughter reached the age of 7 her father was entitled to demand feudal aid from his vassals to marry her off. When she reached her ninth year she was entitled to receive her allotted dowry*³⁰⁴

and so Petronella may have been very young indeed. When Dermot died in 1185³⁰⁵ it is possible, even likely, that the marriage had never been consummated because of her tender years.

Petronella's brother (*frat ejus eide Petronille*³⁰⁶), Thomas, paid Petronella's marriage dowry to Dermot and is credited with arranging the marriage. The only Roll entry that refers to this marriage is dated 1217, but it is the instruction for the Justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Marisc to pay Petronella's dowry back to her without delay³⁰⁷ because Dermot was dead³⁰⁸ and had been for a long time; it is noted that this instruction is made almost 30 years after Dermot's death.³⁰⁹

There is no question that the Bluets held land in Ireland, the Marshal held Leinster in right of his wife and his knights held land from him. It has been said that Ralph III was the sheriff of Waterford and Cork, for example³¹⁰

³⁰³ Shahaar, S (2003) *The Fourth Estate : A History of Women in the Middle Ages Revised* Ed p134

³⁰⁴ Shahaar, S (2003) *ibid*

³⁰⁵ Clarendon Mss 4783, page 97 quoted in MacCarthy, D (1858) reported in *Proceedings of the 1858 November Meeting* Jour. Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society. Vol. II p 212

This yeare (1185) Dermot MacCarthy, prince of Desmond. was slaine neere unto Corke in a parley by the citizens and some of Thoobald Walter's party

³⁰⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus. in turri Londinensis* (Tower Roll) 1 Hen III (1217)
Mandatu est G de Marisc Justic Hibn qd sn dilone hre faciat Petronilla Bloet maritagi suu quod Thom' Bloet frat ejus eide Pertonille dedit cu Deremot Magarthy Rege de Cork viro. suo. T. com Supa in the Journal of the Kilkenny and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society (1859) vol II p211

³⁰⁷ *Sn dilone* (see transcript in previous footnote) is taken to be a contraction of *dilatatio sine* = without delay. It doesn't appear in Latham

³⁰⁸ It is interesting that this repayment is made in the first year of the Regency of William Marshal, and of course the Bluets were major allies and supporters of the Marshal

³⁰⁹ If visiting from above click [here](#) to go back to the text

³¹⁰ Davies, RR (1988) *Domination and Conquest : The experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100 - 1300* p52

and almost a hundred years later, in 1307, a William Bluet held a sixth of a knight's fee in Kiltorky³¹¹. This cannot be Ralph III's grandson William, however, as he was dead by 1300, he is one of a lateral line and has not been positively identified.

Petronella later married William de Felcham, who died around 1199. There is an alternative version put forward by some that Petronella married William first and then Dermot, king of Cork. The majority of evidence supports the earlier dates for Dermot and Petronella.

Petronella gave all her lands in Bradley (Hampshire) to the Priory at Kington St Michael.³¹² This is a very useful charter; in the witness list there are several Bluets and it helps to indicate one who was previously missed. The witness list includes Ralph Bloet, Ralph his son, Ralph Bloet son of Walter Bluet³¹³. The Walter Bluet attesting here is the one who held Ragland (Petronella's uncle) and from whom the southwestern (Somerset, Dorset, Devon) and many ex-patriate Bluets are descended. Initially only his grandson was known, the Ralph Bluet who married Amicia Picard (see above). This witness list shows that Walter's son (Petronella's cousin) was also Ralph and this is what is shown in [Fig. 8](#). The dates for this Ralph are not known, but he was obviously of age for this charter. Dating the charter is complicated by the fact that the dates for the witnesses

³¹¹ Calendar Close Rolls Edw I 1302-1307 p509

³¹² Williams SJ and Plucknett TFT (eds) (1956) *Collectanea WRS* vol XII

³¹³ Dugdale, Sir W (1825) *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales* vol IV p399 no. V

Carta Petronillae Bluet de tota terra sua de Bradleya
Sciant præsentes et future, quod ego Petronilla Bluet, uxor Willielmi de Felcham, pietas intuitu, dedi et concessi Deo at ecclesie beatæ Mariæ de Kington, et monialibus ibidem Deo servientibus, totam terram meam de Bradleia, in bosci, in plani, in pratis, in pascuis et in omnibus locis cum omnibus pertinentiis et liberatibus suis, in liberam et perpetuam elemosynam; tenadam ita liberè et quietè 299, sicuti ego ipsa ea tenui de Tho. filio Willielmi de Salemonvill; scilicet reddendon ei inde annuatim quique solidos pro omni servicio, et querela et consuetudine et exactione, et demanda, salvo sevicio domini Regis, quantum perinet illam de prædicto Thomas et hæredibus suis jure cessorum meorum, Deum, et ecclisiam beatæ Mariæ de Kyngtone, et præædictas moniales ibidem Deo servientes, de hac eadem prædicta terra, de præfato Thoma et hæredibus suis, liberè et quietè per prædictum servicium teneda, hæredes moes feci. Et, ut hæc mea donation et concessio rata et illibata et inconcussa perserveret in poterum, præsentis ea cartæ meæ munimine, et sigilli mei impressione comfirmavi. Hiis testibus, Radulpho Bloet, Radulpho filio ejus, Radulpho Bloet filio Walteri Bloet, Ricardo de Herierd, Roberto filio Pagani, Rogero filio ejus, Willielmo Briwere, Petro de Scudamore, Roberto de Berkleya, Johanne de Warra, Helya de Strodleya, Gilberto capellano, Robert capellano, Waltero clerico, qui hanc hanc cartam fecit et aliis (our emphasis)

are uncertain, but it has been suggested³¹⁴ it is between 1194 - 1199³¹⁵.

Ralph and Nest's other daughter Alda married Almaric Despencer, who was Sheriff of Rutland to Henry II (in 1188) and Richard I (in 1189). He was also Steward to Richard. He was one of the barons who rebelled against King John and brother of Thurstan who was held by Roland Bluet³¹⁶.

Alda Bluet gave a virgate of land she held in Worcestershire to the Priory of Little Malvern and this record reveals that she and Almaric had two sons³¹⁷ Thurstan and Ralph.

Emma Bluet entered the nunnery at Godstow although the date is uncertain. She rose to be Abbess in 1248 and resigned in 1266³¹⁸. It is almost certain that land would have been granted to the Nunnery when she entered but there is no mention of this in the Godstow records; the gifting of Duntisbourne, seen above, is far too early to be associated with her, although this was the view of Anthony à Wood³¹⁹. She appears as abbess in 14 of Godstow's charters.

Ralph IV was succeeded by his son William. The date of Ralph's death is uncertain, but one of his agreements recorded in the Curia Regis rolls proves he was dead by late 1245³²⁰ and Reed gives a date of 1241-42³²¹. The 1245 agreement concerns the transfer of responsibility for the dower lands of the daughter and heiress of Ralph Bluet from Walter Marshal the 5th Earl of Pembroke³²², to Simon de Montfort Earl of Leicester and his wife Eleanor, for

³¹⁴ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* Vol 3 p259 *Houses of Benedictine nuns: Priory of Kington St Michael*

³¹⁵ Interestingly there is a reference to Dame Parnel Bluet's lands at Lacock in a quitclaim of 1314 but there is no other indication of a Parnel Bluet at this date; it is possible that this recalls Petronella's ownership of the land but this would be unusual over this length of time.

³¹⁶ If visiting from above click [here](#) to return

³¹⁷ Anon (1837) *Collectanea Topographica and Genealogica* vol IV, pub. John Bowter Nichols & Sons pp238-240

³¹⁸ Clark A (1906) *The English Register of the Godstow Nunnery* vol 2 p xxiv

³¹⁹ Wood, A à (1773) *The Ancient and Present State of the City of Oxford section Dantesborne Church or Danesbourne* p256

³²⁰ This date is sure because one of the principals to the agreement, the 5th Earl of Pembroke, died in November 1245.

³²¹ Reed PC (2008) *Descent of St Maur family of Co. Monmouth and Seymour family of Hatch, Co Somerset* Foundation (2008) 2 (6) 395 fn27

³²² 1198-1245

the sum of 100 silver marks³²³. Unfortunately the daughter and heiress is not named. Ralph is specifically given as being of Silchester and his wife Eve is named³²⁴, she apparently had an assignment of land from her dowry. The date of 1241-2 is supported (although not proven) by a number of events: firstly that around 1243 the Earl exercised his prerogative as lord to turn William Bloet's wardship to profit³²⁵ by selling it to Simon de Montfort

It is known William supported Simon de Montfort in his short lived rebellion (This is also known as the Second Baron's War)³²⁶. This is not surprising as William, and his younger brother Ralph (V), had been in wardship to Simon³²⁷. The battle of Evesham, at which de Montfort was killed, was fought on August 4th 1265, and Ralph Bluet also perished there along with more than thirty other of de Montfort's knights³²⁸.

Others events that might support a 1241- 1243 death date for Ralph IV come from Wiltshire. In 1241 a charter of Lacock Abbey refers to disputes between Abbess Ela and the parson of Lacock, i.e. of St Cyriac's church, one Roger Bluet³²⁹. He only appears in one other record and his origin is unknown. He may have been from a co-lateral line or related but this is unknown. In 1241 Roger Bluet was in dispute

³²³ *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III* vol XVIII (1243-1245) p152 membrane 8d

³²⁴ *Si Eve que fuit uxor predicti Radulfi* - This Eve who was the wife of the aforesaid Ralph - Eve is still alive so it is Ralph who was dead before November 1245

³²⁵ Crouch, D (2005) *The Birth of Nobility* p287. He gives the PRO reference for William's wardship as being KB26/131 membrane 8d

³²⁶ http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/S/Se/Second_Barons_War.htm
The Second Barons' War (1264-1267) was a civil war in England between the forces of a number of rebellious barons lead by Simon de Montfort, and the Royalist forces led by Prince Edward (later Edward I) of England.

³²⁷ Crouch, D (2005) *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900-1300* p287 (from PRO KB26/131 membrane 8d)

³²⁸ Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King ; Edward I and the Forging of Britain* Hutchinson, London, p68 Evesham was a very bloody battle - Morris says that "Even before the first blow was struck Edward had let it be known that on this occasion the normal rules of chivalric warfare were to be suspended. No quarter was to be given, no surrender accepted....At least thirty of [de Monforts knights] were killed.. in an orgy of blood-letting not seen for centuries". Morris provides a very clear and readable account of this turbulent period, highly recommended.

³²⁹ Rogers, KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p 46 no 168 dated very specifically to 11 Aug 1241

concerning a Mill with it's pond and a bridge built by the abbess... and a way on the south side of the monastery there.....

It would seem that not only was the Mill causing problems but also the Abbey graveyard was blocking Robert's access to his lands south of the Abbey where he carried on agricultural activities:

If the abbess cannot warrant the way across the graveyard of Lak[cock] for the business of Roger she shall find him a suitable way to the south of it, for coming and going to the fields and pastures with carts and ploughs for the convenient carrying on of his affairs

It is not unlikely that there was some tension between the centuries-old St Cyriac's and the newly built Abbey. There was some overlap in the responsibilities of the two foundations, for example it is known that the Vicar of St Cyriac's had a few of the abbey officers as parishioners, but all the others within the gate of the Abbey shall be parishioners of the Chapel of St Edmund³³⁰. Although it cannot be proved it is possible that Roger, previously restrained by the Lord of Lackham, took the opportunity of his relative's death to have a go at the Abbey about access rights.

Finally, in the history of another Bluet manor, Hilmarton, it is seen that by 1242-3 Roger Bluet was holding it of Ralph de Wancy³³¹, who held it of the Earl Marshal,³³² another indication that Ralph is dead by 1242

That William's father was Ralph IV is attested by a record³³³ of a gifting of land to Lacock Abbey by William Bluet son of Ralph .

This is of some importance, as it has been suggested by some that the William who was father to the later John Bluet of Lackham was William of Salisbury Manor (Wales), Ralph IV's brother, not his son. The witness list for the charter here includes a reference to Ralph, the donor's brother. From [Fig. 9](#) it can be seen that this would apply to either William of Salisbury [son of Ralph III, brother of Ralph IV] or William son of Ralph IV brother of Ralph V. Distinguishing between these two Williams is difficult, as charters tend not to make it clear where they are from, but the latest charter we have for a William

³³⁰ Talbot, CH (1911) *The Will of Joan Trye* WN&Q vol 7 p58

³³¹ Not much has been found of Ralph de Wancy, although he witnessed 3 charters for Lacock Abbey (no's 347, 351 and 352)

³³² Victoria County History *Wiltshire* vol 9 p52 *Parishes: Hilmarton*

³³³ Rogers, KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p 28 no 122 undated

Bluet dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth century³³⁴ which is too late for it to be William of Salisbury Manor.

Some of the witnesses for this charter, notably Richard de Wyk and Thomas Bubbe are also found in other charters of William that date to the middle and end of the thirteenth century, supporting the suggestion this William is not he of Salisbury Manor. It might be also be questioned why William of Salisbury Manor in Gwent would be granting to Lacock Abbey on a regular basis? It makes much more sense for a William of Silchester and Lackham to have the multiple dealings with Lacock Abbey that are seen in the abbey Cartulary. (William of Salisbury Manor is specifically mentioned as being of that location but Lackham is not mentioned at all).

William's legal majority is given by Crouch³³⁵ in 1251, which gives a birth date of 1230.

It has already been seen that William of Salisbury Manor was granted an exemption from duties on assize etc in 1249 for life.³³⁶ Another exemption, also for life and made by the same King (Henry III), was granted to William Bluet in 1268³³⁷, 19 years later. This interval is just right for this second exemption to be to the next generation, ie William Bluet son of Ralph IV.

Many of these agreements between William, and indeed specifically Lackham, and the Abbey were about water - for example agreements dated between 1257 and 1270³³⁸.

There appears to have been some degree of relationship between Sir William Bluet and the second abbess of Lacock, Beatrice of Kent, who took office on 25th

³³⁴ Rogers (1978) *ibid* p81 no 320 dated to between 1275 and 1298. the dates are those for the Constable of England here, the 3rd Earl of Hereford, 2nd Earl of Essex

³³⁵ DNB (2006) David Crouch section on Bluet family

³³⁶ *Calendar Close Rolls Henry III*, vol. 4, Years: 1247-1258 Dated Oct 6 1249 Exemption for life for William from sitting on assizes, juries and recognitions

³³⁷ *Calendar Close Rolls Henry III*, vol. 6, Years: 1266-1272 p305 dated Dec 6 1268 Exemption for life for William Bluet from sitting on Assizes, juries and recognitions and being made Sheriff etc

³³⁸ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p25, nos. 49 & 50 dated 1257 - 70 Probably all the records dealing with the watercourse date from about the same time, but none of them are datable exactly

December 1257 after Ela resigned ³³⁹. A record of the time ³⁴⁰ starts

*Beatrice abbess of Lacock and Sir William Bluet, knight, striving to make abundantly clear the bonds of mutual affection and indeed kinship... have agreed to make an exchange of lands between them.*³⁴¹

In this agreement William granted to the abbess a spring on his land in Lackhams lee (*Lachameslie*) with liberty to prepare, inclose and strengthen it, and to make a watercourse across William's land. Sometime later William granted the abbess the right to run a watercourse from Bowden to the Abbey, crossing the land of his men of Bewley.³⁴²

This man of Bewley may have been one Robert de Holta³⁴³, son of Richard, who granted to

*Beatrice abbess of Lacok of free power to dig and conduct her water across or beneath the land which he holds of the fee of Sir William Bluet, and to repair her conduit wheresoever and whensoever she wishes without hindrance for ever.*³⁴⁴

This charter does not have any of the witnesses that signed the agreement between William Bluet and Beatrice, which may mean it was completed at a different time.

Agreements such as this were not unusual but it is worth noting as the records concerning this watercourse provide much of the Wiltshire information about William. Although the phrasing given by the Harveys appear to suggest this

³³⁹ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* III p304

Beatrice was expressly designated by Ela as her successor : *dum vixit abbatissam prefecit Beatricem de Kancia*. She died in or after 1280 Victoria County History *Wiltshire* (1959) IV footnote 78, p 315

³⁴⁰ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p44, no. 157 dated 1257-1283

³⁴¹ Dugdale provides a transcription of the latin charter [Monsticon vol VI p504 fn b] which starts *Beatrix abbatissa de Lacok et Wilielmus Bluet miles fecerunt inter se excambium terrarium*. Dugdale's version is considerably shorter than that given by Rogers (previous fn)

³⁴² Harvey B and Harvey, R (1981) *The Early History of Bewley Court ; Part 1 History* WAM vol 81 pp63-64

³⁴³ Ralph de Holta was Abbey Steward in Ela's time Victoria County History *Wiltshire* III p312

³⁴⁴ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p25, no 50, dated 1257-

was a new enterprise, Lacock Abbey charters indicate otherwise. In an earlier agreement (dated sometime between 1257 and 1270) William and Beatrice agreed that

*she may freely mend the watercourse or aqueduct so that the aqueduct and watercourse continue in the same place and state in which they are now contained and disposed*³⁴⁵

(It is noted that the water supply to the Abbey still comes in via a pipe across these same lands). It is interesting to note that one of the witnesses to this charter was Sir Ralph Bluet - whether this is William's brother, or the grandson who held Lackham in 1316 is unknown.

The abbey workers didn't have *carte blanche* when working on others land, damage had to be paid for, in a charter of 1280 it was agreed that

*If William or his men suffer damage or detriment from the conduit, the abbess to make reasonable amends by the consideration of lawful men*³⁴⁶

Things did not always go smoothly between William and Beatrice however - in 1264 there had been problems with

*the cutting off of the watercourse to the mill standing within the close of the Abbey and about the turning back of the water as far as William's free tenement [location unknown] and about damage of the whole path called Churigwei [Church or Carriage Way?] across Snailsmede³⁴⁷ and of the street extending from the Abbey as far as Beulie"*³⁴⁸

It is likely that this was the same Mill which was the source of the earlier disagreement between Roger Bluet and Ela.

William agreed never to disturb the supply again in exchange for land, some of which was *next to land of Alice de Beuleye*. Agreement was made concerning repair of the conduit. There had been changes since the earlier agreement. William had remarried, the dedication is "*for the souls of his wife and his*

³⁴⁵ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p25 no 49 dated 1257 -70

³⁴⁶ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p25, no 51, dated 1280-08

³⁴⁷ "*Snaylesmede*" is the name of the level meadow between Lacock village and the River Avon that is the site of Lacock Abbey Victoria County History Wiltshire IV p 304

³⁴⁸ Rogers KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p47, no. 169 dated c1264

children " ³⁴⁹ whereas previously it was only "for the health of the soul of Margaret his wife ³⁵⁰ ", which is the only known reference to her that has been found. Alice was the name of the next abbess ³⁵¹. William was given respite from taking up knighthood in 1253 ³⁵² and again between 1256 and 1258 ³⁵³.

As has been seen both he and his brother Ralph V supported Simon de Montfort in his short lived rebellion ³⁵⁴.

Although very little is known about Ralph V some information does exist. There was an Inquisition of 1265 that said that Ralf Bluet was a rebel ³⁵⁵ and that his land at [Hinton Blewett] was in the hands of Sir Edward ³⁵⁶. This is not

³⁴⁹ Rogers KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* p25, no 51, dated 1257-70 The Harveys indicate a date of 1280 for a similar document

³⁵⁰ Rogers KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS p25, no 49, dated 1257 -70

³⁵¹ Kite, E (1917) *Lacock Abbey and its owners* Wilts. Gazette January 11th

Ela Countess of Salisbury	15/8/124	-	25/12/1257
Beatrice of Kent	25/12/1257	-	?
Alice	?	-	1288
Julianna	1288	-	1299
Agnes	1299	-	1303
Johanna de Montfort	1303	-	>1322
Faith Selyman	>1322	-	1380
Agnes de Wick	1380	-	1403
Elena de Montfort	1403	-	1434
Agnes	1434	-	1483
Margery of Gloucester	1483	-	?
Joan Temys	?	-	Dissolution 21/7/1539

³⁵² DNB (2006) David Crouch section on Bluet family

³⁵³ *Close Rolls (Supplementary) Henry III 1244 - 1266* Roll 2 (1256-1258)

contains writs of respite from taking up knighthood.....covering the years 1256-1258 (Introduction p v) and number 21. p6. has *Willelmus Bluet de comitatu Wiltes' per finem etc habet con similem respectum fecit nobiscum dedimus ei de se faciendo militem*

³⁵⁴ http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/S/Se/Second_Barons_War.htm

The Second Barons' War (1264-1267) was a civil war in England between the forces of a number of rebellious barons lead by Simon de Montfort and the Royalist forces led by Prince Edward (later Edward I) of England.

³⁵⁵ *Pipe Rolls Henry III*, dated Friday before St Calixdis 49 Hen III 9 Oct 1265. (No details of this Saint have been found, the 9th October 1265 was, indeed, a Friday - calculator at <http://www.albion.edu/english/calendar/weekday.htm> . There was a St. Callixtus, whose feast day was 14th October, it might be that the Pipe roll refers to this saint.)

³⁵⁶ *Calendar Inquisitions Miscellaneous* vol 1 no 826 p265

surprising as Ralph and William had been in wardship to Simon³⁵⁷. The battle of Evesham, at which de Montfort was killed was fought on August 4th 1265, and Ralph Bluet V also perished there. Thus two Bluets rebelled against the king - Ralph IV rebelled against Henry III in 1233 and lost his lands for a time; thirty years later his son Ralph V rebelled against the same king and lost his life!

In an assize of 1280 there was a dispute about the ownership of tenements in Henton [Hinton Blewett] and Roger Kantok's bailiff said that the tenements were of one Ralf Bluet who was killed at the battle of Evesham [fighting] against King Henry³⁵⁸. It appears that Ralph V's son William gave the tenements in question to a Walter Bluet who had a son Richard. The descent of these Bluets is not known for certain but may have been cousins on the Somerset line³⁵⁹ or Walter may have been William's son although this isn't clear. It may be relevant that the claimant in the assize case was Nicholas de Montfort

Ralph V does appear in connection with an Eyre held in northern Wiltshire in 1249. He was one of the 12 *good and lawful men of Wiltshire* that were the jury for an Inquisition to determine whether three men were held in custody in Sarum jail lawfully. Simon Atteberne, his son John and his son³⁶⁰, or grandson³⁶¹, Henry, were accused of killing William de Caudel and they had appealed their detention. This case makes it clear that local feuds and drink related violence are nothing new and is discussed to give a flavour of the time³⁶². Five people were alleged to have been involved - Simon, John, Henry, Ralph de la Monte the carter of Godfrey de Escudemor (Roger was said to be a stranger to the area) and Roger the plowman. Ralph and Roger had already fled and were not held in Sarum. The Inquisition had to decide whether Simon, John and Henry "were being held out of spite and malice or because they were guilty... and if out of spite and malice by what spite and malice and if they are

³⁵⁷ Crouch, D (2005) *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900-1300* p287 (from PRO KB26/131 membrane 8d)

³⁵⁸ *Feet of Fines* Somerset Record Society vol 44

³⁵⁹ *Feet of Fines* *ibid*. Our sincere thanks to Rosemary Walker of Hinton Blewett for making this information available to us

³⁶⁰ Original eyre report Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes) p159, no 40

³⁶¹ Writ of *de odio et atya* issued 2 Aug 1248 from *Criminal Inquisitions* : C. 114/3 no 31 in Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes p 260, Notes to the text, no 40

³⁶² It is emphasised, however, that although this was a violent crime it should not be assumed that people were being murdered on every street corner

not guilty who is guilty therein"

Ralph and his colleagues decided that the three were not guilty and that they were indeed being held in custody out of spite and malice. They said that this was because of a local dispute between Elias de Calewey (of Kellaways, three miles north east of Chippenham) and his men and Philip de Cerne ³⁶⁴ and his men. The trouble appears to have started when a dog had been stolen from Elias' mill and taken to Philip de Cerne's house and kept there "*Whence often between their men disputes were moved at ale drinkings and elsewhere*". John Atteberne might have been remanded because he had given information against Philip's men when they had fatally wounded his brother Henry ³⁶⁵. The Inquisition decided that Ralph the carter alone had killed Henry with an axe as they were coming back from the tavern of [Abot's] Langley ³⁶⁶

However this didn't mean that the case was over; it came before the local Eyre later in 1249. The Eyre jurors decided that both Roger and Ralph were guilty because they had fled, Roger back to Abbot's Langley just outside Chippenham. As the village had taken him in they were also at risk of punishment - in mercy. Simon denied involvement and the jurors acquitted him. John also denied the charge but was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. As Ralph and Roger were not in custody they couldn't be hung but were exacted and outlawed ³⁶⁷ A nasty event at any time.

Three of William IV's people from Lackham are known by name in this year, and again it is the Eyre records that provide the information ³⁶⁸. John Sercheche had accused 7 people ³⁶⁹ of robbery and the case was set to be heard at the Eyre. The defendants turned up but John didn't. Those bringing a charge against others had to have sureties that they would come, and in

³⁶³ Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes) p 260, Notes to the text, no 40

³⁶⁴ The William de Caudel who was killed appears to have been Philip de Cerne's nephew

³⁶⁵ Meekings [Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes) p 260, Notes to the text, no 40.] notes that it is likely that Henry had died between August 1248 and April 1249, after the Inquisition took place'

³⁶⁶ So here we have a local feud that flares up when alcohol is consumed, a story that TP hears again and again in Court, although now it doesn't usually end with two people getting killed. Hospitalised maybe.

³⁶⁷ Eyre report Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes) p159, no 40

³⁶⁸ Meekings, CAF (1961) (ed) *Crown Pleas of the Wiltshire Eyre 1249* WRS vol XVI Devizes p196 no 237

³⁶⁹ *William le Fort, Henry le Hethene, John Smaleman, Adam Cakman, Henry le Careter, Robert son of Perment' [and] Reynold of Bathon'*

this case John's pledges were Walter Cloudgirofe³⁷⁰ of Lacham and Richard, son of Robert the Reeve of the same so they were at risk. Whether they were punished in some way is unknown but it is very likely.

William Bluet IV, like his uncle William, was involved with Henry's wars in Wales. Wales was a constant concern for both Henry III and Edward I.

In 1274 the Welsh leader, Prince³⁷¹ Llywelyn ap Gruffudd had refused to pay homage to Edward I and, indeed, had tried to marry the daughter of the (very) deceased Simon de Montfort. It is possible that this threatened to re-ignite the recent civil war and in 1276 Edward marched an army into Gwynedd and forced Llewellyn's submission in the Treaty of Aberconway. But then

*In 1282 the Welsh, chaffing under English overlordship, rebelled. Limited outbreaks of resistance become a united uprising. This was eventually led by Llywelyn himself, who captured key castles and defeated the royal army. Edward responded by leading an even greater host into Wales.*³⁷²

In July of 1282 William Bluet was summoned to appear at the King's Council that was held in Gloucester³⁷³ before the multi- front English campaign which ended the rebellion and killed Llywelyn. This did not end all rebellion in Wales, there were sporadic uprisings until the early 1300's. For example the lord of Dryslwyn in Carmarthenshire, Rhys ap Maredudd, had

*taken such exception to the humiliations heaped on him by [the English Justiciar³⁷⁴] at Carmarthen that he rose in rebellion in June 1287*³⁷⁵

This rebellion was serious enough that the army was summoned - William had to

³⁷⁰ It is noted that the writer has made two persons of Walter's unusual name, Walter Cloude and Girofe of Lacham

³⁷¹ Llewellyn had been officially granted his self-assumed title Prince of the Welsh' when he swore fealty to Henry III, and signed the Treaty of Montgomery, in 1267 [Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King : Edward I and the Forging of Britain* p132]

³⁷² http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/state/nations/wales_conquest_05.shtml

³⁷³ Pulgrave, F (ed) (1827) *Parliamentary writs and Writs of Military Summons* vol 1 p332

³⁷⁴ Robert Tibetot

³⁷⁵ Jenkins, GH (2006) *A Concise History of Wales* Cambridge p107

*appear with horse and arms at a Military Council to be held at
Gloucester before Edmund, Earl of Cornwall*³⁷⁶

on 24th June 1287. This council was being headed by Earl Edmund because Edward I was in France, trying to settle disagreements over the ownership of Sicily. William was not the only Bluet involved this time; his son John Bluet was also in Wales in 1287, he was there with the Duke of Norfolk, his overlord for Silchester and Lackham³⁷⁷. It is noteworthy that two Bluets were called up - this hadn't even happened during the major invasion of Wales two years earlier. In the event it turned out this was because the regents, perhaps fearing a revolt on the scale of 1282-83 was imminent, responded with magnificent overreaction³⁷⁸ and 24,000 men were mobilised. As it turned out this was not that serious a rebellion and was all over by the new year, but ap Maredudd remained at large until he was betrayed by four of his own men in April 1288. He was eventually hung and quartered at York.³⁷⁹

The Bluet's Wiltshire land was not confined to Lackham, of course; in common with the landowning patterns of the time there were parcels of land spread all over the county - for example William is recorded as holding a small amount of land³⁸⁰ at Hurdecotes Ashton, somewhere between Semington and Westbury in Wiltshire from at least 1255 to 1277. Other evidence that William owned land in many places can be found, if needed, in an agreement of 1282, where he acknowledged in Chancery that he owed Nicholas, son of Nicholas the treasurer of Wells, 300 marks, and that this was to be levied on his lands in Wiltshire and Berkshire if he³⁸¹ failed to pay³⁸². This money was dowry so that William's daughter Emmeline could marry Nicholas' nephew Nicholas (son of Nicholas'

³⁷⁶ Pulgrave, F (ed) (1827) *The Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons* vol 1 p250

³⁷⁷ *Calendar of Close Rolls Edw I 1282 - 1292* p274 —John Bluet who is in Wales with the Duke of Norfolk until Michaelmas^l dated Hereford 23 July 128

³⁷⁸ Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King : Edward I and the Forging of Britain* Hutchinson London p217

³⁷⁹ Jenkins, GH (2006) *A Concise History of Wales* Cambridge p107

³⁸⁰ Victoria County History *Wiltshire VIII* p208. 2 carucates. The land was —probably^l held from the barony of Castle Combe

³⁸¹ Morris, M (2008) *A Great and Terrible King : Edward I and the Forging of Britain* Hutchinson London p217

³⁸² *Calendar Close Rolls Edw I* vol 1 1279 - 1288 p 180 dated Friday after St Gregory 1282. This would have been Friday the 13th of March, as the Feast of St Gregory (12 March) was on Thursday in 1282. This St. Gregory was the early Pope Gregory (c540-604) who is most famous for seeing Anglo-Saxons for sale in a Roman market and saying — These are not Angles, they are Angels^l

brother Ralph). Nicholas son of Ralph was a minor at the time, his uncle Nicholas acknowledged that when his nephew came of age at St Nicholas next ³⁸³ he would give him control of the lands that he was holding in wardship³⁸⁴.

A few occurrences that involved William's estates in Wiltshire are known - in 1276 four people were arrested in Lacock on charges of larceny and receiving. Three of them - John Sturdi, Thomas la Hattere and Alice Thoregber were found guilty and hanged. The felons' belongings went to Walter de Wick, "*tithingman of Lacok of William Bluet's part*" ³⁸⁵

It is noteworthy that the de Wick family is seen elsewhere - Richard de Wick was a witness to two of the agreements between William and Abbess Beatrice cited above ³⁸⁶ and he appears as a witness to many other agreements in this period. The Wick family also had connections with the Marshals; in 22 Edw IV (1483) an action ³⁸⁷ between Robert Bonham and Robert Baynard of Lackham rested on the fact that Richard Wyke held "*the manor of Charlaweswyke from William Mareschal as of his manor of Lackham*" ³⁸⁸, and had granted it to William Bluet Kt., and his descendents

Wick Farm near Lacock in Wiltshire was owned by this family. They also appear as charter witnesses for the Bluets and others see below.

William Bluet was a juror at an inquisition into the destruction of a charter belonging to the Abbot of Quarr by William (some sources say Adam) Brayboef, Sheriff of Hampshire

The King.. ordered the sheriff to summon before the King on the 3rd day after Christmas, wherever he might then be in England thirty lawful knights girt with sword ³⁸⁹

³⁸³ 6th December 1282. There are far too many Nicholas's here

³⁸⁴ *Calendar Close Rolls Edw I* vol 1 1279 - 1288 p 180 dated 12 March 1282, and signed at Down Ampney, a Hungerford Manor south east of Cirencester

³⁸⁵ Pugh, RB (ed) (1978) "Delivery of Old Salisbury Gaol, Friday in Whitsun week 4 Edw I [29 May 1276] before Sir William de Braybuf and H. of the marsh, justices" *Wiltshire Gaol Delivery and Trialbaston Trials 1275-1306* Wilts. Rec Soc XXXIII no 38 pp38 - 39

a tithingman was *Anciently the chief man of a tithing a headborough, in later use a peace office or petty constable or —A collector of tithes, a tithe proctor* (Oxford English Dictionary Compact Edition (1971) Oxford Press Vol II p334),

³⁸⁶ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p25, no. 49 dated 1257-70 and p47 no. 169 dated c1264.

³⁸⁷ *De Banco Rolls, Michaelmas 22 Edw. IV, m. 615* De Banco refers to Justices of the King's Bench and the Common Bench

³⁸⁸ The record actually has —Kakham but no such manor is known. It is most likely this is a misspelling of Lackham

³⁸⁹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls* vol 2 p212 1257-1300 Dated 3rd May 1278

There was a Chapel attached to Lackham. The founding date is unknown, but it was before 1179. In a charter, seen earlier, William gifted an acre of land to Richard Swein, the rent for which was 1d to light the chapel of the blessed Mary at Lakham.³⁹⁰

William held mesne lands at Yeovilton in Somerset and was succeeded by another son, John, about 1303, which gives a possible date for William's death. It has already been seen that the Bluets held Yeovilton under William d'Eu, as they did Silchester.

The date of William's death is unknown but he was certainly alive after 1282³⁷⁵ as was seen above, and it may have been as late as the 1300 upper limit in the DNB³⁹¹.

William would appear to have been the last of the Bluets to bear the device that is seen on the chancel wall at Silchester *Or, two wings conjoined in a fesse gules.*

These arms are part of the elaborate medieval scroll and flower paintings on the east chancel wall of St Mary the Virgin at Silchester, a delightful church located inside the standing Roman walls at Silchester (Roman *Callea Atrebatum*). They are very faint and hard to see but there is one each side of the stained glass east window. (The later Bluet arms are also *or* with the eagle being *gules*, so the same colour scheme).

³⁹⁰ Rogers, KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS p38 no 122, undated but witnesses put it around 1270-1290 This land was later granted to the Abbey church by Richard's son Edward, when the rent to Lackham chapel continued (Rogers, KH (1978) *ibid* p38 no 124 undated, which is the agreement referred to in Kite (1899) *ibid* p2). It is surprising that Kite didn't use the previous agreement. Although both are undated they were both before 1311, as in this year Edward's widow, Isabel gave the remainder of her lands to the abbess. One of the witnesses was Sir John Bluet, agreement made on the feast of St Alphege the Martyr * (19th April) (see Rogers, KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS p29, no 74)

*Saint Alphege is the commonly used name for Ælfheah the Anglo-Saxon Bishop of Winchester and, later, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was martyred at Greenwich on 19th April 1012 (details Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphege>)

³⁹¹ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2006) Vol 6 Blackmore - Bowyer Bluet family by Crouch, D. p325 gives he died sometime between 1287 - 1300. 377 Boon, GC (2000) *St Mary the Virgin, Silchester* p19



Fig 15a The east Chancel wall at Silchester, location of arms ringed ³⁹² *

³⁹² Both Fig 15a and Fig 15b Photos © Dr Colleen McDuling (2015), whose help is gratefully acknowledged



Fig 15b Bluet arms on the north side of the Chancel window, Silchester *

The version seen as Fig. 1a³⁹³ is taken from this wall painting.

The paintings belong to the original chancel of c 1230.. In the corners of the east wall, high up, a rapidly sketched coat of arms, consisting of a pair of conjoined wings, badly preserved, may be seen. As befits work executed at the expense of the manorial family, as this would have been, this is the Bluet's signature (at Lacock Abbey, Wilts, their main home, it can be seen on a roof-boss of the cloisters³⁹⁴)

and, indeed, in the cloister roof is found a beautifully coloured roof boss. However these are not the Bluet arms, which have not been located in the Cloisters at Lacock as the colour scheme is reversed. As was seen above these are the Seymour arms, they bore *Gules a lure of two golden wings*

³⁹⁵

³⁹³ If using link click on the " at the bottom of the page to return here

³⁹⁴ <http://perso.numericable.fr/~briantimms/rolls/StGeorgesE4.html>

Or two wings conjoined in lure gules

Timms notes that this roll was painted about 1285, which would lend support to William Bluet surviving beyond this date. However it has been shown (Peter , *pers.comm*) that the date of 1285 is only approximate and that it is very possible that the Bluet arms are earlier, which would not support a survival date beyond 1285. Our thanks to Peter Howarth for his constructive and helpful comments on a number of heraldic points. The circumstances that led to the compilation of the roll are unknown. By kind permission of Brian Timms

³⁹⁵ <http://www.2020site.org/heraldry/beasts.html>



Fig. 16a Arms in Lacock Abbey cloisters ³⁹⁶ *

The Seymour wings can also be seen, as the second top left of 14 quarterings, in the arms of Sir Francis Seymour in a memorial window in Bath Abbey ³⁹⁷



Fig. 16b Arms of Sir Francis Seymour, Bath Abbey *

It is noteworthy that the only appearances of the Seymours in the Lacock Abbey Charters are as witnesses, and then only twice.

³⁹⁶ Photo © Tony Pratt 2007. If visiting from below click [here](#) to return to the discussion

³⁹⁷ This member of the Seymour family is later than the period we are discussing here, he paid for the glazing of the middle most of the windows in Bath abbey when it was renovated in the 16th century (Peach, REM (1887) (ed) The History and Antiquities of Bath Abbey Church by John Britton)

However they were important enough to the Abbey to have the right of appointing novices, in 1346-7 Sir Thomas Seymour is found paying the expenses of the festivities on the occasion of the veiling of Alice Sthocus³⁹⁸ and so it is not surprising to find their arms in the Cloister

It has been seen that the Bluet arms are to be found in the St George's Roll, which was a Roll of Arms compiled in about 1285-. The original is now lost but a number of copies exist, although these differ from each other³⁹⁹



Fig. 17 from St George's Roll *

The roll was said to lend support to the idea of William Bluet surviving beyond 1285. However it has been brought to our attention⁴⁰⁰ that although Sir Anthony Wagner dated the completion of the roll to "c 1285"⁴⁰¹ he also pointed out several names who had died well before then.⁴⁰² and William may, therefore, have died before 1285

It has already been seen that Sir John Bluet was with the English army in

³⁹⁸Victoria County History Wiltshire Vol 3 *Houses of Augustinian canonesses: Abbey of Lacock* p310 The Victoria County History footnote (fn 169) to this entry gives :N.C. f. iv, *Cellaress's Roll*. 'Ea die' (Monday, 29 Oct.) 'non plus quia dominus Thomas Seymore acquietavit omnia alia propter velacionem Alicie Sthocus'. *Thomas held land in Wick and Notton (Lacock): B.M., Add. Chart. 47145; Cal. inq. pm. ix, 93.* [might this have been Athocus ?]

³⁹⁹ Howarth, Peter pers comm 2011 "The ten copies were made between 1530 and 1640. Four of these are in the College of Arms. The copy used by Brault as his basic manuscript is the one from Queen's College, Oxford. Other copies are to be found at the British Library (3 copies), the Society of Antiquaries, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

⁴⁰⁰ Peter Howarth, pers. comm 2011

⁴⁰¹Wagner, A R (1950), *Catalogue of English Mediaeval Rolls of Arms*, OUP, , p 19; comes to the same date (Brault GJ (1997) *The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, Boydell, vol i. pp 203-4

⁴⁰² Wagner, A R (1950), *ibid*

" No. 76 'Fraunc d'Boun', d. 1273; No. 131 'Geffrai de Dinaunt', d. 1258; No. 246 'George de Cauntelow', d. 1273; No 103 'Tebaud de Verdon', succeeded 1284 [read 1274]."

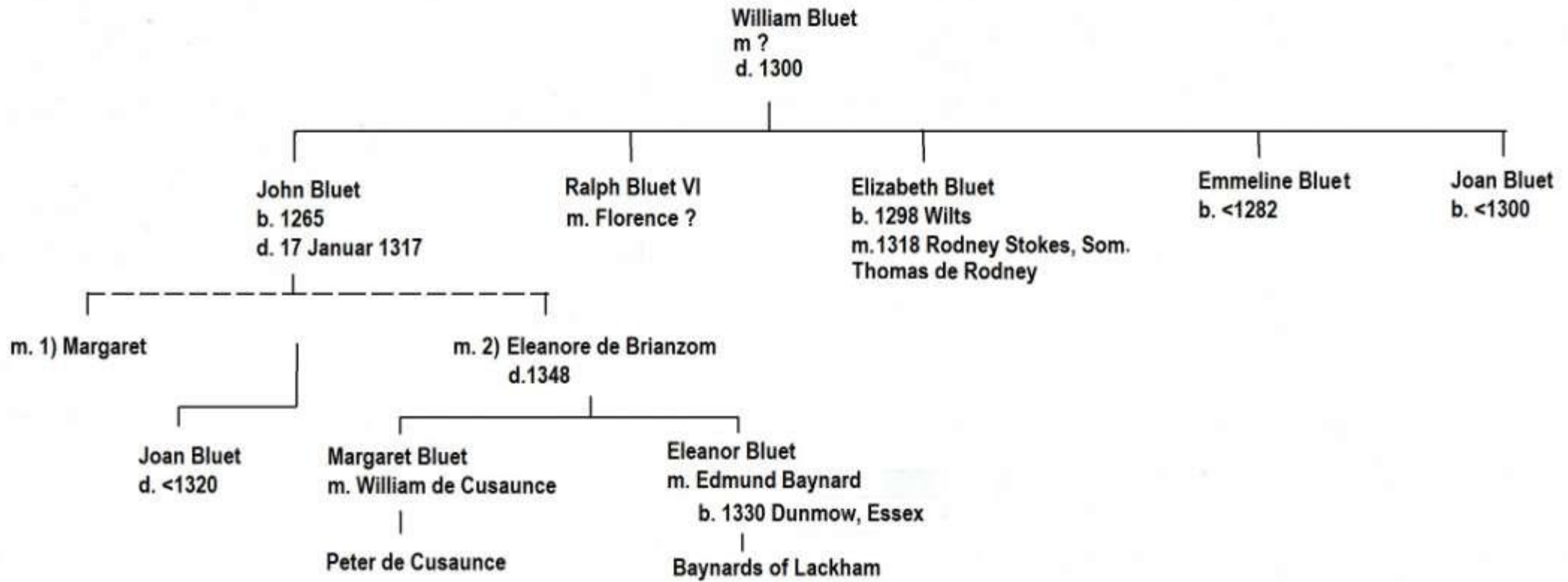


Fig. 18 Descendants of William Bluet *

If visiting from the discussion on Margery below click [here](#) to return to the footnote

If visiting from the discussion on Joan below click [here](#) to return to the text

Wales in 1287, under the command of his overlord, the Duke of Norfolk ⁴⁰³ .

In 1290 John witnessed a charter of Roger Bygod Earl of Norfolk and marshal of England ⁴⁰⁴ and in 1293 a charter of William Horn that granted land, close to John's manor at Lackham, to Nicholas de la Hoese ⁴⁰⁵ . Another of the witnesses was Edmund Gacelyn, his neighbour at Sheldon.

In 1295 John was an arbitrator for the Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, Gilbert de Clare, in a dispute between the Earl and the archbishop of Canterbury, Robert of Winchelsea. What this dispute was about is unclear, but John and his co-arbiter Luke de la Gare were unable to come to an agreement with the Archbishop's arbitrators ⁴⁰⁶ and in October King Edward appointed Antony Bek, Bishop of Durham and a King's Man, to finally determine the dissension ⁴⁰⁷ - what his decision was is also unknown. This record, however, shows John Bluet being associated with the prime movers and powers within the country at this time. Both Winchelsea and Bek were of major importance in the conflict between Edward 1 and the Church between 1297 and 1300, which eventually led to them both being banished from the kingdom - only to return at the request of Edward II, years later.

From an Inquisition post mortem of 1297 it is known that John Bluet held land in Bedfordshire ⁴⁰⁸ as well as Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire

There is a record of an agreement ⁴⁰⁹ between John Bluet and one William Martel, who became John's squire . The Romantic Movement has given us a

⁴⁰³ Calendar Patent Rolls Edw I 1282 - 1288 p274 see above, p85

⁴⁰⁴ *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw I vol 2 1281 - 1292* p134 dated 6 Kalends June 1290 - 27th May 1290. This was the last Roger Bigod to be earl of Norfolk, his line died out with him

⁴⁰⁵ Kirby, JL (ed) (1994) *The Hungerford Cartulary : A calendar of the earl of Radnor's cartulary of the Hungerford family* WRS vol XLIX p84 no 327 dated Sunday the eve of St Bartholomew [23rd August] 1293

⁴⁰⁶ Master Simon de Gandavoarch deacon of Oxford, and William de Saredene

⁴⁰⁷ *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw I vol 3 1292 - 1301* p152 dated October 7th 1295

⁴⁰⁸ *Inquisitions Post Mortem Edw I vol 3 no 386* p257 Inquisition of Laurence de Sancto Mauro Sunday before the Annunciation 25 Edw I [6th April 1297; strangely the IPM says this was April 10th, but the Feast of the Annunciation was April 7th in the old calendar - Waters, C (2003) *A Dictionary of Saints Days, Fasts, Feasts and Festivals* Countryside Books p16] held at Bedford "a capital messuage 140a arable 30s rent of free tenants and 63s rent of bondmen who are ought to reap in autumn, held of John Bluet by service of 110s yearly"

⁴⁰⁹ British Library Add. Ch. 1531 signed at Silchester 25 Edw I (1297). Written in French

skewed and unrealistic view of knights and their squires; this was actually

a contract, and is as formal and business-like a document as any contract between manager and actor, or between author and publisher...

The fact was thatSir John Bluet wanted a courtly squire. William Martel applied for the engagement, and got it. A contract was then drawn up, and duly sealed: it was a contract valid during the life of William Martel and it was binding on the heirs of Sir John Bluet.

⁴¹⁰

The text of this agreement, in both French and translation, was earlier published by Thomas Wakeman ⁴¹¹ (see Appendix 2 for Wakeman's translation of this agreement). He notes that

The Martells were lords of Llanviagel, Rogeat ,and Llanwanches, in the same neighbourhood of the Manor of Langston, which was held by the Bluets from the lordship of Caerleon by the service of one knight's fee ⁴¹²

Denholm-Young has argued ⁴¹³, convincingly, that by this time the station of esquire didn't necessarily involve personal service, although in this case it sounds as if it did. However this may be because Martel wasn't a squire. Coss has suggested that in the original French the word most commonly used for a sub-knightly retainer is not esquire, the expected vernacular equivalent of armiger, but valet ⁴¹⁴. "*John Bluet retained William Martel seon valet and the valet has both household and military connotations*". Coss points out ⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁰ <http://www.harvestfields.ca/horror/006/174.htm>. This is a short piece called *Chivalry* by Arthur Macken, a writer of (mainly) horror stories but in this gloss on the agreement he makes some useful points. The original document source is not given, and no reference is made of the Arch. Camb. article, see next footnote.

⁴¹¹ Wakeman, T (1847) *Agreement between Sir John Bluet, Knt. And William Martell Temp. Edw. I* *Archaeologica Cambrensis* Vol II pp 143-145. The original and translation also appear in Morgan, O & Wakeman, T (1864) *Notices of Pencoyd Castle and Langeston Monmouth and Caerleon Antiquarian Ass.*

⁴¹² Wakeman T (1847) *ibid* p143. This whole section is a good example of how two researchers can complement one another - Tony located the record of the original document in the British Library and then, completely independently and many months later, Karen Repko found the article by Wakeman. It was only when we compared the information that we realised they dealt with the same document!

⁴¹³ Denholm-Young, N (1969) *The County Gentry in the Fourteenth Century with Special references to the Heraldic Rolls of Arms Clarendon press*

⁴¹⁴ Coss, P (2003) *The Origins of the English Gentry* CUP p225

⁴¹⁵ Coss, P (2003) *ibid* p226

that Valet was undoubtedly a term employed by the magnates to denote retinue membership. It is noted that John Martel, not a knight, witnessed an [undated ⁴¹⁶] charter of Bartholomew de Mora, along with Sir William Bluet, but whether John Martel was related to William Martel is unknown, it seems very likely.

Sir John is known to have borne the device that is now familiar for the Bluets of Wiltshire (Fig. 1b). This is different from the two wings seen before (Figs 1a and 15), the Bluets arms had changed sometime between c1285 (the date of William's arms in St. George's Roll) and 1297. One possible reason is suggested by Dr. Crouch's assertion that in 1287 John Bluet was made a Peer. Some support for this may be that after this date he is sometimes referred to as "Lord of Lackham" but this might just mean he is lord of the manor of Lackham. It is curious, however, that he isn't seen with the title before this. Probably this is the date he succeeded his father ⁴¹⁷ which would date William's death to 1300, which is what is shown in Fig. 18.

It has however been pointed out ⁴¹⁸ that there were many instances in this period where families changed their arms. *For some we can find explanations, but for many others we can't.*

In 1297 John was in Scotland with the English army, as a change of scenery from Wales. His arms are shown in the roll that commemorates the Battle of Stirling. We originally said that this was the Battle of Stirling Bridge. It has been pointed out ⁴¹⁹, however, that Brault shows that the Stirling Roll refers to the siege of Stirling Castle in 1304 and not the disastrous defeat of the English in 1297.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Calendar Charter Rolls vol 3 Edw1 Ewd II 1300-1326 p98, this record was for a re-inspection of the original charter. Internal evidence from the witnesses of the original would suggest a date around 1260-1270. This charter was seen above

⁴¹⁷ Howarth, Peter *pers.comm* 2011

⁴¹⁸ Howarth, Peter *pers. comm* 2011.—

⁴¹⁹Howarth, Peter *pers. comm* 2011

⁴²⁰G J Brault (1997), *The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, Boydell, 1997, vol i. p 483



Fig. 19 Arms of John Bluet from the Stirling Roll ⁴²¹ *

Brault notes that ⁴²²

the original roll was from 1304 and refers to the siege of Stirling Castle in April to July of that year, and not to the battle of Stirling Bridge on 11 September seven years earlier. There are two reasons for believing this: (a) the English are unlikely to have celebrated a disastrous defeat in a roll of arms, but they would have been pleased with the recapture of the castle at the end of the siege; and (b) the headnote on the roll describes the forcing of a ford across the Forth on the Saturday after Trinity [30 May in 1304] and the rout of the Scots.

A description (undated but probably about 1300) gives John Bluet as *or une eglee goules and ii testes* ⁴²³

In March 1299 John Bluet was on his way to the court of the Pope in Rome, on behalf of Edward I, with Robert de Halghton ⁴²⁴. John named William Martel

⁴²¹ <http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms/rolls/stirlingST1.htm>.

An excellent site that gives superb renditions of the arms described in a large number of rolls of arms. *or a double-headed eagle displayed gules* by permission of Brian Timms.

⁴²² G J Brault (1997), *The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, Boydell, 1997, vol i. p 483

⁴²³ As Peter Haworth kindly pointed out *"The best authority by far for mediaeval blazon is Dr Gerard J Brault, a francophone Canadian, sometime Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of French and Medieval Studies at Pennsylvania State University, and a world authority on mediaeval French and [who] also wrote 'Rolls of Arms of Edward I'. In Early Blazon [2nd ed, Boydell, 1997.] he gives examples of 'teste' used as the head of a dragon, wolf, lamb, leopard, serpent, and specifically 'egle de deus testes' (see p 173). Later of course the word became 'tête' with the circumflex indicating the missing 's'.*[Haworth, Peter 2011 pers. comm]

⁴²⁴ Sir Robert de Halghton was a Staffordshire knight. Interestingly he was an MP, and supporter of Simon de Montfort in the Parliament of 1258, so he too had been forgiven by King Edward (Political History of Penkrigde, 1258 - 1603 at <http://www.timespast.org.uk/id87.html>) Robert de Halghton died in 1303 (IPM Staffordshire, dated 20 Jan. 32 Edw 1 - 1303)

and Thomas Page as his attorneys to act for him while he was away⁴²⁵. In 1287 the same Thomas Page had quitclaimed

*all his rights in half a 'ham' (a portion of meadow) called Badecoakes lying next to the abbey of Lacock in exchange for one and a half acres of meadow in Northmede, formerly belonging to John Crok*⁴²⁶

The aim of this embassy has not been discovered but it may have been to respond to the appeal made to the Pope by the Scots. They presented Pope Boniface with a well prepared case to show that

*Edward had no superiority in Scotland but that, in fact, the kingdom was in the special protection of the Holy See*⁴²⁷

John wasn't in Rome long, he may have returned when the embassy failed; the Pope issued the Bull *Scimus Fili* instructing Edward I to leave the Scots alone. This wasn't actually presented to Edward until later in 1300, see below.

John Bluet was back in England by October when he acknowledged that he owed 8 marks to John de Tyting to be secured on his property in Southampton,. This doesn't necessarily mean in the town of Southampton as at this date Southampton was often used as a geographical area and appears to have been looked on almost as a county in its own right. It is known from the Close Rolls that de Tyting was a citizen of Winchester⁴²⁸ but this doesn't show his true importance. He could afford to lend John Bluet money as he

*was Mayor of Winchester on three occasions as well as being Member of Parliament..... He made his fortune from wool and in modern terms was a multimillionaire who had many connections with France and other parts of Europe*⁴²⁹

Wool and money were major factors of England at this period - " throughout the thirteenth century the amount of money in circulation had been increasing

⁴²⁵ *Calendar Close Rolls Edw I* vol 3 1296 - 1303 dated March 8th 1299 p397

⁴²⁶ Document, detailed in a sale catalogue, dated Lacock, Wiltshire, 26th May 1314, current location unknown.

⁴²⁷ Keen, M (2003) *England in the later Middle Ages* 2nd ed. Routledge p27

⁴²⁸ *Calendar Close Rolls Edw I* vol 3 1296 - 1303 p508 dated October 28th 1302 when John acknowledged the debt was now £24 6s 4d

⁴²⁹ Scobie, G *Views of Medieval Winchester* at <http://www.communicate.co.uk/hants/somsoc/page12.phtml> (no longer available)

⁴³⁰ ; the increase in the [money] supply was certainly stupendous and was supported by the influx of silver to pay for English and Scottish wool. So it is not surprising to find a wool merchant lending money.

Edward invaded Scotland again in 1300 and it is clear that John Bluet was again present; his arms appear in the Galloway Roll of Arms ⁴³¹. Brian Timms notes that this roll is not definitely linked with any particular event in 1300, which is certainly its date, but that it probably refers to a skirmish which took place about three weeks after the siege of Caerlaverock ⁴³². However Brown ⁴³³ associates it with a fight at the River Cree some three weeks after the siege. A good account of the fight appears in Barrow's excellent book on the period:

the English army reached the [River] Cree and found the Scots facing them across the tidal estuary. . . . The archers on both sides exchanged shots across the river, and when the tide went out the English infantry crossed over and harassed the enemy at close quarters. In each army the cavalry was grouped in three brigades. Edward, mistrusting snares and traps which the Scots were reported to have laid, wished to keep the English horse on the east side. But owing to a misunderstanding the earl of Hereford's brigade went over, whereupon the king and his son Edward of Caernarvon followed in support. At this the three Scottish cavalry brigades, commanded respectively by Buchan, Comyn of Badenoch, and Umfraville, took to flight, many knights abandoning their horses and fleeing to the moors. ⁴³⁴

It is said that the Galloway roll was composed soon after this and that it only includes the knights in the King and his 16-year-old son's squadrons ⁴³⁵. If this is

⁴³⁰ See, for instance, Carpenter, D (2003) *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* OUP, chapter 2 generally, and p40 specifically

⁴³¹ <http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms/rolls/gallowayGA3.htm>

⁴³² <http://www.briantimms.com/rolls/gallowayGA1.htm> The Galloway Roll manuscript is M14bis, pp376-90, College of Arms, London. Edward I commenced the siege of Caerlaverock Castle on July 10 1300 and battering rams and trebuchets made short work of the castle and rope tied to the nearest trees made even shorter work of some of the hapless garrison [Barrow, GS (2005) *Robert the Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* p146]

⁴³³ Brown, NM (1996) *Gules Crusily and a Fess Dancetty Or* Research/Penn State, Vol. 17, no. 3, online at <http://www.rps.psu.edu/sep96/gules.html>

⁴³⁴ Barrow, GS (2005) *Robert the Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* p148

⁴³⁵ Brown, NM (1996) *Gules Crusily and a Fess Dancetty Or* Research/Penn State, Vol. 17, no. 3, online at <http://www.rps.psu.edu/sep96/gules.html>

correct John Bluet was one of either Edward I or Edward of Caernarvon's personal knights.

John was probably back in Wiltshire in the late autumn of 1300; in August the Pope sent a letter to Edward I demanding that he should withdraw from Scotland, referring to his Bull of the previous year, which Winchelsea had only just presented to the King. Edward deferred his answer, but on October 30th announced a truce with the Scots.⁴³⁶

Edward invaded Scotland again in 1301 and continued to harry the Scots in 1302 and 1303. John Bluet was certainly in Scotland towards the end of this period. In 1303 he was given respite of service due in Southampton and Wiltshire because he is going to Scotland with the King⁴³⁷ and later in the year this was extended because he was staying with Ralph de Monte Hermeri⁴³⁸ in Scotland.

John Bluet was more involved with the royal family at this time than just being one of their knights; he stood surety for Joan of Acre. This is known because shortly after the return from Scotland he was given a grant by the King that neither he nor his heirs were to be

*molested by reason of his having been one of the pledges for the debts of Joan, countess of Gloucester and Hertford, the king's daughter to the king in his lifetime, who is bound to the king in 8,000 marks to have again her goods which for certain causes he had taken into his hands, and also for part of the debts wherein Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, sometime her husband, was bound to the king in his lifetime*⁴³⁹

Joan was married to Gilbert de Clare, the 7th Earl of Hertford, in 1290. He died in 1295 and she secretly married Ralph de Monthermer, 1st Baron Monthermer, who was a member of her personal household, in 1297. King Edward I, who was arranging a marriage for her to an Italian nobleman, was extremely upset when he found out. He threw Monthermer in prison, and Joan had to plead for his release. King Edward also took control of Joan's household and her property, hence the debt. Eventually her father relented, released Monthermer from prison in August 1297, and allowed him to hold the title of Earl of Gloucester and Hereford during Joan's lifetime. But John Bluet had to wait another three years before he was no longer looked on with disfavour for having backed Joan and probably only then because he gave good service in Scotland.

⁴³⁶ Powicke, M (1962) *The Thirteenth Century 1216 - 1307* The Oxford History of England Clarendon Press p693

⁴³⁷ *Calendar Close Rolls 1277 - 1325* p79

⁴³⁸ *Calendar Close Rolls 1277 - 1325* p92

⁴³⁹ *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw I vol 3 1292-1301* p534 dated September 20th 1300

King Edward I was in Wiltshire in April and May 1302, when he was staying at Devizes Castle. During his visit he let Sir John Bluet off a fine that had been imposed when John had appeared

*before... the king's justices recently appointed to enquire concerning certain trespasses of venison against him [the King] in the Forest of Wolvemer as the king has given him such respite*⁴⁴⁰

This pardon was only formally granted in 1303 by reason of his service in Scotland when the King was in Dundee. This was yet another excursion into Scotland that had not been much fun; earlier that year, in February, the English had been routed at the Battle of Roslin when Sir John Seagrave's 30,000 English were beaten by 8,000 Scots under various commanders⁴⁴¹. John Bluet was not involved in this campaign.

In 1306 Joan, the king's daughter for whom John Bluet had stood surety, died and her IPM shows that Sir John had land, houses and a water mill in Monmouthshire⁴⁴² but that it was only a lifetime tenure and they was not inherited by John's heirs.

As one of the Wiltshire county knights John was involved in law and order. For example in early 1307 he was appointed, with Peter Malorre⁴⁴³, to investigate a problem for a neighbouring landowner and find

⁴⁴⁰ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw I* vol 4 1301 - 1307 dated October 18 1303 p164

⁴⁴¹ including Wallace, Comyn, Fraser, St. Clair, Somerfield of Carnwarth, Simon of the Lee, Fleming of Cumbernauld and the Knights of the Hospital at Torphichen.

⁴⁴² *Inquisitions Post Mortem* vol IV 24-35 Edw I no435, p326
Little Lantrissen on Usk [Monmouth] houses with garden, 175a 1r in the hand of John Bluet for life of the gift of Sir Ralph de Monte Hermeri whereof a part remains void after the war, a water mill held by the said John Bluet Lantrissen tenements which descended to the said earl by hereditary right viz $\frac{1}{4}$ knights fee held by John Bluet for life of the gift of Sir Ralph de Monte Hermeri
 Ralph de Monte Hermeri is now more usually referred to as Ralph de Monthemmer, Joan's second husband (see previous page)

⁴⁴³ *Charter of Inspeximus*, Charter Roll, 5 Ed. II., m. 8 quoted at <http://www.yorkshirehistory.com/RAVENSER/beginning.htm>

the persons who entered the manor of John de la Mare ⁴⁴⁴, while he was on the king's service and carried away rabbits and other goods under his protection, at Castalcumbe [Castle Coombe], co. Wilts, hunted in his warren there and carried away rabbits and other goods ⁴⁴⁵

Peter Malorre ⁴⁴⁶ may have been sympathetic to de la Mare's problems, as he had suffered similar affront just two years earlier; in the patent Rolls for 1305 there is a record of the appointment of knights to investigate after people

broke down the close of Ralph de Sandwyco ⁴⁴⁷ and Peter Malorre at Wykewood, co. Surrey and cut down and carried away his trees.
⁴⁴⁸



Fig. 20 Arms of John de la Mare *

Knights of Edward I vol III (1930) Harl. Soc vol LXXXII p110
Argent bend azure and 3 eagles or by permission of Brian Timms at
<http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms/era/early%20rolls%20of%20arms.htm>

John de la Mare held the Barony of Castle Combe as the inheritance of his first wife, Petronilla de Dunstavill, widow of Robert de Montford. He held it after Petronilla's death for life only [<http://www.the-orb.net/wales/esknights/mare.htm>]

⁴⁴⁵ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw I* vol 4 1301 - 1307 dated Jan 24th 1307 p540

⁴⁴⁶ Peter Mallore was a witness to Edward II's grant of a charter as a free borough to the Yorkshire town of Ravenserode in 1299. From the witness list it would seem likely that Mallore was one of Edward's household knights.

⁴⁴⁷ Barron, CM (2004) *London in the Middle Ages : Government and People 1200-1500* OUP ISBN 0199257779

Ralph de Sandwich was a baron of the exchequer [Royal Arch. Soc. of Gt. Brit. And Ire. (1848) *Memoirs Illustrative of the Antiquities of the County and City of York etc*, p151] and was appointed royal Warden of the City of London when King Edward I took London into his own hands in June 1285 after Lawrence Duket was murdered in St Mary le Bow church. The city was governed by royal Wardens for thirteen years and the city liberties were only recovered after a fine of 2000 marks (an enormous amount) was paid in April 1298. Sandwich is seen as Warden, or Mayor, of London 9 times between 1284 and 1293 (Appendix 1 pp322-323). He may have died in 1307 [Foss, E (1851) *The Judges of England* vol III pp151 - 152]

⁴⁴⁸ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw I* vol 4 1301 - 1307 dated March 7th 1305

In 1308 John granted the income from the rental of some Bluet land to Robert of the Bridge, provided he supplied 2lbs (approx 1kg) of wax for the Chapel of St Mary of Lackham annually, presumably for candles⁴⁴⁹ .

Nearly four hundred years later one of these areas (Winterswell) belonged to a Notton clothier⁴⁵⁰ .

Robert was chaplain at Lackham in William Bluet's time; William gave a message⁴⁵¹ in the manor of Lakham to *Robert of Lakham, cleric, and Rosye his wife*

It is noteworthy that Robert was a clerk, not a priest and so could marry. Robert appears as a witness to Lacock Abbey charters between at least 1263 and 1303⁴⁵² . Other Lackham names that appear at this time are 'Alan de

⁴⁴⁹ A copy of the original document is reported by Hinton, [Hinton, FH (1941) *Notes : Chapel at Lackham, in Lacock WAM XLIX CLXXIV* pp360 - 361]. The entry reads :

Dugdale, Sir W (1825) *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales 1308* (2 Edw II)
(Transcription by JE Jackson from a copy, in his possession, of a Charter in the British Museum. BM Additional Charters no. 1533)
Sciant presentes &c. I John Bluet Kt and Lord of Lackham give &c, to Robert de le Brigg, Clerk, Two shillings & sixpence of annual rent in my Fee of Lackham to be yearly taken, viz, From Matilda Hobekins 18d, & from John le Colt 12 for the Messuages, &c, wh. they hold of me. Moreover I have given to ye said Robert 171/2 acres of Arable, viz. 6 in Le Leye; 11/2 on Nethecote, 1 on Cockelegh, 1 at Goidlegh cum Rammesbrok, & 1/2 an acre at Man's Lane. And at Pewsdon 1 acre and at Wynterwell (names still at or near Lackham JEJ) 1 acre & on Eldridge 2 acres, & near the land of dame Hawys in the Inland 1 acre and near Le Weylete 1 acre; & on Flexley 1 acre of meadow called Le Melehamme. To Have & To Hold the said Annual Rents with the 171/2 acres of arable & 1 of adow, of me and my heirs or assigns, To said Robert for term of his life freely, quietly and in good peace, Rendering thereout every year at the Chapel of the Blessed V Mary of Lackham Two lbs of wax (and) to me and my heirs sixpence, for the mess aforsd. And I, ye sd John Bluet, will warrant &c On testimony whereof &c. Our seals are affixed. Witnesses Alan Brecon, Alexander de Fraxino [Ash?, and if so was he from the settlement of Ash, at the top of Naish (Ash) Hill?], Wm Thomas and others. dat 2 Edward II"

⁴⁵⁰ Kite, E (1911) *Will of Samuel Mitchellof Notton, 1694 Wilts. Notes & Queries* VI p269

Samuel Mitchell gave "lease of grounds at Winters Well Lacock purchased of Nicholas Gore and John Grist" to his son in law Robert Tarrant and grandson Robert Colborn. He didn't actually die until 1698 - *Here lyeth the body of Samuel Mitchell, of Notton, Clothier, who deceased the 4th day of Feb 1698, Aged 74 years* Lacock inscriptions recorded in Sherlock, P (ed) (2000) *Monumental Inscriptions of Witshire 1822* WRS vol 53, p17

⁴⁵¹ British Library Add. Ch. 7063 dated Edward I

⁴⁵² Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 He appears in charters between 1257-63, 1286-98 and 1290-1303 [p33 no 94, p28 no 58 and p49 no 178

Lacham'⁴⁵³ and 'Sir William de Lacham, knight'⁴⁵⁴, which is dated to between 1257-83, and is presumably William Bluet.

The names of six other chaplains are known - Richard (1168)⁴⁵⁵, Robert (1221)⁴⁵⁶, Stephen Draper(1349)⁴⁵⁷, Walter Fynamore (1352)⁴⁵⁸ William Hunte⁴⁵⁹

respectively]. He is shown as "Robert de Lacham clerk" in the first and last here.

⁴⁵³ Rogers, KH (1978) *ibid* p26 no 58

⁴⁵⁴ Rogers, KH (1978) *ibid* p33 no 98

⁴⁵⁵ Rogers, KH (1978) *ibid* p18, no 29, dated 1168 - 79 Richard was a witness to the agreement between Earl William of Salisbury and Ralph Bloet between 1168 and 1179, where he is recorded as *Richard, chaplain of Lach'* which is the earliest record of a Lackham chaplain. It doesn't necessarily follow that the chapel was the one under discussion as the name is not given.

⁴⁵⁶ British Library Add. Ch. 47302 is a charter by Sibia "daughter of Edward Lambel", who granted several pieces of land in Lacock to "Robert, vicar of the chapel of Lakham in Laycok in co. Wilts" which is dated 5 Hen III (1221 [Rogers, KH (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS p26, no 58, dated 1286-98]

⁴⁵⁷ Calendar of Patent Rolls Edw III vol 3 p400
2nd October 1349 *Presentation of Stephen Draper chaplain, to the Chapel of St Mary within the manor of Lackham*

⁴⁵⁸ It is likely all were local men but Walter certainly is - the "House of Fynemore" (or Fynamour) was located near the south west edge of Bowood and formed a point on the Chippenham Forest boundary as laid down in the Perambulation of 1300 and the Bluets have dealings with various Fynamours.

⁴⁵⁹ The original details for the three middle chaplains are given in Hinton, FH (1941) *Notes : Chapel at Lackham, in Lacock* WAM XLIX CLXXIV pp360 -361 taken from the Register of Sarum, as printed in the vol. of "Wilts Institutions" by Sir Thos. Phillipps

Jackson (Mss) also has exactly the same information, laid out in exactly the same way -

		Institution of Lackham Chapel	
		Patron	Clerk
		The King: for the heir	Stephen Draper
AD	Capel : Lacham		
1349		of Eleanor Bluet**	
1352	Capel Lacham situat juxta Lacock	Peter de Cusaunce Ld of ye Manor of Lacham	Walter Fynamour on resig. of Stephen Draper
1410	Cantaria in manerio de Lakham	Philip Baynard Ld of ye Manor of Lakham	Wm Hunte

** she had died in 1348 - the heir was Margaret

(1410)⁴⁶⁰ and the last of the Chaplains to Lackham, Sir Michael Brickett
 (1565)⁴⁶¹ .

John Bluet was also involved with Lacock Abbey. It has already been seen that he gave up his right of presenting to St Cyriacs church⁴⁶² and

*when Sir John Bluet agreed to surrender his share of the avowson of St Cyriac's to the nuns one of the conditions was that they should build between them a Lady Chapel adjoining the conventual church in which he should be buried*⁴⁶³

In 1312 this was put in hand and the abbess of Lacock, Joan de Montfort, was in bond to Sir John for 200 marks⁴⁶⁴ ; the abbess and convent had to complete the chapel by the due date. If this was done John would assign the money to cover the work, otherwise he would demand payment. The deadline appears to have been renegotiated, another agreement was made in 1315 with the same bond amount but only two thirds of the work had to be completed by 1323 and the final third by 1327. The chapel was to be built on the side of the Abbey and two arches made to replace the common wall⁴⁶⁵ .

⁴⁶⁰ Aubrey, J ed by Jackson, JE (1862) *Wiltshire Topographical Collections* footnote 1 p9 (footnotes by Jackson)

⁴⁶¹ Thomas, J O (1984) *History of Agricultural Education in Wiltshire* p28 records that Michael Brickett was buried in Lacock church in 1565, available online at [Agricultural Education in Wiltshire](#)

⁴⁶² Calendar Patent Rolls Edw II vol 1 1307 - 1311 John was granted licence to give up his avowson to the Nuns, and they were given licence to appropriate St Cyriac's dated March 4 1311. The licence actually cost him 100 solidos - "Johes Bluet finem fecit cum R p centum solid' p licen' concedendi jus pronat quod het in ecclia Sci Ciriaci de Lacok abisse et moniabilis de Lacok " [Rotulorum originalum in Curia Scacarii (1805) vol 1 Hen III Edw I & Edw II p115]

⁴⁶³ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* III p305

⁴⁶⁴ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 no 37 pp21-22 payable at All Saints [1st November] in 1319, dated 27 Sept. 1312 .
 For the original wording (in French rather than the more usual Latin) see Clark- Maxwell (1904) *On the Appropriation of Lacock Abbey* WAM 33 Appendix XI pp372 - 373. The seal, described as Seal armorial : two headed eagle is that of the Bluets. The original text, and the translation given in Talbot CH (1876) *On the agreement between the abbess Johanna de Montfort and the convent of Lacock, and sir John Bluet, Lord of Lackham, concerning the erection of a chapel of Our Lady adjoining the Abbey Church of Lacock AD1315* WAM XVI pp 35 - 39, are much longer and more complete

⁴⁶⁵ Rogers, KH (ed) (1978) *ibid* p23, no 43 dated 28 August 1315
 The conversion factor between marks and pounds at this time can be calculated from two other agreements, dated September 1315, where John Bluet formally agreed the bond. From these documents it is seen that 200 marks was equal to £133 3s, one Edward II mark was therefore equal to just under 13s 4d, which is exactly the same value as the

It is unknown if the Chapel was completed on time.

The original agreement for this work still existed in 1900 although it seems to have disappeared now -

*This the covenant made between lady Johanna de Mounfort Abbess of Lacoke and the convent of the one part of Sir John Bluet Lord of Lacham of the other part. That is to say that the aforesaid Abbess and convent or their successors shall cause to be made and finished a chapel of Our Lady in their abbey of Lacoke, which chapel shall adjoin their high church of the same abbey. And thus shall the chapel be, in length five and nine feet and in width twenty five and a half and there shall be in the said chapel four windows that is to say in each gable one window as large as the one is made and finished and the other is begun shall be well made and finished, and in the far (south) side of the aforesaid chapel the one to be such as is made and finished and the other as large as it is begun shall be made and finished of good and suitable work and the aforesaid windows are to be suitably ironed and glazed. And the old wall shall be taken down from the apex of the two windows which were and appeared on the making of this writing in the wall aforesaid as far as the string course next below the sills of the same windows, and two arches shall be made where the wall shall be taken down as large that is to say as can well be suffered between the two buttresses so that the old arch (window arch) can be sawn without peril. And the aforesaid Abbess and convent or their successors shall cause to be made the roof of the same chapel of good timber and suitable work and a roof of such kind as shall please the aforesaid Abbess and convent or their successors . And the aforesaid chapel, that is to say the roof, shall be well and suitably covered with lead, and the roof within the aforesaid chapel shall be all well ceiled and painted ..*⁴⁶⁶

The Lady Chapel's location is made clear by Talbot, it was

*To the south of the nuns' choir, and its east end ranged with the east end of the Church, which was a little beyond the east face of the tower later built by Sir William Sharrington*⁴⁶⁷

Sir John was appointed Warden of the forests of Chippenham and Melksham, his

Tudor mark [Rogers KH (1979) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS pp22-23, charters 41 & 42]

⁴⁶⁶ Breakspear, H (1900) *Lacock Abbey Church* The Archaeological Journal pp4-5 WANHS WT138/13

⁴⁶⁷ Talbot, CH (1911) *The Will of Joan Trye* WN&Q vol 7 p58 The Tower is, of course, the one now seen on the south eastern side of the abbey and famous from Fox-Talbot's early photographs.

deputy was John de Montsorel⁴⁶⁸ .

According to a much later Visitation of Wiltshire there was another generation of Bluets at Lackham, with John being the son of another John Bluet who married Margaret or Margery Bigod, presumably a daughter of his overlord. There is some problem with this as no such marriage is seen in the pedigree of the Bigod family. There is no direct evidence, from charters etc, that there were two John Bluets at this time, and the dates do not require another generation, although if they were short-lived it would *just* be possible. It is taken that the Sir John who is said to have been married to Margaret Bigod is a confusion of later date and that Sir John married first Margery and then Eleanor⁴⁶⁹ .

There is documentary evidence for Margery; in 1300 Alice of Calne , daughter of Thomas Boret granted land in Helmerton (Hilmarton) to Sir John Bluet and his wife Margery⁴⁷⁰ . In 1308 she is given as John's wife in an agreement⁴⁷¹ with John's brother, Ralph VI.

The latest record found of Margery is in September 1309, when she and John took back land in Melksham and Beanacre they had allowed John de Bradford⁴⁷² and his wife Isabel to use⁴⁷³ . She was certainly dead by 22nd March 1311 when she is referred to as John's late wife⁴⁷⁴

John married Eleanor, the widow of William de Brianzon . As Eleanor was the

⁴⁶⁸ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* IV p437

⁴⁶⁹ The Bluet pedigree in [Fig. 18](#) shows this arrangement, not the one depicted in Visitations. This lineage remains speculative, but is considered to be as probable as the more widely accepted one.

⁴⁷⁰ Badminton Estate Records D2700/NR11/1/4

⁴⁷¹ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw II* vol 1 1307 - 1313 dated Nov 1st 1308 p145. This is possibly the grant that is recorded in *Rot. Orig. in Curia Scacarii* (1805) p163 not dated which shows John held in chief - "*Johes Bluet finem fecit cum R p decem marcas p licentia feoffandi Radm Bluet de manio de Helmerton qd de R tenet in capite*".

(An aside, and nothing at all to do with Lackham or the Bluets; the next entry in this Roll is "Nov 5th 1308 Notification that Roger atte Mershe had accidentally lost part of his left ear by the bite of a horse" - it is not clear why this appears in a Patent but it was too good to omit!)

⁴⁷² Bradford on Avon

⁴⁷³ Pugh, RB (ed) (1939) Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II Wilt. Rec. Soc. Devizes Vol 1, p74

⁴⁷⁴ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p20, no 33, dated 6 Mar 1312

widow of a tenant in chief the King had to grant permission for the marriage. The application was granted in December 1311⁴⁷⁵. Eleanor appears as Sir John's wife in a fine of 1312⁴⁷⁶ when there was an agreement concerning land in Beanacre and Melksham with John's brother Ralph VI. It is likely this was the same land that John and Margery had claimed in 1309.⁴⁷⁷

It seems that they were reclaiming Wiltshire manors at this time as in 1313 they also took back control of Lackham and Hilmarton from William Martel, John's squire / valet. This is before the birth of Eleanor, John's younger daughter; the fine specifies that the manors are to be held by John and

*the heirs male of John's body . Successive remainders to Margaret, daughter of the said John, the heirs of her body and the heirs of John*⁴⁷⁸ .

Which set up that these two main manors are to be held by John's sons then the remainders to Margaret and her children.

In 1313 John Bluet is seen acting in concert with the porter of Lacock Abbey, John de Menstreworth, in an action regarding land they held in Box⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁵ *Calendar Patent Rolls Edw II vol 1 1307 - 1313 p407*

Dec 1311 *Licence, at the request of Ralph de Monte Hermerii, for Eleanor, late the wife of William de Brianzon. tenant in chief, to marry John Bluet, if she will*

⁴⁷⁶ Pugh, RB (ed) (1939) *Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II Wilt. Rec. Soc. Devizes Vol 1, p82*

⁴⁷⁷ In 1309 it was *1 messuage, 1 carucate of land and 10 acres of meadow in Beanacre and Melksham. And in 1312 1 messuage, 1 carucate of land and 12 acres of meadow in Beanacre and Melksham* [Pugh, RB (1939) *Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II Wilt. Rec. Soc. Devizes Vol 1, pp 74 and 82 respectively*]

⁴⁷⁸ Pugh, RB (ed) (1939) *Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II Wilt. Rec. Soc. Devizes Vol 1, p78*

⁴⁷⁹ *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 4 (1902), pp. 410-420. Deeds: A.9301 - A.9400 URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64408>*

Acknowledgment by William de la Barre of Chippenham that he had received from Sir John Bluet, lord of Lacham and John de Menstreworth, porter of the abbey of Lacok, a moiety of all the lands, &c.as fully as they came by descent in pur party to William de Pykewyke by the death of Walter de la Slade his uncle at La Slade in the parish of La Boxe and elsewhere in the said parish, as appeared by their deed (recited) whereby they granted to the said William de la Barre the lands, &c. they had by the feoffment of George de Persy in La Slade in the said parish, to hold to the said William, and Hawyse his wife, and the heirs of his body; with grant, for himself and his heirs, that he held the said lands of the abbess and convent of Lacok. Witnesses:—Sir John de Holt, Sir John de la Mare, Sir William de Cotes and others (named). Lacok, Friday after Midsummer, 6 Edward II (June 28th 1313)

Sir John was can be placed in Wiltshire in 1314, when he was at Sheldon Manor, near Lackham, to witness a quitclaim⁴⁸⁰.

In 1315 John was appointed a Commissioner of oyer and terminer⁴⁸¹ along with Henry de Scrop and John Daubernoun, to investigate

*the persons who killed the late abbess at Romsey, on the confines of the counties of Hants and Wilts*⁴⁸²

On 11th May, 1315, Alice de Roffia and Margaret de Middleton, who were nuns at Romsey, brought news to the King of the death of Abbess Alice. They alleged that the late abbess had come to her end by foul means, and on 28th May the commission was appointed.

This was a busy year for John, he was also involved with an inquisition in Devizes⁴⁸³; earlier in 1315 the parson of Devizes, Thomas de Yucflel had petitioned the king for tithes he said were owed to him by Queen Margaret⁴⁸⁴ because "she held the park of Devizes and was responsible for the tithes due on the pasture therein". Three local men were commissioned⁴⁸⁵ to make the enquiry - John de Foxley, John Bluet and William de Harden⁴⁸⁶ and the

⁴⁸⁰ Kirby, JL (ed) (1994) The Hungerford Cartulary : A calendar of the earl of Radnor's cartulary of the Hungerford family WRS vol XLIX p84 no 328 dated Sheldon Thursday before Easter [4th April] 1314

⁴⁸¹ <http://thelawdictionary.org/court-of-oyer-and-terminer/>

⁴⁸² Victoria County History Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Vol II p126-

⁴⁸³ Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous vol 2 no 206 p49 year 1315

⁴⁸⁴ Marguerite of France (born in Paris in 1282 and died at Marlborough Castle 14 February 1317) the second consort of Edward I. They married in 1299 when she was 17. She and Edward had three children - Thomas of Brotherton; Edmund of Woodstock and Eleanor of England who had died aged 5 in 1311

⁴⁸⁵ Commission dated Wednesday March 5th 1315

⁴⁸⁶ William de Harden appears frequently in the Patent Rolls around this time as a commissioner as here; interestingly in one of them he is the subject - in a commission issued September 10th 1299 Henry Spygurnel (Spigurnel) and John Durelwere tasked with looking into an appeal by Agatha de Wedone in Northamptonshire, concerning Theobold prior of Okenurn, Willam de Harden, Henry Botneyand Henry de Okeburn sometime bailiff of Wedone touching the death of her son This doesn't mean that they were accused of killing him, it is likely the named men were the commissioners who investigated the death of William de Wedoneand that Agatha wasn't happy with the result. (Calendar Patent Rolls Edw I vol 3 [1292-1301] p 474)

inquisition took place in Devizes.

They found that

The late King Edward ⁴⁸⁸ and his ancestors from time beyond memory paid tithe of the meadow in the park of Devizes. The said late king, in the 10th year of his reign [1282] caused the said meadow to be changed to pasture by Ralph de Sandyesthen constable of Devizes castle, and from that time no tithe has been paid therefore. The yearly value of the tithe of the said meadow was 22s

In modern usage meadow and pasture are interchangeable. At Domesday they had different meanings - Pasture was land where animals grazed all year round. Meadow was much more valuable, as it was land bordering streams and rivers, which was used both to produce hay and for grazing ⁴⁸⁹. The tithe rate appears to have been different for the two but what that was in Wiltshire is unclear. This distinction is clearly made in a fine of 1312 ⁴⁹⁰ where 12 acres of meadow and 40 acres of feeding are mentioned.

In 1316 John granted lands and tenements in Weston to William Reynnade, his wife Maud and their son ⁴⁹¹. This charter is of note as it is one of the few that specifies that it was signed at Lackham, showing John was staying there.

In the same year one John granted land to Gilbert de Fynamore his wife and John and Elizabeth their children ⁴⁹². This grant was also written in French, and in it he gave the piece of "land of the king's waste..... in the Forest of Pewsham at Horselaperith for the sum of 2¹/₂ marks per annum". It may well be that this is part of 138 acres that John Bluet was granted by Edward II "at

⁴⁸⁷ Thursday the morrow of St Barnabas ie June 12th 1315

⁴⁸⁸ Edward I, died July 7th 1307

⁴⁸⁹ <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/life.html> Pasture, Livestock and Fisheries

⁴⁹⁰ Pugh, RB (1939) *Abstracts of the Feet of Fines relating to Wiltshire Edw I and Edw II* Wilt. Rec. Soc. Devizes Vol 1, p 80 dated September 1312

⁴⁹¹ British Library Add. Ch. 7067 Written in French, dated 9 Edw III, Monday before the feast of St. Stephen, which means this charter was signed on Sunday Dec 20th, 1316 (the Feast of St. Stephen, December 26th, fell on a Sunday in 1316), calculation performed using day - date calculator at <http://www.calendarhome.com/tyc/download.html>, which can be printed and used offline; a good online facility that gives the same results is at <http://www.searchforancestors.com/utility/dayofweek.html>

⁴⁹² W&SHC 1720 100 This is one of the very few Bluet documents held in Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham.

*Horslaperithe by the close of John de Roches*⁴⁹³ in 1315. Gilbert de Fynamore appears in many grants and charters in the northern Wiltshire area in the period between 1280 and 1320⁴⁹⁴. A Gilbert de Finemor witnessed a charter of Ela, abbess of Lacock between 1239 and 1257⁴⁹⁵, which may have been the Gilbert under discussion, it is not clear. There are three other charters⁴⁹⁶ in the Lacock cartulary also witnessed by Gilbert de Finemor, but they are undated. Gilbert was a member of the local de Finemor family who

*lived at Whethan Hall, near Calne, and who came into possession of the manor of Comerford or Quemerford in the reign of Henry VII in the year 1504*⁴⁹⁷

This wasn't the only land that Gilbert had in the Forest; in the same year the constable of the castle of Devizes, William de Rameshulle⁴⁹⁸, acknowledged he had received 8s 3d from Gilbert Fynamour for 33 acres in the forest of Chippenham⁴⁹⁹. de Rameshulle was the local receiver of the moneys of Lady Isabella⁵⁰⁰, Queen of England, from the enclosures of the forests of Melksham and Chippenham.

Records in Hampshire show John Bluet being a witness for Sir Thomas de

⁴⁹³ *Calendar Close Rolls Edw II* vol 2 1307 -1319 p236 dated March 1st 1315. However, in Rot. Orig. in Curia Scacarii (1805) vol 1 p217 the acreage is 145, and it cost John 36 sol and 3 dinarii a year - "R dedit & concessit Johi Bluet de vastis R in foresta R de Pewesham in com' Wiltes centum et qdraginta et quinq acra p pictam viginti pedum apud Horslaperithe etc tened' eidem Johi & hedibud suis impm reddo inde p ann' triginta et sex solidose et tres denar'

⁴⁹⁴ See *Close Rolls of Edw I and Edw II*

⁴⁹⁵ Rogers KH (1979) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS p32 number 92

⁴⁹⁶ Rogers KH (1979) *ibid* numbers 247, 344 and 353

⁴⁹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quemerford> *Early history of Quemerford and the Quemerford family*, extract as of article in Dec 2007

⁴⁹⁸ Six years later he was constable of Marlborough castle [*A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 1* (1890), pp. 395-405 Deed C192. at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64230>]

⁴⁹⁹ W&SHC 1720. 109

⁵⁰⁰ Isabella of France was the wife of Edward II, the king until 1327. She married Edward in Bologne sur Mer cathedral on January 25th 1308 when she was 12 (they had been betrothed since he was 8, not uncommon at the time). For a useful, short biography see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabella_of_France the works by McKisack, M (1959). *The Fourteenth Century 1307-1399* and Weir, A (2005) *Queen Isabella: Treachery, Adultery, and Murder in Medieval England* are also good.

Coudrein 1297⁵⁰¹, 1307⁵⁰² and 1315⁵⁰³. de Coudre is another knight who was in Scotland with the the King, his arms appear in both the Galloway and Stirling rolls, alongside Sir John's.

John died between December 20th 1316 and January 17th 1317, when a patent was issued to set William de North

*in the place of John Bluet, who died at Loughborough after the commencement of the proceedings*⁵⁰⁴

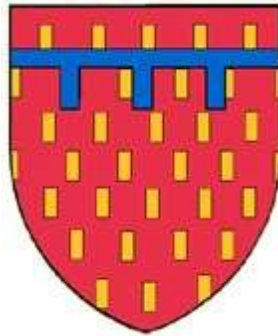


Fig. 21 Arms of Thomas de Coudre⁵⁰⁵ *

These proceedings, although John didn't see the end of the investigation, concerned a

*complaint by queen Margaret touching the persons who entered her free chase at Asshedoune, her park at Maresfeld and her free warrens at Maresfeld and Wylingdon, co. Sussex, hunted therein, and in her chace and park took deer, and in her warren hares, rabbits, etc., cut clown her trees growing in the woods within the chace, fished in her stews and free fisheries at Maresfeld, carried away fish, trees, deer, etc. and also assaulted her bailiffs and servants exercising their offices within the honour of L' Aigle.*⁵⁰⁶

Breaskpear's excavation of Lacock Abbey in 1900 found evidence for what

⁵⁰¹ Hampshire Record Office 44769/C312 dated 1297

⁵⁰² Hampshire Record Office 44769/C307 dated September 2 1307

⁵⁰³ Hampshire Record Office 44769/C31252 dated February 2 1315

⁵⁰⁴ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw II* vol 2 1313 - 1317

⁵⁰⁵ <http://perso.numericable.fr/briantimms/rolls/stirlingST1.htm>
Gules billey or a label of three points azure by permission of Brian Timms

⁵⁰⁶ *Calendar Patent Roll Edw II* vol 2 1313 - 1317

was probably Sir John's tomb

*Each gable was pierced by a window and the south wall had two windows. The monument of Sir John Bluet, who was buried in this chapel and around which four candles were maintained daily, was probably provided for from the first and occupied the centre of the wall between the windows; a large block of foundation stone was found projecting inside the wall face, which probably formed the support to this*⁵⁰⁷

Ralph Bluet VI held in knight's fee in Lackham in 1316, and at Littlecote in Hilmarton. Limited evidence for Ralph is to be found, but in 1309 he and Margery (presumably his wife) had bought the Manor of Beanacre; three years later he conveyed it to John and Eleanor Bluet⁵⁰⁸ and of course he has already been seen acting as an Inquisition juror (see above) .

It is not uncommon for there to be disputes arising from a will, and there is evidence of this with John's. There were three trustees (executors) of John's will - Roger of Chippenham (the parson of Heddington), and two Roberts, the parsons of Bromham and Ditteridge. There was a dispute about payments to be made under the terms of the will - first Robert le Poleter of New Salisbury brought an action against the trustees for £14⁵⁰⁹ and then in 1319 a writ was issued concerning a plea for £10 from William de Braybok. The trustees should have appeared before the Court early in the year but eventually attended at Woodford in October 1319⁵¹⁰. They obviously didn't pay up - in February 1321 the Abbot of Salisbury warned them to comply with the court decisions⁵¹¹, which presumably they did as no further records are known.

As per the agreement with the Abbey, and mentioned by Breakspear above,⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁷ Breakspear, H (1900) *Lacock Abbey Church* The Archaeological Journal pp4-5 WANHS WT138/13

⁵⁰⁸ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* VII pp 98-99
Beanacre Manor was first mentioned in a claim by the Prioress of Malmsbury in 1296 but may have been in existence before that. It was rented by the family of William de Beanacre but they lost it for defaulting on payments. See Victoria County History *Wiltshire* for more details.

⁵⁰⁹ Reynolds, S (ed) (1965) *The Registers of Roger Martival Bishop of Salisbury 1315 - 1330* Vol III Royal Writs The Cat. & York Society p 55 no 180

⁵¹⁰ Reynolds, S (ed) (1965) *ibid*, This was before Justices R de Worth and William de Selton, the clerk was William de Aisshton

⁵¹¹ Reynolds, S (ed) (1965) *The Registers of Roger Martival Bishop of Salisbury 1315 - 1330* Vol III p77 no 278

⁵¹² Breakspear, H (1900) *Lacock Abbey Church* The Archaeological Journal pp4-5 WANHS WT138/13

John was buried in the Lady Chapel of the Abbey Church of Lacock and four wax candles lighted during the daily Mass for the Dead⁵¹³ were maintained until the dissolution in 1539⁵¹⁴. The nuns had to

*find at their own costs a priest.... who is bound to celebrate daily for ever for the souls of Sir John and Dame Margery late his wife, and their ancestors, benefactors of the monastery, and all the faithful departed in the Lady Chapel.... The nuns are also to cause one of the priests of the monastery to celebrate a mass of the Blessed Virgin with notes (singing) daily in the same chapel, and during these two masses four wax candles, each of four pounds weight of wax, shall burn daily at the four corners of Sir John's tomb when he has been buried in it and when they are consumed to a length of two cubits they shall be renewed at the cost of the nuns.*⁵¹⁵

These candles required 30 lbs of wax....generally costing 7d a lb - £0 17s 6d annually⁵¹⁶. This wasn't the only charge on the monastery, every year on the anniversary of Sir John's death "the nuns are to give $\frac{1}{2}$ d each to a thousand poor people"¹⁰⁸ which was a yearly cost of £2 1s 6d. "This payment was maintained until the Reformation - a payment of £2 1s 8d was made to the poor on [the feast of] St Petronilla Virgin Mary (May 31st)"⁵¹⁷

Eleanor, John's widow, went on a pilgrimage in 1321, her destination is not known although it was abroad⁵¹⁸.

Eleanor was able to go away as the girls were in the wardship of Maud, Countess of Gloucester. Maud died a year later in 1322, and from her Inquisition it becomes apparent that John Bluet actually had three daughters. He had held the manor of Langeton, within the lordship of Kaerlion [Caerleon]

⁵¹³ Aubrey, J ed by Jackson, JE (1862) *Wiltshire Topographical Collections* footnote 1 p9

⁵¹⁴ Michael, W (1901) *Historic spots in Wiltshire* Lacock was one of the thirty monasteries spared dissolution in 1536, but was surrendered in 1539

⁵¹⁵ Rogers KH (ed) (1978) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS 15 p20, no 33, dated 6 Mar 1312

⁵¹⁶ Talbot CH (1876) On the agreement between the abbess Johanna de Montfort and the convent of Lacock, and Sir John Bluet, Lord of Lackham, concerning the erection of a chapel of Our Lady adjoining the Abbey Church of Lacock AD 1315 WAM XVI p350

⁵¹⁷ Recorded in Clark-Maxwell (1904) On the Appropriation of Lacock Abbey WAM 33 p361

⁵¹⁸ Victoria County History *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* Vol II p126-128

in Wales⁵¹⁹; a record of 1322 shows the Countess Maud, the widow of Gilbert de Clare, held the wardship of the manor

*by reason of the minority of Eleanor, Margaret and Joan, daughters and heirs of John Bluet deceased, who held the manor of the said countess as of her dowerie of the fees of her husband.*⁵²⁰

Joan does not appear in any other record so far located and her fate is unknown⁵²¹ but it is suggested that she is Margaret's daughter. If she was a minor in 1322 she had to have been born by 1310 (the age of majority for females at this time was 12) and so she could have been born in the last year of Margaret's life and this is what is shown in [Fig. 18](#)

Countess Maud died in 1322 and the wardship of the Bluet heiresses devolved to the Earls of Norfolk and Pembroke the overlords of Silchester.

In 1323 Eleanor was

*summoned to deliver up the bodies of her daughters Margaret and Eleanor - the co-heiresses of John Bluet - to William de Cusaunce, the King's Clerk who had bought their marriage rights from Thomas Earl of Norfolk and Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, the overlords of the Manor. Although she petitioned to the king to keep her daughters with her by reason of their tender age she was forced to comply with this order*⁵²²

It is noted that Joan isn't mentioned as a co-heir who was to be given up by Eleanor and may well have died in the meantime. The birth dates for Margaret and Eleanor are not known but Margaret was born at the latest 1314⁵²³. Eleanor jnr was either born just before John's death in late 1317/ early 1318 or maybe even post mortem; in late 1348 she was 30 years and more. Margaret was certainly born after 1311 - in two of the local Inquisitions held on Eleanor senior's death she is given as being daughter of John and Eleanor

⁵¹⁹ This is the manor which provided the money to pay William Martel the 60 sous d'argent seen above

⁵²⁰ *Inquisitions Edw III* dated 23 June 1322

⁵²¹ It is possible that Joan died 1322 - 23

⁵²² *Victoria County History Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* vol II p53

⁵²³ The reasoning here is that in late 1348 Peter de Cusaunce was 19 $\frac{3}{4}$. This means Peter was born in 1329 (actually 2nd February 1329). Given that Margaret's marriage could not be consummated before she was 14 that would give her date of birth at latest as 1314, if she was (for example) 17 when her son was born that would give her birth in 1311. [dates etc from *Cal IPM* vol IX Edw III (1916) no 104 pp91-93 Eleanor, late the wife of John Bluet.]

⁵²⁴ and this is what is shown in Fig. 18

There was another Joan however - John's sister. Not much is known of her, she only appears in three records. The earliest is in 1300, when John de Columbariis knight, acknowledges he owes to John Bluet and Joan his sister 200 marks ⁵²⁵. Then in 1302 King Edward I acknowledged he

has taken the homage of Joan Bluet for the lands that she holds by reason of the lands that Roger le Bigod, Earl of Norfolk and Marshal of England lately surrendered into the king's hands ⁵²⁶

and a week later the King granted the knight's fees that Joan had from the land back to Roger le Bigod rather than keeping them for himself ⁵²⁷.

In 1327 Eleanor married Sir John de Peyton ⁵²⁸ who was probably appointed warden of Braydon Forest on 18th September 1358, the record reads kings yeoman granted "the stewardship with the horn" for life ⁵²⁹

de Peyton's *Inquisition Post Mortem* ⁵³⁰ gives glimpses of the state of the

⁵²⁴ Cal IPM vol IX Edw III (1916) *ibid*
*Peter de Cusaunce son of Margaret daughter of the said Eleanor aged 19 years on the feast of the Purification last (Feb 2nd) is one of her heirs in blood and Peter de Cusaunce, knight, son of Margaret daughter of the said John and Eleanor, one heir of the said Eleanor aged 20 years and more [Cal IPM vol IX Edw III (1916) *ibid* Investigation into the lands held in Essex 25 Feb 23 Edw III taken at Reghleye on Monday after St Dunstan 23 Edw III]*

⁵²⁵ *Calendar of Close Rolls Edw I 1296 - 1302* dated Aug 24 1300 p405

⁵²⁶ *Calendar of Close Rolls Edw I 1296 - 1302* dated July 17th 1302 p532

⁵²⁷ *Calendar of Close Rolls Edw I 1296 - 1302* p543

⁵²⁸ Jackson, LE, in a letter to Kite, written from Leigh Delamare on March 7th 1857 (WANHS library ref 16.267). He notes that *the Peytons were Suffolk people* In *Victoria County History Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* it is noted that "He was in all probability her third husband although he does not seem to be called so specifically anywhere. The same John obtained licence to have a chapel in his manor of Lackham which formerly belonged to the Bluets and it is probable that he was holding it in the right of Eleanor"

⁵²⁹ *Victoria County History Wiltshire IV* p435

⁵³⁰ Stokes, E (1914) *Abstracts of Wiltshire IPM returned into the Court of Chancery in the reign of King Edward III, AD 1327-1377*. Index Library Vol 48. British Record Society.

Manor in the fourteenth century; there was a messuage⁵³¹ with garden and curtilage⁵³², a dovecot and 160 acres of land, several pastures, woods and a water mill (there were probably two). There were restrictions on what could be done with the land; of the total 160 acres 120 acres (75%) could be sown one year but only 80 acres (50%) the next, with 40 acres (25%) lying fallow. There were a further 20 acres of pasture, of which the Manor held control all the time could only mow every other year when they are worth 5s, otherwise they are worth nothing because they lie in common.⁵³³

Lackham also had land in the Forest, for example an assart - a clearing being used for cultivation - of 64 acres, held of Queen Phillipa⁵³⁴.

Lackham was held by John de Peyton in right of his wife until her death in 1348. She was apparently survived by two of her daughters, Eleanor and Margaret.

Under the law at the time land was inherited by primogeniture that is by the eldest male. The advantage of this system is that the estates are not diluted and broken up as they are under the alternative of inheritances being distributed among all the children. Primogeniture is fine until there is no male heir from the first marriage. In that case,

before about 1130 an inheritance descended only through one daughter or other female heir; after that it was to be divided equally between all

⁵³¹ messuage = mansion. Wiltonensis (1899) *Deed relating to the manors of Bremhill, Stanley, Bromham Battle and Clench AD 1566* Wilts. Notes & Queries III December 1899, footnote 1 p 175

⁵³² However a messuage was "Originally the portion of land intended to be occupied, or actually occupied, as a site for a dwelling house and its appurtenances. In modern legal language a dwelling house with its out buildings and curtilage and the adjacent land assigned to it's use "[OED (1971) vol 1 p376]. It is clear the usage here is the earlier term as the curtilage is specified separately. "An area attached to a dwelling house as part of its enclosure " *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976) 6th ed. p 251

⁵³³ Stokes, E (1914) Abstracts of Wiltshire IPM returned into the Court of Chancery in the reign of King Edward III, AD 1327-1377. Index Library Vol 48. British Record Society

⁵³⁴ Philippa of Hainault was wife to Edward III. Her marriage was a result of the problems that led to Edward III ascending the throne: Edward's mother, Isabella of France, was at odds with her husband, Edward II, over the power of the Despenser family, who were trying to get her marriage annulled. She fled to the Low Countries and, in exchange for the promise of Prince Edward marrying Philippa, William II- Count of Hainault, Holland and Zeeland -, supplied 450 Hainaultian troops for Isabella's return to England. The ensuing uprising led to the defeat of Edward II, "the Despensers [being] captured, disembowelled and hanged" [Emerson, B (1986) *The Black Prince* pp2-3] and Edward III's crowning, in 1327.

⁵³⁵ *valid female heirs.*

Hence when *old lady Bluet* ⁵³⁶ died the estates would be divided between Margaret and Eleanor. Eleanor died on 28th October 1348
⁵³⁷

Margaret had been given in marriage to William de Cusaunce, nephew of William de Cusaunce who had acquired the marriage rights in 1323 (see above), and they had a son Peter.

Although it has been suggested that Margaret and William inherited after Eleanor's death, Boon ⁵³⁸ states that both Margaret and William died before Eleanor. This is probably correct, it is supported by the fact that, in Eleanor's inquisition, it is Eleanor junior and Peter de Cusaunce who are given as the heirs ⁵³⁹. This is clear in all the county inquisitions: in that from Southampton ⁵⁴⁰ (taken at Basingstoke on 3rd December 1348) from Essex ⁵⁴¹ (taken at Rayleigh on 23rd January 1249) and from Wiltshire ⁵⁴² (taken at Hilmarton on 1st December 1248) Margaret is not an heir as she surely would have been were she alive.

It is not known if Eleanor sen. died from the plague or not, it is very likely:

⁵³⁵ Kenny, G (1997) *The Heiress as Fortune-Maker and Widow in Thirteenth-Century Anglo-Norman Ireland: Christiana de Marisco, Matilda de Lacy and the de Genevre brothers* PaGes, Arts Postgraduate Research in Progress Faculty of Arts, University College Dublin, Volume 4, 1997 @ <http://www.ucd.ie/pages/97/kenny.html>

⁵³⁶ Boon, GC (1989) *St. Mary the Virgin, Silchester* p9

⁵³⁷ *Cal IPM* vol IX Edw III (1916) no 104 pp91-93 Eleanor, late the wife of John Bluet. Inquisition for Wiltshire, taken at Hilmarton 1 December 22 Edw III

⁵³⁸ Boon, GC (1989) *ibid*

⁵³⁹ *Cal IPM* vol IX Edw III (1916) *ibid*

⁵⁴⁰ *Cal IPM* vol IX Edw III (1916) *ibid* Eleanor the wife of Edmund Baynard aged 30 years and more and Peter, son of William de Cusaunce and Margaret his wife sister of the said Eleanor who is aged 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ years are the heirs of the said John Bluet

⁵⁴¹ *Cal IPM* vol IX Edw III (1916) no 104 pp91-93 Eleanor, late the wife of John Bluet. Peter de Cusaunce son of Margaret daughter of the said Eleanor aged 19 years on the feast of the Purification last (Feb 2nd) is one of her heirs in blood and Eleanor wife of Edmund Baynard daughter of the said Eleanor Bluet aged 30 years and more is co-heir with the said Peter and another heir in blood of the said Eleanor Bluet

⁵⁴² *Peter de Cusaunce son of William de Cusaunce and Margaret his wife, is heir to Lacham and the aforesaid parcels and also of a moiety of the tenements in Beanacre. Eleanor wife of Edmund Baynard daughter of the said John and Eleanor of full age is her heir of the other moiety of the tenements of Beanacre*

from her Inquisition⁵⁴³ it is known she died on 28th Oct 1348⁵⁴⁴ and it is known that the Black Death killed many in Silchester in that year⁵⁴⁵.

The Black Death.... struck the county [of Hampshire] in autumn 1348 and in less than two years killed probably half the population⁵⁴⁶

and Wiltshire suffered equally badly, for example in Calstone Wellington, near Oldbury,

The Black Deathhit this community badly and in 1348 the families of one third of the tenants and 40% of the cottars were wiped out. The water mills ceased, as there was no one to run them.⁵⁴⁷

And, even closer to Lackham, Sheldon village was devastated by the plague and never recovered, becoming one of the many English villages that disappeared at this time.

The vast numbers of deaths brought about by the Black Death is well documented. A very rough indication of the progress of the pandemic can be gained by looking at the number of tenants in chief reported dead over a year. These can be judged from the instructions to the escheators to take land into the king's hands, which happened when a *tenant in chief* died. (At this period the background number was around 30 per year (averaged over the years 1330-1345). The figures during the late 1340's were⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem Vol IX Edw III, pp 91-93

⁵⁴⁴ Tuesday the feast of Saints Simon and Jude 22 Edward III" This could either be 1348 or 1349; it has to be 1348 if the Feast of Ss Simon and Jude was on the Tuesday, also the dates for the county inquisitions give a late 1348 date.

⁵⁴⁵ Victoria County History *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* vol 2 p53

⁵⁴⁶ James, TB (1999) *The Black Death in Hampshire* Hampshire Record Office

⁵⁴⁷ Wiltshire Community History - Calstone Wellington at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom.php?id=45>

⁵⁴⁸

Compiled from data in writs in *Calendar Fine Rolls* vol 16 Edw III 1347 - 1356
It is noted that this only shows when a death was acted on, given the terrible conditions in the country it is likely that information from remote areas took longer than usual to be notified. The monthly figures, for what they are worth, were: (cont on next page)

1348	43
1349	378
1350	130
1351	53

Eleanor's Inquisition gives a useful idea of the holdings of the Wiltshire Bluets at this time; Eleanor had land in several counties. In Hampshire she held only Silchester⁵⁴⁹, no other land is recorded in the county. In Wiltshire the main holdings were the manors of Lackham and Hilmarton, but other land was held at Goatacre⁵⁵⁰, Beanacre⁵⁵¹, Cherleswyck⁵⁵² and Notton. These were all inherited from her marriage to John Bluet, whereas other land was hers from her first husband, William de Briazanon (for example the lands held in Essex⁵⁵³ - Le Lovetotes in Gt. Akering, Little Waking, Littleshoebury, Shopelond, Leigh, Reighleigh, Gt Stanbrugge, Southchurch, Bemfleet and Stanford.) Not all of the land she held descended to her heirs as they were held in right of her first husband, William de Brianzon, for Eleanor's life after which they reverted to their owners. For example in Rochford the marsh of Landwick another marsh called Littleburghwerth⁵⁵⁴ and the marshland in Gt. Stanbrugge La Pole⁵⁵⁵ all reverted to the brother and heir of William the earl of Northampton on

1348		1349		1350		1351	
January	1	January	8	January	17	January	3
February	4	February	10	February	9	February	4
March	3	March	17	March	5	March	1
April	8	April	35	April	39	April	3
May	4	May	25	May	11	May	6
June	2	June	40	June	20	June	4
July	2	July	36	July	8	July	13
August	2	August	57	August	3	August	3
September	2	September	37	September	2	September	
October	7	October	48	October	10	October	5
November	7	November	48	November	5	November	6
December	1	December	17	December	1	December	5

⁵⁴⁹ Writ taken at Southampton Thursday after St Andrew (3rd December as the feast of St Andrew is the last day of November, and this was a Monday in 1348)

⁵⁵⁰ Held from the manor of Hampstead Marshal, of the King

⁵⁵¹ Writ taken at Hilmarton 1st December 22 Edw III (1349)

⁵⁵² This is now Wick Farm, Lacock.

⁵⁵³ Writ taken at Reighleigh Saturday after the Epithany 22 Edw III (January 20th 1349)

⁵⁵⁴ *daily inundated by the sea, held of the King*

⁵⁵⁵ some 500 acres in all

Eleanor's death and the Manor of Southfanbrugge likewise reverted to the Bishop of Ely. It is clear that Essex was a marshy county; Eleanor held other wetlands - a marsh called Bernemarsh and land called *Gedybernelond*

William de Cusaunce had bestowed the hand of Eleanor [Bluet jnr] upon Edward (Edmund?) Baynard⁵⁵⁶ of Dunmow in Essex before 1348⁵⁵⁷. Actually it was considerably before; a 1334 record in the Badminton Estate archive⁵⁵⁸ shows Edmund Baynard discussing lands and tenements that his wife Eleanor will inherit fully after the death of her uncle Ralph Bluet including parcels occupied by William de Cusaunce. This is noteworthy for a number of reasons. It shows that the lands were not only to be split between the two heirs as has been indicated previously, but that Sir John's brother Ralph inherited some of them for his lifetime, although it would appear that William de Cusaunce at least was holding some from him (and was therefore still alive in 1344) There is a Ralph who was a member of an extent and appraisal jury⁵⁵⁹ held in Chippenham on the 10 June 1379 and it is possible that this was Ralph VI, although he would have been very old and it is at least as likely that this was yet another Ralph Bluet. If Ralph VI was holding Daglingworth in 1321 it is not likely he is the one mentioned in 1379.

Finally the document dated 1334/5 is the earliest record so far found that shows Edmund and Eleanor married. How much earlier than this they were married is not yet known.

It is possible this was before Eleanor became the last surviving Bluet and gained control of both Silchester and Lackham, but may have been afterwards. The Manor at Beanacre may have formed part of Eleanor's dowry - it was conveyed to Eleanor and Edmund Baynard⁵⁶⁰ in the year of their marriage.

⁵⁵⁶ Victoria County History *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* vol 2 p53

⁵⁵⁷ The year of Eleanor senior's IPM, when Eleanor jnr is given as *the wife of Edmund Baynard* [Cal IPM vol IX Edw III (1916) no 104 pp91-93 *Eleanor, late the wife of John Blue*]

⁵⁵⁸ Duke of Beaufort Badminton Estate Archive DL700/NR11/1/6 dated 1334/5

⁵⁵⁹ Conyers, A (ed) (1973) *Wiltshire Extents for debts Edward 1 - Elizabeth 1* WRS Devizes vol XXVIII pp25-26 no 21

This was held after a writ had been issued by John atte Yerd and William Worston merchants of Winchester because William fitz William owed them 60l. The extent was a survey of the debtor's lands made by the sheriff with the assistance of a local jury composed of at least twelve men, as in this case. Under the statute procedure all lands held at the time of the debt were liable to be surrendered to the creditor(s). This extent found that William owned a *messuage and a carucate in Wambergh, with meadows, feeding, and pasture belonging worth 4 marks* [£2 13s 4d = £2.67] yearly - the record notes that the lands were delivered on 14 June according to the writ

⁵⁶⁰ Victoria County History *Wiltshire* VII p435

In Silchester church there is an effigy that is thought to be of this last of the Bluets, Eleanor Baynard

The effigy, later fourteenth-century and probably that of Eleanor Baynard, wears kirtle, open-sided cote-hardie with deep V-neck once painted vermilion, and mantle; her head is covered by a substantial kerchief, and her neck and chin by a wimple-like barbe' - in all, widow's weeds. Her feet peep out to rest against a dog (damaged), and two winged angels support her head.⁵⁶¹



Fig. 22 Effigy of Eleanor Baynard, Silchester Church, Hants *

Peter de Cusaunce, Eleanor Bluet's grandson, was also an heir and inherited a moiety of the Silchester Manor, he was holding [Silchester] in right of his mother [Margeret]⁵⁶².

He was also lord of Lackham; in 1351 he confirmed the grant of land at Horslaperyche, made by John Bluet to Gilbert de Fynamourin 1316, to John de Fynamour⁵⁶³ He was Gilbert's son, and married Alice⁵⁶⁴.

The Fynamour family involvement with de Cusaunce was more than this, however. In 1352 Peter gifted Lackham and Helmerton to Walter Fynamour who was the Chaplain of the Chapel at Lackham⁵⁶⁵. What relationship Walter

⁵⁶¹ Boon, GC (1989) *St. Mary's Church, Silchester* p21

⁵⁶² Leland (1540) *Itinerary*⁵⁶² vi, p53, quoted in Kite (1899) *Old Lackham House and its owners* Wilts Notes & Queries Vol III

⁵⁶³ W&SHC 1720.146 dated 1351 Witnesses were John de la Roche. Geoffrey le Eyr, Robert de Cauntelo, John atte Halle and William Cryps

⁵⁶⁴ the descent of the Fynamour family is given in a memorandum from the "mid 15th century (W&SHC 1720.296) *Gilbert had issue John, John had Robert, Robert had William, William had John, John had Thomas and Thomas had Roger now surviving*' From another record it is known that John son of Gilbert also had Margaret, Christine and Alice [W&SHC 1720.176 dated 1346]

⁵⁶⁵ Kite, E (1899) *Old Lackham House and its Owners* Wilts. Notes and Queries vol III

had to John Fynamour is unclear, he doesn't show up in any of the records held by the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre.

A charter of 1358⁵⁶⁶ shows Peter de Cusaunce having land in the common fields of Lacock, which would not have necessarily gone with the leasing of Lackham, although Peter would still retain title even if they were being rented out with Lackham.

Then, in January 1361,⁵⁶⁷ Peter and Margaret put forward an action to "grant back and render the manors to be held directly by Peter and the heirs of Peter's body". This was a legal action called a *Plea of Covenant* by which the plaintiff (Peter and Margaret) alleged that the defendants (in this case John de Burbach the vicar of Helmerton church, and Walter Fynamour) had failed to keep an agreement (to grant back and render the land to Peter)⁵⁶⁸ It was noted that this was a moiety of the manors, and that the remainder (and, as it turned out, Peter's part as well, there being no heirs) went to Edmund Baynard and his wife Eleanor Bluet, Margaret's younger sister)⁵⁶⁹

Peter de Cusaunce was obviously important within the county - he was Sheriff of Wilshire in 1377 and presented the rector to the church at Hilperton in 1380.

In the windows of Silchester Church coats of arms relating to the holding families of the manor could be found⁵⁷⁰. Each coat of arms was in a separate window, and it might be that each was financed by different members of the famil.

In his article on the history of Lackham⁵⁷¹ Kite gives a coat of arms which

p51

⁵⁶⁶ Rogers, KH (1979) (ed) *Lacock Abbey Charters* WRS vol xxxiv p55 no 206 Grant of Agness abbess of Lacock to Richard ate Kychen "... and 1a lies in Goudeligh etween the lands of Peter de Cusaunce and William Cokkel"

⁵⁶⁷ Actually the action (see next fn for reference) took place in the week beginning on the Quin[dene] of Hil[ary] 35 Edw III which is the 21st of January 1361. Hilary was "formerly, one of the four terms of the courts of common law in England, beginning on the eleventh of January and ending on the thirty-first of the same month, in each year; - so called from the festival of St. Hilary, January 13th".

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Hilary>

⁵⁶⁸ Elrington CR (1974) (ed) *Feet of Fines Edw III* WRS Introduction, pp6-7

⁵⁶⁹ Elrington CR (1974) (ed) *Feet of Fines Edw III* WRS no 488 p118

⁵⁷⁰ Bishop Gibson, in Cambden's *Brittanica* (1695) describes three coats of arms, viz in a field sable, seven fusils argent bendwise [Cusaunce], in a field sable, a fesse between two chevrons or [Baynard] and in a field or an eagle displayed with two heads gules [Bluet].

⁵⁷¹ Kite, E (1899) *Old Lackham House and its Owners* Wilts. Notes and Queries vol III

includes those said to be of de Cusaunce

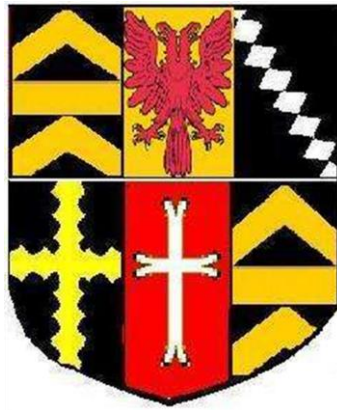


Fig. 23 Supposed arms of de Cusaunce *

The presence of the Baynard arms and crest here is difficult; Peter was not descended from the Baynard - Bluet marriage but the de Cusaunce-Bluet one. It is likely this is not an actual coat of arms but a composite put together for some unknown reason, possibly by Withie. Peter de Cusaunce died without issue and his portions of Silchester, Hilmarton and Lackham passed to Eleanor Baynard, nee Bluet.⁵⁷³

Leland⁵⁷⁴ noted that

one of the Blueths leaving no sons, the land not entaylid to the heire (male or generale) came by marriage to one Peter de Cusaunce, and after to one Edmund Baynard, coming out of the Baynards of Essex whose name is now ther obscured. The lands of the Blueths entaylid to heyre male of that name yet remaining in Devonshere. Leecham longgid to Baynarde as his principale how[se]

Eleanor was the last of this major Bluet line her date of death is unknown but is after 1380. The Bluet family continued elsewhere of course, in Ireland, the Marches, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, but their long association with the land in Hampshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire was over. There were, of course, Bluets still in the local area even though they no longer owned Lackham. In letters dated 11 Henry IV (September 1409/September 1410) Philip Baynard appointed

Robert and Ingram Baynard his attorneys to deliver to John

⁵⁷² Kite credits this to John Withie (Harleian Ms#1443) and shows (top) Baynard. Bluet, Cusaunce and below Ufford (aka Willoughby) Blake, and Baynard. The full blazon included the Baynard crest of a demi-unicorn rampant and their motto *Vive ut Vivas*.

⁵⁷³ Victoria County History *Hampshire and Isle of Wight* p 54. Victoria County History does not mention Hilmarton but it is known that he was lord of this Manor as well

⁵⁷⁴ Leland (1540) *Itinerary* vi, p53, quoted in Kite, E (1899) *Old Lackham House and its Owners* Wilts. Notes and Queries vol III

*Blounte and Elizabeth his wife seisin of all the lands, &c. which he had by the gift of the said John*⁵⁷⁵

Some reminder of them continued, however; The Baynard line descending from Edmund and Eleanor retained the Bluet sigil as part of their arms. A carved shield, thought to have originally come from the front porch of the old Lackham House is to be found on the west wall of the current house at Lackham and shows the combined Bluet and Baynard arms.



Fig. 24 Baynard family (Lackham line) arms at Lackham, Wiltshire *⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁵ 'Deeds: A.9701 - A.9800', *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 4* (1902), pp. 451-463. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64412> dated "Lacham, the feast of St. Edmund the King and Martyr, 11 Henry IV"

⁵⁷⁶ Photo © Tony Pratt 2008

Appendices

Tintern abbey was founded in 1131 by Walter de Clare, grandson of Walter FitzPatrick Count of Ew. The Itinerarium of Willelmi de Worcestre has these entries relating to Tintern

De obitus fundatorum et de generae propinquo eorum ecclesiae sancto Mariae Tynterniae ul antique lalendario inveni registratum

Comes Gilbertus sexto die Junio obit
 Comes Robertus Altiabatensis obit die Octavo Februarii
 Isabella Comitissa Pembroc obit die nons Martii
 Ricardus Rex Anglica prime obit de xxvii Martii
 Matilda Comitissa Warena obit de xxix Martii
 Walterus fundator exx.esiae sanctae Mariae Tynternae obit de x Martii
 Ricardus comes marescallus obit de xx Aprilii
 Babilla comitissa mater Willielme comitis de Penbrok obit de iii Junii
 Galfredus marescallus comes de Penroc obit de xxvii Junii
 Radulfus Bloeth junr xiii de Julii
 Johannes Rex Francieae obit die sexton Novembro
 Elizabet comitiss V xix de Novembro obiit
 Blancha Regina Francieae obit xxviii Novembro
 Magareta comitissa Flanduiae obit iv decembro
 Berengerusel comitissa soro ejus obit xxiii Decembro
 Asissimus marescallus obit xxiv decembro
 Matilda de Clare comitissa Gloucestreae et Herefordiae obit xxix decembro
 Rogerus Bygod comes marescallus guiedificas eccelsiam Tynterniae obit de vii Decembro seizer Wiliam E ut in lalendario religiosum Tynterniae
 Thomas de Bolterton marescallus Anglia obit xxiv Aprilii obit

To return to the text click [here](#), to return to the index click [here](#)

⁵⁷⁷ Dugdale, Sir W *Monasticon Anglicanum: a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales* [new edition eds Caley, J Ellis, H and Bandinel, Rev. B (1825) vol 5 p266]

Agreement between Sir John Bluet Knt. And William Martell Temp. Edw. I

Translated by Thomas Wakeman, 1847

In the year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Henry, one score and five [1297] it was thus agreed between Sir John Bluet, knight and William Martel, that is to say, that the said John Bluet acknowledges for himself and his heirs to be bound to the aforesaid William Martel, his esquire, for the life of the said William, in sixty pence of silver of the good and lawful money, to be paid yearly and every year at the two terms of Hockday [ie the second Tuesday after Easter week] and Michaelmas, out of his manor of Langston, in Netherwent, that is to say, out of the lands and tenements that Walter le Swon, John Fitz Thomas Robert le Joevene, Ann le Swon and Alice Ketyng hold of him in the moor of Langston, so that the aforesaid William, or his certain attorney, may levy the said rent by distress upon the said tenements in whosoever hands they may be, at their will and pleasure, without let or hindrance from any one, and such distress securely keep till such time as the said rent be duly paid; and also two Robes yearly of the value of twenty pence from his chamber during the life of the said William, one at Christmas and the other at Easter: and maintain the said William as long as he lives in sufficient meat and drink as a gentleman ought to have, and his two boys,[servants] and to find his two horses in hay and oats and shoes during the life of the said William, that is to say half a bushel of oats each. And for these advantages the said William Martel will serve the said John Bluet well and faithfully as an esquire ought to do, in the wars now waging between the King of England and the King of France; and also in England, if war should break out there, which God forbid, and in Wales, and in all other lands either on this side of the sea, or beyond the sea, wherever the said John shall be (except the Holy Land;) and in tournaments, in the time of peace, with a great war- horse which the said John will find him, and good and suitable armour without any default on his part; and for the greater security for the due performance of the due performance of the covenants above written, the said John Bluet binds himself and his heirs and executors, and all the lands and tenements in England and Wales which he holds on the day of completion of this writing, in whose hands soever they be in time to come; and also that he may be constrained by the stewards or Marshals of our lord the King of England or the bailiffs of the liberties of Caerleon, whosoever they may be, if he in any lanner make default in the above named covenants. And if any of the horses of the aforesaid William, either in time of peace or of war, should perish in the service of the said John Bluet, the said John Bluet binds himself, his heirs, and executors, fully to restore them. In testimony of which the parties hereto have interchangeably affixed their seals as witnesses Sir John ap Adam, Sir Thomas de Knoyvyle, Ralph de la Grave, John de Howel and others, given at Cilchester, on the Feast of St Lawrence, in the year of the reign of our lord King Edward, one score and five [10th August, 1297] ⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁸ To return to the Index click [here](#)

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