

THE HARDWICKS OF DERBYSHIRE

By Michael Harmer

Yes the title is correct and no our editor hasn't had a funny turn! This article is really about the Hardwick's of Derbyshire including Bess Hardwick a lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth I.

The story begins in Sussex (where all good Harmer stories begin!) with one Robert Savage senior who held lands in the Worthing and Horsham areas of Sussex and who in 1199 offered the King 100 marks and a palfrey (riding horse) to be allowed to marry the daughter of William fitz Walkelin of Stainsbury, Derbyshire. By 1214 William had died and having no male heir, Robert Savage was able to obtain Stainsbury and some other land for a further payment of 100 marks and yet another palfrey. However, Robert Savage did not enjoy his new estates for long as by August 1220 he was dead and his son Robert Savage junior found himself owing the King £20 inheritance tax. There was a series of complicated legal actions brought against Robert junior by several people and Robert's attorney was a man called Jocelin of Stainsbury. It is known that attorneys were often tenants of the persons they represented in court. This Jocelin became the first lord of Hardwick and was in evidence in litigation a century later when he was referred to as "Joclyn de Hermer seynur del Hardwick", ("Jocelin de HARMERE Lord of Hardwick").

This Jocelin is most probably Wocelin de HAREMERE assumed grandson of Milo de HAREMERE our earliest known Sussex ancestor. But I am jumping the gun. How did Jocelin of Stainsbury become the first lord of Hardwick? Well it seems that he held the estate of Hardwick from Robert Savage sometime between 1220 and 1253 as Robert's widow Aldeluya sued, in a very complicated case, Jocelin (and her son John Savage) for a pension in return for forfeiting any claim she had on the estate. The evidence presented clearly details the land in question including the manor of Hardwick. [It was the accepted practice for widowed mothers to sue their sons for land, which would be forfeited in return for a pension, as a means of obtaining formal recognition of their pension rights which would survive the untimely death of the son. It did not in anyway imply that there was a disagreement between mother and son.] Jocelin appears to have built up his estate possibly over several decades by acquiring further land from Robert Savage and also from a Ralph Brito of Hardwick. He also secured the right to have his corn milled at Stainsbury free of charge and to move his wagons and cattle through the woods at Eastwood without paying a toll. These advantages must have helped him to have the capital to invest in his estate.

Jocelin features as a witness in a number of charters of the period and is know as both Jocelin of Stainsbury and Jocelin of Hardwick. At this time second names had not become accepted as family surnames, most of the population had no second name at all, but those who had title to land often used the names of the estate on which they lived as a second name hence Jocelin de HAREMERE became either de Stainsbury or de Hardwick when he moved from Sussex to Derbyshire. In all these many charters Jocelin's rank can be gauged by his position in the list of witnesses. In general he was the first witness, only being pushed down the list by Knights and his own Lord. He was, therefore, of some local prominence but did not rank among the Derbyshire gentry as a whole. It appears that Jocelin was the Savage's right-hand man in Derbyshire while they concentrated on their Sussex estates.

Jocelin and his wife had their own chapel and priest at Hardwick but had to undertake that if as a result of this their local parish church at Ault Hucknall suffered any loss he and his wife and household would attend the parish church at least six times a year until the loss had been made good. We know from the arrangements that Jocelin made to ensure the smooth transfer of his estate upon his death (this time son sues father for land, who concedes the claim in return for having a lifetime right to it, paying rent to son as compensation) that he had at least one son William and two daughters Lucy and Mabel. Jocelin probably died in 1269. William his son seems to have dropped completely the "de Harmere" name which reflected his father's Sussex origins, and only rarely used the name of his estate "Hardwick". He seems to prefer to be called William of Stainsbury, though in one document he is called "William of Stainsbury lord of Hardwick".

Like his father, he too built up his estate apparently acquiring lands in South Kirkby, in The West Riding of Yorkshire, possibly through his wife Denise and in Mansfield Nottinghamshire as well as other parts of Derbyshire. It seems that he rose in rank amongst the local gentry above his father's status and in the baronial rebellion of 1264-65 he remained loyal to Henry III as he was one of three men who were given the lands of the rebel Robert son of Nicholas, and sometime between the 1281 legal circuit and his death in 1289 he became one of the two Derbyshire coroners. From the Nottinghamshire inquisition post mortem following William's death it appears that he had at least two sons, one Jocelin aged 19 and a John aged 14.

From now on the evidence used to construct the Hardwick family tree is extremely complicated and cannot easily be summarised for an article such as this. Suffice it to say, that the tree which accompanies this article needs to be researched further if that is possible, as like the de Haremere tree, it currently ends in the female line, yet we know that there was a John Hardwick whose son John married Elizabeth Leake whose fourth child Elizabeth became known as Bess of Hardwick and whose life is worth mentioning in some detail.

BESS OF HARDWICK

Bess's father John Hardwick died aged 41 when Bess was still very young and although John had tried to protect his estates in the event of his death, Bess's mother found herself with a young family to support and little income. Her childhood would have been tough and she could not have looked forward to a prosperous future.

The women of the time, irrespective of rank, were considered as infants before marriage and (as) her husband's property during marriage. Only widowhood would bring respect similar to a man. Bess's only career was therefore to marry, which she did when she was under fifteen. Her chosen partner was Robert Barley/Barlow who was probably only thirteen at the time. Their marriage was short lived with Robert dying 18 months later in 1544.

Bess married Sir William Cavendish in 1547 who was an able and wealthy widower. Together they built up their joint estate taking care to protect it's future. They moved in court circles and purchased Chatsworth which they set about rebuilding and adding to the land around it. At this time they must have been spending far more than their income and although Sir William was well placed to strike good deals it seems that by 1557 he was being accused of misappropriating some £5000 of royal revenues. Mary was Queen at this time. As the case built up against Sir William so his health deteriorated and before it came to a conclusion Sir William died leaving Bess with a debt of £5000, six children and two step-daughters.

As Queen Mary's health deteriorated so Bess manoeuvred herself close to Elizabeth the future Queen to whom she would owe so much money. The key from Bess's point of view was to be a senior member of the future Queen's court, from where she could not only delay repayment of the debt, but where she would be able to meet wealthy men, one of whom she would make her third husband, thus providing for her and her children's future. Queen Mary died on 17 November 1558 and Queen Elizabeth I took the throne of England. Bess was amongst the young Queen's court and there, less than a year later, Bess found her third husband, Sir William St Loe. Once again Bess, with her husband, set about adding to their estates taking all the necessary precautions to keep them intact after either's death.

In 1561 Bess was caught up in the Catherine Grey/Edward Seymour secret marriage and pregnancy affair which so annoyed The Queen. Bess was probably innocent of being party to the plot but nevertheless she was questioned by Sir Edward Warner, but there is no further reference to her involvement in the state papers and therefore it is assumed that she was acquitted of any suspicion of collusion in the affair.

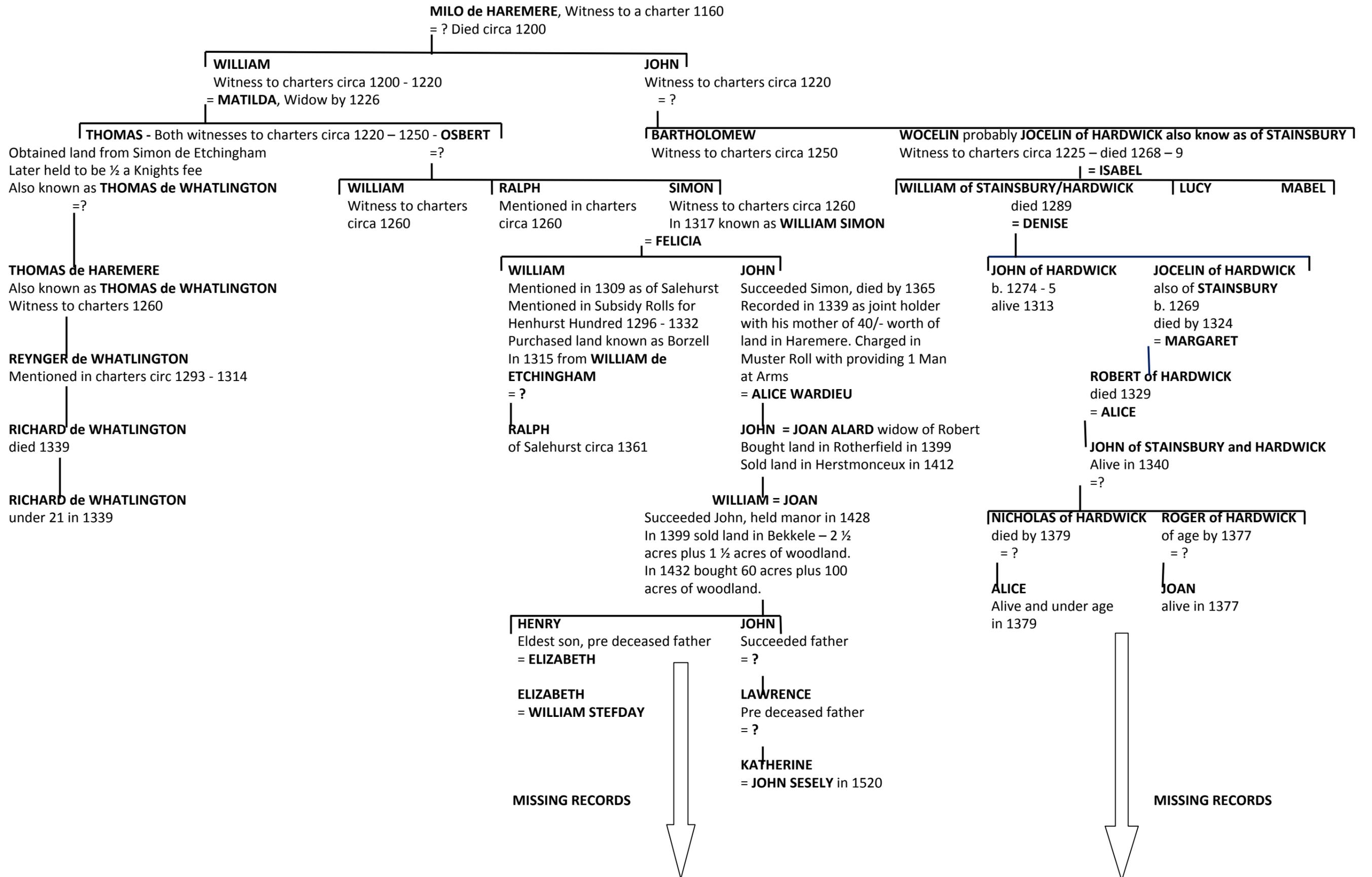
After her interrogation Bess was accepted back into court circles and with her husband was able to renew her attempt to persuade the Queen to wipe out her £5000 debt. Eventually Queen Elizabeth accepted a fine of £1000 paid by Bess's husband and an apology. This was in August 1563, sadly Sir William St Leo and Bess had little time together to enjoy themselves now that this great burden was lifted from them, as Sir William died in early 1565. Bess was in her late thirties with significant estates to manage and develop further if she was to achieve her ambition and found a dynasty that would survive for at least a thousand years, so once again she returned to court to seek a fourth husband.

It was in the autumn of 1567 that Bess married George Talbot Sixth Earle of Shrewsbury who was regarded as one of the richest noblemen in England, albeit, not one of the cleverest. Shortly after their marriage they were charged with the responsibility of personally supervising the imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots, a task which lasted 16 years and cost them a great deal of their own money. The strain of the task may also have contributed to the Earl's mental state, for his love for Bess turned to an obsessive hatred which even the Queen of England could not overcome. George Talbot died in 1590 leaving Bess as the most wealthy woman in the kingdom next to the Queen herself, and even the Queen sold estates to Bess at bargain prices for ready cash. Bess outlived her mistress, Elizabeth I, dying on 13 February 1608 when remarkably she was most likely 80.



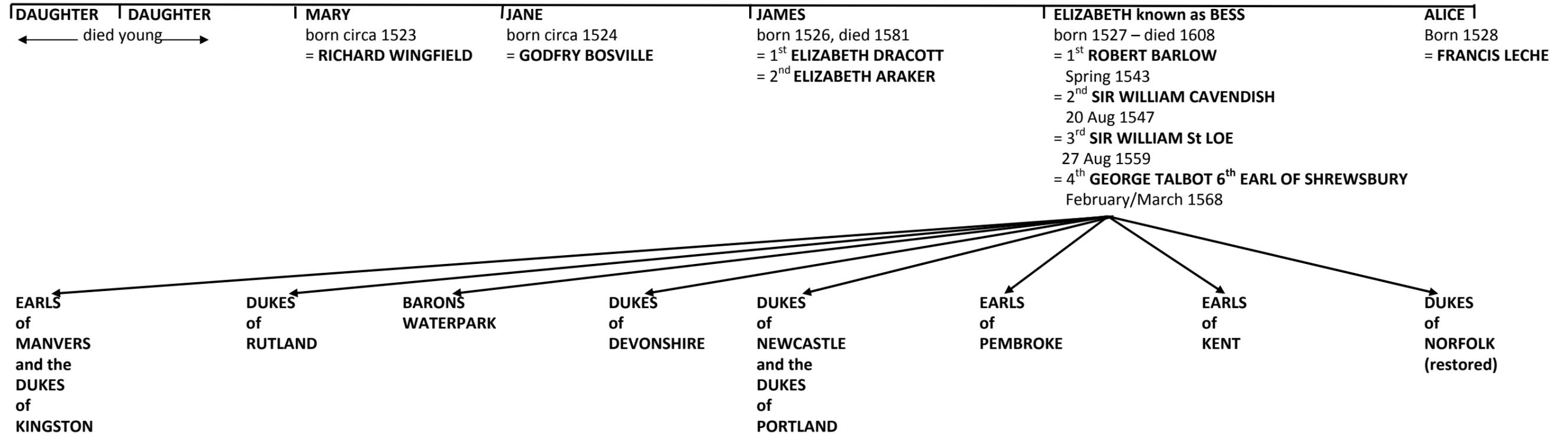
HFA Newsletter
Vol 17. No.4
December 1994
Amended April 2009

THE EARLY de HAREMERES / de HARDWICKS



THE SUSSEX HARMERS

SIR WILLIAM de HARDWYCKE
 = ELIZABETH WINGFIELD/ nee GOUSHILL
 ↓
ROGER de HARDWYCK
 = NICOLA BARLOW
 ↓
JOHN HARDWYCK
 born 1451
 = ELIZABETH de BAKEWELL
 ↓
JOHN HARDWICK
 born 1470
 = ELIZABETH PINCHBECK
 ↓
JOHN HARDWICK
 born 1495 – died 1528
 = ELIZABETH LEAKE



Tree based on:-
 The Haremeres of Sussex – Harmer Family Association reunion booklet 1980
 “Hardwick before Bess” by David Crook - Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, journal 1987
 “Bess of Hardwick” by Mary S Lovell and papers from Rev’d Joseph Hunter, F.S.A. Manuscripts dept, British library