

THE STRETLEY FAMILY OF BUCKS. AND
OXON.

BY

G. ANDREWS MORIARTY, A.M., F.S.A.

The following monograph is by no means an exhaustive account of the Stretleys, but is an attempt to put together some notes collected from time to time, in the hope that my brother antiquaries in England will be able to add some additional information about a family, which has, apparently, heretofore been neglected by searchers.

The family undoubtedly takes its name from Streatley in the neighboring county of Beds. The first of the name concerning whom I have found any information was one Roger de Stretley, who, together with his wife, Maud, received a quitclaim to lands in Mentmore, co. Bucks. from Joan, daughter and "sole heir" of William de Argentine.¹ It seems quite probable that Maud was a sister of William de Argentine, for reasons which will later appear. In this connection the following suit is significant. In 1276 William de Nirford sued Thomas de Bray, Richard de la Bere, Roger de Stretley and Hugh Blundell, together with others, for unjustly disseising him of his free tenement in Aspley and Eye (Beds.), i.e. one carucate of land and 40s. rent etc. Thomas, Richard, Roger and Hugh came, the others came not. Thomas says that he has not injured William and has no claim. Roger says that he entered upon the tenement after the death of his mother, Maud, who died seised thereof in demesne. Hugh says that he received the tenement by the feoffment of Richard de la Bere and Alice his wife. Richard says that he claims nothing except through his wife, Alice, whose right

¹ *Pl. F. Div. Cos. Trin.* 42 Hen. III.

and inheritance the said tenements are and who is not named in the writ. William cannot deny this and was given leave to withdraw.² William de Nirford brought a new suit for the same cause in 1281 but again withdrew. The defendants were now Thomas de Bray, Richard de la Bere and his nephew, Richard Gubion, Hugh Blundell, Hugh de Stretley of Mentmore *et als.*³

This William de Nirford was evidently the adherent of Earl Simon. In May 1234 William de Argentine transferred to Henry de Nirford or Nafford by fine a carucate in Aspley and Eye, except one messuage, evidently the land referred to in the suits.⁴ This was held, together with the services of Miles de Mentmore's tenement in Aspley by rent of a sparrow hawk or 2^s yearly and foreign service. Alice, wife of Richard de la Bere, was evidently a daughter of Sir Richard Gubion of Streatly and Heigham, co. Beds, who married Agnes de Merley, and a sister of Sir Hugh Gubion.⁵ Richard de la Bere's claim that Aspley and Eye were of his wife's inheritance suggests that her father Richard Gubion had a second wife, besides Agnes de Merley and that she was the child of the second marriage. In the reign of Edward I. Milicent de Monthaut (born Canteloupe) was querent and Hugh de Stretley of Mentmore and Agnes, his wife, deforciant, for rents in Mentmore and Ledburn (in Mentmore) in the right of Milicent.⁶ In 1284, Hugh de Stretley held, together with several others, one and a half knight's fees in Mentmore of Milicent de Monthaut, who held of the King.⁷ On Friday the Conversion of St. Paul 14 Edw. I (25 Jan. 1285/6) Fulk de Neyrnuit, rector of Pitstone, with the consent of his brother,

² *Ass. R. Beds.*, No. 7, 4 Edw. I, m. 23.

³ *Ass. R. Div. Cos.*, No. 1247, 10 Edw. I m. 8d.

⁴ *Beds. Hist. Soc. Pub.* VI, 97.

⁵ cf. *The Mortgages of Marston and Tilleworth* by this writer in the *Beds. Record Soc. Pub.*

⁶ *Fl. F. Bucks Edw. I.*, no. 235.

⁷ *F.A.* I, 78.

Sir John de Neyrnuit, patron of Pitstone Church, deeded his rights in the park and new close of Ashridge, reserving the tithes to his "brother Ralph, Rector of Ashridge." Among the witnesses is Hugh de Stretley.⁸ On 8 Feb. 1286/7 'Hugh de Stretley of Mentmore' had letters of protection going to Ireland with Walter de Beverley, clerk. On Oct. 17 and 18, 1287 respectively, letters were issued to John de Passelewe and Agnes de Vescy naming Hugh de Stretley and others as their attorneys in Ireland for one year.⁹ In 1298 Hugh de Stretley was one of 35 jurors, who returned a perambulation of Bernwood Forest.¹⁰ In 1302/3 Hugh de Stretley, Andrew de "Charpunville" *et als.* held 1/2 fee in Mentmore.¹¹ In 1305 Hugh de Stretley settled Mentmore on himself for life, remainder to his son John and the issue of John by his wife Elizabeth.¹² In 1316 Hugh de Stretley, Andrew de Jarpunville *et als.* held the vill of Mentmore with its members.¹³ In 1346 John de Stretley and Maud de Jarpunville held 1/2 fee in Mentmore, which Hugh de Stretley and Andrew de Jarpunville formerly held.¹⁴

From the above we may conclude that Roger de Stretley acquired a part of the Argentine fee in Mentmore in 1258 and that his wife was probably a sister of William de Argentine, who held Mentmore of the Canteloups. Roger and his wife were dead by 1276 and had been succeeded by a son Roger, who was holding the Stretley lands in 1276. He died without issue by 1281 and was succeeded by his brother, Hugh, who married Agnes, probably a daughter of Geoffrey de Neyrnuit (the father of Sir John, Fulk and Ralph of the Ashridge deed), and it is highly significant that the members of the Stretley family were later vicars and rectors of Pitstone and Fleet Marston (as will later

⁸ Ex penes Ashridge House, inform, Frederick G. Gurney.

⁹ *Cal. Pat. R.*

¹⁰ *Boarstall Cart.*, ed. Salter, no. 576.

¹¹ *F.A. I.*, 101.

¹² *Fi. F. Bucks.* 33 Edw. I, no. 11.

¹³ *F.A. I.*, 111.

¹⁴ *ib.*, 127.

appear) both lordships of Geoffrey de Neyrnuit. Hugh was alive in 1316 but was succeeded soon after by his son and heir, John, who held Mentmore in 1346. John evidently died about this time as will hereinafter be shewn. In addition to John, Hugh and Agnes apparently had other sons, viz. Hugh, Rector of Fleet Marston in 1327, and Stanton St. John in 1340, Ralph, Rector of Fleet Marston in 1319, Robert, Rector of Fleet Marston in 1348, and Richard, Vicar of Little Marlow and later, in 1344, of Aston Abbots.

John de Stretley, son of Hugh, acquired Creslow in Bucks, which, henceforth, appears to have been the principal seat of the family. In 1302 Hugh de Tydemarsh and his tenants held half a fee in Creslow.¹⁵ In 1304 Hugh settled Creslow on himself for life remainder to John, son of Hugh de Stretley,¹⁶ and in 1312 John de Stretley appears to have had possession of Creslow.¹⁷ In 1316 John de Stretley, Thomas Traily and William Barkevyle held Creslow and its members.¹⁸ John's right to Creslow was disputed by Richard de la Welde, who married a sister of Hugh de Tydemarsh and in 1320 the latter, together with divers others, broke in upon John's house in Creslow and dragged away Elizabeth, John's wife, who was in childbed.¹⁹ John, son of Richard de la Welde, renounced to John de Stretley his claim in Creslow in consideration of an annuity of 60^s.²⁰ John de Stretley was born about 1289, as is shewn by his testimony as to the proof of age of Richard son of Simon Darches, given at Clifton, Bucks, on 24 May 7 Edw. III (1333).²¹ On this date John de Stretley chivaler aged 44 years deposed that the said Richard was 21 years old on the 14 April last past, which he knows, because

¹⁵ *F.A.* I, 101.

¹⁶ *Ft. F. Bucks*. Trin. 32 Edw. I, no. 7.

¹⁷ *V.C.H. Bucks*. III, 337, citing *Chanc. I.P.M.* Edw. III, file 37, no. 1; cf. also *F.A.* I, 111.

¹⁸ *F.A.* I, 111.

¹⁹ *Cal. Pat. R.* 1317-21, 543, 550.

²⁰ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1323-27, 155.

²¹ *Chanc. Inq. P.M.* Edw. III, file 37, no. 1.

that same year he purchased the manor of Creslow. William atte Welde aged 50 years testified to the same and states that the said Richard was born on the same day (i.e. 14 April 1312) on which Ralph de Chedington married the sister of John de Stretley.

On 4 March 1 Edw. III (1327) a commission of oyer and terminer was issued on the complaint of John de Stretle that Maurice Draghsward *et als.* broke into his houses at Creslow, Bucks. and took away his cattle,²² while on 18 March 1345 a similar commission was issued on the complaint that he and others had assaulted John, son of Alan de Leause at Little Leckhampsted, co. Bucks.²³ On 8 Oct. 11 Edw. III (1337) and 12 Oct. 1337 John de Stretley was a collector of the Subsidy and Scutage in Bucks.²⁴

John de Stretley evidently died in the first half of the year 1346, as on the Nativity of St. John the Baptist 20 Edw. III (1346) an important settlement of Creslow was made by a fine levied between "Elizabeth late wife of John de Stretle" querent and John de Warne parson of Merton deforciant whereby Creslow was settled on Elizabeth for life, remainder to Master John de Stretley for life, remainder to Roger brother of John for life, remainder to William, brother of Roger, and the heirs of his body, remainder to Lawrence, brother of William, and the heirs of his body, remainder to Robert, brother of Lawrence and the heirs of his body, remainder to Thomas, brother of Robert, and the heirs of his body, remainder to the right heirs of Master John de Stretley.²⁵

On the Morrow of the Ascension 22 Edw. III (1348) and again on the Quidene of Holy Trinity 22 Edw. III (1348), John de la Mare and wife, Margaret and Alice late wife of John de la Mare the elder querents and Master Roger de Stretley, parson of "Pilchesthorn"

²² *Cal. Pat. R.* 1327-30, 77.

²³ *ib.* 1343-5, 504.

²⁴ *F.R.* V, 551, 53.

²⁵ *Ft. F. Bucks.*, Case 19, file 87, no. 5.

(Pitstone) and Thomas de la Brugly, parson of Waterstoke deforcs. levied a fine on 5 messuages, 1 carucate, 2 virgates of land and £6:0:2 rent in 'Museale,' 'Soaneboarn,' 'Wengrave,' 'Wenge' and 'Cobelyngton.' John acknowledged the tenements to be in the right of Master Roger, as those which Master Roger and Thomas had as the gift of John.²⁶ This Master Roger de Stretley was parson of Creslow from 1 April 1336 to June 1342, when he resigned.²⁷ In 1348, as we have seen, he was parson of Pitstone, where he apparently succeeded his brother, Master John.

On the Octave of the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist 27 Edw. III (1353) Master John de Stretley clerk quer. and William Mordaunt of Turvey (co. Beds.) and wife Maud deforcs. levied a fine of one sixth part of Mentmore manor. Master John gave 20 silver marks.²⁸ In the Octave of Trinity 32 Edw. III (1358) Master John de Stretle quer. and Henry Lacy and wife Margaret deforcs. levied a fine of one sixth part of Mentmore; Master John gave 20 silver marks.²⁹ From these fines it appears that both Master John and his brother Roger were clerics and so the settlement of 1346 gave them remainders in Creslow for life only, whereas their brothers held remainders in fee tail.

Master John de Stretley appears to have been the most distinguished member of the family and he attained considerable importance in the household of King Edward and of his son, the Black Prince at Bordeaux, as a trusted financial official of these princes. His career may be traced in the public records with considerable certainty. On 6 Feb. 1338/9 a commission of oyer and terminer was issued concerning a trespass of John de Stretle, parson of "Pilcheston," (Pitstone) together with Lawrence de Stretle, William de Stretle, Hugh de Stretle *et als.*

²⁶ *ib.* case 20, file 89, no. 11.

²⁷ *cf.* *Liscomb*, III, 327.

²⁸ *Ft. F. Bucks.* Case 20, file 21, no. 6.

²⁹ *ib.* Case 20, file 94, no. 7.

against John de Chetyngdon at "Erle" (Yarley in Pitstone, Bucks.).³⁰ Master John de Stretle, the King's Clerk having been sent to Flanders on the King's affairs received an order for payment of his account on 15 Nov. 1346.³¹ On 10 Sept. 1347 Master John de Stretle was pardoned for certain offences in connection with his possession of the prebend of Banbury in the Church of Lincoln, from the possession of which he was removed, while he was in the King's service in Flanders and which he later recovered in the Court of Canterbury.³² On 12 May 1349 he is mentioned as interfering with William de Kelesayes' custody of the prebend of Banbury in Lincoln Diocese.³³ On 21 July 1351 Master John de Stretle, Constable of Bordeaux was charged with excesses in his office.³⁴ He is again styled "Master John de Stretle, Constable of Bordeaux" on 29 Oct. 1357.³⁵ On 8 Feb. 1361/2 (36 Edw. III) he, styled "John de Stretle Doctor of Laws and Dean of Lincoln" was sent on an embassy to treat with the Count of Flanders.³⁶ On 24 Aug. 1360 he, styled "the Prince's Clerk and Constable of Bordeaux" was to pay an annuity promptly, which the Prince had granted to Sir John Chandos for his services at Poitiers.³⁷ On 28 Jan. 1364/5 he was styled "the Prince's Clerk, Master John de Stretle, Dean of Lincoln, once Constable of Bordeaux."³⁸ Shortly before this on 11 Nov. 1362 he is called "the Prince's Chancellor for Gascony."³⁹ He appears as "Master John de Stretle, Dean of Lincoln" on 13 Nov. 1368.⁴⁰ He disappears shortly after this from the Patent and Close Rolls so we may conclude

³⁰ *Cal. Pat. R.* 1338-40, 278.

³¹ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1346-49, 121.

³² *Cal. P. R.* 1345-48, 408.

³³ *ib.* 1349-54, 29.

³⁴ *ib.* 1349-54, 373.

³⁵ *Black Prince's Reg.* IV, 224.

³⁶ *Cal. P. R.* 1361-64, 167.

³⁷ *Bl. Prin. Reg.* IV, 358.

³⁸ *ib.* IV, 541.

³⁹ *ib.* IV, 479.

⁴⁰ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1364-68, 490.

that he died soon after. He was certainly dead by 1382, when Geoffrey le Scrope, Canon of Lincoln, provided in his will that he should have an obit like that of Master John de Stretle, Dean of Lincoln.⁴¹ An entry in the Black Prince's Register, under date of 11 July 1362 is of importance in connection with the subsequent history of the family: this was a grant to Master John de Stretle, Dean of Lincoln, of the custody of the lands and wardship of the daughters and heirs of the late Sir John de Whitfield, held of the Prince, together with their marriage.⁴²

From these entries we may construct a brief biography of Master John. He was parson of Pitstone in 1339, King's Clerk in 1346 and 1347, Envoy to Flanders that same year, Prebendary of Banbury at Lincoln 1347, Constable of Bordeaux 1351 and in 1362 Dean of Lincoln and Chancellor of Gascony. He acquired two thirds of Mentmore manor besides his other ancestral holdings.

Master Roger de Stretle, the second brother, was parson of Creslow from 1 April 1336 to 1 June 1342, when he resigned the living.⁴³ He was parson of Pitstone in 1348, where he appears to have succeeded his brother John. Of the other brothers, William and Lawrence together with Master John were concerned in a trespass at "Erle" (Yarley in Pitstone) in 1339. On 2 April 1348 (22 Edw. III) Lawrence witnessed a release of Isabel, daughter of John Blaket to Sir John de Molyne *et als.*⁴⁴ We shall hear more of William anon. Of Robert and Thomas I have found nothing more.

Contemporary with these brothers was a certain Hugh de Stretle. He was apparently a younger son of Hugh and Agnes, as he was evidently not the son of John and Elizabeth, because he is not named in the settlement of Creslow in 1346. This Hugh was also,

41 *Linc. Wills*, Linc. Rec. So. V, 14.

42 *Bl. Prin. Reg.* IV, 464.

43 *Lipscomb*, III, 324.

44 *Cal. Cl. B.* 1346-49, 506.

apparently, a cleric. He was Rector of Fleet Marston and resigned in 1327. On July 18, 1340 Hugh de Stretle, parson of Stanton St. John, Oxon, was complained of for a trespass against John de Handlo in 'Bekkeleye,' co. Oxon.⁴⁵ He was Rector of Addington, Bucks, in 1350. Again this Hugh can hardly be identical with the "Hugh de Stretle, the Prince's Yeoman," who received an annuity of 100^s from the Black Prince on 24 May 1364.⁴⁶ This latter is evidently the Hugh de Stretle, whom the Sheriff of Lincoln was to put in exigend for a debt on 3 March 1372/3.⁴⁷ I am of the opinion that this Hugh was the son of another brother of Sir John and Master Hugh and a cousin of Master John and his brothers. Master John had apparently a sister, Agnes de Stretle, who was elected Abbess of Godstowe on 6 June 1349.⁴⁸ A number of Stretleys were at this time rectors in neighbouring Bucks. parishes. They were, besides Hugh de Stretley, discussed above; Ralph de Stretley, Rector of Fleet Marston in 1319; Robert de Stretley, Rector of Fleet Marston in 1348; and Richard de Stretley, Vicar of Little Marlow and afterwards in 1344 at Aston Abbots. This connection of the Stretleys with both Fleet Marston and Pitstone suggest strongly a relationship with the Neyrnuits, who were lords of both places. I would, therefore, suggest that Ralph, Robert and Richard de Stretley were sons of Hugh and Agnes de Stretley and brothers of Sir John and that their mother, Agnes, was a daughter of Geoffrey de Neyrnuit and sister of Sir John, Fulk and Ralph de Neyrnuit.

William de Stretle, third brother of Master John, appears to have been the progenitor of the later Stretleys. We have already seen that, together with his brothers, Master John and Lawrence and their supposed uncle Hugh or else their cousin Hugh de

⁴⁵ *Cal. P. R.* 1340-43, 87.

⁴⁶ *Bl. Prin. Reg.* IV, 527.

⁴⁷ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1369-74, 545.

⁴⁸ *Cal. P. R.* 1348-50, 325.

Stretley, he was complained of, on 6 Feb. 1338/9, for a trespass at Yarley in Pitstone. On 27 May 1379 he was a Collector of the Subsidy in Bucks.⁴⁹ On 28 May 1380 the custody of Merlebergh castle and town was given to Robert Power by mainprise of William Stretle of Bucks *et als.*⁵⁰ and a suit by William Stretle for a trespass against Thomas Fynchawn of Aspele *et als.* is mentioned on 20 Feb. 1380/1.⁵¹ These references are all that we have regarding William. Chronology makes it likely that the last two references relate to a son of the first mentioned William, brother of Master John. The second William undoubtedly had issue John de Stretley his successor at Creslow and Mentmore and also a son, Master William, and a daughter Isabel, who was the third wife of Roger Giffard Esq. of Twyford, co. Bucks.

Master William was parson of Creslow from 6 Sept. 1402-1408. On 18 Feb. 9 Hen. IV (1408) William Stretle, parson of Creslow was presented to the vicarage of Little Marlow.⁵² He was Rector of Addington at a later date. This William, while parson of Creslow appears in connection with Roger Giffard of Twyford, as will later appear.

John de Stretley, who succeeded to Creslow and Mentmore, together with Alice, late wife of Thomas Holes, a tenant in capite, paid into the hanaper £20 for intermarriage without license.⁵³ John Stretle Esq. was one of the Bucks. men who took oath not to maintain peace-breakers (*Pat. R.* 1 May 1431). John also appears, as will be seen, in a connection with Thomas Giffard of Twyford. On the Octave of St. John the Baptist 25 Hen. VI (1447) a fine was levied between John Stretle quer. and William Welton and wife Dionisia defores. for a toft, 10 acres of land, 10 acres of meadow and 10 acres of pasture in Creslow,

⁴⁹ *F.R.* IX, 148.

⁵⁰ *F.R.* IX, 200.

⁵¹ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1377-81, 502.

⁵² *Cal. Pt. R.* 1405-08, 394, 410.

⁵³ *Cal. P. R.* 1416-22, p. 437.

which Isabel Agas held for life. This land, which was of the inheritance of Dionisia, on the death of Isabel, was to revert to John de Stretle and his heirs. John gave Willian and Dionisia 20 silver marks.⁵⁴ John's successors in title were his three granddaughters, viz. Edith, wife of Alexander Darrell, Elizabeth wife of George Cumberford and Anne, wife of Edward Lee, who in Jan. 1482 quitclaimed Mentmore to the King.⁵⁵ Of these three co-heiresses, Elizabeth, who married 2ndly. — Wooton, styling herself "daughter of William Stretle," sold her share in Mentmore to Ralph Lane in 1503.⁵⁶

In addition to these Stretleys, who held Mentmore and Creslow, there was a cadet branch seated at Whitfield (Wheatfield), co. Oxon. We have already seen that on 11 July 1362 the custody of the lands and minor daughters of Sir John de Whitfield, together with their marriage, was granted by the Black Prince to Master John de Stretley, Dean of Lincoln. On 7 July 1362 John de Stretley and Eleanor, who was the wife of Thomas Cok, knt., gave a recognizance to Edward, Prince of Wales, for 400 marks to be levied in default of payment on their lands and chattles in Oxon. Cancelled on payment.⁵⁷ On 16 June 1390 Richard Breton, yeoman of the Chamber, was given custody of the moiety of the manor of Wheatfield co. Oxon., late of Katherine Whitfield, a tenant in capite, deceased, during the minority of Richard Stretley "her kinsman and heir" aged 18 years.⁵⁸ In 1397 Edmund Stretle held Bosmere manor in Fawley co. Bucks., which John de Whitfield had held in 1347. In 1410 Edmund Stretley held it and in 1455 John Stretley held it.⁵⁹ On 12 Nov. 1404 Edmund Stretle was collector of the Subsidy in Oxon.⁶⁰ On 6 Feb. 1424

⁵⁴ *Bucks. Ft. F.* Case 22, file 122, no. 1.

⁵⁵ *V.H.C. Bucks.* III, 337, 399, citing *Ft. F. Dio. Cas.* Hil. 21 Edw. IV, no. 14; *Bucks. Ft. F.* Hil. 22 Edw. IV, no. 2.

⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Bucks.* III, 398-9, cf. *Cl. R.* 16 Hen. VIII, m. 29.

⁵⁷ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1360-64, 410.

⁵⁸ *Cal. Pt. R.* 1388-92, p. 262.

⁵⁹ *V.C.H. Bucks.* III, citing *Add. R.* 27039, 271504, 27040.

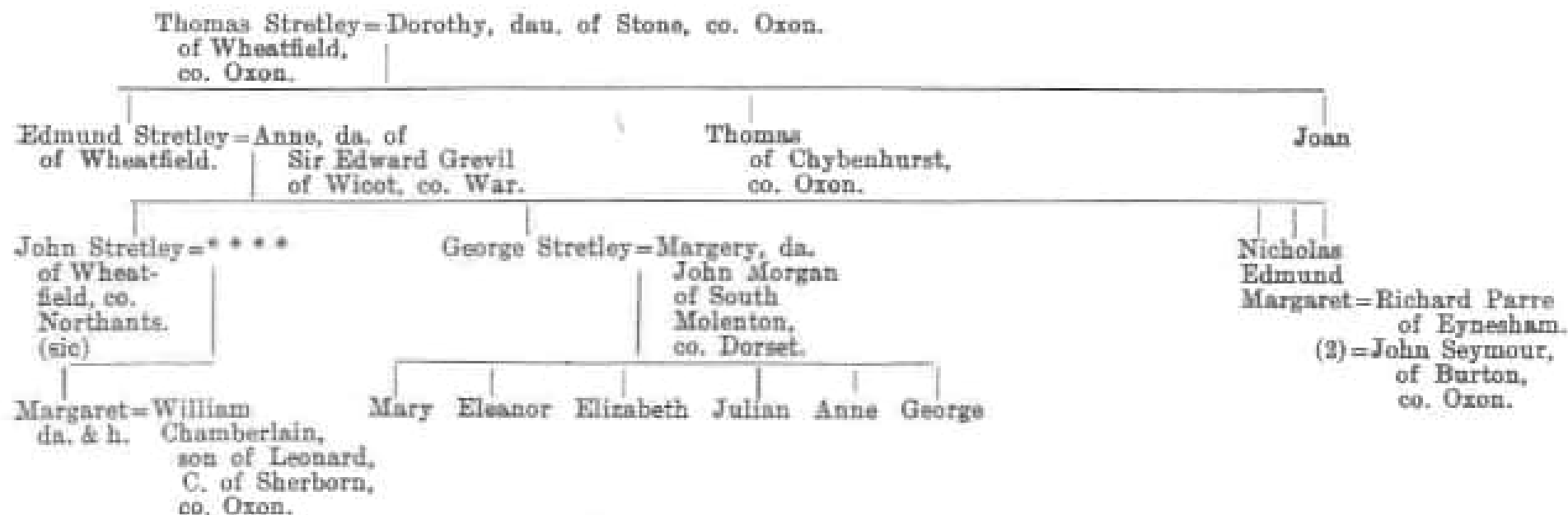
⁶⁰ *F.R.* XII, 284.

Edmund Stretle of Wheatfield gent. was cited for failure to answer William Tropyne citizen and taylor of London touching a plea of debt,⁶¹ and on 14 June 1426 (4 Hen. VI) Edmund Stretle of Whitfield, co. Oxon. the elder Esq. was cited for failure to answer William Shepton, citizen of London in a plea of debt⁶² The pedigree of Stretley of Welde, co. Oxon. appears in the Visitation of Oxfordshire for 1574 (Harl. Soc.) as follows:

⁶¹ *Cal. Pt. R.* 1422-29, p. 148.

⁶² *Cal. Pt. R.* 1422-29, p. 312.

Arms: Gyronny of eight gold and sable, on a canton gules a covered cup gold (Stretley) 2. Silver on a bend sa. 3 owls of the field Stretley) (*sic.*).



I would suggest that William Stretle of Creslow, the brother of the Dean of Lincoln, Master John, had a younger son named John Stretley, who was married by his uncle, Master John, to Eleanor, widow of Sir Thomas Cok and daughter of Sir John Whitfield and that they had issue Richard, the eldest son and heir, born about 1372, who succeeded to Wheatfield and died s.p. prior to 1397, and Edmund, who received Bosmere manor in Fawley, co. Bucks. and who succeeded to Wheatfield by 1397. This Edmund was of Wheatfield in 1424 and 1426. He had a son, Edmund, who died without issue, and Thomas, who was of Wheatfield and heads the above pedigree. This Thomas is undoubtedly the man who sold by indenture dated 6 Dec. 19 Edw. IV (1479) the woods of half the manor of Bosmere, called "Stretdespart, in Fawley, Hamelden and Tyrfeld," co. Bucks.⁶³

At this point it seems proper to discuss to some extent the arms of the Stretleys, as their armorial bearings elucidate the pedigree to some extent and offer some very interesting examples of mediaeval armory.

The arms of the Stretleys are as we have seen Gyronny of eight gold and sable, on a canton gules a covered cup gold. I am informed by Mr. Gurney that he has seen a fourteenth century deed, now no longer available of John de Stretley (i.e. Master John) sealed with these arms. This coat is an interesting example of the manner in which coats were made in the mediaeval period, the gyronny portion being taken from the Canteloup coat, that of the overlords of Mentmore, while the cup in the canton comes from the Argentine coat. In the Visitation pedigree of the Oxfordshire Stretleys above given we find another coat ascribed to the family, namely Silver on a bend sable 3 owls of the field. The key to this riddle has been furnished to me by Mr. Gurney who has found in the collection of charters belonging to Mr. F. H. Parrott of

⁶³ *Anc. Decis* VI, p. 245, C. 5623 (2).

Little Kimble one whereby Edmund Stretle of "Whitfield" (Wheatfield) co. Oxon. grants to John Somercotes of Whitchurch, co. Bucks. and Alice, his wife, six acres of arable land in the field of Oving, co. Bucks. etc. Dated at Oving the Sunday next before St. Nicholas 1 Henry IV (7 Dec. 1399). This deed shows that Richard de Stretley was dead at this time (he was probably dead as early as 1397) and had been succeeded by his brother Edmund. The most interesting thing about this deed is the seal of Edmund Stretle, which is of an earlier period, about the middle of the fourteenth century. This seal bears the owl coat ascribed to Stretley in the Visitation of 1574 but the inscription upon the seal shows that it was the seal of a Sir William de Whitfield, probably the father of Sir John, the grandfather of Edmund Stretley, or else his brother. The seal evidently came to the Stretleys through the Whitfield marriage and the Elizabethan heralds, in their uncritical fashion ascribed the coat to Stretley. The fifteenth century roll of arms printed by Mr. Barron in the Ancestor contains the gyronny coat, which is there ascribed to "John de Stretle," probably the John, who was lord of Creslow and Mentmore in the early half of the fifteenth century, although it is possibly the coat of Master John of the preceding century. By quartering the Whitfield coat the Stretleys were distinguished from the elder branch at Creslow, without any further mark of cadency.

I now turn to the parentage of Isabel Stretley, wife of Roger Giffard of Twyford co. Bucks. Esq., as it was owing to my interest in her that I first began to study the Stretley pedigree. The *Inq. P. M.* of Roger Giffard of Twyford who was born in 1368⁶⁴ was taken in the 10 and 11 Henry IV (1408-10) in Kent, Oxon. Northants. and Bucks. In Northants. he held the Manor of Helidon by feoffment of Sir John de Seton and William Batesford clerk, who had settled it on

⁶⁴ cf. *New England Hist. & Genral. Rep.* Vol. 74, pp. 233-234.

Roger and Elizabeth "then his wife" and the heirs of their bodies and Roger and Elizabeth had issue Katherine aged 10 years and more, who was his heir with respect to this manor (Katherine was afterwards the wife of the Lord Chief Justice Billing). In the other counties Roger's heir was his son, Thomas, aged 1 year and more. Roger had married 1st Joan, daughter of Baldwin de Bereford, 2ndly Elizabeth, probably Seton and 3rdly, as will now appear, Isabel Stretley, the mother of his son and heir Thomas. The Oxfordshire Inquisition shews that he held, conjointly with his wife, Isabel now surviving, the manors of Bigbrook and Newenton by feoffment of William Stretle and William Kyng, chaplains, together with the manors of Twyford, co. Bucks. and Helydon, co. Northants. *ib.*, p. 234. The *Inq. P. M.* of Sibyl Giffard (widow of Sir Thomas Giffard, father of Roger) was taken 8 Henry VI (1429-30). It recites that on 6 July 7 Rich. II (1383) William Hampton *et als.*, clerks, who were seised of Fringford manor, co. Oxon, had license to enfeoff Sir Thomas Giffard and Sibyl, his then wife, for life, remainder to Roger, son of Sir Thomas, and Joan his wife, daughter of Sir Baldwin de Bereford and the heirs of their bodies, remainders to John, Thomas and William, brothers of Roger and the heirs of their bodies, reversion to Sir Thomas in fee. Sir Thomas died and Joan, wife of Roger Giffard, also died without issue, as did John, Thomas and William, brothers of Roger. Roger Giffard was also seised of Somerton manor and the advowson of the church there and by license, granted in letters patent on 21 July 19 Rich. II (1395), he sold the same to Sibyl for life remainder to himself and his heirs. Thereafter he married Isabel Stretley and had issue Thomas now surviving, who inherits on Sibyl's death, as next heir of his grandfather, Sir Thomas.⁶⁵ From this series of documents we learn about Roger's various wives. The one in whom we are interested is his third wife, Isabel Stretley, whom he

⁶⁵ *ib.*, p. 234.

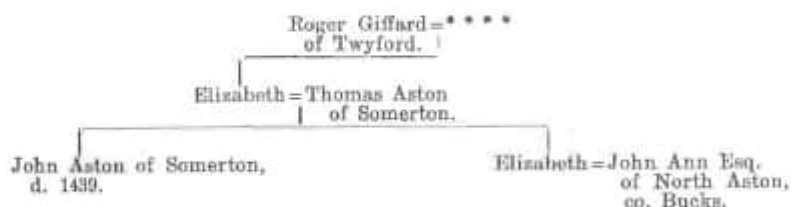
married prior to 1408; William Stretle and William Kyng chaplains (feoffees of Roger) settled Bigbrook and Newnton etc. on Roger and Isabel. As all these were Giffard manors, it is clear that this was a marriage settlement on Isabel and her issue made by Roger. In 1412 John Stokes and his wife Isabel entered into litigation regarding Helidon manor. They recite the earlier settlements made by Sir Thomas Giffard and his son Roger and state that Roger's daughter by Elizabeth still survives, but that Elizabeth died. On the Vigil of Sts. Philip and James 2 Henry IV (1400-01) Roger Giffard enfeoffed William Stretle, William Kyng and John Crouche, chaplains of the manor and that Crouche released to Stretley and Kyng, who thereupon conveyed it to Roger Giffard and Isabel and the heirs of their bodies, remainder to the heirs of Roger. The feoffment of Roger and Isabel was made on the Sunday before St. Luke the Evangelist, 5 Henry IV (1403-4). On 1 Sept. 9 Hen. VI (1430) Thomas Giffard (i.e. the son and heir of Roger and Isabel) confirmed to John Stokes and his wife Isabel, the estate in Twyford, Begbrook and Newnton, which William Stretle and William Kyng gave to Roger, now deceased, and to Isabel his wife, now the wife of John Stokes etc.⁶⁶ On 8 Oct. 9 Hen. VI (1430) Thomas Giffard, quitclaimed to John Barton, the younger, John Stretle and John Aston, with warranty, of rents and services the lands in Poundon in Twyford, co. Bucks., and in Begbrook and Newnton, co. Oxon. which they had by feoffment of John Stokes and Isabel, his wife.⁶⁷ On 14 Oct. 9 Hen. VI (1430) Thomas Giffard confirmed the above gift, made by the said feoffees, to John Stokes and Isabel his wife.⁶⁸ On 28 Nov. 16 Hen. VI (1437) Thomas Giffard of Twyford purchased a license to enfeoff William Grey, Bishop of Ely, John Aston *et als.* with the advowson of Somerton

⁶⁶ *Coram Rege R.* 604, East. 13 Hen. IV, m. Rex 10; Cal. C. R. 1429-35, p. 108.

⁶⁷ *Cal. Cl. R.* 1429-35, p. 107.

⁶⁸ *ib.* 108.

Church to the use of John Aston and his heirs.⁶⁹ In Turner's *Visitation of Oxford Mss.* in Bod. Lib. we have as follows a pedigree of Ann of North Aston:



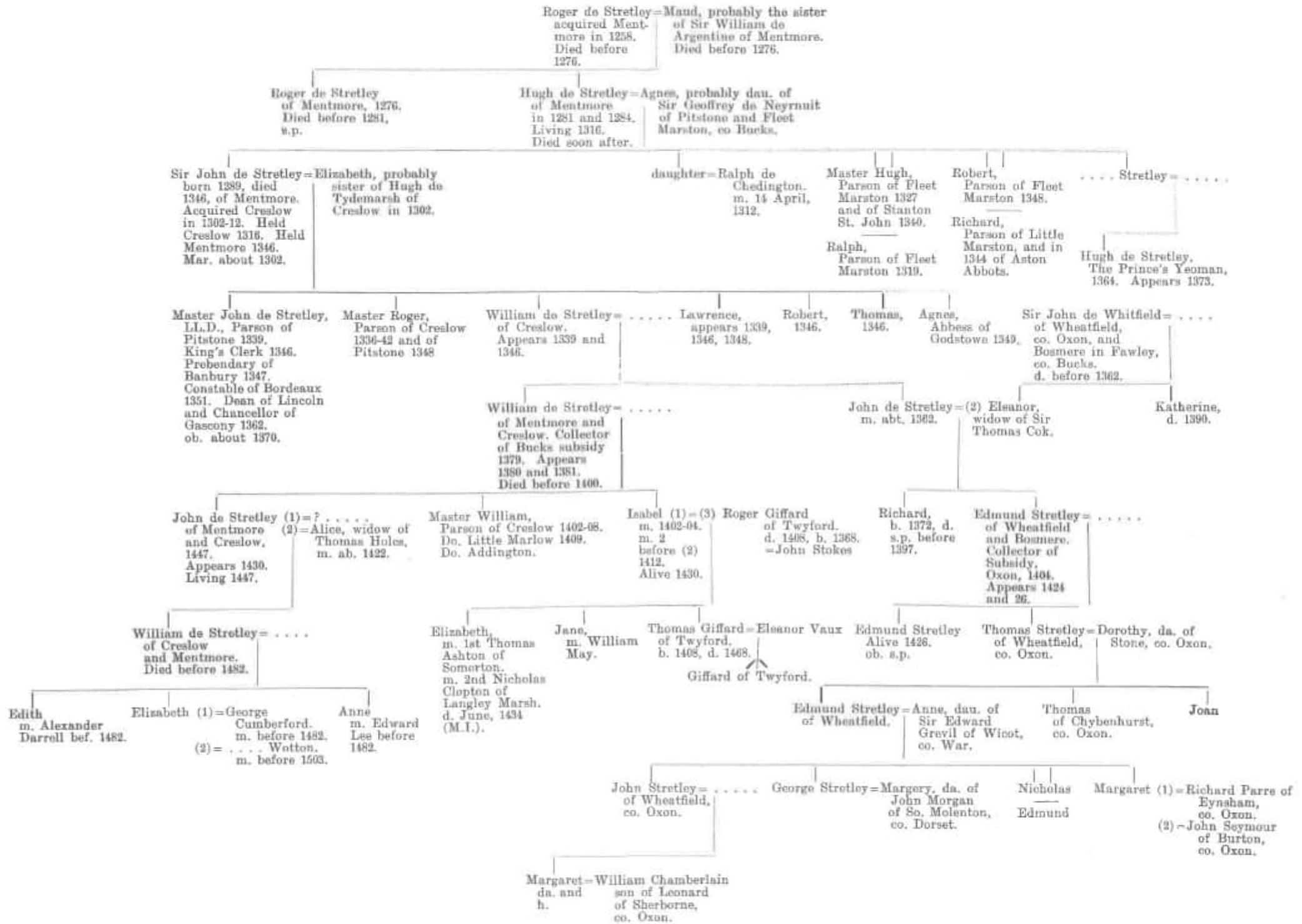
The pedigree of Giffard of Middle Claydon, 1574, in the College of Arms, states that Elizabeth, daughter of Roger Giffard by Elizabeth Stretle married Thomas Aston of Somerton co. Oxon. In 1415 Thomas Berkeley of Berkeley, chivaler sued Richard Aston, John Aston of Somerton, husbandmen *et als.* for pasturing cattle in his manor of Somerton, called "Grey's Place" and for assaulting his servants. The Astons answer that they are tenants of John Stokes, who is seised of Giffard's manor in Somerton and that they have a right of pasturage on the common lands.⁷⁰

The pedigree of 1574, above cited, in the College of Arms states that Roger Giffard married "Elizabeth daughter of Streightlie of Kirslowe" (in this pedigree I have found several errors). The pedigree of Giffard in *Harl. Mss.* 1393, fo. 25b states that Roger Giffard married — Seton and 2ndly. "Elizabeth (Isabel)" "daughter of Stretley of Kirslowe." The Stretley arms are here given as Silver, a bend sa. charged with 3 martlets. The pedigree of Giffard in the College gives the Stretley arms correctly. The errors in these sixteenth century compilations are obvious but it is evident that the compilers believed that Isabel, wife of Roger Giffard, belonged to the Creslow family and not to the Wheatfield branch.

⁶⁹ ex penes Bevil Romsey Esq. of Croughton, cited in "The Deanery of Bicester."

⁷⁰ *Curia Regis*. R. 619 Hil. 3 Hen. V. (1415-16) m. 40.

STRETLEY OF MENTMORE AND CRESLOW, co. BUCKS.



Arms of Stretley of Mentmore and Stretley: Gyronny of eight gold and sable, on a canton gules a covered cup gold.
 " " " " Wheatfield Quarterly 1 & 4 as above, 2 & 3 Silver on a bend sable three owls silver (for Whitfield).

From the above we find William Stretley, clerk, who was evidently the son of William Stretley of Creslow, acting as a feoffee for Isabel Stretley on her marriage settlement by Roger Giffard. This marriage evidently took place between 1401 and 1404. Later in 1430 we find John Stretley, the then lord of Creslow acting as a feoffee for Isabel and her second husband John Stokes. This makes it very clear that William Stretley, clerk and John Stretley of Creslow were very nearly related to her. Consequently she must belong to the Creslow and not the Wheatfield family, in which case she could only have been the daughter of William Stretley of Creslow. This view is borne out by the pedigree of Giffard in the College of Arms, for what it is worth, which makes her belong to the Creslow family, which was extinct at the time the Visitation pedigree was made, while the Wheatfield branch still flourished and the heralds ascribe to her the gyronny coat, the correct coat of Stretley. I submit, therefore, that Isabel was a daughter of William Stretley of Mentmore and Creslow and a sister of William, the parson of Creslow, Little Marlow and Addington.

In closing I wish to acknowledge the valuable suggestions and assistance received from Mr. Frederick G. Gurney, of Egginton, and of Mr. F. G. Parrott of Little Kimble for the Stretley deed cited in this article and also to Mr. A. Vere Woodman of Wing for helpful suggestions.

[It was no part of Mr. Moriarty's exhaustive and erudite labour to do more than refer to the "principal seat" of the Stretley family (p. 382). Perhaps it is unnecessary to remind members that Creslow is by far our most important domestic building of the date (c. 1330 according to the Historical Monument Commissioners), in the county. The solar, with its vaulted undercroft, has changed but little since John de Stretley's day. The Society last visited Creslow in 1934.

ED.].