

THE STRANGWAYES LINE

INTRODUCTION

Jane Strangwayes, aunt of Lucy Jane Stapley, died in 1892 and, three years after her death, her younger sister, Anne, published a book of Jane's poetry ^a. In the foreword to the book she wrote "The authoress of these poems was the eldest daughter of Edward Strangwayes, of The Leases, Bedale, Yorkshire, where she was born 11th of September, 1812, and where the family has resided about 300 years. The Strangwayes are a very old Yorkshire family, long resident at Well, near Bedale and Kirby Fleetham, and are lineal descendants of Sir James Strangwayes of Harsley Castle, near Northallerton. They are a branch of the same family tree as the Hollands and Ilchesters. Miss Strangwayes was a staunch Conservative and supporter of the Established Church. In 1844 she went to reside in London where she was a constant visitor to the Reading Room of the British Museum and the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy had a great charm for her". In 1868, she returned to Yorkshire and lived with her sister, Anne, at Beech House, Ainderby Steeple, where she died on April 7th 1892.

Many generations of that family are shown in an elegantly hand-written family tree from the earliest Henry Strangwish to "John Strangwayes, died 1749, of whom Strangwayes of Well" and his brother Richard Strangwayes - without any dates.^b The document is "a copy by Thomas Edward Strangwayes, a solicitor of the Supreme Court and a member of Lancashire Research Societies". It had been copied from a "Pedigree of Strangwayes of Well in the possession of Henry Morton" an antiquarian collector from Northallerton.

That solicitor's document was itself copied by John Barry Stapley, no later than 1948, and has additional notes. One states that the same Richard "married Anne dau. of ... Kaye of York, of whom Strangwayes of The Leases". There are also details of John and Richard Strangwayes' four sisters and the family of John Strangwayes of Well down to 1819 - but no more information on Richard or "Strangwayes of The Leases".

The direct line as shown in that tree from Henry Strangwish to John "of whom Strangwayes of Well" and the details of the descendants of John are confirmed by Burke's Landed Gentry, 1837 but still with no dates or any mention of the "Leases" family.¹

There are branches shown on that tree, other than the direct line, which show the ancestry of families who were linked to the Strangwayes by marriage. One such branch led via the Talboys family to Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy (William the Conqueror was the seventh Duke of Normandy). Two more such branches led to Umprevill, four generations before one of the very rare dates shown, 1241, and to Fitzwill, two generations before that 1241 date. The tree is shown below in sections and carries the authority of the College of Heralds. A fifteenth century "visitation to the North" by the College of Heralds, which included an enquiry into the Yorkshire branch of the Strangwayes family, agrees with the handwritten tree and Burke - but yet no dates.²

^a Now in the possession of Rosemary Manwaring, daughter of John Barry Stapley

^b Now in the possession of Susan Craen, grand-daughter of Edward Maitland Stapley

This chapter of the family history follows the direct line ancestry of Lucy Jane Stapley, née Strangways, for 200 years from about 1400 with the family's origin in Lancashire, but moving across the Pennines to Yorkshire, at first inland near Northallerton, then to the north-east coast and, finally, back again to the Northallerton area in the early 1600s.

THE NAME

The origin of the name was Strangwas/Strangwish and meant "strong stream", OE *strang* + *(ge)waes*.³ The original seat seems to have been at Strangways Hall in Manchester, from which one branch settled in Yorkshire, and two others in Dorsetshire.⁴ However, the name of the family was spelt in several ways, including Strongways, Strangwayes and Strangwishe.⁵ Strangways Hall and its grounds also have various spellings including Strangwish. They were eventually sold and replaced by a courthouse and Strangeways Gaol,.

THE EARLIEST STRANGWAYES RECORDS

Early legal documents that are reported in the Lancashire volumes of the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* (commonly *The Victoria County Histories* or *VCH*) include several Strangways called Thomas and Henry with Geoffrey, John and an occasional James. John de Strangways occurs early, in 1304, with Thomas and Geoffrey his brothers, all charged with the death of John Grelley. In 1345, Sybil, widow of Geoffrey, and Thomas, son of Geoffrey, were co-defendants in a land case. In 1349 John and Margery, his wife, had a lease in Manchester, a witness to the lease being Thomas who "was probably head of the family at that time ... down to his death in 1386". At his death he had a son, Geoffrey, who was only five. Other names recorded in various legal documents include John and Alice, his wife, in 1377, and Henry in 1383 and 1410. "No connected pedigree can be formed nor is it known how they acquired the estate called Strangeways."⁶

By an indenture of 29th September 1385, John, Thomas and Henry de Strangways, Esquires, were engaged for one year to "enter the King's service for the guard of the donjon of Cherburg", John being paid £20 and Thomas and Henry £13.6s.8d (£13.67) each at the end of the year, and being provided with "sufficient victuals, fitting for esquires of their condition, for the year".⁷ In 1385, too, Henry granted land to Thomas Strangways and Ellen, his wife, who had a daughter, Cecily. Henry, "son of John", owned land in Salford in 1397.⁸

The Strangways coat of arms is described as "Sable two lions passant in pale paly of six argent and gules" Crest A lion passant paly of six ar and gu. ^{c 9}

FROM HENRY STRANGWISH TO "THE LEASES"

HENRY

^c Two lions, walking to the left, one above the other, tails curled forwards over their backs – against a uniform background: they are coloured in vertical stripes of silver and red.

In the fourteenth century, Henry was clearly one of the gentry who for generations, as local leaders, landowners and businessmen, performed those duties for the King (for a salary or a commission) that are now carried out by the Civil Service. Between 1399 and 1401 Henry held the office of Clerk and Keeper of the King's Mills on the Dee at Chester and the fishery there. He was appointed as Chief Chamberlain of the Exchequer of Ireland in 1404, was granted this office for life in the following January and was confirmed in possession by Henry V in May 1414. One authority equates Henry, "the head of the accepted [Strangways] pedigree", as "very probably the same who (described as 'of Manchester') was paid 40 marks for wines in February 1402 at the Lower Exchequer, 'per manus Jacobi Strangways' ".¹⁰ These were wines that Richard II's Chief Butler had bought for royal use at Chester.

That "accepted pedigree" is based on early "Visitations to the North" by the College of Heralds in 1584/5 and 1612 to ensure the proper use of titles and coats of arms. Their record starts with the first title-holder, Sir James, the son of Henry and includes his father simply to identify the James who was now Sir James, but it carefully records details of his brothers and sisters to ensure proper inheritance. (Sequence of birth is important but actual dates are irrelevant!) The reference above to a Henry owning land in 1397 suggests that John was the father of our Henry, and the Cherburg indenture suggests that another John was his oldest brother

The marriages of two of the sons of Henry and two of his daughters to landed Lancashire families indicate that it was essentially a Lancastrian family well into the fifteenth century. Henry de Strangways is named as owning a tenement in the Market-Stiddle in Manchester in both 1410 and 1420, and James Strangways held land there in 1410. James is even named as a parishioner in Manchester in 1421, nine years after his appointment as Justice of the Peace in the North Riding of Yorkshire in 1412, an office he held until his death in 1442. That was the first record of the family in Yorkshire.

The IGI states, dubiously, that Henry ("of Well"!) died in 1419.

HENRY'S SONS

Sir James, the judge.

The oldest son, James, was appointed Serjeant-at-law in 1410, Justice of the Peace in 1412 and King's Serjeant-at-Law in 1415. He was also appointed Justice of Assize in the Midlands in 1416 and Puisne Justice in the Court of Common Pleas in Westminster in 1423 (the equivalent of a present-day High Court Judge). In addition he was appointed Justice of North Wales in 1427. In 1423 he bought the manor of West Harsley near Northallerton and, it is believed, built Harsley Castle: John Leland who toured England in 1534-43 remarked "Strangwise, the judge, builded a praty castelle at Harsley".¹¹ ^d However, by 1923 there was "no more than a moat to mark its site in Foxton Lane, in Foxton". It is still, though, marked as **Harsley Castle, ruins of** in West Harsley on Ordnance Survey maps. "It probably fell into disuse when it was forfeited to the Crown in a lawsuit in the 16th century".¹²

^d John Belham and John Barwick quitclaimed the manor to James Strangways in 1423

The Prince Bishop of Durham, a Cardinal and twice Chancellor of England, was his direct 'superior feudal lord': he was also a near neighbour of the Strangways in Lancashire and James was not only his executor but appears to have acted as Senior Justice in the courts of the Durham Palatinate. James and the bishop were also co-patrons of the parish of Wharton in Lancashire.¹³

James married Joan, daughter of Nicholas Orrell, a member of one of the powerful Lancashire families, and they had six children, one boy and five girls. James died in 1442/3.^e Nicholas Orell, his father-in-law succeeded Henry as Chief Chamberlain of the Exchequer of Ireland in 1430.¹⁴

Roger

Roger was the second of Henry's sons to have children. He, too, held a judicial appointment, though much lesser, becoming King's Attorney in North Wales in 1439. He married Alice, daughter of Robert or Richard Orrell. After their first son, Thomas, they had six children, three sons and three daughters. Of those six, a boy and a girl died in childhood, two daughters "died virgin" and two sons were without issue. Thomas was thus the only child of Roger to continue that line. He married Ellinor or Alianor, the daughter of Walter Talboys and possessor, in her own right according to the will of her son, James, of property in the City of Salisbury and "within the countie of Wiltshire or elliswher". (It was her ancestry that led back to Rollo, Duke of Normandy.) Thomas is believed to have been the first of the family to settle in Dorset. Of their four sons and one daughter, one son, James, married Katherine who was the daughter of the Countess of Huntley and who succeeded to her mother's title; James was associated with "the religiose brethern of St. Thomas' Hospitall" in Southwark and in his will (proved 1516/17) requested burial "afor the most blissted figure of oure Lady behynd the high aulter within the monastery chirche of Sanct Mary Overy, in the burugh of Suthwark, nere the citie of London".¹⁵ The original monks' hospital has become the present St Thomas' Hospital and the monastery church, not greatly enlarged, is now Southwark Cathedral. However, the present cathedral authorities state that "the Victorians made many changes ... There does not appear to be a memorial remaining in existence to James Strangways".¹⁶

Another son of Thomas and Alianor, Henry, started a line of the family into which Stephen, Earl of Ilchester married in the eighteenth century and assumed the arms and name of Strangways.^f Hence, the relationship mentioned in Jane's book of poetry.

Thomas.

The youngest of Henry's sons, he married Katherine, daughter of Ralph Nevill first Earl of Westmoreland (by his second wife, Joan, the legitimated daughter of John of Gaunt) and widow of the Duke of Norfolk. They had three children, Thomas who died young, Catherine, who became Baroness Grey, and Joan, who married William de Willoughby and became Countess of Nottingham. This was the first family link to the highly important Nevill/Neville family.

^e The double date is given as the old calendar, until 1752, used to change year at Easter.

^f This is the Strangways line of descent given in books of reference

SON OF SIR JAMES, THE JUDGE

Sir James, The Speaker

The first record of James, the only son of the judge, is as witness to a deed in 1430 (suggesting a pre-1410 birth date) and early in 1431 he married Elizabeth, the older daughter and joint heiress of Philip Lord D'Arcy. She had been born in the Spring of 1417 and her father died in August 1418, only a month before the birth of her sister. Both girls had married by November 1431 when Elizabeth "proved her age", 14, and inherited her share of the D'Arcy estates in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire and Calais, and also her share of the family properties in Ireland. Other estates came to her on the death of her grandmother and her mother. James, adding this property to his father's estates in West Harsley and elsewhere eventually had, in the North Riding of Yorkshire "a chain of manors (some in his own, some in his wife's right) reaching from the neighbourhood of Northallerton towards the mouth of the Tees".¹⁷ The younger D'Arcy sister married Sir John Conyers of Hornby, near Bedale, a few miles west of Harsley Castle, James thus becoming Sir John's brother-in-law

James and Elizabeth had seventeen children, thirteen boys and four girls, of whom fourteen survived to adulthood. The exact date of Elizabeth's death is not known but was probably 1460 when she would have been 43. James remarried, to another Elizabeth, the daughter of Robert Eure, but they had no children.

The father of this very large family, James is first recorded in various confidential legal roles, often for the Neville family, including the Earl of Salisbury. "It is not too much to assume that Strangways' ties with the Neville family were generally and continuously close, that from the beginning of his career he was in all probability a member of the household of Richard, Earl of Salisbury, and perhaps one of his officials".¹⁸ All his life, he was also in the mainstream of royal service at both national and local level. He served on a number of local commissions. In 1434, 1436 and 1448, he was appointed a commissioner of array to organise resistance to the Scots following the outbreak of war on the borders, and by the time he was appointed Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1445 he had been knighted.

In 1449 James became an MP, one of 'The Northern Knights'. In the same year, he was appointed to a commission with two peers and two officials of the royal household to treat for a truce with Scotland, which had invaded England.[§] The following year, he was appointed as one of four commoners to administer the recently introduced graduated income tax, hypothecated for "retinues engaged in defence", and to be an assessor of the tax to be paid in the North Riding. There followed a series of royal appointments, often connected to the truce with Scotland. They were severely troubled, violent times. The war in France continued and England suffered the Wars of the Roses involving families on both sides to which he was related, professionally and by marriage, especially the Nevilles. The Earl of Salisbury, head of the Neville family, for whom James was an executor, was killed at the battle of Wakefield,

[§] Pope Pius II had sent an envoy to Scotland, at the request of the French, with a papal order to invade England and reduce England's war effort in France. The writer has seen a contemporary fresco in the Piccolomini Library in Sienna showing the Pope giving the order

in which James also took part.^{h 19} There was further war on the Scottish border in 1455 and 1456 which involved him in renewed truces in 1457 and 1459. He was High Sheriff in 1446, 1453 and 1469.

When Edward IV, the first of the Yorkist kings, became king in 1461, he appointed Sir James, his son Richard, and his brother-in-law Sir John Conyers, to a commission to imprison the Lancastrian rebels. Among fellow commissioners were the Earl of Warwick (The Kingmaker'), the earl's brother, Lord Montagu (Chamberlain of the Royal Household) and Lord Fauconberg, Richard's father-in-law. In November 1461, Sir James was elected Speaker of the House of Commons. As was customary, the session only lasted a month, just long enough to debate and approve the King's tax proposals! However, Sir James is noted in Parliamentary history for breaking with tradition and, uninvited, making a loyal address to Edward, assuring him of the loyalty of the Members of Parliament in the first session since the King regained the throne after the wars.

Civil war continued in the North, supported by continued alliance between Scotland and France and an invasion from France: Sir James was involved in frequent commissions to deal with defence, the prosecution of rebels or negotiation with the Scots. In 1468, on the death of Sir John Conyers, his brother-in-law, he was appointed Sheriff of Yorkshire for a second term. During his period of office, the Lincolnshire Rising broke out at the end of which lands of the rebels were sequestered, including those of Sir James' own younger son, Robert, and the young Sir John Conyers. Right up to his death in 1480, he continued to serve on many royal commissions concerning a wide variety of issues, from fishing rights on the River Esk to more breaches of the truce with Scotland.ⁱ

THE CHILDREN OF SIR JAMES, THE SPEAKER AND ELIZABETH

The lives of two of James and Elizabeth's seventeen children, Richard and James, are detailed below. Of the other fifteen, Thomas, William and Joan died young. Robert may also have died young, as there is a second Robert (the eighth son) recorded as being married and living near York; George became a clerk in holy orders, warden of D'Arcy's chantry at Whorlton and later Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Of six other boys, nothing is known except that one, John, died without issue. Three daughters married.

Richard

The oldest son, and the heir of James the Speaker was Richard, who inherited Harsley Castle and the bulk of the family's estates from his father and is known as Sir Richard Strangwayes of Harsley Castle and Whorlton Castle. (Our ancestor was James, the second son, a younger

^h Richard Neville, son of that Earl of Salisbury who was killed at Wakefield, both of whom supported Richard Duke of York, married the Warwick heiress and became the 16th Earl of Warwick. He became known as 'The Kingmaker'.

ⁱ Unfortunately, editions of the National Dictionary of Biography before 2005 do not record his death in 1480 but ascribe to him an extra 36 years taken from the life of the "James Strangwayes esquier", his cousin's son, who asked (see above) to be buried "afor the most blissed figure of oure Lady" in the Southwark monastery in 1516.

brother of Richard.) Richard increased his fortunes by his first marriage to Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of William Nevill, Earl of Kent and Baron Fauconbridge. Their son, another Sir James, married Alice, co-heir with her brother Geoffrey, of the estates of Thomas, fifth Lord Scrope. The son of James and Alice was the third in the direct line to marry an heiress, Ann, daughter of Humphrey, Lord Dacre, “the celebrated commander of Flodden Field.”

The last in that line was known as Sir James of East Harsley and Whorlton, leading to the belief that he may no longer have inhabited the castles. He, too, married an heiress, the daughter of Thomas Pigott but had no male heir. There were three daughters of that marriage to inherit the family fortune and he was in the process of selling his estates to his cousin Lord Dacre in 1540/41 when he died. The consequent legal tangle and disputes were eventually settled by appeal to the king. Twenty-six manors and estates, including two that had been obtained in the two previous years were involved and the process took three years.^j No-one with the name Strangways received a legacy. Three years later, after further bitter arguments, the king took Harsley Castle.

The rest of this history will, with one exception, concern itself only with those in the direct line of descent from the original Henry, through Richard’s brother, James, to Lucy Jane Strangways, her sister and her brothers.

James

James, the second son, married Ann, daughter and heiress of Robert Conyers of Ormesby in Cleveland, near Middlesbrough, and was thereafter known as ‘of Ormesby’.^k His pedigree was determined against his Arms in the Visitations of Yorkshire 1584/5 and 1612 and he was recorded as “Strangways of Ormesby”.^l Importantly for this history, it is from him that both the Strangways of Well and the Strangways of The Leases are descended.

STRANGWAYS ON THE NORTHEAST COAST

The geographical centre of interest in this history moved to the northeast coast following the marriage of James to Anne Conyers. It appears that James and Ann did not live actually in the manor of Ormesby, as there was no manor house recorded in the deeds when the manor

^j For the record, they were Ainderby, Aislaby, Aine, Appleton Wishe, Carlton Minott, Clifton upon Ure, Constable Burton, Gristhorpe, Hallikeld, Hilton, Hunmanby, Kirby Sigston, Masham, Middleton, Middleton on Leven, Morton Grange, Mount Grace, Newton nr. Theakston, Northallerton, Potto, Rudby, Seamer, Skelton, Warlaby, Whorlton and Yarm. Source: various volumes of VCH.

^k His aunt had married into the other branch of the Conyers, known as “of Hornby”, near Bedale. Both branches of Conyers were involved in a series of marriages with the Strangways over several generations, together with the Dacre and Nevill families. See G Nutall *Who was Lord Conyers* published privately Sheffield 2000 (SCL –LS).

^l By the time of the visitation, his arms, which the College of heralds was auditing, incorporated the arms of Strangways, D’Arcy, Meynell, Conyers, Percy and Danby.

was sold after 1596.^m James was elsewhere called “of Ormesby and Sneton” having acquired the ‘vill’ of Sneton, near Whitby, which is where the couple seem to have lived and to have had fifteen children, nine boys and six girls.ⁿ Two of the girls are known to have married and one became a nun. The only record of the sons, apart from one dying without issue, is that the oldest, was yet another James and inherited Ormesby on the death of his father, who was buried in Whitby in 1507 or 1508.²⁰ Anne, who died six years after her husband, asked to be buried in Ormesby.

James, that oldest son, also married an Anne, the daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford of Lancaster and they only had one child who became the third ‘James Strangwayes of Ormesby’. He once again married an Anne, the daughter of Ralph Danby and they had one son and five daughters.

Those three generations of Strangwayes, each Sir James, who were ‘of Ormesby’ or ‘Ormesby and Sneton’, were followed in that title by a son who became Sir Richard. He had one son and a daughter by his first wife, Jane, daughter of Sir Thomas Metham, that son becoming the fourth James ‘of Ormesby’ who died in February 1593/4. As he had no sons and his only daughter, also Jane, had married and moved away, the death of this last James in the line was followed by the sale of the Ormesby estate in 1596, and neither it nor Sneton ever reappear in the records of the family.

However, Sir Richard, father of that last James, had remarried after the death of his first wife, to Isabell, daughter of Thomas Thwaites of Lund, and they had three sons and two daughters. One of these sons, Henry, moved about four miles south to South House, Robin Hood’s Bay^o The youngest of the three sons of Henry and Isabell, Edward, married three times though the name of only his third wife is known, Felice, daughter of William Radcliffe. All that is known of her family is that they came from Lancashire.

What is certain is that Edward and Felice were the first Strangwayes in this descent to move back, about 1550 or 1560, to the neighbourhood of Northallerton, into Kirby Fleetham parish,

^m Ormesby is on the southern edge of Middlesbrough, while Sneton is some thirty miles south of Ormesby and two miles south of Whitby. The present National Trust Ormesby Hall is an eighteenth century house. “The Old Hall” which is largely remaining, was built about 1599 after the heirs of James Strangwayes who were, with his nephew, joint owners of the Ormesby estate, had sold the house there in 1596 to their lawyer, Ralph Rokeby, who sold it on to James Pennyman, who build a hall on the site. Ref. Private correspondence with Mark Whyman, historian, Ormesby Hall.

ⁿ Sneton or Sneaton, was a berewick of Whitby and one of the ‘vills’ of the liberty of the Abbey of Whitby for which the Strangwayes, Conyers, Eldringtons and Allatsons (all local tenants of the abbot) had to perform an annual ceremonial duty, ‘the horngarth,’ a token of the Saxon hedging duty of *deorhege*, to keep in horned animals. Nine yards of hedging, had to be made by nine in the morning of Ascension Eve, on the east side of the Esk, above Whitby Bridge, “a slight hedge a little way into the shallows of the river” to last for three tides. The wood for this came from South House, two miles south of Robin Hood’s Bay, which later became a Strangwayes residence.

^o There are now two buildings on the site. Mill Bank Farm was rebuilt in the late 1700s but does include mullioned windows “possibly dating to the 1500s”. The building now called South House was rebuilt in the early 1900s “we believe after a fire”. (Source, C. Hutton, son of the current occupier).

which is the neighbouring parish of Hornby of the Conyers and only a few miles south of the site of Harsley Castle, the original Yorkshire home of the Strangways. In Kirby Fleetham was the farm, eventually known as Warren Farm (on the “The Leases” estate), the home of Jane who wrote the book of poetry and of her youngest brother, Richard, the father of Lucy Jane.

- ¹ John Burke 'Strangways of Well' in *A Genealogical History of the Landed Gentry* 4 vol 1837 vol i
- ² Joseph Foster (Ed) *Visitation of Yorkshire in 1480-1500* (copied from the original by Robert Glover, pursuivant and herald, 1544/88) Surtees Soc No 144, 1930.
- ³ Mills *A Dictionary of English Placenames* Oxford 1991.
- ⁴ John Harland *Collectanea relating to Manchester and its neighbourhood ii* Cheetham Soc 1847 p 142.
W Farrer & J Brownbill (Eds) *Victoria History of the Counties of England (VCH) Lancashire iv* 1911 260.
- ⁶ All this para *ditto*.
- ⁷ Harland *above*.
- ⁸ *VCH (L) iv* 260.
- ⁹ *VCH(L) iv* 1911 p 260.
- ¹⁰ J S Roskell 'Sir James Strangways of West Harsley and Whorlton' in *Yorkshire Arch. Journal vol 39* Wakefield 1958 455-483 at 465. The principal subject of this monograph is the grandson of Henry, and son of Sir James, Judge, i.e. Sir James, Speaker of the House of Commons in 1461.
- ¹¹ *VCH(Y) i* p437. J. Leland, *Itinerary* ed L Toumin-Smith London 1919.
- ¹² *VCH(NY) i* 1911 p434.
- ¹³ *VCH(L) viii* 158.
- ¹⁴ This para. Roskell *above*.
- ¹⁵ *North Country Wills* Surtees Soc. Vol 116 p 86.
- ¹⁶ Private Correspondence 28 January 2000.
- ¹⁷ Roskell *above* 459. A long list of the individual manors is given.
- ¹⁸ Roskell *above* 462.
- ¹⁹ *The History Today Companion to British History*.
- ²⁰ Will dated at Sneton 10.4.1507, proved 5.6.1508.