

THE STRANGWAYES OF THE LEASES (AND WELL)

AND IN LONDON

Edward Strangwayes and Felice were followed in Little Fencote, in the parish of Kirby Fleetham, by three generations, Edward and Elizabeth, John and Ann, Thomas and Dorothy. Thomas Strangwayes and Dorothy Hardcastle, a local girl whom he married in 1661, had four sons and four daughters, one child each year for five years then one after another three years, followed by a break of seven years before the third daughter was born in 1676 and a fourth in 1678. This last was baptised on July 29th 1678 and her mother was buried on July 30th. Six of her children were still under 15 years old and Thomas remarried - but had no more children.^a He died at Hollow Moor House in Holtby Magna in 1712 and was buried in Hornby. ¹ His two youngest daughters had been married there in 1700 and 1704.

The second of those four sons of Thomas and Dorothy was Richard, our ancestor, who married Anne Kaye and they are recorded as living in Leeming Lane, elsewhere called Low Street and probably regarded by them as still being in the village of Little Fencote.² . It joins the villages of Fencote and Leeming and runs parallel to what was then called High Street, the old Roman road of Dere Street, now known as the Great North Road or the A1.

The oldest son of Richard and Anne was Thomas who, in 1772 when he was 57, was renting a farm on the estate of a Mr Marriott, which is shown on a plan drawn up that year, probably for the sale of the estate (illus). It shows Warren House and the farmland he was renting and it lies alongside Leeming Lane.³ The survey accompanying the plan lists his seventeen fields, some of the names being High Street Close, Low Street Close, and, significantly in view of the claims made in the book of Jane's poetry, North Leases, Middle Leases and Sun Leases. A 21-year lease granted by a new landlord, Henry Pierse, four years later in 1776, to "Thomas Strangways of Ascough (sometimes called Askew)" lists a house called Rabbit Warren House, a barn and 127 acres at an annual rent of £84^{4b}.

Thomas, "of whom Strangwayes of Leases" according to the manuscript genealogy, had three surviving younger brothers. Edward, our ancestor, the second of these, born in 1725, married in 1763, Martha Walker. It was their older son, another Edward, born in 1764, who had the farm after his uncle Thomas died and who is recorded in that book of poetry as "Edward Strangwayes, of The Leases, Bedale, Yorkshire."

This Edward, at the age of 47, married 28-year-old Jane Walker from the nearby village of Helmsley at Bedale church in 1811 and they had seven children. Two of their three daughters, Jane and Anne, born in 1812 and 1816, never married. Martha, born in 1815, married and left the area. Edward and Thomas, the two elder brothers, born in 1814 and 1817, worked the family farm after their father died in 1846, increasing it (127 acres in the 1776 lease) from "170 acres, employing two men and a boy" in 1851 to "260 acres, employing three men and a boy in 1881".⁵

^a His second wife, Elizabeth died eleven years later. All his children were baptised in Kirby Fleetham and both his wives were buried there.

^b The current OS map, Landranger 99, shows both Warren House and Low Leases Farm. Just the other side of the A1, it shows Little Holtby but not a Holtby Magna. Aiskew is now an extension of Bedale.

By 1881, also, they were no longer tenants. It was a freehold farm known as Far Leases. Edward never married: Thomas married Ann and they had a son, Thomas, and two daughters, Ann and Jane, all living on the farm. John, their last child, was born in 1824 but died in the same year. Richard, the youngest of the three sons, born in 1818, left the farm by the age of 23, went to London and eventually married and become the father of Lucy Jane Strangwayes,⁶

[A diversion: The “Strangwayes of Well” were descended from John, the third son of Thomas and Dorothy. He married Gratiana Preston and moved to Well, south of Bedale, and about six miles southwest of The Leases, where he was appointed deputy master of St. Michael’s Hospital.

The first son of John and Gratiana, also John, had a daughter who married a doctor, Allen Swainton, and their son, Edward Swainton, took the name Strangwayes or Swainton-Strangwayes. This is the Strangwayes family that is detailed in books of reference. (The third son of John and Gratiana, Thomas, left the area and went to Boreham Wood, near Elstree.)

The middle son of John and Gratiana, Richard, was, like his father, deputy master of St. Michael’s Hospital. His second son, Richard married Catherine Purchas in 1775 so their firstborn, born in 1776, was given an additional name and was called Richard Purchas Strangwayes. That pair of names was handed down until, in 1839, another Richard Purchas Strangwayes was born and he, like Richard Strangwayes “of the Leases”, moved to London and lived just a mile from him.

The latest record of the Strangwayes actually living in Well is that, in 1823, Richard Strangeways Esq. was “living in an old monastery building at Well. R. P. Strangeways Esq. was living at Holly Hill”.⁷ The 1841 census does not show any Strangeways in Well.]

Richard, of the Leases, had left for London by the time of 1841 census. He appears then in the Islington returns as an assistant linen draper in a large household living at 70/71 Chiswell Street where the proprietor was Richard Hughes from Denbigh. By 1846, Richard was named in the Post Office London Directory, cross-referenced to “Hughes and Strangwayes, linen drapers”. The 1851 census gives much more information. At that address (which was still recorded as a warehouse in the Goad insurance map of 1886) lived 17 people. Richard Hughes was joint head of household with Richard Strangwayes, whose sister Jane had come down from Yorkshire in 1844 to be their housekeeper. There were five draper’s assistants, two assistant linendrapers, three apprentices, two porters, a clerk and a housemaid, all living in the two houses. (Chiswell Street lies four hundred yards north of the City of London and leads into the south-west corner of Finsbury Square) Before the 1861 census Richard had married Selina Croad and moved away.

On June 14th 1860, Richard Strangwayes married Lucy Selina Croad, a daughter of Samuel Croad, a general handyman, by licence at Christ Church, Highbury. Richard was 42; she was 38 and her family was originally from Portsmouth, but had migrated to the Metropolis when Selina was a small child.^c

Though they both lived on the northern edge of the City of London before their marriage, their marital home was south of the river in Dansey Villa, Lyndhurst Road (now part of Lyndhurst Way), in Camberwell, South London. An 1865 directory shows that their neighbours included a

^c For details of her family, see the Barry, Strange and Croad section.

surgeon, a parson, a solicitor and a ladies' school. There, Lucy Jane was born in February 1861 and a son, Edward Ernest, followed in September 1862. The birth of a second daughter, Elizabeth Barry, was not registered but both the census for 1881 and her death certificate suggest that she was born in 1865.

The family left Dansey Villa before the 1871 census and their whereabouts is not known between 1865 and 1881. What is known, however, is that the wholesale drapery business, listed in Chiswell Street under only Richard's name in 1866 and 1867, last appears in trade directories in 1867. In the foreword to the book of Jane's poetry, Anne says that Jane returned to Yorkshire in 1868. The premises were not listed as occupied at all from 1868 to 1871 nor do Richard Strangwayes or Richard Hughes appear by name in any directories.^d The 1871 census index has been searched for the family, without success. It is possible that they were out of the country at the time of the census and it is known that Richard had obtained a Belgian passport for a visit in 1848. (The photocopy of a single page records this visit but the passport itself has been lost with any possible records of other visits.) It was in this dark interval, too, that the 1865 birth of Elizabeth is indicated by census returns and her death certificate.

In the 1881 census when they were back across the river in Amhurst Road, West Hackney Richard is recorded as a "Brewer's compensation agent", 19-year old Lucy was living at home though Elizabeth Barry, then 16, was working as a governess.^e Ted was 18 with his occupation stated as "Woollen warehouse, manufacturing".

In 1882, Lucy married George Maitland Stapley, clerk. (Her father was recorded on the marriage certificate a "gentleman".)

Two years later, the family was living at 20 Durley Road, Stamford Hill when, in June 1883, 18-year-old Elizabeth, 'Lillie', married Edmund Soillieux, a 30-year-old stockbroker of 36, Durley Road, whose father was also a stockbroker. Edmund had spent an adventurous ten years or so of his early adult life working first in the Australian gold fields and then sailing the South Pacific seas as the master of a passenger vessel. (His daughter, May, who inherited a large collection of Fijian spears, later called him "a blackbirder".) Edmund and Lillie had two children, May (1887) and Montagu (1891). 'Monty' died in 1922 from tuberculosis, a "Pensioned Sub-Flight Lieutenant, Royal Navy".

In 1896, Ted, then 33, married Frances May Louise Howden, the 30-year-old daughter of a cashier. In his marriage certificate, Ted is called simply "agent" and, surprisingly, that certificate records his father, Richard, as still a draper. (In his death certificate in 1896, Richard is called a "Retired draper") No children of that marriage have been traced so there appear to be no Strangwayes grandchildren of Richard.^f

^d Directories for 1872-74 are not available but number 70 was occupied by Mrs Elizabeth Ervin, linendraper, in 1875 and up to 1880, though number 71 seems to have remained empty right up to 1880.

^e At that time, magistrates were being required to reduce the number of public houses and pay compensation to the owners of those they closed. The brewers employed agents to negotiate the level of compensation.

^f Two families descended from the 'Strangwayes of Well' have been found, Richard Purchas Strangwayes and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in Osbaldeston Road, only a mile from the Durley Road

family. There, Elizabeth died in 1885 from cancer of the liver and Richard Purchas took his own life in 1887. Later, the birth of John John Bell Francis Adrian Swainton-Strangwayes was registered in Hampstead, the son of James de la Hess Swainton-Strangwayes and Moira Mary, née Simpson, in April 1902.

¹ Foster. *Pedigrees of the County Families of England* London 1874 (and Hornby parish register) .

² *Ibid.*

³ *Aiskew* 1772 NYCC ref ZBA 26/1/3

⁴ NYCC ref ZBA 11/6/24

⁵ Census returns for 1851 and 1881.

⁶ Census return 1841.

⁷ Correspondence from NYCC, quoting Baines *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York* 1823