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# Collections

RELATING TO THE

## FAMILY OF STIFF.

BY

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PART I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SURNAME.

THE MEDIEVAL STIFFS OF HAWKESBURY.

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HAWKESBURY CHURCH: SOUTH



# Collections

RELATING TO THE

## Family of Stiff.



### On the Origin of the Surname.

THE surname of Stiff has been associated with the county of Gloucester for close upon five hundred years at least, and though at present we have no evidence of its existence in Gloucestershire at an earlier period than the commencement of the fifteenth century, there is documentary proof that persons of the name were living in the adjoining county of Wilts some two or three hundred years before that date, thus carrying it back to a time not very long after Domesday Book.

Although the Stiffs have never taken any prominent position in Gloucestershire, it still may be of interest if we attempt to trace the origin of the family and derivation of this surname, for there is some reason to believe that it belongs to the very oldest class of English family names, those which are patronymic in their character, and are derived from the ancient personal names brought over from the continent by the early Teutonic invaders of Britain, most of which, however, fell into disuse in consequence of the Norman conquest. To this conclusion we are drawn by the fact that all instances of the name, however early may be their date, are without the prefix of any particle,

like "le," "at," or "de," such as are usually found associated with those names which are derived from the occupation or place of origin of those who first acquired them.

The etymology of the family nomenclature of England is a science still in its infancy, being indeed, to a very great extent, little more than guess work, and it must remain so until surnames are individually traced back to their respective localities and, through the changing forms which occur in records, to the earliest periods at which they can be found.

In attempting then to ascertain the origin and early history of a surname, the principal questions to be considered are the various forms it may take, the early recorded examples, and the localities in which it is found, and in the case of a patronymic the origin of the personal name upon which it is based. This we shall seek to do with the surname with which we are now concerned. A name consisting only of a single syllable, like Stiff, obviously does not admit of much variation of form, a fact which, of course from the view of the genealogist, is no small advantage.

The surname of Stiff is one of a group of three now existing names which are probably identical in their origin. These are Stiff, Steff, and Staff. The first seems to be the form mostly in use in the West of England, and the two latter in East Anglia. Steff, at present a very rare name, is apparently becoming extinct through absorption in the ranks of either the Stiffs or the Staffs. There are other forms, no longer extant, depending upon the alteration in the vowel, the change of "f" into "v," and the addition of the letter "t." That these variants are interchangeable forms, there is in most cases ample documentary evidence. They may be arranged as in the following table—

Stuf and Stuph.	Stefe.	Stiff, Styffe,	Steff	Staff.
Stive.	Steefe.	and Stiffe.	Steffe.	
Stife.		*Stift, Stift,		
Stief.		Styffe, and		
Styfe.		Steyfte.		

With the exception of Stuf, Stuph, Stive, Steff, and Staff, all these variant forms occur in the parish registers, wills, and other

\* Stift or Stiff does not now exist as a surname in England, and only appears occasionally in parish registers and the like. It, however, is found on the continent, and occurs in Austria where, according to "Rietstap," there is a family of barons of this name. As a slight confirmation of the identity of Stiff and Stift, it may be noted that a recent edition of Kelly's London Suburban Directory enters a lady named Stiff under the spelling Stift. We may also compare the names Cliffe and Clift.

records relating to the Gloucestershire Stiffs in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. That Stiff and Steff are identical is shown by the registers of St. Magnus, London Bridge, the wills of the Northamptonshire Stiffs and Steffs, and records relating to the Steffs and Stiffs of Drinkstone in Suffolk. We have at present no documentary evidence to show the identity of Steff with Staff, and Stiff with Stuf, but that they are etymologically the same there can be no doubt.\*

Locally the families which bear the name of Stiff, if we except comparatively modern settlements in great trading centres such as London and Birmingham, seem to be almost wholly confined to a zone or district extending something like five and twenty miles on either side of a line drawn from Bristol to Lowestoft. Within this zone, several families of Stiff and Steff have been settled, between whom for the last three or four centuries no kinship can be traced, although of course it is by no means improbable, when we consider how few families of the name there are, and how very localized it is, that at some early period they may have branched off from one common stock, and that an agnatic blood relationship exists, though remotely, between most of those who bear the name. Whether this be so or not, is, however, a point we cannot hope to determine. The counties in which the name is chiefly found during the last three or four centuries, are Gloucestershire, Berkshire, and Hampshire, Northamptonshire and Suffolk.

The *Gloucestershire* Stiffs appear at Hawkesbury as early as the year 1419, and they are found in the register of that parish down to the year 1826. Branches of this family settled in Kingswood, Wotton-under-Edge, Dursley, Cam, and Uley, and with one or other of these places they are still connected. One line, presumably an offshoot of the Hawkesbury Stiffs, has existed in the neighbouring village of Iron Acton for a very considerable period. To this latter family belong the Stiffs of Dover, who settled there in the beginning of this century. Others were settled at Chipping Sodbury, Wickwar, and North Nibley.

In *Berkshire* the name appears at least as early as 1584, and persons bearing it were living in the county early in the

\* See below where the etymology of Stiff in the various Teutonic languages is touched upon. It may be worth while noticing that in Scotland, where they say "wull" for "will," English people named Stiff are sometimes addressed as Stuff. Compare also Clutterbuck and Clitterbooke, Brunnesley and Brinsley, Dudeot and Didcot.

present century. The districts with which the Stiffs were associated are in Mid Berkshire round about Lambourne, and on the southern edge of the county adjoining *Hampshire*, in the northern part of which county they appear as early as 1509. We find them at Sherborne, Pamber, Bramley, Strathfieldsaye, and Silchester, at which last place they still own property.

In *Northamptonshire*, the subsidy rolls show a Robert Steffe at Norton, in 1524-5. The will of Robert Styffe, of Norton, was proved 1548-61, and that of Richard Steffe, of Norton, in 1556-7. Other Northamptonshire places with which they were connected were Whilton, Braunston, Rotherthorpe, and Floore. The will of William Stiffe, of Glendon, was proved in 1724.

In *Bedfordshire* we find the will of Eusebius Stiff, of Elstow, which was proved in 1723.

In *Suffolk* there is, at the present day, quite a numerous clan of Stiffs. Some few of them seem to have been emigrants from other districts, but the majority are doubtless indigenious to the county, that is to say they can be traced in the early part of the sixteenth century. Anciently, the more usual spelling followed in East Anglia seems to have been Steff, a form which has been almost wholly superseded by Stiff.

The will of Simon Steffe, of Woolpit, was proved in 1529-38, and with that village and the neighbouring ones of Drinkston, Norton, and Rougham, the Stiffs are still connected.

Anne Steffe of Drinkstone, in 1585, married John Stevens, *alias* Cator. James Steffe of Drinkston, youngest son of John Steffe of the same place, in 1668 filed a bill in chancery against his brother John Steffe, claiming certain copyholds by virtue of the custom of borough English. In his brother's reply, however, the name is throughout spelt Stiffe, thus forming an interesting proof of the identity of the two surnames.

There was a family of Steffe settled at Tuddenham at the end of the sixteenth century, several of whom were educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge, and became clergymen. John Steff graduated at Clare College in 1672, and George Steff in 1675, and the former may be the Rev. John Steff, rector of Wrentham, who died in 1723, and whose son the Rev. Thomas Steff, of Taunton, published a volume of sermons in 1743. Whether the Steffs of Tuddenham and Wrentham were one and the same family, or whether they were connected with the Steffs or Stiffs of Woolpit and Drinkstone, we are unable to say.

The general result then is this: we find that in the sixteenth century there existed some five or six different groups of the name, extremely localized, and apparently not then related to each other. These were—

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.	Stiff, Stefe, and Stift.	Hawkesbury, Cam, Dursley, Iron Acton, from 1419.	
HAMPSHIRE and SOUTH BERKS.	Stiff.	Silchester.	„ 1509.
MID BERKSHIRE.	Stiff.	Lambourne.	„ 1584.
NORTHAMPTON.	Steff or Stiff.	Norton, Glendon.	„ 1524.
SUFFOLK.	Steff or Stiff.	Woolpit, Drinkston.	„ 1529.
	Steff.	Tuddenham.	„ 1598.

Leisure has not permitted the taking of an accurate census of the name, though that of course is possible, since 1837, through the records of the Registrar-General's office. But a study of the birth registers for the period of five years ending 1881 leads to the conclusion that there were nearly two thousand Stiffs, Steffs or Staffs, living at that date. This calculation is based on the supposition that the rate of births in families bearing these names is a normal one. The exact figures are shown in the following table:—

STAFF births in 1877-81,	132.	Total living 1881,	773
STEFF	„ „ 24.	„ „ „	140
STIFF	„ „ 177.	„ „ „	1037
			<hr/>
			*1940

Staff and Steff are mainly East Anglian forms, and all the names seem now commoner there than in the West of England, though we have but few notes about the Staffs. There is, however, some reason to believe that this is due to an abnormal increase amongst the Suffolk Steffs and Stiffs during the last hundred and fifty years.

According to Sharon Turner, the population of England at the time of Domesday was not less than two millions, in other words about a thirteenth of what it was at the census of 1881. Consequently if the various families of Staffs, Steffs, and Stiffs have increased at the normal ratio during the last eight hundred years, their number in the year 1086 could not have exceeded 140 or 150 persons, about ten of whom would represent the modern Steffs, about sixty the Staffs, and about eighty the Stiffs. As

\* As a contrast it may be mentioned that the Smiths living at the same date numbered not less than 356,915 persons.

every one can probably number amongst his recognized kindred some fourteen or fifteen who bear the same surname as himself, there would be about ten families only to represent the Domesday progenitors of the modern Staffs, Steffs, and Stiffs. Since the name, so far as researches go, is common only to the Teutonic population of England and the continent, we venture to suggest that its bearers are of Saxon descent, and that their remote ancestors may be sought for amongst the invaders of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries. Emigrants into a new country, if they would hold their own, must increase far more rapidly than the normal ratio of settled lands and therefore a small clan consisting of ten or a dozen families in the time of William the Conqueror may very well have descended from a single common ancestor or stockfather, living four or five hundred years earlier.\*

Amongst the Teutonic settlers in England in the first half of the sixth century, was a Jutish chieftain named Stuf, who landed in the Isle of Wight in the year 514. Cerdic, the first King of the West Saxons, was his uncle, and he himself was the founder of a family which, three centuries later, still occupied a very prominent position, since we are told that one of his descendants was Oslas, the "famous" Chief Butler of King Ethelwulf. The king indeed married his daughter Osburgh, who became the mother of Alfred the Great. The chronicler in recording these facts, deems it needful to inform us that Queen Osburgh was noble, not only by disposition, but also by descent from the Goths and Jutes, being "of the race of Stuf et Wightgar." King Alfred was born at Wantage, a fact which renders it not unlikely that the race of Stuf may have migrated northwards, and settled in Berkshire. And the place-names in the neighbourhood of Wantage, as we shall presently see, lend support to the suggestion that a clan of Stifingas, the descendants of Stuf, lived thereabouts. If this be so, it is a remarkable coincidence that for centuries we should find the name Stiff existing in the county. Though the suggestion may seem a bold one to make, it is possible that the modern Stiffs in

\* Names which remain comparatively rare in the mother country, may become of frequent occurrence in a colony, as the experience of America during the last three hundred years amply demonstrates. There are in the United States, many families, now quite numerous, who trace their lineage from one common ancestor who settled in New England a couple of centuries back. The same process doubtless often happened with the families of Teutonic settlers in England in the fifth and sixth centuries.

England may be directly descended from the Jutish chieftain Stuf, who flourished more than thirteen centuries ago.

But this suggestion is only possible on the assumption that many modern Englishmen derive their surnames from the ancient personal names in use before the days of the Norman invasion.

This suggestion compels us to digress somewhat, and to consider somewhat the Anglo-Saxon system of personal names, and its effect upon our modern family nomenclature. Too little attention has been paid to the subject, and writers on surnames usually assume that such did not become hereditary until some time after the Norman Conquest, a view which there seems some reason to believe is an erroneous one.

Undoubtedly there must have been a large number of families who readily changed their surnames, perhaps every generation, just as was the Welsh custom until lately, if indeed the practice be even now extinct. But Domesday book affords us unmistakable evidence about family or hereditary nomenclature, for its pages show us that the ancestors of such families as Poyntz, Byron, Berkeley, etc., in the eleventh century, used the same surnames as do their descendants in the nineteenth, and Sharon Turner quotes some charters of the tenth century, showing the existence then of a family bearing the surname of Hatte, a name which still exists amongst our family nomenclature.

That we so rarely meet with surnames in Anglo Saxon charters may be due to the fact that a man's baptismal designation was *par excellence* his name, and therefore the only one which ought to be recorded in a legal document.

Of the vast number of Saxon personal names, only a very few indeed are still used in baptism. The rest are utterly extinct and forgotten, or exist only embedded amongst our family surnames. From them have originated a class of early patronymic surnames derived from the personal appellation of some remote forefather, just as in later centuries arose the names of Williamson and Williams, Watson and Watts, Richards, Thomas, etc. The latter we may appropriately style the *neo*-patronymics: the former are the *paleo*-patronymics.

Mr. E. A. Freeman in his History of the Norman Conquest, has pointed out that if we could trace when Knott came into use as a surname, we should have a clue to the period when Knutt ceased to be a personal name. And the converse of

course would indicate the latest date to which we could assign the adoption of Knott or Nutt as an hereditary surname.

That many of the Anglo Saxon personal names must have been adopted as the distinctive hereditary surnames of families, tribes, or clans, seems to be indicated by the frequency with which they occur with the addition of the particle *ing*, a syllable having the primary meaning of "young man," and being also indicative of "son" or "descendants." Thus "Skiolding" is the son of Skiol, while the Pendingas are the descendants of Penda, and the Doddings or Dodingas are the family or tribe who own for their ancestor one Dodda. Doubtless the members of the clan used their ancestor's name either alone or with the addition of "ing," thus accounting for such forms as Brown and Browning. And as the Doddings gave name to the village of Doddington, so in turn it would give name to the family of Doddington.

Thus these early personal names have had a double influence on our family nomenclature, to which it will be seen they contribute both directly and indirectly. In the one class are the Dodds and the Doddings, and in the other class are the Doddingtons, who derive their name from the place. It is obvious, therefore, that the antiquity of the name Dodd and Dodding is to be measured by the date at which Dodda fell into disuse as a personal name, while the Doddingtons probably acquired their surname sometime in the middle ages by reason of their ancestor's connection with Doddington. The Dodds may have a descent by blood from Dodda, but not so probably the Doddingtons.

A table of some early Anglo Saxon names, chiefly those which are monosyllables, will make plainer the effect they have had upon the local and family nomenclature of England. In the first column are given in capitals the original Saxon personal names; in the second and third, those modern English surnames derived directly from them; in the fourth, the placenames; and in the last column, the surnames derived from the places.

WIG.	Wigg.	Wiggins.	<i>Wigthorpe.</i>	....
			<i>Wigston.</i>	Wigston.
FRODE.	Froude.	....	<i>Frodsham.</i>	Frodsham.
	Frowde.			
SCEAF.	Sheaf.	....	<i>Sheffield.</i>	Sheffield.
			<i>Shefford.</i>	Shefford.
DOMAR.	Dummer.	....	<i>Dummer</i>	Dummer.

SIGGAR.*	Siggers.	....	<i>Siggeston.</i>	....
HARDI.	Hard.	....	<i>Hardwick.</i>	Hardwick.
	Hardy.	Harding.	<i>Hardingham.</i>	....
	Hurd.	....	....	....
KNUT.†	Knott.	....	<i>Knottingley.</i>	....
	Nott.	....	<i>Nottinton.</i>	....
	Nutt.	Nutting.	<i>Nuthall.</i>	Nuttall.
KNEBBA.	Knibbs.	. . .	<i>Knebworth.</i>	....
DODDA.	Dodd.	....	<i>Doddington.</i>	Doddington.
			<i>Didcote.</i>	Didcott.
			<i>Dudley.</i>	Dudley.
WITHER.	Withers.	....	<i>Wetherby.</i>	....
OSSA.	Hosse.	....	<i>Ossington.</i>	....
HORSA.	Horser.	....	<i>Orston.</i>	Orston.
IDA.	Hyder.	....	<i>Iddesleigh.</i>	....
BRUN.	Brown.‡	Browning.	<i>Brinsley.</i>	Brinsley.
TOD.	Todd.	....	<i>Toddington.</i>	Toddington.
SKIOL.	Scull.	Schooling.	<i>Skulthorpe.</i>	Sculthorpe.
	Skells.	Skelding.	<i>Skelton.</i>	Skelton.
ORM.	Orme.	....	<i>Warmington.</i>	Warmington.
CLAPA.§	Clapp.	....	<i>Clapham.</i>	Clapham.
GAMEL.¶	Gamble.	....	<i>Gamston.</i>	Gamston.
BAN.	....	Banning.	<i>Banningham.</i>	....
FIN OR	Finn.	....	<i>Finnere.</i>	Fynmore.
FEN.	Fenn.	Fenning.	<i>Finningley.</i>	....
BOD.	Budd.	....	<i>Boddington.</i>	Boddington.
	Body.	....	....	....

\* In a charter dated 796 we find that Sighere filius Sigheri was an attesting witness.

† King Hardi Canute, the son of Knut, is a familiar character, and he would certainly appear to be an example of the way in which patronymic surnames arise.

‡ Why the Browns are so numerous is a puzzle which is yet unsolved. Many of them doubtless derive their name from some Anglo Saxon Brun, but it would be unwise to conclude that they all have the same origin. If they were, we might have expected to find the Brownings at least as numerous, and this notoriously is not so. It is worth while observing that in Domesday book we are told that Brun held property in Brunnesleia, the modern Brinsley, which gave its name to the Nottinghamshire family of Brinsley.

§ According to Lower, one Osgod Clapa possessed the Surrey Clapham before the Conquest, and this certainly looks like an instance of a surname.

¶ At the time of Domesday, one Gamel held land at Gamelston, now Gamston, near Nottingham, and Gamble is still found as a surname in that town.

ELLA.	....	....	<i>Elton.</i>	Elton.
[BILL].*	Bill.	Billings.	<i>Billingsley.</i>	Billingsley.
WITTA.	Witty.	Whiting.	<i>Whittington.</i>	Whittington.
BRAND.	Brand.	....	<i>Brantingham.</i>	....

Of course the foregoing must be viewed as an experimental list only. Some of the names may have other origins than the ones suggested. Thus places called Fenton may be derived from the personal name Fen or Fin, or from the physical characteristics of the locality. The Wilfords may derive either from the village Wilford, or the patronymic Wilfrid; and so with the Dummers.

Most of the names in the first column are taken from the pedigrees of the Anglo Saxon kings. Some of these early appellations must have been of frequent occurrence, or their owners must have had large possessions. Thus there are at least seven places apparently derived from *Bod*, and the suggested form *Bill* supplies us with *Billingsley*, *Bilton*, *Billington*, *Bilborough*, *Billingborough*, etc.

We are inclined to suggest that there may be an important distinction in the significance of place names with *s* and those without it. *Billingsley* would be the *ley* belonging to one *Billing* or to the *Billing* family, being literally *Billing's ley*. *Billington* on the other hand would be the town which was principally peopled by a clan of *Billings*, or by persons bearing that name. A similar difference of meaning may exist in *Bilston* and *Bilton*, or in *Wigston* and *Wigton*. But it must be remembered that the way in which the letter *s* is added to, or dropped from, words appears to be somewhat anomalous so that this suggestion must be received with caution.

It is perhaps needless to remark that to deal satisfactorily with the origin of the surnames in the foregoing list, it would be requisite to institute a very minute investigation into their early family history, and to their localities of occurrence, such as our space here would not permit of.

These names seem to be more prevalent in the middle than the upper classes of society,† and we shall probably be not far wrong if we infer that they might afford to a careful

\* The family nomenclature of the aristocracy in the middle ages was affected by feudal ideas, being mainly territorial in its character; and doubtless those families who were allowed to retain their property under the conqueror in very many instances found it expedient or more fashionable to adopt territorial family names.

† It should be noted that we have not met with any actual instance of this name in Anglo Saxon records. It may be the origin of the surname *Bell*.

inquirer some guide to the ethnological origin of the families who bear them.

Our concern now is with the modern surname of Stiff which we have already suggested, belongs to this class of paleopatronymics, and therefore must originate from a period anterior to the Norman Conquest.

It is proverbially dangerous to hazard surmises upon the origin of names and surnames and speculations of this character, in perhaps the majority of cases, must be received with a certain amount of caution. Writers on patronymics have suggested two origins for this name, deriving it either from the christian name Stephen, or from a nickname acquired by its first bearer. For the first theory no evidence whatever has been adduced, and we may at once dismiss it from further consideration. For the latter theory which associates the name with the personal qualities of the bearer there is more to be said, but it is open to doubt whether it can be properly called a nickname. A nickname may be defined as an additional name, not always complimentary, acquired in later life by one who is already possessed of a personal name. Such for instance is Longshanks, which was applied to Edward the First, and many nicknames of this class no doubt became crystalized into surnames proper. If however Stiff really belongs to the paleopatronymic class, it can scarcely be included amongst the nicknames, although it may have reference to the qualities or supposed qualities of its first bearer.

If this was originally a purely personal one, it must have been given to its first owner for complimentary reasons, since children usually receive names such as are complimentary in their character, or intended so to be. This suggestion, seems to be borne out by the original significance of the word.

In modern English the adjective "stiff" has become very much narrowed in meaning, but in Anglo-Saxon or middle English, it connoted valour and strength, not merely the idea of rigidity, being equivalent to the latin, \**rigidus*, *fortis*, *robustus*, so that used as a personal name, it would be regarded as a compliment. With slightly varying spelling and pronunciation,† the word runs through the various teutonic languages, but the meaning is

\* That at a very early date, a surname did exist which predicated the idea of rigidity, is shown by the fact that in the 12th century we find mention in Normandy of one Radulphus Rigidus, which it is not unfair to assume, was the medieval latin for Ralph Stiff.

† As we have already shown above, the surname Stiff, if we may judge from the spelling found in parish registers and the like, must sometimes have been pronounced long, quite late in the seventeenth century, thus according with the ancient pronunciation of the adjective.

practically identical in all. Thus in Low German we have *Stief*, in Frisian *Stef*, in Dutch *Styf*, in German *Steif*, in Danish *Stiv* and *Stiiv*, in Icelandic *Styfe*, and in Swedish *Styf*.\* Modern German supplies the form *Stif*. In Anglo-Saxon, the form was *Stif*,\* signifying *stiff*, *valiant* or *strong*. From it came various derivative forms: the plural *\*stive*, the superlative *\*stivist*, the adverbial form was *\*stifliche*, *i.e.* *valiantly* or *strongly*, and the substantive *\*stifness*, *i.e.*, *stiffness*.

The prevailing idea of rigidity is of course apparent in the modern English word *staff*, the Anglo-Saxon *staef*, *staf*, the old Frisian *stef*, and modern Dutch *staf*. Hence the straight rigid appearance of the letters of the alphabet caused this word to be applied to them so that *staff* means also a *letter*, and, by a slight extension of meaning, a *word*. *Stefcraft*, in old English *staefcraft*, or as we should probably say, had the expression survived to our day, *stiffcraft*, signifies the science of grammar, and *stefitez* is the alphabet. Consequently, *stastic* means what is literal or exact. *Staf* also entered into composition with other words as *candelstaf*, *cartstaf*, *bocstaf*, *distaff*, none of which, except the last, have been handed down to modern days.

The verbal form is *Stiften*, with the meaning to erect, build, or found, and *Stifter* is the builder or founder.

Thus it will be seen that all these varying forms are based on a root word † in which the idea of firmness and strength prevails, and so to our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, a man who was called Stiff, doubtless meant one who was valiant and brave, or exhibited firmness of character. Such an appellation would be a suitable one for a Saxon chieftain to give to his son, and we therefore cannot be surprised to find it occurring at a very early date.

For the first evidence of any name approximating in form to Stiff, ‡ we must, as we have already intimated, go back almost

\* The vowel was pronounced long as in life.

† This root word is *sta*, which appears to be very widely spread. It is the basis of the Sanskrit *stha*, the Greek *στασις* the Latin *sto*, the English *stand*, and many kindred and derivative words in various languages.

‡ There are several places, the names of which are evidently based on one or other forms of this word; of these may be mentioned Stafford, Stifford in Essex, Stiffkey in Norfolk, anciently Stivecai or Stivekeia, and Staffield in Cumberland. In Herefordshire, we meet with a Stivingeurdin, of which the modern form would be Stiffingwardine. The island of Staffa, in the Western Hebrides, we can hardly doubt, owes its name to the rigid columns or staffs of basalt, in the famous Fingal's Cave. Steventon in Berkshire appears in an early date as Stivetune, and as Stiventon and Stiviton in Edward the First's time. It is important to note that an Anglo-Saxon charter dated in 762, supplies us with the place name Stifincweg, and another, a couple of centuries later, mentions Stifingehaem. Both these seem to have been in Berkshire not very far away indeed from the modern Steventon.

fourteen centuries to the Saxon invasion of Britain at the beginning of the sixth century. In the year 514, the West Saxons came to Britain with their ships, "at the place which is called Cerdic's Ora,\* and Stuf and Wihtgar fought against the Britons and put them to flight."

Sixteen years later in 530, Cerdic and Cynric his son conquered the Isle of Wight, and slew many men at Wiht-garas-byrg. Cerdic's death happened in 534, but he and his son are stated by the chronicle to have bestowed the whole island upon "their two nephews Stuf and Wihtgar." Ten years later in 544, Wihtgar died, "and they buried him at Wiht-garas-byrg.†"

There is the further striking point that though Stuf, when ever his name occurs, is always mentioned in connection with Wihtgar, no reference to his death is to be found, though that of Wihtgar is duly recorded. Perhaps the true explanation may be found in the suggestion that Stuf and Wihtgar are in truth but one and the same, and that Wihtgar may be merely a surname or title acquired by Stuf, pointing to his position in the island of which he was governor.

It is easy to see that a chronicler at a period when single names were usual, might well be puzzled by the tradition of Stuf Wihtgar who slew the Britons and became chieftain of the Isle of Wight. If this be so, then the statement of Asser and other writers that Stuf and Wihtgar were brothers, is a mere gloss interpolated as an explanation of Stuf's surname or title.

The only other reference to Wihtgar in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle is under the date 796, when we are told that the council of Cloveshoo, summoned by Archbishop Athelhard, confirmed "all the things concerning God's ministers which were appointed in Wihtgar's days and other Kings' days."

\* The locality of Cerdic's Ora is disputed; some believe that it is the modern Southampton; others consider that it is Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight. As the West Saxons are not mentioned in connection with the Isle of Wight until 530, we are inclined to think that the former is the more correct.

† Wihtgarasbyrg, the fortress of the Wihtgar, is identified with the modern Carisbrooke. Still, to the present day, there survives the distinct office of governor of the Isle of Wight, now held by Prince Henry of Battenberg, whose official head-quarters are at Carisbrooke Castle.

In considering these scanty facts in the history of the Isle of Wight, by Mr. Lockhart, doubt is thrown upon the theory that Carisbrooke takes its name from the Jutish chieftain Wihtgar, and that writer says that Wihtgarasbyrg is nothing more than the burg of the men of Wight. If this be the significance of Wihtgara it would seem to confirm the theory that Wihtgar is but the surname acquired by Stuf or perhaps rather a title of office—that he was indeed the Wihtgar or man of Wight, and that Carisbrooke is simply the Wihtgar's fortress. It seems more probable that it would be called after the governor than after the inhabitants of the island.

From the latin chroniclers, as Asser of Monmouth and Simeon of Durham, we infer that the race of Stuf\* must have long continued in importance for his descendant Oslas, described as "famous," held the important office of butler to King Ethelwolf. The king indeed married his daughter Osburgh, and as is well known their son was Alfred the Great, who was born at the Berkshire town of Wantage. It is not a little remarkable, and seems to point to the importance of the family that the chroniclers should think it requisite to tell us something of his family history. "Oslas was a Goth by descent, being of the stock of Stuf and Wihtgar, two brothers who obtained the sovereignty over the isle of Wight from King Cerdic, their uncle, and Cynric his son, their cousin," or consobrinus.

We therefore scarcely can doubt that in Stuf\* the Wihtgar, we have an extremely early instance of a Saxon personal name which for the last six or seven centuries can be traced as existing as a surname in the kingdom of Wessex.

In the 12th century, we find an instance at Swindon, probably the Swindon in Wiltshire, of the name Stive clearly used as a surname. Humfrey Stive possessed a considerable holding of land in that place which his father had held before him in the days of King Henry, *i.e.*, between 1100 and 1135; and in a bull of Pope Honorius III., who occupied the pontifical chair from 1216 to 1227, we find a reference to the fee of Richard Stive in Swindone.

In the following century, in the time of Edward I., 1274, amongst the jurors summoned upon an inquisition held at Marlborough, only a few miles south of Swindon, we find the names of Robert Stife and John Stife for Blackmore hundred, and Roger Stive for Thorhulle hundred. In all these instances, Stive and Stife are clearly used as surnames in accordance with modern usage, being handed down from father to son, a practice which at that early period was comparatively rare.

Then a man was known by his baptismal name of John or Robert as the case might be, and was distinguished from other Johns and Roberts by his residence, his occupation, his father's name, or even by a nickname. Thus we get John at Well, John Atwood, John de Swindon, John Fitz William, or John Williamson, John Smith, John le Cooper, and so forth.

\* Of the name spelt with *u* in modern times, only one instance can be adduced. Administration of the goods of John Stuff, a seaman, was granted in 1748 to his cousin german, Piero Stella, a name which suggests that John Stuff was a foreigner.

These constitute the only direct proofs we possess of the existence of this name in the West of England at an earlier period than the fifteenth century.

Let us then briefly summarize the evidence in favour of the theory that the modern Stiffs and Steffs may be descended from the Saxon chieftain Stuf. First, there is the etymological identity of the names—Stiff, Steff, Staff, Stuf; then there is the possibility that a modern group of families always numerically few, may be derived from a single immigrant living thirteen or fourteen centuries ago. It may be properly objected that there may have been other immigrants of the name than the one of whom we have historical evidence, and a distinct origin may be suggested for the East Anglian Stiffs and Steffs.\*

If this be the case, then the case in favour of the Saxon descent of the Stiffs of the West of England is greatly strengthened, since they are very few in number, and always seem to have been so far back as we can trace them. Indeed, it is open to question whether they are now more numerous than they were three or four centuries ago.

It is clear that in the ninth century, a family of very high position existed, one of whose claims to distinction rested on the fact of their descent from Stuf, the Saxon "king" of the Isle of Wight, who landed in this country in the year 514.

It is important also to note that the place names in the neighbourhood of Wantage, the birth place of King Alfred, who through his mother, was of the race of Stuf, the nephew of Cerdic, seem to support this suggestion of an early Berkshire settlement of the descendants of Stuf. We have first the village of *Steventon*, within five miles of Wantage anciently Wantinge. In the time of Edward I., *i.e.*, about 1274, it appears as Stivinton and Stiventon; in Domesday book it is entered as Stivetune. It is important to note that both Steventon and Wantage adjoin Hendred, which though now but a small country village, was a thousand years ago, a famous place, "locus celebr." Now Kemble prints a charter of King Edgar, under date, 964, in which he grants to the monastery of Abingdon, ten hides of the best land in "Hennaride," Hendred, and sets out the boundaries in great detail.

\* Mr. Rye, a well-known authority upon East Anglian genealogy, states that the name is very scarce, and that its first occurrence is in 1272, when Hugh Stive was one of the Norwich citizens condemned for the riot in which the cathedral was burnt. The form Stive occurs as late as 1585, in the registers of Michell Marsham.

Amongst them are Wantage wega, *Stifingehaeme* gemaera, Riscbere and Lacyngbroc. These we may reasonably identify with Wantage way, or the high road leading to that town; Lacyngbroc is doubtless the brook that runs from the modern Lockinge, through Hendred and Steventon, to the Thames; *Stifingehaeme* gemaera may be the mere or boundary which separates Hendred from Steventon, for we are inclined to think that in the tenth century, the formation of the name of the present village of Steventon was still in progress, and that it was then uncertain whether the form *Stiffingham* or *Steventon* would ultimately be adopted. A charter of King Hardacnut, dated 1042, grants ten mansae at Feornbeorgan, to the Church at Abbendune, and in describing part of the boundaries, mentions Standitan weg and Stanmeringa gemaere, and "then they lead forth from the small way to the full way called *Siifinc* weg, that is Catmeringa gemaere."

Kemble also prints a charter of King Eadred, dated 948, granting land at Stanmere to his servant Wulfric, such mentions *Stifigweges* Catbeorh, and Bedenweg.

Now we can identify most of these places. Stanmere is the modern Stanmore, Catmeringa gemaere must be the mere or boundary of Catmore. Bedenweg is evidently Beedon way, and Feornbeargen is Farnborough; all four places, Farnborough, Catmore, Stanmore and Beedon, lie a little to the south of Wantage and Hendred, being separated from them by the Ridgeway; *Stifigweg* and *Stifincweg*, the "fulanweg" of one of one of the charters, we are inclined to think must be the great highroad from Newbury to Abingdon, which passes close by Beedon and through Steventon.

It seems therefore reasonable to suppose that the descendants of Stuf, who we know were connected with this district in the ninth century, must be identified with the *Stifingas* who gave name to Steventon, and to the *Stifincweg* and *Stifinghaeme* of the Saxon charters.

Now in view of these facts, it certainly seems something more than a mere coincidence that families named Stiff, should in after centuries be found settled in Berkshire and Hampshire within five and twenty miles of Wantage, and the reasonable inference seems to be that they may be the direct descendants of the *Stifingas* of Saxon days. Search amongst the early records of Berkshire might show their existence in the county at an earlier date than we now meet with them, but until our early records,

such as subsidy rolls, plea rolls, and the like, are rendered generally accessible by means of the printing press, it is hopeless for us to expect to trace the medieval history of middle class families.

We shall now place before the reader the documentary evidence upon which are based the preceding arguments in favour of the suggestion that the modern Stiffs may be the direct descendants of Stuf, the nephew of Cerdic.

THE ANGLO SAXON CHRONICLE.

Anno 514. This year, the West Saxons came to Britain with three ships at the place which is called Cerdic's ore, and Stuf and Wihtgar fought against the Britons, and put them to flight.

Anno 530. This year, Cerdic and Cynric conquered the island of Wight, and slew many men at Wiht-garas-byrg.

Anno 534. This year, Cerdic, the first king of the West Saxons, died, and Cynric his son succeeded to the Kingdom, and reigned from that time twenty-six years; and they gave the whole island of Wight to their two nephews, Stuf and Wihtgar.

Anno 544. This year, Wihtgar died, and they buried him in Wiht-gara-byrg.

Anno 796. And Athelhard, archbishop of Canterbury, appointed a synod [the council of Cloveshoo held in 803] and confirmed and ratified by command of Pope Leo, all the things concerning God's ministers which were appointed in Wihtgar's days and other king's days.

ANNALES RERUM GESTARUM AELFREDI MAGNI: AUCTORE  
ASSERIO MENEVENSI.

Mater quoque ejusdem [Aelfredi] Osburg nominabatur, religiosa nimium femina, nobilis ingenio, nobilis et genere; quae erat filia Oslas famosi pincernae Aethelwulphi regis, qui Oslas Gothus erat natione, ortus enim erat de Gothis et Jutis; de semine Stuf et Wightgar [Wihtgar]\* duorum fratrum et etiam comitum qui, accepta potestate Wectae insulae ab avunculo suo Cerdic rege, et Cyric [Cynrico]\* filio suo, consobrino eorum, paucos Britones ejusdem insulae accolae quos in ea invenire potuerunt in loco qui dicitur Gwihtgaraburgh [Wightgarabirig]\* occiderunt; caeteri enim accolae ejusdem insulae ante aut occisi erant aut exules aufugerant.

\* According to Florence, of Worcester.

*Translation.*

The mother of King Alfred was named Osburgh, a very pious woman, who was noble by disposition as well as by descent. She was the daughter of Oslas, King Ethelwulf's famous butler, who by nationality, was a Goth, for he sprang from the Goths and Jutes, of the race of Stuf and Wightgar, two brothers, companions in arms, who received lordship over the Isle of Wight from their uncle, King Cerdic, and Cynric his son, their cousin, and who slew there, in a place called Gwightgaraburgh, the few Britons who they found dwelling in that island. The rest of the inhabitants of the island hath either been previously killed or had fled from it as exiles.

Simeon of Durham also, in his history, refers to the descent of Osburh in much the same terms as does Asser, and gives a very vivid picture of the battle of Certicesore in which the Britons were exterminated by the invading Jutes.

## KEMBLE'S CHARTÆ ANGLOSAXONICÆ.

Hardacnut "rex Anglorum et Danorum," in the year 1042, grants ten mansae of land at Fernebeorgan to the monks of Abbendun in Berkshire. The boundaries are set out and we extract the following:—thonne forth siththan suth on thone Stanchtan weg of Stanmeringa gemaere; thonne forth on thone smalan weg to tham fulan wege se hatte *Stifincweg*, thaet is catmeringa gemaere and thaes landes to Feornbeorgen.

No. DCCCXII.

Charter of Eadgar, King of the English, granting x mansae of the best land "in loco qui Henneride numcupatur vocabulo" to the church of St. Mary, Abbendun, to the use of the monks there. The boundaries commence from Hennaride *i.e.*, Hendred:—amongst them occurs the following passage:—

"Of tham mere on Wanetinge brog; and lang broces theat hit cymth to thaere dic to *Stifingehaeme* gemaera, and lang anheafdan estward thaet hit cymth to thaes ealdormonnes gemaera."

No. MCCLIII.

Eadred, "Anglorum rex" 945 to 948, grants to his servant Wulfric, land at Stanmere. The boundaries of the property are set out, inter alia, as follows:—

"Aerest of than crundelun thaer to Straete; and land Straete to athulfes thorne; to thonner Fydammas and *Stifigweges*, thonon on catbeorh."

No. MCLIV.

REGISTER OF MALMESBURY ABBEY.

In this work, recently issued, in the "Master of the Rolls" series, is recorded the following charter:—

Sciatis presentes futuri quod ego Osbertus Abbas Malmesburiae et conventus, concessimus *Unfrido Stive* tenementum nostrum de Swindone, scilicet duas hydas quas *pater suus* tenuit tempore regis Henrici sicut jus suum tenendas de nobis in feudo et hereditate, reddendo camerario nostro per annum xl sol pro omni servitio, salvo regali servitio. Hiis testibus. Reg. Malm. CXLI.

*Translation.*

Know all men present and future, that I, Osbert, Abbot of Malmesbury, and the convent, have granted to Humphrey Stive, our tenement of Swindone, namely, the two hydes which his father held in the time of King Henry [*i.e.*, 1100-1135] as his right, to be holden of us in fee and inheritance, by paying to our chamberlain every year forty shillings for all service, saving the service due to the king. These being witnesses.

A Bull of Pope Honorius, 1216 to 1227, touching a complaint by Malmesbury Abbey, against G., rector of Swindone is recited in award of the Priors of St. James and St. Augustin, Bristol, relating to a dispute about the small tithes [*minutis decimis*] arising from the fee of *Richard Stive* in Swindon, which by agreement was compounded by G., the rector, agreeing to pay two pounds of wax annually to the monastery.

Reg. Malm., CLV.

From the two last records, it seems clear that the Stive family were considerable landowners in Swindon shortly after the date of Domesday, and though they so continued about a hundred years later, yet from the time that the records known as the Hundred Rolls were compiled, that is, from a date not later than 1274 until the year 1419, a period of nearly a century and a half, we are at present without a single instance of the occurrence of any form of the name of Stiff.

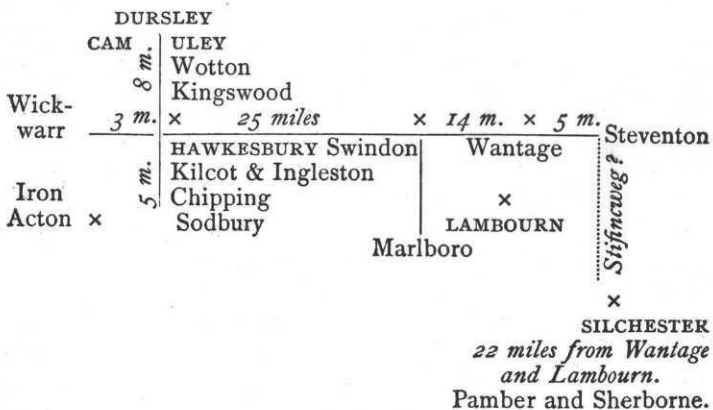
Probably as more of the records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries for the counties of Wilts, Berks, Hants, and Gloucester, become accessible, we may expect to trace some of the medieval settlements of the Stiffs, and thus bridge over the present existing gap in their history.

## The Medieval Stiffs of Hawkesbury.

A FAMILY of Stiff was living at Hawkesbury in Gloucestershire, from the date 1419, and until recently remained associated with that place. From them the modern Gloucestershire Stiffs seem to descend.

The important parish of Hawkesbury with which they were so long connected lies in Grumbald's Ash Hundred, in the southern part of the county, adjoining Badminton, and only three miles from the Wiltshire border. It is but five and twenty miles from Swindon, and a little over the same distance from Marlborough, with both of which places it will be remembered we find settlements of the name early in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. About twelve miles from Swindon and Marlborough is Lambourne, and some twenty miles further is Silchester, with which or with the adjoining villages of Pamber, Sherfield, and Sherborn St. John, a family of Stiff has been connected since 1509 or earlier, while Wantage, associated with the descendants

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE STIFFS.



it easier to understand the various migrations which have probably taken place. The distances it may be observed are given in miles as the crow flies.

Hawkesbury, the oldest known settlement of the Stiffs in Gloucestershire, is an extensive parish some thirty-five miles in circumference, and anciently was known as the mother of seven daughters, for as many distinct tithings or hamlets lay within its bounds. These were:—Hillesley, Tresham, Kilcot, Saddlewood or the Waste, Hawkesbury Upton, Ingleston, and Little Badminton. The mother church of St. Mary lies at the foot of the hill, on which, about half a century ago, was erected the monument to Lord Arthur Somerset, so familiar to railway travellers between Gloucester and Bristol. As a parish church, it is well worth a visit on account of its many interesting architectural features, not the least noticeable being the fine stone pulpit from which the successive vicars of Hawkesbury have preached for the last five or six centuries.

The chancel was the burial place of the Jenkinson family, and here still hang many of the banners of the Earls of Liverpool, while the chapel, at the east end of the south aisle, contains inscriptions to the old Gloucestershire family of Stinchcombe,

The parish church is situated at what was anciently known as *Stoke Hawkesbury*, or simply as *Stoke*, but this distinctive name has long been extinct, and is scarcely mentioned even in the county histories, though it is as we shall see of frequent occurrence in the manorial rolls. On the top of the hill, behind the church, is the village, most appropriately known as *Hawkesbury Upton*, whilst a mile away in the deep combe, at the end of the hills, which spur off on the other side, is the hamlet of *Kilcote* one of the seven tithings of Hawkesbury already referred to, It is a picturesk spot, with its farmhouses, cottages, and mills along side the stream which runs down the narrow valley, on its way towards Severn. The hamlet is a straggling place about a mile in length, the one end of it being known as Upper Kilcote, and the other as Lower Kilcote. Though the Stiffs have long since ceased to live here, there is yet a field in Kilcote which goes by the name of "Stiff's close." John Styffe was a copy holder here as early as 1422, and many of the family remained associated with the place quite late in the seventeenth century.

*Ingleston*, another hamlet of Hawkesbury, about a mile north of the church, gives its name to the still unenclosed Ingleston

Common, and when we look at the old-fashioned farmhouses, and the thatched cottages which fringe the common, we realize how little it can have changed in appearance during the last two or three hundred years. This hamlet, like Kilcote, was a favourite residence of the Stiffs, as we shall see when we deal with their history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is almost unnecessary to remark that we find offshoots at different times settled in the neighbouring places, such as Wickwar, Chipping Sodbury, Oldbury-on-the-Hill, etc. Specially we may mention *Iron Acton*, some five miles south-west of Hawkesbury, where there is still a settlement of Stiffs. One branch of this line migrated to *Dover* in the early part of this century, and is now resident there. In the early part of the seventeenth century a still existing branch of the Kilcote Stiffs settled at *Wotton-under-Edge*, and, later on, removed to *Dursley*.

Another branch, the descendants of Anthony Stiff, of Kilcote, who died in 1607, migrated in the seventeenth century to *Cam*, eight miles north of Hawkesbury, and were landowners in that parish as late as 1837, being at the present time, freeholders in adjoining parish of *Uley*.

There was also an eighteenth century settlement of Stiffs at *North Nibley*, near Wotton-under-edge, who almost certainly sprang from the Ingleston Stiffs.

Hawkesbury formed part of the the possessions of the Abbey Church of St. Mary at Pershore in Worcestershire, and of course, at the dissolution of the monasteries, came into the hands of the crown.\* It is doubtless due to this fact, that there are still preserved in the Public Record Office, many of the early court rolls of the manor of Hawkesbury. This circumstance is a fortunate one, for it enables us to show the continued existence of the Stiffs in the parish from the early part of the fifteenth century onwards.

As the name is not found in any of the extant rolls before 1419, we are inclined to think that that date approximately indicates the period when the Stiffs first settled in Gloucestershire, though unfortunately too many of the early rolls are missing

\* The manor of Hawkesbury *alias* Stoke Hawkesbury, was granted at the dissolution to Sir John Boteler, knight, who was also possessed of the manor of Upton, *alias* Hawkesbury, but the lordship of Stoke Hawkesbury, ultimately passed to the Jenkinson family, in whom it is still vested.

to enable us to affirm this with certainty. Probably they were immigrants from the neighbouring county of Wilts. It is not a little singular that at present we are without any trace of the name throughout the whole of the fourteenth century, and indeed for some years before. For the medieval history of a family like this, always few in number, leading an uneventful career, and rarely rising above the yeoman class, it is almost useless to search patent rolls, inquisitions, and the like. What we have to rely upon, are early wills, deeds, and charters, assize rolls and subsidy rolls, and above all, manor rolls, which contain records of the small landowners such as the Stiffs in Gloucestershire, always appear to have been as far back as we can trace them. Most of these records are practically sealed books, but happily as the early manor rolls of Hawkesbury are in the Public Record Office, it has been found possible to make a careful examination of them.

It will be convenient to give a list of those which are at present known to be extant, together with the official reference number.

DATE OF ROLLS.	REFERENCE.	
14 to 21 Edward I., 1286-1293 . . . . .	Port. 14, No. 53.	
No mention of the Stiffs.		
[Gap, 1294-1405.]		
8 to 10 Henry IV., 1406-1408 . . . . .	Port. 14, No. 54.	
No mention of the Stiffs.		
[Gap, 1409-1417.]		
5, Henry V., 1418. . . . .	} Port. 14, No. 55.	
6, Henry V., 1419. . . . .		
7, Henry V., 1420. . . . .		
8, Henry V., 1421. . . . .		
9, Henry V., 1422. . . . .		
10, Henry V., 1423. . . . .		
4, Henry VI., 1425. . . . .	} Port. 14, No. 56.	
5, Henry VI., 1426. . . . .		
6, Henry VI., 1427. . . . .		
[Gap, 1428-1457.]		
36, Henry VI., 1458. . . . .		
37, Henry VI., 1459. . . . .		
38, Henry VI., 1460. . . . .	} Port. 14, No. 57.	
39, Henry VI., 1461. . . . .		
[Gap, 1462-1469.]		
9, Edward IV., 1470. . . . .	} Port. 14, No. 57.	
12, Edward IV., 1473. . . . .		
13, Edward IV., 1474. . . . .		

14, Edward IV., 1475. ....	Port. 39, No. 64.
[Gap, 1476-1530.]	
16, Henry VII., 1501. ....	Port. 14, No. 58.
[Gap, 1502-1511.]	
3, Henry VIII., 1512. ....	} Port. 14, No. 59.
[Gap, 1513-1528.]	
20, Henry VIII., 1529. ....	
[Gap, 1530-1534.]	
26, Henry VIII., 1535. ....	Port. 31, No. 51.

Here the manorial rolls of Hawkesbury cease, so far as the Public Record Office is concerned.\*

We may now give the results of a perusal of these records :—

At the view of Frankpledge held for Stoke, *i.e.*, Stoke Hawkesbury, at Martinmas, 6 Henry V., 1419, the jury presented John Styffe for breaking the assize of ale, and he was therefore amerced in the sum of sixpence.

Johannes Styffe....brasiavit et fregit assisam; ideo in misericordia.

At the same court in a suit, Thomas Sturgys, *v.* Richard Maynard, the “plegii de lege,” or sureties were Robert Ka and John Styffe, the latter being doubtless the individual previously fined for breaking the assize of ale, and as entries lower down describe him as “Johannes Styffe, *Wodeward*,” in 1422 and 1426, we conclude that to him fell the task of supervizing the woods of the Abbot of Pershore. How necessary such an officer was, the numerous entries relating to trespassers in the lord’s woods very clearly show.

As we have already intimated, these entries are the earliest records of the name in Gloucestershire, which at present we have met with.

At the Martinmas court, 9 Henry V., 1421, John Styffe is again presented for breaking the assize of ale, and is fined as before, 6d., which appears to have been the usual amount for this very common offence.

At the last mentioned court he obtained a grant of the reversion of a messuage in Kilcote then held by Alice Trode, for the lives of himself, his wife Margaret and Edith, their daughter, for which he gave the lord a fine of 6s. 8d, as well

\* In reply to an inquiry, Sir George B. Jenkinson states that he possesses no manor rolls for Hawkesbury. Possibly they have strayed from their proper custody, for it seems unlikely that all the court rolls since the time of Henry VIII., can have been destroyed.

Since writing the above more of the Hawkesbury Court rolls have come to light in the Public Record office, *viz.* 12-16 Henry VI, and 27-31 Henry VI. The references in them to John Styffe must be dealt with later.

as the grant of a house and meadow in Kilocote, on the like terms after the death of Juliana, the wife of Thomas Harrys, but the amount of the fine for the latter is not now legible. The grants further provided that they should render to the lord the same dues as did Alice Trode and Juliana Harrys, but these unfortunately are not specified. The grants are thus recorded :—

Ad istam [curiam] Dominus concessit *Johanni Styffe* et *Margarete* uxori ejus et *Edithe* filie eorum.....i messuagium cum pertinentiis in Kylcote quod Alicia Trode modo tenet post decessum eorum [sic] Tenendum *Johanni* *Margarete* uxori ejus et *Edithe* ad terminum vite eorum secundum consuetudinem ejus manerii per rotulum curie Reddendum inde [domino prefato] in omnibus sicut predicta Alicia inde prius reddere et facere consuevit Et dat Domino de fine vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> Et fecit domino fidelitatem.

Item concessit predicto *Johanni Styffe* et *Margarete* et *Edithe* j domum cum j .....prati in Kylcote post decessum *Juliane* uxoris *Thome Harrys* cum acciderit Tenendum eisdem *Johanni* et *Margarete* et *Edithe*, ad terminum vite eorum per rotulum curie Reddendum inde domino prefato in omnibus sicut predicta *Juliana* Et fecit domino fidelitatem Et dat [domino de fine] j...

As the previous entries relating to John Stiff are under Stoke, the present Hawkesbury, these two grants may indicate the date at which the Stiffs were first settled at Kilocote.

John Styffe is again referred to as the "woodward" under Woodcrofte, at the Hockday court, held 10 Henry V., 1422.

*Woodcrofte.* De Attachiamenta *Johannis Styf* wodeward ibidem prout paret in extracta eidem deliberata xx<sup>d</sup>.

At the Martinmas court, held 4 Henry VI., 1425, for Kyllecote, John Styffe is again amerced in the sum of sixpence, for breaking the assize of ale, and we are therefore inclined to infer that sometime between 1421 and 1425, he had removed from Hawkesbury to Kilocote.

At the view of frankpledge held at Martinmas, 5 Henry VI., 1426, for Kylcote, John Styff was ordered to repair his tenement. At the view of Frankpledge held Martinmas, 6 Henry VI., i.e. 1428, some mention seems to be made of a John Styff, under Badmynton, probably Badminton Parva, a village near to Hawkesbury, and indeed one of the seven hamlets appurtenant to it, but the roll is too faded to fully decypher the entry.

Unfortunately, a gap of thirty years occurs in these manor

rolls, but in the next one which is extant, that of the Hockday court, 36 Henry VI. we first find mention of a Nicholas Styfe, as a pledge.

The death of John Styffe was presented at a view of frankpledge, held at Martinmas, 37 Henry VI., 1458. From this we gather that he held a cottage in Kilcot, at the rental of 9s. 4d. a year, and that there accrued to the lord as a heriot, an ox, of the value of 8s. The cottage itself descended to his son, Nicholas Styff. In the absence of the court rolls for 1427 to 1457, it is of course not possible to decide whether these premises are identical with either of these granted to John Styff, thirty seven years before, or indeed whether the John Styff of 1419 and 1422, may be identified with the one whose death is now noted, although such may very possibly be the case.

At the Hockday court in the following year, 38 Henry VI., 1460, Nicholas Styff was admitted tenant of a messuage in Kilcote, lately in the occupation of John Hewys. This house Nicholas Styff obtained for the term of his own life and that of his wife, Agnes, at the annual rent of eight shillings, payable quarterly, and subject to a heriot at his death or departure.

The record of these transactions runs thus :—

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 37 Henry VI. 1458.

*Kylcote.* Item presentant quod *Johannes Styffe* diem suum clausit extremum qui de domino tenuit unum cotagium cum pertinentiis sub redditu per annum ix<sup>s</sup> iij<sup>d</sup> unde accidit domino de herietto unus bos pretii viij<sup>s</sup>. Et cotagium predictum cum pertinentiis remanet *Nichollao* filio dicti *Johannis* ut patet per copiam suam per dominum inde sibi concessum.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 38 Henry VI. 1460.

*Stoke.* Ad istam venit *Nicholaus Styffe* et cepit de domino unum messuagium cum pertinentiis in *Kylcote* nuper in tenura *Johannis Hewys* viij<sup>s</sup> per annum et omnia cervicia inde prius debita et de jure consueta Habendum et tenendum totum predictum messuagium cum pertinentiis predicto *Nicholao* et *Agneti* uxori sue ad terminum vite sue suxessive; redditu viij<sup>s</sup> ad quatuor terminos; Heriot at death or departure "bidens pretii 12<sup>d</sup>" No fine because he repairs and maintains "i ormeum de duobus spaciis." Nicholas Styff is then admitted and does fealty.

HAWKESBURY: View of Frankpledge, 39 Henry VI,  
1460-61.

Stoke. Nicholas Styffe is presented and fined ij<sup>d</sup> for allowing his beasts to trespass on the sown fields "campos seminales" at Bagulaye.

A gap of seven years now occurs in the rolls, and the next mention of the name is in 1470 when the tithingman presented Thomas Stiffe, who together with others, had broken the assize of ale, and had permitted the common way at Copynes hende to fall into disrepair.

HAWKESBURY: View of Frankpledge, 9 Edward IV.,  
1469-70.

Stoke. Decennarius ibidem cum decennia . . . . Item presentat quod Robertus Forde, vi<sup>d</sup>, Thomas Styffe, vi<sup>d</sup>, Thomas Byke, vi<sup>d</sup>, et Willielmus . . . . vi<sup>d</sup>, brasiaverunt et fregerunt assisam; ideo ipsi in misericordia . . . . Item presentat quod communis via apud Copynes hende jacet in fund. . . . in defalto Thome Wymbolde, Thome Styffe, Willelmi Bullesdone [etc and order was made for them to amend the same.]

At the Hockday court for Stoke, 12 Edward IV., 1472, presentment is made of an estray which, it is stated, is in the possession of Thomas Styff, and lower down on the same membrane is another entry respecting him, but now too faded to be read. Thomas Styffe was a juror at the Hockday court for Stoke in the following year 1474. He was amerced sixpence for breaking the assize of ale, and is again mentioned in connection with an estray.

At the Martinmas court, 13 Edward IV., 1473, under Kylcote, Nicholas Styffe is recorded as breaking the assize of ale, thus again incurring a fine of sixpence, and a further presentment is made, that the gate at Elyottys lane lies broken, through the default of John Wyrlicke, Edith Gurney, and Nicholas Styffe, and they were ordered to repair it by the following Sunday.

At the Hockday court in 14 Edward IV., 1474, Nicholas Styffe appears as a juror, and under Kylcote he is presented for not making up his portion of a hedge called Hewyns hegge in accordance with an order of the preceding court. He and two others were fined a shilling each, but this it appears, was subsequently remitted.

The entry in the roll is to the following effect:—

Kylcote. Homagium ibidem venit et presentat quod Nicholaus Styffe, Willielmus Langeden et Editha Gomney non fecerunt purpartes illius sepis vocati hewyns hegge

sicut habuerunt in presepto in curia presedente; ideo incurrunt penam habendam in curia precedente, viz.: quilibet eorum xij<sup>s</sup> et postea dominus p'... afferatores penam predictam pardonavit.

An entry made at the same court, shows that Thomas Styffe of Stoke [Hawkesbury] was again in possession of an estray, a small dun coloured horse, worth three shillings.

*Stoke*: Item, presentant unum parvum equum coloris "dun" precii iij<sup>s</sup> pervenientem in extrahuria citra festum Sancti Johannis et remanet in custodia *Thome Styffe* Et preceptum est quod proclamatur per curiam.

Another unfortunate gap ensues, this time of five and twenty years, and then we find a Nicholas Styffe acting as a juror at the Martinmas court in 16 Henry VII., 1500. It is scarcely likely that he is to be identified with his namesake, the son of John Styffe, who was a copyholder at Kilcote some years before, more likely he is the Nicholas Stiffe, who was tenant of two messuages at Kilcot in 1512. From 1501 to 1512 is again another gap, and we find in the latter year, both John Stiff and William Stiff acting as jurors at the court, the precise date of which we cannot decypher. At the same court one Clement Fenne was granted the reversion of two messuages in Kilcote, known as Stiff's and Webbe's, after the death of Nicholas Stiff, or sooner determination of his interest in them.

The entry on the roll last referred to is this:—

HAWKESBURY: View of Frankpledge; feast of.....  
3 Henry VIII. 1512.

*Kylcote*: .....Captio reversionis.

Ad hanc curiam venit Clemens Fenne et cepit de domino reversionem duorum messuagiorum unius cotlandi et dimidie virgate terre cum suis pertinentiis in Kilcote vocati *Styffes* et Webbes modo in tenura *Nicholai Styff* immediate et quam [cito cum] acciderit post decessum seu discessum sursum-redditum seu foris facturam ejusdem Nicholai Stiff tenendum sibi pro termino vite sue secundum consuetudinem manerii pro redditibus consuetudinibus et serviciis inde prius debitis et consuetis, secta curie et herietum cum acciderit. Et dat domino de fine pro.....statu inde pro reversione predicta sic habendum x<sup>s</sup> Et sic admissus est Et fidelitas respectuata quousque etc.

Whether Nicholas Stiff was then an old man, we of course cannot say, though it seems very probable.

Only two subsequent court rolls are known to be extant, and they do not enable us to add to the pedigree. The lay subsidy

roll of 14-15, Henry VIII., 1523, shows both William Stiff and Joyce Styffe, paying 6s. apiece upon £12 "in bonis;" the latter Joyce or Jecosa Styffe may have been the widow of either John or Nicholas. At the Hockday court in 20 Henry VIII., 1529, the tithing of Stoke presented William Styffe and others for allowing their pigs to ramble at large, and fined them each twopence, and Joyce Styffe, produced a "copy," dated 17 April, 17 Henry VIII., 1526, relating to the subletting of premises in the tithing of Stoke and a croft in Upton. The last reference in the court rolls is Hockday, 26 Henry VIII., 1535, when William Styff served on the jury. The entries relating to Joyce Styffe and William Styffe follow:—

*Iecosa Styffe* exhibuit unam copiam gerentem datum xvii die Aprilis, Anno regni Regis Henrici octavi xvij facere et habere subtenentem sive subtenentes de et in uno messuagio et in j pastura vocata Alseley infra decenniam de Stoke. Et de una crofta vocata West barne in Upton, etc.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Tuesday in feast of Hockday, 20 Henry VIII., 1529.

Stoke: Decennia et homagium presentat. . . . . Et quod Thomas Pytcher, ij<sup>d</sup>, Willelmus Brownynge, ij<sup>d</sup> *Willelmus Styffe*, ij<sup>d</sup>, Nicholaus Prowte et Johannes Pen, ij<sup>d</sup>, non ambulandos porcos habuerunt in precepto; ideo ipsi in misericordia.

The early records in the Probate Register at Worcester, in which diocese Gloucestershire was situated until 1541, are imperfect, and no Stiff will has been discovered there; but at Gloucester we find the wills of Robert Styfe in 1544, Wylliam Styffe in 1544, and Agnes Styffe in 1556.

Robert Styffe, in his will, 1544, mentions only his wife Elinor. William Styfe, 1544, names his wife Agnes, and their two daughters, Johane and Annes. No sons are mentioned by either, and the only additional information we can gather from the will of Agnes or Annes Stiff, 1556, is the marriage of the daughter Agnes to Thomas Wymbold.

Exact transcripts of these three wills follow, and though the genealogical information they contain is but scanty, they are interesting by reason of their early date, and the glimpse they afford of the possessions of two Gloucestershire yeomen in the days of Henry the Eighth. The reader will not fail to notice that in one of them even the names of the four kyne are given Musse and Yencle, Fylpayle and Pet are just such names as a

Gloucestershire farmer might bestow upon his cows at the present day, but whether he would trouble to record them in any formal document, such as a will, is much more doubtful.

Will of ROBERT STYFE 1544.

"In the name of God, Ame' the xxix<sup>th</sup> day of may, In the yere of our lorde god m<sup>i</sup> fyve hun'dryd xliiij I *Robert Styfe* of the p<sup>'</sup>ysche of haukysbury & wythyn the dyoc' of Gloucest<sup>'</sup> very syke in body notwythstandynge thanks be to god p<sup>'</sup>fet of Reme'brans do make my laste wylle in man' & forme followynge, ffyrste I bequeth my soule to Almighty god & my body to be bu. [torn] in the p<sup>'</sup>yshe churchey' of haukysbury, Itm' I bequeth to my wyfe ij sterys of on red the oth . . . valowe, Itm I geue to mysayde wyfe ij kyne & ij heyfers and on' boloke of iii. yeres olde. It . . . bequeth to my wyfe vj shepe & on calfe of thys yerys brede. Itm I geue to mysayde . . . the on halfe of my dettes that be owynge to me. Itm I geue to my wyfe all my brass . . . wyth all my bedyng' coffers lyny' stuffe and all thinges to the bed aperteynyng & belongy . . . the reste of my goodes not geuy' nor bequethyde I geue to elenor my wyfe, who I do ordeyne & . . . my hole executrix to dyspo the' as she shalle thinke necessary to the hono<sup>'</sup> of God & wel . . . my soule, And Arthur Crewe to be ou<sup>'</sup> sear thes me' beryng wytnes, Antony downe . . . Styffe, Jhon fferre, Edmu'd downe wyth oth<sup>'</sup> the day & yeare above w<sup>'</sup>tyn.

Will of WILLIAM STYFFE 1544.

In the name of god Ame' in the yeare of ou<sup>'</sup> lorde a thousande fyue hundryde xliiij the xiiij<sup>th</sup> day of Octobre. I *Wyll<sup>'</sup>m Styffe* of the p<sup>'</sup>yshe of Hawkysbury wyth yn the dyoces of Gloucett<sup>'</sup> beynge seke in my body not w<sup>th</sup> standi'gg thanks be to god p<sup>'</sup>fet of reme'brans do make my laste wylle in maner and forme folowynge ffyrste I bequeth my soule to almyghty god my body to be buried w<sup>th</sup>yn the churchey of Haukesbury Itm I geue to Johanne my doughtre ij kyne on callyd musse and the other callyd yencle. Itm I geue to the same Johanne on yonge bolloke colleryde of ij yerys olde & the wauntage. Itm I geue to Annes my doughtre ij kyne coloryde red on callyde fylpayle & the other callyde pet & on yonge tagled heyfer. Itm I wolle that my wyfe haue durynge hyr lyfe all my stuffe of housholde and after her lyfe I wolle the same stuffe Indyffere'tly to be dyuydyde by twene my ij doughters Johanne and Annes. The reste of my goodes not gevyn nothyr bequethyd I do geue to Annes my wyfe who I do make my hole & sole executryx to dyspos the' for the welth of my soule as to her schalle seme meat & necessary thes beryng wytnes, Anthony downe, Arth<sup>'</sup> Wynbolde & Edmu'd downe the day & yeare above wrytyn.

Proved in Gloucester cathedral 7 Oct., 1544.

## Will of AGNES STYFFE 1556.

"In the name of God ame' the xxv daye of April in the yerre of o' lord god mlccccclvj<sup>th</sup> I *Agnes Styffe* of the p'isse of hawkesbury in the dioc. of Glouc'. wedowe, beyng Syke in Body: bute p'fitt of mynde & memorie Thanks be Gevyn vnto o' lord god do ordeyne and make thys my laste wyll & Testam<sup>t</sup> in man<sup>r</sup> & forme foloyng. First, I do bequethe my Sowle vnto Almyhty god o' blessed lady and all the holy Company in hevyn. And my Bodey to be buried in the churcheyarde of hawkesbury aforeseid. Itm, I do bequethe vnto the mother Church in Glacet<sup>r</sup> iiiij<sup>d</sup>. I do bequethe & geve vnto the Churche of hawkesby aforsaid xx<sup>d</sup>. Itm, I do Geve vnto Johan my dowght<sup>r</sup> ij platters & vi<sup>s</sup> & viii<sup>d</sup> in money. Itm, I do Geve vnto all the chyldren of Thom<sup>s</sup> Wymbold vi<sup>s</sup> viii<sup>d</sup> apece to au'y of them. And all the Reste of my Goods & cattalls moveable & vnmovable not here before Gevyn nor bequethed I do Geve & bequethe vnto thom<sup>s</sup> Wymbold & Agnes his wyff, whome I do ordeyne & make to be my true & whole Executors to See my Detts payd & dispose itt for the Welthe of my Sowle & all Christen sowles at their wyll & plesur. In wittnes herof I haue called John Baron clerke, Wyll'm Came & Arthur Vyser to be wittnes berers to thys my last wyll & Testament.

With the knowledge at present available, it is impossible to state the kinship between Robert and William Stiff, or the relation in which they stood to Edmund Stiff, of Kilcot, whose will was proved in 1593. One may possibly have been the father, and the other perhaps the uncle. The parish register at Hawkesbury will not help us, since it does not begin until 1603; and as the early Bishops' transcripts at Gloucester are also missing, we must at present be content to record the existence of a gap in the history of the family for a period of about forty years. This gap serves to mark off the disconnected history of the medieval Stiffs from that of their modern descendants, who can be traced in an unbroken line from Edmund Stiff, of Kilcot, who died in 1593, right down to the present day.

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Since the modern list of Court Rolls in the Public Record Office was compiled, as we have already mentioned in the footnote on page 24, very many more of the ancient rolls of the Manor of Hawkesbury have come to light during the work of sortation, which is constantly in progress there. They have consequently been re-arranged and re-numbered. It is, therefore, desirable to repeat the list of Hawkesbury rolls, giving those newly discovered, as well as the fresh reference numbers. It

should be added that they are all in the same portfolio, 175, instead of portfolios 14, 31, and 39 as heretofore.

10 Edward [I] 1281-82	} No. 40	4 Henry VI. 1425-26	} No. 51
18 Edward [I] 1289-90		5 Henry VI. 1426-27	
23 Edward [I] 1294-95		6 Henry VI. 1427-28	
[Gap; 1295-1309]		[Gap 1428-33]	
4 Edward [II] 1310-11	} No. 41	12 Henry VI. 1433-34	} No. 52
[Gap; 1311-12]		13 Henry VI. 1434-35	
6 Edward [II] 1312-13		14 Henry VI. 1435-36	
7 Edward [II] 1313-14		15 Henry VI. 1436-37	
8 Edward [II] 1314-15		16 Henry VI. 1437-38	
9 Edward [II] 1315-16		[Gap 1438-48]	
10 Edward II. 1316-17	} No. 42	27 Henry VI. 1448-49	} No. 53
11 Edward II. 1217-18		28 Henry VI. 1449-50	
12 Edward II. 1318-19		29 Henry VI. 1450-51	
13 Edward II. 1319-20		30 Henry VI. 1451-52	
14 Edward II. 1320-21		31 Henry VI. 1452-53	
15 Edward II. 1321-22		3[4?] Henry VI. 1455-56	
16 Edward II. 1322-23		[Gap 1455-56]	
[Gap 1323-24]	} No. 43	36 Henry VI. 1456-57	} No. 54
18 Edward [II] 1324-25		37 Henry VI. 1457-58	
[Gap 1325-26]		38 Henry VI. 1458-59	
20 Edward [II] 1326-27	39 Henry VI. 1459-60		
16 Edward [II] 1322-23	No. 44	[Gap 1460-61]	
[Gap 1329-50]		2 Edward IV. 1462-63	
24 Edward III. 1350-51	No. 45	[Gap 1463-65]	
[Gap 1351-93]		5 Edward IV. 1465-66	
17 Richard II. 1393-94	} No. 46	6 Edward IV. 1466-67	} No. 55
18 Richard II. 1394-95		7 Edward IV. 1467-68	
19 Richard II. 1395-96		8 Edward IV. 1468-69	
20 Richard II. 1396-97		9 Edward IV. 1469-70	
21 Richard II. 1397-98		10 Edward IV. 1470-71	
22 Richard II. 1398-99		49 Henry VI. 1470-71	
[Gap 1399-1406]		8 Edward IV. 1468-69	
8 Henry IV. 1406-7	No. 47	9 Edward IV. 1469-70	
9 Henry IV. 1407-8	} No. 48	10 Edward IV. 1470-71	} No. 56
10 Henry IV. 1408-9		[Gap 1471-72]	
[Gap 1409-16]		12 Edward IV. 1472-73	
4 Henry V. 1416-17	No. 49	13 Edward IV. 1473-74	
5 Henry V. 1417-18		14 Edward IV. 1474-75	
6 Henry V. 1418-19		[Gap 1475-95]	
7 Henry V. 1419-20	} No. 50	12 Henry VII. 1496-97	No. 57
8 Henry V. 1420-21		[Gap 1497-1500]	
9 Henry V. 1421-22		16 Henry VII. 1500-01	No. 58
10 Henry V. 1422-23		[Gap 1501-1527]	
[Gap 1423-25]		20 Henry VIII. 1528	No. 59
		Henry VII. or VIII.	No. 66

The additional rolls now come to light afford us many more particulars respecting this family, but the entire absence of any mention of the name from all those that are extant for the reigns of the three first Edwards and Richard II afford strong, though negative, corroboration of the theory that the Stiffs first settled in Kilcot\* in the early years of the fifteenth century. The first entry traceable appears to be that already referred to on page 24 under the heading of Kyllecot, at the Martinmas court 6 Henry V. 1419, when John Styffe was presented for breaking the assize of ale.

In 1426, 5 Henry VI., commence a series of presentments against John Styffe for failure to keep in repair a tenement at Kilcot, which he held from the lord of the manor. He was by no means alone in this omission, and many presentments of a similar character appear on the rolls, and to judge from the frequency with which these complaints are repeated against the same individuals, it is evident that the monitions in this respect of the abbot of Pershore and his steward could have had but small effect. Probably the tenants often found it better to pay the fine imposed, than to incur a heavy expenditure in repairs or rebuilding. The neglect to comply with the presentment is the more remarkable in the case of John Styffe, seeing that he was one of the officers of the manor, being, as already mentioned, the woodward, a post which he must have held some years, for he is mentioned as such in 5 Henry VI., 1426, 16 Henry VI., 1437, 28 Henry VI., 1449, and 30 Henry VI., 1451.

On this first occasion, 5 Henry VI., 1426, he and others were required to repair their tenements before the next court under the several penalties of twelve pence each.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Martinmas 5 Henry VI., 1426-7.

*Kilcote: Precipitur Johanni Styff [et aliis] reparare tenementa sua citra proximam [curiam] subpena cujus libet eorum xijd.*

Whether he complied with this order we are unable to say. But six years later, 12 Henry VI., 1433, he was presented for

\* Kilcot, which has been so often mentioned, is a place of great antiquity for it may be traced back upwards of a thousand years, being mentioned in a charter of the year 972 granted by King Edgar to the Abbey of Pershore in Worcestershire. Amongst other places named are Suthstoc, probably Stoke Hawkesbury, the modern Hawkesbury; Hileagh, doubtless Hillesley; Treshaa, Tresham; Cyllincocotan, that is, Kilcot; Ealdanburie, perhaps Oldbury on the Hill; Dydimeretune, our modern Didmarton; Badimyncgtun, now Badmington and Upton, which is, of course, the present Hawkesbury Upton.

allowing his bakehouse to be ruinous, and this is repeated at the Martinmas court of the following year, 13 Henry VI., 1435, when he was ordered to amend and repair it by the next court day under the penalty of 6s. 8d. The six months passed by, and when Hockday arrived he was again presented for allowing his tenement, no doubt the bakehouse just mentioned, to be ruinous, and he was directed to "fully repair" it before the ensuing Michaelmas. At the succeeding Martinmas court, 14 Henry VI., he and another were presented for that they had not yet fully repaired or amended their tenements, and the order was repeated at the Hockday court in the same year. How the matter progressed the hiatus in the court rolls prevents us learning, but when they recommence at Martinmas, 27 Henry VI., 1437, we find that an order was made for John Styffe to fully repair and build his tenement anew, under a penalty of twenty pence. The order to fully build anew was repeated at the Hockday court, 27 Henry VI., 1437. Twelve months later a similar order was made against him, when the penalty was increased to half a mark or 6s. 8d. On this occasion the tenement is described as "a cottage formerly John Webbe's," and we may presumably identify the house granted to John Styffe in 1421 with one of the two messuages, "Styffes" and "Webbes," which in 1512 were in the tenure of Nicholas Styff. Two years passed by, and in 1430 we learn that the "aule et camere" of John Styffe were "totally decayed"; he was therefore "in mercy," but he obtained sufficient time to "construct anew" his house, and as no further presentment was made against him during the next twelve months, we may fairly assume that at last he complied with the order to rebuild. The repair of his house was not his only difficulty. At Martinmas, 1433, a complaint was made that he allowed his ditches to remain unscoured, and his land to inroach on the highway at Buttes lane. This he failed to remedy, for at the Hockday court, six months later, the tithing alleged that the watercourse at Buttes lane is taken out of its course, for that the highway is blocked up through the default of John Styffe, and the complaint was repeated at the Martinmas court in the same year, after which the mischief seems to have been remedied.

At about the same time there are some curious entries about John Styffe and his wife, Margaret, which serve to illustrate village life in the unsettled reign of Henry VI. Margaret Stiffe, who lived at Kilcote, appears to have had some enmity against

Richard Lacy and Thomas Tasker. In what way they offended her we are not told; she took, however, the summary method of raising the "hue and cry," [hutesia], a serious proceeding, no doubt, for we can well imagine that in the first half of the fifteenth century it was by no means a pleasant business to find the whole neighbourhood set in pursuit of one. We are told that she did this "unjustly," and that, therefore, she was "in mercy." Singularly enough, the same roll contains the records of another similar complaint against her. John Styffe fell to blows with Robert Hugges, and against the peace drew blood, "extraxit sanguinem de dicto Roberto," as the record puts it, and John was therefore "in mercy." Although he thus got the best of the fray, his good wife Margaret was not satisfied, but took upon herself to raise the hue and cry against Robert, with the same result as in the former case, that the tithing declared she did it "unjustly," and the steward entered upon the roll that for this also she was "in mercy." Legal proceedings at this time, possibly arising out of these disputes, were taken against John Styff, for one Richard, whose surname does not clearly appear, brought an action of trespass against him. The matter was adjourned to the next court and we hear no more of it.

In 1453, Hockday, 31 Henry VI., several inhabitants of Kilcote, including John Styffe, with the whole vill of Tresham, one of the members of the manor of Hawkesbury, were directed to place mere stones at Pykyn Clife and Cleryn Stubbe, between the land of Nicholas Alderly and the land in the tenure of John Penne.

A defaced roll ascribed to the 32nd year of Henry VI., 1454, records the admission of Nicholas Styff in succession to premises formerly held by him, but the date should doubtless be fixed somewhat later, for as we have already seen, John Styff's death was presented at a court held in 1458.

But John Styffe was not the only one who failed to keep his holding in repair, for at Martinmas, 1471, a similar presentment was made against a Thomas Styffe at Upton Hawkesbury, when he and his co-tenant, John Westcote, were ordered to repair their tenement before the next Whitsuntide, under the pain of 6s. 8d. At the same court, under Stoke, a presentment was made that Thomas Styffe had charge of an estray which had come into the lordship since the preceeding St. Bartholomew's day. Probably this Thomas Styffe was the one who appears in a very faded membrane as a juror at the Martinmas court in 1468.

About twenty six years later, in 12 Henry VII., 1497, we find that at Stoke a Thomas Styffe, with several others, was fined sixpence for breaking the assize of ale, and with many others he was presented for allowing his house to be ruinous. They were all directed to repair their several premises before the next view of frankpledge under the penalty of 13s. 4d. At the Hockday court in the following year a similar presentment was made respecting the ruinous tenement of Thomas Styff, and as far as we can decipher the much obliterated entry, it would appear that he was directed to rebuild his house "de novo." At the same court William Styff came and took the reversion of a cottage in Kilcote, then in the holding of Edith Dorney, whenever it fell into hand, and for this he gave a fine of five shillings. It appears from this entry that the tenancy was for William Styff, and his wife, but unfortunately her name is left blank.

In 1509, at the Martinmas court, Nicholas Styff, at Kylcote, incurred a penalty in reference to twenty-six sheep, though for what reason the faded parchment does not permit us to say. He was also directed to well and sufficiently repair his wagon, under penalty of forfeiting it to the lord, so that it would appear that the lord of the manor must sometimes have supplied his tenants with some at least of the implements of husbandry. At the same court, Thomas Styff, of Stoke, was fined sixpence for breaking the assize of ale.

So much attention is now given to our earlier records that it is not too much to hope that further documents may in time be available to fill up some of the gaps in the preceding narrative, and possibly also to indicate the habitats of the Styffs during the fourteenth century. The series of extracts from these ancient Court Rolls which now follow are given in proof of the facts related in the preceding narrative.

### Record Extracts.

The entry previously referred to on p. 25, in which it is stated that a John Styff is mentioned in 6 Henry VI., under Badmynton, proves on a closer examination of the record to relate to a direction to John Styff, wodeward, to enforce an order of the court that William Ryce,\* of Badmynton, should give security for the repair of his house, which, according to the presentment,

\* At the Michaelmas Court 16 Henry VI., 1437, we get a glimpse of the subsequent history of this William Ryce, for it is recorded of him, *abinde noctante recessit*,—he went away by night—a method of avoiding responsibilities which is no by means unknown at the present day.

was wholly ruinous. The same roll contains an entry of the estreats of *John Styff*, "Wodeward superioris."

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 12 Henry VI., 1433.

*Kyllecote*. Item presentant quod Willelmus Tankere et *Johannes Styff* permittant fossata sua jacere non escuriata et terram superpendere viam regiam vocatam Butteslane ob quoque defectu Regia via ibidem infunderatur ad nocumentum. Ideo ipsi in misericordia. Et precipitur eis quod emendant per proximam [curiam] sub pena cujuslibet eorum vj<sup>d</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday 12 Henry VI., 1434.

*Kyllecote*. Decennia presentat . . . . . Et quod *Margareta Styffe* injuste levavit hutesiam super Ricardum Lacy et Thomam Tasker. Ideo ipsa in misericordia. Et quod *Johannes Styffe* contra pacem traxit sanguinem cum glayss precii ij<sup>d</sup> super Robertum Hugges. Ideo ipse in misericordia. Et de precio predictae Glayss balliuo mandatum est super computum. Et quod *Johannes Styff* contra pacem extraxit sanguinem de dicto Roberto. Ideo ipse in misericordia. Et quod *Margareta Styff* injuste levavit hutesiam super dictum Robertum. Ideo ipsa in misericordia. Et quod cursus aque apud Butteslane ducitur extra cursum suum per quod regia via ibidem obstupatur in defectu *Johannis Styffe*. Ideo ipse in misericordia. Et preceptum est quod emendet citra proximam [curiam] sub pena xij<sup>d</sup>. Et quod *Johannes Styffe* permittit pistrinam suam esse ruinosa. Ideo ipse in misericordia.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 13 Henry VI., 1434.

*Kyllecote*. Decennia presentat . . . . . Et quod cursus aque apud Butteslane ducitur extra rectum cursum suum per quod regia via ibidem infunderatur in defectu *Johannis Styffe*. Ideo in misericordia. Et quod idem *Johannes Styffe* permittit pistrinam suam . . esse ruinosa. Ideo ipse in misericordia. Et preceptum est eis illam emendere et reparare citra proximam [curiam] sub pena vi<sup>d</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>. Idem Ricardus [Scot] queretur versus *Johannem Styffe* de placito transgressionis . . nondum . Ideo attachiatus citra proximam [curiam].

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 13 Henry VI., 1435.

*Kyllecote*. Et quod *Johannes Styff* adhuc permittit teneamentum suum esse ruinosa. Ideo precipitur eis dictos domos plene reparare citra festum sancti Michaelis

proximum futurum sub pena cujuslibet eorum xi<sup>d</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 14 Henry VI., 1435.

*Kylcot.* Et quod Johannes Rooke et *Johannes Styffe* nondum plene reparaverunt nec emendaverunt domos tenementa suorum sicut eis preceptum fuit. Ideo ipsi in misericordia. Et precipitur quod emendent citra proximam [curiam] sub pena cujuslibet eorum ij<sup>s</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 14 Henry VI., 1436.

*Kyllecote.* Item, Precipitur *Johanni Styffe* reparare tenementum suum sub pena ij<sup>s</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 16 Henry VI., 1437.

De attachiamentis *Johannis Styff*, wodeward superioris ut paret per extractam sibi liberatam.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 16 Henry VI., 1438.

De attachiamentis *Johannis Styff*, wodeward superioris, ut paret per extractam sibi liberatam.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 27 Henry VI., 1448.

*Kyllecote.* Item, precipitur *Johanni Styffe* plene reparare de novo edificando tenementum suum citra proximam [curiam] sub pena . . . xx<sup>d</sup> ex . . . . . sua propria.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 27 Henry VI., 1449.

*Kyllecote.* Precipitur *Johanni Styff* plene edificare de novo . . . . . tenementum suum citra proximam [curiam] sub pena xx<sup>d</sup> ex cons. sua propria.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 28 Henry VI., 1450.

Et precipitur *Johanni Styff* plene reparare et emendare j cotagium quondam *Johannis Webbe* citra festum Sancti Michaelis proximum futurum sub pena dimidii marci.

*Wodeward.* De attachiamentis *Johannis Styff*, wodeward superioris, ut paret per extractum unde factum et sibi liberatum. iiij<sup>d</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 30 Henry VI., 1452.

Item presentant aule et camere *Johannis Styff* totaliter decase. Ideo ipse in misericordia. Et nichilominus cepit diem sufficienter et de novo construendo dictum domum citra festum de Hokday sub pena de vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>.

*Wodcrofte.* Ad hanc [curiam] precipitur *Johanni Styff* superiori wodeward quod distingas tenentem terrarum et tenementorum nuper Thome Browne in Badmynton de respondendo domino de homagio [etc.]

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 31 Henry VI., 1453.

*Kylcote.* Et preceptum est per senescallum Willelmo Tonkere, Rogers Longedene, Henrico Cooke, Thome Woodroue et *Johanni Styffe* cum tota villata de Tresham quod ponant lapides merales apud Pykyn Clyfe et Cleryn Stubbe in festo Sancti Martini proximo futuro post datum hujus curie inter terram Nicholai Alderley et terram diu jam in tenura Johannis penne super visum homagii preante habitum et factum. Et hoc sub pena cujuslibet eorum in defectu forisfacture domino iiij<sup>d</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, [32 ?] Henry VI., 1454.

*Kylcote.* Ad istam [curiam] venit *Nicholaus Styffe* et dat domino de fine vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> pro ingressu habendo de ..... cum pertinentiis ipsius in tenura [*Johannis Styff* ..... inde et faciendo in omnibus sicut *Johannes Styff* reddere et facere consuevit .... solvendo vere finem predicto domino premanibus .....

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 11 Edward IV., 1471.

*Upton.* Item presentat quod adhuc tenementum nuper in tenura Stephani Fouler et modo in tenura Johannis Westcote et *Thome Styffe* jacet ruinosum; Ideo in misericordia; Et continuatur pena, viz.: vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> Et preceptum est eis quod bene et sufficienter emendant citra festum Pentecoste et hoc sub pena predicta.

*Stoke.* Decennarius ibidem cum sua decena venit etc. .... Item presentat j pullum mas precii xvi<sup>d</sup> proveniente in extrahuria citra festum Sancti Bartholomei Apostoli et remanet in custodia *Thome Styffe* Et preceptum est quod proclamatur per curiam.

HAWKESBURY. St. Martin, 12 Henry VII., 1496.

*Stoke.* Decennarius et homagium presentat quod ..... Et presentat quod Antonius Down, vi<sup>d</sup>, et *Thomas Styff*, vi<sup>d</sup>, brasiaverunt et fregerunt assisam.

*Pene per dominum.* Item presentat quod Willelmum Bullesdon permittit domum vocatum Towkers stare ruinosam et precipitur ei emendi citra proximum visum sub pena xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>; Thomas Wykeham pro orio suo x<sup>s</sup>; Johannes Byrchald pro orio suo; Johannes Birchald pro domo suo; Willelmus Bagepath similiter; Willelmus Forde similiter; *Thomas Styff* similiter habent in penam predictam.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, Hockday, 12 Henry VII., 1497.

*Essoigns. John Styff.*

..... Item—a presentment “superten’ *Thome Styff ruinos’*”—apparently an order made for him to rebuild it “de novo,” but the entry is much obliterated.

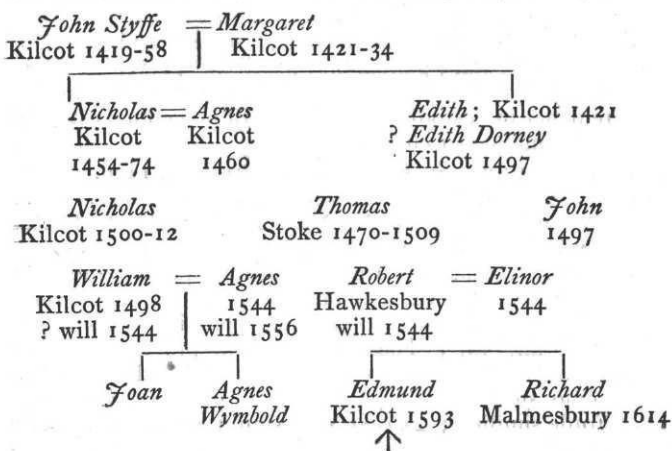
Ad istam [curiam] venit *Willelmus Styff* et cepit in curia reversionem j cotagii cum pertinentiis in *Kylcote* modo in tenura *Edithe Dorney* Tenendum sibi ..... uxori sue secundum consuetudinem cum accidit post decessum, vel recessum sive sursum redditum dicte *Edithe* ..... serviciis et con.... inde domino prius debitis. Et dat domino de fine v<sup>a</sup>.

HAWKESBURY. View of Frankpledge, St. Martin, 1 [Henry VIII?] 1509.

*Kylcote*. Homagium ibidem exactum ex officio Juratores presentant quod..... *Nicholas Styffe* ij<sup>d</sup> xxvj oves Et quod *Nicholas Styffe* habet penam..... proximam curiam bene et sufficienter emendare defectum plaustris sui sub pena forisfacture domino.

*Stoke*. Decennarius cum decena ibidem venit et presentat ..... Et quod *Walterus Proud* vj<sup>d</sup>, *Ricardus Ady*, vi<sup>d</sup>, *Thomas Styffe* vi<sup>d</sup>, *Thomas Byke* vi<sup>d</sup>, et *Johannes Davyes* vi<sup>d</sup>, brasiavit et fregit assisam servisiis.

The foregoing records are summarized in the following table, which gives the following names of the various individuals with the earliest and latest dates at which they respectively occur.



### Hawkesbury Church.

**F**EW village churches can shew a greater antiquity than that of Hawkesbury, for it is certain that one existed here long before the close of the seventh century. Of that early building nothing now remains, unless, indeed, the foundations of a wall discovered in the late restoration in the west part of the nave may have formed part of it. Dedicated to the blessed Virgin, it was the mother church of a large parish, which included the four chapelries of Hilsley, Tresham, Waste, and Little Badminton, besides the hamlets of Upton, Kilcot, and Seddlewood, as well as Ingleston and Chalkeley. The church lies in the valley near Ingleston common, within the tithing of Stoke, or Stoke Hawkesbury, a name which has long dropped out of use, and at the foot of the hill on which lies Hawkesbury Upton, now the most populous part of the parish, though we shall probably be right if we infer that Stoke Hawkesbury in early days was the larger of the two. Indeed, the whole parish must once have been a far more important place than it now is. A fair and market was established at this place by charter in 1253, though it has long since been forgotten.

The dimensions of the church from east to west are nearly one hundred and thirty feet, with a width of nearly seventy feet, inclusive of the two porches. Almost every style of building is exhibited in it. There are some fragments of pre-Norman work in the north porch, surmounted by a Norman doorway. The greater part of the chancel, the south aisle, and some portions of the tower and north porch, are of Early English date. The arcade in the nave, and part of the tower, are of the Decorated Style; whilst the clerestory, the south porch, and most of the north porch, as well as the upper part of the tower, the pulpit and some minor work, belong to the Perpendicular period. Of the work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there still remain traces, and the date 1736 in the church marks repairs then undertaken. The pews are of Jacobean character. In plan, the church consists of a chancel, the nave, with a smaller aisle, at the end of which is the Stinchcombe chantry, two large porches, and a tower. A plan to scale appeared in the thirteenth volume of the *Transactions* of the Bristol and Gloucestershire



HAWKESBURY CHURCH: INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST.



HAWKESBURY CHURCH: INTERIOR, LOOKING WEST.

Archæological Society, which also contains some interesting details of the church, and of the various discoveries made during the restoration, which took place in 1882. A view of the church from the north was given in Bigland's *Gloucestershire*, and its general appearance at the present time, both inside and out, is shewn by the accompanying engravings. The restoration of this ancient building was undertaken in 1882, when many necessary repairs were executed, though unfortunately the architect ill-advisedly removed the whole of the plaster, and the walls were re-pointed, thereby giving to the interior a very bare and crude appearance. For this he gives some reasons in his account of the restoration. One of them, that it "enables archæologists to study the history of the church," sounds very strange. The supposed need of antiquaries is hardly a sufficient reason for denuding rough rubble walls of plaster, and it is hard to find in mere unsightliness the "dignity" which the architect claims for this method of treatment.

The seventeenth century pews were retained, but were altered and rearranged, though this in a village church could hardly have been requisite, however needful such a change may be in a populous town parish, and we may be permitted to regret that so good an instance of pew work of that date was not allowed to remain untouched.

In the chancel are the banners and monuments of the Earls of Liverpool, which have been fully described in *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, V., pp. 177, 252.

At the east end of the aisle was the chantry, founded about the middle of the fifteenth century by one of the Stinchcombe family. Some of their gravestones are yet to be seen in the floor, and the name is still common in this parish amongst the humbler inhabitants.

As will be seen from the illustrations, the church is most picturesquely situated, and is a building of great interest to the antiquary. There are, indeed, few other village churches whose known history like this dates back upwards of twelve centuries to 684, when Gloucestershire formed part of the dominions of Ethelred, the king of Mercia, and only four years after the foundation of the see of Worcester.