

THE ENTWISLE FAMILY – Their ancestry according to B. Grimshaw

By Peter Stanford in further continuation of his earlier Review of the above work, and of 'Part I' which considered 'The Early Ancestors?' and 'Part II' which dealt with 'The Main Line of Descent of the Entwises of Entwisle'.

Part III – The Case for Sir John examined

Now that I have got hold of a copy of the relevant (I feel pretty sure that it is) Whalley pedigree I have to say that the case for "Sir John Antwisel/Antwysell – 1067" is looking very poor indeed. Firstly because he wasn't called Antwisel, or any other variant of Entwisle. And secondly, as if that wasn't enough of itself, the person concerned probably lived a long time after 1067.

This pedigree comes from Nichols' "History and Antiquities of Leicester", vol. II, pt. II, p. 736, published around 1800, which I feel must be the source of Grimshaw's informant's information, because it seems to be the only known Whalley pedigree harking back so far and other roads lead back to it.

It tells us that Sir John Antwilley's daughter Goditha married Eustace, Lord of Whalley, son of Wyamarus Whalley who had Whalley, in the Wapentake of Blackburne, by the gift of William Bastard duke of Normandy in 1067 for his service done at the battle of Hastings

Clearly Antwilley is not a feasible rendition of Entwisle. I believe it probably started life as "att Wille" which, like "att Welle" describes a person who lived by a stream or spring. Now found as At(t)will, At(t)well etc. There are other possibilities, e.g. the equivalent of "at Willey", a placename spelling meaning willow, or even "at Whalley". Or the first element could refer to a personal name, one translation of which could give the rather humorous result of "Ant('s)-hill". Whatever, it surely isn't derived from "ened-twisla" or some such, as is Entwis(t)le.

The same person is referred to as Autwilly on an American Whaley (sic) website, but it is clear that this is from the same source (and, therefore, a mistranscription) because the immediate source is a book of circa 1900 which itself refers back to Nichols.

As to the timescale: After 1067 the next date mentioned on the pedigree is a descendant Richard Whalley, eight generations from Wyamarus, who died in 1583 aged 84, so we know from this when Richard was born - 1498 or 1499. Wyamarus couldn't have been born much later than 1045 if he fought at Hastings, which would make them born at least 453 years apart, giving an average time between generations of 56.6 years, whereas it is generally around 25 years.

A further point is that the pedigree shows Roger Whalley, great great grandson of Wyamarus and of Sir John Antwilley as married to a daughter of John Townley of co. Lancaster. Applying the 25 year yardstick would give an estimated date of birth for this Roger as 1145, and let's say he married after another 25 years, in the year 1170. But it is evident from the Townley pedigree and associated information in Baines' History of Lancashire that this was not used as an "of" name until earliest 1235, when Richard was given Townley by his brother Roger, who had held it as parcel of the lands he held at Whalley (and would therefore have been known as Roger of Whalley). This Richard thus becoming known as Richard de Townley. However, he had no sons and it didn't become fixed as an hereditary surname until several generations later so we may take it that this John (and consequently the daughter who married the first-mentioned Roger) was of a considerably later date.

So, one way and another, it is evident that either there are huge gaps in this pedigree or that the people at/near the top of it lived a lot later than it suggests - probably both. However, that hardly matters to us if Sir John wasn't an Entwisle anyway.

Nonetheless, the Whalley pedigree does seem to chime somewhat with others I have seen and so has its own interest. Elsewhere I noted a Wyamarus said to have been given lands in Yorkshire, including Cave, by the Conqueror for his service at Hastings, i.e. the same story except for the place (though no Wyamarus is mentioned on the surviving Battle Abbey Roll copies). He could, of course, be the same as above because there is no reason why he couldn't have been given land in different places as his benefice. But this one left these lands to his brother Jordan (de Cave), being childless himself. In passing, let me mention that Jordan became used as a name from association with the Crusades - well after the Conquest, so this of itself contradicts the Conquest claim.

Now here is the interesting bit: The Stanfeld (also mentioned by Grimshaw), of Yorkshire, family pedigree descends them from one Wyon, who had a son Jordan, who married a Daughter of John Townley of Townley, who had a son John de Stanfeld who married Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Entwissel. Grimshaw mentions all this from Jordan onwards. It doesn't take too much imagination to make Wyon out to be an abbreviation/corruption of Wyamarus. (This appears to have a Latinised ending and is also found as Wyamar, Wyam, Wymer etc.) Nor does it take too much imagination to believe that either the Wyamarus in the preceding paragraph had sufficient other land at Whalley for his offspring as well as leaving his lands at Cave etc. to his brother - from which his childlessness had been supposed, or that the father and son relationship between Wyon and Jordan had been supposed because Jordan had inherited the lands of Wyon who was really his brother.

All very intriguing, but, whatever it means, my conclusions at the end of all this (including the earlier papers I wrote on the subject) have to be:

As I said before, Thomas Entwissel seems to have been a real person but probably did not live before the 1200s. May well be a descendant of the Robert, circa 1200, for whom there is substantial evidence.

“Sir John Antwisel” is an incorrect transcription. He was actually recorded as Antwilley and, therefore, was not of the Entwisle family at all. It follows that the red and white Arms attributed to “Sir John Antwysell 1067” are nothing to do with the Entwistles, or indeed anyone else at that date - Not that I thought they had anything to do with them before, but this surely disposes with any lingering doubt that anyone might have - except anyone who might now like to make Estouteville into Antwilley!

This leaves us with our first known ancestor being the abovementioned Robert. It seems clear that there weren't any “of Entwistles” befo