

# FRIENDS OF WOKING PALACE

## The Beaufort Family

The Beauforts were the children of John of Gaunt and his mistress, Katherine Swynford. Although the children were born whilst John was married to Constance, *Queen of Castile*, the line was legitimised by Papal Bull and Act of Parliament and became the House of Tudor in 1485 when Henry VII defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field. The connection of the Beauforts with Woking house began when John Beaufort married Margaret Holland the sister and coheir of the childless Edmund Holland, Earl of Kent.

John Beaufort, (c1371-16 March 1409/10) illegitimate son of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford created Earl of Somerset 9 February 1396/7 and Marquess of Dorset and Marquess of Somerset 29 September 1397, married before 28 September 1397, Margaret Holland, daughter, Thomas, Earl of Kent John died 16 March 1409/10 in the hospital of St Catherine by the Tower of London and was buried in St Michael's chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. His widow married secondly Thomas, Duke of Clarence (1387-1421) *see later*.<sup>TCP</sup>

John, Duke of Somerset son of above died 27 May 1444 married Margaret Beauchamp of Bletso in or about 1442, widow of Sir Oliver St John, sister and heir of John, Lord Beauchamp, created Earl of Kendal and Duke of Somerset 28 August 1443. After the death of John, Duke of Somerset, his wife married Leo Welles who was slain at Towton 29 March 1461. She died at a great age shortly before 3 June 1482. The only child and heir of this marriage was Lady Margaret Beaufort born 31 May 1443.<sup>TCP</sup>

Edmund, Marquess of Dorset, Earl of Somerset and Earl of Somerset, younger brother of John above b c1406 styled Earl of Dorset 1438-41 created 28 August 1442 Earl of Dorset created 24 June 1443 Marquess of Dorset created 31 March 1448 Duke of Somerset. The King granted him and his heirs a yearly fair at Woking on Tuesday after Whitsunday 20 May 1452. He was committed to Tower by Duke of York as Protector during King's illness about Christmas 1453 but released 4 March 1454/5.<sup>TCP</sup>

Henry, Duke of Somerset, Marquess of Dorset, Earl of Somerset and Earl of Dorset, son of Edmund above born about April 1436, styled Earl of Dorset 1448 to May 1455. Attainted by Act of Parliament 1461 when all his honours were forfeited. Received general pardon 10 March 1462/3 and was restored to his *name, state, stile and dignite*. At end of 1463 changed sides again and was defeated and captured 15 May 1464 at battle of Hexham. Beheaded the same day. Restitution of 1463 declared null and void by Parliament 21 January 1464/5. Manor forfeited to Crown.<sup>TCP</sup>

Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443-1509), daughter of John above, married John de la Pole marriage dissolved 1453, Edmund Tudor (d1456) 1455, Henry Stafford (d1471) before 1464 and Thomas Stanley (d1504) before October 1473. Lady Margaret had only one child and that from her marriage with Edmund Tudor. This was Henry Tudor (Henry VII) born 28 January 1456/7.<sup>TCP</sup>

Lady Margaret Beaufort and her third husband, Henry Stafford obtained the Manor of Woking by Royal Warrant 1466.

A paper about a medieval composer, Lionel Power, c1375-1445, reveals that he was a member of the Household of Thomas, Duke of Clarence c1388-1421, the younger brother of Henry V. Woking Palace is said to be one of only two places where it is certain that Power spent some of his working life. The owner of the Manor of Woking at this time was Margaret Holland above, the wife of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset c1371-1409. Margaret had inherited the manor from her mother Alice, the Dowager of Kent. On the death of her husband, John Beaufort, Margaret married Thomas, Duke of Clarence in November or December 1411.<sup>TCP</sup>

The source for Lionel Power being at Woking is frequent references in Westminster Abbey Muniments 12163. This is a volume of household accounts of the revenues of Thomas, Duke of Clarence from 1418 to 1421, when he died in 'a disorderly battle' near Angers. At the beginning of the period Clarence is fighting in Normandy and his wife, Margaret Holland, is staying at Woking, with all the chapel household of her husband. In 1419 there is a detailed list of the Duke's household including 16 clerks, with Lionel's name standing second and another entry showing him as a member of the chapel throughout the period and instructor of the choristers.<sup>WA</sup>

The house at Woking was, therefore, as important historically in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century as it was in the next century when the Tudors turned the house into a palace. Prior to the Tudors, Woking manor was not just a holding providing an income but rather one of the places where the Beauforts lived. This is an important addition to our knowledge of the Palace.

TCP     The Complete Peerage  
WA     Westminster Abbey Muniments 12163

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