

The Kent and Holland families

The story of the Kent and Holland families may be said to have begun when, according to Manning and Bray, King Edward III in the first year of his reign gave the Manor of Woking to Edmund of Woodstock born 5th August 1301 and created 1st Earl of Kent 28th March 1321 who married to the 3rd Baroness Wake, daughter of the 1st Baron Wake by Joan de Fiennes, sometime between October and December in 1325, at Blisworth in Northamptonshire. There were four children, Edmund Plantagenet, 2nd Earl of Kent, Margaret Plantagenet, Joan Plantagenet the *Fair Maid of Kent* and John Plantagenet, 3rd Earl of Kent.

When Edmund was beheaded in 1330, the manor was forfeited to the Crown but on the 7 December ^{TCP} following, his elder son Edmund (died probably aged about 5 before 5 October 1331^{TCP}) was restored in blood by Parliament and his estates restored to him. He died a minor soon after when the Manor descended to his younger brother, John Earl of Kent, who died seised hereof on 26/27 December 1352.^{TCP}

In 1331 following the forfeiture of the manor to the Crown another survey ^{MB} was made with the following result:

A capital Messuage

A Garden

Arable, Meadow and Pasture land

Pasture in the Park

Pasture in Brookwood

A Fishery

A Water mill

The Surrey Taxation Returns of 1332 include the name of Margaret, Countess of Kent for both Woking village and *the house of Sutton*. Given that John Aubrey ^{JA} reports that the arms of her executed husband, Edmund of Woodstock were in a north window of St Peter's church, it is possible that she and her young family may have lived at the manor house then.

On the death of her younger brother John in 1352, Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent (c 1328- 1385^{DNB}) became Countess of Kent in her own right ^{DNB} although there is some suggestion that John's wife who he had married 3 April 1348 namely Elizabeth, daughter of William, Margrave (later Duke) of Juliers, ^{TCP} retained some interest in his estate ^{MB} until her death 6 June 1411.^{TCP}

A survey^{MB} following the death of John, Earl of Kent in 1351 revealed the manor as:

A Capital Messuage enclosed with Moats

Arable, Meadow and Pasture land

A Park enclosed

A Water mill

A Fulling mill

A free Fishery

Thomas Holland, 1st Earl of Kent **sic** (C1315-26 Dec 1360^{DNB}) secretly married the 12-year-old Joan of Kent in or before 1339^{TCP}. He, Thomas Holland became Earl of Kent in right of his wife, Joan. He was succeeded as Baron Holland by his son Thomas, the earldom (of Kent) still being held by his wife (though the son later became Earl in his own right).

Thomas Holland, 2nd Earl of Kent (1350-1397^{DNB}) son of the above married 1364^{DNB} Alice Fitzalan c1350-1416^{DNB}, daughter of Richard Fitzalan, 10th Earl of Arundel and Eleanor of Lancaster.^{DNB} The death of his mother, Joan of Kent, in 1385 brought him the considerable estates of her inheritance. He and his wife Alice had nine children including Thomas Holland, 3rd Earl of Kent and 1st Duke of Surrey, who succeeded his father and Margaret Holland d1439^{DNB}, who married first John Beaufort, 1st Earl of Somerset and second Thomas of Lancaster, 1st Duke of Clarence.^{DNB}

Thomas Holland, 3rd Earl of Kent (1374-7 January 1400^{death TCP}) and 1st Duke of Surrey son of the above. Holland became 3rd Earl of Kent on his father's death in 1397. In the same year, Richard II sent Kent to arrest his own uncle¹ — Richard Fitzalan, 11th Earl of Arundel. In reward for which he received a share of the forfeited estates, and on 29 September 1397^{TCP} was created Duke of Surrey. Holland, along with many of Richard's advisors, was arrested after Richard II's deposition by Henry IV in 1399. As a result he had to forfeit the honors and estates he had gained after the arrests of Gloucester and Arundel, and thus went back to just being Earl of Kent. Early in 1400 Holland, along with his uncle John, Earl of Huntingdon plotted to kill Henry IV and free Richard II from prison and return him to the throne. This "Epiphany Rising" failed and Holland was captured and executed^{TCP}.

¹ Richard was attempting to remove Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and his associates from power.

An attainder and forfeiture of his estates was the consequence. But in the next year, the King restored the Manor to Alice Countess dowager of Kent, the Duke's mother, and to the issue of her body by Thomas her late husband, the 3rd Earl of Kent ^{MB}. The Countess enjoyed it till her death in 1415/6 ^{MB} when, by virtue of this grant, it would have descended to Edmund Earl of Kent (6 January 1384-15 September 1408), ^{TCP} her younger son but on his decease without issue, it went, on a partition of the Estates of the Family, to Margaret Holland, one of his sisters and coheirs, the wife of John Beaufort Earl of Somerset.

There is nothing to prove that the Kent or Holland families ever resided at Woking or used the Manor other than an investment.

The Manor now passed to the Beaufort family.

- DNB** Dictionary of National Biography
- MB** Manning and Bray
- TCP** The Complete Peerage
- JA** The Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey