

# Lewis Carroll's descent from the Skeffington family

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The real name of Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice in Wonderland*, was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. The following figure mentions his parents:

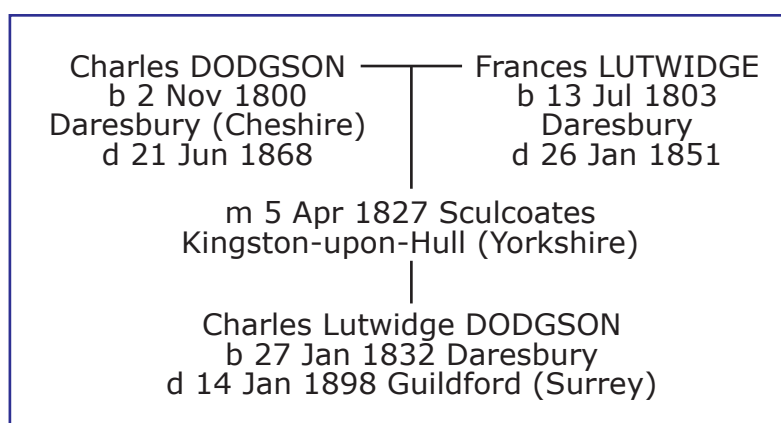


Figure 1: Parents of the author of *Alice in Wonderland*.

To obtain his pseudonym (in 1856, at the request of a magazine editor), Dodgson started out by Latinizing and altering his given names: *Charles* and *Lutwidge* became *Carolus* and *Ludovicus*, then *Carroll* and *Lewis*. The fledgling 24-year-old writer then interchanged these terms and dropped his *Dodgson* surname.

## Abbreviations in genealogical charts

Letters designate events:

- b = born (date and/or place)
- c = christened (date and/or place)
- m = married (date and/or place)
- d = died (date and/or place)
- f = funeral (date and/or place)
- t = tomb (place)
- y = died young
- z = no issue

A squiggle before a date means *circa* (about).

## Lutwidge family

Lewis Carroll's second given name, Lutwidge, was the surname of his mother Frances, the fourth child of Charles Lutwidge and Elizabeth Dodgson, as indicated in the following chart:

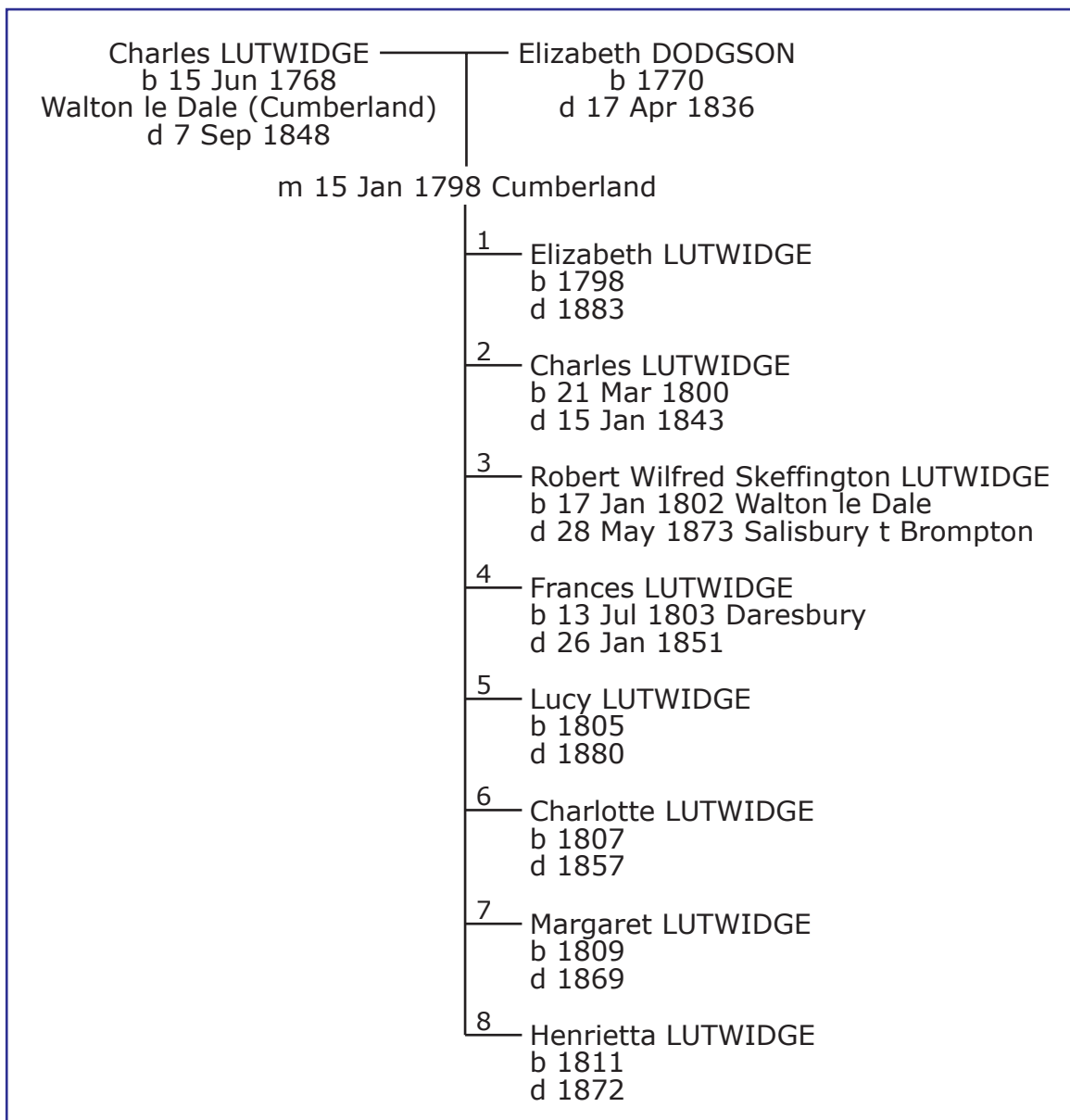


Figure 2: Maternal grandparents of Lewis Carroll.

Carroll's father and his maternal grandmother, both named Dodgson, were relatives.



## Massereene context of Mary Skeffington

The following chart presents the immediate ancestors of Mary Skeffington:

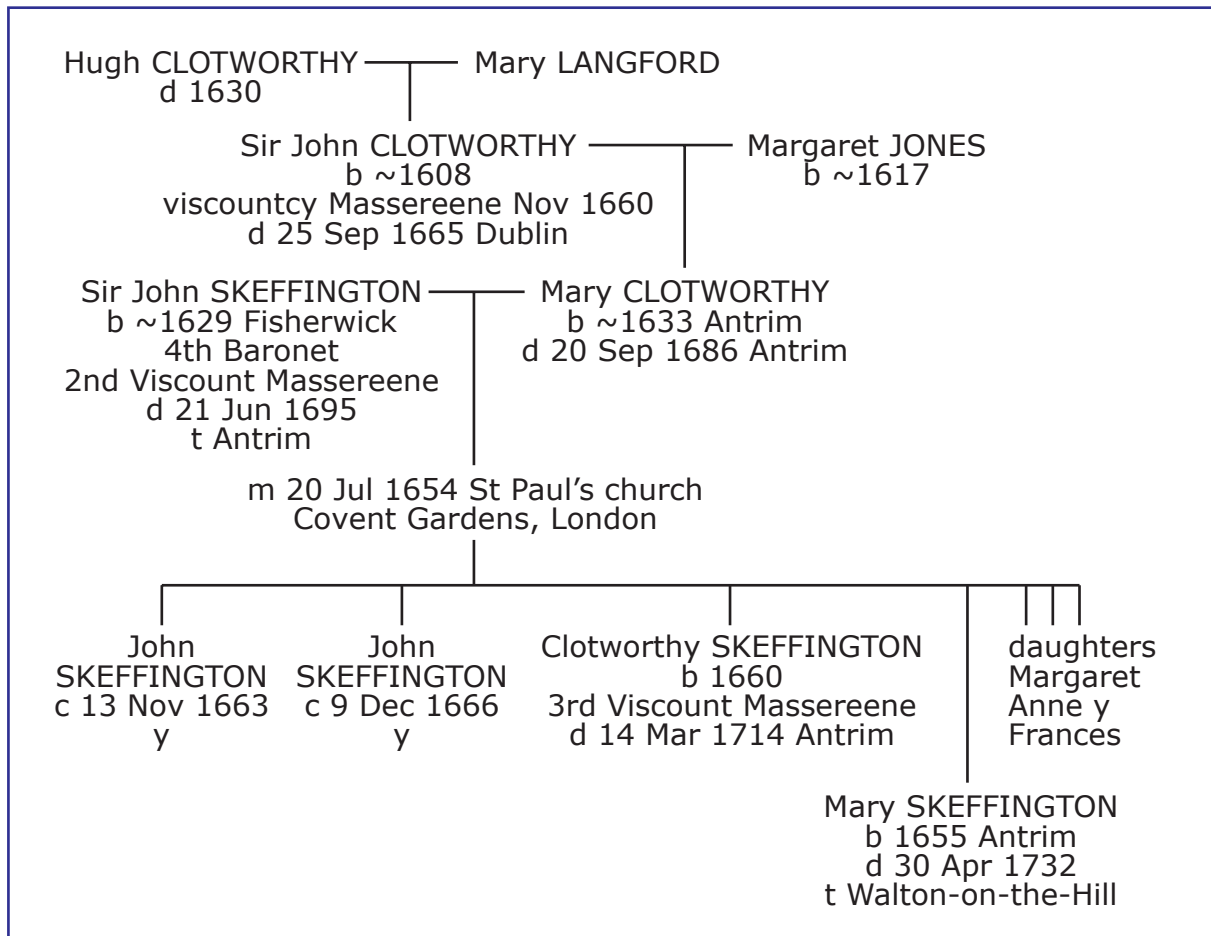


Figure 4: Massereene context of Mary Skeffington.

Her great-grandfather Hugh Clotworthy, a Presbyterian from Devonshire, went to Ireland in 1573 as a soldier. In 1606, he leased a property named Massereene from the Lord-Deputy of Ireland, fellow-Devonian Sir Arthur Chichester, then he married Mary Langford. In 1621, Clotworthy obtained Antrim Castle, which he set about renovating. Sheriff of Co Antrim in 1622, he died in 1630.

His son John, born around 1608, became the member of parliament for Co Antrim in 1634. At the Restoration, he represented the Protestant interest in Ireland towards the king. No doubt because of this, in November 1660, John Clotworthy was created Viscount Massereene.

In 1654, Clotworthy's daughter Mary married Sir John Skeffington, who was the member of parliament for Co Antrim in 1661. When Skeffington's father-in-law died in 1665, he became the 2nd Viscount Massereene. His wealth enabled him to create the gardens of Antrim Castle.

John Skeffington's third son, Clotworthy, was a soldier prior to becoming MP for Co Antrim in 1692-1693. In 1695, at the age of thirty-five, he became the 3rd Viscount Massereene.

The Massereene viscounty still exists today. The current head of the family, John Skeffington, was born in 1940. Upon his father's death in 1992, he became the 14th Viscount Massereene, the 7th Viscount Ferrard and the 7th UK Baron of Oriel. A revolutionary British operation in 1999 known as the House of Lords Act removed most hereditary members of the House of Lords. Otherwise, this conservative politician would still be a member of that august chamber.

## Skeffington patriarchs

A description of families whose surname was Skeffington, or a variation on that name, can be found in a genealogical document whose title is *Skeffington Patronymic Research*, written by the present author, which is available at the following website:

<http://gamone.free.fr/skeffington/>

The following chart presents some early Skeffingtons whose identity is well established:

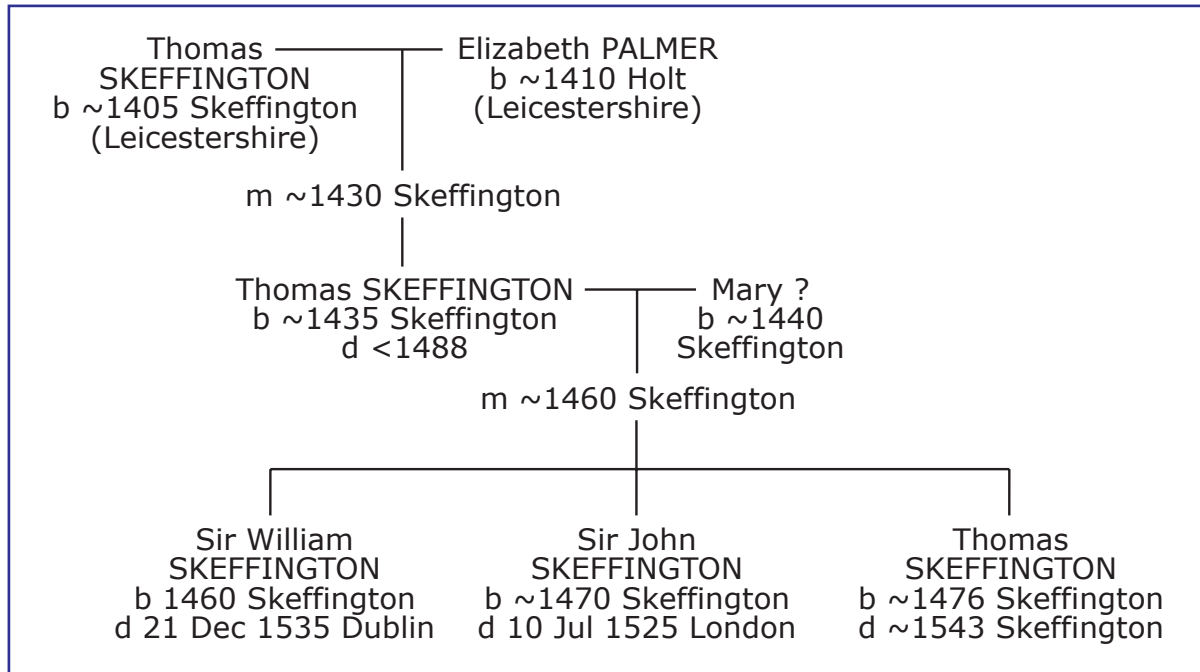


Figure 5: Patriarchal Skeffington Tudor lords.

Sir William Skeffington was the patriarch of the mainstream Skeffington family, which came to an end in the middle of the 19th century. His younger brother, Sir John Skeffington, was the patriarch of the branch of the family known as Massereene: ancestors of Lewis Carroll and of the present Viscount Massereene.

## Fisherwick Skeffingtons

The following chart presents the descent from the second Tudor lord of figure 5 down to Sir John Skeffington, 2nd Viscount Massereene, whose name appeared already in figure 4:

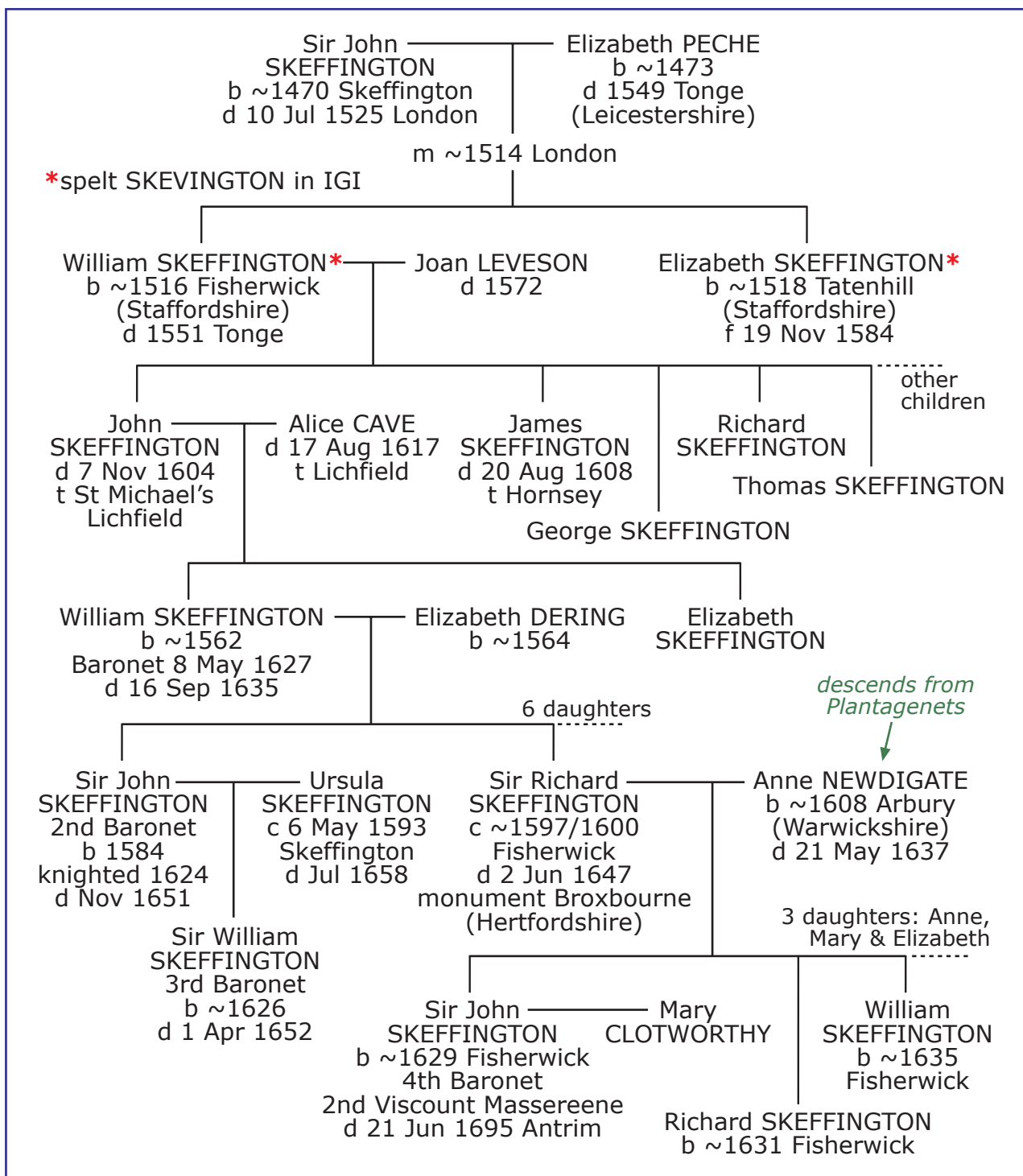


Figure 6: Fisherwick branch of the Skeffingtons.

Many of these individuals came from Fisherwick in Staffordshire. After the marriage of John Skeffington and Mary Clotworthy, the Massereene homeplace was Antrim in Northern Ireland.

## Descent from the Plantagenets

As indicated in figure 6, the mother of the 2nd Viscount Massereene, Anne Newdigate (who died before her 30th birthday, after having given birth to six children), descended from the Plantagenet monarchs. These links will now be presented.

The following chart starts with the Plantagenet monarch Edward III:

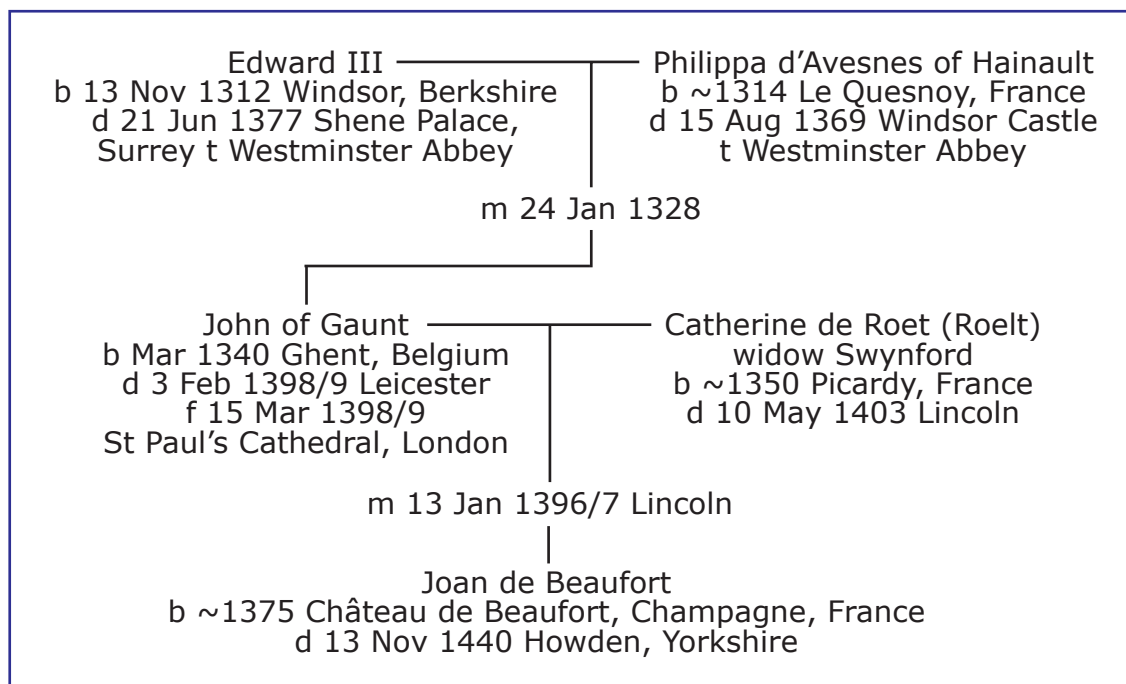
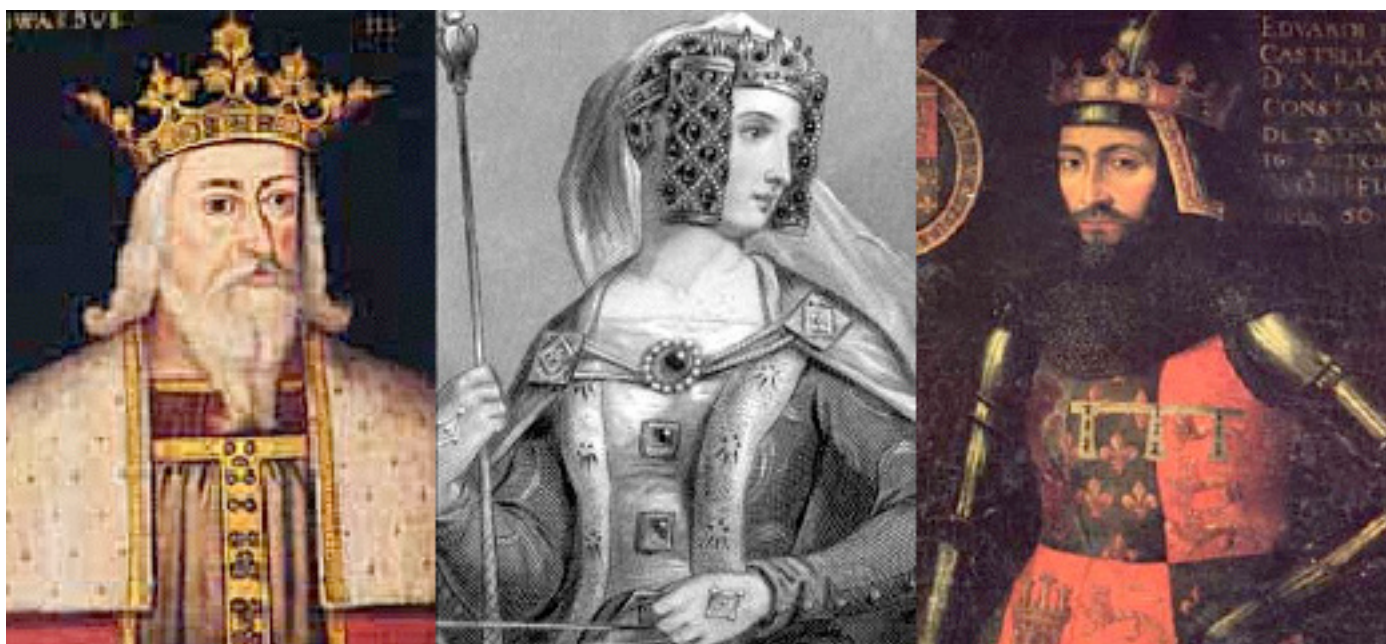


Figure 7: Joan de Beaufort, granddaughter of Edward III.

The king's son, John of Gaunt, had four children by his French mistress Catherine de Roet (sometimes spelt Roelt), widow of Hugh Swynford. These children were legitimized in 1397, after the marriage of their parents, and they took the name of the French castle, Beaufort, where they were brought up. The offspring who concerns us was Joan de Beaufort [1375-1440].



Grandparents and father of Joan de Beaufort (from left to right): Edward III, Queen Philippa and John of Gaunt.

## Neville and Percy descendants of Joan de Beaufort

Joan de Beaufort's first husband was Robert de Ferrers. After his death, she married Ralph de Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, as indicated in the following chart:

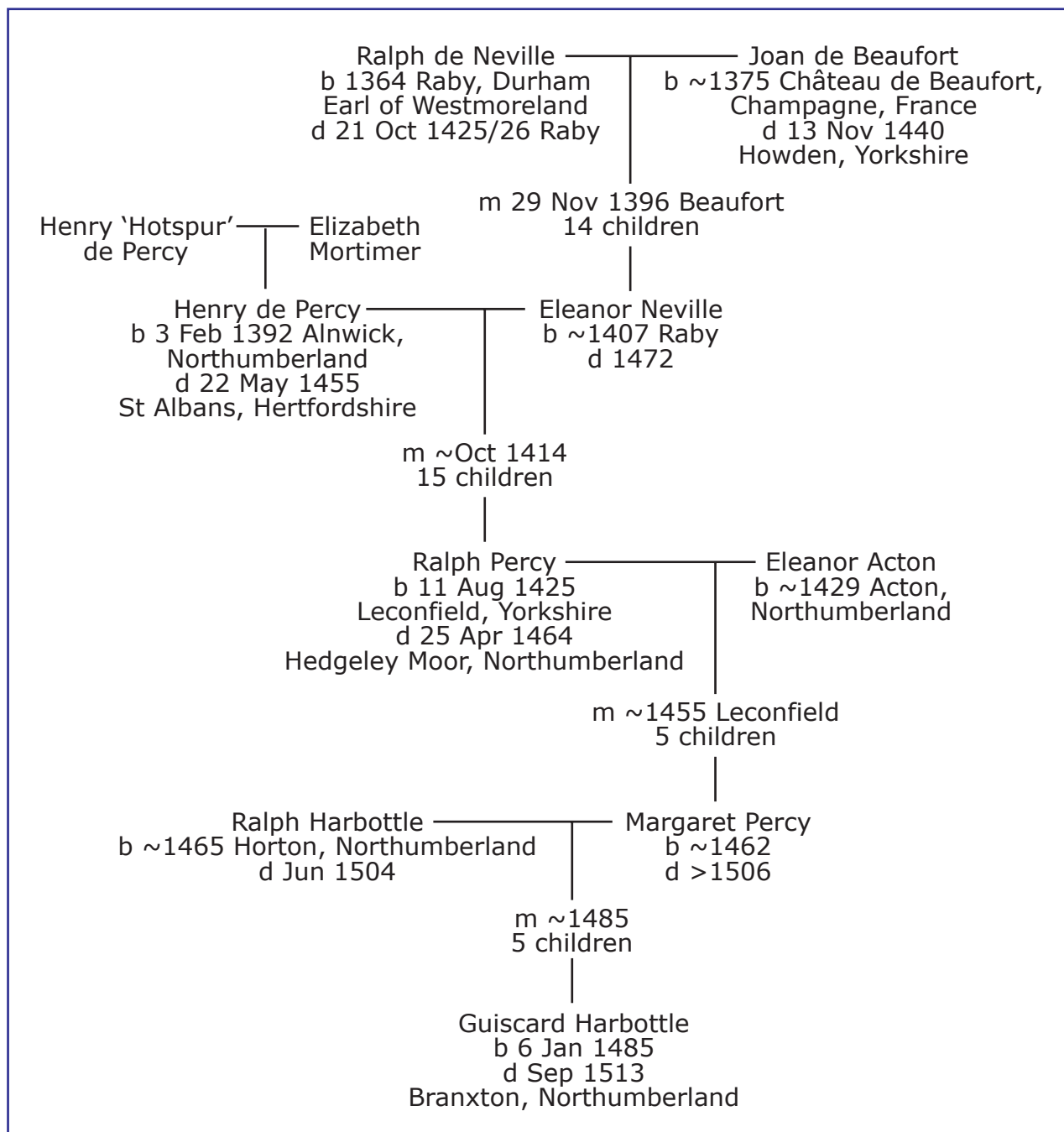


Figure 8: Neville and Percy descendants of Joan de Beaufort.

Their daughter Eleanor married Henry de Percy, son of the personage known as Hotspur in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.

Figure 8 terminates with a descendant named Guiscard Harbottle.



## Direct ancestors of Anne de Newdigate

The following chart presents the descent from Guiscard Harbottle to Anne Newdigate, whose name (sometimes spelt Newdegate) appeared in figure 6:

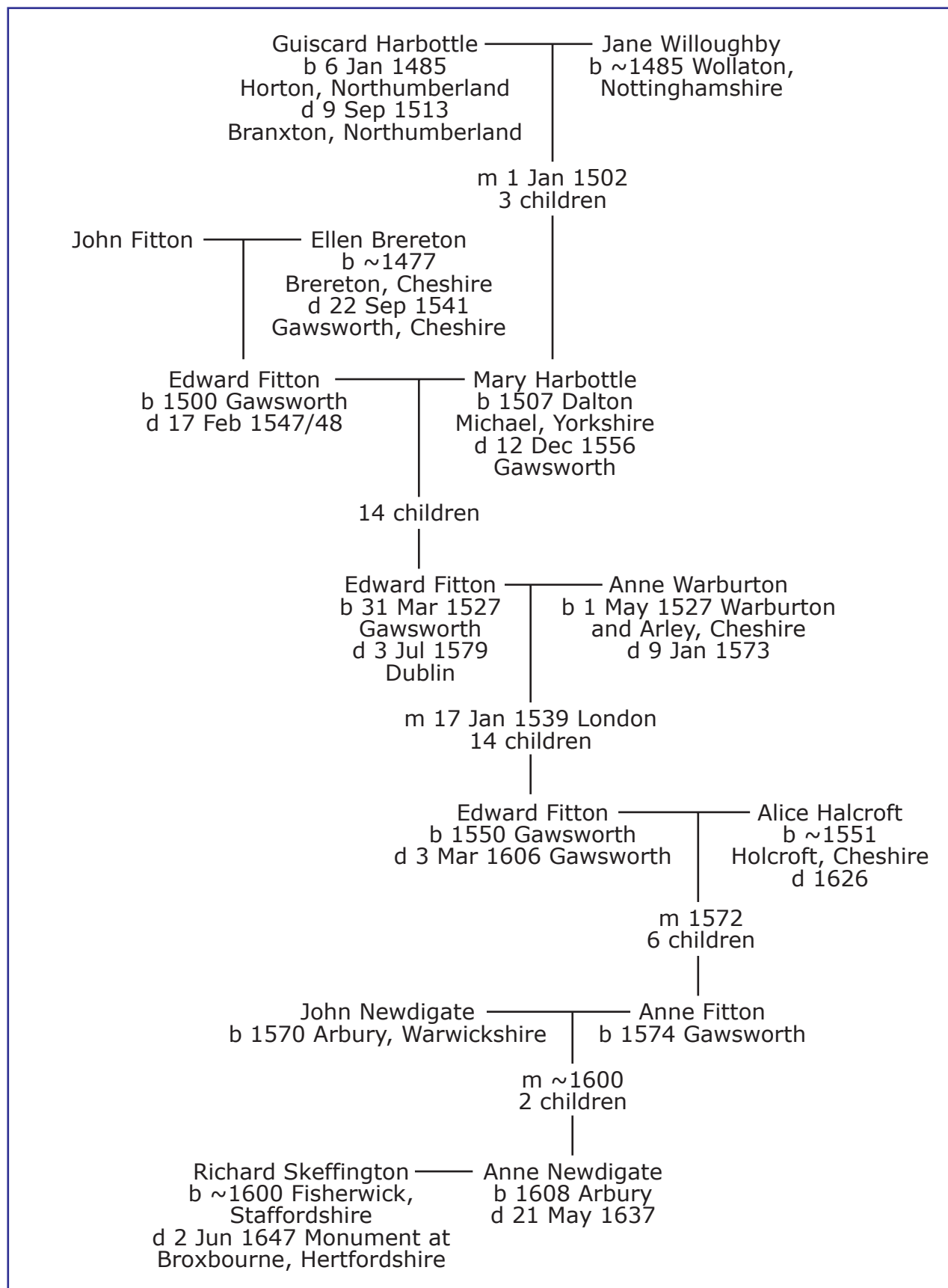


Figure 9: Direct ancestors of Anne Newdigate.

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## Conclusions

Here is a summary of our findings:

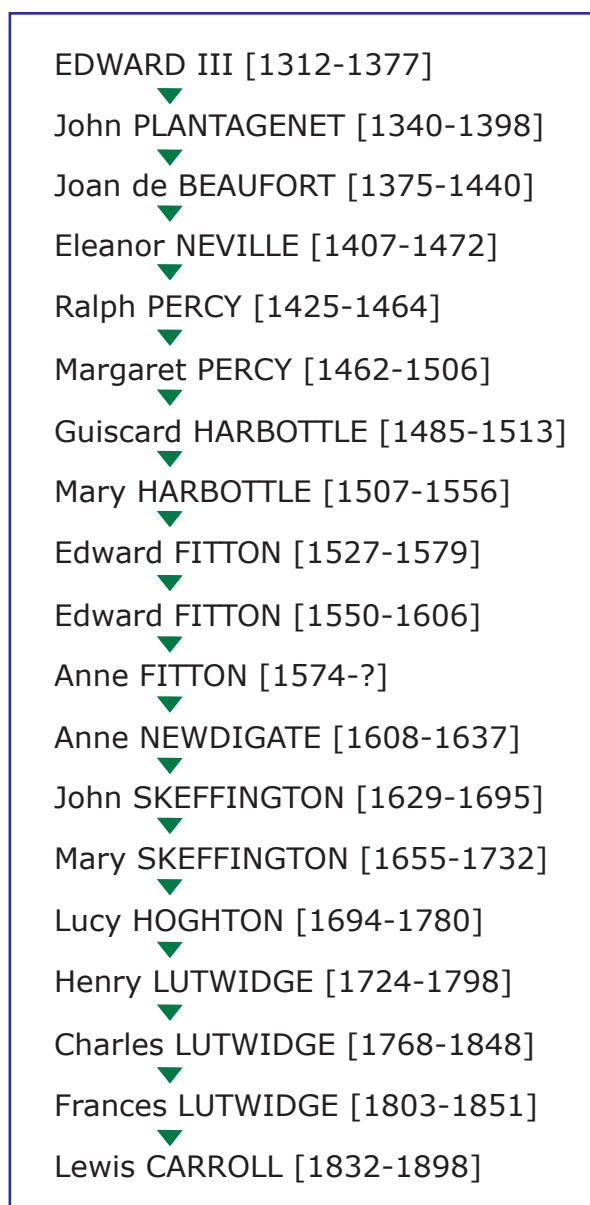


Figure 10: Generations between Edward III and Lewis Carroll.

The Plantagenet monarch Edward III was therefore the 16-great grandfather of Lewis Carroll. This means that Lewis Carroll was a genetic descendant of British royalty (issued from William the Conqueror) to exactly the same extent as two other famous figures: Winston Churchill and Lady Diana.

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## Acknowledgments

Concerning the more recent Carrollian genealogy—as presented in figures 1, 2 and 3 of this article—I am indebted to Edward Wakeling, editor of *Lewis Carroll's Diaries*, for his corrections and enhancements.

My research into genealogical links between the Skeffingtons and the Plantagenets was motivated initially by the Massereene chart in the 19th-century book by John Bernard Burke: *The Royal Families of England, Scotland and Wales with their Descendants, Sovereigns and Subjects*. I was dismayed however by a trivial blunder in Burke's chart, which I have described on the following web page:

[http://william.skyvington.free.fr/burke\\_error/](http://william.skyvington.free.fr/burke_error/)

The descent from royalty that I have finally described in this article—presented in figures 7, 8 and 9—was revealed to me by an unexpected source. My friend Natacha Boudoul (archivist at the Diocese of Marseille) drew my attention to an amazing website on the history of thoroughbred racehorses in Britain:

<http://www.highflyer.supanet.com/earlybreeders.htm>

The gist of the relationship between British genealogy and horseracing is that, during the 17th and 18th centuries, most owners and breeders of thoroughbred racehorses were descendants of Henry I, or relatives of such descendants. So, in browsing through lists of these racehorse owners and breeders, we encounter precise and complete pedigrees—I am talking of humans, not horses—of British royalty and aristocracy.

As far as basic Skeffington/Massereene genealogy is concerned, my primary source of information has been *The History and Antiquities of Leicestershire* by John Nichols (circa 1800).

Whenever possible, I have called upon the extraordinary genealogical resources provided by the Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) at the following website:

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

It goes without saying that I would welcome criticism and information concerning my article, which can be sent to me at [sky.william@orange.fr](mailto:sky.william@orange.fr).

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