

Thomas of Brotherton, 1st Earl of Norfolk

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Thomas of Brotherton, 1st Earl of Norfolk (1 June 1300 – 4 August 1338), was the fifth son of King Edward I (1272–1307), and the eldest child by his second wife Margaret of France, the daughter of Philip III of France. He was, therefore, a younger half-brother of King Edward II (1307–1327) and a full brother of Edmund, Earl of Kent. He occupied the office of Earl Marshal of England.

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Early life

Thomas of Brotherton was born 1 June 1300 at the manor house at Brotherton, Yorkshire, while his mother was on her way to Cawood, where her confinement was scheduled to take place.^[1] According to Hilton, Margaret was staying at Pontefract Castle and was following a hunt when she went into labour.^[2] The chronicler William Rishanger records that during the difficult delivery his mother prayed, as was the custom at the time, to Thomas Becket, and Thomas of Brotherton was thus named after the saint and his place of birth.^[3]

Edward I quickly rushed to the queen and the newborn baby and had him presented with two cradles. His brother Edmund was born in the year after that. They were overseen by wet nurses until they were six years old. Like their parents, they learned to play chess and to ride horses. They were visited by nobles and their half-sister Mary of Woodstock, who was a nun. Their mother often accompanied Edward on his campaigns to Scotland, but kept herself well-informed on their well-being.^[2]

His father died when he was 7 years old. Thomas's half-brother, Edward, became king of England and Thomas was heir presumptive until his nephew Edward was born in 1312.

The Earldom of Cornwall had been intended for Thomas, but Edward instead bestowed it upon his favourite, Piers Gaveston, in 1306. When Thomas was 10 years old, Edward assigned to him and his brother Edmund, the estates of Roger Bigod, 5th Earl of Norfolk who had died without heirs in 1306.

Thomas of Brotherton



Coat of arms of Thomas, Earl of Norfolk

Born	1 June 1300 <div>Brotherton, Yorkshire</div>
Died	4 August 1338 (aged 38) <div>Framlingham Castle, Suffolk, England</div>
Resting place	Bury St Edmunds Abbey, Suffolk <div>52°14′38.76″N 0°43′9.12″E﻿ / ﻿52.244378°N 0.7192°E﻿ / 52.244378; 0.7192</div>
Title	1st Earl of Norfolk
Tenure	1312 – 1338
Known for	Younger half-brother of Edward II of England
Years active	1316 – 1338
Wars and battles	Second War of Scottish Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none">Battle of Halidon Hill
Offices	Earl Marshal
Predecessor	New creation
Successor	Margaret, Duchess of Norfolk
Spouse(s)	Alice Hales <div>Mary Brewes</div>
Issue	Edward of Norfolk <div>Margaret, Duchess of Norfolk</div> <div>Alice of Norfolk</div>
Parents	Edward I of England <div>Margaret of France</div>

Career

In 1312, he was titled "Earl of Norfolk" and on 10 February 1316 he was created Earl Marshal. While his brother was away fighting in Scotland, he was left Keeper of England. He was known for his hot and violent temper. He was one of the many victims of the unchecked greed of the king's new favourite, Hugh Despenser the Younger and his father Hugh Despenser the Elder, who stole some of the young earl's lands. He allied himself with Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer when they invaded England in 1326, and stood as one of the judges in the trials against both Despensers. When his nephew Edward III reached his majority and took the government into his own hands Thomas became one of his principal advisors. It was in the capacity of Lord Marshal that he commanded the right wing of the English army at the Battle of Halidon Hill on 19 July 1333.



Ruins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds where Thomas of Brotherton was buried

He died about 20 September 1338, and was buried in the choir of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds.^{[3][4][5]}

He was succeeded by his daughter, Margaret, as Countess of Norfolk.^[3] She was later created Duchess of Norfolk for life in 1397.^[5]

As a son of Edward I of England, he was entitled to bear the coat of arms of the Kingdom of England, differenced by a *label argent of three points*.^[6]

Marriages and issue

He married firstly, before 8 January 1326, Alice de Hales (d. before 12 October 1330), daughter of Sir Roger de Hales of Hales Hall in Loddon in Roughton, Norfolk, by his wife, Alice, by whom he had a son and two daughters:^{[7][3]}

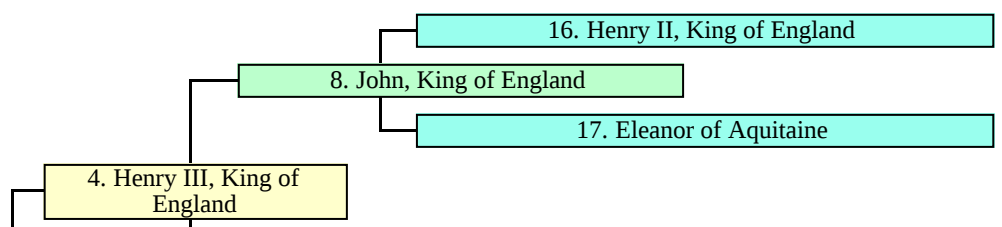
- Edward of Norfolk, who married Beatrice de Mortimer, daughter of Roger de Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, but died without issue before 9 August 1334.^[8]
- Margaret, Duchess of Norfolk, who married firstly John Segrave, 4th Baron Segrave, and secondly Sir Walter Manny.
- Alice of Norfolk, who married Sir Edward de Montagu.^[9]

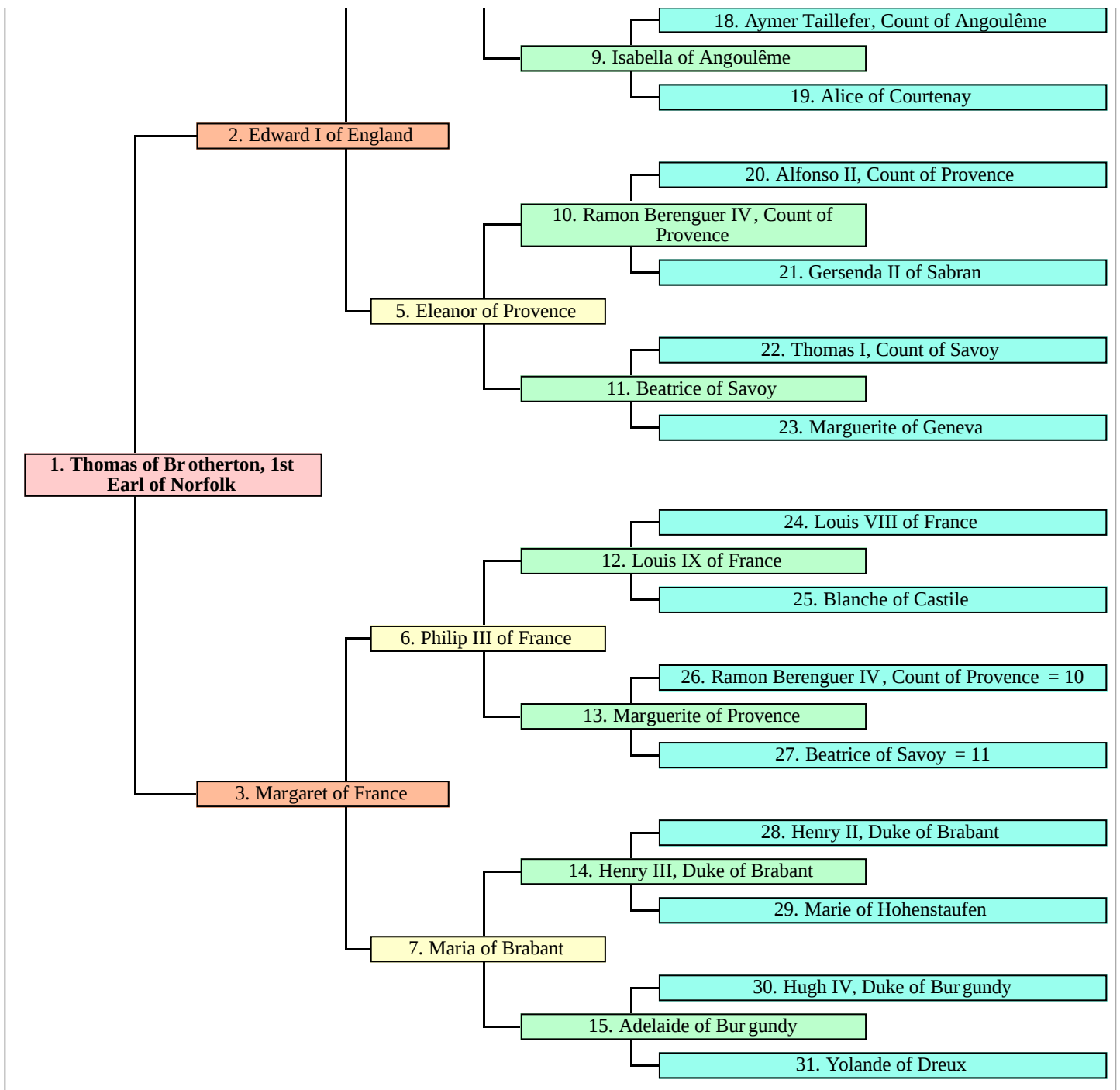
Alice Hales died by October 1330, when a chantry was founded for her soul in Bosham, Sussex.^[10]

He married secondly, before 4 April 1336, Mary de Brewes (died 11 June 1362), widow of Sir Ralph de Cobham, (d. 5 February 1326), and daughter of Sir Peter de Brewes^[3] (d. before 7 February 1312) of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, by Agnes de Clifford (d. before 1332), by whom he had no surviving issue.^{[11][12]}

Ancestry

Ancestors of Thomas of Brotherton, 1st Earl of Norfolk





Notes

1. He was born in the main house, later demolished in the 1930s due to disrepair although the new 17th century wing still exists. Waugh, 2004.
2. Hilton 2008, p. 240.
3. Waugh 2004.
4. Richardson IV 2011, p. 182.
5. Thomas F. Tout, (1886) "Thomas of Brotherton" in Dictionary of National Biography
6. Marks of Cadency in the British Royal Family(<http://www.heraldica.org/topics/britain/cadency.htm>)
7. Richardson II 2011, p. 631.
8. Richardson II 2011, p. 634.
9. Richardson II 2011, pp. 634-5.
10. Cokayne 1936 pp. 596-9.
11. Richardson II 2011, p. 632.
12. Richardson IV 2011, p. 180.

References

- Archer, Rowena E. (2004). "'Brotherton, Margaret, suo jure duchess of Norfolk (c.1320–1399)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online ed.). Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/53070. (Subscription or UK public library membership required.)
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- Hilton, Lisa (2008). *Queens Consort, England's Medieval Queens.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson. p. 240. ISBN 978-0-7538-2611-9.
- Richardson, Douglas (2011). Everingham, Kimball G., ed. *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families. II* (2nd ed.). Salt Lake City. ISBN 1449966349.
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Further reading

- Mortimer, Ian. *The Greatest Traitor*, 2003.

English royalty		
Political offices		
Preceded by Nicholas Seagrave	Lord Marshal 1316–1338	Succeeded by The Countess of Norfolk
Peerage of England		
New creation	Earl of Norfolk <i>3rd creation</i> 1312–1338	Succeeded by Margaret

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