

Early Ginn's in Hertfordshire

Looking for ancestors before William Ginn (b 1450, d 1520)

Just as William is the progenitor of "most (virtually all) of the Ginn family descendants arising from Hertfordshire alive today", there is an earlier 'Gynn' man who was ancestor to all these families, or at least some of them. We don't know who he is and to find this man based on BMD records is not possible because these records don't exist. In fact, as Dr Taylor has also said, "we are lucky to know as much as we do". The earliest reference in Hertfordshire is "Richard Gynne or Ginn, 1307, Poll Tax/Lay Subsidy for Hertfordshire". (GHB) At this time, there is no known connection nor do we know his location.

Dr Taylor has said that, in Hertfordshire, there are the "Ware" family, the "Stevenage" family and the "Aston" family and that the "Ware Ginn family might be a "far flung outpost" of the Stevenage family and thus possibly the only surviving descendants of that branch". Again, there is no known connection between them.

Here is a list of early 'Gynns' in Hertfordshire, from my own research:

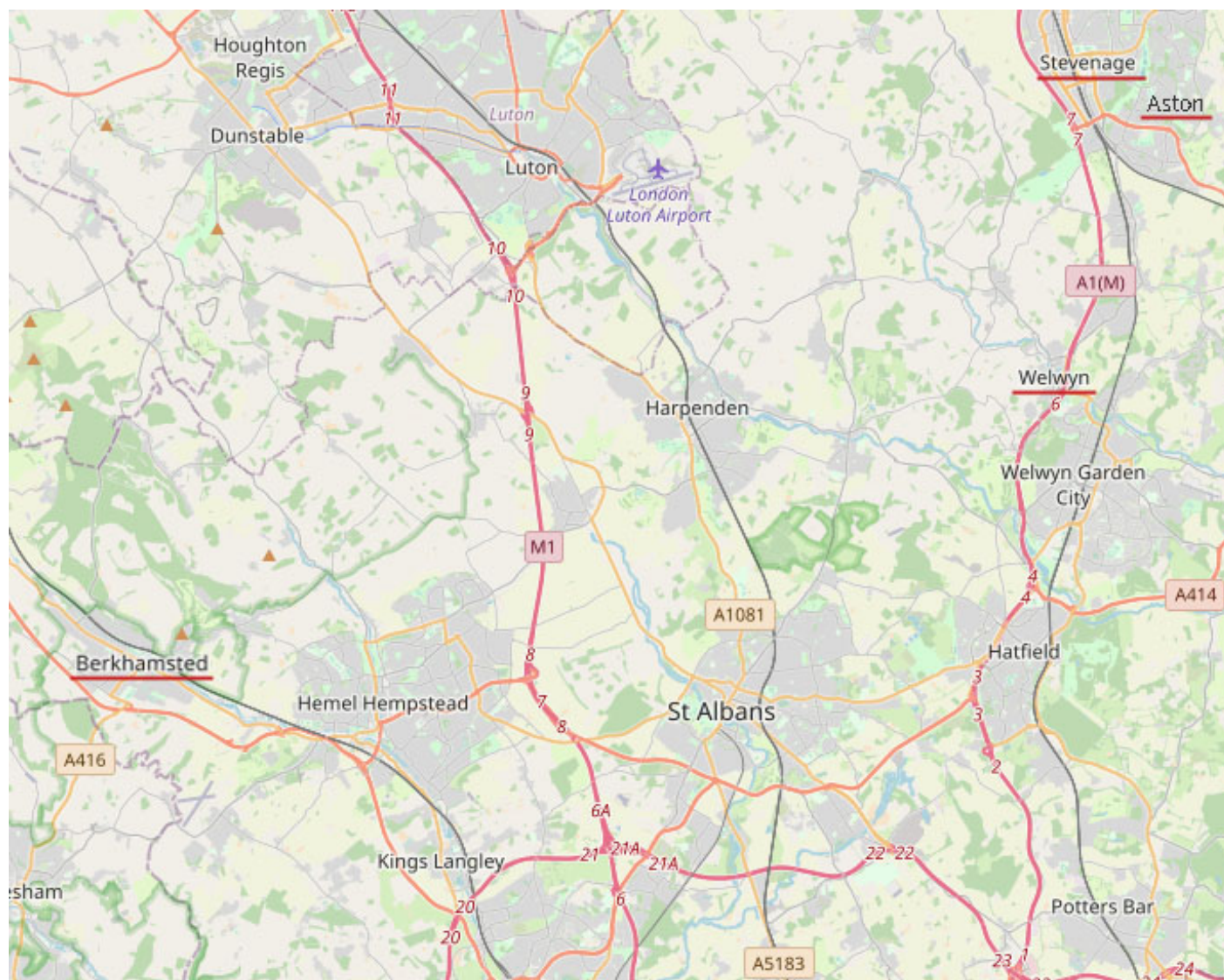
- John Gynne, 1401, Welwe (1)
- William Gyn, 1408, Hertfordshire (2)
- Thomas Gyn, 1440, Aston (3)
- John Gynne, 1453, quitclaim in Feet of Fines, Ware (4)
- John Gynne, 1470, Hoddesdon (5)
- John Gynne, husbandman, 1472, Hoddysdon (6)
- Thomas Gynn, 1482, Stevenage (7)
- William Ginne, 1484, Berkhamsted (8)
- John Gyn, 1493, Stevenage (9)

The locations mentioned in this list are very close together. They are all within a sixteen mile radius of the first name mention, a John Gyn in Welwe in 1401. Welwe is now known as Welwyn. All easily within the distance a man on his horse can ride in less than a day. None of the references include the age of the men but they are all adults. Their actual birth year might 25 or 30 years before the date of the reference. So the first two men might be only a couple of generations later than the first reference, that of Richard in 1307.

[Welwyn](#) is a village and civil parish in Hertfordshire. The parish includes the villages of [Digswell](#) and [Codicote](#). A Norman church was built in Welwyn on the site of the Saxon church in about 1190. The manor of Lockleys, in the parish of Welwyn, passed through several hands before "[t]he overlordship is found later vested in John of Gaunt" in about 1375. He was succeeded in 1399 by his son Henry, who in the same year became king as Henry IV, and the overlordship of Lockleys with his other possessions thus came to the Crown, and the manor was subsequently held of the king. Lockleys was conveyed in 1415 to John Perient of Digswell, in whose family it descended in the same manner as Digswell. Upon the death of Thomas Perient in 1545, Lockleys was divided between his second and third daughters, Dorothy the wife of George Burgoyne, and Anne, who married Anthony Carleton. (William Page's [A History of the County of Hertford](#)) See also: [Victoria History of the Counties of England](#) series.

So, there is a John Gynne shown to be in Welwe in 1401, coinciding with overlordship passing from John of Gaunt and then to Henry and then to John Perient within a span of sixteen years from 1399 to 1415, the same year as The Battle of Agincourt. A 'Richard Gyn' had served in the role of archer also under

John of Gaunt as well as Ralph, Lord Basset of Drayton (c. 1335 - 1390) in France in 1373. And then there are the two "William's" in Berkhamsted, one in 1355 and another in 1484 witnessing important documents. (see below)



OSM Map showing Welwyn at just right of centre. Locations mentioned are underlined in red.

Then there is a William Gynn shown in 1408 but his location is unknown. The reference shows a suit against William had been brought by Richard Perers, of Chesthunt which is twelve miles southeast of Welwe. The suit also was brought against a Robert Baron of Staundon as well as a John Hyve. It is not known who these men are, however, Standon, as it is now known, is ten miles to the northeast of Welwyn. This may be as close as we get to knowing the location of this man. Standon is also where Sir Ralph Sadlier lived. Sadler had married Margaret, daughter of William Mitchell and Margaret Cromwell of Stockwell and his son, Henry's second marriage was to Ursula Gyll / Gill of Widial / Wyddial . (Mitchell notes) There is an outside chance this 'Staundon' could mean Staunton in Gloucestershire but this is over 90 miles away.

All this suggests that a relationship between Perient and Gynn went back quite far. It looks like they were important to each other. It also suggests that the marriage between John Gynn and Mary Gill was not happenstance.

It is likely there is a connection because Welwyn, Aston and Stevenage are very close together. In fact, Aston Village Hall states that "Aston is a small village in East Hertfordshire, about 2/3 miles east of the centre of Stevenage" (10) and Aston is only five miles from Welwyn.

From this list, we can also see a John Gynne in Ware in 1453 which is eight miles east of Welwe.

Not to contradict Dr Taylor but all the above men predate Thomas Gynn in Stevenage (1482), the earliest reference I have found for Stevenage. This may be simply because the record of an earlier Gynn in Stevenage hasn't been found. Then there's a 'John Gynn' in Hoddesdon in 1470 and 1472 who is shown as a 'husbandman'. Hoddesdon is about ten miles southeast of Welwyn.

Side note: There are two Gyn's mentioned in Church Mead in Essex, a John Gyn in 1417 and a Simon Gyn in 1419. There are two Church Mead's in Essex. One is now enclosed within Roydon, two miles east of Hoddesdon and the other is eight miles northeast of Chelmsford. These references are probably the latter because there are other mentions of 'Gyns' close to Chelmsford.

The Thomas Gynn, shown in Aston in 1440, also stands out as predating Thomas Gynn in Stevenage, or Ware. As stated, Aston is about five miles to the northeast of Welwe. Remember that Gynn and Perient had both hired servants with the same last name (Perot). We don't know Thomas's birth year but it was much earlier, may even be as early as 1400.

It is not unreasonable to place birth years for these men anywhere from about 1370 for John in Welwe to around 1420 for the John Gynne found in Ware or 1440 for the other John Gynne also living in Hoddesdon. It may even be possible that the John in Ware or Hoddesdon might be descended from John in Welwe. They may be the same man but alas we'll never know. And how does Thomas in Aston fit in?

Here, it is worth noting another reference to a 'William Gysne' who was witness, in 1355, to a

"release by Hugh de Poyntz, brother of Sir Nicholas de Poyntz, lord of Corymalet, to Robert Kynebell of Berkhamstead and to Christiana his wife of all his right and claim in the manor of Dullyngham, CO. Cambridge, which he had for life of the grant of the said Sir Nicholas, for 10l. yearly. Hugh has also made a general release to Robert and Cristiana by this deed". (11)

The release is dated "London, Saturday in Easter week, 29 Edward III". The reference does not show where this William was from.

Lastly, there is William Ginne in Berkhamsted in 1484. He is shown as an 'innholder' and executor of Richard Kymbell. (12) He may be descended from the 'William Gysne' shown above.

"In 1347, one Robert de Kymbell and his wife, Christiana, had been awarded a very large lease of manors, land and tenements in Berkhamsted directly from Edward, The Black Prince, long before his death in 1376. Some of this property had been passed to others by the mid 1350's with a large lease going to a 'Henry Berkhamsted' in 1358". (13)

Presumably, descendants of Kymbell still held land there in the late 15th century. Berkhamsted is sixteen miles southwest of Welwe. The real question here is what is the connection between William Ginne and Richard Kymbell.

For more about William Ginne and Richard Kymbell, see 'Backstory'.

Notes:

1: CP40/561: K-Z: Easter Term, 1401; WAALT
 2: CP40/589: K-Z: Easter Term, 1408; WAALT
 3: <https://www.englandsimmigrants.com/person/1405>; <https://www.englandsimmigrants.com/person/528>
 4: http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_91_116.shtml
 5: <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40no837/CP40no837Cty.htm>
 6: CP40/841: Hilary Term 1472; WAALT
 7: http://www.hrsociety.org.uk/files/newsletters/newsletter_05.pdf
 8: Michaelmas Term, 1484; WAALT
 9: <https://archive.org/details/listofearlychanc1055newy/page/300/mode/2up?q=gyn>
 10: <https://www.astonvillagehallherts.org.uk/about-aston-village/>
 11: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=tykMAQAIAAJ&pg=PA188>
 12: CP40/890; WAALT
 13: The Household and Military Retinue of Edward the Black Prince, APPENDIX Vol II, David S. Green PhD Thesis, https://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/10912/2/298952_VOL2.pdf, pg 15;
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000000340044&view=1up&seq=558>
 The WAALT references are found in a file I sent named "early_findings_WAALT.htm" from data extracted at **WAALT** (<https://waalt.uh.edu/>)