

Hamelin de Warenne, Earl of Surrey

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Hamelin de Warenne, Earl of Surrey (c.1129 – 7 May 1202) (*alias* Hamelin of Anjou and (anachronistically^[a]) Hamelin Plantagenet), was an Anglo-Angevin nobleman, a half-brother of King Henry II of England, and was prominent at the courts of the Plantagenet kings of England, Henry II and his sons Richard I and John.

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Origins

He was an illegitimate son of Geoffrey of Anjou, and thus a half-brother of King Henry II,^[1] and an uncle of King Richard I and of King John.^[2]

Marriage & progeny

King Henry II arranged for him to marry one of the wealthiest heiresses in England, Isabel de Warenne, 4th Countess of Surrey,^[3] the widow of William of Blois.^[3] Hamelin and Isabella married in April 1164,^[4] and after the marriage he was recognized as *Comte de Warenne*, that being the customary designation for what more technically should be *Earl of Surrey*.^[5] In consequence of the marriage Hamelin adopted the surname *de Warenne*, as did his descendants. By his wife he had progeny one son and four daughters as follows:

- William de Warenne, 5th Earl of Surrey, only son and heir, who married Maud Marshal.^[6]
- Clemence (aka Adela), mistress of her cousin^[b] King John, and by him the mother of Richard FitzRoy, feudal baron of Chilham,^[7] in Kent.^[8]
- Ela, who married firstly Robert de Newburn and secondly William FitzWilliam of Sprotborough.^[6]
- Maud (*alias* Matilda), who married firstly Henry Count d'Eu and Lord of Hastings, secondly Henry d'Estouteville, Seigneur de Valmont.^[6]
- Isabel, who married firstly Robert de Lacy of Pontefract, and secondly Gilbert de l'Aigle, Lord of Pevensey.^[6]

Career

Warenne's lands in England centred on Conisbrough Castle in Yorkshire, which powerful castle he built. He also possessed the "third penny" (an entitlement to one third of the fines levied in the county courts) of his County of Surrey and held the castles of Mortemer and Bellencombe in Normandy.

Hamelin joined in the denunciations of Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket in 1164, although after Becket's death he became a great believer in Becket's sainthood, having reportedly been cured of blindness by the saint's intervention. In 1176 he escorted his niece Joan to Sicily for her marriage.

He remained loyal to Henry II through all the problems of the later part of his reign when many nobles deserted him, and continued as a close supporter of that king's eldest son and his own nephew, Richard I. During Richard's absence on the Third Crusade, he took the side of the regent William Longchamp. Hamelin was present at the second coronation of King Richard in 1194 and at King John's coronation in 1199.

Death & succession

He died in 1202 and was buried in the Chapter House of Lewes Priory in Sussex. He was succeeded by his son, William de Warenne, 5th Earl of Surrey.^[9]

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Notes

- "It is much to be wished that the surname "Plantagenet," which since the time of Charles II, has been freely given to all descendants of Geoffrey of Anjou, had some historical basis which would justify its use, for it forms a most convenient method of referring to the Edwardian kings and their numerous descendants. The fact is, however, as has been pointed out by Sir James Ramsay and other writers of our day, that the name, although a personal emblem of the aforesaid Geoffrey, was never borne by any of his descendants before Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York (father of Edward IV), who assumed it, apparently about 1448. V.G., *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. 1, p. 183 note (c)
- Technically they were half first cousins, both being grandchildren of Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou by different mothers. See Schwenicke, *Europäische Stammtafeln* (ES), Band II, Tafeln 82, 83; *ES*, III/3, tafeln 355; Sheppard, 'Royal Bye Blows', *NEHGR*, 119, 97. Her given name is not known for a certainty

Peerage of England		
Preceded by Isabel de Warenne	Earl of Surrey 1199–1202	Succeeded by William de Warenne

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