

940, he called Guy, the then head of the family, to be a thane, or a member of his Parliament. This Guy married Phenan, the daughter of an old chieftain, and they settled in their home at Welswe, near Wells, in Somerset. His son, Geoffrey, occupied a prominent position among his Saxon compeers, and having been, as he believed, unjustly treated by Etheldred, he joined himself to the Danish forces, and marched with Sweyer against his own countrymen. His son, Licolph, who is said to have been concerned in the murder of Edward the Elder, A.D. 946, was, in his turn, murdered on his way home, many years afterwards. His eldest son, Walrond, long resided on the ancestral estate, the Manor of Welswey, and died there about A.D. 1070, leaving two sons, both of whom were large landowners. Avenant the Elder was made sergeant of all the country for many miles north of Bristol. At that period surnames began to be used, and these brothers are described in contemporary history as Avenant of Welswey, or Wesley, and William de Wellesley. The son of the latter became heir to the estate, and is recorded as Roger de Wellesley, and married Matilda O'Neal. They had two sons and two daughters, all of whom married into wealthy families, by which their influence was greatly extended in the country.

Stephen, the heir, married Alice de Cailli, county of York. He having distinguished himself in the wars in England and Gascony, was sent with Sir John Courey to Ireland in 1172, to try and subdue Ulster. Walter, his youngest son, having been initiated into the arts of chivalry, was permitted to go with his father to Ireland, and had the honour of being appointed standard-bearer to the King, Henry II., who led the expedition. For this military service he obtained large grants of land in the counties of Meath and Kildare, and he settled in that country on his property. He founded the Irish branch of the Wesley family, who have occupied the land ever since, and on that estate, Arthur, the great Duke of Wellington was born more than a century since, a lineal descendant of the Wesley family. The original standard carried in 1172 was preserved in the Irish family till quite a recent period.

Returning to the English family, Nicholas de Wellesley married Laura Vyvyan, daughter of a Cornish baronet, who inherited the estate near Wells. He was engaged in much military service, for which he was amply rewarded, and left six children