

From Shropshire to the Weald

Kettles and their kin in Kent and Sussex

Part 2

The earliest Richardsons – Yalding, Brenchley and Horsmonden

Having recounted the history of the Kettles and their Shropshire kin, it is time to turn to the family of John³'s wife, Sarah Richardson. The earliest person in this line that I have found is probably one Nicholas Richardson of Yalding, who may have been Sarah's 3 x great-grandfather, though this assumption relies on a lot of deduction and speculation (outlined later). Yalding lies in the flood plain of the River Medway, at the point where the Rivers Teise and Beult join it, and about 6 miles from Brenchley where intervening generations spent part of their lives, and 7 from Horsmonden, where later generations settled and Sarah was born. A migration of this distance seems feasible, and there seems to be no evidence for Nicholas' descendants beyond a first generation in Yalding.

Little is known about Nicholas Richardson other than the fact that he baptised five children in the parish church of St. Peter and Paul, and buried four of them there. Even his wife's name remains unknown, as only his appears in the baptism register. Nicholas was baptised on 28th March 1601 but buried the following year. Jone was baptised on 8th March 1603, but died in 1609. Thomas' baptism was not recorded at Yalding but he was buried there on 17th April 1608. Isbel, baptised on 7th May 1609, died in 1612. So by the time William Richardson was baptised on 19th March 1613, all his siblings were dead. His father was buried less than a year later on 13th December 1614 as:

Nicholas Richardson, householder

His wife was buried a month later on 15th January 1614 as:

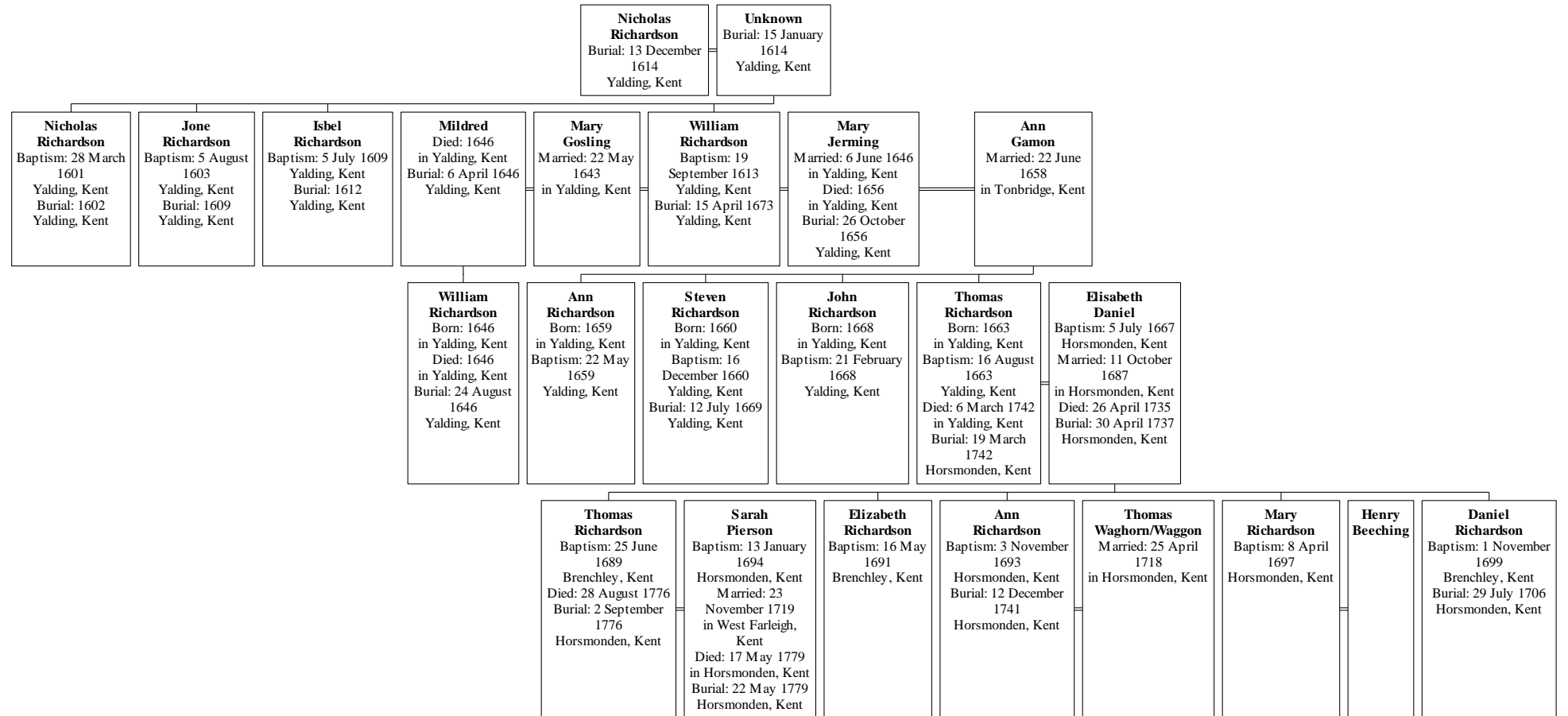
Nichls Richardson's widow buried



St. Nicholas Yalding

Presumably someone in the village brought up the orphaned William, as he appears to have married for the first time, aged 29, at Yalding on 22nd May 1643. A son, named William, was baptised at Yalding on 29th March 1646. Nine days later, the burial was recorded of Mildred Richardson on 6th April 1646. It is tempting to believe that the name was wrongly recorded, and that this was Mary dying in childbirth. Alternative explanations would involve a second William in Yalding, which is possible, though there is no evidence, or an unrecorded burial of a first wife and an unrecorded second marriage all within less than three years. Whatever the truth, William hastily married again, to a widow named Mary Jermyn, on 6th June the same year, presumably with a view to her raising his infant son. However, baby William was buried on 24th August the same year. There were no children from this marriage, which lasted for ten years and ended with Mary's burial at Yalding on 26th October 1656. Widowed again, William took another wife, Ann Gamon, whom he married at Tonbridge on 22nd June 1658, the register recording them as:

Tree 9 - Descendants of Nicholas Richardson



William Richardson of Yalding and Ann Gamon of Nettlestead

and a year later, at the age of 46, William found himself a father again. The first child from this marriage was Ann, baptised at Yalding on 25th May 1659. Stephen followed, baptised on 16th December the following year, but he died young and was buried at Yalding on 7th February 1669. In the interim, Thomas was born, and baptised on 16th August 1663, and another son, John, was baptised on 21st February 1668. William died five years later, and was buried at Yalding on 15th April 1673, recorded as a householder, like his father. I have found no further trace of his widow, Ann. Maybe she remarried – likely if she had three young children to bring up, and the marriage of a Thomas Larkin and Ann Richardson on 18th July 1675 would seem to fit the bill. Neither seems to have been buried in the parish, though.

There is no marriage or burial for William's son Thomas at Yalding. This may be an omission from the register, or he may have moved away. I have surmised the latter. There were strong links between Yalding and the area where the Richardsons later settled. John Browne of Brenchley was an iron master and gun founder to Charles I. He ran a furnace at Horsmonden and employed some 200 men there, a very large workforce. Completed cannon and other ordnance were taken by road as far as Yalding, where they were transferred onto barges to be taken to Chatham naval base. By 1625, Browne had a monopoly on making royal guns, and his gun factory must have been a major pull employment-wise in the area, until its closure in 1685. It seems therefore highly feasible that Thomas¹ would have been familiar with the road from Yalding to Horsmonden, and, even if he was not personally involved in the iron industry, would have known people who were, and who made the journey between these parishes regularly.

So although Thomas¹ Richardson who married at Horsmonden in 1687 and died there in 1742 is actually the earliest proven ancestor in this line, the weight of circumstantial evidence points strongly to the family originating in Yalding. The baptism at Yalding in 1663 would make this Thomas 24 at the time of his marriage, slightly on the young side, but perfectly feasible and given that he did not die until 1742, it seems unlikely that he was a much more mature age when he married. It would also give an age at death of around 78 – 9, and his gravestone records his age as 79 years.

Whatever the truth, the register records that:

Thomas Richardson of Brenchley and Elizabeth Daniel of this parish were married

on 10th November 1687. They presumably initially settled in Brenchley, as it was here that their first two children, Thomas² and Elizabeth were baptised, the former on 25th June 1689 and the latter on 16th June 1691. Thomas² grew up to become the father of Daniel and grandfather of Sarah. Elizabeth never married, and was buried at Horsmonden on 8th September 1764. The next two baptisms were at Horsmonden: Ann, sometime in 1693 – the date isn't clear – and Mary, 4th August 1697. As adults,

these two married Thomas Waggon or Waghorn and Henry Beeching respectively. The last child, Daniel¹, was also baptised in Brenchley, on 11th January 1699, but didn't survive childhood and was buried at Horsmonden on 29th July 1706.

Thomas¹ Richardson left little record of his life apart from the fact that he paid tax on lands¹ in Horsmonden:

Tax on lands in Horsmonden For relief of the poor			
1698	Thomas Richardson	7.00	7.00
	Thomas Richardson	5.00	5.00
1699/1700	Thomas Richardson	7.00	3/6
	Thomas Richardson	5.00	2/6

By 1720: Thomas Richardson snr paid at 8/- to 18/-

He wrote a detailed will² on 20th November 1740 about two years before his death, describing himself as:

Thomas Richardson the elder of Horsmonden in the County of Kent Yeoman

In his first bequest – an annuity of £7 10/- to his eldest daughter Elizabeth – he made reference to:

my farm and land in Goudhurst in the occupation of Edward Phillips

showing that Thomas held property in the parish on the other side of Horsmonden from Brenchley. He also stipulated that £7 of the bequest was for board and maintenance, and the remaining 10/- for clothing. His two married daughters, Ann Waghorn and Mary Beeching, had presumably received their portions when they had wed, as each just received an annuity of £1 raised on the profits from the Goudhurst farm. The property itself went to his son:

Also I give and devise all that my aforesaid messuage farm lands and premises in Goudhurst aforesaidunto my said son Thomas Richardson

who in turn later devised it to his own heirs. His goods and chattels were to be sold and the proceeds divided between his son Thomas² and daughter Mary, whose husband, Henry Beeching was nominated executor along with his brother-in-law Thomas². The will was witnessed by Thomas Reeve, who may have been a relative as Reeve was Thomas' grandmother's name, John Collins and John Mandett. Thomas¹ Richardson made his mark. His son Thomas² and Henry Beeching proved the will on 17th March 1742, eleven days after his death on 6th March and two days before his burial at Horsmonden.

¹ CKS, p 192/12/1 Horsmonden Overseers' Accounts 1698-1732

² CKS, DRa PW9, Will of Thomas Richardson of Horsmonden , 1742

A gravestone at Horsmonden records the whole family:

Here lieth the body of Thomas Richardson of this parish, yeoman,
who departed this life March 6th 1742, aged 79 years.

Here lieth the body of Elisabeth Richardson
who died April 26th 1735 aged 71 years.

Left issue 1 son and three daughters, Thomas, Elizabeth, Ann, Mary.



Grave of Thomas¹ Richardson and family

Daniel and Reeve: Horsmonden and Brenchley

I wonder whether my great-grandfather Daniel Kettle realised that he probably owed his Christian name to his great-great grandmother. When Thomas¹ and Elisabeth Richardson named one of their sons using her maiden name, they started a trend which lasted for at least five generations. Elizabeth Daniel was baptised at Horsmonden on 7th May 1667 as:

Elizabeth the daughter of James Daniel and Elizabeth his wife

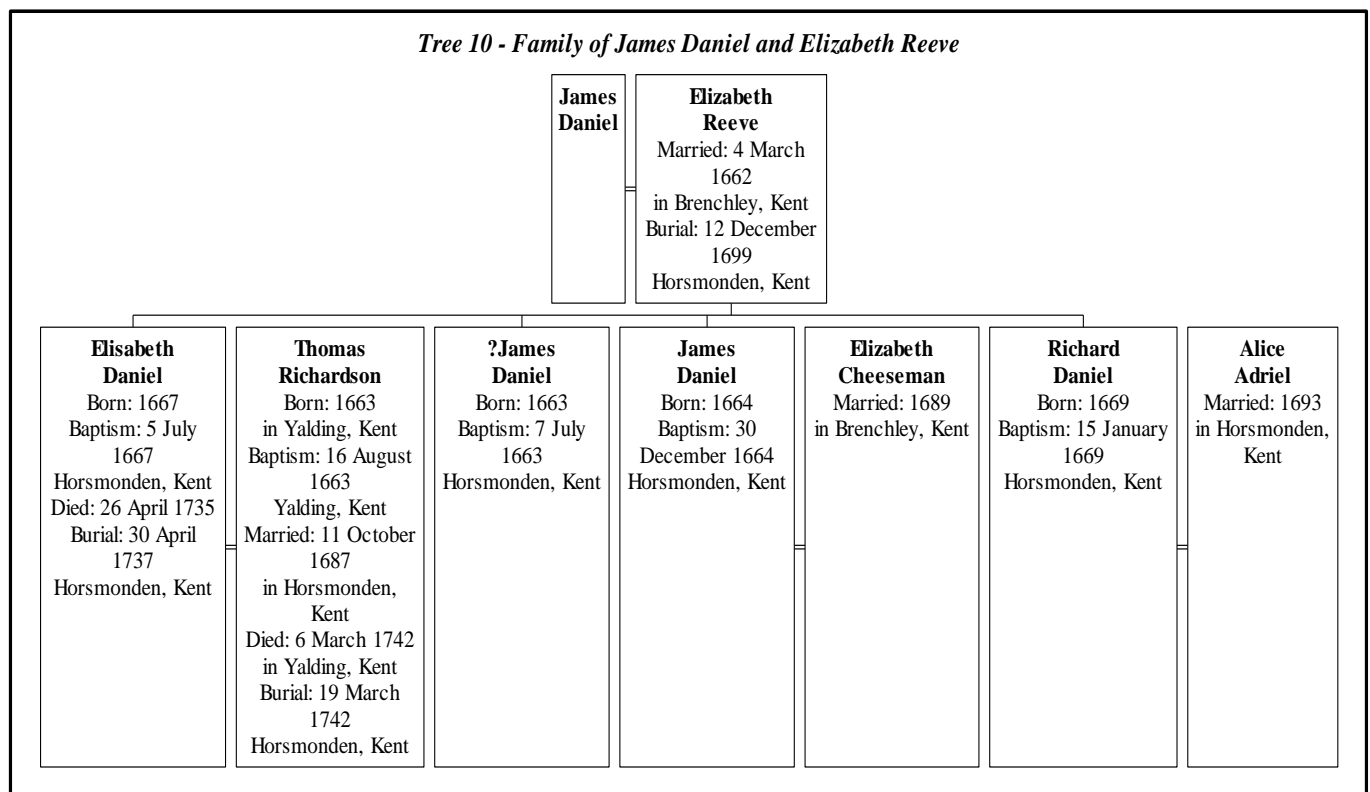
She was the third child of James Daniel and Elizabeth Reeve, who had married at Brenchley on 3rd April 1662, although both were living at Horsmonden at the time. Their first child, also James, was baptised on 7th July 1663 but presumably died young as a second son with the same name was baptised nearly 18 months later on 30th December 1664. James junior married Elizabeth Cheeseman at Brenchley in 1689 and baptised a son James and daughter Elizabeth there, though his daughter Elizabeth was buried at Horsmonden in 1699. A third son, named Richard, was

baptised, also at Horsmonden, on 15th January 1669. He married Alice Adriel in Horsmonden in 1693 and baptised a family of five girls there.

As evidenced from the gravestone cited above, Elizabeth Daniel died on 26th April 1737, aged around 71 and was buried at Horsmonden on 30th April 1737. Her father James was also buried there on 6th January 1692 as:

James Daniel of Brenchley

I have found no trace of his baptism or that of his wife Elizabeth Reeve, though she too was buried, from Brenchley, at Horsmonden on 12th December 1669.



Thomas² Richardson of Brenchley, Horsmonden, Goudhurst and Withyham

Thomas² Richardson (also a yeoman) was baptised at Brenchley on 25th June, 1689, the oldest child of his parents, Thomas¹ Richardson and Elizabeth Daniel. By the time he married, aged 30, he was settled in Horsmonden, as was his wife, Sarah Peirson. However, the couple chose to celebrate their wedding, on 23rd November 1719, at West Farleigh church, where the register records both of them as from Horsmonden. Over the next 20 years Thomas and Sarah raised eight children; all survived to adulthood, but apart from this, little is known of his early adult life.

Thomas² was over 60 when he acquired Stevens or Stephnetts Farm in Withyham in Sussex, a second foray into land ownership in this parish, it seems.

This property devolved to his descendants in an increasingly complex way for well over half a century. Clients' papers³ for the farm record the initial purchase:

This indenture made the 22nd Dec in the 26th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King George II....1752 between Alexander Rose of Walthampstead alias Godstone in the county of Surrey blacksmith on the one part and Thomas Richardson of Horsmonden yeoman in the county of Kent on the other part witnesseth that for the consideration of 5/- to Alexander Rose paid by Thomas Richardson.....He..... Alexander Rose doth grant bargain and sell to Thomas Richardson... all that messuage or tenement called or known by the name of Stephnetts with the barns and buildings closes yards gardens and orchards and appurtenances and several pieces or parcels of land belonging called or known by the several names of Barn Crofts, the Fillets, the Three Acre Meadow, the East Southfield, the Little Southfield, the Bratte Garden, the Rough Ridden, and the North Bridges..... at or near a certain common called Blackham Common in Withyham in the county of Sussex containing by estimation 46 acres formerly in the tenure of Thomas Chapman



Stephnetts Farm Blackham

The following day the same parties made a release in fee to consolidate the sale and Thomas² Richardson paid Alexander Rose £637 12/8 for:

the absolute purchase

of the package detailed above. Another document, dated 26 November 1752, confirmed a final agreement between the two men on the same property. The last document in the box was dated two generations later in 1814, and shows Thomas Richardson of Tonbridge and James Richardson of Hadlow, both farmers and sons of Thomas²'s youngest son John, selling their share in the Stephnetts property to their cousins James and Daniel Richardson of Withyham (sons of Daniel and brothers of Sarah). The whole web of ownership of land which originally belonged to Thomas²

³ ESRO, ACC4937/Box 3 1752 – 1979 Clients' Papers re. Stephnett's Farm

became extraordinarily complex, and I am deeply indebted to two descendants of Daniel Richardson of Withyham - Julian Richardson for his research, and William Richardson - for writing it up and posting it on the Blackham village website and who have clarified the various strands of ownership. Their account is placed at the end of this section.

Thomas² seems to have served at least once as overseer⁴ in 1756/7. He is also recorded as paying church taxes⁵ at the rate of 7/6 in Horsmonden towards the end of his life - in the years 1773 to 5. He had already written his will; it is dated 5th June 1771⁶. It shows that he had acquired properties in a number of different parishes.

The first bequest was made to his wife Sarah of an annuity of £8 a year drawn from:

my two several messuages or tenements... and several pieces or parcels of land... in the parish of Goudhurst... now or late in the several tenures or occupation of Thomas Phillips and Samuel Draybridge

His eldest daughter Mary, wife of Thomas Bannister, was given an annuity of 50 shillings, also drawn from the property in Goudhurst. Her brother Thomas was willed the two houses and accompanying land. I assume that at least part of this part of his estate was the land willed to him by his father. A Withyham property, already occupied by his sons James and John, was first mentioned as providing a second annuity to Sarah of £12. Interestingly, he states that this property was bought from Richard and Edward Hoare not Alexander Rose which confirms that he bought more than one parcel of land in that parish. Second daughter Sarah, married to John Rogers and living in Withyham, and her sister Rebecca were each given an annuity of 50 shillings on this property. He then went on to deal with the property itself:

I give and devise the said messuage or tenement, lands.... [etc.] in Withyham... unto my three sons James Richardson Daniel Richardson and John Richardson and to their heirs and assigns for ever to be equally divided between them share and share alike as tenants in common and not as joint tenants

There seems to be no specific mention of Stephnetts in the will, so maybe this had already been parcelled out, or counted as part of the residual estate. A further property consisting of two dwellings in Horsmonden late in the tenure of John Britton and William Hickmot was willed first to his daughter Sarah, and after her death to her two eldest sons. Another messuage in Horsmonden, occupied by George Bathurst, was willed to his daughter Mary and then to her two children. Yet another property in Horsmonden, occupied by someone named Collins and Thomas

⁴ CKS, P/192/12, Horsmonden Overseers

⁵ CKS, P/192/3/2, Horsmonden Church Tax

⁶ CKS, DRb/PW61, Will of Thomas Richardson of Horsmonden, 1771

Bristed was to become the property of his other daughter, Rebecca. His clothing, silver plate and a chest of drawers:

standing in the best chamber of my dwelling house

were given to his wife Sarah, while his three daughters received a lump sum of £10 each. Any residue was to be divided between his four sons: Thomas³, James, Daniel and John and these four were also nominated executors. Eldest son Thomas³ proved the will of Rochester on 23rd of August 1777.

Thomas² had died the previous year on 28th of August 1776, and was buried at Horsmonden on 2nd September. His memorial, shared with his wife Sarah reads:

In memory of Thomas Richardson of this parish, yeoman, who departed this life August 28th 1776, aged 87 years. Also Sarah his wife, May 17th, 1779 aged 84 years. Left issue 4 sons and 3 daughters, viz: Thomas, James, Daniel, John, Mary, Sarah, Rebecca. Near this place lieth Ann, their daughter.

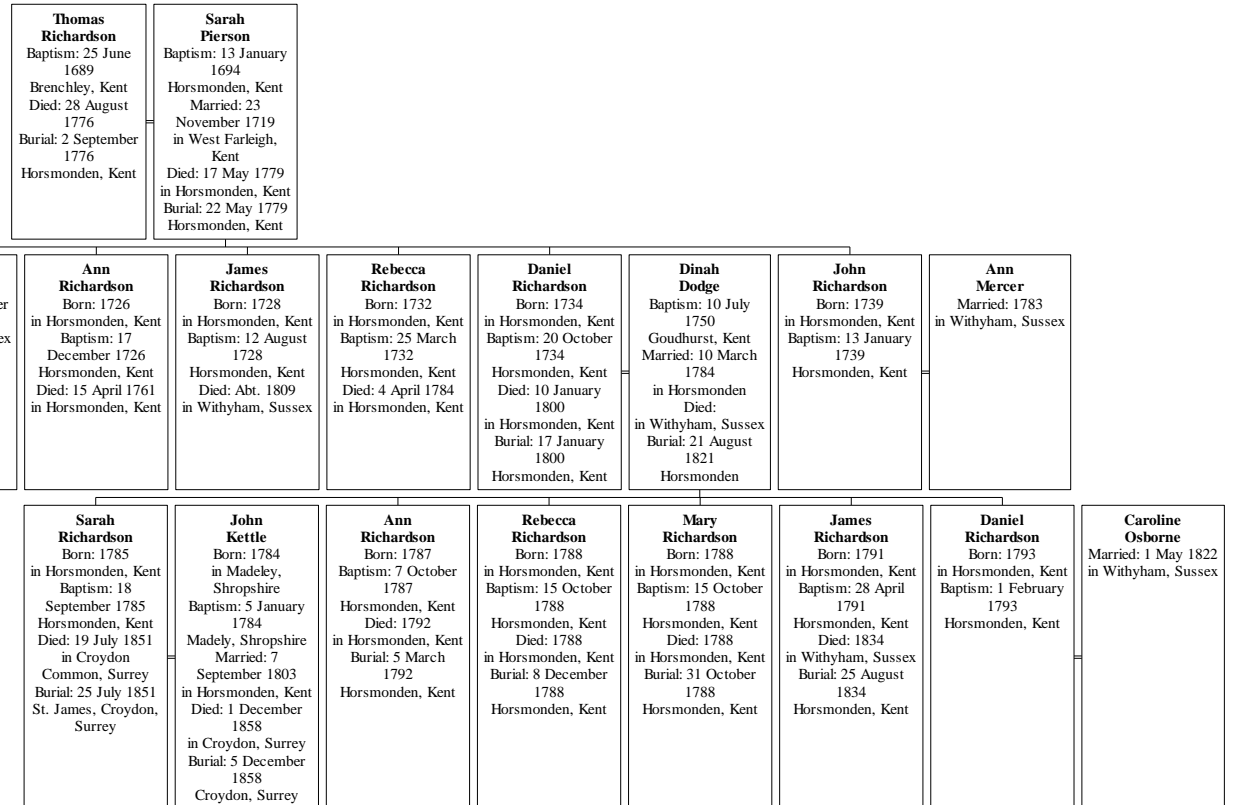


Grave of Thomas² Richardson and family

All the couple's eight children were baptised at Horsmonden, beginning with Mary, on 7th November 1720. She married Thomas Bannister at Sevenoaks in 1756. I suspect she died before 1784 when her sister Rebecca wrote her will⁷, as there is no mention of her although her husband received £10 from his sister-in-law.

⁷ CKS, DRa Pwr 9/172, Will of Rebecca Richardson of Horsmonden, 1785

Tree 11 - Descendants of Thomas Richardson and Sarah Pierson



Thomas³ was baptised just over two years later on 20th December 1724. He married Mary Baker, but there were no children from this marriage, and after his death she married widower William Lavender, gentleman of Goudhurst, whose will⁸ bequeathed hundreds of pounds to his children by his first wife, and an annuity of £10 and a like lump sum, along with a house in Goudhurst, to Mary. He was eventually buried with his first wife, and she with her first husband Thomas, so presumably the second marriage was one of convenience. Thomas³ made a detailed will⁹ on 22nd May 1790, appointing his wife Mary and Joseph Tompsett, innkeeper, along with Richard Tyler Twort, gentleman – both of Horsmonden, as his executors. Mary was willed £100, all his household goods and:

every my messuages or tenements farms lands and premises and real estate whatsoever with their appurtenances situate lying and being in the parish of Goudhurst.... and now in the several tenures or occupation of Thomas Phillips and Widow Vousden

After Mary's death, the property tenanted by Thomas Phillips was to pass to his nephew Thomas⁴, son of his youngest brother John, and that tenanted by Widow Vousden to Thomas⁴'s brother James.

Thomas³'s brother Daniel² and his then only daughter Sarah received £2 10/- apiece. He also mentioned the eldest children of his nephew John Rickwood, who received £10 each; I assume they must have been relatives of his wife. His sister Sarah Rogers and her son James received £5 each. These legacies were to be paid within the year and then the rest of the estate sold and the money arising invested to the benefit of his wife. After her death the money was to be divided as follows: £50 to his brother-in-law Thomas Bannister, £100 to his sister Sarah Rogers and her four sons and £50 to his brother John and his children. His executors Joseph Tompsett and Richard Twort were given £5 apiece for their trouble and he will was witnessed by William Lavender, soon to be married to his widow, William Baker – perhaps a relative of his wife - and Moses? Pope.

Thomas Richardson³ was buried at Horsmonden on 30th May 1790. His grave records:

Thomas Richardson of this parish Yeoman. 26 May 1799 aged 67

and underneath

Mary his wife relict of William Lavender late of this parish 29 July 1809 aged 65

The next child of Thomas² and Sarah Richardson was Sarah, baptised 20th December 1724. She married, as already said, John Rogers, at Withyham on 28th October 1756, and by whom she had four sons: Thomas, James, John and Daniel. Another daughter followed, named Ann. Another winter baby, she was baptised on

⁸ TNA, Prob 11/1405, Will of William Lavender of Goudhurst, 1804

⁹ TNA, Prob 11/1193, Will of Thomas Richardson of Horsmonden, 1790

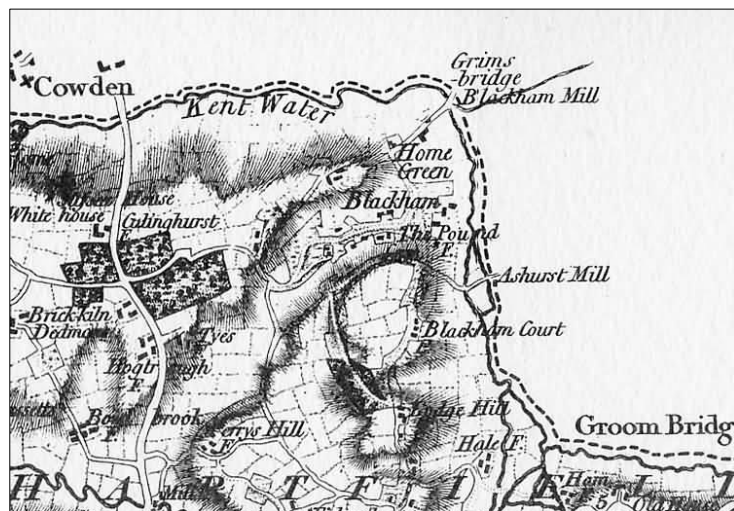
17th December 1726. She never married, and was buried near her parents on 15th April 1761 aged around 34.

Almost exactly two years after Ann's birth, Sarah bore another son, James, who was baptised on 8th December 1728. He also never married, but settled with his brother John in Withyham. He must have died between 1807 when he wrote his will¹⁰ and 1809 when it was proved by his nephews Thomas⁴ and James Richardson. These two (sons of John and living in Withyham) and their cousin Daniel³ (son of Daniel², brother of Sarah and living in Horsmonden) were bequeathed:

all that my half part of my third part or share of the farm lands and premises called Steven's land in Withyham aforesaid and also all that my half part of my third part or share of the farm and lands called Homeland in the parish of Withyham aforesaid and also all that messuage or tenement and garden in the occupation of ?Edward Russell and John Reynolds and standing on Homeland Farm to hold to them the said James Richardson Daniel Richardson Thomas Richardson and James Richardson their heirs and assigns for and as tenants in common and not as joint tenants

Thomas⁴ and James also received:

all that water corn mill and land called Blackham Mill in the occupation of Thomas Atherfold to hold to them the said Thomas Richardson and James Richardson their heirs and assigns for ever as tenants in common and not as joint tenants



Map of Sussex c 1795 showing site of Blackham Mill
William Gardner & Thomas Gream¹¹

In addition, Thomas⁴ was devised:

¹⁰ TNA, Prob 11/1492, Will of James Richardson of Withyham, 1809

¹¹ <http://theweald.org/m00.asp?PicIdto=50908104>

all that my half part of the estate called the Bear Garden situate at Withyham

and was tasked with ensuring his younger brother John Richardson received two years' schooling, while the said John was willed his uncle's copyhold land in the manor of Munkloe in Withyham. Everything else was divided between brothers Thomas⁴ and James.

Thomas² and Sarah's next child was a girl named Rebecca. She was baptised on 25th March 1732, died of smallpox and was buried at Horsmonden on 4th April 1784. Her memorial, at the foot of her parents' stone, reads:

Rebecca Richardson, died 2.4.1784, aged 52.

She had never married, so in her will¹² dated 24th March 1784, she bequeathed her possessions to her immediate family. She obviously trusted her brother Daniel² sufficiently to make him executor and, as she made him no bequest it can only be hoped that she thought he was sufficiently provided for in life. Her oldest brother Thomas³ was given the standard shilling to ensure he could make no further claim on her estate but her younger brothers, James and John were given £7 and £5 respectively, while she left the house she was living in at Horsmonden Hoath to her sister Sarah Rogers with the proviso that it go after her death to her sons John and Daniel Rogers. Sarah was also to choose any wearing apparel of Rebecca's that she wanted. A final bequest of £10 was to be paid to her brother-in-law Thomas Bannister, widower of her sister Mary. Her brother Daniel² proved the will at Rochester on 28th March 1785.

Daniel² Richardson, my 4 x great-grandfather, was Thomas and Sarah's penultimate child and was baptised at Horsmonden on 20th October 1734. His story will be told later after that of his father and his younger brother John, baptised on 13th January 1739. As has already been intimated, John spent much of his adult life at Withyham, having married Anne Mercer there in 1783, and raising a family between that year and 1800 who all bore familiar Richardson names, viz: Sarah, Thomas, James, Mary Anne, Rebecca, Dinah and John. John presumably died late in 1806, as his will¹³ is dated in September of that year and was proved by his widow in January 1807. I suspect that by this time his eldest son Thomas had been provided for as he only received 20 shillings. However, second son James was willed a part of the estate named Home Barn, while his youngest son John received:

all my part of the estate called and known by the name of the Bear Garden lands and also all my part of the estate called and known by the name of Steven's farm both situated lying and being in the parish of Withyham

with the stipulation that:

The use of all the aforesaid estates together with the movables thereon my will and desire is shall be for the use and purpose of maintaining and

¹² CKS, DRa Pwr 9/172, Will of Rebecca Richardson of Horsmonden, 1785

¹³ ESRO, A 70 p.4.2, Will of John Richardson of Withyham, 1807

bringing up of my aforesaid sons James Richardson and John Richardson my daughters Rebecca Richardson and Ann Richardson and for maintaining my wife Ann Richardson until my aforesaid son John Richardson shall attain to and be the age of 21 years.

He continued :

And my will and desire is that no timber shall be cut of my aforesaid lands and farms until my son John Richardson shall be of the age of 21 years except timber for necessary repairs and when and so soon as my son John Richardson shall be the age of 21 years my will and desire is that there may and shall be timber cut in proportionable quantities of the aforesaid lands and farms sufficient in value to pay unto each and every one of my daughters - viz - Sarah Richardson Rebecca Richardson Diana Richardson and Ann Richardson the sum of £20 each

Once son John reached the age of 21, son James was to pay his sisters Sarah and Ann 20 shillings a year from the profits on Home Barn, while John was expected to pay his mother an annuity of £5 and 20 shillings each to his sisters Rebecca and Diana out of the profits on the Bear Garden lands and Steven's farm. A note on the will values the estate as not exceeding £200.

The later Richardsons – Horsmonden and Withyham



All Saints Brenchley

Before commencing the story of Daniel² Richardson and his family, it seems appropriate to insert the article from the Blackham village website¹⁴, compiled from Richardson family knowledge, family wills and death certificates and the title deeds

¹⁴ <http://www.blackham-village.co.uk/Richardson%20family.html> hosted by Richard Coomber

to Blackham Mill owned by Mr and Mrs Roger Postlethwaite of Blackham. I trust all concerned will forgive me for presenting the information here in full, as it is so complicated, that any attempt of mine to précis or paraphrase it would merely obfuscate things further:

Thomas Richardson, 'yeoman', was born in Brenchley in about 1689 and lived in Horsmonden with his wife, Sarah, and eight children. He owned land in Horsmonden and in Goudhurst, and in May 1750 bought Homelands Farm, Blackham with about 20 acres, from Richard Hoare of Goudhurst and Edward Hoare, victualler, of Sevenoaks, for £300. Two years later, in December 1752, he bought Stephnetts with about 60 acres, from Alexander Ross.

Thomas died in Horsmonden in August 1776 and his land in Blackham was left to three of his sons, James, Daniel and John, as tenants in common.

In March 1794 Daniel and John bought Grimsmead and the two beanfields, in all about 18 acres, from John Waghorn, tailor of Mayfield, and his wife.

It is not known whether all three brothers lived in Blackham, but it seems likely that Daniel remained with his family in Horsmonden. He died there in 1800, leaving all his holding in land and buildings in Blackham in equal shares to his two infant sons, James (aged 9) and Daniel (aged 7), as tenants in common.

John is described as being 'of Withyham' where he died and was buried in 1806. He left his part of Home Barn Land with buildings to his son James, and his part of Bean Garden Land and 'Stevens' Farm to his youngest son, John (then still under 21 years of age). He had a third son, Thomas, not mentioned in that part of his will relating to Blackham, but who may have inherited land elsewhere.

The third brother, James, also probably lived in Blackham, for in 1787, according to an inscription in the brickwork, the house now known as the Old Post House was 'raised at the expence of James Richardson', and during the same period he became the owner (built?) the water mill at Grimsmead. He died in 1807, aged about 81, and was buried at Horsmonden. He was unmarried and left his estate to his nephews, the sons of his late brothers, Daniel and John, as tenants in common. To James and Daniel, sons of Daniel, and now aged about 16 and 14, and described as of Horsmonden, and to Thomas and James, sons of John, and described as of Withyham, he left all his one third share in Stevens Land and in Homelands. The corn mill and land called Blackham Mill, in the occupation of one Thomas Atherfold, he left to his nephews Thomas and James 'of Withyham'.

The Blackham land was now held by five individuals as tenants in common but in different proportions. These were two families of brothers, who were also cousins, and at least two of them were still under the age of 21. The importance of being a tenant in common arose on the death of a tenant,

when his estate would pass to his heirs under his will, instead of being transferred automatically to other joint tenants.

Because of the form in which legacies were expressed (eg 'one quarter of my third share in...') ownership of different parts of the land now becomes extremely difficult to identify, but appears to have been as follows:

	Homelands	Stephnetts	Grimsmead & Beanfield	Corn Mill
Thomas (son of John)	1/12	1/12	-	6/12
James (son of John)	5/12	1/12	-	6/12
John (son of John)	-	4/12	6/12	-
James (son of Daniel)	3/12	3/12	3/12	-
Daniel (son of Daniel)	3/12	3/12	3/12	-

A further complication arose from the fact that widows and daughters, some seven in all, whilst not inheriting land under the wills referred to, had been left life-time annuities of varying amounts to be funded from different parts of the estates.

After 1810, Thomas and James, still described as 'of Withyham' gradually sold off different sections of their land in Blackham to their cousins, James and Daniel, still 'of Horsmonden', until in 1814 James and Daniel became 'farmers of Withyham', and Thomas and James were described as 'of Tonbridge' and 'of Hadlow' respectively. John's youngest son John is not mentioned again.

In 1822 some of the annuities still due to female relatives were paid out in full.

James died in Blackham in 1834, and is buried at Horsmonden. He was unmarried and left his estate in Blackham to his brother Daniel 'to be held for his lifetime and after his decease to be shared equally by his sons and daughters. So, 58 years after the 'first' Thomas died, the Richardson's land in Blackham was once more in the ownership of a single individual, Daniel, who lived with his family at Stephnetts.

In 1838, Daniel's wife, Caroline (Osborne) died in premature child-birth, leaving him with seven children aged between three and 16. His eldest daughter, Sarah, remained unmarried and kept house for him until her death in 1864, aged 42. His eldest son, Thomas, was miller at Blackham Mill until emigrating to New Zealand with his wife and three infant children in 1854. Daniel's second son, Daniel, farmed with him until 1858, when he died at the age of 32. There were two other daughters who were married and two other sons, James who was a draper in Edenbridge, and Albert William, a solicitor in Tunbridge Wells.

Daniel died in April 1870, aged 77, with the cause of death being entered as melancholia chronic for 12 years and bed sores for ten months. Under the will he had made six years earlier, he appointed his sons James and Albert William trustees, to sell all his real estate and other property and to divide the proceeds between his surviving children.

Sarah Richardson – my 3 x great-grandmother - had been baptised at Horsmonden on 18th September 1785, the oldest child of Daniel² and Dinah Richardson. (Daniel² was presumably named for his uncle, who must perforce be Daniel¹.) Horsmonden is some 45 miles from Southwark, and, at that period, intensely rural as opposed to being at the edge of London. It is 8 miles east of Tunbridge Wells and 13 miles south of Maidstone, the county town. In an earlier incarnation it had been both a centre of weaving, with many rich clothiers living in the area (such as John Austen, of whom more later), and a part of the Wealden iron industry with men like John Browne – a 17th century gun-founder to the king - providing employment for many in the village, but by the 18th century these glory days were past. I don't know how Sarah met John Kettle; however, for a long time the village was known for its annual gypsy horse fair, which John may well have attended on business, meeting, and maybe courting, Sarah while he was there.

Daniel² Richardson, Sarah's father, was something of a late developer. Baptised at Horsmonden on 20th October 1734, he was nearly 50 when he married Dinah Dodge by banns (called 12th, 19th and 26th September) on 3rd October 1784 at Horsmonden. I can find no clue as to why he left it so late to take a wife, but having done so, he fathered six children in just over seven years. After Sarah came Ann - baptised on 10th August 1787, then twins Rebecca and Mary who were baptised on 15th October the following year. Two boys completed the family: James, baptised on 28th April 1791 and Daniel³ baptised on 2nd January 1793, all at St. Margaret's, the which church is a full mile and a half away from the centre of Horsmonden. Sadly, all three of Sarah's sisters died young. The twins had very short lives, with Mary being buried only two weeks after her baptism, on 31st October 1788 and Rebecca following her on 8th December the same year. Ann was four and a half when she was buried on 5th March 1792.

It is possible that Daniel² spent part of his adult life away from the village, perhaps farming at Withyham, as he doesn't seem to appear in the taxation records before 1785, the year after his marriage. After that, he pays Land Tax¹⁵ on land he occupied belonging to John Austen esquire. In 1785 he is recorded as paying £3 8/- on land on which he paid rent of £17. The same details are recorded for 1787, but the following year, the rent has dropped by £1, making the tax bill £3 4/-. Some years¹⁶ are missing in the returns, but entries continue until his death in 1800, when, for a while at least, his wife picks up the tab. In 1798¹⁷ he was paying land tax in Goudhurst – still on land belonging to John Austen – at a quarterly rate of £1 6/- as well as his usual tax in Horsmonden. During the period of his marriage he also paid

¹⁵ CKS, Q/RPI/185, Horsmonden Land Tax Assessment

¹⁶ CKS, P192/3/2, Horsmonden Church Taxes

¹⁷ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/> , UK Land Tax redemption, 1798

church taxes at Horsmonden: 8/- in 1786 and 87; 16/3 in 1788 and 89; 5/5 in 1790; 7/6 in 1792; 4/6 in 1793, a whopping 19/6 in 1794 and 8/9 in 1799. He also appeared in the Overseers' Accounts¹⁸ around 1790, paying Poor Tax in March that year with £35 in the 'Rents in the £' column and paying £3 10/- in tax. In October the same year, he paid £2 12/6, but in March the following year it had gone up to £4 9/6. On 31st March 1790, the overseers paid:

Daniel Richardson for a hog £6 2/10 ³/₄

and later that year he was nominated as Overseer of the Poor, and appeared to serve in that role for the next three years.

In 1790, Daniel²'s brother Thomas³ died, willing¹⁹

to my brother Daniel Richardson and to my niece Sarah Richardson daughter of my said brother Daniel Richardson the sum of £2.10/- each of like money.

The residue of the estate was to be divided equally between all his nephews and nieces equally.

Nine years later, on 3rd December 1799, Daniel² made his own will²⁰. He called himself a yeoman, and began by appointing:

my brother James Richardson, my brother-in-law Thomas Dodge and Thomas Lavender of Horsmonden aforesaid miller executors of this my last will and guardians of my children until they attain the age of 21 years.

£200 was set aside for his daughter Sarah, to be inherited when she came of age, the interest being used meanwhile:

towards her maintenance and education

Another £200 was to be put in trust for her, with her being entitled to take the interest as soon as her younger brother gained his majority:

during the term of her natural life for her own use and benefit and after her decease upon trust to pay and divide the said sum of £200 and the interest due for the same unto and amongst all the children of her my said daughter in equal shares and proportions.

His wife Dinah was willed an annuity of £30, with the proviso that this be reduced to £20 if she remarried. The rest of his estate was bequeathed to his two sons:

... all my messuages or tenements buildings lands hereditaments and premises with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances unto and to

¹⁸ CKS, p 192/12/4, Horsmonden Overseers' Accounts, 1790- 1802

¹⁹ TNA, Prob 11/1193, Will of Thomas Richardson of Horsmonden, 1790

²⁰ TNA, Prob 11/1345, Will of Daniel Richardson of Horsmonden, 1800

the use of my said two sons James and Daniel ... equally to be divided and they to take as tenants in common and not as joint tenants and as to all the rest residue and remainder of my ... estate and interest therein I give and bequeath the same and every part thereof to my sons James and Daniel ... share and share alike.

The will was witnessed by Richard Vidler, David Hobbs and R White attorney at Goudhurst, and proved at the PCC six months later on 22nd July 1800. Daniel² had been close to death when he drew up the will; he died on 10th January and his burial was recorded at Horsmonden on 17th January 1800. His youngest child would have been just 7 years old. A gravestone which is becoming hard to read now is inscribed:

Daniel Richardson of this parish
who died 10 January 1800 aged 65
And Dinah his wife died 12 August 1821 aged 70
Left issue surviving 3 children James, Sarah and Daniel



Grave of Daniel Richardson

After her husband's death, Dinah presumably continued to live in Horsmonden, where she is recorded paying church taxes²¹: 8/ 9 in 1800 and 11/5 ½ in 1805, with a final payment in 1809. Her rent was recorded s £35 in 1804 and £45 15/- in 1805. She also paid land tax²² of £3 4/- on a rent of £16 between 1800 and 1816, but presumably after that date she went to live with her sons at Withyham as when she was buried at Horsmonden on 21st August 1821, she was noted as:

Dinah Richardson of Withyham, Sussex Aged 70

²¹ CKS, p192/3/2 , Horsmonden Church Taxes

²² CKS, Q/RPI/185, Horsmonden Land Tax

Six years later, her brother Thomas died, having willed²³ half the residue of his estate to:

all and every the child and children of my late sister Dinah Richardson
deceased in even and equal shares and proportions

i.e. to Sarah, James and Daniel³ - the other half going to the children of his other sister.

By this time, James and Daniel³ were both based at Blackham, in Withyham parish in Sussex. The land they jointly owned and the reasons for the way they held it are complicated, but have been outlined above. James never married, but owned a quarter of the family's jointly held lands at Homelands, Stephnetts and Grimsmead and Beanfield. In his will²⁴, dated 24th August 1834, he started by calling himself a farmer, and then discharged his half of the debt owed him by his brother-in-law John Kettle, and urged his brother to do the same, so that the £675 owed would be wiped out completely. He added a caveat that if Daniel³ wouldn't play ball, the rest of the money was to come out of his estate. He then went on to bequeath to his sister Sarah:

the sum of £830 upon trust ... for and during the term of her natural life
and immediately after her decease I give and bequeath the said principle
sum of £830 ... unto and equally amongst them between all her children
sons and daughters of my said sister Sarah Kettle

To his brother Daniel³ went:

all my freehold and copyhold estates lands tenements and hereditaments
and appurtenances and all my moieties of farms lands tenements and
hereditaments and appurtenances and all other my shares therein situate
lying and being at Blackham or near thereto in the parish of Withyham
aforesaid or elsewhere

with the proviso that, after Daniel's death this all be shared equally between his children. The rest of his estate also went to Daniel³. The will was witnessed by East Grinstead solicitor William Peerless, Charles Marchant – a farmer from Hartfield – and Tonbridge miller David Lingham, who was kin on the Dodge side of the family. He died the following day and was buried at Horsmonden, described on his gravestone as:

James Richardson of this parish late of Withyham 25 August 1834 aged 43

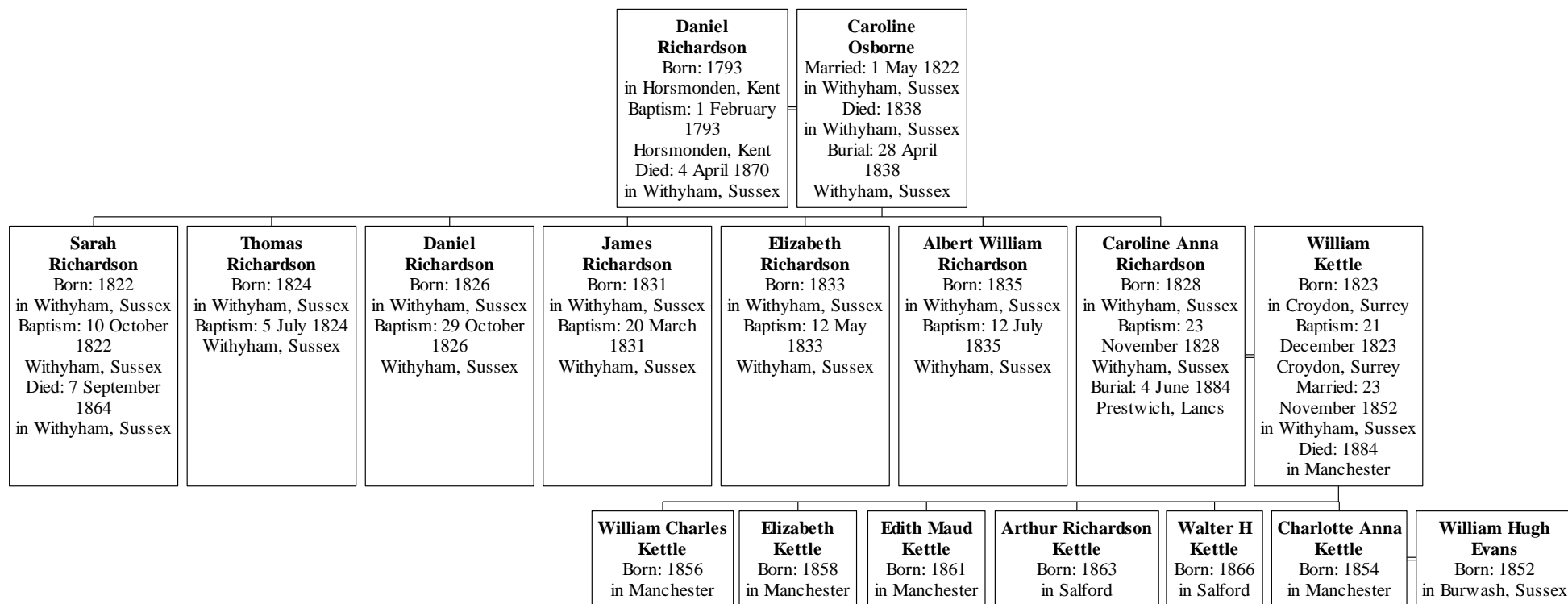
His brother Daniel³ proved the will on 15th September 1834. The local paper²⁵ reported his untimely death:

²³ CKS, PRC17/107/422a, Will of Thomas Dodge of Goudhurst, 1827

²⁴ TNA, Prob 11/1836, Will of James Richardson of Withyham, 1834

²⁵ <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, *Sussex Advertiser*, 1.9.1834

Tree 12 - Descendants of Daniel and Caroline Richardson



An inquest was taken on Tuesday last at Withyham, before our coroner, F.H. Gell, Esq. On view of the body of James Richardson. About noon on the previous Saturday, the deceased was leading a gelding colt, drawing a broad wheeled dung cart, which had drawn in trace harness, but had never before been in shafts. As he was proceeding along the lane, the horse began to jump about, and ran away. The deceased clung to him for as long as he could, but was by some means thrown on the side of the road, and the near wheel of the cart went over him. He died on the succeeding Monday evening. Verdict – “*Accidental Death*”.

Daniel³ Richardson married Caroline Osborne at Withyham on 1st May 1822. Their family quickly grew, with Sarah being baptised in November the same year, then Thomas in July 1824, Daniel⁴ in October 1826, Caroline Anna – 3rd November 1828, James in March 1831, Elizabeth in May 1833 and Albert William in July 1835. Unfortunately, Caroline died in childbirth three years later and was buried at Withyham on 28th April 1838, leaving Daniel³ to bring up the family. In 1841²⁶ he was enumerated at Blackham Common, as a farmer, with all seven children in the household, and one female servant to help out. By 1851²⁷ he was described as a farmer of 120 acres, employing three labourers. Sarah, Daniel⁴, Caroline Anna and Elizabeth completed the household at Blackham, along with a servant, employed as a carter’s mate. In 1861²⁸, the farm at Blackham, now called Richardson’s, had shrunk slightly to 95 acres, and only James and Elizabeth were at home, although a house servant and a milkman were also living in. Caroline Anna’s disappearance is easily explained: she had married her cousin William Kettle in 1852 and moved to Manchester. Her sister Sarah died on 7th September 1864, aged 41²⁹. Daniel died in 1870. The entry in the National Probate Calendar³⁰ reads:

16 June The will of Daniel Richardson late of Withyham in the county of Sussex Gentleman deceased who died on 4 April 1870 at Withyham aforesaid was proved at Lewes by the oaths of James Richardson of Edenbridge in the County of Kent Draper and Albert William Richardson of Withyham aforesaid Gentleman the sons and Executors. Effects under £4,000.

Pearson, Pierson or Peirson – Horsmonden and Brenchley

We now go back up the tree to Daniel Richardson of Withyham’s paternal grandmother, Sarah Pierson of Horsmonden, who married Thomas² Richardson at West Farleigh in 1719. Her family can be traced for at least three generations, and possibly more, although there is one inconvenient extra candidate to be her grandfather which makes it impossible to be sure.

²⁶ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> , HO 107/1115/7, 1841 Census, Withyham

²⁷ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> , HO 107/1641, 1851 Census, Withyham

²⁸ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> , RG9/578, 1861 Census, Withyham

²⁹ <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> , *Sussex Advertiser*, 20.9.1864

³⁰ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> , National Probate Calendar, 1870



All Saints West Farleigh

Sarah was the eldest child of James and Sarah Pierson and was baptised at Horsmonden on 13th January 1694. She had one brother and one sister; John was baptised on 20th June 1696 and Mary nearly three years later on 20th May 1699. She was nearly 25 when she married and a respectable 84 when she was buried in the churchyard of St. Margaret's Horsmonden on 22nd May 1779; she had around three years to enjoy the annuities amounting to £20 and the silver plate, wearing apparel and chest of drawers left to her by her husband. The monumental inscription she shares with him says:

...also Sarah his wife, May 17th 1779 aged 84 years

Sarah benefitted under the terms of her father's will, inheriting one third share of his personal estate after the death of her mother, and sharing three pieces of land in Deane Street, East Farleigh with her sister Mary. Other than this, nothing is known of her life.

Her father James leaves a fuller paper trail. He was baptised at Brenchley on 9th May 1664, son of James and Alice Pearson. He became a malster, although he also held, and farmed, land in Horsmonden. On 2nd February 1692, he married at West Farleigh – the same church in which Sarah later married:

James Peirson and Sarah Perryn both of Horsmonden were married by licence

In 1700, he is recorded paying tax in Horsmonden: The couple's three children were all born in the next five years. When the youngest, Mary, was five years old, he made a will³¹ (dated 20th March 1709), although he didn't die for another 11 years. He describes himself as:

infirm and weak in body

³¹ CKS, DRb/Pwr/31/356, Will of James Pearson of Horsmonden, 1721

so presumably he suffered a period of illness at this time. After the usual pious openings, the will launches itself into a description of his property:

all that one messuage or tenement called by the name of Capel Cross

The fact that he says 'called' rather than 'situated in' suggests maybe that the house was an important one in the little hamlet in Horsmonden parish which was presumably named for a cross or chapel there in the past. There is certainly a house there now which appears on the listed buildings website³² as Capel Cross. It is in Grovehurst Road and is described as :

House. C18 and extended early C19. Red brick ground floor and weather Boarded timber framed first floor, extended with ornamental tile hung range. Plain tiled roof. Two parallel ranges. Two storeys and attic on plinth with gambrel roof and stacks to left and to right and with 2 flat roofed dormers. Regular fenestration of 2 glazing bar sashes on first floor and 2 tripartite glazing bar sashes on ground floor with central panelled door in later gabled porch. Rear wing with irregularly placed glazing bar sashes.



Capel Cross Horsmonden

Of course, this may be a red herring, or James' house may pre-date the one which is there now. There are several timber-framed houses in the area which are old enough to have been James' home if the wording of the will is misleading.

The will then goes on to list its appurtenances: a malt house, a barn, a stable, two lodges, a close, three gardens and four parcels of land called The Hamletts. There are also several pieces of arable, meadow and pasture land in the variously named Squire, Barne, Wendle or Winter Field, amounting to around 18 acres, and in his own tenure. He goes on to explain that this land:

³² <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-169884-capel-cross-horsmonden>

lately descended to me ...by the death and decease of John Perren the elder of Horsmonden... clothier my father-in-law.

Having described this property, he then bequeaths it to his wife Sarah for life, provided she doesn't remarry. After her death it is all to devolve to his son, John Pierson, provided he has reached his majority by that time.

He then describes another messuage, complete with malt house etc., and 10 acres of land in Deane Street, West Farleigh, in the tenure of Richard Miller or his assigns, and bequeaths these to his wife as well, with the proviso that after her death they go to daughters Sarah and Mary when they reach the age of 21. One half of this was inherited from his father-in-law, John Perren; the other half purchased from John Tanner, John Perrin's co-heir. His moveable goods all go to his wife Sarah, and after her death to their three children, either on their reaching their majority or the day of their marriage.

James' wife Sarah and son John were made executors, and the overseer was John Clive, gent. The will was witnessed by William Durden, Ann Farrell and John Brattle, and proved on 1st April 1721, two months after his burial at Horsmonden on 18th February 1720.

John Brattle, along with William Haines, took a detailed inventory of his personal estate in April³³. This gives some idea of the layout of the house, as they appraise goods in the kitchen, brewhouse, washhouse, milkhouse, buttery, an 'old' room, the kitchen chamber, another 'old' room, another chamber, garrets, the malthouse, and two barns. Goods in the kitchen, although often described as old, included a clock, and were valued at £4. The kitchen chamber and another chamber contained bedding and furniture worth £5 5/- and £4 5/- respectively, while oats, wool and lumber in the garrets were valued at £7 10/- and goods in the malthouse at £11. Crops outside were valued at £30 and livestock at another £30 10/-. All in all, the appraisers totalled his estate at £117 1/-.

James Peirson senior presents something of a conundrum. He spent all his adult life in Brenchley, marrying there twice, paying hearth tax and being buried there. For most of that time he was the only James in town belonging to his generation. There was a large, sprawling network of Pearsons, Peirsons, Piersons, Persones recorded in the Brenchley register almost from the time it was begun in 1560. One of these, Thomas, who also spent his life in Brenchley and raised a large family, baptised a son:

James son of Thomas Pearson junior

on 6th February 1630 which would fit comfortably with a first marriage at the age of 28 in 1658.

³³ CKS, DRB/Pi 35/14, Inventory of James Pearson of Horsmonden, 1720

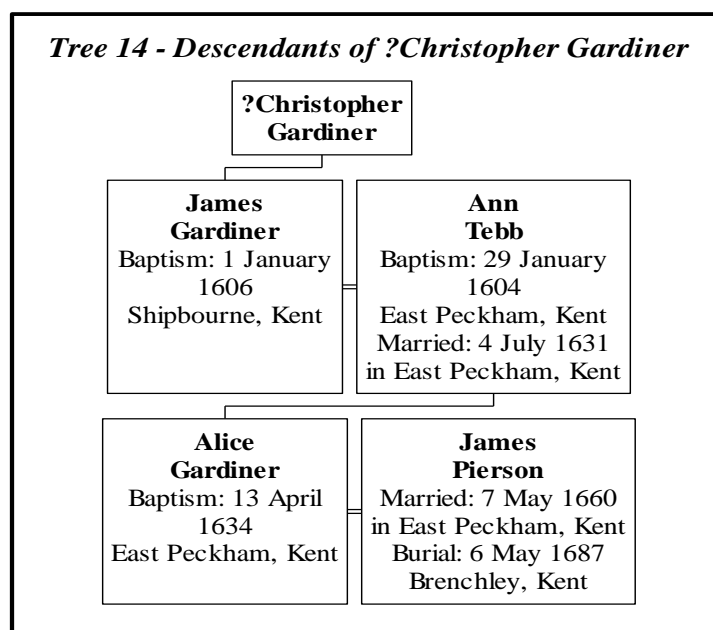
Unfortunately, a marriage was also recorded a generation earlier between a James Pearson and Mary Ashdowne (described as a widow from Rochester) at Brenchley on 1st March 1624, and two years later a James Persone (a recognised variant of Pearson) baptised a son named James there on 25th July 1626. This older James Persone is a mystery. There is no baptism for him at Brenchley and no burial. No more children of his are baptised at Brenchley. It's almost as if he came; he married; he baptised a son, and then moved on, although he does seem to have stayed long enough to witness a bargain and sale³⁴ on 20th September 1627. After that, there is no sign of him. However, there is a burial of a James Peirson, carpenter at Brenchley on 5th October 1689; who must either be James born 1626 or James born 1630. Maybe it's wishful thinking to surmise that our James senior was probably the son of Thomas, but there is no way to prove that he was not the son of the elusive James Persone and Mary Ashdowne.

Whatever the truth of his parentage, James senior married Joan Ragley, daughter of Stephen Ragly deceased, at Brenchley on 19th June 1658. Nearly a year later, on 16th May 1659, a son was baptised, named Stephen for his maternal grandfather. Joan must have died shortly afterwards for on 7th May 1660, a marriage was recorded at East Peckham between James Peirson and Alice Gardner. Alice was the daughter of James Gardiner and his wife Ann Teb. Her baptism was recorded at East Peckham on 13th April 1634, and her parents' marriage was solemnised there three years earlier on 4th July 1631. Ann Teb was also baptised in the parish, on 29th January 1604, but the register doesn't name her parents. A couple of years later, on 4th November 1607, an Andrew Teb – probably a brother – was also baptised with no parents' names, although all other entries are as normal. My guess is that they were illegitimate, and unusually, the church was protecting the mother's identity. James Gardiner was probably the son of Christopher Gardiner, and baptised at nearby Shipbourne on 1st January 1606.



St Michael East Peckham

³⁴ ESRO, DYK/155, Bargain and Sale, John Polly to William Dyke, 1627



On 9th May 1664, James Pearson junior was baptised at Brenchley as the:
son of James Pearson and Alice Gardiner his wife

Two daughters followed: Ann, baptised on 24th July 1666 and Mary, baptised on 27th July 1669. Alice also was destined for a short life, as she was buried at Brenchley on 30th January 1671 and on 25th June 1672, again at Brenchley, James married for a third time, to Mary Underdowne.

In the year of James junior's birth, his father paid Hearth Tax³⁵, recorded under:

The hundred of Brenchley and Horsmonden In the Lath of Aylesford
Brenchley Towne Borough
James Pearceson 2

thus providing yet another variation on the spelling of his surname.

It might seem that three marriages is a bit unlikely, but James Pierson's will³⁶, proved at Rochester in 1687, happily makes the links between various parts of the family explicit by naming a wife Mary, sons Stephen and James and daughters Ann and Mary. In the will, which spells his name as Peirson, James describes himself as a yeoman, sick and weak in body. It was written on 30th April 1687 and he was buried on 6th May, so it was presumably written in extremis, which may explain its relative brevity. The first bequest was to his wife Mary of £20:

in discharge of a bond I made unto my said wife or for her use before my

³⁵ *Kent Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1664*, ed Duncan Harrington, British Record Society, London, / The Kent Archaeological Society, Maidstone, 2000

³⁶ CKS, DRb/Pwr 25/465, Will of James Peirson of Brenchley, 1687

intermarriage with her

Mary also received:

one trundle bedstead one coverlet mixt with several colours and one blanket

Also included were both flaxen and hempen sheets, a flock bed:

one little pot brass kettle and one little iron pot.

Unusually it is his daughters Ann and Mary who are named next. They are somewhat mysteriously bequeathed:

Ten pounds apiece in full satisfaction what I owe them

Had James been borrowing from his daughters or simply made them a promise that each should have this sum on reaching adulthood? Ann was nearly 21 and Mary nearly 18. The following bequest also raises more questions than answers. His eldest son Stephen, now around 28 years old, was willed 40/-. Maybe he had already been set up in life, or maybe they had quarrelled. Maybe his father had loaned him money which then became his inheritance. The rest of his estate went to his son James, who was also executor. James senior signed the will, which was witnessed by Nicholas Swatland, Richard Wakelyn and Tim. Stileman. James Pearson junior proved the will at Tonbridge on 9th November 1687.

On 7th May 1687, with the help of William Gibbons, Nichols Swatland took an appraisal³⁷ of James Peirson senior's possessions. Though not always entirely legible, it makes interesting reading, and it's clear that this house was not the same layout as the one his son James was living in at the time of his death. Some things are common; both have brewhouse, buttery and milkhouse, but the first area appraised in 1687 is the hall, suggesting that James lived in a Wealden hall house. Whereas the more modern house has a kitchen, James senior's house had cooking implements in the hall. A gun and an hourglass in the same room show contrasting aspects of life. The hall had by now been ceiled over, though, allowing for a hall chamber above. About half of his value was 'in husbandry', but there were also 10 bushels of malt in the attic, suggesting either not uncommon home brewing, or the fact that he too operated as a malster, though on a considerably smaller scale than his son:

	L	s	d
In ready money and wearing apparel	3	10	
<u>In the hall</u>			
Item	1 pair pothangers, 1 pair andirons, 1 fire tongs and a firepan; 1 pair bellows and an iron dripping pan 2 spits, 1 brass ladle, 2 skimmers, 2 box irons, 2 plain irons, 1 iron basting ladle, 1		

³⁷ CKS, DRb/Pi 1/38, Inventory of James Peirson of Brenchley, 1687

toasting iron, 1 warming pan, 1 ... and 2 other small pieces of iron	1	10	
Item Iron skillet, 1 brass skillet, 2 brass chaffing dishes, 1 gridiron, 1 ... 1 salt box, 1 other box, 1 table, 2 wooden cups		15	6
Item 1 table, 1 form, 6 joint stools, 10 chairs small and great, 1 brass candlestick, 1 tin candlestick, 1 lantern, 1 two-sided ... 1 lined pot and several small hooks ... with a little in it and a few glass bottles	1	0	8
Item 1 cupboard, 1 cupboard with cloth and several small things in it ... 1 gun, 2 flitches of bacon, 1 half flitch, 1 hour glass and other small things	2	10	
<u>In pewter</u>			
Item 18 pewter dishes, 2 candlesticks, 2 salts, 2 basins and 2 chamber pots 1 flagon, 18 spoons and other small pewter	2	10	
<u>In the buttery</u>			
Item 9 barrels, 1 little old bathing tub, 1 leather bottle, 1 mole prong, 1 gallon, 3 old sieves, 1 cooler, 1 brass bottle, 1 pair of ... 1 pair brewing tongs, 1 ... and old wooden wheels, one linen wheel	1	10	
<u>In the brewhouse</u>			
Item 2 iron pots, 1 iron kettle, 2 brass bottles, 1 old brass skillet, 1 furnace, 2 brewing tubs, 1 long tub, coolers, 3 pails, 1 pair of scales, beam and weight and ... tub, 2 ladles and 1 ... and 2 ... and 1 cheese press and and 1 hog tub and 1 dozen of iron and a few wooden dishes and platters	3	10	
<u>In the milkhouse</u>			
Item 1 pair of and frame, 2 brass bottles, 6 pound bowl churn, 1 butter platter, 1 pot, 1 brass skillet, 4 wooden trap, 1 frying? and one little table, 2 powdering tubs, 1 little square dresser, 1 pair small scales, the shelves, a few ... and some other ware	5	0	0
<u>In the hall chamber</u>			
Item 6 chests, 6 bedsteads, 1 set curtains and curtain rods, 2 beds, 2 bolsters, 1 mat and ... 2 coverlets, 1 window chair, 2 boxes, 2 shelves, 4 1 pair bellows, 1 pair andirons, 1 wooden sand ... 2 candlesticks	5	13	
<u>In linen</u>			
Item 8 pair fine sheets, 6 pair ... sheets, 3 pair fine pillow cases, 2 fine table cloths, 6 ... tablecloths, 26 napkins, 3 towels, 6 wallets and odd old sheets, 1 cupboard and cloth 2 ... cloths and 2 old pieces of linen, 6 hempen napkins and 3 pieces of new cloth	10	0	6
<u>In the chests</u>			
Item 2 dozen ... 15 pair of goosewings, 1 wooden bowl, 2 wooden dishes, 2 spoons, 1 tap, 33 pounds of hemp, 5 pounds of hempen yarn, 1 bag of hops, 1 ...	1	15	
<u>In the milkhouse chamber</u>			
Item 1 bedstead, 1 bed, 1 blanket, matt and 1.... and			

pillow		2	10	6
	<u>In the brewhouse chamber</u>			
Item	1 bedstead, 1, bed, 2 blankets, 1 matt, 1 chest	1	10	
	<u>In the garret</u>			
Item	1 ½ bushels 1 1 and pulley, 1 1 sack with wool, beehives, 7 boards and 3 leather bags, 6 old sacks and other lumber	1	3	
	<u>In corn</u>			
Item	2 quarts of And 10 bushels of malt	2	10	
	<u>Without doors</u>			
Item	In husbandry	8	4	8
	Wooden faggots and wood	1	10	
	1 cock, 5 hens, 20 geese young and old, corn upon the ground and in the ... of the farm	20	10	
	sheep lambs	8		
	3 sows, 3	39	10	
Goods given to Mary Peirson, widow and bedstead, Coverlets, blanket, flaxen sheets, hempen sheets, flock bed, little pot, brass kettle, iron pot		1	10	
Debts:		8	5	1
	Total	£136	0	11

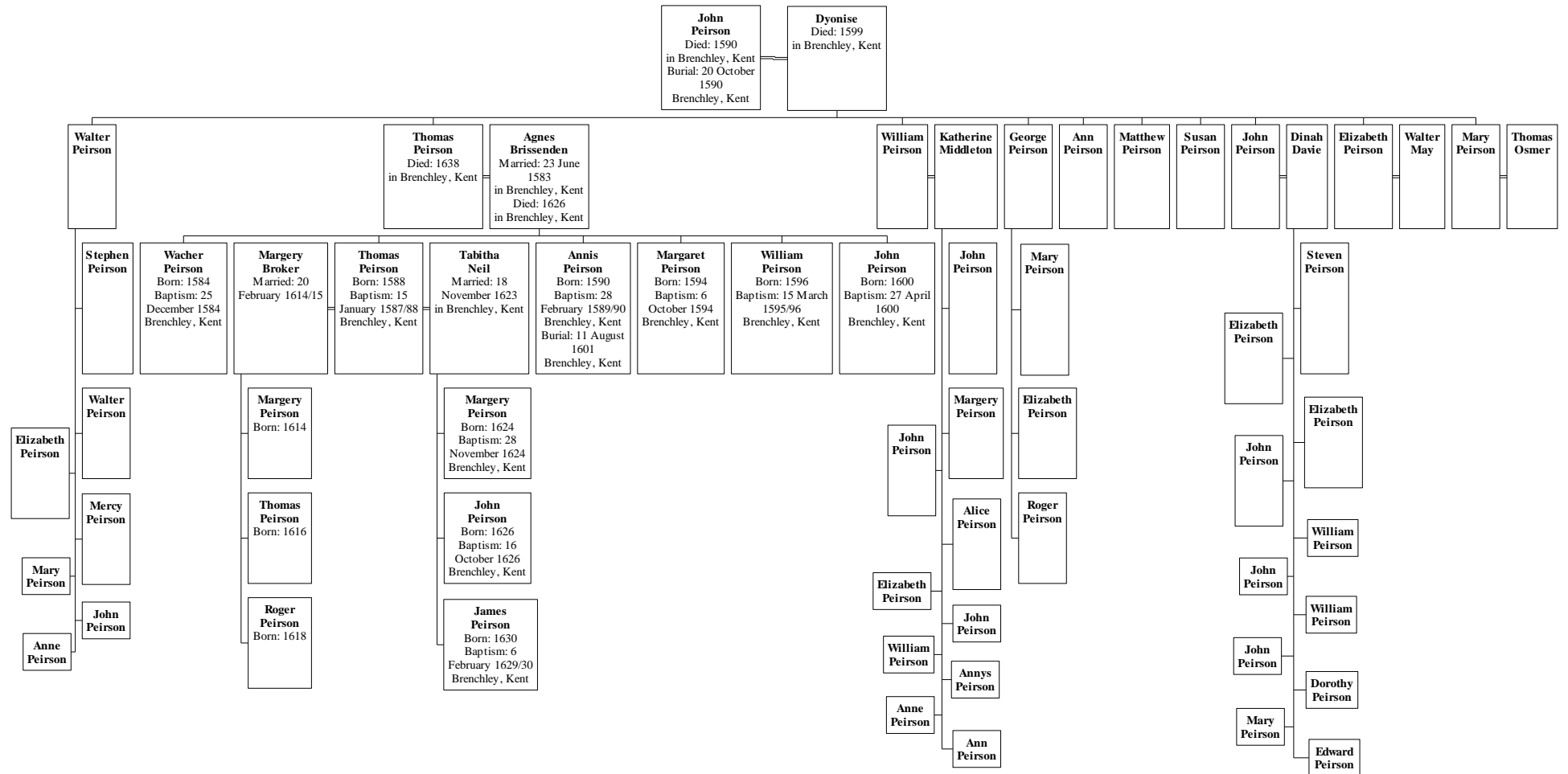
The inventory shows how even items we would consider insignificant, like spoons, small hooks and a little pot were considered valuable enough to appraise, and gives insight into how a yeoman would have lived in the late 17th century.



All Saints Brenchley

Because of the doubt over James Peirson senior's parentage (James Persone and Mary Ashdowne or Thomas and Tabitha Pearson) anything beyond this point is unproven, and must be taken as speculative. However, it is worth recording what is known about this family, as, whichever line is correct, I suspect it leads back to the paterfamilias John Peirson who died at Brenchley in 1590 (a carpenter like the James Peirson who died almost exactly a century later).

Tree 15 - Pearsons in Brenchley



The most likely line of descent for James Pierson (died 1687) is from Thomas and Tabitha through Thomas and Agnes to John and Dyonise Peirson. I have kept to the one spelling of the surname although it appears in various forms in the register.

Both John Pearson the carpenter and his wife Dyonise left detailed wills, from which it is possible to construct a detailed version of their family tree. This is fortunate, as many of their large family were born before the Brenchley register began. Only the five youngest are recorded. Anne was baptised on 9th March 1561, and Matthew on 6th February 1664. Mary and Susanna appear to have been twins, both baptised on 28th March 1566 as daughters of John of Capell. A son John was baptised on 20th June 1568 as the son of John Personn. Presumably Anne, Matthew and Susanna died young, as there is no mention of them in the wills.

John Pearson, who must have been born sometime in the 1520s or early 30s, died first. He made his will³⁸ on 13th October 1590, identifying himself as John Pearson the elder of Brenchley.... Carpenter. After an initial bequest of 8/4 to the poor of Brenchley, his first thought was for his son William, which suggests that he was the eldest. This is borne out perhaps by the fact that William was the first son to give John a grandchild. William was given:

all that my lease and lands therein contained...which the said William now occupieth and which I hold by composition between the said William and me until...1592...paying unto Dyonise my welbeloved wife the sum of tenne pounds....

He also cancelled a debt of £40 which William owed him. His daughter Marie was willed £13 5/8, with a caveat that, if she died before inheriting, the bequest pass to any children she had. His son John was willed £5, and then John senior turned to his grandchildren.

John and Susan Pearson, children of John's son George, each received a ewe. His daughter Elizabeth's children – William, Thomas and John – were given 5/8 each. Stephen son of his son Walter got a heifer and his brother Walter a ewe. Walter and Thomas², sons of son Thomas¹ received a ewe each, as did John, William and Elizabeth, children of his son William. The residue of his goods and chattels passed to his wife Dyonise. He further willed that Dyonise shall hold all his lands and tenements for life and that after her death they be split between his sons George, Thomas¹, Walter and John. George was allocated:

a little tenement and a garden thereunto adjoining by estimation one yard of land or less in the occupation of Francis Coop

and after his death to George's son Roger. Thomas¹, his next son, was willed:

my messuage or tenement called Hermes and vii acres of land more or less thereunto adjoining

with the proviso that Thomas pay the yearly rent of 7^d on it owed to the lord. Walter and John were to share equally a tenement called Besbeech with its appurtenances, situated in Brenchley. He made Dyonise his executor and his neighbour Humfrey

³⁸ CKS, DRb/PW15, Will of John Pearson of Brenchley, 1590

Ley his overseer. John Pearson made his mark and the will was witnessed by John Parker, Humfrey Ley, John Larkin and Alexander Rymington.

Nine years later, on 25th March 1599, Dionis or Dionise Peirson made her own will³⁹, requesting that she be buried in Brenchley churchyard next to her late husband. Her will is harder to read than her husbands, with much detail lost in the gutter between pages when it was filmed. However, a number of relationships are confirmed, and some new ones described. She named Roger, son of her son George, along with his siblings (I think) John, Agnes and Marie; Walter, Thomas² and Agnes, children of her son Thomas¹; Stephen, Thomas and Elizabeth, son Walter's children; John, William and Elizabeth, son William's children; William, Thomas and John May, sons of daughter Elizabeth and her husband Walter May; Thomas the son of her daughter Marie, now married to John Osemer; and Stephen and Elizabeth, children of her son John. She gave her two daughters, Elizabeth and Marie:

the best bedstead and other furniture... in the parlour belonging to the
said bed and also one great joined chest and all such stuff as in the same
chest standing in the chamber where I do lie equally between them

Anything else was to be divided between her children: Thomas¹, William, George, Walter, John, Elizabeth and Marie. The placing of Thomas¹ at the head of the list of course places William's seniority in doubt; however, a subsequent clause reinstates him:

I will and appoint that every of my sons before named, that is to say,
William Peirson, Thomas Peirson, George Peirson, Walter Peirson, Walter
May and John Osemer... make... [a] release to my executor... John Peirson

John proved his mother's will in April 1599.

As is abundantly clear from these two wills, this couple created a Pearson dynasty in Brenchley, with almost all their children having large families of their own. Maybe James the carpenter fits in to one of these lines. However, the line of descent I wish to follow is through Thomas¹, probably John and Dionise's second son. On 23rd June 1583, he married Agnes Brissenden at Brenchley, and their first child Walter, or as the register has it Wachter, was baptised on Christmas Day 1584. Thomas² followed, with his baptism recorded on 7th January 1587. Both of these are named in their grandfather's will, as they are in their grandmother's along with Agnes or Annys, baptised 28th February 1590. These were followed by Margaret in 1594, William in 1596 and 1598 and John in 1600. Another short-lived Agnes (presumably the first one had died) was born in 1601. It is likely that Walter born 1587 was the Walter Peirson carpenter, who left a will in 1644 in which Roger Peirson senior and Thomas Peirson senior (his brother?) were executors. If so, he was following in his grandfather's footsteps and therefore perhaps strengthening the argument that it was James Peirson carpenter, buried in 1689 who belonged to this line, not the James Peirson who left a will and was buried in 1687. Thomas' first

³⁹ CKS, DRb/PW17, Will of Dionis Peirson of Brenchley, 1599

wife, Agnes Brissenden, died in 1626 and the following year, on 30th November, he married Hester Martin. Thomas must have been well into his 70s when he finally died. He was buried at Brenchley as:

Thomas Peirson housekeeper

on 11th August 1638.

It is his second son, Thomas junior, who may have been the father of our elusive James Peirson. Thomas also married twice. By his first wife, Margery Broker, whom he married on 20th February 1614, he had three children: Margery, born 1614, Thomas, born 1616 and Roger, born 1618. When Margery died in 1623, Thomas remarried. His second wife, whom he married at Brenchley on 18th November 1623, was Tabitha Neil, baptised on 21st December 1595 as the daughter of William Neale. She gave Thomas three more children: another Margery, baptised 28th November 1684, John, 16th October 1626, and finally James, baptised on 8th February 1630. It is this James who may – or may not – have married Joan Ragley, Alice Gardiner and Mary Underdowne. Thomas junior was buried on 4th April 1644 at Brenchley, but his wife lived on for another 15 years, being buried finally on 12th November 1659 as:

an ancient woman

Perrin, Peryn or Perryn – Horsmonden and Brenchley

James Peirson described his father-in-law, John³ Perrin, as a clothier. This was an occupation the Weald was famous for, as woollen manufacture had been introduced from Flanders in the 14th century and had been the source of much wealth in the area. Hasted⁴⁰ recorded that:

They were usually called, from their dress, the grey coates of Kent.

An article on *Wikipedia*⁴¹ sums up the cloth industry in Kent as follows:

Cloth-making was, apart from iron-making, the other large-scale industry carried out on the Weald of Kent and Sussex in medieval times. The ready availability of wool from the sheep of the Romney Marsh, and the immigration from Flanders in the fourteenth century of cloth-workers – places like Cranbrook attracted hundreds of such skilled workers – ensured its place in Kentish industrial history. The industry spread along the Weald, and as far north as Maidstone.

It was helped by the fact that Fuller's earth deposits existed between Boxley and Maidstone: it being an essential raw material for de-greasing the wool.

⁴⁰ *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, Edward Hasted, 1793, Vol. VII 92.

⁴¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wealden_cloth_industry

At the time the export of it was forbidden, lest it help their rivals.

Once the wool had been carded (to get rid of the tangles) and spun (both these processes could be done in the workpeople's own homes), it then required weaving. Since that process required looms and the space to do it, 'clothier's halls' were required. These were, as is shown by the timber-framed clothier's hall at Biddenden, often the length of the attics in the master clothier's house. After weaving it was fulled (using the Fuller's earth), and then dried. Once dry, the cloth was brushed with teasels to get rid of loose threads; and finally the shearman cut off loose and projecting pieces of wool.

Regulations ensured the size and quality of the cloth offered for sale. Although regulation width was normally 63 inches (1.75 yards or 160 cm), Kentish broadcloth was only 58 inches (147 cm) wide. One piece was between 30–34 yards (27.5–31 m); and should weigh 66 pounds (30 kg). Officials known as 'ulnagers' were employed to pass each piece. The price of Kentish cloth at the start of the 17th Century was £12–16 per piece. One yard of cloth would be equal to a farmworker's wage for 2–3 weeks.

By this John Perrin's time, though, the glory days of the cloth trade had gone, with the area feeling the pinch from competition in both the West Riding of Yorkshire and abroad in Italy, and when John died as the 18th century began, the wool industry in Kent was virtually dead.



**Timber-framed house Horsmonden named
Weaver's Cottage**

John³ Perrin was baptised at Horsmonden on 12th October 1619, the son of another John Perrin or Peryn and his wife Joan. He and his five sisters: Joan, Elizabeth, Mary, Susan and Alice all survived childhood, but a brother, Richard, seems to have died young. At the age of around 30, on 27th September 1649, he married Mary Hope, daughter of another established Horsmonden family, and seems to have moved into the Austen house at Broadford (see appendix). Their first child, John was baptised – at Horsmonden like his siblings – on 3rd November 1650.

Richard was baptised on 8th June 1654; Joan on 6th December 1655; Sarah, later the wife of James Peirson, born 8th March 1656; Mary – born 27th March 1659 and Susanna on 6th January 1661. Mary may have married Robert Marchant at Goudhurst on 11th July 1683, but no marriage has come to light for Joan or Susanna. The fact that it is Sarah and Mary's births which are recorded is a reminder that this was the period of civil registration during the Commonwealth following the Civil War. A note following Susanna's baptism makes me wonder whether the damage referred to was through dilapidation or the actions of Cromwell's soldiers.

Susanna Perryn daughter of John and Mary his wife being the first baptised at the fonte since the destruction of the church.

John's wife Mary lived long enough to see her children through childhood, but was buried at Horsmonden on 10th December 1675, aged 54.

Just to confuse the issue, there was another John Perrin in Horsmonden at around the same time. The register shows that a man named John Perrin married Alice Dawe in Horsmonden as:

John Perrin of Horsmonden widower

on 22nd April 1672, not a second wife for 'my' John, but probably for his second cousin, son of another John, and grandson of William. Alice Perrin was buried as a widow on 13th May 1704, four years after 'my' John was buried as a widower. Recently, a marriage came to light at East Peckham between a John Perryn of Horsmonden and Mary Bennett, dated 5th April 1660. A fortuitous contact with another researcher of this family (Perrin Wateringbury on *Ancestry* to whom I am grateful for straightening me out) convinced me that the John who married Mary Bennett and later Alice Dawe descended from William Perrin. It was this John, I now believe, who was buried in 1693, leaving his wife Alice to live on until 1704.

Not much else was known of John³ Perrin's adult life until two chancery proceedings recently came to light. These are outlined in the appendix for lack of space here. One of the Johns was called for jury service⁴² in 1663 as:

John Perrin of Horsmonden

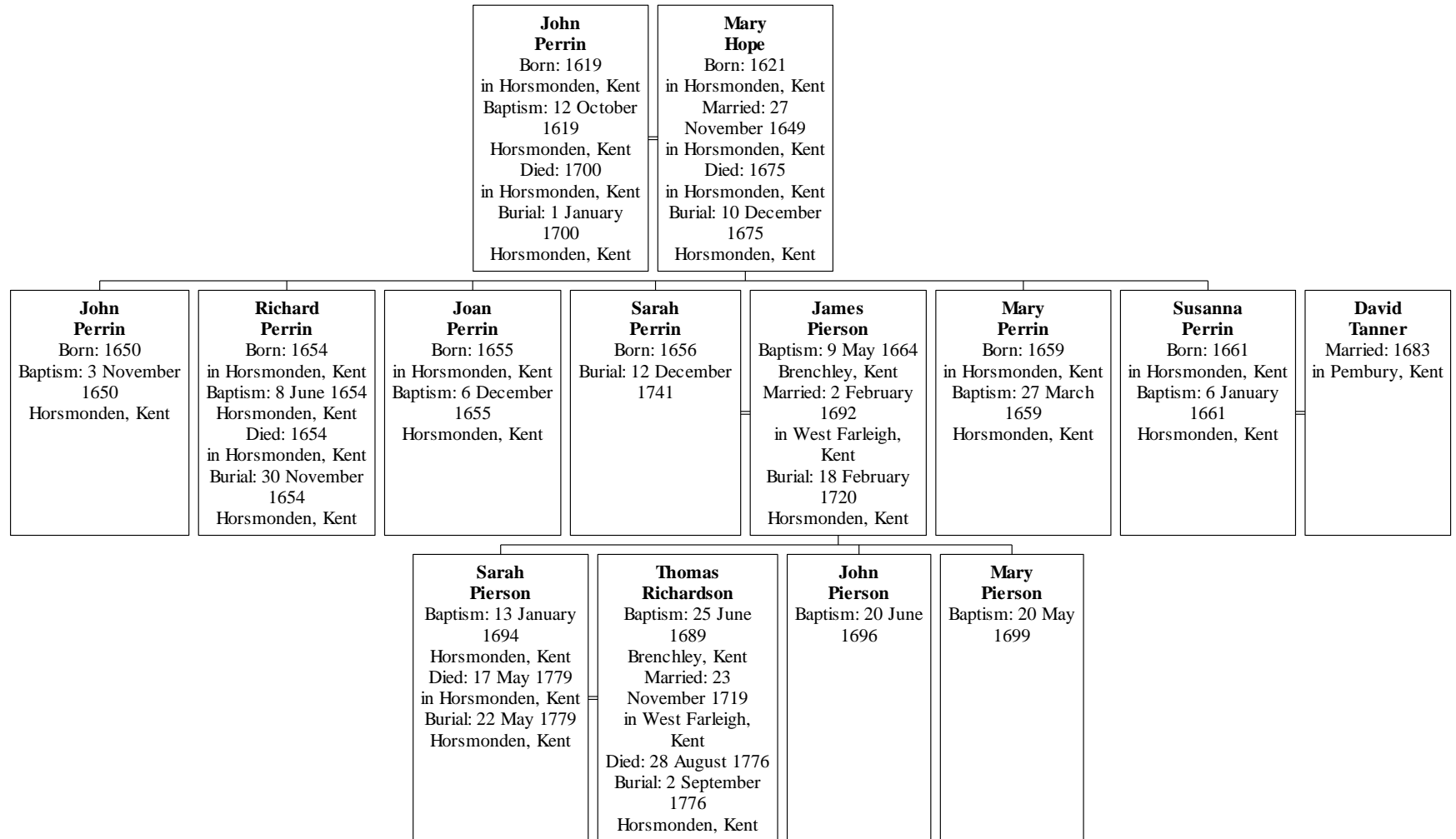
but a note scribbled beside his name on the list of jurors called suggests he was in prison at the time! The next glimpse of him is over thirty years later when he paid tax. In 1698-9 the Overseers' Accounts⁴³ recorded:

Tax made over lands in Horsmonden and occupiers of lands and tythes for		
.... and necessary relief of the poor:		
John Perrin or the occupier	15.00	15.00
John Perrin or the occupier	15.00	7.6

⁴² CKS, Quarter Sessions Papers, QSB9/73

⁴³ CKS, P 192/12/1, Horsmonden Overseers' Accounts 1698-1732

Tree 16 - Descendants of John Perrin and Mary Hope



By the time he died, he must have been over 80. He either didn't make a will; perhaps he lacked the capacity by then, or it has not survived. James Peirson's will in which he makes reference to land bequeathed by John³ Perrin would seem to suggest this may have been the case. An inventory⁴⁴ was made, though, showing a fairly meagre household, hard to decipher now, but with the word 'old' being repeated a number of times. It would seem he had let things go in his dotage, although the books, hour glass and gold weights reflect his earlier standing:

An inventory of all and singular the goods, chattels, credits of John Perin late of the parish of Horsmonden in the co. of Kent, widower^s, deceased, seen, valued and appraised 4th day of January AD 1700, English style by John Groombridge, Richard Johnson, as follows, viz:

	£	s	d
In his purse and ready money		1	2
Item His wearing apparel, linen and woollen	2		
Item A little cupboard joined to the wall	1	6	
Item The furnace in the brewing house		15	
Item The cider press and trough and part of an oast and an old tun tub	1	6	8
Item Two old Three old.... Part of a horse ?qua... an old bedstead in the malt chamber and 3 old shanks	16		
Item In the closet, several old books, an hour glass, a parcel of cl... a pair of gold weights	10		
Item An old ... and an old stool		2	6
Item An old table and frame, 11 old joint stools, an old cupboard, and standard, 2 old trunks and an old iron cl...	1		
Item An old feather bed, an old bedstead, sheets, an old trundle bedstead, 2 old blankets, an old coverlet	1	10	
Total sum:		£8	2/10
The mark of Sarah Peirson			

Sarah Peirson's name on the document suggests that she was in charge of winding up her father's affairs. It is just possible that the parcel referred to is cloth, and that and the mention of gold weights may hark back to his time as a clothier, but the rest of the items suggest that, if he was working at all, it was maybe as a malster or brewer. Perhaps this was for his personal consumption, though – it was not unusual to brew your own beer or cider at this time.

For a long time, John's mother's maiden name was unknown to me. However, the discovery of his father's will, naming his brother-in-law as Francis Austen made it clear that his mother must have been Joan Austen. The story of the Austens of Horsmonden has been well documented, as Francis was 3x great-grandfather to the author Jane Austen. John Perrin received an annuity of £5 a year from the will of his grandfather John Austen (Jane's 4x great-grandfather). This was

⁴⁴ CKS, DRB/Pi15/24, Inventory of John Perrin of Horsmonden, widower, 1700/1

commuted to a lump sum in the will of his uncle John Austen II⁴⁵ and bequests made also to his sisters:

..... Item I give and bequeath unto John Perryn son of my sister Perryn £100 of lawful money of England in full recompense and satisfaction of one annuity of £5 a year given and bequeathed unto him the said John Perryn by the last will and testament of John Austen my father to be issuing and going out of all the lands and tenements of the said John Austen my father and upon this condition likewise that he the said John Perryn shall upon receipt of the said £100 make seale and deliver unto my executor or his assigns such a sufficient and lawful release and discharge in the said annuity as my said executor or his assign shall reasonably require.

Item I give and bequeath unto Susanna Perryn daughter of my said sister Perryn £30 of lawful money of England to be paid unto her two years next after my decease if she be then living.

Item I give and bequeath unto Joane Perryn Elizabeth Perryn Mary Perryn and Alce Perryn the other children of my said sister Perryn £20 apiece.

It is impossible to tell at this distance in time whether the commuting of his annuity was seen by John³ Perrin as a good deal. His grandfather had been dead for 30 years, so he had presumably already received £150 during that period. In an age where death frequently came to those in their prime, a lump sum probably seemed desirable; John wasn't to know that he would live for a further half century. John II Austen's will named a large extended family, and a large number of annuities, but both main properties went to his brother Francis, including Grovehurst, built in the 15th century but bearing the date 1641 in reference to this John Austen.



Grovehurst – the home of John and Francis Austen

John's father was John² Peryn. His name appears in a variety of forms, but often with a 'y', and I will stick to a 'y' form to help avoid confusion. The Horsmonden parish registers suggest that he was baptised on 17th February 1593 as:

⁴⁵ TNA, Prob/11/213, Will of John Austen, Horsmonden, 1650

John Pyrren son of John Peryne

that he baptised his own children between 1619 and 1636 and that he was buried on 5th September 1653 as:

John Perrin ye elder

At some point in the late 1610s he must have married Joan Austen, though the details have not come to light. The first two children were named for their parents, John, born in 1619 and Joan, baptised on 7th September 1622. Three more girls followed: Elizabeth – baptised on 24th October 1623, Mary – on 18th October 1625 and Susan on 19th April 1629. A son named Richard came next and was baptised on 26th May 1633. All of these were recorded as the children of John; it is only with the baptism of the last child, Alice - baptised on 8th August 1636 - that Joan, as mother gets a look in:

Alce dau of John Perin Snr and Joane his wife

A further interesting point about this entry is that John² Peryn is referred to as John senior. Was this because John junior at around 17 was considered more or less an adult? There is a mystifying entry in the *Tyler Index to Parish Registers*⁴⁶ for Kent which lists the burial of a John Perrin of Horsmonden at Goudhurst on 23rd August 1655. If this man, whoever he was, was living in Horsmonden, it is possible the term senior was used to differentiate him from John Peryn, though the term usually implies a relationship.

Like his son, John² Peryn was a clothier and it was probably through this trade that he became involved with and married into the wealthy Austen family, in that era owners of the manors of Broadford, Grovehurst, Hoathe, Smeeth and Capel. To marry clothier John Austen's only daughter does seem quite a coup.

John² Peryn seems to have left more of a paper trail than his son, though much of it is not very clear or informative. A very faded court roll of 1619⁴⁷ seems to show John² Peryn acquiring a house and 40 acres of land in the manor of Capel or Grovehurst, but the combination of Latin, difficult palaeography and a blotched manuscript mean that I could have drawn the wrong inference. In September 1628 his name appears on a list in the parish register of those who donated money to:

to the raising up of the sum of £10 10/-

to establish a charity for the poor of Horsmonden set up by Lady Abergavenny. John gave 10/-. This involved a tripartite agreement between William Beswick (for the parishioners) and Philip Hankin and Alexander Thomas, both gentlemen. Something must have gone wrong somewhere along the line, for on 26th September

⁴⁶ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>, Tyler Index to Parish Registers

⁴⁷ CKS, U 442 M32, Court Roll, Manors of Hoth, Grovehurst and Smeeths in Horsmonden, 1619

the same year, another memorandum appears in the parish register, showing that the vicar, Jeffery Amhurst, had got into financial difficulty over the purchase of land sold by Alexander Thomas on trust for the parish. The note makes reference to the Court of Chancery, and Amhurst's arrest by Alexander Thomas, so once again the local worthies are being asked to stump up. Heading the list is John² Peryn's brother-in-law, John Austen, to the tune of £1, but John² and his future co-father-in-law Thomas Hope both contributed 10/-.

On March 21st 1640 the register notes that John paid £1 1/- (a guinea):

For supply and making up of rents behind and unpaid to Mr Pullen snr being £10 10/- due to him on Ladie Day 1641 and for time before. And for paying of charges to the attorney in a suit commenced by Mr Santon against the feoffees being £2 7/6

The same note continues with an exhortation that the money is:

to be repaid to them or their execs hereafter when the rents shall come into their hands

In 1642, John² Peryn, his brother-in-law John Austen, and John Hope – probably the uncle of Mary Hope (soon to be his daughter-in-law) were recorded as the three assessors⁴⁸ of:

A Particular of the Weekly Assessment...Horsmonden

The same document names:

John Perin clothier

in a list of Horsmonden citizens making contribution to the parliament in 1642.

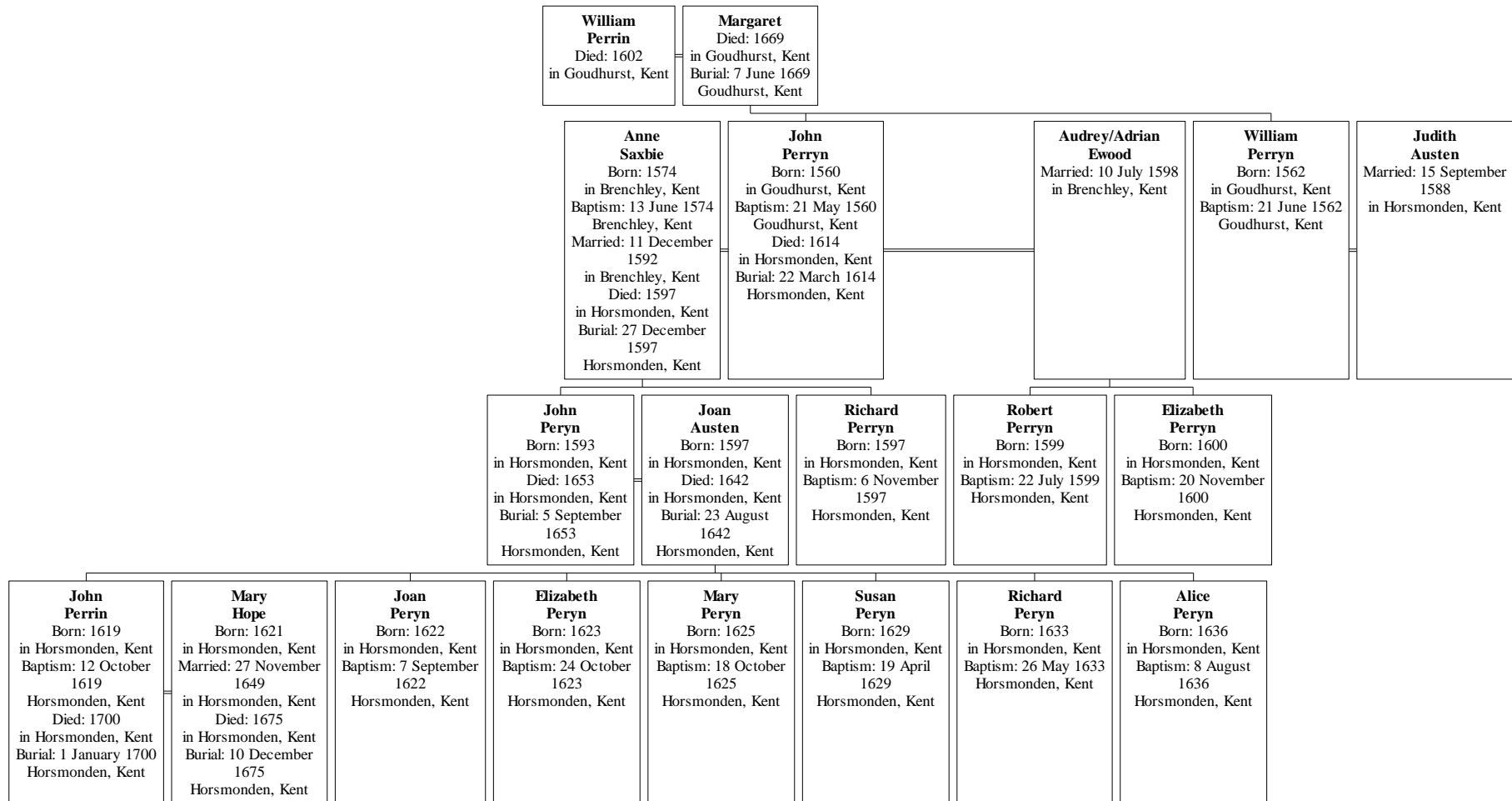
More enlightening is his will, written on 1st September 1653, when he obviously felt himself close to death. His first bequest was of 40/- to the poor. Then he divided a joined chest of linen between his five daughters: Joane, Elizabeth, Mary, Susanne and Allice, and bequeathed all his other household stuff between the sisters and their brother John, i.e. all his surviving children. None of his daughters was married, so he willed them money equally:

I give unto the said Joane, Elizabeth, Mary, Susanne and Allice my daughters one hundred and twenty pounds apiece to every one of them

while the residue of his estate went directly to his son John, also named as his executor. As overseers he chose John Horsmonden, gent of Gouldhurst, and his brother-in-law Francis Austen.

⁴⁸ http://archive.org/stream/papersrelatingto00almarich/papersrelatingto00almarich_djvu.txt
Proceedings in the County of Kent, edited by Richard Almack, Camden Society, 1854

Tree 17 - Descendants of William and Margaret Perrin



In addition to the original cash bequest, eldest daughter Joan was willed the rents from 7 acres of land in two plots to provide an annuity of £4. It is maybe a sign of the times and perhaps John's attitude to the government of the day that he makes a proviso that:

she allow[ing] no parliament Taxes or any other Scotts out of it

In terms of property, John junior received:

All that messuage or tenement wherein I now inhabit and dwell with the Barns Outhouses Workhouses Buildings ... all Utensills ... clothing with the Orchard Close Garden and foure pieces and parcels of land with their appurtenances containing in the whole by estimation 20 acres more or less situate lying or being in Horsmonden aforesaid and being now in the tenure of me the said John

with the proviso that he forfeit the same if he failed to pay his sisters' legacies.

The will was witnessed by Hugh Lake, and John and Will. Austen – who could have been the sons of his brother-in-law Benjamin, or just two of the many Austens living in the area. There is no mention of his wife Joan in the will. She had predeceased him by nearly 11 years, and had been buried at Horsmonden on 23rd August 1642.



The Gun and Spitroast Horsmonden

Not surprisingly, the next person in this line was John¹ Perryn, a clothier, living and working in Horsmonden. He is the earliest person I have identified for sure in this line but I think he was probably baptised at Goudhurst on 21st May 1560. On the 11th December 1592 he married for the first time, at Brenchley:

The xith day were married John Perryn and Ann Saxby

By Ann he had two children, John² – whose story has already been followed, and Richard, baptised – as was John² – at Horsmonden, on 6th November 1597. Ann did not long survive the birth of her second child and was buried as:

Agnes Perren wife of John Perrine

at Horsmonden on 27th December the same year. She would have been 23 years old. A few months later, at Brenchley on 10th July 1598, John married again. The register gives:

The same day were married John Peryn and Adrian Ewood

Ewood seems to be a version of the surname Heywood. Two more children were born from this union: Robert - baptised 22nd July 1599 and Elizabeth – 20th November 1600 (both Horsmonden).

By the time he had completed his family, John¹ was obviously established and presumably comfortably off, as he was assessed on his goods in the 1597-8 Lay Subsidy⁴⁹ at £3 7/- . However, he also seems to have of a somewhat quarrelsome nature, as a series of entries in the Quarter Session Records Calendars show. The first is dated 6 March 1604/5⁵⁰:

John Perryn of Horsmonden, yeoman, and Richard Willard of Horsmonden, yeoman, armed with weapons, assaulted John Willard at Horsmonden in the highway and ill treated him and imprisoned him for five hours.
[Ignoramus]

The final word means that there was not enough evidence and so the case was dropped. Willard was a fairly common name in the area, so it is not possible to be certain whether the Richard and John here named were related, or what John Perryn's involvement was. However, John's father-in-law's will shows that John had a brother-in-law named Richard Willard (his wife Elizabeth was John's wife Anne's sister) so maybe he ended up involved in a family dispute. The quarter session records cite other spats between members of the Willard family and other locals, such as the one between Benjamin Austen and John and Joseph Willard⁵¹, but again, it is impossible to say who held the moral high ground – if anybody. If Simon Willard who had earlier emigrated to the Puritan colonies was related, as Perrins and Austens supported a Laudian vicar, perhaps there was a religious element here.

In 1610, though, John¹ does seem to have been the injured party⁵² (it is just possible that this entry refers to his son). The calendar records:

Note of an assault in the highway by Robert Broke of Bromley, collier,

⁴⁹ CKS, E179/127/515, 1597-8 Lay Subsidy

⁵⁰ CKS, QM/SI/1605/6/6

⁵¹ http://www.genealogycrank.co.uk/pdfs/austen_evidence.pdf

⁵² CKS, QM/SB/930, 25 May 1610

against John Perrine of Horsmonden, clothier, at Farnborough.
Roberte Broke of Bromley in the countie of Kent Collyier, the xxxth day of
may 1610. In the kings highway at Farnborowe in the said countie did make
an assault upon John Perrine of Horsmonden in the said countie Clothier
and him did wound beat and evell intreate
His master's name is Curtys

A collier at this time would have been a charcoal burner. The incident clearly had an impact on John, as the next document in the series⁵³ states:

Robert Brooke of Southborough in Bromley, collier, in £13 6s. 8d., to appear,
do and receive and to keep the peace towards John Perrin of Horsmonden,
clothier; sureties, Richard Curtis of Southborough, collier and Thomas
Russell of Bromley, farrier, in £10 each.
The condition of this recognisance is such that whereas one John Perrin of
Horsmonden in aforesaid county clothier upon his corporate oath hath
complained to the ?above named justice that he standeth in dread and feare
of his life or some bodily harm to be done to him by the ?above bounden
Robert Brooke upon hath prayed the ?surety of the place again the said
Robert Brooke the said Robert Brooke shall personally appear at
the next ... Quarter Session of the to be held at Maidstone in the said
county before his Majesty's Justices of the Peace at the said Session
Assembly to ... and observe such order and as at the court And also
that the said Robert Brooke shall keep the peace of our sovereign lord the
King towards our sovereign and all his people and namely towards the
said John Perrin until the said Quarter Session then his recognisance to be
void or else to stand in fere.

The Weald of Kent, much of it deep in the wilds of ancient woodland, did have something of a reputation for lawlessness at this time, and presumably people protected themselves and their families and goods as best they could.

Whether this incident had a profound effect on John¹, or was a passing irritation, four years later, he was dead; his burial took place on 22nd March 1614 at Horsmonden. Fortunately, he had made an extensive will eight days earlier, in which he named all his children and his wife – whom he names Audrey. This is at variance with the name recorded in the marriage register, but if the entry was made after the event, or written up from a hastily scribbled note, there is not much of a jump from Audrey to Adrian. Certainly, when she witnessed the will of John Austen in 1620⁵⁴, she was recorded as Audrie Perrin.

John¹ Perryn began his will⁵⁵ as follows:

In the name of God amen the 14th day of March 1614 and in the years of
the reign of our Sovereign Lord James by the grace of God of England
Scotland France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith viz of England

⁵³ CKS QM/SRc/1610/79 18 June 1610

⁵⁴ TNA, Prob 11/137, Will of John Austen of Horsmonden, 1620

⁵⁵ TNA, Prob 11/125, Will of John Perryn of Horsmonden, 1614

France and Ireland the twelfth and of Scotland the eight and fourth. I John Perryn of Horsmonden in the county of Kent clothier being sick in body but of good and perfect remembrance thanks be to God for it do make and ordain this my present and last will and testament in manner and form following...

before donating 20 shillings to the poor of his parish. As was often the case with second wives, Audrey was ensured use of the family home:

I give and bequeath unto Audrey my wife my best bed in the parlour of my now dwelling house as it now stands 10 pairs of sheets four pairs of pillowcases 3 pillows 2 dozen of table napkins 5 tablecloths a joined chest a table with a frame in the same parlour. I will and my mind is that the said Audrey my wife shall have the whole use and benefit of the said parlour with free liberty and use ingress and egress and regress for her and her children servants and friends into and from the same parlour at all times during the lease of my said house (if she continue so long a widow) And also that the said Audrey shall during the said time have free liberty to come to the fire and fleete in the said house and to bake and brew and wash and do all other necessary business in the low rooms of my said dwelling house at the only costs and charges of my executor.

For his son Richard he singled out:

one flock bed a bolster a pair of blankets two pairs of sheets and a joined chest

before designating that his wife and son John should share all his household goods apart from bedding. Daughter Elizabeth was to have £40 once she reached the age of twenty, but sons Richard and Robert would have to wait until they were twenty-three to receive their inheritance of £60 apiece.

Any residue was to pass to his oldest son John², who was also made executor, while his brothers-in-law Robert, John and Edmund Saxby were designated overseers, along with John Horsmonden, clothier of Horsmonden. The will was witnessed by John Perryn his son, William Perryn – probably his brother – Richard Hope and Henry Smyghte – perhaps Smythe. Probate was granted at London on 29th March 1614.

John¹ Perryn's will shows a man who has done reasonably well for himself. There was no baptism for him at Brenchley or Horsmonden, but I suspect he was almost certainly the John who was baptised as the son of William Perin in May 1560 at nearby Goudhurst. Two years later another son William was baptised on 21st June 1562, but by then his father was dead; his burial took place at Goudhurst on 27th May 1562. His poignant will shows him to have been a broadloom weaver, as he leaves implements for this trade to his son John and his unborn child. To both alike he leaves:

one brode lowme and winding trendle and five brode slayes, two of them of the best and two the second; and one of the worst



Weavers' Cottages Goudhurst

I take the 'brode lowme' to be a broadloom; the trendle was a wheel or spindle for winding thread and a slaye was the handboard of a loom. Michael Zell⁵⁶ says:

Broadcloth weavers usually owned one or two looms, each of which required two people to operate.... a prosperous broadloom weaver with two looms and a workforce of four could turn out four full-sized broadcloths per month.

However, there is no way of telling whether both looms were in use, and how 'prosperous' William Perren actually was. The boy's mother, Margaret, who is charged in the will with looking after both children and equipment until they come of age, remarried around eight months later, to one John Smythe, at Goudhurst on 25th January 1562. With a toddler and a posthumous child to support, she could not afford to mourn her first husband for long.

Nothing is known about John¹'s step-father and his occupation. Whether he was instrumental in John raising himself to the status of clothier or whether he was taken under the wing of his future father-in-law, John Saxbie, who was also a clothier, is a matter of pure speculation. Clothiers had to undertake an apprenticeship, and if John's was with John Saxbie, he wouldn't be the only apprentice in this family to marry the master's daughter. However, John may have succeeded purely by his own merits, and this may be why he didn't marry until he was 32 and established.

Perrin distaff lines: Saxbie, Austen and Hope; mainly Brenchley and Horsmonden

The earliest John Perryn in this account married as his first wife Ann(e) Saxbie, baptised as the daughter of clothier John Saxbie at Brenchley on 13th June 1574. John

⁵⁶ *Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the sixteenth century*, Michael Zell, CUP, 2004, Cambridge

Saxbie and his wife Jane Dan (married at Brenchley on 28th October 1566). This couple baptised 11 children, beginning with Robert – 28th February 1568 and Jelian – 11th June 1570, and then Anne. She was followed by Alice – 7th April 1571, Elizabeth – 28th December 1579, John – 10th March 1582, Mary – 9th April 1587, twins Alyn and Alexander – 15th December 1588, Edmund – 19th July 1590 and finally Stephen – 5th November 1592.

Like his son-in-law John¹ Perryn, John Saxbie (Saxby or Saxbee) paid the 1597/8 Lay Subsidy⁵⁷ and was assessed on his goods at £5 8/4 while his son Robert paid £3 0/4. He also makes a couple more appearances in the records, once as the victim of a burglary. The quarter session records⁵⁸ for 13th December 1596 note that one John Scotcheford of Sundridge, butcher, was found guilty of taking an ell of Holland cloth valued at 5/- and a table cloth worth 2/6 from John Saxby's house in Brenchley. In addition, documents⁵⁹ concerning the Manon of Leighton and other lands in Cowden show what looks like a land purchase made in 1591. The catalogue states:

Henry and Richard Streatfeild to John Sxabie of Brenchley clothier, of Little Coxlands etc. in Cowden and Great Gilfield and Little Gilfield in Cowden.

Presumably he continued to consolidate his land holding in Cowden, as his will mentions land in Cowden 'lately' purchased from the Willard family. However, the sign below, belonging today to a kennels on the Horsmonden Road leading out of Brenchley, maybe suggests that this was the land the Saxby family owned or tenanted in Horsmonden.



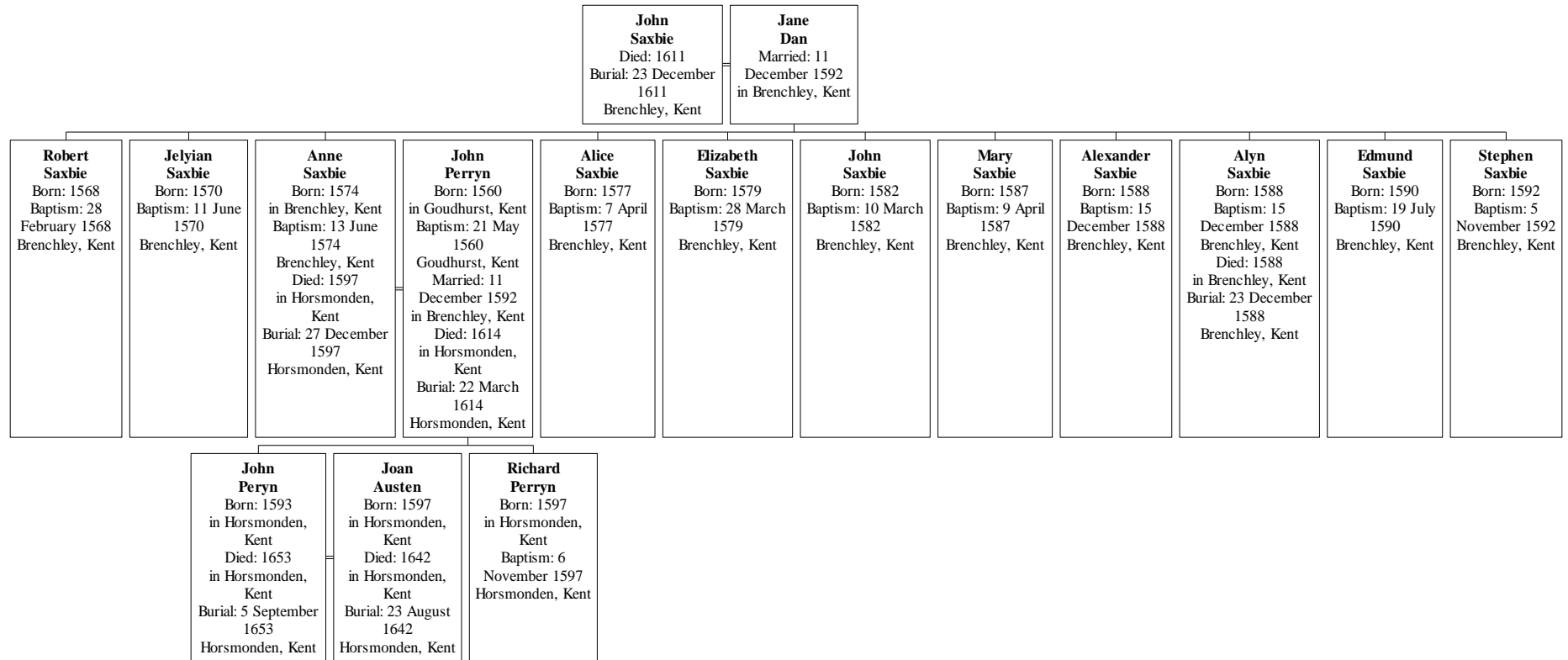
Saxbys sign Brenchley

⁵⁷ CKS, E179/127/515 1597-8 Lay Subsidy, Brenchley

⁵⁸ CKS, QM/SI/1597/1/32

⁵⁹ CKS, U908/T3

Tree 18 - Family of John Saxby and Jane Dan



He was buried at Brenchley on 23rd July 1611, but had maybe been ill for some time as he had written his will⁶⁰ in January 1609. Of his eleven children, all but the twins had survived, and most of them were settled, so many of John's bequests went directly to his grandchildren and god-children. His will began with a gift of £5 to the poor of the parish and then a general bequest of 3/4 to:

all my servants that shall be dwelling with me at my decease

Daughter Julian Lamb's sons John and William, son John's son John, daughter Anne's sons John² and Richard Perryn, daughter Alice Wymeshurst's son Richard, and daughter Elizabeth Willard's son John received £5 each; son Robert's daughter Jane received 40/- and nephew Richard Brooke 20/-, while each god-child was willed 12d.

John Saxby's wife Jane was bequeathed:

my lease and term of years yet for to come... of all that messuage and hereditaments with their appurtenances now in the occupation of the said Robert Sexbey

with the proviso that it pass to son Edmund if she died before the lease ended. She was also willed cattle, household stuff and £20.

Of his own children John, Thomas, Alice Wymeshurst and Elizabeth Willard each received £5, while his younger sons Edmund and Stephen were bequeathed £400 each and daughter Mary £100.

His immovable property was divided between his eldest and younger sons. Robert received land in Horsmonden and Cowden purchased from John Willard, but was to pay his mother an annuity of £4 out of the rents. Stephen was willed a house and 14 acres in Horsmonden in the occupation of William Perrin broadweaver (a brother of John, maybe?), while Edmund got a house and lands in Horsmonden occupied by William Jeffery and purchased from William Willard. The residue of the estate – mainly:

ready money, cloth, wool ... and debts and all my working stuff tools and other implements belonging to the trade of clothier

passed to Robert, his executor. Son-in-law Richard Wymeshurst was named overseer along with Richard Hosner of Brenchley and the will was witnessed by Thomas Scothford (I wonder if he was related to the John Scocheford who earlier stole cloth) Soloman Were (presumably John Austen's nephew) and William Hunt.

John's wife Jane lived for another three years and was buried at Brenchley on 5th June 1614.

⁶⁰ TNA, Prob 11/118, Will of John Sexbey of Brenchley, 1609



The Old Palace Brenchley

An interesting footnote to the story of the Saxbys, which also gives insight into their status, comes from *The Art of Hearing*⁶¹. It would appear that Robert, John's eldest son, left Kent for London in 1629, settled in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, and began keeping a record of all the sermons he heard preached. Hunt, who has researched Robert and his notebook, describes him as:

the eldest son of John Saxby, a prosperous clothier in the parish of Brenchley, Kent [who] inherited the family's clothmaking workshop and equipment when his father died in 1611.... Though not in the top echelon of London's mercantile elite, he was a wealthy man, with landed property in Kent and Berkshire, and his wife's will, drawn up in 1638, describes him as 'Robert Saxby, gentleman'

Though clearly a man of strong religious convictions, as evidenced by the number of sermons he recorded and the serious note he took of their various messages, Robert was not especially literate, and Hunt notes his:

unformed handwriting and idiosyncratic, phonetic spelling

The Austens were another clothier family, residing in Horsmonden. Much has been written about this family, and much speculation made about their origins (see my article *Untangling the Austens*), as the Joan Austen who married John² Perryn was also four-times great-aunt to the novelist Jane Austen. Many sources suggest that the family descended from the Austens of Yalding, but there is no conclusive evidence of this, and the surname is widespread in Kent, probably due to the influence of the medieval order of Austen Canons, who derived their name from St. Augustine - the man tasked by the Pope with bringing England into the Roman Catholic church, and first Archbishop of Canterbury.

⁶¹ *The Art of Hearing – English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640*, Arnold Hunt, 2010, Cambridge University Press

Joan's grandfather's name is widely given as Robert Austen. This man baptised an unnamed son at Goudhurst on 25th April 1560, and this child has been believed by many to have been John Austen of Horsmonden. Certainly, Anthony Wagner, a noted genealogist who rose to become Clarenceux King of Arms of the College of Arms in London thought this the most likely case. He based much of his argument on a deposition⁶² made by Joan's father John on 16th November 1591 which is headed:

John Austen of the parish of Horsmonden in the diocese of Rochester
where he has lived for seven years, before that in the parish of
Goudhurst for all of his life, aged 32

Someone born in 1560 would have only been 31 in 1591, but the age seemed to tally closely enough. What Wagner seems to have ignored is the fact that the Goudhurst parish register was only begun at the end of 1558, and apart from the fact that, when any new system is set up, entries can be missed, it would have been possible for John to have been baptised before the start of the register and still be around 32 at the time he made his deposition. In the document in question, John explains that he and one Salomon Were went from Horsmonden to Linton (a small parish just south of Maidstone) to the house of Thomas Nixon:

to the sealing of certain writing concerning the assurance of certain goods
and lands to Thomas Nixon son of the said Thomas deceased for that he
was to deal in marriage with his the said deponent's sister

In other words, John and Salomon (or Soloman) were acting as marriage brokers for a union between John's sister and Thomas Nixon junior. The document continues:

He [John] saith that the deed of gift being made was brought by Saloman
Were his unto the said Thomas Nixon the elder as he was sitting on his
bed and was by the said Solomon read unto him and when he had read it
the said Thomas Nixon the elder liked well of the same and voluntarily
and willingly subscribed his name to the same with his own hand as well
as he could and sealed the same and then delivered it at his deed unto
Thomas Nixon his son then and there present together with one broken
platter in the possession of his Goods and this the aforementioned
Amryll Bodyam and Soloman Were subscribed their names as witnesses
to the said deal

A second deposition by Solomon Were corroborates John's statement. I was unable to find any record of this sister's marriage to Thomas Nixon, and in fact doubted it had taken place until I happened by chance on a will wrongly indexed by *Ancestry* as that of Thomas Ansten of Wadhurst, 1602. When I read it, two items leapt out:

Item I will and bequeath unto Salomon Weare the son of Thomas Weare
and Elizabeth my daughter late deceased the sum of £10 of lawful English
money, to be paid unto him when he cometh to the age of one and twenty

⁶² CCA, DCb/PRC/39/14

years

and:

Item I will and bequeath to Thomas Nixson the son of my daughter Elizabeth late deceased to the sum of 10 shillings to be paid unto him within two years after my decease

Careful reading of the rest of the will confirmed my expectation that this Thomas (recorded on the will as Austen, not Ansten) also had a son John, and the whole story slipped into place. Thomas' daughter Elizabeth, who was baptised at Goudhurst on 10th August 1567 had first married Thomas Weare and borne him two children - Salomon and Margery, who is also named in the will. Thomas Weare had presumably died some time before 1591 and so Elizabeth married again. Her brother had taken her young son Salomon with him to Linton to broker her marriage settlement with Thomas Nixson, by whom she had later had another son. Salomon would have been too young to undertake the task himself; in fact he must have been very young, so it is possible that John's companion was a paternal uncle of young Salomon who shared his name. Either way, the combination of the names John Austen, Salomon Weare and Thomas Nixson, along with a sister of John in two separate documents is far too unlikely to be a coincidence, so in my opinion it is certain that John Austen was the son of Thomas Austen of Goudhurst and Wadhurst rather than the son of Robert Austen of Goudhurst and Horsmonden.



St. Mary Goudhurst

If I had entertained any doubts, these would have been quashed by the names each man used for his sons. John had christened sons named John, Jeffery, Benjamin, Robert, Francis, Peter, Richard and Thomas. The name Jeffery, his father-in-law's, can be left out of the equation. Thomas' sons were Thomas, John, William (who died young and is not mentioned in the will), Richard, Robert, Francis and Benjamin. Only William's name is not repeated in the next generation. A final

clinch, perhaps, is that John's son John, who died in 1650, left a bequest⁶³ to the widow of an uncle named Benjamin.

The will⁶⁴ of Thomas Austen of Wadhurst is long and detailed. He describes himself as a yeoman and asks for his body to be buried in the churchyard of either Wadhurst or Goudhurst. In the event, he was buried at Goudhurst on 10th October 1601 as:

Thomas Austen of the parish of Wadhurst householder buried

Despite this, he left 40/- to the poor of Wadhurst so perhaps his heart was in Sussex by this time rather than Kent. To his wife Margaret went:

all my movable household stuff and chattels lying and being in the parish of Wadhurst where I now dwell, except one dozen of silver spoons one silver salt and one pot covered with silver

These items were later bequeathed to his three youngest children. Daughter Marie, still unmarried, was given £200 and penultimate son Francis £100. There is then a tantalising reference to his son Richard, who was to receive:

all the household stuff and furniture for his working house which he hath of mine in his possession

The inference is that Richard has followed in his father's footsteps regarding occupation. It's a shame he is not more specific. John, who must have been the second eldest son, only received £10. Maybe he had already received his share to set up as a clothier; maybe at over 40 he was sufficiently well established not to need his father's money. Elizabeth's children Salomon and Margery received £10 each, and Thomas Nixson 10/-. Unfortunately, these are the only members of the next generation who are named. Instead of naming them individually, he gives the 'six children' of his son Thomas Austen 10/- apiece, and the same to each of the unnamed children of his sons John, Richard and Robert. The younger children are evidently not yet married and parents.

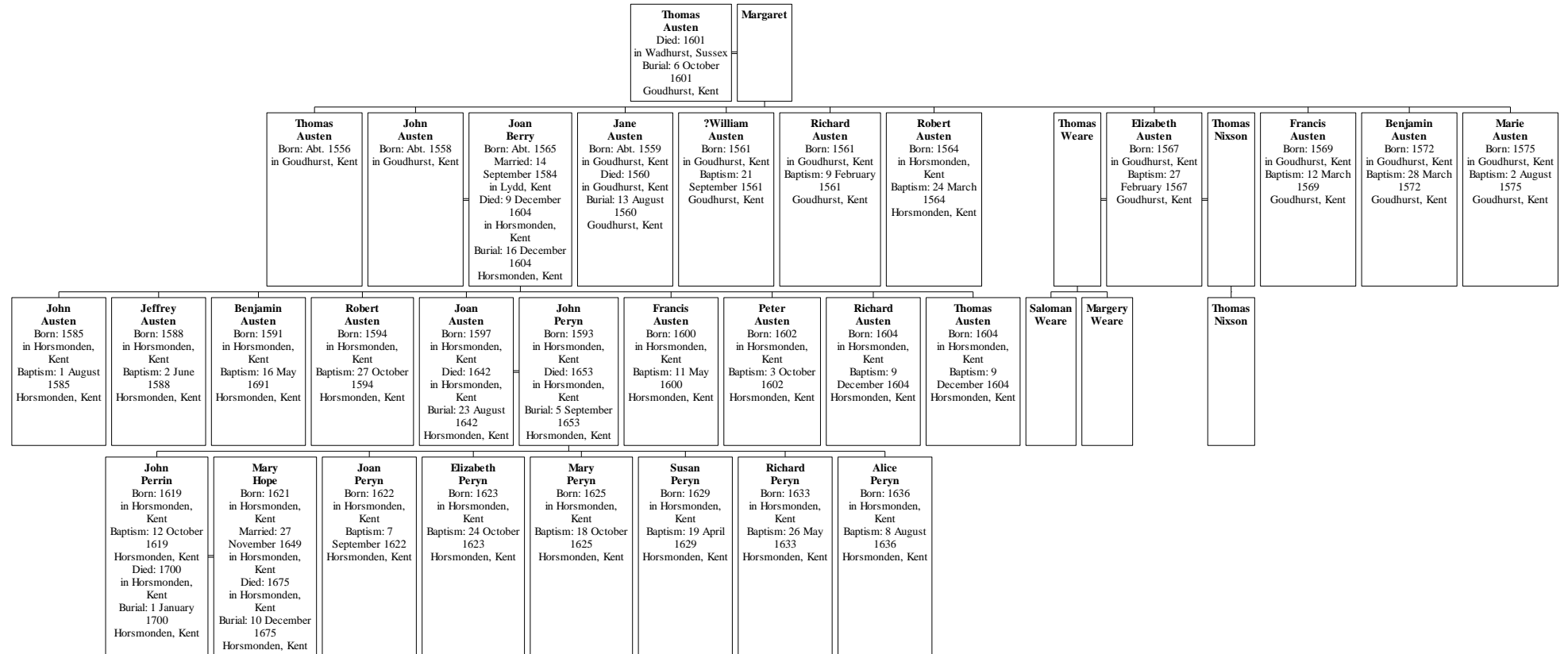
The next bequest is fascinating, and gives perhaps a glimpse of the standing of this family:

I will and bequeath unto my three children Francis, Benjamin and Marye all such linen and pewter as are locked up within the mansion house of my son Robert Austen, whereof myself do keep the key, and all one dozen of silver spoons, one silver salt and one pot covered with silver, which are now in my own possession, to be equally divided amongst them promptly after my decease by mine executor

⁶³ TNA, Prob 11/213, Will of John Austen of Horsmonden, 1650

⁶⁴ TNA, Prob 11/99, Will of Thomas Austen of Wadhurst, 1602

Tree 19 - Descendants of Thomas and Margaret Austen



For further Austen connections, see
<http://www.genealogycrank.co.uk/austen.php>

So Robert's house was a 'mansion', with a secure place to which his father had the key. In addition, in his own house he had valuable silver items. After that, the 10/- bequeathed to Sara Austen – no relationship stated – seems rather mundane. The residue of his moveable estate goes to Robert, while Thomas is appointed overseer, and given 10/- for the trouble.

The will then goes on to deal with his land, and it is clear that he has made a number of purchases in Wadhurst, including land from William Barham, who is also an ancestor:

I bequeath to my son Thomas Austen all my messuages withal my lands tenements and their appurtenances lying and being in the parish of Wadhurst viz one messuage with the lands thereunto belonging which I lately purchased of Richard Harte containing by estimation eight acres, more or less, lying in the parish of Wadhurst adjoining to a certain wood called Week Wood, and also all my land which I lately purchased of Robert Crutall containing by estimation 18 acres of land being in the foresaid parish of Wadhurst, also one messuage or tenement which I lately purchased of William Barham, videlicet one house barn and a shop one garden and two acres of land

The use of the word 'lately' maybe suggests that he had sold property in Goudhurst when he moved to Wadhurst. There is no reference in the will to any lands held back in Goudhurst. A final clause allows his wife Margaret an annuity of £20 on this land. The witnesses were his son Richard and the Vicar of Goudhurst, Richard Carter. Robert Austen proved the will on 27th April 1602.

The Goudhurst register records the baptisms of most of the children of Thomas and Margaret who were named in the will. Richard was baptised on 9th February 1561; Robert on 24th March 1564, Elizabeth on 10th August 1567, Francis on 12th March 1569, Benjamin on 21st December 1572 and Marie on 21st August 1575. Three others must have been born before the register was begun: Thomas, who judging from his inheritance was the eldest son, John of Horsmonden and Jane, who was buried as:

Janne daughter of Thomas Austen

on 25th August 1560. There is one other baptism of interest - that of William son of Thomas Austen, baptised 21st August 1561, only six months before Richard. Was this a late baptism; was Richard premature, or did William belong to another Thomas Austen? He is not mentioned in Thomas' will, so either died young or belonged elsewhere. Given the regularity of Margaret's pregnancies, we can surmise that Thomas, Jane and John were probably born in roughly 1554, 1556 and 1558 respectively, positing a date for Thomas' marriage to Margaret of around 1553.

Thomas' will gives one more intriguing clue:

I will and bequeath unto Stephen Austen the son of my brother Stephen

Austen late deceased the sum of five pounds

However, although I have found two pairs of siblings at around the right time named Thomas and Stephen (see *Untangling the Austens*⁶⁵) who could be Thomas of Wadhurst and his brother, no definitive proof has come to light.

There is nothing in the will apart from the presumption of wealth and the reference to his son Richard's 'workhouse' (which seems to be full of his possessions) to indicate what Thomas Austen's occupation was. However, clothiers tended to operate in dynasties, and given that other evidence shows Thomas junior, John, probably Richard, and Robert all to have been clothiers, it seems most unlikely that Thomas senior was not. The fact that he left land in his will reflects the mixed economy that was the norm of the time in the Weald, and does not necessarily suggest that he farmed land himself. A Thomas Austen senior, clothier, acquired a property named Courtesden⁶⁶ in Goudhurst in 1584, and Thomas of Wadhurst seems to be the only person in Goudhurst at the time to fit the description. If this is indeed our Thomas, he was a wealthy man, as he paid Richard Sharppye, also a clothier, £220 for a house named Courtysden and 14 pieces of land totalling around 45 acres.

Thomas Austen served as churchwarden, signing the register as such at more or less two-yearly intervals from the start of the register in 1558 to 1598, at which time he no doubt took an honourable retirement from the role. It may be that he retired from work and moved to Wadhurst at around this time, but there is no way of telling. If I am right in my surmise that Thomas must have married in around 1553, he was probably born between about 1525-30. He had earned his retirement by the end of the century.

In the deposition referred to above John Austen showed that he must have been born around 1558-9. On 14th September 1584, he married 16 year-old Joan Berry at Lydd on the Romney Marsh. She was the daughter of Jeffery Berry, and it is easy to speculate that maybe he owned some of the sheep from which the clothier's wool supply came, as the marshes were renowned for producing fine wool from local sheep. A year later, at Lydd, a Thomas Austen married an Alice Beree, and it is tempting to see this as John's brother marrying Joan's sister and then returning to Courtesden to raise their family.

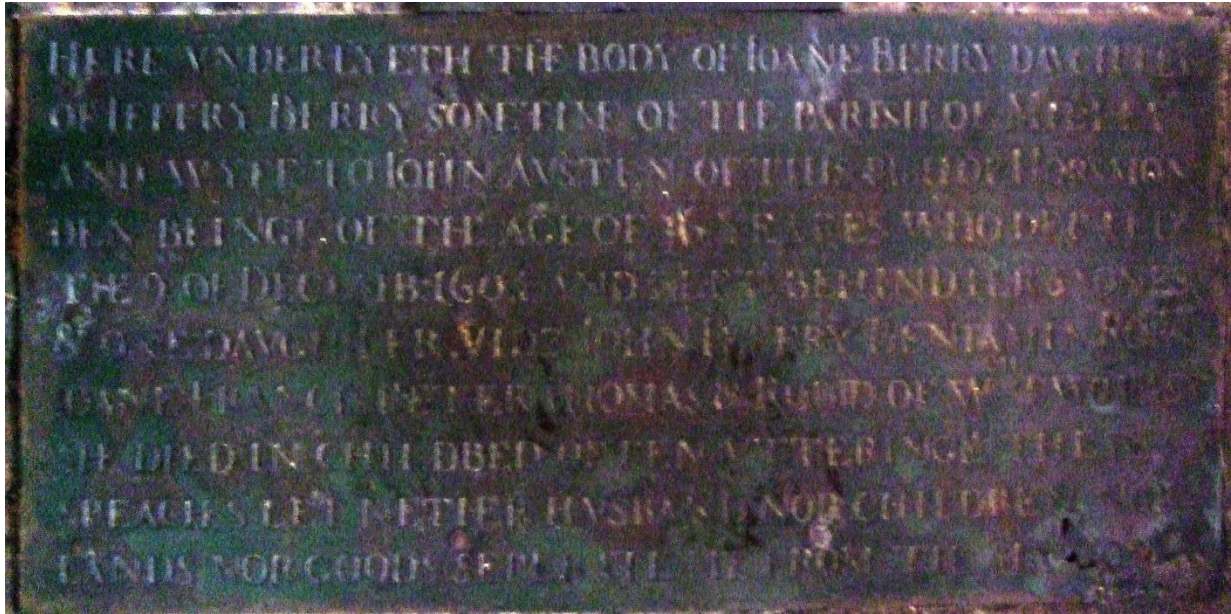
John and Joan's family began with John, baptised at Horsmonden (as his siblings were) on 1st August 1585; he lived until 1650. Jeffrey was next, baptised on 2nd June 1588; he predeceased his elder brother, dying in 1636. Benjamin, baptised on 16th May 1591 died the year following Jeffery, and the run of ill-luck continued as Robert, baptised 16th May 1591, died in 1638. Joan, who later married John Perryn, was baptised on 10th July 1597 and died in 1642. The most long-lived (I assume – some burials have not been found) was Francis. Baptised on 11th May 1600, he didn't

⁶⁵ <http://www.genealogycrank.co.uk/austen.php>

⁶⁶ ESRO, SAS-CO/1/57/882, Lease and Release, Richard Sharpe to Thomas Austen

die until 1688 – a great age at that time. Peter came next – 3rd October 1602, and on 9th December 1604, twins Richard and Thomas were baptised. This final double burden was too much for Joan, who was buried a week later:

The 16th day of December Joane the wife of John Austen was buried



Inscription on Joan Austen's monumental brass – Horsmonden

A splendid brass is still visible on the floor of St. Margaret of Antioch Church at Horsmonden. It shows a lady in elegant Jacobean dress and bears the inscription:

HEREUNDER LYETH THE BODY OF JOANE BERRY DAUGHTER
OF JEFFRY BERRY SOMETIME OF THE PARISH OF MIDLEY
AND WIFE TO JOHN AUSTEN OF THIS PARISH OF HORSMON
DEN BEING OF THE AGE OF 36 YEARS WHO DEPARTED
THE 9TH OF DECEMB: 1604 AND LEFT BEHIND HER 8 SONES
AND ONE DAUGHTER VIDZ: JOHN JEFFREY BENJAMIN ROBT
JOANE FRANCIS PETER THOMAS & RCHD OF W^{CH} TWO LAST
SHE DIED IN CHILDBED OFTEN UTTERING THESE
SPEECHES LET NEITHER HUSBAND NOR CHILDREN NOR
LANDS NOR GOODS SEPARATE ME FROM THEE MY GOD

Above the figure is another plaque, which says, in Latin:

AMICI SI QUAERIS TUMULUM QUI CONFECIT IPSUM.
FUIT JOHANNES MEUM MARITUS NOMINE AUSTEN.

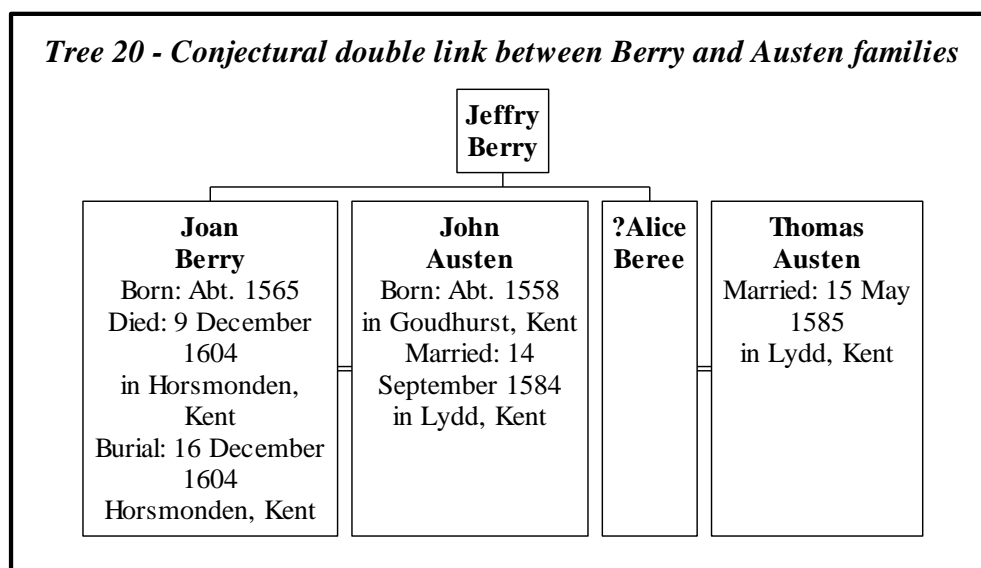
which translates as:

O friend, if you seek the grave of the one who prepared it,
it was John my husband by the name of Austen.



Monumental Brass commemorating Joan Austen

No trace of Jeffery Berry has been found.



John outlived his wife by several years, but was finally laid to rest with his wife inside the church on 5th March 1620. He was recorded in the burial register as:

John Austen snr

John Austen and his family left a considerable paper trail. In 1592 he made the deposition referred to above about his visit with Soloman Were to the house of Thomas Nixon. In the same year Thomas Hampden of London was involved in a bargain and sale⁶⁷ with John Austen, clothier; £500 changed hands – a huge amount at that time. In 1597 John paid tax⁶⁸ on his goods at £4 10/8. A couple of years later he appears in the Quarter Session⁶⁹ records as a yeoman of Horsmonden, with the accusation that:

on 22nd July, 1600, at Horsmonden, [he] ploughed up the highway extending two perches in length and two perches in width.

At the Maidstone Quarter Sessions⁷⁰ on 28th September 1602, he was called to answer the accusation that:

"A core or bancke" lying near a common bridge called Brodford Bridge in Goudhurst is a nuisance because it is damaging "An Arch" of the bridge. John Austen of Horsmonden has allowed the bank to remain for a long time.

⁶⁷ CKS, U101/11/B/13, Bond of Thomas Hampden of London to John Austen of Horsmonden

⁶⁸ TNA, E179/127/1597-8, Lay Subsidy, Horsmonden

⁶⁹ CKS, Q/SR/1/m.11, Quarter Session Records, 1600

⁷⁰ CKS, Q/SR/3/m.11, Quarter Session Records, 1602

It is interesting that Brodford or Broadford Bridge is recorded as being in Goudhurst. Broadford, the Austen house, built partly in the 15th C, was actually in Horsmonden parish but close to the bridge, showing how the family seemed to be living on the border of the two parishes. John finally appeared at the court held at Easter 1603 and had the audacity to ask for a day's grace to remove the bank. At the September court that year, it was reported that the work had been carried out. The inference is that John Austen was not too troubled by what his neighbours or the courts said.

About 10 days before his burial, John Austen made his will⁷¹. After an initial bequest of £5 to the poor of the parish, he willed to his executor, i.e. his eldest son John:

all my moveable goods in my house and plate and jewels whatsoever and also I give unto him all the corn and other provisions in my barns and all of the lease that I have taken of certain lands from Sir Henry Whetnall knight deceased

This makes it clear that even if he didn't own Whetnell's lands, John Austen had already leased at least part of it, although it may only have become a family possession in the time of his son⁷²:

Henry Whetenhall, in the reign of king James I. passed away the manors of Grovehurst, Hoathe, Smeethe, and Capell, together with a seat in this parish, called Broadford, situated near the bridge of that name over the river here, to Francis Austen, the fifth son of Mr. John Austen, of this parish, who dying in 1620, was buried in this church



Broadford Horsmonden

The rest of his goods were to be divided equally between his other seven sons: Jeffery, Benjamin, Robert, Francis, Peter, Richard and Thomas. Friends Jeffery

⁷¹ TNA, Prob 11/137, Will of John Austen of Horsmonden, 1620

⁷² <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=62911&strquery=whetnall>

Amhurst, the vicar, and Richard Weekes were named overseers. His only daughter Joan was not mentioned; presumably she had received her portion on marriage.

The rest of his lands:

in the counties of Kent, Sussex or elsewhere within the realm of England

were settled on John, to be sold with the proviso that each of his other sons received £100 from the proceeds. He also bequeathed an annuity to his daughter's son:

the said John my son shall pay unto my grandchild John Perryn yearly
for and during his natural life out of my lands five pounds of current
English money

There were a number of witnesses to the will: Ralph Rams, Jefferey Amhurst, Robert Austen, Alexander Osborne, Edward Russell and his daughter's mother-in-law, Audrie Perrin.

Much has been made in accounts of the Austen family of the grant of arms made to John Austen. These appear on the leger stone of his descendants in the church at Horsmonden, and are described in the *British History On-line* article about Henry Whetnall as:

or, on a chevron sable three plates, between three lions paws erect and
erased, sable

Deirdre Le Faye⁷³, Jane Austen's biographer, describes the arms thus:

argent on a chevron between three lions' jambs erased sable three
bezants

There are minor discrepancies here, between silver and gold, for example, but essentially, the arms described are the ones allowed to the Austen family of Yalding by the College of Arms in 1574, and it is this fact that makes people assume a link between the Yalding family and the Horsmonden one. However, it is not unknown for the up and coming, or even the arrived to 'fake' a coat of arms, and some of the heralds at the time were probably not above a bribe. In addition, similar arms:

or, a chevron gules between three lions' gambs erect and erased (sable)

were granted to William Austen of Tenterden in 1619⁷⁴. There were clearly several branches of the Austen family given the right to bear a coat of arms.

Joan Austen's brothers can be traced largely through their wills. John, the eldest, never married. He was buried at Horsmonden on 30th September 1650,

⁷³ *Jane Austen A Family Record* Deidre Le Faye, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989

⁷⁴ *The Visitation of Kent, 1619*

having left a detailed will⁷⁵. In this, he names the children of his dead brother Benjamin as John, Mary, Jeffery, Joan and William; and makes it clear that his brothers Richard and Peter have a number of children each, but doesn't name them. John son of brother Jeffery appears as well. As mentioned above, he gives his nephew John Perryn £100 in recompense for the £5 annuity left him by his grandfather, and also wills £30 to his niece Susannah Perryn and £20 each to her sisters Joan, Elizabeth, Mary and Alice. The children of his brother Robert are named as Jeffery, Ann and Joan. He makes his brother Francis his executor, and then in the section dealing with his lands, he first names his brother Thomas. However, it is the next item which is perhaps the most significant, in which he gives:

unto Elizabeth Austen widow late the wife of my Uncle Benjamin £5

The only Benjamin Austen who seems to have been recorded in Horsmonden was the one baptised in 1572 as the son of Robert. He and his wife Elizabeth Bishoppe baptised children named Saloman, Mary and Robert at Horsmonden, but Elizabeth was buried there in 1614 as the widow of Benjamin so can't be the woman mentioned in the 1650 will as the mother of John's cousins, named in the will as Peter and Benjamin. This confirms once again the link to the family of Thomas Asten of Goudhurst and Wadhurst, whose son Benjamin was also born in 1572.

A clause towards the end of the will shows the mindset of the 17th century landowner and the importance of wood in an area which still largely built timber-framed houses:

my will and mind is that my executor shall not fell..... any of the timber trees growing.. upon the lease land which I hold from Thomas Whetenhall [to be kept for repairs etc on Grovehurst House. If the house be sold, a clause shall keep the timber for repairing the house, buildings fences enclosures thereunto belonging. However, wood from the Hooke Wood can be felled.]

The next three brothers all died before John. Jeffery was buried at Horsmonden on 19th March 1636 and his wife, the erstwhile Elizabeth Apesley, followed him on 1st October 1638. In her will⁷⁶ she describes herself as:

late wife of Jefferie Austen

and divides her possessions between her children John and Mary. Benjamin, who had been married to Suzanne Brattle, died in 1637. In his will⁷⁷ he describes himself as a clothier, and names his children as John, Mary, Joan, Benjamin, Jeffery and William. Robert, who died the following year, was also a clothier, but based at Brenchley. His will⁷⁸, which, although written in 1638 was not probated until 1645, mentions his wife Elizabeth (née Keyley?) and his children John, Jeffery and Anne.

⁷⁵ TNA, Prob 11/213, Will of John Austen of Horsmonden, 1650

⁷⁶ TNA, Prob 11/178, Will of Elizabeth Austen of Horsmonden, 1638

⁷⁷ TNA, Prob 11/174, Will of Benjamin Austen of Goudhurst, 1637

⁷⁸ TNA, Prob 11/194, Will of Robert Austen of Brenchley, 1645

Francis Austen, from whom the novelist Jane descends, was, although the fifth brother, the next surviving one when his oldest brother John died, so inherited Broadford and Grovehurst. He outlived his wife Ellen, and presumably many of his children too. Eleanor and John's baptism has not been found, but Francis, Mary, Thomas, Ann, Francis, Elizabeth and Samuel were all baptised at Goudhurst. Of these, only Eleanor, John and Mary are mentioned in his will⁷⁹, though there is a healthy crop of grandchildren.

Peter, the sixth brother, also died in 1638, and was buried at Horsmonden. His will⁸⁰ is just a brief memorandum, probably nuncupative, made in the presence of John Austen – his brother presumably, and his wife Elizabeth. It simply leaves everything to his wife to bring up his young children. These are not named, but the baptism register shows them to have been Joan, born 1633, and Peter and Thomas baptised 1637. The Austen family suffered five, maybe six fairly untimely deaths between 1636 and 1638. These three years were ones of high plague mortality, and it is interesting to speculate whether this had anything to do with this spate of Austen deaths. No wills or burial records have been found for the twins, Richard and Thomas, though both were alive when their brother John made his will in 1650.

The Hopes can be traced in Horsmonden for several generations. Mary or Marie Hope, who married John Perrin in 1649, was the daughter of Thomas Hope and an unknown mother. She was baptised on 11th November 1621, but the Horsmonden register, which records her as Mary, only gives the father's name. The same register calls her Marie when she married, but it seems most likely that this was just an alternative spelling rather than that she pronounced Marie as we would, especially as the same register again records her as Mary when she was buried on 10th December 1675:

Mary Perrin wife of John

Her father Thomas' baptism has not been found, nor his marriage, although his father's will links him to siblings who were baptised at Horsmonden. Thomas and his wife had four children at Horsmonden: Susan, the first, was baptised on 1st December 1617, and twenty-one years later married John Osborne there on 6th December 1638. George, baptised on 5th December 1619 later married a wife named Joane. Mary came next, and Thomas was last, another winter baby, baptised on 21st January 1624.

In 1630, on the Tuesday after Close of Easter, Thomas Hope was sworn as a juror for the body of the county at a General Session of the Peace at Maidstone⁸¹. Initially, this makes him seem like an upstanding citizen, but the same document records that:

Thomas Hope, constable of the Half-hundred of Horsmonden, has not yet

⁷⁹ TNA, Prob 11/391, Will of Francis Austen of Grovehurst in Horsmonden, 1688

⁸⁰ CKS, DRb/PWR/22/300, Will of Peter Austen of Horsmonden, 1638

⁸¹ CKS, Q/SRp/m.l.r., General Session of the Peace at Maidstone, 6.4.1630

paid his share of the money owed for the House of Correction, Gaol, maimed soldiers and county stock, for the last year. William Gouldsmyth, Constable of the Half-hundred of Brenchley, sworn



St. Margaret of Antioch Horsmonden

Despite this, he still seems to have been sworn as constable again at the end of the entry. A similar document⁸², undated, but seemingly close in time, accuses him of a similar 'crime' along with others:

John Ware, a constable of the Hundred of Axton, Joseph Byngam, constable of the Hundred of Little and Lesnes, and Thomas Hope, a constable of the Hundred of Brenchley, have not paid to the treasurer for maimed soldiers and county stock the money due from their hundreds, that is 42s. 3d., 26s. and 17s. respectively. By James Rawlinson, Treasurer.

The fact that Thomas Hope is now acting as constable of Brenchley, and that other constables have also failed to hand over the money almost looks like a concerted act of civil disobedience, either by the constables or by the local populace. This was the period of Charles I's 'personal rule', and in 1629, merchants attempted a tax strike on the basis that the king was violating the rule of 'no taxation without consent'. A leading merchant, Richard Chambers, was imprisoned and fined £2,000 for speaking out⁸³, and commented that:

merchants were in no part of the world so screwed and wrung as in England

⁸² CKS, Q/SRp/m.1r.,

⁸³ <http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/361/361-25.htm>

Thomas' occupation is not known, but his son-in-law and many of his neighbours were clothiers, i.e. merchants, and the fact that he leaves his three younger children £200 apiece suggests a level of income commensurate with such an occupation.

Thomas' will⁸⁴, written on 20th October 1638, is the only other source of information about him. His wife was presumably already dead, as there is no provision for her and the younger children are placed in the care of their brother. He gave 40/- to the poor of Horsmonden before turning to his bequests for his children. George, his eldest son and executor, was tasked with selling:

all that my messuage or tenement wherein I now dwell in Horsmonden
aforesaid with all and singular the lands tenements hereditaments
whatsoever thereunto belonging

when he attained the age of 24 and from the proceeds paying each of his siblings £200. The remainder is to be his. The will was witnessed by Mary Collier, 14 year-old Thomas junior and Robert Atherton. Thomas senior presumably died soon after, as George was granted probate on 14th December the same year.

Thomas Hope was presumably the eldest son of John Hope and his wife Susanna Portar, as he is the first of their offspring to be mentioned in his father's will. This suggests a birth sometime between his parents' marriage at Horsmonden on 26th February 1590 and his brother Richard's baptism there on 23rd June 1595. Two daughters named Susanna were baptised: one on 23rd January 1602 - but she was buried on 19th June the following year - the other on 5th August 1604. No baptism has been found for the third son, John. Like his son Thomas, John also makes an appearance in the quarter session records⁸⁵, but in this instance he was definitely the wronged party. The calendar records:

Joan Walker of Horsmonden, spinster, on 4th January, 1602/3, at
Horsmonden, entered the barn of John Hope and stole "a pecke of
wheate" worth 8d. belonging to John Hope.

The record doesn't say whether he gained redress. He also appears in the Lay Subsidy Records⁸⁶, assessed at over £8 on his goods, although the entry may also refer to his father.

Baptised on 18th July 1568, John was a relatively young man when he died in January 1609/10. He was buried on 11th January, less than 7 months after his father. In his will⁸⁷, dated 8th January, he gives his occupation as sickle maker. Whether he specialised completely - sickles would be important tools when crops were harvested by hand, or did general blacksmithing as well can only be guessed. However, he gave 20/- to the poor of Horsmonden and 6/8 to:

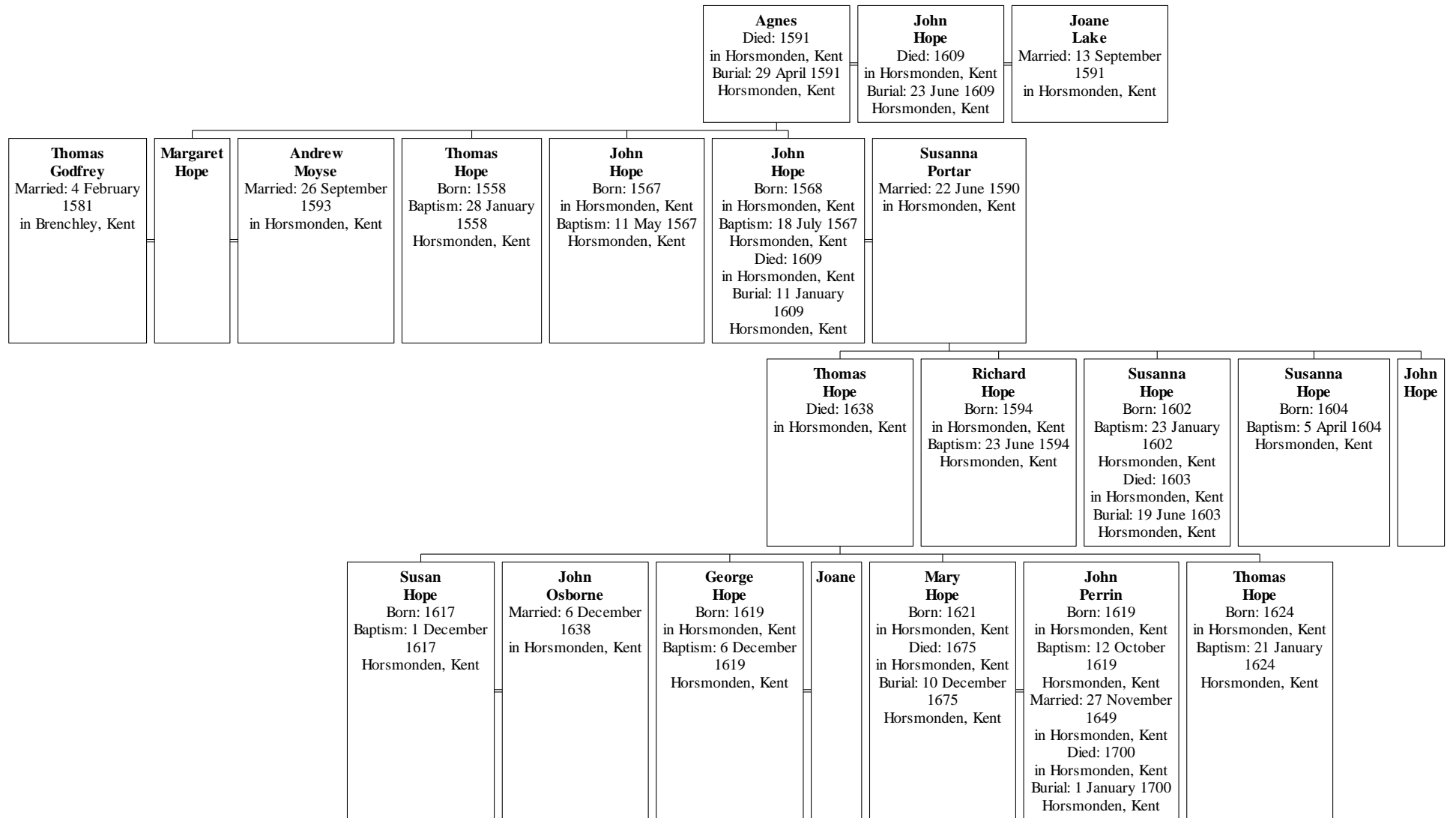
⁸⁴ CKS, DRb/Pwr/22/293. Will of Thomas Hope of Horsmonden, 1638

⁸⁵ CKS, Q/SR/4/m.1d, 3.5.1603

⁸⁶ CKS, E179/127/515, Lay Subsidy, 1597-8

⁸⁷ CKS, DRb/Pwr/20/71, Will of John Hope of Horsmonden, 1609

Tree 21 - Descendants of John Hope



every of my men servants

Unfortunately, he doesn't say how many, but the phrasing suggests more than one or two.

He bequeaths £100 to his only daughter Susan, and a small sum to each of his sister Margaret's children - 30/ to George Godfrey and 6/8 each to his sister Agnes and half-siblings William and Catherine Moyse. The records show that Margaret Hope had married Thomas Godfrey in Brenchley in 1681/2 and after his death Andrew Moyse in 1593 at Horsmonden.

It is clear that John's own father had only recently died as the next item covers his will:

my will and mind is, that Susan my wife her executors or assigns shall pay
all such legacies as are yet to paid by the last will and testament of John
Hope my late father deceased according to the same his will

Susan also receives the residue of his moveable estate and is appointed sole executor, assisted by John Brattle yeoman and Anthony Longley of Goudhurst as overseers. Susan also inherited the yearly profits from John's messuages and tenements in Horsmonden, with the proviso that, when his sons Thomas and Richard reached the age of 24 they would receive an annuity from these properties, Thomas £7 a year and Richard £6. He also specified that Susan was to be allowed:

ten cord of firewood and three hundred of faggots for her fuel
and firewood every year during her life

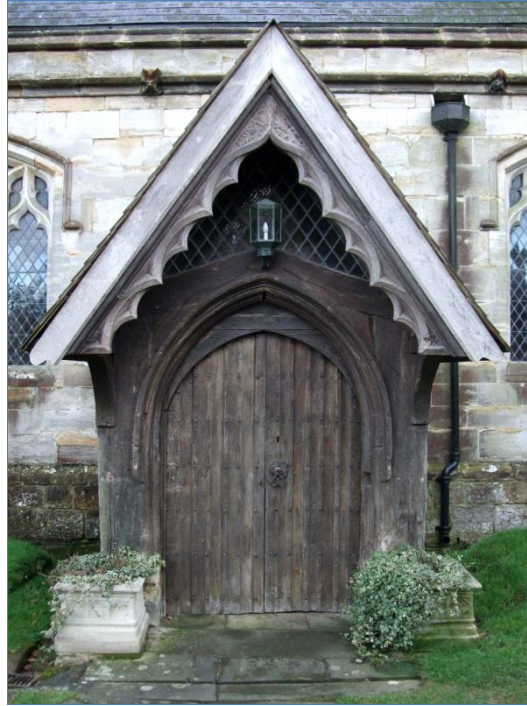
taken from his properties. After Susan's death, his property was to be divided up as follows:

unto the said Thomas Hope my son to his heirs and assigns for ever my
messuage and lands with their appurtenances wherein I now dwell lately
purchased of Menge, and my lands with their appurtenances lately
of Edward Baldock together lying in Horsmonden aforesaid on the north
side of the way there, and to Richard Hope my son to his heirs and assigns
for ever, my messuage and land with their appurtenances in Horsmonden
aforesaid lying not far from Gartefordsbridge and to John Hope my son to
his heirs and assigns for ever a tenement and land with their appurtenances
lately purchased of Gyles Surgante and my messuage and the rest of my
land lately purchased of the said Edward Baldock together lying in
Horsmonden aforesaid.

John Brattle, Anthony Longley and Saloman Were senior witnessed the will, which was granted probate on 17th March 1609/10.

John's father – also John Hope - had died only a few months before, and was buried at Horsmonden on 23rd June 1609. He would have been born before the

parish register at Horsmonden commenced, and probably also married, to a woman named Agnes, before records began as his eldest son, Thomas, was one of the earliest baptism entries, on 28th January 1558. The next child in the register is a presumably short-lived John, baptised on 11th May 1567. He was followed on 18th July 1568 by the John whose life is outlined above. No baptism has been found for Margaret; her birth may predate the register. She and both her husbands seem to have died before her father, as does her brother Thomas.



Porch – Horsmonden Church

John Hope senior probably lost his wife Agnes after a relatively long marriage, as although he took a second wife – Joane Lake – it was not until 13th September 1591, when he must have been quite elderly. Her will⁸⁸ shows her to have been a widow with children of her own at the time of her marriage to John Hope, which suggests a wish for companionship in their twilight years rather than the need for a mother for his children. John, who calls himself a yeoman in his own will⁸⁹ dated 21st June 1609, begins by bequeathing 20/- to the poor of Horsmonden:

to be distributed among them at the day of my burial, or within two months after my decease by my executor, in bread drink or money at the discretion of my executor

Joane was bequeathed a lump sum of £6 and:

one feather bed, one coverlet, two blankets, two pillows, two pairs of sheets, two pillow coats, all of the second sort

⁸⁸ CKS, DRb/Pwr/20/79, Will of Joan Hope of Horsmonden, 1609

⁸⁹ CKS, DRb/Pwr/20/71, Will of John Hope of Horsmonden, 1609

suggesting that she did not have a strong call on his estate. His deceased daughter's elder two children (George and Agnes Godfrey) were given £5 apiece, provided they made no claim on their father's estate, while the younger two (William and Katherine Moyse) only received 20/- each, suggesting perhaps that some deal had been done at some point between John Hope and his son-in-law Thomas Godfrey. The residue of his estate went to his surviving son John Hope junior.

It is a shame that the Horsmonden burial register does not ascribe an age to John Hope senior. He was married by 1558, but could have been so for some time. He lived as long as his son and heir, who had fathered five children of his own by this point. It is possible that John senior had married Agnes in the early 1550s, and could have been born around 1520, making him old enough to be the John Hope who was executor of yet another John Hope whose will⁹⁰ was proved in 1540. To make the arithmetic fit, though, John senior would have had to have been nearly 90 when he died in 1609. This is possible but it is also feasible that there is another generation separating these two Johns. It is also possible, but seems highly unlikely, that there is no connection. This earliest John, making his will only a short time into the Reformation, still made a bequest to the church:

I bequeath to the high altar for my tythes negligently forgotten iiiid

He was clearly a yeoman farmer, although he doesn't state this, as his daughters Joan and Allys each receive a year old bullock, sons Thomas and William are given two steers each, servant John Foster a cow, a horse and some wheat and Margaret Foster two sheep. Thomas also inherited his father's best coat (the second one went to John Foster) and his bow and arrows. The rest of the estate went to his executor, son John. This earliest John, who must have surely been born around 1500 to have had a son old enough to prove the will, must therefore have been either John senior's father or grandfather, making a total of five or possibly six generations of Hopes in this family living in Horsmonden.

See Part 3 for continuation

⁹⁰ CKS, DRb/Pwr/9/297, Will of John Hope of Horsmonden, 1540