

A Herefordshire Griffiths Family

And their Kin

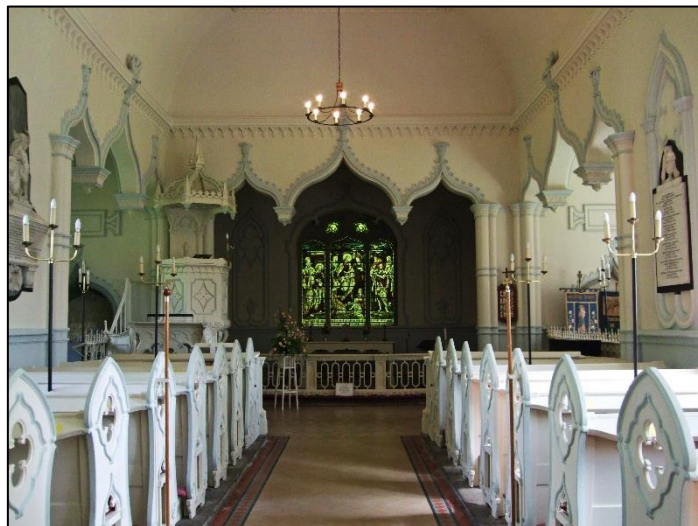
Part 2

The Later Martins - Shobdon, Eye and Leysters

The Martin line which produced Eliza Ellen can be tracked back for six generations and covers several parishes in the northernmost part of Herefordshire, eventually crossing into Shropshire. Eliza was born at Shobdon in 1861, a small parish, never getting much above 500 souls until the post-war period¹. Around 50% of the inhabitants worked in agriculture. Eliza was the only child of her parents:

26th June 1861; Eliza Ellen; Girl; Thomas Martin; Ann Martin formerly Morris; Farm Labourer; The mark of Ann Martin mother Shobdon;
23rd July 1861

She was baptised about 6 weeks later, on 4th August at Shobdon parish church. If her baby eyes had been able to focus, she would have been amazed by her surroundings. The interior of the parish church, which stands in the grounds of Shobdon Court, was completely remodelled in the 18th century by the Bateman family, owners of Shobdon Court, with designs said to be by Horace Walpole. So, the whole is a confection of pastel paintwork, detailed decoration and gorgeous ogee arches in what is known as Strawberry Hill Gothic after Walpole's over-the-top home. The local farming folk would have found it a far cry from the medieval churches they were accustomed to.



Shobdon St John the Evangelist

¹ https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10130955/cube/TOT_POP

Aged nine, Eliza was enumerated² as a scholar living in Shobdon village with her parents, Thomas and Ann. He was 45, an agricultural worker born at Leysters and Ann was 39, born at Shobdon. Under occupation is written for her:

Outdoor work chiefly

By 1881³ Eliza was in service at a house named *Shrublands* in Kingsland. There is still a house there with that name, situated on a private road, a large, white regency style house standing in a largish plot of land. The owner was a retired farmer named William Winnell and Eliza – or Elizabeth as she is recorded, was one of two general servants. She married William Griffiths in 1883 and thereafter her life was mainly one of pregnancy and child-rearing as the births occurred at two- and three-year intervals from 1884 until 1905 when her ninth child was born. As has already been said, she died 13 years later, in 1918.



Shrublands, Kingsland

Eliza's father, Thomas Martin, was born at Woonton, Leysters and baptised at the parish church on 25th May 1827 (see tree 20, p.92). By the time he was 13 he had already left home as the 1841 census⁴ shows him at *The Brook* at Kimbolton, in the household of farmer William Powell. As well as the farmer's family there are three servants, but Thomas' occupation is listed differently, and unfortunately, illegibly. I suspect Thomas was in fact a live-in labourer on the farm. His age is given as 15. By 1851⁵ he had moved on and was enumerated at Middleton-on-the-Hill as a servant and farm labourer in the household of another farmer, Edward Horsnet. This time, his age was underestimated as 22.

² RG 10/2719, 1871 census, Shobdon

³ RG 11/2607, 1881 census, Kingsland

⁴ HO 107/429/16, 1841 census, Kimbolton

⁵ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Middleton-on-the-Hill

Tree 20 - Descendants of James and Ann Martin

<p>James Martin b: 1791 Baptism: 13 November 1791 Eye, Herefordshire d: 21 April 1879 in Middleton-on- the-Hill, Herefordshire Burial: 25 April 1879 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Ann Hoggins b: 1793 Baptism: 25 July 1793 Pudleston, Herefordshire m: 22 May 1816 in Eye, Herefordshire d: 25 August 1876 in Leysters, Herefordshire Burial: 29 August 1876 Laysters, Herefordshire</p>
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<p>Mary Martin b: 1818 Baptism: 12 May 1818 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1839 Burial: 16 June 1839 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>James Martin b: 1820 Baptism: 15 October 1820 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1867 in Union Leominster Burial: 31 January 1867 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Elizabeth Lines m: 1852 in Leominster RD</p>	<p>Elizabeth Martin b: 1823 Baptism: 14 January 1823 Leysters, Herefordshire Burial: 5 April 1836 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>John Martin b: 1825 Baptism: 2 August 1825 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1902 in Onibury, Shropshire</p>	<p>Harriet Downes m: 1855 in Ludlow, Shropshire</p>	<p>Thomas Martin b: 1827 in Wootton, Leysters, Herefordshire Baptism: 20 May 1827 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 22 April 1875 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 27 April 1875 Shobdon, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Ann Morris b: 1832 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Baptism: 29 April 1832 Shobdon, Herefordshire m: 17 May 1859 in Shobdon, Herefordshire d: 9 June 1901 in Union Workhouse, Leominster</p>	<p>Henry Martin b: 1829 Baptism: 9 August 1829 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1868 in Leominster RD</p>	<p>Harriet Synnuck m: 1855 in Leominster RD</p>	<p>Eleanor Martin b: 1834 Baptism: 9 March 1834 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1918 in Hereford RD</p>	<p>Richard Parker m: 1858 in Leominster RD</p>	<p>George Martin b: 1836 Baptism: 20 March 1836 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Eliza Martin b: 1838 Baptism: 19 September 1838 Leysters, Herefordshire d: 1838 Burial: 13 October 1838 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Eliza Martin b: 1841 Baptism: 23 May 1841 Leysters, Herefordshire</p>
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<p>Eliza Ellen Martin b: 26 June 1861 in Shobdon, Kingsland, Herefordshire Baptism: 4 August 1861 Shobdon, Kingsland, Herefordshire d: 23 September 1918 Burial: 27 September 1918 Eye, Herefordshire</p>	<p>William Griffiths b: 7 March 1860 in Pole Lane, Leysters, Herefordshire Baptism: 1 April 1860 Leysters, Herefordshire m: 25 April 1883 in Kingsland, Herefordshire d: 9 April 1935 in The Old Priory, Leominster Burial: 13 April 1935 Eye, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Elizabeth Martin b: Abt. 1854 in Pudleston, Herefordshire</p>	<p>George Parker b: Abt. 1859 in Little Hereford, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Henry Parker b: Abt. 1861 in Little Hereford, Herefordshire</p>
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On 17th May 1859 he married in his bride's home parish, making his mark rather than signing the register:

Thomas Martin	full age	Bachelor	Labourer	Shobdon
James Martin		Labourer		
Ann Morris	full age	Spinster		Shobdon
Thomas Morris		Mason		

Eliza was born two years later. Thomas spent the rest of his life in Shobdon, it seems. In 1861⁶ he and Ann were enumerated at Shobdon with Ann's son Edward Morris, aged 6, as part of the household. Thomas' age had shrunk again as he was recorded as 31; Ann was 29. His final appearance was in the 1871 census⁷ when, still an Ag Lab, now aged 45, he was enumerated with Ann and Eliza in Shobdon village. He died four years later in a freak accident. The death certificate reads as follows:

Twenty second April 1875 Parish of Shobdon, Thomas Martin, Male, 45 years, Accidentally killed by falling from the top of certain granary steps at Lady Court Farm in the said parish of Shobdon, Agricultural Labourer, Certificate received from Henry Moore Coroner for Herefordshire Inquest held Twenty-sixth April 1875, [Reg] Twenty eight April 1875

There seems to be no reference to this unfortunate event in the local papers. He was buried on 27th April 1875 at Shobdon as:

Thomas Martin 48 Shobdon

Not surprisingly, given his relatively early death, Thomas Martin's wife Ann, née Morris, outlived him by some considerable margin; her life will be followed later.

Thomas Martin's parents were James Martin and Ann Hoggins. Although James had been baptised at Eye on 13th November 1791, he was living at Kimbolton when he and Ann married:

James Martyn bachelor of the parish of Kimbolton and Ann Hoggins spinster of this parish married by banns...
X James Martyn's mark
+ Ann Hoggins' mark
Witnesses: + Henry Oliver, X Mary Hoggins

I suspect the Mary Hoggins who witnessed the wedding was Ann's mother.

Unlike their son Thomas, James and Ann had a large family. It began with a daughter named Mary, baptised - like all her siblings - at Leysters, on 12th May 1818. She survived to adulthood but died at Woonton aged 22 and was buried at Leysters

⁶ RG 9/1833, 1861 census, Shobdon

⁷ RG 10/2719, 1871 census, Shobdon

on 16th June 1839. James was baptised on 2nd December 1820. By 1841 he had left home and may have been working as an agricultural worker at Avenbury⁸ though I think this is unlikely. In 1851⁹ he was in Leysters, lodging in the household of John Broom, his mother's first cousin. He was 30, unmarried and an Ag Lab. The following year, he married Elizabeth Lines but by 1871¹⁰ he had been widowed and was lodging with the Tudge family at Puddlestone as James Marten rather than Martin. A burial was recorded in Leysters on 31st January 1867 of a 44-year-old James Martin from Leominster Union, and I suspect it was of James and Ann's son.

Next born was Elizabeth, baptised on 14th January 1823. She had a short life and was buried at Leysters on 5th April 1836. John was baptised on 2nd July 1825, but was also gone from home by the time of the first census in 1841. It maybe he who was enumerated in that year¹¹ as John Marting, an Ag Lab at Pudlestone, aged 15, but he slipped through the net completely in 1851. However, on 25th October 1855 he married Harriet Downes at Stanton Lacy in Shropshire; he was living at Diddlebury. He and Harriet were in St Alkmund near Shrewsbury in 1861¹² but were in Onibury in 1871 and John, now widowed, was there in 1881, 1891 and 1901¹³. He died in the same parish in 1902.

The story of Thomas, baptised on 2nd July 1827, has already been told. His younger brother was named Henry and baptised on 9th August 1829. He was living with his parents, James and Ann, when he was enumerated at Woonton in Leysters in 1841¹⁴. James was 50, and an Ag Lab; Ann was 45; Henry 11, his sister Helen seven, George five and baby Eliza just one month old. 10 years later¹⁵, as a 20-year-old Ag Lab, he was still at Woonton with James - 50, Ann - 45 and nine-year-old Eliza.

In 1855, Henry married Harriet Synnuck in Leominster. In 1861¹⁶ they were living at Kimbolton, with a daughter Elizabeth and lodger Sarah Synock, Harriet's sister. Harriet had been baptised at Holmer in 1830, so was accurate in giving her age as 30, as was Henry who said he was 31. However, he gave Leysters as his place of birth, just to add to the confusion between him and his namesake uncle. Henry died at the relatively young age of 39 in 1868.

Eleanor, Helen or Ellen Martin, baptised on 9th March 1834, seems to have been the first of James and Ann's daughters to reach adulthood. In 1851¹⁷ she was in service with farmer William Callow at Kimbolton, but in 1858 she married Richard

⁸ HO 107/418/1, 1841 Avenbury

⁹ HO 107/1961, 1851 census, Leysters

¹⁰ RG 9/1830, 1871 census, Puddlestone

¹¹ HO 107/430/19, 1841 census, Puddlestone

¹² RG 9 1872, 1861 census, St Alkmund

¹³ RG 10/2724, RG 11/2614, RG 12/2080, RG 13/2506, 1871 - 1901 census, Onibury

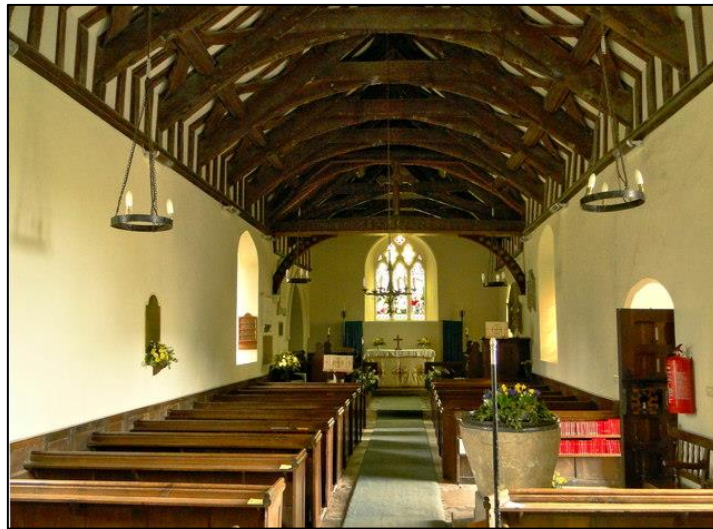
¹⁴ HO 107.430/1, 1841 census, Leysters

¹⁵ HO 107/1961, 1851 census, Leysters

¹⁶ RG 9/1830, 1861 census, Kimbolton

¹⁷ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Kimbolton

Parker in the Leominster Registration District. She and Richard were living at Upton Mill in Little Hereford in 1861¹⁸ and had two sons there – George and Henry - but by 1871¹⁹ they were at Miles Hope near Tenbury and in 1881²⁰ at Middleton-on-the-Hill. She was still there, widowed and supporting herself as a charwoman, in 1891²¹ but by 1901²² she was back in Leysters. In 1911²³, aged 77, she was still working - as a school cleaner. She died in 1918.



Leysters St Andrew

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George Martin was baptised on 20th March 1836, James and Ann's eighth child. He was at home in 1841²⁴ but by 1851²⁵ he too was a farm servant in the household of Thomas Tipton at Woonton, so close to home. After that, he disappears from the records, unless he is the George Martin who died in the Abergavenny Registration District in 1859. He was followed by Eliza, baptised on 5th August 1838 and buried two months later on 13th October aged four months. Another Eliza was baptised on 23rd May 1841 and appears, as already stated, on the 1841 and 1851²⁶ censuses, but after that, she too disappears.

The fact that the older children were sent to earn their keep as soon as possible and that the last three children probably died quite young, suggests a probable level of poverty in this labourer's family. Despite that, both parents seem to have lived to a ripe old age. Ann Martin, née Hoggins, was 83 when she died in 1876 while her husband was 88 when he died in 1879. Both appear in two further

¹⁸ RG 9/2083, 1861 census, Upton

¹⁹ RG 10/2713, 1871 census, Miles Hope

²⁰ RG 11/2604, 1881 census, Middleton-on-the-Hill

²¹ RG 12/2072, 1891 census, Middleton-on-the-Hill

²² RG 13/2492, 1901 census, Leysters

²³ RG 14/340, 1911 census, Leysters

²⁴ HO 107. 430/1, 1841 census Leysters

²⁵ HO 107/1961, 1851 census, Leysters

²⁶ HO 107/430/1 & HO 107/1961, 1841 and 1851 census, Leysters

censuses. In 1861²⁷ the couple was recorded at a cottage in Leysters, both as farm labourers. James owned to being 67, born at Eye while Ann, born at Puddlestone, was also uncertain of her age which she gave as 64. They were more accurate in 1871²⁸ when their address was once again Woonton. James said he was 79 and Ann 77.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when Ann died at Woonton on 25th August 1876, the cause of death was given as old age. She was buried at Leysters on 29th August. The same cause was given on James' certificate when he died on 21st April 1879. His abode was given as Middle Bank, Middleton, so I suspect he had gone to live with or near his daughter Ellen Parker, who registered the death and gave her address as Raddle Bank, Middleton. He was returned to Leysters for burial on 25th April. The register records his abode as:

Raddle Bank (Middleton)

and gives his age as 87.

Hoggins, Broom and Edwards – mainly Leysters and Pudleston



Puddlestone St Peter

Before continuing the saga of the Martins, a brief digression into the little known about the Hoggins and Broom families (**see tree 21, p.99**). Although Ann Hoggins was described as 'spinster of this parish' when she married James Martin at Eye in 1816, She was baptised, and possible born at Pudleston or Pudleston, a parish which butts on to the southern edge of Leysters:

²⁷ RG 9/1830, 1861 census, Leysters

²⁸ RG 10/2713, 1871 census, Leysters

Ann the Daughter of Thomas Hoggins and Mary his wife was baptis^d
July 25th

This was about 18 months after her parents' marriage, which took place at the same parish on 3rd November 1791.

Thomas Hoggins and Mary Broom disappear in terms of parenting for nearly ten years, for their next appearance is in the Leysters parish register, baptising a son named Richard on 2nd May 1802. Interestingly, in 1851²⁹ Richard gave his place of birth as Pudleston. By that time, his wife Elizabeth Mason, whom he had married at Orleton in 1825, had died, but there were still five of their offspring in the household. His death is recorded five years later in the Leominster Registration District. The only other known child of Thomas and Mary Hoggins was Elizabeth, baptised at Leysters on 5th May 1805, although she gave her place of birth as Eye in 1851³⁰. She married William Collins at Kimbolton – still close to home – in 1844. In subsequent years, such as 1861³¹ she put Leysters as her place of birth. She died in 1887.

Thomas Hoggins' origins are a mystery but Mary Broom was Leysters born, baptised on 8th December 1765, the daughter of Thomas Broom and Elizabeth Edwards. This couple married in the parish on the other side of Leysters from Pudleston – Middleton on the Hill. Banns were published there in 1755 or 1756 and the marriage followed in due course:

Banns published and marriage of Thomas Broom (s) and Elizabeth Edwards (s) both of this parish by Hugh Morgan Wit Samuel (Row)en (s) and Wm Cresswell (s) [transcript of BTs]



Middleton on the Hill St Mary the Virgin

²⁹ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Eye

³⁰ RG9/1833, 1861 census, Eye

³¹ RG9/1833, 1861 census, Eye

Although the marriage is recorded in the Middleton on the Hill Register, the incumbent seems to have been more concerned with fulfilling the stipulations of the Hardwick Marriage Act, passed in 1754, as the entry in the original register reads as follows – with no date:

Thomas Broom and Elizabeth Edwards both of this Parish were married by Banns (publish'd on three several Sundays as required by y^e late Act of Parliament for preventing Clandestine Marriages) by me Hugh Morgan

There was obviously a need for the marriage as Elizabeth, the first of a brood of ten, was baptised at Middleton on 20th July that year.

The other nine were baptised at Leysters, though one baptism gives the place of abode as the hamlet of Woonton in the parish. William was baptised on 18th June 1758, Susanna on 15th February 1761, Thomas on 25th May 1763. Then came Mary, followed by Peter – 6th November 1768, John – 21st March 1771, Richard – 4th July 1773, Benjamin – 2nd June 1776 and another Elizabeth – 1st April 1781. Thomas' baptism describes his father as a day labourer.

Presumably Leysters was not Thomas' home parish, as an entry in the Leysters Overseers' Book³² in 1759-60 shows the overseers presumably trying to remove him to settlement in his own parish:

For a warrant for Thomas Broom Jane Sorrell and John Parker	0 1 0
For fetching the warrant	0 1 0
For their three examinations	0 3 0
For two orders to take them to their parish	0 5 0

Generally, the overseers would try and remove anyone not belonging to the parish who was requiring poor relief, so presumably Thomas was in need of help at this juncture. However, the fact that only two removals were undertaken and that Thomas and Elizabeth went on to baptise eight more children in Leysters church, suggests that he had been able to make a case for his settlement there, maybe by securing regular employment for a whole year.

It seems that Thomas and Elizabeth were successful in raising most of their earlier children, although Elizabeth died in 1766. William as an adult crossed the county border into Worcestershire and married Mary King at Kyre Wyard in 1784, dying there in 1836. Susanna married Henry Rogers at Leominster in 1789 and died in 1848 at the ripe old age of 87. After a foray into Shropshire, where he married Elizabeth Beddoe at Ashford Carbonnel in 1788 and baptised a first child, Thomas stayed close to home. When Elizabeth died he married Mary Corbett at Pudleston in 1810 and had two more children. He, too, lived a long life, dying in 1849. Peter married Elizabeth Hoskins at Middleton on the Hill in 1892 and fathered a family before disappearing from the records.

³² HARC, N12/1 Laysters Overseers of the Poor Accounts 1701-89

Tree 21 - Edwards, Broom and Hoggins

John Edwards
Sarah Webb
m: 13 May 1731
in Kimbolton,
Herefordshire

John Edwards b: 1733 Baptism: 7 October 1733 Little Hereford, Herefordshire	Elizabeth Edwards b: 1735 Baptism: 7 September 1735 Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire d: 1785 Burial: 25 December 1785 Laysters, Herefordshire	Thomas Broom m: 1 January 1756 in Middleton-on- the-Hill, Herefordshire	Mary Edwards b: 1738 Baptism: 13 June 1738 Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire	Sarah Edwards b: 1738 Baptism: 13 June 1738 Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire
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Elizabeth Broom b: 1756 Baptism: 20 July 1756 Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire Burial: 26 April 1766 Leysters, Herefordshire	William Broom b: 1758 Baptism: 18 June 1758 Laysters, Herefordshire	Mary King m: 4 October 1784 in Kyre Wyard, Worcestershire	Susanna Broom b: 1761 Baptism: 15 February 1761 Laysters, Herefordshire	Henry Rogers m: 2 May 1789 in Leominster, Herefordshire	Thomas Broom b: 1763 Baptism: 25 May 1763 Laysters, Herefordshire	Mary Corbett m: 17 May 1810 in Pudleston, Herefordshire	Mary Broom b: 1765 Baptism: 8 December 1765 Laysters, Herefordshire d: 17 October 1854 in Laysters, Herefordshire	Thomas Hoggins m: 3 November 1791 in Pudleston, Herefordshire	Peter Broom b: 1768 Baptism: 6 November 1768 Laysters, Herefordshire	Elizabeth Hoskins m: 3 May 1792 in Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire	John Broom b: 1771 Baptism: 31 March 1771 Laysters, Herefordshire	Richard Broom b: 1773 Baptism: 4 July 1773 Laysters, Herefordshire	Benjamin Broom b: 1776 Baptism: 2 June 1776 Laysters, Herefordshire	Elizabeth Broom b: 1781 Baptism: 1 April 1781 Laysters, Herefordshire
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Ann Hoggins b: 1793 Baptism: 25 July 1793 Pudleston, Herefordshire d: 25 August 1876 in Laysters, Herefordshire Burial: 29 August 1876 Laysters, Herefordshire	James Martin b: 1791 Baptism: 13 November 1791 Eye, Herefordshire m: 22 May 1816 in Eye, Herefordshire d: 21 April 1879 in Middleton-on- the-Hill, Herefordshire Burial: 25 April 1879 Laysters, Herefordshire	Richard Hoggins b: 1802 Baptism: 2 May 1802 Laysters, Herefordshire d: 1855 in Leominster RD	Elizabeth Mason m: 14 November 1825 in Orleton, Herefordshire	Elizabeth Hoggins b: 1805 Baptism: 5 May 1805 Laysters, Herefordshire d: 1887 in Leominster RD	William Collins m: 20 October 1844 in Kimbolton, Herefordshire
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The younger children are more elusive. John Broom may have married Ann Cox at Monkland in 1794, but there are no definitive sightings of the others. Mary, sibling to these nine, who married Thomas Hoggins, outlived them all. Although no burial has been found, Thomas must have died before 1841 as Mary appears alone on the 1841³³ census at Luston, Eye, supposedly aged 80 and born in county. Her name is wrongly recorded as Higgins. The age allotted in 1851³⁴, when she was living with her daughter Elizabeth Collins, is more accurate at 84. Her place of birth is accurately given as Leysters.

She died in 1854 aged nearly 89. Her death certificate gives us a rare insight into occupations in this branch of the family as her erstwhile husband is described as a husbandman, a step above the status of labourer and suggesting that perhaps he farmed his own land rather than that of others. Mary almost certainly died of sheer old age as no cause is given:

Seventeenth October 1854 Leysters; Mary Hoggins; female; 89 years; Widow of Thomas Hoggins Husbandman; Unknown, No Medical Attendant; x The Mark of James Martin in attendance, Leysters; Twentieth October 1854

The entry in the Leysters burial register on 20th October gives her address as Pole Lane and her age as 88.

What happened to Thomas and Elizabeth Broom after all their childrearing is open to question. No further sign has been found for Elizabeth, but it is just possible that she died soon after her last child was born and that Thomas went to live with his married son in Kyre Wynard. The burial of a Thomas Brome there on 25th December 1785 may be of a child of William's, but if not maybe it is his father. Again, though this is well into the realms of speculation. In another fit of speculation it may be worth noting the baptism of a Thomas Broom, son of Thomas and Elizabeth at Yarpole, only seven miles away, on 28th February 1722.

Once again, it is the female line which can be taken back slightly further as Mary Broom's mother Elizabeth appears to be the daughter of John Edwards and Sarah Edwards. An entry in the Middleton on the Hill register in 1735 reads:

Elizabeth ye D^{ter} of John and Sarah Edwards was baptized 7^{ber} ye 7th

with the abbreviation 7^{ber} standing for September.

John Edwards and Sarah Webb married at Kimbolton in 1731:

Johannes Edwards Par de Middleton & Sara Webb par de Eye
13^o Maii p^r Banns

³³ HO107/429, 1841 census, Eye

³⁴ RG9/1833, 1861 census, Eye

Their first child, John, was baptised at Little Hereford on 7th October 1733. Elizabeth followed, baptised almost exactly two years later on 7th September 1735. There were two more girls, Mary and Sarah, both baptised on 13th June 1738, possibly twins. And that is as much as has been discovered of Ann Hoggins' ancestry.

The earliest Martins - Eye, Leysters and Richards Castle

Of the remaining four generations of Martins I have discovered, three of them are named James, just to add to the confusion. The first of these was the father of James, born 1791 and husband of Ann Hoggins. This James was baptised at Eye on 5th June 1768, the eldest son of James Martin and Hannah Cook. His mother's name was spelled as Hanna in the register. At Eye on 2nd May 1791, he married Sarah Jay, who was clearly already three months pregnant with James junior:

James Martin and Sarah Jay both of this parish, by banns, by Fra' Coleman, curate.

Both parties signed and the ceremony was witnessed by Joseph Hull and Thomas Burton.

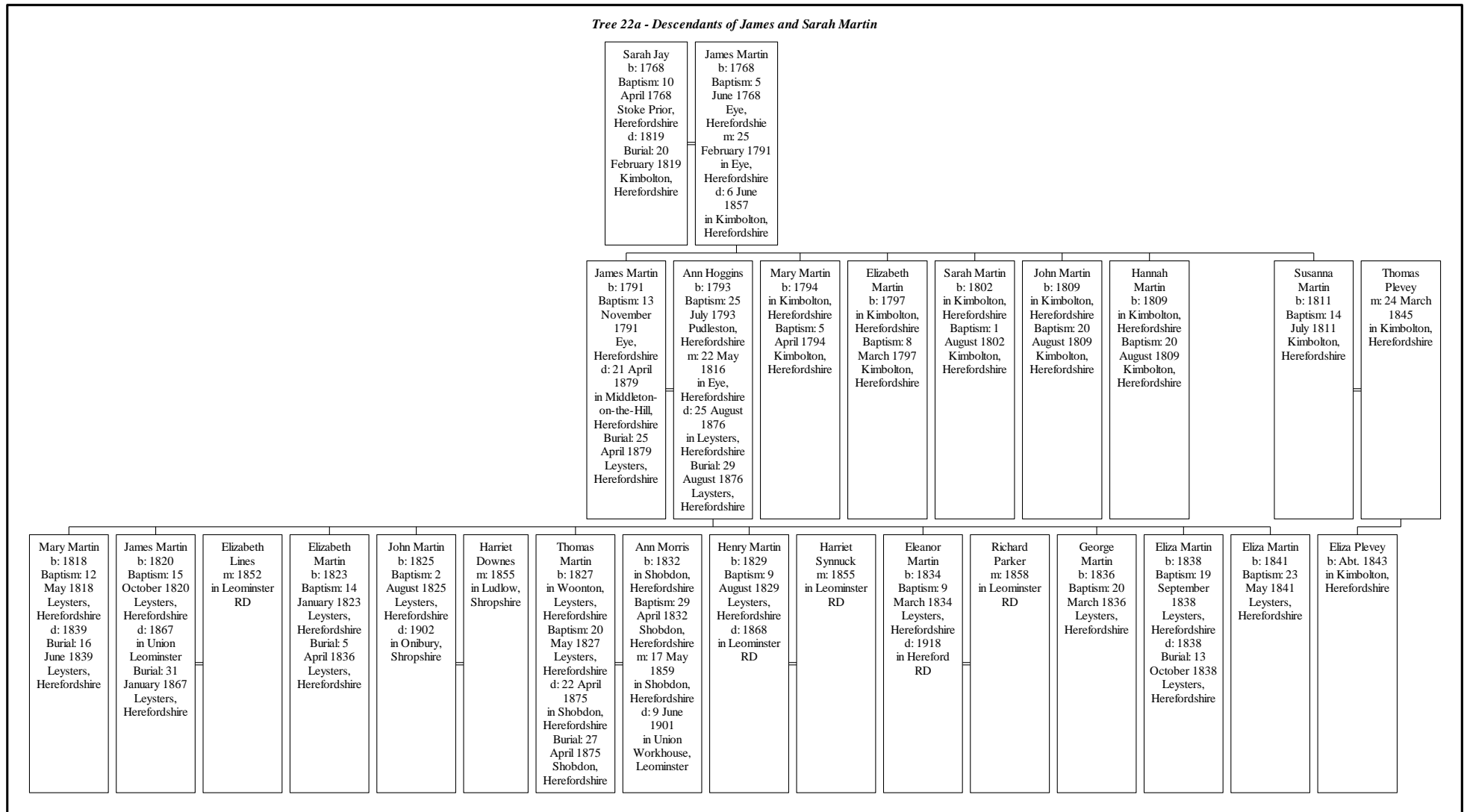
After the birth of James, in 1791 six others followed (**see tree 22a, p. 102**), mainly female, and baptisms all now took place at Kimbolton - the family lived at Stockton in that parish. Mary was baptised on 5th April 1794, Elizabeth on 8th March 1797, Sarah on 1st August 1802, John - the only other boy, was baptised on the same day as his sister Hannah on 20th August 1809 and Susanna on 14th July 1811.

From then until 1819 when his wife died, nothing is known of James' life, but, once widowed, he remarried, signing the register although his new wife made her mark. Mary Wright was also widowed and born in Much Wenlock in Shropshire. The ceremony, which took place at Kimbolton on 14th September 1820, was a double one. As his daughter Elizabeth married Thomas Williams on the same day and the two couples witnessed each other's weddings, presumably at least one of Sarah's children approved the match.

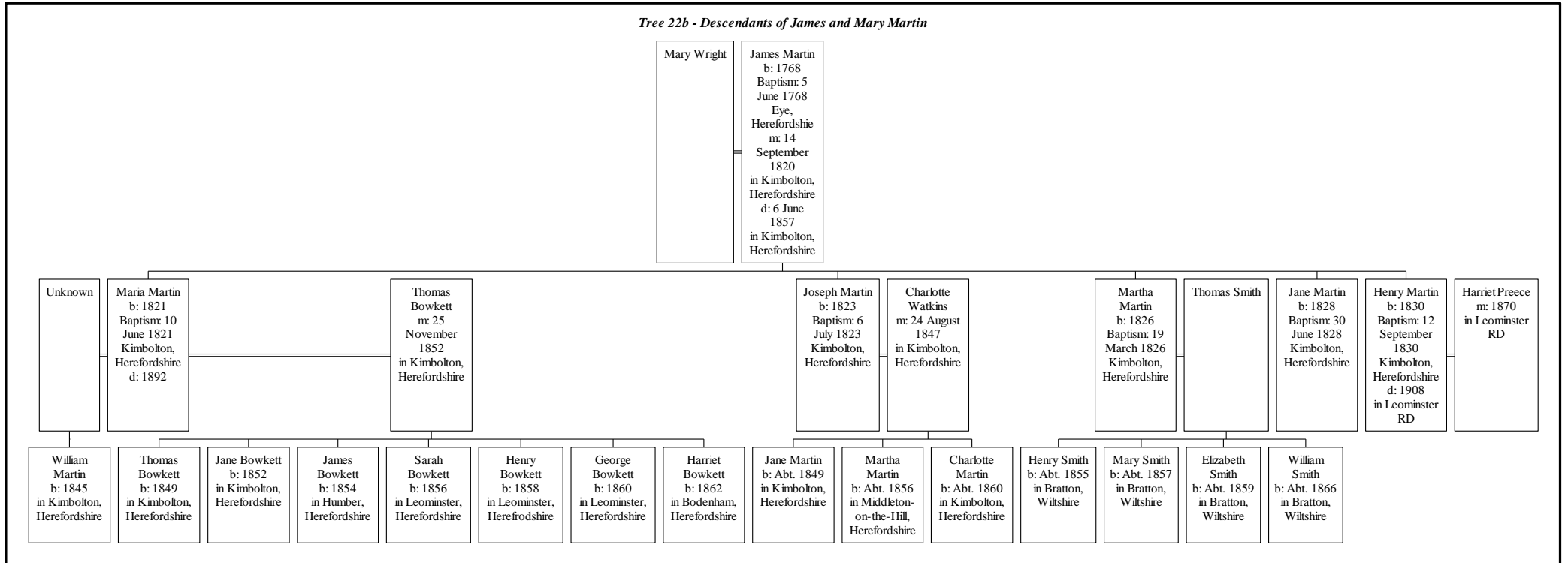
James was 52 at the time of his second marriage, but his wife was younger, possibly around 27 if she gave her age accurately in the 1851 census³⁵, and so she too gave James a string of children: Maria, in 1821, Joseph in 1823, Martha in 1826, Jane in 1828 and finally Henry was born in 1830 when his father was 62 (**see tree 22b, p.103**). As well as numerous, James' family seems to have been tough. At least nine of his offspring survived to marry and reproduce, so by the mid-19th century, Kimbolton and the surrounding parishes must have been littered with Martin genes.

³⁵ HO107/1981, 1851 census, Kimbolton

Tree 22a - Descendants of James and Sarah Martin



Tree 22b - Descendants of James and Mary Martin



In 1841³⁶ James was enumerated as a 70-year-old Agricultural Labourer, living in Stockton with Mary, aged 55, Jane aged 12 and Henry, 10. The 1851 census showed James and Mary as 82 and 58 respectively, and he was still designated a labourer. Jane and Henry had gone, but Maria was at home with two sons, William aged six and one-year-old Thomas.

James junior and Elizabeth's marriages have already been discussed. Sarah married Benjamin Bowdler in 1832; Hannah married Thomas Salisbury in 1831, and Susanna wed William Motley in 1835. Of his second family Maria chose Thomas Bookett or Bowkett in 1852, Joseph wed Charlotte Watkins in 1847 and Jane married George Aymer in 1849. All these weddings took place in Kimbolton church.

Because James Martin married twice and produced children over such a long period, his son James was already married and producing a family of his own by the time Henry - James and Mary's final child - was born. In fact, there was only just over a year between uncle and nephew, with the nephew being the older. Both were baptised at Kimbolton, and generally gave that as their place of birth in the censuses. Confusion was compounded by the fact that both married women named Harriet. So it is possible that I have misplaced these two men. However, I think that it was James and Mary's son who married Harriet Preece in the Leominster Registration District in 1870. Henry was lodging with the Philips family in Kimbolton in 1851³⁷ but seems to have slipped through the net in 1861. In 1871³⁸ he and Harriet were enumerated at Stockton in Kimbolton, where she is shown as nearly 17 years his junior, and they continued to live there until Henry died in 1908.

James' death certificate shows that he too lived to a ripe of age, living to be nearly 90 before he succumbed to sheer old age:

6th June 1857, Kimbolton; James Martin; Male; 89; Burn Limer; Natural Decay, Not certified; x The mark of Charlotte Martin present at the death Kimbolton; 8th June 1857

Charlotte was his daughter-in-law, wife of his son Joseph. I'm guessing that 'burn limer' should read lime burner. Lime burning was an ancient skill, essential to create lime for the mortar which had held buildings together since Roman times. By the time James was engaged in the craft, lime was also needed in vast quantities as a soil improver as it reduced acidity and made the soil more fertile. Essentially, lime is calcium carbonate. When burnt, it turns to quicklime which can then be mixed with water to produce slaked lime. The work could be done in simple clamps or more often in lime kilns, purpose-built for the job. The *Herefordshire through Time*³⁹ website offers the following insight:

³⁶ HO107/429,1841 census, Kimbolton

³⁷ HO 107/1961, 1851 census, Kimbolton

³⁸ RG10/2713, 1871 census Kimbolton

³⁹

[https://htt.herefordshire.gov.uk/1196.aspx#:~:text=Limestone%20\(calcium%20carbonate\)%20was%20burnt,used%20in%20limekilns%20but%20c.](https://htt.herefordshire.gov.uk/1196.aspx#:~:text=Limestone%20(calcium%20carbonate)%20was%20burnt,used%20in%20limekilns%20but%20c.)



Former lime kiln at Bringewood

[cc-by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) - © [Fabian Musto - geograph.org.uk/p/6757642](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/6757642)

In Herefordshire the typical kiln had a round top to the charge hole and was usually lined in stone, with the upper section sometimes in brick. It was a single kiln with two eyes, each with separate but adjoining tunnels. The eye would be in the centre of the rear wall and the arch was elliptical or rounded. The front wall (which incorporated the arches) is rectangular, made from rough coursed stone. Occasionally the arches and the vaulted roof may be of brick.

The story of Sarah Jay's family will be told later. In the meantime, we have yet another James Martin, father to the lime burner. This James was baptised at Leysters on 9th August 1730 as the son of Samuel and Jane Martin. He was 37 when he married Hannah Cook at Eye on 6th November 1767:

James Marten and Hana Cook boath of the parish of Eye was married by banns November ye 6th

Together they had six children, starting with James the lime burner. Mary was baptised on 13th January 1770, John on 24th October 1773, Elizabeth on 21st April 1776, and finally two sons named Henry, one baptised on 25th May 1779 and presumably short-lived, and the other baptised on 9th September 1781, at Eye like all his siblings. No definitive marriages have been found for any of the children apart from James, so maybe James and Hannah were less successful in raising their brood. The only other fact known about this James is the date of his burial, 20th February 1801, at Eye.

Information about Samuel Martin, or Martyn, is also sketchy (**see tree 23, p.107**). He was baptised at Richards Castle, a parish which lies part in Herefordshire and part in Shropshire in 1697 as:

Samuel filius Jacobi Martin et Elizabethae uxor ejus baptizata fuit 27^{mo} ffeb.
Anno predict



Little Hereford St Mary Magdalen

[cc-by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) - © [Philip Halling - geograph.org.uk/p/5798000](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/5798000)

He and Jane Rough married on 1st December 1726 at Little Hereford, which, as well as being equidistant between Richards Castle and Leysters seemed to be a popular venue for weddings:

Samuel Martin of Middleton on the Hill and Jane Rough of Leysters were married by licence

Apart from its popularity there are no real clues as to why the wedding took place where it did. The first child was born a respectable nine months after the marriage, but maybe the parents disapproved. The licence, which survives, shows Samuel supported in his bond by John Martin, probably his older brother, who, according to the licence, was a farmer. The obligation states that:

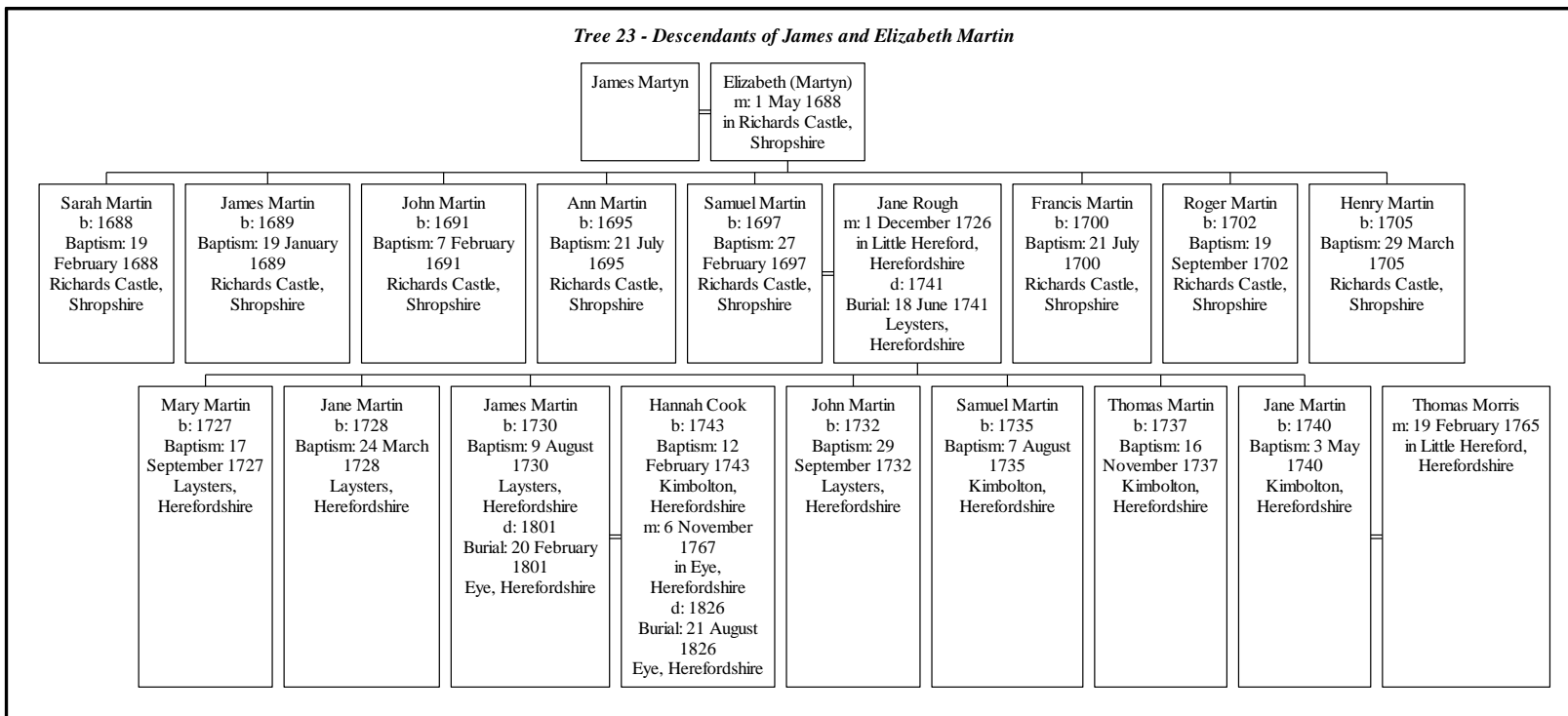
Samuel Martin of the parish of Middleton on the Hill ... Batchelor aged about 25 years and Jane Rough of the parish of Loysters [sic] ... aged about 26 years may lawfully marry together...

Specifically, the licence was for a marriage at either Middleton or Laysters, but they seem to have ignored that stipulation. Both Samuel and John made their marks.

Mary, the first child, was baptised on 17th September at Leysters; Jane was baptised on 24th March 1728; James followed in 1730 and John, 29th September 1732, was the last to be baptised at in Jane's home parish. Samuel - 17th August 1735, Thomas - 16th November 1737 and Jane - 3rd May 1740 were all christened at Kimbolton. Again, no marriages apart from James' have yet come to light.

There is a burial at Leysters of a Jane Martin on 18th June 1741. This could of course, refer to the Jane born the previous year, but there is no reference to the burial being of an infant. Samuel Martin's burial has not been found.

Tree 23 - Descendants of James and Elizabeth Martin





Richards Castle St Bartholomew

James and Elizabeth Martyn were married at Richards Castle in Shropshire on 1st May 1688. Maybe the May Day celebrations had caught up with the person who wrote up the register, as the bride's surname is frustratingly omitted:

Jacobus Martyn et Elizabetha matrimonio juncti fuerunt primo die

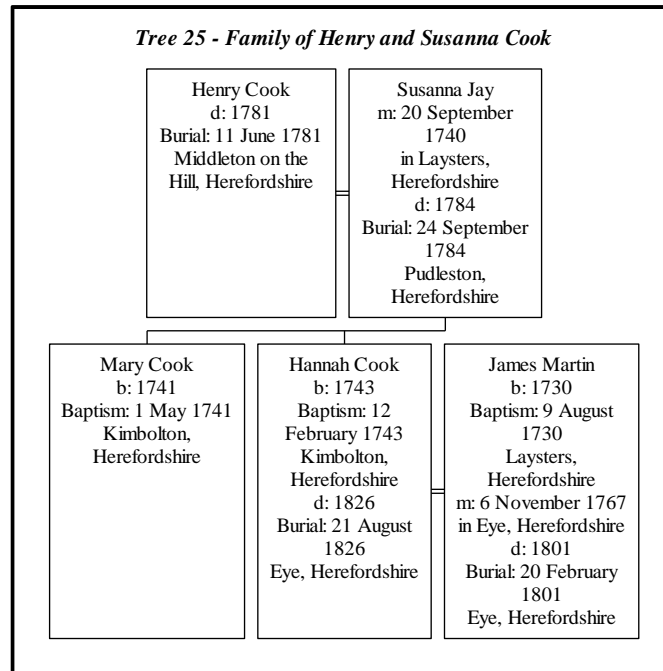
Their family were all baptised at Richards Castle. Sarah, James, John and Ann in 1688, 1689, 1691 and 1695 respectively. Samuel came next and then Francis, Roger and Henry in 1700, 1702 and 1705. Francis, whose forename is relatively unusual, probably married Martha Tipward at Middleton on the Hill in 1732, and stay-at-home Henry married Martha Jones at Richards Castle in 1736. Again, though, the common Christian names make it impossible to be sure that any of the possible marriages belong to members of this family. So here, the story of the Martin clan ends.

Cook and Jay - north-east Herefordshire

A very brief digression will cover what little is known about the families of the women who married the earlier generations of Martins. As has already been said, the Elizabeth who married the first James didn't even get her surname recorded. Jane Rough, who married Samuel, is unrecorded before her marriage, unless she is the daughter of William Ruff, baptised at Staunton on Arrow in 1709, which would make her almost a child bride.

Hannah Cook, who married Samuel's son James, is easier to trace. She was baptised on 12th February 1743 at Kimbolton, the daughter of Henry Cook and Susannah or Susan Jay (**see tree 24, p.109**). She married James at Eye in 1767 and presumably, after giving birth to six children there, was buried in the same parish on 21st August 1826. The entry in the register reads:

Hannah Martin, Leominster, age 88



So the facts don't seem quite right. However, my guess is that the '8' of '88' could easily be meant to be a '3' which would give the right age for someone born in 1743, and the suggestion of Leominster as abode could mean that in her extreme old age she had been moved to Leominster workhouse, which, even at that date, existed in the infirmary of the Old Priory. Her son James was, at that time, raising a young second family, so was possibly not in a position to support her.

Hannah's parents, Henry Cook and Susanna Jay, were married at Leysters in 1740:

Sep 20 Henry Cook and Susanna Jay married by banns

As well as Hannah, there was at least one other daughter, Mary, baptised at Kimbolton on 1st May 1741. There may have been another, named Ann, who was baptised twelve years later to a couple named Henry and Susannah on 16th March 1755 at Leysters with a note saying that they were of Pudleston. So it is possible that the couple moved around for work and that there are other siblings in the intervening years whose baptisms have been lost. No definitive burial has been found for Henry (there are two possibles at Middleton on the Hill, one in 1758 and one in 1781), but there is a burial at Pudleston on 24th September 1784 for Susannah Cook. The transcription reads:

Susanna Cook (Widow Pauper) was buried September 24th

Jay, Squire et al – Stoke Prior and north-east Herefordshire

Jay was clearly a fairly common Herefordshire name, as it turns up again in the ancestry of Eliza Ellen Martin, though in a different part of the county. Her great-grandfather, James Martin, born in 1768, married Sarah Jay, whose Jay ancestors can be traced back another two generations, and her Maund and Squire ancestors further still.



Stoke Prior St Michael

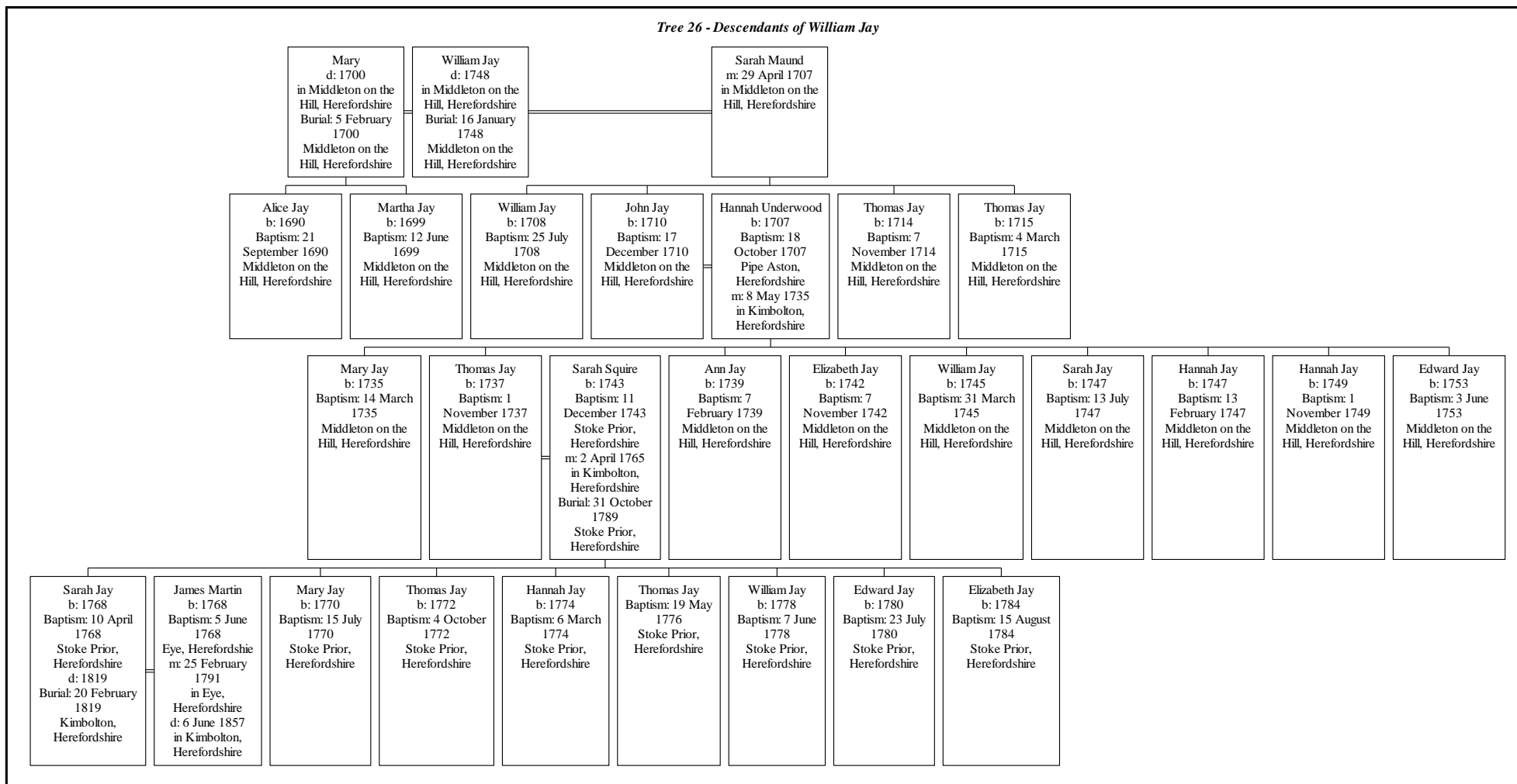
[cc-by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) - © [Rob Newman - geograph.org.uk/p/2746340](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/2746340)

Sarah Jay was born at Stoke Prior, to the south-east of Leominster, and baptised there on 10th April 1768 as the daughter of Thomas Jay and Sarah Squire (see tree 26, p.111). As has already been said, she married James Martin at Eye in 1791, and bore him seven children. She died when the youngest of them was nearly nine years old and was buried at Kimbolton on 20th February 1819, aged 51. And that is all that can be discovered. Like so many women of her time, little other than the vital events were recorded.

Sarah's parents, Thomas Jay and Sarah Squire, who married at Kimbolton on 2nd April 1765, are equally shadowy, but did the family historian a favour by being very conservative in the choice of names for their children. For a long time, I assumed that Thomas Jay was the son of William Jay and Ursula Maund and had been born at Kimbolton in 1729. It puzzled me slightly that Thomas had apparently left it so late to marry. Then I discovered another Thomas Jay, baptised at nearby Middleton on the Hill, on 1st November 1737 – a much more likely candidate, and son of John Jay and Hannah Underwood.

Thomas and Sarah baptised their family as follows, at Sarah's home parish of Stoke Prior: Sarah – named for her mother – on 10th April 1768, and Mary, named for Thomas' eldest sister on 15th July 1770. Thomas, baptised on 4th October 1772, was clearly named for his father but didn't live long as a boy with the same name was baptised on 19th May 1776. Between these two came Hannah, with a name

Tree 26 - Descendants of William Jay



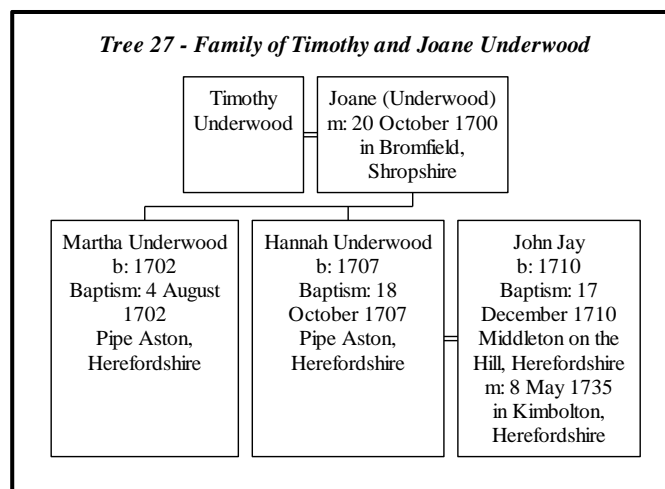
which appears twice in the generation above. She was baptised on 6th March 1774. The last three – William (7th June 1778), Edward (23rd July 1780) and Elizabeth (15th August 1784) all bear names previously given to their father Thomas’ siblings. None of these appear to have married in Stoke Prior or nearby parishes.

John Jay was also born in Middleton on the Hill and was baptised there on 17th December 1710, the son of William and Sarah Jay. He and Hannah Underwood married at Kimbolton in 1735:

John Jay & Hannah Underwood (both of this pish) were married May y^e 8th
by Bans

Their offspring mirror that of Thomas. A first child, Mary, was baptised on 14th March 1735, and married Thomas Preace at Middleton on 31st January 1762. Thomas came next, followed by Ann - 7th February 1739. She also reached adulthood and married James Smith at Middleton on the Hill on 2nd June 1763. Elizabeth may have died young as there is no trace of her after her baptism on 7th November 1742, but William – 31st March 1745 – probably married Jane Parker at Eye on 26th October 1767. Twins followed: Sarah and Hannah, baptised together on 13th July 1747. Hannah at least failed to survive as her namesake was baptised on 1st November 1749 and probably married William Vale at Eye on 13th May 1777. The last child was named Edward and was christened on 3rd June 1753.

Once again, information is scant. All that can be said of the next generation is that William Jay married a lady named Mary and fathered two children (Alice in 1690 and Martha in 1699) and that following Mary’s death in 1700 he eventually married Sarah Maund at Middleton on the Hill on 29th April 1707. The transcript for their first child, William, baptised on 25th July 1708, gives the mother’s name as Mary. It is impossible to say whether this is a mistake on the part of the clerk, or a transcription error. Mary and Sarah, rendered in Latin, do look quite similar. Our ancestor John came next, followed by two boys named Thomas, one baptised on 7th November 1714 and the other 16 months later, on 4th March 1715.



The Underwoods can also be dealt with quite briefly (**see above**). Hannah was baptised at Aston – later, when a pipe making industry developed there, the

parish became known as Pipe Aston. She appears in the register on 18th October 1707 as the daughter of Timothy Underwood and Joane, one of only three babies baptised at Aston that year. A sister Martha was baptised five years earlier on 4th August 1702. It is a good job that the register records the mother's name, at least in part, as the marriage entry in 1700 simply reads:

Timothy Underwood &

Marryed October 20th

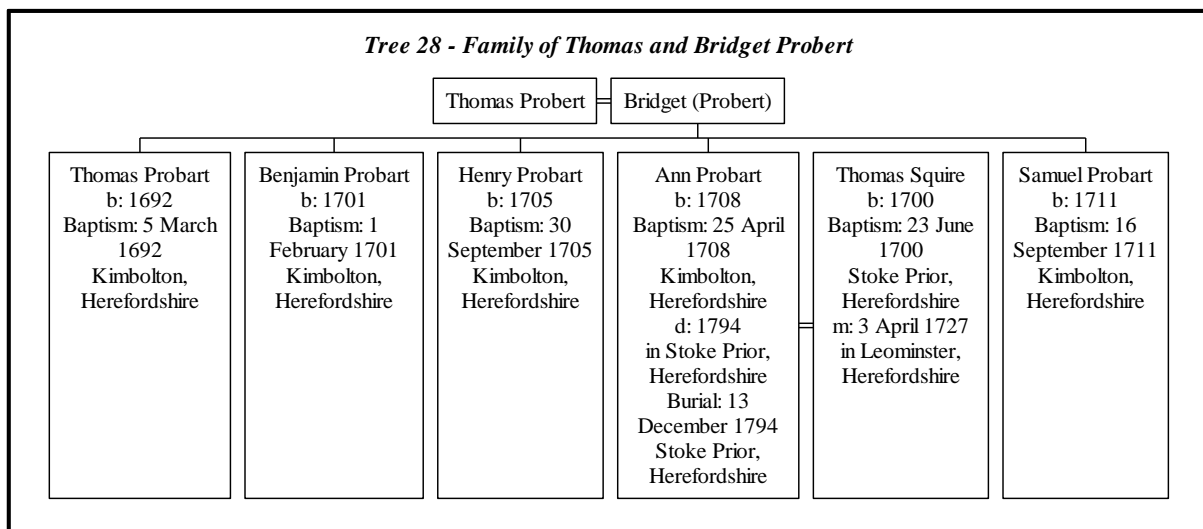
The wedding took place just over the county border at Bromfield in Shropshire, and the entry seems to have been squeezed in between other entries. Maybe the couple were not well known in the parish; maybe the record was put in later and by then the clerk had forgotten the bride's name as the couple had moved away. Maybe it was simply carelessness.

The Squire line is equally shadowy. Sarah Squire was baptised at Stoke Prior in 1743 (see tree 29, p.114):

Decr 11th Sarah daug^t of Thos^s and Anne Squire was bapt^d

and married Thomas Jay in 1765. She died when her youngest child was five and was buried at Stoke Prior on 31st October 1789. Her parents, Thomas Squire and Ann Probart seem to have been quite mobile. They married in Leominster on 3rd April 1727, and their first two children were baptised there - Thomas on 13th October 1729 and Benjamin on 25th July 1731. After that they moved to Humber, a small parish about four miles south-east of Leominster. Here they baptised Mary - 3rd October 1736 and Anne - 4th June 1738 before moving again to nearby Stoke Prior. Elizabeth was baptised here on 12th October 1740, followed by Sarah in 1743 and finally Martha, baptised on 10th August 1746.

Ann Probart was the penultimate child of Thomas and Bridget Probert (see below), following Thomas - 5th March 1692, Benjamin - 1st February 1701, and Henry on 30th September 1705 - all at Kimbolton. Ann was baptised there on 25th April 1708 and followed by Samuel, baptised on 16th September 1711.



Tree 29 - Descendants of John and Catherine Gough

John Squire	Catherine Gough m: 9 May 1686 in Staunton on Arrow, Herefordshire
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John Squire b: 1690 Baptism: 17 October 1690 Staunton on Arrow	Richard Squire b: 1690 Baptism: 17 October 1690 Staunton on Arrow	James Squire b: 1693 Baptism: 26 March 1693 Staunton on Arrow	Martha Squire b: 1695 Baptism: 27 July 1695 Staunton on Arrow	Sarah Squire b: 1698 Baptism: 12 November 1698 Staunton on Arrow	Thomas Squire b: 1700 Baptism: 23 June 1700 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire	Ann Probart b: 1708 Baptism: 25 April 1708 Kimbolton, Herefordshire m: 3 April 1727 in Leominster, Herefordshire d: 1794 in Stoke Prior, Herefordshire Burial: 13 December 1794 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire
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Thomas Squire b: 1729 Baptism: 13 October 1729 Leominster, Herefordshire	Benjamin Squire b: 1731 Baptism: 25 July 1731 Leominster, Herefordshire	Mary Squire b: 1736 Baptism: 3 October 1736 Humber, Herefordshire	Anne Squire b: 1738 Baptism: 4 June 1738 Humber, Herefordshire	Elizabeth Squire b: 1740 Baptism: 12 October 1740 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire	Sarah Squire b: 1743 Baptism: 11 December 1743 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire Burial: 31 October 1789 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire	Thomas Jay b: 1737 Baptism: 1 November 1737 Middleton on the Hill, Herefordshire m: 2 April 1765 in Kimbolton, Herefordshire	Martha Squire b: 1746 Baptism: 10 August 1746 Stoke Prior, Herefordshire
---	--	--	---	---	---	--	---

Thomas Squire was the son of John and Catherine Squire, and with his baptism at Stoke Prior on 23rd June 1700 we get a tiny bit of information about his father. The entry reads:

Thomas son of John Squire limer and Catherine his wife baptised

So he, too, like his great-grandson, James Martin, was a lime burner. I wonder whether the intervening generations followed the same occupation.

John Squire and Catherine Gough married at Staunton on Arrow, nearly ten miles west of Leominster, on 9th May 1686. Their first five children were baptised there; twins Richard and James on 17th October 1690 (unless one was a late baptism), James again on 26th March 1693, Martha on 27th July 1695, and Sarah on 12th November 1698. It was only our ancestor Thomas who was baptised at Stoke Prior at the turn of the century. Of Catherine Gough's origins nothing is known.

It is frustrating that there is so little information available about these people. So often, even the burial records are missing, and none of these characters seem to have left a paper trail in terms of wills or land transactions. I suspect they scratched a living labouring for local farmers and moving to wherever there was work to be had. Despite this, many of them seem to have had numerous children and raised several of them to adulthood.

Morris - Shobdon

Ann Morris, who married Thomas Martin and was the mother of Eliza Ellen, spent most of her life in Shobdon. She was baptised there on 29th April 1832 - with her abode given as Downwood - the daughter of Thomas Morris, mason, and his wife Susan. Nothing is known of her childhood, but no doubt as soon as she was old enough she went into service, like so many others in this story. In 1851⁴⁰ she was working in her home village as a general servant in the household of William Oven, blacksmith and grocer. At the age of 23 she gave birth to a son named Edward, who later appeared on the 1871 census⁴¹ working as a farm servant for a local farmer, William Edwards.

Edward was baptised on 19th August 1855, but no father's name was given. However, when he married Mary Jones at Bleddfa in Radnorshire in 1876, he gave his father's name as George Powis. The census return at Bleddfa in 1881⁴² confirms that Edward was born at Shobdon, and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his father's name, especially as there was a George Powis, journeyman wheelwright,

⁴⁰ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁴¹ RG10/2719, 1871 census, Shobdon

⁴² RG11/5474, 1881 census, Bleddfa

enumerated in 1851⁴³ at nearby Aymestrey. The same man appears in 1861⁴⁴ in Kensington and giving Shobdon as his birthplace. Was it the bright lights of London which appealed, or the need to get away from a possible shotgun marriage? Whatever the truth, in 1861 he was married, with three children under four, and running a café.

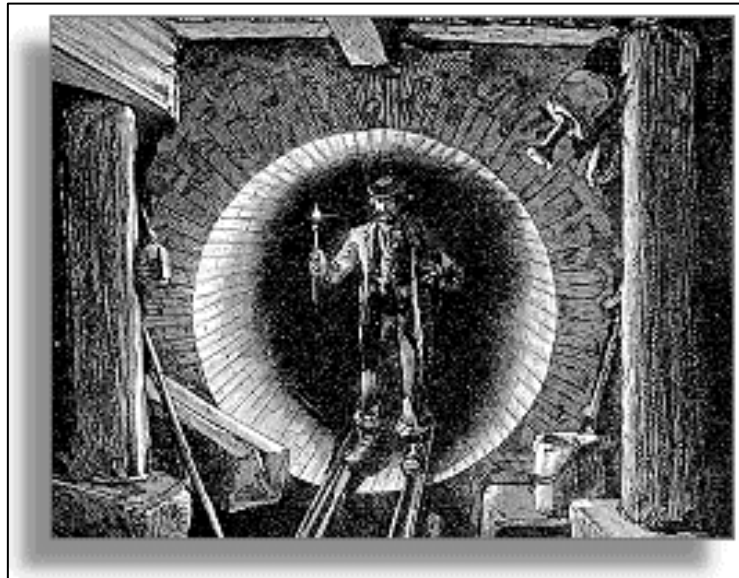
His son, however, continued to work on the land for a time. In 1881⁴⁵ he was enumerated as an agricultural labourer at Bleddfa with wife Mary, stepson Richard and two sons of his own, Thomas and William. Presumably at least four more children followed, but he didn't live to see them grow up. At some point, he must have decided that there were better ways of earning a living – a fatal mistake. His burial is recorded, aged 31, at Hirnant near Oswestry on 15th September 1885. Under his name is written:

Killed at Hirnant Tunnel by explosion of dynamite

A sad note in the margin, not easy to read in full, says:

?: 7: 0 given to his widow and seven little children

It is to be hoped that the blurred number of pounds was a generous sum.



Hirnant Tunnel⁴⁶

The Hirnant tunnel was part of the complex which linked Lake Vyrnwy to Liverpool. The dam was built between 1881 and 1888 to collect water from Snowdonia which could then be used to provide a clean and sufficient water supply for the burgeoning city. The lake was linked to Liverpool by 68 miles of aqueduct, constructed between 1881 and 1892. Part was above ground, but part below,

⁴³ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Aymestrey

⁴⁴ RG9/22, 1861 census, Kensington

⁴⁵ RG11/5474, 1881 census, Bleddfa

⁴⁶ <http://history.powys.org.uk/school1/llanfyllin/tower.shtml>

especially where the Mersey had to be crossed. It must have required armies of navvies to construct, and the pay would have been good given the hard work and dangerous conditions. Presumably, such 'incidents' as Edward's death were commonplace, as there seems to be no reference to it in the press.

Poor Ann. In the space of ten years she had lost both her husband and her only son in terrible accidents, neither of which should have happened. It is unlikely that she would have been able to help her widowed daughter-in-law and grandchildren, as the 1881⁴⁷ census records her living as a lodger in Little Berrington Street in St Nicholas parish in Hereford, aged 54, supposedly born in St Nicholas, but this is probably indicative of how little the rest of the household knew about her.

At some time during the next decade, and for an unknown period of time, Ann moved in with her married daughter Eliza Ellen. Maybe it was as soon as Eliza left service and married in 1883 and so was able to offer her mother a home. No doubt an extra pair of hands when the babies started coming was useful. Consequently, in 1891⁴⁸ she was enumerated at Fairfield in Kingsland with William Griffiths, Eliza and their eldest three children. Her age was recorded as 60. However, it was not a long-term solution and by 1901⁴⁹ Ann was an inmate in Leominster Priory – the workhouse, described as a lunatic aged 66, and:

an agricultural worker, field work



Leominster workhouse

<https://herefordshirepast.co.uk/buildings/leominster-union-workhouse/>

The return states that she was a worker, so presumably she was expected to contribute to her keep. The term lunatic is vague. It probably does not refer to dementia as senility was separately defined, but it is impossible at this distance to

⁴⁷ RG11/2595, 1881 census, Hereford St Nicholas

⁴⁸ RG12/2074, 1891 census, Kingsland

⁴⁹ RG13/2493, 1901 census, Leominster SS Peter and Paul

know what kind of mental illness she suffered from. Certainly, her life had been hard enough to have 'tipped her over the edge' in any number of ways.

Ann Morris died only a few months after the census was taken. Her certificate gives the following details:

Ninth June 1901, Union Workhouse, Leominster U.D. Ann Martin,
Female, 67 years, Widow of Thomas Martin an Agricultural labourer,
Influenza (5 days) pneumonia Certified by Sydney Jacob, James Tracey
Master Union Workhouse Leominster

Ann Morris was the eighth of the eleven children of Thomas Morris and Susan Cox (**see tree 30, p.121**) who married at Shobdon in 1818, witnessed, I believe, by the groom's father and bride's sister:

Thomas Morris of this parish, bachelor and Susan Cox of this parish,
Spinster were married by banns, 26th November 1818.

Thomas and Susan both signed the register, as did their witnesses: John Morris and Elizabeth Cox. Susan was clearly pregnant as their first child, George, was baptised less than five months later, on 4th April 1819. Unfortunately, he only lived for six hours and was buried at Shobdon on the same day.

The next child was baptised on 2nd July 1820, so Susan clearly became pregnant again quickly after George's birth. This child was named Milborough, a peculiarly Herefordshire and Shropshire name. According to research done by the author of *The Genealogy Corner*⁵⁰ (to whom I am indebted for the following information):

Milborough derives from the Medieval name *Milburga* (sometimes spelled *Milburgh* or *Mildburh*). Historically, **Milburga** was the daughter of Saint Ermenburga and of Merewalh, King of the Mercian sub-kingdom of Magonsaete, in the area occupied by the present-day **diocese of Hereford** ... Milburga had two sisters, Mildrith and Midgytha who, like her, were later canonised... Milburga, according to legend, had a mysterious power over birds, and it is said that she was able to turn these creatures away from the crops whenever she asked them to... She eventually became a Benedictine abbess of **Wenlock Priory** ... and her feast day is celebrated on 23rd February.

Milborough Morris had left home by 1841. She was probably working as a servant in nearby Presteigne, just over the border in Radnorshire⁵¹ although she had returned to the family home by 1851⁵². She left it late to marry, and when she did so it was in Birmingham to fellow Herefordian and wheelwright Richard James. They married at All Saints Hockley in Birmingham on 12th April 1858.

⁵⁰ <https://thegenealogycorner.com/2015/05/16/milboroughs-and-montilions/>

⁵¹ HO 107/1457, 1841 census, Presteigne

⁵² HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

There were no children from the marriage, but Richard's sister Sarah, already widowed, died in 1859 having appointed Milborough as the guardian of her two children, Alice and Sarah Ann. Consequently, it was Milborough who took out Letters of Administration on her sister-in-law's estate⁵³. Richard and Milborough also gave a home at some point to her youngest brother William, who was enumerated in the household in 1861⁵⁴ working alongside his brother-in-law as a wheelwright. Milborough died in Birmingham in 1893.

The register for Shobdon shows a very short-lived child named Thomas Morris, buried at one day old on 10th October 1821. Given the earlier fate of George, it seems likely that this was a son of Thomas and Susan.



Shobdon St John

Their presumably second son named Thomas was baptised on 13th April 1823 and appears as Thomas Morris junior, aged 18 and a mason, with his family at Downwood in Shobdon in 1841⁵⁵. He disappears from the records in Herefordshire after that, but it seems feasible, given that one of his brothers became a carpenter, and given the drift towards Birmingham for many of this family, that it is our Thomas who was enumerated in 1861⁵⁶ as a carpenter at Aston in Birmingham, giving his place as birth as Kingsland, Herefordshire. His wife Elizabeth was Yarpole-born, and Kingsland was the parish between Shobdon and Yarpole. The 1851 census⁵⁷ is slightly more ambiguous as the place of birth is indexed as Kingston, Herefordshire, but the place is hard to read on the original. The 1871 census⁵⁸ repeats Kingston, but Elizabeth is still from Yarpole. Thomas is still a carpenter and there seem to have been no children born to the couple. Given that he does not

⁵³ <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>, England and Wales, National Probate Calendar, 1858-1995

⁵⁴ RG9/2131, 1861 census, Ladywood, Birmingham

⁵⁵ HO 107/426/22, 1841 census, Shobdon

⁵⁶ RG9/2194, 1861 census, Aston, Birmingham

⁵⁷ HO 017/2058, 1851 census, Birmingham St George

⁵⁸ RG10/3099, 1871 census, Birmingham St Thomas

appear in the 1882 census, it seems likely that his is the death registered in Birmingham in 1872.

Sarah, the next-born, was baptised on 22nd May 1825. She was enumerated with her family in both 1841 and 1851⁵⁹. In 1854 she married Thomas Jones and the couple had two children, Alice, born in 1855 and George in 1856 or 7. Unfortunately, for Sarah, her husband also died in 1857, so in 1861⁶⁰ she and her two children were enumerated in the household of her two brothers, James and John. Sarah is described as a 35 year-old widow and a laundress. After that, she and George disappear, though Alice resurfaces in 1881⁶¹ in Grafton as a lady's maid.

Sarah's sister Susanna was baptised on 19th November 1827. She seems to have been packed off into service at an early age as in 1841⁶² a Susan Morris was enumerated as a female servant in the house of a farmer in Presteigne. Her age was recorded as 13. Ten years later⁶³, Susan Morris, born Shobdon, was working in service to a household in Hampstead, giving her age as 25. After that, the trail goes cold for her, too. The next child, Mary, baptised on 27th March 1830, may also have had a short childhood as it is possible that she was in service in Ledbury in 1841⁶⁴. By 1851⁶⁵ she had followed her sister Susanna to Hampstead, where she was employed as a cook. At some point in the previous year she had given birth to a daughter, Jessey Ellen, who appears on the 1851 census⁶⁶ with her grandparents in Shobdon, where she was baptised in June that year. By 1861⁶⁷ she was working in Brighton, designated a house servant, but for Mary, too, the trail goes cold at this point.

Ann's story has already been told, so we move on to the three boys. James was baptised on 29th June 1834. He was not with his family in 1841, and his whereabouts remain a mystery; maybe he was serving an apprenticeship. However, in 1851⁶⁸ he was lodging with a family in Yarkhill, aged 20 and a carpenter. Ten years later⁶⁹, he was back in his home village of Shobdon, as already mentioned. He was head of the household and a carpenter. With him were his brother John, his widowed sister Sarah and her children, and Jessey Morris, aged 10. James didn't marry, so by 1871⁷⁰, he was the boarder in his younger brother John's household, but still a carpenter. His death was registered in Leominster registration district in 1879.

⁵⁹ HO 107/426/22, 1841 census, Shobdon; HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁶⁰ RG9/1833, 1861 census, Shobdon

⁶¹ RG11/2588, 1881 census, Grafton

⁶² HO 107/428/32, 1841 census, Presteigne

⁶³ HO 107/1492, 1851 census, Hampstead

⁶⁴ HO 107/425/2, 1841 census, Ledbury

⁶⁵ HO 107/1492, 1851 census, Hampstead

⁶⁶ HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁶⁷ RG9/599, 1861 census, Brighton

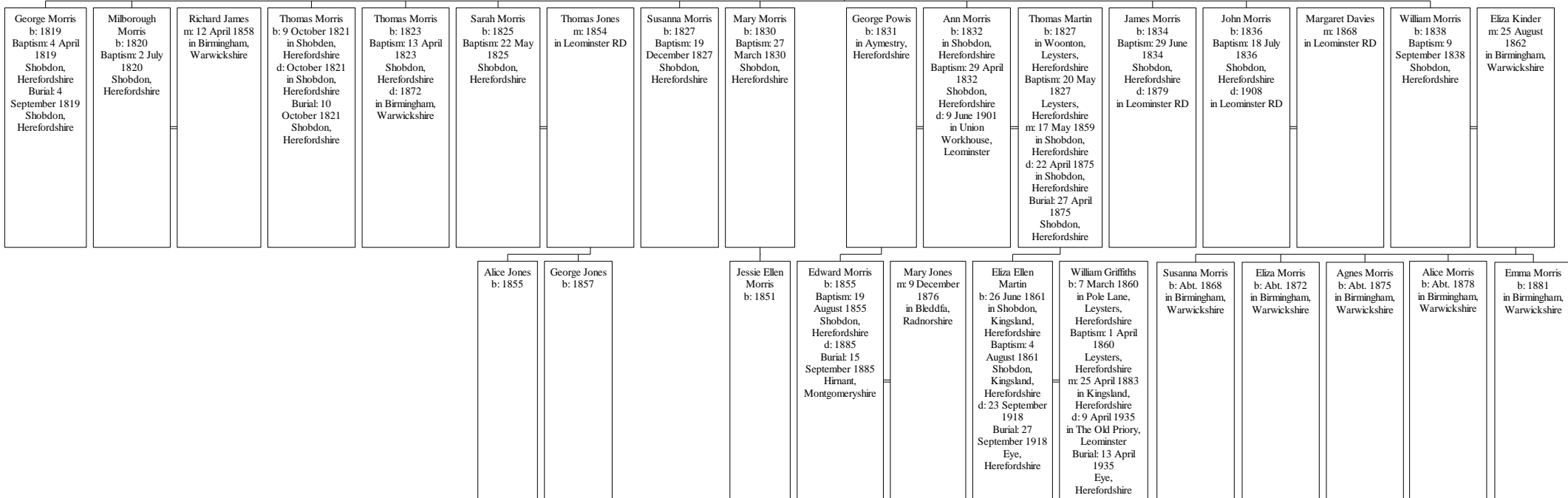
⁶⁸ HO 107/2492, 1851 census, Lyonshall

⁶⁹ RG9/1833, 1861 census, Shobdon

⁷⁰ RG10/2719, 1871 census, Shobdon

Tree 30 - Descendants of Thomas and Susan Morris

Thomas Morris b: 1791 Baptism: 20 April 1791 Shobdon, Herefordshire d: 6 November 1869 in Downwood, Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 11 November 1869 Shobdon, Herefordshire	Susan Cox b: 1797 Baptism: 12 February 1797 Shobdon, Herefordshire m: 26 November 1818 in Shobdon, Herefordshire d: 21 November 1859 in Downwood, Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 26 November 1859 Shobdon, Herefordshire
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Thomas and Susan's penultimate son was, as already mentioned, John, who was baptised on 18th July 1836. He was with his parents in 1841 and 1851⁷¹, but living in his brother's household in 1861⁷², still unmarried and working as a mason. In 1868, he married a local girl, Margaret Davies. In 1871⁷³ there were two small children in the household at Downton in Shobdon, as well as brother James and an 11-year-old servant girl. In 1881⁷⁴ Margaret was listed as a dressmaker, supplementing James' income as a stone mason; there were three children and Margaret's widowed mother in the household. Ten years later⁷⁵, the adults' occupations were the same, but son William was presumably working for his father as a mason's labourer. By 1901⁷⁶, John was widowed but still working, looked after by his daughter Ada. He died in 1908, aged 71.

Finally, we come to William, the last of Thomas and Susan Morris' 11 children, baptised on 9th September 1838 at Shobdon. He was enumerated with his parents in 1841 and 1851⁷⁷ but in the next decade⁷⁸ he was living with his sister Milborough in Birmingham and working as a wheelwright with his brother-in-law Richard James. A year later, on 25th August 1862, he married Eliza Kinder at St Bartholomew Birmingham. By 1871⁷⁹ he had moved on to become a coach builder, married with two children, still living in Birmingham and assisted in the painting of the coaches by his wife's 11 year-old nephew. William was obviously good at his job as, by 1881⁸⁰ he is described as a:

Wheelwright employing 2 men and one boy

However, in 1891⁸¹ he described himself as a coach wheel maker. Two of his daughters were upholsterers, so the family was still involved in coach building. Maybe William felt that his strength or business acumen were failing, and, as he doesn't appear in the 1901 census, the assumption is that he died in the intervening years.

Having explored the lives of Thomas and Susan's children, it is time to return to the parents. I said that both Thomas and Susan were Shobdon-born, and anyone looking at the 1851 census⁸² would have good reason to dispute that. The 1841 census⁸³ doesn't give birthplaces, simply placing 'y' for yes or 'n' for no in the 'born in county' column. In 1841, Thomas, a mason aged 45, was living at Downwood in

⁷¹ HO 107/426/22, 1841 census, Shobdon; HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁷² RG9/1833, 1861 census, Shobdon

⁷³ RG10/2719, 1871 census, Shobdon

⁷⁴ RG11/2607, 1881 census, Shobdon

⁷⁵ RG12/2074, 1891 census, Shobdon

⁷⁶ RG13/2496, 1901 census, Shobdon

⁷⁷ HO 107/426/22, 1841 census, Shobdon; HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁷⁸ RG9/2131, 1861 census, Ladywood, Birmingham

⁷⁹ RG10/3129, 1871 census, Birmingham All Saints

⁸⁰ RG11/2995, 1881 census, Birmingham St George

⁸¹ RG12/2389, 1891 census, Birmingham St George

⁸² HO 107/1931, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁸³ HO 107/426/22, 1841 census, Shobdon

Shobdon with Susan – 42, Sarah – 15, Ann – 8, James – 6, John – 4, William – 2 and Thomas Morris junior, also a mason, aged 18. All assert their Herefordshire birth.

In 1851, though, the following details are entered:

Thomas Morris	H	m	57	Stone Mason	Her, Little Hereford
Susan Morris	W	m	52	Wife	Her, Shobdon
Milbro Morris	Dau	un	30	Dau	Her, Shobdon
Sarah Morris	Dau	un	23	Dau	Her, Shobdon
John Morris	Son	un	14	Scholar	Her, Shobdon
William Morris	Son	un	12	Scholar	Her, Shobdon
Jessey Ellen Morris	Gdau	un	6m		London

Normally, I would treat the census as a reliable source, although birthplaces do often seem to change between one decade and the next, or become vaguer, as when, in 1861⁸⁴, Thomas, now widowed and living as a lodger at Stone House in Huntington, is simply recorded as born in Herefordshire. In this particular instance, though, I think the census information is wrong. In 1851, each household was required to fill in a schedule which was then copied into census enumerators' books. Further down the key page in this instance is another stone mason, Richard Rewberry, whose place of birth is also given as Little Hereford. It would be all too easy for an overtaxed enumerator to read across the wrong line and put the other mason's given birthplace into Thomas Mason's entry.

A fly in the ointment appears at this point. There was indeed a Thomas Mason baptised at Little Hereford on 23rd June 1792, putting him into the right time frame. However, I still believe that the weight of evidence is on Thomas having been born in Shobdon. When Thomas and Susan married, they were both 'of this parish':

Thomas Morris of this parish, bachelor and Susan Cox of this parish, spinster were married by banns, 26th November 1818.

In a population which often moved for work, this doesn't mean much; however, the witnesses were Elizabeth Cox, Susan's sister, and John Morris, who was, I believe, Thomas' father. There was no hint of a John Morris at Little Hereford who could have filled the role.

In addition, in following this line in both directions, both up and down, two of Thomas' sons became carpenters, a third was a coach maker and wheelwright and a son-in-law was also a wheelwright. All men who worked with wood. Although Thomas himself was a stone mason, his father was willed carpentry tools by his own father, suggesting that previous generations had also been wood workers.

The most telling evidence, though, comes from the fact that Thomas and Susan named their eldest daughter Milborough. The name died out with her in this branch of the family as she had no children. However, John's daughter (so Thomas'

⁸⁴ RG9/4227, 1861 census, Huntington

sister) Wilhelmina, (another unusual name which only appears this once in the Shobdon baptism register, and I have wondered whether she was really meant to be another Milborough, but mis-transcription renamed her!) had an illegitimate daughter in 1807 and called her Milborough. I also suspect that the Milborough Morris baptised at Bosbury near Ledbury on Christmas Day 1789 to an unmarried mother named Ann Morris was the daughter of one of John's sisters, especially as Milborough seems to have married in nearby Yarpole - to James Challenger in 1812 - and gave her place of birth as Shobdon in the 1851 census⁸⁵. Milborough Challenger died at Shobdon in 1859 aged 71.

The next generation back sports two Morris Milboroughs, one a sister to John and one a cousin; while the one above that has yet another Milborough, named for her mother, Milborough Shepherd, born in Shobdon in 1681. No one named Milborough was baptised at Little Hereford as far as I can tell. It was a relatively rare name in Shobdon as well. I have found only nine entries not connected to this family predating Milborough Morris' birth in 1820, and six of these include and descend from Milborough Browne, who was born in Shobdon in 1635 and married the vicar, John Tyler, in 1665. One more Milborough can be added to the haul. Susan Cox's sister Elizabeth had a son named James - a cousin to Susan's daughter Milborough. This James Edwards baptised a daughter at Wigmore in 1864 - and named her Milbrough. While this could be coincidence, it is more probable that James named his daughter after his cousin.



St Milburgh's Well c 1900⁸⁶

Thomas Morris consistently defines himself as a mason, which begs the question as to where, and on what, he worked. Shobdon Court was remodelled in the 18th century, and the church was rebuilt between 1749 and 1752, so neither would have afforded work opportunities for him other than in a minor repairs way. There was a quarry, now disused, near his home in the hamlet of Downwood -

⁸⁵ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Shobdon

⁸⁶ <https://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/blog/shropshire-day-2022/>

which lies to the west of the Court and north-west of the village. Was he actually employed quarrying stone? Mason would seem to imply something more skilled.

When his wife died in 1859, Thomas moved away from Downwood, for a time at least, for 1861⁸⁷ found him lodging at a property named Stone House in Huntington. Although there is another mason in the house, there is no obvious family connection. Presumably he was not there long, as by the time he died he was back in Downwood. Maybe this was because his married daughter Ann was nearby as it was she who registered the death:

Sixth November 1868 Down Wood Shobdon, Thomas Morris, Male, 76 years,
Mason (Journeyman), Disease of the heart Not certified, X The Mark of Ann
Martin in Attendance, Shobdon

If Thomas was exactly 76, as both his death certificate and the record of his burial at Shobdon on 11th November suggest, then the baptism at Little Hereford in 1792 seems reasonable. However, Thomas, son of John Morris and Ann Mason was baptised at Shobdon on 20th April 1791, and a miscalculation of a year on a death certificate is perfectly plausible.

Less is known about earlier generations of the Morris family, but the line can be traced back to the early 1700s in Shobdon (see tree 31, p.126). John Morris was baptised there (as were all his children) on 6th January 1756, the son of Richard Mason and Catherine Colerick. He married Ann Mason on 10th November 1787 and their first child, Wilhelmina, was baptised seven months later on 1st June 1788. Aged 18, on 26th April 1807 Wilhelmina baptised her own daughter, named, of course, Milborough. She married James Gatehouse five years later, on 1st June 1812 in Leominster, and had at least five more children, but there is no further sign of her first daughter.

Apart from Thomas, born 1791, whose story has already been followed, the rest of John and Ann's children remain shadowy. Maybe they died young. Ann was baptised on 19th January 1794, Mary on 6th November 1796 and James on 24th November 1799, all at Shobdon. John was buried on 22nd December 1816 and his wife Ann on 22nd June the following year.

In tracing John's father Richard, the obvious candidate would be the child baptised at Shobdon on 30th June 1720, son of James and Ann Morris and sibling to James, born 1717, John, born 1718 and Mary, born 1722. However, Richard left a will⁸⁸ in which he stipulates:

my body to be buried in my father's grave in Aimstrey churchyard

⁸⁷ RG9/4227, 1861 census, Huntington

⁸⁸ HARC, will of Richard Morris, Shobdon, 1778

Tree 31 - Descendants of Richard and Mary Morris

Richard Morris
d: 1747
Burial: 20 April
1747
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire

Mary

Richard Morris
b: 1715
in Aymestrey,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 11
September 1715
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire
Burial: 21 March
1778
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire

Katherine
Colerick
b: 1714
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 26
February 1714
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
m: 11 April 1741
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

?Margaret Morris
b: 1723
Baptism: 21 July
1723
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire

James Campbell
m: 1770
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Milborough
Morris
b: 1743
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 24 April
1743
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Joseph Knight
m: 1778
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Richard Morris
b: 1744
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 27
January 1744
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Catherine Morris
b: 1747
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 20
September 1747
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Thomas Morris
b: 1749
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 2 April
1749
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Ann Morris
b: 1753
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 1
September 1753
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

John Morris
b: 1756
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 6
January 1756
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 1816
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Burial: 22
December 1816
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Ann Mason
b: 1767
in Aymestrey,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 18
March 1767
Aymestrey,
Herefordshire
m: 10 November
1787
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 1817
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Burial: 22 June
1817
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Elizabeth Morris
b: 1757
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 28
December 1757
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Edward Morris
b: 1759
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 29 July
1759
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

which implies that Aymestrey was his home parish. This suggests that he was the child of Richard and Mary Morris, baptised at Aymestrey in 1715, with the entry written in Latin in the register:

Ricardus fil Ricardi Morris et Maria ux bapt 11 September

and this would fit better with his wife's own birth in 1714. A possible sister named Margaret was baptised to a Richard and Mary in Aymestrey on 21st July 1723.

Richard married Catherine Colerick at Shobdon on 11th April 1741. Their first child, inevitably named Milborough, was baptised on 24th April 1743. She married twice, first to James Campbell in 1770 and then to Joseph Knight, by whom she had two sons, in 1778. The couple's first son was named Richard, which maybe adds credence to this being a family name beyond his father, especially as Milborough was named for her maternal grandmother. It would make sense for him to be named for his paternal grandfather and he was baptised on 27th January 1744 at Shobdon. Catherine, named for her mother, was baptised on 20th September 1747 but seems to have died young.

The next five children did reach adulthood. Thomas was baptised on 2nd April 1749, but doesn't seem to have married, at least not locally. He may have been buried at Shobdon in either 1783 or 1811 - the latter date perhaps being more likely. Ann was baptised on 1st September 1753 and was still living in 1778 but there is no clear sighting of her after that. Our ancestor John, born in 1756, was followed by Elizabeth, baptised on 28th December 1757. She was executor to her father's will. Finally came Edward, baptised on 29th July 1759.

Tracing those of Richard and Catherine's offspring who had commoner names has been difficult. Ann may have married William Allen from Wigmore at Shobdon in 1780, and Elizabeth may have married James Hall there in 1785, but the rest cannot be identified definitively in either marriage or burial records.

Richard Morris died in 1778 and was buried on 31st March that year at Aymestrey, as he had requested. It is to be assumed that his wife Catherine was already dead as she is not mentioned in the will, but her burial seems to be missing from the register. The first family bequests are to his daughter Milborough Campbell and eldest son Richard, though both have presumably already been provided for as the stipulation is for:

the sum of one shilling to be paid within one year after my deceased if lawfully demanded

This was a device used to ensure that anyone who was mentioned could not contest the will. To son Thomas, intriguingly, go:

all the books that I have had from him

while Ann is gifted household items: pewter dishes and plates, a pot, a bed with a set of furnishings, a spinning wheel, a coffer, a table and, more impenetrably:

a half Hogshead and quarter barrel and kneading Triend

The next item suggests that at least part of his time was spent working as a carpenter:

Item I give and bequeath unto my son John Morris all my Carpenter Tools

Clearly, that wasn't his only work, though, as Elizabeth is willed:

all and singular my goods and chattels (which are not otherwise disposed of by this my will) my implements of Husbandry... Stock Grain in the Barn or elsewhere to pay any Debts and defray my funeral expense and the surplus to her own use and behoof

His youngest son, Edward, aged about 19, was willed all his father's wearing apparel.

A further clue as how the family lived comes in the final paragraph, and makes reference to that staple of the Herefordshire economy, cider-making:

And I give and bequeath unto my daughter Elisabeth Morris the Profits of the Cider mill Barn Stable Cider Mill house Garden and Orchard with the appurtenances until my son Edward Morris arrives unto the age of Twenty one years and then my will is that the said Buildings garden and Orchard be equally divided into five parts (or the Money it may be sold for and) then I give unto my three sons Thomas, John and Edward each one of the said five parts and of the two parts remaining I give two fifths unto my daughter Ann Morris one fifth to any daughters of Milborough Campbell the fifth remaining undisposed of I give unto my daughter Elisabeth Morris

Elizabeth is named sole executrix; the will was dated 19th January 1778 and signed by Richard in the presence of Jane Woodhouse, William Woodhouse junior and John Brown.

Attached to the will is a long affidavit, dated 18th April 1778, and signed by Elizabeth Morris, spinster of Shobdon, in which she:

maketh oath that the said paper writing hereunto annexed purporting to be the last will and testament of the said deceased was by this deponent on the 31st day of March last (being the day on which the deceased was buried) found locked up in a coffer in the said deceased's house

She confirms that it has not been tampered with and that she recognises the writing, as her father's, so she is:

perfectly satisfied that the whole body series and contents of the said will

as also the name "Richard Morris" thereunto subscribed was and is of the proper handwriting at the said testator and she further then deposes and says that the several alterations and interlineations made on and inserted in the said will were so made and inserted by the said testator with his own hand in the deponent's presence no other person being then also present and that the said testator at the time of making such alteration was of sound mind memory and understanding and very capable of making his last will and testament

Probate was granted the same day.



Aymestrey St John the Baptist & St Alkmund

Colerick and Shepherd - Shobdon

Katherine Colerick was baptised at Shobdon in 1714:

Katherine ye Daughter of Thomas Colerick & Milborough his wife
was baptized Feb^{ry} 26

Her surname appears in the records in various guises, Colerick, Coldrick, Colrick and even Cowlrick. She was the daughter of Thomas Colerick and his wife, who proved to be the Milborough after whom all those other Milboroughs down the generations were named (**see tree 32, p.131**). Thomas married Milborough Shepheard at Shobdon on 22nd April 1703.

As their family grew, a number of familiar names appeared: Ann, baptised on 20th March 1703, grew up to marry Edward Camell (or Campbell) in 1726. Amongst this couple's offspring was a son Thomas, who went on to name one of his daughters Milborough. Richard and Catherine's second daughter was another Milborough though a short-lived one. She was baptised on 14th November 1706 but buried almost exactly five years later, on 29th November 1711. A son Edward (another name which appears in the next generation) was baptised on 3rd March

1709 but was buried on the same day as his sister Milborough while Elizabeth was baptised on 4th October 1712. Catherine was the last child of this couple, and her father Thomas died when she was only four and was buried at Shobdon on 12th November 1719.

Less than two weeks before he died, Thomas made his will⁸⁹, which is dated 30th October 1719. He bequeathed his:

house or tenement and lands in the township of Shobdon

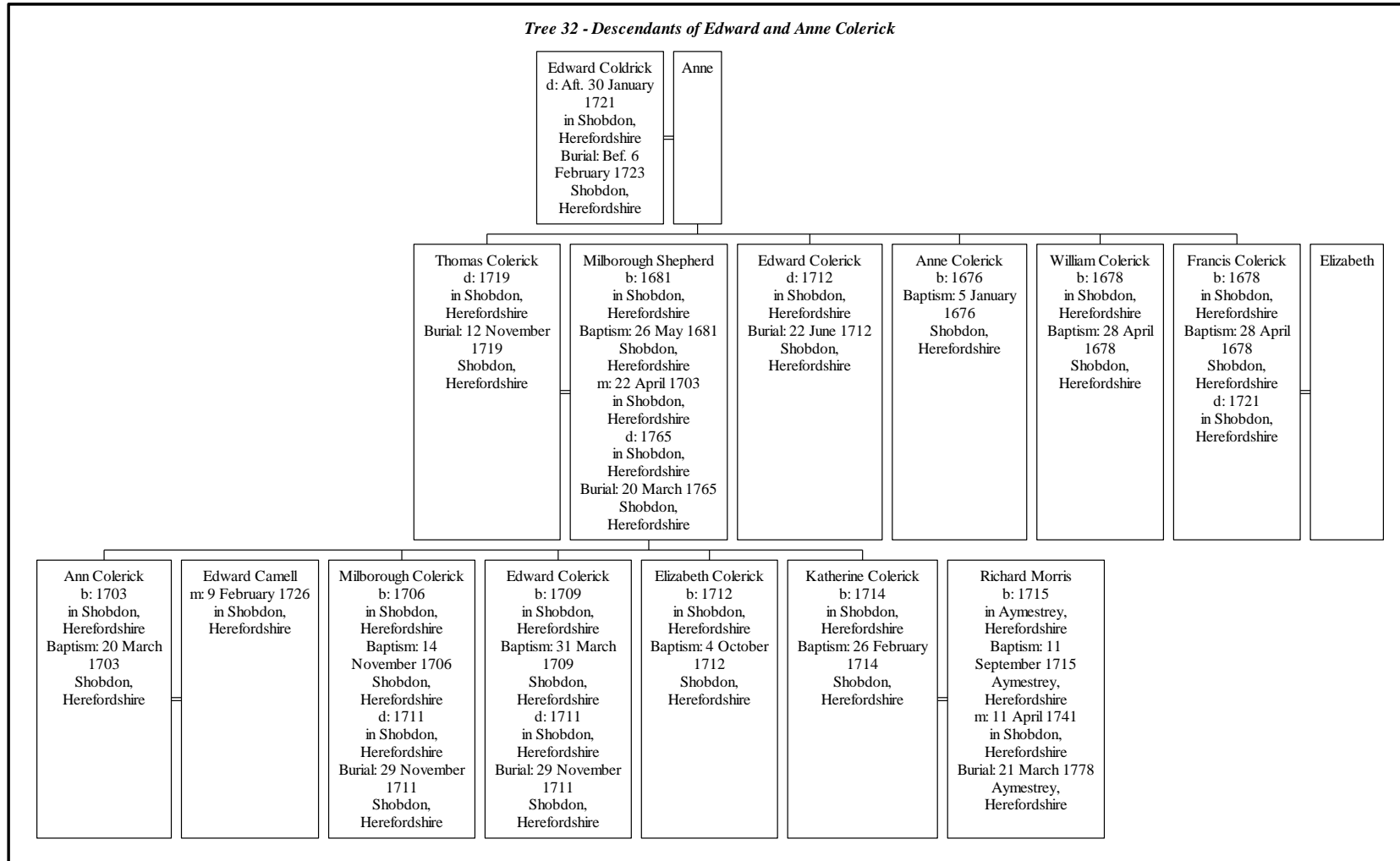
to his wife Milborough, provided she does not remarry. Should she do so, the property would pass to his daughters, Anne, Elizabeth and Katherine and be equally divided between them on marriage. His personal estate was bequeathed to the same people on the same terms. It was witnessed by two men named Thomas Hoskins (presumably one of them was the father of the Milborough born in 1700, and so maybe a relative). The other two witnesses were John Eales and Milborough Colerick, who signed in a good hand. Her husband just made his mark, but at this stage of his life that could be down to infirmity rather than illiteracy. Probate was granted to Milborough on 12th July 1720.

Alongside the will is an inventory of Thomas' possessions. This was taken on 20th December by Joseph Woodhouse (the father of another Milborough), John Vicridge and probably Jonathan Switney, who exhibited it at Ludlow on the day of probate. Helpfully, the rubric at the top describes Thomas as yet another carpenter. It is not very detailed – the catch-all of 'of all sorts' is frequently used, but it does give a clear picture of the kind of dual economy which was frequently practiced. As well as being a carpenter, Thomas has crops and livestock, and is even growing hops – another Herefordshire staple.:

	£	s	d
Imprimis money in pocket and Apparel	01	00	00
Corne on the ground	03	00	00
Two small cattle	02	00	00
Piggs of all sorts	01	10	00
One bagg of Hopps	03	00	00
In the Chamber one Table and cupboard	00	10	00
In the Hall brass and pewter of all sorts	01	10	00
Bedding and Linnen of all sorts	02	10	00
In the Buttery vessels of all sorts	00	06	00
Graine of all sorts in the Barne	01	06	00
Working Tools of all sorts	00	10	00
Provisions of all sorts	00	10	00
Desperate debts	00	05	00
Things out of sight	00	10	00
Summa Totalis	18	07	00

⁸⁹ HARC, Will of Thomas Colerick of Shobdon, 1720

Tree 32 - Descendants of Edward and Anne Colerick



Although no baptism has been found for Thomas Colerick, a run of wills and administrations helps to track the family one stage further. Edward Cowlrick, Coldrick or Colerick made his own will on 30th January 1721⁹⁰. It was not proven until 6th February 1723 so its writing may have been prompted by a series of family deaths, which included that of his wife Anne who was buried on 3rd May 1720. As has already been noted, his son Thomas had lost two children in 1711. The following year, his brother Edward, a shoemaker, died and his father took on an obligation⁹¹, as Edward Cowlerick the elder, to administer his son's estate. In 1719, Thomas died, followed two years later by another son, Francis, a tanner according to the inventory taken. Francis' baptism does appear in the register, but as daughter of Edward and Anne Cowlrick not son! He shares his baptism with a brother William on 28th August 1678. As Francis mentions both his brother William and a wife named Elizabeth in his will⁹², I suspect there is a mistake in the register. There is one more Colerick baptism to mention, Anne, daughter of Edward and Anne was baptised on 5th January 1764. My guess is that Thomas and Edward were the elder two children of the family.

By the time Edward Cowlrick senior died – he was buried about two and a half years after writing his will, at Shobdon on 3rd August 1723 - therefore, there were few potential heirs, so his principal beneficiaries were his remaining son William, who seems to have had no children, and his three granddaughters:

I give and bequeath to Ann Elizabeth and Katherine my three granddaughters twenty shillings apiece Ite I give to Hester Jones the daughter of Richard Jones twenty shillings Ite I give and bequeath to my son William Coldrick all my house barns garden and freehold estate in the parish of Shobdon during his natural life and to the heirs of him lawfully begotten but for want of heirs I do give devise and bequeath all my aforesaid freehold estate to my three granddaughters Ann Elizabeth and Katherine Coldrick after the term of my sons natural life. All the rest of my Goods Cattell and Chattels I give and bequeath to my son William and do constitute and ordaine him my sole executor

The identity of Hester Jones is unclear. Maybe Edward's daughter Ann had married Richard Jones, but if so, it would be likely that the relationship would be stated. The will was witnessed by Jonathan Pryre, Samuel and John Smith, and Edward made his mark.

With the will is an inventory⁹³ taken by John Smith and Walter Taylor on 13th August 1723

	Li	s	d
Imprimis his wearing apparel and money in his pocket	05	?	06

⁹⁰ HARC, Will of Edward Coldrick of Shobdon, 1723

⁹¹ HARC, Admon of Edward Cowlerick of Shobdon, 1712

⁹² HARC, Will of Francis Colerick of Shobdon, yeoman, 1721

⁹³ HARC, Will and inventory of Edward Coldrick of Shobdon, 1723

Item one Cow	01	10	00
Item 4 bedsteeds, 2 feather beds, 2 chaff beds and bolsters	02	15	00
Item Linnens of all sorts and blanketts and coverleds	01	10	00
Item Iron ware of all sorts	00	06	08
Item Brass and pewter	00	13	04
It one chest, 1 cupboard, three coffers	00	15	00
Item Wooden ware of all sorts	00	06	08
Item 6 Chairs, one Table, one Bench	00	10	00
Item one acre of corne and one of pease	00	16	00
Item one Ladle and three pads	00	04	06
Item Things forgotten and unapprised	00	01	06
Item 2 acres of Lease Lands purchased by deed	<u>04</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>00</u>
Suma Total	<u>19</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>02</u>

Probate was granted to Edward's son William around six months later, on 6th February 1723.



Preparing leather

In passing, although Edward does not ascribe an occupation to himself, both his sons Thomas and Francis describe themselves as yeoman. Thomas was also a carpenter, Edward a shoemaker and Francis a tanner. In all probability, these two brothers worked in tandem, with Francis curing the hides and Edward turning the resulting leather into shoes. Francis Colerick's inventory⁹⁴ lists a number of intriguing items, beginning with four bull hides and nine bull necks and running through 36 chicken hides, ten kippes (usually calfskin or skins from small cattle) more calf skins and a piece of pig skin. In addition to the implements of his trade there were twelve loads of bark, essential to the tanning process. The total came to £73 17/7, a much larger total than Edward senior's or Edward junior's inventories

⁹⁴ HARC, Will and inventory of Francis Colerick, tanner of Shobdon, 1721

showed (around £19 and £10 respectively). The clue may be in Francis' will: he bequeathed all his stock in trade and personal estate to his wife Elizabeth in recompense for money she laid out in order to help him set up his business.

Thomas Colerick's wife Milborough was clearly made of stronger stuff than her husband. Baptised as the first child of William Shepherd and his wife Katherine on 25th May 1681, she married Thomas Colrick in 1703. She had only one full sister, named Margaret, three years younger and baptised on 19th April 1684. She was around 38 years old when she was widowed and never remarried as far as I can tell, as the only feasible burial is of a Milborough Coldrick on 26th March 1765, when she would have been 84 years old. One question remains, to which I have no answer. Was Milborough the granddaughter of yet another Milborough, or was she related to or named in honour of the Milborough Browne, born in 1635, who married the local vicar at Shobdon?

Milborough was a product of a second marriage (see tree 33, p.135). Her father, William Sheaperd, married Joan Pharington on 23rd October 1662 at Shobdon and fathered three children, Thomas, who was baptised on 7th March 1664, Ann, who married Richard Taylor at Shobdon on 3rd May 1684 and Elizabeth, who married Edward Winne on 16th November 1683. After his first wife's death, and when his first family was grown up, he married again and had two more daughter. This may be why he chose to write his will⁹⁵ in 1700, although he lived for another nine years. Did he just recover from a temporary illness or was he – knowing that he was an older husband and father – just ensuring that his second family would be looked after? He begins by making a series of bequests to his adult family:

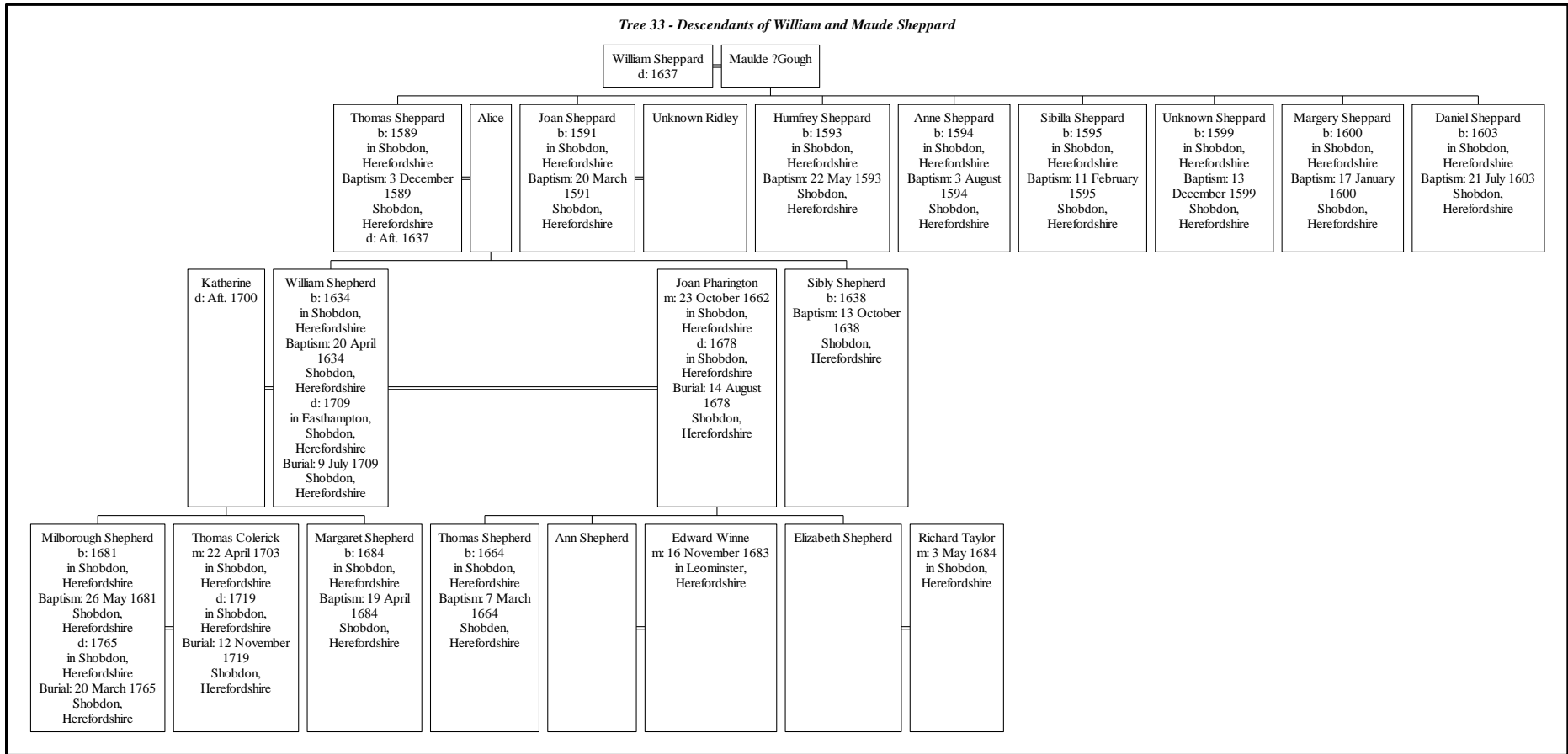
I give and bequeath to my daughter Ann Taylor the sume of five shillings
Item I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth Win the sume of five
shillings Item I give and bequeath to my sonne Thomas Sheapherd the
sume of five shillings

The size of these bequests suggests a token offering to grown-up children who have probably already received a paternal start in life. The rest of his estate goes to his wife Katherine and daughter Milborough. Presumably Margaret had died by this time:

I give and bequeath to Katherine my wife ten bushels of rye Item my will is
that Katherine my wife shall have one bed the best I have excepting one two
payers of sheets one bolster one Rugg one blanket and one bedstead for to
use during the term of her natural life and after her decease I do give it to
my daughter Milborough Sheapherd Item my will is that Katherine my wife
shall have two pillows, three of my best pewter dishes one brass pot the
biggest kettle excepting one , one frying pan and one possnet for to use
during the term of her natural life and after her decease I do give it to my
daughter Milborough Sheapherd

⁹⁵ HARC, Will of William Sheapherd of Easthampton in Shobdon, 1700/1709

Tree 33 - Descendants of William and Maude Sheppard



Milborough was also designated his executor. The will was dated 4th February 1700, signed by William and witnessed by Amy and John Bull and Thomas Hoskins. William was buried on 9th July 1709 and Milborough proved the will three days later.

William's marriage to Katherine has not come to light, but he married his first wife, Joan in 1662. Her burial is recorded on 14th August 1678 so William's marriage to Katherine must have taken place sometime in the next couple of years. On average, in the 17th century, men married at around 25 to 26 years old. There were two baptisms of a William Shepherd at Shobdon in the first half of the 17th century, one in 1628 and the other - which is, I think, the right one - on 20th April 1634 to Thomas Sheppard and Alice. Annoyingly, it seems to be the elder of the two who left a will⁹⁶. In it, he names his wife Em (Emma Woodhouse, whom he married in 1662) and daughter Elizabeth (born 1663). This must have been a second marriage for him as he also mentions a kinsman John Price, presumably a connection of his first wife Elinor Price whom he had married in 1652. John and Ann Price also witnessed his will.

Unfortunately, William's father Thomas left no will. He seems to have died quite young as his wife Alice remarried in 1641 to another Richard Taylor and had two more sons. However, William's grandfather - another William - did leave a will⁹⁷, dated 26th March 1637. It begins:

I William Sheapard of Shobdon in the county and diocese of Hereford Yeoman

After a bequest to his youngest daughter Margery of two cows or:

if she do dislike the same kine then to receive five pounds and half of all my brass and pewter and bedding

he makes bequests to his daughter Joan Ridley and four Ridley grandchildren. He goes on to bequeath to:

Thomas Sheapard my son twelve pence and to his son William ten shillings

This is, I think, William born in 1634, who would have been just a couple of years old.

William senior and his wife Maulde baptised eight children at Shobdon between 1589 and 1603, and several of them survived into adulthood. Thomas, father of William, was the eldest, baptised on 3rd February 1589 but must have died between 1637 and 1641. Joan, baptised on 20th March 1591, married a man named Ridley. She also received a twelve pence bequest from her father's will but her daughter Mary shared the other half of her grandfather's brass pewter and bedding with her aunt Margery, and also received 20 nobles (£6 13/4 - or £6 2/3). Her

⁹⁶ HARC, Will of William Sheppard of Shobdon, 1672

⁹⁷ HARC, Will of William Sheapard of Shobdon 1637

brothers John and William were given 20 shillings apiece and her sister Katherine 5/-.

The next two children, Humfrey - 22nd May 1693 - and Anne - 3rd August 1594 - presumably died young as they are not named in the will. Sibilla, baptised on 11th February 1595, received the same twelve pence bequest as her older siblings. A son came next - 13th December 1599 and then Margery, baptised on 17th January 1600. The final child was Daniel, baptised on 21st July 1603. The token bequests to the older children suggest they had already been set up in life as Daniel, who is also named executor, is left:

all my goods cattle and chattels and movable goods unbequeathed

In giving his youngest son the role of executor, he rather quaintly enjoins him to:

see mee honestly brought home

Two further references in the will give a clue as to the origins of William's wife Maulde, who presumably pre-deceased him. One is the bequest of twelve pence to a god-daughter named Elizabeth Gough, and the other is the closing statement:

I do make my loving Brother lawe Thomas Gough to be my overseer to see that all things be done according to this my last will

It is possible that William had a sister who married a Gough, but it is far more likely that Thomas Gough was Maulde's bother and so had a blood tie to William's children and grandchildren. William Smyth and James Bull witnessed the will.

Mason, Cook and Perry - mainly Aymestrey and Brampton Bryan



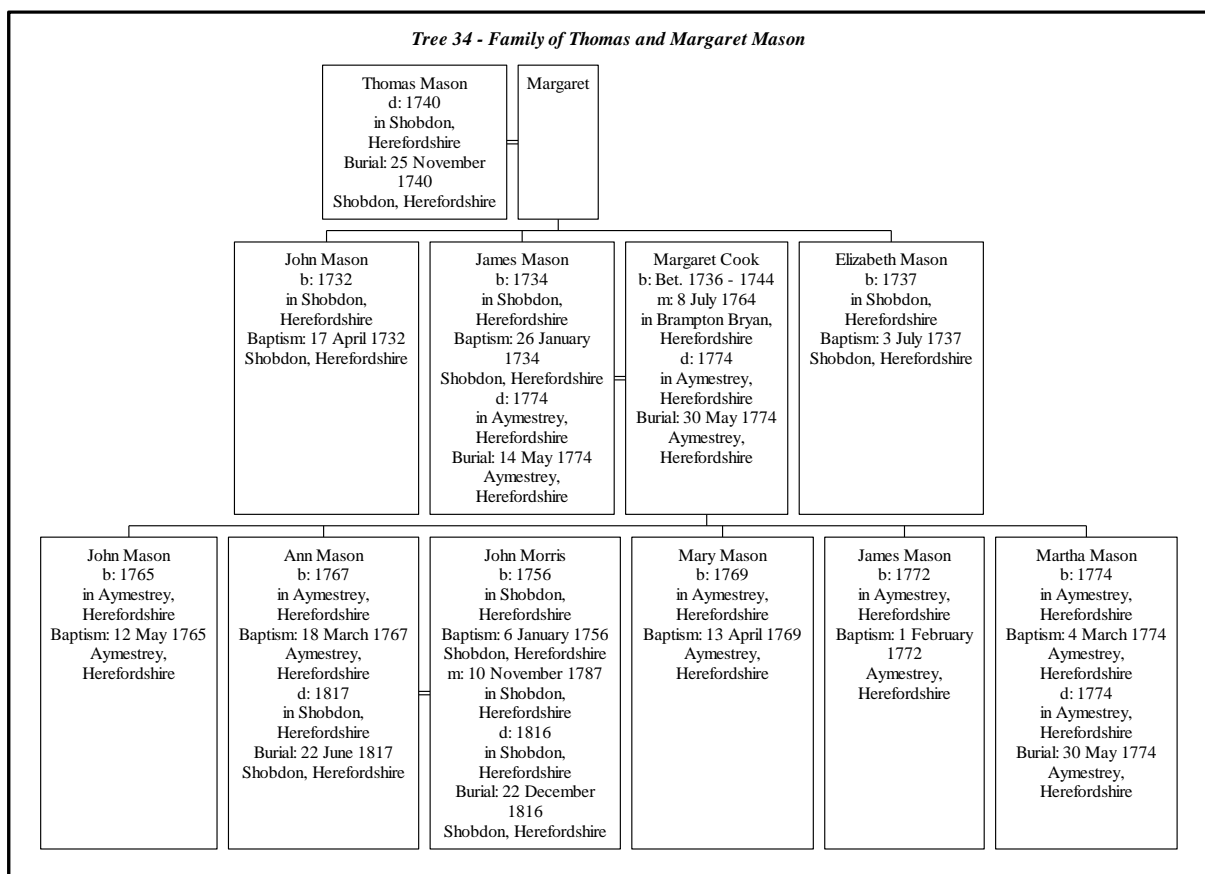
Brampton Bryan St Barnabus

Trying to trace the origins of John Morris' wife Ann Mason, we are on much more shaky ground. Her burial entry at Shobdon on 22nd June 1817 gives her age as 54, suggesting a birth in around 1763. No Ann Mason appears in the extant Herefordshire registers in that timeframe, which is not to say that there wasn't a baby Ann Mason born then. However, a likely candidate appears in the register of next-door Aymestrey, a parish which seems to have been closely entwined with Shobdon. This Ann Mason was baptised on 18th March 1767, so is a little younger than her burial entry suggests, but ages did tend to 'increase' in later life on occasion.

This Ann Mason was the daughter of James and Mary Mason - who could have been the inspiration behind the names of Ann's two youngest children (**see tree below**). If this is the right Ann, she would have been only 20 when she married John Morris in 1787. James Mason seems to have been born in Shobdon and was baptised there in 1734 as the middle child of Thomas and Margaret Mason:

Jan 26 James son of Thomas and Margaret Mason was baptized

John was born in 1732 and Elizabeth in 1737.



James married Margaret Cook at Brampton Bryan, about seven or eight miles north-west of Shobdon and Aymestrey, close to the Welsh border, on 8th July 1764. He would have been 30 and so I initially thought he must have been cradle-snatching, as online indexes have Margaret Cook baptised at Brampton Bryan in 1746, which would have made her barely 17 on marriage. However, a close

examination of original records shows that the child baptised in 1746 was named Mary, not Margaret, and the fact that the indexes seem to show twin girls is probably the result of someone reading the 'y' at the end of Mary as a 'g' and assuming the child in question was actually Margaret. Both versions have ended up on the index. Margaret's baptism has not been found but, as will be shown later, her birth was probably somewhere between 1736 and 1744.

The couple settled in Aymestrey, baptising five children over the next nine years, beginning with John on 12th May 1765. Ann followed less than two years later. Another two-year gap brought Mary, baptised on 13th April 1769 and a brother named James was baptised on 1st February 1772. The last child was named Martha and baptised on 4th March 1774. Two months later, her mother Mary was buried - on 30th May. According to *Findmypast* an infant belonging to James and Margaret was buried on the same day, but the entry hasn't made its way onto the BTs. Normally, this would suggest puerperal fever as the cause of the mother's death, but this date is a full two months or more after the birth, so I think the reason was more likely some infectious illness, especially as James Mason - the father - had been buried a fortnight earlier on 14th May 1744.

James did manage to write a will⁹⁸ but the way it is worded suggests it may have been something of a rushed job at a time when family members were already ailing. He describes himself as a weaver, but that is the only personal fact given about him and his immediate family. The following statement makes up most of the document:

I will and bequeath all and singular my real and personal estate I am possessed of to Richard Cook of Bramton Bryan and William Preece of the Court of Aymestry and their heirs In trust to sell dispose of all my personal estate for the use of such of my children as shall be living at my decease and the rents and profits of all my landed estate to my wife for her natural life to be vested in my two trustees ... for her use during her natural life and after her decease to be equally divided between such of my children as shall be then living share and share alike

The two trustees were nominated executors and proved the will on 23rd June 1774.

William Preece remains an unknown. However, Richard Cook was almost certainly Margaret's brother. The current population of Brampton Bryan is under 200 and the village website⁹⁹ suggests that it is compact enough for any part to:

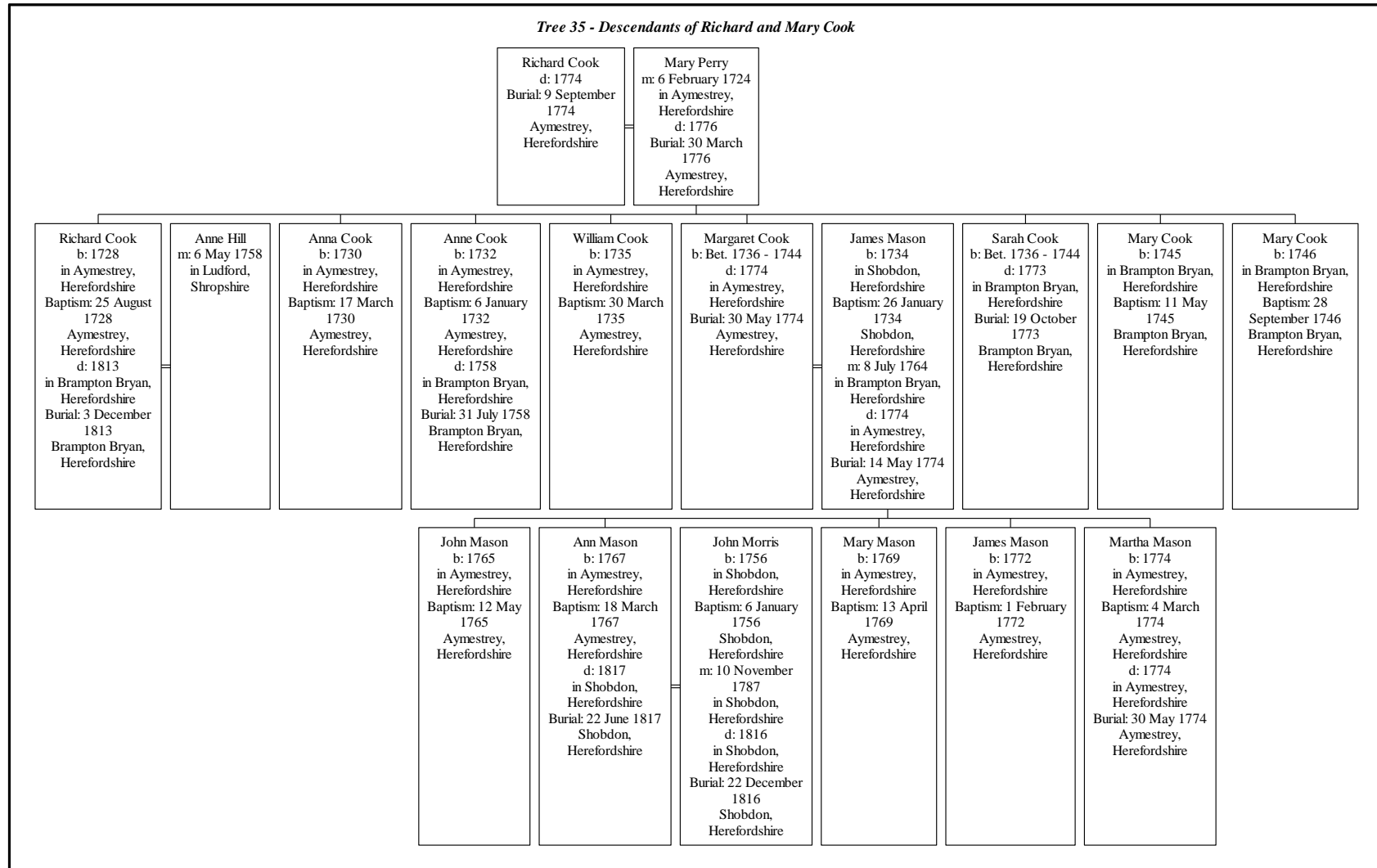
be reached on foot within five minutes

⁹⁸ HARC, Will of James Mason of Aymestrey, 1774

⁹⁹

<https://www.bramptonbryan.org.uk/village/#:~:text=The%20population%20is%20under%20200,Harley%20and%20Margaret%20de%20Brampton>

Tree 35 - Descendants of Richard and Mary Cook



So, it is highly unlikely that there were two Cook families with members named Richard there in the 1700s, although there were probably two generations of Richards. Surprisingly, this little place had been a town in the Middle Ages, trading with the Welsh and having the right to hold markets¹⁰⁰.

Richard Cook and Mary Perry married at Aymestrey on 6th February 1724 (see tree 35, p.140). A first son, Richard (presumably his brother-in-law's trustee), was baptised there on 25th August 1728, followed by Anna - 17th March 1730 - who was presumably short-lived as the next child was baptised Anne, on 6th January 1732. A son named William was baptised at Aymestrey on 30th March 1735, and then the family disappears. It surfaces ten years later in Brampton Bryan, where Richard and Mary baptised Mary on 11th May 1745 and another Mary on 28th September 1746. Where they were in the intervening years is a mystery. However, Richard and Mary buried two daughters at Brampton Bryan, Anne on 31st July 1758 and Sarah - whose baptism has not been found so must have been born during the ten year gap - on 19th October 1773. My conclusion, therefore, is that the Margaret Cook who married James Mason in 1764 was born, like Sarah, in the period between 1736 and 1744. So she was probably in her early twenties when she married.

Richard Cook senior was buried on 9th September 1774 in Aymestrey. Was he a victim of whatever ailment seems to have struck down his daughter, granddaughter and son-in-law? Richard junior did marry, but seemingly not until 1758, when he married Anne Hill at Ludford, professing to be 'of Aymestrey'. The registers are full of gaps when it comes to burials, but there is a burial for a Richard Cook at Brampton Bryan in 1813, with his age given - assuming it is Mary's brother - as a very inflated 97 years!

Cox - Shobdon, Lyonshall and Canon Pyon

The penultimate chapter in this family saga belongs to the Cox family and their kin (see tree 36, p.143). Susan Cox was 21 years old when she married stone mason Thomas Morris, having been baptised at Shobdon on 12th February 1797. According to her death certificate, she was 63 when she died, although she was probably just shy of that. Her certificate records the following:

Twenty first November 1859 Down Wood Shobdon, Susan Morris, Female,
63 years, Wife of Thomas Morris Mason, Asthma No Medical Attendant,
George Cox in Attendance Down Wood Shobdon

I suspect the George in question was her nephew, son of her brother Thomas. She was buried at Shobdon on 26th November, with the register also giving 63 as her age.

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<https://www.bramptonbryan.org.uk/village/#:~:text=The%20population%20is%20under%20200,Harle%20and%20Margaret%20de%20Brampton.>

Susan's parents were Michael Cox and Ann Phenix or Felix, who married at Lyonshall, Ann's home parish, on 5th October 1779 (see tree 36, p.143):

Mical Cox of the Parish of Pembridge and Ann Phenix of this Parish
by banns

Lyonshall lies about 6 miles to the south-west of Shobdon, closer to the Welsh border. Presumably, by the time the couple met, Michael was working in Pembridge, which is roughly half-way between their two home parishes. Both Lyonshall and Pembridge are on the famous 'Black and White House Trail' which incorporates a number of border villages which still have timber-framed houses decked out in magpie colours.



Lyonshall St Michael and all Angels

Michael and Ann baptised two children in Lyonshall; whether they were living there or returned to Ann's roots for the ceremonies is open to question. Thomas was baptised on 10th February 1781. Presumably he grew up in Shobdon and it was there he made a late marriage to Elizabeth Maund on 15th August 1826; it was late in two senses, as their only son, George, was baptised a mere three days later and was probably a marriage of convenience as Elizabeth remarried to Joseph Trehearn around nine months after Thomas died in 1841. Thomas makes two brief appearances in the Shobdon Vestry Minutes¹⁰¹ where he appears as entitled to vote in the 1833 and 1838 elections on account of ownership of freehold property in Downwood in the parish. Curiously, his name is struck through in the second entry. However, his son George appears on the 1854 voters list for the same property¹⁰².

The volume dated 1821-38 also includes an interesting aside, presumably in response to the Education Enquiry instigated in 1833 by the House of Commons. On a page headed 'Education' appear the following comments about Shobdon:

¹⁰¹ HARC, AJ94/18 & 16, Select Vestry Meeting Minutes Shobdon 1821-38 & 1838-48

¹⁰² HARC, AJ94/17, Vestry Meeting Minutes Shobdon 1854-87

Tree 36 - Family of Michael and Ann Cox

<p>Michael Cox b: 1756 Baptism: 16 February 1756 Shobdon, Herefordshire d: 1827 Burial: 17 May 1827 Shobdon, Herefordshire</p>	<p>Ann Phenix/Felix b: 1756 in Lyonshall, Herefordshire Baptism: 25 June 1756 Lyonshall, Herefordshire m: 5 October 1779 in Lyonshall, Herefordshire d: 1836 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 19 December 1836 Shobdon, Herefordshire</p>
--	--

Thomas Cox
b: 1781
Baptism: 10
February 1781
Lyonshall,
Herefordshire
d: 1841
Burial: 10
January 1841
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Elizabeth Maund
m: 15 August
1826
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Sarah Cox
b: 1783
Baptism: 19
January 1783
Lyonshall,
Herefordshire

Richard Price
m: 31 January
1804
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Ann Cox
b: 1785
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Baptism: 17
April 1785
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Thomas Chandler
m: 11 November
1806
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

George Cox
b: 1789
Baptism: 15
February 1789
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Mary Cox
b: 1790
Baptism: 19
December 1790
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 1874
in Leominster
RD

Richard Rewbury
m: 8 August
1819
in Ludlow,
Shropshire

Elizabeth Cox
b: 1793
Baptism: 6 July
1793
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

William Price
m: 24 August
1820
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire

John Cox
b: 1795
Baptism: 10 May
1795
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 1838
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Burial: 19 March
1838
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Susan Cox
b: 1797
Baptism: 12
February 1797
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 21 November
1859
in Downwood,
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Burial: 26
November 1859
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

Thomas Morris
b: 1791
Baptism: 20
April 1791
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
m: 26 November
1818
in Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 6 November
1869
in Downwood,
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
Burial: 11
November 1869
Shobdon,
Herefordshire

James Cox
b: 1800
Baptism: 6 June
1800
Shobdon,
Herefordshire
d: 1846
in Leominster
RD

House of Commons 1833

...

Number of inhabitants 1831 536

What No of schools daily 2

15 boys in one

20 girls

Enter at 7 quit from 14-17

...

The above scholars appear at church morning and evening attended by master and mistress.

No endowed school in the parish... The above schools established 1824.

Michael and Ann's second child, Sarah, was baptised at Lyonshall on 19th January 1783. She married Richard Price at Shobdon on 31st January 1804. The couple baptised four children there but there were another seven born at nearby Dilwyn, where Sarah was enumerated in both 1851 and 1861¹⁰³.

The rest of Michael and Anne's family were born at Shobdon. Ann, baptised on 17th April 1785, married Thomas Chandler there on 11th November 1806. Between 1808 and 1825, this couple baptised ten children at Shobdon, including what looks like two sets of twins. Ann's brother George was baptised on 15th February 1789. I have found no marriage record for him and he may have died relatively young. There is only one burial for a George Cox at Shobdon in the right timeframe - in 1805 - and this may equally record his uncle or great uncle. Mary, baptised on 19th December 1790, married Richard Rewbury at Ludlow on 8th August 1819. The couple settled in Shobdon where four children were baptised, with a possible fifth baptised at Staunton on Arrow. Like his brother-in-law Thomas Morris, Richard Rewbury was, according to the 1851 census¹⁰⁴, a stone mason. Mary died in the Leominster Registration District in 1874.

The next child in this family was the rather shadowy Elizabeth. She was baptised on 6th July 1793 and married William Price in her home parish on 24th August 1820. John, baptised on 10th May 1795, is also something of a mystery, but seems never to have married. He was buried at Shobdon on 19th March 1838. Susan came next, and then the last child was James; baptised on 6th June 1800, his is perhaps the death registered in the Leominster Registration District in 1846.

Michael Cox was a yeoman, according to his will¹⁰⁵, which he wrote on 4th May 1822, and he seems to have been possessed of a number of pieces of property, as well as a large family. This is borne out by the fact that his name appears in a Hereford Poll Book of 1802¹⁰⁶:

¹⁰³ HO 107/1979/256 & RG9/1826/12, 1851 & 1861 censuses, Dilwyn

¹⁰⁴ HO 107/1981, 1851 census, Shobdon

¹⁰⁵ HARC, Will of Michael Cox, yeoman of Shobdon, 1822/27

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<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=cCdcAAAACAAJ&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=michael+cox+shobdon&source=bl&ots=y->

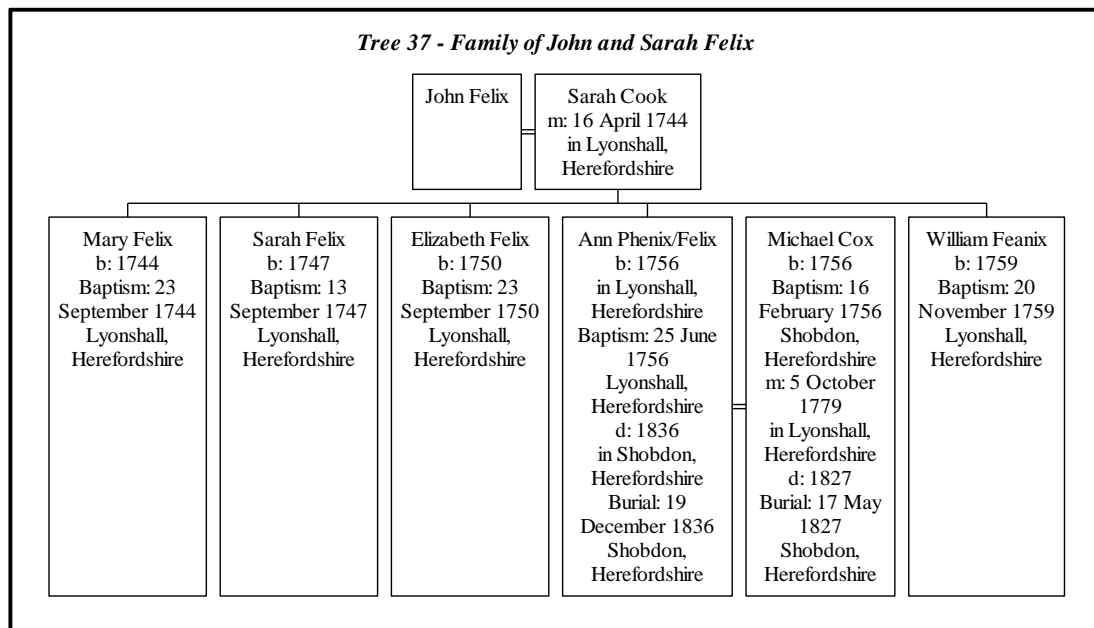
Chandler and Elizabeth Price were each willed £20 and daughter Sarah Price £15. Anything left over was to be put in trust by his son Thomas and the interest paid to his wife Ann for life.

Somewhat surprisingly, he doesn't nominate one of his children or his wife as executor. Instead, he chooses:

Mr Thomas Caldecourt of Kingsland Blacksmith

which suggests that Michael followed the same trade as his father and grandfather. Presumably, too, the making of this will was not done in extremis. Michael seems to have made a trip into the nearby market town of Leominster to draw it up, as the witnesses are all of Leominster, namely: Samuel Southall, Grocer; William Southall, Druggist and Samuel Nicholas, Postmaster. Michael Cox lived for another five years and was buried at Shobdon on 17th August 1827 as:

Michael Cox; Downwood in the Parish of Shobdon



His wife, Ann Phenix, lived on for another nine years and was buried at Shobdon on 19th December 1836 aged 80. This fits well with her baptism at Lyonshall on 25th June 1756 although it took me some time to find it as her name is recorded as Ann Felix:

25^o Ann daughter of John and Sarah Felix

She was the penultimate child of John Felix and his wife Sarah Cook (**see tree 37, p.146**), whom he had married at Lyonshall on 16th April 1744. Their first four children – which included Ann – were baptised as Felix, namely: Mary, baptised on 23rd September 1744; Sarah – 13th September 1747; and Elizabeth – 23rd September 1750. The last child, baptised on 20th November 1759, was entered as William Feanix. John and Sarah's surnames were also unstable. Sarah was buried as Sarah

Feenix on 14th December 1763 while John appears in the register on 15th November 1781 as John Phenix. There is no sign of a baptism for him, although his wife Sarah may have been born in Shobdon in 1725, daughter of Edward and Anne Cooke.

Michael Cox was the second child given that name by his parents, Thomas Cox and Elizabeth Smith, and was baptised on 16th December 1756 at Shobdon (**see tree 38, p.149**). His short-lived namesake was the couple's first child, baptised on 6th September 1747, at Shobdon like all his siblings. Elizabeth, baptised on 17th September 1749 and named after her mother, may have married Thomas Sturkey at Lyonshall in 1779, but there is no definitive proof. Thomas, named for his father, was baptised on 1st September 1751. He was followed by Susan – baptised 24th June 1753. The second Michael was next, followed by George – 10th May 1758 - and Mary – 25th February 1761. All of these siblings remain elusive.

Presumably Thomas senior had undertaken an apprenticeship as a blacksmith, maybe with his father, as, in 1753, on 14th April, he took on an apprentice of his own¹⁰⁷:

Tho ^s Cox of Shobdon, Hereford,	B:Smith	Joseph Griffith
Premium paid £1.		

After that, nothing is known of him. His wife Elizabeth presumably outlived him, and, like many widows, sank into poverty. Inside the Shobdon Vestry Meeting Minutes¹⁰⁸ is a loose sheet of paper dated 1805, which appears to be disbursements made to the poor. Three entries appear to relate to Thomas' wife Elizabeth:

April 3 rd	Betty Cox Downwood to buy coal	0 2 0
May 9 th	Betty Cox Downwood	0 2 0
May 10 th	Betty Cox Downwood to buy coal	0 2 0

These would tie in nicely with the date of her burial at Shobdon in 1806:

Jan^{ry} 21st Elizabeth Cox was buried

Casting around for a likely marriage between Thomas Cox and Elizabeth, the most obvious choice seemed to be that between a Thomas Cox and Elizabeth Bush at nearby Leominster in 1747, three months before the birth of Michael. However, this couple raised a family in Leominster, and some of their children's baptisms overlap those of the Shobdon family. In fact, Thomas Cox married Elizabeth Smith on 29th October 1745 at Huntington, about 13 miles south-west of Shobdon, and right up against the Welsh border. Fortunately, even the transcript gives his abode:

29 Oct 1745	Cox Thomas of Shobdon	Elizabeth Smith of Pembridge	Lic
-------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------	-----

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>, UK Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures, 1710-1811

¹⁰⁸ AJ94/16 Vestry Meeting Minutes Shobdon 1838-48

This would be just under two years before their first child was born, which fits neatly. There is no baptism of an Elizabeth Smith at Pembridge, so her origins remain obscure.

Thomas the blacksmith was the eldest son of Michael Cocks and his wife Mary or Maria Smyth and was the first of this family to have been baptised at Shobdon – on 18th October 1719. He was followed by two girls and then a boy: Ann was baptised on 13th October 1723, Mary on 17th March 1725 and George on 11th June 1727. His wife may have been born at nearby Aymestrey in 1696, the daughter of William and Ann Smith, but again, definitive proof is lacking. The couple married in Burrington, about eight miles north of Shobdon on 3rd December 1716, which is slightly puzzling, as the most likely origin for Michael Cox or Cocks is at Canon Pyon, just over ten miles south of Shobdon. Here, Michael, son of George and Susanna Cox née Bennett was baptised on 20th October 1689, and given the prevalence of the fairly unusual name George in this family, it feels a good fit.



Canon Pyon St Lawrence

Michael's older brother, George, born three years after his parents' marriage at Canon Pyon on 20th January 1676, was baptised there on 18th November 1680. He was buried at Canon Pyon on 17th May 1733, but the name appears at least once in the next four generations. George and Susanna's only other proven child seems to have been Anna, baptised on 8th October 1693. She married John Chambers in Hereford Cathedral on 2nd March 1716. George chose to marry in Hereford Cathedral on 5th February 1710; his bride was named Susanna Brush and came from Felton. They baptised two children at Canon Pyon, George and Hannah, but from here the information is confusing. George Cox senior was buried as such on 28th December 1716, but there is no sign of his wife's burial. However, the two entries directly following the baptism of George junior's daughter Hannah in 1715 read as follows:

Tree 38 - Descendants of George and Susanna Cox

George Cox d: 1715 Burial: 28 December 1715 Canon Pyon, Herefordshire	Susanna Bennett m: 20 January 1676 in Canon Pyon, Herefordshire
--	--

George Cox b: 1680 Baptism: 18 November 1680 Canon Pyon, Herefordshire Burial: 17 May 1733 Canon Pyon, Herefordshire
--

Susanna Brush m: 5 February 1710 in Hereford Cathedral, Hereford, Herefordshire
--

?Susanna Cox

Edmond Jones m: 8 June 1715 in Canon Pyon, Herefordshire

Michael Cocks b: 1689 Baptism: 20 October 1689 Canon Pyon, Herefordshire d: 1743 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 23 January 1743 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Mary Smyth m: 3 December 1716 in Burrington, Herefordshire Burial: 23 March 1764 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Anna Cox b: 1693 Baptism: 8 October 1693 Canon Pyon, Herefordshire
--

John Chambers m: 2 March 1717 in Hereford Cathedral, Hereford, Herefordshire

Thomas Cox b: 1719 Baptism: 18 October 1719 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Elizabeth Smith b: 1723 Baptism: 16 June 1723 Huntington, Herefordshire m: 29 October 1745 in Huntington, Herefordshire d: 1806 Burial: 21 January 1806 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Ann Cox b: 1723 Baptism: 13 October 1723 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Mary Cox b: 1725 Baptism: 17 March 1725 Shobdon, Herefordshire

George Cox b: 1727 Baptism: 11 June 1727 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Michael Cox b: 1747 Baptism: 6 September 1747 Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 14 August 1749 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Elizabeth Cox b: 1749 Baptism: 17 September 1749 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Thomas Cox b: 1751 Baptism: 1 September 1751 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Susan Cox b: 1753 Baptism: 24 June 1753 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Michael Cox b: 1756 Baptism: 16 February 1756 Shobdon, Herefordshire d: 1827 Burial: 17 May 1827 Shobdon, Herefordshire
--

Ann Phenix/Felix b: 1756 in Lyonshall, Herefordshire Baptism: 25 June 1756 Lyonshall, Herefordshire m: 5 October 1779 in Lyonshall, Herefordshire d: 1836 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Burial: 19 December 1836 Shobdon, Herefordshire

George Cox b: 1758 Baptism: 10 May 1758 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Mary Cox b: 1761 in Shobdon, Herefordshire Baptism: 25 February 1761 Shobdon, Herefordshire

Edmund Jones of Wellington and Susanna Cox of this parish were married
June y^e eight
Susanna daughter of George Cox senior (pauper) Buried July 20th

My gut feeling is that the first entry refers to the marriage of a daughter of George senior, unless, that is, George junior had died suddenly and his wife remarried - an unlikely scenario as he seems to have been buried at Canon Pyon in 1733. Regarding the second entry, I wonder if it should read 'wife of' rather than 'daughter of'.

To return to Michael Cox, he and his wife Mary settled in Shobdon where Michael made his living as a blacksmith, an important and essential role in a village where everything had to be made and mended to order; horses needed to be shod on a regular basis, and nails, locks and furniture needed to be made.

Two years after the birth of their last child, Michael wrote his will¹⁰⁹. It is dated 24th July 1729, but was not proved until 3rd January 1744. The inference is that Michael was ill. He uses the formulaic phrase:

being sick and weak in body

and it lacks the detail of someone who is not in a hurry to settle his or her affairs. He begins the body of the will as follows:

I do give and bequeath to my Dear wife Mary Cox all my Personal Estate Goods Cattel and Chattels during her natural life for the Education and Maintaining my children and to dispose of it amongst them at her Discretion [sic]

with the proviso that, should she remarry, his trustees Joseph Woodhouse and Edward Coke:

set it out to the use and best advantage of my Poore Children Giving my wife a Competence what they think fit

Despite this, he made his wife executrix and the will was witnessed by Thomas and John Smith, who may well have been Mary's brothers.

Michael clearly recovered and lived for another 13 and a half years. He was buried at Shobdon on 23rd January 1743, with the briefest of notes in the register:

Jan^{ry} 23 Michael Cox was buried

Appraisers Thomas Eales, Thomas Thomas and Edward Cooke (certainly the Edward Coke mentioned above) took an inventory:

January 30th 1743

¹⁰⁹ HARC, Will of Michael Cox, Blacksmith of Shobdon, 1729/44

The account of Goods of Cattle and Chattels of Michael Cox Blacksmith of the parish of Shobdon late deceased

	£	S	D
Imprimis Shoptools and things belonging to his			
Trade we value at 8 ^l	08	0	0
Shop Books to the Value of 10 ^l	10	0	0
Four Cows	10	0	0
Seven horses	16	0	0
Sheep and Piggs	5	15	0
Grain thrashed and unthrashed	4	0	0
The Hay	8	0	0
The Corn growing on the Ground	2	10	0
Tack of Team and Implements of Husbandry	3	10	0
The Kitchen one clock, Brass and pewter and other things to the value of	5	0	0
The Room adjoining to the Kitchen one bed and three Hogsheads and a Chest and other things to y ^e Value	4	0	0
The Chamber over the Kitchen and the next adjoining to him three feather Beds and other Goods to y ^e Value of	10	0	0
Nine Baggs of Hops	9	0	0
Money in hand and at Interest	70	0	0
Lease land to the value of	32	0	0
Wearing Apparell	5	0	0
Things forgotten and unknown to the Value	0	5	0
Total	204	0	0



Turner - A Country Blacksmith disputing upon the price of iron...
 1807 - [Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 DEED](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Several things are noteworthy about this inventory. Firstly, the value, which highlights the status of a blacksmith in the community. It's not a bad haul for someone whose father was apparently buried as a pauper. There are the usual signs of husbandry, both in terms of livestock and implements, but in addition, there are his blacksmith's tools and his accounts book, valued together at £18. Also, there are the nine bags of hops, valued at £9. Hop-growing is a typical Herefordshire

industry, still practiced today, though on a smaller scale. Hop flowers are an essential ingredient in beer making, adding flavour – including bitterness – and stabilising the brew. They are grown up tall poles, and at this time the flowers would have been harvested by hand once the vines had been removed from the poles. Finally, there are a number of investments, both in money and land, amounting to exactly half the value of his estate.

Mary was sworn as executrix on 3rd January 1744 and exhibited the inventory on 30th January when the will was proved. Mary seems to have outlived her husband by a considerable period as the only burial for a Mary Cox at Shobdon was on 23rd March 1764, although it is possible that this entry refers to her daughter of the same name.

Leonard Griffiths – Kingsland, Eye and Leominster

After a very long digression exploring my grandfather-in-law's female ancestors, we finally return to the main Griffiths line in the person of Leonard Griffiths, son of William Griffiths and Eliza Ellen Martin. He was born on 19th July 1894 at Kingsland, and his mother registered the birth about four weeks later:

Nineteenth July 1894, Kingsland; Leonard; Boy; William Griffiths; Eliza Ellen Griffiths formerly Martin; Farm Labourer; Eliza E Griffiths Mother, Kingsland; Sixteenth August 1894

He was baptised at Eye church. The 1901 census¹¹⁰ places the family in the civil parish of Eye, Moreton and Ashton, but family lore suggests they were in Eye. It would have been a crowded household, with William as head of the family, a 40-year-old Wagonner on Farm, his wife Eliza aged 39, then six children ranging from Henry at 14, down through Mary Ann, William, Leonard aged 6, Edith and finally 11-month-old Albert. All but the youngest of the children gave Kingsland as their birthplace.

By the time the census was taken, Leonard was already a scholar, at Berrington and Eye School¹¹¹, having been admitted on 5th February 1900, and having previously attended Hope School. His education didn't last long, though, as a note in the Log records:

Age and attend^{ce} Cert

and shows that he left school on 26th July 1907, having just passed his 13th birthday.

¹¹⁰ RG13/2496/43, 1901 census, Eye, Moreton and Ashton

¹¹¹ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> National School Admission Registers and Log Books, 1870-1914

On 25th March 1909 Leonard was confirmed at Eye Church. A confirmation Card, signed by vicar Wilfred G Buckle, carries the following lines:

Thine for ever. Thine for ever!
Armed with Faith and strong in Thee
Ever fighting fainting never
May we march to Victory.



When the next census was taken in 1911¹¹², although he was living at home still, at Eye Cottages in Leominster, he was apparently contributing to the household income by:

Assisting in garden

Three years later, World War I erupted, and Leonard enlisted in the Herefordshire Light Infantry in the 1st/1st Battalion. Unfortunately, his Attestation Papers don't seem to have survived, but he enlisted in May 1915. The local newspaper¹¹³ included him in its Roll of Honour in an edition dated 22nd May 1915, but his formal enlistment seems to have taken place a week later, on 30th May:

Leonard Griffiths, Berrington

Nothing is known about his early training, but from June 1916 Leonard kept a diary¹¹⁴ of his time abroad, which helps piece together his experiences. The first entry notes:

We sailed from Devonport in the S.S. Northland on June 26th 1916 and proceeded to Egypt arriving at Alexandria on July 8th had a very good sea voyage all the way also the S.S. Northland was a good boat for travelling with.

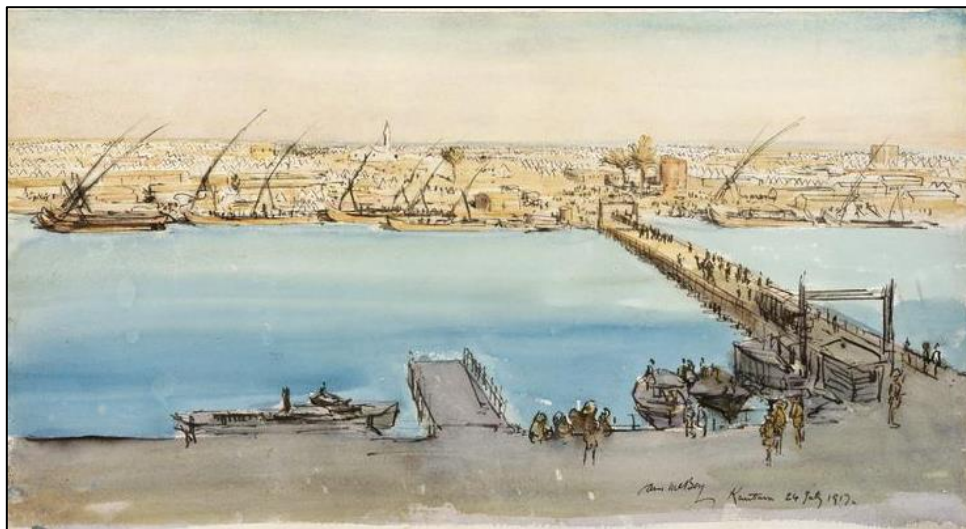
¹¹² RG14/15822, 1911 census Leominster

¹¹³ *The Kington Times*, 22.5.1915

¹¹⁴ Transcribed by his granddaughter

On arrival at Alexandria, his draft marched to a rest camp at Sidi Besili. On 13th July, he joined the rest of the battalion at Moassaan where he was clearly struck by the heat having just arrived from England. Another train journey a week later took them to Kantara. On July 23rd they:

marched to Hill Seventy in the heat and were loaded up with ammunition as we were expecting an attack by the Turk. July 24th marched to Romania [Rumani] to out-post line to wait for the Turk to attack which he did on August 4th and got a rather bad time of it too. But of course we lost some men as well.



Kantara 1917

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<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/18111>

Later in August the battalion returned to Kantara and several other locations. Several places are mentioned, along with raids and rests, but clearly the most striking thing for him was occasions where they had tents to sleep in, and an occasion when they were:

beside the sea which was a very good thing as we able to get a bath every day while there.

For the rest of the year the entries list a lot of marching, some training and strengthening of trenches, and also some rest periods, but seemingly no major skirmishes. At the beginning of 1917 they returned to Rumani to attack the Turks again. However, perhaps not surprisingly, Leonard seems more interested in describing creature comforts or lack of them than describing the battles. He comments on sleeping in huts at Kantara but sleeping in the open at Gilbran which he:

found ... rather cold after the hot days.

In February 1917 they went to El Aruk and:

were right by the sea again and while there we had a pretty good time, but of course there was outpost duty to do every night. 21st left El Aruk and went to El Rurg. Feb 25 went to Shield Jouwaid where we stayed a few days to dig wells to get more water and for the railway to be put down.

The following month was an eventful one. On 8th March one of their men died while they were at Shield Jouwaid, and between 21st and 26th they marched to Rifa, Canucnius Gardens and St James Park and made another attack on the Turks. After the battle they were relieved and rested, spending much time apparently pumping water to store. He clearly wasn't too keen on the camels which carried the water as he considered them:

very handy animals so long as you did not have to go too close to them

Much of the rest of the year seemed to be taken up with routines of marching and training, but in November his luck ran out temporarily:

Nov 3 marched by Beersheba and stayed on some hills a little way out. Nov 6th went into action at a place called Khuwielfeh. Got wounded and same day got back to Beersheba by motor. 7th left by G S wagon and arrived at Calvi and then by train to El Marrah. 8th went by train to El Arish Hospital where I stayed for a fortnight. 23rd went by train to Kantara.

By December he was back in action:

Dec 8th left Kantara by train to Calvi where we arrived on 9th. 19th marched to Beersheba where we stayed the night. It rained very hard while we were there. 20th Derhareira stayed there till 22nd when we marched to Hebron, which is a very pretty place. 24th marched to Solomans Wells. 25 Xmas day marched to Jerusalem through mud and water up to the top of our boots. That was where I joined the Battalion after being wounded. Jerusalem is not a very large town or very clean, dirty looking. 26th marched to the line. 28th went into action and took Anatai Village. 29th marched to Ismia stayed there holding the line till Jan 11th 1918 when we marched to a place just outside Bethell in reserve.

In March 1918 he reports an attack in which they took Dragon Hill and Chipps Hill in what he describes as a stiff fight. So, no doubt he was glad of leave in Cairo in May where he apparently enjoyed himself. His time in the Middle East was coming to an end, though. On 18th June, the battalion sailed from Alexandria on the Kaisir Hind for Taranto in Italy. From there they entrained for France and arrived at Out Cappell at the end of the month. The diary tails off in mid-July:

July 7th marched to school camp. July 13th went to St Omer. July 15th arrived back at Out Cappell. 16 entrained for Soissons 18 arrived at small village outside...



Leonard Griffiths in WWI

**Leonard Griffiths around the
time of his marriage**



No doubt Leonard found himself with little time – and probably little stomach - for writing a diary. The war had now entered *The Hundred Days* from 18th July to 11th November 1918. In a series of battles and offensives, the Allies pushed the Germans back over the Hindenberg line and brought the war to an end. However, although the Armistice was signed on 11th November 1918, Leonard was not demobilised until 30th April 1919. He seems to have already decided on a career as the Trade Union Membership Registers record him as a porter when he was admitted to the National Union of Railwaymen in 1919. The entry on *FindmyPast* gives the date simply as March/April.

So, back in Leominster, Leonard was working¹¹⁵ as a railway porter, possibly at Berrington station (his abode was given as Berrington on *The Kington Times'* Roll of Honour in 1915), and a year later he married. Whether he had known his future wife before the war or not is unclear. However, his marriage certificate gives plenty of other detail:

Marriage solemnised at the Priory Church in the parish of Leominster...
April 14th 1920
Leonard Griffiths; 25; Bachelor; Railway Porter; Cranes Lane Leominster
William Griffiths, Farm Labourer
Elsie Mary Hughes; 24; Spinster; -; 6 Cranes Lane Leominster
William Hughes; Carman

Bride and groom both signed as did the witnesses: Henry Griffiths and Edith Esther Griffiths. Henry and Edith were, of course, Leonard's siblings. A photograph taken on the wedding day shows Leonard's father, William Griffiths, sitting in the front row with Elsie's father William Hughes, flanked by two Hughes relations. Leonard and Elsie stand behind the two fathers and Mary Whatmore, Leonard's sister, is to the right of the bride. Harry Griffiths is to the far left and his wife Rose second from the right. The other bridesmaid, to the left of Leonard, is another Hughes cousin, but I suspect, given that she signed the register so must have been present, that one of the two unidentified young women is probably his sister Edith.

I imagine Leonard and Elsie moved in with her widowed father after the wedding, as that is where the couple were enumerated for the 1921 census¹¹⁶. At 6, Cranes Lane, Leominster, William Thomas Hughes was head of the household, 55 years old, born Hatfield, Herefordshire and employed at Leominster station as a Carman for the LNW Railway. Elsie's three brothers, William, Reginald and Henry were all there too. The oldest and youngest brother were both out of work; it was the beginning of the Depression, and only Reg was employed – as a Law Clerk. Elsie Mary Griffiths was aged 25 years 4 months, born in Leominster and engaged in 'home duties'. Leonard Griffiths was listed as son-in-law, 26 years 11 months, and a Railway Porter with the Great Western and London and Northwest Railway, based at Berrington and Eye Station.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> Britain, Trade Union Membership Registers

¹¹⁶ RG25/12266/20, 1921 census, Leominster



Harry Griffiths

Harry Hughes

Leonard Griffiths

Reg Hughes

Elsie Highes

Mary Whatmore?

Rose Griffiths

Doris Hubbard

Jane Yapp Win Yapp

William Hughes

William Griffiths

Annie Hubbard

A series of Electoral Rolls online¹¹⁷ helps trace the household through the decade, always at 6, Cranes Lane. In 1920, Leonard appears on the register along with William Thomas and William James, his brother-in-law. In the following two years, Reginald Thomas, his other brother-in-law, is also resident. From 1923, only William senior and Reg are listed with Leonard. In 1927 and 1928, there are considered to be two households at no 6, as, while the house as a whole is shown as occupied by William Thomas and Henry George Hughes (the third brother-in-law), a separate entry annotated 'part of' has Leonard and a newly enfranchised Elsie Griffiths as occupiers. In 1931, 6 Cranes Lane was shown to be occupied by Leonard and Elsie Griffiths and William Thomas Hughes only.

The couple's sole child, Leonard Henry, was born at 6, Cranes Lane on 6th November 1923; his father registered the birth about three weeks later. By 1939, William Hughes was still living with his daughter and family, but they were now at no. 20 Cranes Lane. William was listed as a retired GWR Carter and Leonard senior as a Railway Porter Trained as shunter. Elsie was recorded with the ubiquitous 'unpaid domestic duties' and Leonard junior was at school.

It is to be hoped that Leonard as shunter, was not responsible for an accident reported in *The Kington Times* in 1932¹¹⁸ under the heading:

RAILWAY MISHAP
DERAILED COACH DELAYS TRAFFIC

The article begins:

Delay to main line and branch traffic was caused at Leominster Station on Tuesday morning through the derailing of a passenger coach during shunting operations.

It appears that after passengers had alighted from the 9.25 Worcester train, the carriages were shunted into the goods yard to remove goods vehicles. After this was done, the passenger coaches began to leave the siding. As the train was travelling over the crossing to return to the main line, the last set of wheels stayed on the siding rails, resulting in the derailing of the carriage:

Porter Leonard Griffiths, who was standing on the footboard outside the coach jumped clear just in time to avoid a large gas lamp.

The rear of the coach struck the said lamp column, snapping it in two. Fortunately, the guard was able to bring the rest of the train to a standstill, but the derailed coach blocked the main up-line for a while, causing trains in both directions to be run on the downline until the break-down gang was able to right the coach. According to the article:

¹¹⁷ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>, England and Wales, Electoral Registers 1910-1932

¹¹⁸ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>, *The Kington Times*, 16.7.1932

Normal working conditions were restored by one o'clock.

Two years later, another incident on the railway line brought Leonard into the news¹¹⁹. This time, it was something of a tragedy. A few days before the publication of *The Kington Times* on 3rd March 1934, an engine driver reported feeling a slight bump on the line between Leominster and Ford Bridge stations:

When a telephone message was sent from Ford Bridge to Leominster asking That the line should be searched, Mr L. Griffiths, a member of the Leominster platform staff made an inspection with a hand lamp. On passing a level crossing about a mile from the station... he came across a man's body.

Leonard gave testimony at the subsequent coroner's inquest:

Leonard Griffiths, 6, Cranes Lane, Leominster, porter at Leominster Station, said he was on duty on Monday night when he had information that something was on the line. He went to the south end. Just past the crossing, about a mile from Leominster, he found some flesh in the four-foot way. Further on he found a body in the four-foot way. The body was in a terrible way. They moved the body out of the four-foot way. They came back and reported the matter to the Station Master.

This must have been a traumatic incident for Leonard and whoever accompanied him, given the gruesome details in the paper regarding the state of the apparent suicide's body.

Leonard featured in *The Kington Times*¹²⁰ again, five years later, when he was knocked down by a car - along with one Charles Cooke - in Broad Street in Leominster. They:

were knocked down by a car driven by Reginald E. Batstone ... The car was being driven down Broad Street and the pedestrians were going in the same direction. Dr Thompson arrived on the scene and attended to the injured men.

It seems that on this occasion again, Leonard was relatively lucky as the other pedestrian was hospitalised. Both the fact that the railway was up and running again within three and a half hours of the derailment and the fact that at this accident assistance was given by no less than three policemen make the stories seem to belong to a different world.

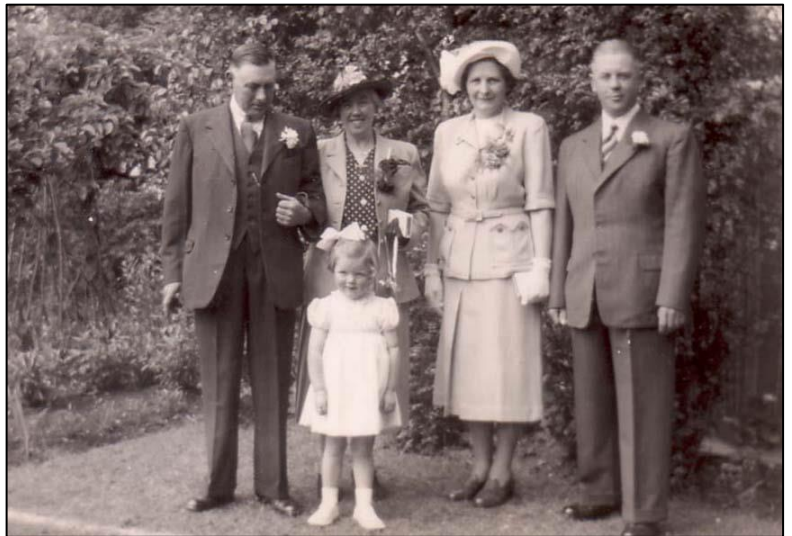
Documentary evidence mainly shows Leonard to have worked as a porter, but he was also at some time a Railway Guard and, according to family lore, a Signaller. At some point unspecified, the family moved to 64, Etnam Street in Leominster. I suspect this was after William Hughes died in 1942. By this time, World War II was in full swing, and Leonard junior was in the RAF. Elsie's brother

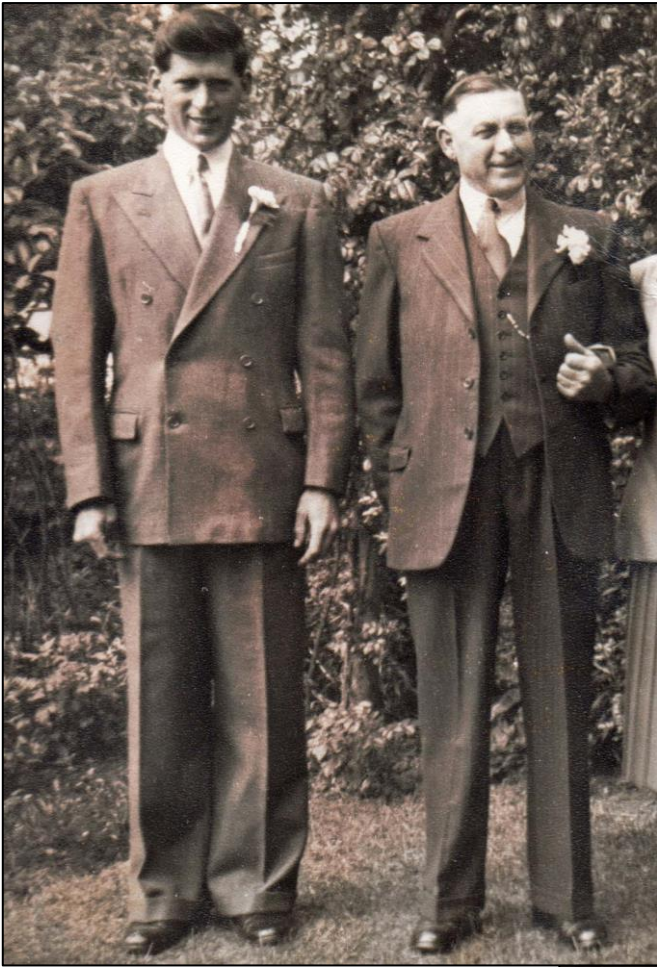
¹¹⁹ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> , *The Kington Times*, 3.3.1934

¹²⁰ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> , *The Kington Times*, 30.10.1937



Clockwise from left: Len and Elsie - Brighton 1946; Len and Sally; Len with Mary Ann and Tom Whatmore; Len and Sally's wedding; Len in railway uniform.





**Leonard Griffiths and
Leonard Henry Griffiths
On Len senior's wedding day**

**Leonard Griffiths -
Verger - at the door to
Leominster Priory in 1955**



Reg was living a few doors away at no. 84 Etnam Street, and it was he, rather than Leonard, who registered Elsie's death on 14th June 1948 when she succumbed to cancer.



Etnam Street Leominster

Leonard junior had married in 1947 and it was his wife, Sheila, who nursed Elsie in her illness. However, after Elsie's death the young couple moved to Chester. A couple of years later, in Leominster in 1951, Leonard married again, to Sarah Hannah Richards, who had spent much of her life in service as a cook. The event was recorded by the local newspaper¹²¹:

MARRIAGE.

GRIFFITHS-RICHARDS. At Leominster Priory Church on Saturday June 23rd, Leonard Griffiths of 64, Etnam Street, Leominster, to Sarah Hannah Richards, of 52 South Street, Leominster

Sarah was the only paternal grandmother my husband and his siblings knew and was always known affectionately as Nana Sally.

When he retired from working on the railway, Leonard took on the role of verger at Leominster Priory. This would have been no sinecure as the priory church is huge, incorporating the original Norman north nave, with an adjoining aisle, and an even broader south nave, also with aisle attached. Keeping this whole building spick and span and in good order would have taken up some time. As a child, my husband used to go and help clean the church when he visited his grandparents. On 18th March 1962, A.T.V. televised Sung Eucharist from Leominster Priory. No doubt Leonard had given the church a particularly good clean that week. In recognition of this, he was presented with a framed photo of the priory. On the back is written:

A small memento of a happy occasion with thanks for all your share

¹²¹ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> , *The Kington Times* 30.6.1951



Leominster Priory - 1962

It is signed by the Vicar and Rural Deam of Leominster, G A H Rainbow.

Leonard died in 1964:

Fifth November 1964 Leominster and District Hospital
Leonard Griffiths; male; 70 years; Of 64 Etnam Street Leominster
Porter British Railways (retired)
I(a) Ac. Cardiac failure, (b) Hypertension, (c) Arteriosclerosis,
II Old cerebral hemiplegia

Sally's sister-in-law Gladys, wife of her brother Jack, and living just a few doors away, registered the death. Leonard was buried in Leominster Municipal Cemetery, section E. Sally lived on at the house in Etnam Street until peritonitis and diverticular disease took her to Leominster County Hospital where she died on 30th September 1979.

Leonard and Elsie are both buried in Leominster Municipal Cemetery¹²². Their shared stone reads:

In loving memory of
ELSIE MARY GRIFFITHS
who died June 14th 1948, aged 52 years.
Peace perfect peace.
Also LEONARD her beloved husband
who died November 5th 1964 aged 70 years

The plot next door has a memorial to Nana Sally and her parents:

In loving memory
HANNAH RICHARDS died 22nd June 1948 aged 83 years
ARTHUR RICHARDS died 14th Oct 1951 aged 80 years
Also their
daughter
SALLY/GRIFFITHS
Died 30 Sept 1979
aged 78 years

Leonard Henry Griffiths - mainly Leominster, Darlington and Hereford

Leonard Henry Griffiths, the only child of his parents, was born in 1923 and died 93 years later on 21st January 2017. His birth certificate reads as follows:

Sixth November 1923, 6 Cranes Lane Leominster U.D.; Leonard Henry; Boy;
Leonard Griffiths; Elsie Mary Griffiths formerly Hughes; Railway Passenger
Porter; L Griffiths Father, 6 Cranes Lane Leominster, 30th November 1923

He was baptised a few weeks later, on 9th December, at the Priory Church in Leominster. The two sponsors are given as Mrs Hubbard and Mr Griffiths. The former was almost certainly his great-aunt, born Anna Caroline Hughes but married to Arthur Hubbard. Her address is given as 19 Cranes Lane, one of many indications of how close-knit this family was. The latter is a bit of a mystery. Mr Griffiths' address is given as 6 Cranes Lane, which would suggest that Len's father was the other sponsor. It is also possible, though, that the surname should have read Hughes, giving a range of suitable uncles, and even a grandfather. Len spent the first five years of his life at 6, Crane's Lane, where the household included his grandfather Hughes and, from time to time, his three Hughes uncles. The family then moved a few doors away to number 20, Cranes Lane, but still with Elsie's father as part of the household.

¹²² A588/523 Leominster Municipal Cemetery; plot E270 and E 271



Leonard Henry Griffiths

It is not known where Len received his primary education, probably Leominster Primary School. However, he clearly shone, as an article in *The Kington Times*¹²³ shows. Under the heading, 'Examination Results' is a sub-heading:

RURAL ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIPS AND SPECIAL PLACES

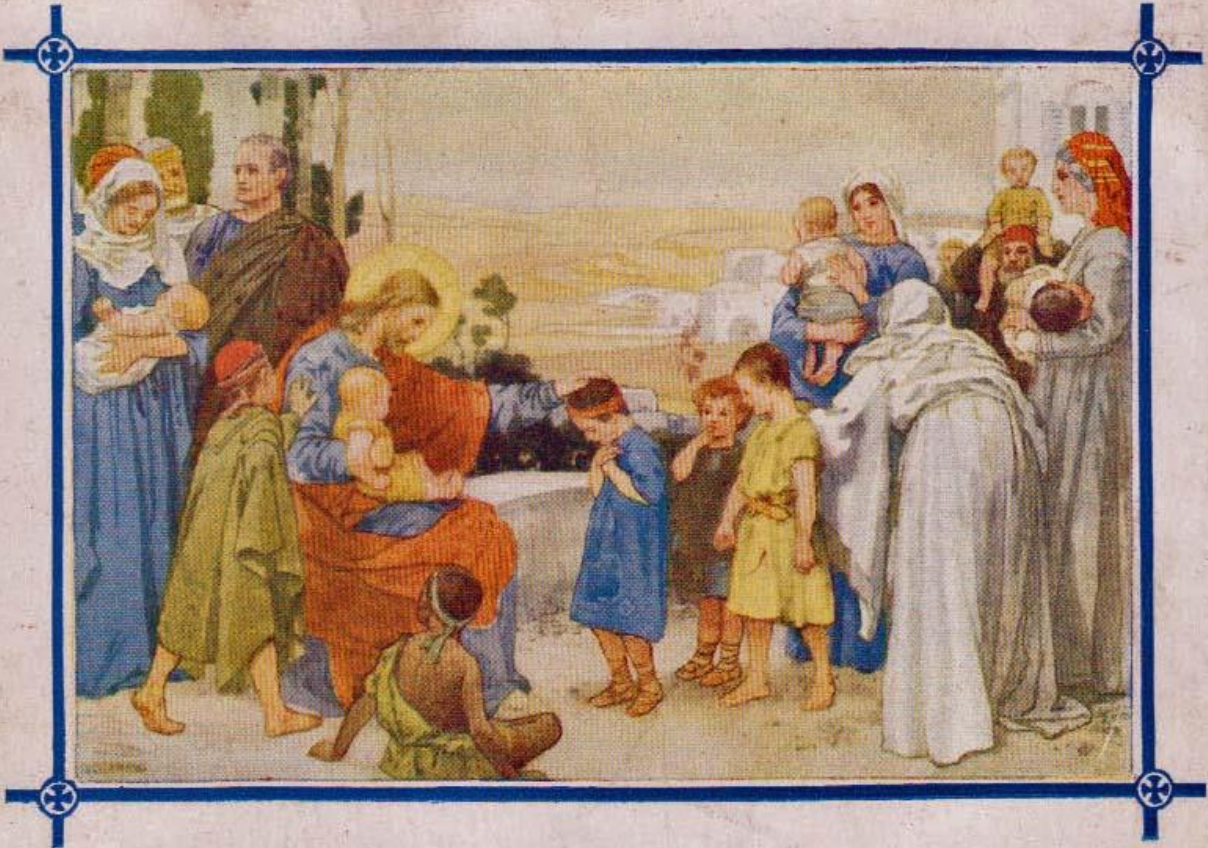
....Awards made in accordance with the scholarship scheme were submitted for approval and passed by the Higher Education sub-committee on Saturday last. The following were the local successes:

SPECIAL PLACES

... Leonard Henry Griffiths, Leominster Council...

Len's was one of only 13 such scholarships for Leominster Grammar School. Sadly, his father did not see the point of Len taking up his place at grammar school, and it was only through the good offices of one of his Hughes uncles, who managed to convince his father that the boy deserved his chance, that Len got to grammar school in September 1935. It was probably while he was there that he learnt to swim, and in August 1939 he was awarded the INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE of *The Royal Life Saving Society*:

¹²³ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> , *The Kington Times*, 29.6.1935



Priory
Church,



Leominster.



Leonard Henry Griffiths.
was Baptised on *December 9th 1923.*

Sponsors.

Mrs. Hubbard, 17 Grosvenor Lane.

Mrs. Griffiths, 3 Grosvenor Lane.

Signed *J. H. Haines.*

Baptism certificate - Leonard Henry Griffiths



Life Saving Certificate - Leonard Henry Griffiths

for practical knowledge of Rescue, Releasing oneself from the Clutch of the Drowning and for ability to render aid in Resuscitating the Apparently Drowned

By the time he had completed his grammar school education, war had broken out, and in 1942 he joined the RAF, where he trained as a pilot. Some years ago, he wrote up his memories of this time for one of his grandsons:

I left my hometown Leominster in 1942 and travelled to St. John's Wood, London, where I met the others I would train with in the following years. We were kitted out, and used to go to Lord's Cricket Ground which the R.A.F. had taken over for lectures.

He records how glad he was when they were transferred to No. 8 I.T.W. (Initial Training Wing) at the Trenance Hotel in Newquay which was out of the way of the bombs which were falling on London. While there the trainees had a strenuous timetable of fitness training and flying lectures.



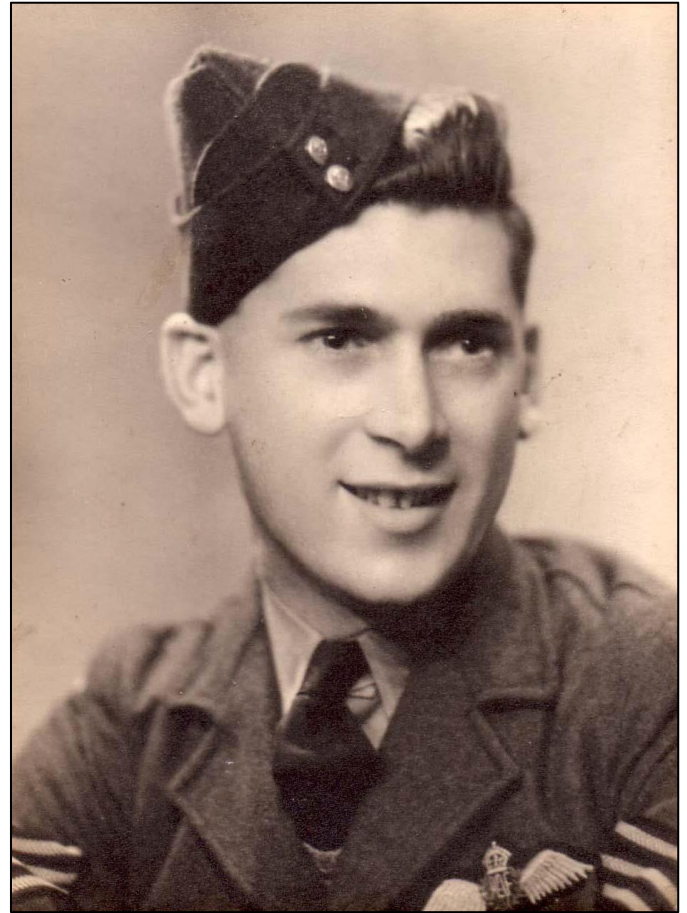
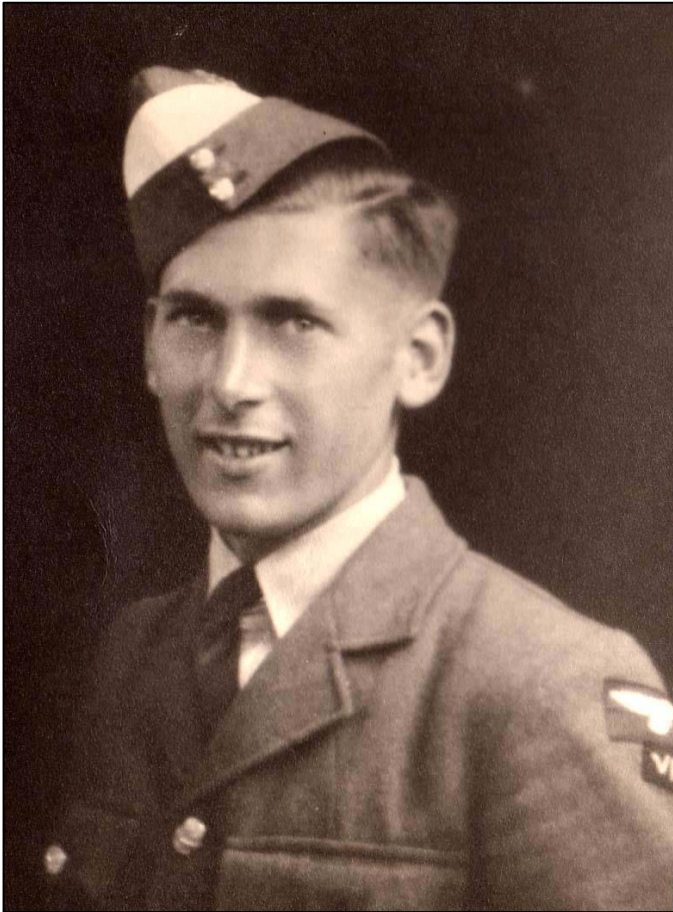
New pilots outside Trenance Hotel
CC BY-NC 4.0¹²⁴

Passing out they were then posted to Heaton Park in Manchester, which had been turned into a huge camp where they were drilled, taught how to use various weapons and given more fitness training. Moved once more – this time to Glasgow, Len boarded the *Aquitania*, one-time pleasure liner, now a troop carrier:

We started off in convoy together with lots of merchant ships. They were crossing the Atlantic to bring back food for Britain as we were severely rationed.

Once in the open sea, they left the convoy and travelled much faster, landing in New York and taking a train up to Moncton in New Brunswick, Canada:

¹²⁴ <https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/26859>



Len in RAF uniform

No 4 Squadron Athletic Team Cup Winners 1943 - Len is far right



No 4 Squadron Athletic Team Cup Winners August 1943

I remember how very cold it was there. Our training proper was to begin when we took the train across Canada to R.C.A.F. DeWinton which was a station south of Calgary. Here the planes on which we would train were the Cornell and Harvard where we learnt all the aspects of flying and had many more lectures on the theory of flight.

When they were considered proficient enough to fly solo, Len and the rest of the group were posted to Moose Jaw in the middle of the prairies, where, instead of cold, it was heat they had to contend with. Then they were posted to the R.C.A.F. station at Gimli, north of Winnipeg:

Here the aircraft were twin-engined Ansons and Oxfords which were very different to the single-engined Cornells. The training here was to prepare us for our eventual return to England and R.A.F. stations. If I remember rightly, it was quite intensive and as well as the usual flying we would be night flying. We usually did this in pairs with one flying and the other navigating and as there was no radar we had to rely on compass bearings and any landmarks we could find. Eventually, we were considered proficient enough to be awarded our wings.

Amongst all the practical training, Len also had to study airmanship, gunnery, weather patterns, theory of bombing, meteorology and forced landings. It wasn't all study though. Before returning to England on the *Isle de France* - which was full of American soldiers preparing for eventual D-Day - he had the chance to visit Banff, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and the Niagara Falls. It must have been a huge adventure for someone who had probably never left Herefordshire before the war.

Despite all that training, I'm not sure that Len took part in operations, despite being designated Pilot Navigator. He seems rather to have been involved in training others, as far as I can tell. He wasn't demobbed until 1947, though, by which time he was stationed in Aldergrove in County Antrim. A caption in his photograph album, begun in February that year notes:

Last Days in the R.A.F.

By then, he had met the woman he was later to marry, a W.A.A.F aircraftwoman named Sheila Margaret Bonallo. Pictures in the spring of that year show them enjoying each other's company in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire, with both of them now out of uniform. Len found employment with the Ministry of Food. Banns were published at Leominster Priory on 6th, 13th and 20th July 1947 and then in August, they married in Sheila's hometown of Edinburgh:

1947 Marriages in the District of Canongate Portobello in the city of Edinburgh.

30th July at Abbey Church Edinburgh after banns according to the form of the Church of Scotland.

Leonard Henry Griffiths, Clerk, Ministry of Food, Bachelor, 23; 64, Etnam St, Leominster, Herefordshire

Sheila Margaret Bonallo, Book-keeper (Aircraftwoman) WAAF,

Spinster, 22; 17, Chambers St, Edinburgh
Leonard Griffiths, Railway Signalman, Elsie Mary Griffiths,
m s Hughes
Hugh McKay Bonallo, Brewer, Susan Yeaman Boath Bonallo,
m s Paton
Signed: J Broadfoot, Minister of Abbey Church, Edinburgh
Witnesses: R. Jones, 25, Charnley St. Whitefield, Manchester
M. Bonallo, 17, Chambers St, Edinburgh
Registered 13th July, Edinburgh

I think the first witness was an R.A.F. colleague, but M. Bonallo was Sheila's sister Moira, also her bridesmaid.

Once again, *The Kington Times*¹²⁵ gives an insight to the event. The headline is:

SCOTTISH CUSTOM AT ABBEY CHURCH WEDDING

Underneath a photo of the couple is the following:

Smiling Miss Sheila Margaret Bonallo, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Bonallo... and her Leominster bridegroom, Mr. Leonard Henry Griffiths... leaving Abbey Church...

The bride is a member of the W.A.A.F. and the bridegroom served during the war with the R.A.F. with the rank of flight-sergeant... He is an old pupil of Leominster Grammar School and a former member of the A.T.C.



Len and Sheila
Behind, L-R, Hugh Bonallo, Elsie and Len Griffiths, Susan Bonallo

Sheila's dress is described as of figured marocain while Moira was in shell pink. Her mother was also in pink, while Len's mother was in a turquoise outfit with a navy hat. Apparently:

¹²⁵ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>, *The Kington Times*, 9.8.1947

The ancient custom of 'poor oot' (throwing coins to children) was observed at the wedding.

The article finishes by stating that the reception was at the Darlings Hotel, the honeymoon in Scotland, and that the couple received:

Useful presents

The couple honeymooned at Dunbar and then Rothsay. However, carefree times were short, as soon after, Len's mother became ill with cancer, and Sheila had to move in with her in-laws in Etnam Street in Leominster to nurse her while Len began his teacher training at Chester College, supposedly the first purpose-built teacher training college in England, built between 1839 and 1842. After his mother's death, Sheila presumably joined him in King Street in Chester, which is where their first child was born in 1949. Connections with Leominster were still strong, though, as Len played rugby briefly for the Luctonians Rugby and Sports Club, in what was probably its first season – the club was founded in 1948.

Sport was always at the heart of what Len did, which explains why he then went on to Loughborough College of Physical Education, graduating in 1950. Armed with the D.L.C.P.E. he received there, he applied for, and got, a job as the teacher in charge of Physical Education at Darlington Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. This necessitated a move, and the acquisition of a family home at 23, Langholme Crescent in Darlington, the house his three children grew up in. Darlington was conveniently at a more-or-less half-way point between Len's family in Leominster and Sheila's in Edinburgh.

Still enamoured of rugby, Len became a member of the Darlington Grammar School Old Boys Rugby Football Club – now Mowden Park R.F.C. According to the club's website¹²⁶, the club was accepted as a member of the Rugby Football Union in September 1950, just as Len joined the staff:

Our first County Cap came in the 1950/51 seasons, and our contribution to The County Side grew rapidly until on one celebrated occasion we provided a third of the team.

In 1958:

...during the course of a pork pie supper at *The Boot and Shoe*, the committee agreed to purchase a property in Victoria road [as a club house]. This was a large terraced house on three floors, with a good cellar... which is even now remembered with affectionate nostalgia by ex-players and their supporters from the whole of the north-east.

The year before, the *Leominster News Series*¹²⁷ had run a piece headed:

¹²⁶ www.mowdenpark.com/a/club-history-6410.html

¹²⁷ <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>, *Leominster News Series*, 29.3.1957

Rugby Stalwart From The Town
Len Griffiths's Work For Darlington O.B.

One of the longest serving members of Darlington G.S. O.B. rugby team – And tower of strength to the Club in other directions too – is Len Griffiths, whose association with the Old Boys dates back to 1950, when he joined the staff of the School as senior P.E. officer after a diploma course at Loughborough College.

Mr. Griffiths, who teaches mathematics at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Darlington, hails from Leominster and attended Leominster Grammar School until joining the R.A.F., in which he served as a pilot. His father is Mr Leonard Griffiths of 64, Etnam Street.

Within two years of joining Darlington Old Boys he had impressed so much by his play and enthusiasm for the Club, both on and off the field, he was elected vice-captain. As it happened, he did actually captain the first team for part of that season through the illness of the elected captain, and he was formally appointed captain the next season, 1954-55.

His committee activities have been numerous and the Club must especially be grateful for his services as social secretary in the early days. He and his helpers laid the foundation for the present strong financial position of the Club.

At the moment, he serves on the social, clubhouse and training sub-Committees, and is the leader of the first XIV forwards.

The newspaper clipping below, taken at an annual dinner of the Darlington Grammar School Old Boys Association probably dates from around this time. Len is on the left.



Len was also a pioneer of school trips, organising a number of trips abroad with the then newly-formed *PGL* – still organising school trips today. The founder, Peter Gordon Lawrence began his work in 1957, with canoe trips down the River Wye. This may have been how Len came into contact with him as he had a very soft spot for what he called:

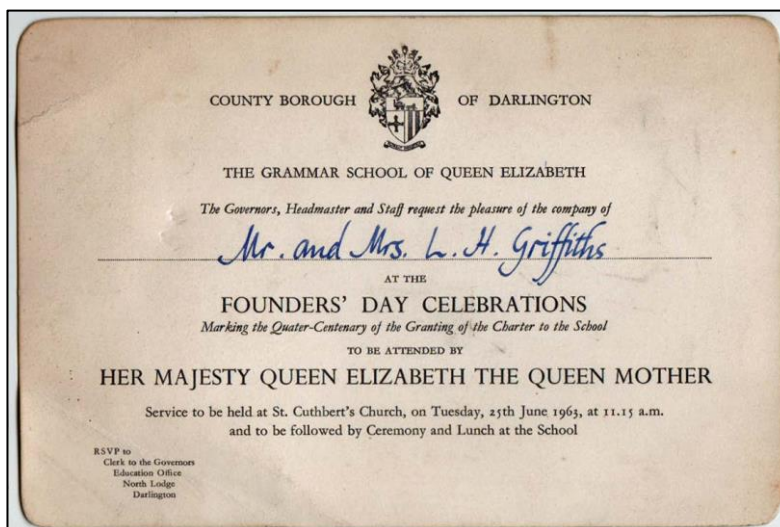
the gentle Wye

Over the years, Len took a number of students from the Grammar School on trips to places like the Ardèche in France, and further afield to the then Yugoslavia. These weren't always without incident. On one famous occasion, the coach the school party was travelling in broke down with a group of hungry boys on board. Len managed to acquire a frying pan, bread and eggs and served egg butties to the entire group. He also organised ski-ing trips, as well as organising the usual run of school fixtures.



Len with the 3rd XV in April 1962

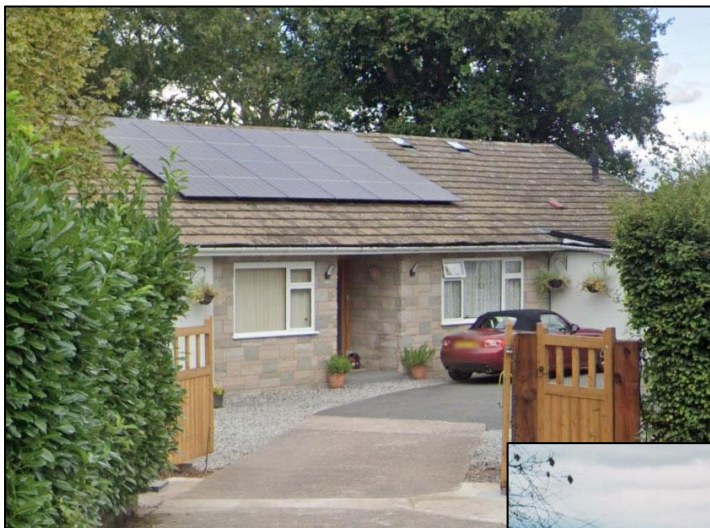
In 1963, the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, the Founder's Day celebrations were attended by the Queen Mother, and Len and Shiela were among those invited to attend. The programme began with the arrival of the Queen Mother at Darlington station, followed by a service of thanksgiving at St Cuthbert's church, a reception in the town hall, a ceremony in the school hall, with an address by the queen, the unveiling of a plaque, lunch and a tour of the school.



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Founders' Day Invitation

In addition to the son born in Chester, two further children were born and grew up in Darlington in the house in Langholme Crescent, close to the centre of the town. As well as family holidays, photo albums show trips to both sets of grandparents – in Edinburgh and Leominster, and a whole series of photos showing the children’s progress towards adulthood, but over the years, Len and Shiela grew apart. They divorced in 1974 and Len remarried, to widow Jean Richardson, whom he married at South Shields Register Office on 16th November 1974. As a consequence, he found himself involved in bringing up three step-sons.

Like many of his generation Len was able to take early retirement, leaving teaching (mainly Maths rather than P.E. in the final years) aged 59. A couple of years later, he and Jean moved to Herefordshire, where they bought a bungalow named *Spyhill* in the tiny hamlet of Ruckhall near Eaton Bishop. Here, he created a beautiful garden overlooking his beloved River Wye. One of my children’s favourite walks with their granddad took them down the footpath beside the house and along the River Wye to come back across the fields towards Eaton Bishop before taking the lane back to *Spyhill*.



***Spyhill*
Ruckhall**

**River Wye from
Spyhill
at Ruckhall**



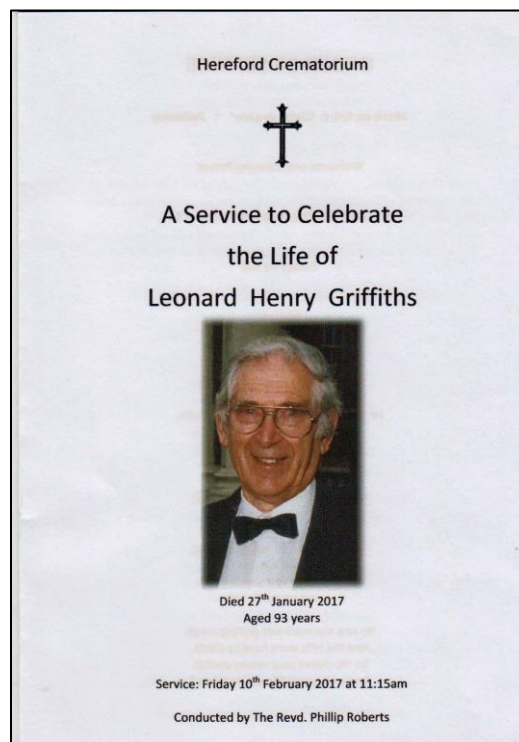
Eventually, though, old age and infirmity drove them back into Hereford, as Ruckhall was a very isolated spot. Here, Len continued to live quietly, winding the beautiful grandfather clock he had inherited from his Hughes grandfather every day.

He was distressed when, debilitated by cancer which was affecting bowel, liver and lungs, he no longer had the power to turn the key. He turned down the offer of surgery, preferring to let nature take its course, but lived at home until days before his death. He died on 27th January 2017 at St Michael's Hospice, Bartestree in Hereford, at the ripe old age of 93. Fittingly, at his funeral at Hereford Crematorium on 10th February, the rugby anthem *Guide me O thou Great Redeemer* was sung; a hymn which had become a Griffiths family mantra at events over many years.

Len's eldest son predeceased him, but in memory of their grandfather, and in recognition of his lifelong love of and service to sport, his family presented a cup inscribed:

The Leonard Henry Griffiths Schools Challenge Cup

to the Luctonians Rugby and Sports Club, for whom he had once played.

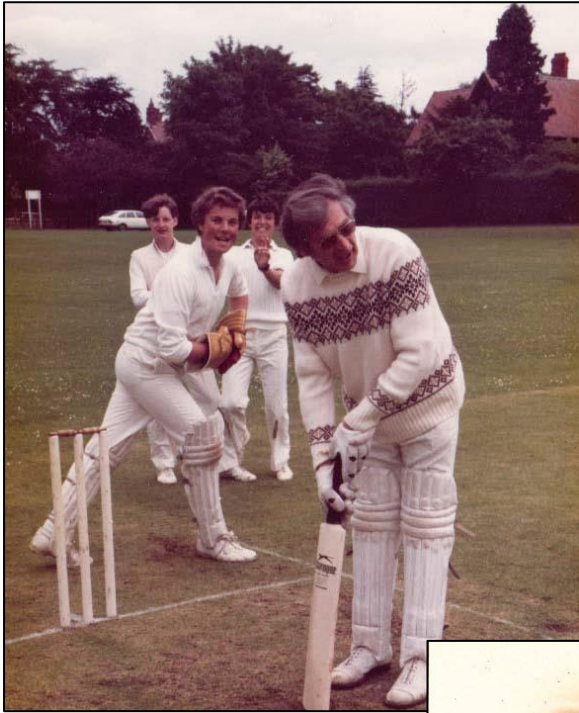


As his daughter said in her eulogy:

Dad leaves a legacy. He has completed the full circle of his life's journey and inevitably leaves behind some of himself, his experiences, his ideas, his values, in the hearts and minds of everyone here today.

Thank you, Dad for passing on a strong sense of right and wrong, fair play and a love of sport.

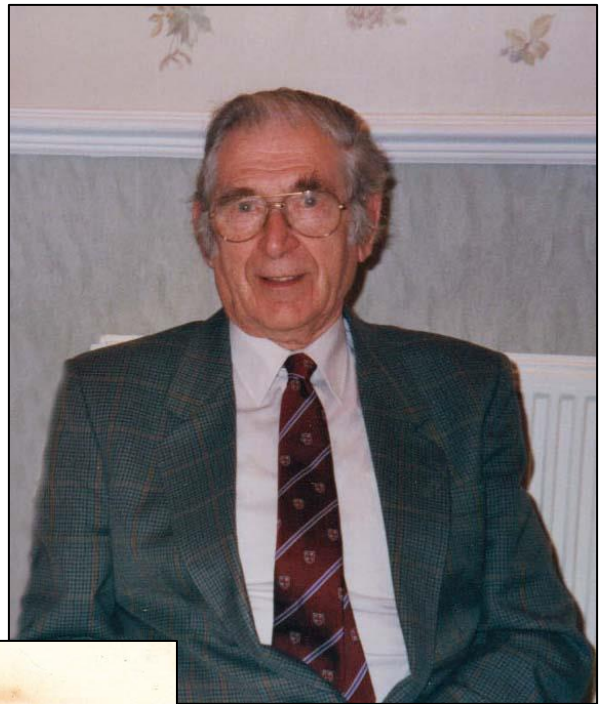
Thank you for keeping us safe and cared for, thank you for taking an interest and pride in our accomplishments. Thank you for the happy holiday memories, we continue to create them with our own children and grandchildren.



Playing Cricket

Len, Christmas 1931

At Duxford



2001

and in later life

2002

