

## Chapter 6

# Kent, Sussex and Yorkshire

As we saw in Chapter 5 John Graham married Caroline Eleanor Curteis in 1821. She came from a family that was just as prominent in Kent as the Grahams of Edmond Castle had been in Cumberland. More so, most likely. Indeed, the antecedents of the Curteis family, and of families into which they married, can be traced back a lot further than can the Grahams of Edmond Castle. Of course, the further back you go, the more uncertainty there is; in the Curteis line we meet, for the first time, great uncertainty as to whether or not the details are correct. For the Grahams, for example, we can be pretty sure of everything after about 1630 or so. The Curteis line goes back with reasonable certainty to the 1580s, and, together with associated families such as the Newingtons, the Beales, the Dawtreys and the Colepepers, can even be traced back to the 1300s. Of course we pay a price for this, in that the details are quite unreliable and we cannot put too much faith in the genealogy; however, it is all we have, and interesting to consider nonetheless.

Let me add quickly that genealogical reliability depends to a large extent on what one considers to be certain. All the relationships here are attested by original sources – parish records, heraldic visitations, and so on – so nothing is entirely speculative, but the question is how much one can trust these sources. Most likely they are vaguely correct, but often wrong in detail, which would play havoc with lines of descent.

The main evidence for the Curteis's of Windmill Hill comes from Burke's *Landed Gentry* [17] as well as quite a few monumental inscriptions; in addition, the Curteis's, Newingtons and Beales all appear in William Berry's *County Genealogies* [9]. I have also relied greatly on the efforts of a number of other researchers. Geoff West, David Kennedy and Carol Cheeseman have been particularly helpful, so thanks to them.

The reader is warned that this group of descents is considerably more complex than others that have appeared so far (although much worse is to come!) and that frequent reference to the genealogical charts is recommended. Still, it's your choice. Far be it from me to tell you how to read this. I know how this works. I have teenage children. It's OK if you never refer to the charts, not once. I don't mind. It's entirely up to you. You are not being controlled here. You can make the decision<sup>1</sup>. Just relax. No big deal. You don't need to swear at me.

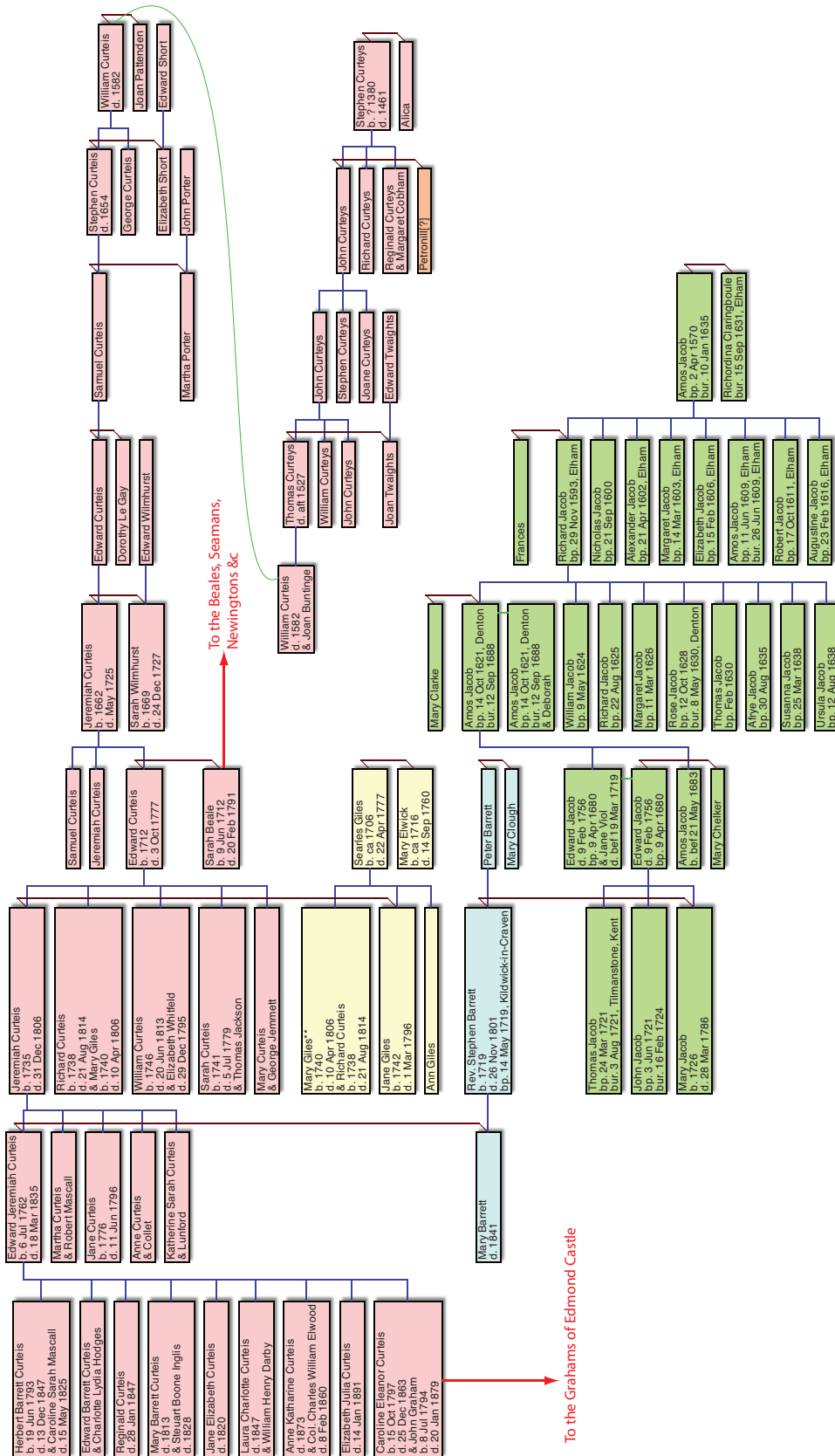
## The Curteis Family

### The earliest Curteis's

It is difficult to reconcile the traditional history of the Curteis family with known facts. According to family tradition (and Berry's *County Genealogies*) the earliest known Curteis ancestor was a Stephen Curteys, who owned land in Appledore and Brookland, in the county of Kent (see Map 6). Stephen had three sons; one of his sons, Reginald Curteys, was sent by Henry V on an embassy to Holland to procure ships for the transportation of the English army on its way to the battle of Agincourt (in October, 1415), and Reginald himself fought in that battle. Another of Stephen's sons, John, had a

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<sup>1</sup>No matter how foolish it might be.



The Curteis's and Jacobs.

son John in his turn, who had a son, Thomas, who was the first Curteys to move to Tenterden; before then the family was based in Appledore and Brookland.

The traditional family descent is based on a 1619 document “This Desent of the Antient Family of the Curteis’s in the County of Kent, Gentlemen, faithfully collected out of the Office of Armes the publicke Records of the Kingdom Private Evidences of this Family and other venerable Monuments of Antiquity”.<sup>1</sup> The document, written on four membranes of parchment, is subscribed “This Coate of Armes doune to Norton Curteis Eldest Son of George Curteis of Maidstone, is a true Copie, taken out of the Originall now in the hands of Sir George Curteis of Otterdein in Kent which was Exemplified by the Authority of the office of Armes testified by the Scale and confirmed under the hand of William Segar Garter Principall Kinge of Armes Anno Domini 1619”.

So much for tradition. Although that’s what I’ve put into the Curteis chart (page 124), I don’t believe it.

There were a number of known Curteis’s in the 1300s and 1400s [51].

- There was indeed a Reginald Curteys of West Cliff who performed that mission to Holland for Henry V. On the 17th of April, 1402, this Reginald married Margaret, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham, and the sister of Eleanor, the wife of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the Lord Protector of the Realm in the minority of Henry VI. There were also two Curteys’s who fought at Agincourt (although they seem both to have been called William; I have never found any trace of a Reginald Curteys at Agincourt).
- In a parchment roll of the time of Edward I (1271–1307) is a list of those who paid “Seot” in Appledore and the neighbouring parishes. Among those names are Clement Curtehose, Hame [?] Curtehose, John Curteys, Robert Curtehose, and Robert Curteys. This parchment is in the Cathedral Library at Canterbury.
- In a roll of the fifteenth year of the reign of Edward III is a list of freemen of the Cinque Ports exempt from subsidies. Among them is the name of John Curteys.
- On the 4th of August, 1361, Edward, the Black Prince, founded two Chantries in the Under Croft of Canterbury Cathedral and named a John Curteys as one of the first Chantry priests.
- In a manor Court roll of Brookland of the years 1397–1401 the name of John Curthose appears.
- In 1429 William Curteis was elected Abbot of Bury St. Edmonds, and repaired the campanile, or bell tower. He entertained Henry VI in 1433, and died in 1445. His arms appear to be the same as those borne by the Curteis family to this day.
- A family of Curtehose or Curteys held lands in or near “The Manor”, Kent, from early in the reign of Edward I.
- A Piers Curteis was Keeper of the Wardrobe to Richard III (who reigned from 1483–1485) and the Writer of the Wardrobe Account, or Coronation Roll.
- In the Diocesan Probate Office in Canterbury there is a will of Stephen Curteys of Brookland, dated the 8th of February, 1461, in which he mentions the name of his wife, Alica, the first known name of a female Curteys in Kent.
- Finally, the Curteis coat-or-arms appears in several places in the roof of Canterbury Cathedral Cloisters, which were built between 1390 and 1411.<sup>2</sup> All the subscribers to rebuilding the nave were apparently commemorated by their arms being introduced as ornaments. The Curteis arms were also placed in windows in the Churches of Chilham and New Romney about the same time, and have always been considered to be those of Stephen Curteys of Appledore and Brookhaven.

<sup>1</sup>I’ve never seen it, but there is a copy in the Sussex Archive Office. One day I’ll get to see it for myself.

<sup>2</sup>The compartments in which they are (numbered from the Martyrdom westwards) are 23, 26, 445, 446, 455, 536, 537. I’ve never seen them myself.

In this list there is a lot in common with the more recent Curteis's. They lived in the same area, in Kent, around the Cinque Ports, Appledore and Brooktown. They had the same coat-of-arms. They had the same names as the family tradition (although this means almost nothing, I suppose.) Given all this, I think there can be little doubt that at least some of these early Curteis's were directly related to our Curteis's. The Stephen who made his will in 1461 is one obvious candidate, for instance; all the Curteis's consistently claim a Stephen Curteys from Appledore and Brookland as their immediate ancestor, they shared the same coat-of-arms, and the dates are possible. However, the tradition that Reginald was his son is likely incorrect, as the dates just don't work out. Most likely the Curteis's were desperate to have a noble fighting ancestor at Agincourt (no less!) and just commandeered him.

### The later Curteis's

Whatever the truth of the matter, there is little doubt that the first reasonably reliable ancestor of the Curteis's was William Curteis, who died in 1582.<sup>1</sup> It is said that William's father was Thomas Curteys of Appledore, who moved to Tenterden, married Joan Twaights, daughter of Edward Twaights (claimed by Burke to be the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports), and died sometime after 1527. The Thomas Curteys might be accurate, and even the name of his wife might be accurate, but the bit about Joan's father being Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports is twaddle for sure. Every single one of the Lords Warden is known, and known well, and Edward Twaights wasn't one of them. I'm quite sure that we see here a bit of wishful thinking coupled to an active and unblushing imagination. Later Curteis's were wealthy and well-known, mayors of Tenterden for generations, desperately in need of illustrious forebears. So they made them up; a hero of Agincourt and a Lord Warden. They weren't the first family to do that, and not the last.<sup>2</sup> Although, to be fair, the earliest family history in the 1619 document mentioned above says nothing of Edward Twaights being a Lord Warden, or so I am informed. So the invention was somewhat later, and might indeed have been due to Burke himself for all we know.

Getting back to William, he had two wives, Joan Buntinge and Joan Pattenden (of Biddenden)[48], of whom we are concerned only with the latter. The eldest son of William and Joan Pattenden was Stephen Curteis, who was the Mayor of Tenterden in 1622 (or maybe 1621; the sources disagree slightly). He married Elizabeth Short<sup>3</sup> and their son Samuel continued the line. Well, so claims the family history, but Here Be More Dragons. The thing is that there certainly was a Stephen Curteis, Mayor of Tenterden, but the only such Stephen Curteis I know of was married to Mary Stark, and had a son Nathaniel and a daughter Elizabeth. And this is information from Stephen's will and his gravestone, both rather reliable sources (although not infallible). Nary a Samuel in sight, nor an Elizabeth Short. However, it's not impossible that there were two different Stephen Curteis mayors of Tenterden; this wouldn't really surprise me. Tenterden had to have a lot of mayors, and there were a lot of Curteis's around, from different branches of the family, and I imagine a good fraction of them were called Stephen.

For the next few generations this branch of the Curteis's was closely associated with Tenterden. As Hasted's 1798 *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* [41] says:

The town of Tenterden is situated nearly in the centre of the parish and hundred. It stands on high ground, neither unpleasant nor unhealthy; the greatest part of it is built on each side of the high road leading from the western parts of Kent and Cranbrooke through this parish south-east to Appledore. A small part of it is paved, where there is a small antient market-place, built of timber; but the market, which is still held on a Friday, is but little frequented, only two millers, and seldom any butchers attending it. It is a well-built town, having many genteel houses, or rather seats, interspersed

<sup>1</sup>Actually, to be honest, he doesn't seem to be all that reliable either, as we shall see, but I shall pretend he is for now.

<sup>2</sup>Such sceptical comments as these cause offence, or so it would seem. In 2009 I received an email from a Curteis descendant in Australia saying that the Curteis family would *never* make up anything like this, already had very illustrious forebears, and such remarks were "in bad taste to the Curteis name". Hmmm.... well. I'm convinced.

<sup>3</sup>The Short family provided Mayors of Tenterden as many as fifteen times in the 16th & 17th centuries. Some of them were clothiers; Daniel Shorte in 1632 borrowed materials for dyeing from James Skeets, and William Shorte had land to the west of the Tilden Dye Works[48].

throughout it, among which are those of the Curteis's, a numerous and opulent family here, who bear for their arms, *Argent, a chevron between three bulls heads, caboshed*.

Stephen's grandson (Edward) and great-grandson (Jeremiah) were both mayors of Tenterden – Edward in 1663 and Jeremiah in 1696. One of Jeremiah's sons, Edward, married Sarah Beale, a descendant of an equally prominent Biddenden family<sup>1</sup>, while two of Edward's sons married two Giles sisters. The Beale connection itself can be traced back to the 1300s as we shall see below.

Jeremiah Curteis (1735-1806), who married Jane Giles, took an enormous step and moved entirely away to foreign parts. To Rye, where he established himself as an attorney, and served as the Town Clerk from 1756 to 1800. Not a bad effort, that. He obviously did very well for himself. He (and his son, Edward Jeremiah) bought extensive estates in the Rye area as well as at Tenterden, Goudurst, Hawkurst and in Romney Marsh.<sup>2</sup> From 1807 their principal residence was at Windmill Hill (see Map 6 on page 240). His daughter, Martha, married into yet more serious money, and her daughter, in turn, married her Curteis cousin, Herbert Barrett (son of Edward Jeremiah), thus bringing wads of money back into the family. How nice that would have been. The advantages of inbreeding.

Edward Jeremiah Curteis (1762-1835), my 4G-grandfather, was a lawyer and an M.P. for Sussex from 1820 to 1830. Maybe it's my cynical nature, but I suspect that he spent most of his time being a gentleman rather than in any useful pursuit, but who knows. Since most of what I know about him comes from his obituary in the Gentleman's Magazine, I might as well quote it directly.

March 18. At Windmill Hill, near Battle, in his 73rd year, from a sudden attack of illness, after some years of previously declining health, universally respected and esteemed, Edward Jeremiah Curteis, Esq. a Magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant for the Counties of Kent and Sussex, and formerly M.P. for the latter county.

He was born at Rye in Sussex, July 6, 1762, and was the only son of Jeremiah Curteis, esq. of that town, the first of the family who settled in Sussex, and of Jane his wife, the daughter and coheirress of Searles Giles, esq. of Biddenden, Kent. His family has for centuries been settled in Kent, chiefly at and in the neighbourhood of Tenterden, of which town Mr. Curteis was Recorder for some years. Stephen Curteis was living at Apuldore, in the reign of Edward III.<sup>3</sup> His great grandson Thomas, 1527, married Joane, daughter and coheirress of Edw. Twaights, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports [nonsense, as we saw before], in the reign of Henry VII. and VIII., whose arms the family still quarter, together with those of Segrave. His son William (ob. 1582) married twice. From his wife, Joan Buntinge, are descended the Curteis's of Sevenoaks, Tenterden, and Canterbury; from Joan Pattenden, the subject of the present memoir, as also the Curteis's of Otterden Place (vide Gents. Mag. vol CIL., part i, 396–).

Mr. Curteis was educated at Westminster School, which he entered in 1774, and of which he was head boy in 1778. He left the following year for Christ Church, at the early age of 16. In 1783 he took the degree of B.A., was elected Fellow of Oriel College in the following year, and proceeded to the degree of M.A. in 1786. He was called to the Bar in 1788; for some years he generally attended the Home Circuit, and was well acquainted, and intimate with many of the legal as well as the leading literary and political characters of the day.

<sup>1</sup>The names are hilarious; as well as Tenterden, Haffenden and Biddenden, we also get Frittenden, Ibornden, Wosenden, Hevenden, Omenden, Bugglesden and Wachenden. It's hard not to giggle.

<sup>2</sup>I'm not entirely sure where all those places are, but it's not really important.

<sup>3</sup>In a footnote it says: Reginald Curteis of West Cliff, the son of Stephen, married April 17, 1402, Margaret, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham of Sterborough, and sister of Eleanor, the wife of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the Lord Protector of the Realm in the minority of Henry VI. Some time previous to the battle of Agincourt, Reginald Curteis, together with Richard Clydow, went over to Holland to treat for ships for the King's service, to be sent to the ports of London, Sandwich, and Winchelsea. The names of two Curteis's appear in the list of those who are mentioned as having fought at Agincourt, October 25, 1415. William Curteis was elected in 1429 Abbat [sic] of St. Edmond's Bury, the campanile or bell tower of which he repaired. In 1433 he entertained Henry VI. the Duke of Gloucester, and the Court, for some months at his Abbey. He died in 1445 (vide Dugdale's Monasticon). Piers Curteis was Keeper of the Wardrobe to Richard III. and the writer of the Wardrobe Account, or Coronation Roll of that monarch, which is still in existence (vide Archaeologia).

In 1796 he left London, and resided in East Sussex [note that this was the year his father died, so that is presumably when he inherited the 'duties' of a country gentleman], where he was well known as a most useful and active magistrate, and as one who thoroughly understood the local interests of the county. He was elected member for Sussex in 1820, together with the late Walter Burrell, esq. and again in 1826. He was independent as to party, and was distinguished in the house as a staunch and uncompromising agriculturist. Through his exertions were passed some local bills of considerable utility to his constituents. In 1830 his declining health induced him to retire altogether from Parliament and from public life; since which period he resided entirely at his seat, Windmill Hill, near Battle. His remains are interred in the family vault, in the church of Wartling, in which parish Windmill Hill is situated. He was succeeded in the representation of the county in 1830 by his eldest son, Herbert Barrett Curteis, esq. who is still one of the members for East Sussex.

Mr. Curteis married April 14, 1789, Mary, only dau. and heiress of the Rev. Stephen Barrett, M.A. of the Bent, in Kildwick, Craven, Yorkshire, and Rector of Hothfield in Kent the last male descendant of a very ancient Yorkshire family. His grandmother was the sister of Archbishop Sharpe. He married Mary, the only child of Edward Jacob, esq. of Feversham, Kent, by his second wife Mary Chalker, and the half-sister of Edward Jacob, esq. an eminent naturalist and antiquary.

[There follows information about his children and grandchildren.]

Mr. Curteis was endowed with brilliant talents, and was noted for his conversational powers, as well as for his varied and extensive information. He was a member of several literary and charitable institutions. He was a frequent contributor to the Gentleman's Magazine, Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, &c. and was well known in both the literary and political world. He was universally beloved and esteemed; and, both in public and private life, he was a most active and useful member of society.

A lot of E.J. Curteis's correspondence survives, and I even have copies of some of it. Unfortunately it's very difficult to read. I got it from the East Sussex Archives; you look up in the catalogues and get the numbers and write a letter and organise a postal note (no internet payments for *them*, thank you very much), and send it off, and wait, and wait, and wait, and finally you get a big envelope in the post which you open with terrific excitement . . . to find 10 pages of poorly photocopied, completely illegible, writing, so dim and faded that you can barely tell it's writing as opposed to random markings. And for this you paid £1,000,000 and waited 20 years.<sup>1</sup> It would piss off a bloody saint, I tell you.

So I've transcribed only one of these letters, which, as it gives a nice picture of the state of the family, I give in full here. It's difficult to read in spots, so this transcription is only partially accurate.

*Postmarked 1827, the letter is addressed to Miss Inglis and Mrs Powis, Shane Street, Kensington. From E.J. Curteis. It is a letter from Edward Jeremiah Curteis to his granddaughter, Mary, daughter of Mary Curteis who married Steuart Boone Inglis. Mary Curteis was long dead by this date.*

Windmill Hill Battel

Sept. 23 1827

My Dear Mary

I am desired to forward to you the inclosed letter from your Father, by your Grand-mamma, & I take the opportunity of saying to you that all of this family are well – we are glad to find that you like your new situation & we hope that you will make the most & best of it for Improvement [sounds like a Grandfather, indeed]. We expect your Uncle and Aunt Darby [that would be Laura Curteis, daughter of E.J., and her hubby] to come

<sup>1</sup>I exaggerate.

over in the [?] for some months – the Graham families [that would be Caroline and John et al.] are all of them in France – the Edwards we have lately heard of – the Coll[?] has the Govt of the Province of Cutch[?] & the Command of the Army there. Mrs. Mascall & Anne [I think he's referring to his sister, who married Robert Mascall] are with us, they have been on a very pleasant tour in the West. Mr. Frankland Lewis Mrs. Hare's son, is appointed as Secretary to the Treasury – the Wagner families are all assembled at Hurstmonceux. Past Bowne[.....?. I really can't read it here]. Mr. [?] is at Rose Cottage but the lodge is unlet. We have had a good deal of papering & painting done at the Hill this Summer – which now seems to be over, for of late we have had a great deal of rain & wind.

Your uncle Herbert [Herbert Barrett] is coming back from Scotland. Reginald is still here & Edward is at B[?] and has been on a visit from there to Mrs. Collet [E.J.'s sister married a Collet] at the Jungle. Mr. Luxford has purchased a house at Robert's Bridge, called Highhome – a very pretty place – Miss Emily Graham [sister of John Graham, who married Caroline Curteis] I am glad to say is quite restored to health in all respects. Mr. Young our Curate has just been presented by his Lady with a little Boy – the Greenalls are living together at the Living in Suffolk near Cambridge – which is a very good one – Your Grandmama & I have both of [us] been better in health than usual this Summer – & your Aunt Eliz has been on the whole very well. We have a great many tame Pheasants running about on the Lawn – & there is an abundance of game this year. We all unite in kind love to you and in every fond wish. I am My Dear GrandDaughter,

Always

Most Affectionately Yours

E.J. Curteis

In the other correspondence, Caroline was writing to her brother Edward, who was very interested in the genealogy of the Hodges family (his wife was a Hodges), but I haven't bothered to transcribe it properly yet. Neither have I transcribed Edward Jeremiah's will, of which I also have a copy. One day, somebody with more energy than myself will do these jobs and send me a nice legible electronic file. Please.

To complete the connection, it remains only to point out that one of the daughters of Edward Jeremiah was Caroline Eleanor, who married John Graham of Edmond Castle (Chapter 5).

## The Barretts

On the 14th of April, 1789, Edward Jeremiah Curteis married Mary Barrett. Now, the ancestry of this Mary has intrigued me for years, and only recently have I got it partially sorted out. So I feel rather attached to the Barretts, and you, as a loyal reader, must too.

Why was I so intrigued? Well, the first thing I read about her was the entry in Burke's *Landed Gentry*, which reads "Only daughter and heir of Rev. Stephen Barrett, Rector of Hothfield, Kent, and the last male descendant of the ancient family of Barrett of the Bent, Kildwick, Yorks." How exciting, I thought. Has to be something in this. Ancient family. Rector of Hothfield. Heiress. All those good things which suggest that more can be discovered.

Well, nothing. There was wide agreement that Bent was the home of lots of Barretts, and had been for a long time (I wrote to the local genealogical group in Yorkshire, and they tried to be helpful, but weren't really) but nothing else. For years, actually. Every so often I looked around the web again, but nothing ever appeared. Stephen Barrett of Bent was one of my great mysteries.

Then, as more stuff kept getting put on the web, I started learning more about this Stephen Barrett. First his gravestone in the Hothfield Church monumental inscriptions:

Sacred to the Memory of the Rev. Stephen BARRETT MA who died 26th November 1801 in the 83rd year of his age. He was born at Bent a very ancient Mansion of the

family of Barrett in the parish of Kildwick in Haven [sic; really Kildwick-in-Craven] in the County of York. He was during a long and flourishing period Master of the Free Grammar school of Ashford and almost thirty years Rector of this parish. Likewise to the memory of Mary his wife, youngest daughter of Edward JACOB Esquire of the city of Canterbury, who died 28th March 1786 in the 60th year. This tribute was erected by their only daughter and Heiress Mary wife of Edward Jeremiah CURTEIS Esquire of Northiam in Sussex.

Woo Hoo. Finally I had found something. I now knew that he taught at the Ashford school, and the name of his wife.

But wait! There's more! Even more things began to appear on the web. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography has an extensive entry about him. He was a regular contributor to *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *Nichols's Literary Anecdotes*. He was a good friend of Samuel Johnson. A story is told of how the Editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* wanted a Latin poem translated. "Give it to Barrett" said Johnson. "He will correct it for you in a minute". Whereupon Johnson and Barrett agreed to share the task which they completed in a very short time.

Just to cover the details, here is his entry in the Dictionary of National Biography.

Barrett, Stephen (bap. 1719, d. 1801), schoolmaster and Church of England clergyman, was born at Bent, in the parish of Kildwick in Craven, Yorkshire, and was baptized there on 14 May 1719, the son of Peter Barrett of Sutton, Yorkshire, and his wife, Mary. He was educated at the grammar school in Skipton, where he excelled in poetry and classics. He matriculated from University College, Oxford, on 24 March 1738 and graduated B.A. in 1741 and M.A. in 1744. Having taken holy orders he became rector of the parishes of Purton and Ickleford, Hertfordshire, in 1744. Five years later, in 1749, he was appointed master of the free grammar school at Ashford, Kent, on the nomination of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull. He raised the school's academic reputation and attracted the patronage of the local gentry, who sent their sons to his school. Its success enabled Barrett to augment the master's salary of £30 to an income of 120 guineas per annum, presumably by charging fees for pupils who boarded. In 1751 he applied for the mastership of his old grammar school in Skipton; it seems that both he and the rival candidate, William West, offered bribes to some of the churchwardens who were electing to the post. Although at first Barrett disdained such means, in a letter dated 6 August 1751 he wrote that he would invest £100 in bribes to please his patron, Lord Thanet. He had secured a majority of votes when he suddenly pulled out of the competition, fearing a scandal, should details of his bribes leak out.

Barrett resigned from Ashford in 1764 but returned as headmaster two years later. By that time he had married Mary, daughter of Edward Jacob of Canterbury; their only child, Mary, was baptized at Ickleford, Hertfordshire, on 5 August 1764. Barrett resigned the mastership a second time, in 1773, when presented to the rectory of Hothfield, Kent. He was a friend of Dr. Johnson and Edward Cave, and a frequent contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He also published some verses, a Latin translation of Pope's Pastorals, and *Ovid's epistles translated into English verse, with critical essays and notes; being part of a poetical and oratorical lecture read to the grammar school of Ashford in the county of Kent, and calculated to initiate youth in the first principles of taste* (1759). Tobias Smollett gave a withering review of Barrett's works in the *Critical Review*: "though he might be an excellent schoolmaster, he had, however, no pretensions to taste" (Nichols, *Lit. anecdotes*, 3.346n).

Barrett died at Church House, Northiam, Sussex, on 26 November 1801, and was buried at Hothfield on 3 December. He was survived by his daughter, who had married Edward Jeremiah Curteis, a barrister.

From Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes* [50] we learn additional lovely tidbits. A review of his "Ovid's Epistles etc"<sup>1</sup> said that he had:

<sup>1</sup>*Monthly Review*, vol. XX, p. 273. This is not the "Independent Socialist Magazine" that shares the same title, but rather

... before sufficiently distinguished himself as a complete Master of the Latin Tongue by an elegant Translation of Mr. Pope's Pastorals into Latin Verse; and by a very judicious Scheme for the Improvement of Lilly's Grammar, by reforming the order of the Tenses agreeable to that of Varro. He appears, however, in common with many other Professors of the learned languages, not to be equally Master of his own.

Ha. Somebody didn't like his English much. We also learn that his paternal Grandfather was

... a very active and zealous partizan of the cause of Charles the First; after whose death he was compelled to take refuge in Ireland, a price having been set on his head by the Usurper Cromwell. After the Restoration he returned to England, but was not able to recover back more than a comparatively small portion of the property which had been wrested from him during the troubles.

So finally, I feel that I know my old friend Stephen Barrett a whole lot better. It took years, but I got there in the end.

Stephen Barrett's wife was Mary Jacob, the daughter of Edward Jacob, a surgeon in Canterbury and mayor of Canterbury in 1727 and 1728, and his second wife Mary Chalker (or possibly Chelker). They will appear in the very next section.

Unfortunately, Stephen Barrett's ancestors remain uncertain. I have looked through the parish records of Kildwick-in-Craven, but it's not possible to piece together a coherent genealogy. There were Barretts all over the place, had been for centuries, and they all seem to have had the same name. Very confusing it is, to be sure.

In 2008, the village of Sutton-in-Craven published on its website a complete version of the book *The History of Sutton-in-Craven*, written by Nellie Stell in 1927 (<http://www.sutton-in-craven.org.uk/stellch01.asp>). This book mentions the Barretts a number of times, and is a very interesting read.

For example, in the poll tax of 1379 there were two Baretts mentioned (Johannes Baret & ux, and Johannes Baret junior), and one Willelmus de Bent & ux (and wife). The author comments:

The name William de Bent is interesting. There is still a district of Sutton called 'The Bent', there is a Bent Farm and also Bent Lane. Evidently William held land or lived in this area. The surname Baret occurs twice in the list [i.e., the 1379 poll tax list]. Later we know that the Baret family also held land near the Bent. The surname is still very common in the village.

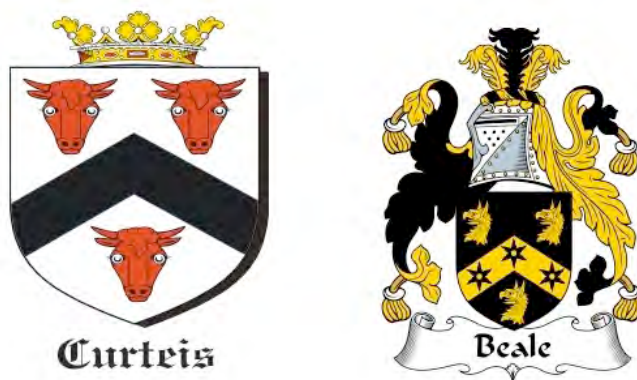
A later muster roll, in the reign of Henry VIII, lists a number of Baretts again. "William Baret, hors & hern", for instance.

During the Civil War, as we have already seen, a William Barrett of the Bent was a partisan of Charles I, there was a price on his head, and he had to flee to Ireland. Still later, in 1658, there were seven Barretts on the list of ratepayers in Sutton.

And that's pretty much it for the Barretts. Not enough for a detailed genealogy, but enough to give a pretty accurate idea of where the family came from. One intriguing puzzle remains but I shall leave that to the special question box.

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an English periodical founded by Ralph Griffiths, a Nonconformist bookseller, that was the first periodical in England to offer reviews.



The Curteis and Beale coats-of-arms. Just because I like the pretty pictures. These are the Curteis arms that are carved on the ceiling of the Cloisters of Canterbury cathedral. The images are stolen from one of those horrible online shops that try to sell the “family arms” to anybody with the same name who’s willing to buy them. That’s why they look so corny. But they’re still kind of pretty.

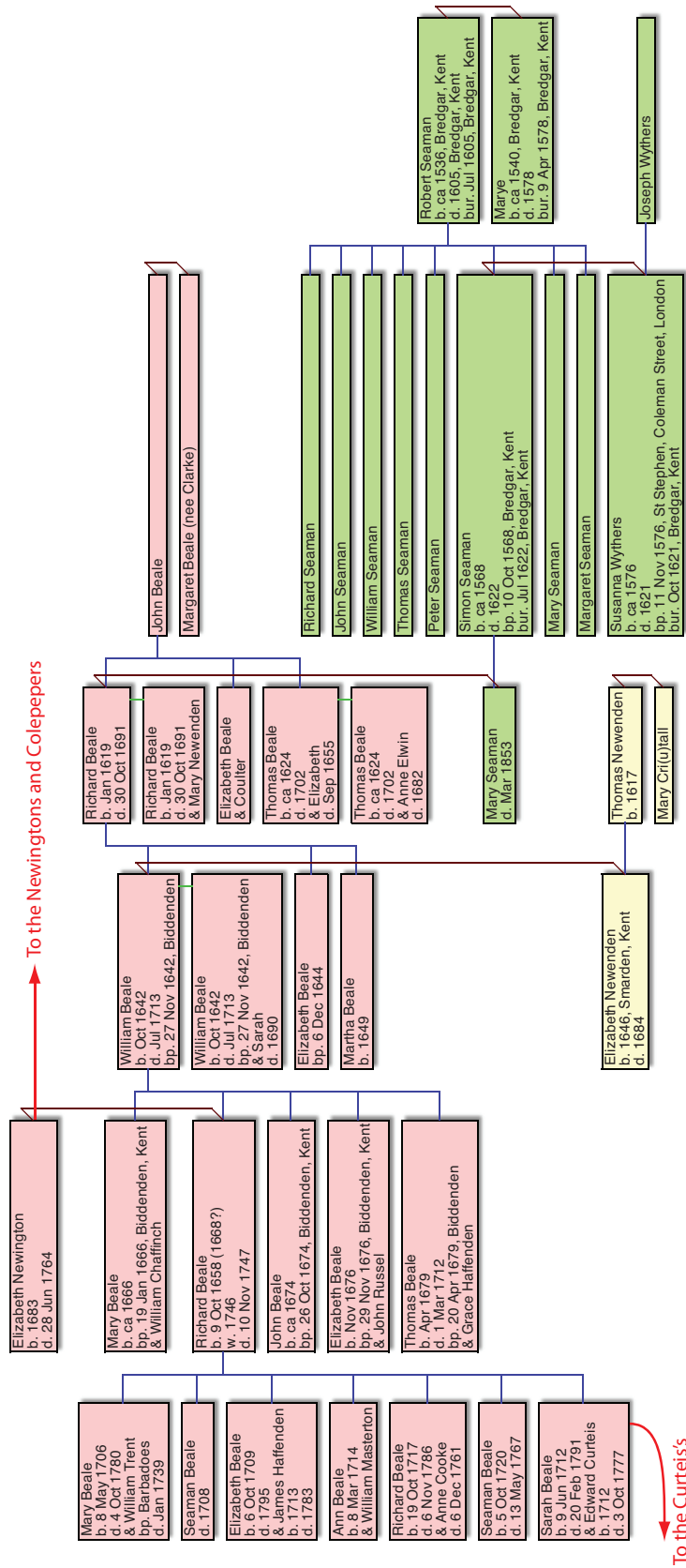
**Questions:** Was Stephen Barrett’s maternal grandmother the sister of John Sharp, the Archbishop of York? Enquiring minds wish to know. E.J. Curteis’s obituary claims it to be so (page 127). However, other sources say his mother was a Clough, another well-known family in the area of Kildwick-in-Craven. Now, John Sharp had an only sister, Hannah Sharp, who married John Richardson, which doesn’t immediately square with the claim that Stephen Barrett’s mother was a Clough. Not impossible, of course, what with remarriages and suchlike things, but more difficult to confirm. Fortunately, we know that Hannah and John had children, but, to keep balance in the universe, I don’t know who they are. John Richardson, as it happens, has a pedigree that is described in Burke’s *Commoners*, 1835, Vol. 3 [15]. He was one of the Richardsons of Bierley, and his father, Richard Richardson of Bierley, had to pay a fine of £40 to Charles I for declining the honour of a knighthood. Well, well. And I thought nobody turned this down. Maybe he just hated Charles I. There is also quite a lot known about Hannah Sharp’s parents (not that anybody cared about *her*, she was only a woman, but she shared parents with an Archbishop [40]<sup>a</sup>). However, by strict genealogical rules I can’t really include the Sharps or the Richardsons in my ancestry, as the exact link cannot be verified by any source – an offhand mention of somebody’s grandmother doesn’t really count. But I really would like to find out one way or the other.

<sup>a</sup>John Sharp’s son also wrote a biography of him, but I’ve never seen this.

## The Jacobs

This is another family about whom I knew very little until somebody else did all the hard work and published their results online. It was clear that much had to be known about the Jacobs; he was, after all, the mayor of Canterbury and an Esquire to boot, so something in the records was pretty much guaranteed. Still, I wasn’t in Canterbury, it wasn’t easy, and I just didn’t bother.

Then, in 2009, some other descendant of the Jacobs put a neat web page online, in which the family and forebears of Edward Jacob were described (<http://www.myjacobfamily.com/favershamjacobs-/edwardjacob2.htm>). It’s one of those excellent web pages that gives full source information, even including scans of parish registers and old documents, and I believe it to be trustworthy. It’s certainly very stylish.



The Beales and Seamans.

To begin at the beginning of the Jacobs, the earliest known is **Amos Jacob** of Elham (1570–1635), who appears as a farmer in a number of old documents. He married **Richordina Claringboule**, a member of an old established family apparently, and had at least eight children, all baptised at Elham.<sup>1</sup> His eldest son, **Richard Jacob** (1593–1664), married at least twice. He was a widower in 1639 when he remarried **Frances Cosen** at St. Margarets, Canterbury. Two of his sons, Amos and Richard, became doctors of medicine. **Amos**, the elder, was licensed at Ashford as a surgeon and a medic in November, 1661, married Deborah, and had at least five children in Ashford. He must have moved away from home to live and work in the big smoke, assuming that Ashford was then, as it is now, considerably bigger than Elham.

Our **Edward** (the father of the Mary Jacob who married Stephen Barrett) was the son of Amos's second wife, **Mary Clarke**, the widow of William Harris. He was born at Ashford, and was a scholar of King's School, Canterbury, some time between 1694 and 1696. He also moved away from home, to work as a surgeon in Deal, after having done his apprenticeship with Samuel Harris, surgeon, of Deal.

Described as an apothecary, he became a freeman of the City of Canterbury in 1706. He had brought to the Registrar at Canterbury a note from a local Deal surgeon, testifying to his apprenticeship to a Mr. Samuel Harris of Deal for the full term of seven years. In the writer's opinion he was fit to be licensed for the practise of *Chyrurgery*. He was elected Mayor of Canterbury in 1727 and was an alderman and chamberlain of the city for many years. His first wife was **Jane Viol**, with whom he had eight children, but after she died in 1719 (probably due to childbirth), he married a second wife, **Mary Chalker**.

Their first two children died young, and their third child, our **Mary**, was baptised on the 5th of October, 1726. Her mother died only nine days after, surely due to childbirth. Edward's wives weren't too lucky in this department. Mother Mary was buried in Tilmanstone, where the family had clearly been living for some time, as five earlier siblings and half-siblings who died in infancy were all buried there also.<sup>2</sup>

## The Beales

In 1733, Edward Curteis married Sarah Beale, the daughter of Richard Beale and Elizabeth Newington. The Newingtons also can be traced, but we shall do that a bit later.

The Beales (page 133) were an old Biddenden family that made a pile of money as clothiers and eventually got rich enough to buy estates and be labeled as landed gentry, with their own coat-of-arms and all. This was a common pattern; we saw it in the Curteis's also and we shall see it again in the Boileau and others. I suppose the Grahams of Edmond Castle were slightly unusual in that they didn't earn their money and their status by actually doing anything useful. Originally they probably just stole it. However, in the more settled region of Kent, money had to be earned. If I was a proper historian I could probably make some wise comment about how all these Kent families (Curteis's, Beales, Newingtons, etc) showed the emergence of a wealthy mercantile class that challenged and eventually took over the old feudal order. That's certainly how it looks to me, but then I'm no expert. But I find it interesting how you can see, in these Kent families, how wealth begat status, and how emerging families were desperate to ape the manners of their social betters. They bought estates and called themselves Curteis of Windmill Hill, Beale of River Hall, Barrett of the Bent<sup>3</sup>, Richardson of Bierley, and so on. They all got coats-of-arms. They built mansions, or bought castles where they could. They invented notable ancestors. And they intermarried, again where they could, with the younger daughters of the old families further up the social scale such as the Cheneys or the Colepepers.

It's a lot more difficult to write about this part of the family tree. Most of the people are known only by their names, and maybe an odd date or two. You can easily get this information from a simple chart, like the one on page 133. It's of little use merely to list the same information again

<sup>1</sup>Elham is due south of Canterbury, and due east of Ashford. Tiny place it seems.

<sup>2</sup>Tilmanstone is just east of Deal, between Deal and Canterbury. Again, it seems to be a tiny place.

<sup>3</sup>I know, I know, that's Yorkshire not Kent, but the point remains

here. However, every so often something interesting pops up, and these are the bits I'll concentrate on.

One of the first interesting bits is actually the parents of Sarah Beale; **Richard Beale** and his wife, **Elizabeth Newington**. They are interesting for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the Newingtons were another well-known family whose ancestry can be traced, and secondly, they are an excellent example of the difficulties and confusions of genealogical research.

How so? Well, I knew from Richard Beale's gravestone that he married an Elizabeth, and there was a record of a Richard Beale marrying an Elizabeth Henden in 1705 in Biddenden. So, for a long time I thought they were the parents of Sarah. It all made sense; the right time, the right names, the right place. Easy. However, they're not. In that same year, in Wadhurst church, a different Richard Beale married a different Elizabeth, a Newington this time, and there's a lot of very strong evidence (including dates of death and the names of their children) that these are the parents of Sarah, who married a Curteis. Presumably Elizabeth was from Wadhurst, as that's where they got married. It was originally Geoff West who pointed out this error to me, and showed me the evidence. It makes one wonder how many other mistakes there are in the genealogy. Probably lots and lots. Certainly, anything that relies on Burke is destined for embarrassment. But even parish records can be misleading, unless enormous care is taken.

Richard Beale didn't much like one of his sons-in-law, James Haffenden, who married Elizabeth, or so it seems to me. Maybe it's just standard legal jargon, but the following excerpt doesn't sound all that trusting to me:

Also I give and bequeath unto my Son-in-Law James Haffenden of Tenterden in the said County of Kent Gentleman the sum of three score pounds of lawfull money of Great Britain to be paid him within twelve months next after my decease subject nevertheless and upon this express condition that he the said James Haffenden shall and will peaceably and quietly accept receive and take the same in full payment and in satisfaction of all claims challenges and demands that the said James Haffenden now hath or ever shall have against me on any account whatsoever. And also that he the said James Haffenden shall not nor will at any time or times after my decease sue molest disturb or trouble or cause to be sued molested disturbed or troubled my said Executrix and Executor howinafter named or for or by reason of any such claims challenges and demands or for or by reason of any other act matter or thing whatsoever and that at the time of payment of the said legacy or sum of three score pounds he the said James Haffenden shall and will sign seal espouse[?] and deliver such quittances releases and discharges my said Executor and Executrix shall be advised and think necessary for discharging the said legacy and all such other demands as he the said James Haffenden now hath or ever shall have against me or them on any amount whatsoever. And my Will and meaning is that in case the said James Haffenden should refuse to accept receive and take the above Legacy of three score pounds given to him by me as aforesaid on the above terms and conditions that then and in such case he shall not be intitled to the same or any part or parcel thereof by virtue of this my Will.

One really does wonder if this was all entirely necessary. To be fair, I've seen similar phrases in a number of other wills of the period (although nothing quite so extensive as this) so maybe it was just a standard set of phrases that meant little.

By the way, if anybody is interested, Richard's wife got his "best bed with the Bedstools, Curtains, [?] and all the other furniture thereunto belonging and also two pair of sheets . . .". Generous. Still, this seems to be a better deal than what the wife of his grandfather (another Richard Beale) got. She got

. . . free libty to brew wash and make in the rooms for those purposes belonging to the said house and the utensills thereto as also to doe any other necessary or huswifery business in the said house and free libty use and a privilige to have and take water in the sewers belonging the said house and convenient room . . . To have receive take possess and enjoy the said use benefitts libtyes and priviledges to her and her assignes during

the tyme that she shall keep her self a widdow & unmarried after my decease and noe longer.

Sounds to me like she was only allowed to carry on doing the housework. Well, I jest just a little. I imagine it was important to ensure that his surviving wife was allowed to remain in the house and use it, otherwise she could possibly have been ejected by the heir. Somehow, it doesn't seem quite fair I must say.

Richard the grandfather married, for a first wife, **Mary Seaman**, who appears in more detail in the next section. His gravestone in the Biddenden churchyard reads "Under this Tombe lieth ye Body of Richard BEALE of Biddenden, Clothier, who died October 30th 1691 aged 72 years and nine months. He was twice married, his first wife was Mary daughter of Mr SEAMAN, Minister of Bredgate (sic) By whom he left one son William. His second wife was widow of John NEWENDEN by whom he left another son, John, who erected this tomb. North side. Here also lieth Mary second wife of Richard Beale who died July ye sixth 1696 aged 73 years and four months." He left quite substantial sums of money to his children and grandchildren:

Item I give & Beq unto my son Wm Beale and unto Sarah his wife the sume of 5 pounds a peece of lawfull money of eng and I doe give unto Rd Beale son of the said Wm Beale the sume of 50 pounds of good money and unto Thomas Beale and Elz Beale the sume of ten pounds apeece of lawfull money of Eng also I give & beq unto Mary Beale d/o the sd Wm Beale the sume of 200 pounds of ...all which sd Legacyes given to the said Wm Beale and Sarah his wife Rd Beale Tom Elz & Mary Beale children of the sd Wm Beale I doe order & appt shall be pd to them respectively within 6 monthes after my dec. by my Exec. hereafter named. Provided nevertheless and upon this condicon Following (viz) that in case the sd Wm Beale shall any wayes disturbe or molest my Exec. hereafter named in the quiett enjoyment of what I doe give and devise to him by this my Will or shall ever goo about to destroy and make void this my last Will and Testment or to hinder the same . . .

Clearly, being a clothier was a money-making proposition. The Beales lived at River Hall, described by Hasted [41] as

River-Hall is a seat in the south-east part of this parish, near Stroud Quarter, which has been for more than a century in the possession of the Beales, formerly clothiers here. Richard Beale, clothier, of Biddenden, resided here in the beginning of Charles II.'s reign and his grandson Mr. Richard Beale is the present owner of it, and resides in it. They bear for their arms, *Sable, on a chevron, or, between 3 griffin's heads erased, argent, as many estoiles, gules.*

## The Seamans

One of Sarah Beale's brothers was called Seaman, a most unusual name. This came originally from her great-grandmother, Mary Seaman, whose own grandfather, **Robert Seaman**, was a blacksmith. I think old wills are fun to read, so here is his (as transcribed by Robert Kennedy):

In the name of God amen the 17 of June ano domini 1605 I Robert Seaman dweling in the parish of Bredgar being of a sound & perfect [?] memory have caused this note containing my last will and testament to be mayd in manner & forme following; First I Comfitt [? Maybe commend] my soul to God and my body to the earth. Item I give to Richard Seaman mine eldest sonne my house and Garden that belongs thereto together with my shopp lying in the parish of Bredgar and to his heires for ever Item I give to John Seaman my sonne Three pounds of good and lawfull money of England Item I give to my sonne William three pounds likewise I give and will to Thomas Seaman my sonne five poundes of good and lawfull English money and moreover I forgive all \*\*h debts \*\*s he oweth me. Item I will to Peter Seaman my sonne the summe of thirty pounds of good and lawfull money of England to be payd unto him within one whole yeare

after the day of my decease, And if it fortune that my sayd sonne dye before payment bemaied according to the time limited then I will that the sayd summe of xxx poundes be payd equally by even portion, to my sonnes and daughters that then shall be livinge. Item I give to Symon Seaman my youngest sonne x/- [= 10/-] and Calvins Institutions. I will to Mary my daughter twenty nobles to be payd to her one whole yeare after the day of my decease. Item I will to Margarett my Daughter xlty [=40] shillings to be payd unto her as she shall need it presently after my decease and further I will unto her a payer of good sheets and the Chest that stands [?] \*\*\* the path [?] syde of my bedd: I will besyds that Richard my eldest sonne his heires executors or assignes shall pay unto the sayd Margarett my daughter xs [=10] yearely during her naturall life the which [?] xs my mynde is [?] it shall be payd att two severall [?] payment that is to say five shillings halfe yearely, And if the foresaid Richard his heires executors or assignes doe refuse [?] this to pay it Item I will that the sayd Margarett shall either straine [?] any goods that shall be within the foresayd house or orchard or cease upon the sayd house and orchard and keep it in her owne possession untill such time as the sayd summe of money shall be payd (as aforesayd) according to the same [?] meaning of my will: I will unto Richard Sellden and George Sellden sonnes of George Sellden tenn shillings to be spent in clothing of them. Item I will tenn shillings to tenn of the poorest of this parish, All my moveable [?] goodes either within the house or without or in the shopp that [?] I work in he paying all legacyes and bequeaths I bequeathe to Richard my sonne whome I make sole and whole executor of this my last will and testament dated and written the day & yeare aforementioned in wittnes whereof I have sette my hand and seale in the presence of Thomas Ly\*ystead [?] his marke, Thomas Batchelor his marke, Seaman Richard [?] Seaman his marke.

For me, the most interesting thing in this will is the 10 shillings and book (presumably John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*) he bequeathed to his youngest son, Simon. The money was a fee to Simon, the local vicar, to preach his funeral sermon. Nowadays, such a bequest might be a joke, seeing as how he left another son £30. However, one suspects it isn't. Simon, as we shall see below, ended up much wealthier than the rest of his family, so presumably the £30 was better spent elsewhere.

I also rather like the provision for his daughter Margaret; if it isn't paid on time she gets to grab the house and orchard until it is. I wonder if old Robert was concerned that his son Richard wouldn't pay out. It certainly seems a bit that way. And why were other bequests put off for a year, like the 20 nobles to his other daughter Mary? Enquiring minds want to know.

Robert's son **Simon** must have been an unusually intelligent child; although his father and his brothers were blacksmiths, he was lucky and clever enough to receive a proper education, and was raised to the dizzy heights of a vicarage, well above the rest of his family in income and social status. In 1588, when he was 20, he was awarded one of two scholarships for Kent, founded by the Deacon of Nottingham, and rotated around the counties in turn, and on this scholarship went to St. John's, Cambridge.

Simon got his B.A. from 1591-92 and his M.A. in 1595<sup>1</sup>, and was then appointed as Vicar of Bredgar, his home town, where he remained for the rest of his life, from 1595–1622. His father was presumably proud of him. We know almost nothing about his activities as vicar, except that one thing he did (in addition to his usual duties, one assumes) is to transcribe into the parish ledger many of the old records before he became vicar. They can still be seen (well, I've only seen photocopies, to be honest, but that's still pretty cool), with a little notation "Simon Seaman, Vicar" at the bottom of each page.

In 1596, Simon married **Susanna Wythers** in London, at St. Michael Bassishaw, a church that was demolished in 1899. It's a reasonable assumption that this was Susanna's home parish. It's possible that she brought quite a lot of money to the marriage, as in his will Simon left his daughter Mary (who later married Richard Beale) various items, including "my little bible . . . the brasse vessle

<sup>1</sup>According to the official list of Cambridge University Alumni, 1261–1900

my wife used to fry fritters in . . .” and £100 to be invested for her. The most likely place where Simon could have got this kind of wealth is from his wife; it was a large sum for the time. His will contained no provision for his wife, so it’s likely she was already dead.

**Mary** was only five when her father died, and the will implies that her mother was already dead. Neither does the will name any guardians for her; it’s not known how she was raised. Still, raised she was, to marry so far above her grandfather’s station that he would have been turning in his grave. Not out of displeasure one imagines, but certainly out of surprise. So, gentle readers, let this be an object lesson to you all on the values of a good education.

## The Newingtons and Hepdens

Recall that Sarah Beale married Edward Curteis in 1733. Well, Sarah Beale’s mother, as we saw before, was **Elizabeth Newington**, another old Kent family that is described in Berry [9]. Elizabeth’s father was **Samuel Newington** of Wadhurst, which is consistent with the fact that Elizabeth got married in Wadhurst Church, while Samuel’s father, another Samuel, was of Hawkhurst, Kent (see Map 6).

The second Samuel’s parents get the prize for the strangest names; **Zabulon Newington**, of Ticeherst, and **Goodguift Hepden**. They just don’t come like that any more. Hi, we’re Zabulon and Goodguift, your new neighbours. Mind you, the Newingtons were tame compared to the Hepdens. Goodguift’s siblings (see the chart on page 139) were Herbert, John, Retourne, Elizabeth, Goodgift, Hopestill, Fearnot, Constance, Thanckfull, and Goddard. No prizes for guessing their religious persuasion. Mind you, according to Berry, Goodguift’s great-grandfather had “come from the North and had issue”, so they were basically a bunch of foreigners coming in and breeding like rabbits. Nasty. Three of the Hepden girls married Newingtons, with Fearnot and Hopestill marrying two Newington brothers, cousins of Zabulon. A bit of a genealogical mess, really.

Actually, I was motivated by these names to find out more about Puritan nomenclature, the first serious study of which was done by the Victorian vicar C.W. Bardsley [8]. He made a distinction between the Hebrew names such as Samuel and Joshua and the later names consisting of “scriptural phrases, pious ejaculations, or godly admonitions”. Examples of both types of name can be seen clearly in the Newingtons and Hepdens. Apparently, the heartland of Puritan names like this was East Sussex and the Kent border, while the only other place they became popular was in Northamptonshire [58]. So the families discussed in this chapter were right in the hot seat of Weirdo Puritan Nomenclature (WPN©). One of the originators of WPN was almost certainly Dudley Fenner, a curate at Cranbrook in Kent, around the 1580s. He named his daughter Good-Fruit and inspired some poor sucker to name his son From-Above Hendley. From Cranbrook these new names spread mostly into East Sussex, but after 1600 the fashion died out fairly quickly. So, contrary to what I had thought before, WPN was highly localised both in time and space, and was not at all a generic feature of Puritanism.

The Hepdens are one well-known family to have used WPN; in fact they used regular names in conjunction with WPN, which was not at all unusual. **Goddard Hepden**, who later called himself Godward Hepden, appears in [58] as an example of an upwardly mobile Puritan. His father, **John Hepden**, made his will in 1586, at which time he called himself a yeoman, although one of his executors called himself a gentleman. His sons, Goddard and Thomas, were also called yeoman at that time. In 1591, Goddard was reported by the vicar of Burwash for failing to receive communion there for over a year, but, despite these differences in doctrine, both Thomas and Goddard were calling themselves gentlemen by 1610, when Goddard was a member of a grand jury.

Goddard built himself a house at Burwash, Homshurst, which is still standing today. It’s made of brick, with stone dressings, and has the initials G.H. and the date 1610 carved on the lintel. By this time he had reverted to Goddard, as opposed to Godward, although it’s not clear whether he was a good boy and received the communion. In the preamble to his will he admits that “the days of my pilgrimage to be both few and evil” and speaks of “the small estate and substance which God hath lent me”. This was nothing but self-righteous pious hypocrisy; he goes on to mention his freehold lands in Heathfield and Mayfield, copyhold land in Brightling, and property in Burwash, which sounds like his small estate wasn’t too small at all. In his will he also left money bequests



amounting to £183 5s, and a further £23 in annuities, as well as £2 10s for the poor. Since, in the 1590s, when he was called a yeoman, he had been assessed at £4, it's clear that he had done rather well for himself thank you very much.

Returning to the Newingtons, there is, unfortunately, little more to be said about them. Sir Adam Newington of Witherden, Ticeherst, Sussex, Knight (whom I don't believe existed anyway); Thomas Newington of Saleherst, Sussex; his son Thomas Newington of Saleherst; they're all just names to me. I assume that, if they existed at all, they were farmers, landowners, reasonably wealthy. They had a coat-of-arms (*Azure, three eagles displayed, three, two, and one, argent. Crest: On a chapeau azure turned up argent a demi eagle, wings elevated, of the last.*) but it's not clear to me exactly who was entitled to it. Probably not all of them.

However, the most intriguing things about these gentlemen are their wives. And here my suspicious nature comes into play. According to the 1662 Sussex Visitation<sup>1</sup> the first known Newington, Sir Adam, married Alice Colepeper, the only daughter of Sir Alexander Colepeper of Bedgebury and his first wife, Agnes Davy. Now, this rings all sorts of alarm bells. The only source I know for this claim is the Sussex Visitation, which was copied by Berry in his *County Genealogies* [9]. But the Colepepers were a very well-known family, with an ancient pedigree, and this sounds very like the Newingtons, in typical style, invented an illustrious marriage for their early ancestor, who was likely also fictitious; Sir Adam Newington, Knight, the ancestor of a bunch of unknighthed gentry (i.e., rich farmers), just sounds a little too convenient to me. Not to mention that, given that this was the record of a Heraldic Visitation, the Newingtons clearly would have been under pressure to produce some noble ancestors to justify the use of their coat of arms. It would be understandable if, under the circumstances, some minor inaccuracies crept into the family records. If I could find some other source of this, some confirmation from an independent source, I'd believe it. But if Berry and the 1662 Sussex Visitation is the only thing going, well, I'm not convinced.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there is no doubt that women often married beneath them in social station, and it was common for the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of nobles to be much less socially advanced; it didn't take many generations to lose the blue blood. However, although it's possible, there's little evidence of that happening here.

Similarly for the Cheney and the Dawtrey wives. Each of those families was also ancient and eminent. For example, the Dawtrey lineage appears in Burke's *Commoners* [15]; Jane Dawtrey (wife of Thomas Newington, who died in 1580) was (or so it is claimed) the daughter of Sir John Dawtrey of Moore Hall, Sussex, who married a daughter of a Shirley of Weston, whose ancestry can be traced to the Plantagenets. If true, it would be nice addition to the family tree. But it probably isn't.

So I don't think I'll continue the lines any further. It would be an interesting exercise in genealogical construction, just to believe all these marriages and construct a detailed lineage as far back as possible. However, until I actually believe it, I can't be bothered. I'll leave it to somebody else.

**Questions:** As I pointed out in the text, do we believe the early Newington wives? If we do, what's the evidence? It would be nice to have a confirmed link to the Colepeper, Dawtrey and Cheney families, but somebody needs to do more work on this.

<sup>1</sup>Heraldic Visitations were essentially inspections by the King of Arms to see who was using coats of arms as wot shouldn't be. The King of Arms would go around the country asking the gentry to present proofs of their nobility, their arms, and their descent. Understandably, these visits weren't popular. The Visitations took place from 1530 to 1688, after which the landed gentry became too powerful to have their precious coats of arms taken away from them, whether they deserved them or not.

<sup>2</sup>By the way, for anybody interested in the early history of the Colepepers there is an excellent web site, <http://gen.culpepper.com/>, the best family history web site I've ever seen. In particular, it has a complete reproduction of two articles by Attree and Booker [6, 7] from 1904–1905, which have a very nice discussion of the early Colepepers.