

John & Anne Newport (née Paye)

(1782-1845) (1786-1844)

(My 3 x Great Grandparents)

Preamble

In the following story, a number of villages are mentioned and these were, and are, close to each other. The family moved from one parish to another, going wherever the work was. They, probably, stayed in Patricbourne the longest, though, as they grew up, the children moved away going where they could find work and where they probably found their future husbands or wives.

It has often been said that people didn't go far in "those days" but they did. The poor had to go where they could earn a living. It was the rich, the people with land who stayed where they were born, for many social reasons, but, mainly, because they couldn't take the land with them!

A map showing the relative positions of the villages, and giving rough distances between them, would be a good idea; but that will have to wait at the moment. A look at the ordnance survey map of the area or a good detailed road map will show how they moved.

The Story

My great-great-great grandfather, John was baptized on the 9th June, 1782, at the 12th century, flint church of St Peter & St Paul, in the village of Upper Hardres, set in the heart of the beautiful Kent Downs. He was the son of John and Susannah Newport (née Brookes) who were married, in Barham, a couple of years earlier, on the 12th October, 1780.

John was the couple's first child but by no means the only one, as the couple would go on to have seven children in all and most survived the early years.

As with all family history, except, of course, the titled and landed families, once you get back beyond civil registration, the records that were kept, of people and their lives, were few and far between, and those documents that survived, even fewer. So, we know nothing of John until his marriage to Anne Paye.

We know even less of Anne - not even where she was born or baptized but we do know the year, 1786. Her parents were John Paye and another Anne, whose surname is still a mystery to me. All I know about John Paye and Anne is that he was born, in 1757, and that they had a total of ten children, most of whom survived to get married.

Going back to John Newport, on 23rd February 1805, he married Anne Paye, at the church of St. Giles, in Kingston, Kent. The witness was John's brother-in-law; William Fox who had married John's sister, Catherine, two years earlier at the parish church in the village of Elham, Kent

It is possible, even likely, that the family didn't live in Kingston but, somewhere, in the outlying area, in a small hamlet such as Derringstone, which being a hamlet wouldn't have had a church so baptisms, marriages, and burials were carried out in the nearest church, that of Kingston. These events would be recorded in the Kingston parish registers which gives the impression that that is where they lived.

I chose Derringstone because that is where John's aunt, Susannah Newport (née Brookes) died, in 1846, and her burial recorded, of course, in the registers of Kingston. This small hamlet was probably where the Brookes lived and John and Anne may have gone to stay with them – it's only guess-work but it's a reasonable supposition.

On 26th May, that same year, 1805, their first child, William, was baptized in Kingston, Kent. No one could have known that he was to leave the land, at the age of 17, join the Royal Marines, and serve on board the

British flagship at the last sea-battle to be fought completely under sail, in 1827. He would retire, uninjured, on a pension, in 1845.

Their next child, John, was born in 1807 and baptized on 30th August, in Nonington, Kent but the young child was, only, to live for another ten months; he was buried on 10th, July.

In 1809, John and Anne had another son, which they, again, named John. This threw me when I came across the entry in the Nonington registers, because I had already found the John of 1807 but hadn't looked at the burial records, yet. Once I had seen the record of the first John's death, I understood what had happened. One thing that struck was, how could they have given the same name to their second child? I found, later, that this was fairly common practice, at this time in history (perhaps, it had always been so) but it's something we wouldn't do to-day.

The John of 1809, baptized on 11th June, was my great-great-grandfather and would become a market gardener in the village of Herne, which is not far from the north coast of Kent, or more accurately, the southern bank of the Thames estuary.

By 1813 the family had moved from Nonington to Littlebourne, still in Kent, and another son, James, was born - and he was baptized on 25th April.

In 1815, still in Littlebourne, they had yet another son, who was, Henry, on 22nd October.

Their luck changed, in 1817 (whether for good or bad, I'll let the reader decide!), when a girl, Sarah, their second daughter, was baptized on 18th May, in Littlebourne.

In 1819, their third daughter was born and she gave me the biggest headache when I tried to find her. Before coming across her baptism, I had found the next child, born in 1822, the next born in 1823, and the last born in 1827 - and the gap from 1819 to 1822 seemed to be just that bit too great. Had I missed a baptism and possibly a burial? I was sure there had to be another, at least one more, child, somewhere.

In the 1851 census, there was a Maria Newport, aged 32 (therefore, born in 1819, in Littlebourne), and she was in the same household as a William Newport (her brother) who was a "Greenwich Pensioner (in other words he'd been a sailor or a Royal Marine) born in Kingston and a Charles Newport, again, her brother, who was born in 1822, the same year as another son-to-be of John and Ann.

Out of place, but put here for obvious reason, and for interest, is the census entry.

1851 Census - Piece No. HO 107/1623 - Folio 177v. Address: - 19, Cold Harbour Farm House, Patricbourne

Name				Age	Occupation	Born
William Newport	Head	Un.	45	Garden Labourer		
					Pensioner Late Mariner	Kingstone
Charles Newport	Bro.	Un.	28	Farm Labourer		Patricbourne
Maria Newport	Sis.	Un.	32	Laundress		Littlebourne

It wasn't difficult to work out that she was the missing daughter! But where was she baptized? I had searched all the local registers and found no trace - then, I came across the registers of the Non-Conformist Church in Guildhall Street, in Canterbury and found the following:

"Maria Newport, daughter of John Newport and Ann, his wife, was born March 13th, 1819 and baptized the 31st of the same month in the parish of Littlebourne by Sleba Gurteen".

The name 'Sleba Gurteen' seems clear enough on the document but is certainly strange, if true. All other entries are signed 'S. Gurteen' or just 'S. G.' so no help is to be gained by examining them. I have found a few Gurteens around the world (via the Internet) but am no closer to discovering where the name comes from.

Whether the entry is saying that Maria was born or baptised in Littlebourne is not clear. If she were baptised there, why was the entry in the registers of the church in Canterbury? And did the family, for a short period, become non-conformists? Life's one big mystery!

Between now and 1822, the family moved to Patricbourne - - - but, before I move on, I must tell you something about this small but very beautiful village. It's exactly what you would expect to see on an old-fashioned box of chocolates! No joking!

It's difficult to describe in any way other than that above - but it has an old Norman Church, St. Mary's, standing on a bend in the road and looking like something Hollywood dreamed up! I'm sure I saw Greer Garson standing by the wall and was that Robert Donat?!!! (Greer who? Robert who? Oh dear, the world moves on!)

To get the best view of the church, you must walk along the narrow road, passing, on your left, a long low, very old cottage (I swear there were roses growing over the front porch!), which is separated from the road by a wide stream that flows under a small, humped-back bridge, to meander, slowly and respectfully, passed a few, half-timbered and beautifully thatched cottages, then across the fields and out of sight. To cap it all, when I was there several years ago, there were swans, big and majestic, on the stream! My only negative thought was – what happens, when it rains heavily and the stream floods? Perhaps, it doesn't.

Now we come to Charles, another brother of Maria, who was baptised in Patricbourne on September 5th, 1823. The only information I can find of him, is that he joined the ranks of the “Agricultural Labourers” and never married.

On September 5th, 1823, another son, George, was baptized at the little church of St. Mary, in Patricbourne.

Their last child, a son, was christened on April 8th 1827, at Patricbourne church.

The following comes from the 1841 census (Piece No. HO107/468 - Folio 5v.) and the address is, simply, given as “**Patricbourne**”

Name	Age	Trade	Born in Kent?
John Newport	55	Ag. Lab.	Yes
Ann Newport	50		Yes
Ann Newport	10		Yes

A quick couple of quick notes here - in the 1841 Census, ages of children of 14 years and under, were given to the nearest year, while those aged 15 and above were to the nearest 5 years below, e.g. someone who was 23 years old, would have their age recorded as 20. This could be very annoying to family historians as you can't use the age to prove someone's relationship!

The other problem with the 1841 census is that relationships to the head of the household were not given, so, who was the 10-year old Ann? It's possible that she was John and Ann's daughter but, if so, I can't find any record of her birth, in 1831. Could she have been the daughter of John & Sarah, my great grandfather's sister, who was born in 1831? This would mean that she was the couple's granddaughter.

This causes another problem, but not insurmountable; Ann, aged 10, the daughter of John and Ann, is recorded in the 1841 as being at home! What could have happened is that she was with either her parents, in Herne, when the census was taken and then went to her grandparents just before the census enumerator reached the house in Patricbourne – or, perhaps, the other way around. The distance between the two villages is not great, roughly 11 miles, but at that time it would have meant travelling by horse and cart on roads that were not that good; it is possible, however, but how likely, I don't know. For instance, in London, in 1909, the average speed of a horse and cart, on relatively, good roads, was recorded as seven miles an hour which would mean that the single journey would take about one and a half hours.

As a matter of interest, and just as an aside, the average speed of a motorist, in London, to-day, is recorded as six miles an hour – and you can't use the waste product!

On Friday, October 13th, 1854, George married a young girl by the name of Maria Hogben, at Petham, which was her parish, where her father, Edward Hogben, was a labourer. The couple didn't, however, stay in Petham, but moved to the small village of Bridge, which is just south of Canterbury, and straddles the old "Pilgrim's Way" – the road that is now the main A2 road to Dover.

They, obviously, had difficulty in having children, as it wasn't until 1862, that the first child was born; a boy, who was christened, Frank (not "Francis" but Frank), on Sunday, November 30th, 1862, at the church of St. Peter, in Bridge.

It was three years before they had another child, and this time it was a daughter, who, at Bridge, on 25 June, 1865, was christened Elizabeth.

Continuing with the story of George and Maria for a little bit longer, the following year, 1866, George died and was buried, in Bridge churchyard, on Sunday, December 2nd, aged 43 and three years later, Maria died, aged just 40, and was buried, with her husband, on 1869 Friday, May 7th 1869.

The two children were orphaned at an early age and I never found what happened to Elizabeth but young Frank was "adopted" by his Uncle and Aunt, Francis and Sarah Ann Newport, who were living in Bridge and not far away,

Going back to John and Anne, she died in 1844, aged 59 years, in Nonington, where she may have been visiting relatives or, perhaps, had become ill and was being looked after by a sister or brother. She was buried on 15th. May, in St. Mary's churchyard, at Patricbourne.

Just over a year later, on June 30th., 1845, John died, aged 63, and was buried in the same churchyard. There are few headstones in the small churchyard and fewer have survived the years; if they had one, John and Anne's was one of those that hasn't.

"Acta est fabula" were Caesar Augustus's last words – "So ends the story". He has nothing to do with this, my story – it's just my bit of whimsy and showing off – well, it's my website!!!