THE FAMILY OF DENHAM OF EGHAM

BY

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SIR JOHN DENHAM, the poet, informed John Aubrey that the Denham family came originally from the west of England. Yet when Denham himself in 1642 left his home—'The Place,' at Egham—to serve King Charles, he did so as the chief representative of a family that had been settled in the neighbourhood of Egham for three generations, and there was no anomaly in his appointment the same year as High Sheriff of Surrey. In fact, the three generations of Denhams at Egham and Thorpe appear to constitute all of the poet's ancestry that can be validly ascertained. Most of what is on record concerning that family has been discussed more than once in the past; half a century ago Frederic Turner examined many of the details in 'Notes on Some Surrey Pedigrees,'[1] but Turner's informative 'Notes' contain several errors and inconsistencies, not all of which were corrected by Mill Stephenson in his subsequent 'List of Monumental Brasses in Surrey.'[2] The materials discussed by previous writers must, therefore, be reviewed once more, with a view to clarification of what is really known and to informed speculation on matters not yet established as fact.

Aubrey, in recording Denham's assertion of a western origin, supplies as the Denham coat-of-arms, 'gules, 3 lozenges ermine,' and remarks incidentally that 'this coate is in stone and thus coloured, on the roofe or vaulting of the cathedral church at Winchester.' Whatever the truth of this last statement, and whatever the intended connexion between Winchester and the west, Aubrey's blazonry at least is confirmed by the Denham brasses and monuments at Egham and Thorpe. But the first Denham to have borne this coat was the poet's grandfather William Denham (1519–83), who also, as it happens, was the first of the immediate family to settle near Egham. As Stephenson notes,[3] these arms were confirmed to William Denham by Sir Gilbert Dethick, garter-king-at-arms, about the year 1572. The transaction is also noted by Joseph Foster, *Grantees of Arms named in Docquets and Patents to the End of the Seventeenth Century*.[4]

The said William Denham, 'Citizen and Goldsmith of London,' moved to the vicinity of Thorpe probably later than 1559 (his eminent son John, Baron of the Exchequer, was born in London in

[1] *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 1–6, 11.
[2] *Surrey A.C.*, XXXIII (1920), 4–7.
[3] *Surrey A.C.*, XXXIII (1920), 7.
[4] Ed. W. Harry Rylands; *Publications of the Harleian Society*, LXVI (London, 1915), 73.

1559). Upon William Denham's death in 1583 he was buried in Thorpe church; his brasses in that church, together with his will,[5] provide a large measure of what can be determined about him and his family. Another Denham in Thorpe was Thomas, also a Londoner, who in 1563 married Elizabeth Bond of Thorpe, who died a widow in 1598. Turner believed Thomas Denham to have been a brother of William Denham's, and that the two brothers moved from London to Thorpe at about the same time (between 1559 and 1563[?]). Turner's surmise about their relationship is supported by the manuscript collection—Boyd's 'Citizens of London'—belonging to the Society of Genealogists which reveals that William and Thomas were both goldsmiths and both of St. Matthew, Friday Street, a highly suggestive coincidence (and neither could have been the son of the other). The same source shows Thomas to have died in 1586, three years after William.[6]

William Denham, as his effigy-brass in the chancel of Thorpe church reveals, had by his wife Joan five sons and ten daughters. His will, however, mentions only the two sons who are known also on other evidence to have survived him: William (died 1623) and John (1559–1639). Joan Denham's maiden name is unknown, although Stephenson thought it to have been Prideaux. She died in 1589, and her will[7] mentions two sons, her son-in-law Francis Morley, 'my daughter Morley and my cousin Tottell.' Her daughter Morley was Sarah, wife of Francis Morley, but as many as four other of her daughters lived to marry, of whom the names of Judith, Joan and Martha are retrievable. The identity of her 'cousin Tottell' I shall attempt to establish later.

Thomas Denham had, by his wife Elizabeth Bond, according to Turner, four children, of whom two sons, each named John, were both living at the same time. The 'Pedigree of Denham,' drawn up by Turner, indicates, however, five children as the fruit of this union: two daughters, Cicely and Averyne; and a son Henry represented as apparently senior to the two Johns.[8] Boyd's 'Citizens of London' records Thomas Denham as father of seven children in all: the two daughters and five sons. These discrepancies may be hypothetically resolved by recalling that when Thomas Denham married Elizabeth Bond in 1563, his brother William was 44 years of age. If Thomas was, as the date of his death suggests, about three years younger than William, he would himself have been near 41, sufficiently old to make a previous marriage highly likely. Cicely and Averyne were almost certainly his daughters by Elizabeth Bond, she having had sisters of the same names,[9] and it is reasonable to assume that one of the Johns was Elizabeth's child. Henry and the elder John

[5] P.C.C., 45 Rowe.

[6] For bringing Boyd's 'Citizens of London' to my attention, as well as for other sound advice, I am deeply indebted to the courtesy of Mr. C. F. H. Evans, F.S.A.

[7] P.C.C., 36 Leicester.

[8] *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 11.

[9] *Surrey A.C.*, XXXIII (1920), 2.

would then have been sons by a previous wife. The identity of perhaps the youngest son is revealed by an entry in the Stationers' Register for December 5, 1586, recording the fact that 'William Denham sonne of Thomas Denham late Citizen and goldsmith of London Deceased hath put himself Apprentyse to Henry Smith staconer for Seaven yeres.' This was in the year of Thomas Denham's death. Young William Denham, presumably born about 1570, appears no more.

At this point the first of several tantalizing and perplexing coincidences thrusts itself into notice, the fact that in 1586, when William Denham was apprenticed to a stationer, the warden of the Stationers' Company was one Henry Denham, not impossibly his elder halfbrother. Henry Denham, at any rate, had been himself apprenticed in 1557 (to the celebrated printer Richard Tottell), which suggests that his birth took place not far off from 1540, when Thomas Denham was perhaps twenty. No insuperable chronological difficulty therefore attaches to the possibility that Warden Denham was the eldest son of Thomas Denham of Thorpe. Tottell we shall revert to. The subsequent careers of Thomas Denham's children, and their progeny if any, remain untraced. Turner's 'Pedigree of Denham' shows another John Denham obscurely descended from the younger of the two Johns, but whom he has in mind as this person Turner fails to say. We shall run across a young John Denham of mysterious antecedents who may be the one intended. Also Sir John Denham the poet in 1662 acknowledged kinship to one Dr. [Edward?] Denham, who might stem as well from Thomas Denham's line as from any other branch of the family tree.

The dozen or so Denhams to reach maturity of the second Surrey generation—the children of William and Thomas—belonged as a group to the sixteenth century, during which they lived out the longest portions of their lives, and in which most of their own children were born. William Denham's daughter Judith married Thomas Hunloke of Dronfield, to whom she gave at least a son and a daughter. The son, Denham Hunloke, became a Merchant Taylor of London and had a number of financial transactions with his first cousin the poet, whose senior he was by perhaps twenty or more years. The daughter Joan, by Turner's account, married her first cousin Francis Morley the younger, son of her aunt Sarah Morley. William Denham's daughter Sarah married, as has been previously indicated, Francis Morley the elder, to whom she gave three sons: Francis, who married his cousin Joan Hunloke;[10] Lyonell; and George. George, the youngest, was born in 1597; he became a friend of Edmund Waller the poet and also Bishop of Winchester. The third of William Denham's daughters, Joan, married William Bereblock, to whom she gave a son James who in turn fathered John Bereblock.

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[10] Le Neve's *Pedigrees of the Knights*, ed. G. W. Marshall, *Publication of the Harleian Society*, VIII (1873), 452–3, however, has him married to a Joane Collins.

A fourth daughter, Martha[11] married John Mabbe of London. She was apparently still alive, although probably widowed, in 1607. In that year the will was proved of John Tyson, of Egham, who in it mentions his aunt Mrs. Martha Mabbe, his uncle John Denham, esq., and his uncle's wife, his aunt Mrs. Cicely Denham.[12] And this determines that another daughter of William Denham, sister of John Denham and Martha Mabbe, must have married Robert Tyson and so have become the mother of John Tyson of Egham.

In exception to the majority of their generation of the family, William Denham's two surviving sons lived on well into the seventeenth century. The elder, William, died in 1623 and was buried at Egham; his wife Margery, maiden name unknown, was buried two years later at Thorpe. No children are recorded of this marriage, but again perhaps some of the unplaced seventeenth-century Denhams derive from it. John, William Denham's other son, became the most distinguished member of the family up to his time.

John Denham commenced the study of law at Lincoln's Inn at the age of eighteen, in 1577; it is not recorded that he attended either university. His subsequent professional success was signalized by a knighthood conferred at Greenwich in 1609, immediately precedent to his appointment as a Baron of the Irish Exchequer. At that time he was, for some reason, designated as 'of Berkshire.'[13] He owned estates in that county it is true, as he did elsewhere, but there is little doubt that Egham was, in effect, his home. He later erected his house, 'The Place,' there, about 1622, and founded almshouses in Egham for poor aged women. (The Denham Almshouses survive, although 'The Place' was torn down in the nineteenth century.) Since Egham lies directly upon the border between Surrey and Berkshire it is not impossible, although it seems unlikely, that there was some confusion as to which county Egham is in. Sir John Denham's first known wife was Cicely Farr, widow first of Anthony Bond of Egham who died in 1576, secondly of Richard Kellefet of Egham who died in 1595. Obviously, therefore, she was in middle life and possibly past child-bearing, and quite likely older than her new husband when in 1596 she married John Denham. He, it should be noted, was himself thirty-seven at the time, and therefore not unquestionably never before married. His father had virtually certainly been married in his twenties; his son the poet was to marry for the first time at nineteen; and therefore it is impossible to deny categorically that he might previously have fathered a child now of marriageable age. The point of this caveat will emerge. Lady Denham died in 1612 and was buried at Egham, having given Sir John no children.[14] It is uncertain whether or not she accompanied her husband to Ireland, and if she did, why her death took place presumably in Egham. Sir John's second wife he probably

[11] According to *Visitation of London, 1568, Publications of the Harleian Society*, CIX–CX (1957–8), 74.

[12] Abstract in Surrey Record Society, *Surrey Wills* II (1916), No. 1107.

[13] William A. Shaw, *Knights of England*, II (1906), 148.

[14] *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 3.

met and married in Ireland. She was Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret Moore, Baron Mellifont and Viscount Drogheda in the Irish peerage. In 1615, at Dublin, she bore Sir John his first known child, a son John, who was to become Sir John Denham the poet: the judge at the time was already 56 years old. In 1617 he was recalled from Dublin to become a Baron of the King's Bench, and in 1619 his wife died shortly after giving birth to a daughter. The infant had died unchristened ten days before. Sir John erected in Egham church a handsome monument, which remains still, to his two wives and his infant daughter. The monument is also graced by a tiny kneeling figure of his four-year-old son, dressed in ruff and scarlet cloak. Sir John Denham the judge did not remarry, although he lived two further decades to see his eightieth year. He was buried at Egham in 1639, a few months after the burial there of his infant grandson. Despite his continued residence at Egham, however, he described himself and his son John in the matriculation-book of Trinity College, Oxford, on 18 November, 1631, as *de Horseley parva in com.* [Essex].[15] Horsley parva or Little Horkesley was a valuable estate, but this designation seems as anomalous as the notation in 1609 that Sir John was of Berkshire.

In the year 1645 one Stephen Soame of Kent deposed that his wife Mary was the 'daughter and co-heir of the late Sir John Denham, and widow of Leonard Bancaster.'[16] This entry puzzled Turner (who, incidentally, reversed the order of this Mary Denham's two husbands) until he discovered an order of the Court of Wards dated in 1626 and delivering one Mary Blacknell to the care of 'Sir John Denham or his lady, "to be by her brought up, amongst her own daughters".' From this he concluded that 'there is no reason to doubt the legitimacy of Mary Soame, or that Sir John had other daughters beside, although they are not mentioned in his will.'[17] In this resolution of the problem, however, two insuperable difficulties are overlooked: first, Mary Soame is clearly identified as Sir John Denham's co-heir; a co-heir would most improbably have been unnamed in his will. Second, Sir John Denham, the judge, in 1626 had had no lady for seven years. The seemingly unlikely solution to these difficulties is that both puzzling references are to a different Sir John Denham. In fact another John Denham had been knighted, at Rycote in 1616, and it is undoubtedly to him that the references apply.[18] The identity of this second Sir John Denham remains obscure: perhaps he was a descendant of Thomas Denham, perhaps not a relative at all. His knighting at Rycote may suggest he lived in Oxfordshire, and University records disclose the presence of a family of Denhams in Oxford and Buckinghamshire during the seventeenth century, but his place of residence is not listed.

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[15] *See* Aubrey; also Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford*, 1500–1714 (1891), I, 393.
[16] *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding*, II, 887.
[17] *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 4.
[18] Shaw, *Knights of England*, II (1906), 159.

John Denham the poet, then, is the only known child of Sir John Denham the judge to have survived infancy. He was also the youngest living member of his generation of Denhams, the third in Surrey (his Hunloke, Morley and Bereblock cousins being all at the least eighteen years older than himself), and the only known member of his generation to retain the surname Denham. At the early age of nineteen, on 25 June, 1634, he married Anne Cotton, daughter and heiress of Daniel Cotton, Esq., of Whittington in Gloucestershire, at St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street.[19] By her he had, all authorities from Aubrey onward agree, one son and two daughters. His daughter Elizabeth seems not to have been married when in 1670, as named executrix, she proved his will,[20] and although a pedigree printed by T. H. Banks, Jr.,[21] has her married to a Sir Thomas Price and dying *ca.* 1701, he cites no authority, and I have been unable to confirm his assertions. In any event, Elizabeth died childless. Denham's daughter Anne, also named in his will, married Sir William Morley, K.B. (whose ancestry is quite distinct from that of Denham's cousin Morley), and had two sons and a daughter: John, who died *sine prole* in 1683; William, who died *sine prole* in 1693; and Mary, who married James, tenth Earl of Derby, to whom she gave but one son, who died in infancy, and herself died in 1752, at the age of 84. Denham stated in his will, dated a few days before his death in March 1668/9, that he had 'now noe sonne left alive.' No one disputes that testimony, but there is wide and unrecognized divergence of belief as to what circumstances it covers. Denham lost one infant son, John, who was buried in Egham church in August 1638, but this only son ever mentioned by recent authorities is clearly not the 'one son' reckoned by Aubrey. Aubrey says: 'His son did not *patrem sapere.* He was of Wadham College in Dr. Wilkins's time the dyed *sine prole,* I thinke, there.' Obviously, Aubrey had never heard of the infant who died in 1638, or if he had, did not reckon him.

Aubrey's report, notwithstanding the silent disregard with which modern writers receive it, is not without substance. On 8 July 1654, Wadham College received caution-money from one John Denham, Fellow Commoner, who matriculated on 20 July. In the matriculation-book this John Denham is designated *arm. fil.*, although his father is not named, nor his place of origin.[22] Both omissions are unusual. Joseph Foster additionally designates this young man himself as 'arm.,' but this may be an error.[23] The term 'armiger' as used in Oxford registers exclusively translated the title 'Esquire,' a title not so democratically distributed in the seventeenth century as

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[19] *The Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers of . . . Westminster,* ed. J. L. Chester (1876), 170.

[20] *Wills from Doctors' Commons,* ed. John Gough Nichols and John Bruce, Camden Society Publications, LXXXIII (Westminster, 1863), 119–123.

[21] *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham* (New Haven, 1928), 332.

[22] R. B. Gardiner, *The Registers of Wadham College, Oxford . . . From* 1613 *to* 1719 (London, 1889), 203.

[23] *Alumni Oxonienses . . .* 1500–1714 (I), 393.

it is today. John Denham of Wadham College, therefore, was necessarily the son of *Blank* Denham, Esq., and (if Foster is correct) was himself John Denham, Esq. To address ourselves first to the more certain instance of the father: *Blank* Denham, Esq., according to the seventeenth-century restrictions on the use of his title, must have been one or more of the following: (*a*) the younger son of a nobleman; (*b*) the heir of a baronet; (*c*) the eldest son of a knight; (*d*) the eldest son of the eldest son of a knight; (*e*) an attorney at law; (*f*) an officer of State; (*g*) a squire or justice of the peace. During the relevant part of the seventeenth century neither noble nor baronet named Denham appears, nor officer of State. There was, however, a barrister who was also the eldest son of a knight: namely, John Denham, Esq., the poet (admitted to the Bar January 1638/9; named royalist Sheriff of Surrey October 1642). It is true that this does not constitute conclusive evidence, and another Denham, Esq., might have been the father of John Denham of Wadham. Sir John Denham of Rycote, for one, may have had a son, *Blank* Denham, Esq., although we hear only of his daughters, or there may have been somewhere another Denham-at-Law, or Squire Denham. If Denham of Wadham himself is actually an Esquire also, however, almost certainly he would have to have been the grandson of a knight.

That the son of an esquire should have been so registered at Wadham yet without indication either of his father's name or place of residence seems somewhat odd. But if John Denham the poet were the father in the case, a plausible explanation would suggest itself. Since 1647, Denham's children (their number is never specified) had been under Parliamentary guardianship because of his activity on the King's behalf in the Civil War. For most of the time thereafter Denham was in political exile. He had returned to England, it is true, in 1653, but his estates had been confiscated, and he was without a home; in 1654 he was living at Wilton as a guest under the protection of the Earl of Pembroke. A son of his entering Oxford that year would indeed have been *arm. fil.*, but would have had no family estate to name as his residence (as Denham himself had named Horseley *parva*), and would have had a father whose very existence was semi-illicit, and almost unknown to him.

Aside from Aubrey's flat and, so to speak, gratuitous assertion that it was Denham's son who was at Wadham in 1654, a completely independent connexion has been made out between the young man and the poet. Gardiner appends to his entry on young John Denham the following note: 'It is to be observed that the next name in the [Matriculations] is Samuel Woodford. Now Samuel Woodford wrote verses in commendation of "A new Version of the Psalms of David by Sir John Denham 1668": whence it may possibly be inferred that the above John Denham was related to the poet of Cooper's Hill, and that his residence at Wadham brought him into connexion with Samuel Woodford.'[24] Gardiner's guess is more than supported by Aubrey's assertion, of which Gardiner appears unaware.

[24] *The Registers of Wadham College*, 203.

Samuel Woodford was born in 1636, and therefore entered Wadham at about the age of eighteen. Young John Denham's birth, however, cannot plausibly be assigned to so early a year if he is to be the poet's son, for the infant who died in 1638 appears also to have been named John. Despite the precedent set by his great-uncle Thomas, Denham is unlikely to have given the same name to two living sons. A second John would presumably have been born after his brother's death in August 1638, and so could no more than have begun to approach his sixteenth birthday in July 1654. But Denham himself had entered Trinity at sixteen, and fifteen was by no means an unusual age at matriculation. In his will, in fact, Denham assumed that his grandson John Morley would enter Oxford at *fourteen*. During 1638 and 1639 Denham was living quietly with his wife Anne, in the lull before the war, and so might then very probably have fathered a son.

Thus the traditional evidence may readily be construed as lending support to Aubrey's otherwise unauthenticated assertion. New evidence, moreover, may be viewed as converting plausibility to overwhelming probability. Testimony from litigation in the years 1650 and 1652, preserved among the State Papers[25] in the Public Record Office, establishes beyond doubt that in those years a minor son of John Denham was alive as the nominal inheritor of a portion of his maternal grandfather's estate. Somewhere, perhaps, the further evidence exists to identify positively this son of John Denham, who was alive in 1652 (and in view of the physical separation enforced between John Denham and his wife by the Civil War, it is difficult to see how the lad could be then any less than ten years old), with the young John Denham who entered Wadham College in 1654. For the present the identification rests on four bases: the limitations implied by the title 'esquire'; the information volunteered by Aubrey; the connexion noted by Gardiner; and the suitability of the young man's obscure yet dignified background to the circumstances of John Denham's family in 1654.

In 1662 the poet, now Sir John Denham, K.B., Surveyor-General of His Majesty's Works, wrote to commend to Sir George Lane in the administration at Dublin the services of 'my kinsman, Dr. Denham.'[26] In the same volume we find record of a payment made in 1661 to one Dr. Edward Denham, presumably the same person. Earlier, in 1641, Edward Dynham, M.D., 'a Londoner born,' was incorporated at Oxford, having received his medical degree at Montpelier in 1639.[27] What this man's precise relationship to Denham was remains undiscovered, but he is perhaps a grandson of Thomas Denham, and so no closer than a second cousin.

Denham's wife, Anne Cotton, had died about 1647, and in 1665 he married Margaret Brooke, the 23-year-old daughter of Sir William Brooke, K.B. The marriage, overshadowed by scandal and

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[25] Domestic Series 23, Vol. 104, pp. 595–608.
[26] Historical MSS. Comm., *Ormonde MSS., New Series* (1904), III, 19–20.
[27] Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, I, 438.

madness, lasted only nineteen months and twelve days. It ended with Lady Denham's death from an internal ailment she insisted was poison, but which an autopsy report asserted was not. There were no children from this marriage, and Denham's only heirs were his daughters and grandchildren. He provided generously for his two grandsons. To the elder, John Morley, he left funds for his education and maintenance 'att some good grammer schoole'; at Oxford (specifically) for three years or more; and for two subsequent years of foreign travel. William he designated his chief heir, on condition that he adopt the surname of Denham. All his desires, however, were frustrated; first by the early death of John, leaving William as his own father's sole heir-male and so precluding his assumption of the name Denham; then by the premature death of William. His granddaughter Mary, just a year old at the time of Denham's death, received a more dubious legacy. When Denham had left Egham in 1642 to join the King, he had raised, with the aid of Denham Hunloke, all the money he could extract from his neighbours. For security the contributors received chiefly notes of hand issued by Denham in conjunction with Wolley Leigh, the squire of Thorpe. Leigh died at Oxford in 1644, and Hunloke was ultimately forced to make good on some £10,000 of the total debt.[28] But Denham himself apparently paid off some of the debt also, for he reflects rather wryly on the law's delays in leaving to his granddaughter 'all my right, clayme, and interest in three judgments or statuts which I have upon the manor of Thorpe, in the county of Surrey, late the estate of Wolley Leigh, esquire, and now in joynture to the Lady Lowther heretofore wife to the said Wolley Leigh, which judgments or statuts are all the satisfaction I am like to receive for diverse great sumes of money which I have paid for the said Wolley Leigh.'[29]

This was the last connexion that the Denhams of Egham and Thorpe had with that part of Surrey, and at the death of Mary, Countess of Derby, the poet's line became extinct. His daughters, then, were the last known descendants of William Denham, the goldsmith, to bear his surname.

If the line that began in the sixteenth century ran out in the eighteenth, the unresolved question remains of the sixteenth-century origins of that line. Turner offered some suggestions, relative to Aubrey's report of a western origin for the family, of possible connexions with a fifteenth-century Sir John Denham of Devonshire, and a sixteenth-century Sir 'John' (*sic recte* William) Denham of London who was born in Devon. The arms of the fifteenth-century Sir John Denham Turner gives as 'Gules a fesse indented ermine,' which he says 'call cousins with' those of the Egham Denhams.[30] Unknowingly, Turner is referring to a noble family (of 'Dinham' or 'Dinaunt'), holders of a baronage which became extinct

[28] Turner, *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 5.

[29] *Wills from Doctors' Commons*, ed. J. G. Nichols and J. Bruce (Westminster, 1863), 119–23.

[30] *Surrey A.C.*, XXX (1917), 1.

in the sixteenth century at just about the time the Egham Denhams rose to prominence.

The name Denham, despite its Anglo-Saxon appearance, is not English but French. The noble family of Dinham, at least, came over subsequent to the Conquest. The variants Dinham and Dynham are truer than Denham to the original name, for the founder of the Devon family was Geoffrey de Dinan, son of Oliver Sire de Dinan son of Geoffrey Sire de Dinan and his wife, Orieldis. The first of this Breton family notably in England was Alan de Dinant, brother of Oliver, who was active at the court of Henry I and founded a family in Northamptonshire. His nephew Geoffrey, however, founder of Hartland Abbey, co. Devon, became, under King Stephen, the first of a line of territorial magnates possessed of Hartland, Nutwell, and Ilsington, Devon, and Buckland Denham in Somerset. Geoffrey was succeeded by his brother Oliver, and the succession lasted through ten subsequent heirs male. Sir Oliver de Dinham or de Dinaunt (d. 1299) was the first who may colourably be regarded as Lord Dinham, by virtue of a writ of Edward I in 1295. His grandson, son of Josce de Denam (d. 1301), was the first known member of the family to be christened John. Sir John de Dinham died in 1332, his son John in 1383, and thereafter all the succeeding Dinhams were named John. Sir John Dinham, who was knighted in 1430 and died in 1458, seems to have been the first to have borne the surname *sans* preposition. His successor, Sir John Dinham, a formidable military figure, was elected to the Garter by Henry VII, and is doubtless the fifteenth-century Sir John named by Turner. He, more certainly than his ancestor Oliver de Dinham, is entitled to be called Lord Dinham, having been summoned as a lord to parliaments of Edward IV and Henry VII; he became Lord Treasurer in 1486. In 1480–1 Lord Dinham had a son, George, at Winchester College, but the lad died in 1487, and at his Lordship's death in 1501 'any hereditary Barony . . . became extinct.'[31] A shield of Lord Dinham's arms on a ceiling-vault in Winchester College was probably put in place at the time of his son's residence there, and that shield may be the basis for Aubrey's report of the Denham arms to be found in Winchester *Cathedral*.[32] Lord Dinham's estates were divided among the representatives of his four sisters, but it was later to be alleged that he did not die quite without progeny. William Syer, a Buckinghamshire parson who died in 1605, asserted in his epitaph that his wife Jane was the daughter of George Dynham, son of Sir Thomas Dynham, son of John, Lord Dynham. Thomas Dynham, thus claimed to be Lord Dynham's bastard, was knighted in 1518, and had in all eleven children: John, George, Thomas, Charles, Elynour, Roger, Edward, Anne, Kateryn, Elizabeth, and Jane. T. C. Banks implicitly accepts this claim, and ends Lord

[31] G. W. Watson, 'Dinham or Dinaunt,' *The Complete Peerage*, IV (London, 1916), 380.

[32] H.C., 'The Arms at Winchester College of John, Lord Dinham,' *Notes and Queries*, 12 ser. III (1917), 496–8.

Dinham's line with Jane Syer;[33] but a seventeenth-century family whose pedigree was compiled by Everard Green, Rouge Dragon, traced descent from an early sixteenth-century Sir Thomas Dinham of Bucks., who may be the same with Jane Syer's grandfather.[34] The baronial Dinhams remained throughout their history a Devonshire family, but as might be expected of any family that maintained connexions with London for over four centuries, their names appear from time to time in the records of Surrey.[35] They seem to have had little interest, however, in the corner of Surrey toward Egham, unless they are ultimately represented by the brothers Denham who removed from London to Thorpe.

Another Denham to attain some prominence was William Denham, Merchant of the Staple of Calais, born at 'Lyston' in Devon, and knighted in 1542 (Shaw). How this Sir William may have been related to Sir Thomas Dinham or to Lord Dinham, one may only guess. All had busy London careers and a Devon background. But the more interesting question for us is that of the possible connexions between Sir William and the London goldsmith William Denham, born in 1519. It being safe to assume that Sir William's knighthood came to him as a late-summer if not a ripe autumnal fruit, his age must have corresponded closely to that of the goldsmith's father, whoever the latter might be (the younger William was 23 at the time of the elder's knighting). But that Sir William was himself William Denham's father must be deemed highly unlikely, for we find the goldsmith, decades later, gratifying his vanity and asserting his gentility by securing to himself the confirmation of a coat of arms, a procedure seemingly redundant in the son of a knight, and neither then nor on his monumental brass claiming such parentage. Once more, however, Boyd's 'Citizens of London' is illuminating. That collection lists a John Denham of St. Dunstan in the West, citizen and draper, who was born in 'Lyfton,' Devon, and who died in 1532. He had, moreover, three brothers—John, James, and William.[36] Since 'Lyston' and 'Lyfton' are virtually certainly the same place, the modern Lifton,[37] John Denham's brother William, presumably also born in 'Lyfton,' can very plausibly be identified with the William Denham, born in 'Lyston,' who was knighted in 1542, ten years later than John's death. And if Sir William's age must have approximated that of the father of William and Thomas Denham, the same holds true for his brothers—John the draper, the second John, and James. The coincidence that Thomas Denham named two of his

[33] T. C. Banks, *The Dormant and Extinct Baronage of England* (London, 1807), I, 288.

[34] 'Pedigree of the Family of Dinham [Dynham, Denham] of Stamford and Spalding, co. Lincoln,' *Miscellanea Genealogica at Heraldica*, ed. W. Bruce Bannerman, 4th ser., II (London, 1908), 17–20—for this reference also I am indebted to Mr. Evans.

[35] *See* the indexes to *Surrey A.C.*

[36] Once more I must thank Mr. Evans for his kind transcription of relevant excerpts from Boyd.

[37] Designated 'Lyston' on Christopher Saxton's map of Devon in Camden's *Britannia* (1607).

sons John (as did the poet, though probably under more understandable circumstances) compels belief for the inference that it was through the Denhams of Lifton[?] that the poet Sir John Denham could correctly claim western ancestry.[38]

At this point we may revert to consideration of coat-armour. The arms of the baronial Dinhams are variously described: 'Gules a fesse indented ermine' (Turner); 'Gules a fess dancetee' (Banks, *Baronage*); 'Gules, five fusils in fesse ermine' (Watson, *Complete Peerage*). The last, as the most precise, may be the most accurate, although all are manifest attempts to blazon the same arms. The arms of the goldsmith William Denham may be said to 'call cousins' with these arms in two regards: that the escutcheon of each consists of a field gules bearing a charge ermine; and that the charge on each is a pattern of diamond-shaped quadrilaterals. But despite the extreme visual likeness of the two shields, and the close similarity of a lozenge to a fusil, the two coats are technically quite distinct. Heraldry will regard five fusils in fesse to be as distinct from three lozenges (distributed in the pattern of an inverted triangle), as one charge can be from another of the same tincture, nor is the difference of a kind that constitutes a heraldic 'difference.' Yet a resemblance between the two coats is undeniable. The soundest explanation, it seems to me, is that William Denham believed himself to descend either from a cadet branch of the lordly Dinhams (but one clearly without claim to the extinct and dubitable barony) or from a bastard of one of the twelve successive Dinhams, some precursor of Sir Thomas Dinham. If William's forebears came from Lifton, such a supposition on his part might even embody truth. A circle of about 40-mile radius, having Lifton (three-and-a-half miles east of Launceston on trunk road A30) at its centre, would include five of the six manors historically held by the Dinhams: Hartland to the north, Cardinham (in Cornwall) to the west, Nutwell (near Exeter) to the east, Ilsington and Kingskerswell to the south-east. The baronial Dinhams seem to have resided chiefly in Exeter. The three ermine lozenges, in consequence, would have been derived by the obliging herald from the noble fusils in order to accommodate William's beliefs. Therefore it can be said that the Egham Denhams aspired to be thought of as related to or descended from the Devonshire Dinhams of high degree, and that there may be some truth to their claim. An attenuation of the same desire and a fading of family tradition accounts for Sir John Denham's assertion to Aubrey that 'his family was originally westerne.'

Some two or three of the ancient family of Dinham achieved distinction apart from the Barony. In 1347 Oliver Dynham, grandson of Josce de Dynham and cousin of Sir John de Dinham, contemporary holder of Hartland, was knighted by Edward III

[38] As a caution it must be noted that there seems to be a 'locality' called Lyston in St. Thomas Rural District—the rural environs of Exeter—although I have failed to find it on the Ordnance Survey one-inch map. While searching that map I was interested to notice the existence of a Mount Dinham, near St. Thomas Station, within the city of Exeter.

at the siege of Calais. And Sir John Denham the judge was not the first Denham to sit as a Baron of the Exchequer, nor his son the poet the first Denham K.B., for in 1332 Edward III created William de Denam, Baron of the Exchequer, a Knight Banneret of the Bath. Sir William's connexion with the Devonshire family is not clear, but he was at any rate the earliest noted of many William Denhams.

Still turned toward Devon we may now briefly consider the enigmatic conjunctions of Denhams with Tottells. About the year 1530 in Exeter, William Tothill, citizen, fishmonger, alderman, mayor-to-be (1552), became the father of a third son, Richard. By 1547 Richard Tottell had appeared in London as a stationer's apprentice, and by 1553 had set up as a printer of law books and intimate of a circle of leading lawyers at Lincoln's Inn. In 1557, as we have noticed, one of his four apprentices was Henry Denham. By 1562 Tottell was listed as a parishioner of St. Dunstan's in the West, as had been his Devonian predecessor, John Denham of Lifton. Tottell grew rich, bought up lands with a view to founding a new 'county' family, and set his son William, to the law. 'That the Tottells achieved their ambition is evident from the fact that William Tottell married Catherine Denham, daughter of Sir John Denham'—so, exasperatingly, and without citing sources, writes H. J. Byrom.[39] William Tottell was born in 1560, and so would scarcely have married before 1580. The only verifiable Sir John Denham whose daughter he might plausibly have married was the judge, only a year older than himself, and no adducible fact absolutely forbids fantasy from marrying a, say, 36-year-old William Tottell, in 1596, to a 16-year-old Catherine, daughter of John Denham by an unrecorded early marriage (Denham and Tottell would have read law together at Lincoln's Inn). The Sir John knighted at Rycote in 1616 seems out of the running, he having minor daughters still in 1626, when William Tottell, if he lived, was 66. But commonsense boggles at fantasy, and imagination jumps alternatively to the guess that Sir John might be *recte* Sir Thomas, recalling that one of Sir Thomas Dynham's five daughters was named 'Kateryn.' But Sir Thomas was probably born well back in the fifteenth century, and was certainly knighted 42 years before William Tottell's birth; moreover his granddaughter's husband was already dead by the time Tottell was 45. Kateryn Denham therefore would probably have been notably long in the tooth by any date at which she might plausibly have married William Tottell. But if the knighthood rather than the Christian name be waived, it becomes easier to supply William Tottell with a father-in-law named John Denham. It will be recalled that in 1589 Joan Denham, widow of William Denham of Thorpe, alluded to her 'cousin Tottell.' Occurring as it does immediately after mention of her 'daughter Morley,' this reference is probably to a woman, married to someone named Tottell. Ineluctably, therefore, the conviction arises that 'cousin

[39] 'Richard Tottell—His Life and Work,' *The Library*, 4th ser. VIII (1928), 17, n.

Tottell' is Catherine Tottell, *née* Denham, wife of William Tottell (who would, of course, strictly speaking be Joan Denham's husband's cousin, but such usage seems common in the period). We have already suggested that the father of William and Thomas Denham was one of the three brothers of Sir William Denham—John the draper, John, and James. A Catherine daughter to the younger John (or to Sir William, to exchange the name once more for the knighthood), would have been first-cousin to William Denham and yet conceivably of an appropriate age to marry William Tottell. Chronologically, however, even more satisfactory would be a Catherine who was daughter either to Thomas Denham or to an unrecorded brother of William and Thomas, but this would require extension of the term 'cousin' to include 'niece.' However impossible to define, connexion there yet must be between Denhams and Tottells. We end lamely by listing the coincidences: both families came from Devon; both emerge first in London at St. Dunstan's in the West; both were involved with the Stationers' Company, and a Denham was apprenticed to a Tottell; Joan Denham had a 'cousin Tottell'; William Tottell married a Catherine Denham.

Western Denhams continued to flourish modestly into the seventeenth century, but as a whole on a humbler scale than the Denhams of Egham. Between 1587 and 1698 no fewer than ten western Denhams, Dinhams, or Dynhams matriculated at Oxford. Six were from Devon, three from Cornwall, one from Somerset; appropriately, six matriculated at Exeter College, and another graduated from Exeter. Of the ten, six were named John. Generally speaking, the entry-books suggest a decline in the social standing of these Denhams: the only 'gent.' among them is the earliest of the lot, James Dinham of Devon who matriculated in 1586/7. Of the others four are designated *pleb.*, one as *pleb. p. p.* (*pauper puer*), and one—John Dinham of Blisland, Cornwall, in 1681—simply as *pauper*. Two are sons of clergymen, and in each case the father had preceded as a *pleb*. Four at least of these Denhams entered the Church. One of the latter, however, offers an exception to the general impression of humbleness: in 1603/4 John Dynham of Devon, aged 19, subsequently rector of St. Mary Major, Exeter, matriculated from Exeter College. His designation was exceptional: *arm. fil. nat. max.*, which (Mr. Evans informs me) signifies 'eldest son of an esquire.' Who could he have been?

About eighteen months earlier a quite distinct John Dynham, *arm. fil. nat. max.*, had matriculated at Oxford in 1602. He was about two years younger than the other (being 15 in 1602), came from Oxford City, and matriculated from Gloucester Hall. Oxford and Buckinghamshire, between them, contributed five Denhams to the University during this period, all five between 1601 and 1631. Two were Johns (1601, 1602), one a William (1606), one a Henry (1631), and one an Edward (1629). The father of Edward Dynham, *pleb.*, was named John, and Henry Dynham of Bucks (1631) was the son of John Dynham of Oxon., *gent.* (1601). Perhaps the John Denham knighted at Rycote in 1616 was connected with some of

these, but quite certainly he is not to be identified with any of them. Except through guesswork, however, none of these Denhams, Dynhams and Dinhams can be associated with the Denhams of Egham.[40]

Somewhere in the records of the sixteenth century, perhaps, the connexions among these families, whatever they may be, await discovery. No complete pedigree of the outstanding sixteenth-century Denhams can be drawn, but it is possible to sketch an outline on which the various known Denhams are placed within their proper or probable generations, and tentatively linked. From this a sense at least may be had of what the possible interconnexions are.

It has always been an easy matter to trace the extinction of the Egham Denhams; their origins only remain dark. And now we can only say that one great line of Denhams, descendants of Geoffrey, Sire de Dinan in Brittany, flourished long in Devonshire and finally petered out in the sixteenth century. Within the same century another line of Denhams, stemming from Devonshire, began its rise, tentatively asserted affiliation with the older line, quickly reached high distinction in Sir John Denham the judge and his son Sir John Denham, K.B., surveyor-general and poet, and vanished totally in the seventh generation.

[40] See Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses* . . . 1500–1714, I, 393, 438.