

◆ The origins of Thomas Turner

by Roger Davey

This paper investigates the family background of Thomas Turner (1729–93), shopkeeper (mercator) and diarist of East Hoathly, and supplements the work of previous writers on the subject. It identifies a number of relatives named in the diary as members of the Ovenden family of Boarshead, Rotherfield (his mother's connections), and shows how his father John Turner alias Fann rose from illegitimate beginnings in the Groombridge area of Sussex and Kent to be himself both a mercator at Groombridge (later Framfield), and the owner of a 74-acre farm at Chiddingstone Hoath in Kent.

The diarist's paternal grandmother, Sarah Fann, later married to Thomas Bennett, is shown to have been of a Frant yeoman family with London trading connections. His paternal grandfather cannot be certainly identified, but is likely to have been from a family of farmers in the Ashurst/Groombridge area of Kent, closely related to the Turners of Alksford Farm, Withyham, by whom John Turner may have been brought up. Links are demonstrated to the Constables and Combridges, earlier mercators at Groombridge, and to John Luck of Penshurst, from whom in 1712 John Turner inherited his farm.

INTRODUCTION

The diary of Thomas Turner (1729–93), village shopkeeper of East Hoathly, has become widely recognized as a classic of its kind, offering an entertaining and revealing portrait of the people amongst whom he lived, and recording his own thoughts and outlook with an attractive candour and perception. Surviving in the Stirling Library at Yale University as 111 notebooks dating from 1754 to 1765, it begins when he was aged 24 (3½ years after taking over the shop at East Hoathly), and ends with his second marriage at the age of 36.¹

The first extracts from the diary were published in these Collections in 1859, inspiring an article by Charles Dickens.² Later published extracts included an edition in 1925 by Turner's great-great-granddaughter Florence Maris Turner (Mrs Charles Lamb), who printed as an appendix Turner's autobiographical notes.³ These, coupled with references to living relatives in the diary itself, tell us as much about the family origins and connections of the diarist as Turner was able or chose to recount. The fullest edition of the diary, comprising roughly one-third of the original text, was edited by David Vaisey and published in 1984, and it is this which has opened up its riches to a much wider audience for study and pleasure.⁴

Vaisey's introduction analyses Turner's career as a shopkeeper (a mercator), including his sources of

supply in London and elsewhere. He also looks at the diarist's rôle in the East Hoathly community (notably as a parish officer dealing with the problems of the poor), and at his relationships with family and friends. The diaries (published and unpublished) particularly reveal Turner's troubled relations with his first wife Peggy, but as she became seriously ill and eventually died, so his attitude changed and he expressed misery and, later, loneliness. He took his family responsibilities seriously, for example caring periodically for his nephews John and Philip (sons respectively of his brother John and sister Elizabeth), but professed bewilderment and hurt when the support did not seem to be reciprocated — though the unpublished diary records the frequent mutual visiting and support of family and friends. Regular entries highlight his boredom when trade was slack, his predilection for sermons and other serious reading, an obsession with recording what he ate, and his lack of a head for the alcoholic drinks which he could not resist, but for whose effects he regularly castigated himself afterwards.

The various accounts of Turner over the years have pieced together quite a full picture of his own life. What has emerged much less clearly is the family background which is necessary to provide a full context for his life and views. This research was prompted in the first place by Dr Naomi Tadmor's work on the 18th-century family, and it was the

queries which this brought to light which led to the much fuller investigation which follows here.⁵ Details of dates and sources (including will references) are set out in Appendix 2.

THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Thomas Turner, by his own account, was born at Groombridge in Kent on 9 June 1729, the son of John Turner by his second wife Elizabeth Ovenden 'of Rotherfield'. By his father's first marriage in 1714 to Elizabeth Constable he had an elder half-brother John (born 1717, later a grocer and linen draper of Tunbridge Wells); a half-sister Elizabeth (born 1718, a 'vagabond' who had an illegitimate son Philip born in 1749); and a half-brother William (born 1721). Thomas himself was the eldest son of the second marriage, having further siblings Moses (1733–1812), Sarah or Sally (born 1738), and Richard or Dicky (1742–74). Sally married John Taylor, a tailor of Barcombe, at Tonbridge in 1774. Most of what is known of Thomas' own generation can be gleaned from editions of the diary, and the later history is not discussed here, except to add a few previously unrecorded details, and to throw light on the earlier family background.

Thomas records of his father John Turner that he removed from Groombridge to Framfield on 2 June 1735, to run a shop of which he had taken possession the previous April. John died at Framfield on 6 May 1752 'in the 63rd year of his age, . . . the best of Parents'. His widow Elizabeth survived him, dying on 1 April 1759 'in the 62nd year of her age'. She continued to run the shop at Framfield until shortly before her death, with the assistance of her son Moses after his completion in 1754 of an apprenticeship at Lewes.⁶ Moses remained the shopkeeper there for some years to come.

The death of Thomas' mother Elizabeth Turner fell within the period of the diary, which records on 5 April 1759 a gathering of relations to attend her funeral. These included 'my brother [Moses] and sister [Sally], brothers Dicky and John and William, my uncle Hill and cousin Molly, my aunt Moon, uncle Will. Ovendean and his wife and my cousin Tho. Ovendean'.⁷ Other relatives mentioned in the diary included his cousin Charles Hill, his 'aunt Ovendean' of Boarshead [Rotherfield], his uncle Edward Bennett, and his cousins John and Moses Bennett. Their identification is important in seeking the family background and of those noted here, all

except the Bennetts can be accounted for straightforwardly as relations on Thomas' mother's side (the Ovendens).⁸ This connection is therefore described first.

THE OVENDEN FAMILY

The Ovenden family was a prolific one in the parish of Rotherfield and neighbourhood. A number of cousins lived and held lands there at the same time as Turner's immediate ancestors. Elizabeth Ovenden, Thomas Turner's mother, was baptized there on 27 December 1697, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Ovenden. They had been married by licence at Framfield in 1695, he 'of Rotherfield', and she as Elizabeth Page ('Paige') of Mayfield.⁹ Elizabeth was their second child; she was married, 'of Speldhurst', to John Turner at Pembury in Kent on 18 January 1728.

Thomas Ovenden, the diarist's grandfather, died in 1749 at the age of about 78, when Turner was aged 19. He had been baptized at Rotherfield in 1670, the son and second known child of Thomas the elder and Joan Ovenden. The father died five months later, leaving the baby as his heir. A 1674 rental of the manor of Rotherfield best indicates the extent of the lands at this period, which were described as of 'the heirs of Thomas Ovenden', and as comprising an 'old freehold' house at Boarshead Street with 24 acres of land, and a further 20 or so acres nearby.¹⁰ The lands included the six acres of copyhold land ('Wardfield' or 'Wadefield') which are noted below as passing to William Ovenden in 1751. The extent of the lands occupied with the core property evidently varied from time to time, but Thomas Ovenden appears from rate books to have continued to farm a fair-sized estate at Boarshead until 1730 when, at the age of about 60, he passed most of them over to his eldest son Thomas. As indicated below, the latter predeceased his father in 1740, having himself acquired in c. 1729 an additional estate at The Rocks, Boarshead, which had sometime been in the hands of Ovenden relatives.¹¹

Turner's grandmother Elizabeth Ovenden, *née* Page, died in 1733 ('Elizabeth wife of Thomas Ovenden'), and in the following year Thomas remarried at Withyham a widow, Mary Slaughterford ('Slaterford'). Named in his will of 1742 as his 'now wife Mary', she in fact died a year before he did, in 1748. The will names in addition Thomas' daughter Ann, wife of Thomas Moon of Rotherfield, his grandson Thomas Ovenden of Boarshead, and his

son and executor William.

Of the children, Elizabeth's elder brother Thomas Ovenden (baptized in 1696), Thomas Turner's uncle, is first recorded in Rotherfield rate books as 'Thomas Ovenden the younger' in September 1730. It would appear that he had then taken possession of the greater part of his father's lands in the Boarshead area, occupying them until his death in 1740 'at Boarsheadstrete'. Administration of his goods was granted to his widow Dorothy, and the inventory was valued at £353 15s. 3d. The Rotherfield manorial court book, in presenting his death as a freeholder, described him as 'gent., of Boreshead', late owner of the Rocks Farm.¹² By Dorothy, this Thomas had three children, of whom another Thomas (1733–91) was referred to by Thomas Turner in the diary. Apart from attending the 1759 funeral as 'my cousin Tho. Ovendean', he attracted the comment in 1765: 'I think I never saw a more stupid young fellow in my life than my cousin Thomas Ovendean; his discourse is one continued flow of oaths almost without any intermission'.¹³ He inherited his father's estate in due course, but appears to have remained unmarried. At his death in 1791, 'of Boarshead, farmer', his estate passed to his niece Elizabeth Dadswell (*née* Taylor) 'wife of Edward Okill Dadswell of Crowborough schoolmaster'.¹⁴ It is probable that the 'aunt Ovendean' of Boarshead mentioned in the diary in 1756, and later as a port of call for tea on journeys to and from Tunbridge Wells, was Dorothy, widow of the Thomas who died in 1740; she continued to pay the rates on her husband's estate until at least 1761, and is probably the Dorothy Ovenden, widow, who was buried at Rotherfield in 1784.

The third child of Thomas and Elizabeth Ovenden was Ann, baptized in 1700. She was married at Lewes in 1730 to Thomas Moon of Mayfield, was named in her father's will of 1742 as his daughter Ann wife of Thomas Moon of Rotherfield, and was the 'aunt Moon' of the 1759 funeral. The couple lived first at Mayfield, where three children were baptized between 1731 and 1734, and then at Rotherfield, where a further three children were baptized between 1737 and 1742. Thomas Moon was buried at Rotherfield in 1768 as 'Thomas Moon of Owlsbery' (Owlsbury, a farm to the south of Crowborough), and his widow may have been buried there in 1793, 'Ann widow of Thomas Moon'. This would put her in her early 90s at death, but although there were other Thomas Moons in the parish, none of them seems to have

had a wife named Ann.

William Ovenden (baptized 1703) was the fourth child, 'uncle Will. Ovendean' of the 1759 funeral, who attended with his wife. By 1733 he was the owner of a 50-acre farm at Salters Green, partly (the house and 20 acres) in Mayfield, and partly in Rotherfield.¹⁵ His marriage (to Elizabeth) has not been traced, but five children were baptized at Mayfield between 1740 and 1748, including his son and heir William (1740–1809). The latter would marry Mary Wood at Mayfield in 1768, and brought up a large family at Salters Green. William Ovenden the elder was buried at Mayfield in 1779, and his widow then paid rates until 1789. Under the will of his father Thomas, William inherited a messuage and 14 acres of freehold land 'called the Old Boareshead where I [Thomas] now dwell'. He was also admitted at the Rotherfield manorial court in April 1751 to the copyhold tenancy of six acres of native (bond or copyhold) land of the farlingate of Wade (at Boarshead).¹⁶ His death was presented at the Rotherfield court on 30 April 1780.¹⁷ Parish rating records show that the Boarshead premises were occupied by tenants.

The last child of Thomas and Elizabeth was Mary (baptized 1706). She was married at Frant in 1733 to Richard Hill, farmer of Little Horsted. 'My uncle Hill' attended the 1759 funeral with his daughter Molly (Mary, aged 9), and this family, together with Richard's son Dr Charles Hill of Yalding in Kent, a sometime naval surgeon, is mentioned several times in the diary.¹⁸ Charles, baptized in 1734, had first been apprenticed to Thomas Frewen, a surgeon of Rye, for 7 years from January 1749; his meanness was deplored by Turner in 1764.¹⁹ The families were on regular visiting terms, and David Vaisey comments on the relationship (though he mistakenly says that the connection was through the Constable family).²⁰ Turner's aunt Mary died at Little Horsted in 1745, after childbirth; her husband Richard died there in 1774, his will being witnessed by Moses Turner and his wife Susannah. He farmed at what is now Wicklands Farm, Little Horsted, occupying with it the neighbouring Old Farm. William Turner, the diarist's half-brother, was a servant to Richard Hill there during the diary period.

THE GROOMBRIDGE AREA

Prior to 1735, John Turner *alias* Fann, the diarist's father, lived at Groombridge, and the topography

of the area is important for the account which follows. Groombridge was a village built up on both sides of the ancient crossing of the river there (a tributary of the Medway), which forms the county boundary between Sussex and Kent at this point. Old Groombridge, in Kent, was the principal community until the last hundred years or so, with a 17th-century chapel. It was located within the parish of Speldhurst, and register entries are found at the parish church. Baptisms of John Turner's children are recorded at Speldhurst ('of Groombridge') in 1718, 1721 and 1729. Reference will also be made below to Rusthall in the parish of Speldhurst, a small community lying round or near Rusthall Common, about 1½ kilometres west of Tunbridge Wells.

Tunbridge Wells developed as a fashionable spa town from the later 17th century onwards and, no doubt in the 18th century came to be regarded as a convenient centre for commerce, education, socializing, and the like, for neighbouring parishes in both Kent and Sussex.²¹ It is clear from the account below that local landowners had holdings on both sides of the county boundary, and that the inhabitants of Sussex parishes lying to the north of Ashdown Forest and the High Weald watershed would have seen themselves in many respects as part of a natural district which extended into neighbouring Kent parishes. These included (besides Speldhurst) Ashurst, Cowden, Penshurst, Chiddingstone, Hever, Bidborough, Tonbridge, and Southborough, many of which feature below.

The Sussex part of Groombridge lay in Withyham parish, though lands immediately to the east of the settlement were in Rotherfield parish until 1949. Reference will be made below to Hendal and Alksford Farms in Withyham, homes of the Constable and Turner families respectively, which lie within 1½ kilometres of Groombridge. Hartfield parish lies to the west, and Frant, Rotherfield and Wadhurst to the east.

JOHN TURNER ALIAS FANN

By contrast with the story of Turner's mother's family, that of his father is complex, and there are questions about it to which definitive answers cannot yet be given. No family diaries or letters are known to survive, so the investigation had to proceed by putting together references from a number of disparate sources, of which one of the most important comprises the title deeds of the farm

which John and Thomas Turner owned at Chiddingstone in Kent. These are preserved in the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone among records of the Streatfeild family of Chiddingstone and Uckfield, the purchasers of the farm in 1799.²² The diarist had previously sold the property in 1777.

From the documents, the following account can be put together of the life of John Turner otherwise (or *alias*) Fann (this was the way that he signed himself in his will, and also as he appears in some documents, mainly after 1734; at other times he was simply 'John Turner'). According to Thomas Turner, his father died at Framfield on 6 May 1752 'in his 63rd year'. His baptism has not been found, but it now seems clear from tracing his relatives (especially the Bennetts named by Thomas in the diary) that John's *alias* name derived from his illegitimate birth, somewhere between May 1689 and May 1690 (assuming that Thomas stated the age correctly). The vexed question of his Turner father is further discussed below, but his mother was evidently Sarah Fann (*see* below), born in 1665 of Frant parents, and thus aged about 24 when John was born. It seems likely that she was in service in the vicinity of Groombridge at the time, and on 30 July 1693 'of Withyham, maiden' she was married at Hartfield by licence to Thomas Bennett, a weaver, also 'of Withyham'.²³

The first specific reference so far found to John himself is as 'John Turner *alias* Vann of Groombridge'. This occurs in July 1709 in the will of John Luck of Penshurst (Kent), yeoman. Luck died there in 1712, and his will was proved shortly afterwards. He appears to have been an elderly ('aged') bachelor, the owner of half a dozen farms in the neighbourhood, in the Kent parishes of Penshurst, Pembury, Tonbridge, Tudeley, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Chiddingstone, and in the Sussex parish of Frant. He named about 30 beneficiaries in his will, including some 'kinsmen' and 'nephews'. These mostly received sums of money, but one of the principal inheritors of his lands was John, described as above. No reason was stated for a connection between the two. Peter Rabson, a kinsman of Luck who was living with him in 1709, was to pay John an annuity of £5 until the age of 24, and then deliver to him possession of Luck's farm at Chiddingstone. This was the farm which remained with the diarist's family until 1777, and John would have taken possession of it in about 1714, the year of his first marriage. He attended the manorial court of

Chiddingstone Burghurst in 1717 to pay a relief of 1s. 3d. due on Luck's death.²⁴

In 1712 'John Turner' was a witness to the will of Francis Combridge, mercer of Groombridge in the parish of Speldhurst, a significant connection in view of the fact that he himself would be so described in later documents. Combridge was the successor to Constable mercers there (*see below*), and was the husband of Elizabeth Constable. It was to her near relative Elizabeth Constable 'of Withyham' that John Turner (also 'of Withyham') was married by licence dated 10 March 1714.²⁵ The marriage itself has not been traced so far. Elizabeth was born at Withyham on 20 January 1690, the daughter of William Constable of Hendl Farm and his wife Jane (*née* Mills).

John's stepfather Thomas Bennett died at Withyham late in 1714, his will making no mention of John. His mother, Sarah Bennett, continued to live at Withyham until her own death in 1721, when 'John Turner of Speldhurst yeoman' was a surety for the grant of administration — an office normally performed by a close relative or friend. Administration of her estate was granted to Sarah's son Thomas Bennett, and the other surety was William Constable of Withyham. This entry thus demonstrated an important link between Sarah Bennett, her two sons Thomas Bennett and John Turner, and the latter's brother-in-law William Constable of Hendl.

It seems probable that John and Elizabeth Turner were resident at Groombridge until her death (between 1721 and 1728, date unknown) and his eventual removal to Framfield in 1735, though their first child, John, born on 3 January 1717, was not baptized at Speldhurst. The other two children by this marriage were born and baptized there, however: Elizabeth in 1718, and William in 1721.

On 18 January 1728, John Turner 'of All Saints, Lewes' was married at Pembury (Kent) to Elizabeth Ovenden 'of Speldhurst'. The Ovenden connection was discussed above. It is not clear whether Turner had actually moved to Lewes after the death of his first wife, or whether this was a temporary address for some reason, but by 9 June 1729, when their son Thomas was born, the couple were certainly again 'of Groombridge'.²⁶ Moses was also born there, on 29 June 1733.

John evidently saw himself as a man of status locally, since in 1731 he commissioned a map of his farm at Chiddingstone, which survives among the Streatfeild papers at Maidstone.²⁷ An attractive

depiction on parchment, it includes a small 'bird's eye view' of the farmhouse and outbuildings. Its title reads: 'A Survey and Mapp of a Farm Lyeing in the Parish of Chiddingstone in Kent Belonging to Mr John Turner: By John Bowra at Groombridg in Sussex. 1731'; and the land area was summarized as Plain Land 58a. 3r. 16p., Wood Land 10a. 3r. 21p., and Ruff [rough] or Wast Land 4a. 3r. 0p. — a total of 74a. 1r. 37p. There were two John Bowras, mapmakers, who worked mainly on the Kent side of the county boundary, many of whose maps are in the Centre for Kentish Studies. The surveyor in this case was evidently the elder, who paid rates as occupier of a house in Withyham between 1725 and 1739, but who had children baptized at Speldhurst between 1720 and 1733.²⁸ Clearly he was a close neighbour and acquaintance of Turner.

The deeds of Little Buckhurst Farm show that it was otherwise called Walnut Tree Cross Farm, and lay at Chiddingstone Hoath, less than a kilometre east of Mark Beech, near the point at which the parish boundary of Chiddingstone meets those of Hever and Cowden. The Turners evidently never occupied it themselves, being always primarily shopkeepers elsewhere. Jeremiah Dives was the occupier by 1717, and was replaced by James Knight in 1736.²⁹ He was visited by Thomas Turner in 1764, and is mentioned on other occasions. The 1736 lease survives with the deeds, showing that Knight leased the farm from 'John Turner otherwise Fann of Framfield mercer', for 21 years at an annual rent of £26 5s. 0d.³⁰ In attending the Chiddingstone Burghurst court to pay quitrents in 1764, the diarist would (as ever) take the opportunity to enjoy the associated lunch at the Castle Inn.³¹

No evidence has been found of a settlement on John's first marriage, to Elizabeth Constable, though it is likely enough that there was one. In any event, it would appear that no settlement was made on the second marriage, to Elizabeth Ovenden in 1728, since on 18 May 1734 John appointed a post-nuptial trustee, Thomas Maynard of Withyham, tanner (of Corseley, just outside Groombridge), who was commissioned to pay to Elizabeth after John's death an annuity of £12 out of the farm at Chiddingstone. He also entered a bond with Maynard to divide the sum of £300 between such children of the marriage as should be living at his death. These documents survive among the farm deeds at Maidstone.³² John evidently made an earlier will than the surviving one of 1752, since the bundle also contains a receipt

dated 26 October 1745 signed by John Turner the younger (the mercer of Tunbridge Wells) for £50 advanced to him by his father against expectations under his will. In the event, all of these earlier arrangements were superseded by the 1752 will (below).

The diarist recorded that his father took over his new shop at Framfield on 23 April 1735, and removed there with his family on 2 June following. He succeeded there John Constable and his wife Avis, the former being the brother of Turner's first wife Elizabeth. By a document dated 9 December 1735 another brother, William Constable, now of Westerham, Kent, signified the discharge of all claims in respect of his brother's shop, goods and house, acknowledging the payment of £152 11s. 1d.³³

John Turner's reason for removing to Framfield is not stated, and it may have been simply a question of prospects for better trade, coupled with a suitable business becoming available in the family. However, it is noteworthy that from 1733 Groombridge was gaining notoriety as the headquarters of a gang of smugglers who operated from Romney Marsh through the village to London. The principal commodity was tea. The two leaders were from Groombridge, namely Robert Moreton and John Bowra (the younger surveyor of that name), who were involved in an incident in which 30 armed men with 50 horses were tracked by Riding Officers from Iden to Stonecrouch near Flimwell. The officers were beaten and overpowered in the ensuing struggle, taken prisoner to Groombridge, and eventually released after their guns had been smashed.

According to an informant calling himself 'Goring', Moreton and Bowra sold in London, during the winter of 1735/36, 3000 lb. of tea per week, helping to feed a substantial black market there. Bowra was captured and tried in 1737 when the gang was caught landing tea at Fairlight, but he was acquitted, and it was 1749 before the Groombridge Gang was finally tried at Rochester, and broken up. 'Goring' reported that Bowra had built himself a £500 house at Groombridge out of his profits. Local lawlessness was aided by the fact that the Groombridge Place estate was in Chancery in 1734, following the death without male heirs of the last member of the Packer family, and the locality must suddenly have become a difficult and threatening one for a (presumably) law-abiding trader.³⁴

Transactions relating to acquisition of the Framfield shop are recorded in the court books of

the manor of Framfield, of which it was copyhold, and confirm the diary account: on 10 June 1735 John Turner *alias* Fann was admitted tenant, on the surrender of John Constable and Avis his wife, of one messuage or tenement and half one rood of land late Humphreys lying near the churchyard of Framfield now in the occupation of John Turner *alias* Fann, abutting to the churchyard aforesaid towards the south, to the footway leading to the churchyard aforesaid towards the east, to the way leading to the vicaridge house of Framfield towards the west, and to the lands now or late of John Humphrey towards the north.

He paid a fine of 3d., and surrendered the property to the uses to be expressed in his will.³⁵ The Framfield poor rate book records his tenancy, and makes it clear that until 1740 he occupied with the house 'Willetts land' (as John Constable had previously).³⁶

In 1738 Elizabeth, John's daughter, was apprenticed to a Westerham mantuamaker (her Constable uncle there may have helped in this),³⁷ and on 17 August 1738 his daughter Sarah (Sally) was born at Framfield, to be followed by the last child, Richard, in May 1742. A useful reference helping to confirm the Fann/Bennett link is found in April 1741 when John Turner's mother's brother, Moses Fann, formerly a mercer of Sevenoaks but now a hop merchant in the City of London, made 'my cousin William Turner son of John Turner' a contingent beneficiary of his will. This was the diarist's half-brother, then aged about 20. Another potential beneficiary in the same circumstances was John Turner's half-brother Moses Bennett, weaver of Rusthall, Speldhurst (*see* below).

The eldest Turner son, John, mercer of Tunbridge Wells, was married at Speldhurst in 1745 to Margaret Newman, receiving four days later the sum of £50 from his father as an advance against expectations under his will. Margaret died in 1747, and 'about 15 months later', according to Thomas' biographical notes, the younger John remarried. His new wife was his servant Mary Bennett (who had been baptized at Bidborough in 1716). It is not known whether she was related to the Bennetts of Withyham. Their young son John, baptized at Tunbridge Wells in 1752, was left at Framfield with his grandmother, or at East Hoathly with Thomas Turner, on various occasions after 1756.³⁸ From 26 March 1749, Moses Turner was apprenticed to Isaac Hook, a Lewes tailor, for seven years.³⁹

Unlike the diarist, John Turner does not seem to have held a parish office, either in Speldhurst or Framfield. He did, however, attend the Easter vestry meetings, and on several occasions appended his signature as a parishioner approving the accounts. The Framfield overseers' accounts show that he supplied goods for the use of the poor, presenting his bill annually between 1737 and 1752 for payment.⁴⁰ He was preceded in this arrangement by John Constable, and his widow continued it from 1753. Unfortunately none of the original vouchers survive.

The death of John Turner *alias* Fann in 1752 was presented at the Framfield manorial court on 25 October 1753. Thereupon, his son Thomas Turner *alias* Fann of East Hoathly shopkeeper appeared and exhibited his father's will dated 1 May 1752, and under its terms was admitted copyhold tenant himself, though his mother Elizabeth retained the occupancy and business. Thomas likewise surrendered the property to the uses of his will. This appears to have been the only occasion on which the diarist was named as '*alias* Fann'.⁴¹

The will of John Turner *otherwise* Fann of Framfield shopkeeper was proved by Thomas Turner (*sic*) before the South Malling peculiar court on 28 August 1777, 25 years after his father's death. Under its terms John bequeathed to his wife Elizabeth his farm called Buckhurst near Renleys Hoath in the parish of Chiddingstone, Kent. This was charged with the payment of various sums of money, namely £150 to his son John Turner *alias* Fann, £300 equally between his children Thomas, Moses, Richard and Sarah, an annuity of 50s. to his daughter Elizabeth, and an annuity of £5 to Elizabeth's natural son Philip Turner until the age of 14 (after which he should be assisted to obtain an apprenticeship). The premises at Framfield were bequeathed to his widow Elizabeth for life, with reversion to Thomas and his heirs; they were charged with an annuity of £5 to John's other son William.

The will of John's widow Elizabeth, dated 19 October 1754, was also proved on 28 August 1777. A brief affair, it left the farm at Chiddingstone between her four children, Thomas, Moses, Sarah and Richard, to hold as tenants in common, who were instructed to honour the charges imposed under John's will. She added a further personal bequest of £6 to her husband's 'daughter by a former wife', Elizabeth, now described as 'wife of Archibald Blare'. Thomas, in commenting on its provisions for

tenancy in common, expressed the hope that he and his brothers and sister 'may live in peace and unity among ourselves'.⁴² Probate of the two wills, long neglected, had finally to be obtained in order to provide a satisfactory legal title to the Chiddingstone property, on the occasion of its sale.

Prior to this, in 1774, Richard Turner, one of the owners, had died childless and intestate, whereupon his portion passed in equal shares to his brothers Thomas (the diarist) and Moses according to the Kentish custom of gavelkind. Then in 1775 Moses Turner and his sister Sarah (Sally), by now the wife of John Taylor, conveyed their shares to Thomas — Moses receiving £410 and the Taylors £250. Thomas mortgaged Little Buckhurst in the following May to secure £300, the mortgagee being John Morris the younger, mason of All Saints, Lewes. Finally, by indentures of lease and release dated 28 and 29 August 1777, Thomas conveyed the premises to John Everest of Chiddingstone for the sum of £1050. On Everest's death the property would pass to his daughter Ann and her husband William Camfield, tanner of Groombridge, Kent, who (with John Morris to complete the title) conveyed it in April 1799 to Henry Streatfeild of Chiddingstone and Richard Thomas Streatfeild of Uckfield. It is among their extensive papers at Maidstone that the deeds and plan of the farm are now preserved.

THE CONSTABLE FAMILY

On 10 March 1714 a licence was issued for the marriage of John Turner, Thomas' father, to his first wife Elizabeth Constable (*see above*). Both parties were 'of Withyham', but the marriage itself has not been located so far. As noted above, the couple were subsequently of Groombridge in Speldhurst parish. Although the diarist was probably unrelated to the Constables, their immediate history is relevant to the story and identity of John Turner.

Elizabeth Constable was born at Withyham on 20 January 1690, the daughter of William and Jane (formerly Mills) Constable who were married at Withyham in 1682. Their other children were William (1683), John (1686), Philip (1688), Richard (1692), Henry (1694), Ann (1697), Jane (1701), and Thomas (1704). William the father was described in the baptism register as a 'yeoman' in 1704. In the poor rate book, which begins in 1714, he was listed as paying rates for Henda Farm and other associated lands; he was buried at Withyham in 1717 as 'Mr

William Constable senior'. His will, dated in 1705, refers to his wife Jane and to all his nine children, of whom William (the eldest son) was to inherit his father's lands in the parishes of Speldhurst, Withyham and West Hoathly.

The younger William Constable is shown in the Withyham rate book as occupying all his father's lands until 1723, after which Hendal passed to Robert Avis (remaining in that family for some years); the remaining lands at Withyham were likewise occupied by others after 1728. This William Constable, John Turner's brother-in-law, was 'of Westerham (Kent), yeoman' by 1735, and it was from his brother John Constable, owner since 1720, and his wife Avis (whom he married at Framfield in 1723), that Turner acquired the shop and business at Framfield.⁴³ John Constable was Turner's near contemporary (born 1686), and may have followed a very similar path into the trade of mercer.

Hendal Farm in Withyham, otherwise the manor and demesne land of Hendal or Hendoll, had been held leasehold of the Earls of Dorset since the early 17th century, when Nicholas Constable, great-grandfather of John Turner's wife, was the tenant. He purchased freehold lands at Withyham from the Earl and other owners.⁴⁴ Nicholas died in 1636, when the tenancy passed to his eldest son William Constable (died 1670). Among records from Knole House in Kent there survives a 21-year lease dated 17 May 1651 of Hendal Farm, comprising 150 acres, to this William Constable, for an annual rent of £50 and two capons.⁴⁵ William had three sons (besides daughters), of whom the eldest (Elizabeth's father William) succeeded to Hendal and the associated lands. The second son, John (died 1719) owned substantial estates in Etchingham and Burwash, which were added to by his only surviving son William Constable of Shoyswell (died 1743). This William's will shows him as owning manors and farms of several hundred acres in the parishes of Burwash, Etchingham, Ticehurst, Salehurst, Brightling, Bexhill, Hooe, and Wadhurst.⁴⁶

A close Constable relative, not certainly identifiable because of gaps in local registers in the Civil War period, was Richard Constable, mercer of Groombridge in Speldhurst, who in his will of 1708 would name John Constable of Etchingham as his 'kinsman' and overseer. He himself had been named overseer in 1666 of the will of William Constable of Hendal (died 1670), when he was first described as 'mercier of Groombridge'. There survives a draft

conveyance of 1694, in which Richard, still 'of Groombridge, mercer', conveyed to William Constable of Hendal a house and land by the bridge at Groombridge (Kent) in order to pay off mortgages totalling at least £300.⁴⁷ At his death in 1709 he was buried at Speldhurst as 'Mr Richard Constable' and his will identifies him as now mercer of Rusthall. His son Richard had evidently taken over the Groombridge business, but he died unmarried in 1702, described in turn in his will as 'mercier' there. The elder Richard at death lived in a property called the 'Hand and Sceptre', and owned a timber yard at Mount Zion, Tunbridge Wells, as well as a farm in the parish of Tonbridge. A particularly interesting reference in his will is the bequest to his youngest son William of all 'my Bookes that doe any wayes belong or appertaine to the Law, and all my dictionaries, Mapps and Wast papers'. His brother Henry Constable (died 1709) was also a mercer, at Penshurst. It may be, if John Turner started his career as a mercer with the Constable business at Groombridge, that he owed part of his education to Richard.

Elizabeth Constable, daughter of Richard Constable the elder, was married to Francis Combridge from Coldharbour, Penshurst, and by 1702 already had two children, who were mentioned in the will of Richard Constable the younger. Francis was 'of Groombridge, mercer' in his will of 1712, and was a relative of John Luck, John Turner's benefactor in 1709 (*see below*). It seems that Combridge must have taken over the business there, directing the sale of 'all my shopp goods merchandize and wares thereunto belonging with my book debts bills and outdoor stock' in order to meet his debts. John Turner witnessed the will, no doubt being present in the house or shop when it was made, and would seem to have taken over the business thereafter (though whether as owner or tenant is not clear at present).

THE FANN/BENNETT CONNECTION

It was the discovery of a licence dating to 1693 for the marriage of Thomas Bennett and Sarah Fann, both of Withyham, which gave the first clue to the identification of John Turner's mother. It brought together the parish where John was first recorded in the early stages of research, his '*alias*' name of Fann (used mainly after 1734, though subsequently it would also be found recorded as 'Vann' in 1709),

and the surname of relatives recorded by Thomas Turner in his diary.

Following up the marriage entry, the Withyham register was searched for the family of Thomas and Sarah Bennett, and yielded baptisms for William (1694), Sarah (1696), Moses (1700), Edward (1702), and Ann (1705). There was also a son Thomas, perhaps born in 1698. Thomas the father was described as a weaver in 1702, and as a labourer in 1705. He was listed in the first surviving Withyham poor rate assessment of 1714 as occupying two small properties, valued at £2 a year each — one 'his own land', and the other 'the coppinghold'; he was buried at Withyham in December 1714.

Thomas Bennett 'of Withyham, weaver' left a will, dated a month before his death. It mentioned his six children (though not John Turner), and made provision for his house and land to pass to his wife Sarah for life, with reversion to the son William. The will was witnessed by William Constable (of Hendl), and by Nathaniel Turner (*see below*). Sarah Bennett, his widow and the mother of John Turner, was buried at Withyham on 19 October 1721. Although she left no will, administration of her estate was granted in December to her son Thomas, the additional sureties for the bond being William Constable of Withyham yeoman, and John Turner of Speldhurst yeoman (as noted above).

The Withyham rate book records that 'widow Bennett' paid the rates on one of the £2 properties (the one formerly Thomas' 'own land'), until her death after which various combinations of her sons Thomas, Moses and Edward are listed until 1727. Edward Bennett then appears as sole tenant until 1749, with the last entry showing the occupation passing to one Henry Weller. It has not proved possible to locate the Bennett house on a modern map, but it was assessed in 1747 as having 14 lights (windows), and was in the same general area as Hendl and Alksford Farms.⁴⁸ There may have been other Bennett relatives working with Thomas: the Speldhurst register records the marriage in 1703 of a John Bennett, weaver of Withyham. The 'coppinghold' is further discussed below.

Three Bennetts are mentioned by Thomas Turner in the diary. One of them, John Turner's half-brother Edward Bennett, was twice married. By his first wife Sarah, who died at Withyham in 1745, he had one recorded daughter (Anne) in 1734, but after 1749 he evidently removed to Speldhurst parish, where as a widower he married Mary Goodman in 1757

and had two further children, including 'Sarah Fann' Bennett in 1765. Thomas Turner refers to him as 'uncle Ed. Bennett' in an unpublished diary entry dated 21 February 1757, in the context of Edward's visit to Turner's mother at Framfield to 'receive the principal and interest [£35, plus £2 7s. 6d.] of a bond due from my mother to Charles Tanner'.

Edward's brother Moses Bennett is named as a weaver on various occasions in local records. He was rated for his parents' property at Withyham from 1723–26 (with Edward in 1724), but in September 1727 was the subject of a settlement certificate from Withyham to Speldhurst.⁴⁹ As 'weaver of Withyham' he was granted administration of his brother Thomas' estate in 1728, and in 1729, with John Bennett, he witnessed the will of John Fann of Rusthall Common, Speldhurst, cooper.⁵⁰ Moses and his first wife Elizabeth had four children baptized at Speldhurst between 1730 and 1740. In 1741 Moses Bennett 'of Rusthall, weaver' was named as contingent legatee of Moses Fann of London (*see below*). His wife Elizabeth died in 1742, and Moses would in 1755 remarry a widow, Ruth Soane. Of the children, Moses (born 1732) and John (born 1737) seem to have lived in the Rusthall area during their lifetimes, John dying in 1790 at the age of 53, and Moses in 1791, aged 58. The brothers were the other Bennett relatives mentioned in Thomas Turner's diary, as his 'cousins'. In 1758 John was commissioned by Turner to buy for him at Tunbridge Wells a copy of Budgen's account of the 1729 'hurricane' in Sussex.⁵¹ The brothers visited the Turners at Framfield and East Hoathly on various occasions.

Sarah Fann, the diarist's grandmother, was baptized at Frant on 27 July 1665, the eldest of the eight or nine children of William Fann and his wife Sarah (*née* Gutsall). Her grandfather, Moses Fann of Frant, had died in 1663, leaving a will of 1654 which referred to four surviving children: three daughters, and his son William (born in 1635). William, with his mother Elizabeth, was heir to Moses' specified lands in Speldhurst (partly in the vicinity of Langton Green), and to the residuary estate. Moses' relatively unusual Christian name seems to have been perpetuated among a number of descendants, not least the diarist's brother.

William Fann, Sarah's father, who was buried at Frant in 1705 (preceded six days earlier by his wife Sarah), bequeathed his own lands to two sons, William (born 1673) and Moses (born 1678). William was to inherit the lands (probably a few

parcels only) in Speldhurst which his father had received from his own father, as well as the unspecified lands in Frant, while Moses was to receive a messuage and lands called Palmers in Penshurst. His daughter Sarah (now Bennett, though the marriages of children were not mentioned) received the sum of £40, chargeable on the Speldhurst land. Although the will is a long one, little clue is given to the size of the estate, or to any other sources of William's income. His son, William, appears to have remained at Frant until his death in 1725, after which no Fann entries are found in the registers there. The family property in Frant has not so far been identified.

Sarah's other brother, Moses Fann, has some relevance to the story of the diarist's father. Born in 1678, he was married in 1703 at Sevenoaks in Kent, where eight children were born between 1704 and 1720. In 1717 he was admitted to the tenancy of a copyhold tenement and 20 acres of land near Ham Bridge at Withyham, when he was described as a 'mercier of Sevenoaks'. He succeeded a James Gutsall, who may have been a relative.⁵² However, by the time that he made his will, in April 1741 (it was proved a month later), he was described as Moses Fan (*sic*), a 'hop merchant of the parish of St. Stephen in Coleman Street in the City of London'. Three daughters were living at this time, one unmarried, and the other two married, one to a London weaver and the other to a citizen and apothecary of London. The two marriages had taken place (in 1734 and 1738) in the parish of St Benet, Paul's Wharf, between St Paul's Cathedral and the River Thames, which may indicate Moses' residence in those years.

Moses described five farms or properties in his will, at Withyham, Penshurst, Horsmonden, and Speldhurst and Penshurst (two properties lying between the two parishes), which were to descend to his wife and daughters with specified remainders. However, he also made provision for the failure of his issue, when two of the properties should descend to 'Moses Bennett, weaver, living at Rusthall in the parish of Speldhurst' (his nephew), and two should be shared between 'my sister Bayley's' two daughters and 'my cousin William Turner son of John Turner' (his great-nephew, the diarist's half-brother). This last entry is revealing because it implies a continuing connection into the 1740s between John Turner and his London uncle, and it suggests that Moses Fann, as a mercier himself, may have had a trade, as well as a personal, connection with John. The occupier

of Moses Fann's Withyham farm at the time of his death was John Hall, whom the diarist (with his brother Moses) visited in 1758 when passing through the parish.⁵³

Indexes to baptisms and marriages in London show that other individuals named Moses Fann were resident there in the later 17th and early 18th century, particularly in the Stepney area, and it may be that Sarah Bennett's brother, in moving to London, was joining relatives already in trade there. This connection could probably be researched further.

JOHN LUCK OF PENSHURST

Up to this point the story proved reasonably clear, though much work was involved in uncovering it. Two major issues remained unresolved, however: the identity of John Turner's father, and the connection between John Turner *alias* Fann and his benefactor John Luck of Spring Hill, Penshurst, who died in 1712. The issues could well be linked.

John Luck's background can be traced. It places him fairly within the definition of at least 'yeoman', and relates him to other local families of similar or gentry status in the Penshurst area, notably the Streatfeilds of Chiddingstone, Hever and Uckfield, and the Combridges, Woodgates and Spencers of Penshurst (among others). It is not possible to go into these relationships in detail here, but most of them can be worked out from pedigrees and narratives in G. and G. M. W. Woodgate, *A History of the Woodgates of Stonewall Park and Summerhill in Kent and their Ancestors* (Wisbech, 1910).

John Luck's paternal grandparents were William Luck of Spring Hill, who died in 1596, and Clemence Streatfeild. It was William who in 1572⁵⁴ first bought the nucleus (15 acres) of the farm at Chiddingstone which would be inherited by John Turner in 1712. William's wife was of the prominent family whose members would own both Chiddingstone and Hever Castles in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their son, William Luck of Spring Hill (1594–1655), was John Luck's father. Clemence's sister Elizabeth was married to Andrew Combridge of Coldharbour, Penshurst, and their great-grandson was Francis Combridge, the mercier of Groombridge who preceded John Turner in the business there. There were, however, other Luck-Combridge connections.

The second William Luck was twice married. By his first wife Mary (died 1618) he had a daughter

Elizabeth (1618–98), who married Oliver Combridge (died 1673) of Newhouse, Penshurst, first cousin of the above Francis Combridge's grandfather. Elizabeth Combridge's descendants feature largely in the will of John Luck in 1709. Two sons of William Luck by his second wife Anne (*née* Rixon) survived infancy: John himself (1628–1712), and the youngest child, Thomas (1635–77). Thomas was married at Frant in 1667 to Mary Luck, of a Wadhurst/Penshurst family, probably a distant cousin (she was a daughter of Richard Luck of Durgates, Wadhurst). Mary's brother Edward Luck of Penshurst had a son John Wells Luck (1686–1771), a prominent local lawyer, latterly of Wadhurst, whose name appears appended for professional reasons to many deeds and wills in local parishes of Kent and Sussex.⁵⁵ These include the documents to which John Turner *alias* Fann was a party in the 1730s, and contemporary wills of members of the Ovenden family of Rotherfield. Thomas Luck inherited part of his father's estate, including the future Turner farm at Chiddingstone, but he died childless in 1677, and the farm in due course reverted to his brother John.

John Luck seems to have remained a bachelor, farming at Spring Hill after the death of his father, and receiving the rents from other farms in the neighbourhood. He was aged about 83 at death, by which time his unidentified 'kinsman' Peter Rabson was living with him. The latter inherited Spring Hill, and died there as 'Mr Peter Rabson' in 1730. It was Rabson who held the Chiddingstone Farm for John Turner until he attained the age of 24, paying him in the meantime an annuity of £5.

John Luck's will of 1709 refers to near relatives of some quality. His 'kinswoman Elizabeth Spencer widow' was in fact his niece (daughter of Oliver and Elizabeth Combridge), the widow of Gilbert Spencer of Redleaf House, Penshurst, whose monument in Penshurst church records that he had been one of the gentlemen of the robes to both Charles II and William III, and had been for some years receiver-general of land tax in Kent. He also undertook professional work (probably as a lawyer) for the 2nd Earl of Leicester, owner of the Penshurst Place estate.⁵⁶ Two named great-nephews ('nephews' or 'kinsmen' in the will) were Robert and Abraham Spencer, of whom the latter was High Sheriff of Kent in 1736, dying in 1740. Two other great-nephews (not described as relatives in the will) were John and Oliver Thorpe, sons of Luck's niece Ann Combridge,

of whom the former (born 1682) would inherit the Combridges' Newhouse estate, and was described in his cousin Abraham Spencer's will as a 'doctor in physick'. A nephew (so described by Luck in 1709) and principal beneficiary was John France (1668–1743), son of Luck's sister Margaret, who in his own will would be described as 'of Fishall, Hadlow, gentleman'. Other Combridges and Woodgates were featured in 1709, some described as relatives, and some not, although relationship can be shown.

There is no statement in Luck's will of a family relationship between himself and John Turner '*alias* Vann' of Groombridge, but examination of the family background makes it clear that a number of beneficiaries of the will were in fact closely related to him, even where this was not stated (another example would be his niece, *née* Combridge, noted only as 'Sarah wife of Joel Woodgate'). This fact keeps open the possibility that John Turner was some kind of relative of John Luck, whose full background has still not been uncovered, notably on his mother's side (other 'kinsmen', such as Peter Rabson, are also unplaced as relatives). At its closest, if (say) one of John Luck's sisters was married to John Turner of Ashurst (died 1678; *see* below), whose wife has not been identified, he might have been a great-nephew. If John Turner was indeed related to Luck, there may have been good reason why he felt entitled to be described on the 1731 map of his estate as 'Mr Iohn Turner'.

THE TURNER BACKGROUND

On the issue of the Turner origins, one point needs to be dealt with at the outset. Blencowe and Lower referred in 1859 to a 'carefully painted and well-preserved coat of arms which accompanies the manuscript' of the diary, which they and later writers took to imply that the diarist was descended from the armigerous family of Turner of Tablehurst in East Grinstead. This item is no longer with the diaries, and cannot be located. There is a printed pedigree of the Turners of Tablehurst, as compiled in the 1630s, in Berry's *Sussex Pedigrees*,⁵⁷ which records that the arms (per pale, gu. and az. three talbots, passant; surmounted by the crest of an antelope sejant) were granted to John Turner of Tablehurst, gent., in 1579. This John's father, Thomas, was said to have been of Reading, Berkshire, and a senior branch of the family is shown to have moved to Somerset by the 1630s.

It is possible that there was a connection in the 16th century between the earliest Withyham Turners described below and their near neighbours at Tablehurst, but no indication has been found of a 17th-century link, and indeed the evidence below points the other way. It is perhaps significant that no armorial bearings feature on the map of John Turner's estate at Chiddingstone in 1731, and while the possession of the painted arms by the family must be noted, it may be that it represented no more than the wishful thinking common in matters of this kind.

In seeking John Turner's father, the point may also be made that it was probably more common than not for illegitimate children to take their mother's surname, and that John's use of 'Turner' alone for some years may imply a particular attachment or acknowledgement to his father or his father's family. On the other hand, he seems to have made a point of being 'otherwise Fann' in legal documents after c. 1734, and there may also be a reason for this.

In the early stages of research, the Withyham registers (and other local records) speedily revealed a Turner family at Alksford Farm there, who seemed to merit further investigation. The farm lies just across the road from the Constables' Hendl Farm, about 1½ kilometres south-west of Groombridge, and this proximity to his wife's home argued in favour of John Turner having connections there. Particularly useful records in investigating this were the court rolls of the manor of Framfield, of which Alksford, a farm of some 30 acres, was copyhold.⁵⁸

The records show that Robert Turner held Alksford from at least 1647 until his death in March 1674, and his will in turn makes a number of relationships clear. He named four sons (besides three daughters), of whom Thomas and Richard were heirs to his 40-acre freehold estate called Lincolnes (modern Linkhorns) at Ashurst in Kent (near Groombridge), while Robert and Philip inherited that part of Alksford which was not left for life to his wife Elizabeth.⁵⁹ Reference was also made back to the surrender of Alksford in June 1647 to the uses of Robert's will. Overseers of the will were John Turner of Speldhurst (died 1678), Robert's 'cousin', and a 'nephew', John Turner of Rotherfield, the two references indicating relationship to other nearby dynasties of Turners. In fact the son Philip died in or by 1676, his share of Alksford passing to the next youngest son Richard, though the manorial

court books provide no evidence of his later interest in the title. Richard may have died in 1696, 'of Rotherfield'. Elizabeth Turner, Robert the elder's widow, died in 1685 ('widow Turner'), having herself left a useful will. Both Robert's and Elizabeth's wills were witnessed, among others, by William Constable.

The son Robert Turner (1640–99) surrendered Alksford at the manorial court on 14 January 1679 to hold to himself, his wife Mary, and the heirs of their bodies. The marriage has not been found, but it seems probable from clues provided in her will that she was Mary Hedgcock (or Hitchcock), sister of Richard Hedgcock, carpenter of Withyham (died 1702), and of John Hedgcock, tanner of Pulborough. 1679 may well mark the date of the marriage, but it would seem that no children were born and the entail was set aside in 1689 by the legal mechanism of a common recovery, after which the premises were made subject to Robert's will.⁶⁰ This, dated in 1694, bequeathed the farm to his wife Mary for life, with reversion to Nathaniel, younger son (born 1676) of his brother Thomas Turner, a blacksmith of Cousley Wood, Wadhurst, who died in 1713. Mary apparently remained at Alksford until her remarriage in 1710 to John Lock of Hever in Kent (not a spelling variation of Luck), and was buried at Withyham in 1733 as 'Mary Lock from Hever'. Her widowed husband died at Hever in 1740, leaving a family by his own first marriage.

Nathaniel Turner was a blacksmith by trade, who lived at Alksford until his death in 1739. He was married twice, firstly in 1700 to Mary, daughter of Mary Turner's brother Richard Hedgcock, who died after the birth of their son Nathaniel in 1701; and again in 1711, having further children Mary (1712), Philip (1714), Jane (1716), and John (1724). The name Philip, relatively uncommon at the time, was used both in the Alksford family and in that of the diarist. Nathaniel Turner was in 1714 a witness (with William Constable) to the will of Thomas Bennett, John Turner's step-father. The Turner presence at Alksford continued until 1791. Nathaniel's successor there was his son Philip (died 1779), whose own son Philip had to sell the title in 1783 (to a John Luck, farmer), and to relinquish the occupancy in 1791.⁶¹ Fuller details of the later ownership are included in Appendix 2.

In addition to the marriage of the diarist's parents in 1728, there is a second potential connection between the Turners of Alksford and the Owendens of Boarshead, in that in 1744 Jane Turner

(born 1716), daughter of Nathaniel, married James Ovenden (1707–73), the owner of Grubbs Barrs Farm in Withyham. James was the son of John Ovenden of Boarshead (died 1734), and a relative of the diarist's mother. The second marriage connection may perhaps be coincidental, making only the point that the two families, geographically close, moved in much the same social circles.

In considering the possibility that John Turner was connected to the Turners of Alksford, two points may be made. Firstly, the date of the breaking of the entail on Robert and Mary Turner's land in December 1689 coincides very closely with the likely birth date of John Turner, and may imply that John was then being considered as a possible heir for the childless couple. In the event Robert made his final will when John was aged about four, and nominated as his heir at Alksford his brother Thomas' son, Nathaniel Turner. Robert could have been himself the father of an illegitimate child who was accepted and brought up by Mary, but while this possibility cannot be dismissed out of hand, it does seem unlikely. In its most 'tabloid' interpretation one could be envisaging a kind of surrogate motherhood. A more probable suggestion would be that the couple took under their wing the illegitimate child of a Turner relative, provided for him, and perhaps saw to the early stages of his education. An Alksford link could explain both John Turner's preference for the name Turner during Mary Turner's lifetime (latterly as Mary Lock), and also his feeling free to revert to 'otherwise Fann' after her death.

Mary Turner's will was made in November 1710, just before her second marriage, and admittedly makes no reference to John Turner, but it does show that she had lent her nephew John Hedgcock (born 1685), 'late of Rye', the sum of £100 to help set himself up in business as a shopkeeper at Pulborough. He was another local near-contemporary of John Turner who went into trade, and Mary may well have given similar help to Turner, any debt having been repaid by 1710. When she died in 1733, an inventory was taken of 'the goods and chattels of Mary Lock late Mary Turner widow . . . left at Nathaniel Turner of Withyham in Sussex' which was made and signed by Robert Cat and John Turner.⁶² Signature comparisons are inconclusive, but if this John Turner was not the diarist's father, it is very difficult to see who he can have been.

The other point about John Turner and a potential Alksford link concerns the £2 'copyhold'

for which his stepfather Thomas Bennett paid rates at Withyham in 1714. A process of elimination suggests that this comprised a cottage and one acre of land at Motts Mill Common, Withyham, to which Robert Turner and Mary his wife were admitted copyhold tenants at the Framfield manorial court in December 1692 (it lay about a kilometre south across the fields from Alksford). It passed to other occupants after 1714, and in 1718 Nathaniel Turner was admitted to the reversion of the property, to take effect on the death of Mary Lock; he left it to his two daughters in 1739. If the Fann/Bennett occupation dated back to 1692 (Thomas Bennett was married to Sarah Fann in July 1693), it may be that the Turners actually bought the cottage with the intention of housing John Turner/Fann's mother in their near vicinity.

It is a reasonable guess that Sarah Fann became pregnant as a servant in a house where a Turner was either the occupant, or was himself a servant. If John Turner *alias* Fann was related to John Luck, then his father may well have been of yeoman farmer status. In considering Turner males of the Alksford family who might have been the father, the immediate sons of Robert the elder (died 1674) are impossible or unlikely because of death, age, or their own marriages. In tracing the family back as fully as is possible in a parish (Withyham) where the registers survive only from 1663 (and the bishops' transcripts cover only the years 1606–41, with gaps), the key to earlier years was provided by Catherine Pullein's account of the Turners who held land of the manor of Dewlands, at Castle Wood in Rotherfield (south of the village near the modern Kingsbury Farm).⁶³ The Robert Turner who died at Alksford in 1674 was the son of another Robert, married at Withyham in 1610, who held the Castle Wood lands from 1591 to 1622, and whose other descendants (*see* Appendix 2) included a series of Turner owners there well into the 18th century. Among these was the 'nephew' John Turner of Rotherfield named in Robert Turner's will of 1673 (above). The father of John Turner *alias* Fann could have been of this branch of the family, but no obvious candidate has been found.

A generation back, the earliest Turner ancestor so far traced was John Turner (died 1612), who held a 21-year lease from 1597 from the Earl of Dorset of 178 acres of demesne land of the manor of Blackham, Withyham.⁶⁴ Besides Robert, his children included John Turner (died *c.* 1629), who inherited

from his father two tenements in Penshurst called Blowers Wood (44 acres), adjacent to the Combridge and Luck lands there, as well as the reversion of a tenement in Ashurst, by Groombridge. His son John Turner, who died at Ashurst in c. 1666, had in 1660 'lately' settled on his own son, a fourth John Turner, 31 acres of land at Groombridge (Speldhurst), which was freehold of the manor of that name.⁶⁵ He (or perhaps the son) also held in 1662 lands freehold of the manor of Ashurst, called Uswardes, Harrow Hill, Tolherst, Puells, and Hudalls, which totalled 140 acres.⁶⁶ This fourth John was described as 'cousin' and overseer, 'of Speldhurst', in the will of Robert Turner of Withyham (1673), and would seem to be the man of that name who was buried at Speldhurst in December 1678. Both Robert Turner and John Luck also held lands in the small parish of Ashurst.

The fact that the Ashurst parish register does not begin until 1692 (and the Bishop's transcripts until 1715) accounts for the paucity of information about the families there. Indeed, it may also account for the failure to trace a baptism for John Turner *alias* Fann in c. 1689. The fourth John Turner was certainly married, since his daughter Elizabeth was named in her grandfather's will of 1664, and if he is the man buried in 1678, then he almost certainly had a son John (fifth) who would be the man named in an Ashurst rental of 1680 as holding the same lands as 'John Turner' in 1662, with the exception of Hudalls tenement (50 acres) which he had 'lately aliened' to Thomas Northey. By 1686, Northey had acquired all John Turner's lands at Ashurst.⁶⁷

Two possibilities may be suggested. John Turner (fifth), born perhaps in the 1660s, may have died around the time of the birth of an illegitimate son (before the start of the Ashurst register), providing a good reason for his Alksford relatives to take on responsibility for the child and his mother. Alternatively, John may have lived on, but have been unable or unwilling to marry the mother and care for the child. In these circumstances he may have arranged for the assistance of his childless relatives. There are a number of 'unplaced' John Turners in the area (and many other Turners generally in local parishes), but one who may be particularly noted as a possible candidate for the father is a John Turner who in 1705 witnessed the will of Gilbert Spencer of Penshurst, gentleman (John Luck's nephew by marriage), and who was buried at Penshurst in June 1708 as 'John Turner, yeoman'. No indication has

been found in the Penshurst register of this man being married or having other children.

A year after this John Turner's death, John Luck made his final will, in which he designated his 'kinsman' Peter Rabson 'that now lives with me' as heir to his residence and principal farm at Spring Hill, Penshurst, and also made him responsible for paying an annuity to John Turner *alias* Vann (or Fann) of Groombridge until he should attain the age of 24. It seems probable that Rabson was the subject of a 'deal' under which he would manage the elder Luck's estate for him, in return for a substantial promised inheritance. Given the coincidence of dates, it is conceivable (though there is no direct evidence, as yet) that Luck had made a similar arrangement with John Turner earlier, perhaps also a kinsman, which had been frustrated by his dying before Luck. The bequest to John Turner *alias* Fann may have been in recognition of Luck's earlier obligation and indebtedness to the young man's suggested father in this case.

The above suggestions are inevitably speculative and circumstantial, but pending the discovery of future concrete evidence to the contrary, they do offer a tentative and tenable identification, based on name, place, relationship, and circumstances, of the father of John Turner *alias* Fann.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Biographical research into historical figures is usually able to draw on a variety of personal sources, including letters, diaries and reminiscences. In the case of Thomas Turner, all that is available of this kind is his own (very full) diary for a dozen years, and it is the very rarity, if not uniqueness, of such a source for a village shopkeeper in the mid-18th century which gives it its great value. This does pose problems, however, in trying to set his life and achievement in context, and to assess his typicality, since the supporting documentation is limited to formal records such as parish registers, rating and taxation lists, wills, manorial records, title deeds, and the like. The problem is akin to that of attempting to unravel the life of William Shakespeare, with the same tendency to build elaborate theories on slight evidence (though much fuller sources are available in the 18th century).

Here the purpose has been to investigate Turner's family origins and connections, so that an assessment can be made of the influences and background

which helped to shape the man. Some of the results are useful but not unexpected. For example, named members of his maternal grandfather's family, the Ovendens, have been fully identified here. They feature regularly in the diary, were of yeoman farming stock, and perhaps aspired in some cases to the lower reaches of the gentry (e.g. his uncle Thomas Ovenden of The Rocks, Boarshead). Other results were not anticipated: it was known, for example, that Turner's father John was himself a shopkeeper (more specifically a mercer) at Groombridge, later Framfield, but it was not known that he was illegitimate, nor how he came to acquire the 74-acre farm at Chiddingstone in Kent which he left to his widow Elizabeth, and which she passed on to her four children.

This account has identified John Turner's mother Sarah Fann, and has shown that she herself came from a yeoman farming family (who furnished John's *alias* surname). Their immediate roots lay in Frant, with connections in neighbouring parishes of Kent, but they also had family and perhaps commercial links with London which may have been useful in establishing John as a mercer and in providing him with suppliers. Sarah Fann married a Withyham weaver three years or so after John's birth, and may have been partly supported by the Turner family of Alksford Farm there.

However, it would appear that the 'mercenary' dimension (sometimes 'grocer and linen draper'), which loomed large in the lives of John Turner and most of his children, had more early ramifications than the Fanns can account for alone. Turner was preceded as mercer at Groombridge by Francis Combridge, whose wife was Elizabeth Constable. She was the daughter of earlier Constable mercers at Groombridge who had traded there since at least the 1660s. Turner himself married their near relative Elizabeth Constable in 1714, the daughter of a Withyham farmer and landowner at Hendl Farm, and in 1735 (after her death) succeeded her brother John Constable as mercer at Framfield. These pervasive mercer links are highlighted in Appendix 1(2). A cousin of the Constables (another William) would be a major and wealthy landowner in the Etchingam/Burwash area in the early 18th century. Turner could hardly have married into this sort of family, especially given his illegitimacy, without at least some modest social status and/or financial security behind him.

It is now clear that part of this came from his

inheritance of the farm at Chiddingstone, fully assumed in the year of his first marriage, which provided him with both land-owning status and an assured annual income of some £26. He inherited this from an elderly bachelor, John Luck of Spring Hill, Penshurst, as one of a small group of heirs to an estate of half a dozen farms in neighbouring parishes. Most of these heirs are known to have been related to Luck: Turner was not described as a relative, but in time may well prove to have been so. What is clear is that Luck was himself related to other yeoman or gentry families in the Penshurst area, including the Combridges, of whose Coldharbour branch Francis Combridge was a younger son, the mercer of Groombridge who preceded John Turner in the business, and whose will Turner witnessed.

It is noteworthy from this and other quoted examples that the trade of mercer, with trading links to merchants in London and other centres, was an acceptable one around 1700 for sons of the gentry or yeomanry who were not the principal heirs to their fathers' lands. Indeed the education which they received may well have given them built-in advantages in commerce. It is not known where John Turner and his son the diarist were educated, but it can be seen from their abilities that they were both fully literate and numerate. In the case of John, Tunbridge Wells is a likely place for schooling, perhaps supplemented by a trade-orientated apprenticeship to a Constable or Combridge (or both). The diarist may have been educated at Lewes, where he was certainly a 'servant' as a young man.⁶⁸

The identity of John Turner's father has not certainly been established, but it seems very likely that there were close connections with the Turners of Alksford Farm, Withyham. These were friendly with the Constables of neighbouring Hendl Farm, John's future in-laws, and mutually witnessed family wills and other documents. Turner cousins of this family owned land in Ashurst, Speldhurst and Penshurst, and moved in much the same circles as the Lucks and Combridges. A John Turner of this branch was perhaps born in the 1660s, disposed of his Ashurst lands in the early 1680s, and may have been the father of an illegitimate child of whom his Alksford relatives assumed the care. Whatever the precise link, and whether or not there was an additional family relationship with the Lucks and Combridges, this does seem to represent the general background from which the father of John Turner

alias Fann came. For a time John seems to have harboured his own social aspirations ('Mr Iohn Turner', the landowner with a parchment estate map), but the diarist himself, while possessing an ease in most company which may reflect his background, professed to regard people of this class as 'really . . . my betters'.⁶⁹

There is no suggestion in the diary, published or unpublished, that Thomas Turner enjoyed any residual connections with the Luck background, except perhaps in one respect. His first wife was Margaret ('Peggy') Slater, daughter of Samuel Slater of Hartfield, and the diary reveals a number of mutual family visits. Margaret's aunt Mary Slater (1701–81) was married in 1725 to Fortunatus Woodgate of Hartfield (died 1774), who features three times in the unpublished diary in the context of visits, and who was evidently one of the Woodgates of Penshurst.⁷⁰ This family was related to the Lucks and the unusual Christian name featured among them. As with other possible links above, this one may simply be coincidental, as was always possible in a restricted society, but it may also hint that there was a distant family connection between the diarist and his first wife.

John Turner's illegitimacy may have made him particularly sympathetic to the needs of his own illegitimate grandson Philip Turner (Elizabeth's son), for whom he made careful provision in his will.⁷¹ The extent to which Thomas Turner's background affected his own attitudes to his family, to his neighbours, friends, and trading partners, and to

those with whom he dealt as an active parish officer, is beyond the scope of this paper. It is hoped, however, that the additional information provided here may usefully supplement that already put to good use by David Vaisey, in providing an assessment of Thomas Turner's life and significance.

This account is not the final word on the subject. Some areas have not been researched, such as the family of Turner's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Page from Mayfield; the London connections of the Fann family (and the local connections of the Gutsalls or Goodsells, the family of Sarah Fann's mother); and the wider rôle and contacts of the Lucks, Combridges and Constables. Most crucially, some unknown source may yet emerge which will unarguably identify John Turner's father. It is hoped that this paper may stimulate answers to some of the outstanding questions.

Acknowledgements

This paper had its genesis in assisting research by Dr Naomi Tadmor into the background of Thomas Turner, for use in her forthcoming work on the 18th-century family, *inter alia* (see note 5). She located the deeds at Maidstone of the farm at Chiddingstone, and has since then given much useful advice and generous assistance. The help is also acknowledged of David Vaisey, editor of the diary; of my colleagues in record offices Chris Whittick (Lewes), Peter Wilkinson (Chichester), and Mark Ballard (Maidstone); and of Mary Robson of the Groombridge History Group.

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NOTES

Full dates for parish register entries are given in Appendix 2. References to registers are not given here, but the originals will be found, as appropriate, in the county record offices at Lewes and Maidstone, and transcripts are available in various reference libraries. References to wills and administrations are stated in Appendix 2. All dates before 1752 quoted in this paper are 'new style'.

- ¹ East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO), XA 41 (microfilm of diary), and AMS 6532 (typed transcript by Dean K. Worcester of most of the diary).
- ² R. W. Blencowe & M. A. Lower, 'Extracts from the diary of a Sussex tradesman, a hundred years ago', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **11** (1859), 179–220.
- ³ F. M. Turner (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Turner of East Hoathly (1754–1765)* (London: Bodley Head, 1925); for the notes, see 105–12.
- ⁴ D. Vaisey (ed.), *The Diary of Thomas Turner 1754–1765*

(Oxford: Oxford Univ. P., 1984). A revised edition has since been published in paperback (East Hoathly: CTR Publishing, 1994).

- ⁵ N. Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, forthcoming 2000).
- ⁶ R. Garraway Rice (ed.), 'Sussex apprentices and masters 1710–1752', *Sussex Record Society* (hereafter SRS) **28** (1922), 194.
- ⁷ Vaisey, 180.
- ⁸ Other relatives mentioned in the diary include 'my cousin Ballard' at Forest Row (28 July 1757), and 'my cousin Potter' at Halland (7 August 1757). These have not been identified, though no investigation has been made into the family of Turner's maternal grandmother, the Pages of Mayfield. The use of terms such as 'nephew' and 'cousin' in all sources at this and earlier periods needs to be carefully examined, since they may not have the modern connotations.
- ⁹ E. H. W. Dunkin (ed.), 'Calendar of Sussex Marriage

- Licences . . . for the Archdeaconry of Lewes, August 1670 to March 1728–9 . . . and . . . the Deanery of South Malling, May 1620–December 1732', *SRS* 6 (1907), 309.
- ¹⁰ ESRO, ACC 2953/116.
- ¹¹ ESRO, PAR 465/5/1–9, Rotherfield parish poor rate books, 1690–1838 (with gaps).
- ¹² ESRO, ABE 74.O, 572.
- ¹³ Vaisey, 310.
- ¹⁴ For the Okills and Dadswells, masters of Fermor's Charity School, Crowborough, see J. Caffyn (ed.), 'Sussex schools in the 18th century', *SRS* 81 (1998), 293 and 323. In his will of 1807 Moses Turner, the diarist's brother, named Edward Okill Dadswell of Rotherfield schoolmaster as his trustee and 'respected friend'.
- ¹⁵ ESRO, PAR 422/30/1/1–8, Mayfield parish poor rate books, 1711–1834.
- ¹⁶ ESRO, ABE 74.O, 647.
- ¹⁷ ESRO, ABE 74.E, 182.
- ¹⁸ Vaisey, 41: Charles Hill joined the *Monarch* at Portsmouth in May 1756.
- ¹⁹ Garraway Rice, 94; Vaisey, 291.
- ²⁰ Vaisey, 332.
- ²¹ P. J. Neville Havins, *The Spas of England* (London: Robert Hale & Co., 1976).
- ²² Centre for Kentish Studies (hereafter CKS), U908. T158 and T159, title deeds of Little Buckhurst Farm, Chiddingstone.
- ²³ Dunkin, 148: the term 'maiden' was used for all previously unmarried women in the contemporary register of marriage licences.
- ²⁴ CKS, U908. M45.
- ²⁵ Dunkin, 210.
- ²⁶ There was another John Turner, cooper, married to Elizabeth, living in All Saints parish at this time, but there seems to be no connection with Withyham. Their son Seth described both his parents as living when he made his will in 1754 (ESRO, W/A 59, 193).
- ²⁷ CKS, U908. P29.
- ²⁸ ESRO, PAR 512/30/1/1–2, Withyham parish poor rate books, 1714–1810.
- ²⁹ CKS, P89/12/4, Chiddingstone parish poor rate books.
- ³⁰ CKS, U908. T159/4.
- ³¹ Vaisey, 301.
- ³² CKS, U908. T158.
- ³³ CKS, U908. T158.
- ³⁴ M. Waugh, *Smuggling in Kent and Sussex 1700–1840* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1985).
- ³⁵ ESRO, ADA 117, 24v–25r.
- ³⁶ ESRO, PAR 343/30/1, Framfield parish poor rate book.
- ³⁷ Garraway Rice, 193.
- ³⁸ Cf. Vaisey, 57.
- ³⁹ Garraway Rice, 194.
- ⁴⁰ CKS, P344/5/2; ESRO, PAR 343/31/1/2.
- ⁴¹ ESRO, ADA 118, 49–51.
- ⁴² Vaisey, 181.
- ⁴³ CKS, U908. T158.
- ⁴⁴ CKS, list of records at Knole House, 235, rental of the Earl of Dorset's manors, c. 1609; see also references in the will of Nicholas Constable, 1633, and ESRO, ADA 38 (Blackham Court entry, 12 September 1621).
- ⁴⁵ CKS, list of records at Knole House, 153.
- ⁴⁶ See also ESRO, HOP 71/1, and DUN 48/15, the marriage settlement of William Constable, 1710.
- ⁴⁷ ESRO, DUN 14/12.
- ⁴⁸ ESRO, ACC (formerly D) 472, Land Tax Miscellanea.
- ⁴⁹ CKS, P344/13/1 series.
- ⁵⁰ CKS, DRb/PW52.
- ⁵¹ Vaisey, 128 and 136; and 'Some particulars of a Sussex hurricane in 1729', *SAC* 36 (1888), 119–35, which reproduces the text and map from Richard Budgen's pamphlet of 1729.
- ⁵² ESRO, ADA 106, 175 (manor of Buckhurst) and 179 (manor of Munckloe).
- ⁵³ Unpublished diary, 29 May 1758.
- ⁵⁴ CKS, U908. T159.
- ⁵⁵ There is a memorial plaque to John Wells Luck in Wadhurst church.
- ⁵⁶ CKS, U1475. C160/20–24, five letters of Gilbert Spencer, 1664–1667.
- ⁵⁷ W. Berry, *Pedigrees of the Families of the County of Sussex* (London: 1830).
- ⁵⁸ ESRO, ADA 114–20, Framfield manor court books, 1675–1791; for a microfilm of the court book 1665–1675 see ESRO, XA 69.
- ⁵⁹ Thomas and Richard Turner shortly sold Lincolnes: CKS, U732. M1–2, court rolls of the manor of Ashurst. From 1727 it formed the endowment of the free school at Wandsworth, Surrey (deeds CKS, U732. T1/6).
- ⁶⁰ ESRO, ADA 114, 183v–184v.
- ⁶¹ ESRO, Withyham Land Tax assessments.
- ⁶² ESRO, W/INV 2531.
- ⁶³ C. Pullein, *Rotherfield: the Story of Some Wealden Manors* (Tunbridge Wells: 1928), 159–62.
- ⁶⁴ E. Straker (ed.), 'The Buckhurst Terrier 1597–1598', *SRS* 39 (1933), 36.
- ⁶⁵ ESRO, ADA 38, 4, court roll of the manor of Groombridge, Kent.
- ⁶⁶ CKS, U732. M1–2, court rolls of the manor of Ashurst.
- ⁶⁷ CKS, U732. M1–2.
- ⁶⁸ Vaisey, 257.
- ⁶⁹ Vaisey, 273.
- ⁷⁰ Unpublished diary, 7 March 1756, 13 July 1757, 28 April 1758. Fortunatus Woodgate, son of Henry Woodgate of Penshurst, was apprenticed for 7 years from June 1714 to Edward Medhurst, carpenter of Hartfield (Garraway Rice, 212).
- ⁷¹ In the event, Philip Turner died in 1764 of scarlet fever, at the age of 15 (Vaisey, 294).

APPENDIX 2

* Persons marked with an asterisk are named in the Diary of Thomas Turner.

1. Turner *alias* Fann

JOHN TURNER *alias* FANN, mercer (or grocer and linen draper) of Groombridge, Speldhurst (Kent) and Framfield; born c. 1689/90 (son's account), believed illegitimate son of Sarah Fann, perhaps by John Turner of Ashurst/Groombridge (see *Turner*); 1709 is named as 'John Turner *alias* Vann of Groombridge' in the will of John Luck of Penshurst (see *Luck*), to inherit his farm called Buckhurst at Chiddingstone, Kent at age of 24 (Luck dies 1712); 1712 witnesses will of Francis Combridge of Groombridge, mercer; described as of Groombridge (Kent) in 1718, 1721, 1729, and as mercer of Speldhurst 1734; surety Dec. 1721 for admon. of Sarah Bennett (*née* Fann) of Withyham; perhaps appraiser 29 Oct. 1733 of probate inventory of Mary Lock formerly Turner, for her goods left at Alksford, Withyham; removed 2 Jun. 1735 to shop at Framfield (son's account); manor of Framfield 10 Jun. 1735 admitted tenant of the shop premises at Framfield on the surrender of John and Avis Constable (see *Constable*); died at Framfield 6 May 1752, and bur. there 9 May 1752 'Mr Turner'; will dated 1 May 1752 and proved South Malling 28 Aug. 1777 (ESRO, W/SM/D9/233); married (1) by licence dated 10 Mar. 1714 ('of Withyham') **Elizabeth Constable** of Withyham (see *Constable*; her burial not traced); married (2) at Pembury (Kent) ('of All Saints, Lewes') 18 Jan. 1728 ***Elizabeth Ovenden** 'of Speldhurst' (see *Ovenden*; named in her husband's will to be tenant for life of his shop at Framfield, and to inherit his farm called Buckhurst at Chiddingstone, Kent; she died 1 Apr. and was bur. at Framfield 5 Apr. 1759; her will dated 19 Oct. 1754 and proved South Malling 28 Aug. 1777 (ESRO, W/SM/D9/236)); had issue:

(*by first marriage*):

1. ***John Turner**, mercer/grocer and linen draper of Tunbridge Wells; born 3 Jan. 1717; married (1) at Speldhurst 22 Oct. 1745 **Margaret Newman** (died c. 17 months after marriage); married (2) ***Mary Bennett**; had issue:

(*by first marriage*):

- 1.1. **Mary Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 17 Jul. 1746 (*by second marriage*):

- 1.2. ***Ann ('Nan') Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 10 Jul. 1749.

- 1.3. **Sarah Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 11 Jan. 1751.

- 1.4. ***John Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 20 May 1752.

- 1.5. **Margaret Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 14 Apr. 1754.

- 1.6. **Thomas Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 2 Mar. 1759.

- 1.7. **William Turner**; bap. at Tunbridge Wells 11 Jun. 1760.

2. ***Elizabeth Turner**; born and bap. at Speldhurst (Kent) ('born Groombridge') 31 Dec. 1718; apprenticed 31 May 1738 for 2 years to Mary Birsey, mantuamaker of Westerham, Kent; named 1754 in stepmother's will as wife of **Archibald Blare**; had issue:

- 2.1. ***Philip Turner** (illegitimate); born c. 1749; died at Framfield 26 May, aged 15, and bur. at Framfield 30 May 1764.

3. ***William Turner**; born 22 Mar. and bap. at Speldhurst (Kent) 25 Mar. 1721; named 1741 as contingent legatee in

will of uncle Moses Fann; worked in diary period for uncle Richard Hill of Little Horsted; bur. at Framfield 13 Nov. 1789, bachelor aged 67.

(*by second marriage*):

4. **Thomas Turner, the diarist**; grocer and linen draper of East Hoathly; born 9 Jun. and bap. at Speldhurst (Kent) ('at Groombridge') 20 Jun. 1729; died 6 Feb. and bur. at East Hoathly 11 Feb. 1793, 'shopkeeper'; will dated 14 Jan. 1793 and proved Lewes 28 Sep. 1793 (ESRO, W/A 66/728); married (1) at All Saints, Lewes, 15 Oct. 1753 **Margaret Slater** (who died 23 Jun. and was bur. at Framfield 27 Jun. 1761); married (2) at East Hoathly 19 Jun. 1765 **Mary Hicks** (who was bur. at East Hoathly 1 Dec. 1807, 'aged 71'); had issue.

(*for further details of the diarist and his family, see Vaisey*).

5. **Moses Turner**, mercer and grocer of Framfield; born 29 Jun. 1733; apprenticed 24 Mar. 1749 to Isaac Hook of Lewes (to 5 Apr. 1754); bur. at Framfield 5 Apr. 1812, widower aged 78; will 'of Framfield mercer and draper' dated 25 Jul. 1807 and proved South Malling 15 Jun. 1812 (ESRO, W/SM/D11.298); married at Framfield 8 Nov. 1772 **Susanna Chatfield** (who was bur. at Framfield 15 Apr. 1803, 'married, aged 50'); had issue:

- 5.1. **John Turner**; bap. at Framfield 12 Feb. 1773; bur. at Framfield 23 Jun. 1776.

- 5.2. **Thomas Turner**; bap. at Framfield 2 Feb. 1775; ?died young.

- 5.3. **George Turner**; bap. at Framfield 31 Aug. 1777; bur. at Framfield 18 Dec. 1780.

- 5.4. **Thomasine Turner**; bap. at Framfield 13 Apr. 1785; named 1807 in father's will.

- 5.5. **Sarah Turner**; bap. at Framfield 30 Jan. 1795; named 1807 in father's will.

6. **Sarah ('Sally') Turner**; born 17 Aug. and bap. at Framfield 12 Sep. 1738; married at Tonbridge, Kent, 29 Sep. 1774 **John Taylor** 'of Barcombe, tailor' (who was a party in 1775 to transactions about the Chiddingstone farm, as 'of Barcombe, tailor'; named 1807 in brother-in-law's will as co-trustee, 'tailor and shopkeeper of Bolney').

7. **Richard ('Dicky') Turner**; bap. at Framfield 25 May 1742; apprenticed 1 Jan. 1754 to George Beard of Chailey shopkeeper (to 1 Jan. 1761); then servant to John Madgwick of Lewes; died 21 Feb. and bur. at Framfield 23 Feb. 1774, 'of Hoadly'.

2. The Turner Family of Withyham, etc.

'Pullein' references in this section are to C. Pullein, Rotherfield: *The Story of Some Wealden Manors (Tunbridge Wells, 1928)*.

JOHN TURNER of Blackham, Withyham; manor of Dewlands Dec 1591 and Feb. 1593 is (with son Robert) admitted tenant of lands in the Castle Wood area of Rotherfield (Pullein); 31 May 1597, takes 21 year lease of 178a. demesne land of manor of Blackham (Buckhurst Terrier); will dated 28 May 1612 and proved at Lewes 20 Aug. 1612 (ESRO, W/A14.45), which names as overseers his uncle John Turner of Newnham Park, Buxted, and his brother William Turner; married **Jane** (named 1612 in husband's will, to hold tenement in Ashurst for life); had issue:

1. **John Turner**; named 1612 in father's will, to inherit two tenements in Penshurst called Blowers Hill, and tenement in Ashurst after death of his mother, and is joint executor

and residuary legatee; 1626 is named guardian and uncle of John Turner of Rotherfield, and is dead by 1629 (Pullein); had issue:

1.1. **John Turner** of Ashurst, Kent; 1660 has 'lately' settled 31a. held of manor Groombridge (Speldhurst) on his only son John; 1662 holds freely tenements and lands called Harrow Hill, Tolherst, Puells and Hudalls (140a.) of the manor of Ashurst (or this may be the son); will dated 9 Sep. 1664 'of Ashurst yeoman' and proved PCC 3 Dec. 1666 (PROB 11/322), refers to his late wife and his cousin Robert Turner of Withyham, names as executors his cousin Thomas Moone of Frant and John Crundall of Penshurst (who renounce in favour of Robert Woodgate), has tenement called Hugh Dallyes in Ashurst, tenement called Great & Little Blowers Hill (44a.) in Penshurst, tenement called Melley (5a.) in Withyham, 3a. called Fulling Mill Croft at Hendl Bridge, Withyham, and lands called Holdens (12a.) in Withyham; had issue:

1.1.1. **John Turner**; 1660 has 'lately' had 31a. freehold of manor of Groombridge (Speldhurst) settled on him by his father; named 1664 in father's will, has a house in Ashurst; named 1673 in will of Robert Turner the elder of Withyham as his 'cousin' and overseer, 'of Speldhurst'; ?bur. at Speldhurst 1 Dec. 1678; had issue:

1.1.1.1. **John Turner**; manor of Ashurst 1680, holds freely tenements and lands called Uswardes, Harrow Hill, Tolherst and Puells (80a.) (and has lately alienated Hudalls (50a.)); ?named 1705 as witness to will of Gilbert Spencer of Penshurst; perhaps bur. at Penshurst 18 Jun. 1708, 'yeoman'. (He may have been the father of John Turner *alias* Fann, c. 1689/90.)

1.1.1.2. **Elizabeth Turner**, named 1664 in grandfather's will.

1.1.2. **Mary Turner**; named 1664 in father's will as wife of **Robert Woodgate** (who proves the will 1666; he may be the RW whose death was reported at the Munkloe manorial court in Sep. 1689 and who held lands at Blackham, Withyham).

1.1.3.?: the mother of children named in her father's will as his principal heirs 1664:

John and Bridget Cruttenden

2. **Robert Turner**; *whom see below*.

3. **William Turner**; named 1612 in father's will (with reference to his 'children').

4. **Elizabeth Turner**; named 1612 in father's will as having a son **William Moone** and other children;

4.1. **William Moone**; named 1612 in grandfather's will.

5. **Joan Turner**; named 1612 in father's will, as having children

6. **Armanell Turner**; named 1612 in father's will, as having children.

ROBERT TURNER of Withyham; manor of Dewlands Dec. 1591 and Feb. 1593 is admitted (with father) tenant of lands in the Castle Wood area of Rotherfield (Pullein); named 1612 in father's will, and is joint executor and residuary legatee; died 1622 (Pullein); married at Withyham 19 Feb. 1610 **Elizabeth Webb**; had issue:

1. **John Turner**; born 1615 (Pullein); 1626 is made ward of uncle John Turner, who dies by 1629 (Pullein); 1629 is made ward of grandfather Drugo Webb (Pullein); manor of Rotherfield 29 Jul 1635, is admitted tenant of 1r. land on Rotherfield Hill as heir to his father Robert Turner (and sells

it); bur. at Rotherfield 20 Jun. 1644; will 'of Rotherfield yeoman' dated 14 Jun. 1644 and proved PCC 3 Feb. 1645 (PRO, PROB 11/192); married at Rotherfield 27 May 1633 **Agnes Vincent** (who was bur. at Rotherfield 7 Jan. 1642); had issue:

1.1. **John Turner**; bap. at Rotherfield 21 Sep. 1634, and bur. 25 Sep. 1634.

1.2. **John Turner**; born 16 Dec. and bap. at Rotherfield 22 Dec. 1635; named 1644 in father's will, is executor and inherits lands in Rotherfield and Mayfield (trustees are his uncles Robert Turner of Withyham and Thomas Moon of Rotherfield); manor of Dewlands 7 Aug. 1645 is admitted to his father's Castle Wood lands at Rotherfield, aged 8 (Pullein); named 1673 in will of Robert Turner of Withyham as nephew and overseer; manor of Dewlands 3 Jun. 1686 surrenders his lands at Castle Wood, Rotherfield, to his only son John (Pullein); bur. at Rotherfield 28 Nov 1706; married at Rotherfield 8 Dec. 1657 **Joan Lockyer** (who was bur. at Rotherfield 1 Dec. 1702, 'wife of John Turner'); had issue:

1.1.1. **Jane Turner**; bap. at Rotherfield 3 Oct. 1658.

1.1.2. **John Turner**; bap. at Rotherfield 12 Feb. 1661; manor of Dewlands 3 Jun. 1686 is admitted to Castle Wood lands at Rotherfield on his father's surrender; bur. at Rotherfield 28 Sep. 1722, 'John Turner the elder'; married 'of Burwash' by licence dated 21 May 1686 **Mary Hepden** of Burwash (who was bur. at Rotherfield 27 Apr. 1717, 'wife of John Turner'); had issue, including John Turner (1691–1735), latterly 'of Gravehill', Rotherfield, from whom later generations of Turners were descended in Rotherfield.

1.3. **Elizabeth Turner**; bap. at Rotherfield 27 Jan. 1639; named 1644 in father's will, to inherit lands called Dalties and Slingly.

2. **Elizabeth Turner**; named 1644 as sister, singlewoman, in will of John Turner.

3. **Robert Turner**; *whom see below*.

4. **William Turner**; named 1644 as brother, of Cowden, Kent, yeoman, in will of John Turner; had issue:

4.1. **Elizabeth Turner**; bap. at Cowden 28 Feb. 1632; named 1644 in will of uncle John Turner.

4.2. **Mary Turner**; bap. at Cowden 3 Aug. 1634; named 1644 in will of uncle John Turner.

4.3. **Robert Turner**; bap. at Cowden 27 Aug. 1637; named 1644 in will of uncle John Turner.

4.4. **Jane Turner**; bap. at Cowden 6 Dec. 1642; named 1644 in will of uncle John Turner.

5. **Jane Turner**; named 1644 as sister in will of John Turner, the wife of Thomas Moon of Rotherfield yeoman; married **Thomas Moon** (who was named 1644 in will of John Turner as co-trustee for John Turner yr.).

ROBERT TURNER of Alksford, Withyham; named 1644 as brother, of Withyham yeoman, in will of John Turner, and is co-trustee for John Turner yr.; manor of Framfield 9 Jun. 1647 (recited 13 Sep. 1676) surrendered Alksford Farm (30a.) to his own use for life and then to uses of his will; manor of Ashurst, Kent, 1662, holds freely messuage and lands (40a.) called Lincolnes; named 1664 as cousin in will of John Turner of Ashurst; bur. at Withyham 9 Mar 1674; will dated 27 Dec. 1673 and proved at Lewes 1 Apr. 1674 (ESRO, W/A34.2), which named as overseers his cousin John Turner of Speldhurst and his nephew John Turner of Rotherfield; married **Elizabeth**

(who was bur. at Withyham 11 Dec. 1685 'widow Turner'; her will dated 16 Jan. 1681 and proved at Lewes 19 Jan. 1686 (ESRO, W/A37.78); had issue:

1. **John Turner**; named as eldest son in Framfield manor court entry of 1647 (recited 1676).
2. **Elizabeth Turner**; bap. at Withyham 12 Nov. 1637 (BT); named in father's will 1673 as 'now wife of William Brooker'; named in mother's will 1682 as 'now wife of William Brooker'; named in will of brother Robert 1694 as mother of two children; married **William Brooker**; had issue:
 - 2.1. **Susanna Brooker**; named in grandfather's will 1673.
 - 2.2. **Jane Brooker**; named in grandmother's will 1682 and will of uncle Robert Turner 1694.
 - 2.3. **Sarah Brooker**; named in grandmother's will 1682 and will of uncle Robert Turner 1694.
3. **Robert Turner** of Alksford; bap. at Withyham 7 Jun. 1640 (BT); *whom see below*.
4. **Armanell Turner**; bap. at Withyham 23 Jan. 1642 (BT) 'Armonie'; named in father's will 1673 as 'Armanell', inheriting £6 p.a. from lands in Ashurst, in mother's will 1682 as 'Armonell', and in will of brother Robert 1694 as 'Armanell'; bur. at Withyham 30 Aug. 1705 'Armorill Turner spinster'; admon. granted at South Malling 15 Sep. 1705 to her brother Thomas Turner (WSRO, Ep.V/1/4, fo,61v).
5. **Thomas Turner**, blacksmith of Wadhurst; named in father's will 1673 as joint executor and residuary legatee, and as heir with brother Richard to freehold lands called Lincolnes at Ashurst, Kent (Ashurst manor court roll 1680 says that they had alienated it to Richard Marshall); named in mother's will 1682 (with 3 children); named in will of brother Robert 1694 (with 5 children); granted admon. 1705 of the estate of his sister Armanell; bur. at Wadhurst 24 Mar. 1713 'old Thomas Turner, blacksmith of Couslywood'; will 'of Wadhurst blacksmith' dated 6 Jan. 1709 and proved at South Malling 30 May 1713 (ESRO, W/SM/D5/177); married at Wadhurst 29 Apr. 1673 **Mary Waghorne** (who was bur. at Wadhurst 8 May 1705 'wife of Thomas Turner smith'); had issue:
 - 4.1. **Robert Turner**; bap. at Lamberhurst 4 May 1674; named in grandmother's will 1682, in will of uncle Robert 1694, and in father's will 1709.
 - 4.2. **Nathaniel Turner**, of Alksford, Withyham; bap. at Wadhurst 8 Jan. 1676; *whom see below*.
 - 4.3. **Elizabeth Turner**; bap. at Wadhurst 29 May 1679; named in grandmother's will 1682, in will of uncle Robert Turner 1694, and in father's will 1709 (as wife of William Burges); married at Ticehurst 17 May 1708 **William Burges**.
 - 4.4. **Mary Turner**; bap. at Wadhurst 17 Apr. 1683; named in will of uncle Robert 1694, and in father's will 1709.
 - 4.5. **Jane Turner**; bap. at Wadhurst 27 Jul. 1689; named in will of uncle Robert 1694, and in father's will 1709; married at Withyham ('of Rotherfield') 5 May 1715 **Samuel Monck** of Wadhurst, blacksmith (who was chosen as guardian in 1739 by Jane's nephew John Turner; named in Wadhurst window tax assessment 1747).
5. **Richard Turner**; named in father's will 1673 as joint executor and residuary legatee, and jointly inherits with brother Thomas a freehold called Lincolnes at Ashurst, Kent (Ashurst manor court roll 1680 says that they had alienated it to Richard Marshall); 12 Jul. 1676 is granted admon. of estate of his brother Philip; manor of Framfield 13 Sep. 1676 is admitted to the interest of his brother Philip in the tenancy of Alksford, as next youngest brother; named as executor in

mother's will 1682; named in will of brother Robert 1694; ?bur. at Withyham — Apr. 1696 'of Rotherfield'; ?admon. at Lewes 'of Rotherfield' 31 May 1696 to widow Ann (ESRO, W/B12/87); ?married at Rotherfield 12 Apr. 1687 **Ann Norman**.

6. **Philip Turner**; manor of Framfield 1647 (recited 1676) is youngest son of his father; named in father's will 1673 as joint heir to Alksford with brother Philip; manor of Framfield 6 Apr. 1674 is admitted with mother Elizabeth to a share of Alksford; admon., 'of Withyham', granted at Lewes 12 Jul. 1676 to his brother Richard (ESRO, W/B8.120r).

ROBERT TURNER, of Alksford, Withyham; bap. at Withyham 7 Jun. 1640 (BT); named in father's will 1673 as joint executor and residuary legatee, and as heir to Alksford with brother Philip; manor of Framfield 13 Sep. 1676 is admitted tenant of his share of Alksford, 1679 surrenders to use of himself, his wife Mary, and the heirs of their bodies, Dec. 1689 breaks the settlement of Alksford by a common recovery and surrenders to the uses of his will; manor of Framfield 21 Dec. 1692 with wife Mary gets grant of copyhold cottage and 1a. land of new assart at Motts Mill Common, Withyham; bur. at Withyham 1 Aug. 1699; will dated 7 Sep. 1694 and proved South Malling 2 Sep. 1699 (ESRO, W/SM/D3.135); married by 1679 **Mary (Hedgcock)** (named in manor of Framfield entries 1679, 1692; named 1694 in husband's will as executor and tenant for life of his lands; bur. at Withyham 10 Oct. 1733 'Mary Lock from Hever'; will dated 15 Nov. 1710 (as Mary Turner widow) and proved at Lewes 31 Oct. 1733 (ESRO, W/A54.197); inventory of goods at Alksford appraised by Robert Cat and John Turner; she married (2) at Withyham 12 Dec 1710 **John Lock** of 'Heaver' (Hever, Kent) (a widower, who was bur. at Hever 23 Oct. 1740; his will dated 25 Aug. 1736 and proved PCC 18 Apr. 1741 (PRO, PROB.11/709)). Robert Turner was succeeded at Alksford by his nephew:

NATHANIEL TURNER, blacksmith of Alksford; bap. at Wadhurst 8 Jan. 1676, son of Thomas Turner; named in grandmother's will 1682; named in will of uncle Robert Turner 1694 (proved 1699) as reversionary heir to Alksford; named 1705 as surety for admon. of his aunt Armanell Turner; named in father's will 1709 (proved 1713) as executor and residuary legatee; named in will of aunt Mary Turner 1710 (proved 1733 as Mary Lock) as father of her 'kinsman' Nathaniel Turner; rated as occupier of Alksford (1714) to death; witness 1714 to will of Thomas Bennett of Withyham weaver; manor of Framfield 29 Apr. 1718 is admitted to the reversion of a cottage and 1a. land at Motts Mill Common on the death of Mary Lock, and surrenders to the uses of his will; burial not traced; will dated 14 Jan. 1734 and proved at Lewes 27 Oct. 1739 (W/A56.62); married (1) by licence at Wadhurst 14 Nov. 1700 ('blacksmith of Withyham') **Mary Hedgcock** ('Hedgecott') (niece of Mary wife of Robert Turner, she was bur. at Withyham 6 Oct. 1701); married (2) at Withyham 6 Feb. 1711 Ann Wallis (who was bur. at Withyham 19 Mar. 1764); had issue:

(*by first marriage:*)

1. **Nathaniel Turner** of Withyham; born 19 Sep. and bap. at Withyham 29 Sep. 1701; named in will of Mary Turner/Lock 1710 (proved 1733), to inherit 3a. land called Avis Island and part of house in Hartfield; manor of Framfield 1733 is admitted tenant of Avis Island on death of Mary Lock, and surrenders to uses of will, but 1746 with wife Mary surrenders to his brothers Philip and John; bur. at Withyham 21 May

1780; married at Penshurst, Kent, 22 Sep. 1728 **Mary Adams** (who was bur. at Withyham 8 May 1785 as Mary Turner widow); had issue (bap. at Penshurst):

Mary (1729), Ann (1735, died a baby), John (1737), (bap. at Withyham:) Thomas (1740), William (1741), Philip (1748) and Sarah (1750).

(by second marriage:)

2. **Mary Turner**; bap. at Withyham 18 Nov. 1712; named in father's will 1734 (proved 1739), inherits moiety of Motts Mill Cottage; named in husband's will 1769; bur. at Withyham 20 Nov. 1782; married at Withyham 28 Apr. 1736 **Thomas Waghorne** of Sherlocks Farm, Withyham (who was bur. at Withyham 1769; will 'of Withyham yeoman' dated 22 Feb. 1769 and proved at Lewes 26 Jun. 1769 (ESRO, W/A62.49); had issue (baptized at Withyham):

Mary (1738), Thomas (1746), Philip (1743–56), Anne (1746), Elizabeth (?), Jane (1751), Maria (1754), John (1755).

3. **Philip Turner** of Alksford; bap. at Withyham 21 May 1714; named in father's will 1733 (proved 1739) as executor and joint heir of Alksford with brother John; manor of Framfield 16 May 1739 is admitted joint heir to Alksford, 1746 is admitted with brother John to 3a. land called Avis Island on surrender of brother Nathaniel, 1747 surrenders his moiety of Alksford to uses of his marriage settlement, 1758 is admitted on mortgage to 16a. land at Alksford on surrender of Robert Wickersham (absolute title 1761), 1762 acquires brother John's moiety of Alksford, and mortgages the whole; named as trustee in will of brother-in-law Thomas Waghorn 1769; bur. at Withyham 8 Oct. 1779; will 'of Ashurst yeoman' dated 9 Dec. 1768 and proved at Lewes 29 Jun. 1780 ('late of Withyham') (ESRO, W/A64.202); married at Withyham 22 Apr. 1747 **Elizabeth Burford** (who was tenant of Alksford for life under her husband's will 1769, but with other parties sells Alksford to John Luck 1783; bur. at Withyham 29 Dec. 1787; had issue (bap. at Withyham):

Edmund (1750), Elizabeth (1753, who in 1770 married Thomas Gillett at Ashurst (Kent)), James (1754–56), Mary (1756, who in 1779 married Thomas Groombridge at Withyham), Nathaniel (1758, died a baby), Ann (1759–88, bur. at Ashurst (Kent)), Philip (1761, who remained tenant at Alksford until 1791).

4. **Jane Turner**; bap. at Withyham 25 Aug. 1716; named in father's will 1733 (proved 1739), inherits moiety of Motts Mill Cottage (1745 surrenders to brother-in-law Thomas Waghorn); married by licence at Withyham 1 Jul. 1744 **James Ovenden** (he was bap. at Rotherfield 30 Sep. 1707 son of John and Mary Ovenden of Boarshead, married (1) Mary Butler in 1731, and was the owner of Grubbs Barrs Farm, Withyham, as reversionary heir under the will (1709) of his grandfather James Ovenden (ESRO, W/A47.191); he was bur. at Withyham 2 May 1773); had issue (bap. at Withyham):

James (1746, died a baby), Mary (1747), John (1748), Thomas (1751).

5. **John Turner**, blacksmith of Withyham; bap. at Withyham 25 Jun. 1724; named in father's will 1733 (proved 1739), jointly inherits Alksford with brother Philip, and (aged 16) chooses (uncle) Samuel Monck as his guardian; manor of Framfield 1746 is admitted to moiety of 3a. land called Avis Island on surrender of his brother Nathaniel, 1748 surrenders his copyhold land to the uses of his will, 1748 surrenders his moiety of Alksford to his brother Philip on a mortgage of £100, and 1762 surrenders Alksford and Avis

Island to Philip absolutely; bur. at Withyham 2 Jul. 1764; married **Sarah**; had issue (bap. at Withyham):

Ann (1752), John (1754), Sarah (1756), Philip (1759), Mary (1761, died a baby), (?)Elizabeth (bap. 1762 at Ashurst, Kent).

3. The Luck Family of Penshurst

'Woodgate' references in this section are to G. & G. M. W. Woodgate, *A History of the Woodgates of Stonewall Park and Summerhill in Kent and their Ancestors (Wisbech, 1910)*

WILLIAM LUCK of Spring Hill, Penshurst, Kent; 1572 buys Little Buckhurst Farm, Chiddingstone; bur. at Penshurst 7 Nov. 1596; married **Clemence Streatfeild** (named 1583 in her father's will as wife of William Luck); had issue:

1. **Margery Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 1 Feb. 1579; bur. at Penshurst 16 Aug. 1611.

2. **Elizabeth Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 1 Jun. 1580.

3. **Anne Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 4 Feb. 1582; bur. at Penshurst 2 Feb. 1611.

4. **Richard Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 29 Dec. 1583; named 1654 in brother William's will as deceased (had bequeathed lands in Penshurst to William).

5. **Margaret Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 27 Mar. 1586; named 1654 in brother William's will as Margaret Peckham, widow, with daughters Margaret and Mary; ?married at St. George's, Southwark, 1620 **William Peckham**.

6. **Sarah Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 15 Dec. 1588.

7. **Clemence Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 11 Apr. 1591; named 1654 in brother William's will as wife of **Richard Skinner** (who was bur. at Penshurst 5 Mar. 1659; his will 'of Penshurst yeoman' dated 14 Sep. 1658 and proved PCC 20 Apr. 1659 (PRO, PROB 11/290)).

8. **William Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 2 Jun. 1594; *whom see below*.

WILLIAM LUCK, of Spring Hill, Penshurst, Kent; bap. at Penshurst 2 Jun. 1594; named 1652 as son-in-law and overseer in will of John Rixon of Penshurst (PRO, PROB 11/230); bur. at Penshurst 13 Mar. 1655; will of William Luck of Penshurst yeoman dated 31 Oct. 1654 and proved PCC 12 May 1655 (PRO, PROB 11/249); married (1) **Mary** (who was bur. at Penshurst 24 Dec. 1618, 'wife of William Luck'); married (2) **Anne Rixon**, a daughter of John Rixon of Penshurst (she was bur. at Penshurst 12 Sep. 1649, 'the wife of William Luck'); had issue:

(by first marriage:)

1. **Elizabeth Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 17 Dec. 1618; named 1654 in father's will as wife of Oliver Combridge; bur. at Penshurst 9 Apr. 1698; will dated 11 Sep. 1696 'of Penshurst widow' and proved PCC 9 Jun. 1698 (PRO, PROB 11/446); married **Oliver Combridge** of Newhouse, Penshurst (who was bur. at Penshurst 13 May 1673, 'old Oliver Combridge'; will 'of Penshurst yeoman' was dated 12 May 1673 and proved PCC 16 Feb. 1674 (PRO, PROB 11/344); had issue:

1.1. **Elizabeth Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 11 Apr. 1643; named 1654 in grandfather's will; named 1673 in father's will; named 1696 (with Gilbert Spencer) in the will of her mother; named in will of John Luck 1709 as his kinswoman Elizabeth Spencer, widow; died 16 Apr. 1714 in her 71st year; married 1662, by Vicar General's

licence 24 May, **Gilbert Spencer** of Red Leafe House, Penshurst (who died 4 May in his 80th year and was bur. at Penshurst 7 May 1709, 'gentleman'); described on his monument in Penshurst church as from an ancient family at St. Albans, one of gentlemen of the robes to Charles II and William III, for several years receiver of land tax for Kent; his will 'of Penshurst gentleman' dated 28 Jan. 1705 and proved PCC 12 Jul. 1709 (PRO, PROB 11/510), witnesses included John Turner; had issue:

- 1.1.1. **Gilbert Spencer**; bur. at Penshurst 24 Nov. 1705 'the younger, gentleman'.
- 1.1.2. **Robert Spencer**; bap. at Penshurst 26 Jun. 1667; named 1705 in father's will (executor and residuary legatee); named in will of John Luck 1709 as his nephew, of Dorking; bur. at Penshurst 4 Aug. 1724.
- 1.1.3. **Mary Spencer**; bap. at Penshurst 31 May 1672; named 1705 in father's will.
- 1.1.4. **Sarah Spencer**; bap. at Penshurst 12 Feb. 1675; bur. at Penshurst 16 Aug. 1698.
- 1.1.5. **Ann Spencer**; bap. at Penshurst 12 Apr. 1678; named 1705 in father's will; named in will of John Luck 1709, as dau. of his kinswoman Elizabeth Spencer; bur. at Penshurst 16 Jun. 1713, 'Mrs. Ann Spencer'.
- 1.1.6. **Abraham Spencer**; bap. at Penshurst 30 Dec. 1680; named 1705 in father's will (inherits estate called Pollards at Chevening); named in will of John Luck 1709 as his nephew, of Chatham; died a bachelor 11 Nov. aged 60 and bur. at Penshurst 18 Nov. 1740; described on family monument as Sheriff of Kent 1736; will 'of Penshurst esq., dated 15 Sep. 1740 (codicil 30 Oct. 1740) and proved PCC 5 Dec. 1740 (PRO PROB 11/706).
- 1.1.7. **John Spencer**; named on family monument.
- 1.1.8. **Elizabeth Spencer**; named 1705 in father's will; named in will of John Luck 1709, as wife of Thomas Lancaster clerk and dau. of kinswoman Elizabeth Spencer; named on family monument; married at Penshurst 19 Feb. 1704 **Thomas Lancaster**, rector of Hever (from Herstmonceux family).
- 1.2. **Mary Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 26 Nov. 1644; named 1654 in grandfather's will; named 1673 in father's will; ?bur. at Penshurst 2 Feb. 1682, 'Mary, wife of Mr John Skinner of Westerham'; married at St. George's, Southwark, 1678 **John Skinner** of Sussex (Woodgate); had issue:
 - 1.2.1. **John Skinner**; named 1696 in will of grandmother
- 1.3. **Sarah Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 19 May 1648; named 1654 in grandfather's will; named 1673 in father's will; named 1696 in mother's will as wife of Joel Woodgate; named 1709 in will of John Luck as 'Sarah wife of Joel Woodgate'; bur. at Penshurst 1 May 1731, 'Mrs Sarah Woodgate widow'; married (1) **Robert Chapman** of London (Woodgate); married (2) at Chevening 18 May 1685 by Vicar General's licence 15 May as 'Mrs Sarah Chapman widow of Speldhurst' **Joel Woodgate** of Speldhurst yeoman (who was bur. at Penshurst 11 Jan. 1715); had issue:
 - 1.3.1. **Sarah Woodgate**; bap. at Penshurst 25 Jun. 1686.
 - 1.3.2. **Ann Woodgate**; bap. at Penshurst 3 Jan. 1689; bur. at Penshurst 6 Aug. 1702.
 - 1.3.3. **Rebecca Woodgate**; bap. at Penshurst 12 Oct. 1694.
- 1.4. **Oliver Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 21 Mar. 1650;

named 1654 in grandfather's will; named 1673 in father's will; bur. at Penshurst 29 Dec. 1687, 'Mr Oliver Combridge of Newhouse'.

1.5. **Ann Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 31 May 1652; named 1654 in grandfather's will; named 1673 in father's will (inherits lands called Frennden at Chiddingstone); bur. at Penshurst 18 Mar. 1694, 'Ann wife of Mr John Thorp'; married by Faculty Office licence 1679 **John Thorpe** (who was named 1696 as son-in-law in will of Elizabeth Combridge; bur. at Penshurst 10 Apr. 1703, 'John Thorp, gent. '); had issue:

- 1.5.1. **John Thorpe** of Newhouse, Penshurst (Woodgate); bap. at Penshurst 20 Mar. 1682; named 1696 in will of grandmother; named 1709 in will of John Luck; named 1740 in will of Abraham Spencer as 'my kinsman John Thorpe doctor in physick'.
- 1.5.2. **Oliver Thorpe**; bap. at Penshurst 3 Feb. and bur. 7 Feb. 1684.
- 1.5.3. **Oliver Thorpe** of Grays, Penshurst (Woodgate); bap. at Penshurst 19 Dec. 1684; named 1696 in will of grandmother; named 1709 in will of John Luck; named 1740 in will of Abraham Spencer as deceased kinsman, father of Oliver; married **Sarah Streatfeild** (Woodgate); had issue:
 - Oliver (born 1720).
- 1.5.4. **Thomas Thorpe**; named 1696 in will of grandmother.
- 1.5.5. **James Thorpe**; named 1696 in will of grandmother.
- 1.6. **Margaret Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 17 Aug. 1655; named 1673 in father's will; named 1696 in mother's will (as 'Margaret Combridge spinster'); named in will of John Luck 1709 as his kinswoman Margaret Combridge; bur. at Penshurst 24 Mar. 1720, 'Mrs Margaret Combridge'.
- 1.7. **Ann Combridge (?Hannah)**; bap. at Penshurst 29 Jan. 1658; named 1696 in mother's will (as 'Hannah Combridge spinster').
- 1.8. **Susanna Combridge**; bap. at Penshurst 15 Dec. 1664; named 1673 in father's will; named 1696 in mother's will (as 'Susanna Combridge spinster'), is executrix and residuary legatee; named 1709 in will of John Luck, as Susan wife of Francis Combridge of Penshurst; bur. at Penshurst 22 Sep. 1716, wife of Mr Francis Combridge; married **Francis Combridge** of Penshurst (Woodgate).
(*by second marriage:*)
2. **Frances Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 28 Aug. 1620; named 1652 in will of grandfather John Rixon; named 1654 in father's will as wife of Peter Sharpe; married at Penshurst 1 Feb. 1652 **Peter Sharp**.
3. **Ann**; named 1652 in will of grandfather John Rixon; named 1654 in father's will.
4. **William Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 25 Feb. 1624; bur. at Penshurst 31 Aug. 1649, 'son of William Luck'.
5. **Sarah Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 18 Jan. 1626.
6. **John Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 22 Apr. 1628; whom see below.
7. **Margaret Luck**; bap. at Penshurst 8 Sep. 1630; named 1652 in will of grandfather John Rixon; named 1654 in father's will; bur. at Penshurst 17 May 1706, 'Mrs France, widow'; married at Speldhurst 26 Nov. 1666 by Vicar General's licence dated 31 Oct. (he 'of Leigh, aged about 33'). **Thomas France** (who was bur. at Penshurst 13 Jul. 1689, 'Mr Thomas France'; his will 'of Penshurst gentleman' dated

6 Apr. 1679 and proved PCC 1 Jan. 1690 (PRO, PROB 11/398)); had issue:

7.1. **John France** of Fishall, Hadlow, Kent; bap. at Peshurst 14 Aug. 1668; named 1679 in father's will; named in will of John Luck 1709 as his nephew, of Fishall, Hadlow; bur. at Hadlow 1 Jan. 1743, 'gentleman'; will 'of Fishall, Hadlow, gentleman' dated 25 Aug. 1740 and proved PCC 29 Dec. 1742 (PRO, PROB 11/722), principal heir his son-in-law George Swaine; married **Sarah** (who was bur. at Hadlow 23 Jan. 1722); had issue:

7.1.1. **Sarah France**; bap. at Hadlow 6 Dec. 1700.

7.1.2. **Elizabeth France**; bap. at Hadlow 2 Dec. 1703.

8. **Richard Luck**; bap. at Peshurst 14 Feb. 1633; bur. at Peshurst 23 Nov. 1641, 'son of William Luck'.

9. **Thomas Luck**; bap. at Peshurst 25 Dec. 1635; named 1654 in father's will (to inherit his estate at Renley's Heath, Chiddingstone at age 21); named 1673 in will of Oliver Combridge as witness; ?bur. at Peshurst 7 Sep. 1677, 'Thomas Luck'; married at Frant 17 Jan. 1667 **Mary Luck** of Wadhurst.

JOHN LUCK, of Spring Hill, Peshurst; bap. at Peshurst 22 Apr. 1628; 1652 witnesses will of grandfather John Rixon; named 1654 in father's will (executor and residuary legatee, and inherits lands); named 1658 as kinsman and overseer in will of uncle Richard Skinner; named 1673 in will of Oliver Combridge as overseer; named 1679 in will of Thomas France as brother-in-law, trustee and witness; bur. at Peshurst 22 Feb. 1712; will 'of Peshurst yeoman', 'aged' dated 22 Jun. 1709 (codicil 11 Feb. 1711) and proved PCC 5 Feb. 1712 (PRO, PROB 11/536), names c. 30 legatees, the principal heirs being his kinsman Peter Rabson who now lives with him (relationship not determined), his nephew John France, his kinsmen Joseph and Dorothy Viney (relationship not determined), and John Turner *alias* Vann of Groombridge (connection not stated).

4. The Constable Family of Withyham

NICHOLAS CONSTABLE of Hental Farm, Withyham, yeoman; c. 1609 holds lease of Hental; bur. at Withyham 21 Sep. 1636; will dated 13 Feb. 1633 and proved Lewes 10 Feb. 1637 (refers to land bought of Earl of Dorset, and to lease of Hental Farm, also brothers Daniel and John Constable); had issue:

1. **William Constable**; *whom see below*.

2. **Ann Constable**; named 1633 in father's will as wife of Robert Marchant yr.; married at Withyham 29 Jun. 1631 **Robert Marchant**; had issue:

2.1. **Robert Marchant**; named 1633 in grandfather's will.

2.2. **William Marchant**; named 1666 in will of uncle William Constable.

3. **John Constable**; named 1633 in father's will; named 1666 as co-executor in will of brother William.

4. **Nicholas Constable**; named 1633 in father's will; is dead by 1666 (will of brother William Constable); had issue:

4.1. **Robert Constable**; named 1666 in will of uncle William Constable.

5. **Joan Constable**; bap. at Withyham 29 Nov. 1612; named 1633 in father's will; bur. at Withyham 9 Apr. 1635, dau. of Nicholas.

6. **Richard Constable**; bap. at Withyham 2 Jul. 1615; named 1633 in father's will; named 1666 in will of brother

William; ?bur. at Withyham 6 Aug. 1696 'Richard Constable'; married at Withyham 13 Jan. 1642 **Jane Maynard**.

WILLIAM CONSTABLE of Hental Farm, Withyham; named 1633 in father's will as eldest son; 1651 takes new lease of Hental (150a.) for 21 years; bur. at Withyham 24 Aug. 1670; will 'of Withyham yeoman' dated 18 May 1666 with additions 18 Aug. 1670 and proved PCC 8 Sep. 1670 (PRO, PROB 11/333), which includes references to Richard Constable of Groombridge mercer (not his brother); married at Withyham 6 Aug. 1639 **Phyllis Heckman** (named 1666 in husband's will as 'Philippa'); bur. at Withyham 14 Jul. 1680 'Philip Constable widow'; had issue:

1. **Margaret Constable**; bap. at Withyham 11 Jun. 1640; named 1666 in father's will as wife of William Chapman; married at Speldhurst 16 Apr. 1666 **William Chapman**; had issue:

1.1. **William Chapman**; named 1666 in grandfather's will.

2. **Ann Constable**; bap. at Withyham 4 Jul. 1641; named 1666 in father's will.

3. **William Constable**; *whom see below*.

4. **John Constable** of Burwash and Etchingham; named 1666 in father's will; 1687 is of Burwash (ESRO, DUN 52/31/1); c. 1694 purchases Durgates Farm, Wadhurst from John and Martha Luck (ESRO, DUN 36/20); named 1708 as kinsman and overseer in will of Richard Constable of Groombridge, mercer; 1710 is party to son William's marriage settlement (for deeds of lands purchased from c. 1680 in Burwash and Etchingham, i.e. Turses c. 1680, Lodge Farm c. 1687, Shoyswell c. 1698, *see* ESRO, ACC 4113, boxes 1 and 4); bur. at Etchingham 17 Sep. 1719 'Mr John Constable'; will 'of Etchingham' gent. dated 27 Jul. 1719 and proved PCC 6 Nov. 1719 (PRO, PROB 11/571); married **Sarah** (named 1719 in husband's will; bur. at Etchingham 12 Oct. 1721 'Mrs Sarah Constable widow'); had issue;

4.1. **William Constable** of Shoyswell, Etchingham; named 1719 in father's will as only son (to inherit his lands); will 'of Burwash gent.' dated 22 May 1743 and proved PCC 24 Nov. 1743, mentioning extensive estates (PRO, PROB 11/729); married (1) at Cowden, 'of Etchingham', 24 Mar. 1702 **Elizabeth Mills** (bur. at Etchingham 2 Dec. 1704); married (2) (marriage settlement dated 20 Apr. 1710) **Mary Roberts** of Boarzell, Ticehurst; had issue:

(*eleven children, 1704–31, not further traced here*).

4.2. **John Constable**; bap. at Burwash 9 Jul. 1685; party 1710 to brother's marriage settlement; bur. at Etchingham 26 Aug. 1717.

5. **Philip Constable**; named 1666 in father's will.

6. **Mary Constable**; named 1666 in father's will as wife of **Matthew Glover** of Croydon, Surrey; had issue:

6.1. **Thomas Glover**; named 1666 in grandfather's will.

7. **Jane Constable**; named 1666 in father's will.

8. **Sarah Constable**; named 1666 in father's will.

WILLIAM CONSTABLE of Hental Farm, Withyham; named as witness to wills of Robert Turner 1673, Elizabeth Turner 1681, Thomas Bennett 1714; 1694 has conveyance of house etc. at Groombridge from Richard Constable of Groombridge mercer; rated for Hental and other lands (1714) to death; will 'of Withyham yeoman' dated 2 Jun. 1705 and proved at Lewes 10 Jul. 1717 (ESRO, W/A49.269), naming brother John Constable

of Etchingham; bur. at Withyham 28 Mar. 1717 'Mr William Constable senior'; married by licence at Withyham 19 Dec. 1682 **Jane Mills** (who was named in probate of William's will 1717); had issue:

1. **William Constable**; bap. at Withyham 15 Sep. 1683; named in father's will 1705, and was executor 1717, inheriting lands in Withyham Speldhurst and West Hoathly; surety 1721 for admn. of Sarah Bennett; rated after father's death for Hendl Farm (to 1723), and for other lands there (to 1728); 1720 paid rent £50 p.a. to the Duke of Dorset for the site and demesnes of the manor of Hendlall (*SAC* 39, 143); 1735 'of Westerham, Kent, yeoman' makes discharge for £152 11s. Od. to John Turner *alias* Fann of all claims in respect of the shop and business at Framfield late owned by his brother John Constable (CKS, U908/T158); named 1743 'of Westerham, gent.' as trustee in deeds relating to Chafford Park and manor of Ashurst, Ashurst (Kent) (ESRO, LAN 166,173); had issue:
 - 1.1. **William Constable**; bap. at Withyham 9 Dec. 1718.
 - 1.2. **Mary Constable**; bap. at Withyham 21 Apr. 1720.
 - 1.3. **John Constable**; bap. at Withyham 15 Oct. 1722.
2. **John Constable**; bap. at Withyham 14 Jan. 1686; named in father's will 1705; manor of Framfield 31 Mar. 1720 was admitted tenant (already occupier) of shop at Framfield on surrender of John Humphrey, and 10 Jun. 1735 with wife Avis surrendered the same to John Turner *alias* Fann; married at Framfield 11 Jun. 1723 **Avis** (surname not stated); had issue (baptisms at Framfield):
 - 2.1. **Jane Constable**; bap. 17 Jul. 1726.
 - 2.2. **Ann Constable**; bap. 9 Jun. 1728 (father 'Mr John Constable').
 - 2.3. **Elizabeth Constable**; bap. 22 Feb. 1730.
 - 2.4. **John Constable**; bap. 23 Apr. and bur. 20 Jun. 1732.
 - 2.5. **Mary Constable**; bap. 11 Nov. 1733.
3. **Philip Constable**; born 16 Feb. and bap. at Withyham 1 Mar. 1678; named in father's will 1705.
4. **Elizabeth Constable**; born 20 Jan. and bap. at Withyham 12 Feb. 1690; named in father's will 1705; licence issued for marriage 10 Mar. 1714 to **John Turner**, both 'of Withyham' (*see Turner alias Fann*).
5. **Richard Constable**; born and bap. at Withyham 30 Mar. 1692; named in father's will 1705.
6. **Henry Constable**; born and bap. at Withyham 5 Mar. 1694; named in father's will 1705.
7. **Ann Constable**; bap. at Withyham 24 May 1697; named in father's will 1705; probably marr. at Withyham — Sep. 1721 **John Goring** of Heathfield.
8. **Jane Constable**; born 17 Jan. and bap. at Withyham 13 Feb. 1701; named in father's will 1705.
9. **Thomas Constable**; born 26 Apr. and bap. at Withyham 15 May 1704; named in father's will 1705.

NB: The following Constables were related to the above, but the precise connection has not been established:

Richard Constable of Groombridge (later Rusthall), Speldhurst, mercer; named 1666 as overseer in will of William Constable of Hendl, Withyham; named 1673 as witness to will of Robert Turner the elder of Alksford, Withyham; party 1687 as 'of Speldhurst, mercer' to transactions concerning Baker lands at Tonbridge (ESRO, AMS 6086/69); named 1690 as 'friend' in will of Revd. John Poeton of Withyham; 1694 conveys a house, etc., at Groombridge (Withyham) to William

Constable of Hendl, to pay off mortgages; bur. at Speldhurst 18 Mar. 1709 'Mr Richard Constable; will 'of Rusthall, Speldhurst, mercer' dated 30 Jun. 1708 and proved PCC 11 Apr. 1709 (PRO, PROB 11/69); married at Withyham 16 Oct. 1666 **Dorothy Ware** (who was bur. at Speldhurst 10 Mar. 1694); had issue (order not known):

1. **Richard Constable** of Groombridge, Speldhurst, mercer; bur. at Speldhurst 27 Oct. 1702; will 'Richard Constable the younger of Groombridge mercer' dated 11 Feb. 1702 and proved Rochester 1 Nov. 1708.
2. **John Constable** of Groombridge, Speldhurst, butcher; named 1702 in will of brother Richard, to inherit his message and lands; bur. at Speldhurst 26 Mar. 1725, 'butcher at Groombridge'; married at Tonbridge 'of Groombridge' 9 Jan. 1704 **Elizabeth Knight** of Speldhurst; had issue:
 - 2.1. **John Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 16 Jul. 1704; named 1708 in grandfather's will as eldest son of John.
 - 2.2. **Richard Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 28 Nov. 1707; named 1708 in grandfather's will; married at Frant 9 Jun. 1735 **Avis Humphrey**; had issue (bap. at Speldhurst):

(four children, 1736–45, not further traced here).
 - 2.3. **Sarah Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 21 Jan. 1710.
 - 2.4. **William Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 23 Jan. 1712.
 - 2.5. **Barbara Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 16 May 1714.
 - 2.6. **Hannah Constable**, bap. at Speldhurst 31 Mar. 1717.
3. **Elizabeth Constable**; named 1708 in father's will as wife of Francis Combridge; named 1711 as executor in husband's will; ?bur. at Peshurst 23 Nov. 1715 'Mrs Elizabeth Combridge widow'; married **Francis Combridge**, of Groombridge, Speldhurst, mercer (he was bap. at Peshurst 1672, son of Francis and Mary (*née* Osborne) Combridge of Coldharbour, Peshurst; named 1702 as brother-in-law and executor in will of Richard Constable the younger; named 1705 as overseer of will of Henry Constable of Peshurst mercer; bur. at Peshurst 18 Mar. 1712 'Mr Francis Combridge, mercer, Groombridge'; will of Francis Combridge of Groombridge mercer dated 7 Feb. 1711 and proved PCC 8 Jul. 1712 (PRO, PROB 11/527), appoints kinsman John Constable of Peshurst as trustee to sell his shop, etc., and John Turner is witness; had issue:
 - 3.1. **Richard Combridge**; named 1702 in will of uncle Richard Constable yr.; named 1708 in grandfather's will; named 1711 in father's will, to inherit 31a. land at Coldharbour, Peshurst.
 - 3.2. **Mary Combridge**; named 1708 in grandfather's will; named 1711 in father's will; ?bur. at Peshurst 21 Apr. 1713, 'of Groombridge'.
4. **Thomas Constable**; named 1708 in father's will as second youngest son and joint executor, to inherit properties called the 'Hand and Sceptre' at Rusthall, timberyard and lands at Mount Zion, Tunbridge Wells, and lands at Tonbridge.
5. **William Constable**; named 1708 in father's will as youngest son and joint executor.
6. **Mary Constable**; named 1708 in father's will as youngest daughter.
7. **Dorothy Constable**; bur. at Speldhurst 16 ?Aug. 1687, daughter of Richard Constable.

Henry Constable of Peshurst, mercer; named 1708 as brother and overseer in will of Richard Constable of Rusthall, mercer; bur. at Peshurst 29 Oct. 1709 'Mr Henry Constable'; will of Henry Constable of Peshurst, mercer, dated 15 Aug.

1705 and proved PCC 5 Dec. 1709 (PRO, PROB 11/512), names as overseers John Streatfeild of Peshurst, gent., Francis Combridge of Groombridge, mercer, and John Waite of Peshurst, butcher; married **Joan** (who was bur. at Peshurst 27 Jun. 1702, wife of Henry Constable); had issue:

1. **Henry Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 12 Dec. 1672; bur. at Peshurst 9 Dec. 1674.
2. **Elizabeth Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 2 Jul. 1674; named 1705 in father's will.
3. **Sarah Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 1 Jun. 1676; named 1705 in father's will as wife of **Abraham Newman** of Mayfield.
4. **Mary Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 2 May 1678; named 1705 in father's will as wife of **George Best**; had issue:
 - 4.1 **Sarah Best**; named 1705 in grandfather's will.
 - 4.2 **Henry Best**; named 1705 in grandfather's will.
5. **John Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 27 Jan. 1681; named 1705 as son and executor in father's will; named 1711 as trustee of the will of kinsman Francis Combridge of Groombridge, mercer.
6. **Aann Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 8 Nov. 1683; bur. at Peshurst 8 Aug. 1693.
7. **Dorothy Constable**, bap. at Peshurst 24 Jul. 1689; bur. at Peshurst 11 Dec. 1695.

5. The Bennett Family of Withyham

SARAH FANN; bap. at Frant 27 Jul. 1665, daughter of William and Sarah Fann (see *Fann*); named 1702 in her father's will, receives £40 out of lands at Speldhurst (Kent); named 1714 as executor in husband's will, and as tenant for life of his house at Withyham; rated 1715 until death for house at Withyham as 'widow Bennett'; bur. at Withyham 19 Oct. 1721; admon. granted at South Malling 2 Dec. 1721 to son Thomas Bennett of Withyham (sureties include John Turner of Speldhurst yeoman) (ESRO, W/SM/D6.18r); married by licence at Hartfield ('of Withyham, maiden') 30 Jul. 1693 **Thomas Bennett** of Withyham (who was described as weaver 1702, labourer 1705, was rated 1714 for his own house at Withyham, and for copyhold land, and was bur. at Withyham 7 Dec. 1714; his will 'of Withyham, weaver' dated 1 Nov. 1714 and proved at South Malling 26 Aug. 1715 (ESRO, W/SM/D5.245)); had issue:

1. **John Turner alias Fann**; born c. 1689 (illegitimate son of Sarah Fann) (see *Turner alias Fann*).
(by her marriage to *Thomas Bennett*.)
2. **William Bennett**; bap. at Withyham 5 Jul. 1694; named 1714 in his father's will as reversionary heir to his house at Withyham.
3. **Sarah Bennett**; bap. at Withyham 19 May 1696; named 1714 in her father's will; ?bur. at Withyham 5 Oct. 1719, Sarah Bennett.
4. **Thomas Bennett**; born c. 1698; named 1714 in his father's will; 1721 granted admon. of his mother's estate ('of Withyham, yeoman'); rated 1722–23 and 1726–27 for his late father's house; bur. at Withyham 20 Nov. 1727; admon. granted at South Malling 1 Jul. 1728 to his brother Moses (ESRO, W/SM/D6.128r).
5. **Moses Bennett**; born 2 Sep. and bap. at Withyham 24 Sep. 1700; named 1714 in his father's will; rated 1724–26 for his late father's house in Withyham; Sep. 1727 settlement certificate from Withyham to Speldhurst; Jul. 1728 'of Withyham, weaver' is granted admon. of his brother Thomas'

estate; Apr. 1741 'of Rusthall, Speldhurst, weaver' is contingent legatee under will of Moses Fann of London; married (1) at Pembury, Kent, 'of Speldhurst', 5 Oct. 1727 **Elizabeth Cripps** 'of Tonbridge' (who was bur. at Speldhurst 4 Sep. 1742); married (2) 'widower' c. Nov. 1755 (banns at Speldhurst) **Ruth Soane**, widow; had issue:

- 5.1. **Jane Bennett**, bap. at Speldhurst 19 May 1730.
- 5.2. ***Moses Bennett**, bap. at Speldhurst 29 Aug. 1732; married at Tonbridge 28 Mar. 1763 **Ann Hollamby** (who was bur. at Speldhurst 20 Nov. 1782); bur. at Speldhurst 28 May 1791, 'aged 58'.
- 5.3. ***John Bennett**, bap. at Speldhurst 16 Nov. 1737; bur. at Speldhurst 10 Sep. 1790, 'aged 53'.
- 5.4. **Thomas Bennett**, bap. at Speldhurst 23 May 1740.
6. ***Edward Bennett**; born 19 Jul. and bap. at Withyham 31 Jul. 1702; named 1714 in his father's will; apprenticed Apr. 1721, 'son of Sarah B. widow', for seven years to Nathaniel Wilmshurst of Withyham, cordwainer; rated 1724 and 1727–1749 for his late father's house in Withyham; married (1) **Sarah**; married (2) at Speldhurst 'widower' 25 Apr. 1757 **Mary Goodman**, spinster; had issue:
(by first marriage:)
 - 6.1. **Anne Bennett**; bap. at Withyham 5 Nov. 1734, daughter of Edward and Sarah Bennett.
(by second marriage:)
 - 6.2. **Edward John Bennett**; bap. at Speldhurst 10 May 1761.
 - 6.3 **Sarah Fann Bennett**; bap. at Speldhurst 17 Nov. 1765.
7. **Ann Bennett**; born 30 Jan. and bap. at Withyham 31 Jan. 1705; named 1714 in her father's will.

6. The Fann Family of Frant

MOSES FANN of Frant; bur. at Frant 4 Apr. 1663; will of Moses Fann of Frant yeoman, dated 7 Mar. 1654 and proved at Lewes 14 Jun. 1665 (ESRO, W/A30.120); married **Elizabeth** (named in husband's will 1663 as joint executor and residuary legatee); had issue:

1. **Elizabeth Fann**; bap. at Frant 5 Mar. 1634.
2. **William Fann**; bap. at Frant 20 Dec. 1635; *whom see below*.
3. **Elizabeth Fann**; bap. at Frant 15 Oct. 1637; named in her father's will 1654 as eldest daughter.
4. **Moses Fann**; bap. at Frant 12 Jan. 1640; bur. at Frant 7 Dec. 1653.
5. **John Fann**; bap. at Frant 16 Jun. 1642; bur. at Frant 5 Dec. 1653.
6. **Mercy Fann**; bap. at Frant 21 Jan. 1645; named in her father's will 1654.
7. **Mary Fann**; bur. at Frant 6 Dec. 1653; named in her father's will 1654.
8. **Sarah Fann**; bur. at Frant 3 Jul. 1655.

WILLIAM FANN of Frant; bap. at Frant 20 Dec. 1635 (above); named in his father's will 1654, is joint executor and residuary legatee, and is to inherit lands at Speldhurst (Kent); bur. at Frant 24 Jan. 1705; will of William Fann of Frant yeoman dated 10 Nov. 1702, with codicils 27 Feb. 1704 and 18 Jan. 1705, and proved at Lewes 7 Apr. 1705 (ESRO, W/A46.8), refers to lands in Speldhurst and Peshurst (Kent); married at Frant 12 Jul. 1664 **Sarah Gutsal** (who was named in husband's will 1702, and bur. at Frant 18 Jan. 1705); had issue:

1. **Sarah Fann**; bap. at Frant 27 Jul. 1665; named in her father's will 1702 (to receive £40); married at Hartfield 30 Jul. 1693 **Thomas Bennett** (see *Bennett*).
2. **Mary Fann**; bap. at Frant 2 Feb. 1667; named in her father's will 1702 (to receive 20s. p.a., with £20 to be divided between her children on her death).
3. **Elizabeth Fann**; bap. at Frant 9 Dec. 1668; named in her father's will 1702 (to receive 5s.); named in will of her brother Moses 1741 as Elizabeth Waggon [Waghorn] of Tonbridge.
4. **Mercy Fann**; bap. at Frant 22 Nov. 1670; named in her father's will 1702 (to receive £30, but in codicil 1704 is described as dead); bur. at Tonbridge 20 Jan. 1703, wife of William Box of Southborough; married at Wadhurst — Sep. 1702 **William Box**, farmer of Tonbridge.
5. **William Fann**; bap. at Frant 26 Jun. 1673; named in his father's will 1702 (is executor and residuary legatee, and to inherit lands in Speldhurst); bur. at Frant 26 Jul. 1731; married **Anne**; had issue:
 - 5.1. **William Fann**; bap. at Frant 3 Sep. 1703; bur. at Frant 8 Oct. 1725.
 - 5.2. **Anne Fann**; bap. at Frant 16 Mar. 1705.
6. **Hannah Fann**; named in father's will 1702 (receives £40).
7. **Moses Fann**, mercer of Sevenoaks, Kent, later hop merchant of the City of London; bap. at Frant 5 Feb. 1678; named in his father's will 1702 (to inherit a messuage and lands called Palmers at Penshurst); manor of Buckhurst 19 Sep. 1717 is admitted ('Moses Fann of Sevenoaks (Kent) mercer') tenant of a messuage and lands called Hamfield *alias* Walfield (16a.) near Ham Bridge at Withyham on the surrender of James Gutsall; manor of Munckloe 19 Sep. 1717 is admitted tenant of lands called Aylands (4a.) near Ham Bridge, Withyham, as above; tenants rated 1737–41 at Withyham for 'Mr Fann's land' (then is 'late Mr Fann's'); will 'of Moses Fan of St. Stephen in Coleman Street, City of London, hop merchant' dated 20 Apr. 1741 and proved PCC 15 May 1741, refers to Moses Bennett weaver of Rusthall, cousin William son of John Turner, and his 'sister Bayley's two daughters' (PRO, PROB 11/709); married at Sevenoaks (Kent) 26 Oct. 1703 **Hannah Day** (named 1741 in husband's will); had issue.
 - 7.1. **Martha Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks 21 Sep. 1704; married at St Benet's, Paul's Wharf, London, 4 Apr. 1738 **Samuel Savage**; named 1741 in father's will as wife of Samuel Savage of London, weaver.
 - 7.2. **Elizabeth Fann**; married at St Benet's, Paul's Wharf, London, 17 Oct. 1734 **Henry Hall**; named 1741 in father's will as wife of Henry Hall, citizen and apothecary of London.
 - 7.3. **Hannah Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks 17 May 1708; bur. at Sevenoaks 26 Feb. 1715.
 - 7.4. **Day Fann** (son); bap. at Sevenoaks 22 Oct. 1710; bur. at Sevenoaks 25 Mar. 1715.
 - 7.5. **Sarah Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks 16 Mar. 1712; named 1741 in father's will as youngest dau. (unmarried).
 - 7.6. **James Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks 24 May and bur. 31 May 1713.
 - 7.7. **Isaac Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks 10 Jul. 1715.
 - 7.8. **Isaesday Fann**; bap. at Sevenoaks — Aug. 1720.
8. **Lydia Fann**; bap. at Frant 18 Feb. 1682; named 1702 in her father's will (to receive £3 p.a.); married at Frant 3 Mar. 1709 **John Weston** of Dallington.
9. **Anne Fann**; bap. at Frant 9 Jan. 1685; named 1702 in her father's will (to receive £60); married at Frant 11 Oct. 1705 **William Banks** of Frant.

7. The Ovenden Family of Rotherfield

THOMAS OVENDEN of Boarshead, Rotherfield; bap. at Rotherfield 16 Aug. 1670, son of Thomas and Joan Ovenden; manor of Rotherfield 7 Dec. 1671 presented as heir to his father and guardianship granted to Christopher Cripps, his death presented 19 Apr. 1750; rated for lands at Boarshead (1693)–1730, continuing for reduced lands at Boarshead until death; bur. at Rotherfield 26 Apr. 1749; will dated 28 Oct. 1742 and proved at Lewes 29 May 1749 (ESRO, W/A58.42); married (1) by licence at Framfield ('of Rotherfield') 26 Feb. 1695 **Elizabeth Paige** of Mayfield (who was bur. at Rotherfield 12 Feb. 1733); married (2) at Withyham 16 Jul. 1734 **Mary Slaughterford** ('Slaterford'), widow (who was bur. at Rotherfield 26 Mar. 1748; see Rotherfield manor court book 14 Apr. 1748, where she is identified as formerly widow of William Slaughterford); had issue (by Elizabeth):

1. **Thomas Ovenden** of the Rocks Farm, Boarshead, Rotherfield; bap. at Rotherfield 20 Aug. 1696; rated for the Rocks etc. at Boarshead 1730 until death, and for lands at Boarshead late of his father 1730 until death; bur. at Rotherfield 15 Oct. 1740 'Thomas Ovenden the younger at Boarsheadstrete'; admon. granted at Lewes 21 Nov. 1740 to widow Dorothy (ESRO, W/B17.79v); married ***Dorothy** (who was rated for lands late of her husband 1740–1761, and was bur. at Rotherfield 12 Aug. 1784); had issue:
 - 1.1. **Elizabeth Ovenden**; bap. at Rotherfield 27 Dec. 1729; named in will of brother Thomas 1790 as 'widow'; married at Rotherfield 28 Feb. 1764 **William Taylor**; issue included Elizabeth, named in will of uncle Thomas Ovenden 1790 as executor and heir to his lands, and as the wife of Edward Okill Dadswell of Crowborough schoolmaster.
 - 1.2. ***Thomas Ovenden** of Boarshead, farmer; bap. at Rotherfield 19 Feb. 1733; named in will of his grandfather Thomas Ovenden 1742; rated for lands at Boarshead late of parents (1764) until death; bur. at Rotherfield 8 Oct. 1791; will dated 7 Jan. 1790 and proved at Lewes 12 Oct. 1791 (ESRO, W/A66.217).
 - 1.3. **Anne Ovenden**; bap. at Rotherfield 26 Oct. 1737; named in will of brother Thomas 1790 as sister Ann Hoath; married (1) at Rotherfield 23 May 1771 **Robert Dadswell**; issue included Robert Dadswell named in the will of his uncle Thomas Ovenden 1790.

2. ***Elizabeth Ovenden**; bap. at Rotherfield 27 Dec. 1697; married at Pembury (Kent) ('of Speldhurst') 18 Jan. 1728 **John Turner** 'of All Saints, Lewes' (see *Turner alias Fann*).

3. ***Anne Ovenden**; bap. at Rotherfield 30 Apr. 1700; named in father's will 1742 as wife of Thomas Moon of Rotherfield; bur. at Rotherfield 23 Apr. 1793 'Ann widow of Thomas Moon'; married at All Saints, Lewes ('of Rotherfield') 29 Apr. 1730 **Thomas Moon** of Mayfield (who was bur. at Rotherfield 8 Jan. 1768 'of Owlsbery'); had issue:

- 3.1. **Thomas Moon**, bap. at Mayfield 4 May 1731.
 - 3.2. **William Moon**, bap. at Mayfield 5 Dec. 1732.
 - 3.3. **John Moon**, bap. at Mayfield 7 Dec. 1734.
 - 3.4. **Anne Moon**, bap. at Rotherfield 9 Apr. 1737.
 - 3.5. **Mary Moon**, bap. at Rotherfield 20 Sep. 1739.
 - 3.6. **Sampson Moon**, bap. at Rotherfield 22 May 1742.
4. ***William Ovenden** of Salters Green, Mayfield; bap. at Rotherfield 1 Jul. 1703; rated 1730 until death for an estate called Salters at Rotherfield, and 1733 until death for a farm (at Salters Green), Mayfield; named in father's will 1742 as executor

(proved 1749), and as heir to a freehold estate at Boarshead, Rotherfield; manor of Rotherfield 11 Apr. 1751 admitted to 6a. land of the farlingate of Wade as heir of his father, and death presented 30 Apr. 1780; bur. at Mayfield 2 Nov. 1779 'William Ovenden yeoman'; married by 1740 ***Elizabeth** (who paid rates as widow Ovenden until 1789); had issue:

- 4.1. **Elizabeth Ovenden**, bap. at Mayfield 4 Jun. 1740.
- 4.2. **Mary Ovenden**, bap. at Mayfield 24 Sep. 1742.
- 4.3. **William Ovenden** of Salters Green, Mayfield; bap. at Mayfield 13 Aug. 1744; manor of Rotherfield 4 Apr. 1782 admitted as heir to his father to 6a. land of the farlingate of Wade; rated 1790 until death for farm at Salters Green, Mayfield (described 1797 as part in Rotherfield); bur. at Mayfield 15 Jan. 1809, aged 64; admon. granted to widow Mary at Lewes 11 May 1809 (ESRO, W/SM/D11.172); married at Mayfield 21 Aug. 1768 **Mary Wood**; had issue (entries at Mayfield):
(eleven children, 1768–88, not further traced here)
- 4.4. **Sarah Ovenden**; bap. at Mayfield 9 Feb. 1747.
- 4.5. **Hannah Ovenden**; bap. at Mayfield 23 Nov. 1748.
5. **Mary Ovenden**; bap. at Rotherfield 12 Aug. 1706; bur. at

Little Horsted 20 Mar. 1745; married at Frant ('of Rotherfield') 15 Feb. 1733 ***Richard Hill** of Little Horsted, farmer (who was appraiser of the inventory of his brother-in-law Thomas Ovenden 1740; paid land tax (1750) until death for lands (Wicklans Farm) and Old Farm at Little Horsted; bur. at Little Horsted 18 Jul. 1774; his will dated 17 Dec. 1772 and proved at Lewes 26 Jun. 1775 (ESRO, W/A63.334)); had issue:

- 5.1. ***Charles Hill**; bap. at Little Horsted 29 Jan. 1734; apprenticed 1 Jan. 1749 for 7 years to Thomas Frewen of Rye surgeon; sometime naval surgeon; married at Yalding (Kent) 17 Nov. 1763 **Mary Underwood**; named in father's will 1772 as of Yalding, Kent; had issue (bap. at Yalding):
 Polly (1770), Thomas (1772).
- 5.2. **Richard Hill**; bap. at Little Horsted 21 Apr. 1736; bur. at Little Horsted 8 Jul. 1738.
- 5.3. ***Mary ('Molly') Hill**; bap. at Little Horsted 27 Dec. 1742; named in father's will 1772 as wife of **Henry Curde** (or **Cord**) of Little Horsted (who paid land tax for lands formerly of Richard Hill 1775–78).
- 5.4. **Elizabeth Hill**; bap. 16 Mar. and bur. 2 Apr. 1745 at Little Horsted.