

**The Knapman Family of Throwleigh,
Drewsteignton and South Tawton,
on the northern edge of Dartmoor,
from 1500 to the Civil War**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Family

This is an account of those branches of the Knapman family that were alive between 1500 and around 1650, whose origins can be traced back to William Knapman of Throwleigh (c.1500 to 1563), a landowner and member of the minor gentry. He almost certainly moved to Throwleigh from elsewhere, but we know that he was being assessed for tax there by 1524, and sufficiently established by 1532 to be elected to the Stannary Parliament. By the end of the 16th century his five grandsons and their families were the only Knapmans on the northern margins of Dartmoor for whom there is documentary evidence. They had interests in tin mining, land owning and farming.

There were other Knapmans to the south of Dartmoor (and elsewhere in Devon) in the 16th and 17th centuries, and although they may have been related to 'our' Knapmans, I have not found clear documentary evidence to support a link.

Map: The 'home territory' of William Knapman and his family (1765)



Source: Benjamin Donn's 1 inch to the mile survey map of 1765. This is the earliest detailed map of the area that I have found. The whole map can be found on Wikipedia.

In another document entitled 'The Wider Knapman Family: An account of all known instances of families and individuals named Knapman (or close variants of the name) from about 1650 to 1850, and their origins, where known' I have attempted to trace all post-Civil War English Knapman families for which I have been able to find evidence (not just the descendants of William of Throwleigh), plus their male descendants. It also includes such evidence as I have found, however fragmentary, of very early Knapmans, almost all of them living in Devon, in an attempt to see whether the various groups and individuals might credibly be linked.

That document, which is referred to below for convenience as 'Knapman families: 1650-1850', tracks the Knapman surname wherever it may have been carried, whether in Devon, elsewhere in Britain or overseas, and it includes several families which link in to this account of William Knapman of Throwleigh. The 1841 English census records around 200 persons with the Knapman surname who can claim descent from the original William of Throwleigh with reasonable confidence.

As a separate exercise I have sought to trace all descendants (working down the female lines as well as the male ones) of my father's great, great, great grandfather, Arthur Knapman (1720 to 1811), almost certainly a descendant of the original William of Throwleigh, in his case via William's grandson John (see Chapter 6)¹.

The text of this present document has been organised as a series of Chapters, most of them linked to specific family trees.

- This Chapter provides an introduction and some historical context to what follows.
- Chapter 2 deals with the first William Knapman and the next three generations of his family, from 1500 to about 1635, including the offspring of his younger children, and those of his eldest son, the second William. It ends with the third William (c.1573 to c.1634).
- Chapter 3 deals with the descendants of the third William. His main male line passed through his son, Alexander, and three further generations, before dying out late in the 17th century.
- Chapter 4 deals with the family of Francis Knapman, the younger brother of the third William. The main male line descending from him also died out late in the 17th century.
- Chapter 5 deals with the family of James Knapman, the third son of the second William. All male lines descending from him also died out late in the 17th century.
- Chapter 6 deals with the families of the other two sons of the second William: John and Edward, up to the aftermath of the Civil War. Several of the families identified in these two chapters are then traced further in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850'.
- Finally, Chapter 7 presents the family trees on which most of the foregoing chapters are based.

The origins of the name Knapman

As a child I was told that the name Knapman was associated with flint knapping (which involved the making of arrow and spear points, and subsequently the supply of strikers for flintlock firearms and the production of building materials). Knapping was an important activity in flint bearing locations, such as Brandon in Suffolk, and some parts of Norfolk and Sussex. However, the 1841 census shows that almost 88% of the 471 Knapmans (or close variants of the name) in Great Britain at that time were living in Devon, while there were no Knapmans in Suffolk or Sussex, and just one family group in Norfolk, who had brought the name from Devon. At that time there were also 112 persons called Knapper in Britain, 91 of them in Staffordshire; 1,051 called Knapp (over half of them in Middlesex, Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Hampshire); and 564 called Napper (two thirds of them in Sussex, Somerset and Middlesex). If anyone took their name from knapping, these seem to me to be stronger candidates.

If the name does not come from flint knapping, the most likely derivation seems to be the term knap which is widely used in Devon to signify a hill, or the crest of a hill, and which has its origins

¹ Although some of the links, particularly that between the third and fourth generations after William are not definitively proven, they are highly likely.

in the Old English word *cnæpp* meaning top, and possibly the Old Norse word *knapp* meaning knob. This conclusion is endorsed by 'Patronymica Britannica'², which describes Knapman as meaning "a dweller upon a knap or hill". However, this begs the question of why the name is not more widely distributed.

The principal sources

In late 2006 I received, via Joan Loader, my father's cousin, a copy of a very substantial Knapman family tree going back to William Knapman of Throwleigh which had been drawn up by John Knapman of Plymouth in 1988. This tree is widely referred to in messages on Knapman-related internet genealogy websites, and is likely to be familiar to many family historians with an interest in the Knapman surname. I have subsequently received from John Knapman a more detailed, and updated, edition of that tree, and extensive supporting information. I cannot overstate the debt that I owe to his researches and his very generous approach to sharing the fruits of his labours.

The early parts of the tree, including our ancestor John, can be confirmed by reference to page 518 of Volume II of 'The Visitations of Devon comprising the Herald's Visitations of 1531, 1564 and 1620, with additions by Lt Col J L Vivian'³. The family trees from the 1620 visitation can also be found on line⁴, as can an equivalent publication on the Herald's Cornish visitations. An alternative source document is 'Devonshire Pedigrees, recorded in the Herald's Visitation of 1620' produced in 1859-61 by John Tuckett. Some background on the purpose and significance of the Herald's visitations is given later.

All of the Herald's information about the Knapman family came from the visitation of 1620, suggesting that the family came to sufficient prominence to be awarded arms at some point between 1564 (the year after the original William's death) and 1620.

Lt Col Vivian made a few post-1620 additions to the family tree drawn up following the Herald's visitation, but not many. However, the existence in the National Archives of wills for James Knapman the elder of Drewsteignton (died in 1593), his older brother Alexander (died in 1618), Alexander's oldest son William (died in 1634) and James' grandson James (died in 1644) provide valuable supplementary information. There is also an 'inquisition post mortem' (a precursor of the process of proving a will) in the National Archives for the original William Knapman, which confirms that he died in 1563. It is in Latin, and written in somewhat stylised script. However, a translated abstract is available (see the details which are given later) which names a long string of large landholdings totalling well over 1,000 acres in the parishes of Throwleigh, Gidleigh, South Tawton, Okehampton, Mortonhamstead and Drewsteignton.

The medievalgenealogy.org.uk website explains that 'inquisitions post mortem' were held following the death of a direct tenant of the crown, to establish what lands were held, and who should succeed to them. However and whenever he obtained his land, this confirms that by the time he died the first William was a man of considerable substance.

Unfortunately many more Devon wills, including about 40 which would have been of direct interest to me, were destroyed by fire in Exeter in 1942 (during a World War II bombing raid). However, various lists (or 'calendars') of the lost wills still exist⁵, from which names, dates and parish links can be drawn. There has also been an extremely helpful project, accessible via the Devon pages of the genuki.org.uk website (referred to hereafter more simply as the genuki website), to consolidate information on all known Devon wills, and where to find those that survive. I have also drawn widely on parish records, both directly via the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC, formerly the Devon Records Office, or DRO), and via transcriptions (including those of the Devon & Cornwall Record Society, which are also in the DHC) and the records which can be found on the internet which I refer to by their old name, of the International Genealogical Register (IGI).

² Source: Patronymica Britannica: A dictionary of the family names of the United Kingdom, by Mark Anthony Lowes, 1860, accessible on-line via Google Books.

³ This book was published by Henry S Eland of Exeter in 1895, and one copy is held in the British Library's Harleian collection. I refer to this book later as Vivian (1895). The Tuckett volume referred to later in the same paragraph is also held in the British Library.

⁴ Source: The archive.org website. Put the terms '1620 visitation devon' into this website's own search box.

⁵ The one that I have used can be found in full on the internet, and is entitled 'Calendars of Wills and Administrations relating to the counties of Devon and Cornwall, proved in the Court of the Principal Registry of the Bishop of Exeter, 1559-1799, and of Devon only, proved in the Court of the Archdeaconry of Exeter, 1540-1799'. It was edited by Edward Alexander Fry and published in 1908 by William Brendon & Son Ltd for the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art. See also the 'Devon Wills Project', the results of which are accessible via genuki.org.uk, the UK and Ireland Genealogy website.

One thing that is very striking about the records in the National Archives (and elsewhere, other than some parish registers), is that the spelling of the name Knapman, unlike many others, is remarkably consistent. Although there are several instances of Napman in parish records, the most obvious exception to this general rule that I have found is a single reference from the middle of the 15th century to a 'John Cnappeman' from west Devon, who may or may not have been related to the Knapmans of Throwleigh.

Another vital source of information is the collection of papers linked to lawsuits which can be consulted at the National Archives at Kew. I have attempted to identify (generally in footnotes) all those from which information has been drawn, but there are many others. I have seen several of these papers, but most of the information referred to relies on the extensive researches and transcriptions of John Knapman of Plymouth. In most cases the papers would comprise a sworn complaint by one party (often described as the complainant), followed by replies from the defendants, and separate evidence from third party witnesses. Persons making statements often described themselves as the 'orator' or 'oratrix', or occasionally as the 'deponent' or 'deft'.

As well as sporadic lawsuits and land deals (which can only be expected to turn up evidence of relatively well-off individuals) there is a sequence of 16th and 17th century sources⁶ which provide evidence not unlike that from censuses, in that they set out to record everyone who was deemed liable to pay taxes to the Crown, or to fight if England was invaded. The tax assessments also indicate the relative wealth of all of the named individuals. Because the originals are not perfectly preserved, even the most complete are not fully comprehensive, so absence of evidence cannot be deemed to provide evidence of absence.

In date order, these start with the 'Devon Lay Subsidy Rolls' for 1524-27 and 1543-45. Both show William Knapman of Throwleigh to have been the richest Knapman in Devon when they were compiled, despite his relative youth in 1524. The next source is the 'Devon muster roll for 1569', the purpose of which was to list all those aged over 16 who could be called on to fight the Spanish if necessary, as well as those who would be expected to provide cash and equipment. Because the Stannary Parliament was responsible for such matters, there are no returns for 25 tin-producing parishes, including Throwleigh, Drewsteignton, Gidleigh and Chagford.

The next five sources are all tax-related lists, albeit incomplete. They cover tax assessments drawn up in 1581, 1642 and 1647, and then (the most complete of the four) the '1660 Poll Tax Roll', and finally the '1674 Hearth Tax Returns'. By 1660, by far the main concentration of tax-paying Knapmans was in Throwleigh, Chagford and South Tawton. Unfortunately the '1674 Hearth Tax Returns' do not cover Throwleigh, Drewsteignton, Gidleigh, Chagford or South Tawton, but they do reveal Knapmans elsewhere in Devon. There is a quite separate, and apparently complete, transcription of the 1671/72 Hearth Tax returns for Exeter which can be seen in the DHC. This does not show any Knapmans living in Exeter at that time.

A wide range of sources agree that by 1620 the Knapman family was active in the tin mining industry on Dartmoor. This link to tin mining provides the background to one of two extensive articles on the Knapman family from the Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art (TDA). These articles in turn provide helpful background to some of the lawsuits and wills: one exploring the background to the tin works at Bradford Pool ('The Bradford Pool Case' by Lynette M Costello, LLB⁷), and another ('The Ancient Family of Wyke of North Wyke, Co Devon' by The Reverend W Wykes-Finch, MA, JP⁸) which I refer to subsequently as 'The Wykes Family article', and which explores the history and internal struggles of the Wykes family, into which the Knapmans married, and with whom they did business. Further information on this family, and on their neighbours (including the Knapmans) can be found in the TDA in articles submitted by Ethel Lega-Weekes. I have also benefitted greatly from information provided directly to me by Dr Tom Greeves, a leading historian of the Dartmoor tin industry, and of Dartmoor more generally.

There are many other much shorter items relating to members of the Knapman family in the TDA, all of which can easily be consulted at the DHC in Exeter (among other places).

The introduction to the Wykes Family article provides the following words of warning regarding family history, which seem to me to be highly relevant, and well worth quoting.

⁶ For all of the information in this section I have relied on transcripts, most of them produced by T L Stoaate, which are published on CD by westcountrybooks.com in Paignton.

⁷ 'The Bradford Pool Case', by Lynette M Costello. TDA Vol.113, pp.59-77. December 1981.

⁸ This paper was read at Sidmouth in July 1903 and printed in TDA Vol.35, pp.360-425.

"Probably in nothing do men more slip, or allow preconceived ideas to dominate their conclusions, than in the writing of family history. Too often a pleasing assumption speedily becomes a boasted fact: the imagination is feasted with indulgence, and sentimental adornment imposes on the unwary and sometimes 'deceives the very elect'. A single-minded devotion to the investigation of truth gradually falls into abeyance; the desire to convert the pride of fiction into unassailable fact grows apace, and the result becomes worse than misleading". In other words, caveat lector!

The Herald's visitations

By the 15th century, the use and abuse of arms was becoming widespread in England. One of the duties of the Garter Principal King of Arms and his 'officers of arms' (who comprised Kings of Arms, Heralds and Pursuivants) was to survey and record the armorial bearings and pedigrees of those using coats of arms or the titles of knight, esquire, or gentleman, and to correct any irregularities discovered. The officers of arms toured England for such purposes, particularly during the 16th century, and had authority to enter homes and churches, and to "... *put down or otherwise deface at (their) discretion ... those arms unlawfully used*"⁹.

Sheriffs and mayors were obliged to assist the King of Arms, or his deputy, in gathering the necessary information. When one of them visited a county, his presence was proclaimed by presenting the Royal Commission, and all people using titles or arms were summoned to the visitation bringing their arms, and proof of their right to bear them. Their ancestry would also be recorded, as would any official grant of arms that had been made. Arms which predated the College of Arms would be confirmed. Not all gentlemen were permitted to bear arms, but anyone bearing arms was 'at least' a gentleman, a term which was never properly defined, but which generally signified that the user did not need to work in order to support himself and his family.

However, as the Encyclopaedia Britannica cautions (in its entry on Genealogy) "... *to the Heralds these visitations were rare opportunities of obtaining fees from the visited, and the value of the pedigrees registered is notably unequal. Although it has always been the boast of the College of Arms that visitation records may be produced as evidence in the law courts, few of these officially recorded genealogies are wholly trustworthy. Many of the officers of arms who recorded them were, even by the testimony of their comrades, of indifferent character, and even when the visiting Herald was an honorable and industrious man he had little time to spare for the investigation of any single genealogy. Deeds and evidence in private hands may have been hastily examined in some instances - indeed, a Herald's summons invites their production - and monuments were often viewed in churches, but for the most part men's memories and the hearsay of the countryside made the backbone of the pedigree. The further the pedigree is carried beyond the memory of living men the less trustworthy it becomes.*"

The Knapman arms are described in Tuckett's 'Devonshire Pedigrees' (referenced above) as "... *Or on a cross gules between four Cornish choughs proper. Five blocks of tin marked with the letter W. (granted by William Harvey Clarenceux)*". Another description, given in an article in 'Devon Notes and Queries'¹⁰ describes the W as "... *not a Roman capital, the effect being more of a double U in 'block' type*" and describes the lower points as being "... *encircled by an annulet*". The 'Devon Notes and Queries' description also uses the term 'sa' instead of 'gules' (which is odd, because 'sa' is an abbreviation for 'sable', the heraldic term for black, whereas 'gules' means ruby red. 'Or' definitely means gold, or yellow). I have only seen black and white illustrations of the arms, but if rendered in full colour they should contain a ruby red (or black) cross on a gold background, with the four choughs set against the four segments of gold background, and the blocks of tin and Ws arranged on the cross. In the black and white illustration that I have seen, the lower points of the W symbol are encircled by an oval (the effect being that of a W standing on a disk, viewed from an oblique angle).

The Herald's 1620 visitation of Devon recorded about 450 pedigrees. To put this in some sort of context, the population of Devon at that time was about 300,000¹¹, so if each pedigree recorded by

⁹ Source: J L Vivian's 'The Visitations of Cornwall, comprising the Visitations of 1530, 1573 and 1620' cited by Wikipedia in their entry on Heraldic visitations.

¹⁰ 'Devon Notes and Queries: A quarterly journal devoted to the local history, biography and antiquities of the county of Devon' edited by P F S Amery, John S Amery and J Brooking Rowe, published by James G Commin, 230 High Street, Exeter. See Vol II Jan 1902 to Oct 1903, p.72, for an item by C Lega-Weekes. Several volumes of 'Devon Notes and Queries' can be found on the internet at archive.org.

¹¹ Population estimates drawn up at the time of the 1841 census can be found on the histpop.org website. These put the population of Devon at 268,291 in 1600 (6.0% of the English total), and 329,873 (6.3%) in

the Herald contained an average of 30 persons, this would have represented almost one person in twenty of those then living in the county.

Tin production on Dartmoor

Dartmoor was at one time almost as important as Cornwall as a source of tin. By the 16th century, although tin production on Dartmoor was in decline, it was still of some importance. The oldest and simplest form of mining was known as 'streaming', and involved collecting alluvial tin directly from stream beds without the need for complicated tools. In the 16th and 17th centuries there was some open cast mining on Dartmoor, in which trenches were dug into the veins of tin ore, and evidence of this technique can still be found in the form of gullies and spoil heaps. The ore which was collected in this way was smelted in 'blowing houses' to create 'white tin'. So-called 'free tinner' could work the land for tin, in exchange for one fifteenth of the value of the refined tin, payable to the landowner.

Everything related to tin production and refining was controlled by Stannary law and the Stannary Parliament. Originally there was a single Stannary Parliament for Devon and Cornwall, but by the 16th century each county had its own administrative structures. Dartmoor's Stannary Parliament met occasionally and irregularly¹² at Crockern Tor, a remote spot with a natural amphitheatre close to the centre of the moor, just under a mile north of the settlement of Two Bridges. Each of the four Stannary towns (Chagford, Ashburton, Plympton and Tavistock) sent 24 members, known as 'jurates' to the Parliament. Justice, which extended well beyond matters directly related to tin production (but not to cases affecting life, limb or land), could be harsh, and there was a Stannary prison at Lydford Castle. The Stannary Courts were abolished in 1836.

Chagford had been a Stannary town since 1328, and by the early part of the 17th century the Knapman family was a significant player in the local tin industry (hence the design of the coat of arms). An article in 'Devon Notes and Queries' (see the earlier footnote) says that the Knapmans "... were, with the Battishills of West Wyke, the Endacotts of Throwleigh¹³, the Lethbridges of Nymet Tracey, the Whyddons of Chagford, the Wykes of North Wyke and other Wykes in South Tawton, and other families of that parish, Stannators of the Stannary town of Chagford". This is confirmed in 'The Dartmoor Stannaries: tin mining on Dartmoor in the Middle Ages 1100 to 1600'¹⁴, which describes the relevant branches of the Knapman and Endacott families of Throwleigh and the Whiddons of Chagford as "... minor gentry ... who owned mines and blowing mills in the Okehampton area during the 16th and 17th centuries" (and these are almost the only families identified by name). In part it explains the absence of the nobility and richer landowners by reference to a 1494 ruling in the Stannary Parliament "... forbidding owners of land above the yearly value of £10 to acquire any new interest in tinworks".

Further evidence linked to named individuals is given later, particularly in Chapter 2. This draws on a number of sources, including in particular 'Four Devon Stannaries: a comparative study of tinworking in the sixteenth century' by Dr Tom Greeves¹⁵ and two articles in the TDA of 1949 and 1950 by H P R Finberg. Dr Greeves has also sent me supplementary information in a personal capacity, which has been very helpful.

The land market in Devon, 1535 to 1555

The market for land in the 16th century was heavily influenced by two factors: recurrent outbreaks of plague, which affected tenants and landowners alike; and the dissolution of the monasteries, which took place in the late 1530s.

The plague continually 'freed up' land, and concentrated property in the hands of the lucky survivors. Well after the Black Death (1348 to 1350) there were recurrences of plague in Devon. The genuki website¹⁶ records that "... although the locality of Exeter is peculiarly healthy, it has at various periods suffered severely from plagues and other fatal epidemics. It is said to have

1630. Devon's share of the English population started to fall noticeably in the first half of the 18th century, reaching 4.6% by 1801.

¹² The Parliamentary sessions for which documentary evidence survives were held in 1494, 1510, 1532, 1533, 1552, 1567, 1574, 1600, 1688 and 1703.

¹³ This family produced John Endecott, the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay (in 1629).

¹⁴ By Paul Hambling, Orchard Publications, Newton Abbott, 1995. This slim volume is available in the British Library.

¹⁵ This forms a chapter in 'Tudor and Stuart Devon', published in 1992.

¹⁶ See the genuki website. The Devon pages are particularly informative.

increased greatly in population in the reign of Athelstan, by the influx of strangers; but in the Domesday Survey, 48 houses which had paid taxes are stated to have been then in ruins. The city was visited by famine and pestilence in 1234, and the two following years. Fatal pestilences are recorded to have happened in 1378, 1438, 1479, 1503, 1546, 1551, 1569 and 1586. The plague was very fatal here in 1590, 1603, and 1625, but the city appears to have escaped the great plague of 1665".

The influence of the dissolution of the monasteries was probably more dramatic, because of the relatively large amount of land released over a period of a few years starting in 1536. In Devon this coincided with a boom in the cloth industry, and an unbroken sequence of eight good harvests, from 1536 to 1543. An article in 'The Agricultural History Review'¹⁷ reckons that at least a quarter of all the manors in Devon changed hands between 1536 and 1558, some because they were sold by the Crown, but many because landowners were taking the opportunity to consolidate their land, and selling peripheral properties in order to be able to buy newly available land closer to where they lived.

The same article states that the 'élite' class (meaning those of the rank of esquire and above) received 102 Devon manors from the Crown over this period, but also made net sales of at least 97 manors on the open land market. Whereas there had previously been a prejudice against selling family assets, land which had been recently purchased was viewed slightly differently, being seen more as the personal property of the buyer, and less as being held in trust for future generations of the wider family.

A fascinating insight into the changes in society, and the shifts of wealth and power, at this time can be found in A L Rowse's 1950 book 'The England of Elizabeth: The structure of society'¹⁸.

Religious and political turmoil, 1549 to 1665

The dissolution of the monasteries in the middle of the 16th century also set off a process of religious unrest which provided one of the long-term causes of the English Civil Wars a century later. My principal source for the pre-Civil War events noted below has been Wikipedia. Other sources are identified individually.

In 1549, under Edward VI, the church authorities introduced the Book of Common Prayer, reflecting the theology of the English Reformation. The Act of Uniformity (of the same year) made it illegal, from Whitsunday, to use the old Latin prayer books. On Whitmonday the parishioners of Sampford Courtenay, about 5 miles from Throwleigh, compelled their priest to revert to the old service. Justices arrived at the next service to enforce the change, leading to an altercation in which William Hellyons, a proponent of the change, was run through with a pitchfork and killed, on the steps of the church house.

Following this confrontation a group of parishioners from Sampford Courtenay decided to march to Crediton and on to Exeter to protest at the introduction of the new prayer book. As they marched they gained large numbers of Catholic supporters and became a significant force. Although a number of the inhabitants of Exeter sent a message of support to the rebels, the city closed its gates, and the rebels besieged it for over a month.

In both Devon and Cornwall, the issue of the Book of Common Prayer seems to have been the straw that broke the camel's back. A general sense of oppression and the rapid enclosure of common lands (particularly in Cornwall) was compounded by two years of rampant inflation, in which wheat prices had quadrupled, and by attacks on the traditions of the Church, which was felt to be central to the rural community. All of this eventually led to an explosion of anger. In Cornwall, a rebel army gathered at the town of Bodmin, and then crossed the Tamar into Devon to link up with the Sampford Courtenay rebels. Their slogan "... *Kill all the gentleman and we will have the Six Articles up again and ceremonies as they were in King Henry's time*" highlights the joint religious and social aims of the rebellion.

In London, Edward VI and his Privy Council became alarmed. The Lord Protector (Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset) ordered one of the Privy Councillors, Sir Gawain Carew¹⁹, to pacify the

¹⁷ 'The Disposal of Crown Lands and the Devon Land Market, 1536-58' by John Kew, available on-line from bahs.org.uk.

¹⁸ First published by Macmillan. Cardinal edition of 1973. ISBN 0 351 18062 1.

¹⁹ His name occurs in various lawsuits involving the Knapmans and Richard Powell, whose daughter Maud married William Knapman a century later.

rebels. At the same time Lord John Russell was ordered to take an army, composed mainly of German and Italian mercenaries, to impose a military solution.

Confrontations then took place at Fenny Bridges, near Honiton, and Clyst St Mary, just outside Exeter. The result of the Fenny Bridges engagement was bloody but inconclusive, with around 300 reported killed on each side. At Clyst St Mary over 1,000 rebels were reported to have been shot or burned to death. Worse was to follow: 900 bound and gagged prisoners had their throats slit (in 10 minutes) on Clyst Heath, and 2,000 died the next day (5 August) at the battle of Clyst Heath, after the rebels had been outmanoeuvred and surrounded.

Some of the rebels escaped northwards up the Exe valley, but they were overtaken by Sir Gawain Carew, who left the corpses of their leaders hanging on gibbets from Dunster to Bath. The surviving Cornishmen together with others from Devon re-formed at Sampford Courtenay. Lord John Russell advanced with his troops, now reinforced with a strong contingent of Welshmen, and after a desperate fight they stormed the village on the evening of 17 August, and the death toll was a massive 1,300.

In total over 5,500 people lost their lives in the rebellion. By order of the Lord Protector and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, English and mercenary forces then moved throughout Devon and into Cornwall and executed or killed many more people before the bloodshed finally ceased.

In the face of such suppression it is perhaps not so surprising that religious dissenters, and particularly those able to operate within the structures of the official church, found ready support in Devon. By 1625 the term 'dissenters' included the emerging Puritan movement. Being barred from any profession that required official religious conformity, Puritans became instrumental in a number of new industries. They dominated foreign trade and were eager to colonize the New World. With the flourishing of the trans-Atlantic trade with America, Puritans in England were growing quite wealthy. At the same time the artisan classes had become increasingly Puritan. Therefore, religious tensions combined with the economic and political causes of the English Civil War (tax levies, liberalization of royal charters, the purchasing of peerages, increasing discontent between the House of Lords and the people, and rebellion over Charles I's attempt to introduce a Divine Right of Kings), to produce a general dispute that pitted Church of England 'Cavaliers' against Puritan 'Roundheads'. Puritan factions played a key role in the Parliamentary victory and later became a majority in Parliament, after the withdrawal of Royalists and the forcible exclusion of those who wished to continue negotiating with the King.

All of the Knapmans for whom I have found evidence one way or the other were sympathetic to the Parliamentary cause, and to non-conformity in general.

The first English Civil War lasted from 1642 to 1646, when Charles I surrendered to the Scots. After he escaped, the second Civil War broke out in 1648, leading to his re-capture and execution in 1649, and the final consolidation of parliamentary power in 1651. Two years later, Cromwell dissolved the Rump Parliament, and declared himself Lord Protector and head of the English Commonwealth.

Although few major Civil War engagements were fought in the South West, there was plenty of low-level conflict, particularly towards the end of the first Civil War, culminating in a major battle at Torrington. Before this, however, and when things were going better for the Royalists, they had attempted to consolidate their general control of Devon by forcing citizens to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. This met with much opposition, and 500 Exonians (and no doubt others from the countryside) were forced into exile in Parliamentary London.

However, as the tide of the war turned, General Fairfax and the New Model Army moved westwards, entering Devon in October 1645. (The source for this, and for the next few paragraphs which deal with the military conflict, is the excellent british-civil-wars.co.uk website).

The Prince of Wales, Captain-General of the West, had withdrawn to Exeter after Lord Goring's defeat at Langport in July, and as the Parliamentary forces under Fairfax approached, the Prince moved further west to Truro. As the Royalists' morale deteriorated Lord Goring himself abandoned the Prince and fled to France. In mid-October Fairfax captured Tiverton after a short siege. With forces blockading the Royalist stronghold of Exeter, Fairfax's army quartered around Tiverton and Crediton. Then Cromwell himself arrived from his campaign in southern England on 24 October to bring the New Model Army back up to full strength.

Lord Goring's successor as commander of the western Royalist army was Lord Wentworth. While the Prince remained near the Cornish border, Wentworth quartered his cavalry for the winter on Bovey Heath, just outside Bovey Tracey, 14 miles south-west of Exeter. On the afternoon of 9 January 1646, Cromwell led a surprise raid on Wentworth's camp, entering Bovey Tracey from the north. Encountering no opposition his forces swept through the town, capturing a party of off-duty officers and troopers taking their ease. As dusk fell Cromwell attacked the main camp. The unprepared Royalists put up a token resistance but their defensive embankments did not cover the approach from the town, and they were quickly overwhelmed. A large number were killed or taken prisoner; the rest retreated to Tavistock.

The routing of Wentworth's cavalry left no Royalist forces in the vicinity of Exeter. Rather than close in on the city immediately, however, Fairfax advanced towards Plymouth, which had been a Parliamentary stronghold since the beginning of the war and was regularly under threat. After forcing the Royalists to abandon their siege of Plymouth on 12 January, Fairfax turned back towards Exeter, and on 18 January his troops stormed and captured Dartmouth and its surrounding outposts. The surrender of Powderham Castle on 26 January completed the encirclement of Exeter.

The third commander of the Royalist western army in as many months, Lord Hopton, advanced into north Devon in an attempt to draw the New Model Army away from the siege of Exeter. When Fairfax learned of the manoeuvre, he marched with 10,000 men (roughly twice as many as Hopton had at his command) towards Torrington, leaving Sir Hardress Waller to cover the siege of Exeter.

After fierce fighting Hopton's Cornish infantry were overwhelmed and retreated into Torrington, pursued by the Roundheads. The Royalist cavalry counter-attacked, and bitter fighting continued in the streets. Then a stray spark ignited the Royalists' store of gunpowder in Torrington church, blowing the roof off and killing many Royalist soldiers and Parliamentary prisoners in and around the church. Falling debris narrowly missed General Fairfax himself. The explosion effectively ended the battle, but in the resulting confusion Lord Hopton and the remnants of the Royalist western army withdrew from Torrington and escaped into Cornwall before the Prince of Wales escaped to the Isles of Scilly, pursued by Parliamentary warships. Lord Hopton surrendered to Fairfax at Truro on 14 March 1646, agreeing to disband the western army and to go into exile.

It was probably after the skirmish at Bovey Tracey that an incident reported in 'Throwleigh: The story of a Dartmoor village'²⁰ occurred. This report says that after Royalists had attacked a contingent of Roundheads near Chagford "... a more or less strenuous scuffle also took place on what has since been called War Cleave, the steep side of the river valley reaching Chagford to the edge of the lands of Wonson manor in this parish". Also, "... a field near the brook seems to have been used as a burial ground by the soldiers, and was afterwards known as Bloody Meadow". Local memories of hostilities between Royalist Chagford and Parliamentary Moretonhampstead are still fresh, 350 years on.

In the Commonwealth period the Church of England was removed from royal control and reorganized to grant greater authority to local congregations, most of which developed in a Puritan and semi-Calvinist direction. However, there was never an official Puritan denomination, and the term itself fell out of use when their movement became the status quo, being replaced by the broader term 'non-conformist'.

The Commonwealth government tolerated a somewhat broader debate on doctrinal issues than had previously been possible, and considerable theological and political conflict between non-conformist factions continued throughout the 1650s.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 the Church of England attempted to re-assert its authority as the official English church. In 1662, the 'Great Ejection' followed the passage of the Act of Uniformity in England, and around 2,000 non-conformist ministers were forced to resign from their positions as Church of England clergy. Persecution of dissenters then occurred sporadically under the terms of what later became known as The Clarendon Code²¹. This persecution was somewhat abated under James II and then, after the Glorious Revolution, under William and Mary.

²⁰ By Emmie Varwell, published by Sydney Lee, Exeter, 1938. This book is available in the British Library, among other places.

²¹ The original source cited for this in Wikipedia is Gatiss, 'The Tragedy of 1662'.

The changing value of money, 1500 to the present day

Several of the wills and lawsuits from the 16th and 17th century from which information is drawn mention sums of money, but it is very difficult to work out how much such sums would be worth in today's money. The most reliable source that I have found is a 1999 House of Commons Library Research Paper (No.99/20) entitled 'Inflation: the Value of the Pound 1750-1998'. By combining that information with economic statistics covering the period 1999 to 2007 we can estimate how much £100 in 1750 would be worth today. Although we know that this is only a very rough estimate, the data suggest that £10 in 1750 would have been worth about £1,500 in 2007.

For the period 1500 to 1750 there is very little that we can say with certainty, though we know that in 1640 the price of food was about six times what it had been in 1500²². If money had retained its value unchanged over the 100 years to 1750, which seems highly unlikely, £10 in 1550 might be worth between £4,000 and £5,000 in the early 21st century. If its value had been eroded at a similar rate over that same period, the current figure could easily be twice or three times as high.

²² Source: page 2, 'The English Civil War' by Maurice Ashley, Thames & Hudson 1974.

Chapter 2: About 1500 to 1635: The first four Generations, starting with the original William Knapman of Throwleigh

This chapter mainly deals with the individuals shown on Family Tree A, starting with the first William Knapman and his family, paying most attention to his eldest son and heir, the second William. It then deals with the second William's eldest son and heir, Alexander, and his eldest son and heir, the third William. The families of the second William's three other sons are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

Before that I deal briefly with a small number of sightings of persons named Knapman from the area around Throwleigh, which could possibly refer to William's parents.

Very first sightings of Knapmans in the area around Throwleigh

In June 1511 Robert Knapman presented 4 ingots of tin at the Chagford coinage. I owe this information to Dr Tom Greeves, a leading authority on the Dartmoor tin industry. So far I have been unable to find any further reference to Robert, who could have been the father of the first William Knapman of Throwleigh (though see below for an equally plausible alternative).

A board in South Tawton church shows that John Knapman was a churchwarden there in 1528, and this can be confirmed by reference to the Churchwardens' Accounts for the parish, which are held at the DHC, and which give the date of his tenure as 1528/29. This John could well have been either the father or brother of the first William. He may well also be the John Knapman who presented tin at Chagford to the value of 12s 5d in June 1523 and 6s 3d in September of that same year.

However, there is no evidence of a John Knapman on the Lay Subsidy Rolls for South Tawton (or Throwleigh, or Drewsteignton) in 1524-27, suggesting that he may have moved to South Tawton from elsewhere. My suspicion is that he is the same relatively rich individual who had been assessed for tax at Northlew in 1524-27, and therefore of an age to be the father or older brother of the first William Knapman of Throwleigh.

There is then an entry in the card index at the DHC (and formerly in the Westcountry Studies Library) which indicates that in 1542 Sir John Fulford sold some land in Drewsteignton to John Martyn, including land at Morton "... *which Johan Legh, late wife of John Knapman, holds*". It seems reasonably likely that Johan's first husband was the former churchwarden at South Tawton, and that after his death she had been re-married to a husband called Legh. She could well have been William's mother.

The first William

Although the first William Knapman is generally described as being 'of Throwleigh', and is reckoned to have been born in about 1500, it should be acknowledged that his actual origins and precise date of birth are uncertain. We have the evidence from the Herald's visitation of 1620, which shows that wherever he may have been born, by the time his children were born, he was established at Throwleigh, and we know from the 1524-27 Devon Lay Subsidy Rolls that he was settled in Throwleigh by then, and relatively wealthy. With an assessment of £11 in goods²³, he was the highest-rated taxpayer in the parish, and just outside the 'top 10%' of Devon taxpayers²⁴.

An article on the TDA for 2011 (Volume 143) by Judith Moss of Murchington, entitled 'The Descent of the Manor of Throwleigh: the feudal period, 1066 – 1428' makes no mention of anyone called Knapman which, when taken in combination with the absence of other evidence, tends to support the view that the first William was probably an incomer.

After 1500, however, we have evidence from stannary records. 'The Bradford Pool Case' article reports that by 1532 the first William was sufficiently established to be elected to the Stannary Parliament as one of the 24 'jurates' representing Chagford stannary (though we know from H P R

²³ Assessments in 1524-27 were based on land, goods or wages, with goods being by far the most common basis for assessment. Land and goods were taxed at different rates.

²⁴ This latter statement is based on the analysis done by T L Stoate, the transcriber of the Devon Lay Subsidy Rolls, who nevertheless cautions against relying too heavily on relative assessments as a reliable indicator of wealth. If William had recently arrived in Throwleigh, it might be expected that he would be viewed as a handy source of revenue by existing residents, and assessed accordingly.

Finberg's articles in the TDA for 1949 and 1950 that he was not a jurate the following year, in 1533). In 1532 he presented tin at Chagford to a value of 24s 7½d in June, and 31s 11¼d in September (there were two such sessions each year), making him one of the largest tin producers in Devon that year. Although we do not have coinage duty records for individual producers each year, I am obliged to Dr Tom Greeves for the information that William's output in September 1531 (2,450 lb) was probably the second highest in Devon that year. In October 1532 he was again a jurate at Crockern Tor, as he was again 20 years later, in 1552. By this time his output of tin had dropped considerably (to 12 ingots at Chagford in 1550 and 1 ingot at Tavistock in 1553). In 1553 he had a major tinworks at Parford.

The evidence from the Herald's visitation also confirms that the first William Knapman married Eleanor Arscott. It does not say where she was from or when they married, but we know (from the Herald's visitation of 1564) that four generations of the Arscott family had been living in and around Holsworthy by then²⁵. The parish records for South Tawton also show several families of Arscotts living there. We also know from a history of the Easterbrook family (which is accessible on the easterbrook.org.uk website) that in 1538 a member of that family had inherited a tenancy "... in *Richard Arscott's manor of Drascombe ...*" in Drewsteignton. We do not know from which of these families Eleanor came. We also know from the 1524-27 Devon Lay Subsidy Rolls that as well as the extremely wealthy John Arscott of Holsworthy (assessed for £133-6s-8d), at that time there was also John Arscott of Bradford (near Cookbury, assessed for £5), and nearer to Throwleigh, William and Richard Arscott of Belstone (£4 and £1 respectively), and John Arscott of Sampford Courtenay (£1).

The Knapman family tree produced following the Herald's visitation of 1620 shows that William and Eleanor had four sons and a daughter, and there may have been other children who did not survive infancy. Their five children are all shown on Family Tree A, and were called William, John, George, Christopher and Christian (also referred to as Katherine on the Batishill pedigree given in Vivian (1895)). Some further details on John and George in particular are included below.

All of this begs the question: did the first William Knapman buy land around Throwleigh, or did he inherit it? The evidence that I have seen suggests that he did not acquire any monastic land directly as a consequence of the dissolution²⁶, but that from about 1540 onwards he did start to buy land on the open market.

Evidence for this can be found in the card index in the DHC (and previously in the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter), which states (without giving its source) that William bought land in Drewsteignton in 1540 from Thomas Denys, and that he bought more in 1544 from Peter Courtnay in Throwleigh, Gidleigh, South Tawton and Chagford. In the same year (1544) he bought land in South Tawton from John Fulford. This may or may not have been the Sir John Fulford who was granted '*various manors, advowsons, land etc in Devon and Somerset*' in 1544 by Henry VIII²⁷, and who is mentioned above in connection with the very first sightings of Knapmans in the area around Throwleigh.

There is also a small document in the DHC (which I have seen, but could not read²⁸) which dates from 1542 and concerns some land at Ilsington, west of Bovey Tracey. The description of the document provided via the National Archives website mentions a William Knapman, but does not specify what his interest in the land was (and there is, of course, no certainty that the William Knapman concerned was 'our' William, though I believe that on balance it probably was, because his son William subsequently sold some land in this same area in 1557).

There is one non-land-related Chancery case from around this time²⁹ which shows William (or possibly his son, the second William) to have been in dispute with John Strobrydge, a merchant

²⁵ Although none of the trees produced as a consequence of the visitation of 1564 (for more recent branches of the family based in Dunsland, Ashwater, Tetcott and Plymouth as well as the oldest-established branch at Holsworthy) include a daughter called Eleanor, we can see that the earliest recorded John Arscott of Holsworthy had four sons (and he could easily have had sisters as well). His dates are estimated (on the arscottfamily.eu website) as approximately 1469 to 1541, and his oldest son, also called John, who was born in about 1494, is described as "... of Inner Temple ...".

²⁶ 'Devon Monastic Lands: Calendars of Particulars for Grants, 1536 to 1558' (Edited by Joyce Youings for the Devon & Cornwall Record Society, 1955), which is available in the British Library, contains no reference to any Knapman.

²⁷ DHC Ref 1926 B/FU/E/12/1.

²⁸ It forms part of 'The Moger Deeds' linked to the Courtenay family's extensive land holdings. The reference number is D1508/Moger/182.

²⁹ Chancery Ref C 1/1270/98-101 from the period 1544-51).

from Exeter, regarding payment for tin. The summary of the National Archives website mentions "... letters obtained from the Council for payment of price of tin already partly paid". Then on 29 August 1552, the 'Acts of the Privy Council'³⁰ record "... a letter to the Mayor of Excester to cause the Statute of Bankrupt to be executed against John Strowdbridge of Excester, who is indebted to William Knapman in lxxxiiij^{li}, and nowe keepeth his house". I interpret the value at issue as £84: a considerable sum.

As to the question of land ownership, there is the evidence from the Lay Subsidy Rolls that in 1524-27 William owned goods rather than land. This was still true at the time of the 1543-45 assessment, by which time his assessment had risen to £30 (and the only other Knapman assessed in or around Throwleigh was his son John, for £7, though the record for Drewsteignton is incomplete).

A second piece of evidence in favour of his not being a land owner in Throwleigh prior to the 1540s can be found via the National Archives website, which shows that in the 15th and early 16th centuries a family called Wonston owned a lot of land in and around the parish, including several farms subsequently associated with and owned by the Knapman family. There is an 'inquisition post mortem' for Richard Wonston in the National Archives (which I have not looked at) dating from 1516/17, and a legal case³¹ dating from 1515-18 involving (according to the summary on the National Archives website) "... Richard Wonston and Sibyl, his wife, daughter and heir of John Lytelwod, alias Langston, vs. William Baker, alias Inglond, and Isabel his wife. Detention of deeds relating to messuages and land in Lytelwod, Schylston, Aysshe, Southbovey, and Throwleigh, Devon"³². There was then a further case³³ from 1529-32 involving "William Larkeworthy vs. Robert Wonston. Detention of deeds relating to a messuage of land in Throwleigh, Devon".

All of this evidence points consistently to the probability that William Knapman took on land that had formerly been in the ownership of the Wonston family in the 1540s after making money in the tin business, having quite probably moved to Throwleigh from elsewhere.

There are two other legal cases, both of which very probably involved the first William, but could refer to another William. The first is from the period 1518 to 1529, and is summarised on the National Archives website as "... William Knapman v. the steward of the Duchy of Lancaster court of Lymedry: action of Richard Stotford of Dolton, gentleman, on a bond for a debt already paid"³⁴. I have looked at the original document, but was unable to understand a word of it. The second case, from the period 1544 to 1551, is summarised as "... Elizabeth Sentyll v. John Newcombe and William Knapman: messuages and land in Moretonhampstead and Chagford given to complainant on her marriage to John Sentill, her husband"³⁵. Although hard to read, it appears that William Knapman's role was peripheral in this case, but it does place him on the northern edges of Dartmoor at the time, which makes it highly likely that this was the first William Knapman of Throwleigh.

His own 'inquisition post mortem' of 1563 (already referred to above) shows that by then he was a 'tenant in chief' on property in Throwleigh, Gidleigh, South Tawton, Okehampton, Moretonhampstead and Drewsteignton. It is in Latin, and written in somewhat stylised script, and I could not read more than a few place names when I inspected it at the National Archives. However, there is what is described as a 'translated abstract' in the TDA³⁶ which provides further detail. The text below is exactly as printed there, including the abbreviations and punctuation. (I believe that 'Ar' indicates an individual entitled to bear arms, and that 'gen' signifies gentleman. A 'messuage' is a dwelling with an associated piece of land, 'free socage' appears to mean land held in return for rent rather than military service, and assignable to an heir. Land held 'by fealty' appears to mean much the same, and the distinction is unclear to me.)

"Inq. p.m. of William Knapman, Sr taken at Exeter Castle, 6 Eliz. by the oath of George Ford, Ar. John Raleigh, Ar. Thos. Yarde, gen. Thos. Sentclere, gen. Christopher Martyn gen. Geoffrey Thoms, Will. Noble, Ric. Hockleye, Hen. Sewarde, Humph. Lee, John Stokkelye, Peter Lyde, Ric. Collyns &

³⁰ 'Acts of the Privy Council' edited by John Roche Dasent (1901), Volume IV, p.116. I saw this volume in the National Archives.

³¹ Chancery Ref C 1/454/1.

³² The term 'messuage' refers to a dwelling with associated land.

³³ Chancery Ref C 1/651/5.

³⁴ Chancery Ref C 1/532/38.

³⁵ Chancery Ref C 1/1269/7.

³⁶ TDA Vol.37, p.329-330. The article in which it occurs is entitled 'The Neighbours of North Wyke' Part V, by Ethel Lega-Weekes, read at Princetown on 20 July 1905.

Chr. Collope, who say that W.K. was seized in 3 messuages, 200 ac. lands, 30 ac. field, 30 ac. past. 20 ac. furze & heath, & 4 ac. wood, in South Wonston North Wonston & Nordon, in the p'sh of Throwleigh (held of Walt. Code, Ar. as of his manor of Throwley in free socage & worth 100^s clear) Also in 1 mess. 200 ac. land, 20 ac. field, & 3 ac. wood, called Crofte in the p. of Okehampton (held of Robert Carye of Begbeare by fealty, and worth £4) Also in 1 mess, 20 ac. land, 10 ac' field, 20 ac. past. 20 ac. f. & h. called Crebeare in the p. of Gydleigh (of the s'd Walt. Code, & worth 20^s) Also in 1 mess. 60 ac. land. 10 ac. field, 20 ac. past. 10 ac. f. & h. called COLIFORDE in the parish of S.T. (held of George Molyns Ar. in free socage, & worth 30^s clear) Also in 1 mess. 40 ac' land, 8 ac. field, 10 ac. past. 6 ac. f. & h. called ESTWEKE in the p. of S.T. (held of Thos. Donnyng in free socage & worth £20) Also in 3 mess. 100 ac. land, 20 ac. field, 20 ac. past. 100 ac. f. & h. called GOSSEFORDE & AYSHE in the p. of S.T. (held of Thomas Carewe of Haccombe, Ar. as of his manor of S.T. & worth £5 per an.) Also in 3 messuages, 40 ac. land, 20 ac. field, 20 ac. past. 4 ac. f. & h. in the TOWN (villa) of S.T. now in the occupation of Henry Arscott (held of John Wadham, Ar. in free socage & worth £4 per ann.) Also of 1 mess. 40 ac. land, 10 ac. field, 20 ac. past, 10 ac. f. & h. called Senthill, in the p. of Morton Hampstede (held of the Queen as of her manor of Southtenge in free socage & worth 40^s) Also in 1 mess. 40 ac. land, 8 ac. field, 20 ac. past. 40 ac. f. & h. called fforde alias Venton lying in the p. of Drewsteynton (held by fealty of Thos. Moncke, Ar. & worth 20s) Also in 3 mess. 20 ac. land, 10 ac. field, 20 ac. past 40 ac. f. & h. called fforde murchington and Througleigh in the p. of T. (held of Walt. Code in free socage & worth £4) Also in 1 mess. 20 ac. land, 8 ac. field, 20 ac. past. 40 ac. f. & h. in Gydleigh (held of Walt. Code & worth 20s) Also in 4 mess. & 4 ac. land with appurts in ZELE (held of the queen in free socage & worth 40^s clear) And the s'd William Knapman died 6 Nov. last and William Knapman, Jun. aged 40, is his son & next heir."

The age of the younger William (given as 40 in 1563) can probably be treated as an estimate, and would be broadly consistent with the first William having married Eleanor Arscott in about 1524, with his first son being born the following year.

There is also evidence cited in an article in the 'The Bradford Pool Case' article (referenced earlier, and which deals with an important tin mine in which the family had an interest), which states that "... from the middle of the sixteenth century the owners of the freehold land on which Bradford Pool was situated, were the Knapman family, who held estates in the neighbouring parishes of Throwleigh, South Tawton and Gidleigh. They appear to have been involved in mining ventures from an early date. Ormerod has referred to the conveyance in 1553 of 'the deep works at Parford' to William Knapman, and of the works at Bradford to John Knapman in 1559. The family also purchased adjoining Venton in 1558 and 1560. William Knapman Senior was a Jurate for Chagford at the Devon Convocation (Parliament of Tinnars) in 1532 and 1552, and he was involved with the Burgoyne family of South Tawton, in smelting tin in the sixty years prior to 1590. The blowing house, referred to as a 'tin-mill' or 'tinworks' was situated beside the Blackaton Brook, and it is probable that Bradford and Parford supplied the ore". The Blackaton Brook flows in a north-south direction, between Throwleigh and Ash, both of which can be seen on the map reproduced earlier, along with Bradford Pool and Parford³⁷.

An article in 'Dartmoor Magazine' No.28 (1992) entitled 'The Gidleigh Mill and Bradford Tinworks Leat' describes part of the Bradford Leat near Berrydown and Creaber farms (which was in William's possession at the time of his death). The website of the Dartmoor National Park Authority describes the Bradford Pool Tinworks Leat as dating from the mid-16th century, and in 'The Dartmoor Stannaries' (cited above) the following text appears. "Occasionally quite major feats of engineering were undertaken. A leat built in the 16th century to serve the tinworks at Bradford Pool, near Drewsteignton, was a full 12 miles long, and was carried across streams and valleys on aqueducts over 20 feet high". 'The Bradford Pool Case' quotes documents in the DHC which put the cost of constructing the leat at £1,500: an immense sum of money at that time.

There are some very interesting photographs taken up on the moor, in the area where the leat originates, which can be seen on the dartmoorperspectives.co.uk website. Bradford Pool (also sometimes recorded as Bradmere Pool and Beechmere Pool) is a lake covering 3 to 4 acres very close to Spinster's Rock, a notable cromlech a short way east and uphill from the hamlet of Venton. Although the tin works fell out of production for well over 100 years after the Civil War, it was brought back into production in the 19th century.

³⁷ I have seen a reference in 'Sir Roper Lethbridge's Presidential Address' to the Devonshire Association in 1901 to a 1636 will in which John Endacott of Chagford left "... one of the Knapman tin mines, called South Tinnell, at Pafford in Moretonhampstead ..." to his son. This is probably a slightly inaccurate reference to Parford, which is close to the boundary between Drewsteignton and Moretonhampstead (and Chagford). The Herald's visitation of 1620 confirms that William Knapman's grandson, Edward, married a daughter of Henry Endecott.

The second William

As can be seen on Family Tree A, the second William married Alicia Hore of Rushford (sometimes then spelled Rishford), an estate just outside Chagford. She had been baptised in about 1525, and they started having children in about 1545³⁸. In all they had four sons (Alexander, John, James and Edward) and two daughters (Elizabeth and Jane). Alexander is dealt with below. Family trees for each of the other three sons can be found in later chapters. All I know about Elizabeth and Jane is shown on Family Tree A.

Some background to Alicia Hore's family can be found on the internet. Most sources rely to some degree on 'Early history and genealogy of the families of Hore and Hoare' by Capt Edward Hoare (1883) and 'Pedigree and memoirs of the families of Hore and Hoare of the counties of Devon, Bucks, Middlesex, Surrey, Wilts and Essex' (1819) by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart. They reckon that in about 1330 Robertus Hore married an heiress from the Fforde family of Chagford, and established a family which remained there until at least the 16th century. Robertus had apparently moved to Devon from Pole Hore, near Wexford in Ireland, where his older brother inherited the estate which had been granted to one of their ancestors after he had joined an expedition to pacify the country in the time of Henry II. The Hores of Rishford clearly had some wealth, but nothing spectacular. Alicia's parents were probably called William and Johane. They, together with their son William, were involved in a lawsuit³⁹ in 1529-32 concerning some land at Sowden in Broadwood Kelly, a few miles north of South Tawton.

Some of the references above to William Knapman, and in particular to his involvement in the purchase of the works at Parford in 1553, may be references to the second William rather than to his father. Some support for this view comes from an article in the 'Dartmoor Magazine' No.27 about the Bradford Tinworks leat, which reports that "... documentary references to Bradford Tinworks and Pool date from a conveyance of 1559 when a John Knapman acquired it, and at the June 1550 Chagford Coinage a William Knapman Jr is recorded as presenting more than 5,000 lbs of tin⁴⁰. So that whilst the Knapman family had other mining interests besides Bradford, it is suggested that at the time the local mines were quite productive and expanding". The same article identifies William Knapman of Throwleigh, gent, as a Stannator for Chagford in 1587, after the death of the first William. Dr Tom Greeves has subsequently confirmed to me that the second William's June 1550 output (also described as 49 ingots) made him the leading producer in the Chagford stannary at that session. In September 1550 he submitted a further 13 ingots.

Whatever land the first William may have owned and passed on to his heirs, we also know that during his lifetime the second William bought (and sold) further non-tin-related property of his own. What we cannot tell is whether he acquired some of it through marriage, or obtained it in the form of a grant in recognition of services rendered. Evidence that he was actively engaged with the land market can be found in an article on Creech manor, near Taunton, which is available on the british-history.ac.uk website. This shows that in 1557, before his father's death, the second William bought an interest in Creech manor, having previously bought the reversion which the Crown had granted to Sir Edward Hastings. He sold the manor on in two parts the following year. He is also shown as having sold interests in farms and properties at Charlton, Ham and Langaller (all near Taunton) between 1557 and 1559. Confirmation can be found in the Calendar of the Patent Rolls⁴¹ where an item dated 16 October 1557 states that a licence was granted "... for 7s., to William Knapman, gentleman, to grant his two messuages and 102 ac. Land, meadow and pasture in Othereye and Lydyarde Saynt Laurence, co. Somerset: to Simon Saunders and William Venne, their heirs and assigns." Then on 1 April 1558 a second item records the grant of a further "... Licence for 7s.11d. to William Knapman, gentleman, to grant a messuage, dovehouse, garden, 60 ac. Land, 30 ac. Meadow and 48 ac. Pasture in Charleton and Mychelcreche, co. Somerset: to Alexander Sydenham, esquire, his heirs and assigns."

There are many other pieces of evidence to show that William was very actively engaged in the land market between 1555 and 1565. The fact that the activity carried on after the first William's

³⁸ However, the fact that the second William was not separately assessed at the time of the 1543-45 Lay Subsidy Roll (at least not in any of the surviving Devon records) suggests that 1545 is about the earliest that he might have been married. His younger brother John must have been married very young, because he was separately assessed.

³⁹ Chancery Ref C 1/629.

⁴⁰ The source cited is 'Courts and Parliaments of Devon Tinnors, 1474-1785' by T A P Greeves, in TDA Vol.19.

⁴¹ See the 'Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Philip and Mary, Vol.IV' (1557-1558) which was published in a printed translation into modern English in the 1920s, and can be accessed on line via a link on the excellent medievalgenealogy.org.uk website.

death points very clearly to most of these deals involving the second William, even where the source is unclear. Much of the evidence can be found in the card index at the Westcountry Studies Library in Exeter, which identifies many transactions for which the original evidence is (or was) in the collection of manuscripts in Exeter Castle⁴². Between 1555 and 1558 he sold land at Gedicote, Milton Damerell to John Arscott of Tetcott, and land in Ashburton⁴³ and Drewsteignton (Shilston). In 1562 he bought land in Chagford and Throwleigh, and in 1564 he sold land in Totnes and Dartington as well as buying and selling land in Drewsteignton. There were several more deals in 1565.

There is also evidence from the TDA, including a lawsuit in 1558 involving Henry Weke⁴⁴ (presumably Wykes) in which William was granted a considerable amount of land and a tin mill. About 12 years later, in about 1570 there was a lawsuit between Richard Weekes (or Wykes), a priest from Chagford, and William⁴⁵, in which Weekes complains that "... *diverse dedes divers writings, scripts & Muniments concerning the pmisses are by casual meanes comen into the handes and possession of one Willm Knapman the Elder, Willm Knapman the younger, Gregorie Loftie, Thomas Kelland, Thomas Northcot, Richard Northcot & Willm Northcot at Chagford aforesaid who by color of the said dedes have contrived and made diverse secret feoffamentes leases and other conveyances of the pmisses and have pured the said Henry Wekes the father being a man not able to rule himself to joyne with them in the making of the said conveyances ...*" and declares that he, "... *Richard Wekes clerk was all together defrauded and made void contrary to all Right Equitie and good conscience*".

Unfortunately, this is by no means the only occasion on which accusations of underhand dealings are levelled at the Knapman family, though, as reported below, most are directed at the second William's eldest son, Alexander.

It appears that William had died by 1581. The evidence for this is that his name does not appear on the 1581 tax roll (unlike those of his sons, Alexander and James, and his brother George). There is also the fact that one of the oldest of the 'lost' Devon wills was that of Alice Knapman of Throwleigh, proved in 1588. It seems unlikely that she would have left a will if he had not already died.

The first William Knapman's younger children

John

The John Knapman who had an interest in the Bradford Pool tin works (referred to above) would be this John. Dr Tom Greeves has told me that in June 1550 John presented 40 ingots at Chagford in June 1550 (making him the fourth largest producer at a time when the largest was his brother William with 49 ingots, as reported above). In September 1550 he presented a single ingot at Ashburton.

He married Johan, a member of the large local Weekes / Wykes family, but died relatively young (possibly before his own father, and certainly no later than early 1564). After John's death Johan was re-married to Thomas Guene. We know this partly from the Herald's visitation, and partly from a submission dated 3 May 1564 by Thomas and Johan Guene in a lawsuit against the second William⁴⁶.

John and Johan's only child, Elizabeth, married into the same family, and she and her husband Mark Wykes are mentioned in 'The Wykes Family article' referenced earlier. Mark was the second of eight sons (and three daughters) born to John Wykes and his wife Mary, a daughter of Sir Roger Giffard of Brightleigh. Mark's grandfather had been known as 'Warrior' Wykes.

⁴² J C Tingey Col. Exeter Castle MSS, folios (or folders) 134, 142, 143, 151, 202-3, 218 and 226.

⁴³ This land was in the borough of Ashburton and had previously been owned by Geo Forde of Ilsington. This may be the land in the earlier (1542) transaction. In this case the description mentions William's wife Alice, which shows that this was definitely the second William.

⁴⁴ TDA Vol.33, p.463. See also Vol.33, pp.459 and 464 for other disputes.

⁴⁵ Chancery 1558 to 1579, Ref C 3/188/6.

⁴⁶ Chancery Ref C 3/71/51. There is a separate case referred to in a document accessible on-line via Google Books which refers to Chancery decree rolls Elizabeth I (Ref.C 78/15-45) dated 11 May 10 Eliz (i.e. 1569) in which Thomas and Joan (Johan) Guene were apparently suing the second William over a tenement called Collybeare, with 180 acres of land. It seems likely that they were successful, and that Collybeare became Elizabeth's dowry.

Mark and Elizabeth had two children, twins called Margaret and John, baptised on 29 January 1577, not long before Elizabeth's untimely death (she was buried at South Tawton on 20 May 1577). After her death Mark re-married, and had a further nine children by his second wife. Both Margaret and John were married, Margaret to John Colleton (they had no children), and John to Joan Hole of Black Hall. John and Joan certainly had a large family (five sons and four daughters), but of course his descendants carried the Wykes name. The parish register shows that he was buried at South Tawton on 28 June 1638⁴⁷.

George

I believe that the information reported following the Herald's visitation of 1620 is not 100% accurate as regards the family of George. The Herald's Visitation tree shows the Mary Knapman who married William Baron as the daughter of George Knapman the younger, whereas I believe that she was his sister, and therefore the daughter of George the elder.

The evidence for this, and for additional family members, comes from various lawsuits. Evidence from a case from 1636⁴⁸ mounted by William Baron's son John (and John's son William) includes the following words: *"... about three and twenty yeares now past the said William Baron the ffather of yor orator John Baron and grandfather to yor orator William and one George Knapman the younger brother in law to the said William Baron the elder and uncle unto your orator"*. This establishes that the younger George Knapman and William Baron were indeed of the same generation, which is entirely consistent with the tone of earlier lawsuits mounted by them. John Baron goes on to state that George and William had lodged a complaint against *"... Alexander Knapman prayinge thereby to be relysed against the said Alexander Knapman for the ffee one tenem't lyinge in Throwleigh in the County of Devon wch the said Alexander had by fraudulent and indirect dealinge and for little or noe consideracon att all gotten and obteyned from George Knapman the elder"*. The same deposition refers to *"... Margaret daughter of the said George Knapman the younger"*.

In 1619, in an earlier case⁴⁹, William and Mary Baron had complained that *"... the same Conveyance was pcurd by the indirecte and synyster practice of the sayde Alexander Knapman with one Beaten the second wife of the sayde George Knapman, when he was weake blynde and sicke in his Bodie, and did not und(er)stand what he did"*. They alleged that the conveyance was sealed on a Sunday during a time allocated to church services, and that Beaten was paid £40 to persuade her husband to sign the deal. They also alleged that, under pressure of public opinion, Alexander had agreed to accept a payment of £150 from George the younger and William Baron, in return for which the land would be conveyed to them and their heirs, and to John and Alice Sloman and their heirs. Whatever actually happened, the deal was never completed, though the indications are that Alexander settled separately with George the younger. The same deposition also indicates (albeit not with absolute clarity) that the first wife of George the elder was called Elizabeth.

In summary, and based on the evidence of the various lawsuits, it seems that George the elder was married twice, first to Elizabeth, by whom he had children, and then to Beaten. George and Elizabeth had a son (George the younger) and a daughter (Mary, who married William Baron, a leading tin producer of his day⁵⁰). Based on the evidence of one other lawsuit⁵¹ George the younger was born in about 1553, while William Baron (based on the evidence of yet another⁵²) was born in about 1548. William and Mary Baron had at least one son, John, who in turn had a son, William.

We do not know the name of the wife of George the younger, but they had two daughters: Margaret and Alice. Margaret was very probably the person of that name who married John Slowman at St James', Christow on 21 January 1622. Alice also married a husband called John Sloman who (according to the same lawsuit from which William Baron's year of birth is estimated) was born in about 1559, and who was dead by the time the 1619 lawsuit was launched⁵³. John and Alice Sloman had a son called Thomas. Alice subsequently married Hugh Elford of Shippstore

⁴⁷ The source for several of the facts in this paragraph is a very helpful website run by Nigel Batty-Smith, called uk-genealogy.org.uk.

⁴⁸ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/B122/61.

⁴⁹ Chancery Ref C 3/315/21.

⁵⁰ In June 1595 William Barnes / Barons presented 13,635 lb of tin at Chagford, making him one of the two biggest producers of tin in all Devon that year. The source for this fact is 'Four Devon Stannaries: a comparative study of tinworking in the sixteenth century' by Dr Tom Greeves, published as a chapter in 'Tudor and Stuart Devon' (1992).

⁵¹ Chancery Ref C 21/A11/9.

⁵² Chancery Ref C 21/L28/12.

⁵³ John Slowman's will, dated 1618, can be downloaded from the National Archives website. I have not seen it.

(probably Sheepstor, on the south west edge of Dartmoor) under a licence issued by the Bishop of Exeter dated 26 July 1621⁵⁴.

In any event, George the younger appears to have been the last male Knapman in his branch of the family.

Christopher and Christian

We have the evidence of the Herald's visitation that Christopher died without producing an heir, and quite possibly without marrying.

The other thing that we know about him is that in 1549, probably still in his late teens, he killed a man, but was pardoned. This information comes from the Calendar of the Patent Rolls⁵⁵, and an item dated 23 November 1549, the main text of which is as follows.

"Whereas, by inquisition taken at Thurleigh, Devon, 17 May last, before Raimond Northleigh, one of the coroners of that county, upon the view of the body of William Moryshedd, the king is informed that Cristopher Knapnam, late of Throwleigh, Devon, on 16 May last, between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. at Churchmede in Throwleigh, assaulted Moryshedde and with a stick called 'a halsyn binder', price 1d., struck him on the top of the head a mortal wound from which he died at 2 p.m. the same day; and subsequently on Tuesday before All Saints Day last, before Hugh Pollard, knight, Richard Chydley, William Roope, and John Rydgeway, esquires, and their fellow justices for delivery of the gaol of Exeter castle, it was found that the said Christopher being assaulted with a stick called 'a bynder of a hedge', price 1d., which he found in the hedge there."

Although this is not entirely clear, the final sentence says "Pardon to the said Christopher Knapman alias Knapeman, 'grome,' for the said death." I have been unable to find the meaning of the word 'grome', but the effect seems clear enough, and the implication is that he was adjudged to have acted in self defence.

William and Alice's only surviving daughter Christian married William Battishill of West Wyke, and they had a large family, details of which can be found in Vivian (1895). That family tree gives her name as Katherine rather than Christian. William Battishill was buried at South Tawton on 13 August 1579.

The second William's eldest son Alexander, and his family

There are records in the IGI which describe Alexander as being 'of Whood, Dartington'. This may have been one of the many properties that his father bought, but how strong his connection to it was, and when the link dates from, is uncertain. However, we do know that Hood (the more common, and later, spelling), subsequently belonged to the family of his daughter, Elizabeth (see below), and that she was baptised there in about 1575. The estate spans the boundary between the parishes of Rattery and Dartington.

In about 1572 Alexander married Anne Whiddon, the youngest child in a prominent and very large Dartmoor family. Her father was Sir John Whiddon, a High Court judge of the Queen's Bench. He had been married twice, and had one daughter by his first wife (Ann née Hollis) and six sons and seven daughters by his second (Elizabeth née Shilston). He bought the manor of Chagford and built a manor house at Whiddon Park, a couple of miles outside the town, towards Drewsteignton. The Park, at the entrance to the gorge of the Teign, has been described as romantically beautiful, a place of rocks, ravens, and wild deer. When Sir John died (on 27 January 1575) a memorial was erected to him in the chancel of St Michael's church, Chagford.

Sir John's will left money and property to most of his sons, to his oldest daughter, and to one of Anne's sisters (who was called Erthe), but not to Anne.

Almost everything we know about Alexander derives from the fact that he was constantly involved with the law, either as a litigant, or as the object of lawsuits mounted by others.

⁵⁴ The source for this, and subsequent references to marriage licences issued by the Bishop of Exeter, is 'The Marriage Licences of the Diocese of Exeter' edited by Lt-Col J L Vivan (1889) and now available on the internet.

⁵⁵ See the 'Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edward VI Vol.III' (1549-1551), published in a printed translation into modern English in 1925, which is accessible on line via a link on the excellent medievalgenealogy.org.uk website.

A largely illegible (to me at least) document in the National Archives shows that at some point between 1558 and 1603 Alexander Knapman was the victim of an assault in his own home, which was by then in Throwleigh. It shows that he sued William Caselegh, Henry Shock and others in the Court of the Star Chamber⁵⁶ for 'forcible entry and assault', but I could not divine the cause or the outcome. In 1590 he was sued for blocking a watercourse called the Love Brook, thereby adversely affecting the interests of users in South Zeal. This case⁵⁷ is described in 'Throwleigh: The story of a Dartmoor Village' (previously referenced) as follows.

The case involved William Burgoyne, plaintiff, and Alexander Knapman, defendant, concerning the diversion of Blackaton Brook (sometimes known locally as the Jordan, and formerly known as the Love Brook). *"The suit arose out of the miller of West Week being accused of turning the water away from the leat which runs to South Tawton. One can understand how the miller of West Week ... was in a particularly happy position for superintending the distribution of water towards Zeal and towards Throwleigh, if he had a mind thereto. When the suit came on for hearing various witnesses were called and one can imagine what a delight the whole dispute must have been to the neighbourhood, providing sufficient subject for discussion and the expression of strong feeling, to brighten a whole winter and more"*. One witness referred to the miller (which, given the context, must be a reference to Alexander) being similarly accused 14 years before, but being discharged on that occasion. The context makes it clear that West Week mill was for grinding corn, not for processing tin ore.

The significance, and value, of control over water can also be seen by reference to the Bradford Pool Case, referred to above.

In 1588, as recorded at the time and reported in a book published in 1886⁵⁸, Alexander subscribed £25 to the Armada defence fund.

There is a further substantial set of very complicated papers⁵⁹, which I have seen, from a case in the Court of the Star Chamber in 1599-1600 (well after the second William's death, though the documents refer to him) relating to the tin works at Bradford. This involved Alexander, Elizabeth the widow of 'our' John (and her second husband John Newcombe), and William Edmonde (alias Enoffe or Enoff). This case is not directly reported in 'The Bradford Pool Case' article, which concentrates on later events. Further confirmation of Alexander's interest in tin can be derived from the fact that in October 1600 he represented Chagford as a jurate at the Great Court on Crockern Tor⁶⁰. That session was summoned, and presided over, by Sir Walter Raleigh.

Then, over an extended period of at least 20 years, from the mid-1590s to around 1615⁶¹, Alexander was in conflict with his son-in-law, William Ayshe (also sometimes spelled Aish or Ash), the husband of his daughter, Margaret. The disputes throw light on the character of Alexander, as well as of William Ayshe, which is why I deal with them here.

At the heart of William Ayshe's complaints was his belief that Alexander had cheated him of all or part of his (apparently considerable) inheritance. He had married Margaret in about 1592, shortly after the death of his grandfather, and his family had settled land on Margaret for her lifetime (to provide for her should she be widowed). Soon after the marriage William's father Alexander Ayshe also died, leaving him short of experienced family advisors⁶². His 1615 deposition states that Alexander Knapman *"... seekinge and contriving by all undue courses to wrest the same from him and therewith to enrich himself did about a fortnight before yor orators marriage that is to say on*

⁵⁶ Court of Star Chamber 1558 to 1603 STAC 7/3/26.

⁵⁷ Exchequer Ref E 134/33Eliz/Hil10 and E 134/32&33Eliz/Mich24, in which latter case Alexander's name is incorrectly transcribed as 'Knapton' on the National Archives website, and summarised as concerning the alleged diversion of the river Lovebrook into a leat to the detriment of Burgoyne's mill.

⁵⁸ See 'The names of those persons who subscribed towards the defence of this country at the time of the Spanish Armada, 1588, and the amount that each contributed. With historical introduction' by T C Noble (1886). This book, and many references to it, can be found on the internet.

⁵⁹ Court of Star Chamber, Elizabeth I Ref STAC 5/K11/34.

⁶⁰ Source: Dr Tom Greeves, personal communication.

⁶¹ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/A51/72 and C 21/A11/9.

⁶² There are wills available for downloading from the National Archives website for William Aishe (February 1593, but in Latin and what is to me an impenetrable script) and Alexander Aishe (April 1593). We know from other available documents that Alexander Aishe was the son of the older William, and the father of the William Aishe who married Margaret Knapman. We also know from the 1581 tax roll that whereas Alexander and James Knapman were each assessed for £3 in land, William Ayshe was assessed for £18 in goods, and his son Alexander for £4 in goods, much of which might well have passed to the younger William in 1593.

the first day of december Eliz:⁶³ secretlie and cunningly procure the said Marriage to convey unto him the said Alexander Knapman all the estate grannted unto her by yor orators grandfather". This, he claimed, "... left himself nothinge to live on for the maintenance of himself his wife and tenne children but onely one lease for terme of his life in a tenement called Wonston worth VIII by the yeare and a parte of one other tenement called Langeston".

The evidence of various witnesses called to offer evidence on the case, paints a more nuanced picture, however. All of the witnesses agreed that William Ayshe had been a regular seller of land, some of it to Alexander. However, James Knapman (Alexander's brother's grandson and heir) described William as "... of a wasteful disposition and likely to consume his whole estate and is a frequenter of alehouses". William Knapman (Alexander's son) stated that William Ayshe "... doth usuallie frequent Alehouses and hath spent much of his estate that waye" and that "... he hath often seene the Complt soe distempered with drinke that he hath not beene able to speake". Other witnesses confirm this picture, though John Hore of Chagford said that he thought Alexander had bought at least one piece of property from William "... to the intent that none other man should buy anie lands of the Complt but that he would buy itt all himself att a very cheape rate rather than for the pservacon thereof for the Compls posteritie, and hath heard the same from some that are verie nere unto the Deft. And sayth further that he hath known the Complt by the space of 16 years or more and hath been very familiarlie acquainted wth him and often in his companie but did never pceive that he was of a wasteful or riotous disposition but very sparing in his expense".

By the evidence of William Ayshe's own daughters we know that several of them were at various times supported to some degree by Alexander, their grandfather, working for him as servants in his household, and receiving money derived from land he had bought from William.

Much more seriously, though, several years earlier William Ayshe had denounced both Alexander and his brother James to the Privy Council. This dispute started in about 1592, and as well as Alexander and James Knapman, it involved William Ayshe's own father, Alexander. The Acts of the Privy Council⁶⁴ show that on 12 April 1592 "*This day Alexander Knopman of Trowley in the countie of Devone, yeoman, and James Knopman of Tenton Drew in the same countie, ye[o]man, being sent for by warrant from the Lordes and others of her Majesty's Privie Councell to appere before their Lordships to answeere soche matters as they are to be chardged withal, have entered their appearance accordingly, and were injoynd to give their attendance on their Lordships at their sittings, and not to depart without speciall licence of their Lordships.*"

About a month later⁶⁵, under the heading 'Lewd words in Devon' we can find the text of a letter addressed to Lord Anderson (presumably a circuit judge) and Mr Baron, Gent. "*Upon information geven us by William Dourish and others of most leud and undutiful speeches against her Majestie and the State suppozed to be uttered and spoken by Alexander and James Knapmans and Alexander Ash of Thromely in the county of Devon, we sent for the said Knapmans and the rest by warrant to appeare before us, with intent to have proceeded to the examining and due punishment of the offendours according to the manner and quality of those notable crimes. But finding that the said matters had formerly bin examined by the Lord Bushop of Exciter, Mr Sejeant Glanvil and others, Justices of Peace of that county, upon like informacion geven them by the said Dourish, and that good bonds were taken by them of all parties respectively for their personall appearance and answering those matters before you at the next Assizes to be held in that Circuit, we have thought good to remaund the parties to be proceeded with at the said Assizes before you according the tenor of the bonds so taken of them, praeing and requiring you to have that due care in the examining and exact bolting owt of the truth of these detestable crimes, as either the parties now accused may receave condigne punishment agreeable with the greatnes of their offences, or in case it shall fall owt the words have not bin spoken at all by them or in such sort as was alleadged, that then like punishment be inflicted on the accusers, as the only aucthors and first inventors therof themselves, according to the lawes and statutes in that behalf provided. And so not doubting of your good circumspeccion in the discreet managing hereof that no indignity may be offered hereby to her sacred Majestie by any publick scandal, we bid your good Lordship, &c.*"

Although we do not have any direct evidence regarding the outcome of the trial at Exeter, we do know that both James Knapman and Alexander Ayshe died in 1593, both of them relatively young.

⁶³ At this time dates were generally given by reference to the monarch on the throne at the time. In this case the year is missing, making it impossible to know the year being referred to.

⁶⁴ 'Acts of the Privy Council' edited by John Roche Dasent (1901), Volume XXII, p.395. A copy is available in the National Archives. Subsequent footnotes only give the volume and page numbers. Since this is a typeset document I have reproduced the spelling as it was printed.

⁶⁵ Vol XXII, pp.439-440.

Two and a half years later, the Acts of the Privy Council⁶⁶ reveal that on 26 November 1595, meeting at Whitehall, the Council approved an arrest warrant for Alexander Knapman. The very next entry, on 30 November, simply says "A *proteccion for William Ash of the countie of Devon to pas without any arrest or impeachment during the time of six months from the date hereof.*" The implication appears to be that William had denounced Alexander. Then, meeting on "Sondaie the xxvth of Januarie 1595" (i.e. 1596 by the modern calendar) at the court of Richmond⁶⁷, with the "Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer, Earl of Essex, Lord Admirall, Lord Chamberlaine, Lord Cobham, Lord Buckhurst and Sir Robert Cecyll" present, the record states the following. "*This daie Alexander Knapman, having beene sent for by warrant from their Lordships, made his appearance accordinglie and hath caused the same to be entred in this Register of Councell for his indempnitie, being nevertheless enjoyned in their Lordships' names to give his daiely attendance on their Lordships so often as they shall meete in Councell until by their order he shalbe dismissed.*"

I have checked the indexes⁶⁸ covering subsequent years, and there is no further reference to Alexander either being prosecuted or dismissed, which suggests that the case against him was quietly dropped.

However, a further five years on, in 1601, William Ayshe wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, a Privy Councillor and Principal Secretary to Queen Elizabeth I, seeking to resurrect the case against his father-in-law. As a members of the Privy Council, Cecil had been present at Richmond in 1596. Indeed by 1596 he was already carrying out many of the tasks and duties of Secretary of State, even though he had not at that stage been appointed to the position. The letter, which is undated, but is endorsed '1601', is available from the british-history.ac.uk website⁶⁹. It reads as follows. "*I have long been a suitor to the Privy Council touching a matter of high treason committed by one James Knapman, who, being found guilty by the grand jury, did shortly after poison himself and so died. Since that time, I have at great charges pursued the same suit against his brother, Alexander, as accessory in the same offence, who hath lately spoken very opprobrious speeches against her Majesty and the Privy Council. On Sunday last I delivered my petition to your Honour, and being sent to Mr Wade for answer, was told that Knapman should be sent for to answer the cause, and that I was to attend on Wednesday last in the Star Chamber, when I was told by Mr Wade, contrary to his promise, that he had no answer, neither would he deal any more in the matter. By means of which frivolous answer I greatly doubt lest some of Knapman's confederates have used some dealings with Mr Wade in the mean time: for Knapman is a man of great wealth, and will not stick to bestow £500 rather than to answer the cause. Your Honour's father furthered my cause against James: I beseech you help me against Alexander.*" Robert Cecil's father was Lord Burghley.

The Mr Wade (or Waad) who is referred to in the letter was a politician, ambassador and administrator who was for many years one of the clerks to the Privy Council. Throughout his career William Wade was closely associated with the Cecils (having earlier in his career been secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's spymaster, and at that time Secretary of State), and through his involvement with the Privy Council was zealous in seeking out and persecuting catholics in general and Jesuits in particular. In 1603 he was knighted by James I, and not long after he was appointed Lieutenant of the Tower of London, in which position he, with Sir Robert Cecil⁷⁰, was responsible for obtaining Guy Fawkes' confession. The accusation in William Ayshe's letter is that Alexander paid a bribe (and the doctoral thesis⁷¹ 'Secretaries, Statemen and Spies: the Clerks of the Tudor Privy Council c.1540 to c.1603' considers that this may well have been true, while also confirming that no further action was taken against either Alexander or William Wade. An alternative reading might suggest that William Ayshe was by 1601 viewed as a serial nuisance, and not to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, it seems likely that James' and Alexander's motivation in any criticisms of the Queen and her government was based on Puritanism rather than Catholicism, otherwise Wade would probably not have overlooked the case against Alexander.

⁶⁶ Vol XXV, p.92.

⁶⁷ Vol XXV, p.180.

⁶⁸ Both the indexes of the Acts of the Privy Council and the State Papers, and the record of 16th century Treason Trials, all available at the National Archives.

⁶⁹ The original is in the 'Cecil Papers: December 1601, 26-31', Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House, Volume 11: 1601 (1906), pp. 531-588.

⁷⁰ In 1591 Cecil had been knighted by Elizabeth I and made a member of the Privy Council: at 28 the youngest ever member. In 1603 James I raised him to Baron Cecil of Essindene. In 1604 he added the title of Viscount Cranborne, and in 1605 made him Earl of Salisbury.

⁷¹ Submitted to St Andrews University by Jacqueline D Vaughan as a PhD thesis, and accessible via the internet.

Given this sorry history of conflict, Alexander's motivation in doing down William Ayshe via more local (and commercial) disputes while protecting his children would have been clear and understandable.

Further comment on Alexander's character can be found in a separate case already quoted in relation to George Knapman⁷². In that case William Baron and others described Alexander in 1619 (soon after his death) as being well known for "... *his harde and unconscionable dealings in his indirecte pcuringe of the sayde lands*". In 1636 William Baron's son John said in a related case⁷³ that "... *Alexander had by fraudulent and indirect dealinge and for little or noe consideracon att all gotten and obteyned from George Knapman the elder*" rights over land that the Barons were contesting. George Knapman the elder was, of course, Alexander's own uncle.

Perhaps this is where at least part of the problem lay: Alexander, his father and grandfather understood the law, and the complex ways in which land could be granted to one person for their lifetime, without willing it to them and their heirs in perpetuity. By contrast, some of the recipients may have failed to appreciate these subtleties, and thought that having occupied a farm for many years, they could keep it in their branch of the family for ever, whereas the agreement would take it back to the main male line.

Finally, we have Alexander's will, which he drew up on 14 April 1618, and which was proved later that year. Unfortunately, it is the hardest of the early wills that I have to decipher, but it is clear that as well as property in Throwleigh, he owned several properties in South Tawton and Sampford Courtenay. His wife Anne survived him, and was the principal beneficiary of the will.

Alexander's children

The third William

One lawsuit⁷⁴ puts the year of birth of Alexander and Anne's eldest son (the third William) as early as 1564, when 1573 or 1574 seems much more likely. In 1600 he (along with his father) represented Chagford at the Stannary Parliament. That same year he married Maude, one of three daughters of Richard Powell of Tiverton and his wife Parnell. From the evidence of Richard Powell's will (written in 1607) it would appear that William and Maude lived with him in Tiverton for a while, because it refers to one of the rooms in the house as "... *the chamber over the old parlor heretofore called the parlor chamber and nowe of late called William Knapman's chamber*". However it seems unlikely that they were living there at the time the will was drawn up, because the will confirms that William and Maude's son Alexander and their daughters Honor, Margaret and Anna had all been born by then. Their son William is not mentioned in his grandfather's will, not having been born by 1607.

The family tree drawn up following the Herald's visitation of 1620 (and cited in Family Tree A) shows that Honor married Thomas Furse of Crediton. We know that a licence for the wedding was issued on 13 October 1618 by the Bishop of Exeter, and it is likely that the actual wedding took place elsewhere soon thereafter. On the Herald's visitation 1620 family tree for the Furse family, Thomas is described as 'of Crokernwell', and his father is linked to both Crediton and Crockernwell (which is just north of Drewsteignton). Interestingly, William Knapman is also described as of Throwleigh, with the additional information that he was at that time 'of Crokernwell'.

I have also seen evidence via the National Archives website that in 1620/21 Thomas Furse of Crediton (and almost certainly the husband of Honor) bought some land at Mary Tavy, including the Barton and rights of the manors of Mary Tavy and Waven "... *commonly called Blackdowne*". It appears that Thomas and Honor had at least one son (John), because in 1663 Honor's younger brother William was apparently involved in the administration of a will⁷⁵ involving his great nephew John Furse, son of John Furse of South Tawton (who I deduce was the son of Thomas and Honor). The younger John came of age in 1668.

I have no information on William's other two daughters beyond what is contained in Family Tree A.

Richard Powell's will also confirms that another of his daughters (probably the eldest) married Christopher Collamore and had four daughters and a son. The third (probably the youngest)

⁷² Chancery 1617 to 1621 Ref C 3/315/21.

⁷³ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/B122/61.

⁷⁴ Chancery Ref C 21/L28/12.

⁷⁵ Source: genuki website, Devon Wills project.

married William Palfrey, and had at least two sons. The will strongly suggests that Richard had no surviving son by the time he died.

Richard left an interest in some land at Launceston in Cornwall to William, which does not appear to have provided much income, and was the subject of subsequent lawsuits, including at least one after William's death (which is discussed below).

The family reputation for sharp dealing persisted. The third William was described in a lawsuit mounted in 1632 by John Palfrey⁷⁶, the son of his wife's sister, as his "... *trusted but untrustie uncle William Knapman of Throwley*".

William's will, which he drew up on 11 January 1634, only mentions a relatively few properties, including land in the parishes of Throwleigh, South Tawton, Belstone and Whythecombe⁷⁷. He made particular provision for his younger son William, who by that stage was studying for the priesthood. This William's life and career are covered in Chapter 3.

In 1635, after William's death, Maude sued William Coryton, John Blackall and William Westlake in a lawsuit⁷⁸ concerned with the revenues from the tithes of the parish of St Stephen's, Launceston, left to William by her father in his will of 1607. This linked to a lease made by Sir Gawain Carew, who had so brutally put down the Prayerbook Rebellion of 1549. Evidently the persons sued by Maude had consistently refused to pay William his share of the tithes. One of the lost Devon wills was that of William Knapman of Throwleigh, dated (i.e. proved) in 1637. This could well have been the will of the third William, proved following extended disputes.

Alexander's other two sons

We know that Alexander and Ann had at least two more sons after William who survived to adulthood. Francis was born in about 1582, and Barnabie was probably born a few years later. Francis and his descendants are the subject of Chapter 4.

Barnabie married Elizabeth Newcombe, the eldest daughter and co-heiress of William and Alice Newcombe of Chagford⁷⁹. There is a record of the baptism of an Alexander Knapman, son of Barnabie, at Throwleigh on 26 October 1606, and we know from a lawsuit⁸⁰ that they also had a son called John. Unfortunately Barnabie died while still a young man (his will, which does not survive, was proved in 1610), and the indications are that his son Alexander died in infancy. The basis for this supposition is that when a lawsuit was mounted, in 1611, by Elizabeth and her second husband Thomas Luffe of Ashton, near Christow (who she had married at Throwleigh under a marriage licence granted by the Bishop of Exeter on 6 June 1610 in which she is described as "... *Elizabeth Newcombe alias Knapman of Throughlye ...*", and then at Ashton the following day), it mentions John, but not Alexander⁸¹. According to the testimony in that case of Elizabeth's former brother-in-law, William Knapman, Thomas Luffe did not want certain land to be used to support his step-son John.

I have seen no evidence to suggest that John, Barnabie's son, survived to adulthood, married or had children. However, he may have done so under the name John Luffe.

Alexander's daughters, Elizabeth, Alice and Margaret

Alexander and Anne also had three daughters. The tree produced as a result of the Herald's Visitation of 1620 shows Elizabeth, Alice and Margaret, in that order, and that is the order I have adopted.

Elizabeth was (according to the IGI) born in about 1575, at Whood, Dartington (actually, as noted above, the estate called Whood, or Hood, spans the parish boundary between Rattery and

⁷⁶ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/P12/31.

⁷⁷ This may be a reference to Withycombe, near Minehead (Somerset), or possibly to Widecombe-in-the-Moor. Alternatively (and despite the reference to the parish of Whythecombe) it could refer to Withecombe, a farm to the north of Chagford.

⁷⁸ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/K1/43.

⁷⁹ The evidence for this comes from the Court of Star Chamber, Ref STAC 8/191/24. This is a case between Barnabie and Elizabeth on the one part and Edward Cole on the other, who had evidently married Elizabeth's younger sister Margaret against the wishes of her parents, her father (William Newcombe) now being dead.

⁸⁰ Chancery Ref C 21/L28/12.

⁸¹ However, it is just possible that the young Alexander may have survived, and grown up to be the Alexander Knapman of Exminster who was recorded by the 1660 Poll Tax Roll with an unnamed wife, and whose will was proved in 1681: yet another of the lost Devon wills.

Dartington). In about 1603 she married Thomas Gould of Rattery and Dartington, and they had four children: Alexander, Margaret, Thomas and Bridget, before Thomas' death in 1617. Four years later Elizabeth was re-married, to Mathias Abraham, also of Rattery, and they had at least one son, John. She and Mathias both appear to have died early in 1654.

We know a certain amount about Elizabeth's two families from a series of documents identified via the National Archives website. The most informative is the will written by Thomas Gould, Elizabeth's son by her first marriage, which he wrote in 1647 when he described himself as of Rattery, but resident in Lisbon. The will itself, which I have not seen, is in the DHC⁸², but the summary on the National Archives website states that in his will he left his 'plate, jewels and diamonds' to "... *his mother, Mrs Elizabeth Abraham, widow, of Rattery*". He left his lands in Rattery and Dartington to his brother, Alexander "... *and if Alexander has no children, to the eldest son of his eldest sister Bridgett Mattocke*". The residuary legatees were his nephews, the sons of his sisters Bridgett Mattocke and Elizabeth Browse. Nicholas Browse, his brother-in-law was one of his executors.

Prior to that, in 1632, Thomas (described as 'of Exeter') had granted a 21-year lease on a property called the 'Common House' to Allan Leaman. That same year he and his brother Alexander (described as a clothier, of Dartington) signed an agreement regarding Hood.

Then, in 1655, John Abraham, Elizabeth's son by her second marriage, and described as a yeoman of Rattery, signed an agreement regarding some property in Rattery that involved "... *Elizabeth Gould jr, daughter of Alexander Gould, late of Hood*".

Alexander's middle daughter Alice married Robert Lethbridge of Nymet Tracey, and they had at least one daughter, called Ann. In fact they probably had further children, because Alexander's will included legacies to the children of Robert Lethbridge. Robert had been born in about 1561, and although Alice was very probably much younger than him, it seems likely that she was born before Francis (who was born in 1582).

As indicated above in the text dealing with Alexander, his youngest daughter Margaret married William Ayshe (or Aish), and whatever the truths of the cases described there, theirs must have been a difficult marriage. William indicated (in the context of a lawsuit quoted above) that by about 1615 he and Margaret had ten children, and we know that he had married shortly after the death of his grandfather, which occurred in 1593. If Margaret really was the youngest of the three sisters, and if Elizabeth really was born in about 1575, she must have been very young when she married William.

We know the names of some of their children. Three documents listed on the National Archives website but held at the DHC identify three of their sons. One⁸³ names Francis and Alexander as sons of William Ayshe of Throwleigh. The other two⁸⁴ identify James as William's son and heir. The first also names Humfrye Ayshe as James' uncle (and therefore William's brother), and the second mentions "... *John Martyn of Exeter, gent (Executor of William Aysh, gent, deceased) and James Aysh, son and heir of the said William ...*" concerning some property at Morchard Bishop. Francis is also identified in the evidence of the third William Knapman, his brother-in-law, in the 1615 lawsuit. Francis, like several of his sisters (of whose names we know Anne, Joan and Maude), was 'placed out' with another family, with some money contributed as maintenance.

One of William and Margaret's daughters, Anne, was apparently 'placed out' with Thomas and Elizabeth Gould, her uncle and aunt from Rattery (see above) at one time. Later, when she was offered the chance to go and live with her grandfather, Alexander Knapman, with whom her father was in dispute, she told another witness (Alice Hole) that "... *she would willinglie come to the Deft⁸⁵ if her father would give her leave*". The evidence of her sister, Joan, given in 1617, confirms that leave was indeed given. In her deposition, Joan stated that she was "... *now servant to Deft her grandfather ... (and) ... held a lease for two years which her mother said she had from the Deft and which she redelivered to her mother who put it in a coffer and which was taken from same by the Compl^t*". She went on to say that "... *the Deft hath kept and maintained some of the Compl^ts children in his owne house for some tyme as namely this Dept herself by the space a quarter year, and Anne her sister for two years and Deft did give towards the maintenance of this Dept 20/- a year untill she became 21 and which sum was paid over 10 or 11 years and her sister Anne had 10*

⁸² DHC Ref 2779 M/25/2, dated 1647.

⁸³ DHC Ref 21/10/208, dated 28 October 1614.

⁸⁴ DHC Ref 21/26/3/9, dated 19 November 1622, and 21/26/3/10, dated 1623.

⁸⁵ William Aish was the complainant in this case, and Alexander was the defendant.

pounds laid out for her when he placed her with her Aunt to be maintained. She knows that Maude her sister was placed forth by the Deft at 20/- per year maintenance while she continued so forth. Deft also placed forth Francis son of the Complt for the sum of 10 pounds. She says that the Complt had the proffitt of four milch kyne of the Defts for 8 or 9 years but for what consideration she did not know. Deft wished to maintain Maude and Anne in his owne house after their placemts and sent a message to that effect to the Complt but he was not at home. She and her sister Maude received 20 pounds each from the Deft which sum was in part payment for some of the lands he bought of the Complt. Anne Aish recd 8/14/2d and has taken securitie for 11/2/10d up to age of 21 and that the Complt had received this sum".

Chapter 3: About 1600 to 1690: The Descendants of the third William Knapman

This chapter deals with Alexander and William ('William the cleric'), sons of the third William, and with Alexander's family, which represents the main male line of the Knapman family, and which died out almost a century after Alexander's birth.

Whereas the first three generations of the family accumulated land and wealth, the impression is that the third William and his son Alexander spent it. Alexander died in debt, and by the end of the 17th century much of the family's former wealth would appear to have gone, a lot of it into the pockets of lawyers. I base this comment on the fact that whereas between 1500 and 1700 there were at least 50 lawsuits involving the Knapman family for which papers still exist in the National Archives, after 1700 there are no cases for 120 years. Most of the cases involved property disputes, including challenges to wills. Whether the money had simply run out by 1700, or the papers have been lost, I do not know.

The third William's elder son Alexander, and his descendants

Alexander

William's oldest son, Alexander, married Barbara Strode from Holbeton, not far east of Plymouth, in 1624. She was the daughter of the late William Strode of Carswell in Holbeton, and his wife Johane. The Strode family had long been active in politics in Devon, and further details about them are given later in this chapter as general background.

Barbara had three brothers (Adam, Phillip and Sampson) and four sisters (Julian, Christian, Hellen and Johane). A statement lodged by Adam Strode in answer to a subsequent lawsuit⁸⁶ brought by Alexander, Barbara, her sister Johane and her husband John Pethen in about 1633 states that "... *the complnt Barbara being married in the life tyme of the said Johane her mother had given unto her in marriage with the Compt Knapman by her said mother the some of two hundred and fiftie pounds over and above her fathers bequeath which made in all the some of four hundred pounds wherewith the said Alexander Knapman her husband was well pleased & contented & uppon receite thereof by his Deed bearing date the last Daye of October in the third yeare of the raigne of our now sovereigne Lord King Charles⁸⁷ did remise release & quit claime unto the said Johane Strode this Defendts mother and this Defendt & their executors and administrators for ever*". At issue was the question of the will made by Barbara's brother Phillip before his untimely death, and whether this was covered by any earlier agreement about the parents' estates. This argument, and the associated lawsuits (including at least one between Alexander and John Pethen), went on for some time, and must have consumed considerable fees.

Alexander and Barbara lived in or around Throwleigh, but all the indications are that Alexander mortgaged much of his property, presumably to fund his lifestyle and his general litigiousness. They were also bringing their family up in the increasingly unstable social and economic conditions that led to the first Civil War.

He was even sued by his own mother, Maude, in 1638⁸⁸ for seeking to overturn the wishes expressed in the third William's will, particularly his wish to pass on property to support Alexander's younger brother, William (the cleric).

Alexander and Barbara had four children between 1626 and the early 1630s, but we know (from evidence presented in yet another lawsuit⁸⁹ in 1647 by their eldest son, the fourth William) that in about 1631 Barbara "... *fell to bee very sicke and weake And soe much spent by the Continuance of her sickness that it was generally conceived that ... shee would Dye of the sicknes*". The allegation was that Edward Knapman, cousin of Alexander's father (the third William), took advantage of the situation to acquire a lease on Murchington from Alexander on terms which proved to be very favourable indeed to Edward and his wife Alice when Barbara subsequently recovered. This deal spawned a great deal of further litigation between the families after Alexander's death.

⁸⁶ Chancery Ref C 2/K25/58.

⁸⁷ i.e. 1628.

⁸⁸ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/K23/27.

⁸⁹ Chancery Ref C 2/ChasI/K16/7.

Alexander died in about 1645, before any of his children had reached their 21st birthdays. At the time his eldest son, the fourth William, was apparently away, possibly fighting in the Civil War. The evidence from the lawsuit suggests that Alexander's will was either mislaid or concealed. However, one of the lost Devon wills was that of Alexander Knapman of Throwleigh, dated (i.e. proved) in 1646/47. In any event Barbara appears to have taken advantage of the situation to manage Alexander's affairs very much in her own favour, and without regard to the agreement made between Alexander and his father's cousin Edward, over Murchington, from where she sought to evict Edward's widow Alice, and her children.

That dispute (over Murchington) spawned another long-running lawsuit⁹⁰, in which Alice expressed her feelings over her treatment by Alexander, and her disgust "... *that a gentleman of his qualitie would so have disgraced himself*" in his land dealings, describing him (Alexander) as "... *a well learned man and skilled in making of deeds*".

However, evidence of the pressure under which Barbara must have been at the time can be drawn from evidence⁹¹ given almost a decade later (on 3 July 1655) by her younger son, Alexander, in which he revealed that on "... *ye 8th day of Sept 1646 ... one John Northmore ... an attorney & now ye attorney of ye complt did cause an arest on ye sd Barbara for debt as administrator to her deceased husband, she being under arest for ye most pte of two days & one night*".

The 1660 Poll Tax Roll shows that Barbara was the head of household (assessed for £9), and shows that her adult son Alexander was living with her (but that his brother Sampson was not). She survived for several years more, being buried at Throwleigh in May 1673. Her son Alexander very probably died in May 1675, and his may well have been yet another of the lost Devon wills (proved in that same year).

The fourth William, and his family

When William returned to Throwleigh, in or before 1647, he was evidently approached by his father's creditors, as his son and heir, and required to settle Alexander's many and various debts. As a consequence he was forced to sell most of the remaining property (but not Wonson). He then mounted a lawsuit⁹² against his own mother for spending the proceeds of his father's estate without paying any of his debts, and appears to have been estranged from his siblings as well as from her.

Two years later, in 1649, there was a marriage settlement concerning "... *the moiety of all the capital mansion house, barton, farm and demesne lands of Wonston, and the mills belonging to it, and the reversion of the other moiety after the decease of Mrs Barbara Knapman, widow, mother of William Knapman of Throwleigh, gent, and Ann Hutton one of the daughters of Thos Hutton of St Kew, Cornwall, clerk, deceased, and sister of Wm Hutton of North Lew, clerk, and Ann's marriage portion of £300*".

Unlike most of the Knapmans' connections by marriage, Thomas Hutton had been on good terms with the Royal family, having been personally appointed to the living at St Kew by the King. Further information on him and his family (who interacted elsewhere with the Knapmans) are provided at the end of this chapter.

In 1650 William was sued by his sister, Maude⁹³, and in 1654 and 1655 he was again in conflict with his mother, and his brother, Alexander⁹⁴. In the earlier case William indicated that the money that his wife had brought with her as a marriage settlement had been critical in keeping them solvent. In the latter case it was evident that Alexander had inherited his parents' talent for litigation, and that he too was now in conflict with his mother as well as his brother over money. He also revealed that he had been seeking "... *to accomplish & make ye marriage betweene one Jayne Battishill & this defendant*". I have seen no evidence to suggest that the marriage ever took place.

In 1656 Maude married John Hole of Hals, in the southern part of North Tawton parish. The National Archives website has evidence of a bond, between William Knapman (presumably Maude's

⁹⁰ Chancery 1647 Ref C 9/228/142.

⁹¹ Chancery Ref C 8/221/91.

⁹² The papers, like those of most of the cases mentioned, are in the National Archives. Details can be found through their website.

⁹³ Chancery Ref C 10/6/160.

⁹⁴ Chancery Ref C 8/221/91.

brother) and John Hole, dated 10 September 1663. It is held at the DHC⁹⁵, but I have not seen it. Maude was buried at Throwleigh in January 1680, recorded as John's wife, and resident at Drewsteignton.

Before that, the 1660 Poll Tax Roll shows William and his wife (Ann) assessed for £41 (making his the highest assessment on any Knapman, and the highest assessment in Throwleigh). William was one of three 'rators' for Throwleigh, alongside Richard Dunning and Edward Knapman (from Family Tree E1). Although the transcription cannot show every nuance, it shows that there were other members of William's household, including Edmond, who (despite the absence of any baptismal record) was almost certainly William's eldest son, born before he and Ann settled in Throwleigh.

Edmond cannot have been much older than 16 when he married Elizabeth Collyhole at Throwleigh on 23 April 1666⁹⁶. They evidently had a son called John who was baptised at Cheriton Bishop on 27 August 1667, and a second called Edmond baptised there on 6 October 1668. So far as I know neither of these boys survived, nor have I found any evidence of other children (and all of the contemporary records that I have seen agree that this branch of the family died out in the male line with the death in 1692 of Edmond's father). There was a will dated 1671 for an Edmund Knapman of 'Crediton or South Tawton', and he was buried at Throwleigh in April that same year. Elizabeth may be the person of that name buried at South Tawton on 14 April 1689, but this is by no means sure.

William and Ann (née Hutton) had four more children baptised at Throwleigh, but of these four only their daughter Mary survived infancy. In 1675, when she was still just 17, she was engaged to be married to William Northmore, an influential local lawyer (and the son of the lawyer who had caused Barbara to be arrested in 1646).

The marriage settlement is in the National Archives, and the extract on their website describes William Northmore as being "... of *South Tawton*". He is described by Vivian (1895) as being "... of *Throwleigh and Well*" (Well being a farm which is just over the parish boundary, in South Tawton). He was the third son of John Northmore, John having been an attorney at the King's Bench, and a forester of Dartmoor who had died in 1671, four years before the marriage between William and Mary. According to the article in 'Devon Notes and Queries' previously cited, William Northmore was subsequently the mayor of Okehampton⁹⁷.

The settlement concerned "... *all the messuages, barton and tenement called Wonston with Wonston Mills and one newly-built house adjoining*". William and Mary agreed to provide her parents with "... *meet, drink, lodging and washing*", and to allow them to "... *enjoy the new chamber and the room underneath*", and if this arrangement did not work out, to pay them £23 a year instead. 'Throwleigh: the story of a Dartmoor village' (referenced earlier) reports that their marriage was "... *certainly a happy one*". Unfortunately Mary died relatively young, in 1695, and William Northmore re-married. William Northmore himself died in 1716, and his will (which I have not seen) can be downloaded from the National Archives website. Some idea of the wealth of his family can be gathered from the fact that one of his sons by his second wife lost £17,000 (a huge sum at that time) on the turn of a single card when gambling. The fateful card, the ace of diamonds, is apparently illustrated in the wood panelling at Wonson Manor.

In 1666 William and Ann mounted a lawsuit⁹⁸ against Robert Bellman concerning the estate of Ann's mother, Dorothy, and challenging an apparent change in her will in favour of Bellman, her grandson, at the expense of Ann. What is interesting is that whereas Ann refers to her mother "... *a little before her Death and when shee was non sane memorie*", in his response, Thomas Bellman "... *saith that Dorothy Hutton widow ... is yet livinge and in health and not Dead or Deceased as in the said bill is falsely alleadged ... (and) ... is of very pfect and sound memory*".

In 1688 William was involved as a witness in another internecine lawsuit which consumed the Wykes family, and which is the subject of 'The Wykes Family article' (referenced earlier). He was also by that time the mortgagee of North Wyke, a situation which had come about because Elizabeth Whiddon had been "... *in possession of North Wyke as mortgaggee from 1662 to 1670*,

⁹⁵ DHC Ref 69/M/3/192.

⁹⁶ Their marriage is included in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850', but no significant additional information is given there.

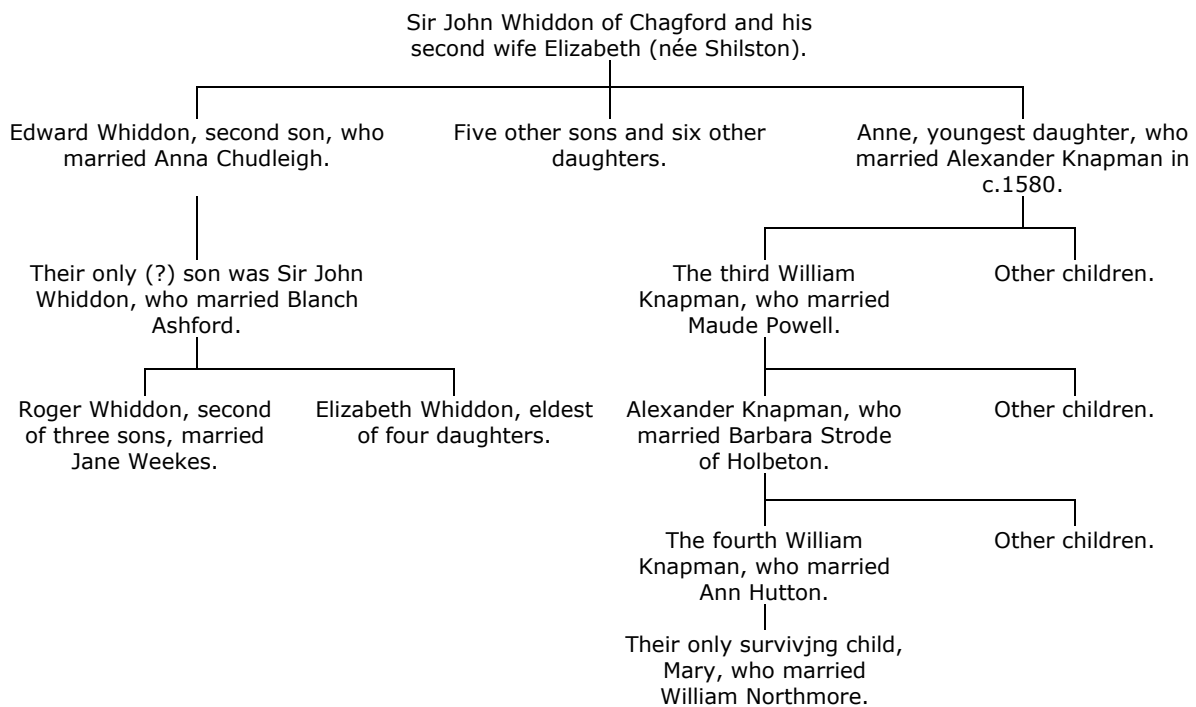
⁹⁷ However, that source may be suspect because it also refers to "William Knapman's brother John (who) had two daughters married to Battishill and Weekes". Either the author was mixing up the generations, or there is another brother (John) who is missing from the bottom row of Family Tree B1.

⁹⁸ Chancery Ref C 5/49/76.

when she transferred her interest to her kinsman, William Knapman of Throwleigh". The relationship between William, Elizabeth Whiddon and some of the other relevant parties are shown in the summary tree on the next page.

'The Wykes Family article' explains that Jane Weekes, who married Roger Whiddon, was the daughters of John Weekes of North Wyke. In a lawsuit in 1670⁹⁹, the fourth William Knapman stated that he believed that "... Jane the daughter of the said John Weekes was given in marryage to the said Roger Whiddon and ... that the said John Weekes in his life time became bound unto the said Roger Whiddon in one obligacon of eight hundred pounds condiconed for the paymt of ffower hundred pounds". Elizabeth Whiddon's claim was evidently based on this (apparently unmet) obligation, and she must have decided to pass at least some of her rights to the fourth William, her second cousin once removed. 'The Wykes Family article' goes on to state that in his 1668 deposition, William Knapman confirmed that he "... did assign to his son in law, Northmore, his Mortgage on North Wyke Estate, who assigned it to Richard Weekes, son in law, who in consequence kept possession of the Prem. who before enjoyed the House and Gardens of North Wyke with this Deponent's permission".

William had evidently been present at North Wyke in 1661 when a dramatic event occurred, which is described in the same article. Following the premature death from consumption of John Wykes, heir to the estate, Richard Wykes, a distant relative, seized control of the house and deeds from John's mother and sister, Katherine. The article quotes at length Katherine's evidence from a 1662 lawsuit, "... wherein she relates what took place at North Wyke on the eventful evening of the 29th September, 1661".



Katherine then stated that "... one Richard Weekes who pretended himself a near kinsman to the said John Wykes, did, a little before his death, labour and endeavour by several friends of his to persuade the said John Wykes to settle the lands and premises upon him", but that, despite signing a deed to that effect, shortly before his death John Wykes "... did then solemnly declare in the presence of several witnesses that the said Conveyance should from thenceforth be utterly void, and that the said Richard Weekes should never have any part of the said lands. But about three days after his return to his House, and before he had made any writing of revocation, that is to say, on or about the 1st day of September last, the said John Wykes ... died". Then, on "... the 29th Septr. last upon which said day being Sunday, and the very next day after the Funeral of the said John Weekes, he, the said Richard Weekes, although he had formerly promised to give until your Oratrix £500 more than was due unto her by the said Conveyance, yet did declare that he was at that time to act 'the Divell's part and his own,' and shortly after on that same Sunday towards the evening, he ... drew his sword and held it to the breast of the said Oratrix ... and threatened to kill

⁹⁹ Chancery Ref C 10/118/115.

her and her mother and others in their company, unless they forthwith departed the said House, and thereupon your said Oratrix, hasting towards her chamber in the said House, was stopped by the said Richard Weekes, and by him violently thrown down to the ground on her head, whereby your said Oratrix, for preservation of her life, was enforced to quit the possession of the said House, and the said Oratrix' mother was, by the said Richard Weekes, dragged into the Hall of the said House and there, with others in her company, locked up all that night ... and kept without fire or candle light. And moreover on the same Sunday night about midnight, he, the said Richard Weekes ... did, with hatchet and iron bar, break open the door of your Oratrix' chamber, and the door of the chamber or room where were all the Deeds, Evidences, and Writings, concerning the said lands &c. and a certain Deed of entail of the Premises, all which the said Richard Weekes ... did then carry away. And the said Richard Weekes ... hath ever since and doth still keep the same, together with other things belonging to the said Oratrix". In those days, possession was certainly nine tenths of the law.

This information throws some light on subsequent events featuring Katherine Weekes in the next chapter.

Ann Knapman was buried at Throwleigh in November 1685, and in 1688 William was almost certainly the last member of the family to serve as a jurate for Chagford Stannary at the Crockern Tor Great Court¹⁰⁰. By the time William himself was buried, in January 1692, he was the last surviving male descendant of the main Knapman line, unless either of his two brothers, Alexander or Sampson, survived and produced a male heir, of whom I am unaware. Whereas we have a probable burial, at Throwleigh in 1675, for Alexander, Sampson seems to have disappeared without trace after 1650. He could easily have been killed in the second Civil War, or, as a youngest son, he might have gone abroad to seek his fortune. In any event, I have found no evidence to suggest that he was either married or buried in or around Throwleigh.

The extinction of the main male Knapman line is reflected in the description of Throwleigh in 'Magna Britannia, Volume 6' (1822)¹⁰¹, which confirms that the manor belonged at one time to the Knapman family "... whose heiress brought it to the Northmores, with the manor and barton of Wonson, the capital messuage of Ford, and the manor of Rushford, in Throwley, and Chagford". The Northmores subsequently purchased Cleve, in the parish of Ermington, south of Dartmoor and not far from Ivybridge.

There is one final piece of information which appears to refer to William. However, rather than relying on a contemporary document it comes from an unsourced story included in a novel called 'John Herring' by the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould¹⁰² which was published in 1884. Baring-Gould wrote extensively about Dartmoor, and was presumably recycling a story that he had heard locally to add a bit of colour to his novel.

The text concerned goes as follows: "*In the grand old days when there were many squires about here, and the Knapmans were at Wansdon, and the Whiddons at Whiddon, the old Squire Knapman was getting into a bad way financially, like me. He was invited to dinner at Whiddon, and drove there in his great coach. After dinner, Squire Whiddon saw him into his overcoat in the hall, and was about to accompany him to the door when old Knapman said, 'No, no! you will catch cold! keep in, man.' But the squire was too hospitable for that, and he attended Knapman to the coach. 'Don't come out, for heaven's sake, you will get your death of cold,' said Knapman. 'Why!' exclaimed Whiddon, 'what is the meaning of this, Knapman? Going to ride on the box instead of inside, a night like this?' 'I prefer it,' answered Squire Knapman, proceeding to ascend to the box. But Whiddon would not allow it; he went to the coach-door and opened it — when, lo! he found it full of hay. 'How came that?' asked Herring. 'Why, do you not see? Old Knapman was badly off for hay for his horse, and when he went out anywhere to dinner he told his coachman to fill the carriage with hay from his host's rick, and himself went home on the box'."*

Wansdon was no doubt a mis-spelling of Wonston, and if the story is not entirely true, some elements of it may well be so.

¹⁰⁰ Source: Dr Tom Greeves, personal communication.

¹⁰¹ This source can be found via the british-history.ac.uk website.

¹⁰² 'John Herring' can be found on-line via the archive.org website, and the story occurs on page 42. That part of the novel features the Battishill family.

Alexander's younger brother, William the cleric

In November 1631 Alexander's younger brother William enrolled as a student at Trinity College, Oxford¹⁰³, where he was awarded a BA in 1634 and an MA in 1637. His studies were evidently in preparation for entering the priesthood, because on 23 September 1636 he was ordained at Exeter. According to a website called theclergydatabase.org.uk¹⁰⁴ William was appointed a deacon on 23 September 1638, and licensed as a preacher on 1 October 1639.

According to the familyhistoryonline.net website a William Knapman married Martha Leach at Stoke Climsland on 17 August 1642, and I believe that this was William the cleric. Using information from the same source, Martha may well have been baptised on 18 April 1619 at Luxulyan, Cornwall, the daughter of Nicholas Leache.

Another (unidentified) source suggests that William became a curate at Seal in Kent (near Sevenoaks), on 21 June 1645. The vicar of Seal at that time was John Baker (installed in 1644, in succession to Robert Baker, probably his father, who had been the incumbent from 1608 to 1644).

There is then a record in the Journal of the House of Lords for 24 February 1648 that "*... an ordinance was presented to the House, for making William Knapman Clerk, to be Minister for Bridestowe in the county of Devon; which was read, and passed, and ordered to be sent to the House of Commons for their concurrence*". It went to the Commons on 1 March 1648, and we can assume that it was passed because the 'Book of Bridestowe' then provides several references to William, the most substantial of which is as follows.

"William Knapman of Throwleigh, a Puritan Nominee, was placed to the living of Bridestowe by order of the House of Commons in 1647¹⁰⁵ following the sequestration of Edward Cotton¹⁰⁶. Through Knapman we have the earliest extant record of the beating of the bounds of Bridestowe and Sourton Common¹⁰⁷. We find amongst the Bidlake papers notes taken by Knapman, not only of the bounds of his own parish, but those of a number of others as well.

"Upon the Restoration, William Knapman was ejected from the living of Bridestowe. It is important to note that although Knapman had the label of 'intruder' attached to his name, he should not be presumed to be someone unworthy of the priesthood. As confirmation of this, Knapman was amongst others, chosen to preach in St James' Chapel, Okehampton, during 1657".

The 'Book of Bridestowe' also states that the rector of Bridestowe was the *de facto* Lord of the Manor, and gives details of a hearing of 'the Court of William Knapman held on 27 September 1653' which identified the property holders in the village. Bracketed together as the tenants of a house and meadow called Denboles Park are Martha Knapman (presumably William's wife), Mary Knapman and Reginald Hawkey.

Mary's identity is uncertain, but we do know that William the cleric was the second cousin of John Knapman (whose details follow in Chapter 5), who was initially the rector of Pyeworthy and then of Pillaton. John had died in 1645, and Mary could easily have been his eldest daughter (born c.1624). It is no more than speculation, but it is possible that after her father's death Mary, still single, went to live with her respectable second cousin-once-removed, and his wife. John Knapman of Plymouth has studied her will (dated 1715), which confirms that Mary knew the Hawkey family well.

William's successor to the living at Bridestowe was one William Hutton. He was installed (according to the 'Book of Bridestowe') on 9 August 1661, but remained resident at Northlew. As reported above, Hutton's sister, Ann, was married to William the cleric's nephew (see above for further details on this, and see the end of this chapter for further information on the Hutton family).

Subsequently William lived at Padstow, where he fell out with The Reverend Bowden, the local vicar, as a result of his (uninvited) preaching. There are apparently letters (which I have not seen)

¹⁰³ Some of the information about William's qualifications and early career were provided by John Knapman of Plymouth, but there is some uncertainty about the identity of the original source.

¹⁰⁴ This website is far from easy to use, but does contain useful information. My tip is to open the database search page, and then to specify Exeter as the location, select the relevant Bishop for the time period concerned, and then use a simple search for the name of interest on the page that comes up.

¹⁰⁵ I conclude that the reference to 1647 is to the ecclesiastical year.

¹⁰⁶ Edward Cotton was evidently an active Royalist supporter who accompanied their troops around the country rather than tending to the needs of his parishioners.

¹⁰⁷ These records, from 1649, can be seen (I have not seen them) at the DHC.

dated 21 and 23 January 1674 from Bowden, and a reply to the first from William, dated 22 January 1674.

However, I have seen a record dating to 29 May 1672 in the publication 'Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence' transcribed by Professor G Lyon Turner MA in 1911 and now available on-line via Google Books. The same information is confirmed in a 1908 publication entitled 'The Declaration of Indulgence¹⁰⁸ 1672: A study in the rise of organised dissent' by Frank Bate MA BLitt with an introduction by C H Firth MA which is also available on-line. Professor Lyons reproduced a petition from 27 Cornish dissenters including William Knapman, the text of which is as follows.

"To the Kings most Excellent Majesty. The most humble acknowledgement of ye Nonconforming Ministers in the County of Cornwall. May it please your most excellent Majestie. Wee your most faithfull Subjects being duely & deeply apprehensive of your Royall favour, and Clemency exprest in your gracious Declaration of Indulgence, doe render most hearty, & thankfull acknowledgements thereof., And most humbly desire & petition that wee may reape the benefit of your Favor, in affording us Licences to exercise our Function & allowing us such places as wee humbly shall propose to your Majtie. Wee behaving our selves peaceably and unblameably; & wee shall endeavour to ye utmost of our abilities to demonstrate our selves your Majties most Loyall subjects & alsoe shall ever pray for your Majties constant happinesse in your Person & Government."

William was buried at Throwleigh in December 1680, described in the parish register as 'householder and non-conformist minister'. In 1684 a William Knapman, very likely the same person, was commemorated by name (but described as a churchwarden) on a church bell at Coryton, a small village 5 miles south west of Bridestowe.

The family of Barbara Strode, wife of Alexander

The following information is given not because it has anything to do with the Knapman family, but to provide some background to Barbara, and to highlight the extent to which the Knapman family was associated with the Parliamentary interest in and around the civil war. I have not identified how Barbara's immediate family was related to the Strodes described below, but they were almost certainly directly (and closely) related.

The Strode family had lived in the area around Ermington, Modbury and Holbeton since the 13th century (the original family home was at Strode Farm, where there are still traces of a larger house), but during the 15th century they acquired Newnham in Plympton St Mary by marriage, which became the family's principal residence.

The Strodes were active in politics, and Richard Strode, MP for Plympton, is still known for instigating one of the earliest and most important English cases dealing with parliamentary privilege. He lived from about 1480 to 1522, and was a tinner as well as an MP. After he attempted to introduce legislation at Westminster restricting the rights of tin miners, an influential competitor brought charges against Strode in the Stannary Court, which imposed a fine of £160. When Strode refused to pay, he was imprisoned at Lydford Castle. He was released three weeks after the Westminster Parliament passed what became known as Strode's Act, which overturned the local court decision and granted him immunity from further prosecution related to his Parliamentary activities.

Several generations later, from 1604 to 1614, Sir Richard Strode was one of two MPs for Bere Alston, a small town on the east bank of the Tamar, between Plymouth and Tavistock. Ten years later he was succeeded by William Strode (1598 to 1645). For the avoidance of doubt, this William was not Sir Richard's son (his father was also called William)¹⁰⁹.

William Strode was actively involved in the Parliamentary opposition to Charles I¹¹⁰. He was a supporter of Sir John Eliot's criticism of the Duke of Buckingham, and played a leading role in the disorderly scenes of 2 March 1629 when Denzil Holles held the Speaker in his chair to prevent the adjournment of Parliament. Refusing to give a bond for his good behaviour, Strode was imprisoned 'during the King's pleasure', and was held in various prisons for 11 years.

¹⁰⁸ The Declaration of Indulgence relaxed the penalties and controls on both Catholics and nonconformists.

¹⁰⁹ A great deal of information on historic representation is contained within Wikipedia. Suggested starting search: 'former parliamentary constituencies', then keep digging.

¹¹⁰ Wikipedia gives as a source reference: C H Firth, revised by L J Reeve, William Strode, Oxford DNB, 2004.

Soon after he was released he was again elected to represent Bere Alston in the Short Parliament of April 1640 and the Long Parliament in November. Embittered by his personal experience, Strode was the first to propose that Parliament should control the appointment of the King's ministers and the militia. He was zealous in supporting the Grand Remonstrance and aggressive in pursuing the prosecution of Lord Strafford, even proposing that anyone who appeared as Strafford's counsel should also be charged with treason. As a result of his vehement opposition, Strode was one of the five Members whom the King attempted to arrest in January 1642.

Opposing all suggestions of compromise with the King, Strode was one of the most militant of the 'war party' in Parliament, and relentless in advocating the prosecution and execution of Archbishop Laud in 1644. Strode died in September 1645, and was buried in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. His body was exhumed after the Restoration and reburied in St Margaret's churchyard.

It is worth noting (for the benefit of anyone looking into the life of this William Strode) that there was a second anti-Royalist William Strode in the Long Parliament. He was MP for Ilchester in Somerset, and his family was from Barrington and Shepton Mallet. To compound confusion, both of them had fathers called William.

Further Strode MPs included Sir William Strode, one of the two members representing Plymouth Erle from 1660 to 1667. He was followed by Richard Strode, who represented the same constituency from 1685 to 1690, when his fellow member was Sir Christopher Wren.

The Reverend Thomas Hutton and his family

The following information is taken from the entry on Thomas Hutton, a clergyman and well known religious controversialist, in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB).

He was baptised at St Margaret's, Westminster on 1 June 1566, the son of a merchant tailor. He went up to St John's College, Oxford in 1583 and took a BA, MA and Bachelor of Divinity, the latter awarded in 1597. He established his reputation as a preacher at Coventry, whose mayor and aldermen certified in 1603¹¹¹ that "... *he might with the good liking, desire and love of the inhabitants have continued still if he had been so minded, and that he was most lovingly, honestly, and godly behaved himself*".

In December 1604 Hutton was appointed rector of Huxham, just north of Exeter. The DNB reports that he "... *quickly became involved in public disputations with clergy not prepared to subscribe to the Lambeth articles of that year, and in preaching sermons in Exeter Cathedral, defending the prayer book*". Subsequently he published 'An Answer to Several Reasons for Refusal to Subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer' (1605), and 'The Second and Last Part of Reasons for Refusal ... with an Answer to Bothe' (1606). In the second, he expressed "... *his gratitude to Archbishop Bancroft and the King for their favour 'in the prime of his studies'. ... This zeal probably led to Hutton's presentation by the King to the vicarage of St Kew, Cornwall, in January 1607, and by John Sprott for the King to the rectory of Northlew, Devon, in July of that year. He resigned his fellowship of St John's in September 1607, probably about the time of his marriage to Dorothy. ... They had five known sons, of whom the eldest, William was born in October 1608 and one died in infancy, and four known daughters*".

Thomas Hutton was installed as a prebend in Exeter Cathedral in 1618, and continued as an active preacher for the rest of his life. He also knew four foreign languages, and when he died (of natural causes), on 23 December 1639 his library was valued at £200. His full estate was valued at £1,661-6s-8d: he left all his land to his son William.

We can see from theclergydatabase.org.uk that William Hutton was ordained a priest at Exeter Cathedral on 25 September 1631, and a deacon just under a year later. He was appointed to Northlew on 8 December 1634 (the same day that his father resigned), and his patron for that appointment is identified as King Charles. On 30 July 1640 he was appointed rector of Jacobstow in Cornwall (half way between Bude and Tintagel), but he did not necessarily move to Cornwall. As reported above, he was still resident at Northlew when he was appointed to the living at Bridestowe following the ejection of William Knapman in 1661, and he did not move to Bridestowe either.

¹¹¹ The DNB gives the source as 'The early history of St John's College, Oxford' (1939) by W H Stevenson and H E Salter.

Chapter 4: About 1580 to 1710: Francis Knapman, and his Descendants

This chapter deals with the individuals shown on Family Tree B2, starting with the first Francis Knapman, brother of the third William Knapman, and great grandson of the first. The male line that descended from him died out at very much the same time as that of his brother William, who was the subject of Chapter 3.

The first Francis and his family

Francis, second son of Alexander Knapman of Throwleigh, and the origin of Family Tree B2, appears on the family tree drawn up following the Herald's visitation of 1620, along with his wife Elizabeth (née White) and the first five of their six children (Alexander, William, Francis, Anne and Honor, all therefore confirmed as having been born between about 1609 and 1620, and Jane, born thereafter). Francis died young, and his will, dated 1621 and describing him as 'of Throwleigh', was one of the lost Devon wills.

In 1651, following the first Civil War, there was a lawsuit pitting the first Francis' eldest son Alexander against the rest of the family, namely: his own mother, by then remarried to a husband named Richard Enoffe, his five younger siblings, and two of his sisters' husbands (namely Anne's husband Thomas Rowe, and Jane's husband, the non-conformist rector of Throwleigh, John Dickes). The case concerned a mill at Throwleigh, and appears to show Alexander's concern that, with his mother re-married, his inheritance might be endangered, along with his marriage prospects.

There is also a 1658 lawsuit¹¹² involving John Dickes and the second Francis which provides further confirmation of several of the features of Family Tree B2 (specifically the first two Francises, and their relationships to Elizabeth Enoffe).

From 17 July 1660 there is a further very long and complex legal document¹¹³ linked to another earlier lawsuit which, although almost impossible to read, was clearly about money, and involved Alexander and William Knapman on one side and John Weekes of Collibear (now spelled Collybeer), South Tawton, on the other (Mark Wykes of Collibear had married the cousin of their grandfather, Alexander). In 1663 there is literally a book of deposition from Alexander¹¹⁴ (part in Latin, part in English, all very difficult to read) which shows that he had made and then broken an engagement to Katherine Weekes of North Wyke (who appeared as a bit player in the previous chapter).

In the long run he probably considered himself fortunate not to have married her, because as revealed in 'The Wykes Family article', Edmund Parker of Burrington, the older and richer suitor who she preferred, and to whom she was married on 25 August 1667, testified many years later that he was not "... paid any part of the said £1,500, nor any part of the additional £500, nor any part of the mother's annuity This Dept bought the mother's annuity of £100 a year and also a judgment for £920 ... and did pay the annuity for several years and is about £2,000 out of pocket thereby. Also he bought a judgment from one Widow Fursdon of Cadbury for £300; also from Widow Strawbridge for £200, &c. &c. This Dept. is £3,000 out of pocket". He had clearly invested a lot of money to try to regain the Weekes family fortune, but been outmanoeuvred. The depth of his, and his family's determination, can be seen from the fact (related by William Knapman in evidence¹¹⁵ given in 1660) that after his death his son and executor, also called Edmund, continued to pursue the Wykes family to the extent that one of them "... was enforced for his safetie to dept this Kingdom of England severall times & many other times to absent himself from his business for fear of arrest by Baylif".

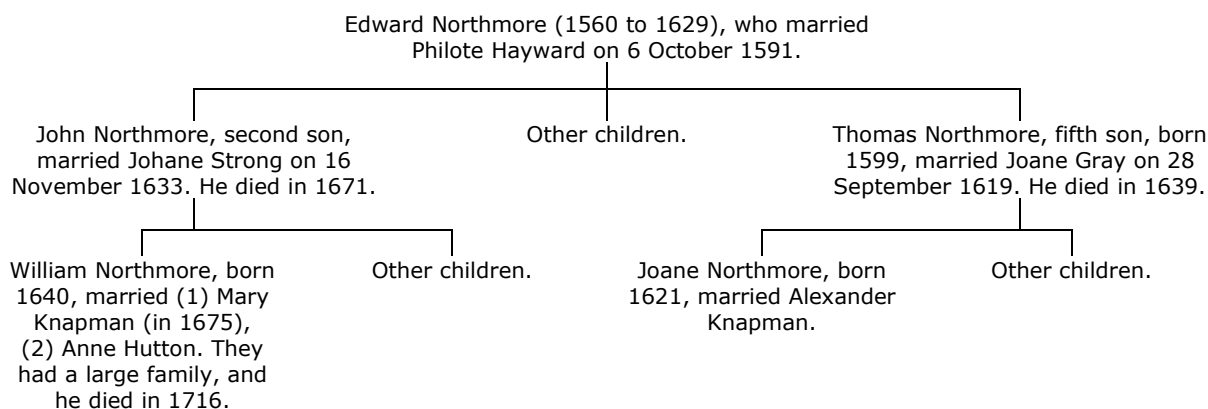
After rejecting, or being rejected by, Katherine Weekes, Alexander married Joane Northmore. He appears to have been about 50 by the time he got married, and all the indications are that the marriage was childless. The 1660 Poll Tax Roll shows an Alexander Knapman and (unnamed) wife assessed for £10 in Throwleigh, which is probably this Alexander. Although he was two generations older than Mary, the last surviving Knapman on Family Tree B1, his wife was a first cousin of Mary's husband, William Northmore. The following brief summary tree, which shows the two marriages, is based on the Northmore pedigree given in Vivian (1895).

¹¹² Chancery Ref C 5/399/172.

¹¹³ Chancery Ref C 9/22/106.

¹¹⁴ Register of High Court of Delegates Ref DEL 1/46.

¹¹⁵ Chancery Ref C 9/22/106.



There is a record of an old monumental inscription for Alexander Knapman, buried at Throwleigh, who died on 5 May 1674, which may well refer to this Alexander. Another of the lost Devon wills was that of Alexander Knapman of Throwleigh, dated 1674.

There is fragmentary evidence from the largely illegible parish register of Sampford Courtenay that Alexander's brother William settled there after marrying Joane Rament in 1635. The baptismal register reveals two daughters born to William and Joane, called Chrissott¹¹⁶ (baptised on 24 July 1636) and Jone (10 March 1651). In between these two, where I found parts of the register impossible to read, there may well have been other children, because a William Knapman (who I am guessing was their son) married Ann Milford on 20 June 1670¹¹⁷. As shown on Family Tree B2, he and Ann then had two daughters that died in infancy (Agnes, baptised on 12 February 1671 and buried on 9 February 1672; and Ann, baptised 24 March 1672 and buried on 2 May 1673) before Symon (also identified in the register as a daughter) and Elizabeth. This family is included in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850', but no additional information is given there.

The family of the third brother, Francis, is dealt with below, and I have not managed to find any further information about his sisters Anne (Rowe) and Honor.

As noted above, the first Francis' youngest daughter, Jane, married John Dickes, the non-conformist preacher who had been appointed to Throwleigh in 1644, reflecting the fact that Parliament and the dissenters were by then in the ascendancy, in the run-up to the first Civil War of 1644 to 1648. Assuming there was only one clerical John Dickes of his vintage, theclergydatabase.org.uk website shows that he had been appointed a deacon at Exeter Cathedral on 22 September 1633, then a priest on 24 May 1635, then a preacher in the Exeter diocese on 4 August 1636, then a curate at Saltash on 7 November 1638, and finally a schoolmaster, also at Saltash, on 2 January 1640. He may well have been the son of William Dickes, a resident of Chagford who had been appointed a priest-deacon at Silverton on 22 May 1608 and a priest at Spreyton by 1628. I have not seen any evidence of the births of any children of John and Jane Dickes, but the transcription of the Throwleigh parish register shows that two of their children, Thomas and Elizabeth, were buried in 1657 and 1668 (in Elizabeth's case, just a month before Jane herself was buried, on 9 December 1668). John died less than two years later, in May 1670¹¹⁸.

So far as I can tell, the male line descended from the older Francis died out with his grandsons.

The second and third Francis and their families

The second Francis' wife was called Mary (the evidence for this comes from the Drewsteignton baptism register, where she is identified as mother to their youngest son). Evidence from the IGI points towards Francis and Mary having had two children (Elizabeth and William) at Throwleigh, both of whom died in infancy, before an unnamed son (almost certainly the third Francis) was baptised at South Tawton in 1659. There is also solid evidence, from a 1692 lawsuit¹¹⁹, that he had two more daughters, called Mary and Joane, and the Drewsteignton baptism register shows that he

¹¹⁶ The name is almost illegible, but this is what it looks like, and it then recurs when she was married to Henry Bray on 8 October 1668.

¹¹⁷ Their marriage is included in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850', but no additional information is included there.

¹¹⁸ There is scope for confusion, because another John Dickes and his wife Ann of very similar ages to 'our' John and Jane lived in Throwleigh at the same time, and some of their children were buried at very much the same time as Thomas and Elizabeth.

¹¹⁹ Chancery Ref C 5/104/21.

had a further son, called Edward, who died as a young adult, some years before the 1692 lawsuit. A further lawsuit¹²⁰ shows that he, together with John Hole of Drewsteignton and many others, was in dispute with the rector of Drewsteignton over tithes in 1670. The second Francis was described as resident at Tarr Down when he was buried at Drewsteignton on 7 March 1691, and his will was proved later that year. He was almost certainly a widower by then, and it is very probable that Mary's burial is the one recorded in the parish register as having taken place on 5 June 1687¹²¹.

That 1692 lawsuit started with a complaint lodged by the third Francis against his sister Joane Knapman and their brother-in-law Valentine Mare (who had married Mary Knapman in 1685 at Spreyton). In it, he alleged that his late father had "... *contracted severall debts being by reason of his old age not well able to manage & looke after his estate*" and accused Ann Lethbridge of seeking to obtain parts of his property as a consequence. He also refers to "... *witnesses who could prove the truth of the aforesaid allegations (who) are either dead or gone into places beyond the seas remote & unknowne to your orator*".

The response from Joane and Valentine Mare shows that Joane had been the second Francis' executrix. They too rebutted a claim from Ann Lethbridge who alleged that Francis had meant to leave the farm to her. Joane suggested that Ann Lethbridge might have been paid to look after Francis, but that she "... *kept him out of his house insomuch that he dyed alone in a hayloft not being able to gett into his house the doores being shoot upon him*". Their joint deposition also refers to Francis as 'fey', suggesting an early case of senile dementia.

They went on to state that the second Francis had made his will on 10 January 1688, leaving Tarr Down to Joane and another property in Venton to Elizabeth Mare (possibly the daughter of Valentine and Mary, though I can find no other evidence for this). Joane had then proved the will and obtained probate, and stated that "... *the day before his death*" Francis had confirmed these bequests. Joane acknowledged that "... *the complaynt is heir at law to the sd Ffrancis Knapman the father, but hope to prove he was very undutifull to his said father*". Francis' will was yet another of those burned in Exeter during World War II (the date being given as 1691).

I have found a small amount of further evidence of Valentine (and Mary) Mare via the National Archives website. In 1698 to 1700 Valentine, together with John Hole senior and John Hole junior, was a party to a dispute about tithes at Down St Mary¹²². There is also evidence from the 1723 Oath Roll, which both Valentine and Mary signed as residents of Morchard Bishop, to the north of Crediton. The Mare family was well established in that area.

The third Francis' first wife was called Mary, and they had a daughter called Mary at South Tawton in 1681. Unfortunately Mary (the daughter) died very soon thereafter, and was buried at South Tawton on 30 November 1681. His wife Mary also died relatively young, being buried at South Tawton on 8 July 1691. Her will is very probably one of the lost Devon wills, dated 1692.

The Drewsteignton parish register shows that Francis moved back there, and that he had two further wives called Anne (buried 22 May 1694) and Thomasine (buried 17 December 1699). The third Francis was also buried at Drewsteignton, on 14 February 1709, five days after his death.

I have found some other evidence¹²³ which may well refer to his early life, in the form of a report of State Papers from Newfoundland in 1680. They report that a Frenchman called Johanis (or Jean) Ducarrett had complained to the British authorities that the previous winter, his boats had been destroyed and his cabin on Colinet Island burned by a group including Francis. Whilst such harassment of French settlers was, apparently, a common enough occurrence, the perpetrators were seldom brought to trial. On this occasion, however, the authorities followed up on the complaint, and six persons were accused, of whom four (Francis Knapman, William Crouch, Samuel Wood and John Wallis) were arrested, questioned and found guilty. The sentence, dated 29 September 1680, was that they should be "... *duck at the main yard arm*" of HMS Assistance, and be made liable to pay compensation to the complainant. Newfoundland had strong links with most

¹²⁰ Chancery Ref C 10/102/11.

¹²¹ This could also be the first wife of the third Francis, but on balance I think not.

¹²² See Exchequer Ref E 134/10&11 Wm3/Hil13.

¹²³ This can be found on the british-history.ac.uk website. The same material is also referred to in 'A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records' by D W Prowse QC (1895) which is accessible via the Google Books website, and in an article entitled 'Outport Economics: Culture and Agriculture in Later Seventeenth-Century Newfoundland' in the journal of 'Newfoundland and Labrador Studies', which is available via the journals.hil.unb.ca website.

Devon ports, from which fishermen went for the seasonal cod fishing in large numbers, and would have been an obvious place for a young man to go to try his fortune.

If Francis was 20 at the time, he would just about have had time to get home, get married to his first wife, Mary, and have his daughter (also Mary) in late 1681.

There was yet another Francis, who was buried at Throwleigh in February 1698. However, I do not think he was from this family, otherwise he would most probably have been buried in South Tawton or Drewsteignton.

All the evidence points to the male line of this branch of the Knapman family dying out with the demise of the third Francis in 1709, about 20 years after the death of his second cousin, the fourth William Knapman. Francis' will is reported to have been proved in 1708, but this is presumably an error, given that it was almost certainly that of the third Francis, described as 'of Teington Drewe'.

Chapter 5: About 1550 to 1700: James Knapman of Drewsteignton, and his Cornish Descendants

Logically, it might be expected that this chapter would deal with the family that starts with John Knapman, the second son of the second William, and Family Trees C1 to C4. However, there is a pragmatic case for dealing first with the family of his younger brother, James Knapman the elder of Drewsteignton. The male line descended from him died out at very much the same time as those of his nephews William and Francis, who were the subjects of Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, and the sources of information have more in common with those already cited than those used for John and Edward Knapman, who are therefore bracketed together in Chapter 6.

James the elder and his son William

James the elder of Drewsteignton was the third son of the second William, and he married Emma Cove, identified in the family tree drawn up following the Herald's visitation of 1620 as the sister of his brother John's wife¹²⁴. James and Emma appear to have had just one surviving child: their son William. Since the family tree produced following the Herald's visitation of 1620 was signed by William's son James the younger, it seems likely that this was true, though it is eminently possible that others may simply have failed to survive childhood.

James the elder appears to have held the position of local justice of the peace, or similar, because some of the many lawsuits cited in this history were sworn before him. We also know that he and Emma were involved in a sequence of legal actions related to property in the parishes of Stoodleigh and Cove, to the north of Tiverton. After James' death in 1593 his elder brother Alexander stood in to protect the interests of James' grandsons, James and John.

As reported earlier, in Chapter 2, James was involved in politics, and in 1592 was accused (with Alexander) of treason. The letter sent to Sir Robert Cecil in 1601 by William Ayshe of Throwleigh (and which is quoted in full in Chapter 2) refers to "... a matter of high treason committed by one James Knapman, who, being found guilty by the grand jury, did shortly after poison himself and so died." Whether James the elder actually committed suicide is uncertain: William Ayshe was not necessarily a very reliable witness (see the earlier text, also in Chapter 2, in relation to his civil cases against Alexander), and his animosity to the Knapman family ran deep. However, we do know that William Ayshe's own father, who was named as a co-defendant on the original indictment, also died in 1593.

Whatever the truth of the matter, before he died James drew up a will on 4 March 1593, which was proved on 4 April 1594. This will mentions a large number of properties including some in Throwleigh (Langston); some in Drewsteignton (including Higher and Lower Shilstone, Shilstone manor¹²⁵, Higher Parford and some other properties whose names I do not recognise called Fleete, Foxpark and Feamill); Marapitt¹²⁶ in the forest of Dartmoor itself; some in relatively nearby parishes on the northern edges of the moor (Hittisleigh, South Tawton, and Okehampton); some on the north western edges of the moor (Bratton Clovelly and Lydford); some in parishes slightly further away (Cheriton Fitzpaine and Coleford); some on the southern edges of Exmoor (Stoodleigh and Anstey); some on the road west towards Cornwall (Hatherleigh, and Pulworthy in Highampton parish); Dittisham (near Dartmouth); and several places I cannot locate at all, assuming I have transcribed them correctly (Fernehill, Lymington and Highcompton). It also refers more generally to properties in Somerset and 'in the city and county of Exeter'.

It makes no mention of any troubles that he faced, but it does give the impression of a document drawn up in a hurry, almost like a stream of consciousness. Towards the end, small legacies are being added like afterthoughts, and with no real sense of structure. I would not want to overinterpret this as indicating anything dramatic, but it does give the impression of a life drawing rapidly, possibly unexpectedly, to a close.

Another striking characteristic of the will is that it only mentions his son William in the context of his (William's) sons (who are generally identified as 'my son's son'). I thought for some time that this was because William had already died by the 1593, but information provided to me in 2014 by

¹²⁴ See the end of this Chapter for further details on the Cove family.

¹²⁵ The farm on which the Bradford Pool tin works was located was called Shilstone, and Bradford Pool now lies in the woods directly behind the farmstead of Higher Shilstone Farm.

¹²⁶ Ownership changes referring to land within the boundaries of the forest of Dartmoor were recorded by the Stannary Court at Lydford, and sessions in January and October 1585 noted that James Knapman of Throwleigh had bought small parcels of land at Marapitt (modern spelling Merripit, near Postbridge).

Dr Tom Greeves, drawing on documents from the Stannary Court at Lydford (now held in the National Archives), show that William did not die until 1598¹²⁷. They also show that he was hanged for committing "*violent slaughter and wilful murder*". It is possible that by 1593 he was already in trouble with the law, and James the elder decided to pass property to the next generation to avoid it being confiscated, as sometimes happened in the case of convicted criminals. Intriguingly, another Lydford document from 16 May 1594 shows that when James' death was reported, his interest in the land at Marapitt passed to William, not to one of his sons, as intended under James' will.

William left a widow and three sons when he was hanged. His widow had been born Eliza Coode, daughter of a prominent Cornish landowning family, and their three surviving sons were James the younger, John and William. Eliza was buried at Drewsteignton in September 1620, and the will of 'Elizabeth Knapman of Dresteignton', which was proved in 1621, was probably one of the lost Devon wills.

James the elder's three grandsons

James the younger

James the younger of Drewsteignton spent some time as a student at Exeter College, Oxford. The college's records (made available to me via the college library) show that he matriculated in 1601, aged 15. Exeter, the fourth oldest of the Oxford colleges, was originally founded in 1314 to provide an educated body of clergy for the diocese of Exeter, and retained strong connections with the west country for several centuries.

According to the Knapman family tree created following the Herald's visitation of 1620, James the younger married Jone, daughter of Sir John Whiddon. However, according to the Whiddon pedigree from the same source, Jone was called Jane, and was Sir John's granddaughter rather than his daughter, being the daughter of his fourth son, Francis. If this is correct, she would also have been the niece of Anne Whiddon, who some years earlier had married Alexander Knapman, the older brother of James Knapman the elder of Drewsteignton.

The Herald's Visitation tree shows that James and Jane had four sons and five daughters. One of those sons, Zaccheus, died in infancy, but all the others survived to adulthood.

We know that at some point James had inherited or purchased the tinworks at Bradford Pool, because, as reported in the 'Bradford Pool Tinworks' article, in 1618 he was involved in a dispute with his neighbour John Newcombe over the water needed to drive the machinery. The article comments that with mining ventures becoming more capital intensive, the importance of a private water supply to the mine was critical, "*... particularly as natural streams were not available. In 1618, almost as a prelude to the disastrous events which were to follow, a dispute arose over the leat supplying water to Bradford between John Newcombe of Throwleigh and South Tawton, and James Knapman. Newcombe diverted the leat as it passed through his lands to work his mill, claiming that he was entitled to do so when the water was not being used by the tanners. The dispute was decided by arbitration, and the award recorded by deed poll. Knapman was forever to freely 'have and take' the water from 1 November to 15 May in every year, and Newcombe was to have it the rest of the year. The award stated that the leat had been found by a 'suit in case and verdict at law' to appertain to 'divers tinworks' of James Knapman*".

In 1624 James purchased an interest in some land in Maine, New England¹²⁸. The year before, an English adventurer, Christopher Levett, had been granted the right to purchase, for £110, 6,000 acres on the coast of Maine, near to modern-day Portland. He promptly sold (for £35) a quarter of his purchase to two settlers from Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1624 they in turn sold (for £11 13s 4d) one third of their share to three other investors: Alexander Grosse, John Southmead and James Knapman. Levett founded a small colony on his land before returning to England on naval business, but none of his fellow-colonists were ever seen again.

In return for a little under £4, therefore, James had bought about 166 acres of New England rocks and trees. His co-investor was Alexander Grosse, or possibly his son. Alexander Grosse was very probably the well-known Devon dissenter who was vicar of Ashburton from 1647 to 1654. The third investor, John Southmead, was also a puritan preacher, from Wray Barton, a substantial property

¹²⁷ Ref SC2/167/11 Lydford North 21 Sept 40 Eliz 1598.

¹²⁸ Source: Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries, Vol.23, accessible via Google Books. See also Massachusetts Historical Society Vol.69, accessible via the same source.

on the main road south east of Moretonhampstead. Like James, he was related by marriage to the Whiddon family of Chagford, in that his daughter Anne married Francis Whiddon MA of Chagford, another leading dissenter with links to Totnes. John Southmead also had a younger brother who emigrated to New England in about 1640 and produced a prominent Massachusetts family under the name of Southmayd. I have seen no evidence to suggest that James ever visited Maine to inspect his investment, and it is not mentioned in his will, suggesting that either he sold it on, or it turned out to be of no real value.

According to the TDA¹²⁹, in 1629 James gave his oath at the inquisition post mortem for John Hore, who had died without lawful issue. This was probably the John Hore of Chagford who had testified in support of William Ayshe in his 1615 suit against Alexander Knapman, James' great uncle.

James evidently shared the views of his grandfather, and was not shy about expressing them, because evidence available via Google Books¹³⁰ shows that when "... *James Knapman and John Southmeade were presented at the Exeter Assizes in August 1642 for 'scandalous words spoken of the king's majesty and the parliament and the Book of Common Prayer' they were bound over to appear at the next assize. Their wait turned out to be longer than expected. For there were no more assizes in Exeter until August 1646 ...*" by which time James had died, his death having occurred in December 1644. James' co-accused was one of his two co-investors in New England land.

We know from the evidence of all the main parties to a lawsuit¹³¹ mounted after James' death that he was on the side of the Parliamentarians in the first Civil War. The evidence given by his granddaughter Jane in that case says that he was known "... *for his good affection and greater love which he had and leased to the Parliament constraind and inforced by the cruelltye of the late King's party to defect and leave his habitation to the merciless occupation and possession of the Cavaliers and afterwards was by them imprisoned by the space of two years and ... being so oppressed and burthened with injuries and calaymities did in these late unhappy distractions of his nation deliver and deposit all his said divers writings, evidences, court Rolls and C'nterptes of leases unto the hands & possession of one Susan Hoare of Chagford ... to be safely by her kept and to be redelivered unto him or to his right heirs at any time when he or they should require or demand*". It is not clear whether James the younger ever returned home before his death, and on balance it seems unlikely that he did.

We also have James the younger's will, which was drawn up on 3 April 1644 but not proved until 5 July 1647. The probate copy is available via the National Archives' website, but an attested copy (which is also much more easily legible) is available in the DHC. He left two of his Drewsteignton properties (Fleete and Foxhill) to his daughter Jane (Robarts) and a third (Bowdon tenement) to her unmarried sister Maud. He left land at St Stephen's, near Saltash in Cornwall, and two properties in Throwleigh (Leigh and Southleigh) to his youngest daughter Honor. He left his land in Moretonhampstead to his son John, who was also his executor and residuary legatee. He then left 20 shillings each to his married daughters Margaret Bellamy and Elizabeth Trevethan, plus 10 shillings to each of their children. To his granddaughter Jane, the daughter of his late son James, he left a 99-year interest in East and West Bullapitt (two properties at Werrington, just north of Launceston, then in Devon but now in Cornwall) to commence after the deaths of Richard Mayne, gent, and her own mother Jane. Finally, he left the profits from his remaining Drewsteignton property (Shilstone) to John until his grandson (and John's nephew) James (i.e. Jane's elder brother) came of age. He also instructed James that if he should survive him (which I interpret to mean James the younger), then he should use his interest in Venton to pay £30 to his uncle John.

His three sons who survived childhood (James, Francis and John) are dealt with below, after his brothers.

John the cleric

James the younger's brother John also studied at Exeter College, Oxford. The college's records show that he matriculated on 18 March 1608, and took his BA on 4 March 1614 after teaching boys

¹²⁹ TDA Vol.37, pp.331-333.

¹³⁰ The immediate source is 'England on edge: crisis and revolution, 1640-1642' by David Cressy. His original source for this piece of information was 'Western Circuit Assize Orders 1629-1648: A Calendar' edited by J S Cockburn for the Camden Society, 4th series, 17, (1976), p.234.

¹³¹ Chancery Ref C 8/99/93.

for six terms at Exeter (in Devon)¹³². He then became a priest, and was the first member of the family to do so, about 20 years before William the cleric, whose career was dealt with in Chapter 3.

As well as the evidence from Exeter College and the Herald's visitation, we also have evidence and dates from theclergydatabase.org.uk which shows that after graduating he was appointed a schoolmaster at 'Cullyton' on 25 June 1614. It was while he was there that his first wife, Anna, died (and was buried on 20 July 1615 at St Andrew's, Colyton, described as the wife of the schoolmaster, providing certain proof of this first marriage. Three months later, and recorded as a resident of Drewsteignton, John was appointed a priest and a deacon at Silverton (half way between Exeter and Tiverton), both on 25 September. His appointment as curate at Pyeworthy dated from 1622 according to theclergydatabase.org.uk database, though he was described as "... of *Pieworthy, Clerk ...*" on the marriage licence issued by the Bishop of Exeter on 27 January 1620 (see below for details of his second marriage). Three years later, on 18 February 1625, he was appointed rector of St Odulphus Church at Pillaton (in Cornwall) under the patronage of Egidius Englett, where he remained until his retirement in 1644. He died (from natural causes) the following year, and his will (proved in 1646) was one of the lost Devon wills.

John the cleric's second wife was called Julian Vignes, and she was described on the marriage licence as being from Torrington Magna (Great Torrington). I have not found any further details about her, but theclergydatabase.org.uk does show that a Johannes Vignes had been appointed a deacon in 1608 when resident at Walcombe, then a priest in 1609 when resident at Beaford, a curate in 1616 at Sheepwash, and then a curate at Abbott's Bickington in 1622. It is speculation, but he might very well have known John the cleric, and Julian might have been his sister.

There is also evidence (via the National Archives website) that John the cleric received £6-13s-4d in 1634 "... for tithing of third part of all the woods in Tremone wood and Blindwell wood in Pillaton for next cutting of these woods". I have also noted on the tree that John and Julian appear to have had two children (John and Mary) at Pyeworthy, before the four who were born and baptised at Pillaton.

There is a record (on the National Archives website) of a John Knapman witnessing a legal document which was signed at Pillaton in 1667. This may have been the son who had been born at Pyeworthy. Alternatively (and probably more likely), it could have been John the cleric's nephew, also called John Knapman, of Northill (subsequently Stoke Climsland), or his son (also called John). Details on them follow below (the elder John being one of three sons of James the younger of Drewsteignton). One of the otherwise unexplained lost Devon wills is that of John Knapman of Drewsteignton, dated 1671. This could conceivably be the eldest son of John the cleric, having returned to the parish where he had (presumably) inherited some property.

John Knapman of Plymouth has found evidence that John and Julian's daughter Elizabeth married Joseph Tincombe, and that the will of her older sister Mary made provision for Rebecca. Mary was about 90, and a spinster living at Bodmin, when she died in 1715, and Rebecca was also unmarried and infirm. In her will¹³³ Mary named Benjamin Hawkey to act as trustee for Rebecca, and in all probability this Benjamin was the son of Raignold and Jane Hawkey (of whom more later). I have seen no further evidence of Elizabeth, James and Sara, the other three children of John the cleric.

William junior

William's third son was apparently known as William junior. Unlike his two brothers, he was not mentioned in his grandfather's will, and therefore may well have been born after 1593. He appears to have been buried at Throwleigh in January 1665, and although he appears to have married, I have seen no evidence that he had any children. He was probably the William Knapman, with an unnamed wife, listed on the 1660 Poll Tax Roll as a basic rate tax payer.

However, it should be acknowledged that he was a direct contemporary of another William Knapman of Throwleigh (who I deal with in Chapter 6 and who appears on Family Tree C1), and some of the evidence and links which I have assigned to that other William may more properly belong here. However, it seems likely to me that if William junior had produced a son and heir,

¹³² A source accessible on-line via Google Books states that on 17 February 1614 John Knapman "... was dispensed six terms which he had spent teaching boys in Exeter city ..." which suggests that he only spent a short time at Oxford.

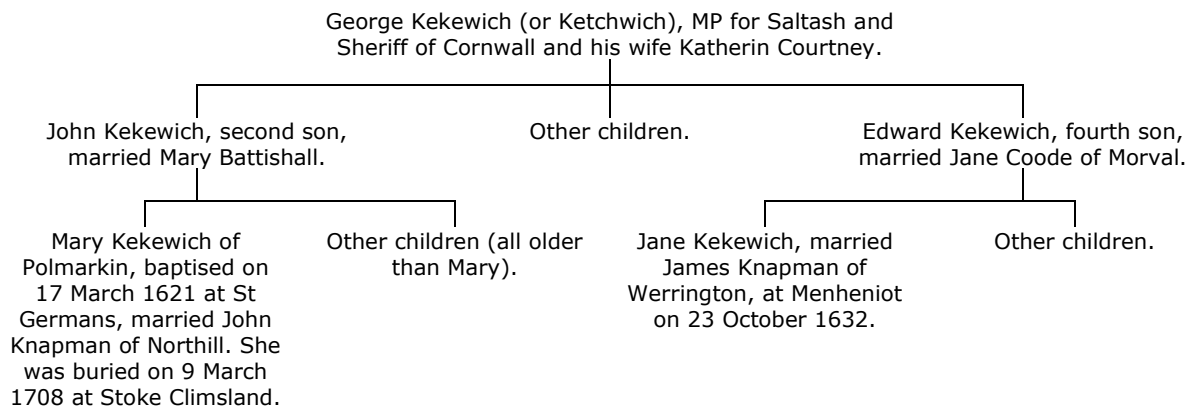
¹³³ Mary's will is held at the Cornwall Records Office. It was administered in 1716/17, and re-administered in 1719.

then this might have merited a mention in the lawsuits relating to the estate of his older brother, James, which are described later.

The three sons of James the younger: James, Francis and John

As shown on Family Tree D, both James and John, two of the three surviving sons of James the younger, married wives from the Kekewich family, a very prominent family from south east Cornwall. 'An Historical Survey of Cornwall' Vol.II¹³⁴ reports that there are monuments to the Knapman and Keckwich families in the church at Stoke Climsland (I have seen the one to the Knapman family, and quote it below). The third son, Francis, is known (from evidence given by his brother John in 1651) to have died without producing an heir.

The two Kekewich wives were first cousins, as shown below, though there was a gap of 20 years between the two marriages. As can also be seen below, the mother of one of them was born Jane Coode of Morval, a relative of Eliza Coode, her new husband's grandmother (and wife of James the younger's father, William Knapman).



The main evidence concerning the first (chronologically) of these two marriages, between James Knapman (born 1603 or 1604) and Jane Kekewich, is set out in Family Tree D. They had just two children, including Jane, the initiator of the 1651 lawsuit¹³⁵ referred to above. In her evidence (challenging the will of her grandfather, and the right of her uncle John to succeed to his main properties, even though he had been named as executor by James the younger) she stated that "... *James Knapman who was the eldest sonn of the said James the grandfather ... dyed in the lifytyme of the said James (your Oratrix said grandfather) and hee the said James the grandson being lawfully seized of the said Mannors, lands tenements lately dyed in the year one thousand six hundred and fifty, after whose death and decease the aforesaid Mannors, lands and Tenements descended and lawfully came unto your said Oratrix as sister and only heir of the said James Knapman*".

In about 1651, still only aged about 18, Jane (the granddaughter of James the younger) married Rainold (or Reynold) Hawkey, a Cornish lawyer. He was the son of Reinald Hawkey and his wife Martha, who appears to have been either born Martha Knapman, or widowed after marrying a Knapman. The evidence for this comes both from a reference in 'Magna Britannia Volume 3' (available via british-history.ac.uk) to "... *Trevegoe, a farm house, ... (which) was a seat of the Knapmans, whose heiress brought it to the Hawkeys*" and the citation by English Heritage in their description of Trevego, which is now a listed building¹³⁶.

There is also a lease from 1680 referred to on the National Archives website which involves Richard Hawkey (presumably a mis-transcription for Rainold) of St Winnow in Cornwall, gent, and Jane his wife (and sister and heir of James Knapman late of Bullapitt in Werrington). There are further

¹³⁴ Compiled by W Penalva in 1838, and available on-line through books.google.com.

¹³⁵ Chancery Ref C 8/99/93.

¹³⁶ English Heritage's description states that Trevego was built in the late 16th century for the widow of Sir William Mohun, who had purchased Boconnoc in 1579. They also state that Trevego "*passed from Mohun family to Knapman family and then by marriage to Hawkeys*". Sir William, a lawyer and politician, died in 1588. He was married twice, but neither wife was a Knapman, or called Martha. Since Rainold Hawkey was apparently born at Trevego in about 1590, Martha may have been gifted Trevego by her father or first husband, who in tuen may have bought it from Sir William's widow. I have been unable to untangle this any further, or to work out where Martha came from. The deeds for Trevego, which might explain all, are apparently held in the Cornwall Records Office.

details of the Hawkey family descended from Raignold and Jane on a website called sweetfamily.familytreeguide.com.

Raignold and Jane Hawkey were evidently successful in their lawsuit to have Jane declared the principal heir of James the younger of Drewsteignton (despite the fact that her brother James evidently did not live to the age of 21), but as reported in detail in 'The Bradford Pool Case' article, they subsequently lost a major struggle for control over the water that was essential to the operation of the tinworks at Bradford Pool, which might have been seen as the jewel in the crown of James the younger's estate.

The birth of Mary Knapman, the older daughter of John Knapman and Mary (née Kekewich), in 1653, points to their having got married in about 1652. There was also a settlement during the period 1649 to 1660 which is referred to on the National Archives website involving Landreyne manor in Northill, and 'Samuel Kebewich, John Knappman and Henry Blyth' (their spelling). Evidence from the Federation of Family History Societies' familyhistoryonline.net website suggests that there was a marriage between John Knapman and Elizabeth Keckwedge at Liskeard on 13 February 1652. It is possible that Mary's name may have been mis-transcribed, or that the John Knapman concerned may have been from Pyeworthy / Pillaton. If not, then we have a mystery. (I work on the assumption that John and Mary were indeed married in 1652. Although their marriage is included in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850', the main account of their marriage and family is here.)

We do know (from his evidence in the lawsuit against his niece Jane, referred to several times above) that during the first Civil War John had served in the Parliamentary army. His evidence confirms that "... *by reason of the late trubles the late King's forces having the command of the countrie where the said defendts said father dyed this defendt being wth the parlament forces was fearfull to go near the house where his father dwelled in a long tyme after his death*".

He was also the John Knapman of Northill in Cornwall who filed a lawsuit¹³⁷ in 1670 against John Chase and Thomas Hawke of London and William Hawke of Cornwall, in which he stated that he had been for some time in the West Indies¹³⁸. The Hawkes may well have been related to his brother-in-law Raignold Hawkey, who had gone to law to establish his family as heirs to James Knapman of Drewsteignton at the expense of John.

There are other legal depositions¹³⁹ which show that by 1680 John had moved to Stoke Climsland, and a lawsuit¹⁴⁰ launched in 1681 in which Sir John Coroton complained about John, his son (also John) and various members of the Kekewich family of Stoke Climsland concerning payments due on land which they appear to have leased from him. The younger John died in 1689 at the relatively young age of 30, apparently without marrying or producing an heir (and his will is in the Cornwall Records Office¹⁴¹). His younger sister Blanch had died two and a half years earlier. These facts are confirmed by a tablet on the wall of the church in Stoke Climsland which says "*In memory of John, the son of John Knapman, of this parish, gent, who departed this life the 11th day of April Ano.1689. Also of Blanch, ye daughter of the said John Knapman who died the 23rd day of October 1686.*" This tablet was almost certainly placed there by their father, who outlived them. His will, dated April 1694 and proved in 1696, is also in the Cornwall Records Office¹⁴².

John's elder daughter Mary married John Trehawke. We know from an article in 'Devon Notes and Queries'¹⁴³ that they had at least one son, because the article concerns a dispute over the will of their grandson, John Trehawke of Liskeard (who died in 1789, "*the last of his name and family*"). The article refers to "... *a licence granted to John Trehawke for life, of all lands in the manor of Stokeclimsland, which were his father Knapman's, by the consent and at the request of his wife, under seal of the court, 31st Aug., 1710*" and "... *a deed poll of agreement dated 18th Nov., 1718, between John Trehawke and Mary his wife of one part, and Wm Kitt and John Randell of the other*". Whereas the first of these two references confirms that Mary (and John) were still alive in 1710, the second could conceivably be a reference to a son and daughter-in-law (though not to the parents of their grandson John Trehawke, who according to the same article were called John and Susannah, née Steed). We know separately that a John Trehawke of Liskeard died in 1710

¹³⁷ Chancery Ref C 10/478/75.

¹³⁸ In his deposition John mentioned an associate called Ferdinando Massaro (spelling uncertain).

¹³⁹ Chancery Ref C 89/20/39a and 39b.

¹⁴⁰ Chancery Ref C 9/75/37.

¹⁴¹ Ref AP/K/449.

¹⁴² Ref AP/K/506.

¹⁴³ Vol II Jan 1902 to Oct 1903, pp.171 to 174. Accessible at archive.org.

(because his will is available in the Cornwall Records Office), but this could easily be 'our' John's father. Finally, the article refers, intriguingly, to "... a book entitled 'A brief Account of some Remarkable Passages in my earthly Pilgrimage,' in the writing of John Trehawke, the grandfather ...".

The evidence, therefore, points to the male Knapman line descended from James the elder of Drewsteignton being extinguished when John Knapman of Stoke Climsland (formerly Northill) died, in 1694.

The daughters of James the younger

The main evidence for the married names of James the younger's daughters (given in Family Tree D) comes from his will, though it is the evidence of her brother John that confirms Honor's marriage to Roger Batishill, after her father's death.

The only marriage of the five daughters that I have managed to find in parish records involved Jane, who married John Robarts on 10 August 1643 at St Columb Minor, just outside Newquay. Then on 15 January 1689 Elizabeth Knapman married Benjamin Robarts in the same parish. He may well have been the child of John and Jane, but where Elizabeth came from I have not worked out (unless she was another daughter of John and Mary (née Kekewich), possibly born after they left St Just in Roseland and before they settled in Northill). I have found no other records of Knapmans in Cornwall for a further 100 years.

The Cove family

There are multiple references in legal documents to the Cove family in connection with the manors of West and East Stoodleigh, East Mere and Cove¹⁴⁴. Whether the family took its name from the manor, or *vice versa*, I do not know.

Prior to the mid-1550s the references are to Nicholas Cove, gent, but then in 1559 they change to "... the wardship of Elizabeth, Joan, Katherine, daughters of Nicholas Cove". In the same year there is also a document¹⁴⁵ referring to the title deeds of Northlew in Devon concerning "... messuages and lands in West Kimbeare and wardships etc of Richarde or Richot Cove, Elizabeth Cove, Emma Cove, Joan Cove and Katherine Cove". Then there is a reference to a 1563 deed cited in a later lawsuit¹⁴⁶ referring to "... marriages of Elizabeth Johan & Katherin Cove sisters & coheirs of Peeter Cove". This shows that Elizabeth (and two of her sisters) were married by 1563. A further source¹⁴⁷ confirms that "... Nicholas was dead in 1567, when his three daughters and co-heirs, Richarda, wife of John Knight, Elizabeth, wife of John Knapman, and Katherine, wife of William Gidley, presented to the church with the concurrence of their husbands ...". One possible interpretation of this is that Emma had not married James Knapman by 1567.

A later document referring to West Stoodleigh and Cove¹⁴⁸ names "... John Newcombe and Elizabeth his wife, James Knapman and Emma his wife, Richard Lyppyngcote and Johan his wife, William Gydlegh and Katherine his wife". This tells us the married names of all five sisters. Later documents in the same series say that William Gidleigh lived at Northlew, and by 1598 Katherine was a widow.

We also have references to two inquisitions post mortem in the National Archives, one for Nicholas Cove (1555/56) and another for Peter Cove (1560/61), and a lawsuit¹⁴⁹ from 1556 to 1558 involving Mary, executrix and late wife of Nicholas Cove and the manor of West Quantoxhead near Minehead, Somerset.

¹⁴⁴ These can be identified via the National Archives website, but are held at the Somerset Archives in a collection related to the Carew family, under the reference DD/TB/36.

¹⁴⁵ This document is in the DHC, in a collection linked to the Fortescue family of Castle Hill Catalogue Ref 1262M/T/731.

¹⁴⁶ Chancery Ref C 8/99/93. See the evidence of John Knapman, and in particular the list of deeds and properties.

¹⁴⁷ See p.398 of 'The history of the past of west Somerset: comprising the parishes of Luccombe, Selworthy, Stoke Pero, Porlock, Culborne and Oare' by Charles Edward Heley Chadwyck-Healey (1901) partly viewable on-line via Google Books.

¹⁴⁸ In the Somerset Archives' Carew papers, Ref DD/TB/34/10.

¹⁴⁹ Ref C 1/1428/80.

We therefore know that Nicholas Cove was a reasonably substantial landholder, and that he and Mary were the parents of Peter, Richarda, Elizabeth, Emma, Joan and Katherine, and that the sisters inherited their father's property after the early death of his only son Peter.

Chapter 6: About 1545 to the late 17th Century: John and Edward Knapman of Throwleigh, and their probable Descendants

Introduction

This chapter deals with the individuals shown on Family Trees C and E, starting with John and Edward Knapman respectively. They were grandsons of the first William Knapman of Throwleigh, and the second and fourth of the four sons of the second William. Their 21st century descendants, of whom there appear to be a considerable number, can all claim descent from the first William Knapman.

Their families differ in an important respect from those of their brothers Alexander and James, in that they were nothing like as litigious; nor do any wills from the early generations survive. Family Trees C and E (and their descendants traced in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850') are therefore at least as reliant on the balance of probability as on detailed documentary evidence.

When I started researching this early history of the Knapman family, I often wondered how these four brothers left such different legacies. Alexander in particular spawned many lawsuits, but James also left a thick trail of evidence via land deals, and they were both rich men. By contrast, John and Edward hardly left a trace between them (the odd lawsuit, no wills, not even details of their children in the tree assembled following the Herald's visitation). Although Alexander, as the eldest son, could have been expected to be the richest of the four, it was James' family that fought most fiercely over his legacy, whereas Alexander's son William seems to have inherited a smaller fortune than might have been expected.

John's relative lack of prominence is almost certainly explained by his early death. He and James may have married sisters, and as a consequence started adult life as near equals, but after his early death his widow (despite a subsequent marriage to another solid citizen) probably did not build on his inheritance, whereas James definitely did. Furthermore, with John's children being so young when he died, their identity as Knapmans may have been somewhat diluted. Edward, as the youngest son, was never likely to enjoy the same sort of fortune as Alexander, and although his wife came from a highly respectable local family, she may not have brought as much by way of dowry as the Cove sisters to whom John and James were married.

The key to the relative fortunes of Alexander and James probably lay in the treason trial of about 1593 and its aftermath. By (apparently) being found guilty and taking his own life, James not only spared himself a potentially very unpleasant end, he also appears to have preserved his fortune largely intact, passing it to his grandsons and their families. Alexander, by contrast, appears to have got trapped into a spiral of paying off the clerks of the Privy Council to prevent his own case being resurrected. William Ayshe accused him of being perfectly capable of bribing the clerk with £500, and the surviving evidence could be read as suggesting that he did this twice, in 1595 and then again in 1601. If this is indeed the case, no wonder his son William seems to have had money troubles, and no wonder the whole family became supporters of the Parliamentary cause against the Royalists at the time of the Civil War.

Theirs seems to me to have been the pivotal generation in the family's history, and Alexander's death to have marked the watershed between three generations of rapid accumulation of wealth and prestige, and a slow decline into more or less respectable obscurity. In a contribution to 'Devon Notes and Queries'¹⁵⁰ someone writing under the *nom de plume* of Sceptic wrote about John's probable descendants: "*In the case of Knapman and others of like station in days far distant, how comes it that they – small yeomen – bore arms?*". Had Alexander and James not got themselves caught up in politics as Elizabeth's reign was drawing to a close in a frenzy of political scheming and threats from Spain, Sceptic might not have been so dismissive.

The descendants of John Knapman, second son of the second William

John Knapman, his wife Elizabeth, and their youngest son George

John Knapman of Throwleigh, the originator of Family Tree C, is recorded on the family tree drawn up following the Herald's visitation of 1620 with a wife called Elizabeth Cove (see Chapter 5 for background on the Cove family, which shows that John and Elizabeth were married by 1563, when

¹⁵⁰ Vol III, 1903 p.106. Accessible at archive.org.

both of them were very young). There are three stems below their names, which might be interpreted as showing that they had at least three children. The researches of John Knapman of Plymouth point to there having been three sons: William, John and George.

Unfortunately John died young, when his children were very young. Although we do not have his date of death with certainty, a likely 'candidate' burial is that of Johan Knapman at Kenn, south of Exeter, on 24 January 1577. Whether or not this burial refers to 'our' John, we do know (based on the evidence of documents available via the National Archives website¹⁵¹) that by 1581 his widow Elizabeth was re-married, to John Newcombe. The Newcombes were a large family, with branches in both Drewsteignton and Chagford, but this John Newcombe was from Drewsteignton, and very probably the second son of William Newcombe, and brother of William, who became mayor of Exeter¹⁵².

In his will of 1621 John Newcombe left much of his wealth to Elizabeth (referring to her in ways that suggest that she was indeed his second wife), and to his children by his first wife (William, Thomas and Joane, wife of Thomas Youlden of Chagford). However he also left one sheep each to the children of John Knapman, and those of George Knapman (who he appears to describe – the writing is unclear – as "... *my sonne in law*". Since he did not leave a legacy to a daughter identified as being married to George, I wonder whether this might mean that George, as Elizabeth's youngest son, may have been formally adopted). His son William Newcombe was named as executor, but in the event of any disputes, the parties were urged to approach William Burgoyne for a ruling, rather than resorting to law. This may well be the same William Burgoyne who had sued Alexander Knapman over the diversion of Blackadon Brook in 1590.

There are then two conflicting pieces of evidence from 1623, either of which could refer to 'our' Elizabeth. In February 1623, Elizabeth Newcombe, widow, was buried at Drewsteignton, and on balance I think this probably refers to her. However there were quite a lot of Newcombes around, and there was a marriage licence issued on 11 July 1623 by the Bishop of Exeter, which allowed Elizabeth Newcombe of Drewsteignton to marry William Oxenham junior of South Tawton. Marriage licences were often used for re-marriages, and it is also possible that this was 'our' Elizabeth. The Oxenham family had substantial landholdings in South Tawton and Sampford Courtenay, but I do not know how prominent William junior was.

John and Elizabeth's youngest son George apparently had four daughters. The IGI records their baptisms at Throwleigh, but does not give the name of their mother. However, it also records the baptism of a 'Marye Vernery or Knapman', daughter of Mary Vernery and George Knapman, on 24 September 1614. The way that this is expressed, and the fact that she was baptised only 7 months after George's daughter Dennishe, suggest that either this was a different George¹⁵³, or that Marye was born out of wedlock. In either event, in the absence of sons the Knapman name did not survive via George's branch of the family. There is also an otherwise unexplained will, of Matilda Knapman of Throwleigh, proved in 1641, which could have been written by George's wife (or, more likely, widow).

John and Elizabeth's eldest son William, and his possible descendants

John Newcombe's will does not refer in any way to William, his wife's eldest son. John Knapman of Plymouth has seen a document stating that William was killed at Saltash in about 1599, leaving his widow Katherin (née Wivell) with children (in the plural). There is a document in the Cornwall Record Office¹⁵⁴ dated 28 January 1609 referring to "... *lands of Thos. Wivell, gent*" in the parish of St Stephens, Saltash, which may refer to a relative of Katherin's, and there is a website dedicated to the Wivell family that shows that they had links both to North Pertherwin (to the west of Werrington) and to Wiveliscombe (in Cornwall, not Somerset, close to Saltash and St Germans). The National Archives website also shows that the wider Wivell family also had links to Botusfleming (near Saltash), Werrington, Egloskerry and Northill (all near Launceston) and Hatherleigh in Devon.

The evidence for William and Katherin's daughter Judith and son Robert (both of whom are shown on Family Tree C) is circumstantial, but reasonably convincing. The evidence for their having had a third son called William (who is also shown on Family Tree C) is presented in the next two

¹⁵¹ See, for example, documents in the Somerset archives dated 1581, Ref. DD/TB/34/10 and DD/TB/36/38.

¹⁵² These Newcombes also appear in the Herald's Visitation pedigrees given in Vivian (1895).

¹⁵³ It could, for instance, have been this George's cousin, also George, the son of Edward (see Family Tree E).

¹⁵⁴ CRO Ref CY/1119.

paragraphs, but should not be relied on. What is suggested is certainly possible, and is consistent with certain 'facts on the ground', but is completely unproven.

There are two lawsuits involving a William Knapman and his wife, Margaret, which I believe refer to another son of William and Katherin (shown with orange highlighting on Family Tree C) but could, it must be said, refer instead to the younger brother of James the younger of Drewsteignton, who is covered in Chapter 5 and Family Tree D. The first of these lawsuits, from 1660¹⁵⁵, although hard to read, was clearly the result of a bitter dispute between William and a complainant called Nicholl, from Bridestowe, who referred to William in his deposition as "... *one that lives in a high and expensive way ... (with) ... no visible (means) to support the same*". In his response William appeared to allege that Nicholls had called at his house, with mastiff dogs, when William was out, and that he had carried out a lewd assault on Margaret. William was unable to sign his name, but made his mark on the deposition (and this seems to me to suggest strongly that he was not a member of the family of James the younger of Drewsteignton, most of whom were well educated). The second lawsuit, from 1664¹⁵⁶, concerned William and Margaret's daughter Thomasine, and her marriage to John Skynner, son of Christopher Skynner, and Christopher's apparent failure to pay his share of the marriage settlement that had been promised. At different points in his deposition William refers to Thomasine as his daughter, his daughter in law and as the daughter of his wife Margaret, so it is possible that Margaret may have been a widow with a daughter when she married William. Margaret was buried at Throwleigh, a widow, in July 1679.

We also know that a William Knapman (described in both instances as 'William sr'), who does not fit into any of the other Family Trees, was assessed for £10 on the 1660 Poll Tax Roll (which shows that he was married at that time), and buried at Throwleigh in April 1669. He could easily have been born in the 1590s, and could therefore have been the son of William and Katherin. The fact that he was described as William sr suggests that he too had a son called William. A younger William was indeed living and rearing a family in or around Throwleigh in the mid-17th century. This would be consistent with being born in about 1630. Although we have no firm evidence of his wife's name, we have some circumstantial evidence in the form of the 1660 Poll Tax Roll, which records William Knapman and his wife Mary living in South Tawton parish. There are also two more of the lost Devon wills, of Mary Knapman of South Tawton proved in 1692, and William Knapman of South Tawton in 1695. Although all of their children were baptised at Throwleigh, we know that families that farmed Well, Gooseford and other farms in the narrow strip of South Tawton that lies to the east of Throwleigh often treated Throwleigh as their 'home' church, particularly when there were strong family ties. Parts of Family Tree C and the families which descend from them (see 'Knapman families: 1650-1850') are therefore based on a combination of parish records and probability, with the link between the first two Williams being particularly suspect.

As well as William and Thomasine, Family Tree C includes two further possible sons of William sr, called John and Edward. John Knapman of South Tawton was buried at Throwleigh in June 1668, described in the parish burials register as the son of William, and there was certainly an Edward Knapman whose family was growing up in South Tawton at very much the right time to be a member of the family. He provides the starting point for Family 'c.1654, Edward & Joane' in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850'.

John and Elizabeth's middle son John and his family by Jane Martin

John, the middle son in the second generation on Family Tree C, appears to have married Jane Martin. His three children (John, Beaton¹⁵⁷ and William) were the first Knapmans to appear in the South Tawton baptismal register (which starts in 1540), but the register does not give his wife's name.

I have seen evidence (via the National Archives website) that a John Martyn purchased land at Morchyngton (Murchington), part of Rushford manor in Chagford, in 1541. He may well have been Jane's grandfather. However, there is also some evidence from a 1598 lawsuit¹⁵⁸ to suggest that before he married Jane, John had been married to Margery Gray, the evidence for this coming from a largely illegible deposition from Alexander Gray of Throwleigh, acting as executor for the will of John Gray, which states that Margery "... *married and took to husband*" one John Knapman. It also

¹⁵⁵ Chancery Ref C 10/60/37.

¹⁵⁶ Chancery Ref C 5/615/86. See also the Carew family papers, referenced below.

¹⁵⁷ Beaton was a girl's name, and an alternative to Beatrice (according to an aside headed 'Some uncommon Christian names' in the commentary accompanying the transcription of the Devon Hearth Tax Returns of 1674, which cites the Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names' in support).

¹⁵⁸ Chancery Ref C 3/271/47.

appears possible that soon after the birth of their third child (William), Jane may have died¹⁵⁹, because a John Knapman married Grace Langlye at South Tawton on 19 May 1617, and I have been unable to find another John Knapman to whom this might credibly refer.

The only other reference that I have found that is probably to this John is in the TDA¹⁶⁰, where it is stated that in 1592, presumably as quite a young man, he sat on a jury at North Tawton in a dispute between Mark Wykes (presumably his late father's first cousin) and Roger Wykes.

John and Jane's eldest son John appears to have married Jane Battishill, but I have seen no evidence of any children from this marriage. The Battishill pedigree in Vivian (1895) shows that she was born in about 1615, the third daughter of John and Joice Battishill of West Wyke. In 1638 she was the administrator of the will of one of her brothers, John, and then in 1664 she was named in the will of another brother, William, as being married to a husband called Knapman (in the same year she was also mentioned in her mother's will).

The IGI shows that John and Jane's middle child, Beaton, had a son called Jonas (who died in infancy), but that is the only trace of his branch of the family that I have found. Since she was named as Beaton Knapman, she was presumably unmarried at the time.

John and Jane's youngest son William married a wife called Elizabeth. The details of this marriage and the family that eventuated, are traced as Family 'c.1652, William & Elizabeth' in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850'.

The descendants of Edward Knapman, fourth son of the second William

We know from Vivian (1895) that one of the sons of the second William was called Edward, and that his wife was a daughter of Henry Endecott of Throwleigh. However, there is another passing reference in the card index at the DRO (and formerly held in the Westcountry Studies Library) to Edward Knapman acting as an attorney¹⁶¹ in 1585 and 1591, and describing him as the son-in-law of Edward (rather than Henry) Endecott. This could easily be a simple mis-citation. One of the lost Devon wills was that of Edward Knapman of Throwleigh, proved in 1623, and it seems very likely that it belonged to this Edward. There was also a will of an Alice Knapman in the same year, which could be his widow.

I have found no evidence from parish registers to show that the first Edward had any children, and none are mentioned in the 1593 will of Edward's older brother James (which mentions Edward, and most if not all of James' other nephews). However, the 1622 will¹⁶² of Alexander Endecott of Throwleigh, the brother of Edward's wife, mentions three nephews: Arthur, William and Edward Knapman, all of whom were 'of age' by 1622. Combining these two pieces of evidence suggests that all three had been born between 1593 and 1601, and very probably in the order in which they were named. I have found nothing further regarding Arthur and William.

The second Edward also married a wife called Alice, and they farmed at Murchington. As reported above in Chapter 3 they were involved over an extended period in a series of lawsuits, primarily against Alexander and Barbara Knapman, Alexander being the grandson of Edward's uncle Alexander. There is a reasonable chance that his was the will (of Edward Knapman of Gidleigh) which was proved in 1641. This is roughly when he died, and his youngest son was baptised at Gidleigh.

Some of the details on Family Tree E are inferred rather than confirmed. For example, I have found no baptismal record for the second Edward's son Bartholomew, but he certainly existed, and we know from the 1660 Poll Tax Roll (see below) that he was from this family. We also have Alice's evidence in a lawsuit from 1647¹⁶³ that she had six children. There may, however, have been a further child not shown on Family Tree E, because Dina died in infancy, and might not have been counted by Alice when she made that statement. (One possible 'candidate' for such an additional child is the Alexander Knapman who was married and living at Exminster when the 1660 Poll Tax Roll was drawn up, who left a will dated 1681, and who may well have been the originator of a

¹⁵⁹ The South Tawton burials register does not start until 1653, so cannot provide evidence either way on this point.

¹⁶⁰ TDA Vol.33, p.437.

¹⁶¹ This may not mean that he was a qualified lawyer. He might simply have been a trusted representative.

¹⁶² See 'Observations on the family of Endecott in the county of Devonshire, England, together with material for illustrating the ancestry of Governor John Endecott, and Gilbert and William Endecott, early settlers in New England' by Eben Putnam, accessible on-line within 'Putnam's Historical Magazine' 1899, New Series Vol VII.

¹⁶³ Chancery Ref C 9/228/142.

family which settled at Crediton, but appears to have died out in the male line during the second half of the 18th century.)

There is also the question of the third Edward, son of Edward and Alice. Two Edward Knapmans of the right age to be him were married in or about 1654, and proceeded to father parallel families, one in Throwleigh and the other in South Tawton. These two families are dealt with in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850' as '1654, Edward & Anne' and 'c.1654, Edward & Joane' (which I have 'allocated' to Family Tree C).

The reason why I believe that this Edward was the originator of Family '1654, Edward & Anne' rests on the evidence from the 1660 Poll Tax Roll. This shows an Edward Knapman and his wife living in Throwleigh, assessed for £16-10s, with Bartholomew (his brother) and Alice (his widowed mother) living with him, demonstrating beyond any reasonable doubt that the Edward from this family was the person who lived in Throwleigh, and therefore the one who married Anne Ayshe. Their substantial family is traced in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850'.

Chapter 7: The Family Trees

Introduction

The colours pink, orange, blue in the trees which follow (applied to every other generation) are there to make it easier to identify members of the same generation both within and between trees. The colour green identifies families which are traced in 'Knapman families: 1650-1850'.

Family Trees A, B1, B2 and D draw most heavily on the Herald's visitation of 1620 (though see the earlier text in Chapter 1 for a word of caution). Family trees drawn up following the Herald's visitations were mainly concerned with sons and inheritance, and whereas they indicate the order in which sons were born, and sometimes the order in which daughters were born, they do not indicate how the two groups overlap. I have only 'promoted' daughters in the birth order where there is good evidence that they were in fact older than their brothers (by, for example, being married at a time when their brothers were still minors).

Family Trees C and E seem to me to be credible. They are made up of real people who may well be related to one another as shown.

One of the things that I have tried to do in these family trees is to see whether all of the Knapmans whose baptisms and marriages are recorded over the period concerned either in the IGI¹⁶⁴ in Throwleigh, Gidleigh, South Tawton and Okehampton or in the parish registers for Throwleigh, Drewsteignton and South Tawton (and elsewhere, as indicated where evidence has been found), and any other Knapmans of whom there is some evidence, however thin, in the same general area over the same period, could be linked to the tree of the original William Knapman of Throwleigh. I have done this in order to test how credible it is to postulate that all of the Knapmans living on the northern margins of Dartmoor in the 19th century might have been descended from him. I conclude that whilst this is certainly not proven, a majority of the Knapmans in this area in 1700 were indeed highly likely to have been his descendants. Whether it was still true in 1800 is much less certain.

Baptisms

Prior to 1650 (indeed prior to 1700) no Knapmans show up as having been baptised in Chagford, Moretonhampstead or Belstone; and there was just one marriage in Chagford (that of James the younger of Drewsteignton). No Knapman baptisms were recorded in Okehampton prior to 1650.

The IGI does not have records for Drewsteignton, though I have seen some on the parish register, of which six are covered by the trees. One other baptism which is not covered is that of Jane, daughter of Richard Knapman and his wife also called Jane, who was baptised at Drewsteignton on 16 December 1653. By the time the 1660 Poll Tax Roll was drawn up Richard and his family were living in Chagford, and they were basic rate taxpayers (i.e. they owned little or no property). A Mrs Jane Knapman was then buried at South Tawton on 28 March 1696. I do not know where Richard came from.

The IGI records a large number of Knapman baptisms prior to 1650 in Throwleigh and South Tawton, and a few in Gidleigh. The trees that follow and the text above mention all except one of these: Marie (daughter of William, born in 1610 in Throwleigh) who could conceivably be the result of Margaret, the middle child of William and Maude in Family Tree B1 having her name mis-transcribed.

Marriages

I have accounted for all of the Knapman marriages which took place in or around Throwleigh as recorded in the IGI prior to 1650.

Burials

The IGI holds very few burial records, and most of those refer to infants. However, I have looked at the transcription of the Throwleigh parish burials register, which holds 49 Knapmans prior to 1700, and the Drewsteignton parish register, which holds eight over the same period, and the Devon & Cornwall Record Society transcript of the South Tawton parish register (the microfiche of

¹⁶⁴ To carry out a search for an individual use familysearch.com. To search a particular parish (and to discover which parishes and periods are covered by the IGI), use freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~hughwallis and follow the links from there.

the original being only sporadically legible), which shows 14 burials between 1678 and 1696. Of these, all except two of the Throwleigh and Drewsteignton burials are covered by the trees: John, the infant son of William Knapman, a labourer from Okehampton who was buried in 1668, and Francis, buried at Throwleigh in February 1698. On balance I do not think that he was a son of the third Francis (on Family Tree B2). Several of the South Tawton burials remain unexplained.

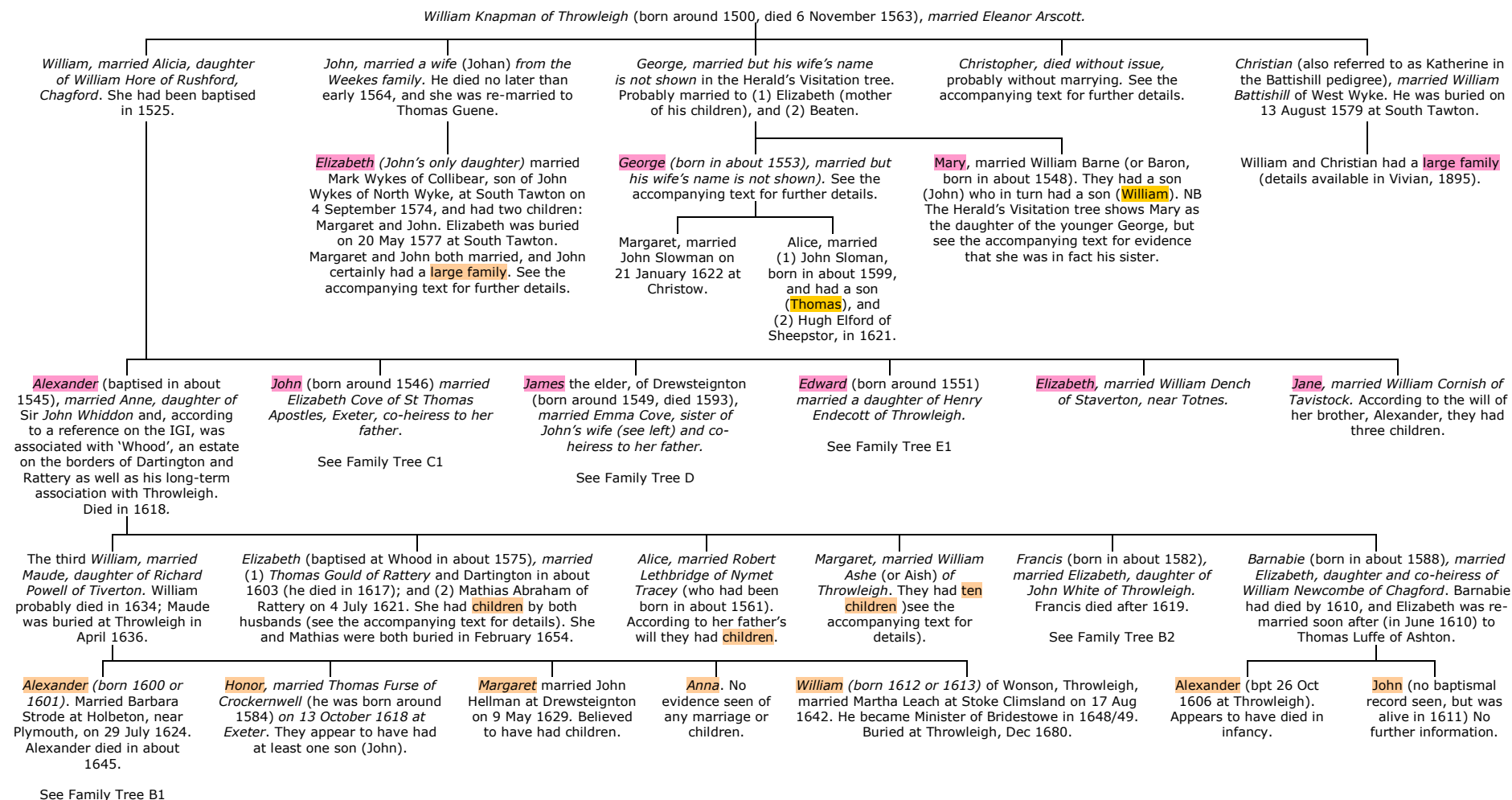
Another unexplained nearby burial is that of John Knapman, son of William the labourer (see above), who was buried at Okehampton in 1668.

It should be acknowledged that, particularly with the several Edward Knapmans, I may have mixed up some of the burial dates.

Wills

There are no Knapman wills from the period concerned and from the area north of Dartmoor that I have managed to identify (including by reference to the recent 'Devon Wills Project', the fruits of which are accessible via the genuki website) that are not linked, even if only speculatively, to individuals on the trees.

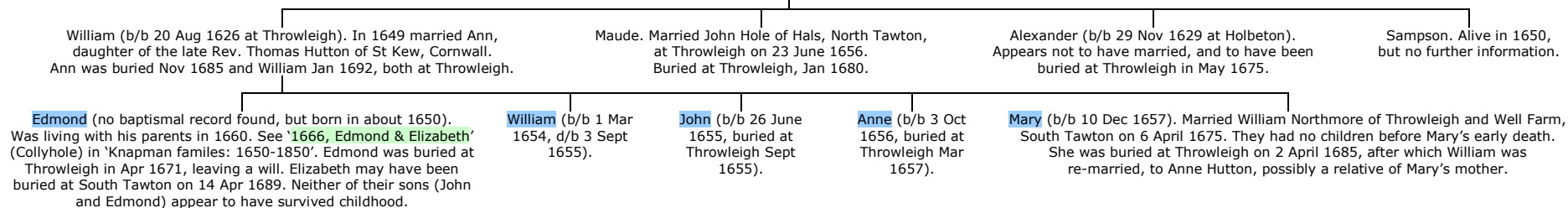
Family Tree A: The early family of William Knapman of Throwleigh, starting in 1500



All details in italics are based on information taken from the Herald's Visitation tree of 1620 (given in Vivian, 1895). However, I have tried to iron out inconsistencies in spelling, and put Latin terms into English, which amounts to paraphrasing rather than direct quotation. Most additional information is based on evidence from family wills and lawsuits, some of it very kindly provided by John Knapman of Plymouth.

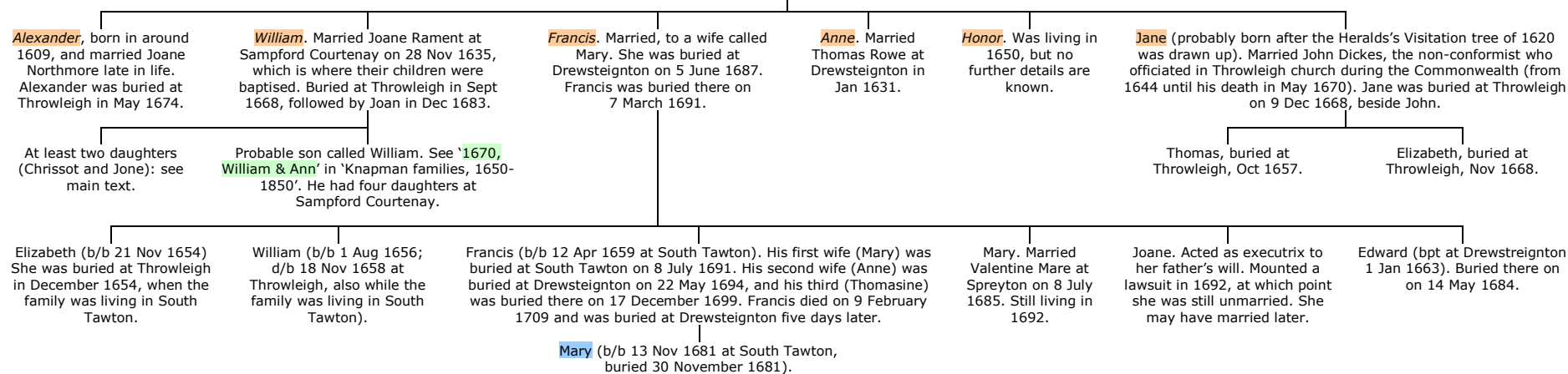
Family Tree B1: The family of the second Alexander Knapman of Throwleigh, about 1600 to 1692

Alexander (born 1600 or 1601), son of the third William Knapman of Throwleigh. Married Barbara Strode at Holbeton, near Plymouth, on 29 July 1624. Alexander died in about 1645. Barbara was buried at Throwleigh in May 1673.



Family Tree B2: The family of Francis Knapman of Drewsteignton, about 1580 to 1700

Francis Knapman, born in about 1582, son of the first Alexander Knapman of Throwleigh. Married **Elizabeth**, daughter of **John White** of Throwleigh. Francis died after 1619 (he is mentioned in his father's will), but is known to have died while his own children were still young. Elizabeth then married Richard Enoffe, who died in or before 1651.



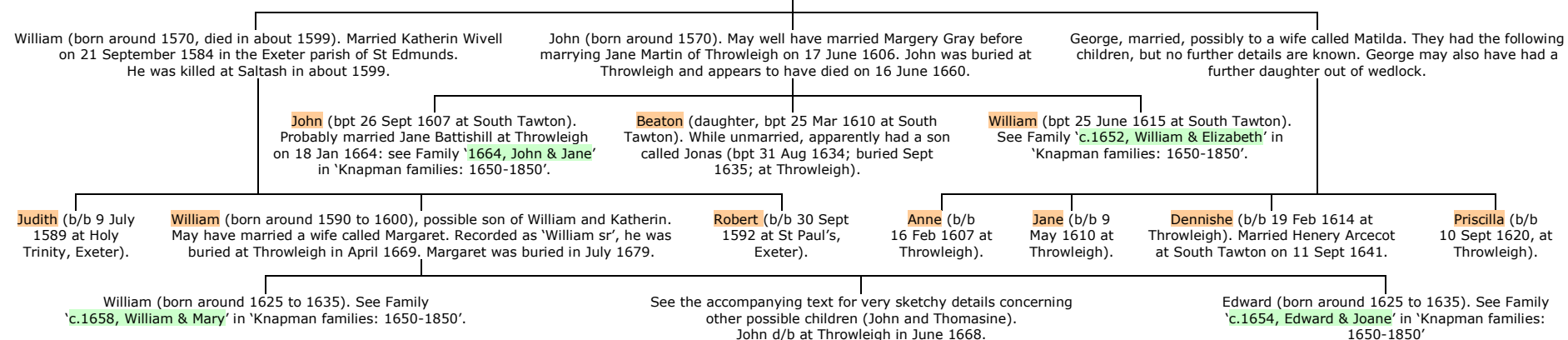
In both of the trees on this page, all details in italics are based on information taken from the Herald's Visitation tree of 1620 (given in Vivian, 1895). However, I have tried to iron out inconsistencies in spelling, and put Latin terms into English, which amounts to paraphrasing rather than direct quotation.

Most additional information is based on (a) evidence from family wills and lawsuits, some of it very kindly provided by John Knapman of Plymouth; (b) information from the IGI; (c) information from transcriptions of the Throwleigh parish registers; and (d) from other parish registers. In these trees bpt means baptised, b/b means born or baptised, and d/b means died or buried (with most dates taken from the IGI).

Family Tree C1: The possible family of John Knapman of Throwleigh, 1545 to about 1675

(NB This tree should be treated as indicative only, and should not be relied upon)

John Knapman (born around 1546), second son of the younger William Knapman of Throwleigh, married Elizabeth Cove of St Thomas Apostles, Exeter, co-heiress to her father. The Herald's Visitation tree in Vivian (1895) indicates that John and Elizabeth had children, and could be interpreted as indicating that there were three of them. John probably died in 1577, and may well have been buried at Kenn on 24 January that year. By 1581 Elizabeth was re-married, to John Newcombe, who died in 1621. Elizabeth died in February 1623, and was buried at Drewsteignton.

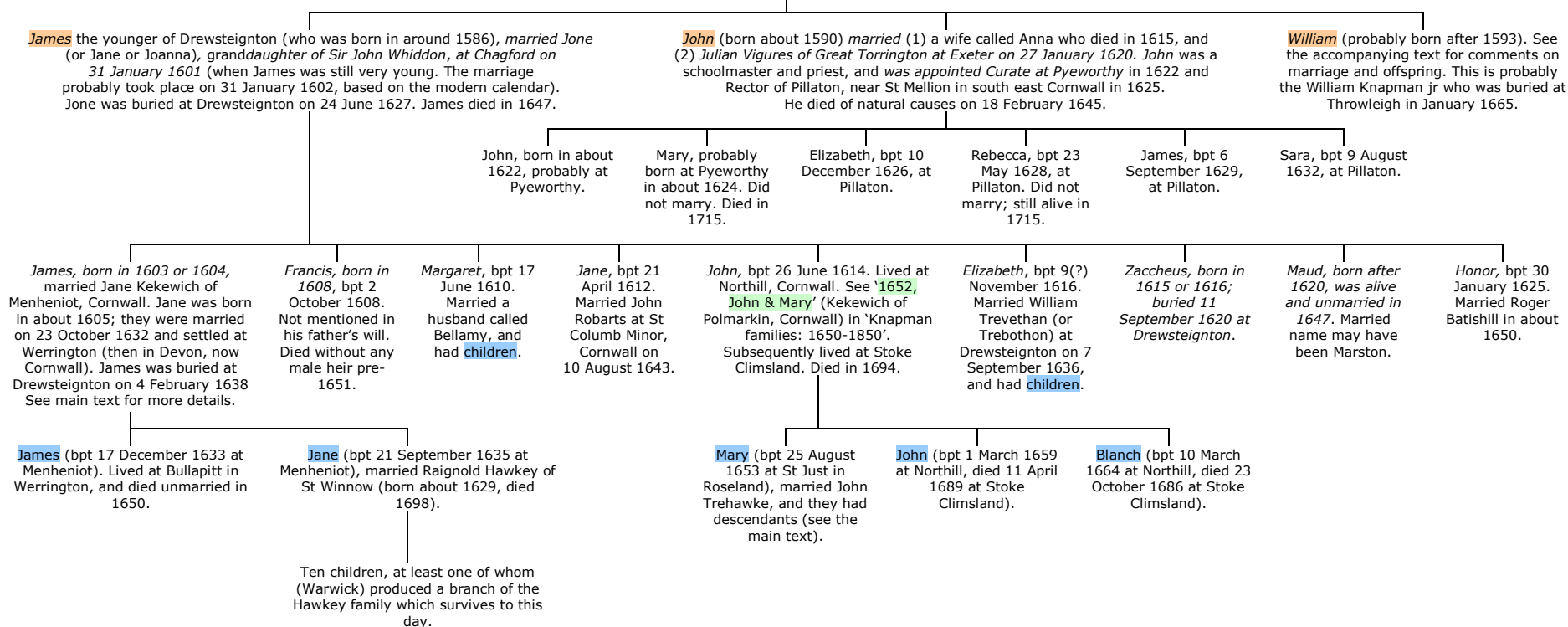


The main source for this tree is the Knapman family tree drawn up by John Knapman of Plymouth, supplemented and amended using information drawn from the IGI and the parish registers for Throwleigh, South Tawton and other parishes as indicated. In this tree bpt means baptised, b/b means born or baptised, and d/b means died or buried.

Family Tree D: The family of James Knapman the elder of Drewsteignton, 1550 to 1700

James Knapman the elder of Throwleigh and Drewsteignton (born around 1549, died 1593, probably by his own hand), *third son of the younger William Knapman of Throwleigh, married Emma Cove of St Thomas Apostles, Exeter, co-heiress to her father. James was a lawyer and prominent local citizen. Emma survived James.*

James and Emma's only son William (who must have been born well before 1570) married Eliza Coode, one of nine daughters (and seven sons) of Walter Coode and his wife Edith (née Coriton). The Coodes were a prominent family from Morval in Cornwall. William must have married young, and did not inherit any property under his father's will, though Eliza was mentioned, as were her three sons, who did inherit. In 1598 William was hanged for murder. Eliza was buried at Drewsteignton in September 1620.



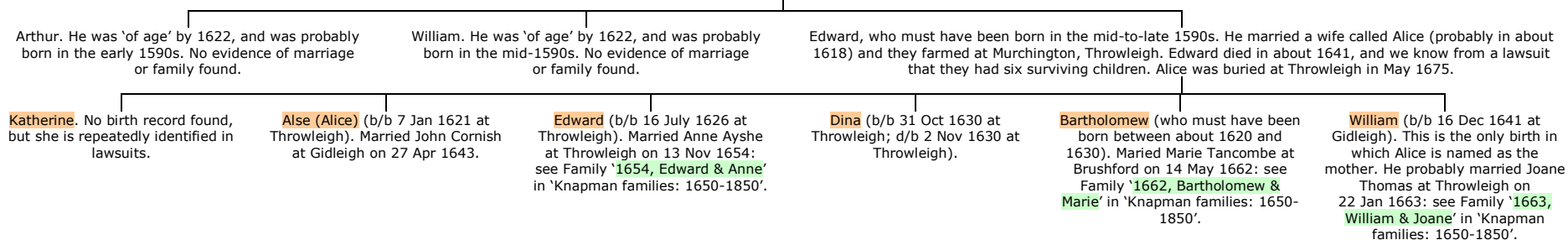
All details in italics are based on information taken from the Herald's Visitation tree of 1620 (given in Vivian, 1895). However, I have tried to iron out inconsistencies in spelling, and put Latin terms into English, which amounts to paraphrasing rather than direct quotation. Most additional information is based on evidence from family wills and lawsuits, some of it very kindly provided by John Knapman of Plymouth, with a few details from the Family History Society's on-line resource, and several dates taken from the Drewsteignton parish registers.

In this tree b/b means born or baptised, and d/b means died or buried (with most dates taken from the parish registers and/or the IGI).

Family Tree E: The probable family of Edward Knapman of Throwleigh, 1550 to about 1675

(NB This tree should be treated as indicative only, and should not be relied upon)

Edward (born around 1551, the fourth son of the younger William Knapman of Throwleigh) *married a daughter of Henry Endecott of Throwleigh*. She may have been called Alice. They had three sons who survived to adulthood (based on the evidence of an Endecott family will), and may well have had daughters, and other sons who died young. Edward and his wife both probably died in 1623.



Some information is based on evidence from family wills and lawsuits, some of it very kindly provided by John Knapman of Plymouth. In this tree bpt means baptised, b/b means born or baptised, and d/b means died or buried. Most dates are taken from the IGI, or from transcriptions of the Throwleigh parish registers.