

# The Deacons of Cornerhall



**B. H. Holt**









*THE DEACONS of CORNERHALL*

*Hemel Hempstead*  
*Hertfordshire*  
*ENGLAND*

by

B.H. Holt

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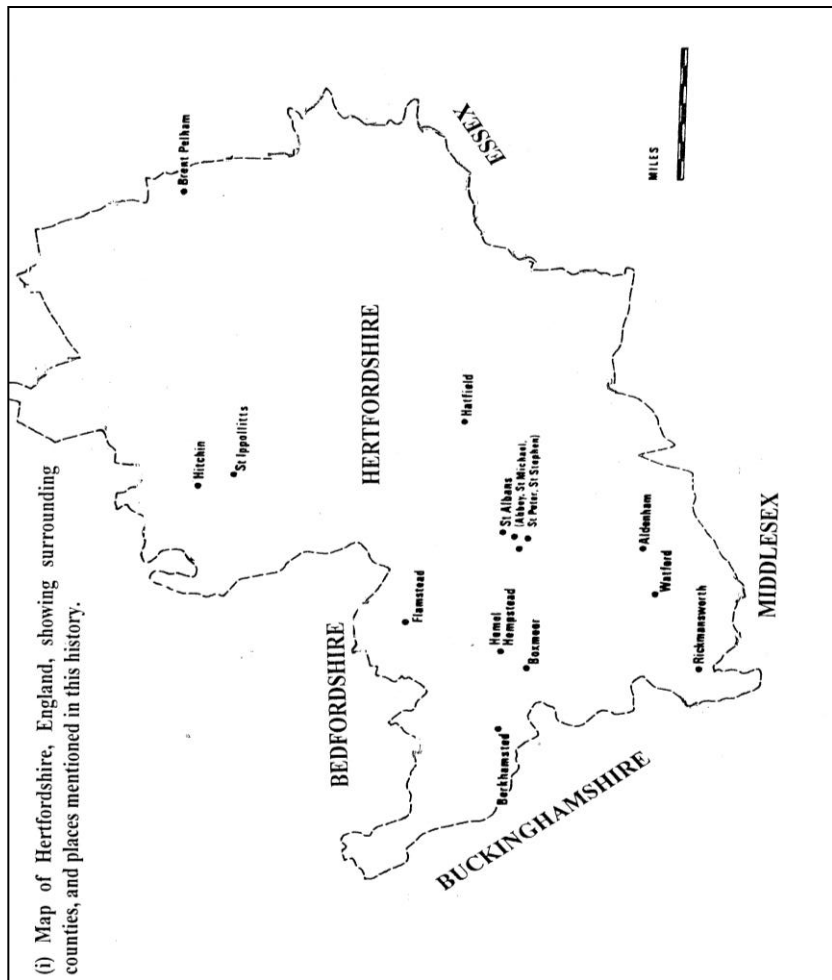
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(1) Map of Hertfordshire and surrounding counties (adapted by B. Holt from one in M. Rensten's book *Hertfordshire Brasses*)



# PREFACE



In 1924, my father, Laurence William Holt (1898-1970), visited Hemel Hempstead, with his older brother, Horace James Holt (1894-1975), on their first trip to England from New Zealand. They knew it was where their father, Thomas Franz Holt (1853-1908), who emigrated to NZ in 1879, had lived as a child. My father was aged 10 when his father T.F. Holt died.

**(2) T.F. Holt as a young man**

Laurence W. Holt brought back to NZ two postcards of Hemel Hempstead in 1924:



**(3) 1924 Hemel Hempstead from Hill Field Road**



**(4) 1924 The Marlowes, a continuation of the High St**

In 1950, my father took his wife and four children to Hemel Hempstead, while he was on a year's study leave from his job as Associate Professor of Accountancy at Auckland University College. In 1963, after his retirement as Emeritus Professor, he again visited it with members of his family.



**(5) 1963: From left: B.H.Holt with NZ cousin and Prof. L.W. Holt, in High St, Hemel Hempstead (S.B.Holt)**

The Deacon name belonged to my Holt grandfather's maternal ancestors. Following the custom of the mother's surname given to a second son, it was included in the name of his younger brother, James Deacon Holt (1855-1918). Franz then gave it to his second son, Frank Deacon Holt (1895-1963), born in New Zealand.

I began researching my Deacon line in 1992, by reading films of St Mary's Hemel Hempstead parish registers at a Mormon Family History Centre in New Zealand. At the time, as well as the Deacons, I was researching my Holt paternal line (published as *The Holt Line* in May 2000), and my father's maternal lines, the Squire, Luxton, Evans and Radford families of Devon, England.

I soon discovered that the Deacons, from the 16<sup>th</sup> through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, owned a key business in the small town of Hemel Hempstead in which they lived. Their line therefore proved far easier to research than any of my Devon lines in which families tended to move from place to place. In August 1992, I went to England for one month and visited record offices and places where my families had lived and took photographs, some of them included in this booklet.

I visited the Hertfordshire Record Office and Library in the town of Hertford and was thrilled to find there Deacon Wills from the 1600's. On that visit I met another family historian, Sheila Pettman of Hertford, who spent a generous amount of her time, in the following years, voluntarily helping me to find out more about my Deacon family. She sent me names from registers, passages in a local history, and pictures of places and she drew a sketch map of Hemel Hempstead for me. In 1995, she made the long trip to New

Zealand for a holiday with me and to meet a Pettman family member here.

Another member of the *family of genealogists* who helped me work on this history is my NZ friend, Jennifer Miller, a relation by marriage of Freda, the wife of my late uncle, Horace James Holt. She looked up some things for me while overseas, translated the Latin on a 1600's Deacon gravestone and commented on my first draft of this history.

I am indebted to Nick Holmes of Cardiff, Wales, a descendant of my Deacon ancestor, Elisha(4), for advertising his interest in the UK's 1987 Genealogical Research Directory. After I contacted him in 1993, he sent me a Deacon descendant's memories of Hemel Hempstead.

I also acknowledge help I received from staff of Hertford Library; and from the Hertfordshire Family and Population History Society in the UK who gave me permission to print copies of their logo and drawing of a Militia man. I am also grateful to Mary Rensten, UK author of the book: *Hertfordshire Brasses*, for giving me permission to include copies of a few of the many brasses appearing in her book.

I am also grateful to staff and volunteers of the New Zealand Genealogical Society; and Janice Hamilton of New Zealand for designing the cover of this book and for the layout of it.<sup>1</sup>

**Barbara H. Holt, New Zealand, December 2000**

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<sup>1</sup> This version of the Preface to the 1st Edition includes photographs not originally in it and it is also slightly edited. .

## Preface to the Second Edition

In 2001, I sent copies of my 56-page booklet, *The Deacons of Cornerhall*, to members of my Holt family in NZ and overseas; and to several libraries, including the Hertford Library and Record Office in England. As a result, between September 2005 and December 2014, I was contacted via email by four overseas people about it.

The first was **Marilyn Scott** of Lancashire, England who corresponded with me between Sept. 2005 and Jan. 2006. She was researching her ancestor Daniel Deacon of Hertfordshire, mainly using the Mormon Church's International Genealogical Index on-line. The IGI began to be put on the web in 1999, after I completed my research into the Deacon family. It was available on film in Mormon Libraries when I was doing my research in the 1990's. However, I chose not to use it because much of the material on it was not from church registers but contributed by family researchers who provided no sources for it.

Marilyn told me information she had found on the IGI on-line suggested her **Daniel Deacon** born 1709 was a great-grandson of Elisha(3) Deacon; but she had found no church information confirming that relationship. In 2015, the situation with regard to the IGI on the web appears to be that the Mormon Church has removed much information and duplication which appeared on the old IGI. It has also divided the IGI on the web into a Community Contributed IGI and a Community Indexed IGI, the latter information being from church registers on the old IGI. However, some information on the old IGI is not found on the new IGI; and the Mormon Church advises it is better to look for

information from church registers in the Historical Records part of its website: [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

I am grateful to Marilyn for telling me about two Deacon marriages she found on the old IGI I did not have details of; and for information she found on the Genes Reunited and other websites about early Hertfordshire Deacon and Fielde families. (This information was possibly put there by American descendants of **Phebe Gould** *née* *Deacon*, born 1597, eldest child of Thomas Deacon, tanner, and his wife, Martha *née* Field).

The second of the four overseas people who contacted me was an Australian, **Professor Alan Atkinson**, between January and April 2006. He was then ARC Professorial Fellow in the School of Classics, History and Religion, University of New England, Armidale, Australia; and is now Emeritus Professor and Senior Tutor at St Paul's College, University of Sydney, Australia. He provided me with many pieces of information and comments about the Deacon family of Hemel Hempstead, from whom he is descended.

Alan pointed out the Oxford Dictionary of Biography (online) has a long entry about churchman **Richard Field**, born 1561 in Hemel Hempstead. He was interested that it was suggested on the geni.com web-site that Richard was a half-brother of **Martha Deacon** *née* *Field*. He also noted someone on a website mentioned a **Professor Gould** had written that a grandson of Thomas and Martha Deacon was a Lieut.-Colonel in the English Civil War. He suggested that because a local history of Hemel Hempstead said their son **Elisha(1) Deacon** may have been a Captain in the same War, having two sources for a similar story meant it was more likely to have some truth behind it.

Alan also commented on my transcription of the Will of Elisha (1) of 1661: *You say that Elisha left to his younger son Thomas the Books of Marlowe. I'm sure this is "the Bookes of Marters"- in other words Foxe's Book of Martyrs, standard fare for Puritans.* I was pleased to receive this correction as I had no knowledge of John Foxe's book or of the Deacons being Puritans.

I had written that some Deacons of Hemel Hempstead may have attended a non-conformist church after I found their baptisms were missing from the register of St Mary's, the established Church of England in Hemel Hempstead. Alan thought they were possibly members of a Baptist Church; but knew its early records were not available now to prove it. (I have included in this second edition information about when Baptist Churches were established in Hemel Hempstead, which I found in a book on the web).

Alan also knew something about the Gould family. He wrote: *Some of them were involved in the Salem witch trials in the 1690's and were forebears of Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Latter Day Saints (also known as the Mormon Church).*

Alan is a descendant of **Catherine Paten née Deacon**, daughter of **Elisha(4) Deacon** and **Elizabeth Theed** who married at Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire in 1743. (Theirs was one of the Deacon marriages Marilyn Scott found on the old IGI.) Alan also gave me information about Deacons he found in two Theed Wills. With his permission, I have included his Theed information in Chapter 5 of this second edition since my great-grandmother **Sarah Holt née Deacon**, born 1821 in Hemel Hempstead, was also a

descendant of **Elizabeth Deacon née Theed** and **Elisha(4) Deacon**, through their son **Elisha(5)**.

The third overseas person to contact me about my first edition was **Chris Reynolds** of the website [www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk](http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk), in February 2009. He put on his website a photo of the cover of my booklet and asked me how people could obtain a copy of it. I told him I planned to revise it and would let him know when such copies were available.

The fourth and latest overseas person to contact me, between October 2014 - March 2015, about my 2000 booklet was **Karen Johnsen**, Vice-President of the **Towne Family Association** of the USA. She saw my booklet's cover on Chris Reynolds' website and asked him for my email address. Karen told me she was planning to lead a group of TFA Members to England in 2017 and wondered whether my booklet would provide them with information about Deacons of Hemel Hempstead they did not have.

Karen has since sent me copies of recent T.F.A. newsletters which mention the Deacons of Cornerhall, mainly in articles by Englishman **Charles Farrow**, Consulting Genealogist to the TFA. One of those looked at Thomas Deacon's ancestors in other parts of Hertfordshire (which I have decided are outside the scope of my booklet). Another is based on information Charles found in Manor Court Books of Hemel Hempstead of the 1600's, relevant to the Deacons.

Another by Charles Farrow, with the title *Thomas Deacon's House*, has information from the British Listed Buildings website which broadly dates 5 houses I photographed in 1992 at Cornerhall. The Pedigree Charts prepared by Karen



Johnsen include one for Thomas's first child, **Phebe Deacon**, baptised 1597 in Hemel Hempstead. She married **Zacheus Gould** between 1617-1620 in England and died in Essex County, Massachusetts, USA. Another is about their grand-daughter, **Phebe Perkins**, born 1644, who married in 1662 **Joseph Towne** who was born in 1639 in Salem, Essex, Massachusetts, USA.

Karen's Phoebe Deacon chart names the parents of **Martha Field**, who became the wife of Thomas Deacon in 1596, as **John Field** born 1535 and **Grace Turner** born 1555 in Hertfordshire. Charles Farrow discovered the Will of John Field confirmed he was the father of both the theologian, **Richard Field** and of **Martha Deacon** *née Field*.

I am grateful to Karen Johnsen, Charles Farrow and the Towne Family Assn for allowing me to mention: Thomas Deacon's father's Will and Manor Court Books of Hemel Hempstead; the Will of John Field; baptism dates of all the children of Thomas and Martha Deacon; some descendants of their eldest daughter Phoebe; and official estimates of when Cornerhall houses were built. **B. H. Holt 2015.**

### **Preface to the 3rd Edition**

Included in this edition, on page 21, is information I received this year from a U.K. reader who found a reliable source confirming **Martha Deacon** *née Field* was Richard Field's half-sister. Also included in this edition, on page 24, is some well-documented information I received this year, from a reader in the USA, about the Gould family's involvement in the 1692 Salem witches trial.

**B. H. Holt 2016.**

# ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

<b>Map of Hertfordshire .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>First, Second and Third Prefaces .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Ch. 1: Thomas, Tanner &amp; Bailiff c. 1565–1642 ...</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Ch. 2: Elisha(1), Tanner &amp; Covenanter 1603-1661..</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Ch. 3: Elisha(2) Tanner &amp; Sons 1633 – 1712 ....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Ch. 4: Elisha(3) Tanner &amp; Farmer 1673 – 1736....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Ch. 5: Elisha(4) Gent &amp; Farmer 1714 – 1805 ...</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Ch. 6: Elisha(5) Tanner, Militia Man c.1746-c.1812</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Ch.7: William Publican and Brewer 1789-1852 .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Illustrations.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>89</b>

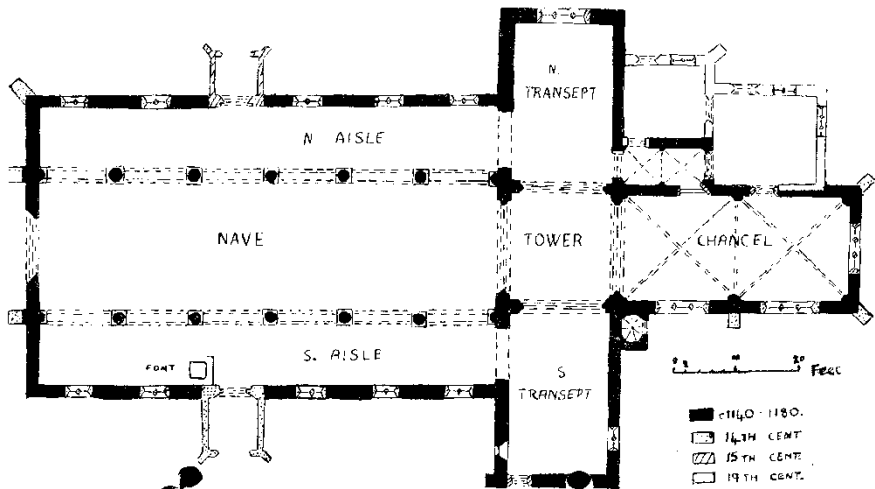
# 1: THOMAS DEACON – TANNER AND BAILIFF abt 1565 – 1642

The parish church of St Mary's (also known as Great St Mary's), Hemel Hempstead is some 20 miles north-west of London, in the diocese of St Albans, Hertfordshire, England. It is in cruciform style, and was built by the Normans of stone and flint, with Roman bricks inserted. Begun in 1140 and taking about 40 years to build, its South Porch was added in the 14th century. The Church has a fluted leaded spire, reaching to almost 200 feet, from the same period. A North Porch was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>



**(6) Brass commemorating Robert & Margaret Albyn, about 1390, on wall inside St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead**

<sup>2</sup> Notes, plan & inside photo are from a booklet about St Mary's Church, pub. by the Church Publishers, Ramsgate.



(7) Plan of Church of St Mary, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

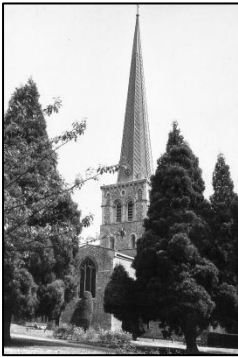


(8) St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead (BHH, 1992)



**Hemel** is the name of a district found in a Bodley Manuscript of about 705. The name **Hempstead** is from the Old English word for homestead: *hamstede*<sup>3</sup> In 1539, King Henry VIII gave the town of Hemel Hempstead its first Charter, granting it the right to hold weekly markets and an annual fair on Corpus Christi. He had his children brought up at Hatfield, Hertfordshire, near Hemel Hempstead.

Originally from the Greek word for a servant, **Deacon** is an Old English word from the 1200's when it meant a person in the lowest rank of holy orders or a church officer who was officially celibate. Surnames began to be used in the South of England at about this time. The Deacon name was perhaps given as a nickname to a religious-minded person.



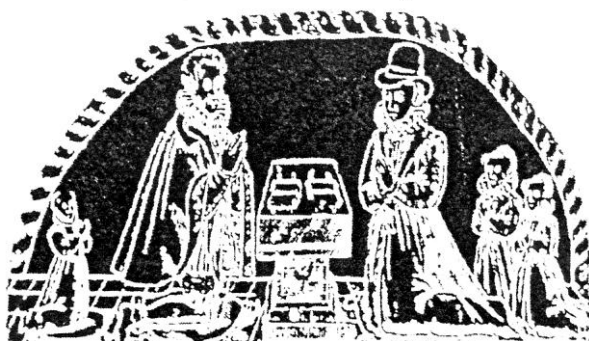
In the late 1500's when St Mary's parish records begin, five people having the surname Deacon, either brothers and sisters or cousins, were married there: in 1581, Roger to Rebecca Groves; in 1587, Audrie to Matthew Robson; in 1592, Raphe to Miriam Howton; in **1596, Roger to Annis Turner** and **Thomas to Martha Fielde**<sup>4</sup>.

**(11) 1992 Postcard of the spire of St Mary's Church.**

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<sup>3</sup> Ekwall, Eilert, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, 4th Edition, reprinted 1970.

<sup>4</sup> St Mary's marriages found from 1558, baptisms from 1566, on LDS Films, along with some Bishops Transcripts.



(12) Brass at St Ippollits, south of Hitchin, of the Hughes family. Alice, the wife, died in 1594 at age 29.<sup>5</sup>

There were also Deacons living in other parts of Hertfordshire at this time. In 1615, Laurence Deacon, a husbandman (small farmer) of St Paul's Walden near Hitchin, left a non-cupative (by word of mouth) Will.

The **Field** surname (also spelt **Feild** and **Fielde**) in this district had strong connections to the Church. **William Field** was Minister of St Mary's in about 1484, according to a list of its ministers given in the booklet about the Church.

**Richard Field**, born in Hemel Hempstead in 1561, was a son of **John Field**, by his first wife, **Margerie Gladman** (also having a Hemel Hempstead family name) whom John married on 28 July 1560 at St Mary's. Charles Farrow discovered the Will of Richard's father, **John Field**, showed John was also the father of **Martha Fielde** who married **Thomas Deacon** in 1596; but it did not show whether Martha was Richard's sister or half-sister.

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<sup>5</sup> A copy of this brass used as its logo by the Hertfordshire Family and Population History Society who gave permission for it to be used here.

A book has now been discovered which shows that after **John Field** married **Margerie Gladman** on 28 July 1560 at St Mary's Church and their son **Richard Field** was born in 1561, Margerie was buried at Hemel Hempstead on 13 May 1573<sup>5</sup>. John then married **Grace Turner** at St Mary's on 27 June, 1575 and their daughter **Martha Field** was baptised at St Mary's on 16 February 1578/9. That definitely makes her Richard Field's half-sister.

Richard was educated nearby in Berkhamstead. He entered Oxford University in 1577 aged 16; and became a very distinguished churchman. Professor Atkinson told the author a long entry about Richard Field is in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography which can be read on-line. It includes these facts: he became chaplain to Queen Elizabeth 1 and to James 1 and dean of Gloucester; he was present at the Hampton Court Conference which launched the translation of the King James Bible; and he was nationally known in England as the author of a book called *Of the Church - Five Bookes*, published in London in 1606.

Professor Atkinson said this book is an extraordinary work of scholarship, still regarded as one of the founding documents of the Church of England. Field was also a greatly admired preacher and very likeable and open-minded man. Fuller, a contemporary historian, described him as: *That learned Divine whose memory smelleth like a field the Lord hath blessed.*

Unlike his wife Martha's birth, the actual year of birth of **Thomas Deacon of Cornerhall** is still unknown. However, Charles Farrow discovered from the 1582 Will of Thomas

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<sup>5</sup> Nathaniel Field: *Some Short Memorials Concerning the Life of that Reverend Divine Doctor Richard Field*, pub. 1716-17. Google Books.



Deacon of Bovington, 4 miles from Hemel Hempstead, that his sons **Roger** and **Thomas Deacon** were both under 21 years old when their father died. Charles Farrow also learnt from his study of Manor Court Books of Hemel Hempstead that Thomas Deacon and three other young men were accused of illegally fishing in a stream belonging to the Lord of the Manor in June 1593.

The same books show that 2 years later, on June 17, 1595, the Steward of the Manor granted to **Roger** and **Thomas Deacon** *and their heirs forever, at the will of the Lord of the Manor*, one rood (one quarter of an acre) at Cornerhall. It was described as *a barn with three bays and a shed attached to it, with a room above*<sup>6</sup>. Here the two brothers together ran a tannery business. Manor Court Books also show that in June 1598 the same property was divided between **Roger** and **Thomas Deacon**.<sup>7</sup> Probably that was because, after both brothers married in June 1596, they began having children. The first child of **Thomas** and **Martha Deacon née Fielde** was baptised **Phebe** at St Marys on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1597.

On 20 May 1600, a Manor Court Book shows **Thomas Deacon** was admitted, by the Lord of the Manor, to more property - one bay of a house and building called an Outlet with an orchard and garden on one rood of land in Corner Hall; and on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1602 Thomas was admitted to another bay with a building and a half perch of land (a perch being 25.29 square metres), next to his existing property. On 28 May 1605, both **Thomas** and **Roger Deacon** were admitted

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<sup>6</sup> According to [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com), a *barn* is an old word for a measurement of 10.28 square metres and a *bay* was an area between posts or walls.

<sup>7</sup> Information from *About Towne (Newsletter) Vol 33 No 2*.

to one acre each of meadow at Cornerhall. On 13 June 1609 **Thomas** was admitted to another half-acre of meadow there.

The dates of these acquisitions of property tie in quite closely with baptisms of some other children of **Thomas** and **Martha Deacon** at St Mary's, such as: **Anne** on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1600; **Thomas** on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1602 (buried on 17<sup>th</sup> of that month); a son **Elisha(1)**<sup>8</sup> on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1603; a daughter **Saray** on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1604; another son **Thomas** on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1609; and **Martha** on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1613. Six years later, on 22 October 1619, the couple had an unnamed daughter and, on 23 October 1619, an unnamed son, presumably twins, buried at St Mary's. It seems Thomas and Martha Deacon had nine children and raised six, three dying as infants<sup>9</sup>.

Although the date and place of her marriage has not been found, **Phebe Deacon**, her parents' first child, is known to have married **Zacheus Gould**, probably in the period 1617/20 in Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, its records missing for that period. Zacheus was probably born there in about 1586/89. The timing of their marriage is assumed because St Mary's Church records have the baptisms of three of their children: **Phebe**, on 17 September 1620, **Maria** on 19 December 1621 and **Martha** on 25 May 1623.

Two more baptisms of children of Phoebe and Zacheus Gould, **Priscilla** on 7 September 1628 and **John** on 29 June

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<sup>8</sup> In this book, the name **Elisha** is always followed by one of the numbers (1) to (5) to distinguish between the Deacon men of different generations having the same first name. However, in the times when they lived, they were referred to as **Elisha Senior** or **Junior**.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Farrow usefully adjusted the way these Deacon baptisms were recorded in St Mary's Register to match the present calendar, introduced in England in 1752. He also found the 1619 unnamed Deacon burials.

1635, were found, by Charles Farrow, on Great Missenden records, in Buckinghamshire, England; and arrears of Ship Money listed in 1635<sup>10</sup> suggest **Zacheus Gould**, his wife **Phebe** *née* *Deacon* and some of these five children emigrated to New England, USA in about that year. They are found buying land in Topsfield, Massachusetts in 1639. and by 1644, they had settled there.

In 1643, **Phebe**, the eldest daughter of Phebe and Zacheus Gould, baptised in 1620, married **Thomas Perkins**, born in Hillmorton, Warwickshire, England in 1622. Phebe and Thomas also emigrated to Topsfield, where their daughter **Phebe Perkins** was born in 1644. In 1663, **Phebe Perkins** married there **Joseph Towne**, who was born in Salem, Essex, Massachusetts, USA in 1629.<sup>11</sup>

In April 1663, the death occurred in Topsfield, USA, of **Phebe** and **Zacheus Gould's** second daughter, **Priscilla**, at age 35. She had been married to **John Wildes** and had eight children by him. Seven months after Priscilla's death, Wildes married Sarah Averill. That is thought to be the reason why Priscilla's older sister **Maria/Mary Redington née Gould** and her younger brother **Lieut. John Gould** supported locals who accused Sarah Averill and others of being witches. Sarah was one of 5 women executed after the famous Salem Witch Trial of February 1692. At the time of Zacheus Gould's death, he had an estate of 3,000 acres, one of the biggest in the area, which suggests his family would have had much social influence in the area<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Ship Money Records found at the National Archives in England by Charles Farrow

<sup>11</sup> Karen Johnsen's Pedigree Chart Vol 34 No 2; & Charles Farrow's article about the Gould family in Vol 35 No 1. *About Towne* newsletter.

<sup>12</sup> Topsfield Historical Collections Volume 11 (now on-line).

*Here lyeth interred the body  
of **Thomas Deacon** the  
sonne of **Thomas Deacon**  
and **Martha** his wife, of  
Corner Hall, Batchelor of  
Artes & Student of Physick,  
who by his Extraordinary  
height being in proportion  
to the length of his stone  
might shew the desire he  
had to heaven and so  
departed Sept 28<sup>th</sup> A.D. 16*

*.....  
Death and Time are alike  
repulsive to me (& both are  
tyrants); Not least when the  
former is victor over me the  
doctor; Fearing that which I  
used to control by logic and  
discoveries which I alone  
have made; They will not  
let go unpunished. And  
Time has decreed what will  
be. Death may take her  
time; she will come, but the  
way is obscure to me.*

*As a memorial to his  
outstanding ability both as  
a scholar and as a  
physician.*

In Hemel Hempstead in 1605, Thomas Taylor was appointed to be vicar of St Mary's Church. His stated aim was to establish *unity, peace and concord* in the village. He tried to get some villagers to conform to Puritan standards - to stop drinking to excess and living adulterous lives, and to attend church on Sundays and Saints' days. After he fined someone for absence, complaint proceedings were brought against him by some substantial inhabitants, including **Thos. Deacon** the tanner, and **John Besouth**. However, the Rev. Taylor remained in his living until his death in 1628. He had the law on his side as there was a statutory fine on Church absenteeism at the time<sup>13</sup>.

**(13) On left: Original inscription on gravestone in St Mary's Church of Thomas & Martha Deacon's son Thomas, b. 1609.**

<sup>13</sup> Information from *A History of Hemel Hempstead*, by members of H.H. Hist. & Museum Soc. pub. Borough of Hemel Hempstead, 1973.

In the 1600's, education became available to more people as the amount of dissent from the ways of the Established Church grew. This was one factor which led to the English Civil War 1642-1651.

Baptised in 1609, **Thomas**, the 2nd surviving son of **Thomas** and **Martha Deacon** attended Oxford University, where he was described as son of *Thomas of Hamstead, Herts, pleb*<sup>14</sup>. He attended Trinity College, Oxford, matriculating on 23 November 1627 aged 18; and he was awarded his B.A. on 6 December 1630, aged 21<sup>15</sup>.

The gravestone of **Thomas Deacon**, scholar and doctor of medicine, originally lay on the floor of the vaulted chamber on the north side of the Chancel (where the altar is) in St Mary's Church. It was 6 feet long by 2 feet wide. In 1846, the last 3 feet of the slab was cut off and removed from the Chancel, making it 3 feet long. On the cut-off part of the gravestone was the poem by Thomas Deacon, with an acknowledgement beneath it, both written in Latin (given in English on page 25)<sup>16</sup>.

It is not known when this **Thomas Deacon**, son of the tanner, died, his year of death being missing from his gravestone when it was copied. During the English Civil War (1642-1649), and again during Cromwell's Government (1649-1660) (see next chapter), records were often not kept or were destroyed. The Bishops Transcripts

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<sup>14</sup> A plebeian was a commoner in ancient Rome.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas's academic record from *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1886* by J. Foster, 8 vols.

<sup>16</sup> Gravestone inscription in F.E. Cussans' *History of Hertfordshire* Vol III. Translation from Latin by Jennifer Miller, M.A., Warkworth, NZ.

for St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead are missing between 1641 and 1660. (Charles Farrow pointed out to the present author that is partly because Cromwell's Government abolished the role of Bishops when it took office in 1649).

However, the baptism of an **Elizabeth**, daughter of **Thomas Deacon**, was entered on St Mary's parish register on 4 November 1646, several years after the death of **Thomas, the tanner**. It seems therefore that **Thomas Deacon**, the scholar and doctor (or possibly a son of his also given the name Thomas) may have been Elizabeth's father. On the web in 2015, an American *Mayflower* descendant quoted a Professor Gould as having written that **Thomas Deacon, tanner** of Cornerhall, was the grandfather of *Lieut. Col Thomas Deacon, the Parliamentary soldier*. If that were so, that soldier may have been a son of **Thomas Deacon, the scholar**; and the father of **Elizabeth**, baptised 1646.<sup>17</sup>

Returning to **Thomas Deacon** (the tanner)'s land acquisitions, on 25 May 1619 the Manor Court admitted Thomas Deacon to a cottage with a hearth and garden in Cornerhall. Immediately afterwards Thomas surrendered that property to William Puddefat. Two years later, on 29 May 1621, William surrendered it back to Thomas Deacon, with the addition of a stable. Thomas Deacon went on to make other small acquisitions of land in the later 1620's. On 22 May 1627 he was allowed to occupy one acre of arable land in Crouchfield Common and on 10 June 1628, was admitted by the Court as a tenant of that property. The same day, he was admitted to a cottage of *two bays with*

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<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Fitzgerald, the *Mayflower* descendant, who put this information on the website: [worldconnect.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://worldconnect.rootsweb.ancestry.com), told the author he copied it from another website where no source was given.

*appurtenances* in Cornerhall which had been held by Joseph Martyn, a Doctor of Medicine.

When aged about 65 (if born 1565) on 16 October 1630, **Thomas Deacon, tanner**, began to divest himself of some of his land. He surrendered his piece of arable land on Crouchfield Common of one acre and one rood out of Court to **Richard Chadley Jnr.** On 24 March 1631, Thomas surrendered many of his other holdings to his eldest son **Elisha(1) Deacon** who, the Court record says, desired to be admitted to them<sup>18</sup>. These properties are mentioned in detail in Manor Court records, the description of them given here being the present author's interpretation of what was meant:

All of a dwelling house of **Thomas Deacon** and formerly of **Roger Deacon** with a portion on the north with a yard; and a building called an Outlet, west of land called The Moor; and the greater part of a building called The Shed situated near the dwelling house, with the Tan-vats below the Shed ( except for the upper ones called The Tops); and all land on the west side of the Shed, between the Canal and the four Home-vats situated on the north side; and the building called a Lime House adjoining it with a furnace called a Kill, and the building erected above it, extending to the gooseberry hedge on the west as far as the other separate piece of the orchard on the east, together with free passage of ingress, egress and regress to all the land and the Tan Vats.

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<sup>18</sup> The actual words that appear in these Manor Court records are given in Towne Newsletter Vol. 33, No 2, in the article : *The Joseph Towne Connection: the Deacon, Gould and Perkins Families. The Deacon Family of Hertfordshire Part 2: Thomas the Tanner Part 2*, by Charles Farrow, Consulting Genealogist, Towne Family Association..

Six months later, on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1631, out of court, **Thomas the tanner** also surrendered to the use of himself and **Martha** his wife, for and during the term of their natural lives and to the longer liver of them; and after their deaths to the use of **Elisha(1) Deacon** their son and heirs forever the following: - the east part of his holding with the dwelling house in Cornerhall, reaching to the part which formerly belonged to **Roger Deacon**; and the upper yard and an outhouse lying on the east side of it (except one bay of outhousing standing furthest south); and the Tan-vats & outhouses lying north and northwest from the upper yard; and the ground where the Tan (leather?) lay and the Beam House watering places there, Lime-vats, the upper yard barn and outhouses standing on the northwest side of the Tanyard, and the Barkmill and the house over it.

This area also included the lower part of the biggest orchard reaching to the upper side of the gooseberry hedge; and the orchard next to the Tanyard and the north-west part of the biggest garden and the hedge and bakehouse & henhouse adjoining it, and a harehouse standing by itself with a little yard to it adjoining with free & quiet ingress, egress and regress to and from all the houses, tanvats, orchards and other places contained in this part.

On 7 June 1631, **Thomas Deacon, tanner** was accused in the Court Leet (held by the Lord of the Manor for criminal offences) of encroaching on the waste land of the Manor beside the King's highway in Cornerhall, having erected a boundary fence and a building called an Outlet there. He was ordered to remove them before 29 September 1631.

In 1637, **Thomas Deacon, tanner**, then probably aged about 72, became the bailiff of Hemel Hempstead. This



meant that, with the aid of a jury chosen by him, he presided over and managed market disputes at the fair. The bailiff was elected annually by the inhabitants of Hemel Hempstead on the feast of St Andrew's day - 30<sup>th</sup> November; and he was expected to provide the feast<sup>19</sup>. On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1642, **Thomas Deacon, tanner**, made his Will in which he referred to himself as being *sickened in body but of good and perfect memory*.

After he died (aged 77 if born 1565) an Inventory of his possessions was drawn up on 11<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1643 by **Roger Deacon of Flamstead**, a village north of Hemel Hempstead, and his cousin **Richard Sawell**, and **John Gage**. They valued his assets, including £80 of bond bills owing to him, at £1,106-15s. Thomas's total assets would have had the purchasing power of about £163,909 in 2013.<sup>20</sup>



The inventory shows the tanner's house had a dining-hall, a kitchen and brew-house, three chambers above, and a garret above them, and it was well-furnished.

#### 14) House known as *The Three Gables*, in Cornerhall<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Information from 1973 History of Hemel Hempstead. ed. S.Yaxley..

<sup>20</sup> Purchasing power shown at <http://www.measuringworth.com>.

<sup>21</sup> Photo and information about The Three Gables from article by Charles Farrow in *About Towne* Newsletter Vol 34, No 2. page.48.

Charles Farrow discovered that five Cornerhall buildings and one wall still found there today are on the British Listed Buildings website, all listed as Grade 2. That is defined as: *of outstanding interest and not to be altered without consent from the local authority after it has had approval from English Heritage for the changes*. The listing website said ***The Three Gables*** house was built in the 1500's or the late 1400's and altered in the early 1600's.

The period in which alterations to this house are thought to have been made is when Thomas and Martha's nine children were being born. The photo of it shown here also seems to the present author to fit well with the description of the house in the 1643 Inventory attached to Thomas's Will of 1642 which says it had three bedrooms above and a garret.

Charles Farrow wrote Thomas's daughter Phebe's home was in the buildings known as 9 and 10 Cornerhall, ( their photo given in the next chapter), situated on the opposite side of the street from *The Three Gables*. It seems to the present author Thomas and Martha probably did live in 9 and 10 Cornerhall when their children had grown bigger but may have lived earlier and later in *The Three Gables*.

The Inventory to Thomas's Will says his tanyard had two sheds with lofts above. *Butts, hides and skins* he held were valued at £678 (having a purchasing power of £100, 473 in 2013). This **Thomas Deacon**, was also a farmer. At his death, his crops of wheat, barley and malt were worth nearly £200 (a purchasing power of £29,640 in 2013) - his animals, worth nearly £50 (a purchasing power of £7,410 in 2013) were horses, foals, hogs (castrated boars), hogs, and sheep. His farming equipment was worth about £20 (a purchasing power of £2,964 in 2013).

**Thomas Deacon**, tanner, left to his children, not named in his Will, *no more but twenty shillings apiece* (having a purchasing power of £148.20p in 2013) *and to the pore people of Hemel Hempstead 30 shillings* (£222.30p in 2013). It was his special desire that all his debts would be honestly paid by his overseers, his *loving cozen*, **Richard Sawell**, and his eldest son, **Elisha(1)**. He left them each 10 shillings (£74.10p in 2013) *for their pains*.

Thomas willed the balance of his goods, chattels and credits to his wife, **Martha**, making her his sole executrix. He said he was fully persuaded she would honestly discharge his *loving friends*, the men he had engaged to direct men at his request; and believed while she lived she would be helpful to his children, arranging to give them what she could spare above her own needs, according to their kind and dutiful behaviour towards her.<sup>22</sup>



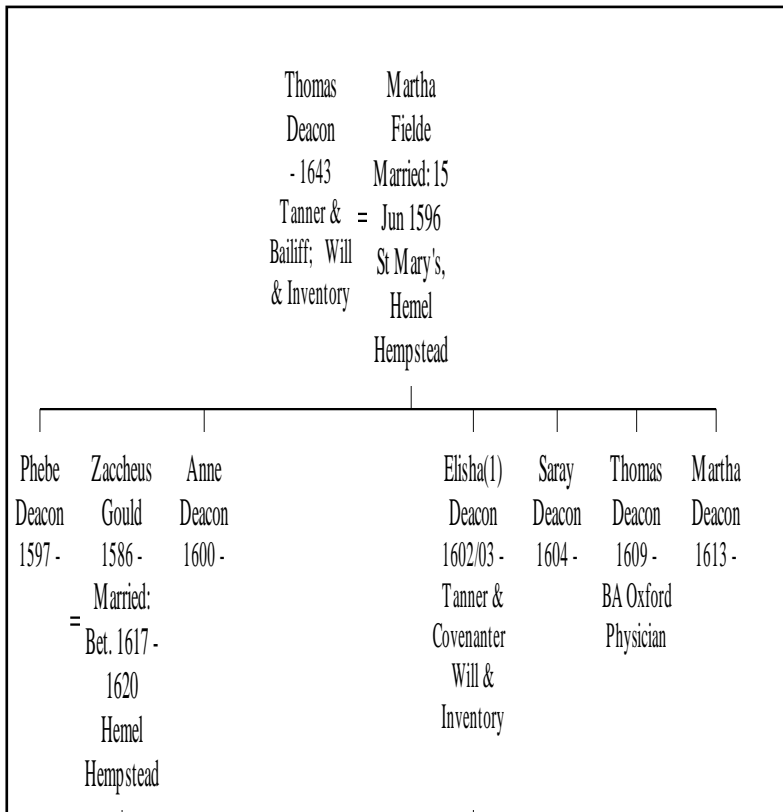
**(15) Above: Brass of Mary or Anne Rowley, a wife who died 1625/27, Brent Pelham, Herts**

**(16) On right: Brass of Pemberton daughters, 1627, St Albans (St Peter's), Herts.**<sup>23</sup>



<sup>22</sup> Will of Thomas Deacon 1642 and Inventory Ref 32 HW 95, Hertford Record Office, Hertford, England. A website [www.geni.com](http://www.geni.com) in 2015 gave Martha's dates as 15 February 1579 - 24 October 1663 and said she was a half-sister of Richard Field (1561-1616). but offered no sources for any of this information.

<sup>23</sup> Figs. 13 and 56 from *Hertfordshire Brasses* by Mary Rensten, 1982

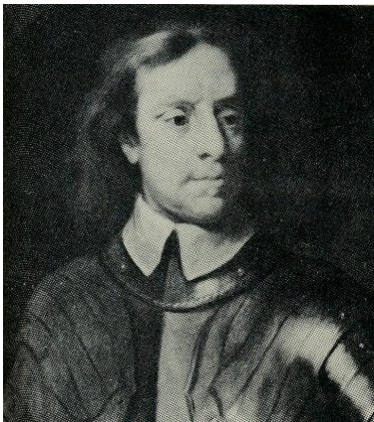


### No. 1 Deacon Tree: Family of Thomas and Martha Deacon née Field.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Nothing else has been found out about daughters **Anne**, **Saray** and **Martha**, except for a few details for Anne's life mentioned on the website geni.com without sources. The first son named **Thomas**, baptised in Feb 1602, who died as an infant, is not shown on the above Tree.

## 2. **ELISHA(1) TANNER & COVENANTER 1603 - 1661**

At about age 29 on 16 January 1631/32, Thomas and Martha Deacon's eldest surviving son, **Elisha(1)**, tanner of Corner Hall, married **Mary Hull** at St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead. This couple had ten children - 8 daughters and 2 sons - born in this order: **Mary**, baptised 24 August 1631; **Elisha(2)**, born in about 1633; **Sarah**, baptised 9 September 1637; **Phebe**, baptised 29 January 1639; **Martha** baptised 27 April 1645; **Elizabeth**, perhaps a twin of **Joane**, baptised on 29 August 1648; **Ann**, baptised 28 June 1650; **Thomas**, born about 1652; and **Judith**, born about 1654. (Both St Mary's Church register and Bishop's Transcripts of it have blank spots in this period.)



**Elisha(1)** was a signatory to the Solemn League and Covenant of Sept.1643, first signed by Members of the House of Commons in Parliament. In 1644, men over 18 years, living in areas under the control of the Parliament, were expected to sign this declaration if they supported Cromwell in the Civil War (1642-1651).

(17) **Oliver Cromwell**, born 1599. Leader of the English Parliament 1653-58, died 1658. (Painting from website).

In 1642, the first **Baptists** in Hertfordshire appeared in the parish of Hemel Hempstead when **George Kendall** (or Rendell<sup>25</sup>), M.A., became vicar of the parish church of St Marys. He was a Baptist and he permitted a Baptist advocate named **Baldwin** to preach in his parish. In 1643-4, inhabitants of Hemel Hempstead complained Kendall refused to administer the sacrament of baptism to their children. Shortly afterwards Kendall was committed to Newgate prison. James Ashton was appointed in his place.<sup>26</sup>

Most business people in England, such as the Deacons of Hemel Hempstead, supported Cromwell's Parliamentary Party. It has been suggested **Elisha(1)** fought in the Civil War, possibly in the role of Captain.<sup>27</sup> A message on a website refers to a Professor Gould as writing that a Lieut-Colonel Thomas Deacon, a Parliamentary soldier, was a grandson of Thomas and Martha Deacon. If his name were Thomas, the Lieut. Col. could only have been a son of the Oxford scholar and physician, **Thomas Deacon** born 1609, who was **Elisha(1)**'s younger brother. Elisha(1)'s son **Thomas** was born in 1652, after the Civil War ended.

Not long after the period of Parliamentary Government ended in 1658, **Elisha(1)** died in 1661, when he was about 58 years old. An Inventory of his possessions valued them at £635 (its purchasing power in 2013 £78, 422.25). This was less than half the amount of £1,106.15s (£163, 909 in 2013) mentioned in his father Thomas's Will, 18 years before. That may have been because **Elisha(1)**'s business

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<sup>25</sup> The name Rendall, appears for Kendall in the booklet about St Marys Church, pub. by The Church Publishers, Ramsgate.

<sup>26</sup> Information from website <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report>

<sup>27</sup> Mentioned in *History of Hemel Hempstead*, pub. by H.H. Borough 1973.

interests were affected by the Civil War, especially if he spent time in Cromwell's army. However, the 1661 Inventory of **Elisha(1) Deacon**'s possessions suggests the house he and his family occupied was larger than the house his parents were living in when his father Thomas died (mentioned in the Inventory of Thomas Deacon the tanner's possessions). That is not surprising as **Elisha(1)** and his wife **Mary née Hull** raised three more children than his parents had; and the standard of housing was rising in England during the 1600's.

Charles Farrow wrote that Nos 9 and 10 Cornerhall was the home of **Thomas and Martha Deacon** in which **Phebe Deacon** lived as a young person. It seems also to the present author likely to have been the home where her brother **Elisha(1)** and his wife **Mary née Hull** later raised their ten children.



(18) From left, No 10, with No 9 set back, built in the 1600's or earlier, in Cornerhall.<sup>28</sup>

The Inventory to Elisha(1)'s Will is extremely difficult to read, being in very small Secretary script, first used in Europe in the 1500's, and still used in the 1600's and early 1700's. It says that on the ground floor were a long hall and a little hall, with an entry, two kitchens and a buttery. On

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<sup>28</sup> Photograph & information from article by Charles Farrow in *About Towne* Newsletter Vol 34, No 2.

the first floor were five chambers, one with a little room by it, and a garret above. There were also, in **Elisha(1)**'s house, a cellar, and a pair of virginals (a kind of harpsichord) in the long hall and a bandalore ( somewhat like a guitar) - in the little hall.

The nine children who survived him are mentioned by **Elisha(1)** in the Will he drew up in 1658, before he died in 1661.<sup>29</sup> To his eldest daughter, **Mary**, aged about 30 when her father died, the wife of **John Bunn** of **Eastcote**, he left *the great chest standing under the window in the Chamber over the kitchen*. Mary died on 11 November 1684, 6 years before the death of her mother, Mary née Hull.

His second daughter, **Sarah**, aged about 24 when her father died, was the wife of **Daniel Shipton, the Elder**. We know this couple lived in **Elisha(1)**'s household before he died because to them he left *the bedstead over the hall wherein they dwell and the drawing table in the best chamber*. **Sarah** died at the age of 33, after having three children, on 11 November 1670, 20 years before her mother Mary née Hull died.

To his third daughter, **Phebe**, aged about 22 when her father died, **Elisha(1)** left £50 (its purchasing power in 2013 £6, 174) to be given to her the day she *accomplished the age of one and twenty years or at her day of marriage, whichever should happen first*. He also left her the Court Cupboard standing in the chamber over the kitchen. No marriage of Phebe has been found.

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<sup>29</sup> Will and Inventory of Elisha Deacon 1658 Probate 1661 Ref 32 HW 110, Hertford Record Office

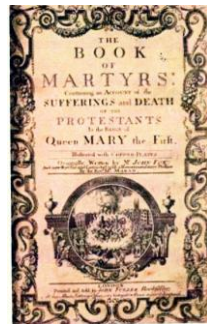


To his fourth daughter, **Martha**, aged 16 when her father died, **Elisha(1)** left £50 on the same basis as to her sister, **Phebe**, and the bedstead standing in the chamber over the kitchen. But, if his son **Elisha(2)** paid her £2 -10 shillings instead at her day of marriage (in 2013 about £208), he could keep the bedstead. **Martha** married at age 20, on 18 October 1665, **William Green** from a family also known as **Gladman**.

To his daughters, **Elizabeth** and **Joane** who may have been twins, **Elisha(1)** left the bedstead standing in *the best chamber that Daniel Shipton holdeth* equally between them. He also left to **Elizabeth** the tapestry coverlet lined with linen. (She was buried on 1 May 1668, as daughter of *Widow Deacon*). **Joane**, about 13 when her father died, married **William Jarvis** and they had two daughters named **Mary** and **Martha**.

To his seventh daughter, **Ann**, aged 11 when her father died, **Elisha(1)** left the best chest standing in the best chamber. She married **James Besouth** on 17 November 1672 when aged about 22 and they had a daughter they named **Ann**.

**Elisha(1)**, left to **Elisha(2)**, his eldest son, the table, the frame and the joined stools in the hall where Daniel Shipton lived; the table, frame and joined stools in the other hall; the table, frame and joined stools in the kitchens; and the table, frame and press standing in the chamber and in the other hall.



(19) Reprint of cover of Book of Martyrs 1<sup>st</sup> pub. 20 March, 1563 (from a website)

To his youngest son, **Thomas**, if born 1652 aged 9 when his father died, **Elisha(1)** left *The Book of Martyrs* in 3 volumes. Professor Alan Atkinson recognised this was John Foxe's Book of Martyrs which he knew was *standard fare for Puritans*. Its sub-title is: *A History of the Lives Sufferings and Triumphant Deaths of the Primitive Protestant Martyrs*.

Nothing more has been found out about this **Thomas Deacon**. He is not mentioned in his mother's Will of 1690 which may mean he died as a young man or perhaps emigrated to America.

The eighth daughter and youngest child of **Elisha(1)**, named **Judith**, born about 1654 and aged 7 when her father died, is not mentioned in his Will. That may be because she was about 4 years old when her father made his Will.

**Elisha(1)** did not sign his name at the end of his Will but made *his marke and seale*, a very shakily drawn large letter **D**. It seems likely Elisha(1) could read and write since his younger brother Thomas attended Oxford University as a student. He may have been following local custom in not putting his full signature on his Will or may have been in a frail state of health.

**Elisha(1)** made *his well-beloved wife, Mary*, his executrix and appointed two of his sons-in-law, **John Bunn** and **Daniel Shipton**, as overseers, giving them 20 shillings each (£123.50 in 2013) and all his grandchildren 5 shillings each about £31 (in 2013.) **Elisha(1)** was clearly a less careful man with money than his father had been because he left his overseers twice as much. Although the value of the pound had fallen a little in the preceding 20 years, it had not fallen by 100%.

**Elisha(1)**'s widow, **Mary Deacon née Hull**, lived through the 28 years of the *Restoration Government* of the Stuart Kings from 1660 until the *Glorious Revolution* of 1688. It ended the reign of the Catholic King James II and put his Protestant daughter, Mary and her husband William of Orange on the throne of England from 1689 to 1702.

When **Elisha(1)**'s widow, **Mary Deacon**, made her Will in 1690,<sup>30</sup> she left to her eldest son, **Elisha(2)**, her *jack* (either a pitcher of waxed leather or a contrivance for turning a spit on which meat was cooked); her clock; and her biggest spit standing in the house where he lived.

Her daughter, **Martha**, wife of **William Green/Gladman**, received £19 (£2,892 in 2013). Her daughter, **Joane**, the wife of **William Jarvis**, received £10 (£1,522 in 2013), and her daughter **Ann**, wife of **James Besouth**, the same amount. To **John Bunn**, a son-in-law, whose wife, **Sarah**, died on 11 November 1670 at age 33, Mary left £17 (£2,587 in 2013).

Mary also left money to her grandchildren: to **Mary Jarvis**, daughter of **William Jarvis**, £5 (£761 in 2013) and to her sister, **Martha Jarvis**, £4 (£608 in 2013). To the children of her son **Elisha(2)** (see Chapter 3), **Mary, Martha and Susannah Deacon**, Mary left each £4 also, and if any of them died before they received the money, it was to be divided equally among the survivors.

Mary's great-granddaughter, **Mary Belgrave**, daughter of **Samuel Belgrave** and **Elizabeth** (her son **Elisha(2)**'s eldest

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<sup>30</sup> Will and Inventory of Mary Deacon, 1690 Ref 34 HW5 Hertford Record Office.

daughter) was to be paid £5 when she became 18 years old, all the other legacies having to be paid within 6 months of Mary's death.

Mary left money only to female descendants, probably because only males were traditionally left family property at this time. She made her youngest daughter, **Judith**, then aged about 36, her full and sole Executrix, leaving her all the rest of her goods and chattels, after her debts and funeral expenses were paid. Mary made her Will *being sick and weake of body but in good and perfect mind and memory* and signed her Will with her name.

If **Mary Deacon** *née Hull* were aged 22 in January 1632 when she married, she would have been about 80 years old when she made her Will in 1690. Witnesses to her Will were **Mary Knight**, who made her mark, and **Daniel Shipton** and **Daniel Field** who signed their names.

The Inventory to her Will, made after Mary Deacon *née Hull's* death, was drawn up by two of her sons-in-law, **John Bunn** and **William Green/Gladman**. Some items listed are very difficult to read as the ink has faded and its Secretary script is small. It includes the following recognisable items, £1 in 1690 being equal to £152 purchasing power in 2013:

In the Chamber (Bedroom):-

First, Mary's wearing apparel & money in her purse: £3

Item: one bedstead and bedding on it: £2-7-6

Item: 6 pairs of sheets, 2 doz. napkins & other old linen: 19/6

In the Room to West:-

Item: 2 small square tables & 2 round tables & forms;

joint stools & 2 chairs & 3 small stools; 7 small pewter plates (and many small items) £1-1-0

Item: 1 Bible and other books 9s

**Total Value of 1690 Inventory Items** (many not shown above) ..... **£160 - 2 - 9<sup>31</sup>**

**Total Value of Money Bequests .....£72 - 0 - 0<sup>32</sup>**

Marriages of Elisha(1) & Mary Deacon *née* Hull's children:

- (1). Mary to John Bunn
- (2). Elisha (2) to Elizabeth Hackny
- (3). Sarah to Daniel Shipton
- (5). Martha to Wm Green / Gladman
- (7). Joane to William Jarvis
- (8). Ann to James Besouth

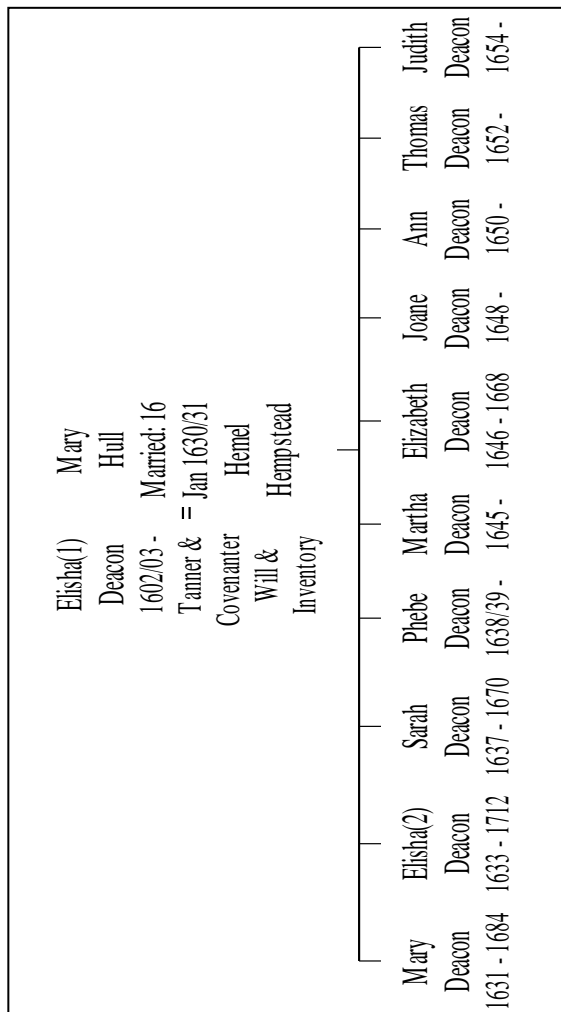
**Marriages have not been found for these family members:**

- (4). Phebe;
- (6) Elizabeth;
- (9) Thomas
- (10) Judith.

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<sup>31</sup> This amount had a purchasing power of £24, 364 in 2013.

<sup>32</sup> The money bequests had a purchasing power of \$10, 944 in 2013..



**No. 2 Deacon Tree: Family of Elisha(1) & Mary *née* Hull**

### 3: ELISHA(2) TANNER AND SONS

#### About 1633 – 1712



(20) View of Cornerhall houses built or altered in 1600's:  
On left, gable of No 10; on right, The Three Gables (BHHolt, 1992)

Born in about 1633, **Elisha(2)**, at about age 34, married **Elizabeth Hackny** on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1667, six years after the death of his father, **Elisha(1)**. **Elisha(2)** and his wife **Elizabeth** had at least nine children. The Will of **Elisha(2)**, made in 1707<sup>33</sup> and proved in 1712, only mentions four daughters and three sons. However, there was a daughter, **Susannah**, born in about 1680, who was buried 4 days

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<sup>33</sup> Will of Elisha Deacon, 1707, Inventory and Probate, 1712, Ref 34 HW53, Hertford Record Office.

before her father, on 12 September 1712 aged 32; and there was a burial in 1686, of: *a child of Elisha Deacon*, given no name, perhaps a still-born child.

The children of **Elisha(2)** and **Elizabeth Deacon née Hackny** who survived their father were: -

Their eldest child, **Elizabeth**, baptised on 2nd Feb. 1669, who married **Samuel Belgrave**, and then **Robert Barre**.

Their second child, **Mary** baptised 11 November 1671, according to her father's Will, was the wife of **William Smith**. (The name, **Martha**, was entered in the parish register as the daughter who married William Smith, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1703, probably an error made by the parish clerk).

The third child and eldest son of **Elisha(2)** and his wife **Elizabeth** née Hackny, was **Elisha(3)** baptised on 26 November 1673.

Their fourth child was a son, **Thomas**, baptised on 4 March 1675. Their fifth child was **Roger**, born about 1677 and their sixth child, **Susannah**, born about 1680, who died in 1712.

Their seventh child was **Judith**, born in about 1683 who received an adult baptism in St Mary's Church when she was aged about 19 on 17 May 1702. Judith married **Joseph Bates** in St Mary's Church on 30 October 1712, when she was aged about 29.

There is a possibility that **Elisha(2)** and **Elizabeth Deacon née Hackny** were either Quakers or Baptists at about the time Judith was born in 1683, as both these religious groups



do not baptise children. The author of a 1908 history of the County of Hertfordshire wrote: *in 1683 there was a Quakers' meeting constantly held every Sunday at Woodgreen in Hemel Hempstead.* The same author wrote: *The first certificate of a non-conformist meeting-house there was given in 1690 to Anabaptists. In 1699, the Quakers obtained their first licence there. In 1702 the Presbyterians appeared in the parish and in 1706 they certified a house in Crouchfield*<sup>34</sup>.

**Elisha(2)**'s Will begins with these words: *In the name of God Amen the Nineteenth day of January in the Sixth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Anne by the Grace of God Queen of Great Britain ..... Queen Anne* of England reigned from 1702 to 1714 which indicates **Elisha(2)**, born about 1633, made his Will in 1708 when he was aged about 75 years. The date of the Inventory to his Will prepared by others indicates he died four years later, in 1712, aged 79.

His Will continues: *I Elisha Deacon of Cornerhall .....being ancient in years and infirm of body but of sound and disposing memory and understanding, praised be Almighty God therefore calling to mind the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time when it shall happen for the quietness of my mind do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following...*

Unlike the Wills of his father **Elisha(1)** and his grandfather **Thomas Deacon**, **Elisha(2)** in this Will mentions the manorial or customary inherited property he occupied during his life-time which he surrendered to the use of his Will. The reason he did that was probably that he had

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<sup>34</sup> 1908 history of Hertfordshire found on-line at [www.britishhistory.ac.uk](http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk)

shared the use of this property with his brothers-in-law and nephews as well as his son, **Elisha(3)**, during his life-time.

The property was described as *all those Messuages or Tenements* (houses with land attached) *with all Outhouses Edifices Buildings Barns Tannyards Tannfatts and appurtenances thereunto belonging now or late in the Terms of Occupation of me the said **Elisha Deacon the Elder, Richard Green*** (probably a nephew), **William Smith, Elisha(3) Deacon the Younger**, and **Daniel Shipton** or son or one of them their sons or assignee or assignes situate and being at Cornerhall within the manor of Hemel Hempstead Cum Membris. (The last two Latin words mean *with all its parts*.)

Like his father and grandfather, **Elisha(2)** surrendered the same premises to his wife, **Elizabeth**, *to have and to hold for and during the term of her natural life*. After her death, the premises were to go to his sons, **Thomas** and **Roger Deacon**, and to his daughters **Elizabeth Barr**, **Mary Smith**, and **Susannah** and **Judith Deacon**, subject to the condition that if, within six months after his wife's death, his son, **Elisha(3)** gave the other children £10 each (£1,305 purchasing power in 2013) he might inherit all the premises.

As his grandfather and father had done, **Elisha(2)** left all his goods and chattels and his personal estate to his wife, **Elizabeth**, and made her his sole executrix. Unlike them, he signed his name on the Will, instead of making his mark and seal. The witnesses were Daniel Shipton, Joseph Munn and John Clifton.

In 1712, probate was granted to his wife **Elizabeth Deacon née Hackny**. The 1712 detailed Inventory attached to the

Will of **Elisha(2)**, is again written in Secretary script, but it is shorter and the writing is easier to read than in the 1661 Inventory of his father **Elisha(1)**'s belongings and the 1690 Inventory of his widow Mary's belongings.

**Elisha(2)**'s 1712 Inventory reads:

	\$ - s - d
<u>Wearing Apparel and Money in purse -</u>	1- 0 - 0

<u>In the Hall:</u> one Table, 2 Forms, 8 Chairs -	0 - 8 - 0
One small Copper, 3 Kettles, 2 Pots and one Skillet,	
A quart Copper Pot & Brass Ladle -	1 - 8 - 0
Nine Pewter Dishes, 3 Plates, 4 Porringers	
( <i>shallow bowls</i> ) & one Flagon; two Candlesticks,	
2 Salts, 2 Cups and Tin Candlestick -	0 - 15 - 0
One Musket, 2 other Guns and 2 Swords -	0 - 8 - 0
One Jack, 2 Spits, 4 Forks, 2 Chimney Hooks,	
one pair of Tongs, and other odd things (sic) -	0- 12 - 0

<u>In the Hall Chamber:-</u> One Bedstead and Trundle	
Bed, two Chests, two Chairs, a Press, a pair of	
Curtains and Velours, and Bedroom Desk -	4 - 5 - 0

<u>In the Room Over the Buttery:</u> One Bedstead,	
2 Floor Beds, a Bolster, 2 Feather Pillows and	
2 Blankets -	0 - 10 - 0
1 Cupboard, 2 Trunks, one Chest, 5 Chairs	0- 11 - 0
4 Pairs of Sheets and Napkins.	0 - 10 - 0

<u>In the Room over the Entry:</u> One Bedstead, One	
Flock bed, 2 Bolsters, one Blanket and a Coverlet	1- 0 - 0
<u>In the Drink House:</u> Three Barrels and 2 Firkins <sup>35</sup>	0-10 - 0

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<sup>35</sup> Firkins were small casks for liquids, butter, fish etc.

<u>In the Buttery:</u> One Salting Trough, one Pondering Tub ( <i>for weighing water</i> ) ,a Bolting Mill, Cascading Trough & Covers, a Tin Dripping Pan & Earthenware	0 - 11 - 0
<u>In the Washhouse:</u> One Hat Press and Wire and Hand Wire, One Bucket Weight with other Working Tools, Naked Firewood and Lumber	3 - 0 - 0
<u>In Stable:</u> One Rabbit Hutch and one Hand Cart	0-10- 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12-18-0</b>

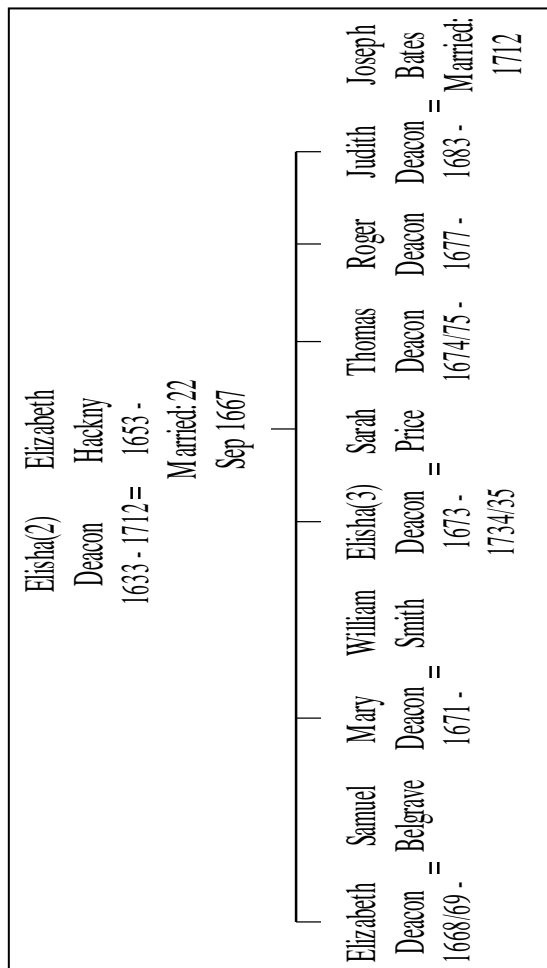
£1 in 1712 was equal to a purchasing power of £130 in 2013.<sup>36</sup> Therefore **Elisha(2)**'s possessions listed in his Will's Inventory were worth about £1,690 in 2013 compared with those of his grandfather, **Thomas Deacon, the tanner**, worth £152, 144 in 2013.

The reason for this difference was probably that **Elisha(2)**, during his life-time, shared his home, work, assets and the profits of the Deacon family's tanning and farming interests with his sons-in-law – **Green, Smith** and **Shipton** and his sons, **Elisha(3)**, **Thomas** and **Roger**. However, the Will of **Elisha(2)** of 1707, as already mentioned, did not provide absolutely for the continued sharing of those assets. In it, he gave a nod to the manorial custom in which the eldest son inherited his father's property. He left all his property to his wife; and after her death, to his children; but gave his eldest son, **Elisha(3)**, the right to buy his brothers and sisters out of their shares of his property, within 6 months of his mother's death.

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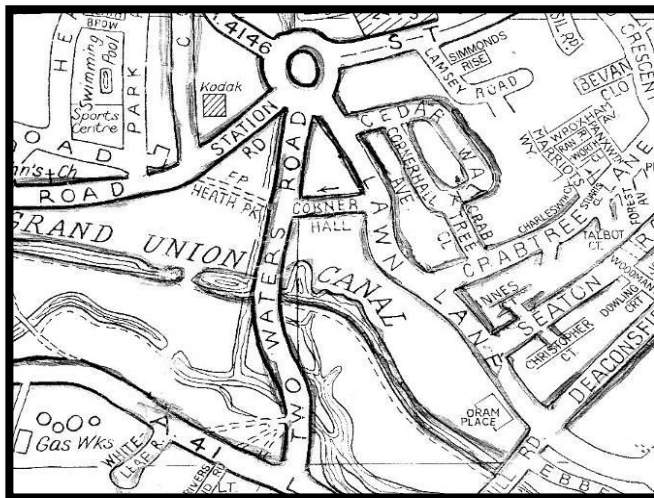
<sup>36</sup> Calculated using the website [http:// measuring worth.com](http://measuringworth.com).

### No. 3 Deacon Tree: Elisha(2) & Elizabeth née Hackny



Daughter Elizabeth Deacon married as her second husband R. Barre. No marriages of Thomas and Roger Deacon have been found but they may have married in another county of England.

## 4: ELISHA(3) TANNER & FARMER 1673- 1736



(21) Small part of modern map of Hemel Hempstead showing one -way street Cornerhall in centre, between Two Waters Rd and Lawn Lane, with Deaconsfield Road on right off latter.

In 1706, six years before his father Elisha(2) died, **Elisha(3)**, baptised on 26 November 1673 in Hemel Hempstead, married **Sarah Price** at Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, when he was aged 33. (His father **Elisha(2)** and grandfather **Elisha(1)** were a similar age to him when they married). Sarah was baptised in 1685 at Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, therefore aged 21 at the time she married.<sup>37</sup> Evidence confirming Sarah Price of

<sup>37</sup> Marilyn Scott found this marriage on the old IGI on-line. It is not there since changes were made to the IGI, and not yet listed under Historical Records on the Mormons' website: [www.family-search.org](http://www.family-search.org).

Rickmansworth was the woman **Elisha(3)** of Cornerhall married is in his Will of 1732. In it, he left to his daughter **Sarah** and her heirs a freehold piece of land at Mill End in the parish of Rickmansworth, occupied by **John Carey**. The land contained outhouses, buildings, barns, stables, yards, gardens, orchards, barksides and appurtenances. (Bark was used in the tanning process).

It is likely the father of **Sarah Price** gave the land at Mill End to his daughter, when she turned 21 or married. It would have become the property of **Elisha(3)** when they married as that was the general law in place in England before the Married Women's Property Act of the 1880's was passed there. However, before that, sometimes special legal provisions were made when land was gifted to a daughter.

The Will of **Elisha(3)** indicates he and his wife **Sarah née Price** raised two children, a daughter they named **Sarah** and a son they named **Elisha (4)**. As baptisms for neither child have been found in St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead, it is likely their parents were either **Baptists or Quakers**, as both those denominations do not believe in child baptisms. This cannot be confirmed because the relevant records are not available. Baptist Church records for Hertfordshire date only from 1785.

However, a 1908 History of Hertfordshire says: *In 1712 the Baptists took out a licence for a house abutting the tanyard next to the Waterside and Moor on the south-east*<sup>38</sup>. This

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<sup>38</sup> 1908 History of the County of Hertford: Vol 2 pp. 215-30, on web at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43272](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43272). Accessed 18/9/06.

seems very likely to refer to a house next to the tanyard owned by the Deacons.



(22) Grand Union Canal, Hemel Hempstead (BHHolt, 1992)

It is not known exactly when **Elisha(4)** and **Sarah Deacon**, children of **Elisha(3)** and **Sarah Deacon** *née* Price, were born. However, it is clear both of them were under 21 years of age when their father made his Will in 1732, four years before he died in 1736.<sup>39</sup>

Hertfordshire Militia records<sup>40</sup> in which **Elisha(4)**'s name appears, suggest he was born in about 1714. As his parents married in 1706, it seems his sister, **Sarah** was probably her parents' first surviving child, born in about 1712. That would make her aged 20 when her father made his Will in 1732, and her brother, **Elisha(4)** about 18 years old at that time.

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<sup>39</sup> Will of Elisha Deacon 1732, Proved 1736 (No Inventory) Ref 35 HW 12, Hertford Record Office, Herts.

<sup>40</sup> Militia records published by Hertfordshire Family and Population Society in 1987 are mentioned again in Chapter 5.



**Elisha(3)** was 59 years old and in *good health in body and of sound and disposing mind memory and understanding* when he made his Will. It is interesting that it contains the term *copyhold lands and tenements* to mean lands and houses traditionally held by the Deacons as tenants of the Lord of the Manor, for some premises and land they held.

That was probably done because **Elisha(3)** now had other property which he owned outright. They are referred to in his Will as: *the Barn Buildings and Orchard which I lately bought and purchased of Mr Samuel Lewis; and the cottage or tenement with the appurtenances where Thomas Wright lived in at Cornerhall; and my close of arable land called Feazes<sup>41</sup>*, bought from **Hannah and Anne Meadows**.

This Will demonstrates how far, in parts of England, the manorial system of land tenure had been abandoned by 1732. Many occupiers no longer regarded their land as held by them at the discretion of the Lord of the Manor. They were selling it and willing it as though it were freehold land, probably with the informal agreement of the Lord of the Manor. (It was not until 1815 in England that manorial tenants could legally dispose of their copyhold land in their Wills without restriction).

As his great-grandfather, grandfather and father had done, **Elisha(3)**, in his Will of 1732 (for which no Inventory is available), left all his lands, buildings and hereditary land entitlements in Hemel Hempstead to his wife **Sarah** to hold for the term of her natural life and afterwards, to his only

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<sup>41</sup> Feacy Down, shown on 1993 map of Hemel Hempstead, was probably named after the Old English word for a bull: *Fearr*..

son **Elisha(4)** and his heirs. As in his father's Will of 1712, this was done on the condition that his son pay his sister a sum of money, in this case £200 ( its purchasing power in 2013 £29, 950) when she turned 21 or on the day of her marriage, whichever happened first, and after his wife **Sarah** had been dead for six months.

If his wife **Sarah** died before their daughter **Sarah** turned 21 or married, his son should pay his sister Sarah £5 (in 2013 worth £748.80) clear of all taxes and deductions by half-yearly payments until her legacy of £200 became due.

To his wife **Sarah** and his son **Elisha(4)**, **Elisha(3)** left all his stock and utensils in trade to be divided equally between them. That suggests he expected both his wife and his young son to be managing independently some of the businesses he had run, after his death.

Like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, **Elisha(3)** left all his goods, chattels, cattle and personal estate to his wife, whom he made the full and sole Executrix of his Will.

To the two overseers of his 1732 Will, **John Booth The Elder of Waterend** and **Daniel Shipton the Younger of Cowley, Elisha(3)** gave each a guinea (its 2013 purchasing power £157. 20) *for them to buy Memorial Rings*. (Such rings may have just become fashionable in England then among the wealthier classes. (**James Holt**, (born 1759, a London Innkeeper and carrier who died a bachelor, in his 1827 Will left money to many family members; and gave £100 each to his two executors for their trouble as trustees and executors, as well as *a Mourning Ring* to each.)

According to a copy of his memorial in St Mary's Church<sup>42</sup>, **Elisha(3)** Deacon died on March 17<sup>th</sup> 1735, in the 62<sup>nd</sup> year of his life.

Another copy of a memorial in St Mary's Church, reads: *To the memory of Sarah Deacon of Cornerhall, wife of Elisha Deacon who departed this life in 1746 aged....* (her age missing when this was transcribed). If born in 1685 and married at age 21 in 1706, Sarah would have been aged about 61 when she died in 1746. If they were **Quakers** or **Baptists**, Sarah and her husband would still have to be buried at St Mary's Church because those religious groups did not have the right to bury people at their own meeting places at this time. (St Mary's Church had a *Friends area* once where Quakers were buried).

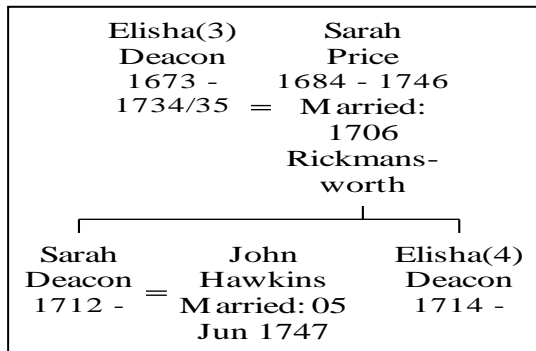
In 1746, **Elisha(4)** took out Letters of Administration<sup>43</sup> on behalf of the estate of his mother **Sarah**, who died without making a Will. They said: *all that was due to Mrs Sarah Deacon at the time of her death was but 6 pounds and 50 shillings*. (In 2013, that amount had purchasing power of £1,154). The marriage by licence of the widow **Sarah Deacon** *née Price's* daughter **Sarah Deacon** to **John Hawkins** was registered at St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead, on 5 June 1747. By that time, Sarah, aged 35 (if born in 1712) would have received her monetary inheritance from her brother, due to her 6 months after the death of her mother.

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<sup>42</sup> Copies of memorials obtained from the NZ Society of Genealogists.

<sup>43</sup> Letters of Administration 1747 of Sarah Deacon's Estate H23 694, Hertford Record Office, Herts.

### No 4 Deacon Tree: Family of Elisha(3) and Sarah *née* Price.



The next chapter is about the four wives and nine surviving children of **Elisha(4) Deacon (1714 - 1805)** of Cornerhall.



(23) On left: Nos 10 & 9 Cornerhall, built in 1600's;  
On right: No. 50 Lawn Lane, built in 1700's. (BHH 1992).

## 5: ELISHA(4) GENT AND FARMER, about 1714 - 1805

**Elisha(4)**, born about 1714, only son of **Elisha(3)** and **Sarah Deacon née Price**, seems to have married, on 31 December 1732, **Elizabeth Clark** of Codicote (also known as Caldecote), in Hertfordshire. This is a very small place about 13 miles north-east of Hemel Hempstead, near the Bedfordshire border, described on the web now as *a deserted medieval village*. The marriage took place there at St Mary Magdalene's Church, which began to be built in the 1300's, and which, in 1968, was made a Grade 2 listed Heritage Building<sup>44</sup>. Its surviving register which starts in 1726 shows **Elisha(4)** married there aged 19 in 1732.<sup>45</sup>

1732 was also the year in which **Elisha(4)**'s father, **Elisha(3)**, made his Will, so the two events are probably connected. (Some men appear to have married in the past when they could demonstrate to a bride's parents what they would inherit from their father). **Elisha(4)** and his first wife, **Elizabeth née Clark** had a son they named **Elisha**, baptised at St Paul's Walden, near Codicote, on 23 March 1734.

However, it seems both **Elisha(4)**'s first wife **Elizabeth** and their son named **Elisha** must have died young because **Elisha(4)** married a second time, at Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, on 9 June 1743. His bride then was

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<sup>44</sup> The website <https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki> has a photo of this church.

<sup>45</sup> Elisha(3)'s first marriage and first child's baptism found in the Historical Records part of the Mormon website: [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). His first wife and child's burials have not been found.

**Elizabeth Theed**<sup>46</sup>. If born in 1714, **Elisha(4)** would have been aged 29 at the time of his second marriage in 1743.

Eleven children were born to **Elisha(4)** and his second wife, **Elizabeth Deacon** *née Theed*, between 1743 and 1767, but not all these children were baptised at St Mary's Church. Probably their parents at times attended a Baptist Church or another early church for Dissenters whose records for that time no longer exist. A 1908 History of Hertfordshire, already quoted from in the previous chapter, says: *A new meeting house was erected in 1731 for Baptists who formerly used to meet at Marlowes. A house at Two Waters was registered for Dissenters in 1736....*



(24) Copy of watercolour painting of old part of High St, Hemel Hempstead, by Peter Wagon

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<sup>46</sup> Both Marilyn Scott and Professor Alan Atkinson found details of Elisha(4)'s marriage to Elizabeth Theed. Alan thought many of the Theed family members were probably **Baptists**.

Only five of the eleven children of this couple survived infancy. They were: **Elizabeth**, their eldest, born 1744-45; their second child called **Mary** born about 1746; **Elisha(5)** baptised on 27 October 1747 at St Mary's Church; their second child called **Catherine** baptised February 1758 at St Mary's Church; and **Rebecca**, born 1759.

All that is known about the six children of **Elisha(4)** and **Elizabeth Deacon** *née Theed* who died young are their names and / or their dates of baptism and / or burial at St Mary's Church. They were: an un-named infant buried on 2 June 1749; **Mary Deacon** buried on 21 January 1752; a **Catherine Theed Deacon**, baptised on 21 July and buried on 23 July 1754; **Thomas Theed Deacon** baptised on 17 June 1757 and buried on 13 April 1758; another **Thomas** buried on 17 June 1760; and a child **Sarah** buried on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1767. (These six children's names are not included in the index to this booklet,)

Professor Alan Atkinson of Sydney, Australia, is a descendant of **Catherine Deacon**, baptised 1758, one of the four surviving sisters of **Elisha(5) Deacon**. Alan told the author his ancestor, **Catherine**, was married at Mentmore, Bedfordshire on 15 or 16 October 1782 at the age of 24, to **Thomas Paten**, who was from an Aylesbury family. They were the grandparents of **Eliza Paten** who married Alan's great-grandfather **John Pritchard Atkinson**, a London printer. **Eliza Atkinson** *née Paten* migrated to Australia in 1855, with her husband John and their small children.

Alan gave the author information about the Theed family which he had gleaned from two Theed Wills. One of these was the Will of Elizabeth Deacon's mother, **Mary Theed**, made in 1767, the year her married daughter **Elizabeth** died

(probably in childbirth as, her last child, **Sarah Deacon**, died that year).

In her Will, **Mary Theed** showed she had probably lived most of her life at Mentmore, a civil parish in the area of Aylesbury, Bedfordshire. In it, she described herself as *late of Mentmore* and said she wanted to be buried there. Alan discovered there were many Theeds in and around Mentmore and the head of the Theed family had once owned a little manor house at Ledburn there.

However, **Mary Theed** ended up living with or near the Deacons of Hemel Hempstead and leaving everything she owned to her five surviving Deacon grandchildren. They were all minors at the time she made her Will in 1767, the year her married daughter, who was possibly her only child, **Elizabeth Deacon** *née Theed*, died.

Alan told the author Mary's chief beneficiary was her eldest granddaughter, **Elizabeth Deacon**; and that the money Mary Theed left to her five Deacon grandchildren was entrusted to **Theed Pearce**, a Mentmore relation and prosperous lawyer. His son, also named **Theed Pearce**, was a distinguished international expert on birds.

A second Theed Will Alan Atkinson found was that of **Edward Theed** of Berrystead, Mentmore, signed on 28 July 1769 and proved on 3 July 1770. Alan thought Edward seemed likely to have been a great-uncle of the Deacon children because he left his land to his: *kinswoman Joyce Topping and £10 (its purchasing power in 2013 £1, 211) to Elisha(5) Deacon, my kinsman, son of Elisha(4) Deacon and Elizabeth his wife which was Elizabeth Theed.*



Edward Theed's Will said that if Joyce Topping (aged 19 when she stood to inherit his land at age 21) did not pay the £10 to **Elisha(5)**, the latter was to get his entire estate. **Elisha(5)** was aged about 23 in 1769. That was the year his father **Elisha(4)** married for a third time which may be why Edward Theed decided to leave some money to his young Deacon relative, **Elisha (5)**.

**Land Tax Records** for Hertfordshire for the years 1746 to 1830<sup>47</sup>. list owners and occupiers of land. They show **Elisha(4)** Deacon drew some of his independent means, allowing him to call himself Gentleman, from the houses and land his family owned and let, as well as from the profits of the Deacon family's tanning business.

In May 1746, his mother **Sarah** *née Price* was shown as owner of Path Field, as well as a mead or meadow held by **Thomas Field** of Cornerhall. She was also the owner of Pheseye (another spelling of *Feacey*); and of a house at Two Waters. After the death of his mother **Sarah** in July 1746, **Elisha(4)** is shown in 1753 as owner of these properties and of another, described as *Newman and Landlord*, probably a public house.

In 1757, in the reign of King George II, because of increasing commitments to overseas wars, the English Parliament passed an Act for the better ordering of the militia services. From Anglo-Saxon times, the various shires had been responsible for providing men and arms to defend England from attack. Those forces had been raised

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<sup>47</sup> Land Tax Records for Hertfordshire, available for the period 1715-1830, on LDS Film No 0579280.

as and when necessary. Under the new Act, Hertfordshire had to raise 560 men. From 1757 to 1761, men aged 18 to 50 were called up and liable to serve as militiamen; and after 1762, those aged 18 to 45.

As a result of this legislation, every year between 1759 and 1764, **Elisha(4)**, described as *Gentleman* and one year as *Farmer*, was listed as eligible to serve in the militia at *Hempstead Town*. (As he was no longer eligible to go into the ballot in 1764 when he turned 51, these records indicate Elisha(4) was probably born in about 1714).

It is likely he did not actually serve at all. The men were chosen by ballot to serve for three years but there were exemptions of various kinds. Those whose names were drawn could provide a substitute or pay £10 for one. **Elisha(4)** may have taken the latter course, as he is described as Gent in the Militia Lists<sup>48</sup>.

On 9 January 1769, at age 55, after being widowed for a second time in June 1767, **Elisha(4)** married **Hannah Capon**, a spinster, by licence at St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead. The bride Hannah was either 22 or 28 years old (the writing on film of the register unclear). They had five children whom they named **William**, **Anna**, **Thomas**, **Hannah** and **John**, the last two twins. However, **William** and **John** seem to have been the only children of **Elisha(4)** and **Hannah** who survived to adulthood. Hannah died on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1787 when she was possibly in her forties or fifties.

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<sup>48</sup> Militia Lists, Hertfordshire, pub. by Hertfordshire Family and Population History Society, January 1987.

A descendant of this third marriage of **Elisha(4)** is Nicholas Holmes of Cardiff, Wales, born 1 December 1947<sup>49</sup>. He told the author his maternal great-grandmother was **Mary Ann Deacon**, a grandchild of **Elisha(4)** and **Hannah née Capon** by their son, **William** born 1771 and his wife, **Rebecca née Nash**.

Nicholas also told the author his branch of the Deacon family lived mainly in St Albans (where the Deacons owned a tannery in the 1800's). St Albans is today Hertfordshire's only city, situated between Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield. A 90-year-old aunt of Nicholas's mother vividly recalled visiting her Deacon relations in Hemel Hempstead because of the terrible smell of the acid used there in tanning hides to make leather. She also remembered the Deacons ran a place where people could buy port at a small wharf between Two Waters and Marlowes.

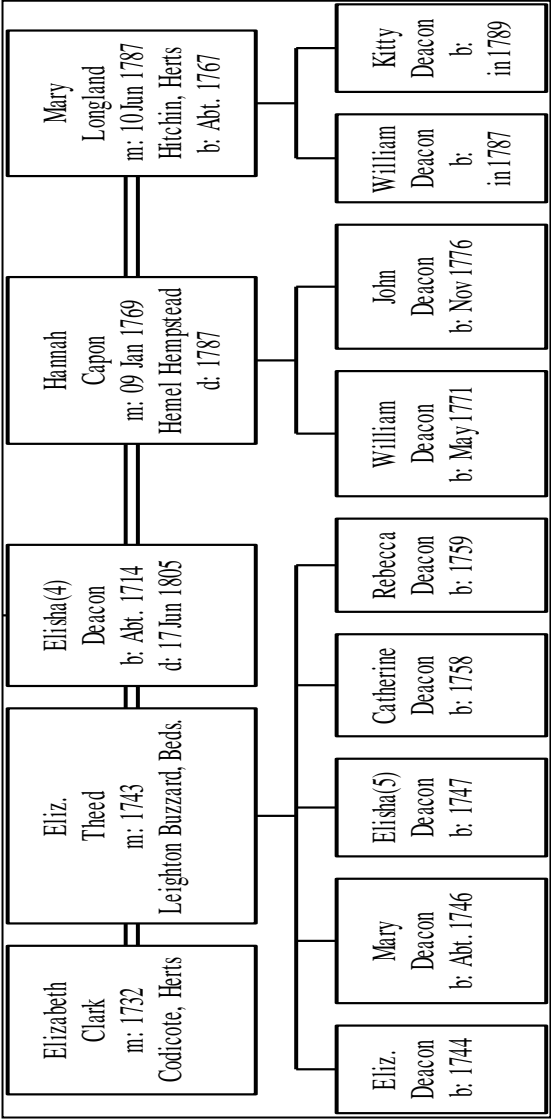
Soon after the death of **Hannah, Elisha(4)**, when aged about 73, married a fourth time on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1787, his bride being **Mary Longland** of Hitchin. It is an old market town in the north of the county, 19 miles / 31 km from Hemel Hempstead. Two children were born to **Elisha(4)** and **Mary nee Longland** at Hitchin: **William**, baptised 26 December 1787 and **Kitty**, in 1789. **Elisha(4)** was buried on 13 June 1805, his age recorded as 82. However, he was probably aged about 91 years then.

No Will has been found for **Elisha(4)** Deacon, probably because he gave all that he owned to his nine children and his last wife before he died.

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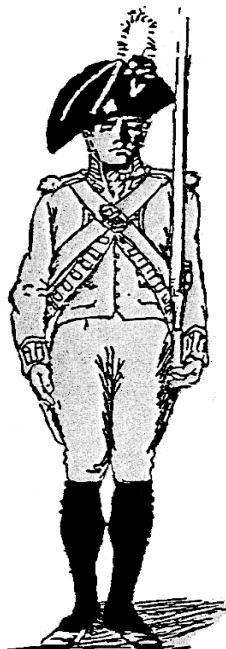
<sup>49</sup> Nicholas Holmes advertised his interest in the Deacons of Hemel Hempstead in the UK's 1987 Genealogical Research Directory.

No 5 Deacon Tree: Wives & 9 Children of Elisha(4).<sup>50</sup>



<sup>50</sup> Only Elisha(4)'s nine children who survived infancy are shown here and in the Index..

## 6: ELISHA(5) TANNER, MILITIA MAN & FARMER 1747- abt 1812



(25) Militia Man

**Elisha(5)**, the only surviving son of **Elisha(4)** and **Elizabeth** *née Theed*, appears to have been baptised twice - on 27 October 1747 at St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead and, in 1783 aged 40, in an adult baptism at the same Church, two years before his marriage. That suggests he was or had been raised as a Baptist as they believe in adult baptisms.

As tanner of Cornerhall, and once living at High St Side, he was listed as eligible for service in the Herts Militia in the years 1772 - 1782 when he was aged 25 - 35 and did serve from 1778 to 1782.

There were five other Deacon men in Hemel Hempstead eligible for militia service at this time, probably quite close relations of **Elisha(5)**. They were **James** and **Joshua**, labourers of Crouchfield; **John**, a butcher and paper maker of Two Waters and Crouchfield; and **William**, a servant (possibly farm or tannery labourer) of Cornerhall and High St Side, as well as **William**, a butcher and labourer of Crouchfield and Burymill End. Butchery and tanning were closely associated trades, of course.

On 30 May 1785, when he was probably about 37 years old, **Elisha(5)** married **Ann Proctor** ( then aged about 20 years), at St Mary's Church. A witness was his 26-year-old sister, **Rebecca Deacon**. In 1729, the burial of a **Dr Henry Proctor** was registered in Hemel Hempstead. Probably he was a relation of Ann because the Proctors were a local family. The word *proctor* means a lawyer in a civil or church court or an official in a university who sees that good order is kept. Like the name Deacon, it might have been a nickname originally given to someone who took law and order very seriously or may have described work done.

Between 1785 - 1796, **Elisha(5)** and **Anna Deacon née Proctor** had five children: four sons and one daughter, baptised as follows: **Thomas Elisha(1)** in March 1786; **Joseph** in July 1788, **William** in December 1789, **James** whose birth date is not known, and **Sarah** in March 1796. (Because he died when he was 3 years old, James is not shown on the Tree at the end of this chapter).

By 1780, much of the manorial copyhold land once held by the Deacons was sold because of the continuing trend towards the enclosure of land, previously farmed in strips by different families. This movement was occurring in most parts of England at the time.

In 1780, **Sam Howie**, from a local farming family, owned nine properties. The names of some of his properties - *late Deaconsfield*, *late Deacons house*, *lande and meadow*, *late Fields* etc show who were the former copyholders of it.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Land Tax Records, Herts.

Land tax records show **Elisha(5)** in 1785 owned No 6 Cornerhall. (This is not one of the five listed Cornerhall Heritage buildings which Charles Farrow found, unless its number has been changed, which is quite possible). Elisha(5) was also shown as joint owner with a Thomas Squire of a place called *The Cupid*, probably a public house on Cupid's Green. Both **Elisha(4)** and **Elisha(5)** are shown at different times owning land or property once occupied by **Isaac Shipton**, known as his meadows or as *Mrs Shipton's two meadows*, as well as occupying some of their own property and letting some of it to others.



(27) Sign for Deaconsfield Rd, a street not far from Cornerhall, in present day Hemel Hempstead (BHH 1992)

Hertfordshire Land Tax records (which exist from 1780) refer to **Elisha(5)** as *Elisha Deacon Junior* every year up to and including 1788. That means that although **Elisha(4)** did not die until 1805, he retired from working his land at the end of 1788, when he was about 74 (if born in 1714). After that, he probably lived with his fourth wife, **Mary**

**Longland**, and their children in Hitchen, where they had married in 1787.

After 1788, **Elisha(5)**'s name appears in the Land Tax registers without the word *Junior* every year until 1811 when he was about 64 years old. That means the reference to *Elisha Deacon, tanner*, in the Freeholder's Book of 1800, refers to **Elisha(5)**. The relevant Land Tax records of 1812 - 1825 and Bishops Transcripts of parish registers of Hemel Hempstead 1813 - 1829 are missing; and no Will of **Elisha(5)** has been found which might have explained his land ownership more clearly. If a person owned land in more than one county at this time, their Will was kept in records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC), held in the Public Record Office, London. That may explain why Wills of **Elisha(4)** and **Elisha(5) Deacon** are not held in Hertford Record Office.<sup>52</sup>

**Elisha(5)** may have retired or died in about 1828 when he was aged 81. In 1829, the name of his eldest son, **Thomas Elisha(1) Deacon**, born 1786, is shown on Land Tax records for the first time, when he was aged 43. T.E. was the eldest of the three sons who survived to adulthood of **Elisha(5)** and **Anna Deacon**, and therefore he probably inherited most of the land his parents had owned, as well as their tanneries. (The next chapter reveals his two younger brothers, **Joseph** born 1788 and **William** born 1789, led somewhat different lives from their older brother).

**Elisha(5)** and his wife **Anna née Proctor** may have named their fifth child, their only daughter, **Sarah**, born 1796, after Elisha (5)'s sister **Sarah** who died as an infant in 1767, the year his mother, **Elizabeth née Theed**, also died. It is

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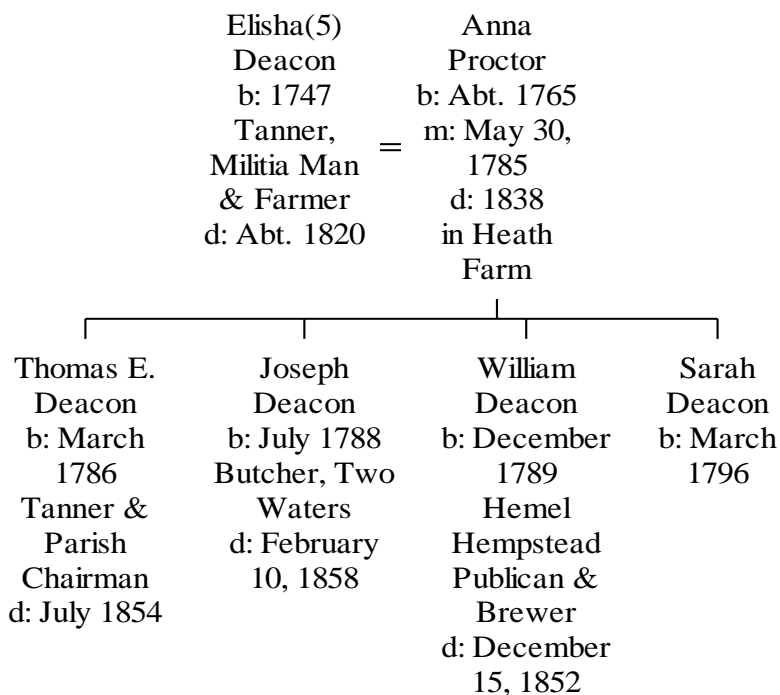
<sup>52</sup> The author did not look at the PRO, London for their Wills.



not known whether **Elisha(5)** and **Anna née Proctor's** daughter **Sarah** also died young. Their son, **William**, perhaps named his eldest daughter, the author's paternal great-grandmother **Sarah**, born 1822, who lived until 1901, after his sister, **Sarah**, born 1796, as nothing other than her baptism has been found about her.

**Elisha(5)**'s much younger wife **Anna Deacon née Proctor**, died in 1838 aged 73 at Heath Farm, 2 to 3 miles west of St Mary's Church.

**No 5 Deacon Tree: Family of Elisha(5) & Anna Deacon née Proctor**



## 7: WILLIAM, PUBLICAN AND BREWER 1789 – 1852

**William**, the third son of **Elisha(5)** and **Anna Deacon** née Proctor, was baptised on 3 December 1789 at St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead. He married **Elizabeth Allen** in Sheffield Cathedral, Yorkshire in 1818 by banns, at age 29, his bride being seven years older than he was<sup>53</sup>.

The couple were entered as widow and widower on the register. This may have been an error made by a clerk as no evidence of previous marriages for either of them has been found. It seems likely that William met Elizabeth in Sheffield after moving there for work experience. Witnesses at their wedding were Johnathan and Lyndonia Woodward and Joseph Hudson, which suggests the bride's parents may have died by then.

**Elizabeth** and **William Deacon** had five children, born between June 1819 and July 1828 in Hemel Hempstead. They named them: **Elisha**, **Sarah**, **Jane**, **Maria** and **William**. Four of them are known to have survived to adulthood, **Jane** being the one about whom nothing has been found. (For their years of birth see Tree on page 82).

In 1821 the population of Hemel Hempstead was 3,962, but by 1831 it had increased to 6,037. Between 1823 and 1839, **William Deacon**, aged 34 - 50, husband of **Elizabeth** and

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<sup>53</sup>Sheffield St Peter's marriage register seen on LDS film.. No first marriage has been found for either the bride or groom. Eliz. Allen, baptised in March 1782 at Sheffield Cathedral, a child of **Joseph** and **Sarah Allen**, seems to be the one who married William Deacon in 1818.

father of five children, was keeper of the *Rose and Crown*, a public house in the High St, Hemel Hempstead.



**(27) Rose & Crown Public House, Hemel Hempstead, 1990's.**

This inn brewed its own beer on the premises. Historically, there were over 20 inns and beer houses in the High St, Hemel Hempstead, who brewed their own beer or obtained it from small local breweries, like *The Anchor Brewery*. That brewery's ownership changed many times. In 1851, when William was no longer keeper of the *Rose and Crown*, the owner of the *Anchor Brewery* was William's older brother, **Thomas Elisha(1) Deacon**.<sup>54</sup>

In 1826, **Thomas Elisha Deacon**, then aged 40, was first elected Chairman of the Parish of Hemel Hempstead, a position equivalent to that of Mayor today. At this time, the

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<sup>54</sup> Dr Alan Whitaker, *Brewers in Hertfordshire, A Historical Gazetteer*, pub. by Univ. of Hertford Press 2006, held in NZSG Library, Akld, NZ.

Parish Council was responsible for collecting rates and spending them for the benefit of the townspeople on such things as a workhouse for the very poor to live and work in. In 1826, the year his eldest brother became the Parish Chairman, **William Deacon**, at age 37, became the part-time Vestry Clerk for the Parish; and in 1832, when he was 43, he became a part-time Parish Overseer, his job being to supervise the collection of the rates and to ensure they were spent correctly.<sup>55</sup>

**William Deacon's** other older brother, **Joseph**, born 18 months before him, was also a part-time Parish Overseer, while being a butcher (an occupation with a close link to tanneries), at Picot's End in 1832, and at Two Waters, near Cornerhall, in 1839<sup>56</sup>. Also in 1832, a company called *Deacon and Harrison* existed in Hemel Hempstead, which either **Thomas Elisha(1)**, or **Joseph** or **William** or possibly all three brothers were part-owners of. It advertised the service of conveyance by water from Boxmoor, Crouchfield, Frogmore End, and from independent wharves in Hemel Hempstead, to London, Birmingham etc.

In 1839, aged 50, **William Deacon** left his position at the *Rose and Crown* and became keeper of an Inn called *The King's Arms* in the High Street, Hemel Hempstead. It was the commercial, excise office and parcel agent for the Railway Company and offered carriages for hire. According to Pigot and Co's directory, along with *The Bell*, *The King's Arms* was a particularly well-regulated establishment.

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<sup>55</sup> Parish Minutes of Hemel Hempstead 1819-1885 on LDS film .

<sup>56</sup> Kelly's Directories, 1850, 1860, 1870 and Post Office Directory 1874.

At this time, Hemel Hempstead was described in a directory as a populous and thriving market town, 24 miles northwest of London, consisting principally of the High Street, nearly a mile in length.



**(28) The old part of High St, Hemel Hempstead  
(1992 Postcard)**

Situated on the declivity of a hill, near the small rivers of Gade and Bourn, it was about a mile from the Grand Junction Canal and a mile and a half from the London and Birmingham Railway. Its leading manufacture was paper, with the straw plait industry also being important employing females and children in their homes making hats, boaters etc from wheat straw. There were also several corn mills in the area.<sup>57</sup>

**William** and **Elizabeth** *née Allen*'s eldest son, **Elisha**, baptised 1819, married **Marianne** (her maiden name

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<sup>57</sup> Pigot and Co's Directories of Hertfordshire for 1823-24, 1826-27, 1832, and 1839.

unknown) at Hemel Hempstead. They had a daughter, **Jane Emma**, baptised there on 20 October 1848. Nothing else certain has been found out about that family. They may have moved to London. An **Elisha Deacon** is found in the 1841 and 1851 Censuses as a barman there. His year of birth is given on both Censuses as 1829, not 1819 but people at this time often put wrong ages on Censuses, for work and other reasons.

By 1851, railway companies had taken away much of the parcel and travel agency business once conducted by inns. The March 1851 Census shows that by that time, **William Deacon Snr**, had left his job as an inn-keeper. His previous connection with inns and the parcel business, however, explains how his eldest daughter, **Sarah**, came to meet and marry **James Holt**.



(29) **Sarah Holt** *née Deacon* aged 70<sup>58</sup>

James was baptised in Islington, Middlesex on 30 January, 1832. He worked from a young age as a clerk for a prominent coach and railways travel agency named Chaplins where his father also worked. His Holt uncle, grandfather and other relatives had been inn-keepers, some of whom shipped goods by carriage and canal boat between Cheshire and London, before railways took over that business.

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<sup>58</sup> The only close-up photo of Sarah Holt, sent to her son in NZ in 1892.

On the March 1851 Census of Hemel Hempstead, **William Deacon**, baptised December 1789, gave his age as 61 years and his occupation as Brewer Master, employing two men at Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead. In his home were **Elizabeth**, his wife, baptised 1782, who gave her age as 67 years; their unmarried daughter, **Sarah**, baptised March 1821, who gave her age as 28 years; an unmarried Railway Agent's Clerk, **James Holt**, who gave his age as 29; and Daniel Cooper, a servant, born St Albans, aged 21.

The marriage of **Sarah Deacon** and **James Holt** took place on 18 October 1851, with **Maria Capitaine** (probably Sarah's younger married sister) as a witness.<sup>59</sup> She seems likely to be the Maria Capitaine found on the 1861 Census at Edmonton, Middlesex, shown as born in Hertfordshire, with a daughter **Maria**, born 1855 in Middlesex.



(30) St John's Church, Boxmoor (BHH, 1992).

**William Deacon**, younger than his brother **Thomas Elisha** by nearly 4 years and younger than his brother **Joseph** by 18 months, died before both of them on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1852,

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<sup>59</sup> Certificate of Marriage of James Holt & Sarah Deacon, Oct 18, 1851.

aged 63, from *diseased brain hemiplegia: a few days* ( a stroke).<sup>60</sup> Both he and later his widow, **Elizabeth**, were buried at **St John's Church, Boxmoor**. It was built as a chapel – of - ease to St Mary's Church and opened in 1830, becoming a separate parish in 1844. (The present church on the site was built between 1865 and 1874 but William and Elizabeth Deacon's older gravestone was still legible there in 1992, placed with others against a fence).

**William Deacon Snr** died without making a Will and so it is not known what financial assets he had at the time. In January 1853, Letters of Administration regarding his estate were taken out by the youngest brother of **Sarah Holt née Deacon**, **William Deacon, Jnr**, baptised on 24 July 1828.<sup>61</sup>

In May 1857, **Sarah née Deacon** and **James Holt** moved from Holloway Road, London - where their first three children were born:- **Thomas Franz Holt**, in May 1853, **Ellen Maria Annie Holt**, in August 1854, and **James Deacon Holt** in December 1855 - to live in Hemel Hempstead. The move was obviously made so that they could live near or with Sarah's widowed mother, **Elizabeth Deacon**, then aged 75.

The last four of the Holt children of **Sarah née Deacon** and **James Holt** were born in Hemel Hempstead: **Winifred Sarah** at Boxmoor in May 1857; **Marion Frances** in The Cotterells in December 1858; **Horace William** in Marlowes

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<sup>60</sup> Death certificates for William Deacon in Dec Quarter 1852 Vol 6a Page 184 and for Elizabeth Deacon June quarter 1859 Vol 3a Page 193. in Registration District of Hemel Hempstead. Memorial inscriptions No 41 (held by NZ Genealogical Service Library).

<sup>61</sup> Letters of Administration for Wm Deacon's Estate, Jan 1853, PCC, page No 262, on film at Family History Centre, London.



in February 1861; and **Edith Mary** ( who died young) in Marlowes in 1863<sup>62</sup>.



(31) The Cottterells, Hemel Hempstead (BHH, 1992).

**Elizabeth Deacon** *née Allen* died in a house (which one not known) in Marlowes on 10th June 1859. Her age was given on her death certificate as 77 years which confirms she was the one baptised in March 1782 in Sheffield). The cause of her death given was *bronchitis and decay: several months*.



(32) A house in Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, (BHH, 1992).

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<sup>62</sup> These names and dates of birth taken from Holt Family Trees produced by James Holt (1822-1887) and his children..

After the death of Elizabeth Deacon in 1859, **Sarah** and **James Holt** stayed on in Hemel Hempstead for at least several years. They are found there on the 1861 Census and their last child was born there in 1863. They are only known to have returned to live in Hackney, London by 1867. By that time their eldest son, **Thomas Franz Holt** ( who must have remembered living as a child in Hemel Hempstead since he talked to his New Zealand family about it) was aged 14.

In 1992, **James Laurence Holt** of Warwickshire, showed the author a book which had belonged to his grandfather, Horace William Holt who was Thomas Franz's youngest brother. The inscription in it showed it was given to Horace by his mother's brother, **William Deacon Jnr**, who was probably his godfather. This William Deacon appears on the 1881 Census of England as a Stock Exchange Clerk, aged 52, living in Lambeth, London, with a daughter, Mary E. Deacon, a music teacher.

William Deacon Snr's older brother, **Joseph(1)**, died on 10 February 1858 aged 70. His son, **Joseph(2)**, born 1806, was a general and marine store dealer at Boxmoor in 1850, and died in 1853, aged 47. The latter's son, **Joseph(3)**, born 1830, was a corn dealer and, in 1861, a marine store dealer at Marlowes.



(33) Marlowes Shopping Centre, (BHH, 1992)

In 1897, a **George Joseph Deacon**, possibly a son of **Joseph(3)** was a rag merchant at Marlowes and a furniture remover at 11 Edmonds Place. No other Deacons were in business in Hemel Hempstead at that time<sup>63</sup>.

**William** and **Joseph(1) Deacon's** elder brother, **Thomas Elisha Deacon**, owned and operated Tanneries at Cornerhall and at St Michaels in St Albans for 31 years between 1823 and 1854. His first child, baptised on 22 March 1821, the year after his parents married, was **Thomas Elisha(2) Deacon**. His mother, **Mary Ruth Deacon** (her maiden name unknown), was born outside Hertfordshire. **Thomas Elisha(1)** was 34 years old and Mary Ruth, 29, when they married. As well as their eldest child, **Thomas Elisha(2)**, they had four other children named **Samuel** baptised in 1822, **Ann** in 1824, **Sarah** in 1826 and **Elisha** in 1833.

On the 1841 Census, **Thomas Elisha(2) Deacon**, aged 20, his occupation Tanner, and his sister, **Sarah**, aged 15, were living with their parents at Cornerhall. The youngest son, **Elisha**, aged 8, was at a small school which had 10 pupils in Marlowes Road<sup>64</sup>. On the 1851 Census, **Thomas Elisha(2) Deacon** was aged 30, an unmarried head of household and Tanner employing 10 men, with an unmarried housekeeper, aged 54, and a manservant, aged 21.

His brother, **Samuel**, was a Brewer, employing 7 male employees at Bury Mill End Breweries, living with his sister **Ann**, aged 27, unmarried, a housekeeper, his brother,

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<sup>63</sup> This is according to an 1897 Ordnance Survey map which includes business owners' names.

<sup>64</sup> Censuses of Hemel Hempstead 1841 and 1851 now on-line.

**Elisha**, 18, unmarried, a clerk, and a female house-servant, aged 20.

By August 1851, after his younger brother, **Samuel**, had died at age 29, **Thomas Elisha(2)** took over his brewery business, being listed in *Pigot's 1850 Directory* as a *Brewer, Malster and Tanner* at Bury Mill End and at Corner Hall. **Thomas Elisha(1) Deacon**, Parish Chairman for many years, while also running Tanneries in both Hemel Hempstead and St Albans, died in July 1855, aged 69 years. His Will of 1854 gave his wife a life interest in the property at Cornerhall and his son, **Thomas Elisha(2)**, the tanneries (which his ancestor, **Thomas Deacon**, acquired in 1595).

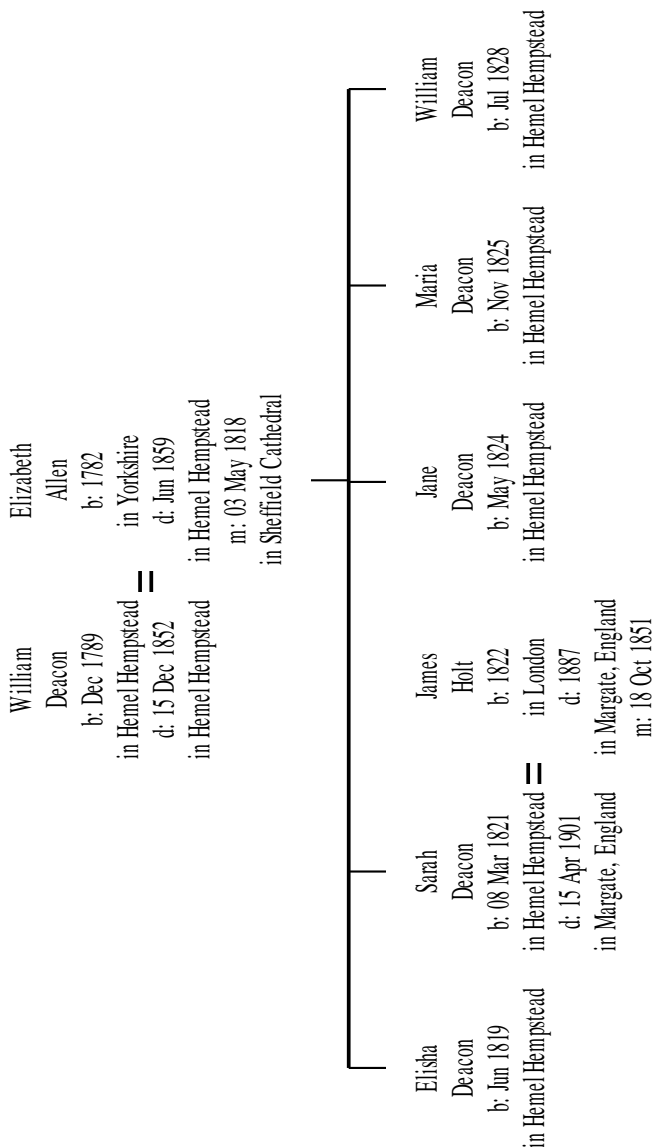
*The London Illustrated News* of February 1858<sup>65</sup> carried a notice that *T.E. Deacon, Tanner of Hemel Hempstead*, was declared bankrupt. This may have referred to **Thomas Elisha(1)**, or to his son. In Kelly's Directory of 1860 there were no Deacons mentioned as Brewers, Malsters or Tanners in Hemel Hempstead. A long period of prosperity and stability for this Deacon family had come to an end.



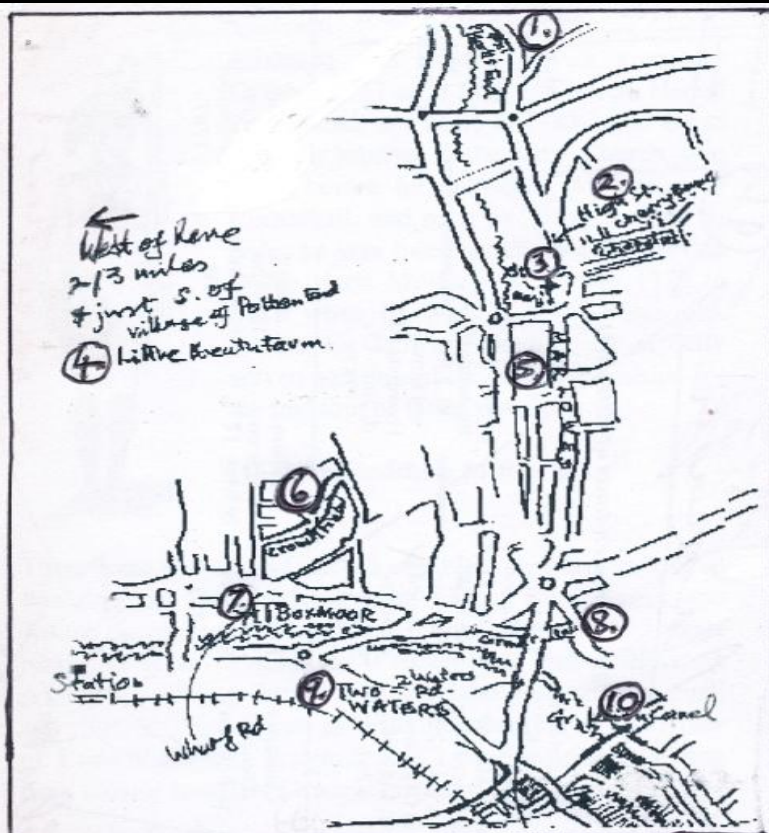
### (34) Steep part of High St, Hemel Hempstead, (BHH, 1992)

<sup>65</sup> *London Illustrated News* Feb 1858 Vol 32 No 902 quoted in Obituaries Index held at Hertford Record Office.

## No. 6 Deacon Tree: Family of Wm & Elizabeth née Allen



**(35) Sketch of Hemel Hempstead by Sheila Pettman, showing places mentioned in this history**



Places shown (from north to south) are:

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Picotts End       | (6) Crouchfield        |
| 2) High St           | (7) Boxmoor            |
| 3) St Mary's Church  | (8) Cornerhall         |
| 4) Little Heath Farm | (9) Two Waters         |
| 5) Marlowes          | (10) Grand Union Canal |

## APPENDICES

### (1) Extract from *Kelly's Directory of 1850*:

*Hemel Hempstead, with the townships of Boxmoor and Two Waters, and the hamlets of Cornerhall and Crouchfield, is a market and union town with railway station on the river Gade, close to the Grand Junction Canal, the London and North Western Railway and the Aylesbury Road and two miles from the Railway Station at Boxmoor, about 25 miles from London. Well-lit with gas and partially paved, it had a population in 1841 of 7,268. On the Gade River are numerous paper mills, a brewery, iron foundry, tannery and lime kilns. A Town Hall was opened in 1852.*

### (2) *Extracts from History of Hemel Hempstead by members of the H.H. History and Museum Society, ed. by Susan Yaxley, 1973.*

*The leather industry was important locally, as is shown by the appointment of a leather searcher and sealer by the Manor Court: its product served many purposes, not only for footwear but for clothing, for farming purposes such as harnesses and in industry for such things as buckles, belts, buckets and bellows. It depended mainly on local supplies of hides and needed considerable supplies of water, hence the location of the local works on the River Gade.*

*A tanyard at Cornerhall was established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and acquired by the Deacons towards the end of that period. It remained in that family for many generations and was in use until recent years. Waste from this tannery was dumped*

*on Boxmoor affecting both the drainage and the fertility of the ground... Waste material from the tannery .... created some difficulty when the Heath Park recreation ground was laid out in the 1920's and the bandstand erected.....*

*There still remains at least one old building, The Gables (called in this history The Three Gables) which stands at the corner of Cornerhall Road (in 2015 called Lawn Lane) and the one-way street (called Cornerhall), at one time occupied by the Deacon family. The tannery lay on the south side of Cornerhall, abutting the one-way street which now (still in 2015) leads to Two Waters Road. ....*

*One industry which was important throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1800's) but has now completely disappeared was the tannery at Cornerhall..... At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was owned by Henry Balderson.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Map of Hertfordshire and surrounding counties
2. Photo of T.F. Holt as young man (Holt Family Archives)
3. 1924 Postcard of Hemel Hempstead from Hill Field Rd
4. 1924 Postcard of The Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
5. The author with Laurence W. Holt in High St (SBH, 1963)
6. Brass: Robert & Margaret Albyn in St Mary's (Rensten)
7. Plan of St Mary's Church (Church Publishers, Ramsgate)
8. A view of outside of St Mary's Church ( BHH, 1992)
9. Another view of St Mary's Church, ( BHH, 1992)
10. Inside St Mary's Church, (Church Pub. Ramsgate)
11. The spire of St Mary's Church (1992 Postcard)
12. Brass of Hughes Family at St Ippollitis (Rensten)
13. Text on Gravestone of T. Deacon bn 1609 (Cussans)
14. The Three Gables (Photo: C. Farrow & Towne Assoc.)
15. Brass of Pemberton daughters at St Albans (Rensten)

**List of Illustrations continued on next page:**



16. Brass of Rowley wife at Brent Pelham (Rensten) ..
17. Portrait of Oliver Cromwell (from website).....
18. No 9 & 10 Cornerhall ( C. Farrow & Towne Assoc.).
19. Reprint of Cover of the Book of Martyrs (from web)
20. View of Cornerhall (Photo: BHH, 1992).....
21. Copy of Part of Modern Map of Hemel Hempstead
22. Grand Union Canal at Hemel Hempstead (BHH, 1992)
23. Nos 10 & 11 and 50 Lawn lane, Cornerhall (BHH, 1992)
24. Water colour of High St, H.H. by Peter Wagon.
25. Drawing of Militia Man (Herts Family & Pop. Hist Soc.)
26. Deaconsfield Rd (Photo, BHH, 1992).....
27. 1992 Postcard of Rose & Crown, H.H. ....
28. 1992 Postcard Old High St, H.H.....
29. Photo of Sarah Holt née Deacon aged 70.....
30. St John's Church, Boxmoor (Photo, BHH, 1992).....
31. Cotterells, Hemel Hempstead.( “ “ “ ) .....
32. Old house in Marlowes, ( “ “ “ ).....
33. Marlowes Shopping Centre ( “ “ ”).....
34. Steep part of High St ( “ “ “ ).....
37. Sketch Map of Hemel Hempstead by Sheila Pettman ...

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# INDEX

**Note:** Wives (including Deacon- born women) are here under their single name, with a referral to their married name & page number.

Albyn, Robert & Margaret, 16  
 Allen, Eliz. see Deacon 71-78  
 Allen, Joseph and Sarah 71  
 Anchor Brewery, Herts 72  
 Anne. Queen 46  
 Aston, James.35  
 Atkinson, Alan 11, 12, 60, 61  
 Atkinson John Pritchard &  
 Eliza née Paten 60  
 Aylesbury, Bedfordshire 61

## B

Balderson, Henry 85  
 Baptists 45, 52,56, 59, 66  
 Barre, Robert & Eliz. 45  
 Barre, Mary & Eliz. 47  
 Bates, Joseph & Judith 50  
 Belgrave, Samuel & Eliz.41-5,  
 Belgrave, Mary & Eliz. 41, 47  
 Berkhamstead 20, 51  
 Besouth, John 24  
 Besouth, James & Ann 38, 40  
 Booth, John The Elder 55  
 Bourn River 74  
 Boxmoor 75, 77  
 Bovingdon 21, 25  
 Brent Pelham, Herts 33  
 Bury Mill End 66, 80  
 British Listed Buildings 31  
 Bunn, John & Mary 37-41

## C

Capitaine, Maria 76  
 Capon, Hannah see Deacon

Carey, John 52  
 Chadley, Richard Jnr 27  
 Civil War 25, 34, 36  
 Clark, Elizabeth see Deacon  
 Clifton, John 47  
 Codicote /Caldecote 58  
 Cooper, Daniel 76  
 Cotterels, The 77- 8  
 Cowley 55  
 Crouchfield 27 & 66  
 Cromwell, Oliver 34-35  
 Cupid's Green 68

Deacon, Anne b. 1600 23, 33  
 Deacon Ann see Besouth  
 Deacon, Ann née Proctor 67  
 Deacon Catherine see Paten  
 Deacon, Elisha(1) 23-34  
 Deacon, Elisha(2) 34-50  
 Deacon, Elisha(3) 49-52  
 Deacon, Elisha(4) 53-60  
 Deacon, Elisha (5) 60-70  
 Deacon, Eliz. b.1646 26  
 Deacon Eliz. b.1648 34, 38  
 Deacon, Eliz. née Allen 71-84  
 Deacon, Eliz. see Belgrave &  
 Barre  
 Deacon, Eliz. née Clark 53  
 Deacon, Eliz. née Hackny 44  
 Deacon, Eliz. née Theed 54  
 Deacon, George Joseph 79  
 Deacon, Hannah née Capon 64  
 Deacon, Joane b.1648 34, 38  
 Deacon, John b.1780's 64  
 Deacon, Joseph(1) b.1788 73-9

Deacon Joseph (2) 79  
 Deacon Joseph (3) 79  
 Deacon, Judith b, 1654 34, 39  
 Deacon, Judith b.1683 see  
 Bates  
 Deacon, Kitty b.1789 64  
 Deacon, Laurence 20  
 Deacon Maria b.1825 see  
 Capitaine  
 Deacon, Mary b.1631 see Bunn  
 Deacon, Mary b.1671 see  
 Smith  
 Deacon, Mary b.1746 54  
 Deacon, Mary née Hull 34, 40  
 Deacon, Mary née Longland 64  
 Deacon, Mary Ann, dau of Wm  
 & Rebecca née Nash 64  
 Deacon, Martha née Field 14-  
 23  
 Deacon, Martha b.1645 see  
 Green  
 Deacon, Phebe b.1597 see  
 Gould  
 Deacon, Phebe b.1639 34, 37  
 Deacon, Rebecca b. 1759 60,  
 69  
 Deacon, Roger b. 1560's 19,  
 21, 28  
 Deacon, Roger of Flamstead 30  
 Deacon, Roger b. 1677 45, 47  
 Deacon, Samuel b. 1822 80  
 Deacon, Sarah née Price 51-7  
 Deacon, Saray b. 1604 23  
 Deacon, Sarah b. 1637 34, 37  
 Deacon, Susannah b.1680 44-7  
 Deacon, Thos c.1565 14-33  
 Deacon, Thos b. 1602 23  
 Deacon, Thos b.1609 25, 26  
 Deacon, Thos b.1652 34, 39  
 Deacon, Thos Lieut-Col. 35  
 Deacon, Thos b. 1675 45, 47

Deacon, Thos E.(1) b.1786 67-  
 73, 80-81  
 Deacon, Thos E.(2) 80-81  
 Deacon Wm b. 1771 &  
 Rebecca née Nash 64  
 Deacon Wm b. 1787 65  
 Deacon, Wm b.1789 71-82  
 Deacon, Wm b.1828 79-82  
 Deaconsfield Road 51

## E

Eastcote 37  
 Elizabeth, Queen 21

## F

Farrow, Charles 10, 13, 14,  
 21, 23, 30  
 Field, Daniel 41  
 Field, John b. 1535 14, 20, 21  
 Fielde, Isaake 14  
 Fielde, Martha see Deacon  
 Field, Richard 14, 20, 21  
 Field, Thomas 62  
 Field, William 20  
 Flamstead 30  
 Foxe, John, author 12, 39  
 Fuller, historian 21

## G

Gables, The Three 49  
 Gade River 14, 49  
 Gage, John 30  
 Gladman, Margerie 21  
 Gladman see also Green  
 Gould, Professor 11  
 Gould family 12  
 Gould, John (b, 1635) 24  
 Gould, Phebe née Deacon 11,  
 14, 23, 36  
 Gould, Priscilla b. 1628 24

Gould, Maria & Martha 23  
 Gould, Zacheus 14, 23  
 Great Missenden, Bucks. 23-4  
 Green Wm & Martha 34- 41  
 Groves, Rebecca 19

## H

Hackny, Elizabeth see Deacon  
 Harrison, Deacon and 73  
 Hatfield 19  
 Hawkins, John & Sarah 56  
 Heath Farm 38  
 Henry The Eighth 19  
 Hitchen 20 and?  
 Holmes, Nicholas 9, 64  
 Holt Ellen Maria Annie 77  
 Holt, Frank Deacon 8  
 Holt, Horace James 6  
 Holt, Horace William 77  
 Holt, James 55  
 Holt James Deacon 8  
 Holt, James Laurence 77  
 Holt, Laurence Wm 6, 7  
 Holt, Sarah née Deacon 38-43  
 Holt, Thos Franz 6, 79  
 Howton, Miriam 10  
 Hughes, Alice 20  
 Hull, Mary see Deacon

## I

## J

Jarvis, William & Joane 38, 40  
 Jarvis, Martha & Mary 40, 41  
 Johnsen, Karen 13, 14

## K

Kendall (or Rendall) Geo. 35  
 King's Arms, The 73  
 Knight, Mary 41

## L

Land Tax 62,67-8  
 leather 14  
 Leyton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.  
 58  
 Lewis, Samuel 54  
 Longland, Mary see Deacon

## M

manorial land 37, 67  
 Manor Court Books 21-7  
 Marlowes 64  
 Meadows, Hannah & Anne 54  
 Mentmore, Beds. 60  
 Militia records 53, 63  
 Miller, Jennifer 9. 26  
 Mormon Church 10, 12  
 Munn, Joseph 25

## N

Nash, Rebecca see Deacon,  
 Mary Ann

## O

Oxford, University of 20, 25

## P

Parliamentary Govt 13  
 Paten, Thos & Catherine 60.  
 Paten, Eliza see Atkinson  
 Pearse, Theed 61  
 Pemberton family 32  
 Perkins, Phebe née Gould  
 23,24  
 Perkins, Thomas (b. 1622) 24  
 Pettman, Sheila 8  
 Picot's End 79  
 Presbyterians 46  
 Price, Sarah see Deacon

Proctor, Anna see Deacon  
Proctor, Dr Henry 67

## Q

Quakers 46, 52, 56

## R

Reynolds, Chris 13  
Rensten, Mary 9  
Restoration Govt 20  
Rickmansworth 51-2  
Robson, Matthew 19  
Rose & Crown 72  
Rowley, Mary or Anne 32

## S

Salem, Mass. USA 12, 24  
Sawell, Richard 30, 32  
Scott, Marilyn 10  
St Albans 16, 34, 64  
St Andrews' Day 29  
St John's, Boxmoor 77  
St Mary's Church 16-19  
St Pauls Walden 20  
Shipton, Daniel (The Elder) &  
Sarah 37-47  
Daniel Shipton ( Younger) 55  
Shipton, Isaac 68

Smith William & Mary née  
Deacon 45  
Squire, Thomas 68

## T

Taylor, Thomas, Rev. 24  
The Three Gables 30-31  
Theed, Edward 61  
Theed, Elizabeth see Deacon  
Theed, Mary d. 1767 60-61  
Topsfield, Mass. USA 24  
Towne Family Association 13  
Towne, Joseph & Phebe 14, 24  
Trinity College, Oxford 26  
Turner, Annis 19  
Two Waters 64, 79

## U

## V

## W

William of Orange & Mary 40  
Woodward, Johnathan 71  
Wright Thomas 54

**The End.**