

## ... from Princes Risborough to Sussex

The link that's now shown on the family tree between the Rippington families in Princes Risborough (Chilterns) and Sussex is new and somewhat circumstantial ... but there's a lot of corroborating evidence that seems to make this familial tie highly probable.

Let's start with what's known - a William Rippington married Dennes Browne on 27th April 1665 in West Hoathly, Sussex.

Dennes was baptised in West Hoathly on 10th November 1639, so it's a reasonable assumption that William was born during or shortly before 1639 - but there are no records of William's baptism in Sussex.

It had been thought that William came from London (as there's nearby evidence in Rudgwick, Sussex that a Richard Rippington had), but once again there are no records of William's baptism in London around this time ... the closest-by date is 1618.

What came as a breakthrough, to even consider the Chiltern-Sussex link, is finding settlement paper records for a William Rippington in the years between 1700 & 1706, who was moving from Deptford with his family to take up residence in Chiddingly.

Now obviously this is not the same William Rippington as above, but it had been thought that Chiddingly William was the son of West Hoathly William - this is where it gets interesting.

Why was Chiddingly William coming from Deptford? ... this on it's own doesn't make sense ... but if you consider Chiltern William's wider family then maybe it all becomes very obvious.

Chiltern William had two son's with an unknown wife just before the English Civil War erupted (1655 & 1660) - these were Edward & Joseph ... there is no marriage record or baptism records for these two sons; as the Princes Risborough parish records during and just after the war years either never existed or have been lost / destroyed.

[Happening between 1642 & 1651, the English Civil War was extremely disruptive, as was the great plague and great fire of London in 1665 & 1666 ... making this very unsettling times; so with this in mind the family upheavals listed below do make a lot of sense.]

Evidence for Edward comes from his marriage to Elizabeth Lee in West Wycombe in 1673 and the birth of his first son Thomas in Bradenham in 1675.

Evidence for Joseph comes from his marriage to Elianor Jonett in Princes Risborough in 1678 and also that he is the progenitor of all the subsequent Chiltern Rippington families.

What creates the tie-in between Sussex and the Chilterns is that it appears that Edward either lost or left his wife in West Wycombe and made the move to Deptford - there's a marriage record of an Edward Rippington to a Jeane Rose in London in 1684, and then there's records of births to an Edward of Richard, Rebecca, Sarah and Rachel in Deptford in 1687 & 1688.

[Note that there's also a marriage record of a Mrs Elizabeth Rippington in London in 1688 ... her age listed in the transcript makes her too young, but that of her new husband's age does fit with that of Elizabeth nee Lee ... so maybe her disparate age is just a transcription error(?).]

What produces the great tie-in between Deptford Edward and the Chilterns is details given in Edward's Will of June 21st 1708 in Deptford - where he lists his brother Joseph and his brother's son; Joseph ... Chiltern Joseph also had a son called Joseph.

And most interestingly it also details that Edward was a Blacksmith - which, as will become clear later, seems to be the strongest link between all these families.

Nephew Joseph also made the move to Deptford ... interestingly he made great use of what infamously became known as the 'Fleet Marriages' in London - marrying three different women, all named Elizabeth. This wasn't done bigamously though; as there are burial records for the first two. This was a time in London when Typhus and Scarlet Fever were rife; so it seems likely that Joseph sadly lost his first two wives in one of these ways.

Like his 'uncle Edward', Joseph was a blacksmith and became an extremely important figure in the Deptford Docks - working his way up from a mere Farrier, to a Foreman of the smiths and eventually becoming Master Smith when he made the move to Woolwich Docks in 1747.

This was just after he married his last Elizabeth, so maybe this was also a conscious decision to make a new start after the previous sadness in his marital years living in Deptford.

Joseph retired in 1759 and London Land Tax Records show him living in salubrious Royal Naval Pensioner accommodation in Tower Ward, central London until his death and subsequent burial in Woolwich in 1761.

This detailed description of Joseph's life seems a bit of a distraction from explaining the Chiltern-Sussex link, but it does highlight the very strong Blacksmith connection ... this becomes highly significant when referring to Chiddingly William's settlement papers in more detail - he was a Blacksmith ... and he came from Deptford.

So what's happened to his previous supposed link to West Hoathly? ... well the William who married Dennes did have a son called William who was baptised on 12th April 1673.

Also in West Hoathly is the burial of a William Rippington on 18th February 1673 ... now if this is William the Younger's father(?) then he died before he was born and he never knew him.

[There is one complication here - there's evidence for another William Rippington in West Hoathly at this time - who married Mary ... who this is, is as of yet not known ... but he wasn't the father of William the Younger; so he doesn't have too much of a bearing on the Chiltern-Sussex link ... maybe he was one of the London Williams(?).]

Being brought up fatherless, it makes every sense that William the Younger could have made the journey sometime in his youth to Deptford to be with his half-brother Edward and hence along with him join the Blacksmith fraternity.

His return to Sussex in the years after 1700 also makes a lot of sense as one of the major suppliers of the Deptford ship-building industry was the numerous Wealden iron foundries that existed at this time - including specifically in Chiddingly (where the iron furnaces were used to make cannons for the battleships ... even two of the modern-day pubs in the village are named after the foundries).

So we've come full circle with this Chiltern-Sussex link - William had a son called William who worked with his half-brother Edward, who had a nephew called Joseph, who like his uncle and half-uncle worked as Blacksmiths in Deptford ...

Chiddingly William's son and grandson (both Edwards) were also Blacksmiths; so the family trade persisted until at least 1809.

One final convincing detail is West Hoathly William's age - as stated previously he was born during or before 1639 ... Chiltern William was baptised in Princes Risborough on 14th May 1637 ... there are no burial records in Princes Risborough for this William, his son Edward or his grandson Joseph (in contrast to elder Joseph who was buried there on 14th March 1715).

Until evidence is found of other William's, an Edward and two Joseph's that fit this scenario so accurately, then all these links do seem to be the most probable.