

A complex genealogical descent

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Introduction

An unmarried man, James Dearnley from Cheshire, was, in effect, adopted by his uncle who lived in Holme. James and three further generations in his male line married descendants of the same C17th century couple, Thomas Beardsell and his wife Mary Armitage. This article explores the way in which this somewhat unusual descent increasingly linked him and his descendants to families who had lived in the Holme Valley since the C13th and C14th and probably earlier.

This complex family history was uncovered by the writer researching his own family history. Readers who have researched their own family connections to the valley may discover links to their own families. It ends with a discussion of more general interest.

The approach taken in the article is to examine what can be found of the Beardsell and Armitage families in the valley. We then follow the descendants two sons of that marriage and briefly follow the ancestries of their spouses. We then follow the descent from James Dearnley and the marriages to the Beardsell descendants.

The Beardsell/Armitage marriage of 1655

Beardsell

Collins (1902)¹ has an account of the family under the name Berdsell focussed on Kirkburton parish. She follows Fishwick (1889) in suggesting the name is a toponym derived from Buersill with a C13th occurrence in Saddleworth.

Whatever the origin, this family was established in the Holme Valley in the township of Holme by 1352 when Robert de Berdeshill was amerced 2d for not attending the manorial court at Kirkbuton on 14 June and the same sum on 09 August for *vert*, cutting green wood (Habberjam, O'Regan & Hale, 1987)

There are no further published rolls for the C14th although a set of heriots² published in the Northern Genealogist includes a note that Wm. Littlewode and John Berdishill paid £4 13s to farm the manorial mill in 1420 (Gibbons, 1903 in Fifteenth century heriots). The next published volume of court rolls is for almost a century later when on 13 Jan 1436 Richard Berdeshill paid 4d to enclose 2 acres of land in Holme and on 14 Apr he paid 7d to take 22 acres of land recently enclosed by Adam Bemonde (Beaumont) at Neddirlaye (Netherley) and Neddirlayebanke in Holme. On 19 Oct the same year Adam Berdeshill was amerced (fined) 2d for cutting green wood *in the lord's wood at Holmfirth* (Fraser, 2011)

The name is not listed in the subsidy roll of 1379 which falls in date between Robert and the C15th Berdeshills above so we cannot certain that the family continued in the area between the two but as it is not a common name it seems likely that it died out and was reintroduced from elsewhere.

Tudor Beardsell families

In the following century parish register records are available and variations of the name can be found there; for convenience the standard form Beardsell is adopted here. There appears to have been a family at Shepley which occupies much of Collins's account and need not concern us here.

1 Pp ccxxxi to ccxxxix

2 A heriot was a fee paid to inherit a tenancy

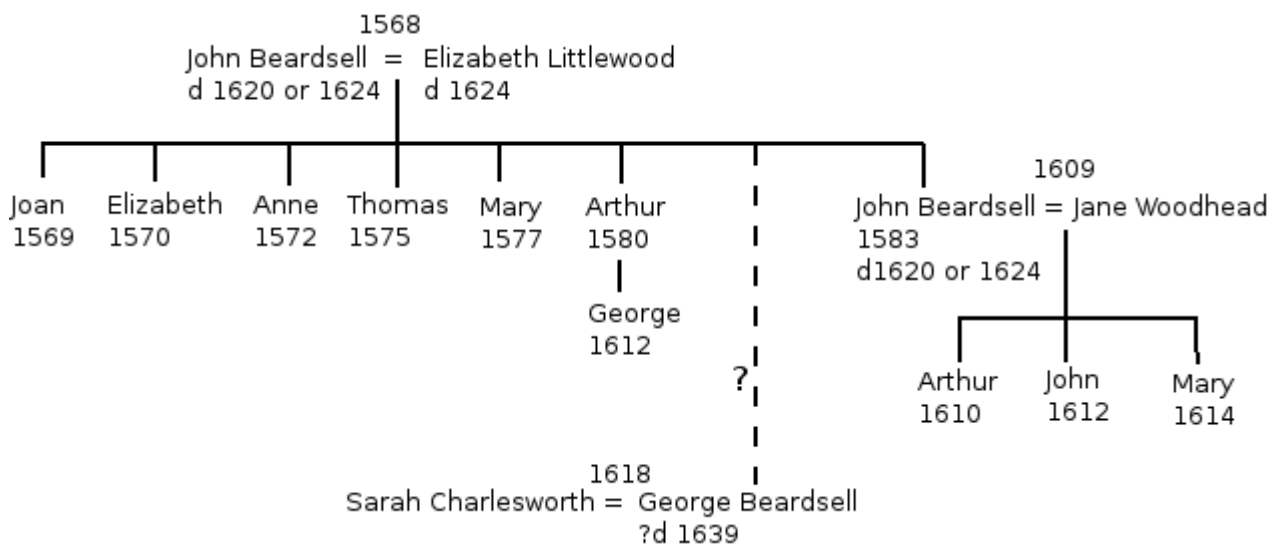
The records as they relate to the Holme family are fragmentary but it is these who concern us here. Later Beardsell occupied Meal Hill which overlooks the village of Holme and it may well be that this association goes back to the Tudor period.



Meal Hill, centre right, overlooking Holme village

Two of the earliest registry entries record the burials of a John, 05 Feb 1558³ and a Thomas Beardsell on 31 Mar 1559. They are followed by the marriages of a John and a Thomas.

The family of John Beardsell



The family of John Beardsell and Elizabeth Littlewood

John married Elizabeth Littlewood⁴ at Almondbury on 03 Oct 1568. Variations on de Littlewood go back as far as the late C13th in the Holme Valley. Littlewood is thought to have been in the area

³ Dates are given with the year starting on 01 Jan.

⁴ Surnames given in modern spelling.

of Upper and Lower Woodhouse in Cartworth (Holmfirth vineyard is at Lower Woodhouse). The known children of John and Elizabeth were:

Joan bapt 28 Aug 1569, bur. 28 Sep

Elizabeth bapt 28 Oct 1570 bur. 06 Jan 1581

Ann bapt 20 Jul 1572

Thomas bapt 25 Mar 1575. There was no further mention or marriage or baptisms of children in an expected time-frame but as his brothers seem to have moved away he probably stayed on to help run the family farm and maybe married after the death of his father⁵.

Mary bapt 09 Feb 1577

Arthur bapt 18 Dec 1580, father of George, bapt 04 Oct 1612, probably moved to Ward Place

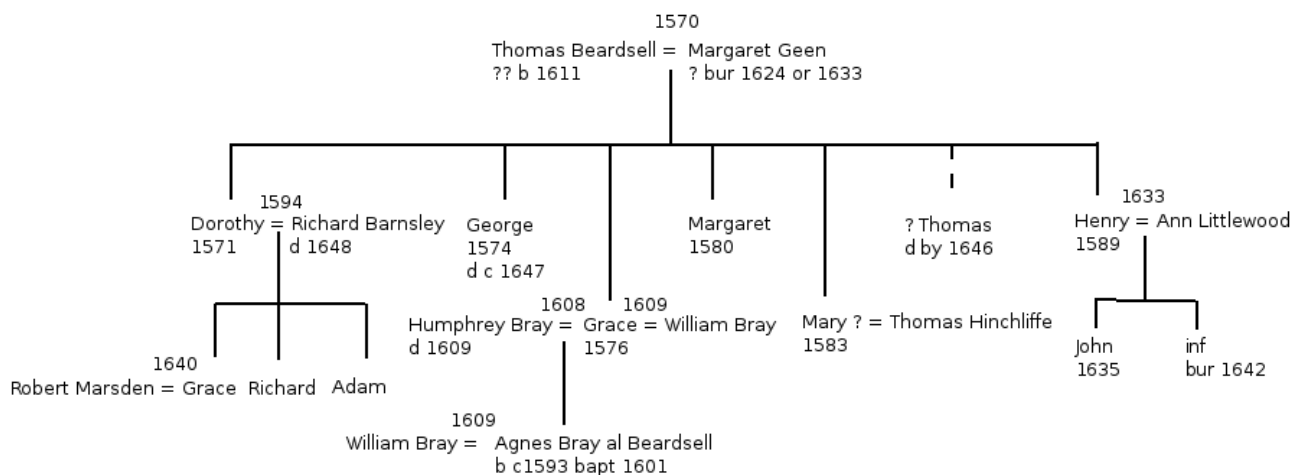
John bapt 01 Jan 1584, probably married Jane Woodhead at Almondbury on 14 Dec 1609 and settled in Meltham where three children, Arthur, John and Mary were born. Probably one of the John Beardsell buried on 27 Sep 1620 and 12 Apr 1624

Susanna bapt 17 May 1590 bur. 23 Jan 1592

A George Beardsell of Holme who was buried on 12 Mar 1639 may have been an otherwise undocumented son of this family and possibly the George Beardsell who married Sarah Charlesworth at Almondbury on 21 Oct 1618 but if so no children were recorded.

John senior may have been one the John Beardsell buried on 27 Sep 1620 and 12 Apr 1624 and Elizabeth the widow Bearsell of Holme buried on 27 Sep 1624.

The family of Thomas Beardsell



The family of Thomas Beardsell and Margaret Green

Thomas Beardsell married Margaret Green at Almondbury on 02 Nov 1570. Variations on the name de la Green also go back as far as the late C13th in the Holme Valley. As with Littlewood the origin is in a place name but is less easily identified. Early C19th century maps show several small greens around the area and a few survive today but the biggest may have been the green, now partly surfaced with setts, around which many of the houses of Holme are clustered.

The children of Thomas Beardsell were:

Dorothy bapt 09 Sep 1571 married a Richard Barnsley on 11 Apr 1594 with whom she had sons Richard and Adam and daughter Grace who married Robert Marsden in January 1640.

George bapt 14 Mar 1574 probably died 1646 or 1647 when there was a gap in the parish registers but left a will proved 1647.

Grace bapt 06 May 1576. She had an illegitimate daughter Agnes with Humphrey Bray of Hepworth c1593 but not baptised until 1601. She married Humphrey in 1608 but he died less than a year later. A few weeks later she married William Bray the elder and Agnes married William Bray the younger on the same day. The relationship between the William Brays has not been established.

⁵ An alternative arrangement was that the eldest son would be set up with property and forgo any but a token bequest in the father's will with a younger son staying on to inherit the farm

Margaret bapt 05 Feb 1581

Mary bapt 24 Nov 1582 who may have married Thomas Hinchliffe

Henry bapt 31 Aug 1589 married married Ann Littlewood at Almondbury on 04 Nov 1633 with son John bapt 09 Aug 1635 and an infant buried on 14 Aug 1642.

Thomas may have been the Thomas buried on 15 Nov 1611 and Margaret one of the widow Bearsells of Holme buried on 27 Sep 1624 and 26 Feb 1633.

Son George's will, summarised in Collins, helps tie this widely spaced family together:

- There were bequests to brother Henry, also named as executor, and sister Margaret.
- Some children of Richard Barnsley are named: Richard and Adam and Grace was "the wife of Robert Marsden". Mary is not mentioned by name but she have been "the wife of Thomas Hinchliffe" who, along with her children are each left the traditional child's bequest of a lamb but no marriage can be found for her. A further bequest of 12d, the same as the Marsden sons, was made to the wife of Jo Earnshaw; he may have been the Joshua who was one of the witnesses and she may have been another niece.
- Grace is represented by a bequest to the wife of William Bray. There were several William Brays so it's not clear whether the burial of a widow of William Bray referred to her and thus whether the bequest was to Grace or Agnes.
- There is also the traditional child's bequest of a lamb to a Thomas Beardsell. To have received such a bequest he is likely to have been a nephew of George although he could have been a godson. One possibility is that he would have been an otherwise unrecorded son of Henry born soon after the marriage. The other possibility is another, unrecorded child of Thomas and Margaret.

Thomas Beardsell

There appear to have been two adult Thomas Beardsell living in Holme between c 1620 and 1640. A Thomas Beardsell married Diana Crossley on 28 Nov 1626 and would have been the Thomas Beardsell of Holme who was buried on 16 Mar 1633 as on 22 Jul 1633 a Diana Beardsell married John Hadfield. Another Thomas Beardsell was still living when his wife was buried on 26 Apr 1639.

There were three known children with a father's name given as Thomas Beardsell of Holme:

Elizabeth buried on 28 Feb 1625

George bapt 11 Mar 1627

Sara bapt 23 Mar 1630.

Elizabeth could not have been a child of the Diana Crossley marriage but the other two could have been a child of either marriage.

There appears to have been at least one Thomas Beardsell of Holme not accounted for by any baptism. A Thomas Beardsell was the father of. This is unlikely to have been a child of the marriage of Thomas to Diana Crossley. A Thomas Beardsell had a wife buried on Unless there were even more Thomas Beardsell in Holme

There are no records of the baptism of a Thomas Beardsell who would have been of an age to have married in 1655. One possibility is that he would have been the child to whom George left a lamb in his will. If so he would have been the otherwise unrecorded child of Henry or of an otherwise unrecorded brother, possibly the Thomas whose wife was buried in 1639.

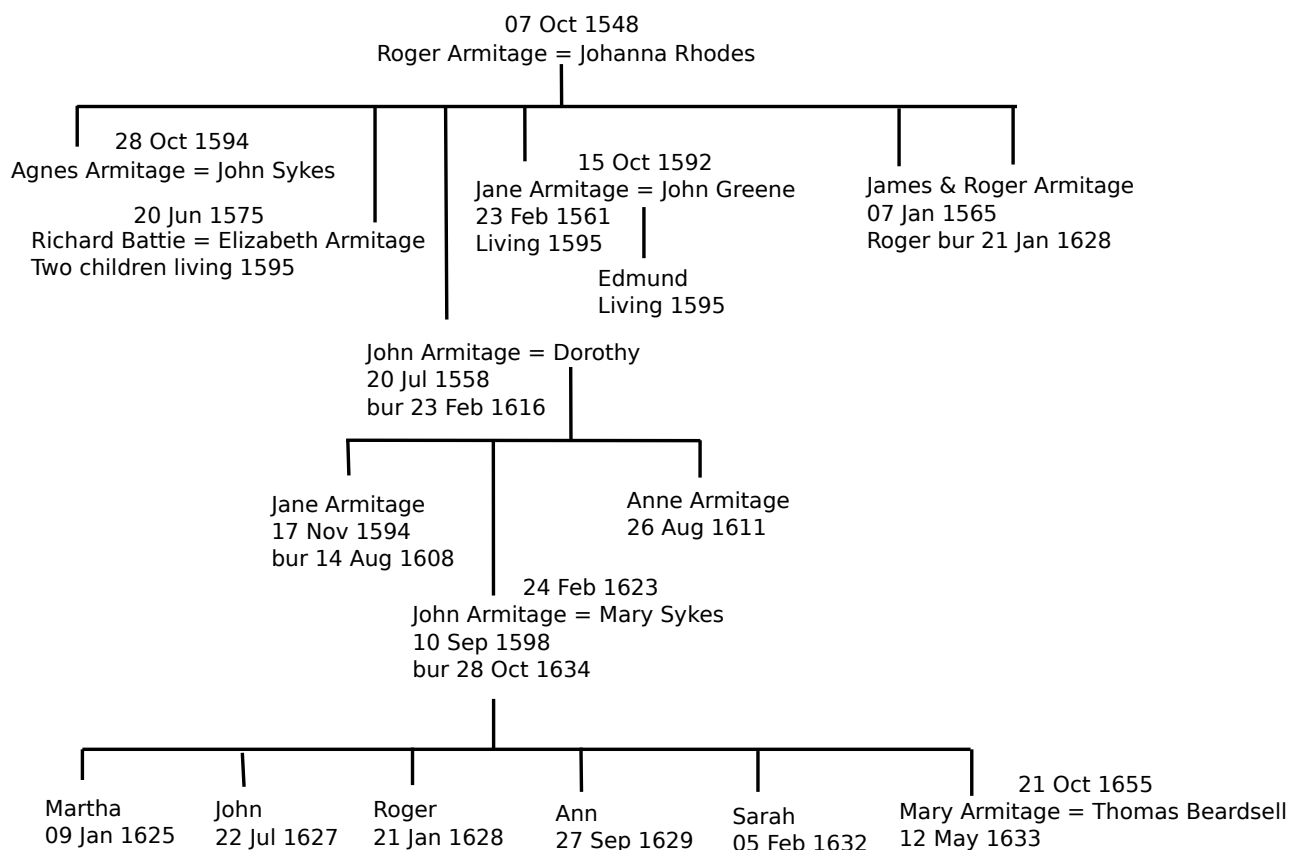
Armitage of Howood

The surname is derived from a place name. Collins (1902)⁶ gives some information relevant to the origins of the name as Hermitage. In the early C13th a small plot of land in Crosland Edge was

6 pp lii to liv.

granted to the Templars and a further four acres, now unidentifiable, to support it. Subsequent grants for support are identifiably in the Armitage Bridge/Armitage Fold area.

The surname had come into existence by the time of the 1379 Poll Tax with Willelmus del Ermytache and his wife Agnes assessed for the basic 4d tax. The family seems to have prospered during the C15th and by the early C16th there were branches in Honley and Meltham in addition to the Crosland branch and also further afield as far apart as Bradford and Cawthorne. Many of these branches became quite significant and married into leading families of their areas.



Descendants of Roger Armitage and Johanna Rhodes

Our branch was not so prosperous. According to Collins Roger Armitage of Howood left his daughter Jane “my best brasse pot in full satisfaccon of all the rest of hir marriage goodes childes parte or porcon of goodes” and his daughter Agnes “two ewes in full satisfaccon of all the rest of hir marriage goodes childes part or porcon of goodes” in his 1595 Will⁷. It seems he couldn’t afford their full marriage portions in his lifetime. Collins also has a brief note of the Will of the first John which gives his wife’s name as Dorothy although no record of such a marriage can be found.

Tudor Howood seems to have been populated by only three families, Armitages, Greens and Littlewoods who frequently served as godparents to each other’s children and also marriage partners. Neighbouring Digley Royd seems to have had only two families, Hinchliffes and Woods, the latter being replaced in the 1590s by a Sykes family. The first Sykes record was the burial of Grace, wife of John on 26 Jun 1594. Agnes marriage might have been to this John or to a son. Prior to this the Sykeses had been mainly in the Colne Valley where the surname originated. A marriage of a John Armitage to Mary Sykes in 1623 is almost certainly between these neighbouring families. The family had a pew in the Holmfirth Chapel of Ease, a John Armitage of Austonley appears on a seating plan thought to date to 1639.

⁷ Collins op cit pp lxix, lxx deal with this family.

Thomas Beardsell I and Mary Armytage

The C17th marriage in question was between Thomas Beardsell and Mary Armytage at Almondbury on 21 Oct 1655. Their descendants lived at Meal Hill, Holme and this had probably been their property. Their children were:

probably Jonas before 1662

twins James and Joshua bapt 27 Aug 1662

Arthur bapt 14 May 1665

Mary bapt 15 Oct 1673

Jonas, like Joshua had at least one child known to have been born at Meal Hill. Only Joshua and Arthur concern us here.

Arthur Beardsell's descendants

Arthur's role in the subsequent descent is the simplest and provides the first marriage to a Dearnley so will be dealt with first. It includes two families, Roberts and Crosland.

Roberts

This is another old Holme Valley family; a Matthew Robert was listed in the Holmfirth 1379 Poll Tax returns. However in this case we can't trace Arthur Beardsell's Roberts wife back very far. Her father was Mellars Roberts. He was probably born in Kirkburton parish in the early part of the C17th. The original parish registers from that time were badly damaged and we have to use the so-called bishop's transcripts, copies sent to York to be held there about half of which from Kirkburton for the first third of the century are missing so his birth is likely to be among them. His first name suggests the surname Mellar or Mellor, from a place name Mellor in Cheshire or Lancashire. There are no Mellor/Roberts marriages on record but, again, it's possible a marriage could have been lost in the missing BTs but a more likely possibility is that he was illegitimate and the mother's name could have been Roberts.

Mellars Roberts married twice. The first was to Ester Moakson (Moxon) on 06 Dec 1641 with two children, Gilbert, bapt 30 Jan 1642 and Elizabeth, bapt 25 Jan 1645, buried 21 Dec 1645. Ester was buried on 29 Feb 1660 and "a child" on 11 Sep 1660. He then married Susanna Berie (Berry) on 02 Oct 1662. They had a number of crism children buried but three daughters were baptised, Ann, 09 Oct 1664; Grace, 01 Apr 1667 and Elizabeth, 13 Nov 1670. Mellars was dead by 24 Oct 1679 when Susanna was buried.

The daughter Grace married Arthur Beardsell. One child of the marriage is known, Martha, bapt 27 Nov 1694.

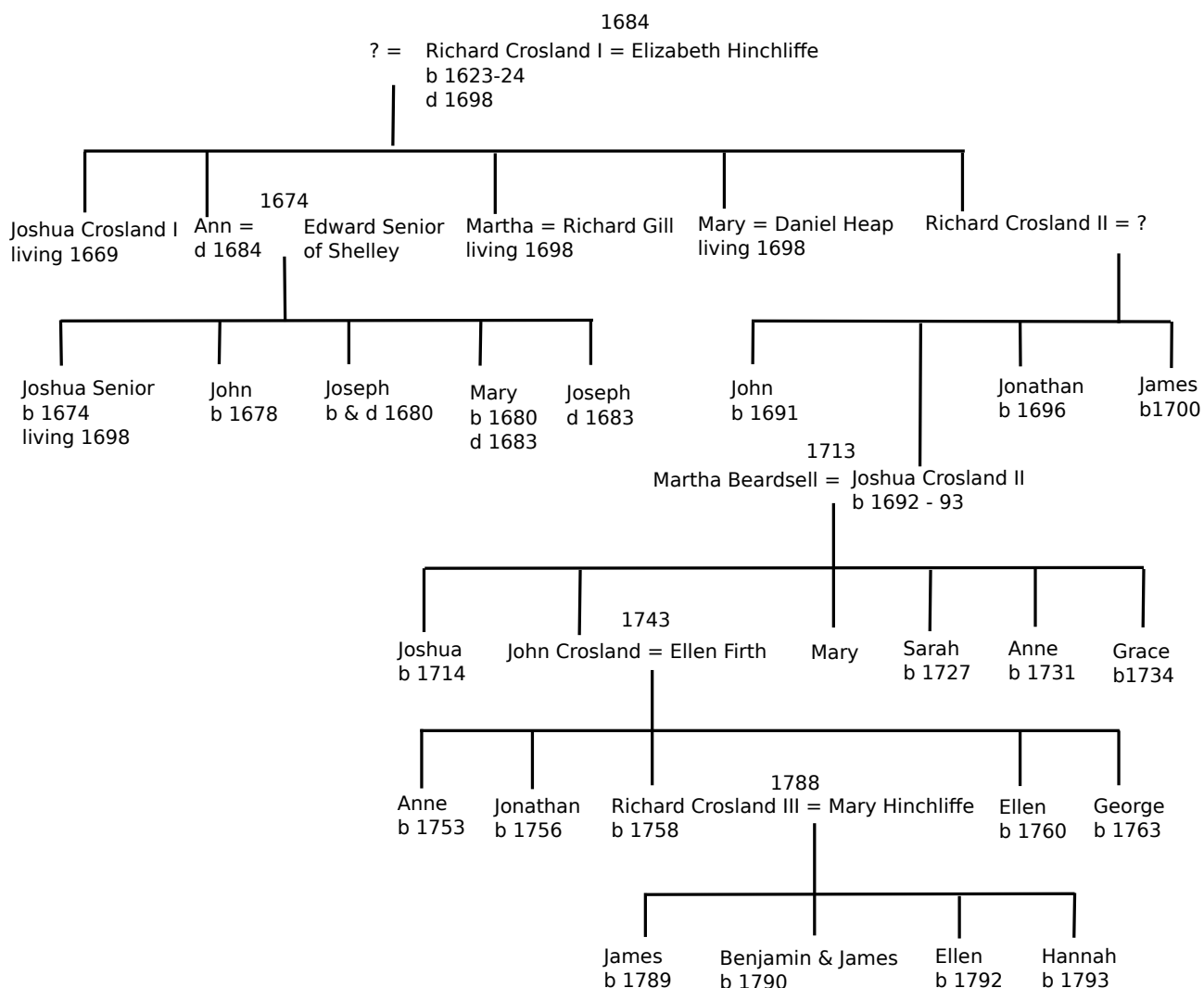
Crosland

The surname is derived from the name of the two townships of North and South Crosland between the Holme and Colne Valleys. The 1379 Poll Tax returns listed a Richard in North Crosland and a William in South Crosland, both paying the basic 4d tax.

The family has been in the Holmfirth area since at least 09 Sep 1435 when Thomas Crosseland surrendered a rood of newly enclosed land in Wooldale. By the time parish registers are available there were several families in Kirkburton and one in Holme. A branch settled in Upper Stubbin which appears to have previously been occupied solely by the Littlewoods since at least the mid C16th.

Richard Crosland of Upper Stubbin I married Elizabeth Hinchcliffe in 1684 giving his age in a marriage bond as 60 and she was 54. This is the only guide to his birth in 1623 or early 1624, probably in Kirkburton parish in the middle of a 10 year gap in surviving parish records. His first marriage and the baptisms of his children are also unrecorded but if he was married in Almondbury parish that might have fallen into a gap in the parish records there during the Civil War. The exact

link to the Littlewoods has not been recorded although in 1669 when he and a son, Joshua were mentioned in a will of John Littlewood of Upper Stubbin.



The Crosland family

In addition to Joshua he also had at least one other child, Anne, who married Edward Senior of Shelley in 1674. The Senior's first, and possibly only surviving child, Joshua, was born later the same year; Anne died in 1684 but Edward and Joshua were named in Richard's will when he died in 1698. Richard's own son Joshua is not mentioned there but daughters Martha and Mary, married to Richard Gill and Daniel Heape respectively, and a son Richard Crosland II.

Richard II had the following known children although his marriage is not registered. His known children were

- John bapt 22 Nov 1691
- Jonathan bapt 20 Oct 1696
- Mary bapt 14 Feb 1704

In addition there were sons Joshua and James, both of whom settled in Holme, James becoming the schoolmaster there.

Joshua married Martha Beardsell on 09 Nov 1713. There is a marriage allegation which gives Martha's age as 19 and his as 20 so he was born in 1693 or late 1692. The known children of this marriage were:

- Joshua bapt 06 Apr 1714
- Sarah bapt 19 Jul 1727

Anne bapt 30 Jan 1731

Grace bapt 05 Jan 1734

The gap between Joshua and Sarah corresponds to a period when no chapel baptisms were copied into the Almondbury registers. There are likely to have been other children born in this period and it is suggested here that they included a John and a **Mary**. These were known from later records, would have been born in this time-frame and for who there are no other candidate parents.

John married Ellen Firth (see below) on 16 Jun 1743. Their known children were:

Anne bapt 31 Mar 1753

Jonathan bapt 18 Apr 1756

Richard III bapt 11 May 1758

Ellen bapt 13 Sep 1760

George bapt 10 Feb 1763

Richard Crosland III married Mary Hinchcliffe⁸ on 24 Mar 1788. Their known children were:

James bapt 31 Jan 1789

Benjamin and Joseph bapt 19 Feb 1790

Ellen bapt 20 Feb 1792

Hannah bapt 27 Oct 1793

Those with names highlighted will be dealt with below.

Joshua Beardsell's descendants

Beaumont, Firth and Kinder families

Abraham Beaumont's will of 16 Apr 1707 quoted by Collins (pp ccii – cciv) names Mary, wife of John Firth of Greave between Joshua and the other daughters of Thomas Beaumont as named in the latter's will. She was clearly a member of the Meltham branch of the Beaumont family which deserves a longer treatment than can be afforded here.

The Firth family was well established around Rastrick by the mid C15th with the spellings Firth and Frith⁹ in use in the published manorial rolls of the 1430s. A century later a Richard Fyrth was constable of Shelley, elected at the court at Burton on 16 October 1539. As early as the late C13th the description "del Frith" with spelling variations is given to people in the courts at Brighthouse so it appears that the forest concerned was Sowerby rather than Holme.

The family appears early in both Almondbury and Kirkburton parish registers. Presumably it was the Shelley family who provided the early entries in Kirkburton and possibly even the same Robert who married Agnes Buth on 21 Aug 1541 at Kirkburton and Agnes might have been the Anne Firthe of Hoblayne, widow, who was buried on 14 Jul 1567. The early Almondbury registers have Firths in the Colne valley, especially Marden and Longroydbridge, around Almondbury and Farnley and in Uppershong and Booth House.

John Firth's baptism cannot be traced. He married Mary Beaumont at Meltham on 01 Feb 1675. It seems likely that they had more children than can be traced in the parish registers:

John bapt at Meltham 11 Oct 1675

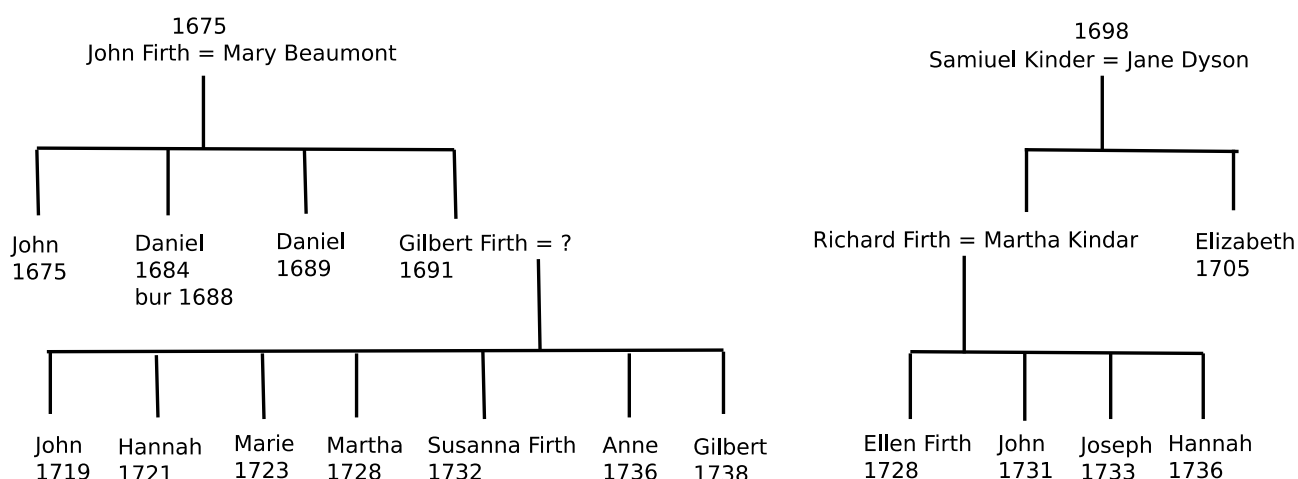
Daniel bapt in a chapel, presumably Meltham 13 Dec 1684 bur there 03 Dec 1688

Daniel born at Greave bapt at Meltham 26 Jul 1889. Mother's name given as Mary

Gilbert bapt at Meltham 16 Sep 1691

⁸ The Hinchcliffe surname originated in the Holme Valley. It appears as a place name in the Manorial Rolls of 1307 and attached as part of a personal names in 1324.

⁹ Frith means forest.



Two Firth families

No record of Gilbert Firth's marriage has been found. His known children were:

- John born at Netherthong bapt 20 May 1719 at Meltham
- Hannah bapt 15 Mar 1721 at Meltham
- Marie born Netherthong bapt 25 Sep 1723 at Meltham
- Martha born Netherthong bapt 06 Mar 1728
- Susanna born at Natherthong bapt 01 Jan 1731
- Rebecca born at Austonley bapt 14 Aug 1733
- Anne born at Bradshaw, Austonley bapt 14 Apr 1736 at Meltham
- Gilbert bapt 28 Oct 1738 at Holmfirth

Births at Netherthong with baptisms at Meltham are consistent with Gilbert having followed his father at Greave.

Ellen Firth who married John Crosland (above) was the daughter Richard Firth of Upperthong. His birth cannot be traced but he is likely to have been from the Upperthong family of the 16th and 17th centuries. Richard married Martha Kindar of Upperthong on 12 Nov 1721. Their children, all born at Upperthong with Richard described as a clothier were:

- Ellen bapt 16 Jul 1728
- John bapt 21 Mar 1731
- Joseph bapt 05 May 1733
- Hannah bapt 27 Aug 1736

Martha was probably an otherwise unrecorded daughter of Samuel of Upperthong whose daughter Elizabeth was baptised on 15 Jul 1705. The Kinders or Kindars were a family who arrived in the area in the C17th. A Robert Kindar had a legitimate son John baptised in Huddersfield in 1630 and an illegitimate daughter Anne in Almondbury in 1633. Other than the marriage of Anne there is no further mention of the name until the later 1680s: a John and George had children baptised in Huddersfield, and Lawrence and Thomas in Almondbury and Samuel, who married Jane Dyson at Almondbury on 25 Apr 1698. Apart from the burial of Samuel son of Samuel Kinder of Upperthong on 03 May 1699 there are no further mentions of an Upperthong family in the parish registers until a later generation. The Dyson name is recorded in the Colne Valley as early as the second decade of the C14th and in Upperthong and Kirkburton parish in the middle of the C16th.

The Howard family

The Howard surname was variable; endings include -wood and -worth with many variations on the first vowel. Collins indexes 18 variations in volume 1 although this falls to 2 in the second. An example is the baptism of Herre Hayward son of George Heward at Kirkburton on 28 May 1570.

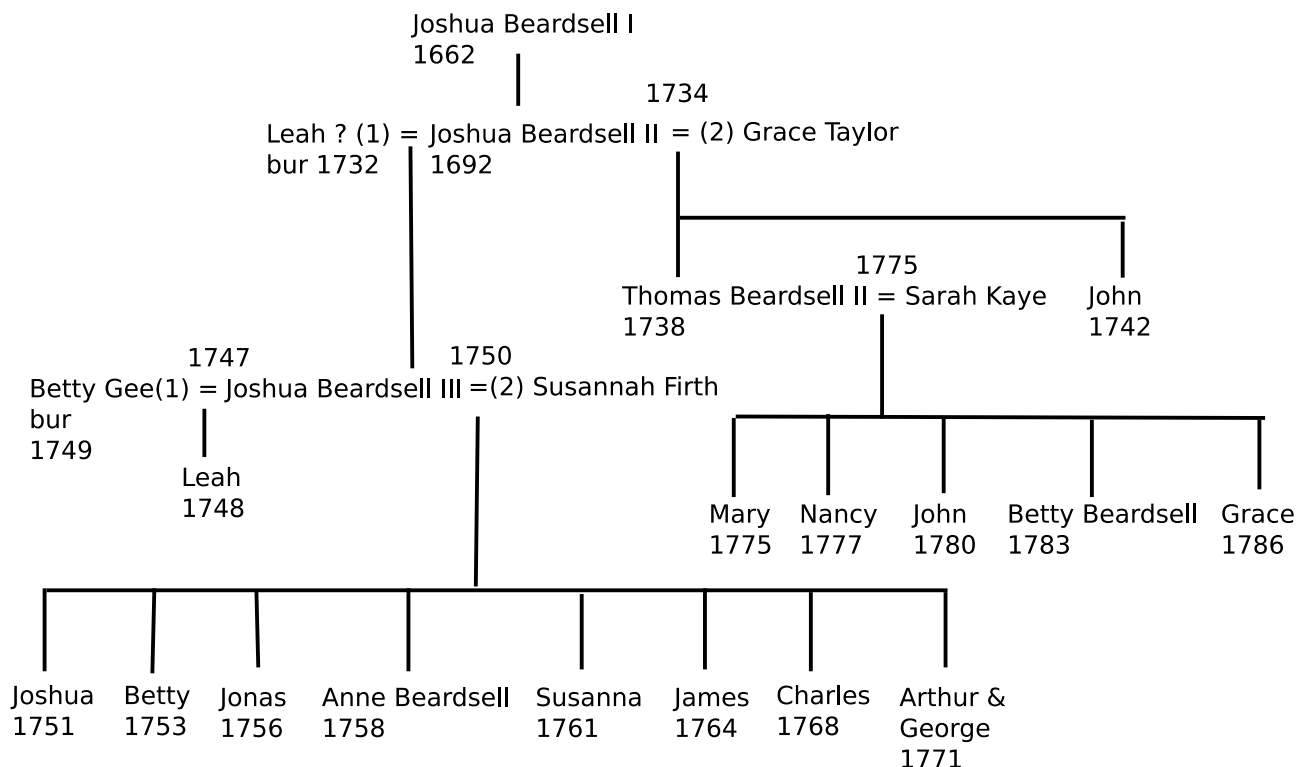
The family goes back in the Holmfirth area to at least the 1350s as Herward with land in Ramsden, Cartworth according to the manorial rolls, Hayward in the 1379 subsidy roll and Haywarde in Cartworth in the 1430s. There are no early mentions in Almondbury parish registers. The earliest registration is a baptism at Kirkburton of Agnes, daughter of Henry Hayworth on 25 Dec 1542. Henry may well have been the Henry Haward who, at court on 19 Jun 1540 took a rood of land and meadow from Thomas Tynker who had just inherited land in Hepworth.

A branch of the family became established at Holme Woods by the middle of the C17th but the first substantial parish records start at the beginning of the C18th with the family of a James and subsequently became a significant family in Holme. A John Howard who was probably the grandson of James but described as of Kirkburton parish, married Mary Lockwood of Moss Edge at Kirkburton on 15 Aug 1784. Their known children were:

- Hannah baptised 03 Jul 1785
- John baptised 08 Feb 1789
- Caleb baptised 01 Jan 1791
- Betty baptised 08 Jun 1793
- Mary born 18 Jul 1798 baptised 15 Aug 1798
- James born 24 Feb 1802 baptised 14 Mar 1802
- Lydia born 24 May 1807 baptised 01 Jul 1807
- Jonathan 28 Jan 1812 baptised 15 Mar 1812

Almost all were born at Woodhey Laith, Holme, or simply Holme except for Hannah who was born at Brownhill, Kirkburton.

Joshua Beardsell I and Joshua Beardsell II



Family of Joshua Beardsell I

Joshua Beardsell I had only one recorded child, Joshua II born at Meal Hill and bapt 28 Mar 1692.

Joshua II was married twice. His first wife was Leah, buried 27 Feb 1732. No children are recorded of this marriage but a further Joshua, Joshua Beardsell III seems to have been born about this time and was probably a son of that marriage.

His second marriage was to Grace Taylor¹⁰ on 13 Sep 1734 and they had the following known children:

Thomas II bapt 18 Nov 1738

John bapt 07 Aug 1742

Joshua Beardsell III

Joshua Beardsell, clothier of Holme, married Betty Gee¹¹ on 28 May 1747. There was one child, Leah bapt 21 Nov 1748 and Elizabeth, wife of Joshua Beardsell jun of Holme, clothier was buried on 16 May 1749. The approximate age of Joshua III, his description as junior and the naming of his daughter suggest strongly that he was a son of the marriage of Joshua II to Leah.

Joshua then married Susannah Firth on 20 Feb 1750. Their known children were:

Joshua baptised 14 Mar 1751

Betty baptised 18 Jun 1753

Jonas baptised 27 May 1756

Anne baptised 26 Nov 1758

Susanna baptised 09 Aug 1761

James baptised 11 Nov 1764

Charles baptised 09 Mar 1768

Arthur and George baptised 14 Jul 1771

Anne is the child who concerns us here but James was an important figure in the development of the textile industry in the Holme Valley in partnership with his sons Joseph, Charles, Peter and Isaac starting at Meal Hill. Day quotes extensively from Peter's diary.

Thomas Beardsell II

He was the son of Joshua II and Grace Taylor. He married Sarah Kaye on 12 Oct 1775.

The various Kay or Kaye families almost certainly descend from a John Kaye whose wife's parents, the Finchendens of Mirfeld purchased the manor of Farnley Tyas and Woodsome in the 1360s and bequeathed it to his oldest son. As John had at least five legitimate¹² and one illegitimate sons as well as six daughters. Although the senior and at least one other line were of high status some of the other children were responsible for numerous Kaye families in the valley, not least because one Kaye wife gave birth to twenty living children. Tracing this many lines for more than a few generations without risking confusion is difficult and many genealogical brick walls are due to a Kaye bride who cannot be placed with any certainty but must nevertheless descend from John Kaye of Woodsome Hall.

This Sarah appears to have been from a family living at Malking House for several generations.

Their known children were:

Mary baptised 26 Dec 1775

Nancy baptised 02 Nov 1777

John baptised 21 May 1780

Betty baptised 13 Jan 1783

Grace baptised 02 Mar 1786

Elizabeth (Betty) Beardsell

She was the daughter of Thomas Beardsell II. She married Caleb Howard but the couple appear to have been devious.

¹⁰ Taylor was a surname in the Holmfirth area as early as 1379 when there are two couples with that surname in the Poll Tax. Grace's baptism cannot be traced.

¹¹ Gee is not a name with a long history in the Holmfirth area and may have come from Cheshire..

¹² Two heraldic visitations give the same names for the five but differ on the sixth. In on the sixth name, Jenkin, is a diminutive of one of the others, John, and also the name of the illegitimate son given y the other visitation.

There is a marriage licence granted for Caleb *Heywood* and Elizabeth Beardsall in 1810 supported by an Abel Beardsall, probably Elizabeth's first cousin. It gives Caleb's age as over 21 although he was only 19. The licence was for Almondbury but there was no marriage there. Banns were also called at St Mary's, Stockport for Caleb Howard and Elizabeth *Birchall*, both said to have been of that parish. The banns were called on March 18th, 25th and April 1st. The actual marriage was on April 1st, the date when the banns were called in Stockport, but in Mottram, again with Elizabeth Birchall as the bride but with Abel Beardsell as a witness and again they were said to have been of that parish.

The likely explanation is that Caleb's parents objected to the marriage as Elizabeth was eight years older. Even on her death certificate Elizabeth's age was given as a few years less than it really was. Their known children, all baptised at Lane Independent Chapel were:

Mary born 10 Sep 1815 bapt 20 Nov 1815
Hannah born 23 Feb 1820 bapt 29 Mar 1820
Moses born 14 Aug 1822 bapt 25 Sep 1822
John born 08 Apr 1825 bapt 19 Jun 1825
Caleb born 14 Jan 1827 bapt 05 Apr 1827
Isaac born 10 May 1829 bapt 11 Aug 1829

The Dearnley family

The Dearnley surname derives from a place of that name in Rochdale but the property passed by marriage to the Whiteheads despite several attempts in court to regain it for the family. The greater part of the family settled in and around Glossop. Like the Howards the name shows a good deal of variation and in Yorkshire evolved to lose its middle syllable. A William Dearnley, described as a labourer of Penistone, but derived from a Glossop area family married a widow, Mary Green of Holme and settled in Holme. The couple were childless and appear to have, in effect, adopted a nephew of William's, James. James and three successive generations in the male line married brides descended from Thomas Beardsell and Mary Armitage.

James Dearnley married Ann Crosland on 23 May 1754. Their known children were:

Mary Dearnally born in Holme baptised on 26 Oct 1754 in Holmfirth
James in Holme baptised on 27 Mar 1757 in Holmfirth
John born in Holme baptised on 24 May 1759 in Holmfirth
Martha born in Holme baptised on 06 Dec 1761 in Holmfirth
Betty born in Holme baptised on 25 Aug 1764 in Holmfirth
James born in Holme baptised on 28 Dec 1766 in Holmfirth
Joseph born in Holme baptised on 18 Oct 1769 in Holmfirth

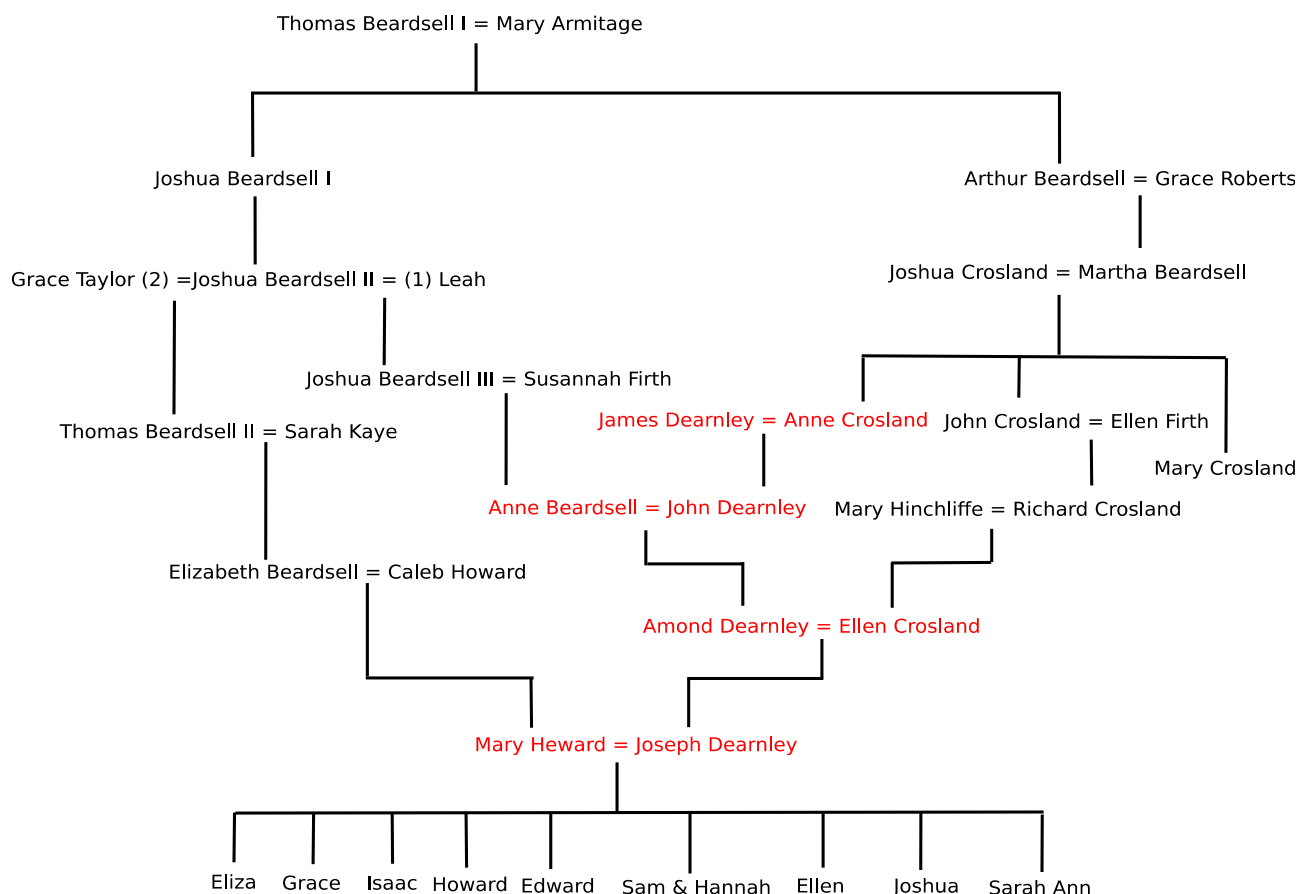
John Dearnley was the son of James Dearnley of Holme. He married Ann Beardsell at Almondbury on 25 Dec 1780. Their known children were:

Fanny born in Holme baptised on 04 Jun 1781 in Holmfirth
Joseph born in Holme baptised on 03 Nov 1782 in Holmfirth
Amond born in Holme and baptised there on 26 Nov 1785

Amond Dearnley was the son of John Dearnley. The spellings of his name vary considerably but Amond is how he spelled it when he signed the marriage register. The spelling is Hammond in the main part of the register entry. Other spellings are mostly Amon and Ammon although Harman and Heamon are also known and Hammond is again given at the baptism of daughter Sarah and burial of Benjamin. He married Ellen Crosland on 08 Sep 1811. Their known children were:

John born 26 Mar 1812, died before 1837
Betty baptised in Holmfirth 05 Jan 1815

Joseph baptised 24 Aug 1816
 Hannah baptised 24 May 1818, died Aug 1823
 Ann baptised 19 Mar 1820
 Grace baptised 07 Mar 1822
 Sarah bapt 04 Jan 1826, died Apr 1841
 Isaac born about 1828, died May 1836
 William baptised 6 Jul 1830
 Benjamin, probably b c 1832 buried 6 May 1834
 Hannah born c1834 calculated from age in 1841 Census
 Joshua born 11 May 1836, died Sep 1841
 John baptised 1 Feb 1838



Summary Dearnley descent from the Beardsell/Armitage marriage

Joseph Dearnley was the son of Amond Dearnley. He married Mary Heward (Howard) on 24 Aug 1835. They had the following known children:

- Eliza born 15 Feb 1836, bapt 22 May 1836, d when her clothes caught fire in her mother's absence in Apr 1839
- Grace baptised 31 Dec 1837. Her birth does not appear to have been registered.
- Isaac born 11 Aug 1839
- Howard born 3rd quarter 1841
- Edward born 1844. His birth does not appear to have been registered.
- Sam and Hannah born 4th quarter 1845
- Ellen born 1st quarter 1848
- Joshua born 1st quarter 1850
- Sarah Ann born 3rd quarter 1856

As can be seen this gives Joseph Dearnley's children two lines of descent from the Croslands and Grace Roberts, from the first Joshua Beardsell's unidentified wife and also two Firth lines, and four

lines from Thomas Beardsell and Mary Armitage. Whilst this particular descent is unusually complex a degree of intermarriage was inevitable within small communities such as Holme. For example Mary Crosland married into the Kaye family of Holme, in fact, one half of the descent leading to another second cousin marriage. One of her descendants married a daughter of Grace, daughter of Joseph Dearnley so their descendants, including the writer, gained an additional Crosland/Roberts/Armitage/Beardsell line as well as an additional double Kaye line¹³ and an additional Hinchliffe line.

Conclusion

It seems to be a assumption amongst many genealogists that all English people and their colonial descendants are descended from William the Conqueror or Edward III and similar arguments are made for larger populations to be descended from Genghis Khan or Charlemagne. At the root of this is a numerical argument: each of us has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc., the number of ancestors doubling at each generation so that by when the progression gets back to the time of the alleged common ancestor the generation size is so large as to ensure that it must include that ancestor.

This argument is based is the assumption that a theoretical generation of, say 1024 ancestors, has that number of distinct individuals or at the very least that the discrepancy is too small to worry about. In order for this to happen there would need to be no geographical constraints, let alone no social constraints, on finding partners. Failure of this assumption results in individuals appearing in more than one genealogical role and not necessarily in the same generation. If an individual in one later generation appears twice or more then so do all their ancestors in previous generations. This called “pedigree collapse”. The writer’s genealogical experience is mostly concerned with the Holme Valley and, although the above is an extreme example, pedigree collapse was so prevalent that it cannot be reasonably ignored.

Other genealogists would maintain one of the common descent hypotheses. Some can, in fact, trace such descents. This represents a biased sample as a sufficiently high status early modern ancestor can not only be more easily be traced into the medieval period but is also more likely to have had an even higher status ancestor. DNA studies have suggested an second reason: the population of eastern and southern England, lowland England in essence, was more homogeneous whilst upland England and the other UK nations showed a series of geographically restricted make-up. Perhaps intermarriage was more common in the lowlands and such descents more common there.

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¹³ In fact this includes a descent from the Newtons of Stackwood Hill which introduces several other Kaye lines, see <http://www.holmfirthhistory.org.uk/Membersresearch> and there is, in fact, an additional Newton line from Grace’s husband.

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