

## Chapter 15


# Possible Origins for the Sheffield Plants

ASSESSING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FIRST SHEFFIELD AREA PLANTS

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This Chapter sets out Plant data which, with fuller study, might help to establish the likely origins of the first Sheffield area Plants. Though possible forefathers for Lawrence of Bakewell and Francis of Buxton seem few, there are more possibilities to consider when trying to identify the antecedents of the progenitor  $W^m(0)$  of the Duckmanton Plants. Two different schemes, in particular, are appraised in this Chapter. Possible schemes may be deduced from such sources as data for Plants at Great Longstone, 15 miles SW of Sheffield, as well as elsewhere such as further to the west near 17th century Staffordshire. As indicated earlier, Plants arrived, by 1725, at Duckmanton — some then travelled 10 miles NNW to Sheffield, where they became those who have been called the *Plant's Yard* Plants — many of their progeny remained there, such as the Sheffield shoemaker William (*i.e.*  $W^m(shoe)$ ) who was one of the closest Plants to *Plant's Yard* by the times of the 1841 Census.

### 15.1 The changing distribution of English Plants

ome name genealogical investigations can often allow studies of family migrations. A family name travels sometimes with the relocation of whole families as well as with the male offspring who often move several miles before settling in marriage.

It seems that, in such ways, the Plant name had migrated around the English midlands by 1700. The distribution of this name was not uniform however and there was a particular concentration of Plants at the far side of North Derbyshire from Sheffield, for example, on the border between North Staffordshire and East Cheshire.

#### 15.1.1 Romance of the early Plants

Plants came to exist in Plantagenet times<sup>1</sup>. It seems unlikely that the Plants descended from just a single Plant ancestor. The standard explanation, based on early linguistic and other studies, is that the surname denotes a gardener<sup>2</sup>. Such early forms as *Plantbean* and *Plantrose*, in East Anglia around 1200, are cited to support this interpretation. Such early metonymics as one for a 'Gardener' could, one might think, have arisen in many places though it is not unknown for rare ones to be traced to a single ancestor in a particular place.

Plantagenets can be found around the NW of England<sup>3</sup> before the crown passed to the House of Lancaster at the end of the 14th century. The Plantagenet name derives from

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<sup>1</sup>The Plant surname is thought to have come into existence before the mid 13th century, perhaps first near Essex and Norfolk (W.K.Plant (1990), *Roots and Branches*, **1**, page 4).

<sup>2</sup>W.K.Plant (1990), *Roots and Branches*, **1**, page 4.

<sup>3</sup>The 1984 version of the IGI for example lists that Eleanor Plantagenet married John Beaumont at Lancaster in 1339. It also includes the Lancaster births of Maud Duchess of Bavaria Plantagenet (b 4.4.1339) and Blanche Duchess of Lancaster Plantagenet (b 25.3.1345), both to Henry Duke of Lancaster Plantagenet and Isabel Duchess of Lancaster Plantagenet.

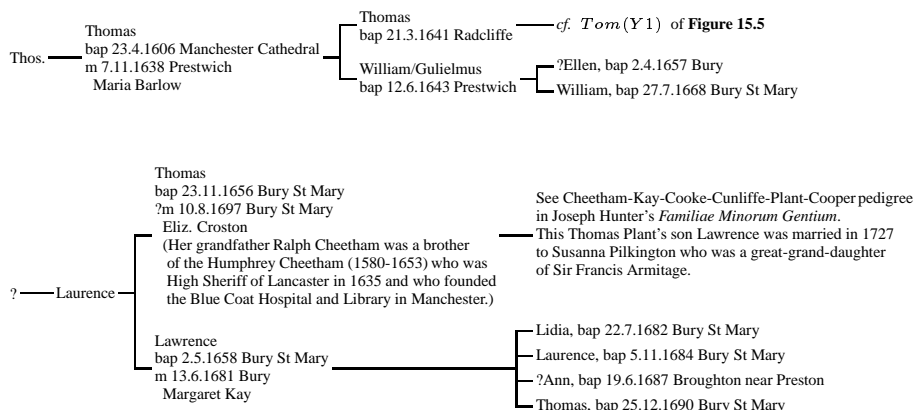


Figure 15.1: A scheme of 17th century Lancashire Plant records

*planta genista* which has sometimes been thought to have symbolised ancient *fire brands* and authoritative<sup>4</sup> regeneration<sup>5</sup> (cf. pageants with torch<sup>6</sup> bearing soldiers). In his dictionary, Samuel Johnson defines *brand* as (1) a fire stick, (2) a sword, etc. It is only on the basis of anecdotes however, such as Chaucer's '*a Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose*'<sup>7</sup>, that romantic pictures have occasionally been conjured of swords and knives being borne across mediaeval North Derbyshire, between Sheffield and Brand which is near the tip of North Staffordshire in the NW Midlands.

Plant has been described as a distinctive Staffordshire surname which may have originated in the NW in Lancashire (cf. Figure 15.1) and, like Salt<sup>8</sup>, it ramified<sup>9</sup> early in Staffordshire's adjoining counties<sup>10</sup>. Plant is thought to be a metonymic surname. There is evidence that locative surnames generally migrated southwards, in the centuries after their likely formation, from Lancashire through Cheshire to Staffordshire. The available Plant history seems compatible with this general pattern of an early southwards migration. It is known that there were Plants in North Cheshire (Flint) by 1301 and at Leek in North Staffordshire by 1381<sup>11</sup>.

### 15.1.2 Plants in parish records by 1700

Table 15.1 is based on the numbers of pre-1700 Plant records in the 1984 version of the IGI<sup>12</sup>. Some extra Plants appear in the IGI's later versions and some, no doubt, did not baptise their children. Other Plants were, of course, outside this general region. However, despite these provisos, this Table shows a notable Plant cluster in the parish of Leek, North Staffordshire<sup>13</sup> and in the adjoining parish of Prestbury, East Cheshire<sup>14</sup>. These parishes

<sup>4</sup>The Latin word *planta* has two meanings, one being the sole of the foot.

<sup>5</sup>The other meaning of the Latin word *planta* is shoot for propagation, cutting.

<sup>6</sup>The Latin word *genista* means broom(-plant).

<sup>7</sup>Geoffrey Chaucer (?1341-1400).

<sup>8</sup>The surname Salt is said to be locative and to have derived from the village of Salt in North Staffordshire. The rarer Staffordshire surname Wedgwood may have derived from a single ancestor from the nearby village of Wedgwood.

<sup>9</sup>The word *ramified* means 'sent up shoots' and it may be compared both with the Latin word *planta* meaning 'shoot for propagation' and the Welsh word *plant* meaning 'a child'.

<sup>10</sup>This is based on analyses of the 1842-6 Death Indices, the 1666 Hearth Tax returns, and earlier records, by David Hey, Professor of Local and Family History, Sheffield University.

<sup>11</sup>W.K.Plant, *Roots and Branches*.

<sup>12</sup>International Genealogical Index, *ibid*.

<sup>13</sup>Table 15.1 lists evidence of 124 pre-1700 Plant records in the parish of Leek.

<sup>14</sup>Table 15.1 lists evidence of 119 pre-1700 Plant records within the boundary of Prestbury parish, given that this boundary also envelops Macclesfield and Gawsorth.

SW Midlands		NW Midlands			NE Midlands	
County	Total	County	Total	Leading parishes	County	Total
Leicestershire	31	Lancashire	23	Prestbury (58), Macclesfield (41), Gawsworth (20)	Yorkshire	17
Warwickshire	7	Cheshire	153		Leek (124), Alstonfield (24), Muckleston (28)	Derbyshire
Worcestershire	15	Staffordshire	227	Sheriff Hales (19)	Nottinghamshire	5
Gloucestershire	15	Shropshire	25		Lincolnshire	115

Table 15.1: Distribution of pre-1700 Plant records around the Midlands in the 1984 IGI

lie some 35 miles to the WSW of Sheffield on the far side of Buxton and Brand. Table 15.1 indicates that the Plant name was concentrated in a few such parishes<sup>15</sup> in pre-Georgian times when, for example, Protestantism was becoming more fully established under King William III<sup>16</sup>. This was contemporary with an ‘Age of Enlightenment’, as for example 17th century science began to contribute its fluxion<sup>17</sup> to 18th century engineering, so laying a faith in determinism<sup>18</sup> for the coming ‘Industrial Age’.

It has been estimated, on the basis of general population trends, that there could have been about 1650 Plants in the U.K. by 1700<sup>19</sup>. If we assume that their distribution throughout the UK was roughly the same then as now, we can estimate that there would have been about 1000 Plants, in 1700, in the counties that are included in Table 15.1. Perhaps there were more, as they could have been more concentrated at that time in those counties. This suggests that there might be a significant undercount of the Plant surname in Table 15.1, in which there is a total of only 664 pre-1700 Plant records<sup>20</sup>.

### 15.1.3 A rough outline of Midlands Plants up to Modern times

In modern times, the distribution of the Plant name retains some similarities with pre-Georgian times (Table 15.1). Though the estimated number of UK Plants rises from 1650 in 1700 to around 15,000 by 1980, there appears to be some remanence throughout this growth of Plants in particular places. In particular Plants still remain concentrated around the NW and West Midlands<sup>21</sup>.

Without prejudice to future deliberations about the actual origins of the modern Plants, it can be noted for example that Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester are close to the aforementioned Leek-Prestbury cluster of pre-1700 Plant IGI records. This area remains the leading centre for UK Plants. It seems that perhaps around 20% of the UK Plants were in the Leek-Prestbury cluster in 1700<sup>22</sup>. There are now 12% living around Stoke-on-Trent (North Staffordshire), which developed into an Industrial City just to the SW of this cluster and 5% in South Manchester, for example, which is not far to this cluster’s north. The pre-1700 Sheriff Hales Plant cluster in East Shropshire (Table 15.1) is similarly close to a 20th century concentration of Plants around Wolverhampton (South Staffordshire). Sheriff Hales accounts for around 3% of the known UK Plants in 1700 and 8% of the UK Plants now live

<sup>15</sup>It should be noted however that some parishes are missing from the IGI on which Table 15.1 is based.

<sup>16</sup>This was William of Orange, b 1650, reigned 1689-1702.

<sup>17</sup>Historical change, or fluxion, was inspired for example by the ‘*method of fluxions*’, or Newtonian calculus, which was invented by the great Cambridge scientist from Lincolnshire, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), who also provided monumental theories of mechanics, dynamics, gravity, and optics.

<sup>18</sup>Before Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle of quantum theory (1925) all the great theories of Physics, from Newton’s to Einstein’s, had been *deterministic* allowing calculations of future, as well as past, behaviours. Thus, it was around 1700 that Newton’s Laws of Motion for example (*i.e.* his *Principia* of 1687) firmly supplanted earlier beliefs in astrology; *cf.* Sir Roger Penrose, *The Emperor’s New Mind: concerning Computers, Minds, and the Laws of Physics*, Oxford University Press, 1989.

<sup>19</sup>W.K.Plant (Dec.1990), *Roots and Branches*, Vol.1, pages 4-6.

<sup>20</sup>A sizeable fraction of these records are late 17th century baptisms.

<sup>21</sup>W.K.Plant (Dec.1990), *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>An estimate of 22% arises from Table 15.1 after adjusting the value (37%) given by that Table for the estimated number of Plants elsewhere in the UK.

nearby around Wolverhampton. Some of the early Wolverhampton Plants may have moved south from North Staffordshire for example. Further study could lead to more detailed information about how the distribution of English Plants has progressively developed down the centuries.

It already seems clear that some approximate similarities remain today with the Plant distribution before 1700 in the NW and W Midlands in particular. In the E Midlands nearer East Anglia, on the other hand, an early Lincolnshire cluster (Table 15.1) has declined. Plants also now appear to be concentrated a little further to the NE than they were before 1700, in as much as 4% of the modern UK Plants are now in the vicinity of Sheffield.

#### 15.1.4 North Derbyshire and Sheffield Plants

An 18th century Sheffield Plant forefather has been associated with ‘*Branside, Prestbury*’ which might mean the Prestbury (Cheshire) side of the high ground around The Roaches, Wincle Minn, and Axe Edge (Brand)<sup>23</sup>. Brand, as perpetuated in the modern place name Brand Side (NW Derbyshire), may have in general referred to the high ground at the western edge of the High Peak Hundred of NW Derbyshire and perhaps sometimes also to adjoining high ground in N Staffordshire and E Cheshire. It has been mentioned in earlier Chapters that the surname Plant is occasionally corrupted to *Bland* in early Sheffield records though there is no sound evidence that this derives from that early Plant homeland called *Brand*. It is thought that the rare Staffordshire surname *Brund* derives from that place.

Midway along the North Derbyshire route from ‘Brand’ (near Buxton) to Sheffield lies Ashford, which neighbours both Great Longstone and Bakewell (bottom left corner of Figure 15.2). Plants had already settled as near as this to Sheffield, at least by the times of the 17th century (Figures 15.3 and 15.4).

Edmund Plantagenet was a brother of King Edward II (1284-1327) and he owned a fortified house at Ashford. Ashford, which is recorded by 926AD, was a noted North Derbyshire crossing point of the River Wye. Nearby at Bakewell in 1538, a Christopher Plant was apparently Gell’s bailiff (Chapter 11) and certainly there are further known Plants nearby at Great Longstone when its parish register begins in 1639. A bridge is marked at Ashford on Christopher Saxton’s 1577 map and, when Edward and Thomas Browne reached there in the autumn of 1662, they had to choose ‘*Whether wee would swim our horses through an overflown ditch or ride over an extream narrow bridge*’<sup>24</sup>.

It can be noted that the first known arrival of Plants 15 miles to the NE of Ashford at Sheffield was in 1737, just before some momentous events in this town’s Industrial History. It was in the early 1740s that Thomas Bolsover first discovered the basic processes for forming Old Sheffield Plate and that Benjamin Huntsman first developed, near Sheffield, the new plant and processes needed for his newly invented crucible steel.

#### 15.1.5 Some ancestral schemes for the Sheffield area Plants

The available evidence for around 1700 is somewhat scant and the reconstruction of likely genealogies for those times is accordingly dogged by elusive data and by uncertain relationships between possibly related Plants. However, a first step is to postulate some ancestral schemes which can then be used as possible working hypotheses or, in other words, as grounds for further study. Indeed some such hypotheses, for the first Sheffield area Plants, can be judged on the evidence of this Chapter to seem rather more plausible than others.

<sup>23</sup>A modern location for a ‘Brand Side’ is on the Derbyshire side of Axe Edge. *Branside* could more generally imply however ‘on the side of’ the high ground around Axe Edge (Derbyshire), The Roaches (Staffordshire) and Wincle Minn (Cheshire) which could likely have been strategic sites for a fire beacon (Brand).

<sup>24</sup>David Hey (1980), *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads: Trade and Communications in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire*, Leicester University Press.

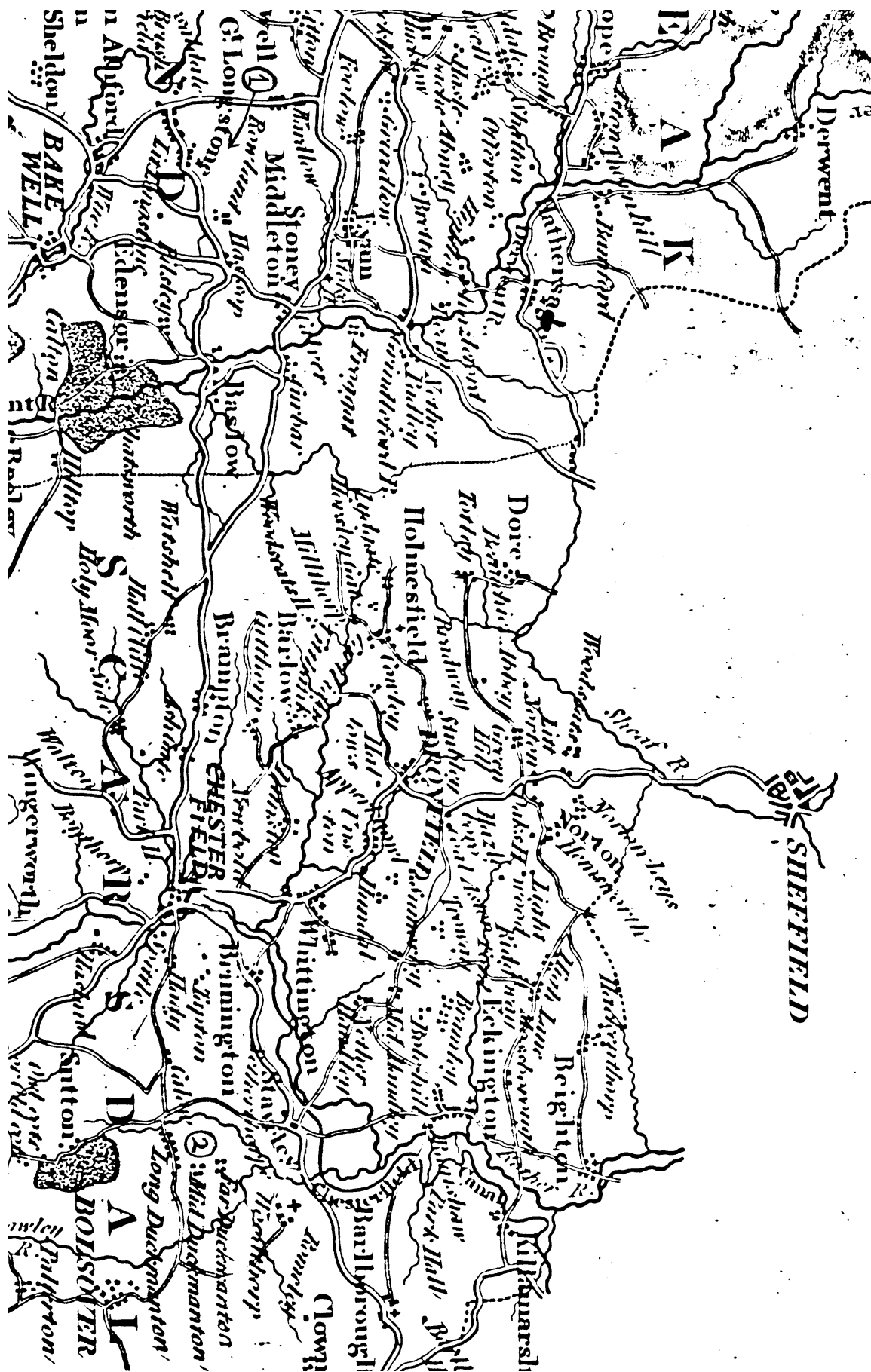


Figure 15.2: NE Derbyshire by 1817 (from Magna Britannia, Lysons and Lysons, 1817) showing (1) Great Longstone just north of Bakewell (bottom left corner) and (2) Duckmanton (bottom right corner) 5 miles east of Chesterfield

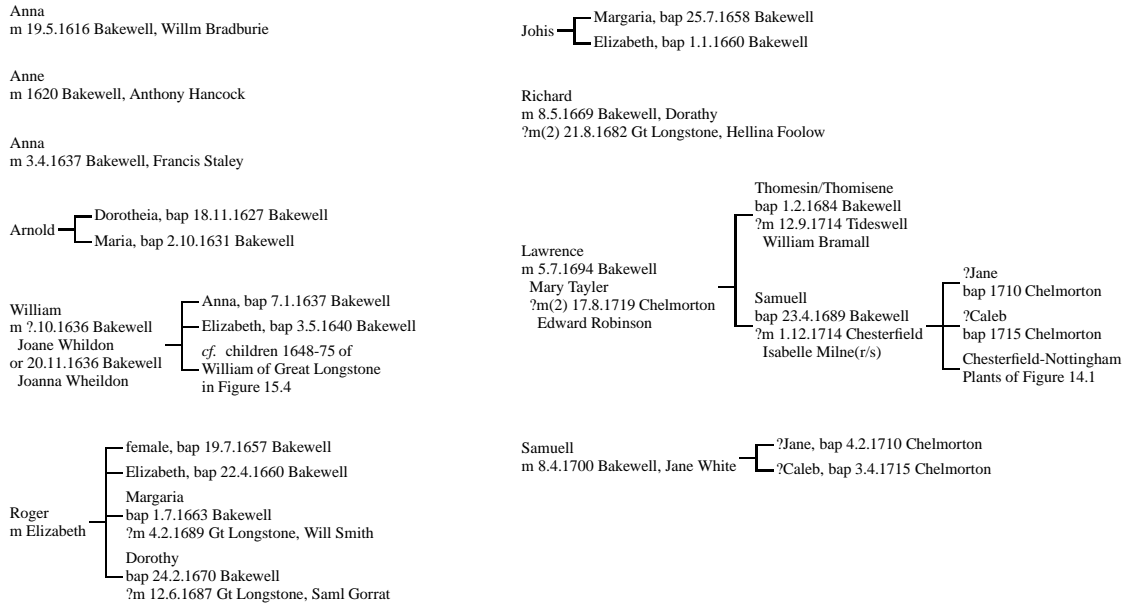


Figure 15.3: Bakewell area Plants: (I) some 17th century Bakewell parish records

Various possible schemes have already been outlined for the origins of the Sheffield *Plant's Yard* Plants (Chapter 14) with, for example, one local scheme for around 1700 supposing that there may have been a confusion between the calligraphically similar names  $\text{Kent}$  and  $\text{Plant}$ . However, the less local schemes of this Chapter involve more simply just the surname  $\text{Plont}$  or  $\text{Plant}$  or  $\text{Plante}$ . As described earlier, there are already 7 known baptismal possibilities for the progenitor of these Plants,  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton, within 50 miles or so of Duckmanton (Chapter 14) — 5 of these are amongst the base data that goes towards formulating the ancestral schemes for him that are considered in this Chapter.

Such ancestral schemes relate in particular to the possibility that the first Sheffield area Plants may have descended from those around Great Longstone (near Ashford). As already indicated this lies towards the High Peak Hundred of NW Derbyshire which lies in the direction of the aforementioned pre-1700 Leek-Prestbury Plant cluster beyond Brand. It is found in later versions of the IGI that there were a few more Plants by 1700, around this area, than appear in Table 15.1<sup>25</sup>.

This chapter accordingly considers, for example, two distinct schemes in which the forefather  $W^m(0)$  of the Duckmanton Plants is taken to have descended from a 17th century Plant family at Great Longstone, near Ashford, some 15 miles to the SW of Sheffield. Whereas the first scheme involves a possible baptism for  $W^m(0)$  away to the north in mid-Yorkshire, the second restricts his baptism to 3 out of the 4 known possible baptisms near Buxton and Brand, which are about 10 miles or so to the west of Great Longstone which, in turn, is about 15 miles west of Duckmanton.

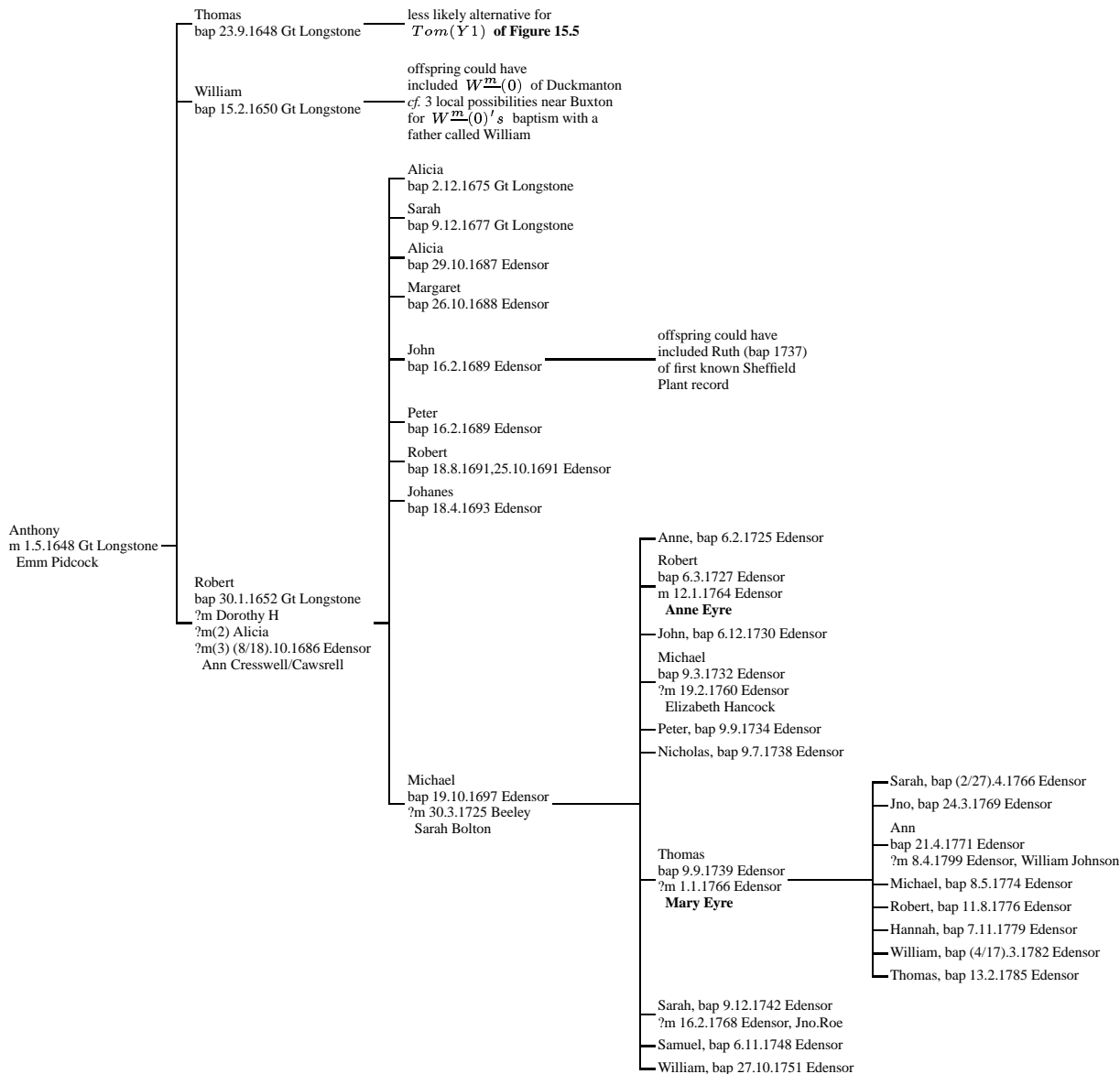
## 15.2 A ‘Yorkshire’ hypothesis for $W^m(0)$ 's ancestry

**S**t helps to clarify the arguments if we begin with a ‘Yorkshire hypothesis’ for  $W^m(0)$ 's ancestry. This hypothesis relates to the local north Derbyshire history of the English civil war. The disruptions of this war may be used as one possible

<sup>25</sup>The records of the 1984 version of the IGI were used as a basis for Table 15.1 with later versions being checked for extra Plants for the purposes of *most* of the Figures in this account.

Richard  
 m 10.9.1640 Gt Longstone, Elizabeth Higgins — Thomas  
 ?m(2) 15.11.1645 Gt Longstone, Ellin Shawe — bap 18.7.1641 Gt Longstone — cf *Tom(Y 1)* of Figure 15.5

Robert — Anthony, bap 15.11.1648 Gt Longstone  
 — William, bap 15.11.1648 Gt Longstone



Daniel — William, bap 19.7.1650 Gt Longstone  
 — Thomas, bap 25.7.1652 Gt Longstone

William — William, bap 3.9.1648 Gt Longstone  
 — Margaret, bap 21.2.1650 Gt Longstone  
 — ?m 27.5.1673 Gt Longstone, Robert Cook  
 — Jane, bap ?5.1654 Gt Longstone  
 — ?m 1.7.1684 Bakewell, Arthur Needham  
 — Joan, bap 7.12.1656 Gt Longstone  
 — ?m 29.6.1676 Gt Longstone, Henry Boam  
 — Elizabeth, bap 3.10.1659 Gt Longstone  
 — female, bap 18.5.1662 Gt Longstone  
 — Mary, bap 19.9.1664 Gt Longstone  
 — William, bap 18.8.1667 Gt Longstone  
 — female, b 6.5.1673 Gt Longstone  
 — Elizabeth, bap 9.1.1675 Gt Longstone  
 — ?m 8.4.1700, Thomas Boam

Figure 15.4: Bakewell area Plants: (II) Plants from Great Longstone (ca.1640-1680)

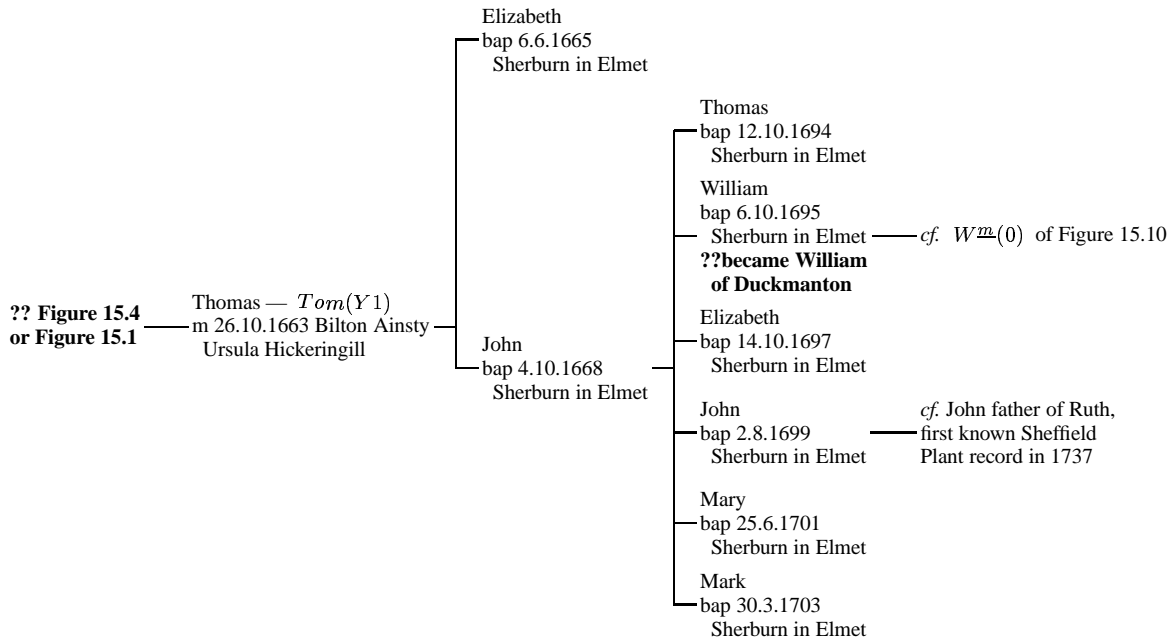


Figure 15.5: The ‘Yorkshire’ ancestral *hypothesis* for the Duckmanton Plants

explanation for the existence of a mid-17th century Plant family in mid-Yorkshire. One might also wonder, though this is not considered here, if the decline of the pre-1700 Plant cluster in Lincolnshire (Table 15.1) related in any way to the impact of Cromwell’s raised forces there<sup>26</sup>.

### 15.2.1 The Civil War in north Derbyshire

History records that Sir John Gell raised his Parliamentary forces at Chesterfield, not far from Great Longstone, to defeat Colonel Eyre at Derby and that he also held Sheffield castle (1642-3). The area around York (40 miles to Sheffield’s north) was being held temporarily by the Royalist Earl of Newcastle. Sir John Gell’s army from NE Derbyshire had joined Cromwell at Nottingham on 2 June 1643, with a view of a march into Yorkshire. At the 1644 Battle of Marston Moor (near York), the Roundheads defeated the Royalists and thereby extended their control from SE England to the north of England. It was not unusual for women and children to accompany the army and indeed it is known that they accompanied Sir John Gell to Alcester in 1645. Moreover the relocation of families was not unusual throughout the unsettled times of the ensuing Commonwealth period (up to 1660) and on into the late 17th century.

### 15.2.2 An associated hypothesis for the Yorkshire Plants

Such historical records may hold some clues for answering the questions of how a Plant came to be, by 1663, at Bilton Ainsty near York. It may be noted that the parish of Bilton Ainsty (1571) adjoins that of Long Marston (1648) which was the site of the aforementioned 1644 Battle of Marston Moor.

<sup>26</sup>Alternatively, the early Lincolnshire Plants may, for example, have joined a general trend of southwards migration towards London.

Certainly  $Tom(Y1)$  of Figure 15.5 married in 1663 at Bilton Ainsty, which is about 10 miles to the west of York<sup>27</sup>. It was then apparently this Thomas Plant's son John who was subsequently baptised at Sherburn-in-Elmet, which is just 12 miles south of Bilton Ainsty.  $Tom(Y1)$  and his son John fathered several children at Sherburn-in-Elmet including a William Plant.

Thus, in an associated scheme which is outlined at the top of Figure 15.4, it is conjectured that  $Tom(Y1)$ 's father could have been the Richard Plant who married at Great Longstone in 1640<sup>28</sup>. At some time during the subsequent Commonwealth disruptions, this Richard's son Thomas Plant (bap 1641 at Great Longstone) may have found his way from Great Longstone to Bilton Ainsty near York. In the so-called 'Yorkshire' ancestral hypothesis, it is then romanticised that the grandson William of  $Tom(Y1)$  became  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton (i.e.  $W^m(0)$  of Figure 15.10).

### 15.2.3 Critique of this Yorkshire hypothesis

Amongst various reservations about the Yorkshire hypothesis, it may immediately be noted that  $Tom(Y1)$  of Yorkshire (Figure 15.5) could have been, for example, either from Radcliffe in Lancashire (Figure 15.1) or from Great Longstone<sup>29</sup>. Alternatively this could be an isolated manifestation of a Plant family that had arrived near York sometime earlier. It is essentially just the 'proximity' of Great Longstone to Duckmanton that forms a basis for supposing that  $W^m(0)$ 's ancestors may have come from Great Longstone and that he may then have 'returned' from mid-Yorkshire to NE Derbyshire<sup>30</sup>. In attempting to add some justification to the Yorkshire hypothesis, it might be proffered that the north Derbyshire Plant, Samuel, who apparently moved from Bakewell to Chesterfield (Figure 14.1) concurrently with the arrival of  $W^m(0)$  in nearby Duckmanton (Figure 15.10), could have been one of  $Tom(Y1)$ 's nephews. If so, this would imply that  $W^m(0)$  could have 'returned' some 40 miles from mid-Yorkshire, after 60 years, to live near a nephew Samuel of his supposed grandfather ( $Tom(Y1)$ ). As yet, the available evidence suggests however that  $Tom(Y1)$  was not as close as a brother to the apparent Bakewell father, Lawrence, of Samuel (Figure 15.3). In short, these conjectures of Plant family relationships have to be judged, on the basis of the available evidence, as doubtful.

### 15.2.4 Some other possible links for the North Derbyshire Plants

The available evidence, which will be outlined below, is in fact more directly amenable to separate ancestral connections of both the aforementioned Lawrence and  $W^m(0)$  to other Plants near Brand. Brand (near Buxton<sup>31</sup>) is only around 15 miles to the west of Great Longstone and it is the possibilities of Plant family connections with that area that will be examined further in this and subsequent Chapters. It was indicated earlier that the available

<sup>27</sup>It may be noted that  $Tom(Y1)$  of Bilton Ainsty would seem to have been more likely the age of the Thomas Plant baptised at Great Longstone (NE Derbyshire) in 1641 (Figure 15.4) than the one who was baptised there in 1648. This derives from the supposition that, in the data of Figure 15.5,  $Tom(Y1)$  married at Bilton Ainsty in 1663 and he would have been rather young (15) even for those times if he had been baptised at Great Longstone in 1648 instead of in 1641.

<sup>28</sup>This Richard Plant may have been (?back) in Great Longstone for a second marriage in 1645. It is unclear, however, whether this was the same Richard as the one who later married a Dorothy at Bakewell in 1669 (Figure 15.3) — it can be added that a Richard and Dorothy Plant had children at Leek in 1670 and 1682.

<sup>29</sup>Figure 15.1 shows another possible baptism for  $Tom(Y1)$  at Radcliffe in Lancashire. The year of the baptism at Radcliffe (1641) is the same as that at Great Longstone and so both of these recorded baptisms are similarly well suited to the apparent age of  $Tom(Y1)$ . Furthermore Radcliffe is also a similar distance from Bilton Ainsty, being about 50 miles to its WSW whilst Great Longstone is about 50 miles to its SSW.

<sup>30</sup>It is no more than the fact that Great Longstone is 15 miles west of Duckmanton that forms a basis for supposing the 'return' of  $Tom(Y1)$ 's grandson William from mid-Yorkshire, which is some 40 miles away, to NE Derbyshire and it needs to be added that this return was to a different location, 15 miles away, in NE Derbyshire.

<sup>31</sup>There were Roman baths at Buxton (Aquae Arnemetiae) and it may not have been unknown to the Romans that there were coal outcrops nearby on Axe Edge.

evidence suggests that  $W^m(0)$  had a connection with ‘*Branside, Prestbury*’ and, instead of favouring such schemes as the above ‘Yorkshire hypothesis’, this and further evidence tends to attract attention to contemporary Plants beyond Buxton. In other words, it can be considered that there may have been connections between the various known Plants around Buxton and these were, in particular, in the parishes of Great Longstone (N Derbyshire), Prestbury (E Cheshire), and Leek (NE Staffordshire).

### 15.3 Sheffield area Plants from beyond Buxton

**S**hree different, early Sheffield-area Plant forefathers were identified in Chapter 14. The possible origins of two of them, Lawrence of Bakewell and Francis of Buxton, are outlined below in conjunction with known information about the third, the stirp  $W^m(0)$  of the Duckmanton Plants. The Sheffield area Cutlers’ Apprenticeship records and other information suggests that it may well be appropriate to look around 18th century Buxton for the origins of all three of these apparent early Sheffield-area Plant forefathers.

#### 15.3.1 Buxton around 1700

I t is relevant to note that, though Buxton was developed into a fashionable Spa Town in the late 18th century<sup>32</sup>, it was less of a commodious centre around 1700. Though the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury had erected a capital mansion early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I ‘*near the auncient Bathes of Buckstone*’ ‘for the reception of strangers who then began to resort thither from distant parts of the kingdom’<sup>33</sup>, this mansion was taken down in 1670 by the Earl of Devonshire. By 1697, Celia Fiennes found ‘*the lodgings (at Buxton) so bad, two beds in a room, some three beds, and some four in one room .... and sometimes they are so crowded that three must lie in a bed ...*’<sup>34</sup>. On her way there from Haddon Hall (near Bakewell) she had noted ‘*Its very difficult to find the wayes here for you see only tops of hills and so many roads by reason of the best wayes up and down that its impossible for Coach or Waggon to pass some of them, and you scarce see a tree and no hedges all over the Country, only dry stone walls that incloses ground no other fence*’. Part of this route from near Ashford to Brand may have been along the old Roman road which was then followed quite exactly from Chelmorton to Buxton. Oral tradition at Chelmorton preserves the memory of long trains of packhorses standing in the village street and stretching back to the lead mine, waiting to take their panniers full of ore to the smelters<sup>35</sup>.

#### 15.3.2 A possible scenario for the nearby Plants

I t would not be surprising if the 17th century Great Longstone Plants of N Derbyshire had connections with the area west of Ashford through Chelmorton to Buxton and beyond. Any Plants who travelled west from Great Longstone may have paused little in the High Peak Hundred of NW Derbyshire before they passed by Buxton to reach the lower lands of East Cheshire and North Staffordshire. Similarly, any who travelled east from Leek parish (NE Staffordshire) or Prestbury parish (E Cheshire), may have settled little in the higher, more desolate lands of the Staffordshire Moorlands and the Derbyshire Peak District, before they arrived around 15 miles to the east in the vicinity of Bakewell town and nearby Great Longstone (cf. Figure 15.6). Before the late 18th century, it seems likely that some of

<sup>32</sup>It was not until 1780 that the 5th Duke of Devonshire built Buxton Crescent with its former ballroom which now houses the town library. The seat of the Dukes of Devonshire was (and is) at the Chatsworth House estate, about 15 miles to the east, which is shown as the shaded area just east of Bakewell in Figure 15.2.

<sup>33</sup>Joseph Hunter, 1819, *Hallamshire*, *ibid*, page 60.

<sup>34</sup>John Heath (1993) *An Illustrated History of Derbyshire*.

<sup>35</sup>David Hey (1980), *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads*, *ibid*, pages 31, 51, 121.

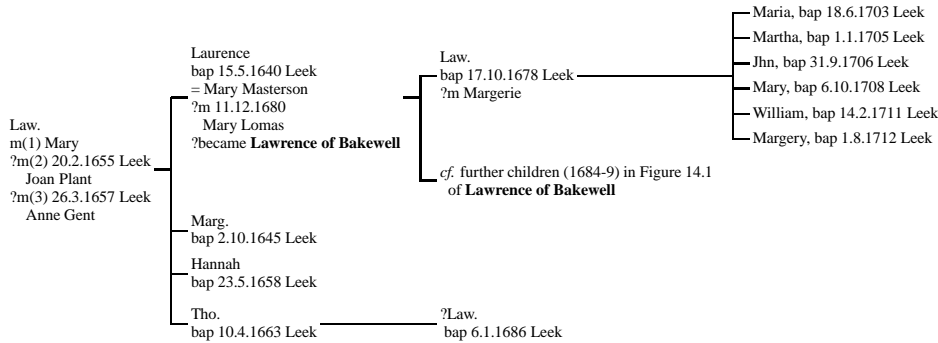


Figure 15.6: NW Derbyshire by 1789 (from an Actual Survey by P.P.Burdett 1789) showing (1) Brand Side near (2) the triple point joining the counties of Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire (bottom left corner) and (3) Chelmorton en route to Great Longstone north of Bakewell (bottom right corner)

## (a) Macclesfield St Michael in the parish of Prestbury (Cheshire)



## (b) Leek (Staffordshire)

Figure 15.7: Possible origins of the Sheffield area Plant forefather *Lawrence of Bakewell*

the pack horse trails from the Cheshire plains and from Leek parish passed by Brand and Chelmorton en route to Great Longstone. This can be considered alongside the evidence that the two Chesterfield area Plant forefathers of around 1700, *W<sup>m</sup>(0)* and Lawrence's son Samuel, have already been tentatively connected in records (Chapter 14) to *Branside, Prestbury* and Chelmorton<sup>36</sup> along the general course of this ancient, cross country route (cf. the somewhat altered road pattern by 1789 in Figure 15.6).

It might be misleading to suppose that the Brand Side now found in the north part of Hartington parish (NW Derbyshire) is that *Branside, Prestbury* which has been connected to *W<sup>m</sup>(0)* of Duckmanton. However we can consider, for a moment, a hypothetical family at that place that is now called Brand Side. Before 1700, such a family might have considered baptising their children (if at all) somewhere other than at their parish church of Hartington (8 miles SE). They might, for example, have considered availing themselves of the parish records of Gawsworth (8 miles W), Leek (8 miles SSW), Longnor (5 miles SE), or Chelmorton (5 miles E) for example. Before Buxton (1718), the dates when the parish records of the surrounding churches began were Alston Field (1538), Leek & Lowe (1634), Longnor (1694), Gawsworth (1557), Macclesfield St Michael (1572), Hartington (1610), and Chelmorton (1580). Nearer to Gawsworth there was, for example, a known Plant family at Wincle. Though we do not consider them in detail in the Chapter it is relevant to note that they, for example, could fit with the aforementioned description *Branside, Prestbury* that has been associated with *W<sup>m</sup>(0)* of Duckmanton. Wincle is just in Prestbury parish (East Cheshire) over the border from Leek (North Staffordshire) and it lies on the side of high ground about 3 miles NW of The Roaches. A Plant family at Wincle might have considered baptising their children at Leek (6 miles S), Gawsworth (5 miles NW), or Macclesfield (6 miles NNW) for example, which were nearer than their main parish church of Prestbury (8 miles NNW).

<sup>36</sup>As indicated in Figure 15.3, it is not entirely clear how a ?1700 Bakewell marriage, between a Samuel Plant and a Jane White, fits into the scheme of one or more Samuel(s) at Bakewell, Chelmorton, and Chesterfield.

### 15.3.3 Lawrence Plant of Bakewell

As already noted, one of the Sheffield area Plant ancestors was quite feasibly the father, Lawrence, of a Samuel Plant who was of the large parish of Bakewell (North Derbyshire) and then of Chesterfield (NE Derbyshire)<sup>37</sup>. If we assume that this Chesterfield Samuel's father was indeed called Lawrence Plant<sup>38</sup>, we may then proceed to remark that Lawrence's quite uncommon name suggests that he may have been the one who was baptised in the large parish of Prestbury (E Cheshire), which surrounds Macclesfield and Gawsworth, (Figure 15.7(a)), or that he may have been a different, contemporary Lawrence who was baptised in the parish of Leek (NE Staffordshire) which adjoins it to the south (Figure 15.7(b)).

It then follows that it may have been a son Samuel of a Lawrence from the far side of the High Peak Hundred (NW Derbyshire) who arrived near Chesterfield (NE Derbyshire) in the years around 1700. This is about the same time as when  $W^m(0)$  also arrived near Chesterfield, at Duckmanton. This can be set against a background of developing trade and communications at that time between the counties beyond Brand (Cheshire and Staffordshire) at the far side of north Derbyshire and the Sheffield-Chesterfield area<sup>39</sup>.

In short, the available parish and apprenticeship records relating to their origins (Chapter 14) suggest that both Laurence and  $W^m(0)$  may have originated from near Buxton (NW Derbyshire) or beyond, near the Cheshire-Staffordshire border. Provided that we assume that  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton was indeed he who was of *Branside, Prestbury*, essentially all the known possibilities for his and Lawrence's baptisms occur within the boundary that contains the two adjoining (large) parishes of Leek (NE Staffordshire) and Prestbury (E Cheshire). No other possibilities are (as yet) known (cf. Figure 15.1) for Lawrence in particular and, in a wide region of several counties around Brand, there are no other known possibilities for  $W^m(0)$ 's baptism<sup>40</sup>.

### 15.3.4 Francis Plant of Buxton

Similarly, as for Lawrence, there are few known possibilities for the similarly uncommon name Francis Plant. This name appears in the parish records (Figure 15.8(a)) for Sheriff Hales (East Shropshire) and Seighford (West Staffordshire) which are around 20 miles SSW of Leek.

The Sheffield area apprenticeship records (Chapter 14) indicate that Francis Plant's son John arrived near Sheffield rather later than the other apparent Sheffield area Plant forefathers,  $W^m(0)$  and Lawrence's son Samuel. It also seems that this Francis may have come from further to the SSW near Sheriff Hales. By those times, the Industry of the East Shropshire coalfield near Sheriff Hales was passing its peak and early skills from

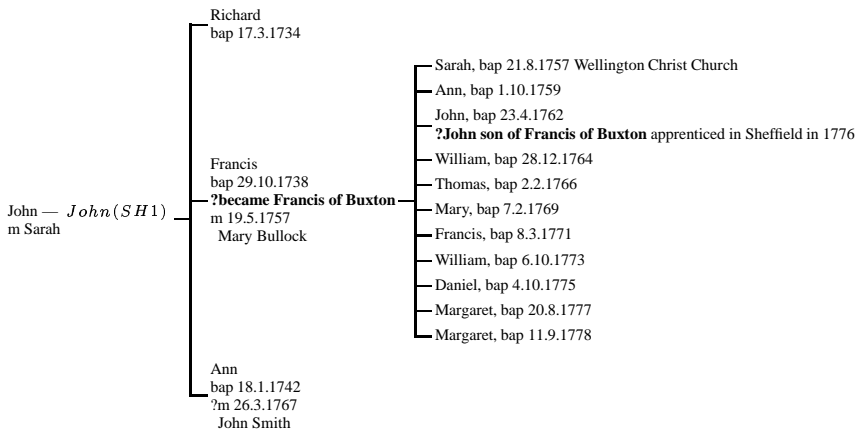
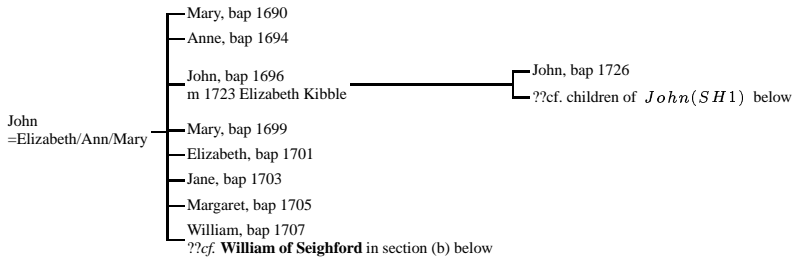
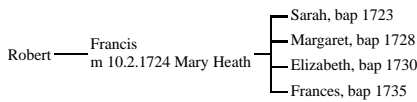
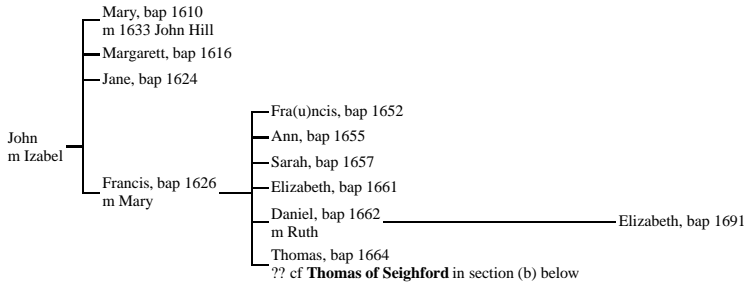
<sup>37</sup>It was mentioned in Chapter 14 that the available information could be taken to indicate that this Lawrence's son Samuel had a connection with Bakewell's chapelry of Chelmorton (near Buxton) around 1710-15.

<sup>38</sup>It should be noted that some additional information in Figure 15.3 leaves some uncertainty about whether there may have been another Samuel in Bakewell parish. The Bakewell records contain a marriage for a Samuell just 11 years after the baptism of a Samuell to Lawrence.

<sup>39</sup>The accounts for the 'Attercliffe group' of ironmasters (near Sheffield) show that their trade was starting to extend to Cheshire around 1700, with consignments being sold to the Cheshire market towns of Chester, Knutsford, and Nantwich in the first 15 years of the 18th century. Certainly, by 1749, the adjacent Staffordshire township of Leek was indicted in the quarter sessions for not repairing 'a great carriers' road ... chiefly used by packhorses who carry salt out of Cheshire ... and bring back malt ... upon a modest calculation above 100 packhorses loaded with salt pass weekly ...' — this route led to Chesterfield, near Duckmanton, though it passed through Hartington and Matlock some distance to the south of the Plants at Great Longstone.

<sup>40</sup>The known possibilities for  $W^m(0)$ 's baptism are at Gawsworth and Leek. The possibility at Gawsworth is for 1696 (Figure 14.4(d)). The small parish of Gawsworth, which contains Gawsworth Hall, is surrounded by the parish of *Prestbury* (East Cheshire). There are also three possible baptisms for  $W^m(0)$  at Leek (Figure 14.4(e)) dated 1698, 1702 and 1706. The latter date, for example, would imply that  $W^m(0)$  would have been aged 19 at the time of his 1725 marriage to Ann Webster at Ault Hucknall, at which he is described as 'William Plant of Duckmanton' (Chapter 9). The earliest known possible baptism, at Gawsworth, would imply that  $W^m(0)$  would instead have been aged 29.

(a) Sheriff Hales (Shropshire)



(b) Seighford and Pattingham (Staffordshire)

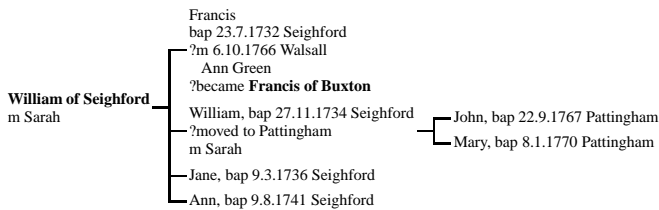
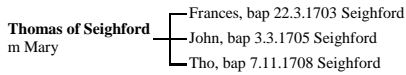


Figure 15.8: Possible origins of the Sheffield area Plant forefather *Francis of Buxton*

that area were in demand in the developing NE Derbyshire and S Yorkshire coalfield of Sheffield's Hallamshire. Though this was quite far, it can be noted that trade links were improving to that area by that time. By 1787, Birmingham could be reached twice weekly by Sim's cart for example as these Sheffield carriers ran a service over the hills via Ashford, Leek, and Newcastle-under-Lyme. Thus, it is not inappropriate to note that the parish records of Sheriff Hales contain in particular a Francis, with a son John Plant of just the required age (14) for matching a 1776 apprenticeship record for near Sheffield. This Cutlers' apprenticeship record mentions John Plant, son of Francis Plant of Buxton, which may suggest that, by 1776, this Francis may have travelled about 35 miles NNE from Sheriff Hales to near Buxton and that his young son John may then have travelled on to near Sheffield to take up an apprenticeship as a filesmith.

These different dates, together with their apparently different origins, might be thought to suggest a lack of connection between this Francis and the other supposed early Sheffield area Plant forefathers. We may note however that there were some parallels between the early Plants of East Shropshire and those arriving in NE Derbyshire in as much as their contemporary environments, both near Sheriff Hales and near Duckmanton, had been nurturing Industrial Developments that were to be of an utmost historical significance.

### 15.3.5 Plant brick men

Figure 15.8 suggests that a branch of the Sheriff Hales Plant family may have travelled a further 10 miles south to around Pattingham and Seisdon (near Wolverhampton). At Seisdon, there are records<sup>41</sup> of two brick men, Plant and Price in the mid 1750s. It may be noted that these Seisdon brick men were presumably brickmakers and that they were contemporaries of the brickmaker  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton, which is near Sheffield about 55 miles to the NE.

We can accordingly note that the aforementioned Seisdon Plant brick man, who may have been from the Sheriff Hales family, was close by Abraham Darby's historic iron-making developments in East Shropshire. Sheriff Hales is now a pleasant, secluded village with a fine Manor House. In the early 18th century, it adjoined the now-abandoned East Shropshire coalfield<sup>42</sup>. It was in this coalfield, at Coalbrookdale, that Abraham Darby first successfully used coke in a brick-built blast furnace for smelting iron<sup>43</sup>. It is reputed that common bricks had been made in East Shropshire long before 1750 though it was probably not until around that time that fire-bricks were made there<sup>44</sup>. Certainly by the late 18th century, fire-bricks were made from coal-baked fireclay from 3 clay strata near Wombridge, which is just 4 miles west of Sheriff Hales.

It seems that the brickmaker William Plant of Duckmanton may have originated around 1700 as a carpenter at *Branside, Prestbury*, which is some 35 miles NNE from Sheriff Hales. It may hence be no more than coincidence that, after settling at Duckmanton, this brickmaker  $W^m(0)$  was also nearby a historic development in the production of iron and steel. It is known that  $W^m(0)$  had a family connection with the famous Benjamin Huntsman, who was using coke in brick-built furnaces for his newly-invented crucible steel. When  $W^m(0)$  arrived at Duckmanton by 1725, there was already industrial activity in that area. At Chesterfield near Duckmanton in 1697, Celia Fiennes saw '*coale pits and quarraes of stone*

<sup>41</sup>The Victoria County Histories of England: Staffordshire, Vol.20, page 192.

<sup>42</sup>This historically important coalfield extended 3 miles east to west and 10 miles from Lilleshall, just NW of Sheriff Hales, to just south of Coalbrookdale.

<sup>43</sup>Abraham Darby came from Bristol to Coalbrookdale and rebuilt the then-derelict blast furnace with brick and giant bellows to successfully smelt iron ore with coke in 1709. It was nearby at Horsehay, 6 miles SW of Sheriff Hales, that his son Abraham Darby II and his partner established that coke was commercially superior to charcoal for the smelting and forging of iron (*The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, Barrie Trinder, 2nd Edition, 1981).

<sup>44</sup>Fire bricks had earlier been imported to East Shropshire from Stourbridge (Barrie Trinder, *The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire*, *ibid*).

*all about*’ and there were also iron works and potteries<sup>45</sup>. Nearer to Duckmanton, the inhabitants of Calow had protested in 1650 that ‘*the many carriages of Coale, leade, and milne stones*’ were destroying their roads<sup>46</sup>. Ten miles to the north, bricks apparently first reappeared in Sheffield (since Roman times) in 1696, just before the arrival of the brickmaker  $W^m(0)$  at Duckmanton. It is known that, by the late 18th century, this ‘first’ Sheffield brick building was being used by a step-uncle-in-law of the brickmaker  $W^m(0)$ ’s son Benjamin.

## 15.4 A supposed Great Longstone connection

**T**he first known arrival of a Plant in Sheffield is in 1737 — there is a 1737 baptism of a Ruth Plant to a John Plant. The father John in this Sheffield baptism record could have been a John Plant from Sherburn-in-Elmet in mid-Yorkshire (30 miles north of Sheffield, Figure 15.5) or from Great Longstone in north Derbyshire (15 miles SW of Sheffield, Figure 15.4). By assuming that it was the latter, rather than the former, a *glimmer* of a picture begins to emerge of possible Plant relationships between Great Longstone and Sheffield and this picture is not incompatible with the baptismal possibilities for  $W^m(0)$  away near Brand.

The contention is thus that there could have been a link between a John Plant who went to Sheffield by 1737 and  $W^m(0)$  who, if it is the same William, apparently came from *Branside, Prestbury* to Duckmanton by 1725. It can hence be supposed that a decade or so after  $W^m(0)$ ’s baptism, which was quite likely near Brand, around 15 miles or so WSW of Great Longstone, a John Plant (Ruth’s father) could have travelled 15 miles NE from Great Longstone to Sheffield. Thus, these contended links portray a plausible picture of Plants moving within a realistic circle of 10 or 20 miles around a Plant home base at Great Longstone.

### 15.4.1 A possible relationship between $W^m(0)$ and John

I ncluding baptism data from near Brand (Chapter 14) enables the formulation of a simple scheme, if we adopt a hypothetical set of Plant family relationships that centre on Great Longstone. This scheme extends to Great Longstone’s west, to Prestbury parish beyond Brand, and a similar distance to its east, to Duckmanton. The closest known Great Longstone relationship, by which we can connect  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton to John (father of Ruth) of Sheffield, is that they could have been cousins. This is apparent from the existing Great Longstone schemata of Figure 15.4.

In the Yorkshire hypothesis, which was considered earlier in this Chapter, Ruth’s father John Plant in Sheffield could instead have been  $W^m(0)$ ’s brother from Sherburn-in-Elmet (Figure 15.5). As has been indicated above however, there is more persuasive evidence (Chapter 14) for a link of  $W^m(0)$  to ‘Branside, Prestbury’ and this does not fit easily with a more distant Yorkshire hypothesis.

For the purposes of describing a simple Great Longstone contention for  $W^m(0)$ ’s ancestry, we can accordingly begin by noting that the brickmaker  $W^m(0)$ ’s father could also have been called William Plant. Three out of the four known possible baptisms for  $W^m(0)$  beyond Brand were to a father called William<sup>47</sup> (Chapter 14). The general evidence is amenable to an exploratory contention that  $W^m(0)$ ’s father could have travelled 15 miles or so west from Great Longstone to around Brand (beyond Buxton), in accord with the evidence of the Cutlers’ Apprenticeship records. From there, he could have had his son

<sup>45</sup>John Heath (1993), *An Illustrated History of Derbyshire*.

<sup>46</sup>David Hey (1980), *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads*, *ibid*, p 122.

<sup>47</sup>Amongst various possibilities, this father William *could have been* Anthony’s son William (bap 15.2.1650) of Great Longstone. Moreover *this* William *could have been* the uncle of the John Plant who first went to Sheffield (Figure 15.4) to become, in 1737, the father of Ruth Plant.

$W^m(0)$  baptised (circa 1696-1706) nearby at Gawsorth (Prestbury) or Leek, where there are three suitable baptisms.

It remains to be considered, in later Chapters, whether or how the Great Longstone Plants might have related to early Plants who had long been based beyond Brand, such as at Wincle near the Leek-Prestbury border. It is already possible to consider below, however, the implications of the above contention that the Sheffield *Plant's Yard* Plants could have originated, via 'Branside' and Duckmanton, from a 'central' Plant family base at Great Longstone.

### 15.4.2 Implications for the Plant's Yard Plants

By adopting the above contention that pertinent North Derbyshire Plant relationships were centred on Great Longstone, we arrive at an implication that  $W^m(0)$ 's sons, *Ben(bellows)* and James, perhaps when they were in their teens before 1760, could have gone from Duckmanton to Sheffield in the wake of an elderly cousin, John Plant from Great Longstone, of their father. As indicated earlier, both *Ben(bellows)* and (apparently his brother) James went to Coalpit Lane near Broom Hall and, since the younger *Ben(bellows)* is known to have held many properties in Coalpit Lane around 1790, it has been supposed that this could have been a likely site for the '*Late Plant yard*' that is mentioned in local rate books of around 1780. The designation '*Late*' might mean that *Ben(bellows)* had disposed of a '*Plant yard*' of his own by 1779<sup>48</sup>. It is interesting, however, to speculate that such a yard could instead have been established earlier by his father  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton (bur 1769) or, in this simple 'Great Longstone contention', by  $W^m(0)$ 's cousin John Plant from Great Longstone (bap 1689). If this were so, it could follow that further (time consuming) examinations of the 18th century property records for Sheffield (cf. Chapter 13) might eventually uncover some further clues.

### 15.4.3 Implications for a Plant-Eyre connection

It was commented in Chapter 11 that it may have been more than just coincidence that, around the time when  $W^m(0)$ 's sons arrived near Broom Hall, two NE Derbyshire Plants from near Great Longstone married into the Eyre family. This might imply for example that further information about the Eyre family could be relevant, at least to the circumstances of the Great Longstone Plants. Such information might moreover provide some clues that could then be related to the contention that there may have been a close family relationship between the Great Longstone and Sheffield Plants.

Certainly, there is clear evidence for an Eyre-Plant connection near Great Longstone. This can be considered together with Eyre family data from the 1984 IGI<sup>49</sup> which suggests that the two Eyre brides of the Great Longstone Plants may have been sisters who had come from Chelmorton<sup>50</sup> (Figure 15.9(b)). Like other Eyre gentry, this Eyre family might have had an interest in lead and it may have been this that took them, perhaps temporarily, to Chelmorton with its lead mine. These Eyres from Chelmorton twice married into the Great Longstone Plant family at Edensor, near Great Longstone on the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth House estate (Figure 15.2). A brother of these brides, Solomon Eyre, had apparently moved by the time of his sisters' marriages from Chelmorton to the Plant bridegrooms' home parish of Great Longstone.

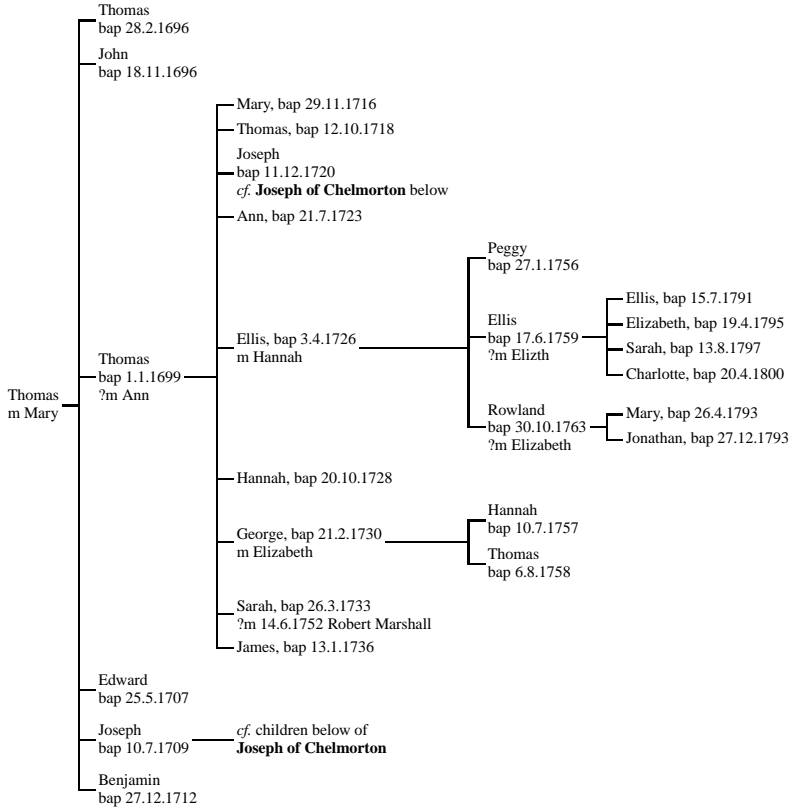
The activities of the Eyre gentry perhaps help to reveal the nature of the NE Derbyshire region over which Plant interests may have extended. The Eyre family had long held lead

<sup>48</sup>It is quite conceivable that he could have acquired and then sold a yard of his own by that time, since he had married into a leading Sheffield family in 1766 and he is known to have been a bellows maker by the time of his daughter's baptism in 1768.

<sup>49</sup>International Genealogical Index, *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup>Chelmorton has been mentioned already in connection with  $W^m(0)$ 's Chesterfield contemporary, Samuel Plant.

(a) A scheme of Edale Eyres



(b) An Eyre family from Chelmorton

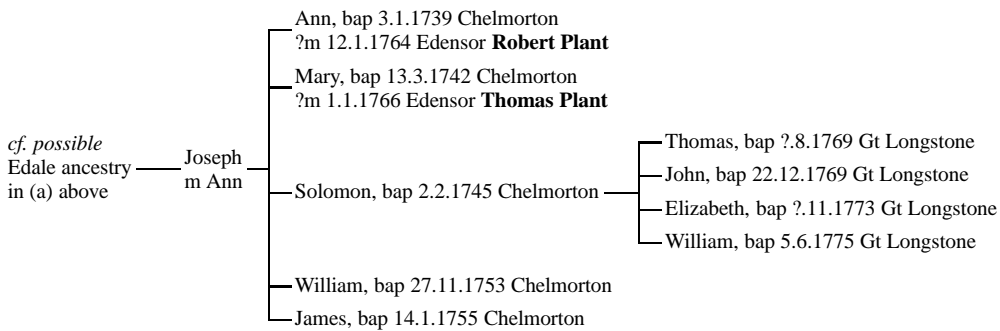


Figure 15.9: Possible ancestry of the Eyre brides of the Plants

mines at Calver and Hassop (near Great Longstone). They also had a long-held interest in lead smelting mills at Dore and Totley, midway between Great Longstone and Sheffield, and at Barlow, midway between Great Longstone and Duckmanton (Figure 15.2). The Old Hay lead mill at Totley, for example, was built in 1585 and in 1589-90 the Earl of Shrewsbury leased it to Rowland Eyre of Hassop (near Great Longstone) in return for Eyre ceasing to claim the manor of Barlow<sup>51</sup>. In 1586, Rowland Eyre's lease of the Barlow smelting mills granted free passage to his '*servants, workmen carriers and jagggers with horses and oxen waynes cart and carriages ... for bringing and carieing of lead ore*'<sup>52</sup>.

As well as at Great Longstone, there appears subsequently to be a close proximity between the Eyres and the Plants at Broom Hall, in Sheffield's SW chapelry of Ecclesall. The evidence for a possible Plant-Eyre connection near Broom Hall is simply as follows. It is known that  $W^m(0)$ 's son *Ben(bellows)* was to be found, at least by the time of more detailed 1790s records, with 'Broom Hall land' and based at nearby sites (Chapter 13). Broom Hall, near (Little) Sheffield Moor, had been inherited by a member of the Eyre gentry of High Low (Chapter 11). It may hence be of some relevance to note that Sheffield History<sup>53</sup> records that, around those times, it was 'the daughters of the Shores, the Eyres, the Steers, and the Batties' who were judged fit to be the queens of the Sheffield balls. This was around the time when  $W^m(0)$ 's son *Ben(bellows)* is known to have married into one of Sheffield's leading families.

The detail of this evidence is such that it remains just a plausible contention however, for future consideration, that the Duckmanton Plants arrived at Sheffield in the wake of a Great Longstone Plant interest in Broom Hall, which had recently been inherited by the Eyre family of High Low (alias the Gell family of Hopton). Certainly, it is fitting to note that Great Longstone was just 5 miles south of the High Low home of the Eyres who had twice married into the Jessop family of Broom Hall<sup>54</sup>. It is necessary, however, to stress a proviso that, though there is clear evidence of a close family relationship between the Plants of Great Longstone and some nearby Eyres, there remains some uncertainty about the precise extent of the relationships between the Eyres who married into the Great Longstone Plant family and the nearby High Low Eyres, who inherited Broom Hall. The Eyres of High Low were the leading Catholic family of Derbyshire and they do not themselves appear in the 1984 Derbyshire IGI. There hence remains some uncertainty about the precise details of the relationships between the Eyres of Chelmorton, Great Longstone and Broom Hall, just as some uncertainty remains about that relationship between the Great Longstone Plants and those Plant's Yard sons of  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton who moved to near Broom Hall in Sheffield.

## 15.5 The arrival of Plants around Little Sheffield Moor

**D**eliberations in this Chapter indicate that it is quite feasible that  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton came from a region near Brand near Buxton. This agrees with the mention of '*Branside Prestbury*' in a Sheffield area Cutlers Apprenticeship record for a William who may well have been the same William as he who was the progenitor  $W^m(0)$  of the Duckmanton Plants. Both Williams had sons at Coalpit Lane near Sheffield and it seems likely that both these sons were sons of the same William, in fact of  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton who is known to have had sons called Benjamin and James<sup>55</sup>. There is also a possible scheme of Plant family relationships to illustrate the feasibility that Plants at

<sup>51</sup>David Crossley (1989), *Water Power on the Sheffield Rivers*, *ibid*, p 92.

<sup>52</sup>David Hey (1980), *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads*, *ibid*, pps 120-1.

<sup>53</sup>Mary Walton (1948), *Sheffield: its Story and its Achievements*, p104.

<sup>54</sup>Barbara Eyre of High Low near Hathersage had married into the Jessop family of Broom Hall in 1664 and John Eyre of High Low (alias John Gell of Hopton) married Isabella Jessop of Broom Hall in 1721.

<sup>55</sup>Some further relevant evidence, for James for example, was outlined in Chapter 14.

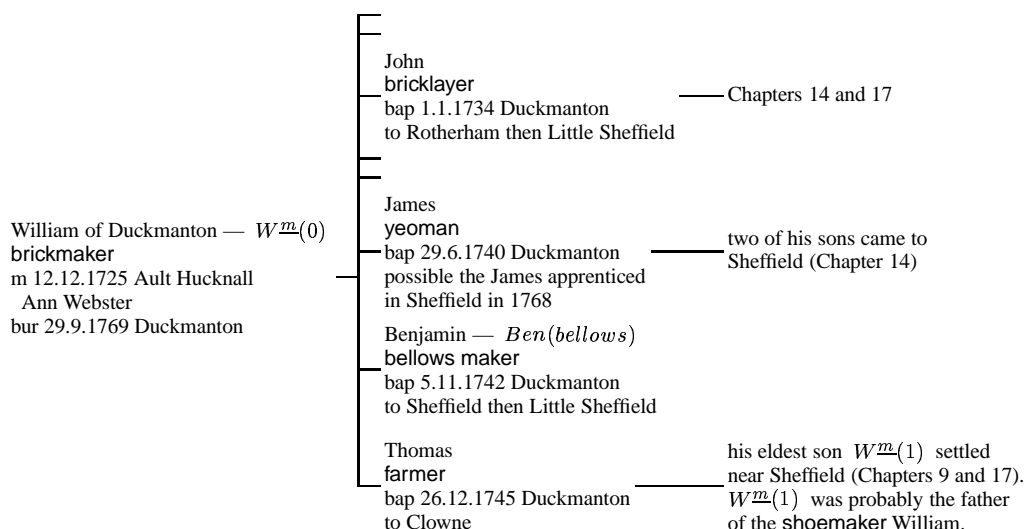


Figure 15.10: Duckmanton ancestors of the Sheffield (Plant's Yard) Plants

Great Longstone, midway between Brand and Sheffield, can be tied into the origins of these Duckmanton Plants. There is thus a possibility that  $W^m(0)$ 's father may, for example, have originated from Great Longstone, which was the nearest known contemporary Plant base to Sheffield and Duckmanton. Such a possibility will remain a subject for further consideration.

The subsequent history of the Duckmanton Plants who came to Sheffield is better established than the 'hypotheses' and 'contentions' that have been outlined in this Chapter. A relatively detailed record for  $W^m(0)$ 's Sheffield descendants, through late Georgian and Victorian times, has already been uncovered. It accordingly seems quite clear that some descendants of  $W^m(0)$  of Duckmanton settled near (Little) Sheffield Moor, which adjoined Broom Hall. A particular source of information relates to  $W^m(0)$ 's son *Ben(bellows)* who is known in a standard book on Sheffield's history<sup>56</sup> as 'Benjamin Plant of Sheffield Moor'. An associated 'Late Plant yard', for which there are records by 1779, has been supposed to have been at or near *Ben(bellows)*'s Balme Croft property (Coalpit Lane) at the SW edge of Sheffield town (Chapter 13), though it might have been elsewhere within Sheffield's quite small SW chapelry of Ecclesall. It is not as yet clear whether this 'Late Plant yard' originated from an earlier generation of Plants.

*Ben(bellows)*'s Balme Croft property (Coalpit Lane) was near the head of Little Sheffield Moor. The Little Sheffield site that was subsequently to become widely known as Plant's Yard was about a mile to the south near this Moor's foot (Chapter 10). These two early Sheffield Plant family sites were evidently involved, in the late 18th century, in Industrial Forge conversions (Chapter 14). It may hold some Plant family significance that Eyre links to earlier Lead Smelting Mills, such as on the Barlow Brook midway between Great Longstone and Duckmanton, can be offered as an apparent central force in the early local expertise<sup>57</sup> for mechanised (giant bellows-driven) ore smelting and forging<sup>58</sup>.

In the 18th century Alsops Fields, at the southern edge of Sheffield town, extended eastwards from St Paul's Church, near the head of Little Sheffield Moor, down towards the

<sup>56</sup>*Peeps into the Past*, *ibid*.

<sup>57</sup>Lead production centred on North Derbyshire from prehistoric, Roman, and mediaeval times — it is the only county specified as lead producing in the Domesday Book, with mines at Ashford, Bakewell, Crich, Matlock and Wirksworth. In the 16th and 17th centuries the riches of the North Derbyshire Gell and Eyre families depended on it until most of the ore was exhausted. Lead production involves crushing the ore, roasting it, and placing it in an air-blown furnace with coke and limestone.

<sup>58</sup>Lead ore and limestone were abundant in NW Derbyshire and iron ore and coal in NE Derbyshire.

Pond Tilt and the Pond Forge. These were near the confluence of the Porter Brook and the River Sheaf, which combined their wheel-turning flows at the eastern edge of Sheffield town. A mixed residential and factory area was planned across these fields by the Duke of Norfolk's steward, Vincent Eyre, and the plan was carried through, between 1776 and 1793, by Sheffield's most famous surveyor William Fairbank; pleasant houses lined the new streets. It was in the adjoining Pond Lane that Hannah Plant was bequeathed in the 1805 will of her husband ( *Ben(bellows)* ) the choice of either of two houses not far from the Howard Street home of her brother, Sheffield's 1790 Master Cutler, Joseph Ward.

Another beneficiary of *Ben(bellows)'s* will was *W<sup>m</sup>(1)* who was quite surely the eldest son of *Ben(bellows)'s* brother, the farmer Thomas Plant of Clowne (Figure 15.10); Clown(e) appears at the right edge of Figure 15.2. It was almost certainly this same *W<sup>m</sup>(1)* who was the father of the Sheffield shoemaker William Plant (1803-48). At least in the final decades of his life, this shoemaker lived near the foot of (Little) Sheffield Moor which was no longer wild moorland to the south of Sheffield town as it had, at the end of the 18th century, been enveloped by Sheffield's spreading buildings.

Sheffield became in the 20th century the fifth leading city of Britain, both in terms of its total and its Plant populations. Even by modern times, some of the shoemaker William's descendants were still living near the first sites of the Plant forefathers who came to Sheffield (Chapter ??). Though (as yet) the detail is scant, it seems that it is possible to catch at least a few glimpses of an arrival in 18th-century Sheffield of the first (known) Sheffield Plant forefathers of these persistently Sheffield-based Plants. Some of the shoemaker William's descendants moved only slightly southwards with Sheffield's spreading outskirts to live on ex-NE Derbyshire land, which was annexed to South Yorkshire's expanding city of Sheffield<sup>59</sup>. The likely origins of the Sheffield Plants, along with the Sheffield Plant family descendants of the shoemaker William (1803-48), will be considered further in the next Chapters.

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<sup>59</sup>There were significant annexations of Derbyshire land to Sheffield in 1928, 1933, and 1967.