

## The Shepherd Family of Milborne Port

(Some of the names have been colour-coded to help the reader keep track of who is who!)

The Shepherd family was significant in and around Milborne Port in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their origins lie in Horsington where **Thomas** Shepherd and his wife baptised their children, Elizabeth 1683, James 1688, Samuel 1697 and **Andrew** 1702. **Thomas** was buried there in 1718. His son **Andrew** (of Horsington) married a local girl, Joanna Andrews, at Maperton on 8th February 1725 and they baptised two sons there, Samuel later in 1725 and **John** in 1727. **Andrew** next appears in North Cheriton where he and Joanna baptised two further children, Mary in 1730 and Benjamin in 1733.

**Andrew**, Joanna and their son **John** moved to Osborne where **John** and his wife Mary baptised children Ann 1750, **Thomas** 1752, **John** 1754, **Samuel** 1755, **Benjamin** 1757 and Joanna 1759, followed by **Andrew** 1764 and **Mary** 1766 baptised in Milborne Port. Joanna died in 1765 and **Andrew** in 1785; both were buried in Osborne.

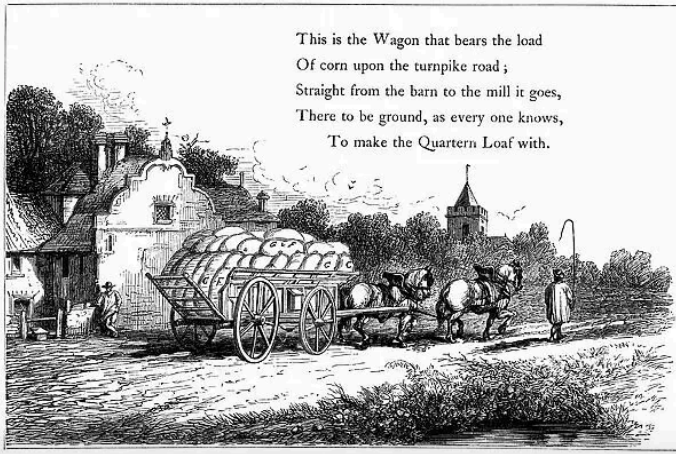
By now the family were substantial bakers and millers and were involved in the wine trade. **John** was a prominent landowner in Milborne Port and an overseer of the poor, although he was not above cutting corners and committing minor misdemeanours. There was a bankruptcy, an illegitimate child and a family tragedy thrown into the mix. Later generations included a gifted musician and a tannery owner who became a millionaire.

In 1757, **John** Shepherd of Osborne, Dorset miller and baker, was convicted of selling unmarked bread at Milborne Port, although we do not know what penalty he incurred. In 1709, a new Act had superseded the Assize of 1266; magistrates were empowered to control the type, weight and price of loaves. Only white, wheaten (wholemeal) and 'household' bread were permitted ('household' bread was made from low grade flour). In 1757, a report accused bakers of adulterating bread by using alum lime, chalk and powdered bones to keep it very white. Parliament banned alum and all additives in bread but some bakers ignored the ban.



In 1771, a lease for years of lives of land<sup>1</sup>, formerly the site of a dwelling house in Kingsbury Regis, Milborne Port was granted to **John** Shepherd, baker of Kingsbury Regis, by Thomas Hutchings Medlycott of Ven.

In 1772, there was an Order dismissing an appeal by Newton and Longman, Overseers of Milborne Port, against the nomination and appointment of Edward Hallett the younger, **John** Shepherd, William Highmore and Robert Baunton as Overseers<sup>2</sup> of the said parish.



We do not know what grounds Highmore and Baunton had against the nominations but perhaps **John** Shepherd's dodgy reputation didn't do him any favours! And their fears were surely understandable... For in 1774, John was in trouble again for flouting the law! A memo exists telling us that James Hiscock of Milbone Port, labourer, gave information against John Northover, servant to **John** Shepherd, concerning a driving offence; a wagon pulled by five horses belonging to **John** Shepherd

went up a hill in Milborne against the statute regulating turnpike roads. (The width of the felloe<sup>3</sup> of the wheels were less than regulation size).

An indenture of a lease 1<sup>st</sup> May 1776 was made between Edward Walter of Stalbridge (then Lord of the Manor of Kingsbury Regis) and **John** Shepherd the elder of the other part. *Edward Walter did demise, grant to **John** Shepherd the elder all that messuage or dwelling house, water grist mill, bakehouse, stable and garden thereunto belonging situate, lying and being in Kingsbury Regis formerly in the possession of John Balster then and now in the possession of **John** Shepherd the elder together with all ways, passes, passages, rights, easements, profits, waters, watercourses, flood gates, banks, mill pounds and other appurtenances therewith usually held and enjoyed whole to **John** Shepherd for 99 years.* The document was signed by **John** the elder, **Thomas** and **Benjamin** Shepherd; the rent was £1, the herriott<sup>4</sup> 13s 4d per year.



<sup>1</sup> The lease nominated three people and the lease expired when all three people named had died.

<sup>2</sup> The Overseers of the Poor administered relief such as money, food, clothing, elected annually every Easter.

<sup>3</sup> Each segment of a ring of wood just inside the iron tyre of a wagon wheel is called a felloe, i.e. the circular rim or a part of the rim of a wheel, into which the outer ends of the spokes are inserted.

<sup>4</sup> A feudal duty or tribute due under English law to a lord on the death of a tenant.

This property was, in all likelihood, the Old Mill in Lower Kingsbury, pictured above.

It was 1780 and back in court again regarding a bastardy order was **John** Shepherd of Milborne Port, Somerset, Maltster, with his son **Benjamin** Shepherd of Osborne, baker (reputed father), and Rosannah Critchele of Folke. The requirement of a bastardy bond order resulted in **John** and **Benjamin** being obliged to pay £40<sup>5</sup>, then 1/- weekly for seven years until the 'female bastard was put out to apprentice'. It is likely that **John** was required to act as a guarantor because **Benjamin** had refused to accept paternity or to marry Rosannah.

Fortunately, this sorry episode is followed by propitious, maybe even arranged marriages for some of **John's** children.

Joanna married and Samuel Longman in 1781; **Thomas** Shepherd married Mary Longman in 1783 and Mary married Charles Pitman of Osborne by licence in 1786; **Mary** died during or soon after childbirth in 1788. Their children were **Joseph**, born 1786 North Petherton and baptised in January 1787 at Milborne Port, and **Martha** baptised 24/9/1788 in North Petherton.

In 1789, there is a marriage settlement for **Andrew** Shepherd (son of **John** Shepherd) and Sarah Longman (daughter of John Longman, linen manufacturer) both of Milborne Port, relating to the same house, water gristmill and bake house in Kingsbury Regis. The indenture features the names **John** Shepherd, Sarah Noake (widow of Milborne Port), **Benjamin** Shepherd of Osborne (miller)<sup>6</sup> and **John** Shepherd junior of Stalbridge (baker), George Hallett (gentleman) of Milborne Port, and John Longman. This must have been quite a business venture! These are the names of many of the other eminent families in the village at this time and many of them are connected by marriage or blood.

As part of the same agreement, Andrew Shepherd and Sarah Longman are entitled by the marriage agreement of her father and late mother part of the sum of £600 or to purchase an estate. Sarah Noake adds to this sum £500 to her granddaughter (Sarah Longman). If Sarah dies before her husband and with no issue, the money is to go to George Hallett and John Longman in trust for **John Shepherd's** other children.

1/6/1789 **Andrew** and Sarah were married by licence at Milborne Port on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1789. Their children were **John Longman Shepherd**, Mary, Caroline, James, Uriah, Reuben, Andrew and Benoni<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-history-centre-blog/2021/08/06/bastardy-records-what-are-they-and-what-do-they-tell-us/>

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Shepherd leased Osborne Mill in 1794; could he have taken it over from his father? According to The Mills Archive, there was a mill off Osborne Lane, not far from the junction with Crackmore; there was possibly another further north.

<sup>7</sup> A version of Benjamin.

A John Shepherd appears in the Osborne Militia Ballot List<sup>8</sup> in 1798; he is described as 'hard of hearing'; he was 5' 4"; it is unclear which John this is.

**Samuel** Shepherd died in 1799 aged (44) and was buried at Osborne and just a year later, the family's misfortunes continued... **Thomas** Shepherd (late of Osborne, Dorset miller and baker) appeared in a list of bankrupts on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1800 and was called to appear at The Bear Inn, Wincanton (reputed to be the oldest coaching inn in the town) to face his creditors.



In December 1805, John made his will and died the following month, aged about 80 – a very good age for the times! He was buried at Milborne Port. He left £100 each to sons **Thomas** and **John** and £50 to his grandson John (son of **Thomas**).

He wrote off **Andrew's** debt to him of £200 and bequeathed him all his estate and interest in his *Messuage or dwelling house, Malthouse, Butcher Shop and Garden late Lambert situate in Milborne Port and also his Cottage, house thereto adjoining with the appurtenances to the same belonging now in the possession of Richard March and held under the Commonalty Stewards of the borough of Milborne Port.*

He left Joseph and Martha Pitman, the children of his daughter **Mary**, £50 each (to remain with son **Benjamin** Shepherd until they reached the age of 22) and he left his grandson George the furniture at Osborne Mill House, implements of the milling trade and his horse and cart. Household goods in the house occupied by me to daughter Ann wife of Samuel Longman and £15 per annum annuity to Ann and grandson John.

Son **Benjamin** freehold orchard called Ripon (2 acres) and appurtenances belonging and copyhold estate name of late Ryalls in Milborne Port. The 'rest residue and remainder' went to son **Benjamin**.

**Andrew** Shepherd died in 1811 aged 46 and was buried at Milborne Port.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.opcdorset.org/OborneFiles/OborneMilitia1798.htm>; The Militia Act of 1757 invited all 'able bodied' men to serve in the militia at home in order to counter any threat arising while the majority of the regular army was stationed abroad. Lists of eligible men in each parish were known as 'militia ballot lists' and from these, the men actually chosen appeared in the militia lists.



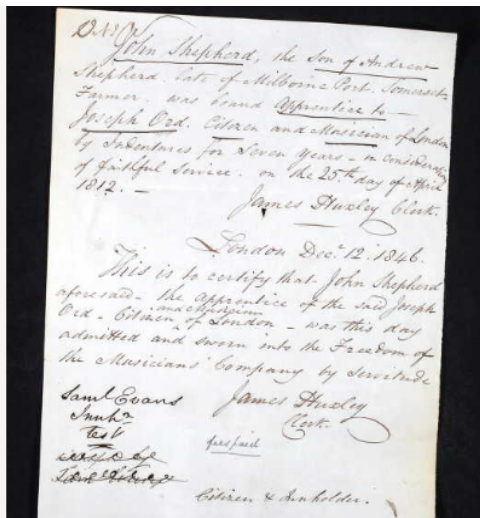
**John** and his son **Andrew** are buried beneath a large chest tomb, on the north side of Milborne Port church, inscribed as follows:-

South panel:  
*Sacrum Memoriae*  
*John Shepherd*  
*obit Janry 3 1806*  
*aged 80*  
*Mary, wife of*  
*John Shepherd*  
*obit Dec 14 1792*  
*aged 70 years*



East panel:  
*Andrew Shepherd*  
*obit February 5th 1811*  
*aged 46 years*  
*Sarah Shepherd*  
*his wife obit March 16*  
*1841 aged 73 years<sup>9</sup>*

The north and west panels are blank.



### Meanwhile, further afield...

On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1812, **John Longman Shepherd** (son of **Andrew** Shepherd, late of Milborne Port, farmer) was bound apprentice to Joseph Ord, citizen and musician of London, by indentures for seven years in consideration of faithful service. In December 1846, he was admitted and sworn into the Freedom of the Musicians' Company in recognition of his long service in the profession, albeit under contractual indentured servitude.<sup>10</sup>

And now to return to **Martha**... She married a distant relative called Cornelius Shepherd on 10/8/1818, paying a bond<sup>11</sup> of £200 to the Bishop of Bath and Wells by Cornelius Agrippa

<sup>9</sup> Parish Register states age 75.

<sup>10</sup> A form of labour in which a person is contracted to work without salary for a specific number of years. Historically, it has been used to pay for apprenticeships, typically when an apprentice agreed to work for free for a master tradesman to learn a trade (similar to a modern internship but for a fixed length of time, usually seven years or less).

<sup>11</sup> Wealthy people who wanted to marry in a private house or chapel could pay even higher fees for a special licence.

Shepherd, schoolmaster of Hanwell, Middlesex (and later a surveyor in Oxford) and George Team, wine merchant of North Petherton, Somerset for the marriage of Cornelius Shepherd to **Martha** Pitman.

**Benjamin** Shepherd made his last will and testament on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1827, by then 'gentleman' of Gloucester Road, St Paul's, Bristol, leaving to his wife, Martha, 40 dozen bottles of wine – amongst other things...! Perhaps he had also been in the wine business! Various family members were also left generous legacies. He died on 7<sup>th</sup> April the following year and the obituary that appeared in the Bristol Mercury on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1928 described him as 'a truly honest man'. If that were true, he was certainly a better man than his father! His body was brought from Bristol to be buried in St Cuthbert's Old Churchyard, Osborne..



**Joseph** Pitman (1767-1787) became Lord of the Manor of Amblecote, Stourbridge, near Birmingham. He married Mary Tomlinson in Stourbridge in 1830 and in the following decade established a skinnery at Town End basin, Stourbridge, turning sheep skin into leather and parchment, essential for the drafting and preservation of legal documents known as indentures. In the 1861 census, he was living at The Hill, Amblecote, Stourbridge and is described as Tannery Owner living on private income, employing a butler/footman, a cook, a lady's maid, four housemaids and a kitchen maid; eight employees! He had obviously done extremely well for himself. 'The Hill' was a substantial Georgian house, pictured below in 1893 when it became a



hospital. By 1867 the business was producing 1,000 skins a week. **Joseph** sold the business to William Turney who increased the output to 65,000 skins a week.<sup>12</sup>

After his retirement, **Joseph** donated £200 towards the cost of erecting Amblecote Parish Church, of which he became Vicar's warden in 1867; he was also Chairman of the Stourbridge & Kidderminster Banking Co and Chairman of Stourbridge Waterworks Co.

**Joseph** died on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1871 and his house and its grounds were bought by the Stoke Prior Salt King John Corbett and opened as the Corbett Hospital (pictured right before its demolition) in 1893. He left £50,000<sup>13</sup> in his will.



This great-grandson of **Thomas** Shepherd was certainly a very industrious, busy, philanthropic and successful man. Well done, **Mary** Shepherd, you chose well in Charles Pitman! It is a shame that you did not live long enough to see what your youngest child made of himself. And it looks as though his children were loving and devoted, erecting a memorial to their father and to their brother, Joseph, in Amblecote Church in 1871: **Joseph, Mary Ann & Joseph Pitman** - *This memorial was erected by three daughters to the memory of their parents who died in 1870 and 1871 and their brother Joseph who died in 1853 of a fever in Zante (one of the Greek islands) at the age of 23 years.*

<sup>12</sup> See <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/7b8b9330-3cd6-448f-a5fa-02cc9c1f2522> for an indication of the scale of the business.

<sup>13</sup> Around £4.5m in today's money.

The wording mentions the daughters' grateful love and esteem in remembrance of their parents 'unremitting kindness to the poor of the hamlet' (presumably Amblecote).



*Valerie Jackson & Nathalie Hetherington  
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