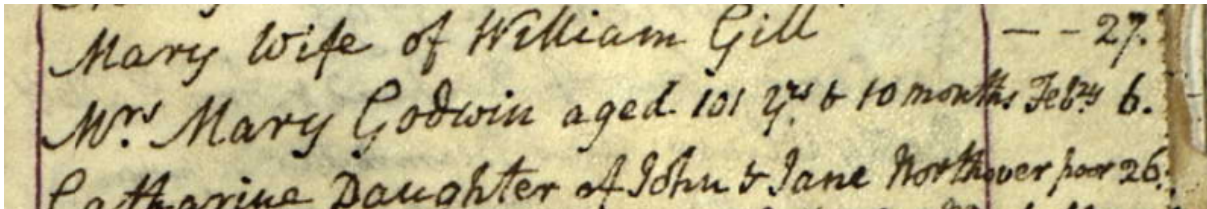


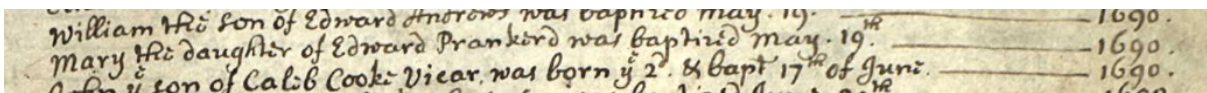
Mary Godwin – An Unlikely Centenarian!

Mrs Mary Godwin's burial is recorded in the parish registers of Milborne Port on 6th February 1792, noting that she was aged 101 years and 10 months! This is an amazing achievement for anyone but especially for a baby born in the last years of the 17th century when life expectancy was around 37¹. Was she really over a hundred years old or was this an exaggeration? After all, there was no one around to contest this assertion.



Mary lived during the reign of five monarchs: William III, Anne, George I, George II and George III. It was a time of great innovation which saw the invention of, amongst many other things, the seed drill, the piano, the first flush toilet, the power loom, the thermometer and the publishing of the first dictionary.

Mary's marriage or any children have not been traced but her husband - or maybe son - was probably Philip Godwin who was buried in Milborne Port in 1748. Mary was a wealthy woman and made bequests in her will to her wider family from which it is possible to deduce that she was the daughter of Edward Prankerd, a name well known to the residents of Milborne Port.



This confirms that Mary was indeed 101 years and 10 months old when she died. Wow!

Unfortunately, the baptism entry does not show which Edward Prankerd was Mary's father. Around this time there were possibly three - or even four - Edwards recorded in the Milborne Port registers; one of Pinford Farm, one of the Knappe, one of Pigg-street (now North Street), and one abode not recorded.

Mary's parents appear to have been married in Longburton on 27th December 1680 and were Edward Prankerd (buried 4/9/1717) and Joyce Grandy (buried 1/9/1752). Edward made his will on 14th January 1716 and bequeathed leasehold property to his sons Edward and Thomas. He left £200 each to his daughters Joyce, Mary and Elizabeth. His wife Joyce was his sole executor.

Extracts from Milborne Port parish registers:

18/1/1681 bur Sarah wife of Edward

8/1/1681 bpt Edward son of Edward

24/10/1683 bpt Joseph son of Edward of Pinford ffarme

¹ Note that life expectancy figures were skewed by infant mortality figures.

2/2/1684 bpt William son of Edward
18/3/1684 bpt Deborah dau of Edward of the Knappe (bur 19/11/1684)
2/3/1685 bpt James son of Edward of Pigg-street
12/10/1686 bpt Elizabeth dau of Edward of the Knap
14/6/1687 bpt Elisabeth dau of Edward of Pinford Farm
22/1/1689 bpt Thomas son of Edward
20/3/1689 bpt Edward son of Edward of ye Knappe (bur 22/3/1689)
19/5/1690 bpt Mary dau of Edward
7/4/1692 bpt Mary dau of Edward
18/1/1694 bur Elisabeth wife of Edward of Pinford Farm
26/9/1694 bpt Joyce dau of Edward (mar William Henvill of Lydlinch 25/6/1724)
22/9/1696 bpt Edward son of Edward of the Knap (bur 11/3/1697)
5/5/1699 bur Edward of Pinford Farm
11/5/1702 bpt Robert son of Edward
8/12/1708 bur Elizabeth dau of Edward of the Knap
24/1/1711 bur Edward
4/9/1717 bur Edward
16/10/1733 bur Edward

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23/3/1701 bpt Elizabeth dau of Edward (mar Philip Henvill 27/4/1731)

bpt = baptism

mar = married

bur = burial

We learn more from Mary Godwin's will (faithfully transcribed!):

In this my last will And testament made the seventh day of December in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty Seven I Mary Godwin of Milborn Port in the County of Somerset widow do give and devise to my sister Elizabeth Henvill now living at Child Okeford in the County of Dorset all my messuages lands tenements and hereditaments With their appurtenances situate in Milborne Port aforesaid To hold to her and her heirs for ever also I give and Bequeath to my said sister Elizabeth Henvill the sum of Five hundred pounds of lawful money of Great Britain to Be paid her at the end of six months next after my decease Also I give and bequeath unto my nephew the Reverend James Henvill of Round Hill near Portsmouth the sum of one Hundred pounds also I give and bequeath unto my grand Nieces Elizabeth and Sarah Case the sum of twenty pounds Each also I give and bequeath unto my niece ffrances Hodder And to my niece Sarah Henvill sister of the said ffrances Hodder the sum of twenty pounds each also I give and Bequeath unto my nephew Philip Henvill and my niece Elizabeth Rogers son and daughter of my said sister Elizabeth Henvill the sum of twenty pounds each and also I Give and bequeath unto Miss Elizabeth Matthews who now Lives with me the sum of twenty pounds also I give and Bequeath unto Mr George Grandy of Milborne Port aforesaid The sum of ten pounds also I give unto Mr William ffry Of the same place the sum of ten pounds and my will is That the said several last mentioned legacies given by this My will to my said several legatees shall also be paid Them respectively at the end of six months next after my decease

Also I give and devise unto my said nephew Phillip Henvill Of Lydlinch in the County of Dorset all my messuages lands Tenements and hereditaments situate at Manson [Manston] in the County Of Dorset to hold to him his heirs and assigns for ever all The rest and residue of my goods and chattels real and Personal estate whatsoever after payment of my debts and Funeral expenses I give devise and bequeath unto my said Nephew Philip Henvill his heirs executors and administrators And Do hereby constitute and appoint my said nephew Phillip Henvill sole executor of this my last will and testament hereby Revoking all former wills by me heretofore made In witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and Year first above written. Mary Godwin signed sealed Delivered and declared by the said Mary Godwin as and for Her last will and testament in the presence of us who at Her request and in her presence and in the presence of each Other have subscribed and names as witnesses hereto John ffooks, Walter Brett, John Newton

This will was proved at London the thirty First day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand and Seven hundred and ninety two before the Right Honorable Sir William Wynne knight doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commisary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the oath of Philip Henvill The sole executor named in the said will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular the goods and Chattels and credits of the said deceased having been first Sworn by Commission duly to administer

Although the Prankard/Prankerds were a prolific family in Somerset and Dorset in days gone by, today it is a very rare name indeed.

Follow this link to find out more about the Prankerd tombstone in the churchyard of St. John's Church.

<http://milborneporthistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/The-Prankerds.pdf>

Valerie Jackson
January 2024