

# Now, there's a coincidence!

Keith Dawson



I was born in Sussex, but I knew fairly early on that my maternal grandmother, whose surname was Gregory, came from the NW London area and that I had a number of great aunts and uncles who lived in Eastcote and Pinner.

Later a cousin and I traced the Gregory family to James (1814-1885), my great-great-grandfather, who was a farmer and publican. He was born in Ruislip to a John Gregory, a woodward (1764-1841), who was the son of another John, the Special Bailiff of the Manor of Ruislip, who acted for the Provost of Kings College Cambridge. My cousin's family still had his parchment deed of appointment dated 1763.

I want to focus on the younger John, the woodward, who married a Jane Bunn (1773-1855) at St Mary's Church, Watford in 1794. When the 1851 census was published we discovered that she was born in Bovingdon and at the age of 78 was a shopkeeper, living in Northwood, then in the parish of Ruislip, with two of her daughters. As we were by then living in Flaunden, a Bovingdon origin was quite a coincidence!

Jane Bunn was baptised in Bovingdon Church on 21 February 1773, the daughter of Thomas and Ann Bunn. The banns of marriage and the marriage itself of Thomas with Ann Coleman were registered at Bovingdon on 14 October 1766. The search for a Thomas of the right age led us to the Sarratt Church register, where his baptism was recorded on 30 December 1739. He was the son of Francis and Elizabeth Bunn, who married in Redbourn in 1727.

In the Sarratt parish register which starts in 1733, there is an entry on one of the fly leaves as follows.

Sarratt 1734  
Gilbert Williams Vicr.  
Matthew Williams Esq } Churchwardens  
Francis Bunn

It seems as though our Francis was a churchwarden in Sarratt that year. His eldest son, another Francis was baptised in Sarratt in 1733 but younger siblings were all baptised in Bovingdon. So, Francis was living in Sarratt from about 1730 to about 1740. We know from published wills that the Bunns were farmers, many styling themselves as yeomen, so perhaps a suitable farm had become available in Bovingdon. He died there in 1749. A yeoman leased his land from the Lord of the manor, originally in payment by service, but in later years by annual rent.

Francis' brother George, a farmer, who died without children in 1766 in Bovingdon, included in his will a bequest which paid to another brother, John of Sarratt, one shilling a week for the rest of his life. John was married to Susanna and had a number of children in Bovingdon in the 1710s. He and his wife must have moved to Sarratt at some time. Susannah died in 1763 and John in 1770. They were both buried in Sarratt, although as there are few burial plot records from that time, we do not know where they were interred precisely.

Pam and I joined St. Paul's, Chipperfield church over 25 years ago and, when Chipperfield came together with Holy Cross, Sarratt, church in a Benefice in 2004, we started to worship regularly at Holy Cross as well. So, it was something of a coincidence to find that my fifth-great-grandfather was a churchwarden there in the 1730s and my sixth-great-uncle and aunt were buried in the churchyard nearly 250 years ago. As we had both been Churchwardens at Chipperfield, it must run in the family!

