

## **Forest Ancestors Part 4: the Milsons**

### ***6x Great grandparents William and Ann Milson***

The story starts in the middle of the seventeenth century in Coleford, on the edge of Gloucestershire's Forest of Dean. Coleford at this time was home to about 500 people and it had suffered during the civil war. In 1643, a Welsh royalist army, some 2000 strong, commanded by Colonel John Lawley, was heading towards Gloucester. Standing in their way, was Colonel John Berrow, who was raising a parliamentary army in the Forest of Dean. The parliamentarians erected barricades in the streets of Coleford and battle commenced. The parliamentarians were able to fire on the advancing royalists from the shelter of the houses, killing Lawley and two other leaders. Eventually though, the force of numbers took its toll. The royalists burned the town, including the market house; those attempting to defend Coleford were driven out and took refuge in the Forest.

The Restoration allowed Coleford to experience an economic boom. Charles II granted the town a charter in 1661, establishing a weekly Friday market and two annual fairs, a wool fair in June and a cheese fair in December. The new market house, in part financed by the king, was erected in 1662. The town expanded and trade increased. The Angel Inn and the Old White Hart became hubs for the commercial and social life of the area. The 1660s also saw a rise of nonconformity in the Forest, with the establishment of a Quaker community. Members experienced persecution but their support grew and founder, George Fox, visited in 1668.

It was not all positive news. Coleford was within the hundred of St. Briavels and as such, the inhabitants were entitled to free mining rights.

The area was rich in natural resources, including iron ore and coal. Men could apply to the gaveler for a gale, an allocated plot, where they could mine. The miners weren't the only claimants on the land, as the commoners were fighting for grazing rights. In addition, the Forest of Dean was part of the royal demesne, so was subject to forest law. In the wake of the civil war, the miners and poor labourers who had retreated into the forest, built rough shelters on the royal land. This was, not surprisingly, not popular with the authorities, whose role it was to protect hunting rights and timber supplies for the crown. Timber was in particularly high demand as the Charles II sought to build ships to bolster the navy, who were embroiled in supporting fledgeling colonies and waging war against the Dutch.

The king's rights were aggressively enforced under the leadership of the Duke of Beaufort. This led to the Dean Forest (Reafforestation) Act of 1667/8, which gave the crown the right to enclose 11,000 acres of forest and replant it with oaks to supply the shipyards. This had a significant impact on the residents, as grazing rights were lost and although the traditional privileges of the miners were confirmed, these were restricted to those born in the hundred. The illegal forest dwellings, erected by the 'cabiners', were demolished. The Speech House was built in 1682 to house both the Verderers' Court, known as the Court of Speech and the Mine Law Court.

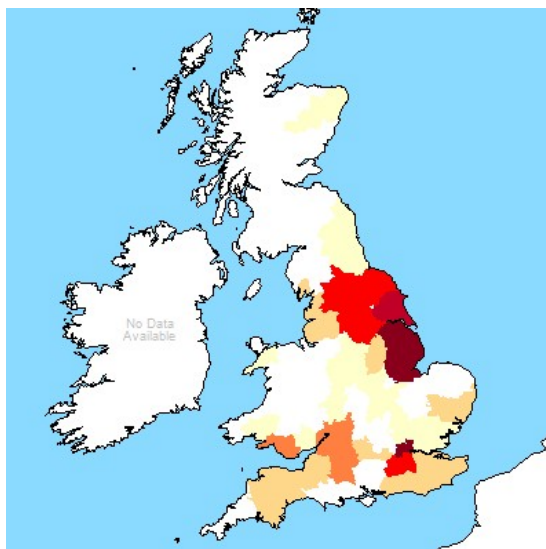
Living in Coleford at this time, were a couple called William and Mary Milson.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the parish register for Newland, in which the town of Coleford lay, has had a significant chunk eaten out of it, presumably by rodents, meaning that it is probable that records of the baptisms of William and Mary Milson's children are not all extant. Although no baptism has been found, it is very likely that 6x great grandfather William Milson

---

<sup>1</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

was their son. William junior's mother may have been a Jones, as he mentions an uncle, William Jones, in his will.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, of course, William Jones could have been the husband of William Milson's aunt, or even his wife's uncle.

The surname Milson may be a locative surname, taken from the village in Shropshire,<sup>3</sup> or its derivation could be 'son of Miles'.<sup>4</sup> By 1881, there were no Milsons in the Forest of Dean, where this family had lived for several generations. There was a small group left in Bristol but the greatest concentration was many miles away along the Humber estuary.<sup>5</sup>



**Distribution of the Milson Surname in 1881**

William Milson and Ann presumably married in the early 1680s, when English politics was obsessed with the royal succession

### **Children of William and Ann Milson**

William baptised 30 March 1684 in English Bicknor

Richard born about 1686

Ann born about 1688

John baptised 30 November 1690 in Newland

Alice baptised 16 August 1692 in Newland

Thomas born about 1694

Elizabeth born about 1696

Mary baptised 15 September 1698 in Newland

<sup>2</sup> Will and inventory of William Milson, written 1698, proved 1699 at the Consistory Court of Gloucester, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>3</sup> Lower, Mark Anthony, *A Dictionary of Surnames* Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1860.

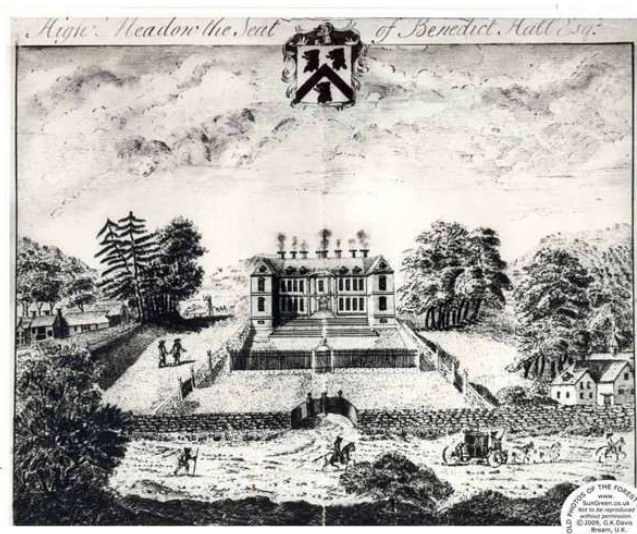
<sup>4</sup> Cottle, Basil, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* Penguin 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1978.

<sup>5</sup> *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software 2003.

and attempts to prevent Catholic James, then Duke of York, from taking over from his brother, Charles II, who had no legitimate children.

William's will names seven children<sup>6</sup> but baptisms have only been located for three of them.<sup>7</sup> The likely order of birth of the remaining four, can be ascertained by their ordering in the will. There is also a baptism for a posthumous daughter, Mary.<sup>8</sup> The baptisms of William and Ann's children in Newland state that the family were living at High Meadow.<sup>9</sup> High Meadow House was a grand mansion, built about 1670 by Henry Benedict Hall and by the 1690s, was in the hands of his son, Benedict.

Although the house does not survive, the associated farmhouse does. William Milson's will describes Benedict Hall as his 'master'<sup>10</sup> but we don't know in what capacity William worked for the Halls. Interestingly, unlike most of the residents of the Forest of Dean, the Halls were both Catholic and royalists.



**High Meadow Hall  
from [www.sungreen.co.uk](http://www.sungreen.co.uk) used  
with permission**

It seems that William's early death, in April 1698, left his widow, Ann, about three months pregnant and with seven young children, the oldest of whom was probably about fourteen, to support. Under the terms of

---

<sup>6</sup> Will and inventory of William Milson, written 1698, proved 1699 at the Consistory Court of Gloucester, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>7</sup> Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, English Bicknor, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>8</sup> Bishops' Transcripts for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>9</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>10</sup> Will and inventory of William Milson, written 1698, proved 1699 at the Consistory Court of Gloucester, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

William's will, Ann was to inherit his estates during her lifetime but after her death, or if she remarried, it would devolve to their sons, each of whom was to be given a specific property. William junior was left an estate in Hillarsland, a settlement to the north of Coleford, in the parish of English Bicknor. Richard was to have a house in Coleford and John a house in Whitecleeve, now known as Whitecliff, located between the settlements of Coleford and Newland and very close to High Meadow. William specifies that this is the house of 'my uncle' William Jones. Thomas, the youngest son, was to inherit a different property in Whitecleeve.<sup>11</sup>

William's widow, Ann, cannot be traced any further and very little is known about their four daughters; no records have been found for Ann, Alice or Elizabeth after their mention in their father's will. The youngest, Mary, married a local stone cutter, James Fox<sup>12</sup> and had a family in Whitecleeve.<sup>13</sup> Thomas, the youngest son, also married locally, to Elizabeth Godwyn<sup>14</sup> and it is likely that they are the Thomas and Elizabeth Milson who had children baptised in Bristol in the 1720s, in which case, Thomas was a barber.<sup>15</sup> The other three brothers have more of a story to tell.

It is probable that William and Ann's eldest child was William, who was baptised in English Bicknor, Gloucestershire in 1684;<sup>16</sup> perhaps the family were living at Hillersland at the time. William junior's story involves the

---

<sup>11</sup> Will and inventory of William Milson, written 1698, proved 1699 at the Consistory Court of Gloucester, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>12</sup> Marriage register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>13</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Will of James Fox, written 1755, proved 1767 at the Consistory Court of Gloucester, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>14</sup> Marriage register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>15</sup> Bishops' Transcripts for St. Philip and St. Jacob, Bristol, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>16</sup> Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, English Bicknor, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

difficult issue of enslavement. He became a surveyor and settled in Clarendon, Jamaica. He married a lady called Judith and had at least seven children, George, Catherine, Mary, Richard, Elizabeth, Thomas and Alice.<sup>17</sup>

As a land surveyor, William's role was an important one, as he would have been responsible for mapping out the boundaries for the rapidly expanding sugar plantations and livestock pens. There is a record of a land transaction, a bargain and sale for land in Clarendon, dated 1737, between William and Judith and one of the most prominent enslavers in Jamaica, John Pennant.<sup>18</sup> In 1754, a Thomas Milson was listed as owning 600 acres in Clarendon.<sup>19</sup> This is almost certainly William's son, as William had died the previous year.<sup>20</sup> A 600 acre plantation did not compare with the estates that covered many thousands of acres, such as those of the Pennants<sup>21</sup> but it was nonetheless a sizable holding that was probably used for cultivating, sugar or indigo and raising livestock. This could only be made possible by exploiting enslaved labour. This is underlined by the fact that William left his wife 'a negrowoman named Calinda' in his will.<sup>22</sup> Although this is now, rightly, abhorrent to us, at the time, William would have been regarded as a successful businessman.

---

<sup>17</sup> There may have been two Marys. Will of William Milson, written 1739, proved 1753 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, original at The National Archives, London, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Transcript of parish registers for Clarendon, Jamaica, accessed via [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

<sup>18</sup> Catalogue of documents held a Bangor University <https://calmview.bangor.ac.uk/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=PFA%2F5%2F1%2F104>.

<sup>19</sup> Transcription of list of landowners in Jamaica taken from the quit rent books of 1754, accessed via [www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com](http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com).

<sup>20</sup> Will of William Milson, written 1739, proved 1753 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>21</sup> Transcription of list of landowners in Jamaica taken from the quit rent books of 1754, accessed via [www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com](http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com).

<sup>22</sup> Will of William Milson, written 1739, proved 1753 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

William's will, which was written in 1739 when he was 'of Clarendon' but residing in Newland, Gloucestershire, refers to his 'honoured mother Mrs Ann Golden', or Golder. It is not clear if this was his mother, with the surname of a subsequent husband, or his mother in law; it



**All Saints, Newland**

is mostly likely the latter.<sup>23</sup> There was a Judith Goulden baptised in Jamaica in 1677.<sup>24</sup> William junior mentions his three brothers in his will and a 'brother in law William Worgan'. No marriage has been found between a William Worgan and a Milson, although two of William Milson's brothers marry Worgan women, so this could be his sister-in-law's brother.<sup>25</sup>

William and Ann's second son, Richard, was born about 1686.<sup>26</sup> In 1699, Richard 'late of Newland', was apprenticed to a joiner, William Lawrence, of London. In the indentures, his late father is referred to as 'Gent.'<sup>27</sup> Richard married Mary Worgan at St. Nicholas', Bristol on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1716/7.<sup>28</sup> Two children were baptised at St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney, William on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1718 and Hannah on the 14<sup>th</sup> of

---

<sup>23</sup> Will of William Milson, written 1739, proved 1753 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>24</sup> Transcript parish registers for Clarendon, Jamaica, accessed via [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). This is not William's future wife, as she would be too old to have a child in 1730 but could be her aunt.

<sup>25</sup> Marriage register for St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Marriage register for St. Nicholas', Bristol, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>26</sup> Apprenticeship Indenture for Richard Milson 1699, originals at London Archives accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>27</sup> Apprenticeship Indenture for Richard Milson 1699, originals at London Archives accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>28</sup> Marriage register for St. Nicholas', Bristol, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).



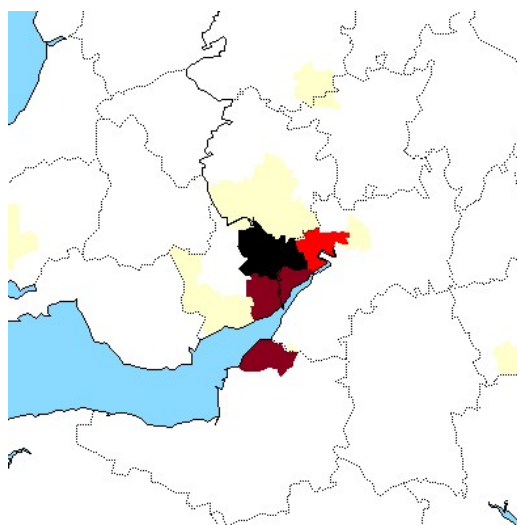
September 1719.<sup>29</sup> Richard was buried in Newland in 1754, described as being 'of Coleford'.<sup>30</sup>

### **5x Great grandparents John and Elizabeth Milson née Worgan**

Attention now turns to 5x great-grandfather, John, who had been baptised in Newland on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1690, while the family were at High Meadow.<sup>31</sup> He married Elizabeth Worgan on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1729, at Awre with Blakeney; John was described as being 'of Newland' at the time.<sup>32</sup> Surnames directories are silent on the derivation of the surname Worgan.<sup>33</sup> It may be a corruption of Morgan. Instances of this surname are found almost exclusively in the Forest of Dean and Bristol.<sup>34</sup>



**St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney**



**Distribution of the Worgan Surname in 1881**

---

<sup>29</sup> Baptism register for St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>30</sup> Burial register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>31</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>32</sup> Marriage register for St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>33</sup> Cottle, Basil, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* Penguin 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1978; Lower, Mark Anthony, *A Dictionary of Surnames* Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1860; Reaney, P.H., *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958.

<sup>34</sup> *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software 2003.



Elizabeth Worgan had been baptised on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1703 at Newland, the daughter of John and Elizabeth.<sup>35</sup> The Worgan family cannot be taken back any further with confidence.

John and Elizabeth Milson moved from Newland to neighbouring St. Briavels about 1736.<sup>36</sup> In 1750, John Milson was St. Briavels' Churchwarden. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of July in that year, the churchwardens resolved at a meeting that

*"No badger shall be paid for nor any fox except hee or they shall make an afodavt before one of his majestis Jestis of the pece for this county"*<sup>37</sup>

This refers to the practice of the church paying for the extermination of vermin. It rather sounds as if the parishioners of St. Briavels were claiming the bounty without producing the corpses. In 1753, John was mentioned in his brother's will.<sup>38</sup> John's wife, Elizabeth, died on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1758<sup>39</sup> and was

### **Children of John and Elizabeth Milson née Worgan**

Rebecca baptised 9 October 1730 in Newland

Elizabeth baptised 4 December 1732 in Newland

Mary baptised 7 May 1735 in Newland

Richard baptised 30 November 1738 in St. Briavels

Alice baptised 11 May 1741 in St. Briavels

Hannah baptised 24 June 1745 in St. Briavels

<sup>35</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>36</sup> Baptism register for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>37</sup> Churchwardens' Accounts for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire quoted in Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Journal Vol. 9 p. 99.

<sup>38</sup> Will of William Milson, written 1739, proved 1753 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>39</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

buried at St. Briavels the following day.<sup>40</sup> John died on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1761<sup>41</sup> and was buried on the 31<sup>st</sup> at St. Briavels.<sup>42</sup>

John and Elizabeth Milson had five daughters and one son. Of the five daughters, only the two youngest married. Alice married William Hartland at Newland on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1776.<sup>43</sup> She died in 1812<sup>44</sup> and was buried at St. Briavels, 'of Mitcheldean'.<sup>45</sup> No Hartland children have been found. The youngest daughter, Hannah, married Thomas Pitcher at Hewelsfield, Gloucestershire in 1776.<sup>46</sup> They had three children baptised at St. Briavels.<sup>47</sup> Their daughter, Elizabeth, was baptised in 1779,<sup>48</sup> with her aunt Mary as her godmother.<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth's sister, Ann, married Mr Richard and had a son Henry Milson Richard, who was left a Bible 'that was given to me by Madam James' by his great aunt Mary.<sup>50</sup>

The other three sisters remained unmarried, living at St. Briavels.<sup>51</sup> In 1811, Mary, who it seems ran a coaching inn in St. Briavels, wrote a will, giving various items to her nieces and nephews. She bequeathed the

---

<sup>40</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>41</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>42</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>43</sup> Marriage register for St. Andrew's, Awre with Blakeney, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>44</sup> Monumental Inscriptions St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>45</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>46</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary Magdalene, Hewelsfield, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>47</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>48</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>49</sup> Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>50</sup> Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>51</sup> Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

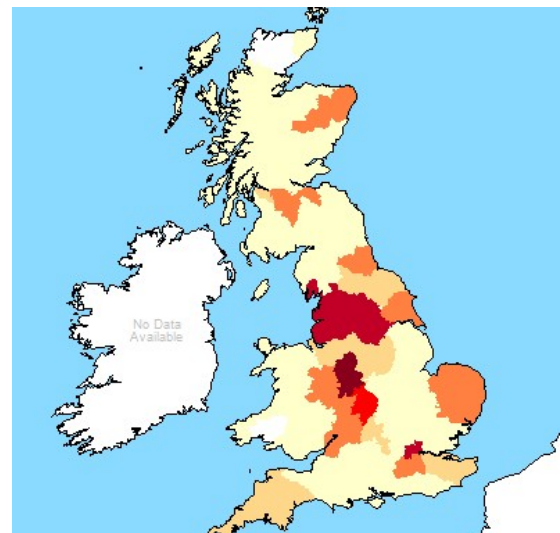
George Inn, St. Briavels to her sister Rebecca, who had predeceased her. The will stated that the George should therefore pass to Mary and Rebecca's nephew, John Milson.<sup>52</sup> The family seem to have been of some status, as both Elizabeth and Mary were buried with the courtesy title 'Mrs'.<sup>53</sup> At this date, this was a reference to rank, rather than marital status.



**The George Inn, St. Briavels**

#### ***4x Great grandparents Richard and Ann Milson née Harper***

John and Elizabeth's only son was 4x great grandfather Richard. He was baptised at St. Briavels on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1738.<sup>54</sup> On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 1765, Richard Milson married 4x great grandmother, Ann Harper, at St. Mary's, Whitechapel, Middlesex.<sup>55</sup> Harper is a common surname, taken from one who makes or plays harps.<sup>56</sup> It is widely distributed round the country with a slight concentration



**Distribution of the Harper Surname in 1881**

<sup>52</sup> Will of Mary Milson, written 1811, proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>53</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>54</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>55</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary's, Whitechapel, Middlesex, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>56</sup> Cottle, Basil, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* Penguin 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1978; Lower, Mark Anthony, *A Dictionary of Surnames* Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1860; Reaney, P.H., *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958.

in the West Midlands.<sup>57</sup> Ann was born about 1741.<sup>58</sup> Her family cannot be traced further.

The marriage, so many miles away in Whitechapel, raises some questions. It clearly states that Richard was 'of St. Briavels'. The witnesses were Milson Clifton and Elizabeth Clifton.<sup>59</sup> Milson is elusive in the records and there were certainly several eighteenth century Milson Cliftons. This marriage witness was probably a merchant's clerk whose second marriage, in 1758, was to Elizabeth Sargeant from 'the parish of Dean' in Gloucestershire<sup>60</sup> but his baptism has not been found and his parentage is uncertain. He and the other Milson Cliftons, must surely descend from John Clifton, a tailor and Ann Milson, both of Houndsditch, who married clandestinely in 1707 at the Fleet.<sup>61</sup> The clandestine marriage, suggesting nonconformity, might explain the lack of a baptism for Milson Clifton the witness, who was probably their son.

Who then, was Ann Milson of Houndsditch? John Clifton was a Quaker, whose birth is recorded in the records of the Houndsditch Monthly Meeting.<sup>62</sup> This makes sense with the Quaker presence in the Forest of Dean. Unfortunately, Ann Milson's identity remains a mystery.

Richard made up for his sisters' lack of offspring by having twelve children, nine daughters and three sons, five of whom almost certainly dies in infancy or early childhood.<sup>63</sup> It is likely that the first child was Ann,

---

<sup>57</sup> *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>59</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary's, Whitechapel, Middlesex, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>60</sup> Marriage register for Saint Ethelburga, Bishopsgate, Middlesex, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Marriage Bond for St. Peter le Poor, Middlesex, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>61</sup> Fleet Prison clandestine marriage registers RG7 18, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>62</sup> Register of Quaker Births, for the monthly meeting of Devonshire House, Houndsditch, accessed via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

<sup>63</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk). Will of Mary Milson written 1811 proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

who is commemorated at St. Briavels.<sup>64</sup> No baptism or burial records survive;<sup>65</sup> perhaps she was born and died in London. The first baptism that has been found is that of Elizabeth in 1767 at St. Briavels;<sup>66</sup> she died in 1775<sup>67</sup> and was buried at St. Briavels.<sup>68</sup> The remaining children were all baptised in St. Briavels.<sup>69</sup>

Richard and Ann's eldest son was John. He was baptised in 1772<sup>70</sup> and married Mary. They had a daughter Ellen about 1790.<sup>71</sup> In 1810, John witnessed the marriage of his sister Sarah to John

### **Children of Richard and Ann Milson née Harper**

All baptisms in St. Briavels

Ann died 1767

Elizabeth baptised 4 April 1767, died 1775

Mary baptised 28 March 1769

Ann baptised 12 September 1770

John baptised 21 July 1772

Hannah baptised 5 April 1774, died 1775

Alice baptised 22 July 1775

Rebecca

Richard baptised 28 December 1778, died 1778

William baptised 2 June 1780

Helena baptised 18 June 1782

Sarah baptised 2 March 1785

<sup>64</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>65</sup> Baptism and burial registers for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>66</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>67</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>68</sup> Bishops' Transcripts of the burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>69</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>70</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>71</sup> 1841 census for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 8.





**Milson Tomb, St. Briavels**

Mudway.<sup>72</sup> He was mentioned in his aunt Mary's will, written in 1811 and inherited the George Inn from her.<sup>73</sup> In 1841 John, a yeoman, was living in St. Briavels.<sup>74</sup> He appears on the St.

Briavels Tithe Schedule, owning and

occupying land of one rod sixteen perches, for which he paid the vicar one shilling and four pence per annum.<sup>75</sup> He died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1847<sup>76</sup> and was buried at St. Briavels in the 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>77</sup>

Richard and Ann's sixth daughter, Hannah, died at a few months old in January 1775.<sup>78</sup> It is possible that she and her seven-year-old sister, Elizabeth, died in an epidemic as Elizabeth died two months later.<sup>79</sup> Their sister, Alice, was born later in 1775.<sup>80</sup> Alice was not mentioned in her aunt's will and probably died young.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>73</sup> Will of Mary Milson written 1811 proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>74</sup> 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 8.

<sup>75</sup> The Tithe Schedule for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, held at The National Archives IR29 13/30.

<sup>76</sup> Monumental Inscriptions St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>77</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>78</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>79</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>80</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>81</sup> Will of Mary Milson written 1811 proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).



1775 was a tumultuous year for the Forest of Dean. There was a serious dispute concerning the rights of 'foreigners', those not born in the Forest, to work in local iron and coal mines. Mining administration could not be dealt with, as the paperwork held at the Speech House vanished inexplicably. Protestors blew up the colliery in Nailbridge, some ten miles from St. Briavels. There were also complaints about the appalling conditions at St. Briavels Castle, where debtors and other prisoners were held and reformer, John Howard, came to inspect the jail. Although it gives the wrong date for Howard's visit, a newspaper report of 1851 describes this incident and Richard Milson's role in it. According to the report, Howard's journal for 1785<sup>82</sup> reads thus,

*"In this village I found residing a Mr. Richard Milson, maltster and farmer, and I must bear record to the good heart and kind feelings of this person towards the poor debtors imprisoned in the castle here: it is his custom, and has been so for many years, to send on every Sunday during the year round the first helpings of his Sunday joint of meat to the prisoners in the castle, according to the numbers therein confined, with a suitable quantity of good table beer. After which, himself, wife and seven or eight sons and daughters sat down to dinner with 'joy and gladness of heart'"*

One wonders how large the joint was if it fed the large Milson family, with enough left over for prisoners.

The report goes to mention Helena Milson, by 1851, Richard's only surviving unmarried daughter, then aged sixty eight, who 'resides in that Castle', 'whose noble conduct won the admiration of the philanthropist (Howard). It describes Helena as a poor woman, 'without possessing one penny of this world's goods, blessed with the cheerful disposition of her father, still lives in hope of happiness hereafter.' It also expresses Helena's hope that she would not have to go into the workhouse. It might

---

<sup>82</sup> In fact the inspection was in 1775.

seem odd that she was living in the Castle itself but after the prison was closed, in 1842, parts of the Castle were let to local residents. For the preceding two years, says the *Gloucester Journal*, Richard's friends had raised two shillings and nine pence each week to support Helena. The article goes on to seek support for Helena.<sup>83</sup> In the 1851 census, she was living alone in St. Briavels, quite possibly in the Castle.<sup>84</sup> Helena died of old age six years later. Unfortunately, her death certificate just gives St. Briavels as her place of death, so it is not certain if she was still at the castle. The informant was her nephew William Mudway.<sup>85</sup>

A 1776 Poll Book for St. Briavels lists Richard Milson as holding an unnamed messuage and land, that was in the tenure of himself and others.<sup>86</sup> No baptism has been found for Richard and Ann's next child, Rebecca but she was mentioned in her aunt's will.<sup>87</sup> She was born in St. Briavels about 1777 and married Thomas Turner there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1800.<sup>88</sup> They had five children. William Milson Turner was baptised in Llandogo, Monmouthshire on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1801.<sup>89</sup> He was buried there on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1803.<sup>90</sup> Charles William was baptised privately at St. Giles, Oxford, Oxfordshire on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1808. His brother, Thomas, was baptised there on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May.<sup>91</sup> It seems likely that these were twins but that Charles was baptised early as he was sickly. Thomas can be found with his mother at Winchcombe Street,

---

<sup>83</sup> *The Gloucester Journal* 15 March 1851 p.4 col. d.

<sup>84</sup> 1851 census for St Briavels, Gloucestershire HO 107 2443 folio 637.

<sup>85</sup> Death certificate of Helena Milson 1857m digital image from the General Registrar.

<sup>86</sup> 1776 Poll Book St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>87</sup> Will of Mary Milson written 1811 proved 1814 at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>88</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>89</sup> Baptism register for St. Oudoceus, Llandogo, Monmouthshire, accessed via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk).

<sup>90</sup> Burial register for St. Oudoceus, Llandogo, Monmouthshire, accessed via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk).

<sup>91</sup> Baptism register of St. Giles, Oxford, Oxfordshire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

Cheltenham, in the 1841 census.<sup>92</sup> Ellen was born<sup>93</sup> and baptised in Cheltenham on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1820.<sup>94</sup> She was living with her mother in 1841<sup>95</sup> and 1851.<sup>96</sup> John Milson Turner was baptised on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1821 in Cheltenham.<sup>97</sup> When they were in Monmouthshire, Thomas Turner senior was a printer.<sup>98</sup> By the time they were living in Cheltenham, he was an auctioneer.<sup>99</sup> In 1841, Rebecca, described as being of independent means, was with her children Thomas and Ellen at Wincombe Street.<sup>100</sup> Ten years later Ellen and Rebecca, now described as a proprietor of houses and mistakenly listed as being ninety three instead of seventy three, were in what appeared to be half of Windsor Cottage, Victoria Place, Cheltenham.<sup>101</sup>

Richard and Ann Milson's ninth child was Richard. He was baptised at St. Briavels on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1778<sup>102</sup> and buried there on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1780<sup>103</sup> Marc 1780h 1780. Next came William, who was baptised at St, Briavels in 1780.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> 1841 census for Winchcomb Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire HO107 353/6 folio 44.

<sup>93</sup> 1851 census for Windsor Cottage, Victoria Place, Cheltenham Gloucestershire HO107 1973 folio 121.

<sup>94</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary's, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>95</sup> 1841 census for Winchcomb Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire HO107 353/6 folio 44.

<sup>96</sup> 1851 census for Windsor Cottage, Victoria Place, Cheltenham Gloucestershire HO107 1973 folio 121.

<sup>97</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary's, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>98</sup> Baptism register for St. Oudoceus, Llandogo, Monmouthshire, accessed via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk).

<sup>99</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary's, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>100</sup> 1841 census for Winchcomb Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire HO107 353/6 folio 44.

<sup>101</sup> 1851 census for Windsor Cottage, Victoria Place, Cheltenham Gloucestershire HO107 1973 folio 121.

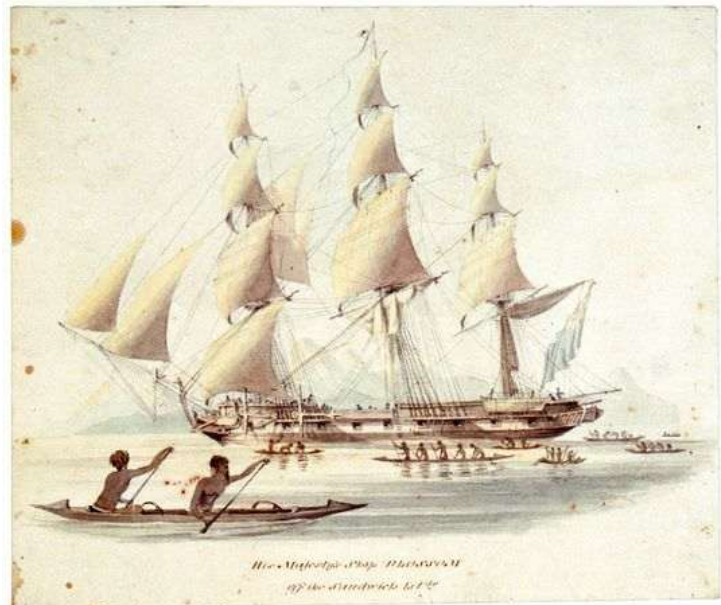
<sup>102</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>103</sup> Burial register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>104</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

William joined the Royal Navy.<sup>105</sup> His earliest known ship was *HMS Zealand* but the record also suggests that he was on *HMS Amelia*.<sup>106</sup> He was transferred to *HMS Crocodile* as an able bodied seaman on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1806.<sup>107</sup> William must have joined the *Crocodile* for her launch as she was not officially built until the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1806.<sup>108</sup> It seems that the *Zealand* provided a number of crewmen for the *Crocodile*.<sup>109</sup> The *Crocodile* measured 119 feet by 22 and was a 6<sup>th</sup> rate 22 with a builder's measurement of 540. She had been built by Temple of South Shields.<sup>110</sup> In March 1807, *Crocodile* detained the American ship *General Clarke*, from Philadelphia and sent her into Plymouth. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, *HMS Crocodile* sailed from Portsmouth as escort to a convoy bound for Quebec.<sup>111</sup> From the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1806 until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1807, William was working as a master's mate but he then reverted to seaman.<sup>112</sup>

William left *HMS Crocodile* on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1807 to join *HMS Blossom*, again as a master's mate, as the *Blossom* was short of her complement.<sup>113</sup> He was accompanied by two others



***HMS Blossom* William Smythe  
Image in the public domain**

<sup>105</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735; Ship's Muster for HMS Blossom May-September 1807 ADM 37/1539; Ship's Muster for HMS Victory 1809-1810 ADM37/2270; Ship's Muster for HMS Minotaur May-August 1810 ADM37/2474.

<sup>106</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735.

<sup>107</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735.

<sup>108</sup> Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail 1793-1817: design, construction, careers and fates* reprinted by Pen & Sword 2014.

<sup>109</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735.

<sup>110</sup> Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail 1793-1817: design, construction, careers and fates* reprinted by Pen & Sword (2014).

<sup>111</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS\\_Crocodile\\_\(1806\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Crocodile_(1806)) accessed the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2020.

<sup>112</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735.

<sup>113</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Crocodile April-July 1806 ADM 37/735.

from the *Crocodile*, John White and Robert Hood.<sup>114</sup> The *Blossom* was also a new ship having been built by Guillaume of Northam, Devon and launched on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1806. She is described as a sloop 18 and was 108½ feet long and 30 feet wide, with a builder's measurement of 427.<sup>115</sup>

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1810, William again changed ship and joined *HMS Victory* as a midshipman. His entry on the muster of the *Victory* is annotated 'p P Lists'.<sup>116</sup> The famous *Victory* had been built in 1765 as a 100 gun warship.<sup>117</sup> After a refit in the early part of the year, in 1810 the *Victory* formed



**HMS Victory**

part of the Baltic fleet as the flagship for the Vice Admiral was Sir J Saumarez Bart.. The Captain was P Dumaresq and the first lieutenant George Brine, the Purser Robert Gamble.<sup>118</sup> Their role was to implement the blockade against Napoleonic forces, thus protecting the British merchant fleet.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1810, after only six months on the *Victory*, William was formally transferred to *HMS Minotaur*, on the orders of Sir James Saumarez.<sup>119</sup> He arrived on board on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June and took up the

---

<sup>114</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Blossom May-September 1807 ADM 37/1539.

<sup>115</sup> Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail 1793-1817: design, construction, careers and fates* reprinted by Pen & Sword 2014.

<sup>116</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Victory 1809-1810 ADM37/2270.

<sup>117</sup> The Navy List 1810.

<sup>118</sup> The Navy List 1810.

<sup>119</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Minotaur May-August 1810 ADM37/2474.

post of acting Lieutenant.<sup>120</sup> The *Minotaur* was also part of the Baltic fleet but was a newer ship than the *Victory*, having been built in 1793. It was a 3<sup>rd</sup> 74-gun ship with a builder's measurement of 1723.<sup>121</sup> The Captain was John Barrett, the Purser was S Nicholson<sup>122</sup> and there was a crew of 640.<sup>123</sup>

The *Minotaur* left Gothenburg on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December in bad weather, together with the *Plantagenet*, the *Loire* and a convoy of sixty sailing ships.<sup>124</sup> It seems that she was short of her complement and only had 470 men on board<sup>125</sup> but there is some confusion about the numbers involved.<sup>126</sup> She was on her way from the Baltic to Great Yarmouth when a storm separated her from the *Plantagenet* and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1810, tragedy befell *HMS Minotaur*. The ship was driven on to the Haak Sands at the mouth of the Texel, in the Netherlands.<sup>127</sup> Terence Grocott's *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* quotes the official statement from the Dutch Chief of Staff, C. Langereld, regarding the wreck.

*"Captain Musquetie, commander in the Texel Roads, sent at daybreak on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the aviso<sup>128</sup> and pilot boat the Dunker to reconnoitre the vessel that had been wrecked but the wind and heavy sea prevented her from approaching the vessel. She lost her masts and was under water from about half-way up the bowsprit to behind the main mast. The waves broke over the remainder of her. One hundred and ten crew, notwithstanding, succeeded in saving*

---

<sup>120</sup> Ship's Muster for HMS Minotaur May-August 1810 ADM37/2474.

<sup>121</sup> Gosset, W.P., *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy 1793-1900* Mansell 1986.

<sup>122</sup> The Navy List 1810.

<sup>123</sup> Gosset, W.P., *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy 1793-1900* Mansell 1986.

<sup>124</sup> Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

<sup>125</sup> *The Naval Chronicle* Vol 25 p. 56, quoted in Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997

<sup>126</sup> Gosset, W.P., *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy 1793-1900* Mansell 1986; Monumental Inscriptions St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>127</sup> Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

<sup>128</sup> A dispatch boat.



*themselves in the boats. They landed behind the Texel Island, near the village of Koog, where they were made prisoners of war by the troops stationed in that quarter. Among the prisoners was a lieutenant, the surgeon and eight midshipmen.*"<sup>129</sup>

A further report, sent from Amsterdam on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, was reported in *The Times* on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1811.

*"On the 25<sup>th</sup> four men got ashore on a small piece of the wreck of the Minotaur, which was lost on Haak Sands. According to the accounts, the captain and sixty or seventy men who got into a boat were unfortunately swamped close in with the ship. Among those who got to land is the second lieutenant Mr Snell and also the mate, a passenger and four men of the American ship Charles.*"<sup>130</sup>

The description of the incident in Gosset's *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy 1793-1900* is as follows,

*"After sailing from Gottenburg bound for the Downs she was alone in thick hazy weather when she struck and was wrecked upon the north Haak Sand; it is noted that her officers were unable to agree whether they were wrecked upon the English or Dutch coast. The survivors got ashore in a ship's boat and were immediately taken prisoner by the Dutch who refused to send aid to those stranded on the wreck. Court Martial 30 May 1814."*<sup>131</sup>

The Court Martial could not be held until the prisoners returned to England three and a half years later, when Lieutenant Snell, the master and a few surviving crew members were tried on board the *Gladiator* in

---

<sup>129</sup> Statement from Dutch Chief of Staff reported in the *Navel Chronicle* Vol. 25 p.56 and quoted in Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

<sup>130</sup> *The Times* the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1811, quoted in Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

<sup>131</sup> Gosset, W.P., *The Lost Ships of the Royal Navy 1793-1900* Mansell 1986; Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

Portsmouth Harbour.<sup>132</sup> It has not been possible to find official records of the Court Martial<sup>133</sup> but it was reported in the *Naval Chronicle*.

*"It appears that the loss of the ship was caused by an error in the reckoning of the pilots as to the ship's situation, they presuming her to be near Smith's Knowl, when at the time he struck she was sixty miles from that shoal. The court passed a sentence of acquittal on all the officers and ship's company. We are sorry to say that it appeared in evidence the Dutch might have saved the people if they had attended to the urgent requests of those who were fortunate to land first."*<sup>134</sup>

The account of the wreck given in Wikipedia is based primarily on Van Alphen, G.M.W. Acda & van Dissel, A.M.C., *Kroniek der Zeemacht: Gedenkwaardige gebeurtenissen uit vijf eeuwen Nederlandse marinegeschiedenis*, Bataafsche Leeuw 2003 and states,

*"Minotaur got stuck in the sand, rolled on her side and quickly made water. It was decided to cut all the masts to lighten the ship; this destroyed some of the boats. By the early morning, the ship had nevertheless sunk deeper, flooding the forecastle. Waves pounded the hull. Around 08:00, the hull split asunder. The crew, taking refuge on the poop deck, tried to evacuate on a remaining launch and two yauls. Thirty-two men escaped on a yaul. When they reached the Dutch coast, this inspired another eighty-five to use the launch; they too reached the shore. Captain Barrett, together with about a hundred men, then tried to escape with the remaining yaul but it was swamped and all drowned. Around 14:00, the Minotaur turned completely, drowning the remaining crew. The 110 of her crew that had taken to her boats informed the Dutch authorities of*

---

<sup>132</sup> Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

<sup>133</sup> Search by Paul Blake, genealogical researcher.

<sup>134</sup> *The Naval Chronicle* Vol 31 pp. 486-487, quoted in Grocott, Terence, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras* Chatham Publishing 1997.

*the disaster. Another twenty survivors were rescued by a pilot vessel. The authorities placed the survivors under custody and refused to dispatch more rescue vessels until the following morning. The rescue party found however that apart from four men who had reached shore by clinging to wreckage, no survivors remained on the vessel or in the surrounding water. The death toll therefore was between 370 and 570 men. All survivors were taken to France as prisoners of war.*<sup>135</sup>

Four hundred of the crew, including William Milson, perished. William is commemorated at St. Briavels, where the inscription reads, "He was a Lieutenant of HMS Minotaur which was lost off the Texel the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Dec 1810 with the Captain, 5 Lieutenants and upwards of 500 of the crew. On the tombstone his age is give as 29 when he was in fact 30."<sup>136</sup>

In 1781, Richard was listed in the Land Tax Returns for St. Briavels, paying £1 16/6 for property including late Mousalls, or Monsalls, Park. The eleventh child of Richard and Ann was Helena, who has already been mentioned. Their youngest child was 3x great grandmother, Sarah, who was baptised at St. Briavels on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1785.<sup>137</sup>

It is possible to discover a little more about Richard. *The Gloucester Journal* of the refers to the sale of six acres of pasture, known as White Pool, in St. Briavels, that was tenanted by Richard.<sup>138</sup> In 1798 Richard was again listed in the Land Tax returns for St. Briavels, this time paying

---

<sup>135</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS\\_Minotaur\\_\(1793\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Minotaur_(1793)) accessed 30 May 2020, account based on Van Alphen, G.M.W. Acda & van Dissel, A.M.C., *Kroniek der Zeemacht: Gedenkwaardige gebeurtenissen uit vijf eeuwen Nederlandse marinegeschiedenis.*, Bataafsche Leeuw 2003.

<sup>136</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>137</sup> Baptism register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>138</sup> *The Gloucester Journal* 7 October 1793 p. 2 col. c. This settlement is now known as Whitepool and is to the north east of St. Briavels village, in the road to Bream.

£2 8/-.<sup>139</sup> Malting was a seasonal task. It involved soaking grain, so that it germinated, before drying it so that it could be used for brewing. Warm weather was not conducive to this task as, in the summer, the grain rotted, rather than sprouting; so malting took place from October to April. This meant that maltsters often combined malting with farming, or some other trade and Richard was also described as a farmer.<sup>140</sup>

Although maltsters generally had some status, usually owning land, running their own businesses and serving as parish officials, life for a late eighteenth century maltster in Gloucestershire would not have been easy. The damp heaps of barley would need to be turned regularly, to make sure that they did not get too warm. This was done using heavy wooden spades, or malting shovels. The germinating malt was then put in a kiln, which, by this date, was probably fired using local coal. The river network



**A Late Eighteenth Century Malthouse imagined by ChatGpt**

---

<sup>139</sup> 1798 and Tax Return for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>140</sup> *The Gloucester Journal* 15 March 1851 p.4 col. d.

was crucial for shipping the finished barley to the breweries of Bristol. This suggests that Richard's malthouse was probably in the western part of St. Briavels parish, close to the River Wye, which flowed into the River Severn.

A tax on malt was first introduced in the seventeenth century but in 1791, a cash-strapped government, trying to finance the French Revolutionary Wars and pay off debts following the American War of Independence, increased the tax. The rate of 10/6 a quarter<sup>141</sup> in 1787, was 12/6 in 1791 and a government now faced with the Napoleonic Wars, raised it to 38/6 by 1804.<sup>142</sup> In an era when drinking water was often contaminated, the population relied on small beer as the drink of choice, one which also contributed much needed calories an increase in the price of beer led to malnutrition. In order to calculate the amount of tax due, by measuring the depth of the barley that was waiting to be germinated, customs officers visited malthouses at regular intervals. Penalties for tax avoidance were severe.

The 1790s was a decade of very poor wheat harvests, meaning that there were bread shortages. Maltsters were often resented for using barley for beer, rather than bread. The winter of 1794-1795 was a particularly severe one and the River Severn froze over, no doubt impacting on Richard's options for selling his grain.

Richard died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1809<sup>143</sup> and was buried at St. Briavels on the 27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>144</sup> Richard Milson 'Gent' left a will in 1809. This mentions his *"freehold, messuage, tenement or dwelling house, malthouse, garden and*

---

<sup>141</sup> A quarter was eight bushels, or sixty four dry gallons.

<sup>142</sup> Hansard 10 March 1835 vol 26 cc737-834.

<sup>143</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>144</sup> Transcript of the Burial register for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire; Bishops' Transcripts for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

*lands.*"<sup>145</sup> Richard's wife, Ann, died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1823 and is commemorated at St. Briavels.<sup>146</sup> Sarah, the youngest Milson child, married John Mudway at St. Briavels on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1810.<sup>147</sup> Her brother, John Milson and Ann Mudway were the witnesses. Sarah's story continues under Mudway.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> The Gloucestershire Wills Index, via [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk).

<sup>146</sup> Monumental Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

<sup>147</sup> Marriage register for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire, accessed via [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>148</sup> See the Mudway story.