

Bones in Froyle and Petersfield

The story of Thomas Bone.

Village of
Froyle

Mary Baker
c.1734-1807

George Albery

Town of
Petersfield

Thomas Reading
?

Ann Bone
1768-1805

James Albery
b.1754

Francis Poling
d.1805

Thomas R. Bone
1793-1862

Elizabeth Albery
1793-1879

Harry A. Bone
1837-1912

The Bones

We know enough about the Bones to tell their story in several parts, and this one centres on the last ancestor to remain in England: Thomas Bone (1793-1862). At the time of this writing, not much is known of his predecessors, and his son Harry's tale will be saved for later because it largely takes place in Canada.

Thomas' story was researched by his great-grandson Albery Bone beginning in the late 1960's. Though it begins with Thomas' poverty and abandonment, it follows him to a new life of family and professional success. Some of the story was passed from son to son, but most was eventually substantiated by public records, and its investigation was one of Albery's passions. The gaps between the records, the parts we can only imagine about Thomas' life, fueled his passion, and provide as much interest as the 'facts' themselves.

So what follows is both the story revealed by the researched records and Albery's and my own imagination. All imaginings are shown in italics. They might end up being wrong, but filling in the blanks is the essential fun in making sense of a partial tale.

Thomas' Missing Years

For a researcher, it is a cause for celebration to find that particular record that links an ancestor's adult life with their earliest events. Not only can such a document point to the time and place of birth, but ultimately to the ancestor's parents. For Thomas Bone, this was his entry in the Census of England and Wales for 1851.

Record HO 107/1677,
District 112 (Petersfield), enumeration #2a, folio 156, Household #94,
Bone, Thomas, head, 57, Maltster Brewer, b. Froyle, Co. Hampshire

Several records describe Thomas before 1851, but this census was the first to include village of birth, and indicates where to look for Thomas' record of baptism. He was born in Froyle, Hampshire to the unwed Ann Bone in 1793. We may only assume *he lived with her until* she died in 1805. Ann's own mother Mary died in Froyle in 1807. At age 12, Thomas was an orphan, and did not appear in the public record for another 16 years.

In 1821 Thomas joined the independent Church of Christ in Petersfield, marking the end of his un-historied youth. In his adult life, Thomas was a successful brewer, husband, and father of three, but it is the 16 'missing' years that provides the most fertile ground for imagining his story.

Froyle

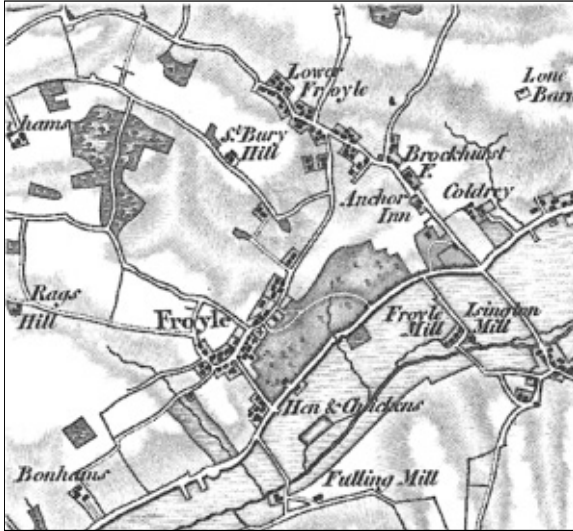
In the Wey River valley of North-Eastern Hampshire lie several small hamlets surrounding the village of Froyle, home to our oldest known Bone ancestors, and the place of Thomas' childhood. Local agriculture was in cereals and hops, yet Froyle had many poor, and the parish regularly gave Poor Relief to the larger families.

When Thomas was born, his mother was not married. His baptism record in St. Mary's Church register read,

Bone, Thomas Reading, 1793, 14 July, 'baseborn' son of Anne



John Speede's England, 1611

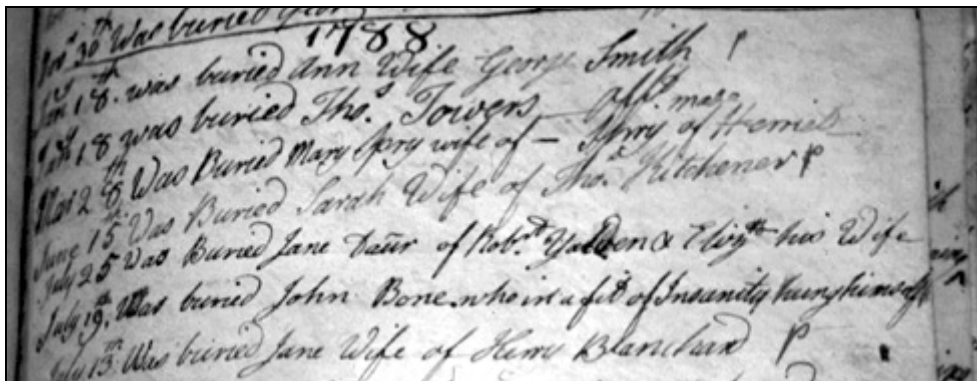


Froyle, 1810 Old Series Ordnance Survey

At the time there was a married man living in Froyle named Thomas Reading. St. Mary's recorded his marriage to Sarah Dicker in 1792. No subsequent baptisms are found in Froyle, but between 1794 and 1812 several children of Thomas and Sarah Reading were baptised in Buriton and Petersfield, indicating the family moved nearer these villages about 20 km south of Froyle.

Ann Bone's family was large; nine brothers and sisters, all baptised at St. Mary's. Their parents John and Mary were married there in 1760. No other Bone record predates their marriage, so John must have come from elsewhere. Mary's family the Bakers appear in the church records since 1680.

During Thomas' early life in Froyle there was Aunt Esther and Uncle John Oliver, Aunt Lucy and Uncle Henry Combs, Uncle John Bone, two more younger uncles, and his widowed grandmother Mary. Sadly, Grandfather John had committed suicide five years earlier.



St. Mary's Church Burial Register, (second line from the bottom) "July 19th, Was buried John Bone who in a fit of Insanity hung himself

When Thomas was 12 years old, his mother Ann died. His grandmother Mary, "the Widow Bone" was receiving aid from Froyle Parish for "distress and illness", and died two years later. Thomas' remaining kin included Aunt Lucy's family, the Combs, who lived in Froyle until at least 1812, and Uncle John who died unmarried in 1820. *Did Thomas stay in Froyle with his Aunts, Uncles and cousins, or did he leave to find his father, or to find work?* The next 16 years of Thomas' life are unknown, but we may speculate:

Maybe Thomas' childhood resembled that of a young Dickensian hero, trying to support his dying grandmother, slaving in factories and workhouses until her death and his eventual escape to quiet Petersfield.

Or, Thomas lived with his wicked Uncle John, a lifelong bachelor who mistreated the boy, and never let him forget he was both orphan and bastard. Finally his Aunt Lucy revealed who his real father was, and told of his move south to Buriton and Petersfield.

Maybe a local farmer found Thomas one day, a destitute and thieving urchin, and gave him into the care of the local minister of the local independent church.

Petersfield

By age 28, Thomas Bone was in Petersfield, a stagecoach stop en route to Winchester and Portsmouth from London. It was a town three times the size of Froyle, described in travel guides as pleasant, if not very important.

“Petersfield lies in a pretty broad and very beautiful valley. On three sides of it are very lofty hills, partly downs and partly covered with trees”

Cobbett, William: 1830: *Rural Rides*: (London)

“The Town lies very pleasantly in a fruitful Soil, and is a great Thorough-fare, lying in the direct Road between London and Portsmouth. It is pretty populous, and tho' it cannot be called rich, 'tis not poor, nor are the Houses ill built.”

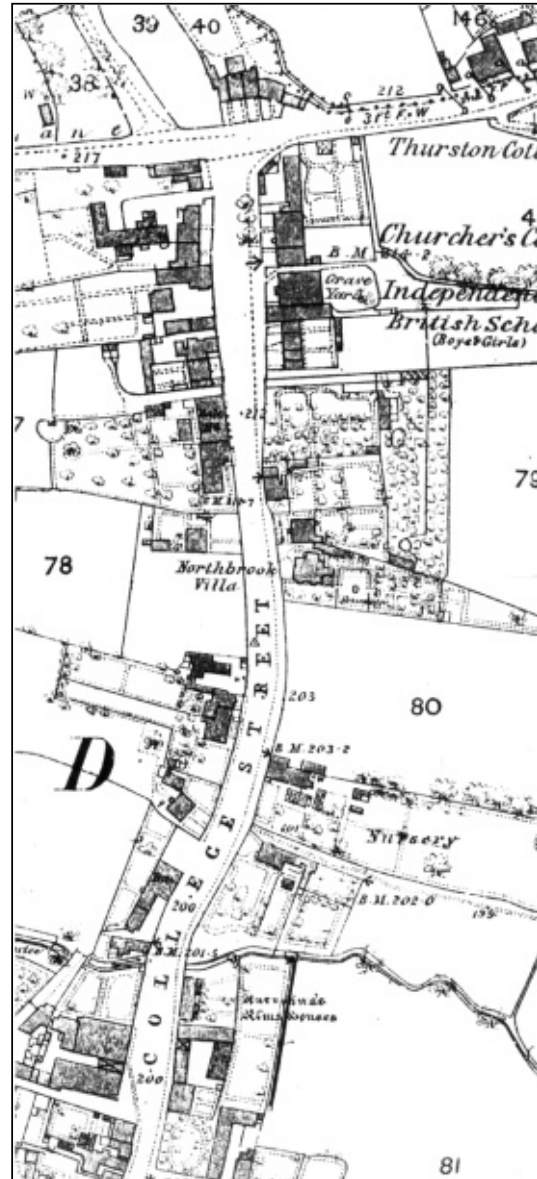
Cox, Thomas: 1738: *Magna Britannia, Antiqua et Nova, A Survey of England*

All the major influences on Thomas' adult life were centred on College Street – on this 400 metre stretch of road was Thomas' church, home, business *and also his mentor*.

James Albery was a maltster on College Street, and from 1823-30 he produced malted barley, a beer brewing ingredient. By 1830, Thomas Bone was also a maltster and a master brewer on College Street; *he surely had a professional association with James Albery. Maybe Thomas learned the trade under his mentorship*, James being 40 years his senior. Thomas married James' daughter Elizabeth in 1830. Her brothers did not follow as maltsters, *so it's likely Thomas was also James' successor in the malt house on College Street*. He honoured his benefactor by naming their son Harry Albery Bone; a tradition of naming that lasted three more generations.

Thomas and his wife were religious non-conformists or dissenters. Instead of attending St. Peter's, the local Established Church on The Square, they were members of the independent Congregational parish at the top of College Street, Church of Christ. Our first record of Thomas in Petersfield was made on 21 Feb 1821, when he was admitted to that congregation. Elizabeth Albery joined in 1829; *they probably married there*, and their three children were registered and baptised in that parish: Mary Ann (1833), Emma (1835), and Harry Albery (1837).

Harry shared a wonderful memory, passed down through the generations, of his school days in Petersfield and picking apples from his father's trees while reaching over the schoolyard fence. *Did he attend Churcher's College*, on the northernmost end of the street (and its namesake), or *the British School for boys and girls* two doors south?



College Street, Petersfield, 1870. Copyright © Landmark Information Group & Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright

Thomas continued as a maltster and brewer on College Street throughout the 1840's and 50's. Thomas had learned to write during this time, and was able to sign his name as witness to Mary Ann's marriage in 1858. She wedded a grain miller named Charles Lillywhite and moved to nearby Sheet, and later to Steep. Harry married Kate Stallard in 1861, and they remained on College Street continuing in the brewing trade. Emma died of consumption at age 17. Thomas *probably worked with his son*, also a brewer and beer retailer, until his death in 1862. He was buried in unconsecrated ground in the Dissenters section of Petersfield Cemetery.

Elizabeth left Petersfield and moved to a small cottage in Sheet, near to the Lillywhite's mill. Harry and Kate remained on College Street until they emigrated to Canada with the Stallard family around 1867.

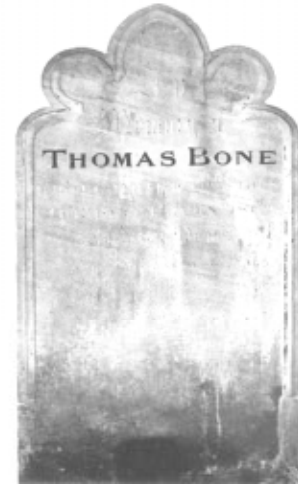


Photo taken 2003

The Lillywhites



Sheet, 1870. Copyright © Landmark Information Group & Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright

Charles Lillywhite operated the Sheet Bridge Mill, about a mile north-east of Petersfield on the Rother River. After Thomas' death, Elizabeth lived her remaining years in a cottage at the mill. In 1879 she "died of cold weather and old age", and was also buried in the unconsecrated section of Petersfield Cemetery.

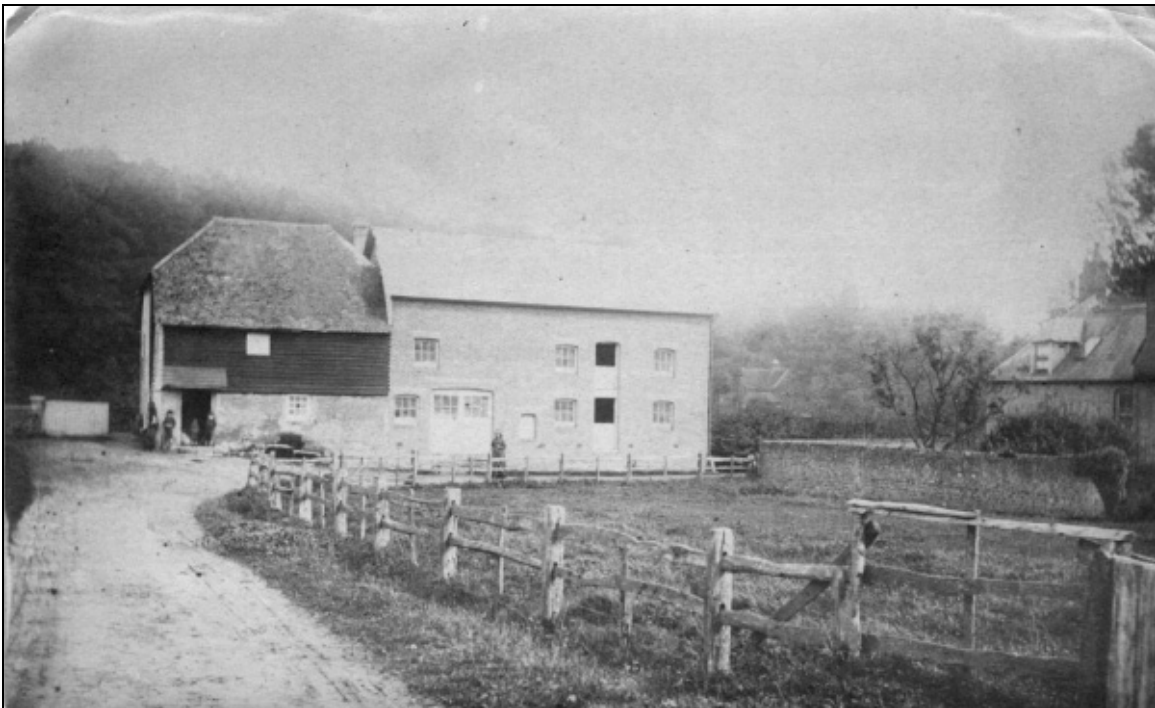
Charles and Mary Ann had no children. They lived in nearby Steep at Yew Villa until the end of the century; he died in 1897, and she one year later. Both were buried in Steep Churchyard.



Yew Villa circa 1880 – "Charles Lillywhite's house & garden, Steep, nr Petersfield, Hampshire, England". Mary Ann Bone on far right.



Sheet Bridge Mill c. 1880 – “South view of C. Lillywhite’s Mill, Also of the cottage in which Mrs [Bone] lived and died, the second ho[use] on the left”



Sheet Bridge Mill c. 1880 – “Sheet Bridge Mill, Steep, West view of Charles Lillywhite’s Mill”

