



CHERRYBURN TIMES

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THOMAS BEWICK'S ANCESTRY

by David Gardner-Medwin

PART 2. HIS GRANDFATHER, THOMAS BEWICK



Part 1 of this paper discussed Thomas Bewick's (TB's) grandmother Agnes Arthur and her family. His grandfather Thomas is a more shadowy figure. The search for him has involved many archives. A key to these is provided at the end.

The farmer of Kirkheaton and Birches Nook

Thomas Bewick senior was probably born at East Shaftoe in 1685, but we shall come to that later. The earliest firm documentation we have about him is at the baptism of his first child on 22 July 1708 when he was 'of the Town and Parish of Kirkheaton'. No record of his marriage to Agnes Arthur survives: probably it was in about 1707. The family remained at Kirkheaton at least until their eighth child was baptised there, from their home at Cross Stone House, on 25 October 1724 (see Part 1). We have no other reliable source of evidence about them at this period but it seems likely that Thomas was farming, preparing for his later life as 'one of the most intelligent, active & best Farmers on Tyneside' (TB's *Memoir* page 1), and perhaps also gaining experience of the small-scale coal mining that was carried on at Kirkheaton in the early 18th century.

The next definite record is that he was on Tyneside by 1731. His son John wrote on 25th August 1760 to his landlord, John Battie of Cusworth near Doncaster,¹ negotiating a renewal of his leases for Mickley Colliery and Cherryburn, and asking for a supply of wood for the colliery:

In a Lease granted to my father of the said colliery from Mr. Wrightson for the Term of Eleven years and which commenced A:D: 1731 an Allowance of that nature was mentioned (DD/BW/E15/14).

No copy of this 1731 lease seems to survive but two later rental documents confirm Thomas Bewick as the tenant of Mickley Colliery, in May 1740 and May 1741, paying £12

per annum (see *Appendix*). The equivalent Battie Wrightson records between 1724 and 1740 are missing.

In his *Memoir* TB (born ten years after Thomas senior died) wrote that his grandfather 'farmed the Lands of Painshaw field and Burches Neuk, near Bywell, and also the Colliery on Mickley Bank or Mickley Common – how long since I know not, but it might probably be about the year 1700'. But when in fact Thomas began mining at Mickley remains a puzzle.

The tenants of Mickley Colliery.

By a lease dated 11 November 1715, William Fenwick of Bywell granted to 'John Atkinson and Thomas Buick of Kirkheaton ..., yeomans' the mining rights for 11 years at 'Mickley West Bank, Acomb Moore and 'Eltringham' [*ie* Eltringham] Common in the manor of Bywell' (DD/BW/N/IV/11) – in Part 1 we identified John Atkinson as a cousin of TB's grandmother Agnes Bewick née Arthur). Some details of the three collieries are given in the *Appendix*.

At this date TB's grandfather Thomas was probably aged 30, and was raising his family in Kirkheaton; the description 'yeoman' implies that Atkinson and his partner were both active farmers there. This casts doubt on whether the same man could both run the home farm and partner his kinsman in a mining enterprise at Mickley and Eltringham, well over ten miles away by foot and ferry. This is not an impossible walking distance, so Thomas may have achieved the feat for the following decade (after all, his young grandson TB walked a similar distance home from Newcastle to Cherryburn after a day's work most weekends from 1767 to 1785) but it is sufficiently unlikely for us to consider alternatives.

One possibility is that one or other of the partners simply gave up his work at Kirkheaton and lived in Tynedale returning periodically to see his family; if so, which one? Atkinson signed his name on the indenture of the 1715 lease, but 'Buick' (also spelled Bueick at the end of the document) was able only to sign with his mark. The money for the project would probably have come from Atkinson, a member of the land-owning family of Kirkheaton, so it is difficult to envisage a role for the less wealthy and apparently less educated 'Buick' other than a directly supervisory one. During part of this period 'John Atkinson of the town and parish of Kirkheaton',

probably the same, appears in the Kirkheaton parish register as the father of Margaret (baptized 26 March 1717, buried 20 July 1732), Barbary (2 January 1723/4) and John (2 September 1731), so he was no more free and overall less likely than Bewick to have moved to Tynedale to supervise the collieries.

An alternative explanation of the enigma is that there was more than one Thomas Bewick. The partners appear in the rental lists for Martinmas 1721 and May Day 1724 (DD/BW/E15/23 & /25) only in the equivocal guise 'John Atkinson and Pa^r', Pa^r presumably meaning 'Partner', and not necessarily Thomas. For by that time 'Thomas Buick', may have died. Certainly a 'Thomas Bewick of Pruddaw in the parish of Ovingham' was buried at Kirkheaton on 23 April 1718 (*Par. Reg.*). Might he have been a relative of 'our' Thomas Bewick and might he have returned in poor health to his former home in Kirkheaton or have been brought back from Prudhoe by the family to be buried? No proof of such an idea is available. All that can be said is that no previous mention of a Thomas Bewick of Prudhoe is to be found in the Ovingham parish registers, so he may have been a newcomer to that area. To pursue the speculation, if there was indeed a second, perhaps more senior, Thomas Bewick 'of Kirkheaton, yeoman' in the family, who went to Prudhoe (near Eltringham) in Tynedale in 1715, it would make it very much easier to understand (1) how the collieries in Tynedale could have been managed while the younger Thomas was farming at Kirkheaton, (2) who the 'Thomas Bewick of Pruddaw' was, who was buried at Kirkheaton in 1718, and (3) how it came about, as I postulated in Part 1, that Jane, one of the children born to Thomas and Agnes Bewick at Kirkheaton, came to be buried at Ovingham as the 'daughter of Thomas Bewick of Pruddoe' on 17 June 1725.

The 1715 eleven-year lease by Atkinson and 'Buick' would have expired in 1726, not long after the time when Thomas Bewick's family seems to have left Kirkheaton, and it may or may not have been renewed then by Atkinson, no record survives. Perhaps it was from this time onwards that he had some help from the younger Thomas Bewick. We know that, not long after the death of his 15 year-old daughter Margaret, John Atkinson sold his lands at Kirkheaton on 1st November 1732, and moved to Hexham, where he died in 1736 (Hodgson, 1897). His withdrawal in about 1732 may explain why at about this time Thomas Bewick seems to have changed from whatever he was doing in Prudhoe, took on Mickley colliery in his own name in 1731 and at about the same time leased the farm at Birches Nook.

We are left unsure of the identity of the Thomas Bewick who leased the collieries with Atkinson in 1715. Was he the grandfather of TB? Did he for about ten years walk or ride regularly from Kirkheaton to Tyneside heroically maintaining farm and family at one place and supervising two or more mines at the other? Or did he leave his wife a grass-widow while he went to work the collieries in Tynedale, eventually moving the family there permanently in about 1725? Or was he a different Thomas from the same family who went to Prudhoe and died in 1718, presumably leaving Atkinson with the need for a new (and undiscovered) partner?

I searched for a signature of TB's grandfather to settle whether he was literate, hoping to distinguish him thereby from the 'Thomas Buick' who made his mark on the 1715

lease, two lines forming a fallen T thus \neg . Sadly I failed. The 1734 indenture of the mortgage described in Part 1 is the part signed only by the Arthurs.² On his will, while 'weak of body', Thomas made only his mark, repeatedly scratching the pen in an upright T shape, whether from illness or illiteracy is uncertain, while his witnesses William Arthur and Joseph Jackson wrote their names. For what little it is worth, the marks add a little weight to the 'one Thomas' rather than the 'two Thomases' hypothesis, but the question remains unsettled.

Birches Nook seems to have been a typical Northumberland linear farm, probably of one storey like Cherryburn, with a well nearby, standing close to the southwest side of the Hexham turnpike near Stocksfield.³ The row there, now called 'Birches Nook Cottages', probably developed from Thomas Bewick's farmhouse. There is no record of when Thomas first took the lease of Birches Nook farm, near Stocksfield, but he was there by 1732. The ownership of Birches Nook and Mickley had been transferred to William Wrightson in January 1723/4, following his marriage in 1723 to Isabella,



Crozier Surtees Esq. (1701-1739) with his wife Jane, Thomas Bewick's landlord. From Surtees and Leighton (1925).

daughter of the former owner William Fenwick of Bywell Hall (NCH, Vol. VI). But eight years later, on 14 November 1732, he and his wife sold Birches Nook with the neighbouring 'Common Farm', Merryshields and Batt House and some other properties to Mr Crozier Surtees (DD/BW/N/IV/26 & /54 & /92). At this date Birches Nook was 'sometime heretofore in the tenure or occupation of Robert Simpson and late of Peter Waugh but now of Thomas Bewick' (*ibid* /92). The farm's rental lists along with all those of the Bywell estate are missing after the period 1706-1724 until 1740. The successive rent-payers of Birches Nook were indeed Robert Simpson in 1706 and Peter Waugh in 1715-24 (DD/BW/E15/21-30). Waugh had a 21-year lease dated 10 April 1709 ending on 2 May 1730 (DD/BW/N/IV/8) and it is unlikely that he relinquished it before 1730. His family was certainly still there when on 7 May 1728 bastard twin children of George Waugh of Birches Nook and Margaret Burlaston were baptized (Bywell St Peter Par. Reg.) and Peter Waugh himself seems to have survived until after Thomas Bewick arrived at Birches Nook since 'Peter Waugh of Clickham Inn' (ie Click'em Inn, on the southeastern

boundary of Birches Nook) was buried at Bywell St Peter on 16 October 1736 (Par. Reg.). So Thomas Bewick probably arrived at Birches Nook some time between May 1730 when the Waugh lease expired and November 1732 when he was in occupation when the farm was sold.

In Part 1 we saw that Thomas Bewick and his family may have arrived on Tyneside by 1725, perhaps initially settling in Prudhoe; but we have no firm news of them from 1724 to 1731. It is possible that he was involved chiefly in mining in his early years on Tyneside, but since he was later known as a farmer it seems unlikely that he gave up farming altogether in these first seven years.

Crozier Surtees Esq, from 1732 the owner of Birches Nook, and his wife Jane lived at the neighbouring estate of Merry Shields, where some of their four children were born from 1734 to 1740, so his tenant and near neighbour Thomas Bewick and his family would probably have been well acquainted with them.

Surtees did not live to enjoy his ownership of Birches Nook for long. He died in September 1739 at the age of 37. His will was proved in 1740 and his executors spent the next 16 years realising the value of the properties left in trust for his elder son. These included Birches Nook Farm which was sold for £59-07-00 at an unknown date before 1756. In the same period, among others, Merry Shields was sold for £285-11-08 and Common

Farm for £118-05-04 (all from Surtees and Leighton, 1925). Some of these sales seem to have been within the family because a century later in July 1835 Merry Shields and Birches Nook were still in the possession of Robert Surtees Esq., who was Crozier's grandson, the son of his posthumously born second son.⁴

TB's *Memoir* mentions that Thomas also farmed Painshaw Field. No mention of this farm appears in the Wrightson documents I have seen, but in 1739 it was apparently one of the properties bequeathed by the will of Crozier Surtees to his trustees and was sold by them for £217-11-10³/₄ at some time before in 1756 (Surtees and Leighton, 1925). Probably, therefore, during most or all of Thomas Bewick's tenancy it and Birches Nook were both in the possession of Surtees or his executors. It lies south and south-west of Birches Nook. Theoretically Thomas might have farmed there between 1726 and 1732 before expanding into Birches Nook, but there is no evidence of this. It seems more likely that he started with the smaller farm of Birches Nook and lived there throughout, only later leasing the additional more valuable and larger acreage of Painshaw Field.

Today much of Birches Nook farm⁵ is covered with a housing estate (as is Painshaw Field), but we can learn a

little about it from two early documents. In 1723 the stated annual rental value of the 26 acres of Birches Nook to the new owner was £8 and the value of its wood £18 (DD/BW/E15/4). Incidentally, the annual value of 'Cheryburn' and its intack (then just over 7 acres) at that time was £3.15s and of its wood £50; and the value of 'Mickly colyery' £10 (*ibid*). In 1732 Birches Nook was included in an 'extract of fine' concerned with the sale of the four adjacent farms but how much land belonged to each is not stated: '... three Messuages, thirty acres of Land, thirty acres of Meadow, thirty acres of Pasture and common of pasture for all cattle with the appurtenances in Common Farm, Birkesnook, Merryshale Intacke and Batthouse ...' (BW/N/IV/54).

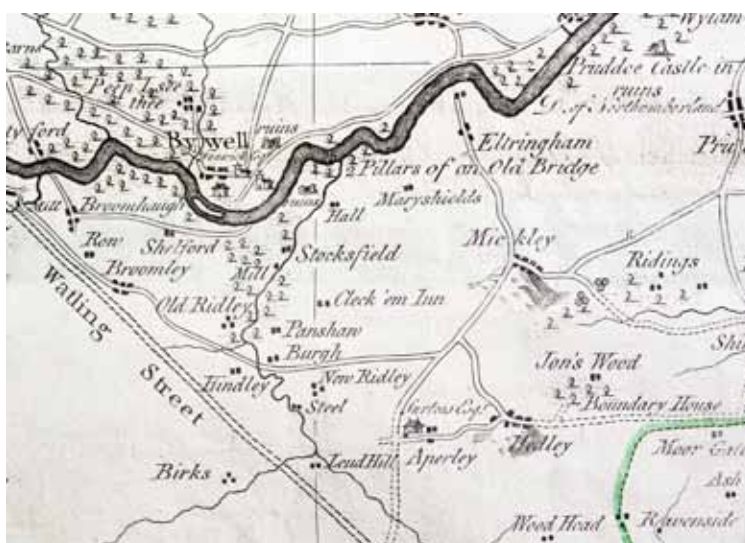
As we saw in Part 1, Thomas seems clearly never to have lived at Cherryburn; the tenants there from at least 1702 to 1742 were five successive members of the Johnson family (DD/BW/E15/21-30). His son John Bewick did not take out

a lease on Cherryburn until 29 October 1751 (*ibid* BW/N/IV/48) although he may have lived there for a short time before that date; when his first wife Ann was buried at Bywell St Peter on 23 June 1751 she was recorded as the wife of John Bewick of Eltringham. But from that year until 1946 the Bewick family leased both Cherryburn and Mickley Colliery from the Wrightsons.

A Thomas Bewick, probably but not certainly the same, is listed in

the baptismal and marriage registers at Bywell St Peter as a churchwarden in 1742, the year before he died. Apart from his appearance on the rental lists for Mickley Colliery in 1740 and 1741, we have no other documentation of his life after his mortgage agreement of 1734. Evidently by that date he was already financially secure and we may presume that for the rest of his life he was developing his reputation as a 'one of the most intelligent, active & best Farmers on Tyneside', expanding from an initial holding of 26 acres into Painshaw Field, and no doubt, like his son later, pasturing sheep on Mickley Fell. The soil in that part of Tynedale is good. The standard Fenwick and Wrightson farm leases (DD/BW/N/IV) prohibited the ploughing of meadow land or the cutting of young oak or ash trees and sometimes required the liming of land, so it is likely that Thomas's new landowner, Surtees, would have made similar stipulations. The conditions were right for successful farming.

Thomas Bewick was 'weak of body' when he signed his will with his mark on 21 February 1742/3 (DPRI/1/1743/B8/1-2) and he was buried at Bywell St Peter between then and 25 March in that year (the exact date is effaced in the register). He bequeathed to his daughter Mary Brown 'a coow', and to each of her two daughters twenty shillings; to his sister Jane



From Lt. A. Armstrong's 1" map of 1769. (Courtesy of Newcastle City Library)

Jackson ten shillings; to his son John ten pounds, two mares, all his sheep and all his 'utentials belonging to husbandry'; and the residue of his property to his wife and all his living unmarried children, John, Sarah, Ann and Margaret. His wife was to be sole executrix, but she declined the office and probate was granted instead to John on 18 June 1743. There was no real estate and the total value of his property was not stated, but an inventory made on 7 May 1743 lists:

Purse and apparell	£02-10-0
4 Coows	£13-14-0
2 Mares & a gelding	£12-00-0
Household goods	£09-00-0

(Durham University Library DDR/EL/PRO/7/8/1.)

There was no mention of the sheep or utensils of husbandry! The sums mentioned seem not to support TB's statement that his grandfather 'got to be very rich'; indeed there seems a discrepancy between these resources and the acreage of his farm.

The origin of Thomas Bewick: clues and sources

G.C. Atkinson (1831) wrote that TB's father and grandfather both died at 'about the age of 70', which would put Thomas's birth in about 1672. John, did indeed die aged 70, in 1785, but in the limited parish registers for the period (in the IGI) no feasible baptism of a Thomas Bewick in or near the year 1672 has been discovered. Perhaps significantly, Atkinson's manuscript draft for his *Sketch* (Gardner-Medwin, 2007) gives a different wording: 'his father, and some others of his family, had died at the age of seventy'. A birth date near 1672 for Thomas cannot be ruled out but is insecure as a premise.

In the 1980s Mrs Nora Hancock worked extensively on the pedigrees of the Bewicks, particularly the descendants of Thomas Bewick senior, but also the families of William Bewick (1795-1866) the artist of Darlington and of Fenwick Bewick both of whom she believed to be related in some undiscovered way to TB. Her working papers and correspondence with descendants of all three lines are deposited at Cherryburn and form a valuable resource for family historians studying more recent generations. Her 1992 pedigree of the Bewicks (*see* Part 1), without citing a source or place, gives the date **4 October 1685** for Thomas's baptism, improbably late if the birth date 1672 were correct. I have failed to spot her source for this date in her extensive papers and Mrs Hancock kindly checked for further records at her home in November 2010, and was again unable to find or recall a source. Nor have I noticed any other mention of this date in the Bewick literature.⁶

A second clue is to be found in Thomas's will. He names 'my sister Jane Jackson' to whom he left ten shillings. The will was witnessed by Joseph Jackson (with two others). A Jane Bewick, perhaps the same, had married a Joseph Jackson of Elsdon at Elsdon in early June 1712 (*Par. Reg.*). No subsequent certain information about Jane or Joseph has been traced.⁷ TB's apprentice in the early 1820s, John Jackson, was baptized in Ovingham on 19 April 1801. However John's father, John Jackson, was a native of Alnwick (Ovingham *Par. Reg.*) so it is unlikely that he was related to TB's great aunt Jane; and Jackson was a common name in the county.

These then are the starting points for the attempt to learn something of the elusive background and ancestry of Thomas Bewick the grandfather of TB.

My search has covered England as a whole using the IGI for baptisms and marriages and the NBI for deaths. No likely origin for Thomas was found outside the counties of Northumberland and Durham. Local records from the Indexes have all been checked and supplemented by recourse to the parish records, and the Northumberland county histories, poll books, and hearth tax, probate and quarter sessions records. I reviewed Nora Hancock's records at Cherryburn. Early sources such as 16th C muster rolls are of no specific help without the intermediate family links.

The Bewicks of Northumberland

Bewick is an indigenous Northumberland name, its origin evidently in the township of Bewick, between Eglingham and Chillingham. Names in the form Robertus de Bewic, Willelmus de Bewyk and Peter of Bywik occur in the 13th century (*NCH* vols. VIII & IX; Fraser, 1968) and by 1378 a 'John son of William Bewick' paid rent on four land holdings in Bewick township (Percy Hedley pedigrees, (A) NRO 3635/2). But by 1680 there was no Bewick among more than fifty gentry and tenantry who rode the bounds of Bewick (Langlands, 1866).

By the late 17th century, when Thomas was born, Bewicks were concentrated further south, mainly in the central part of the county, with some in Newcastle and a small cluster in Berwick. The parishes of Hartburn, Kirkharle and Stamfordham (especially in Ingoe and Ryal), all bordering Kirkheaton, were particular strongholds and there the male Bewicks had the limited range of forenames that are familiar in Thomas's descendants, John, Robert, Thomas and William being especially frequent. There were also several Bewicks in Morpeth. Bewicks were merchants in Newcastle (with connections to Morpeth) at least from the 15th century (Welford, 1884). From them the Bewickes of Close House descended. The parish registers of Newcastle's churches survive from a much earlier period than most of the rural ones, and numerous Bewicks of all social classes are found there.

The Bewicks of Tynedale

By the early 18th century significant numbers of Bewicks begin to be found further south again, in the Mickley/Hedley area of the parish of Ovingham, though Ovingham and neighbouring Bywell seem to have had few Bewicks before then. There were none in Ovingham village or Prudhoe in the 1538 Muster Roll, the 1552 Free Tenants list, Stockdale's 1586 survey of tenants-at-will or the 1664/5 Hearth Tax return (*NCH* vol.12). An early record was of George Buike of Horsley who was one of the Four and Twenty of Ovingham Vestry in 1689-90 (Vestry Minutes, dating from 1680, *NRO* EP/102/52). The Ovingham baptismal register dates from 1661, those for marriages and burials from 1679. The earliest recorded Bewick was a baptism in 1691. Bywell St Peter registers date from 1663 and there the earliest recorded Bewick was the baptism of Jane, daughter of John Bewick of Newton, on 26 September 1703.⁸

And yet, well before Thomas and his family arrived in the Ovingham area from Kirkheaton, Bewicks had become particularly prevalent at Mickley and Hedley and there was a Bewick

at nearby Birches Nook. At Mickley a John Bewick had ten children between 1706 and 1724 and gave them the same forenames as TB and his known forebears gave their children. One of this John's sons, William (baptized on 26 April 1716), was probably the William Bewick of Mickley who with his wife Mary had six children there between 1750 and 1761; he may even have been the pauper 'Will Bewick' who befriended the young TB and 'discoursed largely' with him about 'Astronomy & of the Magnitude of the universe' (*Memoir* p. 24). In addition a number of Bewicks 'of Mickley' were buried at Ovingham as paupers between 1743 and 1758;⁹ perhaps they were some of the poor people who lodged on Mickley Common that TB described in his *Memoir*. Can it have been pure coincidence that Mickley West Bank and Eltringham were two of the collieries that John Atkinson and Thomas Buick leased in 1715, or that Thomas Bewick and his descendants worked Mickley at least from 1731?⁹ We cannot be sure.

Even earlier than at Mickley there were Bewicks higher on the fell at nearby Hedley, the four children of Thomas Bewick and Barbary Greenwell married in 1690 (*Ovingham Par. Reg.* – see below). Another interesting family of Bewicks lived at Hedley Fell House in the extreme west of Ryton parish, County Durham, just across the county boundary from Hedley. There, at an unspecified date, was a William Bewick who 'engraved large figures on wood' (Longstaffe, 1854; Fordyce, 1857) and experimented with using bark for making fine papers. His son William, an upholsterer, was born near Rokeby in Teesdale and moved to Darlington where a grandson William was born in 1795. William Bewick the grandson became a pupil of Benjamin Haydon in London and a fashionable portrait painter. He greatly admired TB, possessed a portrait of him painted in oils by William Bell, and visited him in Gateshead in 1827 (Landseer, 1871). Neither man made any claim to be related to the other, although their descendants sought to do so without finding proof (*see* Nora Hancock's notes). But Hedley Fell was only a couple of miles from Mickley, so the temptation to try to find a link between two neighbouring artistic Bewick families is strong; we too shall yield to it below.

The burial register for the parish of Bywell St Peter has an entry: '19 March 1716[7] Ann, wife of Robert Bewick of Birches Nook'. There is no other trace of this couple in the area. In the absence of a local record for their marriage they may have been the Robert Bewick and Anne Shotton 'of Forrest' married at Rothbury on 17 July 1685. But it is perhaps more likely that they were the Robert Bewick and Anne Vinte married at Hartburn on 20 October 1713, who may have had a daughter the following year when Anne, daughter of Robert Bewick was baptized at Hartburn on 27 September 1714. With the exception of a family at Newton (*see Note 8 and Part 1 Note 4*), there is no other evidence of Bewicks in the parish of Bywell St Peter until the mid 18th century (*Par. Reg.* and *NCH*). Mr D.G. Bewick, in a letter to Nora Hancock filed at Cherryburn, quoted a half-remembered family story that this Robert of Birches Nook was related to Fenwick Bewick (to be mentioned below) and that after the death of his wife Robert moved away with his daughter to Barnard Castle where he might have married again and had a son, perhaps called John, who might have been the father of Fenwick.¹⁰ It is difficult to assess this clearly insecure

combination of speculation with recollection. The parish register records several other people from Birches Nook, and they are not recorded as tenants in the Battie-Wrightson papers, so there is no evidence that Robert and Ann had any unique status there and they may simply have been itinerant hinds or other employees. Nevertheless, since the tenancy of Birches Nook Farm came later into Thomas's possession, the possibility must be considered that they were relatives, or even his parents. No local or nearby baptism of a Thomas son of Robert has been found and indeed an extensive search has failed to establish any close family link between these successive Bewick residents at Birches Nook. A complete coincidence cannot be excluded, but neither can a family link pre-dating the existing parish records. What is certain is that neither Thomas nor any earlier Bewick was a freeholder in the area.¹¹

Thomas Bewicks – candidates for TB's grandfather

This survey of Bewicks in the northern counties revealed a number of Thomases born in the latter part of the 17th century in the counties of Northumberland and Durham. But almost all the families involved can be ruled out on grounds of dates, locality or family connections. In particular, no baptism of a Thomas was found in Newcastle, Stamfordham or Berwick, who might plausibly have been the grandfather of TB. It would be tedious here to present all the negative evidence, but in all the areas considered only the following three feasible candidates emerged. It needs to be emphasised again, however, that the parish registers of the late 17th century are far from complete and the family we seek may simply be unrecorded.

A Thomas, son of Robert Bewick, baptized at Morpeth on 29 Sept 1664 cannot be ruled out. But his three sisters and a brother baptized between 1654 and 1668 had some unfamiliar names for the family, Ann, Judith, Alice and Edward, and there was no Jane. His birth in 1664 would have made him about 43 when he married and 60 or more when he started farming in Tynedale, rather too old to be likely.

Between 1691 and 1697, Thomas Bewick of Hedley and his wife Barbary, née Greenwell had four children, John, Thomas, James and Mary, baptized at Ovingham. They had been married there on 21 May 1690 (*Par. Reg.*). Their second son, Thomas, baptised on 18 December 1692, was surely too young at the age of 15 or 16 to be a likely candidate for the father of the John baptized at Kirkheaton on 22 July 1708. So, attractive as this Hedley family is, living close to the family of William the artist and to the Bewicks of Mickley, it can almost certainly be ruled out.

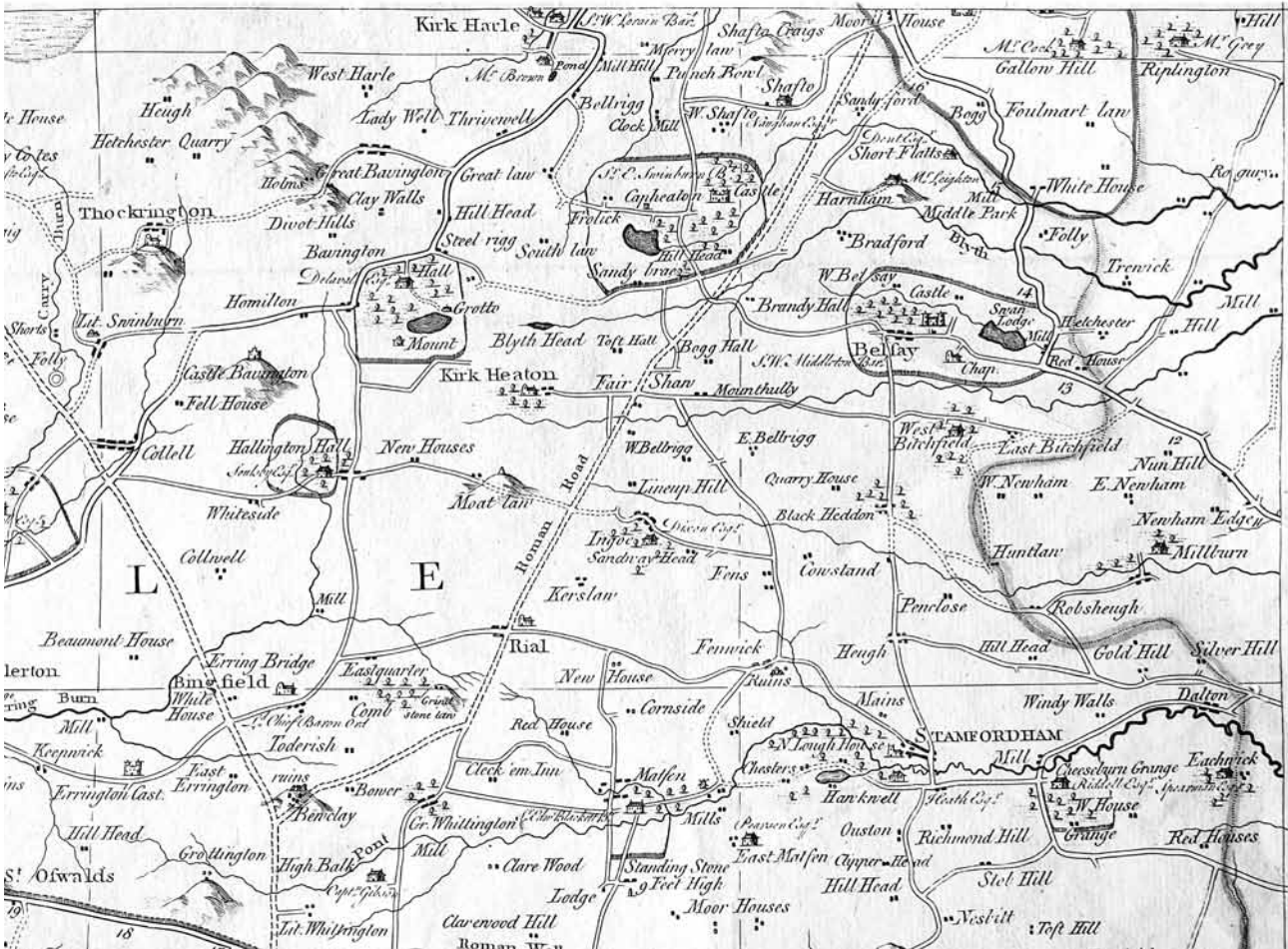
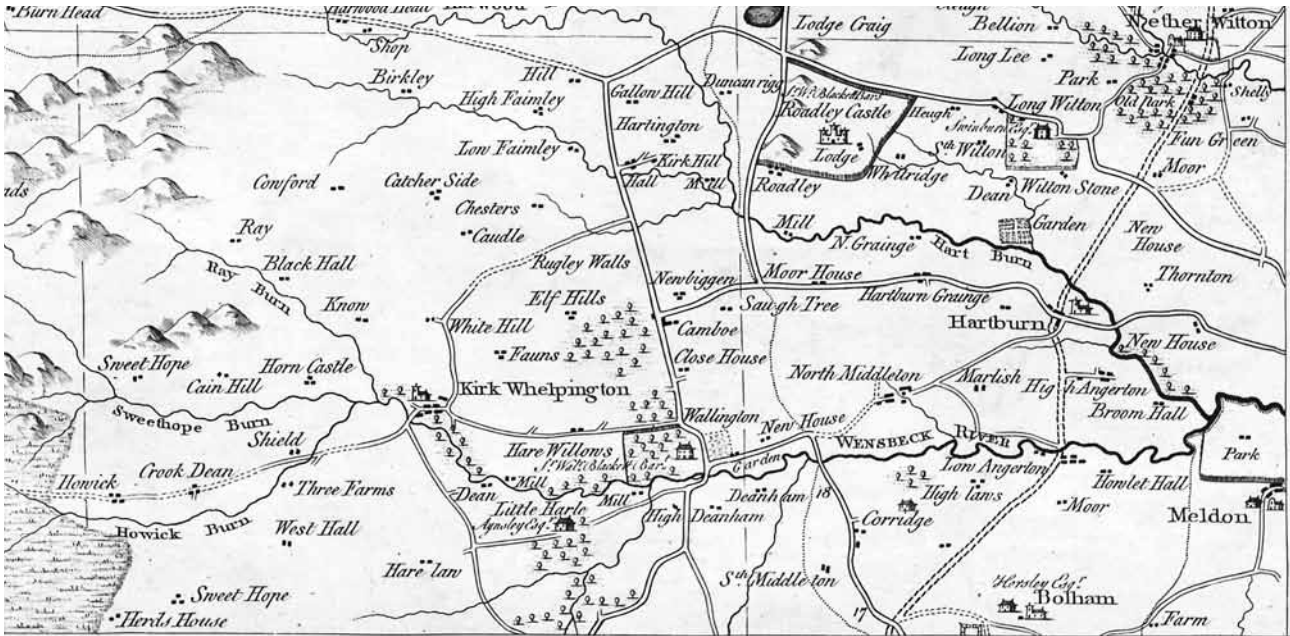
The mysterious baptismal date in Nora Hancock's pedigree, 4 October 1685, turns out to correspond exactly to the baptism of Thomas son of John 'Bowck' of East Shaftoe in the parish of Hartburn (*Par. Reg.*). The date would make Thomas about 22 at the birth of his first child and not 70 but about 57 at his death. Four other children of this John Bewick (successively spelled Bewicke, Bewick, Bowck, Bowick and Beuick) of East Shaftoe, baptized at Hartburn, were 'Jan' [Jane] (4 June 1681), Anthony (30 Nov 1682), Wil[liam] (1 Sept 1687) and George (12 Dec 1689). (The spelling of other familiar names in the Hartburn register for this period was exceptionally varied and inventive.) Here then is a candidate Thomas who has a sister Jane, matches the date of

baptism, is of about the right age and whose family lived close to Kirkheaton. No other Jane Bewick baptized before 1700 in the same family as a Thomas has been traced in the IGI. The evidence is far from conclusive but is at least suggestive.

The Bewicks of East Shaftoe and Kirkharle

East Shaftoe is about four miles northeast of Kirkheaton, and closer to the villages of Kirkharle to the west and Bolam to the east. In the late 1600s the estate and 14th-century mansion

there were owned by the Vaughan family (Hodgson, 1827 page 293). No estate records are available at the NRO.¹² While John Bewick may have been the tenant of the farm there, the place was a more extensive hamlet than it is today so a humbler occupation is possible. Further information about him has so far proved impossible to establish: no baptismal or marriage register for Hartburn exists until 1678. The few available earlier Northumberland registers (IGI) are of little help and if the East Shaftoe John was born elsewhere the



Sections of two separate but contiguous plates from Lt. A. Armstrong's 1769 map of Northumberland.

connection may be impossible to prove. The more likely possibility is that John was born locally, in or near the parish of Hartburn, and that the parish register for his birthdate does not survive. Indirect support for this comes from the fact that there were several other Bewick families in the earliest parish registers for Hartburn (living at ‘Grange Mour’, ‘Saug Houses’, Donkin Ridge’, North Middleton, ‘Yusle’, Hartington Hall, ‘Grange’, and Low Angerton) and that in an undated but probably early 16th century perambulation of the property of Newminster monastery there were already Bewicks in the parish with familiar forenames, ‘John Berwycke’ [*sic*] and ‘Thomas Bewycke’, at Rothley (Hodgson, 1827, page 305). The available evidence leaves John Bewick of East Shaftoe as a plausible candidate for the great grandfather of TB.

A family connection between this John Bewick and the Hedley, Mickley or Birches Nook families might be expected but none has been found; no doubt any such connection would have involved a generation earlier than the available records. Nor is there a record of his marriage, which would probably have been some time in or not long before 1680. No John Bewick was married in the parish of Hartburn in the decades following the earliest registration in 1678; no marriage record at Kirkharle survives before 1695 or at Kirkwhelpington before 1684; and in the whole county the only feasible surviving marriage records of John Bewicks all seem too early. For the present we must accept that we have no idea of the names of Thomas Bewick’s mother or his father’s parents.

Nor can John Bewick’s death be pinned down with certainty. No John Bewick was buried at Hartburn. Five were buried at neighbouring Kirkharle (3), Kirkheaton and Kirkwhelpington between 1720 and 1755. Of these, only John Bewick of Kirkharle, yeoman, buried at Kirkharle on 8 March 1737/8, left a will, disappointingly proving him not to be John of East Shaftoe.¹³ But a plausible possibility is the John Bewick ‘of the Town and Parish of Kirkheaton’ who was buried there on 12 January 1722/3, although to suggest that he is likely to be the right John because he may have been living in his old age with his putative son Thomas is to risk a circular argument.

We have already put forward a similar argument for ‘Thomas Bewick of Pruddaw’ who was buried at Kirkheaton on 23 April 1718. Might he and John both have returned to their ancestral village at the end of their lives? Might Thomas of Prudhoe have been an uncle to Thomas, and a brother of John of East Shaftoe? Again the parish registers no longer exist to test the hypothesis. Taken together with the junior Thomas’s marriage to a Kirkheaton woman and his residence in the village, and Thomas the collier’s status there as ‘yeoman’, we could begin to build a picture of a strong and perhaps even longstanding link of the family to Kirkheaton as well as to East Shaftoe. It is an attractive story, but we need to remember that it is built upon the flimsiest of evidence. However, let us stretch the story one stage further.

In the hamlet of East Shaftoe, an entertaining neighbour and close contemporary of young Thomas Bewick would have been the ‘licentious’ Northumbrian poet Thomas Whittell (c1683-1731) who went to live there as a young man and remained for the rest of his life.¹⁴ In his poem ‘The Insipids’ about the many local suitors of a local belle

(‘Of all the Kirkharle bonny lasses ... Jane Heymours for beauty surpasses ...’) one of the many names mentioned with varying degrees of ribaldry was ‘Bob Bewick just makes it his calling / Unto her his love to declare ...’, just possibly the Robert Bewick we shall meet in relation to the Storey family below. Intriguingly, Thomas Whittell’s poem ‘East Shaftoe’ describes a pit of excellent coal on Shaftoe Crag, so it is even possible that experience of mining extended back a further generation in the Bewick family. The colliery with a drift and two pits was still functioning (unprofitably) in 1821 (*NEIMME WAT*/3/36/33-34). Incidentally, according to Mackenzie (1825) Whittell in his youth had arrived one day in Cambo seeking work at the mill there and riding a goat. Is it possible that this tale was often told locally and became part



of Bewick family lore, which TB in a later generation adapted for his well-known vignette in *Quadrupeds*?

But we go too fast. We have not found proof that the Thomas baptized in 1685 was TB’s grandfather, and the suspected identity must be treated with caution. Is there any further evidence that might provide indirect support?

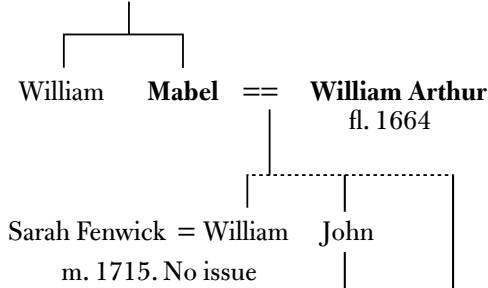
A search for supporting evidence.

What of Thomas Bewick’s East Shaftoe brothers, Anthony, William and George? William Bewicks were numerous in the area¹⁵ and several George Bewicks are recorded in Kirkharle and Hartburn;¹⁶ in neither case is it possible to distinguish Thomas’s brother. However, might William, the brother of Thomas, or possibly a son of that William, conceivably have been the wood engraver of Hedley Fell whose grandson was William the portrait painter?¹⁷ Fordyce (1857, vol 2, p. 759) went so far as to state that the artist was ‘distantly related to Thomas Bewick’ (ie TB) but offered no evidence. Indeed, seductive as this idea may be there is no evidence to support it and TB and his younger admirer, William the painter, who must surely both have thought of the possibility, were clearly unaware of any family relationship. So we can only conclude that a connection is feasible, but purely speculative.

Anthony (baptized there in 1682) does not appear again in the Hartburn records, and the only Anthony Bewick in the NBI was buried at Kirkharle on 7 August 1716, the son of a ‘John Bewick of Kirkharle’. It seems possible that by that date John had left East Shaftoe and moved to the nearby village, perhaps living with his eldest son. To record a man of 34 as ‘Anthony son of John’ would be unusual, and might imply that he was dependent, perhaps as a result of a disability. Anthony Bewick was a rare name and no other local birth or death with the name has been found, so a coincidence here is not very likely. But again the evidence is far from secure.

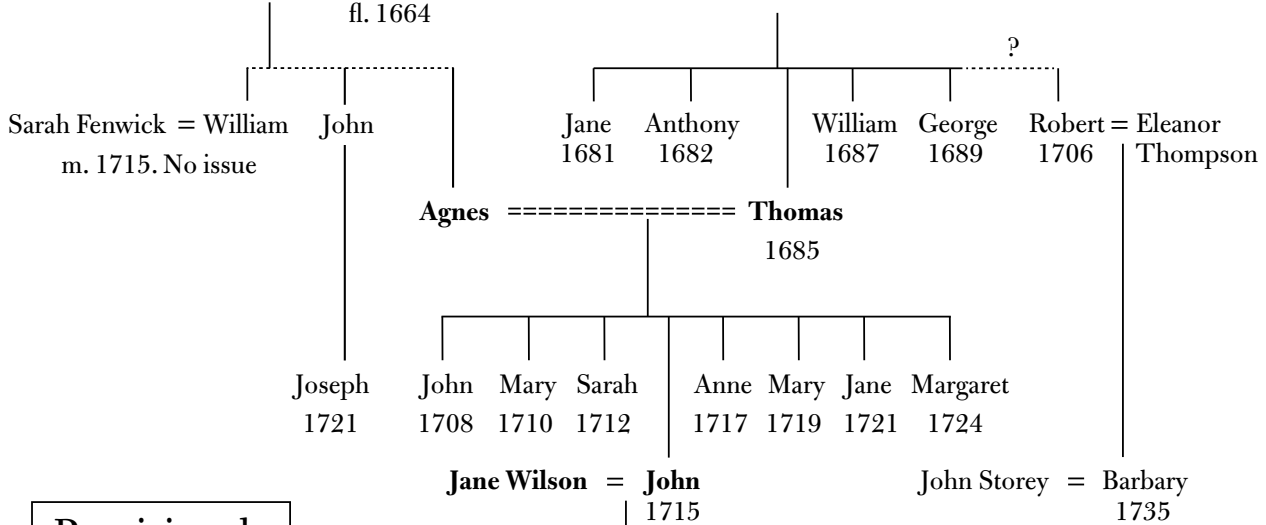
On 6 January 1786 TB wrote a letter to Fenwick Bewick at Stocksfield accompanying a silver tobacco box, which TB

John Atkinson d. 1681



The dashed horizontal bars show unproven relationships. The identity of the Thomas Bewick who married Agnes Arthur with the Thomas son of John, and of the William Arthur who flourished in 1664 with the husband of Mabel Atkinson are also unproven.

John Bewick



Provisional
pedigrees

Thomas Bewick (1753 - 1828) and eight sibs

had engraved with the figure of an otter and was sending as a rather lavish New Year's gift.¹⁸ Nora Hancock and her correspondent, Mr D.G. Bewick, both searched at length for a connection between TB's family and Fenwick Bewick, seeking Fenwick's baptism and parentage without success. Evidently family lore in D.G. Bewick's family had convinced him that Fenwick was related to TB and he speculated that his father was a John or Robert Bewick who might have been closely related to Thomas Bewick, and that Fenwick was perhaps the grandson of the Robert Bewick of Birches Nook whose wife Ann died in 1716. He seems never to have realized that the connection was to Fenwick's wife. A fragment of a letter in the archives of the Natural History Society of Northumbria,¹⁹ (assumed to have been written to TB though only the end of the letter survives), is signed 'Your Cusen Sarah Bewick'. I am grateful to Iain Bain for directing me to Jane Bewick's notes on her father TB's correspondents where the 'cusen' is identified as Sarah née Dicker, the daughter of TB's aunt Hannah Wilson (his mother's sister, who cared for him in his infancy).²⁰ Sarah had become a Bewick by her marriage to Fenwick Bewick at Gateshead, on 13 April 1786. TB's gift to Fenwick came three months earlier, though the forthcoming wedding was not mentioned; probably TB made the gift to a future kinsman in friendship. His daughter Jane felt no such friendship. In her notes she calls Fenwick 'no relation to the Bewicks of Cherry Burn - He was as bad a fellow as could be, & a disgrace to the name of a man'. Fenwick and Sarah Bewick had at least six children from whose scattered baptismal records it appears that their father was an itinerant woodman.²¹ He was buried 'aged 67' on 15 July 1826 at Felton St Michael in mid-Northumberland. So his birth date should have been 1758 or 1759 but no record of his baptism or parents has been traced. Fenwick sadly provides no help in tracing Thomas Bewick's pedigree.

TB made a single tantalising mention of some relatives: [In Christmas week 1784] ... 'It was to be a day of cheerfulness, for Mr and Mrs Storey distant relations of my father, & for whom my parents had the greatest regard, had been, with other friends, invited to dine with us at Cherryburn that day ...' (*Memoir*, page 85). Can we learn anything from these 'distant relatives'? As dinner guests they probably lived locally. In the absence of forenames the only feasible approach to identifying them seems to be to look for local Storeys, primarily in the Ovingham/Bywell and Kirkharle/Hartburn areas, with marriages to spouses with the surnames Bewick or Arthur, or possibly Atkinson or Jackson. In an extensive search of the IGI, no likely candidate marriage has so far been found in the mid-Northumberland parishes though there were many Storeys in these parishes and indeed a family of that name lived at New Deanham, virtually next door to East Shaftoe, and actually overlapping in time with a Bewick family there.²² A Barbara Bewicke who married a John Story, tanner, of St Johns, Newcastle was not of the right family since her husband died before 1784.²³ In Ovingham, however, another John Story married another Barbary Bewick (both of that parish) on 17 August 1756. She was probably the Barbary Bewick baptized at Ovingham on 5 July 1735, the daughter of Robert Bewick, her identity made likely because a Robert Bewick was a witness to the 1756 marriage. Robert Bewick, probably the same, had married Eleanor (spelled Ellanr) Thompson at Ovingham on 15 Sept 1734. The couple had no further children baptized in that parish, though they remained there (at Broomhouses) till Robert's death in 1767.²⁴

John and Barbary Story, therefore, might feasibly be the 'distant relatives' mentioned by TB. So, could Robert Bewick, father of Barbara, have been related to John Bewick of East Shaftoe?²⁵ Most likely he was Robert, son of John Bewick, baptized in Ovingham on 4 April 1706 whose sibs

baptized there make him unlikely to be related. However, another Robert, 'son of John Bewick of Kirkharle', was baptized at Kirkharle on 20 January 1706/7. Might John Bewick of East Shaftoe have moved by then to nearby Kirkharle, as suggested in relation to Anthony above, and had an 'afterthought' son Robert? That would have made Barbary Story the first cousin of TB's father, not really a 'distant relative'. The crucial links in this particular chain of hypotheses are not proven or even very probable. There were many other Storeys/Stories nearby both at Ovingham and near Kirkheaton and Hartburn and the 'distant relatives' might equally well have been not in the Bewick line but in the Arthur or some other earlier line. The sad fact is that without more information we cannot rely upon the dinner guests of 1784 to prove anything definite.

To sum up, Thomas Bewick was probably born in 1685, the son of John Bewick of East Shaftoe. The evidence is insubstantial – an unreferenced date of baptism, a family in a plausible place with a sister Jane as mentioned in his will, the failure to find a likely alternative. Nothing firmer. So he may yet be found to have been born to still unidentified parents elsewhere. Firm evidence begins only after his marriage to Agnes Arthur, when he lived and presumably farmed as a young man in Kirkheaton, at Cross Stone House, where their eight children were born. Some time after the baptism of his youngest child in 1724 he took on the tenancy of Mickley Colliery and in about 1730-32 the farm at Birches Nook, where he farmed successfully until his death in 1742/3.

Of TB's great grandfather, if indeed he was John Bewick, we can conclude very little. We first hear of him in 1681 at the hamlet or estate of East Shaftoe when the first of his five known children was baptized at the parish church in Hartburn. Many other Bewick families were living in the parish at the time, mostly concentrated around the North Middleton and Scots Gap area, and in the nearby parish of Kirkharle. Some of these must surely have been kin to him. At East Shaftoe he would have been on the estate and perhaps in the employment of Robert Vaughan the landowner. The rest is speculation, useful only as a train of hypotheses set up to be tested against new evidence. After the baptism of his fifth child, George in 1689 we lose sight of him but he may possibly have moved first to Kirkharle, where an Anthony, probably his eldest son, died in 1716, and perhaps afterwards to Kirkheaton to be near his second son Thomas where he may have been the John Bewick who died there in 1722/3. It is just possible that in January 1706/7, after his move to Kirkharle, he had a sixth child, Robert, who may later have married in Ovingham and have been the Robert whose daughter Barbary married John Storey in 1756. Almost equally tenuous is the hypothesis that another Thomas was a member of John's family, perhaps even his brother, who was 'of Kirkheaton' in 1715 when he leased collieries in Tynedale, and who died in 1718.

Part III of this paper will describe TB's mother's family, which can be traced with greater confidence.

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APPENDIX: Acomb Moore, Mickley West Bank and Eltringham Common collieries.

Acomb lies 1½ miles north of Bywell and more than two miles by foot and ferry from Mickley and Eltringham Common. (A different larger Acomb is north of Hexham.) The partners John Atkinson and Thomas Buick appear nowhere in surviving rental lists for Acomb. Rent for the farm there was payable in 1706 and 1722 by 'Josh. Atkinson', possibly a relative (DD/BW/E15/21 & /24), but Acomb Moore colliery is not mentioned. After 1724 however this part of the Fenwick estate became the property of William Wrightson's wife's brother-in-law John Fenwick of Bywell Hall, whose estate records are not available. Acomb Moore colliery is not mentioned in any account I have found of the early collieries of Northumberland. It lies outwith the main Northern Coalfield and was probably a small and unproductive outlying coal deposit which the partners soon abandoned, if indeed they ever worked it.

In the Mickley area the Bewicks worked collieries in two places. The one most consistently associated with the Bewick family, and that named on the 1715 lease, was Mickley West Bank. This was worked from a drift or 'grove' under the northwestern

end of the 'bank' or escarpment of Mickley Fell, where the deepest seams of the tilted Northern Coalfield outcrop, dipping down from there to the east (Hall, 1856; www.dmm.co.uk; NEIMME Bud/58/1-6). The site is well shown on an 1835 estate plan (Bud/58/1a) and on the 1865 6" O.S. map (at the modern NZ 068615). The lease was recorded as being in possession of Elizabeth Bewick (widow of TB's nephew Ralph Bewick) in 1860 and was still in the family in the 1940s (www.dmm.co.uk). In a letter to R.H. Wrightson in 1835 a colliery surveyor James Hall wrote that the site had been wrought for landsale coal for upwards of 200 years (Bud/58/1-6). By 1706 the tenant of 'Mickley Colliery' was a Robert Simpson (who in a significant precedent also rented 'Birks Newk'); and then until May Day in 1715 the half-yearly rental (£6.5s.) at the colliery was payable by a George Stokeld (DD/BW/E15/21 & /22), so it appears that the lease Atkinson and Buick took on the colliery in November 1715 was their first but was for a going concern. Rental records exist for Martinmas 1721 and May Day 1724 confirming that the lessees of this 'Mickley Colliery' were 'Jno Atkinson and Pa' (ibid E15/23 & /25). Then, after a crucial hiatus in the records, 'Mickley colliery' was being rented in May 1740 and May 1741 by Thomas Bewick (ibid E15/26 & /27) and in December 1741 (more than a year before Thomas's death) by his son John (ibid /E15/28). The hiatus was partly filled by John Bewick's letter of 1760 (DD/BW/E15/14), which stated that his father took the lease in 1731, but he may or may not have also held it earlier. Stangely TB did not mention in his *Memoir* that his father John Bewick also worked the West Bank drift mine. However, in a letter to the owner, William Wrightson, on 16 September 1807, written on behalf of his brother William, TB wrote 'I need not Sir perhaps remind you, that the two Collieries viz the Pit on Mickley common & the Groove on Mickley Bank, were many years ago let to my Father, & lately to my Brother at an advance of rent' (NCL Bewick 371, p.159). Thomas and his son John themselves can scarcely have won more than a fraction of the coal that was mined at Mickley Bank, estimated by 1835 at one third of the available 254 acres of the rich '5/4' and '6/4' seams, respectively 42 and 46 inches in thickness (Bud/58/1-6). In the next generation TB referred to the fossil mussels at 'my brother's colliery at Mickley Bank' (*Memoir* p. 210n) and Mackenzie (1825, Vol. 2, p368) gave an unequivocal account 'The colliery here [at Mickley], under Mr W. Bewick, is worked by a level which enters from the side of the hill, and leads to an excellent seam of coals'. This was clearly Mickley West Bank, but did TB's statement that his grandfather wrought 'Mickley Bank or Mickley Common' imply two collieries or two names for one? The West Bank mine entrance is only 700m from Birches Nook, so it makes sense that both Thomas Bewick in the 1730s-40s and his predecessor Robert Simpson in 1706 wrought this mine from Birches Nook. Much later, in the early 20th century, the Bewicks exploited the distant part of the West Bank seams by sinking a pit more than half a mile away, high on the fell, at Mickley Grange (www.dmm.org.uk).

The pit at Mickley. In his *Memoir* TB unequivocally describes his father's pit, not a drift, mentioning the shaft and the gin functioning during his childhood (*Memoir* pp. 25, 30, 88). Later a letter from his parents, on 15 March 1777 (quoted by Tattersfield 2001, p.14), reported that his brother, John junior, was 'both sinking a Pit and Breaking a Groove', evidently a second pit though where this was is not stated. In an letter to Wrightson, on 20 March 1789, four years after his father's death, TB wrote that the pit had been out of use for two years because a 'dike' (a geological fault) had blocked progress and attempts to sink a new pit, re-open an old one for ventilation and open a drainage adit were being obstructed by Wrightson's agent. TB's letter

appealed against this, and asked for a long-term lease instead of the by now customary annual contract (NCL Bewick 371, p.160). By 1807, as the later letter from TB to Wrightson shows, William was still or again obliged to work only the 'groove' which was now in need of expensive new workings; also attempts to circumvent the dyke problem at the pit by the sinking of a new ventilation pit to the west were being obstructed by another landowner, Mr Newton, who had by then claimed an 'encroachment' on that part of the common. Newton was also blocking the access track to Bewick's colliery, and a collier from Hedley was carting and stockpiling his coal near the drift mine, so William was losing business there too. Two years after John's death, on a plan surveyed by John Fryer in 1787 and drawn by John Bell (NRO SANT/BEQ/5/3/12/4), part of which is displayed at Cherryburn, a single 'Bewick's pit' lies in the southwest angle of what is now the crossroads at Mickley Square (at NZ 075620). This was then in open country on Mickley Common, with only the primitive 'lodge' for the miners to sit in nearby (*Memoir*). Before 1799 the road past the pit at Mickley Square was a mere track often 'ruinous through floods'. On a later plan in the Wrightson papers dated 20 July 1841 two small pits across the road in the northwest angle of the crossroads (the site of Newton's encroachment) are labelled 'Mr Bewick's working pit' (DD/BW/E15/176). These three pits and others nearby were also shown on Hall's plan of 1835 but without any tenant's name. They are not mentioned in the Durham Mining Museum website. The new pits must have been sunk after 1787 and may have been those mentioned by TB in his letters; by 1841 the family's colliery was worked by John's grandson Ralph Bewick (1795-1843) by which time the problems seem to have been at least partly resolved.

'Mickley colliery' seems to have been used at various times as a short-hand term for any or all of these workings including Mickley West Bank. Hall (1854) listed among 284 northern collieries 'Mickley' and 'Bewick's Mickley', both as 'pits for landsale purposes'. By by then there were also two other collieries at Mickley, with no Bewick connection. By an enclosure act of 1812 land and mining rights on Mickley Common were awarded in 1817 to William Wrightson (*NCH* vol 6, p.166n) and eventually leased by him to The Mickley Coal Company which developed a major colliery with associated coke ovens and access to the nearby new Newcastle to Carlisle railway. This in the mid 19th century took over the name 'Mickley Colliery'. It was only about 200 yards west of Cherryburn. Yet another new pit was sunk on the east side of 'Mickley Hill Top'. Their Mickley collieries never provided the Bewicks with more than a modest living, ending in the 1930s with the near bankruptcy of the last tenant, R.E. Bewick, before he finally paid off the overdue rents in 1946 (DD/BW/E4/56).

The identity of **Eltringham Common Colliery** is more elusive. It is not recorded as such in the historical mine records (www.neimme.org, www.dmm.co.uk; Hall, 1854), but in 1825 a 'landsale colliery, worked by Mr Robert Brown' adjoined Eltringham Hall, the property of Thomas Humble Esq. (Mackenzie, Vol. 2, p.369) and 'Eltringham Land Sale Pit', probably the same, survived at least till July 1847 when a newspaper reported a boy Thomas Wigham had fallen to his death there while his father, John, the banksman, was winding him down the pit on a corf (cutting in NEIMME Bell/19/586; 1841 Census). A different much larger 'Eltringham Colliery', was worked from about 1860 on the riverside by the railway near Prudhoe at NZ 08216 63051 (www.dmm.co.uk).

Eltringham Common seems to have extended east of Cherryburn from the Tyne southward to the foot of Mickley Fell. A group of 'intack' fields lying southeast of Cherryburn were

'intaken' from the common land by the early 18th century and leased by various local farmers. Similarly, west of Cherryburn, the 'Common Farm' was similarly 'intaken' from Mickley Common. Both intakes are shown on a simple estate plan and associated survey, made for William Wrightson in 1724 (DD/BW/E1/6 & /E1/2) but this shows no colliery. 'Common Farm' was leased for seven years on 10 April 1717 at £14 per annum by Robert and Ralph Johnson 'of Chireyburn, yeomans' but the lease made no mention of a colliery; indeed, on the contrary, it required the tenants to buy their coal supplies from one of the 'pitts' belonging to William Fenwick, their landlord, a standard clause in Fenwick's farm leases at that time (DD/BW/N/IV/12). In 1721 and 1724 the half-yearly rental of 'Common Farm' (£7) was indeed payable by Rob Johnson and Par, who also rented 'Chireburn and Intack' (for £1.17s. 6d. and later £2.10s.). The Bewicks seem never to have followed the Johnsons in leasing Common Farm. In 1787 Cherryburn had a close around the house and two separate fields in the Eltringham intack, a total of only eight acres (NRO SANT/BEQ/5/3/12/4 & /5/4/12/2/6/16), large enough only for a modest farm, so the Bewicks were financially very dependent on their collieries.

Eltringham Common Colliery almost certainly lay immediately beyond the eastern boundary of the Eltringham intack at the modern NZ 082627. Both Fryer's 1787 survey (NRO SANT/BEQ/5/3/12/4) and TY Hall's plan for Wrightson in 1835 show an unlabelled pit there, partly worked out in the latter, and James Hall's 1835 report describes the sequence of seams of excellent coal there, the two best seams lying only 16 and 23 fathoms (30 and 40m) deep (NEIMME Bud/58/1a & 1-6). The 1865 6" O.S. map shows 'Pit Houses' near that site. But I have found no clear statement linking the name to the site. In 1787 the common land was 'in the possession of William Fenwick Esq'; by 1835 the enclosure of the common had allotted the land and mining rights to Thomas Humble of Prudhoe and Eltringham House, who was apparently empowered to prevent Wrightson (or the Bewicks) sinking a pit on the intack. The Bewicks, living squarely in the middle of this rich coalfield, were able to exploit only its southern edges.

Back in 1715 Eltringham Common Colliery may have proved beyond the resources of the partners Atkinson and Buick to work; it was not mentioned on the subsequent rental lists. But in 1751, when John Bewick first leased Cherryburn from Wrightson for nine years at £4 per annum, the lease also included Eltringham Common colliery, at £12 p.a. (DD/BW/N/IV/48). But John seems to have promptly given up the lease on Eltringham Common since the combined half-yearly rental due from him on May Day 1752 was £8, £2 for 'Chirrey burn' but £6 for 'Mickley coal pit' (DD/BW/E15/30). In 1760 when he was preparing to renew the Cherryburn lease the first draft again included 'the colliery on Eltringham Common for land sale' at a total rental of £30 (ibid BW/N/IV/50). Again he demurred.

The letters John Bewick wrote to Mr Battie in January, June and August 1760, negotiating the lease, provide the probable explanation. In these John refers to 'my colliery' and 'Fenwick's colliery' and it seems likely that the latter was the pit on Eltringham Common which, at some point soon after 1751, John had had to relinquish, unable at that stage to manage (or afford) to work both pits. Fenwick (of Bywell Hall, Wrightson's wife's brother-in-law) seems from the letters to have taken over the Eltringham lease and was by 1760 competing aggressively with John's pit at Mickley. Battie offered John the chance to take on both pits again in 1760, but John was unhappy that the right to cut wood locally for use in the colliery was to be withdrawn and was also unwilling to pay the proposed rent; he preferred to continue working

Mickley rather than Eltringham (DD/BW/E15/14). Nevertheless, when Wrightson put his Northumberland estates up for auction at Christies in August 1791 (the sale seems not to have gone forward as the property remained in the family) the tenants at will 'Thomas and William Bewicke' (*sic*; ie TB and his brother) held 'Cherry Burn Farm' (8 acres) and the 'Land sale colliery on Eltringham Common' and 'Ditto on Mickley West Wants' all together rented at £60 p.a. (NRO SANT/BEQ/5/4/12/10/13). By the 19th century Eltringham and the pit there became the property of Thomas Humble of Ryton and there is no further word of Bewick involvement.

E. Clavering (1989) wrote about 'Coal and the Bewicks', providing useful background information about the coal industry of the day but making some incorrect assumptions about John Bewick's involvement; he thought for example that John had leased his pit from the Humbles of Ryton, and that he was connected with the Risemoor colliery high on the east side of Mickley Fell, for which I can find no evidence. But he comments also on two sketches by John Bewick junior, TB's brother, who died in 1795. One, published by Bain (1979, p.19) shows a pit and winding gear with wagonways and distant industrial buildings; clearly this was a sea-sale colliery which would have used the wagonway as access to a navigable part of the river and must have been somewhere nearer Newcastle, far downstream from Mickley. The other, reproduced by Clavering and by Tattersfield (2001, p.14), was annotated 'Pit at Eltringham' and signed 'John Bewick'. Leaving aside some imprecision in the drawing (the horse powering the winding gin would have fouled the gearing as it circled it), the pit stood on a mound overlooking lower ground, the winding gear was flimsy at best and in the foreground a coal wain departed, drawn by two horses and two oxen, clearly indicating a land-sale colliery. Was this the Bewick pit at what is now Mickley Square, or was it indeed 'Eltringham Common Colliery' once again being worked by a Bewick, at this time probably William, as the Christies auction document implies?

Endnotes

- ¹ John Battie was the son in law and heir of the former landowner, William Wrightson. He later took the surname Wrightson.
- ² On 1st June 1734 Thomas Bewick of 'Breachesnake', yeoman, provided a £120 mortgage to his wife's relatives William and Sarah Arthur (NRO 660/4/5. See Part 1).
- ³ The farmhouse is first clearly mapped on the 1865 6" OS Ordnance Survey map at the modern reference NZ06206125.
- ⁴ I have found no estate records for this Surtees family. The farm was recorded in 1787 and in July 1835 as being in the possession of Robert Surtees Esq. on plans of Wrightson's adjacent property in Mickley made respectively by John Fryer and W.N. Hall (NRO SANT/BEQ/5/3/12/4; NEIMME Bud/58/1a). Surtees and Leighton (1925) record Cozier's posthumous second son, also Crosier, and Robert Surtees, the grandson, as of 'Redworth and Merry Shields'.
- ⁵ The farmhouse of Birches Nook and the boundaries of its land are not clearly shown on any plan I have seen, but it is clear that the farm bordered the Hexham turnpike road at its 90° turn from SW to NW at the present OS map reference NZ 063612, extending mainly to the west and south. The house may have been on the east side of the road at about NZ 062613.
- ⁶ An earlier manuscript pedigree of the family in Thomas Bell's grangerized copy of GC Atkinson's "Sketch of the Life and Works of the late Thomas Bewick" (1831) in Gateshead City Library (shelfmark L920 BEW) gives no birthdate and adds no information about TB's grandparents.
- ⁷ By 1742 Joseph Jackson was probably living nearby when he witnessed the will, at Birches Nook, during Thomas's final illness. Not far away Ann, wife of Joseph Jackson of Prudhoe, was buried at Ovingham on 11 December 1767. If this was the same Joseph, Ann must have been his second wife, yet no nearby death of a Jane Jackson before this date has been found, other than two widows. A Jane Jackson of Catton, who was buried at Allendale on 13 May 1743, soon after Thomas Bewick died but before his

will was proved, could conceivably be she. Alternatively, it is possible that Thomas's sister Jane had married another Jackson, perhaps a close relative of Joseph, though no very likely such marriage has been identified.

- ⁸ Neither Jane nor John appears again in the registers, at least before the 1740s. But Thomas and Anne Bewick of Newton Hall had five children (Isabel, John, Anne, John, and Thomas) baptized in the parish between September 1717 and February 1731/2. The first John and Anne were buried on 24 February and 20 March 1725/6. The only other Bewick in the registers before 1742 was Anne, wife of Robert, buried on 19 March 1716/7, mentioned below. At Bywell St Andrew, where the baptismal and burial registers date from 1668 and the marriage register from 1685, no Bewick is recorded until 25 January 1740/1.
- ⁹ Barbary buried in 1743, Robert (1756), and Eleanor and John (1758).
- ¹⁰ Mr DG Bewick (born c.1932), a great great great great grandson of TB's brother William, evidently collected much information about the Bewicks over many years. In letters to Nora Hancock in 1992 (see her notes at Cherryburn), he explained that he had difficulty in reading his notes and was also suffering from memory impairment following a road accident the previous year. He only vaguely remembered seeing a family bible with information about his family dating from the end of the 16th century, and also as a child seeing 'up to 60' family portraits, the earliest in an Elizabethan ruff, which had covered two walls in his grandmother's house, but which were burnt after her death by an aunt. It is possible that the family bible and his notes might still come to light. (TB's own family bible, with no entries earlier than his own generation, is in the collection of the Natural History Society of Northumbria in the Hancock Museum.)
- ¹¹ The Poll Books of 1710, 1734 and 1747/8 and the Freehold Book of 1721 show no Bewick as a freeholder in any part of Ovingham or Bywell.
- ¹² Or identifiable in the national website Access to Archives (www.national-archives.gov.uk/a2a).
- ¹³ His children were Robert, John, William, George, James, Anne Yellowly and Jane Straughan (Durham UL DPRI/1/1738/B5/1-2).
- ¹⁴ Robson (1815). Hodgson (1827) says of Thomas Whittell's poem 'East Shaftoe' that he 'noticed every thing about the place with much minuteness'.
- ¹⁵ A William Bewick was buried at Hartburn in April 1698. Another married Mary Lowry of North Middleton in Newcastle in January 1714/5 (Hartburn Par. Reg.). A William Bewick of North Middleton was buried at Hartburn on 23 March 1716/7, a fourth was the tenant of a farm on the west side of Thockrington in 1716 (NCH Vol. 12, page 403). Even closer to East Shaftoe, a daughter Isabel and a son John of William Bewick of the next-door farm of New Deanham were baptized on 16 May 1725 and 31 October 1726 respectively (Kirkharle/Kirkheaton register).
- ¹⁶ George Bewick of Kirkharle married Jane Milburne on 19 December 1717 (Par. Reg.) and three children were born to them by 1723. Amongst others elsewhere, George Bewicks were married at Bolam, Stamfordham and Hartburn before the 1740s and buried at Kirkharle on 15 September 1729 and at Hartburn on 18 February 1730.
- ¹⁷ In the Ryton parish registers (which date from 1583) the only Bewick baptism recorded before the 1760s was William son of William baptised on 17 September 1727. Either this son or (barely) the father could have been the grandfather of the painter born in 1795; and the father could have been the brother of Thomas. A William son of Thomas Bewicke of Stonywaite was buried at Ryton on 30 August 1747.
- ¹⁸ The letter is reproduced in the 1887 Memorial Edition of the Memoir, edited by Austin Dobson, on pages 167-8.
- ¹⁹ NEWHM:1997.H45-4.
- ²⁰ Jane Bewick's manuscript notes are deposited in the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle.
- ²¹ John baptized on 12 November 1786, Ann on 20 July 1788 both at Bywell St Peter's (their father being 'of Stocksfield hall' and 'of Stocksfield'); Fenwick at Bywell St Andrew's on 30 May 1790; and Abraham (6 November 1792) and Elizabeth '6th child of Fenwick and Sarah Bewicke, woodman' on 22 January 1797, both baptized at Ovingham. Thomas was baptized at Bishop Auckland in County Durham on 23 August 1795 (IGI refs Par Reg). Sarah daughter of Fenwick Bewick baptized at Hexham on 21 April 1799 was probably of the same family, though her father was identified as 'hsmn', presumably a husbandman; before then the scattered locations suggest an itinerant life.
- ²² The family of Storeys lived at New Deanham between 1708 and 1724 while the family of a William Bewick was there at least from 1721-1725 (Kirkharle Par. Reg. baptisms).
- ²³ Pedigree at NRO (SANT/PGH/PED/2/14/1-4), confirmed in the St John's Par. Reg.
- ²⁴ Eleanor, widow of Robert Bewick of Broomhouses, yeoman, was granted administraton of his property on 15 December 1767 (DUL Probate A122 1767).
- ²⁵ I found no connection to the Robert of Birches Nook whose wife Ann died in 1716/7.

Key to Archival Sources

DD/BW/	Battie Wrightson estate records at Doncaster Archives, Yorkshire, some of which were formerly at Leeds Archives (Cousins, 1995).
DPRI/	Wills in Durham University Library Probate Records, Palace Green, Durham.
IGI	International Genealogical Index, accessed at www.familysearch.org .
NBI	National Burial Index (2010). 3 rd Edition. Federation of Family History Societies.
NCL	Newcastle City Library, Bewick Collection.
NEIMME	North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers archives, Newcastle upon Tyne.
NEWHM	Archives of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne.
NRO	Northumberland Record Office, Woodhorn, Northumberland.
Par. Reg.	Parish Registers seen on microfilm at the NRO and also in a few cases in transcript there and at Newcastle City Library.

I am grateful for the generous help of many archivists and librarians in these places. DG-M

Editor's Note

The genealogy of Thomas Bewick has interested a number of our readers, especially those from the United States. We have often received queries about Bewick's descendants, despite there being so few, i.e. his own four children, none of whom had any children of their own. But other members of his family – and he had eight siblings – did have descendants. Nora Hancock researched these and presented a large calligraphic version of her results to Cherryburn in 1992, where it has been on display ever since. We published this document in *Cherryburn Times*, Volume 5 No.2, Easter 2007.

We thought it was time to look further into Bewick's ancestors, forefathers and mothers, and we were therefore immensely grateful for David Gardner-Medwin's time and effort, both in travelling to archives, searching for clues, assembling the evidence and writing up the results of his protracted enquiries. His account is an education in the state of records available to the historical researcher in the North.

CherryburnTimes is normally published twice a year. Contributions are invited particularly (but not only) from members of the Bewick Society. The preferred digital format is 'Rich Text Format' (.rtf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) and images in jpeg or tiff; print resolution 300 d.p.i. (8 cm wide or larger).

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