

WM BENNETT 1726 - 1796

A JOURNAL OF MY BIRTH, PARENTAGE, LIFE, Etc

- In 1726 The 29th April old style I William Bennett was born of Thos and Mary Bennett living in the Parish of Raysby in the County of Leicester five miles from the Town/Farmer.
- 1729 My father died leaving my Mother with five of us 1st. John, 2nd Thomas, 3rd Sara, 4th myself, 5th Mary. I continued with my Mother who kept the Farm on with the Parsonage, going to plough, harrow, driving the Cows etc, I suppose as soon as able.
- 1739 Having an old Bachelor Uncle possessed with about forty Pounds Per annum, and he residing at Chatham he insisted on my coming there to go apprentice to a Shipwright. As according on the 7th Dec 1739 I set out for Chatham. My Uncle Wi Spencer by Name having provided me a Master, accordingly on the 17th December I was bound apprentice to Augustus Nelson, then Carpenter of his Majesty's Ship of War the Namare, but I to work in the King's Yard at Chatham.
- 1744 15th Novr I with 60 of us was lent from Chatham to Sheerness, where I continued 3 months, lodged in hammocks on board one of the old ships that lie for Breakwaters, then I returned to Chatham.
- 1746 2nd Oct I with 12 of us was sent to Sheerness, 7th Oct I with 6 of us was sent into the Downs on Board the Folkstone man of war having run on shore and got damage was carried down by the Mercury man of war a day or two after we got down and do what we could to keep her safe there came a fair wind to Portsmouth and the Captn thought fit to carry us there. 10th Oct. Anchored at Spithead. Next Day weighed and run into the Harbour. Next Day waited on the Commissioner for Conduct Money being a penny a mile for Kings men which accordingly we received from Portsmouth to Sheerness being 122 miles each reed. 10/2d. 15th reached London, so to Sheerness. 25th was ordered Home to Chatham. Recd for my wages while apprentice in Money for my Master 241.5. 6. 17th Decr was out of my Time, continued in Chatham Yard there for myself.
- 1747 9th June. Got leave and came to work at Faversham, being better Wages earning 1£ 6/- per week. 28th July. Returned home to Chatham. 29th Sepr. Set out to see my Mother and Friends in Leicestershire. 31st Oct. Returned Home to Chatham.
- 1748 14th Oct. Unlucky Day in which a Ticket I bought in the Lottery at London was drawn a Blank.
- 1749 12th Feb. My Sister Sara died a Maiden. 5th Aug. My Mother came to see me at Chatham.
- 1751 25th May Uncle Wm Spencer died leaving me his Executors. 15th July. I entered into . . .
- 1752 18th Feb. Requested my Discharge but could not obtain it without going to the Navy Board which I did.
- 2nd March. Was discharged and came to Faversham. N.B. Brother Thos. was turned over from Chatham by Providence/Apprentice to Mr. Pain and lived with him till he died. He died in 1751 then Brother took the Yard and as soon as Uncle's affairs were settled I by his Request came to live and work with, him. In June. Sister Mary came to Faversham to see us.

27th Novr. Having but little to do I set out for Dover and from thence in a Packet to Calais. Next Day with some more Englishmen which I never saw before having nobody with me that I knew we took horse to Dunkirk. Next Day I returned, to Calais alone leaving my Company at Dunkirk, visiting Gravelines and other towns I could bring in my circuit I got to Calais at night. Staying there 6 or 7 days for a Wind, came to Dover, lodged there one night took my Horse which I left at Dover while gone took a circuit, thro' Deal, Sandwich, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, so thro' the Isle of Thanet and got safe to Faversham that night much pleased with my Voyage and Journey.
This Year my Head run much on merchandizing of Deal's Mfers etc accordingly informed myself therein.

- 1753 5th Feb. Agreed for a Ship to go. Sailed 8th Mar arrived 17th May.
5th July. Agreed with Mr. Francis Smith to take his stock of Ironmongery, Brazieri, Pewter and Tin in 12 months.
18th Aug. Bought this house viz: next the Queen's Head of Mary Pulin living at Rochester for 100£.
23rd Dec. Said Amen to what the Parson said about nourishing and cherishing my Wife, we both being before the Altar.
- 1754 9th Jan. We came into this House.
11th. Began to take the Goods in the Shop from Mr Smith.
Mr Smith and I appraised them.
Feb. Brother and I had a prize in the Lottery of 10£
8th May. Sent a Ship to Norway.
25th. Sold this House to my Brother Thos Bennett.
1 July. Arrived the Ship from Norway.
13th. The same Captain sailed, a 2nd. Time from Norway.
16th Aug. Bought part of a Ship with Riga Timber. Brother Thos had the other part.
This Year Faversham streets was first paved with flat stone each Rod cost a Guinea.
- 1755 7th Jan. The London Carpenters began to pull down the Gallery and Pews and from thence on towards the Alteration of Faversham Church.
Wednesday the 22nd. Jan my 1st Daughter at 20 minutes after 10 in the Evening first drew her Breath, in this world,
31st. At 5 o'clock in the Morn this my first Child named Nary expired.
4th Feb was interred in Faversham Churchyard.
12th Novr at half past 2 o'clock p.m. our second Girl was stillborn.
1st Novr 1755. Lisbon was destroyed by a dreadful Earthquake and fire after it.
18th. Novr, happened another in Boston in New England and many other parts but not so terrible, as that the first.
- 1756 1st Feb. I set out for Leicester and Birmingham, was gone just a fortnight.
15th. A Dragoon was shot and buried just by the Gallows for 3 times deserting.
29th. Brother Thos was married to Ann Ealy.
30th. Duke William went by the road to view the Kent and Sussex Coast. Lodged that night at the Archdeacon's House in Canterbury.
8th March. We had a very hot Press by County Warrants.
10th. I set out and Mr Gockrill to wait on the House of Commons with an estimate of what damage has been sustained by the Supernumerary Soldiers quartered here since Michaelmas last, as were 2, 3 or 4 from all other Market towns in
• . Kent Essex and Surrey. I went as Constable and was only recd. Some towns sent all Innkeepers/and were not admitted. Our Estimate at 3d per day per man came to 237.17.6. In about
2 years after was granted the sum of about 70£ to be divided amongst the Inn and Aleshousekeepers in this Town.
Mr Cocril1 and I were paid first 2 guineas each, viz a guinea and half for our Horse and Expenses and ½ guinea for Time. ,

19th March At about 2 o'clock in the morning came up to the Towns 3 Boats from the Ambuscade a 40 gun ship lying at the Nore with 3 Lieutenants and 45 or 50 men, they oalled up the Mayor and Constable and me as Borsholder to assist them to open Houses. There was a very hot Press all the morning. We took up near 20 but carried off but six none being suffered to be carried away but what the Mayor permitted.

The First Sunday, in this Year 1756 was the first time of carrying two Maces before the Mayor to Church.

Mr Sam Shepherd was Mayor, Dan Gillett, Constable and I was Borsholders.

18th April. The French land in Minorca.

18th May. War was declared against the French. 22nd in Canterbury. 26th War was declared at Faversham at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

28th July. Fort St Philip surrendered to the French under brave Genl Blakeney.

1st Aug. 726 Hanoverian Soldiers were quartered here in their march from Canterbury to Coxheath to incamp.

2nd. The same number. 3rd. The same number.

7th Oct. Edward Horton and Adduza Whitfield with their vessels and crews were all lost and heard no more of.

Horton was bound from Lymington here with Salt. Whithfield was bound from Sunderland here with oats. Both sailed from their Ports the afternoon before.

15th Decr. At half past 2 o'clock in the morning being on Thursday our third child was born with much trouble.

28th. Was baptized by the Name of Mary.

1757

23rd. Jan, Was the first Sunday we were all seated in Faversham Church after the grand Repair. Mr Robert Shearwood Mayor, Mr Marsh preached from these words in the 93rd Psalm "Holiness becomes thine house for ever." The Pewing the Church including the Organ Loft, the Mayor and Commoners pews cost 532£ odd shillings. Each Commoner's Pew cost about 3. 5. 0, a pew. The Corporation pews and the Organ Loft cost 106£ which the Corporation paid.

The Court Martial on Admiral John Byng for not sighting the French Fleet on the 20th May last before Port Mahon began at Portsmouth

on the 28th Decr last 1756 and continued every day but Sundays till the 27th January when the Court ended and sentenced him to be shot. Admiral Thos Smith President. His Death Warrant was made for the 28th Feby but a Respite was granted till the 14th March when he was shot, in the 50th year of his age.

13th Feb. Was the first Time on Sunday this Brand New Organ began to perform to the Congregation of Faversham, it cost 320 odd Pounds.

10th March & 11th. 500 Hess Soldiers came here for Quarters in and about this Town, waiting for the arrival of the Transports.

16th March. Were chosen 8 new Commoners and 5 new Jurats in this Corporation.

19th. Were hung up the 2 Small Branches or Brass Candlesticks new from London, cost 6£ eoh. The Chain of Iron that holds the sounding board cost at London .2/6 per foot.

2nd May. Wheat was sold at Linham market and at Cranbrook for 4£ the Quarter. Boiling Peas at £2. 16s and 3£ the quarter. Dressed Mead is sold now in Town at 1/6 the Gallon.

Rough from the Mill 1/4. Best Flour 19d per Gallon.

The Under is the present State of this Nation as handed about the Coffee Rouses in London.

Supreme Majesty without Power, Councils without abilities, Nobles without Honour.

Magistrates without Justice, Manufactories without Trade, Colonies without Protection.

Parading Fleets without fighting. Great Armies without use. Common People without Money and poor people without Bread.

28th July. This Day Bread was sold for 14½d per Gallon which yesterday was sold. for 19½d.

7th Sepr. Bread and flour having again risen to 16d per Gallon this day fell to 11d.

1758

15th July. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Bristol confirmed in Faversham Church both Town and Country adjacent.

- 1759 25 Jan. At Night Mr Creed's House was robbed of about 200£ in money and 1200£ in Bonds and Bills.
26th. Jan Hatton was taken at Canterbury on suspicion, the same afternoon her Husband was also taken on the Dover road and both brought to Faversham Gaol. The 25 of Feby following the above woman was delivered of a Girl in the Gaol where she and the Child continued. The 4th of March the Man broke out of ao1 and was not afterwards caught.
11 Febr. About one o'clock at Noon or a few Minutes before our fourth Child was born /being Sunday/ and on the 25th christened by the Name of Sarah.
18th Sepr, Brother Thos Second Wife died.
1760 14th March. Our two Girls Polly and Sally with the Servant Maid Jane Row were inoculated with the smallpox and all had them very- favourable being but e or 9 Days upstairs.
- 1761 14th April at past 2 in the morn being Friday our fifth child was born being the first Boy. On the 10th May being Whitsunday was baptized by the Name of Wm. Father & Mother Ayers and Brother Horton Sponsors.
- 1763 24 Feb. At 11 o'clock at Night Our Boy Wm died aged just 22 months
24 Sepr at 4 o'clock in the morning our sixth Child was born.
On the 9th Oct was baptized by the Name of Elizabeth.
Thos Wilkinson, Mrs Knott and Mrs Spencer Sponsors.
1st Dec. was a prodigious high Tide 3 inches up.
Mr Stonestreets Doorsill and a very high wind.
- 1767 At 1/4 past 12 o'clock this morning one of the Powder Stores blew up containing about 24 Barrels of Powder. No Human Person was hurt, but many windows were broken in this Town and Ospringe.
Jan 2nd at '2 and 3 o'clock this morning was a very High Tide, higher than that 1st Dec 1763. And the next Tide after the above in the day time was within 2 inches as high as the night Tide and a very high wind.
Jan 3rd that night, the next Day and the Night after was the most snow fell than ever was remembered, and for 11 days after mostly continued snowing, so that the Roads particularly the high Roads were quite impassable. On the 12th day it began to thaw.
Max 6. At 11 o'clock at night our Girl E1izabth died of the Small Pox.
Sep. 10. Our Seventh Child was born about ½ past 2 o'clock being Thursday morn, named Ann.

This Year was a general miss of Apples, so as a'Codlin was sold for a ½ penny each.
July 29. Bought in London our new Tankard. wt. 30 oz 2 Dr at 7/- per Oz
Cost 10 10 8
Engraving the Cypher etc 0 7 0
£10 17 8
- 1768 1768 Feb 28. Our Girl Nancy was inoculated for the Small Pox.
Aug 11. The King of Denmark passed by this Town at ½ past 11 o'clock in the forenoon in a Chaise and four Horses.
Baron ... was in the same Chaise as the King about 19 years old. Was dressed in Green trimmed with Gold. Landed at Dover from Calais.
- 1768 Oct. 14. The same King of Denmark about ½ past 5 o'clock afternoon passed by here on his return back to Calais. It was computed that the expenses and Presents during his Stay in this Country, amounted to £300,000.
Sepr 3. Our Polly set off for Tenby in Pembrokeshire, South Wales.
Dec 3. My Ticket in the Lottery No. 17,171 which cost £14.12.0. was drawn a Prize of £50.

Dec 5. Bought another Ticket No. 42,138 which the 6th was drawn a prize of 20£. The same Night the 6th Dec my Friend Wm Annan bought me another Ticket No 229,190, but that came up a Blank the 10th.

Dec 18. Betwixt 12 and 1 o'clock in the morning a Fire brokeout at Mr Alderman Woodmestons near Courthall Rochester. It burnt down 10 houses and damaged others. Mr Woodmeston it was thought set his House on Fire/being his own as was the White Hart/in which was burnt to Death his Maid Servant and her Sister. The next day Mr Woodmeston was taken up being heard to say before that he would lay the City in Ashes, and while he was in Custody of the Constable he cut his own Throat with a Penknife of which he died.

1769 Mrs Lott of Hythe was burnt on Penenden Heath for poisoning her Husband, and Benjn Buss was hung at the same time as a Confederate with her in the Action. Mrs Lott was first hung and hung 41 minutes; then 200 Faggots were set round the Post she was hung and chained to and burnt her all to Ashes; the shavings and the candle to light the fire with were drawn in the sledge from Maids-tone with her, she was a fine young woman, had not long been married to Mr Lott. He was an elderly man and of about £1600 Property. Mrs Lott laid in of her first Child in Gaol.

Oct 23. About ½ past 6 o'clock in the Morning our Eighth Child was born. Nov 12th was baptized by the Name of Elizabeth.

Mr Isaac Bull, Sisters Horton and Bennett Sponsors.

This year there was a general miss of Hops, the most general ever remembered.

1771 Aug 26th. Our ninth Child was born about ½ past nine o' clock in the Evening. Named Sophia. This Year was a more general miss of Hops in Kent than the above.

1772 In this year the first Abbey Gate was pulled down with the lofty Tower over it. In the lower Gate and Tower also were pulled down.

1773 I began on the first of April to pull down this my old House and built it up new quite finished at Christmas.

1775 May 29th. I was voted in by the Mayor, Mr John Downe into this Corporation.
Aug 27th at after nine o'clock in the Evening being Sunday our tenth Child was born.
Sep 17th. Christened by the name of Sophia.
N.B. Mrs Bennett is 40 years old in Nov next and I am 50 in May next.

1776 Jan 12 and 13th was a very great fall of Snow and there being some wind at East all the Roads were rendered impassable being 6, 7 and near 8 feet deep in the London Roads. The Stage Coaches, two of them were quite blocked, up between this place and Norton Ash and with great difficulty the Horses were got thro the snow to Ospringe and with more difficulty the Passengers were got out. Mr Win Simons at Queencourt Ospringe was exceeding good and sent his waggon and a strong Team with 7 or 8 men and himself and got the Passengers safe to Ospringe by One o clock in the Night, having sat in the coach from four o'clock to that time being very cold. If Mr Simons had not been very resolute in this affair they must have sat there all Night. The Roads were quite impassable for Coaches till the 25th and then only in the London Roads by having a Passage made by Digging with Laborers. The Ashford Road was not open nor any Carriages passed from hence to Ashford from the 12 Jan to the 7th Feb. On the 27th Jan. it froze exceeding hard and it was extremely cold indeed that Day and the 28 and continued very cold indeed till the first of Feb when in the afternoon it began to thaw apace and so continued.

1776 Nov 4. Captn J. Cunningham and Lieutenant Jarvis were fixed here at the Head, of a Press-Gang which rendezvoused at the Red Lion in High Street.

1778 April. Lord Chatham died.

1779 Aug 21st. Our Sally was married to Mr Robert Rich and by that made Mrs Rich, say the 21st Aug 1779.

An Account of Charities etc belonging to the Corporation of Faversham.

viz		£	s	d
Town Rents due to Corporation	457	5	0	
Hatches Gift Brook Farm Queens. Arms 264		5	0	
Napletons Hr Squire the Orchards and Gardeus		89	4	6
School land of John Hope a years Rent	94	18	"	
Castlocks Gift Land in Harty	29	13	"	
Wm Sakers land also in Harty	15	"	"	
Thos Mustard & Ed Spillett Chapman and 2 other houses below him etc	6	8	"	
Wm Spillett a House at Boughton	21	7	8	
Thos Stranshams a House at Stone	14	3	8	
Eliz Thos and Isaac Berry 75£ Stock	2	5	"	
Sam Preston		<u>2</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>"</u>
		£990	5	9

1780 Oct 14. I was made a Jurat of this Town. My new Jurats Gown cost £7. 18. 11.

1781 Jan 9. Bought of John Videon our Silver
Coffee Pot, cost 10 7 6
the stand for do 2 11 6
cost Together £12 19 0

1781 17th April. This morning betwixt 9 and 10 o'clock was a terrible blow up of a corning House and a dusting House adjoining in which were 70 to 90 Hundred wt of Gunpowder. There was scarcely one House in Town but had Windows broken and at the bottom of West Street and Davington were all the windows broken and many houses untiled. Only three men were in it and they blown to pieces.
No part of one was supposed to be found. This Corning House then stood in the Marsh about **yards** to the North of Stone Bridge.

1780 In June was a prodigious mob and Insurrection in London, which
Damages done by Fire and Destruction by the mob amounted to the sum of £157. 847. 1.
111/4 as by an Estimate made and given in June 1781.

1785 Jan 7, Monsr Blanchard. a Frenchman and a Dr Jefferyes an Englishman launched in a Balloon at Dover Castle about 1/4 after one o clock of this Day and went over to France in it and landed about 6 miles south of Calais in 2 1/4 hours the wind at N.N.W.

1794 Aug 11. The first Foundation Stone of the New Steeple of this Church was laid by the Vicar Mr Richard Halke.

1796 A Mr Win Hobson of Milton next Sittingbourne told me that he had one Field of Wheat in Sheppy about 8 Acres that last year brought him full 5 Quarters an Acre some of which he sold in London Market at 5. 11. 0. per Quarter. The whole brought him more money home than the Field cost him six years ago.

Here finishes the Journal of Mr Wm Bennett of Faversham, Kent.

In another Handwriting is as follows viz:

Thomas My Uncle Bennett departed this life the 29 of Dec 1795 aged 73 years.

Wm Bennett My Father died Nov 3 1797 aged 71, was interred in a new Vault in Faversham Church Nov 10th.

Richard. Horton died. Feb 26th 1792.

My Uncle Horton Feb 28th 1793 aged 75 years.