

JOHN BROWN

Convict Samuel Hodkin Baker (see later) a Third Fleet Convict, shown in the official record as Samuel Odkenbaker, is not the only mystery in the ancestry of many Tasmanians.

His young daughter, Elizabeth (whose mother was Mary (Ann) Brennan, also a convict), was married off at the tender age of 13, already pregnant, to a free man who called himself John Brown. The ceremony is recorded in the parish register for St John's in Launceston (Port Dalrymple) for 18 July 1831.

So who was John Brown? He is said in the family to have maintained he was born in 1801 and was Scottish. He speculated that his alleged father, Captain J. W. Gordon, was one of the Gordon clan from the Gordon seat Huntly in Aberdeenshire where there are still the ruins of the original castle.

It is possible, however, that his father was James William Gordon. This was a common combination of forenames in the Gordon clan, both among military men and those who joined the navy.

Or he could have been Captain James Willoughy Gordon. John Brown's birthday is recorded in family papers as 10 February 1801. He told his family that his father was a 'captain', and that he (John) had been sent to Tasmania with his father's man servant Andrew Kenny.

The family Bible and other papers contain a number of references to Scotland. The name 'Gordon' along with references to Huntley (probably Huntly), and a note about 'Wolrige Gordon'. The names Gordon and Huntley go down the family. My own

mother, born in 1901, told us she had ancestors from Aberdeenshire, but she knew not whence precisely. Capt. Gordon was her great great grandfather.

The old family seat at Huntly still sports an ancient castle. The story that came down the family that the 'W' middle initial stood for 'Wolrige'. The Wolrige Gordons did not come into existence, through marriage, until after John Brown was born. There were also Willoughby Nortons.

Regarding 'Wolrige Gordon', my suggestion is that John Brown saw an item in a newspaper referring to this name and guessed this could be the 'W' Gordon he knew from his earlier days.

From a University of Southampton, England, website, there are references to General Sir James Willoughby Gordon, 1st Bart. (1773-1851). The papers of General Sir James Willoughby Gordon include references to his career. He was clearly highly mobile, Colonel in Chief of the Welch Fusiliers and of the 5th REGIMENT OF FOOT 25 Feb 1807, then Gen. Sir James Willoughby Gordon, Bt, GCB, GCH 27 Nov 1815. He saw little that was attractive in West Indian life and was greatly shocked by the general prevalence of immorality. During the 1790's he served in the West Indies. In 1808 his Military Transactions of the British Empire, from the commencement of the year 1803, to its termination.

To date there is no sign of a J Wolrige Gordon, with the title of Captain, who was a 'Huntly' Gordon. There was, however, a Captain John William Gordon.

John Brown was a mystery to the end. We have no record of his death in family records. It is not hard to speculate about this but research by a cousin in Tasmania shoots down this theory in an instant. Just in case someone else draws the same erroneous

conclusion, here is my speculation. For once, a 77 year-old man named John Brown, destitute and unable to care for himself, was buried in 1881 in Launceston. This is just about walking distance for an old man from John's former home at Sidmouth on the Tamar where he worked as a boat builder.

The old man was said to come from 'England'. This only meant that he came from the mother country, so he could have been Scottish, but sailed from England. This is not a perfect match for a birth in 1801, but perhaps the second '1' in 1801 was actually '4'. They are often confused due to the way numbers were written at the time.

This is, however, unlikely to have been our John Brown. He had a large family not far away so it is hard to think of him as ever becoming destitute, maybe wandering off because of, say, dementia. There is, though, another speculative explanation. He was an expert boat builder. He could easily have disappeared at sea on a rough night out in the Strait and drowned.

Until informed otherwise, I suspected that no one was sure how old he was when he died, guessed that he was 80 and the 8 was misread as 5. This is just the kind of error that can often be found in old records, as suggested above.

Regarding the story passed down the family that John told his children he and 'Andrew Kenny' jumped from their ship into the harbour at Hobart and made their way inland, we now know that Andrew Kenny was certainly linked to John Brown.

The National Library online newspapers website shows them both fighting a fire.

A search for "Andrew Kenny" in Tasmania comes up with an item in *The Courier* (Hobart, Tasmania) for Saturday 6 March 1852, page 3. It says:

BUSH FIRE.-A bush fire took place on Saturday last, on the

west side of Whirlpool Reach, and continued during Sunday. It was likely to produce very serious consequences, had it not been for the timely assistance of Mr. Andrew Kenny, and some of Mr. McCulloch's men. The whole of the fences belonging to Mr Reid of Richmond Hill were destroyed, and Mr. John Brown's premises were in imminent danger. The fire is supposed to have originated from the carelessness (or wilfulness) of some gold-seekers observed in the neighbourhood. *Chronicle*

As is usually the case with family stories, there might be a smidgen of truth in the story about John and Andrew Kenny swimming across the harbour. It says, at least, that he or Kenny were trying to get away from someone and become anonymous. The family story is that John Brown ran away from home to escape his father's attempts to force him into the Gordon Highlanders. I will come back to that.

Most runaways of the time (the newspapers carried accounts as a warning to the islanders), were convicts. Was John a convict and lying, as he would sure have done were he a runaway? This is impossible to tell as there were so many convicts named John Brown. It seems unlikely he was a runaway, given his readiness to show himself in Port Dalrymple where his future father-in-law (Samuel Hodkin Baker) had been a constable.

If John was a runaway (bush ranger), could he also have lied about his name and identity? It must surely not have been too hard to obfuscate over one's identity in Tasmania in the early days.

Let us not forget that John's young wife Elizabeth was born in 1818, only eight years after this northern port was first settled. Ships came and went up and down the Tamar river. Anyone could have arrived by sea or by land without people knowing who they

were. So if John Brown was someone else, say James Gordon, who would have known otherwise?

Was Kenny a convict? It is possible. It is possible too that if John Brown and Andrew Kenny arrived on the same ship (as John Brown said they did). Andrew leaped into the harbour and John Brown followed him.

It would be possible to speculate endlessly about this, but there seems little point. Rather, the facts on record may speak for themselves. But before leaving this point, leaping into the harbour was one way of getting to shore, especially if the weather was hot and the small boats had no room for passengers. Such a story is often elaborated by children in later years into something else! One can imagine the scene. The ageing father entertaining his children and grandchildren with tales about his adventurous youth!

As for the identity of John Brown's 'Captain' father, he could have been either a sea captain or a military man. That John said his father was trying to force him into the Gordon Highlanders suggests he was a military man, as well as a landowner committed to raise men for the regiment, as they were expected to do in the area around Huntly, where the regiment first came into being.

From *Wikipedia*:

Two regiments named the "Gordon Highlanders" have been raised from the Clan Gordon. The first was the "81st" formed in 1777 by the Hon. Colonel William Gordon, son of the Earl of Aberdeen and was disbanded in 1783. The second was the "92nd" raised by the Marquess of Huntly in 1794. What facts are there about the likelihood of John Brown and Andrew Kenny knowing each other before the event of the fire at Sidmouth? It happens that there were two men aboard the

same ship with those names.

This is in the public record – in the index held by the Colonial Secretary New South Wales.

http://colsec.records.nsw.gov.au/indexes/colsec/k/F30c_ka-ke-15.htm

Apparently Andrew Kenny was a convict who arrived in Australia on the "Chapman" in 1817 (McClelland - Convicts Pioneers & Immigrant History). The record says this:

1817 Aug 5,9. On return of convicts arrived per "Chapman" who embarked on the "Jupiter" for Hobart (Reel 6005; 4/3496 pp.273, 289)

Nothing against 'alias', nor 'Irish Rebel'.

Calling/trade: Labourer. Born: 1789 Native place: Galway

Tried: 1816 Galway Co Sentence: 7 [years] Former

convictions: [nothing noted] Ship: Chapman (1) [1817]

As it happens, on board the convict transport "Chapman" was a 'John Brown', a Private in the 46th Dorset foot regiment; working as a guard. Now, there was trouble on the Chapman, strife between officers and convicts led to a near riot.

John Brown gave evidence to the Committee of Enquiry and was listed, among others, to be returned to England to attend a full inquiry into the matter. One presumes he went. If so, could he have come back? Indeed. How plausible is this? If he was in the 46th, he could have been backwards and forwards to Australia on guard duties. This would have enabled him to decide when, once he left the army, he might settle in Australia.

Andrew Kenny was free after his seven-year term by 1824, so maybe this was when (if the men became acquainted and perhaps even trusted friends) John Brown made for Tasmania and met up

with Kenny.

If Kenny was John's father's 'man-servant', how could this be if John was Scottish or English and Andrew Irish? This would not, in fact, be unusual. The Irish (and any young males from the British Isles) were quick to migrate to greener pastures.

Besides, if John's father himself was mobile, he would have recruited retainers locally wherever he went. If they were good workers and capable, he would have kept them on. Farm servants and labourers living and working in Scotland often came from Ireland. There was a great deal of interchange between the two in the decades in question. Galway, after all, is on the central west coast of Ireland, both a port and a military fortress of the day.

There were a number of ships coming and going to Australia whose captains were 'Brown', so Andrew Kenny might also indeed have been a 'man servant' on board a ship. According to Jenny Fawcett, the Prince Regent, under the command of Captain Brown, arrived in 1821. Besides frequently traffic from Sydney to both Port Dalrymple/Launceston and Hobart, there were other ships in Australian waters with Captains Brown.

Brown - Capt master of MARY 1820

Brown - Capt master of MORLEY HM/ Eng to Aust 1820

Brown - Capt wife Mary (née Browne) died/NSW 1821SG

Brown - Capt ELIZABETH 1829 Brown - Capt HOPE 1830

The coincidence of the name John Brown and Andrew Kenny, and the military link, suggests a possible scenario:

Supposing John Brown (according to online Parish records there were Brown families in Huntly, as well as many

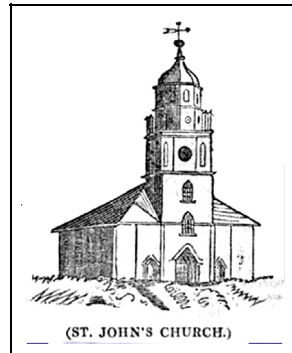
Gordons who were not of the aristocratic family) was not keen to be a pressed man, rather than join the Gordon Highlanders (who went to some of the bloodiest battle scenes}, John Brown escaped to England and enlisted (age 16, as he could) as a private in the 46th Dorset Regiment.

The attraction could even have been a relatively easy way of seeing the world. After all, ships crossed the Atlantic to South America, then to Cape Town, sometimes up the African coast to Colombo, then via various points down the Malaysian peninsula to Australia.

Continuing with this thread in my speculation, here is a further possible scenario:

Let's say John Brown made a friend of Kenny when serving in the 46th Regiment as a guard on the convict ship the Chapman. After John Brown left the army and Kenny had done his time, John Brown helped Kenny find a job with his father.

He and Kenny arrived in Hobart and rather than risk a scene with his father, they made off on their own. As free men, they would not be listed as bush rangers or runaways. Supposing they arrived with John's father on the Hope in 1830 then made their way to Port Dalrymple, this could explain why it took John Brown, by then 30, so long to get married.



In 1831, Elizabeth Baker was just old enough, having reached 12, as she was born in 1818 to marry legally. She was baptised at St

John's in Launceston in 1825. The sketch below shows the church as it was in earlier days.

When the new church was built, for a while remnants of the old wooden church were left near the west door.

So was there a John Brown around in the Huntly area in Scotland? The only baptism that would tie in, 4th March 1801, was a child at Inch, father Alexander. Scarcely Captain J Gordon. However, if John was an illegitimate child, he could have been born anywhere in Scotland or indeed in England.

A search in Scotland produces only one recorded baptism of an illegitimate birth in that year: in Hallbank in Tundergarth parish, Dumfriesshire, christened on 15-8-1801. Tundergarth is 242 miles from Huntly. If the child John Brown was taken away as a baby to be raised in the Huntly area by his natural father Capt. J. W. Gordon. This could explain why John thought his father was Capt. J. W. Gordon. If the first-mentioned destitute old man, John Brown, who was 77 years old (he might have been confused by dementia, so guessed his age) and buried in Launceston, was our man who said he came from England, were there many J W Gordons at the right time?

Indeed there were, even in London. One John William Gordon was born 23 December 1763, father John, mother Elisabeth. Any Gordon of that period would almost certainly make it very clear to his children that they were, by ancestry, Gordons from the Highlands of Scotland, and specifically from the Huntly area.

What if John William Gordon was John Brown's father? Were there John Brown births in London early in 1801? Again, indeed there were, including one in Deptford, near the docks, from where so many ships sailed all round the world.

As so many of London's church records were lost in the Blitz, it's pointless to search any further. But those online on the Internal Genealogical Index whose father was not named, were common. John Brown births with the mother named as Brown, took place around the time of his birth all over England.

So could John Brown have really disappeared rather than died in destitution? Certainly, as he made and sailed little boats round Tasmania, one being the *Salus*, he could have hit trouble. The Bass Strait (Bass Straits or Bass's Straits in his time) is a notoriously dangerous strip of water. He could easily have lost his life at sea.

Equally, he could have taken off for the mainland, shipped himself back to Britain and died there. Hundreds of John Brown deaths took place in England of men born around 1800-1802, long after he no longer appeared in the public record in Tasmania in 1875 in Sidmouth.

The Old Parish Records in Scotland show no deaths of a John Brown after 1875 in Aberdeenshire, but there were 22 in the period between 1875 and 1900 of men born around 1801. Two died in likely locations, one in Aberdeen itself and the other at Keithhall, in a remote hamlet in a beautiful spot in the Highlands, south west of Aberdeen.

An alternative possibility is that John Brown died in the area and somehow this event was overlooked for one reason or another. Now, why was John writing about the Wolrige-Gordons (if he was)? This is almost certainly a red herring.

The Wolrige-Gordons of Hallhead and Esslement (regarded as 'peerage') did not come into being until well after John was born, after the marriage of Ann Gordon to Henry Perkins Wolrige

in 1856. I suspect John read about the Wolrige-Gordon children in newspapers from Britain, noted down the name, and wondered if he was linked through his father's middle initial being 'W'. The Wolrige-Gordons. up the Ann Gordon line. were an offshoot of the Huntly Gordons but centuries back. The Gordons of Aberdeenshire acquired the Hallhead lands by marriage in the 14th Century.

Equally, John (knowing his father was a Gordon), might have done some reading in libraries and newspapers, found out that the Gordon 'seat' was in Huntly, and made notes accordingly.

This kind of note taking goes on in many families. It is sometimes the case that descendants come across the notes and take them as fact rather than jottings of someone trying to make sense of his/her ancestry. So John Brown might only have been a Brown speculating about his origins. Who knows but his mother was a Gordon and he muddled 'grandfather' and 'father' in his notes. Whose 'father' after all did the notes refer to?

In short, it is my belief that John Brown knew little about his own ancestry, a not uncommon situation, so attempted to piece it together, as do most amateur genealogists.

REFERENCES

- 1817 Sep 22 Evidence given at proceedings of Committee of Enquiry of conduct on board "Chapman" (Reel 6020; 9/2639 pp.257-72).
- 1817 Nov 24 On list of soldiers to be sent to England as witnesses in the matter of the ship "Chapman" (Reel 6046; 4/1738 p.115)

SAMUEL HODKIN BAKER OR SAMUEL ODKENBAKER?

The ancestry of many Tasmanians includes convict Samuel ‘Odkenbaker’, transported from England to Sydney in 1791 on The Third Fleet, then on from there to Norfolk Island. He was then freed and finally moved to Van Diemensland (now Tasmania) in 1813 when Norfolk Island was cleared of convicts.

Ever since Samuel ‘Odkenbaker’ (as he is most commonly referred to today) fell into the hands of the authorities in Bedfordshire in 1788 as a suspect after a burglary, his name has been a matter for debate and speculation. This article is no exception, but seeks to rule out some of the possibilities. Having considered these, I take the view that his true name was almost certainly Samuel Hodkin Baker.

There are a number of facts and certainties that give strength to this argument. As Rhonda Cole (1999) points out in her published paper, people plainly had trouble with his name. There were several versions in the paperwork of the time, one of which had been scratched out and written over. The following have been noted: Oakenbaker, Odkenbaker, Odkinbaker, O’Baker, Baker. The name was carefully written as ‘Odkenbaker’ on the list of transported convicts to leave England in the Third Fleet (1791) for Sydney. Samuel called himself Baker, which I believe is an important reference point.

The puzzle then has to focus on what came before Baker. Oakenbaker, Odkenbaker, Odkinbaker do not provide convincing middle names: Oaken, Odken, Odkin. The logical course in my research was to see if the name, or anything resembling it, exists

in historic records. Looking at the searchable online sites for genealogical information, we found nothing to suggest this is a true name in any of the first four versions shown above.

Searching for O'Baker on the IGI (International Genealogical Index) produces 'Obaker' surnames in the USA and various forms of 'Baker' surname in Scandinavia, but nothing like it in England. However, Baker himself seemed clear about his own name. By the time he arrived in Tasmania, he had served his sentence and was a free man. In Launceston (Port Dalrymple), he was known as Samuel Baker. *The Hobart Gazette* for 1818 records his appointment as a Constable and (assuming this is the same man) as Baker, being appointed collector for their own newspaper fees. Considering where Samuel came from is scarcely more illuminating than searching for his alleged name. The court papers for the Bedford Assizes in the National Archives at Kew, Surrey, England, which I have seen and photographed, state that he came from Rickmansworth, although this was not a claim to be his place of birth.

Rickmansworth falls in the Watford (Hertfordshire) registration district. If Samuel had been born there, we might expect to find the forename 'Samuel' common in the period of his own life, say up to the end of 1839. Searching the public records shows that in this large area there were only nine Samuel forenames and none in families with surnames that resemble Odkenbaker or variants.

Going back to the online IGI, the Batch Number for Rickmansworth is C072791. Searching for 'Samuel' in the forty-year band around Samuel's supposed birth year produces only nineteen. None of their surnames fits. So where else might he have come from? In one document of the time, in the bundle from the Bedford Assizes in 1788, there is a reference to Samuel and

his accomplice both being 'late' of Chalgrave. This means Samuel had been elsewhere. The court records show no evidence of a record of 'place of birth' as opposed to where the plaintiffs had come from. The court records said Baker 'of', meaning little other than he had lived there recently or lodged there, however fleetingly.

There were certainly Baker families in Rickmansworth. On the other hand, although we are led to believe Samuel was born in around 1759, if this was ten years out, the baptism on 4 March 1748 of Samuel Baker to John and Mary Baker in Hemel Hempstead (only 10 miles from Rickmansworth), could be our missing link.

Yet he could have been born in any of the several villages between the two. However, there is more evidence of people with names like his in the area around where the burglary took place (Hockliffe, on the A5 as it is now known).

As noted above, it is important to acknowledge that 'late of' only means one previous place of residence in court records, but could refer to any one of several 'late of' locations. Besides, both Baker and his accomplice appeared eager to present themselves as birds of passage, seasonal workers helping with the harvest or hanging about to earn a crust carrying 'burthens' (burdens) for others, as the court record shows. One wonders if they both had criminal records elsewhere. More likely, they were keen to pretend they were not local, had never been to Hockliffe, so could not have carried out the burglary.

Given that they both admitted finally that they were 'late of' Chalgrave, the IGI shows the following baptisms to Baker parents in Chalgrave, a picture of slender but consistent occupation. Even later in the 1800s, most of the Bedfordshire Bakers were from nearby villages:

Mary Baker, 9 March 1783, parents Richard Baker and Mary, Mary Baker, 18 May 1805, parents Richard and Mary, perhaps this Richard being the son of the one above Mary Baker, 18 May 1805, parents William Baker and Elizabeth. John Baker, 22 April 1589, father Thomas Baker, mother unknown John Baker, 25 November 1797 (six years after Samuel went to Norfolk Island), parents Richard and Mary Ann Baker, 20 March 1785, parents Richard and Mary Thomas Baker, 20 October 1807, parents William and Mary, Mary perhaps being his second wife Joseph Baker, 6 January 1811, father not named, mother Rebecca James Baker, 4 May 1800, parents William and Mary.

So was the name ‘Samuel Baker’ common in Bedfordshire, and if so from when onwards? Searching the IGI shows that the earliest Samuel Baker baptised in Bedfordshire, for whom records have survived and have so far been transcribed (the IGI is incomplete), might have come from the Cardington area. A Samuel Baker married Ann Whitbread on 23 June 1636. Cardington is on the south-east edge of Bedford and about 20 miles north of Chalgrave. This is the kind of distance farm workers and labourers commonly travelled for social and occupational reasons.

The next Samuel Baker, child of Joseph Baker and Mary, was baptised 7 November 1708 at Old Warden, southeast of Bedford, 27 miles from Chalgrave.

A member of the Church of the Latter Day Saints has put a marriage in 1749 in Woburn, Bedfordshire on the IGI. This Samuel apparently had a father named Samuel too. Woburn is only about 8 miles from Chalgrave. This date, 1749, is about right for the marriage of parents of our Samuel.

What these entries tell us is that the name Samuel Baker was

indeed local to the Hockliffe/Chalgrave area. One last search within the date range 1770-1810 reveals a marriage of 'Sam Baker' to Mary Alliston, on 28 June 1787. This was at Sundon, the parish Church for the village was at Upper Sundon, less than six miles from Chalgrave.

So the evidence is accumulating that there were Samuel Baker individuals in the area close to where the theft took place and where Samuel had been living.

Regarding the marriage to Mary Alliston, if this was the Samuel in question, just before he got into trouble over the alleged theft, and a child of the union was born before Samuel left for Eastney Common to work on Fort Cumberland before leaving for Norfolk Island, the child would have been born before 1790.

Before pursuing this separate question, are there any clues in the name Alliston? This surname was mainly an Essex surname from the Halstead area. More interesting though, Alliston was also a Northampton name as shown in early census material(1841) and in parish records. Northampton is only 30 miles from Chalgrave.

Further, the name Samuel Hodgskin(s) appears four times on the IGI for Ashton, a village on the Chalgrave side of Northampton. Did 'Sam Baker' know his wife from that area? We cannot be certain, but a scenario can be imagined whereby he knew and visited his father, and came across Miss Alliston.

Regarding the possibility of a child from the Alliston-Baker union, if the online record is correct, based on the IGI, no child with that surname was baptised in Sundon, nor within the right time frame in Chalgrave or neighbouring villages.

I return to this point later, as the 1851 census shows there was a William Baker living in Chalgrave who said he was born there at the right time. So who could Samuel really have been if he was

local? The IGI shows the record of a couple named William Baker and Mary having children in Hockliffe between 1787 and 1791.

Was William a brother to Samuel? Maybe, since William was the name Samuel chose for his son born to convict Lewis in Norfolk Island (Cole, 1999). As earlier suggested, did Samuel know about the valuable items in the shop in Hockliffe because he knew the village? Is it more than coincidence?

The record is consistent that there were Baker children in the neighbouring villages. Bakers were baptised in Toddington, in the late 1800s in Harlington, and in Hockliffe in the years around Samuel's time as well as in the late 1800s in Tilsworth and Chalgrave. The Baker children born in Hockliffe were Thomas (1787), Ann (1789), Rebecca (1791), Hannah (1796), and Betty (1798). These were born around the time we might have expected Samuel to have been having children had he stayed in England.

More, the Bakers baptised in Tilsworth, 3.5 miles away from Chalgrave, included a Tilsworth child who was staying in Chalgrave in the 1851 census. The names are familiar: Elizabeth, William, Sarah (as well as Richard, John, Robert and Henry).

It seems likely from this that all the local Baker families were connected. The 1841 census for Chalgrave shows several male Bakers in this small village who could have been relatives of Samuel (names: Daniel, David, Henry, James, John, William). Bearing in mind that ages were rounded down to the nearest 5 years in this census, there are several interesting entries, perhaps Samuel's brother and nephews. William, 1761. William, 1796. John, 1796.

The elder William, an agricultural labourer (Samuel was a labourer, according to one Bedford Assizes document), could indeed have been Samuel's brother. William's year of birth would have been anywhere between 1757 and 1761.

We have been led to believe that our Samuel was said to be born c.1759, so William could easily have been his brother, or a cousin. The two younger men could just be Samuel's sons, if not William's, or one of each. Following this line of enquiry, in the 1851 census for Chalgrave parish, the younger William's age is given as 58 and his place of birth as Chalgrave. He was a Cow Dealer. His daughter was named Ann.

Interestingly, the Chalgrave register shows no William baptised at that Church but he could have been baptised elsewhere, perhaps where his mother's family came from. Was he Samuel's son? Or was he the child of a non-conformist couple? Many of the non-conformist records have been lost.

If Chalgrave was a possible birth place, what likely couples were married there before Samuel's birth? Just two: John Baker to Ann Hilsdon on 29 December 1751 and (less likely) Henry Baker to Mary Odell on 30 September 1740.

At nearby Tilsworth, however, lived a couple, John Baker and Mary. They had a large family, but not including 'Samuel'.

However, as the later censuses show, there was a link between the Bakers of Tilsworth and those of Chalgrave. As for other Bakers in 'Wingfield in Chalgrave', the 1851 census shows Thomas Baker, age 63 and deaf, born in Hockcliffe. He and his widowed sister, Ann, were both paupers, while her children were in employment. Ann and Thomas Baker are referred to above. They were children of the Hockcliffe couple, William and Mary Baker according to the IGI.

This listing of Bakers shows, as suggested, just how mobile the Bakers were between villages in this cluster around the time Samuel was there: Wingfield, Hockcliffe, Chalgrave, Tilsworth, Toddington, and others. Thomas could just as easily have been

Samuel's son.

So does this help to discover where Samuel Baker fits in? Not so far. Do we get any clues from the record for George Davis? It seems not. Although there were George Davis baptisms in Woburn (according to the IGI), Woburn being a few miles from Chalgrave, there seems no good fit for his age. Perhaps Davis was actually born in Bristol, whence he said he came, according to the court record.

However, in the same paper that identified Samuel as a Chalgrave man, Davis was also said to come from Chalgrave ('late of Chalgrave'). In earlier days 'late of' meant only that the individual concerned had been there for a while, perhaps only day, before the Court case. Most of the Bedford Davis families of the time seemed to live in Shillington, a village about 10 miles north east of Chalgrave. If Davis and Baker were indeed local, it would not be surprising that the men knew each other, as the court records show they did indeed, and have been lying low in Chalgrave planning their theft.

My suspicion is that Samuel Baker was very local to the area around Chalgrave rather than born in Rickmansworth. To have claimed to come from elsewhere would have given the story the two men told more credibility. That they had been nowhere near Hockliffe, nor ever had been, until, as shown in the indictment papers, the truth came out that they had been in Chalgrave.

I looked earlier for 'Samuel' as a favoured forename in Rickmansworth, with nothing of interest in the available online records. Turning to look at the surname, there were two few Baker baptisms around the time of his birth, and no marriages, suggesting a closer look at the Chalgrave area would be in order. Are there any clues in the 'Odken' prefix. Was it a middle name? Searching on line in the public records and on the IGI, there is no record anywhere of Odken or Odkin as a middle name or

surname. However, Oaken exists within the right period as a surname (and middle name) in various forms, including Okins or Okings in Bedfordshire.

According to the 1841 census, these families were on the opposite (northern) side of Bedford, so some distance from Chalgrave. Further, there were no Samuels with that surname on the IGI. (Okin or Okings are probably the same name as Hocking, a Midlands surname, with the initial 'h' dropped.) It was particularly common in earlier days to give a child the surname of someone known to the family, say a godparent, or the maternal surname.

One suspicion pursued was this: Was Odken a name with the 'h' missing? The aspirate 'h' was (and is) commonly dropped in Britain wherever the Queen's English, or 'received pronunciation', is not the norm. All of the following exist: Hodkin, Hodkins, Hodgkin, Hodgkins, Hodskin, Hodskins with either an 'l' or an 'e'. Interestingly, spoken without the 'h', they sound remarkably similar.

Looking for family naming patterns, the website FreeBMD (shows several Samuel Hodkin events but no Samuel Hodken entries at all. The 1851 census shows four Samuel Hodkin individuals in Derbyshire and one in Yorkshire, while the 1841 census shows five in Derbyshire, Worcester and Sheffield, but none in Bedfordshire. There were only two Samuel Hodkins, one from Ireland and one in Warwickshire.

Why there so much variation in the spelling of what is plainly the same name? Hardly anyone could write until the 19th Century, certainly not in the villages. People knew their names, so it was up to those who had to write down other people's names, for some official purpose, to make the best of it. Such people would have been mainly local clerks, teachers, church staff

or scribes, the Vicar, lawyers, or, later, census enumerators and teachers.

Spelling of surnames for ordinary people was only standardised when schooling became universal. Teachers would see a flock of children through a school from local related families and decide on how to teach them to write down their own names. Schooling for all children was only universal after 1840 in towns and even later in rural areas of England. The consequence is that parish records show children even in the same family with their surnames spelled differently depending on the guidance offered by teachers.

This is perhaps what happened when Samuel was arrested and charged. It has been argued (Cole, 1999) that our Samuel could surely write and spell his own name. As noted earlier, this is highly unlikely. Education for labourers was not in place until the mid-1800s. Few without education could write their own name in the 1700s, and if they did, this was because they had been taught by someone to do so for special occasions only – such as marriage.

I have been surprised in doing my genealogical research in Britain, just how many had to resort to X instead of their name. For knowing his own name, when Samuel spoke it out, he would quite naturally have dropped the initial ‘h’ of Hodkin. This was and is commonly dropped in England, even among those who were educated, for example in the pronunciation of the word ‘hotel’. Even in 2014, there are people in England who refer to a hotel as ‘anotel’.

The Court clerk’s job was slavishly to write down, in full detail, what was said to him. The name would thus have sounded like Samuel ‘odjkin Baker, or ‘odkin’ Baker.

What would be more natural than to run ‘Odkin’ and ‘Baker’ together as Odkinbaker or Odkenbaker? Or for someone to make

an error in transcribing it, turning the name into something that looked like Oakenbaker since the medieval form of the cursive ‘d’ can look like an ‘a’.

The scene can be imagined: Samuel was caught, locked up, then interrogated:

“Name?”

“Samuel 'odken Baker, sir.”

“Bodkin Baker?”

“Odjken Baker, Samuel, sir.”

He could have been too intoxicated to say Hodgkin clearly without slurring it. The clerk might have replied: “Got it. Odken Baker. Odd kind of name that.”

Regarding the occurrence of the surname with variants, online FreeBMD shows a number of ‘Hodgkin’ individuals in Bedfordshire as well as Hodkins, but no Hodken variants. Hodgkin and variants with the middle ‘g’ are more common.

So where were the Hodgkins? The City of London apprentice records show that Robert Hodgkin, son of Robert Hodgkin ‘late of Houghton Regis in the County of Bedford yeoman dec’d’ was apprenticed to Thomas Baker for seven years on the 9th March, either 1659 or 1660.

This may be 100 years before Samuel was born, but it shows that people with the Hodgkin surname were in the right area. Houghton Regis is less than two miles away from Chalgrave. Even though the Hodgkins might in later years have been more common further north, they were certainly in Bedfordshire within the time frame we are considering.

Indeed, one John Hodgkins became Bishop Suffragan of the See of Bedford as early as 1537. There were plenty of Hodgkins in Bedford at Samuel’s time, especially in Lidlington and Toddington, villages close to Chalgrave (12 and less than 2 miles

away, respectively).

One point of interest is that the online IGI Bedford index shows a number of Hodgkin events with Christian names that sound familiar: Samuel, William, Mary, Sarah, Betsy, Ann.

Samuel Baker called his children William, Mary, Elizabeth (Betsy) and Sarah.

Examination of the IGI for the surname variants of Hodgkin or Hodkin shows that the Hodkins only arrived quite late in Bedford city itself, mainly in the parish of St Paul.

So where were they before in the County of Bedfordshire? There was one family in the earliest online IGI records (late 16th Century as well as in the early 1800s) at Flitton by Selsoe (a hamlet a few thousand yards due west of Silsoe).

The name is written as Hodgkins. It seems likely they were in that location in between these years well. There were Hodkin families in Maulden, south of Bedford city at various points, although none between 1610 and 1690, unless the records are missing. In more recent times, searching on FreeBMD for the surname Hodkin, shows most in the north England. The same applies for 'Samuel Hodkin'.

After this, the Hodgkin or Hodkin name began to surface in villages on the eastern fringes of the county, then in Dunstable and in Bedford itself. The particular combination of Samuel and Hodkin or Hodgkin (or variants) first appears in these online records in Derbyshire, dozens of miles north of Chalgrave.

How might the two names, Hodgkin and Baker, have come to be combined? Returning to parish records, the IGI shows the baptism of a child named Samuel Hodskins on 27 August 1758 in Lidlington, which is only 12 miles from Chalgrave. The parents were John Hodskins and Martha Webb. They baptised seven children in that parish, the first in 1748 and the last in 1762. Beyond this, though, there is no further history of the name

Hodskins in that parish in the online record. However, this shows that the combination of Samuel and Hodgkin, at least, can be found in the right geographical area.

The interesting point about this area in the villages near Chalgrave is that the route south from there would have gone through Nottingham, Leicester, Wellingborough and Bedford, then south to London. Relevant maps show the A5 (the old Roman road, Watling Street) and the A6, an ancient road probably dating back to the Dark Ages then used in stretches by the Romans. These were main routes from the Midlands and the North to London. Like the spokes of a wheel, with London as the hub, all the old London-bound main roads converged more closely as they approached London.

On Watling Street (currently the A5) is Hockliffe where the burglary took place. It was plainly a busy village, with even today a goodly collection of road houses, and a pretty church on the hill to the west looking out across the area where the Bakers lived – Chalgrave, Houghton Regis, Houghton Conquest, Toddington, Tilsworth, Upper and Lower Sundon, Wingfield and Woburn.

Hodkin families lived in several of these villages, although most Hod(g)kins were in Dunstable, about 5 miles south of Chalgrave or in villages to the north of Bedford. The clutch of villages between the A5 and A6 are all within walking distance of each other.

The key point to this observation is that the inns on these two main roads (Hockliffe offers several good examples) would have been serving travellers on their way to and from London.

The publicans would have recruited their workers from these ‘Baker’ villages, two of which (Toddington and Dunstable) also had Hodskins families around the time of the birth of Samuel. Many a man would have stopped for the night at an inn on the A5

or A6 and found a local wench for comfort.

The IGI shows regular baptisms in the area where there is no named father.

However, even though there were both Bakers and Hodskins in the area, it is perhaps fruitless to speculate too much about where Mr Hodkin or a variant came from since – despite so many other coincidences – the combination of the two names Samuel and Hodkin (or variants) is not specifically local to this tidy triangle of close villages, rather from those at a slight distance from them, still within walking distance.

An example is from Lidlington, about ten miles north of Chalgrave, while there were several over the years in Bedford city. There were no Bakers in Lidlington but tens of Samuels.

So how could Samuel have acquired his double-barrelled name? It was customary in England for forenames to be passed down the family. As I have shown, the combination of Samuel with either Baker or Hodgkin(s) was not common. The online Free BMD shows more than thirty Samuel Hodkin births, marriages, and deaths.

Could he have been entitled to both names through illegitimacy? If Samuel was an illegitimate child, there were two possibilities for naming. In England, it was perfectly normal in such situations for a boy child to be given the father's Christian name, with the father's surname as a middle name, then the mother's surname tacked on as the child's surname.

Let us say Miss Baker got together with Mr Samuel Hodkin, so the child was Samuel Hodkin Baker, born in the area.

Maybe the child's Hodkin grandfather was Samuel.

Not uncommonly a grandfather would take a child to be baptised. The second option, adopted for Samuel Baker's

(presumed) daughters with Mary (Ann) Brennan, is to give the child the father's surname and add in the mother's surname as their middle name, quite the opposite of the usual English practice. So perhaps the mother was Miss Hodgkin and the father was Samuel Baker. I doubt this as I have never seen this done at that time in England. The child would thus be Samuel Baker Hodgkin, which makes no sense in the context of the recorded name for him as a convict: Samuel Odkenbaker.

Regarding the birth of any child of a fleeting union, Mr Hodgkin would have had no say in the matter. As would have been normal for the time, Miss Baker would have taken her baby boy to be baptised. The Vicar would have insisted on knowing the name of the father for the sake of the child's future and for the parish records. Illegitimate children could and did inherit, but more important for the parish, if the father was known, maintenance could be extracted.

Turning to examine the possibility that the baby could indeed have been the child of Samuel Hodgkin and Miss Baker, and returning to the blind alley of looking in local villages, we have noted the presence of 'Baker' families in Toddington, as shown in the parish records.

In the 1841 census, there was a 'John Hodgkins' in Toddington, but none in the 1851 census. Looking again at the parish records on the IGI for Toddington, as we found for Dunstable, alongside the Bakers in the register were Hodgkins and variants of that name (such as Hodgkin) across the generations, right back to the beginning of records.

Even more interesting, there were plenty of 'Samuel' babies baptised in the village of Toddington – thirty nine in the records that run up to 1812. Moreover, in excess of fifty baptisms took place of children fathered by a 'Samuel'.

As for illegitimate children, Toddington had its share,

including among the Bakers. Did a Samuel Hodgkin/Hodkin slip through the record? It is possible. Whole pages go missing from parish registers.

Turning next to Samuel's mother, can we guess Miss Baker's (or Miss Hodgkin's) Christian name? There used to be quite strict conventions about naming. What clues do we have? Samuel had the first of Mary Ann Brennan's girls (he was given as father) named Mary. The first-born girl would usually be named after the maternal grandmother. The second girl would be named after the father's mother. Samuel and Mary Ann's second baptised child was Elizabeth, my own great great grandmother.

Searching for likely Elizabeths, an Elizabeth Baker Church was baptised at Flitton with Silsoe (now Flitton by Silsoe, St John the Baptist) on 13 July 1746. This is only seven miles from Chalgrave, and just below the A507. As for the other surname, we have already seen that there had been Hodgkin(s) families in this village but they were elsewhere to the south.

An Elizabeth Hodskin was baptised in Dunstable on 4 November 1750. This girl would have been too young, but Elizabeth Baker (1746), were she his mother, would have been over 14 (the legal age of marriage) when Samuel was born in about 1760.

Her own parents were Joshua and Mary. Her siblings were John, Ruth, Jonathan, William and Mary. Most of these Christian names ring no bells. Searching for Mary and Sarah Baker, the other family names, produces nothing of interest, either.

Assuming Samuel's mother was Elizabeth Baker, what happened to her after Samuel was born?

There were several 'Elizabeth Baker' marriages after Samuel left the area, including one in the Northampton area to a William Baker.

The only way of discovering the truth would be if a family

source of information from England itself were to surface, such as a family Bible or stories passed on whether in writing or orally. On the balance of probabilities, it seems that Samuel Odkenbaker was almost certainly Samuel Hodkin (or Hodskins or Hodgkin) Baker, from a cluster of villages between the A5 and A6 in Bedford, with a hot candidate being Toddington for the origin of father and maybe even mother (always supposing that the Toddington Hodgkins originally came from Derbyshire, bringing the name Samuel with them as part of their own family origins in points north). The other hot candidate location for Samuel's ancestry is Flitton or Silsoe, which shared a church. Besides these villages, there was Maulden, where there were also Hodgkin/Hodkin families.

Regarding the most likely spelling of Samuel's name, nowhere in the court papers or elsewhere is there any suggestion of an 's' or a 'g' (soft 'g') in the middle of the middle name. This points to the probability that Samuel pronounced his surname without either, ie as Odkin. The sibilant 's' is usually very obvious, so he presumably did not say it. Further, if Samuel slurred the soft 'g', given the difficulty anyone would have in pronouncing the name, it could have sounded like Odkin spoken with a thick tongue, as from intoxication. We know Samuel was fond of his tipples.

Given that the plain version of the surname, Hodkin, is mainly found further north, in Derbyshire, and that the local Bedfordshire variant (especially close to Chalgrave) was more commonly Hodgkin or Hodskins, maybe the 's' was actually a 'g' but mistranscribed. Hodgkin seems most likely. According to the online site FreeBMD most people with the surname Hodkin were primarily in the north – Derbyshire through to Yorkshire.

Finally, given the English naming traditions of the time and the coincidence of places and names, together with the high

probability of a mistranscribed middle name, I propose that Samuel's mother was probably Miss Elizabeth Baker, that his father was Samuel Hodgkin or Hodkin, and that our man was most likely to have been SAMUEL HODKIN BAKER or Sam Baker to close friends and maybe family, if only because Hodgkin would have been written as Hojkin.

REFERENCE

BEDFORD CONVICTS—1789 LENT ASSIZES by Rhonda Cole (*Tasmanian Ancestry*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1999, pp. 99–103).