

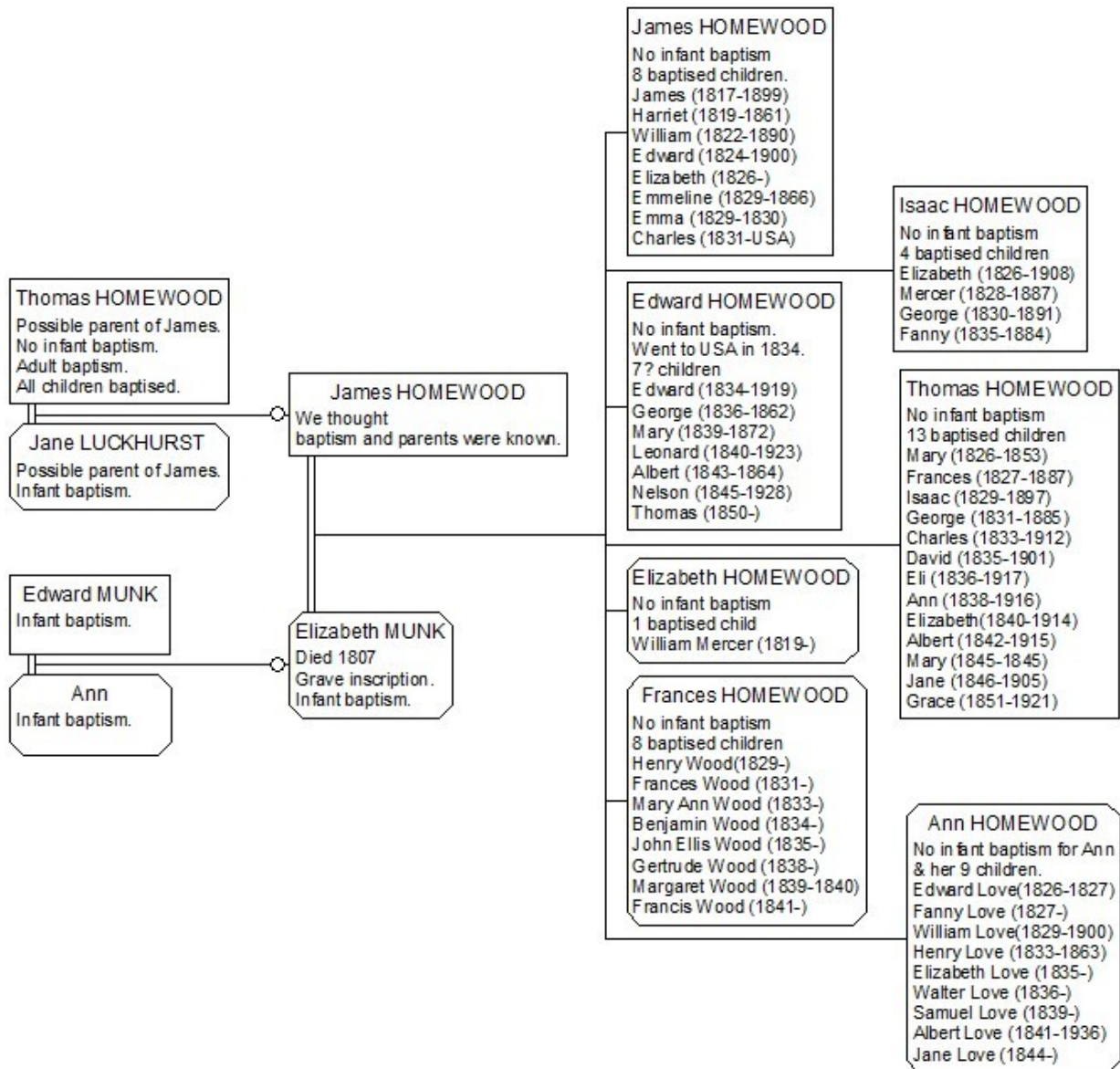
# I name this child .....

My Homewood ancestors in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were Baptists. The lack of an infant baptism means it is difficult to link a child to its parents. This is the story of my search for the links and a final conclusion that welds the family together.

A Smarden gravestone<sup>1</sup> states 'To the memory of ELIZABETH wife of JAMES HOMEWOOD and daughter of EDWARD and ANN MUNK of this Parish who died June the 12th 1807 aged 36 years. Left issue surviving four sons and three daughters (viz) James, Isaac, Edward, Thomas, Elizabeth, Frances and Ann.'

James and Elizabeth have many descendants<sup>2</sup> alive today and most of the researchers assume without question that James's parents are Thomas and Jane (nee Luckhurst) Homewood of Biddenden. This family stands out like a beacon as Thomas was baptised the same year he married and he baptised all his children while they were infants, including James. Is it the correct James?

Diagram 1: The large family of James and Elizabeth with possible parents of James.



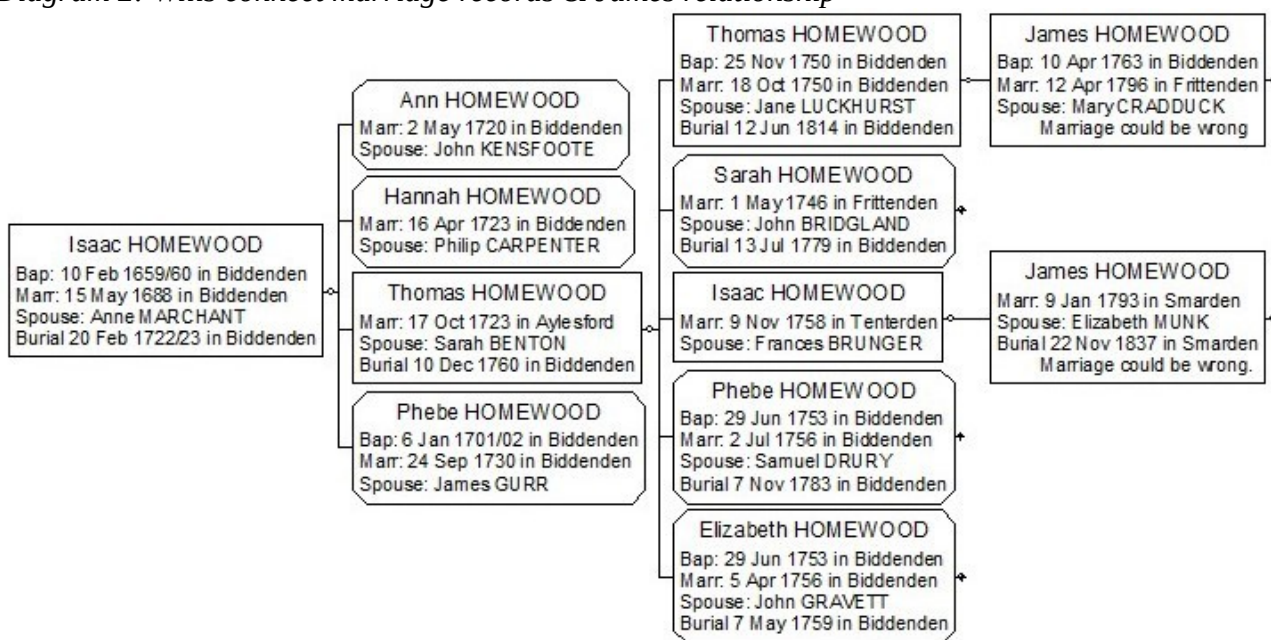
1 Monumental inscriptions in Smarden. <http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/MIs/MISmarden/01.htm>

2 See Diagram 1. The descendant Victorian families were very large.

There is a marriage for a James Holmwood with Mary Cradduck in 1796 in Frittenden<sup>3</sup>. As this couple baptised their children<sup>4</sup> it is likely this James is the son of Thomas, the convert to the Church of England faith.... but where is the proof? It leaves Elizabeth's husband without parents.

Wills solve many parental linkage problems. The Will of Issark Homwood<sup>5</sup> of Biddenden written in 1719 provided legacies to 3 unmarried daughters. Their marriages<sup>6</sup> are in the Biddenden Parish Records. The Will left the residue of the estate to a son Thomas who was buried<sup>7</sup> in 1760 in Biddenden, but his Will cannot be found. The burial<sup>8</sup> in 1736 of a Sarah in Biddenden, described her as the wife of Thomas Homewood. The only suitable marriage, Thomas Homwood and Sarah Benton in Aylesford<sup>9</sup> in 1723 is geographically too distant to be likely. An internet search linking Homewood and Benton produced a Will for Thomas Benton of Cranbrook that mentioned the name Homwood. This Will<sup>10</sup> gave the names of Homwood nieces with their husbands. They all married<sup>11</sup> and lived in the area leaving no doubt they were the children of Thomas and Sarah (nee Benton). The two nephews mentioned in Thomas Benton's Will were Thomas and Isaac. Nephew Thomas, must be the Thomas who converted to the Church of England faith. His son James was baptised in 1763. Isaac's marriage and family were recorded<sup>12</sup> by Baptists, meeting in Love Lane, Headcorn. It states:- *'Isaac Homwood & Frances Brunger were married Nov 9th 1758 at Tenterden. Susan Homwood, daughter of Isaac Homwood and Frances his wife was born March 20th 1761 at Biddenden. James Homwood, son of Isaac Homwood and Frances his wife was born April 1st 1763 at Biddenden.'* This confirms the two James were cousins of a similar age.

Diagram 2: Wills connect marriage records & James relationship



3 Familysearch provides the date of April 12<sup>th</sup> 1796.

4 John, baptised 10<sup>th</sup> Aug 1798 and James, baptised 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 1798. familysearch film # 1736721

5 The Biddenden PR show a burial on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1722/23 for Isaac Homewood. Issark Homewood used in Will, but indexed in Canterbury Probate database under Issac Homwood PRC/17/84/12i. Three different names.

6 16<sup>th</sup> April 1723 Hannah wed Philip Carter; 24<sup>th</sup> Sep 1730 Phoebe wed James Gurr; 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1720 Ann wed John Kensfoot

7 Burial 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 1760 'Thomas Holmwood Sr' leads us to expect a junior Thomas Holmwood is alive.

8 Burial 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1736 ... 'Sarah, wife of Thomas Homewood'

9 Marriage on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 1723 from Familysearch or Family History Centre microfilm 1469176 IT 5-6.

10 Probate PRC/17/97/57b from <http://wills.canterbury-cathedral.org>

11 1<sup>st</sup> May 1746 Sarah wed John Bridgeland at Frittenden; 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1756 Phebe wed Samuel Drury in Biddenden; 4<sup>th</sup> May 1756 Elizabeth wed John Gravett and died in 1759 leaving a son Thomas Gravett who was in the Will.

12 FindmyPast has scanned the book of records produced by General Baptist Church at Headcorn between 1779 and 1837. It includes events prior to 1779. The transcribed records are also available on Ancestry.

Family Folklore, a version of Chinese Whispers gives us valuable information and some unwanted assumptions. After the death of Elizabeth, her husband 'disappeared'. The older children went to Swift's Green Farm and the younger ones to Willesboro'<sup>13</sup>. The eldest child James, by 2010 at the age of 16 was taking responsibility for the farm, perhaps necessitated by the death in Smarden of Isaac<sup>14</sup> and Frances<sup>15</sup> by 1810. He eventually owned or managed 7 farms<sup>16</sup> before his death in 1859.

What happened to Elizabeth's husband James? This is uncertain, although we do know he was living in Smarden in 1837 when his son James recorded his death<sup>17</sup>. I wonder if he was considered the black sheep of the family and he was never talked about during those years immediately after Elizabeth's death.

Why did the younger children go to Willesboro'? Willesborough is near Ashford but no suitable records have been found in that area. One day I was studying the first published ordnance survey map<sup>18</sup> of Kent dated 1801 and I saw Wilsborough Farm was on the East side of Fosten Lane, Biddenden. My family know that if I mention Langdon or Newland Green I am talking about farms and not villages. No doubt this also applied to the families of Thomas and Isaac. There is no longer a Wilsborough Farm at this location, but I must talk to the residents of Fosten Lane to find out what old building foundations may still exist. In 1807 Thomas, the CofE convert, was living in Biddenden with his second wife, Elizabeth. Could Willesboro' Farm be his home and the home of his ancestors? Between 1807 and 1810 half the family were living with or close to Isaac in Smarden and half the family were living with or close to Thomas in Biddenden. It is not surprising that these younger members who were between 1 and 6 years old in 1807 had some wrong ideas about their parentage. In particular, Thomas, born 1803, thought he was the son<sup>19</sup> of his nanny, Sarah Munk, sister of Elizabeth Munk.

As these families were farmers, it is probable that they had minimal ability at reading and writing. Thus the spelling of the surname depended greatly upon the background experience of the cleric involved. Using the assumption that the surname Homwood, Holmwood, Homwoode and Homewood refer to the same family during the 18<sup>th</sup> century there is no unexplained marriages or death records that I have found. Also I concluded there are no other Homewood families in Biddenden and Smarden at that time.

We still do not know for sure which James is the husband of Elizabeth Munk. This research came to a very satisfying conclusion when I had a Eureka moment. It sprung from the facts I have presented above. You may wish to reconsider them and see if you can develop a convincing hypothesis. Turn to the next page for the final analysis.



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13 Ed. Bradford has collected Homewood material in his electronic book that is available free on the website Pg 159 in 2016 edition. <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~edbradford/ed/books/homewood.pdf>

14 The Monthly Magazine or British Register for Suffolk - Essex --Kent - Surrey Vol XXIX Part 1 for 1810 Page 611

15 See footnote #12

16 See footnote #13. Pg 192 in 2016 edition.

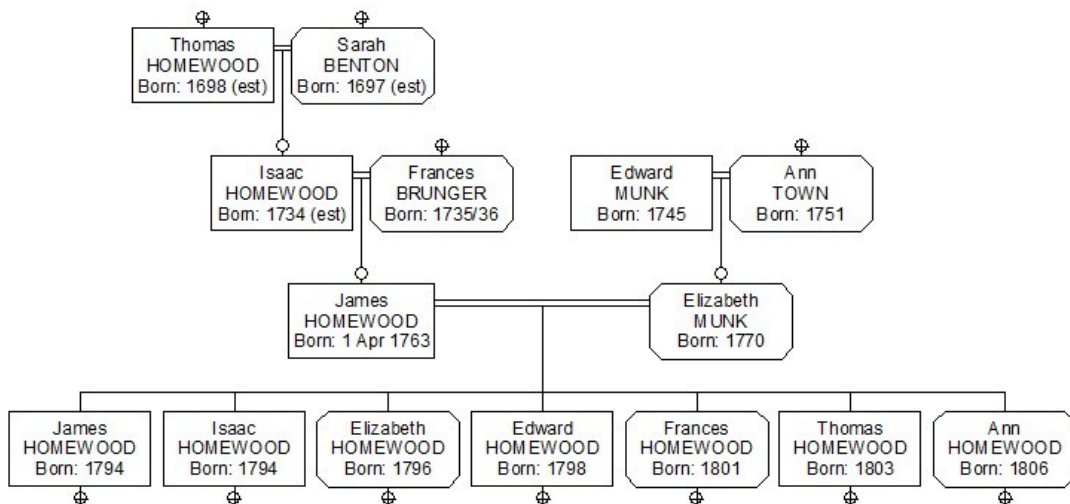
17 National Death Register Dec 1837 West Ashford Vol 5 Pg 11

18 This map is available on-line using link <http://mapco.net/kent1801/kent1801.htm>

19 See footnote #13 Pg 159 in 2016 edition.

Lets look at the names of the children on Elizabeth’s gravestone. If her husband, James is the son of Isaac and Frances, diagram 3 shows the resulting family tree. The ages given on the 1841 and 1851 census lets us assemble the children in age order.

*Diagram 3: The children named in sequence in honour of their Ancestors*



- The eldest son James was named after his father, James.
- The second son, Isaac was named after paternal grandfather Isaac
- The third son, Edward is named after maternal grandfather Edward.
- The fourth son, Thomas is named after father’s paternal grandfather, Thomas
- The eldest daughter, Elizabeth is named after mother, Elizabeth (nee Munk)
- The second daughter, Frances is named after paternal grandmother Frances (nee Brunger)
- The third daughter, Ann is named after maternal grandmother Ann (nee Town)

This could have been completely unintentional. Following the naming sequence used by the parents their next female child would be called Sarah in honour of Father’s paternal grandmother whose maiden name was Sarah Benton. I am now convinced that the parents of James, the husband of Elizabeth (nee Munk), are Isaac and Frances.

We have a big job ahead of us. There are hundreds of descendants of James and Elizabeth. My father had 36 Homewood first cousins. The 19<sup>th</sup> century families were larger. There are many of these descendants who have accepted without question that Thomas and Jane (nee Luckhurst) are the parents of the James who wed Elizabeth Munk. If you consider Isaac and Frances are the parents, please will you send known Homewood researchers a copy of this document. It may take us years to convince everyone that the family tree shown so frequently is not correct. People are unlikely to correct a mistake copied many times, unless they see the logic. Good luck and thanks.

You may be asking why so many of the folklore statements contain errors. Here is an example. If you had asked me 10 years ago ‘Where is Willesborough?’ I would have said it is a village near Ashford but today I would answer after learning the reason for the question. I do feel an empathy for Charles Darwin. He attempted to prove a theory that pieced together the evidence of evolution in a logical manner, but almost everyone believed he was wrong. I like to think of this work in a similar way.

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