

THOMAS BISHOP

Thomas was the third child of Thomas and Jane Bishop of Birchington. Thomas Bishop Senr. married Jane Darby of the well-known local smuggling family in All Saints Church Birchington on 3rd August 1794. Thomas jun. was one of ten children, several of whom died in infancy. Thomas was baptised on 7th January 1798, so probably born mid to late 1797. When, later in his life, he escaped from custody after being caught and condemned for smuggling in July 1820, he was said to be 24 years of age, so would appear to have been born in 1796. However, the authorities may have been going on hearsay information, when his age was given on the Reward Notice.

Below is a list of Thomas's family.

Jane	baptism	date unknown
	buried	17 June 1795
Mary	baptised	24 April 1796
** Thomas	baptised	7 January 1798
Henry	baptised	28 April 1799
Jane	baptised	15 February 1801
	married Stephen Wales	10 September 1818 *
Sarah	baptised	4 April 1802
	married John Huggett	8 July 1818
James	baptised	30 December 1804
	married 1 Mary Anne White	13 October 1829
	" 2 Sussanah White	18 September 1831
Archibald	baptised	4 October 1807
Elizabeth	baptised	28 May 1809
	buried	8 June 1810
Elizabeth Darby	born	24 November 1810
	baptised	15 January 1811

* There is a second entry for a Jane Bishop who married James Wales just four days later 14th September 1818. It has occurred to me that either of these two entries could refer to daughter Jane or to mother Jane. This was not possible to sort out, unfortunately, as no ages were given for the couples.

Following the custom of the time, a later sibling was often given the same name as an earlier one who had died. The last two children were an instance of this. The second Elizabeth was also given a second name (all the rest of the children only had one name each) - which was her mother's maiden name - that of a great and much respected smuggling family in the village. Since the older brother was involved in the trade by 1820, it would appear that the two families were both enjoying the perks from the trade.

On 10th November 1814 Thomas Bishop Senr was buried in All Saints churchyard. Interestingly, he is listed not as an 'agricultural labourer', as so many of his friends and neighbours were, but as a 'shopkeeper'. This was at a time when there were very few shops in the village. One wonders whether some of the perks from the activities of his son and his in-laws were ever on sale in his shop!



View of All Saints Church in early 1800s

Archibald Bishop, smuggler Thomas's youngest brother, later married Elizabeth, who came from outside the parish as her marriage to Archibald does not appear in the all Saints register. They had a son, whom they had baptised as Thomas, after his grandfather and uncle, on 27 July 1834. Sadly he only lived 20 months and his burial was recorded on 3rd March 1836, while they were living at Acol. On the 12th March 1837 a second son was born to Archibald and Elizabeth, who was again called Thomas. As was said earlier, this was a very common occurrence during this period. There are no further entries in the registers for any of the Bishop family after this date.

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To read the rest of the story of Thomas Bishop Jun. read the account headed "**Reward Notice - 1820**".