

The Matthew Thomases of Zennor 1700-1810

Recently Ancestry.com suggested, based on DNA matches between myself and 3 other genetic profiles, that my x3 great grandmother, Eleanor Thomas had two brothers both named Matthew. As it happens one of the Matthews, born at St Ives, Cornwall in 1812, was the brother of my ancestor. That's one for the algorithm.

The other Mathew Thomas, born at the nearby Parish of Zennor around 1804-5, also has a place in my family tree but not through the connection the Ancestry computer came up with. Unravelling who the Zennor Matthew was proved a tricky exercise mostly because there were at least two potential fathers of two different Matthews born in the same parish around the same time. More on this later.

In the process I built up a picture of the Thomas families of Zennor and this paper relates primarily to nine Matthew Thomases of Zennor born in the preceding century. For ease I have prefaced each Matthew with the year of their birth/baptism, or presumed birth where no such record exists, so as to make clear which Matthew Thomas is being referred to.

#1 Matthew Thomas

There are several trees on Ancestry.com which feature Matthew Thomas 1711¹-1796 from the west Cornish parish of Zennor. Many of those trees include a son named William born to this 1711 Matthew and his only wife Anne Roberts who is herself often recorded as having died in 1777. I detail here why I think that this couple did not have a son named William, and why Anne did not predecease her husband.

Firstly, I suspect the reason researchers into this family have concluded the two 'facts' that I am disputing is, in the case of a son named 'William', down to an article published in the Western Morning News in 1922 and, in the case of Anne's early death, down to a parish burial record. The reason I think this is not the case is based on my reading of Matthew's Will which does not support the former fact and contradicts the latter. I've copied both the newspaper article and a transcript of the Will below.

In April 1922 in celebration of Miss Emma Thomas' 89th birthday a West Country daily featured a story of the birthday girl's illustrious ancestors referencing Matthew, her great grandfather as the first person to welcome the preacher John Wesley to Cornwall in 1744, noting that her grandfather William Thomas hosted the great man on a later visit. It is not unreasonable to extrapolate from this that her grandfather William was the son of her great grandfather Matthew given they bore the same surname.

¹ Many have estimated his birth year as 1712 but I use here 1711 given he was recorded as 85 years old when he died late in November 1796

That same year Gilbert John Anderson (1894-1951) published *The Thomas Family of Zennor, Cornwall. Some notes on its history together with a pedigree showing eight generations*². Whilst his publication does not directly reference it, Gilbert married at Zennor in 1920 to Annie Thomas, a x3 great granddaughter of 1711 Matthew. I was hoping that G J Anderson's book would provide conclusive proof of who was who in this family but as he observed -

'It is not possible to state at what particular date the Thomases first established themselves at Zennor, for documentary evidence is scarce, and there is little authoritative information beyond the Parish registers.'

Anderson noted the first record of a Thomas in Zennor as the 1618 marriage of '*John Thomas and Margaret his wife*' and goes on to bemoan that, while the Zennor registers date from 1599, the earlier ones were in '*a lamentable condition page after page being now totally indecipherable owing to mildew*'.

He therefore begins his pedigree with the 1711 Matthew who, despite there being no known baptism record, is given as being born in Zennor based on his 1740 marriage at Towednack to Anne Roberts in which he is described as '*of Zennor*'. And whilst Anderson goes on to say '*from this date the pedigree can be started with certainty*' he acknowledges -

'Very little information indeed is forthcoming in regard the second generation [after Matthew]...; in fact the names of John Thomas and Mary his wife can only be fixed definitively by reason of their appearing on the headstone commemorating their sons Matthew and Thomas..... It must not be assumed that the three children of Matthew Thomas shown [in his pedigree] ...were the only ones constituting their generation'.

The references given to support his analysis include Phillimore and Taylor's Cornwall Parish Registers and a few late 19th century accounts of life in Cornwall as well as the Reverend Richard Polwhele's *Parochial History of the County of Cornwall 1803-06*. Anderson's work is extensive, and he clearly spoke with many members of the Thomas clan including the octogenarian Emma referred to above, with a special mention reserved for a Henry Thomas of St. Just whose '*information at once erudite and voluminous; and without his aid this history and pedigree would not have been completed.*'

Anderson's booklet appends a hand drawn family chart beginning with Matthew and covering up to eight generations. The three people Anderson records as children of

² Ancestry.com subscribers can access a digital copy of GJA's 8-page book at www.ancestry.co.uk/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/21151116/person/322456165707/media/f6fa1aef-c27f-4005-aded-a6ed0e1ca635?_phsrc=Acr22110&usePUBJs=true&galleryindex=1&sort=-created&sort=-created and a copy of the pedigree at www.ancestry.co.uk/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/21151116/person/322456165707/media/de9240cc-0e5e-43b5-ba65-e81c0d262da0?_phsrc=Acr22110&usePUBJs=true&galleryindex=2&sort=-created&sort=-created

Matthew Thomas and Anne Roberts are John as above, Elizabeth wife of Philip Eddy and Charity wife of Nicholas Christopher.

New evidence

Unfortunately, it seems G J Anderson did not have the benefit of access to the Bishop's transcripts of Parish records held at Exeter nor did he have a copy of 1711 Matthew's Will which would have helped him enormously.

The newspaper article noted above gave Emma's grandfather as William, while Anderson gives only John as a son of Emma's great grandfather. As it happens the evidence suggests both were wrong.

No Will in this Will

Matthew Thomas died in 1796 and his Will made no provision for, and no mention of a son named either William or John or of any such descendants which there must surely have been if a son had grandchildren living into the 20th century. Of course, close family members get written out of Wills all the time but given what we know of the man and the provision he made for his four daughters I find it inexplicable that a son or sons and any family should be left out.

Matthew Thomas' Will is dated 13 June 1796 and was made less than 6 months before his death. It references six people; his *brother-in-law Thomas Robarts*; his *wife Ann*, the executrix; his *daughter Mary Thomas widow*; his *daughter Ann the wife of William Christopher*; his *daughter Joanna the wife of Andrew Eddy*; and his *daughter Elizabeth the wife of Thomas Carborse*.

Don't believe everything you read in the press

Miss Emma Thomas was born in 1833 to parents William Thomas 1776-1852 and Catherine Michell 1795-1874. Her father was the son of a John (not a William) Thomas and a Mary Thomas. Anderson is correct on that point.

However, 1711 Matthew was the father of Emma's paternal grandmother Mary, not her paternal grandfather, the same 'Mary Thomas widow' referred to in Matthew's Will. Assuming the convention that a married woman takes her husband's name the Will confirms his daughter, Mrs Thomas, had married a man with her same surname, Thomas.

Mary's husband was John Thomas born in Zennor in 1737 but he was the son of Hannibal Thomas and Charity Stephens, not Matthew and Anne. Anderson was aware of this Hannibal, conjecturing he was either the brother or first cousin of Matthew.

John died in January 1796, 11 months before his father-in-law and long before Emma was born. I don't think it is much of a stretch that she erroneously reported the name of her grandfather. Even now I have to stop and think of the name of my own paternal grandfather who died decades before I was born. And I have been fortunate enough to have seen his name written down in many places on many occasions but despite this it just doesn't stick because I never actually knew him. John Thomas married Mary Thomas at Zennor on 8 June 1762.

Matthew's widow

Matthew's wife was clearly still alive in 1796 when Matthew died and when she swore to the '*tenor of the oath*' before the commissioner William Borlase on 19 May 1797 that the document before her was '*... the true Original last Will and Testament of Matthew Thomas late of the Parish of Zennor, your late Husband deceased...*'.

I think what has misled people is the burial in Zennor on 13 July 1777 of a woman named Anne Thomas recorded as 'the wife of Matthew'. On that same day there was also a burial of a Matthew Thomas, a 'son of Matthew'.

These two people were not the wife of 1711 Matthew and his son as some would contend. I believe this woman was Anne Leggo, who married a Matthew Thomas, 'of the parish of Zennor' in 1774 in the Parish of Paul, Cornwall. A week before her death a boy named Matthew was baptised at Zennor and I would argue this baby was the Matthew who was buried, most likely with his mother Anne, at St Senara's Church.

Anne Leggo's husband Mathew was I believe born circa 1740³, the son of Hannibal Thomas and Charity Stephens, and the brother of the John Thomas referred to above.

Mid-century Matthew Thomases

After the untimely death of his first wife the widower 1740 Matthew married Rachel Chenhale (or Chenalls) at Zennor on 29 January 1780. This Matthew died in 1811 at the age of 71. He also left a Will which is crucial to identifying which Matthew was the father of which children baptised at Zennor between 1780 and 1810.

I believe 1711 Mathew did have a son named Matthew who was baptised in 1752. Based on his father's Will, I would argue this son died young and without issue or at least had no surviving children in 1796. I suggest he died as a youth and is the 'Matthew Thomas junior' buried at Zennor in 1768.

Another Matthew also married in 1774 at Zennor, to an Elizabeth Stevens. He was of the parish of Zennor and I would argue was the Matthew baptised in 1753, son of George Thomas and Phillipa or Phillis Quick. It is very likely that the father, George Thomas born circa 1709, was also a sibling or cousin of Hannibal b.1710 and Matthew b.1711

In the mid 18th century there were at least 5 Matthews baptised in Zennor and at least 2 burials of children named Matthew Thomas. The following table summarises my account of these 5 Thomases.

³ Most trees give his birth as 1741 based on his baptism of that year but he was described as 71 years of age when he died in April 1811 so I have calculated he was born no later than 1740.

Table 1 – Thomas children baptised 'Matthew' at Zennor 1740 to 1770

5 Matthew Thomas – baptised at Zennor mid 1700s					
Baptismal Year	1741	1752	1753	1754	1766
Baptismal parents	Hannibal & Charity	Matthew & Ann	George & Phillipa	Matthew & Jane	John & Mary
Assumed Parents	Hannibal Thomas & Charity Stephens m.1734	Matthew Thomas & Anne Roberts m. 1740	George Thomas & Phillis Quick m.1733	???? ⁴	John Thomas & Mary Thomas m.1762
Spouse	(1) Anne Leggo (2) Rachelle Chenhale	n/a	Elizabeth Stevens	n/a	Charity Christopher
Place and date of marriage	(1) Paul 03 Mar 1774 (2) Zennor 29 Jan 1780	n/a	Zennor 30 Oct 1774	n/a	Zennor 8 Jun 1793
Burials at Zennor	28 Apr 1811 '71yo'	1 Sep 1768 'Matthew junior'	????	3 Nov 1761 'son of Matthew'	18 Aug 1809 '43yo'

Children of #1 Matthew Thomas

Anderson's pedigree ascribes 2 daughters to 1711 Matthew. The first of the two is Elizabeth who is given the husband Philip Eddy. There are many Ancestry.com trees that agree with this. There is a record in the Zennor registers for a marriage of Elizabeth Thomas to Phillip Eddy, yeoman on 5 May 1769. However, I would argue that this Elizabeth was the daughter of Hannibal Thomas b.1710 and not Matthew.

Matthew did have a daughter named Elizabeth, but she was the spinster who married a Thomas Carbes of Ludgvan at Zennor on 4 December 1774. This aligns to 1711 Matthew's Will where one of the legatees is *'my daughter Elizabeth wife of Thomas Carborse ..'*

A witness at the Thomas/Eddy wedding was Hannibal Thomas junior. I would suggest this man was the bride's brother and why I argue this Elizabeth was the daughter of Hannibal Thomas and Charity Stephens baptised at Zennor on 14 July 1748.

The second of 1711 Matthew's daughters claimed by Anderson was a 'Charity born 1749 who married Nicholas Christopher in 1767'. I'm not sure why Anderson

⁴ There is a couple who could have baptised this Matthew but it requires a second baptism taking place 4 weeks later at Redruth. This couple were Matthew Thomas and Jone or Joan Pearce of Redruth. Was Jone in Zennor when she had her baby? Was he baptised before embarking on the 20-mile trek home? If so, why was he buried in Zennor? Nothing quite fits here.

concluded Charity's birth was circa 1749. I can find no baptismal records to support this. In 1749 Matthew and Anne did baptise a daughter but that was the Elizabeth who married Thomas Carbes. Curiously, Anderson provides no year of birth for his Elizabeth, daughter of 1711 Matthew. Did he erroneously write '1749' below Charity which was meant for Elizabeth?

Matthew and Anne did not have a daughter named Charity, or at least I can find no evidence that they did. The wife of Nicholas Christopher recorded in Anderson's pedigree was the offspring of Hannibal and Charity, baptised at Zennor on 4 January 1745. She was the sister of Elizabeth, wife of Phillip Eddy.

If I am right then Gilbert John Anderson's wife, the inspiration for his book is still a descendant of the illustrious Matthew Thomas and Anne Roberts. Annie Anderson née Thomas (1894-1978) was the daughter of Benjamin Thomas and Catherine Jane Thomas and traces her line through Benjamin who was a great grandson of the John and Mary Thomas referred to above.

Next century Matthew Thomases

As I say above my interest in this family began when it was suggested that Matthew Thomas born circa 1804 was the brother of my x3 GGM Eleanor Thomas of St Ives. He was not. But working out who he was, wasn't easy.

I share DNA with two descendants of a Matthew Thomas born circa 1804, the husband of Charity Nichols (1807-1836). However, I believe the shared DNA is not to be traced through Matthew but Charity who was the 2nd cousin of my x3 GGF Henry Rogers, the husband of Eleanor Thomas.

There were three Matthew Thomases baptised at Zennor in the years 1804 to 1805. Two of them had fathers named Matthew. Added to this there was another Matthew Thomas, son of Matthew and Jane baptised at St Ives in 1805. I believe this latter Matthew died in St Ives aged 23 and was buried there on 14 April 1828. He was the grandson of Hannibal and Charity Stephens and I have discounted him from being in the mix.

The third Zennor Matthew was the son of a William and baptised on 10 June 1804. I believe his parents were Wm of Morvah and Catherine Phillips and that he married Mary Ann Tippet at Paul in 1834. This William Thomas and son Matthew are I believe of the line of George b.1809.

Of the two Matthews, sons of Matthew baptised at Zennor, one christening took place on 3 June 1804 and the other on 13 Jan 1805. My view is that one Matthew later married Jane Reynolds at Paul in 1826 and the other Charity Nicholls at Zennor in 1829. So, which is which and who were their parents?

There were two Matthew Thomases who married at Zennor in the 1890's. Matthew son of the John and Mary, referred to above, married Charity Christopher on the 8 June 1793. The inscription on Matthew's gravestone confirmed that in 1809 he was survived by his wife and seven children. It was of this Matthew that Anderson wrote -

*'He married his first cousin in 1793, but came to an untimely end sixteen years later, when he was killed by a fall of rock following a blasting explosion in the [Trewey Downs⁵ tin-] mine.'*⁶

The other Thomas couple was Matthew Thomas of Morvah and Mary Rowe who married at Zennor on 1 October 1796. Matthew senior was baptised in 1771 at Morvah the son of George and Elizabeth and was the brother of *Wm of Morvah* referred to above.

Two other couples in the frame

In addition to the two Matthew Thomases who married at Zennor in the 1790's there were 2 other couples who must be considered as candidates for the parents of our two Matthews born in the mid 1810's. They were 1740 Matthew Thomas married to Rachel Chenhale born circa 1754 and 1753 Matthew Thomas, son of George, married to Elizabeth Stevens.

I have discounted Rachel as the mother for two reasons. Firstly, while her husband's Will confirmed the couple had a son named Matthew his order in the list of legatees strongly suggests he was their eldest child born soon after they married in 1780 and secondly, in her early 50's, she was likely past her childbearing years.

1753 Matthew and Elizabeth Stevens who married in 1774 have also been discounted. I am only confident of the following children for this couple. Elizabeth Thomas bpt.1775, Matthew Thomas bpt.1778 and John Stevens Thomas bpt.1793. They may also be the parents of Hannibal Thomas baptised at Zennor on Christmas day 1785. I'm not sure when Elizabeth Stevens was born or who her parents were but even were she just 20 years old when she married, she would have been 51 when the first of the two Matthews was baptised.

1804 v 1805

The Matthew who married Charity Nichols in 1829 was the son of Charity Christopher. He died in 1859 in Ludgvan, aged 55 and had been living in Trewey, Zennor with his second wife. He was buried at Zennor on 23 March 1859. I have determined he was the elder of the two Matthews and baptised in June 1804.

The other Matthew baptised January 1805 I have determined to be the son of Mary Rowe, and then the husband of Jane Reynolds and buried at Zennor on 3 September 1873. Whilst this Matthew was described as 70 years old at death the ages he gave at census time (46 in 1851, 56 in 1861 and 67 in 1871) suggest his birth year was nearer 1805 than 1804. This isn't a lot to go by, but it also fits best with the run of children in the two families.

⁵ Also known as the Wheal Chance Mine. Trewey Downs is about ¾ of a mile south of Zennor.

⁶ A report at the time went 'A melancholy accident happened a few days ago, in the parish of Zennor.—As two men were at work in a pit about 5 fathoms deep searching for Tin, the ground fell in upon them and killed one man on the spot: the other was taken out alive but much bruised. The deceased has left a widow and seven small children to deplore his loss.' Royal Cornwall Gazette - Saturday 19 August 1809.

From the Will⁷ of Matthew Thomas (1740-1811) we learn he and Rachel had children as follows – Matthew, John, William, Edward, Anne and Stephen plus as co-executors with wife Rachel, were the sons Thomas and Hannibal.

From the baptism register we find John was born circa 1784, William – 1794, Edward and Anne (twins) – 1796 and Stephen – 1801. I am deducing from the order in which they appear in the Will that Matthew was born before John probably around 1782 though I can find no baptism record. I am also deducing for the same reason that Thomas was older than Hannibal and therefore this Hannibal was the one baptised in 1788 (and not the Hannibal baptised 1785 that I have speculated above was the son of Elizabeth Thomas née Stevens). This leaves a Thomas Thomas for which I can find no baptism record. I presume he was born before Hannibal probably around 1786.

Matthew's 1809 legacy

That just leaves us with 11 children of an unidentified Matthew Thomas baptised at Zennor between 1793 when the first of our Matthews married and 1809 when that same Matthew met his untimely death. See the table below. We know 1766 Matthew left behind 7 children but who were they?

One of them was a Matthew. There is too much evidence not to accept he had a son of the same name who married first Charity Nichols and then Wilmot Osbourne. I have outlined above why I think this was the Matthew baptised 1804. Matthew Thomas and Mary Rowe were the parents of the Matthew baptised in 1805.

In the 1851 and 1861 censuses 1804 Matthew and Charity's youngest daughter also named Charity (bpt.1836) was living with an aunt and an uncle; brother and sister John Thomas and Mary Thomas. Given the census and burial records these were most likely the Mary baptised in 1796 and the John baptised 1806. So, we now have 3 of the 7. I have deduced then that the Mary baptised in 1799 was the daughter of Matthew Thomas and Mary Rowe.

In addition to listing a Matthew, Mary and John as children of 1766 Matthew, Gilbert J Anderson claimed he also had children named Charity, Jenny and Nanny and left a '?' for the name of the seventh child.

In the registers there are two Charitys. One baptised six months after 1766 Matthew and Charity wed in 1793 and a second child who was baptised, I have surmised, four months after the death of her namesake sister. I believe the last two named children were, respectively, the Jane baptised in 1802 and the Nancy baptised in 1800.

Of the four other children in the Zennor register, I would argue three were the children of 1771 Matthew Thomas and Mary Rowe. They were John, baptised seven months after their marriage and, as referred to above, Mary baptised 1799 and Matthew baptised 1805.

In 1794, three months after 1766 Matthew and Charity baptised their first born another Matthew baptised a daughter named Nancy. I'm not at all sure who this

⁷ A transcript of the Will is annexed to this paper

Matthew was. I do not believe he was Matthew husband of Rachel because there is no Nancy referenced in his Will and no record of a girl with that name dying before 1811.

By a process of elimination this leaves 1753 Matthew, husband of Elizabeth Stevens, who I believe baptised children detailed above in 1775, 1779, 1793 and possibly 1785. If they were this Nancy's parents then she was baptised just eleven months after her brother John Stevens Thomas. Of course, there may have been other Matthew Thomases in Zennor at that time.

Table 2 - Children of a Matthew Thomas baptised Zennor 1793 to 1810

Baptismal Date	Baptismal name	Assumed mother	Comments
Matthew Thomas and Charity Christopher married 8 Jun 1793			
09 Oct 1793	Charity	Charity Christopher	Probably died in infancy and is the Charity buried 20 Dec 1797
11 Jan 1794	Nancy	Unknown	Possibly a child of Matthew and wife Elz. Stevens
Matthew Thomas (of Morvah) and Mary Rowe married 1 Oct 1796			
26 Nov 1796	Mary	Charity Christopher	Census records prove this
19 May 1797	John	Mary Rowe	Possibly died in childhood and is the John buried 9 Apr 1807
15 Apr 1798	Charity	Charity Christopher	Baptised 4 months after death of sister same name
31 Jul 1799	Mary	Mary Rowe	
11 May 1800	Nancy	Charity Christopher	GJA gives name as Nanny
16 May 1802	Jane	Charity Christopher	GJA gives name as Jenny
03 Jun 1804	Matthew	Charity Christopher	I accept these could be the other way round
13 Jan 1805	Matthew	Mary Rowe	
30 Mar 1806	John	Charity Christopher	Census records prove this

I realise this only gives us six children of 1766 Matthew and Charity alive when their father died in 1809. It remains a mystery who was the seventh child that was 'left' when he departed this earth.

However, there may be a solution to this puzzle. Between 1808 and 1820 Matthew's brother Hannibal (1771-1853) and his wife Jane Quick (1773-1852) baptised at least 5 children in the Parish of St Levan, about 15 miles south of Zennor. In that same parish, on the 15 January 1809 a Matthew and Charity Thomas baptised a boy named Thomas. This is the only child with parents of those names baptised there. In the absence of any contrary evidence I am supposing this boy to be the seventh child to survive their father Matthew Thomas (1766-1809)

Conclusion

Mathew Thomas born circa 1711 did establish a dynasty at Zennor however he was not the only Thomas to do so. In the mid 18th century contemporaries Hannibal Thomas and George Thomas were also raising families in the same parish. I hope this paper takes us a little further forward in working out which of the many future Thomases descend from which of these three lines. I have annexed to this paper an incomplete pedigree for each of these three men.

The Matthew Thomases covered in this paper were -

1. MT presumed born in Zennor 1711 (m. Anne Roberts)
2. MT baptised Zennor 1741 (m. Anne Leggo and Rachel Chenhale)
3. MT baptised Zennor 1752, son of 1.MT. Died age 16.
4. MT baptised Zennor 1753 (m. Elizabeth Stevens)
5. MT baptised Zennor 1754 of untraced family. Possibly died 1761.
6. MT baptised Zennor 1766, grandson of 1.MT (m. Charity Christopher)
7. MT baptised Morvah 1771 (m. Mary Rowe)
8. MT baptised Zennor 1777, son of 2.MT. Died after 1 week.
9. MT baptised Zennor 1778, son of 4.MT no other details
10. MT presumed born in Zennor circa 1782, son of 2.MT no other details
11. MT baptised Zennor 1804, son of 6.MT (m. Charity Nichols and Wilmot Osborne)
12. MT baptised Zennor 1804, son of William of Morvah (m. Mary Ann Tippet)
13. MT baptised Zennor 1805, son of 7.MT (m. Jane Reynolds)

These were not the only Matthew Thomases in Zennor at this time. I hope also to have laid to rest any outstanding questions on who the seven children were to survive the tragic death in 1809 of their father, a Captain of the Wheal Chance tin mine at Trewey Downs.

Many thanks go out to the work of the countless researchers on Ancestry.com who publish their findings in public trees and from which much of the above is drawn. Of course, any mistakes are mine and I will be grateful for being corrected wherever I am in error. And a particular shout out to the late Gilbert John Anderson whose work will continue to be a valuable resource to researchers of this family for decades to come. Thanks also go to the archivists at Kresen Kernow.

For those who may find it useful I have annexed to this paper 3 tables I compiled when researching the above. They cover the baptisms, marriages and burial transcripts accessed through www.cornwall-opc-database.org during February 2023.

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23 February 2023

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grief.

During the proceedings it was announced that the fête arranged for Whit-Monday, and for which the late earl had given the use of the grounds of Port Eliot, had been postponed.

WESLEY MEMORIES.

CORNISH FAMILY AND THE FOUNDER OF METHODISM.

There are not many persons who can claim that their grandfather entertained the famous founder of Methodism when he was touring in Cornwall, yet such is the boast of Miss Emma Thomas, of Lodgvan, who has just celebrated her 89th birthday, having been born in April, 1833.

She enjoys the further distinction of being the 17th child of a family of 23, all of whom, excepting her eldest brother, William, who died in his 22nd year, lived to a good age. Miss Thomas is still a regular attendant at the services of the Wesleyan Chapel.

Her great grandfather, Matthew Thomas, was the first to open his house to Wesley when he visited Zennor in 1744, and on a subsequent visit Wesley was entertained by William Thomas, the grandfather referred to above. From 1744 the Thomases have been Methodists and their home has always welcomed Methodist preachers.

Miss Thomas's native parish is Zennor, where the family have lived for generations. Old Henry Quick, the eccentric Zennor poet, wrote an account of the death of her eldest brother, a copy of which Miss Thomas still treasures.

After giving the names of the elder William Thomas's children and the dates of their birth, he concludes with the following effusion upon the worthy man:—

"William Thomas of Boswednack,
Father of twenty-three under wedlock,
All his family he did rear
By industry, toil, and care.
He has gained the highest prize
Of twenty-four parishes.
He is an example rare
Of diligence and Godly fear.
May God bless him and his race,
Thus to spend their days in grace.
May their latter end be peace,
Heavenly joys that never cease."

The reference to the "highest prize" refers, Miss Thomas says, to the old practice of giving a prize to the man whose family was the largest and best cared for in the parish.

ORATE DR. O. J. TANCOCK.

The Rev. Charles Coverdale Tancock, D.D., who has died at Sussex House, Winchester, was the son of the Rev. O. J. Tancock.

From the Western Morning News
of Thursday 20 April 1922, page
4, column 7.

The article was repeated on page
6 of the Cornishman - Wednesday
26 April 1922.

Transcript of the Will of Matthew Thomas c.1711-1796

The original is held in the archives at the Kresen Kernow (Cornwall Centre).
Reference AP/T/3416 – Will of Matthew Thomas, yeoman, of Zennor

In the Name of God Amen I Matthew Thomas of the Parish of Zennor in the County of Cornwall Yeoman being now advanced in years but of Sound and Disposing Mind Memory and Understanding Considering the Certainty of Death and the Uncertainty of the Time thereof DO make and appoint this my last Will and Testament First and Principally I commit my Soul into the keeping and Protection of Almighty God Hoping and fully Confiding in Divine Mercy thro the Merits of Jesus Christ my most Gracious Saviour and Redeemer to Enjoy Eternal Life, My Body I Commit to the Earth for Decent Burial, And in respect to such Worldly Effects as God hath been pleased to bless me with I dispose of the same as follows, First I Will and request that all my Just Debts Legacies and funeral Charges shall be paid off and Discharged

Also I Give and Bequeath unto my Brother in Law Thomas Robarts who now Sojourns with me after the Death of my Executrix and not before all my Estate and Premises in Embla in the Parish of Towednack in the said County of Cornwall To hold the same to him the said Thomas Robarts immediately from and after the Death of my Executrix for and during the Remainder of my Estate and Right therein.

Also I Give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Mary Thomas Widow in Zennor aforesaid the House and Garden in Boswednack in Zennor wherein She now lives from and after the death of my Executrix TO Hold the same to my said Daughter Mary her Executors and Adm'ors for and during the Remainder of my Right and Estate therein I Also give unto my said Daughter Mary Thomas the two fields the Eastern side of the downs lane called or known by the name of the Longcloses and the field the Western side of the downs called Halftore and the Western field called Doarpons and the one Half part of the eastern field called by the name of Doarponse aforesaid and the one half of the Moor Called Tremearns moore and likewise the one Half of Tremearns loar grounds to be equally divided and the one Half of Tremearns Mow-hay and the one Half of the Barn and the one Half of the Town plot before the Barn door and the one quarter of the Crofts and the usual roads for Carreing and Watering to and from any of the aforesaid fields TO Hold the same unto my daughter Mary her Ex'ors and Adm'ors and assigns from and after the Death of my Executrix for and During the Remainder of my Right and Estate therein Which premises She now live on and are known and distinguished by the name of Tremearns Land.

Also I Give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Ann the Wife of William Christopher of Zennor aforesaid and to her Husband during their Coverture from and after the Death of my Executrix the Old House Called by the name of Berrymans House and the Western field adjoining to the Broad lane and the field to the south side of the Western Lane called by the name of Inkams field and the Middle field of the Doarponses and the one half part of the eastern field Called the Doarponses aforesaid and the one half part of Tremearns Moor and the one Half part of Tremearns loar grounds to be equally divided and the one half of Tremearns Mowhay and the one half of the Barn and the one half of the Town plot before the Barn door and the Quarter part of the Crofts and the Usual Roads for Carreing and Watering to and from any of the said fields But the said William Christopher Shall not Sell or dispose thereof TO Hold the same unto my Daughter Ann and her Ex'ors and Adm'ors from and after the Death of my Executrix and during the Remainder of my Right and Estate therein which premises are known and Distinguished by the name of Tremearns Land.

Also I give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Joanna the wife of Andrew Eddy of Zennor afore'd and to her Husband during their Coverture from and after the Death of my Executrix the Dwelling House where in She now lives and the field ajoineing to the Mowhay Called the name of the Erra and the Western field of the Western Ground ajoineing to Hallangeer and the field Called by the name of Doar hill and the Western field of the Doarponses Belonging to the Estate whereon I now lives and

one [?]ich of the Doareans ajoineing to Arthur Berrymans and the one Half of the Moors on the Tenement whereon I now lives and the one half of the Lower Grounds Called Old Grees and the Craften Stables and the one Quarter part of the Crofts and the One half of the Mowhay and the one half of the Garden and the one half of the Stable ajoineing on the Tenement whereon I now lives and the one half of the lower Town plot and the Usual Roads for Carreing and Watering to and from any of the Said fields But the said Andrew Eddy Shall not Sell or dispose thereof nor any part thereof TO Hold the same unto my Daughter Joanna her Ex'ors and Adm'ors from an after the Death of my Executrix for and during the Remainder of my Right and Estate therein.

Also I give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Elizabeth the wife of Thomas Carborse now of the Parish of Towednack yeoman and to her Husband during their Coverture from and after the Death of my Executrix the Dwelling House wherein I now lives and the whole of the field called Park Crease and the two Eastern fields of the Western Grounds and the under [?]ich of the Doareans to the Seaward and the eastern fields of the Duarpons on the Estate whereon I now lives and the one half of the Moors on the tenement whereon I now lives and the one half of the loar grounds Called Old Grees and Craftn Stubbes and the one Quarter part of the Crofts and the one half of the lowar Mowhay and the one half of the Garden and the one half of the Stable ajoineing and the one half of the lowar Town plot and the Usual Roads for Carring and Watering to and from any of the Said fields But

the said Thomas Corberse shall not sell or dispose thereof or any part thereof TO Hold the same unto my Daughter Elizabeth her Ex'ors Adm'ors and Assigns from and after the Death of my Executrix for and during the Remainder of my Right and Estate therein And I do hereby further declare it to be my Will that in Cause any or either of my aforesaid sons in law Shall survive or outLive their respective Wives they Shall each and Every of them Have Hold and Enjoy their respective parts and Shares of the Several and respective premises herein before given to their respective Wives my before named Daughters for and during the Remainder of my Right and Estate to Come and Expire therein

Lastly All the Rest Residue and Remainder of all my Estate and Estates Goods Chattels Ready Money and Effects Whatsoever and wheresoever and what nature and kind soever I Give Devise and Bequeath unto my well beloved Wife Ann Thomas whom I do also hereby make Nominate Constitute and Appoint the Sole Executrix of this my Last Will and Testament hereby Revoking and making Null and Void all other Wills by me at any time heretofore made and publishing and Declaring this as and for my Last Will and testament First hereby Declaring it to be my Will that none of the beforesaid Legacies and Bequests Shall in any wise take place or become due until the Death of my Executrix But that the whole of my Effects Shall be held and Enjoyed by her for and During her Natural Life and that from and immediately after her death the said Legacies to take place immediately as aforesaid In Witness whereof I the Said Matthew Thomas the said Testator have hereunto Sett and Affixed my hand and Seal this Thirteenth day of June in the Year of our Lord Christ one Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Six. 1796.

Signed Sealed published declared by the said Matthew Thomas the said Testator as and for his Last Will and Testament in our presence and by us attested in his presence and at his request

Matthew Thomas



William Polmear

Matthew Phillips

George Moore, Clerk, Master of Arts, Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry of Cornwall, lawfully constituted To our beloved in Christ William Borlase and John Thomas Thomson, Clerks Greeting: We hereby commit and impart to you jointly and severally our power and authority to administer in due form of Law the Canonical Oath subscribed to Ann Thomas, Widow, the Executrix named in the last Will and Testament of Matthew Thomas late of the Parish of Zennor within our said Archdeaconry deceased. And what you shall do herein you or such one of you do shall execute these presents shall duly certify us or some other competent Judge in this behalf as soon as you can conveniently together with these presents Given under the Seal of our Office the seventeenth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven –

John Wallace Registra

Tenor of the Oath

You shall swear that the Paperwriting hereunto annexed contains the true Original last Will and Testament of Matthew Thomas late of the Parish of Zennor, your late Husband deceased so far as you know or believe That you will well and truly perform the contents thereof and pay first his Debts and then the Legacies contained in the said Will so far as his Goods Chattels and Credits will thereto extend and the Law charge you And that you will exhibit or cause to be exhibited unto the Registra of the Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall a free and perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the said deceased which already have or hereafter shall come to your hands possession or knowledge and yield and pass a free and just Account thereof when thereunto lawfully required

Comission was duly executed and the said Ann Thomas was duly sworn to [...] of the above Oath this nineteenth day of May – one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven –

The sign of Anne Thomas

Before me

Wm Borlase - Commissioner

Transcript of the Will of Matthew Thomas c.1741-1811

The original is held in the archives at the Kresen Kernow (Cornwall Centre).
Reference AP/T/3687 – Will of Matthew Thomas of Zennor

In the Name of God Amen

I Matthew Thomas of the Parish of Zennor in the County of Cornwall Being very sick and weak But of Perfect mind and Memory Thanks begiven to God Calling unto Mind the Mortality of my Body and knowing that it is appointed for all Men once to Die DO Make and Ordain this is my last Will and Testament That is to say Principally and first of all I give and Recommend my Soul into the hands of Almighty God that gave it and my Body I Recommend to the Earth to be buried in decent Christian Burial at the Direction of my Executors and as touching such Worldly goods wherewith it hath Pleased God to bless me in this Life I Give devise and Dispose of the same in the following Manner and form.

First I give and bequeathed to my son Matthew Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid him after my Death by my Executors.

Also I give and bequeathed to my son John Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid him after my Death by my Executors.

Also I give and bequeathed to my son William Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid him after my Death by my Executors.

Also I give and bequeathed to my son Edward Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid him after my Death by my Executors.

Also I give and bequeathed to my Daughter Ann Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid her after my Death by my Executors.


Also I give and bequeathed to my son Stephen Thomas the sum of one shilling to be Paid him after my Death by my Executors.

Lastly I give to my dearly beloved Wife Rachel Thomas and my two sons Thomas Thomas and Hannibal Thomas whome I likewise Constitute make and ordained the Sole Executors of this my Last will and Testament to be by them freely Possessed and enjoyed share and share alike and my Will is that they do not Divide the Stock or Household furniture for three years after my Death but if Either one do go off from the Others to live they shall Value the said stock and goods and to have their Part according to that Value to the End of three years after my death and I do hereby utterly disallow all and every other former Will by me in any ways afore named Ratifying and Confirming this to be my last will and Testament in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this second day of March in the year of our Lord 1811 one thousand Eight Humdred and Eleven

Signed Sealed Published Pronounced
and Declared by the said Matthew Thomas
as his last Will and Testament in
the Presence of us who in his Presence
and in the Presence of each other
have hereunto subscribed our names

William Polmear

Matthew Phillips

A photograph of a piece of aged, yellowed paper. On the left, the words 'The sign of' are written in cursive, followed by the name 'Matthew' in a larger, more ornate cursive script. To the right of 'Matthew', the name 'Mr Thomas' is written in a similar cursive hand. Further to the right is a large, irregular, reddish-brown wax seal, which appears to be broken or partially removed, leaving a textured, clumpy residue.

1 George THOMAS Born circa 1709. m. Zennor 26/02/1733 Phillis QUICK (17??-1787)
Buried Zennor 12/03/1786

2 George 1737 Baptised Zennor 05/02/1737
Buried Zennor 07/01/1838

2 Ann b.1739 Baptised Zennor 20/05/1739

2 Mary Baptised Zennor 28/12/1740

2 George Baptised Zennor 05/08/1744 m. Zennor 26/12/1766 Elizabeth STEVENS (1744-1807)
Buried Morvah 26/08/1782

2 Thomas Baptised Zennor 30/12/1749 m. Zennor 29/02/1772 Mary RICHARDS

2 Matthew 17! Baptised Zennor 20/05/1753 m. Zennor 30/10/1774 Elizabeth STEVENS

A very rough pedigree for 3
Thomas men who lived in Zennor,
Cornwall in the 18th century

USE WITH EXTREME CAUTION

1 Hannibal THOMAS Born circa 1710. m. Zennor 18/02/1734 Charity STEPHENS (1715-1796)
Buried Zennor 29/01/1787

2 Hannibal Baptised Zennor 30/11/1735

2 John Born Zennor 17/03/1737 m. Zennor 08/06/1762 Mary THOMAS (1741-1816)
Buried Zennor 29/01/1796

2 Stephen Baptised Zennor 13/05/1739

2 Matthew Baptised 09/08/1741 m. (1) Paul 03/03/1774 Anne LEGGO (17??-1777)
m. (2) Zennor 29/01/1780 Rachelle CHENHALE (c1754-1834)
Buried Zennor 28/11/1811

2 William Baptised Zennor 23/07/1743

2 Charity Baptised Zennor 04/01/1745 m. Zennor 11/05/1767 Nicholas CHRISTOPHER (1737-1811)

2 Elizabeth. Baptised Zennor 14/07/1748 m. Zennor 15/05/1769 Philip EDDY (1746-1816)

1 Matthew THOMAS Born circa 1711 m. Towednack 26/04/1740 Anne ROBERTS (1719-1797)
Buried Zennor 28/11/1796

2 Mary Baptised Zennor 25/08/1741 m. Zennor 08/06/1762 John THOMAS (1737-1796)
Buried Zennor 02/02/1817

2 Ann Baptised Zennor 24/02/1744 m. Zennor 25/05/1770 William CHRISTOPHER (1743-1822)
Buried Zennor 15/04/1827

2 Elizabeth Baptised Zennor 24/05/1749 m. Zennor 04/12/1774 Thomas CARBIS (1739-1825)
Buried Zennor 07/03/1839

2 Matthew Baptised Zennor 03/12/1752
Buried Zennor 01/09/1769

2 Joanna Baptised Zennor 27/03/1758 m. Zennor 06/01/1781 Andrew EDDY (1750-1832)
Buried Zennor 08/05/1810

My tables drawn from the Cornwall Online Parish Clerks database, February 2023.

Table 1 - Baptisms of Matthew Thomas or similar held at Zennor and surrounding parishes 1700-1810

Table 2 - Marriages of Matthew Thomas or similar held in Cornwall 1700-1830

Table 3 - Burials of Matthew Thomas or similar at Zennor and surrounding parishes 1700-1810

Table 1 Baptisms

Ref	Date	Parish	Father	Mother	Linked Mar/Bur Refs
Z-00	Ant. 1711	-	-	-	M-01; BZ-05
Z-01	24-Feb 1723	Zennor	Hanl.	Jane	M-02
Z-02	09-Aug 1741	Zennor	Hanniball	Charity	M-04; M-06; BZ10
Z-03	03-Dec 1752	Zennor	Matthew	Ann	BZ-03 ??
Stl-01	07-Apr 1753	Ives, St.	Peter	Mary	
Z-04	20-May 1753	Zennor	George	Philippa	M-05; BZ-16
Z-05	04-Aug 1754	Zennor	Matthew	Jane	BZ-02 ??
Z-06	05-Oct 1766	Zennor	John	Mary	M-07; BZ-08
Mv-01	13-Oct 1771	Morvah	George		M-08
Z-07	02-Aug 1772	Zennor	John		
Stl-02	18-Aug 1776	Ives, St.	Hannibal	Charity	M-09 d.1848 St Ives
Z-08	08-Jul 1777	Zennor	Matthew		BZ-04
Z-09	20-Sep 1778	Zennor	Math.	Elisabeth	BZ-13
Z-10	16-May 1779	Zennor	John	Elizth.	BZ-15
Stl-03	29-Jun 1783	Ives, St.	Peter	Honor	M-10
Z-11	03-Jun 1804	Zennor	Matthew		M-17; d.1859 Ludgven
Z-12	10-Jun 1804	Zennor	William		Mar1834 d.1851 St Just
Stl-04	19-Jul 1805	Ives, St.	Matthew	Jane	BO-25
Z-13	13-Jan 1805	Zennor	Matthew		M-16 d.1873 Zennor
Z-14	27-Nov 1808	Zennor	William		BZ-09
Z-15	16-Apr 1809	Zennor	William		BZ-12
Z-16	12-May 1811	Zennor	Wm:		
Stl-05	17-Jan 1812	Ives, St.	Matthew	Eleanor	d.1870 Australia
Z-17	03-Jan 1819	Zennor	John	Catharine	father Blacksmith; abode Boswednack

Table 2 Marriages

Ref	Date	Parish	Wife's name	Notes
M-01	26-Apr 1740	Towednack	Ann ROBERTS	
M-02	11-Feb 1751	Zennor	Mary QUICK	
M-03	14-Oct 1772	Towednack	Eleanor THOMAS	Groom was a tinner
M-04	03-Mar 1774	Paul	Anne LEGGO	Groom was a Yeoman of the parish of Zennor
M-05	30 Oct 1774	Zennor	Elizabeth STEVENS	
M-06	29 Jan 1780	Zennor	Rachelle CHENHALE	Groom was a widower
M-07	08-Jun 1793	Zennor	Charity CHRISTOPHER	
M-08	01-Oct 1796	Zennor	Mary ROWE	Groom resident of Morvah
M-09	15-Jul 1804	Ives, St.	Jane HODGE	Mariner - Both of this parish (otp)
M-10	31 Jan 1808	Ives, St.	Eleanor GILBERT	Bachelor (B) and Spinster (Sp) - Both otp
M-11	26-Nov 1815	Ludgvan	Catharine OATS	Both otp
M-12	18-Mar 1819	Perranuthnoe	Susanna JAMES	B and Sp - Both otp
M-13	21 Oct 1820	Zennor	Elizabeth MANN	B and Sp - Both otp
M-14	13 Aug 1825	Liskeard	Sukey NANKIVELL	B and Sp - Groom sojourner otp - Bride otp
M-15	25-Nov 1826	Ludgvan	Jane CURNOW	Groom of Towednack - Bride otp
M-16	31 Aug 1826	Paul	Jane REYNOLDS	Groom of Zennor - Bride otp
M-17	18 Jul 1829	Zennor	Charity NICHOLLS	B and Sp - Both otp

Table 3 - Burials

Ref	Date	Parish	Age	Est. Birth	Notes
BZ-01	27-Sep 1704	Zennor			
BO-01	18-Mar 1715	Roche			
BO-02	19-Feb 1725	South Petherwin			name Mathue
BO-03	06-Jan 1733	Roche			
BO-04	30-Sep 1743	Ludgvan			name Matthews
BO-05	12-Jan 1743	Mevagissey			son of John
BO-06	03-Sep 1743	Ludgvan			
BO-07	06-Aug 1749	Ludgvan			
BO-08	03-Mar 1754	Agnes, St.			
BO-09	22-Jun 1755	Ludgvan			
BZ-02	3 Nov 1761	Zennor			son of Matthew Thomas

Ref	Date	Parish	Age	Est. Birth	Notes
BZ-03	1 Sep 1768	Zennor			name Mathew (junr)
BO-10	26-Feb1762	Roche			
BO-11	18-Mar 1763	Mylor			son of Sampson & Margaret
BO-12	05-Nov 1766	Redruth			
BO-13	14-Jan 1770	Agnes, St.			
BZ-04	13 Jul 1777	Zennor			son of Matthew
BO-14	01-Dec 1779	Roche			
BO-15	22-Mar1780	Mylor			
BO-16	20-Feb1794	Gennys, St.	Infant	1793	son of George
BZ-05	30 Nov 1796	Zennor	85	1711	
BO-17	04-May 1797	Agnes, St.	2	1794	abode St Agnes
BO-18	10-Nov1799	Ludgvan	73	1726	
BZ-06	24 Mar 1801	Zennor			
BZ-07	04-Mar 1803	Zennor			
BO-19	12-Nov1807	Redruth			
BO-20	20-Jan1808	Wenn, St.			
BO-21	12-Jun1808	Redruth			
BZ-08	18 Aug 1809	Zennor	43	1766	accident
BO-22	11 May 1810	Crowan	48	1761	
BZ-09	8 Sep 1810	Zennor	inf	1809	
BZ-10	28 Apr 1811	Zennor	71	1740	
BO-23	2 DEC 1821	Bodmin	69	1752	abode Bodmin
BO-24	18-Sep 1823	Hilary, St.	33	1790	abode Goldsithney
BO-25	14-Apr 1828	Ives, St.	23	1804	abode St Ives
BZ-11	30 Dec 1828	Zennor	3	1825	abode Treen
BO-26	05-Mar 1829	Roche	25	1803	abode Parkwoon
BZ-12	30 Mar 1830	Zennor	20	1810	abode Church Town
BZ-13	27 May 1830	Zennor	32	1798	abode Treen
BZ-14	15-Apr 1831	Zennor	1 mth	1831	abode B[o][u]swednack
BZ-15	15 Nov 1831	Zennor	51	1780	abode Treen
BZ-16	28-Dec 1835	Zennor	85	1750	abode Tregurthen
BO-27	11-Jun 1833	Agnes, St.	5	1827	abode Vicarage
BO-28	23-Jun 1834	Ludgvan	63	1770	abode Crowlas
BO-29	21-Jun 1838	Luxulyan	82	1755	abode Lavrean in St Austle
BO-30	18-Nov 1840	Ludgvan	45	1795	abode Uny Lelant