



The Sheppards of Mendlesham and Campsea Ashe

**Research by Sheila Holmes
2011**

An account of the Sheppard family was written as part of research about the Lords of the Manor of Campsea Ashe. The estate incorporated much of the village and beyond. The Sheppard family lived at Ashe High House for 230 years.

It soon became clear that the Sheppards, first appearing in Campsea Ashe in 1654, had their family seat in Mendlesham. My curiosity led me to look further into their roots.

The first section of this account, looks at the early Sheppards in the Mickfield and Mendlesham area. The very earliest mention of the family so far is in 1442, when John Sheppard inherited a russet gown and striped hood from his godfather.

The story starts with a Thomas Sheppard, a yeoman farmer, who died in 1528. He is the “oldest” Sheppard about whom there is a reasonable amount of information, particularly through his will. The next two generations lived through the reigns of Tudors. During this time there was much political and religious upheaval and some members of the family, who were sympathisers of the Christian Brethren, found themselves in danger.

John Sheppard, 1575-1628, of Mendlesham left a detailed will. He was a man of some standing in the community and bought a considerable amount of land around the area. He married Elizabeth Lane of Campsea Ashe and they had 11 children.

The second section starts with the eldest son John, 1607-1669, who inherited the major part of his father’s estate. In 1654, he bought Ashe High House in Campsea Ashe from a William Glover. John, his wife Bridget and their children made the High House their home.

Many hours of research revealed that the line of succession for the next 230 years was not straightforward, apart from the fact that most of them were called “John”.

There were three occasions when the direct line of inheritance did not occur. The first was in 1671 when the High House and it’s estates passed to a cousin, Edmund Sheppard Jun. Edmund passed the estate to his father, also named Edmund for the next 5 years but it seems that he remained in Mendlesham. On the death of his father, cousin Edmund gained the High House and estates.

In 1747, John, who died without an heir, bequeathed the High House and estate to his godson, John Sheppard of Wetheringsett. John had much improved the High House on account that he brought his new bride there and because for her social standing, he wanted to impress her. John had married Anne Reeve, who was a widow and had previously been married to Philip Sydney, Earl of Leicestershire. Therefore, John of Wetheringsett inherited a newly renovated grand mansion house and lived there for the next 46 years.

The Sheppard dynasty continued from father to eldest son. They purchased more lands, stocks and shares and married well. The High House and its estate was sold in 1882, when John George Sheppard died without any direct heirs. The property was bought by William Lowther.

The account of the Sheppards over the generations contains many stories and interesting facts. These include the number of Sheppard sons who either joined the church, daughters who married clergymen and sons who joined the military.

There is sadness too, such as the story of John Wilson Sheppard who suddenly died immediately after sitting at the Assizes in Bury St Edmunds whilst carrying out his duties as High Sheriff. He was only 32 and left a young wife and four small children.

Another sad account can be found on the south wall of Campsea Ashe Church where a memorial tells the military career of Frederic Sheppard, son of John and Mary nee Revett, who was killed in action aged 22 years. He joined the army at the age of 9.

The account of the Sheppard Family is retained by the Local Heritage Group, Campsea Ashe Church. A second folder contains all the wills, newspaper articles and other evidence, which is also available to view.

I wish to thank Roy Colchester of Mendlesham, (a descendant of Agnes Colchester, wife of Robert Sheppard.) for a great deal of information and support.

Sheila Holmes 2011

Sheppard Family.

**Descendants of Thomas Sheppard and line of succession from
Mendlesham, (Reade Hall) to Campsea Ashe (Ashe High House)**

Mendlesham

Thomas Sheppard	1470-1528	m. Joan
Robert Sheppard	1493-1548	m. Agnes Colchester
Robert Sheppard	1515-1570	no heirs
Richard Sheppard	-1589	m. Margaret. (brother of Robert continued the Sheppard line in Mendlesham)
John Sheppard	1535-1595	m. Elizabeth. (John, brother of Robert and Richard)
John Sheppard	1578-1628	m. Elizabeth Lane of Campsea Ashe

Mendlesham to Campsea Ashe

John Sheppard	1607-1669	m. Bridget Sedley Bought High House in 1654
----------------------	-----------	---

Campsea Ashe

John Sheppard	1635-1671	unmarried and died without issue
Edmund Sheppard	1610-1676	m 1 st Dorothy Humberstone 2 nd Dorothy Collard Uncle of John.
Edmund Sheppard	1641-1708	m. Anne Coell

[illegible]

John Sheppard 1737-1793 m. 1st Elizabeth Whincopp
2nd Mary Revett (John of Wetheringset,
godson of John, born 1675)

John Sheppard 1768-1824 m. Letitia Wilson, relation of Baron
Berners

John Wilson Sheppard 1798-1830 m. Harriet Crump

John George Sheppard 1824- 1882 m. Harriet Anne Tyrwhit, d. of Baronet Tyrwhit
No direct heirs
Sold Ashe High House in 1882.
Bought by William Lowther.

Harry Sheppard	1868- ?	m. Alexandra, (Harry nephew of John George)
-----------------------	---------	---

Claud Sheppard m. Margaret Clay.

The Funeral of John George Sheppard

Saturday 3rd June 1882

This must have been one of the most memorable days in the history of Campsea Ashe.

The funeral was attended by members of the family and their friends including,

Mrs. Harriet Anne Sheppard, widow of John George

Mrs. Julia Hall, sister

Mr. Henry Sheppard, brother

General Tyrwhit

General Edward Tyrwhit

Sir Henry Tyrwhit, Aide de Camp to HRH, the Duke of Cambridge

Hon. H. Tyrwhit, Equerry to HRH the Prince of Wales

Hon. Morton North and Mrs. North

Rt. Hon. Lord Rendlesham, MP

Rt. Hon. Lord Henniker

Sir Richard Wallace, Baronet, KCB, MP

Lieut. Col. Long

Major Rouse, DL

Major E. St. G. Cobbold

It is also recorded that the churchyard was filled with spectators, people from the village as well as tenants and estate workers, who assembled to pay their last respects to “a kind and upright gentleman”

The outer coffin was plain oak encasing an inner lead coffin. It was placed in the Sheppard family

Vault in the church according to the newspaper report.. This vault has not been located and remains a mystery for the present.

The residents of Campsea Ashe must have been rather overwhelmed about the event with so many distinguished and high status figures in their little village.