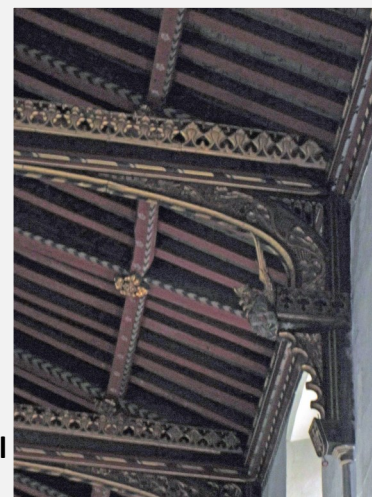




While it is known that there was a Towne family living near **St. Margaret's Church, Lowestoft**, in the 16th century; no direct relationship can be established. This enormous church has a square west tower that remains from an earlier building and is crowned with a wooden copper-covered spire. Lofty arcades lead up to the clerestory windows. The beautiful roof was recolored in 1899 based on traces of medieval col-

oring that had survived. The great brass eagle lectern is medieval. ∞

More pictures of Lowestoft



Lowestoft, Suffolk County, was an important port and a bitter rival to Great Yarmouth that was ten miles north of it in Norfolk County. It has been completely rebuilt as only the tower remained of the 15th century church. The ceiling was painted in 1899 following the traces of medieval coloring which had survived. The great brass eagle lectern is medieval.



St. Mary, Haddiscoe, Norfolk County

Baptismal Record found for William Towne's Father?

By Charles Farrow, Consulting Genealogist for TFA

As is so often the case, an exciting find turns up when least expected. Searching through the first parish register of Haddiscoe from 1558 - 1600, in Norfolk Record Office, an entry caught my eye:-

The photo of this entry, which is reproduced here by the kind permission of Norfolk Record Office, is a close up of a small part of the page on which this entry is made. A photo of the entire page has been sent to TFA archives.

Could this be the baptism of William Towne's father John? Haddiscoe is in Norfolk, but only 5 miles as the crow flies from Blundeston, where John got married in 1597. There are no other Town Baptisms here in this period, no Marriages, and no Burials. It would seem that Robert & Elizabeth did not stay very long in Haddiscoe.

This area of Norfolk has not been searched for any Town entries, so there is a possibility of finding more relating to the family. There is a Marriage Index covering southeast Norfolk, but sadly there are no Town marriages in this. We have already seen that Edmund Towne married at Somerleyton, Suffolk, and then moved to his bride's parish of Woodton, Norfolk (see "About Towne" Vol. XXXI No. 1 p. 10)

Have we any other reference to Robert Town? If we refer to the Will of Thomas Towne of Lound, made in 1563, he had a brother Robert, to whom he gave £3 (see "About Towne" Vol. XXXI No. 1 p. 9). Lound is only 5 miles from Haddiscoe, so the chances that Robert, the father of John, is this Robert are extremely high.

Haddiscoe Church — continued.



Baptismal font where John Towne was baptized.

Side entrance to Haddiscoe church. →

The 2012 TFA England Tour did not include this church as this information was not yet known. Charles Farrow had just recently found the birth record for John. The Haddiscoe Church will be a part of the next TFA England Tour.

For those of you who came on the Tour in 2012, we passed Haddiscoe Church on the way from the Norfolk Record Office to Lowestoft. With its tall round tower, the church standing raised above the flat surrounding marshes can be seen from a considerable distance. Hopefully, the picture of the north side will bring back memories, as this is how we saw the church as we passed. The Font in which John Towne was baptised is a good example of a Perpendicular East Anglian type, with seated lions against the stem and angels and the signs of the Evangelists against the bowl. Both these pictures are reproduced by the kind permission of Simon Knott (<http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/>).

Haddiscoe will certainly have to be featured in any future Towne Ancestral Tour (TAT). If more searching is done, who knows how many more places will have to be added to the next TAT? ∞





St. John the Baptist's Church, Lound, is a simple or plain church on the outside, but inside, it is a "riot of mock medieval splendor," according to Charles Farrow. It has earned the nickname "Golden Church" dating from a 1914 restoration that recreated what a church might have looked like before the Reformation. From the 1563 will of Thomas Towne it is clear that there was a Towne family established here. The Manor Court Rolls and Subsidy Returns confirm this, but no early parish registers surviving.

Remember that In Thomas Towne's will, a brother named Robert was given an inheritance. It may be that he is the same Robert Towne who is the father of John and grandfather of William Towne. (The will was mentioned in the article on Haddiscoe Church.) ∞

Pictures from the inside of St. John the Baptist Church in Lound





All Saints' Church, Belton, is where William Towne's sister, Agnes, was buried in 1602 and where his brother John was baptized in 1603, leading to the assumption that William must have spent at least a year of his life here. The earliest feature of the church, the west round tower, was rebuilt in 1849. The original baptismal font was discovered in several large pieces under the altar just a few years ago.

What was most likely the earliest feature of the church, the west round tower, had to be rebuilt in 1849. Notice the ogee doors on the later added South Porch. ∞

More pictures of the Belton Church

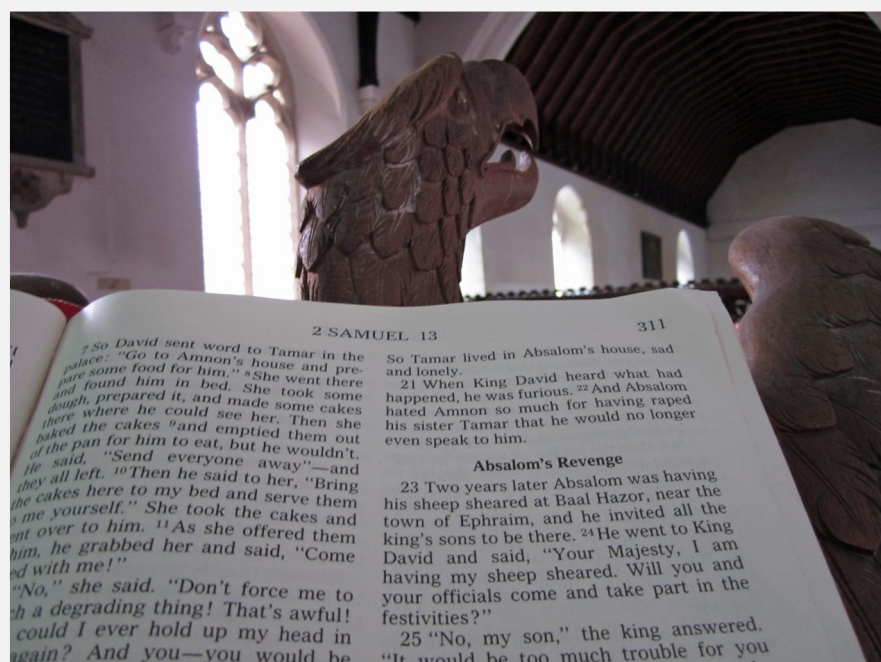


← The rood screen and altar
The broken square font, it was
new in 1864. ↓



← The front of the Eagle Lectern

↓ The back of the Eagle Lectern with the Scripture





St. Mary's, Blundeston, is the church where William Towne's parents, John Towne and Elizabeth Clarke, were married in 1597. Elizabeth had been baptized here in 1571; and her parents, John Clarke and Rose Fenne, married here in 1563. The slender round west tower is most probably Norman, built after 1066, and the south wall was rebuilt in the fourteenth century. Blundeston is featured in the first chapter of the novel "David Copperfield," Dickens' famous work.

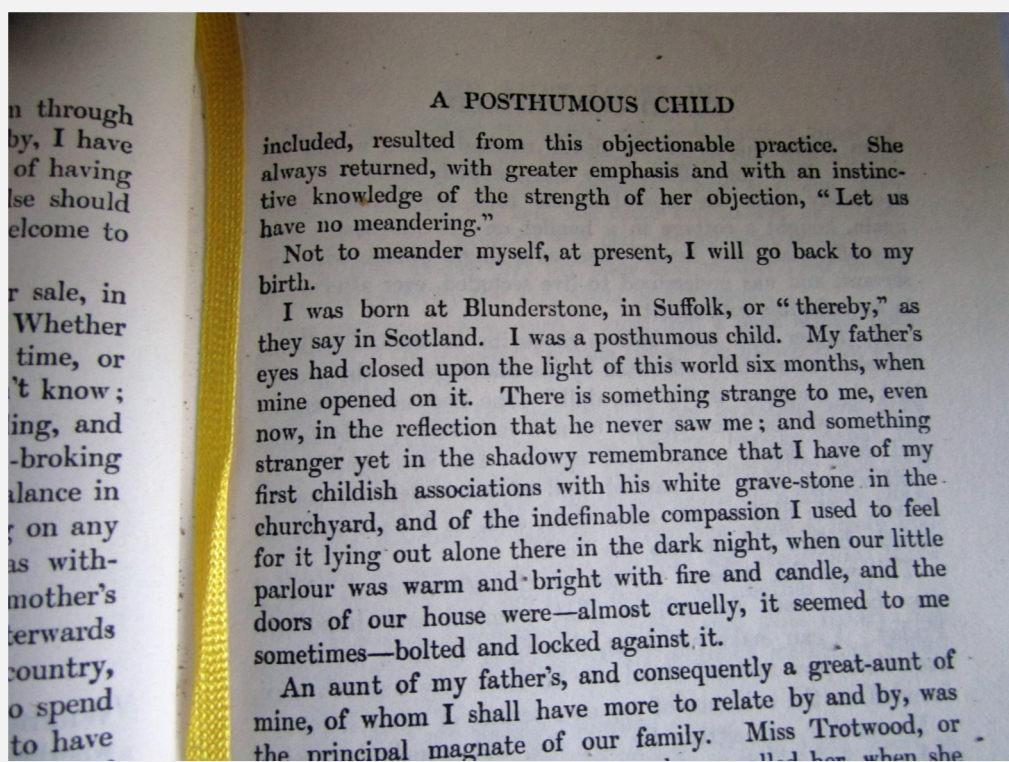
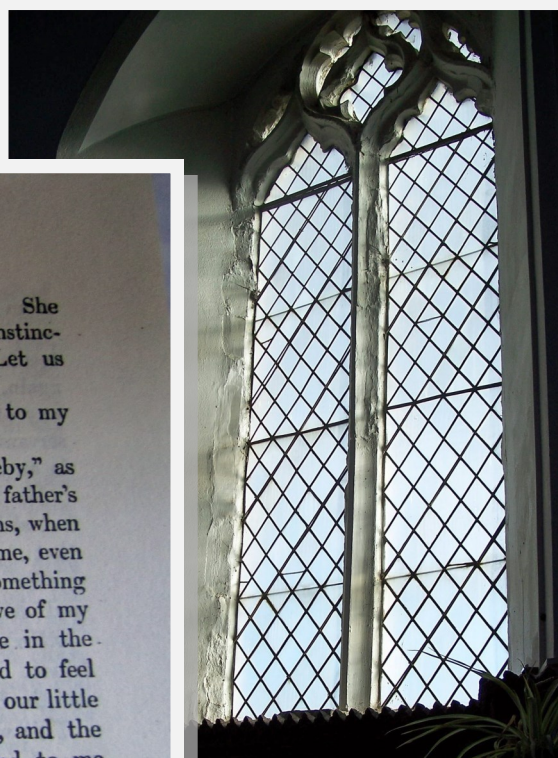
Blundeston is located in Suffolk County, England, about two miles inland between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft close to the North Sea coast. ∞

More pictures of Blundeston —



Fancy Rood Screen featured
below ↓

Inside St. Mary's Blundeston,
notice the Poppyhead on end



← Blundeston featured in
David Copperfield by Charles
Dickens

Blundeston records —

On Thursday, September 6th, 2012, members of the Towne Family Association visited the Blundeston St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church. This church is very special to the Towne Family as it was the church where William Towne's parents, John Towne and Elizabeth Clarke were married in 1597. Elizabeth Clarke's parents John Clarke and Rose Fenne also were married here in 1563, and Elizabeth Clarke was baptized here in 1571. The records for the Blundeston St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church are located at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) in Norwich, England. The reference number for these church records is NRO: PD 109/56.

Below are the entries of marriages, baptisms and burials related to our family at the Blundeston St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church. The spellings match how the names were spelled in the records. Thanks to Charles Farrow for researching the Blundeston records and finding these entries for our family.

MARRIAGES:

17 Oct 1563 John Clarcke & Rose Fenne

John Clarcke & Rose Fenne are the parents of Elizabeth Clarke and the grandparents of William Towne.

23 Oct 1564 Henrye Towne & Marian Feveryeare

Henry Towne is discussed in the "About Towne Newsletter" March 2011 in an article by Charles Farrow called, "Sixteenth-Century Townes in Suffolk and Norfolk." Henrye's relationship to John Towne is not known at this time.

25 Sept 1597 John Towne & Elizabethe Clarcke These are the parents of William Towne who married Joanna Blessing and became the progenitors of the Towne family in America

29 Sept 1603 John Marsham & Anne Clarcke

This is the marriage of Elizabeth Clarke's sister Anne. She is the daughter of John Towne & Elizabeth Clarcke.

BAPTISMS: The children listed below are sons and daughters of John & Rose Clarcke. Our family descends from their 4th child, Elizabethe Clarcke. They were baptized on the following dates:

27 Aug 1564 John Clarcke

22 Sept 1566 Margaryte Clarcke

3 Apr 1569 William Clarcke

19 Aug 1571 Elizabethe Clarcke

16 Aug 1573 Anne Clarcke

22 July 1576 Thomas Clarcke

27 Oct 1578 Johane Clarcke

21 Jan 1581 Edwarde Clarcke [1582 in new style]

BURIALS:

28 Sept 1576 Thomas Clarcke, the son of John & Rose Clarcke [1577 in new style]

12 Oct 1596 Agnis Clarcke

7 Feb 1610 Anne Clarke [1611 in new style], the daughter of John & Rose Clarcke.

25 Mar 1610 John Clarke [this should have been in 1611, as it was new years day].

5 May 1613 Alice Clarke

20 May 1618 Margaret Clarke, a daughter of John & Rose Clarcke.

30 Jan 1619 Rose Clarke widow [1620 new style] This is Elizabeth Clarke's mother. ∞



St. Nicholas' Church, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk now called a "Minster", which is any large or important church according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is the largest parish church in the United Kingdom. It is also the oldest parish church in Great Yarmouth, begun in the 1100s; and it is the church of the Townes. The parents of William are buried here, as is his daughter, Susan; William's brother John married here; William was baptized here in 1598; Record DN/VIS 6/4



St, Nicholas Minster in Great Yarmouth continued — plaque placed on wall inside the church

Bishop's Visitation 1633 Presentment of William & Joanna Towne for not receiving Communion at Easter last.

Record DN/ANW/2/71 Archdeacon's Visitation 1634 Presentment of William & Joanna Towne.

I have copies of these records.

Another record in St. Nicholas Great Yarmouth records relates to Jone (Joanna) Towne's sister (or perhaps step sister. James Roome indicates that John Blessing had a wife named Margaret and they had a daughter named Margaret who was baptized on 9 Aug. 1590 at Holy Trinity Church in Caister-on-Sea. This daughter Margaret married Robert Buffam on 23 Aug. 1613 at St. Nicholas Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England. Would this record shed any new light on her parents? Did she have children baptized at St. Nicholas Church Great Yarmouth?

tized at St. Nicholas Church Great Yarmouth?

William and Joanna Towne's son Jacob Towne married Catherine Symonds. Her baptism is recorded in the Great Yarmouth St. Nicholas Parish Register: "18 Apr 1630 Katteren dau John & Ruth Symons." (Spelled Symonds when they married.)

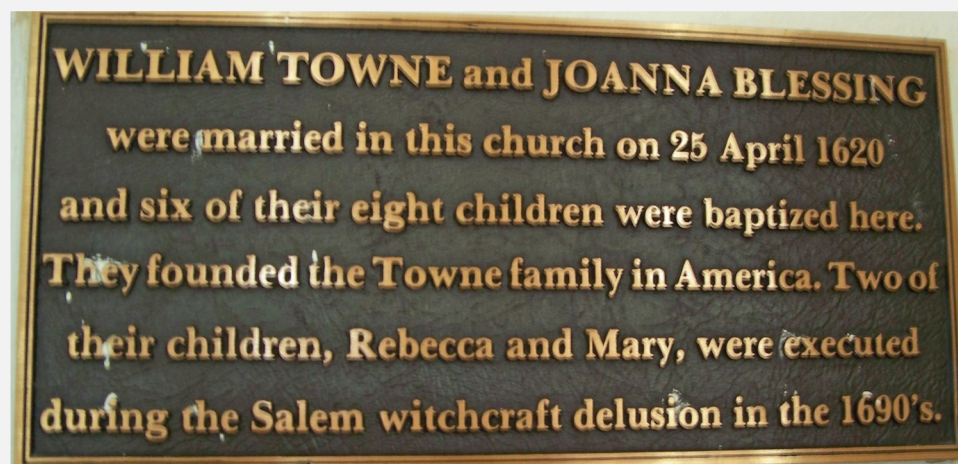
Julian Blessing married Thomas Goose Vergoose on July 31, 1622 at St. Nicholas Church in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England. The source is "About Towne" Dec. 2001 pg. 64.∞



↑The organ pipes inside St. Nicholas Church



Stained glass window and the TFA plaque Inside St. Nicholas Church



Records related to William Towne's parents:

1. John Towne, Senior, pauper, father of William Towne, burial record 13 Sep 1627.
2. Elizabeth (Clarke) Towne, mother of William Towne, burial record 7 Sep 1630.

Records related to William and Joanna Towne:

3. Wyllyam Towne baptismal record 18 Mar 1598/99, son of John Towne and Elizabeth Clarke. (Spelled William in later records.)
4. William Towne and Jone (Joanna) Blessing marriage record 25 Apr 1620.

Six of William and Joanna Towne's children were baptized at St. Nicholas of Great Yarmouth. One child's death is also recorded as she died young.

5. Rebecka Towne baptism 21st Feb. 1620/21.
6. John Towne baptism 16th Feb 1622/23.
7. Susan Towne baptism 26th Oct. 1625.
8. Susan Towne early death and burial 29 July 1630.
9. Edmund Towne baptism 22nd June 1628.
10. Jacob Towne baptism 11th March 1631/32.
11. Mary Towne baptism 24 August 1634.

The following records relate to the Blessing family. It is thought that Margaret, Julian and Alice are related to Joanna Blessing. There are marriage records for 2 of these women in the Great Yarmouth parish records. There is additional information about these Blessing women and their lives in the book, "Massachusetts & Maine Families" by Goodwin Davis pages 186-199. Charles Farrow is planning to do some more research on the Blessing family in the future to help determine relationships.

12. Margaret Blessing and Robert Buffam marriage record 23 August 1613. Margaret is the sister or half-sister of Jone (Joanna) Blessing.
13. Julian Blessings married Thomas Goose July 31, 1622. Further research is needed to determine her relationship to Joanna Blessing.
14. Alice Blessing married a man from Great Yarmouth with the last name of Firmage. The marriage record has not been found as yet. Firmage is also spelled Fermace, Formais, Fearmayes, Feiremayde, Vermage, Vermaes, Vermaz, Vermayes, Vermasse and Vermages. When Alice was in a Salem town meeting on Oct. 29, 1638, she is referred to as "widow Alice Vermais." She refers to Robert Buffam as her brother-in-law. She made her will Feb. 8, 1656 and died the following day. In the will she includes: "To my sister Joan Towne, my old cloth gown." ("Massachusetts & Maine Families" by Goodwin Davis pg. 188-192 & 195-199.)

Additonal records from the St. Nicholas Great Yarmouth parish registers related to the Towne family:

15. John Towne, brother of William Towne, married Jane Bootes 31 Jul 1623.
16. Suzan Towne, sister of William Towne and daughter of John Towne and Elizabeth Clarke baptized March 2, 1605/06.
17. Katteren Symons baptismal record 18 Apr 1630 "Katteren dau John & Ruth Symons." Katteren Symonds and Jacob Towne married in America. Jacob is the son of William and Joanna Towne. (Last name spelled Symons, Symonds, or Symondes) Note that Charles Farrow wrote an article on the "Elusive Symonds Family" in **About Towne**, June 2012, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, page 34. This article lists many more records for the name Symondes in the Great Yarmouth parish registers.

More pictures of St. Nicholas Minster, Great Yarmouth



The following records are not in the Great Yarmouth parish registers. DN refers to Diocesan deposit and Y/C refers to the Great Yarmouth Borough records. These records are also held at the Norfolk Record Office.

18. Bishop's Visitation 1633 Presentment of William & Joanna Towne for not receiving Communion at Easter last. DN/VIS 6/4
19. Archdeacon's Visitation 23 Oct 1634 Presentment of William & Joanna Towne. DN/ANW/2/71
20. On 5 Nov 1608, John, a gardener, apprenticed his son, William, "for 14 years from 2nd Feb. next" to a basket maker. Abraham Robbertes of Yarmouth. Great Yarmouth Enrolled Apprenticeship Indentures of William Towne. Y/C 4/302.
21. On 25 Apr 1635, "William Towne, gardener of Yarmouth, apprenticed his 12 year old son, John Towne, to Lyonell Gibson, cooper of Great Yarmouth to "8 years from 14th June next." He was to receive "Double apparel, a thicksle, a howell & shave, and to be made a freeman." Great Yarmouth Enrolled Apprenticeship Indenture of John Towne. NRO Great Yarmouth Borough Record, Y/C 4/327.
Note: A cooper is a barrel maker.

The next record for William and Joanna shows them being cited for failing to appear for communion" (1633) and the last record for them is on the 26 September 1635, where they are referred to as "Separatists William Towne and Joanna his wife." (Norwich Consistory & Archdeaconry Visitation Records). It is about this time that the Towne family left Great Yarmouth and moved to Salem Village in the Massachusetts Colony of New England in America. ∞