

The John Dennis buried in Ryde Cemetery was baptised on 1st January 1809 in St Edmund's, Wootton. He was the son of Thomas Dennis (1772-1837) and Anne Tewksbery (1786-1880), who spent their lives in Wootton. Thomas was a plasterer and glazier. Thomas and Anne had a total of ten children between 1805 and 1824, and Anne lived to age 94, living with her daughter in Wootton in 1851 and 1861, and with her son John in 1871.

John left Wootton and was in Jersey, in the Channel Islands by 1832, at age 23, working as a bootmaker. His first child was born in 1832 and sadly died at age 7. The second son, also called John, was born in 1833. Over the next twenty years a further eight children were born, so altogether John Dennis and his wife Ann née Lang whom he had met and married in Jersey had eight boys and two girls. For the time, these children were remarkably long-lived: two reached 90 years of age, one 85, and only two died as children: one within a week and one aged seven. But unfortunately Ann Lang, John's wife, died of cancer in Jersey, in 1860 at age 50.

John must have left Jersey almost immediately afterwards, leaving his oldest boy John there with his wife Charlotte and their offspring, and returned to the Isle of Wight.

In the 1861 Census John born 1809 was in Ryde, with five children ranging in age from 20 to 2. The oldest child in Ryde was William Henry Dennis. John was still working as a Boot and Shoe Maker.

In the 1871 Census John, aged 62, was in Monk Hewitt Cottage, Ryde East, with his daughter Rosina acting as housekeeper and his son Walter Augustus working as carpenter. His mother, aged 85, was also with them.

John died in 1875 and is buried in Ryde. His mother outlived him, dying in 1880 and being buried in St Edmund's, Wootton, along with one of her daughters.

William Henry Dennis, John's son, who was not in Ryde in 1871, must have returned at some stage since his wife Mary Ann Dean who died in 1886 is buried in the same grave as John. Indeed, it is clear from the inscription that it was William Henry who caused the gravestone to be erected in memory of both.

William Henry himself lived in Worthing with his sister Rosina Elizabeth, who had acted as housekeeper for their father in 1871 and was in 65 High Street, Ryde in 1881. William Henry lived to age 90, dying in 1931, while Rosina died in 1933 at the same age.

William Henry Dennis

Rosina Elizabeth Dennis

Grave of William Henry and Rosina Elizabeth Dennis, Worthing