

## Francis Newman 1759 – 1818

I began writing this article some three or four years ago before putting it into the “too hard” basket when other priorities came along. Graham Newman’s November 2025 appeal to members to provide Donna Newman with some content for the January Chronicle has inspired me to dust it off and to try to finish it this time.

Long-standing members of the Newman Name Society may recall reading an earlier article that I wrote about Francis Newman, my wayward g-g-g-g-uncle. But perhaps not, as I've been unable to find any such article in my archive of Bulletins and Chronicles or in my files or email records. However, I offer my apologies to any reader who finds him- or herself re-reading some of what I wrote in previous years.

In fact, in this updated article I've added quite a bit of new content and have rewritten some of the old. My efforts have been supported by Harold Biggs from the USA who over the last decade and more has given me a huge amount of help, guidance and information about the Newman family which has helped me to fill and correct several pages of my website.<sup>1</sup> One of his most helpful contributions was in differentiating between the two Richard Newmans – father and son – whose combined lives covered the 121 years between 1574 to 1695. (These two Richards appear at the head of the pedigree on page 3.) Prior to Harold’s interventions, I had had great difficulty in working out which of the two Richards was the Col. Richard Newman who had reputedly been involved in the English Civil War (1642-49) and in assisting the young King Charles II to escape capture after the 1651 Battle of Worcester. Harold was able to point out a lot of erroneous assumptions and misinformation, concluding that neither Richard had ever carried the rank of colonel and that neither of them had assisted the king to escape from Worcester. In fact, I wrote an article on this subject (titled “The Mysterious Colonel Richard Newman (A Cautionary Tale?)” which was published in the *Chronicle* in or around 2023.

Harold has assisted me in many other areas of Newman history including research into Francis Newman, the subject of this article, particularly relating to his life in America and to his (probably shady) business dealings in England. I am therefore delighted that Harold has agreed to write a complementary article to this one, covering Francis’s colourful life in America between the years c.1795 and 1818. I’m hoping that Donna will publish Harold’s contribution forming “Part 2” of this article, in the next edition of the *Chronicle*.

---

<sup>1</sup> See [www.newman-family-tree.net](http://www.newman-family-tree.net)

## Francis Newman – 1759 - 1818



*Left – Francis as lampooned in the Town & Country magazine in 1790*

*Right - Francis dressed in the uniform of a US Army Infantry officer in the War of 1812-1815*

Francis Newman's life can be divided into three distinct parts – the first 35 or 36 years spent in England with a year interlude in France. Finally, his last 23 or 24 years were spent in the newly established United States of America. He has left a legacy of wives, partners, children, wills, court proceedings and other records that form a complex tapestry that is only gradually revealing the outline of a coherent life-story. He was, with little doubt, the most colourful character amongst the Newmans of Fifehead<sup>2</sup>.

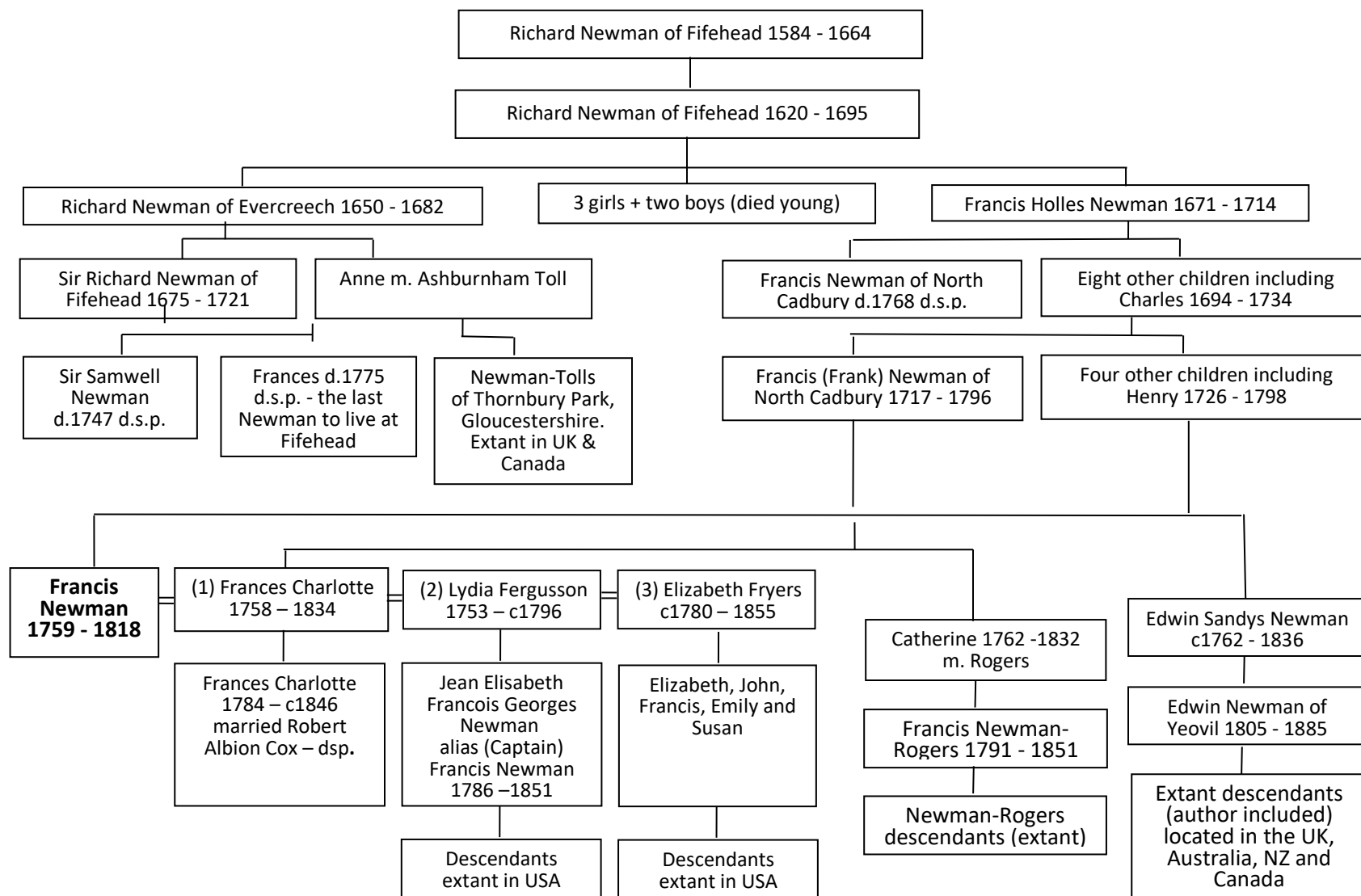
Some confusion may arise between Francis, his great grandfather, his great-uncle, and his uncle, all of whom were named Francis Newman. Adding to the confusion, his first wife (who was also his first cousin) was named Frances, as was their only surviving daughter. Francis and Frances's first-born was a son, also called Francis, who died in infancy. Francis subsequently had two other sons named Francis, one born in France to Lydia Ferguson, and the other in America to his second wife Elizabeth, née Friar.

Francis's ancestry and descendants are illustrated in the lineage diagram overleaf. This is followed by a timeline of his life

---

<sup>2</sup> The term "Newmans of Fifehead" refers to the family of Newmans descended from a John Newman who is said to have been rector of Fifehead Magdalen in Dorset as far back as 1405. For the next 250 years, the Newmans leased the Fifehead estate from the Abbot of St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, until c.1660 when Richard Newman (1620-1695) is believed to have purchased the estate, Fifehead remained in Newman hands until 1775 when Frances Newman died. Frances was Francis's first cousin thrice removed. Francis never lived at Fifehead and probably had little association with Frances and her sisters.

## NEWMANS OF FIFEHEAD PEDIGREE - 1584 to Present



# Chronology of Francis's life

## England: 1759 – 1785

- 1759 Mar 7<sup>th</sup>: [Francis Newman](#) is born at Hinckley in Leicestershire, where his mother's family lived. Baptised in St. Mary's Church, Hinkley 24th July 1760. [May also have been christened at Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset, where his father Henry was vicar.]
- 1760 *King George III comes to the throne*
- 1761 Oct *William Pitt the elder resigns from leadership of the British government*
- 1762 [Edwin Sandys Newman](#) is born (younger brother to Francis Newman).
- 1763 Feb *Treaty of Paris: France gives up eastern half of Louisiana, Canada, and the Ohio Valley. Spain trades all the Floridas to Britain for the return of Havana.*
- 1763 *First Newcomen steam engine introduced, marking the start of the industrial revolution*
- 1768 Francis's uncle Frank inherits various estates from his childless uncle Francis.
- 1770 *Captain Cook discovers Australia and claims it for the British crown.*
- 1770 until 1772 (aged 11 to 13): Francis attends Rugby School, England
- 1773 Dec *Boston Tea Party brought about by Britain imposing taxes on tea exported to the American colonies*
- 1775 Apr *Battles of Lexington and Concord mark a de facto state of war between the American colonies and Britain.*
- 1776 *July 4: United States of America declares independence from Britain.*
- 1777 18 year-old Francis transfers from Rugby School to Cambridge University (England) - *unverified information*
- 1778 Feb *The United States and France sign a treaty making them allies against Britain.*
- 1778 Nov 9<sup>th</sup>; Francis, aged 19, marries his 20 year-old cousin [Frances Newman](#) – (see [marriage record](#) kindly provided by Harold Biggs Aug 2019)
- 1779 May Francis and Frances's first son Francis is baptized. He is buried in Cadbury church a month later.
- 1779 Jun *Spain, allied to France, declares war on Britain.*
- 1780 Dec Frances's second son Henry is baptized and buried shortly after.
- 1783 Apr *The Treaty of Paris ends the American Revolution.*
- 1783 Cliff Ranson reports that Francis was jailed for debt and released when his wife [Frances](#) raised money by mortgaging the (Cadbury?) property. *However, no corroborative evidence has been found.*
- 1784 Mar 24 year old [William Pitt the Younger](#) becomes Britain's youngest and second-longest-serving Prime Minister
- 1784 Apr 7<sup>th</sup>: Birth of Francis's fourth child [Frances Charlotte Newman](#) who was baptized 9th May (see [Newman-Rogers' Bible](#)). At the time of the birth, her parents were living at [Fursdon House](#) in the Parish of Cadbury, Devonshire (not be confused with the village of Cadbury in Somerset).
- 1784 May Francis abandons his wife and begins an affair with Lydia Sheridan - see Chancery Proceedings [C12/629/31](#) page 24.
- 1784 Oct Francis and Lydia living together (with a servant) in Lowerbank's Hotel in St. James's Street, London
- 1784 Nov Francis and Lydia live in rented rooms at the house of Mrs Barker in Green's Row Chelsea. Francis meets his wife Frances in London around this time - see Chancery Proceedings [C12/629/31](#) page 24.
- 1784 Dec Francis and Lydia moved into Osborne's Hotel at the Adelphi (not far from the Strand).
- 1785 Feb Francis and Lydia moved back to Mrs Barker in Green's Row Chelsea.

### France: 1785 – 1787

- 1785 Apr 29<sup>th</sup>: Francis and Lydia move to France as man and wife, settling into Château le Riau near Dornes, (see [summary of the trial of Lydia Sheridan](#)).
- 1785 Nov Augusta Catherine Newman was born to [Frances Newman](#), and baptized 17 Nov at North Cadbury and died May 1786. Francis claimed that the child was not his.
- 1786 Aug 16<sup>th</sup>: [Jean Elisabeth Francois Georges Newman](#) was born to [Lydia Ferguson](#) at Château le Riau, with Mrs Barker in attendance (or was it at the Palace of Godfather High Lord John Anthony deCharyin?)
- 1786 Oct [Frances](#) travelled to Wales to settle her husband's affairs, claiming expenses of £16/13/11 (see Chancery Proceedings [C12/629/31](#).)
- 1786 Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> - A Bill of Complaint (amended 24 Jan 1789 and 14 Jan 1790) against Francis was lodged by his wife [Frances](#), her daughter [Frances Charlotte](#) and her father [Francis](#). It concerns the Lease and Release of parts of the South Cadbury and Sparkford estates and non-payment of £100 annuity – see Chancery Proceedings [C12/629/31](#).
- 1787 Feb 10<sup>th</sup>: [Jean Elisabeth Francois Georges Newman](#) baptized at Moulins, France with Marquis des Gouttes acting as godfather.
- 1787 Feb Mr William Loveridge, solicitor acting on behalf of Lydia's husband Henry Sheridan, hands a summons to her to initiate divorce proceedings.
- 1787 Oct Francis, Lydia and child return to England (date given in [C12/629/31](#)), taking lodgings at a house in Brompton Row, Hyde Park.

### England: 1787 – c.1795

- 1788 Feb Francis and Lydia's presence in London was "discovered" by a Mr Brewer acting on behalf of Henry Sheridan.
- 1788 May Lydia attends court to answer a charge of adultery. Henry Sheridan granted a divorce plus damages of £2000 against Francis Newman .
- 1788 Aug 7<sup>th</sup>: [John Elisabeth Francis George Newman](#) baptised into the Church of England (location unknown) - see [copy of entry](#) (supplied by Harold Biggs, Aug 2019).
- 1789 Mar House of Lords confirms Lydia's divorce - see [British History On-Line's website](#).
- 1789 Jun *Storming of the Bastille in Paris marks beginning of the French Revolution.*
- 1789 Sep 16<sup>th</sup>: Francis was in Bath, Somerset, answering his wife's Bill of Complaint to the Chancery court - ref [C12/629/31](#).
- 1789 Oct 27<sup>th</sup>: [James and Catherine Rogers](#) lodge a Bill of Complaint against Francis Newman relating to the purchase of Francis's inheritance expectant on the death of Francis Newman the elder including North and South Cadbury, Sparkford etc. for a price of £6,922 – ref [C12/171/26](#).
- 1789 Francis mortgages the manors of North Cadbury and Sparkford and the advowson of Sparkford through a deed of arrangement arising out of his inheritance Ref [DD\SOG/177](#)
- 1790 Feb 5<sup>th</sup>: Francis Newman answers Bill of Complaint from [James and Catherine Rogers](#) – ref [C12/171/26](#).
- 1790 Sep Town and Country Magazine published an article about Francis and Lydia titled "The Female Deserter and The Chemical Lover".
- 1791 Jan 29<sup>th</sup>: Francis answered a bill of Complaint by [James and Catherine Rogers](#) (see [C12/178/26](#)) relating to deeds for South Cadbury Court. It appears that James Rogers refused to pay Francis an amount of £6,922 for the properties of Sparkford and Cadbury that Francis would inherit on the death of his uncle Frank because of fraudulent misrepresentation by Francis Newman relating to concealment of encumbrances on the properties!

- 1791 Aug 8<sup>th</sup>: Thomas Alves published a statement in the London Gazette dissolving a partnership with a Francis Newman which had traded as Francis Newman and Co.
- 1791 Nov 26<sup>th</sup>: Francis lodged a Bill of Complaint against [James Rogers](#) (see [C12/184/20](#)). Francis was living at Shudy Camps, Cambridge, "late of Broad Street, London"
- 1791 Francis (of Shudy Camps, Cambridge. ) signs a 1 year lease of manors of North and South Cadbury and Sparkford, the advowsons of South Cadbury and Sparkford etc. Ref [DD\SOG/178](#)
- 1793 *Jan Louis XVI, King of France, is executed.*
- 1793 *Feb France declares war on Great Britain.*
- 1794 Feb 5<sup>th</sup>: Francis makes out a Will, signed and witnessed in London, presumably in anticipation of his forthcoming voyage to America.
- 1794 or 1795 Francis, Lydia and [Jean Elisabeth Francois Georges](#) set sail for the USA.

**Francis's years in the USA: 1795 – 1818**  
(to be covered in a separate article by Harold Biggs)

- 1794 or 1795 Francis arrives in USA and purchases The Grange estate at Port Tobacco, Maryland.
- 1796 Aug (Aug 8th according to Cliff Ranson) - Lydia Sheridan dies
- 1798 Francis marries Elizabeth Hannah Friers.
- 1807 Feb Francis writes to President Jefferson and Henry Dearborn (Secretary of War) offering own services and/or those of the local militia that he has been authorized to recruit, claiming (falsely) to have been a soldier for 18 years.
- 1813 Dec Francis appointed tax collector for the 6th Collection District of Maryland.
- 1817 Francis purchases Oaklawn Plantation in Huntsville, Alabama
- 1818 Francis dies in Maryland

### **Early Life: 1759 - 1779**

Francis Newman was born in 1759 at Hinckley in Leicestershire, England, at the home of his mother's family. A year earlier his father Henry had been appointed rector of both Shepton Beauchamp and Sparkford, neighbouring villages in South Somerset. Francis was the eldest of two sons, his brother Edwin Sandys Newman being born three years later in 1762.

Francis was sent to the famous Rugby School in Warwickshire, probably starting there around 1770. It has been suggested that he went up to Cambridge University in 1777, there is no confirmed source for this has been found. Nothing more is known of his early life.

An event of great significance to Francis occurred in 1767, when his uncle Francis Newman (hereafter referred to as Frank) inherited the Newman estates of Cadbury, Sparkford and elsewhere, from his own (childless) uncle, another Francis Newman. In his will, this Francis left his estates to Frank on condition that they be passed down through the family "in tail male" (i.e. through the senior male line), though the conditions of his will allowed each of his inheritors to grant any part of the estates not exceeding the value of £200 a year, to his wife for life. Frank took the opportunity to grant the Rectory of Queen Camel to his wife Jane for her life, though it turned out that she died before him, either in 1784 or 1794). In the meantime, she produced for him three daughters and no sons, which meant that on Frank's death the entailed estates would pass to his brother Henry and, on Henry's death, to his elder son, the young Francis of this narrative.

### **Marriage: 1779 - 1784**

On 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 1778, at the age of 19, Francis married his first cousin Frances, daughter of his uncle Frank. The marriage ceremony was performed in Sparkford Church, presumably officiated over by Francis's father, Henry who was vicar of Sparkford from 1758 until his death in 1798.

It appears that the marriage got off to a bad start, being necessitated by Frances's pregnancy, a situation made worse by her father Frank promising a dowry that he subsequently reneged on.

Frank (image at right) seems to have been a disreputable character. In 1776 he was convicted of perverting the course of justice while acting as a Justice of the Peace in a case involving his (even less reputable) brother Charles and his more reputable cousin, Rev. William Baily.<sup>3</sup>



Uncle Frank's questionable character is of relevance when looking at the circumstances of Francis's marriage and when reviewing the claims and counterclaims made against Francis by Frank and his daughter Frances which feature in several Chancery Court proceedings. Indeed, one of these Proceedings offers insights into Francis's marriage, so it is described next before returning to the marriage and its problems.

---

<sup>3</sup> The case is recorded in "The Trial of an Information issuing out of the Court of King's-Bench, on the prosecution of William Baily, clerk, against Francis Newman and John Hunt, Esqrs ... for certain trespasses and misdemeanors, at the assizes at Taunton" published by Gale Echo, ISBN 9781171472117

## Chancery Court Proceedings

The Fifehead Newmans appear to have been an extraordinarily litigious family as its members appear in what seems like countless court proceedings. Of those relating to Francis Newman, the longest and most revealing is recorded in [C12-629-31](#)<sup>4</sup> relating to a case that ran between 1786 and 1789. Most of the story of Francis's first marriage is derived from this source.



*North Cadbury Court, where Frank Newman lived and which young Francis hoped to inherit.*

This Chancery case was initiated in 1786 some two years after the breakup of the marriage, when Frances, together with her father Frank and her 2-year-old daughter Frances, lodged a combined complaint against Francis for failing to pay her a £100 annuity from 400 acres of land at Sparkford and 200 acres at South Cadbury that Frank Newman had given to young Francis in February 1783 specifically for the purpose of providing an annuity for his wife. (This was a complex case involving several individuals, mortgages and loans, and is described in [a 7-page summary](#) that can be downloaded from my website.)

### **Francis and Frances's Marriage and its Problems**

Francis's response to his wife's accusations, as described in the court records, offers some interesting insights into the circumstances of their marriage. For instance, Francis claimed that he had for some time beforehand lived with Frank Newman who had "encouraged and approved" his approaches to his

---

<sup>4</sup> Chancery Court proceedings can be found on the National Archives at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

daughter and the resulting marriage. He also gives the year of the marriage as 1779 (the month and day being left blank) observing that he was then “still under the age of 21 (viz the age of 20 years)”. In fact, the marriage took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1778 (as stated above) when Francis would have been 19 years old.

Given that Frances’s first child was born in May 1779, it is pretty clear that the marriage was necessitated by her pregnancy. Furthermore, Francis’s evidence hints at the possibility that his uncle Frank’s “encouragement and approval” could have been associated with Francis’s anticipated inheritance of (the then) 72-year-old Frank’s estates, thereby ensuring that they would remain in the possession of his own descendants.

At any rate, the marriage suffered a major blow when the baby boy, for whose sake the couple had married, died within a month of his birth. Baby Francis was buried in North Cadbury in June 1779, and it is said that his is the only Newman memorial that was not expunged from the church when the house and lands were purchased by the Bennett family in 1795 or 1796.



*(left) North Cadbury Church; (right) baby Francis Newman’s memorial carved into the flagstone floor.*

On top of this loss, it seems that Francis was soon encountering problems with his uncle/father-in-law Frank. In his response to his wife’s accusations, he concurred that his uncle had agreed to give him land as part of the marriage settlement, but only 200 acres rather than the 600 acres claimed by his wife. However, shortly after the marriage, he claimed that Frank had postponed the settlement until Francis reached the age of 21 (i.e. May 1780), but even then the deeds had not been completed and Francis’s subsequent appeals to Frank were fobbed off with promises and excuses.

Later in 1780, Francis and Frances suffered a second blow with the birth of a stillborn son, Henry, in December of that year. He too was buried at North Cadbury, on 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 1780.

By the beginning of 1783, Francis (now 23) found himself “greatly distressed in his circumstances” and in need of money. His uncle therefore agreed (finally) to release to him Sparkford and South Cadbury lands, the necessary indentures of Lease and Release being signed on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February 1783. However, Francis claimed that even then he was denied possession of 40 acres of Sparkford land because of a private agreement that Frank had made with a tenant, and that it had cost him (Francis) £30 to resolve the matter. Because of this and various other omissions inflicted by his uncle, Francis was

left with insufficient income to extricate himself from his debts or to “live in a proper style”. As a result, he had continued to be “much embarrassed and distressed in his circumstances”.

It was around this time that Francis and Frances moved away from Cadbury in Somerset to take up residence in Fursdon House in another village called Cadbury, some 50 miles to the west, near Tiverton, in the neighbouring county of Devon.



*Fursdon House, Cadbury, Devon*

Perhaps the move was prompted by Frances becoming pregnant for the third time in mid-to-late 1783. But perhaps more likely, Francis was attempting to escape from his creditors since he claimed that at the time he was “experiencing such disappointments from [his uncle] and not having money to pay several debts which he had contracted” and that he had been subsequently “arrested by two or three of his creditors for several considerable sums”. According to Cliff Ranson (one of Francis’s American descendants), Francis was imprisoned at this time and only released when his wife raised money by mortgaging the property, however no evidence of his imprisonment has been found<sup>5</sup>. Perhaps Cliff erroneously deduced that Francis had been imprisoned from this statement about his arrest.

In fact, Francis went on to claim that he and his wife jointly obtained a loan of £500 on the security of his lands, which served to discharge his debts, but it had left him unable to pay his wife’s £100 annuity – a circumstance that he claimed both she and her father had been aware of at the time. Indeed, he and Frances had subsequently transferred the loan to another lender who had increased its value to £1,200, being used to pay off the original loan, with Francis keeping the balance, an action that they repeated again in raising the loan value to £1,400.

In 1784, Frances gave birth to her only surviving child, a daughter Frances Charlotte, born on 5<sup>th</sup> April and baptized on 9<sup>th</sup> May. By then, it seems, the marriage was already past salvation, because in the same month that his daughter was born, Francis abandoned his family to begin life with Lydia Sheridan, a married lady five or more years his senior, who had been living with her mother in the nearby town of

---

<sup>5</sup> In 2004/5 Susan Moore undertook a thorough search of all available debtors’ prison records, but found no indication of Francis Newman being incarcerated in any of them.

Tiverton. Perhaps it was the financial stresses that caused the breakdown of Francis's marriage, or perhaps it was the antagonism between Francis and Frances's father that set them apart.

Anyway, Francis and Lydia headed for London, leaving Frances to return home to her father in Somerset, where (it would appear) she soon found a new lover of her own. She was to give birth to another short-lived child in November 1785, which Francis could not have fathered.

### **Living in Sin: 1784 - 1785**

The story of the romance between Francis and Lydia, their first year together in London, their escape to France in April 1785, their return to London (probably in 1786), and Lydia's divorce hearing in 1788, is told in the published record of "the Trial of Mrs. Lydia Sheridan, wife of Major Henry Sheridan, for adultery with Francis Newman Esq. tried in the Bishop of London's Court, Doctor's Commons".<sup>6</sup>

To summarize their first year together, Francis and Lydia moved into rented rooms in Chelsea, then a semi-rural but wealthy retreat just outside of London, later moving to Osborne's Hotel at the Adelphi. He had enough resources to afford a manservant to answer the door and to help maintain the pretense that he and Lydia were married.

### **French interlude 1785 – 1786 or 1787**

On their landlady's discovery of their unmarried status, Francis and Lydia escaped to France. They must have had sufficient funds to allow them there to take up residence in a chateau near Moulins. There, for over two years they maintained the pretense amongst the local dignitaries that not only were they married, but that Francis was a member of the English peerage - viz: "High Lord Francis Newman, Knight, Baron and Lord of Cadbury, Sparkford and Lord and Sovereign of Fullen, besides his other lands".<sup>7</sup>



*Château le Riau near Dornes, Central France near Dornes, some 15km north of Moulins, where the couple are believed to have taken rooms in 1785.*

---

<sup>6</sup> The trial record is published by Gale Echo publishers, ISBN 9781170404331.

<sup>7</sup> These faux-titles were recorded on the certificate of baptism dated 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 1787 for Francis and Lydia's son, Francis, who had been born in France in August 1786.

Some 16 months after their arrival in France, in August 1786, Lydia gave birth to a son, another Francis, but shortly after the baptism, Francis and Lydia were “discovered” by a lawyer sent out from England by Lydia’s husband Henry Sheridan who had returned from a military posting in America. Henry’s lawyer’s arrival on Francis and Lydia’s doorstep put an end to their French idyll. Francis attempted to prevent the lawyer from serving Sheridan’s warrant on Lydia, but he capitulated when the lawyer threatened to reveal the nature of their relationship to the local dignitaries who they had been deceiving. After accepting the warrant, the couple invited the lawyer into their home where they introduced him to their new baby and entertained him for dinner.

### **Living in Sin, London and Cambridgeshire 1787 – c1795**

How long they lingered in France after this is not revealed by the records, but by October 1787 Francis and his new family were back in London, lodging in rooms either in Brompton Row, Hyde Park or in Brompton Road near Hyde Park. Their presence there was confirmed by an acquaintance of Lydia’s husband who, on receiving the news, promptly served divorce papers on her. The hearing was held in the Bishop of London’s Court in the Doctor’s Commons in May 1788 and a divorce was granted to Henry Sheridan followed in November by his being granted £2000 in damages (a very considerable sum<sup>8</sup>) plus costs against Francis Newman for “criminal conversation” with his wife. The House of Lords passed a bill confirming the divorce early the following year.

Despite these setbacks Francis still seems to have had sufficient funds to maintain a reasonably comfortable lifestyle with Lydia in or around London. Yet his legal problems persisted and in September 1789, as revolutionary fervour began to spread across France, Francis travelled to Bath to respond to the complaint made by his wife in the Chancery Court three years earlier. He presented 25 pages of explanation (see [C12/629/31](#)) as to how he had given money to his agent Simon Payne and authorized him to pay the annuity to his wife up to 1785 but had stopped further payments as from 6th Oct 1786 because his circumstances were so distressed. At the same time, he implied that his wife did not deserve, and should not have expected, further payments from him because since their separation she had contracted considerable debts of her own, some of which he had been sued for, and because (he had been informed) she had: “conducted herself in a very improper manner and had a connection with one or more person or persons while this defendant and the said Frances were separated and apart from each other and that she was actually delivered of one or more child or children”. How the case was resolved is not known.

The following year, in Oct 1790, Francis and Lydia suffered one more indignity with the publication of a scurrilous article (or cartoon) in the *Town and Country* magazine titled "The Female Deserter and The Chemical Lover" which included their caricatures - these being of a close enough likeness for others to recognise them.

---

<sup>8</sup> £2000 in 1788 might be worth between £400,000 and £4 million in 2025 values depending on the comparator used - £400,000 equivalent in RPI value, and £4 million in labour value (income or wealth).



Caricatures of Lydia and Francis as published in [Town and Country Magazine, Sept 1790](#)

### Legal disputes persist – 1789 to 1795

Towards the end of 1789, Francis had been served another complaint through the Chancery Court, this time by his sister-in-law Catherine and her husband the Rev. James Rogers (see [C12/178/26](#)). It is not clear precisely what the complaint was, but it related to Francis's mortgaging of the estates of South Cadbury Manor for around £1,000. Francis responded in January 1791 saying that the mortgage deeds were in the hands of his erstwhile agent Simon Payne and that he was not bound to explain how he had mortgaged his other estates.

Later in the same year, 1791, Francis "late of Broad Street, City of London but now of Shudy Camps, Cambridge" lodged a complaint of his own against James Rogers (see [C12/184/20](#)). On this occasion, he was joined by three of his creditors, viz:- Thomas Jones of Sloane Street, Knightsbridge, Middx; Samuel Rashford of Cannon Street, London, turner; and John Laycock Hill of Austin Friars, London, merchant. The dispute related to an agreement that Francis had signed in December 1788 whereby his creditors would sell his (mortgaged) title to the "several manors and estates called North Cadbury and Sparkford<sup>9</sup>" to James Rogers for the sum of £6,922, presumably in order to pay off what they claimed Francis owed them. Francis's complaint was based on his assertion that he had been deceived by James Rogers into signing this agreement.

Such disputes between Francis, his uncle Frank, his wife Frances, his daughter Frances Charlotte, his brother-in-law James Rogers, his agent Simon Payne and others, continued on and on until at least 1792, with no clear resolution and no indication as to who was paying the legal costs. But it seems doubtful

<sup>9</sup> This is the first mention of the North Cadbury estates being mortgaged. The earlier court hearings referred to the mortgaging of the South Cadbury and Sparkford estates.

that the sums raised from mortgages (whether through misrepresentation or otherwise) would have been enough to cover Francis and Lydia's considerable outgoings, especially since the purpose of raising the mortgages appears to have been to pay off debts that Francis had previously incurred. It therefore seems likely that he must have either borrowed more to finance his living costs or earned money in some other way.

### **Francis Newman & Co.**

One possible means by which Francis might have generated funds was through business deals using an entity called Francis Newman and Co. References can be found to a Thomas Alves, a London merchant in Harley Street in the late eighteenth century, whose main claim to fame was failing to win election for the notoriously corrupt borough of Seaford in 1784<sup>10</sup>. In August 1791, this Thomas Alves published a statement in the London Gazette<sup>11</sup> dissolving a partnership with Francis Newman which had traded as Francis Newman and Co. From there the trail seems to lead to a Chancery suit active in 1802, known as *Mangin v Alves*, which including among the defendants: Alves, John Thomson Tempest, Francis Newman and Aquila Brown. Brown happened to have been a Maryland merchant who went bankrupt 1803, thereby providing the first link between Francis and his future home of Maryland.<sup>12</sup>

### **Francis and Lydia, America bound**

Francis left England in or around 1795 and died 23 years later in America, their story there to be told by Harold Biggs in the second part of this article.

### **Post Script**

It is poignant to note that 30 years after his death, in 1848, legal disputations continued through the English Chancery Court relating to Francis's legacy there.

---

<sup>10</sup> Information relating to Thomas Alves comes from Jim Brennan – see email correspondences dated Jan 2011.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/13332/pages/459>

<sup>12</sup> I'm indebted to Harold Biggs for this information. However, much remains to be discovered about Francis Newman's business dealings, particularly in association with Thomas Alves.