

# New Light on Jane Austen’s Great-Grandmother: A Complete Transcript of Elizabeth Weller’s *Memorandum* and Account Book and Seven Newly Found Letters

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By **Azar Hussain**

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“Kent is the only place for happiness, Everybody is rich there;—”  
(Jane Austen, 18–19 December 1798)

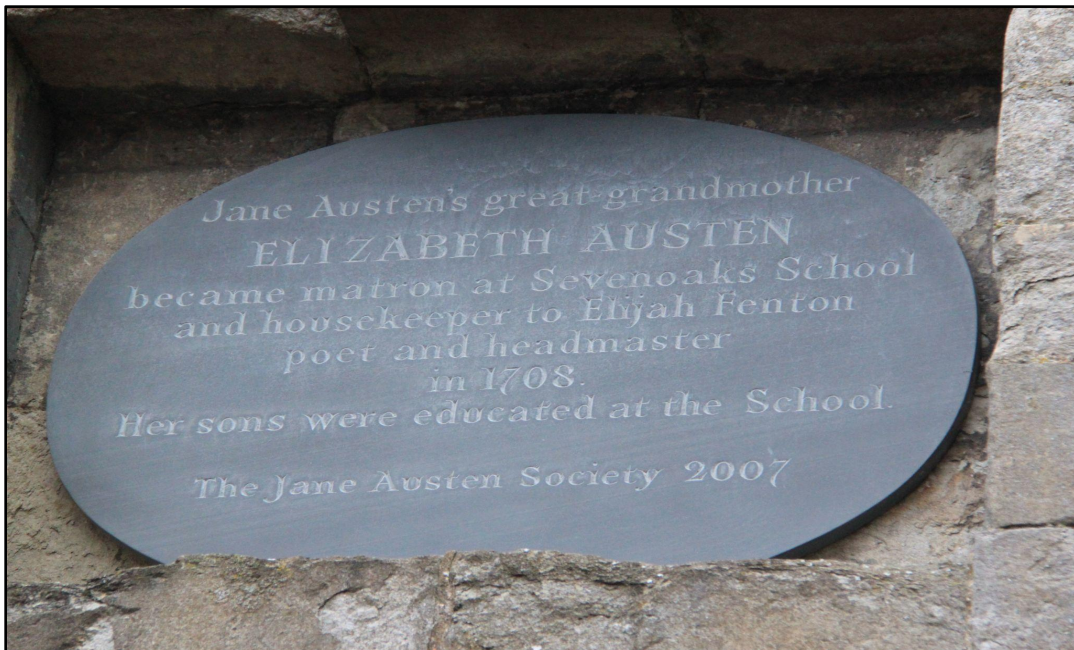
**O**n March 24, 2007, through the efforts of the Kent Branch of the Jane Austen Society, a memorial tablet was unveiled at Sevenoaks School in Kent.

Jane Austen’s great grandmother  
ELIZABETH AUSTEN  
became matron at Sevenoaks School  
and housekeeper to Elijah Fenton  
poet and headmaster  
in 1708  
Her sons were educated at the School.  
The Jane Austen Society 2007<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The plaque is positioned on the front wall of the original school house building (built in 1732, so not the one Elizabeth would have known). Unfortunately, there is no mention of Elizabeth or her sons in the school’s archive. I am very grateful to Sally Robbins, Archivist at Sevenoaks School, for kindly supplying this information.

At the ceremony, it was noted that the tablet would have given particular pleasure to Alwyn Austen (1921–2003), a late member of the Society and Elizabeth’s great-(x4) grandson (Stokes 2). The Reverend George Austen’s paternal grandmother might seem like a rather arcane subject, even for the devoted enthusiast of Jane Austen, but Elizabeth Austen née Weller is well known to many and a firm fixture in the secondary literature on Austen, even inspiring a work of fiction, Carole Penfield’s *Austens of Broadford* (2021).



*Plaque at Sevenoaks School commemorating Elizabeth Weller.  
Reproduced with the kind permission of Sally Robbins.*

In the various sections of this article, I would like to do three things. I will review what we know of Elizabeth’s life, as presented in the secondary sources. I will provide a complete transcript of her own account of her widowhood (referred to hereafter as the *Memorandum*) as well as her account book for the period, neither of which has ever been published in full, and will also provide transcripts for newly found source material relating to Elizabeth, which, to my knowledge, has been hitherto unknown to Austen scholars. I will also offer further background and context on the source material and assess the currently accepted story of Elizabeth’s life in light of this new information.



One of the earliest references to Elizabeth Weller is a precis of her story in *Chawton Manor and Its Owners: A Family History* (1911) by William Austen-Leigh and Montagu George Knight

(152–56). The 1913 *Life and Letters* by William Austen-Leigh (1843–1921) and Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (1872–1961), Austen’s great-nephew and great-(x2) nephew respectively, provides a more developed version of the story, including of her *Memorandum* and account book. The authors note that “Elizabeth left behind her not only elaborately kept accounts but also a minute description of her actions through many years and of the motives which governed them” (2). Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (hereafter RAAL) goes into further detail in *Austen Papers 1704–1856*, a collection of family material published privately in 1942. The first chapter, “Elizabeth Austen and Francis Austen, 1704–1721,” tells the story, mainly using Elizabeth’s *Memorandum* and account book, of her widowhood and subsequent struggle to raise her children, including Jane Austen’s grandfather, William (1701–37).<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Weller was born on 18 December 1671, and grew up in Tonbridge (R. Weller, unpaginated leaf). Her father, Thomas (1632–1722), was a lawyer; Mark Ballard and Allison Cresswell note that he “had acted as steward of South Frith and Rusthall, two of the three manors which converged at The Wells, and collaborated with the viscountess of Purbeck, lady of South Frith, in developing the spa, converting property there from seasonal accommodation to permanent residences” (72). Elizabeth grew up in a comfortable home, Chauntlers in Bordyke, Tonbridge, which still stands. It had been bought in about 1631 by her grandfather, another Thomas (1602–70), who was also a lawyer.<sup>3</sup> The house remained in the family until it was sold to a neighbor, George Children of Ferox Hall, in 1800. The house was subsequently divided into two properties, now known as The Priory and the Red House (Ballard and Cresswell 74, plate 11).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As will be detailed below, RAAL made his transcript of the manuscript in 1909; there is also an undated typescript of the manuscript by RAAL in the Hampshire Record Office (23M93/97/5/3), which contains a small number of variants of the text that appears in *Austen Papers*.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth’s grandfather Thomas was a parliamentarian during the English Civil War with responsibility for collecting taxes in the local area. A brief account of his role on the Tonbridge Historical Society website (<http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk/events/civil-war.html>) appears to have been extracted from a full account first published in the *Camden Miscellany* in 1855, which can also be found online: [https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The\\_Camden\\_Miscellany/m6UKAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/The_Camden_Miscellany/m6UKAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover).

<sup>4</sup> For further details on the house and its history, see Hoole.

On 19 January 1694, Elizabeth married John Austen (d. 1704), also of Tonbridge.<sup>5</sup> This John Austen, Jane Austen's great-grandfather, has been called John Austen IV in the biographical literature to distinguish him from his father, John Austen III (1629–1705), and son, John Austen V (1696–1728). (See Appendix 1.) John Austen III's wealth came from being a clothier, which Le Faye defines as "the middleman who provided the capital and raw wool for the manufacture of cloth, and then sold on the finished product to merchants for retailing" (*Family Record* 1). John III lived at Grovehurst, Horsmonden, which is about ten miles from Tonbridge. Elizabeth and John lived at nearby Broadford, another Austen family home.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1695 and 1704, Elizabeth and John had seven children: a daughter and six sons (see Appendix 1). On 21 September 1704, however, tragedy struck when John IV died of consumption after a long illness. Prior to his death, he had revealed to his father that he had got into considerable debt and sought his father's help to settle with his creditors. We are told that John III reassured his son, but after his death, he reneged on his promise and refused to help Elizabeth. He stalled and prevaricated before dying himself on 13 July 1705, just under a year after his own son's death. When John III's will was read, Elizabeth was bitterly disappointed in the small provision made for her fatherless children. Nonetheless,

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<sup>5</sup> I have not been able to ascertain with confidence when John Austen was born. I have found four online sources that state 1657, with one quoting the International Genealogical Index: <https://theweald.org/N10.asp?ID=211100>. In her *Chronology*, however, Le Faye has dates of "c.1665" and "?1665" (1, 4), but her source, RAAL's *Pedigree*, does not contain these dates (3). Le Faye's index in the *Letters* also states "?1665–1704" (483), however, her *Family Record* has "c.1670," but without citing a source (1). Jon Spence's *Becoming Jane Austen* also states 1670 (1, 6), but without source, although he may have been drawing on the *Family Record*. The Goudhurst Local History Society's website has a record for the baptism of a John Austen, son of John and Jane, on 10 August 1662: <http://www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org/baptisms-1654-1669>.

There are various genealogical papers compiled by RAAL in the Hampshire Record Office (23M93/97/5/4 & 23M93/97/5/5). I have looked through a number of them, and, although there is reference to John IV's death in 1704, I have not found any record of his year or date of birth. The above dates, if correct, span the period 1657–70, meaning that John IV could have been between approximately thirty-four and forty-seven at his death. The 1913 *Life and Letters* states (without source) that he married "when quite young" (2).

According to RAAL's *Pedigree*, Elizabeth and John married on 29 December 1693 (3), a date quoted by Clare Graham (53), but Ballard and Cresswell have verified 19 January 1694 (75).

<sup>6</sup> For images, see <http://www.horsmonden.co.uk/places/broadford/>, <http://www.horsmonden.co.uk/places/grovehurst/>, and <https://janeausteninvermont.blog/2013/09/20/jane-austen-and-the-huguenots-of-spitalfields-guest-post-by-ron-dunning/>.

she sold off her household goods, dealt with her husband's creditors, and found a way to solve the problem of her children's education, given that there was no local grammar school.

Elizabeth rented out Broadford and moved to Sevenoaks, some sixteen miles away, as she had heard that the schoolhouse was to be let to the master with schoolboys being taken in as boarders. In this period at Sevenoaks, boarding was not an integral part of the school's structure. The occasional boy who boarded was simply someone who stayed in the headmaster's household. The minor poet Elijah Fenton (1683–1730), the headmaster at the time, was a bachelor.<sup>7</sup> As housekeeper (not matron, as the plaque suggests), Elizabeth fulfilled a role normally exercised by a headmaster's wife in running his personal household. As part of the arrangement, Elizabeth's own sons would be educated gratis (although her accounts show entries for Latin, French, and the writing master). Her second to youngest son, Robert, died young of smallpox, but the other boys entered trades and made their way in the world, the most successful being her second son, Francis. Elizabeth died on 20 February 1721, and was buried in Tonbridge (*Austen Papers* 1–16; Tomalin 12–14).<sup>8</sup>

Many subsequent biographers and researchers have drawn on RAAL's transcript to recount Elizabeth's tale. RAAL's description of Elizabeth as "plucky" (16) is echoed in the subsequent literature, with John Austen III being roundly condemned as the villain of the piece. To George Holbert Tucker he is "the crotchety old man, who disliked his daughter-in-law" (20);

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<sup>7</sup> There is some doubt as to Fenton's exact dates at Sevenoaks, but he seems to have been there from around 1708 to 1711. I have examined a number of biographies and accounts of Fenton's life, but I have not found anything that throws significant light on his time at Sevenoaks. For details on Fenton's life and specifically his time at Sevenoaks, see Sherbo, Johnson (89), and Harlan (33–41). For additional accounts of Fenton, many used by Johnson, see the sources quoted by Roger Lonsdale in his edition of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. See also Graham.

<sup>8</sup> The year of Elizabeth's death is sometimes given as 1720—for example, in Robert Weller's *Family Memoranda & Letters* (unpaginated leaf) and RAAL's typescript of the Weller manuscript (15)—although in *Austen Papers*, RAAL used 1721 (xi, 16). This variance is likely because prior to 1752 and the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in Britain, the calendar year began from 25 March, and dates prior to this could be considered as falling in either year. This discrepancy can also be seen in the unnumbered loose leaf on which Elizabeth recorded the dates of birth of her children: e.g., Francis's year of birth is given as 1697/8 and Stephen's as 1703/4. For simplicity, I have used the year as per the modern Gregorian calendar (i.e. the later year).

Additional accounts of Elizabeth's life can be found in Wilson (14–20), Killingray and Purves (210–11), and Spence (*Becoming* 1–5).

Maggie Lane describes him as “crusty and capricious” (21) and “tight-fisted” (24). Le Faye’s *Family Record* judges John III as “miserly” for his “grudging assistance” (2). Spence reads the will as showing “his almost bitter determination to [make his grandson John V a gentleman], and it hints that he saw his daughter-in-law as his enemy” (*Wills* 5). Clare Graham’s judgment is perhaps most damning: “It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that [John III] just enjoyed making [Elizabeth] suffer” (Graham 56). Claire Tomalin presents Elizabeth’s story most eloquently, concluding, “Her life had been hard, but also heroic; father, husband, father-in-law and brothers-in-law had all failed her and her children, and she had saved them single-handed, by a combination of grit and ingenuity” (14).

It is unclear how many researchers, if indeed any at all, have consulted the original manuscript of Elizabeth’s *Memorandum*, which has been at Jane Austen’s House at Chawton since 1971. I have not found any work that quotes directly from the manuscript, except for Le Faye’s *Chronology*. All other sources quote from RAAL’s transcript.<sup>9</sup> Sophie Reynolds of Jane Austen’s House has kindly confirmed that no one has examined the manuscript at least since 2018—surprising given that RAAL did not provide a full transcript, as appears from the ellipses in his account and his occasional interspersed commentary, which condenses certain passages of the *Memorandum*.<sup>10</sup>

In a 2009 article on the *Austen Papers*, Le Faye provided some history and a possible view to the future:

Elizabeth Austen’s “Memorandums” and her domestic account book passed to her son Francis and so on to his descendants who lived at Kippington near Sevenoaks in Kent. RAAL saw these items in 1909, and published a fair amount of the information they contained in *Austen Papers*. The manuscripts were finally given to the Jane Austen Society in 1971 by another descendant, Miss Susan Radcliffe, and are now

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<sup>9</sup> There is an image of a passage of the *Memorandum* as plate five in Graham’s article.

<sup>10</sup> Further confusion has probably been caused by certain commentators stating that the transcript is complete. See, for example, the *Jane Austen Society Report* for 1971—“The statement is transcribed in full in *Austen Papers*, edited by R. A. Austen-Leigh” (“New Exhibits”)—and Brade-Birks’s statement that Elizabeth’s “own account is given in full in *Austen Papers*, pp. 3 et seq” (218).

kept in the archives of the Jane Austen Memorial Trust at Chawton; they still await complete transcription and publication. (21)<sup>11</sup>

On examining the *Memorandum* and account book at Chawton in May 2023, I was therefore surprised to find a transcript of the *Memorandum* made by Le Faye herself, along with a letter to Tom Carpenter of Jane Austen’s House Museum (as it then was) dated 19 January 2004, in which she states her intention of also making a transcript of Elizabeth’s account book.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear why Le Faye never published her transcript of the *Memorandum*, but on comparing her transcript with the original I noticed a number of departures from the text, and so therefore made a completely new transcript of the *Memorandum* and of the account book. Le Faye’s transcript of the *Memorandum* was prefaced by a short note on the manuscript’s transmission, which appears below and to which I have made corrections and additions:

These two items descended in the family of Kippington Austens, as follows:

- 1) Elizabeth Weller (1671–1721).
- 2) Her second son, Francis Austen II (1698–1791) of Sevenoaks.<sup>13</sup>
- 3) His eldest son, Francis Motley Austen (1747–1815) of Kippington.
- 4) His third son, John Austen VII (1777–1851) of Kippington.
- 5) His eldest son, John Francis Austen VIII (1817–93), who sold Kippington and built Capel Manor, near Broadford, Horsmonden, which was completed in 1862 (Fitzhugh 99). John Francis Austen married twice, first in 1855 to Charlotte Tucker (c.1820–62). By her, he had two daughters, the eldest being Charlotte. In 1868, he married Georgiana Pearse (1843–1931), by whom he had another two

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<sup>11</sup> Note that Sylvia Andrews wrote in 1949, “*In a letter still preserved at Chawton, she [i.e., Elizabeth] announced her intention to ‘take a roomy house at Sennocks within reach of the Grammar School, and board the schoolmaster and some of his pupils’*” (3, emphasis added). Andrews might have been thinking of RAAL’s transcript and been mistaken about the original’s whereabouts.

<sup>12</sup> Le Faye’s books and papers are now deposited at Chawton House, but since cataloguing is ongoing, it is currently unclear if the transcript of the account book was ever made. I am grateful to Emma Yandle for assistance on this point. Le Faye does, however, quote selectively from the account book in her *Chronology* (7–9).

<sup>13</sup> Francis Austen is sometimes referred to as “Old Francis.” Jane Austen’s brother Henry might have been the originator of this denomination (*Austen Papers* 16); I refer to him as “Francis II,” following his great-grandfather, Francis I (1600–88).

daughters.<sup>14</sup> (RAAL states that he saw the manuscript in 1909, when it was in the possession of John VIII's second wife, Georgiana, who was still living at Capel Manor. She remained there until her death in 1931.)

- 6) His eldest daughter, Charlotte Marianne Austen (1857–1910), who in 1887 married Sir William Smith Marriott, 8th baronet (1865–1943).
- 7) Their only child, Mary Charlotte Smith Marriott (1888–c.1981). She married, first, Heathfield Dodgson in 1913; and then, in 1927, Alban Harrison (1869–1943), civil servant and professional footballer.<sup>15</sup> By her first husband, Mary had one son, Raymond (1914–40), who was killed in action in Somaliland. He was unmarried. Mary lived at Brookden, Cranbrook, Kent. Presumably due to the death of her son, she gave away some of her Austen family memorabilia. The Elizabeth Weller material went to her third cousin, Susan Radcliffe.
- 8) Susan Radcliffe (1912–86) was a violoncellist. Her brother was the musicologist Philip Fitzhugh Radcliffe (1905–86), Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. Tragically, both brother and sister were killed in a car accident in France in 1986. Susan Radcliffe passed on the Weller material to the Jane Austen Memorial Trust in Chawton in 1971.

On examining the manuscript, I found that two pages, eleven and twelve, are missing. Le Faye had also noticed this fact in her 2004 transcript, and these pages also seem to have been missing in 1909 when RAAL made his transcript. On her title page Elizabeth refers to a sequence of pages that begins with number thirteen (see transcript below). Another possibility, then, is that there were no pages eleven and twelve and that Elizabeth perhaps made a mistake in the sequencing of the pages that she realized but did not correct. Fortunately, a copy of Elizabeth's *Memorandum* (but not her account book) was made by her brother Robert, appearing in a volume he compiled titled *Family Memoranda & Letters*. This volume is now in private hands, but the current owner has very kindly allowed me to view it.

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<sup>14</sup> Georgiana's great-uncle, John Pearse (1759–1836), was Director and Governor of the Bank of England. His wife was Anne Pearse, née Phillimore. In the *Later Manuscripts*, she has been identified as the "Mrs Pearse of Chilton-Lodge" in Austen's *Plan of a Novel* (Todd and Bree 228, 689; Fitzhugh 100–01; Claus).

<sup>15</sup> Harrison's first name is sometimes given as Allan (*Pedigree* 8; *Chronology* 729), but his first name was in fact Alban, as can be seen from various online sources. I am grateful to Ron Dunning for confirming this.



Before I examine the contents of Robert Weller's book any further, it is worth pausing to consider its author, as his history demonstrates just how interconnected gentry families were. Robert Weller was born in 1677, making him almost five years younger than his sister Elizabeth. He left Tonbridge to train as an apothecary, moving to Rochester and becoming a freeman in 1700. In 1704 he married Elizabeth Poley of Rochester, where he became mayor in 1719 (Ballard 74). Edward Hasted notes that Robert Weller of Tonbridge was the sheriff of the county of Kent in 1728, Thomas May in 1729, and Sir Brook Bridges in 1733; when Sir Brook Bridges died on 23 May, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull became sheriff for the remainder of the year (1: 211 [1797]).<sup>16</sup> Thomas May (1701–81) was the father of Thomas Knight (1735–94), who would subsequently adopt Jane Austen's brother Edward, and Sir Brook Bridges's son, the third baronet Sir Brook Bridges (1733–91), would become Edward's father-in-law. The Sir Wyndham Knatchbull (1699–1749) mentioned was the 5th baronet and great-uncle of Fanny Knight's husband, Sir Edward Knatchbull (1781–1849), the 9th baronet.

It is also worth mentioning that Robert Weller's daughter Jane (1707–89) married John Children (1706–72). Their son George Children (1742–1818) bought Elizabeth's childhood home, Chauntlers in Tonbridge, from the Wellers in 1800. George's son John George Children (1777–1852) was a chemist and friend of Humphry Davy.<sup>17</sup> Due to their shared Weller ancestry, Jane Austen and John George Children were third cousins, and he is mentioned in Austen letters (15–16 September 1796). (See Appendix 5.) These details underscore the point made by Gilbert Hoole and noted by Ballard and Cresswell on the extremely close-knit nature of Tonbridge (and more broadly Kentish) gentry society (76).

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<sup>16</sup> Hasted's *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* appeared in two distinct editions with significant differences. The first appeared between 1778 and 1799 in four volumes, the second between 1797 and 1801 in twelve volumes. All quotations hereafter will specify the volume and year. For further details, see Thirsk.

<sup>17</sup> Both George and John George Children have entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, as does John George's daughter, Anna Atkins (1799–1871), botanist and photographic artist: George Children

(<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5298>), John George Children

(<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5299#odnb-9780198614128-e-5299>), Anna Atkins

(<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-37132#odnb-9780198614128-e-37132>). Note that in the *Letters Le Faye* states that George Children married Jane Weller of Tonbridge (505), but Jane Weller was in fact his mother. George married Susannah, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Marshall Jordan, as noted in his *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry.

Robert Weller stated that the *Family Memoranda & Letters* came into being on the death of his father, Thomas Weller (1632–1722), and his uncle Henry Weller (1639–1721). Through their deaths, Robert inherited various family papers, which he copied into the *Family Memoranda & Letters* to preserve for future generations.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, the manuscripts copied included Elizabeth’s *Memorandum* (119–27). Robert prefaced his copy with the statement:

The following was copied from some loose papers of my sister Mrs Elizabeth Austen widow of John Austen of Horsemonden daughter of Mr Tho<sup>s</sup> Weller of Tonbridge who died at Sennock the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1720 found among her papers after her decease and entitled by her on the outside and all writ with her own hand.

Presumably, he would have borrowed the manuscript from his nephew Francis II, who inherited it on his mother’s death.

Robert Weller married Elizabeth Poley (1681–1761), daughter of Thomas Poley (1642–1701) and Frances, daughter of Sir Richard Head of Rochester. In the absence of a male heir, the Poley estate at Boxted Hall in Suffolk was settled on Robert’s lawyer son George (1710–78), on condition he take the Poley name. He therefore became George Weller-Poley and moved to Boxted Hall in 1757, having recently married Frances Hussey (1724–96) (Ballard and Cresswell 75).<sup>19</sup> We can see that George continued to make entries into the *Family Memoranda & Letters*, as his initials appear in later pages. George was Francis II’s cousin, and the *Family Memoranda & Letters* demonstrates that the two branches of the family kept in touch: it records that Francis II was godfather or proxy godfather to a number of George’s children, as was Francis’s nephew and George Austen’s cousin, Henry Austen (1726–1807):

- George (1753–80): “Revd Mr Henry Austen Proxy for Ed Weller”
- John (1755–99): “Proxy for Mr Children the Revd Mr Henry Austen”

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Weller’s *Family Memoranda & Letters* contains additional material on the Austen family that I hope to publish in a subsequent article. The Suffolk Record Office at Bury St. Edmunds holds a book of letters to and from Robert (HA 519/8/75), although this item does not appear on their online catalogue. A copy of this letterbook is available on microfilm at the Kent Archives and Local History center; their online catalogue lists a number of the correspondents, some of whom have connections with the Austen family:

[https://www.kentarchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/GB51\\_TR\\_3882\\_1](https://www.kentarchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/GB51_TR_3882_1).

<sup>19</sup> A portrait of Frances as a child can be seen at <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/792016>.

- Robert (1756): “His Cosen Francis Austen of Seven-oak, Kent” “Proxies, for Mr Francis Austen John Poley Esq”
- Edward (1758–64): “His kinsman Francis Austen of Sevenoak in Kent” “following proxies . . . Fr Austen” (See Appendix 4.)

3. *Proxies for Mr Children the Rev. Mr Henry [unclear] the July 1756 about 2 an.*  
*Robt Weller, born Monday 12: July 1756*  
 Hour after four in the morning privately baptized the  
 next day in the afternoon His Cosen Francis Austen  
 of Seven-oak, Kent & Edward Jennings Esq<sup>r</sup> of the  
 Inner Temple being his Godfathers, and his Great  
 Aunt Mrs Eliz: Gott his Godmother.  
 publicly baptized 30<sup>th</sup>, Proxies, for Mr Francis Austen  
 John Poley Esq<sup>r</sup>; 30 for Mr Jennings Mr Robt Rose; for Mrs  
 Gott, Mrs Aspin. Died 2: August following. Buried the 5<sup>th</sup>  
 at the entrance of the Door just within the Burying Ground at  
 Boxted. June 25: 1757 about Three

Detail from the *Family Memoranda & Letters*. © Azar Hussain

Another connection between the Wellers and Austens appears in the posthumous collection of James Cawthorn’s poetry in 1771. Cawthorn had been headmaster at Tonbridge School (1743–61), where Austen’s father had been educated. George Austen attended the school during Cawthorn’s time and subsequently became his assistant master.<sup>20</sup> Curiously, George Austen’s name does not appear among the list of subscribers, but we do find both “John Austin, Esq; Broadford, Kent” and “George Waller, Esq; Boxted Hall, Suffolk” (Cawthorn i, iii), these presumably being John Austen VI and George Weller-Poley, his first cousin once removed.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Martin J. Cawthorne for a valuable account of the connection between the Austens and James Cawthorn.

<sup>21</sup> See

<https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Poems/3qpYAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=poems%20by%20james%20cawthorne&pg=PA2&printsec=frontcover>.

I have cross-referenced Robert Weller's text with that of the Chawton manuscript and indicated in my transcript where I have found significant departures. Textual variances or comments are marked in blue and accompanied by a footnote. Robert sometimes expands Elizabeth's contractions—for example, writing "and" as opposed to an ampersand or "that" instead of "y<sup>t</sup>." He also occasionally corrects Elizabeth's somewhat unorthodox spelling. These corrections often do not make any material difference to the sense. I have generally left Elizabeth's wording untouched to allow the reader a better sense of her voice and the character of her hand.

In addition to the *Memorandum*, Robert copied out seven letters from Elizabeth to their father, dating from John IV's last illness prior to his death on 21 September 1704, to before Elizabeth's removal to Sevenoaks in June 1708 (127–31). These letters parallel part of the timeframe of her *Memorandum* and therefore provide a valuable sidelight into this period of Elizabeth's life. To my knowledge, they appear in print here for the first time and call into question some of the assertions made in the accounts of Elizabeth's life that appear in the secondary literature.