

Of Catherine
wife of
Jacob Godfrey Hippius
Who died March 10 1821
Aged 6*

Catherine Hippius (often transcribed as Hippias, Hippies or Hippins) died on 10th March 1821 aged 64¹. She was the wife of Jacob Godfrey Hippius a Merchant from London. A new grave was made for her for 16/- which was paid on 15th Feb? 1821 and then a further 10/6 was paid on 21st April for a head stone for her grave.²

The Monthly Repository reported in the obituary column ***'March 10, at Exeter, after a long illness, borne with Christian patience, Catherine, wife of Mr. J. G. Hippius, of Hackney.'***³

We don't know why she died in Exeter; whether she was here for her health, staying with friends or whether Jacob was here for business we can but surmise at present.

Catherine Hippius was born Catherine Mallison in Bridlington York in 1758⁴. She was the daughter of Thomas Mallison and Ann (née Obee). Catherine was one of four children as far as we know. Her brother Thomas was born 1746, sister Isabella 1749 and Ann 1750.⁵

At the birth of Thomas junior his father was described as an exciseman and when he died 'The Gentleman's magazine' recorded in the deaths section that on '27 May 1794, aged 82 Mr T Mallison late supervisor of excise at Hull and on the same day aged 72 Mrs. Ann Mallison his wife to whom he had been married 50 years.'⁶

Catherine Mallison married Jacob Godfrey Hippius on 4 August 1778 at Hull, York.⁷ They eventually had nine children. Catherine (1780), John Frederick (1782), Thomas (1783), John (1785), James (1786), Isabella (1787), George (1788), Elizabeth (1789) and Charles James (1790).⁸ By the time she died in 1821 she had seen at least three of her children dead and possibly more.

Jacob was born in Reval, Estonia in about 1753. We don't know when he came to England but he settled in Kingston-upon-Hull. According to insurance policies he was in the timber trade with John Wray in 1781. His brother, Frederick, also lived in the house of John

¹ 'Exeter Bow Meeting (Presbyterian) 1687-1823 Births, Baptisms and Burials RG4/965 accessed via Ancestry.co.uk

² 'Report and Account book of Dissenters Burial Ground 1748-1832, DRO3693D/0/B/1, Devon Heritage Trust

³ 'The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature, Vol 12, 1821, p.182

⁴ 'England, Select Births and Christenings 1538-1975, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk

⁵ Sourced via Ancestry.co.uk

⁶ The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle for the year 1794. Vol. 64, part 1, London

⁷ 'England, Select Marriages 1538-1973' accessed via Ancestry.co.uk

⁸ 'England, Select Births and Christenings 1538-1975' and 'London, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1538-1812' accessed via Ancestry.co.uk

Bromby,⁹ a merchant who joined Wray and Hippius in 1783/4 as a third partner at the beginning of the 1780s.¹⁰ Some months before his marriage he gained his British naturalisation (6th March 1778).¹¹ After the birth of their first child, Catherine (1780), they moved to London and lived in 4 America Square, Aldgate which was the commercial premises of Hippius and Co. On Wednesday 24th November 1784 Messrs Hippius & Wray, Merchants in the City of London took on Andrew Hollingworth as an apprentice so their business must have been thriving. By 1791 he was living in Throgmorton Street where he filed for bankruptcy in 1796.

It has been difficult to find out exactly what Jacob was a merchant in. The listings include timber, tar and iron and in the bankruptcy papers he had mainly wood, iron, coal and grain. However, in 1804 after a second bankruptcy he 'tried a new beginning as a goods broker'.¹² A poll book of 1796 lists him as a Broderer. He became a Freeman through the Worshipful Company of Broderers in 1789,¹³ a Master of the Court in 1805-6 and listed as a Broker and member of the Court in 1820.¹⁴

Jacob died in April 1828 at the age of 74 and was buried in St. John, Hackney. The Monthly Repository and Review of Theology and General Literature Vol 2, reported his death with an obituary which gives us an insight into the type of man he was.

'Mr Hippius. April 15, at his house, Upper Homerton, Jacob Godfrey Hippius Esq., aged 75 years. He was respected both by rich and poor, on account of the kindness and benevolence which accompanied his actions. He has soothed the sorrows of many a widowed mother when she has almost sunk in despair, and the fatherless, the sick and the indigent, rarely sought relief of him in vain; in a word, he was always ready to promote what he considered to be the best interest of mankind to the full extent of his power.'

It is possible that only three of his children survived him, Charles James¹⁵, Elizabeth and Thomas. His will reads thus:

'In case of my death it is my will that my son Charles James and my daughter Elizabeth become joint executors of what property I may die worth or leave behind me out of what I have acquired thro' war trading exertions and agonising perplexities and anxiety during the hellish war. should my son Thomas survive me I leave it to my executors to give to him what share they like out of what they become possessed of from or through me his horrible opstrepulous behaviour from his infancy towards his parents would justify me in forbidding anything to be given to him but God have mercy on us all. J.G.H.'

The war he talks of is the Napoleonic War, a period when trading was difficult.

⁹ John Bromby married Catherine Hippius' sister Isabella Mallison

10 Deutsche Kaufleute in London: Welthandel und Einbürgerung (1660-1818), Margrit Schulte Beerbühl.

¹¹ 'Letters of Denization and acts of naturalization for aliens in England and Ireland' by William Arthur Shaw, pub. 1911.

¹² As 10 above

¹³ Freeman – those who had obtained the Freedom of the Company but were not yet full Liverymen of their Company.

¹⁴ 'A Chat about the Broderers' Company by An Old Boy and Past Master', London, 1910.

¹⁵ Liverymen - those who had set up in business on their own, were Freeman of the City, had been admitted as full members of the Company and could eventually become members of the Court.

Catherine's sister Ann Mallison, married John Chapelle and their daughter Ann married Captain Matthew Flinders the Navigator and cartographer. Separated for many years they corresponded regularly and even Ann's half-sister Isabella Tyler (Ann Mallison married twice) wrote to Matthew. In her letter dated 4 July 1810 she says

'You perhaps recollect my two cousins Bell & Elizabeth Hippins (mistranscribed), you will be surprised to hear that Bell is become a very elegant woman, not handsome it is true, but a remarkably fine figure, very tall (Do you know I am not a bit bigger than your wife, how provoking, when of all things I wish to be tall) I spent three months with them last winter, the first time I have visited the Metropolis since I went with you, my Aunt looks quite young as ever, and my Uncle is as disagreeable nay, if I must speak the truth, I shall say ten times more disagreeable if possible, than when I saw him before'.

The Aunt and Uncle she speaks of are Catherine and Jacob Godfrey Hippus. Matthew named many places on his circumnavigation of Australia after family including Mallison Island no doubt named after his mother in Law or her family.

'From thence the main coast was visible four leagues further, extending in the same south-western direction; at the end of it was an island of considerable elevation, which I named *Mallison's Island*,¹⁶

However from December 1803 until June 1810 Matthew Flinders was detained on Mauritius as a result of the war between Britain and France. He continued to write many letters hoping that Mr Hippus would be able to help deliver them.¹⁷ *"Mr. Hippus or Thomas Franklin could probably inclose thy letters to some merchant in New York or some other part of America, with a request to have them forwarded to the Isle of France Direct them under cover"*

Anne Amosford
July 2017

¹⁶ Flinders, M. (1814). A Voyage to Terra Australis'

¹⁷ <http://flinders.rmg.co.uk/index-2.html>