

Clandestine Marriages of Effingham Residents 1667-1754

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The practice of clandestine marriage, whereby couples married not in compliance with the laws set down either by the church or by statute, became ever more prevalent during the 18th century. Huge numbers of them were carried out in London, especially in the area of the Fleet prison, mostly officiated by 'ministers' of a disreputable nature and conducted in disorderly venues such as taverns. At least a dozen such marriages were entered into by residents of Effingham and these are the focus of this article.

Introduction

In the 13th century the Church consolidated its view that marriage was a sacrament (a gift from God), thereby to justify it being controlled by the Church. Accordingly, rules were established in Canon Law (ie church law) stipulating the Church's requirements for marriage. The rules evolved over time. Following the religious changes brought about through the Reformation, the rules as set out by the Church of England from the 16th century became crystallised in the canons of 1604. Within this set of about 141 canons, 9 concern marriage (Nos 62, 63, 70 and 99-104) and 4 concern divorce (Nos 105-108). As an example, canon 62 reads as follows:

LXII.

Ministers not to Marry any Persons without Banns or License.

NO Minister upon Pain of Suspension per triennium ipso facto, shall celebrate Matrimony between any Persons, without a Faculty or License granted by some of the Persons in these our Constitutions expressed, except the Banns of Matrimony have been first published three several Sundays or Holy-days in the time of Divine Service, in the Parish Churches or Chapels where the said Parties dwell, according to the Book of Common Prayer. Neither shall any Minister upon the like pain under any Pretence whatsoever, joyn any Persons so Licensed in Marriage at any unseasonable Times, but only between the Hours of Eight and Twelve in the Forenoon, nor in any private Place, but either in the said Churches or Chapels where one of them dwelleth, and likewise in Time of Divine Service: Nor when Banns are thrice asked (and no License in that respect necessary) before the Parents or Governours of the Parties to be married, being under the Age of Twenty and one Years, shall either personally, or by sufficient Testimony, signifie to him their Consents given to the said Marriage.

Many important legal matters (eg legitimacy of offspring, inheritance, etc) hinge upon the question of the *validity* of a marriage as determined by the law. If the legal status of a marriage be challenged, then that status will be determined by the law as it stands at the time the challenge is made, not solely upon whatever status the marriage had initially; this is because new laws may operate retrospectively so as to revise earlier decisions. A marriage is *valid* for any legal purpose when it is *recognised to be so* by every court having jurisdiction in the matter. In general the law presumes a marriage to be valid unless a challenger can satisfy a court that the marriage is *void*, that is, had never validly existed. Also, there have been past occasions when a marriage that was originally void was subsequently rendered valid by later retrospective legislation.

Prior to 1754, the period of interest examined in this article, the question of whether any particular marriage was valid was entirely a matter to be decided by the church (ecclesiastical) courts. Whilst the (civil) courts of common law often had to consider whether some couple were married, the mere fact of the parties having undergone a marriage ceremony was sufficient for them to be presumed married; but any challenge to the *validity* of the marriage remained wholly within the jurisdiction of the church courts to decide.

There is a vital distinction to be drawn, with regard to the requirements of the law, as to what is *mandatory* and what is merely *directory*. In relation to marriage, some of the requirements set out in the canons of 1604 have been mistakenly viewed, by many modern writers of both history and of genealogy, as mandatory when they were actually only directory. As one example among several it is commonly but wrongly often asserted that failure to have the Banns called or to have obtained a Licence prior to a marriage ceremony rendered that marriage invalid; but this is not the case. The excellent guide *Marriage Law for Genealogists* by Professor Rebecca Probert, a leading authority on the marriage laws of England and Wales, explains how such mistakes have arisen and then been widely propagated even to works that one might have regarded as authoritative and trustworthy, resulting in much confusion in the literature of this subject and leading many genealogists astray.

To summarise, during the period (1667-1754) the applicable law was Anglican canon law, as it had been from the start of the 17th century except in a brief period in the 1650s up to 1660 (the year of the Restoration) when civil law applied. The two essential mandatory requirements for a valid marriage were:

1. the ceremony *had to be conducted by an Anglican clergyman*;
2. both parties *had to express their consent to be married to one another*.

A marriage could be challenged if either party lacked the required *capacity* to marry, ie if:

3. the parties were related *within the prohibited degrees* (eg were siblings);
4. either of the parties was *under the age of consent* (12 for girls or 14 for boys);
5. the parties were *of the same sex*;
6. either of the parties was *already married*;
7. either of the parties was *not capable of consummation* at the time they married.

Certain other requirements were merely directory and these included:

8. either Banns had to be called or a Marriage Licence had to be obtained;
9. the marriage had to take place in a church or chapel in the parish of at least one of the couple unless a Marriage Licence had been obtained, for which a fee would be payable;
10. if either one party was aged under 21 years then consent was required of their parents or guardians;
11. the marriage had to be recorded in the Register of the church or chapel where the marriage took place;
12. the marriage ceremony had to be conducted during 'canonical hours', that is, between 8am and noon.

Failure to observe any of the directory requirements did *not* inherently invalidate the marriage. Their purpose was to make clear firmly what the church expected of all marrying couples and to encourage conformity in the ceremony of marriage. When such a requirement was not met the offending party or parties could be brought before a diocesan Correction Court and made subject to penalties.

Prior to 1754 a marriage that failed to comply with all the requirements of canon law was termed *clandestine*. Nevertheless, provided it had been consensual and celebrated by an Anglican clergyman it was still a valid marriage. In some quarters an additional term *irregular* has also been used to classify certain kinds of non-compliant marriage, but this term lacks formal legal meaning and we shall not use it here. The usual meaning of 'clandestine' is of something secret or underhand but is used more loosely in our current context to connote any way in which the marriage service did not meet the church's requirements.

Clandestine marriages became an ever-increasing occurrence:

'Clandestine marriages began to grow in numbers from the middle of the seventeenth century. The authorities attempted to quell this growth by introducing three parliamentary acts between 1694 and 1696 which collectively regulated marriages, introduced marriage taxes and censured and suspended clergy found to be involved. These, however, only applied to marriage centres which came under the jurisdiction (or visitation) of the bishop of the diocese. These acts inadvertently gave a near monopoly to private marriage centres outside the bishop's visitation (e.g. prisons) and to clergymen (many of whom were prisoners) who had been dismissed or were in debt and who had nothing to lose by conducting clandestine, fee-paying marriages.

In 1711, Parliament passed legislation which included an attempt to deal with the problem of such clandestine marriages being conducted in prisons. A clause was included in the act to counter the loss of revenue (from non-payment of stamp duties) caused by clandestine marriages. The clause continued the imposition of fines for any person in 'holy orders' conducting a marriage but also introduced the same fine for any prison keeper who permitted such a marriage at his prison. While this prevented the marriages being performed inside the prisons, it did not prevent them being conducted in other locations in the vicinity of the prisons: e.g. the Liberties (or Rules) of the Fleet, or the Mint (for King's Bench Prison).'

[General Register Office: *Registers of Clandestine Marriages and of Baptisms in the Fleet Prison, King's Bench Prison, the Mint and the May Fair Chapel*, The National Archives: Class RG7]

By 1753 very large numbers of clandestine marriages were taking place, often in disreputable circumstances (as will be discussed presently) and creating difficulties in many areas of life, including the management of estates:

'By the early 18th Century, it was estimated that up to a third of all marriages were irregular or clandestine. In addition, around half of all marriages in London were performed at or around Fleet prison (which equated to around one seventh of all English weddings). Many couples travelled to London to get married.'

[<https://wardfamily.blog/>]

The reasons were various:

'Such ceremonies were often shrouded in secrecy as there were a variety of motives for requiring a clandestine marriage, the primary appeal being reasons of cost, while other reasons included the avoidance of the need to obtain parental consent, requiring a back-dated ceremony to legitimise offspring or attempts to validate claims upon an inheritance, proof of legitimacy or a Will.'

[<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/non-conformist-records>]

Aiming to establish order and clarity in the matter, the *civil* judiciary took a radical step towards eliminating clandestine marriages, specifically by the introduction of Lord Hardwicke's 'Marriage Act' (formally, *An Act for the Better Prevention of Clandestine Marriage*, 1753). This Act came into force on 25 March 1754.

Clergymen: income, debt and conducting of clandestine marriages

From the early Middle Ages a system of *primogeniture* had, in general, been adopted by the wealthier landowners. Under this system, on the death of a father his estate would pass to his wife for life, if she were still alive, and then go in total to the eldest son (or daughter if no males survived). This arrangement had a logic as it ensured that the estate was not divided between so many people that it would soon become valueless through fragmentation. However, if the widowed wife were young, it could put off for years the point at which the eldest son might come into the inheritance.

Provided there were sufficient money in the estate, one option was for one son to purchase a commission in the army, which could be done up to the rank of colonel. This practice took root from 1683 during the reign of Charles II and there was a sliding scale of charges for commissions. The lower ranks were obviously cheaper and the more famous foot regiments charged more, reflecting the varying degrees of social prestige between different regiments. The most expensive were amongst the cavalry regiments, but the pay was obviously better.

These commissions were not cheap and amazingly there was no obligation to know anything about military matters. One paid the money, purchased the uniform and spent one's time parading around at social events.

This system was discontinued after the serious losses in 1854 of the Light Brigade under the poor command of the 7th Earl of Cardigan, appointed despite his lack of a suitable military background.

Many younger siblings opted instead to join the officer ranks of the navy or the church to give them an income. Provided they enrolled at a university or training college for a term or two they stood a good chance of becoming an ordained minister. Some might pay a patron to nominate them for a living when a vacancy came up. But many livings were very poorly recompensed (by the Church). Consequently many curates and other clergy who had managed to find a patron sank into debt.

There were several ways by which ministers could seek to improve their financial positions. One way was to become appointed as a domestic chaplain:

'A domestic chaplain was a chaplain attached to a noble household in order to grant the family a degree of self-sufficiency in religion. The chaplain was freed from any obligation to reside in a particular place so could travel with the family, internationally if necessary, and minister to their spiritual needs.'

[<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaplain>]

The work of domestic chaplains 'was not chronicled in the usual records of the Church since they often operated outside the supervision of the ecclesiastical hierarchy' [*A Social History of the Domestic Chaplain, 1530-1840* by William Hamilton Gibson, Leicester University Press, 1997].

Two of Effingham's ministers were among the fortunate few who became domestic chaplains to the nobility. One was Thomas Bonney MA, Rector of Ockham during 1753-64 and vicar of Effingham during c1738-62; he was appointed on 11 March 1753 as domestic chaplain to Peter King, 3rd Baron of Ockham [*Register of Noblemen's Chaplains*, Lambeth Palace Library]. This gave him additional income of £164 per annum – a significant increase. The other was Bonney's successor at Effingham, Henry Warner MA. He served as Rector of Fetcham during 1748-72 and vicar of Effingham during 1762-72 and moreover was appointed on 19 August 1762 as personal chaplain to Mary Keith, Countess of Kintore.

A second way to earn income additional to that obtained from one living was to hold another living concurrently, that is, to be a *pluralist* minister, as was the case with both Bonney and Warner. Another local example was John Chorley Knowles BA, Rector of Fetcham and vicar of Effingham during 1772-93. Yet another was Henry Malthus MA who held both Effingham and Donnington in Sussex. These ministers along with several others would have considered the income from Effingham alone, as for the majority of benefices, inadequate. Some ministers occupied parishes that were contiguous, but otherwise they would find curates, to whom they could pay a percentage of the value of the living, to conduct services for them.

Pluralist positions had to surmount certain legal hurdles:

‘Although pluralism was commonplace in the Church of England, many clergymen were not eligible to hold livings in plurality and certain combinations of offices were forbidden by ecclesiastical law. When a cleric was appointed to a living that could not be held alongside his current position, the latter living was deemed void by cession.’

[<https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/glossary/cession/>]

This circumstance arose with only one of Effingham’s vicars, Thomas Bonney. Apart from holding the posts above in 1762 he also obtained the living as Rector of St Andrew Undershaft with St Mary Axe in London. This it seems was too much for John Thomas, then Bishop of Winchester, who had Bonney’s living at Effingham deemed void by cession.

A third way for a minister to supplement his income was to take on a teaching role for the offspring of a local lord. One Effingham minister, Rev William Farley, tried this but, it seems, not always successfully if his pupil Keppel were to be believed [*Fifty Years of my Life* by George Thomas Keppel, 6th Earl of Albemarle, MacMillan and Co, 1876]. Another ‘minister’, James Lando at the Fleet Prison, is recorded as offering his services to teach Latin and Greek but seems not to have had many clients.

Ironically, the ministers who came off best, if they were lucky, were those who had been committed to one of the big London prisons as debtors. There they could conduct clandestine marriages and many of them became very wealthy.

Notable venues for clandestine marriages

Prominent locations for clandestine marriages were in the vicinity of prisons, since many clergymen who had been unable to make ends meet in their former parishes became committed to these institutions through becoming debtors. These circumstances have produced for us the most fruitful sources of clandestine marriage records. Relatively little record remains of such marriages being occasionally performed elsewhere and therefore we will never know the true extent of the practice.

The Fleet Prison

In London the most significant location for clandestine marriages was the Fleet Prison which claimed to be outside the jurisdiction of the church.

Fleet Prison was chiefly a debtors prison, situated on the east bank of the Fleet River in what is now Farringdon Street, London. The surrounding area, called the ‘Rules of the Fleet’, was bounded by Farringdon Street, Ludgate Hill, the Old Bailey and Fleet Lane, being a dense and infamous warren of narrow alleys and courts. Here debtor prisoners who gave suitable security were able to live outside the prison and, where practicable, to continue their former occupations.

The earliest marriages were performed in the prison chapel, the prison warders taking a share of the profit. In 1711 a statute was enacted to impose fines upon them for doing so, but the effect was only to drive the clandestine marriage trade outside. As a result the ceremonies were performed in the open. Local taverns even made rooms available for visiting Fleet ministers to perform them. Some such taverns employed resident ministers whilst some private houses nearby let out rooms to them.

‘During the 1740s, up to a staggering 6,000 marriages a year were taking place in the Fleet area alone, between 100 clergy working in the Fleet area between 1700 and 1753. It was not merely a marriage centre for criminals and the poor, however: both rich and poor availed themselves of the opportunity to marry quickly or in secret.’

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleet_marriage]

‘The marriages performed at the Fleet involved all classes from London and the surrounding counties, but mainly catered for artisans, farmers, labourers and craftsmen from the poorer parishes of London, soldiers (including Chelsea Pensioners), and particularly sailors.’

[<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C13332>]



Figure 1 A wedding in the Fleet; 17th century print.

The King's Bench Prison

'King's Bench Prison was located on the east side of Borough High Street in Southwark. As with the Fleet, the majority of prisoners were debtors, but relatively few marriages were performed in the Prison itself.' [<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C13332>]



Figure 2 The prison yard of the King's Bench Prison in St George's Fields;
© The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

The King's Bench Prison operated from the middle ages up to 1880.

It took its name from the King's Bench court of law in which cases of defamation, bankruptcy and other misdemeanours were heard; as such, the prison was often used as a debtor's prison until the practice was abolished in the 1860s. In 1842, it was renamed the Queen's Bench Prison and became the Southwark Convict Prison in 1872.

Although much larger and better appointed than some other London prisons, the new King's Bench still gained a reputation for being dirty, overcrowded and prone to outbreaks of typhus. Debtors had to provide their own bedding, food and drink. Those who could afford it purchased 'Liberty of the Rules' allowing them to live within three square miles of the prison.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King's_Bench_Prison]

The Marshalsea Prison

The Marshalsea (1373-1842) was a notorious prison in Southwark, just south of the River Thames. Although it housed a variety of prisoners – including men accused of crimes at sea and political figures charged with sedition – it became known, in particular, for its incarceration of the poorest of London's debtors. Over half of England's prisoners in the 18th century were in jail because of debt.

Most of the first Marshalsea, as with the second, was taken up by debtors; in 1773 debtors within 12 miles of Westminster could be imprisoned there for a debt of 40 shillings. Jerry White writes that London's poorest debtors were housed in the Marshalsea. Wealthier debtors secured their removal from the Marshalsea by writ of *habeas corpus*, and arranged to be moved to the Fleet or King's Bench, both of which were more comfortable. The prison also held a small number of men being tried at the Old Bailey for crimes at sea.' [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshalsea>]



Figure 3 The first Marshalsea in the 18th century as depicted in *Old and New London*, Vol. 6, 1878 by Edward Walford; public domain.

The Mint

The Mint was somewhat different:

‘A Charter of 1550 gave the area exemption from the City's control of the manor and created a separate jurisdiction, the Liberty of the Mint. The Mint occupied an area of Southwark, south London, on the west side of Borough High Street, around where Marshalsea Road is now located.’

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_of_the_Mint]

It became a haunt of criminals and fugitives:

‘Those who were in danger of being thrown into debtor's prison could, if they were lucky, run to the Mint to hide. Once in the Mint, such debtors risked immediate arrest if they were found outside of it.’

[https://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/The_Mint]

As a result ministers here did not have the same freedoms as those in the Fleet and by the 1740s those marriages which had been performed in the Mint began to be held at the Fleet.

The King's Bench and the Mint, because of their locations, tended to attract a high proportion of couples from Kent and Surrey.



Figure 4 The Mint, Southwark, in 1825; British Library (public domain).

Curzon Chapel in May Fair and Alexander Keith

The Church of England's new Curzon Chapel was built in London's Curzon Street in 1730 and its first incumbent was Alexander Keith. He began to perform marriages without Banns having been called or Licences issued.

‘From the late 1720s, clandestine marriages commenced at May Fair [aka Mayfair (in Westminster)], which eventually became only second to the Fleet in terms of notoriety for such marriages. Initially, May Fair marriages were performed at St George's Chapel, Curzon Street, Mayfair, near Hyde Park Corner

then, from 1744, at a private dwelling house (the 'New' or 'Little Chapel') situated ten yards away from St George's Chapel. Whereas clandestine marriages performed at the Fleet and King's Bench prisons and surrounding areas tended to attract the working classes, the May Fair Chapel was frequently used by professional classes and the aristocracy for marriages, including the Dukes of Cleveland and Hamilton, Lord Stanley, and Lord George Bentinck.'

[<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C13332>]

He was in due course ex-communicated by an ecclesiastical court in 1742.

Keith then went to prison and remained there for several years. However, he quickly established his own private chapel very near to his old one on Curzon Street, where he and his curates continued clandestine marriages until 1754, when the Marriage Act 1753 came into effect. At its height, some six thousand marriages a year were taking place at the chapel.

The chapel's business was promoted by frequent advertisements in newspapers, such as this one in the *Daily Post* dated 20 July 1744:

"To prevent mistakes, the little new chapel in May Fair, near Hyde Park corner, is in the corner house, opposite to the city side of the great chapel, and within ten yards of it, and the minister and clerk live in the same corner house where the little chapel is; and the licence on a crown stamp, minister and clerk's fees, together with the certificate, amount to one guinea, as heretofore, at any hour till four in the afternoon. And that it may be the better known, there is a porch at the door like a country church porch."

Keith was finally committed to prison in the Fleet, but this did not stop the marriages and he employed Curates to perform the services. When his wife died in January 1750, Keith combined the announcement of her death in the *Daily Advertiser* with an advertisement for his chapel.'

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith%27s_Chapel



Figure 5 Certificate for a Fleet marriage; 23 February 1727.

Effingham residents marrying clandestinely

The clandestine marriage records as listed in Appendix I are held in class RG7 at The National Archives. Probably, many others have never reached The National Archives and are either in private collections or have become lost altogether.

The records of marriages of Effingham residents were found by searching *Ancestry's* scans of the records in The National Archives and are shown below. *Ancestry* may have added further marriage records since this article was written. The spellings shown are as they appear in the registers and Effingham residents are named in bold type.

The original register pages we found are shown in Plates 1-35 in Appendix II. Beneath each Plate we give the marriage date, details of the parties, the RG7 piece number, the 'officiating minister(s)' and the details of the file and date range in which the record is contained, all as given by The National Archives. The actual officiating minister for any particular marriage cannot in general be inferred with a high degree of confidence, and the details concerning this beneath the Plates should be treated with caution.

<i>Groom</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Bride</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Reference Plate</i>	
Elderfield Thomas	Effingham	1707	Smith Elizabeth	Great Buckham	RG 7/19	1
Pollard Thomas	Petworth	1720	Mascall Sarah	Effingham	RG 7/56	2
Alife [?-unclear]	Essingham?	1724	Chivers Mary?	Dorking	RG 7/62	3
Neals John	Effingham	1727	Cotton Elizabeth	Christ Church, London	RG 7/47	4
Neales John	Effingham	1727	Cotton Elizabeth	Christ Church, London	RG 7/85	5
Neales John	Effingham	1727	Cotton Elizabeth	Christ Church, London	RG 7/91	6
Neales John	Effingham	1727	Cotton Elizabeth	Christ Church, London	RG 7/595	7
Taylor John	Carford	1729	Burgess Mary	Effingham	RG 7/99	8
Sheerin Thomas	Effingham	1735	Merrett Mary	Effingham	RG 7/148	9
Sheerin Thomas	Effingham	1735	Merrett Mary	Effingham	RG 7/421	10
Sheerin Thomas	Effingham	1735	Merrett Mary	Effingham	RG 7/644	11
Godfrey William	St Martin	1737	Kelluck Elizabeth	Effingham	RG 7/139	12
Godfrey William	St Martin	1737	Killuck Elizabeth	Effingham	RG 7/144	13
Godfrey William	St Martin	1737	Killuck Elizabeth	Effingham	RG 7/147	14
Godfrey William	St Martin	1737	Kellick Elizabeth	Effingham	RG 7/159	15
Godfrey William	St Martin	1737	Kellick Elizabeth	Effingham	RG 7/160	16
Walker John	Effingham	1740	Constable Jane	Of Tavern near Blackfriars	RG 7/166	17
Walker John	Effingham	1740	Constable Jane	Of Tavern near Blackfriars	RG 7/724	18
Walker John (again)	Effingham	1752	Alemore Eliz	St Andrews, Holbourn	RG 7/268	19
Port John	Abinger	1741	Hains Jane	Effingham	RG 7/161	20
Port John	Abinger	1741	Hains Jane	Effingham	RG 7/191	21
Port John	Abinger	1741	Hains Jane	Effingham	RG 7/448	22
Port John	Abinger	1741	Hains Jane	Effingham	RG 7/491	23
Howick Henry	Effingham	1743	Hall Ann	Effingham	RG 7/215	24
Airow Thomas	Effingham	1745	Patterson Eliza	Leatherhead	RG 7/150	25
Arrow Thomas	Effingham	1745	Potterton Eliza	Leatherhead	RG 7/220	26
Arrow Thos	Effingham	1745	Potterton Eliza	Leatherhead	RG 7/526	27
Arrow Thos	Effingham	1745	Patterson Elizabeth	Leatherhead	RG 7/660	28
Harrow Joseph	Effingham	1747	Collins Amey	Effingham	RG 7/144	29
Harrow Joseph	Effingham	1747	Collins Amey	Effingham	RG 7/191	30
Harrow Joseph	Effingham	1747	Collins Ame	Effingham	RG 7/236	31
Harrow Joseph	Effingham	1747	Collins Amey	Effingham	RG 7/472	32
Harrow Joseph	Effingham	1747	Collins Amey	Effingham	RG 7/548	33
Taylor John	Compton	1750	Marsh Hannah	Effingham	RG 7/241	34
Puntar John	Effingham	1753	Muggeridge Avis	Effingham	RG 7/15	35

Altogether these entries span 15 distinct marriages (including 2 for Walker), 14 clearly for Effingham people. Similar numbers are found for some nearby villages although many more appear for Cobham.

The ministers

Below are details of some of the better known and more notorious ‘ministers’ who performed marriages for Effingham residents and operated out of the Fleet and King's Bench. The following account of them indicates which Plates show the marriages for which they officiated. Each minister subtitle below includes the date range over which they operated.

John Gaynam, c1709–1740

John Gaynam was one of the earliest, and perhaps the most prolific, performer of marriages near the Fleet. He gave evidence at several trials held at the Old Bailey in the 1730s, as recorded a century later in *The Fleet Registers* by John Southerden Burn [publ Rivingtons, London, 1833]. Extracts from these trials are given in Appendix III. Gaynam may have officiated at the marriage of John Neales and Elizabeth Cotton shown in Plates 4-7.

Walter Wyatt, c1717–1750

Walter Wyatt was also prolific in this activity. He appears on a number of marriage entries from his own registers and notebooks (eg Plates 3, 15, 17, 18, 21 etc) and also in the lists of ministers in other registers (eg Plate 6: Floud, Wagstaffe, Gaynam, Wigmore, Wyatt, Ryder, Meredith, Dare).

He is not known to have resided at the Fleet but was active there and in the area surrounding it.

He is recorded as having earned at least £57 12s. 9d in October 1748 alone for weddings [*The Fleet: its River, Prison and Marriages*, by John Ashton, publ Scribner and Welford, New York, 1888, p348], showing that it was (for him) a very lucrative trade. Besides his activities at the Fleet he also set up in opposition to Mr Keith, the most prominent ‘minister’ at May Fair. Ashton [*ibid*, p350] writes of this as follows:

‘He seems to have attempted to invade Parson Keith's peculiar in May Fair, or it may only be an Advertising ruse on the part of that exceedingly keen practitioner, in order to bring his name prominently before the public. At all events there is an Advertisement dated August 27, 1748:

“The Fleet Parson (who very modestly calls himself Reverend), married at the Fleet, in Mr. Lyl's house, Mrs. Cook's, at the Naked Boy, and for Mr. Wyatt, the Fleet Parson. And to shew that he is now only for Mr. Wyatt, the Fleet Parson's deputy, the said Wyatt told one in May Fair, that he intended to set up in opposition to Mr. Keith, and send goods to furnish the house, and maintains him and the men who ply some days at the Fleet, and at other times at May Fair. But not to speak of the men, if he himself was not a Fleet Parson, he could never stand in Piccadilly, and run after Coaches and foot people in so shameful a manner, and tell them Mr. Keith's house is shut up, and there is no Chapel but theirs; and to other people he says, their Fleet Chapel is Mr. Keith's Chapel, and this he hath said in the hearing of Mr. Keith's clerk, and it is known to most of the people about May Fair, and likewise Mr. Keith appeals to the generality of people about the Fleet and May Fair, for proof of Mr. Reverend's being only Wyatt's, the Fleet parson's deputy.”’

The Naked Boy mentioned above receives mention also in the account of the William Godfrey case recorded in Plates 12-16 and discussed in Appendix IV.

Wyatt evidently desisted soon afterwards [*The Craftsman*, 26 November 1748]:

‘The town being informed in this paper for some months past, of a Fleet Parson that had open'd a chapel in May Fair in order to supplant M. Keith, we think it not improper to acquaint the Public that we shall not trouble them on that score for the future, he having decamp'd on Thursday last, and returned to his own place, the Fleet.’

In his later work *The History of the Fleet Marriages* [publ Longmans, London, 1846], John Southerden Burn asserts that Wyatt's ‘last marriage was on the 3rd March 1749’ and goes on to report of Wyatt that:

‘He died 13th March 1750. By his Will proved at Doctors' Commons, he appoints his brother William guardian to his children; to his son William his study of books and sermons; to his daughter Mary, wife of Thomas Gorden, of Colebrook, five guineas, and his estate at Oxford; and notices his two other children Jemima and Katherine.’

William lived near the Fleet but as far as we know was not involved in Walter's activities.

Daniel Wigmore, 1723–1754

Judging by his handwriting Wigmore may have been an elderly man or perhaps not very sober. A piece in *The Daily Post*, 25 May 1738, reported that:

‘Yesterday Daniel Wigmore, one of the parsons noted for marrying people within the Rules of the Fleet, was convicted before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, of selling spirituous liquors contrary to law.’

He is mentioned (Plate 14) in connection with the marriage of William Godfrey.

Alexander Keith

We have only one marriage recorded by Keith (Plate 8), from the May Fair registers in 1729.

John Mottram, 1709–1725

Mottram is mentioned beneath Plate 2 for the marriage of Sarah Mascall to Thomas Pollard. John Southerden Burn [*op. cit.*, 1846] writes of Mottram that:

‘In 1716 he was convicted in the Consistory Court of London for solemnizing clandestine marriages within the Liberty of the Fleet Prison and was suspended from the execution of his ministerial functions for three years. [There is] an account of his conviction in the Court of King’s Bench in the same year, when he was fined £200. In one of his pocket-books he states the arms of the family of Mottram, of Mottram, in the deanery of Macclesfield, to be, “S. a chev. Arg. charged with three roses between three cross crosslets Or.”’

It would seem he was a minister as he appears in the *Alumni Cantabrigienses* [compiled by John Venn and his son John Archibald Venn]:

John Mottram

Adm. at a College. pens. at EMMANUEL Sept. 14, 1703. Of Lincolnshire. Turned papist, and afterwards recanted.’

Mottram conducted marriages not in the chapel of the prison, but in a room of the Fleet they called the ‘Lord Mayor’s Chapel’. He was convicted and tried at the Guildhall, London in 1716 for solemnizing two clandestine marriages. An account of the conviction appeared in the *Weekly Journal* of 13 February 1717:

‘John Mottram, Clerk, was tryed for solemnizing clandestine and unlawful marriages in the Fleet Prison, and of keeping fraudulent Registers, whereby it appear’d that he had dated several marriages several years before he enter’d into orders, and that he kept no less than nine several Registers at different houses, which contained many scandalous frauds. It also appeared, that a marriage was antedated because of pregnancy ; and to impose on the ignorant there was written underneath, this scrap of barbarous Latin, “Hi non nupti fuerunt sed obtinerunt Testimonium propter timorem parentum”, meaning that they were not married but obtained this private Register for fear of their parents. It rather appeared from evidence, that these sham marriages were solemnized in a room in the Fleet they call the Lord Mayor’s Chappel, which was furnished with chairs, cushions, and proper conveniencies, and that a coal-heaver was generally set to ply at the door to recommend all couples that had a mind to be marry’d, to the Prisoner, who would do it cheaper than any body. It farther appear’d, that one of the Registers only contained above 2200 entries which had been made within the last year.’

Burn states that Mottram had left the Fleet by August 1727.

John Floud, 1709–1729

Floud is mentioned, among others, beneath Plate 6 for the marriage of John Neales to Elizabeth Cotton. Burn gives the following brief account of Floud:

‘He died suddenly 31 December 1729, at his lodgings in the liberty of the Fleet. He married both at the King’s Bench Prison and the Mint in 1725, having a back room at the latter place. He appears to have been a man of bad character, and to have been several years a prisoner for debt. There is in one of the Registers a memorandum in Greek characters to a marriage in 1727 “Paid five shillings, and one certificate, brought by Mrs. Blood, Doctor Floud’s mistress.”’

William Dare, 1732–1746

Dare is mentioned beneath many of our Plates. In a few of these it is probable that he was the actual officiator, such as Plate 23 for the marriage of John Port to Jane Hains and Plate 26 for the marriage of Thomas Arrow and Eliza Potterton. Burn writes of him that:

‘He at one time resided at No. 12, Bell Court, Bow Church Yard. He used to marry from 150 to 200 couples per month, and kept a curate to assist him. In one of the Registers is “1723, 14 April, Peter Kulett of St. Brides Fram [frame?] Maker, Mary Ann Paviour Sp: forged by Mr. Dare in 1741, who married [them?] att Smiths att ye same time.” To a marriage by Mr. Dare in 1742 are these witnesses, who were no doubt members of his family “Elizabeth Dare–Anna Catherina Dee–Sussex Dare.”’

Peter Symson, 1731–1754

Symson is mentioned beneath many of our Plates. In one of them (Plate 28) the record of the marriage of John Walker to Eliz Alemore lies in one of his own registers. Others show him among ministers operating from Mr. William Simpson's who kept the King's Arms chapel. Burn writes of him as follows:

‘One of his hand-bills runs thus:

“At the true Chapel at the old red Hand and Mitre, three doors from Fleet Lane and next Door to the White Swan; Marriages are performed by authority by the Reverend Mr. Symson educated at the University of Cambridge, and late Chaplain to the Earl of Rothes. N. B. Without Imposition.”

On a trial in 1751, for Bigamy, Symson was thus examined:

“*Q.* —Why did you marry them without licence ?

Symson —Because somebody would have done it, if I had not. I was ordained in Grosvenor Square Chapel by the Bishop of Winchester and the Bishop of Lincoln. Can't say I am a prisoner in the Fleet. Am 43 years old. Never had a benefice in my life. I have had little petty curacies about 20/. or 30/. per year. I don't do it for lucre or gain.

Court. —You might have exposed your person had you gone on the highway, but you'd do less prejudice to your country a great deal. You are a nuisance to the public ; and the gentlemen of the jury, it is to be hoped, will give but little credit to you.”

It appears by an entry in one of the May Fair Registers, that Symson officiated at May Fair Chapel for Mr. Keith, in consequence of the committal of the latter to the Fleet on his ex-communication. There is a whole Register of May Fair Marriages from 1750 to 1754, “Performed by the Reverend Mr. Peter Symson and Mr. Fran Denevau, for Keith, May Fair.”

Edward Ashwell, 1734–1743

Ashwell appears in several of our cases, for example in the marriage (Plate 30) of Joseph Harrow and Amey Collins. Burn's rather damning account of Ashwell reads as follows:

‘In the Lansdown [sic – Lansdowne] Manuscripts (841. 61) is a letter giving an account of this person:

“Reverend Sir, June 21, 1725.

There was lately at Southam, in Warwickshire, one Edward Ashwell, who in my absence got possession of our school and preach'd in several churches in this neighbourhood. I take the liberty to inform you, since I hear he is at Kettering, that he is a most notorious rogue and impostor. I have now certificates on my hand of his having two wives alive at this present time, and he was very near marrying the third in this town, but the fear of a prosecution upon the discovery of the flaming and scandalous immoralities of his life forc'd him away from us in a short time. Afterwards, in a village not far from us, he attempted to ravish a woman, but was prevented by a soldier then in the house. I can assure you he is in no orders, though the audacious villain preaches when he can get a pulpit. I have a whole packet of letters by me, all tending to the same character, which I think exceeds for variety of all manner of enormous practices what can be charg'd upon the very scum of mankind. The accounts are from persons of integrity and known reputation.

I prevented his preaching one day at Brawnston, Mr. Somes's parish. It would be a very kind and Christian office to give some information among the clergy, that they may not be impos'd upon by him, particularly to Mr. Heyrick, for I married Mr. Allicock's sister of Loddington.

I know you will pardon this trouble if the fellow be amongst you. I am, Your affectionate brother, W. Hodgson."

Ashwell had a great deal of business at the Fleet, and was one of the most notorious of the parsons. In one of his pocketbooks is "May 2^d. 1740. C. sine matrimonio Wm. Wallby of Suson in Waltham Abby Parish Husb, and Mary Vale Ditto Sp; Venit nuper ad Dominu [He came late to the Lord]".

Ashwell died in January 1746, as appears by the following notice of his death in the *General Advertiser*, for the 15th of that month: "On Monday last died in the Rules of the Fleet, Doctor Ashwell, the most noted operator in marriages since the death of the never-to-be forgotten Dr. Gaynam."

James Lando, 1737–1743

Lando appears in only one of our findings (Plate 34). This is what Burn has to say about him:

'In his advertisements he styled himself 'late Chaplain to His Majesty's ship *The Falkland*, and the public are informed that the said Mr. Lando teacheth Latin, French, &c. Three times a Week.' He had a place he called St. John's Chapel, in Half Moon Court, the first house joining to Ludgate, on Ludgate Hill. *Daily Advertiser*, 1749: "Marriages with a Licence, Certificate and a Crown Stamp, at a Guinea ..."

It appears by the Books at the Admiralty that he was appointed to *The Falkland* on the 29th May 1744, and served on board till the 17th Jan 1746. He does not appear to have been in employ afterwards.'

A rival said of him 'True it is, the subject, as you say, is invidious and unpopular, but more so, I'll venture to say, near the banks of a certain Canal west of Fleet Ditch, than on any bank to the eastward of it in England ...'

At the end of one of the Fleet Registers is the following: 'John Lando, a French Minister, in Church Street, Soho, opposite at a French pastry or nasty cook's. His Landlord's name is Jinkstone, a dirty chandler's shop.' Which seems curious if he had been serving on a British ship.

The Effingham records

The total number of records found from searching for Effingham was 37. Two were for soldiers in Howard's Regiment of Foot and these were discarded as they were not Effingham residents. (Note – prior to 1744 there were two regiments each commanded by a Colonel Howard, both being known as Howard's Regiment. To avoid confusion, the 3rd Regiment of Foot (Thomas Howard) was named the Buff Howards and the 19th Regiment of Foot (Charles Howard) the Green Howards, according to the colours of their regimental facings worn on the collars and cuffs.)

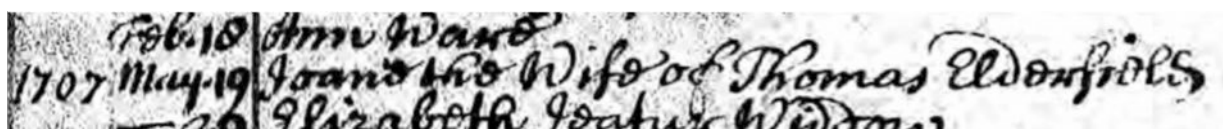
Most of the marriages appear multiple times in the records by having been recorded in, or copied into, various registers or notebooks. The retained 35 records represent at most 15 distinct marriages, but one of these may not be relevant as the groom's residence is entered as 'Essingham'. Among the remaining 14, the groom came from Effingham in 9 cases and the bride also in 9 cases; in only 4 cases did both the bride and groom come from Effingham. All the marriages save one were made at the Fleet. All the Effingham grooms were listed as husbandmen save one who was a wheeler and another who was a wheelright.

Notes on the plates

Plate 1

An *Ancestry* record [FHL: Film 307792] suggests that Thomas Elderfield first married a Joane Beldham on 21 September 1671 at Effingham, but the parish register gives the date as 21 September 1675. We do know that Thomas and Joane were in the village soon after this date from the baptism dates of their five known children, all female: Elizabeth on 8 April 1677; Jane on 2 March 1679; Mary on 1 May 1681; Margaret on 9 March 1684 and Hannah on 8 February 1689. Mary was buried on 16 May 1710. All these events took place at St Lawrence church. There are no further references to the girls in the church registers so they must have all have eventually moved away.

On 19 May 1707 Joane was buried at St Lawrence. It seems that in the same year Thomas remarried in London on 4 November to Elizabeth Smith of Great Bookham. The marriage is listed in a notebook showing Walter Wyatt as the officiating minister, but the owner of the notebook is unknown.



On 19 May 1707 Joane the wife of Thomas Elderfield was buried at St Lawrence.

A Thomas Elderfield was buried on 3 August 1711 at St Lawrence, Effingham but we do not know what became of Elizabeth.

Plate 2

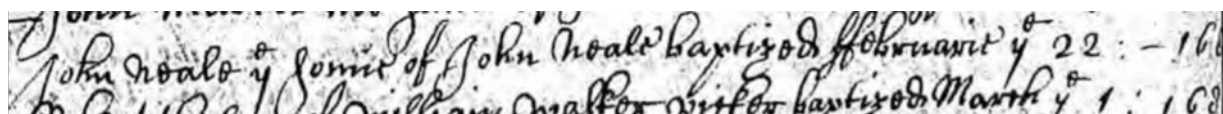
The Thomas Pollard who married Sarah Mascall was possibly the one baptised on 1 Apr 1684 at Petworth, Sussex, the son of a James Pollard. It is not possible to identify Sarah as there were several of the same name and of similar age at this time in Effingham.

Plate 3

We have been unable to clarify this record, but we know of Ayliffes in Effingham from around 1800.

Plates 4 – 7

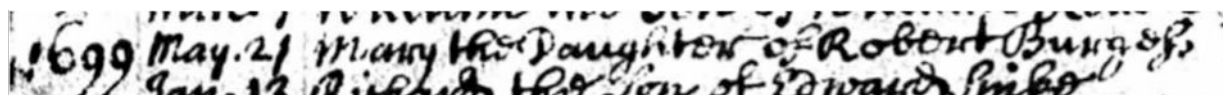
The Neal family has been recorded in Effingham since the 1660s. The only plausible candidate for the widower John Neales (sic) who married Elizabeth Cotton in 1727 is a John (son of John Neale) who had been baptised in Effingham on 22 February 1688. If this was him then he would have been aged about 39 in 1727, possibly explaining why he married in London.



Baptism of John Neale at St Lawrence in 1688.

Plate 8

Members of the Burgess family were quite prevalent in Effingham in the 1700s. For example, a daughter Mary of Robert Burgess was baptised in 1699. However, the bride Mary Burgess in Plate 8 was a widow.



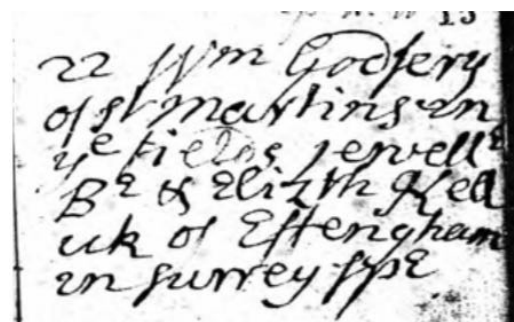
Baptism of a Mary Burgess at St Lawrence in 1699.

We know nothing of the groom John Taylour, labourer and widower. His place of residence 'Carford' probably refers to today's Kirdford in West Sussex which appears on an early map as 'Cardforde'.

Plates 9 – 11

Thomas Sheerin and Mary Merrett gave their residence as Effingham, although neither surname appears in the Parish Register, but a son William of Thomas and Mary *Sherwin* was baptised on 7 March 1736.

Plates 12 – 16



William was the son of Effingham's incumbent vicar Rev Joseph Godfrey. For a vicar's son to marry clandestinely would have been viewed as scandalous. Elizabeth, we believe, was the second of seven children of Henry and Elizabeth Killick, being baptised in Effingham on 7 May 1716. More details of the marriage of William and Elizabeth are given in Appendix IV.

Plates 17 – 19

We know little of John Walker. Could he be a descendant or relative of William Walker who was vicar of Effingham from 1677 until his death in 1696? We know that he was already a widower when he married the widow Jane Constable from a tavern near Blackfriars in 1740, officiated by Walter Wyatt, although we have no idea how they met.

It seems that Jane died and John returned to the Fleet to marry in 1752 to another widow, Eliz Alemore from St Andrews in the Holbourn district (today's Holborn) of London.

Despite John being recorded as a husbandman of Effingham for both marriages there is no reference to either his family or hers in the St Lawrence register.

Plates 20 – 23

There were, it seems, many members of the Port family in Abinger when John Port married Jane Hains in 1741. They apparently resided later in Little Bookham.

On 19 June 1764 John Port and Mary Sherwin were married at St Lawrence, Effingham by Henry Warner. Mary, born to Thomas and Mary mentioned earlier, had been baptised on 30 May 1740.

Marriage Banns for John Port and Mary Sherwin.

N^o 21. The Banns of Marriage between John Port of the Parish of Little Bookham and Mary Sherwin of this Parish were published in this Church upon three Sundays May 20, 27, & June 3, in the year 1764, by me Henry Warner Vicar.

Marriage of John Port and Mary Sherwin at St Lawrence on 19 June 1764.

N^o 17 John Port of the Parish of Little Bookham and Mary Sherwin of this Parish were married in this Church by Banns this nineteenth Day of June in the year 1764 by me Henry Warner Vicar. This Marriage was solemnized between us John ^{his} Port ^{her} Mary ^{her} Sherwin in the Presence of John Allingham James Spralley

On 4 May 1788 a John Port was buried at St Nicolas, Great Bookham,

Plate 24

It seems that Henry and Ann Howick later moved to Esher. There is a burial for Ann on 11 January 1769 at St George, Esher, wife of Henry Howick.

Nearly three years later, on 8 December 1771, there is recorded the burial of a Henry Howick, wheelwright, at this same church. St George's is very small and it was later replaced as the parish church by Christ Church in Esher.

Henry left a will, the main beneficiary being his brother William.



Figure 6 St George's Church, Esher painted by John Hassell.

11. Ann wife of Henry Howick

The burial of Ann at Esher.

Dec. 8 Henry Howick.
Joseph Smith
J. G. Glover, Rector.

The burial of Henry at Esher.

Henry's will.

Plates 25 – 28

Thomas Arrow may well have been baptised as the son of Caleb Arrow on 29 March 1724 at All Saints, Little Bookham.

Baptism of Thomas recorded in the Little Bookham register.

His wife Elizabeth (Eliza) was probably the daughter of John Potterton and baptised on 28 May 1727 at St Mary and St Nicholas, Leatherhead. This would make her 18 years of age at the time of marriage. We do not know why they married in London but perhaps Elizabeth did not have parental consent.

Baptism of Elizabeth Potterton in Leatherhead.

Plates 29 – 33

Amy Collens may have been the daughter of Jo Collens and been baptised on 7 September 1721 at St Andrew in Cobham.

Baptism of Amy Collens in Cobham.

Joseph Harrow/Arrow is described as labourer and husbandman in various entries. He may have been related to the above Thomas Arrow.

After the marriage, Joseph and Amy returned to Effingham and six months later, on 12 April 1748, a son also called Joseph was born to them and baptised at St Lawrence. There followed another six births: Caleb in 1750; Benjamin in 1753; John in 1756; Mary in 1759; William in 1762 and Abraham in 1784, all of them recorded in the St Lawrence register.

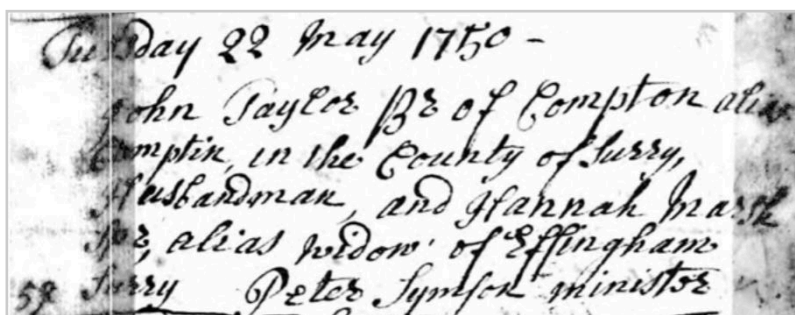
Amy died in 1793 and was buried on 3 February that year, at All Saints, Little Bookham. We have not found details of the death of Joseph.

Plate 34

According to the register for St Lawrence, on 14 April 1744 a Hannah Marsh of Effingham married John Bennett a bachelor of Cranley, by licence.

Entry in the register for the marriage of Hannah to John Bennett.

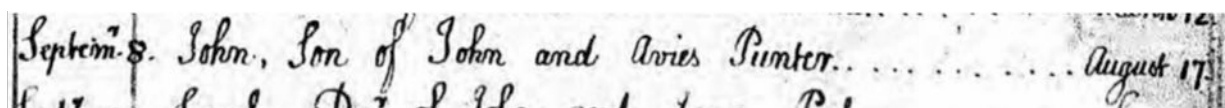
The entry from the notebook of Lando, Symson, Wyatt & Deneveu states, six years later, Peter Symson performed a marriage for a Hannah Marsh, 'spinster alias widow' of Effingham, to a John Taylor a husbandman from Compton, in Surrey. It is not clear whether this was the same Hannah. (See also Plate 8.)



Entry in the notebook of Lando, Symson, Wyatt & Deneveu.

Plate 35

It appears that wheelwright John Puntar and Avis Muggeridge were resident in Effingham, living as a married couple prior to 1753. Avis gave birth to a son also called John on 17 August 1753 with a baptism date of 8 September that year at St Lawrence. The baptism was performed by the newly arrived Henry Warner, curate to the frequently absent pluralist vicar William Bonney.

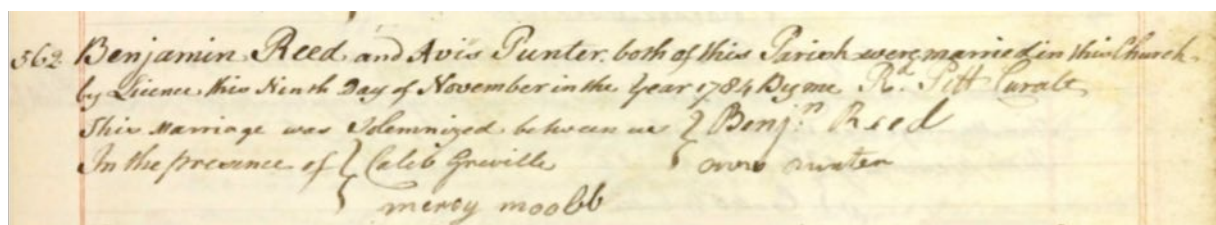


Entry for John's birth at St Lawrence on 17 August 1753.

There is no comment about the baptism in the register and Warner was possibly unaware that the couple were not married.

Evidently, between the birth of baby John and his baptism, John and Avis made a dash to the Fleet and were married there by Peter Symson on 3 September 1753.

John and Avis went on to have another two known children both baptised at St Lawrence. They were Avis born on 2 February, baptised on 11 February 1756, and Mary born on 23 September, baptised 23 October 1758. Some time later the family apparently left the village. The only child we can follow with any certainty is Avis; she married by licence to Benjamin Reed on 9 November 1784 at St George, Hanover Square, Westminster.



Marriage of Avis at St George, Hanover Square in 1784.

Avis died on 10 January 1830, aged 73, and is buried in St Andrew Churchyard, Kingswood.



Figure 7 Grave of Avis in St Andrew Churchyard.

Epilogue

As noted previously, the prevalence of clandestine marriages had risen dramatically by 1753; in the Fleet area alone there could have been as many as a hundred clergymen performing them. Hardwicke's Marriage Act, in the face of some significant opposition, was implemented in order to put an end to them, imposing clear legal requirements for the marriage ceremony. Under pain of annulment, it was required that Banns should be published or a licence obtained; that, in either case, the marriage should be solemnised in church by a recognised clergyman; and that in the case of minors, marriage by licence must be by the consent of parent or guardian; and that at least two witnesses must be present. Jewish and Quaker ceremonies were exempt. Clergymen conducting clandestine marriages after this were liable to transportation. The imposition of this new law meant there was a rush to meet the deadline, and one register shows that on the day prior to the law taking effect, one minister alone conducted over 270 ceremonies. Hardwicke's Act applied only in England and Wales and so clandestine marriages continued happening in Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Since 1837 rules for marriages have gone full circle. By contrast with the early clandestine marriages, civil ceremonies today entirely eliminate the religious element. They do not require the presence of an ordained minister and no reference can be made to God or to any deity, nor to any particular religion or denomination; this is strictly enforced. In England and Wales they may be instituted and performed by a government official (a registrar). Originally restricted to register offices, they may now employ premises such as stately homes, castles, or hotels subject to these having been appropriately registered for this purpose.

As explained in The National Archives' Catalogue, 'the registers of the Fleet were kept, for the most part, by the ministers (or their clerks) who performed the ceremonies, by self-appointed register-keepers, by the landlords of some of the houses where the ceremonies took place, and by persons who appear to have set up record offices at a later date and made copies of registers in the possession of others'. As a result there are usually several copies of each entry in various registers. Those from the original minister's notebook are the most reliable and often the most detailed.

As the Fleet Marriages were performed at a great many houses in the neighbourhood of the Fleet, the proprietors of these houses being frequently the possessors of the registers of marriages performed there, it is impossible to trace all these books. Many were subsequently lost or destroyed and some may still be in private hands. Following Hardwicke's Act the Fleet Registers became saleable articles. We know in about 1783, a Mr. Benjamin Panton purchased a collection of five or six hundred of these books which were said to 'weigh more than a ton'. Mr. Panton died, leaving a Will, whereby he bequeathed these books to his daughter, who, in 1813, disposed of them to Mr. William Cox [John Southerden Burn, *op. cit.*]. Cox seemed to have added to this collection and in 1821, for a sum of £260 6s 6d, the government purchased the collection. These registers containing an estimated 400,000 entries representing over 200,000 weddings are now held at The National Archives.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: copy of an 18th-century print in *Old and New London: a narrative of its history, its people, and its places* by Walter Thornbury, publ Cassell, Petter and Galpin (London), Vol II, 1878, p409

Figure 2: 'View looking across the prison yard of King's Bench Prison, in St George's Fields';
© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

Figure 3: 'Southwark: High Street' in *Old and New London* by Edward Walford, Vol VI, 1878 (public domain)

Figure 4: 'Liberty of the Mint' by William H Prior, extracted from *Old and New London, Illustrated* by Edward Walford, Vol III; original held and digitised by the British Library (public domain)

Figure 5: from <https://dailybritain.wordpress.com/2017/03/25/25th-march-1754-fleet-marriages>

Figure 6: from Surrey History Centre [SHC Ref: 4348/4/34/2]

Figure 7: *FindaGrave* Memorial ID 115290457, image by Laurence Hennessy

Figure 8: from Surrey History Centre [SHC Ref: EFF/13/40-96]

Figures 9-11: from the registers of St Lawrence Church, Effingham

Plates 1-35: from The National Archives via *Ancestry*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the advice provided by Professor Rebecca Probert of the Law School, University of Exeter, enabling substantial improvement of this article's introductory material.

FURTHER READING

1. *Fleet & other Irregular Marriage Registers* from *GenGuide*: <https://www.genguide.co.uk>
2. *Rules for Mediaeval Marriage* from *The History Jar*: <https://thehistoryjar.com>
3. *Clandestine marriage in early modern London: when, where and why?* by Gill Newton, in *Continuity and Change*, Vol **29**, Issue 2, July 201
4. *Irregular Marriage: Myth and Reality* by Eleanor Gordon, *J. of Social History*, November 2013
5. *The Fleet Registers* by John Southerden Burn, publ Rivingtons, St Paul's Churchyard, 1837
6. *The History of the Fleet Marriages* by John Southerden Burn, publ Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 3rd Edition, 1846
7. *The Fleet: its River, Prison and Marriages* by John Ashton, publ Scribner and Welford, New York, 1888
8. *The Presumptions in Favour of Marriage* by Rebecca Probert, *The Cambridge Law Journal*, Vol **77**, No 2, July 2018
9. *Marriage Law for Genealogists: the Definitive Guide* by Rebecca Probert, publ Takeaway (Publishing), 2nd Edition, 2016

APPENDIX I

Clandestine marriage records in The National Archives

RG 7/1-273	Fleet prison register
RG 7/274	Index to piece number 8
RG 7/275	Index to piece number 28, pages 1-50 only
RG 7/276	Section 1 – index to piece number 35
RG 7/277	Index to piece number 42
RG 7/278	Pages 1-196 – index to piece number 116
RG 7/279	Index to piece number 13
RG 7/280	Index to piece number 148
RG 7/281	Index to an unidentified volume of folios
RG 7/282	Partial index to piece number 189 folios 1-34
RG 7/283	Index to piece number 200, pages 1-58
RG 7/284	Index to piece number 218
RG 7/285	Index to an unidentified volume
RG 7/286	Part I – index to an unidentified volume, 1745-1747
RG 7/287	Index to piece number 241 entries 1-590 (1748-1752); piece number 267 entries 584-686 (1752-1753); and part of piece number 15 (Aug 1752 - Mar 1754) entries 592-670
RG 7/288	Index to piece number 255
RG 7/289	Index to piece number 263
RG 7/290	Portions of four indexes to unidentified volumes
RG 7/291	Fleet notebook – Abbott's and Barker's notebook
RG 7/292-386	Fleet notebook – Ashwell's notebook
RG 7/387-402	Fleet notebook – Barrett's notebook
RG 7/403-471	Fleet notebook – Burnford's notebook
RG 7/472-476	Fleet notebook – (Burnford), Newton's notebook
RG 7/477-478	Fleet notebook – Cock's notebook
RG 7/479-548	Fleet notebook – Dare's notebook
RG 7/549-555	Fleet notebook – Dare's notebook - Crawford's account
RG 7/556	Fleet notebook – Floud's and Cuthbert's notebook
RG 7/589-656	Fleet notebook – Gaynam's notebook
RG 7/657-659	Fleet notebook – Gower's notebook
RG 7/660	Fleet notebook – King's Arms register, (marriages at Mr William Simpson's who kept the King's Arms)
RG 7/661	Fleet notebook – Sands's notebook, (marriages performed at Sands)
RG 7/662	Fleet notebook – Shellburn's notebook
RG 7/663	Fleet notebook – Shepherd and Goat register, (marriages at Mr Daniel Stebbings at the 'Shepherd and Goat')
RG 7/664-666	Fleet notebook – possibly Townsend's notebooks
RG 7/667	Fleet notebook – Smith's (the 'Two Sawyers') register
RG 7/668	Fleet notebook – Wigmore's notebook, (marriages at the house of Mr & Mrs Ball)
RG 7/669-676	Fleet notebook – Wigmore's notebook
RG 7/677	Fleet notebook – Wilson's notebook, (marriages performed at the house of J Wilson Jr)
RG 7/679-801	Fleet notebook – Wyatt's notebook
RG 7/802	Fleet notebook – Mottram's notebook
RG 7/817-818	Fleet notebook – unidentified notebook (1 st series)
RG 7/819-824	Fleet notebook – unidentified notebook (2 nd series)
RG 7/825-831	Fleet notebook – miscellaneous notebook
RG 7/832	Fleet notebook – a collection of loose pages from unidentified notebooks
RG 7/833-835	Fleet notebook – miscellaneous notebook

APPENDIX II
The records – Plates 1-35

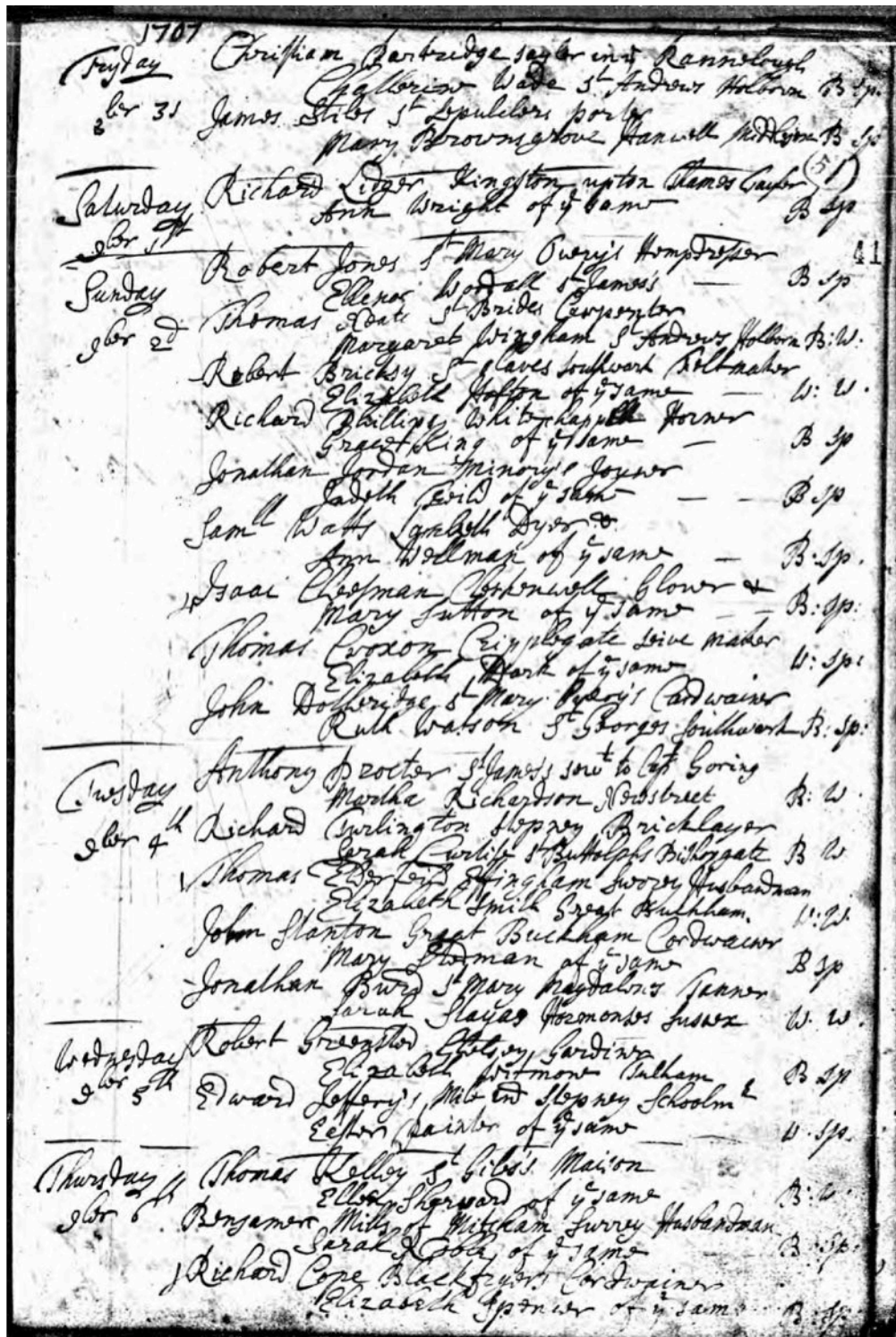


PLATE 1

Thomas Elderfield, husbandman, widower
Marriage Date: 4 November 1707
Residence: Effingham
Spouse: Elizabeth Smith
Spouse Residence: Great Buckham, widow

Piece Description: RG 7/19
Officiating Ministers: not named
Fleet register: 1706 Nov – 1709 Dec

Catherine Harford ditto.	B.	Sp.
Humphry Connett Lambeth p th Mariner	B.	Sp
Mary Padnall ditto -		
Thomas Deswell s ^t Sepulchre's p th Mariner		
Susanna Bagley ditto -	W.	Sp
Soloman Davis Lambeth p th Mariner -	B.	W
Mary Rooke ditto -		
George Solmes s ^t Margt Westm ^d Cooke -	B.	Sp
Elisabeth Winter ditto -		
George Chapman s ^t Margt p th Gent -	B.	W
Anne Pack ditto -		
Thomas Henry Shepney p th Gent. -	B.	Sp
Sarah Collins ditto -		
George Gibbs Shepney p th Cordwainer. -	B.	W
Mary Wilson ditto -		
Richard Johnson Lombard Street Gardiner -	B.	Sp
Mary Price ditto -		
Thomas Pollard Petworth p th fapex fellmonger -	B.	Sp
Sarah Mascall Effingham p th		
Reuben Smith s ^t Giles's Gent -	W.	W
Elenez Tofts s ^t Martin's Camp.	B.	Sp
Edward Thayer s ^t Margaret Lethbury Gent.		
Edw. Thayer ditto		

PLATE 2

Thomas Pollard, fellmonger, bachelor

Marriage Date: 1720

Residence: Petworth, Sussex

Spouse: **Sarah Mascall**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/56

Officiating Minister: Wyatt

Fleet register: Wyatt's register [Mottram's register]: 1720 Mar – 1722 Nov

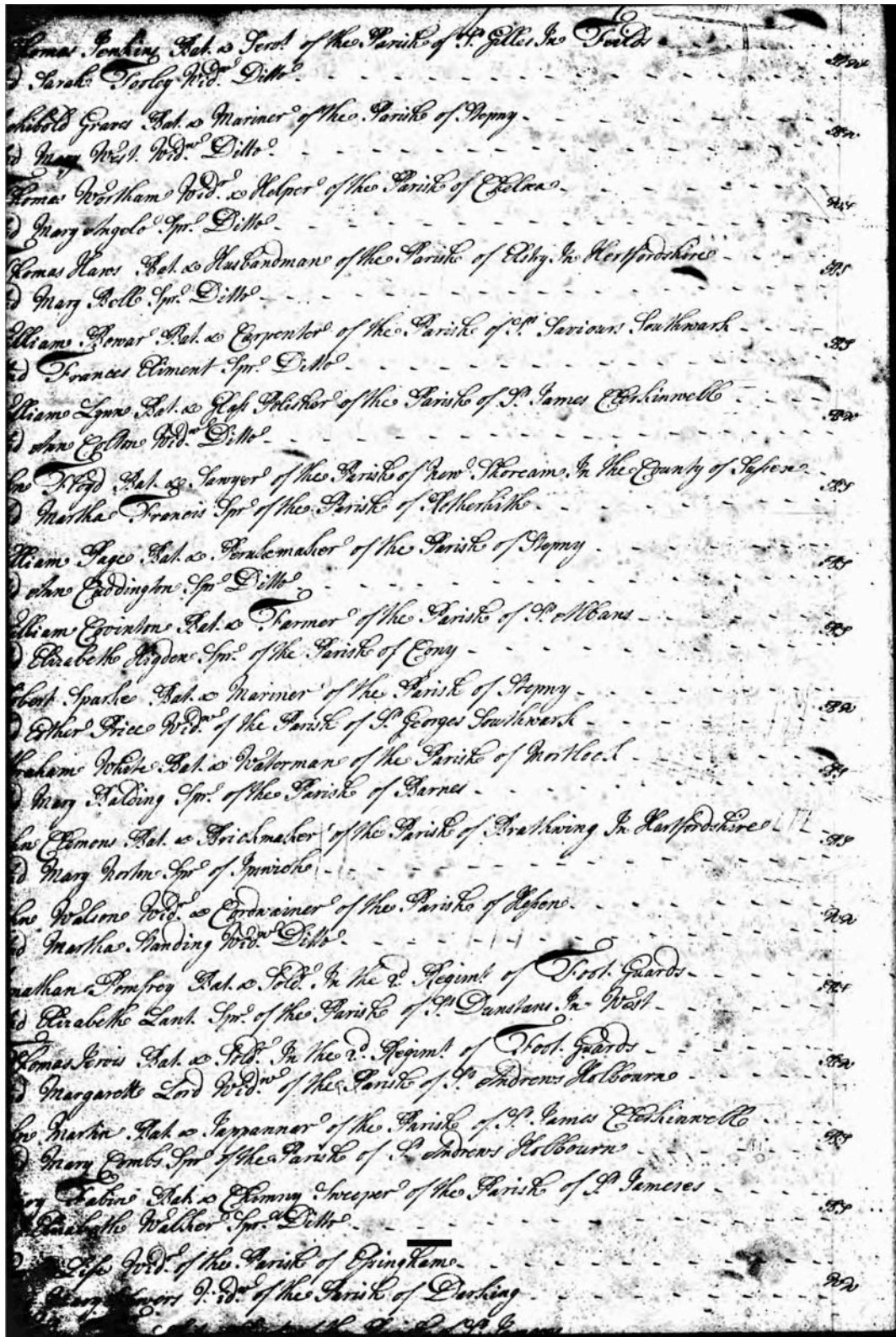


PLATE 3

Alife ?, widower

Marriage Date: Oct 1724

Residence: Essingham [sic]

Spouse: Mary Chivers ?, widow

Spouse Residence: Dorking

Piece Description: RG 7/62

Officiating Ministers: Sindrey, Dare, Ashwell, Wyatt etc

Fleet register: 1721 Sep – 1732 Mar

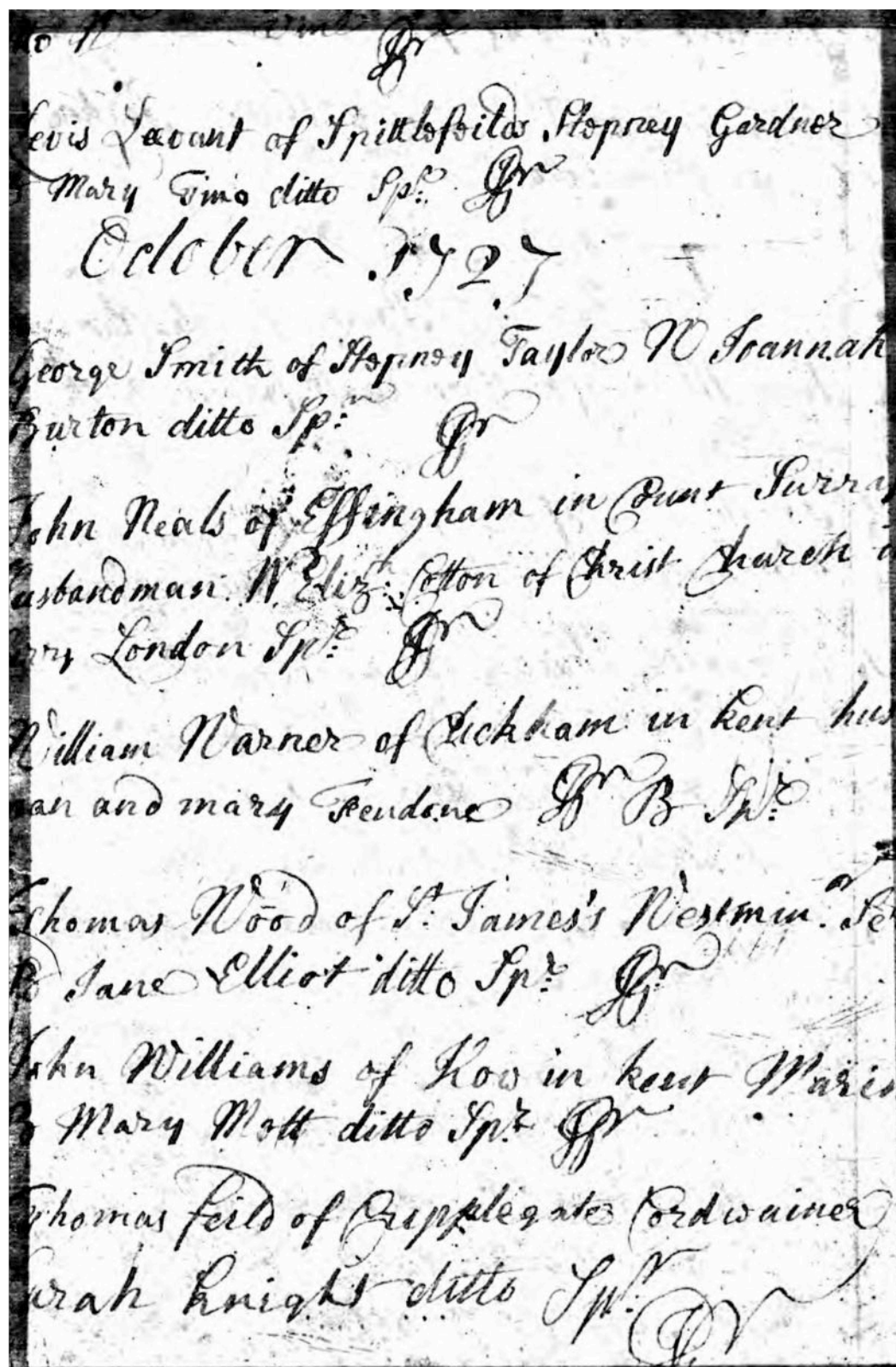


PLATE 4

John Neals, husbandman, widower

Marriage Date: 3 Oct 1727

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Elizabeth Cotton, spinster

Spouse Residence: Christ Church, London

Piece Description: RG 7/47

Officiating Ministers: Gaynam, Wagstaffe, Cuthbert and others not named

Fleet register: 1727 Jun – 1728 May

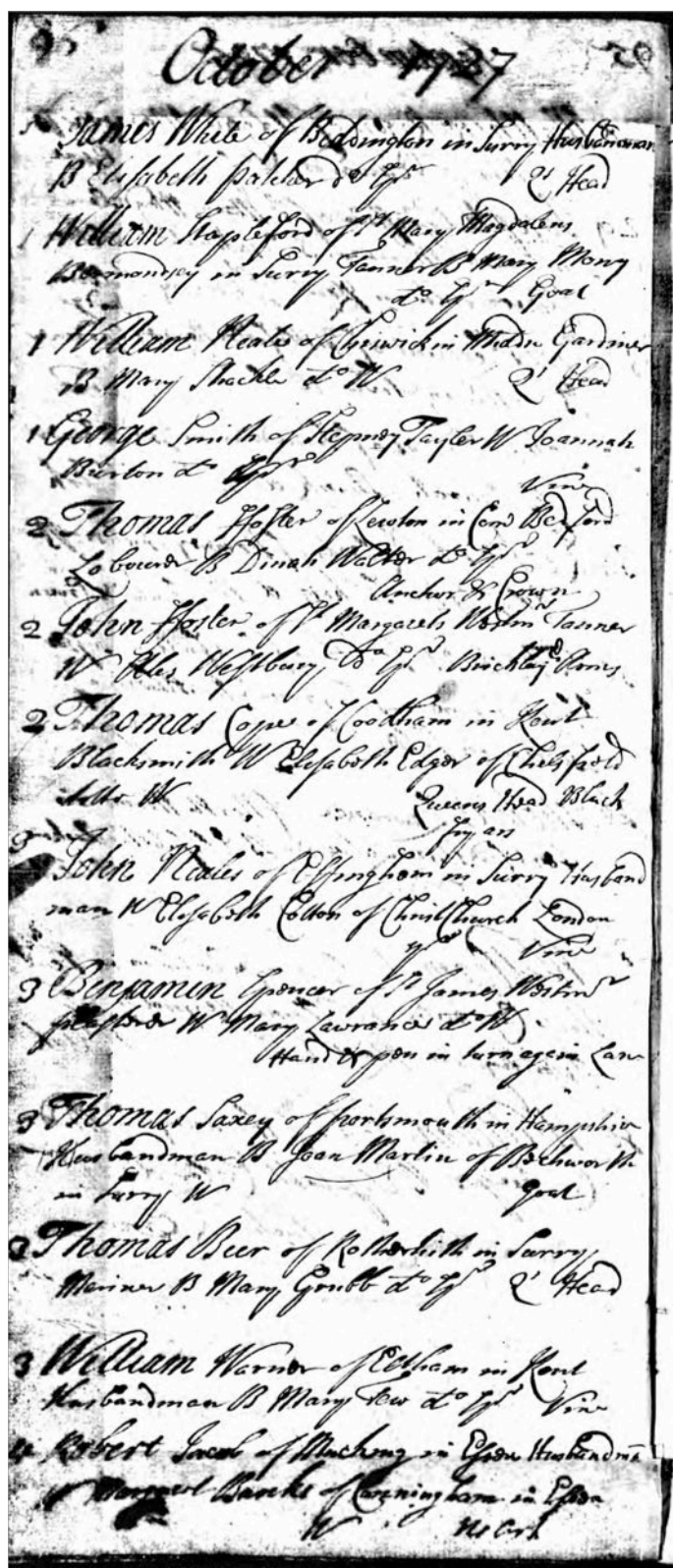


PLATE 5

John Neales, husbandman, widower
 Marriage Date: 3 Oct 1727
 Residence: Effingham
 Spouse: Elizabeth Cotton, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Christ Church, London

Piece Description: RG 7/85
 Officiating Ministers: Starke, Gaynam and others not named
 Fleet register: 1726 Jul – 1729 Jun

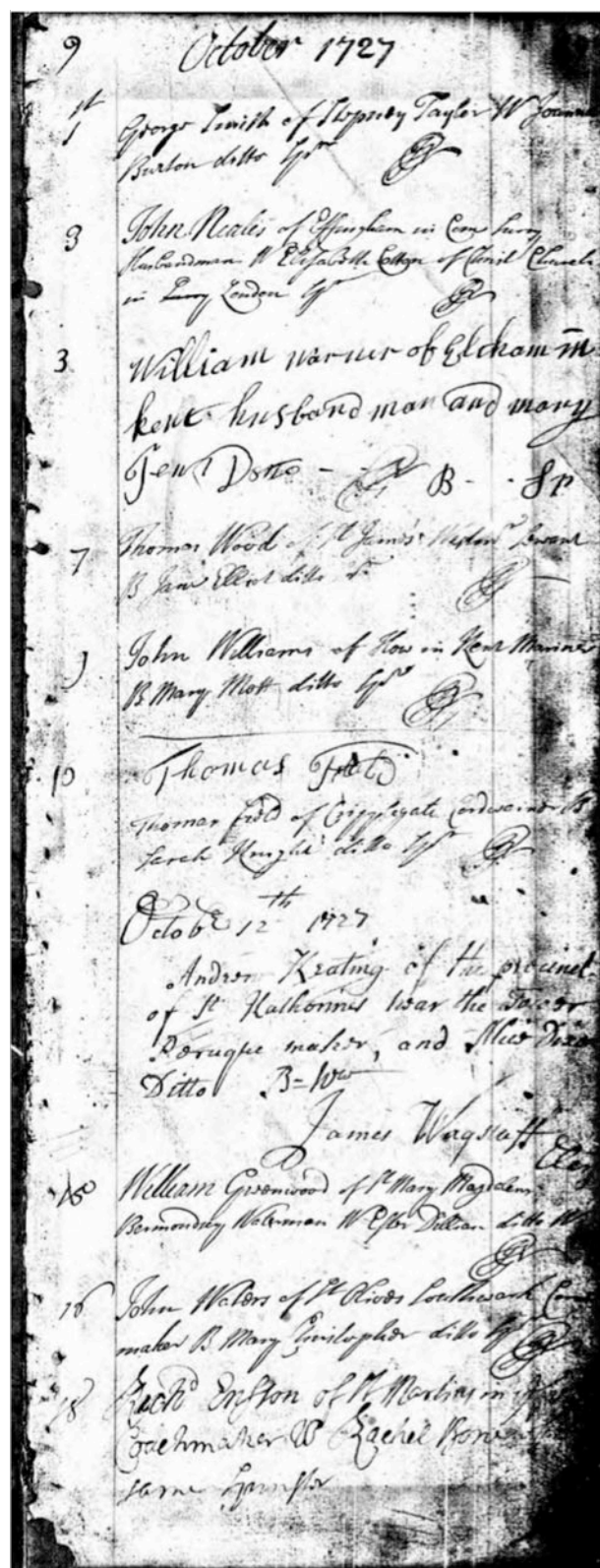


PLATE 6

John Neales, husbandman, widower

Marriage Date: 3 Oct 1727

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Elizabeth Cotton, spinster

Spouse Residence: Christ Church, London

Piece Description: RG 7/91

Officiating Ministers: Floud, Wagstaffe, Gaynam, Wigmore, Wyatt, Ryder, Meredith, Dare

Fleet register: 1727 Jul – 1745 Feb

3 John Neales of Effingham ²¹
 in Com Perry Husbandman W
 Elizabeth Cotton M^r Church
 London ²¹
 3 Benjamin Spencer of
 St James's Work's Station
 W Mary Levrance D^r W
 Turn again
 3 Thomas Lacey of Portsmouth
 in Hampshire W
 Joan Martin of Bodmin
 W
 govt

PLATE 7

John Neales, husbandman, widower
 Marriage Date: 3 Oct 1727
 Residence: Effingham
 Spouse: Elizabeth Cotton, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Christ Church, London

Piece Description: RG 7/595
 Officiating Minister: not named
 Fleet notebooks: Gaynam's notebook: 1727 Sep – 1727 Oct

11.	Robert Higginson of S. ^t Andrews Holborn Baker and Sarah Dudds of S. ^t -----	B. S.
11	John Taylour of Carford in Sussex. Labourer and Mary Burgess of Effingham in Surrey	W. W.
11	Norton Harrop of S. ^t Mary White chappell Cipemaker and martha Pinkard of S. ^t -----	B. W.
12	Humphry Brown of S. ^t Dunstan Shpney mariner and Mary Pairpoint of S. ^t Dunstan in West	B. S.
12	Samuel Vanderphell of S. ^t Andrews Holborn Tapstry worker and Elizabeth Clapp of S. ^t -----	W. W.

PLATE 8

John Taylour, labourer, widower
 Marriage Date: 11 Oct 1729
 Residence: Carford (now Kirdford), West Sussex
 Spouse: **Mary Burgess**, widow
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/99
 Officiating Minister: Alexander Keith
 Fleet register: May Fair register: 1729 Mar – 1731 May

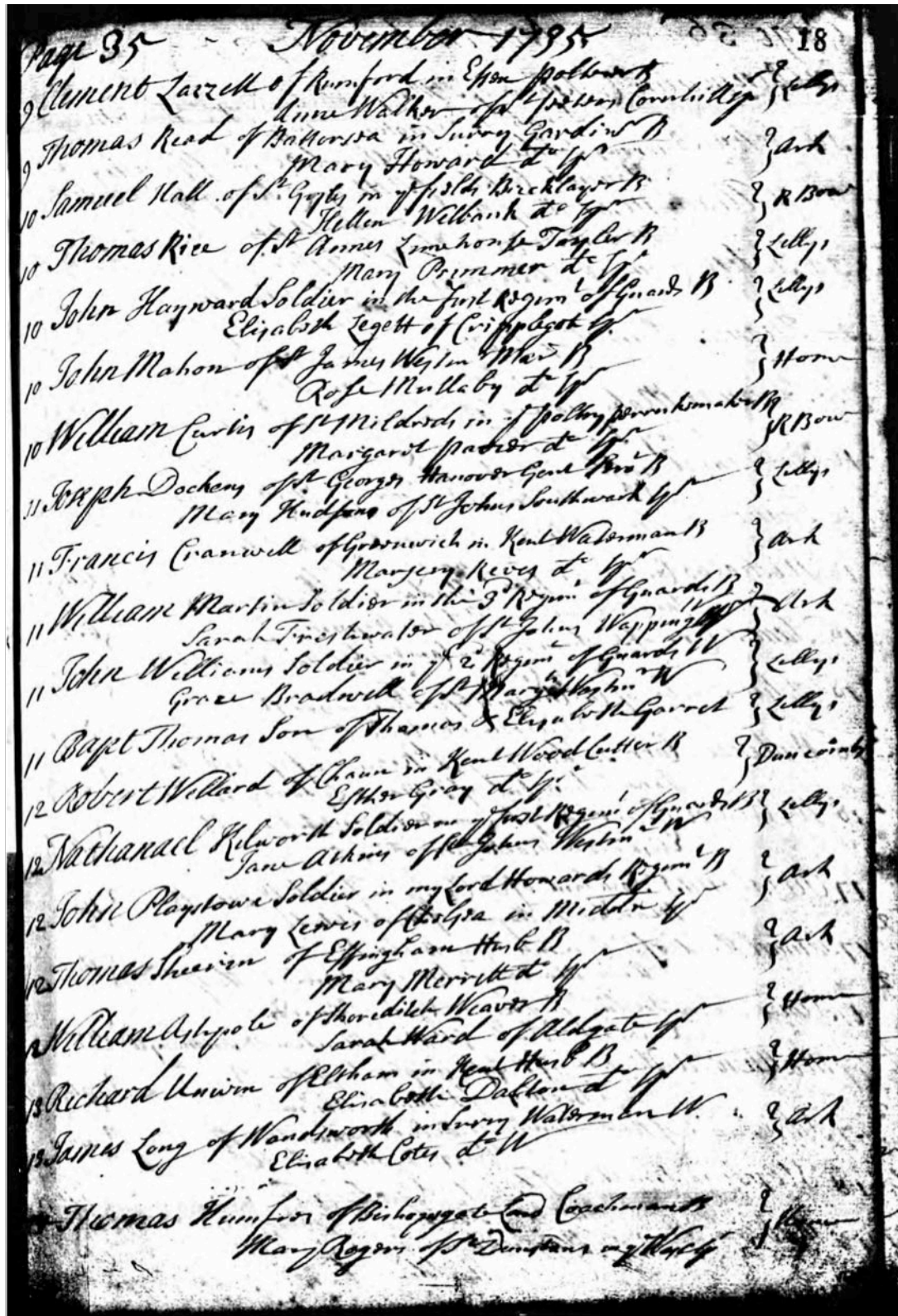


PLATE 9

Thomas Sheerin, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 12 Nov 1735

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Mary Merrett**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/148

Officiating Minister: Gaynam

Fleet register number 5: Gaynam's register: 1735 Jun – 1738 Jul

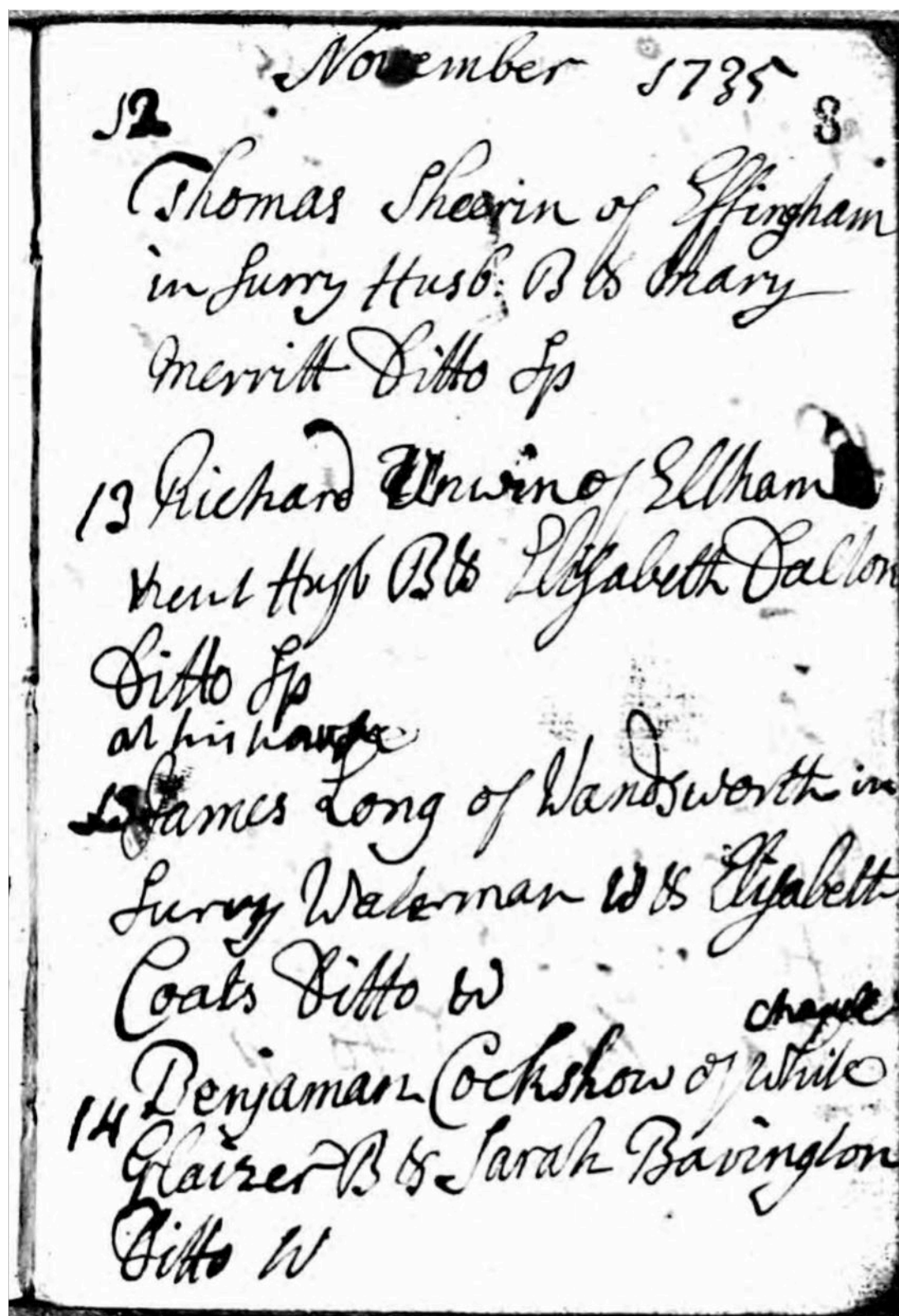


PLATE 10

Thomas Sheerin, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 12 Nov 1735

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Mary Merrett**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/421

Officiating Minister: not named

Fleet notebooks: Burnford's notebook: 1735 Oct – 1736 Mar

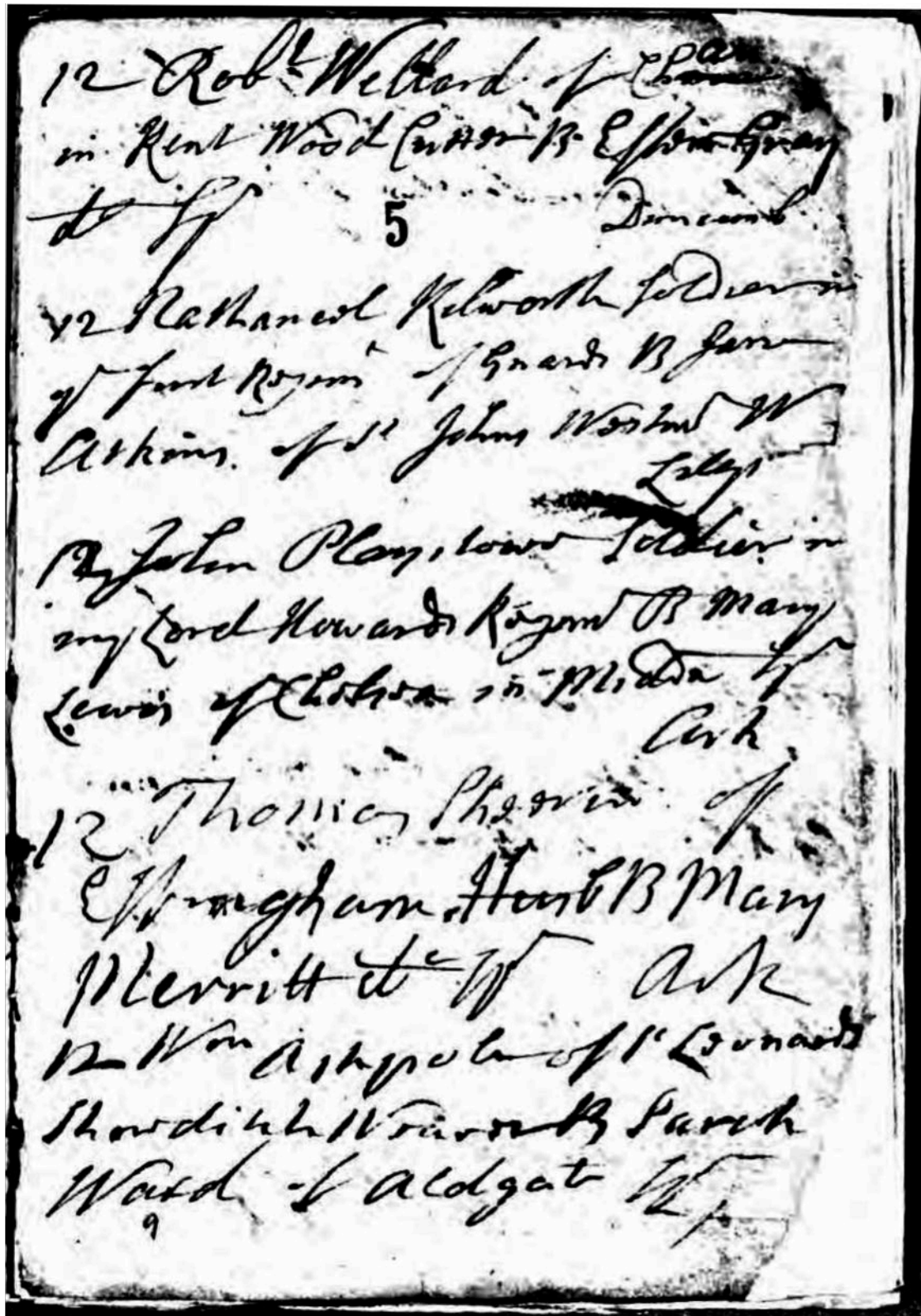


PLATE 11

Thomas Sheerin, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 12 Nov 1735

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Mary Merrett**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/644

Officiating Minister: not named

Fleet notebooks: Gaynam's notebook: 1735 Nov – 1735 Dec

July 21st 1737 25
 Rich: Morris of
 Acton in Midt Wic:
 & Eliz: Banks widow
 to W. W.
 21st Christopher Stevenson
 Upholsterer of St. James
 Westminster Batch: & Mary
 Fleming. Ditto widow
 to W. W. 15
 22 Wm Godfery
 of St Martin in
 the field Jewell
 B^r & Elizth Kelluck
 of Effingham
 in Surrey sp^r
 23^d Jas: Ashwell brew
 ers Serv^t of St. George
 Bloomsbury wid: &
 Francis Saunders sp^r
 to W. W.

PLATE 12

William Godfery [sic], jeweller, bachelor

Marriage Date: 22 July 1737

Residence: St Martin-in-the-field

Spouse: **Elizabeth Kelluck**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/139

Officiating Ministers: Walker, Wigmore, Wyatt, Shellburn, Gaynam, Ashwell, Ryder

Fleet register: 1734 Nov – 1738 Oct

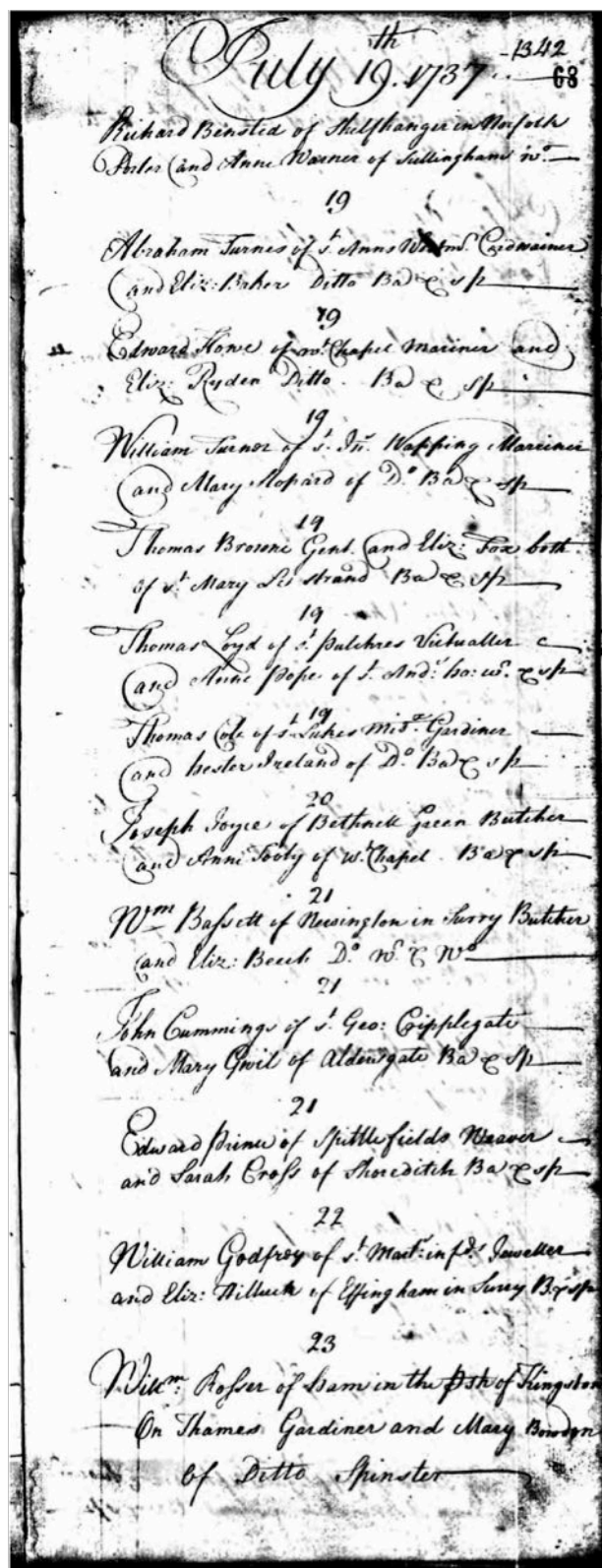


PLATE 13

William Godfrey, jeweller, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 22 July 1737
 Residence: St Martin-in-the-field
 Spouse: **Elizabeth Killuck**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/144
 Officiating Ministers: Symson, Dare, Gaynam, Shellburn
 Fleet register: 1735 Apr – 1738 Nov

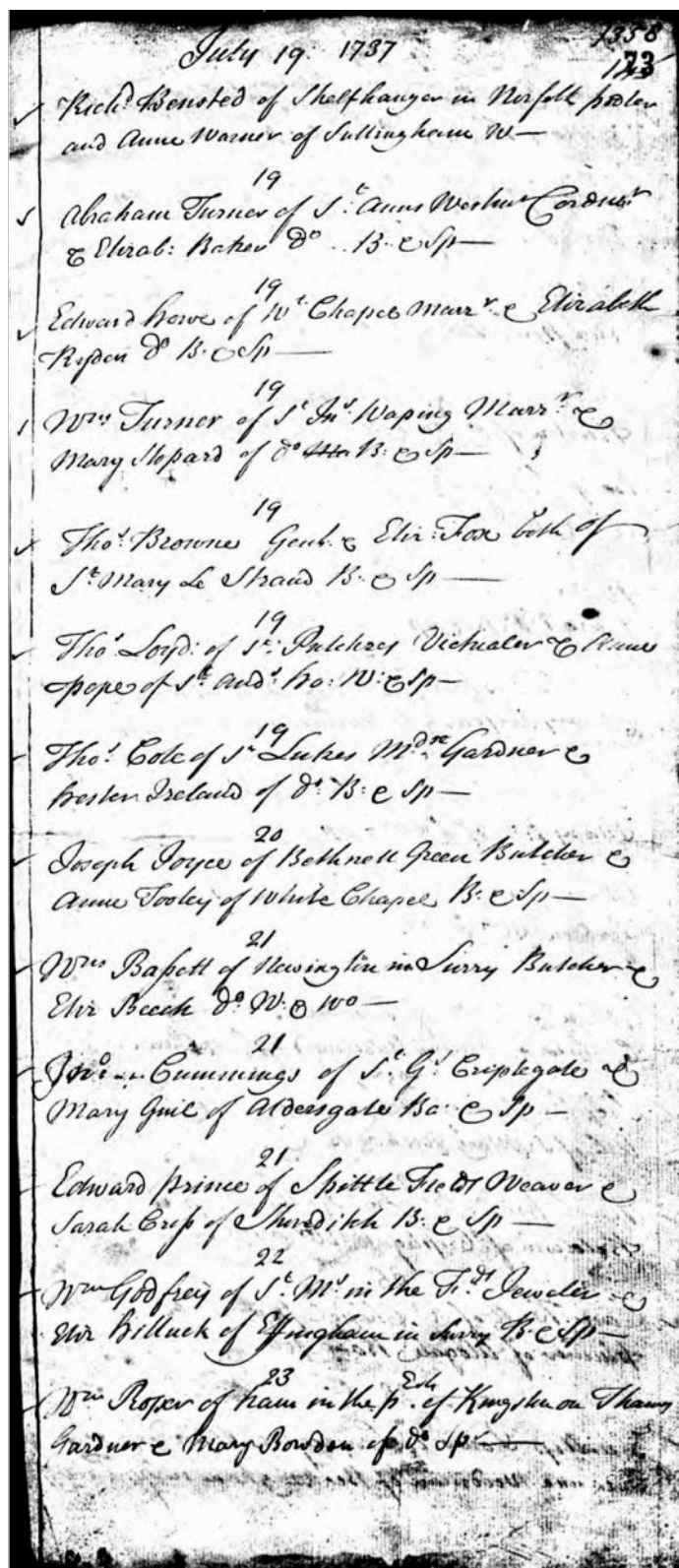


PLATE 14

William Godfrey, jeweler [sic], bachelor

Marriage Date: 22 Jul 1737

Residence: St Martin-in-the-field

Spouse: **Elizabeth Killuck**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/147

Officiating Ministers: Wigmore and others not named

Fleet register: 1735 Jun – 1738 Nov

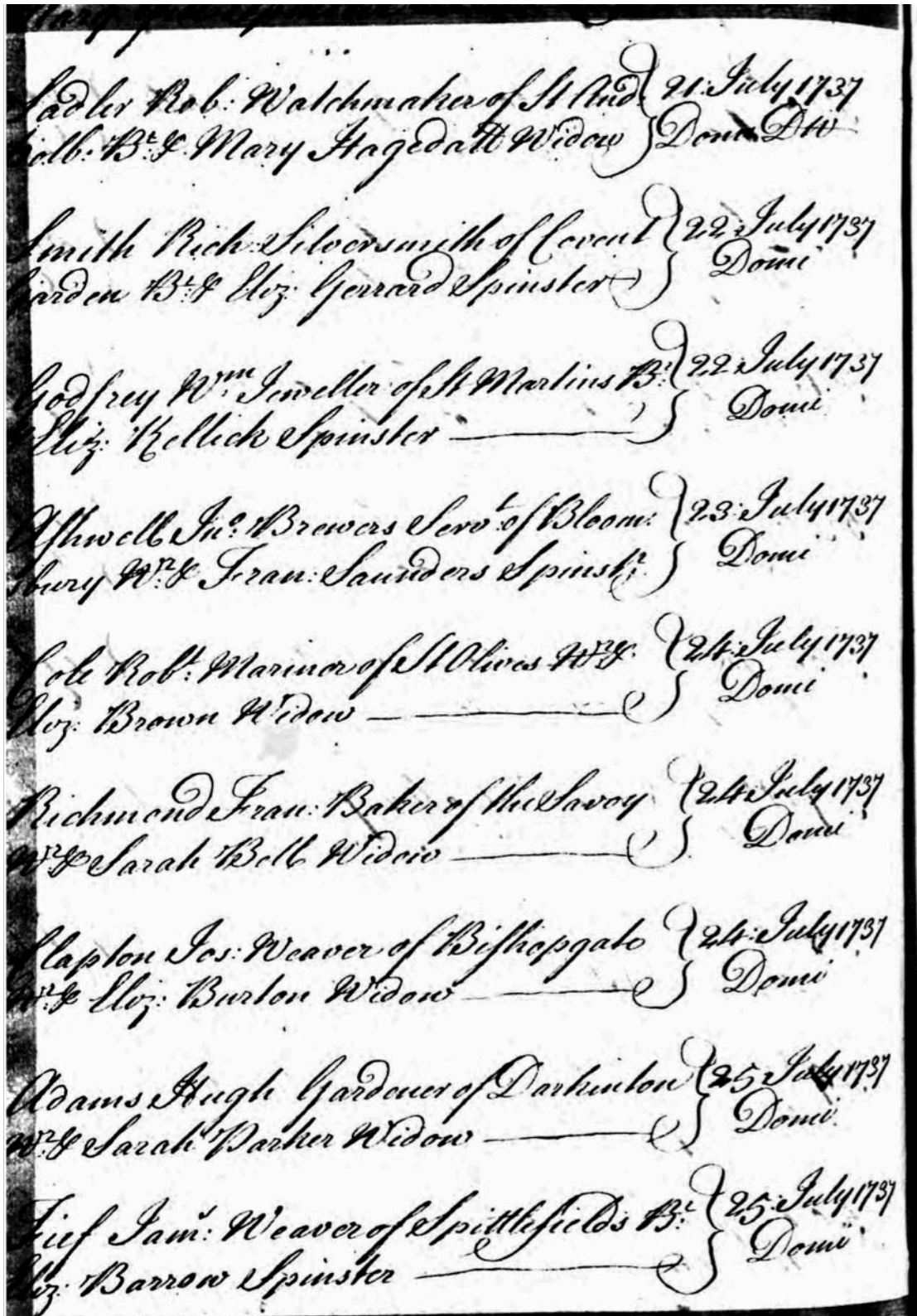


PLATE 15

William Godfrey, jeweller, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 22 Jul 1737
 Residence: St Martin's, London
 Spouse: **Elizabeth Kellick**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/159
 Officiating Minister: Wyatt
 Fleet register: Wyatt's register: 1736 Sep – 1739 Feb

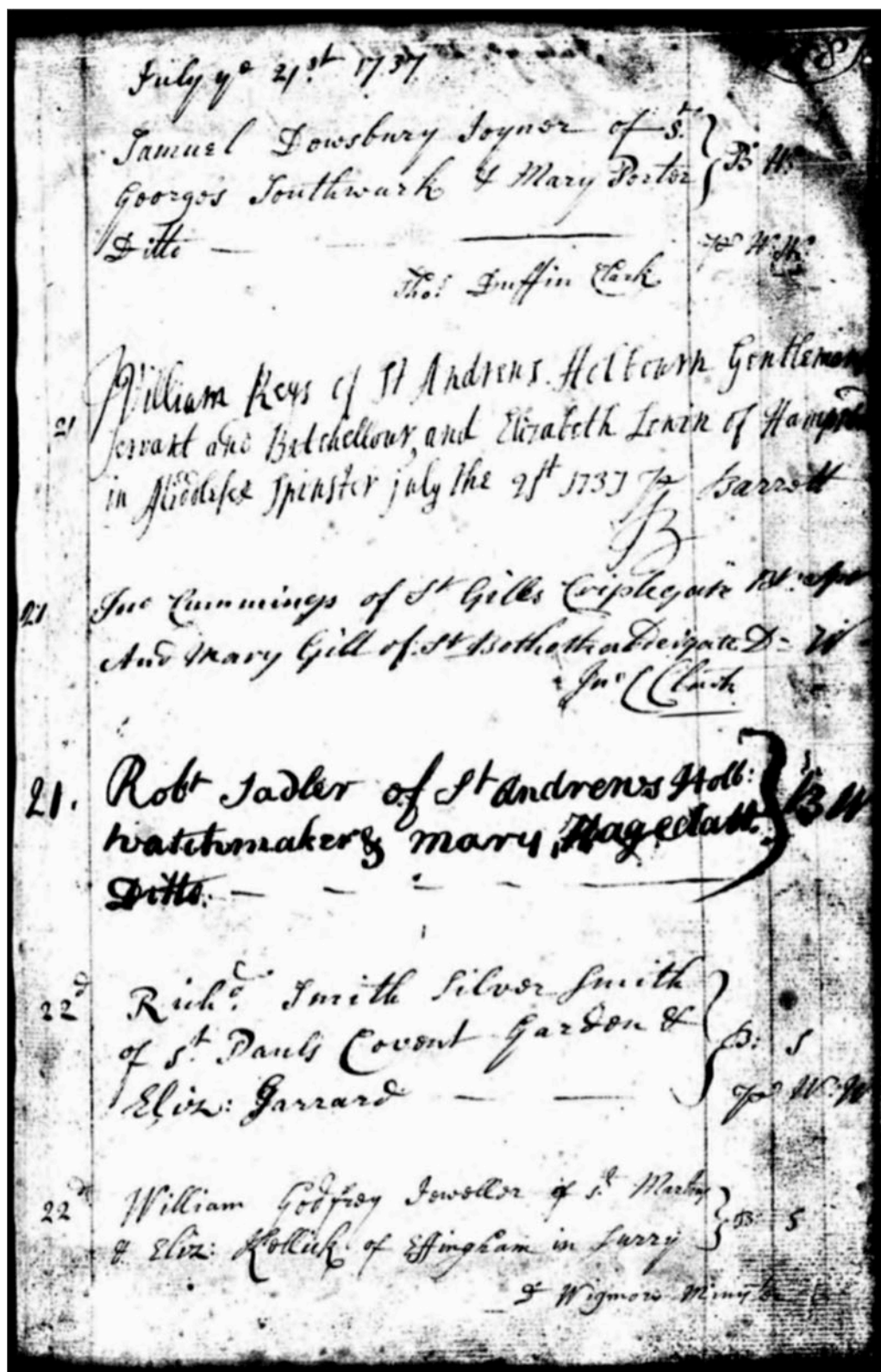


PLATE 16

William Godfrey, jeweller, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 22 Jul 1737
 Residence: St Martin's, London
 Spouse: **Elizabeth Kellick**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/160
 Officiating Ministers: Wyatt, Ryder, Ashwell, Dare, Wigmore, Hanson, Tarrant
 Fleet register: 1736 Sep - 1739 Feb

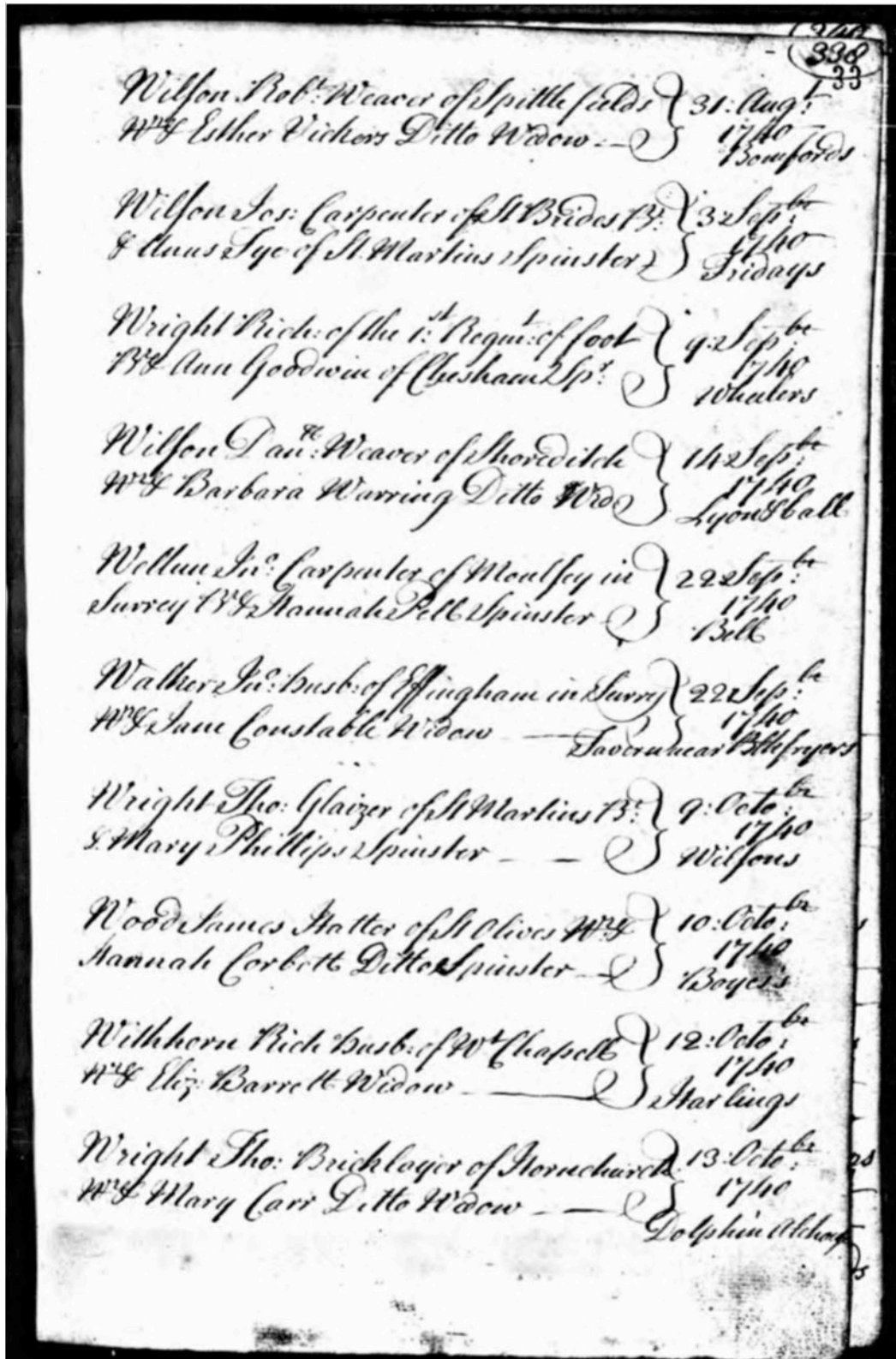


PLATE 17

Jno Walker, husbandman, widower

Marriage Date: 22 Sep 1740

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Jane Constable, widow

Spouse Residence: of Tavern [near] Blackfryers [sic]

Piece Description: RG 7/166

Officiating Minister: Wyatt

Fleet register: Wyatt's register: 1737 Mar – 1741 Nov

19th? y^e 22 5
 Jⁿ^o. Luck. Husb: of
 Chestnut in Hertford
 -shire Wid: & Eliz.
 Hoskott Da^gg^r
 at y^e Adam & Edd
 22^d Jⁿ^o. Wollun Carpenter
 -for of Moulsey in Surrey
 & Hannah Poll sp
 at y^e Bell
 22 Jⁿ^o. Walker Husb. of
 Effingham in Surrey
 & Jane Constable widow
 at y^e Tavern near Black
 frys

PLATE 18

Jno Walker, husbandman, widower

Marriage Date: 22 Sep 1740

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Jane Constable, widow

Spouse Residence: Of Tavern near Blackfryers [sic]

Piece Description: RG 7/724

Officiating Minister: Wyatt

Fleet notebooks: Wyatt's notebook: 1740 Sep – 1740 Oct

November 1st 1752 - 47²⁴
 John Walker widower Husband
 of Effingham Surrey Eliz
 Almore widow of St Andrews
 Holbourn P. Symson
 1st Thomas Robinson Br and
 Butcher of St Pauls Shadwell
 Eliz. Shadbourn spr Ditto
 P. Symson
 3^d Edward Jones Br and an apothecary
 of St Clements Lane, Jane Bowen
 spr Ditto Peter Symson
 3^d John Wheeler Br and a Justice of St.
 Holm of Peters near St. Alans West of London
 Eliz. Atkins spr Ditto
 4th John Basse Br, and a Mathematician
 of St Georges Southwark, and
 Ann Strelon spr Ditto
 4th Thomas Clark Br and weaver
 of St Lukes, Eliz. Selan spr
 of St Botolph Bishopgate P. Symson

PLATE 19

John Walker, husbandman, widower
 Marriage Date: 1752
 Residence: Effingham
 Spouse: Eliz Almore, widow
 Spouse Residence: St Andrew's Holbourn

Piece Description: RG 7/268
 Officiating Ministers: Symson, Deneveu
 Fleet register: Symson's register number 2: 1752 Jul – 1754 Mar

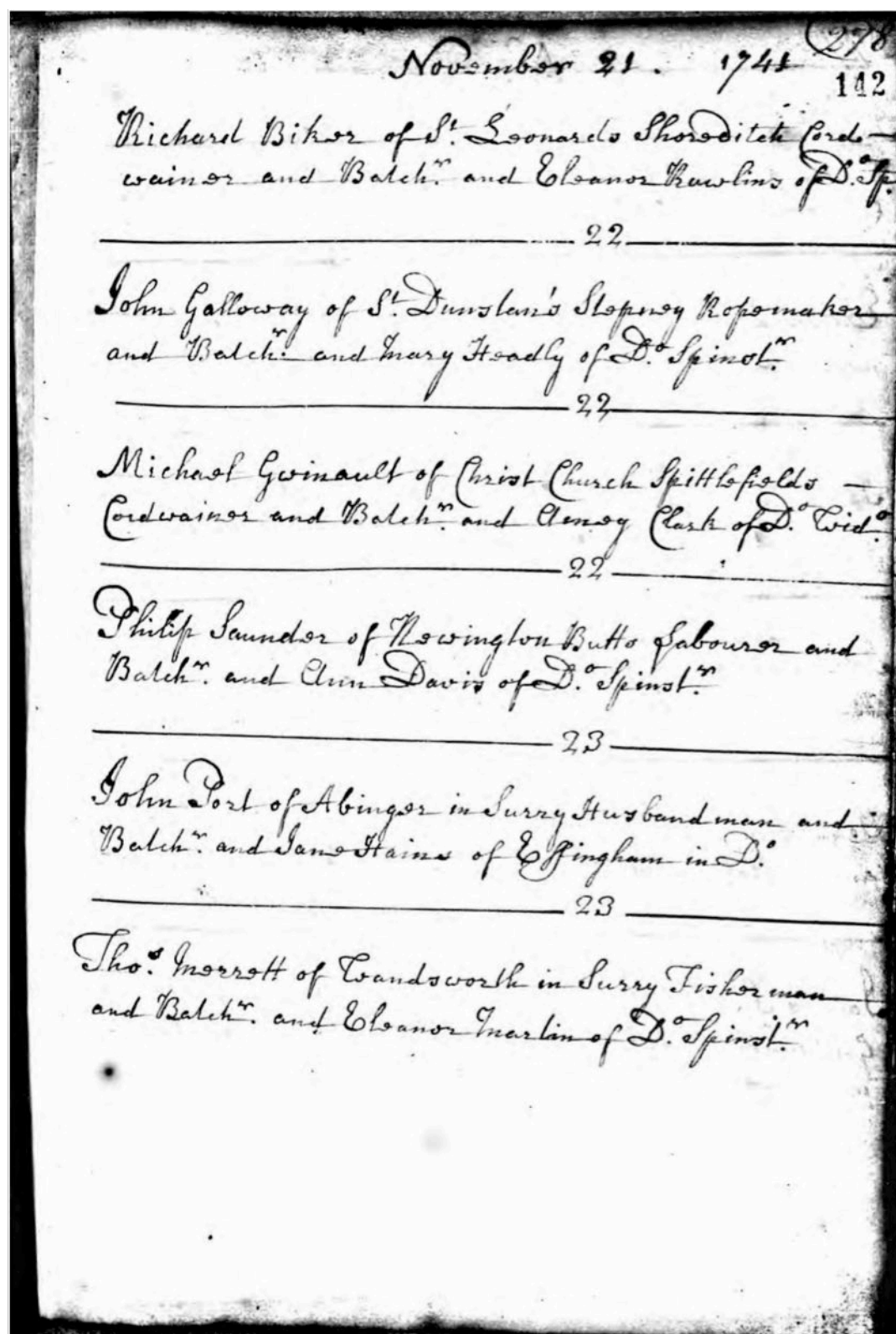


PLATE 20

John Port, husbandman, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 23 Nov 1741
 Residence: Abinger
 Spouse: **Jane Hains** [spinster?]
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/161
 Officiating Ministers: Dare, Sindrey, Wyatt, Wigmore, etc
 Fleet register: Dare's register number 1: 1736 Nov – 1742 Aug

NOVEMBER 1741			28
18 Joseph Bull of The Grain of Littlebury at Woolwich	ask:	Esther King of Greenwich Sp:	24 B: 8
19 William Smith of Algate port Marriner	ask:	Rebecca York ditto Sp:	B: 8
20 Robert Newman of General Honewood Troop of Dragoons	ask:	Elisabeth Cole of Ingerston in Essex Sp:	B: 8
23 John Port of Abinger in Surrey Husbandman	Dare:	Jane Hains of Effingham Sp:	B: 8
25 John Turse of Andover in Hants Cordwain	Wyatt	Mary Waters ditto Sp:	B: 8
27 Andrew Tolgerson of Deptford in Kent Marriner	Wyatt:	Susannah Riley ditto Sp:	W: 8
27 Thomas Benham of St Cathrins by the Tower Marr:	Wyatt:	Elisabeth Cole ditto W:	B: 8
28 Thomas Colwell of Broomley in Kent Husb:	ask:	Elisabeth ditto Sp: Saxeby omitted & name by oversight	B: 8
28 Edward Lepish of Scarborough in Yorkshires Marriner	ask	Isabella Robinson ditto of St Georges of East	B: 8 W:
29 John Dean of the 3 Troop of Horse Guard	Wyatt	Elizor Duckers of St Georges Hants Sp:	B: 8
DECEMBER 1741			
1 Thomas Webb of Hogsdon in Hartfordshire Cordwain	ask:	Ann Webb ditto W: She did not Change her name	
2 John Weston of East mawlin in Kent Gent: Parh:	ask	Ann Hand ditto Sp	B: 8
5 John King of St Pauls Covent Garden Carpenter	ask:	Diana Nicholson ditto Sp:	B: 8
7 Nathaniel Borham of Letton in Essex Potter	ask:	Sarah Dors of Harlow Sp:	B: 8

PLATE 21

John Port, husbandman, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 23 Nov 1741
 Residence: Abinger
 Spouse: **Jane Hains**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/191

Officiating Ministers: Ashwell, Wyatt, Wigmore, Tarrant, Crawford, Dare
 Fleet register: Wyatt's register [Burnford's register]: 1740 Sep – 1747 Dec

novbr 1741

23 John Port of abinger
in Surrey Husb B & Jane
Hains of Fflingham Sp
of Fare
one under ~~the~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~town~~ ~~hill~~ 24
27 Andrew Tolgorson of
Deptford mar'd B & Susannah
Riley Bitts Sp: Wyatt
Jy: B: m Coash 16

25 John Nurse of andover in
Hants Cordwain? B & Mary
Waters Bitts Sp
Wyatt B all

PLATE 22

John Port, husbandman, bachelor
Marriage Date: 23 Nov 1741
Residence: Abinger
Spouse: **Jane Hains**, spinster
Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/448
 Officiating Minister: not named
 Fleet notebooks: Burnford's notebook: 1741 Oct – 1741 Dec

Nov^r. 23. 1741
 John Port of Abinger in Surry
 Husbandman & Bachelor Jane Hains of
 Effingham in Do. - - - Bm: -
 6/8
 23. Thomas Merrett of Wandsworth¹⁴
 in Surry Fisherman & Bachelor and Oliver
 Martin of Do Spinster Shepherd & Cook
 6/8
 19
 28 John Tlemelling of St Mary
 Over's Lighterman & Widow and Elizabeth
 Lambing of St Martin's and his
 Colidge & a Widow Fleet Bank
 6/1.
 23 Edward Davis of St Dunstons
 Stepney Cordwainer & Bachelor and
 Magdalen Jopson of St Sp^r
 m/8
 -:15:6

PLATE 23

John Port, husbandman, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 23 Nov 1741
 Residence: Abinger
 Spouse: **Jane Hains** [spinster?]
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/491
 Officiating Minister: not named
 Fleet notebooks: Dare's notebook: 1741 Nov – 1741 Dec



PLATE 24

Henry Howick, wheeler, bachelor

Marriage Date: 21 Feb 1743

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Ann Hall**, widow

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/215

Officiating Minister: Dare

Fleet register: Dare's register number 3: 1743 Feb – 1744 Feb

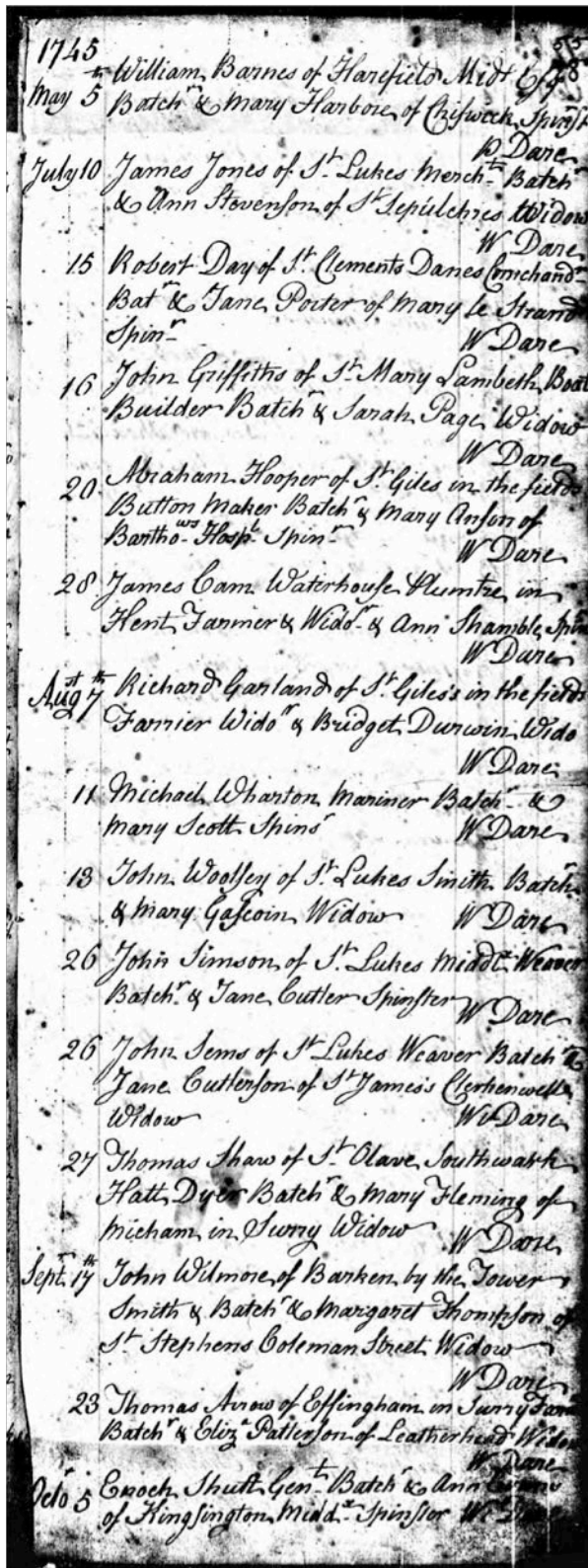


PLATE 25

Thomas Airo, farmer, bachelor

Marriage Date: 23 Sep 1745

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Eliza Patterson, widow [but in Plates 26-28 entered as Potterton, spinster]

Spouse Residence: Leatherhead

Piece Description: RG 7/150

Officiating Ministers: Wyatt, Wigmore, Shellburn, Ryder, Dare, Crawford, Symson, etc

Fleet register: King's Arms register: 1735 Nov – 1750 Dec

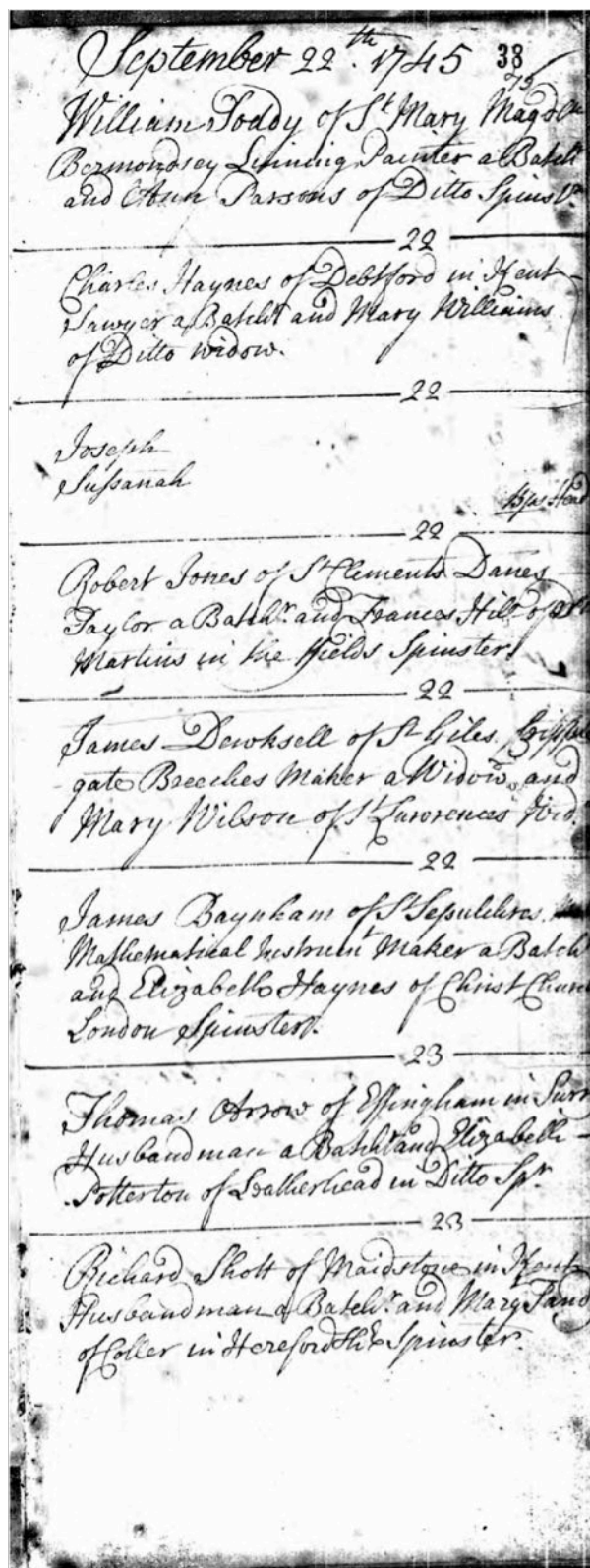


PLATE 26

Thomas Arrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 23 Sep 1745

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Eliza Potterton, spinster

Spouse Residence: Leatherhead

Piece Description: RG 7/220

Officiating Minister: Dare

Fleet register: Dare's register number 4: 1745 Mar – 1746 Jun

Sep^r: 23th 1745
 Thos Arrow of Effingham in Surry
 Husbandman a B^{ch} and Eliz Potterton
 of Leatherhead in D^{or}set^r ... Sign: son
 9/18
 23 Richd Shott of Maidstone in
 Kent Husbandman a B^{ch} &
 Mary Jandy of Coler in Hantsford
 sh^r p^r ... - - - - - Sign: -
 9/18
 23 Nath: Collard of St Giles in the
 fields Lordwainers a B^{ch} & Ann
 Huxey of D^{or} widow. Bates
 9/18 See Feb^r: 25. 1744
 24 Isaac Cambel of St Giles Cris
 plegate Lordwainers a B^{ch} &
 Eliz Py mile of D^{or}set^r - wood
 4/1 - - - - - come
 - 9m: 8

PLATE 27

Thos Arrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 23 Sep 1745

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Eliza Potterton, spinster

Spouse Residence: Leatherhead

Piece Description: RG 7/526

Officiating Minister: not named

Fleet notebooks: Dare's notebook: 1745 Sep

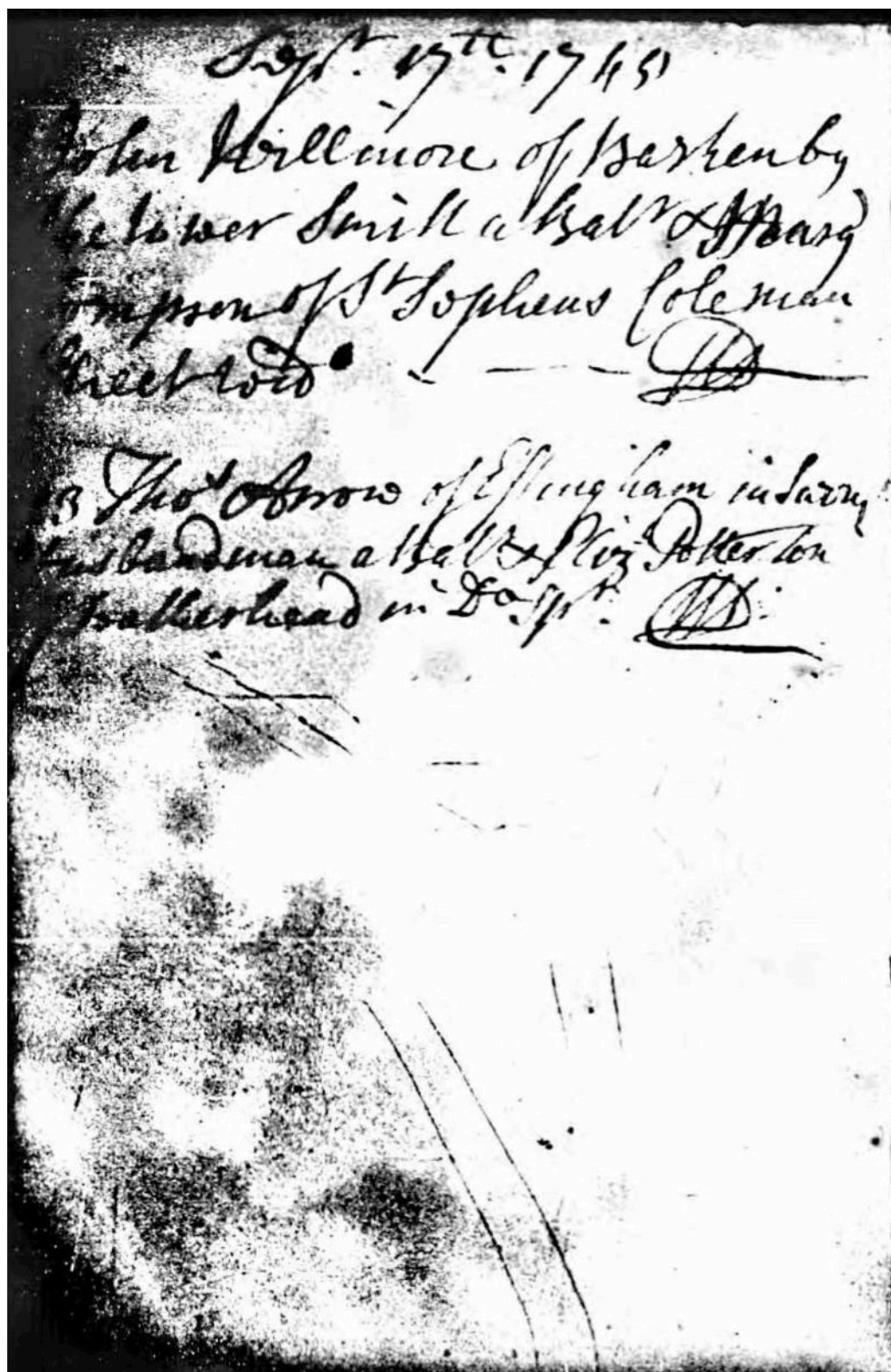


PLATE 28

Thos Arrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 23 Sep 1745

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Eliz Potterton, spinster

Spouse Residence: Leatherhead

Piece Description: RG 7/660

Officiating Ministers: Dare, Wyatt, Symson, Deneveu

Fleet register: King's Arms register (marriages at Mr William Simpson's): 1741 Jun – 1749 Jul

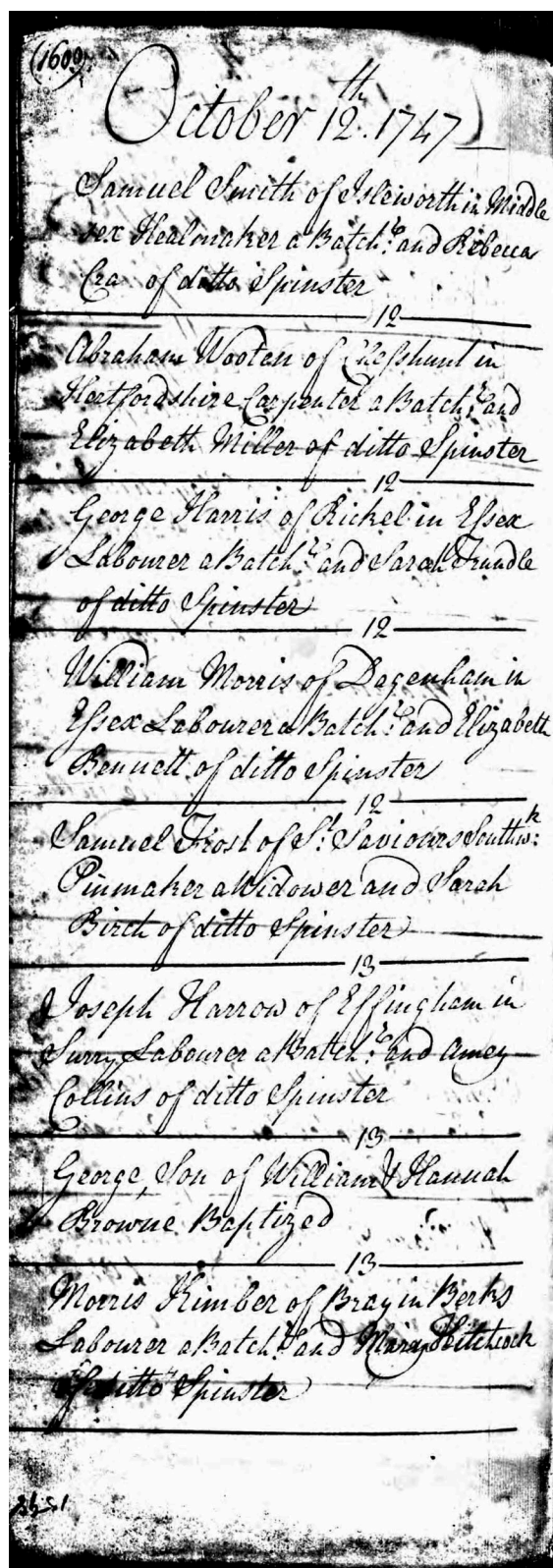


PLATE 29

Joseph Harrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 13 Oct 1747

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Amey Collins**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/144

Officiating Ministers: Dare, Tarrant, Symson, Deneveu

Fleet register: Dare's register: 1747 Sep – 1750 Sep

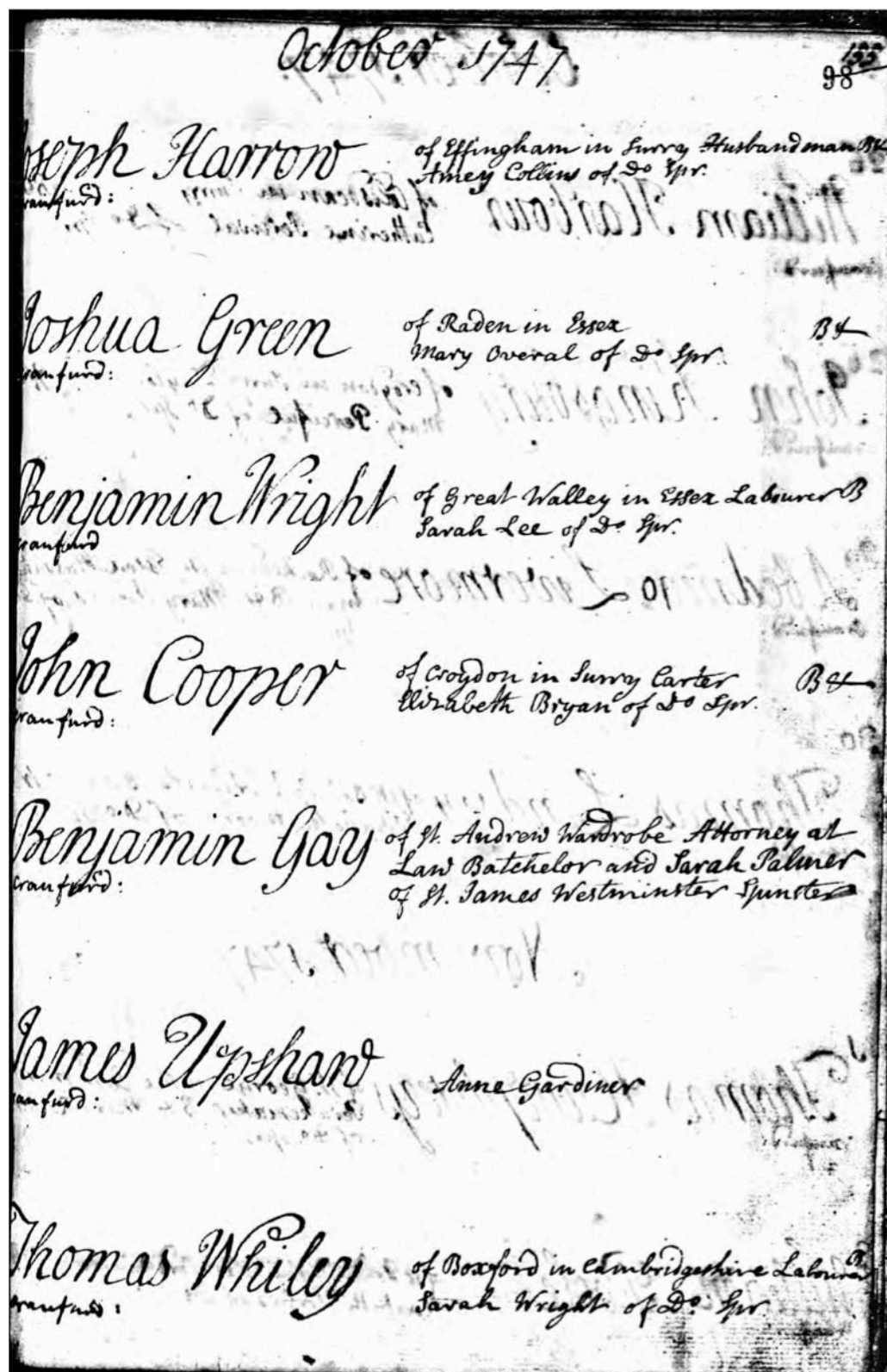


PLATE 30

Joseph Harrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: Oct 1747

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Amey Collins**, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/191

Officiating Ministers: Ashwell, Wyatt, Wigmore, Tarrant, Crawford, Dare

Fleet register: Wyatt's register [Burnford's register]: 1740 Sep – 1747 Dec

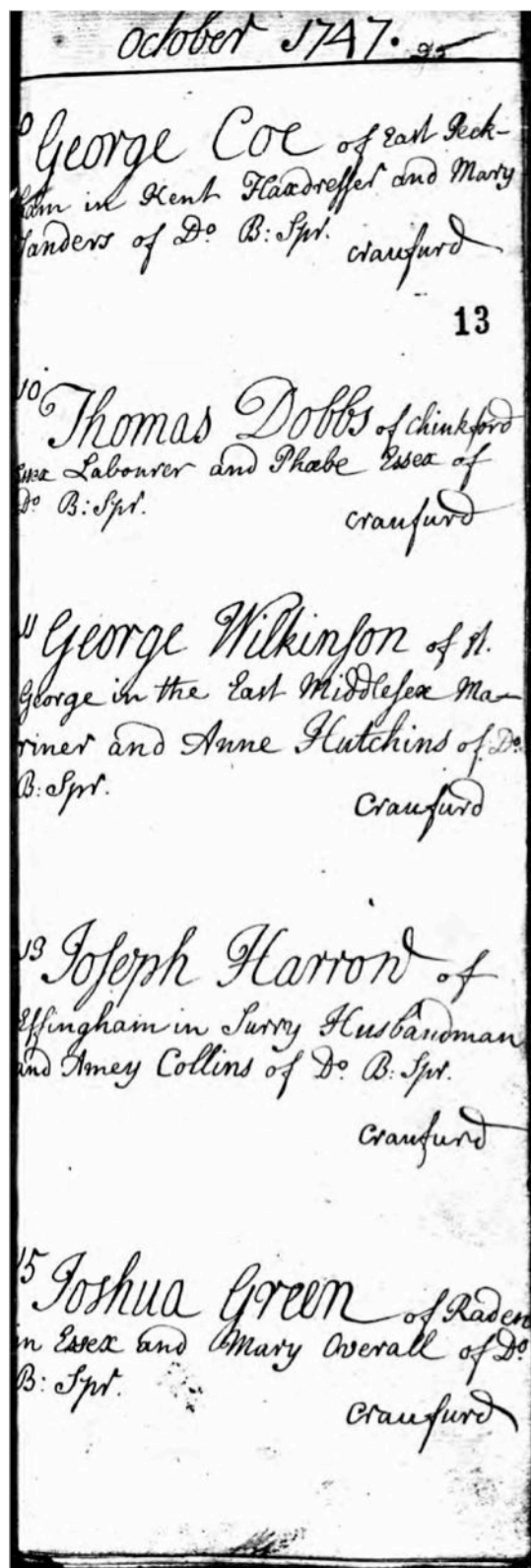


PLATE 31

Joseph Harrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: 13 Oct 1747

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: **Amey Collins**, spinster

Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/236

Officiating Ministers: Tarrant, [P]Townsend, Crawford

Fleet register: [Newton's register]: 1747 Jul – 1748 Oct

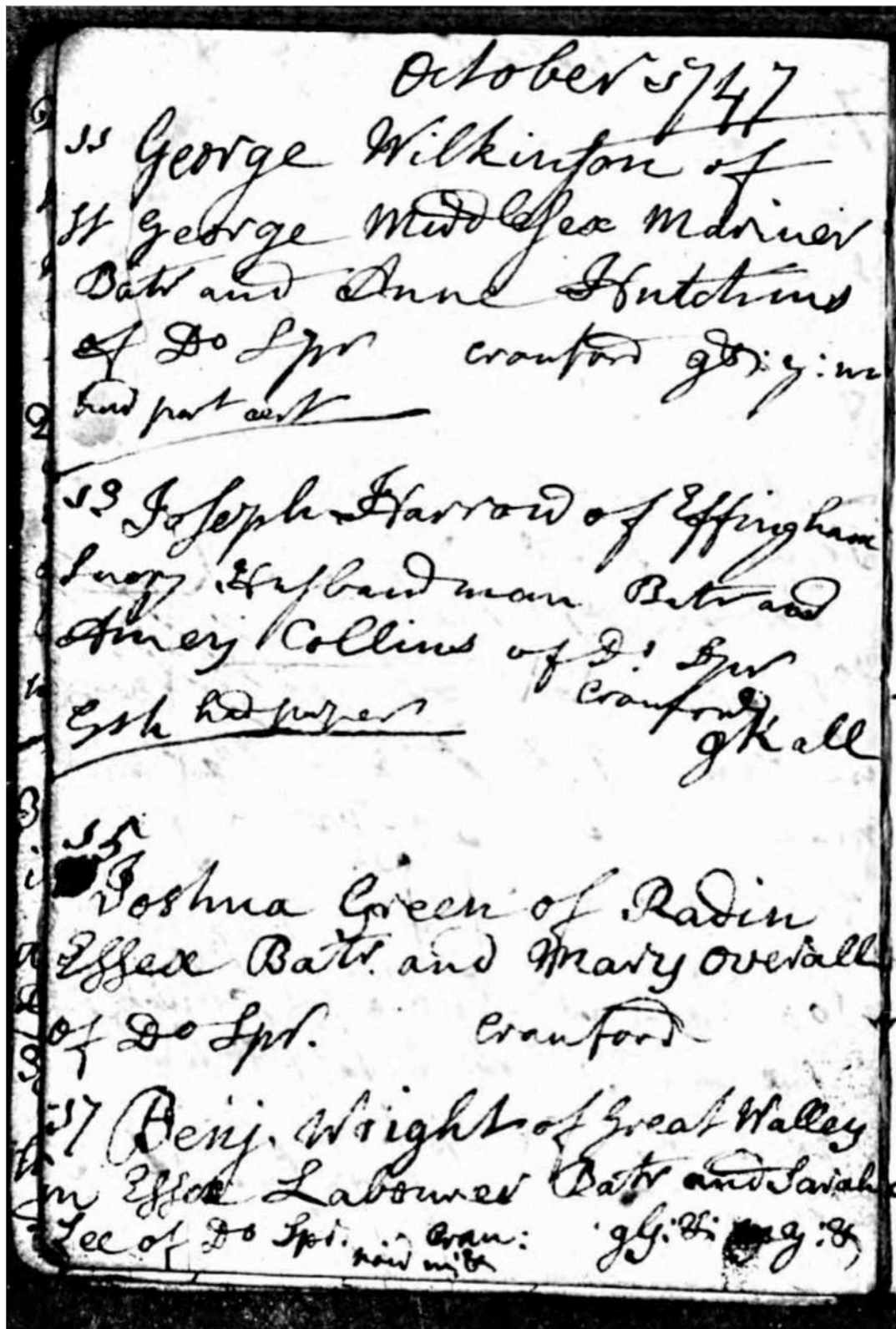


PLATE 32

Joseph Harrow, husbandman, bachelor

Marriage Date: Oct 1747

Residence: Effingham

Spouse: Amey Collins, spinster

Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/472

Officiating Ministers: not named

Fleet notebooks: Burnford's notebook; Newton's notebook: 1747 Jun – 1747 Dec

Oct: 12th 1747
 Wm Morris of Dagulrae
 Esq & Lab^r 13th Eliz Bennet
 of D^o Sp^r - - - - - til 6: -
 4/- ✓

12: Saml Gos of St Paul Surry
 Pin & nates wth Sarah Birch
 of D^o Sp^r - - - - - Bates 4
 m/o ✓

13. Joseph Harrow of Effing-
 ham: Surry, Lab^r & Amey
 Collins of D^o Sp^r Bm 13: -
 o/o ✓

13 George son of Wm & Ann
 Nath Brown Baptized
 Asa Ham Bullock & Asa Ford
 Wm Bullock witnesses
 m/- ✓

PLATE 33

Joseph Harrow, labourer, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 13 Oct 1747
 Residence: Effingham
 Spouse: **Amey Collins**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Essingham

Piece Description: RG 7/548
 Officiating Minister: not named
 Fleet notebooks: Dare's notebook: 1747 Oct – 1747 Nov

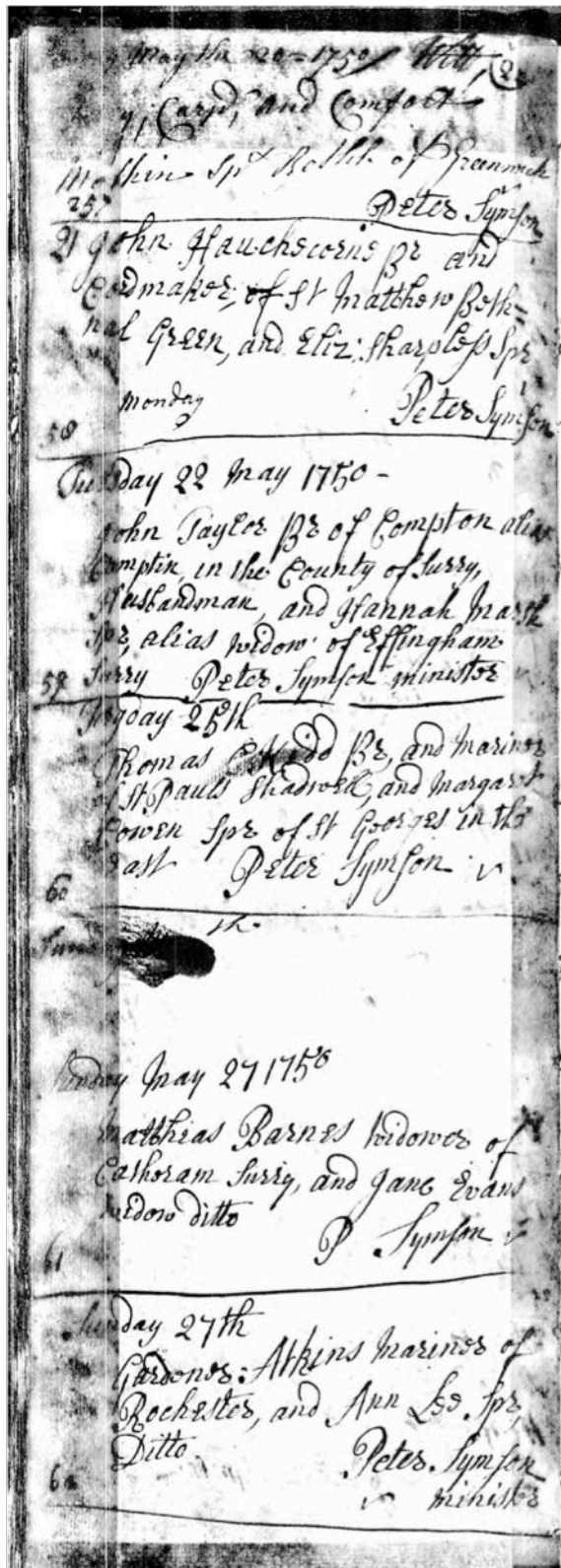


PLATE 34

John Taylor, husbandman, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 22 May 1750
 Residence: Compton alias Comptin, Surrey
 Spouse: **Hannah Marsh**, spinster alias widow
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/241
 Officiating Ministers: Lando, Symson, Wyatt, Deneveu
 Fleet register: 1748 Sep – 1752 Aug

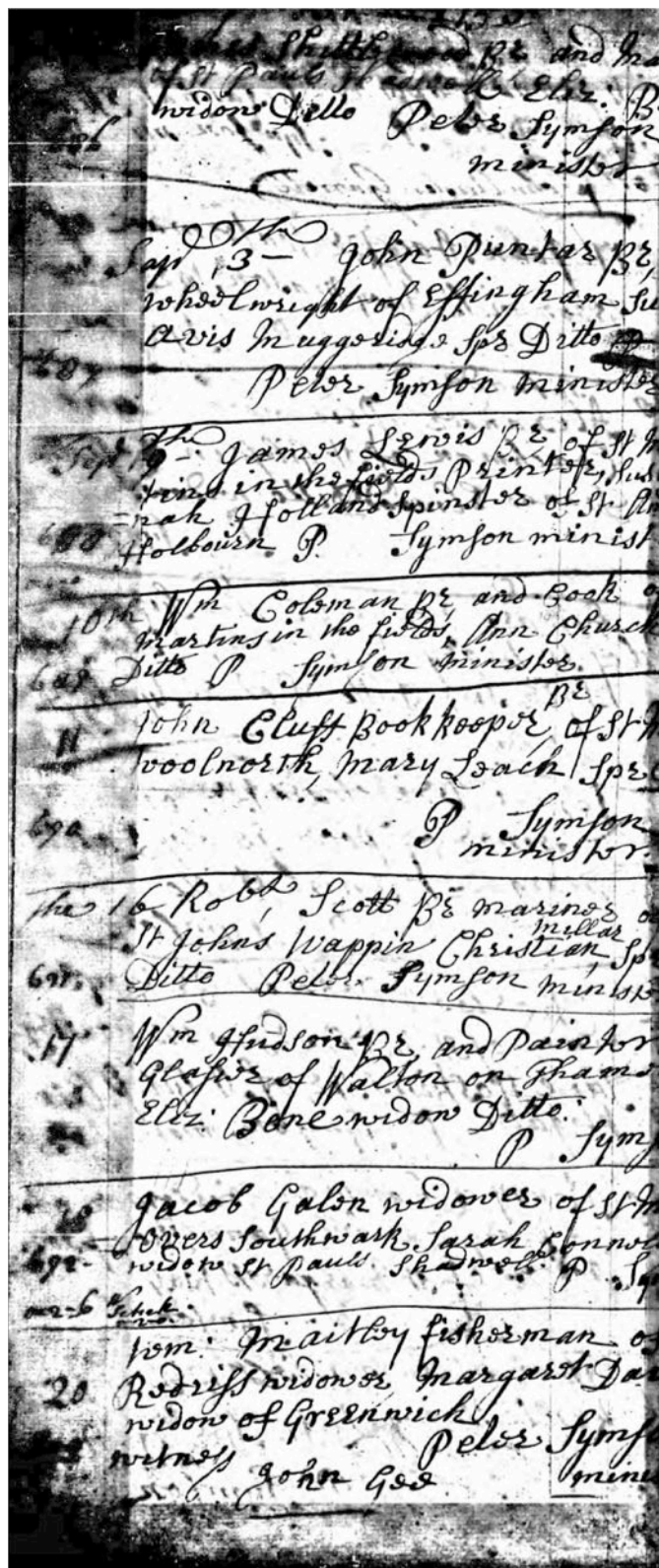


PLATE 35

John Puntar, wheelwright, bachelor
 Marriage Date: 3 September 1753
 Residence: Effingham
 Spouse: **Avis Muggerridge**, spinster
 Spouse Residence: Effingham

Piece Description: RG 7/15
 Officiating Ministers: Symson, Townsend, Nodes, Bearfield
 Fleet register: 1752 Aug – 1754 Mar

APPENDIX III

John Gaynam in The Fleet Registers, Chapter III, pp25-26

¹ This man, famed for the number of his marriages, and unrivalled for notoriety of character, appears to have been styled "Doctor Gaynam." The following evidence given at the Old Bailey on the trial of Robert Hussey in 1733 for bigamy, will give some idea of his character and pretensions.

Dr. Gainham. The 9th of September 1733, I married a couple at the Rainbow Coffee House the corner of Fleet Ditch, and entered the marriage in my register, as fair a register as any church in England can produce. I shewed it last night to the foreman of the jury, and my Lord Mayor's Clerk, at the London Punch House.

Counsel.—Are you not ashamed to come and own a clandestine marriage in the face of a Court of Justice?

Dr. Gainham.—(bowing) *Vide meliora, deteriora sequor.*

Q.—You are on your oath, I ask you whether you never enter marriages in that book when there's no marriage at all?

Gainham.—I never did in my life. I page my book so, that it cannot be altered.

From the trial of Edmund Dangerfield, for bigamy, in 1736.

Dr. Gainham.—I don't know the prisoner. I did marry a man and woman of these names. Here, this is a true register: "Edmd. Dangerfield of St. Mary Newington Butts, Batchelor, to Arabella Fast." When I marry at any house I always set it down, for I carry one of the books in my pocket, and when I go home I put it in my great book.

Court.—Do you never make any alteration?

Gainham.—Never, my Lord. These two were married at Mrs. Ball's, at the Hand and Pen, by the Fleet Prison, and my name is to her book.

Counsel.—"Tis strange you should not remember the prisoner.

Gainham.—Can I remember persons? I have married 2000 since that time.

The prisoner's defence.—"Arabella Fast said to me, 'There is a minister, (naming his name) who often lies with me, and if you'll say you are my husband we may get some money out of him.' I took a room for her, within a fortnight after; she told me the parson was come to London and now was the time to make him our prize; 'Come into our room (says she) about 10 o'clock at night'—I did, and found Arabella and he a-bed. 'Hey! (says I,) how came you a-bed with my spouse?' 'Sir, (says he,) I only lay with her to keep my back warm.' In the morning the gentleman said, 'I must make you a present if you can produce a certificate.' I knew not what to say. 'Sir, (says Arabella) we were married at the Fleet,' and says she to me, 'For a crown I can get a certificate from the Fleet.' I gave her a crown, and in half an hour she brings me a certificate."—The Prisoner was acquitted.

It is believed that it was Gaynam who was named "The Bishop of Hell," a notice of which appellation was taken at the trial of Ruth Woodward, in 1737, for bigamy.

John Hall.—I saw her married at the Fleet to Robert Holmes; 'twas at the Hand and Pen, a barber's shop.

Counsel.—And is it not a wedding-shop too?

Hall.—Yes. I don't know the parson's name, but 'twas a man that once belonged to Creed Church—a very lusty, jolly man.

Counsel.—Because there's a complaint lodged in a proper court, against a Fleet parson, whom they call The Bishop of Hell.

In one of the pocket-books used by the Fleet Clergymen is the following.

Sept. 16, 1728, "Witness that they (Hutchis and Brown) saw Walter Chandler strike John Gaynam, Clergyman, with a stick, several blows."

APPENDIX IV

*The clandestine marriage of William Godfrey and Elizabeth Killick in 1737***William Godfrey's background**

From 1724 to 1738 the Vicar at Effingham was Rev Joseph Godfrey. We know little about him, but he may have come late into holy orders (see *Some Account of the Post Reformation Clerics at St Lawrence Church, Effingham*, Bryan Sherwood and Susan Morris, 2023, pp87-91). He married on 1 November 1711 at the church of St Peter and St Paul, Godalming to Elizabeth Toft. Their son William was born in the following year, being baptised at Godalming on 24 October 1712 [FHL: Film No 814231].

Elizabeth Killick's background

Elizabeth's father Henry (Junior) Killick, the son of Henry Killick and Ann, was baptised on 2 February 1688/89 at Effingham. Following his marriage in 1711, when the baptisms of his children began to be recorded, he was named 'Henry Junior' in the registers, but after the death of his father in 1719 the register entries revert to just 'Henry'. He is believed to have married firstly to Elizabeth Lull, on 16 December 1711 at St Peter's in Woking; the register records him as being 'of Merrow'. We have no documentary evidence to substantiate whether he was living there just prior to the marriage.

Henry and his wife Elizabeth were living in Effingham when all their seven children were baptised. Of these, only three appear to have survived into adulthood: William baptised in 1713 who married and stayed in Effingham, Elizabeth baptised on 7 May 1716, and possibly Martha baptised on 12 October 1721 who may have gone to Great Bookham, remaining unmarried. Henry's wife Elizabeth died five months after the birth of her final child, also named Henry. She was buried on 14 March 1723/24, leaving three children under the age of 10-11 including Elizabeth.

The clandestine marriage

By 1736 when she was 20, Elizabeth Killick's parents Henry and Elizabeth were dead. Evidently she was working for Rev Joseph Godfrey at Effingham vicarage as a 'yearly hired servant'. Rev Godfrey's son William had become an apprentice jeweller in London. A romance started, resulting in the birth of an illegitimate child named Elizabeth in December; she was born at an alehouse called *The Bell and Goat* in Bull Inn Court, The Strand, London.

Two of the Justices of the Peace for the county of Surrey had ordered the child to be removed from the parish of Effingham. Elizabeth was unmarried with a child and thus 'likely to become' a charge on the parish where she was living. The Poor Law Guardians were charged with finding out who the father was, and this they did. Elizabeth made a statement on oath to them on 19 July 1737:

‘The Examination of Elizabeth Killick singlewoman taken on Oath this nineteenth Day of July in the year of our Lord 1737.

Who upon Oath saith she is about twenty one years of age that she was born at Effingham in the County of Surry [sic] and was a yearly hired servant to the Reverend Mr Joseph Godfrey Minister of Effingham aforesaid about two years and a quarter and that she left that service about seven months ago. And this Examination her Voluntary Oath further saith that Elizabeth Killick aged about six months removed from Effingham aforesaid by an order under the Hands and Seals of two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Surry is a Bastard and is likely to become chargeable to the parish of St Martin in the aforesaid and was born of her body in December last at one Thomas Davis's who keeps an alehouse being the Sign of the Bell and Goat in Bull Inn Court in the Strand in the parish of St Martin in the Fields in the said Liberty of Westminster and that one William Godfrey son of the said Joseph Godfrey who was an apprentice to one Mr Bishop a jeweller in York Buildings in the parish of St Martin aforesaid had several times the carnal knowledge of her body in the bed where she lay at the said Mr Godfrey's house at Effingham aforesaid at one of which times he begat on her body the said female bastard child and she further on her Oath saith that he the said William Godfrey is the true and only father thereof and no man else.

Sworn the day and year above written before ... Fraser

The mark of Elizabeth Killick'

Since the father was thus named, he was probably compelled to marry Elizabeth. Both partners were of age, so that could not cause an impediment. Doubtless this was intensely difficult for a Vicar's son. They were married clandestinely three days later at the Fleet on 22 July 1737, as shown by the records in Plates 12-16. One can only imagine the gossip in the village swirling around the Godfrey and Killick families.

Westm^r toq
Wit. . . }
36

The Examination of Elizabeth Killick & Ingleborne
taken on oath this nineteen th Day of July
in the year of our Lord 1737.

Who upon her Oath saith She is about twenty one years
of age that She was born at Effingham in the County of Surrey
and was a yearly hired servant to the Reverend Mr. Joseph
Godfrey Minister of Effingham aforesaid about two years and
a Quarter and that She left that Service about seven Months
ago. And this Examinant on her Voluntary Oath further
saith that Elizabeth Killick aged about six Months removed
from Effingham aforesaid by an Order under the Hands &
Seals of two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County
of Surrey is a Bastard and was born of her Body in
December last at one Thomas Davis's who keeps an
Alehouse being the Sign of the Bell and Goat in
Bull Inn Court in the Strand in the Parish of St
Martin in the fields in the said Liberty of Westm^r and
that one William Godfrey Son of the said Joseph Godfrey
who was an Apprentice to one Mr. Bishop a Jeweller in
York Buildings in the Parish of St Martin aforesaid had
several Times the full Knowledge of her Body in the
Bed where she lay at the said Mr. Joseph Godfrey's House
at Effingham aforesaid at one of which Times he begot on
her Body the said female bastard Child and she further
on her Oath saith that he the said William Godfrey is
the true and only Father thereof and no man else.

Sworn the Day and Year
above written Before

Elizabeth Killick

M. T. W. S.

Godfrey is since
married to her

Figure 8 The Settlement Examination of Elizabeth Killick; 19 July 1737.

Tragically, there was a very sad follow up. In the very next year William died aged only 25 and 3 months and was buried at Effingham on 19 January 1738. At the time of his son's burial Rev Godfrey wrote a particularly poignant entry in the register, more lengthy than usual. 'Cuius animo Deo propitius esto – God be merciful to his soul'. One hopes William had not harmed himself. Rev Godfrey himself died only a few months after his son, being buried on 4 July. His widow, Elizabeth, stayed in Effingham and was buried in August 1752. There are no extant gravestones for the Vicar, his wife or his son.

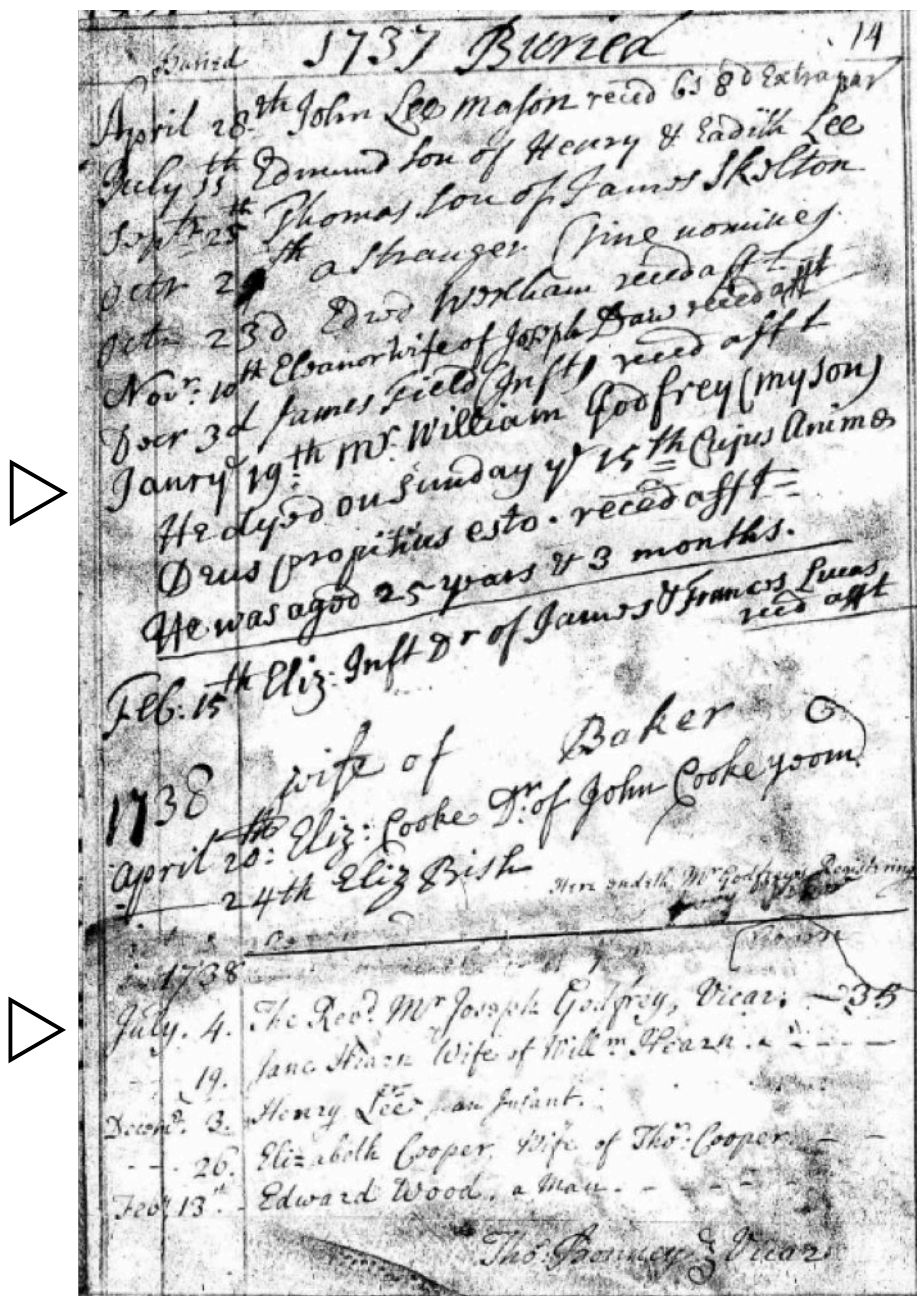


Figure 9 Burials of William Godfrey and his father Rev Joseph Godfrey.

What happened to Elizabeth and her daughter (if they survived), are not known. It is recorded that an Elizabeth Godfrey of Yoel (Ewell) married a Charles Ockly of Ossel (Horsell) husbandman at the Fleet on 30 September 1739.

Marriages at The Naked Boy

The Naked Boy inn, near the Strand's Fleet Bridge, was one of the venues at which clandestine marriages were conducted. Amazingly, we know that Rev Godfrey had some contact with a place of that name in the Strand – perhaps he went to London in happier times to visit William being an apprentice. This is from Monica O'Connor's *The History of Effingham in Surrey* about the Memorandum book [SHC Ref: BKL/18/1a]:

'There is also a verbatim transcript of a seedsman's catalogue of seeds and plants "sold by Will Lucas at the Naked Boy near Strand bridge, London" probably written by Mr Miller's successor, Mr Joseph Godfrey.'

Today, a 'Naked Boy Court' is off College Hill, near Cannon Street.

An earlier servant problem for Reverend Godfrey

It is plausible that Rev Godfrey's servant Elizabeth Killick had taken up the position vacated by an earlier servant of his, Elizabeth Birch. Miss Birch had married (after Banns) at St Lawrence, Effingham on 7 July 1734 to John Dudman; in the register Rev Godfrey qualified her name with the note '(my servt)'.

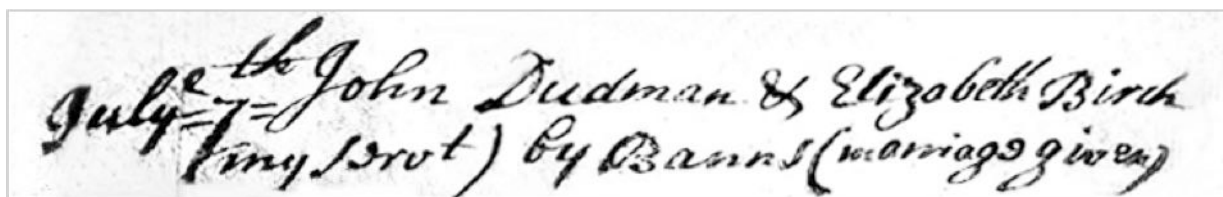


Figure 10 St Lawrence register entry for the marriage on 7 July 1734 of Elizabeth Birch and John Dudman.

It may have been an embarrassment to him that she was almost full term in pregnancy at that time, giving birth shortly afterwards to a baby girl Elizabeth, baptised on 22 July. In the baptism entry Rev Godfrey added a short memorandum to the parents' names 'they were married but a fortnight before y^e child was born'.

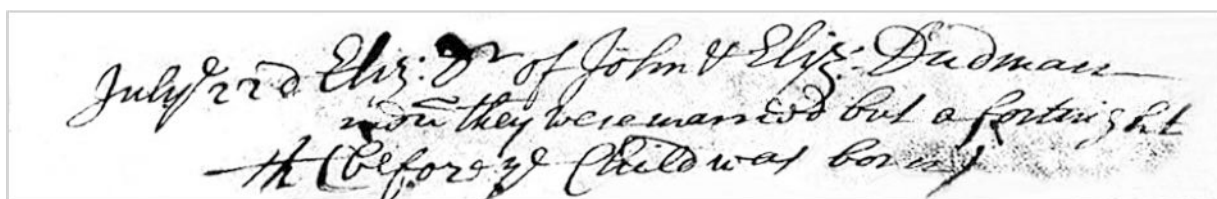


Figure 11 St Lawrence register entry for the baptism on 22 July 1734 of Elizabeth Dudman.