

High Wych History 63

High Wych Weddings

A few weeks ago we discussed High Wych burials on the basis of the Registry Of Burials at St. James's Church. That registry was started a few months after the foundation of High Wych Parish. A separate registry had to be kept to record details of marriages and they are the ones we would like to discuss in this article. Not all of them of course, just the first ten years or so.

REGISTER OF MARRIAGES,

Pursuant to Act 6 & 7 GUILLIELMI IV., Cap. 86

N^o.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY AUTHORITY OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL,
FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

BY H. TUCK, 105, ALDERGATE STREET.

1860.

Page 1

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
1	July 12 th	John Springham	42	Bachelor	Labourer	High Wych	George Springham	Labourer
		Susan Tanner	35	Widow	—	High Wych	James Harding	Labourer

Married in the Church of St. James according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or other Person by us.

This Marriage was solemnized between us: John Springham & his wife In the Presence of us: Sarah Groves H. Tuck Charles Springham

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
2	Dec 6 th	William Ellis	46	Bachelor	Labourer	High Wych	Mr. Tom die?	Labourer
		Susan Marsh	45	Widow	—	High Wych	Benjamin Ellis	Labourer

Married in the Church of St. James according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or other Person by us.

This Marriage was solemnized between us: William Ellis & his wife In the Presence of us: Charles Smith H. Tuck Charles Springham

Cover of the HW wedding registry – The first two entries

The first things that struck me was how untypical those first few weddings were. The first one took place on 12th July 1862 when John Springham married Susan Tanner. John was a 42 year old bachelor and labourer, Susan a 35 year old widow. John had lived with his parents George, also a labourer and Ann near Little Pennys on the High Wych Road. Susan was born Harding, the daughter of James and Mary of Sawbridgeworth, James a farm bailiff. On October 14th 1848, in Merton Surrey, not yet 20 years old she marries John Tanner, ten years her senior. John, who described himself as a labourer on the wedding certificate died in January 1860 upon which Susan must have moved back to East Herts and indeed got married in High Wych. John Springham dies in 1870. Susan lived on until 1927 by which time she is resident in Upper Sydenham, Kent.

The second High Wych wedding, which took place on 8th December 1862, strangely also involved a widow. On that day William Ellis married Susan Marsh, (yes, another Susan!). William was 46 years old and a labourer, Susan 45, both were local to High Wych. William's father is listed as Benjamin on the form, Susan's father was possibly called William. The vicar put a question mark next to his name. Why that was or is uncertain. Further details as to their ancestry and further life, particularly Susan's were nigh impossible to find.

Part of the course of any research concerning High Wych people in the olden days is the frequent occurrence of the name Springham. Not all of those people were related of course, at least not closely. On the 13th February 1869 however there was a Springham Springham wedding. John Springham, the groom, a labourer, was born in 1848 the son of William and came from Gilston. Emma was a High Wych girl and her father's name was Charles. The couple already had a child; 4 years previously their son Charles Henry was born. Sex before marriage was not as uncommon in the Victorian era as some will have you believe! John and Emma then went on to have seven more children. John most probably dies in 1885 and Emma in 1924 by which time she is resident in Ware.



St, James's church High Wych in the 1870s

Another point that strikes you reading this registry and also other documents of that age is the different wording, sometimes in ways which we nowadays would consider rather negative. On 22nd September Charles Ward, a 24 year old labourer of High Wych marries his bride Mary Ann Pritlove of Pole Hole. In the space where the name of the father of the groom should be put our vicar at the time, Henry Frank John wrote "born out of wedlock".

Information for this article was drawn from Ancestry.co.uk and from the High Wych wedding registry kept at HALS, Hertfordshire Archives and Library Services. Contributions to and help with this continuing History of High Wych are (is) always welcome. Please get in touch. Contact me at theo@vandebilt.co.uk or phone me at 01279 725468