

Reverend John Jennings Smith – obscure origins

*Research notes by Brian Walsh (updated 2022)
with appendix of further research by Mike Payne*

Rev. John Jennings Smith was the first "incumbent" minister at St Paul's Church of England, Paterson NSW. He took up the position in 1839. An outline of his time at Paterson can be found in Val Patfield's book *Reverend John Jennings Smith* published by Paterson Historical Society in 2013.

Some time after Val's book was published, more information about Jennings Smith's emerged, including some mystery and intrigue. This is why I have undertaken additional research and exchanged information with several of his descendants in an attempt to unravel or at least shed more light on the legend of his Royal birth. I also wish to acknowledge the expert input and research by Mike Payne in 2021.

Disputed beginnings

There is no doubt John Jennings Smith was born on 14 June 1784.¹ According to family tradition he was the illegitimate son of King George IV.² Others claim that his parents were Thomas Smith and Sarah Jennings,³ but this is almost certainly incorrect. A detailed argument for his Royal lineage is provided later in these notes, including the strange circumstances surrounding his baptism as an adult.

Little is known of his early life apart from the fact that he received a sound education. A John Jennings Smith was an officer serving in the Bahamas in 1803.⁴ If it was the same man, he would have been 19, and it is possible he served in the British Army, presumably receiving a commission as a young ensign, but further research is needed to confirm or eliminate this possibility.

On 26 December 1818 at Cheshunt, Hertford, England, he married Anne Timberlake and they had 11 children. Their marriage certificate indicates that he was "of this parish". The family bible incorrectly claims Anne Timberlake was the sister of Lord Ashbrook.⁵ Recent detailed genealogical research in England has ruled this out. Instead, Anne was the daughter of Ezekiel Timberlake and Ann Dove. Anne was born in St Marylebone, the daughter of a poulterer who had been declared bankrupt in 1812. Other inaccuracies were found in the family bible, which raises questions about its provenance.⁶ It may, for example, have been created by one of John Jennings Smith's children as an adult.

On 27 June 1823, at the age of 39, John Jennings Smith was admitted to St. Catharine's Hall at Cambridge University to study a Bachelor of Arts prior to taking Holy Orders.⁷ Notably, his admission to St Catherine's Hall was as a Fellow Commoner, with a seat at High Table,⁸ an indication of his social status or support by an influential patron. He obtained his B.A., graduating on 2 May 1827.⁹

He was baptised five days later (7 May 1827) the baptism essential for his impending ordination.¹⁰ The circumstances of his baptism are curious to say the least, and lend weight to the argument for his illegitimate birth. At the time of his baptism he was living in the village of Duxford, yet he travelled 56 kilometres to Thomas a Becket Church at Great Whelnetham, Suffolk to be baptised by Rector Henry George Phillips. Perhaps Jennings Smith needed a distant place and a priest upon whom pressure could be brought to bear to perform the baptism? The father of Rector Henry Phillips was a former surgeon to the Royal household.¹¹

On 8 July 1827, two months after graduating, John Jennings Smith was ordained as a Deacon by the Bishop in the Diocese of Gloucester and was immediately appointed Stipendiary Curate at St Michael's, Gloucester with an annual salary of £90.¹² Almost a year later, on 15 June 1828, he was ordained as a priest at Gloucester Cathedral by the Bishop of the Diocese. In August 1829 he moved to the curacy at Hartpury, a small town north of Gloucester. Here he had an annual stipend of £60 "together with surplice fees value £195 enjoined to reside in the Vicarage house, garden and offices". He added the curacy of the nearby village of Ashelworth in January 1830.¹³

Rev. Smith's M.A., which did not require further study, was conferred by St Catharine's Hall on 7 July 1831.¹⁴ It was also about this time that he performed his last baptisms at Hartpury and Ashleworth. These four years [1827-31] were Jennings Smith's only full-time experience of parish duties in England. In mid 1831 he moved to Chiswick in London. Here he ran a boarding school at Turnham Green up until he and his family left England in 1839. In those days, positions in many areas of life depended on personal influence. The Church was no exception. By age and education, Smith would have qualified for a vicarage. He did not get one, which points to a lack of patronage.¹⁵

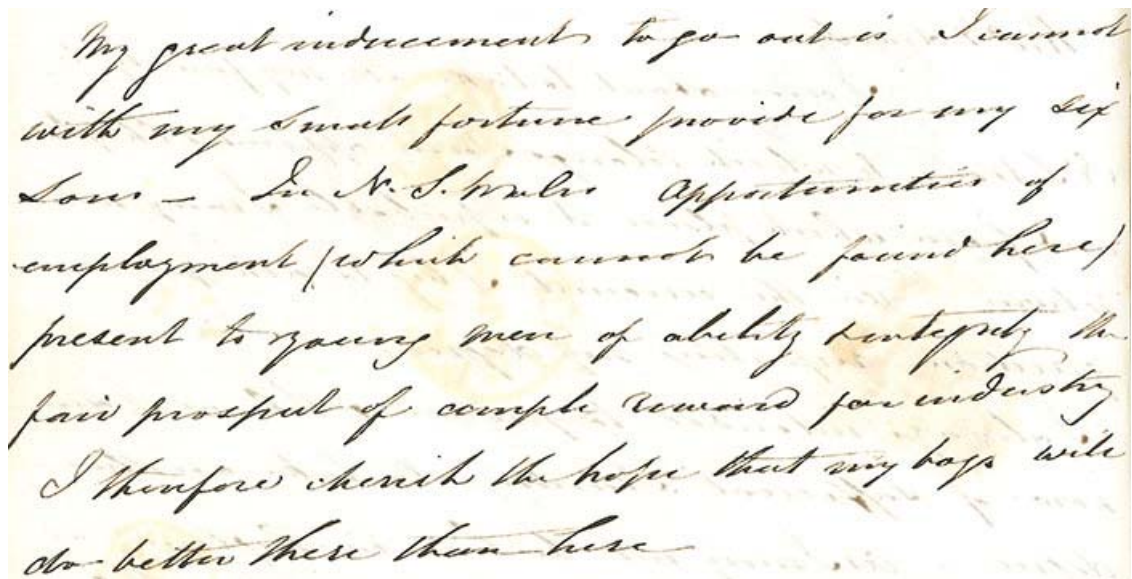
What had happened? He had high-level patronage to enter St Catherine's in 1823 as a Fellow Commoner, but by mid 1831 his patronage had vanished. One explanation is the death of his supposed father and patron, King George IV, in June 1830. Perhaps George's brother William who became King on George's death was not disposed to help Smith, leaving him stuck as a curate with little prospect of becoming a vicar.

On 31 July 1835 Rev. Smith became licensed as a "lecturer" at Chiswick parish church.¹⁶ Despite the impressive title this simply indicates Jennings Smith was paid to give the sermon at the less fashionable Sunday afternoon services.

Family tradition says that Jennings Smith was often visited at St Mary's Chiswick by the Duchess of Kent and her daughter, Princess Victoria. It is suggested that Victoria, as Queen, helped him gain an appointment in New South Wales, but no evidence of this has been uncovered and in any case it was not necessary. By the late 1830s the increasing number of free settlers in New South Wales created new opportunities for clerical appointments and by 1837 the NSW colonial government was promoting the emigration of clergy of all major denominations. It was within this context that Jennings Smith approached the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel for a colonial posting. His application was recommended by the Society and approved by the Bishop of London. Consequentially in 1839 Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for the Colonies, approved Smith's appointment and "authorised the Colonial Agent to issue to him the usual allowance for outfit and passage".¹⁷

Rev. Smith's motives for emigration were worldly rather than spiritual, as he explained in a letter he wrote to a staff member at St Catharine's, Cambridge shortly before departure:

My great inducement to go out is I cannot with my small fortune provide for my six sons. In N.S.Wales opportunities for employment (which cannot be found here) present to young men of ability & integrity the fair prospect of ample reward for industry. I therefore cherish the hope that my boys will do better there than here.¹⁸



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Above: part of a letter written by Rev. Smith in 1839 explaining why he was emigrating (see transcript above).

Professor Elkin takes up Rev. Smith's narrative:

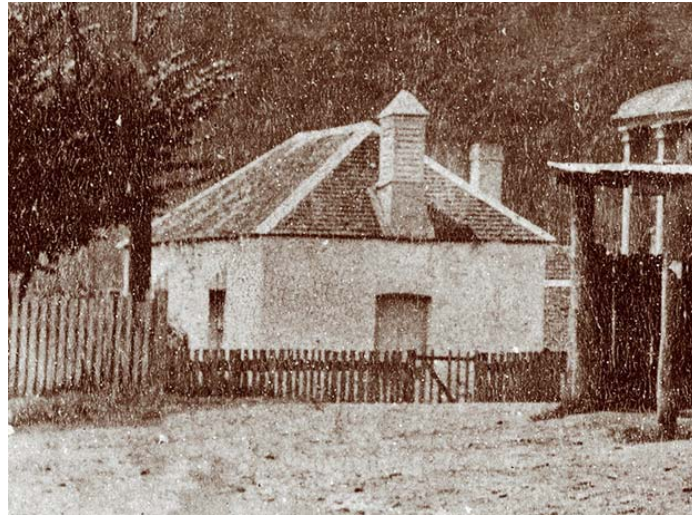
His wife and daughters rode in the dray while he and the others walked. They arrived at the empty parsonage late on the night of October 2, 1839.

"Mr. Smith had already made arrangements for his eldest son to emigrate to Australia, but he and the rest of his family soon followed. Thus at the age of 56, he set out on a completely new stage in his career. He was welcomed by Bishop Broughton, who offered him the Archdeaconry of Hobart Town in Tasmania, together with the headmastership of the Hutchins School there—an ideal position for a man of his experience and attainments. The alternative was the missionary charge of the new settlements along the Paterson and Allyn Rivers, 130 miles north of Sydney. He chose the latter, and with his family travelled by the *Sophia Jane* to Morpeth. From there his wife and daughters rode in the dray, which carried their personal belongings, while he and the others walked. They arrived at the empty parsonage late on the night of October 2, 1839."¹⁹

They had arrived in Sydney on the ship *Amelia Thompson*.²⁰

The following is part of a descendant's account of Rev. Smith's ministry in Paterson:

The town had a courthouse, a store, a blacksmiths and 3 shanty public houses. The Parish was an agricultural district sparsely populated by farmers and settlers. He found the settlers unmarried, their children not baptised. He baptised whole families and conducted services in many homes. His wife's wedding ring was lent in turn to wives in the district. For two years he was not paid at all.²¹



The schoolhouse in Paterson, built in 1843 and used as a church before St Paul's was built. The CBC B & B now stands on this block.

John Jennings Smith was licensed to serve as a Minister of the Parish or district of Paterson in October 1839.²² He was not the first chaplain of the district (as is claimed on a memorial tablet in St.Pauls, Paterson). That honour goes to the Rev George Middleton, but Smith was the first "incumbent" of St. Paul's.

Shortly after arriving Rev Smith erected a small stone building on Church land at the corner of King and Duke Streets, to initially serve as a church and school. About 1892 this large corner block was sold to the Commercial Banking Company (CBC) of Sydney, and the proceeds used to build the Parish Hall which today stands next to St. Paul's.

Smith was an active man and soon set about building St.Paul's Church at Paterson which was consecrated in 1845.

Unfortunately John Jennings Smith did not enjoy the use of St. Paul's for long. While driving to Hexham in 1846 he was thrown from his gig and taken unconscious to Mrs Muir's Family Hotel at East Maitland where he died of his injuries a few days later at the age of 62. He is buried in St. Paul's cemetery.

Mrs Smith and her children moved to Sydney where she died in 1884 at the age of 89. She is buried in Randwick, Sydney. Both are commemorated on a mural tablet in St. Andrews Cathedral in Sydney.

One of their sons, Francis Grey Smith, became a Melbourne banker and made it into the Australian Dictionary of Biography.²³ Another of their children, Emilie Clara, married Sydney Montagu Consett Stephen who was the second son of Sir Alfred Stephen, Chief Justice of New South Wales.²⁴ Sydney also made it into the Australian Dictionary of Biography.²⁵

One of Jennings Smith's daughters, Ellen Augusta, married William Munnings Arnold at St Paul's Paterson in 1844 and over the next 20 or so years they had nine children, the last of whom died in 1946. In the late 1840s William and Ellen settled at Stradbroke on the Paterson River and their Stadbroke home, which is still standing, was partly modelled on the Vicarage at Hartpury in Gloucestershire where Ellen spent some of her childhood while her father was Curate there.²⁶



St Paul's at Paterson (Harry Boyle, Paterson Historical Society)

Was Smith the son of King George IV?

Here is a review of evidence and conjecture for the claim that John Jennings Smith was the illegitimate son of King George IV:

- a descendant of John Jennings Smith stated in a document deposited in the State (Mitchell) Library of NSW in 1963 that Smith was the son of King George IV. This belief is also firmly held by some present day descendants (2014);
- it is almost impossible that someone of obscure family origins could procure a seat at High Table at St Catherine's Hall, Cambridge, without the support of a powerful or influential patron, possibly King George IV;
- Smith's coat-of-arms on the commemorative windows in St. Pauls supports this claim (see photo below). The barred helmet on Smith's coat-of-arms is typically reserved for the highest ranks of nobility.²⁷ The crest (area above the helmet) is a lion rampant. The shield is divided into four quarters. The top left quarter (technically the top right in heraldry but let's stick to left and right as we view it) consists of three doves that usually signify peace or the soul and the holy spirit. The doves, combined with the motto "mens conscia recti" which means "a mind that knows what is right", are the religious or spiritual component of the coat-of-arms. The top right and bottom left quadrants contain further lions rampant which usually signify royalty but can also signify bravery and courage. The bottom right quadrant contains a chevron between three trefoils, which is one of the many variants of the Smith and Smythe family crests. Three lions rampant and a barred helmet strongly suggest a link to royalty that is combined with spirituality by the doves and motto. However, we need to be careful not to read too much into this. It is possible the Jennings Smith family crest was created in Australia and may reflect the family belief in the link to royalty rather than provide further evidence of it. Alternatively the crest may have been a vanity item, purchased off the shelf as many coats-of-arms were;

- Is it feasible? When Smith was born in 1784, his putative father was not yet the King, he was the Prince of Wales. And yes, it is feasible. In 1780 at the age of 18 the Prince of Wales established his own household and lived a life of heavy drinking and numerous mistresses, much to the displeasure of his father King George III. The Prince became King on his father's death in 1820;
- John Jennings Smith is believed to have tutored the future Queen Victoria in her youth, thus placing him within the royal court;
- In Rev. Smith's possessions was a box containing a hone for stropping razors. The box was of silver-gilt and on the lid is engraved "George IV", surmounted by a crown.²⁸ However, this could have simply been an item of Royal merchandise available in shops at the time;
- "Smith" is a convenient name to give to a "love-child" by those in the royal household given the task of arranging a discreet adoption or placement of an unbaptised baby.
- One of the longer-term mistresses of the Prince of Wales was Maria Fitzherbert, whose maiden name was "Smythe".²⁹ This is possibly just a coincidence. He first met Maria at the opera in early 1784, which does not fit John Jennings Smith's timeline unless he was born later than his gravestone, memorial tablet and family bible indicate;
- the curious circumstances surrounding his baptism, such as travelling 56 kilometres from his home to be baptised by the son of a former surgeon to the Royal household.

The circumstantial evidence strongly suggests King George IV is John Jennings Smith's father but so far it cannot be proven or disproven. If you can shed any further light on this mystery, please contact me.



Above: the coat-of-arms for John Jennings Smith in St. Paul's, Paterson (photo: Brian Walsh).

See also

Burke, Bernard. *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry*. Vol 2, London, 1893, p494.

Clements, Pauline. *History of St. Paul's Church Paterson NSW*. Paterson Historical Society, 1993.

Clements, Pauline. *Burials in St. Paul's Church Cemetery, Paterson - Part 1 from 1839 to 1900*. Paterson Historical Society, 1996.

Elkin, AP. *The Diocese of Newcastle*. Sydney, 1955.

Patfield, Val. *Reverend John Jennings Smith 1782- 1846*. Paterson Historical Society, 2013.

Wilkins, William Henry. *Mrs Fitzherbert and George IV*. 2 Vols. London, 1905.

¹ according to his family bible (sighted in 2019) and his memorial tablet in St. Andrews, Sydney, as cited by Professor A.P. Elkin in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 8 July 1939 p7. A birth year of 1784 aligns with his age of 62 when he died on 8 September 1846, as stated on his gravestone. This age was probably informed by his wife and it likely to be accurate. It has sometimes been said John Jennings Smith was born in 1782, for example see the *Dungog Chronicle*, 2 July 1929 p5 but this ignores evidence to the contrary from several sources.

² Smith, Ethel Selwyn. *Memo of the Rev. John Jennings Smith, M.A.* ML DOC 385, State Library NSW, 1963. Copy provided courtesy of Dr Cameron Archer, AM.

³ Patfield, Val. *Reverend John Jennings Smith 1782- 1846*. Paterson Historical Society, 2013. There is a record of a baptism on 7 May 1827 of John Jennings Smith as an adult at Great Whelnetham, Suffolk, England, with a birth date of 14 June 1789, father's name Thomas Smith, mother's name Sarah Smith, both of London – from transcript of baptismal register, copy courtesy of Mike Payne. The year of birth puts his age five years different to the age shown on his gravestone.

⁴ Whittington, Bernard Johnson. *Race Relations in the Bahamas 1784-1834: Nonviolent Transform Slave to Free*. University of Arkansas Press 2000, p46.

⁵ England, Marriages 1538-1973. Salt Lake City, Utah, FamilySearch 2013, per Ancestry.com 2014. Also Jennings Smith family bible (sighted 2019).

⁶ Information provided courtesy of Mike Payne in late 2021.

⁷ Venn, John and JA Venn. *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900*. Part 2, volume 5, Cambridge University Press, 1953, p561.

<https://archive.org/details/p2alumnicanabri05univuoft/page/560/mode/2up?view=theater>

⁸ Professor A.P. Elkin in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 8 July 1939 p7.

⁹ *The British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record*, vol 2, London 1827, p262.

¹⁰ Transcript of baptism register provided courtesy of Mike Payne.

¹¹ Information courtesy of Mike Payne, 2022.

¹² CCEd-Clergy of the Church of England Database: <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, records 205386, 142548 and 66880, accessed 14 September 2014. See also: *The British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record*, vol 2, London 1827, p511.

¹³ CCEd-Clergy of the Church of England Database: <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, records 205413, 66936, 142619, 67031, 142637 and 67076, accessed 14 September 2014. See also: *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 26 June 1828, p2.

¹⁴ *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review*, London 1831, p508.

¹⁵ Holland, Julian. "John Jennings Smith (1782-1846) and his Philosophical Apparatus". *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, 69, 2001, pp21-26.

¹⁶ CCEd-Clergy of the Church of England Database: <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, record 164488, accessed 14 September 2014.

¹⁷ Glenelg to Gipps, 25 January 1839. HRA series 1 volume 19 pp772-773.

¹⁸ John Jennings Smith to College official, St Catherine's Hall, Cambridge, 20 April 1839. St Catharine's College Archives, Cambridge.

¹⁹ Professor A.P. Elkin in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 8 July 1939 p7.

²⁰ *Sydney Gazette*, 1 October 1939, p2.

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- ²¹ Smith, Ethel Selwyn. *Memo of the Rev. John Jennings Smith, M.A.* ML DOC 385, State Library NSW, 1963. Copy provided courtesy of Dr Cameron Archer, AM.
- ²² NSW *Government Gazette*, 1839 p1240.
- ²³ Geoffrey Blainey, "Smith, Francis Grey (1827-1900)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published in hardcopy 1976.
- ²⁴ *Northampton Mercury*, 17 December 1853, p3.
- ²⁵ Martha Rutledge, "Stephen, Montagu Consett (1827-1872)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published in hardcopy 1976.
- ²⁶ *Dungog Chronicle: Durham and Gloucester Advertiser*, 13 September 1932, p5.
- ²⁷ wikipedia.
- ²⁸ Bedford, Ruth. *Think of Stephen: a Family Chronicle*. Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1954, pp 85-88.
- ²⁹ Newspaper article, unknown source, supplied courtesy of a descendant.

Appendix

research notes by Mike Payne, December 2021

Some Thoughts on John Jennings Smith and the Inscriptions in his Family Bible

JJS Baptism

As he had apparently not been baptised as an infant JJS had to be baptised as an adult before he could be ordained into the Church of England ministry. This took place on 7th May 1827 at St Thomas a Becket Church at Great Whelnetham, Suffolk. The ceremony was presumably conducted by the Rector Henry George Phillips, who held this position from 1816 until his death in 1868. It was recorded that the baptism took place whilst he was a “visitor at the parsonage”. His date of birth was incorrectly recorded in the record as were, possibly, the names of his parents. Henry Phillips was a Cambridge graduate like JJS but from a different college and at a different time, thus it is unlikely that they were particularly well acquainted. His father, however, was a one time Surgeon to the Royal Household, which may be of significance.

His lack of being baptised did not apparently preclude him from being a sponsor at the baptism of some of his elder children, as noted in the family bible. Canon law requires that baptismal sponsors were themselves baptised members of the church.

Gloucester

The ordination of JJS as a Deacon on Sunday 8th July 1827 and as a Priest on Sunday 15th June 1828 both took place at Gloucester Cathedral and were reported in the local press. The Church of St Michael, to which he was appointed Curate stood right in the middle of the City of Gloucester but only the tower remains today. The baptism of his son Harold Selwyn was performed there and the register notes that the family were then resident in Kingsholm, a hamlet just to the north of the city but then in the County of Gloucestershire.

The family bible notes state that the birth was at Kingston Villa, Gloucester. I am aware of only one residence in Gloucester bearing that name but that had not been built at this time. There was, however, a block of four large Georgian houses in Kingsholm built in about 1820 known as Kingsholm Villas. These were less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from St Michael’s Church and could have been a likely residence.

Hartpury

The reason that the position of Curate of Hartpury came with the requirement to live in the vicarage is because the Vicar at that time was mainly absent because he held another position. William Bayly, Vicar of Hartpury from 1804 to 1838 was for much of that time headmaster of Midhurst Grammar School in Sussex.

Turnham Green

The reference in the family bible to the birth of Ernest Octavius at Bolton House is the only reference I have found to the location of the school run by JJS. The extract from the 1871 OS map shows its location.



According to the Victoria County History “A few stately red-brick houses survived from the 18th century but Heathfield House, perhaps the best known, had long gone; Linden House was to make way in 1878 for Linden Gardens and Bolton House, a private school like many of the older seats, was to follow in 1880.” Thomas G Dyne was the apparent successor to JJS at the school and he appeared to be more adept at advertising in the press. In the 1841 Census he had 40 pupils but in 1851 there were only 16.

INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION on Christian principles, for a LIMITED NUMBER of PUPILS, by Mr. DYNE, BOLTON-HOUSE, TURNHAM-GREEN, five miles from London, uniting the advantages of the Continent with those of an English home, conducted on the plan of a family. Mr. Dyne has spent many years in several of the capitals of Europe, for the purpose of investigating the most approved methods of Education. Every endeavour is made to promote the moral and intellectual welfare, as well as the personal comforts and health of the pupils: the principal and the assistant-masters join in the recreations of the play-ground. The course of instruction, without extras, comprehends the Latin and Greek Classics, French and German, which are much spoken in the establishment, the Mathematics, Drawing, the Elements of Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Music, etc., and all the branches of a liberal education. Each pupil has a separate bed. References to pupils' parents:—the Rev. Dr. Stoddart, Vicarage, New Brentford, Middlesex; William de St. Croix, Esq., Windsor; C. G. Grainger, Esq., 16, Adam-street, Adelphi, and other professional and commercial gentlemen of the highest respectability. For further particulars apply at Drewett's Library, 62, Quadrant, Regent-street; at Suter's, Stationer, 19, Cheapside; or to the Principal, and a prospectus may be forwarded, post free.

New Court Gazette 18 December 1841

St Nicholas Church, Chiswick

Although JJS was not licensed as a Lecturer at Chiswick Church until 1835 it is clear that he had been carrying out priestly duties there since his arrival in the district in 1831.

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BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of *Chiswick*
in the County of *Middlesex* in the Year One
Thousand Eight Hundred and *Thirty one*

When	Child's Name	Parent's Name	Abode	Quality, Trade, or Profession	By whom the Ceremony was Performed
1831 Sept 25 No. 606	William Henry son of John & Martha	William & Martha	Ripon Chiswick	Builder	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Oct 1 No. 607	James Theodor son of John & Anne	John & Anne	Turnham Green	Clark	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Oct 9 No. 608	Henry George son of John & Maria	Philip & Maria	Green	Home Smith Gardener	The Vicar Bouverbank
1831 Oct 16 No. 609	Isaac John son of John & Nannah	John & Nannah	Turnham Green	Labourer	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Oct 16 No. 610	Alfred son of John & Ann	Joseph & Ann	Turnham Green	Painter Glasier Single woman	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Oct 23 No. 611	James son of John & Mary	James & Mary	Turnham Green	Labourer	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Oct 23 No. 612	James son of John & Elizabeth	James & Elizabeth	Turnham Green	gentleman	The Vicar Bouverbank
1831 Nov 6 No. 613	William son of John & Caroline	William & Caroline	Chiswick	Hair dresser	John Jennings Smith Officiating Minister
1831 Nov 6 No. 613	Samuel son of John & Mary	Samuel & Mary	Turnham Green	gentleman	The Vicar Bouverbank
1831 Nov 6 No. 613	William son of John & Caroline	William & Caroline	Chiswick	workman Single woman	The Vicar Bouverbank

Provenance of the Family Bible Inscription

Not having been involved in the history of this research or any direct contact with the family, I can only comment on the prima facie evidence of the images.

The first paragraph reads *John Jennings Smith, Vicar of St Mary's Cheshunt, Herts, was married on 26th December 1818 to Ann Timberlake, sister of Lord Ashbrook by the Revd. W.A. Armstrong.* To this has been added after JJS's name the qualifier *(of Cambridge Hall, Cambridge)*. I believe that at least three of these "facts" can be disputed. Firstly, I don't believe that an institution called Cambridge Hall ever existed in Cambridge. This must have been meant to read Catherine Hall, Cambridge (now known as St Catherine's College, Cambridge) which is where JJS took his degree. Secondly, he was never Vicar of St Mary's, Cheshunt. Thirdly, I can see no circumstances whereby Anne Timberlake could be the sister of Lord Ashbrook. The family name of the Viscount Ashbrook was Flower and for this relationship to hold she would have had to have been born a Flower and previously been married to a Timberlake. The marriage record proves that she was a spinster and the names of the witnesses reinforce the belief that she was the daughter of Ezekiel Timberlake and Ann Dove. Even if she were only sister-in-law to Lord Ashbrook it would require one of her siblings to be married to a Flower, which was not the case. The truth seems to be that she was of humble stock, born in St Marylebone, the daughter of a poulterer who had been declared bankrupt in 1812.

The information about the birth and baptism of each of JJS's children appears to tally with the formal records with the single exception of Henrietta where the church's baptismal records says she was baptised by the Vicar of Chiswick and not JJS.

The birth and death dates at the bottom of the second page are obviously in a different hand and contain a major error. Anne Smith died on the 1st February 1884 and not the 8th September (which was when JJS died in 1846).

On the whole, it would appear that the inscriptions have been carelessly copied into this bible from another source.

**Mike Payne
December 2021**