

## LIDGOULD WAY - THE HIGHGROVE CONNECTION

by Eileen M. Bowlt

A new road sign has appeared on Eastcote Road in recent months, naming the road leading to Highgrove House as Lidgould Way. People have been asking where this somewhat odd name has come from. Well, as so often, history provides the answer.

A Rev. John Lidgould purchased a piece of meadow at Hale End from Elizabeth Wilchin in 1747 and had a house, which was later called Highgrove, built upon it. Hence the reason for the newly named road, but who was John Lidgould and why did he build a mansion in the parish of Ruislip?

The Rev. John Lidgould was Vicar of Harmondsworth and Vicar of West Drayton 1727-60. He died in 1760 and is commemorated at St Mary's Harmondsworth in a monument in the north aisle, along with his wife, Honoria and Thomas Sedgwick Esq., his son-in-law.

Hennessy's *Novum Repertorium*, that lists clergy in the diocese of London from mediaeval times onwards, has nothing else to say about him, suggesting that these two benefices were his only appointment.

But there is another snippet of information about him and his daughter, from an unexpected source, the Marriage Licence Allegations for the Commissary Court of Surrey 1673-1770. The Rev. John Lidgould, Vicar of Harmondsworth and Thomas Sedgwick, Linen Draper, of the parish of St Olave, Jewry, appeared personally at the Commissary Court on 8 June 1749.

Thomas Sedgwick, on oath, stated that on the 2 April 'last past', 'being a batchelor and free from all matrimonial contracts' he had

gone to a house in Fleet Market in the parish of St Bride's, London 'in company with Marion Lidgould of the aforesaid parish of St Olave, Jewry, London, then a spinster of the age of twenty years and upwards, free... from all matrimonial contracts whatever.' There a person who appeared from his dress to be a clergyman of the Church of England read over the marriage service, according to the Book of Common Prayer and pronounced the couple lawful man and wife. Thomas Sedgwick went on to say that he now had great reason to suspect that 'the person who so acted as a clergyman was not in Orders'. He doubted whether he and Marion were legally married and was seeking a licence to marry again 'in the face of the church'. He wished to be married in the church of St Saviour's, Southwark. John Lidgould 'maketh oath that he was and is the father of the said Marion Lidgould...and is consenting to the solemnisation of the said marriage'.

What do we make of this? There are many intriguing questions? Was the ceremony in April 1749 a 'clandestine marriage'? Many such were performed within the verge of the Fleet Prison by clergy of doubtful reputation. Why was the Vicar of Harmondsworth's daughter living in St Olave's in the City? Had the couple eloped because the bride's parents objected to the match and if so why; had the father changed his mind two and a half months later? Could Marion have been pregnant? Perhaps we should not speculate.

Just why John Lidgould wanted a house in Ruislip remains a mystery (for the time being).