

Will the real Mrs Ealey please stand up?

Our research has led us either to the same results that distant cousins have reached or new information that we share. So far only one issue causes a difference of opinion – the identity of James Ealey's wife, Mary Ann.

We know from censuses that she was born in Quebec, Canada, in 1791-2 (or as early as 1786 according to her death certificate) but this is all that seems certain. Other websites and discussion boards boldly assert that she was a Mary Ann Passiful who married James Ealey at Shadwell in London's docklands in 1810. However, James had no other known connections with the East End.



We at buss-crew cannot understand these bold assertions when an alternative marriage looks much more likely. On 11th February 1812 a James Ealey married Mary Ann Smith at St George, Hanover Square – the record can be viewed at the City of Westminster Archives Centre. This parish covers the heart of Mayfair, where James and Mary Ann subsequently lived, and it is the church in which their son Edward married in 1854.

It is just about possible that both marriages are James's and his bride was a Mary Ann in both instances. But until we are presented with some proper evidence, we will continue to pass over Miss Passiful in favour of our West End wedding.