

Birth, parentage, marriage and death of

Pensissily Neal nee Hobley

This brief evidences the details of the birth, parentage, marriage and death of Pensissily Neal nee Hobley.

Those details are –

Baptised in Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire on 26th September 1708.

Baptised to Simon and Margaret Hobley.

Married to Henry Neal at St Michael's Church, Coventry on 25th May 1733.

Buried at Birdingbury, Warwickshire on 15th February 1797.

(The research for this brief was conducted in early 2023. Some additional records were obtained and incorporated in this brief in March 2025).

Pensissily's name

Following modern-day protocol that the name as recorded in a birth certificate is the correct name correctly spelled,¹ the spelling “Pensissily” is adopted in this brief (and in other briefs referring to her), as that is the spelling of her name in her baptism record, see below.

However, it does seem likely that her name was pronounced commencing with either “penth” or “pent”, given the various spellings of her name in other records located relating to her, namely Penthessela, Penthiselea and Penthisilea, as well as in the baptism record of her granddaughter Penthessaly.²

Pensissily's baptism

In the course of researching Henry Neal's birth, the parish registers of Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire were manually examined from 1670 to 1720, see the brief relating to Henry Neal.

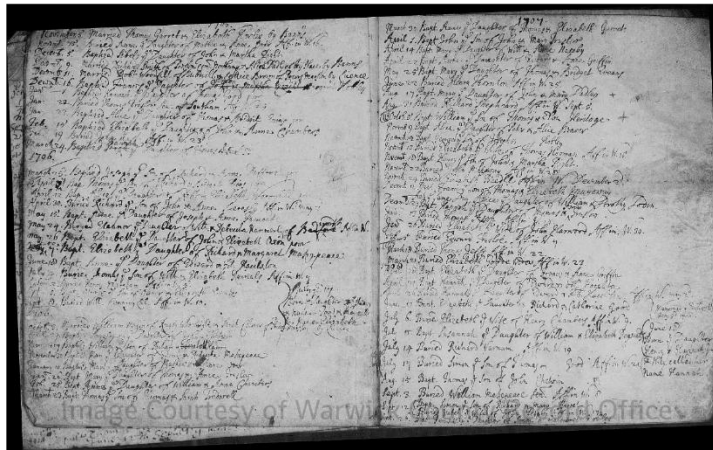
During the course of that examination, a record of the baptism of a Pensissily Hobley was encountered,³ see image 25 of 43 of the 1680-1730 bundle at <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-DCGS-WRN?i=24&wc=XDLB-FM9%3A42645501%2C1583867702%2C1583874818&cc=1462403>.⁴

¹ For example, in England, and despite that it is lawful to informally change one's name, the official legal name for the issue of passports, drivers' licences and the like is that as recorded in a birth certificate (until changed using formal name changing protocols). See <https://www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll>.

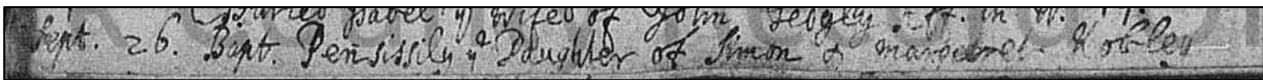
² See the brief relating to William Neal.

³ Also encountered were an Edward baptised to Simon and Margaret Hobley in Napton on 9th April 1717, image 29 of 43, and a Richard baptised to them on 19th May 1719, image 30 of 43.

⁴ URLs of Family Search records linked herein include “61903”, presumably a specific member number, and likely need adapting to function.



This is a close-up of the relevant entry in the parish register.



This is the Family Search record of the event, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QGF7-BB8P>.

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Pensissily Hobley

Vital • England, Warwickshire, Parish Registers, 1535-1963

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Name	Pensissily Hobley		
Christening Date	26 Sep 1708		
Christening Place	Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire, England, United Kingdom		
Father's Name	Simon Hobley		
Father's Sex	Male		
Mother's Name	Margaret Hobley		
Mother's Sex	Female		
Event Type	Christening		

Attached in Family Tree to

Pensissily Hobley
1708-Deceased • GZK1-KWV

Similar Records
No similar records were found.

Document Information

Collection Information
England, Warwickshire, Parish Registers, 1535-1963

Cite This Record

Pensissily Hobley's Parents and Siblings [OPEN ALL](#)

Simon Hobley	Father	M
Margaret Hobley	Mother	F

A Family Search all-records search for any record at any time for a person with the first name Pensissily in Warwickshire returned only the above baptism record.⁵ Expanding the search to all of England did not return any additional records.⁶

In the brief relating to William Neal, it is concluded that –

1. his mother baptised two children in Napton on the Hill
2. his mother baptised three further children in Birdingbury, about five miles from Napton on the Hill, and
3. the first of these five baptisms was in September 1738, and the last was on 11th November 1753.

⁵ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyPlace=Warwickshire&q.givenName=Pensissily&q.givenName.exact=on>.

⁶ In the most unlikely event that the first “s” in her first name in the baptism record is actually a “t”, “Pentissily” was also checked for any English record at any time, with the like result. See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyPlace=England&q.givenName=Pentissily&q.givenName.exact=on>.

Pensissily would be aged about 30 in September 1738, and 45 on 11th November 1753, which corresponds to the normally expected childbearing age range.⁷

Another matching factor of considerable cogence is the fact that the baptisms of the first two of those five children were in the place of Pensissily's own baptism, namely Napton on the Hill. (The fact that the baptism of the last three of those five children was in a place only five miles from Napton on the Hill also fits).

On encountering the record of Pensissily's baptism above, the most unusual first name immediately and obviously called to mind William Neal's mother, named in his baptism record as Pencissela.⁸ The coincidence of names, with their marked unusualness, as well as their homonymy, also suggests that the Pensissily baptised in 1708 is the mother of William Neal.

Finally, it is noted in the brief relating to William Neal that various parish records relating to his family named a female family member as Penthessela, Pencissela (or Pentissela), Penthiselea, Penthisilea and Penthessaly. It was then concluded in that brief that these names, as well as Pensissily, are varied spellings of the same name, a name that was rare in the extreme in 17th and 18th century England (see the brief relating to William Neal for the research and analysis which reaches those conclusions).

It follows from the rarity of her first name, and that name's connection to a number of other records associated with William Neal, as well as the strong location/time nexus, that Pensissily was William's mother.

Accordingly, William Neal's mother Pensissily was baptised to Simon and Margaret Hobley in Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire on 26th September 1708.

Pensissily's burial

As noted in the brief relating to William Neal, Henry and Pensissily Neal baptised –

1. a Henry in Napton on the Hill in September 1738
2. William himself, also in Napton on the Hill, on 9th September 1740
3. an Elisabeth in Birdingbury on 30th January 1742
4. a Thomas, also in Birdingbury, on 25th June 1749 and
5. an Edward, also in Birdingbury, on 11th November 1753 (and then they buried him there the next month).

As noted in the brief relating to William Neal, Henry and Pensissily's family moved from Napton to Birdingbury, probably by early 1742 and, in any event, by 1749.

As also noted in the brief relating to William Neal, his father Henry was buried in Birdingbury on 28th August 1777 at age 84.

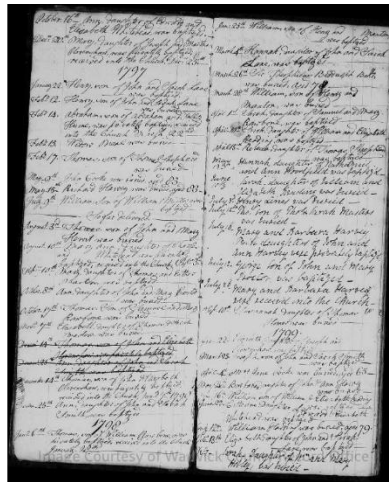
As noted in the brief relating to Elizabeth Neal nee Wright, the Birdingbury parish registers were manually examined for the period up to 1812 in connection with research relating to that brief. In the course of that exercise, a record of a "Widow Neal", buried in Birdingbury on 15th February 1797, was encountered, see

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DZP7-V8W?i=12&cc=1462403&personUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AVH6B-DBJ>.

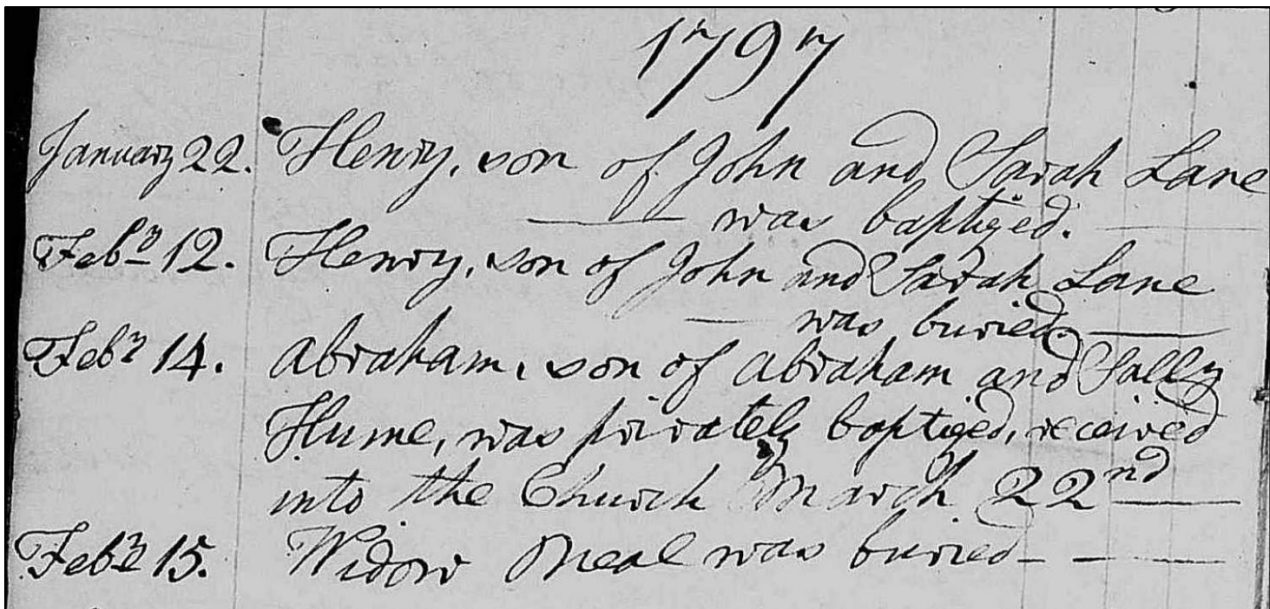
⁷ "A woman's childbearing is assumed to start at age 15 years and end at age 45 years ..." See

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/childbearingforwomenbornindifferentyearsenglandandwales/2019>. As noted below, further research concluded that it was likely the case that Pensissily had another child, a Henry baptised on 20th September 1733, when she would have been about 25, which also corresponds.

⁸ Pensissily sounds similar to Pencissela in particular, but also calls to mind each of the other name variants referred to below, namely Penthesilea, Penthessela, Pentissela, Penthiselea, Penthisilea and Penthessaly.



This is a close-up of (inter alia) the relevant entry.



This is the Family Search database record linked to the above entry, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VH6B-DBJ>.

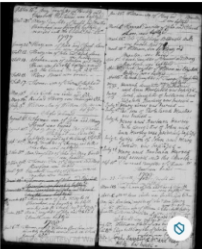
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Neal

Vital • England, Warwickshire, Parish Registers, 1535-1963

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Name **Neal**

Sex **Female**

Death or Burial Date **15 Feb 1797**

Death or Burial Place **Birdingbury, Warwickshire, England**

Death or Burial Place (Original) **Birdingbury, Warwickshire, England**

Event Type **Burial**

Family Tree

ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE

Similar Records

No similar records were found.

The parish burial record notes that the person was a widow. As Henry Neal was buried in 1777, the fact that the person buried in 1797 is named as a widow corresponds. Also, Pensissily is likely to have continued to live where her husband Henry lived and was buried, namely Birdingbury. That was also where her son Edward was buried in December 1753, see above.

No other record of a Neal or Neale named Penthessela, Pentissela, Pencissela, Penthiselea, Penthisilea, Penthesilea, Penthessaly or Pensissily being buried in Warwickshire or England at any time between 1753⁹ and 1810 was found upon Family Search all-records searches for both Warwickshire and England.¹⁰ Further, the like searches in relation to a Neal or Neale named Penelepe, Penelope or Thais also produced no records (the relevance of those three further first names is explained below).

Also, as verified below, there were very few Neals/Neales in Birdingbury and its immediate surrounds in the mid to late 18th century.

For all these reasons, it is almost a certainty that the above Birdingbury burial record of “Widow Neal” relates to Pensissily.

Accordingly, Pensissily was buried in Birdingbury on 15th February 1797.

Pensissily’s marriage

William Neal’s mother Pensissily was married to Henry Neal and, before baptising William, they baptised a Henry in Napton on the Hill in September 1738, see the brief relating to William Neal. In that baptism record, she is named as a Neal, not a Hobley. Accordingly, Pensissily would have married Henry prior to September 1738.

However, examination of the images of Napton parish records from November 1731 (image 3)¹¹ to December 1740 (image 6) located no record for such a marriage.

Accordingly, a Family Search search was conducted for a Henry Neal marriage in Warwickshire between 1725 and 1745.¹² It returned one record of interest, namely a Staffordshire church record of the issue in “Itchington, Warwickshire”, in 1733, of a marriage licence for the marriage of a Henry Neal to a “Thais Hobley”, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLQB-NDW2>.

⁹ When Pensissily was demonstrably still alive, as Edward was baptised to her in Birdingbury on 11th November 1753, see above.

¹⁰ See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.deathLikeDate.from=1753&q.deathLikeDate.to=1810&q.deathLikePlace=Warwickshire%2C%20England&q.givenName=Penthessela&q.givenName.exact=on&q.surname=Neale&q.surname.exact=on>.

¹¹ See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HY-DCGS-WNR?i=2&wc=XDLB-4WL%3A42645501%2C1583867702%2C1583874819&cc=1462403>.

¹² See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1725&q.anyDate.to=1745&q.anyPlace=Warwickshire&q.givenName=Henry&q.givenName.exact=on&q.surname=Neal&q.surname.exact=on&c.marriageLikePlace1=on&f.marriageLikePlace0=9>.

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch record for Henry Neal. The record is titled "Henry Neal" and is categorized as "Vital • England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944". It includes buttons for "SAVE", "EDIT", and "SHARE".

Document Information:

- Collection Information: England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944
- Cite This Record: "England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944," database with images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLQ8-NDW2 : 8 July 2020), Henry Neal and Thais Hobley, 1733, Marriage Licence

Vital Information:

- Name: Henry Neal
- Age: 40
- Residence Place: Long Itchington, Warwick
- Birth Date: 1693
- Marital Status: Unknown
- Occupation: Farmer
- Spouse's Name: Thais Hobley
- Spouse's Age: 28
- Spouse's Residence Place: Long Itchington
- Spouse's Birth Date: 1705
- Spouse's Marital Status: Unknown
- Marriage Date: 25 May 1733
- Marriage License Date: 1733
- Marriage License Place: Warwickshire, England
- Marriage License Place (Original): Itchington, Warwickshire, England
- Event Type: Marriage License
- Affiliate Film Number: GBPRS/STAFF/MARRLICENCE/018488/1

Possible Family Tree Match:

- Henry Neale (Deceased • MDDX-CGH)
- ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE
- DISMISS MATCH

Similar Records:

- Henry Neal, England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944
- Henry Neale, England Marriages, 1538-1973

Long Itchington is 2 miles south of Marton and 2 miles south-west of Birdingbury. (There is a Bishop's Itchington 5 miles south-southwest of Long Itchington, but no Itchington, the place name specifically mentioned as the event place in the record, whether nearby or anywhere else in England. Given the residence places of the bride and groom, the marriage licence record must mean to refer to Long Itchington).

The Long Itchington parish register entries between 20th May 1733 and 17th December 1733 are mostly obscure,¹³ see image 11 of the 1712-1759 bundle of images at <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LWS-85K?i=10&wc=X63M-K68%3A42645501%2C1583872502%2C1583871414&cc=1462403>, which raises the issue as to whether "Thais" is only a portion of the name written in the original marriage licence record, or a speculative translation by the Family Search scanning software.

This is the actual record (acquired from FindMyPast), however, it clearly writes the first name as "Thais", and that first name is plainly not a longer name which has been partly obscured.¹⁴

¹³ Although a Henry baptised to Henry and Penelepe Neal on 20th September 1733, as referred to below, can just be made out.

¹⁴ Note that, at first blush, Henry appears to have signed his own name, and spelled it "Henry Nealle". However, the handwriting appears suspiciously similar to the handwriting of the vicar of Long Itchington of the time, see the parish records from 1733 and 1736 set out below.

Know all Men by these Presents, That We *Henry Neal*
of the Parish of *Long Eshington* Farmer and *Moris Spire*
of the same Parish Farmer

are held and firmly bound unto *the worshipfull Henry Raynes Doctor*
of Laws Vicar general of the Diocese of *Leicester and Coventry*
in the sum of *one hundred pounds*
of good and lawful Money of Great-Britain; To
be paid unto the said *Henry Raynes*
his certain Attorney, his Executors, Administrators, or Assigns: To
which Payment, well and truly to be made, We oblige ourselves;
and *sath* of us by *h^m self* for the
whole our and *sath* of our Heirs, Executors, and
Administrators, firmly by these Presents, sealed with our Seals. Dated
the *Twenty fifth* Day of *May* in the
seventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *George the*
third by the Grace of God of Great-Britain, France, and
Ireland, King Defender of the Faith, and so forth: And in the
Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and *thirty three*



The Condition of the above-written Obligation is such, That if there shall
not hereafter appear any lawful Let or Impediment, by reason of any Pre-
Contract, Consanguinity, Affinity, or any other just Cause whatsoever; but that
Henry Neal of the Parish of Long Eshington in the County
of Warwick aged forty, and John Hobley of the same
Parish aged about twenty eight

may lawfully marry together: And that there is not any Suit depending before
any Judge Ecclesiastical or Civil, for, or concerning any such Pre-Contract:
And that the Consent of the Parents, or others the Governors of the said Par-
ties, be thereunto first had and obtain'd; And that they cause their said Mar-
riage to be openly solemnized in the Face of the Parish Church of *Eshington*
as aforesaid between the Hours of Eight and
Twelve of the Clock in the Forenoon; And do and shall save harmless and
keep indemnified the abovenam'd *Doctor Henry Raynes*
his Surrogates, and all others his Officers, and Successors in Office, for, and
concerning the Premises:
Then the said Obligation to be void; or else to be and remain in full Force
and Virtue.

Sealed and Delivered (being first
duly stamped) in the Presence of

Edward Jackson
Tho: Graue

Henry Neal

Moris Spire

Banns of marriage involved giving 7 days notice of a proposed marriage to the vicar of each parish church of the bride and groom, and then the public announcement of the proposed marriage on the three following Sundays in that church or those churches, allowing anyone to raise objections or inform of any impediments to the marriage, thus serving to prevent potentially invalid marriages.¹⁵

In lieu of banns, a marriage licence issued by the local Vicar-General (i.e. Bishop), such as the above licence, allowed a marriage without banns in return for a £100 bond which was payable if it proved to be the case that there was an impediment to the marriage. Typically, the obligors were the applicant, usually the groom, and his “bondsman”, usually a friend or relative of the groom who was good for the £100 bond in the licence¹⁶ (and who was, in the case of the above licence, “Moses Spires”, of Long Itchington, Farmer).

The fact that the issuer of the licence is the Vicar-General of Lichfield and Coventry explains why the document ended up being in the “Staffordshire Church Records”, as, although Coventry is in Warwickshire, Lichfield is 23 miles to its north-west, and is in Staffordshire.¹⁷

There is no other information of note in the marriage licence, but the above Family Search record for it also has a link to the Family Search “England marriages, 1538-1973” database, which has the following record of the marriage taking place on 25th May 1733 (the same date as the date of issue of the marriage licence) at St Michael’s Church in Coventry,¹⁸ see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NNGN-F45>.

The screenshot shows a FamilySearch record for Henry Neale. The record is titled "Henry Neale" and "Vital • England Marriages, 1538-1973". It includes a "Check Image Availability" button and a "Document Information" section. The "Collection Information" section shows "England Marriages, 1538-1973". The "Cite This Record" section shows "England Marriages, 1538-1973", database, FamilySearch. The "Event Information" section shows "Name: Henry Neale", "Sex: Male", "Spouse's Name: Thais Hobley", "Spouse's Sex: Female", "Marriage Date: 25 May 1733", "Marriage Place: Coventry, Warwickshire, England", "Marriage Place (Original): Saint Michael, Coventry, Warwick, England", "Event Type: Marriage", and "Source Details: 2:2B29PMQ". The "Possible Family Tree Match" section shows a match with "Henry Neale" (Deceased • HDGX-CCH) and a button to "ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE". The "Similar Records" section shows two records: "Henry Neal" (England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944) and "Henry Neal" (England, Staffordshire, Church Records, 1538-1944). The "Henry Neale's Spouses and Children" section shows "Thais Hobley" as the wife.

It thus seems that the bride and groom (and bondsman) travelled to Coventry, 10 miles north-northwest of Long Itchington, obtained the marriage licence, and immediately married.¹⁹

The place of marriage is specifically nominated as St Michael’s Church in Coventry, justifying that it is accepted herein as such, but it is possible that the groom and bondsman travelled to Coventry to obtain the marriage licence, and then went back to Long Itchington for the marriage, given that the marriage licence suggests that the marriage was to occur there. However, that possibility cannot be substantiated because, as stated above, the Long Itchington parish register entries between 20th May 1733 and 17th December 1733 are mostly obscure, and there are also no images available on Family Search of St Michael’s parish records from 1725 to 1813, see <https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=XDL5-4WL%3A42645501%2C1583866502%3Fcc%3D1462403>.²⁰

¹⁵ See <https://www.regencyhistory.net/2018/10/banns-licences-and-hardwicks-marriage.html> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banns_of_marriage.

¹⁶ See <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/borthwick/documents/5marriagebonds.pdf>.

¹⁷ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichfield>.

¹⁸ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coventry_Cathedral.

¹⁹ If, as is suggested in a footnote above, the Long Itchington vicar signed the marriage licence for Henry, he may also have gone to Coventry to officiate the wedding.

²⁰ See also the Bishop’s Transcript of the available records at <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G966-P92Y?i=480&lang=en>.

For that same reason, the original marriage record²¹ cannot be checked to see if it contains more information. It is, however, unlikely to show that the Family Search software has incorrectly transcribed the bride's first name, given that the name recorded in the marriage licence is unquestionably "Thais".

Notwithstanding the lack of an original marriage record for whatever reason, and notwithstanding the different first name of the bride, it is concluded that this 1733 Coventry marriage is that of Henry and Pensissily for the following reasons:

1. The groom's first name and surname, Henry Neal/Neale, and the bride's maiden name, Hobley, in both the above marriage licence record and the above marriage record, are matches to Henry Neal and his wife Pensissily, given that, as noted above, William's mother was a Hobley. If the bride Thais was not Pensissily, the fact that the other names match would be a surprising coincidence.
2. The bride and groom are both stated in the marriage licence record as residing in Long Itchington. That provides a strong geographical connection to Henry Neal and his wife Pensissily, as they subsequently had children baptised in Napton, 4 miles south-east of Long Itchington, and Birdingbury, 2 miles north-east of Long Itchington, and they were both buried in Birdingbury (see above).
3. The marriage year of 1733 corresponds closely to the baptism dates of the children of Henry Neal and his wife Pensissily. As noted above, there was a series of baptisms to them in 1738, 1740, 1742, 1749 and 1753.²²
4. The groom's age given in the Coventry marriage licence record is a very close match to the Henry Neal who married Pensissily, as he was buried in Birdingbury on 28th August 1777 at age 84, see above, and, as such, he was born between about²³ 29th August 1692 and 28th August 1693, and thus he would have been either 39 or 40 on 25th May 1733.
5. The bride's age given in the Coventry marriage licence record corresponds to the age of the Pensissily who married Henry Neal. Given her baptism date, see above, Pensissily would be 24 at the time of this 1733 marriage. Thais is stated in the marriage licence record to be about 28, which is a fair match given inaccuracies as to a person's age of the times.²⁴ (The match is likely more than a fair match, it is probably an exact match, as there is a significant chance that the bride overstated her age given Henry's much older age).
6. The fact of a significant difference in the ages of the bride Pensissily and the groom Henry is itself unusual, and a distinguishing feature of that marriage, and also a corresponding characteristic of the marriage of Henry and Thais.
7. Henry is said to be a farmer in the marriage licence record, which matches with the father of William Neal, married to Pensissily, who was the freeholder of 4 pasture lots in Birdingbury in 1755 (see the brief relating to William Neal).

Both the number, and the weight, of all these reasons is well sufficient to conclude that Pensissily Hobley married Henry Neal at St Michael's Church, Coventry on 25th May 1733.

Notwithstanding, the bride's different first name given in the Coventry marriage licence record, Thais, remains an anomaly.²⁵ Why would the name Pensissily/Penthesilea be recorded as such?

²¹ It may well be that the marriage recorded in "England marriages, 1538-1973" is not a separate record in any case, rather it is simply a record of information certified to a central authority by the parish based on the marriage licence record.

²² Also, as noted below, upon further research, it was likely the case that Pensissily had another son baptised in 1733, which corresponds exactly to a marriage year of 1733.

²³ Allowing a few days between death and burial.

²⁴ As noted in the brief relating to Mary Wilkins nee Neal, inaccuracies as to age could result from lost, incorrect, incomplete or illegible baptism or birth records, no birth record being kept or birth date committed to memory for a child baptised well after birth, persons not accessing available records to ascertain their exact date of birth due to illiteracy or having moved away or for other reasons and consequently arbitrarily choosing one, and persons lying about or deliberately embellishing their age (in either direction) for a range of reasons. The risk of being found out at the time was extremely low due to the quality of, and the ability to access or to read, baptism records.

²⁵ During the course of that analysis, a further name anomaly (that relating to Penelepe/Penelope) was uncovered and also analysed, see below.

Resolving the name anomaly

William Neal was baptised in 1740 in Birdingbury to Henry and Pensissily Neal, see the brief relating to William Neal.²⁶

So, unless Thais and Pensissily were the same person, the 1733 Coventry marriage is a separate marriage involving another Henry Neal, being another Henry Neal in the locality at the time (Long Itchington, Napton and Birdingbury all being within 5 miles of each other).

If indeed there were two Henry Neals senior²⁷ in the locality at approximately the same time, and more or less the same age, in that one married in 1733 and the other had a child in 1740, one would expect two more or less contemporaneous baptism records and two more or less contemporaneous burial records for a Henry Neal in the records of parishes in the locality.²⁸

Also, if the 1733 marriage was of a separate couple than the couple who had William, one could expect a baptism record relating to a Thais Hobley, as well as a burial record of a Thais Neal/Neale, in the records of parishes in the locality, as well as baptism records for children of Henry and Thais Neal/Neale, given mothers of the time in lower or middle class families (such as families of farmers and agricultural workers) “typically gave birth to eight to ten children”.²⁹

Accordingly, the following research was carried out to establish if there were any such records, which might then disprove that Thais and Pensissily were the same person. The research relating to Thais is documented first.

Records for a Thais Hobley or for a Thais

According to Wiktionary, “Thais” is a “female given name from Ancient Greek”.³⁰

“Thais” in the above marriage and marriage licence records is too short to be a misspelling of Pensissily. And it is not conceivably a diminutive of that name.

“Thais” in those records is also too short to be a misspelling of Penthesilea,³¹ which Pensissily’s name apparently derives from given its other spellings in other records relating to her listed above. Notably, however, Thais could well be a diminutive of, or a nickname for, most of those spellings, that is, Penthessela, Penthiselea, Penthisilea, Penthessaly, and Penthesilea itself. The Ancient Greek associations of both names (Thais and Penthesilea) is also an intriguing connection.

A specific Family Search all-records search for a Thais Hobley anywhere in England at any time was conducted, with no record returned except for the marriage and marriage licence records above.³²

“Thais” also proved to be a name rarely happened upon in Family Search records for the relevant time period. A Family Search all-records search for the given name anywhere in England from 1680 to 1800 returned only 2

²⁶ Although William’s baptism record names the mother as Pencissela (or Pentissela), the brief relating to William Neal explains why she, and Pensissily, are one and the same person.

²⁷ The suffix “senior” is used given a Henry was christened to Henry and Penelope Neal on 20th September 1733 (see below), and a Henry was christened to Henry and Penthessela Neal in September 1738, see the brief relating to William Neal. The fact that both were named Henry does not undermine the conclusion below that the same couple was involved given that the first Henry junior died in 1733 (see below).

²⁸ And, possibly also, for the surviving spouse to be named in any such burial record so as to indicate that a Thais existed as well as a Pensissily. Most parish burial records do not name the widow or widower, but some do.

²⁹ See <https://sites.udel.edu/britlitwiki/social-and-family-life-in-the-late17th-early-18th-centuries/> (per University of Delaware) which goes on to say that, typically, only five or six children were raised due to high infant mortality rates.

³⁰ See <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Thais>. It may have derived from the Greek word *theá*, meaning “divine” or “goddess”, see <https://www.thebump.com/b/thais-baby-name>.

³¹ An Amazon Queen in Greek mythology. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penthesilea>.

³² See <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyPlace=England&q.givenName=Thais&q.givenName.exact=on&q.surname=Hobley&q.surname.exact=on>.

other persons,³³ one buried in Kent in 1724, and one baptised in Yorkshire in 1799. Obviously, neither of them could be the person who married Henry Neal in 1733.

The absence of a baptism or a burial record in Family Search's databases of a person named Thais Hobley, or, for that matter, the absence of a record for a person named Thais, regardless of her surname, who could possibly be the person who married Henry Neal in Coventry in 1733, suggests that Thais was Pensissily.

Records for children of Henry and Thais

As for any records of any baptism to a separate couple, no record for a Henry Neal/Neale with a spouse with the first name Thais or alternatively the surname Hobley was returned on a Family Search all-records search anywhere in England in the 18th Century,³⁴ again with the exception of the marriage and marriage licence records above. However, it is possible, albeit unlikely, that they had no children.³⁵

It is also possible that they did have children but none of them are recorded in any Family Search database. Although one suspects it is highly unlikely that all in a series of children have gone unrecorded, it could still occur because some parish records are missing (sometimes in blocks of several years), or damaged and illegible, and some parish register images are yet to be electronically indexed by Family Search (such that the information in the index is not in any Family Search database). It could also occur because the Family Search scanning software³⁶ wrongly transcribed an entry in a parish register, or is unable to read or interpret an entry. Instances of each of these omissions and errors have been observed.

Accordingly, in addition to the database checks noted above, manual examinations of parish records in the likely locations and time period were conducted to search for any potential candidate for Thais apart from Pensissily.

Before documenting that process, the details are provided of a second name anomaly discovered in the course of research for this brief. The manual examinations of parish records were also directed to researching and resolving that further name anomaly.

A second name anomaly

In the marriage licence record, both Henry and "Thais" are said to then be residents of Long Itchington, see above. A search for Henry Neal using the additional search criterion of Long Itchington uncovered another record, this time in Family Search's England births and christenings database, of the baptism of a Henry in Long Itchington to Henry and Penelepe Neal on 20th September 1733 (which record also documents the boy's subsequent death on 25th December 1733). See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JMF2-2B6>.

³³ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1680&q.anyDate.to=1800&q.anyPlace=England&q.anyPlace.exact=on&q.givenName=Thais&q.givenName.exact=on>.

³⁴ See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1700&q.anyDate.to=1800&q.givenName=Henry&q.givenName.exact=on&q.spouseSurname=Hobley&q.spouseSurname.exact=on&q.surname=Neal&q.surname.exact=on>. Changing "Neal" to "Neale" returns only the record of the 1733 marriage in St Michael's Church, Coventry.

³⁵ "Around 1 in 7 couples may have difficulty conceiving". See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/infertility/>. The "indications" are that rates of infertility in the past were lower, although there is sparse data: see <https://www.biocouriers.com/en/blog/596-infertility-in-history>. A past instance of a couple electing not to have children, as occurs today, was never discerned despite the examination of numerous records.

³⁶ Family Search says their database records have been created by digitising their microfilm collections using scanners. See <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/familysearch-microfilm-collection-digitized>.

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

Records Images Family Tree Genealogies Catalog Books Wiki

Henry Neal

Vital • England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975

SAVE EDIT SHARE



Document Information

Collection Information

England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975

Cite This Record

"England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975", database, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:3MF2-2B6 : 4 February 2023), Henry Neal, 1733.

Name **Henry Neal**

Sex **Male**

Death Date **25 Dec 1733**

Christening Date **20 Sep 1733**

Christening Place **Long Itchington, Warwickshire, England**

Christening Place (Original) **Long Itchington, Warwick, England**

Father's Name **Henry Neal**

Father's Sex **Male**

Mother's Name **Penelepe**

Mother's Sex **Female**

Event Type **Christening**

Attached in Family Tree to

Henry Neal 1733-1733 • MNR2-CBZ

Similar Records

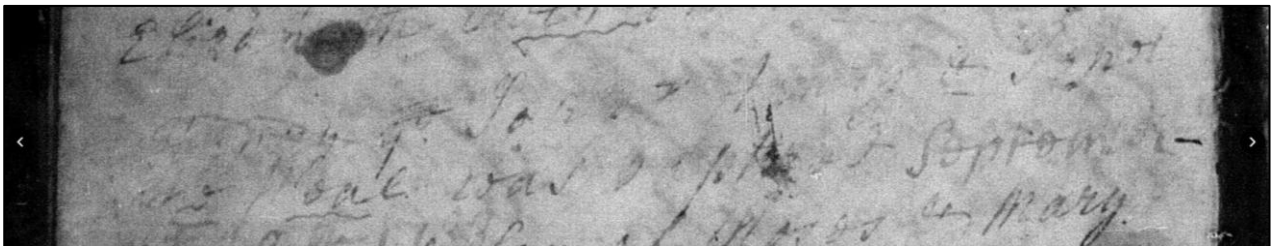
No similar records were found.

Henry Neal's Parents and Siblings

Name	Relationship	Sex
Henry Neal	Father	M
Penelepe	Mother	F

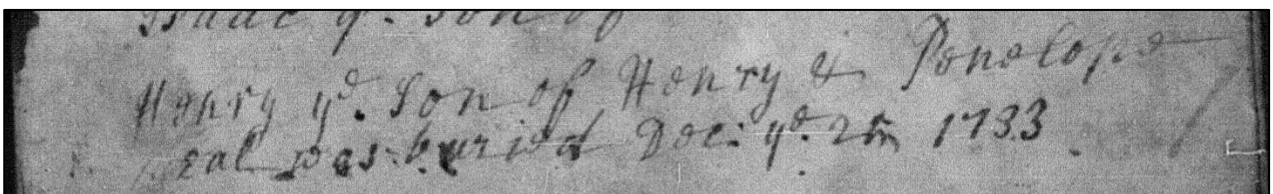
OPEN ALL

The images of the parish register for Long Itchington were checked to locate the actual parish record of this baptism and death. Some entries on the parish register pages in image 11 of the 1712-1759 bundle of images are obscure, and they include entries between 20th May 1733 and 17th December 1733, but the Henry baptised to Henry and Penelepe Neal on 20th September 1733 referred to above can just be made out, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LWS-85K?i=10&wc=X63M-K68%3A42645501%2C1583872502%2C1583871414&cc=1462403>.



Despite Family Search recording the mother's name as Penelepe, and despite that its exact spelling cannot be discerned in the above record, it is most likely written therein as Penelope, with the "o" possibly transcribed by the Family Search software³⁷ as an "e", given the vicar writes "o" exactly the same as "e" (see the record set out next, and note also that, in the above record, the "e" between the "n" and the "l" looks like an "o"). "Penelope" is also how the name is recorded in the two records set out next, and those records are in the same handwriting as the above record.

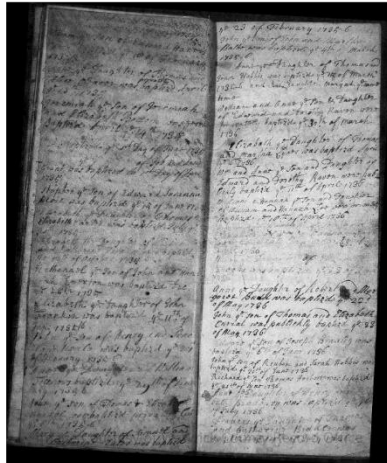
Henry's burial on 25th December 1733 is separately recorded on a page in image 26. This is a close-up of the relevant entry.



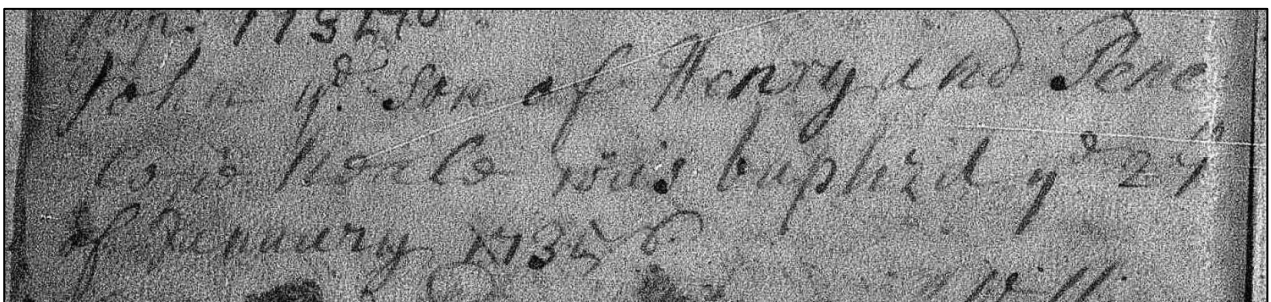
³⁷ Or possibly the spelling is a best-case guess by the software, given the obscurity of the entry.

A Family Search all-records and anywhere search for records from 1700 to 1800 of a Henry Neal/Neale, and a spouse named Penelepe/Penelope, resulted in no records except Henry's christening record above.³⁸

However, upon the manual examination of Long Itchington's records, carried out as referred to below, a further record involving a Henry and Penelope Neale was located, namely that of the baptism of a John to them on 27th January 1736, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LWS-6YL?i=11&wc=X63M-K68%3A42645501%2C1583872502%2C1583871414&cc=1462403>, image 12 of 42. (Examination of the whole page makes it clear the year is 1736).



This is a close-up of the relevant record.



(It is noted that the same recorder spells the surname "Neal" in the first two 1733 records, and "Neale" in the third record a little over two years later).

It is noted from the above that a Henry Neal (spelled Neale in one record) of Long Itchington was involved in four events in close succession in 1733, being the above marriage licence and marriage³⁹ events, and the above Henry junior's baptism and death. The speedy arrival of the child after the marriage less than 4 months earlier on 25th May 1733 suggests that the couple in the baptism and the marriage records are the same. In other words, it is likely that Thais and Penelope are the same person.

Penelope⁴⁰ is, of course, a fairly obvious variant of Penthesilea.⁴¹

³⁸ No records were returned for Neal and Penelope, or for Neale and Penelepe or Penelope. For the Neal and Penelepe search, see <https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1700&q.anyDate.to=1800&q.givenName=Henry&q.givenName.exact=on&q.spouseGivenName=Penelepe&q.spouseGivenName.exact=on&q.surname=Neal&q.surname.exact=on>.

³⁹ He is not said to be from Long Itchington in the marriage record, but the marriage licence record confirms he is from Long Itchington.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, as with Penthesilea and Thais, Penelope is also a name whose origins go back to the Ancient Greeks, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penelope_\(given_name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penelope_(given_name)), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penelope_\(dryad\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penelope_(dryad)) and <https://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/NymphePenelopeia.html>.

⁴¹ "The name Penthesilea is a girl's name [and an] interesting figure from Greek mythology – an Amazon queen who fought for Troy in the Trojan War – but no figure could be interesting enough to make that five-syllable mouthful usable today. Stick with Penelope ..." See <https://nameberry.com/b/girl-baby-name-penthesilea>.

Penelope and Pensissily

As noted above, in records relating to Pensissily, there have been a number of variations in the spelling of her name. Possible reasons for the multiple spellings of the name are suggested in the brief relating to William Neal, but all are rooted in the fact that the name is unusual, long and obscure. That fact, as well as the fact of those multiple other spellings of the name, raise the prospect that Penelope is indeed another variant of Pensissily's name.

The timeline of the dates of all the above records for Henry and Thais, Henry and Penelope, and Henry and Pensissily fit that thesis. That is, the couple marry in May 1733, have Henry baptised on 20th September that year, followed by John in 1736, another Henry in 1738 (the first Henry having died), then William in 1740, Elisabeth in 1742, Thomas in 1749 and Edward in 1753.

Also, no record was located of an 18th century marriage of a Henry Neal/Neale to a Penelope/Penelepe either in the above-referred to Family Search all-records and anywhere searches for records from 1700 to 1800 of a Henry Neal or Neale with a spouse named Penelope or Penelepe, or in the below-referred to manual image examinations looking for Neals/Neales in the locality at the time.

That also suggests that there was no Henry and Penelope couple separate to Henry and Pensissily in the vicinity of the latter couple at the time.

Manual examination of relevant records

In order to confirm or deny the hypothesis that Thais, Penelope and Pensissily are the same person, manual examination of parish records was also undertaken.

As noted above, that hypothesis requires that there was no Henry Neal in the locality married to a Thais as well as a Henry Neal married to a Pensissily (or similar). Accordingly, the search was for the same records as the database search, that is, a baptism record for Thais Hobley, a burial record for Thais Neal/Neale, and baptism records for children of Henry and Thais Neal/Neale.

The hypothesis also requires, similarly, that there is no further evidence apart from the three records already found that there was a Henry Neal in the locality married to a Penelepe or Penelope at the time. Hence the search was also for a marriage record of a Henry Neal to a Penelepe or Penelope, a burial record for Penelope Neal/Neale, and baptism records for other children of theirs.

Any such baptism events for children would have occurred between about 1730 and about 1760. Any baptism of a Thais Hobley would have occurred earlier,⁴² and any burials of a Thais Neal or a Penelope Neal would have occurred at the end of that time frame or later.

Prime potential baptism locations would be Napton, Birdingbury and Long Itchington. Given the later Neal connections to Marton and Frankton, and the fact that those villages are in the immediate area, they are also potential baptism locations.⁴³

A number of relevant parish register images had already been previously researched looking for Neals/Neales for other briefs, as follows.

1. All Napton on the Hill records from 1670 to 1720 (refer to the brief relating to Henry Neal).⁴⁴
2. All Napton records from November 1731 to June 1750 (refer to the brief relating to William Neal).
3. All Birdingbury records from November 1729 to December 1757 (refer to the brief relating to William Neal) (Birdingbury images only start at 1729, see the brief relating to Henry Neal).

⁴² There was no search for a baptism of a Penelepe or Penelope who might have married Henry Neal as we have no potential maiden name.

⁴³ Marton is about 2 miles north by west of Long Itchington, and Frankton is about 3 miles north-northeast.

⁴⁴ It was noted that there were a number of other Hobley families in Napton at the time, apart from that of Simon and Margaret Hobley. Simon and Margaret themselves appear to have had 8 other children as well as Pensissily, but none with the name Thais or any other name that could possibly be confused with it. See the person record at <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/GZK1-2VG>.

4. All Marton records from 1670 to 1720 (refer to the brief relating to Henry Neal), as well as all Marton records from 1720 to 1750 (refer to the brief relating to Elizabeth Neal nee Wright).
5. All Frankton records from 1670 to 1720 (refer to the brief relating to Henry Neal).

Apart from entries relating to children verified as those of Henry and Pensissily Neal baptised in 1738, 1740, 1742, 1749 and 1753 (see the brief relating to William Neal), and entries relating to children said to be baptised to Henry and Penelope Neal/Neale in 1733 and 1736 (see above), the only further Neal/Neale entries located in the course of the above manual examinations were as follows (in date order).

<i>Person</i>	<i>Event date</i>	<i>Event type</i>	<i>Event location</i>
Ann/Anna Neal	23 rd March 1671	Burial	Marton
Matthew Neale	13 th June 1683	Baptism	Napton on the Hill
Easter Neale	March 1686	Baptism	Napton on the Hill
John Neale	4 th August 1690	Burial	Marton
Thomas Neile	23 rd February 1692	Baptism	Napton on the Hill
John Neal	10 th July 1729	Burial	Birdingbury*
Goody Neal	23 rd October 1729	Burial	Birdingbury*
Sarah Neal	6 th July 1735	Baptism	Marton
Wife of Thomas Neale	31 st March 1740	Burial	Marton

* Note: recorded in Marton's parish register.

The burial records listed are plainly not relevant, and none of the above four baptisms were to a Henry (Matthew was to Matthew and Elizabeth Neale, Easter was to Thomas Neale, Thomas Neile was to William and Millicent Neile, and Sarah was to Thomas Neal).

As for Long Itchington's records, the images of the parish register from 1710 to 1759 were also manually examined.⁴⁵ For that period, they do not have electronic indexes. No other relevant records except for the three Henry and Penelepe/Penelope records referred to above were located upon that manual examination of Long Itchington's records.

In case Henry had a wife Penelope, and she died and he then married Pensissily, a possibility admitted by the timeline set out above, the Long Itchington and Napton burial and marriage records⁴⁶ were also manually examined between 1736 and 1738.⁴⁷ In those locations and in that time period, there was no record of the burial of a Penelope/Penelepe Neal, or the marriage of a Henry Neal/Neale.

⁴⁵ Being the 1653-1713 bundle, images 25 and 26 (baptisms), 41 (burials) and 46 (marriages), see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LWS-8VL?wc=X63M-L29%3A42645501%2C1583872502%2C1583871413&cc=1462403>, and the 1712-1759 bundle, images 3-22 (for baptisms), see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LWS-JQJ?wc=X63M-K68%3A42645501%2C1583872502%2C1583871414&cc=1462403>. As noted above, some entries on a parish register page in image 11 of the 1712-1759 bundle of images are obscure.

⁴⁶ Long Itchington: images 27-29 of the 1712-1759 bundle for burials, and images 35-36 of the 1712-1759 bundle for marriages. Napton: images 5-6 of the 1731-1797 bundle. See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-DCGS-W8X?i=4&wc=XDLB-4WL%3A42645501%2C1583867702%2C1583874819&cc=1462403>. Although the Long Itchington records are not electronically indexed, some of the Napton records are, and they include images 5-6.

⁴⁷ That time period being the relevant period because Penelope had John baptised in Long Itchington on 27th January 1736, see above, and Penthessela had Henry baptised in Napton on the Hill in September 1738.

Thus, and although there are significant gaps in the records as noted above, no evidence of a Henry and Thais was located apart from the 1733 marriage record, and no evidence of a Henry and Penelope was located apart from the three Henry and Penelepe/Penelope records referred to above.

Conclusions as to the name anomaly

The above comprehensive Family Search electronic searches, as well as the above manual examinations of the images of records of the time of parishes in the locality –

1. found no parish records in the locality referring to a Thais, or to a Thais Hobley, apart from the marriage record and the marriage licence record
2. found no parish records in the locality identifying or suggesting a Thais as the wife of a Henry Neal, apart from the marriage record and the marriage licence record
3. found no parish records in the locality identifying or suggesting a Penelope or a Penelepe as the wife of a Henry Neal, apart from the three Henry and Penelepe/Penelope records referred to above
4. established that there was a strong location/time nexus between Thais and Henry Neal and Penelope and Henry Neal (that is, Thais and Henry, who married in 1733, both came from Long Itchington, and Penelope and Henry baptised a child in Long Itchington the same year).

Accordingly, no evidence of a Thais or Penelope which contradicted the hypothesis that Thais, Penelope and Pensissily are the same person was found despite comprehensive Family Search electronic searches as well as manual searches of the images of records of the time of parishes in the locality.

Those comprehensive searches also –

5. established that there were very few Neals/Neales in Long Itchington and the surrounding towns of Birdingbury, Napton, Marton and Frankton in the 1720s to the 1750s
6. found no potential candidate for a second Henry Neal senior in the relevant area at the relevant time.

Those comprehensive searches thus demonstrated to a high degree of probability⁴⁸ that there was only one Henry Neal in the locality at the relevant time, and thus only one Henry Neal family.

Accordingly, it is concluded that Thais, Penelope and Pensissily are one and the same person, and that it is Pensissily Neal who has been recorded as Thais Neal and also Penelepe/Penelope Neal in the records referring to them above.

It follows that Henry Neal married Pensissily in St Michael's Church in Coventry on 25th May 1733.

It also follows that Henry and Pensissily had another child Henry in 1733 (although he died in infancy), as well as a John baptised in 1736.

(It is noted that, even if the conclusion that there was only one Henry Neal family in the locality at the time is wrong, that only casts doubt on the conclusion that Henry and Pensissily married in St Michael's Church in Coventry on 25th May 1733, and not on the baptism, parentage or burial details of Pensissily given in this brief).

Explanations for the name anomaly

The three possible explanations for the fact that Pensissily was named Thais in the marriage record and the marriage licence record are that –

- "Thais" was given as her name because her family called her that as a diminutive of, or a nickname for, her name, for the reasons suggested above, or

⁴⁸ The research exercise is not wholly definitive as only the most likely locations have been checked, and also records in those locations are sometimes obscure, or missing for periods.

- an alias was used for her, for the reasons suggested below, or⁴⁹
- her name of Pensissily (or similar) was made known to the recorder, but was then incorrectly recorded as Thais. However, this seems most unlikely given the magnitude of the discrepancy between her name and “Thais”.

Family Search suggests that the marriage licence procedure available at the time allowed for those “who want[ed] to marry in a hurry or in private”.⁵⁰ It gives, as two potential reasons for doing so, firstly that the bride was pregnant,⁵¹ and secondly that “[t]he parties differed greatly in age, such as ... an old man marrying a young woman”.⁵²

As it happens, Pensissily was almost certainly nearly 5 months pregnant, see above, and Henry was about 40 and Pensissily was 24 (and even then her age was overstated to the recorder, as the marriage licence record states that she was aged about 28). Either or both of these reasons might explain why an alias was used, if that is what occurred.

There are thus three potential reasons, each of some cogence, why the bride’s first name of Pensissily (or similar) was recorded as Thais.

There are also obvious reasons why Pensissily/Penthesilea was recorded as “Penelope” in the three Long Itchington records (Henry junior’s baptism and burial, and John’s baptism).⁵³ Likely it happened because she went by the easier to pronounce, readily spelled, and far better known, name of Penelope. Or, alternatively, she was known in the village as Penny, which is an understandable sobriquet for Pensissily, but which is also the traditional diminutive for Penelope. Pensissily’s baptism was 25 years earlier, and in the different parish of Napton, and the record of it is in different handwriting, so it is well understandable that the Long Itchington vicar at the time of Henry junior’s baptism and burial, and John’s baptism, had no knowledge of her name as recorded at birth.

⁴⁹ The use of aliases did not formerly carry the stigma it does now. See https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Use_of_Aliases_-_an_Overview.

⁵⁰ See https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Marriage_Allegations,_Bonds_and_Licences_in_England_and_Wales.

⁵¹ By obtaining a marriage licence, they could marry (as they did) immediately, rather than wait for a marriage date after 7 days notice, and then banns being called on the three following Sundays (see above). Also, at the time, there was stigma attached to bearing children outside of lawful matrimony. The English *Poor Law Act of 1576* called it “an offence against God’s and Man’s laws”. Unmarried mothers were also stigmatized as often the financial burden of providing for their children fell upon the parish and/or Poor Law aid. See <https://motherandbabyhomes.wordpress.com/2013/07/26/growing-stigma-around-unmarried-motherhood/>.

⁵² Another reason given is family opposition, which might also explain why the Long Itchington couple married in the unrelated location of Coventry, although the simpler explanation is likely that they needed to go there to get a marriage licence, as one could not be obtained in Long Itchington or nearby: Family Search states that the “great majority” of marriage licences were issued by the bishop of the diocese. See https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Marriage_Allegations,_Bonds_and_Licences_in_England_and_Wales.

⁵³ The three records are in the same handwriting, and thus recorded by the same vicar.