

RICHARD LAWRENCE [1738-1814]

Richard Lawrence was the eldest son of William and Ann (nee Hope) Lawrence of Spofforth and he was baptised at All Saints Parish Church in Spofforth, West Riding of Yorkshire on 23rd July 1738¹. George II was on the throne and Richard would have been a child during the Jacobite rebellion under “Bonnie” Prince Charlie and the Battle of Culloden in the mid 1740s.

There are three possibilities for his marriage:

1. He married twice, firstly to Betty Pool and secondly to Elisabeth Carter (see below)
2. He married Betty Pool only
3. He married twice, firstly to an unknown wife and then to Elisabeth Carter

Based on the evidence found in other records I believe he married Betty Pool and then Elisabeth Carter. My reasons for this are described in Appendix One at the end of this biography.

Richard was married twice which was not uncommon in the 1700s when the death rate was fairly high especially during child birth for women. He first married Betty Pool (Peel) when he was about 23 years old at the Parish Church in Kirkby Overblow, West Riding of Yorkshire on 20th July 1761 (Figure 1)². He was a taylor (sic) from Spofforth Parish and she was a spinster from Kirkby Overblow Parish. They were married by banns which were published on 21st and 28th of June and 5th July 1761. Both Richard and Betty signed their names indicating that they could write and therefore may have had some form of schooling.

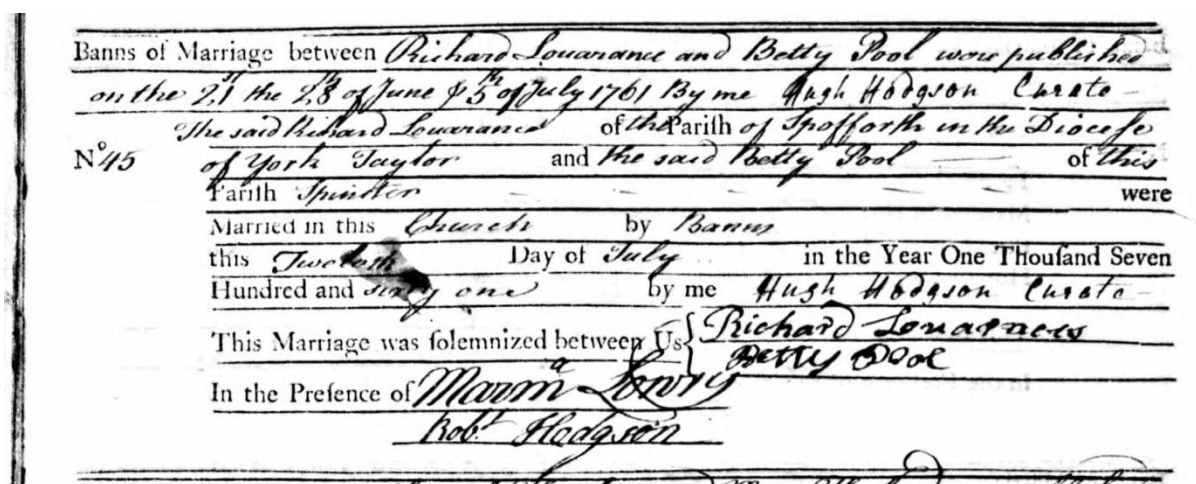


Figure 1: Marriage Register of Richard Lawrence and Betty Pool.

Transcription: Banns of Marriage between Richard Louarance and Betty Pool were published on the 21st the 28th of June & 5th of July 1761 By me Hugh Hodgson Curate. The said Richard Louarance of the Parish of Spofforth in the Diocese of York Taylor and the said Betty Pool of this Parish Spinster were Married in this Church by Banns this Twelfth Day of July in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and sixty one by me Hugh Hodgson Curate. This Marriage

was solemnized between Us Richard Louarness Betty Pool. In the Presence of Marm^a Lowry Robt Hodgson.

Richard and Betty (nee Pool) Lawrence had six known children, all sons between 1762 and 1772 (Table 1).

Table 1: Children of Richard and Betty Lawrence

Name	Baptism Date	Baptism Place	Burial Date	Burial Place
William Lawrence	28 Feb 1762	Kirkby Overblow ³	7 April 1762 ⁴	Kirkby Overblow ⁴
John Lawrence	31 Jan 1764	Kirkby Overblow ⁵	After 1814 ⁶	
Richard Lawrence	3 Mar 1767	Kirkby Overblow ⁷	After 1814 ⁶	
William Lawrence	16 Mar 1769	Kirkby Overblow ⁸	16 Oct 1836 ⁹	Spofforth ⁹
Thomas Lawrence	2 May 1771	Kirkby Overblow ¹⁰	29 Jul 1771 ¹¹	Kirkby Overblow ¹¹
Joseph Lawrence	9 Aug 1772	Kirkby Overblow ¹²	25 Oct 1772 ¹³	Kirkby Overblow ¹³

In the 18th century, infant mortality rates were high with 13.5% of boys and 12.2% of girls dying before the age of one (between 1750 and 1799, the infant mortality rate for children under the age of one in 12 parishes was 135 boys per 1000 and 122 girls per 1000)¹⁴ and sadly three of the six children died when they were only a few months old. Three sons, John, Richard and William, however did survive until adulthood.

About 7 months after the death of their youngest son, Joseph, Richard Lawrence's wife, Betty died. Although it is not known when she was born, it can be surmised that if she was between 21 and 25 when she married (Richard was about 23 years old when they married) Betty would have been born between 1736 and 1740. Therefore, she would have been between 32 and 36 years old when she died and her surviving children would have been between 4, 6 and 9 years old. Betty was buried on the 9th May 1773 in the Parish Church at Kirkby Overblow (Figure 2)¹⁵.

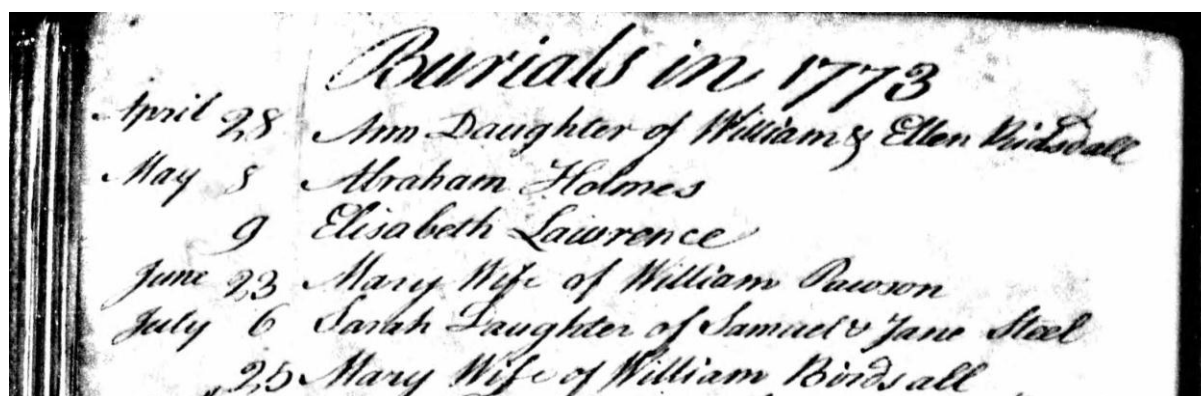


Figure 2: Burial Register of Elisabeth Lawrence (Betty Pool).

Transcription: *Burials in 1773. May 9 Elisabeth Lawrence.* It is unusual that it does not say “Wife of Richard Lawrence” as other entries in the register state “wife of” or “widow”.

Richard, with three young boys to provide and care for, married for a second time, on 21st November 1776 at the Parish Church in Kirkby Overblow¹⁶. He married Elisabeth Carter by banns (b. 1743).

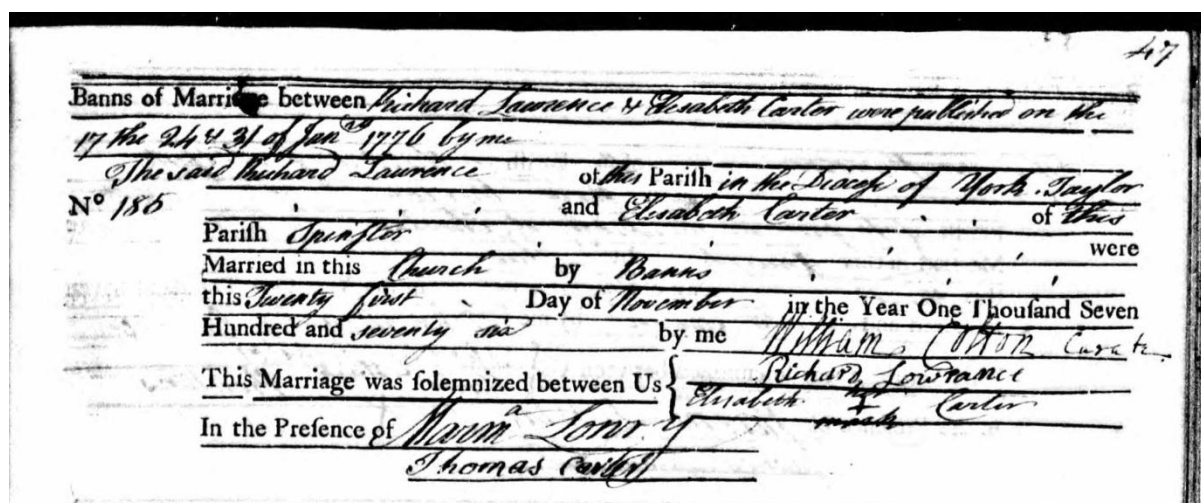


Figure 3: Marriage Register of Richard Lawrence and Elisabeth Carter

Transcription: *Banns of Marriage between Richard Lawrence and Elisabeth Carter were published on the 17 the 24th and 31 of January 1776 by me. The said Richard Lawrence of this Parish in the Diocese of York, Taylor and Elisabeth Carter of this Parish Spinster were Married in this Church by Banns this Twenty First Day of November in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and seventy six by me William Cotton Curate. This Marriage was solemnized by Us Richard Lowrance Elisabeth Carter + mark. In the presence of Marm^a Lowry and Thomas Carter.*

As Elisabeth “made her mark” and Richard Lawrence signed his name, it is likely that Elisabeth was illiterate which was not uncommon for this period. Thomas Carter is likely to be a relation of Elisabeth’s such as her brother or father.

Richard and Elisabeth nee Carter Lawrence had a son Thomas Lawrence, who was baptised on 19th July 1782¹⁷, and he was probably born a few weeks earlier. This means that he was born in 1782, a surprising 6 years after Richard and Elisabeth were married. Based on Elisabeth’s age when she died (64) in 1807 which may be inaccurate, she would have been 39 years old when Thomas was born. Richard’s will⁶ (see later) suggests that Thomas was the only child born to Richard and Elisabeth Lawrence and no other baptisms or burials of Lawrence children in Kirkby Overblow between 1776 and 1782 have been found. So unless Thomas was baptised several years after he was born, an explanation as to why no children were born earlier in the marriage could be investigated – for example, was Richard in the militia and was away from home – during this time between 1775 and 1783 Great Britain were fighting in the American War of Independence.

From the late 17th century to the mid 20th century, owners of land with an annual value of more than 20 shillings were subject to land tax. Every year, assessments were made in each parish to determine how much tax each land owner should pay. Some of these land tax assessments have survived especially between 1780 and 1832 and record the proprietor (landowner, copyholder or long leaseholder) and occupier (tenant or sub-

tenant) and the assessment amount. Land tax assessments exist for the parish of Kirkby Overblow and Richard Lawrence was both an occupier and proprietor in Kearby (Kirby) cum (with) Netherby in the parish of Kirkby Overblow between 1792 and 1813 (Table 2)¹⁸. Richard Lawrence's will confirmed that he resided in Kirby cum Netherby⁶ (see below).

A Topographical Dictionary of England, originally published by S Lewis, London, 1848 (www.british-history.ac.uk) describes Kearby cum Netherby as “a township, in the parish of Kirkby-Overblow, Upper division of the wapentake of Claro, W. riding of York, 4½ miles (W. by S.) from Wetherby; containing 226 inhabitants. The township comprises by computation 1348 acres, belonging to various proprietors, of whom the chief is the Earl of Harewood, who is lord of the manor.”

Richard Lawrence was a proprietor between 1802 and 1806 and between 1792 and 1800 and between 1807 and 1813 he as an occupier. Interestingly the change from proprietor to occupier in 1807 coincides with the death of his second wife, Elisabeth Carter (see below). Richard Lawrence died in April 1814 (see below) and therefore may not have been alive at the time of the 1814 assessments. Table 2 shows the land tax assessments for Richard Lawrence in Kirby cum Netherby.

Table 2: Land Tax Assessment for Richard Lawrence in Kirby cum Netherby

Date	Proprietor	Occupier	Sum Assessed
1792	Mr Wetherherd	Richard Lowerance	£” 6s 8d
1794	Mr Theop ^s Wetherherd	Rich ^d Lowerance	Record damaged
1795	Mr Theop ^s Wetherherd	Richard Lowerance	£” 6s 8d
May 18 th 1796	Rev ^d Mr Bradley	Rich ^d Lowerance	£” 6s 8d
May 24 th 1796	Rev ^d Dr Cooper	Rich ^d Lowerance	£” 5s 10d
1798	Mr Theop ^s Wetherherd	R ^d Lowerance	£” 4s 2d
1799	Tho ^s Issott	R ^d Lawrance	£” 4s 10d
1800	Thomas Issott	Rich ^d Lowerance	£0 4s 10½d
1802	Rich ^d Lawrance	Himself	£0 6s 7½d
1803	Rich ^d Lowerance	Himself	£0 6s 7½d
1804	Rich ^d Lawrance	Himself	£” 6s 7½d
1805	Rich ^d Lowerance	Himself	£” 6s 7½d
1806	Rich ^d Lowerance	Himself	£” 6s 7½d
1807	The Trustees for the Poor of Wath	Rich ^d Lowrance	£- 6s 7½d
1808	The Trustees for the Poor of Wath	Rich ^d Lowrance	£- 6s 7½d
1809	The Trustees of the Poor of Wath	Rich ^d Lowrance	£- 6s 7½d
1811	The Trustees of the Poor of Wath	Ric ^d Lowerance	6s 7½d
1812	The Trustees of the Poor of Wath	R ^d Lawrance	£- 6s 7½d
1813	The Trustees of the Poor of Wath	Richard Lawrance	£’ 6s 7½d

No land tax assessment recording Richard Lawrence's name has been found before 1792. This may be because land tax assessments for Kearby cum Netherby before 1792

have not survived or because his name has not been recorded as an occupier for example.

Richard Lawrence's second wife, Elisabeth Lawrence nee Carter died in 1807 and was buried at the Parish Church of Kirkby Overblow on 20th June 1807 (Figure 5)¹⁷.

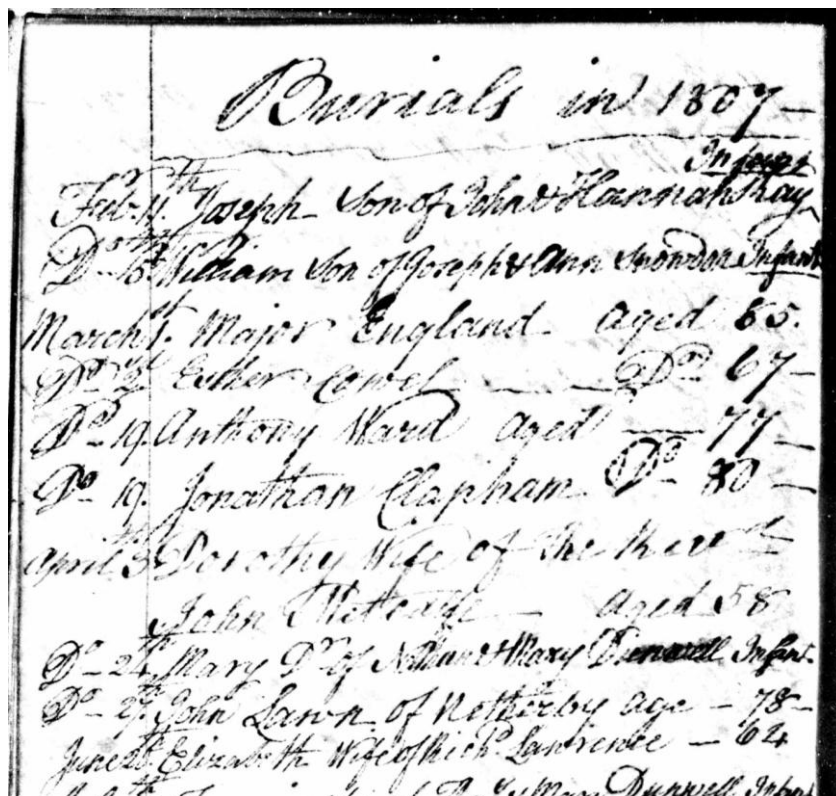


Figure 5: Burial Register for Elisabeth Lawrence.

Transcription: Kirkby Overblow Parish Register 1807: "burial of Elisabeth, wife of Rich^d Lawrence, age 64". This gives her year of birth at approximately 1743.

Richard Lawrence's will, written, witnessed and signed on 3rd May 1813 states that he was "infirm in body" and that his eldest son was John Lawrence and his other sons that he left bequests to were Richard Lawrence, William Lawrence, and Thomas Lawrence. Thomas Lawrence was the sole executor. The will was proved on 16th April 1814 and his estate was worth less than £20 (too small to qualify for death duty). Richard Lawrence and Thomas Lawrence were taylors (sic) and resided in Kirby cum Netherby in the Parish of Kirby Overblow. There is no mention of Richard's wife, Elisabeth which confirms that she predeceased him. We also know that he was unable to write at that time as he signed the document with a cross (made his mark) although he previously signed his name on marriage register.

References

- ¹ Baptism Register for Richard Lawrence 1738, West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; www.ancestry.co.uk, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812.
- ² Marriage Register for Richard Lawrence and Betty Pool 1761, West Yorkshire Baptism, Marriage and Burials 1512 - 1812 on www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ³ Baptism Register for William Lawrence 1762, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ⁴ Burial Register for William Lawrence 1762, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ⁵ Baptism Register for John Lawrence 1764, West Yorkshire, England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1512 - 1812, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ⁶ Last Will and Testament of Richard Lawrence and Probate Details, Prerogative and Exchequer Courts Probate Index 1688 - 1858, www.findmypast.co.uk , Will, Borthwick Institute of Archives, Vol 158, f 160.
- ⁷ Baptism Register for Richard Lawrence, Yorkshire Parish Records; RDP105/1, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds. St James's Wetherby. www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ⁸ Baptism Register for William Lawrence, 1769 West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1512 - 1812, www.ancestry.co.uk, West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; New Reference Number: RDP49/1/1.
- ⁹ Burial register for William Lawrence, West Yorkshire, England, Births, Marriages, and Burials, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹⁰ Baptism Register for Thomas Lawrence, West Yorkshire, England, Births, Marriages and Deaths, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹¹ Burial Register for Thomas Lawrence 1771, West Yorkshire, England, Baptism, Marriages and Burials 1512 - 1812 www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹² Baptism Register for Joseph Lawrence 1772, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹³ Burial Register for Joseph Lawrence 1772, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812, www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹⁴ Wrigley E.A & Scholfield R.S. (1989). The Population History of England 1541-1871, Chapter 7, page 249.
- ¹⁵ Burial Register for Betty (Elisabeth) Pool, West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; New Reference Number: RDP49/1/1, www.ancestry.co.uk. West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812.
- ¹⁶ Marriage Register for Richard Lawrence and Elisabeth Carter, West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; New Reference Number: RDP49/4/1, www.ancestry.co.uk, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812.
- ¹⁷ Baptism Register for Thomas Lawrence, 1782, West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, marriages and Burials www.ancestry.co.uk.
- ¹⁸ *West Yorkshire, England, Select Land Tax Records, 1704-1932* www.ancestry.co.uk Original data: West Yorkshire, Land Tax, 1703-1932. QE 13/6/15, Claro Hundred, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, England.
- ¹⁹ Burial Register of Elisabeth Lawrence, 1807, West Yorkshire Archive Service; Wakefield, Yorkshire, England; Yorkshire Parish Records; Old Reference Number: P49/12/1, www.ancestry.co.uk. West Yorkshire, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512-1812.

Appendix 1

The reasons why I think Richard Lawrence married Betty Pool and Elisabeth Carter are as follows:

- The marriage to Betty Pool is a year before the birth of his first child
- The first child and subsequent children were baptised in Kirkby Overblow, the parish of Betty Pool
- There is gap in the birth of Richard Lawrence's children between 1772 and 1782, indicating the death of the first spouse and subsequent second marriage
- Richard has the same occupation on both marriage registers, a taylor (sic).
- There is a plausible burial at Kirkby Overblow for an Elisabeth Lawrence in 1773 which explains why the succession of children stopped in 1772.
- The names of Richard's children living at the time that Richard wrote his will are confirmed in Richard Lawrence's will.
- A complete search has been performed for the marriage of Richard Lawrence in the parish registers for Kirkby Overblow and Spofforth and no other plausible marriages were found
- It is unlikely that there would be a 10 year age gap between the penultimate and final child with the same mother and father as even if they had several children that were still born or died when they were a few days old, you would still expect to find a baptism or burial record

The reasons why I query this theory are as follows:

- Richard's first wife is only known as Betty Pool on the marriage register. In all other records she is called Elisabeth. However, Betty is a shortened version of Elisabeth so it is plausible.
- Richard Lawrence signed his own name on both marriage registers but it is unclear if the hand writing is the same. Also "Lawrence" is spelt differently on each marriage register - however there was a 15 year gap between marriages and spelling was inconsistent in 18th century.

Appendix 2

Transcript of the Will of Richard Lawrence [1738-1814]

Page 1

Exon of the Will of Richard Lawrence late of Kirby cum Netherby and Kirby Overblow deced Was granted to Thomas Lawrence his son and sole Executor before Brown 16th April 1814 ??? 20.

Page 2

In the Name of God Amen I Richard Lawrence of Kearby cum Netherby in the Parish of Kirkby Overblow in the West Riding of the County of York Tailor, being infirm in Body but of sound Mind Memory and Understanding do make and publish this my last Will and Testament in manner following that is to say To my eldest son John Lawrence I give and bequeath the sum of one shilling, To my son Richard Lawrence I give the sum of one shilling, To my son William Lawrence I give the sum of one shilling, To my son Thomas Lawrence I give and bequeath all the Rest Residue and Remainder of my Goods Chattels ready money Debts Securities for Money personal Estate and Effects whatsoever after payment of my Debts Legacies and Funeral Expenses To hold to my said son Thomas Lawrence his Executors and Administrators and I do hereby constitute and appoint my said son Thos Lawrence sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament and hereby revoking all former Wills by me heretofore made I publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I the said Testator have to this my last Will and Testament set my Hand and Seal this third Day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirteen. Signed sealed published and declared by the said Testator Rich^d Lawrence as & for his last Will & Testament in the Presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our Names as Witnesses

Robert [?Driury]

Ralph Snowball

The Mark and Seal of Rich^d Lawrence

Page 3

I do hereby certify that on the 16th day of April in the year of our Lord 1814 Thomas Lawrence of Kirby with Netherby in the County of York Taylor the son and sole executor named in this the last Will and Testament of Richard Lawrence late of Kirby cum Netherby in the Parish of Kirby Overblow in the diocese of York Taylor deceased was sworn duly to execute the same and that the said deceased's personal estate does not amount in value to the sum of twenty pounds Witness my hand

G Brown S[????]

16th April 1814