

## *The Victorian Rectors of Hartley*

The board listing Rectors of the parish in All Saints' church in Hartley near Longfield, Kent includes the names of Edward ALLEN (pictured) and William Whitton ALLEN (usually known as Whitton), it does not reveal that they were father and son, the following is the story of their lives and those of some of their family.

The period during which the ALLENs were Rectors of Hartley 1826 - 1901 covers the whole of Queen Victoria's reign and a period when there were tensions within the Church of England between the Evangelicals, who were influenced by the Wesleyan Methodists, and the High Church Tractarians (also known as the Oxford Movement), who were influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, and other factions in between. I have not found any clues as to which faction Edward and Whitton followed, but as both attended Oxford University they would have come into contact with the leaders of the Oxford Movement however that does not mean that they followed their influence. However, I am sure that, unlike in Exeter in 1845, there were no riots in Hartley over the issue of whether the Rector should wear a surplice when preaching.



Edward ALLEN was born 14<sup>th</sup> March 1786 and baptised on 10<sup>th</sup> April at St George's, Bloomsbury he was the son of William ALLEN Esq. and his wife Sarah. He matriculated to Brasenose College, Oxford University aged 17 in 1804, obtaining a BA in 1808 and an MA in 1810. Edward's degrees would not be in Theology as this was not offered as a course at either Oxford or Cambridge until the 1870's. At this time to be ordained required that a position had been found and that you had sufficient knowledge of Latin and the Scriptures but most would have a degree from Oxford or Cambridge.

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1809 Edward was licensed as Curate at Charlton-next-Woolwich by the Bishop of Rochester (Walker KING). On 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month he was ordained deacon by the same bishop at Winchester House Chapel, Chelsea, permission having been obtained from the Bishop of Winchester by Letters Dimissory for Edward, being of his diocese, to be ordained in a different diocese.

The following year Edward married Ann St BARBE, the youngest daughter of John St BARBE Esq. of Blackheath, at St Mary, Lewisham, they are both shown as being 'of this parish'. At this parish it was common to record the birthplace of the bride and groom in the marriage register, this shows that Edward was born in the Parish of St George's, Bloomsbury and Ann in the Parish of Allhallows, Barking. The parish register also shows the signatures of five witnesses, presumably all relatives of the bride and groom – John St BARBE, S MORTIMER, Harriet MARTIN, Persis ALLEN and Septimus Thomas ALLEN. Septimus was baptised January 1790 in the same parish as Edward, shown as the son of William and Mary, he was a lawyer in Cliffords Inn before becoming a Wine Merchant.

At this time Edward conducted marriages at St Mary, Lewisham as Officiating Minister, including the marriages on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1810 of John FLETCHER (Widower) to Esther GRATWICK (Widow) and John ALLEN to Sarah OSBORN, all four had been born in Erith, Kent and both brides were of the Parish of Erith, both grooms were of the Parish of St Mary, Lewisham and each couple witnessed the marriage of the other couple. This John ALLEN may be the father of Eliza whose marriage to George GIPPS, son of George GIPPS of Howletts, was conducted by Edward at Sutton-At-Hone in 1842.

While Edward and Ann were living in Lloyds Place, Blackheath they had 4 children baptised at St Mary, Lewisham:- Eleanor St Barbe in 1811, William 1813, Francis Pitney Martin 1814 and Edward December 1815 who lived for just 10 hours. The registers of St Mary's also record the burial on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1819 of Ann aged 31.

It is obvious that Edward was quite wealthy, possibly the money came from his parents, in 1823 he came into possession of the Swan Public House with 2 acres of land and another 41 acres of land in Widford, Hertfordshire both of which he leased out. (The Swan was later sold to a brewery in 1865).

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 1824 Edward married Anne WHITTON at her parish of St Mary, Lambeth, and the following year a daughter, Grace, was baptised at Lewisham. An announcement in the London Evening Standard reveals that Grace died on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1829.

Only a few years after his marriage Edward made the move to become Rector of Hartley. The right to appoint the Rector (the advowson) was something that could be sold. It had changed hands a number of times, in 1759 it was sold by the Earl of Shrewsbury to Rev Thomas BLOOMFIELD, the rector at that time, for £250. In 1801 it was sold at public auction at Garraways Coffee House and the winning bid of £661 10s 0d was made by William ALLEN of Clifford Inn, London, Esq. (presumably a relative of Edward). By 1826 the advowson had passed to Edward, meaning that he was the 'true patron' and therefore had the right to appoint the new Rector, so he himself petitioned the Bishop of Rochester (George Murray) to be made Rector. Subsequently Edward was instituted as Rector of Hartley on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1826 under the jurisdiction of the Bishop. The advowson appears to have remained in family hands until being sold again after his son Whitton's death in 1901.

I suspect that Edward also had a family relationship with John Ward ALLEN who had been curate of the parish, his name appears in the marriage register from 1773 to 1785 during which time he was also Rector of the neighbouring parish of Ridley and Vicar of Cudham.

When Edward became Rector he did not move to Hartley as may be expected but lived in Wilmington where he is recorded on the Electoral Roll in both 1835 and 1837. There are numerous references relating to the Rectory of the Parish of Hartley being in serious disrepair dating back as far as 1433 and in 1801 the Rector was granted leave of absence for 2 years due to the Parsonage House being dilapidated. This seems to have continued to be a problem and the Rector prior to Edward lived in Greenhithe. Presumably at the time of Edward's appointment repairs had still not been effected.



*This map shows Hartley (marked by a blue dot), Sutton at Hone, Greenhithe (1), Stone (2), Wilmington (3) and Cudham (4)*

Among the duties of the Rector of Hartley at this time was the annual distribution of 2 coats and 2 gowns to 2 men and 2 women (mostly widow(er)s in the parish provided by a charity which was no doubt set up by bequest from a former parishioner.

One year after his appointment, on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1827 at Wilmington, William Whitton ALLEN son of Revd. Edward ALLEN (Rector of Hartley) and his wife Ann, was baptised, the family's abode being Wilmington. Two more children were baptised in Wilmington Margaret in 1828 and Ann (who had been born in Dover) in 1831.

Naming another son William could indicate that the William born in 1813 had died however, in 1830 Edward was a party to the Articles of Agreement under which William ALLEN of Rye, Sussex was to serve as clerk to John Haddock LARDNER (one of the Attorneys of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench) for a term of five years. At the end of his training this William ALLEN is listed among those to be admitted to the King's Bench in 1836, and is shown as now living in Blackheath. This William may be Edward's son born in 1813 who may have been taken into the care of some relative after his mother died, otherwise he was probably a nephew or young cousin to some degree of relationship. I have been unable to identify any death or census entries as being certainly either the son or the lawyer.

In 1837 Queen Victoria succeeded to the throne, this year also saw a major change in the law relating to marriage. All parishes had to obtain two new marriage registers, one to keep (many of these have been lodged with county archives) and one which, when full, would be passed to the Superintendent Registrar, and certificates to be completed as a copy of the register entry – the same form of marriage certificates that are currently in use. Also from this time on civil (Registry Office) marriages were available as an alternative to Church of England marriages. The new law came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837 and the first marriage recorded in this way at Hartley was that of David Wellard and Sarah Fellman on Christmas Day 1837.

The Parish Register of marriages shows that although not living in the parish Edward was carrying out most of the marriages as well as other church services, although he did have a curate – Thos. P PHELPS to assist him. This did not involve a large amount of travelling however as throughout the time of Edward and Whitton being rectors in Hartley there were between 0 and 2 marriages per year. There were slightly more baptisms, examples being 9 in 1867; 4 in 1886 and 2 in 1887. As well as marriages within the parish Edward also officiated at some family marriages including the marriage in 1857 at Paddington of his niece Eliza Sophia DICKINSON, eldest daughter of the late Andrew DICKINSON Esq of the House of Commons, to Rev A E O Harris, vicar of Sutton-at-Hone.

Edward's son William Whitton became one of the non-Channel Island pupils at Elizabeth College, Guernsey – a school that was founded by Elizabeth I – in 1839 and on census day in 1841 Edward, Mary, William, Margaret and Ann were all recorded in Petite Marche, St Peter Port, Guernsey with a governess and three female servants. Like his father William Whitton attended Oxford University joining Trinity college in 1844 aged 18, he gained a BA in 1848 and MA in 1852.

In *A Topographical Dictionary of England* by Samuel Lewis, published 1848 (which is around the time that William Whitton was made curate of Hartley), the parish is described as:- *containing 224 inhabitants. It lies west of the Gravesend and Wrotham road, and comprises 1178 acres, of which 205 are in wood. The living is a rectory, valued in the king's books at £7; net income, £275; patron and incumbent, the Rev. Edward Allen.*

When Edward's second wife Ann died in 1849 her funeral service at Hartley was conducted by Walker KING, Rector of Stone near Dartford (the son of the Bishop who had licensed Edward in 1809 and by this time a relation by marriage via Edward's eldest daughter Eleanor St Barbe). It appears that the extended ALLEN family had many members living in Hartley, Wilmington, Dartford, Southfleet, Blackheath, London and possibly Erith, many of them Clergy or Lawyers.

By 1850 William Whitton was being known by his middle name and when he married Mary TRIMMER (daughter of the late Rev. Henry TRIMMER) on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1850 at Sutton-at-Hone the newspaper report refers to him as the Rev. W Whitton ALLEN. At the same time Whitton's sister Margaret married the Rev. Claude E ROWLATT (son of the Rev. W H ROWLATT). Both marriages were conducted by the Rev. Frederick HEBERDEN. In August of that year Whitton and his wife visited Mr Charles Clement DEACON in Brighton and were listed among the fashionable visitors in the local newspaper.

Reports of Rev Henry TRIMMER's death in 1842 recorded that he was the grandson of Mrs TRIMMER the authoress; Sarah TRIMMER (1741-1810) was famous at the time as a writer of children's literature, she is shown here (under cc licence) as painted by Henry Howard, one of four portraits of her held by the National Portrait Gallery.





The 1851 census records Edward ALLEN, Vicar of Hartley living in Sutton Street, Sutton-at-Hone with his children Ann and W W (Curate of Hartley) also daughter-in-law Mary and her mother (also called Mary) and two sisters, plus 4 servants. Ten years later the household remained the same apart from Mary's mother Mary was no longer present and there is one less servant, but they had moved and were living at the new Rectory in Hartley (see more details below). From these censuses we can see that the TRIMMER family were well travelled as Mary's sister Agnes had been born in Tours, France and Emmeline in Cullompton Devon, Mary herself had been born at Strand-in-the-Green, Middlesex.

Edward had plans drawn for a new rectory and arranged an exchange of land to enable the new house to be built on what is now known as Rectory Meadow, which is actually within the boundary of Longfield Parish. Longfield Rectory at this time was within the parish of Hartley. The family lived in this 5 bedroom house with a coach house and large cellar from its completion in 1857 until Whitton's death. Whitton's successor Rev. Gerard W Bancks then lived in the house until his death in 1934 when the contents including many books were sold in a two day auction. The house then became a private house, unfortunately it was destroyed by fire in the 1960s and the remains were later demolished.



*The Rectory built by Edward ALLEN*

The National Archives index of documents, *Discovery*, reveals that in 1852 Edward took action in the Court of Chancery against Richard Norman and his wife Caroline St Barbe Norman. Caroline was related to Edward's first wife and as the case was heard in the Court of Chancery the dispute is most likely to have involved property.

The multiple uses of the name William by the ALLEN family is demonstrated by this marriage announcement in The Times in 1858:-

*Married- at Southfleet by Rev W Whitton Allen, Mr Wm Allen of Hartley Court elder son of Wm Allen Esq. The Court Lodge, Stone to Mary youngest daughter of the late Wm Allen, New Barn, Southfleet.*

The census records for 1861, 71 and 81 show another family living in Hartley headed by a William ALLEN with a wife named Mary. This William changed from being an Agricultural Labourer to being a farmer of 405 acres living at Hartley Court Lodge.

Edward died January 1870 in his 84<sup>th</sup> year, after 44 years as Rector of Hartley, he is buried with his wife Ann who died on Easter Day 1849. His son and curate Whitton then took over as Rector of the Parish of Hartley.

*The Glossop-Dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter* in 1870 regularly detailed visitors to the area and show that Whitton, his wife and sisters-in-law were visiting the spa town of Buxton in May and June 1870, I wonder if they needed to recover from the death of Edward. In addition to his parish duties Whitton also performed the role of diocesan inspector in which capacity he inspected Swanscombe school in April 1871.

By 1891 a third William ALLEN, William Frederick; born 1871 at Stone Hill Green Farm, Wilmington, the son of James and Ann ALLEN; was farming at New House Farm in Hartley, he was still there in 1901 described as a Market Gardener and Fruit Grower. Some of this land now forms part of New Ash Green and the 'New' in New Ash Green is a reference to this farm. William Frederick was a Churchwarden at Hartley for some years and in 1893 he seconded a proposal by F D BARNES J.P. at a Vestry Meeting noting the funding by Whitton of repairs to the fabric of the church, the proposal carried unanimously reads:

*That this Vestry while congratulating the Reverend W. Whitton Allen on the completion of the restoration of the Parish Church, desire to acknowledge, and record the deep and lasting obligation under which the Parish rests to its Rector, who, at his sole charge, has rebuilt the Western end, and the spire of the church, and so preserved the ancient fabric from decay, and handed it down to posterity unimpaired, as a lasting testimony of his, and our love for the church, and for his love of the Parish with which he and his father before him have long been identified.*

James and Ann ALLEN of Stone Hill Farm were very active in the church at Wilmington with their daughters running the Sunday School in their house. When their daughter Annie died, Margaret ROWLATT (Daughter of Edward ALLEN) and her husband were described as Annie's great niece and great nephew, I have not researched the wider family enough to confirm this relationship.

Like many people in the area Whitton kept chickens it is recorded in the Maidstone and Kentish Journal in 1892 that among the fowl stolen by the defendant in a court case were 6 stolen from Rev Whitton ALLEN.

When Rev W Whitton ALLEN died 30<sup>th</sup> April 1901 aged 74 having been Curate and Rector for 57 years he was buried with his wife Mary who died 7<sup>th</sup> December 1889, and nearby to his

parents Edward and Ann. The funerals of both Edward and Mary were conducted by Rev. W KING who by then was Rector of Leigh, Essex. Between these two graves lies Mary's sister Agnes TRIMMER, died 4<sup>th</sup> April 1879. All three graves are marked with crosses, unfortunately the top of the one for Whitton and Mary has broken off and is laying behind the base.



The West Porch of the church of All Saints, Hartley which can be partly seen in the photo above, was erected in 1899 by Emmeline as a memorial to her sister Mary ALLEN. The oak reredos and two coloured windows are also memorials to members of the ALLEN and TRIMMER families donated by Emmeline and Whitton. Unfortunately when the windows were repaired after WW2 landmine damage, they got the TRIMMER name wrong, so they now refer to SUMMER.



In *Hartley through the Ages*, written by Whitton's successor as Rector Revd. Charles G W Bancks it is recorded that the Lych-gate which can be seen in the picture here, copied from Rev. BANCK's book, was the handwork of the late Rector, Rev W W Allen and was erected in memory of his father, constructed of timber from a tree in the Glebe under which Edward liked to sit and bears the inscription:-

*" Erected A. D. 1887 by loving friends in memory of Edward Allen, 40 years Rector of Hartley."*

Hartley Church and Lych-gate.



Whitton also carved the oak reredos which is below the East Window, behind the altar in the church (pictured below from <http://www.hartley-kent.org.uk/> )



#### The East Window and the Reredos

The east window was filled in 1898 with stained glass presented by the P&O Company in memory of Adam Tait of Hartley Court. It was restored and re-ordered in 1987. The Revd W W Allen carved the oak reredos [1882] which is below the window.

*Arranged by Janet Drayton,  
Ann Griffiths and Dawn Francis*

*Sponsors: Joan & Julian Delf,  
Linda Moffatt*

Many people at the time invested in the Great Western Railway, its records show that when Whitton's sister Ann died 392 Consolidated Ordinary Shares were transferred to Whitton as Executor. Similarly in 1901 300 shares then held by Whitton were transferred to his Executor. There were also some shares held jointly by Whitton and the Very Revd. Edward Neville CRAKE, Dean of Battle, these may have formed a trust as the ownership was transferred solely to the V Revd. E N CRAKE.

Following Whitton's death the Probate index records – *The Reverend William Whitton ALLEN of Hartley Rectory, Longfield, Kent clerk died 1 May 1901 Probate London 29 May to the Reverend Edward SMITH clerk Effects £5,922 9s 1d*. This death date differs slightly from that given in the memorial inscription, Edward SMITH, who also conducted Whitton's funeral service, was the Rector of Longfield.

Agnes TRIMMER had continued to live in the Rectory until her death and Emmeline was still there in 1901. After William's death Emmeline moved to Gravesend and she died the next year, the Probate index shows that her estate was valued at £5,641 11s 1d and Edward SMITH was also her Executor.

So far this account has concentrated on Edward and Whitton the following gives some information on Edward's other children.

The youngest daughter Ann never married and died in 1895 at Coombe Cottage, Wilmington, (the home of her sister Margaret who was then Mrs ROWLATT), in her will she left money to form a charity for the poor of Wilmington, this was later amalgamated with other Wilmington



charities.

Francis Pitney Martin ALLEN (Edward's third child) married Mary HOOPER at the House of the British Ambassador in France in 1834, passed his legal examinations in 1837 and was admitted to the King's Bench when he was listed as being of Wilmington and his Articles had been transferred from John GREGSON of Bedford Row to Thomas Broadly FOOKS of Dartford. It appears from records held by the family that at some point Francis married Mary Ann GORDON, the mother of his children but no record of this marriage has been found. Not long after qualifying for the King's Bench Francis became insolvent and emigrated to Brooklyn, New York, America, travelling with his wife and infant daughter Beatrice on board "Toronto" in November 1839. After arriving in New York he set up in a business partnership running a fishing tackle store in Manhattan. Mary Ann died early in 1867 when their youngest child was about 10 and in March 1868 Francis married Anna DAVIS nee CLOYD in Manhattan, New York.

During the American Civil War, which raged 1861-1865, Francis sent his son Frederick to stay with Edward in Hartley because of concern that he would be drafted into the army and he was too frail to be a soldier. The family still have the prayer book inscribed by Whitton and given to Frederick on his return to America. Francis's daughter Beatrice also visited Hartley, in 1872, and was given a watercolour picture of the Hartley Rectory (shown above), this painting and the portrait of Edward shown on page 1, are owned by Beatrice's granddaughter Karen.

Francis died in May 1872 and his wife Anna's application for Probate shows that he had four surviving children – Beatrice, Ellen, Fanny (Frances) and Harriet St Barbe.

In 1841 Edward's daughter Eleanor St Barbe with her husband Frederick HEBERDEN and three children are recorded as living at the Vicarage in Wilmington. Eleanor's marriage in 1834 and the children are mentioned in the HEBERDEN entry in *Burke's Family Records* where she is shown as Ellen St Barbe, her husband Rev. Frederick HEBERDEN MA, Vicar of Wilmington is part of a dynasty of clergy, the family, as recorded in this book, includes 14 members of the clergy including a Vicar of Dartford and Rev. Walter (sic) KING, Archdeacon of Rochester (who was also Rector of Stone) who was married to Frederick's sister Anne.

For sources please see the bibliography below.

My thanks to Karen Gosnell, Peter Mayer and Gerald Cramp for additional information.

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