



Campsea Ashe in Victorian Times

The Clergy of Campsea Ashe

**Research by Tim Holmes
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During the period 1839 to 1901 there were only four Rectors appointed to the parish of Campsea Ashe, namely:

Rev. Jermyn Pratt, (appointed 1836)

Rev. Henry Edward Knatchbull (1867)

Rev. Goodwyn Alfred Archer (1876)

Rev Christopher Hodgson (1891).

In Victorian times the Rectors were appointed by the Patron who in the case of Campsea Ashe was lord Rendlesham. All of the Rectors made their own contribution to the life of the Church and village. There are many references to the Rectors visiting the school in their role as School Manager.

The Rectors were supported by a number of curates one of whom was appointed by the churchwardens and one by the Rector himself. Brief details of the Curates are given at the end of this paper.

Rev Jermyn Pratt

Appointed Rector 1836

Rev Jermyn Pratt was the third son of Edward Roger Pratt and Pleasance Brown. He was born on 6th February 1798 and lived at the family estate, Ryston Hall, Norfolk (<http://www.rystonhall.co.uk>). The Hall was built by an ancestor, Sir Roger Pratt, in 1670 and the family still own the Hall today.



Taken from Rev Lucas 'Notes on Campsea Ashe'

He was educated at Eton and later in 1818 at Trinity College, Cambridge where he gained a BA in 1821 and an MA in 1825. He was ordained a deacon a priest in 1822 and his ministry was as follows:

1823 – 26	Rector of Bintree and Themelthorpe (near Reepham)
1823 – 30	Curate of Fordham
1831 – 32	Rector of Great Bircham and Harpley
1836 – 63	Rector of Campsea Ashe ¹ .

On 4th May 1847 he married Mary Louisa Murray (1824 – 1878), daughter of Rt Rev George Murray, Bishop of Rochester. They were married in London and had a number of children all of whom were born whilst Jermyn was Rector at Campsea Ashe:

Edward Murray Roger	3 December 1847 – 20 November 1921
Blanche Eleanor Murray	4 May 1850 – 5 September 1921

¹ It is possible he remained as Rector of Campsea until his death in 1867, although he moved to Ryston Hall in 1863. The records at Campsea Ashe indicate this is the case.

Richard William	1851 –
Henrietta Mary Murray	2 December 1851 – 11 April 1936
Walter Jermyn Murray	3 February 1853 -
Reginald Henry Murray	29 May 1854 – 1925
Lucy Edith	128 June 1855 – 10 February 1901
Francis Augusta	23 November 1858 –
Rosalind Alice Murray	14 June 1860 –

Jermyn succeeded his brother to the Ryston Hall Estate on 28th May 1863, both his elder brothers Edward Roger and Lt Col Henry Pratt having died in 1863 and 1860 respectively. It is possible he remained as Rector of Campsea Ashe as well as inheriting the Estate as no other Rector is mentioned in the Campsea Ashe records between 1863 and 1867.

He was a member for a number of years of the Campden Society². Early historical and literary texts are still published under its imprint, although the actual society merged with the Royal Historical Society in 1896. He was editor of *Records of the College of Christ Church College of Brecon*.³

According to an article in *The Spectator* dated 8th July 1865, Jermyn stood as a candidate as MP for Lynn in the 1865 general election. He was not successful, but his purpose for standing was to “*establish the rights of the clergy of the Church of England – the only class of commoners now excluded from a House which admits Catholics and Jews.*”

The Church has two brass Alms Dishes which are ascribed to Rev Pratt. According to Peter Carter in his *History of the Church* (2011):

One bears the words “God loveth a cheerful giver” and the other “Give Alms of thy goods”. On the bottom of each is engraved “Campsea Ashe, & dono Jermyn Pratt. Rector 1843”. Allegedly the first Lord Ullswater told a former Rector that when on Sundays he saw the inscription it always gave him a guilty conscience because, although he gave, he was not a ‘cheerful giver’. Perhaps all the more credit to him for giving!

Jermyn died on 15th May 1867.

² The Camden Society was founded on 15 Mar 1838, at the home of John Bowyer Nichols, parliamentary printer, and proprietor of *Gentleman's Magazine*, during a meeting presided over by Thomas Amyot, secretary of the Slave Compensation Commission and Treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries. Others present at this first meeting included John Bruce, John Payne Collier, Rev Joseph Hunter, historian and PRO staff member; Sir Frederick Madden, Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, Thomas Stapleton, genealogist, Thomas Wright, editor of early texts. The meeting resolved to found a society for the publication of early historical and literary remains, to be called the Camden Society. (Not to be confused with the Cambridge Camden Society founded in 1839, and from 1846 known as the Ecclesiological Society). The Society was to be governed by a President and a Council of twelve members and including a Treasurer and Secretary. Membership of the Society was by annual subscription of £1, and an annual meeting was to be held on the 2 May - the birthday of William Camden (1551-1623, historian and antiquary). It was proposed to publish unedited manuscripts as well as republish selected scarce printed books. Copies of the publications were to be sent to every member and surplus stock to be offered publicly. The Society also determined that distinct works be published separately, allowing the individual to bind them in their own chosen arrangement.

³ Taken from “Rectors and Patrons of St Lawrence’s Church”

Photograph (with thanks) © John Salmon www.norfolkchurches.co.uk
Memorial is at Ryston Church, Norfolk

The Pratt family still lives at Ryston Hall near Downham Market, Norfolk and they have lived there for over 400 years. The most famous member of the family was probably Sir Roger Pratt who was a distinguished architect and one of the three commissioners appointed by Charles II to oversee the rebuilding of London following the Great Fire in 1666. Two earlier ancestors were amongst the founders of Cambridge Massachusetts in 1630.

The Rev Lucas, in his History of Campsea Ashe, has a special mention of Rev Pratt:

Born February 6th 1798. Educated at Eton 1811-1815 and Trinity College, Cambridge. Ordained 1824. Was formerly Vicar of Fordham, Norfolk. Rector of Campsea Ashe 1836-67; died May 15th of that year. Buried at Ryston. Was named Jermyn after his ancestor Harry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, ambassador to France, who died 1683 and whose grand-daughter Henrietta, fourth daughter of Sir Robert Davens and Mary Jermyn, married Roger Pratt of Ryston Hall; died 1771.

Their son was the Reverend Jermyn Pratt – Rector of Worthington and his son is pictured below.

The Jermyn Pratt Window

This window, on the South Side of the Chancel, behind choir seats, contains the arms of Reverend Jermyn Pratt (on the left hand side) and of his wife (on the right hand side).

Jermyn Pratt. *Rector here 1836-67. Was owner of Ryston Hall, Downham Market, Norfolk, now held by his eldest son. He had three sons and four daughters. He was born 1798; died 1867.*

Mrs. Pratt – *to whom he was married in 1847 was Mary Louisa, fourth daughter of the Rt. Reverend George Murray, Bishop of Rochester, second son of Lord George Murray who was the second son of John, third Duke of Athol. Her arms, in the window, contain the Quarterings of Murray, Stewart & Athol, Stanley (Lord Derby) and Strange, Isle of Man. (The Dukes were formerly Kings of the Isle). Lions of England and Fleur de Lys of France (perhaps through descent from Edward I), and Lathour.*

Mrs. Pratt died in 1878.

Rev. Henry Edward Knatchbull

Rector from 1867 to 1876

He was son of Rt Hon Sir Edward Knatchbull and he married Pleasance Bagge, daughter of Thomas Philip Bagge and Grace Salisbury on 17th September 1835. They did not have any children.

Sir Edward, Henry's father, was 9th Baronet of Mersham Hatch, Kent, and a member of Parliament for Kent from 1790 to 1802 and again from 1806 to 1819. Henry was born in 1808 in Mersham Hatch, Kent one of 8 children, his father marrying on three occasions. He was baptised on 19th September 1808. Prior to coming to Campsea Ashe he was vicar of North Elmham. He died on 31st August 1876 at Campsea Ashe, but is buried elsewhere.

Henry Knatchbull was a First Class cricketer, a right hand batsman and wicketkeeper. He played for Cambridge University, Kent, Norfolk and Oxford University and in his 41 first class matches he scored 736 runs at an average of 10.51. His highest score was 72. He took 31 catches and 5 stumpings.

(See <http://www.cricketarchive.com/Archive/Players/30/30820/30820.html>).

During his time as Rector, considerable work was undertaken to improve the Church. In his Guide to the Church (December 2011) Peter Carter records:

It was during the Victorian restoration (1869-70) that the Chancel was re-faced with knapped flint, and at the same time the old Porch was repositioned sideways ten feet (3m) to the western end of the Nave. Excavations for drainage ground-works in 1998 exposed the foundations of this earlier Porch, indicating it to be a little longer and narrower than today's, and floored with brick. As a result of its move the Porch swapped places with the westernmost window, which was refashioned to replace the original entrance and create a well proportioned elevation with the Porch (also re-faced) and a neat line of three evenly spaced windows leading to the buttress on the right. Also in 1869-70 the doorway in the south Chancel wall was made smaller and a window added immediately to the west of it. It is said that redundant masonry from this work was used at the time by the Rev. Knatchbull to create rockeries in the adjacent Rectory garden – a fine example of recycling - and one of his successors, the Rev. F. G. L. Lucas, noted in 1909 that he “lately discovered amongst these stones ... the [old Porch] stone bearing the inscription “S.K. 1792””. Final alterations to the church's south façade were not completed until 1914 when the central window of the Nave was adjusted to match the other two, stone tracery being substituted for the old and decaying wooden frame.

Writing in the Churchwardens' Account Book in late 1870, the Rev. Knatchbull makes the following statement, no doubt with some satisfaction: “Gentlemen - In pursuance of my undertaking in my letter to you dated April 2nd 1869, which was in substance that I would ... carry out the church restoration &c. in full, according to the plans and agreements then laid before the meeting - I have now to report that the whole of the church works are completed and the accounts duly balanced ...” He adds that “... there remains still to be restored 4 windows to match the new one in the Nave” thus anticipating some of the additional building work that was to be carried out on the north frontage over the following years.

The church accounts record that the 1869-70 restoration and sundries cost £852-7s-5d. Comparisons with the present day are notoriously difficult because of the relative costs of labour, craftsmanship, commodities and such like, but an estimate for an equivalent cost in the

early 21st century could easily exceed £70,000. (Interestingly, the books show that the Rector contributed no less than £481-11s-3d - over 56% of the total! - from his own resources, local landowners Lord Rendlesham £200 (24%) and Mr. Sheppard £100 (12%), with the Rector's private friends and other sources making up the difference. This begs the question of how and why the Rev. Knatchbull could afford such sums, but is explained by the fact that he appeared to be from wealthy stock: his lineage is not clear, but he is believed to be the son of the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Knatchbull, 9th Bt., FRS, MP for Kent, Privy Counsellor and Paymaster General to Sir Robert Peel).

Inside the Church Rev Knatchbull was responsible for installing the reredos at a cost of some £55-16s-0d (about £4000 today)

Rev. Goodwyn Alfred Archer

Rector from 1876 to 1891

Relatively little is known about Rev Archer. He was born in 1841 in Ely, Cambridgeshire, the son of Goodwyn Archer and Mary Ann (Brittin). He was the eldest of four children.

He was educated at Charterhouse School and then Emmanuel College. He was ordained Deacon in 1864 and then Priest 1865. He had various appointments:

Curate of Hilgay	1864 – 1866
Freethorpe	1866 – 1870
Sutton	1870 – 1872
Vicar of Butley	1872 – 1876
Rector of Campsea Ashe	1876 – 1891
Chaplain of Brookwood Necropolis	1895 – 1904

Goodwyn married Kate Harriette Browne in 1872 in Mutford, Suffolk, but she died when only 33 years of age. The lectern in the Church is dedicated to her and is inscribed '*E Dono Kate H Archer*'. There is a record of a Goodwyn Alfred Archer marrying a Margaret Anne Buxton in Devon in 1893 and this is likely to be him. It is believed that she was born in 1872 in Campsea Ashe, so was one of his parishioners. He worked in the Diocese of Exeter in his later years from 1903 to 1931. He died aged 90 at Exeter, leaving his second wife, Margaret.

Rev. Christopher Hodgson

Rector 1891 to 1906

The final Rector of the Victorian period was Rev Christopher Hodgson. He was born in 1830 in Witherslack, Westmoreland, son of William Jackson and Agnes (nee Benson) Hodgson, one of seven children.

He was ordained deacon in 1855 and a priest in 1856. He married Elizabeth Isabella Croft in 1857 when aged 27 and they had five children, Arthur Tayler (born 1857), Ernest Christopher (1859), Isabella E (1861), Emily M (1863) and Randolph Llewellyn (1870).

He was Curate of Burgh 1855 – 58, Vicar of Playford 1858 – 71, P C of Culpho 1860 – 71, Rector of Braithwell 1871 – 1891, Rector of Campsea Ashe 1891 – 1906. In the 1901 census he is recorded as living at the Rectory along with his wife, son Randolph (now an author) and two servants.

He died at Campsea Ashe in 1906 and it is believed he is buried in the Churchyard at Campsea Ashe, although there is no memorial to him.

The Curates of Campsea Ashe

Much less is known about the Curates who served the village. Rev Lucas, who provided much information about the village in his personal history of the village identifies the following:

Arthur Hanbury	1856-57
William R. Villiers	1858-59
H. Harper Green	1860
Augustus Legge	1860-67

Some of the above were possibly Curates-in-Charge during a vacancy; some may have been employed owing to the Rector holding more than one living.

Rev. Jermyn Pratt appears to have ‘kept a Curate’ during the last eleven years of his incumbency.

Arthur Hanbury was born on 20th December 1830, the son of Rev Arthur and Jessie Hanbury. It appears his family were very wealthy and his father was closely involved with the school at Bures. He attended Trinity College Cambridge and became a Deacon in 1855, a Priest one year later. On leaving Campsea Ashe he went as Curate to Bures where he remained until 1873.

See <http://www.bures-online.co.uk/school/school4.htm>

Augustus Legge – Appointed Deacon in 1858, Priest 1859. He became Curate of Honing, Norfolk 1858-60, Curate of Campsea Ashe 1860-67, Vicar of North Glemham 1867-94. The Rev Legge retired into private life in 1894. His uncle, Rev. William Legge (nephew of the third Earl of Dartmouth) was Rector of Ashted, Surrey, from 1826-72.

Churchwardens in Victorian Era

According to Rev Lucas the following were Churchwardens during this period:

Dates	Names of Churchwardens	Notes
1839-40	Lewis Fish & Edward Scofield	Lewis Fish was a farmer born in 1791. Edward Scofield was also a farmer, married with three children. He was born in 1811.
1841-42	Lewis Fish & Henry Jeffries	Henry was another farmer but was only 19 years old in 1841. It appears that his father had died and he took over the farm.
1843	Lewis Fish & Robert Rackham	Robert was yet another farmer, born 1806.
1844	Lewis Fish & Edward Self	
1845	John George Sheppard & Edward Self	J G Sheppard lived at the High House and was a very influential member of the community.
1846-47	Robert Rackham & Henry Jeffries	Robert Rackham was another farmer aged about 40 year; Henry Jeffries lived at home and was also a farmer
1848	John George Sheppard & George Fish	George Fish was the son of an earlier Churchwarden, Lewis Fish
1849-50	John Sawyer & William Newson	William Newson was a Bailiff and he was born in 1796
1854	George Smith & Samuel Jaye	Samuel Jaye was a farmer of some 210 acres.
1855	John Sawyer & Samuel Jaye	
1856	Walter Burch	<i>The Rector, Jermyn Pratt, did not appoint his Warden as he proposed to resign the living. However, he did not resign until 1860</i>
1857-62	Walter Burch	Walter was a farmer of 120 acres and was only 25 when he became Churchwarden
1863-68	John George Sheppard & Samuel Jaye	

1869-77	John George Sheppard & James Buxton	James Buxton was a farmer at Jolly's Farm and he was born in 1839
1878-79	Lord Rendlesham & James Buxton	
1880-81	Arthur Forbes & James Buxton	Arthur lived at Park House and was a Land Agent
1882-85	J.B. Kingscote & James Buxton	
1886-88	Hon. W. Lowther & W. Minter	William Lowther was an MP and lived at the High House
1889-1903	Hon. W. Lowther & James Buxton	