

GEORGE RICHARD MACKARNESS 1823 - 1883

Notes on his life and on some of his family connections

George Richard Mackarness was the second of three sons of John Mackarness (1794 - 1870), a West Indies merchant, and Catherine Poynter Coxhead, who lived at Islington and later at Elstree House, Bath. All three sons were ordained priests in the Church of England. There were also three daughters.

John Fielder Mackarness was Vicar of Tardebigge, Worcestershire, Rector of Honiton in Devon (1855 - 1870), and finally Bishop of Oxford (1870 - 1888). While at Tardebigge he married Alethea Coleridge, daughter of Sir John Taylor Coleridge, a judge, and author of a life of Keble.

He used to stay at Tardebigge Vicarage and was often seen pacing up and down in the spinney in the Vicarage garden where snowdrops abound alongside the lane leading up to the Church. This path kept the name "The Judge's Walk" until well within living memory. Tardebigge ("Tower on the Hill") Church was rebuilt in the 1770s when the tower fell in and destroyed the old building, the tower being replaced by a needle-like spire visible for miles around. The patron of the living at the time of J F Mackarness' appointment as Vicar was Lady Harriet Windsor Clive, owner of nearby Hewell Grange. Three charming water-colours of Tardebigge Church and Vicarage done by her are now in the possession of Peggie Goodman (née Booker - a great, great-niece of George Mackarness) who acquired them via her uncle Hugh Mackarness. Peggie Goodman was married in Tardebigge Church - the Bookers then living a few miles away at Elmbridge - and still lives at nearby Bromsgrove.

Henry Smith Mackarness (1827 - 1868) was Vicar of Dymchurch and then of Ash, both in Kent. He married Ann Planché, author of a large number of children's books, novels and poems. - He died, aged 41, and his three sons emigrated to the USA.

Catherine Mackarness (1828 - 1856) married The Rev Thomas Rogers, Vicar of Batheaston, Bath. Of their three children one - Emily - married The Rev Frederick Noyes who became the first Provost of Argyll and The Isles (1876 - 1886) during George Mackarness' episcopate there.

Emily Mackarness (1831 - 1862) married The Rev William Robert Haverfield. Their son Frank Haverfield became Camden Professor of Ancient History and an authority on excavations of Roman Britain, in particular on Hadrian's Wall.

Julia Mackarness (1836 - 1912) was unmarried and lived for much of her life in Scarborough.

George Richard Mackarness was educated partly at Eton and, owing to weak health, under private tuition. He went up to Merton College, Oxford, and got his Degree in 1845. In the following year he was ordained Deacon and held a curacy at Chilton in the Diocese of Salisbury.

In the winter of 1847 - 8 he went on a cruise to Madeira, and several of his letters written from there to his future wife, Mary Ann, survive in a bundle of letters in the possession of Peter Mackarness at Petersfield. On the cruise George was accompanying Lord Henry, son of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and it seems that he was tutor/companion to the boy. He evidently knew the Buccleuch family well, and in his last letter written before arriving back in England he says he will "deliver up Lord Henry" to the Duchess. He also refers to staying at Drumlanrig, the Buccleuch residence in Dumfriesshire. Also in the company on the cruise was "the Queen Dowager", presumably Queen Adelaide, widow of King William IV. George was evidently often in the company of the Queen and her entourage, and played whist with them on the voyage.

In 1848 George was ordained priest and became Curate at Barnwell in the diocese of Peterborough - a living which is in the gift of the Duke of

Buccleuch who owns nearby Boughton House. Barnwell Manor is now lived in by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester (The Duke's mother, Princess Alice, who also lives there, ^(died Feb 1993) is aunt to the present Duke of Buccleuch).

In that same year George married Mary Ann, daughter of Cosby Young Esq of Lahard in County Cavan, Ireland. She was evidently a very attractive personality. On hearing of her engagement to George, Mary Ann's young brother sent her a letter which is in the surviving bundle of letters. He wrote: "I know your heart and soul are in Madeira. Just fancy! He has at last attained his object, for he has tried a great many times and has at last succeeded; as the old maxim says 'better late than never'. I cannot think that I shall soon have to call you Mrs Mackarness - just fancy! ... If I was to mention all the gentlemen that have tried for you, I should fill my paper ... and now you are going to enter upon the cares of married life - just fancy!"

George and Mary Ann had one son, Evelyn, born in 1851, who died in 1896. He went to school at Bradfield College, Berkshire from 1860 to 1867 and afterwards served in the Sherwood Foresters. He married Marie Graham Campbell, daughter of John Graham-Campbell of Sherwin, and their daughter Jessie married her second cousin Geoffrey Coleridge, that being the third marriage between the Mackarness and Coleridge families in three successive generations. These were:-

- 1) John Fielder Mackarness married Alethea Buchanan Coleridge, a great niece of the Poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Her father's sister Frances married Sir John Patteson and their son John Coleridge Patteson became Bishop of Melanesia and was murdered there in 1871 ~~at~~ aged 44. Before going out to Melanesia he had been Vicar of Alphington near Ottery St Mary, Devon, and there

is a handsome inscription to him in that little church where there are also plaques to John Coleridge, Lord Chief Justice, and his second wife. Many other Coleridges are commemorated in the large collegiate church at Ottery St Mary. Alethea's eldest brother was John Duke Coleridge (1820 - 1894), Lord Chief Justice of England, 1st Baron Coleridge. Another brother, Henry James Coleridge (1822 - 1893), became a member of the Order of Jesuits. While in charge of the then newly-built RC Church in Oxford he received Oscar Wilde into the Roman Catholic Church.

- 2) Mary ("Aunt Min") daughter of J F Mackarness married her first cousin Bernard Coleridge, a judge, son of the Lord Chief Justice, and 2nd Baron Coleridge.
- 3) Their son Geoffrey (1877 - 1955), 3rd Baron Coleridge, married his second cousin Jessie Mackarness.

So J F Mackarness' grandson married George Mackarness' granddaughter.

George was appointed in 1854 as Vicar of Ilam on the Derbyshire-Staffordshire border - a beautifully situated village now on the edge of the Peak District National Park near to where the rivers Dove and Manifold converge. The name Ilam is Saxon, meaning "At the Hills", and the village nestles below several fairly steep hills in a wooded valley called Paradise which is said to have inspired Congreve and Dr Johnson in their writings.

Ilam Hall, an early 19th Century wealthy industrialist's mansion, is now owned by the National Trust and houses a Youth Hostel, a shop, and a small museum. The old Vicarage is now called Dovedale House and is a Youth Centre owned by the Diocese of Lichfield. The church, founded in Saxon times, has been restored and rebuilt several times, notably in the 19th Century, but still has a Saxon font.

While at Ilam (1854 - 1874) George Mackarness was approached by the Vicar of Denstone, Staffordshire, the Rev Henry Meynell - who married Mary Ann's sister Jane - and his Patron, Sir Percival Heywood, about a project to found a boys' public school there. All three of them admired Canon Woodard's work in founding schools in the south of England and felt strongly that such a school should be founded in the Midlands. George showed great keenness on the project and became one of the Organising Secretaries to carry the idea forward under the direction of Canon Woodard. Sir Percival Heywood donated land at Denstone and gave part of his late son's inheritance which, with fund-raising efforts, enabled the laying of the Foundation Stone of St Chad's College in 1868, George being one of the founding Fellows. At the west end of Denstone College Chapel there is a brass plate in the stalls bearing the inscription: "In grateful remembrance of the Rt Rev George Mackarness, DD, Lord Bishop of Argyll and The Isles, sometime Vicar of Ilam, a warm and active friend of Denstone College from its foundation, and an early and zealous promoter of this school, one of the six Fellows appointed by the Founder, constituting with the Provost the Society of SS Mary and John of Lichfield, July 29th 1873." There is also a stained glass window in the Dining Hall at Lancing in Sussex - another Woodard School - dedicated to Bishop George Mackarness alongside other Victorian ecclesiastical worthies.

When Mary Ann died at Ilam aged only 49 the parishioners put up a stained glass window to her memory in the church there. On a plaque beneath it is the inscription: "To the glory of God and in memory of Mary Ann, wife of the Rev G Mackarness, this window is dedicated by the people of Ilam who lovingly recollect her bright unselfish life spent amongst them - 1873."

The Episcopalian Church in Scotland was disestablished in 1689 when William and Mary came to the throne and the Presbyterian Church became the Church of Scotland. It was not until the mid 19th Century that the first Episcopalian cathedral in Scotland was built - in Perth. Soon after, in 1851, a church with a theological college attached to it was built on the Island of Cumbrae, reached by ferry from Largs on the mainland. It was designed by William Butterfield, the great architect of the Gothic revival, who was also responsible for All Saints Church, Margaret Street in London, ~~and the Chapel of Keble College, Oxford.~~ This church on Cumbrae was elevated in 1876 to the status of a cathedral and consecrated as the Cathedral of the Isles and pro-Cathedral of Argyll. It is the smallest cathedral in Britain, and seats no more than 100 people. In 1920 St John's Church, Oban, became the Cathedral of the United diocese.

Bishops in the Scottish Episcopalian Church are elected, not appointed, and in 1873 when a vacancy occurred in the Bishopric of Argyll and The Isles the laity were represented for the first time in the electoral body. The electors met to vote on two candidates, but neither gained the required majority. A few months later, at a second meeting, the sole candidate also failed to gain the required majority. In January 1874

and the Chapel
at St Columba's
College, Dublin.

a third electors' meeting was held at which the names of two candidates were put forward, one being George Mackarness, and eventually he obtained the necessary majority and was consecrated Bishop of Argyll and The Isles on March 25th 1874, his brother J F Mackarness, Bishop of Oxford, being one of his consecrators.

Four years after becoming Bishop, George married Gertrude Granville, daughter of the Rev Granville John Granville, Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon and sister of the Rev Gray Granville who had succeeded George as Vicar of Ilam in 1875. George's nephew, the Rev Charles Coleridge Mackarness, was one of the witnesses to the marriage, and signed his name in the church register at Hamstall Ridware in Staffordshire.

The last year of George Mackarness' tenure of the Bishopric was clouded by ill-health, and he died at Brighton on April 20th 1883. There is a memorial plaque to him in the Cathedral of The Isles, and he was buried beside his first wife at Ilam. In the churchyard there is a Celtic cross bearing an inscription to him on the face, and one to Mary Ann on the side.

When George Mackarness became Bishop of Argyll and The Isles the diocese contained 1,547 members of the Church; 465 communicants and 12 clergy. At the time of his death the corresponding figures were 2,883, 1,039, and 28. The Scottish Guardian of April 28th 1883 wrote of George Mackarness: "His genial and courteous bearing to men of all opinions, his unfailing kindness and ever-ready sympathy won for him not merely the respect, but the hearty love of members of our own communion, and the cordial regard of many whose views were far removed from his own."

Tailpiece

Of George Mackarness' descendants, his son Evelyn had four sons, two of whom died unmarried. Of the other two, Charles emigrated to Canada and has descendants there. The other, George, married Gabrielle Smith and had a son Evelyn (known as Robin) who died in 1974 leaving two sons, Geoffrey and David, both of whom have families.

Of John Fielder Mackarness' three sons two, Frederick - Liberal MP for Newbury in the 1905 - 10 Parliament and later a County Court Judge - and Arthur, for many years a solicitor in Petersfield, had no children.

The remaining son, Archdeacon Charles Coleridge Mackarness, married Grace Milford whose youngest brother Humphrey Milford was for many years Publisher to the Oxford University Press. He was Vicar of St Martin's Church, Scarborough, and was there when German warships bombarded the town ^{on December 16th 1914.} ~~in August 1916.~~ A piece of shell smashed through the glass window of his study, whizzed across his desk, and embedded itself in "The Life of the Venerable Bede" in the bookshelf behind. The Archdeacon was not in his study at the time. He was conducting a Service in Church where two shells crashed into the roof. He told his congregation that they would be as safe there as they would be anywhere and went on with the Service. The chair which he used at his desk is now in the possession of Christopher Booker, Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury ("Cosmo Gordon Lang" by J G Lockhart) described the Archdeacon as "a devout inheritor of the Tractarian tradition, a most able and faithful parish priest in his Scarborough church of St Martin's, kindly and wise, a man in whose company it was good to be."

Archdeacon Mackarness had six children. The daughters were

- 1) Margaret (Margot) who married Robert Penrice Lee Booker and had five children; and

- 2) Elfred (Elfie) who married the Rev Francis Peyton Hughes and had three children.

Of the four sons Hugh was unmarried; Cuthbert had two sons; Guy and Roger each had one son.

Through the lines from these two Mackarness brothers the Mackarness name lives on.

Acknowledgements

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I have also drawn on the Coleridge family tree in "The Story of a Devonshire House", and on "Memorials of the Episcopate of Bishop Mackarness, Bishop of Oxford" by the Rev C C Mackarness which contains a short Annex on George Mackarness.

Eleanor Booker

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