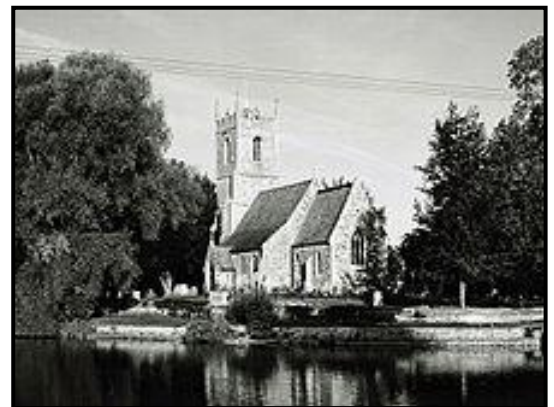
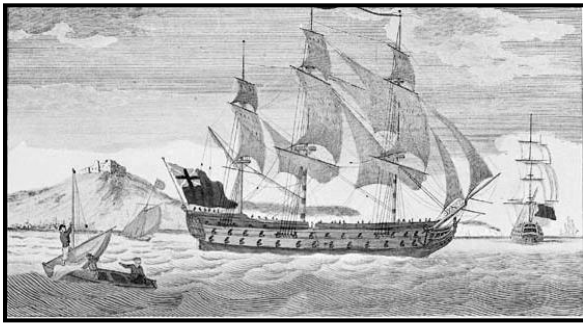
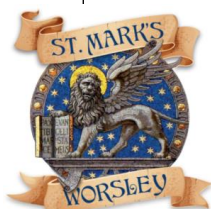


# Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson



Curate - St. Mark's, Worsley: 1863 - 1866

Vicar of Hartford, Huntingdonshire: 1880 - 1894

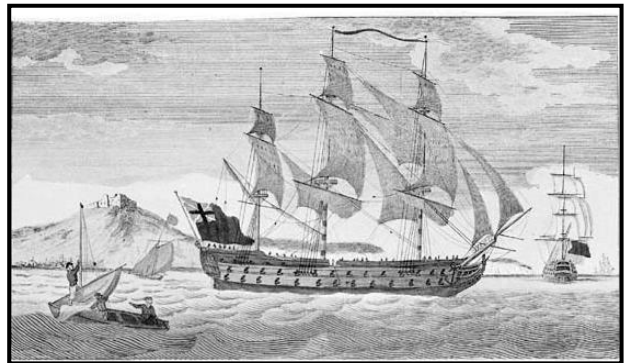


## Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson (1863-1866)

**George Cockburn Dickinson** was the second curate to the parish, appointed during the incumbency of Rev. St. Vincent Beechey. Born on 14 March **1839**, he was the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Captain Richard Philip Dickinson, RN, of Woodside, Plymouth, and Jane Splatt Searle, daughter of Rear Admiral Thomas Searle, in Woodside, Devon, and Ann Maddock. He was soon baptised on 10 April 1839 at the Church of Charles Martyr, Plymouth.

**His mother**, Jane Splatt Searle, (1803-1878) was born on 13 October 1803 in Hampshire, and was baptised at St. John's, Portsea, Hampshire on 25 July 1813. She married by licence, on 28 February 1828, at St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, Captain Richard Dickinson, R.N., C.B. They had 1 daughter, Adolphina Frederica Ann (1830), and 5 sons - Adolphus Frederick (1833), Richard (1835), Thomas Searle (1837), George Cockburn (1839) and Henry Richard Sweeney (1840). **His maternal grandfather**, Jane's father, Rear-Admiral Thomas Searle (1777-1849), had enlisted into the Royal Navy in 1789 at the age of 12. On 4 June 1815, Captain Searle was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath. In 1818, he was appointed to H.M.S. "Hyperion," in which ship he had the honour of conveying H.R.H. the Prince Regent (later George IV) for a cruise, and afterwards sailing to South America, where he remained until 1821, and then returned, to England with specie to the amount of £500,000 sterling. On the 1 August 1836, he was appointed to the command of HMS "Victory," a 104-gun flagship, for 3 years, by then guardship at Portsmouth, and on 9 November 1846 he was promoted to Rear-Admiral, Flag Rank 9. He died on 18 March, 1849.

**His father**, Captain Richard Dickinson, (1787-1840) was born in Deal, Kent, on 14 February 1787. He too enlisted into the navy at a very young age in 1798. He gained the rank of Lieutenant on 29 August 1806, at the tender age of 19; and, then, in 1815 (aged 28) he was onboard HMS "Northumberland," a 74-gun ship, which took Napoleon to St. Helena. The picture shows HMS "Northumberland" leaving for St. Helena. Interestingly, the commander of that ship for that journey was Sir George Cockburn! This must, therefore, be the reason behind the curate's name. At the time of his marriage to Jane Splatt Searle in 1828, he was 41. In the following year, on 13 May 1829, he rose to the rank of Captain and became a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB), But then, on 26 August of the same year, he was brought before a courtmartial for firing on his own ships at Navarino. At that battle, he was second in command of H.M.S. "Genoa," and on the early death of Commodore Bathurst in that engagement, he succeeded to the command of that ship. Fortunately, three weeks later, on 17 September, he was acquitted of all charges, since they were deemed to be "*frivolous, groundless and vexatious.*" However, "*his spirit never recovered from this unexpected and unmerited shock, but his bodily health was sacrificed.*" He had developed an acute pain in his back which never left him and ultimately caused his death. In addition to his C.B., he also received the orders of Knight of the Royal French Order of St. Louis, and Knight (2<sup>nd</sup> class) of the Imperial Russian Order of St. Anne.



This was, therefore, the background to the birth of this gentleman - a father and mother who both had very distinguished and strong links to the Royal Navy, and who saw fit to name one of their sons after the officer under whom he served in 1815. The quickest way to find information about him, as with all clergymen, is to consult Crockford's Clerical Directories. The one chosen for this was 1886. It reveals the following details:

**COCKBURN-DICKINSON, George**, Hartford Vicarage, Huntingdon, and United Club, Charles Street, St. James, SW. Magd. Hall Ox., St. Bees 1860. **d.** 1863 by Bp. of Pet for Bp. of Man. **p.** 1864 by Bp. of Man. Dom. Chap. to Ld. Athlumney 1870; V. of Hartford,

Dio. Ely 1880. (P. pres. V. and Exor of the late Hon. Mr. Cockburn Dickinson; Fees 4l; Q.A.B 6l; Eccles. Comm. 37l; Gross Inc. 47l w 64 a (unlet) of Gl. and Ho; Pop. 433). Formerly in H.M. Civ. Service (the Admiralty); C. in charge of Ellenbrooke near Man. 1863-66; Kensington, 1866-68; Sen. C. of H. Trin. Haverstock Hill, 1868-69; St. Geo. Hanover-square, 1869-70; Patrington, Yorks, 1872-74; St. M. Somers Town 1876-77; V. of D. of Herringfleet, 1877-78.

This gives us a summary of his appointments prior to **1886**. The hyphenated surname is an error, since this was not the case. [The abbreviations stand for: Magd. Magdalene; Ox. Oxford; **d.** deacon; Bp. Bishop; Pet. Peterborough; Man. Manchester; **p.** priest; **P.** Patron; C. Curate; V. Vicar; Dio. Diocese; Exor. Executor; *l* pounds; *a* acres; Sen. Senior; H. Trin. Holy Trinity; M. Mary; D. Donative]. This is a very useful starting point to allow one to focus on specific areas and appointments.

For a long time, the principal route of entry into the church was through the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. However, as the nineteenth century moved on, Theological Colleges began to develop, the first one being St. Bees in 1816. Fourteen others followed. It did take about half a century for these new colleges to become established.

There is no information about his schooling. In fact, it has been difficult to locate anything before the **1861** census. This showed that George C. Cockburn was a Divinity Scholar, aged 22, at St. Bees, Cumberland, living as a lodger. His place of birth was given as Kingston Hall, Southsea, which is curious.

His first clerical appointment was as Curate at St. Mark's, Worsley, with responsibility for St. Mary's Ellenbrook. His first service appears to have been a Baptism at St. Mark's on 3 April **1864** and his last was a Baptism at St. Mary's on 14 October **1866**. Apart from his official duties in both churches, there is very little of note to mention about his time in the parish - except that on Tuesday 19 June **1866** he attended the Queen's Levée at St. James's Palace, London, in the presence of the Prince of Wales. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the levée in Great Britain and Ireland became a formal court reception given by the sovereign or his/her representative in the forenoon or early afternoon. This levée took the place of the one postponed from Wednesday 6 June.

*The London Gazette* of Tuesday 22 May **1866** printed this instruction for those attending:

*PRESENTATIONS. -*

*Any Nobleman or Gentleman who proposes to be presented must leave at the Lord Chamberlain's Office, St. James's Palace, before twelve o'clock, two clear days before the Levee, a card with his name written thereon, and with the name of the Nobleman or Gentleman by whom he is to be presented. In order to carry out the existing regulation that no presentation can be made at a Levee excepting by a person actually attending that Levee, it is also necessary that a letter from the Nobleman or Gentleman who is to make the presentation, stating it to be his intention to be present, should accompany the presentation card above referred to, which will be submitted to The Queen for Her Majesty's approbation. It is Her Majesty's command that no presentations shall be made at Levees, except in accordance with the above regulations.*

This ceremony originated in 16<sup>th</sup> century France when Henry II allowed his subjects, from nobles to household servants, to come in while he dressed. This was designed to enhance the impression of him by his subjects. Louis XIV raised this to a very formalised ceremony and one which Charles II adopted in England. Here, it took the form of a formal reception at St. James's Palace, at which officials, diplomats, and military officers of all three armed services, were presented individually to the sovereign. When their names and ranks were called, each stepped into the Throne Room and then bowed to the king/queen who was seated on a dais with members of his/her family.



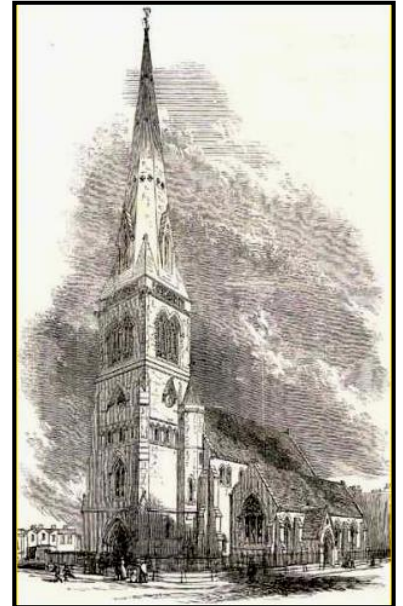


George's second curacy was at St. Mary Abbott's, Kensington, **1866-1868**. St. Mary Abbot's is a church located on Kensington High Street and the corner of Kensington Church Street in London W8. However, at the time that the **Rev. Dickinson** was there, it was the only church in Kensington. Today, there are several. A brief glance at online pictures of the church will remind the reader of our own parish church, though a little larger. The present church structure was built in 1872 to the designs of Sir George Gilbert Scott, who combined neo-Gothic and early-English styles. The accompanying picture is an etching by S. Woodburn depicting St. Mary Abbots as it was in 1807. According to a survey done in 1866, when it was clear that the old church was falling apart, "*it was found that many of the walls consisted of a thin skin of brickwork encasing a rubble core, indicating that in some cases the medieval walls may merely have been refaced with brick*". The beams were riddled with dry rot and it was clear that the church was no longer fit for purpose. With a growing population, the demand for a suitable parish church meant that something drastic had to be done. Demolition of the old church started in 1869. The result was the current church, a fine cathedral-like building.

As at St. Mark's, he attended two further levées on Friday 22 March **1867** and Saturday 30 May **1868** during his time there. He moved on again to become Senior Curate of Holy Trinity, Haverstock Hill, **1868-1869** (pictured right, 1850). At some point, however, he became a student at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, for the Oxford University Alumni record shows:

*Dickinson, George Cockburn, 3s. Richard Philip, of Plymouth, Devon, equitis. MAGDALEN HALL, matric. 25 June 1868, aged 28; vicar (and patron) of Hartford, Hunts, 1880.*

The first entry in the Baptism Registers of Holy Trinity signed by George was on 27 September **1868** and the last entry was on 12 September 1869. The first marriage entry was for 4 October 1868 and the last was on 27 September **1869**. His time spent in this parish was clearly very short.



*The Morning Post* on Saturday 12 February **1870** reported that **Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson** of St. George's, Hanover-square, had departed from the Hyde Park Hotel, Marble Arch, for the Continent. There is no further report about him or his journey. He was curate at St. George's (photo left) for a very short time.

However, this was just three months before his marriage.

*The Morning Post* of Saturday 14 May **1870** reported:

*On the 12<sup>th</sup> inst., at St. Martin's, by the Rev. O. Bridgeman, uncle of the bride, the Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson, to the Hon. Ursula Elizabeth Denison, third daughter of the late Lord Londesborough, and stepdaughter of the Right Hon. the Lord Otho Fitzgerald, Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household.*

This begs the question: Which St. Martin's and where? *The Belfast Newsletter* of Monday 16 May 1870 helps, because it clearly states that the wedding took place at St. Martin's, Dublin.

At this point, it is appropriate to trace a simple outline of their family. This will become increasingly important as the lives of their children in particular come to light, and the circumstances of the deaths of the two parents emerge. One remarkable thing to note is the fact that each child had several names, usually four or five. Secondly, their chosen names were quite extraordinary. And thirdly, it has been very difficult to trace the whereabouts of some of them, until later in their lives.

The Hon. Ursula Elizabeth Denison was the daughter of Albert Denison Denison, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Londesborough, and Ursula Lucy Gray Bridgeman, his second wife; Lady Henrietta Maria Weld Forester, his first wife, having died on 22 April 1841. They were married on 21 December 1847. She was born on 3 October 1848. The Baron himself had died ten years before his daughter Ursula's marriage on 15 January 1860. Ursula Lucy married The Right Hon. Lord Otho Augustus Fitzgerald after the death of the Baron, making him Ursula Elizabeth's step-father, as mentioned above.

George and Ursula had six children: -

- (1) Edith Jane Catherine Christophina Ursula, born Ludborough, Lincs., about 1871.
- (2) Londesborough Granville Lawton Maud, born 19 August 1872 at Kingston, Surrey.
- (3) Francis Trevelyan Egerton, born 7 September 1874 in Yorkshire.
- (4) Edgell Antonio Albert Fitzgerald, born 17 December 1875 in Yorkshire.
- (5) Eveline Haroldina Elizabeth Carnegie, born 21 September 1877 at Herringfleet, Suffolk.
- (6) George Victor Conyngham, born 1880 in Cheadle, Ches., baptised at St. Alban's, Stockport on 13 June 1880).

Ursula died in Stockport on 23 April 1880. *The Morning Post* of Friday 31 December **1880** printed an obituary to mark her death.

*The Hon. Ursula Elizabeth Dickinson, wife of the Rev George Cockburn Dickinson, and daughter of Lady Otho Fitzgerald and the late Lord Londesborough, aged 31.*

Could her death have been linked to the birth of her son George Victor Conyngham? It is to be noted that this notice appeared in the paper about eight months after her death was registered. But the curious thing here is why she was in Stockport in the first place with a young daughter.

Two of their sons, Londesborough Granville Lawton Maude Cockburn Dickinson (24) and Edgell Antonio Fitzgerald Albert Cockburn Dickinson (21), married daughters of William John Bennett (Mabel Alice and Ethel Lily respectively) on the same day, 28 April 1897, at St. Paul's, Kingston Hill, Surrey. Both couples were living at Stanley House, Clifton Road, Kingston.

The daughter Eveline Haroldine Elizabeth Carnegie Cockburn Dickinson (27) married Albert Gregory on 16 July 1904 at St. Peter's, Norbiton, Surrey. She was born on 21 September 1877 and baptised a month later by her father at Herringfleet, Suffolk.

In the **1871** census, George was aged 29 and his wife, Ursula Elizabeth Dickinson was 21. They were both visitors at 26 Hesketh Street, North Meols, Southport - the home of Salome Fowler (52), a widow who was born in Huntingdon. His profession/occupation was entered as *In Holy Orders, Established Church & Peer's Domestic Chaplain*. The curious thing here is that it states he was born in Woodside, Devon. Quite different from the census of 1861.

The census above referred to him being Domestic Chaplain to a Peer. *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* of Wednesday 26 February **1873**, in its Ecclesiastical Intelligence: Preferments and Appointments section noted that *the Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson* had become *Chaplain to Lord Athlumney*. Crockford's states that he became Chaplain in 1870! Baron Athlumney, of Somerville and Dollarstown in the County of Meath, was a title in the Peerage of Ireland. It was created in 1863 for

the Liberal politician Sir William Meredyth Somerville, 5th Baronet, who had previously served as Chief Secretary for Ireland. In 1866 he was also created Baron Meredyth, of Dollardstown in the County of Meath, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom. The Barons Athlumney and Londesborough were related and this most likely explains why George Cockburn Dickinson became Chaplain to Lord Athlumney.



And so, to continue his journey. Within a ten-year period, this peripatetic clergyman had held 4 different positions. And more were to come. Crockford's states that he was curate at Patrington, Yorkshire, **1872-1874**, (photo left), but this was more likely to be 1874-1876, since *The York Herald* on Wednesday 27 May **1874** announced that The Archbishop of York has also licensed '*The Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson to the curacy of Patrington.*'

The impressive, cruciform church was built mainly between the end of the 13th century and the middle of the 14th in Decorated style. The spire and the east window were added by 1400. In terms of its style and its appeal, it is strikingly similar to St. Mark's. The church is dedicated to St. Patrick.

His itinerant journey continued when he became the curate of St. Mary the Virgin, on Eversholt Street, in Somers Town, **1876-1877**, behind Euston Station in the London Borough of Camden. A glance at the Baptism Records for the church shows that he was there from 2 June **1876** to 9 May **1877**, a very short curacy. By

chance, this was not far from Haverstock Hill, an earlier parish of his.

He then became Vicar of Herringfleet, a small village in Suffolk, 1 mile from Norfolk, **1877-1878**. *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* reported on Thursday 6 December **1877**, in the Ecclesiastical Intelligence: Preferments and Appointments Column: **Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson; Donative Incumbent of Herringfleet**. Herringfleet is known for its Norman church, dedicated to St. Margaret, which was built in several parts over the past thousand years. Its round tower is indicative of many East Anglian churches dating from the period. The church includes a nave and chancel. It has been described thus: "*The church comprises a nave and chancel, round tower at the west end. The whole edifice is Norman, though considerable alterations have been made; the tower retains most of its original features, and has in the upper storey wide windows of two lights, which are triangular-headed, of the character called Saxon, but here, undoubted Norman work.*"



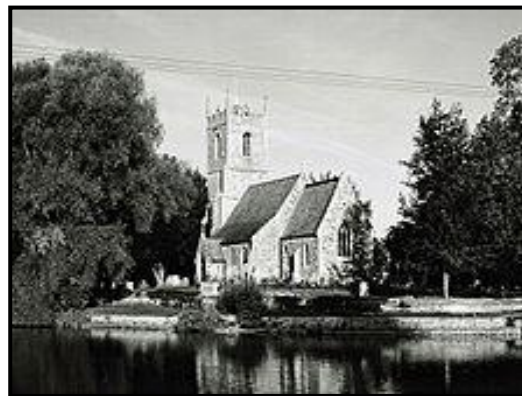
The dates given in Crockford's do not always appear to be consecutive. This may be accounted for by the constant movement of **George Cockburn Dickinson**. However, his next parish was to be the parish church of Hartford, Huntingdonshire **1880-1894**. And this was to become a very significant point in his life. Today, Hartford lies in Cambridgeshire and lies on the north bank of the River Great Ouse. It is to be remembered that his wife had died in April 1880. *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* for Friday 24 December **1880** reported in the Ecclesiastical Intelligence: Preferments and Appointments Section:



**Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson BA; Vicar of Hartford.**

[Above: The memorial tablet in Hartford Church]

The census of **1881** revealed that he was aged 38, and a widower. He was indeed Vicar of Hartford, the church of All Saints, with servants; and Francis T. Egerton, son, (aged 6, born 6 September 1874) and Edgell Antonio Albert Fitzgerald, son, born Hull (aged 5, born 20 November 1875).  
[Right: All Saints Church, Hartford ]



In the same census, Eveline H.E.C (3), was a visitor, at the home of Rev. William G. Bridges, Curate in Stockport, and his wife, Emily I. (née Greaves). This begs the question why was she in Stockport when her father was in Hunts, and who was the Rev. William Bridges? A clue maybe lies in the fact that, at his death in 1936, his estate was left to Conyngham Cockburn Dickinson, a retired captain in the Steam Navigation Company.

In the census of **1891** census, he was given as aged 47, living at the Vicarage, Hartford, with his daughter E. J. K. C. W. (19). No other children were at the house at that time. Both Londesborough (18) and Edgall (15) were at school in St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, and both had been born in Cheadle, Cheshire.

Sadly for **George Cockburn Dickinson**, a series of tragic and unfortunate incidents marred his tenure of office there. The first of these was reported in *The Hunts Guardian* on Friday 8 May **1885**. In the church there is one memorial window in the south wall of the chancel, which is in memory of the Rev. Cockburn-Dickinson's son, Francis Trevelyan Egerton Cockburn-Dickinson, who sadly drowned in 1885, aged just ten. This tragedy occurred on Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> **1885**.

#### MELANCHOLY OCCURRENCE

*On Saturday last an inquest was held at the King of Prussia public house in this village on the body of Francis Trevelyan Egerton Dickerson aged 10, son of the **Rev. G. C.***



***Dickerson** (sic), vicar of Hartford, who was taken out of the water dead that morning. It appeared from the evidence of Elizabeth Hitch, one of the domestic servants in the family, that on Friday the deceased, his younger brother and the vicar were working in the garden before early dinner, and as was supposed they all went into the house about 1.00 (sic) to dine.*

*The deceased disappeared from the house and the vicar and the other son sat down to dinner, but as deceased did not go to dinner also a search was made for him about the house and garden. Witness ultimately went to the riverside and there she found the jacket that had been worn by the deceased, but could not find him anywhere. A search in the river was then made for the body until late in the evening, but without success. His cap was found in a chair in the kitchen. The dog was kept near the boathouse and deceased used sometimes go and fetch the dog, but it was not there when he went to the boathouse. Did not think deceased knew the dog was brought from the boathouse. George Crow, labourer, Hartford, deposed to finding the body on Saturday morning about four yards from the bank. The water was about 20 feet deep where he pulled it out. The jury returned a verdict of "accidentally drowned in the river Ouse".*

[There is a memorial window in the south wall of the church at Hartford, shown above, which is in memory of Francis Trevelyan Egerton Cockburn-Dickinson, who sadly died on Saturday 2 May 1885, aged 10 – Ed.]

Some of his surviving children, however, seem to have caused him some embarrassment, according to 'the Looker-On' column in the local paper of 19 March **1892**. On that date, *The Hunts County Guardian* printed the following news item:

*'An incident occurred at Hartford last Sunday evening, which has caused a good deal of excitement, not only in Hartford, but in the surrounding neighbourhood. Shortly after the commencement of the service in the little village chapel, two young persons dressed in strange disguise entered and took seats and of course everybody's attention was attracted towards them. However every attention was paid them and books were supplied, and they remained during the remainder of the service. Whilst the service was proceeding it gradually dawned on the minds of some that they knew who the apparent strangers were, and eventually the suspicion became a certainty and the strange behaviour of the two individuals caused some interruption to the service. It turned out that they were no other than the son and daughter of a certain clergyman. There was a scene outside the chapel when the service was over, and the two young persons fled towards Houghton and were chased by a number of young men but there they managed to evade them. Soon afterwards the couple returned and then there was another scene and this ended in blows being struck, and the proceedings have resulted in summonses and cross-summonses, which will be heard at the County Bench next Saturday.'*

This event was shortly followed by a report in *The Leeds Mercury* on Saturday 2 April **1892**.

*'At the Huntingdonshire Divisional Court, the **Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson**, Vicar of Hartford, Huntingdonshire, was convicted and fined £1 and costs for assaulting a labourer named Child, of the same place. On the previous week, the son and daughter of the defendant were each fined £5 and costs for assaulting the same man.'*

But that was not the end of this story, for *The North Eastern Daily Gazette (Middlesborough)* reported on Wednesday 20 December **1893**:

*'The further hearing of the case against the **Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson**, for alleged ill-treatment of three of his children, was resumed at Huntingdon yesterday. The defendant gave evidence, denying all the charges of cruelty, and explained that certain severe measures referred to by witnesses were rendered necessary as punishment for bad behaviour and untruthfulness. Ultimately the court dismissed the case, and the charge preferred against the eldest daughter of assaulting her younger sister was also dismissed. The prosecution, it will be remembered, was instituted by the National Society for the Protection of Children.'*

And the sadness and pity do not end there! Another story appeared in the press three years later. It is easiest simply to copy the accounts that appeared at that time in two newspapers.

*The Yorkshire Evening Post* - Monday 14 September **1896**

**AN HEIRESS MISSING**  
*Strange Story of Lord Londesborough's Niece*

*'The Daily Mail states that Miss Ursula Cockburn Dickinson, granddaughter of the first Lord Londesborough and niece of the present Earl, has disappeared, and the same paper gives various details as to the disappearance.*

*Miss Dickinson is the eldest daughter of the **Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson** of Londesborough Lodge, Worcester Park, Surrey. She is 27 years of age, with property of her own, and large expectations – amounting, according to her father, to £40,000. Until*



recently she has lived at her father's house, and one of her hobbies has been the keeping of pedigree cats – beautiful creatures of considerable value.

The father is heartbroken. He has been making inquiries everywhere. He has made personal investigations at Brighton, and has communicated with the Cardiff police, but so far has discovered no trace of his daughter. He asserted that before going she withdrew her money from her account at Gosling's Bank, sold out all her investments, and even turned his costly presents to her into cash. The amount realised by her is said to have been about £22,000.'

And this report was followed by:

Lloyds Weekly Newspaper - Sunday 27 Sept 1896

*"The Missing Heiress"*

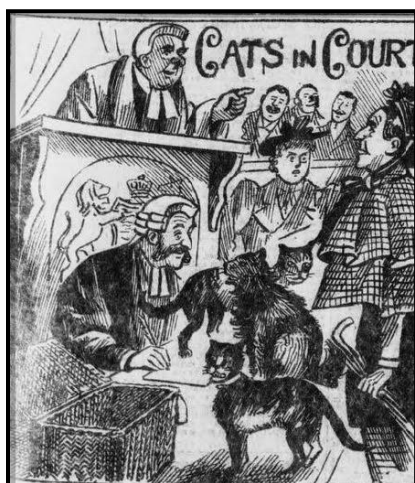
'Miss Ursula Dickinson, a niece of Lord Londesborough and daughter of the **Rev, George Cockburn Dickinson** was an heiress and kept pedigree cats. When a valuable one wanted medical attention she sought help from Reuben Schofield, a so-called veterinary practitioner at the time, in Horley. After some association with Schofield she agreed to open a cat and dog hospital in Tooting which he proposed and she became a partner (presumably providing the finance). After some months Mrs. Schofield received a letter saying that her husband had ran away with Miss Dickinson and he enclosed an open cheque that she could draw on to support herself and their two children. She found that this was worth just £3. Her father found that she had already drawn some £11,000 of what was thought to be an inheritance of £22,000 and he had also been asked to pay several outstanding bills that the couple had run up.'

A longer and more detailed account of this sad event can be found in the *New Zealand Herald*, 14 November 1896. It is well worth reading, and can be found online by entering the name Miss Ursula Cockburn Dickinson and selecting the entry New Zealand Herald/14 November 1896. As a guide to her dear love of cats, her name appears as the owner of 43 cats in the Fourth Volume of the National Cat Club Stud Book and Register, 1896. The vast majority had the name Londesborough in theirs. Her address was officially *Londesborough Lodge, Worcester Park, Surrey*.

If the reader is a little intrigued by this development, they might like to read this piece which has appeared recently. It helps to shed more light on this, the eldest daughter, and her fondness for cats.

**When Crazy Cat Ladies Go to War.**

This court case comes from my beloved "Illustrated Police News" for March 9, 1895:



[taken from [www.strange.co.blogspot.com](http://www.strange.co.blogspot.com)]

At the Bloomsbury County Court Judge Bacon heard an amusing case, in which Miss Ursula Cockburn Dickinson sued Mrs. Sarah Clements for the return of £2 2s, the price paid for a sable-coloured Persian cat, which the plaintiff alleged was not equal to warranty.

The plaintiff, who resides at Londesborough Lodge, London Road, Worcester Park, stated that she was very fond of Persian cats, and possessed a very fine female specimen, whom she called by the pet name of Queen May. For some time she (Miss Dickinson) had been desirous of obtaining a companion for the animal, and at the beginning of the present year she saw an advertisement, and, in consequence, wrote to the defendant at Rochester Place, Camden

*Road, Kentish Town. After some correspondence, it was arranged that she should have a cat for £2 2s, the animal being guaranteed to be a "dark sable tabby Persian stud cat," but Miss Dickinson informed his Honour that, being suspicious that all was not as it seemed, she said she would only take it "on sale or return." To convince her the defendant said she would cut a bit of the fur off the cat's back and send it to her by post. This being done, the plaintiff sent the money and received the cat. To her surprise she found that the animal sent was not a Persian cat at all, but only an ordinary London tomcat. (Laughter.) She wrote to the defendant, accusing her of palming off a sham upon her, and demanded the return of her money. This course, however, was not adopted.*

*The defendant assured his Honour that the cat sold was a Persian one--sable, tabby, and a male. She would be glad if his Honour could only see the cat. Her husband, a naturalist, had lately died, and she was giving up the business.*

*The plaintiff called her maid-servant, who proceeded to place on the registrar's table in front of the learned judge three baskets. On the first being opened a magnificent Persian cat stepped majestically out, and was introduced to the judge as Queen May. The second basket was then opened, the plaintiff at the same time remarking as another cat appeared, "This, your Honour, is the miserable specimen she sent me."*

*The defendant (picking up the rejected cat and balancing it in her hand): Miserable! Yes, it isn't half the cat he was when he left his home.*

*Plaintiff: What, if it hadn't been for the kindness he has received from me he would have been dead long since.*

*The third box was then opened, and the occupant, another cat, plaintiff said was an animal caught on the walls--an ordinary London tomcat--and appealed to the learned judge to say whether the defendant's cat was not of the same breed. (Laughter.)*

*His Honour, after inspecting Queen May and her companions, said he did not know very much about cats. He could, however, see that the one sold to the plaintiff was not of Persian breed, and gave judgment for the plaintiff, a decision which was received with applause by a crowded and vastly amused court.*

The **advowson** of the church of All Saints, Hartford, was held by Huntingdon Priory until the Dissolution, when it passed to the crown, who continued to hold it until in 1870 it was sold to Miss Emily Ripley. In 1880 it was held by the incumbent, the Rev. Geo. Cockburn-Dickinson, M.A., and, at a later date, by him in conjunction with the late Hon. Mrs. Cockburn-Dickinson's children.

'Advowson (or patronage) is the right in English law of a patron (avowee) to present to the diocesan bishop (or in some cases the ordinary if not the same person) a nominee for appointment to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice or church living, a process known as presentation (*jus praesentandi*, Latin: "the right of presenting").' The parish records for All Saints, Hartford, show that the Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson retired from his position in 1894.

By the time of the census in **1911**, George Cockburn Dickinson, aged 72, was recorded as a Retired Clerk in Holy Orders, living at Londesborough Lodge, Worcester Park, Surrey. He died on 18 December **1915**, aged 78, at Londesborough Lodge, Worcester Park, Surrey. Probate was granted on 15 February **1916**. *The Rev. George Cockburn Dickinson, by his will, proved 15 Feb. 1916, gave the sum of £180, the interest to be applied towards the relief of sickpoor, regardless of creed or church attendance.* The charity that was set up in his name was removed from the list on 25 September 1996.

According to the Charity Commission, its purpose was '*INCOME FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SICK OR NEEDY LIVING IN THE PARISH REGARDLESS OF CREED OR CHURCH ATTENDANCE.*'

He had been a Member of the United Club, Charles Street, St. James. '*United Club, Charles-street, St. James's, SW. — Proprietary. This club was founded in 1865, and is established on the premises of and in connection with the United Hotel, in Charles-street, St. James's-square, having exclusive use of spacious club-rooms for dining, reading, writing, &c., with a separate entrance from the opera arcade. No entrance fee. Subscription, £5 5s. for the first year, and £3 3s. for each subsequent year.*' [Charles Dickens (Jr.), Dickens's Dictionary of London, 1879]

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