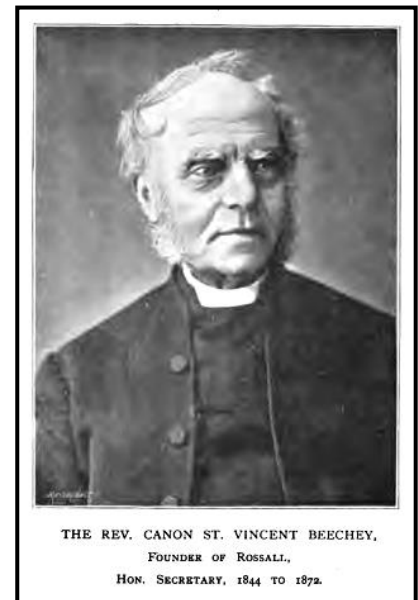


Rev. Canon St. Vincent BEECHEY



ALSO:

William Innes BEECHEY

1839 - 1869

Aged 29

Mary Ann BEECHEY

1806 - 1888

Aged 82

Born: 7 August 1806

Died: 19 August 1899

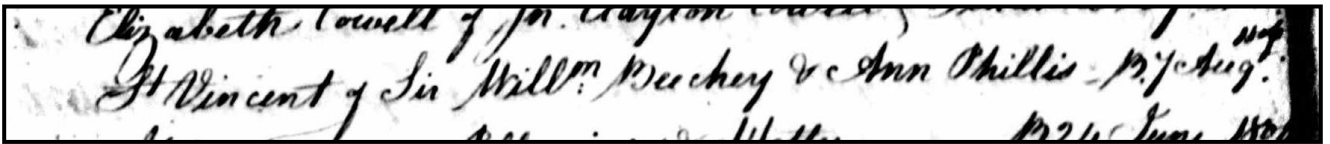
VICAR of St. Mark's 1850 - 1872
POLYMATH



Rev. St. Vincent Beechey
(1850 - 1872)



St. Vincent Beechey had the distinction of being the first vicar of the parish. He was a son of Sir William Beechey, painter [R.A.], Court Painter, of 13 Harley Street, London. He was born on 7th August **1806** in London, one of fifteen children born to Sir William Beechey! [There is speculation that the number may have been greater – Ed]. His mother was Ann Phyllis Jessop (3 August 1764; 14 December 1833), second wife of Sir William. He was named after his godfather, Sir John Jervis, 1st Earl of St Vincent, in recognition of his great naval victory over the Spanish fleet on 14 February 1797 and was baptised at St. Marylebone on 18th January **1807**. Sir William Beechey painted a portrait of Admiral John Jervis, 1st Earl of St. Vincent, [portrait, left] and a close friend, in 1804.



[Copy of the baptismal entry at the church of St. Marylebone, Westminster, for 18 January 1807].

The background to this honour was explained in the book ‘*Sir William Beechey, R.A.*’ by W. Roberts in **1907**:

Pages 179-180.

Both Sir William and Lady Beechey were what would be described today as great “social” lights. They entertained largely and formed many friendships which were lasting. One of their most intimate friends was that fine old “sea-dog” the Earl of St. Vincent, whose portrait (see p.106), one of many of him by Beechey – one of the strongest male portraits ever painted – a head and shoulders, belonged until lately to the son of his god-child, Canon St. Vincent Beechey, at Denver, near Downham. Lord St. Vincent wrote some delightful letters to the Beecheys, and by permission of the owners, the late Canon Beechey and Mr. Ernest Beechey, we are able to print them in extenso. The first of these deals in fact with Frederick William Beechey (1796-1856), afterwards Rear-Admiral, who entered the Navy in 1806. The concluding paragraph of the letter is curious. The “man in embryo” for whom Lord St. Vincent had obviously been asked to stand as god-father was the late Canon St. Vincent Beechey, who was born on 7 August 1806 – a few hours only before the letter was written many miles away (Canon Beechey died on August 19, 1899, the last surviving son of the artist). The letter is as follows:

“Hibernia, near Ushant, August 8, 1806.

“My Dear Madam – Frederick (Beechey) dined with me yesterday and eat double allowance, for the poor fellow had been sea-sick all the way out in the Conqueror. Mr. Jackson, son of the master attendant of Plymouth Dockyard, has the care of him below and my nephew, John Parker, above. Your ladyship is heartily welcome to my name for the man in Embrio, and with my best wishes to you, Sir William, and the colony, I remain,

Very sincerely Yours

“St. Vincent”

Sir William Beechey was a close friend of the sitter and this portrait is thought to have been given by the Earl of St Vincent to the artist's son, St. Vincent's godson and namesake, the **Reverend St. Vincent Beechey** (1806–1899). A second version of the work is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), London. It has been suggested that the NPG work was painted by another of the artist's sons, George Beechey. This is one of four portraits that Beechey painted of St. Vincent, although

multiple versions of each exist. William Beechey died on 28 January 1839. He was appointed portrait painter to Queen Charlotte in 1793 and was knighted in 1798 in recognition of his most ambitious painting, the huge Review of the Horse Guard with King George III and the Prince of Wales. The painting was destroyed in the 1992 Windsor Castle fire.

The young **St. Vincent Beechey** was educated in Boulogne, France, and in Sidcup, Kent, at a school run by the father of James Sheridan Knowles. He matriculated at Caius College, Cambridge, on 2nd July 1823. Whilst a scholar there, he was fond of rowing and was bow-oar in the college crew. He graduated with his B.A. in 1827 and was awarded an M.A. in 1830. He was ordained Deacon in 1829 and Priest in 1830 by the Bishop of Rochester. A summary of his clerical life would show that he first served as curate of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Aylesford, Kent (1829-1830) and from there became a curate of All Saints, Hilgay, Norfolk (1831-1840), a village near to Downham Market. Whilst at Hilgay, he became Inspector of Schools for the Diocese of Norwich (1838-1840). Hilgay was to feature prominently later in his life.

A timeline of his life as a clergyman would simply show:

- Curate of Aylesford, Kent, 1829-30.
- Curate of Hilgay, Norfolk, 1831-40. *Also, Inspector of Schools for the diocese of Norwich, 1838-40.*
- Vicar of Thornton, Lancs., 1840-50. *Also, Founder of Rossall School.*
- Perpetual Curate of Fleetwood, 1840-50.
- Vicar of Worsley, 1850-72. *Also, Curate of Ellenbrook Chapel, 1854-72. Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Ellesmere and Lord Grantley.*
- Rector of Hilgay, Norfolk, 1872-99.

He married Mrs. Mary Ann Ommanney, of Woodhall, the widow of Frederick Woods Ommanney, on 19th September 1836 at Hilgay, Norfolk. St. Vincent Beechey was, at that time, Chaplain to Lord Grantley. She was the daughter of the late William Jones, Esq., formerly Marshal of the King's Bench. She had 2 children from her first marriage – Mary Ann (bp. 27th Jan 1832 at Putney) and Frederick Francis (bp. 27th Sept 1833, also at Putney).

[The death of Frederick Woods Ommanney was announced as follows:
 14 July 1834. At East Sheen, in his 30th year, Frederick Woods Ommanney, Esq., of Putney, after a lingering illness, which he bore with much fortitude. His loss is much lamented by his family and friends.
 (The Asiatic Journal – 1835)
 Probate was granted on 7 September 1836.]

<u>St. Vincent Beechey</u> of <u>this</u> Parish	
<u>Bachelor</u>	
and <u>Mary Ann Ommanney, Widow</u> , of <u>this</u> Parish,	
were married in this <u>Church</u> by <u>Licence</u> with Consent of	
	this <u>Nineteenth</u> Day of
<u>September</u> in the Year One thousand eight hundred and <u>Thirty Six</u>	
By me <u>John Hewlett, R. D. Rector</u>	
This Marriage was solemnized between us {	<u>St. Vincent Beechey</u>
	<u>Mary Ann Ommanney</u>
In the Prefence of {	<u>St. Vincent Beechey</u> <u>Mr. Jones</u> <u>Mr. Jones</u>
	<u>John Jones</u> <u>John Jones</u> <u>John Jones</u>
No. 213.	<u>John Jones</u>

They had 7 children - 4 sons and 3 daughters.

Emily Elizabeth b.30 June **1837** @ Hilgay. Died 1920 in Denver, Norfolk.

William Innes b.29 March **1839** @ Woodhall, Hilgay. Died 17 March 1869 in Todmorden, Yorks. [Buried at St. Mark's].

St. Vincent b.13/1/1841. bp.7 March **1841** @ Woodhall, Hilgay. Died 17 Sept. 1905 in Downham, Norfolk.

Charlotte b. 27/2/1843. bp.16 April **1843** @ St.Peter, Fleetwood. Died 14 Feb. 1925 at Ardingley, Sussex.

Sophia bp. 27 April **1845** @ St. Peter, Fleetwood. Died 16 Dec. at Scarborough, Yorks.

Edward bp.13 June **1847** @ St. Peter, Fleetwood. Died 1905 in Lancashire.

Charles Grantley bp. 5 November **1848** @ St. Peter, Fleetwood. Died January 1905 in West Derby.

His first position was as curate of St. Peter and St. Paul's, Aylesford, Kent - **1829-1830**. On the death of the rector, the churchwardens and parishioners petitioned the dean and chapter to give him the living, but it was bestowed upon a senior canon in the diocese.

During his first period of time at Hilgay, he was already showing a great interest in education. The following advertisement appeared in *The Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette* on Saturday 25th January **1840**:

HILGAY NATIONAL SCHOOLS

Wanted

A man and his wife as Master and Mistress of the above Schools. They must be active and experienced Teachers, thoroughly acquainted with the National System of Education, Members of the Church of England, and produce unexceptionable references as to Character and Ability.- Salary £70 per annum, with a cottage and other advantages, which will be stated at an interview.

*All appointments must be made either personally or by letter to the **Rev. St. Vincent Beechey**, Woodhall.*

By the time of the first national census in **1841**, he had relocated with his family to the parish of Thornton in Lancashire. The record shows:

Residence: Parsonage.

St. Vincent Beechey	30	Incumbent
Mary	30	
Mary Ommanney	9	
Fredrick Ommanney	7	
Emily Beechey	4	
William Beechey	2	
St. Vincent Beechey	4 mo.	

+ several servants and staff.

For this first census, no relationships were recorded, nor the place of birth.

This desire to improve the education of the young went with him to Lancashire, when he moved with his family to Fleetwood. An announcement appeared in *The Preston Chronicle* on Saturday 2nd July **1842**.

*Fleetwood Colleges: A meeting of the provisional commission of the Fleetwood Colleges Association, and of gentlemen interested in the intended education establishments on the principle of life insurance, was yesterday held at the North Euston Hotel, Fleetwood-on-Wyre, the **Rev. St. Vincent Beechey**, AM, incumbent of*

Fleetwood and Chaplain to Lord Grantley, in the chair. It is intended that these colleges should be founded and supported on the principle of life insurance, for the education, the one of five hundred boys, and the other of five hundred young ladies, between the ages of seven and eighteen. The pupils according to their ages will form separate departments, entirely distinct in residence and management.

The outcome of this was the founding of Rossall School. **St. Vincent Beechey** is now credited with being the founder of Rossall School in **1844**, viewed as a sister school to Marlborough College which had been founded the previous year. Its establishment was "to provide, at a moderate cost, for the sons of Clergymen and others, a classical, mathematical and general education of the highest class, and to do all things necessary, incidental, or conducive to the attainment of the above objects." The Northern Church of England Boarding School, renamed Rossall College under the later headship of William Osborne, opened on 22nd August **1844**. It was soon established that there was little hope of founding the girls' school and this idea was abandoned, with the boys' school pupil numbers reduced to 200. At this stage in the development of the school, **St. Vincent Beechey** first came into contact with Lord Egerton, who contributed to the school's funds, together with other notables.

After the prize-giving ceremony of Wednesday 17th June **1846**, the **Rev. St. V. Beechey** related the following incident:

"The Poet Wordsworth invited Professor Adams. Mr. Hext, and the Rev. Edward Spencer, Mathematical Master, and myself, to visit him at Rydal Mount. We all went over together in the steamer to Ulverston and accompanied him to Rydal. He was full of anecdote. and entertained us most hospitably . . ."

Elsewhere, after repeating this account, **Beechey** enlarges upon it:

"Wordsworth told us of a nobleman, a friend of his, who had two sons and said. 'I do not know what to do with the younger.' 'Not know. my Lord?' said Wordsworth, 'I will tell you. Make him agent to his elder brother. He will soon be the richer of the two!' We arrived safely at Rydal Mount, and slept there two nights. It was a time of much domestic affliction for Wordsworth, the cause of which it would be painful to relate. But he took us some beautiful walks, and especially to the lovely spot on Rydal Water, where there was the old tree on a rock which I believe is still called Wordsworth's Chair, and where he is said to have written several poems."

[William Wordsworth had, at that time, two grandsons at the school – Ed.]

By **1851**, the year of the second census, the family had already moved to Worsley. The promised new parsonage had not yet been completed, since the family was residing at the Mill House, Worsley. The reason for the move was prompted by a letter which he had received from Lady Ellesmere. It read:

Dear Sir: Lord Ellesmere is not well enough to write himself, but he wishes me to say that the living of Worsley will be vacant in three months, and if you will accept it he will double the income and build a house for your family.

Yours truly, Harriet Ellesmere.

Residence: Mill House, Worsley.

Revd. St. Vincent Beechey	Head	M	44	Incumbent of Worsley Church	b. London
Mary Ann Ommanney	D.-in-law	S	19		b. Putney
Emily Elizabeth Beechey	Daur.		13		b. Hilgay
St. Vincent	Son		10		b. Hilgay
Charlotte	Daur.		8		b. Fleetwood

Sophia	Daur.	6	b. Fleetwood
Edward	Son	3	b. Fleetwood
Charles Grantley	Son	2	b. Fleetwood
+ servants			

In December **1851**, the newly-formed University of Sydney appointed Rev. Dr. John Woolley (Rossall 1844-1849; Norwich G.S. 1849-1852) as its first Principal and professor of Classics. His application was accompanied by 121 testimonials, including one from William Wordsworth. He had originally had to resign from Rossall because of a fall in the number of boys and certain deficiencies in his leadership. Sadly, he drowned in *'The SS London'* in the Bay of Biscay on his return to Australia after a visit to this country. Of 239 persons onboard, only 19 survived.

One event which aroused great pride in **St. Vincent Beechey** was the visit of Queen Victoria to Fleetwood on 20 September **1847**, her first visit to the Duchy of Lancaster. The Queen and Prince Albert were on their journey from Scotland to London. Rev. Beechey was entrusted with the honour of drafting and presenting an address to the Queen. An address, written in latin by the boys of Rossall School, was also presented to her Majesty. In his book, *The Rise and Progress of Rossall School*, written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the school, **St. Vincent Beechey** recalled this memorable event. This is best appreciated in his own words:

I was the first Vicar of Fleetwood, and it fell to my lot to read the address which Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, three Officials of the Town and Railway Company, and myself presented to the Queen. It was printed in gold, on white satin cloth, and received by Lord Palmerston on board the 'Victoria and Albert', immediately on its arrival in the harbour.

My brother, Admiral Beechey, the Arctic navigator, who at four different times explored the Arctic regions, viz. twice under Franklin and Parry, and twice in his own command of 'The Blossom', was acting as Pilot on board the Royal yacht. He had so entirely surveyed the Irish Channel that he was able to tell Prince Albert, who was his frequent companion on board, the depth of every cast of the lead, the shells at the bottom, and the exact moment when the cry of "No bottom!" should indicate their arrival over the Lune Deep. He was also, perhaps, the only Naval Officer who was so thoroughly acquainted with the coast and islands from Ardrossan to Fleetwood that he was enabled to put Her Majesty into still water as often as Prince Albert requested him to do so, in consequence of her sea-sickness; for she was in delicate health....

But the third point of interest in the Queen's visit was the presentation of a Latin address by the Rossall boys to Her Majesty. I will not transcribe it here, for I believe it is printed in full in the Rossall Register. How far Dr. Woolley was concerned in its composition I do not know. No doubt he revised it, but I believe it to have been the genuine work of the Upper Form, one of whom, Sharpe, the captain of the school, was quite equal to the performance. The address contained, however, a little cupboard love for it concluded in a manner peculiar to schoolboys. My wag of a brother would perhaps have translated the last lines something like this:

*'Patron of Art, England's well-beloved Queen,
Royal mother of children, the fairest e'er sen,
Long mayest thou live to reign over our Nation,
But grant us poor boys a week's longer vacation.'*

I regret to add that the Address was printed too late for presentation, but was sent up to town to the Secretary of State, and a gracious reply was received and the holiday granted.

Two years later, it was reported in *The Manchester Courier* on Saturday 11th August 1849 that **St. Vincent Beechey** led a deputation to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company 'on the subject of the grievous desecration of the Lord's Day, caused by the cheap Sunday Trains on your line.'

Throughout his lifetime, he was an effective speaker and lecturer, During his spell at Fleetwood, in January 1849, he delivered lectures on Ancient and Modern Astronomy at the Annual General Meeting of the Kendal Natural History and Scientific Society. At that meeting, he was elected an Honorary Member of the society. Then, in November 1849, He read a paper on 'The Sabean character of the winged lion and bull of Nineveh' in the lecture theatre of the Royal Institution in Manchester.

By mid-1850, his time in charge of Fleetwood was coming to an end. His final sermon was to be given on Sunday 23rd June at St.Peter's Church. *The Manchester Times* of Saturday 20th July 1850 reported that 'The Earl of Ellesmere has nominated the **Rev. St. Vincent Beechey** to the Perpetual Curacy of Worsley, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. Charles Cameron.' Then, on Tuesday 29th October 1850, a presentation was made to **St. Vincent Beechey** at Fleetwood. £80 had been raised to allow the purchase of an excellent microscope and case, and a beautiful rosewood cabinet, made by a local cabinetmaker. His speech of thanks took 1½ hours to deliver!

Shortly after taking up the curacy of St. Mark's, he continued to attend and give lectures. On Monday 12th August 1850, he attended the 'Congress of the Archaeological Association in Manchester Committee' as a member. Later, on 13th January 1851, **Beechey** delivered the third lecture in the series 'The Architecture of Man' at the Royal Manchester Institution. This series was presented by a Professor of Anatomy and Physiology. The **Rev. St. Vincent Beechey** 'exhibited a large number of illustrations by the use of his trinoptic lantern.' There are full reports in national newspapers of some of his many lectures.

The year 1851 was a momentous one in the life of Manchester, Salford and Worsley. From 9th to 11th October, Queen Victoria and her Consort were guests of the Earl of Ellesmere at Worsley New Hall. After her visit to Manchester on Friday the 10th, she returned with Prince Albert to Worsley and, at about 4pm, she made a visit to St. Mark's. The royal party consisted of Her Majesty and Prince Albert, the Countess of Ellesmere, the Viscountess Brackley, the Ladies Alice and Blanche Egerton, the Marchioness of Westminster, the Earl and Countess of Wilton, together with other members of the party at the Hall. The Queen and the Prince Consort were greeted at the church door (south porch) by the incumbent, the **Rev. St. V. Beechey**, and they proceeded down the main aisle. Victoria seemed very pleased by the architecture and sculpture of the church, and its rich stained-glass windows.

On the final morning of her stay, **St. Vincent Beechey** led a large number of local pupils (about 1,400) with their parents and 200 teachers onto the slopes and lawn of the New Hall to deliver an address to her Majesty. It read:

May it please your Majesty,

The Clergy, Teachers, and Scholars in connexion with the Sunday and Weekly Schools of Worsley, Walkden, and Ellenbrook approach your Majesty on this auspicious occasion with the sincere expression of their devoted loyalty and attachment to your Majesty, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and your August Family.

The visit of your Majesty to our munificent Patron most powerfully demands such an expression of our sentiments; for in no portion of these realms has the epoch of your Majesty's accession been connected with greater cause for thankfulness than in these three districts.

Previously to that event, of happy memory, a small extra-parochial Chapel, at Ellenbrook, was the only place of worship within the distance of three miles which our Established Church possessed, and great moral and physical degradation accompanied the want of religious instruction and beneficent superintendence which prevailed.

But it has so pleased Divine Providence that the very year in which Your Majesty was mercifully called to the Throne of these realms should be also a year of regeneration to these districts, and that each succeeding year should add a blessing to our labouring population.

Since that time, Sunday, Daily, Infants', and other Schools have sprung up in rapid succession; Libraries, a Dispensary, and Clubs for various purposes have been established; two Churches have been erected, and their officiating Clergy provided, thus offering additional means of worshipping God, free of any payment whatever, to upwards of 1,300 of the population.

Through the Divine blessing on these means, aided as they have been by the Acts passed by your Majesty prohibiting the daughters of our poorer inhabitants from the unfeminine labour of the coal-pit, as well as by the great impetus given to education by the grants and inspection of the Committee of Council, whose examiners have already been enabled to pronounce the Schools of Worsley as amongst the best in this country, the happiest results have taken place.

It is not without pride, mingled with the deepest gratitude where it is so justly due, that we present before your Majesty this day nearly 1,400 children of our labouring population, now receiving Daily or Sunday instruction according to the pure principles of our Protestant Established Church, with nearly 200 Sunday Teachers, from a population not exceeding 5,000, within the three districts immediately connected with our generous Patron, whom your Majesty has graciously delighted to honour.

We believe, on the other hand, that it will greatly rejoice your Majesty to be thus assured, from personal inspection, that the great cause of sound Religious Education which your Majesty and your Royal Consort have so much at heart, is here progressing in some degree proportionate to your desires. And on the other hand, we are persuaded, that thus to behold their Queen and the Royal Princes, of whom they have so often heard, and for whom they have so often prayed, will leave upon the hearts of even the youngest of these children indelible impressions of duty, loyalty and love, and cause them to join their Pastors and Teachers in offering up more ardent prayers that Almighty God may long preserve your Majesty upon the Throne of these realms, and bless your Royal Consort and your hopeful Children, "in health and wealth long to live, strengthened to overcome all your enemies," if such there be, "and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity."

Signed in behalf of the Clergy, Teachers, and Scholars,

St. Vincent Beechey, M.A.

Incumbent of Worsley

Worsley, October 11th, 1851

Transcribed from 'The London Gazette', Tuesday 14 October, 1851.

Throughout his time in the parish, he found himself involved in a great deal of work outside it, delivering sermons as a guest at churches within the Manchester Area, attending the distribution of prizes at the Royal Manchester School of Medicine and Surgery, helping to illustrate lectures at the Royal Manchester Institution with his trinoptric lantern, notably on 'The Architecture of Man', supporting the Deaf and Dumb School in Old Trafford in their drive to provide means for religious services for the 50 or so members, and delivering lectures to the Manchester Mechanics' Institution.

By **1855**, he had become an active member of the Manchester Photographic Society and was its President from 1865 to 1870. He also attended the quarterly meetings of the Manchester Diocesan Church Building Society and helped to promote an Exhibition of Art and Industry at Stretford in 1856 in aid of the schools of Flixton and Urmston.

In **1860**, the **Reverend St. Vincent Beechey**, M.A., was appointed Honorary Chaplain of the 4th Battalion Lancashire Rifle Volunteers. This was dated 29th October, 1860. Then, 16 years later, *The London Gazette* announced that the Honorary Chaplain, the **Reverend St. Vincent Beechey**, resigned his Commission. (dated 26th March, **1873**).

The **1861** census showed that the family was now living in the new Parsonage at Worsley.

St. Vincent Beechey	Head	M	54	Perpetual Curate Worsley
Mary Ann	Wife	M	54	
Mary Ann Ommanney	Step-daur.	S	29	
Emily Elizabeth Beechey	Daur.	S	23	
Charlotte Beechey	Daur.	S	18	
Sophia Beechey	Daur.		16	
+ 2 servants				

In November **1864**, a movement began *'with the view of amusing and instructing the men of the cavalry and infantry regiments stationed in Hulme and Salford.'* The chaplain (the Rev. B. Harris) managed to put together a programme of lectures and concerts, and **St. Vincent Beechey** was one of those approached to deliver a lecture. The lectures and concerts were to be given alternately each week, to which the men were admitted free of charge.

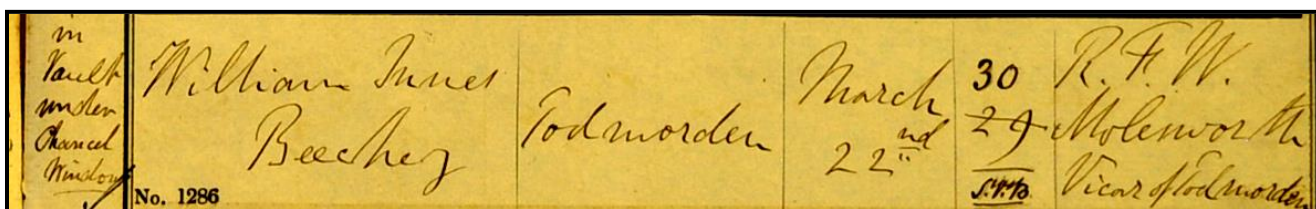
His deep interest in education continued unabated, and in October **1866** he took part in a meeting in connection with the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Manchester, its purpose being *'to consider if in any way they could give employment to women who possessed a certain amount of education'*. The Earl of Shaftesbury presided over the meeting, and he made reference to the fact that women were already employed in bookkeeping, printing and in telegraph offices, and not just in mills, factories or in service. He proposed a motion that *'a society be formed in the city of Manchester, similar to the societies in London and Dublin, for promoting the employment of women.'* **St. Vincent Beechey** seconded the motion, stressing that *'to provide for the occupation of women was becoming every year of greater importance.'* By May **1867**, he was placing an advertisement for the Cambridge University Examination for Girls, to be held in Manchester. He had become the Honorary Secretary of the committee appointed the previous year and he placed further adverts in the following years.

In June **1868**, he was nominated by the Bishop of Manchester to be an honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral and this was confirmed on 4th August at the Diocesan registry. He thereafter occasionally performed baptism and marriage ceremonies at the Cathedral, on one occasion officiating at 3 weddings on the same day (2 Nov. 1871).

As for the parish of Worsley, when he was invited to come to here, the income was doubled and a new parsonage was proposed for him and his family. Since St. Mark's was having regular large attendances, it was decided to apply for a faculty to enlarge the church by adding a north aisle. This was granted and the extension was opened in **1852**. Five years later, the patron, the 1st Earl of Ellesmere, died on 18th February 1857. He was buried in a vault at the south-east corner of the church. In **1854**, the Earl offered him the donative of Ellenbrook, with an increase in his stipend and, with it, the ability to engage a curate.

In **1867**, their son William Innes was married at Eccles Parish Church on 10 July 1867. He married Frances, the eldest daughter of Francis Spencer, Esq., of Leaf Square, Pendleton. The ceremony was led by his father, incumbent of Worsley and chaplain of Ellenbrook.

Less than two years later, the family suffered a grievous loss when, on 17 March **1869**, their eldest son, William Innes, died, aged 30, in Todmorden. He was buried at St. Mark's on 22 March 1869. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. R.F.W. Molesworth, Vicar of Todmorden. The register entry below shows that he was buried in a 'Vault under the Church Window.'



The Todmorden Newsletter of Saturday 20 March **1869** announced his death as follows:

Death of Mr. Beechey, of Waterside. *On Wednesday evening last, Mr. W. I. Beechey – the principal manager for Messrs. Fielden – died a little after 6pm. It is not an ordinary thing with us to refer in our paper to the decease of persons, unless they have had a long connection with the neighbourhood, or were in some way remarkable. We shall be excused in making special allusion to Mr. Beechey's death, in that his illness has been so*

short, and from other circumstances. Our readers will have seen that he had engaged to be in the chair at Mr. Miller's lecture on Tuesday evening last, and the officiating chairman (Mr. Thos. Ashworth) stated the cause of Mr. Beechey's absence. Only a week before he died Mr. Beechey took to his bed. Dr. Thorp has attended him, and Dr. Turner, of Manchester, was also called in. Hope was entertained on Wednesday forenoon that he would recover, but we see now how much it was to be disappointed. Inflammation of the membrane covering the brain, we are told, was the cause of death. Young, in a position – and we believe of a disposition – to serve his fellow-men, it may be considered in a great degree a public loss that Mr. Beechey has been removed from among us, and all will sympathise with his family over whose prospects a shadow has come where before all seemed so bright and fair. Mr. W.I. Beechey was a son of the Rev. Canon Beechey of Worsley, near Manchester. The deceased was 29 years of age. It is a little over 3 years since he became engaged by Messrs. Fielden Bros.

Beechey wrote about the death of his son, who had returned from a spell in Egypt, learning how to gin cotton. "He returned to England, to be the trusted and much valued Superintendent Manager to the Messrs. Feilden of Todmorden, over five mills, where he was greatly loved by the people and managers. He died after two years there, from abscess in the brain, contracted in Egypt, and was buried at the sole expense of the Feildens, where I hope to lie, at Worsley." Given that this was in 1869, it is interesting to note that he had already decided where he wanted to be buried – in a special location at what was then his church, and some thirty years before his death!!

Not long after the death of William Innes, their third daughter Sophia married Rev. Septimus Kingsford at St. Mark's on 26 August 1869. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. A.E. Dunsford, Arch Deacon.

1869. Marriage solemnized at <i>St Mark's Church</i> in the <i>Town</i> of <i>Worsley</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
138	August 26 th	Septimus Kingsford full	28	Bachelor	Clerk in Holy Orders	St Peter's Church, Hampton	Septimus Kingsford	Clerk
		Sophia Beechey full	21	Spinster		Worsley	Wm Beechey	Clerk

Married in the *Church of St Mark's* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by *after* *Canon* by me, *Adm Dunsford Arch Deacon*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Septimus Kingsford* in the Presence of us, *Charlotte Beechey Emily E. Beechey Mrs J. Worsley*

GRAND WEDDING AT WORSLEY. (From The Manchester Courier.)

Yesterday, at the pretty little church at Worsley, the Rev. Septimus Kingford, assistant chaplain to the English Embassy at St. Petersburg, was united to Miss Sophia, younger daughter of the Rev. Canon Beechey, M.A., vicar of Worsley, and chaplain to the Earl of Ellesmere. The church was crowded, and among those present were the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere, the Dowager Countess of Ellesmere, and Lord Willoughby de Brooke. Scarlet cloth was spread on the ground from the parsonage, along the churchyard, and down the middle aisle, to the altar. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Archdeacon Dunsford, assisted by the Rev. P. Kingsford, brother of the bridegroom. The bride had on a beautiful white silk dress, white net veil, a wreath of orange blossom, and carried a handsome bouquet, which was presented to her by the Dowager Countess of Ellesmere. There were six bridesmaids, all of whom were richly attired. A choice selection of music was sung by the choir, assisted Mr. Handel Thorley, Miss Thorley, and Miss M. Thorley, of Manchester. When the service was finished, the Earl, Countess, and Dowager Countess of Ellesmere each shook hands with the bride, and wished her much happiness. The bride has received many costly presents. The party left the church, twelve

girls belonging to the bride's class in the Sunday school, strewed flowers in her path. All the old women in the village above sixty years of age, partook of a good dinner in the school-room, at the expense of the vicar.

The census of **1871** shows the family still in Worsley, before the marriage of Charlotte and the relocation back to Norfolk.

Residence: Crossfield ("Vicarage"), Worsley.

St. Vincent Beechey	Head	M	64	Vicar of Worsley & Honorary Canon of Manchester
Mary Ann	Wife	M	64	
Emily E.	Daur.	S	33	
Charlotte	Daur.	S	28	
Edward	Son	S	23	Banker's Clerk
Charles G.	Son	S	22	Mechanical Engineer

+ 3 domestic servants

In **1871**, his daughter Charlotte married Champion Jones on 25 July **1871** at her own parish church of St. Mark, Worsley. The ceremony was conducted by Septimus Kingsford.

1871. Marriage solemnized at <i>St. Mark's Church</i> in the Parish of <i>Worsley</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
170	<i>July 25th.</i>	<i>Champion Jones</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Captain</i>	<i>Chiselhurst, Kent</i>	<i>William L. Jones</i>	<i>gentleman</i>
		<i>Charlotte Beechey</i>	<i>full.</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>half pay 56th</i>	<i>Worsley.</i>	<i>St. Vincent Beechey</i>	<i>Clerk in Holy Orders</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>Septimus Kingsford</i> after <i>banns</i> by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Champion Jones</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>Emily G. Beechey</i>		
		<i>Charlotte Beechey</i>				<i>Philip Graham</i>		

MARRIAGE AT WORSLEY CHURCH. (*Bolton Evening News* – Thursday 27 July 1871) — On Tuesday the vicinity of Worsley Church was the scene of considerable excitement, consequent upon the marriage of Miss Beechey, daughter of the Rev. Canon Beechey, to Captain Champion Jones. Long before the time appointed, a large number of the inhabitants congregated in and around the church. On the arrival of the wedding party, and as they entered the church, the choir sang "The voice that breathed o'er Eden." The bride was neatly attired in white corded silk, and was preceded by eight bridesmaids. The service was performed by the Rev. Septimus Kingsford (brother-in-law of the bride), of the British Embassy, Russia, assisted by the Rev. Philip Graham, of Darwen. As the party left the church Mendelssohn's wedding march was performed, and the path of the bride was strewed with flowers. In the afternoon substantial dinner was given in the schoolroom to the old folks of Worsley.

On the death of the Rev. William J. Parkes, the rector and patron of Hilgay (his old curacy), St. Vincent Beechey was offered the living which he accepted in **1872**. During his years there, but in age becoming an old man, he remained an active and energetic parish priest, often preaching two or three sermons on Sundays, and still delivering lectures for literary and scientific institutions in the week. He installed electric lights in the rectory, church and schools, the generator being situated in the rectory grounds. He erected an observatory in his garden and spent a good deal of time studying astronomy, the result of which was two letters sent to *The Times* about his sighting of comets in **1881** [those being Schaeberle's, 24th July 1881, and one unnamed - possibly *Tebbutt's comet* - on 23rd June 1881 - Ed].

A third family wedding within 5 years next took place at St. Mark's on 24 August 1874. The third son Edward married Martha Jackson, also of Worsley, the daughter of Thomas Jackson, a Foreman. Edward was now a Bank Cashier. The marriage was by licence and was officiated by the Rev. Acton W. Sillitoe. It is interesting that there was no mention of the Beechey family in the list of those present.

1874. Marriage solemnized at <i>St. Mark's Church</i> in the <i>Parish</i> of <i>Worsley</i> in the County of <i>Lancashire</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
246	<i>August 24th</i>	<i>Edward Beechey</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Bank Cashier</i>	<i>Worsley</i>	<i>St. Vincent Beechey</i>	<i>Bank in India Orders</i>
		<i>Martha Jackson</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>Worsley</i>	<i>Thomas Jackson</i>	<i>Foreman</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>License</i> or after <i>—</i> by me, <i>Acton W. Sillitoe M.A.</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Edward Beechey</i> <i>Martha Jackson</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>Edw. A. Graves Lydia Prescott</i> <i>David Prescott George Jellicoe</i>		

After a burst of family weddings, the census of 1881 reveals a much smaller family, now residing at the Rectory, Hilgay, Norfolk.

St. Vincent Beechey	Head	M	74	Rector of Hilgay
Mary A.	Wife	M	74	
Emily E.	Daur.	S	43	Rector's daughter
+ 3 servants				

Mary Ann, St. Vincent Beechey's wife, died on Sunday 21st October 1888 at Hilgay Rectory, Norfolk, aged 82. Her death was announced in several newspapers in the days following:

BEECHEY - Oct. 21. at Hilgay Rectory, Norfolk, Mary Ann, the beloved wife of Rev. Canon St. Vincent Beechey, in her 82nd year. No cards.

The parish registers for St. Mark's show that she was buried in the churchyard on the 25th October 1888, aged 81, and that the ceremony was performed by Charles Lowe (curate of St. Mark's, 1866-1871, and later vicar of Bolton-le-Moors).

<i>Mary Ann Beechey</i>	<i>Hilgay Rectory</i>	<i>Oct. 25</i>	<i>81 years</i>	<i>Charles Lowe</i>	<i>Private Vicar</i>
No. 1812	<i>Norfolk</i>				

1891 census and we find relatives lodging with him

St. Vincent Beechey	Head	W	84	Rector of Hilgay
Emily E.	Daur.	S	54	Living on her own means
Arthur St. V.		S	19	Brother's grandson. Scholar b. India
Soffie B. Kingsford	G. Daur.		20	b. St. Petersburg
+ 2 servants				

1893. The Rev. St. Vincent Beechey continued to deliver interesting lectures and sermons after the death of his wife. *The Yarmouth Gazette* reported on Saturday 18 February 1893:

Downham Market. - On Monday evening a lecture in connection with the Downham and Clackclose Conservative Club was delivered in the National School-room by the Rev.

Canon St. Vincent Beechey, rector of Hilgay, on “The wisdom, goodness and power of God in the formation of the human hand.” As might be expected from the well-known ability of the rev. lecturer, a great intellectual treat was provided for the large attentive audience that was present. The lecture was illustrated with fifty views by the powerful oxy-hydrogen lantern, and, although given in aid of the funds of the above club, was perfectly non-political, and, no partizan on the other side being able to take exception to the canon's well chosen address, the gathering was a very enjoyable one. - A vote of thanks was accorded to **Canon Beechey** at the end of the lecture.

As he gradually approached his ninetieth year, the **Rev. Canon St. Vincent Beechey** would have been thrilled to host and attend the wedding of his granddaughter Emily on **18 April 1894** at Hilgay Church. Amongst the many guests were people who were well known to him during his time at Worsley. *The Thetford Times* published a detailed account of the day and of the many gifts given to the couple.

MARRIAGE OF MISS EMILY BEECHEY.

*The marriage of Miss Emily Beechey, granddaughter of the **Rev. Canon Beechey**, with Mr. R. Froude Coules, of Worsley, Manchester, took place at Hilgay on the 18th instant. What promised to be an extremely pretty wedding was much marred by a heavy downpour of rain, which compelled the bride and her bridesmaids to drive to the church, instead of carrying out their first intention of walking. The morning was beautifully fine, and continued so until noon, when the sky clouded over, and rain and hail fell incessantly until about half an hour before the departure of the happy pair, when once more the sun shone out. But the wet did not at all dampen the enthusiasm of the villagers, who crowded every available place in the church some time before 2 o'clock, the hour fixed for the ceremony. The bride, who was given away by her grandfather, was met at the west door by the choir and the officiating clergy the Rev. the Marquis of Normanby (Canon of Windsor), the Rev. A. G. Hilton (Vicar of Meysey Hampton), and the Rev. G. J. W. Trendell (Curate of Hilgay). The processional hymn was 'The voice that breathed o'er Eden'. After the marriage rite had been performed by the Marquis of Normanby, the bride and bridegroom proceeded to the altar, during the chanting of Psalm cxxviii. [128]. The hymn before the address, which was read by the Rev. Hilton, was "O, perfect love, all human thought transcending". As the bridal party proceeded down the church, after the signing of the registers. Mr. J. H. Leyland, the organist, played Mendelssohn's Wedding March, the fine peal of eight bells ringing out merrily from the belfry tower. The way to the carriage was plentifully strewn with flowers by members of the Girls Friendly Society. The bride was attired in a dress of white corded-silk, handsomely trimmed with old Brussels lace and orange blossom. She wore a tulle veil and a wreath of orange blossoms, and carried a bouquet of choice white flowers, the gift of the bridegroom. The four bridesmaids - Miss Champion Jones, Miss Vera Kingsford, Miss Winifred Beechey, and Miss Miles - were in coral pink crépon trimmed with white silk, their hats being black with pink lilac. They wore gold brooches, and carried bouquets of white and pink roses, both the gifts of the bridegroom. The wedding guests assembled at the rectory after the ceremony, where refreshments were served in a large tent. At 5 o'clock the happy pair left for London, amid the hearty good wishes of their friends and villagers and the ringing of the bells.*

Amongst the guests from Worsley and those who offered presents were: Rev. and Mrs. St. Vincent Beechey, jun.; the Rev. the Marquis of Normanby; the Earl and Countess of Ellesmere; Lord Brackley; the Hon. F. and the Hon. T. Egerton.

As he entered his ninetieth year, **St. Vincent Beechey** continued to perform his duties – baptisms, marriages, funerals, as well as delivering sermons, hosting evening entertainments to raise funds, giving yet more talks (eg. “The Origin and History of Writing”, with a ‘fine series of 50 illustrative slides shown in the electric lantern), culminating in a great 90th birthday celebration on 7 August

1896, with a huge audience in the local National school-room, in the presence of all his children (in England). *The Lynn Advertiser* reported that '*Canon Beechey is one of the oldest clergymen living, and in spite of his 90 years, continues as active as ever, and fills up his spare time in scientific pursuits, including the Röntgen system of photography, in which he is singularly successful*'.

Canon Beechey continued to hold a great affection for Worsley. Indeed, he visited the church on numerous occasions in his later years. In fact, in February **1896**, now in his ninetieth year, he preached in the church both morning and evening, in addition to visiting the sick and the poor. He last preached at the church barely six weeks before his death, and whilst here also gave the annual address at Rossall School. He retained his energy and vigour to within two weeks of his death. It was reported that "*he seemed to lose strength all at once within the last fortnight, and died quite peacefully on Saturday, in the presence of his daughter, Miss Emily Beechey, with whom he lived at Hilgay Rectory.*"

The Morning Post of Monday 21st August **1899** announced the death of **St. Vincent Beechey** at Hilgay, aged 93, in common with several other regional and national newspapers. *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* referred to him as the 'oldest clergyman in England.'

On the 21st August **1899**, the *Manchester Guardian* carried a long obituary following his death on 19th August 1899. It reported that, at Cambridge, he was awarded a second senior optime degree (a second class degree in Mathematics), and that he might have gained an even higher degree but for a fall from a horse on the second day of the examination. During his first post at Aylesford in 1829, he was instrumental in establishing the first elementary school in the parish. At Hilgay, he gave the parish its first National school. Whilst at Cambridge, he showed a deep interest in medicine, and when there was an outbreak of Asiatic cholera at Hilgay (1831-2), he was able to render a service to those affected.

When he came to Lancashire in 1840, he was presented to the perpetual curacy of St. Peter's, Fleetwood, to which was added the benefice of Christ Church, Thornton. Assistance in setting up the foundation of Rossall School came from the Preston and Wyre Railway Company with a grant of £200 towards the scheme and, in order to help him facilitate his work, he was granted a free pass on their line!

During his time at Fleetwood, he was the life and soul of the school. '*He undertook the responsible duties of local manager of the funds of the establishment, superintending the admission of pupils and representing the Council in the business affairs of the school.*' He even introduced scholarships, one of which was named "The Beechey" to the value of £50 per annum, tenable for three years at any college in Oxford or Cambridge. He ceased active connection with the school in 1873.

The Guardian then reports that:

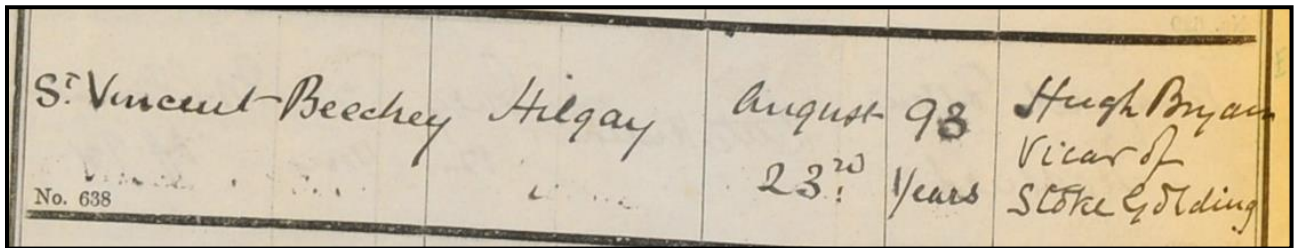
'When on a visit to his former parishioners at Worsley in February 1896, he remarked: I have now been Rector of Hilgay twenty-three years - exactly one year longer than I spent at Worsley. I am now in my 90th year, in perfect health, in possession of all my faculties taking two or three services every Sunday. He preached morning and evening, the church being crowded; and in addition he visited in the afternoon a large number of the aged, sick, and poor of Worsley...

Canon Beechey often recounted his father's friendship with the great naval hero Nelson, who in 1805 fell on board the Victory at Trafalgar.'

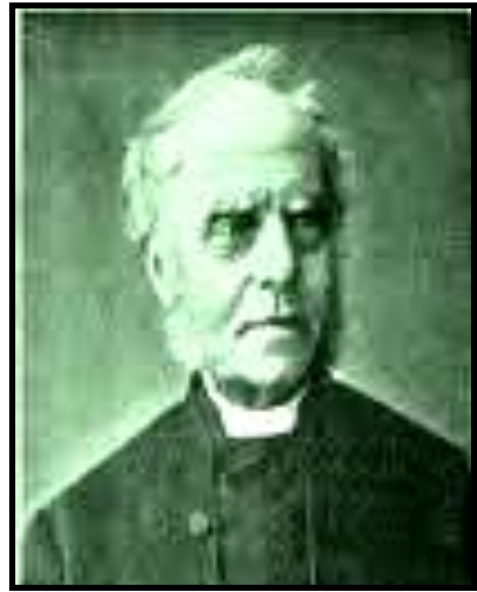
He was buried at St. Mark's on 23rd August **1899** by the Rev. F. K. Hodgkinson, vicar, assisted by the Rev. Hugh Bryan, vicar of Stoke Golding (and former curate at Hilgay, 1872-1880), and other clergy. His body had been brought by train from Hilgay that day, arriving at London Road Station at 3pm. From there, it came by road to Worsley. The service, to a full congregation, was fully choral and contained two pieces by Handel, his favourite composer.

BEECHEY the reverend St. Vincent of Hilgay Norfolk clerk died 19 August 1899 Probate **London** 26 October to the reverend St. Vincent Beechey and the reverend Septimus Kingsford clerks Effects £8415 0s. 3d.

... .. 11 H. V. 135 D. 1899 Probate **London** 13 January to Mary Jane Beechey



The memorial to the Canon and his wife is located beneath the East window. It may look as though it has been vandalised, but it is designed to express a 'work in progress.'



St. Vincent Beechey (far left, seated) at the wedding of his granddaughter Mabel Champion Jones, in Camberley, Surrey, on 27 July 1898. Mabel Champion Jones was the daughter of Beechey's daughter Charlotte.



Grant of Arms
1829
to Sir William Beechey



Stand fast and Endure

