

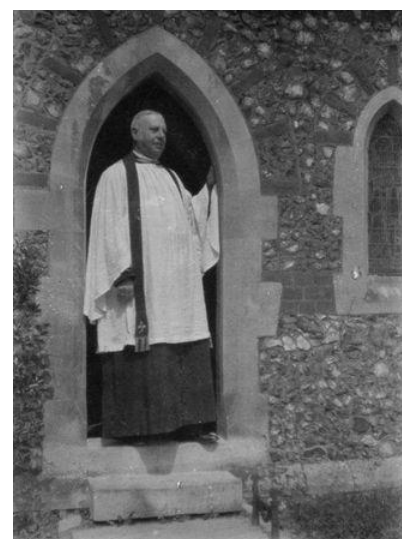
## High Wych History – 39 – Our Church 2

Fourteen C.of E. priests have served at St. James High Wych since 1861. Two stand out. Henry Frank Johnson of course, who later became bishop, and Horace Fuller Rackham who served at St. James's from 1886 until 1928: 42 years!

Horace Fuller Rackham was born in Wangford Suffolk in January 1849, the son of William, a surgeon at Guys Hospital and his wife Eleanor. He was educated (amongst other places) at Bury School from 1866 to 1868 and admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge University. In 1872 he was ordained a deacon at Rochester. Between 1872 and 1876 he was a curate at Springfield, Essex. In 1876 he married Frances Amelia Pearson, the sister of Arthur Pearson, later Sir Arthur, who founded the Daily Express newspaper. That same year he became vicar at Stanway All Saints, Essex where he stayed until 1886 when he was appointed at High Wych.



Horace Rackham and his wife entertain a friend at the vicarage (now the Grange)



Rackham at High Wych Church's vestry entrance

In 1901 when Rackham had been in High Wych for 15 years, High Wych became a separate civic parish from Sawbridgeworth. Rackham became our parish council's first chairman although strangely he was not on the first list of candidates. No proper election was in fact held. He held on to the HWPC chairmanship until 1926. Another red letter day was 29<sup>th</sup> September 1903 when Bishop Johnson came down to dedicate the new porch. The Chelmsford Chronicle noted with admiration that special provision was made for the storage of bicycles.

The Rackhams had two daughters: Amy and Mary. In 1906 Amy married Robert Sperling Hart. Mary married Ernest Carpenter in 1921. By that time Amy had already been a widow for two years. Mrs. Hart was for many years the president of our WI. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1928 Horace Fuller Rackham passed away. He had been a popular vicar. When plans were announced for a brass plaque in his memory, more money was donated than was needed. The reverend Rackham was succeeded by Alfred Salter Buckland who only served for 3 years in High Wych.



Mrs. Rackham on her donkey cart on the vicarage drive

Mrs. Hart, nee Amy Rackham

The full list of High Wych vicars reads as follows:

1862 – 1880 Henry Frank Johnson, 1880 – 1886 Spencer Nairn, 1886 – 1928 Horace Fuller Rackham, 1928 – 1931 Alfred Salter Buckland, 1931 – 1939 Arthur McPhearson Erat Huggins, 1939 – 1943 Cecil Mortimer Lamb 1943 – 1952 Edward Bannister, 1952 – 1974 John Morgan Walters, 1974 – 1981 David Evan Cross Wright, 1981 – 1987 Philip Charles Rumsey, 1987 – 2000 Douglas Charles Clarke,, 2000 – 2007 Roderick Brendon Reynolds, 2007 - 2011 Wendy Elise Grace Carter, 2011 - present Anthony John Giles..



Sources for this article were: Ancestry.co.uk, the Herts and Essex Observer, Wikipedia and as always county archives aka HALS. Do not forget: the High Wych History Project needs your personal contributions, memories, stories and photographs as well as your criticism, be it positive or negative. Get in touch!! Contact me at: [theo@vandebilt.co.uk](mailto:theo@vandebilt.co.uk) or phone me at 01279 725468. You can also check my blog at <http://vandebilt.co.uk/history/>