

Rev. Charles Archer Kent, 39th Vicar of Worle

Worle's 39th Vicar, Chas Kent, was something of a character, and I thought we might enjoy sharing a peep at his life and his time in our village.

Charles Archer Kent was born at Ryde on the Isle of Wight in 1864. He had, like almost all 'Clerks in Holy Orders' enjoyed a university education and had a Masters Degree from Exeter College, Oxford.

Sometime in the 1880s he married Diana Josephine Eraud who was born on the Island of Guernsey. Perhaps the couple's island births drew them together. There were two children of the marriage, Diana Josephine born in 1889 in Yorkshire, and a son, Elliot Chas Archer, born in Berkshire in 1892. The family moved to Worle in 1896, when Chas became the incumbent at St. Martin's Church.



His daughter was 7 and his son was 4 when they made their home in the then Vicarage in High Street. It seems to be a lovely family home with gardens and 3 storeys. The dormer windows indicate the servants quarters, whilst the family bedrooms would have been on the first floor. There were no modern facilities, however, and

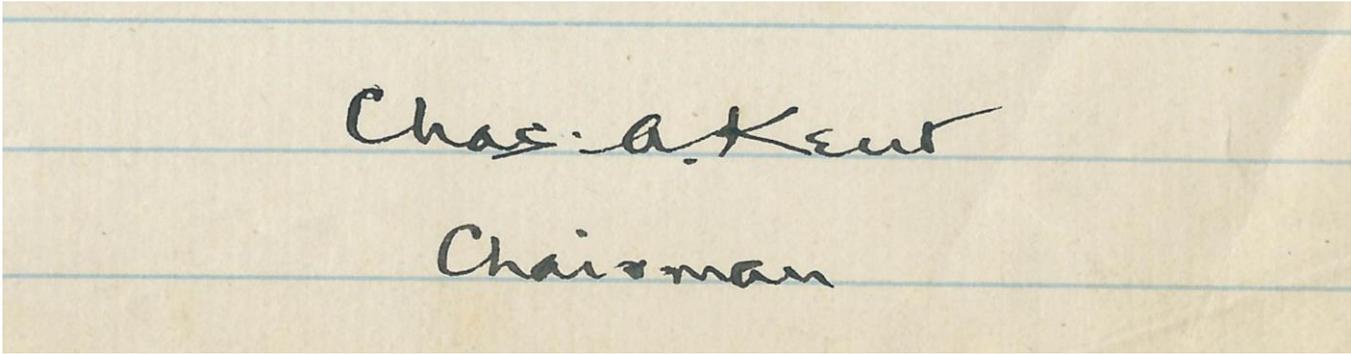
all we know about their servants is that Mabel Collings from Ottery St. Mary, was a live-in housemaid, according to the 1901 census.



There are no family photographs in our collection, but Reverend Kent does appear in the Worle Cricket Team photo, taken in 1900, in Tripps Field.

He is the gentleman 4 from the left in the back row. He is bearded and wearing a strange hat and cravat, very different from the other men in the picture. The Vicar was President of the Cricket Club.

The Vicar also chaired the meetings of the organising committee at Worle Village Club (now The Century Club), and it is from this source that I found his signature.

A photograph of a piece of aged, cream-colored paper with horizontal blue lines. The paper features a handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Chas. A. Kent". Below the signature, the word "Chairman" is also handwritten in the same ink. The paper shows signs of age, including some discoloration and faint smudges.

A signature always allows us to feel closer to the person who is wielding the fountain pen.

In 1901, at the Easter Vestry meeting, Rev. Kent resigned his living in the parish. At the time, he was 37 years old and his children were 12 and 9 respectively. The following transcript from a newspaper report at the time goes some way towards explaining his reasons.

The vicar [Rev. Kent] said he thought it would be convenient, at that stage of their proceedings, if he made an announcement which he felt compelled to make. Very shortly after he came into residence he found that financially he would be unable to hold that living for any length of time, and he felt then, that after five years' ministry there, that he would be obliged to resign the living before his certificate with regard to dilapidations had expired. Since coming to that conclusion private financial anxieties had strengthened that necessity, and he had now to acquaint them with the fact that he had sent in his resignation of that living, which would take effect of 3rd September next [1901], exactly 5 years after his induction. To say that he regretted the necessity of such a step was hardly to express his feelings. It was naturally impossible to contemplate the break even in that comparatively short ministry without deep regret at leaving friends who had supported him in the work of the church, and had helped him in the organisations of that parish in which he was thoroughly interested. Looking forward to the appointment of a new vicar, he could truly trust and pray that he might be the man of God's choice and possessed with sufficient private means, for while the income of the living was steadily increasing, the growth of the place would soon make increasing demands upon him.

He was succeeded as vicar of Worle by Rev. Cecil Harman, whose wife's family had made a fortune in the brewery business.

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Come and join us at Worle Community Centre on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7.00 p.m., oh, and have a look at our website.