

# THOMAS MARSH EVERETT

by Valery Cowley

As a member of the Kempe Society, I have long appreciated that stained glass studio's two fine chancel windows depicting St Martin's life, beneath which I sing in choir. The adjacent brass plaque outlines the life of Ruislip's vicar for 21 years, whom they commemorate; he was Thomas Marsh Everett, who established the church's robed choir in the late 19th century.



**Fig. 1**  
**Rev. T.M. Everett**  
**St Martin's Vicar 1878 - 1900**

Born in 1843 Thomas was the second son of James Everett, the head of the household at Wold Farm (Fig. 2) in the district of Brixworth, Northamptonshire, who in 1851 employed four farmhands and, with his wife Sarah (née Marsh), had by then five more children.



**Fig. 2**

Apparently Thomas used his powerful sweet voice to work his way through Oxford; aged nine he was thirteenth chorister on entry to New College in 1852 and fourth on leaving in 1857.

Thomas is mentioned from 1862-64 in the parish magazines of St Margaret's, Whitnash (see Fig. 3) near Leamington as a successful cricketer, so he may have taught at the rector's exclusive school in return for a classical education.

He became a paid lay clerk in the choir of Magdalen College, Oxford during 1865-69 and sang bass with the Magdalen Vagabonds and with the Maltese Glee Club in solos or glees. He appears in a report of the Magdalen Madrigal Society concert at Leamington in 1866, in aid of Whitnash church, where George Gilbert Scott worked on restoration, as he did at Ruislip 1869-71. In the summer of 1868, in Heiligenberg, Thomas tutored 14-year old Prince Louis of Battenberg, who later became grandfather to the present Duke of Edinburgh.

From 1869-72 Thomas was assistant Vicar Choral at Hereford Cathedral and in June 1870, he took his Oxford Pass degree in Classics and was admitted as Scholar of Civil Law; however, his *career* changed to a *vocation*, for he must have been studying Theology.

He was ordained deacon in 1870 and by 1872 he was curate of St John the Baptist, Hereford.



**Fig. 3**

In *Louis and Victoria, the First Mountbattens* (1974) Richard Hough wrote that 14-year-old Louis of Battenberg would have to pass an examination at Portsmouth Naval College in December 1868. A tutor, Mr Everett, was therefore despatched from Magdalen College, Oxford to Hesse to 'cram' Louis in algebra, Euclid, Latin and English composition. That summer was very hot at Heiligenberg where Prince Louis' family were crammed into the castle, with servants and horses nearby. 'When they went over to Wolfsgarten for parties and picnics, Louis was left behind with Mr Everett'.

On the 25 September, Mr Everett and Louis' father, Prince Alexander accompanied Louis to England to settle him in a crammer school at Alverstoke, between Gosport and Portsmouth, where he would be prepared for the December examination. 'The crossing from Calais to Dover was very rough and it was with some satisfaction that Louis – in his newly chosen element – thoroughly enjoyed himself while his tutor succumbed to seasickness'.

Mr Everett was probably a paid lay clerk, i.e. an adult chorister, before becoming an 'Academical Clerk' or 'Bible Clerk' when he matriculated as an undergraduate.

Everett was one of the first twelve members of Magdalen College's Maltese Glee Club (founded 1865) and in March 1866 'Mr Everett's Evening' was held in the college.

A Maltese Cross on a ribbon was the badge of membership.

Magdalen College archives describe Everett's 'most delightful voice, of great power and of great sweetness: and whether he sang solos or took part in glees, his help was always most valuable. He was for years a tower of strength to the Brotherhood' (i.e. The Magdalen Vagabonds, who gave concerts for charity, 1862-1899). On a visit to Birmingham, Everett called the party a 'Concert' or 'Opera Troupe' to obtain railway ticket reductions, whereupon a porter requested an order for that evening's 'Circus'! In December 1865, a Leamington newspaper recorded an enthusiastic encore for Everett's Gounod's *Nazareth* and in 1866; he 'gave Hallah's *Storm* with an artistic finish which elicited a thunderous encore'.

At the Royal Pump Room, Leamington in December 1865 great pleasure was given by a Magdalen College Madrigal Society (flourished 1864-68) concert including old friends such as T.M. Everett 'formerly resident in Whitnash' whose Church Restoration Fund was the beneficiary. St Margaret, Whitnash's porch of late 1867 was paid for by the money raised.

In February 1872 Everett was elected a Minor Canon of St George's Chapel, Windsor, at a stipend of £200 p.a. and £30 p.a. in lieu of a house. According to the archivist Dr Eileen Scarff, he was involved in redressing some of the 'grievances' of the Minor Canons.

During Sir George Elvey's time as Organist and Master of Choristers at Windsor, there were links with the royal family, including concerts. Elvey composed the English Hymnal tunes *Diademata* (The Head that once was crowned with thorns) and *St George's, Windsor* (Come, ye thankful people, come). Everett sang for Queen Victoria in Eton College Hall. When he toured Russia, the Czar offered him a solo part in the Imperial Opera at St Petersburg but Everett declined and the Czar gave him a magnificent diamond ring.

In 1878 on the death of Christopher Packe, having been Dean's Curate and Senior Minor Canon, Everett was appointed to Ruislip, one of the livings set apart for Minor Canons. He entered into correspondence with St George's Chapel about the Ruislip glebe lands. His induction on the 12 October 1878 by the Archdeacon of Middlesex is recorded in a leaflet; Evening Prayer followed. According to a Ruislip Parish Magazine of 1900, he owed his presentation to the living of Ruislip, to Dean Wellesley (whose bust is in the family chapel at Wellington's home, Stratified Saye).

Nearly four years after his induction to Ruislip, the *Buckingham Advertiser* announced that Thomas Marsh Everett, aged 39, was engaged to Maud Frances Baker, third daughter of Laurence James Baker of Haydon Hall, Eastcote and Ottershaw Park, Surrey. They married at St Stephen's, South Kensington on the 30 April, 1884; Mr Baker had a house at 28 Queen's Gate, Kensington. To celebrate, Ruislip Church was lit by new lamps with opal shades on brass mountings. The parish gave Maud a painting and a card case. Sir Morton Peto presided over an assembly on the vicarage lawn with refreshments and toasts.

Probably using architects Peto and George, Everett built the red brick vicarage in Bury Street, leaving as Victoria Cottage the 18th century wing of its predecessor.

Sadly, in 1886, the Everetts' daughter Phyllis Maud Battenberg died, aged 13 months, and is commemorated on the family grave to the left of the path from Eastcote Road. Reginald (Rex) was baptised in May 1889 and Vera Frances Ethel in July 1891.

In 1891 the vicarage was let for two years and the Everetts lived at Sunnyside, Eastcote, where the Church School's Annual Treat was held.

The church organ was enlarged and Everett was Ruislip and Deanery Choirmaster. The choir members were given framed photographs of the church interior, inscribed

in recognition of their voluntary services, and Everett addressed them on their duties. In 1893 they had an outing to Windsor.

Mrs Everett was parish librarian, with 200 books in a donated bookcase. Each summer Everett wrote in the Parish Magazine about his six-week-holiday as locum in Wales and Lincolnshire, noting the local churches, weather, crops and geography. He introduced a Childrens' Flower Service whose blooms were sent to Great Ormond Street Hospital. The Thrift Club he founded was still extant in the 1930s.

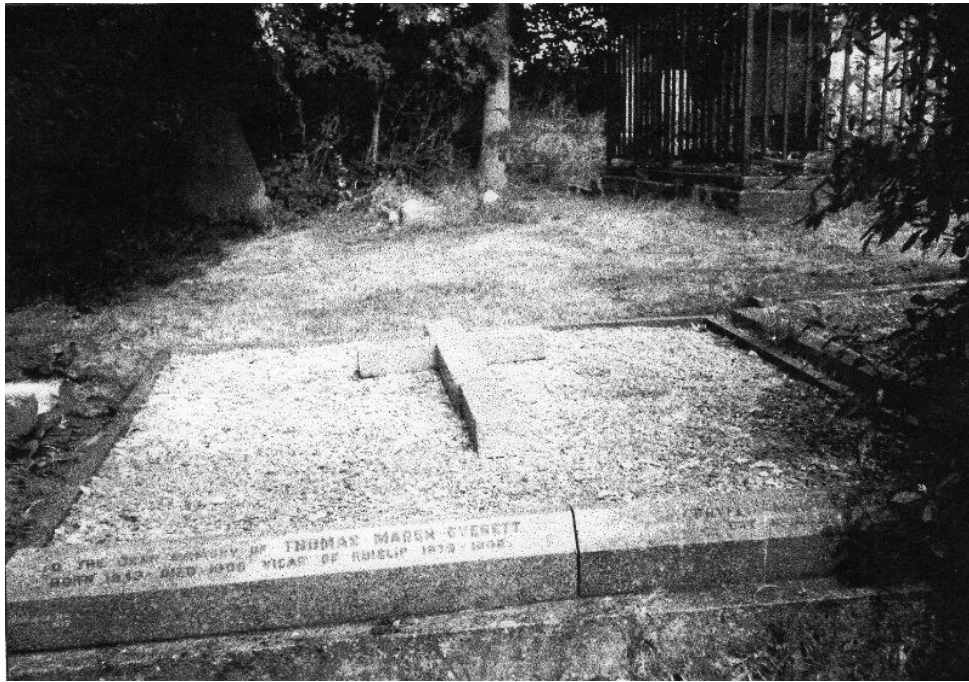
A School Penny Bank was established and Everett was concerned about parents' responsibilities. He superintended Sunday School, taught in it and was school manager and treasurer, etc. He was socially and civically active.

Eight-year-old Rex's 'big manly voice' was heard at an Entertainment at Ruislip Schools presided over by his father. The January 1899 magazine records an entertainment at Ruislip Schools by children of the temperance society, The Band of Hope, under the Everetts' superintendence. The vicar taught them to sing and act and Maud made 'tasteful costumes', reported Fanny Thompson of Park House, High Street.

The church exterior was restored and the porch replaced. However, just as the parish seemed to prosper, shocking news broke.

In December 1899 Thomas Marsh Everett was seriously ill and confined to his room at his father-in-law, Laurence James Baker's house Ottershaw Park, near Chertsey, Surrey. A locum was in charge of the parish and a farewell letter from the Vicar was read from the pulpit on the 11 February 1900. Everett died at Ottershaw on the 21 February. In Ruislip blinds were drawn at the news. Everett was buried aged 56 in Ruislip churchyard on the 24 February (see Fig 4). A muffled peal was rung and a former curate, Reverend Harland, Vicar of Harefield, preached and gave a tribute to Everett before a large congregation that evening.





**Fig. 4**  
**T.M. Everett's Grave**  
**Left of path from Eastcote Road lych-gate**

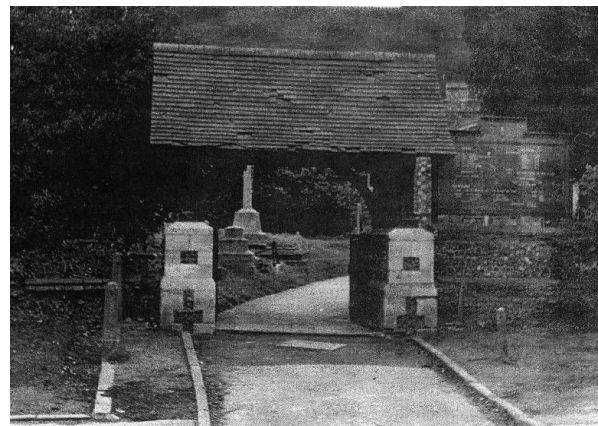
By May 1900, during the interregnum, the amount of the Easter offering had decreased. In June, Sunday School gave Mrs Everett a farewell gift. An oak litany desk with a brass plate in Everett's memory was installed in the church. Mrs Everett entertained the Mothers Union at the Schools, and the Band of Hope went to tea at the vicarage. She also gave the church a morocco-bound book of the Litany Service.

The chancel memorial windows depicting St Martin's life were planned and a list of subscribers drawn up. C.E. Kempe Studios were given the commission; their stained glass is also in Ottershaw church. The Eastcote Road lych-gate is also a memorial to T.M. Everett. (Fig. 5)

On the 5 August 5 1900 W.A.G. Gray was instituted as Vicar.

Everett's former pupil, Prince Louis of Battenberg, 1st Marquess of Milford Haven died in 1917; he had married a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, Princess Victoria of Hesse, who died in 1950.

Mrs Everett visited the parish in 1924 with her grandchildren and she attended a fête in



**Fig. 5**

aid of church funds at Manor Farm in 1925 and 1930. In 1939 Mrs Everett gave one tree and Mr and Mrs Rex Everett two trees for the churchyard hedge. The family remained in contact with St Martin's until the 1990s.

In a 1932 issue of *Outlook* an old Ruislipian said, '[TME] set a standard of congregational and choir singing which has never been forgotten in the district and [he] inspired others with his enthusiasm'. The parish traditions Everett established in liturgy, singing, church maintenance and pastoral care continue to flourish.