

## SERRES Henry D. 307

The Rev. Henry Arthur Serres was only the third vicar of All Saints Birchington, because until 1871, we had always been a daughter church of Monkton. He came to the parish in 1898 and retired in 1930, so he steered his congregation through the Boar war as well as the Great War and was a man of warm heart and truly loved by his flock. His wife had been a widow with a very young daughter when he married her shortly before he came to Birchington. Much to their sorrow, his step-daughter died in 1906 aged only 13 and is buried in All Saints Churchyard. The inscription on the monument reads:-

'In loving memory of Margaret Ada Miskin, daughter of William Miskin and Ella Harriette Serres and step-daughter of Henry Arthur Serres, Vicar of Birchington: born at Belvedere, Kent 15 Sept 1893: fell asleep at Birchington Vicarage 9 Sep 1906.

Also in memory of Henry Arthur Serres, Vicar of Birchington 1898 – 1930: born at Trichinopoli, India, 2 Sept 1855: died at Folkestone, Kent 7 Jul 1937.

"Fear thou not for I am with thee."

'Also of Ella Harriet, his wife, born 15 June 1860: died 18 Mar 1939

"Via crucis via lucis"

'In loving memory of Joyce Adye, wife of Geoffrey Miskin born 24 Sep 1903: died and was buried in Hong Kong, 9 Jan 1930'

Henry Serres played a very active part in both church and village life during his time here. Besides the two wars, this was a period of huge expansion in the village as the impact of the arrival of the railway (in 1863) began to impact more and more rapidly on this rural corner of Thanet. In 1900 there had been 10 working farms in and abutting the village, but by the time Serres retired, several of them had been swallowed up into housing developments. He took on a parish of about 2000 residents but by the time he left in 1930, it had risen to over 3,500 – not far off double the number. He helped to steer through the building of the Public Hall, (still in use to this day, though under a different guise), the building of the separate Girls' School in Park Lane, followed by the new Infants' School on an adjoining site.

