

Charles Herbert Hodgson (1857-1922)

Master of Music for the Sherborne Pageant.

Charles Herbert Hodgson was born in 1857, the son of the Rev. Richard Hodgson, curate of Warton in Lancashire, and his wife Caroline Hodgson (née Fletcher). He was educated at Harrow School and was awarded a scholarship to Hertford College, Oxford.

In 1881, he was appointed as assistant master at Sherborne School, and in 1892 he succeeded Louis Napoleon Parker as Director of Music, a post he held until 1916.

'He was by no means a professional musician, but a cultured and enthusiastic amateur. For 24 years as honorary Director of Music he brought to the discharge of his self-appointed task unflinching zeal, a kindling enthusiasm, and an infinite capacity for taking pains. His programmes show him to have been less daring than his predecessor, but there were compensations. Indeed, there was a distinct advance in the quality of instrumental music performed,

notably from 1903 onwards. This, to a considerable extent, was owing to the musicianly influence of Mr A.F. Tester, who came to Sherborne in that year as Hodgson's lieutenant. Hodgson had a happy knack of endearing himself and his artist aims to a wide circle of musical friends, and the still happier gift of attracting Old Boys to return and help him in the Society's concerts – notably R. St J. Ainslie, A.C. Broadbent, W.H.P. Price, and Clive Carey, all of whom did yeoman service for many years.' (*The Sherborne Register 1550-1950*, 4th ed, 1950)

He was housemaster of Abbeylands from 1893 to 1900.

On 18 April 1893, Charles was married in Sherborne Abbey to Leonora Mary Cecilia Saunders (1870-1912), the daughter of the Rev. George Eveleigh Saunders (1822-1911), rector of Maperton, Somerset. They had five children, although only two survived to adulthood: Richard Eveleigh (1894-1918) and Francis Herbert (1896-1918), who both died in 1918 during the First World War. Charles and Leonora's marriage was dissolved in 1909.

Children:

- Richard Eveleigh Hodgson (1894-1918), born 12 March 1894 at Abbeylands. Attended Sherborne School (School House) September 1908-July 1913. New College, Oxford. WW1, Lieutenant 4th Kings Liverpools and RAF. Killed on 15 September 1918, aged 24, by gunfire from the ground whilst flying near Dunkirk, his first action over the enemy trenches. Buried at Coryde near Dunkirk. Remembered on Sherborne Town War Memorial and in Sherborne School Chapel.
- Francis Herbert Hodgson (1896-1918), born 11 March 1896 at Abbeylands. Attended Harrow School. Science Demyship, Magdalen College, Oxford. Medical student, St Mary's Hospital. WW1, Captain in RFC and RAF accidentally killed 19 November 1918, aged 22, whilst on a trial flight over Elincourt, France. Buried near Le Cateau in France. Remembered on Sherborne Town War Memorial and in Sherborne School Chapel.
- Cecil Roger Hodgson (1898), died 21 October 1898, aged 10 months. Buried in Sherborne town cemetery.
- Mary Verena Hodgson (1901-1905), died 23 June 1905, aged 3. Buried in Sherborne town cemetery.
- Douglas Kyrle Hodgson (1903), died 3 June 1903, aged 3 months. Buried in Sherborne town cemetery.

From 1900 to 1913 he lived at Abbey Grange, Hospital Lane, Sherborne.

In 1905, he was Master of Music for the Sherborne Pageant and trained the Pageant chorus.

In 1912, the School Governors granted Hodgson a 30 years lease for the use of the land to the north of the Sanatorium on which he could build a private dwelling house 'to provide accommodation for one or two bachelor Masters of a small family'. [The house was named Wharton, possibly after Hodgson's birthplace of Warton in Lancashire, where his father had been curate]. Wharton's was completed in Spring 1913 and in March 1913 Hodgson and his two sons moved in. By his will (proved 1922), Hodgson left Wharton and the residue of his estate (over £15,000) to the School Governors to provide Scholarships for the sons of Clergymen.

Charles Herbert Hodgson died on 30 March 1922 at Greenhill, Sherborne. He was buried on 1 April in the family plot in Sherborne cemetery alongside three of his children. The funeral service conducted by the Rev. H.R. King of Abbeylands.

