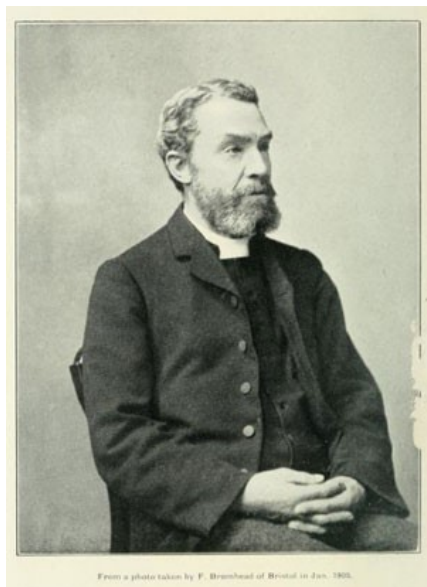


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Ley, Augustin (Rev) 1842 – 1911

Posted on [March 18, 2011](#) by [Chris](#)



From a photo taken by F. Bramhead of Bristol in Jan. 1905.

Augustin Ley's family had its origins in Devon. His father, William Henry, was Oxford educated and was, at one stage, Head Master of the Cathedral School in Hereford. Declining health meant that he resigned from the school and took on the incumbency of Sellack with King's Capel. These were contiguous parishes, near Ross, on opposite sides of the River Wye.

The vicarage at Sellack was to be Augustin Ley's home for the majority of his 69 years. Augustin and his elder brother, William Clement, were both educated there by their father. Augustin entered Christ Church, Oxford (as a scholar) and read Classics; during his time there he was awarded the Gaisford prize for Greek Prose. He was ordained in 1867, and his first curacy was at Buxton.

After some 4 years, he returned to the family home at Sellack in order to help his father with the care of the two parishes. From 1878 – 1885, he held his first incumbency at St. Weonard's, roughly half way between Hereford and Monmouth. He married in 1878, but shortly after returning from their honeymoon his wife (Sarah) contracted a chill and died (pneumonia). In 1885, he again returned to Sellack and assisted in parish duties there until his father's death where upon he succeeded his father as Vicar for the two parishes for a period of 21 years.

Ley's interest in natural history sprang in part from his father's interest in the natural world but also from contact with his uncle Augustin Prichard (a doctor and surgeon, based in Bristol). Augustin Prichard also contributed to an early Flora of the Bristol area. Ley's brother, William, developed an interest and expertise in meteorology.

During the time that Ley worked as assistant curate to his father, he began the systematic exploration of Herefordshire. Some time before this, W H Purchas had mapped out the country into some 14 districts to investigate the distribution of the flora of Herefordshire. The two men worked together for many years until the Flora was published in 1889, even though from 1870 Purchas was based in Staffordshire. The *Preface* to the Flora gives an account of how the work 'evolved' over this time.

Ley's trips across Herefordshire, the surrounding counties and the Welsh Borders can be 'followed' by examination of his sheets at the [Herbaria@Home](#) project. During these trips he collected specimens for both the Botanical Exchange Club and the Watson exchange Club, and his own herbarium (which eventually passed to the University of Birmingham). His many trips and the writing of material for the Flora clearly occupied much of his time, but after 1887 he began to offer papers to the *Journal of Botany* and other publications.

He contributed much to the botany of the genera *Rosa*, *Sorbus*, *Rubus*, *Hieracium* and *Ulmus*; and was always a keen bryologist. Further details of his botanical / bryological contributions may be accessed [here](#).

From various accounts, it would seem that not only was Ley assiduous in his clerical duties, and but also a

painstaking and generous botanist. The Rev. E F Linton wrote of “ his unfailing courtesy and good temper in any argument his thoughtfulness for others and persevering method in carrying out laborious investigations”.

In 1908, he resigned from his incumbency and moved to a cottage near Ross though he continued to help in local parishes when needed. He died on April 23rd 1911, after a painful illness.

Apart from his travels through Wales and the Border Counties, Ley visited the Tyrol, Norway, Switzerland, Normandy, Brittany and the Riviera; some of these visits were with his brother and father.

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2 Responses to *Ley, Augustin (Rev) 1842 – 1911*

David Price says:

August 9, 2014 at 8:53 am

Ley's wife, Sarah, was a du Buisson who were of Huguenot extraction; one branch of the family settled at Glynhir (properly Clunhir) near Llandybie, Carms., now an hotel well-known to members of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI). A useful link is <http://www.terrynorn.ic24.net/glynhir.htm>

Richard Herbert says:

June 23, 2014 at 2:47 pm

Hi, The spelling of 'Prichard' is incorrect here: 'uncle Augustin Pritchard (a doctor and surgeon, based in Bristol). Augustin Pritchard also contributed to an early Flora of the Bristol area. '

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