

# Vickerman family One-Name Study

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## June Whitfield

June Whitfield, one of Britain's best loved female comedy actresses, has a connection to the greater VICKERMAN family of Huddersfield.

June was born in London in 1925 and during WW2 she and her parents spent some time in Huddersfield and June took shorthand and typing qualifications.

June's paternal grandmother was Edith May VICKERMAN, b1871 in Huddersfield. Edith May's father was Herbert Vickerman, who was involved in a rather bizarre court case<sup>1</sup>

Herbert's father was Charles Vickerman<sup>2</sup>, b1821, in Marsden and *his* father, Thomas VICKERMAN (b c1786) was a cropper<sup>3</sup> in Marsden in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was at the time of the Luddites<sup>4</sup> and their murder of William Horsfall of Marsden.

June's paternal grandfather James McLanachan WHITFIELD (husband of Edith May VICKERMAN) b1869 Primrose Hill, was a Piano Forte & Master Instrument dealer as was his Scottish father, John WHITFIELD. It's believed that one or both of these men were the founders of Whitfields music shop in Huddersfield.



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<sup>1</sup> See next page for details of the court case with Herbert VICKERMAN

<sup>2</sup> See next page for details of Inquest on Charles VICKERMAN

<sup>3</sup> Croppers were highly skilled workers who were employed in the Cloth Finishing Process. Their skill meant that they could make or mar the finished piece of cloth.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'Luddite' was given to groups of workers in the Textile Industry who attacked and destroyed machines that they felt were threatening their jobs. The name Luddite came from groups of frame knitters in Nottinghamshire who sent threatening letters to Masters, signing them "Ned Lud" or "General Lud"

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understood that the plaintiff preferred to have his dog back to the payment of the £1 allowed.

**HILL v. VICKERMAN.**—John Hill, contractor, Huddersfield, sued Herbert Vickerman, commercial traveller, Water-street, Huddersfield, for £18 13s. 3d., the value of certain fixtures in a house let by plaintiff to the defendant. The defendant had paid £5 3s. into court for the value of fixtures admitted to have been agreed to be taken by the defendant. Mr. S. Learoyd appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr. R. Welsh for the defendant. The case was heard by a jury under the direction, as to law, of the Judge. According to the evidence of the plaintiff, in February, 1878, he let a house he had been residing in to the defendant, at the rental of £31 10s. per annum. Before taking the house the defendant looked it through, and asked plaintiff—who was going into a house of his own which he had just built—whether he was going to take the fixtures out of the house he was leaving to his new house. Plaintiff replied if he could arrange with defendant about them it would be better than taking them away. Defendant said he would take them at cost price, the plaintiff to sacrifice the cost he had been at in having them fixed. This was agreed to, and it being inconvenient for the defendant to pay for them just then, it was agreed that the payment should stand over for 12 months, and that defendant should pay him interest on the amount at five per cent per annum. The defendant had neither paid the rent or for the fixtures; the rent had to be distrained for, and the amount due for the fixtures and interest was now sued for. The actual cost of the fixtures, consisting of two chandeliers, two gas brackets, a passage lamp, and Venetian blinds for bedrooms, sitting-room, and kitchen, amounted to £17 15s. 6d.; the balance was for interest. According to the evidence of the defendant, he went through the house in which the plaintiff was residing in January, last year, but he heard of no fittings to be purchased, except gas fittings; he did not say he would purchase the venetian blinds. Subsequently he went with his wife one evening to look at the house. They went into the sitting-room and the kitchen. On that occasion he offered £5 for the sitting-room chandelier, two gas brackets, and a passage lamp, if he wished him to take them. Nothing was said about the blinds, so far as he heard. In the kitchen defendant saw a three-light chandelier, and remarked plaintiff might take that away, as a single pendant would do for him, to which plaintiff replied that he should not bother to have it taken down. The first time defendant heard of the claim for the blinds and the kitchen chandelier was on the day after he gave notice to leave the house. Mrs. Vickerman, wife of the defendant, confirmed her husband's evidence of the interview with the plaintiff on the evening when the offer was made of £5 for the fixtures he mentioned. She also added that after they entered the house, she asked the plaintiff one day, as he was passing, if he would mind putting them in a new venetian blind in the new bedroom, as the other blinds were his, and his reply was, "No, he would be at no more expense;" but when she asked if he would find a rod and a roller, he said he would. Eliza Armitage, charwoman, Crossland Moor, and Louisa Fearnley, domestic servant, gave evidence that one day, when they were cleaning the venetian blinds he swore at them considerably, said they would spoil his blinds, and he should have to put new tapes to them. His Honour, in addressing the jury, said it was mainly a question of veracity as between the unconfirmed statement of the plaintiff and the statement of the defendant, as confirmed by his wife, and supported by other two witnesses. He pointed out that the blinds would be made to fit the windows of the plaintiff's property, and if they did not chance to fit the windows of the next house occupied would be valueless to the defendant, and that it was hardly likely that the plaintiff would have gone and interfered with the blinds when being cleaned, saying they were spoiling his blinds, if he had parted with them by sale to the defendant. The two things were not consistent. The jury retired, and after a short absence returned, and gave a verdict for the defendant. His Honour allowed costs as well.

**THE "ALLAN" LINE.**—Referring to a recent announcement that tenders were being asked for the construction

## SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. CHARLES VICKERMAN.

### INQUEST AND VERDICT.

On Tuesday afternoon Mr. J. E. Hill, deputy county coroner, held an enquiry at the Radcliffe Arms, Almondbury, into the circumstances attending the death of Mr. Charles Vickerman (aged 73), retired mill manager, of the Common, Almondbury, who died suddenly on Saturday morning.

Evidence of identification was given by the daughter of the deceased (Mrs. Edwin Hartley, who resided with her husband, a commercial traveller, next door to her father). She said that the first time she heard of her father's illness was a week ago last Sunday, when he said he had been "out of sorts" for three or four days. She thought there was something wrong with his kidneys. On Sunday week he took some patent medicine, but she did not think he took any more of it subsequently, as he said he would not do so until he had communicated with the people who made it. He wrote to them on the Wednesday, and received a reply on the Friday morning stating that his was clearly a case of inflammation of the lining of the bladder, and that, although his age was against a speedy cure, they felt confident that he would derive benefit from their treatment. This included the taking of their preparation at intervals of three hours (five times per day).

The Deputy-Coroner pointed out that the prescription was signed by an M.D. of the United States, who had no right or title to prescribe in England. He thought it was a pity that Mr. Vickerman did not send for a professional man on the spot rather than run any risks.

Mrs. Hartley said that on the previous Tuesday she asked her father very, particularly to let her fetch a doctor. He replied that these people made a special study of such cases. He would try them, and if their treatment did not answer she might fetch a doctor. He told her at the breakfast table on Friday that his case was not regarded as a serious one, and neither he nor his family anticipated that it would have a fatal result. He asked her husband to get him the medicines, and these were found intact after his death, which took place suddenly at one o'clock on the Saturday morning before the arrival of Dr. Draper, who was sent for.

Dr. Draper, of Almondbury, in his evidence, said it was impossible to give the cause of death, but he should judge it was either a stroke or a weak heart. He had obtained an analysis of the patent medicine referred to, and found it contained 315 grains of saltpetre in 16 ounces of water. Saltpetre taken in such quantities would be deleterious and depressing, especially to an elderly man, and ought not to be taken except under personal medical supervision, and not as a result of advice by letter. There would be about one-eighth of the 16 ounces left in the old bottle, so that the deceased might have taken from 260 to 300 grains, but whether this had been done recently or not he could not say. The effect, however, would be very depressing on the system. The temperature of the body of the deceased when he arrived was 100 degrees, and this pointed either to fever before death, or a rise of temperature afterwards. The latter took place in cases of brain disease or of stroke, though deceased looked like a man who had died from his heart. At the same time he thought it was very dangerous for elderly people to tamper with these quack medicines.

The Deputy-Coroner hoped the Medical Defence Union would take the question up. He thought it was high time these quack nostrums which were to "cure all diseases incident to humanity" were exposed.

Dr. Draper said that in this case there was a letter of advice, and this, in the opinion of the union, was clearly practising.

The Deputy-Coroner added that a fee was received and a prescription sent. The public ought to be protected, and shown the great danger of people being prescribed for without being seen. He thought it was a very risky thing to do.

Dr. Draper commented on the insertion of quack medicine advertisements in the news columns of newspapers.

The jury ultimately returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."

The Deputy-Coroner hoped the result would be to stop the practice that had been alluded to, and thought the public should be grateful to Dr. Draper for the trouble he had taken in the matter.

Mr. Vickerman was well known in the town as an ardent Liberal and Congregationalist. He represented the Moadgreen Ward on the Huddersfield Town Council, from 1879 to 1882, and was also a useful member of the Board of Directors of the Huddersfield Equitable Building Society. His knowledge of cloth manufacture was both wide and deep, and the books published by him on the subject are recognised as standard works by those engaged in the staple industry of the district.