

WILLIAM HUBBARD

1804 – 1870

NOTES EXTRACTED FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY HUBBARD'S DESCENDANTS.

William Hubbard was apprenticed to a papier-mache manufacturer in London making the very attractive and fashionable items such as trays and inkstands inlaid with mother-of-pearl and painted with delicate flower designs. For a time he worked on textiles in Staffordshire but returned to Crayford to work for Swaisland's*, sometimes also staying in various country houses as a member of the family or special guest painting the whole family – life-size portraits and miniatures (these often of the children) – and painting views of the house from the estate grounds or gardens and portraits of their pets, dogs in particular. Unfortunately he was self-taught and never had the opportunity to attend an art school, so did not learn life drawing or anatomy, but he painted beautifully with good colouring and great feeling for the trees and flowers. He showed his paintings in the Grosvenor Gallery which until the last war was near the National Gallery. William always travelled to London by stage coach, refusing to go anywhere by train, saying trains were dirty, ugly and ruined the countryside.

On 4th May 1828 William married Mary Groser who was born at Crayford on 26th October 1804 and whose mother's maiden name was Woodland. Her father was of French Huguenot extraction. Mary was passionately fond of flowers and was a great gardener. She would bring in lovely flowers and William would make his designs from them.

Mary and William had five daughters. William supported his family by working for Swaisland as a designer, and teaching in evening schools in Crayford.

Mary died in 1869 at home, then at Bexleyheath, and William died 1870 in Islington, having moved there to be near one of his daughters.

*William also worked for William Tagg, a textile printer in Crayford, whose premises Charles Swaisland took over in 1832. Tagg left William Hubbard (referred to as a pattern drawer) £1,000 in his will.