

MURDER OF SHIRLEY ALLEN 4th May 1957 - End note

The story of the murder of Shirley Allen on the 4th May 1957 is recorded in the transcripts of the trial of her murderer. What happened after Günther Wiora was sent to prison for 12 years for her manslaughter was left unrecorded, but the attached letters and this brief note give a small window into this part of the story. Shirley was buried in All Saints Churchyard in the grave of her grandmother (A 157). It stands on the east side of the path from the south door to the lower churchyard gate. The wording on the grave states

"In loving memory of Harriet Elizabeth PENGELLY,
who passed on 16 Feb 1939, aged 72 years."

"Also of Shirley Marguerite ALLEN
granddaughter of the above,
departed this life 4 May 1957, aged 24."

According to the Kelly's Directories, her parents moved away from Alpha Road, Birchington in 1971, to an unknown destination.

Günther Wiora was sent to jail for 12 years on a charge of manslaughter (not murder), as he pleaded diminished responsibility at the time of the murder. It was realised that it was unpremeditated and was a crime of passion, regretted immediately it had been done.

On the 25th June 1981, Wiora wrote to the then vicar of All Saints Church, asking if he could give Günther the date of Shirley's birth. The Vicar passed the letter to the Parish Archivist, Mr Alfred Walker, who checked the Baptism register, but found nothing. In the burial register for 1957 it simply gave Shirley's age as 24 that year. This gave her a probable birth date of 1933. The copy of the reply is held in the Church archives, along with a copy of Günther's letter. The original of this is still held in the papers belonging to Alfred Walker and is now in the hands of his son-in-law Mr Peter Lington at Somali Farm.

The address on Günther's letter is:- Gloucester House, Broadmoor, Crowthorne, Berkshire. It would appear that this was possibly a 'half-way house' between leaving prison and finally integrating back into society.

Sometime after 1981, Günther Wiora moved back to the area where he had shared the flat with Shirley Allen all those years ago. His address by then was 42 Queen's Gardens, Paddington, London W2. He was possibly attending the local church, St James's in Paddington, and got to know the curate the Rev. G. M. Buckle. Günther died in Paddington on the 27th August 1991, aged 68, and in late November that year, the Rev. Fred Smale was approached by a member of the Clergy from St James's Church, to say that in his will, Günther had asked if it were at all possible, he would dearly love his ashes to be interred in Shirley's grave.

Strange though this request may sound, it certainly backs up the evidence that was uncovered at the trial, which suggests that he loved the girl very much and deeply regretted his action the moment he had done it, continuing to suffer for it for the rest of his life. Because no contact had been made by Shirley's parents since they left Birchington in 1971, Mr Smale agreed to Günther's request. The curate, Rev. G. M. Buckle, brought the ashes to Birchington on December 12th in 1991. In a quiet ceremony late that afternoon the ashes were interred in Shirley's grave in All Saints' churchyard.