

Alderman William Tombs, of College Farm (b.1882, d.3/10/1966)

William Tombs born in 1882 had a remarkable career. His father was a labourer and had nine children. William left school at the age of ten. He began on a farm, leading the plough horses, and was later apprenticed to the gardener at Shotover. Later he managed to acquire a market garden, and subsequently College Farm. He regularly won prizes for his allotment, and in the local Horticultural Society Show (10 in 1905 and 12 in 1906).

William was determined to improve his education and attended Evening School throughout his twenties. His public spirit and the respect of the community are illustrated by the positions he held: in the early days of Local Government he was a member of the Wheatley Urban District Council and, later, Chairman of the Wheatley Parish Council, a Manager of the local Primary School, and a governor of the Secondary Modern School. His career of public service culminated in his being elected an Alderman of Oxfordshire.

In 1951 there was a dinner in honour of Alderman Tombs at The Merry Bells, celebrating his forty years in local government. In replying to the tributes he said: 'I claim that we have saved the ratepayers thousands of pounds..... water costs the cottager an average of 2 pence or 3 pence a week, far less than it would cost to repair a pump when it went wrong. We have street lighting, and good roads - and there will be other improvements as time goes on.' In spite of his County responsibilities, Alderman Tombs always found time to support village activities such as the allotment and smallholding associations, the Benefit Society and various charities.

William Tombs was admitted to the Oxford District of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society on 6th June 1938.

William Tombs married Fanny who died 29/10/1959. They had a daughter, Dorothy (now resident in the Triangle Nursing Home in 2006), and a son, William Henry.

William Henry Tombs had a successful Coal Merchant's business by the railway station. In his spare time he was an enthusiastic cricketer. He married Emily Hilda Bricknell of Horspath, who still lives in Church Road. They had two sons: William David b. 1963, Alan Raymond, b.1964 and a daughter Susan Elizabeth b.27/12/73.

Alderman William Tombs died 13 October 1966.