

## Morland House - the first Vicarage

The large house on the north-east corner of Holloway Road, now the Morland House Surgery, was originally built in 1850 for the first Vicar of Wheatley, the Rev. Edward Elton. The Elton's were followed in 1884 by Rev. Charles Firmstone, in 1889 by Rev. Arthur Sturges and then, in 1907, by the Rev. W.D. B. Curry and his family. The new, smaller, Vicarage in London Road, at the back of the church, was built c. 1925 and first lived in by Rev. Maurice Bell and his family.

The original vicarage remained Church property but was re-named The Glebe. It was let to a retired clergyman, Rev. Fox, and his wife.

In 1927, Rev. S.J.S. Groves was appointed vicar after Rev. Maurice Bell. He had three young children and employed a nursemaid, so he found the new Vicarage too small. They vacated it and moved into The Glebe which again became the Vicarage. Mr Groves came from a wealthy brewing family in Weymouth, and could afford to run a large house. The new, smaller, Vicarage was let to a Mr and Mrs Hancock, friends of Maurice Bell.

In 1933 Rev. John Bowles was appointed Vicar, and moved into the new Vicarage. The Hancock therefore, had to move out, and they built a house at the top of Ladder Hill, now called New Place. Their daughter, Joan, ran an upmarket tea shop in Thame for several years.

In due course, Mr and Mrs Fane moved into The Glebe, and re-named it Morland House. Mrs Fane was born Violet Morland, a member of the Oxford brewing family, and the house was named after her family. A. J Fane was the treasurer of the Merry Bells from 1938 (or earlier) to 1947 (or later). When their sons and daughter had grown up, Mr and Mrs Fane moved across the road into Westland House, on the opposite side of Hollow Way. Morland House was then sold to Oxfordshire County Council.

At the beginning of the Second World War, Morland House was used by the army for a while. Later, the County Council used it as a children's home.

The doctors' practice bought the property in the 1980s.