

DIARY OF REV.E.ELTON, 1850-84

Property of Lord Elton. Extracts with quotations from Elton's memoirs.

1850

May 6 ...Saw Mr Lamb mark out the site for the house, which is to begin tomorrow...
(A dilapidated parsonage existed in the street, wholly unfit for use, indeed land had been bought above the village intended for the site of the future Vicarage)

May 7 ...The Training College for School Masters is likely to be built at Wheatley... (On the site of the Manor House, abandoned in favour of Culham. The Bishop bought it from the disintegrating Whalley-Smythe-Gardiner estate and resold it to Squire Henley of Waterperry for demolition. He turned it into cottages. The descent of Sir James W.S. Gardiner from Sebastian Smythe is shown by Montagu Burrows[his son-in-law] in *Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire.*)

May 23 ...the bishop... came to lay the stone of the house at Wheatley... (Moreland House, now a County Council Home. Wilberforce offered Elton the incumbency in 1849 and 'told me it was one of the worst places in the diocese.')

July 1 ..Drove to Charlton.. .to attend an Inclosure Meeting.. .the village on borders of Otmoor...

1851

Feb. 21 ...Slept at Crown Inn...
(Now flats, but a pulley for lifting bags off coaches is illustrated below, see p. 167. Its ample stables are demolished. Isolated by the new turnpike it tried to retain custom *via* the 'Crown Tap' [the Doctor's House], but its licence passed to the 'Railway Tavern.')

July 8 .. First waggon of goods left early for Wheatley...
(I remained two years longer at Bierton poor and trying as that place was that the Vicarage might be built.)

July 12 ...After breakfast [at Holton] all our party came over to take possession of our new house at Wheatley...

July 20 ...Very good congregation at Church. At this time great numbers of very small frogs seen on the paths...

July 22 ...Walked with the children to Shotover house, a very fine old Mansion about 14 mile distant. The gardens & lawns are beautiful. There are some splendid old limes...

July 23 ...Most violent thunder storm towards evening which causes quite a flood in the brook & kept the people from Church...

- Aug 6 ...Walked to Cuddesdon and attended the re-opening of the Church which has been restored in a very complete manner...
- Aug 14 ...Walked to Horsepath a pretty walk over a common with heath and fern. Near the village yellow ochre is dug of a very superior sort...
(Wheatley had a paint factory in the bam of Mulberry Court. It rivalled pigstyes in evoking complaints about smell.)
- Aug 20 ...Went... to see the curious remains of a Roman villa on Wheatley hill, on a very elevated point. They contain the usual plan of a house and are now secured by a shed...
(Later it was wantonly destroyed)
- Oct 10 ...Planted some large shrubs bought from Old Manor House...
- Oct 12 ...The Wheatley Feast began today, a sad time of drunkenness. A badger baiting intended. Notice of it given to the constables...
- Oct 13 ...Much drunkenness & badger baiting at feast. Sent information to Society for preventing cruelty...
(Under an act of 1835 the S.P.C.A. suppressed bull which had taken place for over 200 years and badger baiting, its attempted substitute;
E. S. Fairholme, *A Century of Work for Animals* 1924, p.79)
- Oct 15 ...The badger killed-
- Oct 17 ...A constable here taking evidence about badger baiting-
(Rude sports lingered here as in their last resort...Before this the custom was at the feast or at Whitsuntide to parade a bull through the streets covered with ribbons and during the next day to bait him tied to a stake i.e. every one who had a savage dog was allowed to let him loose at this bull. This was done in the old quarry and a brutal scene it was.)
- Nov 6 ...Typhus fever in the village...
- Dec 9 ...The railway threatened through our garden...
- Dec 27 ...Walked to Wheatley Gate...
(East of Wheatley Bridge)
- 1852
- Jan 2 ...Many people unemployed...
- Jan 11 ...Last week began weeding and levelling the quarry...
(i.e. in the Vicarage grounds, now Moreland House)

- Jan 12 ...Violent rain which has swollen our brook into a river...
 ('A sluggish stream of water ran through the main stream, after a storm it quickly turned into a flood and kept visitors out of the place, In 1919, a torrent 3ft. deep swept down the High St.)
- Feb 8 ...the Constable for the hundred appointed yesterday he is to love at Wheatley...
 ('The brother of our present Bishop lived here with a private tutor, he told me at that time his tutor never went out without pistols...fighting between men was frequent but the establishment of the police has entirely stopped it and the place is very quiet.')
- March 14...Walked on Wheatley Common...
 Formerly on edge of Shotover given in lieu of Forest rights)
- March 16...Some fossil bones dug up in blue clay 8 ft. down on wheatley hill, they are probably those of a gigantic lizard...
- Apr. 15 ...Drove Margaret to Thame, attended meeting in favour of the Railway...
- Sept 8. ...Rode to see the farm at Charlton on Otmoor. The tenant appears to be getting it in order...
 (Wheatley glebe farm)
- Oct. 18 ... The first day of the village feast.
- Oct. 19 ...*Had* a constable from London to prevent badger baiting.
- Dec. 8 ...The wet season has caused much fever of a typhus character...
- 1853
- Feb. 17 ...Vestry meeting on the subject of Mid West Railway...
- Aug. 6 ...Miss Earle gave a fete at Shotover to the children of our schools about 120 were present with others from Forest Hill...
 (Mrs. Elton's aunt, tenant at Shotover.
- Sept. 18...Last Sunday before school master comes, school chiefly under myself... (I was annoyed by having some of the most respectable children of the place – children of the Bishop's butler – passing up every day in Cuddesdon and thereby passing a reflection on ours, I asked the Incumbent Mr., now Archdeacon, Pott to forbid their coming but he evaded this. The payments being 6d. were valuable and he could not give them up. I then stated the case fully to the Bishop but could not move him...my next step was to bring the case before the rural deanery, Mr. Pott being actually rural dean...Mr. Pott was obliged to yield.')

1854

Aug. 21...Walked to Cuddesdon saw the Bishop, at his wish determined to attempt rebuilding the church...

(‘The church built so recently as 1795 was of such a hopeless conventicle pattern.’
‘With diminutive chancel, great round-headed windows and hipped roof of slate; in fact nothing but a tower to distinguish it in outward appearance from a meeting house.’ *Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the Neighbourhood of Chford*, 1846, p300. See plate 71)

Feb. 15 ...Wheatley separated from paying Church rates to Cuddesdon... (‘Wheatley had been taken out of the Parish of Cuddesdon during the Incumbency of... Seeker... & up to the time of my coming had some connecting links with the Mother Church-these have now happily since entirely severed.’

February and March were cold and the students of the new Theological College skated at Shotover 'wearing fez caps, coloured ties, and smoking short clay pipes.' Edward King, then curate, had to complain of consequent disquiet in the new parish. See O. Chadwick, *Founding of Cuddesdon*, 1954, p.28.)

Dec. 2 ...Petition for faculty for taking down Church put on door...

(‘The Bishop...told me that if I obtained a faculty from his court...the actual consent of the vestry was needless...It was from its technicalities difficult to read and for the people to construe, and the chief point was evident...the opponents must...make themselves responsible for all costs, a very wholesome condition...’ The only legible tombstones left in the old church yard are those of the Cooper family, Mary Waine and William Saunders.)

1856

Oct. 9 ...At a vestry carried a vote to cover over the brook & make the village street good. A poll was demanded to last two [days] at which I have, alas, to be present...

Oct. 14 ... Attended vestry telling votes 11 AM till 4.

Oct. 15 ...Again occupied in taking votes. The plan for improving the village street was carried by a majority of 21-...

Oct. 29 ...Engineers came to examine the brook...

Dec. 23 ...Rode to Horspath. The roads of inclosure are being made and fences completed...

Dec. 27 ...Our two organs taken away to be exchanged for a good barrel organ on payment of £28...

1857

Jan. 6 ...Attended meeting of School trustees at Cuddesdon Palace where a proposed plan for rebuilding the Schools was adopted & hope held out of it's speedy fulfilment.

Jan. 7 ...Mr Morrell called and gave me the admirable site proposed for the Schools...
(One day passing the present site, then garden, its fitness suddenly struck me. It belonged to a very rich person, a brewer, not a man to be moved by a direct appeal from me. I accordingly stated the case to the Bishop as Chairman of Bp. Moss's trust and asked if he could apply to the owner for permission to buy half for the new school. An intimation came in reply that he would come out and see the spot which he did...He generously gave the whole garden of an acre.)

Jan. 9 ...Heard that the brook can be covered under Health of Towns Act...

Jan. 21 ...Rode to Waterpeny to get Mr Henley's support for schools...
(He has resigned from being trustee when Elton defeated his 'fussy interference' with holding services in the upper room of the former school's 'wretched building.' I have had no, further trouble with school trustees.)

March 10...Inspector from the Board of Health held an enquiry today & forwarded the plans of those who desire the improvement of the place...
(Until water was covered by a suitable drain and the street placed in a decent state, it was useless to expect much improvement in the habits of the people.)

March 11...Much earth carted into the pit to form a garden & improve the field...

April 1 ...School trustee meeting. Preparations made for building.
(In a very complete way at a cost of £1000. I availed myself of an offer from the Government to double whatever was given by residents within five miles.)

"May 28 ... Signed contract for schools...

June 2 ...Whit Tuesday preached to Club & dined at King's Arms...
(At the junction of Back St. [now Church Rd.] and the Turnpike.)

June 10 ...Great day for Wheatley, tolerably fine and pleasant. Church Consecrated, two Bishops present & large Company. Dined in the Field. Collected £83.1.3...
(I alone was responsible. Not even churchwardens joined in with me and the money in all about £3,500 was raised mainly in small sums. I believe I wrote about 5000 letters...The balance of £500 I myself paid. Materials were only £150. Much of the money collected in small sums less than £1. A good deal given by late and present members of University.)

Sept. 11...The new schools are advancing well...

Oct. 20 ...There is much fever in the place.

Nov. 7 ..Received the Gazette announcing that the Wheatley Board of Health had been appointed.

Nov. 24...Notice of opposition on the part of some of the persons nominated by Mr. Gammie. (For some years Shotover was owned by a person who had made a rapid fortune in Australia and who would have been a very prosperous man at home had he avoided speculations, but these in course of about 14 years brought him to ruin. He was a man very desirous at all times to assert his right.' The tale of a labourer's revenge for a whipping by him is remembered.)

Nov. 30...40 lads at night school...

(An earlier attempt at night school failed ; E.P.Baker, *Bishop Wilberforce's Visitation Returns*, 1854, p.160.

Dec. 3 ...The Election of a Board of Health makes us busy...

(Some of the old and prejudiced people of the place did all in their power to hinder our object...The next point was the election of nine members, and great cautions were used by both parties, between those who desired and those who felt themselves against all improvement. On looking over the Schedule respecting the election hung on the church door I discovered in smaller print as it happened and underneath the main directions, a note informing the readers that those persons who occupied their own freehold houses had double votes. I thought this might not be observed by our opponents active though they were and I quietly directed all friends to fill their double claims and this was done. The result was that whereas it was supposed the numbers on both sides were nearly equal, our opponents failing to apprehend this chance were defeated by a large majority.)

Dec. 10 ...A sharp contest ended in the return of our friends entirely. Dined at the Palace...

1858

Apr. 23 ...Today it was settled at Board of Health meeting to begin the improvement forthwith...

Aug. 30 ...E.K[ing] gave up the curacy here although as a neighbour we often hope to have his valuable help...
(Principal of Cuddesdon and bishop of Lincoln)

1859

Feb. 28...Fox killed by South Oxon. hounds in Wheatley. The Prince was present (Wales)...

March 15...At Vestry Church rate granted without opposition.

1860

Aug. 22 ...Heard of my election as Guardian of the poor for Wheatley at Headington Union. I was proposed by Mr Gammie and a contest ensued, which ended thus,

E.E[ltan] 29

J.P.FRampton 18-11

22 did not vote.

(Last Wheatley man to wear a smock. Wheatley was a centre for smockmaking.)

Aug. 23...Gave a large school feast to children, nearly 230 paraded the street with a band, just as we were going to table placed in field, heavy rain drove us to school, where after some bustle all passed very well...

Aug. 4 ... Attended at Thame a meeting called to promote the railway extension to Oxford, a line proposed passing just on the South side of Wheatley, through Littleworth by tunnel to Horspath and thence over Cowley crossing river near Iffley & joining G. W.R.. The line seemed much approved.

(The press reported that Elton 'supported the line also upon religious grounds, because he believed the establishment of a railway had a beneficial influence in raising the character of the people. He felt quite sure the character of Wheatley would be raised by the establishment of a railway.' E.F.Murray, civil engineer on the late Mr. Brunel's staff told a select committee in 1861 that building stone, bricks and recently found iron ore should cause considerable traffic. No landowners opposed the line. House of Lords Record Office, vol. 81, Evidence 1861, Group 6, Wycombe Extensions Railway Bill, 30 Ap. 1861. The accompanying plans show that G. Gammie let the Howe in strips to 16 tenants including 5 different Munts. A plan of Littleworth shows the owners and occupiers of all 26 cottages there.)

Aug. 6 ...Drove to Stokenchurch 12 miles distant. The beechwoods on the hill are lovely, but those on the common are cut down since the inclosure and the village looks bare and poverty stricken. Most of the people make beech chairs, and you see parts of them in piles and on hedges...

Sept. 13...Went to see a cricket match at Cuddesdon between Wheatley and Cuddesdon choirs...

Nov. 19. Wombwell's menagerie exhibited in village. Took the children. A crowd in evening, but good show of animals, fine male elephant, 3 old 3 young lions, Bengal tiger, many leopards, white & black bears & various animals.

Nov. 20...Heard of the intention of the Company to bring the Railroad to Wheatley. A large staff of Engineers at work.

Dec. 18...Mr Gammie a Church Warden aide me giving away charity in clothing...

Dec. 25...Gave several poor a dinner...

1861

Jan. 10...A very fine badger lately killed on Shotover Hill, there are several other animals in the ochre pits, a tolerably safe retreat...

April 12...Duty at Headington Quarry. This Church is lofty and spacious and of devotional character. The village a strange collection of cottages in pits. (At a convenient walking distance, and socially akin, Quarry was a traditional source of Wheatley brides.)

July 29...Cricket match between Wheatley Club and Cuddesdon College & parish, the former beat in one inning...

1862

Jan. 4 ...Rode to Oxford to attend Committee of farmers anxious to start a Conservative Candidate at the election.

Jan. 15 ...Dismissed ringers with Church Warden for bad behaviour...

Feb. 24 ...Night school recommended...

April 22...Easter vestry appointed Mr Gammie and Mr Rose Churchwardens... (' Mr Gammie... was anxious to alter the rating of the parish and in his capacity as churchwarden he could have influence. He filled the office for 2 years and...made himself very unpopular...I did not wish to annoy him by putting him aside...The School master came to tell me several malcontents were come to the Vestry evidently meaning mischief...Mr G. was easily offended, he had originally taken the office at my request and would soon be very disagreeable if he found himself not elected...Intimating to a friend to propose Mr. Rose as parish warden, this disconcerted the enemy...so Mr. Rose was elected nem.con... I quietly nominated Mr. Gammie as my warden in Mr. Rose's place...Mr. Rose being a singularly quiet man...I knew that Mr. G. would not feel that he was less influential than before.')

May 6 ...Drove to Thame & saw the Railway Station in course of erection...

Aug. 6 ...Alice's birthday. 19 today. Went on a picnic with a large party from Holton in 3 carriages to Stokenchurch hills-stopped by the furious rain for an hour at the '3 Pigeons.' Got on to 'Lambert Arms,' where had our luncheon instead of under the open air. Walked to Aston Rowant House, & then climbed one [of the] hills, covered with dwarf juniper. From hence a splendid view over the plain below, now full of the richest corn ready for harvest. A fine evening. We got home before 8 P.M...

Aug. 15...School feast. Very unfortunate the rain much marred the pleasure of it-220 children entertained from the 3 schools. Procession through the street. Banners and band. Prizes given-cakes & teas...

Oct. 9 ...The railroad is now begun in earnest. Upwards of 100 men near here. Embankment began near the village-
(They fetched buckets of spirits on yokes from the 'King and Queen.')

Nov. 15...Drove Horspath to Cuddesdon. Passed over a new bridge made over railroad at former place, there are large excavations already made...

Nov. 21...The railroad rapidly advances near the village...

Nov. 23...Read the Bible in School at night with men...

Nov. 28...Night school has now an average of about 22 boys.
(An account of the Night School by Margaret Elton is printed in *Church Times*, 24 Sept. 1954, p.716.)

1863

Jan. 3 ...Mr Cooke dined here, walked with him & the girls to see the Roman Villa on Wheatley hill looking towards Milton...the bricks are admirable now, the remains are chiefly baths & good masonry...
(Vicar of Beckley)

Jan. 18 ...Temporary road opened at Cuddesdon hill...

Feb. 23 ...to Littleworth, saw the engine drawing a line of carriages going to & fro, repeatedly up & down from the cutting to end of embankment, making an immense saving labour-...

March 29...Walked down the line from Cuddesdon hill east. The line & solidly made about a mile...

March 31...Walked to Littleworth, saw steam saw, cutting through timber like cake. In the evening a great rarity brought to me, a genuine & splendid wild cat, male, caught last night in Holton wood.. It looks like a small tiger, a brown yellow with stripes, length 3U/2inches weight 9% lbs. It has been seen before in the wood. Was caught by leg & then killed. There is about 1000 acres of woodland more or less connected but the keeper had not seen one before. It is really a great prize. Mr. Tyndale gave it to me for stuffing.

April 12...Walked...along the line east & over a temporary bridge across the river...

April 19...Walked on line by Littleworth. The digging is now advanced abreast of Brownsell's house in blue Oxford clay...

April 20...Heard today from an old resident that wild cats were found in the Quarters years ago, deep woods connected with Holton Wood...

May 14 ...Field of the Bishop's near Combe wood found full of iron ore...

- May 19 ...Walked on hill & by Littleworth, saw iron stone in various parts (Commercial exploitation proved financially disappointing)
- May 20 ...Saw the iron materials of great size made for the river by railway maker. Immense girders resting on cylinders.
- May 27 ...Drove to Oxford to meet the Bishop about his iron ore. He missed by making a mistake as to day...
- May 28 ...Mr. Smith, medical officer here, long ago insane, attempted suicide today had to be taken to asylum, a great boon to the poor. Long unfit for post... ('Of great personal influence among the people...He had neglected a woman whom he attended, coming to her in a drunken state. As she died, I thought it needful that an inquest should be heard. This gave dire offence...When I was going to church he insulted me in a very gross manner...I had planted a number of trees in the pleasure grounds and fields which were so sadly bare... about 150 of these were cut down just as they were beginning to grow...I had reason to believe that a man had been paid by this drunkard...He having committed suicide during a drunken quarrel with his wife...I declined to perform the funeral service over him... Some of the family threatened me with legal proceedings but nothing came of it... This refusal had a good effect on the people.')
- June 1 ...Walked on Shotover to see iron stone in ochre pit...It appears sandy & defective as compared with that at Combe wood...
- June 4 ...Dr. Cogan appointed Medical Officer pro: tern: a great blessing to all the poor, who have been sadly neglected...
- June 31 ...Nightschool began for navvies
- Aug. 7 ...to the tunnel, saw the place for brick making, the deep cuttings and bringing up of earth from tunnel. Much progress is made.
- Sept. 2 ...The scripture reader came & stationed at Thame...I chaplain to the railwaymen.
- Sept. 14 ...Professor Bell, writer of British quadrupeds, pronounces from a photograph the wild cat now stuffed & in my collection to be genuine specimen of true wild cat...
- Oct. 23 ... Scripture reader at work on railroad...
- Nov. 23...Mr, Bevan came to see the iron ore and was highly pleased with it. He proposes at once to try experiments upon it with the view of possibility of working the ore.
- Dec. 27 ...A large steam engine brought here last night stuck in the road going to Littleworth & will not easily be moved

1864

Jan. 8 ...Works on the railway embankment carried on day & night...

Jan. 22 ...Bishop held a confirmation in our Church. 77 candidates among whom Louisa received the rite with others from Waterperry, Holton & Albury. 32 from Wheatley...

Feb. 1 ...At night an entertainment given to navvies etc. at School room. A large number came & very good behaviour...

March 1 Fire in 2 mills on Wheatley hill, both burnt down

March 11...Embankment of line goes on night & day, nearly carried on to Swerford lane...

April 30...To station & to Holton, the former almost finished...

June 21 ... School feast delayed on account of Mrs. Henley's funeral...

Nov. 14 ...I have an ammonite very perfect found in Littleworth cutting about 9 inches in diameter...

1865

Feb. 1 ...Louey went to school from station here and under the care of the Bishop who happened to be going...

Feb. 2 ...to Garsington. On this high road snow was 6 feet deep...

Feb. 22 ...Met a Master from Deddington to take an apprentice from Curzon charity...

Feb. 27 ...Diocesan Inspector visited our 3 schools during the day & made a veiy good report...

March 14...Board of Health. Steps to be taken to widen the road through the village by post office.
(Then at junction of High St. and road to station.)

April 6... Attended board of guardians for last time. Withdrew for the present from a contest, this year being much contention...

April 10...Mr. Lamb came here to see the house which he built in reference to its enlargement...
(By throwing a floor over the kitchen and offices thus gaining about five rooms and making the house really comfortable.)

May 5 ...Telegraph station about to be opened at Wheatley. One pole put up in our allotments...
('As soon as telegraph wire was carried along turnpike road I applied for an office with the place which we obtained. Afterwards this was transferred to post office and now is in full working order.' Automatic telephone came in 1953.)

May 10 ...Went to see Mr. Street about the spire...

May 15 ..Board of Health gave stone for spire-from pit...

June 28...Much engaged in trying to prevent an attempt to stop a public path to Shotover...
(I felt obliged to take it up and wrote courteously [to Mr. Gammie] To this I got a refusal in a curt note and correspondence of an unpleasant nature ensued. I most fully explained the facts and gave an extract from the Inclosure Award which laid this path down as Public and required that it should be stoned and of a certain breadth.)

July 7 . ..Yesterday established the fact at the Board of Health meeting of the right of way to Shotover.
(At last he was obliged to allow the truth and to admit that the path should be kept open. Although on the occasion his behaviour was rude and un gentlemanly he immediately afterwards made up the quarrel at my instance and we parted friends.)

July 27 ..Crops ready for sickle...

Oct. 24 ... Second delivery of letters began today...
(I made a succesful application for second delivery at 3.20. Now the postman uses a tricycle, leaving at 9.45 and returning from Oxford at 2.30.)

Nov. 1 ..Dined at Crown with Protection of Property Society...

1866

April 29...Received the loan of £180 from Queen Ann's Bounty...
('The work was finished except for the papering when one day just on the hill above the village I met the Bishop of London..! thought I might tell the Bishop my case...if I would tell him details when my case was coming on he would do what he could for me. This I did and without the slightest trouble succeeded.')

May 3 ...great day of Concert and success. The proceeds of about £30 for the Church spire.

- July 20 ...Heard Mr. Davenport had come to terms with Mr. Hedges about some money from the fund discovered by Mr. De Rosey connected with the church here...
 (I received a strange letter having a foreign appearance signed by a person calling himself 'Chevalier of the Court of Paris' telling me he knew of money belonging to the Church which he would obtain for me if I would give him 37 per cent...I remembered there was a law suit connected with the Church...£800 belonging to that cause was actually in Court of Chancery... The giver had left the residue of his personal estate to build the church but... this had been revoked by the action of the Bishop, Churchwarden and Incumbent who about 1785 came to a compromise with the next of kin and agreed to be satisfied with the sum of £4000... The only hope came from the next of kin... One representative was a very respectable lawyer at Wallingford [Hedges]. To whom I applied, told him I had documents of value, which I would give if he would pay my costs in case he got anything from them. He took the matter up.. and obtained £600...Very little came to individuals. He did however give me £10.10 for the Church and repaid my costs of £30...')
- Aug. 6 ...Meeting of Board of Health & precautions taken against attacks of cholera. Efficient inspection ordered.
 (By 1882 the lower death rate at Wheatley encouraged settlers though the ill- fed had typhoid in 1894. Littleworth was connected with sewer in 1951)
- Aug. 21 ...Meeting of Board of Health , leave given to Contractor of Spire to put up sheds in the quarry...
- Dec. 28 ...Today signed contract with Mr. Holland of Thame for Church Spire. He begins on Monday digging stone...
- 1867
- Jan 7 ...Much troubled with other trustees in the distribution of charities...
- Jan. 11 ... A good many poor out of employment...
- Jan. 23 ...To Littleworth and made a will for a poor man-...
- Feb. 11 Wombwell's large menagerie came here for the night stationed in the short road connecting upper & lower road near 'Crown' & exhibited in evening...
- Feb. 16 ...Walked by windmill...
- Feb. 18 ...Riot at night school here, several expelled...
- Feb. 23 ...Saw stone already dug in quarry for Spire. It is of excellent quality and turning out well. Stone here is of 2 sorts of freestone...

- April 2...Meeting of Board of Health. Claims of Mr. Chillingworth to waste found to be none...
 (...as I was passing the ruined pound, now no longer used, I saw a man digging...and asked him by whose orders he was working. He said 'By those of the Lord of the Manor' who had let the ground to him and that he was to pay no rent for two years.
 ..On perusing the Inclosure Award I found a certain piece of ground was set apart for Sir J. Gardiner in lieu of his rights as Lord of the Manor, to any claim of waste...The case was too clear to admit of doubts.)
- April 30...Application to be made to Court of Chancery this term in re Sims bequest...
- May 10 ...Mr. Street, architect, came down today to inspect stone and make final arrangements for the Spire building. Walked to Shotover. Stile at the old Wheatley pathway replaced.
- May 19 ...Disturbed this morning by account of the house having been broken into. The thieves broke through larder window, broke lock & so into passage, kitchen and pantry. They eat a great deal. Stole 5 silver dessert forks, tops of cruet stand, small cruet, silver fork, thimble etc.-The police quickly came and taken the search in hand. I expect the thieves are from the place, they brought few or no tools.
 ('A thief had evidently been groping his way in the dark up the ['back'] staircase...when he reached the floor above, and had violently struck his head on the floor above.')
- May 20 ..Police active in the place-had window guarded by bar...
- May 30 ...Balliol "oak" door bought at sale, put on our staircase...
 ('And with this protected in like manner the front stairs so that we are practically fortified against a like visit upstairs.')
- Oct. 25 ...Meeting Curzon Charity sub: Committee, also of Town Meadow trustees, who came to the important resolution to allow all poor inhabitants to be eligible and not merely the settled poor...
- Nov. 6 ..Dined at Wheatley Protection of Property meeting at die 'Crown'...
- Dec. 20 ...Gave away coal & clothes tickets. Margaret nearly started her soup kitchen scheme.
- Dec. 24 ...Soup given out to a number of families...
- Dec. 27 ...Soup given out with great success to a vast number...
- Dec. 31 ...Gave out soup 314 hours engaged in giving out charity monet to more than 100 families...

1868

Jan. 24 ...Soup kitchen crowded...

Feb. 12 ...Foundation stone of solid part of tower prepared...

Feb. 21 ...Soup kitchen very efficient

Feb. 24 ...Crowded concert and reading tonight. 300 present. Great success. £4.3 taken...

Feb. 27 ...Today the weather cock was put on the spire...

(Delays to building the spire prompted wits to suggest that the Round House should be used as such.)

April 2 ...At Headington meeting of Guardians ordered that Wheatley be described as a parish and not as a Chapelry or hamlet...night school supper...

May 16 ...Decided today before magistrates Wheatley should be called a parish & so treated and her Churchwarden should act with overseer as in time past. I have thus succeeded in a matter occupying much time & of some importance to the parish... (In 1894 Wheatley obtained an Urban District Council. This was abolished on the formation of the Bullingdon Rural District.)

June 2 ...Whitsuntide Club...dined at Crown

Dec .28 ... Soup kitchen began...

1869

Jan. 18 ...Drove Wm. Hathaway of St. Ebbes to see the field we hold in common at Rycote, the rent of which we think insufficient. It is a field near turnpike about 22 acres-and of good land worth £2.5/- an acre at least...

Feb. 12 ...Edmunds large show of wild beasts came here. At night and amid great dirt we...saw it...

Feb. 13. ...Great flood. The water across the road at Wheatley bridge which I never saw before...

March 19...Last soup kitchen...

May 18 ...Whit Tuesday. Club service-dined at 'King's Arms.'

Aug. 24 ...Dined at Forester's Court, Wheatley...

Nov. 1 ..Meeting Board of Health for putting up telegraph poles on road...

- 1870 ..
- Jan. 2 .Buried my poor old parishioner Geo. Munt, he thought himself 93 next February, a good old man who told me much village history.
- Jan. 4 ...Walked on Shotover & new ochre pits now being worked, it is bright yellow and said to be the purest in kingdom.
- Jan. 20 ...Funeral of poor Thorpe the carrier...
- Feb. 18 ...Many men out of work...
- Mar. 21 ...Accomplished walking the exact bounds of the parish... a distance of about 5 miles & in part very picturesque...
- May 17 ...Last night a great riot at the Common, the poor turning out cattle belonging to the old stockers of the common...
 (James Munt, John Tombs, Geo. Clark, Thomas Maloney and John Munt labourers , pleaded not guilty to assembling riotously on May 16.
 J.P.Frampton said he had exercised right of commons for over 44 years. A notice on the church door " given by the poor inhabitants of Wheatley to the tradespeople " said they would " have to remover their cattle from ofrf the common (allotted to the poor)." Standing with the hayward, George Munt, he saw 200 or 300 people coming, yelling. They had a flag on a pole, a sheep bell, and most of them had sticks of various sizes. J. Munt said they were denied a sight of the decree of 1660 and they drove the beasts off the common. George Wright of Wheatley, schoolmaster, said he was landsurveying in a field opposite the common and he saw boys collecting the cattle and flags. The defendants refused to replace property removed, to fill a ditch they had dug or to pay 3s. costs. "Bitterness of feeling between the tradesmen and the labouring poor" reduced attendance at the annual dinner at the Crown at which Elton presided, after the various village benefit societies met at their club rooms at the Crown, the King's Arms and the Railway hotel [the latter club having lately moved from the White Hart]. Joseph Sheppard, Joseph Tombs, Charles Messenger and Edward Tombs, labourers, were charged with further rioting on 4 June, on the complaint of John Cooper, baker. He had pastured his horse for 17 years and was not aware that the common was reserved to the poor of Wheatley. He sent William Hunt to the Common with Thomas and Stephen Putt and a mob of 40 or 50 people came up the road from Wheatley in two companies with some swearing but no violence. Capt. Fane said that the worst feature of the case was that this conduct was committed whilst others of the defendants' class were in custody on a similar charge. See *Oxford Chronicle and Berks and Bucks gazette*, 4 June 1870, p. 7; 11 June 1870, p.7, July 2 1870, p.7, cf. p. 83.)
- June 5 ...Some men went to goal, of the rioters at the Common...
- Aug. 1 ...Went over Shotover House. Much surprised at the bad state of the offices, etc. Gloomy in the extreme.

Sept. 29 ...Dined at the 'Railway Hotel' to preside over Forester's Club & had very successful evening.

Oct. 20 ...Yesterday Mr. Juggins an old inhabitant died, in early days of my ministry here he was my great opponent.

(Descended from a yeoman's family who formerly had much influence in the place, he was also head of a clique who had set an evil example, and managed everything in the parish in their own way...This man lived on a moderate annuity...and went about from one public house to another living on the gossip which was current drinking with the richer as with the poorer inhabitants. He was a noted cock-fighter and admirer of pugilists at the same time he was very fond of local power and filled the office of Churchwarden. ..I believe he liked to boast to his friends that he would keep me under. ..He had, living in another house, an invalid sister, whom I liked to visit and it seemed that on one occasion I read what was very suitable to her case the 38th. Psalm, Shortly afterwards I called at his house one morning and found him intoxicated, he had returned from some races and had a prize-fighter in the house. He allowed me to come in and then he assailed me in very outrageous language pointing to a large folio prayer book open at the 38th. Psalm...From that moment he took every opportunity to annoy me and hinder my plans, circulating all manner of evil reports among his friends at the public houses. Sometimes he would when he met me shout out "Look at the 38th. Psalm" or other unpleasant remark. Then as Church Warden he actually opposed a proposal for a church rate...I made much effort and succeeded in defeating him and then encouraged by this after a great exertion inducing people to vote in the Ensuing vestry he was rejected as churchwarden. From that time he fell into obscurity but for many years after every Easter vestry was a time of anxiety for me as he generally contrived to propose some hostile candidate but he never succeeded...For about 12 years he never entered the church which he did all in his power to hinder me from building.. .but in his last illness allowed my visits but his end was without satisfaction as affording much ground for hope. He was a desperate old cockfighter allowing fights to take place secretly on his premises and he was a patron of dog-fighting and other cruel sports. With him passed away much of the bad traditions of the place, and a great deal of opposition...')

Oct.22 ...Our late excellent school mistress Mrs. Hunt, about 25 years in charge of Infant school, died this morning in 77th year. A good Christian...

Oct.29 ...Acorns very abundant & numbers collected from the woods by poor for sale at Littleworth.

Nov. 14 ...Attended auction at Mr. Juggin's late house...

Dec. 5 ...Busy in village preparing for cheap dinner opening tomorrow...

Dec. 16 ...Excellent dinners for poor today, nearly 50 aided.

Dec. 17 ... A skeleton found in Holton wood today in part lately cleared & by it a curious bead. Large mosaic with bright blue, white, black, probably Roman...

1871

- Jan. 21 ... At meeting of Board the parish streets were named...
(As late as 10 October 1869 Church Rd. was called 'The Backside'. See Sale catalogue with plans of houses in 'Wheatley St.' [i.e.High St.]; MS.Top. Oxon. a. 24, fol. 68. The forgotten road from the new turnpike [A. 40] to the Wheatley *?Bridge?* was called Plough road.)
- Jan. 28 ...The Charity Commissioner came today and inquired into condition of all charities especially of the Common. The whole went off quietly and well.
- Mar. 10 ...Railway agreed to help L.Board in improving the approach to the station... ('At first very awkward and narrow and accidents happened in consequence caused by the milk carts...We passed a resolution at the L.Board that if the Company refused to improve the approach we should hold them responsible for any future accident. This I sent to the Secretary with a proposal that if the L.Board bought the land the Railway should make the road and build the walk a proposal they thought well to accept...' In 1872 the railway changed to narrow gauge and navvies were lodged in the attic of the Manor House.)

1872

- Oct 10 ...Meeting of Police Committee. They declined to go into Sibley's case, having no power...
(A policeman of superior education and character...attended the feast at Forest hill... with his sergeant who was drunk... abused him, knocked off his helmet and incited him to fight. Of this he made complaint and was immediately suspended. I ...wrote courteously to the Chief Constable...suggesting a rehearing...after some time I received a rude reply and was referred to the Chairman of the Sessions...the Court could not interfere..! drew up an account of the whole transaction... and published it... and did justice to myself in the eyes of all except a few adherents of irresponsible power...The offending sergeant who lived in Wheatley was soon moved away...)

1873

- Jan. 7 ...Walked with Herbert to see iron ore pits near Windmill...
- Feb. 10 ...An effort on foot to settle the question about the Common... ('The Wheatley people had a small common of 20 acres given as compensation for the loss of forest rights and of this they were very jealous. Whilst its frontier made it a great nuisance to the owner of Shotover. From time to time great efforts had been made to purchase or exchange it but all these had been frustrated by the folly of the people. At last under a recent act means were found by which an exchange might be made. Two of the inhabitants were persuaded to sign a paper, asking the aid of the Charity Commission to vest the land in trustees and...the parties were found to be completely in the hands of the said trustee. After various delays the transaction was completed and the people had to content themselves with the new common turned into cottage allotments...It caused the breaking up of old associations dear to the people and was done without any proper explanation

of the advantages...I had endeavoured to bring about the change some years before and procured the offer of terms better than they ultimately obtained, but the majority would not listen and indeed became quite riotous and abusive...During the later transaction I had to make great efforts in order to secure a portion for recreation as well as allotment for the labourers...' Land accordingly earmarked by the Charity Commissioners at the foot of the Howe as a playing field [the common allotment vesting scheme T.H/31, 686] has not been used as such)

Feb. 15 ...Col. Miller circulated papers among people to obtain opinion as to exchange of common...

Feb. 28 ...The people seem foolishly to dislike Col. Miller's proposal.

March 5 ...The person Chapman who had caused the ill feeling against me and the Church wardens by slander, brought to book by the Lawyer...

March 7 ...Thieves attempted larder last night in vain...

March 9 ...Chapman's apology in all the papers...

Nov. 13 ...Many villagers emigrating...

Dec. 10 ...Plantation made of larch by old Oxford Road...

Dec. 14 ...Many emigrants are leaving the parish...
(Many went to Queensland as a result of organised propaganda. The squire of Holton advised people not to go.

1874

July 1 ...See iron ore diggings. Presided at Temperance Meeting in School at night...

July 12 ...Instead of evening service had lecture at Littleworth...

July 19 ...3 full duties & cottage lecture in evening at Little worth...

1875

March 10 ...Lecture at School on Temperance...

1877

Oct. 15 ...Our feast. Successful effort made to get the people entertained at School room...

Oct. 16 ...Second entertainment to people at school. Still more successful than last night-great satisfaction-...

Oct. 28 ...Young man from Oxford took the Littleworth duty...

Dec. 20 ...Meeting of charity trustees here. The poor are much quieter and easier to manage...

1878

Jan. 14 ...Had nice conversation with Mr. Henley. His intellect bright, but deaf & cannot see well. He goes Parliament on Thursday. He is father of the House of Commons...
(He said that the most marked improvement had taken place in the whole character of this place during the last 25 years or so in the time of my incumbency-that formerly he was constantly appealed to in order to settle quarrels... Once the name of Wheatley was a word of reproach...

1879

Nov. 2 ...Last night of Littleworth service before evening service...

Dec. 19 ...Soup kitchen [daily almost] gives great relief. My good old churchwarden for 23 years died tonight about 82. A great loss to us.

1880

Nov. 20 ...Meeting of rural deanery at School decided that the bell should not be rung at dissenting funerals.

1881

Jan. 26 ...Much destitution everywhere...

Feb. 2 ...Much distress in place...

Feb. 14 ...Saw Editor *Oxford Times*. Settled about papers coming here early.

Feb. 15 ...Soup kitchen well attended

(In 1886 a soup kitchen for 120 poor villagers and tea for the workless was supplied by Col. Miller through the Congregational pastor. To mitigate unemployment Col. Miller planted fir trees and encouraged recruiting.)

Feb. 19 ...Much amused by very impotent attacks of dissenters.

March 28 ...Capital meeting of Temperance Society which we hope to establish here. Many joined..

July 8 ...Meeting of G.F.S. girls at Wheatley. More than 100 with associates...

1884

Feb. 12 ...Had Band of Hope meeting...

March 5 ...Saw Wheatley antiquities at Ashmolean.

(In 1883...upwards of 60 skeletons found with various relics, spearheads, knives, beads... charm out of bear's tooth etc. which have found fitting resting place...in cases headed "Wheatley remains". The curator, Nir. J.H. Parker C.B. directed and paid for excavations.' See plate 5.)

- Apr. 20 ...Walks round Littleworth and the Windmills.
- May 20 ...Walked with Louie beyond Anglo-Saxon site, today a skeleton was found nearly 400 yds. from it, lower down, east of it...
- June 26 ...2 good pumps erected in streets...
- July 27 ...Lecture as usual at Littleworth.
- Oct. 10 ...To see site of Anglo-Saxon burial on hill, excavations having recommenced-4 bodies found and relics...
(See V.C.H., (9x<?n i, 535. Skeletons[of mixed race] accompanied by Romano-British objects at the eastern end of the Roman villa.)
- Dec. 8 ...Today at 4.30 the Rt. Honble. J.W.Henley died peacefully in his 93rd year. He was most estimable and sagacious man. He died at Waterpeny. (M.P. for Oxfordshire, 1841-78. Portrait in County Hall. His father bought Waterperry in 1814. His wife was Georgina Fane [of Wormsley]. See *Dictionary of National Biography*.)
- Dec. 9 ...Wagons came early and all confusion packing.
- Dec. 10 ...Went out early to Wheatley, saw Vicarage now desolate. Two drays had not yet left.
- Dec. 11 ...On with servants to Sherrington...The home will soon be comfortable. (I felt...I had some claim on the Bishop's notice, who, as my near neighbour must know somewhat of what had been accomplished at Wheatley and of the difficulties of the population. He seemed however in some measure absorbed by attention to younger men...I felt it my duty to bring my claims to his notice, and they were of such a nature that when fully placed on record they could not easily be ignored...The issue of all this was his offer in the summer of 1884 of the really desirable preferment which I hold [Sherrington Rectory, Bucks].')