

Rev. Arthur Smith Sturges, MA

The Reverend Arthur Sturges was Vicar of Wheatley from 1889 - 1907. He is buried in the Wheatley churchyard. *(NB there is an error on the stone stating that he was born on May 14th 1889, but all other evidence states that May 1889 was the date of his induction)*

A letter from the Vicar of Cuddesdon, Rev. John Octavius Johnstone, to Rev. Curry, written on May 29th, 1909, and printed in the Wheatley Parish Magazine, indicates how highly Mr Sturges was regarded in the Parish:

My dear Curry,

How sudden is this news of your predecessor's death! I had not even heard of his illness. Only a few days ago I had a long bright letter from him. It is quite impossible to use the word 'sad' about his passing away. His task, as a labourer in the vineyard ended when he left Wheatley; and he knew it: and to him the loss of work was a greater burden than any amount of work that he could do. So we cannot think that he would have wished for many days here in the solemn waiting. His heart was always in his old parish, where his gentleness, kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness had made so many friends happy; and it is truly appropriate that his body should find its last resting place in the Wheatley churchyard.

Yours sincerely

J. O. Johnston

The funeral was at 6 pm on Whit Monday. The whole service was taken by the Bishop. A large number of clergy from the rural deanery and the greater part of the parishioners were present, testifying how much Mr Sturges was beloved. The full choir attended. Psalm 90, hymn 401, and the Nunc Dimittis were sung in the church, and Mr Sturges' favourite Vesper Hymn at the graveside. Mr A. Sheldon, in the absence of Mr Leyshon, through bereavement, played the organ. The grave was lined with ferns and ivy by Miss Parker and the Misses Gale. The Parishioners, the choir, and bell-ringers sent two beautiful wreaths. The deepest sympathy was shown throughout the parish for Miss Sturges and the members of the late Vicar's family.

A muffled peal was rung after the service by the bell ringers, as a mark of respect for their late Vicar.

Mr Bayley remembered, when he was a schoolboy, the Vicar came to school once or twice a week and took the Scripture lessons. He was a very kindly man and liked by most people - church or chapel. His sister organised the coal and clothing clubs and the children brought 3d or 6d a week which was collected until Christmas.