



Matthias Hunt's Generation

Matthias Hunt's brothers and sisters

and the brothers and sisters of Ellen Hunt (formerly Cullum)

There is quite frequent interaction and coincidences amongst this generation of the two families, so they are both listed here. Some of the information was gathered together some years ago by J.H.Hunt, (the author's father-in-law), from family letters and gossip. It has not been possible to positively confirm some of those details from official records.



By and large, the Hunt family appears to have lived in Littleworth, and the Cullums in Wheatley itself. This is information taken from census returns which specifically states 'Littleworth' and 'Wheatley' respectively.

Thomas Hunt, bom 1809,

was Matthias's half-brother, the only child of Matthias's father's first marriage to Elizabeth Buckland. Thomas became a shoemaker like his father before him, and continued to live in the Cuddesdon area. Thomas and his wife, very confusingly also named Elizabeth Martha!, became parents to Edward in 1835, Richard Thomas in 1837, Elizabeth in 1841, Sarah Anne in 1845, Eliza in 1848, and Jane in 1851. When daughter Elizabeth married at Cuddesdon in 1862, the witnesses were a Martha Munt and a William Cullum, further indication of how 'tight' this little community must have been in those days. There is one further entry in the baptism register which reads 'November 4th 1855, Thomas, son of Thomas, deceased sexton, and Elizabeth Martha'. Civil records confirm that Thomas did indeed die in late 1855, so this would have been 'him', and he was the sexton at Cuddesdon Church. Thomas's widow later moved to Littleworth, and is found there on the 1861 census as a 'private schoolmistress' living with her three youngest children. JHH believed that one of Thomas's *grandsons*, also named Thomas, married Mary, a daughter of William Cullum and Elizabeth Martha, (Matthias's sister). There is a record of a Thomas Richard Hunt marrying a Mary Jane Cullum in Headington District in 1896.

One now has to remember that the following 'Hunts' were the children of Richard Hunt by his *second* marriage. He was well into his 40s when the eldest, William, was born, and Richard himself died in 1845. His wife lived on until 1870. On the Cullum side, the patriarch, William, was to depart this world in 1865, followed by *his* wife in 1879. (There was also a Cullum *son* named William.) This would generally have been around the time that the population were beginning to become 'mobile' anyway, (the industrial revolution would have been well underway by now), and one can see that one or two elements of the families were happy to move away from their home area.

Witnesses: William Hunt, Sarah Ann Hunt I
on March 26th ['1856 at
Wheatley I
Elizabeth *m* William
Hunt Martha Cullum
chr *chr*
30-1-1831 7-4-1833

William <i>chr</i> 2-7-1826	Sarah Anne <i>chr</i> 15-6-1828	Anne <i>chr</i> 3-3-1833	twins Mary and Jane <i>christened</i> 'privately, from illness' 29-4-1837
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on December 27th 1859 at St. Mary the Virgin Wheatley
Matthias Hunt *m* (1) Ellen Cullum
chr 17-5-1835 Wheatley
Oxfordshire
Estate Carpenter

William Hunt, born 1826,

was the eldest of Matthias's full brothers and sisters. He became a schoolmaster, as did his sister's brother-in-law, Charles Edward Cullum (see later). William married Jane Crofs in 1850, and then moved at some stage, certainly by about 1860, (and one could probably deduce 'earlier than that' from the next entry for Sarah Anne Hunt) to South Warnborough, a small village to the north of Alton in Hampshire. The 1881 census shows him still in residence there as

- ❖ Head of household, age 55, born Wheatley, Oxford, a schoolmaster
- And also in the house are
- ❖ Jane Hunt, his wife, age 56, born Kidlington, Oxford, a schoolmistress
 - ❖ John Hunt, their son, age 19, born South Warnborough, a postman, and
 - ❖ Albert C. Hunt, their son age 16, born South Warnborough, a scholar
- And the address was Canaan Lane, South Warnborough.

There was also another son, their eldest, also named William, who had left home by 1881.

Sarah Anne Hunt, born 1828,

Matthias's eldest sister, married Edward Dicker in 1858 in Hartley Wintney district, which includes South Warnborough!, and it would appear that for some reason the marriage took place *there*, rather than in the bride's 'home parish'. One would surmise that perhaps elder brother William and his wife became the schoolmaster and schoolmistress either in the village of South Wamborough itself, or in nearby Odiham (214 miles away), and Sarah Anne was introduced to Edward Dicker on a visit. Edward Dicker was a farm bailiff. He died in 1874.

On the 1881 census, the entry for Sarah Anne reads :

- ❖ Head of household, widow, age 52, born in Wheatley, occupation 'plain needlewoman'.

With her in the house are

- ❖ Ada Louisa Dicker, unmarried, age 18, born in South Warnborough, Hampshire, a dressmaker.
- ❖ Edward Dicker, unmarried, age 17, born in South Warnborough, a gardener.
- ❖ Alexander Dicker, age 14, born in South Wamborough, a scholar.
- ❖ But she was no longer lived at South Wanborough. By 1881, the widowed Sarah had moved the family to a cottage in Adstock, Buckinghamshire, about 1 % miles from Addington. She must have decided to be near Matthias *and* (coincidentally)....
- ❖ Adstock was also the home of Thomas Cullum, the youngest of that generation of Cullums. On the 1881 census, he is living in a cottage in Adstock with his wife and three young sons. He is a carpenter/joiner.

JHH believed that Sarah Anne had an older daughter, Fanny, who had left home by 1881. This is confirmed by the 1871 census when Fanny was still *at home*, (aged 11), and 'the 71' reveals there was another daughter, Emily Sarah, (aged 10 in 1871), as well.

Elizabeth Martha Hunt, born 1831,

Matthias's second sister, married Matthias's brother-in-law, William Cullum, in 1856, so in fact they were the 'first up the aisle' of the two couples. (Matthias was to marry Ellen Cullum three years later, in 1859.) J.H.H. believed the Cullums had four children, Frank, Lizzie, Mary and Arthur, and this is substantiated by the 1871 census. Sadly there were three others, William born 1856, who died January 12th 1857 aged 5 weeks, Eliza, born 1858, who died in 1870 aged 12, and Alfred Edward, born 1862 who died aged 4 months. Mary is referred to previously - she married one of Thomas Hunt's grandsons and had a son named Harold. Arthur is believed to have married and had two daughters

named Florence and Barbara. No further records have been found or substantiated. The family headstone in Wheatley Churchyard (plot C325) reveals that her daughter Lizzie ('Elizabeth' on census returns) died in 1895 aged 35, and that Elizabeth Martha Hunt (nee Bussell), "for many years the Infant School Mistress", is buried in the same plot. She was Matthias's and *this* Elizabeth Martha, who became Elizabeth Martha Cullum's, *mother*. (Very confusing!) This, the younger, 'Elizabeth Martha', Matthias's sister, died in 1900 aged 69.

Anne Hunt, born 1833,
died young, in 1840.

Mary and Jane Hunt, twins, born 1837,

The entry in the parish register says they were baptised at home 'due to illness', and little Mary did not survive. She died within a few weeks. Jane though managed to get through *this* crisis, and is found on the 1851 census with her by then widowed mother, still in Wheatley, and is a 13-year old 'infant teacher', no doubt working with her mother who was the Infant School mistress for around 25 years. But, alas, the parish register records the death of a 17 year-old Jane Hunt in 1854.

Richard Hunt born 1839
died young, in 1845

<i>b</i> 16-4-1798, <i>Wantage Berks d</i> <i>26-5-1865 Wheelwright at</i> <i>Wheatley</i>			<i>Chr</i> 23-6-1805, <i>Kingston Bagpuize Berks d</i> 12-3-1879			
<i>Witnesses: William Hunt, Sarah Ann Hunt</i>						
<i> on March 26th </i> <i>1856 at Wheatley</i>			T I r n			
Elizabeth <i>m</i> Martha Hunt <i>chr</i> 30-1-1831	William Cullum <i>chr</i> 7 [^] 1-1833	Eliza <i>b</i> 11-11-1831	Georae <i>b</i> 20-1-1837	John <i>b</i> 15-3-1839	Charles Henry Edward <i>b</i> 15-12-1841	Thomas <i>b</i> 8-11-1848

The Cullums

on February 17th 1831 at Kingston Bagpuize
Witnesses: Charlotte Seiwood, William Williams

William Cullum *m* Elizabeth (Betsey) Williams

William Cullum junior, born March 11th 1833,

married Matthias's sister Elizabeth Martha, as noted on the previous page. He was a wheelwright, as were his father and two of his brothers, Henry and John. On the 1861 census, he lists under 'occupation' that he was also 'the Parish Clerk'. He spent his whole life in Wheatley and is buried in the churchyard there. On the 1891 census, he is shown as a 58 year-old wheelwright and builder in Bell Lane Wheatley, with Elizabeth Martha (60), and their children, one of whom, a daughter Elizabeth, suffered from a chronic spinal disease. It would appear that the description 'builder' was intended to convey that he built according to his trade, i.e. carts, carriages etc. On the 1901 census, William is a widower, but still active, an 'employer', and still a builder and wheelwright. His housekeeper is a Fanny Dicker, age 41,

on December 2 7th 1859 at St. Mary the Virgin Wheatley
Witnesses: Charles Booker, Ann Lambert, Caroline Williams, John Cullum

Matthias Hunt *m* (1) Ellen Cullum

b 31-1-1835

born in South Warnborough. She is down as a 'servant', but in all probability she was his niece by marriage, the daughter of his wife's sister Sarah Anne Hunt, who had married Edward Dicker and moved to South Warnborough. (JHH believed there was a Dicker daughter named Fanny. See under Sarah Anne Hunt)

At 'The Museum of Living' at Reading, there is a collection of farm wagons including (quote) "a 'barge wagon', from Home Farm, Shotover Park, Wheatley, Oxfordshire. It was donated by a Major Mills whose family used the wagon. It was probably made by Cullum Ltd. of Wheatley c.1900." This was almost certainly 'our' William Cullum. He died in 1916, aged 83.

Ellen Cullum, born January 31st 1835, married Matthias in 1859.

George Cullum, born January 20th 1839,

is found on the 1861 census as a baker in Wheatley. He had married a Susannah Radford in 1859, and on 'the 61' they had one son, Ernest, aged 10 months. JHH believed there to have been another son born later. George died on November 10th 1865, and is buried in St. Thomas's, Oxford.

Eliza Cullum, born November 11th 1831,

married George Munt in May 1853. (Munt was a very common name in the Wheatley area. In an old diary in Marje's possession is written (quote) "Eliza Cullum G.Munt was married May 20th 1858 Left home June 2nd Sett sail for Australia June 10th the same year". They went to the State of Victoria, to which George, a mason's labourer on the 1851 census, had probably been attracted by the mining industry, indeed 'The Victorian Gold Rush' was just beginning around that time. They had five children, whose names were very much those of their brothers and sisters that they had left behind, Elizabeth Martha, Isabella Eliza, Emily Kate, Alice Ellen, and Charles Henry. Eliza died September 4th 1912, aged 81. There are further details of the Munts of Australia in another section.

John Cullum, born March 15th 1839,

is to be found on the 1871 census as a wheelwright in Wheatley, married to Eliza nee Hughes from Woolavington, Sussex, and with them were their two children, Henry and Ada. There is a note in the parish register alongside the record of their 'banns' in May 1868 that the marriage took place in Sussex. John Cullum died on April 22nd 1872, at the age of 33. On the 1881 census, Eliza Cullum, his widow, has been found living in Graffham, Sussex, close to her birthplace of East Lavington. She'd obviously 'gone back home' after her husband died. With her were her two children, a son, Henry Edward, age 11, and a daughter Ada Louisa, age 10. The two children were born in Wheatley. There is a bequest to them in Elizabeth (Betsey) Cullum's Will.

Charles Edward Cullum, born December 15th 1841,

was a schoolmaster and organist at Ince, near Ellsmere Port., although it would appear from the 1881 census that he was at Burton, Cheshire previous to that. His wife was a Burtonian, as were their first two children. The 1881 census reads :

- ❖ Charles E. Cullum, Head of Household, age 39, born Wheatley, a schoolmaster
- ❖ Martha Cullum, wife, age 35, born Burton, Cheshire
- ❖ Elizabeth Jane Cullum, daughter, age 14, born Burton, scholar
- ❖ Selina K. Cullum, daughter, age 12, born Burton, scholar
- ❖ Charles E. Cullum, son, age 10, born Ince, Cheshire, scholar
- ❖ Maud Alice Cullum, daughter, age 5, born Ince, scholar
- ❖ Walter John Cullum, son, age 3, born Ince
- ❖ Martha Mary Cullum, daughter, age 7 months, born Ince
And the address was 'Private House', Ince, Cheshire.

Henry Cullum, born June 11th 1845,

died March 10th 1879, aged 33. He was another of the wheelwrights in Wheatley. He did not marry. He was almost certainly known as 'Harry'. In a letter believed to have been written to Ellen by Matthias there is a reference to a 'Harry', and in the little diary/notebook that has survived, and which was almost certainly used by Ellen, there is an entry which reads "Dear Mother and Harry died, Harry March 10, Mother March the 12".

1879 must have been a difficult time for Matthias and Ellen, and Ellen may not have been well herself. She died the following year.

Thomas Cullum, born November 8th 1848,

was the youngest Cullum of that generation and is referred to earlier in the notes on Matthias's sister, Sara Anne Dicker nee Hunt. On the 1881 census, he is a carpenter and joiner living with his family at Adstock, Buckinghamshire. The small village of Adstock (population 352 in 1881) is only 1% miles from Addington. There was a large estate there, Adstock House. No prizes for guessing who bought it in 1891. (Yes, it was Lord Addington. Did Matthias perhaps have something to do with his brother-in-law finding a position there? More than likely, as explained in the section on Matthias).

The 1881 census entry reads :

- ❖ Thomas Cullum, Head of Household, age 32, born Wheatley, a carpenter & joiner
- ❖ Elizabeth Cullum, wife, age 33, born Salisbury, Wiltshire, 'formerly laundress'.
- ❖ Harry H. Cullum, son, age 4, born Adstock
- ❖ Albert D. Cullum, son, age 3, born Adstock
- ❖ George F. Cullum, son, age 1, born Adstock

The address reads simply 'Cottage, Adstock'. Thomas died on April 1st 1896 aged 47.

The Will of William Cullum senior is very straightforward. He left everything to his wife, but her Will is rather more interesting. Why was son Thomas not given a share of her household furniture and effects? Her deceased son George's son Ernest is mentioned, as is Neville Charles Cullum (born 1863), probably his brother. The Probate was slightly complicated because one of the benefactors and executors, her son Henry, unfortunately died two days before his mother did. Her son William junior became the sole executor.

Executors.

This is the last Will and Testament of me Elizabeth Cullum of Wheatley in the County of Oxford, Widow. I appoint my dear sons William Cullum and Henry Cullum to be the Executors of this my Will. I direct that all my just debts funeral and testamentary expences shall be fully paid and satisfied as soon as possible after my decease. I give and bequeath my household furniture and effects equally between my four dear children, namely William Cullum Ellen (the Wife of Mathias) Hunt Charles Edward Cullum and Henry Cullum. I give to my son Thomas the legacy or sum of Nineten quineas. Also I give the following legacies (namely) To my Daughter Eliza the Wife of George Hunt the sum of Fifteen pounds for her sole and separate use. To my Daughter the said Ellen Hunt the sum of Twenty pounds. To my son the said Charles Edward Cullum the sum of Twenty pounds. To my Grandson Ernest George Cullum the sum of Ten pounds. To my Grandson Neville Charles Cullum the sum of Ten pounds. And to my Daughter in law Eliza the Widow of my late son John Cullum the sum of Thirty pounds absolutely that she may do the best she can with it for herself and her two children. I give and bequeath all my wearing apparel to my Daughter the said Ellen Hunt absolutely. And as to all my real estate (if any except estates vested in me as a Mortgagee or Trustee) And as to all the residue of my personal estate I give devise and bequeath the same unto my sons the said William Cullum and Henry Cullum their heirs executors administrators and assigns as tenants in common for their own absolute use and benefit. I declare that the receipts of the said Eliza Hunt and Ellen Hunt shall be good and sufficient discharges to my Executors for the legacies given to them respectively. I devise all estates that may be vested in me as a Mortgagee or Trustee to the said William Cullum and Henry Cullum their heirs and assigns subject to the equities affecting the same respectively. And lastly I hereby revoke all other Wills by me heretofore made. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand the sixth day of November. One thousand eight hundred and seventy two.

Signed by the said Elizabeth Cullum the Testatrix as and for her last Will and Testament in the presence of us both present at the same time who at her request in her sight presence and in the sight and presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as Witnesses

Elizabeth Cullum.

George Mallam, Solr, Oxford.

Edm. Nicolson, the Strubben, Oxford, Attorney at Law

(6/11/72)

Something quite noticeable about the Cullums of this generation is that quite a few of them did not make 'old bones'. The exceptions were William junior, who died in 1916 aged 83, and Eliza, who married George Munt and emigrated to Australia. She made it to 81. Her grand-daughter, Alice Roulson, in a letter to 'grandfather' (Harold Hunt) in 1967, says that she remembers her grand-mother Eliza saying that her *doctor* had told her to go to Australia 'for health reasons', and since Eliza went to Australia but the others didn't, that almost implies that Eliza was the least healthy of them all! One wonders what could have been the problem. The hardships that the early pioneers had to endure in Australia were formidable, and yet Eliza survived those. On the plus side, there was of course 'the climate out there'. Back in England, although it's tempting *now* to look back and imagine life in a rural location such as Wheatley as almost idyllic, that was far from the truth. There was an open sewer running down the main street, and Wheatley was rather a 'den of iniquity' until the Rev. Elton started getting things improved. Disease was widespread. Comments in the parish register reveal that there was scarlet fever there in 1863, and smallpox in 1865. Tuberculosis was also a constant threat. Such conditions took a toll of many families, and one imagines that many of those who managed to survive the various epidemics would have been physically weakened by the experience. In a letter to Ellen Cullum, a Mrs. Thompson says that she 'hopes Ellen's brother is able to walk again'. Although that could just as easily have referred to an accident of some kind, it might have been the result of an illness her brother (whichever one it was) had contracted. We don't know, but altogether they come across as 'a pretty sickly lot', although that's probably an unfair judgement because it was quite possibly just caused by the environment in which they lived. By contrast, the Cullum *parents* of this generation, William Cullum and Elizabeth nee Williams, lived to 67 and 73 respectively.

A historian by the name of Margaret Rosenthal has written an assessment of Wheatley which is reproduced here. Many of those mentioned above would have witnessed some of the later events mentioned in the text.

"The village of Wheatley is dominated by the church spire and the building looks ideally situated, but is has stood here only since 1857. There are records of a previous place of worship, but this was a small and humble chapel, never a parish church, and was dependent on Cuddesdon. This situation caused a good deal of discontent in Wheatley, and the inhabitants had to wait until 1750 before the chapel was consecrated for 'marriage, christenings,

burials, churching of women' to take place there. Even then the clergyman had only the status of 'curate' and was usually non-resident, while Cuddesdon, two miles uphill, remained the mother church.

In 1784, Thomas Sims, a native of Wheatley who had made a fortune in Gibraltar, planned to pay for rebuilding the chapel, and intended to provide enough money for a 'proper and commodious place of worship', but

the then chaplain and churchwarden were anxious about the cost of *maintaining* such a building. Forty-one Wheatley inhabitants petitioned the Bishop

Petition* to the Bishop of Oxford.

To the Right Revd. Father in God John Lord Bishop of Oxford ;

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the Parish of Wheatley annexed to Cuddesden ;

Humbly sheweth

That your Petitioners have long laboured under the very disagreeable circumstance of being greatly straiten'd for room in the Church or Chapel of Ease, which, according to the best accounts, was built upwards of Two Centuries ago, as the place of Divine Worship for the Inhabitants of this Village & its Dependencies :

That the inconveniency of want of room is such, that the principal Inhabitants, when they have a friend or friends on a visit, cannot take them to Church with them, with the certainty of accommodation ; That it frequently happens that they themselves are incommoded by Strangers & others, for whom there is not proper room ; and that for these reasons Divine Worship is too often neglected, contrary to the wish of the Inhabitants :

That the late Archbishop Seeker when Bishop of Oxford, bestowed, at his own private expences, several repairs upon the aforesaid Chapel of Ease of Wheatley, about Thirty years ago, since which 'Eime the roofs, Chancel, Tower, and every part of it, have been falling into decay & min :

That the Inhabitants of Wheatley and its Dependencies are all Rack- Renters and people who work for their living, and who severely feel the late heavy rise of the Taxes ; and that though the roof of the Chancel is falling in, and the Tower in the greatest danger, it is not in their power, with Justice to themselves and Families, to repair or rebuild those Damages which are now wanted, and will soon increase to the ruin of the whole Fabric.

Under these disagreeable circumstances, it was with the greatest satisfaction that your Petitioners understood that Mr. Thomas Sims of Denton,¹ a native of this Place, considering the Inconveniency and Decay of their old and ruinous Chapel, and out of pious affection to the place of his Nativity, did & does intend to build your Petitioners a proper & commodious place of worship, such as may do credit to the place and his own Memory ; Your Petitioners farther understand that this is an Object very much at their intended Benefactor's heart, that he has willed & ordained such Benefaction by his last Will and Testament ; but that in the pleasing hope of seeing it finished, he is very anxious & desirous of seeing the Good Work begun in his own life time :

That your Petitioners have heard with great sorrow and regret, that your Lordship is averse to this intended Benefaction of Mr Thomas Sims. Mr Sims not only proposes as abovesaid, but intends also to found a Charity School, forever, at Wheatley. How far the Disappointment of an Old Man in one favourite object may lead him to relinquish another, your Petitioners presume not to say, but humbly beg leave to lay that Consideration before your Lordships Attention ;

That Mr Sims has no near relation, and that he most cordially consents to this Petition, are Truths which will bear the strictest Enquiry :

That while your Petitioners pray for your Lordship's consent to, and approbation of the aforesaid pious Intentions of Mr Sims, they know and always shall be ready & willing to acknowledge their Dependence on the Mother Church of Cuddesden.

That all expensive & vexatious Law-suits on the Will of Mr Sims' may be effectually prevented, your Petitioners humbly beg leave to entreat that your lordship would be pleased to take their Petition into your Benevolent Consideration :

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

Richd Sheen

John Bassett Church Warden

William Juggins ³	John Davis	Overseers
Thos Harper		Thos. Juggins
Edmund Watts		Richd. Griffin
Susanna Cox		Thos. Davis ⁴
Joseph Cooper		Mary Davis
Rose Cherry		John Battin
Richard Griffin		Ann Williams
Bartholomee Price		John Allin
Eliz. Mottley		William Huggens
John Chapman		Joseph Stacey
Richard Hunt		Joseph Sheldon
James Parker		Robert Buckland
Willm Hartford Consdble		William Fryday
Thomas Guy		Frances Poling
Thos Sheldon		
Thos Tombes		
Wm. Roes		
Henry Vaughan		
James Griffin		
Thos. Huggins		
Richd Brown		
John Redhead		
Edmund Soanes his [mark?]		
James leaver		
Tomas Green		

The Lord Chancellor ruled that a smaller building to that envisaged by Sims and the people of Wheatley must be accepted, and this was put up, at a cost of £2,485-5s-6d, in July 1795.

The Richard Hunt who was one of the petitioners has not been traced. He may or may not have been a relative.

29. UNDERTAKING NOT TO RIOT, 1771

Parish chest

June the 28th. 1771.

(J Wc whose Names arc hereunder subscribed do promise and agree never to Interrupt nor disturb the Chapel Warden and Overseers of Wheatley nor their Successors in attempting to mow the Town Meadow¹ for the time being nor assemble in any other Riotous Manner² as we did on the 24.Day of this Instant June 1771 on the penalty of ten Pounds each as Witness our hands

James Russel	The Mark of
The Mark ³ of William Gomm	Willm. Paxton
The Mark of	The Mark of Francis Munt
Thomas Sparrow	The Mark of
The Mark of Thos. Juggins	Willm. Willings
The Mark of Richd. Gomm	The Mark of Richd. Munt
	The Marks of
	Richd. Wilder. Alis Andrews
	The Mark of William Munt
	The Mark of
	Robert Holliman
	The Mark of John Munt
	The Mark of
	Isaac Munt
	The Mark of
	Christopher Wakelin
	The Mark of
	Willm. King
	Abraham Pratt.

Witness Thos. Davis

Wheatley people were always regarded as 'a troublesome lot', witness this undertaking 'not to riot' from 1771. This dispute would appear to have grown from a 'right' to 'mow the meadow' (whatever that specifically meant...it could have been 'with a scythe' or 'with livestock') ...'while one inch of candle burnt'.

There was a similar riot in 1870.

The main reasons attributed to the general lack of discipline were poverty, lack of 'a squire', and lack of a resident parson. As the village at this time lay on the main road to Oxford, it also had a disproportionate number of inns and beer-houses. A writer in 1841 characterised it as "Wheatley...that most bull-baitingest and cock-fightingest of villages.

Samuel Wilberforce, the energetic and reforming Bishop of Oxford from 1845, must have seen something of the unhappy condition of the people as he travelled from Cuddesdon Palace to Oxford. Many of them lived along the High Street, where the uncovered brook served as an open sewer. Wilberforce resolved to make the parish independent of Cuddesdon, and appointed a vigorous young clergyman, Edward Elton, to become the first Vicar.

Thirty-three year-old Edward Elton came to Wheatley in 1849 and immediately recognised the challenge he faced. He described his flock as 'a turbulent population', and the village as 'a refuge for all the worst characters of the neighbourhood'. On his first Sunday, he had to be escorted to church by police, and 150 young trees he had had planted were vandalised in one night. But he was not to be discouraged. During the first ten years of his incumbency, he built a vicarage, a school, and a new church. The money for the church was raised entirely by his own efforts. "I alone was responsible", he wrote, "not even churchwardens joined in with me, and the money, about £3500, was raised mostly in small sums. I believe I wrote about 5000 letters.....The balance, £500,1 paid myself".

The new church was designed by G.E.Street, the recently-appointed diocesan architect, and was in the '13th Century' style popular at the time. Because money was short, it was much plainer than many of Street's other buildings, such as Cuddesdon College, or Saints' Philip's and James's in Oxford, and was completed in 1857.



(Ed note : G.E.Street was also the architect of the church built at Addington for John Gellibrand Hubbard. This is particularly interesting, and the chronology may just provide the answer to one or two nagging questions regarding Matthias Hunt's life, such as "Why did Matthias stop being a wheelwright and become a carpenter?", and "Under what circumstances did Matthias leave Wheatley for Addington?". Street's Wheatley church was built from 1856 to 1857, (it was consecrated on June Kf¹), and his Addington church was built in 1857-58. It could just be that Matthias Hunt, former wheelwright, became a carpenter and worked on the Wheatley church, and then when that was finished, or nearing completion, Street took him to Addington to work on his next project.)

On June 10th 1857, the Revd. Elton wrote in his diary, "Great day for Wheatley, tolerably fine and pleasant. Church consecrated, two Bishops present, and large company. Dined in the Field. Collected £83-1 s-3d". He had to go on collecting, for more funds were needed to

complete the tower. It was not until February 27th 1868 that he was able to write, "Today the weathercock was put on the spire", and later the same year when a clock was installed, "A man was engaged twenty days putting it in its place". The total cost was £98 and it "commenced telling the hours October 21st 1868".

Edward Elton was tireless in his support of 'our country poor' and struggled with and for the people around Wheatley for thirty-five years. He fought to curb their 'evil habits' of bull-baiting and cock-fighting, he fought on their behalf to have the brook in the High Street culverted, and he fought to have the projected railway line run through the village so that the population would be more in touch with the outside world. He raised money for a new school and persuaded the owner of land adjacent to the church to give him a site for it. (The school remained in service until 1984, when a new one was built in Littleworth Road.) A new organ was installed in the church in October 1872, and "on this occasion the choir started wearing surplices, a Robing Room having been made at the West End of the Church".

In 1884, Edward Elton, then 68, asked his Bishop for a quieter life, and was given the living of Sherington in Buckinghamshire, where he was appointed Rector, and where he continued his ministry until his death in 1898. He is buried in Wheatley, outside the East End of the church where he ministered for so long.

Ed note : In a letter to Matthias written in August 1870, his mother, when obviously 'very ill', (she died in 'the October') wrote 'If it will not distress you, I shall be glad of ...[illegible],..is but a few shillings for Rvd. Elton. are gone out for six weeks.' One imagines that she perhaps wished to show some appreciation for Elton's pastoral care during her illness.

And in Edward Elton's diary, which is in the possession of Lord Elton, the entry for October 22nd 1870 reads "Our late excellent school mistress Mrs. Hunt, about 25 years in charge of Infant School, died this morning in her 77th year. A good Christian", and in the parish register when she was buried on October 27th he wrote alongside the entry "Many years the excellent mistress of the Infant School".

He obviously knew Matthias's mother well, and thought highly of her.