

The Diary Of A Village

By

Sir John Leigh Hoskyns

Rector

of

St. Michael's Church

Aston Tirrold

1845 - 1911

(ABRIDGED)

SIR JOHN LEIGH HOSKYNS

Introduction

John Leigh Hoskyns was born on 4th February 1817, the 3rd son of Sir Hungerford Hoskyns, 7th baronet, and came from a family who had been settled in Herefordshire for over 400 years. Many members of the Hoskyns family were Members of Parliament for Hereford. The first baronet was Sir Bennet Hoskyns, a barrister knighted in 1676.

John Leigh was brought up at Harewood House, between Hereford and Ross-on-Wye. He had two brothers and four sisters. He wrote, "It was a wonderfully free and uncontrolled life - no interference - and we did very much as we liked and we often made expeditions up into the old garrets or lumber rooms and imagined all sorts of things." John Leigh was then sent to Ham House School near Cheltenham. He left in the summer of 1828 and went in the autumn to Rugby.

John Leigh entered Rugby School House at the same time that the famous Dr. Arnold went there. He writes of all his peers and teachers, and describes Dr. Arnold, whom he greatly admired: "How expressive was Arnold's look & questioning and silence & frown ! I used to be much moved by His Sermons in Chapel - and felt the unspeakable contrast when any other master preached". John Leigh was happy at Rugby and says it "ended in 1835 to my great sorrow".

John Leigh Hoskyns became an undergraduate of Balliol College, Oxford, then a fellow of Magdalen College. After his ordination he acted as Deacon at Dunchurch near Rugby) until 1841, when he went as curate to Lugwardine (near Hereford) until 1845, when he was presented with the parish of Aston Tirrold by Magdalen College, who had held the living since 1608 (and still do).

John Leigh Hoskyns was the only the second rector to live in the parish of Aston Tirrold (his predecessor lived here from 1843-45). Since the seventeenth century Rectors had been appointed, but they had lived at a distance, and curates had lived here, and carried out their duties.

Immediately on arrival, he went about pulling down and rebuilding the Rectory. We know that he married on 22nd April

the same year, but he does not record where he and his wife lived until the house was ready for use (nor indeed where he lived before his marriage). He married Phyllis Emma Peyton, the daughter of Sir John Strutt Peyton, and they apparently lived a happy married life in Aston Tirrold. They remained at Aston Tirrold until his death in 1911 (aged 94), when Lady Hoskyns moved to Eastbourne and died 3 years later (aged 96).

Sir John succeeded to the baronetcy in 1862, on the death of his brother, becoming the ninth baronet. He says nothing of this in his parish diary, nor does he refer to his private life at all. He only mentions his wife once. However, we know that they had six sons and three daughters, all of whom lived to adulthood.

This village diary was started in 1857, when the Rector found an old black leather-bound book (which still exists in Reading Record Office), with many empty pages. He started then to record the events of the village and comment on national events – backdating it to his arrival in Aston Tirrold in 1845. He must have had some notes, as many reports are very full and detailed. What is printed here is as he wrote, without any changes, although in this abridged edition long lists of confirmation candidates, lengthy accounts and some church matters have been omitted.

John Leigh Hoskyns was a true Victorian in his taste and his high-minded morality, but he was also a man of all time - a kindly man, apparently loved by everyone, a gentle father, who loved the company of children. He did not seek promotion, but dedicated his life to the people of Aston Tirrold. Five sons and a daughter, some remaining members of his beloved Clerical Society, and a large number of parishioners attended his funeral. The Archdeacon said then: ‘He was so courteous with that old-world courtesy which is now so rare, so considerate and kind, so wise and generous... and comes as near as anyone I have ever known to William Law’s “holy priest full of the spirit of the Gospel; watching, labouring, praying for the small country village; every soul in it as dear to him as himself, and he loves them all as he loves himself because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself.”’

Vivien and David Biggs, 1999

Village Diary of the Rev. Sir John Leigh Hoskyns Bart.

1845 - 1911

How often is the Wish Expressed that The Clergy of past times had in their Register Books made even a few observations on passing events! - such notices would have been interesting when they touched on public and national affairs; & still more (especially to the successive Clergymen of a Parish) if parochial and local matters had been judiciously chronicled. We lament the indolence and negligence of past times, and yet most of us will be chargeable with the same indolence by posterity. - No History can supply the place of observations made upon passing events by contemporaries - and I already regret that when I came here more than Twelve years ago (in 1845) I did not at once begin a Register of Parochial Annals with occasional introduction of public transactions. - This large black book is inviting - Let me begin even now - This is Sunday Evening October 18 1857. I will first enter such circumstances as I have entered elsewhere.

1845 Old Parsonage pulled down, and Barns against Churchyard - Garden wall built - The Rev. W.J. Butler my predecessor here for a year moved to Appleton in March and I came into residence.

June 1. Sermon commenced on the Sunday Mornings.

July 6. Monthly Sacrament begun.

It was a singularly beautiful and dry Autumn succeeded by a very mild winter - no frost to speak of.

This year, Mr. Wellingham Fuller was married to Miss Slade (she died in 1846) and Mr. Breach to Miss Martha Fuller (March 13). I mention this after 12 years interval because they have been such steady Church people and have set so good an example - Regular at God's House and Regular at the Lord's Table.

1846

Rectory begun Monday March 2. Corner Stone (SE) laid March 13 - several neighbours present and School children; we sang 127th Psalm and offered prayers - a remarkably dry and beautiful summer - House finished by November and we came to reside.

There are Clerical Meetings in the Neighbourhood - once a month for Scripture Reading and Prayer - Members in 1846:

Revd. John Langley, Rector of Wallingford

Richard Meredith Vicar of Hagbourne

H. W. Lloyd Vicar of Cholsey

William Vincent Vicar of Steventon (since moved to Islington)

H. Shuter - Curate of Britwell, Oxfordshire

R. Twopenny, Rector of Ipsden

E.B. Hawkshaw, Curate of Ewelme - now R. of Weston Under Penyard -

Mr. Ross

John Thomas Austen, Vic of Aldworth, since removed to Kent.

1846

Tried daily service in Lent. It failed. A Wednesday evening service is better.

June 29. The Church Scholars separated from the Dissenters - all were together before. Mrs. Sowden and Maria Arnold were our Mistresses. Sunday School at old Thomas Blackall's (since decsd). A malignant fever raged at Upton - many died. Our village escaped. It was melancholy to hear the Blewbury Bell continually tolling.

1847

This year commenced with a most severe frost.

Feb 28. Sermons preached by Queen's Letter (There are no such things now (1857) for Lord Palmerston has put an end to them) in aid of the Irish who have been reduced much by

Famine owing to the mysterious potato disease. Thousands perished, but time has proved that all was wisely ordained, for Ireland has never been so prosperous as since that period. Public Fast in consequence of Irish Famine March 24 observed very strictly all over the Country.

May 31. New School Room commenced. Mr. Herbert gave the ground and paid for the conveyances. A most desirable situation. The School Room was opened September 5. Miss Robson from the Training School at Kidlington was Mistress. John Huggins the Blacksmith our Sunday School Master (After 10 yrs interval and Experience of that man, how shall I express sufficiently my high opinion of his Christian Character and Zeal in teaching and conducting the singing in the Church through much discouragement? Still living and helping in the Choir (1884).

Octob. 27. Confirmation at Cholsey - Our New Bishop (Samuel Wilberforce) shone brightly - Cholsey Church had just been restored (Every church nearly in the neighbourhood has undergone or is undergoing the most necessary process which consists in pulling down unsightly square pews and galleries, scraping off white wash from Arches and Windows - new flooring etc. the advantage is great).

Nov. 19. Our first Missionary Meeting in the School Room - small beginning -

1848

A year of Revolution and Disturbances on the Continent. Louis Philippe driven from France escaped to England in an open boat and in disguise. England herself perfectly tranquil.

1849

Sept 26. Day of Humiliation for the Cholera which has become very prevalent - the Clerk Thomas Curtis says he never saw the Church so full as on that day.

October 12. Soldier Pope an old Waterloo Dragoon died suddenly. His wife (who died in 1847) had laid up some money and his last days were much worse for her pains and hoarding.

Dec 11. South Moreton Church reopened. The curate Mr. Macfarlane spent a large sum upon it. The Bishop preached.

1850

The Country from one end to the other is in a state of greatest excitement on account of the encroachment of Popery. Meetings are being held everywhere but I observed that the Church got more blows than the Papists. If speakers began against the Papists they ended with the Church. The Papists have changed their Vicars Apostolic into regular and defined sees and have erected Westminster into an Archbishoprick to which Cardinal Wiseman has been named. London full of caricatures on the subject - 700 Clergy met at Oxford to protest against Rome's encroachments and manipulations. Our Bishop manfully declared that it was a schismatical act of Rome as here is already a true branch of the Church Apostolic established. The Commotion ended and we now hear nothing of it (1857) - How characteristic is this of Englishmen - how soon a storm of indignation is aroused and how suddenly it subsides.

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1851

May 1. The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park opened. It was indeed a glorious sight and quite beyond description here. It originated as more enlarged idea of glass roofs on a large scale. Sir Joseph Paxton suggested it. It was of course nothing to the present palace at Sydenham.

Most abundant harvest and splendid weather.

1852

The Church Restoration commenced March 1. It was reopened June 7. The Bishop preached "I beseech you that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain" - The day was most unpropitious. The Rain incessant. Drummond Rawnsley Vicar of Shiplake preached in the Evening. Our Church was restored. Who that ever stood in the old one could believe it was the same place? I must enter this more particularly. In its original state large deep unsightly pews filled the North side. The South Transept

had a stone seat all around of the roughest workmanship, centre vacant for the School Children. A Gallery at the South Window of the N. Transept in half - the men sit round the stone seat and under Gallery, musicians and boys in Gallery. The Chancel had 2 square pews. The Tower was a dirty place where the Ringers assembled. It was shut off from the rest of the Church, and so the west window was invisible from the Church. There was a flat ceiling - ceiled to the large beams - Chancel Roof ceiled and timber invisible. No Arch between Chancel and Nave - no Vestry. All the stone work covered with white wash - no Screen; the old one (of which the present is an exact imitation) was cut down in the memory of several living and part was taken up to a Summer House of Mr. Slade's of Thorpe Farm. It now occupies the West side of the porch. We discovered the 2 Norman Windows - the doors of Rood Loft - the old Purbeck marble tombstone now in the Chancel moved to new aisle.

The walls of the South Transept were found covered with successive pictures of Saints etc. some very curious - this was the oldest - then followed a coating of black letter texts etc. - evidently of the period of the Reformation and these had given place to more modern texts etc. The windows there had originally been decorated with the rose ball flower all up the sides and mullions - in making the subterranean flue which runs from the centre under the Vestry to the Chimney an immense quantity of wood ashes were thrown out. How came this there? The Churchyard was considerably lowered and graves replaced on the South side for the mould was 3 feet up the walls of the Church and it smelt damp and unwholesome on entering, and green damp was all round the walls inside.

Wyatt of Oxford was the Architect and Builder - During the work of Restoration we have service morning and afternoon in Thorpe Chapel by permission of the Rev. J. Macdonald, Vicar of Blewbury. It was indeed a work that was much required - the want of Reverence was grievous - and the encouragement to sleep and indolence very great. For some Sundays after Completion (we had service June 7 and the Bishop came amidst pouring rain to open it and preach for the Restoration Fund) the church was crowded to excess.

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The whole expenditure was not far short of 500£ and the Balance was paid, as such balances are usually paid, by the Rector.

The Year 1852 was memorable for the death of the great Duke of Wellington and his magnificent interment in St.Pauls by the side of Lord Nelson (Nov. 18th). I witnessed it, having a good seat at Charing Cross. The streets thronged and every window full. Large sums were asked for a good seat at a window. I was more impressed by a Diorama of the Duke's life which I witnessed the day before, especially his triumphant entry into Madrid, than by the spectacle of his Funeral. The crowd was irreverent and the Funeral Car awkward and tottering. To see his Charger led after the procession was touching and deeply affecting - but 'Copenhagen' the Waterloo war horse has died of course, long ago.

The Autumn and Winter of 1852 was one almost uninterrupted downpour of Rain - Floods universal.

1853

Camp at Chobham on the Common, during the Summer - most interesting to visit.

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1854

New School House built. Finished Sept. 2nd.

It cost 120£ raised by Subscription - built by Finch the Carpenter.

Year memorable for the Crimean Campaign and all the unspeakable Horrors of the Winter before Sebastopol. It is calculated that in Battle and by Disease and Exposure we lost 25,000 men in the Russian War. No one can imagine the intense feeling throughout the Country on the tidings of the Battle for Inkerman Nov. 5th, and the anxiety that pervaded the whole country during that memorable winter.

1855

Sebastopol taken Sept. 8. The Capture of the Malakow by the French was the great success. Aston Tyrrold furnished one soldier to the English forces - Moses Parsons - but he was taken ill after the landing in the Crimea in Sept. 1854 and was taken to Scutari Hospital in which he remained as an Orderly and never saw a shot fired. He returned with the Army in 1856 and soon was discharged and turned the sword into the ploughshare. I met in the Railroad Train one of the Dragoons who was in the famous Balaclava Charge which Lord Cardigan led, and where so many perished. This man saw poor Captain Nolan struck, and escaped unhurt himself.

Our new School Mistress Mrs Mobbs came Sept. 20. I am writing this March 30 1860. How much reason have we to be thankful for the arrival here of this excellent person! She married Thomas Curtis - a farmer - in 1874 - son of the old Clerk.

1856

The Army returned from the Crimea. It was very interesting to see these bearded and bronzed campaigners at Aldershot Camp where I went with Mr Clutterbuck in the summer.

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1857

It was in this year that the Indian Mutiny broke out which has filled all hearts and been if possible a subject of deeper personal interest and anxiety than even the Crimean Campaign because it has come close to many more families and made so many more homes full of mourning. The account of the cruelties inflicted upon the Ladies and Children were heart-rending, though subsequent enquiries have proved that false reports were frequently sent home - the indignation of all of us at home knew no bounds - the name "Sepoy" was employed to express everything vile and cruel and cowardly.

1858

The sudden death of Mr. Thomas Fuller of Filberts in January cast a great gloom over the village. This was the year of

Donati's great Comet. It was a most beautiful object and excited immense interest. I saw it one Evening in Paris when the star Arcturus was visible, glittering through the Comets Tail. This was on Tuesday. The Heat of the summer was very intense.

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1859

The Italian Campaign of Napoleon III. Battles of Magenta and Solferino - Austrians defeated.

1860

March 31. Winter began early, and has been long and tedious, though but little severe weather. Our Confirmation took place on Thursday last in this Church - The Parishes of Blewbury, Hagbourne and South Moreton sent their candidates here. There were 80 in all. The Bishop came and preached the Evening before.

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August 15 1860 Wednesday

Remarkably wet cold summer. It rained heavily throughout June. There has been no real Heat. Harvest has not yet begun in this Parish - whereas last year the wheat was all cut by this time. I returned today from the 'Conference' of Clergy at Radley College.

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1861

In this year the Rectory was much improved and enlarged by adding several feet to the Dining Room. The west wall was taken down and rebuilt further out into the back Orchard - thus nearly doubling the size of the Room - also a Bed Room was gained over the new part. Magdalen College contributed 100£ towards this improvement. It was done by Winterborne of Abingdon who had originally built the House.

The death of "Albert the Good" (Decr. 14) plunged the nation into mourning. He was a man of high and sterling character

and devoted himself to the Education of his children and the advancement of Social Science - the cultivation of the Arts, Agriculture etc. - eminently a wise man, reserved and not generally popular (through national jealousy) but most useful -

1862

In this year "Penny Readings" became the fashion everywhere and continued for some years - they consisted in Recitations of Prose or Verse, description or humorous - The School Room used to be crowded - everyone paid a penny - the usual Readers were Mr. Breach, Mr Slade (Henry), Mr John Fuller, Mr Mark Taylor & Rector - very often a stranger - after a few years there arose difficulty in finding suitable matter, and one of the Readers died, another removed and gradually the Penny Readings degenerated and then died out - the public taste craved only humorous things - these soon verged upon objectionable matter, and so it was best they should be put an end to.

1863

In this year, or the autumn before, Mr. Mark Taylor came to live at The Filberts - He was the chief founder of the Aston and Moreton Benefit Society which began with very few members and now (1884) numbers 90 and we have a considerable sum in the Bank. It has been a great benefit to members - Our Annuity to 9 for 20 years has been fine.

On Mr. Taylor's death at Blewbury in 1868 his widow put up the central compartment in the East Window of the Chancel in memory of her Husband - it is a Crucifixion by Mingay of Oxford. Both Mr. & Mrs. Mark Taylor are buried here near Mr Herbert's large enclosed Tomb.

There was a second Restoration and also an enlargement of the Church in 1863 and the reopening was on St. James's Day July 25, and some description of that event is given on the opposite side in some newspaper extracts. The appearance of both nave and Chancel have been greatly improved by the alterations and additions.

The marriage of the Prince of Wales on March 10 was celebrated here with much rejoicing - people said there never

had been such a day at Aston - much of the success of the days proceedings was due to the exertions of Mr. Mark Taylor and Mrs. Taylor who were then residing at The Filberts

Alas! He lived but a few years longer - having taken a farm and removed to Blewbury he died on Nov 8 1868 and is buried in this Churchyard near Mr. Herbert's tomb, and a beautiful stone has been placed over his grave.

Sacred to the Memory of Mark Taylor

Who died Nov. 8 1868

Age 55 Years

"They that sleep in Jesus with God bring with them."

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Feeling much the want of a Room for Parochial Purposes I converted half the Barn into a Coach House and made the old Coach House and Tool House (or Dairy formerly) into a Parish Room or Rooms for General Purposes.

We hope to have Practisings of our Choir there and Sunday Classes and many other things.

1873 Organ purchased

Our late Bishop, Wilberforce, gifted with such genius and energy, and eloquence and powers of organisation was killed on Saturday July 19 by a fall from his Horse while riding with Lord Granville in Surrey, very near Abinger Hall - our present excellent Bishop alluded to it very feelingly at the Reopening of Abingdon Parish Church on Wednesday last July 30. His loss is great indeed to the Church and the Nation at large - He was Bishop of Oxford for 24 eventful years of incessant labour.

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1877

In this year the Reredos was erected, according to Mr Edwin Dolby's design and executed by Mr Grafton, Mason of Oxford - at a cost of 40£ - The East End was very unsightly and green with damp - altogether unworthy of the sacredness of the place. Happily the simple cross of Sicilian marble gave no offence to the parishioners.

1878

In the autumn of this year I went to Italy for the winter - leaving at end of September and returning in the May following - the Rev G Gardner, Vicar of Box near Chippenham resided at Aston and took my duties.

1879

In this year Mr. George Fuller of Copse Stile succeeded to his property and came of age - there were great rejoicings.

He died quite suddenly on the Cricket Field June 4 1898, leaving widow and 1 son and 5 daughters. The Copse Style House and Property in Aston Tyrrold Parish passed into the hands of Mr. Francis Cross of Egerton Lodge, Bolton in 1900. Also the Aston Tyrrold Manor House and Farm also Mr. Reynolds Farm occupied by Mr. Thomas Curtis.

The wettest summer and autumn in any one's memory - the sun hardly appeared - Rain incessant - Crops wretched - Many farms have been thrown upon owner's hands and tenants not to be found - wheat still cheap owing to the immense supplies from America, so the farmers have had no compensation in high prices and the ground is so foul from weeds that the prospect of future crops is injured.

1880

Lord Beaconsfield's Government turned out in the Spring, and Mr Gladstone's takes it place. Mr Ralli is our M.P. for Wallingford in place of Mr Wills.

Octob. 25. We have two of our chief neighbours lying dead. Mr. Henry Slade of Blewburton House and Mrs. Stevens - both of them died last week. The latter will be buried in our churchyard - Mr. Slade at Thorpe. The Rev. Mr. Lloyd late Vicar of Cholsey still resides at Filberts and is very useful and kind in the Parish - he was Vicar of Cholsey for 37 years and then retired through deafness and infirmity. Mr. Circuit is now Vicar of Cholsey, and Mr. Gwilliam Rector of South Moreton has built a new Rectory and entered it in April last (1880). A new Rectory has also been built at Brightwell by

Mr. Cunningham who died in 1899 succeeded by Rev. F Kiddle Vicar of Buckingham.

April 15 1882

The Winter which is now over has been the mildest on record. No frost or snow beautiful sunshine also dry and without violent storms or wind. Geraniums could have survived without shelter

There is great depression among the farmers owing to the low price of corn and its injured condition in consequence of the Rains of last August. Many have had to give up their farms and responsible tenants can hardly be obtained. The price of wheat is very much affected by the increasing quantities now imported from Canada and the States where it can be grown so cheaply. Beef is also now brought over in great quantities.

The new Railroad from Didcot to Newbury was opened by Mr. Lloyd Lindsay on Wednesday last - trains began to run on Thursday.

Mr. Fairthorne of Brightwell has bought all the land from South Moreton to Aston, lately occupied by Mr. Stevens and also he has bought the House belonging to Mr. G.F. Fuller and 90 acres of land connected with it, making his farm very compact and he is now building two beautiful new cottages to East of Moreton St. (1882)

Death of Rev. H. W. Lloyd - late Vicar of Cholsey.

He died Saturday June 17 1882, deeply and universally lamented - He was for 37 years Vicar of Cholsey and resigned from deafness in 1873, and came to live at 'The Filberts' in this Parish - He was one of the most holy men I ever knew - walking with God day by day - a beautiful character - beloved by every person in the village - He used to visit the poor chiefly up the Hill and most blessed to them - He frequently preached after he came to reside, but latterly seldom. As a Parish Clergyman he was indefatigable in his labours and of a singularly affectionate nature and warm heart. May we all endeavour to follow his bright and example. He was buried today (June 23) by the side of his wife and two children in Cholsey Churchyard. A muffled peal was rung in the evening by the Aston Bells.

Death of Mr. Breach
Surgeon of Aston Upthorpe

We also lost some months ago a most excellent man, Mr. John Breach after a tedious illness - He had been a very successful surgeon for many years, succeeding a father equally respected - He lies buried in Aston Upthorpe Churchyard, East End. He was so regular at church in spite of his professional duties that he was never absent except in great emergencies - and at last he was drawn to Church.

Who could wish good men like these to live on in this world when their work is done and their powers of mind or body are decaying - and when they are ripe for heaven?

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1883

Memorable for the most abundant crop of Potatoes and Apples ever known. Potatoes were selling all the winter at 3/- a sack. The Cherries completely failed. There were only two burials in Aston Churchyard this year - one quite an old man, Avery Dearlove.

The schoolroom was enlarged at an expense of £108 10s 8d.

The Winter of 1883-4 was singularly mild and dry - in fact there has been no winter

The Altar cloth has been very much beautified by an improved Frontal.

The new Chandeliers have been give to the Church and the Vestry furnished

On Easter Sunday the choir wore surplices for the first time.
1884.

The Church Bells were rehung last Winter by Messrs White of Besselsleigh at a cost of 50 £.

May 26 1884 Bishop's visitation at Abingdon.

He dwelt much on the great importance of keeping some record of our work in our Parishes - our visits, sermons etc. - and

Parochial Events, such as I endeavour from time to time to record - in sort of Parochial Logbook such as we keep for our Schools - a most important book of reference.

Let me then record one fact which it is impossible to dispute - viz the wonderful improvement during the last 25 or 30 years in the condition of the labouring classes - Their food, clothes, cottages, furniture - manners - education are increasingly above what they were. The Village was full of paupers 30 years ago - now there are very few - I used to preach to smock frocks and old cloaks. I now preach to ladies and gentlemen - The wages are good (12-15/- per week) and employment plentiful. - It is quite surprising how handsomely the people now dress and how well-fed they appear.

At the same time our population decreases. Young men leave the plough and go to the Railway or Biscuit factory at Reading, or Police, or Army - many go into service - This gives better opportunities for those who remain - The population of this Parish at last Census 1881 was only 310 - while 30 years ago it was 400 and upward.

The introduction of threshing machinery by steam has had a great deal to do with this.

July 4. Two young Blewbury men killed by lightning not far from Thorpe Gravel Pit names Bezely and Street - they were hoeing turnips for Mr. Benjamin Slade. Three others - Edward Holden, Charles Bennet and William Eustace had just left them to go to dinner.

A remarkably beautiful Spring, Summer and Autumn - Excellent Harvest - Wheat sells at 32/- per Quarter - the lowest price known for a century - Farmers in despair - great depression in Trade.

1885

Great drought this summer - no Swedes or Turnips for Sheep - great depression in value of Stocks owing to imports from abroad - young cattle unsaleable - wheat still at 32/- Gallon loaf 10d, wages 10/- a week. We made collections for a new Funeral Pall - very much needed - cost £3 2s 5d. Mrs Redhood volunteered to make it. Very few deaths in 1884 and 1885.

1886

This year the Tower was roughcast afresh at a cost of 25£. Mr Albert Finch had the contract. Miss Lane has for the last few years very much assisted the Funds for the Church Repairs by having a Sale of Work in the School Room in the Autumn - by this means 14£ has been collected and many persons interested in the maintenance of the Church Fabric.

1887

Great agricultural Depression everywhere - wheat at 32-36/- a Quarter - Barley 24 - Stock almost unsaleable. I am writing this April 27 - we have had a very long and severe winter - Happily Provisions have been cheap and very few out of work. Bread 9d a Gallon - Bacon 8d a lb, coal at Station 16 a Ton - Fresh Butter 16d a lb.

1887

This was the year of the Queens Jubilee - Great and universal Rejoicing - Great gathering of Princes, Potentates to Westminster Abbey to return thanks - Bonfires on ever hill - Feastings in every village - on Lowborough Hill a huge bonfire - it was a warm and glorious summer.

1889

We lost our excellent Bishop Mackinness, a Holy, Humbleminded devoted man - his noble appearance of dignified bearing corresponded with his nobleness of soul. His Truthfulness, Genuineness, Honesty, Fairness of Character - where will his equal be found? Bishop Stubbs succeeds him.

1893

Remarkable drought for 4 months from the beginning of March - Consequently a very small Hay Crop - Cattle unsaleable. Price of Wheat very low 26-28 shillings a Quarter - Farmers in great distress. Many estates in the Country are changing Hands.

1894

A Plentiful Harvest but a wet season. Wheat sold in October for 18/- a Quarter and Barley & Oats very reduced.

Given by the Rector

N.B. A face to Church Clock completed Dec. 12 by Messrs Thwaites and Reed, Clockmakers, Clerkenwell. The Pendulum has date 1716. Clock made by Reynolds Church wardens }
Field & Lewindon

Great flood in November. Highest on the 15th.

The flood in 1809 was as high

1894 December 4 First Parish Council elected.

George F Fuller	Farmer
Thomas Buckman	Postmaster
Thomas Curtis	Farmer
Thos W. Fuller	Farmer
Fredk Whichello	Carpenter to Mr Finch

1895

The Parish Council has proceeded to confer allotments of Ground for Gardens to 17 persons on land belonging to George F. Fuller Esq., of Copse Stile.

March 1895. This has been a winter of unusual severity lasting from the first week of January to the beginning of March.

September 24th 1895. Two plants of "Ampelopsis Veitchii" were presented by Mrs Pigott, niece of the Rector, and planted this day on the South side of the Tower by Sir John and Lady Hoskyns respectively at 12 o'clock noon in tropical heat. The heat during September of this year has probably been seldom if ever experienced.

The Harvest of this year has suffered severely owing to the remarkable dryness of May and June - and the prospect for farmers and labourers during the approaching winter is very serious. On the other hand the abundance of aftermath and of orchard Fruit and Garden produce of all sorts is remarkable - apples are almost quite unsaleable.

October 17 1895. The Telegraph completed to Aston Post Office and first Telegram sent from Aston - Mr. Thomas

Buckner being Postmaster - a great Event in the history of this village.

1895 On Monday Dec 16 I planted a young ash tree opposite the Chequers near the site of the old Pound which has been removed. The oak tree died.

1895

Reflections on my Jubilee

1. The change and vast improvements in the social condition of the people during these 50 years has been remarkable - This is owing to the cheapness of all the necessaries of Life - food, clothes, light and Groceries - also to the Love of cleanliness and neatness which a better Education promotes - The Cottages have a different interest and much increased air of comfort and taste - The people are better fed and clothed - also the children - I wish I could honestly say that I think there is a higher tone of Religion - but the indifference of many men in the village to Religion of any kind is most distressing. There are very few male communicants, and the attendance of men at church is v. small. Still, there is a vast social improvement.

2. It is a question whether it is desirable for any Clergyman to remain so long as I have done in the same Parish - there are great objections to it - Not that you are preaching to the same people - for the changes are continual. But there is danger of becoming too common and that you grow too old to welcome even useful improvements - New things do not fit either, and the old are preferred. At the same time, there are advantages - you preached to their fathers and Grandfathers, and can speak with some authority, and you have known and taught your middle aged Parishioners when they were boys and girls. You are regarded as a living Institution, and have a welcome in every House - This is my greatest encouragement and source of Thankfulness and Gratitude to God. May he pardon my many failings during these 50 years.

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1897 Rejoicings Everywhere our beloved Queen having reigned 60 years.

1898

May 30. The Great Mr Gladstone died on May 19 and was buried in Westminster Abbey on Saturday last May 28 aged 88. The public interest and deep feelings excited by his illness and death is extraordinary - as he had for some time retired from public life. A wonderful man in mind and body and unequalled by any Englishman of this Century in the variety of his gifts. All England seems in mourning for him. The newspapers overflowing with this absorbing subject. There is a general feeling that he has raised the tone of public life. He has been called "G.O.M. - The Grand Old Man".

He was a devout Christian and a staunch Churchman and set a bright example and showed that a man may be of brilliant abilities, and at the same time a humble Believer, and it is to be hoped that many will learn not to despise those who believe as he believed. Such an example is needed in these days.

The new Recreation Ground purchased in 1897 is now completed as regards sowing etc - a quick set hedge is planted round, and some Trees - May it be a source of Enjoyment to the young and old of this parish till the end of time - To have had any hand in it has been a privilege.

Nov 1897. We have now introduced lamps into our dear old Church and have Evening Services instead of afternoon - and the congregations are decidedly larger.

May 1898. The most extraordinary feature of the present time is the bicycling. Two years ago no females bicycled - now Every one does who can afford to purchase one - and it is found very conducive to Health.

The Summer of 1898 was remarkably dry - there was no rain for many weeks - and the Hay and Corn harvest were secured without any interruption. The sudden death of Mr. George Fuller in the cricket field on June 4 has caused great sorrow to all his numerous Relatives.

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1900

This year the Manor Farm and House, the property of Mr. Thomas Wellingham Fuller Also Copse Style Farm and House, the property of the late Mr George Fuller, also Mr. Reynolds' Farm occupied by Mr Thomas Curtis - all passed into the hands of Francis Cross Esq., of Egerton Lodge, Bolton Lancashire. He came into possession by purchase at the end of September 1900.

This year hardly any of the Corn was reaped by Hand - nearly all by Cutter and Binder - The sickle was scarcely used at all and hardly any women were employed in the fields - The Harvest was all over before the last fortnight in September and the weather was reasonably fine and settled.

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There is great scarcity of Labourers in the Country, as so many of the young men prefer work in towns - so scarce are Labourers that in threshing out their corn the farmers are obliged to borrow Labourers from one another. The War in South Africa has also caused a great scarcity of labour - such numbers having perished from wounds, and still more by sickness and fever.

1901 January 22. The death of our beloved Queen on this day at 6.30 has plunged the whole Nation into grief - Beloved by all her people and indeed by the World - the best of all the sovereigns who have reigned over England - and she will always be remembered as Victoria the Good - while Alfred will be recorded as Alfred the Great. Her Funeral was on Saturday Feb 2 and we had a Memorial Service in Aston Church that evening at which there was an immense Congregation.

The Census was made on Sunday night March 31 1901

Aston Tyrrold	-	289	
Aston Upthorpe	-	<u>125</u>	
		<u>414</u>	a decrease of 42 since last census

In the Census of 1891

Aston Tyrrold	-	300	
Aston Upthorpe	-	<u>156</u>	
		<u>456</u>	a decrease of 22

In the Census of 1881

Aston Tyrrold	-	310	
Aston Upthorpe	-	<u>168</u>	
		<u>478</u>	a decrease of 57

In the Census of 1871

Aston Tyrrold	-	366	
Aston Upthorpe	-	<u>169</u>	
		<u>535</u>	a decrease of 33 since 1861
		Total decrease	<u>154</u>

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December 29, 1902

This has been a wonderful year, The termination of the war in South Africa and declaration of peace - all our Troops returning Home.

The King's illness - and postponement of the Coronation - His wonderful Recovery through the prayers of the whole nation - The passing of the Education Bill after tremendous opposition of Nonconformists for fear the Church should be strengthened in our Schools - The discovery of Wireless Telegraphy and messages sent from Canada to Cornwall by wireless telegraphy - a wonderful year!

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A new Mistress has come to our School: Miss King went in July after 14 years faithful service on her marriage - Mrs Bucler from Warwick has taken her place - with high recommendation. Miss Mayne still teaches the infants after 25

years faithful work - beloved by all the children. Mr. Cross has built two beautiful new cottages near the Recreation Ground.

May 1903. Mr. Cross has purchased 23 Acres of Arable Glebe on the Hill for 255£. The two pieces were called "The Severalls" (being the Upper and larger piece, of 12 acres) and the Lower piece along the Road called "Water Slade" -

By consent of The Rector, The Bishop, The Patrons (Magdalen College Oxford), The Board of Agriculture and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners - The money is invested in the Indian 3 percent - for Rector of Aston Tyrrold JLH.

This land is subject to Tithe according to the award - Documents of sale are deposited in Iron chest.

August 10 1904. One of the most remarkable features of the present day is the wonderful increase of travelling in Motors and Bicycles.

Everybody now seems to bicycle and Motors are increasing rapidly - Few gentlemen or ladies or farmers ride now, except those who hunt. Labouring men now have their Bicycles - and the benefit to them is enormous in going to their work and returning.

They have been a discovery and invention of great benefit to all classes, and have contributed a great deal to the Happiness of the people, and also to their Health and very likely to Longevity.

We are having a most lovely summer - the Crops of Hay have been immense and well secured.

The School Play ground close adjoining has been purchased by Mr. Cross and conveyed to the Trustees of the National School at a cost of 46£ - a most valuable gift and absolutely necessary to the School.

The School has much improved under the care of Mr and Mrs Evans since Christmas last - Mr Evans has been our first Master of the National School.

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Mr. Thomas Wellingham Fuller, late owner of Aston Manor died Sunday Sept. 17 1905 aged 85 and was buried Sept 21 in the North East corner of the Churchyard and near his first wife's grave who died in May 1846 aged 24. Mr Fuller was a man respected and beloved by all who knew him.

The new Farm Buildings on the Hill on Mr. Cross's property were commenced this autumn - and completed in 1906 - The opening was on Saturday October 20.

1907 May 16. Poor Mrs Thomas Curtis our excellent School Mistress for 22 years died of Cancer.

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A.D. 1910

Friday April 8. On this day at 3 o'clock pm the new Organ-Chamber was dedicated by our son Edwyn, the Bishop of Southwell, in the presence of a large congregation.

It was built in memory of our beloved youngest daughter Florence who before her marriage to the Revd. Prebendary Gurdon had been our organist at Aston - it had been in an inconvenient position and on her lamented death after only a week's illness we erected a new Organ Chamber on the North of the Chancel - and last Friday it was dedicated.

The improvement to the Church is immense - The brass Tablet on the side of the Arch will keep in memory the purpose of the Erection - and the name of one who was beloved and deeply lamented by all who knew her.

This was the last entry made by my Father. He lived until the close of the following year 1911, when he was called suddenly to his rest on the morning of Dec 8th while staying in Bournemouth with my Mother's sister, but without pain or suffering - His body was moved to Aston and laid to rest beside the body of his daughter, the late Mrs Gurdon.

Signed

Benedict J Hoskyns

Vicar of Brighton

Canon & Preb. of Chichester Cathedral 9

N.B. This entry was made on July 28 1912

List of Plates:

Front Cover	Aston Street, Aston Tirrold (c1890)
Frontispiece	Sir John Leigh Hoskyns
Centre 1	The Smithy, Aston Upthorpe (c1890)
Centre 2	Copse Stile, Aston Tirrold (c1890)
Centre 3	The Manor, with St Michael's Church, Aston Tirrold
Centre 4	St Michael's Church, Aston Tirrold