

Droxford Church Rectors

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Rectors

1701 – Parish Burial Register

‘Peter NOURSE, D.D., succeeded Thomas GOODWIN in the Rectory of Droxford & was inducted June 4th, 1701.’

14 April 1722 – Death of Rector - Memorabilia

Peter NOURSE, buried beneath the altar of Droxford Church. Rector 1701 – 1722. Also Prebendary of Winchester and Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Anne. His grave stone was moved from the altar to the belfry floor when the sanctuary was tile-floored (between 1868 and 1886). Inscription now (1934) badly worn by the feet of the bell-ringers but reads:-

HSE
P. NOURSE
S.T.P
Hujus Ecclesiae Rector
Obijit April 14
1722 Aetatis suae 59

There is a wall tablet to his widow and one of his two daughters, Mary MYNGS and Elizabeth NOURSE, on the N. wall, behind the organ.

Doctor Lewis STEPHENS, Rector, 1722- 1745 – Memorabilia

‘He was a man of some private means and a cultured man of literary tastes, Chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester. His grave, unidentified, is in the Churchyard. His monument is a large circular tablet let into the wall of the South chapel ... It is possible that he built the Old Rectory He bequeathed a chest of old books to the Parish, a number of works against popery and an extract of his Will in the Parish Register bequeaths the books ‘ ... to the Parish Church of Droxford to remain there for ever in a press made at my expense for that purpose to and for the use of the Curate of Droxford whenever the Rector of the Parish aforesaid does not reside in person. The press is to be kept in one of the ‘side isles’ of the Church.

Dr. Stephens also bequeathed a piece of land called ‘Longmead’ to the Rectory Glebe – ‘It is the narrow meadow between the River Meon and the ditch popularly called the ‘dead river’ which rises in the middle of the field called ‘Town Meadow’ and joins the River at the end of the Rectory property. ‘Longmead’ is a useless piece of ground. It was bequeathed – subject to the lifetime of Mrs Philadelphia STEPHENS to whom a rent of 30/= was to be paid – to his successors in the living for a term of 500 years. It was copy-hold land, held from the Lord of the Manor.’

Doctor James CUTLER, Rector, 1746-1782 – Memorabilia

(Also Rector of Bishops Waltham)

Wife CATHARINE (daughter of John NEWHEY, S.T.P., Dean of Chichester) dies 12/12/1770, aged 50, and is buried with him in the S. aisle of the Church (Black stones). He died 15/3/1782, aged 65. He endowed a Charity (see board in Church belfry).

On account of the damp Dr. CUTLER tried to move his predecessor's bequest of old books from the Church to the Rectory, but the lawyers of his day were of the opinion that the strict letter of the Will must be adhered to. He therefore notes in the Parish Register: 'The lawyers are of opinion that the press and books could not be removed into the Parsonage House, so that they will be in great danger of being damaged by the damp. Let not therefore such inconvenience be imputed too the negligence of the succeeding Rector, who differed in opinion and would have taken greater care of them.' (However, some later person did remove them to the Old Rectory dining-room where they lay in a chest until 1930 at least.)

December 14th 1766 – Vestry Minutes

'The new Cushion of Crimson Velvet, together with a Crimson Cloth, laced and fringed, for the Pulpit and Reading Desk (Pr. £17:19:1½) are the Gift of the Rector (The Revd Mr Cutler) as a proof of his readiness to promote a decent provision for the Publick Worship; and a small token of his respect for a Parish with whom he hath been so many years connected.'

Doctor James CHELSUM, Rector, 1782-1801 – Memorabilia

A Cameo portrait of him is in the Church Vestry. The Burial Register has this entry: 'Buried May 1st 1801 Rev. James CHELSUM, D.D., Rector of this parish, aged 63 years.' His grave is not identified and no monument exists in the Churchyard ... (He) appears to have been rather a pugnacious gentleman who was not a 'persona grata' with his parishioners and they perhaps desired to forget him quickly.'

In 1789 Dr CHELSUM erected the stone monument at the end of the terrace walk in the Old Rectory Garden 'To the memory of Lewis Stephens , D.D. In gratitude for his donation of Longmead to the Rectorial Glebe of Droxford – Doctor JAMES CHELSUM, DD, Rector, For himself and posterity dedicates this tribute In the year of our Lord 1789.'

26th September 1785 – Manor Court Baron

We present the Reverend James CHELSUM for Digging Down the Church Way leading from Poppy Hill to the parish Church of Droxford and for Locking the Gate of the said Way'.

22nd July 1789 – Vestry

Vestry resolved ' That the offer of the Rev^d Dr Chelsum To present the Parish with an Organ (capable of being so fitted up as to need no Organist and to cause no Expense whatsoever to the Parish in general) be thankfully accepted'(to be paid for by private subscription. (20 signatures, including a shaky but neat 'Mary Myngs')

- Organ 'with two Barrels' – 'It stood at the West end, on the floor. There was no entrance then to the Church through the Belfry. The West entrance was made at this time.' (Memorabilia)

16th May 1791 – Vestry

Dr Chelsum (Rector) asks that the present Crimson-coloured Altar Cloth and Stools be now dyed purple '.... as being more suitable.'

Rev. William GARNIER, Rector, 1801-1831 – Memorabilia

‘His monument may be said to consist of the Rectory garden, which he laid out, and of the Beech Walk, which he planted ... related to the then Rector of Meonstoke (Mr Poulter) who was a great lover of trees and an expert in their culture. These two Rectors planted avenues of beeches on their respective Glebe lands in order that they might walk under pleasant shade to each others’ houses.’

Rev. J.A. Griffith COLPOYS, Rector, 1831-1868 – Memorabilia

‘Non-resident Rector for many years, living at St. Leonards-on-Sea, where he died and was buried. He lived there for the sake of his wife’s health. She was a daughter of John Bird SUMNER, Archbishop of Canterbury, who married them in Droxford Church. Mrs COLPOYS and son are buried near the East wall of the Church.’

Rev. Stephen BRIDGE, Rector, - 1868 -1886 – Memorabilia

‘For a long period the character of the Church services in Droxford Church was that of the extreme Evangelical type. The Rev. Stephen Bridge was of that type of Churchmanship, while he liked the services to be decently and reverently conducted and was jealous for the appearance of the Church’.

Rev. R.G. Harrison, Rector, 1886-1902 – Memorabilia

He ‘was a stalwart Protestant & Evening Holy Communion prevailed in his day, but was discontinued by Canon Vaughan’.

He is buried in the Churchyard under the wooden paling of the Rectory garden.

Rev. Canon John Vaughan, Rector, 1902-1910 – Memorabilia

He ‘was a liberal Evangelical, a student, naturalist, antiquarian and one of the early pioneers of Biblical criticism’.

‘Residentiary Canon of Winchester. Buried at Winchester Cathedral. For his memorial in Droxford go to the Church and there ‘si monumentum requiris, circumspice.’

Rev. Canon Stephenson, Rector, 1910-1926 – Memorabilia

He ‘was an old-fashioned High Churchman who was accustomed to much more outward ceremonial than he was able to introduce into a parish where tradition was so strong on the other side. He adopted the Eastward position for celebrating and wore the ecclesiastical colours in his stoles for the Eucharist, but beyond this he did not change the character of the Service’.

Rev. Etheridge Rector, 1926 – 19xx – Memorabilia

Rev. Etheridge himself ‘stated his intention of keeping up his own personal habit of bowing on passing the Altar. But he promised to make no change in the services without the approval of the people as expressed through the PCC’. In his time the following was introduced:

- Sung Evensong (from Easter Day, 1926)
- Sung Morning Service (from Christmas Day, 1926)

- Lighted candles – but ‘to prevent opposition, only for Celebrations before Morning Prayer – this practice came in, by a unanimous vote ‘without trouble’.
- A robed choir (Easter Day, 1934) – two choir members, who had voted against robes, left it ‘but the congregation and parish soon came to appreciate the change – people felt that their Church was now no longer ‘peculiar’ in the ordering of its services’.

Buried in Churchyard.