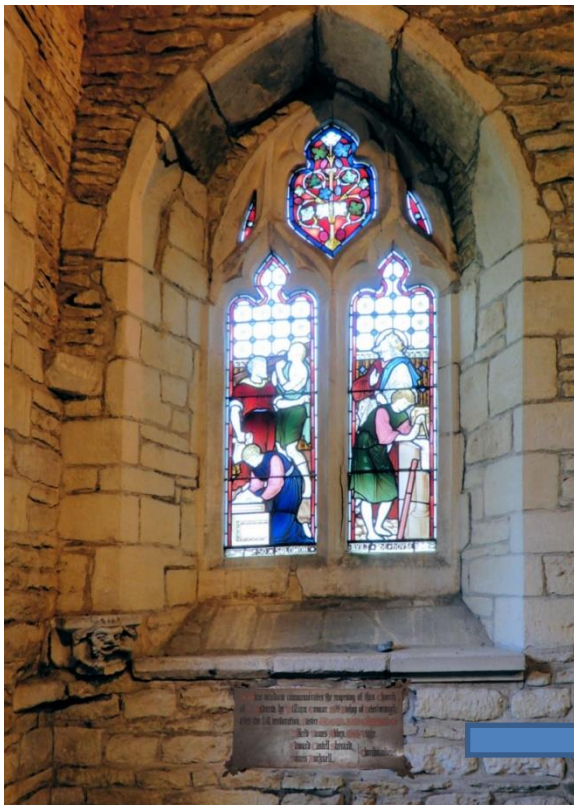


REVEREND ALFRED JAMES ABBEY 1873

Reverend Alfred James Abbey was the Vicar of St Andrew's for just five years. He was a pupil at Cotterstock Vicarage School established by William T Watson. It is hard to think of anyone who played a more important part in the life of the village that he did. It was during his incumbency that the Church was restored and reordered and the bells were restored and re-hung. The window at the east end of the north aisle refers to this restoration.



What is interesting is that whilst he was vicar here for just five years, his connections with the village extended over a much longer period.

He was born in 1847 in Lubenham in Leicestershire but the family had their roots around Long Buckby. His father was an attorney and described himself as a gentleman. Alfred did not go to one of the well-known public schools, instead he was educated in the private boarding school run by the Vicar of Cotterstock in the vicarage, so his connections with Cotterstock began at an early age.

In 1866 he went to Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge and gained his B.A. in 1870. In the same year he was made a deacon in Ripon Cathedral and a priest the following year. He began his career in Leeds as a curate and served there until 1873 and there are hints that he might have been influenced by the Oxford Movement and been 'High Church' in

outlook. In 1873 he was appointed to Cotterstock and his time here was clearly fruitful.

After just six years here he moved from Cotterstock, first for a year to Luton and then to Marazion in Cornwall. During this time he clearly kept contact with Cotterstock because the parish registers here record him returning to the village to conduct a funeral. In 1885 he left Marazion and then his movements become obscure, he was not yet forty but he didn't hold any further appointments in the church. Perhaps he inherited a considerable income as when he died he was a very wealthy man.

Reverend Alfred Abbey died in Nice in 1923 and his grave is in the cemetery there. In his will he left £37000 which would be in the order of £1.5 million today. He left bequests to various charities but also some to individuals which are interesting because eight of them were from Cotterstock. It does seem surprising because he died forty years after leaving Cotterstock but it is clear that he still had contact with the village and knew what was going on. He bequeathed money to George Berridge because he had been permanently maimed in the war; when we look at military records we find that George was invalided out of the Army in 1916. He left money to George Lewis and his wife Julia in "acknowledgement of their having given 'dad' a home in his old age". The census for 1911 shows that George and Julia had George's father living with them.

It is clear that Cotterstock was especially dear to him throughout his life as at the end of it he still remembered fondly the associations he had had with the village.