



Christopher Hodgson

Appointed Rector 1891

The final Rector of the Victorian period was Rev Christopher Hodgson. He was born in 1830 in Witherslack, Westmoreland, son of William Jackson and Agnes (nee Benson) Hodgson, one of seven children.

He was ordained deacon in 1855 and a priest in 1856. He married Elizabeth Isabella Croft on 6th January 1857 when aged 27 and they had five children, Arthur Tayler (born 1857), Ernest Christopher (1859), Isabella E (1861), Emily M (1863) and Randolph Llewellyn (1870).

Career

Curate of Burgh 1855 – 58,
Vicar of Playford 1858 – 71,
P C of Culpho 1860 – 71,
Rector of Braithwell 1871 – 1891,
Rector of Campsea Ashe 1891 – 1906.

The Guardian announces the following preferments and appointments:—Rev. George H. Butt, vicar of Edlington, Horncastle, assistant diocesan inspector of schools for the diocese of Lincoln; Rev. W. B. Drawbridge, LL.B., vicar of Bussage, Stroud—patron, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol; Rev. Christopher Hodgson, rector of Campsea Ashe, Suffolk—patron, Lord Rendlesham; Rev. Wordsworth Everard Jones, rector of Dunsby, Lincoln.

The Times

16th July 1891

In the 1901 census he is recorded as living at the Rectory along with his wife, son Randolph (now an author) and two servants.

Crockford's Clerical Directory (1874) describes him as follows:

HODGSON, Christopher, Braithwell Rectory, Rotherham.—St. Bees, 1853; *ibid.* 1855, p 1856 by Bp of Nor. R. of Braithwell w Bramley, Dio. York, 1871. (¶¶, Ld. Chan; Tithe—Imp. 370*l*, App. 269*l*, V. 87*l*; Gl. R. 2½ a.; V. 5 a.; Gross Inc. 330*l* and Ho; Pop. 732.) Formerly C. of Burgh near Woodbridge 1855-58; V. of Playford 1858-71; V. of Culpho, Suff. 1860-71. Author, *Sermons*, 1871. [14]

He died at Campsea Ashe in 1906 and it is believed he is buried in the Churchyard at Campsea Ashe, although there is no memorial to him.

Probate record:

HODGSON the reverend Christopher of Campsea Ashe Suffolk clerk died 30 June 1906 Probate **London** 22 August to Ernest Christopher Hodgson professor-of-music Effects £1339 14s. 5d.

Playford Village Website

Rev Hodgson appeared to have a difficult time at Playford, particularly with regard to the local school:

Much like the 18th century school at Playford Hall mentioned above, brief mention in an account of the history of education in the village should be made that the Revd. Christopher Hodgson, vicar of Playford from 1858-1871, boarded four 11 year old 'scholars' at the vicarage only one of whom at the time of the 1861 Census came from Suffolk.

Return of Schools, 1871.

In his reminiscences of early Victorian Playford, James Frost states that by about the year 1864 the school was at 'one of the Hill Cottages' and he goes on to say that the 'Revd. Hodgson and others' took an active part in its running.

The school's closure in 1877

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was the first piece of government legislation to deal specifically with the provision of education in this country; it created school boards in those districts where there were insufficient school places for the numbers of working-class children as enumerated in the Census. A Parish meeting was accordingly held in Playford Vicarage on a weekday morning in November of that year 'for the purpose of deciding whether the rate-payers will erect a school-room for the Parish or unite with Bealings for a District School'. The decision of that meeting was that 'the invitation by Great Bealings to unite in a District School with the three parishes of Great Bealings, Little Bealings and Playford be respectfully declined'. Attending the meeting were the Revd. Christopher Hodgson, in the chair; Manfred and Herman Biddell, farmers of Lux and Hill Farms respectively; E C Hakewill, prominent church architect who had retired and built Playford Mount for his own use only three years before; Francis Coates, a shop-keeper and carrier; William Mann, shoe maker and father of Ellen the teacher, and George Woby, agricultural labourer who worked for the Biddells. The vote against acceptance of the Great Bealings' offer was won on the casting vote of the Chairman; the agricultural lobby, being the main rate payers, naturally voted in favour. Hodgson's action would have riled the Biddells particularly Herman who, as sole churchwarden, would have been instrumental in introducing him to the Playford living. Hodgson had served his curacy at Burgh where Herman was friendly with the Rector there and indeed married his daughter Harriet in 1870. With Herman's fiery temperament, it was probably no coincidence that Hodgson left the parish within months of the meeting. It was probably no coincidence either that, within two years of his departure, plans had been finalised for major building works at the church: the demolition and rebuilding of the chancel, another area of potential conflict between parson and quick-tempered churchwarden.