

## A Year in the Life of the Village in 1891

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If we examine the reports given in four local newspapers under the heading of "King's Cliffe", in the course of the year 1891, we uncover a fascinating account of what actually happened in the village in that year. For this was still the Golden Age of the local newspaper, when local news coverage was the staple diet and reports from town and village were given in extensive detail. Such was the character of the three or four local newspapers of that bygone era to which we now turn as the well-springs of our study, the Stamford Mercury, the Stamford Guardian, the Peterborough Advertiser and the Kettering Leader.

To set the scene we turn to the Census Returns of 1891, to discover who lived in the village at that date and the employment (if any) in which they were engaged. In the year 1891 the Census Return for King's Cliffe revealed a population of 1082 men, women, and children: 547 males, 535 females. This showed a decrease in numbers of 193 persons since the Census of 1881, when there was a total of 1275 persons. (In the peak year of 1851 there was a population of 1407). In its edition of 24th April 1891 the Stamford Guardian news for King's Cliffe made this comment: "within the last ten years the population has decreased by about 200. This is largely accounted for as there are 47 houses empty in the parish. Many people have left to go to large towns. In Leeds, for instance, there is quite a colony of Cliffe people." What the correspondent for Cliffe might have added was that the opening of the railway in 1879 gave Cliffe people, young men and women especially, a ready way of leaving the village for distant parts. By 1901 the population had again fallen to 982 persons.

Then we take a look at the employment of the people, as was submitted household by household in this Census of 1891. To take a limited range of occupations, we find that there were 38 female domestic servants; 5 male domestic servants; 46 labourers, some of whom were boys of 12 and over; 51 agricultural labourers, again, boys amongst them; 4 woodmen; 3 gamekeepers; 10 sawyers; 26 wood turners, of whom 4 were master-turners and 22 employees; of the railway 8 plate-layers, 2 signalmen, 1 linesman, 2 porters and 1 station-master; 5 bakers; 5 principal shopkeepers (grocery, drapery and general) and 6 male assistants; 8 housekeepers; 3 doctors (two practices); 8 dressmakers; 1 timber-merchant; 1 coach-and-wagon builder; 5 journeymen-wheelwrights; 2 schoolmasters, 1 pupil teacher; 3 schoolmistresses; 2 photographers; 1 London merchant; 1 curate; 1 nonconformist minister; 2 tailors; 6 timber-carters; 5 grooms; 2 master-blacksmiths, 3 journeymen-blacksmiths; 9 farmers; 4 farm-foremen; 2 sweeps; 4 plumbers; 2 painters; 5 stone-masons; 6 inn-keepers; 1 veterinary surgeon; 1 maltster; 1 brewer; 3 engine-drivers; 4 gardeners; 1 slater; 1 threshing tackle owner; 4 master butchers and 2 assistant butchers; 5 shoemakers; 7 hurdle-makers; and 1 saddler.

And so the tale continues; let it suffice that in 1891 King's Cliffe was still what we may describe as a self-sufficient community. No squire, no-one very affluent; just 21 females and 6 males who reported that they were "living on own means". What deserves special note is that there were 46 general labourers, 51 agricultural labourers and 26 men wood-turners.

Always something was afoot in the village. There were gatherings for convivial suppers of one sort and another; the meetings of political associations, of the fire brigade, the cricket club, the Friendly Societies; there were concerts and dances organised by village people for their own entertainment. There was no such thing as "the wireless"; there was no village hall, so that all such gatherings were held either in those public-houses which had adequate room-space or in the comparatively new Park Street Schools (opened 1873). There was unemployment and there was much poverty; there were the aged poor, some of whom found refuge in the almshouses. In 1891 Mrs. Cornforth founded and built her "Cornforth Homes" for three poor men and three poor women, on School Hill, and supplemented thereby the three Thorpe Almshouses in Park Street and the eight Law & Hutcheson Almshouses on School Hill. The Parish Church and the two Nonconformist Chapels added their quota of gatherings for multifarious purposes; the tale of these village activities was endless.

The Christmas 1890/New Year 1891 saw the Christmas "Waits" sing carols and hymns all round the village, while the Church bells rang "merry peals". The Advertiser reported on "Seasonable Benevolence": the Thomas' Day charities for "the deserving poor", the gifts of edibles to the poor by individual donors such as the Rector, Miss Sarah Law and Mrs Howes. The 51 contributors of the Rector's Coal Club each had five shillings and four pence added to the eight shillings and eight pence saved during the year; while the "Sick and Dividing Club" at the Turners' Arms paid out a dividend of 4 s 6d to its 26 (male) members. On New Year's Eve the annual "Working Men's Supper" was held at the Wheat Sheaf inn, when a "substantial repast" was provided by Host C. Sharpe. Mr. Reuben Dixon proposed the health of the working-man and "after the cloth was drawn" songs were sung by Messrs J. Compton, C. Compton, H. E. Dixon, R. Bonfield, J. Sharpe, and M. Skinner. Mr. George Miles, the redoubtable timber-merchant of Park Street, was in the chair and paid for a glass of grog for the whole of the large company present.

This was a very hard winter, the cause of much unemployment in the village. The Advertiser of 17th January carried this report for Cliffe: "Lord Carbery, in addition to having great alterations made at Laxton Hall, has had

the pond cleaned out with the intention of supplying the Hall with water. These undertakings have caused the employment of a large number of labourers, Cliffe contributing 18. By the continued frosts having brought farming operations to a standstill, these 18 labourers would have been out of employment, so that their families are doubly thankful that the work has turned up at a time when poverty is more keenly felt."

The farmers, tradesmen and publicans held their annual supper at the Windmill Inn on 20th January, when a plentiful supply of beef, mutton, pork and rabbit pies was served up by the hostess, Mrs. Catlin. Mr George Miles occupied the chair and Mr. J. J. Bailey the vice-chair. After supper the chairman remarked that this very agreeable social evening was "the means of bringing all classes and conditions of people together" and was "productive of a great deal of good". As usual at these all-male supper events, some "good singing" was indulged in, and the National Anthem at 10 o'clock brought yet another "pleasant evening" to a close.

At this time Cliffe had a good and thriving Cricket Club, supported by the leading lights of the village, and never short of players. Club members were active in raising funds for the team; this we see in an "Entertainment and Dance" presented in the Park Street School-rooms on 7th February 1891, with a repeat performance on the following Monday. Music for dancing was provided by Mr. J. J. Bailey (piano), Mr. F. Pell (Violin), Mr. H. Bailey (piccolo); a farce was played by an all-village troupe. Entitled "Handy Andy", the Dramatis Personae were: Nandy Andy, Mr. A. Hawkes; Squire Egan, Mr. H. Jarvis; Squire O'Grady, Mr. E. J. Hawkes; Mr. Murphy, Mr. H. Bailey; Mr. Furlong, Mr F. Blake; Edward O'Connor, Mr. F. Edgson; Simon, Mr. J. Paine; Oonah Rooney, Miss N Wragby; Mad Nance, Miss L. Miles; Fanny Dawson, Miss L Davison.

Those who have studied the gravestones in Cliffe churchyard will have seen the gray-black marble obelisk which stands near the west gable-end of the nave. This is a memorial to Thomas and Ann Carrington, the parents of a Mrs. Cornforth of Birmingham. Mrs. Cornforth was born and raised in Cliffe, left home at an early age to make her way in the City of Birmingham. She married a Birmingham industrialist named Cornforth and when she came to early widowhood decided to memorialise her parents in the churchyard of her native village and to erect almshouses for three aged men and three aged women in Cliffe. She launched her scheme in January 1891 and in no time at all selected a site at the top of School Hill for her "Homes". The plans were prepared by Mr. J. Boothroyd Corby, architect, of Stamford, tenders called for and the tender of S. F. Halliday, builder, of Stamford, accepted out of ten submitted; his quotation was the lowest: £1367! From then on King's Cliffe was agog with excitement over this benefaction, and each time Mrs. Cornforth came to inspect progress - and eventually to open the Homes - the village turned out to greet her, to enjoy her largesse, to put out flags and to ring the Church bells. The speedy progress of constructing the Homes was faithfully reported in both the Peterborough Advertiser and the Stamford Guardian. These reports are worth quoting at length:

Stamford Guardian 10<sup>th</sup> July 1891 "STONE LAYING AT KING'S CLIFFE : LADY BOUNTIFUL

On Tuesday last the people of King's Cliffe assembled to witness the laying of the Cornforth Homes memorial stones. Mrs. Cornforth, who lives at Lime Grove, Edgbaston, is a native of King's Cliffe, she being a daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Carrington, wood-turner, who died at King's Cliffe on March 21st 1857, at the age of 79 years. To the memory of her father and mother, Mrs. Cornforth has erected a beautiful granite monument in the churchyard and now she is about to benefit her native place by ENDOWING IT WITH THE HOMES mentioned above. They will be situated on School Hill in a field known as "Dovecote Close"..... Soon after nine o'clock the church bells were rung in honour of the occasion and rang at intervals during the day. The place was gay with bunting. One o'clock was the time appointed for the stone laying, but the rain somewhat delayed the event. The delay, however, was not long continued and shortly after the time announced Mrs. Cornforth drove up in her carriage and was escorted to the spot by Mr. T. J. Law. Master English, the four year old son of Mr. R. M. English solicitor, Stamford, also accompanied the lady. The Revd. Henry Collier, who did duty for the Revd. R. L. Clarke, curate-in-charge, read appropriate passages of Scripture, after which the STONE WAS LAID IN POSITION and Mrs. Cornforth and Master English, each in succession, took the silver trowel and the mallet and proceeded to effect the customary stone laying ceremony. The stone bore the simple inscription "C.C. Laid 7th July, 1891, R.C.E." the initials being those of Catherine Cornforth and Richard Cornforth English..... The next proceeding was the reception of the children and old people by Mrs. Cornforth. This took place in a large marquee, and to each child under eight years of age there was given a bun, an orange, and sixpence. There were about two hundred recipients of the generous memento of a memorable occasion. The old people to the number of about 100 received half-a-crown each, and some of the most infirm got a double present in the shape of two half-crowns. Mrs. Cornforth then drove up the town to the Cross Keys inn where Host Fane had provided an excellent dinner to which many friends and relatives of Mrs. Cornforth had been bidden. Mr. T. J. Law occupied the chair at dinner and among those present were: Mrs. Cornforth, Mr and Mrs. English, Mrs. T. J. Law, Mr and Mrs W. F. Law (Stamford), Miss Sarah Law, Dr. Pink, Dr. Phipps, Revd. H. Collier, Messrs. J. Bailey, G. Bailey, T. Bailey, G. Miles, W. Bollans, J. Rate, G. Rate, W. Rate, J. J. Bailey, H. Bailey, R. Brown, W. Dainty, W. Raven, W. Walker, T. Walker, and W. H. Gist. The health of Mrs. Cornforth was drunk with enthusiasm. In addition to the half-crowns, to which reference has already been made, 100 OLD AND INFIRM PEOPLE were given tickets for a knife-and-fork tea at the Red Lion inn, where a substantial repast was provided. The workmen employed on the new homes were entertained to a well-deserved hot supper at the

Golden Ball inn, and after the cloth was drawn the evening was given to conviviality. Mrs. Cornforth left King's Cliffe for Stamford at six o'clock with the good wishes of the entire population. It is hoped she will repeat her visit on the completion of the new buildings, and her tenants are selected, when, it is rumoured, a general holiday will be provided. "

The Advertiser of 22nd August 1891 reported on a private visit which Mrs. Cornforth made to the village that week. The Homes were by then in an advanced stage of construction and the lady visited them, after distributing gifts of wearing apparel to the poor. This account speaks of the removal of several thatched cottages which had occupied the site and which previously obstructed the view from the street, and of the incongruous and unsightly obstruction, the property of Thomas J. Law, a gaunt thatched building which completely blocked the view of the new Homes from the town side. " The road, which is very narrow just here and inconvenient as it is the middle of a very steep hill, would be very much improved by the removal of this building. "

The formal Opening of the Homes took place on Wednesday the 13th of July 1892, and it is worthwhile advancing beyond our 1891 commitment in order that the story of the establishment of the Homes may be told in full. So let us turn to the Peterborough Advertiser of 16th July 1892:

OPENING OF THE CORNFORTH HOMES " On Wednesday this village bore an exceptionally gay appearance, it being the all-important day selected by Mrs Cornforth on which to open her homes. On Tuesday afternoon Mrs Cornforth came into her native village, heralded by a merry peal of bells, and highly pleased were the inhabitants at the knowledge of her arrival. On Wednesday the streets were gaily decorated with streamers, bearing mottoes of welcome, accompanied by numerous flags, which gave the village a very animated appearance. Shortly after one o'clock a large concourse of people made their way in the direction of the Homes, and at two o'clock many hundreds had assembled. After several short addresses Mrs. Cornforth, accompanied by numerous personal friends at King's Cliffe and Birmingham, with her solicitor, Mr English of Stamford, commenced to open the Homes. The ceremony was witnessed with great gratification. The following are the order and names of the fortunate recipients of these magnificent homes:- No. 1, Robert Green, aged 77 years; No.2, George Palmer, aged 76 years; No.3, John James Gordon, aged 70 years; No.4, Mary Goodwin, aged 85 years; No.5, Mary Blood, aged 82 years; No.6, Jane Payne, aged 70. To each of these deserving men and women, on being handed over the keys of their respective homes with half a sovereign, the gracious donor accompanied the gift by kind words of praise and congratulations. This part of the proceedings was very affecting, as the occupants of these gifts were entirely overcome by their feelings. Mrs. Cornforth and friends then adjourned to the tent, when the children were each presented with a bun and orange and money, and so great was the demand that the supply of buns and oranges became exhausted. The remainder, however, were compensated with three-penny pieces and sixpences. Mrs Cornforth, amid the continued and lusty cheering of the inhabitants, proceeded to the Cross Keys Hotel, when a recherche repast had been provided, for numerous were the invited guests. Speeches were made, all couched in eulogistic terms. Mrs. Cornforth suitably acknowledged the compliments paid to her. In the evening all the men and women of 50 years of age, to the number of 200, were entertained to a substantial supper, part of which was supplied by Mr. R. Dixon of the Golden Ball Inn, and the remainder by Mr. T. F. Richardson, of the Red Lion Inn. To say that those elderly residents enjoyed themselves would not be fairly representing their feelings, as they were one and all delighted, and the opening of the Cornforth Homes will be remembered by young and old as a red letter day."

The volunteer village Fire Brigade was a most important institution in the community; the maintenance of the horse-drawn, manually-operated engine (kept in the Hall Yard building dedicated to that purpose, and still to be seen with its 1831 inscription); the regular exercising of the two teams of firemen; all called for capable management and systematic money-raising. The annual meeting of the Brigade Committee was held Tuesday 27th January at the Wheel Inn, when it was found that the accounts for the past year showed an increase in expenditure over that of receipts and subscriptions. It was decided to hold two concerts later in the year for the purpose of purchasing new helmets and uniforms for the "engineers". A Brigade meeting at the Cross Keys on Monday 27th May decided on the purchase of 60 feet of new canvas hose and of a new copper branch pipe, this last to be 18 inches longer than the old one. The Secretary was to purchase two helmets for the engineers, not to exceed 15 shillings each.

Since ancient times the general regulation of the village was vested in the Vestry, an assembly of the ratepayers which met always in the south transept of the Parish Church, usually on Thursday mornings. (Parish Councils as such, replacing the ancient parish Vestries, were established only in 1894/5). The annual general meeting of Cliffe ratepayers was held in the Church Vestry on Thursday morning, 25th March 1891, to elect the usual parish officers for the ensuing year. Present on this occasion were Messrs. T. J. Law, W. Dainty, W. Walker, E. Dixon, H. Jarvis, T. Miles, C. Stokes, E. J. Hawkes, C. Stanyon, R. Dixon, W. Bollans, J. L. Blake, J. T. Bailey, J. Close, W. Dixon, H. E. Dixon.

Mr. C. Stokes and Mr. T. Miles were re-elected Overseers of the Poor; Mr. W. Dainty and Mr. E. J. Hawkes were re-elected Poor Law Guardians; Mr. G. Miles was re-elected Waywarden; his appointment brought to the fore

that subject which at this time continued to agitate the whole village, viz. the bad state of the footpaths. The meeting decided that the Waywarden should enquire of the local Highway Board if it would help the parish in the matter. Then followed, by old custom in Cliffe, the adjournment of the Vestry to the Wheatsheaf Inn, first to partake of a hearty supper of bread and cheese, then to sell by auction the herbage and mortar of the highways and byways, and finally to receive from John Lucas Blake, the village saddler, the accounts of the Sparrow Club. This last was an old practice by which those who captured or shot sparrows - the predators of field and garden - brought the dead birds to an appointed Vestryman, to receive so much money per score. This year £4 9s. 4d. was raised from the sale of the herbage and mortar, while J. L. Blake had a balance due to him of 3s. 6d.

Easter fell early in 1891. It was always a time of great activity in Cliffe. There was the annual Church Vestry meeting for the appointment of churchwardens. On Good Friday Miss Sarah Law, of Wellington House, gave hot cross buns to the children of the village; while on Easter Tuesday the scholars of the Church Sunday School received prizes and a "Bun and Orange" apiece. Then on Easter Monday the two Friendly Societies held their anniversary feasts, the Old Amicable Society at the Golden Ball and the Wheel Inn Society at the Wheel Inn. Each Society was in a flourishing condition and after dinner each Club paraded through the streets, the Old Amicables headed by the Nassington band, the Wheel members making use of Mr. J. Bailey's band. An entertainment was given in the Wesleyan Chapel on Thursday 16th April by the Sunday School scholars, consisting of songs, hymns and recitations, and on the evening of the 21st the Temperance Band of the Congregational Chapel provided a tea for some 50 persons, with games to follow. Public teas were frequent social occasions at the "Top" Chapel and one held on Sunday 2nd of May 1891 saw 120 persons sit down to "a bountiful tea", followed by a lecture in the chapel schoolroom (formerly the old "British" Nonconformist schoolroom). And when Boswell's Circus visited Cliffe in the second week of April, standing in a field close to the railway station, it was well patronised, the children especially being treated by Dr and Mrs Pink to an afternoon performance.

The political associations of the village were always lively; they had frequent meetings and produced as speakers either divisional agents or candidates for the general elections-to-come. One such meeting was promoted in the Schools on Wednesday 10th June 1891, by the Cliffe Liberal Association, when Mr. J. T. Stockburn, J.P., the Liberal candidate for the division, was the principal speaker, supported by Mr. A. C. Morton, M.P. for Peterborough, and Mr. C. Pollard of Kettering. There was a large attendance and Mr. Charles Stanyon, the Bridge Street ironmonger and leading member of the Top Chapel, presided. Mr. Stockburn spoke at length, critical of Lord Burghley and of Mr. Monckton of Fineshade, of the Conservative "Agricultural Holdings Act" and of the Bill for Free Education, which he described as a "Tory bribe". Cliffe charities he said, should be put in the hands of the people of Cliffe. When Mr. Morton and Mr. Pollard came forward to speak there were frequent interruptions from Mr. George Miles, Conservative. We learn from the Guardian that active leaders of the Liberal Association were Messrs. Elijah Dixon, Henry Dixon, William Bollans, George Coleman, Edward Edgson, George Bollans, Robert Green, H. E. Dixon, and John Ventross Green.

In this year of 1891 George Miles had reached the peak of his success as timber-merchant and the biggest employer of labour in the village. His home (later to be rebuilt as "Rockbourne"), was at the very end of Park Street, with the large timber-yard next to the house, flanked by Station Road. The spectacle of timber "druggs" drawing tree-timber through the streets of Cliffe was a common sight, with usually three horses to each drugg. The Advertiser of 25th July 1891 carried this significant report on George Miles business:-

**KING'S CLIFFE : MONARCHS OF THE FOREST.**- Mr Miles, who may be considered the stay, or rather the backbone of the village, on account of the great amount of labour that he employs, is daily receiving large consignments of new timber in his yard at Cliffe, and also at Stamford, where he carries on a very extensive business, owing to the free access of railway communication, he having his saw benches in the Midland Railway station yard. Lying on the side of the footpath by which this station is approached are three of the finest trees that it has ever been the pleasure of the public to witness. They are of a mixed kind, viz., one oak, one ash, one elm. The three trees cost upwards of £120, but a tree which may be classed as a king of the forest now lies in Deene Park, and which causes a great amount of anxiety to the timber carters, on account of its prodigious size, to know how it is to be conveyed home. It is an elm, and as it lies it measures 36 feet in length, with a quarter girth of 43½ inches, which will be found to contain 473 feet. To include the top, of which it has been decapitated, it would contain over 700 feet of measurable timber."

There was an active Sports Committee which every year promoted athletic sports, usually to coincide with the village Feast. The year 1891 also witnessed the formation of a Cycle Club in the village, with Mr G. Close as Captain and Mr. R. Green as sub-captain. These were the days of the first bicycle, the "Penny-Farthing", and its advent in Cliffe aroused much attention. One of the club meetings held on 21st July, attracted a vast crowd in the village. The cyclists were first treated to a meat tea by Mr. W Brookes, the vice-president, on the lawn of his house; they then processed through the village, all the machines handsomely dressed with flowers. A run to Fotheringhay followed and when they returned to Cliffe at 10 p.m. " Chinese lanterns adorned

several machines, and were admired by hundreds of spectators." In the following week the Sports were held. The Guardian reported: " The Rothwell Albion Band paraded the village, and then marched to the sports field, where about 1600 persons were assembled, great numbers coming to the village by train." Of the many events, the Married Women's Race must have prompted the greatest fun, when the first prize was won by a Mrs. Giddings, the second by Mrs Hy Cunnington, the third by Mrs. Godfrey. " Mrs. Emma Britten also ran." The same week was "Feast Week", commencing on 25th July, the day of the dedication of Cliffe Parish Church to St. James the Great. The Guardian report informs us that large numbers of visitors came in by the Saturday evening trains; that on Sunday afternoon the Stamford town band played a selection of sacred music at the Cross and in the evening of the same day the Gretton brass band also performed a concert of sacred music. And so "Cliff'east" began, lasting five days in all. " There was the usual display of roundabouts, shooting galleries, high fliers, coco-nut shies, gingerbread stalls, boxing booths, and the aerial flight, which seemed to be well patronised by old and young." Another feature of the Feast was a cricket match between 12 active members of the Club and 22 oldies. This year the 12 won by 2 runs.

King's Cliffe in the closing years of the nineteenth century was still what it had been from time immemorial - a village in which agriculture was at the very heart of life, where the skills of the agricultural worker were of vital significance, and where horse-power combined with human muscle power to work the land and produce crops. The growing-months of 1891 had been inauspicious weather-wise, but then in early September came a spell of very hot weather. Reaping went ahead smoothly, stacks were built and quickly thatched down. And then there were the gleaners, allowed into the fields, as soon as cut and garnered, to gather stray ears of corn which, taken to cottage homes - and thence to either the West Street windmill or to the Hall Yard watermill for grinding - brought some added provision to those homes. But we learn from the Guardian that so hot was the second week of September 1891 that the gleaners had to return home, " they being unable to combat with the fatigue caused by the intense heat." Scenes indeed of yesterday !

The Vestry and the ratepayers were still vexed with the problem of the dilapidated footpaths and on 10th August a meeting of ratepayers in the Church Vestry considered once more a plan put forward by George Miles and Elijah Dixon. This was to lay granite slabs on the 3000 yards of footpaths, to cost about £1,500. Mr. Monckton of Fineshade, a County Councillor, warned the meeting in a letter " to be careful what it did ". It did nothing except appoint a committee to confer on the subject with Mr. Monckton, the outcome of which was dealt with at a Vestry meeting on 17th December. Present at that meeting were Messrs G. Miles (in the chair), T. J. Law, W. Dainty, W. Walker, L. Wade, C. Stanyon, W. Bollans, J. Skinner, V. Green, E. Dixon, J. Slingsby, E. Edgson, E.J. Hawkes, J. Bailey, sen., T. Miles, H. Jarvis, J. T. Dixon, W. Dixon, R. Green, J. J. Bailey, and H.E Dixon. Principal item on the agenda was a proposal to petition the County Council to declare some five miles of the road from Cliffe to Easton a main road, since this was the direct road to Stamford, "the recognised market town of the neighbourhood". The question of the footpaths was then deferred, pending the decision of the County Council in the matter of the road. A deputation to present the memorial to the County Council was appointed, consisting of Messrs. G. Miles, T. J. Law, W. Dainty, V. Green and J. Slingsby; while Mr. E. J. Hawkes and Mr. H. E. Dixon were appointed to canvas the village for support and signatures of the ratepayers to the memorial.

Harvest thanksgiving services were held at the Parish Church on Thursday, October 1st and on the Sunday following. " The Sunday evening service was announced by a merry peal of bells, and the evening being beautifully fine, a large number of people flocked in from the neighbouring villages, which greatly taxed the seating of the church," so reported the Advertiser. The Wesleyan Chapel anniversary was held Sunday 4th October, followed by a public tea on the following day, when 64 people sat down. The anniversary of the Congregational Chapel was held Sunday 15th October, followed by a public tea and meeting in the chapel schoolroom on Monday 18th October. Further recognition of a bountiful harvest was given by a Harvest Supper provided by Mr. T. F. Richardson of the Red Lion Inn for all the farm-workers of the village on Tuesday the 13th October, at a cost of one shilling per head. Mr. William Dainty and Mr. Lucas Wade, farmers, fell in with this project and paid for their men. Altogether 110 persons sat down to a repast of hare and rabbit pies, legs of mutton, rounds of beef, a sucking pig, Yorkshire and plum puddings, cheese and celery. This was followed by the singing of songs by the company with Mr Dainty in the chair and Mr. Wade in the vice-chair. These were the singers and their songs, no doubt oft-repeated in the public houses: J. Henson, "Don't forget to bury me deep"; C. Goodwin, "Tap at the window tonight, love"; B. Langley, "A soldier and a man"; J.L. Blake, "Our Jack's come home today"; H. E. Dixon, "Ehren on the Rhine"; E. Smith, "Poor old dad"; R. Sharpe, "A farmer's boy"; G. Freer, "The rook built her nest in the twine"; E. Turner, "Pretty Mary"; E. Griffiths' "Old Pals"; A. Eayles, "Only a violet"; R. Smith, "The watercress girl"; W. Bell "The anchor's weighed".

Another harvest supper was one provided for the farm-workers in the employ of the Marquis of Exeter at West Hay Farm, on the evening of Saturday, 24th October. The hosts were Mrs. Wright and her son, tenants, who provided a substantial supper of roast beef and legs of mutton. After the cloth was drawn, the healths of the Marquis of Exeter, Lord Burghley and Mr. Thorpe (agent) were heartily drunk. Song singing prevailed throughout the evening, and at 12 o'clock the company departed."

Harvest was well over, and so was the cricket season, so now there came the annual Cricket Supper to wind up the season. Held at the Red Lion Inn with Dr. Phipps in the chair and Mr George Miles in the vice-chair, a good muster of players, friends and tradesmen gathered to enjoy the meal. Toasts and singing became the order of the evening, as we learn from the Advertiser's report:- " Mr. A. Bailey sang "Dear old pals"; Mr. Lucas Wade "The Cricketer"; Mr J J. Bailey "The song that reached my heart"; Mr J L. Blake "Our Jack's come home today"; Mr C. Compton "See that my grave's kept green"; Mr. E. J. Hawkes "The oak table"; Mr. J. L. Blake "England is England" and Mr. Wm. Wootton "Obadiah". Then on Friday 24th October, the tradesmen held a "Tripe and Sausage" Supper at the Cross Keys Inn, and we learn from the Advertiser's report just who were the tradesmen of the village. "Mr. T. J. Law occupied the chair, and Mr. G. Miles the vice-chair. There were also present: Messrs. C. and G. Percival, Dr. Pink, Dr. Lewis, W. Gilford, L. Wade, T. Miles, R. Brown, W. Walker, C. Stokes, W. Bollans, T. Walker, J. T. Bailey, E. J. Hawkes, C. Sharpe, R. Bonfield, J. L. Blake, - Spendlove, M. Skinner, G. Freer, W. Palmer, - Marks, and W. H. Fane."

Early in November the bell-ringers began to practice for Christmas; the ringers were G. Bollans, J. Green, M. Skinner, H. Bailey and Wm. "Puff and Dart" Dixon, tenor bell. The Cycling Club had been formed in May 1891, with ten members, and now in early November it was able to report, at its end-of-season meeting at the "Turner's Arms", that during the summer 19 additional members had joined. The surrounding villages had been visited and a total distance of 271 miles covered. Attendance prizes were won by M. R. Green, first, and F. Edgson and A. Sharpe joint second.

Finally, on the 13th of December a " vocal and instrumental " concert was held in the Park Street Schools, to raise funds to provide each of the three Thorpe Almshouses in Park Street with badly-needed oven-and-boiler grates. The performers were Mr. H. Pepper, Mr. H. Bailey, Mr. H. Jarvis, Mr. R. Bonfield, Mr. G. Longbottom, Miss Maud Dixon, Mr F Edgson, Mr. H. E. Dixon, Mr J. J. Bailey, and Misses Lettie and Lottie Miles. Unfortunately the concert was not well patronised, so that only £3 16s was raised. Early in the New Year sufficient was donated to make up the sum required.