

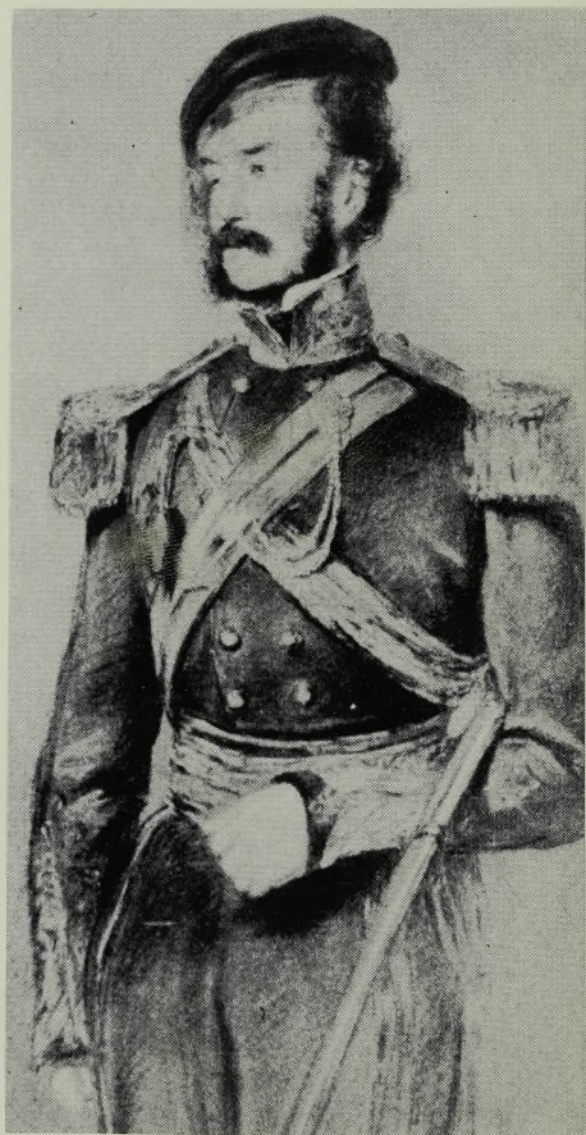
*THE BEDFORDSHIRE  
Historical Record Society*

**VOLUME 66**

**The Diary of a  
Bedfordshire Squire**

(John Thomas Brooks of Flitwick  
1794 – 1858)

Edited by  
**RICHARD MORGAN**



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THE BEDFORDSHIRE  
HISTORICAL RECORD  
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*John Thomas Brooks, 1794–1858, in the uniform of the 14th Light Dragoons*



THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE  
HISTORICAL RECORD SOCIETY  
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# The Diary of a Bedfordshire Squire

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RICHARD MORGAN





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*(between pages 136 and 137)*

1 Flitwick Manor House and church, a watercolour, 1839

2 Flitwick Manor House, seat of J. T. Brooks, Esq., c.1850

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3b Mary Brooks nee Hatfield, 1795–1879, wife of J. T. Brooks

4a Mary Ann Brooks, 1822–48

4b George Henry Brooks, 1825–1910

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5b John Hatfield Brooks, 1824–1907, Captain in the 1st European Light Cavalry, Allahabad, 8 Sept. 1858

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12b The Rev. Charles Ward, 1799–1879, Rector of Maulden 1825–79

The owners of the originals of the plates are M. S. Longuet-Higgins (1); John Lyall (6b); Andrew Underwood (11b); Charles Ward (12a); and the rest belong to descendants of the Brooks family. The prints were made by Mr Ken Whitbread of the Beds. C.C. photographic unit.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My primary debt is to Mr John Lyall, who is the owner of the diary, but has kindly deposited it on loan to the Bedfordshire County Record Office, where it may be consulted. He has not only consented to allow the Diary to be edited and published, but gave me considerable help and encouragement.

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Her colleague, James Collett-White of the County Record Office, has also played an invaluable part in the research, and has greeted successive demands for more information about nineteenth century Bedfordshire with great good humour and helpfulness. I have also received assistance – particularly on the Brooks' neighbours in Ampthill – from Mr Andrew Underwood, to whom I owe a considerable debt.

Two of my colleagues, David Jones of the House of Lords Library and John Palmer of the House of Commons Library, went out of their way to give a lot of help in tracking down sources of nineteenth-century biography.

Others who have been particularly helpful are some Brooks cousins whom I have now had the pleasure of meeting for the first time: Mrs Theodora Corner, and Jill and Nigel Armstrong.

Finally I ought to offer thanks to the staff of the various Libraries I have used: The Bedfordshire County Record Office, The Society of Genealogists, the House of Lords Library and the House of Commons Library .

Richard Morgan  
Westminster



To my Mother  
Marjorie Harriette Emma Morgan (nee Brooks)

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Brooks Family in Bedfordshire*

John Thomas Brooks' father George was the first of the family to have any connection with Flitwick. George Brooks was born in 1741 – I do not know where. The first notice of him that I can find is his appointment in 1765 as Apparitor-General to Bishop Trevor of Durham. Under this Bishop, and his successor Bishop Egerton, he acquired a plurality of offices being by 1785 Secretary, Register, Apparitor-General, Cursitor, Auditor, one of the Stewards, Bailiff of Auckland, and Librarian<sup>1</sup>. By 1771 he also had a London house in the Parish of St. George's Hanover Square and in 1776 he was living in Green Street Mayfair in that Parish. In 1787 he founded with a man called Dixon a bank at 26 Chancery Lane, known originally as Dixon, Brooks & Co. With various changes of name the bank continued until 1859 when it was taken over by the Union Bank of London, which itself became part of what is now National Westminster Bank plc.

George Brooks had married in 1773 Anne Kirton, daughter of Thomas Kirton, a merchant of Newcastle, but she died in 1784, leaving a daughter Ann Sophia (b.1774) and a son John (b.1776).

It is not clear how George Brooks first came to Bedfordshire, though as early as 1765 his elder brother John was witness to a Will of Cuthbert Sheldon of Priestley in Flitwick and by 1779 George Brooks himself became Trustee of the Marriage Settlement of Cuthbert Sheldon's daughter Elizabeth when she married James Durham.

In 1789 George Brooks married Ann Hesse (b.1757) widow of James Hesse and daughter of Jeffrey Fisher. From her godfather Humphrey Dell she had in 1765 inherited Flitwick Manor. She had two daughters from her marriage with Hesse, but no surviving sons. From her marriage with George Brooks, she had only one surviving son, John Thomas Brooks, the subject of this book, born in 1794.

Despite acquiring Flitwick Manor, George Brooks, whether for business reasons or otherwise, continued to live in the London area, in Mortlake by 1802 and by 1816 at Twickenham where he resided in the splendid Montpelier House which still survives. Flitwick Manor was let in 1802 to a man named Robert Trevor (apparently from an illegitimate branch of Bishop Trevor's family. The Brookses and the Trevors seem constantly to cross each other's paths though I can find no family connection between them).

George Brooks died in Twickenham on 8 May 1817, and was buried at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire, where his step-daughter (Martha's) husband, the Rev. Arthur Bold, was Vicar.

The banking business continued under George Brooks' son John (1776–1824) by his first marriage, and on his death by his son Francis Henry (1805–57). John Thomas Brooks obtained the Manor of Flitwick.

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### *John Thomas Brooks before 1829*

John Thomas Brooks was born in his father's house in Green Street Grosvenor Square on 16 December 1794 at 3.45 a. m. and baptized by the Rev. George Owen Cambridge on 12 January 1795, his sponsors being the Duchess of Leeds, John William Egerton afterwards Earl of Bridgewater (who was a relation of the wife of J. T. Brooks' half-brother, John) and Thomas Williamson by his proxy J. T. Brooks' half-brother John. In view of the fact that both half-brothers were called John, it is not surprising that John Thomas was apparently always called Thomas.

He matriculated at Christ Church Oxford on 1 June 1813. Many did not take a degree then and J. T. Brooks was no exception. He remained there less than two years, taking a commission as Cornet on 2 February 1815 in the 14th (Duchess of York's Own) Light Dragoons, a regiment of which his baptismal sponsor, the Earl of Bridgewater, was Colonel. The Regiment did not serve at Waterloo, and Cornet Brooks' military career lasted just over a year, for on 20 April 1816 he married Mary Hatfield, the daughter of a Twickenham neighbour Alexander Hatfield, and left the army. George Brooks immediately gave them Flitwick Manor and they lived there for the rest of their lives. John Thomas Brooks became High Sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1821, was active with the Amptill Board of Guardians, Trustee of the local Savings Bank and generally lived the enviable life of a Victorian country squire. The one unusual feature about his career was his passion for horticulture and botany. The estate was only about 900 acres, which F. M. L. Thompson<sup>2</sup> suggests was small to support the life style which he enjoyed. It is tempting to imagine that he supplemented his income from a share of the banking business and his occasional contacts with his banking nephew F. H. Brooks support this.

At the time the Diary opens, Brooks has four children – Mary Ann (b.1822), John Hatfield (b.1824), George Henry (b.1825) and Thomas William Dell (called Willie) (b.1828).

### *Religion and Politics*

The novelist, Anthony Trollope, wrote;

There is a class of country clergymen in England . . . which is so closely allied to the squirearchy as to possess a double identity. Such clergymen are not only clergymen, but are country gentlemen also. Mr Clavering regarded clergymen of his class – of the country-gentlemen class – as being quite distinct from all others, – and as being, I may say, very much higher than all others, without any reference to any money question. When meeting his brother rectors and vicars, he had quite a different tone in addressing them, – as they might belong to his class, or to another. There was no offence in this.



## INTRODUCTION

The clerical gentlemen understood it all as though there was some secret sign or shibboleth between them; but the outsiders had no complaint to make of arrogance, and did not feel themselves aggrieved. They hardly knew that there was an inner clerical familiarity to which they were not admitted.

Anthony Trollope: *The Claverings*  
(Worlds Classics edition p 351)

Most of J. T. Brooks' friends, and also several relatives, were parsons, and parsons of this class. Bentinck, Bridges, Cust and Erskine were all related to the aristocracy, and the families of Calcott, Cooper, Passy and Ward appear in the pages of *Burke's Landed Gentry*. Some of these had clerical incomes which enabled them to maintain their status: Cooper at Toddington had £829 p. a. and Ward at Maulden was more than comfortably off in 1850 on £512 p.a. But as Trollope remarks it was "without reference to the money question", for Bentinck got only £84 p. a. for being Vicar of Ridgemont and a further £46 for Husborne Crawley, but then presumably he had private means, as of course did Willie whose income at Flitwick was £230.

In other respects J. T. Brooks was very much an old Tory and High Churchman in the old sense – i. e. not a ritualist, but a supporter of the Establishment of the Church. His anger with Dawson over the reduction in the number of services is in part a manifestation of this. His hero was Bishop Wilberforce ("the best bishop on the bench"). It happens that two of J. T. Brooks' friends, Sir Robert Inglis and the Rev John William Burgon, were notorious for their resistance to ecclesiastical change, and their views were probably J. T. Brooks' too.

Politically J. T. Brooks, like most of the squirearchy, was a devout Tory. Democracy, the rule of the mob, is terrifying, and attempts by Whigs or Radicals to win Tory seats are characterised as 'usurpation'. Bedfordshire returned two Members of whom one was usually Whig and usually also a member of the Russell family, and one was usually Tory. Bedford the Town was more consistently Whig, one of the Whitbreads often being the Member. Brooks is respectful to the Russells and Whitbreads, and visits are exchanged, but he does not invite them to dinner, and the political gap between them is also a social one.

### *Flitwick, Ampthill and district*

There is surprisingly little in the diary about Flitwick. While Mary Ann was alive she did some visiting of the poor, and Willie took over this when he became Vicar. Perhaps the riot of 6 December 1830 scarred him. Yet he emerges as a sympathetic employer, providing a carriage for the cook to go to the station to take her holiday, and a house for an indigent ex-servant.

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Amphill seems to be much more of a focus for J. T. Brooks' activities – particularly the Board of Guardians, of which he was often Chairman. Amphill was also the post town, an important matter with a son abroad, and also contained a number of friends – Whitehurst, Bentinck, Fitzroy and others. He was unfortunate in that the only other house of any size in Flitwick was the Vicarage and during much of the time he was either on bad terms with the incumbent or had only a curate there while the incumbent was absent.

The rest of his social life was passed with other families at a similar social level in the surrounding villages – i.e. parsons or squires. This was conducted by a series of visits which had to be returned within the succeeding few days, interspersed with dinner parties and even the occasional dance. Brooks' passion was horticulture and he was always glad of an opportunity of showing off his gardens and greenhouses, but it does not appear that many of his social acquaintances really could share his interest in botany.

### *Horticulture*

This was Brooks' main interest and he brought the gardens, arboretum and 'stoves' (ie greenhouses) at Flitwick to a high standard. The description of the fresh fruit which comprised the dessert at the dinner on 1 Aug. 1848 is staggering. To pursue this hobby Brooks attended horticultural shows in London, visited gardens whenever he could, and maintained correspondence and visits to botanists and gardeners. He writes frequently of the Duke of Bedford's gardener, Forbes, and also of Lord de Grey's gardener, Snow. He also is in touch with the leading names in the field, Loudon, Hooker, Dovaston and Paxton, as well as receiving seeds and specimens from horticulturalists in Kent, Hertfordshire and several other parts of the country. A particular feature is his keenness to acquire newly discovered or newly developed species – Bourbon roses, which were just coming in in the 1840s, and the Wellingtonia.

### *J. T. Brooks' Diary*

J. T. Brooks kept a diary most of his adult life and the present volume contains approximately half of the material which survives dating from January 1829 to August 1858<sup>3</sup>, four months before his death. Some of the entries are headed 'Record' – particularly for the period 1829–1841, and I suspect that these rather brief notes were written up some years later – perhaps from a full journal which no longer survives. This brief record may have been for the benefit of his children. A give-away is the entry for 6 December 1830 which mentions the Flitwick riot and adds that 'Lord de Grey the Lord Lieutenant came'. He did indeed attend, but not as Lord de Grey. In 1830 his title was Lord Grantham, and he did not succeed to the Earldom of de Grey until 1833.

The entries after 1841 are generally much fuller and also more personal, and



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are usually headed 'Journal'. Their purpose was at least in part devotional – a moral stock-taking, as is shown by such entries as 1 January 1843 and 16 December 1856 – with frequent exhortations to 'Recommence – trusting, please God, to be successful'. These passages (most of which I have omitted) seem to refer to moral improvement rather than simply diligence in continuing the journal. Some of the entries, especially just after a 'Recommencement', have a brief string of abbreviations (also omitted) which apparently record an ambitious and frequently recommenced project of reading the Bible through in its entirety, starting at Genesis.

He also devotes space to the recording of sermons and several other entries apostrophise God for His beneficence. These last passages often have an almost incantatory repetitiousness about them, which I find slightly disturbing. Yet his piety cannot be doubted. I have been fairly ruthless in editing out almost all these sermons and prayers.

The remainder of the material not used consists of entries such as 'at home all day' and 'to Church twice', which occur depressingly frequently in the latter years. I have also weeded out other material – in particular social visits in the Flitwick area – to reduce the total volume of the diary by about half.

### Editorial Method

In editing the diary I have been concerned to make it readable. The orthography is variable. J. T. Brooks frequently misspells names such as Captain Moore's or Captain Boulton's which he must have known, and he seems never to have made up his mind whether his butler's name is Swale or Swales. He omits letters from words and transposes letters dyslexically. Extreme examples are 'brigde', 'mots' (for 'most') and even 'oppucied' (for 'occupied'). He also, alas, thought there was a word 'arregorical'. I have corrected all positive errors, but retained some original spelling – particularly where I think it is a genuine archaism which shows the flavour of the age. Examples include 'chuse', 'encrease', 'plaister' and 'staid'. On the other hand I have, no doubt illogically, put together as one word forms which he spelled as two, such as 'to day'.

His punctuation, like that of Byron who was only 6 years his senior, tends to use dashes where we would use commas, and often uses no punctuation at all. He also has a penchant (which seems to be inherited) for parentheses. I have attempted to follow modern norms here.

Capitalisation also presents problems. He had a Teutonic fondness for capitals for certain words – eg 'Tree' and 'Train'. But his handwriting makes it difficult to distinguish between upper and lower case for many letters, including 'a', 'm', 'n', 'v', 'w'. I have not been totally logical, but have generally followed modern usage while retaining just enough of his idiosyncrasies to give a flavour of the original. I have retained, in italics, only a few of his many underlinings.

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J. T. Brooks' handwriting is fairly difficult to read in places. He has a particularly dismaying habit of writing smaller and smaller as he approaches the bottom of the page, and there are several passages which I either cannot read or where I am by no means confident that my reading is correct. Such passages are marked by [?] after the word and an indecipherable passage by —. I have deposited with the Bedfordshire County Record Office <sup>4</sup> a complete transcript of the diary, original orthography, sermons, warts and all, so anyone who disagrees with my transcription can check back to see what I thought I could read.

Any material in square brackets [ ] has been supplied by me and is not in the original diary. I have endeavoured to keep such interventions to a minimum. There are also explanatory notes where I think they are helpful, but in order to keep these to a minimum, I have included some very brief biographical material in the index. I hope this will have the double effect of making the index more useful, and keeping the notes to a manageable size. In the Notes, Index, Epilogue and this Introduction, I have used the following abbreviations: b. born, BHRS Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, bpt. baptized, c. circa, d. died, HEICo Honourable East India Company, JTB John Thomas Brooks, unm. unmarried.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson's *History of Durham* Vol 1 pp. 591–2

<sup>2</sup> *English Landed Gentry in the Nineteenth Century*, London and Toronto 1963

<sup>3</sup> The Bedfordshire Record Office references for the original diaries covered by this volume are as follows: Jan. 1829–July 1840 (LL 17/280/1); June–July 1840 (LL 17/280/2); 24 June 1841 (LL 17/280/3); 1 Jan.–31 Dec. 1843 (LL 17/281); Dec. 1846–Jan. 1847 (LL 17/280/4); Jan. 1847–June 1852 (LL 17/282); 19 Sept. 1852 (LL 17/280/5); Jan. 1853–Aug. 1858 (LL 17/283).

<sup>4</sup> Bedfordshire Record Office reference CRT 180/475



# Diary of John Thomas Brooks (1794–1858)

1829–31 1

## 1829–1841

1829

- January 19 New Road begun (Road turned behind Church).
- March 29 Paid Bill Messrs. Morant for refitting Drawing Room and Music Room £272 9s. 10d.
- April 25 New Road finished.  
Deer came, commenced with 4 Does, Mixed breed.
- April 27 Document signed by Magistrates respecting the new Road.
- May 10 Dear Johnny went to Church for the first time.
- June 24 to 30 Mr. Loudon<sup>1</sup> here.
- August 19 Dear Willie vaccinated at Toddington by Mr. Chapman<sup>2</sup>.
- August 26 Dear Mary Ann and dear Georgy vaccinated second time from their Brother.
- Nov 18 Mr. Loudon arranging as to Planting arboretum.
- Dec 16 Went to London and Stoke to attend Funeral of Mrs. John Brooks<sup>3</sup>.

1830

- March 18 The Richardsons moved into Hopkins' Cottage.
- July 19 Went to Cambridge, never having seen it before, returned 21<sup>st</sup>.
- August 31 Left home for Chartham Rectory, Kent – Mr. Moody's<sup>4</sup>.
- Sept 4 Passed today at Dover Castle.
- Sept 11 Passed today at Walmer Castle.
- Sept 13 Went to Margate.
- Sept 24 Returned home from Kent.
- October 9 Dear Mary Ann and dear Johnny received from Mr. Robinson their first (Tutor's) lessons in writing and arithmetic.
- Dec 6 Rural Riots, mob at the House, Lord de Grey the Lord Lieutenant came, all passed off well<sup>5</sup>.

1831

- January 26 Went to London and Stoke to attend the Funeral of Mr. Bold<sup>6</sup>.
- June 16 Dear George took his first lesson in writing.
- Sept 25 Dear George went into cloth clothes.
- October The Two Lodges built by Burrowes.
- Nov 2 Avenue, approach Road, planted with Spanish Chestnuts.
- Nov 9 Bought Glasses for Conservatory at Mr. McQueen's Sale, Ridgmont<sup>7</sup>.

- January 28 Mr Hatfield died, my dear Wife in great grief<sup>8</sup>.  
 Feb 15 Glasses put up in the Conservatory.  
 March 1 Commenced business with Mr. Swaffield as Steward<sup>9</sup>, my first draft [?claim] this day.  
 May 28 Left home at 5 o'clock in the morning for Cheshire, reached Matlock Bath at 4 o'clock saw Sir [blank] Arkwright's Place<sup>10</sup> and the splendid scenery in the neighbourhood.  
 May 29 Exactly at a quarter before four in the morning left Matlock, with Mr. Swaffield, and proceeded to Dovedale, Ashbourne, Alton Towers, and arrived at Matlock at 8 in the evening having seen all those most beautiful and interesting places. At half past 8 went with Morg.[?] Mary Ann, and Mr. Swaffield to the Rutland Caverns on the Top of the hill, delightful day.  
 May 30 Saw Chatsworth, Buxton, and arrived at Trafford Park Mr. Perryn's at 10 at night<sup>11</sup>.  
 June 15 Went by Marquis to Rhayhate, Mr. Lloyd's.  
 June 18 Returned to Trafford seeing by the way the Ladies Cottage in the vale of Llangollen<sup>12</sup>.  
 June 26 Went to Park Gate, left Trafford.  
 July 2 Went to Bryngwyn.  
 July 10 Returned home after a most pleasant journey.  
 August 1 Bought Pair of Carriage Horses.

## 1833

- Feb 28 Paid (by Dr Witt<sup>13</sup>) for 2 shares of the Bedford New Assembly Rooms £25.  
 March 5 Dearest Johnny went to Mr Webber's School at Chichester<sup>14</sup>.  
 April 11 Dearest Mary Ann took her first dancing lesson at Mr Pearse's<sup>15</sup>.  
 April 17 Wire fence began round Park.  
 August 3 Took dear Mary Ann to Miss Stone's school at Blackheath for the first time.  
 August 19 Drove with Mary to see Lord Ongley's Garden, at Warden<sup>16</sup>, also Southill, Mr Whitbread<sup>17</sup>.  
 August 26 Mr Knight came.  
 August 21[sic]Went to my dear Mother at Ampthill and found her well, thank God.  
 Sept 22 Dear Willie went into Cloth Clothes.  
 October 11 Archdeacon, Mr<sup>s</sup> and Miss Webber and Miss Brisbane came.



- January 1 At nine o'clock this Morning my beloved Mother died at Ampthill, wretched day.
- January 8 Attended the Funeral of my beloved Mother, my Nephews George and Francis Brooks<sup>18</sup> and my Brother in Law M<sup>r</sup> Whitehurst<sup>19</sup> kindly accompanied me to the Mausoleum at Maulden, the children being all too young to attend. From the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of this Month I was unhappy, miserably unhappy. My dear and excellent Mother's loss has been to me a most severe one indeed, this, and the death of my dearest Father, the two greatest afflictions of my Life.
- Feb 16 Our neighbour (our late tenant at this place) M<sup>r</sup> Trevor died<sup>20</sup>.
- April 3 Dear Georgy went to M<sup>r</sup> Pearse, Westoning, the first time.
- May 2 The Rookery robbed and a man killed by falling from a Tree.
- May 17 to June 7 Staying in Manchester Square<sup>21</sup>.
- June 6 Saw Buckingham Palace.
- June 7 Went to stay at Mrs Hatfield's Twickenham.
- June 14 Dear Johnny returned from School at Chichester which school he left at this time. I met him (from Twickenham) at Esher turnpike.
- June 25 Billiard Table put up where it now is, it having been moved from the present Dining Room, moved by me and Thurston's men.
- July 26 Johnny went to Mr Pearse, Westoning, for the first time.
- August 5 Mr and Mrs Moody and Robert and Frank Moody came here<sup>22</sup>.
- August 9 Johnny began Greek.
- Dec 6 Poor M<sup>rs</sup> Hatfield died at Twickenham. My dear Wife there with her<sup>23</sup>.
- Dec 12 Went to Twickenham for the last time.
- Dec 13 Attend M<sup>rs</sup> Hatfield's Funeral. There were also present Messrs Perryn, Lovibond and Whitehurst.
- Dec 24 Left Twickenham, a place endeared to me by so many, to me, most important events, and a place which I shall probably never see again. During M<sup>r</sup> Trevor's tenancy at Flitwick, I passed there with my beloved Father and Mother many happy years of early youth<sup>24</sup>. I there too married and was often there afterwards with my Wife's Parents. At this place too my excellent Father died, and from here I attended his funeral at Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire.



- January 3 Mr Eagles here canvassing for Lord Alford<sup>25</sup>.  
 January 7 Kitchen Range put up.  
 January 30 Dear Willie went to school, Mr Pearse's Westoning, for the first time.  
 May 21 Dear Johnny went to remain at M<sup>r</sup> Pearse's. He had previously returned home at night with his Brothers.  
 July 1 Passed the day with Georgy and Willie at D<sup>r</sup> Witt's. Toll taken off Bedford Bridge.  
 August 6 D<sup>r</sup> Hooker, Professor Botany, here<sup>26</sup>.  
 August 7 185 shocks of wheat (10 sheafs in each stook) making 1850 sheafs in field near the right of the riding going from Mount to Woods.  
 August 24 Attend the funeral of Lady Inglis at Milton<sup>27</sup>.  
 October 6 Pictures arranged in Picture Gallery.

## 1836

- January 9 Bought of D<sup>r</sup> Witt for £45, the Bay Horse Ocelio six years old and warranted sound.  
 June 17 Woburn Abbey Gardens with Mary. Violent thunder storm while in the Garden.  
 July 16 Left home exactly at 4 o'clock a. m. for M<sup>r</sup> Moody's Chartham Rectory near Canterbury, arrived there at half past 6 o'clock p.m. after a pleasant journey.  
 July 18 Monday went to Herne Bay, sea Bath.  
 July 22 Friday went from Canterbury to Whitstable by Railroad.  
 July 27 Went to Ramsgate.  
 August 1 Slept at Miss Stone's Blackheath. Left dear Mary Ann there.  
 August 2 Returned home, found all well thank God.  
 August 6 Johnny went to Bedford to bring dear George and Willie from our friend D<sup>r</sup> Witt's where they had been kindly entertained during our absence.  
 August 19 Staying with our friend M<sup>r</sup> Higgins of Turvey Abbey<sup>28</sup>. Were this day driven by him in his Phaeton to Yardley Chase (Northamptonshire) to see the two giant oaks called Gog and Magog.  
 Sept 29 Went to a Ball at the New Rooms with D<sup>r</sup> and Mrs Witt.

- October 6 All the Boys attacked with the measles. Johnny brought home with it (by M<sup>r</sup> Chapman in our Carriage). All three Boys doing well thank God.
- Nov 19 This night three Deer were killed in the Park and carried away. Thieves taken and punished.
- Nov 29 Thunder Storm, an Immense and Very old Elm, near the Yard Gates, blown down.
- Dec 19 Went to Town to bring home Mary Ann, accompanied by M<sup>rs</sup> Witt.
- Dec 21 This day gave to the Poor of Flitwick their usual Annual donation of clothes flannel and bed clothes<sup>29</sup>.

## 1837

- January 1 Our kind friend D<sup>r</sup> Witt dined with us.
- 3 The Ice House filled. Received from Mr Paxton (Chatsworth) the first specimens of *Musa Cavendishii*<sup>30</sup>.
- 17 Went to Bedford to attend M<sup>r</sup> Goulbourn's funeral.
- 24 Poor Mary Very unwell with Influenza and attended by D<sup>r</sup> Witt.
- Feb 28 Mary Ann had the measles at Miss Stone's.
- March 3 The Plantation by Westoning Brook thinned by M<sup>r</sup> Swaffield.
- April 20 Mowing the Lawns begun first time this year.
- May 14 Young Fawn in the Park.
- June 4 *Cereus Ackermannii* in magnificent blossom – size of the Flower, Circumference 23 Inches and Diameter  $7\frac{1}{2}$  Inches.
- 11 Dear Mary Ann confirmed at Lewisham Church by the Bishop of Rochester.
- 14 Started at 4 this morning with dear Johnny to bring home dear Mary Ann for the Holydays.
- 21 The New Gate to the Stable Yard put down.
- July 11 Went to Oakley House to see the Gardens and dined at Kempston with the Newlands.
- 13 Dear Johnny had a fall at Harlington, injured his eye and eyebrow.
- August 1 Hornet's Nest in roof of the House, destroyed. It was over the Bow Bed Room.
- 21 Mr and Mrs Lee called.
- 22 Dearest Johnny left us this day for Rugby School for the first time. His Uncle Whitehurst took him being on his way to Leamington<sup>31</sup>.

- Sept 6 Went on a visit to Turvey Abbey.  
 7 Went to Weston [Underwood] and Olney to view the Scenes endeared to everyone by the delightful Poet Cowper.  
 9 Returned home, dining at the Witts on our way.  
 27 Went to Bedford Races with Mary.
- October 11 The Egerton Greens have come here on a Visit<sup>32</sup>.  
 17 Green and Whitehurst went from hence to Town by Railroad from Box Moor. The Railroad was opened last July, and this was the first time of it being used by any here.  
 30 Went with Francis Brooks to Town by the Railroad from Box Moor, the first time I was ever upon it.
- Nov 24 Heard of poor John Madocks' death<sup>33</sup>.
- Dec 13 Dearest Johnny returned home for his first Holydays from Rugby, well thank God and apparently much improved.  
 19 Dearest Mary Ann returned for the Holydays from Blackheath, well thank God.  
 31 Church Service in the Morning, dearest Mary Ann received the Holy Sacrament (in company with us) for the first time. May it please God Almighty to bestow his blessing upon her.

## 1838

- Feb 7 D<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Witt gave a Ball to celebrate the opening of their magnificent new Room. Went there with Mary, Mary Ann, and Johnny. D<sup>r</sup> Witt opened the Ball with Mary, a most pleasant evening.
- May 1 Subscribed to the New Church at Bedford<sup>34</sup>.  
 11 The Carriage (Landaulet) came from Wilkins of S<sup>t</sup> Albans.
- June 16 Went to Turnham Green Show of Horticult: Society.  
 18 Dear Johnny came from Rugby.  
 20 Dear Mary Ann came from Blackheath, accompanied by Miss Ruperts to pass the Holydays with her.
- July 2 M<sup>r</sup> Thompson the artist came to take the Family group, the Picture in the Drawing Room<sup>35</sup>.
- Sept 18 James Hammond came – his first Visit to Flitwick.
- October 29 Went with Mary Ann to Town by Railroad dined and slept at Hale's<sup>36</sup>.  
 30 Went to Brighton (Kemp Town) on a visit to James Hammond.
- Nov 22 Left Brighton and slept at Hale's at the Charterhouse.  
 24 Went to Miss Stone's to bring Mary Ann to the Hales.



- Nov 26 Returned home from our Brighton-London Visit.  
 Dec 5 One Sycamore on Lawn (in the way of the Cedar) and one Elm and one Scott's Pine in the Grove (in the way of a splendid Beech) cut down.  
 13 M<sup>r</sup> Bright and the two young Moneys from Sandhurst came to us on a Visit.  
 18 Dear Mary Ann and dear Johnny both returned from School.  
 20 Dear George and Willie returned from School.

## 1839

- January 25 George Brooks came on a Visit from Hampden.  
 Feb 12 Dear Johnny returned to Rugby.  
 March 30 William Smith the chief Carter in charge of the Horses met with a severe accident in returning from Leighton with a Waggon load of Coals.  
 April 6 Went to Town to make enquiries about the Proctorship for dear Georgy<sup>37</sup>.  
 17 Went to Town again for the same cause.  
 25 First nightingale heard this year.  
 May 17 Rooks shot.  
 June 3 Willie Hale came here, dined at the Newlands<sup>38</sup>.  
 19 M<sup>r</sup> Bayford, being on business at Ampthill, came to dinner<sup>39</sup>.  
 August 14 M<sup>r</sup> Webb came to dinner, for the first time.  
 20 Went early (by Railroad) to Town to Gloucester Place on a visit to the Webbs, to take a Gardening Tour with Webb. Visited with him, Hendon Rectory, Rev<sup>d</sup> Theodore Williams, the Highgate Mausoleum, Red Leaf, M<sup>r</sup> Wells, Knowle, Windsor, Eton, Dropmore.  
 Sept 6 Archdeacon Hale came to us on his return from his Tour of Church Inspection in Hertfordshire.  
 10 James Hammond came.  
 17 M<sup>r</sup> Webb came on a visit.  
 23 Left home, by Railroad, for Trafford. Started at 4 in the morning and reached Trafford at 7 in the evening.  
 October 7 Visited Eaton Hall and its Garden.  
 13 Went to the Cathedral, Chester.  
 14 Left Trafford at 1/2 past 8 in the morning. Reached home at 10 in the evening.  
 22 Took dear Georgy to M<sup>r</sup> Bayford's to be matriculated as Proctor.

- Dec 10     Went to Town to bring home Mary Ann from a visit to the Lovibonds in Manchester Square and brought home also Johnny from Rugby.
- 18     George and Willie came home from Westoning.
- 20     Went to the Concert of the Bedford Harmonic Society, dining at the Witts.
- 25     Christmas Day, dearest Johnny received the Holy Sacrament here (in company with Mary, Mary Ann and Myself) for the first time.

## 1840

- January 1     The three Boys, Johnny, Georgy and Willie spent the day at Amphill with M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Swaffield.
- 10     Mary gathered a Primrose in Mount.
- 20     Dined at Lord de Grey's, Mary too unwell to accompany me.
- Feb 4     George and Willie returned to Westoning.
- 5     Plantation made and walk reformed in Eastern Shrubbery where Smith's Cottage stood.
- 8     Dear Johnny returned to Rugby.
- March 6     Three Large Elm Trees on the Church Bank (West Side, near Porch Door) cut down.
- 23     The new Wall bounding the Church Yard towards the West begun to be built finished in a Week.
- April 10     Dear Mary Ann "came out" at the Spring Ball at Bedford – this night her first Ball. Dined at D<sup>r</sup> Witt's.
- 30     M<sup>r</sup> Rose tuned Piano for the first time.
- May 6     Poor Frederick Pawsey dangerously ill<sup>40</sup>. Called today, with Mary, to see him.
- May 16     Went early to Town to attend Fete at Turnham Green of Horticult. Society.
- 18     M<sup>r</sup> Thurnall elected House Surgeon to Bedford Infirmary.
- 20     Rooks shot.
- June 2     The New Organ came this morning from London. M<sup>r</sup> Russel came to put it up. Mr Webb came to dinner.
- 5     A Dinner Party, for the opening of the New Organ in the Music Room. It was played on by M<sup>r</sup> Rose from Bedford and was much approved of, a very pleasant evening.
- 9     First meeting of Conservative Society at Bedford.
- 12     Went to Town to Show at Horticult. Society. Dear Johnny returned from Rugby.



- Sat 27 Domestic affairs all the morning. Johnny and Georgy went to spend the day with the Whitehursts at Ampthill. After dinner Capt<sup>n</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Boulton came and saw the Gardens and spent the evening with us<sup>41</sup>.
- Sunday 28 Church service in the afternoon. In the morning read the Service to the family and prayers and a Sermon with the family at night.
- Mond 29 Put in a pot of Honeysuckle cuttings. At home all day.
- Tues 30 Rent day. M<sup>r</sup> Swaffield came. Drove with Mary to the Roses at Houghton<sup>42</sup>.
- July
- Wed 1 The 2 eldest Boys spent the day at M<sup>r</sup> Powell's in Ampthill, Mary Ann staying with the Roses. Mary and I and Willie at home.
- Thurs 2 Dined and spent the day at the Roses at Houghton and met M<sup>rs</sup> and Miss Burgons<sup>43</sup>, very pleasant day.
- Frid 3 At home all day, John and George rode to Houghton. Pilgrim shoots Hawks today<sup>44</sup>.
- Sat 4 Went to Town with dear George to complete his Initiation as Proctor in Doctors' Commons and returned with him home at night. Got up at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 4 breakfast at 5 set off at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5 for Leighton, left Leighton 20 minutes past 7 and arrived in Euston Square 20 minutes past 9. Walked immediately to the Burgons (11 Brunswick Square) and remained with them the whole day. Got in a cab (Johnny Burgon accompanying us) to the Station at 7, arrived at Leighton at 8 and reached home well thank God! At 10, took Georgy (M<sup>rs</sup> and Miss Burgons accompanying us) to see Westminster Abbey to the afternoon service, and afterwards to the Eccleaba[?] in Pall Mall shewing the Hatching of Birds[?].
- Sunday 5 Church Service in the morning (but almost the only time I have missed doing so) I did not go to Church here but immediately after breakfast rode to Houghton to give M<sup>rs</sup> Rose an account of her family and to see Mary Ann who is staying there. Went to church with the Roses and after the divine service heard a most admirable Sermon from M<sup>r</sup> Rose.
- Mond 6 At home all day. Mary and Willie drove to Ampthill to call on the Whitehursts at Maulden and Clophill to call on the Wards and the Moores<sup>45</sup>. Mary walked over Ward's new Rosery in the Dell and reports it to be very beautiful.
- 7 The whole family mercifully preserved by the Providence of Almighty God from an awful accident. Johnny's gun being discharged in his room when every one of us (Mary Ann excepted) were present.