

Taken from "Froxfield & Privett: A Taste of History" (Author Unknown)

There appears to have been a church at Froxfield Green since Norman times as is evidenced by the pillars taken from the old building and placed in the present church at High Cross. Two pictures exist of the original Green church and hang in the two present buildings. Depicted is a typical village church in the Norman style with a tower said to contain two bells and crowned with a short spire. The last service at the old church took place on March 3rd, 1861. On the following day the building was demolished.

The foundation stone of St. Peter's, High Cross, was laid on June 6th, 1861 by Joseph Martineau, the principle contributor. On this occasion a silver trowel was presented to him by the parishioners as a mark of respect. More than 700 people were present at the ceremony and all were entertained to a feast afterwards on Mr. Thorpe's meadows.

The church was consecrated on November 11th, 1862 and a dinner was given to more than 300 parishioners. Cake and tea were provided for the school children. The cost of the building was £2400. The tower contains six bells given by the Silvester family of The Slade. As noted before, the pillars are of Norman work and were part of the original church at the Green. The west window contains some beautiful stained glass depicting the life of St. Peter and was placed there as a memorial to Joseph Martmeau. As well as being the principle contributor to the building, he gave a silver chalice and flagon for the communion service. The church also owns a rare Elizabethan chalice and paten which is currently part of a permanent exhibition of church silver in "Winchester Cathedral.

William Nicholson built the present Froxfield Green church on the site of the ancient building. It was opened on the 19th September, 1887. Built to a design of Sir A. W. Blomfield, It cost the squire £1250 which he deemed money well spent. He believed his predecessors to have been unreasonable in demolishing the old church in what was then the centre of population and in building the new one a mile or more away at High Cross.

There were, for a time, two other churches in the Froxfield parish. A small tin- roofed chapel existed at Warren Corner which served that end of the parish until it was demolished in 1956. There was also a Methodist chapel at the corner of Honeycritch Lane and Old Litten Lane, which was built in the middle of the 19th Century and continued in use until it was converted into a private house, (now called High View) in 1900.

Froxfield Church Registers

The Registers of Froxfield churches date back to 1545. At about this time Henry VIII's henchman Thomas Cromwell issued orders that all churches should keep records of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials. The custom still exists and from time to time the vicar receives enquiries from past residents who wish to trace their ancestry.

The older registers are now looked after by the Hampshire Record Office. Looking through the old registers one finds certain names that occur again and again including Silvesters in vast numbers, Hellyer, Marriner, Tucock, Gamblin, Wheeler, Fry, Okeshott, Compton, Baker, Churcher, Eames, Langrish, Coxe, Pink, Bone, Aiwyn, Hasted, Corps, Aburrow, Pote and Holmes, common names in the village until a few years ago. Until the corning of mechanised transport and decent roads, few people would have moved far from the village of their birth and

one finds that most marriages were between boy and girl of the same parish until the turn of the century.

Another interesting point to note in the old Marriage Registers is the number of crosses alongside the names. Many of the "signatures" in the books have been written in by the clergyman or clerk alongside the cross, with his or her mark inscribed alongside, indicating that the standard of education in the village was very low, a fact also noted by the first master of the new school in 1876 on the opening page of his school log. But with the coming of laws in the mid- 19th Century laying down standards of education and attendance at school, the indications of illiteracy begin to diminish.

In the Burial Registers of the 17th and 18th Centuries we often come across the caption Buried in Woollen. Now the 'Woollens Act' of 1778 stated that no body of any person (save those who shall die of plague) shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud, made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair or any other stuff or things other than what is made of sheeps'wool only. One supposes that this odd law was all part of the grip that the great woollen trade held upon the country in those days.

Under this Act an affidavit had to be given that wool was used for each burial garment; otherwise a fine of £5 would be exacted. The names of those villagers who swore the affidavit for each burial are recorded in the registers and every year these signatures were checked by a local magistrate who would sign and place his seal on each page. For the years 1768-69 we find the name of Edward Gibbon at the foot of these pages. This was probably the father of the famous historian, who resided at Buriton.

Froxfield Vicars

1868Edmond Docker

1878John Hosegood

1905Anthony Swainson Carr

1926Arthur Ernest Edge

1945John Henry Loring

1954Samuel Norman Frost

1972 ...John CitthbertDay

1978Bennet Forster