

## Medical profession

Two of the resident surgeons, and apothecaries, in Deddington at the beginning of the period 1820-1837 were William Griffin and John Leigh, practising in partnership as Messrs. Griffin and Leigh.

John Leigh was also a Cornet in the 1st Regiment of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. Following his sudden death in 1824, his family residence, recently built, in New Street, was auctioned at the King's Arms. There was a separate two-day auction of his household furniture.

His partner, William Griffin, was probably the son of John Griffin, surgeon/apothecary in Deddington from at least 1791 until his death in 1809. William Griffin also died suddenly, in 1826, leaving a widow and four children.

At about the same time, a Mr. Gibbs, surgeon and apothecary, announced that he had commenced to practice in Deddington in Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery.

Thomas Gibbs became insolvent in 1836, and there was a two-day auction of his furniture and effects on his leaving Deddington. His creditors received a dividend of 6s. 9½d. in the £.

According to a notice by the widow of George Smith in 1837, her husband had been practising medicine in Deddington since 1818. A silver watch belonging to Smith was stolen from his sitting room in 1831. The thief, a former servant, was sentenced to four months' hard labour.

George Smith was declared insolvent in 1836, and he died shortly afterwards in 1837. His widow sought a well-qualified person to carry on the business of the practice with her.

Thomas William Turner (1800-1863) began practising medicine in Deddington around 1826. He married Elizabeth Newman in 1828. Turner remained in Deddington for the rest of his life, and was succeeded in his practice and his Poor Law Union duties by his son, Edward.

It seems that initially Turner rented William Griffin's former house in New Street. When he moved in 1831, it was most probably to what was to become the family home at The Poplars at the eastern end of Castle Street (now Castle End and Monks Court/Applewood), then called The Green.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Thomas Turner became one of the leading members of the local community. Cricket was one of his passions, and he played regularly for the Deddington Club. He became one of the parish charity feoffees (trustees), and was a leading light in the Deddington Horticultural and Floral Society (founded 1838).

Meanwhile the medical practice of the insolvent Thomas Gibbs was acquired in 1836 by Peter Smyth. He became the local Poor Law Union doctor when the Woodstock

---

<sup>1</sup> The property was previously known as Blount's Farm, and was the home of William Apletree, solicitor (died 1820). See <https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/publishedhistories/mvt/5.deddingtonfolk>. After the 1808 enclosure award William Apletree was the fifth largest landowner in the Parish with a holding of 166 acres.

Union was established in 1835. Smyth moved on the following year, disposing of his practice to Mr. Bradfield of London, and there was a two-day auction of his 'modern' household furniture. It transpires that Smyth was in trouble with the authorities for having fathered the illegitimate child of a local girl.<sup>2</sup>

Four months later, a Dr. Thomas Hayle (b. 1808), through the intermediary of a Medical Agency Office in London, agreed to enter into partnership with Mr. Bradfield, although it appears that the two men had never met. Thomas Hayle had been in Deddington for less than 24 hours "before Mr. Bradfield was compelled to leave suddenly, and for an indefinite period". Hayle demanded an immediate dissolution of the short-lived partnership, purchasing the whole of the practice. Given the unusual circumstances of his arrival in Deddington, Dr. Hayle felt it necessary to explain in a letter to the *Oxford City and County Chronicle* in October 1837. Hayle was quickly appointed a Poor Law Union Doctor.

XX

**6 March 1824, page 3**

Oxford News.

On Wednesday last died, suddenly, at Deddington, in this county, much respected, John Leigh, Esq. surgeon, of that place, and Cornet in the 1st Regiment of Oxfordshire Yeomanry.

**4 September 1824, page 2**

*Valuable Household Furniture.*

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

By Mr. CHURCHILL,

On Monday and Tuesday the 20th and 21st days of September, 1824, - The entire modern and elegant HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, on the premises late the residence of Mr. Leigh, surgeon, at Deddington, in the county of Oxford, deceased; comprising handsome lofty four-post bedsteads, with mahogany reeded pillars, and fine morine and flowered cotton furnitures, and window curtains to correspond, seasoned goose feather beds, with bordered ticks and bedding, full-sized mahogany dining tables, with shifting leaves, Pembroke and pillar tables, on brass and socket castors, neat mahogany and bamboo chairs, with satin, hair, and cane seats, wardrobes and chests of drawers, pier and swing glasses, Brussels and Wilton carpets, drapery, window curtains, linen, china, books, stone ware and glass, excellent 8-day clock and case, and wheel barometer, kitchen articles, and brewing utensils.

---

<sup>2</sup> See 'Early Victorian Squarson - The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, 1835-1848', edited by Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson, The Banbury Historical Society, Vol. 29, 2007.

The furniture may be viewed on the Saturday preceding and each morning of sale till Eleven o'clock, when the auction will begin.

Catalogues may be had at the King's Arms and place of sale, Deddington; Red Lion, Banbury, Aynho, and Adderbury; Journal Office, Oxford; and of the auctioneer, Woodstock.

**Oxford University and City Herald, 24 June 1826, page 3**

**MR. GIBBS,**

*Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, and  
Licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall,*

RESPECTFULLY announces to his Friends and the Public, that he has commenced practice in Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery, and hopes, by unremitting attention to his professional studies, to merit their approbation and support. - *Deddington, Oxon, June 14, 1826.*

**The Oxford City and County Chronicle, 7 October 1837, page 3**

DEDDINGTON, OCTOBER 6.

The story that Deddington containing 1847 inhabitants has no resident medical man (copied from us by the Globe) is incorrect, as T.W. Turner, Esq. is practising extensively, and has done so there since 1826. The following has been the performance at another medical house in the town:- In 1835, exit Gibbs, enter Smythe; in 1837, exit Smythe, enter Bradfield, the man of printed testimonials; four months later exit Bradfield, enter Hall [*sic*], who is practising at Deddington at present, and is the *Union Doctor*. No person has yet succeeded Mr. George Smith, who, died a few months ago.

**The Oxford City and County Chronicle, 14 October 1837, page 3**

DEDDINGTON, OCTOBER 12.

We insert the following address sent to us by Dr. Hayle, which he considers necessary to his vindication from the effect of remarks made upon him in the Deddington news of last week:

To the Inhabitants of Deddington, and the Neighbourhood.

The circumstances under which Dr. Hayle succeeded Mr. Bradfield require explanation. The peculiarity of his situation, and its tendency to excite doubt, and invite misrepresentation, seem to bear out this assertion, and will, it is hoped, excuse to the inhabitants of Deddington and the neighbourhood, this trespass on their attention.

The circumstances above alluded to are briefly these. Dr. Hayle having become acquainted with Mr. Bradfield through the medium of a Medical Agency Office, in London, after some inquiry, entered into partnership with him. Thus connected with him, he accordingly came down to Deddington, but had not been twenty-four hours there, before Mr. Bradfield was compelled to leave it suddenly, and for an indefinite period. The uncertainty of his return, and some facts which became known about the same time, seemed to Dr. Hayle imperiously to demand a dissolution of the partnership, and an offer to that effect from Mr. Bradfield was immediately closed with. An arrangement followed, by which the whole of the business and effects of Mr. Bradfield, in Deddington, were purchased, all demands against him, in that place, met, and his patients secured against any sudden call upon them for the settlement of their accounts. In order to effect this a large sum of money was sacrificed, and its total loss, in the event of Dr. Hayle's leaving Deddington, will, he trusts, be considered a guarantee for his remaining.

It appears from the above statement that the acquaintance between the parties was of no long standing, and of a very slight nature, that their connexion was one purely of business, and that, therefore, the behaviour of Mr. Bradfield cannot, in fairness, form an item in estimating the probabilities of Dr. Hayle's future conduct.

In conclusion. Dr. Hayle begs leave to offer his thanks for the confidence with which he has already been honoured, and acknowledges, with gratitude, the kindness of those patients of Mr. Bradfield who felt for his situation, and unknown and unintroduced as he was, took into consideration and admitted his claims.

*Deddington, October, 1837.*