

THOMAS ALEXANDER MANCHIP (1843–1911)

In the Church of SS Peter & Paul Deddington hangs a memorial tablet above the choir stalls. We read: 'To the memory of Thomas Manchip, for 37 years Headmaster of Deddington Boys School and 34 years Choirmaster of this Church who died March 9th 1911, aged 68 years. This tablet is erected in affectionate remembrance and grateful appreciation of his work in this Parish by old boys, members of the choir and personal friends.'

And in the *Deddington Deanery Magazine* of April 1911 his obituary includes praise for his ability and courtesy with which he fulfilled his offices: 'He was always ready to aid any undertaking for the benefit and amusement of the people' ... 'his vocal powers were very useful' were some of the comments.



Also in the Church in the choir vestry, hangs a photograph, dated 1906. Here the jolly, rotund Headmaster sits to the right of the vicar surrounded by the choir he developed over so many years.

As Headmaster he had plenty of opportunities to 'sell' music and choir music in particular to his pupils and their parents, and judging from their numbers in 1906, he must have been most successful. His life's work in the school also coincides with great events in the Victorian age. He and his pupils were the lucky contemporaries of such great names as Bell, Edison and Pasteur. He was able to tell his boys at first hand that the first successful transatlantic cable had been laid, that the Eiffel Tower was being constructed and (dare I mention it in the same breath), the first ascent of the Matterhorn! He would have been the first to embrace with approval teaching methods in our present, go-ahead Deddington Primary, where lucky pupils can surf the internet and contact every corner of our world. But, looking at the friendly face of Headmaster Manchip, I think I would rather sit at his feet than stare at a cold screen, but that rather gives away my age.

Ruth Johnson, 2003