

The question that prevails is – did he act alone? Recorded in the minutes of a vestry meeting held on the 24th September 1841, twenty-three parishioners had signed a petition objecting to the ‘alteration of the chapel’. At the top of the list was a man called George Deer, a property owner whose family had lived in Bodicote for at least one hundred and fifty years. By April 1842 the objectors had engaged a solicitor from Neithrop to act for them. However, in the beginning of May an agreement was reached and the objection withdrawn. The agreement came in the form of a Bond of Indemnity to the Bishop of Oxford. Five leading gentlemen of the village, including George Warriner, the Curate, and W.H. Hitchcock, who wrote the original petition to the registrar requesting the enlargement and repewing of the church, signed it. The document stated that the

‘opponents should not only be exonerated and indemnified from all expenses attending such alterations and improvements but also of and from all expenses which may be incurred in completing in every respect the said chapel’.

Was George Deer the Dissentient who wrote such a long and aggrieved letter to the *Banbury Guardian*? Further proof of his involvement can be found from two separate sources. The first is from a further vestry minute showing that George Deer was arguing strongly against the alteration of the pews.

‘George Deer having a good Pew in church which will now accommodate 12 will not be allowed to have one by James Gardner and W. Hitchcock when the church is reopened on the ground that Mr Deer’s Brother will have one and the said Geo Deer now residing with his Brother might sit with him. The said Geo Deer does not intend residing with his Brother and considers his property injured as it would neither sell or let for so much when deprived of Church Accommodation.’

The second source of information is the memorial board itself. Once hanging in the ringing chamber it is now in the north porch. It commemorates the extra ‘sittings’, notes the grant obtained by the Church Building Society and lists the clergy, laity, architect and builder who were involved. On closer inspection there is only one churchwarden named – Jas Gardner. Looking at a list of churchwardens in the parish chest there are two names listed as churchwardens for that year: James Gardner and George Deer. George Deer’s name must have been deliberately omitted because of his dissension.