

Special Feature The Rector Returns

It has been a convoluted journey, via South Africa and Germany, but the Revd. Dr. Thomas Brookes, Rector of Shipton from 1773 to 1814 is home again. His powerful portrait, probably painted in 1783 when he was fifty, will once again grace the Old Prebendal House where he lived two hundred years ago.



A Well Travelled Painting

Some years ago Mr John Cullom bought the portrait in an auction to furnish his house in Oxford. He became a pilot for Virgin Airlines flying the route to South Africa and took the portrait to his new house in the Cape. Tragically he died when he was swept off rocks near his house and drowned. His brother, Peter Cullom, took over the house and planned to let it. The picture was no longer required there so he brought it back to his own home in Germany and considered what should be done with it.

He noticed that there was a pencil inscription on the back of the portrait describing the portrait as being of the Rector of Shipton-under-Wychwood. He googled ‘Shipton under Wychwood’; and

found the website of the Wychwoods Local History Society (the WLHS). After an exchange of emails, Peter then generously decided to gift the portrait to the WLHS for the benefit of the local community. His parents brought the portrait to Shipton and presented it to the Chairman of the Society (see photograph). During their day with us they visited our prime old buildings and especially St Mary’s where Thomas Brookes had preached, and the Old Prebendal House where he had lived. It was wonderful to hear Mrs Cullom say at the end of the day, “This is where he belongs. I am so glad he is coming home”.

In His Church Once Again

The following Sunday, the portrait was displayed in the Church during the morning service, for parishioners to view.



Arrangements have been made for the portrait to hang in the Old Prebendal House, possibly in the same room where it may have hung two hundred years ago. The Care Home has kindly agreed to allow interested members of the Community to view the portrait on application.

Alan Vickers