

## Mr Francis William Hodges



Vineyard Hill Road in 1910

For nearly 50 years the tall upright figure of Francis Hodges was at the centre of Trinity's life, a church he loved and served zealously.

Born in London in 1858, Hodges, a 'clerk in the patent office' married Eliza Reed and the couple set up home in Fassett Road, Kingston, worshipping at Surbiton Park Congregational Church. In 1900 they moved to a large and recently built house, 19 Vineyard Hill Road with their eight year old daughter Florence.

Within a year of joining Trinity Hodges was ordained as a Deacon and in 1903 as an Elder, a position he held for 45 years, latterly as 'Senior Elder'. In 1907 he agreed to become Session Clerk, a position he was to hold until 1919 when he had to leave Wimbledon for a while. Soon after he returned there was again a vacancy, and he served as Joint Session Clerk (with Major Ruthven) until 1929.

A lover of literature, especially the works of Walter Scott, Hodges was a man of simple faith and strong convictions. He was essentially a man of peace, and it fell to his lot on several occasions to reconcile the conflicting views of his colleagues. A wise counsellor, a good friend to many and a fine Christian gentleman. He was as described in his memorial minute, a 'son of encouragement, a Barnabas to his ministers'.

In 1934 Mrs Hodges died after several years of weakness, and in 1940 their house was badly damaged in an air raid. Mr Hodges continued to serve as an Elder until, with increasing disability, he moved to the Warleigh Nursing Home, Lingfield Road where he died on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1947 aged 90.

Dr Florence Hodges, their daughter, moved to Heathfield in Sussex but kept her membership at Trinity until her death in 1978.