

In Tudor days life was very hard for the clergy, as the religion of the Church depended on the whim of the monarch who happened to be on the throne at the time. William Knott M.A., who had been Vicar of Bramley since 1522, died in the first quarter of the year 1550. He had been instituted according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, retained his place when Henry VIII fell out with the pope and kept it into the decidedly more Protestant reign of Edward VI. He was succeeded as Vicar of Bramley by Gregory Bell on 20th April 1550. Gregory Bell had graduated B.A. in 1538 and M.A. in 1541. In 1543 he had been elected as a Fellow of Queen's, Oxford. In 1553 under 'Bloody' Mary the Church returned once more to Roman Catholicism. Master Bell retained his parish, so he presumably was happy with this situation, but when Queen Mary died in 1558 Elizabeth I ascended the throne and returned the Church to the Protestant faith. Accordingly, in 1559, her first Parliament passed the Acts that constituted the Elizabethan (Protestant) Settlement. Presumably this did not suit Master Bell, who, by now, was a thorough-going Roman Catholic and he refused to take the Oath of Supremacy, for which he was deprived of his livings of Bramley and also East Ilsley in Berkshire. He was succeeded on 15 April 1562 by John Warweke (Warwick, or other variant spellings) who held the post for around a year.

What happened to Gregory Bell after his sacking? This will take further research to discover.