Article from

Dartmouth & Brixham Chronicle

January 2nd, 1880

THE LATE STORM

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STOKEFLEMING CHURCH STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

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A PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE

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One of the heaviest storms that has visited England for some time, took place on Tuesday last, which was accompanied by loud peals of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning, with heavy rain and hail. At first the wind was pretty much from the south, but it gradually got round to the westward, and varied from thence to north-west. The heaviest part of the storm was felt at Dartmouth between 10 and 11 a.m., but, with the exception of a few frights, no casualty occurred here.

Stoke Fleming, however, was severely visited, and a young man, named William Grant, an apprentice to Mr. Hole, jeweller, of The Quay, Dartmouth, had a most providential escape. It appears that on Tuesday morning he was sent as is usual, to Stokefleming to wind up the Church Clock, as is done weekly. He entered the tower about 11.15, and after lighting a couple of candles, mounted the clock stage, and was in the act of winding when a tremendous flash of lightning struck the building with terrific force. Grant was knocked off the platform, which is about 4 ft. high, to the floor, and for a few seconds was rendered senseless. The candles were extinguished and the place being in darkness he groped his way down, by a long ladder leading to the belfry, and ran across to the Green Dragon Inn for shelter, but how he got down the ladder is a mystery to him. Had he been ascending or descending the ladder at the time of the occurrence, he would, in all probability, have been killed. The Rector, the Rev. K. St. Aubyn, and other gentlemen, were soon on the spot, and an examination proved that the lightning had entered the tower in two places, and went down the ladder into the belfry, the floor of which is ripped up and splintered. It then made an aperture in the side wall of the Church, and appears to have expended its force against the pillars at the entrance gates, the pillars being shattered and stones removed in a most curious manner. The shock was felt in many other parts of the village, Mrs Martin, of the Geeen Dragon, being knocked down, but sustained no injury. The damage done to the Church, which some years since was almost completely rebuilt, is estimated at about £200.

The weather during the day remained squally and showery, with intervals of sunshine.

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Letter to the

Dartmouth & Brixham Chronicle

January 9th, 1880

To the Editor of the *Dartmouth & Brixham Chronicle*

Sir, - As a paragraph in last Friday’s *Chronicle*, with reference to the damage done by Lightning to the Church and Tower at Stokefleming, may mislead persons at a distance, I write to inform you that the actual damage done is far less than was at first thought, and that so far from damage – to the extent of £200 – being done, the real damage will not exceed £30 to £35; and I am glad to say that the Westminster Fire Office, in which office the Church was insured, have already caused a survey to be made, and there is every prospect of a satisfactory and liberal settlement of the claim.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant

JOHN W. DAMMARELL

Churchwarden

Pound House, near Dartmouth

January 7th, 1880