A HISTORY OF ST MARY'S HALL

1836-1936

WITH A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LAST YEARS,

AN APPENDIX ABOUT THE SCHOOL MOTTO

AND

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH
IN SWITZERLAND OF THE Revd JULIUS ELLIOTT
IN 1869 TAKEN FROM ELLIOTT FAMILY PAPERS

TJ Elliott TD MA, 1986 (revised 2019)

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INTRODUCTION

When, as both a member of the founding Elliott family and as a Governor, I was approached in 1986 to write this history of St Mary's Hall, I was faced with some early problems.

First of all, the 150th anniversary of the founding of the School had just been celebrated, so that this short offering could not form a part of that celebration.

Secondly, there exists a reasonably adequate, if rather traditional, narrative of the events in the School's long life until 1956, written by Miss Meades and doubtless familiar to some. I chose not to rewrite that narrative on the twin grounds that to do so would be repetitive and that I was anyway more interested in re-examining the account of the role played by my family in the founding and early days of the School. (Miss Meades had not had or sought access to family papers.)

Thirdly, my own work circumstances changed so that I was suddenly deprived of the leisure I had expected in which thoroughly to research the Hall's history through the very considerable amount of material available in the School archives and elsewhere. I have, of course read what is available in the School records, but the in fact rather limited fund of anecdote and information therein remains for a future study by some interested Friend of the Hall.

Accordingly I decided to set about things differently.

I took advantage of a few sources I knew, the family papers in my possession (which had in fact never been requested by anyone writing a history of the Hall) and of the minutes of the Governors' meetings so as to reassess the earliest days of St Mary's Hall against the backcloth of contemporary Brighton and how it came about that my great-great-grandfather founded the School. I then determined to study the School Official Reports, those always available for public scrutiny, but on occasion clearly sanitised for obvious contemporary reasons, and offer an episodic and unsystematic "parallel" history reassessing some of the data and circumstances – sometimes scandalous, sometimes surprising, sometimes humorous – which is omitted or ignored in works so far published, but which are mostly uncritically panegyric studies of the School.

[In 1992 a History of the School was written by the late Lt Cdr MD Martin, Bursar and Clerk to the Governors for two periods of service between 1968 and 1990. He regrettably sought no access to my family papers, and his history, although somewhat in the tradition of Bateman and Meades and factually adequate, is seriously incomplete as to the early years. It is, though, well illustrated with old photos, and lays matters out with clarity and concision, if at times selectively.]

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The principal published authority on the life of the Revd Henry Venn Elliott (HVE) is his biographer the Revd Josiah Bateman whose laudatory and painstaking work, commissioned by the Elliott family, is only redeemed by its worthiness. Time and again, private letters and papers – apparently available to, but on occasion I deduce to have been left unread by Bateman – throw light on matters which plain common sense alone would question. In the case of '*The Life of the Revd H.V. Elliott*', Bateman does the man and his family (especially his wife) less than justice.

It must be remembered that Bateman was a paid biographer-for-hire and, to my knowledge, never even met Henry Venn Elliott. He seems to have been a well-reputed professional biographer of notable churchmen and Henry Venn Elliott, as Cambridge University's 'Select' Preacher, fell into that category in his life outside St Mary's Hall. It appears that his biography elicited some wide-spread commendation as well as running to three editions. But it is outwith my intentions to follow in his footsteps, beyond making a few comments from time to time about HVE as and when this seems appropriate: my intentions are to keep the focus firmly on St Mary's Hall.

It should, however, be placed on record that, in all my readings of the papers available to me and of Bateman's eulogistic study, I have found nothing that is in any way discreditable to HVE. It is therefore a particular sadness that Bateman, no doubt offered access to the Founder's brother[1], the Revd Edward Bishop Elliott, and therefore to a man very close to the events which he relates in such very great detail, was so intent on featuring the piety of the man at the expense of his humanity that he lost sight of the basic 'niceness' of his subject[2]. While I cannot, in these brief pages, wholly redress the balance, I can attempt to make good certain essential elements of Bateman's biography, and to do so against the backdrop of the brilliance and activity which characterised the newly popular and thriving Brighton, an aspect wholly omitted as a context from that biography as well as from other histories.

An immense amount has been written about Brighton, and I ended up drawing most heavily on two of these many works. Margaret Barton and Sir Osbert Sitwell's book, '*Brighton*', published in 1935 (Faber and Faber) is, of course, the classic book on Brighton up to the Victorian era and will have given pleasure to many. For a more modern and overtly scholastic approach, I mainly used E.M. Gilbert's carefully researched book '*Brighton - Old Ocean Bauble*' (Flare Books 1954 - 1975 edition) whose unlikely title encompasses a mass of relevant data very readably exposed. Among other sources, many of which were naturally enough written under the aegis of Sussex University, were Sue Farrant's '*The Growth of Brighton and Hove 1840-1939*', A. Dale's various publications on Brighton, and the well-known Victoria County History. The reader will no doubt perceive echoes here and there of all these writings in what follows because I claim no originality in this matter whatsoever, beyond the occasional tentative extrapolation.

Eileen E Meades' '*History of St Mary's Hall 1836-1956*' served me as a reference for the School's official history until the 1950s and I am indebted to Miss Dorothy Butcher who, but for an unfortunate period of poor health, would have added the full history of the School to her acclaimed, if worthily traditional, History of Roedean and who kindly showed me her initial typescript.

I owe much to my wife's patience and support when faced with a husband both changing career and continuing to be a dilettante. My brother, Anthony, himself a governor for over 20 years and a former Chairman of Governors, proof-read my text and made many helpful suggestions. Mrs Lynda McGinn, of Peat Marwick McLintock (now KPMG) in Milton Keynes, found time in addition to her other secretarial duties to

[1] I assume this to be the case: there is no mention of this whatsoever in the book or in the family papers I have.

[2] Bateman's book is so relentlessly panegyrical as to be almost unreadable. Did HVE have no faults??? As a trivial instance, he kept forgetting people's names because he was very short sighted and refused to wear glasses and simply couldn't discern with any clarity the features of those he met. Which did cause minor offence from time to time. He was held in some affection by those of the pupils with whom he had personal contact.

type my manuscript and deal with continuous alterations and additions. To these, my thanks.

My father, also a Charles Elliott, who figures later in these pages, sadly died before he could apply his wit and affection to my efforts. He was a source of much information and anecdote about the post-war years and his unstinting efforts, as Chairman in his day, to resurrect St Mary's Hall after 1945 cannot be underestimated or undersung. To him, with love, I dedicate this History.

For the rest, I am solely and wholly responsible for the views expressed in the Informal History. They fly, on occasion, in the face of sanctified legend and are not always comfortable reading. They do, however, stand scrutiny on the basis of the facts available to us.

As examples *ante factum*, I cite two issues:

1. I have never felt comfortable about Bateman's all-too sparse account of the founding of St Mary's Hall and it was this strongly-held feeling which caused me to look more carefully into the circumstances which led up to 1st August 1836. In particular, I found it difficult to accept the chauvinistic (but typically contemporary) conceits which would have informed Bateman's attitude towards women and, specifically, towards the role played by the Founder's wife, Julia (née Marshall). I believe I have gone a long way to rectifying this in that, for example, Julia is nowadays commemorated in the annual Service of Founder's Day.

2. The matter of Miss Newport's premature departure from office, so quietly handled by the Trustees and tactfully played down in the Reports, must have been a crisis of the utmost gravity. It is enormously to the credit of the Trustees that they managed to deal with it in the way they did, although I suspect that their contemporaries may well have been infuriated by the slowness with which they seem to have reacted to a dangerously deteriorating situation. Likewise, there is no comment available to us concerning the enormous pay-off made to Miss Newport as part of the package so that we do not know the extent to which she must have been 'bought off'.

All in all, it must have been a most unsavoury episode.

BRIGHTON - BACKGROUND

In 1753 Dr Richard Russell was already 66 years old and with an established reputation when he created the official English translation of his earlier thesis '*De tabe glandulari*' published in Latin in Oxford. By then, as a rather backhanded comment on its value, two pirated translations had come on to the market and Dr Russell was, it would seem, annoyed that he was not receiving due recognition (or royalties?) for his work. His 1753 English translation was intended to redress this feeling of pique. It was hardly to be a best seller.

He already had a flourishing practice in Lewes and, presumably with an eye to expanding his business, he decided to capitalise on the success of his newly translated thesis and set up a branch of his practice in Brighton.

The Brighton of 1753 was an old fishing village, rather battered by storms (there is no natural harbour) and by the French (which is why there is virtually no "old" Brighton except for St Nicholas' Church). But it had certain less obvious virtues, quickly apparent to the doctor: it was near his headquarters in Lewes, it was by the sea and, above all, it had no river to dilute the saltness of its water. By the time he died in 1759, he had bought several sea-front properties, built and moved into what he named 'Russell House' (to be pulled down in 1826 to make way for the Albion Hotel), and discovered, not far to the west, St Ann's Well whose water, when analysed, turned out to be every bit as beneficial, and therefore marketable, as that to be found in rival and nearby Tunbridge Wells. Within a very few years, the Steyne was to be the centre of a thriving medical (and commercial) initiative.

There was nothing new about sea water therapy in itself, as Dr Russell was punctilious in observing. Hippocrates advocated *thalassotherapy*, although the waters of such as the Adriatic are a lot warmer than the chilly seas that surround our Island. Perhaps, if Hippocrates had been English.....? However, Dr Russell had the innovatory notion of including the *drinking* of sea water as part of the curative process. It seems that he had read about this in a lay compilation of 1730 called '*The Domestick Companion*' in which sea water appears as a purgative recommended for (presumably drunken?) sailors.

It is, though, fair to assume that Dr Russell's sea water treatment for the glands would not in itself have been enough to launch Brighton. After all, as Barton and Sitwell were drily to observe, "the skill of a physician was ever ... independent of his knowledge of chemistry and physics", implying, no doubt, that this lack of knowledge extended to an understanding of market forces. However, Russell had a European reputation, a well-established practice, and was successful enough to have interested other eminent doctors in his work. Dr Anthony Relhan, who effectively succeeded him 1759, was to comment that the town is happily "distant from the noxious steams of perspiring trees", "free from the insalutory vapours of running ... water". More, he reminded people of Hippocrates' dictum, which was coincidentally relevant to the Steyne, that "cities exposed to the rising sun are likely to be more healthy".

Next, Dr Awsiter, who built the south-facing baths, was to remark, in his '*Thoughts on Brighthelmston*': "In case of barrenness, I look upon sea water to stand before all other remedies". That other factors would be involved in the treatments was mentioned, in 1755, by Dr John Speed ('*De Aqua Marina Commentarius*') who pointed out, very sensibly, that much of Russell's success should be attributed to "the prudent use of the select medicines which this Author [Russell] employed, rather than to the drinking of sea water". Similarly, the "sanative influence of climate", the "temperating"

sea breezes of summer (Dr Relhan specifically comments that the nearest river is six miles away so that "the air of this place must be proportionately pure[1]" – 1761) and the prescribed daily routine are all indicated as playing a part.

By the mid 1760s, twenty years before the spiteful and ageing Duke of Cumberland and Strathearn[2] – who had taken over Russell House – inveigled his nephew the Prince of Wales down to Brighton for the first time in 1783 in order to annoy his all-too-annoyable elder brother George III, the town had already acquired a reputation for 'rakishness'. This was in common with other Spas and Resorts, but, by virtue of Brighton's relative proximity to London, the former was to enjoy a success denied to smaller or more distant places despite their loudly proclaimed curative merits. Bristol was good for complaints of the eye. Scarborough cured "Preternatural Thirst, All Sorts of Worms and Disorders of the Stomach from Intemperance". The waters of Tunbridge Wells "strengthened the Brain and Origin of the Nerves and were good for Head ach (sic) and Vertigo". Bath was most broadly based, claiming to cure anything and everything from "Cold Humours and Hypochondriacal Flatulence" to "the Longings of Maids to eat Chalk, Coals and the Like". Brighton, in contrast, where diseases of the glands were treated, might have seemed a poor prospect as a resort had it not been for other more mundane factors.

The principal influence on the town's future was that it was a fashionable and alluring alternative to Tunbridge Wells in that it offered the rather daring sport of sea-bathing on a pleasant coast with all the variety of climate and scenery that went with it. After the arrival of 'Society', consecrated by the published intention in 1787 of the Prince of Wales to spend part of every year there, the London to Brighton railway gave a fresh impetus, from 1841 on, to a steady expansion. Not even Queen Victoria's wholly understandable, if squeamish, decision in 1845 not to return to the town could slow this down. Perhaps the cream of society thereupon abandoned Brighton, but nothing now could halt the march of more popular and proletarian progress.

In 1825, then, when Charles and Eling Elliott removed from Clapham to Brighton, after some months' careful reconnaissance, they came to England's fastest-expanding town.

Charles Elliott, a cabinet maker of sufficient distinction to have been featured 150 years later in two successive issues of Country Life (10 and 17 February, 1966), had run a successful business from Bond Street and had met and mixed with many wealthy and important people. His second wife, Eling (née Venn), was a member of a strongly evangelical family. When the time came to retire, it is a comment on the changing nature of Brighton that such a genuinely worthy couple should decide to go and live there, having a house built for them in the new development of "Brunswick Town" at No. 27 Brunswick Square – definitely a "desirable" area, set as it was to the West of central Brighton, in the direction of Hove.

According to Sir James Clark, later Physician in Ordinary to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the climate to the west of the Steyne was damper and milder, and thus better for invalids, than it was to the east where the air was dry and sharp. (The Steyne, incidentally, was deemed to have its own micro-climate.)

The building of Brunswick Town had only started in 1824, and the substantial houses that form much of that development testify to the wealth and standing of those

[1] Many rivers, in those days of inadequate sanitation, were often little more the open sewers.

[2] He was the nephew of 'The Butcher of Culloden', brother to king George III and in later life an obese and dissipated man. He did much, socially speaking, to put Brighton 'on the map'.

who were coming to live in Brighton at the time. It was not until 1827 that George IV, as the Prince of Wales had finally become, visited the Pavilion for the last time. His brother, as William IV, was to visit Brighton until the year of his death in 1837. Queen Victoria twice came after her marriage, albeit reluctantly, and had no hesitation in sending her children to recuperate at the Pavilion in 1843, '44 and '45.

Although Osborne in the Isle of Wight was to supersede the Pavilion as a Royal Palace with its greatly preferable privacy, this did not deter other members of Society from continuing to visit Brighton. The influx of common holiday-makers from the Capital after 1841 was not much cared for, but the solution lay in simply coming at a different time of year for the "season", when the *hoi polloi* were safely back on their greasy and inky office stools in London. In 1829 Joseph Jekyll could say of Brighton that it was "for freedom of manners beyond what Bath was in old times; and for total dissipation what London is in new times". And yet, by 1840, there were 12 Anglican churches seating over 13,000 people and Dr William Kebbell could list, among other complaints curable at Brighton, "the relaxed sore throat, so frequently met with amongst clergymen".

But we need to be quite clear: the "rakishness" of Brighton referred to its *visitors*, not to its *residents*. How else could one justify its choice as a place for a school for the daughters of clergymen?

Brighton was, in addition, an international crossroads – rather surprisingly in view of the lack of a natural harbour. It was the nearest seaside town to London on the Channel coast, and, until Newhaven was developed, was the normal "port" to be used for crossing to Dieppe *en route* to Paris. The Dieppe road to Paris was shorter and more agreeable than the Calais run and there was considerable traffic between the two capitals.

After 1789, Brighton was to greet, and give hospitality to, many unfortunate refugees. Barton and Sitwell describe Brighton as "no doubt the gayest, most fashionable place not only in England, but in all Europe". There being two sides to most coins, Cobbett, whose acid tongue is well known in his '*Rural Rides*', put the opposite view in 1822: "Brighton is naturally a place of resort for expectants, and a shifty, ugly-looking swarm is, of course, assembled here." But he had the honesty to add: "These vermin excepted, the people at Brighton make a very fine figure". Ten years later he was to write "It is all a scene of evident wealth, of pleasure and of luxury."

Of course, this fashionable and vital town, so naturally attractive to a man like Charles Elliott who had made his living in the heart of London, rubbing shoulders with the high and the mighty (as his contract to maintain the furniture in the Palace of Westminster suggests), also had its dark and frightening side. The slums and poverty, evident to any who cared to look, were every bit as disgracefully squalid as those in any northern industrial area, and, if fewer wretches than elsewhere were carried off by the multiple and successive epidemics, it was less a matter of complacent self-congratulation for the wealthy than of the overcrowded insanitary houses being so dilapidated as to allow plenty of doubtless chilly if wholesome fresh air in from the sea. Crime, too, was as prevalent as elsewhere, but the patronising moralists claimed that it was the London riff-raff who were to blame, and not, of course, the honest folk of Brighton.

Although in the late 1820s "hordes of curates infested the town" (Barton and Sitwell), there was little genuine social conscience, as we understand it, amongst those best placed to help the poor. The huge sums, for instance, spent by the Wagner vicars *père et fils* in building churches, rather than helping people, reflected the concerns of

their age, and these churches were genuinely intended as charitable works however much we, in retrospect, might deplore such a misapplication of funds.

It is, thus, with some relief that we can now take a closer look at a family whose preoccupations were more recognisably humane and charitable in the modern sense, although it would be a grave error to think for one moment that the Revd Henry Venn Elliott was not wholly a Victorian. Perhaps this humanity was more apparent in general than we might think, but the accomplishments of many of the clergy mutely confirm what A.L. Wigan wrote in 1845 ('*Brighton and Its Three Climates*'): "one of the attractions of Brighton is the possession of its most examplary (sic) body of clergy. Nowhere can be found a set of men, whose blameless lives, whose zeal and talents mingled with the highest discretion, and whose active and disinterested exertions in the cause of humanity, do greater honour to their noble profession". Certainly, the clergy of Brighton were famous enough for Cuthbert Bede, in '*Mattins and Muttons – or the Beauty of Brighton*' (1866), to remark that visitors "mobbed the places of worship, in a way that was suggestive of places of amusement".

We can, I believe, be confident that such ambiguity would not have included any "place of worship" with which the Founder of St Mary's Hall or his father, Charles, had dealings.

THE ELLIOTT FAMILY AND THE FOUNDING OF ST MARY'S HALL

Henry Venn Elliott was born on the 17th of January 1792. His elder sister, Charlotte, was to become renowned for her hymns and, despite a long lifetime of poor health[1], was to be a great support to him after his wife's premature death. His younger brother, Edward Bishop (I wonder how many sons are saddled with "Bishop" as a Christian name, even as a second one?), was born the following year, and was to share many of his enterprises. Logic, but without evidence, prompts one to think that he may well have led the way in some; he is known to have done so in others, attaining a considerable reputation as a scholar for his magisterial study of the Book of Revelation ('Horae Apocalypticae' first published n 1844 and running through five editions up to 1849) as well as for many other New Testament studies. Their father, Charles Elliott, was comfortably off later in life, thanks mainly to an entrepreneurial outlook combined with considerable manual skills. Their mother, Eling, came from a family with a long and genuine clerical vocation and was, until her death in 1843, doubtless much involved in her husband's and sons' projects.

This conventional background led to an equally conventional upbringing and indeed a most conventional life. Even in the years of Henry's travels (1817-20) he appears, through his letters, to have refrained from taking advantage of those more exotic opportunities in which less serious-minded young men of his day might have revelled. It would therefore not have come as any surprise to his father when, three years after Edward, Henry was ordained curate (2nd November 1823) and then priest (13th June 1824). His uncle, the Revd John Venn, a man who greatly influenced him in his early deliberations about joining the priesthood, forecast this while Henry was still an undergraduate. It was, anyway, virtually compulsory for male Venns to be ordained, and we can be sure that Charles Elliott, an active member of the Clapham sect, and his wife, whose family was well known, if not even notorious, for its militant christianity, supported this inclination.

It was Henry's (and St Mary's Hall's) good fortune that he could indulge his vocation on a sound financial basis.

His schooling was very much what one would expect for an Elliott-Venn. From 1800-1809 he attended Mr Ewell's apparently very unsympathetic school in Hammersmith, whose harsh discipline (common currency in those days) was somewhat redeemed by sound scholarship – at least in the eyes of the fee-paying parent. This was followed by a more relaxed year, accompanied by brother Edward, at the Revd H Jowett's establishment at Little Dunham in Norfolk, furthering his classical studies.

It seems that young Henry did not approve of some of the goings-on there; or perhaps it is a deliberate policy, consistently adhered to by Bateman his biographer, to present as pure-souled and high-minded a young man as possible. (It would have been nice to have had an occasional glimpse in Bateman's work of a lapse here or there; as it is, a priggish and humourless figure emerges from the pages of this biography, singularly at odds with the man who quite evidently and as I have said, was to be held in such great affection, as well as respect, by so many people, especially children).

[1] The family rather unkindly maintained the she 'enjoyed' poor health. It seems that this view was not entirely a fair one.

The year spent at Little Dunham was to play its part in Henry's life in unsuspected fashion. He met and befriended John Babington who was to become his brother-in-law and an influential and most supportive figure in the first few decades of St Mary's Hall. It may also have been there that he first met William Carus Wilson, a future Cambridge friend and contemporary and, after taking holy orders in 1816, to be the Founder of Cowan Bridge School in 1821 (to become a school for Clergy daughters in 1823) in the North of England (later, in 1833, to become Casterton School – the fictional but all-too-easily recognisable appalling Lowood School – of Jane Eyre fame).

It seems that there was at this time a considerable coterie of like-minded young men, with strong Evangelical leanings and private incomes, who dispersed into the world without ever losing touch with each other. It would not surprise me to learn that the Revd Charles Bradley of Glastonbury, who incited the Revd Holmes to open a school for the daughters of Clergy in Gloucester in 1831 (St Brandon's School, Clevedon, and to close in 2004), had been a Trinity man, too. Henry certainly knew about the Gloucester venture when it opened and later, as we shall see, offered material help when it fell upon hard times.

Once a place at Trinity College, Cambridge, had been achieved in 1810, Henry settled down readily enough to academic life, doing well at classics but loathing mathematics. His 2nd gold medal in classics (he himself admits that he was not good enough to win the 1st prize) came easily enough. His position as 14th wrangler out of 49 was primarily the fruit of a dour determination which was to prove to be one of his main qualities. By 1812 he was already involved in teaching at Sunday School, and apparently he paid his first visit to Brighton that year to join his family on holiday.

Holidays were an essential part of his life at this stage, not merely in their own right but as giving his eyes a chance to recover. He suffered from "weak eyes", whatever that meant medically speaking, and had poor vision which probably accounts for his equally apparently poor memory for people's names throughout his life: he could not necessarily see to whom he was speaking and, as I mentioned earlier, was mulishly averse to wearing glasses.

His undergraduate career led (at the second attempt) to a Trinity Cambridge fellowship in 1816, and it is a fair guess that he might thereafter have become an academic, albeit not a brilliant one. His brother, Edward Bishop, may have been a rather better scholar, obtaining his fellowship at the first attempt; but he may also have been instrumental in persuading Henry to forego academe for the cloth. Certainly Edward, later to become a noted Christian thinker and scholar, took holy orders at a significantly younger age than his elder brother.

Before this happened, though, Henry Venn Elliott spent three years travelling around Europe and the Middle East, sometimes on foot sometimes on horseback, staying with the mainly wealthy expatriates of the family's acquaintance who were scattered around. He was a meticulously thorough tourist, but, as his many letters of this time show[1], he never lost sight of a wider and higher purpose. His reactions to Rome, Jerusalem and Nazareth, for instance, bear witness to this. Tellingly, the only book he took with him on his travels was "my little Greek Testament".

Inevitably he faced difficulties and hardships but since, eyesight apart, he was brave, strong and athletic, he was well equipped to deal with them – as no doubt was Edward who joined him for a year. In 1819, for example, he was obliged to wear

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[1] I have donated these to the Wren Library in Trinity, his and my Cambridge College, along with the sermons (these latter partly in his own handwriting) which he delivered as the University' 'Select' Preacher.

'Mameluke dress' while journeying among the holy places, as that great explorer Sir Richard Burton was to do not so many years later. On the 9th of August, 1820, he set foot once more on the "cold and foggy triangle" as he called England (was August ever thus?) to resume his academic career. The years 1817-20 were to remain a highlight in his life and clearly did much to form the man.

By now, he was a rather less callow 28-year-old, and, although by all accounts he admirably fulfilled his role as Fellow and Tutor at his old College, Trinity, something was clearly missing in his life. In 1823 he was to be found in the Curacy of Ampton and on 13th June 1824 he was ordained priest (characteristically coming 1st in the examining of the 84 candidates for the priesthood in the diocese). He was also active locally as a tutor, and a telling reminiscence of Sir Benjamin Hobhouse survives: "His temper ... never gave way under whatsoever vexation". Within a year, though, he was sufficiently unwell to have been obliged to return to Trinity and the lesser demands of an academic routine.

At this moment, Charles and Eling Elliott moved their home from Clapham to Brighton. No records remain detailing the reasons for this move[1], and Bateman – as elsewhere – is entirely uninformative. It would seem that various factors may have been party to the decision: Charles Elliott aged 74 was retiring; the Elliotts liked Brighton (particularly with the opportunities apparent there to an experienced entrepreneur, Brighton being both very much an up-and-coming place and enjoying royal patronage); it was a reputably healthy place to live in and ideal for an ailing son – certainly more so than the marshy, clammy, fever-ridden Cambridge of the time. So Henry came to live in Brighton, first in lodgings with the family in Westfield Lodge, then with them in newly-built No. 27 Brunswick Square and later, after his marriage, almost next door in number No. 35.

It is a reasonable assumption that he would not have agreed to come to Brighton in his early thirties without some objective in mind, so it is likely that his father had already found an opening for him. Charles Elliott would have been only too well aware of a characteristic in his elder son which only very occasionally peers out at us from between the lines of Bateman's narrative: Henry was a workaholic. A father, of course, would recognise so down-to-earth a family trait more readily than a commissioned biographer intent on quasi-beatification. So it was that in July 1826 Henry was appointed to the incumbency of the proprietory Chapel of St Mary's in St James' Street, still under construction and not to be consecrated until 18th January 1827.

Charles Elliott had apparently acquired St Mary's after the original patron had run out of funds and the builder had defaulted (perhaps this accounts for the building collapsing in 1876?). One can detect the quick eye of an opportunist in what may have been a rather hasty deal redeemed, however, by the substantial charitable investment made by Charles Elliott and by the fact that it launched Henry on the road that led, among other projects, to St Mary's Hall.

There is little information about what took place over the ensuing five years and what we know can be resumed as follows:

In 1827, doubtless to his pleasure as well as with the apprehension which Bateman mentions, Henry Venn Elliott was appointed Select Preacher at Great St Mary's, Cambridge, a recognition by the University if not of outstanding scholarship, then certainly of suitability and eloquence. He was to be invited back for the annual

[1] It is mentioned in the later Venn Family Annals of 1904, but only in passing: Eling Venn, HVE's wife, being a woman was not a person of interest for this lengthy book.

series of sermons, and is found to have preached also in other important cities during his life. His brother, Edward, was to grace the same pulpit in Cambridge from time to time as well. (They must have made a formidable pair in Brighton once Edward became incumbent of St Mark's Church, adjacent to the future St Mary's Hall, in 1853[1].)

At some point about now, the Marshalls of Ullswater took to visiting Brighton, for it seems that it was at this time that Henry first made the acquaintance of his bride-to-be, Julia. Although there is no direct statement about his growing relationship with Julia, he was to comment retrospectively about this period as being one of Brighton's most brilliant periods under the more sober if less socially discriminating William IV: "I had ... large scope and free access to many rich and influential persons".

On 15th October 1832, Charles Elliott died and Henry was financially free to breathe life into many projects, of which one particular project seems to have been uppermost in his thoughts. Later in life he was to pinpoint 1831 as the time when he had begun "to revolve in my own mind this enterprise and to make myself responsible for it". He is on record as saying (the handwriting is Julia's in 1835) "In the summer of 1831 I visited the School [...] at Cowen Bridge (sic)... (This) suggested to me the idea....."

In view of the evidence being in Julia Marshall's handwriting, it is reasonable to think that Henry was combining a visit to his Cambridge friend, Carus Wilson in Cumbria, with a visit to his future wife. Bateman treats the matter rather as though it was like St Paul's experience on the road to Damascus in the sudden brilliance of its inception. However, everything we know about the Elliott family shows that considerable care was taken in planning any project, great or small, and it is nonsense to think that the usual care and caution was absent in the planning of St Mary's Hall. Indeed, there is a fair amount of evidence that the unusual success of St Mary's Hall was due in large measure (and in contrast to some other contemporary ventures) to the sound and logical planning which, with its due leavening of courage (and vision), was to turn a dream into a reality.

Besides, there was to be a large sum of money involved.

The dates available to us link the conception of St Mary's Hall to the early years of Henry's acquaintance with Julia Marshall and all the evidence points to a mutual scheme devised in the early 1830s and before their marriage. The existing Bateman / Meades myth does little service to truth or to the Elliotts.

It is impossible at this remove, and without the necessary documents, to distinguish which was horse and which was cart in the Elliott decision-making process. However, a patchwork of comment in addition to the remarks above may go some way to throwing light on what actually happened.

"Humanitarian activity", writes Trevelyan whose finger was more truly on the pulse of English society than most, "was the characteristic form in which their religious piety expressed itself" referring here specifically to such as the Clapham sect. The "hordes of curates" who "infested" Brighton in the 1820s were by no means celibate, so that the problem of the indigent incumbent and his impoverished and frequently numerous offspring was all too apparent. As indeed it must have been to Henry's friend and Cambridge contemporary, the Evangelical Carus Wilson, in his bleak and distant North. It was painfully evident in Gloucester in the West where St Brandon's School was making its hesitant and sickly start.

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[1] The date of 1849 given by Wikipedia would seem to be wrong.

To an Elliott, however pious, a realistic objective would have been needed for any major undertaking, and again Trevelyan aptly phrases the objective at which a charitable entrepreneur might have aimed: "As the upper and middle classes grew richer ... it became a point of social pride that ... young ladies should be taught by a governess in the schoolroom". To train governesses was a main intention in Henry's mind (it was only in 1902 that parents ceased to be asked whether their daughters were "designed for a governess" when applying to St Mary's Hall).

In the middle of the century and when new schools like Marlborough (1843), Cheltenham and Brighton College (1845), Radley (1847), were being established, "the secondary education of girls was very ill provided for. They were sacrificed to pay for the expensive education of their brothers". Thus there was a readily identifiable and suitable market – especially so to a man who combined a philanthropic heart with a hard head.

That Henry Venn Elliott was most deeply attached to his wife, Julia, is beyond question. This too plays its part in the creating of St Mary's Hall. There is no evidence available which directly supports the thesis, but certain events combine compellingly to suggest that Julia Marshall played a major role behind the scenes in the identification of Clergy Daughters as a proper objective for an important work of charity. It is a great loss to us that there are, apparently, no surviving papers, beyond a few brief comments relating to the founding of the School and written by a lady who was quite widely known by her contemporaries as a writer and a poet. We have, therefore, to piece things together as best we may.

Julia Marshall was in Brighton in the early 1830s and, possibly, in the late '20s, as a visitor with her family. By 1831 Henry Venn Elliott is known to have been to Cowan's Bridge which is not far from the Marshalls' home at Ullswater.

On 10th July 1833, a bare nine months after his father's death, he requested her hand in marriage. Such a relatively short interval after a very conventional family's bereavement points to a decision already taken, and one wholly approved of by both families; which in turn suggests that the couple had been planning for the future for some time, as was the custom in those days. In October 1833 Henry went North to Ullswater to marry Julia, the wedding taking place on 31st October (coincidentally the date of my own wedding, generations later, and to another Julia). Perhaps details had been arranged slightly hastily: Julia's wedding dress did not arrive in time.....

However, a crucial visit to nearby Casterton, whither the Cowan's Bridge School had removed earlier in 1833, indicates that the wedding date had been carefully chosen to coincide with the consecrating of the Church which was to serve Carus Wilson's newly moved School for the Daughters of Clergy. "I would rather have built his school and church than Blenheim or Burleigh[1]" Henry was to say. "I offered up a little prayer that the Brighton School might receive a similar blessing when I saw [...] how perfectly everything was arranged, and with what looking up to God it was begun". If we are to believe what he is reported as saying in 1859, twenty five years after Lady Augusta Seymour, a member of the Hervey family (see below the part played by the Marquess of Bristol in the founding of the Hall), had laid the foundation stone of St Mary's Hall, he was by now already two years into the planning of his dream. It is inconceivable that he was not actively seconded from the very first by Julia. Moreover, when Julia died, the Trustees in their appreciation wrote that she "was associated with St Mary's Hall *in its earliest conception* (my emphasis)".

[1] Burghley House, a fine Elizabethan mansion near Peterborough, would have been known to Henry

This is a statement we should ignore at our peril. Indeed, it was only in the late 1980s, and at my insistence, that Julia's name came to figure routinely in the Founder's Day service.

The more practical aspects, the means, of realising the project must also have come in for their due share of careful consideration. Initial finance, curiously, was less of a problem then than now, especially in a town like Brighton if, like Henry, one had the right connections. So other matters took priority. In the early 1830s Brighton was already expanding Westwards and the Elliotts were living in part of that very expansion. Naturally enough, land was prohibitively expensive in that area of the town. The neighbours, too, seem to have been particular about the form any development in their immediate vicinity should take. To the Eastwards, though, the situation was different. There had been some rapid building as far as Royal Crescent (1808). In 1823 Kemp Town was begun. But between the two, there was nothing of significance except for the Sussex County Hospital, built in draughty isolation on its present site. One can detect Charles Elliott's experienced eye in the selecting of an Eastern site for the School, and in the identifying of a potential major patron – the Marquess of Bristol and already known to the family.

The direct dealing with the Marquess and the specific choice of land were to fall to Charles' son, but one senses that he would have been proud of how Henry coped with both. The story goes that Lord Bristol's first offer was turned down on the grounds that the land overlooked a mews (not the rather smart dwelling street of nowadays, but a smelly row of stables). It takes a brave man to turn down such an offer; it takes a determined man to react with an alternative suggestion. This anecdote, which is entirely believable, underscores my thesis that the Revd Henry Venn Elliott was, despite the aura of the clerical collar, business-like and well prepared for such a negotiation. His recently deceased father knew the Marquess and I the same would have been true of the son.

A similar approach may safely be accepted for the other major matter: that of an architect. Here legend has been allowed to elbow fact aside, and the time has come to put the record straight – in my view to the even greater credit of the protagonists. To believe that only a chance encounter was responsible for involving George Basevi (pronounced Baseevee) in the building of the School is to be naïve, and to belittle the Founder's judgement and planning as much it detracts from what was in fact a long-standing friendship. There may well have been elements of the haphazard in their dealings – who knows? We know that the two men were friends even before 1818: in a letter to his mother from Greece, written on 20th September 1818, Henry states: "Our present party of English at Athens is numerous – ten besides ourselves – and of these ten, four of our friends: Mr Wilson, Mr Basivi (sic), Lord Balgonie and Mr Wrench ...".

George Basevi, to become famous after 1834 for the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, was also responsible (1824-1840) for Belgrave Square, except for the corner houses, and on a more bread-and-butter level rebuilt St Andrew's Church in Hove, hardly a stone's throw from Brunswick Square, the work being completed in 1836. That he and Henry should have coincided on their way to London one day on the "Age", driven no doubt as usual by the aristocratic and irascible Sir St Vincent Coton, can hardly be a surprise. That he agreed, either then or, more likely, as a result of well-structured persuasion, to be the architect and to do so *pro bono*, is entirely to his credit as a man of charity and cannot also fail to reflect the quality of the proposition put to him by his friend.

It is a measure of the man who did not wish even his much-acclaimed University of Cambridge sermons to be published that St Mary's Hall opened its door entirely

without fanfares on 1st August 1836. Julia Elliott wrote, most percipiently, that “it was the beginning of the accomplishment of hopes so long cherished.....” as the first three pupils and the Lady Superintendent Miss Tomkinson passed through the doorway of the house which still stands proudly over Eastern Road, set up, according to the Founder, on “... one of the waste places of Brighton”. That it was a beginning, and not an end in itself, is manifest in its subsequent history.

The “early Tudor style functional stone structure with gables and small mullioned and transomed windows” (Pevsner) was to exemplify the 127th psalm so regularly read by the Revd Henry Venn Elliott to the girls: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”.

It’s a shame that the building wasn’t designed to incorporate so many of the features that a school was to come to need. It was an untidy rabbit warren and little apt for what the passing years would bring.

THE FORMAL HISTORY OF ST MARY'S HALL

A glance through the Reports and other Public Documents

What follows is on public record and, if not well-known, is there for all to see.

In 1832 and four years before the Hall opened, the Revd Henry Venn Elliott issued a prospectus for a School for the Daughters of the Clergy. The projected school capacity was to be for 100 girls and it was proposed that the education offered would create a "nursery for governesses for the higher and middle classes". It was to be an all-boarding school and was to be so funded that the fees could be set at £20 per annum and that patrons could wholly sponsor a girl if they wished. School uniform would be provided, and the fee included everything else except for personal clothing, advanced music (£3) and drawing (£4).

This prospectus was drawn up as a memorandum by Julia Elliott since there was no question (or tradition) of advertising in the modern sense. The dissemination of such information was by personal contact, just as the admission of each individual pupil depended on the Founder's personal approbation.

In 1834 the foundation stone was laid, on 21st April, by Lady Augusta Seymour, daughter of Lord Bristol who had donated the land. Within the first year, £2,330 had been subscribed and the distinguished architect, George Basevi, had agreed to act as architect to the project without charging a fee. St Mary's Hall was on its way under the royal, if fairly painless, patronage of the Queen Consort, princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen but shortly to become the widow of King William IV. On 2nd May, the Founder wrote "I read from the Prayer Book a few collects." Psalm CXXVII[1] followed; and that was all. "This quiet committal of the work to God suits my views better than a festival". The modestly low profile adopted by the Founder, in an age that produced fanfares at the drop of a sponsorship (then as now), is as notable as his choice of psalm is significant. This 127th psalm was to be as much the motto of St Mary's Hall as the later-chosen motto "Before Honor (sic) is Humility"[2]: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it....."

On 1st August, 1836 the Lady Superintendent, Miss Tomkinson welcomed the first three pupils: Mary Bryan (No. 1) aged 14 and the sisters Jane and Charlotte Cory. From what Mrs Elliott wrote of the occasion it sounds as though they had all nearly been overtaken by events. Apparently, too, on what must have been a depressingly dank summer's day, the building was not even fully ready. "We swallowed a little dinner as quickly as might be, loaded a fly with linen and provisions, and went up". Once foregathered at the Hall, they went upstairs to what is now the Headmistress's

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[1] The full text of this (surprisingly short) psalm reads:

'*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.'

[2] See the Appendix on page 48 for a detailed study of the motto. Taken from Proverbs (15:33 – '*The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility*'), its provenance from Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress is not adequately taken into account.

study, “It looked so pleasant; a bright fire, the floor carpeted, the table spread with tea, happy faces round it, our hearts full of a thousand mingled emotions”.

She went on in her letter, the poet in her blending gracefully with the clear-sighted enthusiast: “It was the beginning of the accomplishment of hopes so long cherished”, and continued: “the dawn of a day that should go on in increasing brightness!”

By the end of the first year, there were 35 girls (in marked contrast with the early days of other similar and contemporary foundations), and Miss Tomkinson had five governesses under her (of whom two were “Parisian ladies” for the teaching of French), six maidservants and a gardener (and presumably handyman) who lived with his wife in the Lodge. On 1st August 1841, there was a full house of 100 girls at the Hall, admitted in theory (but a glance at the register reveals that it was only in theory) between the ages of nine and fourteen. Term lasted from 1st August to 1st June without interruptions other than those caused by religious festivals and their concomitant celebrations. Visits from parents or guardians were allowed at any time, except on Sundays, and pupils could be taken out. Relatives, with written parental consent, could visit between 2pm and 4pm on the first Monday in the month.

The clothing list sent to parents and very typical of its time read as follows: “Each child is to bring with her:

- a Bible and Prayer Book
- a new umbrella
- combs, brushes and gloves
- day shifts
- 4 night shifts
- night caps
- flannel petticoats
- white upper petticoats
- 1 stuff petticoat
- pockets
- 8 pocket handkerchiefs
- 8 pairs of white cotton stockings
- pairs of lamb’s wool stockings
- brown holland pinafores or aprons
- 2 short coloured dressing gowns
- 1 flannel dressing gown
- 2 pairs of shoes
- 1 pair of thick shoes or boots
- a silver dessert spoon, tea-spoon and fork, which will be returned”.

Frocks, tippets, cloaks, shawls and bonnets were provided.

In 1841 increasing pressure of numbers forced the first of many building works so that, over the next year, Basevi’s original house was enlarged by the construction of a new wing to house practice rooms for the musicians, a dormitory and a sick bay (although history does not record the reactions of those who were unwell to having scales – or, even worse, the fashionable Dr Carl Czerny’s sometimes tedious but always difficult studies – played interminably just the other side of a wall). Had it not been for donations, the Hall would not have been particularly well equipped with musical instruments and there would have been no call for these practice rooms. In the first year, apparently, the Hall received gifts in kind (in addition to the cash donations listed in the official Report) of maps, a pair of globes (!), sheeting and towelling, 56 pairs of

blankets and 105 yards of fine blue cloth for cloaks (these from a Mr Benjamin Gott of Armley House, Leeds), books, 3 pianos and an organ.

On 16th November 1848 the Hall put on a show very reminiscent of modern Open Days for its first Royal Visitor, Mary Duchess of Gloucester. The programme included a concert (singing and pianoforte playing), quasi-gymnastics ("callisthenics") and an art display. The Duchess was to remain a subscriber until her death in 1857, which suggests that she had appreciated her welcome.

On 21st September 1849 St Mark's Church[1] was at long last consecrated, and eventually became the place of worship for the whole school. There must have been more than a touch of ambivalence in the Founder's later comment "This was a great day in my life". I try to explain this in the Informal History, but there is no denying the suitability of St Mark's for a Church of England foundation such as St Mary's Hall. It is a curiosity – but then it is said that history repeats itself – that the return of St Mark's to the Hall in the late 1980s was as fraught with complications as was its completion in the 1840s. My researches in the Diocesan Archives in Chichester suggest that the diocese had been, perhaps and to put it kindly, over-acquisitive in its adoption of the Church solely for parochial duties. Certainly, matters were not helped in the 1950s by the appointment as its incumbent of a man wholly uninterested in having any role, pastoral or academic, in St Mary's Hall.

In 1858 Mrs Mills took over as Lady Superintendent from Miss Tomkinson, who had stayed on an extra year while the Trustees sought a successor. Apart from some minor structural alterations and additions to cope with the greater number of servants, Mrs Mills' term of office was distinguished only by serious pupil unrest (see the Informal History below for 1860) and the death, in February 1859, of the Marquess of Bristol at the age of 90.

The Marquess had, along with the Founder, been the principal benefactor of the Hall in material terms and had, in addition, regularly welcomed classes from the Hall to tea in his grand house in Sussex Square, combining a human touch with his financial generosity. He gave land worth £500 for the Hall; he was responsible initially for St Mark's, and certainly spent a lot of money on it, amounting to £2,500 in addition to the land; he gave the Hall its "drilling room"; he sold No. 6 Hervey Terrace to the Hall for £500, apparently half its actual value; he gave £200 towards the play garden and kitchen garden (land which the Trustees, more eager than diligent, had purchased without proper enquiry as to outstanding charges against the freehold, to their considerable subsequent financial embarrassment); finally, he gave the cottage with its half-acre of land in the north-west corner "together with his (Lordship's) share of right in the road leading to it", a package worth £4,000.

In 1861 Mrs Mills' contract was not renewed, and the shadowy figure of Miss Wood was appointed. Through illness, she does not seem to have taken up office, and Miss Maria Newport deputised for her, prior to being appointed in her place in 1862. Discipline had clearly been a problem, and recalcitrant girls were sternly dealt with. They would have to lie flat on their back on the Nursery floor (no doubt in a howling draught) under the questionably eagle eye of the "Elliott scholar" as she sat in grim silence mending her white cotton stockings. Alternatively, they would have to sit on the lockers which lined the large schoolroom, hemming dusters. They would frequently be sent to bed during the day, and as frequently be got up and obliged to dress – a more complex business then than now (although apparently culprits would slip their nightdresses on over their clothes to speed things up).

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[1] Now an Arts Centre and renamed 'The Spire'.

Recidivists might end up before Authority, such as Canon Babington, the Founder's former Cambridge contemporary, brother-in-law, and successor in office, who it seems was the epitome of kindliness. One such interview has been recorded when in ?1881 Maude Vidal and Florrie Mooney were ushered, in a state of considerable trepidation, into his presence by an angry Miss Newport. "Dear old Canon Babington looked down at the two little smiling faces (poetic licence, one assumes) and, putting his hands on their shoulders, ... all he said was: 'My dears, I don't think you want to be naughty do you?'. 'Oh no, we don't'. 'Then run along and be good little girls, and God bless you'".

Florrie's subsequent euphoria got her, quite accidentally, into hot water within minutes of leaving the Drawing Room, and she was, after sundry punishments, obliged to write to her father at Miss Newport's dictation about her disgrace. (Perhaps this was not so traumatic an experience: in later life, she was to teach for many years at the Hall.)

That Canon John Babington was so closely involved in the Hall's life was a feature of the Revd Henry Venn Elliott's *modus operandi*. There were eight personally selected Trustees, of whom Babington and the Founder's younger brother, Edward, were two from the very beginning. Other than those I mention elsewhere, the Right Revd Lord Arthur Hervey (of the Bristol family) served for 56 years and the 'Right Honble' the Earl of Chichester went one better and was a Trustee for 57 years.

Thus, apart from the on-going Elliott family involvement, which subsists as I write, there was continuity in the governing body until 1893. The managing director, as it were, was the Secretary, initially the Founder and followed by Canon Babington. They ran the day-to-day affairs of the Hall, admitting (and, on occasion, dismissing) pupils, appointing staff and controlling finance. They taught, albeit minimally, and certainly got to know the girls. The Trustees as a group met regularly, and were responsible for policy and planning; they relied heavily on the close, even daily, contact maintained with the Hall by the Secretary of the day. As a body, they were self-perpetuating and tended to serve for many years partly, perhaps, in view of the heavy legal costs under Charities legislation involved in appointing a new Trustee who was precisely that: a Trustee in whom the property of the Hall was legally vested.

On 24th January 1865 the Founder died, aged 73, much loved and, from all accounts, much missed. "No sufficient record can ever be given on earth of the time and thought and affection and prayer that he devoted to its (the Hall's) welfare", exclaimed the Report for that year. But with his death we should remember his wife Julia who had died 24 years earlier and who had been so strong an influence on a man who might well have developed within a much more traditional mould but for her; and, dare I say it? not have founded St Mary's Hall. His immediate memorial was the fund raised in his memory which was to provide from its income two scholarships of nearly £50 each to be held for two years by senior pupils selected by the Trustees for good conduct and academic proficiency – an award re-instituted over a century later, "for progress", in honour of his great-grandson and post-war Chairman, Charles Elliott. Founder's Day commemorates him along with other benefactors.

Henry Venn Elliott's most lasting memorial is of course St Mary's Hall. But his intimate connection with Brighton College in its founding in 1845, as well as with multiple other charities, should not be overlooked.

On 1st August 1859, he had addressed the staff, pupils and friends of the Hall, on the anniversary of its foundation. A version of this address remains, written down from memory, and has served until now as the definitive statement about him and the Hall's origins. We cannot, though, accept it as good history because it contains demonstrable

errors of fact. However, it contains enough verifiable detail and is so obviously sincere and atmospheric as to be worth reading; I recommend the reader to refer to Miss Meade's extensive quotations from it, despite its uncertainties: it is too lengthy to reproduce here. I limit myself to what may interest my reader. Henry's anecdote from the early days about Lord Bristol's letter to him stating: "if you follow up the project you mentioned last evening, let me know" is wholly believable. His injunctions to the pupils, as to what their attitude to life should be, ring true. His warmth shines through the whole reported speech. But with regard to the facts and as I say: "*caveat lector*".

In 1868 the Hall was visited for the first time by an outside examiner, the Revd T Markby who was connected with the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. It was both a new departure to ask an outsider for views as to how the Hall might improve its performance, and a first straw in an unexpected wind. The immediate upshot was the building of a new wing, largely funded by the ever-supportive Elliott family, in order to house more classrooms. Initially the object of the Founder's youngest son Julius' attention, the responsibility eventually passed, after Julius' unfortunate death in Switzerland[1], to the second son Charles A Elliott (later to be Sir Charles). He was currently serving in India where, after being decorated for gallantry in the Mutiny in 1859 (a highly unusual, if not unique, achievement for a civilian), he was to become Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal before finally returning to England in 1895 – whereupon he was promptly appointed a Trustee. The new wing was opened in 1870. Julius' death also resolved another matter, since he had been incumbent at St Mary's as curate for, and then in succession to, his father. This had caused a split in the Hall because it had been traditional for some girls, at least, to attend divine worship at St Mary's while others inevitably had to go to St Mark's, where Julius' uncle, Edward, was incumbent. With no more Elliotts as incumbents of St Mary's, all the girls could now go to the rather closer St Mark's which, no doubt, pleased staff and pupils alike on wet and windy Sundays.

In 1872 the next academic step was taken with an application to the Syndicate of Cambridge to be examined alongside other schools. Minor academic successes started to be achieved. The examiners' report was generally satisfactory and the first step had been taken to produce a 'Certificated Governess'. By now, the Old Girls' Association had been founded (in 1870). In 1876 public examinations were sat twice yearly for the first time, six girls satisfying the examiners in December and one, the senior Elliott scholar, managing her pass with Honours. In 1880 we learn what subjects were examined in the four upper classes: Religious Knowledge, Shakespeare (rather daringly '*The Merchant of Venice*'), English Grammar, English History, Geography, Arithmetic, Political Economy (did Karl Marx, by now a prominent figure in London, figure on the syllabus, I wonder?), Physical Geography, Grecian History, Composition, French and German. The usual range of legibility was commented on, most girls writing perfectly clearly: "some, however, write peculiarly angular or bad hands, which require attention or correction".

In 1882 the Trustees suddenly ordered a full independent investigation of the Hall's educational and domestic condition, and this was carried out by the Revd Chancellor Parish and Miss Hubbard. In 1880 the Trustees had felt constrained to reiterate the objectives of St Mary's Hall at length in their Annual Report. In 1883 Miss Newport retired. In 1884 an enormous gratuity (£500 in 1884 was a lot of money, the equivalent perhaps of some £65,000 in 2017) was paid to her. In 1885, the examiners noted that there have been wholesale changes in the staff together with considerable improvements in academic standards. I try in the Informal History to pick my way

[1] See Appendix 2 (page 50 below) for the sad detail of his demise.

through the noisy maze of silence of these years and to establish as far as possible what actually led to Miss Birrell's appointment in 1884. We will never know what really happened: it has to remain conjecture. Clearly much had been going on which the Trustees had characteristically preferred not to comment publicly on[1]. The formal re-statement in the 1880 Report (a unique cross reference among the Reports) of the Hall's objectives and the surprising absence of any congratulatory reference to the quality of Miss Newport's handling of affairs leave a vacuum which only speculation can fill. Otherwise there is merely mention of matters of minor if not trivial importance.

In 1884 Miss Birrell took up her post, starting, rather unusually, in midsummer. Her qualifications were explicit: 'Cambridge Local Higher Certificate in Honours', 'Cambridge Teacher's Diploma'. Her modernising impact was immediate and long-lasting.

In one area, she did not have to bring things up to date: the providing of uniform by the Hall had ceased in 1880 (accompanied by an appropriate remission of a three guinea admission fee and a £1 reduction in the slowly rising annual fee, reverting to £20) the girls merely being required to conform to the norm of "such neatness and propriety as are becoming for Daughters of the Clergy". The changes in staff commented on by the examiners in 1885 were accompanied by a review of the curriculum – "the introduction of fresh subjects of study". The Reports suddenly become vocal in their commendations of how matters are now progressing, and the Trustees must have felt that they had made a good choice from among the fifty or so candidates who had applied for the post of Lady Principal in 1883. Certainly, from now on, St Mary's Hall settled back down to be what it still is: quietly competent at its job in a professional and unfussy way.

By the time Miss Birrell retired, **in 1899**, a recognisable school in the modern idiom had come into being. The Hall now served a national rather than merely a local market and was well known for the numbers of daughters who were from distant British dioceses. In 1887, a new Royal Patroness, HRH the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and the tird daughter of Queen Victoria, agreed to replace Queen Adelaide, long since dead (1849), and she was to be a pleasingly active supporter of the Hall until, I believe, after the First World War (she was to die in 1923). The Revd Prebendary R Snowdon Smith added to an earlier Babington scholarship by endowing two scholarships for girls under 15. He gave weekly scripture lessons until he was 92, and had served as Secretary for 21 years in succession to John Babington.

In 1888 the Hall became a Special Local Centre for the Oxford Examinations. In 1889, girls under 13 became eligible for a Catherine Dighton Memorial Fund award based on the preliminary examination on entrance (£5 per term). The Nellie Jones Memorial Scholarship followed in 1890. In 1892, the three-term system as we know it was introduced together with further curriculum enlargement in the household skills of cookery, laundry work, house management and advanced needlework. In 1896, Princess Christian visited the Hall for its Diamond Jubilee, and was suitably entertained by a concert, presented with a bouquet of flowers, and received at tea by the Trustees with the Countess of Chichester, Lady Elliott and, of course, Miss Birrell.

The next year, pressure of numbers forced the launching of an appeal for funds to build what was to become the Elliott wing. Like almost all appeals, it got off to a good start and then stalled: it took a major contribution from Sir Charles to see it through. The annexe, as it was called, was built amazingly fast, in about seven months, and only ran some 10% over budget eventually costing £2,200.5.11d (over a quarter of a million

[1] The minutes were, of course, a public document under the Charities' Act.

pounds today). Princess Christian opened it on 7th November 1899, and it was, initially at least, named after her. By now, Autumn 1899, Miss Birrell had retired and it was Miss Potter, formerly Vice-Mistress, who was Lady Principal. By now, as well, the School News Letter, a fruitful source of information, published annually, was in its third year and we can read how properly the event was staged, complete with an Old Girls' reunion in the evening.

Miss Edith Potter's tenure of office, **1899-1911**, was very much a continuation of Miss Birrell's rule. She had served under Miss Birrell since 1879 as both teacher of English and as deputy. Her sister Helen, who was subsequently to be a staunch supporter of the St Mary's Hall Association for many years, worked throughout alongside her. Like many such appointments, Miss Potter's was both successful and unsuccessful. She inherited, and duly fostered, a going concern, continuing to raise standards and modernise the curriculum, notably with the opening of the new science room in 1903. However, times were changing fast and by 1907 the Hall was in a deep financial crisis.

An appeal the previous year, with a new Assembly Hall in mind, had not even managed to engage first gear. Full fees, the Trustees decided, were to be sought in future from those who could afford it – a precursor of the means test, this. In 1908 (apparently after some persistent parental pressure), day girls who were daughters of local clergyman were admitted. In 1909 the Trustees, feeling perhaps a little distant now from the routine affairs of the Hall and clearly alarmed at the downward financial trend, set up a Council of Twelve, specifying a minimum representation on it of three ladies, to supervise and control day-to-day matters. This desperate situation had not come out of the blue: for years the Trustees had been all too well aware that original contributors to the Hall had been dying, and that new ones had not come forward to replace them. Because the financing of the Hall, other than for exceptional capital development, had relied mainly on such routine charitable contributions, there was clearly going to be a problem sooner or later since there was no major endowment from which the Hall could derive income. It was a minor miracle that the Trustees were able to keep the ship afloat – or at least the crow's nest above water – until after the Great War when finally there was no alternative but to take in non-clergy daughters. There were fee increases, and many economies, but eventually fundamental changes in the Hall's original intentions had to be made.

Despite all this, Miss Potter's time was marked by one particularly important event, which was the first full inspection of the Hall in 1910 and its consequent classification by the Board of Education as "efficient", a quaint but commercially vital term. In 1911, before ill health forced her resignation, she was to be gratified to know that the new Assembly Hall would become a reality just as she and many others were saddened by the reason for it: Sir Charles Elliott had died and made provision in his will for its completion. He must have become more than a little sceptical about appeals..... However, his portrait belies this, depicting as it does, for all to see in the drawing room, a benign and dignified gentleman.

In 1911, Miss Ghey (pronounced 'Jaï'), an Oxford graduate, was appointed and her twenty five years at the Hall was to be a period of enormous change and achievement.

She came from Clapham High School (a pleasing link with the Founder's evangelical past) to a relatively small if well-known Clergy Daughters' School and turned it into a modern, and much larger, Girls' Public School. In her early years, the Hall was faced with increasing demand for places. This led to a need for more accommodation with accompanying funding. By now the First World War had broken

out and serious inflation was beginning. In 1914, two houses in Hervey Terrace (to be bought in 1922) were "sanctioned for occupation". (Later, Elliott House, inspired by Charles Elliott, grandson of Sir Charles and Chairman and chief architect of the school's post-war renaissance, would be built on this site after it was bombed on 25th May 1943. It is a shame that construction standards – nowadays known as building regulations – in those difficult years were so second-rate.)

In 1919, in desperation, the Trustees were considering an appeal, but in the following year wiser counsels prevailed and the far-reaching decision to admit full-fee-paying non-clergy daughters was taken. The appropriate sanction was sought from the Charity Commissioners and a new School was born. Although this decision may have seemed to fly in the face of the Founder's intention, there can be no serious doubt but that the Revd Henry Venn Elliott would have approved. I suspect that this would also have been the view taken, at the relevant meeting of Trustees, by his grandson, confusingly also a Revd Henry Venn Elliott. In 1920, No. 2 and No. 22 Sussex Square were purchased, as was No. 21 five years later, thus creating St Hilary and St Nicholas. In 1931, No. 4 Clarendon Terrace was acquired (Hebbert House) only to be disposed of four years later. In 1933 Babington House was created in No. 2 and No. 3 Chichester Terrace, to be sold in 1967. No. 2 Sussex Square was sold in 1948, and the name St Hilary was attached to No. 22.

How, you may well ask, was all this funded, given the parlous state of the Hall's finances? See 1921 for the slippery slope which was to be the answer

In 1921 St Mary's Hall became a Company Limited by Guarantee, which meant, among other things, that it could borrow money by raising debentures. This was as logical a move as the revising of the Constitution ("Scheme") in 1978. The difference lies in the fact that the former was intended to remedy a dangerously unsound position whereas the latter was designed to protect the future of the Hall in line with the Founder's intentions as well as to reflect changing legislation (a factor which brought a further, but non-substantive, review of the Scheme in 2004/5). Both were consistent with radically different views arising from contemporary attitudes and pressures and, naturally enough, gave rise to much debate among the Governing Body.

The consequence of this first constitutional change was that the Trustees – or Governors as I shall now call them – could raise money by using the Hall's only asset, its land and buildings, as security. Investors would be paid interest on their loan whose repayment was guaranteed by a charge against an element of the property. The dangers inherent in such a scheme were not to come home to roost until the Second World War forced a temporary cessation of business, whereupon the full extent of the Hall's consequent indebtedness was scarily revealed. The merit of the scheme may have lain in the almost instant appearance of large sums of money which financed the creating of Miss Ghey's Girls' Public School, but its legacy was frightening.

By 1936, when Miss Ghey retired immediately after the Centenary celebrations, the Hall had more than doubled in size. Modernisation works were carried out in 1928-9 in the main building, bidding farewell to the era of the guttering candle and, as an extra, ushering in a modicum of modern comfort to the sanatorium in the form of limited central heating. In 1921, HRH the Princess Mary visited the Hall, and in 1926 Her Highness Princess Maria Louise, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, became Royal Patroness. The VIth form steadily increased and University honours became much more a part of the pattern than the subject of special comment as before. The climax of Miss Ghey's headmistress-ship was, of course, the Centenary itself, which I describe elsewhere.

In 1936 St Mary's Hall was a typical example of a Girls' Public School but with an additional and fairly unusual ingredient, recognised by all who came into contact with the place and sustained when restored after 1945 with the bricks and mortar of reconstruction: friendliness. People who visit other schools rarely to remark upon the exceptional pleasantness of the atmosphere at St Mary's Hall as one of its principal qualities.

I believe that Julia and Henry Venn Elliott did indeed create something which surpassed their hopes so long cherished.

AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF ST MARY'S HALL

A further glance at events as given in the Reports[1].

(This section is intended to be read alongside the Formal History as a gloss on events. I would stress that the implications made and the inferences drawn are entirely my own.)

Year 1 - 1836

The Children are "happy, diligent, healthy and grateful".

The Reports were full of such comments, and they must, of course, be taken with the usual pinch of salt. For instance, pupil No. 7 on the register was swiftly ejected by the Revd Henry Venn Elliott and Miss Tomkinson, her continued presence being described as "inexpedient".

The Funding of St Mary's Hall

This was very widely based, with money coming in from Royalty downwards. One particular donation strikes the eye among the many: £300 from Mr TR Kemp. He, it will be recalled, was the founder and driving force behind Kemp Town, a development of the greatest beauty built between 1823 and 1828 together with its stylish Church of St George's half a mile to the west. History records that, heavily in debt, Kemp fled precipitately from England in 1837 to end in a pauper's grave in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Not all who gave to St Mary's Hall, gave of their surplus flesh.

The 1836 "Hurricane"

The School suffered an early set-back in the late autumn of 1836 when a violent storm caused considerable roof damage. It was this same storm which destroyed a section of Brighton's famous chain pier. The winter of 1836 was to be particularly severe, bringing the famous and deadly Lewes avalanche. Storms were about the only serious drawback in those days to building a clergy daughters' school in Brighton. The restricting impact of a 180º semi-circular market for pupil recruitment, so to bedevil Governors in the closing decades of the twentieth century, was not an issue in those days.

St Brandon's School

An insight into the Founder's activities and the difficulties surrounding such ventures as St Mary' Hall comes unexpectedly from the West country.

In 1837 St Brandon's School, at that time in Bristol and down to only a handful of pupils, was beset by the most grave financial problems, and I am indebted to the current (1986) Headmaster, Mr J.S. Davey, for sending me photocopies of the Governors' deliberations of June and November 1837 which reveal the long arm of the Elliott family at work. On 30th June, the minutes of the (emergency) meeting of the General Committee of the Governors record the discussing of 'alternative (c)' "That failing

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[1] NOTE: The year date given for each heading refers to the academic year in which events took place.

Reports were sometimes not produced until at least a year after the events they describe, thus potentially being up to two calendar years out of date. This creates for the reader a confusion which becomes particularly acute when historical events, such as the Great War, impinge on the Hall. On those occasions, I have made appropriate common-sense changes in order to sustain a recognisable historical framework and maintain synchronicity with the selective formal history given above.

these two plans, a negotiation be entered into with the Revd H.V. Elliot (sic) to receive the children into the Brighton C.D.S. [Clergy Daughters School - TJE] the consent of the Nominors and Parents respectively having been previously obtained". In November, the "Sub-Committee" was told rather ungrammatically on the 9th that "A letter had been written to Mr. H.V. Elliott (sic) sounding him as to his opinion of the removal of the children to his establishment at Brighton, to which he returned an answer earnestly entreating every effort might be made to retain it at the Fort [St Brandon's Bristol home - TJE]". The meeting on December 28th resolved: "That the children whose terms of five years shall not have expired at Midsummer 1838 shall be transferred to the Brighton School at that period, the consent both of Parents and Nominors respectively being first had".

Fortunately, though, money was forthcoming, the Governors finally found a new Superintendent and no record exists of any girl going to Brighton. Just as we can approve Henry Venn Elliott's reluctance that any girl should be so uprooted, we can also guess, without knowledge but with some accuracy, that he would have contributed financially toward St Brandon's recovery - most likely anonymously as was his wont.

<u>Year 5 - 1840</u>

<u>A Pupil Dies of Measles</u>

This "rendered the Annual Examination inexpedient". On the edge of Kemp Town, as elsewhere in the British Isles, disease in schools was a perennial problem. It had nearly accounted for Carus Wilson's school and had forced the early move from Cowan Bridge to a doubtfully healthier but certainly draughtier and more spacious home at Casterton seven years previously. St Mary's Hall had its fair share of epidemics – measles, scarlet fever (particularly prevalent), ringworm, chicken pox and, in 1882, nettle rash – and appropriate, and sometimes costly, measures had to be taken. But it would seem that Brighton's basically healthy climate and the Hall's hardy regime, coupled with the skill and vigilance of those who watched over the girls, prevented any overwhelming catastrophe.

<u>Year 6 - 1841</u>

<u>Julia Elliott's Death</u>

The moving and emotional terms in which Julia Elliott's death was lamented speak volumes for her role, and are worth quoting *in extenso*: "Then it was ... that ... our Heavenly Father saw fit suddenly to darken the fair scene by taking to Himself one who (as I have already quoted) was associated with St Mary's Hall in its earliest conception; who had enlightened all the perplexities of our earlier plans and arrangements by her wise counsel and cheered them by her sweet cheerfulness and sympathy....." One may detect the anguish of the bereaved in this statement, but the warmth and genuineness of the affection shines through the dark scene like a vein of rich gold.

On this subject, Josiah Bateman momentarily drops his mask and, this time and this time only, reveals the man behind the professional hired writer, effectively accusing the Elliotts' doctor of rank and unforgivable incompetence. Indeed, it would appear on the face of it that at the very best the doctor concerned showed poor judgement. The effect on Henry was devastating, and he was fortunate that his mother was still very much alive and able to help him to come to terms with the shock and with his grief. Henceforth, St Mary's Hall was to play an even more important part in his life. This is another small piece of evidence supporting my thesis that Julia was instrumental in the school's foundation: HVE's involvement was as much for her memory as for himself. Indeed, it is a feature I believe to be unique in British schools that he, as Founder, his family in direct descent to the present day along with members of the family by

marriage, should have had not only such continuous close contact with (and frequently control of) the Hall and its affairs but have operated with such harmony and good will for so long.

Even at Casterton School, a sister establishment if ever there was one, we read, in Geoffrey Sale's "History", of crises, arguments and hostilities which are more reminiscent of the murderous bickerings of Imperial Rome than of Victorian England. Unbelievably, on page 50, Sale writes of the Committee of Management being anxious in 1851 "to pay off the debt owed to Carus Wilson, some £402 (a huge sum in today's terms)." St Mary's Hall never had to face such traumata. Can you imagine Henry Venn Elliott requiring the Hall to pay money back to him?

Year 7 - 1842

"Loss of another £700 through finding that land had been purchased without good title"

The trustees, with a naturally rather distracted Henry Venn Elliott at the helm at this juncture, were not always as business-like as they could, or indeed should, have been. But they had the quaint trait of falling back on Providence to bail them out; they were amazingly rarely disappointed. What had happened was that, in order to enlarge the grounds, they had leapt at the chance of accepting a donation of £200 from the Marquess of Bristol towards buying land in front of the main building without doing their due diligence homework properly, and they learned too late that there was a £500 mortgage attaching to it. Naturally enough they had to pay through the nose for their impetuosity. And, equally naturally, we may assume that the Good Lord came up with the wherewithal through the generosity of some doubtless well-targeted donors.

Year 10 - 1845

George Basevi

George Basevi's "ten year association" with St Mary's Hall was highlighted, and rightly so. He had not merely been the Hall's architect without charging any fee but had made other gifts, particularly towards the gardens. The Trustees do not, however, describe the dramatic circumstances of his untimely death on 16th October 1845, in an accident which was to become an Awful Warning to Architects[1]. It appears that Basevi had had scaffolding erected within the West Tower of Ely Cathedral, for whose restoration and maintenance he was responsible; this had been for the purposes of safety and of inspecting the work, and we gather rather to the annoyance of the stone masons involved who thought such safety measures superfluous.

George Basevi fell off his own safety scaffolding but – and here is the moral – did so because he had his hands in his pockets.

Year 11 - 1846

Inflation

Inflation was commented on for the first, but by no means the last, time and a glance at the accounts shows for instance that bread had cost £324.16.11d against £234.2.0d the previous year and with no appreciable alteration in pupil numbers, or, one assumes, appetites. Inflation will figure again and it is to be regretted that the Trustees always seem to have been taken by surprise; but it was their "style" to react to problems rather than perhaps to exacerbate them by anticipating them: such a relaxed

[1] See Professor Roger Smith's comments to his pupils quoted by Arthur Bolton FSA in the FRIBA,'s memorandum on George Basevi as a pupil of Sir John Soane.

policy certainly would have contributed to the smooth running of affairs, although today it would seem a recipe for financial disaster. The Trustees, with their much closer contact with the Hall, virtually ran the day-to-day affairs anyway, being involved in the selecting of pupils (even the unfortunately expelled No. 7) and contributing to their education in the classics and divinity. It was common, too, for girls to attend the homes of Trustees and patrons for tea on a regular basis. It was all of an 8-mile round trip on foot for the girls to visit the Founder in Brunswick Square.....

Year 13 - 1848

Lay and Ecclesiastical Patrons

Lord Bristol and the Archbishop of Canterbury became the formal Lay and Ecclesiastical Patrons.

Frederick William Hervey was the 5th Earl and 1st Marquess of Bristol, living from 1769 to 1859. His father, the 4th Earl and Bishop of Derry, has the dubious accolade of a tight-lipped entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* which describes him as being a rake-hell of outstanding awfulness in a time when self-indulgent noble tear-aways were two a penny. Frederick William very nearly never even saw the light of day because his father was severely injured climbing – or rather scrambling – on the magma-coated slopes of Mount Vesuvius in 1766 when apparently in no fit state to attempt any risky exertion.

Frederick William, however, did achieve the respectable if uncharacteristic distinction of avoiding an entry in that Dictionary beneath his father's, although apparently the family's hereditary eccentricity did not entirely pass him by. This, of course, may explain the equanimity with which he dealt with the Founder's rejection of his original choice of site for the Hall.

The 6th Earl, his son, did not inherit any such equanimity, and constructive communication ceased abruptly between the Hall and the Herveys over a most trivial matter of nomenclature. (This inappropriate tendency to misbehave has scandalously and indictably continued in the Hervey family up to the present day, much to the pleasure of the popular Press.)

The link with Canterbury was not to be entirely continuous either; it was therefore a particular blessing, on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary, to have had his Grace Dr Runcie find time between his archiepiscopal duties to preach the sermon on Founder's Day on Thursday 10th July 1986 in Thomas Kemp's Church of St George's.

St Mark's Church

On 21st September 1849, St Mark's Church was consecrated, combining (according to HS Goodhart-Rendal) "the smugness of the chapel" and "the peculiarity of the Gothic". He has a point: the church is no beauty.

St Mark's had had a jinx on it from the beginning, it would seem. The unfinished building was given to the Hall in 1838-9 by the Marquess of Bristol as "a Chapel for the Hall and a place of public worship for the servants and poor of Kemp Town and its neighbourhood". It was presumably conceived for those who were unacceptable to the more elegantly fastidious (and richer) congregation at St George's. It was to take ten years and a major cash injection by Henry Venn Elliott to complete the church. Indeed, it was a financial burden which seems not to have been budgeted for, given that it is the only work of charity which is referred to in the papers I have found with less than enthusiasm. It seems possible that the finishing of the church had not originally been part of the Elliott side of the 1838 bargain.

I hesitate to impugn Frederick William's generosity, but from a distance of well over a century I find it difficult not to think that this may have been the string attached *post facto* to the initial gift of land for the Hall. I have no access to Bristol family papers, so let us listen to what Henry Venn Elliott, the man in the middle of it all, had to say: "St Mary's Hall has in fact been the cause of the erection and consecration of St Mark's". He did add less contentiously, later: "After a long struggle of 10 years, such stamp of perpetuity has been put on St Mary's Hall as frail and fugitive beings can at best hope to affix to their works". An expensive stamp.

<u>"More of our pupils go out as governesses</u> ...

... and those that go out after remaining with us their full time readily obtain high salaries. An education in St Mary's Hall has in fact become of value as a recommendation". There are, of course, no statistics describing the choice of future careers of these clergy daughters, but the Trustees were not given to vain boasting. This success story is evident in the healthy state of the pupil numbers for, although the Hall by its very nature was not in open competition with the many other private schools in Brighton, there were not enough pupils locally to fill the Hall – which, anyway, only took boarders – so that its reputation must by now have been considerable and widespread.

<u>Year 15 - 1850</u>

<u>"St Mary's Hall is out of debt, for which we thank God"</u>

We must remember that the Victorian legal definition of solvency was different from ours today; the reference is to a cash surplus on the one year, taking bursaries into account, in those times enough to declare the Hall technically solvent. However, the Report quickly reminds the reader that: "It should be remembered that hitherto each pupil has cost us about £10 per annum more than she has paid", and, within a year, finances were once again giving cause for concern.

<u>Year 16 - 1851</u>

<u>"The French has not kept pace with other studies"</u>.

The Trustees, apart from the occasional side-swipe at French (a long-standing tradition, this, and not just in Brighton), seem to have been little interested in an academic syllabus *in se*. It was rather later in the day and, I suspect, under growing pressure from all sides (certainly from parents and pupils), that they were eventually to institute some major changes three decades later in 1883. Even then they took years to action reforms; we read, in the 1881 Report that: "The Trustees desire to find themselves abreast of the times" (with regard to the education of women). By then, though, a serious storm was crashing around their puzzled heads; but more about that later on.

<u>Student Teachers</u>

By now girls stayed on an extra year as student teachers, unpaid but housed and fed. We are starting to move away from the era described by William Cobbett's corrosive pen as that in which girls "receive their education at a Boarding School, are taught to dance, to speak French and to play upon the harpsichord". Trevelyan warns us, with regard to the Victorian age after the 1832 Great Reform Bill, writing that "we must not think of these 70 years as having a fixed likeness to one another merely because more than 60 of them were presided over by 'the Queen', 1837-1901". From the Trustees' Reports, though, there emerges little overt awareness of the "constant and rapid change" of these years. The Trustees were, in due course, to be rudely awakened.

<u>A Special Gift</u>

Herbert Minton, renowned for his china, gave the Hall, apparently out of the blue, a service of 834 pieces simply because he liked the place. Spontaneous gifts of this nature, if not of this magnificence, are a characteristic of the response which St Mary's Hall stimulated, and continues to arouse, in people who visit.

Year 19 - 1854

Local Support in Kind

Mr. Steyning Beard of Ovingdean was recorded as selling farm produce to the Hall at two-thirds price.

Despite the Trustees' complacent comment four years earlier, the financial survival of St Mary's Hall would seem to have depended in part upon such generosity; and, of course, this particular benefaction helped ensure a healthy diet for the girls. Apparently, this arrangement, went on for many years, to Mr. Steyning Beard's great credit, and existed with other suppliers.

Year 21 - 1856

The Resignation of Miss Tomkinson

After two decades of invaluable service to St Mary's Hall, Miss Tomkinson (the first 'headmistress') submitted her resignation, which gave the Trustees their first opportunity seriously to reappraise the Hall and assess its future. The Report, very much of its era, reads: "We shrink from public advertisement" and so the bush telegraph was used to look for a lady "of a certain position in society" to preside over 100 girls (the numbers had remained gratifyingly steady), 16 governesses and 18 servants, an overall 3.1 ratio, and in excess of 6:1 on the teaching side (a typical modern school in the Independent Sector would run at about 12:1 on the teaching side). The Trustees sought another quality, as the Victorian equivalent of the old-boy network got to work: "Personal and evangelical piety is indispensable". They found what they sought in 1858 and duly paid the price. Miss Tomkinson stayed on the extra two years to cover the gap.

Year 22 - 1857

Scarlet Fever

Because of scarlet fever - again - we find the Trustees writing to the parents in the following peremptory terms: "The long vacation will take place now (March 25th instead of at Midsummer"). I can find no record of parental reaction to this.....

The Trustees took the opportunity, though, to improve conditions. It is more than likely that they were under some pressure to do so both from the source one would expect (parents were not *that* docile) and from what was going on around the corner. Arnold House School, in Sussex Square, was advertising "Every Pupil has a Separate Bed" as a major feature of its establishment. The Reports give us no statistics, but clearly there must have been multiple bed occupancy at St Mary's Hall.

Year 25 - 1860

A Year of Pupil Unrest

The Trustees do not comment elsewhere on such matters, so that the impact on everyone of '*The Caricaturist's Journal*' must have been considerable. This scurrilous and impudent pupils' secret journal was, apparently, found by a member of staff and handed, perhaps with as much glee as trepidation, to the recently appointed Mrs Mills. Regrettably, no copy seems to have survived the inevitable pogrom. The Trustees

talked about "ludicrous and sarcastic views of certain ... teachers and schoolfellows", which is strong language indeed. Who knows, perhaps a Trustee (perish the thought) was lampooned as well. No doubt contemporary diaries could tell us more about what was going on, but little imagination is needed to paint the broader picture.

In the same Report the Trustees recorded, "with regret", the resignation of Mrs Mills "who, in spite of weak health and nerves, which had suffered in her enterprise of a school for the higher classes in the Red River Settlement[1] ... came to us". The Red River Settlement straddled the border between Canada (Manitoba) and the United States (Minnesota and North Dakota) and to have attempted to create a school for the "higher classes" in North America frontier land shows a quite exceptional faith and optimism at work. No wonder Mrs Mills' nerves were not what they once must have been. Her immediately previous post as Lady Resident of the recently founded Queen's College in Harley Street (1846) was unlikely to have been a sinecure, either. The Trustees must, however, have been aware of her potential unsuitability, for they had, exceptionally, only given her a three-year initial contract. We may reasonably conclude that it was by mutual agreement that her contract was not renewed.

The Trustees' lack of success in selecting good Principals was to continue. Miss Wood, Mrs Mills' successor, effectively never even took office and the curtain of discreet silence which was drawn over Miss Newport's long reign only allows inferences to be drawn; of which last, more anon.

Year 26 - 1861

Modern Technology

The requirement for pupils to provide a silver dessert spoon, tea-spoon and fork was modified to allow "a silver or electrotype" set of cutlery.

Thus, and only thus, do we become aware of the "rapid change" going on outside. Little else in the Reports reflects the remarkable technological developments of the period. But the Trustees were elderly gentlemen, clearly not ready to be dragged without much kicking and screaming into a modern era.

Year 27 - 1862

Miss Newport - 1

Miss Newport's position as Principal was confirmed, and we embark upon a reign of over twenty years which, no doubt inadvertently and paradoxically, may nearly have done more to wreck the Hall than even the Second World War.

Maria Newport had enrolled on 5th April, 1837 as pupil No. 38, aged 10, and it is likely that she had remained ever since at St Mary's Hall, progressing through the student teacher phase to become a permanent member of staff before deputising for the absentee Miss Wood.

There was, in those days, no received wisdom about making in-house appointments. The Trustees would clearly have had the best interests of the Hall at heart, and Miss Newport must have served her year as interim Principal to their satisfaction, so perhaps no blame can attach to them. I suspect, though, that they were verging on the desperate after the Mills/Wood fiasco and took an understandably easy way out.

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[1] There are other Red River Settlements, notably in Australia, but the Canada initiative seems to be the most likely one.

Affairs outside, however, were on the move and were conspiring to bring the Hall face to face with its first really serious crisis.

To anticipate matters a little, it is worth reminding ourselves of a few contemporary matters which were acting upon people's thinking about education and, in particular, the role of women in Society. (It is worth remembering, too, that women were only granted the right to vote in 1918 – and then they had to be more than 30 years of age.) The Crimean War had been over for six years by now, and, to quote Trevelyan again, it was held that "upper and middle class women ... should be trained to support themselves and to be of some use to the world". In 1869, John Stuart Mill's '*The Subjection of Women*' was published. In 1870, WE Forster's Bill went through Parliament as a first, hesitant and tardy, step towards the 1902 Balfour Education Act. "The year 1870 was a turning point in education" writes Trevelyan.

It is only fair to say that the Trustees seem, in the Reports, to have been as unalert as anyone to all this, so that we must not lay what subsequently happened wholly at Miss Newport's door, even though she may not have had much experience beyond the confines of Brighton and its purlieus. The ethos of the Trustee-Headmistress relationship left such matters of policy firmly with the Trustees; the tradition of the Hall was one of close collaboration between Trustee and Head so that honest and full dialogue must have played its part as in any such Christian working relationship. I suspect, though, and without a shred of evidence to support what I say, that Miss Newport was, ironically, a product of her schooling and concomitantly averse to change, which attitude may initially have sat quite comfortably with the Founder.

Year 29 - 1864

The Founder Dies

Henry Venn Elliott's death was reported as occurring on 26th January, 1865 (erroneously: he died on the 24th). The Report for a previous year was not normally compiled with any sense of urgency in those days, so it is not surprising to find it as an item for early 1865 in the Report for the 28th year 1863-4. The eulogies are lengthy but genuine, and are summed up in the comment: "During [...] 28 years [...] he acted as the Spiritual Father and Pastor of the inmates (sic), and almost the sole administrator of its (St Mary's Hall's) affairs".

As recorded earlier, the Founder's benefactions were not confined to St Mary's Hall. They ranged from the Blind Asylum (a particular interest this, in view of his poor eyesight), via a host of worthy causes such as Brighton College (it would be pleasing if the College were to commemorate this: his contributions were notably substantial), and as far as to the Ladies' Female Hibernian Society (history does not recall why).

It is appropriate to set down here, as far as we can determine at this remove, just what the Hall owes to the Revd Henry Venn Elliott in purely financial terms. What it owes in other ways is, quite simply, incalculable.

He was known to have given £2,480, bequeathed £1,000, given land worth some £2,500 and donated 1,000 books (expensive items, and even more so then than now). A rather more careful perusal of the St Mary's Hall accounts suggests (but this will never be provable) that he may have contributed £300 annually (over 28 years) and made several large donations under the title of 'a clergyman', '*amicus aulae*', etc... In modern terms (2017), this would comfortably exceed a million pounds. He would have been proud, too, that his death was not to bring a halt to further Elliott benefactions.

And this does not take into account what St Mark's Church had unexpectedly cost him.

Year 32 - 1867

New Trustee Leadership

The Reports adopt a curiously muted tone for the next few years, and not just because a different Secretary's hand is holding the latest improved model of automatic-flow ink pen. We will find that they will not again become alive and informative until the Trustees grasp the nettle and break definitively with the educational pattern ineluctably, if invisibly, fossilising around Miss Newport.

We read about peripheral events rather than central ones:

"The Pupil Association"

This was first mentioned. After the Hitler War this was to become a vital contributing element in the Hall's renaissance.

Founder's Day

This was, very suitably, inaugurated and, despite alternating erratically between the summer and the autumn terms (logically enough in view of a 1st of August opening), has rightly survived as the major event in the Hall's calendar.

Appeals

The first Appeal (of many.....) was launched. I do not, on the whole, bore my reader with the financial sagas which unfold through the Reports. It takes little imagination to supply the libretti which accompanied the frequent operatic squeals of fiscal anguish.

Academic Standards

The Trustees noted "a degree of unsoundness in French which called for serious attention". Apart from the routine aspect of such a comment, this criticism is historically interesting as being the first public record (the Reports were open to public scrutiny if you had the persistence to hammer successfully on the door of the Secretary's home) of any uneasiness among the Trustees about how the academic side of School life was progressing.

Year 33 - 1868

St Mark's Church

This was the first year that the girls all went to St Mark's Church for divine worship. Although consecrated in 1849, it was to be 1853 before Henry's brother Edward Bishop Elliott became its incumbent. It was not until Edward's nephew, Julius, incumbent of St Mary's in succession to Henry Venn, died in the Alps in 1869 that all the girls attended St Mark's.

The Revd Julius Elliott

Julius, the Founder's third son, was President of the English Alpine Club and a hero of the Matterhorn[1], but the Elliott at this time most closely associated with the Hall fell to his death on – or rather, off – the Schreckhorn in Switzerland aged 30. Unlike his

[1] He was only the second man, after Whymper's homicidal, if successful, expedition, to climb the mountain by its north face. For further information on this topic, see Appendix 2 (page 51), 'The Ascent of the Matterhorn', a reproduction and assessment of the principal climbing feat of Julius Elliott based on his diaries and on contemporary press reports. His diary of this achievement is "reproduced" imperfectly in Bateman's biography, but without the use of the private record of which I hold perhaps the only copy.

elder brother Sir Charles, (the first son died, sadly, when only 13), Julius had not gone to Harrow but had been virtually a guinea pig at the recently founded Brighton College (another of his father's interests). This had not hindered his passage to Trinity College, Cambridge, in the appropriate family manner, and I am sure that, before his own death, Henry Venn Elliott knew that Julius was to enter Holy Orders. Unhappily, the family fondness for adventure was to cut short a promising career. But where Julius was thus obliged to sever his connection with St Mary's Hall, his brother and sisters, to the great benefit of the Hall, did not.

Year 36 - 1871

Academic Matters

The Trustees were focusing more on academic matters, possibly in reaction to a recent Parliamentary enactment; no mention is made of this latter, but it is likely. Thus we learn that the Trustees took particular note of the activities of the Revd Arthur Holmes of the Syndicate of the University of Cambridge whom they asked to set papers and then come to the Hall to "viva" the girls as a first step towards producing a "Certificated Governess". Holmes was not the first external examiner to be involved with the Hall, but he seems to have been the first serious moderator of the Hall's academic activities.

Year 39 - 1874

The Revd Edward Bishop Elliott Dies

Edward, as staunch a supporter as his elder brother could have wished, died on 30th July, 1875, leaving only the Revd Canon John Babington, his brother-in-law, as one of the family founding fathers among the Trustees. It was not to be long, though, before the Founder's second son, Sir Charles, after the distinguished service in India which brought him a knighthood, was playing his full part in the fortunes of the Hall.

To my mind, Edward, like his sister-in-law, Julia, is unfairly relegated to a secondary role by Bateman which totally belies his relationship with Henry over the first thirty-odd years of their lives. It is my view that his sense of mission did every bit as much as Julia Elliott's loving involvement to encourage Henry to embark on the project of St Mary's Hall and to sustain him in his endeavour. Likewise it is difficult to see why the able and scholarly Edward should later have accepted the relatively low-profile and backwater incumbency of St Mark's in 1853 were it not for an overridingly good reason: namely, the closest possible continued involvement with the Hall.

Fee Income

"It will be of the greatest assistance in the arrangement of the accounts if contributions are kindly paid earlier in the year".

From this point on, comments on the finances oscillate between the plangent and the panicky and consistently reflect the reactive attitude among the Trustees on which I have already commented. There is no evidence (as in many contemporary businesses) of financial planning as we know it: it was going to need the Wall Street crash to open people's eyes. For instance, 1875 was the year that, flying in the face of the Founder's clearly stated intention, the Trustees applied School capital reserves to meet a current account deficit. This golden goose egg, not being a matter of faith but of finance, was soon, through repetition, to shrivel to mini-bantam size.

Year 43 - 1878

Matters Academic

The academic report on the Hall stated, with regard to Grecian History: "The 4th class were not very successful".

We can sense that we are now embarking on a period of great uneasiness for the Trustees. It is not a modern feature of St Mary's Hall that it is behind the times – the composition of the Board of Governors and the expertise of the Principals guard against this – but, clearly, in the late 1870s, insufficient thought was being applied to the appropriateness of an outmoded syllabus for an intake of ever-widening ability and with fast changing interests.

Year 44 - 1879

Miss Newport - 2 (1879-1883)

To understand the full implications of what follows, one needs to have read all the Reports up to this point. At no stage so far have the Trustees felt any compulsion to reiterate to the Public (the Reports were, as I have said, open to public scrutiny) the aims of the Founder as laid down in the Hall's prospectus. What then has so influenced them that they do so and do so now?

For the first time, the Trustees give in their Report of 1880 an extended Statement of the Objectives of St Mary's Hall. Most of the points made simply describe the *status quo*. Thus: The Hall is an "Institution for assisting Clergymen in the education of their daughters"; "Orphans, *caeteris paribus*, are preferred;" "The age of admission is between 9 and 14; the children must be able to read and spell with ease, and be versed in the first four rules of arithmetic".

(Incidentally, the comment about taking orphans ahead of the queue is relevant: many clergymen were missionaries and, of course, this involved facing certain hazards such as danger and almost inevitable and frequently fatal disease; and even, in certain countries, cannibalism...)

In addition to the above comments, there is one most revealing statement: "No alteration will be made in the system of education....." (to meet individual – i.e. parental – requests). Quite obviously, the situation had reached the point where the Hall and the Trustees were under mounting pressure from various quarters to reform the curriculum and, by implication, to raise standards; but it had not yet reached the point where the Trustees were ready to throw the Principal to the wolves.

Year 45 - 1880

The Education of Women

In a weak-kneed reference to the education of women the Trustees followed up their previous Report with the bland assertion: "The Trustees desire to find themselves abreast of the times". King Canute might mythically just as well have said something similar about the tides before getting his feet wet (with due apologies to any historians among my readers).

Year 46 - 1881

The Crisis

The crisis was upon the Trustees – not that they admitted as much in their Report. We simply read that the "Educational and Domestic condition of the School" was investigated, on the Trustees' behalf, "by the Rev (sic) Chancellor Parish and Miss Hubbard", whoever they were. We can only imagine the internal stresses which brought about this extraordinary step.

The resulting report does not seem to have survived but the problems it addressed can be deduced and the consequences become obvious.

As for the problems, it must have been very difficult for the Trustees to have understood the full implications of the contemporary turmoil when for so many years the Hall had seemed calmly and complacently to be pursuing the Right Course. Unlike the late twentieth century when we are trained to expect, if not anticipate, change, Victorians were brought up with a sense of the rightness and permanence of all kinds of values inherited from the generation that had created those values. The fact that, in education, values are a function of an evolving society is a concept which would have been as alien to them as the idea that, through the structure of matter, God can perhaps be shown to be left-handed.

The consequences of the Parish-Hubbard report quickly became self-evident.

Year 47 - 1882

Miss Newport "retired".

It is not until the Report for the following year (1883) that we unearth from the accounts the astounding fact that Miss Newport was given a "gratuity" of £500 (worth £18,835 in November 1992 - my thanks to the Archivist of Messrs Coutts & Co. The sum, in 2019, would be far higher). This, in the history of St Mary's Hall, is an amazingly large sum of money to give to a retiring Principal. Even her successor, Miss Birrell, who was outstandingly successful – and not just in contrast – only received 100 guineas, 17 years later.

The only conclusion that can be seriously entertained, particularly since Miss Newport was only 56, is that she was effectively sacked and must have become unemployable elsewhere through the doubtful quality of any references which might have been sought and given. The Trustees, though and in those pre-industrial tribunal days, observed the style of the Hall and the spirit of the Founder by buying her out, rather than dismissing her with a lesser "gratuity" as they could perfectly well have done. The Report supports this: "Looking ... to the requirements of modern education ... (and the horse had bolted by now), St Mary's Hall shall be placed under a lady who is conversant with the higher branches of education".

As a footnote, this is a curious reflection on Miss Newport's own education as pupil No. 38. I think we have something to learn from all this about the education offered by St Mary's Hall in the early days.

Year 48 - 1883

The Hand-over

After what must have been a most uneasy interregnum, Miss Birrell, with her "Cambridge Higher Local Certificate in Honours", "Cambridge Teacher's Diploma", took up her post in mid-summer 1884.

A new age dawns, and a stiff and extremely efficient new broom starts in on this much neglected Augean stable. In the following year's Report, we note that the Trustees approve warmly of "alterations in teaching staff and the introduction of fresh subjects of study". We find that the Examiner (the Revd Chancellor Parish back again? we are not told) reports favourably that "the staff (have been) reconstituted to a very large extent (that is since June 1884)". If circumstances had been normal it is unlikely that so much time would have elapsed between the departure of Miss Newport and the arrival of Miss Birrell.

Reading between the lines, and as the main sequel, we can imagine an interview, during the Trustees' careful search for a replacement, in which the power to make decisions concerning the School was agreed to be transferred from the Trustees to the person to be appointed. It must have been an interesting discussion and was clearly one of the most vital moments in the Hall's history; it is formally reflected in the current Scheme. The Reports hint at a rather more distant control by Trustees of matters scholastic and pastoral from now on.

Year 52 - 1887

Miss Birrell

The Trustees continued to comment in public (and in private) on the satisfaction they felt over Miss Birrell's appointment in vivid contrast with the chilly silence that had accompanied Miss Newport's reign and departure. The Reports repeatedly praise the new regime - not unnaturally in the circumstances and particularly in view of the various examiners' laudatory remarks over the years after 1884. Perhaps the best comment on Miss Birrell's impact on the Hall lies in the appointing of her Vice-Mistress, Miss Edith Potter, as her successor: an "in-house" appointment by choice, and not, as in 1862, from desperation.

Year 54 - 1889

Music in the Hall

Parents, in some cases, may have welcomed the dictat that "the violin will be taught to those only who have first obtained a reasonable proficiency in Arithmetic, English and French". Having said which, it is only accurate to point out that music, quite rightly, has always been given a high profile in the Hall's curriculum.

Year 56 - 1891

A New Context

"The continuing falling off in the value of [Church] tithes and the consequent diminution in the incomes of the clergy renders (the Hall and other similar places) especially needful".

St Mary's Hall was embarking on a new phase which would eventually lead to a radical reshaping of its intake in order to ensure its survival. For the first time (1892), parents were told that "if the payment be not made in advance, the child must not be sent, or, having been sent, must be removed". I think we may safely assume that there was more bark than bite in this threat, but then (as, indeed, now when there is rather more bite but no loss of kindness) there must have been one or two moments of heartbreak. This all coincided, curiously, with the introduction of the three-term system which has persisted to the present day (but creeping change is in the air again), and so 1891/92 could, with some justification, be designated the watershed year which divides the original foundation from the modern one, even though it would be a few years until the Hall opened its doors to a wider public.

Year 62 - 1897

The Princess Christian Annexe

This improvement in facilities must have given Miss Birrell much satisfaction in terms of being tangible evidence of her time as Principal, even though she was no longer in office when HRH the Princess Christian opened it formally on 7th November, 1899. It is a comment on the times that it cost £2,200.5.11d (over £250K today - 1992)

and was built with amazing speed between March and October 1898, being officially occupied on 26th October, Founder's Day that year.

Year 64 - 1899

The Financial Situation

"The brush must be dipped in different hues to depict the financial situation".

The oscillations in the Trustees' approach to what, from the accounts, was a straight-line deterioration are nicely illustrated by the succeeding year's statement (in the face of virtually identical figures): "The financial strain is the only cause for anxiety and the Trustees are sanguine that it will not be a permanent one". And then in 1902: "Our difficulties are now greater than ever".

Sciences

"It has been difficult to keep a resident science teacher ... because anyone who is fit to teach science at all wishes to carry it further than the resources of the Hall at present admit of".

This was something shared with most other girls' schools. Progress, such as it was, is to be found in the comment, proudly made in 1902, "The girls have a weekly lesson in Swedish drill". It would be 1903 before there was a proper science room.

Year 66 - 1901

Parental Commitment

For the first time, "new" parents were not required to state whether their daughters are "designed for a governess". The Trustees do not explain whether this reflects Sir Robert Morant's Bill (Balfour's 1902 Education Act). Perhaps they were genuinely "abreast of the times" by now.

Year 69 - 1904

Falling Rolls

There is an exasperating juxtaposition in the Report which states: "There was a very exciting and amusing stoolball match between a Trustees' XI and the School" (presumably not the variety played by the wartime inmates of Oflag IV C (Colditz). In the next breath we learn that, for the first time, there was a fall in numbers. The Hall, together with many other schools, was on the verge of increasingly hard times and the Trustees deemed commenting on a stoolball match to be as, if not more important, than this .

Even so, the letter to parents that year shows that Head Teachers must still have led fairly unruffled lives; it sternly lays down that: "Letters, except on important school business, should not be forwarded to the Head Mistress until the last week of the holidays".

Year 70 - 1905

An Appeal

"A special appeal (for an Assembly Hall) ... has brought in next to nothing."

It is a commonplace of St Mary's Hall's existence, and of that of virtually every other girls' school, that appeals are usually of little, or even no, value. Equally common, though, is the enthusiasm with which succeeding appeals have been undertaken. Appeals emanating from boys' schools were much more likely to succeed

and I suspect that the good demographic and social reasons which so obviously account for this were beyond the ken of the Trustees.

On the other side of the coin they reported that "an anonymous donor (has) given 15 pianos". The Hall had to await Sir Charles Elliott's death in 1911 when a substantial legacy from him was to rescue the projected and much-needed Assembly Hall. 15 pianos?

Year 71 - 1906

Difficult Times

"The strong personal interest which has shepherded the School from its commencement will, it may be hoped, in time be replaced by an equally strong public opinion in favour of its maintenance". I can find no instance of the Trustees ever mentioning that the Hall, faced by the English Channel on one side, had a brutally restrictive market area of a mere semi-circle and relied for publicity on the limited resources of such Church publications as were ever read by often indigent incumbents with daughters to educate.

1907 was clearly a year of crisis both in finance and in morale. Some crucial steps were taken: full fees were asked for from those who could afford them (not applicable, of course, to current pupils - a typical, if unrealistic, St Mary's Hall touch); in 1908 day girls, daughters of Brighton clergymen, were admitted "at moderate charges".

Year 73 - 1908

Changes in the Governing Board

Other significant changes were taking place among the 1908/9 governing body: "It had long been felt to be anomalous that no ladies should be associated with the eight Trustees" and so an executive council of 12 was created "not less than three of whom must be ladies". These ladies were to assume an important role after the 1914-18 war in managing day-to-day matters, doubtless to the irritation of those who actually had to do the work; events will suggest that, however unpopular among the staff of the Hall (the Reports are mute on this aspect), these ladies played their part in achieving very necessary economies.

The Casterton Connection

Mrs Carus Wilson distributed the prizes.

Brighton, it will be remembered, was one of the gateways to the Continent. The close links between the founders of Casterton School and St Mary's Hall appear to have stood the test of time. It would seem likely that, in the 1830s, when the Revd William Carus Wilson was obliged, for the sake of his health, to come South and move for a time to the Continent, (no doubt soon to be reunited with the £402 owed to him by the school he founded), the Wilson and Elliott families saw something of each other, a link to be sustained down the years by future generations.

It is an interesting contrast between the families that Carus Wilson became so estranged from the creature to which he had given birth, even though his son was actively to maintain the family connection.

Year 74 - 1909

A “New” St Mary’s Hall

This was an important year for the Hall in three respects: First, three inspectors from the Board of Education classified the Hall as “efficient”, thereby giving official public recognition of the Hall’s status, and providing conclusive proof of the turnaround in St Mary’s Hall brought about by the Birrell-Potter regime. Second, the much needed Assembly Hall (still only a glint in the appeal director’s jaded eye) suddenly came into being in 1911 following the legacy from the recently deceased and much lamented Sir Charles Elliott. Third, Miss Ghey (BA Oxon, MA London), who was to be such a vital spirit in the Hall’s affairs both as Principal and friend, was appointed to succeed Miss Potter whose health was failing. Rarely can the future have looked brighter.

Year 79 - 1914

The Great War

Despite the outbreak of the First World War, little changed at the Hall. Numbers continued to rise, expansion appropriate to the circumstances took place, and the Trustees, although aware of the appalling situation the other side of the Channel, serenely continued to conduct affairs as though there would be no aftermath. They commented on “the anxieties and perplexities inseparable from the terrible War”, but concluded that the Hall was quite safe materially, since the risk of raids, such as those made on the East Coast, “might reasonably be ignored”. (The situation was going to be very different 25 years later when Brighton was to feature so prominently in the Third Reich’s plans for Operation Sealion.)

“The girls ... are very busy with war work and have done some capital knitting”: the Hall did, of course, play its part and no doubt girls lost brothers and fathers in the horror of the trenches or returned home for the holidays to be faced with maimed and broken men-folk.

Year 81 – 1916

Inflation

Apart from a rather unsophisticated comment on inflation two years previously, the Trustees seem to have been oblivious to the financial threat hanging over the Hall and every other such unendowed institution in the Country. There was “a serious deficit in funds on the year’s working and [...] money (is) urgently needed”. “The Committee are oppressed with constant anxiety for expansion and improvement in many directions”. We have not yet fully broken with the received Victorian wisdom that the way to counter such a situation was by raising and spending yet more money.

The girls, too, were involved in the matter of financing the War effort: “By the wish of all the prize winners”, money for prizes that year was applied instead to the purchasing of a portable communion table to be used by a Chaplain of the Armed Forces.

Year 83 - 1918

Salaries

A new, and perhaps not entirely welcome, factor now obtruded on the financial front. The Trustees did not approve, if the phraseology of the Report is to be our guide, of “the irresistible demand for increased salaries for women teachers”. Unsurprisingly, they reacted with the decision that an Appeal should be considered. They capped this dynamic response with the plaintive cry: “The School is threatened with extinction”.

Year 84 - 1919

The Aftermath

At last serious and far reaching decisions were abroad. With a background of wildly fluctuating fee increases over the past six years (successively 30.4%, 2.7%, 17.1%, 9.5%, 3.4% and 20.0% per annum), and a different society emerging hesitantly from the Kaiser War, a radical re-appraisal was due, if not overdue, of the Hall's situation and objectives: the twentieth century (I would prefer to think of it as the post-first-war era) was implacably about to impose its presence. The decision was accordingly made to "take in Boarders other than Clergy Daughters on non-foundation fees". It would seem from comments made the following year that this far-reaching decision was taken more on the basis of Christian charitable principle than on the basis of cost analysis and income projections (notions not yet current as part of normal financial planning), but it was the decision which was to turn St Mary's Hall into the modern School which, despite Hitler and the hiatus of the early 1940s, it now is.

Year 85 - 1920

A Time of Transition: "Prompt and drastic measures are needed".

The age of the single private benefactor-cum-fairy-godmother had gone for ever. The new Age of the Accountant was dawning. We are in the uneasy half-light between the two, and we find the Trustees helplessly caught in the vicious circle of expanding to house new pupils in order to rescue the School and not being able to fund the expansion they so desperately believed they needed. The situation was only relatively new in those days, but the inflation factor rendered it significantly harder for the Trustees to reconcile their financial traditions with their Christian objectives.

One prompt and drastic measure brings a wry smile: the "Ladies" on the "Council" were tasked specifically with "the scrutiny of all House bills" and the supervision of "all" domestic details. "The Trustees are deeply indebted to the Ladies of the Council for the close attention they have given to their new undertaking". Let me give you the first two names of these worthy "Ladies": The Countess Dowager of Chichester, The Hon Mrs Campion, JP... And yet the accounts, despite this formidable, but I suspect unmethodical and untrained, influence at work, show a huge overdraft of £9,639.1.6d (in the region of £400,000 in 1992) and, more sinister still, the first Bank Charges and Loan Interest Charges (£220.6.8d).

Year 86 -1921

The Age of the Accountant

This new age had now arrived and was not to go away: St Mary's Hall was turned into a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Memorandum and Articles of Association faithfully retained the original wording of the objectives of the foundation because the Trustees contemplated no changes beyond what was already taking place. The importance of this move lay in two principal areas: first, money could be raised on debentures secured by the fixed assets of the Company; second, those fixed assets – property – were now held in the Company's name and were not vested in the Trustees. Thus important savings in legal expenses were made every time a Trustee was appointed or resigned and the concomitant of a worrying personal financial liability no longer lay with each Trustee. If I seem to have explained things back to front (the property aspect logically precedes the debenture aspect), it is because this is how the Trustees, now Governors, reported it, and it reflects their experience and priorities at the time. However much the Governors may have been caught inside that vicious circle in the earlier half-light, the major extension of the Hall dates from this period and it cannot be denied that it was necessary if the future was to be secured on a national as well as a local scale. There were many hurdles ahead, though.

Year 87 – 1922

Expansion

The Governors had been forced by circumstances to put the cart before the horse. "The School has no more recreation ground for its present numbers of nearly two hundred than it has from its commencement for only one hundred". A hard tennis court was laid down, and the Governors commented smugly on the new buildings acquired recently in Sussex Square and the payment by some girls of full fees as representing a more satisfactory basis. The accounts, though, tell a different tale, revealing a huge capital liability of £14,905.0.6d (about £670,000 in 1992).

Year 94 - 1929

Routine

The Reports have recently included little beyond domestic trivia. This year, for instance, the Governors in their remarks were more concerned about an outbreak of measles than the global economic upheavals which were destroying a whole way of life; and indeed they continued to be resolutely introspective until grave national issues could no longer be ignored. Thus they weightily record that the Old Girls, an important part by now of the Hall's life, had "a jolly get-together": "a most happy and friendly week-end was spent (in St Hilary), 1870 joining hands with 1929".

Year 95 - 1930

Numbers

The Governors were not always wholly accurate or consistent over matters of fact in their Reports, although not extravagantly so. Thus when numbers, the current, perennial and vital key factor, were reported on, they were given at 212 "an increase of 15" on the previous year. In the event, the figure for 1928-9 was given as 193, making it an increase of 19. Four places can make a critical difference; I have no reason to doubt that this was also the case in 1930 and am surprised at the lax calculating by the Governors. Having said which, numbers are always as critical as they are highly volatile.

Year 96 - 1931

Oxbridge

It would have been gratifying for parents to read about the steady trickle of Oxbridge successes which the Hall was now achieving. Miss Ghey's Oxford University background has clearly been exercising its influence. She was, after all, the first really well academically-qualified Headmistress to have guided the Hall.

Year 97 - 1932

The Kindergarten

A newly constituted kindergarten department was opened in May 1932 and, clearly, strenuous efforts were being made to make St Mary's Hall more marketable. As had happened almost routinely before, the Governors had elected to increase numbers before arranging accommodation so that No. 4 Clarendon Terrace (Hebbert House) was hastily purchased with yet another convenient debenture. (It was sold again as soon as 1935). They commented predictably at the end of the year: "The interest on this new debenture issue will of course be an additional burden on the finances of the Hall, but....."

Year 98 - 1933

Miss Ghey's Illness

Miss Ghey had been seriously ill, but was back in harness "under strict orders to go carefully" as the Report modernistically phrased it. The Governors took the opportunity to review the various projects undertaken with Miss Ghey from 1919, and acknowledged with gratitude their debt to her. The dramatic and negative impact of these projects on the Hall's precarious finances is not referred to except within the context of the forthcoming centenary year when a magic wand would be brandished and a tidal wave of donations would drown all such monetary cares.

Year 99 -1934

"We are feeling the effects of the general world depression"

Hard times of one sort or another were lying in wait and, although the Hall managed to plough its superficially serene furrow, it was obvious that trouble was brewing in the wake of the Great Depression. Others, too, saw trouble of another kind incubating in central Europe, even though there was no mention of a certain Herr Hitler. They could not, though, easily have foreseen just how dire would be the difficulties that lay ahead; nor could they have judged how Providence was already taking a hand in the Hall's future. Only in retrospect can we recognise such things. Two blessings were poised to combat the Scylla of war and the Charybdis of new inflation.

First, Miss Ghey's health recovered: the Hall may subsequently have lost her as Headmistress when she, and the equally invaluable Miss Galton, went to Oxted for their "new venture" at Blunt House, but it never lost her as a friend and ally.

Second, the Governors are recorded as extending "a cordial welcome" to "Mr C.E.M. Elliott, a great-grandson of the Founder". This would turn out to be an important moment. After the War he was to be chairman of the Governors until 1965 and to remain on the Board until February 1979 when I, as the second of his two sons, replaced him, joining the first, A.C.R. Elliott, already on the Board. The comment by the Governors in 1907 about "the strong personal interest which has shepherded the School from its commencement" was to live on in Charles Elliott, and it is little broadcast that St Mary's Hall owes its survival in the modern era more to him than to any other single person or institution. His own view of his role is characteristically dismissive; in a letter, he refers as follows to Dr George Bell, Bishop of Chichester and years later to be the much and baselessly maligned: "it was thanks to his influence and driving force that we were enabled to get going again". Of course it was a general effort, involving many people, to reconstruct the Hall after 1945; but Charles Elliott's determination and influence were decisive in re-creating the School founded by his great-grandfather and which so joyfully celebrated its past in the summer of 1986.

Year 100 - 1935

The Centenary Year

Naturally enough, the events of the centenary year are narrated in universally felicitous and laudatory terms. The celebrations lasted an entire week, and the *pièce de résistance* was a pageant, written by Miss Ghey and performed twice. It involved "all the girls in the School", "some members of the St Mary's Hall Association and the Staff" and no fewer than five Governors (and, heroically, one governor's wife). We read that "the Century's History of the School was re-enacted with intense realism". The local press did not comment on the quality of the production beyond mentioning "the accuracy of the story" and the costumes, but did highlight the appropriateness of "Colonel A.C. Elliott CBE" playing the parts of his father and grandfather. It fell to the

Bishop of London to say that it was "wonderfully acted", but then, as guest of honour at the second and principal performance, and also as the then Vice-President, he could hardly have been expected to say less.

Two people who were present have described the occasion to me in contrasting terms: "it was a lot of fun"; and "it was excruciating". Take your pick. Either way, it was a fine tribute to a great man.

At the thanksgiving service (an apposite touch, since the rain had stopped just in time that afternoon) the Bishop of Lewes addressed the congregation in St Mark's Church in the following terms: "We are here to thank God for 100 years of blessing on this School....."; "I doubt if any other founder of a school has been succeeded, as he has been, by son and grandson with equal zeal to maintain and improve the School he built".

Years 101-5 - 1936-1940

Into Trauma

Just as Sellar and Yeatman brought their (rather more Memorable) History to a full stop ("."), so do I draw mine to a close. The Hall, now with Miss Stopford as Headmistress, pressed on with its life and its perennially under-financed projects until forced temporarily to disperse in late 1940 by the Luftwaffe's bombs.

Let the principal final words in this section come from the Ministry of Education's report issued in 1954 and let them serve as a memorial to the Revd Henry Venn Elliott's dream and as a testimonial to his great-grandson Charles Elliott's influence and determination.

"When the War ended, the Governors were faced with buildings which were in an appalling condition ..."; "After all the current debts had been paid", continues the Report, "there was a deficiency of about £10,000 (say about £250K in 1992) which had to be covered by a bank overdraft in addition to the debenture issue of £12,000". It is a sobering thought that, under current Insolvency Legislation, St Mary's Hall would almost certainly have had to have been wound up to pay off its liabilities, instead of merely being bombed by the Germans and, more seriously, wrecked inside by our own and Canadian troops.

By 1954, this battered shell was a school again: "The new Elliott House is excellent [I wish I knew who made this comment: it was a thoroughly jerry-built edifice, but the best possible in those difficult days] and the School now has good grounds and buildings which have been restored and made suitable for their purposes ..." '*Suitable for their purposes*'? The then Governors seem still to have been harking back to earlier standards, but then the trauma of a second world war led all too frequently and easily to this frame of mind. If things had been OK before then things duly reinstated to that former standard were OK now. The relevant Report went on: "The School is now on a sound financial basis." To be fair, it seemed so at the time.

"*Deo non fortuna*" is the Elliott family motto (and, curiously, has been purloined by Epsom College): St Mary's Hall has been both blessed and fortunate.

1946-1986

I had not intended to write about the post-war period, but the Hall's demise in 2009 forced by what were to be virtually nation-wide economic pressures prompts a few words for the period up to 1986 when I had a moment to write my 'history' of the Hall.

My own personal involvement began well before I was ever elected to be a Governor and probably dated, *de facto*, from the early sixties and over a decade before I formally joined the Board. My subsequent involvement *de jure* prevents me from making any personal comment.

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St Mary's Hall had achieved a national reputation after its founding in 1836, so that the bombs of 1940 had more than a local impact when they forced the temporary closure of the Hall. The impossibility of funding a removal to a safer place was quickly recognised and a hiatus ensued. The painfully slow task of reconstruction was eventually undertaken: the daunting objective of restoring the Hall to its original condition and status must have made the boldest heart quail. It was a story of painstaking perseverance and one of which all those involved can be truly proud: Miss Stopford, Miss Robinson, Miss Galton, Miss Ghey, Mr Dingwall and so many others.

The detailed narrative of these forty years is as simple or complex as that of any period of reconstruction and I propose to make a quantum leap from the wreckage and vandalism of the war years straight into the sesquicentennial celebrations of 1986, the year I was asked to put (¿a rather better researched and informed?) pen to paper. Nothing, in the Hall's history, had been as shocking as the barbaric destruction of the interior of the Main School and of the buildings in Sussex Square by our own troops. We would have been better off, if the evidence in France is anything to go by, if the buildings had been requisitioned by the Gestapo. Certainly, one person, the late Colonel Strome Galloway MC, a much-decorated Canadian officer briefly billeted in Brighton and who had witnessed the devastation caused by his Regiment, used terms much more forceful than these when describing to me the scene in 1944. The Hall had been requisitioned as the battalion headquarters of two companies of the Canadian Lake Superior Scottish Regiment.

But it was to be more than mere reconstruction: in the forty years since 1946, St Mary's Hall not only recovered its status, but laid a foundation for the future. The times of more leisured guidance by Governors were long past and in 1986 the long-term future – and survival – of the Hall was apparently as secure as it had ever been. In common with any business enterprise in the modern era (and a school was then, for better or for worse, a business like any other), St Mary's Hall conforms to all the modern criteria of business management. The fact that, in this Age of the Accountant, the Hall has not lost sight of its earliest aims and values is what matters. I would like to think that the Revd Henry Venn Elliott and, more especially, his wife Julia, would feel at home if they were to attend Governors' meetings as we move towards the 21st century, even if some of the modern jargon were unfamiliar. The heart of St Mary's Hall was in the right place, just as potential Governors were assessed as to their professional capacities rather more than for their social acceptability.

In 1946 there was virtually nothing but Miss Robinson and a handful of apprehensive girls and a powerful tradition which, for 110 years, had had the faith to persevere. Miss Conrady was to take over in 1950 when Miss Robinson's health started to fail, and, in concert with Charles Elliott, she built the platform from which the Hall

was to step into the Future. Miss Davies navigated the Hall through the turbulent sixties and Mrs Leslie initiated many of the ideas which were to be so important as part of the long-term planning of the Hall. The early eighties brought the more traditional Miss Harvey at perhaps the time of fastest evolution in the Hall's history.

In the late 1980s, it was not an easy time to be a Headmistress when social and economic changes imposed such radical reappraisals of basic skills on a profession which, to a certain degree, had hitherto drifted along from generation to generation. Mrs Broadbent faced a great challenge, only to be prevented by a sudden deterioration in her health from completing her due term in office.

Thereafter, a most unkind historical irony was to place a by now aggressive, if not actively hostile, Brighton College fatefully in the Hall's path – a situation which would have appalled the Revd Henry Venn Elliott as one of the principal moving forces in the College's foundation in 1845

The result was closure in 2009.

As I review my short History (it is now 2019), it is clear that Mrs Meek, at the helm from 1999, was inevitably unsuccessful, despite her tremendous commitment, in confronting the challenges of a socialist-dominated modern era.

Mrs James, having retired in 1997, stepped into the breach as an in-house appointment on Mrs Broadbent's sudden departure. She, with great sureness of touch, led St Mary's Hall through a time of the twin difficulties of rising costs and the apparently and threatened decline in pupil numbers in the Independent Sector of Education. Further, 1986 was the year of teacher unrest and, although the Independent Sector, for very sound and responsible reasons, remained relatively aloof from the undignified behaviour of the profession elsewhere, the eventual impact of its consequences on teaching were wide-ranging and permanent if not always mostly welcome.

For St Mary's Hall to celebrate the 150th year of its foundation in 1986 was, therefore, particularly apt since the Reports I have drawn on show not only a continuing concern for the pupils but, latterly, also a very real awareness of the needs of the staff. It was one of the many blessings of that year of celebration that it was not marred by the intemperate pettiness which was so evident in other institutions. Even the sun shone on the principal outdoor events on The Day, unlike the uncertain weather that had marked the Centenary.

On 27th June, a marvellous pageant, written by Mrs P Sheasby, doubtless all the better for zero Elliott family participation, re-enacted the early days before a distinguished audience including Lord Abergavenny, the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex. The main performance of the pageant was followed by a brief, if wind-swept, word from the then Headmistress, Miss Harvey, who appropriately referred more to the future than to the past The day ended with a Ball, and the strains of the dance band, the jazz band and the disco mingled happily in the warm and, by then, still summer evening air.

On 10th July 1986, the founding of the Hall was solemnly celebrated in a special service at St George's Church (selected in preference to St Mark's because of its greater seating capacity), where His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie MC, preached an apt and sensitive sermon. After this, a relaxed and informal formal lunch took place at the Hall, and a small but appropriate presentation was made to a helicopter-transported Dr Runcie to mark this peaceful interlude between his chairing of a turbulent Synod and his next rather more hectic public engagement. On 20th September, the St Mary's Hall Association celebrated the sesquicentennial with a service of thanksgiving and commemoration in St Mark's. This brought the formalities

of the year to a close, and in a sense opened the door on to the future: it was the first service held in St Mark's by the Hall for decades. Likewise, the welcome presence in the new academic year of Sir Henry Chilver, Vice-Chancellor of the Cranfield Institute of Technology, to speak at prize giving and distribute the prizes, reflected the forward-looking nature of this year of celebration.

Throughout all these happenings, school life followed its customary treadmill, albeit a treadmill far removed from what life was like in 1946, let alone 1836.

Perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to St Mary's Hall in 1986 was that routine did continue, that the staff did manage to cope.

There was not just the 150th year to plan and execute - in itself a major task. There was an Appeal (yes, again – and as unsuccessful as they all had been) launched to support the equipping of St Mark's Church on its becoming redundant and being given (back) to the Hall, a project in which everyone – and not just staff and pupils – became involved. There was "Dido and Aeneas" in May, "The Fur Slipper" (commissioned for the anniversary by Mrs E Aviss and composed by Dr Colin Hand) in July involving the entire Junior School, and all the upheaval caused by Open Day and other annual events.

And there were lessons as usual, examinations as usual, matches, outings, club meetings, visits, assemblies, concerts, interviews, film shows, field trips, exchanges, theatre visits, history expeditions, horse riding, sailing..... The list is endless. A quantum leap, indeed.

Look, too, at the Hall's material improvements in terms of new buildings and refurbishments. Who would have thought, surveying the wreckage and rubble in 1945, that within the short span of four decades St Mary's Hall would have become once again what it had been – and more – before the war?

I pass over the relentless events which led to the Hall's closure in 2009. On reflection, I believe the Hall's closure to have been ineluctable, just as was the case with so many other of the smaller independent educational ventures.

HEADMISTRESSES OF ST MARY'S HALL

1836-1858	Miss Tomkinson
1858-1861	Mrs Mills
1861-1862	Miss Wood
1862-1883	Miss Maria Newport
1884-1899	Miss Christina M Birrell
1899-1911	Miss Edith Potter
1911-1936	Miss Fanny L Ghey
1936-1940	Miss Evelyn E Stopford
1946-1950	Miss Harriet Robinson
1950-1965	Miss Doris Conrady
1965-1972	Miss N Olwen Davies
1972-1981	Mrs E Olive E S Leslie
1981-1988	Miss M F Clare Harvey
1988-1991	Mrs M Teresa Broadbent
1991-1997	Mrs Pamela J James
1997-End	Mrs Susan M Meek

ELLIOTT TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS OF ST MARY'S HALL

Revd Henry V Elliott	-	Founder
Revd Edward B Elliott	-	Brother
Revd Julius M Elliott	-	Son
Sir Charles A Elliott KCSI	-	Son
Revd Henry V Elliott	-	Grandson
Mrs HV Elliott	-	Granddaughter-in-law
Lt. Colonel Alfred C Elliott CBE	-	Grandson
Charles EM Elliott Esq	-	Great-grandson
Mrs RV Broadley	-	Great-granddaughter
Sir Claude A Elliott OBE	-	Great-grandson
Robin D Broadley Esq	-	Great-great-grandson
Anthony CR Elliott Esq	-	Great-great-grandson
Timothy J Elliott Esq	-	Great-great-grandson
Hugh SM Elliott Esq	-	Great-great-great-grandson

Appendix 1

THE ST MARY'S HALL MOTTO

"BEFORE HONOR (IS) HUMILITY"

The biblical origins of the motto are well-known. I quote from the King James Version:

Proverbs - Chapter 15, verses 32-33:

32. *He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.*
33. *The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom;* ***and before honour is humility***.

Proverbs - Chapter 18, verses 11-12:

11. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.*
12. *Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty* ***and before honour is humility***.

However, what is less well known, perhaps, is the quotation's appearance in John Bunyan's "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" (1678/1684). It occurs in Part One when Christian and Faithful are exchanging experiences, notably about what Christian calls here the "Valley of Humility", previously termed by him the "Valley of Humiliation". In Part Two, the valley is exclusively referred to as the "Valley of Humiliation" [*"the best and most useful piece of ground in all those parts"*] where it is discussed at some length. It is thus curious, in what seems to be interchangeable terminology, that Christian refers to it here, and only here, as the "Valley of Humility" – a term which, as you can see below, Faithful adopts. I cannot find anyone to support the contention that the semantic alternation is significant. (What Faithful himself would have chosen to call it later is idle speculation because he is soon to be judicially and brutally murdered in Vanity Fair.)

Bunyan writes:

Faithful: *Yes, I met with one DISCONTENT, who would willingly have persuaded me to go back with him; his reason was, for that the valley was altogether without honour. He told me moreover, that there to go was the way to disobey all my friends, as PRIDE, ARROGANCY, SELF-CONCEIT, WORLDLY-GLORY, with others; who he knew, as he said, would be very much offended if I made such a fool of myself as to wade through this valley.*

Christian: *Well, and how did you answer him?*

Faithful: *I told him that although all these that he named might claim kindred of me, and that rightly - for indeed they were my relations according to the flesh, - yet since I became a pilgrim, they have disowned me, as I also have rejected them; and therefore they were to me now no more than if they had never been of my lineage. I told him moreover, that as to this valley, he had quite misrepresented the thing; for* ***before honour is humility****, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Therefore, said I, I had rather go through this valley to the honour that was so accounted by the wisest, than choose that which he esteemed most worth our affections.*

What is at issue here is the overtly moral progression involved in Christian's journey towards the Celestial City and the depiction of humility/humiliation as coming sequentially as well as morally before "honour". The key word here is 'sequentially': remember that the full title of Bunyan's work is "The Pilgrim's Progress from This

World to That Which Is to Come." (Incidentally and unimportantly, the retention of the spelling "honor" is puzzlingly and unnecessarily idiosyncratic, if not even pretentious in the twentieth century.)

A bigger problem for the theologian (and the sophist?) lies in the apparent interchangeability in Bunyan's mind between "humility" and "humiliation". But Bunyan, perhaps unconsciously, helps us to achieve a better understanding of this in Part Two when Christian's widow Christiana and their four sons, accompanied by Great-heart, meet the Shepherd boy in the "Valley of Humiliation", and he seems to draw the threads together for us:

Now, as they were going along, and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was in very mean clothes, but of a very fresh and well favoured countenance; and as he sat by himself, he sang. Hark, said Mr. Great-heart, to what the shepherd's boy saith. So they hearkened, and he said:

> *He that is down needs fear no fall;*
> *He that is low, no pride;*
> *He that is humble, ever shall*
> *Have God to be his guide.....*

The reference given at this point by Bunyan is to St Paul's epistle to the Philippians chapter 4, verses 12-13:

12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

As to the questions why and when it was adopted by St Mary's Hall, history has not revealed the answer. There is no record that I can find of this "motto" among the Founder's papers and writings; Bateman is unsurprisingly silent on the subject in his biography. The Trustees' minutes make no reference to it, which suggests that it was never a matter for their consideration: there was, apparently, no "Day One" motto. All we know is that it appeared towards the end of the Nineteenth Century.

In reaching any conclusions about the Motto, we should remember that"*The Pilgrim's Progress*" was a very widely-read book at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Fussell, in "*The Great War and Modern Memory*" (OUP 1974), bears striking witness to this. It features in Scott's account of his polar expedition (the Great Barrier being referred to by the expedition as the Slough of Despond). Earlier, the Clapham Sect, to which the Founder's family had actively belonged, were admirable, even self-conscious, exemplars of Bunyan's Work. I believe, therefore, that we should take a fresh look at the Motto's significance.

The oppositional interpretations which I have heard promoted from time to time over the years – and to which I have to confess I thoughtlessly subscribed – of humility being preferable to honour seem, in the light of Bunyan's influential text, to be less than adequate. In Bunyan's text, Humility has to be experienced sequentially before Honour may be properly achieved.

The Motto has far more virtue if considered from within "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" than it does as just one of many appropriate Proverbs selected from the Bible.

Appendix 2

THE ASCENT OF THE MATTERHORN

What follows is taken from the Elliott family papers in my possession.

Introduction

There are two versions: the manuscript, written by Julius and an imperfect typed version (annotated "only copy") done, from internal evidence, by 'MEE' (my Grandmother, Mabel Elliott – TJE) from the manuscript. She changes the title to "The Ascent of the Matterhorn in 1868", that is when Julius was 27 and almost exactly a year before he met his death in a seemingly unnecessary fall on the Schreckhorn.

It is in fact virtually identical to what Bateman wrote as an appendix to his biography of Henry Venn Elliott and my guess is that Bateman must have had sight of Julius' manuscript, or at least a version of it.

Julius was President of the (English) Alpine Club and, obviously, a thoroughly brave and competent climber. The guide to whom he refers was to be with him the following year when he died. Julius calls him "Biner", but, in Press reports, he is called "Herr Binar". I have here adopted Julius' spelling. It was probably the "Biener", who had climbed with Whymper, albeit not the Matterhorn. Bateman favours "Binar", which gives us a clue as to his source.

With the modern family reader in mind, I expected to have to modify one or two routine matters of spelling, punctuation and presentation so as to improve reader accessibility, but, in practice, this has hardly been necessary.

If I mention the typed version, it is only because I think some of my readers may already have or have seen it. Where it varies from the manuscript, I show this by inserting (*).

There is a minor problem with the manuscript because entire sections are subsequent interpolations - or, in the case of the view from the top of the Matterhorn, a complete re-write. These are written with a different, and thinner, nib, and with an upward inclination of the lines which contrasts with the horizontal regularity of the rest of the manuscript. They are less carefully written and, in particular, less easy to read (MEE had trouble in transcribing them and made mistakes). They do not break the flow of the main narrative too much and, being part and parcel of the adventure even though written later, I have retained them. It is purely for interest's sake that I have marked each such section with an asterisk. My guess is that they were added because the document was being prepared for publication. (The description of the view from the top was obviously worked out afterwards with the help of a map. I therefore give, in addition, Julius' first and much briefer and more general version. Likewise, he subsequently deleted a section just before the end, and those paragraphs I also give.)

At the end, I give, for interest, three items:

1. A transcription of the press report concerning the circumstances of Julius' death on the Schreckhorn on 27 July 1869. Press reports being what they are, I have tidied up inconsistencies, spelling, punctuation and paragraphs.

2. The text quoted by Fergus Fleming in his history of the Alps taken from Théophile Gautier's memoires and quoted by one C Engel in '*They Came to the Hill*s' - Allen &

Unwin - 1952. It is most regrettable that Fleming misleads the reader into losing sight of how soon after Whymper's climb this brief encounter took place. Fleming's very readable book ('Killing Dragons' - Granta - 2000) concentrates on Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn and on a few of the main characters involved. It slightly loses its way towards the end, and I would not give it to anyone as a present; but it is well worth having out of the local library.

3. Whymper's own description of what he saw from the top of the Matterhorn.

Finally, it is appropriate to remember that, in the 1860s, climbing was done wearing such as tweeds and hob-nailed boots.....

Julius Elliott's narrative of his Matterhorn ascent

If ever it is true of anything that it inspires different people with different emotions, it is true of the Alps; for to some they are objects of aversion and even terror, while to others they are objects of greatest delight and intensest longings. And, if this be true of any one mountain more than another, that mountain is the Matterhorn.

I have heard it described as "black and awful", "forbidding" and "ghastly". And I have myself thought it the most graceful and fascinating mountain I have ever seen. Certainly no mountain in the European Alps can boast such rare curves of snow and rock, such overhanging precipices, such incessant and terrific stone avalanches, and such an appearance of inaccessibility, which, even now that its virginity has for ever gone, will isolate it to the last as much as its own natural position.

It will be remembered how in 1865 the mountain was climbed for the first time [by Edward Whymper's English expedition - TJE], and how (by the irony of fate) that brilliant success was turned into a most awful failure by the slip of one of the party and the consequent destruction of four of them - an accident that not only restored to the mountain its former reputation, but invested it with a superstitious dread it had not possessed before.

It was climbed again the same year, but from the opposite, or Southern, side. And, in 1867 I believe, it was ascended three different times from the South side (one by guides alone, another time by an Englishman with those guides, another time by an Italian); but, though several attempts were made on the North side, all, from one cause or another, failed. And so the superstition gathered strength that everyone who was rash enough to assail the Matterhorn from the North would never get down alive. It was useless to represent that the accident was the result of the inexperience of one member of that first party and that the Northern slopes were gentler than the Southern and therefore must be easier. With the tenacity of uneducated minds, the guides of Zermatt clung to their prejudice and refused to make the attempt. Others however (who, perhaps, from their inexperience, might have entertained these fears), from living at a distance, took broader and truer views.

(*) Biner, I knew, was disinclined to make the attempt, even were his feelings no stronger; and I could hardly venture, I thought, without him, with a strange guide whom I should not trust and who would not trust me. I reached Zermatt over the Alphubel and Alphubel-Joch, and on Monday did the Dom; and then, thinking I was up to the work, sounded Biner on the subject of the Matterhorn. His answer was very touching to me. As far as I can recollect, it was this: "Dear Sir, I love you well, I know you are strong and sure of foot, and I should love to go with you everywhere. But my mother - if we should slip and fall, it would be bad for me and sad for her." It was unanswerable. I

turned the subject and said: "Well, will you try the Weisshorn? Do you think it can be done now, and do you think I am up to it?" "Ja wohl, Herr," sounded out with a full and round voice, very different from the previous words. So off we went and did the Weisshorn.

(∗) This settled the question in my mind that, come what might, I would try the Matterhorn, weather being good. The work on the Weisshorn is spoken of as so hard, and I found the ascent so easy, though the descent was very difficult, that I got a higher, perhaps vainer, idea of my own powers. The East side also of the Matterhorn was almost wholly free from snow. Certainly there was snow at the top and plenty of it, but I thought, as the wish will direct the thoughts, the new snow may make the final peak of the Matterhorn easier, as it made the Wetterhorn and the Mönch.

(∗) So I tried again at Biner, after doing the Weisshorn, and said to him: "Biner, will you go with me to the shoulder of the mountain (where one is obliged to change sides)? I know there is no danger as far as that and I won't ask you to go a step further." A shrug of the shoulder was at first his only answer; a reluctant look was in his face. Perhaps I ought not to have asked again. Presently he said: "I will speak again to my mother." In the afternoon, he returned with a sad and wistful look and said: "No Sir, I cannot go; my mother cried much when I spoke of it and said: 'Do not go, Franz, I entreat thee, do not go.'" I at once responded: "That settles the question; don't go on any account. You have done quite right to make the resolve."

And so it was that I found myself, on July 24 1868, without my own trusty guide, making arrangements with two men who knew nothing of me, and of whom I knew nothing, who had not been up the Matterhorn or any really difficult mountain, and of whose capacity to render help when wanted my opinion did not increase upon experience.

One great difficulty presented by the mountain was the length of the climb from Zermatt, nine or ten hours' good walking. This had been remedied by the praiseworthy enterprise of monsieur Seiler, the Landlord at Zermatt, who was then building a hut about seven hours up the mountain. This hut was to be my sleeping-place the first night, and it offered this double advantage that so I might pass and re-pass the dangerous spot where the accident happened before I had a chance of being tired, and before the snow at the top had had a chance of being melted by the mid-day heat. But the great difficulty, compared to which the rest were as nothing, was the mental difficulty, the mental struggle with the ghosts of old fears which would not be laid, but returned with increased terror the night before I left Zermatt and made that night memorable in my life.

(∗) I read the 37th Psalm ["*Fret not thyself because of the ungodly...*" - TJE] and, when I came to the verse [*verse iv - TJE*] "*Delight thou in the Lord and He shall give thee thy heart's desire / Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in Him: and He shall bring it to pass*", I shut my book and said: "I'll take that verse for my good omen, and believe I shall succeed." I went to bed, but I could not sleep[1]. What if, after all, what ***I*** thought prejudice was not prejudice but sober truth? What if I were the fool to think the mountain easy and so free from danger? I was alone and all Zermatt against me. Not a Zermatt guide would go. And then vividly would come the pictures of horrid slips and

[1] The psalm is all about the Lord dealing with the ungodly in a variety of efficient and traditional ways. Julius, as a scholar and a priest, will, no doubt, have been aware of the later verse: "*Though he* (a good man) *fall, he shall not be cast away: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.*"..... - TJE

ghastly falls and mangled corpses, and my own was one of them! And then reason came to the rescue, and I reminded myself that I should turn back if I saw danger. But away again imagination carried me with fearful avalanches down fatal rocks and hopeless slopes.

I reasoned with my fears, for I must call them fears, and showed them to be groundless, but my reason was helpless and it was not till about 1.00am, when I was worn out with exhaustion, that I sank into a troubled doze. Four o'clock came, but I was not fit to get up and I dozed on till nearly 5.00am, then had my breakfast, ordered a porter and provisions, for the porter I had ordered was not in Zermatt, and started at 6.00am.

To one in such a state, action was the best remedy and the work of breasting the steep slopes of the Hörnli was an indescribable relief: the restlessness of the previous night was soon forgotten and not another apprehension crossed my mind.

The way up to the hut was not difficult or very remarkable, though quite difficult enough in places to warn inexperienced men off; but the view at my back was marvellously grand all the way, and a sunset seen from a height of between twelve and thirteen thousand feet which commands such a view is a thing not soon to be forgotten. I reached the hut at 1.00pm and spent the afternoon clambering up and about the mountain, reconnoitring the route of the morrow and enjoying the view.

One discomfort fell to my lot which is not likely to fall to others, viz that I was bored by the presence of seven idle fellows who had just finished building the hut, and who seemed to have nothing to do but to joke and laugh at my expense in a patois that I could not understand.

(*) Sunsets and sunrises are impossible to describe, but, as nature speaks to the vexed spirit in her own calm tones, and as it realises that the heavens are declaring the glory of God, there are surely few that have not felt something like a nobler thought or a deeper peace than common. And so the peace came to me, as the sun shone upon glorious mountains piled like Ossa on Pelion[1], dwarfing the greatest giants of mountains, till they were resplendent in light of gold and silver and then of tenderest crimson. And, as I saw the tender colours and experience suggested that they were too tender to augur well for the morrow, the morrow seemed insignificant; I lived only in the present.

We turned in early, for at that height it soon gets cold. But eight people are a large number for that hut, and five in a row is decidedly close quarters; and, if anyone who reads this should ever sleep there under such circumstances, I would advise him not to get to the bottom of the inclined plane (which represents the floor and to which his guides will infallibly consign him as the post of honour), but to the top. It is all very well at first, but, gradually, the force of gravitation begins to tell and movable bodies <u>will</u> roll, so it may happen that he will wake up in the middle of the night, as I did, and find more or less of the weight of the four others upon him. The sensation is not pleasant, for it savours of a nightmare. However, for all that, I slept well and, at 4.15am after a hurried breakfast, I was off with two of these men who had been building the hut and were now to act as guides. They had made an ineffectual attempt the previous year and they had no expectation that we should get to the top, and took little trouble to conceal their thoughts.

[1] For those, like me, who do not know their Ossa from their Pelion, Horace puts Pelion on top of Olympus and Virgil puts Olympus on top of Ossa on top of Pelion - thank you ODQ. Cassells, following Greek mythology, puts Pelion (1548m – 5078ft) on Ossa (1978m – 6488ft) and then on Olympus (2427m – 7961ft). Please take your pick - TJE

[Bateman adds the following paragraph which I have failed to find elsewhere] "*The weather was bright, but an ominous cloud, ominous, yet lovely as the loveliest, appeared in the east, piled far away above Monte Rosa. It seemed like a great flat-roofed temple on many pillars, with a huge pile above, and from its depths came forth ever and anon flashes of lightning. Was it the anger of the clouds at our audacity? Were they about to sweep us from the mountains? Or was it only the playfulness of summer? A few hours would decide. The sun rose, and as its beams smote upon the pillars, the cloud waned and died. Of that sunrise and that sunset I think with as much real pleasure as of anything in the expedition.*"

At first our work was easy enough: a few corners to turn, ledges on which to balance oneself, all at an easy slope, then a few steps to cut in the ice. In two hours we were at the foot of the final peak.

Two objects of interest were, however, in this part. One is the wonderful "arête" or ridge that runs down to the Hörnli, one of the most striking ridges I have ever seen. It is broken into the most wild and fantastic forms, sometimes solid as massive buttresses, at others wild and pinnacled and shattered into fragments tottering to their fall. The other object of interest was the perpetual fall of stone avalanches which, when on a large scale, are some of the grandest and most terrible things in Nature. I saw many of them that day and they made the very mountain tremble.

This is one great danger of the East side of the mountain. That smooth slope which seems so easy to ascend is like a "glacis", perpetually swept by the enemy's shot. [Bateman adds:] "*It surprised me much that I had never heard of this, and also that I saw so little of the glaze of ice on rock, which was supposed to be the chief danger. But in this respect, of course, the mountain varies from year to year On account of avalanches*." On this account, we kept always as near the ridge as possible till we came to the shoulder. From this point, we turned over to the Northern side for the rest of the ascent, working round one or two steep crags by easy slopes of hard snow intermingled with projecting rock, till we came to a more formidable barrier of steep rock which runs right across the mountain. This is undoubtedly the chief difficulty on this side, but I cannot say it struck me as anything very remarkable. The hand-holds and foot-holds were fair, and I fancy I have climbed as bad cliffs alone in Cumberland.

Beyond this, the slope grew less steep, rocks gradually disappeared and, at last, an unbroken snow-slope led us to the top at 8.45am. The top was a ridge of frozen snow, narrowed to a knife-edge in parts and, in places, formed into a lovely cornice over the Southern side. Two eminences on this ridge vie with each other for the credit of being the true summit.

(*) I turned to enjoy the marvellous view, and really I know of no view at all its equal. I had had ample opportunity to enjoy it as we came up, for the men moved very slowly; those times were rich to me in enjoyment. And now, as we were at the top and the whole scene burst on our view with never a cloud to hide it in the early morning light, it was almost more than the capacity of my enjoyment was equal to. Mont Blanc, with its attendant aiguilles, ever magnificent; some way to the left, the Grivola and Grand Paradis - the Grivola as marked as ever by the curved arête which had moved my ambition last year; the Grand Combin between us and the Mont Blanc range; all the Zermatt mountains clear and cloudless, and Monte Rosa trying its best to look respectable on this side: but beyond, towards Italy, cloud, and towards the Tyrol, cloud. The glorious peaks of the Mischabel-Hörner as striking as ever, and then, most lovely of lovely things, the whole Bernese Oberland from the Jungfrau to the Galenstock and, I think, the Tödi, set as in a picture between the Mischabel and the Weisshorn, and covered with that exquisite blue atmosphere of distance which gives so incalculable a

pleasure. The Weisshorn far grander than from the Riffel and its neighbourhood, with a great rocky buttress running down to Zinal, which gives an amazing force to it. That most astonishing of all astonishing peaks, the Rothhorn, looking still more marvellous and unearthly. And, beyond and over these, the mass of the Blümlis Alp and Altels, etc.; and, more to the West, the great masses of glacier from the Wildstrubel, Wildhorn and Diablerets. But the most striking to me of all the peaks was the Dent Blanche, close by, a peak almost as grand and as white as the Weisshorn seen from the Eggischhorn. At our feet lay Zermatt, its hotels and Church plainly visible.

(*) I think my first impressions, after the first wild delight of finding myself at the top, were those of caution and doubt whispered as by an enemy -yes, but you are not safe yet. But never came there a moment's fear or apprehension. A passing shudder there was as I saw the place where they fell and the hopelessness of arresting such a fall.

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I interpolate the following for interest's sake - TJE

Julius' first version of the two preceding paragraphs reads as follows:

"It is a hopeless task to try to describe a mountain panorama. I can only say that it was in many respects the most wonderful view I ever saw. East and West and North and South the mountain world was beneath our feet. There were mountains of all kinds and shapes and sizes, there were domes of snow and pyramids of rock, there were solid masses with leagues and leagues of foundations, and there was at least one mountain that seemed almost perpendicular on one side and rather more than perpendicular on the other - mountains near and mountains far away, snow varying in colour from the purest white to a yellowish pink in the distance, there were valleys of snow and glacier, and valleys of rocks, and valleys of pasture land. The most lavish abundance and variety there was, and we had a perfect day for our view."

A look at a map will testify to the accuracy of the interpolated panorama (although I calculate that he would not have been able to see the Rothhorn). I give a few heights (in feet), for interest and taken from my copy of Sir Charles Elliott's 1896 Times Atlas: Matterhorn - 14,705; Weisshorn - 14,803; Mont Blanc - 15,781; Dent Blanche - 14,317; Jungfrau - 13,672. The highest peak in the Mischabel-Hörner range is the Taschhorn - 14,758. The Tödi, about which Julius hesitates, is the start of the Tödi "Chain" which runs North-East away from the Galenstock where the Rhône glacier comes down and the Rhône starts. The heights have in modern times been recalculated (The Matterhorn is, actually, 14,688 feet and Mont Blanc 15,772 feet).

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The narrative resumes:

But my guides were impatient to descend, for they had insisted on our leaving our ice-axes below the final peak. I think they now began to realise their mistake, for we had to descend a slope of snow lying one and a half foot thick upon rock at an angle of about forty-five degrees and increasing in steepness till it ended in an absolute precipice; and we had but one axe to stop the fall of all three if any one should slip, while full on our recollection flashed the memory of what happened in the first descent. Well for us was

it that it was early in the day, and we ourselves fresh and strong and in capital condition. There are some positions in which the sense of danger is the best security against it. And I never wish for a stronger stimulant than the certainty that my guide will not hold me if I slip. I had this full certainty on the present occasion, for the slope is in parts so smooth that it is very difficult for the most prehensile feet to gain a good grip, and prehensile power was not one of the few accomplishments of my guides. However, the crust of frozen snow (still frozen at that early hour) gave something of the hold to the hands that the feet wanted. And at length and after many delays and many ridiculous exhibitions of incapacity, we stood at the foot of the peak, and all danger might be said to be at an end.

Then we discarded the rope, ran down the sides as best we might, bringing small avalanches of stones in our train, stopped to take a last meal at the hut, and then started off again on our descent. Most inferior guides have a great notion of frequent eating and drinking and, as two hours was the very outside that my companions could exist without recruiting famished nature, I soon grew wearied of them and, breaking from them, reached Zermatt at 4.30pm happily long before I was expected and in twelve hours from the start of the morning. There I learnt that all Zermatt had discovered us that morning at the top and turned out to look at us, that breakfast had been neglected, and that some people had indulged in such antics as savoured strongly of insanity. At dinner that evening, a most tasteful bouquet was sent to me by madame Seiler and a bottle of champagne from monsieur Seiler while a discharge of improvised cannon completed the absurdity.

The next section was crossed out by Julius:

“One of the most astonishing and, I must add, humiliating things that happens to the climber is the nature of remarks that are made to him upon climbing. A gentleman said to me that afternoon: “Have ***you*** been up the Matterhorn? Well, then, I suppose you will try Mont Blanc?” So marvellously does the belief still cling to the English mind that Mont Blanc is the hardest, instead of one of the easiest, of mountains.

“I hope no-one who reads these pages will follow this gentleman’s[1] advice and take his preliminary training for Mont Blanc up and down the Matterhorn. If that ever should be done, it needs little foresight to see that an accident as fatal and perhaps as appalling will again enshroud that mountain, as it avenges the dishonour done to its name.[2]

“If it be attempted, it should be attempted by men who have won their experience and proved their powers on many a crag and many an ice slope. For them there is, I believe, no great danger. And there is an irresistible attraction.”

The narrative resumes and concludes:

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[1] Julius wrote “clergyman” and deleted it, substituting “gentleman”.....

[2] I, in my ignorance, don’t know what the German name means. Nor have I found any definition in the various dictionaries I have consulted. ‘Cervino’ (the Italian name is ‘Monte Cervino’) is an adjective meaning ‘Deer-like’. The French name ‘Mont Cervin’ is simply taken from the Italian and has no meaning, beyond being allusively evocative (a *cerf*, unlike a *chamois*, is not normally a mountain-going animal.) - TJE

So long as the Matterhorn retains its marvellous outline and those subtle curves which made Ruskin call it “a rearing horse of rock”, so long will men love it and yearn after it and count it the King of mountains.

THE FATAL ACCIDENT ON THE SCHRECKHORN (1869)

A correspondent[1] writes from Grindelwald on Monday last:

On the 26th July, Mr Elliott started from Grindelwald to ascend the Schreckhorn, usually considered the second most difficult mountain in Switzerland. Mr Elliott had with him a porter from Zermatt, and another Zermatt man, Binar, his own guide, who had accompanied him in almost all his ascents. In this guide, Binar, Mr Elliott had the greatest, and, it would appear, the most well-deserved confidence; and, in recording in Binar's book his opinion of Binar's conduct during the last trip with him, there is literally hardly an epithet of praise which Mr Elliott has not employed. He especially describes instances in which Binar had succeeded when the local guides had failed or despaired of success.

The party were to pass the night in the cave at Kastenstein. They were accompanied by the Revd P Phipps who had with him Baumann, the Grindelwald guide, and who had intended to leave them the next morning and to cross the Strahleck. The morning of the 27th, however, was so fine that both parties determined to ascend the Schreckhorn, Mr Phipps going separately with his guide so as to leave Mr Elliott free to ascend at his own rapid rate.

The two parties did not follow precisely the same line: at nine o'clock they were within hailing distance, although separated by about a quarter of an hour's climb. The first party (Mr Elliott's) had at this moment reached the end of the snow, and only had before them about half an hour's climb to ascend the last rocks. The second party was roped; Mr Elliott's was not. All the difficulties had been overcome; the two parties had jodelled to each other in congratulation and the first party prepared to pass from the snow to the rocks. The porter who had been leading and cutting the steps now passed on to the rocks, but called out that he was not firm. At that moment, Mr Elliott, who was next behind him, jumped on to the rocks, fell and began to glissade down the long snow slope that falls, at a tremendous depth below, on to the Lauter-Aar glacier. Binar succeeded in catching Mr Elliott by the arm, but it slipped through his grasp. A few yards further on, Mr Elliott lost his ice-axe. He appeared to be lying on his left side and trying to stop himself by his arms. And so, swiftly but calmly, he glided from his friends into eternity. It was difficult to believe that that swift and unbroken sweep down the snow was death; but it was death and, for a mountaineer and one ever ready to leave this life, a death to be envied: without a cry or sound he passed away.

The guides declared with truth that it was impossible to descend the slope and that nothing remained but to return to Grindelwald and to send a party round by another route to the spot on the glacier where the body was presumed to be lying. Before leaving the place, Baumann was lowered, as far as the ropes of the party would allow, to shout and see if he could obtain either an answer or a view of the body if it had lodged anywhere. The attempt was useless. (We should remark that this slope is specially mentioned in Ball's Alpine Guide as dangerous and sending down avalanches on the least disturbance - a character, it will be seen by what occurred later, it fully deserved.)

The descent was difficult from the state of the snow, and it took nearly nine hours for the two parties, now joined, to reach Grindelwald. Herr Bohner, of the Adler Hotel, at once sent off six of the best guides with three days' provisions to cross by the upper Grindelwald glacier to the Lauter-Aar glacier and to recover the body.

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[1] Taken from the Annals of the Alpine Club but I have found that it was given a wider circulation.

Early the next morning, another party of four, including the guides present at the accident, followed in their traces. In eighteen hours this last party returned having reached the spot where the body must have fallen, as marked by the furrow made in the slope above; but, as they found no trace of the guides on the glacier or at the cave, it was evident that the first expedition had succeeded in recovering the body and were engaged in bringing it by some easier route to Grindelwald. At last, fifty four hours after the party of six guides had started and late at night, their lights were seen coming down the rocks by the side of the lower glacier. They had succeeded in finding the body at once. They had taken with them everything necessary for its transport and had come from the Lauter-Aar glacier by the Strahleck pass.

The Pastor of Grindelwald [*one Gustav König - TJE*] had kindly prepared a room in his house for the reception of the body, and it was placed there. It had sustained little injury, but it was evident that death must have been instantaneous. The spot where it had fallen had been quickly found, but the ice there was deeply crevassed and it had been difficult to remove it. No sooner had the party withdrawn it to a more secure place than an avalanche of rocks and snow came down the slope on to the spot where it had lain.

The funeral took place on the afternoon of the 30th July. Mr Elliott's companion and his guide were the chief mourners, and the coffin was borne by the guides who had recovered the body. A very large number of visitors and guides attended, and the ceremony was most solemn and impressive. The Grand Duchess of Baden kindly sent a bouquet of Alpine roses, gathered by herself, to place in the coffin; and the Pastor of the village placed his Church at the disposal of the English Chaplain [Revd Cripps] who performed the service. Before leaving the Church, the Pastor delivered an address in German to his parishioners, calling on them for their sympathy, and showing them the Prayer Book found on the body with so many passages underlined as a proof of the spirit in which Mr Elliott had loved and sought their mountains.

To Herr Bohner's promptitude and to the zeal of the guides sent out must be ascribed the recovery of the body. No blame attaches to the guides that accompanied the ascent, and those who believe that the rope should always be employed must remember that, in this case, if Mr Elliott had allowed himself to be roped, two more lives would almost inevitably have been lost.

The inscription on the Memorial Stone, against the South-East Church wall reads:

GEWIDMET
DEM THEUREN UND GESEGNETEN ANDENKEN
VON
JULIUS MARSHALL ELLIOTT
PFARRER AN DER SANCT MARIENKIRCHE ZU BRIGHTON

GEB. DEN 24ten OCT 1841.
VERUNGLUCKT DURCH STURZ VOM SCHRECKHORN
DEN 27ten JULI 1869.

VOR SEINEM WEGNEMEN HAT ER ZEUGNISS GEHABT.
DASS ER GOTT GEFALLEN HABE
UND WARD NICHT ERFUNDEN.DARUM DAS IHN GOTT
WEGNAHM.BEI CHRISTO ZU SEIN.
WELCHES AUCH VIEL BESSER IST.

In English, this reads:

DEDICATED

TO THE CHERISHED AND BLESSED MEMORY
OF
JULIUS MARSHALL ELLIOTT

BORN ON 24 OCTOBER 1841
HE HAD AN ACCIDENT FALLING ON THE SCHRECKHORN
ON 27 JULY 1869

BEFORE BEING TAKEN AWAY HE HAD WITNESS
THAT HE HAD PLEASED GOD
AND WAS NOT FOUND WANTING. THEREFORE GOD TOOK
HIM AWAY TO BE WITH CHRIST
WHICH IS MUCH BETTER[1]

The above translation of this seems to have given trouble in the mid-1970s when CEME (my father – TJE) saw to the restoration of the lettering and the correcting of the spelling of Julius' surname. CEME, as RAH (my sister – TJE) who deciphered the text will remember, sought help via Dick Swettenham from Henk Wijsman's secretary.

My late wife and a German scholar, largely confirms this Wijsman / Swettenham version and has corrected where it is poorly punctuated and slightly archaic text.

[1] A reference to St Paul's epistle to the Philippians 1:23. The allusion to suicide contained in this text is, I would think, unintentional - TJE

[Fergus Fleming writes as follows on pp.299/300 of his book[1]*, but regrettably makes the observations immediately after a mention of an event in 1887, thus distorting not only the chronology, but the feat itself. I wrote to him about this, but he didn't (bother to?) reply.]*

> Strolling through Zermatt one evening, the French writer and artist Théophile Gautier saw a British party returning from the hill. It impressed him immensely:

> He wrote: "A tall young man, strong and thin, dressed in brown corduroy, with gaiters up to the knees, a soft felt hat pulled down over his eyes, looking a perfect gentleman in spite of the unavoidable carelessness of his clothes. He was a member of the Alpine Club and had just successfully ascended the Matterhorn ... His guides were walking behind him with their ropes coiled round their shoulders, holding their axes, their iron-spiked poles and all that was required to attack so wild a peak. These three resolute sunburnt faces were resplendent with the joy of their triumph over great difficulties ... The guides entered the hotel and the Englishman remained for a few moments on its threshold, leaning against the wall with complete unconcern, looking perfectly carefree, just as if he were coming from his club in Pall Mall ... While watching this handsome youth, probably rich and certainly used to comfort and refinement, who had just been risking his life with complete indifference in a useless and dangerous enterprise, we thought of the resistless passion which drives a few men to undertake terrific scrambles. No example can deter them. When going up towards the Matterhorn, this young man had certainly seen the graves of his three countrymen [*in fact, only two, Douglas Hadow, young (19) and very inexperienced, and Lord Francis Douglas were English; Croz, I think, was Swiss - TJE*] in the Zermatt churchyard."

> The young man in question was one Revd J. M. Elliott. He fell 1,000 feet to his death on the Schreckhorn the following year. Three years later his guide, J. M. Lochmatter, was killed on the Dent Blanche. Gautier supplied an epitaph for Elliott, Lochmatter and every other Alpine climber: "A peak can exercise the same irresistible power of attraction as an abyss." <

[1] Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps by Fergus Fleming (March 2002) – Grove Press

EDWARD WHYMPER'S VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE MATTERHORN

"Not one of the principal peaks of the Alps were hidden. I see them clearly now - the great inner circles of giants, backed by the ranges, chains and massifs. First came the Dent Blanche, hoary and grand; the Gabelhorn and pointed Rothorn; and then the peerless Weisshorn; the towering Mischabelhorn, flanked by the Allaleinhorn, Strahihorn and Rimpfischhorn; then Monte Rosa - with its many Spitzes - the Lyskamm and the Breithorn. Behind were the Bernese Oberland, governed by the Finsteraarhorn; the Simplon and St. Gotthard groups; the Disgrazia and the Orteler. Towards the south we looked down to Chivasso on the plain of Piedmont, and far beyond. The Viso - one hundred miles away - seemed close upon us; the Maritime Alps - one hundred and thirty miles distant were free from haze. Then came my first love - the Pelvoux; the Écrins and the Meije; the clusters of the Graians; and lastly, in the west, gorgeous in the full sunlight, rose the monarch of all - Mont Blanc. Ten thousand feet below us were the green fields of Zermatt, dotted with chalets, from which blue smoke rose lazily. Eight thousand feet below, on the other side, were the pastures of Breuil. There were forests black and gloomy, and meadows bright and lively; bounding waterfalls and tranquil lakes; fertile lands and savage wastes; sunny plains and frigid plateaux. There were the most rugged forms, and the most graceful outlines - bold, perpendicular cliffs, and gentle, undulating slopes; rocky mountains and snowy mountains, sombre and solemn, or glittering and white, with walls - turrets - pinnacles - pyramids - domes - cones - and spires! There was every combination that the world can give, and every contrast that the heart could desire."

"Such a sight might be visible one day in a hundred, Whymper reckoned. They stared at it for a long hour before starting on the descent." – Fleming.