

OLD HOVE RECORD

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THE GRAVE OF CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT

(see story inside)

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in 1836, incorporating a good deal of the twelfth century one.

But to come to the present. The Old Church, Hove, is a homely, friendly church. We are very lucky that it is also a full church. Hove is largely residential. Many of its folk are retired, and the proportion of older ones is high. They, having been well brought up, have regularly worshipped the Lord their God for forty, fifty, sixty or more years; and even I couldn't keep them away. The only things that could do that are arthritis and death.

This makes problems—happy problems—in the holiday season. The inland parson may look forward to a rather quieter time in that part of the year. He may even be able to take a well-earned rest himself. But not the seaside parson. In the holiday season we get to the stage of "Standing room only", and sometimes even, "House full". It is a joy to welcome a number who come year after year. We call them "almost parishioners". If any are listening they can be assured of a hearty welcome in 1957; and if any of you who haven't been before are coming to Hove for your Holidays this year, we shall be most happy to give you a welcome too.

We have a churchyard of seven acres, and on the south in it, near the priest's door, is the tomb of Charlotte Elliott, who wrote "Just as I am" and many other hymns. (See cover and below, Ed.) On the other side of the path is the tombstone of Sir George Everest. Those of you who saw the film "The Conquest of Everest" will have seen both the church and this tombstone in the opening shots. He was Surveyor-General in India when the mountain was first mapped and gave his name to it.

One very happy and encouraging result of having a congregation which tends to be rather older than the average is the number of adults who come forward to be prepared for Confirmation. In the past three years nearly fifty people over forty years of age have been so presented,—a number of them over seventy, and indeed, I had the pleasure and privilege of preparing a very charming and sprightly old lady of ninety one. She was duly confirmed and still is a regular communicant. People in these days talk about empty churches and the decay of religion. About the first, luckily, we don't know. It is undoubtedly true that a growing number of older people, who have for one reason or another passed the normal age of Confirmation, desire to be confirmed. This fact, and their proved staunchness after

Confirmation, gives, I believe (and I know other clergy will bear me out) a very fair hope of a revival of religion. Be that as it may, it is an encouraging and happy task to prepare them. If some of you who hear me and are beyond adolescence, have been thinking about being confirmed, or what other means brings you to full membership of your own branch of Christ's Church, don't hesitate another minute. Every diocese arranges confirmations for adults only. Go and see your own parson about it at once. All experience shows how rewarding it is.

Alan Melville, I think, is rather over diffident about the regularity of his attendance; but I can vouch that there are very few Sundays when he is not there, and then, I have no doubt, there is a good cause. I don't know if he thinks of us as "friends" or "Neighbours". I hope both. I try not to miss any of his appearances on the B.B.C. I can always get my own back on Sunday!

One last word—I believe passionately in my job and I love every minute of it.

OUR COVER PICTURE

Charlotte Elliott, whose tomb is by the 'clergy' door on the south side outside the chancel, was born to Charles and Eling Elliott on March 16th, 1789. For most of her adult life, e.g. from her early 30's, she was an invalid, not always confined to bed but unable to move freely about.

During the summer months many of her days were spent in a summer house facing the sea, on the site of which now stands the Grand Hotel, and much of her work was composed there.

She had written, but never published, a number of hymns from time to time. In 1834 she wrote, "My God, my Father, while I stray," and in 1836, "Christian, seek not yet repose." In the summer of 1841, while her family were absent on a festive occasion and she rested in the summer-house, she wrote the best known of her hymns, "Just as I am." When her people returned, she showed this to her brother, and he decided that it, and the others, should see the light of day. In consequence, she issued an *Invalids' Hymn Book* that first gave publicity to her work.

She died on September 22nd, 1871. Although she had lived all her life in Brighton, she was buried in the family grave in Hove Old Churchyard.