

A SHORT HISTORY OF ST MARY'S HALL

1836 - 1992

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Henry Venn Elliott, 1792-1865, Founder of St Mary's Hall



The original school building, 1836

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the growth of the professional middle classes in England and, at the same time, the tradition of very large Victorian families became established. Amongst the well-to-do it was customary for girls to be educated, to the limited extent then considered necessary, at home by a Governess but very many were not able to afford this alternative to the new Primary and Secondary Schools being set up by the churches and by local authorities, which were usually not considered suitable for the children of professional people.

This need for an affordable education for the new middle class was met in part by the foundation of a large number of charitable schools. There was a great deal of wealth in the country at this period in our history and the consciences of the wealthy prompted them to give generously to charity. Most of the charitable schools were founded for a specific purpose, usually for the sons and daughters of the clergy or for the children of officers of the Navy and Army.

Nearly all the charitable schools of this time owed their foundation to people of outstanding drive and initiative, who saw the need for the particular charity and who had the vision and ability to put the dream into reality. Such a man was the Reverend Henry Venn Elliott, the founder of St Mary's Hall, who gave generously of his time and personal fortune. His service to this school and that of his family are given in greater detail in Chapter 2.

We do not know when he first appreciated the need for a school for the daughters of poor Clergy in Brighton but in 1832 he issued the first prospectus soliciting donations and the next year went to visit the Clergy Daughters' School at Casterton, the foundation of his Cambridge friend, the Reverend W. Carus Wilson. Carus Wilson is described as a clergyman of generous impulses, furious energy and overbearing temperament. Casterton was not a very happy place, being in one of the bleakest parts of the United Kingdom and run with grim Calvinism by its founder. Charlotte Brontë describes life at the School in "Jane Eyre" and her assessment was later confirmed by Mrs Gaskell in her life of Charlotte Brontë.

Henry Venn Elliott must have seen a different side of Casterton for he wrote about the place "I would rather have built this school and church than Blenheim or Burleigh. I offered up a little prayer that the Brighton School might receive a similar blessing . . ." He was courting his future wife at the time and in all likelihood was in the mood to see only that which was pleasing to him!

There was a good response to the prospectus, land was given by the Marquess of Bristol (the first land offered by the Marquess was the plot where St Mark's now stands. Mr Elliott refused it because it was opposite the mews) and the architect, George Basevi, made a gift of the plans of the building. Basevi was architect of the FitzWilliam Museum, Cambridge, lived in Brighton and had met Mr Elliott during his travels in Greece.

On 21st April 1834 the foundation stone was laid by Lady Augustina Seymour, Lord Bristol's daughter. A few friends were there together with the contractor, Mr Doubleday and his family and the workmen. We do not know where the stone is; it was probably covered by the rendering and in any case there is no record of any inscription on it. Mr Elliott says: "They all took off their caps, and I read from the Prayer Book a few collects. Psalm 121 followed; and that was all; and then we returned to our respective homes."

There was a hurricane on 20th November 1835 and the school suffered some damage. Some alterations were also necessary and the original contract price of £3513 rose to £4250. The building was to have been finished in November 1834 but was delayed because of the repairs and alterations and was finally opened on 1st August 1836, although the building was not even then quite ready.

The words of Mrs Elliott give a vivid account of the occasion:- "We swallowed a little dinner as quickly as might be, loaded a fly with linen and provisions, and went up. You may think how our hearts beat. Oh! if you could but have seen us, and been with us, in the pretty little mullion windowed room over the entrance. (The Headmistress' Study then and still so today). 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



The Cloisters, 1880 or earlier (as school uniform is still being worn).

emotions! It was the beginning of the accomplishment of hopes so long cherished, the dawn of a day that should go on in increasing brightness." The party at tea was probably composed of the Founder, Mrs Elliott, Miss Tomkinson, the Lady Superintendent and Mary Bryan, the first pupil. Two other pupils were entered on that first day, Jane Cory and her sister Charlotte but we don't know whether they had tea or not!

This all sounds very pleasant but pause for a moment to consider what life was like in those days. How did Mary Bryan get to the school? We know that her home was a village near Chepstow and can assume that she came by coach via London. There were no trains of course but we know, for instance, that there were 34 coaches daily between London and Brighton. The journey took 6 hours and cost 15/- (75p); this was 50% more than the average agricultural worker's weekly wage!

By now there was a good countrywide network of metalled roads - the turnpike roads: thousands of horses were needed to serve the London to Brighton route alone. When at last they reached Brighton they would hire a fly (a small horse drawn carriage) to take them to the school. It is recorded that some arrived by sea, disembarking over the beach or at the Chain Pier.

It was August when the school opened and the evenings were long but there was no electricity and no gas. The only light was from lamps or candles and needless to say there was no hot water in the dormitories nor any heating apart from a few open fires in some rooms. The school did have its own drainage system in the form of one or more cess pits, the emptying of which one understands was somewhat haphazard - the main sewer in Brighton was not constructed until 1871 - 4.

The houses of the very rich contained a few water closets but there would not have been any in the school. We do not know what the arrangements were for getting rid of the day and night soil to the cess pits; there were probably a few sluice points in the School but - whatever the procedure was, it could not have been very pleasant or hygienic.

Preventive medicine had made little progress and as a result disease was rife. One in five of the population was destined to contract tuberculosis and people regularly died of common diseases such as scarlet fever, whooping cough, cholera and typhoid - vaccination against small-pox was only just

being generally introduced although Jenner had made his breakthrough in 1796.

In many hospital and charity schools children slept two to a bed, to save space and for warmth, but as far as is known each girl in St Mary's Hall had her own bed right from the beginning though they must have been very much crowded together at times. The school was built for 100 girls and this remained the maximum complement until the end of the Great War 1914 - 18.

The aim of the school was to prepare the daughters of the Poor Clergy as Governesses. Mr Elliott had some misgiving about Brighton as a suitable place for his school but considered this was outweighed by it being a better place than Cowan Bridge for procuring donations and subscriptions and he also reasoned that:

- 1 It was a healthy place with good air and sea bathing.
- 2 The best masters (sic) were available on easy terms and therefore a higher style of education and accomplishments.
- 3 It was within easy reach of religious instruction and
- 4 Brighton being a social centre this could help the young governesses to obtain employment when the time came."

Mr Elliott could not perhaps foresee the extent to which, with the coming of the railways in the 1840's, Brighton would develop as a communications centre on the south coast. This became very important as the years went by and remains so today, but the school's situation led to its closure in 1940. It very nearly remained closed for good and all, for a variety of reasons which will be given in a later chapter but luckily, as has always happened in our history, there were some people who would not give in and the Phoenix arose from the ashes or, perhaps one should say, from requisitioning by the War Department.

Chapter 2 - The Founder and the Elliott Family

Henry Venn Elliott was the eldest son of the second marriage of his father, Charles Elliott, to Eling, daughter of the Reverend Henry Venn.

The Family home was then Grove House in Clapham and Charles Elliott was one of England's leading furniture makers, being included in 1803 in Sheraton's list of Master Cabinet Makers. When he died in 1832 he left a fortune of nearly half a million pounds, having started from nothing.

The Elliotts belonged to what was known as the Clapham Sect and Charles Elliott was on the committee of the Church Missionary Society and its chairman from 1808 - 1810.

By 1820 the family was, however, living mainly in fashionable Brighton in a house called Westfield Lodge which occupied the site on which the Metropole Hotel now stands. They were living here temporarily while their own house, No 27 Brunswick Square, was being built. After his marriage, the founder also bought a house in Brunswick Square, No 35.

Henry Venn, who was born on 17th January 1792, was sent to school under a Mr Elwell of Hammersmith. It is recorded that the institution was intensely religious and also harsh and forbidding. His biographer felt that 'Henry Elliott had seen religion on its other side' but fortunately he seems to have had the character to have risen above this experience and indeed benefited from it. When he was 17 he was sent to the Reverend Jowett at Little Dunham, Norfolk, where he enjoyed himself, working hard and gaining entry to Trinity, Cambridge in October 1810.

At Cambridge he continued to do well and gained a Trinity Scholarship. He disliked Mathematics, however, and even at one time thought of transferring to Oxford! Whilst at University he used to teach in Sunday schools in the area, making a life time friend of John Babington. In 1816 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity but admits that he had then lost his vocation for Holy Orders, considering himself unworthy.

In July 1817, Henry Elliott embarked on foreign travels and these were to last until his return to England in August 1820. He visited France, Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Holy Land - his experiences are described in detail by his biographer but it does seem from his own letters and from other sources, that he had the gift of getting on well with all sorts of people, no matter what their standing or religious background. He seemed particularly taken with the monks of St Bernard and their "clever, friendly dogs" who "received no small share of caresses."

He returned to Cambridge and after visiting his brother Edward, who had already become a curate, his vocation returned and he was ordained Deacon on 2nd November 1823 by the Bishop of Ely. He spent two unhappy and unrewarding years as a curate himself before returning to Cambridge yet again.

His family had by this time moved to Brighton and in 1826 Charles Elliott financed the building of St Mary's in St James Street (now Rock Gardens) for his son. The church was finally completed and consecrated on 18th January 1827. Here Henry Venn Elliott remained as Vicar for thirty years, the rest of his life.

Henry Venn Elliott, was and always had been, a staunch evangelical. It is therefore extremely surprising to learn that the Reverend J H Newman (later Cardinal Newman) preached twice in St Mary's in 1829 as did Professor Pusey, leader of the Oxford Movement, in the 1830s. He remained friends with Pusey for the rest of his life but understandably did not maintain contact with Newman for, like many of his generation, he mistrusted and feared the intentions of 'the Romans', as once indeed had Newman himself.

On 31st October 1833, he married Julia Marshall of Ulleswater and they had five children, Henry Venn, Charles Alfred, Effe, Blanche and Julius.

All this time the planning and fund raising for St Mary's Hall was going on and in 1834 the foundation stone was laid. Writing of this occasion his biographer refers to the school as 'an establishment which became henceforth one great object of his life'.



The Arbor in which Miss Charlotte Elliott composed her hymns. About 1882 as although school uniform had been discontinued some items are still being worn.

In September 1840 he reveals a conversation with a parishioner which throws an interesting light on his character. He was asked 'what is the precise difference between you and Dr Pusey?' Taken off hand, he replied: 'Dr Pusey would get his religion from the church and I mine from the Bible.' He records that he told Pusey of this and that Pusey 'did not dispute the fairness of it.'

Julia Elliott died in November 1841, of scarlet fever, shortly after giving birth to Julius. Among the many letters of sympathy was a long letter from Dr Pusey signed 'your very faithful friend.' To add to Mr Elliott's grief his son Harry (Henry Venn) was killed in an accidental fall in May 1848.

Since the opening in 1836, Mr Elliott had been devoting a great deal of time and energy to the school and this is enlarged upon in a later chapter. In 1849, however, St Mark's was consecrated and he says: 'this was a great day in my life on which the Lord granted me to see the top stone thus put to St Mary's Hall.' The carcass of the church had been given by Lord Bristol but there were many difficulties with the Church Commissioners during its construction and large sums of money were undoubtedly found by Mr Elliott to help pay for it all. Lord Bristol wished him to come to St Mark's but he declined, feeling it his duty to remain at St Mary's.

The 1850s show him still working hard at the school; in 1852 he wrote 35 letters after interviews of prospective pupils and admitted that he was 'pen-weary' afterwards. In 1837 also he set the Divinity Exam Papers for the school - 39 sets! The first Remington typewriters were not placed on the market until 1874 so one can imagine the amount of work involved.

In 1860 he describes himself as in good health but two years later he was suffering from overwork and had further health problems in 1863. He last visited St Mary's Hall on 3rd January 1865 and died on the 24th January.

His biography was written in 1868 and the Victorians tended to eulogize rather than criticise in any way. There is no doubting that Henry Elliott was a strong character and indeed he ran St Mary's Hall practically single-handed from 1836 until his death, 28 years later. There were other Trustees but

apparently they didn't do anything very much and they didn't have any formal meetings.

It is, however, quite easy to read between the lines of all the available records. He comes across strongly as a very kind and tolerant man time and time again; he made friends and kept them even if he and they had different views.

It is said that the children were sometimes naughty on purpose, hoping to attract Mr Elliott's attention and to have a word with him. He often had several pupils to tea with him at his house in Brunswick Square. After tea he would devote himself to their amusement, playing games with the younger ones, reading to the older ones, and "showing his curiosities and pictures."

Clearly he had enormous energy and worked very hard, perhaps too hard; he knew that he did and criticised himself for it towards the end of his life.

He began a tradition of service by the Elliott family to St Mary's Hall as Trustees and Governors. A list of this service is given below and very impressive it is. Mr C.E.M. Elliott, the grandson of the founder, became a Governor before the 1939 - 1945 war, escaped wounded from Dunkirk and then contributed largely to the re-opening of the school, eventually serving for many years as Chairman of Governors. His eldest son, Mr Anthony C. R. Elliott became a Governor in 1967 and is today Chairman of the Board.

Elliott Family - Service to St Mary's Hall

Reverend H.V. Elliott	1836 - 1865
Reverend E.B. Elliott	1836 - 1874
Sir Charles A. Elliott K.C.S.I.	1895 - 1919
Reverend H.V. Elliott	1911 - 1922
Mrs H.V. Elliott	1913 - 1920
Colonel A.C. Elliott	1924 - 1952
Mr C.E.M. Elliott	1937 - 1979
Mrs R. V. Broadley	1950 - 1982
Sir Claude Elliott	1958 - 1964
Mr R. D. Broadley	1964 - 1988
Mr A. C. R. Elliott	1967 - Date
Mr Timothy Elliott	1979 - Date

Chapter 3 - A Limited Education 1836 - 1884

For nearly 50 years the education given at St Mary's Hall was indeed limited. The aim was to prepare young ladies for careers as Governesses and this required only a limited curriculum for they were going to teach other young women. In 1841, for fees of £20 a year, the girls were taught 'the usual branches of English and French education.' Music was £3 a year extra and drawing £4. Needless to say Divinity also featured largely in the curriculum.

Uniform was provided by the school and included Frocks, Tippets (capotes for covering the shoulders), Cloaks, Shawls and Bonnets. Each child had to bring with her a Bible and a Prayer Book and:

- A new umbrella
- Work Bag and sewing implements
- Combs, brushes and gloves
- 6 Day Shifts
- 4 Night Shifts
- 3 Night Caps
- 2 Flannel Petticoats
- 3 White upper ditto
- 1 Stuff Petticoat
- 2 Pockets
- 8 Pocket Handkerchiefs
- 8 Pairs White Cotton Stockings
- 4 Pairs of Lamb's Wool Stockings
- 4 Brown Holland Pinafores
- 2 Short Coloured Dressing Gowns
- 1 Flannel ditto
- 2 Pairs Shoes
- 1 Pair Thick Shoes or Boots
- A Silver Dessert Spoon, Teaspoon and Fork, which will be returned

We know little of Miss Tomkinson, the first Lady Superintendent, though she served the school for 21 years and one can only assume that Mr Elliott

would not have tolerated anyone incompetent or unsatisfactory in any way - and certainly not for this length of time. He in fact ran the school himself for in the Spring of 1836 he had been authorised by the other Trustees 'to be responsible for the setting up and running of the school.'

By the 1st June 1837 the school had 35 children, a Lady Superintendent, 5 other Governesses, 6 Maids and a Gardener and his wife in the lodge. 1838 saw 50 children and the next year there were 60. Numbers grew steadily until in 1842 the school had its full complement of 100 children despite 2 girls having been sent home for non-payment of fees!

The year 1838 saw the first examinations conducted by the founder and some of his friends. We are told the experience came as a bit of a shock to some of the inmates. The human side of Mr Elliott also became apparent for the first record of an audit showed that he had failed to produce vouchers for £1.10s.11d for Medicine and £10.7s.11d for Stationery!

The school was free of debt in 1840 but it is recorded that difficulty was being experienced in collecting fees. The Trustees agreed that girls should be expelled if their fees were more than 3 months in arrears.

With numbers at the full complement of 100 it was found that space was at a premium and in 1843 the N.E. Wing of the Hall was built at a cost of £1000. The Founder was also proclaimed as Secretary and Treasurer - it is difficult to understand why a proclamation was then thought to be necessary as he had been acting as Secretary and Treasurer from the beginning!

The school had its first Royal Visitor in 1846 (H.R.H. The Duchess of Gloucester) and in 1849 St Mark's Church was consecrated. In the report dated 1st August 1849, there is a reaffirmation of the school's Evangelical position and a condemnation of the Tractarians. The school curriculum remained the same, however, and enough charitable donations were still being received to allow the school to maintain a satisfactory financial position although there were no reserves for a rainy day or for further development.

Until 1850 there had only been one annual school holiday from 1st June - 1st August. Improved and cheaper travel, thanks to the new railway systems,



Miss Birrell (1884-1898) and her Sixth Form (Miss Birrell has her elbow on the table!)

now saw the introduction of a Christmas Holiday of 3 weeks which was, however, optional. The school had to remain open for children whose homes were abroad or in Ireland for whom travel remained difficult and expensive.

The school was visited in 1852 by Mr Herbert Minton. He had had a good report of the school and apparently liked what he saw, for he donated 834 pieces of his Staffordshire China with a 'pretty motive (sic) of St Mary's Hall on every piece.' It is a great pity that, to the best of my knowledge, not a single piece remains.

There were now some quick changes of Lady Superintendent, Miss Tomkinson having resigned in 1857. However, as a suitable successor could not be found, she had to stay on until 1859 when Mrs Mills took over for 3 years. It had always been appreciated that, for family reasons, hers would be a short stay and a Miss Wood took over in January 1862 but found that her health and general constitution did not fit her for the post - one suspects that she was unsatisfactory and that she was asked to leave. This she did later in the year when Miss Newport, already a Governess on the staff, took over.

When the Founder died in 1865 the Trustees had their first meeting since 1843. They recorded that Mr Elliott acted 'as the spiritual Father, Pastor of the Inmates and almost the sole administrator of its affairs.' Arrangements were then made for the school to be run in the future by the Trustees as a body.

A gas supply was laid on to the school in 1866 but only to the front door 'on account of the danger to carriages passing to and fro in dark stormy evenings, such as occurred at one of our musical soirees last winter.' The first mention of payment for gas in the accounts is for the year 1848/49 when £45.9.11 was expended on Gas, Candles and Oil. By 1884, when this Chapter ends, Gas and Candles cost £76.3.8 and it can be assumed therefore that a gradual programme of installation of gas lighting was being carried out, although one cannot find any reference to the work apart from the supply to the front door mentioned above. We do know that the school was lit by gas for many years and the old pipes and fittings can still be seen in many parts of the older buildings.

In the 34th year the North West wing of the school was built and hot and cold water was laid on to the dormitories on the upper floors. This year was also noteworthy as the S.M.H. Association was founded - more will be said about this organisation and its contribution to the school in a later chapter.

At long last in 1871 the school was connected to the Town Sewers, though work on the installation of the town's impressive sewerage system was not completed until 1874. Surprisingly the old cess pits were not filled in and in 1926 the covers of one of the pits fell in - only then was this potentially dangerous pit finally sealed off.

The school must, at about this time, have become aware of the advances being made elsewhere in the education of young women. The first public schools for girls were being established and although they were no direct challenge to a school such as St Mary's Hall, they did set standards which others began to follow. Accordingly in June 1872 the first examinations for the school were set by a senior fellow of Clare College, Cambridge and a few years later the girls of St Mary's Hall were taking the local public examinations of the Cambridge Syndicate.

The School acquitted itself reasonably well in these public examinations but little had in fact changed academically from the early days. It was still 'the usual branches of English and French' with Music, Drawing and German as extras. One hardly needs to add that much time was still devoted to Divinity with excellent examination results but some Trustees were already beginning to suspect that too much time was being spent in learning this syllabus by heart and indeed the matter was shortly to be addressed.

School fees had gone up from £20 to £21 a year; Music was £5 a year extra and other extra subjects £4. There was a long waiting list of girls seeking admission to the school but there was still a limit of 100 on the number of places available. Income from donations was still coming in satisfactorily, the books were being balanced year to year but at this stage no thought was apparently being given to the further expansion or development of the school, apart from the academic side mentioned above.

The year 1877 saw the first of many difficulties over the School's right to free sittings in St Mark's. The Secretary, the Reverend John Babington, produced a clear and convincing leaflet giving the facts of the matter and this served to satisfy the Vicar of St Mark's and his Council for the time being.

The years 1881 - 1883 were extremely important for St Mary's Hall. Apart from the decision to abolish school uniform (which was still provided by the School) and the resultant reduction of the annual fee from £21 to £20, the Trustees now made a statement of policy for the future. An improvement in the academic standards was to be sought in view of the 'great advance in the estimate of what is essential to the due education of women.'

At this time the Chairman of the Trustees was the Earl of Chichester. He had helped with the foundation of the school as one of the original Trustees and was to continue serving as Chairman until 1895 - a truly remarkable record of service. He was asked to be Chairman of a Committee to inquire into the academic and administrative organisation of the school and produced a clear and constructive report which was to form the basis for the future.

Until this time the Lady Superintendent was largely concerned with the logistics of running the School and this aspect of her duties had tended to overshadow that of the academic. In future it was decided to have a Matron to take over the housekeeping side of the business. Governesses were in future to be certificated and were to specialise in teaching a particular subject instead of endeavouring to teach all subjects.

Many other sensible changes were also introduced but the comments concerning the teaching of Divinity are of particular interest:

"We consider that the long repetitions of portions of Scripture etc by heart, previous to the examination, should be discontinued."

"... the amount of religious exercises on Sundays, including the attendance at Church - always twice and sometimes three times - is full long and likely to be wearisome to the weaker children ..."

"... doubts have occurred to us as to the desirableness of making the younger children learn by heart the 39 Articles."

The girls were given an extra half an hour in bed on a Sunday morning and henceforward the strict and time consuming emphasis on Divinity was reduced to some extent.

It became clear from the Trustees' Minutes that Miss Newport would have difficulty in adapting to the new regime. Her paper on the duties of the new Matron did not meet with the approval of the Trustees and then she inadvertently saw some letters addressed to Lord Chichester which were critical of her and she felt obliged to tender her resignation. She was persuaded to withdraw this but the die was cast and on the 4th April 1883, the Trustees came to the conclusion that Miss Newport must be replaced by "a lady who will take an active part in the tuition of the School." Later in the year the Secretary informed Miss Newport that she would be replaced in July 1884.

Miss Newport had served the School for 22 years but it seems that she was not the suitable person to introduce the changes that had to take place. She was much loved by everyone and every night used to kiss all the girls goodnight! It seems sad that her time at the School should have ended as it did and it would seem that the Trustees were most unhappy over what had to be done for she was given a gratuity of £500 when she left - a considerable sum of money in those days.



Miss Potter and Sixth Form 1901 (Miss Potter in black)

Miss Christina Macdowall Birrell was born on the 16th November 1849, so she was 34 years of age when she was appointed Lady Principal of St Mary's Hall on 15th July 1884. Born in Glasgow, she was educated at a boarding school in Edinburgh and elsewhere, specialising in English Literature, French, German and Latin. She was one of the first to pass the Cambridge Higher Local Exam and subsequently obtained the Cambridge Teachers Training Certificate.

Her advent must have been quite a shock for St Mary's Hall and this is well recorded by one of her former pupils who wrote as follows after her death in 1906.

"None of Miss Birrell's many friends can owe more to her than we, her 'Old Girls'. Looking back upon the old days at St Mary's Hall, one realises how greatly her strong personality attracted and moulded the characters of all who came in contact with her.

"How her high ideals and her keen sense of honour and duty won our respect and admiration! How the indomitable energy and steadfastness of purpose, which enabled her to overcome great difficulties, instilled into us the seriousness and necessity of hard work! And above all how her faithfulness as a friend won our lasting love!

"She was strict but just, she was strong but humble, reserved and slow in showing her feelings, but constant and true.

"When she came to St Mary's Hall in 1884, she set to work with her usual determination to raise the school morally and intellectually.

"I came back late that term and missed her first drastic methods of 'ticking into shape.' I remember when I did return in November I was horrified to find that we might no longer lounge about the school three or four abreast, with arms affectionately twined round each other; that we might no longer keep our private stores of cakes and jams to send round to our special friends at meals; there were strict rules about talking, about order, about manners.

"We fought hard against the new regime and made it as difficult for her as we could. But she gradually got the better of us and taught

us to admire and respect her, and by degrees she inspired us with her own ideals of honour, of work, of life. How she made us work! I can never be grateful enough to her for that; it was a splendid experience and training. And what eyes she had! She saw everything, knew everything; it was an education to accompany her on her rounds of inspection, not a speck of dust, not an ink spot nor a crooked bed-cover escaped her. There were many changes, many improvements. She transformed the school and raised it to the high level it now holds; she taught us to be proud of our school, to be keen to hold our own in examinations, in tennis, in hockey.

"She increased our Library and taught us to use it. Her enthusiasm about books was infectious.

"Perhaps we felt her influence even more when we left. She wrote to us frequently. I have often wondered how in the midst of her pressing work she could remember us and keep up with us as she did. We shall always think of her as the strong, genuine, loving friend who inspired and influenced us while we were her pupils at school, who inspired and influenced us when we went out into the world, and who will continue to inspire and influence us till the end of our lives."

A year after Miss Birrell's arrival and what sounds like a splendid shake-up, the new Sanatorium was opened. This fine building, now the Art Block, cost £2025 complete with furnishings. The new Sanatorium must have been very welcome indeed but this year is perhaps more notable for the first record of Science being taught in St Mary's Hall, Botany and a beginning to Physics having been introduced into the curriculum. The next year Chemistry was also included in the curriculum.

In 1890 the number of girls in the school was still 100 but there was no longer any overcrowding in the dormitories as extensive improvements had been made, the chief of which was the raising of the roof of the N.W. wing.

1892 seems to have been an eventful year. In January there was 'a terrible outrage and murder' in the hut in the South Field (where the new houses now stand). Local residents petitioned the Trustees to have the hut pulled

down, the Trustees had no objection and the tenant of the field agreed to do the work himself. The original petition is in the school archives.

Miss Birrell also succeeded in introducing a 3 term year but only after long discussion and consultation with parents. This reluctance to agree to a three-term-year is perhaps explained by the large numbers of pupils from dioceses overseas. Miss Meades gives the following figures for 1885:

Abyssinia	1	India	39
Africa	11	Jamaica	6
Australia	5	Jerusalem	3
Basle	1	Nassau	1
Calcutta	2	Antigua	2
Ceylon	10	Natal	1
China	3	North America	4
Demerara	5	Prussia	1
France	4	Smyrna + Syria	3
Hamburg	3	Rupertsland	1

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One suspects that there was some duplication here as the school still only had 100 pupils at this time! It is nevertheless clear, that parents of the majority of the school's pupils were serving overseas and for many the extra holiday would have presented practical difficulties.

On a lighter note, one girl requested instruction in playing the Zither but the Trustees, lacking a sense of humour perhaps, thought that 'the piano and violin were enough.'

In October 1898, the Elliott wing was completed and officially opened by H.R.H the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein the following year. The wing was originally known as the Princess Christian Annex, the Princess being the school's Patroness at the time. Sir Charles Elliott had provided part of the cost of the building and at some time the name was changed to

the Elliott wing. This was perhaps during the first world war when even dachshunds had to be hidden away and only exercised after dark!

Poor Miss Birrell became very tired through overwork and on doctor's orders had to take it easy. Rest did not help, however, and bravely she came to the conclusion that she had 'burnt her ships' (sic) and that it was time for her to hand over to someone else. She never really recovered her health after leaving St Mary's Hall and died at the early age of 57.

St Mary's Hall owes a great deal to Miss Birrell. She transformed the school, working well with the Trustees to leave for her successor, after 15 years of hard work, a small school of excellent quality and reputation. There were still, however, only 100 girls in the school and the fees remained very low at £24.15.0 a year in the senior school. Donations and annual subscriptions were still coming in regularly and any large building project, such as the Elliott Wing, was paid for promptly on appeal. At this stage there seemed to be no good reason for change and so Miss Edith Potter, Vice Mistress under Miss Birrell took over as Lady Principal in 1899.

The Boer War had broken out in October 1899 and Mafeking in Cape Province was immediately besieged. Eventually on 17th May 1900, Mafeking was relieved and Mafeking Night was on the 18th May. At 10 pm the girls assembled in dressing gowns and slippers to celebrate by singing the National Anthem and 'other triumphant strains.' The next day saw the Hall decorated with flags and the granting of a holiday by the Trustees.

Further difficulties arose in 1902 over St Mark's. Misunderstanding by parishioners over the free sittings allowed to the school, led to unfortunate and inaccurate statements in the Parish Magazine and once again the school's position had to be defended by the Trustees.

The teaching of Science had been introduced by Miss Birrell in 1885 and the proper teaching of these subjects gave rise to an urgent need for a science laboratory. At the same time the Trustees appreciated the need for an Assembly Hall and Gymnasium and following their usual practice they issued an appeal for funds for these two projects in April 1903. The Science



The Cricket Team 1903

Laboratory (now the Home Economics Room) was completed in the same year at a cost of £213; it was equipped and in use in 1904.

Miss Birrell was also responsible for the introduction of a Sixth Form as we know it today, the first mention of the form being in 1885. By 1890 girls were taking the Oxford or Cambridge Higher School Certificates with the Sixth Form divided into VI A and VI B. VI A took the Matriculation Examination whilst VI B took the Higher School Certificate. This division of the Sixth Form only lasted a few years and had been dropped by the end of the century.

This was again a time of financial worries. Fees had to be increased from £25.16s.0d a year to £30 for senior pupils in 1907 and day girls, the daughters of local clergymen, were accepted for the first time the next year; a sub-committee was also set up to analyze the various headings of school expenditure. The committee concluded that in general the school was being run economically and noted that the food costs were high but not excessive. It then cost five shillings and eight pence three farthings a week to feed a girl boarder i.e. less than 30 pence!

Sir Charles Elliott, son of the Founder, died at Holy Communion on 28th May 1911. In his generosity he had funded the building of the New Hall himself and when he died was planning the completion of the complex, with the addition of the Music Rooms, the Art Room and the cloak rooms. The building was practically finished when he died and occupied the northern part of the present Hall where the old Cloisters used to be. The whole project was indeed completed the following year thanks to an interest free loan of £600 by an anonymous benefactor. Going northwards the lay-out was now as follows:

The Elliott Wing, the Art Room, the Hall.
The old Music Rooms were as they now are.

This year was also a milestone in that, after the school underwent a Board of Education inspection on 24th, 25th and 26th May, St Mary's Hall was placed on the list of schools recognised as efficient. This was a tribute to the Head

Mistress, as she was now known, but unfortunately Miss Potter's health now let her down and she was forced to resign her position. Miss Potter contributed a great deal to the success of the school, building successfully on Miss Birrell's work. She was also largely responsible for the launching of the St Mary's Hall Association and its early development.

The Trustees appointed as the new Headmistress, Miss F.L. Ghey, Hon. Mods (Classics) Oxford, M.A. London. She had been Assistant Lecturer at the Royal Holloway College and Classical Mistress at the Clapham High School.

For many years there had been a demand for places at St Mary's Hall which could not be met as there was only room for 100 girls. However, before the outbreak of the Great War it was decided to purchase two additional houses in Hervey Terrace (where Elliott House now stands) and this provided accommodation for 20 additional boarders and 3 Mistresses. For the first time therefore numbers in the school exceeded 100 there being 123 boarders in the school in 1914. The Trustees did not consider that Brighton was at risk from raids by Sea or air and parents seem to have agreed for no-one was withdrawn. The 78th Report states:

"Within the limits of the School buildings the lessons of the war have been carefully brought home to the children and they have been encouraged to take their part in the national mobilisation for works of charity and self-denial."

There is thereafter very little direct reference to the war apart from the resultant increases in the cost of everything, which had a serious effect on the school's finances. There is no doubt, however, that everyone was fully aware of what was going on and we know from the recollection of old girls, that the girls were briefed daily on news of the war. Many connected with St Mary's Hall must have been personally affected as was one of the Trustees, the Reverend C. E. Gausson, who gave £100 of war stock in memory of his son, David, who died from wounds received at Delville Wood in 1917.

At long last came the Armistice marked by the National Anthem and a Hymn in the Elliott Hall followed by a Thanksgiving Service in St Mark's and on 23rd November Miss Ghey led a party from the school which attended the

Peace Celebrations in London. With the Peace the Trustees burst into a flurry of activity which led to the further expansion and development of the school described in the next Chapter.

At the end of this period of progress the finances of the school were again giving cause for concern and a decision was made, with great reluctance, to increase fees from £36 to £39.3.0 with effect from the next school year. First thoughts were also given to opening the school to girls other than the daughters of clergymen.

The Trustees also became aware of the Pension arrangements being made for Teachers in the State system and applied for the school to be 'recognised for Teachers' Pensions under the Superannuation Act of 1918. Surprisingly this sensible decision was taken with some misgiving but fortunately for the future well-being of the school the Board of Education agreed our application in 1920.

Chapter 5 - Expansion and Consolidation 1918 - 1940

As long ago as June 1914, the Trustees had taken a decision in principle to set up a Junior School and this of course made good sense when the parallel decision to open the school to girls other than clergy daughters was taken. This decision to broaden the intake was not taken lightly, but the Trustees appreciated correctly that there was no longer the wealth in the country for the school to be able to continue to rely on large sums of money coming in from charitable donations and subscriptions. They probably also realised, though this is not supported by the records, that a school of just over 100 pupils was very expensive to run in any case and probably not viable as a mainly charitable foundation.

Accordingly in 1920, No 2 Sussex Square was purchased and was opened as St Hilary House. In the following year No 22 Sussex Square was also purchased and opened as the Junior School, St Nicholas House. (Boarders as young as seven had been admitted for some years in 1920. The records do not indicate the age range of the Junior School in St Nicholas.) Two further houses in Hervey Terrace (or Eastern Road), Nos 229 and 233, were also purchased for use as additional classrooms. As may be imagined these developments were expensive and the cost was met by the issue of debentures, the school having been registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1921.

To help the school finances the Ladies' Committee had the idea of running a piggery in the school grounds, but the Head Sanitary Inspector wrote saying that piggeries were not allowed in Brighton. Someone then suggested that goats could perhaps be kept instead and the Headmistress was asked to investigate. Not long afterwards the matter was "adjourned sine die" and never raised again.

The decision to expand the school was being justified and in 1926 No 21 Sussex Square was purchased and adapted for use as additional boarding premises for the younger girls. Numbers had built up well and by 1928 there were 200 girls in the school.



The Hockey Team, early 1900's (Tam O' Shanter's were no doubt considered suitable headgear for hockey!)

100 Foundaioners
62 Non Foundaioners
38 Day Girls

Electric light was installed in part of the main building in 1928 and wor. continued thereafter to extend the installation to the rest of the school. I was also decided to install central heating in St Nicholas (21 Sussex Square, and afterwards in the Sanatorium, along with electric light.

There was still a great demand for places and in 1930 No 4 Clarendon Terrace was purchased and opened as Hebbert House (Mr Hebbert had been Treasurer from 1878 - 1884 and a Trustee from 1884 - 1892 and this had been his home). The School was full with the exception of a few places for boarders in the Junior House; the following year there were 243 girls in the school and No 4 Hervey Terrace (233 Eastern Road) had to be taken over as a Kindergarten and as additional accommodation for mistresses.

Games were reported to be "thoroughly good". The cricket team appeared to be particularly formidable and a cricket bat, signed by the legendary Jack Hobbs, was earned and presented to one Mary Luffman who had a bowling analysis of 9 for 5!

The arbour in which Miss Charlotte Elliott, the founder's elder sister composed many of her hymns had been erected in the school grounds some time previously. It had originally been in the gardens of Westfield Lodge and had presumably been moved to the school when the Elliott family moved to Brunswick Square. A memorial was now erected in this arbour in October 1930 but all that remains is the red tiled base by the North West Corner of the single tennis court. It is not known what happened to the arbour - it is understood that it was still there in the 1950s but by the end of the decade it was gone. No doubt it became irreparable because of its age and wooden construction.

Although this was the time of the Great Depression the mood of St Mary's Hall was clearly buoyant. In 1931 all State School teachers had had their salaries reduced by 10% in the national emergency, but the Governors did not impose a similar salary cut on the school staff. The staff instead

requested the Governors to deduct 5% from their salaries for the Autumn Term and to devote the money so saved to help needy cases in the School. This offer was gratefully accepted by the Governors and I am sure that they must have been greatly impressed and encouraged by this wonderful spirit.

In 1932 there were 249 girls in the School but one very old girl sadly died. Mrs Marianne Baker reached the good age of 101 years; as Marianne Cantley she had entered St Mary's Hall as a boarder in 1842, being driven down with her mother by coach from London to Brighton.

Hebbert House had not proved successful as a school boarding house - it was stated to be 'inconvenient and unsatisfactory.' Nos 2 and 3 Chichester Terrace were therefore acquired and adapted and became known as Babington House. Hebbert House was closed and disposed of. Only School House, to be known henceforth as Henry Venn Elliott House, now remained, accommodated in the main building. Partial central heating was also installed in the main building for the first time!

With the increased number of girls in the School, more playing field space was required and the lease of the Manor Road Playing Fields was taken over from Brighton College in 1933 and the use of the West Field regained the following year - it had previously been let to the Kemp Town Bowling Club for bowls, archery and tennis. The School then had 16 grass tennis courts available together with the cricket pitch on the South Field.

August 1936 saw the resignation of Miss Chey as Headmistress though she had not finished with St Mary's Hall by any means! She was replaced by Miss E.E. Stopford. MA Oxon., after the celebration of the School's Centenary at the end of the Summer Term. After the Pageant of One Hundred Years, a purse containing a birthday gift of £1848.10.0 was presented to the Bishop of London by Miss Joy Orde, great-great-granddaughter of the Founder. The purse was the donations of friends and old girls from all over the world for the benefit of the School - the "gift" to the Bishop was a formality and not for his personal benefit! This custom now seems rather old-fashioned and to modern eyes and ears the pageant would also be considered somewhat pedestrian and even boring; one person who was present described it as "a lot of fun" whilst another thought it

"excruciating"! At this less sophisticated time, however, pageants were a common and accepted form of entertainment and the costumes were certainly of a very high standard - pageants were indeed the forerunners of the "son et lumière" of today! On this occasion the music was provided by a string quartet.

Further changes took place in 1937, with Henry Venn Elliott or School House moving to 21/22 Sussex Square and the Junior School moving to the main building. The Henry Venn Elliott dormitory was converted to the library very much as it is today and a Domestic Science Department was established in 229 Eastern Road. It is also apparent from the records of this year that further laboratories had already been set up in the main building, as there is expenditure recorded on re-equipping laboratories for Chemistry, Botany, Biology and Physics.

This was to be the last normal year for some time as 1938 and 1939 saw the beginning of the falling off in numbers and a Sub Committee being set up to consider Air Raid precautions. Matters became rapidly worse in 1940 with Dunkirk and the fall of France and when a head count was taken in June the following picture emerged.

26 Boarders and 37 Day Girls	Definite for September
31 Boarders and 59 Day Girls	Doubtful
13 Boarders and 22 Day Girls	Not returning

The School could not continue with these numbers and it was decided to close for the duration of the war at the end of the Summer Term 1940. Miss Stopford took over as Headmistress of St Elphin's, Darley Dale and our girls were offered places at

- St Catherines, Bramley
- St Michaels, Bognor (which had moved to Penzance - now St Michaels, Petworth)
- Blatchington Court School, Seaford (which had moved to Devon)

Why did not St Mary's Hall move from Brighton to some safe spot like so many other schools? Most Schools which were going to evacuate had

already done so and no doubt St Mary's Hall hoped that a move was not going to be necessary, for moving the School would have been an expensive and uncertain exercise. A major development had just been completed which had exhausted the school's financial resources, never very strong because of the narrow foundation, which was maintained right up until the 1914 - 1918 war. The decision to enlarge and develop the School cannot be said to have been unduly delayed by the Trustees and 1940 saw us with a fine school, viable in every way and one which would have gone on from strength to strength. For once, however, our geographical situation was not an advantage and the closure was inevitable in the circumstances.

The Hall was taken over by the military and all the boarding houses were also requisitioned by the War Department. The Common Room (now the Classics Department Room G) became the Sergeants' Mess, the officers took over the Drawing Room and the Staff Room became the office of the Commanding Officer. The contents of the boarding houses had been sold, at auction or to other schools and much of our other furniture and fittings was stored in the Hervey Terrace houses, 227 - 233 Eastern Road.

In July 1941 the Governors had declared their intention to reopen the School after the war, and the Bishop of Chichester had reiterated this intention to a meeting of the St Mary's Hall Association, held at about the same time at Blunt House, Oxted, the coaching establishment of Miss Ghey, the former Headmistress, and her colleague Miss Galton. Miss Galton had been on the staff of St Mary's Hall when Miss Ghey was Head and had moved to Oxted with her. Plans for the reopening were necessarily vague at this stage but the determination was clearly there.

Fate was to take a final hand in order to make the reopening more difficult, for on 25th May 1943 a bomb fell on Hervey Terrace destroying the Lodge, 227 and 229 Eastern Road and badly damaging the Laboratory. This bomb may have been a blessing in disguise in the long term, for the old houses were quite unsuitable to form part of the School that was to arise when peace was finally restored.



Visit of Princess Mary, 1921

The 9th May 1945 saw the end of the war in Europe and immediately the Governing Body and all the friends of the School began thinking about re-opening. The Chairman of Governors at this time was Lt Col A C Elliott, CBE, but at this crucial period he became ill and eventually moved his home to Devon resigning as Chairman and as a Governor in March 1946. The Bishop of Chichester took over as Acting Chairman, but the driving force on the Governing Body was Mr C E M Elliott, who was Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The main difficulties were as usual financial - the practical difficulties of bomb damage, repairs, redecoration, war damage claims etc etc could be addressed, but without financial support little could be done towards re-opening the School. There were shortages of everything in the country, but for the School the main items that needed to be acquired, when the classrooms and boarding houses were ready for use again, were furniture and books.

The main School building was not in fact handed back until March 1946, although the official date for the de-requisition was 25th December 1945. At the same time, with the de-requisitioning of the boarding houses by the War Department, the Governors had to resist efforts by Brighton Corporation to take them over for their own purposes.

To the onlooker progress towards re-opening appeared to be slow. This was certainly felt to be the case by the St Mary's Hall Association whose President was Miss Ghey. She and Miss Galton at Blunt House, Oxted, their coaching establishment, had kept the St Mary's Hall Association very much alive during the war. Regular meetings and fund raising activities had been held and now Miss Ghey and many other friends of the School were becoming impatient for action of some sort. Miss Ghey and Miss Galton approached the Bishop of Chichester, as Acting Chairman of Governors, who promised to enlist the help of the Diocese - Miss Ghey for her part promised to begin an Appeal to the St Mary's Hall Association. The early response of

promises of £3000 encouraged the Governors to go ahead with plans for the re-opening and by the autumn the sum of £5000 had been raised by the Appeal. No help was forthcoming from the Diocese - not surprisingly, they just did not have the resources required.

The Governors were not sanguine at this time about the chances of being able to run St Mary's Hall as a boarding school again, but as most of the £5000 raised by old girls and friends was conditional on there being a boarding school, this had to be kept as an option, although the first objective was to be the opening of a day school.

Miss Harriet Robinson had been appointed Headmistress in July, 1946 and took up her appointment on 1st September. Other Staff had also been appointed to enable Babington House (2 and 3 Chichester Terrace) to re-open as a Junior School in September. Miss Robinson wrote that the two ladies concerned - Miss Borney and Miss Alexander - "were both hard at work, many weeks before term began, sorting books, finding furniture, dusting, polishing, chivvying workmen, interviewing Charwomen, full of hope one day, despondent the next, because of some new set back, but determined that Babington should be ready for use by the end of September."

In April, Mr Walter Dingwall, the former Headmaster of Hurstpierpoint College and a one-time School Bursar, was employed to plan the re-opening of the school under the general supervision of the Governing Body, and to assist with the whole business of war damage claims, refurbishment, furnishing, equipping and the hundred and one other matters that needed attention so as to enable the school to re-open smoothly. Miss Ghey had now also been appointed as a Governor and along with Miss Galton she took an active part with Mr Dingwall in the great deal of hard work that was necessary to put the plans for re-opening into effect.

And so at the end of September 1946 a Junior School re-opened in Babington House. About twenty little girls "white socked and wearing their new blue overalls, filed up the stairs, quiet as mice..." They had a short service and got down to work, having received a telegram from Miss Ghey and Miss Galton which read "Long life and happy days to St Mary's Hall reborn today."

The work of preparing the school continued and once the way ahead was clear, advertising took place to secure more pupils. A Thanksgiving Service for the re-opening was held in St Mark's on 22nd February 1947 and there were then already 19 Boarders and 41 Day Girls in the School. The next stage is described vividly in a letter from Miss Robinson to members of the St Mary's Hall:

Dear Members of the S.M.H.A.

Time has passed so quickly since I wrote my first letter to you that it is difficult to realise that it was twelve months ago, one whole year, the first year of the School's new life. In this year the School has grown from 20 pupils to over 170. Last November we had only day-girls. We now have 60 boarders, and Babington is full. In January we moved from Babington to the Elliott Wing of the Hall. This term we are in the Hall itself. I am writing this letter in the Headmistress's Study over the front door, the room you all know so well, the room of which the Founder wrote in 1836, "The pretty little mullion-windowed room over the entrance." The top floor of the Hall is still under repair and no place is really completely finished. To make the Hall fit for occupation, to get the workmen out, the furniture in, the classrooms arranged ready for lessons, the dining-rooms and kitchen equipped to provide meals for boarders, and a mid-day meal for over 170, was all there was time for. Such things as floor-staining and picture-hanging have had to be left till the holidays.

On Friday, September 19th, we came into residence at the Hall, from Babington; myself, Miss Willis (Secretary), Mrs Cameron (Cook-caterer) and Ethel Phillips (maid). Our first night here was a memorable one. The escape of gas was so bad in our bedrooms that we had to sleep in my study! Then, very tired and dirty, we thought how comforting a hot bath would be. To our dismay, though there was plenty of hot water, there was not a single bath-plug in the building. I had to go down to Babington to find one. In spite of difficulties, however, it was really thrilling to be at last living at the

Hall, and to be occupying rooms vibrating and pulsing with memories of by-gone days.

On looking back over the past year, my chief feeling is one of deep gratitude for all the help that has been given, for loyal, hardworking staff in the School itself, in the kitchen, and in the garden. To these devoted workers the School owes very much. Then my thoughts turn in sincere thankfulness, to all helpers outside the School, and especially to Miss Ghey and Miss Galton, who have done more for the School than I can at all adequately recount. Nothing has been too much trouble for them. By frequent visits, and telephone calls, they have kept in touch with us. They have found out our most urgent needs and have, as if by magic, satisfied them. I am quite sure that but for their timely help, we should not have been able to accept in such a short time as many boarders as we now have. Their help has been really wonderful. In the first place there were the two beautifully organised and most enjoyable Garden Fetes at Blunt House. In addition to these Miss Galton has attended Furniture Sales, and has managed to procure for us in emergency from London firms essential equipment for the dormitories, without which we should have been compelled to refuse children wishing to enter. I feel sure that you would like to know how the Hall has benefited from the proceeds of the Fetes, so, later on you will see a list. In addition to all these, there are many personal gifts from Miss Ghey and Miss Galton which include ten cream enamelled bedsteads, twenty-four desks and chairs. Do you wonder that words fail me to express my gratitude?

And what of the immediate future? We shall have reached the 200 mark when School re-opens in January, and we shall be using the Sanatorium temporarily as the House for junior boarders. Repairs to No 22 Sussex Square began last week. This House may be ready in May, but in any case it will be ready in September. I say "ready" hopefully, for we have quite come to the end of our stored school-furniture! Would anyone like to furnish a dormitory, or a staff bed-sitting room, to be called after herself, or perhaps in memory of someone? We have kept the old benefactors' names at Babington,



The Tennis Team, 1920's

Snowdon-Smith, Mackworth-Young, Pelham, Dawson, etc. It would be a fresh inspiration and interest to have some new names, and No 22 is such a lovely house!

The hour is long past late, and is getting early. My predecessors in this lovely little room whisper to me, that it is time to end this letter and go to bed. I must just say how glad we have been when you have visited the School, even though I myself may not have been free to see you. It was a great joy to have Miss Short (Daisy) with us last week when she talked to us of her work at Katni. The Indian orphan, Muriel, has now been taken over by the School. We do thank the S.M.H.A. for taking care of her while the School was closed. I will end with an extract from Mrs Goshawk's (Evelyn Farrow) letter, "It is almost unbelievable that you can have accomplished all this since the School re-opened, and what I was so struck by in particular is that you had kept the atmosphere of the old while building anew. I felt I wanted to paint again in the Studio and eat in the Dining Hall, and even suffer a Latin lesson in one of the sunny classrooms. The garden too looked so happy and cared for - you must have a devoted staff already."

Hoping that you will all feel like this when you visit the Hall, and with my sincere thanks to you all for your inspiring devotion to the Hall,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

HARRIET ROBINSON.

Mr C E M Elliott had been elected chairman of Governors at the end of 1946 and the following year saw the move back into the Hall described by Miss Robinson above. The new arrangements of classrooms were roughly as we know them now, with the new laboratories on the first floor. The important decision was also made to sell No 2 Sussex Square and to build Elliott House to accommodate some 60 boarders on the site of the bombed houses in Hervey Terrace.

Work on Nos 21/22 Sussex Square had now been completed and the house was re-opened as St Hilary in 1948, thus releasing the Sanatorium, which had been pressed into use as temporary boarding accommodation - it proved extremely popular to those who lived there. Miss Galton was largely responsible for the furnishing of the refurbished St Hilary, procuring all the furniture, curtains, bedspreads etc and at the same time still holding down her own duties at Blunt House; the School owes her a great debt.

By May 1949 there were 228 children in the School, 100 Boarders and 128 Day Girls and Kindergarten, and the following year all was ready to go ahead with the construction of Elliott House. The contract price was to be £23628 and against this was put the proceeds of the sale of No 2 Sussex Square, £8550 and £13000 received from the War Damage Commission. All went well and by September 1951 the house was ready and occupied by 22 Boarders.

Miss Robinson had worked extremely hard to get the school going again after its closure and she now came to the conclusion, whilst on holiday in Italy, that like Miss Birrell she had 'burned her boats.' She was feeling the strain and the thought of the hard work still to come daunted her. She wrote that 'the next three or four years will require more vigour, more energy, more strength than I have to give.' She accordingly left St Mary's Hall in April 1950 to retire and Miss Doris Conrady took over as Headmistress.

Numbers continued to rise and 1952 saw 133 Boarders, 117 Day Girls and 12 in the Kindergarten in the School. The old Science Laboratory had been converted to use as a Domestic Science Room and began to be used in September.

It is interesting to note that there were some 23 Resident teaching staff in the School at this time and that it was the policy to appoint resident staff rather than staff who lived locally. The report by HM Inspectors in 1953 was not good, however, and they commented in particular on the poor qualifications of the staff, the lack of facilities in the School, particularly for boarders, and recommended the introduction of the House System.



The Old Art Room, 1920's. (Note gas lighting)

The Inspectors must have been aware that the School had only re-opened in 1946/1947 and yet they expressed concern at the preponderance of younger children in the School! It is hard to see how it could have been otherwise but generally speaking the report was constructive and the criticisms were addressed by the new Headmistress and the Governing Body.

Perhaps the most important upshot of this inspection was the resulting review of fee policy. The Sub-Committee set up to make proposals as a result of the Inspection Report recommended that the time had come to abandon the low fee policy which had been followed by the School since its foundation. As a result automatic clergy bursaries were stopped and a system of closed Scholarships adopted for them instead. Steps were also taken to raise fees generally to a level that would be more likely to ensure the continuing viability of the School.

The House System, recommended by the Inspectors, was introduced in 1957, and a Common Room provided in what used to be known as the Lower East Inner Dormitory (now the General Science Laboratory and part of the Physics Laboratory) - another recommendation of the Inspectors.

A lot of hard work was going on to continue improving the School's facilities and its academic standards and when a further inspection took place in 1962 the Inspector congratulated the School on its recovery, commenting that 'a first class staff had achieved wonders in the past four years.'

The School continued to do well under the guidance of a first class Headmistress, its reputation stood high and excellent academic results were being achieved. Miss Conrady retired at the end of the 1965 school year and Miss N.O. Davies took over in September.

Wonders had indeed been achieved, but the School still had poor facilities compared with many of its competitors and it was time to consider a programme of modernisation and development. Until now the administration of the School had been kept firmly in the hands of the Governors and their various Sub Committees with the Headmistress left to get on with the academic side. Apart from the modernisation that was required, the School was run down and the fabric was much in need of

loving care. To get anything done by people who were not on the spot took a very long time and even simple defects like the replacement of a tap washer had to wait until the holidays. This was frustrating in the extreme to Miss Conrady and her Staff but, not before time, changes were made and the School administration and its buildings were modernised, as we shall see in the next Chapter.



A Dormitory, 1920's. (Note gas lighting and washing facilities!)

Miss Davies inherited a successful and popular school from her predecessor and, encouraged by the Governors, began to build up the numbers. At this time each year group consisted of two forms of not more than 24 girls in each form as a matter of policy. When the demand for places exceeded the capacity in any one year, the practice of having "bulge years" was introduced with part-time staff being engaged as necessary to cope with the additional numbers. This was a flexible and profitable way of operating and this practice was to continue for some years.

A Five-Year-Plan of Development had been devised and now began to be put into effect. 1966 saw the creation of classrooms G, H and I as they now are with a new passageway constructed over the outside yard, a project which had been first mooted thirty years before. The pace was stepped up in 1965 with the following work completed.

- a) Sanatorium moved to new small Sanatorium in Elliott House
- b) Physics Laboratory rebuilt in its present form
- c) New Dining Hall and Kitchen created. (The old Dining Room was where Room K and the Staff Sitting Room now are - Room L was the Kitchen).

Enough boarding capacity existed in St Hilary and Elliott and it was therefore decided to sell Babington House (2/3 Chichester Terrace). The house was auctioned on the 15th June 1967; there was only one bidder in the auction room, who secured the property for £25,000, its reserve price! This was very disappointing for the School - the houses should have fetched considerably more at the time.

The Bursar retired in 1968 after long service to the School; her duties had been mainly those of a School Accountant with very little responsibility or

authority for anything else. The new Bursar, who also carried out the duties of Clerk to the Governors, was given definite administrative responsibilities and was authorised to take on a book-keeper and a small maintenance staff. This arrangement made for much greater efficiency and the Headmistress was thereafter able to concentrate more on her proper duties.

The old Elliott Hall had not been big enough to take the whole School at assembly for some time and the Art Room, between the Hall and the Elliott wing, was an extremely dark and dingy room though quite large. Planning for a new hall, Music Rooms and Classrooms began in 1969 and after planning difficulties, work began in April 1970. By the Easter Term 1971 the new Hall was in use and has not been altered to this day. Rear Admiral Walter Evershed was chairman of Governors while the new Hall was being built, but sadly died before the building was completed; the large Music Room is named after him.

It is worth mentioning that the School's existence was once again threatened in the 1970s by the plans of Brighton Corporation to make the whole of Eastern Road into a dual carriageway and to route it through the School grounds. One route proposed went through the west field, the Swimming Pool, the Stage and Music Rooms, the other between the Hall itself and Elliott House. Various contingency plans were prepared to meet this threat but there is no doubt that, if the road had been built, the damaging effect would have been so great that sooner or later the School would have had to close on its present site. Happily, political developments made the scheme unaffordable and the planning blight was eventually removed at the end of the decade.

The Five-Year-Plan was continued with the conversion of the old Sanatorium to an Art Block and this was in use by 1973. The modernisation of dormitories, bathrooms, wash places etc in St Hilary completed the plan which had been drawn up in 1966/67.

Miss Davies had been 'head-hunted' by St Swithuns, Winchester, and left St Mary's Hall at the end of the academic year 1972/1973 to be replaced as Headmistress by Mrs E.O.E. Leslie. The School was, at the change of Headmistresses, in splendid shape and bulging at the seams. More

classrooms were needed, however, and the new Headmistress argued the case, most convincingly, for an indoor heated swimming pool in the same complex. Planning began on the present Pool Block despite a frightening economic climate which saw 20% inflation, massive wage and salary awards and consequently soaring school fees. Work began on the Pool in March 1975 and it was hoped that an Appeal would help to pay for a large part of the cost. The Appeal Target of £50,000 was not met, however, and the campaign was ended early.

An unfortunate and costly decision was made in November of this year when various ways and means to effect economies were being considered. The School was acknowledged to be overstaffed and it was decided to adopt a three form entry in order to make economies! The idea was to enlarge the School to three forms of 24 girls in each form so as to avoid reducing the teaching staff - this would have been sensible if the School had ever managed to fill a three form entry and it was to be 12 years before this uneconomical policy was abandoned. With little likelihood of achieving the required numbers, this costly policy should have been corrected earlier, but the decision to abandon it kept being put off in the hope that the extra numbers would be forthcoming.

On 7th May 1976 the Pool Block was officially opened by the Bishop of Chichester with the Head Girl, Sandra Jantuah, taking the first plunge. A plaque outside the Geography Room recalls the legacy of Miss Evelyn Odell, which helped to fund the new building. Miss Odell had been a Geography Teacher at the School and her brother, Professor N.E. Odell, had been with Mallory and Irvine in the 1934 Attempt on Mount Everest. In the search for Mallory and Irvine, Odell followed them to 27,500 feet without oxygen, an outstanding feat and a record which stood for very many years. Professor Odell was unable to be present for the unveiling of the plaque but visited the School at a later date.

With the many small classes of the three form entry there was an urgent need for another laboratory and the old Room M was converted to a General Science Laboratory in 1977. In this year too, a new Constitution for the School was agreed with the Charity Commissioners. In effect this was a general tidying up and bringing up to date on the various Trusts involving

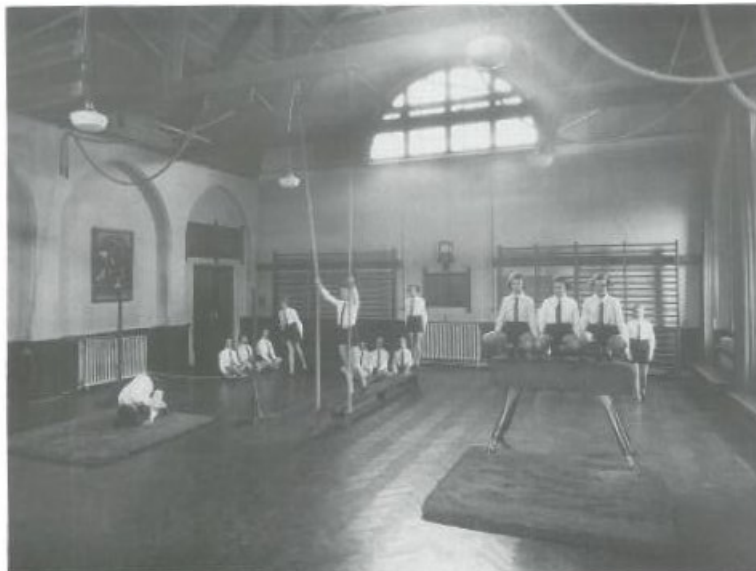
the School. An important effect of the new scheme was that the position of Clergy Daughters, for whom the land and buildings were largely made available in the first place, was now put on a firm basis with bursaries to be available in future up to a limit of 5% of the fee income received in respect of pupils other than the Clergy Daughters.

Despite inflation still raging and with fee increases of 20% which should have been 30%, it was appreciated that improved Sixth Form facilities were required and planning accordingly began for Venn House in 1980. The work was nearing completion when Mrs Leslie retired at the end of the Summer Term 1981 and the house was formally opened by the Bishop of Chichester on the 10th October.

Miss M.F.C. Harvey took over from Mrs Leslie in September 1981. She had come from Badminton School and was a very experienced Headmistress, St Mary's Hall being her third appointment as Head. When she had settled in she quickly queried the need for a three form school, but again the matter was left in the hope that something would turn up. She also appreciated the need to enlarge the Junior School and planning began for a new classroom block. This building was finally completed in 1983, occupying the site to the east of the Art Block - it is now used by the Mathematics Department.

Fears over anorexia were finally put aside and in the Summer of 1982 the new Cafeteria System was installed. A marked improvement in the quality of the meals was immediately apparent, the girls were very pleased and it didn't cost any more than the old 'family service'. There had been ample food of good quality but the menus tended to be monotonous and there was no choice. Every week saw the appearance on each table of a large sausage meat roll - it was surprisingly quite popular and known to the girls as "Baby Maud".

An earlier application had been made by St Mary's Hall to join the Assisted Places Scheme without success, but in 1982 a further successful application was made and the School has participated in the Scheme as from September 1983. This has been a great success in St Mary's Hall, enabling many children to enjoy the benefits of the School who would otherwise have been



The Old Ellers Hall, 1950's

prevented from doing so through the inability of their parents to meet the fees.

The 150th Anniversary of the School was approaching and thought began to be given as to what should be done to mark the occasion. All were agreed that a Craft, Design and Technology facility was top priority and it was then heard that St Mark's was likely to be made redundant and might be offered to the School. There was some hesitancy about taking on this commitment, but after considering all the implications it was agreed that the School would like to take over the church subject to a satisfactory survey. The survey was pretty frightening but by this stage everyone had realised what an asset St Mark's would be and, the legal niceties having been completed, the School began using the Church again for morning assemblies and worship in 1987, after certain basic alterations and improvements to the heating had been carried out.

The 27th June 1986 was chosen as the 150th Anniversary Day. The Programme for the day included a Thanksgiving Service in the forenoon with His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury preaching the Sermon, a Governor's Luncheon, an Open Day in the afternoon and a Grand Ball in the evening with a Marquee on the West Field, a Dinner/Dance in the Hall and a Disco in the Dining Hall. A very happy day for the very many friends of the School who celebrated the occasion.

The Appeal run to raise funds for the 150th Anniversary Developments, the CDT Facility and improvements to St Mark's, was again disappointing but nevertheless the useful sum of £81,548 was raised. This paid for the CDT Facility, the essential repairs, new heating and alterations to St Mark's, for the updating of the stage lighting in the Hall and the provision of a Concert Grand Piano for the Music Department.

The Appeal brochure outlined a radical adaptation of St Mark's for School use so that it could be used as a Chapel and for both Music and Drama. The estimated cost of such a conversion was enormous and quite out of the question; it was moreover reasoned that much drama would be quite inappropriate in a Chapel. It was appreciated that there was already a perfectly satisfactory stage anyway and it was considered to be a better

investment to improve the existing theatre and to keep St Mark's as a Chapel and for music only. Everyone is now agreed that this was the right decision.

The end of the year saw the abandonment of the Three Form Entry and realisation of the need to build further accommodation for the Junior School with the idea that a larger Junior School would feed greater numbers of girls into the Senior School. Numbers entering directly into the Senior School had been falling off and this factor, combined with high interest rates introduced to combat the high inflation of recent years, put great pressure on the School's finances. Large sums had been borrowed to finance essential development and the further investment now required for the Junior School was not available. Careful thought was given to ways and means of putting the finances on a better footing and once again the disposal of the South Field was considered. The field was little used by the School and for many years there had been a threat by Brighton Corporation to purchase it compulsorily as "public open space" at agricultural values - no doubt for further development by them at a later date!

After much deliberation it was decided to dispose of the field, planning permission was obtained on appeal and the land sold for a very good figure at the peak of the market. Months later the housing market was in the doldrums and the bottom had fallen out of the market for building land!

Having sold the field, the decision to go ahead with building Gloucester House was taken in the light of the continuing growth and success of the Junior School.

The first Hurricane had been experienced by the School while it was still building and now, during the night of 15th/16th October 1987, there was another. All considered, the School was relatively lucky, though the appalling damage on the morning of the 16th October was pretty daunting. The worst damage was to the roof of St Mark's - all aspects suffered to some extent, but practically every slate was taken off the north main roof, the lee side. Damage to the Hall was mainly that of slates ripped off, skylights blown away and one chimney pot through the roof. Tiles were off the Art Block and the new Junior School Classrooms, and walls had been blown down or so badly damaged that they had to be taken down later, amongst

them the passageway wall between the Pool Block and the Main School. Several trees in the grounds were blown down but perhaps the most frightening sight was the removal of large pieces of stone from the pinnacles on the west face of the Hall and their deposit onto the grass quadrangle about half way between the Hall and the Art Block! Any piece of this flying debris could easily have killed someone.

School was not interrupted, however, and the Maintenance Staff buckled down to repairs. As we undertook to carry out most of the repairs ourselves, the insurers were very helpful, meeting all our costs, including the extensive repairs that had to be done to the nailsick roof of St Mark's. Repairs to the minor roofs of the church were a joint effort but the whole of the north main roof was re-slatted by the caretaker, Mr Brian Blinco and his son Carl - a splendid achievement.

Disaster struck again when the Contract painting firm set St Hilary alight on Good Friday 1988. Considerable damage was done when a blowlamp ignited fluff behind a shutter and the School owes a great deal to the Fire Brigade, who contained the fire most efficiently. It was, however, many months before the whole house was again fit for habitation.

Miss Harvey retired at the end of this school year with the planning for Gloucester House well advanced and the new CDT facilities in the Elliott wing equipped and in use. The South Field sale had gone through and with the school in the soundest state it had been in since its foundation, Miss Harvey handed over to Mrs Broadbent.

Gloucester House planning proved difficult but work began in the early spring of 1989 and the Junior School took possession for the Autumn Term. The official opening was performed by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester on 20th October.

This year also saw the conversion of one of the new class rooms over the Hall for Information Technology and the installation of a Nimbus Network System.

The numbers of boarders had fallen below the 100 mark some years previously and 1989/90 was to see a further sudden drop from 88 to 66. These numbers could no longer justify the running of two large boarding houses and Elliott House was accordingly converted by School Staff into additional classrooms for the use of a still growing Junior School during the summer of 1990.

What does the future hold? It is considered unlikely that there will be any further political threat to independent schools, in view of recent and welcome changes in socialist thinking. Certainly a socialist government would add to the costs of independent schools and many deeply in debt, would find it difficult to survive. In the opinion of the writer the real threat has come with the economic decline of the country with fewer people able to afford the large fees that are necessary today. In addition, with the 'opting out' of many state schools there is bound to be an increasing number of very good schools indeed in the maintained sector thus reducing still further the number of parents who will be prepared to pay fees.

St Mary's Hall is, however, in a very strong position to survive. It may, and probably will, be necessary to accept change over the coming years but the school is well placed geographically, is not in debt and has all the buildings and equipment necessary for the foreseeable future. It is felt, most strongly, that there will always be a demand for good schools for girls - indeed the pendulum will undoubtedly swing the other way when more people realise that coeducation in independent schools is not in the best interests of the great majority of girls.



The Princess Royal, with Miss Conrady, inspects the Guides, 1956

Chapter 8 - Miscellanea

Discipline, Dress, Customs and Traditions, School Names

Discipline and Punishments

Corporal punishment for girls in Independent Schools has always been very rare, though birching seems to have taken place at Casterton. Here also trouble makers were imprisoned in a cage under the stairs. There is no record of such extreme measures being used at St Mary's Hall even in the early days and it would seem that the Lady Superintendent and her staff soon learned that most girls could be punished adequately by an expression of disapproval from their teachers or in an extreme case from a Trustee. Girls could not explain to their brothers how they were disciplined and the boys, who were used to being flogged for every minor offence, could not understand how this mild treatment had the necessary effect.

The School was of course in a strong position for there was always a long waiting list and any girl expelled could be easily replaced. Between 1836 and 1850, ten girls were sent home as 'most unsatisfactory' by order of the Trustees. Pupil No 7, one Mary Ann Jones, aged 16, came in 1836 and was sent home in 1837 as an 'undesirable influence.' Her crime cannot have been very great for the atmosphere of the School in those days was almost certainly somewhat harsh and puritanical like that of most other similar foundations, though from the beginning St Mary's Hall seems to have been happier and more easy going than most.

Notwithstanding the above, the School seemed to have invented some punishments of its own by the late 1850s:

Hours spent lying flat on the back on the Nursery floor

Days spent sitting on the lockers in the large schoolroom, hemming dusters

Solitary meals eaten at a side table in the Dining Room

Being sent to bed frequently throughout the day
And then, as frequently being obliged to get up and dress again

It seems that the culprits got wise to the routine of being sent to bed and used to put their nightdresses on over their day clothes thus ameliorating both phases of the punishment!

In 1869 one old girl recalls: "One afternoon some girls had been sent up to scrub the dormitory. When Miss Newport went up the floor was not dry. So she got every girl in the house and they ironed the floor."

Another old girl writes at the same time.

"We had to stay in on the half-holidays in May and then we had to write down "I have worked diligently, I have done my exercises and I have not talked to my neighbour."

She goes on to say, however,

"we were all very fond of the staff. Sometimes on Sundays Miss Newport used to take us out on the Downs with her pockets full of apples."

Writing lines has gone out of fashion as has sending to bed - most of the younger generation today would hardly regard this as a punishment! Disapproval in various forms still seems to be the most common way of controlling the girls, with detention for the more serious offences.

Dress

The history of school dress has to a large extent been lost in the mists of time. We know the items worn by the first pupils and in 1869 one old girl recalled "...as soon as we arrived we had to put on the uniform, which was a dark sort of purple with a black cloak. We also had to wear bonnets and a bonnet cap which fitted close to the head so that our hair should not soil the bonnets."

This early uniform was provided by the School and the policy was maintained until 1881 when uniform was no longer required. It is not clear when uniform was again introduced but the following clothing regulations and outfit list are from an early prospectus during Miss Ghey's headship, probably just before the First World War.

CLOTHING REGULATIONS

1. Sailor hats with School colours are worn on both Sundays and week-days
2. Woollen underwear is indispensable: for winter it should be thick and warm
3. Neat white frilling or collars should be worn with all dark dresses
4. Slippers and shoes must have low heels
5. Girls in the Lower School wear their dark blue overalls in School till tea-time; little ones then put on white pinafores.
6. A small charge of 4s 9d a term is made for laundry, to cover the washing of blouses, collars, table-napkins, etc
7. All skirts must have pockets
8. All articles (silver included) must be fully marked with the owner's Christian name and Surname
9. All articles enumerated (but not more) should be provided, and replaced or repaired every term
10. Please pack all that is necessary for the first night separately in small bag
11. A watch and two brooches are allowed; no other jewellery may be brought to School

OUTFIT LIST

(School Colours: Dark Blue and Gold)
TO BE PROCURED AT THE SCHOOL

- 2 white sailor hats with School ribbon
- 1 School cap, tie and belt
- 1 drill tunic (dark blue serge)
- 1 garden hat (Summer term)
- 1 pair drill shoes

TO BE BROUGHT FROM HOME

REGULATION DRESS (SUNDAYS)

Dark blue coat and skirt with 2 white shirt-blouses
(In Summer) white serge coat and skirt

(WEEK-DAYS)

- Dark blue every-day dress
(in Summer 2 dark blue cotton dresses)
- 1 lighter frock, or 2 blouses and skirt for evenings
- 1 short dark blue skirt for games
- 2 white flannel blouses for games
- 1 best white muslin frock (high neck and long sleeves)
- 1 dark blue coat (thick in winter)
- Scarf, and at least 2 pairs gloves
- 2 dark blue overalls with long sleeves
- 4 white pinafores (for little ones)
- 2 pairs strong boots or shoes to lace
- 1 pair brown boots for hockey
- 2 pairs house slippers with low heels
- 1 woollen dressing-gown, and bedroom slippers
- 1 dressing-jacket
- 1 warm navy petticoat and 2 white petticoats
- 4 bodices (for winter, woollen, with long sleeves)
- 2 pairs navy knickers, 4 linings
- 4 sets of underwear

3 nightgowns (woollen in winter).
 (If flannelette is used, it must be "Non-Inflammable")
 At least 3 pairs black stockings (not open-work)
 At least 3 pairs brown stockings (not open-work)
 Suspenders
 18 handkerchiefs
 Black hair-ribbon or plain velvet band
 1 shawl
 1 long waterproof
 1 umbrella
 1 rug
 2 bags for linen, 2 for brush, 1 for slippers
 2 bath towels, 2 face towels
 2 pairs small sheets, 2 pillow cases (25x17)
 2 table napkins and ring
 1 clothes brush, 2 brushes and combs
 1 purse to hang round neck
 1 supply of mending materials
 1 blotting-book and stationery
 1 tea-spoon, dessert-spoon and fork
 1 travelling-bag or basket (see rule 10 opposite)
 1 piece of needlework
 1 Bible with references, 1 Revised Bible
 1 Prayer Book and hymns A & M
 1 strip of tape with name 12 times marked

Straw boaters or sailor hats as they were called then, looked most attractive, but in the thirties they became expensive to buy, they got damaged very easily and most schools dropped them as items of uniform after the Second World War. The school cap was an ugly item but I cannot establish how long it was in use.

In the 1920s and 30s the gym slip became a popular item of clothing in girls' schools. There are photographs of St Mary's Hall girls wearing gym slips in classes and for games - the School tie and blouse were still worn underneath! They wore blue overalls for classwork.

The very attractive School cloak was introduced after the Second World War and was originally lined with a gold material. Later house colours were used inside the hands but this item, like the sailor's hat, has now become extremely expensive and is no longer obligatory.

A School Uniform was worn by everyone during the working day until the Second World War. Photographs showing senior girls wearing plain clothes out of school hours indicate that this privilege goes back a long way but it is only since the school reopened that Sixth Formers have been allowed to wear plain clothes all the time.

Records do not show when the present school colours for uniform were introduced. It is believed that they were adopted when the school reopened after the war and they were certainly in use in the 1960s. School uniform has been subject to constant change and simplification due to the increased costs of special clothing and to fashion. The candy striped dresses worn in the Summer Terms from the 1960s to the 1980s became unpopular for instance and in summer the grey skirt is now worn with short sleeved blouses. The current school uniform list is as follows:

Senior School Clothes List

1. Every girl is allocated a competitive house as follows:

1. Adelaide - Orange	3. Babington - Purple
2. Bristol - Blue	4. Chichester - Green
2. Everything on this list must be clearly named. A fine is made for every article that is unnamed.
3. Every girl must bring a copy of the Good News Bible, a Pocket Oxford Dictionary, and a Phillip's Modern School Atlas.
4. All articles should be checked during the holidays to ensure that they are in good repair.

5. The school cannot accept responsibility for jewellery but girls may wear a simple cross or other religious emblem provided it is worn unobtrusively. Watches and valuable pens should be clearly engraved with the owner's name.

DAY GIRLS AND BOARDERS - ALL THREE TERMS

Regulation coat
 Regulation grey pleated skirts
 Regulation blue blazer with badge (badge in house competitive colour)
 Blue-striped cotton blouses, long or short sleeved
 Cardigans or V-necked jumpers
 Mid-grey and/or white $\frac{3}{4}$ length socks and/or tights (plain black or grey)
 Blue overall (named outside)
 Music case (for music students)
 "Book-bag" with shoulder strop (preferable a back-pack)

PE Equipment To be named on the outside

It would be helpful if instructions given for naming certain items are followed exactly - this helps the staff to ensure girls do not borrow each other's clothes.

Large shoe bag (pillow case size)
 Regulation games sweatshirt
 Plain navy jogging pants
 Regulation navy skirt - embroidered initials in competitive house colour, at bottom left hand corner
 Regulation white games shirts - embroidered initials in competitive house colour, left lapel
 Navy ankle or $\frac{3}{4}$ socks
 Navy pants
 Pair white plimsolls or trainers not training boots
 Pair lacrosse boots
 Regulation royal blue swimming costume (named front left leg)
 Swimming cap (competitive house colour)

Swimming towel with loop for hanging on wothd of towel, name tape by loop

Lacrosse stick - Form 1 upwards)
 Tennis racquet - Summer Term only) Can be bought from school with written permission of parents

Optional Items

Scarf
 Gloves (plain brown, grey or navy)
 Purse belt
 Tennis whites

Shoes

Sensible shoes in plain black, brown or grey

Summer Term only

Short sleeved blouses may be worn with grey pleated skirts.



The Old Dining Room, 1965. (Room K and Staff Sitting Room name)

Customs and Traditions

Washing In the late 1860s an old girl wrote "we used to have two basins in our dormitories. They were both filled, one for night and one for morning. They were very particular about our washing."

There was often ice on the basins in the mornings and it was not until 1870 that hot and cold water was laid on to the dormitories; without proper bathrooms personal hygiene must have been difficult if not impossible. The washing of hair must have been infrequent and this is no doubt why bonnet caps were required to protect the bonnets from greasy hair.

The records are extremely hazy about the provision of bathrooms but it is unlikely that the first baths became available before the 1890 improvements to dormitories.

Routine The girls got up at 6.00 or 6.30 in Miss Newport's day and were given an hour to dress. They then had long prayers and a lecture, presumably religious, before breakfast. An old girl recalled that they always had quantities of rhubarb jam for breakfast and every morning had to recite two verses of scripture. Her ambition was to get into the Sixth Form to learn the Articles of Religion.

Another old girl remembers that they learnt a great deal of scripture in those days. During each of the two terms they had to learn 18 Psalms, all the Collects for the term, four or five chapters from the New Testament, the Catechism and half of the 39 Articles and Scripture proofs for each bit. They had one hour of Scripture lesson each morning after breakfast.

At the turn of the Century the daily routine was not quite so harsh

7.00	Bell	2.0-4.0	Recreation, Walks, Gardening, etc
7.45	Breakfast		
8.30	Garden	4.0-5.0	Preparation
9.00	Prayers	5.15	Tea
9.15	Lessons	6.00	Prayers
11.15	Lunch in Garden	6.15	Prep for Seniors
11.45	Lessons		Recreation for Juniors
1.30	Dinner	7.17	Supper + Bed for Juniors
		7.45	Recreation for Seniors
		8.15	Supper+Bed for Seniors

This was of course a routine suitable for an all boarding school and included Saturdays. Wednesday was a half-day.

By the 1920s some modification had been made to this daily routine, but the framework remained essentially the same. One could imagine that the 1930s saw some radical change as the numbers of day girls increased though we have no record of how or when this was done.

As the School became predominantly a day school, the daily routine changed to the routine that is used today with minor variations from time to time.

The present day routine is as follows:

	07.25	Wake up
	08.10	Breakfast
	09.40	Registration followed by normal school day
	10.30	Break
	12.50 - 1400	Lunch
	16.00	Afternoon Tea
	16.30 - 18.30	Preparation
From	18.00	girls may swim, use the IT Room, Music Cells and Library with permission
	19.00	Return to Boarding House

21.00 - 22.30 Bed, according to age

The Sixth Form have a slightly different routine with Common Room cleared and T.V. off at 22.30, with bed and lights out at 23.00.

This routine is for Monday - Friday

Boarding routine over Saturdays and Sundays is nowadays very much more flexible with growing numbers of weekly boarders.

Exeats in the Autumn and Spring Terms may be taken on any week-end but in the Summer Term there are two fixed long exeats in addition.

Rules and Regulations

Most independent girls schools have a tradition of a large number of rules and regulations. St Mary's Hall seems to have come out of this rather well - there have always been rules of course, they are necessary in an organisation such as a school - but St Mary's Hall seems to have escaped the usual plethora. The only written rules I have come across apply to Day Girls in their early days and some of these seem quaint today.

"Parents are asked to limit the girls' attendance at places of entertainment as much as possible during term, in the girls' own interests, and to confine evening entertainments to Saturdays only."

"Parents are requested to consult the Headmistress before permission is given to a girl to take part in any out of school activities."

Traditions

There do not appear to be many left today. Until quite recently only Sixth Formers were allowed to use the front door - every other girl had to use the Pupils' Door between the Main Building and the Elliott Wing.

Traffic on the staircases had to keep to the left. This was the firm rule

despite the fact that it deprived those going upstairs of the assistance of the bannisters!

The steps down past the Rockery were apparently known as the Postman's Steps. The postman used this approach to the School in the days before the universal use of postal vans for all deliveries.

The Chrysanthemum used to be, and still is, the School's floral emblem. There was once a School Crest designed with the flower as the central motif and a white chrysanthemum is still worn by girls being confirmed. There are also special gowns for confirmands which are still used and the origin of which is unknown - it is known that they were being used as long ago as 1919.



Opening of the Pool, 1976

School Names

Many names are used, or have been used, in the School, the reason for which may not be apparent today.

BABINGTON, The Reverend John (later Canon)

A friend of the Founder's at Cambridge and one of the original Trustees. He was a generous benefactor of the School and after the Founder's death he served as Honorary Secretary of the Trustees for twenty years.

CHICHESTER, The Earl of

Like Canon Babington, he was one of the original Trustees and Benefactors. After the death of the Founder he played an important role in the running of the School devoting 49 years in all to this work.

BRISTOL, The Marquess of

Gave much of the land on which the School now stands and generous personal and financial support to the School for many years. Built the main fabric of St Mark's for the School and for the Parish.

ADELAIDE, Her Majesty Queen

First Patroness of the School and Benefactor together with His Majesty King William IV. After the death of the King she continued to take a great interest in St Mary's Hall and remained its Patroness and Benefactor until her death in 1850.

YENN, The Family Name of Charles Elliott's second wife, Eling.

This name was given to the Founder and used again in subsequent generations of the family.

ST HILARY

A St Hilary (AD 449) was Bishop of Arles and another St Hilary (AD 368) was Bishop of Poitiers. Why this name was chosen for a School House, one cannot imagine, unless this was the original name given to No 2 Sussex

Square by its previous owners.

GLOUCESTER

An early association exists between Duchesses of Gloucester and St Mary's Hall, Her Royal Highness having visited the School in 1848. In 1989 another Duchess of Gloucester visited us and opened the new Junior School. Her Royal Highness also gave her permission for the new building to be named after her.

CHRONOLOGY

1830	Accession of King William IV and Queen Adelaide
1831	The Founder visits Cowan Bridge
1832	First School Prospectus
1834	21st April Foundation Stone of St Mary's Hall laid
1835	Foundation of Brighton Police Force
1836	1st August School opens
1837	Death of the King. Accession of Queen Victoria
1840	Brighton - Shoreham Railway opened Penny Post introduced
1841	Brighton - London Railway opened
1843	N.E. Wing built
1845	Death of School Architect, Mr George Basevi
1848	Visit of H.R.H the Duchess of Gloucester
1849	St Mark's Church consecrated
1850	Christmas Holidays introduced
1854-56	Crimean War
1859	15th February Death of the Marquess of Bristol
1861	Outbreak of American Civil War
1865	Death of Founder, the Reverend H V Elliott End of American Civil War
1867	Outside examiners used for the first time 16th October - First Founder's Day held
1870	N.W. Wing built Foundation of the St Mary's Hall Association
1872	First examinations set by University of Cambridge
1876	First local public examinations of the Cambridge Syndicate taken by girls of St Mary's Hall
1881	1st January School Uniform discontinued
1885	Completion of the Sanatorium (now the Art Block) First record of Science being taught.
1890	Improvements to dormitories N.W. Wing
1896	27th October Visit of H.R.H. The Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein

- 1898 October Elliott Wing built
- 1899 Opening of Elliott Wing by H.R.H. Princess Christian
- 11th October Outbreak of the Boer War
- 1900 18th May Relief of Mafeking celebrations
- 1901 22nd January Death of Queen Victoria
- Accession of King Edward VII
- 1902 31st May End of Boer War
- 1903 Science Laboratory built (now the Home Economics Rooms)
- 1907 17th December First Concert given by a School Orchestra
- 1908 First day girls accepted
- 16th February H.M King Edward VII attended morning service in St Mark's. St Mary's Hall girls were in the congregation
- 1910 Original Elliott Hall completed
- St Mary's Hall inspected and 'recognised' as efficient by the Board of Education
- Death of King Edward VII. Accession of H.M. King George V
- 1914 Two houses in Hervey Terrace purchased
- 22nd October Commendation by Council of the Royal Drawing Society
- Outbreak of Great War
- 1915 18th February Easter Holidays instituted
- 1918 11th November Armistice. Thanksgiving Service in St Mark's
- 1920 September Opening of St Hilary, 2 Sussex Square
- October St Mary's Hall recognised by Board of Education for the teachers to join the State Superannuation Scheme
- 1921 22nd November Visit of H.R.H. the Princess May
- Two further houses in Hervey Terrace 'purchased for use as additional classrooms
- No 22 Sussex Square purchased and opened as a Junior School. Known as St Nicholas House
- 1926 No 21 Sussex Square purchased for use by Junior Boarders
- 1928 Electric Lighting Installation begins
- 1930 No 4 Clarendon Terrace purchased and opened for boarding as Hebbert House
- 1933 Nos 2 and 3 Chichester Terrace purchased and opened for boarding

- as Babington House
- Partial central heating installed in the Hall
- 1934 Hebbert House closed
- 1936 Centenary Year
- January Death of King George V Accession of H.M. King Edward VIII
- 1937 Hebbert House, No 4 Clarendon Terrace, sold
- 1939 Outbreak of Second World War
- 1940 Closure of School at end of Summer Term
- Buildings requisitioned by War Department
- 1943 Bombing of Hervey Terrace
- 1946 Re-opening of Babington House as a School for Junior Day Girls
- 1947 22nd February Thanksgiving Service in St Mark's for the re-opening of the School
- Senior School re-opens
- 1948 Nos 21/22 Sussex Square re-opened as St Hilary
- 1951 Opening of Elliott House - 25 September
- 1952 Death of H.M. King George VI.
- Accession of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II
- Home Economics Room refurbished and opened on present site
- 1953 Coronation of H.M. The Queen
- Sir Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tensing conquer Mt Everest
- 1956 30th May Visit by H.R.H. The Princess Royal
- 1957 House System introduced
- 1967 New Dining Hall and Kitchen constructed
- Room K and L and Staff Sitting Room established
- Babington House, 2/3 Chichester Terrace sold
- 1971 New Hall, Classrooms and Music Rooms built
- 1973 Sanatorium converted for use by the Art Department
- 1975/76 Swimming Pool Complex built. Opened 7th May 1976
- 1981 Venn House built. Opened 10th October 1981
- 1982 Cafeteria system introduced
- 1983 September School participates in the Assisted Places Scheme
- New classroom block built for Junior School (new Mathematics Department)

- 1986 150th Anniversary
- 1987 15th/16th October Hurricane!
St Mark's returned to St Mary's Hall
Technology Room equipped and in use
- 1988 South Field sold
1st April St Hilary Fire
- 1989 Gloucester House opened by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester on
20th October
- 1990 Elliott House converted from Boarding House for use as classrooms
by Junior School

Bibliography

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2. Annual Reports issued by the Trustees 1837 - 1943
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4. Records of Trustees and Governors 1836 - 1992
5. Life of the Reverend H.V. Elliott by Josuah Bateman (Macmillan 1868)
6. The Best Type of Girl by Gillian Avery (Deutsch 1991)
7. History of St Mary's Hall by Mr T J Elliott (1986)

Headmistresses of St Mary's Hall

1836 - 1857	Miss Tomkinson
1857 - 1861	Mrs Mills
1861 - 1862	Miss Woods
1862 - 1884	Miss Maria Newport
1884 - 1898	Miss Christina Macdowall Birrell
1898 - 1911	Miss Edith Potter
1911 - 1936	Miss Fanny Louise Ghey
1936 - 1940	Miss Evelyn E Stopford
1946 - 1950	Miss Harriet Robinson
1950 - 1965	Miss Doris Conrady
1965 - 1973	Miss Norah <u>Olwen</u> Davies
1973 - 1981	Mrs Elizabeth <u>Olive</u> Ethel Stuart Leslie
1981 - 1988	Miss Mary Frances <u>Clare</u> Harvey
1988 - 1992	Mrs Mary <u>Teresa</u> Broadbent
1992 -	Mrs Pamela Joy James