

THE STORY OF
ST ELPHIN'S SCHOOL
1844-1944

by
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1910 - 1933

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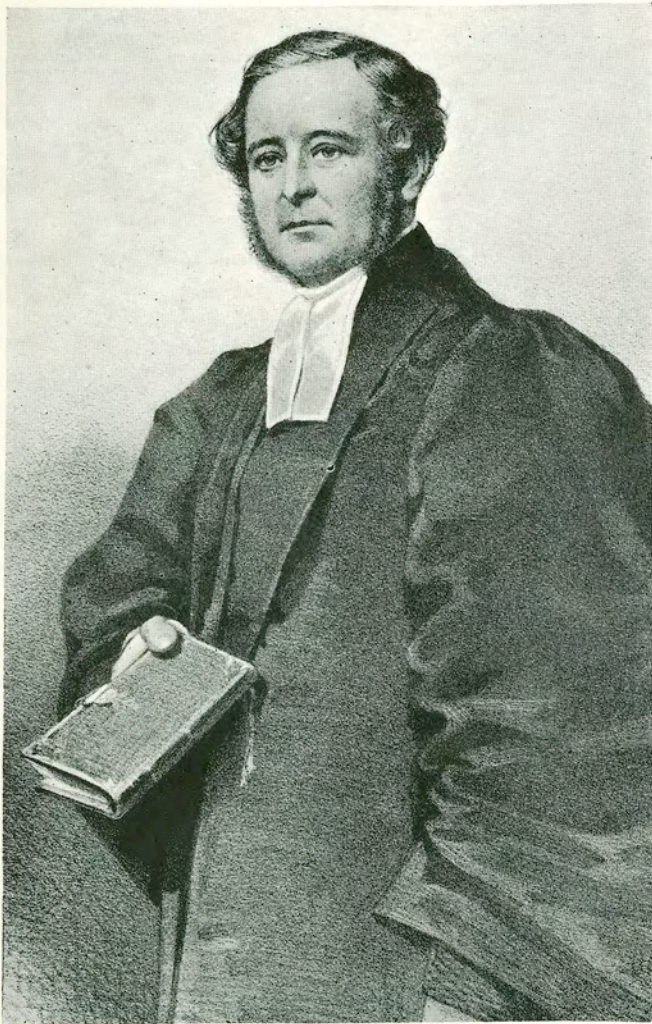
AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am greatly indebted in the compilation of this story of St. Elphin's School to Members of its Governing Body, especially the Bishop of Warrington, the Rector of Warrington and Mrs. Fletcher.

Valuable information taken from early minutes and records has been given to me by the Rector of Warrington, and I owe him my special thanks not only for this information but also for his generous and ready help in revision of the manuscript and in the matter of printing.

My thanks are also due to Mr. G. H. Smith, who most helpfully supplied me with all relevant reports available, and to the Head Mistress, Miss Stopford, who kindly read the manuscript.

M.L.F.



The Hon. and Rev. HORACE POWYS
The Founder of the School.

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CHAPTER ONE

ALTHOUGH St. Elphin's School was actually founded in the year 1844, its roots go back to a much earlier date. It can, in fact, trace its origin to the year 1697.

Amongst the Religious Activities of the period the work of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was begun. One of the original objects of the S.P.C.K. was the establishment of Charity Schools in and about London, which set before them the object of educating the children of the poor in the '3 R's' and in the principles of the Church Catechism. It was during this same period that an Institution was founded at Warrington with the object of granting Pensions to Widows and Adult Orphan Daughters of Clergymen within the old Archdeaconry of Chester.

The following extract is taken from the original Minute Book dated 1697 :—'Whereas ye Reverend Clergy of ye Archdeaconry of Chester are determined to have a yearly meeting at Warrington on ye first Tuesday in June every yeare, then and there to make a collection for ye widdows and children of such of ye poore clergy as within ye said Archdeaconry at their deaths left their families in very narrow circumstances. It is thought fit yt the following rules be observed for the better regulating the said meeting and distributing the said charitable contributions.'

Then follow certain arrangements for meetings at Warrington annually, for services at the Parish Church, a dinner and the collection of funds for the purposes aforesaid.

The meetings were to be held after prayers 'read by the incumbent' in the Parish Church, together with a sermon 'tending to the encouragement of this charitable designe'. The Service was to begin at 11 a.m.

The Preacher was to have two substitutes so that the audience might not be disappointed of a suitable discourse in the event of the 'death or sicknesse' of the nominated Preacher.

The sermon at the first meeting of the Institution on June 3rd, 1697, was preached by Edmund Entwistle, D.D., Archdeacon and Prebendary of Chester. The Sermon was printed, and a copy is still in existence. The dedication is a most illuminating statement on the poverty of the clergy.

There is a rule relating to the order in going to and from the Church, and in 'placeing' themselves at Dinner, the chief place naturally being that of the 'Rt. Reverend ye Bp (if his Lordship be there)'. The next in order were the Preacher, the Incumbent, the Stewards and lastly the rest of the Clergy who 'shall dispose themselves in such order as their own Prudence and Humilitie shall direct'.

The Stewards were to provide the estimated number of 'ordinarys', which were to be 'as cheap as may be . . . to avoid Scandal of excefs and luxury'.

The rules also lay down regulations as to the moderate provision of wine and ale within strict limits, both for the guests at dinner and for the servants.

The collection was to be made in 'a secret manner', so that the charity might be 'not of necessity, but of a willing mind'.

No 'publick state matters' were to be discussed, and nothing was to be proposed but what directly and immediately related to this 'particular charitable designe.'

From its foundation until the year 1829, the supporters of this Institution met annually at Warrington. In 1828 it was resolved that henceforth (i.e., after 1829) the Anniversary should be held at Liverpool, Manchester and Warrington alternately, and this was the actual practice for a time.

After an interval of about thirty years, there was a return to the earlier and original custom of holding the annual meeting at Warrington. Thus, the Institution of 1697 became known as 'The Warrington Institutions'.



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WARRINGTON - 1844

I myself well remember these great Anniversary occasions in the years between 1896 and 1900, the service in the Parish Church, the dinner on not too mean a scale, with the moderate provision of wine for the guests and a small barrel of beer set up for the servitors of the repast in the Staff Common Room!

In 1702 a permanent Corporation was formed, able to hold land and monies and receive benefactions by will. In 1720 we find the Society with a balance of £218 in hand, which was to be put 'upon a mortgage for the use of the Society'.

As time went on it became evident that help was not only needed for the relief of the Widows and Adult Orphan Daughters of the Clergy, but also for the younger children whose education had to be considered. Moreover, there were Clergymen still living and officiating within the same Archdeaconry who were suffering from great poverty and whose children needed help if they were to be suitably educated.

Accordingly in 1837 a Committee was appointed to prepare for a 'female Orphan School' for the education of the children of Clergymen, as a collateral branch of the Institution for the relief of the Widows and Orphans of Clergymen who had officiated within the Archdeaconry of Chester. In 1841 this Committee was authorised to expend the amount then collected for this purpose in the erection of a suitable building on the site procured in the neighbourhood of Warrington from J. Ireland Blackburne, Esq., M.P. This building was taken possession of by the subscribers to the Parent Institution in August, 1843.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously :—

- (1) That relief from this institution be confined to the families of those clergymen who subscribe or make Parochial collections annually for the benefit of this or the Parent Institution . . .
- (2) That the Balance Sheet now presented for the erection of the building be passed and that an Infirmary according to plans produced be sanctioned provided that sufficient funds can be raised . . . without incurring a debt upon the Parent Institution.

A Committee of Management for the School was appointed at the same time.

This Committee of Management was authorised to make provision for the education of two classes of young persons under the supervision of a married Clergyman.

The two classes of young persons were:—(1) The daughters of Clergymen who 'have officiated or are officiating' in the Archdeaconry of Chester; (2) Young persons in training as Elementary School Mistresses.

In 1844, on January 15th, the School was opened with three pupils admitted under class (1) and two under class (2).

The Rector of Warrington at this time was the Hon. and Rev. Horace Powys, who was a great believer in Christian education. He was a moving spirit in the foundation of our Clergy Daughters' School, of the Warrington Training College, and the Chester Training College. He also in 1833 built the Parochial and Mount Schools in the parish.

So much did he interest himself in the establishment of the School that he has always been honoured as its Founder.

Mr. Powys was honorary treasurer of the School from its inception until he left Warrington in 1854 to become Bishop of Sodor and Man. He was succeeded by Rev. Richard Greenall as honorary treasurer while he himself continued as honorary secretary.

When Mr. Powys resigned the treasurership, £17,650 4s. 11d. had been spent on buildings and furnishing. There was a debt on the School of £2,233 9s. 6d. His zeal for the School must have refused to recognise any impossibilities, for when the auditors checked his accounts at the end of his stewardship it was found that he had spent out of his own pocket no less than £4,120 5s. 2d. on the buildings, furniture and maintenance of the School. He also issued a private appeal to his friends for help in clearing the outstanding debt of £2,233.

Though in 1837, when the question of a school was first raised it was resolved that a Committee should be appointed, the government and welfare of the school seems

to have been very much in the hands of Mr. Powys, for on his retirement from the Rectory at Warrington, a special meeting of the Institution resolved "that a Committee of 12 Clergymen and 12 Laymen *be appointed* by the general body of subscribers . . . and that this Committee *shall* present a report of their proceedings for the approval of the subscribers at their Anniversary Meetings".

After he became Bishop of Sodor and Man, he still maintained his keen interest in the School as Honorary Secretary, and rooms were set apart for his occupation whenever he came to visit it, one of which was known later when occupied by schoolgirls as 'The Bishop's Dormitory'. The furniture of these rooms was given to the School after the Bishop's death by his family, and some of it still exists—the two gate-tables and some old chairs.

There is a description of this evidently cheerful and active Bishop given by an early member of the School (the late Mrs. Robinson) as to how he made a practical test of the service-lift to the dining room. The girls were seated at the tables when suddenly a rattling of chains was heard in the lift-cupboard, and there emerged into the midst of the excited company the cheery little Bishop himself!

The name of the School—St. Elphin's—is interesting, a name which it shares with The Parish Church at Warrington.

St. Elphin is in Domesday Book called Sanctus Elfinus, and in the very early book-plates of the School the Saint is referred to as 'Elfin'. He appears to have been one of a band of priest-teachers introduced in 638 A.D., by Oswald, the Christian King of Northumbria, who had an outpost at Winwick, and at Warrington possessed 'The Ford' across the River Mersey which divided Northumbria from Mercia. This ford was the only passage across the river, and by it was a rude settlement. Here lived and preached Elfin. In 642 Penda, King of Mercia, crossed the ford to give battle to Oswald at Maserfield, and in the preliminary skirmish, Elfin was slain.

The site of the Old School, 'the Mount' as it was called in later times, continuing the early name 'Mote Hill', was excavated in 1832 and 1841 and was found to be the

burial place of the cremated remains of a number of human bodies, together with those of animals. The Mercian method of the disposal of the dead was by cremation, and Elfin would be amongst those cremated.

In an early prospectus of the School (dated 1854) we find the following:—

‘The object aimed at in the Institution at Warrington, established 1844, is to elevate the pupils above the station in life to which their poverty would necessarily have degraded them. An education is provided for them which is superior in every respect to that of ordinary private establishments; whilst the domestic arrangements are such as to secure to them every healthful comfort and every indulgence which is consistent with Scholastic discipline.’

In another early document directions are laid down for the conduct of the School under Governors, Clerical Principal, Ladies’ Committee and the Chief Governess.

The Clerical Principal who was to be resident was not only charged with the religious instruction of the pupils, but also with their general education and moral discipline. ‘He is to endeavour to exhibit all zeal, devotion and kindness, in order to lead his charges to habits of sound piety, and to establish among them a high tone of principle with regard to all the duties of life.’

The ‘Chief Governess’, as the Head Mistress was then named, seems to have been so much hedged about with Governors, Ladies’ Committee and Clerical Principal that one wonders how she carried out the functions that were ascribed to her in connection with the secular education and the domestic training, which latter be it noted, was also in conjunction with the Clerical Principal.

Although she nominally had the appointment of her Staff of Assistant ‘Governesses’ she might only have such as The Ladies’ Committee ‘deemed desirable’!

In October, 1847, the land on which the School was erected at Warrington was leased by John Ireland Blackburne to Trustees, viz., The Bishop of Chester, the Hon. and Rev. Horace Powys, the Rev. James John Hornby, the Right Hon. Edward Geoffrey Smith, Baron Stanley, and The Rev. Frank George Hopwood.

In 1867 there was an extension of the objects of the School.

A good education was to be given on extremely advantageous terms (1) (a) To the Orphan daughters of Clergy who in their last sphere of duty officiated in the Archdeaconries of Chester, Liverpool and Manchester ; (b) To the daughters of Clergy still serving in these Archdeaconries.

(2) To the daughters of the Clergy of any Diocese.

The funds for these objects were to be and actually continued to be maintained from the following sources :—

(a) Grants from the Parent Institution ; (b) Pupils' payments ; (c) Subscriptions, Church Collections and donations ; (d) Occasional legacies ; (e) Interest on invested funds.

By 1867 also it had become obvious that not every girl entered as a pupil in the School was fitted to pass on to the Training Department for School Mistresses.

This possibility had been considered at the outset, for it is stated 'Should any pupils, being above the age of 12 years, have been sent to the Institution in order to be prepared to fill the situation of a Governess, and be found so deficient in attainments or capacity as to preclude hope of their benefiting by the advantages of the Institution in such a manner as to qualify them for the situation of Governess—notice thereof shall be forthwith transmitted to their friends by the Secretary of the Governors.'

In 1867, therefore, the two sections of the Institution were separated. They remained side by side under the same Governing Body in the main, and under the same Clerical direction, until Canon Willis, Rector of Warrington, became Honorary Chaplain of the School in 1889. Canon Morley Stevenson at the same time relinquished the Chaplaincy of the School, and continued as Clerical Principal of the Training College.

The actual building in which the school was housed was dignified ; the style of its architecture was good, and in many respects picturesque, especially its windows with their tracery and diamond panes.

In a letter from Dora Pollitt (*née* Bell, 1883–1889) she writes: ‘The building itself, dignified and impressive without, was equally individual and interesting within. The large schoolroom with a massive stone fire-place above which were displayed the Arms of the Dioceses of Manchester, Chester and Liverpool, and a great window filled with fine stone tracery, the Library with a spacious oriel window looking out upon the terrace and another from which the beautiful spire of the Parish Church was always visible, the long passages and twisting stone stairs—not to mention an underground passage leading mysteriously from the playroom, some said, to the Church crypt—were some of the distinguishing features in the school of these days.’

Further land was acquired in 1872 and the purchase money for this was taken from moneys which had been given by Mr. Humphrey Nicholls.

Of this bequest is the story that one day a strange figure was seen sitting on the grass slope below the approach to the School (The Mount) eating sandwiches.

It was thought he was a tramp and he was bidden to take himself off. However, the supposed tramp did nothing of the sort but came up to the front door and drew out of his pocket £500 in notes for the School Fund. This story was vouched for as authentic by Leah Mussell successively kitchen maid, cook and housekeeper of the School for over fifty years, who had witnessed the scene as a very young maid.

The Rev. W. Quekett, Rector of Warrington’s account of how this eccentric man, poorly dressed, visited him on two occasions, is in keeping with this story. He walked into the Rectory, hat on head, to produce, literally from his hat on the first occasion £7,500, mostly £5 or £10 notes, and on the second occasion £5,000.

The Widows’ and Orphans’ Society received £10,000 and the Clergy Daughters’ School £2,500 from this gentleman.

Between 1872 and 1881 sundry small parcels of land were added to the School, but from 1881–1904 which marked the end of the Warrington chapter, there seem to have been no further additions.

During the latter part of the 19th Century, Warrington became a busy industrial centre.

The original School, to judge from the old book-plates, was founded in comparatively countrified surroundings. Gradually, however, works of various kinds were established and the atmosphere grew more smoke-laden and less fitted for a residential school. What finally drove the School Authorities to recognise that a change of environment was necessary was an outbreak of scarlet fever.

In 1904, therefore, at the request of the parents and at the instigation of the Head Mistress at that time, Miss C. L. Kennedy, and of Canon Wilson, then Archdeacon of Rochdale, the decision was made that the School should be moved.

It was suggested that there were two alternatives.

(1) To take a house for temporary occupation while a new School could be built.

(2) To purchase some existing house and grounds and to transfer the School thither during the summer of 1904.

The first alternative was rejected, and it remained, therefore, to consider the second.

Two houses were proposed as worthy of consideration ; one of these was Massey Hall, near Thelwall, belonging to Mrs. Peter Rylands ; the other was Darley Dale Hydro, near Matlock.

The former was not really suitable for the purpose. The second, however, presented many advantages. The house itself was very suitable for adaptation for a Boarding School in respect of bedrooms and classrooms and there was plenty of scope for adding to the building. It was, too, in lovely country, and it seemed that a school in such healthy surroundings, under so distinguished a Head Mistress, would be a certain success. Miss Kennedy and Mrs. Flood had visited Darley Dale and reported the building and its grounds as completely suitable for a new home for the school.

It was decided therefore to choose the Darley Dale Hydro, to be the future home of the School.

CHAPTER TWO

AFTER the decision was made, the whole school visited Darley Dale during the Summer Term and we were at once in love with it. We explored the house in every corner and also the delightful grounds in which we had our picnic lunch, quenching our thirst with herb-beer purchased from a nearby cottage.

Then followed the tremendous undertaking of the actual removal. I shall never forget the dismay with which we saw the Hall at Darley Dale school piled to the ceiling of the gallery with the Warrington furniture which looked unspeakably dirty and dingy, and with huge packing cases.

Canon Wilson was most energetic and cheerful, helped with the unpacking, cut down trees in the style of the G.O.M., and read to us when we were wearied out with our labours. When the girls returned, he took them for long walks over the countryside, and generally looked after us all. I think that he and Miss Kennedy may rightly be considered the 'Second Founders' of the School, as it was owing to their persistence and tireless energy that it began its new life at Darley Dale. For some years Canon Wilson continued to visit the school and to take the chapel services from time to time. He also gave us the most delightful lectures on all sorts of subjects, sometimes astronomy, sometimes geology and most fascinating studies of the Gospels. He gave us our School Motto: "*Nisi Dominus Frustra*".

Before long, additions were made to the School. A Sanatorium was built. This was, of course, a necessity, although every care possible had been taken of the health of the girls in the Warrington school and in the sickroom in the Darley Dale School. The difficulties of maintaining the health of the girls at Warrington in later days has already been mentioned. A letter of earlier times from Amy Bell (1887-1894), however, states: 'we must have had a very good health record—due, perhaps, to the plain and wholesome fare. Sweets were an extreme rarity—jam likewise. An annual blackberrying expedition to Helsby and Frodsham was a delight in itself and provided

the jam for subsequent Sundays—the more we gathered, the more the jam. Medical treatment, as I recall it, consisted of (a) Nitre for a cold in the head ; (b) A tallow plaster for a cold on the chest ; (c) Dr. Gregory's powder for all other ills.'

The new Sanatorium at Darley Dale was well designed and self-contained, under the devoted care of Nurse Hill ('Little Nurse') who lived in it with a maid. By this time methods of treatment in sickness had progressed, and the health of the girls continued to be very good.

The last portion to be constructed during Miss Kennedy's Head Mistress-ship was the up-to-date dormitory, having cubicles with fixed partitions for each girl.

Each cubicle had its own window and was fitted with basins with hot and cold water.

While I was Head Mistress there the Gymnasium was added. At Warrington the Gymnasium had to serve also as Sanatorium, and while there was in it a distinct advance on the calisthenics of very early days, the costume worn was somewhat cumbersome and must have prevented the freedom of movement thought essential nowadays. Amy Bell writes : 'I remember well the thrill of those first experiences and the novelty of the costume (a striking contrast to the costume of these days)—stout navy blue serge tunic with light blue sailor collar and voluminous knickers, and I also recall the diffidence of some of the Seniors at wearing such unusual garb'.

There were also added the reconstructed Chapel, the Annexe, and the Junior Wing built on the plan of the Derbyshire open-air Schools. Two Tennis Courts adjoining the hockey ground were given by the Archdeacons and Canons of the interested Dioceses and were named Archdeacons' Court and Canons' Court respectively. There was a third grass court below the terrace, overshadowed by the copper-beech tree, which caused much trouble to the players. This has now been replaced by a hard court, thanks, to Miss Hudson, my successor, and the hindrance is no longer there.

Games have always played an important part of school life both at Warrington (where hockey on the terrace was

carried on under difficulties, one of them being the proclivity of the ball to rush into the strong-smelling moat alongside) and at Darley Dale. The school has held its own in matches with other schools in hockey, tennis, cricket and lacrosse, and competition was stimulated by the inter-house matches and the cups awarded. Matches between staff and school provided much amusement in Miss Kennedy's days, but in later days became a really serious affair with more equally matched teams!

Miss Hudson also made important improvements in the main school building through the alteration of classrooms and the construction of a Common Room, which was greatly needed.

Further alterations in the Chapel to increase the accommodation were also made.

In April, 1943, after Miss Stopford's appointment, the Governors decided to lease 'Rotherwood', a house immediately opposite the school, to provide extra accommodation for the growing numbers.

There are at the time of writing nineteen girls and two mistresses sleeping at 'Rotherwood'. This has freed two dormitories over at School for middle-school sitting rooms. The Staff have the use of the attractive garden at 'Rotherwood'.

The move into country surroundings immediately led to a further extension in the scope of the School. The daughters of Laymen of the Church were admitted as a regular class of fee-paying pupils. At Warrington, by special favour of the Committee, Miss Kennedy's nieces had been admitted, but from the time that the School was moved to Darley Dale, Lay pupils have formed a regular part of the School. The first Lay pupil was Elinor Blomfield (Mrs. Maul) who, in the days before women had the vote, was active in the Women's Suffrage Movement.

In 1933 day-boarders and weekly boarders were admitted. This was a distinct advantage to the School finances, and it was clear that the scheme also met the needs of the children of the neighbourhood. There followed a rapid increase in numbers, so that the 44 pupils in the School when Miss Kennedy became Head Mistress in 1896 have become 214 in 1943 with a waiting-list.

CHAPTER THREE

THERE are very few actual records of the early days of the life of the School, but there are from time to time very illuminating side-lights from prospectuses, a few reports, and the recollections of early members of the School.

The subjects of the curriculum set forth in the earliest (not dated) prospectus available are divided into Religious and General. Under 'Religious' the pupils were to be taught Holy Scripture, Daily and Occasional services of the Church, Church Catechism, Church History and The Articles. Under 'General' they were to study English Grammar and Reading, History and Geography, Writing and Arithmetic, French and Latin, Music and Drawing, Calisthenic Exercises. In the same prospectus, which gives an indication of its early date, there is an Inventory List, which certainly deserves study for comparison with modern requirements. Apart from normal requirements in the way of clothing and footgear, there are some items startling to modern ideas, e.g., Two plain straw bonnets, a warm cloak and a shawl for winter, a shawl or black mantle for summer, four Day Shifts, Four Night Shifts, Three or four night caps, Six pairs of white cotton stockings, four pairs of lambs' wool stockings, Two pockets, One pair of clogs, White bonnet ribbons for Summer, Dark blue for winter, and a *new* umbrella.

From an early pupil of the School, the late Mrs. Robinson, come one or two vignettes of the regime of the early days. One is of the Head Mistress (or Chief Governess) sitting at her desk in the "Big" Schoolroom at Warrington with the various classes of girls round her, superintending their studies which mostly took the form of learning by heart from various books of question and answer. Even the 'Select Class' comprising the three Senior Girls who generally "did" their lessons with the Head Mistress, had to learn little Catechisms of Heraldry, Botany and Astronomy, and doubtless Magnall's Questions and Dr. Brewer's Child's Guide to Knowledge. The latter work I certainly had in my own nursery days and very strange (for a young child) items of information were to be found in it, such as the diseases to which corn is liable and how

pins were made. I remember my mother telling me that she learnt from little Catechisms at her Boarding School—one variety being 'Mythology'.

Life at school may not have been so dull, however, as this seems to suggest, for Miss Rose, the daughter of a former master of the Warrington Blue Coat School, remembers her father speaking of Charles Dickens, who, as a visitor to the Rectory, was taken across to the school to read to the girls. Dickens' readings were famous on both sides of the Atlantic. They would not lack appreciation in S. Elphin's School.

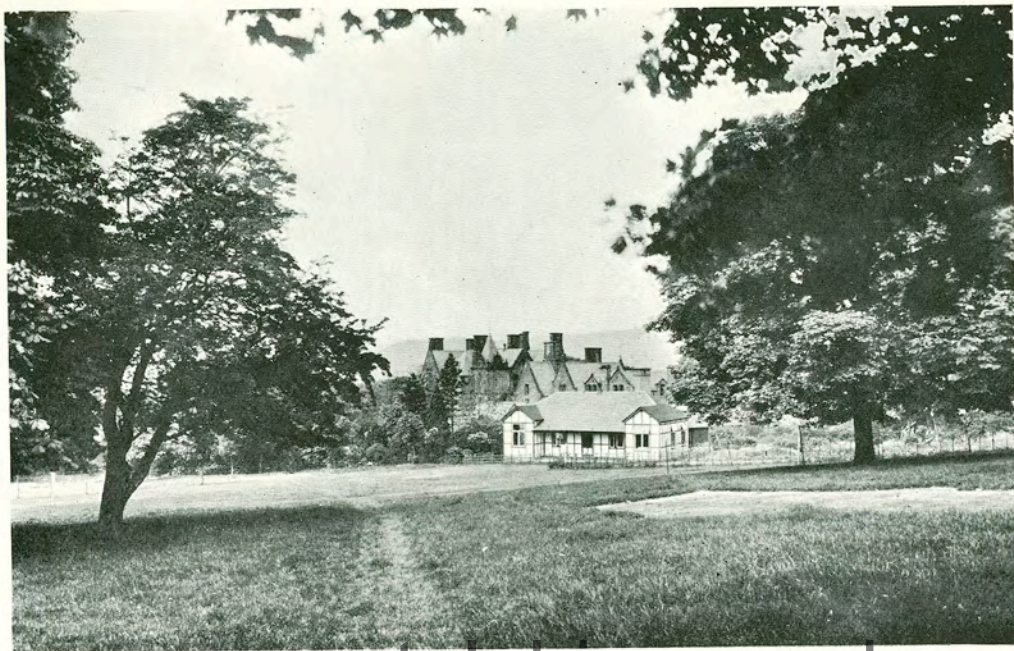
In the Dormitories with their curtained cubicles strange customs seem to have prevailed, e.g., the Assistant Mistresses had to travel round them with the request "Montrez les doigts, s'il vous plaît" and woe betide the girl whose finger-nails came below the standard required. Again there is the picture of a line of girls each tugging hard to pull tight the stay-laces of the one in front of her.

Until 1879 there were only two terms in the full school year. In 1880, after a long discussion, three terms were adopted. The difficulty and expense of travelling were the great objections to the change.

As time went on, however, the type of education changed from the question-and-answer method, and we find from actual reports that by 1882, in Miss Beal's Head Mistress-ship classification into Forms had begun. In her report, Miss Beal states: "The new system of classification in forms only has already had a good result, and I am sure will eventually materially affect the successful working of the School". There is a reference also in this same year to Student Teachers, and entry for Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations for Seniors and Juniors and to the usual examination of the School by the Staff on the work of the term.

Cookery was now to be added to the list of subjects, but it had to be taken on the Saturday 'holiday', so as not to interfere with the general education.

In this same report for 1882 also occurs the request by the Head Mistress to the Committee for the girls to be allowed to have a magazine which was to contain accounts



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DARLEY DALE

of the doings of the School during the term, and articles on various subjects written by members of the School.

By 1892, Miss Beal is reporting on the entries for the Cambridge Higher Local Examinations, one candidate is mentioned as having taken The French Group. It appears from an earlier report that the French of the School did not reach a very good standard, but evidently it had been improved by 1892.

Before this Head Mistress retired, girls had begun to proceed from the School to the Universities ; at least two went to Oxford, Amy Bell and Constance Hedley. Agnes Smallpeice was one of the earliest students to enter Newnham College, Cambridge. She must have been an early pupil of St. Elphin's School, as she was born in 1857.

In 1896 Miss Kennedy was appointed Head Mistress and brought with her Mrs. Flood as her Second Mistress.

In this year my own connection with the School began as a Student Mistress.

Miss Kennedy came of a distinguished family, and was herself a first-rate Classical Scholar, although she did not possess a University Degree. In her day, a good Cambridge Higher Local Certificate was a passport to the Teaching Profession, but her Classical Scholarship was far in advance of its requirements. She was appointed the first Head Mistress of the Leeds Girls' High School, when she was not yet 25 years of age, in 1876.

Miss Kennedy resigned her position there after a most distinguished and successful term of office on the death of her father in 1891. From 1896-1910 for 14 years St. Elphin's enjoyed the benefit of her great gifts. As has already been pointed out one or two pupils of the School had already made their way to Oxford and Cambridge, but it remained for Miss Kennedy to bring the school up to a steady Scholarship Standard.

There was no qualifying examination into the school, so that Miss Kennedy had to deal with a large proportion of girls whose standard of education up to the time of their coming to the school was often very mediocre. She had, however, a marvellous gift for getting good work out of unpromising pupils, and never neglected the stupid

for the sake of the clever. Although her methods might certainly come in for criticism in the light of modern educational developments and seemed harsh and stern to us in some cases even then, there is no doubt that by her untiring interest and work for every individual under her care, she achieved most wonderful results.

The greatest accuracy in all work was demanded, and there was much learning by heart. Although learning by heart can be and often was carried to excess, yet we were saved from the very fluid nature of the knowledge achieved sometimes by more elastic methods. Rules of Syntax, Arithmetic Rules and Formulæ had to be repeated perfectly, and sometimes it must be confessed that the pupil concentrated so hard on verbal accuracy that she forgot the sense and meaning of what she learnt. There was a stern system of Returned Lessons, and in some cases these bore very hardly on the weaker girls.

We were thoroughly prepared for all our examination work, nothing being left to chance, and there is no doubt that in spite of the severe training we really enjoyed the work with Miss Kennedy and felt that we could achieve great things. Miss Kennedy was most anxious to extend the system of Student Mistresses in accordance with the original object of the School. This would prepare girls for the Teaching Profession by way of the Cambridge Higher Local Certificate and a Teachers' Training Certificate for those who could not afford a University Course or a Special Teachers' Training College. The scheme she proposed was intended also to afford a course of Training in Teaching for University Graduates.

Accordingly, in 1902 Miss Kennedy applied to the Board of Education for the recognition of the School as a place of Training for Teachers. After much correspondence and conference, it was at last decided that though the School could not be recognised as a Training College, yet it was perfectly possible for the Student Teachers in the School to obtain the Cambridge Teachers' Training Certificate which did not demand residence in any "Recognised" Training College. This scheme was organised and carried out with considerable success. The Students had lectures in Psychology, History of Education

and Theory of Education. They also had training in actual teaching under Miss Kennedy's supervision. They were presented for the Written Examination of the Cambridge Syndicate, and had an examination in Practical Teaching conducted by a Professor of Sheffield University, who came to the School for this purpose.

I myself received my training as a teacher in this way during my first year as Classical Mistress, and I continued to develop this side of the work of the School after I was appointed Head Mistress, until the claims of the ordinary pupils of the school made such demands upon the time of the Head and her Staff that it had to be discontinued.

Miss Kennedy died in February, 1910, having accomplished a wonderful work for the school. Many generations of her pupils thank her unceasingly for the valuable training she gave them, which has enabled them to achieve success in the work they have undertaken in every field open to women of the ages which came under her charge.

The motto she had chosen for Leeds High School in its simplest form, '*Age quod agis*', 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might', certainly applies to her whole life-work for education.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM February to July, 1910, my mother, Mrs. Flood, Miss Kennedy's Second Mistress, carried on the work of the school until I was able to take up my appointment as Head Mistress in the Autumn Term. At the time I was Head Mistress of the Truro County Secondary School for Girls.

I well remember the agonies of the all-important interviews with the Committee at the time of my appointment and the hospitality offered to the three candidates on the short list (out of a possible sixty) by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Greenall at Hill Cliffe. I remember, too, the kindly words of Dr. Jayne, the Bishop of Chester, who was in the Chair. He told me that while I should rightly respect the traditions of the past, the Committee wanted "Not Miss Kennedy's School, not anyone else's school, but *your* school". That was just the lead I appreciated, for as Student and Assistant Mistress I valued the work of Miss Kennedy, while I knew from personal experience where 'the shoe' was apt to 'pinch' both for girls and staff. I had also had experience in a different type of school. Hence I had a good foundation for the main work of my life—the work of Head Mistress of St. Elphin's School. My heart was always there during the years I spent away from her, and on and off my connection with the school lasted from 1896 to 1933; as this history shows it is not yet severed.

From the date of my appointment, I take it that history as the work of a mere chronicler ceases and continues in the story of the years from 1910 to the present day as a personal and contemporary record.

One of the most important developments was the recognition of the School by the Board of Education.

At the invitation of the Committee on May 21st and 22nd, 1912, the Board of Education held an inspection at the School. There were three Inspectors, Mr. Traves, Miss Hastings and Miss Greene.

The inspection was most thorough and covered every department of the school's life, academic, domestic and social, as one of them expressed it 'from cellar to chimney'. The report presented by them suggested a certain strengthening of the school staff by the appointment of additional mistresses. The Inspectors considered that the work of the Head Mistress was too heavy and that a specialist in Classics should be appointed to relieve her of some of this work, which included University Scholarship Coaching. The Science Department also needed strengthening, not only in respect of staff but also of equipment.

Certain minor structural alterations and additions were advised, which were forthwith carried out.

The Inspectors in their report expressed their satisfaction with the school's administration, and on June 3rd, 1913, St. Elphin's was placed on the Official List of Efficient Secondary Schools.

At the same time, the special character of the School as a Church of England School was retained as no Government grant was received or requested.

The financial position of the School was very satisfactory during the years 1913-1914, a debit balance at the Bank being converted into a credit, while various gifts to the school funds went far to defray the expenses incurred through the recommendations of the Board of Education. One specially munificent donation of £2,500 was given anonymously through the instrumentality of the Bishop of Chester.

In 1914 seven Bursaries were established in memory of Miss Kennedy—called The Kennedy Bursaries, tenable by the daughters of Clergymen who had been in the school not less than three years.

The report for the year 1914 shows the shadow of the Great War falling upon the school. The number of pupils was steadily increasing and it was felt that further accommodation was imperative '*if the War does not interfere with the development of the school and does not cause our numbers to fall*', and the suggestion was made of opening a Junior Preparatory House or a Hostel for Staff.

It was not considered possible under war conditions to prosecute the scheme for a Junior House. Accordingly, to meet immediate needs the Old Gymnasium was altered to make a temporary Chapel, dedicated by the Bishop of Southwell on September 23rd, 1916. The Old Chapel was converted into a Dormitory, and a new gymnasium of wood and asbestos was constructed.

This served also as examination room when required and a recreation room.

Additions to the curriculum in 1917 consisted of a preliminary training in Secretarial subjects and a course of instruction in Personal Health and Hygiene given to Forms Va and VI by a Woman Doctor, Dr. Catherine Chisholme, of Manchester. This proved of the utmost value to the elder girls, who testified to its usefulness to them in their post-school days.

The Annual Report of the Committee of Management of 1916 contains very high praise on the part of the Examiners of the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board. There is special commendation of the English Essays sent in by 18 senior girls, two of them being 'admirable'. There is also in the same report an extract from the "Guardian" on the successes in the Higher Certificates, which ends as follows: "St. Elphin's stands third on the list of girls' schools in regard to the number of passes, but if regard be had to proportion, it is easily first".

The years 1917-1918 were full of difficulty owing to war-time exigencies. Writing in the year 1943 the difficulties strike one as the familiar problems which we all know well at the present time. There were difficulties with black-out, shortage of domestic staff, food difficulties, and correspondingly the same readiness on the part of all to make the best of things. Staff and girls helped in household, kitchen and garden work with hearty good will.

It was an anxious time for all who had the care of children and young people and there were many nights of vigil for the staff, though as one looks back from the terrible blitzes of this war the bombing from Zeppelins seems trivial. Nevertheless, at the time the anxiety was very great and the difficulties acute.

The Report 1919 shows that while the number of applications from both Laymen and Clergymen was greatly in excess of the vacancies, and in spite of the obviously successful work of the school as shown in Scholarship and other examination results, not to speak of the excellent work of former pupils in all spheres of women's work, there was a large deficiency to be made up on behalf of the Clergy Daughters. It was then decided that it was absolutely essential to raise the fees in the coming school year, as well as try to increase the amount of grants.

In 1920 the Government Pension Scheme for Teachers was adopted by the Committee, as it was felt that any private scheme would involve the School in more expense than it was able to bear.

A second full Inspection of the School was held on May 16th, 17th and 18th, 1922, by Miss Dawson, Miss Theedham and Mr. Firkins, H.M.I. The general impression formed by the Inspectors was a favourable one. It was considered that everything was done for the well-being of both staff and girls and that the girls were very happy amidst beautiful surroundings.

In connection with the final remarks of the Inspectors, it is interesting to notice that the School reports speak of the advantages for the girls' happiness as additional extensions were made in the School buildings and surroundings. For example, there was the advantage of country life giving scope for delightful half-term expeditions. I possess snapshots reminding me of many jaunts to Monsal Dale, Dove Dale, Miller's Dale, Chatsworth, Haddon and many another beauty spot or place of interest. It was also possible to allow the elder girls more freedom to go for country rambles by themselves.

The 1927 report speaks of the greater freedom which followed the provision of a Recreation Room, e.g., there was more choice of occupation in free time and discipline was maintained with less conscious effort on the part of Staff and Girls.

The years to come were to provide even greater scope for the girls' welfare which will be shown in its place.

In this same year, 1927, Major Ernest Fletcher, who was such a generous benefactor to the school in countless

ways, made it possible by yet another gift to provide three special Bursaries for the Daughters of Clergy, known as Fletcher Bursaries.

The report for 1931 shows an improvement in the financial position of the School. While 1930 had been a difficult year, expenditure was kept within income and the debit balance at the Bank reduced.

The problem still was that the Grants from some of the Diocesan Boards were insufficient to meet the cost of Bursaries.

It seems appropriate at this point, as I am nearing the end of an outline of my term of office at the school compiled from the records available, to dwell on the steady progress in University Scholarship Examinations and in the ordinary examination work of the Sixth and Fifth Forms in the Higher Certificate and School Certificate from 1896. The University Scholarship list was started in 1900 and was continued till 1934. The majority of these Scholarships held at the Old Universities are for Classics as was perhaps natural, partly because the family traditions in many cases ran in the line of classics, and partly because Miss Kennedy herself was such a fine Classical Scholar, while I myself had made Classics my special subject at Cambridge, and inherited from Miss Kennedy the Classical Traditions of the School.

Modern languages and History take the second place, with one Scholarship only in Mathematics.

During these years there were also many successes in the winning of Competitive Vacancies in the Old and Newer Universities, and these have been continued with little break up to the present time. The balance between the Old and Newer Universities has been reversed in that more girls have proceeded to the Newer Universities than to the Old. It became the definite policy of the school to eliminate the individual coaching which had since Miss Kennedy's time been given to the Sixth Form; hence it was obviously less possible for University Scholarships to be won. Still, there can be no doubt in anyone's mind as they read impartially the facts of the girls' achievements,



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THE SCHOOL CHAPEL

that from Miss Kennedy's time onward to the present day the school has a record for scholarship not only in the sense of scholarship winning, but also in the general level of academic studies, of which it can well be proud.

The proof of the excellence of the education received at St. Elphin's lies in the appointments held by Old Girls in every possible department of work open to women, Theological, Medical, Missionary, Teaching including Head Mistress-ships, Law and Statistical Research.

During the present war more than one of our "Old Girls" is doing important work for the Government in Research and Munitions of which one cannot speak in detail here, and one of them—Christine Ogle, W.R.N.S., after a fine record of useful work, lost her life on active service.

Miss Hudson succeeded me as Head Mistress and made her own valuable contributions to the work of the School. Under her the financial position became stabilized and the numbers of the girls increased. This was no doubt partly due to the admission of day and weekly boarders, to which reference has already been made, which arrangement was an asset to the School both financially and as widening its scope.

Just as the admission of Lay pupils had been an advantage when the school was moved to Darley Dale, so was the admission of day and weekly boarders at this later stage. It was also important from the point of view of spreading the influence of the definite Church teaching for which the School has always stood. This important view of the work of the School and the need for such a School as St. Elphin's in the chaotic conditions of the world to-day is frequently emphasized in the yearly reports presented by Miss Hudson to Governors and Parents.

Miss Hudson was instrumental in having important structural alterations carried out, of which the beautiful Common Room and the enlargement of the Chapel were the most valuable for the well-being and comfort of the girls. They were able to enjoy still greater freedom through improved means of recreation.

Miss Hudson retired in 1941 and was succeeded by Miss Eveleen Stopford, M.A. (Oxon), formerly Head Mistress of St. Mary's Hall, Brighton.

I recently visited the School to give the girls their Certificates and awards for 1943. I also gave them a talk on the early history of the School to prepare them for the Centenary Celebrations of 1944. An excellent concert was given on this occasion, under the direction of Miss Gregson, and a performance of "Midsummer Night's Dream" followed, which I unfortunately had to miss.

This gives me an opportunity of recalling that from very early days it is clear that great attention was paid to the study of music, both for examination purposes and for recreation.

Dramatic performances were also a regular feature of the life of the School. Both in Music and in Dramatics a high level of attainment has always been reached. Mrs. Pollitt's letter and the one received from her sister, Amy Bell, testify to this high standard of efficiency in the 1880's, and everyone who has been in any way in touch with the School in later years knows how well the standard is maintained. After the introduction of the 'House' system at Darley Dale, inter-house singing competitions proved valuable as well as enjoyable.

I was much impressed with the friendliness and happiness of the girls. I feel quite sure that Miss Stopford, who has had such varied experience in Jamaica and at St. Mary's Hall, possessing as she does intellectual qualifications and literary ability of a high order, will most certainly maintain the academic standard of the school, as she will undoubtedly promote the happiness and well-being of those under her care.

FROM the earliest days of its existence the life of the School has centred in its Chapel. The letter written by Mrs. Pollitt (1883-1889) reveals that this took the form, to begin with, of an 'Upper Room' to supplement the services in the Warrington Parish Church.

After the separation between the School and the Training College had taken place, the School shared the Chapel of St. Katharine with the Training College.

The School was no longer under the direct supervision of a Clerical Principal, but its daily services were taken in St. Katharine's Chapel by the Rector of Warrington, Canon Willis, who became Honorary Chaplain in 1889 and served in this capacity for 30 years. All who knew him were deeply attached to him, and many generations of St. Elphin's pupils owe much to his spiritual influence.

The Rector was assisted in the School Services by the Parish Church Staff of Assistant Priests.

On Sunday, the girls attended the Parish Church except for the early Communion celebrated in the Chapel, and sat in the Winmarleigh Chapel in the South Transept.

One of the changes brought about by the removal to Darley Dale was that we had all our Services, Sundays and week-days alike, in a Chapel of our own. Although Canon Willis was still Honorary Chaplain, he could only occasionally come and take the services, but the Rector of Darley Dale, the Rev. R. Whittington, and after his retirement the Rev. R. Griffiths, acted as Chaplains under Canon Willis, took some of the services and prepared the girls for Confirmation. Sunday duty was also undertaken by members of the Governing Body, Parents and Friends.

An annual Confirmation was held by the Bishop of Southwell, in whose diocese the school at Darley Dale was situated, and after the separation of Derby diocese from Southwell, by the Bishop of Derby.

At first the present dining-room was used for the Services.

As the numbers in the School increased it was necessary to find a larger Chapel. Miss Kennedy procured an

iron building which, while it was more suitable for its purpose, suffered from many disadvantages. It had the drawbacks of a 'tin tabernacle' in heat, cold, rain and wind.

The next step was to convert the stable building which had been used as gymnasium into a Chapel, and it seems to be an appropriate coincidence that on one of the stones of its wall the letters I.H.S. were found inscribed. This building was dedicated in 1916 by the Bishop of Southwell. Many friends contributed to the furnishings of the Chapel and gave the fine organ. The choir stalls were the gift of the Rev. Canon Richard Binney.

Miss E. C. Milroy beautified the walls of the Chancel and Sanctuary with a series of mural paintings during the years 1921-1931. These paintings to the great regret of many who had received inspiration from their message, were destroyed in order to meet the needs of the present girls, who had outgrown the capacity of the Chapel. It was enlarged and there is no doubt that the present building is beautiful and dignified.

Among others gifts to the Chapel it may be recorded that the silver gilt hand-wrought Crucifix and Candlesticks on the Altar, of Spanish design, were given in memory of Miss K. Foster; the Silver Alms dish in memory of Mrs. Flood. Mr. Stanton gave the Riddel Posts and Processional Cross and several frontals. Miss Hudson presented several gifts, one of which is the small stained-glass window representing St. Helena finding the Wood of the Cross. It is a very pleasing addition to the Chapel, and is a lovely bit of colour.

In 1919 the work of Honorary Chaplain to the School was undertaken by Rev. W. J. Stanton, who continued it till 1933 when he retired. Both he and Mrs. Stanton were true friends of the School in every way and were always welcome visitors. Mr. Stanton was able to give much more time to the work of Chaplain than was possible for Canon Willis. His work was a labour of love, and it is characteristic that at his death he left £1,000 for the Chapel enlargement, by means of which the present Sanctuary of God has been made possible.

Mr. Stanton's work has been carried on with great success by Canon Southam, and later by Canon H. H.

Dibben, whose help is valued by all. Everything seems to be done now as always to help every girl as she passes through the School to realise the meaning of the 'faith which was once delivered unto the Saints' (words so often on the lips of Canon Willis), so that she leaves it with the true foundation of life and character.

The musical side of the Services has always received careful attention and a high standard has been maintained from the beginning. Many of the staff have helped in the Choir at all times, and at the present time no less than in the past, the Services are worthily honoured by good singing, the result of the organists' training from one generation to another. Warrington pupils will be glad to remember the training given by the Organist of the Parish Church, Mr. F. M. Darby, as the present generation are grateful for Miss Gregson's untiring zeal.

The last sermon preached in the Chapel of the Warrington School, and the first in the new Darley Dale School were alike delivered by Canon Wilson.

He said on the latter occasion: 'The Members of St. Elphin's owe a great debt to this Institution, and are trustees of its good name both at home and at School. With them it rests whether the School has a high moral tone or not . . . You inherit a School with a high reputation, but it is an inheritance which will perish unless you keep always before you *ideals* of school life.'

In the belief that this is most truly the ideal inspiring the present members of the School as it has the past, I bring to an end this small contribution to the Centenary Celebrations of 1944.

It is fitting to close with the history of the Chapel and its Chaplains, for the Chapel represents the soul of the School. The outward form of it and its services may change, methods of administration and education must inevitably change as time goes on, but the School has an immortal soul, a shrine at the centre of its being, which is the Dwelling Place of the Most High.

I commend to the friends of the School this small booklet in affectionate remembrance of all St. Elphin's has meant to me for nearly half a century.

MARGARET L. FLOOD.

Streatham, 1944.

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Appendix 1

List of Head Mistresses, Clerical Principals, and Honorary Chaplains

1844 - 1879

Chief Governess, C.D.S.

1844—Mrs. Lintott
1844—Miss Trepass
5 years.

1850—Miss Groom
15 years.

1865—Miss Hamilton
14 years.

Clerical Principal

1844—Rev. George Richards
1851—Rev. H. S. Stubbs
29 years C.D.S., 3
more to training
students.

1879 - 1944

Head Mistress

1879—Miss Graves
3 years.

1882—Miss Beal
13 years.

1896—Miss Kennedy
14 years.

1910—Miss Flood, M.A. (T.C.D.)
23 years.

1933—Miss Hudson,
M.A., Lond.
8 years.

1941—Miss Stopford,
M.A., Oxon.

1880—Rev. Morley Stevenson

1886—Rev. J. J. Langham

Honorary Chaplains

1889—Rev. F. W. Willis
30 years.

1919—Rev. W. J. Stanton
14 years.

1933—Rev. G. W. Skeet

1934—Rev. Canon F. L.
Southam

1938—Rev. H. H. Dibben

Appendix 2

University Scholarships

M. L. FLOOD	1900
Girton College, Cambridge. Classics (Goldsmiths' Scholarship).		
R. W. FREER	1903
Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. History.		
M. A. REED	1905
Newnham College, Cambridge. Classics.		
D. V. TEMPERLEY	1906
Girton College, Cambridge. History (Russell Gurney Scholarship).		
E. A. d'AUQUIER	1907
Girton College, Cambridge. Classics.		
A. M. HOLDEN	1909
Newnham College, Cambridge. Classics.		
R. C. LAMBURN	1911
Royal Holloway College Classics		
W. M. O. REED	1913
Royal Holloway College. Classics.		
B. N. CHAMPION	1915
Girton College, Cambridge. Classics (Sir Arthur Arnold Scholarship).		
E. G. B. THOMAS	1917
Girton College, Cambridge. Classics.		
M. L. MARE	1919
Royal Holloway College. Modern Languages.		
M. M. JOHNSON	1919
Girton College, Cambridge. Classics.		

N. M. THOMASON	1923
	Girton College, Cambridge. Classics.	
I. BULLOCK	1923
	Girton College, Cambridge. Classics.	
M. L. MARE	1923
	Royal Holloway College. Gilchrist Research Scholarship.	
B. R. PALMER	1924
	Newnham College, Cambridge. Classics (Winkworth Scholarship).	
I. BULLOCK	1924
	Girton College, Cambridge. Classics (Sir Arthur Arnold Scholarship).	
L. M. WHITE	1925
	Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Classics (Exhibition).	
A. M. C. REILLY	1928
	Durham County Minor Scholarship. Modern Languages, Liverpool University.	
C. A. N. NOAKES	1928
	Somerville College, Oxford. Classics.	
P. N. B. DAVIES	1934
	St. Hilda's College, Oxford. Mathematics.	
J. H. M. TAYLOR	1934
	St. Hilda's College, Oxford. Classics.	

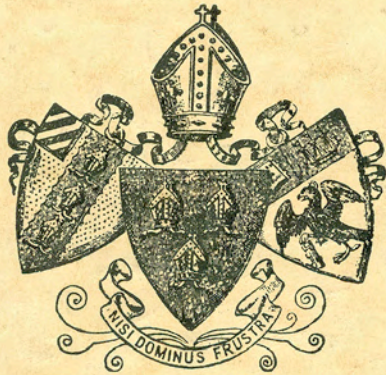


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