

# THE C.L.S.



# BULLETIN

(Organ of THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY, founded 1935)

Founder Editor: SAMUEL MORRIS RICH 1935-1947

President: PROF. GEOFFREY TILLOTSON, M.A., B.LITT.

Vice Presidents: JOHN BETJEMAN, C.B.E., D.LITT.

EDMUND BLUNDEN, C.B.E., M.A., C.LITT.

T. EDWARD CARPENTER, B.A., LL.B.

E. LESLIE GRIGGS, PH.D.

BASIL WILLEY, M.A., F.B.A., LITT.D.

Chairman: ARTHUR F. BISHOP

Vice Chairman: F. E. SANDRY

Hon. Treasurer:

MISS F. A. PARSONS, 32 Carmel Court, King's Drive, Wembley Park, Middlesex.

Hon. Librarian

G. M. NOBLE, F.L.A., Central Library, Fore Street, Edmonton, N.9.

Dramatic Group:

Hon. Sec: MISS G. E. PHILPOT, 26 Cranborne Avenue, Tolworth.

Hon. Treas: MISS A. M. BAZELL, 9 Holland Park Mansions, Holland Park Gardens, W.14.

Membership Secretary:

MISS F. S. REEVES, 33 Alma Street, N.W.5.

Hon. General Secretary:

E. G. CROWSLEY, 37 Highbury Grove, London, N.5.

Editor of Bulletin:

H. G. SMITH, Blakesmoor, 61 Salisbury Avenue, St. Albans.

No. 184

(Thirtieth Year)

JULY, 1965

## SEVENTY YEARS AGO

### A MEMORY OF CHRIST'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HERTFORD

by

MEG FREEMAN

When I was twelve years old, I won a scholarship to Christ's Hospital School for Girls. In those days to win a scholarship, you had to pass in Arithmetic, English Composition, Grammar (Analysis and Parsing), Geography, History and Needlework. If you survived that, you had an oral examination in Reading and Recitation. Fortunately, I survived all that and went to the School in January 1895.

It was a very cold winter, ice floes were in the Thames; we did no lessons for some days as the only heating in the Classrooms was from one coal fire—no central heating in those days.

The school was founded in 1553 by Edward VI; it retained the original names for the separate houses where thirty girls lived, and the houses were called wards. We all wore the same uniform, blue dress, red tammies, black stockings and shoes—white straw hats with blue bands in summer and blue straw in the winter and blue hair ribbons.

Early in my first term, the Lent term, a meeting was called by one of the older girls. She explained to those who had not been there for an Easter Term before, that Good Friday was almost a Fast Day. We had no second course for dinner, only meat and one vegetable. So she had an idea. She suggested we should contribute a few of our sweets each week and put them into a tin which she would keep in her locker till Good Friday. After each visit to the Tuck Shop, the box was produced, and the amount grew, till Good Friday came when the dinner was exactly as the girl had said. Afterwards we all walked down from the Dining Hall and sat down in the ward at the long table to share out the sweets. We had nearly finished, each girl having a little pile of sweets in front of her when the matron came out of her room, which was at one end of our room. She stopped, looked at the table, walked down the room, asked what we were doing, and then each one of us had to put our sweets in the box, she walked into her room, having confiscated our sweets. We were all highly incensed, as we had done nothing wrong and were determined to show our displeasure in an unusual way.

I have already mentioned that we all wore blue ribbons on our hair. After our sweets

were taken away, we held an indignation meeting where it was decided that each girl should write home for a piece of coloured hair ribbon of a different colour. Mine was to be bright maroon. We asked our mothers to post the ribbons immediately as we broke up on Wednesday. On Wednesday morning, we got up as usual, put on our hair ribbons, and went down to the ward. One by one, each of us disappeared into the bathroom, changed our hair ribbon, and emerged into the ward ready to go up to the hall for breakfast, our tummies on our heads covering the gaily coloured ribbons.

The Steward (an Old Blue) sat at an elevated table from which he could see all over the hall. As we sat down at our table, off came the tummies; there was a glop from everyone, and three head taps from the Steward's gook. We must have looked like a guppy show, each girl with a different coloured ribbon. I was between a bright orange and vivid green.

After breakfast was over, we walked in silence to the ward where we had to sit at the long table again. The matron walked along it, taking each girl's ribbon as she passed, all this in silence still. She then went into her room, carrying the ribbons; we did not mind, we had made our protest.

The effect of this on the matron was permanent. When I returned to the school on an old Girls Day, years later, I went into her room and there on our wall was a bunch of faded ribbons.

We asked her why she had kept them: she replied that it was to remind her not to be so hasty, but to enquire why the girls did such things. She had been away for her work, and would never enquire to what she did them, as our protest did some good. She became one of the best, and most loved of all the matrons, and never did she mind.

*From a Broadcast in Woman's Hour,  
Light Programme, 19th April, 1972,  
Reproduced by kind permission of  
the B.B.C.*

**EDITH'S STORY.** We are indebted to the Director for additional information about the days at the Hospital School and which was not included in the broadcast. I was fortunate to be in the original and famous school situated on the High Street at Bristol. On the outside wall was a large sign which read "The Hospital School". The sign was built in 1870. I have two large eggs in which are the school badge, 1870, and the 1970 badge. The school badge is a shield with a cross and a cross on the top and bottom of the shield. The 1970 badge is a shield with a cross and a cross on the top and bottom of the shield. We had

basins with the same pattern as the 1870 milk.

We slept in dormitories, thirty girls in three dorms, and we could draw curtains and push beds making a little room; the beds were pushed back when we were in bed. Our beds were rather hard as we slept on mattresses on boards, on iron framed beds. We had to make our own beds and do a little tidying in the ward. Our shoes were cleaned for us once a week. Before I came to the school the girls wore grey stockings; as the boys were called "mustard legs" owing to their yellow stockings, the girls were called "grass hoppers".

We rose at 6.30 a.m. in the summer and at an hour's prep before breakfast at 8.0 a.m. in winter going to a couple of lessons to keep a going until 8.0 a.m. In winter the day did not start at 7.30 a.m., our prep being done in the evenings.

If the weather was fine we walked to the Dining Hall for breakfast. If wet or snowy or frosty breakfast was brought to the ward, and consisted of porridge, bread and dripping and a mug of cocoa—the porridge was served with milk and sugar, and I could not eat it having been used for porridge served Scotch fashion with salt and cold milk, so I had to carry it down to the matron and as still it was eaten—the cocoa was similarly with the pudding, and I have found the pudding very nice.

The dinners were good, most, two vegetable and pudding, always served in the Dining Room. There were eight tables, four for the girls and four for the House boys who afterwards went to Boarding. I remember the whole school and by then to see the Prince of Wales afterwards Edward VIII, by the foundation stone of the boys' school at Boarding.

The matron kept our pocket money and all other things we brought back from our holidays. Each girl was allowed to spend the same amount weekly at the canteen shop. Our last meal at the day at the school consisted of milk, bread, butter, jam and cake or pudding together with our own cakes. When I came there was musical week and I had a little solo with the boys as a contribution. During the year I was at the school there were no holidays as the school was always having something with a view to the school. There was an excellent agreement with a Sister and Nurse. She did not get out of any examination for the Cambridge Examination. We were taught the usual subjects by Cambridge products, and

drill and swimming by a Sergeant who also drilled the little boys. The swimming bath was a primitive one in the river Lea, with wooden boxes on either side in which we undressed and put on our bathing suits reaching below the knee. The Sergeant stood on a plank stretched over the river and towed each girl held up by a band or cord round her waist, thus teaching us to swim.

Classes at the school were from 9-0 a.m. to 12-45 three days a week with no afternoon work, the other two days till 2-30 p.m. Afternoons were spent in games, tennis, swimming, and sports in summer, and in winter hockey or walks with a mistress round the Hertfordshire lanes.

Whilst I was there the school Chapel was built, a temporary building of corrugated iron. Before that the Church Services were held in the Dining Room by the Head of the boys' school who was in Holy Orders. The floor of the Hall was sprinkled with saw-dust, very painful when kneeling during the Litany. Each ward worked kneeling mats for the new Chapel. On Sundays we always sang the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" before dinner. The Graces were long, especially the one after the meal when we "thanked our Founders and Benefactors". On Saturday evenings we danced in the Girls' Hall, and I learned ball-room dancing there.

I spent happy years at the school and was sorry to leave.

\* \* \*

The foregoing covers the experience of one who was at the Christ's Hospital School for Girls at Hertford, but we do not apologise for its length as it is such an intimate account of a girl's education there seventy years ago. In later years Mrs. Freeman became a school teacher with classes of fifty or sixty, but discipline was good!

\* \* \*

In Bulletin 116 for January 1954 there is an address by Mrs. M. Huxstep who was also a scholar at the Hertford School at a later period when more modern ideas were in operation whilst retaining the underlying principles and traditions of Christ's Hospital.

### TO THE SISTER OF ELIA

By W. S. LANDOR

With a Latin version

by

E. A. BARBER

The following has been received from Miss Annette Park and can be looked upon as complementary to the admirable address on Landor by Sir George Rostrevor Hamilton on 8th March.

### "TO THE SISTER OF ELIA"

Comfort thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile!  
 Again shall Elia's smile  
 Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.  
 What is it we deplore?  
 He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,  
 Far worthier things than tears.  
 The love of friends without a single foe:  
 Unequalled lot below!  
 His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;  
 For those dost thou repine?  
 He may have left the lowly walks of men;  
 Left them he has; what then?  
 Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes  
 Of all the good and wise?  
 Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek  
 Upon the lofty peak  
 Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows  
 O'er death's perennial snows.  
 Behold him! from the region of the blest  
 He speaks: he bids thee rest.

W. S. LANDOR

### "TO THE SISTER OF ELIA"

Abrepti fratris luctum solare parumper;  
 rursus enim mox ille renidens  
 cor tibi mulcebit, qua cordis desinit angor.  
 quid querimur? quae causa doloris?  
 quippe suis multo, cura iam liber et annis,  
 quam lacrimas potiora reliquit.  
 ingratus fuerat nulli, dilectus amicis:  
 optima sors mortalibus haec est.  
 ingenium restat fratris naturaque mitis  
 te penes; haec praesentia quid fles?  
 ille uias humiles hominum tibi liquit ademptus;  
 esto-sed superest nihil ultra?  
 nonne oculis, quicumque bonus sapiensque  
 uocatur,  
 pressa legit uestigia ab illo?  
 cessit sol tepidus; tamen hi, pia turba, requirunt  
 aereo ceu uertice fusum,  
 sinceræ roseum mentis iubar, unde refulget  
 par niuibus mors ipsa perennis.  
 Elysium ecce colit felix, teque, o sorrow—audin?  
 adfatus requiescere suadet.

E. A. BARBER

Former Rector Exeter College, Oxford. Published in *CARMINA*, DCMLXIII, edited by Herbert Huxley, Reader in Latin, Manchester University.

## HOLLINGTON CHURCH ONE OF LAMB'S MAGICAL MOMENTS.

by  
FLORENCE S. REEVES

Writing to his friend Dibdin in 1826, Lamb said "And go to the little church, which is a very protestant Loretto, and seems dropt by some angel for the use of a hermit, who was at once parishioner and a whole parish. It is not too big. Go in the night, bring it away in your portmanteau, and I will plant it in my garden. It must have been erected in the very infancy of British Christianity, for the two or three first converts: yet hath it all the appertenances of a church of the first magnitude, its pulpit, its pews, its baptismal font: a cathedral in a nutshell. Seven people would crowd it like a Caledonian Chapel. The minister that divides the word there, must give lumping pennyworths. It is truly the strait and narrow way, and few there be (of London visitants) that find it. The still small voice is surely to be found there, if anywhere. . . . Go and see, but not without your spectacles". So, being on holiday in Bexhill, I decided to take Lamb's advice and go to the Church in the Woods at Hollington.

Contrary to my expectations all the people I asked knew where it was and could direct me correctly, and a kindly bus conductor put me off at a little footpath signposted "To Hollington—The Church in the Woods". Lamb would have walked all the way from Hastings, and would have scorned my laziness in riding part of the way, and doubtless he trod along a path under the concrete one on which I travelled. But how different would his view have been! The one I saw was filled with a new Housing Estate, just like thousands of others all over England. Passing through this I came on another road with a large farm house further up the hill. A cinder track led to the church. On the left, among new houses, I spied an old farm house and barn which Lamb would have seen. It had a notice on the door 'New Laid Eggs for Sale; 4/- a dozen', and the unusual sight of chickens running loose in the yard and cackling cheerfully encouraged the passer by into buying eggs laid by 'happy birds'.

The cinder track swept to the right down a steep hill to the valley filled with trees. Here was The Wood—but no sign of the Church could be discerned. This didn't matter, for the wood was a delight. The ground was covered with anemones, celandines and bluebells. The trees above were showing their new young spring green, and the birds were signing heartily, for after several gloomy days, the sun was shining warmly. At the foot of the hill the path took its way across a small stream. In Lamb's day it was a more pleasing sight, but when I saw it

old prams and bicycles long past their usefulness made a dismal picture of twentieth century litter.

Up the hill the path meandered and when the trees ended the church came into view. It is indeed a small church—not quite so small as Lamb suggests—its tower surmounted by a squat spire. The surrounding churchyard snuggles up to the walls in a protecting manner, and it seems enchanting with its air of peaceful serenity. No sound except the calls of the birds disturbed the silence, and one can well imagine Lamb's delight at the discovery of such a treasure.

The church is not as he saw it. The pulpit has been moved from its original position, and the font which he described as massive is really quite small. The leaflet provided by the Rector and Churchwardens states that the building "has no claim to architectural distinction". It has a bell which is the oldest in Hastings and probably dates back to the fourteenth century. The East window takes one by surprise, for it has had much of its stained glass removed in order to lighten the church. But this stained glass was put in after Lamb visited the place and the church would have been lighter when he saw it.

In 1845—6 it was doomed for demolition as the people wanted to pull it down and build another church nearer the houses. But it was saved and for the sum of £76 os. 5d. it was restored. There seems to be few farms around now whose inmates would make up the congregation, but perhaps people from the Housing Estate worship there. I cannot imagine a more delightful setting for a church, and although Lamb would be dismayed at the ugly rash of houses disfiguring the countryside, he would, I am sure, view the little church in its shady woods with as much elation today as he did so long ago, grateful as I was that the woods had not been cleared to make room for more dwellings.

This little church seems to have made a great impression on Lamb for he urged many of his friends holidaying in Hastings to visit it, and Hood newly married, took his wife there in 1825. His description is as glowing as Lamb's and is worth noting. Writing to his wife's sister he said "we have discovered the little church in the wood, and it is such a church! . . . The ground shadowed with bluebells, even to the formation of a plumb-like bloom upon its little knolls and ridges; and ever through the dell windeth a little path chequered with the shades of aspens and ashes and the most verdant and lively of all the family of trees. Here a broad rude stone steppeth over a lazy spring, oozing its way into grass and weeds, anon a fresh pathway divergeth, you know not

whither. Meanwhile the wild blackbird startles across the way and singeth anew in some other shade . . . . Then suppose so much of a space cleared as maketh a small church lawn to be sprinkled with old gravestones, and in the midst the church itself, a small Christian dovecot such as Lamb has truly described it. I could have been sentimental and wished to lie some day in that place; its calm tenants seeming to come through such quiet ways, through those verdant valleys, to their graves”.

The magical qualities of the place are still in evidence today, and the first sight of it still gladdens the heart. So if you are holidaying anywhere near it, at Hastings or Bexhill, take Lamb's advice and 'go to the little church'.

### BOOKS RECEIVED.

WORDSWORTH, by Prof. Carl Woodring. Riverside Studies in Literature, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, U.S.A. 1965.

(Obtainable from Dillon's University Bookshop, Malet Street, W.C.1. price approx. 16s.)

Members of the Society will recall the presence in 1956 of Professor Carl and Mrs. Woodring at the Birthday Celebrations, and that pleasure will be enhanced by the reading of his latest work on *Wordsworth*,

We are apt to forget the extent of the impact on our literature of Wordsworth's poetry. T. S. Eliot declared that 'the revolution effected by Wordsworth was very far reaching indeed', and Professor Woodring, now at Columbia University, has not neglected that quality of the poet's work. In the *Introduction* to his book he pays a graceful tribute not only to his own preceptors, but 'even more to teachers who have enrolled under me'. Only the barest essential details of Wordsworth's life are given so that the main emphasis may be given to his work as a whole.

The opening chapters deal with the poet's formative years, especially the *Lyrical Ballads* which Elians will remember got Charles Lamb into hot water, a well-meant letter containing some mild criticism invoking 'a long letter of four sweating pages' from Wordsworth, and 'four long pages, equally sweaty and more tedious' from Coleridge!

In dealing with Wordsworth's prose works we are reminded that he was concerned not only with erudite consideration of the theory and practice of literature, but also with the Poor Laws, Enclosure and Combination Acts, the Convention of Cintra, and the topography of the Lake District. His letters are recommended reading.

The chapter entitled *Triumphs in Blank Verse* is full of interest, particularly the consideration of *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, in which the relevance of the work of the Reverend William Gilpin is not lost sight of.

The succeeding chapter deals with the poems published in 1807, now highly prized, but then savagely attacked in the *Edinburgh Review*. Next we are given an extended exposition of *The Prelude*, hailed by Coleridge to whom it was addressed, as 'An Orphic song indeed. A song of high and passionate thoughts'. To one reader, and no doubt many more, the author's almost casual remark that the poem in its supreme moments foreshadows the *Four Quartets* of T. S. Eliot is so pregnant that it is to be hoped that at no distant date it will receive from Professor Woodring the full attention it demands.

There are also illuminating chapters on Wordsworth's sonnets and the poems written at Rydal Mount. The volume ends with the author's *Conclusions* in which he declares that Wordsworth was 'the greatest English poet since Milton', an assessment not lightly made by one so well versed in the work of other claimants to the title. Let it be said, however, he admits that there are blemishes in Wordsworth's work, but at the same time wisely reminds us of the undoubted glories.

Wordsworth hoped that his work would be 'efficacious in making men wiser, better and happier' and that is what Professor Woodring has accomplished in this urbane and scholarly book.

There is a useful Bibliography, and it is to be hoped the book will soon be published in this country if necessary as a paper-back, or better still in more permanent form.

F. WHITING

**HON. GENERAL SECRETARY'S NEW ADDRESS**—Will members please note that Mr. E. G. Crowsley's new address is **37 High-bury Grove, London. N.5.**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**—The Annual General Meeting was held on 15th May at the Mary Ward Centre, Tavistock Place, W.C.1. Mr. F. E. Sandry presided in the unavoidable absence of Mr. A. F. Bishop. The Elian Reading was given by Miss A. Miall who chose an extract from "My First Play" describing Charles Lamb's godfather and "Button Snap"

The Annual Report and Financial Statement were unanimously approved and the various officers thanked for their services. The Officers and Council were duly elected including four new members on the Council in place of those retiring under the rules of the Society. The newly elected Council members were Miss M. Brice, Mrs. C. Hale, Miss K. McGuire and Mr. H. W. Meyer.

The proposed revision of Subscription Rates (as detailed in the May Bulletin) were wholeheartedly approved without any adverse comment.

After the business had been transacted, contrary to our normal practice no specific programme had been arranged so that members had ample opportunity for conversation. We hope that we shall not be misunderstood when we say that members appeared to make full use of this opportunity. Certainly several members on leaving expressed the view that our 1965 Annual General Meeting had been the most enjoyable A. G. M. they had ever attended.

**AN APPEAL FROM THE TREASURER**—Miss F. A. Parsons will be greatly obliged, and certainly helped, if those members who have not returned the revised Banker's Order forms sent to them recently would do so, duly completed, as quickly as possible.

Should there be any members who have not yet paid their subscription for 1965 they will gladden the heart of our Treasurer if they will do so immediately. The old rates still apply as the new rates do not come into force until 1st January 1966

**WINTER PROGRAMME 1965-1966**—Next Winter's Programme is in active preparation and will commence on Saturday 9th October. There will be a visit on that day to the Garrick Club during the morning (Party is limited) followed by a lecture in the afternoon at the Mary Ward Centre

**CHRISTMAS CARDS**—The Society will not be publishing Christmas Cards this year.

**OBITUARY**—We deeply regret to announce the death of Miss Joan Temple (dramatist and actress) on 5th May. Miss Temple had been a member since January 1936, and had been actively interested in the Society and fully appreciative of its aims. On December 9th, 1935 she gave a lecture on "How I came to write 'Charles and Mary'", while at one of the Society's Social Evenings in October 1936 she presented, with the help of her players, excerpts from this play. When the Dramatic Group presented

"Charles and Mary" in March 1953 Miss Temple was in the audience and spoke enthusiastically of the performance.

In July 1945 she contributed to the Bulletin an article "What it felt like to play Mary Lamb" in which she described how she experienced a fourth consciousness at work during its production at the Everyman Theatre in February 1930.

Although to this Society her play on the Lambs is of prime importance Miss Temple was the author of several plays including the well known "No Room at the Inn". We deeply mourn her passing.

\* \* \*

On 7th June we lost another loyal member—Mr. A. Victor Birch who had been ailing for some time. This did not prevent him from attending our meetings whenever possible. Mr. Birch joined the Society in 1948 and had served on the Council where his quiet and wise counsel was always appreciated. We extend to Mrs. Birch and her family our sincere condolences.

\* \* \*

## DRAMATIC GROUP

The Group's 20th Birthday celebrations are to be held on Friday, 22nd October 6-30 for 7 p.m. in the Hewitt-Murray Room of the Royal Scottish Corporation, Fleur-de-Lis Court, E.C.4 (nearest station Chancery Lane). Members may wish to note the date. Full details will be announced later.

\* \* \*

**FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR**—On 4th May our secretary addressed the Welwyn Garden City Rotary Club on, appropriately enough, the Charles Lamb Society.

\* \* \*

Whilst as mentioned in a previous Bulletin there is no "school" named after Humphry Davy at Christ's Hospital, yet in order to get the record straight, in the Science School there are four laboratories each named after Davy, Faraday, Cavendish and Dalton respectively. This information comes from two of our members, both old boys of the school (and of the laboratories).

\* \* \*

On page 398 of the Bulletin for January 1963 mention is made of *Grass Widow* a book of poems by our member Constance Hale. Copies can now be obtained from her at 24 Fairfield Road, Petts Wood, Kent, at a remainder price of 1s. 8d. including postage.