

Rev George Style, an incredible headmaster

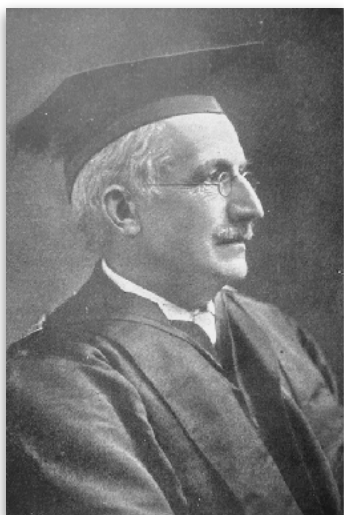
After the disastrous and frustrating events during Rev Blakiston's tenure as headmaster of Giggleswick School his successor was taking on quite a poisoned chalice! The uncompromising and forthright opinions of Rev Blakiston and the '*obsolete character of its ancient Statutes*' [8] were highlighted in an inspection. This kickstarted the appointment of a new headmaster and a change of governors to include **Walter Morrison MP** [ph1-left] and **Sir James Kay Shuttleworth** [ph2]. Consequently the fortunes of the school were about to be transformed in what became known as the '*New Era*'. *The History of Giggleswick School*, by Edward Alan Bell (1912) tells us there were just four applicants for the post in contrast to the 40 for the previous incumbent. Who was the lucky man? **George Style** was appointed on 26 May 1869, a fellow of Queen's College Cambridge, ordained in 1867 and with two years' experience as Assistant Master at Clifton College, Bristol. There would have been high expectations of him

Schools Commission. The school, like most of the old Grammar Schools, had been hampered by the method of appointment of its governing body by perpetual co-optation, and the obsolete character of its ancient Statutes. After an



George had three staff to support him: second master **Mr Jeaffreson**, second master **Arthur Brewin**, in charge of Junior/Lower school and **Herr Stanger** who was a part time German teacher. He had 56 boys, 18 boarding locally and the rest living with their parents. At that stage boarding houses were unregulated and, in some cases, had inadequate and insanitary living arrangements. George and the governors immediately set down strict rules for the licensing of boarding houses and, within two years, most students '*lived in*' at school accommodation at the newly built '*The Hostel*' [ph3]. **Gifford Bromley Mannock** was appointed to help with the design and running of The Hostel. He taught the First Form so was particularly helpful for looking after the younger boys. The school adopted a three-term year, instead of half-years and the holidays were increased from ten to 14 weeks. George and the governors decided on standard payments for students' admission, tuition and boarding fees (as appropriate) in order to fund the school in line with other institutions. They also diverted the funds from the legacy of **Josias Shute** [ph4], who was an 'old boy' of the school who died in 1643, to provide free tuition for boys from the Ancient Parish of Giggleswick who had been resident for at least three years, subject to an entrance examination. We know of several students who benefitted from a '*Shute Exhibition*' in the following years, including **William Bygrave**, son of a solicitor's clerk, **Sydney Smith**, whose father died when he was a baby, **Joshua Maudsley**, a draper's son, **Joseph Handby**, a plumber's son and **Cicero Clark**, a grocer's son. The number of boys had increased from 56 to 101 by 1873, justifying these changes.





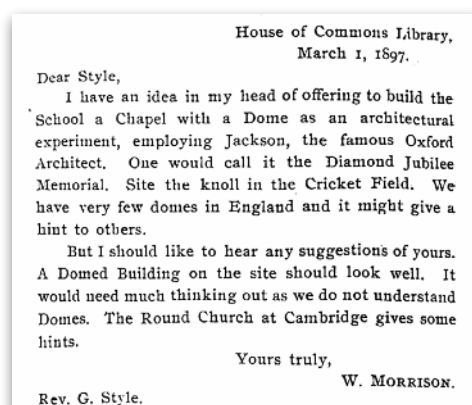
The subsequent increase in fees enabled George [ph5] and the governors to appoint new staff including the talented Science master **Dr William Marshall Watts** to provide specialist Science education for the first time and oversee the building of new facilities. At this time the Settle to Carlisle Railway was being constructed and the Craven caves were being explored enabling George and Dr Watts to inspire students through the very best contemporary geologists and engineers. Dr Bell wrote that, *'at that period no school in England could approach Giggleswick in the practical teaching of Science.'* That's quite a claim! The numbers continued to increase and so more classrooms and other specialist rooms had to be built too. In the 20 years since George's appointment the character and buildings of the school were transformed. By 1894 there were 208 boys in the school, 20 of whom

were day pupils. George established an Old Boys' Club in 1897 and a house system. George was *'an awe-inspiring disciplinarian but without the use of the rod, and there were no instances of the astonishingly unjust punishments that were common in earlier days.'* (This was written in 1912!)

George and Dr Watts oversaw the Maths and Science education producing an incredible increase in the number of scholarships to the most prestigious higher education establishments. George also integrated athletics and swimming (in a new pool) into the school sports provision alongside rugby and cricket, being *'a keen wicket-keeper and a good bat'* and appointed the first resident music teacher. The gymnasium was opened in 1887 and then a joinery. It was during George's tenure, in 1897, that Walter Morrison MP offered to fund the building of the Giggleswick School chapel with its distinctive dome [ph6] which solved the dual problems of a suitable commemoration of the Queen's diamond jubilee and raising the funds required to build a chapel for the school. George served as Headmaster for 35 years. Overall, *'in every branch of school life excellence was attained.'* It was said, *'I have never come across a man with as keen an eye as Mr Style'* and *'He had the most necessary quality in a Headmaster, the power of choosing the right Assistant Masters'*. These included Dr Marshall-Watts and **Douglas Rucker Smith**

amongst others. George *'came at a time when there was only a collection of boys with no unity. He left it united and loyal, prosperous and possessed of a reputation all over England. Behind this was the vitalising energy of the Headmaster, the inspiration of the optimist, the personality of the man.'* So respected was he that former pupils raised funds to present an annual *'Style Mathematical Prize'* as a mark of their appreciation. What a legacy!

So, what was George's background? He was the third out of nine children of a very successful linen draper **John Style** and his wife **Marianna Sparshatt**. They lived in Salisbury, Wiltshire. John's parents died by the time he was five so he was brought up by his grandmother in Dorset. At the age of 16 John moved to Salisbury and was apprenticed to woollen draper **John Sparshatt**, who became his father-in-law. *'By his assiduity, application and general business aptitude he worked his way up.'* A fellow apprentice was **Robert Large**. When he retired in 1838 Mr Sparshatt *'disposed of his business'* [1] to his two apprentices and they worked together for many years as *'Style and*



Large' as 'linen mercer, draper & silk mercers' employing 16 men, assistants, apprentices and servants, many of whom lived with John's family. They ran their business being '*a considerable portion of the frontage of Blue Boar Row*', right in the centre of town. In 1852, in an interesting case of Victorian Justice, William Thompson was found guilty of stealing a horse cloth, '*the property of John Style and Robert Large*'. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison with hard labour, 14 days of which had to be in solitary confinement! [2]

JOHN SPARSHATT, LINEN and WOOL-
LEN-DRAPER, SALISBURY, takes this opportu-
nity to offer to his Friends and the Public his grate-
ful thanks for their kind and liberal support during
the past thirty-three years, and to inform them, that
he has **DISPOSED OF HIS BUSINESS** to his
Son-in-law, Mr. **JOHN STYLE**, and Mr. **ROBERT**
LARGE, both of whom served their apprenticeship
to him, and are conversant with, and determined to

*William Thompson pleaded Guilty to stealing a horse-cloth, the
property of John Style and Robert Large. A previous conviction
having been proved, the prisoner was sentenced to twelve months'
hard labour, fourteen days to be spent in solitary confinement.*

In 1850 a chap called **George Gerrish** joined the company as an assistant. After the death of his first wife and remarriage Robert Large retired and George Gerrish became John's new partner. In 1881, John's son, **Frederick Style**, married George's daughter, **Mary Gerrish** and they continued the family business after John and George died.

John wasn't just a successful draper. He was elected a Liberal Town Councillor in 1859, then Alderman and then Mayor of Salisbury in 1862/3. Demonstrating his academic interest John chaired a meeting of young men to discuss the possibility of setting up a Salisbury Literary and Scientific Institution [3]. Despite having an education at a small rural school he was well read and promoted education for all. In 1871 he was elected as vice-chair of Salisbury School board, promoting a '*better education of the industrial classes to enable them to compete with the more carefully instructed artisan on the Continent. It is as great a necessity to rescue from their sad fate the dangerous classes and the alarmingly increasing pauper class*' as well as a generally higher standard of education [4]. He established a Free Public Library in Salisbury. He would have been delighted with son George's career and that his son, **John Style (Jnr)** was chosen to be the head boy of the Cathedral School and was successful, out of 47 candidates in becoming the headmaster of Cheltenham Grammar School for 24 years. In 1874 John (Snr) was elected Synodsman for the parish of St Edmund, Salisbury.

**SALISBURY LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC
INSTITUTION.**
A Strong desire having been expressed for
the formation of Classes in connection with this
Institution,—A PUBLIC MEETING will be held on THURS-
DAY next, the 20th inst., in the READING ROOM, and the
Committee earnestly invite the attendance of the young men
of Salisbury on that occasion to discuss the subject.
The Chair will be taken by **JOHN STYLE**, ESQ., at half-
past eight o'clock. [6511]

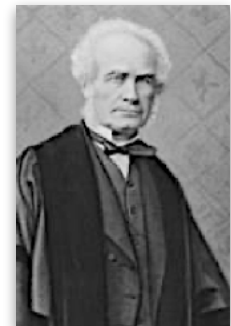
When John died of influenza and pneumonia in 1892, aged 81, his biography and glowing obituary took up half a broadsheet [5], oozing with compliments, '*He was associated with everything which was for the good of the city. He was one of the most enlightened, upright and consistent men in Salisbury, one of those men whose life and character are great treasure.*' That's not bad for an orphaned lad from Dorset and, with that strength of character, it's not surprising that John and Marianne's children had good, respectable careers, aside from the three children who died in infancy/childhood.

**DEATH
OF
ALDERMAN STYLE**

John and Marianne's eldest surviving daughter, **Mary Christian Style**, married an ironmonger, **William Jonas Wilton**, and they had two children. After William died in his mid-fifties, Mary Christian continued the business alone, well into her seventies. It was acceptable for women to continue their husband's business, although it was unusual for widows to continue with ironmongery. It obviously suited her — she was 91 when she died. John and Marianne's son,

Sydney Style, became a solicitor in Liverpool and adopted two children with his wife **Jane Mary Lock**. John and Marianne's daughter, **Elizabeth Style**, remained a spinster and lived with her parents until they died and then with brother George and family.

Talking of which, in 1868, just before his appointment at Giggleswick, George married **Jane Beales**, the daughter of **Patrick Beales** and his wife **Katharine Hurrell**. Patrick was from a longstanding and successful family of merchants and brewers in the Newnham suburb of Cambridge. His father had built a corn and coal business at Newnham Grange in 1793 on the site of a hermitage. The hermit collected tolls for two bridges, apparently. During the 1880s the building was bought and extensively rebuilt [ph7] by Sir George Darwin, the son of THE Charles Darwin. It later became part of Darwin College, Cambridge. Despite being declared bankrupt in 1853 and being bailed out by his brother-in-law, **Swann Hurrell**, Patrick picked himself up and was elected a town councillor and alderman. Patrick [ph8] was elected Mayor of Cambridge in 1856/7 and his brother-in-law Swann Hurrell followed him in 1857/8. So, Jane was definitely a suitable wife for John Style's son George! Unfortunately, Patrick's eldest son, another **Patrick Beales**, a solicitor's clerk, absconded in 1869 after defrauding Cambridge Corporation out of £2,000, but we won't let that spoil our positive story!



Following 35 years of outstanding service at Giggleswick School George retired, aged 65 in 1904. He was presented with *'a gold watch and chain and a handsome tea and coffee service by friends and pupils of the school'* [6]. You don't hear of handsome tea and coffee services any more, do you? So, what does an outstanding headmaster do with himself after retirement? He went back to his theological roots to become the Rector of the 13th century All Saints Church [ph9] near Chalbury in Dorset which has *'one of the quaintest little churches in the county, with its pretty little rectory.'* *'The little church, which serves a parish with a population of about 150 all told, is a picturesque old building of flint and rubble with about 85 sittings, and is situate on a hill (name unknown). The register dates from 1629'* [7]. Even today, it still has 18th century box pews, a three-decker polygonal pulpit and a musicians' gallery. There George remained until 1922 when he died aged 81, following an operation, at Wimborne Cottage Hospital. George's obituaries included *'Mr Style was a man of remarkable personality. He realised the change in times and the genius of his place.'* Students remembered that on Ascension Day, which is a holiday, *he took the whole school for a long expedition. He remembers scouring the fells above Kirkby Lonsdale for half the night with the Headmaster in search of four boys who were missing at the station call over'* [8]. It's funny how those things stick in school memories!



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'The close sympathy with the boys gave him an extraordinary power over them and an Old Boy who came into close contact with Lord Kitchener during the war said at last he had come across a man with as keen an eye as his old Headmaster. He never forgot a name or face and one of the chief pleasures of his declining years was to hear of the doings of his old pupils.' It also transpired

that, in Chalbury, he continued his contribution to education as a member of the Dorset Higher Education Committee and Chairman of the Governors of Wimborne School. *'It is characteristic of his life that every inhabitant of the village was present at his funeral.'*[9]

In 1923 a memorial to George Style in the form of a bas-relief marble portrait by **John Edward Hyett** was unveiled in Giggleswick School Chapel. Coincidentally, sculptor Mr Hyett was an old Cheltenham Grammar School boy, under the headship of George's brother John Style [9]. It was *'an admirable piece of modelling'*!

Winterbotham. Another point of local connection is that the Rev. **George Style** was a brother of the late Mr. **John Style**, M.A., for so many years headmaster of the Cheltenham Grammar School. An illustration of the memorial, evidently an admirable piece of modelling, has appeared in the pictorial page of "The Times."

George left a generous estate to his wife and children. He was replaced at Giggleswick School by **William Wynmar Vaughan** who had very big shoes to fill. George's widow, Jane, remained in Chalbury until her death in 1935 aged 91!

George and Jane had two daughters and two sons. Eldest child, **Katherine Mary Style**, lived with her parents until they died and then lived off her inheritance, still in Dorset until she died in 1951, aged 82. It would not be uncommon for a woman in her situation to spend her days pottering about the house providing company for her ageing parents and mixing with friends of similar backgrounds. However, although never having an occupation as such, she was a busy woman. She was *'well known throughout Dorset, her many activities including those of President of the Dorset County Federation of Women's Institutes, the only female magistrate for the Wimborne County Petty Sessional Division, membership of the County Education Committee and representing the County Council on the governing bodies of two secondary schools, and membership of the Wimborne and Camborne Rural District Council.'* [10] She was regularly mentioned in the *'News of the week from Wimborne'* [11]. Her work covered a range of issues, events and fundraising events in the area; salaries for council staff, farming issues including the humane slaughtering of livestock, installation of electric lighting, development of an isolation hospital, facilities for physical fitness, provision for a cinema and flooding prevention measures. She decided that children should not be involved in collecting rags for charity for hygiene reasons but the ladies of the WI should be involved in sending cigarettes and gifts to the men of the Dorset Regiment in Burma. How refreshing and wonderful to see a woman in these positions in the early 20th century.

mother. Miss **Style** is well known throughout Dorset, her many activities including those of president of the Dorset County Federation of Women's Institutes, a magistrate for the Wimborne County Petty Sessional Division, Governor of Secondary Schools, membership of the County Education Committee, and the Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District Council.

News of the Week From Wimborne

George and Jane's second daughter, **Margaret Helen Style**, married **Henry Torrance Thomson**, a banker's son and medical man. They lived in Edinburgh. George and Jane's eldest son was another **George Style**, known as **Beau**. He had his photo taken at the Horner studios in 1877 [ph10]. Sadly, a year later he died, aged eight and was buried in an unmarked grave in Giggleswick churchyard. George and Jane's second son was **Arthur Hurrell Style**, a medical man. In 1904 he married **Clare Nickalls** in a high society wedding, after which they honeymooned in the North of England. Clare's *'going-away dress was grey silk, spotted with rosebuds, made in Victoria style, and a*



large mushroom straw hat trimmed with pink roses and tied with narrow velvet pink strings' [12]. The report mentioned that Arthur was a medical man and Clare's father was 'for a number of years the popular master of the Surrey Staghounds' [13]. They had six children and settled in Pembroke, where Arthur was a member of Pembroke County Council, and then Suffolk where he worked as the Deputy Commissioner for Medical services.

Arthur generally kept out of the headlines but on the 1921 census return made a point of saying, '*I strongly protests against the accompanying form being decorated with advertisement of a man like Bottomley.*' Wikipedia tells us

that **Horatio William Bottomley** MP was an 'English financier,

newspaper proprietor and swindler.' He edited the popular magazine *John Bull*, providing a nationalistic commentary during WW1. Arthur would have been glad when Bottomley's career came to a sudden end in 1922, convicted of fraud and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.



This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1,3,4 – Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 2 – Hampshire Advertiser, 5 – Salisbury Times, 6 – Carlisle Journal, 7,9,10 – Western Gazette, 8 – Yorkshire Post, 9 – Gloucestershire Echo, 11 – Bournemouth Times, 12 – The Gentlewoman, 13 – Surrey Mirror

ph1,2,3,4,5,6 – credited to The History of Giggleswick School, by Edward Alan Bell (1912), ph7 – credited to historicengland.org.uk, submitted by Brian Mawdsley, ph8 – credited to cambridge.gov.uk, ph9 – credited to wimborneminster.co.uk, ph10 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Jane Mott