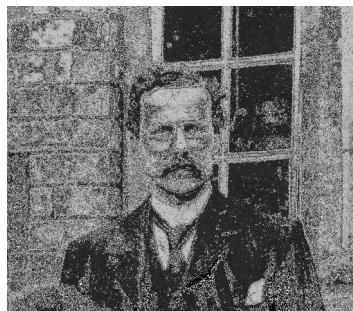


Henry John Hutton (pupil c.1868 – c.1877)

Pupil; teacher; preacher

When Rev Henry John Hutton died on 20 October 1942 the then Vicar of St Paul's Church, Dorking, Rev A C Nickol, wrote:

"A good man has gone home. No one who knew Henry John Hutton will have a shadow of a doubt about that. His passing will bring sorrow to thousands both at home and overseas. With the sorrow, there will be the happy remembrance of a devoted Minister and Christian gentleman – one whose life and character were entirely consistent with his profession of faith. I have known him for more than 30 years, and have always thought of him as God's good man."



Henry John Hutton in 1905

Henry John Hutton was born in Dorking in 1864 and was a pupil at St Paul's School when it was still a relatively new school. He lived with his parents, brother and sisters in Ram Alley (the name for the northern section of Dene Street), though the family later moved to another house in Dene Street itself.

At that time boys and girls were taught at St Paul's in separate, galleried classrooms by the then Headmaster, Mr Robert Pittard, and his wife, Harriet, supported by a Pupil Teacher (who was often aged little more than the students themselves) and by Monitors (senior pupils assigned the task of helping the younger children learn their recitations).

The School had two small, dirt playgrounds, one for the boys and one for the girls and infants, though there were no playtime breaks or PE lessons. There was no direct water supply, large open fireplaces heated the rooms and the only light in the rooms was natural light – there was no electricity supply. Pupils had to pay a 2d fee to attend school.

Hutton became a Pupil Teacher at St Paul's and then trained and qualified as a Teacher. In 1892, when the first Headmaster of St Paul's School resigned after 32 years of service, Hutton was appointed as his successor.

The new Headmaster

Hutton immediately made changes to the School. One of his first was to introduce a short morning recreation break to allow the children five-minutes away from their studies. This, presumably, would have been an extremely popular decision!

Hutton established a School Museum, and set about collecting specimens to put on display – the first exhibits were graphs and maps of the South African Colonies.

In September 1893 he showed great openness of mind, if not current-day political correctness, when he agreed with the School Managers that he would be able to work with an Assistant Mistress in lieu of a Master, “as a female teacher would be less expensive than a male”.

Attendance and punctuality continued to be problems, though Hutton seems to have been successful in dealing with these because in 1910 St Paul's was congratulated by the local Attendance Officer for the excellent attendance levels of its students.

With increasing numbers of children at the School, St Paul's, however, was getting rather overcrowded. In 1904 the County Surveyor reported that “The rooms are awkwardly shaped being too large for class rooms but difficult to divide up and the rooms are passage rooms. It will be a difficult school to enlarge satisfactorily.”

Like many schools across the country, St Paul's was also in a pretty run-down state. The County Surveyor considered that lighting and ventilation in the School was not sufficient, and that the toilets were “by no means good”. In 1912, the Vicar of St Paul's Church agreed: “These Schools have been in existence over 50 years, during which time, beyond certain enlargements, practically nothing has been done in the way of modern improvements.”

Hutton eventually presided over the enlargement of the School when in 1912 two new classrooms were added, moveable partitions installed between the rooms and a school hall created in the centre of the School. This was not an easy time for Hutton. The building work over-ran, and instead of the rooms being available from the start of term in September, work was not completed until mid-October – Hutton had to delay the start of many new pupils until the building works were complete.

First World War

St Paul's School was affected in a number of ways by the war. The girls knitted woollen scarves and socks for men in the Navy; the boys dug a garden by the School to help the national supply of food. The children took part in the nationwide Blackberrying Scheme – teams of boys and girls were taken to Ranmore to collect

blackberries which were then handed over to the Food Control Office. The girls won, collecting almost 200lbs (approximately 90 kgs) of blackberries.

Government cutbacks resulted in fewer staff and less money to spend on activities such as swimming. A headache enough for Hutton, but then refugees started arriving from London, causing the School to become very overcrowded. Children also started to take time off to visit relatives who were home on leave from the Front.

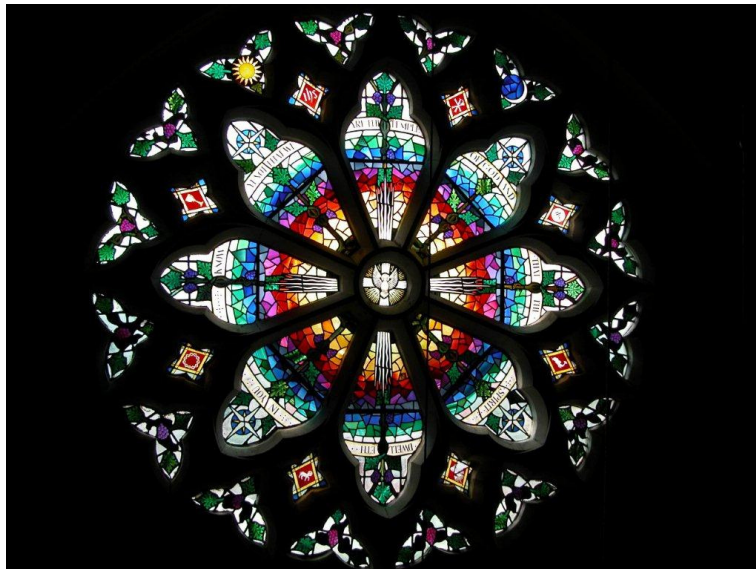
God's calling

In 1918 in Winchester Cathedral, Hutton was licensed as a Lay Reader, with permission to preach in Church. He had had his calling.

Hutton continued as Headmaster of St Paul's until 1924 when he retired – he had led the School for 32 years, the same tenure as his predecessor. In 1932 he was ordained, becoming the Honorary Assistant Curate at St Paul's. He served the Church through declining health until his death in 1942.

As a mark of the great respect members of the Church had for him, the money was raised to replace the clear glass in the Rose Window in the West wall of the Church with stained glass, containing words from 1 Corinthians 3:16:

*“Know ye not that ye¹ are the temple of God,
and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.”*



Rose Window in St Paul's Church, Dorking

Helen Wharmby
October 2011

¹ The window in the Church actually misquotes of this verse from the Bible – it begins “Know ye not that **we** are the temple of God’.