



The Society of the Sisters

<http://www.sistersofbethany.org.uk/>

SISTERS OF BETHANY AT CROWBOROUGH

1887 -1947

&

2015

SS.B. GRAVES

13. Sr. Eliza Christina - died 04.08.1903 Eliza CRISP
D.O.B. 25.08 1849
(Lay) Professed 01.09.1877

80. Sr. Henrietta - died 25.02.1940 Henrietta Emma PARK D.O.B. 08.06.1853
(Choir) Professed 25.03.1889
Regarding Sister Henrietta, apparently in the register (kept at Lewes) there is a
Henrietta Emma PARK who died in 1940 aged 86. We have been unable (thus far!) to
locate a grave, died of carcinoma of right breast

82. Sr. Ethelbertha - died 08.06.1940 Ruby Ethel ALLEN D.O.B. 04.04.1881 (Lay)
Professed 30.10.1913
ALLEN Sister Ethelbertha (Ruby Ethel) died 1940 aged 59

86. Sr. Edith Mary - died 06.02.1943 Edith GOODFELLOW D.O.B.28.09.1855 (Choir)
Professed 09.01.1899

ALLEN Sister Ruth Mary died 1943 age not recorded

89. Sr. Charlotte Mary - died 07.07.1944 Charlotte HUSSEY D.O.B. 23.08.1861 (Choir)
Professed 24.02.1900

Sister Charlotte Mary (HUSSEY SSB) died 1944 aged 82

95. Sr. Olive - died 24.03.1947 Doris Olive PRITCHARD D.O.B. 30.05.1899
(Choir) Professed 06.11.1924

Sister Olive (Doris Olive PRITCHARD SSB) died 1947 aged 47

EDITED EXTRACTS FROM THE CHRONICLES WITH REFERENCE TO CROWBOROUGH 1887- 1947.

Only significant, or otherwise curious, entries are made from the very frequent comings and goings to Crowborough recorded in the Chronicles.

1887

July 13th - Sr. Ellen went to Crowborough - followed by several Sisters during the month. This is the first reference to rests being taken at Crowborough.

1890

June 11th - It was announced that Gertrude Temple lent the money for the purchase of land at Crowborough to build a House of Rest for the Sisters.

1892

September 2nd - The Revd. Mother returned from a month's residence in lodgings, with several other Sisters, at Crowborough; summoned by the serious illness of Sr. Mary Eliza, who had been sinking for some time.

1893

October 27th - The Revd. Mother returned from a short visit to Crowborough, having arranged with the agent of the Goldsmith's Company for the renting of Laurel Cottage, for the Sisters' rests.

1894

January 15th - Sr. Margaret and Miss Nicholson went to the Cottage at Crowborough, to set it in order, and to stock the garden. Returned on 22nd.

April 2nd - Sr. Gabrielle Marie, Sr. Rosina, Sr. Arabella Mary went to the Cottage at Crowborough.

May 5th - The Reverend Mother Foundress and Sr. Nora joined two other Sisters at the Crowborough Cottage.

May 6th - Sr. Margaret and Lucy Nicholson went to Crowborough

July 25th - Sr. Mary Julia went to stay with Miss Nicholson at Hollies, Crowborough.

1895

April 24th - Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough with M Nicholson. Sr. Mary Agatha went to prepare the Cottage at Crowborough for the Sisters' Summer residence.

July 1st - Mother Foundress, Sr. Margaret and Miss Nichols went to Crowborough - stayed at Mrs. Roberts' - the Hollies. The Cottage full of Sisters during the summer.

August 19th - Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough Cottage to nurse Sr. Mary Julia - ill - typhoid.

Dec. 21st - Crowborough Cottage closed for the winter.

1896

February 4th - Mother and Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough for a week

July 13th - Mother and Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough "Pleasant View".

1897

July 3rd - Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough to see about building of the New Rooms at the Cottage. And about this, the Mother signed the lease on the Cottage and grounds, taking it for 14 years, with a break, on either-side, at 7 years.

1898

March 14th - Sister Martha underwent a serious operation in St Thomas' Hospital. She remained there for some weeks, and then went to convalesce in the Crowborough Cottage (Dr Cullingworth performed the operation charging only £2 fee.)

December 21st - Sr. Eliza Christina came up from Crowborough en route for a month at Bournemouth. The Cottage closed for awhile.

1899

January 18th Sr. Margaret took Sr. Eliza Christina back to Crowborough Cottage - with Sr. Martha Mary, who was out of health. Cottage re-opened.

March 7th - Much anxiety on account of the proposed New Light Railway Scheme, which would affect our Cottage and property at Crowborough: notice of this having been served in Nov. last.

May 11th - The Light Railway Scheme at Crowborough rejected - Mr. Sprott, the lawyer, communicated news to Mother.

June 24th - Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough with Miss Celia Chrystie and Lucy Nicholson, to 'Meadow Bank'.

July 10th Sr. Margaret Hilda went to Crowborough. The Cottage very full of various Sisters from Branch Houses, going and returning for their rests.

November 25th - A nurse-servant (Emily) engaged to be with Sr. Eliza Christina at the Crowborough cottage.

1900

We have a watercolour painting of Laurel Cottage/St. Audrey dated 1900.

May 28th - Sr. Margaret and Sr. Mary Frances went to Crowborough (the former to stay with Miss Nicholson in the village)

June 22nd - Sr. Margaret went to Crowborough to meet Davidson (Agent) about neighbouring building contemplated. Returned next day.

1901

Regular comings and going.

1902

December 27th - Sr. Jessica sent down to Crowborough to nurse Sr. Eliza Christina, ill with pneumonia and pleurisy.

1903

August 4th — Sr. Eliza Christina died (suddenly at the last) at Crowborough.

Haemorrhage on Consumption 6.30 am taken ill. Mr. Dunlop, Vicar summoned for the Last Prayers etc. She passed away at 10.15 a.m. Mother went to Crowborough from Seaford and Sr. Mary Julia from London.

August 8th Sr. Eliza Christina's Funeral, in St. John's Church yard (Burial) Mr. Dunlop officiated, 3.p.m. Many friends attended the Service in addition to the household at the Cottage.

1904 -1906

Frequent references to the comings and goings

1907

April 2nd - Sr. Rebecca and Sr. Emma Martha went to Crowborough to open the cottage. (A large Forest Fire had taken place last week, on the Moor close to us). Mr. Woods employed to remake the staircases and do up the Cottage.

July 30th - Mother, Sr. Margaret, with Nurse Dodds, (Assoc.) went by Woffs' motor-car to Crowborough. The car was not quite equal to the state of the country roads. The journey took about 5 hours, and was completed by their taking a carriage from the Cross, Crowborough.

September 26th - Mother and Sr. Margaret, with Sr. Rebecca returned from Crowborough by carriage and train. Dr. Basden (Croboro') seeing Mother conveyed by ambulance into the train, at Groombridge.

1908

March 16th - Sr. Rebecca went to Crowboro' for one night, to see to the bees, and to visit Mr. Frank Humphreys, Solicitor, on business, as to the exact boundaries of the garden -(with regard to the Purchase) and Insurance documents.

March 25th - Purchase of Laurel Cottage and grounds completed.

April 11th - Dr. Robinson accompanied Mother, (with Sr. Teresa and Nurse Whitwell,) to Crowborough, in a Motor-car (Woffs' 26 horse-power). The journey took 3 hours.

July 13th - Sr. Rebecca at Crowborough, about the Bees, 2 Days.

August 11th - Sr Rebecca at Crowborough, doing the bees, got severely stung, and had to come up into St. Barnabas' Hospital for treatment.

1909

December 2nd - Sister Bessie was elected as the second Mother General of the Society.

1910

April 9th - Sr. Rebecca went to Crowborough to prepare for Miss. Nicholson's arrival - a house having been taken for her up in the town, for the summer.

1911

Early this year an extra slip of ground was purchased at Crowborough - on the moor side of the garden.

June 20th Lucy Nicholson, Associate R.I.P. no. 5 Lloyd Street 1pm (Propers for the Dead in the Evening).

June 24th Funeral at Holy Redeemer Church and burial in Highgate Cemetery.

1912

July 17th - Mother General went to Crowborough for a week to inspect the garden - she took Sr. Helen Ursula with her.

October 12th — The Reverend Mother General held a General Chapter at which two delegates from the orphanage and one from each Branch House were present, and also all the Choir Sisters resident in the Mother House. The points to be discussed were the alterations to re-building of part of Laurel Cottage and secondly the purchase of burial ground in the cemetery at Bournemouth. Both were agreed upon.

November 8th - Sr. Rebecca came from Crowborough for a few days to talk over the plans for the cottage.

1913

February 27th — Death of Reverend Mother Foundress.

June 21st - This the day the Sisters returned to Laurel Cottage after the alterations. For the future the cottage is to be named St. Audrey.

July 7th - Sr. Rebecca came from Crowborough to choose furniture for St. Audrey.

July 21st - The Mother General, accompanied by Sr. Anna Mary went to Crowborough for three days to inspect the alterations, which gave great satisfaction.

September 13th - The Mother General went to Crowborough for a few days to attend to the garden.

1914

July 17th - The Reverend Mother went to Crowborough for a few days. She was much pleased with the look of things in the garden.

1915

December 2nd - Sister Bessie re-elected as Mother General.

1917

December 18th - The Rev. Mother and Sr. Louisa returned from Crowborough in the middle of a bad air-raid to our unspeakable relief as we did not know where they would shelter. Sr. Joanna had gone to meet them. They had left the station when the raid began, and the man bravely drove on rapidly, they mercifully arrived unhurt.

1919

December 2nd - Reverend Mother Bessie re-elected by a large majority.

1920-1921

Frequent records of Sisters taking their rests and periods of convalescence at Crowborough.

1922

October 14th - General Chapter. In connection with the matter of economy it was announced that the house at Crowborough would either be let for the winter months or closed.

October 23rd - The Reverend Mother went to Crowborough to make arrangements for closing St. Audrey for the winter in order to lessen our expenses.

November 8th - The house at Crowborough was closed. The gardener and his wife were left in charge for the winter; they undertook to keep it aired. Sr. Rebecca and Sr. M. Grace and the maid came here (i.e. Mother House) to live.

1923

April 16th - St. Audrey to be re-opened with St. Henrietta in charge. Sr. Dorothy Mary and a kitchen maid went to help in opening the house. The permanent Crowborough maid went for a holiday.

1924

May 12th - The house at Crowborough was opened with Sr. Dorothea in charge. It was quickly filled.

December 2nd — Reverend Mother Bessie was re-elected.

December 20th - The Sisters came from Crowborough and the house was closed.

1926

March 17th - We heard the Rev. B.P.Gurdon had resigned the living of St. John's, Crowborough to take up work in the Mission Field in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman. (South Africa).

November 18th - The Rev. Mother told us the order had been given to put in electric light at St. Audrey.

December 18th - The Sisters came from Crowborough and the house was shut- up. The installation of the electric light was finished and several rooms have been leaned and colour washed.

1927

February 25th - Sr. Joanna and Rosetta went to Crowborough to get the house ready for Mrs. Bartlett.

March 1st The Rev. R. Bartlett returned as our Assistant Chaplain. He had a room at No. 6 Lloyd Square, and his meals here.

March 2nd - Sr. Joanna returned from Crowborough and Mrs. Bartlett and Michael went to St. Audrey.

April 29th - The Rev. Bartlett moved into No 9 Lloyd Street, which is to be the Chaplain's House. Mrs. Bartlett and Michael joined him and left St. Audrey, Crowborough.

1929

February 19th - Sr. Mary Blanche was elected new Superior, following death of Mother Bessie on January 3rd.

1929 - 1932 Regular comings and goings.

1932

May 18th - August 3rd Sr. Rhoda went to Crowborough to do the cooking as Rosetta was ill and taken to the Cottage Hospital at Crowborough.

1933

June 8th - Sr. Henrietta's 80th birthday.

June 10th - Sr. Henrietta very ill.

1934

February 19th - Mother Mary Blanche re-elected Mother Superior.

1937

March 12th - Lady Surma and Sr. Jane Lois went to Crowborough.

1939

February 20th - Mother Mary Blanch re-elected.

August 25th - War imminent.

August 26th Sr. Henrietta, Sr. Charlotte Mary, Sr. Lily with Jessie went by ambulance to Crowborough. Sr. Mary Helen, Sr. Edith Mary, Sr. Mary Monica and a Nurse went by Taxi. Sr. Adeline, Sr. Rhoda, one maid and one Nurse went by another Taxi.

September 3rd - 11.30 am First Air Raid warning. War declared by England on Germany.

1940

February 22ⁿ - A telephone message from Crowborough gave news of Sr. Henrietta. She is very ill. She asked for and received Holy Communion in the afternoon.

February 23rd - Rev. Mother and Sr. Grizel went to Crowborough to see Sr. Henrietta.

February 24th - Rev. Mother and Sr. Grizel returned from Crowborough. Sr. Henrietta sleeping a good deal, and mostly unconscious.

February 25th — Sr. Henrietta died at 10 pm.

February 27th - Rev. Mother and Sr. Dorothea went to Crowborough for Sr. Henrietta's funeral. Vespers of the Dead. Compline 5.30pm. Mattins and Lauds of the Dead (entire) 8.00 pm

February 28th 7.30 am Requiem Mass in the Oratory St. Audrey. Celebrant Fr. Olive. 13 communicants. Absolutions in the cell. (Dies Irae said at the Mass.)

The Funeral Service at 11 am. Fr. Olive officiated. A server acted as Crucifer. Incense and Holy Water used at the grave. Hymn 316 E.H. in Church, and Nunc Dimittis and Hymn 471 E.H. at the end. Sr. Maryan came from Brighton to play the organ in Church in the absence of the organist. Service here (London) at 10.15 am. Rev. Mother returned to London by the 4.30 train.

May 9th - Sr. Hilda took Sr. Ethelbertha to Crowborough.

June 5th - News of Sr. Ethelbertha's increasing illness.

June 6th - The Reverend Mother went to Crowborough to see Sr. Ethelbertha.

June 8th Sr. Ethelbertha died at Crowborough at 10 pm.

June 10th - The Rev. Mother returned from Crowborough.

June 12th Sisters Helen Lucy went to Crowborough for Sr. Ethelbertha's funeral. Requiem in oratory at St. Audrey. Celebrant Fr. Olive. Absolutions in cell.

June 13th Funeral Service at St. John's 10.30. Hymn 490 E.H. Fr. Olive officiated. Crucifer: boy. Thurifer: Sr. Adeline. The grave in Crowborough Churchyard. Sr. Helen Lucy, Sr. Ellen Irene, Sr. Mabel, Dr. Pellatt (Associate) Nurse Jessie (Associate) were present.

1941

April 23rd - St. Gertrude Mary went from St. Audrey to a sanatorium to have a slight operation for her lung.

April 25th Sr. Gertrude Mary had her operation in the sanatorium.

April 29th - Sr. Gertrude Mary returned to St. Audrey from the sanatorium.

1942

Jan 8th - Sr. Olive was moved by ambulance from Brighton to Crowborough. Sr. Mabel Teresa accompanied her and returned to Brighton.

April 15th The Reverend Mother went to Crowborough for rest.

April 29th the Reverend Mother returned with Sr. Gertrude Mary who is to be in residence for a time.

May 1st - Sr. Olive underwent an operation in the sanatorium at Robertsbridge, (where she had gone from Crowborough on April 8th) the object of it being to hasten the recovery of her lung.

December 21st — The Rev. Mother and Sister Hilda went to Crowborough. Sr. Hilda to help with the Sacristy work at St. John's Church over the Festival.

December 23rd - The Rev. Mother returned from Crowborough.

1943

February 6th - Sr. Edith Mary died at St. Audrey Crowborough while Mass was being said in the Oratory. No special offices said at St. Audrey. At St. John's Church, Withyham prayers were asked for the repose of the soul of Sr. Edith Mary on Sunday Feb. 7th at Mass.

February 7th - Vespers of the Dead sung solemnly after Evensong 5:30pm in St. John's Church. Fr. Green Officiant (The body was brought into the church before Evensong.) 6 funeral lights round the coffin. The congregation held lighted (unbleached) candles. Absolutions of the Dead followed.

Feb. 8th - Requiem 7 in St. John's church. Funeral Service 2.30pm in St John's. Hymn 490 E.H. Fr. Green (Vicar) officiated. Reverend Mother and Sr. Lucy Veronica came from London in time for the funeral and stayed the next night at St. Audrey. Sr. Lucy Veronica - Organist. Sr. Ellen Irene, Sr. Mabel Teresa from St. Audrey and several relations were present also. (The small pall was not sent from London.)

February 10th - Rev. Mother and Sr. Lucy Veronica returned.

February 19th - Chapter for election of Mother Superior Sr. Grizel elected.

1944

July 7th - Sr. Charlotte Mary died at St. Audrey, Crowborough about 2.30pm.

July 10th The Little Office was said. Requiem in the Oratory.

The body was brought into St. John's church overnight on July 9th. Vespers of the Dead was sung followed by Absolutions. No Requiem on the day of Burial. The funeral service at 2.30pm all was said in the churchyard (no service in church). No hymns. Fr. Green officiated. The Assistant Superior, Sr. Ellen Irene and Sr. Mabel. Teresa and 2 nurses were present and a few members of St. John's congregation.

1946

August 1th - Sr. Hilda went to take charge of St. Audrey, Crowborough, in place of Sr. Helen Lucy who went on 8th to be in residence at Bournemouth.

November 29th - Sr. Mabel Teresa went to Crowborough to be in charge.

December 2nd — Sr. Hilda came into residence in Lloyd Square.

1947

February 25th - Sr. Elinor and Sr. Rosetta came from Crowborough.

February 26th - Sr. Elinor went to Dr. Odlum who ordered her a long rest. She returned to Crowborough.

February 28th — Sr. Felicity went to Crowborough. (With tin of fruit for Sr. Olive! in snow and ice!!)

March 24th Sr. Elinor came from Crowborough. After breakfast the news of Sr. Olive's sudden death at 8.15 am came. Monday in Passion Week. The Assistant Superior and Sr. Hilda went to Crowborough by the morning train.

March 28th - Sr. Olive's funeral at Crowborough at 11.00 am. Mass at 7.15 in St. John's church followed by Absolutions. Requiem at St. Audrey the following day. The Assistant Superior and Sr. Hilda returned in the evening.

April 23rd - Special General Chapter at 1 pm mainly to consider the sale of St. Audrey, Crowborough.

July 18th - St. Audrey, Crowborough was offered for sale by auction but it was not sold.

August 13th - Sr. Mabel Teresa closed St. Audrey, Crowborough and returned to the Mother House.

August 14th - Furniture came from Crowborough.

October 3rd - The Reverend Mother returned from Crowborough bringing Sr. Rhoda with her. The conveyance of St. Audrey, Crowborough was signed by the Trustees.

OBSERVATIONS

During the period that the Sisters had accommodation in Crowborough the references to Sisters coming and going are very numerous. The various Reverend Mothers were also frequent visitors to the house.

There was a resident group of 2 or 3 Sisters at the house, a maid and other secular assistance. There were regular changes of that resident group of Sisters. Other Sisters went there for their rests and often for convalescence.

It might be assumed that the Resident Sisters gave a little assistance in St. John's church because although regular help is not mentioned specifically, there is a mention in 1942 of Sr. Hilda going to Crowborough to help in the sacristy at St. John's over Christmas. This would have merited comment in being exceptional as the house was usually shut up over the winter months.

From the county archive web-file.

1920 Electricity comes to Crowborough.

1947 Nuns (Sisters of Bethany) leave St Audrey's Old Lane, St John's (Sandstones).

Sisters of Bethany's visit to St John's June 11th 2015



L to R - Sr Mary Joy, Fr Robert Norbury, Sr Elizabeth Pio, Rev Mother Rita-Elizabeth, Sr Gwenyth, Sr Joanna Elizabeth, Fr Peter Walker OGS, Sr Ann Patricia



Sisters of Bethany

During a very special day out yesterday a memorial stone for 6 of our Sisters was blessed. It can be found in the churchyard of St John the Evangelist, Crowborough, East Sussex. After a lovely time with God in the Mass we had a great time getting to know Fr Robert and other members of the church family who were so kind, generous and welcoming to us. Thank you! Alleluia, God be praised!

Rev Mother Rita-Elizabeth and Fr Robert Norbury

