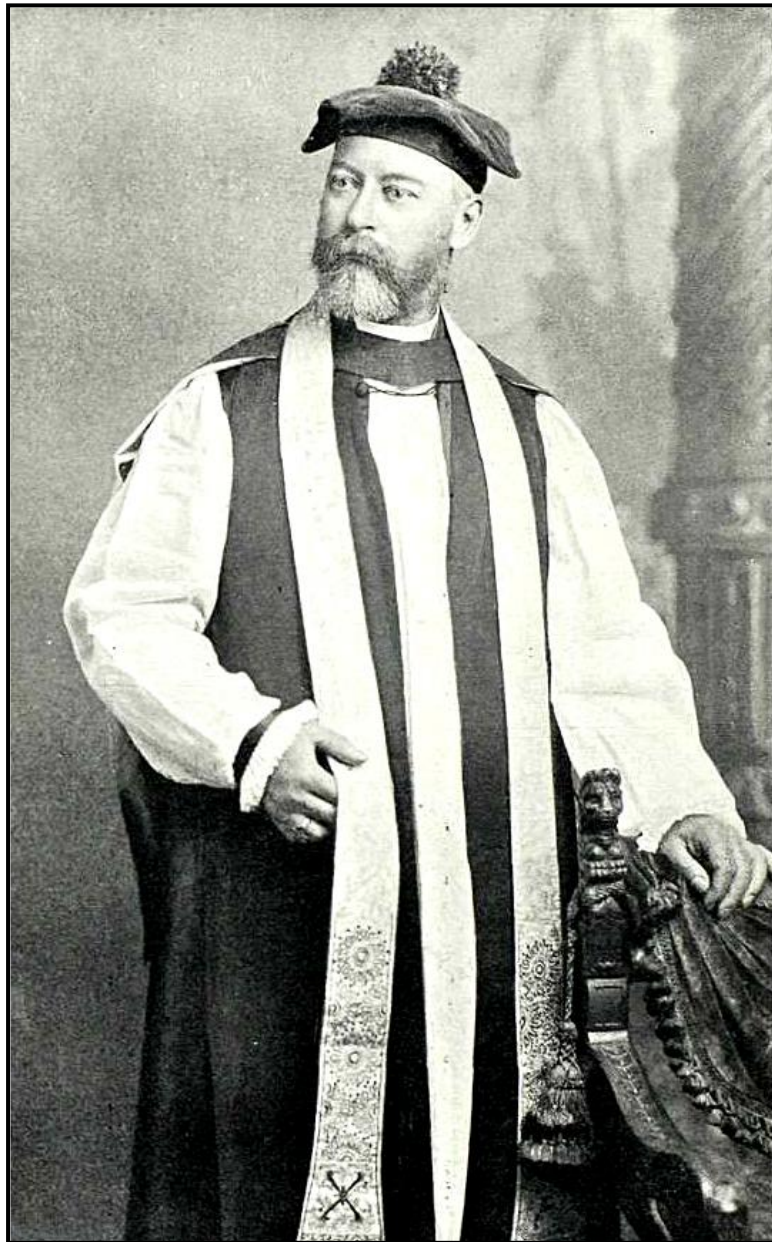


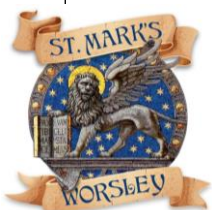
Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe



1840 - 1894

Curate - St. Mark's, Worsley: 1873 - 1875

Bishop of New Westminster, British Columbia: 1880 - 1894



Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe: 1873-1875

When the first Rector of the parish of St. Mark, Worsley, the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey, was appointed by the first Earl of Ellesmere in **1850**, the first Curate to serve at the church was Thomas Aldersey Morley. This set in motion a practice that continued for about 150 years. The Curate, or indeed a second Curate, often took on responsibility for St. Mary, Ellenbrook. In fact, at one point, under the second Rector, the Earl of Mulgrave, there were three Curates within the Parish.

A glance at the records would show that, under the Earl, one of the Curates was the **Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe** - a grand-sounding name. The Parish Registers show that he officiated at all three types of service (Baptisms, Marriages and Burials) over a period of time between 2 November **1873** and 17 September **1875**, at both St. Mark's and St. Mary's. The *Cambridge University Alumni Register*, 1261-1900, records that he was indeed the Curate at St. Mary's, Ellenbrook, from 1873 to 1875. A brief look at the entry for him in the Cantab. Alumni record book outlines a brief, fine and interesting biography of his life. The two Christian names surely indicate a man of rare talent and education.

BIRTH.

In Phillip-street, on Sunday the 12th instant, the lady of Acton Sillitoe, Esq., Merchant, of a son.

Acton Windeyer Sillitoe was, in fact, born in Sydney N.S.W., Australia, on 12 July 1840. His parents were Acton Sillitoe and Sarah (née Ball). *The Sydney Herald* announced his birth on 15 July **1840**. As

reported, his father was a Merchant. Acton, who was born in Trentham, Staffs., in 1802, and Sarah were married on 28 January **1836** at Saint Clement Danes, Strand, Westminster, London. They had three children, including daughter Rosalba, who was born in 1842, and a son born in May 1844. The engraving of the church was by S. Lacey, after T. H. Shepherd, 1829.

The Bankrupt Directory, by George Elwick, shows that **Acton Sillitoe** was a silk throwster, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, by 19 May **1829**. *The London Gazette* reported on 12 Oct **1838** that Allen James Hurd of Newcastle, a silk throwster - a partner with Thomas Philips Birks, Hall White, and Acton Sillitoe - had all been declared bankrupt.

However, it appears that Acton and Sarah emigrated shortly afterwards, since in July **1840**, **Acton Sillitoe**, Esquire, was a merchant in Phillip Street, Sydney. In April **1842** he was an actuary who was criticised at a meeting of the Mutual Insurance Association but was re-elected actuary in August. In January **1844**, he advertised boxes of tea for sale at his King Street premises. He was chairman of the general meeting of the Proprietors and Assistant Drapers held at the School of Arts in October 1844. In the late 1840s, he built *The Willows* in Darling Point Road. He won a prize at the Floral and Horticultural Exhibition in January 1845 and was credited with introducing cork oaks to New South Wales.



Acton Sillitoe was a Trustee of St. James Church in **1848** and in **1850** contributed to the Church of St Paul, Pennant Hills. Acton Sillitoe became an Assessor for Brisbane Ward for the City Council in September 1842. He was elected a Foundation councillor for Bourke Ward, 1 November 1844 to 31 October 1848 and was appointed to the Committee of Public Works.

There was one charming incident relating to the young **Acton Windeyer** during his early life in Australia. The young boy suffered from a constant chest complaint and it was thought that swimming in the sea in the Bay of Sydney might benefit him. However, he disliked the cool temperature of the water; so his father, one day, took some hot water down to the sea, poured it in, and persuaded the boy to get in, since it would now be warmer!! *'He then no longer feared the cold, and was soon enabled to*

enjoy his prescription even without the jugful of warmth, which to his childish sense tempered the chill of the great ocean'. (H. H. Gowen).

Sadly, financial troubles continued to plague him, for, by January 1851, he had been declared insolvent. Later, in June 1852, after the creditors had received their shares of **Acton's** assets, the court granted him a certificate, which brought the insolvency proceedings to an end.

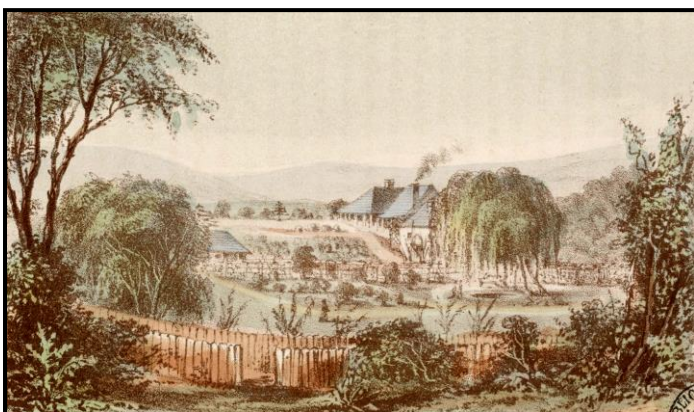
INSOLVENCY PROCEEDINGS.
NEW INSOLVENT,
JAN. 8.—Acton Sillitoe, of King-street, Syd-
ney, merchant. Amount of liabilities, £13,750
19s. Assets—value of real property, £5160
10s.; of personal property, £2819 16s. 9d.;
amount of debts outstanding, £3215 10s. 9d. :
total assets, £11,194 17s. 6d. Amount of defi-
ciency, £2556 1s. 6d. Official assignee, Mr.
George King.

(Insolvency Proceedings, *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* (New South Wales); 11 January, 1851).

LAW INTELLIGENCE.
SUPREME COURT.—WEDNESDAY.
SITTINGS IN BANCO.
(Before Mr. Justice Terry.)
INSOLVENCY JURISDICTION.
IN RE ACTON SILLITOE.
 The CHIEF COMMISSIONER reported that the conditions remaining to be fulfilled by the insolvent, under the order of Court made in August last, suspending his certificate, had been complied with, and moved that the certificate be confirmed.
 The Court ordered that notice be given by advertisement in one of the daily newspapers, that the certificate would issue on Wednesday next, if no cause shown.

Law Intelligence, Empire (Sydney, New South Wales), 17 June 1852.

In 1854 the Sillitoe family moved from New South Wales to England. The young **Acton Windeyer** furthered his education in England, first at King's College School, London, and afterwards at Pembroke College, Cambridge. And then in 1856 **Acton** arranged to sell the family residence in Sydney.



The Morning Herald, Sydney. 5 February 1856.

DARLING POINT.
 That valuable property and truly elegant retreat—
THE WILLOWS—now in the occupation of Thomas
 Skinner, Esq., including
THE FAMILY RESIDENCE
LAWN AND PLEASURE GROUNDS,
GARDEN, ORCHARD, AND VINEYARD,
 the whole occupying an area of about 8 ACRES, with
 extensive frontage to the Darling Point Road, and also
 to the waters of Double Bay.
TITLE—Unquestionable.
TERMS—One-third cash; the residue may remain secured
on the property at interest.
MORT and CO. have received instructions
from Acton Sillitoe, Esq. to sell by public
auction, at the Rooms, Pitt-street, on TUESDAY, 19th
February, at 12 o'clock,
 That truly delightful property, **THE WILLOWS,**
 situate on the heights of Darling Point, and now in
 the occupation of Thomas Skinner, Esq.
 Full particulars of the above may be obtained from
 the Auctioneers, who will also furnish intending purchasers
 with cards to inspect the property prior to the sale.

Today, Darling Point is a peninsula suburb on the eastern side of Sydney Harbour, approximately four kilometres from the Sydney central business district. Darling Point was first called 'Mrs. Darling's Point' in Surveyor Larmer's 1831 field book, in honour of Eliza, wife of the then Governor of New South Wales, Ralph Darling.

At the time of the 1861 census, seven years after the family's return to England, they were recorded as living at 2 Titchfield Villas, Regent's Park, Marylebone. The father, Acton, now 59 years old, was a Merchant; Sarah, mother, was 54, and **Acton Windeyer** was 20 and an undergraduate at Cambridge. Interestingly, the census shows that there was also a sister to the young boy living at that address - Fanny, who was 22. She was born in Middlesex, England - clearly before the family emigrated. Titchfield Villas were in Northgate, Regent's Park, and confirmation of his residency there can be found in *Webster's Royal Red Book* (or Court and Fashionable Register for April, 1863).

Acton Sillitoe died on 16 February **1876** and had been living at 49 Brecknock Road, Camden, and his effects, valued at under £2,000, were left to his widow, Sarah. He was recorded as a Gentleman. Their daughter, Fanny, was married to Robert Gordon Cumming, a clergyman, at St. Luke, Kentish Town, on 17 June 1879. Her brother, Acton Windeyer, signed the register as a witness to the marriage. Fanny subsequently died in 1929. Sarah Sillitoe died herself in 1882 in the district of St. Pancras, London. At the time of her death, she had still been living in Brecknock Road.

This, therefore, was the early background to **Acton Windeyer Sillitoe**. The entry for him in the *Cambridge University Alumni Register* gives a neat and succinct résumé of his education, life and work. It has proved to be a very useful guide to identifying the various stages of his ministry, prior to becoming the first Bishop of New Westminster. In addition to this, much reference will be made to two particular works recounting his time in the province of British Columbia. These are *Church Work in British Columbia: Being a Memoir of the Episcopate of Acton Windeyer Sillitoe* (1899) by H. H. Gowen; and *Pioneer Days in British Columbia: Reminiscences* (1922), by Violet Emily Sillitoe.

Herbert Henry Gowen (1864–1960) was an Anglican missionary and orientalist who wrote on the history of China and Japan and was long associated with the University of Washington (the state). From 1890 to 1897, Gowen served in Canada, as curate of Holy Trinity Cathedral and as rector of St. Barnabas Church in New Westminster, British Columbia. The dates and locations are of particular significance. In 1909, he became the founding chair of the University of Washington's Department of Oriental Subjects, a post he would hold until 1929, though he did continue to teach there for a further nine years. **Violet Emily Sillitoe** was **Acton Windeyer's** second wife and ultimately his widow. Her name and influence will reappear as her husband's mission is brought to life.

The entry in the Cantab. Register states the following:

Name: Acton Windeyer. Sillitoe College: TRINITY Entered: Michs. 1859 Born: 12 Jul 1840 Died: 1894 Adm. pens. at TRINITY, Feb. 22, 1859. [Eldest] s. of Acton [merchant], of 2, Tichfield Villas, Regent's Park, London. B. July 12, 1840, at Sydney, N.S.W., Australia. School, King's College, London. Matric. Michs. 1859. Migrated to Pembroke, Sept. 24, 1860; B.A. 1863; M.A. 1866; D.D. 1880. D.C.L., Toronto. Ord. deacon (Lichfield) 1869; priest, 1870; C. of Brierley Hill, Staffs., 1869-71. C. of All Saints, Wolverhampton, 1871-3. C. of Ellenbrook, Lancs., 1873-5. Chaplain at Geneva, 1876-7. Chaplain to the British Legation at Darmstadt, 1877-9. Bishop of New Westminster, British Columbia, 1879-94. Died June 9, 1894. (H. H. Gaven, <i>Church Work in B. Columbia</i> , 561, which gives date of death as 1879; <i>Crockford</i> .)
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The archives at King's School reveal that he started there in the autumn term of **1853** and left two years later in **1855**. Furthermore, he was a school monitor and was awarded a 3rd class classical scholarship in 1855. Upon completing his education at King's School, London, (then in the Strand, but now K.C.S. in Wimbledon), he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. He matriculated there in the first academic term of the academic year (the autumn term). On 22 February **1859**, he had been admitted a pensioner, i.e. a student who is not a scholar or sizar and who pays for his own tuition. A year later, in **1860**, he migrated (or transferred) to Pembroke College on 24 September, from where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in **1863** and a Master's in **1866**.

In **1869**, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop J. R. Selwyn of Lichfield, a 'great missionary bishop,' and the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand from 1841 to 1869. Sillitoe then became Curate of Brierley Hill, Staffs., through to 1871. In the following year, **1870**, he was ordained priest. He then spent two years as Curate at All Saints, Wolverhampton, from **1871** to **1873**. It would appear that nothing of any significance happened during his time at both of these parishes. Similarly, over the next two years, **1873** to **1875**, when he was Curate in charge of St. Mary, Ellenbrook, there is little to record. However, he was fortunate to serve under the Earl of Mulgrave (later the Marquis of Normanby), who became his lifelong friend.

Acton Windeyer married Charlotte Jane Sillitoe at Bidston Parish Church, Cheshire, on 22 November **1870**. It is a matter of curiosity that both had the same surname, but research has been unable to find any connection. Records show that the Rev. **Acton Windeyer Sillitoe** married Charlotte Jane Sillitoe (born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 6 December 1837). Her father was Thomas Sillitoe and her mother was Sarah Robinson. They were married in the Parish Church of Bidston, Cheshire, on 9 June **1878**. Their married life was shortlived, however, since Charlotte died at Summerfield, Wolverhampton, aged about 40.

<p>SILLITOE Charlotte Jane. Personal Estate under £5,000.</p>	<p>3 July. The Will of Charlotte Jane Sillitoe (Wife of the Reverend Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, Clerk) formerly of Ellenbrook in the County of Lancaster but late of Wolverhampton in the County of Stafford who died 9 June 1878 at Wolverhampton was proved at Lichfield by the said Acton Windeyer Sillitoe of Wolverhampton the sole Executor. Probate being granted under certain Limitations.</p>
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Thomas Sillitoe was one of about 500 guests attending A Grand Ball and Supper, held at the Governor's House in Buenos Aires to

celebrate the marriage of Queen Victoria in 1840. It would seem that he worked within the British Consulate - certainly by 1825. In the census of **1851**, the family was living in Bootle and Thomas was listed as a Retired Hide Merchant. He subsequently died there on 27 March 1856.

Then, suddenly, a major change occurred in his life's journey, when he accepted the chaplaincy of the English Church at Geneva. He was there for only a short time, 'where' according to one unknown source 'he had a good many troubles.' Within a year, he became chaplain at Darmstadt, (Grand Duchy of Hesse), and to the Princess Alice. Here, one of the happiest periods of his life, he stayed for two years, combining with his chaplaincy to the Legation the position of chaplain to Princess Alice. *The Cambridge Independent Press* newspaper of Saturday 28 July **1877** announced:

The Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, of Pembroke College, has been appointed Chaplain at Darmstadt.

Princess Alice (1843 - 1878) was the third child and second daughter of Queen Victoria. She had married Prince Louis of Hesse on 1 July 1862. Later, she became Duchess of Hesse in 1877 and died on 14 December 1878. The same unknown source reported further: "I knew nothing of Bishop Sillitoe until he was nominated as chaplain at Geneva ... His work at Darmstadt was signalized by his great influence over the Princess Alice and her children, especially her daughters. . . . He was undoubtedly the means, under God, of bringing the Princess back from Strauss and unbelief to the happiness of the Faith."

Acton Windeyer married a second time. On 6 August **1879**, in Yoxford, Suffolk, Violet Emily Pelly of married **Acton Windeyer Sillitoe**, just before he took on his rôle as the first bishop of the New

<p>Aug. 6, at Yoxford, the Rev. Acton W. Sillitoe, Bishop Designate of New Westminster, to Violet Emily, second daughter of Justinian Pelly, Esq., of Elmsley.</p>
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Westminster Diocese in British Columbia. Violet Emily Sillitoe was born Violet Emily Pelly on 13 October

1855, in Little Hallingbury, Hertfordshire, England. Her parents were Justinian Pelly (1818-1893) and Fannie Ingleby (1826-1908) and she was the fourth of nine children. The family lived at Gaston House Mansion, Little Hallingbury, Essex. Her father was Secretary to a Joint Stock Company. Violet was to

be his faithful and constant companion for the next 25 years. The reference above to *Bishop Designate of New Westminster* in Jackson's Oxford Journal on 16 August **1879** provides a clue to the next stage of his ministry. In fact, the news of this commission had first broken in *The Newcastle Courant* of Friday 8 August 1879.

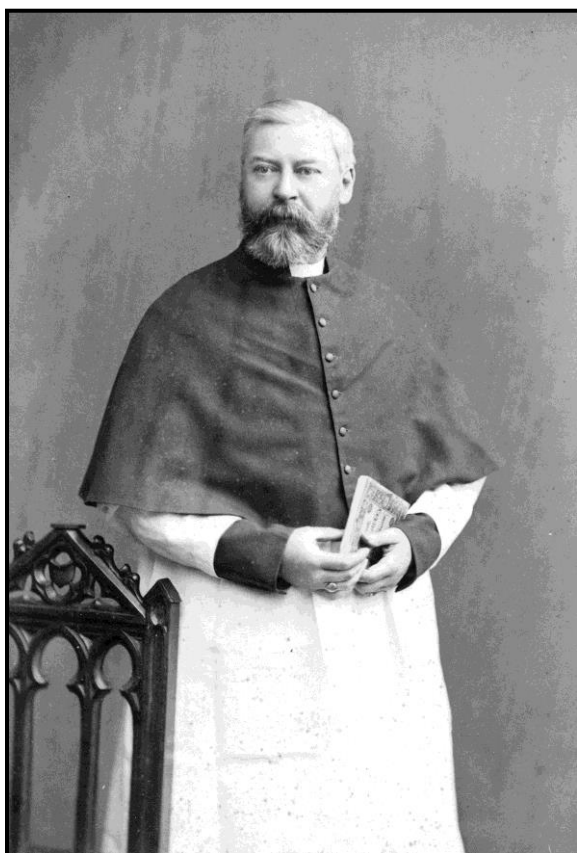
It was during his chaplaincy at Darmstadt that, in **1879**, he received a call from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to be Bishop of New Westminster, British Columbia. New Westminster was then but a small village. The boundaries of the new diocese were to be from the forty-fifth parallel of latitude northward to the fifty-fourth, and from the Rocky Mountains on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west. He was to have jurisdiction over the southern half of the mainland of British Columbia, an area of 186,000 square miles and a population of 5,000, of whom 4,000 were members of the Church of England. (By comparison, England is 50,345 sq.mi. and the UK is 94,525 sq.mi.)

The Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, M.A., consular chaplain at Darmstadt, has accepted the offer of the new bishopric of New Westminster, in British Columbia. Mr. Sillitoe is a graduate of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and was ordained by the Bishop of Lichfield, in 1869. He was curate of Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, from 1869 to 1871; from 1871 to 1873 he was curate-in-charge of All Saint's Mission District, Wolverhampton; and from 1873 to 1876 he was curate at St. Mark's, Worsley, under the Earl of Mulgrave, and had charge of the donative chapel at Ellenbroke. Prior to his appointment at Hesse Darmstadt, he was chaplain at Geneva for a short time.

Berrow's Worcester Journal, on 16 August **1879**, printed this announcement.

Today, New Westminster is a city in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia, Canada. It was founded as the capital of the new-born Colony of British Columbia in 1858, and continued in that role until the Mainland and Island Colonies were merged in 1866, and was the

Mainland's largest city from that year until it was passed in population by Vancouver during the first decade of the 20th century.



"The diocese of New Westminster was founded in 1879, but with the phenomenal growth of the City of Vancouver, the see city was moved there in 1912. In 1879, the original (1859) Anglican Diocese of British Columbia was divided into three "sees" (bishoprics, dioceses): The Bishopric of British Columbia, The Bishopric of Caledonia and The Bishopric of New Westminster. The Bishopric or the Diocese of New Westminster consisted of the southern mainland of the civil province of British Columbia. It has been divided again twice: in 1899 with the creation of the Diocese of Kootenay and in 1914 with the creation of the Diocese of Cariboo. Since 1914 its boundaries have included the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley up to and including Yale, the Sunshine Coast and Howe Sound area. The original See city was New Westminster with Holy Trinity Church constituted as the Cathedral in 1892. By the 1910's the Bishop and Synod administration had moved to Vancouver. In 1929 Christ Church in Vancouver was constituted the Cathedral of the Diocese."

(www.memorybc.ca/anglican-church-of-canada)

On Thursday 4 December **1879**, *The Manchester Courier* reported that "At the congregation today it is proposed to grant the degree of D.D. to the Right Reverend Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, of Pembroke

College, Bishop of New Westminster, in British Columbia," this in recognition of his elevation to the episcopate. The unknown source quoted earlier (a high-ranking clergyman, it appears) wrote: "But although the offer of the Bishopric of New Westminster seemed to upset all his plans and to make a radical change in the whole outlook of his life, Mr. Sillitoe felt it would be wrong to refuse so evident a call to harder duty in the distant dependencies of the Empire". Gowen also observed: "The duties of this double post he left at last to obey the call to the episcopate given him from the far distant West."

Acton Windeyer Sillitoe was consecrated Bishop on All Saints' Day, **1879**, in the parish church of Croydon, by Archbishop Tait of Canterbury, assisted by Bishop Jackson of London, Bishop Thorold of Rochester, Bishop Hills of Columbia, Bishop Jackson of Antigua, and Bishop Tufnell. The sermon was preached by the Bishop's old friend and former rector, the Earl of Mulgrave, who continued to be his commissary till the close of his arduous episcopate. As to whether he was the right choice for this position, the same unknown source said: *"When the diocese was formed, Bishop Hills asked me if I could suggest a good man, and I at once recommended Mr. Sillitoe. ... I well recollect his coming to me and saying he wished I had let him alone, that he was by no means the man I took him to be, that he was very human. . . . The result has proved that my estimate of him was truer than his own."*

Shortly after his consecration, he wrote in a letter to a correspondent what was to prove to be the guiding principle in all his dealings with his clergy throughout his life.

"I hope to be in a most real sense a 'father' to my clergy, and though they may differ as widely as the wide comprehensiveness of our Church permits, I shall never as Bishop lean more to one way of thinking than another. I shall claim the right to hold my own views and to express them, and to place them in the most favourable light I can, but I shall never regard a fellow-worker with less affection because he fails to see things from my standpoint; and my clergy will, I hope, honour my fairness in this respect by equal confidence in one another."

He addressed his first letter to his diocese through its representative, Archdeacon Woods, on 13 November **1879**. At the end of it, he wrote:

"I have had a letter from Archdeacon Wright, and a copy of a report on the spiritual destitution of the mainland. The letter is a gloomy one but it has not made me gloomy. I am prepared for trials and for disappointments, but I don't believe we shall overcome them any the easier by magnifying them or dwelling too much upon them. The bitter has pretty well mingled with the sweet in my life already, but nevertheless I find I get on very fairly by remembering the sweet and forgetting the bitter as much as I can.

Let us take courage and go forward. God bless you and your house.

Faithfully yours in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. W. New Westminster"

He took his farewell of old friends in England on Thursday, April 29, **1880**, at a celebration of Holy Communion in the church of St. Margaret's, Anfield. The rector there, the Rev. John Sheepshanks, who later became Bishop of Norwich, had himself served as a priest in that area of Canada, having held for several years the position of Rector of Holy Trinity, New Westminster. To this church the Bishop took with him a gift from the Abbey Church of Old Westminster - an altar cross presented by Dean Stanley, and the altar pedestals, which were manufactured from old timbers from the Abbey. These pedestals now form part of the credence table in the sanctuary.

The Bishop and his party set sail from Liverpool on Thursday 29 April **1880** on the *Sarmatian* and landed at Quebec on 12 May. The voyage was not an easy one, the ship encountering vast sheets of ice

and icebergs. *"The good ship ploughed her way through a hundred and forty miles of ice, nearly half of it full twenty feet thick."*



Violet Emily says that *"The steamer on which we crossed the Atlantic ... was the last word in luxury, as it was accounted in those days. ... Luxury in those days meant a very different thing to what it does now."* The Bishop conducted several services during the sea passage, both for the emigrants and the saloon passengers. In doing so, he gained a little knowledge of the various classes of people on their way to settle in the new Dominion.

Since the Canadian Pacific Railroad has not as yet been completed (it was built between 1881 and 1885), they had to journey to San Francisco on the Union Pacific Railroad (built 1862 to 1869), it being the only transcontinental line. There were no dining cars and the meals provided at the stops were far from appetising. From Quebec, the Bishop travelled by short journeys to Montreal and Toronto, spending Whit Sunday in the first place and Trinity Sunday in the second. They reached San Francisco on 8 June. From there they travelled to Victoria (the capital of Vancouver Island and British Columbia) on the *Idaho*, arriving there on 14 June.

Violet Emily was not at all impressed by this stage of the journey. *"The voyage from San Francisco in the old Idaho was even worse, for the steamer was crowded to capacity with men engaged to work on the railway construction of the C. P. R.; which had just commenced on the Western Division, and at night all the floor space was covered with sleeping figures. These men were described elsewhere as the scum of the San Francisco market!"*

Then, leaving Victoria on 18 June, they all reached New Westminster on the same day. All the clerical staff of New Westminster, (two in number!), met His Lordship, and welcomed him to his new diocese. His first act was joining in a service of thanksgiving in the church which was to become his cathedral - Holy Trinity Church, at which a *Litany* was said and a *Te Deum* sung.

At this point, the temptation to give a detailed narrative account of his time in British Columbia must be resisted. Instead, the reader's attention is drawn to the two works quoted earlier and these can now be seen on the internet: *Church Work in British Columbia: Being a Memoir of the Episcopate of Acton Windeyer Sillitoe* (1899) by H. H. Gowen; and *Pioneer Days in British Columbia: Reminiscences* (1922), by Violet Emily Sillitoe. Both books can be found at open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks.

Various references will now be made to significant dates and events over the fourteen years of his episcopacy - residency; All Hallows School; assimilation; synods; visits to the UK; missionary work; and his death and obituaries. Three place names - Sapperton, Old Westminster and Yale - will feature prominently within this narrative, as will two churches - St. Mary's, Sapperton, and Holy Trinity, New Westminster.

Sapperton was originally a "suburb" of New Westminster, so named for the Columbia Detachment of Royal Engineers ("Sappers", hence Sappers Town), whose camp was on the hill now occupied by the Fraserview neighbourhood. It is the location of the historic Fraser Cemetery, which has a number of historically significant graves and monuments. *"It was Queen Victoria herself who gave New Westminster its name. Originally it was going to be called Queensborough, but objections were raised and affairs became so heated that the question was referred to England, and Her Majesty decided the matter by herself choosing the name, thereby conferring a singular honour on New Westminster."* (H. H. Gowen). **Yale** is not to be confused with the university in Connecticut. Located on the Fraser River, it was founded in 1848 by the Hudson's Bay Company and played an important role in certain events of the gold rush period. In its heyday at the peak of the gold rush, it was reputed to be

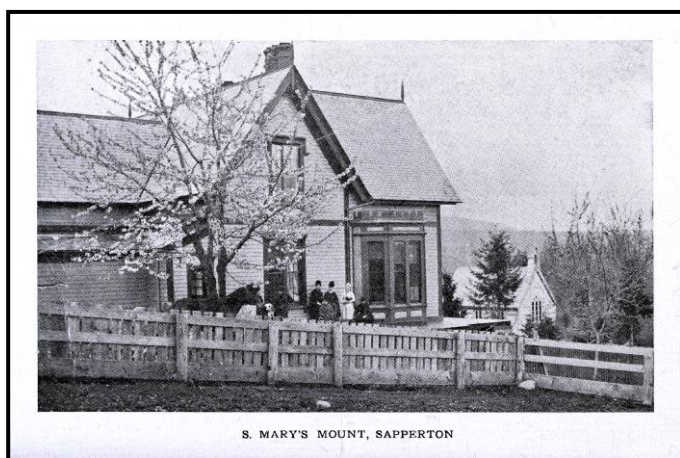
the largest city west of Chicago and north of San Francisco. It also earned epithets such as *"the wickedest little settlement in British Columbia"* and *"a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah"* of vice, violence and lawlessness.

The diocese of New Westminster is on the Pacific Coast of Canada, and formed part of the Diocese of British Columbia, which only became a colony in 1858. The following year, the region became a diocese in its own right, under Bishop Hills - it having recently been opened up to missionary work. It rapidly became an onerous task for one person with just a handful of missionary clergy, because of its rough population and its vast size. A few small churches now existed, but the majority of the growing and itinerant population had no contact with a church. And so in **1878**, a call went out from Bishop Hills and the Synod to seek help and advice. One resolution, which was accepted, was that the diocese be split into three parts - Vancouver Island, New Westminster and Caledonia. The Bishop received the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury in **1879**, and substantial endowments were raised for the new dioceses from private individuals and two large missionary societies.

Gold had been discovered in Fraser Canyon and within months, tens of thousands of prospectors descended upon Victoria - that a small village of only 500 inhabitants. Within two years, much of the gold in that area was depleted and miners went further afield in search of it. London decided to make British Columbia a colony and sent a detachment to secure it, since smaller gold rushes were happening across the area. This inroad of a new population brought problems with the fur trappers and the indigenous Indians, the fishermen and the loggers. Very quickly, as the railroad expanded towards the west, workers from many countries also poured in to build the railway. Hence, the population became very diverse, and their habits and manners were very rough and coarse.

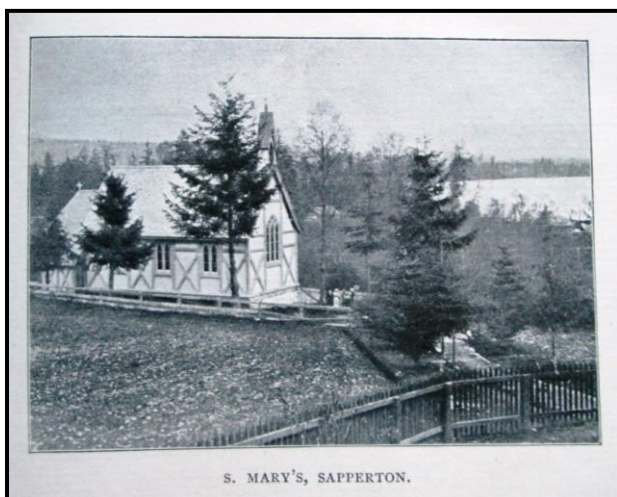
Residency.

The new Bishop chose as his residence the village of Sapperton, a mile and a half from New Westminster but now within the city limits. The Archdeaconry house there was ready to occupy and the village already had its own pretty little wooden church, St. Mary. *"It was the 'fashionable church' of those days. Government House stood nearby; officials and their staff had their residences round about; an English tone pervaded the little society; and they took pride in the church they had built for themselves, and in its services."* (Gowen). The house became known as St. Mary's Mount, Sapperton, and remained their official residence for about nine years.



Over the next decade, St. Mary's Mount became a leading centre of city social life, hosting three Governors General, as well as Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald, on their visits to New Westminster. After the departure of Bishop Sillitoe, St. Mary

reverted to being a small parish church, often with a part-time, shared or short-term priest.



The Bishop wasted no time in moving around the diocese and quickly went to visit the fisheries, the logging camps, the railway workers and the miners. Within three weeks, he made his first visit to Yale, up the Fraser River, spending almost a month there, carrying out his missionary duties - baptisms, weddings. It is fair to say that he found the scenery and landscape breath-taking. During his stay in Yale, a fire, probably caused by a drunk after payday, tore

through the town killing two, and destroying a large section of town. The church and the vestry were saved, largely through the efforts of Violet and Acton Sillitoe brandishing wet blankets on the roof of the vestry and buckets of water on the church roof.

Whilst **Acton Windeyer** was away ministering to the needs of the population, Violet was coming to terms with the arts of domestic life in the New World. *"Then a move was made to Yale, and we took up our abode for a while in the four-room Mission House, built many years before. It was here I began to wrestle with the difficulties of cooking and cleaning."* (Sillitoe)

The wooden church of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton, was designed and built by former Royal Engineers, and completed in early 1865. The original building for the church (set up in 1859) was part of the Barracks of the Royal Engineers, who had come to maintain order and to build the infrastructure of the new colony. The troops and their families became the first congregation of the church. Their number began to be swelled by local civilians. By 1863, the Columbia Detachment of Sappers was disbanded, but most of the Sappers chose to remain in the new colony. Over the next two years a nearby parcel of land was acquired and a new church building was established.

In **1889**, Holy Trinity in downtown New Westminster became the first cathedral of the new diocese and **Bishop Sillitoe** and his family left St. Mary the Virgin to live in the new Bishop's Palace, located near the new cathedral. The first Anglican service in New Westminster was held on Sunday 2 September 1859 in the Customs House - instituted by the Rev. John Sheepshanks, who was also responsible for the services held in the Barracks at Sapperton. The **first** of three Church buildings was completed the following year, was of wooden construction and was destroyed by fire in 1865. The **second** building was built of stone and was consecrated on December 18th, 1867. It was here that **The Right Reverend Acton Sillitoe** and Mrs. Sillitoe arrived in New Westminster on June 18th, **1880** and this church became the Cathedral of the Diocese of New Westminster in 1892. This building was also ravaged by fire in the disastrous fire of 1898 which wiped out the greater part of New Westminster. The **current** Cathedral is a reconstruction of the previous church, the walls and foundations of which were found to be sufficiently strong to be reused.



The picture to the left shows the original wooden church, pre-1865. The one to the right shows the new building, post 1867.

This Cathedral remained the Cathedral Church of the Diocese until 1929, when Archbishop de Pencier designated Christ Church as his Cathedral. The Parish of Holy Trinity was bitterly disappointed and, following a fight which lasted over a year and which threatened to be dragged before the Supreme Court, a settlement was reached which included the right of Holy Trinity to retain the title of Cathedral in perpetuity.



Ashmolean Museum."

In keeping with the intention of creating a *New Westminster*, (and the parallel would have been very obvious had the city remained the capital with the legislature built there), an altar cross "made of wood which had formed part of the Abbey of Westminster from the time of King Henry V" was offered to Holy Trinity by **Bishop Sillitoe** in **1881** with four cedar pedestals which had supported the marble altar in Henry VII's chapel, a gift to **Sillitoe** from Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster, after the marble posts designed by Torrigiano for the altar which the Abbey had used in Henry VIII's reign were rediscovered at the

The cross was placed above the altar and bears the Inscription: *Presented to the first bishop of New Westminster by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, being a portion of a rafter of Westminster Abbey of the date of King Henry the Fifth.*



With the rediscovery of the Torrigiano marbles, there was no longer any need for the cedar pedestals. And so, "A happy thought then occurred to the Dean. Only a few months before, the **Right Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe** had been consecrated to the missionary bishopric, newly established in the little city of *New Westminster* in *British Columbia* . . .

The Dean now presented the pillars, together with an altar cross fashioned out of the wood of the Abbey, to the young Bishop. The latter in his turn bestowed these gifts upon his own Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Trinity, standing on the banks of the Fraser River, where they may be seen arranged so as to form a credence table surmounted by a canopy."

[*Westminster Abbey, Its Worship and Ornaments* (1940), by Jocelyn Perkins, volume 2, p. 201].

'A number of historically significant artifacts grace the Cathedral. Ties to Westminster Abbey are represented by the pillared Credence Table in the sanctuary and the altar cross as well as the banner on the front of the pulpit. The brass lectern was a gift of the first Governor of the Colony, Sir James Douglas in 1875'.

[*The Memoirs of a Cathedral*, by Leslie T.H. Pearson. 1959.]

Assimilation

The Indian Act in Canada was first passed in 1876. That Act was the product of two earlier pieces of legislation - the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869. The Indian Act (which is a current Federal Law) is part of a long history of assimilation policies that intended to terminate the cultural, social, economic, and political distinctiveness of Aboriginal (i.e. native or indigenous) peoples by absorbing them into mainstream Canadian life and values. "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change." (John A. Macdonald, 1887, the first Prime Minister of Canada, who served twice 1867–1873, and 1878–1891). The Act has undergone several revisions but still remains on the Statute Book.

The BBC programme **The Great American Railroads**, hosted by Michael Portillo in 2020, highlighted the impact of this piece of legislation upon the native Canadian Indians when he was travelling through Mission City, a town within the Vancouver area. "It is the first stop on the transcontinental railway heading for Toronto in the east. Situated on the north bank of the Fraser River in the early 1850's, it was gold rush country. But Mission gets its name from the Catholic missionaries, led by Fr. Leon Fouquet, who arrived here by canoe in 1861 to convert the local

indigenous population. They established a church and a school." His mandate was to 'preach the Gospel to the poor'. The R. C. mission of St. Mary (founded in 1863) existed for a long time, but there is very little evidence today of its existence, save for a few stone foundations of some of the buildings. The main aim was to 'naturalise' native aboriginal populations, the idea being that this would make them comply more readily with colonization.

In his interview with an indigenous mentor teacher, she told him that the buildings disappeared in the 1960's. It had been a residential school set up by the government of Canada, with the intention of *"taking the Indian out of the child, so it was where the children attended school, but it was also where they lived year round."* This church school was ministered by the church, but funded by the government; but these residential schools were part of a wider policy of assimilation. *"The system forcibly separated indigenous children from their families and they were forbidden to recognise their culture, language and heritage. Living conditions were poor, education was deficient, abuse commonplace. The last school closed its doors in 1984 and in 2008 the Canadian Government issued an apology to the students and their families and established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission."*

Fr. Fouquet was a member of an Oblate missionary group, a new Catholic order, who believed that Satan was at work both in the lives of non-Christians, but also in the corrupt civilization of secular society. His aim was to save the First Nations not only from Satan, but from the violent and alcoholic excesses of the prospectors looking for gold in the nearby Caribou Gold Rush. He arrived full of the best intentions, the Oblate priest genuinely wished to help the First Nations, who were often badly mistreated by the white settlers and gold prospectors. Indeed, the Oblates and the local Indians were content to work alongside each other, mainly in agriculture. By 1863, the boys' school was running. And then, in 1868, the Sisters of Saint Ann joined the Oblates to establish a nearby sister school for girls. For quite a long time, these residential schools had not acquired an infamous reputation, and many families willingly sent their children to be educated. But by the end of the 19th century, things began to change, with many of the school's methods governing St. Mary's Mission being dictated by the Federal government's policies, eager to suppress all First nations culture.

The Ministry of Education has now made learning about this history as part of the state-wide curriculum. Amongst these peoples, there is heartbreak because many are learning that Canada is not the country they thought it was. The truth is slowly getting out and *"it is a work in progress."* Today, tours are offered around the site and stories are told by survivors of the oppression- their tales being quite horrific and distressing.

All Hallows School

It is against this missionary backdrop, and the drive of the Canadian Government to assimilate children of the First Nations, that **Acton Windeyer Sillitoe** decided to open a school in Yale. When he arrived, he was concerned that the government had made no provision for the training of girls. He believed that they needed an education to help them cope with the new way of life brought about by the coming of the white man.

On a visit back to England, he visited All Hallows School in Ditchingham. There, he was impressed by the dedication of the Sisters who ran the school, as well as by the high standards of education it provided. Upon his return to British Columbia, the bishop wrote to the Mother Superior of the English Convent to ask if two or three of the Sisters from Ditchingham could come to B.C. and establish a school for First Nations girls. He was granted immediate consent.

In the autumn of **1884**, Sister Amy and Sister Alice arrived in Yale from Ditchingham, England. They must have been shocked, as the terrain around Yale was quite unlike that of England. The town of Yale

had earlier been identified as a town where there was much need for the education and conversion of Native people. The town was in decline, following the gold rush and the near-completion of the transcontinental railroad. The two sisters took charge of the academic and administrative tasks, and in the following year, moved into a larger, abandoned building. As the school became known and numbers increased, academic lay staff were hired. They quickly decided that a boarding school was required and were pleased to accept a proposal from the bishop to establish one.

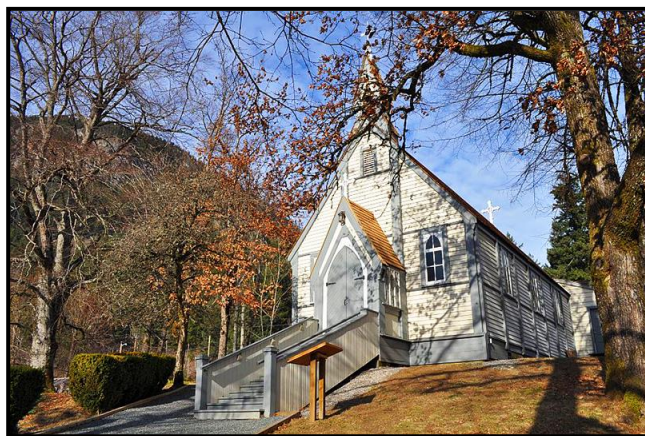


And so, when Andrew Onderdonk (the American railway contractor) moved on in 1886, he donated his estate 'Brookside' to become a girls' school, to be named All Hallows. The house was remodelled into classrooms and dormitories, and the stable was converted into a chapel. This was ranked as one of the main society schools in the colony and continued to operate for decades, into the 1920s. In 1890, All Hallows School was officially opened in Yale. It was the only school in Canada to enrol both First Nations and white girls in the same facilities.

Upon opening, the school enrolled thirty-five First Nations girls and forty-five white girls ranging in age from six into the late teens. Many of the First Nations girls were recruited by local Anglican clerics. Many of the girls' parents were in favour of having their daughters attend the school to "learn white ways." Most of the First Nations girls came from the Lytton area, with a few also coming from the Shuswap area, Salmon Arm, Lillooet and Chilliwack. The school attracted many daughters of Anglican clergymen from across British Columbia. All Hallows School became known for its high quality and standards of education. During a visit in 1887, Archdeacon Charles T. Woods was impressed with the "careful and successful teaching" of the Sisters and the "intelligent, ready, quick answers" given to him by the girls when he conducted exams.

Nicolai Schou, a member of the school board in Manchester, England, was equally impressed when he visited All Hallows in the summer of 1890 by "their good knowledge of the Scriptures and the generally intelligent reading of the pupils." Music was an important part of life at All Hallows School and a violin orchestra was established, which performed all over Canada. The girls at All Hallows School also engaged in reciting poetry, needlepoint, performing plays in a dramatic group and attending a daily chapel service. Among the gardens of the school grounds there was a tennis court, hockey and croquet grounds, and an area near the creek which was flooded in the winter for skating.

All Hallows School flourished for twenty-five years. After World War II, more and more public high schools were opening all over British Columbia and more boarding schools were opening in the larger centres. Attendance at All Hallows dropped and funds were low. And so, in 1920, All Hallows School was closed and the Sisters returned to England. On 10 June 1960, 125 former students of All Hallows returned to Yale for the dedication of a plaque in the church of St. John the Divine (right, established in 1863) and two brass altar vases to the memory of all the Sisters who worked there.



Visits to the UK

The St. Mark's church magazine of December 1886, states that a Day of Intercession for Foreign Missions was observed on Monday 29 November. In Canada, the Bishop of New Westminster

celebrated communion at 7pm and gave an address. On 3 November, after celebrating Holy Communion at St. Mary's, Sapperton, he said farewell to both clergy and laity, who had prayed for a safe journey for him to England. The bishop departed on the newly constructed C. P. R., arriving in Quebec in time to sail on the *Parisian* (19 November) to Liverpool, where he landed on the first Sunday of Advent, 28 November 1886.



There is very little written about his visit to England, but the main purpose was to visit many of the parishes which supported his work- an endless series of appeals, sermons and lectures, with just a small amount of time for periods of rest. During his time, though, he attended the memorable Jubilee Service at Westminster Abbey for the Queen's glorious and happy reign. This took place at Westminster Abbey on 21 June 1886.

Our church magazine for February **1887** reported that **Bishop Sillitoe** came to visit Worsley for 10 days from 16 January 1887, to visit his friend the Earl of Mulgrave.

Immediately after the Bishop's Confirmation Tours in Canada were over in 1888, a start was made for another visit to England. This occurred in April, and shortly after a Diocesan Synod. The purpose of this visit was to attend the Lambeth Conference. **Sillitoe** was deeply impressed at the spectacle of 145 bishops '*assembled together from the ends of the earth, united by the tie of a common faith and a common purpose.*' As for the rest of his time in England, he wrote : '*I was occupied, as last year, in visiting as many as possible of the parishes from which we derive most of our support, and this occupied me continuously during the months of August, September and October.*'

Missionary Work

Both Acton and Violet Sillitoe went to live in an environment that was quite alien to them. Bishop Sillitoe might not have existed on the pages of history as prominently as he does today without the constant presence of his wife, Violet, at his side. This fascinating couple appear to have been tireless in their endeavours and their kindness. The accounts written by Violet and Gowen show the depth of their endurance and love for the people and the area. Certainly, they also portray the hardships that they had to overcome and their missionary zeal. Violet recalls: "*For the first six months after we arrived in British Columbia we were homeless wanderers on the face of the earth, but this mattered the less, as from the very first the Bishop began travelling about, visiting the farming settlements, gathering the settlers together to see what support could be given for church work, and finding the best centres for churches; and wherever he went, I went too.*"

While residing in Yale the Bishop became aware of the overwhelming need for further missionary work. In the words of the Bishop, "*Oh, the opportunities Yale just now affords! Hundreds of men are now going up every week, and what can one man do, and he only a deacon?... There is not a fitter illustration on the whole mission-field of the Lord's lament, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.'*"

Acton continued to serve as the bishop through the 1880s and early 1890s. He often travelled extensively through the vast Diocese of New Westminster. To list all the places he visited would be to print a travelogue. Suffice it to say that he never shirked making a journey, no matter the distance, nor the weather, nor the poor accommodation available. Violet endured the hardships and discomforts of pioneer life, sometimes travelling with Acton to remote areas of the province, and sometimes staying at their home in New Westminster.

Travelling around the diocese was not easy. They variously moved around by canoe, sleigh, horse, buckboard, even steamers near the lower end of the Fraser River. Later, they used a handcar, borrowed from the newly opened C. P. R. Hard work and potentially very dangerous on a single track railroad. Accommodation was often spartan. Tents, log cabins with just one room, half-built hotels, dwellings with canvas roofs. Frequently, little or no lighting or heating. And on one occasion a 'private' room - from which they could see into the adjoining room and the one beyond that!!

After barely a few months in the colony, in October **1880**, the Bishop wrote a letter to some friends in England, upon returning to New Westminster after a journey of six weeks, covering almost 800 miles:

' We returned yesterday from our journey through the interior of the diocese; we travelled a distance of over seven hundred miles, through a country very rarely travelled by ladies, and into a portion of which no Church of England clergyman has ever before penetrated.'

Entertainment

During their time at St. Mary's Mount, the Bishop and his wife entertained three Governors-General. Princess Louise (the sixth child and fourth daughter of Queen Victoria) and her husband, the Marquis of Lorne; Lord Lansdowne and his staff; and Lady Stanley of Preston, with her husband. In each case, their accommodation was taxed to the limit. The Marquis of Lorne arrived in the autumn of 1882. His immediate party were found rooms within the house, but other staff had to stay in the old Government House or in the town. The Sillitoe were given only 24 hours' notice, which meant that existing guests had to find alternative accommodation! These guests included two priests from the Cowley Community, who were caring for the workmen on the C. P. R. Violet remembers:

"I was still very young at the time, and very shy, and stood in great awe of these two holy men, but when they asked if they could do anything to help, my need of assistance was so great that I promptly accepted, and giving them two big aprons, set them to work to clean the silver! Like everything else they undertook, the work was done to perfection!"

Violet also made use of the Princess's valets - at the request of H. R. H. Princess Louise was described as a perfect guest, so simple and unassuming, and made several sketches from their field. Between tea and dinner, Violet and her royal guest spent their time playing music and singing duets. The Princess had to leave the following day, whilst her husband stayed behind, and the plan was for the royal party to use the specially commissioned landau to get to Port Moody, whilst the Bishop and Violet used their buckboard. But Louise would have none of this - and insisted in riding in the buckboard with the Bishop. The procession passed through the grounds to the playing of bands, the waving of flags and the cheering of the people.

The visit of Lord Lansdowne was said to be 'a most delightful one.' He came with a small party of aides and a secretary. When they arrived, one of the aides said to the Bishop, "Do you remember, my Lord, when we last met?" **Acton Sillitoe** did not! "Don't you remember bailing me out of the police court in Darmstadt in '78?" Apparently, this was a common occurrence among young Englishmen who were learning German prior to entering the Army.

Their house became known as Hotel Sillitoe, because of the number of visitors who came to stay, both invited and uninvited! It was a holiday home for workers in the diocese, and a care home for those who needed to be nursed and to recuperate. Equally, when travelling throughout British Columbia, they were met with the same warmth and hospitality - only once ever being turned away. They both found travelling in winter a hard challenge, with cold temperatures and often insufficient cabins. Summer was much more enjoyable for them, since Acton has started to suffer with problems with his throat throughout the colder months.

In later years, All Saints' Day, the anniversary of the Bishop's consecration and also the birthday of the founding of the diocese, was celebrated in Holy Trinity Church and they always made a point of being back in the parish for that. The service was enhanced by the choir being supplemented by other choirs from Vancouver and organised by the Bishop himself. Soon after their arrival in the Dominion, he set up the New Westminster Choral Union, which he trained and conducted himself, since music was his greatest passion. Several concerts were given each season, one always being a performance of Handel's 'Messiah.' After his death, Violet gave all his music scores to the library in New Westminster, together with programmes.

It is recorded that "the New Westminster Choral Union, conducted 1882-93 by **Bishop Acton Windeyer Sillitoe** (b. Australia 1841, d. New Westminster 1894), presented Messiah, Elijah, Bennett's May Queen, Stanford's Revenge, and other choral works in its home city and in Granville (Vancouver) and Ladner. By 1893 it had given 37 performances." One such concert was in 1884 and those taking part made the 12-mile journey by sleigh, "the snow making travelling much easier." Naturally, the Sillitoe's had their own sleigh, mainly a box on runners, made a minimal cost, and the butt of many uncomplimentary comments! When stopping at a hostelry on their travels, the manager of the hostelry and some friends referred to the sleigh, and the Bishop replied that it was strong and serviceable, and the best he could afford. A few days later, these same gentlemen arrived at St. Mary's Mount with a brand-new one!!

His Death and Obituaries

In the winter of **1893**, **Bishop Sillitoe** was in Eastern Canada, trying to collect money for his work. During this visit, he was awarded D.C.L. by the University of Toronto in recognition of his services in the consolidation of the Church in Canada. On his return in March, he was laid low with a severe attack of pneumonia, which greatly weakened him. He struggled on, however, with his work, and was present at the first General Synod of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada, which was held in Toronto in September (1893). Having returned to New Westminster, he was stricken in November with influenza. This left him still weaker, but he struggled on through the winter, taking many services and going long distances. Towards the end of May he was prostrated again with illness at Yale, from where, after a time, he was removed to his own see house at New Westminster. There, to the great grief of the whole community, he breathed his last on the 9 June, **1894**, at the comparatively early age of fifty-three.

Right Rev. Bishop Sillitoe, of New Westminster, according to Dr. Hanington, who returned home last night, has been suffering from uremic poisoning, but is now much improved and is believed to be out of danger.

Acton had developed Bright's disease, and by the summer of 1894 he had an acute case of uremic poisoning. His condition grew worse, and as a result, he developed pneumonia.

Bishop Sillitoe was a High Churchman, but was always fair to every one. The clergy of his diocese, whatever their Church views, vied with one another in bearing testimony to the beauty and sterling qualities of his character. The Rev. L. N. Tucker, Rector of Christ Church, Vancouver, voiced the opinion of all when he said: "*No one, I am sure, could know **Bishop Sillitoe** intimately without being charmed by his genial and friendly manner, and without being impressed by his zeal, earnestness, and manliness.*" [from The Bishops of the C. of E. in Canada and Newfoundland 1896]



acted by his genial and friendly manner, and without being impressed by his zeal, earnestness, and manliness." [from The Bishops of the C. of E. in Canada and Newfoundland 1896]

Acton Windeyer Sillitoe was buried at Fraser Cemetery, New Westminster, in Greater Vancouver Regional District, BC, Canada.

The inscription reads:

In memory of
Acton Windeyer Sillitoe
First Bishop of New Westminster
All Saints Day 1879
At Rest 9 June 1894
Aged 54

(Also Violet Emily, wife of the above. Born Oct. 13 1855 - Died July 1 1934.
Make them to be remembered with thy Saints)

Newspapers in England quickly reported news of his death. *The Morning Post* of Tuesday 12 June 1894 wrote:

Information reached London yesterday that the Bishop of New Westminster, Dr. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, has died of pneumonia. Bishop Sillitoe graduated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he obtained his M.A. degree in 1866 and his D.D. in 1879. He was ordained in 1869; and, after having held several curacies, was consecrated Bishop of New Westminster on November 1st 1879 by Archbishop Tait. He had jurisdiction over the south half of the mainland of British Columbia, an area of 186,000 square miles and a population of 5,000, of whom 4,000 were members of the Church of England. [N.B. England is 50,345 sq.mi. and the UK is 94,525 sq.mi. - Ed.]

The National Probate Record states: **WILL**
SILLITOE the right reverend **Acton Windeyer** of New Westminster, British Columbia, bishop of New Westminster, died 9 June 1894. Administration (with Will) (Limited) **London** 26 November to Alfred Octavius Kirby, solicitor the attorney of Violet Emily Sillitoe widow. Effects £3,874. 11s. 11d.

Bishop Sillitoe died in the midst of work; the love of his wife constant and the appreciation of the colony unending. Few Bishops have endeared themselves into the history of B.C. as much as the seemingly tireless Acton Sillitoe and his wife Violet. In conclusion the words of his wife are recalled prior to a river crossing: "I would not permit him to go without me, saying that if anything happened we would at least die together..." Hence it is no surprise to find that both are buried in the same plot, next to each other, in a former colony of Britain, and close to the place that they came to love.

The Chilliwack Progress of 20 June 1894 wrote:

... In his labours in the Diocese of New Westminster, Bishop Sillitoe never allowed personal comfort to interfere with the conscientious performance of his sacred duties. He underwent many arduous exertions in what was, viewed from the low standpoint of materialism, a poorly remunerated sphere of clerical duty, and it is probable that recently the financial and other difficulties of his large and undermanned diocese strained his weakening health. He has, however, laid deeply the foundations of his church in this diocese of New Westminster, leaving behind the heritage of an honoured name and good works that will live after him.

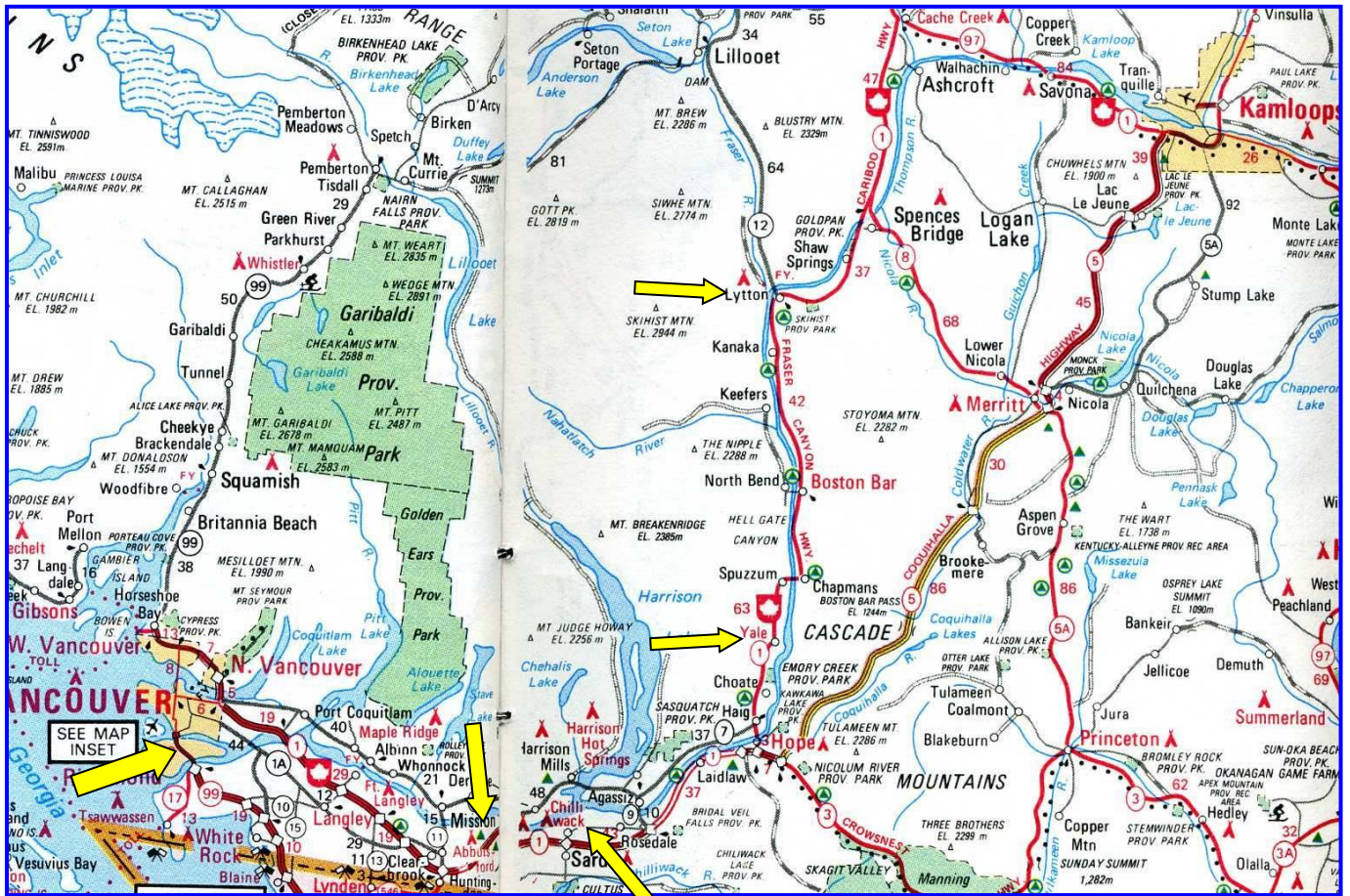
The remains of the Bishop were conveyed to their last resting place on Wednesday last, a large number of persons paying their tribute of respect to the memory of the dead prelate. After laying in state in the cathedral all the previous night, and a plain celebration of the holy communion in the morning, the Church of England burial service was commenced, His Lordship Bishop Perrin, officiating ... At the grave the balance of the service was conducted by Bishop Barker of the American Church. ...

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A **martlet** in English heraldry is a heraldic charge depicting a stylised bird similar to a swift or a house martin, with stylised feet. The attributed arms of Edward the Confessor contain *five martlets or* (golden martlets). The attribution dates to the 13th century (two centuries after Edward's death) and was based on the design on a coin minted during Edward's reign. King Richard II (1377–1399) impaled this coat with the Plantagenet arms, and it later became the basis of the arms of Westminster Abbey, in which The Confessor was buried, and of Westminster School, founded within its precinct.





Violet Emily Sillitoe (née Pelly) survived her husband for another forty years. She was a very close companion and accompanied him on his numerous trips to the distant parts of the diocese, sharing all the discomforts and difficulties of his work.

Bishop Sillitoe died in the midst of work; the love of his wife constant and the appreciation of the colony unending. Few Bishops have endeared themselves into the history of B.C. as much as the seemingly tireless Acton Sillitoe and his wife Violet. (Gowen)

Violet hired an English solicitor to administer Acton's estate in England. After Acton's death in 1894, Violet went to live in Washington State. At the time of the 1900 United States census, she was living with her brother, Bernard Pelly, who was the British vice consul in Seattle, Washington. She returned to Canada in February 1911. She landed in Fredericton, New Brunswick, on her way to Vancouver. She appeared in the Vancouver directories in 1912. She was living at 1860 Robson Street, which was the home of Frederick Lyman Beecher.

In 1914, Violet travelled to England with Frederick Beecher. They returned to North America in May 1914, landing at New York City on their way to Vancouver. During the First World War, Violet was an active supporter of the allied military forces. She organized fundraising activities and coordinated

campaigns to knit socks to send to the troops, especially the prisoners of war. After the war, Violet gave a series of talks on the life that she and her husband had experienced in British Columbia during the 1880s and 1890s. She later organized these reminiscences into a short book called "Pioneer Days in British Columbia," which she published in late 1922.

She lived at 1860 Robson Street until about 1929, when she moved to 1048 West 16th Avenue. She died in Vancouver on July 1, 1934. She was buried in Fraser Cemetery in New Westminster, British Columbia. The English courts were still dealing with Violet's estate in 1949.

The Chilliwack Express: 20 September 1934. The will of Mrs. Violet Emily Sillitoe, widow of the first Bishop of New Westminster, has been filed for probate. It disposes of an estate of a net value of approximately \$41,000. Among the beneficiaries are seventeen relatives here, in England, China, Australia and South Africa and the United States, and the Anglican Church. The will provides for a legacy of \$5,000 for the building fund of the church of St. James the Apostle, Gore Avenue, Vancouver; \$500 each to the bishoprics of New Westminster, Cariboo and Kootenay, and \$500 to the New Westminster Diocesan Board of Woman's Auxiliary Church of England Missionary Society.

Furniture, personal and household articles valued at \$2,000 go to a sister, Chrystabel Dorothy Pelly, who shares with another sister, Sidney Gwendoline Leveson, Vancouver, a life interest in the property at 1048 Sixteenth Avenue West.

A third sister and two brothers: Mary Arabella Pelly, Vancouver; Bernard Pelly, O.B.E., Seattle, and Justinian Pelly, Chilliwack, receive with Miss Chrystobel Pelly and Mrs. Leveson, one-seventh of the income and of the estate proper.

