

# Clarence Bicknell and Sir Thomas Hanbury: what sort of friends would they have been?

Marcus Bicknell, 2 February 2019



The conference of 26 January 2019 at the Hanbury Gardens has the title “Clarence Bicknell e Thomas Hanbury: due grandi vittoriani” (*Clarence Bicknell and Thomas Hanbury: two great Victorians on the Riviera*). These two, whose images are shown here, were men of dignity, science and benevolence, and we consider them both as “great” men.



But does this tell the whole story? I have developed an increasing curiosity about Bicknell and Hanbury’s relationship, and the differences between their personalities.

## Friends?

Valerie Lester in her book *MARVELS: The Life of Clarence Bicknell* describes the two men as friends<sup>1</sup>. Clarence himself writes of “an old friend of the family”, a different concept, but it is not clear whether Clarence thinks of himself as a friend of the Hanbury family or Hanbury a friend of the Bicknells<sup>2</sup>. I know of no meeting between Sir Thomas and other Bicknells, nor of Clarence and other Hanburys.

## Not Friends?

Graham Avery, student of Bicknell’s botany, and vice-chairman of the Clarence Bicknell Association, writes that Hanbury and Bicknell were not friends<sup>3</sup>. Brigid Quest-Ritson, garden expert, says of the entries in Hanbury’s diary “they obviously knew each other without being great friends”<sup>4</sup>. My contribution in this paper is to argue that Clarence’s shyness and inferiority complex might have kept him at a distance from Sir Thomas. He might have felt his station was below that of Sir Thomas. Rather than being Hanbury’s friend, Clarence might have been in awe of him and of his construction of the Hanbury Gardens.

## Clarence Bicknell; speech impediment

Clarence spoke with a slight stutter and possibly with some difficulty with the letter ‘r’.

I never knew this until Valerie discovered it in a book by Clarence’s nephew on his mother side, Edgar Browne, son of Phiz, Charles Dickens’ illustrator. Browne described

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<sup>1</sup> In 1886 and in 1887, quoted from *MARVELS* by Valerie Lester pp.73-74 and p.80

<sup>2</sup> 1907, at Hanbury’s death, *MARVELS* by Valerie Lester p.138.

<sup>3</sup> “Although Clarence was not a friend of Sir Thomas Hanbury (1832-1907), he collaborated with Alwin Berger (1871-1931) who was Curator of the Hanbury Gardens from 1897 to 1914. “ from Avery’s 2016 article of 23 May 2016 [www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads\\_news/clarence\\_bicknell\\_botany\\_and\\_hanbury.pdf](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads_news/clarence_bicknell_botany_and_hanbury.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 3 below

his uncle Elhanan, Clarence's father, as a large, handsome, red-faced man, and his Bicknell cousins as all above average in personal appearance and intelligence. He adds an interesting note about the way they talked. '[Elhanan had] a rather thick utterance, which in his children became converted into an extreme difficulty with the letter 'r'. In order to improve their speech some of them, at all events, were taught elocution by a distinguished actor of the day, Alfred Wigan. Whether it was owing to his efforts, or some other reason, the difficulty disappeared as they attained adult age.'

Perhaps this was not so in the case of Clarence, [but] G.B. Briano writes in *Vita esperantista di Genova e Liguria dal 1900 al 1975*, 'According to the testimony of a contemporary, Bicknell spoke Esperanto fluently, even though he suffered from a slight stutter which he had from birth.'<sup>5</sup>

A speech impediment makes an individual very ill-at-ease with people who might be considered superiors. This factor is one which would have encouraged Clarence throughout his life to seek a solitary life, and to feel happiest in the high mountain.

### **Clarence Bicknell: inclined to violent prejudices**

It is useful to find descriptions of Clarence's personality. Margaret Berry, Clarence's niece, writes about him in her diary on several occasions. Valerie Lester writes:

Margaret became a great favourite with Clarence. She brought with her a fund of humour, warmth, generosity and a sense of family; and she loved her new uncle dearly. She was inclined to see him through rose-tinted glasses, but even so we learn a good deal about Clarence's character from her biographical sketch:

"He was truly 'all things to all men', yet always himself – a vivid personality, loveable, upright, sincere and modest and he gave with open hands to all who needed help, material or spiritual. His door was always open to the sick, the sad and the afflicted, and English and Italians alike went to him as to their best friend for sympathy, advice and assistance. Intensely affectionate and emotional, he was **inclined to violent prejudices** from which he could not always easily free himself, and the haste with which he flung himself into new intimacies was a standing joke amongst his old friends. He showed his disapproval by coldness and reserve rather than by actual anger, and no one who incurred his displeasure would easily forget the expression of his keen blue eyes. But his habitual cheery manner and his merry laughter endeared him to everyone, and his eccentricities and the vivid radiance of his imagination made him the most delightful of conversationalists. He delighted in puzzles, riddles and jokes, and saw humour everywhere. He was never idle for a moment, and got through more work in a day than another man would accomplish in a week."

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<sup>5</sup> *MARVELS* p.8, Edgar Browne, *Phiz and Dickens*. London: Nisbet, 1913, p. 58

## Clarence Bicknell's prejudice against the pompous

So, on the one side Clarence feels himself close to the needy and those with whom he has an emotional link, but we can find out more about his violent prejudices by referring to other letters we have researched...

- One prejudice was certainly against people he considered pompous<sup>6</sup>. He had probably reacted, over time, against the pomp and highfalutin artist friends of his father Elhanan, in fact of his father; he abandoned Elhanan's Unitarianism during his schooldays in favour of the Anglican Church, and he did not pursue contacts with the famous artists he had met at home.
- After being a priest for ten years, Clarence reacted against the pomp of his colleagues in the high church, the *Societas Sancti Spiritus*, and against their liturgies.<sup>7</sup>
- He did not subscribe much to the academic societies of London and only rarely had any contact with them.
- In Bordighera, Clarence became increasingly accepting of other ways to worship a deity; his ecumenical stance got him into trouble. He complains of the insularity and strict doctrines of his Bordighera parishioners. Valerie Lester reports it thus:

In May [1879], Bordighera was in a frenzy of excitement over the celebration of St Ampelio's day. A week before the actual anniversary on the 14th, Clarence attended a service in the parish church where the parishioners 'were keeping a Novena for S. Ampelio, his arm bone being on the altar in a [case], surrounded by candles . . . a litany sung & hymns & then the kneeling congregation . . . were blessed by the relic . . . **I thought it all very horrible & was glad to be out again.**' This revulsion did not dim Clarence's enthusiasm for the saint. On the Sunday before the anniversary, he gave notice of the feast of S. Ampelio to the congregation of All Saints, **'to the astonishment of Protestants & Anglicans who are so anti-Roman or so insular that they cannot understand how we can love to rejoice with them that do rejoice, & confess the unity of all without holding to strict doctrines of one kind or another.'**

The celebration of St Ampelio did not sit well with the conservative faction at All Saints. It smacked too much of Rome, but Clarence was eager to establish rapport with his fellow Christians in Bordighera, no matter what sect they belonged to. Peter Bicknell, who researched Clarence, and might have had diaries which are since lost, wrote in the 1970s; 'His religious doubts were growing. He found the church too ritualistic, too dogmatic and too chauvinistic . . . He gave up any active participation in church matters, asked not to be referred to as "The Rev." and ceased to wear a dog collar.'

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<sup>6</sup> Pompous: affectedly grand, solemn, or self-important. "a pompous ass who pretends he knows everything"

<sup>7</sup> Read about Clarence's intellectual turmoil in the 1870s before arriving in Bordighera [www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads\\_news/left\\_brain\\_right\\_brain\\_2016.pdf](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads_news/left_brain_right_brain_2016.pdf)

- He reacted, in a letter of 1912 to his plant-loving friend the Baroness Helene von Taube against the “ordinary tea party, church-going people who are so conventional and such gossips and have so little of an international spirit”<sup>8</sup>. By “ordinary” he probably meant “stuck up” but could not really say so when writing to the Baroness in case she felt herself included in the generalisation. On the contrary, he adored her and made every effort to spend time with her when she was in Bordighera.

- He reacted against the British upper class in Ceylon, or, at least, wrote that he would feel ill at ease in their company. Valerie Lester writes:

Clarence and Luigi took another glorious train ride through the mountains from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya. There they met John Ferguson, a long-time Ceylon resident and editor of the *Ceylon Observer* for many years, a man instrumental in the development of the railway system and deeply committed to the politics and agriculture of the country, and thus a mine of information. Ferguson and Clarence struck up a strong friendship and were still corresponding three years later. Clarence’s letter of 23 August 1911 throws some light on his visit to Nuwara Eliya. ‘I often think of your place in the mountains, ferns &c . . . your offer is very tempting as an exchange of houses for the winter, **but I fear it is not possible . . . I suspect that NE [Nuwara Eliya] would be rather too civilised for me, rather too exclusively English & proper and that I could only be a black sheep there,** but it is an enchanting place.

- Reginald Farrer, plant collector and writer, gives an account of his first meeting with Clarence. Whether or not his text is exaggerated, it points to Clarence seeing things in black-and-white, or in this case reacted against someone he may have known as pompous, self-important and with a loud voice (albeit with a speech defect). Farrer writes of their arrival at the Casa Fontanalba in the evening of 19 July 1910:

Our hosts were scantily pleased to have two total strangers dropping in on domestic bliss ‘en villegiature’ among the wild mountains. They eyed us with frigidity as we climbed over the garden-railing and indicated that tea might be obtained, perhaps; but that the meal was over, and the fire gone out, and the bottom of the kettle fallen through.<sup>9</sup>

It seems clear to me that when Margaret Berry refers to Clarence’s “violent prejudices” she must be referring to Clarence’s prejudice against the pompous.

### **Prejudice against the pompous – a Bicknell family trait**

Many Bicknells have shown some inferiority complex, manifested as a prejudice against the pompous.

I was always aware in my early life that Bicknells considered themselves middle class or worse. The term often used to categorise our family standing was “tradesmen”. Indeed our forebears were for 5 centuries serge merchants in the area of Taunton, Somerset, meaning that we bought and sold the wool material most often used for

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/90-von-taube>

<sup>9</sup> Valerie Lester *MARVELS* p.149

clothing. This is certainly an occupation which people of education, or with skills, or with aristocratic blood would have looked down on.

Only when John Bicknell 1716-1754 moved to the London area and his son William 1749-1825 became a teacher and subsequently a Freeman of the Vintners' Company, did the family (partly) shake off the "trade" tag. William's son Elhanan made a fortune trading whale-oil, yes, but this would have made him a *nouveau riche*, a fact which would not be concealed by his courting the famous and talented artists headed by Turner. Some of Elhanan's sons show the signs of pretentiousness, including an effort to lead lives of someone of a higher station, a notorious trait of Victorian society. I include Henry Sanford Bicknell who married the daughter of the painter David Roberts R.A., the traveller and writer Herman Bicknell and "the lout"<sup>10</sup> Sidney Bicknell who describes himself as a gentleman, traveller and astronomer. Clarence perceived his brother Sidney's "life as hollow because everything he wrote and achieved was mere advertisement for himself."<sup>11</sup>

My father Nigel Bicknell 1918-1990 had a disrespect for authority and pomposity, indeed a need to confront it at every opportunity. Richard Hilary<sup>12</sup> recorded in 1942 Bill Aitken's comments about Nigel at Cranwell Air Force College in 1939:

Nigel, it appeared, had found the restrictions an irresistible attraction, and no notice could appear without him hearing of it; he would solemnly produce pieces of red tape from his pocket and pin them around the board. This did not intend to encourage cordial relations with the higher authorities, and when he finally wrote an extremely witty but hardly tactful letter to the Commanding Officer, pointing out the Volunteer Reservists had joined the R.A.F. to fight the Germans and not to be treated like children, his stock was at his lowest ebb. He was not actually kicked out, but his record sheet was the blackest of the Course and his action resulted in a tightening-up of all restrictions.

Nigel, and many other Bicknell, myself included, felt more at ease with less pretentious people. To my knowledge we as a family have never had any great success in climbing a social ladder. I think that Clarence had this trait.

### **Clarence Bicknell and Alwin Berger**

There is evidence that Clarence Bicknell collaborated with Alwin Berger, curator of the Giardini Botanici Hanbury 1897 to 1914 (in a trio with Ellen Willmott). It seems certain they shared seeds and shared information. Did Clarence Bicknell feel more comfortable at this operational level rather than with Sir Thomas Hanbury the boss? Later in life Clarence Bicknell frequently expresses his preferences for wild flowers and other plants, as against the garden artificially created by Hanbury; but this difference would not have stood in the way of friendship if there were any.

Graham Avery adds to this evidence in his *Note for the Friends of Hanbury Gardens*<sup>13</sup> when they visited London in 2016:

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<sup>10</sup> Valerie Lester *MARVELS* p.12

<sup>11</sup> Valerie Lester *MARVELS* p.107

<sup>12</sup> Richard Hilary *The Last Enemy* 1942 page 68.

Clarence recorded that in 1902 in Val Fontanalba he ‘escorted Dr Fritz Mader of Nice, the author of the excellent German Guide to the Maritime Alps, and Herr Alwyn Berger, curator of Sir Thomas Hanbury’s garden at La Mortola, to a little beyond Lago Verde’.

I refer to this incident to point out that Sir Thomas Hanbury himself was not on this expedition. There is no reason why he should have been, and maybe he was not available to join the three men up the mountain. Hanbury was more interested in his cultivated garden than the wild flowers of the high mountains. But if Hanbury had been present it would have added to the idea that Hanbury and Bicknell were friends.

### **Clarence Bicknell in Sir Thomas Hanbury’s diary**

During the weekend of the Hanbury Bicknell seminar at the Giardini Hanbury I was delighted to be given by Carolyn Hanbury a copy of Brigid Quest-Ritson’s list of mentions in Sir Thomas Hanbury’s diary of meetings with Clarence Bicknell.

The two men met just 9 times in the 29 years between Bicknell arriving on The Riviera in 1878 and Hanbury dying in 1907. The last mention in Hanbury’s diary is Bicknell’s visit of 7<sup>th</sup> January 1907, just two months before Hanbury died on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1907. Hanbury records just 4 occasions on which the two men had a meal together (twice in 1890, once in 1903 and 1906). They got together in Bordighera, La Mortola or on local trips 4 times.

A different impression is implied in Hanbury’s diary entries about the relationship with Margaret and Edward Berry. When Hanbury went to see Bicknell’s new museum in 1890 it is likely that he first met the Berrys then, but it is not stated. He mentions meetings with the Berrys a dozen time including one rendezvous in the UK at Warley Place<sup>14</sup>. He motors to Bordighera on one occasion but finds that Mrs Berry is not in. The Berrys were house guests for a few days with Hanbury at La Mortola in December 1906.

The Berrys were an impressive couple and for much of their lives the toast of Bordighera. Edward Berry was the British Consul in Bordighera, a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the representative of the Thomas Cook travel company, the manager of the British Bank and the purveyor of a variety of services to the international community include removals<sup>15</sup>. This made him a man of substance and quality which Sir Thomas Hanbury might have been attuned to. Where Clarence might have thought of himself as inferior to Hanbury, the Berrys would have had no such qualms. We cannot draw any conclusions about whether Hanbury and the Berrys were friends but Hanbury certainly held them in high esteem and with some personal warmth.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads\\_news/clarence\\_bicknell\\_botany\\_and\\_hanbury.pdf](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads_news/clarence_bicknell_botany_and_hanbury.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> The gardens in Essex, UK, of Ellen Willmott who also built the Boccanegra Gardens next to the Giardini Hanbury.

<sup>15</sup> In November 1892 Edward created an “English Agency for the selling and letting of houses and other property, transmission of luggage and heavy goods to and from England, storage of luggage, purchase of good on commission etc. etc.”

## Clarence Bicknell and Sir Thomas Hanbury

Is it valid to apply this data on Clarence's character to his relationship with Sir Thomas Hanbury? In the absence of any recorded evidence of their relationship, on a personal level, yes, I think it is valid. Clarence does not mention Hanbury in letters, neither to the professionals in his network like the Swiss botanist Emile Burnat<sup>16</sup> nor in his more personal letters such as the Baroness Von Taube<sup>17</sup>.

He would have felt respect and a bond through the love of plants. Clarence refers to Sir Thomas, at the time of his death as "an old friend of the family"... but that is not the same as a real friend. Why should Clarence Bicknell say "friend of the family" when there is no evidence of any other Bicknell knowing Hanbury? Or was Clarence Bicknell implying that he knew others in the Hanbury family better? In which case, whom?

With evidence of Clarence's personality traits in mind, I think Clarence would have felt ill at ease with Sir Thomas. It would not have been one of Clarence's priorities to seek out Hanbury's company; indeed he would have thought of a trip to la Mortola as being an opportunity to talk seeds with Berger.

But the two men would have had immense respect for each other and their achievements.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads\\_news/burnat\\_letters\\_from\\_bicknell.pdf](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/images/downloads_news/burnat_letters_from_bicknell.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/90-von-taube](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/90-von-taube)

## Appendix 1

### Source material, Clarence Bicknell and Hanbury

Clarence sited the museum in a little park off the Via Romana, a park that he enlarged in 1890 when he bought some adjacent land. He hired a gardener, Ampeglio Bianchieri, and together they planted mostly indigenous flora but, following the example of his friend **Sir Thomas Hanbury** in his gardens at La Mortola, near Ventimiglia, he imported a few exotic plants, such as *Bursera graveolens* from South America, where it is known as *palo santo* or holy wood. A relative of frankincense and myrrh, it is used as incense, and its oil can be applied to aching joints to ease the pain of rheumatism.

1886 *MARVELS* by **Valerie Lester** pp73-74

Photo of Sir Thomas Hanbury on p74 of *MARVELS* by Valerie Lester is probably by Alwyn Berger.

Clarence's correspondent Arturo Issel, an archaeology professor at the University of Genoa and also a palaeontologist, geologist, malacologist, wrote extensively about the earthquake in his book *Il Terremoto del 1887 in Liguria*. In his introduction, he acknowledges Clarence's help and, in his exhaustive description of the damage wreaked upon Liguria, includes two interesting nuggets of information that relate to Clarence. The first is that on one his forays out of town to help others, keen-eyed Clarence noticed that the level of the spring of sulphurous water at Giancarello, just outside Bordighera, had risen by about a third, even though there had been no change in its temperature.<sup>140</sup> The second is that near Ventimiglia in the gardens of the Villa Hanbury, the home of **Clarence's friend Sir Thomas Hanbury**, the marble balustrades of an arcade completely changed their orientation from south to north, while the villa itself was undamaged.

1887 *MARVELS* by **Valerie Lester** p80

'We had scarcely arrived when I received the sad news of the death of **Mr. Hanbury of La Mortola and, as an old friend of the family**, I had to leave immediately to attend a ceremony at his home', wrote Clarence to Cartailhac in March 1907 after his visit to the caves.

1907 *MARVELS* by **Valerie Lester** p138

"Although **Clarence was not a friend of Sir Thomas Hanbury** (1832-1907), he collaborated with Alwin Berger (1871-1931) who was Curator of the Hanbury Gardens from 1897 to 1914. In Further explorations in the regions of the prehistoric rock engravings in the Italian Maritime Alps (Bordighera, 1903) Clarence recorded that in 1902 in Val Fontanalba he 'escorted Dr Fritz Mader of Nice, the author of the excellent German Guide to the Maritime Alps, and Herr Alwyn Berger, curator of Sir Thomas Hanbury's garden at La Mortola, to a little beyond Lago Verde".

**Graham Avery, 23 May 2016** clarence\_bicknell\_botany\_and\_hanbury.pdf

Clarence had been hunting high and low for the perfect botanical pin with which to skewer his specimens when he first met Ellen Willmott, probably in 1901 at La Mortola, the home of Sir Thomas Hanbury whose impressive gardens cascaded down a cliff just outside Ventimiglia. Miss Willmott later bought property two miles away at Boccanegra,



where she, too, created a spectacular garden, also cascading down the cliff. Clarence corresponded with her for years, and watched the development of this garden, providing plants and seeds for it, but his first letter revolved around the thorny topic of the aforementioned botanical pins. He also sought her advice about which fungicidal medicines he could use to destroy the disease that was attacking the cardboard on which he mounted his drawings.

1904 *MARVELS* by Valerie Lester p141

Alwin Berger - Hanbury Gardens, Ventimiglia: 6-8 October 2017: Presentation of the Conference Proceedings "Alwin Berger and others. The signs of German culture in the gardens and in the Riviera landscape. Before and after the Great War". Biographical exhibition on Alwin Berger, curator of the GBH from 1897 to 1915.

[www.giardinihanbury.com/sites/www.giardinihanbury.com/files/news/ENGL\\_Calendar%20of%20events%20-%20150\\_0.pdf](http://www.giardinihanbury.com/sites/www.giardinihanbury.com/files/news/ENGL_Calendar%20of%20events%20-%20150_0.pdf)

Text of Proceedings (Boll. Mus. Ist. Biol. Univ. Genova, 79, 2017, 212 pages) is at:

[www.bmib.it/documents/79/MARIOTTI\\_ET\\_MINUTO\\_EDIT\\_Proceedings\\_A\\_Berger\\_Conference.pdf](http://www.bmib.it/documents/79/MARIOTTI_ET_MINUTO_EDIT_Proceedings_A_Berger_Conference.pdf)

Source [www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/138-research-mader-berger-and-willmott](http://www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/138-research-mader-berger-and-willmott)

BOTANICAL INVESTIGATION ON WILD FLOWERS: 1905 "FLORULA MORTOLENSIS".

In 1905 Alwin Berger, published "Florula Mortolensis, an enumeration of the plants growing wild at La Mortola", a list of plants that spontaneously grew at la Mortola, that he elaborated in the summer 1903. The list (486 species gathered in 92 families), compiled in systematic order for family, contains information on the ecology and location of taxa. The copy of Hanbury Botanic Gardens contained some notes with the local dialect names. The list includes 486 species grouped in 92 families, drawn up in taxonomic order by family.

Boll. Mus. Ist. Biol. Univ. Genova, 79, 2017

In 1905 Clarence Bicknell reviewed Florula Mortolensis on the "Gardeners Chronicle": "This is a catalogue of plants growing wild in the neighbourhood of La Mortola, and has been prepared by Mr. Alwin Berger. It has been drawn up by order of Sir Thomas Hanbury for the benefit of the numerous visitors who come to see his gardens, many of whom are often not less interested in the indigenous than in the luxuriant tropical and subtropical plants under cultivation. The vegetation of this portion of the Italian Riviera in the immediate neighbourhood of Mentone is both rich and varied, as this useful catalogue abundantly testifies. Its luxuriance is due to the great variety of locality that exists. There are dry, steep rocks, deep and fertile soil, bare sunny banks, shady and woody places, water-channels, the bed of a torrent, and the sea shore. The subsoil is almost entirely limestone, in many places rich in fossils. Sand occurs only in one isolated spot close to the garden entrance, but it contains chalk as well, and does not influence in any way the wild vegetation. We should add that Mr. Berger calls attention to the following volume as containing good illustrations of the Riviera plants – Contributions to the Flora of Mentone, and to a Winter Flora of the Riviera, etc., by J. Traherne Moggridge (1871), and Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Riviera » .

Source <https://riviste.unige.it/BMIB/article/download/550/525>

## **Appendix 2**

### **Source material, Clarence Bicknell's personality**

Browne described his uncle Elhanan as a large, handsome, red-faced man, and his Bicknell cousins as all above average in personal appearance and intelligence. He adds an interesting note about the way they talked. '[Elhanan had] a rather thick utterance, which in his children became converted into an extreme difficulty with the letter 'r'. In order to improve their speech some of them, at all events, were taught elocution by a distinguished actor of the day, Alfred Wigan. Whether it was owing to his efforts, or some other reason, the difficulty disappeared as they attained adult age.'<sup>9</sup> Perhaps this was not so in the case of Clarence. G.B. Briano writes in *Vita esperantista di Genova e Liguria dal 1900 al 1975*, 'According to the testimony of a contemporary, Bicknell spoke Esperanto fluently, even though he suffered from a slight stutter which he had from birth.'<sup>10</sup>

*MARVELS* by Valerie Lester p8

Margaret became a great favourite with Clarence. She brought with her a fund of humour, warmth, generosity and a sense of family; and she loved her new uncle dearly. She was inclined to see him through rose-tinted glasses, but even so we learn a good deal about Clarence's character from her biographical sketch:

He was truly 'all things to all men', yet always himself – a vivid personality, loveable, upright, sincere and modest and he gave with open hands to all who needed help, material or spiritual. His door was always open to the sick, the sad and the afflicted, and English and Italians alike went to him as to their best friend for sympathy, advice and assistance. Intensely affectionate and emotional, he was inclined to violent prejudices from which he could not always easily free himself, and the haste with which he flung himself into new intimacies was a standing joke amongst his old friends. He showed his disapproval by coldness and reserve rather than by actual anger, and no one who incurred his displeasure would easily forget the expression of his keen blue eyes. But his habitual cheery manner and his merry laughter endeared him to everyone, and his eccentricities and the vivid radiance of his imagination made him the most delightful of conversationalists. He delighted in puzzles, riddles and jokes, and saw humour everywhere. He was never idle for a moment, and got through more work in a day than another man would accomplish in a week.

*MARVELS* by Valerie Lester p106

It is easy to wonder why they [Clarence Bicknell and Rosa Ellen Fanshawe Walker] did not marry; Rosa Ellen was an eligible widow and Clarence an eligible bachelor, thrown together by circumstances. Perhaps he was daunted by her nine-year seniority and, if she was anything like her mother, her rather dominant personality.

*MARVELS* by Valerie Lester p139

"I would not exchange this scrap of bank for all of the gardens in Peradeniya, Ceylon, Java or Kew. Every day I think I have never seen anything quite so beautiful".

Clarence Bicknell, letter, 10 July 1914.

Private letter to the Baroness von Taube 1030 Probably 1912

“Perhaps I should come to Rome one day. I cannot stand all the long winter here. I am so sick of all the ordinary tea party, church-going people who are so conventional and such gossips and have so little of an international spirit”

<https://www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/90-von-taube>

Private letter to the Baroness von Taube 1032 6 October 1912

“It is strange how I have been gradually losing my love for gardens in comparison to the country. Any field of flowers or common hedge interests me more than the best garden with all sorts of wonderful plants”

<https://www.clarencebicknell.com/en/news-views/90-von-taube>

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Clarence Bicknell in Sir Thomas Hanbury's Diary**

We are grateful to Carolyn Hanbury and Brigid Quest-Ritson for information from Sir Thomas Hanbury's diary about meetings with Clarence Bicknell.

Brigid Quest-Ritson says of the diary entries about Bicknell: "There is not a lot: they obviously knew each other without being great friends. There is more evidence of friendship though with Clarence Bicknell's nephew and his wife, Edward & Margaret Berry, especially later on, so I have included those references too."

CB first went to Bordighera in 1878.

1878 - nothing	1884 - nothing
1879 - nothing	1885 - nothing
1880 - nothing	1886 - nothing
1881 - nothing	1887 - nothing
1882 - nothing	1888 - nothing
1883 - nothing	1889 - nothing

1890 - exchange of lunches 19.05 (Mr Clarence Bicknell of Bordighera to lunch),  
29.11 (We to lunch with Mr Bicknell & then to see his new reading room & museum)

1891 CB visited garden 28.11

1892 CB invited to see skeletons discovered at Rochers Rouges 20.02

1893 - nothing	1895 - nothing
1894 - nothing	

1896 – Mr Bicknell & friends came 26.09

1897 - Nothing	1900 – Nothing
1898 - Nothing	1901 – Nothing
1899 – Nothing	

1902 – TH met CB and Mrs Berry at Ventimiglia, saw the Aprosiana library with Prof. Rossi. After lunch, went to the Barma Grande caves and museum (Grimaldi near Menton), TH, KAH, Bicknell & Mrs Berry. 30.01.

1903 – Mr & Mrs Berry to lunch. 04.01.

Lectured at Bicknell's museum Bordighera on 'Some walks around my garden'. Lunched with Bicknell. 05.02.

With Cecil to Warley Place. Met Mr & Mrs E Berry of Bordighera. 24.08.

HBH discussing going to the Meraviglie rocks with Clarence Bicknell. 22.10.

HBH gave up going with Bicknell. 23.10.

1904 Lunched with Mr & Mrs Berry after lecture at Victoria Hall, Bordighera. 14.03.

- 1905 To Bordighera in motor with Hilda. Mrs Berry not at home. 25.10.  
Mr & Mrs Berry to lunch. 09.12.
- 1906 Mr Bicknell came to lunch. 14.06  
Cecil to call on the Berrys. 14.10.  
Mr & Mrs Berry came to tea. 16.10  
To lunch with the Berrys 21.11.  
Mr & Mrs Berry came to stay till Monday.08.12  
At lunch, Mrs Berry... 27.12
- 1907 C Bicknell called. 07.01