**J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Charles Edward Flower and the Shakespeare Autotypes Controversy**

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Having for many years regarded each other as friends, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889) and Charles Edward Flower (1830-1892) first came into conflict in 1878 over issues encountered in their roles as trustees of the Shakespeare Birthplace. In 1883, they again took opposing positions when the Town Corporation, of which Flower was a member, imposed restrictions on Halliwell-Phillipps’s attempts to autotype Shakespeare-related documents owned by the Corporation. Their relationship, already badly damaged by acrimonious disagreements as Birthplace trustees, henceforth became a battleground of Halliwell-Phillipps’s making, and one which he refused to quit; it thus blighted the remainder of the two men’s lives. Flower was the focus of repeated vitriolic attacks, that verged upon obsession, but Halliwell-Phillipps’s growing disillusionment with the Stratford of the 1880s also encompassed the Corporation, the Birthplace Trustees, the Stratford Herald and the vicar of Holy Trinity: it ended with his severing all ties with the town.

By 1883, Halliwell-Phillipps had enjoyed a decades-long association with Stratford-upon-Avon and was an influential figure in its cultural life. He was an antiquarian book collector and Shakespeare scholar of some renown, appointed as a life-trustee of the Shakespeare Birthplace, purchaser of the New Place Great Garden and devotee of all things Shakespearean. Born in London in 1820, son of a prosperous estate agent father — the sixth of his seven children — he made his home in the capital and later also at his eccentric retreat, Hollingbury Copse, near to Brighton; he nevertheless took Stratford to his heart, making frequent visits and coming to regard it as a second spiritual and scholarly home. He assumed the right of access, unsupervised and unchallenged, to both Birthplace and Town Corporation archival material and, as a result of several years’ devoted labour among these records, he edited an extensive, annotated Descriptive calendar of the ancient manuscripts and records in the possession of the corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1863, which remains available for modern scholars in the Shakespeare Centre Reading Room in Henley Street. He was also generous in his gifts of books, prints and manuscripts to the Birthplace and numerous other institutions, both at home and abroad.

Flower for his part, as a Stratford-born member of the notable brewing family, was well-known and well-respected in the town, as was his father before him: Edward Fordham Flower, the founder of the family firm. He had set an example of civic duty to his sons, becoming mayor four times and being instrumental in the Shakespeare Tercentenary Festival, mounted in his last term of office in 1864. This engendered the idea of a Stratford Shakespeare memorial theatre, an ambition realised over a decade later by his son Charles, who followed in his father’s
father’s footsteps as a Town Corporation councillor and twice becoming mayor (see Figure 1). He also worked alongside Halliwell-Phillipps as a Birthplace trustee and additionally on its Executive Committee. Until the building of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, however, unlike the widely acclaimed Halliwell-Phillipps, Flower was little known outside his native Stratford.

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**Figure 1: Charles Edward Flower, painted in 1891**
*(Courtesy of Royal Shakespeare Company Collection).*

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In the early years, relations between the two men were cordial; it was not until 1878 that they began to cross swords, as trustees of the Birthplace. By this time, Halliwell (as he then was) had purchased the New Place estate in 1861 with money raised by subscription, the expectation being that the Stratford Town Corporation would take over its maintenance and management, a responsibility it resisted for over a decade. He had followed up the purchase with the acquisition, in 1872, of the adjacent first Stratford theatre in Chapel Lane and immediately set about demolishing it; he had long wanted to tear it down, declaring it ‘that unsightly obstruction’ and ‘the ugly building in Chapel Lane which was a disgrace to the Town’. This gave impetus to Flower’s Memorial Theatre project, but there is perhaps an early indication of cooling of their friendship when Halliwell-Phillipps made it clear that although he wished him every success with the enterprise, a fifty-guinea donation was to be the sole extent of his involvement; he was happy to donate ‘providing that it will not involve me in any liability of any kind or constitute me a shareholder in the proposed undertaking’. He declined to attend the laying of the first stone and the Inaugural Festival marking the theatre’s opening in 1879, and given his habitual lamentations at the rapid degradation of the Stratford he loved, he no doubt agreed with his daughter’s description of Flower’s edifice as an ‘abominable erection...out of keeping with the river, Church & everything else’.

This dismay at the inexorable modernisation of the town that he loved might in part explain his strenuous opposition to attempts to divert funds from the Birthplace Trust for purposes that he deemed contrary to the spirit and the letter of its remit; this led to friction with Flower, who
made the ‘preposterous proposition’ that his Memorial Theatre should be such a beneficiary. His proposal was presented at a meeting of local Birthplace trustees on 8 May 1878, in the absence of Halliwell-Phillipps and a fellow non-resident trustee, Frederick Haines, who declared it ‘a complete breach of trust & in all respects a most unwise and wrong thing to do’, an assessment with which Halliwell-Phillipps heartily concurred.\(^\text{10}\)

This matter was still exercising Halliwell-Phillipps five years later, in his *Memoranda on the present State of the Birth-Place Trust*, published in May 1883 ‘for strictly private circulation’ to the Birthplace trustees. In it, he addresses once again proposed misappropriation of trust funds, this time to provide a scholarship for a pupil at the grammar school, a matter on which he had the previous year sought legal advice which supported his opposition. He also considers a problem pertinent to his scholarly preoccupations: what to do about ‘some thousands of separate deeds, old papers, drawings and engravings &c.’\(^\text{11}\) belonging to the Birthplace, which were in need of careful expert calendaring.

Despite Halliwell-Phillipps’s refusal to sanction Flower’s requested trust funds, it was on his recommendation that the trustees had passed a resolution in May 1882 to make a generous gift to the Memorial Theatre library of some 650 items, including duplicate volumes and critical works, in order to reduce the growing number needing to be stored at the Birthplace.\(^\text{12}\) Although he had himself produced the printed 1863 Town Corporation calendar, the present task at the Birthplace was ‘far more onerous’; it therefore required the appointment of a librarian. Richard Savage was engaged at the May 1884 Trustees meeting, despite expectations that George F. Warner of the British Museum, Halliwell-Phillipps’s preferred candidate, would assume the role.\(^\text{13}\) This appointment was an indication of the growing tension between the Executive Committee, comprised of local members like Flower, and the trustees ‘at a distance’, which included Haines, Halliwell-Phillipps and fellow Shakespeare scholar, Dr Clement Ingleby, who was later to become involved in the autotyping controversy. Savage’s appointment as librarian was a touchy subject, because it resurrected the acrimonious and damaging disagreement between Halliwell-Phillipps and Flower over the conduct of the previous incumbent, Bruce Tyndall. He had been appointed on Halliwell-Phillipps’s personal recommendation only three years earlier, in 1880, but his tenure had been short-lived.\(^\text{14}\)

Tyndall appears to have antagonised the long-suffering Birthplace custodians, the Misses Chattaway, whom he was expected to assist in ‘their monotonous vocation’, and to have been cavalier in his taking a lengthy annual leave of three weeks, from 24 June 1882, with only one day’s advanced notice.\(^\text{15}\) Charles Flower was informed of this very inconvenient and unauthorised decision when he volunteered to audit the Birthplace cash accounts on 23 June; in response, he ‘declined to take upon himself… the responsibility of signing (sic) a cheque for the librarian’s salary’.\(^\text{16}\) The Executive Committee concurred, and at their 2 August meeting decided to withhold his quarter’s salary ‘in consequence of his having taken his vacation without a special warrant’. Halliwell-Phillipps was incensed at this treatment of his friend and laced the blame squarely at Flower’s door, where it remained for the rest of Halliwell-Phillipps’s life, exacerbating all their further disagreements. Tyndall, for his part, was distraught and felt compelled to resign, complaining in his 30 August resignation letter to the trustees of their ‘outrageous conduct’ in passing judgement ‘without giving me a chance of speaking for myself’.\(^\text{17}\) Thereafter he had no further truck with the Birthplace himself, but the affair continued to rankle with Halliwell-Phillipps, who repeatedly re-visited it in his later attacks upon Flower and the Town Corporation. This turned out to be the point of no return in the deterioration of relations between the two men: Halliwell-Phillipps’s animosity towards Flower became a preoccupation verging on obsession, fuelled by a further fierce locking of horns over the question of the autotyping of Corporation documents relating to Shakespeare.
Following the British Museum’s lead in employing the new autotyping technology, Halliwell-Phillipps had approached the then Mayor, W. G. Colbourne, in February 1883 to suggest that Stratford followed suit by subjecting original documents relating to Shakespeare to this novel process. He had presumed that the favourable response of the mayor and the town councillors gave him the go-ahead, without any reference to a Corporation Autotyping Sub-committee then set up to supervise the enterprise, under the chairmanship of Flower, assisted by the Mayor and Cllr. Hodgson (see Figure 2). Wires were crossed from the start: the sub-committee assumed the right to be involved in every stage of the project, while Halliwell-Phillipps expected to undertake the autotyping without any interference from Flower et al, whose only role as far as he was concerned was to market the autotypes once produced. Halliwell-Phillipps not only rejected the notion of any such supervision, but in consequence of the altercation over Tyndall, he went so far as to inform Colbourne that he would not ‘meet Mr. Charles Flower under conditions partaking of the nature of a personal conference.’ The Corporation responded by increasing the size of the committee, with the intention of ‘having supervision and control of the whole work’.

Figure 2: Sir Arthur Hodgson, Portrait by Henry Jones Thaddeus, 1899
(Courtesy of Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council).

Halliwell-Phillipps had by then already taken fourteen documents, one by one, to be autotyped by Mr Smartt, a Leamington photographer with a Stratford photographic studio in Rother Street. He had made neither the Town Clerk nor the Autotyping Sub-committee aware of these visits. Although each document was, according to Halliwell-Phillipps returned within a few hours of being removed, to Flower in particular, this behaviour was unacceptable; the sanction of the committee should have first been obtained to ensure proper supervision, and a Town Corporation resolution was passed on 9 December 1883 that no documents should be removed from the Record Room, which was so dingy and ill-lit that, in effect, no autotyping could possibly be done there. This resolution was a response to the first of Halliwell-Phillipps’s numerous, indignant, self-justifying salvos aimed primarily at Flower: a twenty-three-page rant
entitled *The Shakespeare Autotype Committee at Stratford-on-Avon*, published in November 1883. In it, Halliwell-Phillipps’s habitual recourse to lengthy, verbose attempts at sarcasm is all too evident:

Perhaps each document, as it is proposed for autotype, will have to be submitted to a public meeting at the Town Hall to adjudicate upon its merits. Gracefully held up in the hands of the Chairman and illuminated by lime-light, the effect anyhow would be pretty, if not touching. 21

Having made much of Flower’s indifferent disregard for the town’s ancient records thus far, he mocks him for his recent interest:

It is cheering to observe that this apathy is now terminated;—that so influential a member of the Council should not only be suddenly awakened to the unrivalled importance of the records, but to take so earnest and affectionate an interest in their preservation. 22

This first slim volume was swiftly followed in early December by a second, fifty-nine-page edition, in response to the enlargement of the Autotyping Sub-committee. It further attacked Flower, who had had the temerity to defend himself after the first was circulated; in this edition, Halliwell-Phillipps revisits ‘The Librarian Question’ and mounts a thirteen-page defence of Tyndall and of his own reactions to the debacle. 23 He regards himself as ‘justified in taking up the cudgels in defence of my friend and nominee’, and indulges in a rambling review of who-said-or-wrote-what-to-whom, casting Flower as the villain of the piece. 24 In the next section, ‘Very Irregular indeed!’ he returns to his preoccupation with supposed insults over the autotyping controversy, into which he drags the two Stratford newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Chronicle*. Both had allegedly quoted Flower at a 4 December council meeting as characterising Halliwell-Phillipps’s unauthorised removal of the documents for autotyping as ‘irregular’, a word that Flower categorically denied using; 25 but he probably did intentionally stoke the fire when reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post* as saying that a stronger word than ‘irregular’ might be applied to such behaviour—a statement that, far from denying, he readily acknowledged in a letter to Halliwell-Phillipps dated 8 December 1883. 26

Apart from an understandable desire to defend himself against the onslaughters circulating in print from his former friend, it is an open question why, in the light of the Corporation’s previously liberal granting of unsupervised, privileged access to Halliwell-Phillipps for several decades, Flower was so exercised about a few Corporation documents having been removed, for a few hours at a time, to be taken a few hundred yards to the photographer’s studio, when, as will be seen, a few months later he endorsed the removal of a large number to London for several months.

Although he never admitted to it, Flower’s attitude might in part be explained by Halliwell-Phillipps’s life-long reputation as a wheeler-dealer in all manner of manuscripts and rare publications; he was editor and author of a bewilderingly prolific and eclectic list of publications, and he also printed facsimiles of numerous early works. 27 His bibliophile activities co-existed though, with a willingness to dismember books and manuscripts, to paste fragments into the scrapbooks which were also a passion; the sources of his scraps would today be regarded as precious and inviolable, but they obviously were not to him; anything he regarded as imperfect was fair game. 28
In his study at Hollingbury Copse he had a mammoth waste paper basket that he called his Book Bin; he regularly trawled through scores of books and manuscripts, cutting out snippets that would be useful to him in his scrapbooks, and throwing away the rest as refuse into his great bin. In 1864, among other items, he donated seven such volumes, entitled Collectanea Shakespeareana, to the Birthplace, so that the Trustees, including Flower, cannot have been unaware of this practice. Halliwell-Phillipps was not alone in this habit, although his was probably at the extreme end of the nineteenth-century fashion for scrapbook collecting. Individuals and families made up their own books and other famous Victorians, like John Ruskin, were known to be collectors. Chetham’s Library in Manchester holds about 150 volumes of scrapbooks, most of which were compiled by local historians and antiquarians for their own personal use, but it also contains some by Halliwell-Phillipps.

There is also a Flower family scrapbook preserved in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archive, entitled Avonbankiana, relating to Avonbank, the house remodelled by Charles and Sarah Flower in 1866, and their home until their respective deaths in 1892 and 1908. Perhaps not surprisingly, it contains watercolours of the house, given as presents in the days when they were friends: ‘To Charles Flower, Esq. with the kind regards of J.O. Halliwell – 1866’. A less cordial communication is the ‘letter from J.O. Halliwell-Phillipps to C.E. Flower, 8 February 1885, inquiring about the fate of the original Avon Bank’, made at the height of their feud over the autotypes and other bones of contention.

This modest Flower scrapbook, however, is not remotely in the same league as the extraordinarily extensive Halliwell-Phillipps collections now in the Folger Library, Edinburgh University Library, and Chetham’s School of Music Library, in addition to the set of 128 bound notebooks acquired by the Birthplace in 1889, after Halliwell-Phillipps’s death. The latter contain mounted scraps, both printed and in manuscript, cut from books, pamphlets and other sources to illustrate words and phrases found in Shakespeare’s works, with each play or group of poems having one or more notebooks devoted to it. Hamlet, for instance has ten such volumes. In these notebooks, some scraps are identified, but for the most part, Halliwell-Phillipps provides no identifying information. Access to these notebooks is restricted, but the author has had the rare opportunity of examining some of them and of observing the compiler’s very dubious modus operandi. These scraps were thought to date from the sixteenth century onwards, but in one Twelfth Night notebook, the author has discovered a page from an exceedingly rare fifteenth-century incunabulum: Bartholomaeus Anglicus: De proprietatibus rerum, Westminster, c. 1495/6, printed by the ‘Father of Fleet Street’, Wynkyn de Worde, protégé of Caxton (see Figure 3). Astonishingly, the page is not folded, but cut into three pieces; no doubt, given his habit of illustrating different plays from the same volume, other pages or snippets from this precious incunabulum may yet be found; as with many other cuttings, Halliwell-Phillipps does not explain the inclusion of this one. It can only be assumed that he had in mind Sir Toby’s allusion to the Four Elements of earth, air, fire and water, shown in the illustration: ‘Does not our lives consist of the four elements?’ (Sir Toby Belch, Twelfth Night, 2.3.9).

Some of the dismembered sources that he does identify include early herbals, Holinshed, Jonson, Sidney, numerous Restoration plays and, incredibly, a Second Folio edition. He makes no apology for what can today only be regarded as vandalism, sticking an explanatory typed note in the front of some of the volumes: ‘Many of the extracts have been taken by me from original copies of old books read for the purpose’. It must again be noted, that although he was not alone in this type of scrapbook collecting of cuttings from old publications, he must certainly be regarded as one of its most enthusiastic and prolific exponents.
Questions remain about exactly how and where he acquired the countless books, prints and manuscripts that passed through his hands. It is unlikely that they all had an impeccable provenance, and this thought may have occurred to Flower in relation to Halliwell-Phillipps's former unfettered access to the Corporation documents. After all, he had been the only one thus far to handle and calendar the documents, so there was no way of knowing whether or not he had surreptitiously removed any of them to add to his own collection.

From his early days as a student, suspicion hung over the young Halliwell with regard to his stealing of manuscripts (see Figure 4). The most damaging expression of such suspicion involved his association with the British Museum, where he was regularly to be found in the Reading Room. The episode left deep scars and motivated his responses to the later Tyndall and autotyping altercations. The unedifying dispute began with an order in the minutes of the General Meeting of the Trustees of 8 February 1845, requiring that:

the Principal Librarian (Sir Henry Ellis) repeat to Mr. Halliwell in the name of the Trustees the suggestion conveyed in the Principal Librarian's letter of the 29 January, namely that until the case of the Manuscripts improperly abstracted from Trinity College Library has been thoroughly investigated, he would probably think it proper to abstain from consulting the Museum Collections.
A week later, on 15 February 1845, in the minutes of the Standing Committee, Sir Henry Ellis reported to the Trustees that he himself, with:

Sir Frederic Madden (Keeper of the Manuscripts) and Mr. Panizzi (Keeper of Printed Books) join in expressing their humble opinion to the Trustees, that Mr. Halliwell, under all the circumstances of his case as it at present stands, is not a fit person to have admission to the Reading Room.

The cause of this extreme response was the discovery that thirty-three manuscripts recently purchased by the British Museum had gone missing when Halliwell had been an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, which was suing the British Museum over the theft. This scandal achieved national notoriety, prompting the young Halliwell vociferously to protest his innocence and demand a public hearing. In self-defence, he produced an indignant twenty-four page public denial of guilt – an early precursor of his later outbursts in print over the Shakespeare autotypes. The British Museum controversy, though, was far more shocking and reached a much wider and more illustrious audience than would his later Stratford disputes, involving as it did approaches on Halliwell’s behalf to Disraeli and appeals to Parliament, where Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel was, embarrassingly, one of the British Museum trustees; the Archbishop of Canterbury asked for two letters that he had received from Halliwell to be read to the Board of the Museum, and other notable political and literary figures weighed in to the debate.
Emotional letters defending Halliwell were published in the *Times* and other newspapers and journals—a tactic he later repeated at Stratford, but with little success. There was a steady flow of support from personal friends and acquaintances, but many statements of encouragement from well-wishers not known to him also appeared, penned by such outraged champions as ‘A Lover of Justice’, ‘A Hater of Oppression’ and ‘Philo Justitiae’.39

The print media were thought to be using the affair to embarrass the government, successfully turning the prime minister’s trusteeship of the Museum against him and his party, through passionate leader articles characterising Halliwell as the victim of ‘a foul and scandalous conspiracy’, one of which was aptly entitled ‘A Curious Case’.40

Despite the fact that lawyers were employed and a trial was scheduled for Tuesday, 23 June, with Trinity College as plaintiff and the British Museum as defendant, it was postponed until the following Thursday, but it never took place. The ‘curious case’ was suddenly dropped, without any explanation offered by either institution; nothing was proved against Halliwell and he was grudgingly issued with a new reader’s ticket.41

His guilt or innocence was therefore never tested in court, although a considerable weight of evidence and opinion remained against him. The dispute was so intense and bitter that it is difficult to consider it as the result of a simple accusation of theft. It would appear rather that Halliwell had already antagonised influential members of the British Museum staff, who closed ranks against a pushy young man considered to be of questionable talent and ethics, whose reputation they sought to damage. This interpretation is reinforced by the refusal of the Museum officials to provide Halliwell, and indeed the public, with details of its charges against him, or to indicate how long the investigation would last, much less to give him a hearing. From the beginning, Halliwell’s wife seems perspicaciously to have had the measure of her husband’s adversaries, referring to it right from the outset, in a diary entry of 2 February 1845, as the ‘scandalous MS. affair got up by the British Museum People’.42

Long before this humiliating episode, the young Halliwell had already ruffled feathers at the Museum, because of his precociousness, overriding ambition and self-promotion. By 1840, when he was only twenty, he was already a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries. He also became Secretary and Treasurer of the Historical Society of Science, a member of the Camden Society, of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture, of the Ashmolean Society, among the dozen or so organizations to which he belonged, as well as being a founding and council member of the Percy and Shakespeare Societies. Alexander Dyce, literary editor, one of the co-founders of the Percy Society and Halliwell’s life-long epistolary correspondent, humorously addresses him in one letter as ‘F. R.S.A.B.C.D.E.F.G.H.I.J.K.L.M.N.O.P.’, and in another he enquires, ‘Tell me if you have yet demolished the Camden. & how many new Literary Societies you have established during the last six weeks?’43

Halliwell also antagonised Sir Frederic Madden, K. H., Keeper of the Manuscripts at the British Museum, who, while presenting a courteous public face to Halliwell, expressed withering contempt for him in the pages of his private diary.

On 17 March 1840 he dismisses Halliwell’s *A Few Hints to Novices in Manuscript Literature* as a ‘flimsy tract’ concluding that he is ‘certainly not qualified at present’ to enlarge it into a proposed more substantial work. On 25 February 1841, he writes: ‘It is really too bad that this conceited young man should be allowed to figure in the Council of every Society, & be so utterly incapable of editing any work properly’.
On 25 August 1841, Madden condemns Halliwell’s *The Manuscript Rarities of the University of Cambridge* as a ‘miserable volume’, and ‘done in a very jejune & meagre manner’, complaining, ‘I am thoroughly sick of the Halliwelliana. He is a puerile blockhead aiming at everything and able to do nothing’. In addition to incompetence and impertinence, Madden hints at Halliwell’s penchant for deception:

But it really is too vexatious for this meddler to occupy ground like this, procure a list of subscribers to carry so desirable an object into effect ... and then to find that he has deceived us all in this pitiful manner, and by way of crowning his folly, calling his volume ‘The Manuscript Rarities of Cambridge’!

In his 5 January 1843 entry he is scandalised that:

Sir Henry Ellis informed me today, that [Henry] Hallam had seriously proposed to Hudson Gurney, to elect Halliwell Director of the Society of Antiquaries!!! What next? If so absurd a step had been taken, I would at once have resigned.

It must be remembered that it was Madden himself who had bought the Trinity College Manuscript at the centre of the 1845 British Museum national scandal, and it was he who had the embarrassing and bitter obligation of confessing to the purchase on the Museum’s behalf. The affair dragged on for sixteen months, probably not to investigate Halliwell’s involvement – Ellis, Madden, and Panizzi were sufficiently convinced of his guilt for him to be banned from the Reading Room – but to give the Museum and Trinity College time to work out how to proceed. The sudden collapse of the projected trial suggests that both sides were reluctant to run contrary any further to the swelling tide of public opinion so obviously in favour of Halliwell.

Despite his having successfully avoided facing accusation in the law courts, the affair deeply wounded the young antiquarian, but it also demonstrated his ability to mobilise public support and emerge, Houdini-like from perilous danger – a talent that had lost its edge by the time that he took on Flower and the denizens of Stratford in the 1880s. His sympathy for and defence of Tyndall and other underdogs also grew out of his own bruising at the hands of the British Museum. A further rumour that he had stolen a rare quarto edition of *Hamlet* from his future antiquarian bibliophile father-in-law, Sir Thomas Phillipps, also dogged him, but was likewise never proved. It was probably a factor in Phillipps’s permanent disowning of his daughter when she married Halliwell against her father’s wishes, despite the previous close co-operation of the two obsessive antiquarian bookmen.

Having vigorously denied such youthful transgressions, Halliwell did himself no favours by reportedly telling a visitor to his Hollingbury Copse home, years later c. 1880, when trouble was brewing in Stratford with Flower and the Birthplace Executive Committee, that:

if he ever chanced to see anything in anyone else’s house or in a museum that he thought he was more worthy to possess, and (obviously) more able to protect than its owner he had no scruples about taking it.

Little wonder, then, that Flower and the Stratford Town Corporation had reservations about trusting him with its archive.
The appearance of the second edition of *The Shakespeare Autotype Committee at Stratford-on-Avon*, in December 1883, antedated by less than a month the inaugural meeting of a newly-constituted Stratford Town Corporation Record Committee, of which Flower was again Chairman; its brief was to deal with the neglected medieval records in the possession of the Corporation. This committee was once more to trample on Halliwell-Phillipps's already wounded sensibilities, beginning as it did with a clarification of the ownership of copyright of the fourteen Shakespeare autotypes thus far produced. In the minutes of its second meeting on 22 January 1884, although Halliwell-Phillipps is not directly named, reference is made by implication to his having made free with these Corporation documents, because the photographer, Mr Smartt, was present at the meeting to discuss the customary photographer's assumption of copyright. The Record Committee's minutes of this meeting, however, make it clear that instead the Corporation expected to receive the autotype negatives and to retain the copyright. Halliwell-Phillipps had already aired this issue in the second *Shakespeare Autotypes Committee* edition above, where he admits to having allowed the photographer to retain the negatives, so that the images could be enlarged, but claims to have had no discussion with him about copyright.

Adding further complication to the autotyping controversy, in 1883, Dr Ingleby also sought permission from the Corporation to autotype and publish the pages in its possession of Thomas Greene's diary, and was likewise initially thwarted. In a letter dated 9 November 1883, from the Town Clerk Thomas Hunt, Ingleby was granted permission, conditional on oversight by the Autotyping Sub-committee and only provided that no documents were removed from the Birthplace Record Room. Such novel enterprises attracted the attention of the press, and so on 13 November the *Manchester Guardian* informed its readership that there was a 'Little Hitch' with this, because some of the Birthplace trustees objected to turning its Record Room into a photographic studio. The reactions of trustees Flower and Halliwell-Phillipps are not recorded, but for once, they may both have supported this objection. Ingleby, like Halliwell-Phillipps, was exasperated and complained in a letter to Hunt on 20 December that 'in ordinary circumstances I should not have encountered the least difficulty on this score'.

Just before this, on 18 December, Halliwell-Phillipps had once again reprimanded Flower and the Town Corporation, this time by letter, accusing them of being in the 'highest degree frivolous and unjust', of making 'uncourteous remarks' and concluding that it 'cannot be expected that I should continue to work in the absence of sufficient protection against gratuitous annoyances' and 'complaints of a frivolous and vexatious nature'. He therefore withdrew from the Shakespeare autotyping project.

It was in this context that the Record Committee began its work, with Flower in the chair. At its inaugural meeting, on 3 January 1884, there seems to have been some shifting of the Corporation's position: in a further letter sent that day, Hunt informed Ingleby that the committee 'desire to give you every facility to carry out your wish to autotype the leaves of Greene's diary', to which end Mr Smartt, the photographer had been invited to the next committee meeting. This places a different emphasis on that meeting with Smartt; it appears that it was intended not only to consider copyright of the autotypes undertaken on Halliwell-Phillipps's behalf, but to set the ground-rules for those yet to be produced for Ingleby. By 13 February 1884, Ingleby had set aside exasperation and commented in a letter to Hunt that 'there is really no difficulty now that the Committee have allowed Mr. Smartt to do the work at his own house'. Unlike Halliwell-Phillipps, Ingleby made no objection to the supervision of his project, which thereafter proceeded without obstruction, and he went on to publish the autotypes of Greene's diary in 1885 as *Shakespeare and the Enclosure of the Common Fields at Welcombe*. 
Surprisingly, notwithstanding Halliwell-Phillipps’s vituperative attacks on Flower in print, the most recent only a few days before the Record Committee first met, the Corporation also held out an olive branch to him, passing a resolution of confidence in him on 4 January 1884 and hoping that he would resume ‘his valuable labours’; while appearing to accept this invitation in a reply dated 19 January, a telling caveat precluded any real reconciliation and he remained intransigent:

so long as effect...and not subjected to restrictions to which I have been unaccustomed I shall consider it a privilege to work on the autotypes...
It will also give me pleasure to confer with the newly-appointed Record Committee.

Given his continuing animosity towards chairman Flower, this last statement appears to be somewhat disingenuous, particularly since it was followed up by the offer of his services, ‘not merely on the autotypes, but on the general question of the records’ which concludes with circumlocutious self-promotion clearly intended as a shot across the bows of Flower and his inexperienced committee: ‘it would be a mere affectation on my part were I not to admit the indulgence of a hope that my very long experience in such matters may enable me to be of service’. Having thus dug in his heels, he went on to try to interfere with the ongoing work of the committee, resulting in a further deterioration in relations.

Rather than taking up his offer and asking him to undertake the task of calendaring the unbound records of the medieval Guild of the Holy Cross, inherited by the Corporation in 1553 after the Guild had been dissolved, the Record Committee turned for advice to Sir William Hardy, the distinguished antiquarian and Deputy Keeper of the Records in London. He in turn recommended his son, the 26-year-old W.J. Hardy, who in due course was engaged to calendar the manuscript rolls. Despite his youth, Hardy junior was already an accomplished archivist and medieval scholar, eminently capable of deciphering and translating the medieval Latin and middle English in which the manuscripts were written. He was invited to the second meeting of the Record Committee on 22 January (the one also attended by Smartt) to inspect the rolls, to report on their condition and propose the way forward.

Despite Halliwell-Phillipps’s opinion not having been sought, he nevertheless requested, and was provided with, a copy of Hardy’s subsequent report, upon which he commented at length in a letter to Hunt dated 13 February 1884, and read out to the Record Committee with Hardy’s report on 13 March. In it, he immediately takes the scholarly high ground, attempting by implication to put Hardy in his inferior place by making unnecessary reference to the recommendation made to the Birthplace trustees by Dr Ingleby and himself regarding the calendaring of the Birthplace documents. They had proposed G.F. Warner of the British Museum Manuscripts Department to take on the task, his having produced a Calendar for Dulwich College ‘that is acknowledged to be one of the best ever published’.

He goes on to give unsolicited advice on how to deal with the Corporation records, the bound volumes of which had already been fully calendared by him, after ‘being repaired and mounted at the British Museum by the most experienced manuscript binders in the world’. He therefore argues against their being sent to London again, although Hardy had not suggested any such course of action.

He takes personal offence at Hardy’s observation that some of the Guild documents had not been recorded in his own 1863 printed calendar, asserting that any then unrecorded must have since been added to the collection: ‘I work at these matters so extremely methodically, it is hardly possible that I could otherwise have overlooked any’. He drags Mr Cordy Jeaffreson into
his defence, as the palæographer deputed by Royal Historical Commission to inspect records, and who had made an ‘elaborate list of the unbound records’, claiming that ‘Mr. Hardy...was evidently not aware of’ Jeaffreson’s report.

Finally, he balks at any suggestion that records relating to Shakespeare should be put at risk by being taken out of the town – this despite the fact that all such documents that appeared in his own 1863 Calendar had been entrusted to him and transported to London for repair and binding, and there was no need to remove them again. There is a heavy hint here of his continuing anger over the restrictions imposed on his own autotyping activities.

He finishes with a thinly veiled insult of the youthful Hardy, who is dealing with Guild records which elsewhere Halliwell-Phillipps later deems ‘absolutely valueless’ and ‘comparatively worthless’ because they have no Shakespeare connection.60 This being the case, ‘no better arrangement could possibly be made’ than to send them to London ‘to the care of so experienced a palæographer as Mr. Hardy’.

Having made this attempt to dictate to Flower’s Record Committee, he probably intended once again to assert his superior credentials only a few days later, on 18 February, by offering a privately printed collection of regnal years to the committee.61 In view of the tone of his 13 February letter and his previous and subsequent conduct, it is difficult to see this gift as a random act of generosity.

Hardy’s report and Halliwell-Phillipps’s letter having been read at the 13 March Record Committee meeting, it was immediately decided to engage Hardy and to seek the Corporation’s permission to transfer the records ‘to the custody of the Deputy Keeper of the Records’ in London for repair, cleaning and preservation and to ask for the necessary expenses to be provided, including the provision of a clerk to assist Hardy’s work in Stratford. Savage was employed, and when Hardy next attended the Record Committee meeting on 7 April,62 the two men and members of the committee together made an inventory of the Guild records destined for removal to London. It was indeed as Hardy had indicated in his initial report: when checked against the Halliwell-Phillipps 1863 Calendar, 166 items in it were identified, twenty-eight were unidentified and twenty-five were missing. An examination of the copy of that calendar still on the Shakespeare Centre Reading Room shelves confirms this assessment and moreover reveals that the Guild documents had been entered randomly, without any respect to chronology and with only the most cursory descriptions, thus calling Halliwell-Phillipps’s competence and boasted thoroughness into question.

A further report from Hardy followed swiftly, dated 9 April and this cannot have been received well by Halliwell-Phillipps.63 Hardy was critical of a lack of system in the 1863 Calendar, commenting that ‘The manner in which Mr. Phillipps has arranged his Calendar, has, I fancy led both Mr. Jeaffreson and myself into error’. Contrary to Halliwell-Phillipps’s subsequent protestations that there were no documents in a poor state, Hardy also pointed out that ‘many... from their decayed condition are difficult to read’ (see Figure 5). Once again, examination of the Guild rolls reveals that some remain in that condition, notwithstanding the careful treatment they received under Hardy’s supervision.64

The young antiquarian went to work with energy and skill, reporting in a letter to Flower on 16 September that although some of the records were ‘shockingly decayed’ and it was ‘tiresome work to repair them’, the job was nearly finished and they were ‘now permanently preserved’.65
By 5 November the records had been returned, translated, chronologically calendared and to avoid doubt, numbered and cross-referenced with the 1863 Calendar. This once again exposed the deficiencies in Halliwell-Phillipps's careless approach to these medieval records.

By this time, he had ceased to try directly to influence the progress of Hardy's labours, but he wasn't silent for long. He felt personally insulted by the reports of the gaps in his calendar and the poor state of some of the documents, both of which charges called into question his previous custodianship of the Corporation records. To make matters worse, at the 5 November committee meeting Hardy's bill was also presented, the Guild documents thus far calendared (primarily the Masters' and Proctors' accounts) having been returned. The sum came to £180 11s.9d. – Hardy's fee of £116 for the work and £64 11s. 9d. for the repairs et cetera. Flower generously offered to pay Hardy's fee, in order to encourage the Corporation to endorse proceeding further with 'their very important and interesting work', allowing Hardy to take charge of the remaining unbound Guild records. The Corporation thus became liable for only just over a third of the total cost.
The *Herald* then ill-advisedly once again became involved, printing an article describing the Guild documents as heretofore ‘unclassified, unclealndered, uncared for’, in danger of ‘decay and consequent loss to the town’ and hailing Hardy as ‘a gentleman in every way qualified for the work’. He had reduced the records ‘from their chaotic state to something like order’. As one ‘endowed with special talent’ it was natural that he should ‘require adequate payment’ for his services.⁶⁷

At this, Halliwell-Phillipps took aim directly at the *Herald*, publishing *A Brief History of the Ancient Records of Stratford-on-Avon, Chiefly in Reply to a Leading Article that Recently Appeared in the Stratford-on-Avon Herald*. At twenty-one pages, it is similar in length to the first edition of his attack on Flower a year before, and in it he employs similar tactics to those in his 13 February letter to the Record Committee, claiming superiority and belittling the work done by Hardy. With the exception of those relating to the building of the Guild Chapel, he considers the records to be unremarkable, of no more value than ‘thousands of similar guild records in many other towns’. He has himself examined the ancient records of nearly seventy towns in England and Wales and the Stratford records ‘were in at least as good a condition’ before Hardy got his hands on them, and ‘in not a few instances, practically unexceptionable’. In support of this assertion, he once again invokes Jeaffreson’s Royal Historical Commission report, one of the Government’s ‘ablest palaeographers’ who had apparently testified to ‘the excellence of their then condition’. Nevertheless, they comprise ‘one of the few classes of the Town Records that no Shakespearean student would dream of troubling his head about’. Referring to the expenditure incurred by Hardy, he makes unfounded assertions that Flower blamed him for the neglect of the records that necessitated the expense.⁶⁸

He does, of course, make extended reference throughout to his own protracted labours on the 1863 Calendar, which, by contrast with the insignificant number so far dealt with by Hardy, had resulted over a number of years in the calendaring and binding of 4,869 records, for which he had charged no fee.⁶⁹ He cannot resist a veiled reference to his perceived maltreatment by Flower over the autotyping incident, contrasting the current chairman of the Record Committee with predecessors on the Corporation from whom there had been ‘none of that fussy interference’ or ‘tiresome intrusion of advice-giving in matters which they had never studied’.⁷⁰ In the preface, he casts himself as ‘the occasional help’ of the Corporation, claiming that ‘ordinary fairness’ demanded his disclosing the ‘real facts’ in his own defence, to avoid the insinuation that he had been ‘a bad workman and an unreasonable grumbler’; somewhat romantically, he takes on the role of ‘literary domestic’—one of the ‘old servants (who) like to go on quietly in old grooves’; there is little doubt to whom and to what he then refers, laying claim to ‘being scolded by a new head-gardener for moving a few potted flowers from the garden into the potting shed’.⁷¹

Not content with this airing of old grievances and implied references to the autotype controversy, that same December, 1884, he immediately launched himself into overt attack, publishing a first thirty-page edition of *The Stratford Records and the Shakespeare Autotypes*,⁷² making clear in the title that there are *Singular Delusions* current in the town, and styling himself *The Supposed Delinquent*; a second thirty-eight-page edition swiftly followed at beginning of February 1885.

It contains the same preface as the first, and pages eight to twenty are the same in both editions and are simply reprints of his previous attack on the *Herald*. Three additional sections are common to both editions. In the first, headed ‘Stratford Amenities’, having once again reproduced the 9 March 1883 *Chronicle* report of the Corporation Council meeting at which his autotyping offer was endorsed, he takes renewed offence at the *Herald* for having suggested that he had been ‘treated with the greatest courtesy by every individual member’ of
the Corporation. This he uses as an excuse to rehearse the old autotyping grievances against Flower, claiming it to be ‘almost incredible...that this harmless and beneficially-intended action of mine’ was treated by him as ‘a high crime and misdemeanour’.73 In the second section, ‘The “Greatest Courtesy” Speech’, he returns to the wrangling over Flower’s supposed use of the word ‘irregular’, and in the light of this, further castigates the Herald for its presumption that such language might indicate ‘the greatest courtesy’. In typically scornful, verbose fashion, he concludes ‘that journal must belong to a new and advanced ethical school that would exclude so old-fashioned a person as myself from a seat upon its polished benches’. In the third, ‘A Contrast’, he is exercised by the inconsistency, as he sees it, in Flower’s having allowed Hardy to remove ‘119 records over a hundred miles away...for months’, while having ‘taken alarm at the risk incurred by my diminutive proceedings...in moving 14 a few hundred yards, not a single one...being permitted to be away...for more than two or three hours’.74

A further eight pages of the second edition are taken up by ‘Additional notes’, prompted by an article in the Herald in the penultimate week of January 1885, offering ‘humble apologies’ to him for previous misjudgements of his motives in furthering his own selfish Shakespearean interests through his calendaring activities. It now chooses to ‘believe that he engaged in the work, having the highest objects in view, and the real interests of the town at heart’.75 Halliwell-Phillipps predictably rejects this attempted apology and chews over various statements in the article and associated acrimonious exchanges with Flower, which he persists in considering to have been insulting. He demonstrates blindness to the effects of his own words and actions by characterising his letter of the previous 19 January discussed above as ‘most conciliatory in its tone’ and one that he had hoped ‘would have closed all matters of dispute’.76 He of course omits to mention that it was written in response to the olive branch extended to him by Flower’s Record Committee, and that in it he again rejected any supervision of his work.

He concludes with the announcement that ‘my work of every description for Stratford has arrived at a termination’. It is ‘not the only town whose records I have gratuitously arranged’, but he declares it to be ‘the only one wherein the vexatious individual opposition that I have encountered would not have been immediately silenced by a general remonstrance’.77

There is more than a hint of disappointment here that there has not been the kind of national, or even local, outcry in his favour that had aided him in the wounding British Museum affair four decades earlier; despite the valedictory tone of this second edition, such disappointment almost certainly prompted him to persist in publishing three further editions between 1885 and 1887, the last two extending to 111 pages, with numerous reprints of articles in support of him from newspapers and journals, both national and international.

The third edition soon followed, published in February 1885, in the wake of the Record Committee’s decision at its 28 January meeting to seek approval from the Corporation to serialise Hardy’s calendar of Guild Accounts in the Herald over the next year, ‘week by week so that everyone by cutting out a portion and pasting it in a book will in time possess a full Calendar without any expense beyond the subscription to the paper’.78 This was an ingenious solution to the problem of recouping any expense laid out on an expensive printed and bound publication of the calendar; it proved to be a judicious move, because a limited run of 100 hard copies that followed in 1886 did not sell well and lost money.79

At this meeting, Corporation finances were further discussed, and it was decided for the time being to suspend Hardy’s calendaring of remaining Guild docs not yet transported to London; instead, Savage would be asked to identify and number them. Flower also continued to fund Hardy’s work on the residue of the documents originally entrusted to him, on which he worked until November 1885.80
The timing of the publication of Halliwell-Phillipps’s February 1885 third edition can hardly be regarded as accidental, coinciding as it did with the first instalment of Hardy’s calendar in the Herald; it added to the second edition nine pages of extracts from the Birmingham Daily Post, starting with an editorial dated 7 February, followed by a consequent series of letters, the last dated 13 February, the date of the Herald’s first instalment. After a new preface to this third edition, in which he continues to attack Flower but denies any hostility towards the Corporation, the second edition is printed in its entirety, including its preface. He then follows up with the afore-mentioned Birmingham Daily Post entries, claiming the editorial rather unconvincingly to be ‘independent’. Although he includes a riposte from Flower and two of his own letters, there are also two from ‘An Ancient and Most Quiet Watchman’, a fictitious, Dickensian, Halliwell-Phillipps supporter, dubbed by him ‘your astute and humorous correspondent’. Reading the editorial and these pseudonymous contributions, it is difficult to regard them as anything other than Halliwell-Phillipps’s own work – a pitiful and unsuccessful attempt to drum up the widespread endorsements that he had enjoyed in the press during the British Museum controversy.

The editorial fulsomely sings Halliwell-Phillipps’s praises, hailing him as ‘the learned and laborious Shakespearean scholar’ and claiming that ‘few, if any antiquarians and palographers of our day, even professional experts, could have done so much good work and have done it so well, as well as so generously’. It leaps to his defence as it rakes over all the old grievances, deeming the Guild documents about to be serialised ‘of no value’ and ‘not worth’ the cost incurred by the Record Committee. Their degraded condition is again denied and Halliwell-Phillipps’s assertion of unsupervised right of access in the autotyping controversy is upheld. It laments the cessation of his association with Stratford: ‘It is sad to find, and the world generally will find it difficult to believe, that such an ending is possible after forty years of untiring and unselfish work for the literature of the world’. Flower’s letter, dated 9 February, demonstrates an understandable loss of patience with ‘the latest melancholy evidence of the spirit that now animates Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps’, for whom ‘before the issue of these astonishing pamphlets, (he) had entertained feelings of esteem and regard’ – that is, before he ‘so wantonly placed himself in a position of hostility to the Corporation, from whom he had received so many favours and such unlimited confidence’.

Needless to say, both the Ancient Watchman and Halliwell-Phillipps refute these allegations, and in a further section, ‘Mr. Charles Flower’s Letter’, it is picked to pieces and Council minutes and letters related to the autotyping affair already discussed above are re-visited. The use of ‘irregular’ by Flower is mulled over once more in the penultimate section, ‘The Insult’, disconcertingly preceded, by ‘The Intangible Shakespeare’. Here Halliwell-Phillipps appears completely to lose the thread of any argument, and unaccountably feels the need to justify the omission from his 1863 calendar of a Greene diary entry, alluded to in the February 1885 edition of the English Illustrated Magazine, although no reference is made in the quoted article extract to such an omission.

When the last section is reached, intrepid readers who have trawled through all three editions, as well as the other pamphlets previously discussed, may be forgiven for sincerely hoping that it really will be Halliwell-Phillipps’s ‘Final Word’. This is not, however, another valediction as might have been expected; instead, again seemingly unaccountably, it returns to the matter of the Tyndall episode and the Birthplace Executive Committee’s handling of it. Tyndall himself is not mentioned and its two brief paragraphs are couched in arcane terms, referring only to ‘a matter’, ‘the subject’, ‘the case’, ‘the resolution’. Without prior knowledge of the workings of the Executive Committee, this last section makes little sense. It misinterprets the committee’s motives for reversing an initial intention to make clear its own position by publishing all the
papers relating to Tyndall’s tenure: a decision taken in the hope that, by not publishing, the matter might be put to rest. Halliwell-Phillipps persists in believing, however, that making them public would have vindicated him. Sadly, this ending to the third edition demonstrates his desperation to be heard and exonerated, and his inability to relinquish a preoccupation with the Tyndall affair that largely accounts for his sustained and bitter animosity towards Flower. By 1885 it had become an obsession that made it impossible for him to follow the advice of friends such as Ingleby, who encouraged him to make his peace with his Stratford adversaries.

He published two further editions of the *Shakespeare Autotypes*, the fourth in 1886 and the fifth in 1887, both of which recycle the contents of the first three, though with some reordering of the chronology, a forensic sixteen-page critique of ‘Mr. Charles Flower’s letter’ and tinkerings with section headings; for example, ‘Additional Notes’ becomes ‘The Herald’s Explanations’ and ‘The Insult’ is renamed ‘The “Irregular” Enquiry’. A new penultimate section, ‘The Birthplace Museum’, is yet another rambling history and defence of his custodianship of the documents stored in the Birthplace Record Room, in response to Flower’s provocatively claiming at the May 1886 Birthplace Trustees meeting that ‘Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps had them bound, looking after those only which were of Shakespearean interest, and letting the others go anywhere’.


This failed attempt to conjure up support for his points of view in the fourth edition led him in the fifth, which truly is valedictory, to announce his intention to seek widespread publication. Here, in his final offering, his hurt is palpable, as are his desire for public vindication and his contempt for the Stratford ‘oligarchy’ (see Figure 6). He appends his valediction to the title page:

To which is prefixed the Farewell of the oldest living Shakespearean Biographer to the Shakespeare-Councils of the Town which should be, but is not, the chosen Centre of Shakespeare-Biographical Research.

Figure 6: ‘My reply to the idiots who ask me to resume literary studies’...James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (The Guardian 11 April 2014: Charles Nicholl, ‘Shakespeare’s Scholar Tramp’).
An eight-page Preface follows, which broadens its scope well beyond the transgressions of Flower, and which reveals in its opening statement a desperation to be heard and to be vindicated:

The reasons that have led to my retirement from the Shakespearean councils of Stratford-on-Avon having, I find, been greatly misunderstood, an endeavour must be made to give a more extended publicity to the true causes. A large number of copies of this pamphlet will, therefore, be distributed gratuitously, and it will also be accessible to the general public.

No longer confining his attacks to Flower, he includes other targets, terming them ‘the oligarchy’. They have ‘tampered with’ ‘the ancient Shakespeare memorials...in all directions’, in particular misappropriating ‘a slice of the poet’s garden’ at New Place to widen the Chapel Lane footpath. Although not named, a former vicar of Holy Trinity, is also criticised; he had ‘during the execrable “restoration” of the Church’ in 1835 ‘ruthlessly discarded’ the remains of the medieval Becket chapel, which then came into Halliwell-Phillipps’s possession and were handed back to the vicar ‘in the hope that they would be replaced, but they were consigned instead to a corner of the churchyard.

In a letter to Sir Arthur Hodgson, he likewise offered to the Record Committee ‘by far the largest collection of drawings of the Church that has ever been brought together’, but received only ‘a polite acknowledgement’. Recalling this snub leads him to conclude that ‘The proceedings of the oligarchy in all literary matters connected with the town have been of the most ludicrous description’; he pours scorn on ‘“your Committee”’ which has ‘made a terrific fuss about their medieval records’ that they did not pretend to be able to read and ‘presented an elaborate report on their extreme value and importance to Sir Arthur Hodgson, who was in a similar predicament’.

The truth, according to Halliwell-Phillipps, is that ‘there are abundant indications that they do not in their hearts care one single halfpenny about them’. He accuses them of indifference in not bidding against his agent at a recent auction of Stratford-related medieval documents (when in fact a decision had been taken to avoid conflict by not opposing him) leading him to believe that:

Stratford-on-Avon, under the management of this oligarchy, instead of being, as it should be, the centre of Shakespeare-biographical research, has become the seat of Shakespearean charlatanry.

He also indulges elsewhere in insults; having long regarded Flower as ‘His Imperial Majesty King Charles III of Stratford’, he characterises Mayor Colbourne as a ‘vulgar idiot’ and his successor, Sir Arthur Hodgson, as ‘an ignorant and pompous lump...a finer specimen of quasi-aristocratic bumble was never met with’. The Reverend George Arbuthnot, the Holy Trinity vicar (1879-1908) also comes in for criticism over his ‘modernisation’ of the church: ‘a serious piece of Vandalism’ in Halliwell-Phillipps’s eyes.

In the face of these repeated onslaughts, the committee continued steadily with its work of supervising Hardy’s calendaring of the rest of the medieval documents, among other related commitments. Flower stood down as Chairman in October 1888, no doubt wearied by the clashes with Halliwell-Phillipps that affected his health, and Hodgson resigned as Mayor the following month. Halliwell-Phillipps died less than three weeks later, on 3 January 1889, still smarting from his wounds and estranged from all he had spent so many years building up and nurturing in Stratford.
Although his death was announced in the *Herald* on 11 January,\(^9\) it was a further month before a Corporation tribute appeared.\(^{10}\) The Record Committee was also bruised by the protracted feud; notwithstanding the resignations of both Flower and Hodgson, it very tellingly passed up the opportunity to purchase any of the Halliwell-Phillipps collection when it was offered for sale after his death in 1889, declaring that ‘they were not able to find anything of any special interest which they could recommend to be bought on behalf of the Corporation’ (see Figure 7).\(^{10}\)

![Figure 7: Record Committee meeting 1 July 1889: 'They were not able to find anything of any special interest' (Courtesy of Shakespeare Birthplace Trust BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 1 July 1889).](image)

Marvin Spevack’s assessment of Halliwell-Phillipps’s outbursts in his final years is poignant:

> It is difficult not to conclude that most of it was more small-minded than generous, more of an aching tooth than a major calamity. It is equally difficult to overlook the spectacle of personal decline in Halliwell’s persistent concentration on small details and petty prejudices.

Yet he detects ‘a certain sadness...and a kind of noble pathos’ in the elegiac fifth edition and in Halliwell-Phillipps’s closing appeal to his readers: ‘when a man is attacked in the way I have been, he must say something for himself’\(^{102}\).

Beyond the grave, Halliwell-Phillipps perhaps did have the final word, cocking a snook and seeking revenge on the whole pack of them. A window installed in his memory in the chancel of Holy Trinity in 1891, by his nephew and executor, Ernest Baker, forms an incendiary backdrop to the Shakespeare monument, illustrating as it does the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Challenged by Elijah to call upon their god to ignite the holocaust on an altar to him, the prophets of Baal repeatedly failed, but Elijah, in a single appeal to his own God, called down a fire so fierce that it immolated the offering on his altar and lapped up all the water poured into a trench around it. Elijah’s triumph was completed when he put to death all 450 prophets of Baal (see Figure 8).\(^{103}\)

Charles Flower died in 1892, the year following the installation of the Halliwell-Phillipps window, without stating publicly what he thought of this memorial to his erstwhile friend. His own legacy, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre on Waterside was itself consumed by flames in 1926 (fanned perhaps by the spirit of a prophetic Halliwell-Phillipps?). It rose again, phoenix like, from the ashes as the RSC Swan theatre. Did Flower regard it as a more fitting tribute to Stratford’s most famous son than the spectacle of Elijah, raising a perpetual firestorm above Shakespeare’s head and all 450 prophets of Baal crying murder into the Bard’s ear?
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Notes
2 Marvin Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps: The Life and Works of the Shakespearean Scholar and Bookman, Delaware & London 2001, p.244.
3 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT), 83039066-874/.
5 For many in Stratford, these celebrations were seen as successful, but they were financially ruinous. It had been hoped that sufficient money would be raised to pay for a memorial to Shakespeare, but in fact Mayor Flower ended up having to cover the considerable deficit himself: Christa Jansohn and Dieter Mehl, eds., Shakespeare Jubilees: 1769-2014, Zurich 2015, pp.17, 27, 58.
7 He added the maiden surname of his first wife, Henrietta, by royal licence after the death of his estranged father-in-law, Sir Thomas Phillipps in 1872: Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.424.
Halliwell-Phillipps, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.382, 384.
9 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, pp. 381-5.
10 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p. 390.
11 J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Memoranda on the present State of the Birth-Place Trust, Brighton 1883, p.12.
12 Halliwell-Phillipps, Memoranda on the present State of the Birth-Place Trust, p.11.
13 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.528.
14 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.526.
15 Halliwell-Phillipps, Memoranda on the present State of the Birth-Place Trust, p.15.
16 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.528.
17 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.529.
26 Halliwell-Phillipps, The Shakespeare-autotype committee, 2nd ed., p.49.
27 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, pp.8-71.
28 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.549.
29 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.549.
30 SBT, ER1/51-56.
33 SBT, DR1/108/3/2.
37 J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Statement in answer to reports which have been spread abroad against Mr. James Orchard Halliwell, London 1845.
39 These communications from supportive outsiders make up much of Volumes 25 and 26 of the letters in the Halliwell-Phillipps Edinburgh collection, demonstrating how widespread was his popular appeal.
40 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.125.
42 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.249.
43 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.242.
44 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, pp.242-3.
46 Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.589.
47 SBT, BRR2/10/1 &2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 3 Jan 1884 minutes.
48 SBT, BRR2/10/1 &2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 22 Jan 1884 minutes.
50 SBT, DR183/1, Letters from Town Clerk to Clement M. Ingleby, Oct 1883-June 1885.
51 SBT, DR183/1, Letters from Town Clerk to Clement M. Ingleby, Oct 1883-June 1885.
52 SBT, BRR14/18/50, Town Clerk's Office; Volume of Miscellanea, 1883-1885.
53 SBT, BRR14/18/49.
54 See Fn. 43 above.
55 SBT, BRR14/18/56.
56 SBT, 83008179-OS-87.3/.
that are current at Stratford-on-Avon, to all weathers in the churchyard until the arrival of the present vicar, Reverend Patrick Taylor, in 2014. He has since had them placed undercover in the bier house.


Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, 26 October 1888, p. 8.


Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, 8 February 1889, p. 2.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 1 July 1889.

Spevack, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, p.534.


SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 5 Nov 1884.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 7 April 1884.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Minutes & Reports, 28 Jan 1885.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Minutes & Reports, 31 May minutes.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 25 Nov minutes.

SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Record Committee Minutes and Reports, 13 March 1889.

SBT, BRR14/18/51; J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, The Stratford records and the Shakespeare autotypes. A brief review of singular delusions that are current at Stratford-on-Avon, 3rd ed., Brighton 1884-5, p.54


SBT, BRR2/10/1 & 2, Minutes & Reports, 13 March 1884.
