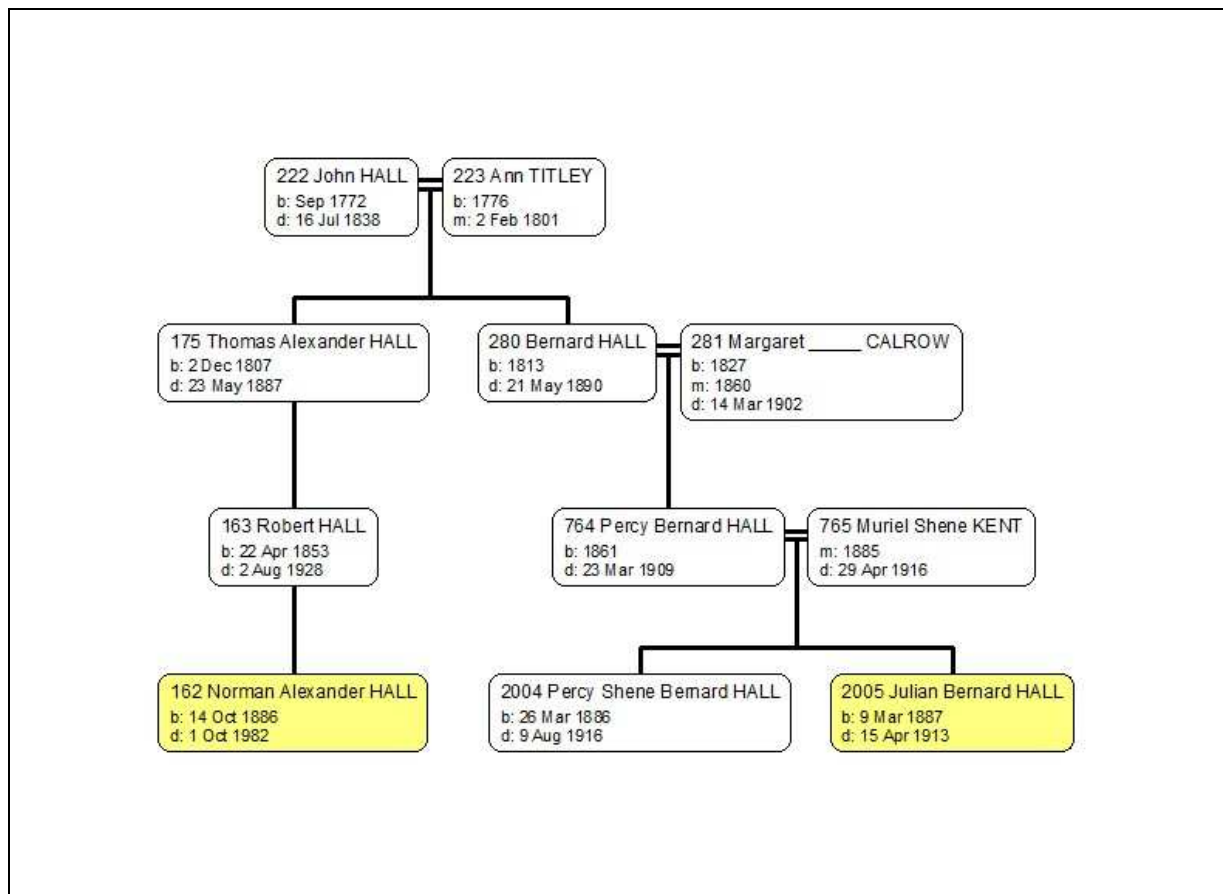


The Shooting of Julian Bernard Hall

Julian Bernard Hall was shot and killed by Jeannie Baxter in the morning of 15 April 1913. This is an account of the shooting, inquest, trial, appeal, and the court proceedings related to Jeannie Baxter's claim to Julian Hall's estate. It is based on newspaper accounts of the day.

Relationship

Julian Bernard Hall and my grandfather, Norman Alexander Hall were 2nd cousins.



Julian Bernard Hall

Julian Bernard Hall, known as Jack, was born to well-to-do parents, Percy^A and Muriel^B Hall, on 9 Mar 1887 at Owesry, Shropshire.¹ His brother, Percy^C, was one year older.

^A Percy BernardHall (764)

^B Muriel Shene Kent (765)

^C Percy Shene Bernard Hall (2004)

In 1891 the family was living at 33 Elvaston Place in the affluent Kensington area of London together with a man servant, cook and three domestic servants.²

In 1901, Julian, age 14, was at Eastman's Royal Naval Academy, 28 South Parade in Portsmouth. The Academy was a boarding school with 6 staff and 47 boys aged 10-16.³

He could not be located in the 1911 census.

In 1913 he was living at 22 Denman Street and had been living there for about three years. The top floors were residential flats and the first and second floors were occupied by the Coventry Club, and the ground floor was a restaurant.⁴ Denman Street is a very narrow road and most of the buildings have since been replaced including number 22.

Julian was an amateur airman and boxer, and an enthusiastic golfer.

Jeannie Baxter

Jeannie O'Kane was born in Scotland c1889. Nothing is known of her parents except that her mother was in London during the trial.

She was married to Mr. Baxter and had a young daughter, Jeannie. She was a widow.

In 1913 she was living at 24 Carlton Mansions, Maida Vale.

Timeline

The following is a timeline of the events.

15 April 1913 Denman Street

Jeannie Baxter murdered Julian Bernard Hall in his flat. She was arrested and taken to the Vine Street Police Station.

16 April 1913 Marlborough Street Court

Jeannie Baxter appeared before a Magistrate and was remanded.

18 April 1913 Westminster

Inquest opened.

22 April 1913 Marlborough Street Court

Remand extended for another week. Jeannie Baxter remained under treatment in hospital.

25 April 1913 Westminster

Inquest resumed.

1 May 1913 Westminster

Inquest resumed. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder and Jeannie Baxter was committed for trial.

6 May 1913 Francis Street Police Court

Jeannie Baxter formally committed for trial charged with murder. She pleaded not guilty.

3 June 1913

Trial of Jeannie Baxter lasted one day. She was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to three years of penal servitude.

23 June 1913

The Court of Criminal Appeal dismissed the appeal of Jeannie Baxter.

31 July 1913 - Probate Court

Jeannie Baxter was dismissed from Julian Bernard Hall's will.

14 October 1913 - Probate Appeal

Jeannie Baxter appealed probate ruling dismissing her from Julian Bernard Hall's will. The ruling was upheld.

26 June 1915

Jeannie Baxter was released although her full sentence was until 12 June 1916. She stated that she would reside in London.

The Shooting 15 April 1913

The following account is based on newspaper articles from:

- The Evening Telegraph and Post, Tuesday, April 15, 1913. p3
- The Evening Telegraph and Post, Tuesday, April 16, 1913
- The Evening Telegraph and Post, Tuesday, April 22, 1913

A shooting tragedy occurred the morning of Tuesday, April 15, 1913 by which a man was killed at No. 22 Denman Street, Shaftsbury Avenue, nearly opposite the Trocadero Restaurant. The top floors are residential flats, and it was here the tragedy occurred. The first and second floors are occupied by the Coventry Club, and the ground floor is a restaurant.

The circumstances of the tragedy are at present shrouded in mystery, but a woman has been taken to Vine Street Police Station. She is at present in a state of hysteria and unable at present to make a coherent statement.

A messenger boy engaged at a restaurant next door states he was dressing in a room shortly before noon when he distinctly heard sounds of quarrelling between a man and a woman, and heard a woman scream several times. A dog with him was barking loudly and he heard no revolver shot.

The name of the man found shot is Julian Bernard Hall. He was a young aviator who recently obtained his efficiency certificate. He has occupied the chambers about three years, but the girl had only been living with him a short time. There had been quarrels, it is alleged over a will. Hall had given flying exhibitions in Yorkshire, where the family is well known.

A later message says a fashionably-attired young woman, who was retained by the police, was subsequently charged at Marlborough Street Police Court with wilful murder.

The accused gave her name as Jeannie Baxter (24), and an address at Carlton Mansions, Portsdown Road, Maida Vale.

At Marlborough Street Tuesday, April 22, 1913 Jeanie Baxter was again formally remanded for a week charged with the murder of Julian Bernard Hall.

It was stated that the prisoner was still under treatment in hospital

The Inquest

The inquest into Julian Hall's death took place on April 18 and 25 and May 1.

The following account is based on newspaper articles from:

- The Courier, Saturday, April 19, 1913. p6
- The Courier, Saturday, April 26, 1913. p6
- The Manchester Courier, Friday, May 2, 1913.

Friday, April 18, 1913

The inquest on Julian Bernard Hall, who was found shot at his rooms in Coventry Mansions, Denman Street, W., on Tuesday, April 15, 1913 was opened Friday, April 18, 1913 at Westminster.

Jeannie Baxter, who is accused of the murder of Hall, was not present at the inquiry.

Evidence of identification was given by the deceased's brother, Mr. Percy Shene Bernard Hall, who described himself as an officer in the army, and stated that in November he went with his brother to Miss Baxter's flat at Carlton Mansions, Maida Vale.



Jeannie Baxter, the accused girl, arriving with her mother at the police station.

The Coroner - "Have you ever heard your brother say anything about marriage with Baxter?"

Mr. Hall - "No."

The Coroner produced a will dated November 2 in which the deceased left everything to Jeannie Baxter, and stated that by another document dated November 4, he revoked all his previous wills, and left half to Miss Baxter and half to someone else. Witness added that his brother had a considerable amount of capital.

A police-constable produced a plan of the deceased's room in Denman Street, and described five distinct bullet holes, four in the northern wall and one in the east wall.

Dr. Percy Edmonds, police surgeon of Great Marlborough Street, deposed that he was phoned for at noon on Tuesday, and on proceeding to Denman Street he found the deceased lying on the bed recently dead. The hands were not clasped as one would have expected to find them if a person had committed suicide. A post-mortem examination revealed a bullet wound on the right chest, showing no powder marks. The wound of exit was lower down on the left side of the back. There was an old fracture of the left hand.

The Coroner - "Might that have been caused while the deceased was boxing? He was a boxer, I believe?"

Dr. Edmonds - "Yes."

Dr. Edmonds added that in the room he found four soda syphons, a bottle of gin, and there was a bottle of brandy underneath deceased's pillow. The reason, he said, he mentioned this was because there were indications that deceased had been indulging a little. When the body was turned over a bullet fell out of the exit wound on the back. There were two bullet wounds on the right arm.

Dr. Edmonds added that, judging by the stomach, he should say that the deceased had had no food for some days. The liver weighed 97 oz. instead of about 60 oz. and witness thought the enlargement was the result of intemperance. There was a small amount of brandy in the stomach.

Mr. John K. Torkington (representing Miss Baxter) - "Did you find any signs of absinthe?"

Dr. Edmonds - "I could not distinguish between absinthe and brandy. It may have been absinthe he had taken."

Dr. Edmonds added that there was a recent cut on the upper lip, but could not say how it was caused. The deceased might have been sitting on the edge of the bed or was in act of getting up when he received his injuries. The bullet, after entering the chest, had penetrated the lower lobe of his left lung and had splintered the sixth rib.

Further questioned, Dr. Edmonds said he did not smell any aniseed, the characteristic of absinthe, and therefore took it that the deceased had been drinking brandy.

Mr. Church Willettecaswell said Mr. Julian Hall had known Baxter for about seven months, and he had heard her press Hall to marry her. Mr. Hall had not been well, and Mr. Willettecaswell remained with him until 3:30 on Tuesday morning, when he went to his own room. He was awakened by shots being fired, and before he could get out of bed Baxter burst through the door, exclaiming rather hysterically, "I have shot Jack. He dared me to do it." She then repeated several times, "Why did I do it when we had arranged things very nicely for this evening?"

Mr. Willettecaswell found a will in deceased's writing leaving all he possessed to Miss Jeannie Baxter O'Kane for the maintenance of her daughter, Jeannie Baxter.

The valet at deceased's chambers stated on Tuesday morning in presence of Baxter, told him he was going to get married and asked him to sign a paper. Witness signed the document, which was also signed by the cook.

Friday, April 25

At the Westminster Coroner's Court Friday, April 25, 1913, the inquiry resumed into the death of Julian Bernard Hall, the young aviator who was shot in his room at Coventry Mansions, Denman Street, W., on the morning of April 15.

Jeannie Baxter, the young woman who is charged with causing his death, was not present, but was represented by counsel. Mr. Douglas Hall, M.P., was present during the proceedings.

Mr. Valette, who appeared for the accused woman, asked the Coroner to consider his (counsel's) position. He had been unable to obtain a statement from his client, and therefore he did not know on what lines he would cross-examine witnesses.

The Coroner said he would adjourn the case again after he had gone as far as was possible that day.

Therese Pantinello, describing herself as of Swiss nationality, deposed to having been in the service of Mrs. Baxter at 24 Carlton Mansions, Maida Vale, from the last Thursday in January to April 22. Witness had seen letters to Baxter from a Mr. Unwin.

Baxter told Pantinello that Mr. Unwin had promised to get a house in the country, so as to take her away from her loose life. Baxter last received money from Unwin on the Friday before Hall's death.

Therese Pantinello added that her mistress told her of a meeting between Mr. Unwin and the deceased at her flat, when it appeared that the deceased took up a revolver, and suggested that Unwin should take up another one, and that the lights had been extinguished they should fire at each other's lighted cigarettes. Mr. Unwin refused, and Mr. Hall then fired at Unwin's photograph, which was on the table, and shot the head off. He afterwards fired at Baxter's photograph. They parted, however, on friendly terms. On another occasion there was a scene between Hall, Baxter, and another woman, and the woman asked him to

choose which one he preferred, and he chose Baxter. ... woman thereupon attempted to throw herself out of the window, but was prevented and afterwards went away. Hall then hit Baxter on the chin with a revolver.

On April 11 Baxter told Pantinello she was going to be married to Hall by special licence the following Thursday. She said that if Hall met with a fatal accident whilst flying she would get a large sum of money. Baxter said, however, that Unwin was much richer than Mr. Hall, who had only £50,000.

Ada Knight said she also went by the names of Lillie Hall and Margaret Roberts, and was a music hall artiste. She first met Hall about three years ago, and lived with him continuously until August last. She left him in consequence of his acquaintance with Baxter, but afterwards she saw Baxter at the club, and asked her to give him up. Baxter said she would, adding that she did not want him. Subsequently, Ada Knight said, she resumed her relations with Hall.

Describing the visit which she made to Hall's flat in the early morning of April 8, Ada Knight said she found Baxter sitting in the armchair, Hall being in bed.

She said to Hall - "What does it all mean?" but he did not answer, and she then said to Baxter - "I understood that you were not allowed here anymore, and that Julian had finished with you."

Baxter replied - "I understood the same about you," and added - "I am sorry that I came between you and Jack, but now he has done me so much harm as he has - lost me my best friend - I have every right to him. Jack must choose one of us. He chose Baxter, and I became more upset. I spoke angrily to him, and he sat up in bed and struck me. I struck him back, cutting his lip with my ring. Being very excited, I went towards the window, but was pushed back. I then went out."

The same evening Knight saw Hall at his flat. He told us he was "sick of everything," and loaded a revolver. He then said - "I am not afraid of death."

Knight then took hold of his hand and remarked - "Think of your mother." Baxter, who was also there, said - "Leave him alone. He won't do it." The deceased then put the weapon down and unloaded it.

Dr. Spilsbury expressed the opinion that the two bullet wounds which he discovered could not have been inflicted by one shot. It was just possible that the wound in the chest, which was a fatal wound, might have been self-inflicted, but he did not support the theory in this case.

Thursday, May 1, 1913

The inquest was concluded at Westminster Thursday, May 1, 1913 on Julian Bernard Hall, the aviator who was found shot in his flat in Denman Street, Shaftsbury Street, W., the jury

returning a verdict of wilful murder against Jeannie Baxter. Baxter, who is charged with causing Hall's death, was not present during the proceedings.

In his summing up the Coroner traced the history of events from the time Hall met Baxter, and then reminded the jury of the visit of Mr. Unwin, with whom Baxter had previously lived, to her flat some time before Christmas, apparently to take her away to the country. He had said that he could not marry her until his mother died, and the evidence was that Unwin was a richer man than Hall, who was reputed to be worth £50,000.

That particular night Hall came to the flat apparently to say good-bye. He arrived drunk with a couple of loaded revolvers, and then there occurred that absurd, melodramatic scene in the flat which, however, had a very distinct bearing on the case. He had been blowing down the barrel of one of the revolvers and then suggested a duel between himself and Unwin. Unwin refused to do anything so preposterous, and Hall then fired at photographs of Unwin and Baxter, and afterwards fired over his shoulder at the door. Unwin never came back from that date to Baxter's flat, and although it is true that he sent money to Baxter as late as the end of February, it was perfectly clear that there was some estrangement between him and Baxter.

It was quite obvious that Baxter had a real grievance against Hall, the grievance being that owing to this disturbance at the flat and owing to her relations with Hall, Mr. Unwin had left her and she was deprived of a man who had made a kind promise to marry her after his mother's death - a very rich man who had been liberal towards her, and who, as far as she knew, would continue to be so if were not for this affair with Hall. It is also obvious. he thought, that Baxter was desirous of getting some kind of compensation out of Hall for the loss which she had sustained through losing Unwin, or thinking that she had lost Unwin.

The Coroner added that the statement made by Baxter immediately after the shots were fired was of the gravest importance. She said, "I have shot Jack. Can you see if you can do anything! He dared me to do it" etc. She did not say anything about the man having shot himself, or about a struggle or a quarrel. The Coroner also referred to the document which Hall's valet and another witness, Champion, signed, and said it was possible that Baxter thought this was a signed promise to marry her and that she was infuriated when she found that a deliberate promise of marriage had been broken, and that she thereupon lost control of herself and did this man mortal injury. But even then no provocation of words, no irritation to which she might have been subjected by the breach of a promise such as that, could possibly reduce homicide to manslaughter.

As to the question of there being an arrangement between the two to commit suicide, the Coroner said that in law the survivor was equally guilty of murder. Possibly the deceased did dare Baxter as she said. He was a brave man - all flying men must be brave - and he might in a joking sort of way have dared her to shoot him and she did so, but that did not reduce murder to manslaughter. The evidence of the medical experts left no doubt in the mind of any reasonable man that they were of opinion that the fatal wound was not self-inflicted.

The Trial

The following account is based on newspaper articles from:

- The Courier, Wednesday, May 7, 1913. p6
- Manchester Courier Wednesday, June 4, 1913

Arraignment

At the Francis Street Police Court Tuesday, May 6, 1913, Jeannie Baxter, of Carlton Mansions, Maida Vale, was formally committed for trial charged with the murder of Julian Bernard Hall, aviator, by shooting him with a revolver at 21 Denman Street, Shaftsbury Avenue, on April 15.

Prisoner pleaded not guilty, and reserved her defence.

Trial

Found guilty of manslaughter, Jeannie Baxter, the young widow who was charged with the murder of Julian Bernard Hall, an Aviator, at a West End flat, was yesterday, at the Old Baily, sentenced to three years penal servitude.

The trial before Mr. Justice Rowlatt began the morning of Tuesday, June 3, 1913, and concluded at eight o'clock in the evening. A great deal of public interest was evinced in the trial, and the court was crowded some time before His Lordship took his seat.

Prisoner, an attractive young woman, was dressed in black, relieved with white lace, and wore a feather boa and a black hat trimmed with a white ostrich feather. In answer to the indictment she replied in a low firm voice, "Not guilty." Before the case for the prosecution was opened she gave way to emotion and wept for a few moments.

Mr. Whiteley, who outlined the facts which led up to the commission of the crime, remarked that it would be a question for the jury whether any explanation that might be offered would be considered by them as sufficient to entitle them to reduce the case to manslaughter or to find a verdict of justifiable homicide.

Ada Knight was called, and stated that she was a music hall artist and resided at Cleveland Mansions, Maida Vale. She had known Hall about three years and had lived with him from January, 1910, till August last year. In cross-examination, she said she never heard the prisoner threaten Mr. Hall. The prisoner was very fond of Hall, who was a very powerful man and very plucky. He had no fear of death.

Mr. Marshall Hall: Did he ever tell you that he had challenged Unwin to fight a duel and that Unwin had refused? - Yes

Witness said she thought Caswell used to go messages for Hall. She once said to Mr. Hall that he was keeping Caswell, and that he replied, "Well, what of it? What is £2 a week?"

She said she knew that for some reason or other Caswell was against Hall marrying anybody.

Charles W.W. Caswell, called, said he had no occupation, and had occupied a flat next to the one occupied by Hall.

Cross-examined by Mr. Marshall Hall, witness swore that at her flat in Carlton Mansions, Baxter said if Hall did not get Unwin back or marry her she would shoot him. In the light of after events, he considered that was a serious threat. He informed Hall of the threat two or three days afterwards, and he made a joke of it. Witness denied that he had invented the statement as to the threat.

Later, witness said he did not find a letter in Hall's room after the tragedy and destroy it. He might have told Knight and another woman that he destroyed a letter he found in his own room in a blotting pad. That was a letter from the deceased's mother, and was two years old, and contained no reference to him. Witness denied that he had been receiving odd sovereigns from Hall, and living on him and wearing his old clothes. He admitted he was claiming £30 lent to Hall - £25, less £5 repaid.

Witness denied that Hall gave him £2 a week. He also denied having ever endeavoured to persuade the prisoner to become his mistress. He had a private income, he added, and was unmarried.

Louis Royle, a valet employed at the flats in Denman street, in cross-examination, stated that he believed that Hall had been drinking about a bottle and a half of brandy per day for several days.

Dr. Edmunds stated that in the absence of powder marks he thought it was absolutely impossible that any bullet wounds could have been self-inflicted.

Dr. Spilsbury gave the same opinion.

On the conclusion of the case for the prosecution, Mr. Marshall Hall immediately called the prisoner to give evidence.

Prisoner, in a low clear voice, told her story of the incidents that led up to the tragedy. She said she had known Mr. Unwin for over two years. He had bought a house in the country, and he was coming on December 2nd last to take her away from London. She met Hall in August, and became intimate with him. She was very much attached to him. She told Hall that Unwin was coming to London to take her away to the country, and Unwin expected her to meet him at the station on the night of December 2nd.

Witness then told how Hall came to her flat that night very drunk, and made her promise to stick to him, threatening if she did not, to "do her in" before Unwin came. Hall had a revolver, and when Unwin arrived asked him to shoot him. Hall fired shots about the room and over his own head. Coming to the morning of the tragedy, prisoner said she had been

to a night club, and called at Hall's flat at 830 in the morning. She asked him if he had made any arrangements about their marriage, and he said he had not for several reasons. He said, "Bill, you and I never could get on together if we were married," and she said she did not see why they should not. Hall then said, "I cannot keep my promise. It is better I should finish it." In the course of quarrelling Hall hit her on the face, and she hit him back. He then struck her and took her breath away, and she fell back on the arm chair. Hall then got up and took a revolver and placed it on the table at the bedside. She asked him what he was going to do, and he replied, "Never you mind."

He said he would make a will out in favour of her little girl, and the will was written out. She then wrote the note addressed to Teresa. While she was writing Hall had the revolver in his hand, and was whistling down the barrel. Afterwards he remarked that he seemed to think light of death and he said, "We all have to die some time." She asked him to put away the revolver, and he said, "Do you think you take it out of my hand?" He was holding the muzzle of the revolver towards himself, and he asked her to pull the trigger. She said, "I am not such a coward. At the same time she hold of his hand and tried to take the revolver from him. Before she knew what had happened two shots had gon off. She saw him bend over to pick up the revolver. She picked it up and fired four times on the ceiling as rapidly as she could. She then rushed to the door and shouted, "Jack has been shot. My God, I hope it is not serious." She denied having said to Caswelll that either Hall must get Unwin back for her or he must marry her, or she would shoot him.

Prior to counsel addressing the jury, the Judge remarked that the facts immediately preceding Hall's death were so obscure, and the circumstances so very unusual, that he would not advise the jury to bring in a verdict of guilty of murder.

The jury were absent about an hour, and their verdict of manslaughter was accompanied by a strong recommendation to mercy.

The Judge, in passing sentence of three years' penal servitude, said the prisoner had been fortunate in having been found guilty only of manslaughter, looking upon the case from the most lenient point of view, and regarding it as one in which there was aggravation.

The Appeal

The following account is based on newspaper article from:

- Manchester Courier Tuesday, June 24, 1913

The Court of Criminal Appeal on Monday, June 23, 1913 dismissed the appeal of Jeannie Baxter, who, at the Old Baily was recently sentenced to three years' penal servitude for the manslaughter of the aviator, Julian Bernard Hall, in a West End flat. The appeal was on a point of law. Prisoner was present in the court in custody of female warders. She was dressed in a fashionable black and blue costume.

There was evidence that Baxter killed Julian Hall with a bullet from the revolver. The court saw no reason for saying that the verdict was not perfectly satisfactory, and the appeal would be dismissed.

Probate

The following account is based on newspaper article from:

- Yorkshire Telegraph and Star, Thursday, July 31, 1913. p5

A case arising out of the tragedy in a flat in which Julian Bernard Hall, described as an airman, was shot, came before Sir Samuel Evans in the Probate Court today.

The case appeared in the list as "Summons adjourned into Court - Hall v. Knight and another." The suit is one affecting the testamentary dispositions of Hall. Mr. Percy Shene Bernard Hall being the plaintiff and Ada Knight and Jeannie Baxter being entered as defendants.

Mr. Barnard for the plaintiff, said that plaintiff on the 22nd April issued a writ propounding the will of Julian Bernard Hall, who died on April 18, 1913, the will being dated August 24, 1912. After that writ was issued an application was made for an administrator, and upon that application Miss Baxter was added as one of the defendants.

Miss Baxter took no interest under the will that the plaintiff was propounding. There was a later will of November 2, 1912, under which she would take the whole of the property, and there was also a will of December 4, 1912, under which she would take half the property. There was further a paper of April 14 of this year which purported to be a testamentary document under which all the shares of Miss Baxter were taken away and left to her daughter.

Jeannie Baxter was convicted of the felony of manslaughter and sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

By the felony of which Miss Baxter had been convicted the testator met his death. In his judgement public policy required that the Court should say that in such a case a person causing the death by a felony could not take any interest in the estate which a testator left. The application therefore, to strike out the name of Jeannie Baxter as defendant was acceded to.

Probate Appeal

The following account is based on newspaper article from:

- The Yorkshire Post, Wednesday, October 15, 1913. p10

The Master of the Rolls yesterday sat with Lords Justices Hamilton and Swinfen Eady to hear the appeal by Jeannie Baxter from a decision of Sir Samuel Evans, as President of the

Probate Division, dismissing her from proceedings relating to the estate of Julian Bernard Hall, the airman, in connection with whose death the appellant had been convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to three years' penal servitude. Hall's estate amounted to about £19,000, and he left four wills. By one, Baxter was entitled to the whole, by another to a half, but by another, made on the day before Hall's death, she was deprived of her interest in the estate in favour of her child. On grounds of public policy the Court held that she had rightly been dismissed from the suit.

The Master of the Rolls, in giving judgement, said this case might have required some consideration but for the decided cases on which it seemed clear that Baxter had been rightly struck out of the suit. It would be nothing less than shocking if Baxter, who was the cause of the man's death, should come before the Court and claim under any will made by Hall in her favour.

Lord Justice Hamilton agreed. "The principle of public policy is," he said. "that a man shall not slay his benefactor and thereby take his bounty, and I cannot understand why a distinction should be drawn between the case where the criminality consists in murder, and the one in which it is a case of manslaughter."

Lord Justice Swinfen Eady concurred, and the appeal was dismissed.

Epilogue

The following account is a transcript of pp318-322 from *The Life of Sir Edward Marshall Hall*, by Edward Marjoribanks 1929 (Document H105). Marshall Hall was the defence counsel for Jennie Baxter.

The next capital defence which Marshall Hall undertook was that of Jeannie Baxter. The circumstances were strikingly similar, up to the very last act of the tragedy, to the case of Edward Lawrence; but on this occasion it was the man who paid the price with his life and the woman who stood her trial for murder. A young pioneer of the air, magnificently built, named Julian Hall, and an extraordinarily beautiful girl met in a night club, and became violently attracted to each other, with the result that the girl left a far richer man than Julian Hall to live with the latter, and the airman threw over another young woman for whom he had cared before. But, in spite of his wealth and wonderful physique, Julian Hall was in a bad way when he met Jeannie Baxter. Like most airmen, he was absolutely without fear of death; he would frequently talk of death, and indeed he was, like Lawrence, drinking himself into his grave before ever he knew Jeannie. When he and Jeannie's former lover met, he said, "Do you love this girl? . . . So do I, I am going to have her, and if you do not agree, come into the sitting-room." He then challenged his rival to a duel by shooting, but the challenge was naturally declined by his more sensible rival. When his own former sweetheart came to upbraid him, Jeannie said he must choose between them, and Julian turned to Jeannie and said, "I choose you." Jeannie had lost a great deal by going to him, and she grew to love him passionately. "I loved him better than anybody in the world," she

said at the trial. But there were violent quarrels. Hall would fire his revolver, and, being a man of gigantic strength, once broke with his own hands a strong oak table. There would be reconciliations, for Jeannie loved the big, strong man, and was even proud of his bouts of violence: it was eventually arranged that they should marry. Hall made a will in her favour, and Jeannie even got as far as choosing a wedding-dress. But Hall was of most unreliable character, and it seemed that he had a man friend and constant companion who opposed the marriage. At all events he began to go back on his promise. According to her own maid, Jeannie had said, "Do you think, Theresa, that anybody should be punished very much if they shot Mr. Hall dead, after he has spoilt everything between me and my friend?" To Julian Hall's man friend, according to the latter's evidence, she had said, "Either Julian must get me back my friend, or he must marry me, or I will kill him."

Julian Hall lived in a flat in Denman Street, and was very ill one night from the effects of drink, and, obeying a summons from the friend, she came in the very early morning to see her lover. He was in bed, and kissed her good morning. They began to discuss the question of marriage, and Julian said that his friend was very much against it. However, a little later he sent for two servants, told them he was going to be married, and they were asked to sign a document, which purported to leave Jeannie's interest in his fortune, under a previous will, to her baby daughter. But afterwards, according to Jeannie Baxter herself, he said, "It's no good—I can't keep my promise—it's better to finish it. This drink is killing me." Then a fusillade, six shots in all, was heard, and Jeannie ran out, the tears pouring down her cheeks, and sobbed out, "I have shot him—four times—he dared me to do it. Oh, why did I do it, when we had arranged everything so nicely for to-night."

Julian Hall had two wounds, and died soon afterwards; he tried to speak, but he could not do so, and Jeannie Baxter was committed for trial at the Old Bailey. She had a difficult case to answer; her desire to marry him, and her maid's evidence as to her threats, were strong evidence both of motive and intention, and her own admission that she had shot him four times seemed at first to make the case conclusive. But Jeannie Baxter felt sure of her acquittal. Marshall Hall, and his junior, Mr. Jack Valetta, had to interview the prisoner in a special room in the gaol. She seemed amazingly confident, and made a strange and incongruous figure, with her fashionable dress, her beautiful, almost childish face and red-gold hair. When the interview was over, Marshall Hall looked out of the window and said, "My God, Valetta, look at that!" Their client, about to be tried for her life, was executing a little pas seul as she crossed the snow-covered prison yard on the way back to her cell. It was not a sight to be forgotten. She was dancing back to prison.

Mr. Cecil Whiteley, only lately appointed a prosecuting counsel to the Treasury, led for the prosecution; he was very nervous at the prospect of his first capital case in that capacity, and felt the task of prosecuting and cross-examining the beautiful girl in the dock an odious one, as any man would have done. He opened the case with admirable fairness, and Marshall, always generous to a young opponent, scribbled a note to him and sent it along, "Admirable, my dear Cecil, just what an opening ought to be."

Marshall Hall cross-examined the dead man's friend and the accused's maid with great effect, but the most useful witness to him was Julian's former sweetheart, who, forgetting

all jealousy, generously came forward to say that Julian and Jeannie were obviously very much in love with each other, that he had been very violent and struck her with a revolver, and that she, the witness, bore no ill-will to Jeannie whatsoever.

As in the Lawrence case, only two people knew what had happened to bring about the tragedy, and the only person alive to know was the prisoner. All, then, depended on her evidence. She came forward and gave her evidence with calmness and great assurance. The defence was that Hall was besotted with drink, and was teasing her, as he often had, about suicide. "You seem to think death an awful thing," he had said, "but we all have to die some time." "Yes," Jeannie had replied, "but we are not all like you." Then Hall began playing with the revolver, and, pointing it towards his breast, dared her to pull the trigger. She refused to do so, but, terrified, sprang forward to take it out of his hand, and in the struggle the revolver had wounded him twice, while his thumb was still round the trigger. Jeannie then fired four more shots into the air to empty the revolver, and ran to get assistance. The dead man had on many occasions been violent to her when in drink.

"Did that make you hate him?" asked counsel.

"No," she sobbed, "it made me love him all the more."

Much turned on the meaning of the words spoken. When Hall said "finish it," did he mean the end of their love, or the end of his life? What exactly happened no one will ever know. Marshall's speech was a magnificent effort; he was always at his best when his case had a strong romantic interest. After a summing-up by Mr. Justice Rowlatt in favour of a verdict of "manslaughter," the jury found her guilty of that offence, and strongly recommended her to mercy. She was sentenced to three years' penal servitude, from which sentence she appealed in vain to the Court of Criminal Appeal. Her tragedy gave rise to a leading case in the civil courts. She was a beneficiary under Julian Hall's will, and the Court of Criminal Appeal decided that no person who feloniously causes the death of a testator can benefit under that testator's will. It had been already established, in regard to the estate of Mrs. Crippen, that there can be no claim to a murdered person's estate by the murderer or through him, but this principle had not been established as to manslaughter until the case of Jeannie Baxter.

In some ways this case of Julian Hall and Jeannie Baxter was as sad as any case in the experience of Marshall Hall. Julian Hall had the makings of a splendid man : everyone spoke of his indomitable courage and his gentle character when unaffected by drink, and his strength was a thing to marvel at. He was one of those fearless adventurers who were just then conquering the air, and on one of his very first flights in those early machines he had hoodwinked his instructor and taken the air by himself. Had he lived for another year, his opportunity would have come, and he might have been one of the great heroes of the war." The most distressing feature is the loss of the man's life," said Marshall Hall, in his final speech. "He was a man of magnificent physique. He took to a branch of national defence which hereafter will be of immense value to the country. He was a man who might have used his life to great advantage, and if he was reckless of it he might have sacrificed it in the magnificent service of his country. Yet he allowed himself to be brought down by drink

and passion to a level lower than some animals." Indeed, the race is not always for the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

Endnotes

¹ H86 - Edward Ash

² H370 - 1891 Census

³ H428 - 1901 Census

⁴ In the UK the "first floor" is the one above "ground level". In Canada we would refer to it as the "second floor".