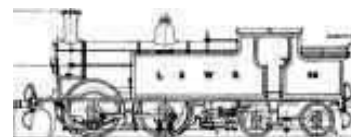


# The Brookwood Express

The Newsletter of the Brookwood Cemetery Society



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## ***The Brookwood Cemetery Society is twenty-five years old!***

**On Good Friday April 1992, the Brookwood Cemetery Society held the first guided walk around Brookwood Cemetery. The Society was founded by Mary Lucas, Arthur Storie, Ian Wakeford and John Clarke, when the then owner was Mr. Ramadan H. Guney.**

The Society had firm foundations and this has enabled it to progress, and withstand the many upheavals, and the several changes of ownership of the Cemetery, that have occurred over these twenty-five years. The achievements of the first twenty years (1992-2012) were well documented in the newsletters numbers 88 to 91.

### **2012-2017**

So for the last five years. There has been an increasing interest in Brookwood Cemetery, and this is probably due to the wider access to online publicity and the varying walks programme. The requests for private tours around the Cemetery have very greatly increased during these years, and the monthly walks are extremely well attended. The income from these walks and associated sales of publications, have given the Society financial security, and

continuation of restoration work. The main develops during these years are as follows:

### **2014**

With the change from family ownership of Brookwood Cemetery in December 2014, to ownership by the Woking Borough Council, there have been many new developments. Woking Borough Council has been able to inject funds into the purchase of new equipment and support the ongoing clearance work within the Cemetery. The Society also purchased a bench for use by visitors.



**Some visitors at the Bee Walk, led by George Else & David Baldock, Sept. 2014**

### **2015-2016**

The Committee has always worked closely with all the owners of the Cemetery, and continue to do so with the Council. At the

2015 AGM Mr Ian Tomes, of Woking Borough Council addressed the meeting, and outline the Council's proposals for the future of the Cemetery. In August 2016 Kim Lowe and Margaret Hobbs attended a meeting with representatives of Woking Borough Council and other interested parties, on the development of the Frame Work Management Plan for Brookwood Cemetery, which all seemed very positive. Also in 2016 the Society was given the opportunity to contribute towards the cost of the new Lodge, purchased by Woking Borough Council, and use the Lodge as a base for the Society. In July of this year the Lodge was ready for use at the monthly walks.

### **Restoration 2015-2016**

The funds raised have also enabled the removal of the breeze blocks over the doorways of the Hughes, Normand, Montagu-Winch, Braine, Glorney, Montagu-Winch and Dudgeon family mausoleums, and the erection security grills. This has greatly enhanced the appearance of these mausoleums.



***The Glorney Mausoleum with the new grill***

The other ongoing project funded by the Society, is the rebinding of damaged Cemetery ledgers by Father Thomas, of the

St. Edward Brotherhood. The leather bindings of many of these early irreplaceable books, that contain the details burial records and burial payments, were badly worn with constant use. The Cemetery ledgers have now been scanned to the computer to preserve them and make easier access to the documentation.

### **Research**

Members of the Society continue to research the history of the persons buried at Brookwood Cemetery, and there have been some interesting discoveries. This has enabled new walks to be designed and the information shared with members and visitors.

The future looks promising for the Brookwood Cemetery Society and the Cemetery and the Committee would like to thank the members for all their support and generous donations.

The Brookwood Cemetery Society sends very many congratulations to Kevin and Hana Holliday, on the birth of their son Oscar, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

### ***A POLITE REMINDER***

***Please do not forget to renew your membership. This will ensure you continue to receive future copies of the Brookwood Express. An orange renewal form is enclosed as a further reminder to some of our members!***

## **FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES: WALKS & OTHER EVENTS**

All walks now start from the Cemetery Office entrance, off Cemetery Pales. A donation would be most welcome. We look forward to meeting you. Walks start at 2pm unless otherwise stated.

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2017: Prominent Women Walk** led by Kim Lowe and Jenny Mukerji **NEW!** This walk will highlight important women buried in the Cemetery and will cover both sections.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017, at 3:00pm: Brookwood American Cemetery** will host its annual Memorial Day Ceremony. Attendance is free and open to the public

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017: Introductory Walk** led by Kim Lowe and Margaret Hobbs.

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017: AGM** in the St. Brotherhood Meeting Room at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be available.

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017: Engineers** led by Ian Devine. **NEW!**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017: British Colonials & Muslims** led by Barry Devonshire. **NEW!** This will be preceded by a lecture in the Chapel in the North Section of the Cemetery.

**The views expressed by contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor and the society.**

## **Society and Cemetery News**

### **Society Website**

The Brookwood Cemetery has a new website, which was launched in time for the start of the new walks programme. Barry has done a wonderful job giving the website a really modern look.

### **AGM**

The Old Mortuary Chapel is looking splendid after the extensive renovations. This year the it can be admired at the AGM on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017. An agenda is enclosed with this edition.

### **Membership**

The committee would like to thank all members for their very generous donations with their renewals this year.

### **Walks Programme 2017**

As members, can see, there are three new themed walks for first part of the year. This is the result of ongoing research and discoveries of those interred in the cemetery. It is hoped that these walks will continue the interest in Brookwood Cemetery.

### **New Bench**

The wooden bench has not weathered well and has been replaced by one made of reconstituted plastic of a mid - brown colour.

### **Plot 52, The Boundary Path and Barnabas Fresh Start**

The two pictures following are of Plot 52, and show the magnificent clearance work, by members Barnabas Fresh Start team. This plot is adjacent to the Old Chelsea Pensioner's Plot, has in past wet winters become very





waterlogged. It is hope with the removal of the under growth, that this area will



***The Barnabas Fresh Start Team on the Boundary Path***



***Plot 52 showing the Chelsea Pensioner's memorial***

become drier and more attractive and allow native species to establish.

The group have also cleared the boundary path beyond the old Anglican pauper area, which had been nearly impassable with thick undergrowth and a fallen tree.

The organization Barnabas Fresh Start, has for some years been working in the Cemetery. The organization works alongside the long-term unemployed people of Woking, with the aim of getting them back into regular work.

Many of the unemployed, by showing their commitment to working with Barnabas Fresh Start, have been successful in finding permanent local employment.

## **Gerald Rusgrove Mills** (1877-1928) Plot 19

One of the original founders of the publishing company Mills & Boon, Gerald is buried in Brookwood Cemetery. Born in Stourbridge, Gerald attended his local grammar school and graduated from Caius College, Cambridge. Initially he worked for the publisher Whitaker and then moved to Methuen's. In 1909 he joined Charles Boon (1877-1943) and set up the publishing house of Mills & Boon. The business was built up on a sound basis by publishing two main lines of books, light fiction and sound educational publications. Gerald was extremely successful with the educational side and a correspondent of *The Times* wrote, "He was a never-failing mine of bookish information if a friend needed the reference to some forgotten subject or passage. As the business which he founded with Mr Boon gradually matured, it was his increasing joy to father a good book, especially if it were one of the educational works in his particular care."

After Gerald's death in South Kensington following an operation, the emphasis on educational books declined despite some

becoming classics and being used throughout the world.



***Grave of Gerald Musgrove Mills***

The company of Mills & Boon continued and became a British cultural phenomenon which has given pleasure to millions of readers around the world. Budding authors such as Jack London, PG Woodhouse and Georgette Heyer had their writing careers boosted by Mills & Boon, which is now a part of the Harlequin UK Ltd Group.

***Jenny Mukerji***

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### **Mr. C Refoy**

The Society was very sad to hear in January, of the death of Society member Mr. C. Refoy. He and his wife and been members since the 1990's and regularly attended the AGM, giving welcome advice and support. He will be missed.

### **Nunhead Cemetery Annual Open Day**

**20th May 2017 11am –  
5pm Admission free**

Spring is on its way so come and enjoy its arrival at Nunhead Cemetery. A Victorian jewel and a green oasis in the heart of urban life. Music in the ruined chapel, free tours, plant stall, "Morris dancing, green woodworking displays and birds of prey" homemade refreshments and many other stalls TBC. Limited parking. Nunhead rail station, P12 bus. [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)

### **Continuing the series of Brookwood Cemetery Employees**

It is hard when visiting Brookwood Cemetery today, to imagine that such a peaceful place must have been so very much busier place in Victorian times; with regular funeral trains from Waterloo, many more burials and a larger workforce.

The foundation of Brookwood Cemetery led to employment opportunities for local inhabitants and businesses. It is apparent from census records, memories of employees of the London Necropolis and Mausoleum Company and the employee's descendants, that in past years, most workers lived near, in the villages of Pirbright and Brookwood. In fact, this latter village's existence, is a direct result of the Cemetery and the Railway. Other employees lived in cottages in the Cemetery grounds and the two stations with the refreshment bars.

One such local business that won the contract for the initial landscaping and planting of the Cemetery, was Goldsworth Nursery, Woking owned by Mr. Robert Donald.

With the increased business of the London Necropolis and Mausoleum Company, the

numbers of employees at the Cemetery increased. The minutes of October 1854 show that, there was a work staff of twenty; two gatekeepers and eighteen porters. By 1887 Mr. Barratt, the superintendent, supervised twenty-seven staff. They consisted of three clergymen, three grave diggers and nineteen other employees including gardeners, labourers and assistants, and two ladies working in the refreshment rooms at the stations. There would also have been the Necropolis Company engraver and office staff. The clergymen were of different denominations, to meet the needs of the religious beliefs of the deceased. The work of the gardeners, labourers and assistants was varied, and they helped with conducting funerals, carrying out repairs, coffin making, grave maintenance and erecting memorials.

In Gwen Spencer's memories of living in North Station in 1920's and 30's, when her father ran the refreshment bar, she recalls her father ringing the north chapel bell for the commencement of work at 8am, and again in the afternoon at 5pm, for the end of the working day. Mr. Spencer also acted as a porter with undertaking duties, and his wife helped with preparing and serving the refreshments for funerals.

The refreshments rooms were licensed to serve alcoholic drinks for seven days a week, including Sundays and the bars were very popular locally. The bars remained open until the 1960's long after the demise of the Necropolis Railway.

By 1926 adjacent to the Superintendent's home and office, was a workshop area, consisting of a paint shop, stabling block, coach house, masonry showroom, two cart sheds, ladder store, greenhouses, a coffin store and carpenter's shop. There was also a cottage adjacent to the stabling block. These were all located in the old Non-Conformist area of the Cemetery adjacent to Cemetery Pales. The Stone Mason's Yard had by then been relocated over the road in the Anglican Section.

In earlier editions of the newsletter we have featured two past employees of the London Necropolis Company; Alfred Bolingbroke the company engraver and Edmund Boylett a gardener, who managed the greenhouses. The Fry family featured in this article, were an example of a local family that had several family members employed at Brookwood Cemetery.



### ***Pirbright Village 1908*** **The Fry Family of Pirbright Village**

#### **Daniel Fry (1829-1918)**

Daniel was born in Hascombe, Surrey, the eldest son of the seven children of William Fry (1807-1860) and Mary née Hoare (1808-1882). Sometime between the 1841 census and the birth of their youngest child in 1842 and when Daniel 13 years old, the family had moved from Hascombe to Pirbright Village, and the start of the family's connection with Brookwood Cemetery. William worked as a carpenter and is buried in St Michael's Churchyard, Pirbright and it is not known whether he worked for the Necropolis Company.

Sadly, Mary his wife died in the Union Workhouse, Guildford, Surrey and not with any of her family.

At the time of Daniel's first marriage to Eliza Ellen Stevens, on Christmas Day 1852 at St Michael's Church, Pirbright, he gave his occupation as a carpenter.





***Gibb's Acre as it is today***

The couple had a daughter, also Eliza Ellen in 1853. But sadly Eliza, the mother died in June 1853 and their daughter in 1854.

Daniel married for a second time on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1854 to Elizabeth née Simmonds (1830-1914) also from Pirbright. The family lived in varying locations in the village, and particularly in small cottages of about 4 rooms at Gibb's Acre, an area near the White Hart Inn.

The couple had nine children, Elizabeth (1855-1859), Mary (1857-1957), Jesse (1859-1893) Alan (1861-1931), William (1860-1895), Charlotte (1862-?), James (1865-1937), Sarah (1867-1943) and Ernest Albert (1870-1937).

Daniel and Elizabeth are buried at St Michael's Church, Pirbright.

### **James Fry (1865-1937) and his family**

James lived all his life in Pirbright and he attended the local school in the village, that had opened in 1870. At the age of 15 years he worked as an errand boy. James married Alice Stevens (1868-1946) on Christmas Day, 1890 at Pirbright, when he was working as house painter. They lived initially at Elm House, The Green, Pirbright and they had three sons, Daniel James (1891-1974), Joseph John (1894-1916) and Percy Harold Jesse (1897-1988).

By 1901, James had changed his job and was working for the London Necropolis Company as a porter. By the 1911 census, James gave his occupation as an undertaker for the Company. All the family were then living at Jubilee Cottage, Gibb's Acre.

It must be supposed that James continued to work at Brookwood Cemetery but when he died, the family did not take up the offer of the special rate burial, that was available for employees of Brookwood Cemetery. James was buried at their parish church St. Michael's, Pirbright.

Their eldest son Daniel James Fry (1891-1946) worked as a house painter, and married Mary Mitchell (1891-1933), in 1915 at St. John's Church Woking, Surrey. They had four children; Leslie John (1917-1991), Ronald (1919-), Margaret 1922- ) and Winifred (1925-1989). Daniel married again to Mabel Maiden in 1934 at Pirbright and had another son David Joseph in 1936. Daniel does not seem to have worked at Brookwood Cemetery.

Joseph John Fry (1894-1916) worked in the paint shop at Brookwood Cemetery. He enlisted in the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion (this was formed in Guildford in 1914) and his army number was G/7224. Joseph was killed on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1916 at Deville Wood during the Battle of the Somme, age 21 years. He has no known grave, and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial and the Pirbright Memorial; he was awarded the Victory Medal.

The youngest son Percy Harold Jesse Fry (1897-1988) married Dorothy Bricknell Dew (1900-1982) at Hambleton, Surrey in 1920. Percy worked at Brookwood Cemetery as a coffin maker and lived at 4, The Terrace, Pirbright. The couple had two sons Harold Joseph Charles born 1921 and Bernard James Bricknell born 1925 and in 1931 a daughter Joyce. All the children attended Pirbright School.

When Percy died in 1988, he like his parents chose to be buried at St. Michael's Church, Pirbright with his wife Dorothy.

**Ernest Albert Fry (1870-1937) and family**



Ernest Albert the youngest of Daniel and Elizabeth Fry's children, started working life as a housepainter, a popular profession in the Fry family.

In 1897 Ernest married Elizabeth Charlotte Rebecca Panter (1879-1970) at Pirbright. The couple had seven children, Elizabeth 1898, Charles James Victor (1900-1963), Mary (1901 -1902), Lily Rose (1902-1903), Alice Esme 1905, Kathleen Rhoda 1907, and Dorothy 1910. Ernest and his family first lived near is brother Percy, at 6, Pirbright Terrace, but by 1911 they had moved to 1, Rose Cottages, Connaught Road, Brookwood. Ernest was still working as a house painter but information was given to the Society by Susan Stevens, a descendant of Ernest, that in the 1920s he started work at Brookwood Cemetery, as a coffin maker and undertaker.

He died October 29<sup>th</sup> 1937 and is buried Western Avenue, Brookwood Cemetery with his wife and youngest child Ernest Thomas Arthur, who died a year after him. At the time of the death of young Ernest, his mother was living at 115, Connaught Road, Brookwood. Elizabeth out lived her husband by 33 years and dying in Hurst, Berkshire.

My thanks to Helen Reeves for all her support with this article.

**Sources: Ancestry**  
*www.pirbrighthistorians*  
*London's Necropolis by John Clarke*

**Margaret Hobbs**



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(The Newsletter exists to promote contact between all members about all things regarding the Society. Margaret welcomes short personal contributions and aims to keep the content of the Newsletter current, varied and informative.)



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