



Personalities from the Past (1)

The Rectory Lane Cemetery Project





The grave of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien

Introduction

In following this trail through part of the cemetery we meet some of the families and individuals who contributed to the life of the town. Some of them are ancient families whose names have appeared through the centuries. Others are families who came from elsewhere but stayed to leave their mark perhaps for 150 or 200 years. Some were not natives of Berkhamsted or its hinterland but were prominent during their time here. Others represent trades or industries which no longer exist today. Some have left legacies of paintings or photographs or books, a lasting legacy of nineteenth and early twentieth century life. Some are of national or even international repute but others are humble citizens who lived in and contributed in their own way to the life of the town. They are only a small cross-section and like many more should not be forgotten.

Numbers refer to the gravestone locations –

www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk/



Members of Hertfordshire Family History Society recording Edward Mawley's inscription

WILLIAM CLARIDGE 1797-1876

William Claridge was a life-long resident of Berkhamsted and a good amateur artist and the town's first photographer. His remarkable legacy of paintings, prints and photographs depict events and people from all walks of life who lived in the town in the mid nineteenth century e.g. Thomas Whately, the surgeon, and Mr Ghost the gravedigger. Perhaps his best known drawings were his two lithographs of the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to the town in 1841 on their way to Woburn. One can be seen in the Clock Room at the Town Hall showing the elaborate decorations and triumphal arch that the town prepared as a welcome.



William was a well-to-do man, a 'proprietor of houses' and owning freehold property in Grubbs Lane (later called Chesham Road). He did not marry until his mid-forties and then chose as his bride a very much younger woman, Charlotte, who was born in the Isle of Man. The family settled in a large house in the High Street almost opposite the Black Horse, now an Indian restaurant. There were two daughters Sarah Isabelle, named after William's mother, and Elizabeth who was four years younger. **(14)**

*Claridge's
home, 2nd on
the left*



JOHN WOLSTENHOLME COBB 1829-1883

John Wolstenholme Cobb was a Yorkshire man by birth and came first to the town in 1853 as curate to St Peter's. He was an energetic and popular young curate and became intensely interested in the history of his adopted town and carried out extensive research, which is still respected and referred to today. In 1854 he gave two long lectures to the Mechanics' Institute on the history of Berkhamsted; the first lecture was devoted to the Castle and its complicated history, the depth of which has scarcely been surpassed since. The following year he published these lectures as the *History and Antiquities of Berkhamsted*. By that time he had become curate of St Mary's Northchurch, where he stayed until he was appointed vicar of Kidmore End, near Reading, in 1863. In the summer of 1861 he had married Elizabeth Mary Crofts, two years his senior, in Berkhamsted. She had been born in Painswick, Gloucestershire. At the time of the 1861 census Elizabeth Mary was staying with the Dorriens at Haresfoot. She was a fund holder, in other words had independent means.

In 1871 John was appointed Rector of Berkhamsted St Peter's just before the completion of Butterfield's Victorian restoration work when the church was faced with flint and many internal alterations were made. Further improvements occurred during his Rectorate up until his death in 1883. He was the first Rector to be appointed by the Earl Brownlow. From 1722 the Rector had been appointed by the Duchy of Cornwall but with the purchase of the Manor of Berkhamsted by the Brownlows in 1865 this duty devolved to them until the death of the last Earl in 1921. (345)



GEORGE LOADER 1839-1908

George Loader was a member of an old-established family in the district. George, a cordwainer, could be said to be a worthy representative of local tradespeople who in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries devoted their lives to public service. Born in Berkhamsted on 28th June 1839, he was a representative of the first generation to benefit from educational opportunities having attended the National School at the Court House. The family lived in Castle Street. George's father (403), also a cordwainer, was

employing five men and one boy in 1861. Then a widower, in the spring of 1866 he remarried Sarah Margrave, schoolmistress at the Bourne Charity School. In the following year, George himself married Isabella Bamford from Little Gaddesden. By 1871, aged 31 he was a master bootmaker employing 7 men, in the High Street.

George Loader died on 25th April 1908 following a severe attack of pneumonia. Actively involved in developing and improving the town, he had served (alongside his father) on the School Board for Berkhamsted 'one of the first in rural England,' set up as a result of the 1870 Education Act. He had recently been re-elected Chairman of the Berkhamsted Urban District Council for the ninth year running. He was one of the representative Governors of Berkhamsted School and Chairman of the local managers of the County Council Schools as well as the senior trustee of Bourne's foundation. A memorial incorporated into the wall in the former Victoria Girls' School, states 'In Memory of George Loader, J.P. for many years Governor of Bourne School, to whom is largely due the erection of these schools (the Victoria Schools).... '

George was a staunch supporter of the Conservative Party and Honorary Secretary of the Berkhamsted and Northchurch Association for twenty-four years. He was an active member at St Peter's, served as a sidesman and was lay representative for some years on the Rural Diaconal Council as well as serving on the Parochial Church Council. A fine memorial in the S.E. window in St Catherine's Chapel was installed in 1909 in his memory.



His Chairmanship of the BUDC covered the period of the death of Queen Victoria, the proclamation of Edward VII as King and the arrangements for the Coronation ceremonies. 'In spite of the inclement weather' a wide section of the community turned out to pay their respects at his funeral. There were about sixty wreaths. (406)

EDWARD MAWLEY FRS VMH 1842-1916

Edward Mawley was not a native of Berkhamsted but lived here for the last 31 years of his life, pursuing his interest in horticulture, especially his love of roses and dahlias and his deep interest in meteorology all of which brought him national recognition. He also took an active interest, together with his wife, in the affairs of the local community. Born in Blackheath of a well-to-do family, he trained as an architect at the South Kensington School of Art where he gained a medal. Soon after 1870, on grounds of ill-health, he gave up his practice. From 1874-75 Edward and a friend made a round trip to Australia on board SS *Sobraon*. He made careful observations on the weather and on return applied to join the Royal Meteorological Society.

In June 1885 he married Bertha Turney Briggs in London and shortly afterwards they moved to *Sunnyside House* and renamed it *Rosebank*.

Bertha shared her husband's love of roses and horticulture. Edward set up an observatory which was described as the 'most complete private meteorological station in the country'. He regularly contributed to various magazines. Of July 1888 he wrote 'One of the coldest, wettest and most dreary Julys ever known. ...In the last 32 years we have had at Berkhamsted only three Julys as wet as this one.'



Edward was also very active in the National Rose Society being Secretary for many years and later President and also President of the National Dahlia Society. With Gertrude Jekyll he published *Roses for English Gardens*. His contribution to horticulture was acknowledged when he was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society.

He encouraged the formation of 'Form Gardens' at Berkhamsted Girls' School and judged them in an annual competition. He campaigned to raise money to purchase an ambulance for the people of Berkhamsted and Northchurch to get to West Herts Infirmary. It was to the people of Sunnyside that Edward and his wife contributed most, being active in the establishment of the Mission Church in George Street, then the Tin Tabernacle in Ivy House Lane and finally in the building of the permanent

church (consecrated 1909) where he was Churchwarden for a number of years.

Edward Mawley died on 15th September 1916 at the age of 74 after a short illness. A Special Vestry meeting paid tribute to his work for the Church and people of Sunnyside 'By his gentle Christian character he had endeared himself to all.' The National Rose Society presented a stained glass window to the church. A plaque nearby states 'This window was given by friends of the National Rose Society in memory of Edward Mawley VMH who was Hon. Secretary to the Society from 1878-1914, President 1915-1916. (373)



*Mawley's Observatory
at Rosebank*

WILLIAM E. COSTIN, 1849-1910

William Costin was born in Berkhamsted the seventh child of Thomas and Mary Ann Costin and as a young child lived in Prospect Place (later known as Highfield Road). His father was a shepherd. At the time of the 1861 census he was living with his older brother John, who was an agricultural labourer. William was also apparently working as a labourer. He did not appear to be attending school. He was 12 years old. In 1869 he married Emily Bedford, who was born in Northchurch and was from a well-established local family. They were married in Hemel Hempstead. William was 20 years old. Emily was 32. It appears that by that time William was already working as a boat builder. He probably did not yet have his own yard, since in the 1871 census he and Emily give as their address Number 4 dock, Ladywood, Birmingham.

Ten years later the couple were back in Berkhamsted and resident in Castle Wharf where William was probably working for John Hatton, from whom a year later he bought the boatyard. In Directories for almost thirty years he is listed as boat and barge builder and coal merchant and his premises consisted of dock, shed, yard, house and water house.

Over the years Costin built a large number of boats and barges particularly for the Aylesbury Canal carrier, John Landon and Co. The last of the fleet he built was The Hythe launched in June 1909. All the boats were launched sideways and sandbags were placed opposite to minimise the damage to the opposite bank.

William Costin built up a flourishing business and employed a large number of men. The couple had no children to carry on the business. In the 1901 census William lists himself as Managing Director of a Boat building business and they were now living at no. 4 Station Road.

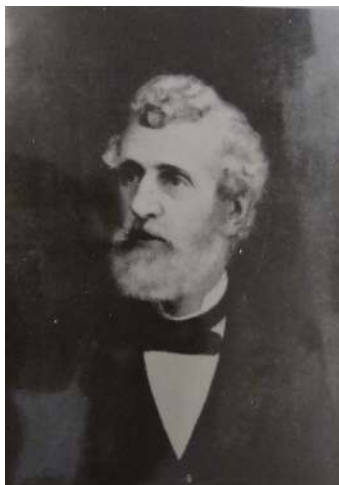
Many local school children associated Costin's with Sunday School outings since frequently children were taken down in heavily laden barges to Cow Roast and then by foot or in wagons up to the Bridgewater Monument for a picnic.

William E Costin died aged 61 in 1910. His wife Emily lived for another three years to the age of 74. The boatyard was taken over by Key's, the timber merchants. **(680)**



THE COOPER FAMILY

William Cooper, founder of Cooper's in Berkhamsted, was a young farrier born in the little village of Clunbury, Shropshire. He arrived in Berkhamsted by carrier in about 1842 with very few possessions and his pestle and mortar. By the time of his death in 1885 he was a wealthy man with a flourishing business, which was to continue to expand until its final demise at the end of the twentieth century. The names of those remembered on the monument trace the history of the firm. William was one of the first to qualify as a vet at the newly-formed Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and gradually became accepted by the local farming community. His real interest,



however, was in developing an effective powder-based cure for sheep scab, the principal ingredient of which was arsenic. This he began to produce at his chemical works in Ravens Lane in the mid 1850s, gradually acquiring more land as his business expanded. He ran his own printing department, the Clunbury Press, built houses for senior workers and members of his family (Sibdon Place and Clunbury House).

William and Mary Cooper had no children, so as he grew older William brought three of his nephews into the business and the firm became William Cooper & Nephews. Of the nephews, William Farmer Cooper, who developed the overseas market, and Herbert Henry Cooper were both benefactors of Sunnyside Church. H.H. Cooper lived at Sibdon House, Ravens Lane – a carved oak chair, designed by C.H. Rew, the architect, was placed in the church in his memory. H.H. Cooper unlike his two brothers had studied law and named his occupation in 1881 as chemical manufacturer. Although spending much of the week in Staffordshire, the 1st baronet, Richard Powell Cooper was greatly admired in Berkhamsted - large crowds turned out to show their respects at his funeral in July 1913. Richard Ashmole Cooper, William Farmer's son, continued the involvement in Sunnyside Church. He set up the Cooper Research laboratory in Ravens Lane after the death of his father. The Cooper family continued to play a prominent part in the affairs of the town for most of the twentieth century and in its heyday the firm was the largest employer of the town. (36)



An early engraving of Cooper's factory

WALTER PITKIN 1882-1945

Pitkins have been in the town since at least 1610 and William Pitkin became Headmaster of Berkhamsted School in 1636. In 1643 he died of the plague on a trip to London, leaving a son and daughter who emigrated to Hartford in Connecticut, where they each founded a dynasty. The Pitkins remaining in the town were no doubt 'pillars of the community'. In 1882 the birth of Walter James Pitkin was registered in Berkhamsted. His father was a painter and plumber and the family lived in Cross Oak Road. Whereas Walter's elder brother Frank followed his father as a painter and plumber, Walter on leaving school became a solicitor's clerk. In 1905 Walter married a local girl, Edith Mary Ward, the daughter of a fishmonger in Castle Street. The couple had three sons, one of whom sadly died aged 5 and lived initially at 19, Kitsbury Road. Walter had something of the spirit of his forefathers working for the community and in 1920 was elected to the Berkhamsted Urban District Council, on which he served for twenty years, for the last two of these as Chairman.



The years 1938-1940 were no doubt difficult years with the threat of War looming imminently and then its outbreak. Locally this was the time of plans for a new Secondary School at Greenway and arguments as to whether it should be a church school. This dominated the first months of his Chairmanship. In September 1938 the Rector of St Peter's remonstrated with Walter over the proposed Sunday opening of cinemas, though the Council approved it 73 to 67. With the outbreak of war Walter masterminded the arrangements for the schooling of the evacuees. The most notable event of his Chairmanship was however, the laying of the foundation stone of the new Civic Centre and its official opening on 14th October 1938. A meticulously arranged programme started at the Town Hall at 5.30pm from whence they were to process to the new Council Buildings and the Chairman would unlock the gate. A tour of the building ended in the Council Chamber with the official opening. The Chairman received a memento for his service on the occasion. Walter died on 4th September 1945 at his home, 10 Clarence Road, at the comparatively young age of 63. **(283)**

THE SMITH-DORRIEN FAMILY

The Smith and the Dorrien and the Smith-Dorrien families played a prominent role in Berkhamsted's history for more than 150 years. They are linked with the two adjoining estates of Haresfoot and Ashlyns Hall, which still stands today. Both families had roots in banking. John Dorrien, whose son George was Governor of the Bank of England 1818-1819, purchased Haresfoot towards the end of the 18th century. In 1801 James Smith, a member of a well-known Nottinghamshire banking family bought Ashlyns Hall. The history of the two families became inextricably linked when Robert Algernon Smith, the younger brother of Augustus Smith of Ashlyns Hall and the Isles of Scilly, married the granddaughter of John Dorrien, Mary Anne Drever. She bore him fifteen children. Robert changed his name to Smith-Dorrien. His eldest son, Thomas Algernon Smith-Dorrien-Smith was to become Lord Proprietor of the Scilly Isles at the death of Augustus Smith. Most of this very large family are commemorated in a very fine memorial and on two tablets in St Peter's Church. In Rectory Lane Cemetery three members of the family are buried, military and naval men, whose names are known well beyond the town of Berkhamsted.

Rear Admiral Arthur Hale Smith-Dorrien (1856-1933) was born at Haresfoot, the son of Col. Robert Algernon Smith-Dorrien and Mary Anne Drever. In 1870 he enlisted as a cadet in the Royal Navy on the Britannia. From 1872 he served as a midshipman in the Volage and the Sultan. He became a

sub-lieutenant in December 1875 and served in the Shah flagship during the engagement with the Peruvian rebel ship Huascar. He landed with the Naval Brigade in Zululand in May 1877 and is mentioned in despatches in 1879. He took part in operations of the Egyptian War of 1889-93. He was promoted to Captain in 1900, retired in 1904 and was promoted to Rear-Admiral on the retired list in 1909.

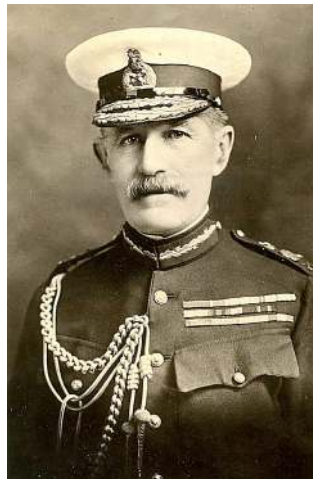
On retiring he returned to Berkhamsted and lived with his unmarried sister, Beatrice, at New Lodge. He was active in local affairs, arranged garden parties to raise money for charity, defended the reputation of his brother General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and was an avid supporter of the British Legion. In June 1933 he was found dead by the railway line near his home apparently having been struck by a passing train, which he may not have heard because he had become quite deaf.

Lieut. Commander Henry Theophilus Smith-Dorrien (1850-1931) RN also had a distinguished career in the Royal Navy, beginning as a cadet in 1863. Since on retirement he did not return to Berkhamsted, but lived instead in London, he is perhaps less well-known. He was married but there were no children. After his cadetship he served under the Duke of Edinburgh in *HMS Galatea*, which sailed round the world. He was promoted Lieut. and then Flag Lieut. to Rear Admiral Algernon de Horsey in 1882. In 1882 during the War in Egypt he disguised himself as an Arab, visited some of the Egyptian forts and reported they were remounting guns. This led to the bombardment of Alexandria.



New Lodge, Berkhamsted

General Sir Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien GCB GCMG DSO ADC (1858-1930) had a distinguished if at times controversial military career and is greatly respected in Berkhamsted. He distinguished himself in the Second Boer War and held senior commands in BEF in World War I. He commanded the British II Corps at the Battle of Mons and the battle of Le Cateau, where he fought a vigorous and successful defensive action contrary to the wishes of the C-in-C Sir John French, with whom there was a personality clash. History has rather vindicated Smith-Dorrien's action. In the spring of 1915 he commanded the British Second Army at the second battle of Ypres. French relieved him of his command when he requested permission to retreat from Ypres to a more defensible position. Smith-Dorrien played no significant role in the rest of the War. His final position was as Governor of Gibraltar from July 1918-May 1923.



He married Olive Crofton Schneider in 1902. There were three sons. Lady Smith-Dorrien played an active role on the Home Front in WWI for which she received several awards. General Sir Horace died on 12th August 1930 from injuries sustained in a car accident in Chippenham, Wiltshire. (257,258, 261)

THE WHATELY FAMILY

Thomas and **George Frederick Whately** were sons of Thomas Whately of Grafton St. Bond Street London, surgeon. **Thomas Whately** arrived in the town shortly after qualifying in 1837. He died aged only 54, after a childless marriage with **Jane** (256). As surgeon here for 30 years, he was prominent in medical circles, where he was Surgeon to the West Herts Infirmary and Medical Officer to the Great Berkhamstead Union. Thomas lived to start with in the High Street together with his widowed mother, **Paulina** and his unmarried sister, **Paulina**. The two women were well-to-do



and dealt in property.(15) Thomas bought Egerton House and other property in Castle Street, was a trustee of various charities, subscribed to the rebuilding of the Town Hall and Market House, supported the idea of the Mechanics' Institute and gave lectures of 'an instructive nature', often illustrating them with experiments. He had great respect for history and ancient institutions of the town and tried to revive the town charter. He was active in campaigning to prevent Earl Brownlow from enclosing part of the Common in 1865. Perhaps his greatest legacy to the parish of St Peter's was his gift of the 'Great West Window' (right) awarded a bronze medal at the Paris Exhibition, 1867. On the day of his funeral a performance of the Dramatic Club was cancelled and all shops closed. **Paulina jnr** is commemorated at (15) together with **George Frederick Whately**, her brother, who was also surgeon here for 20 years from 1858 and lived in the house next door to Dean Incent's House. He was much loved by the ordinary people of the town. (256)



THE LANE FAMILY

The Lane family owned a flourishing Nursery business, which at its height was of national, even international, repute. The firm was established by Henry Lane senr. in about 1777 but it was his grandson, John Edward Lane who developed the business leasing land close to St John's Well Lane by the present Canal Fields but also land stretching up to Greenway Common on the south side of the High Street. There were also orchards at Broadway (Bourne End) and the Balshaw Nurseries at Potten End. *'For upwards of half a century the name of John Lane of Berkhamsted, the present head of one of the oldest and best known nursery firms in this country, has been familiar to horticulturists.'* (Garden Index, 1885). It was not until the 1960s that the firm finally folded. It was famous for its Prince Albert Apple, first cultivated by Thomas Squire, a Berkhamsted Quaker of the Homestead which Lane marketed as 'Lane's Prince Albert' to commemorate the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to Berkhamsted in 1841.

Frederick Quincey Lane, son of John Edward Lane and Sarah Foster (of the Berkhamsted Brewer family) is buried in Grave 245. It is notable that

graves of some of the Foster family are nearby as it appears that both John Edward Lane and Frederick Quincey Lane had some share in the Foster's brewery business. In 1861 John Edward Lane is listed as Brewer and Malster and is residing at the Swan with Hannah, his second wife and other members of the family and his son-in-law George Foster, who is a pupil brewer. In the 1891 census Frederick Quincey Lane is listed as a Nurseryman and Brewer and was residing at the George.

It is not, however, only the man of the household who is worthy of notice but also Mrs Quincey Lane who is listed surprisingly in the 1891 census as journalist. The enumerator has additionally written in pencil 'author'! In 1888 Vol. I of '*The Hertfordshire Constitutional Magazine*' had appeared, available from G. Loosley of Castle Street, edited by Quincey Lane. In presenting the magazine to the people of Hertfordshire the proprietors aimed to meet a long-felt want, within the reach of the general public. 'No pains will be spared to make the contents interesting and instructional to the highest degree.' Both *the Hertfordshire Standard* and *the Journalist* confirm Eliza Jane as the mysterious Quincey Lane and 'the first lady journalist enrolled on the books of the London District of the National Association of Journalists.'

Throughout the second half of the 19th century and well into the twentieth century members of the Lane family held prominent positions in the Berkhamsted Lodge of Freemasons. In the publication in 1945 to mark the centenary of the Masons in Berkhamsted a family tree of the Lanes is included to help the reader understand the complicated relationships.
(Graves 241, 245 and 247)



This booklet was researched and written by Jenny Sherwood.

All photos from the Collection of BLHMS unless otherwise stated.

If you would like to be involved in this exciting project, please visit our website at
www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk

This project is supported by

