

COWGATE - *the Final Burial*

Sheila Cope and Terry Sutton

IN A QUIET CEREMONY at Cowgate Cemetery - looking well kept after the work of Dover Society volunteers - the last burial took place in March, after a service at St. Mary's Church.

This recent burial was that of William Ebenezer Petchey who, aged 105 died at a Whitfield residential home on 21st February 2006. He was the last surviving member of a family who, as sextons from 1835-1870 when it served St. Mary's parish, had lived in a house there and had been responsible for maintaining the cemetery for three generations. (See Elizabeth de Bourbel's article in Newsletter No 49 with its illustration of the part-demolished chapel within the grounds and adjoining house which was their home).

The accompanying photograph, taken in 1910, shows the family standing outside the house with its characteristic 'ecclesiastic' style of window. The photograph was provided by our member Rosa Moon who came to know the family in the 1960's when the children pictured here were, of course, middle aged, and was given to her by Ted



Petchey family, 1910

Petchey, the youngest son. Rosa understands that the family are shown in mourning following the death of the breadwinner, William Petchey aged 49. As a result his widow and children were obliged to leave their tied home. With Mrs Petchey are, left to right, Mary who became a machinist at Flashmans, Ted later an electrician, Will who died recently and Alfred. Will could drive and Rosa believes that he worked for Martin Walters when they built Dormobiles at Cheriton. None of the children married and for a time Mary, Ted and Will lived at Cowper Road, River and after Mary's death Ted and Will moved to Balfour Road.

As a result of Martyn Webster's conducted tour of the cemetery in August 2000 and Derek Leach's subsequent report of the occasion in Newsletter No 39, the Society decided to contribute to the regular maintenance of Cowgate as a nature reserve and also to complete a record of the information on the gravestones which would become available to the public. It seems fitting that with both these aims now achieved the last interment has taken place and the cemetery is presumed to be formally closed.

Will there be a gravestone for William, making a final footnote to add to the documentation of Cowgate Cemetery?



Petchey family graves, William in unmarked grave (right)