

# A Succession of Town Clerks

## Sir Edward Wollaston Nadir Knocker (1838-1907)

### Part II

————— Martyn Webster —————

In part two of the fourth in my series of Essays on the Knockers of Dover here I recount the fulsome local press reports of Sir Wollaston Knocker's funeral.

### Obituary extracted and edited from the Dover Express

**Friday 27th September 1907.**

It is with very deep regret that we have to record the death of Sir Wollaston Knocker C.B. the Town Clerk of Dover who passed away at Castle Hill house on Sunday morning at 2 o'clock at the age of 69 years. Sir Wollaston Knocker was first taken ill on September 1st from a cold, but he quickly recovered, and it was on the following Sunday and during the week he took some carriage drives and seemed to have practically recovered his usual health. During the night of the 14th inst., he was however taken seriously ill. Dr Pinhorn and Dr Murphy with the best nursing aid took charge of the case which was as we have stated last week was of a serious nature. On Tuesday and Wednesday there was a slight improvement and that was maintained on Thursday. On Saturday the bulletin stated that the acute symptoms (cholecystitis and asthenia) had subsided but that Sir Wollaston was very exhausted. Every effort was made during Saturday to restore his strength but the action of his heart and his breathing gradually became feebler and he passed away very quietly at 2 o'clock on Sunday morning in the presence of the whole of his family. The sad fact was published by the following announcement "Sir Wollaston Knocker passed away very quietly early this morning". The news was however chiefly made known to the townspeople by the flags on the public



*Sir Wollaston Knocker (1838-1907)*

buildings being hoisted at half-mast at an early hour and it came as a great shock to the town as, although the serious illness of Sir Wollaston Knocker was clearly announced last week, the unfavourable bulletin of Saturday was not generally known. By a chance that must have afforded some consolation, the whole of Sir Wollaston's surviving family were at home during his last illness. Captain Arthur Knocker of the First Royal Irish Fusiliers who is stationed in India had been home on leave for some time and Mr Lionel Knocker and Mr E. Knocker, the former having been away to the north of England and the latter at Maidstone were both at home when Sir Wollaston was taken so seriously ill and Mrs Lush his surviving daughter was also in Dover.

### **Funeral of Sir Edward Wollaston Knocker - 25th September 1907**

Account extracted and edited from the Dover Express 27th September 1907

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon the first portion of the service taking place in old St James's church prior to the interment at St James's Copt Hill Cemetery. The church was filled, and round to the entrance there was a large crowd of people waiting to pay their last tribute of respect.

Those present in old St James's church included the Mayor of Dover (Councillor G.F. Raggett) whose chain of office was veiled in crepe, the Recorder of Dover (Mr A.H. Bodkin), Sir William Crundall (and amongst many others but principally) the Aldermen of Dover, Borough officials, Clerks, Commander 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Buffs, Headmaster Dover College etc.

Whilst the congregation were awaiting the entry of the coffin, the organ played the "O Rest in the Lord". The corpse was met at the entrance of the church by the Bishop of Dover, the Rector (the Rev T.B. Watkins), the Rev C Clarke (curate) and the Rev Geary Knocker, brother of the deceased. The Rev C Clarke pronounced the opening sentences at the entrance and the coffin was then borne to a bier near the communion table rails followed by Mr Reginald Knocker, Capt. Arthur Knocker, Messrs Lionel Knocker and a W.E. Knocker (sons), Messrs Vernon Knocker, S.H. Knocker and Longworth Knocker (brothers), Capt. Lush (son-in-law) and Mr W Heyn.

There was a full choir present and they led the singing of Psalm 39 to a slow chant and then was sung the hymn "Now the labourer's task is o'er". The Bishop of Dover read the lesson and then was sung the hymn "On the Resurrection Morning". With this, the service in the church ended, and the body was taken in the hearse again for its

resting place in St James's Cemetery. As the coffin left the church choir sang the "Nunc Dimitis", "Now Lord lettest Thy servant depart in peace". Mr Soper acted as accompanist.

The coffin was placed on an open hearse, which was covered with wreaths. This was followed by two more carriages containing wreaths and the chief mourners who followed in the carriages were as follows: Mr R. E. Knocker, Mr L.C. Knocker, Captain A.G. Knocker and Mr W.E. Knocker (sons), Mr Sidney H Knocker, Mr V.E. Knocker and Mr Longworth Knocker (brothers), Col H.P. Knocker, Mr W.W. Knocker, Mr C. McMahon Knocker, Dr A.G. Osborn, Mr Frederick Knocker (cousins), Capt. R.F. Lush (son-in-law), Lieutenant-Colonel J.F. Honeyball (1st Volunteer Battalion the Buffs), Mr L.W. Mead, Mr J. Monger, Mr A. W. Marsh, Mr F.W. Crofts, (Mr A. W. Webster was prevented), Mr W. Heyn (representing Sir Weetman Pearson), the Mayor and Corporation of Dover and officials; the Right Rev the Bishop of Dover, the Rev W.G. Knocker (brother), the Revd. T.B. Watkins, the Revd C. Clarke and many others. On the Mayor's carriage the Town Sergeant (Mr Chapman) rode on the box bearing the Borough Mace which was draped in crêpe. Beside the carriages marched Chief Constable Knott and Inspector Fox.

The cortege proceeded to St James's Cemetery by way of Castle Hill, Castle Street, Maison Dieu road, Park Avenue, Salisbury Road and Frith Road. The route was lined with townspeople and the houses throughout had their blinds drawn. The lower part of Frith Road was lined on either side by the boys of the Buckland Council schools. At the cemetery there was a great crowd, and amongst those awaiting the arrival of the funeral procession there, and who had not been present at the service in the church were noticed a long list of local

worthies. On the arrival of the cortege at the cemetery, the hearse drove up to the mortuary chapel and the coffin was then transferred to the bearers and carried to the grave. The grave is situated on the top of the steep hill in the south-west corner of the cemetery, where so many notable Dover men are bearing amongst them being Dr Astley, Sir Richard Dickeson, Mr C.K. Worsfold, Mr Arthur Harby and many more. It is situated to the south side of a monument which bears the inscription: "In memory of Elizabeth Mozier Knocker, beloved wife of Edward Knocker who died October 1859 aged 51. Also Henrietta Augusta, their daughter and their infant sons, interred in family vaults at Alkham and St James's church. Also of the above Edward Knocker Esq F.S. who died at Torquay on Christmas Day 1884 aged 80. His mortal remains are interred in Torquay Cemetery".

Over the grave was a monumental in memory of Edward Augustus who died October 16, 1867 aged in nine weeks and Percy Wollaston who died April 21, 1876 aged 6? months infant sons of Edward Wollaston and Clara Caroline Knocker.

The grave which was a brick vault was lined with white and blue asters, ivy, yew and laurestine. At the graveside the family members formed at the foot while at the head of the graves of the Revd. T.B. Watkins, the Revd. W.G. Knocker and the Revd. Charles Clarke supported by the supplicated choir of St James's old church. The committal prayers were then read by the Revd. T.B. Watkins and at the conclusion the hymn "Nearer my God to Thee" was sung by the choir and the benediction was pronounced by the rector of St James. For a long while afterwards the crowd filed past the grave in procession and inspected the lovely wreaths. The coffin which was of panelled oak with heavy brass fittings bore

the following inscription:

"Edward Wollaston Nadir Knocker K.B., C.B. born 17 July 1838 died 22 September 1907". The funeral arrangements were most satisfactorily carried out by Messrs Flashman & Co.

It is a matter of immense and sad regret to have to record that after the passage of over 100 years the present ruinous condition in the year 2017 of the grave memorial to Sir Edward has now become such that in the opinion of this essayist it does disservice to a man who almost alone created the Dover of today. Such a state of affairs is surely unworthy of the town to which he dedicated his whole life and was knighted for his efforts. The children, after 43 years of marriage, of Sir Edward Wollaston Nadir Knocker and his wife Clara Caroline nee Chantrell, who herself died in 1919 at 38 Maison Dieu Road (now demolished), to where she had moved after the sale of Castle Hill House in 1911, aged 83 years, were as follows, their lack of reproduction being quite remarkable with the proliferation of previous generations in contrast:

1. Mabel Clara (1868-1903), later wife of John Herbert Dickson, 5th Bombay Light Infantry. Buried Quetta, Bengal (now Pakistan). No descendants
2. Edward Augustus (1869-1869). Infant buried St James (new)
- 3 .Reginald Edward M.B.E. (1870-1956) Solicitor, succeeded his father as Town Clerk (1907-1935). Buried Eridge, Sussex. No descendants.
4. Lionel Chantrell (1872-1953) Captain, Cheshire Regiment, later farmer after World War I, with brother Arthur Gerald, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Died there - was married but no known descendants.
5. Cecil (1873-1873). Infant buried St James (new)
6. Arthur Gerald (1874- 1963) Major, Royal Irish Fusiliers, later farmer after World War

I, with brother Lionel Chantrell, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Died there- was married but no known descendants.

7. Percy Wollaston (1875-1876) Infant, buried St James (new)

8. Evelyn Henrietta (1877-1960). Twice married.

Firstly to John Dudley Scott (1898-1902) who was found dead with his bicycle in a field near his family home at Stroud, in Gloucestershire, murdered by a gunshot to the back of the head. His wife and two infant children were in Sevenoaks with Knocker relatives at the time. Such mysterious circumstances were unresolved at the

ensuing inquest and newspaper reports referred to "rumours" said by Sir Wollaston to be baseless. One son (killed in the First War) and one daughter with descendants.

Secondly to Robert Free Lush (1903-1946), Lt.Col. Prince of Wales Own, West Yorkshire Battalion. Died Hale, Norfolk burial place uncertain. One daughter, died unmarried.

Descendants with the surname Bird by the second marriage provide the sole line of slim descent among her siblings from all of Sir Wollaston Knocker's nine children into the present day.

9. Wollaston Ernest (1879-1943) Electrical Engineer. Married, no descendants. Died Bishops Stortford, burial place unknown.

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## River Dour Partnership Deborah Gasking

Remember me telling you we were awaiting good news for Dover? Well, all is now confirmed.

First, the BIG story: £150,000 for 'Our Finest Dour' project. Funders are: Heritage Lottery Fund (95k), Dover District Council, the Environment Agency, Dover Town Council, Dover Big Local, Southern Water, and Affinity Water.

Works will include:

1. Converting the disused Buckland toilet block into a permanent river centre to facilitate activities and provide information.
2. Delivering a programme of different training opportunities for volunteers.
3. Establishing and train a core group of around 10-15 volunteer river rangers.
4. Carrying out restoration work to improve habitats and clear invasive weeds.
5. Setting up a 'livestream' showing the wildlife in the river.
6. Delivering a series of education workshops with local schools and colleges.
7. Hosting a series of engagement events including a River Dour Festival.

8. Establishing an action plan to provide long term management alongside partners.

The HLF grant has been awarded to Dover District Council and the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, which applied for the funding. The project will be delivered with a range of key partners, including the River Dour Partnership and South East Rivers Trust.

For more information, or if you're interested in being a river ranger, or volunteering as part of the project, please email [iona.dubieniec@dover.gov.uk](mailto:iona.dubieniec@dover.gov.uk)

And the next...

The Victorian railings along the River next to Beaconsfield Road. The Structures Maintenance Team Leader has recently advised that he has just approved for KCC Highways to refurbish and paint the existing railings along the path down to the River Dour together with repairs and railing connections to the brick wall itself. He says, hopefully, it will be by the end of March 2019.