

Lady Emily Constance Crundall

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There is a photograph taken in 1894 showing Lady Emily Constance Crundall (1859-1935), the wife, for nearly fifty years, of Sir William Henry Crundall (1847-1934). Its occasion is evident. Despite intensive searches, only this one photograph of her so far can be found, plus one other as an etching of a photograph with her husband. Very little, if anything, has ever been written about her. Her background and origins are very obscure. They will probably now never be fathomed out properly despite exhaustive attempts by me to do so. No one ever seems to have attempted it till now, perhaps with good reason.



Lady Crundall 1894

Sir William Henry Crundall, a very successful, almost monopolising Dover family timber merchant, is well known as Dover's thirteen times mayor, chairman of

Dover Harbour Board from 1906, contentious local politician, ubiquitous entrepreneur with a finger rightly or wrongly in many pies, cartooned as being at the centre of a spider's web of local political intrigue, once queried by the late Terry Sutton as being quote "Rogue or Hero?" Who can say one way or the other after all this time?

In many ways Sir William's work, by one means or another, ran alongside that of another controlling contemporary influencer, fellow knight, Town Clerk, Sir Edward Wollaston Knocker (1838-1907). In tandem Sir William and he achieved an enormous amount of good work for Dover, including the development of the Clarendon and other housing estates, the naming of streets, the creation of a tramway system, the calling to the port of German transatlantic liners (for a time) and many other local enterprises. He will be subject of a more detailed essay in due course.

Emily Constance Landmann and William Henry Crundall were married on 23rd September 1886 at the Strand Registry Office, London. She recorded as being 27 years of age, a spinster, her given address being the very large nearby Golden Cross Hotel (now the site of South Africa House). She recorded herself as being daughter of George Landmann, deceased, Gentleman. Witnesses were A. H. Maddocks and Anthony Hart who

1886		Marriage solemnized at the Registry Office in the Parish of <i>St. Andrew</i> in the County of <i>London</i>				in the County of <i>London</i>		
No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
	<i>23 September 1886</i>	<i>William Henry Crundall</i>	<i>39 years</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Emile's Merchant</i>	<i>London, Golden Cross Hotel</i>	<i>William Crundall</i>	<i>Goldsmith</i>
		<i>Emily Constance Landmann</i>	<i>27 years</i>	<i>Spinster</i>		<i>Golden Cross Hotel</i>	<i>George Landmann (deceased)</i>	<i>Gentleman</i>
Married in the <i>Registry Office</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i> by <i>W. Maddocks</i>		In the Presence of us, <i>A. H. Maddocks</i>		Signed by <i>Anthony Hart</i>				
Class Marriage Free Subsidized		Signed by <i>William Henry Crundall</i>		Signed by <i>Emily Constance Landmann</i>				

Birth Certificate, Lady Crundall

were unrelated, unconnected and evidently were local employees, summoned for the purpose. For his part William Henry Crundall noted himself as 39 years of age, bachelor, timber merchant, of Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, son of William Crundall, Gentleman.

The decennial census returns for the years 1891,1901,1911 and 1921 note Lady Crundall as giving her place of birth as either London, Middlesex or London, and on one occasion only as Hornsey. At her death she was recorded as 76 years old. From all of this her year of birth estimates a range from 1859-1863. There is nothing more specific or revealing than this.

Absolutely no trace can be made of her birth registration in official records despite exhaustive time-consuming research. Furthermore, her supposed father, George (Thomas) Landmann (1780-1854), a very distinguished engineer and a Colonel at Woolwich with the Royal Engineers, who features in the National Biography, was dead several years before her estimated birth year. There is no reference either to her under these names, or any conceivable combination or alternatives of them, in the 1861,1871 or 1881 censuses where she might have been expected to be found.

What does all this therefore mean? My best conjecture is that she was possibly born out of wedlock to the youngest of George Thomas Landmann's four children (he had a daughter and son born of his first marriage and a son and a daughter by his second). His second daughter was Helen Catherine Landmann (1832-1910), who disappeared from the record after her father's death in 1854, not to be found in the 1861 census (which is crucial to this narrative), only to reappear upon marriage in 1865 to the Reverend Thomas Hacket Massey (1830-1919), rector of Farrington, Hampshire. They were childless.

One unproven conjecture could be that Constance Emily was born or fostered under other names, either in the United Kingdom or very possibly abroad, or even that she was not a Landmann at all but simply assumed the names for decorum purposes. It is not insignificant that Hornsey as a place of birth for Lady Crundall is very plausible as, until 1854 Helen Catherine Landmann had been living at the home of her father in nearby Shacklewell Lane, Hackney (the adjacent parish).

How William Henry Crundall and Emily Constance Landmann first met one another is anyone's guess. Actually it is but part of what appears to have been an intriguing double life for him. The location of the marriage and the information given by the two parties are very curious in the circumstances. The couple had three children together and lived at Woodside, Temple Ewell. Whether their marriage was happy remains to be seen, but on his death in 1934, by the specific terms of his very long will, although in failing health, she was made all but homeless, but on a modest annuity till her own death eighteen months later at the Grosvenor Hotel, London in 1935. She left a meagre estate of little more than £200. Both Sir William and Lady Emily Crundall were, unusually for the time, cremated at the Golders Green crematorium, an innovation.



Woodside, home of Sir William and Lady Emily Crundall