

GRACE ANN (I) (E) FLOWER GRIMES 1889-1969

See also Spring 2011 Pg30

Her name was Grace Flower Grimes but everyone assumed , or she used, as double-barrelled Flower-Grimes. That was her right!

Researched by Herbie Whitmore

Miss Flower-Grimes bought West Grinstead Lodge from the Hornung family after J P Hornung's death in 1940. The Lodge, built before 1832, was a substantial house in Park Lane, about 200 metres north east of the Catholic Church, and was requisitioned by the Canadians during the war; King George VI visited the Division "A" Mess HQ there on March 9th 1944.

We do not know what brought Miss Flower-Grimes to this part of the world, but she soon become something of a pillar of the community: she was a councillor at Horsham Rural District Council for 19 years, sat on the Parish Council for 17 years from 1950, was on the church Parochial Council for 17 years, was treasurer of Dial Post Village Hall and secretary for the WI for many years. She was clearly a lady of some means: she is listed in the Kelly's Directories of 1922 and 1937 as farmer of two farms (Clock House Farm with 58 acres, and Eastcrofts Farm with 25 acres) in Purleigh, Essex, which she inherited from her father. She will be remembered by those who knew her as a tall, friendly woman who drove two Bentleys. She died a spinster in 1969, having moved to a cottage in Denne Park, Horsham, two years earlier after selling West Grinstead Lodge to the Southwark Catholic Children's Society, which was at the time responsible for St. Thomas More Approved School. The house was demolished a few years later, but several large trees of the garden, including an impressive redwood, are still visible from the Catholic Church car park.

Grace Annie Flower-Grimes was born in Streatham, Surrey, on 5th Sep 1889 to Farnham and Georgiana, née Willcox. She was baptised as Grace Annie on 3rd Jan 1890 at St. Leonard's Church Streatham. Farnham was born in Whitechapel, London and Georgiana in Leigh-on-Mendip, Somerset. Their marriage took place in Wheatenhurst, Gloucestershire in 1888. Grace grew up as an only child, as she had a younger sister, Ethel, whom she hardly knew. Ethel was also born in Streatham on 3rd Nov 1891 but died on 25th Dec 1892.

After Ethel's death Farnham bought a family plot in West Norwood Cemetery where all four of the family are now laid to rest. Grace grew up in South London and was probably educated in the same area.

Her father Farnham must have been a colourful character. He was listed in the 1891 census as a solicitor, but by the 1911 census he was described as a dredging contractor, barge builder, lighterman, tug owner, wharfinger, solicitor and company director, living at "Elmcroft", 40 Elmbourne Road Upper in Tooting, London. In partnership with a relative named Flower (hence that element in his daughter's name) in a lighterage tug company, he took delivery in 1902 of a tug that they renamed "Grace".

Georgiana, Grace's mother, died on 1st Sep 1916 aged 64. Four days later she was interred in the family grave in West Norwood Cemetery. In the same year Farnham purchased the two farms in Purleigh, Essex. He had inherited a large sum of money from his Aunt in 1914, which must have helped with the purchase.

On the 11th of April 1921 Farnham was driven by his nephew Joseph Wilcox to Haywards Heath Cattle Market arriving at 11:00am, his intention being to attend a Bull Sale. They had lunch together at the Station Hotel. After the meal Farnham felt unwell and a doctor was called to examine him. After a while Farnham was escorted by the doctor to the nearby station platform, as his explained that he wanted to catch the 3:10pm train to London. Farnham collapsed on the platform while waiting for the train and was pronounced dead at 3:15pm by Doctor Kilpack.

A photo of the family grave can be found at www.findagrave.com. (Memorial No. #42702318)