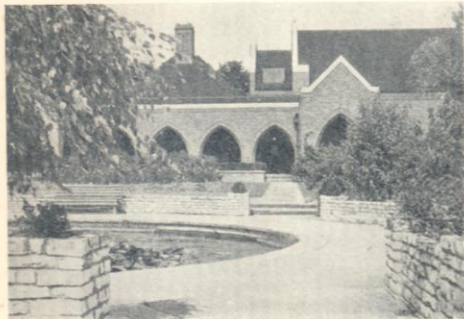


Croydon 1937: Portrait of death and disposal in an interwar suburb



THE CROYDON CREMATORIUM

*Why
Cremation ?*



Brian Parsons

Contents

Introduction

Croydon 1937: Portrait of death and disposal in an interwar suburb

Croydon and Cremation

New Burial Provision in the Croydon Area

Civilian War Deaths (The Volunteer Mortuary service)

Acknowledgements & sources of information

Talks and publications based on extracts from this material:

Images

References

Introduction

The acquisition of a set of twenty professionally taken photographs showing coffins being constructed in the premises of TH Ebbutt in West Croydon in 1937 posed the question of why they were commissioned. Research in local newspapers was carried out to establish if they were to be used for promotional purposes, but no trace could be found. Whilst reviewing that newspapers for 1937 three significant events relating to disposal of the dead and mortality became apparent: the opening of Croydon Crematorium, the establishment of Greenlawn Memorial Park and the typhoid outbreak. As the FW Paine museum in Kingston possessed a large collection of TH Ebbutt's funeral registers, it was appropriate that an investigation be carried out using all this material to establish a portrait of mortality and funerals in the Croydon area.

Little research has been carried out about funerals in the twentieth century.¹ We do know that WWI was a turning point in funerary ritual and studies have been carried out concerning the shift from burial to cremation. But many other aspects need exploration. This research will provide an insight into the situation in Croydon during 1937. Aspects such as how many died in the area and where, why were some deaths investigated by the coroner, what was the format of the funeral; where did burials take place, how many were cremated and what happened to the ashes, are some of the areas that will be explored. As the subject of cremation started to be discussed over forty years before the crematorium opened, the section entitled 'Croydon and Cremation' is prefaced by a review of the debates and coverage in the newspapers from the 1880s. The interwar years concluded with the outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 and the final section is an extract from a publication dealing the involvement of a member of the Ebbutt family in Air Raid Precautions.

With the exception of the typhoid outbreak, only one article has been located about health in Croydon during the interwar years and no literature about funerals.²

Sources of information for this research include the local newspapers, Medical Officer of Health reports and the records of TH Ebbutt. Where no source is cited under a table, the data is from TH Ebbutt registers.

Some of this material has been presented to different audiences and a full list is provided at the end.

Brian Parsons

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www.brianparsons.org.uk

The cover images show a TH Ebbutt funeral outside an unidentified church in the 1930s, the premises of TH Ebbutt, 87 High Street, Croydon, and a cremation publicity leaflet depicting Croydon Crematorium issued by the Cremation Society of Great Britain.

Croydon 1937: Portrait of Death and Disposal in an interwar Suburb

Croydon in 1937

In the year under investigation Croydon was a county borough of some 12, 617 acres. The Medical Officer of Health for Croydon was Dr Oscar M Holden and his report for 1937 contained the following statement about the population:

The population of Croydon has for years shown a rapid and continuous increase. The rate of increase now seems definitively to be slackening. The population has been growing rapidly. The increase of population revealed in the 1931 census was 21.8% on that for 1921. This was the highest rate of increase for any town having a population of over 100,000 at the 1921 Census. The 1931 Census gave a total enumerated population of 233,115. The estimated population at the middle of 1936 was 241,739. For the middle of 1937 the population is given as 242,300 (R-G [Register General]).³

Deaths in 1937

There were 2,800 deaths in 1937, an increase from 2,590 in 1936. The death rate was 11.6 and 10.7 in 1936. The death rate for England and Wales was 12.4 and for the Great Towns 12.5. For London the death-rate was 12.3. The male death-rate was 11.8 and the female 11.3 for the Borough.

Table 1 Deaths residents registered within/out the district

Total deaths registered in the district	Transferable deaths of non-residents registered in the district	Transferable deaths of residents not registered in the district	Net deaths belonging to the district - under 1 year of age	At all ages
2,676	253	377	195	2,800

(Source: MHO report 1937 p28)

The year had commenced with a number of deaths due to influenza; one of the local newspapers declaring that 'Croydon is in the grip of the influenza epidemic.' In fact, it was only five deaths were reported during the week ending 9 January.⁴

The most significant mortality-related event that occurred during the year was the Typhoid outbreak with the first case reported to the Medical Officer of Health on 27 October.⁵ Despite the council's attempts to allay fears, the result was 43 deaths.⁶ Newspapers gave fulsome coverage to the matter including the names of those who had died.⁷ The outbreak even caught the attention of international medical press.⁸ An enquiry was chaired by HL Murphy KC and reported in February 1938.⁹

Deaths referred to the Coroner

A proportion of deaths were referred to the coroner, Dr Harry Beecher Jackson, a physician and solicitor.¹⁰ He held 171 inquests in respect of Croydon residents along with examining 159 referrals by ordering a post-mortem examination, but not subsequent inquest.¹¹ Bodies were removed on the instruction of the coroner and post-mortem examinations were carried out at Mayday Hospital or Bandon Hill mortuary. The records of TH Ebbutt (see below) shows that they carried out 40 removals on behalf of the coroner; in addition

to the aforementioned location bodies were also taken to Caterham and Epsom for post-mortem examinations.¹²

As Croydon was served by a large network of railway lines and an aerodrome a number of fatalities can be linked to these forms of transport. Many of the inquests held in Croydon and also neighbouring areas were afforded extensive coverage in the local newspaper; these give an insight into the types of deaths investigated including suicide, a pregnant girl jumping in front of a train if her husband left her,¹³ and a 39-year-old woman who fell in front of a train at Addiscombe. Most cases of fatal self-harm were given a verdict of 'suicide while of unsound mind.'¹⁴ The same was given for two curates who shot themselves in unrelated incidents,¹⁵ as was a case of gas poisoning.¹⁶ Deaths on the road involved a tramway inspector,¹⁷ a cyclist,¹⁸ a pedestrian,¹⁹ a child.²⁰ Other inquests were for a person who fell down a well,²¹ a Christian Scientist who declined medical attention,²² a death in custody,²³ an abandoned stillborn,²⁴ a councillor's two children dying from diphtheria,²⁵ a fall from a bedroom window,²⁶ a window cleaner falling from a ladder,²⁷ a chlorine-related death at the swimming baths,²⁸ a person bitten by a gnat,²⁹ a woman lying dead for two months,³⁰ and a person dying in a bath.³¹ Air crashes involved a flight leaving Croydon Airport that ended up in the woods at Woldingham,³² and three dead after a plane crashing in fog.³³ Following a school boy being suffocated by bedclothes after an epileptic fit the post-mortem was conducted by the Honorary Pathologist to the Home Office, Sir Bernard Spilsbury,³⁴ who also investigated the case of an unidentified male.³⁵ Dr Beecher Jackson also requested an inquest jury to view the body. *The Croydon Advertiser* commented on the legal position of the coroner's request by stating:

Under the Coroner's Amendment Act (1926) the necessity for a jury to view the body of a deceased person into whose death they were inquiring was obviated. Under the present law members of a jury view a body if a majority of them express a desire to do so, or if the Coroner so directs them.

Dr Beecher Jackson rarely asks this to be done, but he deemed it appropriate in this case as there were 'conflicting statements' regarding the accident that lead to the person's death.³⁶

Disposal: Burial

The town was served by two cemeteries run by the County Borough of Croydon. Queen's Road Cemetery had opened in 1861 and then Mitcham Road Cemetery in 1897. Part of Mitcham Road cemetery was dedicated for Roman Catholics during 1937.³⁷ Residents were also entitled to be buried in Bandon Hill Cemetery that had been opened in 1900 by the Croydon Rural District Council. Due to boundary changes it later became a joint burial authority which embraced the Corporation of Beddington and Wallington along with Coulsdon and Purley Urban District Councils. Four proprietary cemeteries were also nearby: Beckenham Cemetery at Elmers End (then known as Crystal Palace District Cemetery Company), Streatham Park Cemetery (Great Southern Cemetery, Crematorium and Land Company), Nunhead Cemetery (London Cemetery Company) and West Norwood Cemetery (South Metropolitan Cemetery Company). In addition, the southern part of the borough contained a number of Church of England churchyards that continued to receive burials, such as Sanderstead, Woodmansteane and Shirley.

Details of those buried in Queen's Road and Mitcham Road cemeteries were recorded each week in the *Croydon Advertiser*. This included the name of the deceased, age and ward in which they resided, or simply described as 'Non-Parishioner' under the date of interment. The summary below provides an analysis for the first month of each quarter:

Table 2 Burials at Mitcham Road and Queen's Road Cemeteries, 1937

Month/Cemetery	Mitcham Road Cemetery	Queen's Road Cemetery
January	196	69
April	120	54
July	88	31
October	76	33

(Source: *Croydon Advertiser*)

Burials took place over a six-day week. January was a particularly busy month; on 1 January 1937 there were 16 burials at Mitcham Road Cemetery. This is confirmed by the high number of funerals carried out by TH Ebbutt (see below).

The cost of running the two cemeteries were as follows (for the year ended 31 March 1937): Mitcham Road £9,086 6s 8d and Queen's Road £3,668 18s 1d.

Disposal: Cremation

On 26 May 1937 Croydon Crematorium opened in the grounds of Mitcham Road Cemetery.³⁸ It was the thirty-fifth crematorium in Great Britain. The proportion of those cremated in the UK was 2.44 per cent. As with burials, details of those cremated at the new crematorium were published in *The Croydon Advertiser*.

Table 3 Cremations at Croydon Crematorium, 1937

Month/Cremations	July	October
Croydon	10	16

Only two month from 1937 are appropriate to this study. The total number of cremations between the date of opening and the end of the years was 110. In the first full year of operation (1938), Croydon Crematorium carried out 287 cremations and 311 in 1939. The area was already served by crematoria at West Norwood that had opened in 1914, and South London in the grounds of Streatham Park cemetery in 1936. The issue of the provision of cremation facilities is explored below.

Funeral Directors in Croydon

The number of funeral directors serving the Croydon area in 1937 can be determined from the local street directories. The 1939 edition lists nineteen firms. Only a few advertised in the local newspapers and one of these was TH Ebbutt. The National Association of Funeral Directors' annual list of members details ten members trading from eleven locations.

A Short History of TH Ebbutt

The Ebbutt Funeral Service was formed by John Ebbutt in Orpington in 1718.³⁹ John was a carpenter and joiner which included coffin making, a trade carried on by his father and grandfather and by the two preceding generations of Ebbutt's at Chelsfield.

The Ebbutt Funeral Service was first advertised in the Croydon Directory in 1851 at 20 High Street as Builders, Joiners and Undertakers. Shortly afterwards the builders yard was turned into Katherine Street and at one time John also owned the famous Ship Inn. The company business was carried on by further generations of Ebbutt's until the mid-1800's when the business was split into various enterprises. Charles Ebbutt & Co, monumental masons and HD Ebbutt & Sons, undertakers. Others sections of the family owned a home furnishing business and house removal business. Over the next hundred years branches were established at Purely, Coulsdon, Selsdon and Wallington. In 1968 the company acquired controlling interest in RH Willsher & Sons Ltd private car hire along with the funeral businesses of BC Baker & Sons Caterham and Braziers of Limpsfield. W Kemp Ltd of Thornton Heath followed in 1978.

In July 1966 Ashton Funerals Ltd of Clapham joined with TH Ebbutt to form Ashton Ebbutt Holdings. The company was acquired by Hodgson Holdings in 1989 and is now part of Dignity PLC.⁴⁰

David Ashton died in 1974; Lawrence Ashton in 1975 and Thomas Ebbutt in December 1982. Members of the Ebbutt family participated in the activities of the British Undertakers' Association/National Association of Funeral and also the local associations.⁴¹

TH Ebbutt has the distinction of carrying out the funeral arrangements for three Archbishops of Canterbury: John Sumner (1862,) Charles Longley (1868) and Archibald Tait (1882) [all being buried in the churchyard of St Mary's Addington near the Archbishops former residence of Addington Palace] and also the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor who was buried at Bandon Hill Cemetery in September 1912.

Analysis of funerals carried out by TH Ebbutt in 1937

In 1937 TH Ebbutt traded from four locations (the main office being in High Street, Croydon and branches at Wallington, Purley and Coulsdon) with the coffin workshop and garage being located in Clarendon Road, West Croydon. The firm carried out 656 funerals in 1937. This high number of funerals together with its longevity of establishment and reputation means that Ebbutt's can be considered the dominant funeral directing firm in Croydon. Correspondingly, its records are important for providing a profile of funerals taking place during the interwar years along with an insight into the services provided by the funeral director.

For the purpose of this study data from the first month of each quarter has been extracted and the analysis forms the basis of the commentary below. Although the funeral registers are detailed and most of the information is unambiguous, some data is unclear or/and incomplete. This is highlighted in the analysis. In addition to the quarterly data, qualitative information from other months during 1937 is referenced. The overall data is supplemented by newspaper coverage of funerals.

Table 4 Number of funerals and cremations carried out by TH Ebbutt in 1937

1937/ month	Funerals	Burials	Cremations	Transport out of the country
January	69	62	7	
April	59	55	4	
July	36	29	6	1
October	57	47	10	

The vast majority of funerals were for local residents who died and then were buried or cremated in the area (table 4). A small number were transported away for burial either in an existing family grave or because they had died suddenly in the Croydon area and had to be returned back to their place of residency. The majority of funerals were burials with cremations representing 12.2 per cent; this is discussed below.

Table 5 Location of place of burial

1937/ Month	Burials at Mitcham Cemetery	Burials at Queen's Road Cemetery	Burials at Bandon Hill	Burials In local churchyards	Burials in other cemeteries
January	19	7	9	19	8
April	10	1	15	15	14
July	10	2	4	11	2
October	14	0	11	15	7

From table 5 it can be seen that a large number of burials took place in churchyards to the south of central Croydon, such as at Shirley, Sanderstead, Chaldon, Woodmansterne and Coulsdon. Although a proportion of the burials would be in existing graves, the overall figure indicates the availability of new graves and also the preference for local burial. The alternative was the municipal cemeteries with Mitcham Road being the most favoured. By 1937 the availability of new graves at the older Queen's Road Cemetery would have been limited whilst a large proportion of the interments would have been in existing graves.

Burial in 'other cemeteries' can be categorised as those within a five mile radius of Croydon, such as Camberwell Old and New, Nunhead, West Norwood and Elmers End (Crystal Palace District Cemetery) along with some about ten to fifteen miles from Croydon, including Hampstead, Brompton, St Marylebone, Walthamstow, Addlestone, City of London Cemetery and Buckhurst Hill. A small number took place a considerable distance, such as Bath (Lansdown), Shrewsbury and Bradford (Nab Wood). Coffins were transported to Shrewsbury, Bath and Bradford by train (see below)

Table 6 Burial by type of grave

1937/month	New private grave	Re-opened private grave	Public grave	Public grave with option	New brick grave	Reopen brick grave
January	34	22	4	2		
April	25	21	8		1	
July	19	8		2		
October	21	22	1	1	1	1

Table 6 reveals the type of grave used for the interment. The number of new graves refers to purchased private graves. However, this information must be treated with caution as some entries in the funeral records denote the purchase of the exclusive right of burial in a churchyard where this is not possible. Graves can only be purchased in a local authority or privately owned cemetery. Purchase of the exclusive right of burial would then have been in perpetuity. The 'public graves with option' were unpurchased graves where the burial authority (in this case the County Borough of Croydon) permitted the exclusive right of burial to be purchased within fourteen years of the interment taking place. Availability of this option was a relatively common practice at the time.

Ebbutt's provided what was detailed in the register as 'A large platform around grave covered with green baize and lining grave with moss'. This replaced the plain wooden boards usually found around a grave. The former cost an additional £4 15s.

Table 7 Location of death for funeral carried out by TH Ebbutt in 1937

1937/month	Death at home	Death in an institution including hospital, nursing home	Death elsewhere
January	37	23	3
April	31	22	1
July	13	18	1
October	32	18	1

As will be seen from table 7, around two thirds of deaths took place at home with the others occurring in hospitals (such as Croydon General Hospital, Mayday and Purley) along with those at a distance (such as Littlehampton and the Royal Cancer Hospital) and nursing homes (such as Shrublands and Hutton). The lower proportion 'deaths elsewhere'

can be accounted for unclear information in the records and also that whilst death may have taken place in one location, it was certified at a hospital or coroner's mortuary. In cases where death took place at a distance from the area then another funeral director would have been engaged to place the coffin on a train for collecting by TH Ebbutt at usually East Croydon station. (Although not part of this four-month analysis, this was the case for a death occurring in Bournemouth with the coffin arriving at East Croydon station.) Alternatively, the funeral director in Lancaster delivered the coffin using a motor vehicle.

Table 8 Location of deceased between death and funeral for funerals carried out by TH Ebbutt in 1937

1937/month	Deceased in coffin at residence until funeral	Deceased kept at hospital/mortuary until funeral	Deceased resting in Ebbutt's private chapel until funeral
January	42	1	26
April	32	2	25
July	14	6	16
October	32	2	23

Table 8 records the number of deceased resting at home in the interval between death and the funeral. Where this was the case the registers note that the firm provided either a purple or black catafalque on which the coffin would be positioned. A member of staff from TH Ebbutt would have to visit the home to measure the deceased before returning to the workshop to give a body size to the coffin makers (see images). The finished coffin would then have to be delivered to the home where staff would be required to encoffin the deceased. This tradition of retaining the body at home reflects the proportion of deaths occurring at home. It was, however, also a time when the number of deaths occurring away from the home was increasing, a factor that would lead to the deceased being moved directly to the funeral directors premises and not rest in the family home.

TH Ebbutt also possessed a chapel of rest at their Clarendon Road premises where a coffin could be kept without any additional charge to the family. The first chapels of rest started to appear around 1916 and during the interwar years their provision was becoming an important feature of a funeral director's services, especially those in urban or suburban areas.⁴² The chapel of rest was advertised consistently from 1942; as will be seen from the images in the appendix the interior had an ecclesiastical appearance.

Table 9 Occurrence of embalming

1937/month	Deceased embalmed
January	0
April	1
July	1
October	4

Although funeral directors started to practice embalming around the beginning of the twentieth century, there is evidence to suggest that it was not widely practiced until the post-war years when the funeral director acquired more custody of the body.⁴³ The limited number of embalming cases recorded by TH Ebbutt supports this trend (table 9). Detailed assessment of individual cases provides the rationale for the treatment taking place. These include a funeral service being conducted in the house, the coffin taken on a train to Bath for burial, and interment in a brick grave using a higher range coffin. TH Ebbutt made a consistent charge of £2 2s - 'To Carrying out Preservative Treatment'. Where embalming was not carried out the registers are silent on preparation of the deceased, although there

are occasional references to 'To laying out remains' by TH Ebbutt staff. Where death occurred in an institution including nursing homes, it is likely that their staff undertook this task. For deaths at home it may be that a local laying-out person was engaged to do this, but this cannot be confirmed from any sources.⁴⁴

Table 10

1937/ Month	Cremations	Ashes scattered at crematorium	Ashes placed in a niche at crematorium	Location of disposal of ashes removed from crematorium
January	7	4		Bury in Blakeney churchyard Bury in Shirley churchyard Scatter on Coulsdon Court Golf Club
April	4	2		Bury in Eltham churchyard Bury in Sanderstead churchyard
July	6	5		Burial at sea by relatives
October	10	6	1	Removed by a friend Scattered on Leith Hill Transported to Scarborough
Total	27	17	1	9

Whilst the section below (Croydon and Cremation) will fully analyse the cremations carried out in 1937 by TH Ebbutt, Table 10 gives details of the disposition of ashes following cremation. Nationally, figures issued by the Federation of British Cremation Authorities indicates that ashes from 58.91 per cent of cremations were scattered in Gardens of Remembrance attached to all crematoria.⁴⁵ The figure for the four months of cremations arranged by Ebbutt's is consistent at 61.5 per cent. Scattering of ashes in the Gardens was carried out by the crematorium staff without an additional charge.⁴⁶ Where they were buried in a grave in a cemetery or churchyard, however, a fee would be charged. Scattering at sea or on Leith Hill this would not attract any additional expense. The registers note that for the ashes buried at Blakeney in Norfolk the casket was placed on a train with a wreath at Liverpool Street station and removed by the family or funeral director at the destination.

Funerary Transportation

The transition from horse drawn to motor funeral vehicles had commenced by the second decade of the century and by the 1930s this had almost been completed by funeral directors in urban areas. TH Ebbutt's final horse drawn funeral was in April 1932. Motorised vehicles were utilised for all local funerals in addition to those within about a 30 miles radius of Croydon, for example, burials at Willesden New, St Marylebone (Finchley), Addlestone, Highgate and Buckhurst Hill. For the four months analysed, a horse drawn hearse was used on only one occasion which was for the funeral of a local publican. Either one or two motor limousines would have been provided to convey mourners. These would have followed the hearse to the residence of the deceased (where the coffin would be sealed and carried to the hearse, unless it had been resting in the firm's chapel of rest) then transport for the family to the church and

cemetery/crematorium before returning the family home or elsewhere for the post-funeral reception. The use of three and four limousines are recorded with the highest being six. As already mentioned, the rail network was used to transfer coffins to Bath, Bradford and Shrewsbury with a motor hearse being utilised for the delivery to a main line station. Similarly, a coffin destined for burial in Ireland was taken to Euston, placed on a train to Liverpool and then transferred onto a ferry.⁴⁷

One funeral did involve a bus forming part of the procession (see below), but without the coffin being conveyed on it. The local press identified a few issues concerning motor hearses, such as a hearse driver fined for speeding, and, more seriously, a hearse involved in an accident on its way to West Norwood Crematorium.⁴⁸

For the funerals of children two forms of transport were used. A 'curette' was a limousine with a shelf behind the driver's compartment upon which the coffin rested. This was used for a stillborn child up to a two-year-old child, although a hearse was used at a child aged one year and four months. The alternative was for mourners to use their own car, although this only happened on one occasion.

Observations on the Funeral ceremonies

From the information contained in the funeral registers together with descriptions in newspapers, observations about the funerals can be made in respect of funeral transport, personalisation and music at funerals. The coverage of funerals given by the local paper was extensive. Funerals were often said to be 'short and simple'.⁴⁹ Other descriptions used terms such as 'impressive scenes', 'favourite hymns' or 'a large number of floral tributes'. Crying was described as 'Amidst widespread manifestations of sorrow.' In some cases a list of those attending the funeral (and the organisations represented) and also those sending wreathes was included in the newspaper account of the funeral.⁵⁰ The *Croydon Advertiser* also recorded the death of the notorious ex-Rector of Stiffkey Harold Davidson, a one-time resident of the area.⁵¹

Table 11 Service in church

1937/month	Service in church prior to burial/cremation
January	17
April	12
July	5
October	9

Funeral Ceremonies

The vast majority of funerals were conducted according to the rite of Church or England with the priest reading the 'Order for the Burial of Dead' from the *Book of Common Prayer* or the *Revised Order of 1928*. Irrespective of the edition (which were very similar in wording), there was uniformity as clergy were not permitted to deviate from the established service format, with the exception of including congregational hymns along with organ voluntaries (see below). Although Ebbutt's provided printed orders of service at a small number of funerals, the firm also supplied pre-printed booklets containing the 'Order for the Burial of the Dead' from the *Book of Common Prayer* along with popular funeral hymns. The name of the deceased, date of death and details of the funeral were printed in the frontispiece.

Music at the funeral ceremony

Music during funeral services has been an increasingly important feature of funerals during the twentieth century.⁵² Descriptions of funerals give many examples of congregational hymns along with music played during the service. During a church service (table 11) 'Largo' from the opera *Xerxes* by George F Handel and 'O rest in the Lord' from *Elijah* by Felix Mendelssohn were played on the organ while hymns included, 'The Lord is my Shepherd', 'Safely, safely gathered in, and 'Nearer my God, to thee'.⁵³ Another 'fully choral' church funeral included the deceased's favourite hymns 'There is a land of pure delight' and 'Abide with me'.⁵⁴ Hymns played as a preludes were 'Jerusalem the Golden' and 'Hear us, O Saviour' whilst 'Jesu, Lover of my Soul' and 'Eternal Father, strong to save,' with the 23rd psalm chanted. The voluntary as the coffin entered the church was 'O rest in the Lord' and as the coffin left the church was 'Liebstraum' by Franz Listz.⁵⁵ At a funeral in Croydon Parish Church the hymns were 'Now the labourer's task is o'er and 'For all the saints' while one of the dead marches (probably from *Saul* by Handel) was played as the coffin was carried from the church.⁵⁶ At a 'simple but impressive' service the hymns 'The King of love' and 'For ever with the Lord' were sung.⁵⁷ 'Abide with me' and 'Rock of Ages' were sung at a funeral in St John's Upper Norwood, while an improvisation on 'Jerusalem the Golden' was followed by the hymns 'There is a land of pure delight' and 'Abide with me' with the 'Sleepers, Wake' chorale played as coffin departed church.⁵⁸ A pipe organ was installed in the chapel at Croydon Crematorium, but no accounts of funerals listing the choice of music cannot be located.

Personalisation at funeral ceremonies

Newspaper accounts of funerals reveal a number of examples of personalisation concerning the funeral and the disposal of ashes. During one funeral colleagues carried a coffin from the entrance gates to the crematorium chapel with it passing through a guard of honour of 100 bus inspectors, drivers and conductors.⁵⁹ The former ritual took place at the funeral of a schoolmaster when 250 'bare-headed' boys forming a guard of honour.⁶⁰ The colleagues of the former chief officer of Caterham Fire Brigade also carried his coffin.⁶¹ At the service for the former head nurse at Caterham Mental Hospital, members of the Coldstream Guards drew the gun carriage upon which the coffin was draped with a Union Jack.⁶² 'Old Bill' was used at a Busman's funeral. This bus was in service in India and also used during the Boer War and WWI. The bus was decorated with a large wheel wreath bearing a broken spoke to denote a colleague dying in service. Busman lined the street while three bus drivers and three conductors carried the coffin. A bugler sounded the 'Last post'.⁶³ The Jersey custom was maintained at one funeral, as it was described in the *Croydon Advertiser*, of only males attending the funeral.⁶⁴ As noted in table 10, Ebbutt's records reveal that ashes were transported to significant places for burial, such as Scarborough (which were sent by post) along with scattering on Leith Hill in Surrey and also at sea. The ashes of a bus inspector and gardening enthusiast were scattered in the back garden of his house in Beddington.

TH Ebbutt and Typhoid

TH Ebbutt carried out the funerals of nineteen victims of the Typhoid outbreak. The first was on 30 November 1937 and the final on 26 January 1938. The registers contain the parenthesised word 'Typhoid' typed in red. All were buried with the exception of three cremations. One entry states: 'St Peter's Church (Body stayed outside),' whilst another had the following margin note: 'This body was taken in church by permission of the MHO'. None of the cases were embalmed and no special precautions are noted in the registers.

Croydon and Cremation

Cremation 1874-1937

Although the first cremation at Woking did not take place until March 1885, discussion concerning the subject prior to this date concerning the activities of the nascent Cremation Society of England, founded in 1874, can be found in the national and regional press with Croydon being no exception.⁶⁵ For example, the unanimous decision of the 1882 Hygienic Congress in Geneva to call upon Governments to support cremation;⁶⁶ the construction of the crematorium in Milan in 1883;⁶⁷ the cremation of Dr Price's son in 1883;⁶⁸ the Hanham cremations in Dorset,⁶⁹ and the development of cremation in the United States.⁷⁰ After Cremation Society council member Sir Spencer Wells delivered a lecture in Nottingham during 1887, which was subsequently reported in the *Croydon Advertiser*, a lengthy poem entitled 'On Reading a Country Members Views on Cremation' was contributed by the writer and poet Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938) with the concluding verse:

Our graveyards fill up day by day
With decomposing dead;
Bad odours rise from rotting clay,
Disease is widely spread.
How shall we stop this devastation?
One remedy there is – cremation.⁷¹

Research has identified further examples of similar literary efforts. Cremation also generated many humorous quips from satirical periodicals such as *Fun*, *Judy*, *Punch* and *Moonshine* which were reproduced in the local newspapers.⁷²

An early reference to cremation facilities in Croydon can be found in 1886 when the Corporation was exploring the possibility of a new cemetery at Woodside after a site at Norwood was rejected. Cllr Dr Cliff suggested cremation as a 'possible future contingency', but it did not progress as it was anticipated that 'public prejudice is too strong'.⁷³ When a further location, Moorland Park estate, was considered it was commented that 'To place a cemetery in the middle of a densely populated district is absurd, unless the Corporation intend to make it a depository for the cremated'.⁷⁴ In reporting the abnormally high number of deaths in the area during February 1890, the *Croydon Advertiser* commented: 'The number of interments this year up to yesterday are 309, and if this rate goes on a new necropolis will soon be required unless we take to cremation and in our opinion it would be a good thing if Croydon became the pioneer in this as it has in many other reforms.'⁷⁵ The *Croydon Guardian* hoped the building of a crematorium would be explored when the twenty-seven-acre site on Mitcham Road was being discussed in 1892.⁷⁶ Later that year the *Croydon Chronicle* published this florid leader:

The larger the population the more frequent is death in its midst, and it is appointed for all person once to die, so also is it decreed that they should be buried, until cremation ceases to be an expensive process, and artistic jars containing the ashes of our progenitors become fashionable ornaments in our sitting rooms. In the full and certain belief that the day is far distant when there will be no more of the "earth to earth" process, the Corporation have for some time been casting about for a site for a new cemetery, the present one, in some respects being rapidly filled up. The land secured in the Mitcham Road is desirable so far as accessibility is concerned; and as the Borough Engineer informs us that there will be no difficulty about the drainage, the susceptibilities of those who are inclined to feel a little creepiness of the flesh while yet alive, at the thought of being washed away no one knows wither

when dead, may be allayed, and the spirits revive with the hope of a nice dry resting place, thanks to modern science, and the intelligent will of the Corporation to invoke its aid.⁷⁷

Despite this not being progressed, cremation became a subject for public debates in the area, as it did in other areas of the country. During impromptu speeches at the Croydon's YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] Literary and Debating Society in 1884, a Mr Warman spoke about cremation.⁷⁸ The next month the Revd CJ Street, minister of the Free Christian Church in Croydon gave a lengthy paper on cremation to the Croydon Socratic Society where he stated that it was the '...best of all known methods of burying the dead'.⁷⁹ JW Wallsgrave spoke on the subject to the Croydon Shorthand and Debating Society in April 1890 then repeating it in November at the Croydon Debating Society, which was well attended and received.⁸⁰ A further leader in the *Croydon Advertiser* in January 1891 stated: 'Cremating the dead does not make much way among us...But for some time yet it will only be used by the few. Long associated with a coffin, a grave, and a procession, clergyman going before and reading from a book, will keep up the old practice.'⁸¹ The same newspaper also gave an example of the confusion that often arose from the word 'cremation': Old lady: "I don't like at all the clergy encouraging this new fashion of cremation. I want to be buried like a Christian when by times comes." Young friend: "Well, I don't know that it's unchristian; but are the clergy encouraging it?" Old lady: "Oh! Yes; I see Canon Bagot is advertising his creameries everywhere."⁸² The Croydon Women's Liberal Association was given a talk by a Miss Burrell in June 1891 who '...contended that the present system of burial was appalling in its results, that is most dishonouring to the dead and a positive danger to the living.'⁸³ After a discussion ensued, the assembled almost unanimously agreed that cremation was preferable to burial. In February 1893 readers of the *Chronicle* were reminded of the subject following Dr William Price's cremation at Llantrisant, and also through a lengthy extract from Cassell's *Book of the Household* which reported on the progress of cremation in England.⁸⁴ In October 1894 the full text of 'Cremation *versus* the present system of Burial' by AJ Riley given at the Caterham Debating Society's meeting.⁸⁵

By the mid-1890s correspondence and debates diminished, although in 1894 Frank Gladden wrote in support of providing 'A Crematorium for Croydon' within the new cemetery.⁸⁶ The Mitcham Road cemetery would open in 1897. At the end of this year 1,043 cremations had taken place at the four crematoria were in operation in the UK: Woking; Glasgow; Manchester and Liverpool. Despite the low numbers of cremations there was increasing interest in cremation by municipal authorities including the London County Council, and also by undertakers that started to advertise that they were prepared to carry out 'funerals and cremation,' the latter being quite distinct from a burial which hitherto had been regarded as a funeral. TH Ebbutt clearly supported cremation as by mid-March 1898 the firm had amended its advertisement in *Croydon Advertiser* to read 'All Funerals and Cremations are personally conducted'.

Only a few cremation references can be located in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In 1898 the subject was raised by Thomas Farrow at the Old Town Debating Society.⁸⁷ Later the same month, the Sutton Water Company hosted a conference to discuss the probable danger of contamination of the water supply by burials at Banstead Asylum, which averaged 140 interments per annum. A lengthy discussion concluded with a vote of thanks in which in speak commented that 'Cremation...would solve the difficulty, and that would rest with the authority who had the power to order it.'⁸⁸

At a meeting of the Croydon Rural District Council in April 1898, the chairman remarked that '...he hoped it [cremation] would find favour with the council as an enlightened body...', which was met with 'Hear, hear' and 'No, no'.⁸⁹ 'Argus' writing in the *Croydon Advertiser* in 1898 reported the case of an eccentric English who died in the West Indies

and was shipped to England for a ‘while you wait’ cremation at Woking after which his ashes were transported back to the Islands.⁹⁰ The newspaper also reported on the cremation in October of Kenley resident, the author Harold Frederic.⁹¹ Brief discussion about the advisability of building a crematorium took place in 1900, but without any further deliberation.⁹² The *Chronicle* did report the opening of the first municipal crematorium at Hull in January 1901 and also Darlington, a private enterprise the following year.⁹³

Cremation and Controversy

As detailed above, early strategies to promote cremation on a local level mainly centered around information in newspapers and also debates, presumably led by those with an interest in the subject. There was, however, no sustained mechanism to keep the message of cremation before the public, particularly after Woking became available for use in March 1885. In the 1890s some enterprising undertakers incorporated the word ‘cremation’ into their weekly newspaper advertisements. Following the opening of West Norwood Crematorium in 1915, the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company purchased regular classified advertising in local newspapers in addition to those at some distance from the cemetery.⁹⁴ In 1916 these can be found in the *Eastbourne Gazette* and the *Hastings and St Leonards Observer* along with the *Army and Navy Gazette*. In that year there were 88 cremations including some where the deceased lived in those south coast resorts. Despite this advertising, the number of cremations was minimal; table 12 indicates that between 1915 and 1924 only modest increases were recorded annually at West Norwood.

Table 12 Cremations at West Norwood Crematorium

First cremation 15 May) 1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
30	88	117	152	167	156	161	185	177	239

(Source: West Norwood Crematorium registers)

In 1936, the directors of the Great South Cemetery, Crematorium and Land Company opened the South London Crematorium at Streatham Vale and embarked upon an extensive advertising campaign in newspapers and also church magazines.⁹⁵ Along with other promotional tactics such as desk calendars, the delivery of ashes and offering commission to funeral directors, the combination of these efforts brought dividends as indicated by the yearly increases in the number of cremations (table 13). No other UK crematoria opened during the interwar years recorded such growth in their figures.

Table 13 Cremations at South London Crematorium

1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1943
191 (first on 19 June)	685	986	1,129?	1,342	1,272	1,234

(Source: South London Crematorium registers)

TH Ebbutt’s records show that cremations prior to 1937 took place at Woking (36.3 miles), Golders Green (17.3 miles) and West Norwood (6.1 miles), with the latter being predominantly utilised, as identified in table 14. However, this situation changed dramatically following the opening of Croydon Crematorium on 26 May 1937, as the facility was only 2.5 miles from TH Ebbutt’s head office. Cremations at all other locations

were thereafter minimal. Of note is the fact that few cremations took place at South London Crematorium. Having opened in 1936 and less than a year before Croydon Crematorium, Croydon resident continued to select West Norwood that had been opened since 1915 before shifting allegiance to the new municipal facility.

TH Ebbutt was the first funeral director to carry out a cremation at the newly constructed crematorium and the firm was responsible for 81 cremations at five different crematoria during 1937. This represented 12 per cent of the total number of funerals carried out during the year.

Table 14 Location of cremations arranged in 1937 by TH Ebbutt

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
West Norwood	5	3	5	4	3			1	1		1	1	23
South London	1	1			1								3
Woking	1		1							1			3
Golders Green		1			1	1		1				1	5
Croydon						5	6	5	7	10	6	7	46
Total	7	5	6	4	5	6	6	7	8	11	7	9	81

The higher than national figure for cremations in the Croydon area warrants further comment. One factor that can be identified is the promotion of cremation and three points can be made. First, modest box-style classified advertisements for both the privately owned West Norwood Crematorium and South London Crematorium appeared in the *Croydon Advertiser* from 1936, thus continually reminding the readership of the subject.⁹⁶ Croydon Crematorium did not advertise in the local newspapers, although a publicity brochure was circulated, which was the case with many crematoria. As noted below, the policy on advertising was eventually revisited.

In the opening months of 1937 an advertisement for the Croydon Cremation Co Ltd regularly appeared in the *Croydon Times*, such as this example from March:

Cremation – Now less expensive than earth-burial
 Cremation – Hygienic
 Cremation – No expense of memorial
 Cremation – No maintenance for relatives
 Cremation – Government and Medical recommendation
 Croydon now has its own Crematorium

Considering that Croydon Crematorium would not open until the end of the May 1937, the final statement - Croydon now has its own Crematorium - is somewhat misleading. If the originators of the advertisement were the directors of the South London Crematorium they may have considered their facility at Streatham Park to be the crematorium for the Croydon area due to its proximity, but there are no indicators that this is the case. Indeed, the company's advertisement in the *Croydon Advertiser* during February and March 1937 stated:

‘Cremation. We now arrange cremations at the South London Crematorium.’⁹⁷

In July 1937 an advert appeared in the *Croydon Advertiser* for ‘The Croydon Cremation Co Ltd’ which read as follows:

‘Cremation is now available to those of modest means. Cremation fees from £3 3s. Member of National Health insurance, etc at specially reduced fees. For information regarding membership of the Society apply to Head Office.’⁹⁸

From this it is not unreasonable to assume that the Croydon Cremation Co Ltd had a link with the South London Crematorium, especially as the Company was able to offer cremation for £3 3s, perhaps signifying a special arrangement with the crematorium. As detailed below, however, this charge also matched the fee for cremation between 7am and 10am at Croydon Crematorium. The advert also implies that the ‘Society’ was either a friendly society or had charitable objectives.

The second point is that the opening of the local authority Croydon Crematorium less than one year after South London must have been greeted with disappointment by the company’s directors.⁹⁹ At a distance of just under three miles, the municipal facility was clearly a threat to the viability of their private venture as it was likely that those desiring cremation who lived in the Croydon area would utilise the municipal facility. This is clearly apparent from table 14 as in 1938 only three of all the cremations arranged by TH Ebbutt took place at South London Crematorium whilst 98 were held at Croydon. In an attempt to maintain their competitive position, the directors of the South London Crematorium inserted an illustrated strap-style advertisement that covered the base of eight columns in *The Croydon Advertiser* published on 27 May 1937 – the week Croydon Crematorium opened. The same appeared in the *Croydon Times* on 2 June 1937. Thereafter more modest advertising for South London Crematorium continued.¹⁰⁰

The third point is promotion of cremation by TH Ebbutt. Following the opening of Croydon Crematorium in May 1937, a full-page advertisement appeared in the 1939 edition of *Ward’s Croydon Directory*. The text stated:

Cremation

On such an important matter as Cremation it is helpful to consult a firm of Undertakers whose experience can prove to be a real aid. The opening of the Croydon Cremation, which was erected by the Croydon Corporation, has resulted in many enquiries being made concerning Cremation, and Messrs. Thomas Ebbutt & Sons have made this service a special study. Their knowledge and guidance is at the disposal of all requiring to make use of this service, whether Cremation is contemplated in Croydon or in any part of the Country.

It is not known what comprised TH Ebbutt’s ‘special study’, but it is clear that by 1939 the organisation was well versed in the procedures for cremation through their comparatively long and relatively infrequent but increasing number of such funerals. As mentioned above, the firm advertised that they were prepared to manage cremations in 1898. Furthermore, Ebbutt’s possessed a comprehensive range of suitable cremation coffins along with caskets for ashes, the former being named after crematoria, such as the ‘Woking, ‘Golders’ and ‘Ilford’.

During 1938 rivalry between local funeral directors and the Croydon Cremation Company Ltd emerged with the former securing a large box-type advertisement between July and September in the *Croydon Times* declaring:

Cremations... Croydon and District. ALL members of the National Association of Funeral Directors in this district undertake arrangements for Cremations at Croydon Crematorium, which is the property of the Corporation of Croydon. The names and addresses of members in Croydon and district are...[17 funeral directors trading from twenty-three locations].¹⁰¹

It can only be presumed that the funeral directors mentioned, or their local association (the Croydon Association, founded in 1922, was a local gathering of members of the London Association of Funeral Directors), paid for this advert. The Croydon Cremation Company responded with a modest box advertisement that concluded:

‘We are NOT members of any ring or trade Association. OUR charges are most moderate as WE estimate according to the means of each client.’¹⁰²

The Croydon Cremation Company revealed that they could supply a ‘Special cremation coffin, motor hearse and bearers and attendance at crematorium service from £10 10s 0d’. This was considerably less than the average charge for a cremation by TH Ebbutt as tables 15-18 indicate. Furthermore, the Croydon Cremation Company Ltd was the only funeral director to include the cost of a funeral in their advertisement. The figures in tables 15-18 need to be interpreted broadly as it is unknown what comprised a ‘special cremation coffin’, the fact that an urn or casket was additional as was the cost of burial of the ashes, whether the charge for statutory cremation certificates was included along with the fee for the statutory declaration of the Application for Cremation.

Table 15

January 1937	Crematorium	Type of coffin	Vehicles	Ashes	Other details	Total cost of funeral
1	West Norwood	Golders	Hearse & 2 lims	To Norfolk in bronze urn		£46.13s.0d
2	West Norwood	Golders	Hearse & 2 lims	Bury in Shirley churchyard		£46.16s.6d
3	West Norwood	Ilford	Hearse only	Scatter at crematorium		£30.1s.0d
4	West Norwood	Woking	Hearse only	Scatter at crematorium		£23.3s.06
5	West Norwood	Woking	Hearse & 1 lim	Scatter at crematorium		£33.15s.06
6	Woking	Woking	Hearse & 1 lim	Scatter at Crematorium		£33.6s.0d
7	Streatham Park (South London)	Golders	Hearse and 2 lims	Scatter at golf club	Polished cedar box	£30.12s.6d

Table 16

April 1937	Crematorium	Type of coffin	Vehicles	Ashes	Other details	Total cost
1	West Norwood	Woking (gray)	Hearse & 2 lims	Scatter at crematorium	Service in church	£24.18s.6d
2	West Norwood	Golders	Hearse & 2 lims	Bury Eltham churchyard		£47.14s.6d
3	West Norwood	Golders	Hearse and 1 lim	Scatter at crematorium		£22.17s.6d
4	West Norwood	Golders	Hearse and 2 lims	Bury Sanderstead churchyard		£50.14s.6d

Table 17

July 1937	Crematorium	Type of coffin	Vehicles	Ashes	Other details	Total cost
1	Croydon	Norwood	Hearse & 1 lim	Scatter at crematorium		£25.4s.1d
2	Croydon	Norwood	Hearse & 1 lim	Scatter at crematorium		£31.1s.3d
3	Croydon	Woking	Hearse and 2 lims	Buried at sea by relatives		£27.5.0
4	Croydon	Ilford	Hearse and 2 lims	Scatter at crematorium		£22.11s.6d
5	Croydon	Norwood	Hearse only	Scatter at crematorium		£24.6s.0d
6	Croydon	Golders	Hearse & 2 lims	Scatter at crematorium		£32.7s. 0d

Table 18

October 1937	Crematorium	Type of coffin	Vehicles	Ashes	Other details	Total cost
1	Croydon	Woking	Hearse & 1 lim	Scatter at Crematorium		£21.1s.6d
2	Croydon	Woking	Hearse only	Removed by relatives		£22. 10s. 0d
3	Croydon	Woking	Hearse only	Scattered on Leith Hill by FD		£34.16s.0d
4	Croydon	Golders	Hearse and 1 lim	Removed & sent by post to Scarborough		£32.17s.6d .
5	Croydon	Woking	Hearse and 2 lims	Scatter at crematorium		£27.7s.0d
6	Croydon	Woking	Hearse and 1 lim	Place in Niche at crematorium		£34.16s.5d
7	Croydon	Golders	Hearse and 2 lims	Scatter at crematorium		£34. 4s 7d
8	Croydon	Norwood	Hearse only	Scatter at crematorium		£27.6s.6d
9	Croydon	Ilford	Hearse only	Scatter at crematorium		£20.16s.7d
10	Woking	Norwood	Hearse and 3 lims	Scatter at crematorium	Dec embal med	£55.5s.6d

The ownership of the Croydon Cremation Co Ltd was, however, still unclear. But by 1944 this became apparent from two advertisements in the *Croydon Times*. The first was:

No upkeep of Graves
No Cost of Memorial
Cremation is Hygienic
Our charge is £20
For adult cremation service includes elm coffin, Rolls Royce hearse, 2 cars for mourners, cremation fee, etc
Croydon Cremation Co Ltd, Undertakers. 818, London Road Thornton Heath.

The advertisement above then reveals the identity of the owner:

Adult Funeral from £16 10s 0d
....by
David Ebbutt Ltd¹⁰³

Four trading addresses are given, including 818 London Road, Thornton Heath. By virtue of his surname David Ebbutt was clearly related to the TH Ebbutt family, but traded in competition. In the post-WWII years David Ebbutt continued to advertise the cost of a funeral. This example dates from 1947 and shows an additional trading company specifically to promote cremation:

No upkeep of Graves
No Cost of Memorial
Cremation is Hygienic
Our charge is £27 10s 0d
For adult cremation service includes elm coffin, Rolls Royce hearse, 2 cars for mourners, cremation fee, etc
The Coulsdon & Purley Cremation Co Ltd, Undertakers.
33 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon
118 Brighton Road, Purley

Both these addresses are those of David Ebbutt Ltd.

The final point twenty years after opening, Croydon Crematorium commenced advertising in local newspapers. These examples are from 1947:

The pressing social need today is for slum clearance and playing fields in the urban centres of population. The wasteful system of burial is preventing the economic use of land for housing and recreation and thereby reacting to the detriment of the health and happiness of the people.
Croydon Borough Crematorium¹⁰⁴

Later in the month the following appeared:

The hundreds of acres of white marble gravestones and the sprawling wastes of neglected graveyards are an eyesore, yet without cremation there is no limit to their growth. A Crematorium is never filled and never derelict. The building will serve its purposes for ever and the garden will remain a joy for all time.
Croydon Borough Crematorium¹⁰⁵

It is not known if this was advertising copy produced by the Cremation Society of Great Britain or devised by Croydon Crematorium. Irrespective of its originator, the direct nature of this propaganda reiterates the ‘playing fields not cemeteries’ rhetoric promulgated by the Society in the post WWII years. Another advertisement also encouraged funeral intentions to be noted.

If you choose Cremation, put your wishes on record NOW, to that they may have proper attention when necessary. We shall be pleased to advise – it is part of the
CROYDON BOROUGH CREMATION SERVICE
Telephone Tho 1877¹⁰⁶

The following box advertisement dates from November 1947 and includes the adult cremation fee. The line stating ‘dispersal of the ashes in the Garden of Rest’ emphasises the fact that this is carried out without an additional cost, which had been levied by some crematoria including South London Crematorium.

County Borough of Croydon
Crematorium and Garden of Rest
Cremations carried out for a fee of £5 5s 0d including services of Minister, organist and the dispersal of ashes in the Garden of Rest¹⁰⁷

Advertising clearly contributed to the overall preference for cremation as seen from the yearly increases at Croydon Cremation (table 19).

Table 19

Year	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
cremations	110	287	311	452	398	453	566	754	813
1946	1947	1948							
964	1,174	1,228							

Source: *Pharos*, various years)

When comparing the number of burials and cremations in January 1947, the preference for cremation in Croydon is at a significant variance to the national figure, as table 20 indicates. At the two Croydon cemeteries the burials totals 211, but there were 149 cremations. Representing 70.6 per cent, this is far ahead of the national figure of 10.48 per cent.

Table 20 Burials and Cremations, Croydon January 1947

Mitcham Road Cemetery	165
Queen’s Road Cemetery	46
Crematorium	149

(Croydon Borough Council Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee 13 February 1947)

For TH Ebbutt, the increase in the number of cremations between 1938 and 1948 was dramatic – from 17.11 per cent to 43.54 percent respectively (table 21). By 1948 stage the proportion of cremations in England & Wales was 14.9 per cent at the 58 crematoria in operation.

Table 21 TH Ebbutt analysis of cremations by location: 1918-1948

	Woking (1885)	Golders Green (1902)	West Norwood (1914)	South London (1936)	Croydon (1937)	Honor Oak (1939)	Other Crematoria	Total Funerals/ Cremations	%
1908								338/0	0
1918	2	4	10				Ilford	495/17	3.43%
1928		3	18					519/21	4.04%
1938	1	6	7	3	98			672/115	17.11%
1948	1	4	5	2	310	1	Charing	744/324	43.54%

(Source: FW Paine archive). Note: TH Ebbutt data for 1958 could not be located.

New Burial Provision in the Croydon Area

During 1937 it was announced that a new privately-owned cemetery would be opening at Warlingham, about five miles south of the centre of Croydon.¹⁰⁸ Although the local councils (which?) refused to give sanction, Ministerial approval came in January 1937 for the pioneering 'memorial park' that would only permit graves to be marked with a metal tablet at ground level. The company purchased 110 acres, but only nine would be prepared for burial. The scheme met with considerable local opposition with *The Croydon Advertiser* declaring:

Gruesome and distasteful as it may sound, it is understood that one undertaker alone has guaranteed some hundreds of bodies a year to the cemetery and one can see at no distant date the daily sad and sombre and unending procession of hearses and funeral cars wending its way through Warlingham to the cemetery in Chelsham-road.

The Ministry has given their sanction to the cemetery and the inhabitants and their representatives must lie down without a word and watch the spectre of the future haunt the inhabitants for evermore.¹⁰⁹

Despite these dire predictions, work commenced on laying out the cemetery. In December *The Times* noted:

New Type of Cemetery

It is announced on behalf of Greenlawn Memorial Park Limited, Abford House, Wilton Road SW1 that work is to begin at once on the development of a 32-acre site near Warlingham, Surrey, for a new type of burial ground for the Metropolitan area. The cemetery, it is stated, will be administered by a trust, whose first consideration will be the preservation of the natural beauty of the scene. In place of the tombstone familiar in most cemeteries the trust will restrict memorials to tablets of bronze set flush with the turf, thus preserving the park-like appearance of the grounds. Sections are to be reserved for burials in the Church of England, Nonconformist, and Roman Catholic faiths.¹¹⁰

It would appear that the Memorial Park opened without ceremony at some point during the first quarter of 1938. Minimal advertising took place in the local papers whilst one was also published in *The Undertakers' Journal* in April 1938, much in the same manner as crematoria promoted their facilities to funeral directors. The latter stated:

‘Non-sectarian, Perpetual care ensured, Moderate charges, Deferred payments, 15% Discount to trade’.¹¹¹

The terminology of this advertisement is worthy of comment. For ‘Non-sectarian’ read unconsecrated ground; ‘perpetual care ensured’ presumably means that funds will be assigned to manage the burial ground in future years; ‘moderate charges’ were questionable (see below); and ‘deferred payment’ can be interpreted that unusually fees could be paid for by instalment. The ‘discount to the trade’ is interpreted as the commission payable to funeral directors for recommending use of the burial ground. This was not unusual, particularly in respect of private cemeteries along with some municipal ones and also crematoria. At 15 per cent of the purchase of the grave and/or interment fee paid by the client, this was not inconsiderable; it was also indicative that the Greenlawn could afford to do this through having a higher tariff than other burial grounds. Virtually no other information can be traced about Greenlawn Memorial Park.

Seven years after Greenlawn opened, the County Borough of Croydon commenced investigating sites for a new burial ground. The following year the opportunity was presented to purchase 103 acres of land within the area of the Godstone Rural District Council and also the Caterham and Warlingham Urban District Council.¹¹² In May 1947 it was agreed that just under 70 acres would be acquired, subject to town planning; a loan sanction from the Ministry of Health would be required.¹¹³ Caterham and Warlingham Urban District Council objected, but the North-East Surrey Joint Planning Committee recommended the following:

To raise no planning objection to the provision by the Croydon Council of a cemetery of 70 acres of land situated on the north side of Limpsfield Road, Chelsham, subject to the following conditions being observed:

- (1) That arrangements be made by the Surrey County Council and the Caterham and Warlingham Council by arrangements with the Croydon Corporation to plan the cemetery so that Limpsfield Road can be developed as a Parkway, with dual carriageway and a sufficient marginal belt for planting, this proposal possibly involving the acquisition of additional land on the north side for cemetery purposes to compensate for land surrendered for making the Parkway.
- (2) That the general layout and especially the boundaries of the cemetery the subject to careful landscape treatment.
- (3) That the use of headstones be prohibited.¹¹⁴

The Corporation agreed to the first two recommendations, but the third prompted the following comment:

As far as Condition No3 is concerned, the Committee assume the Joint Planning Committee wish to limit all grave indications to horizontal tables or plates, sunk into the ground, similar to the scheme now in operation at the Green Lawn Memorial Park. Whilst appreciating the reasons for this action, the committee feel that the public generally are not yet ready to accept the total prohibition of upright headstones, and that such a restriction is too sweeping for a cemetery which will, in a few years time, be the only one available to a large number of Croydon residents. They recommend, therefore, that the Minister of Town and Country Planning, when dealing with the appeal, should be pressed to permit the erection of simple type of headstones projecting not more than 2ft above ground level, and that in this connection the word “headstone” should not include any kerbs.¹¹⁵

In May 1947, however, plans to progress this new scheme were shelved when a proposal offering Greenlawn was presented to Croydon:

The land coloured green is known as the “Green Lawn Memorial Park” comprises approximately 9 acres, and has been laid out as a modern cemetery of approximately 930 plots of which 150 have already been sold. Substantial buildings, comprising the caretaker’s flat, a chapel, and offices have been erected, and the owners are prepared to sell the land and buildings to the Corporation for £2,500, provided the purchase is completed in approximately one month, the Corporation pay the Vendor’s and Solicitors’ costs.

The land is subject to certain restrictive covenants, from which the following is an extract:-

No grave shall be nearer than 53 feet to any boundary of the said Land. No tombstone shall be permitted, but tablets made of bronze or similar metal shall be used in place thereof. No such tablet shall be erected vertically, nor any projection to any grave be erected to a height of more than one foot above the surface of the ground.

As the land is at present used for cemetery purposes, there will be no need to obtain any town planning consent.

Application will be made to the Ministry of Health for loan sanction, but if this is not obtained it will be necessary to defray to cost out of revenue.¹¹⁶

Croydon continued negotiations on the purchase of land near Greenlawn through the summer of 1947.¹¹⁷ The Memorial Park was acquired by the October, but the exact date is not discernible from the minutes. Surprisingly, no announcement of the acquisition was made in the local press.

A number of comments can be made concerning Croydon’s quest for burial space and the acquisition of Greenlawn Memorial Park. Firstly, the reason for the sale of Greenlawn can probably be attributed to its financial failure as a privately-run burial ground. The 1947 Council minutes record that 150 plots had been sold, whilst a further source states that only 106 burials had taken place.¹¹⁸ The higher figure is accounted for by graves purchased for future use. The number of burials represents an average of one per month and contrasts with a total of over 200 burials per month in Mitcham Road and Queen’s Road cemeteries. Secondly, although a price list for the Memorial Park cannot be located, the records of TH Ebbutt show the purchase of a new price grave for two interments in January 1947 to be £25. This is considerably more than the cost of purchasing a new grave in the municipal cemetery. In 1937, the cost of purchasing the exclusive right of burial (including the first interment) in Mitcham Road Cemetery varied between £4 and £9. It is not known if the least expensive type of grave, a common or public grave, was available at Greenlawn. The third issue concerns the type of memorial permitted at Greenlawn. Graves marked only by a ground level marker were introduced in the 1930s with a cemetery in Leicester being one of the first proposed schemes, although this was subject to a last-minute revision.¹¹⁹ Whilst they reduced maintenance thus pleasing the cemetery manager and also providing an uncluttered aesthetic, they were not popular with the bereaved more familiar with headstones of an individual choice. Only two other cemeteries in London adopted this strategy: Carpenders Park and Trent Park.

The prohibitive cost of interment, coupled with no advertising leaving only the funeral directors to recommend its use, its location being at a greater travelling distance from central Croydon and the severe memorial restrictions, the small number of burials (on average about ten a year) can be appreciated. For the directors of the company, the acquisition must have been a significant relief.

Civilian War Deaths (The Volunteer Mortuary service)

It was anticipated that mass raiding, when it occurred, might mean many dead. There was no announcement of the fact, but those in the counsels of the Government were aware that in an area like Croydon there might be as many as three hundred a night. They would have to be recovered, identified, conveyed to mortuaries and buried or cremated. Quietly, the ARP authorities prepared for the grim prospect. The old Tram Depot at Aurelia Road and the former brewery building in High Street, Croydon were converted into emergency mortuaries and, while these were being made ready, the Thornton Heath Baths were to be used if necessary. Headquarters were at Mitcham Road Cemetery.

An appeal for workers was made to the Croydon undertakers and to the staff of the cemeteries; and by 1941 there were seventy volunteers from amongst these. The Cemeteries Superintendent, Mr LJ Evans, was appointed Superintendent of Civilian Deaths, in association with Mr RA Ebbutt, who was hidden throughout under the name of "Mr Robert." Equipment and stores were provided and the members underwent regular special training in their probable duties. A number of vans were converted into hearses, which carried on their front the letters CWD. Complete liaison was achieved with all other Civil Defence Services.

Such was the efficacy of the course that when the Aerodrome raid on August 15th, 1940, came, with its many deaths, the service went into action with completed competence, the first in the London area to do so. And for the six subsequent years it maintained its efficiency. Fortunately the deaths never reached three hundred nightly, but there were nights when there were three score. That the work was an ordeal no one who has heard it recounted would question. It has to be done in all weathers and in war conditions, most often at night and by the light of fires and torches and amidst debris and in cluttered streets. Harrowing scenes were common, for the human body which has died by blast or from falling masonry is not as that of one who died quietly in the course of nature; it is sometimes not even recognizable as that of a human being and too frequently only pitiful fragments of bodies were recovered. Then, there were the sad and naturally emotional scenes at the mortuary when relatives or friends, themselves under strain, make search for missing people or endeavoured to identify bodies. Only men and women who had steeled nerve and sinew, at the call of what they felt to be an imperative duty, could have done the work. That it was done well, skilfully, and always with sympathy and reverence is recorded with gratitude.

Akin to this service was the duty imposed on the Corporation from the first raid, to bury the bodies which could not be identified. They rest in a special plot dedicated to this purpose in Croydon Cemetery

Extract from WC Berwick Sayers, editor, (1949) *Croydon and the Second World War. The official history of the war work of the Borough of Croydon and its citizens from 1939 to 1945* Croydon: The Croydon Corporation pp212-213

The records of TH Ebbutt indicate that in August 1940 five funerals were prefaced with the abbreviations 'CWD'.

Acknowledgments:

Staff at London Borough of Croydon Local Studies Library and colleagues at the FW Paine Museum in Kingston.

Sources of information

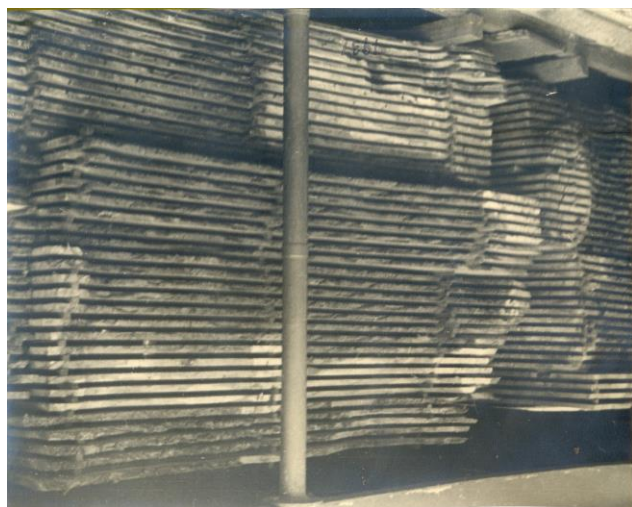
The FW Paine Museum (24 Old London Road Kingston-upon-Thames KT2 6QG) contains seventeen volumes of funeral records. The following are hand-written bound registers: 1906-1908; 1908-1913; 1913-1918; 1922-1925; 1925-1927; 1928-1931; 1931-1932; 1932-1933; 1933-1934; 1935. The following years are in metal bound registers with each page typed with the funeral details: 1935-1953. There is one hand-written index covering 1856-1929.

Talks and publications based on extracts from this material:

A talk entitled 'Croydon 1937: Portrait of Funeral Service' was given to the LAFD Southern Area Association meeting on 12 January 2015 and 'Portrait of Mortality: Croydon 1937' at the Death, Dying and Disposal 13th Conference 8 September 2017. Some of this material has been published as 'Portrait of Mortality: Croydon 1937. Death and Disposal in a London Suburb' (2018) *ICCM Journal* Vol 86 No 2 pp58-66, 'Caring for the Deceased: Some Observations from Funeral Directors' Records' (2018) *The Embalmer* Vol 61 No 1 pp29-35, and 'Coffin Making in the 1930s: A Unique Insight' (2015) *Archive* Issue 87 pp57-63.

Images

(all from the author's collection, unless otherwise stated)









TH Ebbutt's chapel of Rest
(above)

(right) Advert for TH Ebbutt's
Chapel of Rest
(*Croydon Times* 12 July 1947)

Thomas Ebbutt & Sons

EST
1718

FUNERAL DIRECTORS
89, HIGH STREET, CROYDON
 and at Purley, Coulsdon and Wallington
 Telephone: CROYDON, UPLANDS or WALLINGTON 5551

A DIGNIFIED AND EXPERIENCED FUNERAL SERVICE
 The experience of more than 200 years is at your service any time you need information or assistance concerning either Burial or Cremation.
 Our Organisation is modern and efficiently quiet. You are assured of a full and sympathetic understanding of all your requirements.

PEACEFUL REST

Illustrated on the right is the
EXTERIOR OF OUR
PRIVATE CHAPEL



1917. PRICE OF COFFINS TO THE TRADE.

Upon receipt of this List please destroy any previous ones.

		CODE NAME.	DESCRIPTION.	PRICE.		
				£	s.	d.
CHILD'S		SELSDON	Coffin for Child, 12 months old or under*, covered white embossed swansdown, furnished white tin handles, lid ornaments and plate; lined calico, trimmed swansdown ...	0	13	6
		FARLEIGH	As above, with nickel plated fittings* ...	0	15	0
		CHELSHAM	Polished Elm Coffin for Child*, plinth and cap, furnished, lined and trimmed as Farleigh ...	1	0	0
			*For every year in age above one year ... add	0	1	6
UNFINISHED		KENLEY	1-in. Elm Adult's Coffin, planed and prepared for oiling ...	1	6	0
		WHYTELAKE	1-in. Elm Coffin, plinth and cap, filled in ready for polishing ...	1	12	6
		PURLEY	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, ready for furnishing ...	2	0	0
		WOODCOTE	Polished Oak Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, ready for furnishing ...	3	5	0
OILED		CATERHAM	1-in. Elm Coffin, planed and oiled, 1 plinth, black handles, ornaments and plate, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	1	16	3
VARNISHED		NUTFIELD	Varnished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, black furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	2	9	0
		TADWORTH	Varnished Elm Coffin, plinth and cap, electro-brassed furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	2	10	0
		GATTON	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, black furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	2	15	0
		MERSTHAM	Case finished as above ...	3	0	0
POLISHED ELM		HOOLEY	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, electro-brassed furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	2	15	0
		CHIPSTEAD	Case finished as above ...	3	0	0
		CHALDON	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, electro-nickel silver furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	2	15	0
		NETHERNE	Case finished as above ...	3	0	0
		COULSDON	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, brass shield furniture, wriggled plate, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	3	10	0
		REIGATE	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, solid brass furniture, engraved plate, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	3	17	6
		OXTED	Polished Elm Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, brass furniture as above, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin ...	4	4	0
		LIMPSFIELD	Case finished as above ...	4	8	0
		WESTERHAM	Best Polished Elm Coffin, 2 plinths, cap, bead and plate mount, solid brass furniture, lined flannel and trimmed flannel and satin ...	5	8	0
		TITSEY	Case finished as above ...	5	14	0
		HAYES	Elm Shells, covered white, violet or black, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	1	15	0
		WICKHAM	Elm Shell, covered white, violet or black, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin ...	2	0	0
SHELLS		WOKING	1-in. Whitewood Shell for cremation, covered violet, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin (made according to the Cremation Society's rules) ...	2	5	0
		WADDON	Polished 1-in. Oak Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, black furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	3	15	0
		BEDDINGTON	Case finished as above ...	4	10	0
		WALLINGTON	Polished Oak Coffin, 1 plinth and cap, electro-brassed furniture, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	3	17	6
POLISHED OAK		CARSHALTON	Case finished as above ...	4	10	0
		SUTTON	Polished Oak Coffin, 2 plinths and cap, brass shield furniture, wriggled plate, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	4	4	0
		CHEAM	Polished Oak Coffin, 2 plinths and cap, solid brass furniture, engraved plate, lined calico, trimmed embossed swansdown ...	4	14	0
		EWELL	Polished Oak Coffin, 2 plinths and cap, solid brass furniture as above, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin ...	4	18	0
		EPSOM	Case finished as above ...	5	8	0
		ASHTHEAD	Best Polished Oak Coffin, 2 plinths, cap, bead and plate mount, massive brass furniture, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin ...	6	12	0
		LEATHERHEAD	Case finished as above ...	7	1	0
		HEADLEY	Best Oak Coffin, fumed and dull polished, 2 plinths, cap, bead and plate mount, solid brass furniture, lined flannel, trimmed flannel and satin ...	6	12	0
		WALTON	Case finished as above ...	7	1	0
		LEAD	Lead Coffin, and soldering down same, in addition to price of shell	NO PRICE.		
		LEAD CASE	Ditto, made inside case	NO PRICE.		
		ZINC TRAY	Covering bottom and rising 9-in. up the side	NO PRICE.		

Extra Large Sizes—Coffins above 6-ft. x 1 ft. 9-in. x 14-in. to 12-in. are charged for every 3-in. in length, 1-in. in width, or 1-in. in depth, as follows:—

Elm Coffins, 1/-; Elm Cases, 1/6.

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TH Ebbutt's coffin price list to other funeral directors (1917)

CREMATION

ON such an important matter as Cremation it is helpful to consult a firm of Undertakers whose experience can prove to be a real aid. The opening of the Croydon Crematorium, which was erected by the Croydon Corporation, has resulted in many enquiries being made concerning Cremation, and Messrs. Thomas Ebbutt & Sons have made this service a special study. Their knowledge and guidance is at the disposal of all requiring to make use of this service, whether Cremation is contemplated in Croydon or in any part of the country.

Thomas Ebbutt & Sons
Funeral Directors
89, High Street, Croydon

Est. 1718
Phone :
CRO. 5555

CREMATION

SOUTH LONDON GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE and CREMATORIUM

This beautiful resting-place is now completed. The building and fittings are of the most modern design and type and the beautiful chapel is available for services of every denomination.

The charges for cremation are moderate and can be paid in advance. From £4/4/0. Apply for full particulars and Brochure—
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HEATH
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8, Purley Parade
HIGH STREET
PURLEY (opposite
Purley Hospital)

Phone: UPLANDS 5500

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WARD'S CROYDON DIRECTORY.

Croydon Times 9 June 1937 (Above) and upper right from Ward's Croydon Directory (1938)

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MODEST MEANS

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Society apply to Head Office:

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Croydon Times 10 March 1937

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 W. J. FORD, 66, Sumner Road, Croydon.
 GRATWICK & SONS, 15, Hastings Road, Croydon.
 140, Wickham Road, Shirley.
 288, Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon.
 A. E. GREENFIELD & SON, 1, Lower Addiscombe Rd., Croydon.
 JOHN HOOK, 28, Selhurst Road, South Norwood.
 W. KEMP & SON, 5, Heath Road, Thornton Heath.
 E. E. MORGAN, 92, South End Croydon.
 W. J. OVENDEN, 24, Portland Road, South Norwood.
 T. G. POWELL & SON, 59, Whitehorse Lane, South Norwood.
 H. P. RICHARDSON, 974, London Road, Thornton Heath.
 ROWLAND BROS., 301, Whitehorse Road, Croydon.
 J. B. SHAKESPEARE, LTD., 67, George Street, Croydon.
 29, Church Road, Croydon.
 265, London Road, Croydon.
 H. C. SOWMAN & SONS, Ltd., 3, Mayday Road, Thornton Heath.

Croydon Times 7 July 1938

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To supplying Special Cremation Coffin, Motor Hearse
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WE are NOT members of any ring or trade Association
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Continued from Previous Column

MILES—In loving memory of our beloved
husband, father, George Nicholas, who
passed on 11th July, 1940.
At peace.

PACKER—Mother, Dorothy and Charles
—In loving memory of my dear
husband, killed by enemy action, July
19th, 1944.

RICHARDSON—In loving memory of a
dear husband and father, Walter, who
passed away the 18th July, 1946.

Wherever beauty has been quick in
day
Some effluence of it lives, a Spirit
dwells,
Beauty that death can never take
away.

Ever in our thoughts.
—His loving wife and daughter.

TAYLOR—In cherished memory of our
only son and brother, Sgt. Charles
Oliver Taylor, and of his wife, Winifred,
killed by enemy action, July 11th, 1944.
Mother, Father and Connie.

ROLL OF HONOUR

McKINLEY—In proud and loving memory
of Lance-Corporal Hugh Laurence Mc-
Kinley, who died of wounds in Normandy
July 6th, 1944. R.I.P.—From his Mother,
Dorothy and Family.

SMITH—In loving memory of our dear
son, P/O O. W. O. Smith, R.A.F.V.R.,
killed in No. 60, Cyprus, July 19th, 1944
aged 31 years.

Into the mosaic of Victory is laid this
Priceless piece, our only child.
Not a day do we forget you.
In our hearts you are always near.
Those who loved you sadly miss you
As we shed our silent tears.
—Mum and Dad

★ or at the Local Office of the
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W. CROYDON
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Conducted throughout in
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No Upkeep of Graves
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Cremation Is Hygienic

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For adult Cremation Service includes
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THE pressing social need
today is for slum clear-
ance and playing fields
in the large centres of pop-
ulation. The wasteful system
of burial is preventing the
economic use of land for
housing and recreation and
thereby reacting to the detri-
ment of the health and
happiness of the people.

**CROYDON BOROUGH
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No Upkeep of Graves
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**CROYDON CREMATION CO.
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THE hundreds of acres of
whitemarble gravestones
and the sprawling wastes
of neglected graveyards are
an eyesore, yet without cre-
mation there is no limit to
their growth. A Cremator-
ium is never filled and never
derelict. The building will
serve its purpose for ever
and the garden will remain a
joy for all time.

**CROYDON BOROUGH
CREMATORIUM**

*Phone THO. 3877

Croydon Times 12 July 1947

Croydon Times 26 July 1947

374
WARD'S CROYDON DIRECTORY.

T. H. EBBUTT & SON,
Complete + Funeral + Furnishers,
 (TO OR FROM ANY DISTANCE),
 41, HIGH STREET, CROYDON,
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TH Ebbutt advertisement in Ward's Croydon Directory (1885)

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TH Ebbutt advertisement in Ward's Croydon Directory (1885)

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Brighton Road, Coulsdon.

WARD'S CROYDON DIRECTORY.
 'Phone : CROYDON 193.
 'Phone : PURLEY 1812.
 'Phone : PURLEY 299.

TH Ebbutt advertisement in Ward's Croydon Directory (1885) above and (1936) below



Croydon crematorium at the time of opening in 1937

There is, in the use of electricity for cremation, an inherent "fitness for purpose" which is immediately apparent. The elimination of fuel with its unavoidable accompaniment of smoke and dirt is essentially in accordance with the sanctity of crematoria, and the clean radiant heat of an electric furnace is undoubtedly preferable to the idea of burning which is inseparable from the use of any other form of furnace.

BIRLEC LIMITED
TYBURN ROAD, EDDINGTON, BIRMINGHAM.

An advertisement for Birlec electric cremators. The crematorium depicted is not dissimilar to Croydon, although there is no fleche on the chapel. (*Pharos* May 1946)



A funeral arranged by TH Ebbutt probably in the 1930s. The Church is All Saints' Warlingham.



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- 2 Gent JB ed (1992) *Croydon Between the Wars* 2nd edition Croydon: Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Limited. Wilson A & Levy H (1938) *Burial Reform and Funeral Costs* Oxford: Oxford University Press. See also 'Letters to the Editor: Funeral Wishes' *The Times* 30 March 1936
- 3 *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health For the year 1937* Croydon: The Croydon Times Ltd. p16. See *The Times* 20 December 1927 p12 'Dr Oscar Madeley Holden, medical officer of health at Blackburn, has been appointed medical officer of Health at Croydon, on a salary of £1,300 a year, in succession to Dr HP Newsholme, who has been appointed to a similar post in Birmingham. Dr Holden died on 5 January 1971. For an article about the health of Borough of Croydon see James KD (2018) 'Croydon Health in the 1930s' *Surrey History* Vol 16 pp1-11
- 4 'Croydon in the Grip of Influenza' *Croydon Advertiser* 9 January 1937, 'Influenza. Croydon's Firm's Hundred Victims' *Croydon Times* 9 January 1937, and 'Influenza Epidemic. Croydon Never Seriously Affected' *Croydon Advertiser* 16 January 1937
- 5 For an assessment of the outbreak see Rosemary Wall (2013) 'The 'Typhoid Trials': Compensation Culture in 1930s Croydon' in *Bacteria in Britain 1880-1939* London: Pickering & Chatto. See *The Spectator* 26 November 1937 p2
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- 7 'Contaminated Well Blamed. The Typhoid Outbreak in Croydon' *Croydon Advertiser* 13 November 1937, 'The Typhoid Outbreak in Croydon. Re-assuring Statement by the Town clerk' *Croydon Advertiser* 17 November 1937, 'Typhoid Outbreak: Public Inquiry to be Held' *Croydon Advertiser* 20 November 1937. 'Typhoid Chart' *Croydon Advertiser* 26 November 1937
- 8 'The Croydon Epidemic of Typhoid' (1938) *American Journal of Public Health and the Nation's Health* May Vol 28 No 5 pp644-646
- 9 *Report on a Public Local Inquiry into an Outbreak of Typhoid Fever at Croydon in October and November 1937* London: HMSO Cmd 5664. 'Croydon Typhoid Inquiry' (1937) *British Medical Journal* December 11 pp1189, 'Water-borne Typhoid at Croydon' *The Lancet* 13 November 1937 p1164, 'The Typhoid Outbreak at Croydon' *The Lancet* 20 November 1937 p1226, 'The Croydon Epidemic' *The Lancet* 27 November 1937 p1257, 'Croydon Typhoid Outbreak' *The Lancet* 27 November p1281-82, 'The Typhoid Outbreak in Croydon' *The Lancet* 4 December 1937 p1341, 'Croydon Typhoid Outbreak' *The Lancet* 4 December 1937 p1346, 'The Typhoid Outbreak in Croydon' *The Lancet* 11 December 1937 p1397. 6
- 10 Dr Beecher Jackson was coroner from 1919 to 1945 and involved in Croydon poisoning murders that occurred in 1929. See Hall JG and Smith GD (1999) *The Coroner Arsenic Mystery* Chichester: Barry Rose, and *The Times* 24 July 1919 p9. 'New Croydon Coroner' Dr H Beecher Jackson BA (Cambs) MRCS, LRCP and Solicitor has been appointed Coroner for Croydon in succession to his father Dr T Jackson, who held the office for 30 years. During the war Dr Jackson acted as a surgeon in the Royal Navy, but latterly he has been deputy coroner for Croydon. See *The Times* 9 October 1946 p7 'Dr H Beecher Jackson, Croydon Coroner for 26 years, died yesterday in Wilson Hospital, Mitcham. He succeeded his father as Coroner at Croydon in 1919, and was elected President of the Coroners' Society for England and Wales in 1939. See 'Mayor Unveils Memorial to Croydon Coroners' *Croydon Times* 6 July 1947
- 11 *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health For the year 1937* Croydon: The Croydon Times Ltd. p25
- 12 Information from 1936-1937 and 1937-1938 register held in FW Paine archive
- 13 'Inquest Story of Tragedy on Railway Line' 16 January 1937, and 'Tragic story of Girl's Death on Railway Line' *Croydon Times* 26 June 1937, and 'Open Verdict. West Croydon railway Tragedy' *Croydon Times* 6 February 1937

- 14 'Tragedy on the Railway' *Coroner Advertiser* 5 June 1937. See also 'Women on Railway Line. Early Morning Discovery at Thornton Heath' *Croydon Advertiser* 26 June 1937 and 'Widow's Outburst at Inquest' *Croydon Advertiser* 4 September 1937
- 15 'Shot Dead. Tragedy in Vicarage Grounds' *Croydon Advertiser* 1 January 1937. 'Caterham Shooting Tragedy' *Croydon Advertiser* 28 August 1937
- 16 'West Croydon Tragedy of Ill Health' *Croydon Advertiser* 20 November 1937. See also 'Lonely Widow's Death' *Croydon Advertiser* 30 October 1937
- 17 'Tramway Inspector Fatally Injured' *Croydon Times* 6 November 1937
- 18 'Cyclist Killed. In Collision with Car' *Croydon Advertiser* 24 April 1937. See also "Suicide Corner". Croydon Motor Cyclist's Fatal Collision with Car' *Croydon Advertiser* 11 September 1937
- 19 'Darted into Road. Old Lady's Fatal Hurry' *Croydon Advertiser* 4 September 1937
- 20 "Absolute Murder". Father's Outbreak in Coroner's Court' *Croydon Advertiser* 7 August 1937. See also 'Witness's Protest. Time he was kept at Croydon Inquest' *Croydon Advertiser* 3 July 1937
- 21 'Well Tragedy still a Mystery' *Croydon Advertiser* 9 January 1937 and 'Open Verdict in Well Shaft Tragedy' *Croydon Advertiser* 13 January 1937
- 22 'Christian Scientists Death' *Croydon Times* 16 January 1937 and 'Pneumonia Death. Sanderstead Man who did not Consult Doctor' *Croydon Advertiser* 16 January 1937
- 23 'Croydon Man who Died after Arrest. Doctors Give evidence at the Inquest' *Croydon Times* 2 January 1937
- 24 'Dead Baby on Common' *Croydon Advertiser* 20 October 1937
- 25 'Death of Two Children. Mitcham Councillor's Double Bereavement' *Croydon Advertiser* 2 January 1937
- 26 'Inquest on a Minister's Mother' *Croydon Times* 20 March 1937
- 27 'Fatal Fall from a Ladder' *Croydon Times* 13 March 1937
- 28 'Collapsed at Croydon Baths' *Croydon Times* 30 June 1937. See also 'Death at the Baths' *Croydon Advertiser* 3 July 1937
- 29 'Women's Death after A Gnat Bite' *Croydon Advertiser* 21 August 1937
- 30 'West Croydon Widow's Death' *Croydon Advertiser* 23 October 1937
- 31 'Dead in a Bath' *Croydon Advertiser* 23 October 1937. See also 'Dying in a Wood' *Croydon Advertiser* 16 October 1937
- 32 'Airman Killed in Crash' *Croydon Advertiser* 30 January 1937
- 33 'Plane Crash in Fog. Three Dead' *Croydon Advertiser* 3 December 1937
- 34 'Croydon Boarding School Tragedy' *Croydon Advertiser* 27 February 1937
- 35 'Mystery of Dead Man' *Croydon Advertiser* 28 August 1937
- 36 'Jury View Body. Unusual Inquest Procedure' *Croydon Advertiser* 8 May 1937
- 37 'Catholic Cemetery. Consecrated at Mitcham Road' *Croydon Advertiser* 11 September 1937
- 38 'Crematorium Chapel. Bishop of Croydon on "This New Method"' *Croydon Advertiser* 29 May 1937, 'Cremation for Croydon' *Croydon Times* 26 May 1937, and 'Croydon Crematorium. Description of the Buildings and Layout of the Garden of Remembrance' (1937) *Journal of the National Association of Cemetery and Crematorium Superintendents* Vol 2 May pp10-11. See also Jones PH ed (1945) *Cremation in Great Britain* Third Edition London: Pharos Press p53
- 39 This history of TH Ebbutt is almost entirely derived from 'Service of Dedication and Official Opening' (1992) *British Institute of Funeral Directors' Journal* Vol 9 No 2 pp22-23. See also 'Mr TH Ebbutt, Croydon' (1938) *The Undertakers' and Funeral Directors' Journal* April p125. Another source states that the business was founded in Orpington, another in Croydon. See also 'Solicitor, Auctioneer and Funeral Director' *Croydon Times* 9 January 1937
- 40 See Parsons B (2015) 'Coffin Making: A Unique Insight' *Archive: The Quarterly Journal for British Industrial and Transport History*. Issue 87 pp57-63
- 41 President of NAFD: RA Ebbutt (1952), TH Ebbutt (1967). President of LAFD TH Ebbutt (1932-1933 & 1938-1939), RA Ebbutt (1948-1949), TH Ebbutt (1960-1961).
- 42 Parsons B (2018) *The Evolution of the British Funeral Industry in the 20th Century: From Undertaker to Funeral Director* Bingley: Emerald pp23-48
- 43 Parsons (2018) pp49-76
- 44 Adams S 'A Gendered History of the Social management of Death in Foleshill, Coventry, During the Interwar Years' in Clark D ed (1993) *The Sociology of Death: Theory, Culture, Practice* Oxford: Blackwell p161.

- ⁴⁵ 'Cremation Statistics – showing disposition of ashes for year 1934' (1935) *The Undertakers' Journal* February p63
- ⁴⁶ This was not always the case. For example, a receipt issued by South London Crematorium in 1936 shows a fee of £1 1s for reducing the remains and scattering. Copy in FW Paine Archive.
- ⁴⁷ Parsons B (2019) "Place on Rail". The Transport of the Dead by Train in the UK' *Backtrack* Vol 33 No 5 pp292-296
- ⁴⁸ 'Hearse in Smash' *Croydon Advertiser* 23 January 1937. 'Drove A Hearse Above Speed Limit' *Croydon Advertiser* 21 January 1937
- ⁴⁹ 'Mr RJ Leslie' *Croydon Advertiser* 4 September 1937
- ⁵⁰ For example see 'Mr FT Higginson. Purley Resident's Death' *Croydon Advertiser* 8 May 1937
- ⁵¹ 'Mr H Davidson' *Croydon Advertiser* 7 August 1937. See also Tucker D (2007) *The Troublesome Priest. Harold Davidson: Rector of Stiffkey* Norwich: Michael Russell (Publishing) Ltd
- ⁵² Parsons B (2011) 'Identifying Key Changes: the progress of cremation and its influences on music at funerals in England, 1874-2010' (2011) *Mortality* Vol 17 No 2 pp130-144
- ⁵³ 'Mr SP Grubb' *Croydon Times* 13 March 1937
- ⁵⁴ 'Mrs SE Gardiner' *Croydon Advertiser* 28 August 1937
- ⁵⁵ 'Dr A Scott-Turner. Anerley Physician's Death on Coronation day' *Croydon Advertiser* 22 May 1937
- ⁵⁶ 'Mr CH Ebbutt. Funeral service at Croydon Parish Church' *Croydon Advertiser* 27 March 1937
- ⁵⁷ 'The Late Ald Major Rees. Funeral at Shirley' *Croydon Advertiser* 24 April 1937
- ⁵⁸ 'Mrs SE Gardiner' *Croydon Advertiser* 26 August 1937. 'Funeral of Dr Pinkerton' *Croydon Times* 3 March 1937
- ⁵⁹ 'His Ashes were Scattered in his Garden. Croydon Bus Inspector's Last Wish' *Croydon Times* 9 June 1937
- ⁶⁰ 'Funeral of Dr Pinkerton' *Croydon Times* 3 March 1937 and 'Dr RL Pinkerton' *Croydon Advertiser* 6 March 1937
- ⁶¹ 'Fireman's Funeral. Mr Charles Connor Buried at Caterham' *Croydon Advertiser* 10 April 1937
- ⁶² 'Mr WG Stone. Impressive Funeral at Caterham' *Croydon Advertiser* 2 January 1937
- ⁶³ 'Busman's Funeral. Ex-Soldiers and War Bus Present' *Croydon Advertiser* 11 September 1937
- ⁶⁴ 'Mrs MF Picot' *Croydon Advertiser* 28 August 1937
- ⁶⁵ 'Cremation of a Lady's Body' *Croydon Guardian* 4 April 1885. Lord Dalhousie's responses was also cited in the *Croydon Guardian* 9 May 1885. For a general history of cremation See Parsons B (2005) *Committed to the Cleansing Flame. The Development of Cremation in Nineteenth-Century England* Reading: Spire Books
- ⁶⁶ *Croydon Chronicle* 23 September 1882
- ⁶⁷ *Croydon Chronicle* 10 February 1883
- ⁶⁸ *Croydon Chronicle* 12 April 1884 and 'Trial of a Welsh Druid' *South London Chronicle* 23 February 1884. 'Cremation by the Welsh Druid' *South London Chronicle* 29 March 1884. For an interview with Dr Price See 'A Drudical Cremation' *South London Chronicle* 19 January 1884. Dr Price also cremated his bull 'Morgan', a cat and a dog see *South London Chronicle* 3 Jan 1885. See also *Croydon Chronicle* 3 May 1884 that reported on Dr Cameron's Cremation Bill. The report concluded 'Some of the largest undertakers in London occupied seats in the Gallery, and listened with interest to the Debate, chuckling visibly while Sir William Harcourt was fighting their battles.'
- ⁶⁹ *Croydon Guardian* 8 December 1883
- ⁷⁰ *Croydon Chronicle* 15 November 1884 and *Croydon Guardian* 17 May 1884 Check
- ⁷¹ 'One Way out of the Difficulty' *Croydon Advertiser* 5 November 1887, and 'Notes: Political and Social' *Croydon Advertiser* 5 November 1887 'On Reading a Country Members Views on Cremation' *Croydon Advertiser* 5 November 1887. Edward Verrall Lucas was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on 29 June 1938. The same author of 'Notes: Political and Social' concluded another comment of disposal of the dead with 'And we want cremation in place of burial' *Croydon Advertiser* 22 December 1888
- ⁷² *Croydon Chronicle* 22 April 1882, 28 October 1882, 27 January 1883, 22 March 1884, 10 May 1884, 24 May 1884, 6 September 1884, 9 May 1885. The newspapers also focussed on the suggestion from a Mr Pratt of Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, that Reculver Churchyard in Herne Bay, Kent, '...should be reclaimed and utilised as a burial ground for the whole of the metropolis. The body of a pauper could be placed in a cheap coffin, and buried in the soft sand, and embedded in a sarcophagus of soft concrete, which would, of course, harden almost immediately. Others

would be buried on the first layer, so that the bodies of paupers encased in concrete would form a wall to keep back the sea from encroaching on the land'. ('Utilisation of Dead Paupers' *Croydon Chronicle* 8 August 1885 and *West Surrey Times* 8 August 1885)

⁷³ *Croydon Chronicle* 13 February 1886, *Croydon Guardian* 13 February 1886, *Croydon Advertiser* 13 February 1886, 'The Burial Board – The Cemetery Question' *Croydon Advertiser* 6 March 1886 and *Croydon Advertiser* 15 May 1886. The question about providing cremation facilities in the cemetery was also asked by the correspondent 'Esperance' *Croydon Guardian* 1 March 1884

⁷⁴ *Croydon Guardian* 13 July 1889

⁷⁵ 'Croydon' *Croydon Advertiser* 1 March 1890

⁷⁶ *Croydon Guardian* 27 February 1892. See also 'General Purposes Committee: New Cemetery' *Croydon Guardian* 4 June 1892. The cemetery land cost £4,200 and would provide 27,600 new graves. See 'Public Improvements in Croydon. Local Government Board Inquiries' *Croydon Guardian* 6 August 1892

⁷⁷ *Croydon Chronicle* 6 August 1892

⁷⁸ *Croydon Guardian* 29 March 1884

⁷⁹ 'Lecture on Cremation' *Croydon Advertiser* 21 April 1888

⁸⁰ 'The Croydon Shorthand and Debating Society' *Croydon Chronicle* 22 March 1890. 'The Croydon Debating Society' *Croydon Advertiser* 8 November 1890, *Croydon Chronicle* 1 November, *Croydon Guardian* 8 November 1890)

⁸¹ *Croydon Advertiser* 21 January 1891

⁸² 'Wise and Otherwise' *Croydon Advertiser* 28 March 1891

⁸³ The Croydon Women's Liberal Association *Croydon Advertiser* 13 June 1891

⁸⁴ *Croydon Chronicle* 4 February 1893. 'The Progress of Cremation' *Croydon Chronicle* 30 December 1893

⁸⁵ 'Shelley's Heart' *Croydon Chronicle* 6 October 1894 (see also *Croydon Guardian* 24 December 1881 and *Croydon Guardian* 27 September 1890), 'Caterham Debating Society' *Croydon Chronicle* 27 October 1894. See also a letter from AJ Riley *Croydon Chronicle* 1 June 1895

⁸⁶ 'A Crematorium for Croydon' *Croydon Guardian* 16 February 1895

⁸⁷ 'Old Town Debating Society' *The Croydon Advertiser* 8 January 1898, and 'Cremation' *Croydon Advertiser* 15 January 1898

⁸⁸ 'The Sutton Water Supply and the Banstead Burials' *Croydon Advertiser* 22 January 1898

⁸⁹ 'Croydon Rural District Council' *Croydon Advertiser* 2 April 1898

⁹⁰ *Croydon Advertiser* 28 May 1898

⁹¹ 'Kenley' *Croydon Advertiser* 29 October 1898

⁹² 'Advisability of Constructing a Crematorium' *Croydon Chronicle* 2 June 1900

⁹³ 'A Municipal Crematorium' *Croydon Chronicle* 12 January 1901, *Croydon Chronicle* 4 October 1902

⁹⁴ Parsons B (2015) 'The Centenary of West Norwood Crematorium' *ICCM Journal* Vol 83 No 4 pp57-65

⁹⁵ Parsons B (2012) 'A nineteenth Century Initiative Continues: London Proprietary Cemeteries in the Twentieth Century' *ICCM Journal* Vol 80 No 2 pp62-71

⁹⁶ As far as can be traced, the first press release appeared in May 1937. See 'South London Crematorium' *Croydon Advertiser* 1 May 1937

⁹⁷ Advert *Croydon Advertiser* 20 February 1937

⁹⁸ Advert *Croydon Advertiser* 3 July 1937

⁹⁹ See Parsons B (2012) for a history of Streatham Park Cemetery and the South London Crematorium.

¹⁰⁰ The directors took the same approach when Honor Oak Crematorium opened in 1939. See advertisement for South London Crematorium adjacent to 'Camberwell Gets Crematorium After 40 Years' *South London Press* 31 March 1939

¹⁰¹ Advert *Croydon Times* 16 July 1938

¹⁰² Advert *Croydon Times* 16 July 1938

¹⁰³ Advert *Croydon Times* 15 January 1944

¹⁰⁴ Advert *Croydon Times* 12 July 1947

¹⁰⁵ Advert *Croydon Times* 26 July 1947

¹⁰⁶ Advert *Croydon Times* 18 July 1947

¹⁰⁷ Advert *Croydon Times* 1 November 1947

- ¹⁰⁸ Banstead Urban Council explored opening a cemetery on Merland Rise, but the matter did not progress. See 'Proposed Cemetery' *Croydon Advertiser* 16 October 1937.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Memorial Park." Warlingham Residents and Ministry's Sanction' *Croydon Advertiser* 23 January 1937
- ¹¹⁰ 'New Type of Cemetery' *The Times* 7 December 1936
- ¹¹¹ Advertisement (1938) *The Undertakers' and Funeral Directors' Journal* April p132
- ¹¹² County Borough of Croydon. Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee minutes 11 November 1947 pp77-78
- ¹¹³ County Borough of Croydon. Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee minutes 15 May 1947 pp815-816
- ¹¹⁴ County Borough of Croydon. Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee minutes 17 July 1947 pp1171-1172
- ¹¹⁵ County Borough of Croydon. Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee minutes 17 July 1947 pp1171-1172
- ¹¹⁶ County Borough of Croydon. Parks, Cemeteries and Small Holdings Committee minutes 15 May 1947 pp893-894
- ¹¹⁷ 'Croydon Cemetery Scheme' (1947) *The National Funeral Director* September p104, 'Corporation's Cemetery Plan at Chelsham Called 'monstrous and inhuman'' *Croydon Times* 11 September 1947
- ¹¹⁸ Evans LJ (1959) 'Greenlawn Memorial Park' *Journal of the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration* Vol 27 No 2 pp39-40
- ¹¹⁹ See Rugg J (2006) 'Lawn Cemeteries: the emergence of a new landscape of death' *Urban History* Vol 33 No 2 pp213-233, and <https://historicismengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001571> (accessed 29 August 2020). 'New Cemetery Opened' *Leicester Daily Mercury* 20 October 1931