

Henry Wardle – The long distance Railway Funeral

Henry Wardle (1832 – 16 February 1892)

Wardle was born at Twyford, Berkshire, the son of Francis Wardle and his wife Elizabeth Billinge.

In 1853 at the age of 21 he went into partnership with Thomas Fosbrooke Salt in the Burton upon Trent brewery Thomas Salt and Co.

Wardle married Thomas Fosbrooke Salt's daughter Mary Ellen Salt in 1864. They lived at Winshill.

He was for many years active in the town's civic affairs as a Town Commissioner and then an alderman after Burton became a municipal borough in 1878. He was a J. P. for Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

Wardle was elected as the Member of Parliament (MP) for South Derbyshire constituency at the 1885 general election. He held the seat until his death in Burton upon Trent in 1892 aged 60.

The Funeral

Mr. H. Wardle funeral took place on Saturday 20th February 1892. He wished that his body should be cremated. Arrangements were made with Woking crematorium

The body, which was enclosed in a pine coffin, remained at Highfield, his home at Burton-on-Trent, until about half past nine on Friday night. When six old employees were selected from different departments of the brewery to reverently convey it to the brewery sidings. Where a special van and a Saloon were standing.

The corpse was placed in the van, and guard was kept over it during the night.

It had been arranged that Messrs. F. Wardle, H. Wardle, E. D. Salt, W. C. Salt, H.G. Tomlinson, H.E Bridgman, and E. Madeley should take part in the last rights at Brookwood cemetery and Woking, and these

gentlemen went down to London on Friday night.

The others assembled early on Saturday morning at the siding, and, having taken their place in the saloon, were conveyed by one of the firm's own locomotives to the Burton-On-Trent railway station by way of the Dixie siding.

We should here mention that Mr. C. Salt would have been one of the mourners, but illness prevented his attendance.

The van and saloon were attached to the 7.10 Midland passenger train, and arrived in London, St Pancras, soon after eleven.

Here practically all in the firm's employ in the Metropolis, the only absentee being ill.

The mourners were joined by Mr. T. L. Wardle (London), Mr. K H Loverage (London manager for the firm), Mr. H. C. Moody, Mr J. Peaceful (a scripture reader employed by Mr. Wardle at Twyford), and members of the London staff.

Without loss of time the body was placed in a hearse, and, the mourners having taken their place in coaches, which were in readiness, were taken to Westminster Bridge Road station, belonging to the Necropolis Company, and from then by special train to Brookwood Cemetery.

The private station connected with the cemetery was reached before half past one .

At two o'clock the last stoppage was made at the crematorium.

Here a religious service took place, which lasted about half an hour.

This was followed by the process of cremation which lasted about an hour and a quarter.

The space occupied by the body was well designed, and the ashes within this space were afterwards collected, placed in an urn, and brought back to Burton.

The whole arrangements were carried out without a single incident to lessen the solemnity of the proceedings.

The urn containing the ashes were (according to Mr. Wardle's direction.) reverently laid in the family grave in the Burton cemetery on Monday morning, in the presence of near relatives and friends, with his wife Elizabeth. A portion of the burial service was solemnly read by the Rev.K.Warbreck.

There was later a Memorial Service for Henry Wardle at Burton with big attendance.

About Woking Crematorium

The first crematorium in the UK was at Woking. Founded in 1878, when a piece of land close to St John's Village was bought by Sir Henry Thompson of the London Cremation Society. The land was formerly owned by the Necropolis Company, but purchased from a third party.

When opened in 1878, the original crematorium was a very simple affair with a cremator, but no chapel and had very little use

By the time chapel was built at the Cematorium in January 1891 the popularity of cremation was increasing.

In 1892 there where 104 cremations, Wardle was Cremated in Feb of that year. He was a strong advocates of cremation judging by the funeral arrangements

Manchester Crematorium was opened in October 1892 by the Manchester Cremation Society, founded in 1888.

Golders Green Crematorium, Londons first was opened November 1902 by the London Cremation Society, owners of Woking Crematorium.

Sources

The Burton Chronicle – *February 25 1892*

Cremation in Britain 1907 – *the Cremation Society of England*

Wikipedia