

This is a Story from 'A Few Forgotten Women'



Mary Mallett's Story

Please note that this story contains descriptions of a Post Mortem that some readers may find distressing.

A version of this story appeared in the journal of The Braund Society
www.braundsociety.org.

The Post Mortem records for St. George's Hospital, London are available on Ancestry www.ancestry.co.uk and include a report for Mary Braund. Mary had been admitted to the hospital on 27 August 1901, suffering from pericarditis, bronchitis, hypostatic pneumonia and emaciation. She was treated by Dr Ogle. Mary died on 2 September; her age was said to be 57. The report reads, *'Very emaciated body. Scar over L knee, Rigor Mortis present'*. There follows descriptions of the state of Mary's organs, including their weights. J Howell Evans noted, *'Patient on admission Aug. 27th was in a very emaciated condition complaining of general weakness and inability to swallow. Clinical evidence pointed to oesophageal obstruction which was considered as probably due to malignant disease of oesophagus especially because of enlarged cervical glands and of a large slough at the posterior wall of the pharynx and of the marked emaciation. The patient gradually grew weaker and died Sept, 2nd.*

Mary's will reveals that she was a widow, whose normal address was Orchard Hill, Northam in Devon. Just a few months before her death, she was recorded as living

there, in four rooms, with her father, William Mallett, a gardener. There is no clue why she was hospitalised in London.

Mary Mallett was born in Alwington, Devon in 1846. She married local farmer's son, Samuel Dunn in 1866. Two years later, twenty two year old Samuel met an untimely end. His funeral is reported in the *North Devon Gazette*. *'On Wednesday evening the funeral of Private Samuel Dunn of the 21st Devon (Bideford) Volunteers took place, the body being interred with military honours in the Bideford Cemetery. The corps assembled on the quay at half past five o'clock and afterwards marched to meet the funeral procession, when the band played The Dead March from Saul. The Rector, the Rev. F L Bazely, officiated at the burial and on the body being interred, the corps fired three volleys over the grave. The weather was exceedingly wet but notwithstanding this a large number of persons assembled to witness the funeral. The deceased, who was an old and respected member of the corps, caught cold at the recent battalion drill at Barnstaple, from the effects of which he died on Monday week.'*

At the end of the year, Mary gave birth to their son, Samuel. Leaving her son to be looked after by her parents, Mary found work as a housemaid for Dr John Thompson of Kingsley Villa, North Down Lane, Bideford. In 1872, she remarried to John Braund.

Taking young Samuel Dunn, Mary moved to 51 Briton Ferry Road, Neath, Glamorganshire, with her husband, John, a stationary engine driver in a chemical works. John died in 1888 and was buried in Llantwit. In 1891, Mary was still living in Briton Ferry Road with her son, a carpenter and joiner. Perhaps she left Wales and returned to Devon in order to look after her father.

In her will, written in 1900, Mary left a piano and household effects to her son, who was by this time a greengrocer in Neath. Her money was to be divided between her son and her father. Mary's sister, Elizabeth, the wife of William Lloyd, was an

executor, along with Henry Mallett, corn chandler. A gold watch and chain was left to Mary's niece, Nellie Lloyd.

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