

POSTBRIDGE CEMETERY.

There was considerable disquiet about the lack of cemetery at Postbridge. "Clapper Bridge" is a letter to a local newspaper headed "Church matters in the Parish of Lydford" wrote:

"There is no burial ground for the Moor district. The dead of Postbridge and Huccaby have to be carried at least six miles across the Moor to Princetown or Widecombe for interment in all weathers, times and seasons. It may be in summer under most oppressive heat and dangerous or in wintry storms. To instance any case would be pathetic! To describe several cases known to the writer would touch the hearts of all those who have never witnessed the services incident to Moor funerals!".

In 1902 the Rev. G.S. Thorpe, the Vicar of Lydford, sent a petition to the Lydford Parish Council asking for a Burial Ground at Postbridge. The Council set up a committee to enquire into the matter.

In 1903 the committee reported that the inhabitants of Postbridge and district numbered about 300. The cost of providing the burial ground would be about £60 and it was thought that this would cover all expenses - site, fencing, gates and posts, levelling and drainage and planting and consecrating.

Fees for interments and tombstones would meet the cost of maintenance and the Council recommended acceptance of the Burial Act.

Two sites were looked at. One occupied by Mr. Rowse and the other by Mr. Cleave.

Money was to be raised by public subscription and it was hoped that the Duchy would provide the land free of charge. Unfortunately, the Duchy were unable to do this but offered to sell the land for £10.

Mr. Balkwill, of Lydgate, agreed to pay £10 plus £3. 3s for registering the assignment on certain conditions. These were:

" The cemetery to be divided into two equal parts. One part being free and the other subject to the rules of the Church of England.

The free part to be open for the free use of the inhabitants of Postbridge and their relatives, and also for strangers using any religious ceremony the friends of the deceased may wish, so long as such ceremony may not interfere with the free grounds for the burials of others".

After a Parish Meeting in 1904, the Burial Act was adopted and the Duchy were asked to transfer the land.

The parishioners collected £63 towards a total expenditure of between £90 and £100.

In 1905 Mr. Barrington laid out the site which had been previously tenanted by Mr. Rowse, who waived his claim for compensation for loss of occupation.

Messrs Rice & Son tendered for the erection of the walls at 5s 4d per perch, which was accepted. Mr. Barrington agreed that stone could be cut from Merripit Hill or Stannon for the purpose.

Mr. Silas Sleep was appointed as the first grave digger/caretaker and the Council agreed a scale of fees.

The first burial was that of Henry Endacott on 20th January, 1906 in the free part. In December 1907 the left hand side of the cemetery (looking from the gate) was consecrated by the Bishop of Exeter. Other clergy present were Rev. G.S. Thorpe, Rev. Eastcott Smith (Curate at Postbridge), Rev. Lister Coles, Rev. H.G. Pigot (Chaplain Dartmoor Prison) and Mr. A.G. Mackay (Diocesan Registrar).

Prior to this ceremony there had been a service at the Church and when the procession reached the cemetery Mr. George French was presented with a silver key bearing the inscription "Presented to Mr. G. French on the occasion of the opening of Postbridge Cemetery December 1907" which he used to open the gates.