



A Cross for George Crick

Since being given all the information on the grave of George Crick in Cairo, Myrtle and I had very much looked forward to laying the Thame Remembers Cross in his memory in Cairo War Cemetery. Unfortunately the day we were to do this Myrtle was unwell and unable to be with me. The reception desk at the hotel, from my map and instructions, could not help me at all with the location of the cemetery, to tell the taxi driver, but our Egyptian tour guide Hisham was exceptionally helpful and spent a lot of time finding out just where it was. He said no taxi driver would understand the English instructions I had been given, so wrote it out in Arabic but was still doubtful that I would actually find it!

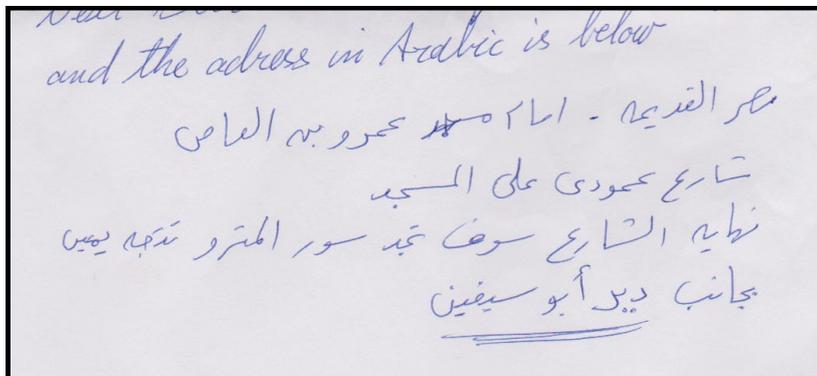
The taxi driver, Said, took me across the city for several miles eventually stopping by a police controlled barrier saying the car could go no further but he would show me the rest of the way on foot and left me at a broad flight of steps



Cairo War Cemetery

leading to an enormous archway and arranged to meet me where he had dropped me in one and a half hours. It was fairly obvious to me at first glance that this was not the right place. There was a very large Church - St Michaels I believe - up yet another broad flight of steps and the cemetery itself was like a small town with large mausoleums, chapels, monuments etc. I wandered hopefully for a while occasionally asking my way but not being understood until I came across a group of people who looked helpful and who said I was in the Greek Orthodox part of the cemetery and I was totally in the wrong cemetery anyway. They gave me instructions on where I should go!

Back to the Police barrier where the taxi had dropped me and here thankfully the police gave me exact instructions. "Pass four streets on your left and take the fifth which is broader." I passed four what I would call only passages, busy and bustling, and the fifth seemed to be the right one. I did ask advice of a man with two small children and I did seem to be in the right area. A large wall appeared on my right with a gate manned by two men but no, this was not it. This was a very run down poor area, and I was beginning to wonder if in fact I was ever going to reach my destination. Yet another gateway with a cluster of people round it. I approached them hopefully, and one man who looked to be some sort of official came forward, looked at my Arabic instructions and said he would show me the way. I had no option but to follow as he led me along the very rough street through debris, deeply embedded tree trunks and at one stage a small flood which he guided me through. Then to a gate in the wall, opened it and there it was. A beautiful green well tended cemetery like all the war ones I had seen before. All laid out as shown on the plan David had given me with an avenue leading to a giant cross and all



The address Wendy used

Crosses Delivered

11 February 2017

Driver

George Crick

Australian Army Service Corps

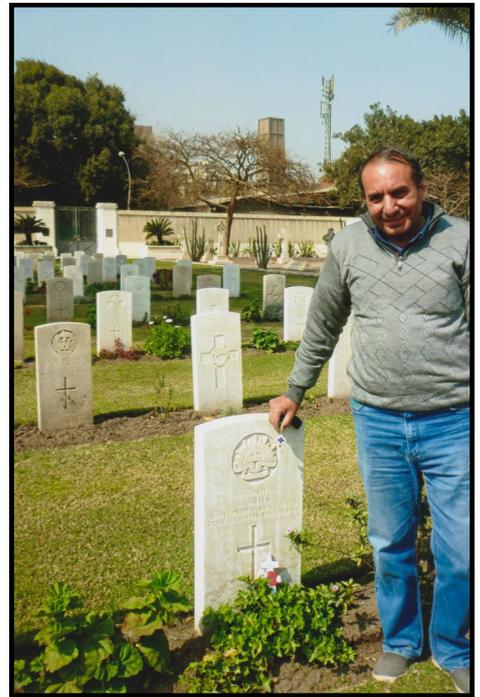
Wendy Townsend

Cairo Military Cemetery

Egypt

the graves neatly numbered. I was quite overwhelmed when we located George Crick's grave so quickly. Like all the others it was beautifully cared for and so I placed the cross, said a prayer and took photos. I would so like to have spent time there just absorbing the atmosphere, but my lovely guide Nabil insisted he would wait for me to take me back and I had already taken up so much of his time. He introduced me to the park keeper, we were the only people there and I was so grateful to them both, I offered Nabil something for his kindness and he refused but he himself asked the park keeper if he would accept something but he too shook his head. I had taken the small Thame Remembers lapel badges, but as he was a Muslim he shook his head with that too. Nabil however, who I learned was a Coptic Christian, accepted the small red poppy badge.

We returned to the gateway where I had met him and he said it was the nunnery of Tamav Erene a convent for nuns. He invited me to go into the church and so I took my shoes off, and followed him inside the very crowded church full of people in prayer. When we came out he led me towards a



The helpful Nabil

busy crowded café and I said I really must go, but he turned to the right which was a very well stocked book shop. Here he insisted on buying me the beautiful guide book of Tamav Erene the history of the nun who dedicated her life to this nunnery. I have yet to read it, but I will!

It was then time for me to say goodbye to my wonderful guide Nabil but the story is not yet quite finished. I was making my way down the street back to the taxi when I heard my name being called. There was Nabil hurrying after me with the file with all the information David had given me in his hand. I had put it down when taking my shoes off in the church and forgotten all about it!

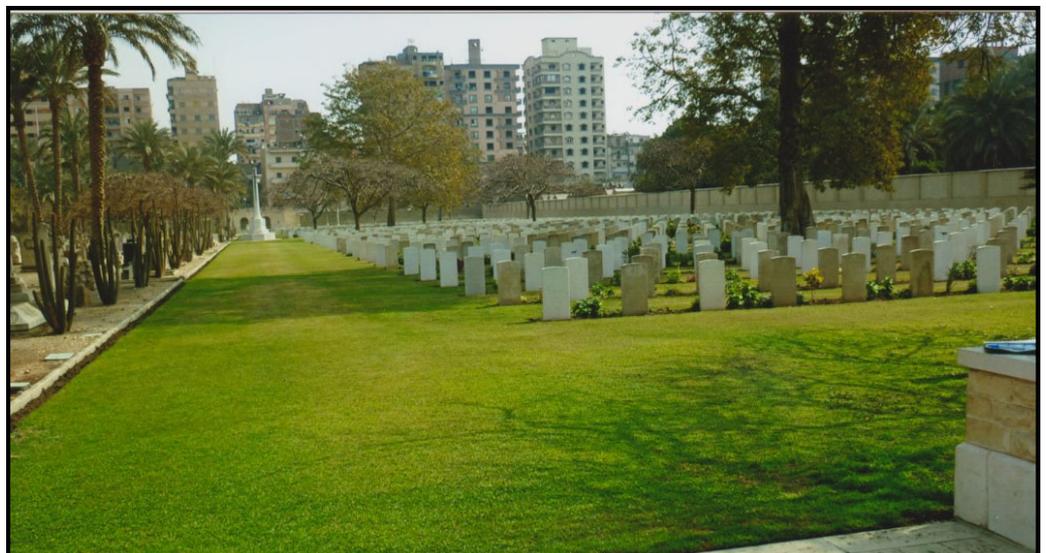
So back to the Police barrier and Said who was waiting for me. I arrived later than I had planned so was especially glad when he came across the road to meet me and so back to the hotel.

I am honoured to have placed the Thame Remembers Cross on George Crick's grave, but also grateful to have gone off the beaten track, as it were, and experience the "kindness of strangers" and will for ever remember the experience.

Wendy Townsend Feb 2017



Wendy laying the cross and the view from the cemetery gate.



Researching George Crick

The Marquis de Ruvigny published a Roll of Honour of the fallen of WW1 containing over 26,000 short biographies; it covers mainly the early years. Although the entries were compiled with family assistance much of the records have been shown to contain inaccuracies. We consulted the de Ruvigny Roll of Honour to find any names of people from Thame who could be added to the Thame Remembers project and among the names that we discovered was that of George Crick. The de Ruvigny biography reads:

"Crick George, farrier, 3rd Light Horse Brigade, 12th Army Service Corps, Australian Imperial Force; b. Moreton, near Thame, co. Oxon; served some years in the R H A; then went to Canada, where he served for nine years in the Mounted Police; proceeded to Australia in Sept 1912 and was subsequently employed at the Footscray Tannery, Yarraville; volunteered for Imperial Service, and joined the Light Horse Brigade, 12th A S C; served with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli, and died at Heliopolis 24 Sept 1915, from illness contracted while on active service. He m. S E (79 Anderson Street Yarraville Melbourne Victoria Australia), dau of (--), and had four children. The eldest s. was awarded the DCM and is now (1918) serving with the 1st Grenadier Guards in France."

There was enough information to consider adding his name to the Thame Remembers project but it was lacking in specific evidence for creating our own biography or presenting a case for inclusion on the war memorial to the Town Council.

To start it would be useful to confirm birth details. The CWGC records his parents as John and Mary Crick and he died at age 45, born Thame, Oxon. A search of the birth and baptism records and the Census returns for 1861 to 1881 show no George Crick in Thame. John and Mary are listed in Moreton but their only son is Sackville, born Aug-Sept 1861. Sackville is a 19 year old blacksmith in the Census of 1881 living with his parents in Moreton.

What do his service details say?

The British Army records have not survived but unlike them all Australian ones have survived and have been digitised,

so a visit to the Australian records quickly located his Service details. George joined up on 31 October 1914 giving his age as 44 years and 1 month and his next of kin as his wife S Crick of 45 Wilson Street (amended later to 79 Anderson St). He also said that he was born in Thame, Oxon and was previously a farrier. Further in the records his wife is confirmed as Sarah Elizabeth. He died in Egypt, of "Mordis Cordis" which is the medical term for heart failure.

Website searches for George Crick did not provide any meaningful response, so a change of approach was needed. A search for Sarah Crick in Australia provided a response in the Electoral Register for Melbourne where in 1914 she was living at 45 Wilson Street, but the person living with her was not George but Sackville. Further searches of passenger lists show Sackville and Sarah arriving in Australia in August 1912 with their youngest daughter, Elizabeth.

The 1901 and 1911 census show Sackville and Sarah living in England in Worksop and Mansfield with their children, the three eldest being born in Canada. They are Frederick, b:1890, Violetta, b:1892 and Elsie, b:1894. Elizabeth was born in Worksop in 1899 where Sackville was working as a shoeing smith/blacksmith.

De Ruvigny mentions Canada so that fits with the children being born there, but there are no records in Canada for a George Crick or even a Sackville Crick. One ray of hope is a passenger list of 1897 when Mrs Sackville Crick and the three children return to Liverpool from Montreal.

Where to go now?

Not quite in desperation but a general search of the internet is as good an approach as any. This turned up a number of

family trees which include Sackville Crick and one had a reference to a George Mott!! Following up on this led to the 1891 Census for Canada, where George Mott, his wife Sarah and young son Frederick are living in Toronto and George is a policeman RCMP.

Backtracking a little to John and Mary in Moreton we discovered that Mary's maiden name was Mott and that she had three children prior to marrying John Crick. All would carry the name Mott as Mary was not married. Growing up, Sackville (George) would have been familiar, if not confused, with the name Mott being used in the family.

Searching Canadian records this time for the name Mott revealed son Frederick Mott's birth on 22 September 1890 in Saskatchewan Canada; mother's maiden name, Sarah Elizabeth Jackson and father George Mott.

The RCMP records are available through the Canadian government library service and soon showed up all 70 pages of George's RCMP service record. He joined in Toronto on 24 May 1887, age 23 and 7 months, previous trade blacksmith and served for five years to May 1892. He re-engaged on 1 February 1894 and was discharged on 31 January 1897. The enlistment papers all give his father as John Mott of Thame, Oxon, England. His service would seem to have always been as a blacksmith. On his re-engagement at Regina on 1 February 1894 he gave his age as 25 years 3 months. A file note points this out and notes that he should be 30 years 3 months according to his first engagement. We have not found details of the marriage, but he was given permission to live out of Barracks on 15 August 1891 as he was a married man. Among the papers is a reference provided for his initial engagement with the RCMP which says that George Mott worked at the Royal Hotel in Toronto for few months in 1887.

Application for Engagement in the N. W. Mounted Police Force.

Name (in full) *George Mott*
 Address *Toronto*
 By whom recommended *Mr. Vernon 1087 100 Front St. E. Ont*

Qualifies to be answered by Applicant in his own handwriting.

Questions.	Answers.
1. What has been your occupation during the last five years?	<i>blacksmithing</i>
2. Do you understand the care and management of horses, and can you ride well?	<i>Yes</i>
3. Have you at any time served in the Canadian Militia, or have you in any other way received military instruction?	<i>yes</i>
4. Have you previously served in the N. W. Mounted Police, if so, when, and why were you discharged?	<i>No</i>
5. Have you at any time applied for engagement in the Mounted Police and been rejected by the Medical Examiners?	<i>No</i>
6. What is your Age?	<i>23</i>
do Height?	<i>5 9/16</i>
do Weight?	<i>hundred 50</i>
do Chest measurement?	<i>35</i>
7. Are you married or single?	<i>single</i>

Date *24 May*
 Signature of Applicant, *George Mott*

Note.—Certificates of character must accompany this application.

George Mott's application to join the Mounties

the Royal Horse Artillery, but lack of a record does not mean that it did not happen, and, as we know, most of the Army records were destroyed by the Luftwaffe during WW2.

What about de Ruvigny's statement:

The eldest s. was awarded the DCM and is now (1918) serving with the 1st Grenadier Guards in France.

In the Census of 1911 Frederick (his only son) was serving with the Grenadier Guards in Aldershot, Hampshire but in early 1914, as a married man he took passage to Australia and lived there till his death in 1964. His army service records have not survived but there is a note of a Grenadier Guardsman named F Crick of Mansfield who gained a Military Medal in 1916. Mansfield is where the family lived in 1911. The same F Crick was awarded a bar to his Military Medal in 1919. All this points to Frederick being recalled to his regiment in 1914, serving throughout the war and achieving two Military Medals but not a DCM.

Why the change of name?

It is only supposition but, in the mid Victorian time in Moreton, I guess George was a more conventional name than Sackville. He would probably have been known as George at home and being brought up in a family of Mott children, he would be known locally as George Mott. It is probable that he did not discover the truth until he came to marry in Canada. Returning to England was a opportunity to adopt his correct name, yet still being called "George" by the family. He was Sackville Crick on the 1901 and 1911 censuses in England and in the Australian Electoral Rolls. It would therefore be natural for him to join the Australian Army as "George" when no proof of name or age was needed. He again lied about his age, this time to be under the 45 years maximum age for enlistment.



This newsletter is printed and published by Thame Museum Trust and distributed free to all

This paper is intended as a digest of news items about the Thame Remembers project to keep the people of Thame up to date with what is happening.

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Thame Remembers is a project of Thame, Oxfordshire to commemorate the centenary of World War One by researching those from Thame who fell in all conflicts worldwide, and remembering them by placing a Thame Cross on their grave or memorial wherever in the world that may be. If you feel that you can help please contact Dave on 01844 21 5178.