

The Grave of Lucas D'Oyly Carte

One of my eight talks and presentations that I have made is one entitled '***A Very English Dynasty – Four Generations of the D'Oyly Carte Family***'.

It traces the history of the family from the mid-19th century to the latter years of the 20th century. The family being:

Richard Cart

Richard D'Oyly Carte

Rupert D'Oyly Carte

Bridget D'Oyly Carte

It is a straight line of descendants, Bridget being the great-granddaughter of Richard Cart. Two aspects of the names should be noted.

Firstly, Richard Cart does not have the letter 'e' at the end of his surname. There was no 'e' in the historical line, but Richard Carte, a flautist, himself added the additional letter to distinguish himself from another musician of the same name.

Secondly, in the second generation the name D'Oyly was added. This is not part of the family, or surname, but was added by the second Richard's mother on registering his birth as a second name – not part of the surname. She added this to his name as the first-born son to record the fact that her family was of French origin, originating from an area of Calvados, Northern France where several villages exist which include Ouilly in their names (e.g Ouilly le Vicompte), thus D'Oyly – of, or from Ouilly. She may have used the simplified form of the name as an easier pronunciation for English speakers. The D'Oyly was not added to the names of young Richard's siblings, but, since Richard D'Oyly Carte was to become a famous and notable name by virtue of Richards's success, his descendants continue to use it as part of their names. Because it is not strictly part of their surnames, the D'Oyly is not hyphenated to the Carte surname.

Richard D'Oyly Carte's marriage was to produce two sons to him and his wife Blanche, Lucas born 1872 and Rupert, 1876. In his adulthood Lucas did not wish to work in his father's theatrical, opera and hotel business, instead training to be a barrister. On his father's death in 1901 it was Rupert, aided by his then stepmother Helen D'Oyly Carte, who took the business forward into the 20th century.

As outlined below, Lucas was to tragically die in the tuberculosis sanatorium in Norfolk in 1907 and was buried in the local churchyard of Kelling Church.

As part of my research of this line, my wife Joy and I located this grave in the late summer of 2021. It was difficult to find and read in a remote part of the churchyard and it was sad to see that the grave was neglected and in need of restoration and cleaning. We determined that something should be done to remedy this situation and, as I write, we are in the process of working with the local Parochial Church Council to have this remedied, through a grant to be made to The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, the charity which exists by virtue of the work of Bridget before her death in 1985.

The words shown at the end of this piece are those that will appear in a small pamphlet to be available at St Mary's, Kelling as a guide to those who may visit the grave in the years following its planned refurbishment. We hope that into future our efforts will enable future generations of the public to locate and visit the grave – this the lost son of one of England's most famous and successful theatrical and business icons.



The Grave of Lucas D'Oyly Carte as we found it in 2021



**Jim Stebbings
March 2022**

Welcome to St Mary The Virgin, Kelling. We hope you enjoy your visit to our Church and to our Eco-award churchyard.

Please take time in the natural surroundings of the churchyard in which you will find a number of interesting graves, some of which are the resting place of patients from nearby Kelling Hospital, the first tuberculosis sanatorium for working men, built in the first few years of the 20th century.

In particular you may wish to visit the grave of one of its first patients, Lucas D'Oyly Carte, eldest son of Richard and Blanche D'Oyly Carte, who died from tuberculosis at the sanatorium on January 18, 1907, and was buried here on January 23, 1907, aged 34.

Father, Richard D'Oyly Carte is inextricably linked to his partnership with Gilbert and Sullivan and the creation of the Savoy Comic Operas through the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Richard D'Oyly Carte was also a theatrical agent, impresario, hotelier and theatre owner, having built London's Savoy Theatre, The Savoy Hotel and the Royal English Opera House, now the Palace Theatre.

Lucas D'Oyly Carte had not wanted to succeed his father in the business, a role that fell to his younger brother, Rupert. Instead, Lucas became a barrister and acted as legal assistant and secretary to Baron Russell of Killowen when in 1899 Russell represented Britain during the arbitration hearings following the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895.

With the onset of his tuberculosis, Lucas was a resident in North Norfolk for several years before his death, first at Mundesley and then at Kelling Sanatorium. During his time at the Sanatorium Lucas became very interested in the treatment of his disease and in the welfare of others. By 1903 he had become a member of the executive committee. Together with Dr. Burton -Fanning Lucas designed a form of sleeping- shelter that would combine the greatest efficiency of the treatment at the least cost. These were of a wooden structure, providing maximum benefit from the fresh North-Norfolk air whilst maintaining the necessary privacy and protection from high winds. Some were mounted on small wheels with a circular metal track so that they could be swung round from the wind. This design would be in use for the next eighty years.

His death in 1907 greatly saddened the staff and patients since as well as continuing to develop the design of the accommodation he and his family had supported all aspects of the sanatorium's work as well as making large financial gifts and finally bequeathing his motor car for sanatorium use.

His burial on a bitterly cold day was conducted by Rev. W.B. Dalby (rector of Kelling and Salhouse). The mourners were led by his brother Rupert and Rupert's wife Dorothy. As well as other members of his wider family there were representatives from the staff and management of Kelling Sanatorium and from the business and theatrical world of his late father who had died in 1901. His mother had died in 1885 and Lucas and Rupert had been brought up by Richard D'Oyly Carte's second wife, Helen Carte Boulter (born Susan Helen Couper Black)

The grave was cleaned and refurbished in 2022 by the PCC with a grant from The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and on the initiative of Norfolk theatre historian Jim Stebbings who speaks on the subjects of Gilbert and Sullivan and the D'Oyly Carte Dynasty. (www.jimstebbingpublicspeaker.co.uk)