M Coghlan Ltd
FUNERAL DIRECTORS



M Coghlan Ltd
1861 - 2013





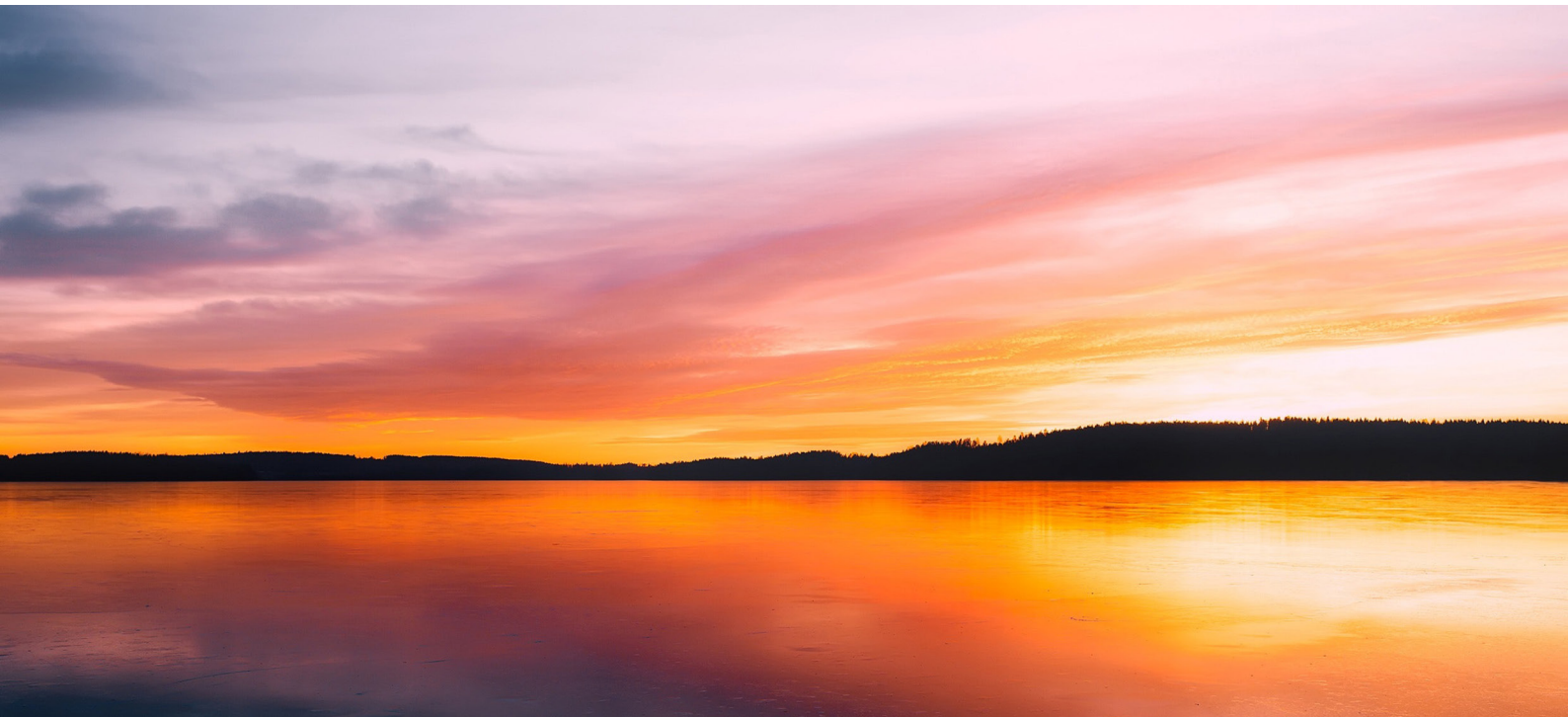
Change Photos

M Coghlan Ltd Funeral Directors
1861 - 2013

1861 - 2020

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How the Coghlan family arrived in Fareham

The Coghlan family was originally from Bantry Bay, Ireland. It would seem that Captain John Coghlan, born in 1754 brought French Prisoners to Portchester Castle.

Ireland, Cork bottom of map



Highlight Cork

Portchester Castle where French Prisoners were kept



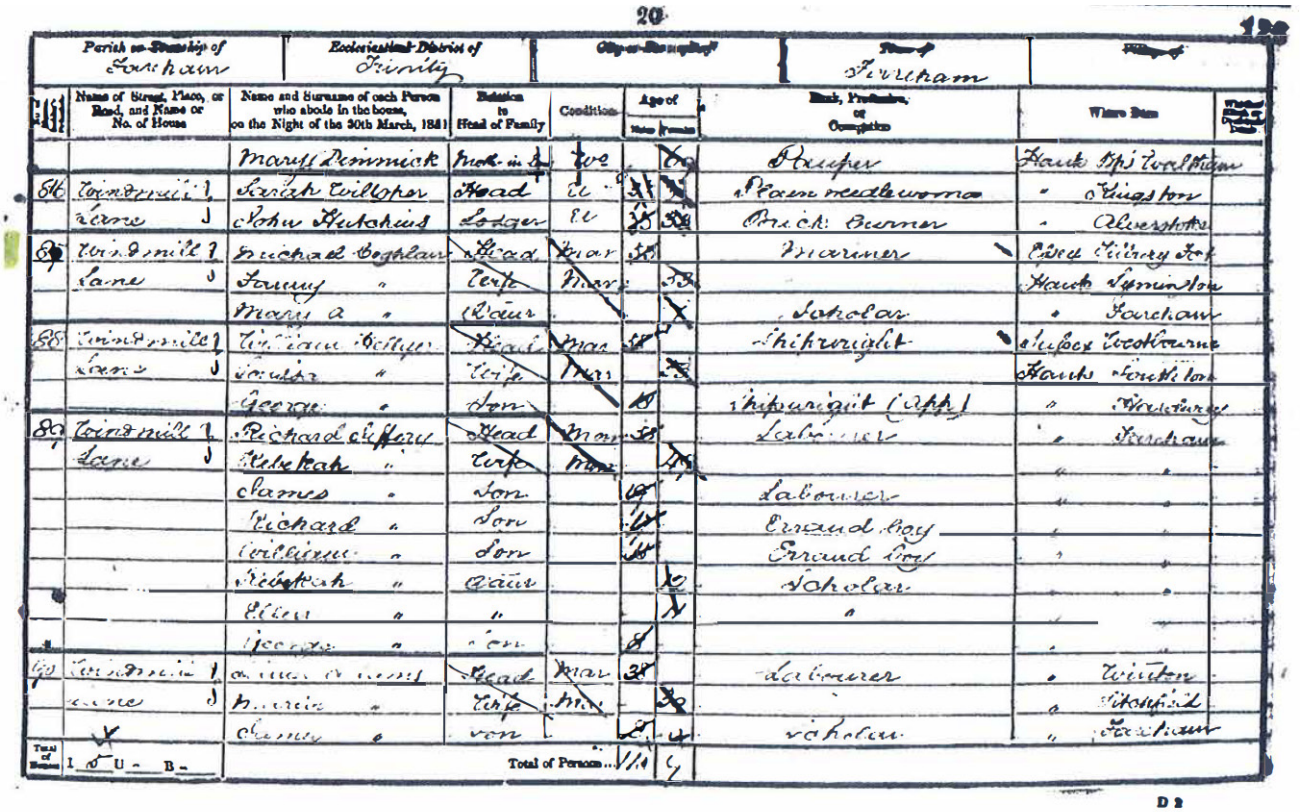
Below are two quotes from Irish papers;

"On 15th December 1796, Bantry Bay, Ireland, once again became the destination of a French Fleet. 43 ships and 15,000 men set sail from Brest in support of the Irish patriot, Wolfe Tone. Tone, a founder member of the United Irishmen, was determined to establish an Irish Republic by armed rebellion. Easterly storms off the Irish coast dis Join up persed the fleet and while some succeeded in anchoring in Bantry Bay, most were scat tered in the Atlantic. On 27th January 1797 the order was given to abandon the attempted invasion and the few remaining ships in the bay that were seaworthy sailed for France."



"Previous to the French fleet coming to anchor, his majesty's brig Kangaroo, commanded by the Hon. Courtenay Boyle, fell in with it, and immediately proceeded off Crookhaven, a small harbour close to the entrance of Bantry Bay, in order to communicate the intelligence of the appearance of the enemy. On the morning of the 22nd of December, the Kangaroo made repeated signals for a boat from the shore, which although they were distinctly seen, yet so high a sea was running at the time, and the wind was blowing so tremendously, that no boat would venture to put off. At length, however, a Mr Coghlan, observing the perseverance with which the signal was continued, and deeming it a case of extreme urgency, induced five men to accompany him upon this dangerous service in a pilot boat, although they left the shore with but little probability of reaching the Kangaroo, or if they succeeded in doing so, of returning in safety from her."

In the 1851 census it would appear that Michael & Fanny Coghlan still resided in Windmill Lane, Portchester.



20

Parish or Township of Fareham | Ecclesiastical District of Trinity | Fareham

No.	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Males	Age of Females	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	
		Mary Dennick	Mistress	Wd		60	Grocer	Hants Titchfield	
84	Windmill Lane	Josiah Willsher	Head	Mar	31	31	Foreman needle worker	" Kingston	
		John Hutchins	Lodger	Mar	25	30	Brick Burner	" Alverstoke	
85	Windmill Lane	Richard Coghlan	Head	Mar	36		Mariner	Essex Tilbury Fort	
		Fanny "	Wife	Mar		33		Hants Symonston	
		Mary A "	Daur			7	Scholar	" Fareham	
86	Windmill Lane	William Collyer	Head	Mar	38		Shipwright	Sussex Westbourne	
		Louisa "	Wife	Mar		35		Hants Portchester	
		George "	Son		10		Shipwright (apprt)	" Fareham	
87	Windmill Lane	Richard Cliffard	Head	Mar	38		Labourer	" Fareham	
		Rebekah "	Wife	Mar		37		" "	
		James "	Son		10		Labourer	" "	
		Richard "	Son		4		Errand Boy	" "	
		William "	Son		3		Errand Boy	" "	
		Rebekah "	Daur			2	Scholar	" "	
		Ellen "	"			1	"	" "	
		George "	Son		8			" "	
88	Windmill Lane	[illegible]	Head	Mar	37		Labourer	" Winton	
		Maria "	Wife	Mar		38		" Titchfield	
		Fanny "	Son		12	4	Scholar	" Fareham	

Total of Houses 1 5 U — B —

Total of Persons 11/4 4

D 2

M. Coghlan Ltd Business, brief history

In the 1865 Commercial Trade Directory there is a mention of a Cochlan, Michael (A spelling mistake) cabinet maker and upholsterer, Portland Street.

Michael Coghlan



By the 1871 census, there were seven Coghlan's living at number 8 Portland Street, see family tree in this publication. During the late 1800's the family moved next door to No 10, by 1910 we had moved to 30 Portland Street (I believe Portland Street may have been re numbered?)
Our workshop was in it's present address at Westbury Rd, Fareham. By 1923 we were also selling electric lights and bell installations as well as carrying out general repairs to house properties.

1910



Portland St 1906



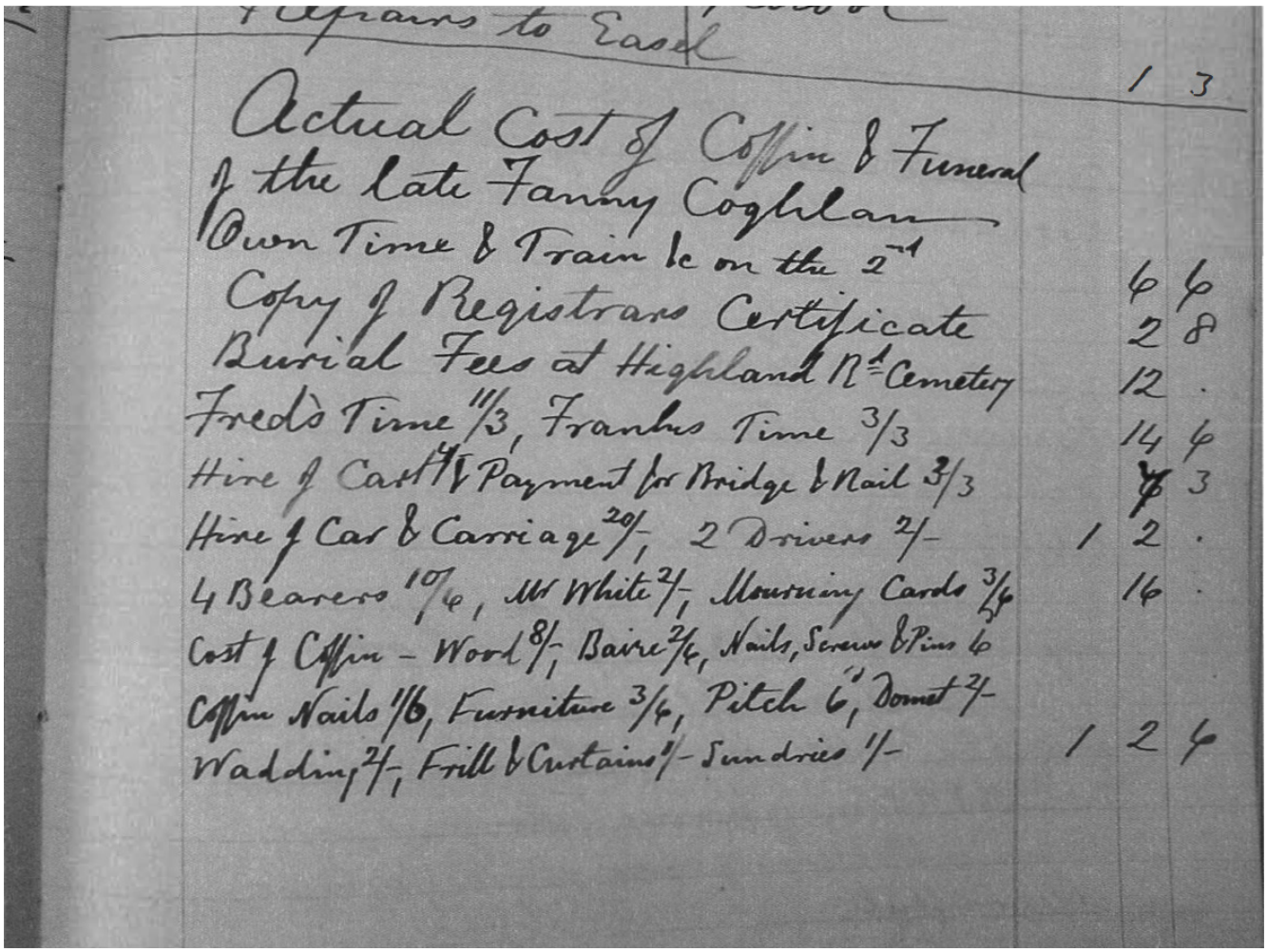
Head stone in St Peter and St Pauls Church Fareham, East Wall Nr War Memorial Reads.

To the memory Michael Coghlan, who died February 17th 1853, Aged 55 years, Also of Frances Wife of the above, who died August 1st 1881, Aged 83 years,
also of five of their children, who died young, also of Alfred James, grandson of the above, and third child of Michael and Anne Coghlan, who died December 13th 1867, aged 1 year and 7 months.



When the new church hall was built at St Peter and St Pauls Fareham, built by Mr Bob Forder, who then became building foreman at M. Coghlan Ltd in 1975. An old Vault was built on and the stone was turned up side down, which reads.
Sacred to the memory of Ann wife of John Coghlan, who departed this life, the 8th September 1810 aged 70, also of Henry Coghlan, who died in the ..... ?
also of Margaret wife of, ... ? who died the ..... ? years, also of John Coghlan captain RN, of HM ship ..... ? died the, 10 .. January 181. aged .. 0 years, also of John Coghlan husband of, the above Ann Coghlan and father of, the above Margaret and John, who died January 21st 1825, in the 71 st year of his age, also of Charles Coghlan who died, March ... 1836 aged 16 years, also of Marianne wife of, James Wrightt Esq and daughter of, the above Henry Coghlan, who departed this life, May 11th 1853 aged 27 years.

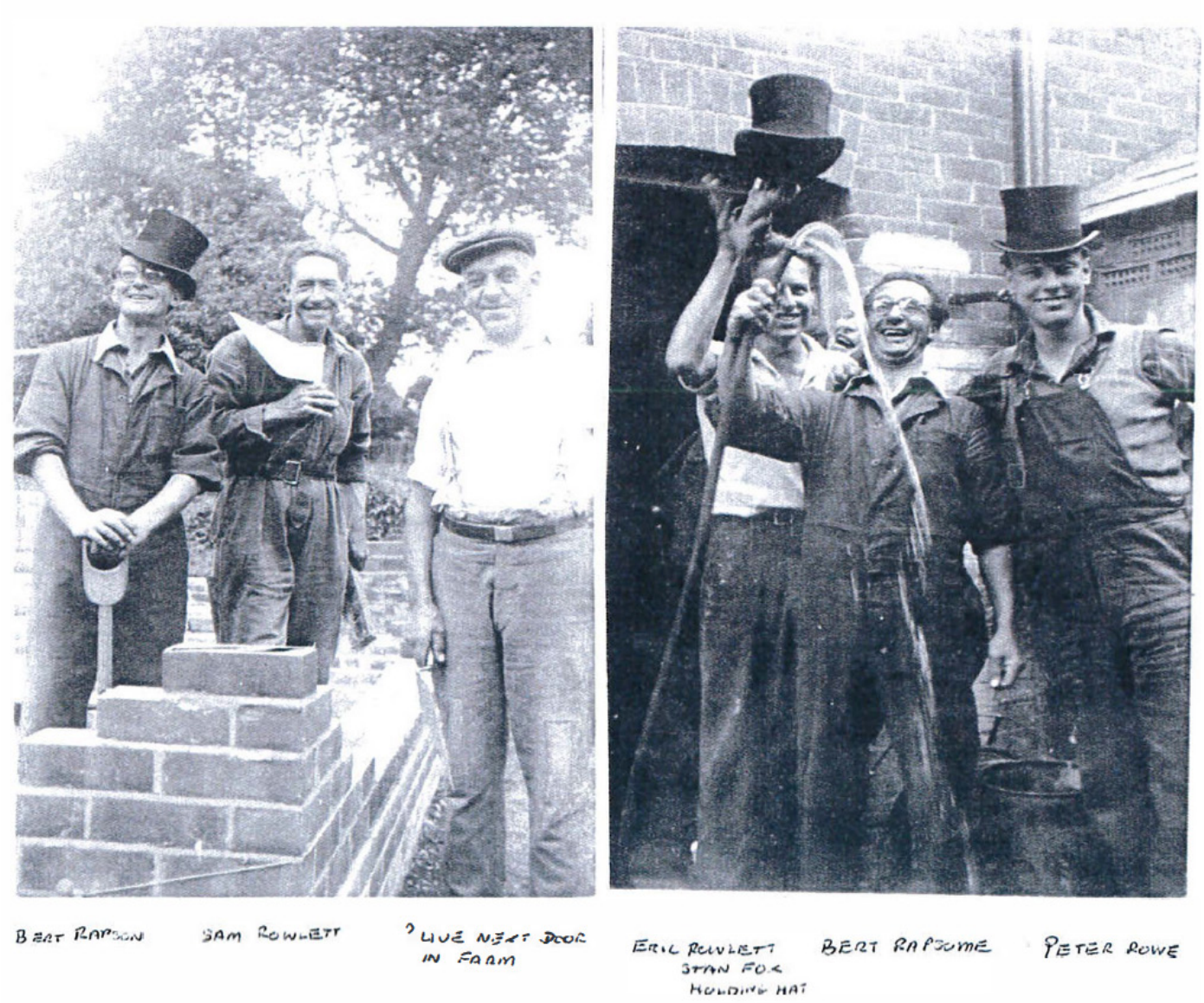
First “Coghlan’ recorded in our funeral record books



During the early l 900's the deceased would have stayed at home until the day of the funeral. Prior to the day the deceased would have been laid out and measured, and the coffin would have been made, and normally during the early hours of the evening the coffin would have been taken home, and the deceased laid to rest in the coffin. From the date of death to the funeral would be about 3 - 4 days. (See Lionel's memories, for more about coffins)

In the late 40's people's attitude towards death was beginning to change. In particular the practice of removals from houses was becoming the norm. By the early l 950's, M. Coghlan Ltd were hiring a chapel at St Christopher's Hospital, formerly the old work house in Wickham Rd. On 15th May 1952 work on our own chapel started, so that families could view the deceased on our premises in Westbury Road, the chapel was dedicated on 16th November 1954 by Rev'd A.H. Watkins (Vicar of Fareham), Rev'd D.W. Hoare (Vicar of Holy Trinity, Fare ham) and Rev'd D.J. Lewis (President of Gosport, Fareham and District Free Church Federal Council)

Building of New Chapel 1952



BERT RAPSON SAM ROWLETT ? LIVE NEXT DOOR IN FARM

ERIC ROWLETT STAN FOX HOLDING HAT BERT RAPSOME PETER ROWE



The Chapel is plainly finished in oak with subdued lighting, There is a stained glass window at the East end which was donated by a local stained glass artist.

Also a small tiled room was on the North side, making it cool, for bodies to remain in. An air-conditioning unit was not purchased until about 1980.



Prior to 1976 the firm had always hired a hearse in from a Bill Lake who owned several limousines and a hearse. Whilst Richard Coghlan was training at “Frederick W. Paynes in Kingston-upon-Thames, an old Austin Princess hearse came up for sale, which John Coghlan duly purchased from them. A few years later Bill Lake sold up and we purchased a limousine from him, an Austin Princess Registration number 206 XTR. The only vehicle owned prior to this was a Morris A45 black van which was used for removals, and a black Peugeot estate car which could be used for distance removals and occasionally used as a hearse. During the early l 980’s a purpose built garage was built on the premises.

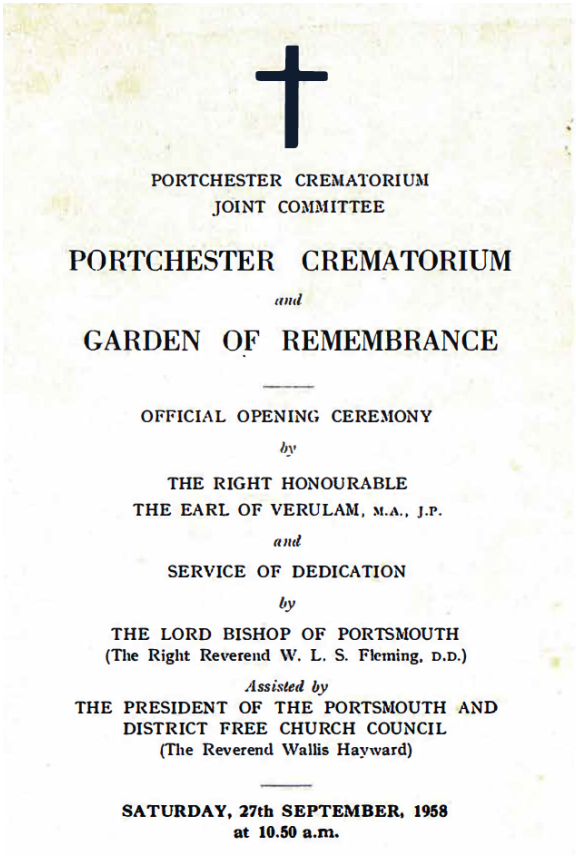
Austin Princess Hearse (Similar to our one)

Also about this time the amount of building work carried out had been very much reduced. This was mainly due to various cut-backs in local authority spending. Also many more people were tackling building and decorating jobs themselves. So in the early l 990’s it was decided to finish general building work and concentrate solely on the funeral side of the business.

Austin Princess Hearse (Similar to our one)







PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM
JOINT COMMITTEE

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM

and

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

by

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF VERULAM, M.A., J.P.

and

SERVICE OF DEDICATION

by

THE LORD BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH
(The Right Reverend W. L. S. Fleming, D.D.)

Assisted by
THE PRESIDENT OF THE PORTSMOUTH AND
DISTRICT FREE CHURCH COUNCIL
(The Reverend Wallis Hayward)

SATURDAY, 27th SEPTEMBER, 1958
at 10.50 a.m.

The advent of the new Crematorium about 3 miles away in Portchester, changed the way the business ran, not having to drive to Southampton. Prior to 1958 a cremation was an all day event.

In early 2000 we had our first lady funeral director Sally Walton. Up till then the funeral industry had been very much a male orientated business.
Dying is a subject people avoid, article “Portsmouth News” 22-07-2003

Sally Walton, 43, has recently started her undertaker’s apprenticeship with M Coghlan Ltd after joining the family-run firm three years ago.
Sally says: “It’s a fascinating job as a funeral is the third most significant day of a person’s life, after their Christening and wedding. At dinner parties if I tell guests what I do, there is usually a deadly silence. No-one wants to talk about death, which after all is what my industry specializes in, but other people are intrigued and wish to know more.
Death can still be a bit of a taboo subject.

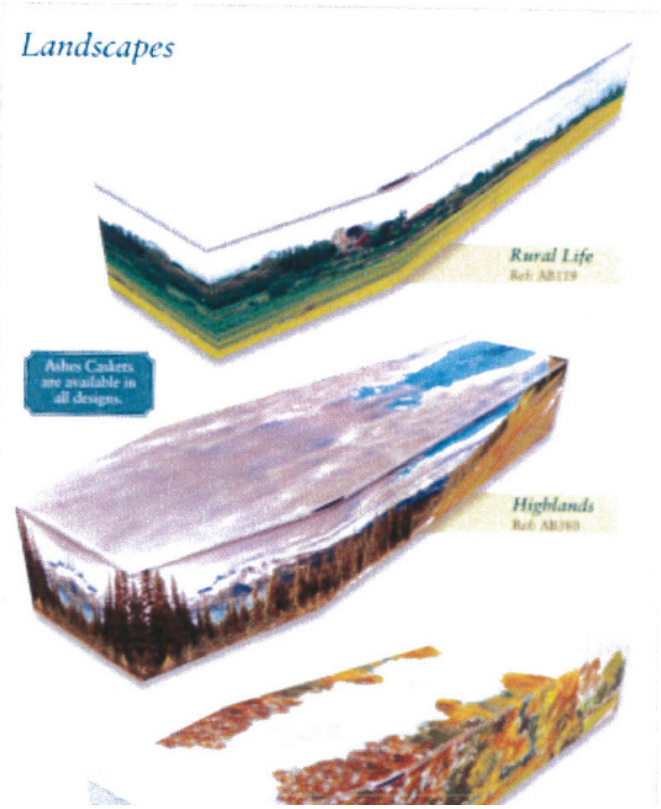


Funeral directing used to be a very male job, deemed unsuitable for the fairer sex, but women can bring a feminine compassion to the job. You need a lot of diplomacy and patience, but also some humour.”

“Once, a family asked for the return of the suit which we had put on a deceased, but unfortunately we had cut the back of it to get it on, so I had to explain this to the family. Deceased can be very rigid, and it is sometimes difficult to get clothes on properly.

Death is part of life and we should and need to accept this."

Recent progress with the internet and technology we can now book the crematorium on-line, print service sheets in-house, and even write funeral services in remote mountain areas and then email them by phone to the office. Also, now a days the client is very much in charge, telling us what they want, perhaps a Wicker coffin or a colourful coffin with photo's on it, or a non-religious ceremony -rather than in the past us telling the client what they can have.





John Coghlan's Memories

When I joined the family business in 1947, my father and grandfather were working at high bench-type desks in the office. At that time we were carrying out building work as well as being funeral directors.

When I first started I was put on the building side, which included general maintenance jobs to properties in and around Fareham. I also worked in the coffin workshop until 1950. In 1951 I attended Portsmouth Municipal College to learn building techniques two half days a week. On Wednesdays I would attend the college in the morning and in the afternoon would go to different builder's merchants in the area to order paint, wood, glass etc. I also attended college two evenings a week and then in 1951 took a course in embalming. This took place in Portsmouth one evening a week.



After leaving college, I would meet clients and estimate work for the building trade, and also sort out accounts, but did not get involved in any labouring, apart from making coffins. I also did a few removals. People either telephoned or came to the office to inform us of a death. The doctor would go to the house first and then a nurse would go to lay the person out, this was known as 'first offices'. Nurse March lived in Gordon Road, Fareham and I remember one evening, picking up Nurse March and then having to walk across the fields to 'Deans Farm' to lay the deceased out. We would then make the coffin which would be taken back to the house that evening to put the deceased in. The funeral director would go to the house everyday prior to the funeral taking place. This would be five to seven days.

The local morgue used to be in Fareham cemetery (the little buildings on the north side of the cemetery). Sudden deaths would be taken to this local public morgue on a hand cart. The Coroner would go to the morgue and the post mortem would be car ried out to establish the cause of death. The deceased would then be wheeled directly to the cemetery. We had a contract with Knowle Hospital to remove the deceased. The deaths were mainly men affected during World War I. The first removal van was a Jowett Javelin which was quite small and had a 2-cylinder engine. The year was 1948. Prior to owning our own van we would use Bill Lake's Buick hearse to do the removals and also for the funerals. I can remember other removal vehicles we had over a period of time.

In 1946 Charles Coghlan bought his first car which was a Morris Oxford, number plate FAA 181, normally though, he used his bike. I learned to drive in the Morris Oxford. We continued to hire a hearse and limousine from Bill Lake until 1976. I then purchased an Austin Princess hearse from the firm where my son Richard was training. At the same time we purchased an Austin princess from Bill Lake. Both the Hearse and Limousine had 4 litre lorry engines in them. They were built specially for the funeral trade. The limousine's registration number was 206 XTR.

Prior to this I had always purchased an estate car so that we could double up for long distance removals. Yes, and they were always black! I had the only Black 'Simca' in the country.

For many years we had always had a small black van as a removal vehicle. These were always called 'Handy' by the funeral trade. Our last black van was an Austin, Registration H __ _ TEL. In about 1970 we purchased a Black Peugeot which was specially built so that we could use this as a small hearse or removal vehicles, should it be necessary. In about 1980 we started using a larger white van for removals, this was not as conspicuous as a black van.



Austin Removal van, similar to ours

We also had specific vans on the building side of the business. I can remember once driving up to see my Uncle in Shrewsbury, and to take my family there we put an old sofa in the back. There were no seat belts then!

When people began to have their deceased in the chapel of rest, instead of at home, we started using a chapel at St Christopher Hospital, Wickham Rd, Fareham. Prior to this, St Christopher's had been the old Victorian work house, incorporating a chapel for use by the poor. When the work house became a Hospital the chapel was not used any more, and my Father rented it for viewings. We also rented it out to other funeral directors.



Our chapel began being built on 15th May 1952. The chapel plans were drawn up my Mr Trigg, a local architect and then built by our building side of M. Coghlan Ltd, our foreman being Mr Latty. The Chapel was dedicated on 16th November 1954 by Rev A.H. Watkins (Vicar of St Peter & St Paul's Church, Fareham), Rev D.W. Hoare (Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Fareham) and Rev David J. Lewis (President of Gosport & Fareham and District Free Church Federal Council, and Minister of the local congregational church) By the early 1950's most viewings were held in our own chapel of rest and not at private homes.

I started driving on my 18th birthday in 1946 and had two 2-hour lessons followed by two half hour lessons, but learnt most of the skills by watching Bill Lake. I took the driving test in Portsmouth but was able to drive whilst learning without anyone with me.

My first funeral in 1950 was from Colenso Road, Fareham -an old Holy Trinity Church choir member. In those days we hired the hearse and limousine from Trinity Garage which was run by Reg Howard and his son-in-law Bill Lake, who later became a bearer for us. It was necessary to telephone them first to make sure they had the vehicles available because they also supplied the vehicles to Mr. Moss of Fareham, Mr. Freemantle of Titchfield, Mr. Knight at Wickham and Mr. Newbury of Warsash. Their Austin hearse was very square and they later bought another one, rather like a Princess. The limousine was a Buick.

All the coffins were made from boards supplied by Messrs Dottridge. The bottom was cut out first, then the ends put on, then the sides were shaped and fitted. The shaping was done by using very hot water, brushed on or steamed. Molding then covered the nails, with sanding down done by hand. In the early stages, French polish liquid was applied with a rag, drying quickly it was built up in layers until highly polished. We later used wax polish. Most of the coffins were made of elm, oak only being used if a special request was made. The coffins took eight hours to construct and Lionel Etherington and Peter Elmes had this task.

The coffins were pitched on the inside. In the early 1970's coffins started to be bought in pre-made and were ordered from Ingell Parson. Handles and plates came from Doridge's in London. Some coffin plates were painted by hand with the name, date of death and age of the deceased by Hayters of Portchester. Deliveries were made throughout the war.

The main office was originally in Portland St, and in 1889 the office was moved to Westbury Rd. We also had an office at 'Mile Stone' 118 West Street, Fareham. Charlie Coghlan, my Father, lived at 11 Westborn Road from 1927 and I moved into Westborn Road in 1953, six weeks before I married Sylvia Pope.

When I joined the firm there was only one telephone line -number 200. So that I could be contacted at home we had a wind-up telephone. To make the bell ring at the office I used to have to wind a handle and visa versa to contact home. For a lot of the call-outs, people used to come in person, or, being a small town knew where to find you.

My telephone number was 2171 and the office number was 2200, the office telephone was also wired to my Father's house, which was opposite the office in Westbury Rd. There were no extensions in the office until 1970. We only had one phone. I made a complicated intercom system, which worked well for many years. It was made up of a core of about 15 wires to all the various offices. We could then contact the various offices and workshop. We would then have to rush down stairs to take any main calls.

In the early 1970's I made an answer machine, this was before you could buy them. It worked when the phone rang, and a microphone picked up the bell sound, a motor then operated which lifted the telephone receiver. Once lifted a tape recorder started and told the person where to phone, or told them to call back later, it was mainly made out of 'Meccano' Having lived so near to the premises all my life, I was used to playing in the yard on many occasions.

M. Coghlan premises used to go right up to the path between Westborn Rd & Westbury path. Along our boundary used to be five large Horse Chestnut trees. It was rumoured that Charlie, my father wanted to create a back driveway into Westborn Rd, but Fareham Urban Distinct Council would not allow this because of the trees, so the local chemist suggested drilling the trees & then injecting sulphuric acid into them. My father did this but the trees grew even better.

During the war years I can remember part of our land being compulsorily purchased by the war office and air-raid shelters were built on the north part of our present premises and chapel of rest. The two shelters were Anderson shelters about 15 foot by 20 foot, with bare benches to sit on around the inside and an air vent. On many occasions, if there was an air-raid warning we would have to evacuate our home and run to the shelters.

Many a night was spent in them. I can remember coming out of the shelter after a 'Doodle-bug' had gone over and leaning on a fence, the 'doodl- bug' landed about 2 miles away north of Fareham and exploded. I could feel the fence vibrating and the earth trembled. Another time I was walking up Portland Street and a bomb landed on Fraser (Opposite what is now Holbrook swimming pool) about 2 miles away.

Fraser was an ammunition depot. The force of the explosion lifted me off my feet and threw me several feet up the road. Beyond the shelters was the 'British Restaurant'. Anyone could purchase food here during the war. The custard used to taste like yellow paint!

Prior to D-Day there was lots of activity around Fareham. Between the air-raid shelters on our premises, an old 'Bell Tent' was erected by the army and used as a communication tent. The telephone exchange was already there, so I presume they connected directly into the exchange.

All along Osborn Rd there were Army Lorries getting ready for D-Day. I was offered porridge oaks with cold milk on them, which tasted really nice.

Just up the road from M Coghlan Ltd premises by Palmerston Ave, a large 20ft x 15ft tank was erected. This was fall of water in case the fire service needed it or we needed drinking water. A sign 'SWS' can still be seen in Osborn Rd - Static Water Supply. Opposite our house in Westb~~oro~~ Rd another small air-raid shelter was built, this extended into the road, which made it difficult for my Father to drive his car out of his driveway.

Westborn

During the war I was a member of the 9th Fareham Scouts, based at Price's School. We had hiked to Wickham, and were just setting up our tents, when an army officer informed us that we were not allowed to camp within 10 miles of the coast, so we had to hike another 5 miles north, before we could camp.

Lucky for us we managed to get a lift back to North Hill, Fareham by a Canadian Army officer. He was only allowed to take us back to North Hill because Fareham was out of bounds to transport, because of the preparation of D-Day.

Lionel Etherington ‘s Memories

I have always been left handed and when I was at school aged 5 or 6 I was caned on my left hand by the teacher to try and stop me using it, because in the early thirties it was frowned upon. When I began working for M. Coghlan Ltd, I was serving an apprenticeship. I was told I would have to use my right hand to plane with, because in a large workshop with lots of men planning, a left hand planer would get in the way of other workers. When I started my apprenticeship I should have been given a certificate showing my record of achievement, but I was never given one and lucky for me, I never needed it because I never changed jobs in all my 63 years of work.

Thinking back to a morning in September 1937, my first recollection is of chasing cattle from the yard which were being driven from the park to market. This was a regular Monday 8am job, for some time. Everything changed so much in the 63 years to follow!!

I was wearing the silk top hat and tailed coat at the age of 16 years. At that time the four bearers (2 carpenters and 2 painters) sat at the sides of the coffin in the hearse, wearing their toppers!
The hearse of the day, being much taller, allowed top hats to be worn. I used to dread 1.30pm funerals -because of running the gauntlet of school boys in Westbury Path -when snow was around. Imagine the target for snowballs? I had my ‘topper’ knocked off more than once (amongst cheers!!)



Another difference with today was that we always wore white gloves for children's or Freemason's funerals.

Coffin making was hard work. They were made from solid boards, first cutting the curves for bending. These had to be ~~3/16th~~ 3/16th of an inch thick. One cut too many and the board would crack on bending!! The bend was helped by boiling water being poured on the curves. The boards themselves were supplied by 'Pinks' of Wickham Road and the finished coffin was then French polished.

Oak coffins were wax polished with home-made polish (beeswax, linseed oil and turpentine). The inside of the coffins were sealed with 'pitch' which was boiled on a gas ring. Frederick Coghlan always said that you could sail the creek in one as it was completely sealed. The complete coffin would take one whole day to prepare by a man and his apprentice.

The coffins were taken 'home' to the family's residence after dark. If this was local then they were taken on the varnished oak handcart with oil lamps at front and rear. (I had to trim and frill these for night removals - rather Victorian!) When the coffin arrived at the house, the deceased was 'laid in state' in the front room.
I was thrown in at the deep end on removals.

The first, at the age of 16, was two ladies who had gassed themselves and lay in a double bed, clutching their bank books. They were found after 4 days - a pathetic sight!. Mr Charlie Coghlan used to choke us all with his pipe, to kill the smell! Apologies for gruesome descriptions. But that is how life and death was. These three cases stick in my memory being so young I suppose.

It was when pushing a coffin to St Christopher's Hospital that we were ma chine-gunned by a German bomber! He was so low we could plainly see the front gunner, firing from the nose of the plane. Bullets rained down in the road around us, but fortunately no direct hits! I often wonder if he had a camera fitted and what he told his mates if he ever got back. The coffin was not hit but the wheel bier was. The plane went over and Lionel and Charlie came out from their hiding place, behind the gate pillars of St Christopher's hospital and continued pushing the wheel bier up to the mortuary.

Of course, the start of the war brought many unpleasant cases especially after air raids on HMS Sultan, when Stuka Dive Bombers came back again. Being in work the next day to pick up the pieces, it was a game of 'guess work' with body parts from Portsmouth City Mortuary. (Sorry, but you just made up a set!)

My longest removals were from Shaw, North of Oldham in Lanes (this was Dr Hilton's Father), and Betws-y-coed, Wales - left home at midnight, wash and shave at swimming baths at 7am. Removal from Bangor Hospital, and home the next day. Hard going through the mountain roads, before motorways were built.

In between funeral work (early war years) I made blackout shutters to fit windows in most of the large houses in Osborn Road and West Street shops. In the evenings Mr Charlie Coghlan would visit the homes for the arrangement of funerals and I would cycle ahead with the 'black bag' to screw down the coffin. We very often had to shelter from gunfire and shrapnel during raids.

The ‘number one’ funeral must be the Revd Frank Partridge, former Bishop of Portsmouth. Travelling from Bishopswood to Portsmouth Cathedral then on to East Meon for the interment. There had been heavy raids on Portsmouth hours before so we had to drive though bomb damaged streets in Old Portsmouth.

I then had a spell with 102 Squadron -Bomber Command, (rather noisy after the peace of funerals) then back to where I left off. Business as usual with a few changes to come. The building of the Chapel of Rest in 1954 and ready-made coffins!

Funeral of Fireman, Edgar Goble 1909 Photo taken near to Lionel and Charlie Coghlan sheltered behind Cemetery gate during 2nd world war from German plane



Richard Coghlan's story as printed in SAIF insight May 2011

Death was never a taboo subject in our family.
Having been born into a family of funeral directors with over 100 years of service to the Fareham families.

When I was a kid I can remember playing in the yard, with all the different little workshops, bricks, sand pit, wood store, but never remember seeing a coffin. At the time, like most Funeral Directors 50 years ago we were also cabinet makers, and builders/ decorators , and being the only business who could make coffins.

Some funeral directors were only carriage masters, as they were the only business with vehicles. As I grew up, friends would ask, "what's it like living in a coffin?' Are your door handles, old coffin handles?' I must confess I have never tried a coffin out, YET!

Being an old established firm I find the old stories fascinating, the history of the firm, one of our employers remembers the following It was when pushing a coffin to St Christopher's Hospital that we were machine-gunned by a German bomber! He was so low we could plainly see the front gunner, firing from the nose of the plane.

Bullets rained down in the road around us, but fortunately no direct hits! I often wonder if he had a camera fitted and what he told his mates if he ever got back. The coffin was not hit but the wheel bier was. The plane went over and Lionel and Charlie came out from their hiding place, behind the gate pillars of St Christopher's hospital and continued pushing the wheel bier up to the mortuary.

I can remember coming home from school, usually my father would be sitting in our lounge having a cup of tea, before he would rush off down back to the office just 2 minutes away from the house. My father could change into his tails and funeral suit quicker than superman!

By our front door was the black telephone, and next to it was a wind up telephone, this would be wound to contact the office, and back at the office another wind up phone to contact our house or my Grandfather's house. I can remember my father being on call 24 hours a day 365 days a year, no rotas of staff like we have now a days. He could never be away from home. If he was not at home or the office, my mum would know where he was!
He was always contactable!

Unlike myself as when I joined the firm and just before I got married, I moved out from home, and my house had no phone for the first month. I would take a pager home, the pager would bleep and I would have to run to the corner of the road to the phone box and find out what the message was.

I can then remember our firm purchasing a brick of a phone. It was great, gave us so much more freedom. I can remember one Saturday being on a climbing course for the Scouts and half way up the wall and the brick going off! I shouted "Belay me!" I then arranged a funeral while tied to a rope 30ft up a climbing wall. The advent of the mobile phone is great! BUT being director of a small busy funeral directors, you are never far from your clients. Being heavily involved with Scouts and the Duke of Edinburgh award, and being away up the mountains many a weekend, the problem of death never stops!

And I have spoken to many clients while being on Scout activities (Unbeknown to them) Up the mountains, in remote parts of Scotland, or sleeping the night in a hike tent at the local Scout woods, and having to wiz back to the office at 2am, undertake a removal, go back to my tent, and do flag break with the Scouts at 8am pretending nothing had happened during the night. Besides communications the main change I have seen is the families having more options and choice of what they want.

When I became a funeral director in 1975, my father sent me to work for the "The Great Southern Group" at Kingston upon Thames with "Frederick Paines", this was a great work opportunity, Each day the firm doing 20+ funerals in the South West of London. They had 20+ office branches in the area and also owned a few crematoriums. Even though Mr Edward Field owned this large company he would take an interest in all his employees, visiting them every few months.

Over the year I experienced l000's of different areas in the funeral business, whether it be at a service, a London mortuary, driving in London traffic, and the awful London smog, where you could not see from lamp post to lamp post, and many different faiths. It was a real baptism to the funeral industry.



THE GREAT SOUTHERN GROUP

(Registered Office) Canteloupe House, Canteloupe Road,
East Grinstead, Sussex RH19 3BJ Tel: (0342) 27755

21 October 1975

J P Coghlan Esq.,
11 Westborn Road,
Fareham,
Hants PO16 7DH

Dear Mr Coghlan,

Now that Richard has been with us for over a month I thought you might be interested to hear of his progress.

I have heard from Mr Sloan, our Area Manager at Kingston, that Richard has settled down very well, gets on well with all the other staff and works very hard. I am pleased, therefore, to report that everybody is extremely happy with his good progress and we are making arrangements for him to be instructed in the art of arranging funerals, and this should commence within the next couple of weeks.

Yours sincerely,

C P J Field

THE GREAT SOUTHERN CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM COMPANY LIMITED (Reg. No. [illegible])

Having experienced this, I felt it right that my Son Dan should do the same sort of apprenticeship, which he did, working for “Cribbs” Soon after, I married Pippa, my very understanding wife. A funeral director’s wife has to be very understanding, having to be woken up at 2am and then the husband arriving back at 4am only to be woken up again at 6am for work.

Soon after I was married I took the Funeral director’s Diploma, this was a great struggle for me being “Dyslexic” but, thanks to my apprenticeship with “Frederick Paines” and a wonderful teacher “Harry Bodinick” from Portsmouth I passed my Diploma.

Coming from a very traditional firm of funeral directors, we have seen many changes, and I know my Father has found some of these changes hard (He still occasionally helps out at funerals at the age of 83). Now a days the family choose what they want rather than the funeral director telling the family what they can have.

Richard, soon after he joined the firm



My Father would never have been seen dead in a cardboard coffin! Woodland burials did not happen 30 years ago, Funeral services at Hotels rather than Churches, Coffin brochures and prices on the internet!

My father would say “What is the internet”? Power point projections of the funeral service! Printed service sheets, Wicker coffins, a Pink Hearse! Civil funerals! Women conducting funerals. My father would say “Every funeral must be a Traditional Christian funeral, what else is there?

I believe now a days we should embrace all of these changes, as independent family firms we can offer plenty of choice and more, We can offer what the family want, a civil funeral, a woodland burial, Service sheets printed in-house, all kinds of music, a lady funeral director, I am very privileged to have an excellent lady funeral director, who can also decipher my Dyslexic spelling!! Sally is also Southern Area Director of the BIFD (British Institute of Funeral Directors) which encompasses all the Diploma holders and those with equivalent qualifications.

Being a devout Christian, I find it difficult that many people think that Jesus is just a swear word! But who are we to judge, we do not know what people's beliefs are. So much so, I felt it right to become a trained and qualified Civil Funeral Celebrant. It is up to the families, what they want. We as funeral directors should not dictate what families can and can't have.

When we have school teenagers visiting our premises, I always say a funeral is a very personal service and is different for each person, and that includes the funeral service and words.

Having been involved in funeral directing for so long and the knowledge that has been passed down to me, I feel very privileged. To be helping people in one of their most trying times of there lives, also I am in the position of being able to pass on my knowledge of funeral directing others, firstly my two children who help me in the business; Sophie and Dan, and also being a qualified NVQ Assessor, with the NAFD, (National Association of Funeral Directors) helping those new to the business .

The one thing I do not like about the present funeral directors industry is the competition against the large corporations and the Coroners contract, which is fought over between companies. This rivalry between funeral directors is not pleasant. We are there for bereaved families, to serve them, to give them the help they need in their difficult times. I am so grateful for the help our old established family funeral directors in the local area give us, the way we get on well together, and the traditional values we offer to our families, I wish all funeral directors could work well together, like we do, and serve the families and the communities we work amongst.



Richard while on a Duke of Edinbugh Award Exped in Scotland, typing up a Civil Funeral Service

Article in Guardian

ME AND MY GIZMO

Graveyard shift



PHOTOGRAPH: ROY RILEY

DEARLY BELOVED, we are gathered here today to remember Richard Coghlan, and his Psion Series 3 pocket computer. The mere fact that they are both very much alive and working as funeral director and gizmo should not detract from the gravity of the occasion.

Richard had been an active member of his local community for many years by the time I spoke with him. His various hats included scout leader, church organist and funeral director.

His vocation had always been part of his life. He was of the fifth generation of Coghlans, who have been ministering to the dead since 1871.

At a time like this, it is unorthodox to talk about a piece of electronic gadgetry. Some will think it trivialising. But to remember Richard is to remember his respectfully-coloured, black-grey, Psion pocket computer. It seems that there was nothing he could do without it and almost nothing he couldn't do with it. Except push up your daisies for you.

I spoke to him just the other day. He told me of his gizmo's many uses and the many ways in which his working life had been enhanced by their meeting. "A couple of years ago," he recounted in considered tones, so familiar to those who knew him, "I got one for the diary and the word processor facilities, and then I found out you could actually program it yourself. It's just a case of being logical really." We cannot forget his modesty.

He would admit he had become dependent on a small, flat, flip-lid computer. He was proud of what they had done together. It could do everything he needed it to: ordering the flowers, filing applications for cremation forms, ordering the coffins and faxing the funeral lists to national newspapers.

"I am programming in some of the popular hymns," he proudly announced, "because often they (clients) know them but they can't think of the actual tune. I have a little program I purchased for it — here we go!" A squeaky, electronic rendition o 'Thine Be The Glory' followed, and made it the tune that will forever remind me of our chat.

Richard gave me the impression that he loved the simple life. Our thoughts turned to the easy-use, friendly menus. Pre-programmed commands in pop-up menu boxes,



such as 'add new funeral' or 'find or edit an existing funeral', or just simply 'EXIT', meant that Richard's gizmo measured up to the job.

Screen to screen, chip to chip communication was never any big ceremony for this gizmo. It easily plugged into his PC and printer. Thus his work was made more efficient, but never to the detriment of sensitivity and humanity. "I thought it might not be very personal," he confessed to me, "but I found it, in a way, more personal because while the machine's chuntering away printing out the forms, you can have a chat to the husband or wife, which puts them at ease." Richard's friends, family and scouts will remember his love for open spaces. "I like the outdoors and once, on my way home, I took a detour across a field and someone phoned up on my mobile; I organised a funeral whilst cycling." His devotion to his work is well-known.

I feel privileged to have been asked to say a few words about Richard. Even though I only spoke to him twice, I feel like I knew him. My abiding memory of him — someone who has, after all, spent most of his life involved with the dead — is of his sense of humour. We laughed as he told me the only drawback of his electronic helper. "The trouble is," he said, "you put this in your top pocket and it is so small, I've dropped it into a coffin (occupied at the time)."

But at a healthy 37, Richard is not, in fact, worried about death in the slightest; he and his gizmo have many years ahead of them. I commit this article to the page and commend his memory (about 4Mb) to you. Amen.

William Mayes

14 The News, Wednesday, January 16, 2013 Portsmouth.co.uk

NEWS

Undertaker gets the full treatment from his family business

Holy Trinity Church packed for funeral

by CHRIS BROOM
Fareham reporter
chris.broom@thenews.co.uk

IT WAS a route he had taken many times as an undertaker.

But yesterday John Coghlan took the route from the business's home in Westbury Road to the nearby Holy Trinity Church in Fareham town centre, for the final time for his own funeral.

Mr Coghlan died aged 84 on December 30 following a stroke after returning home from a social event for the Fareham Art Group.

As the fourth generation of his family to run M Coghlans Ltd, which was set up in 1861, Mr Coghlan was well-known around the region. He had joined the family firm in 1947.

His son Richard Coghlan, the current director, walked ahead of the hearse as it arrived at the church.

And in line with industry tradition, other local funeral directors from Barrells, Freemantles, Michael Miller and Partners, Churcher and Tribbeck and Nigel Chamberlain and Partners acted as pallbearers.

The church was packed with more



Name your citizen of honour in Fareham

FAREHAM residents are being asked to nominate their local heroes for this year's Citizen of Honour.

The award recognises those who complete voluntary service which benefits the community, such as volunteering with a local charity or group.

There are three age groups - four to 11, 12 to 17 and over 18.

Leader of Fareham Borough Council Sean Woodward, said: 'This is a great way to celebrate those unsung heroes living in Fareham, who have made a real difference to people living locally.

'It could be someone who regularly puts others before themselves, has helped others and the community, or a young person who may have shown an act of bravery.'

Winners will received their award at the mayor-making ceremony in May.

They will also receive a family ticket to the gala performance of the panto at Perneham Hall.

Nominations for the awards close on Thursday, January 31.

To nominate go to fareham.gov.uk/citizenawards.

Be treated for charity

BEAUTY treatments and

Vehicles of M. Coghlan Ltd

Wheel Bier used for Tom Parkers funeral 1982





Austin Princes Hearse, similar to the first hearse we purchased 1976

Old Photos



Edgar Goble 1909



Right Rev Partridge 1941 Bishop of Portsmouth

Building of New Garage, about 1977

Richard Coghlan & Bob Forder (Builder Forman)



Horse drawn funeral outside Holy Trinity Church 2007



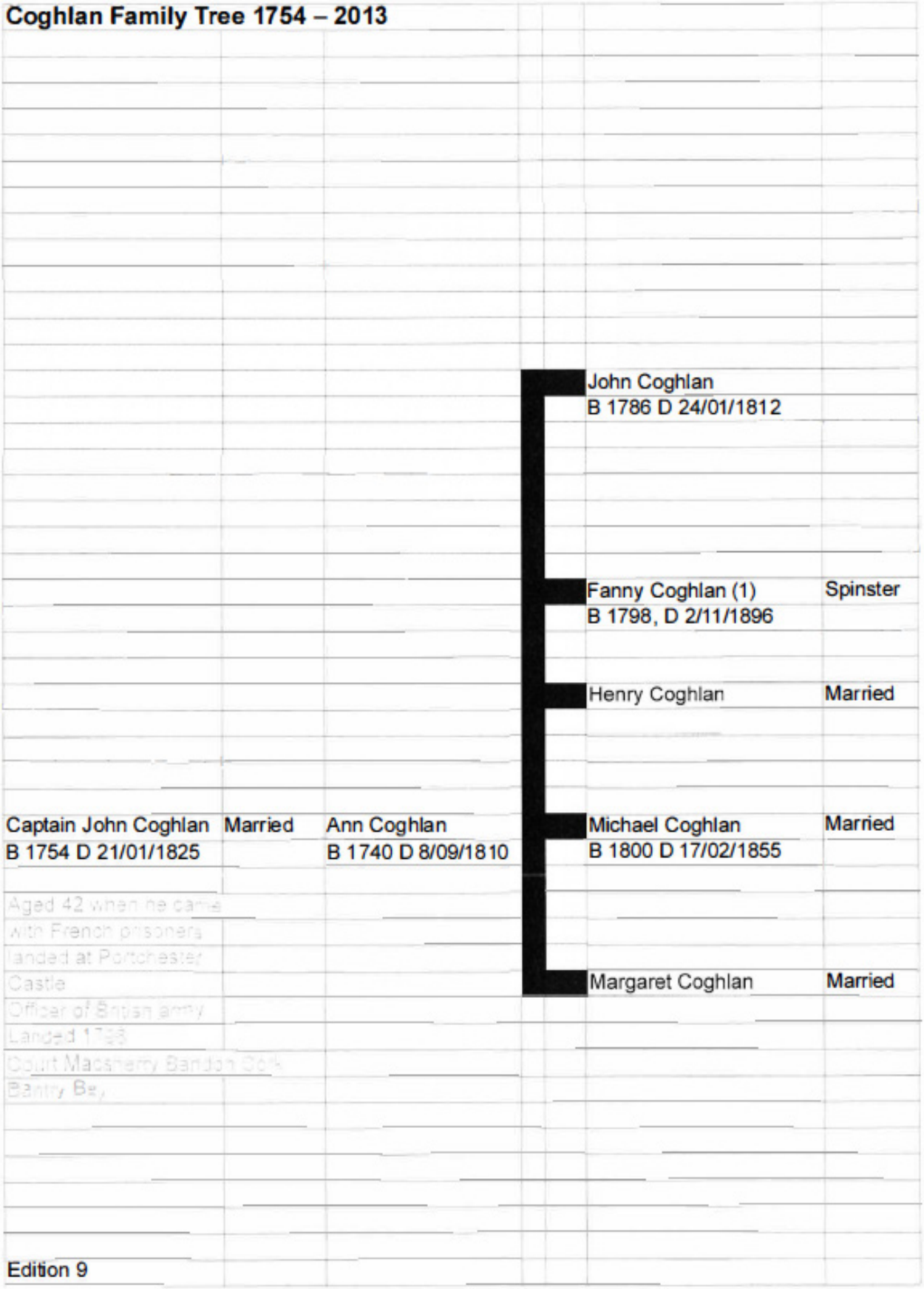
Sophie King Nee Coghlan, Sally Walton Richard & John Coghlan, Geoff Collins 2009

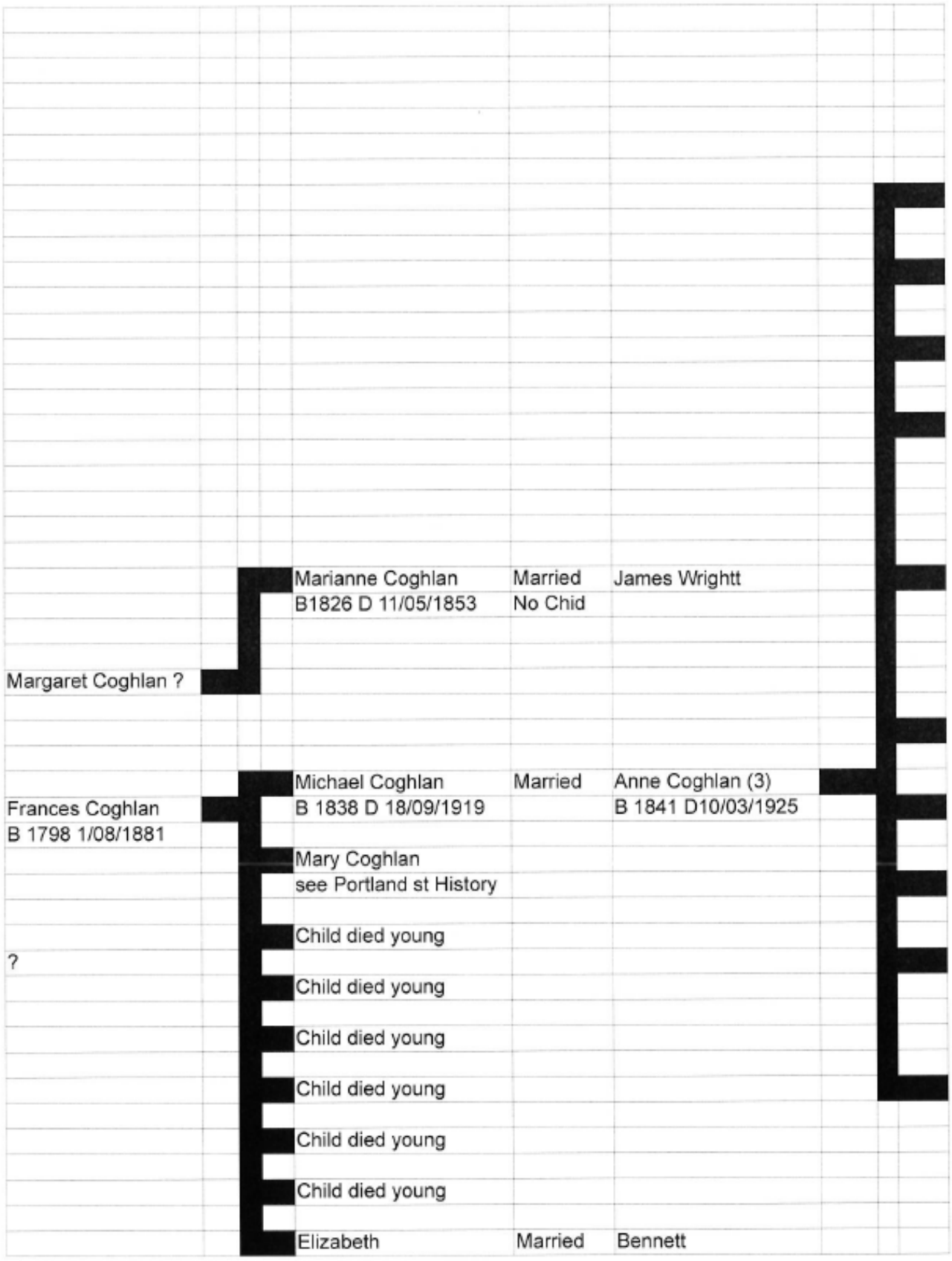


Significant Dates

- 1754 John Coghlan born in Bantry Bay, S. Ireland
- 1796 John Coghlan came to Portchester after shipping French prisoners of war
- from Ireland
- 183 8 Michael Coghlan, who started the firm was born
- 1857 Michael Coghlan mentioned in Trade Directory at Portland Street
- Fareham
- 1861 Firm established
- 1880 Oldest written records, which have been kept
- 1889 Office moved from Portland Street to Westbury Rd
- 1906 MCL gained contract to carry out funerals for 'Work House' employees 1932 Southampton Crematorium opened
- 1937 Lionel Etherington started working for MCL (spent 63 years in the firm) 1946 Charles Coghlan brought his first car
- 194 7 John Coghlan started working for M Coghlan Ltd
- 1952 Work starts on Chapel of Rest at premises
- 1954 Chapel is opened
- 1958 John Coghlan passes Embalming exam
- 1958 Portchester Crematorium opened
- 1958 Peter Rowlatt started working for MCL
- 1968 John Coghlan passes FD Diploma
- 1975 Richard Coghlan started apprenticeship at London funeral director
- F W Paynes
- 1976 Charles Coghlan died
- 1976 MCL purchases first hearse
- 1976 Richard Coghlan joined M Coghlan Ltd
- 1980 Richard Coghlan passes FD Diploma
- 1985 MCL brought first mobile phone
- 1986 MCL brought first computer
- 1987 Geoff Collins (Julia Coghlan's husband) started work for M Coghlan Ltd 1990 Geoff Collins passes FD Diploma
- 1991 Office is moved across yard to be next to Chapel
- 1998 Sally Walton joined MCL, our first lady funeral director
- 1999 MCL produces first internet pages
- 2004 Sally Walton passes FD Diploma
- 2009 Sophie King nee Coghlan started working part time
- 2010 Dan Coghlan started working full time
- 2011 M Coghlan Ltd is 150 years old
- 2011 Sophie King nee Coghlan, has children & steps down
- 2012 Colin Hayward and Peter Rowlatt Retire
- 2012 John Coghlan Dies 30-12-2012 Lionel Etherington Dies

Coghlan Famfily Tree 1754 - 2013




Marianne Coghlan
Married
James Wrightt
B1826 D 11/05/1853
No Chid
Margaret Coghlan ?
Michael Coghlan
Married
Anne Coghlan (3)
Frances Coghlan
B 1838 D 18/09/1919
B 1841 D10/03/1925
B 1798 1/08/1881
Mary Coghlan
see Portland st History
Child died young
?
Child died young
Child died young
Child died young
Child died young
Child died young
Elizabeth
Married
Bennett

Steven Ewart Coghlan	Married inWymouth	Blanch Blanche Howell	
B 1883 D 17/07/1950	No Children		
Henry Revans Coghlan (9)	Married /03/1894	Martha Ann Symes	[redacted]
B 1872 D 23/08/1928 Head Price	1895-1898 then New Milton	B 1871 D28/11/1950	
Alfred James Coghlan			
D 13/12/1867			
Ada Coghlan (17)	Married	James Alfred Wikins	[redacted]
B 1865 D 22/09/1959		D 1944	
Michael Coghlan (6)	Married	Alice Beatrice (5)	
B 1864 D 16/10/1948	No Children	B 1863 D 26/06/1948	
Frederick Cowper Coghlan (7)	Married	Elizabeth Phoebe Nee Marshell(4)	[redacted]
B 1868 D 22/05/1944		B /06/1861 D 20/01/1962	
		Grave in Rogate	
Alice Martha Coghlan	Died aged 11		
B 1881 D 16/06/1892			
Arthur P. Coghlan (10)	Married	Getrude (18)	
B 1876 D 25/11/1937	No Children	B 1881 D 16/12/1952	
Bessie (Jessie) Coghlan (11)	Married	Sidney W. Ings	
B 1874 D 17/05/1934	No Children	B 1875 D 17/05/1961	
Annie Fanny Coghlan	Married	Mr Henry Figgins	[redacted]
B 1868 Sept 1946	Sept 1894		

Harry (Henry) Coghlan B 1898		
May Coghlan B 1897		
Twne (Tine) (Annie) B 1896		
Captain Michael Robert Coghlan (14) B 1896 D 4/07/1981	Married	Gladys Mary B 1896 D27/07/1985
Violet Elfrida Wilkins B 1909	Married	Charles F Bougourd B 1907 D13/01/2000
Reg Wilkins	Married	Gladys Ida D 19/04/1992
Charles Frederick Coghlan (13) B 8/11/1896 D 19/02/1976	Married	Olive Mary Fletcher B 1898 D 4/02/1988
Kathleen Coghlan B 1897 D 1908	Aged 11	
Gladys May	Married 24/07/1926	Cycil Ernest Tiller D 15/07/1964
No Children		

Mary Bougourd	Married	David Geoffry Pike
B 23/2/1945	04/01/1967	
Kieth Bougourd	Married	Margaret Eillen Worley
B 23/2/1945	26/08/1967	No Chidren
Joyce Bougourd	Married	Roland **Tony** Hales
B 1936 D 18/02/2001	04/01/1961	
Clifford Wilkins	Married Divorced	Susan
B 1933		
Kathleen Olive Coghlan	Married	Donald Stuart Bird
B 7/07/1924 D 28/12/2007	Sept 1951	
John Frederick Coghlan	Married 18/07/1953	Sylvia Rosemary Pope
B 15/05/1928 D 30/12/2012		B21/10/1930
Eric Tiller	Married	Elizabeth (Liz)
B 11/10/1930	Divorced	
	Re marred	Judy

Andrew Pike		
B 16/1/1969		
Susan Pike		
B 28/3/1971		
Peter Hales		
B 17/9/1962?		
David Hales	Married	Jan
B 16/8/1965		
Michael Bird	Married 4/05/1985	Sally
B /11/1961		D 1998?
	Partner	Viv
Julia Coghlan	Married 31/05/1980	Geoff Collins
B 6/07/1955 D30/12/2012		B 5/03/1955
Richard Michael Coghlan	Married 31/10/1981	Pippa Jane Cory
B 14/02/1958		B 30/07/1959
Helen		
B 17/07/1968		
Matthew		
B 20/04/1966		

Theo B 7/6/2000				
Maddie B 5/11/2003				
Andrew Bird B 23/10/1988				
Stephanie Anne Bird B 3/04/1991				
David				
Nathan Andrew Collins B 5/02/1990				
Zara Hannah Collins B 14/11/1991				Harvey Georg B 18/08/2011
Sophie Louise Coghlan B 22/10/1983	Married 16/09/2006	Graham King		Oscar Lucas K B 29/09/2012
Daniel James Coghlan B 8/07/1986				
Benjamin Peter Coghlan B27/01/1990				



Funeral firm kept in family for 150 years

FAMILY From left, John Coghlan with his son Richard and his son Dan. They are holding a photo of the firm's founder Michael Coghlan

by RUTH SCAMMELL

Six generations contributed to success

As I continued to work in the profession John would periodically invite me to a Thursday lunch time Rotary meeting. I can remember when John and Sylvia were on holiday, I would have to take the rotary apologies, John did this duty for some 20 years, and he was the longest surviving member of the Fareham Rotary Club, 43 years. Certainly from the email messages I have had, he was a greatly loved member of the club, serving the club to the end.