



ROTHERY

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
MARGARET, THE BELOVED WIFE OF
WILLIAM BROCKBANK ROTHERY OF THE MUIRLANDS
WHO PASSED AWAY AT HAZELMERE, SOUTHPORT
FEB 1ST 1912 AGED 52 YEARS.
"THY WILL BE DONE"
ALSO LAURA IRENE MARGUERITE ROTHERY ROTHERY
DIED NOV 7TH 1895 AGED 1 MONTH

An imposing monument quite near the church door hides an unusual tragedy, not mentioned on the monument. I do not know why the child is "Rothery Rothery".

The *Barrow News* 10 February 1912 carried news of the inquest and the funeral:

KIRKBY LADY'S TERRIBLE END

CORONER'S INQUIRY

DAUGHTER'S BRAVERY COMMENDED

"We fully endorse what the Coroner has said regarding the great courage displayed by Miss Rothery," said the foreman of the jury at the inquest at Southport on Saturday, on the body of Mrs. Margaret Rothery (52), wife of a mining engineer, who was burnt to death in a terrible fire which broke out in the family's residence, Hazelmere, Chambres-road, Southport. The deceased lady was a sister of the late Mr. Todd-Newcomb. Of Kirkby-in-Furness, and Bankfield, Urswick, and along with her husband was well known in this district. The evidence showed that her young daughter had most courageously risked her own life in a vain endeavour to save her mother from the flames. She said that her mother suffered from a weak heart and rheumatism in the legs. On the day of the fire she was engaged in her ordinary household duties, cleaning, etc. Besides Miss Rothery and her mother there was in the house Maurice, her brother, aged 15, her sister Myrtle, aged 8, and a maid Florence Preece. They retired to rest about a quarter to twelve, and Miss Rothery lighted the gas stove in her mother's bedroom, which was over the dining-room, the fire of which was practically out when they left. She went upstairs at the same time as her mother, and they spoke together for a few minutes. Her mother seemed very tired. And as she started to undress she complained of her heart being bad and of a pain in her side. A few minutes later Miss Rothery said good-night, and went to her own room, which she occupied with her sister, Myrtle. She heard her mother lock the door of her bedroom, which was her usual custom, and before she got into bed Miss Rothery thought she heard her mother put out the gas stove. She remembered nothing further until just before five o'clock the following morning, when she woke and found her room full of smoke. She switched on the electric light, but the smoke was so dense she could not see anything in the room. She jumped up and opened the window, carried her sister downstairs, and placed her outside the front door out of danger. She then returned upstairs, and knocked at her mother's bedroom door, but could get no answer. She shouted and screamed out and tried to rouse her, and endeavoured to break open the door, but could not. She then rushed to her brother's room, roused him, and told him the house was on fire. She shouted to the maid, and they all went downstairs.

She told her brother to ring a large handbell which was kept on the landing, and to shout at the front door for help. She then returned upstairs, which was dense with smoke, and again tried to force the door of her mother's bedroom, but failed. She groped her way downstairs again, and opening the dining-room door, found the room in flames. Several gentleman neighbours came to her assistance, and the door to her mother's room was broken open by them. Her mother was not in bed, and could not be seen in the room. Her sister, brother, the maid and herself took refuge with various friends in the neighbourhood. Her mother frequently read to them from the newspapers, and on hearing or reading about any burning fatality, always expressed her horror at such occurrences. And hoped that such a fate would never be hers. During the last few days her mother read of a burning fatality, and told them

how careful she had been with them as children, and how particular she always was about fires being low before retiring. She always impressed it upon them that if at any time a fire broke out they must keep their heads.

Harry Johnson, architect, of 18, Chambres-road, said that about five o'clock he was roused from bed by the loud ringing of a handbell in the street. He partially dressed, and along with his brother George and his father, went to the Rothery's house. They heard that Mrs. Rothery, who was sleeping in one of the rooms, had not been found. Finding the bedroom door locked, they procured an axe and forced it open. The room was full of smoke. They examined the bed, which was empty, but appeared to have been occupied, and examined the room, but could not find any trace of Mrs. Rothery.

Sergt. Leadbeater, whose hand was bandaged as a result of an injury at the fire, said he made an immediate search of the bedroom and bed, but could not find any trace of Mrs. Rothery. The floor was completely burnt away for a space about 4ft. square between the front of the bed and the gas stove, which was fixed in the fireplace. He then searched the dining-room, but again failed to find any trace of the deceased. The house was then systematically searched right through, but without result. The fire by this time had been practically extinguished, and a more detailed search was then made of the burnt-out room, and Mrs. Rothery's remains were then found lying in front of the dining-room fireplace, immediately under the hole burnt in the bedroom floor. The head lay inside the kerb, and the trunk and limbs were over the hole burnt in the floor and supported by the joists. The floor boards were completely burnt away to the cellars. The body was burnt beyond all recognition, but a felt slipper and a portion of a stocking could be discerned on each foot. He was of the opinion that Mrs. Rothery was at the foot of the bed, and that she fell in a more or less insensible condition with her head over the stove, and that her hair or clothing caught fire from the stove. In forming that opinion, he had in mind the fact that the lady suffered from a weak heart, and had been working harder than usual, and had complained of not feeling well before she retired.

The Chief Constable thanked the gentlemen of the neighbourhood who rendered such material assistance to the family and to the brigade when they arrived.

Colonel Brighouse said that Miss Rothery for her age showed great intelligence, and no doubt aided materially in saving her brother and sisters. She showed great presence of mind, practical knowledge, and an ability to cope with an emergency.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death", expressed sympathy with the bereaved family, and endorsed the coroner's compliment of Miss Rothery's courageous conduct.

NB At no point does this account give Miss Rothery's forename. It is probably Augusta Rothery.

In a separate note elsewhere in the same edition:

Funeral: - The interment of the late Mrs. Rothery, who was burned to death at Southport last week, took place in the family vault at St. Cuthbert's Churchyard on Tuesday afternoon, the remains being brought from Southport that day, the Rev. A. Partridge officiating in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends. The choir was also in attendance.

In the **1891 Census** living at Muirlands, Kirkby Ireleth, were William B. Rothery (30) Head, Inspector of Railway Material, born Workington, Cumberland; Margaret H. Rothery (30) Wife, born Kirkby Ireleth; Clifton U. H. Rothery (3), Son, born Kirkby Ireleth; Eric M. F. Rothery (14 months), born Kirkby Ireleth; Mary Royal (49?) Widow, Nurse, born Whitehaven, Cumberland; Angelina Harris (21) Single, Domestic Servant, born Netherton, Staffs.; Frances Coward (17) Single, Housemaid, born Kirkby Ireleth, Lancs.; and Amy Crowe (17) Single, Nurse Maid, born Dalton in Furness, Lancs.

The family had changed and grown by the time of the **1901 Census**. Living in Woodville Street, Lytham were William Rothery (40) Inspecting Engineer, Own Account, born Workington, Cumberland; Margaret Rothery (41) Wife, born Kirby (*sic*) in Furness – as were the rest of the household unless indicated; Miriam Parker (20), Step-daughter; Darcy Rothery (9) Son; Rothie Rothery (9) Daughter; Reginald Rothery (7) Son; Vernon Rothery (6) Son; Dolly Rothery (5) Daughter; Maurice Rothery (4) Son; Esme Rothery (4 months) Daughter, born Lytham; Isabelle Logan (28) Housemaid, born Leamside, Durham; and Annie Close (17) General Domestic Servant, born Embleton, Cumberland.

This shows that Margaret had been married before: to a farmer of 117 acres (employing 6 labourers) named John Parker (34), born Ulverston in the **1881 Census**. Margaret H. Parker is 21, and Miriam J. Parker is 11 months. They

are living at Chapels, Kirkby-in-Furness, together with the six employees, which include John's brother Joseph Parker (28). Margaret was the daughter of John Todd, Yeoman, and his wife Isabella, of Mere Beck, Kirkby-in-Furness. (**1861 Census**). Margaret H. Todd-Newcomb married John Parker in the Ulverston registration district in Q4 1879. John Parker died in September 1881.

Margaret Hannah Parker married William Brockbank Rothery in the Cockermouth Registration district Q3 1887.

In the **1911 Census** living at 10 Chambres Road, Southport, Lancs. were William Rothery (50) Head, Inspecting Engineer (Railway), born Workington, Cumberland; Margaret Rothery (51) Wife (who is recorded as having had 11 children born alive, 10 surviving), born Kirkby-in-Furness; Eric Rothery (21) Son, Single, Engineer Apprentice, born Kirkby-in-Furness; Augusta Rothery (19) Daughter, Single, no occupation recorded, born Kirkby-in-Furness; Myrtle Rothery (7) Daughter, born Lytham, Lancs; Florence Preece (18) Single, Domestic Servant, born Chorley, Lancs.

The **1871 Census** showed Margaretta J. Newcomb (16), and Mary J. Newcomb (10), both as scholars in a private boarding school for girls at Pembroke Lodge, Queen Parade, Harrogate. For more about Queen Parade see <http://www.aeden.plus.com/norwood/preclifton.htm>

The house in Southport, Hazelmere, still stands. It can be found on Google maps.

When she died, Margaret left effects valued at £2982 15s 3d.

Private Norman Bernard Vernon Rothery 8th Bn Cheshire Regt, son of Mr. W. B. Rothery, of Hazelmere, Southport, died on 3 November 1917, aged 23 years. He is commemorated at Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery. (CWGC)

William B. Rothery died in Southport Q3 1946.