Extract from the Obituary of Hubert Henry Morse (1891-1963)

Yard's Languages Man Came From The Forest

Mr Hubert Roylance Morse was born in Whitecroft 63 years ago, the eldest of the three children born to Mr H H Morse, a collier and corn dealer, and his first wife Miss Phipps, of Yorkley

He went to Bell's Grammar School under the headmastership of the Rev.John Talbot Gardener and, finished his education at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester and came back to work at the Whitecroft Mill for his father.

He had started studying to be a doctor but encouraged by Inspector Seabright at Lydney, he left for London and joined the Metropolitan Police.

When he died at his home in Coulston, Surrey on Thursday of last week, he was official translator to Scotland Yard's Special Branch and national newspapers reported the death of "the man of many tongues" with a working knowledge of 23 languages.

Full Life

He had lived a very full life. At school he discovered a talent for languages and a brain able to commit to memory lines of poetry after a single reading. When the First World War broke out he was a policeman stationed at Bow Street. Under a government order, enemy aliens had to register, and Hubert Morse found his interest in languages serving him in good stead. He was the only man at the Bow Street station able to speak German. He was appointed Alien Officer and never pounded the beat again.

When the war ended he was a detective in the CID and had accompanied Cabinet ministers in state mansions. He was at Versailles with Mr Lloyd George when peace was signed and is thought to have been present in the Hall of Mirrors at the signing. He stayed in Paris for a year, came home and returned to the Continent as Scotland Yard's Liaison Officer with the Dutch police at the port of Rotterdam. In 1920 he was one of the 22 observers appointed under the Munich Agreement to watch at the Czechoslovak frontier and he saw the Germans march in.

He retained his interest in literature and poetry as well as the singing voice which once served the Lydney male voice choir under Mr C B Smale.

He leaves a wife, a Swedish girl he met in London. There were no children. His father died in an accident in the mill in 1915. His stepmother Mrs E E Morse has lived at Margery Corner, Stowe for 30 years. Her daughter Miss P R Morse lives with her. Her half brother is transport manager for Cable and Wireless in San Paulo, Brazil, Mr Harry Morse of Longleigh Farm, is his cousin.

Mr Morse had not visited the Forest of Dean since the war when he and his wife visited an old Bell's friend, Mr Frank H Harris of Lydney. His wife spent five months at Margery Corner in 1941 after she and her husband had been bombed out of their home at Raines Park.

The funeral has taken place at Coulsdon.

Hubert married Ottilla J Aransson in 1915 in Kingston, Middlesex.

Submitted by Janet Rigby