

More Morris links

Evelyn Cozens

My grandmother, Eliza Puddle, went to Mayfield, now Mayfield Park, near Southampton, as nurse to Mr and Mrs Stanley Morris *, and worked there until her marriage in 1879 in Sholing Church to Arthur Henry Cozens. Two boys and two girls were in the nursery, but one boy died in childhood. Eric Morris went to Ceylon as a tea-planter. Evelyn Morris did not marry, but stayed at home as her parents' housekeeper. Grace Morris became Mrs Bevan and lived in Canada for a while. After her husband's death, she came home to Brownhill (now the family home) and supervised the garden. She also taught the wounded soldiers at Netley Hospital embroidery.

Grannie's youngest daughter, Annie, now 90, can remember a chest of tea—a present—being sent to their home, and fetching it from Sholing Railway Station.

My Aunt, Edith Cozens, was house maid at Brownhill. I've just found a post-card from her, dated 1906, from there. When I went to Brownhill as parlourmaid in 1927, Mrs Morris was a tall straightbacked old lady, generally in black dresses—the conventional picture of a Victorian lady. She tried to walk along the drive every day. She told me that if she missed doing this for one day, she would not do it again. Her idea came true.

Miss Evelyn, also tall and straight, amused me very much with the tea-making ceremony. In the dining room, on the polished sideboard stood an elegant oval tea-caddy. Every time tea was needed, this was unlocked, the tea carefully measured, and the caddy firmly locked until next time. One of my jobs was to clean and fill the lamps; they were still being used when I left in 1929. In the book-case by the dining room fireplace were some William Morris books, beautifully bound in white vellum. When I left, Mrs Morris gave me a silver thimble, which I used until it was worn out: I still have it. She died soon after I left, and my father and I went to her funeral in Bursledon old churchyard. Mrs Bevan invited me back to see the hall, newly papered with Morris wallpaper: she also gave me an embroidery frame as a keepsake. That was the last time I went to Brownhill.

*Hugh Stanley Morris, born 2nd August 1837.