

Paul Creswick

He was born James Paul Creswick in 1866 in Kingston on Thames, Surrey. He died in Hove on April 13th, 1947, aged 80.

Paul, as became known later, was the oldest son of James and Frances Creswick both of whom were born in London. All four of Paul younger brothers and sisters were born in Lambeth.

It is not known where he was educated but the 1881 Census shows him as a scholar, 14 years old, living with an uncle, Paul W Downey who was a barge owner & lighterman in Bermondsey. Mr Downey's home address was 9, Devonshire Road, Lambeth.

Ten years later the Creswicks had moved to 6, Harlington Villas in Beckenham Road with Paul, aged 24, working as an Assurance Clerk. (Paul's father was working on the Thames as Manager of/in the Castle & Sons Ship Breakers in Victoria Docks).

By 1901, Paul had successfully combined his employment in the Assurance Industry with a parallel career as an author, having had seven books published since 1895. The 1901 Census shows him declaring his occupation as 'Assurance Clerk & Author', living in a large nine roomed house in Kings Hall Road close to Kent House Station with direct trains to Holborn, a stone's throw from Holborn Bars the head office of the Prudential Assurance Company. .

He had been married for about seven years to his wife Maude and a six year old son, Maurice. (Intriguingly his first book in 1895 was titled 'The Miracle'). Their large nine roomed house provided accommodation for both a governess and a general domestic servant.

Over the next 10 years he had a further 10 books published and had risen to the rank of Principal Clerk in the Prudential Assurance Company Ltd. In 1911 Paul, now age 44, and his family were living at 4 Scotts Avenue in the Shortlands District of Beckenham close to the border with Bromley.

For the next 6 years he did not have any more fiction works published. He had stopped his parallel career as an author for a demanding roll in the organisation and running of the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) in the County of Kent.

Within a year of the start of the war, 3,420 men and women had enrolled for VAD duties in Kent. Through the course of the war many units were merged or moved to bigger centres. By the end of the war, there were 120 detachments (90 Women and 30 Men) with a nominal roll of 4,500 members. The Kent County VAD headquarters was in Bromley.

Paul had two roles. One was as Commandment of Kent 33, a men's detachment which was established on August 24th, 1914 in Bromley. The second was as Chief Transport Officer for the whole of the County of Kent. Paul described his duties in a book published in 1915 called "Kent's Care for the Wounded" which he co-authored with two colleagues from other Bromley VADs, G..Stanley Pond and P.H. Ashton.

In the book, Paul acknowledged that he had been able to do his VAD duties through the generosity of Prudential Assurance Co. Ltd.

Another book about the Kent VADs was published in 1920: 'Kent VAD, Report of Hospitals & Detachments, 1914-1919', printed by S Bush & Co, Bromley. On page 6 of this book the last paragraph reads:

“ The Men’s detachments have done valuable work ready and willing to help at any time of the day or night whether on orderly duties in the Hospitals or on transport or air raid work. It was felt however, that the admirable material available in these Detachments might, with advantage, be linked up more generally with the military organisation”. From 1917 the Men’s VADs were given a TF (Territorial Force) designation.

Paul Cheswick’s title became Chief Transport Officer for The County of Kent with the rank of Captain in the RASC (MT) and for his efforts he was awarded the OBE.

Paul did not resume writing novels until 1924 when he was age 58. His last work of fiction was 1928. A list of all his all known books are as follows:

Books by Paul Creswick (All fiction unless stated)

- 1895 The Miracle
- 1896 At The Sign Of The Cross Keys
- 1897 The Temple Of Folly
- 1898 Bruising Peg
- 1899 The Smugglers Of Barnard's Head
- 1900 In Alfred's Days
- 1901 Under The Black Raven
- 1902 Robin Hood And His Adventures
- 1902 Hasting The Pirate
- 1904 With Richard The Fearless
- 1907 In A Hand Of Steel
- 1909 Greypaws
- 1909 Idols Of Flesh
- 1910 Honesty's Garden
- 1910 The Kitty Confidences
- 1911 The Ring Of Pleasure
- 1915 Kent's Care For The Wounded (non-fiction with P H ASHTON & G Stanley POND)
- 1917 Our Little Kingdom (non-fiction)|
- 1924 The Beaten Path
- 1925 King Arthur (non-fiction)
- 1928 The Turning Wheel
- 1930 Providence Square A Domestic Interior (non-fiction)