

Ernest Walter Hardy Beaton (d. 24.8.1936)

Father of Sir Cecil Beaton, photographer, writer and stage designer

(The following text is taken from the book 'The Good Grave Guide to Hampstead Cemetery, Fortune Green' by Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling)

There are eight members of the Beaton family buried here. Cecil's grandparents Walter Hardy (d.1904) and Louisa (d.1899) lived at 8 Netherhall Gardens, but later moved to Abbots Langley. Ernest and Ettie Beaton, Cecil's parents, lived at 21 Langland Gardens, where Cecil was born, but moved to the much larger Temple Court, Templewood Avenue when his father's business prospered.

Ernest owned a woodwool factory in Bethnal Green and was quite well known as an amateur actor.

Cecil wrote about his Hampstead childhood in his Diaries and described the funerals of both his brother and his mother. Brother Reggie was killed in 1933 when he fell under a train at Piccadilly Circus. The train driver said he thought it wasn't an accident, and this, together with evidence that Reggie's Flying Corps career was in trouble because of eyesight problems, caused the Coroner to bring in a verdict of suicide. His family were devastated.

His mother was buried on a snowy February day:
"We stood, a forlorn black family group. The clergyman, with a very red nose, was reading the last prayers...the gravediggers, banded together, moved the coffin towards the grave, then slowly lowered it into the Beaton tomb.... We got back into the two motors and, leaving our mother to lie in the cold earth, we returned to our everyday life."