

# Grave of the Month

## Elsie Jeffrey Bell – aged 23

c.1890-1913



Elsie lived all her young life in Newbury, first at West Street and then in the Market Place where her father ran an architect business. She was a gifted linguist, having studied briefly in Germany, and was considering a trip to France when an evening out ended in tragedy.

Elsie had been invited by a friend to travel to Marlborough on his new motorcycle as his pillion passenger. Almost home, they collided with a car in Oxford Street, and both riders were unseated. Elsie hit her head and temporarily lost consciousness.

A doctor was called and, as she had rallied, the doctor asked the car driver to take her home and request that her parents put her to bed, keep her warm and call their own doctor.

But Elsie appeared so well recovered by the time they reached her house that the message was not relayed to her parents and although her father saw her when she arrived, he had no idea of the seriousness of the accident.

Overnight, however, her condition deteriorated and, by the time her parents appreciated the gravity of the situation and summoned a doctor, there was no chance of saving her life. The inquest returned a verdict of accidental death. A young woman of “bright, genial disposition”, Elsie’s death caused much sadness amongst her wide circle of friends.

The loss was particularly tragic for Elsie’s parents who had already lost a son, Wilfred, 16 years earlier. His name is on the small pillow stone at the head of the grave.



More information is available on our website: [www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk](http://www.fnrcnewbury.org.uk)  
and in the Newbury Weekly News archives for June 26th 1913