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Finding the Grave of Sir William Richard Gowers

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Finding the Grave of Sir William Richard Gowers

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“When the Funerall pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred Friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes.”¹
– Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682),
Norwich; May 1, 1658

William Richard Gowers, considered by some to be the father of clinical neurology, died May 4, 1915 at 34 Ladbrooke Square, in Notting Hill, West London.^{2,3} His funeral was held on May 6, 1915 at St. Peter’s Church, Vere Street, London, and his body was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on the same day.⁴ The final resting place of Gowers’ ashes was not mentioned in Critchley’s biography of Gowers,⁵ or known to the authors of his authoritative biography in 2012.³ On June 15, 2015, however, following historical research surrounding the centenary of Sir William Gowers’ death, it was determined that Ernest Gowers, one of Sir William’s sons, collected the ashes on September 4, 1915 for burial in Yorkshire (personal communication, Golder’s Green Archivist Viv Lackey to NT). Gowers’ great-great granddaughter (Rebecca Gowers) suggested that Sir William would have been buried with his wife Mary (Baines) Gowers, who preceded him in death on January 18, 1913. The authors searched for the grave of Mary Gowers. This was not fruitful, but they were able to locate the grave of Mary’s father Frederick Baines via an online source.⁶ Frederick Baines was one of the partners in the *Leeds Mercury*, and was buried at Lawnswood Cemetery, Leeds, West Yorkshire, England. Knowing this, the authors subsequently contacted Bereavement Services Manager Chris Simpson of the Leeds City Council via email, who verified that William Richard Gowers, his wife, and several other Baines family members were buried in a double vaulted grave owned by Frederick Baines and Sarah Edith Baines (sister of Mary Gowers) in the unconsecrated Victorian section of Lawnswood Cemetery in Leeds (grave numbers A 306 and A 307) (figure 1). The Gowers and Baines families were Nonconformists, and thus were laid to rest in this part of the cemetery. John Hughlings Jackson and William Richard Gowers are inextricably linked to Yorkshire; one by birth (Jackson), the other in death (Gowers).⁷

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The grave of Sir William Richard Gowers, his wife, and several other Baines family members at Lawnswood Cemetery in Leeds.

320x481mm (300 x 300 DPI)





The grave of Sir William Richard Gowers, his wife, and several other Baines family members at Lawnswood Cemetery in Leeds.

493x329mm (300 x 300 DPI)



The grave of Sir William Richard Gowers, his wife, and several other Baines family members at Lawnswood Cemetery in Leeds.

480x303mm (300 x 300 DPI)