



Photo added by a\_baron

## Harold "Harry" Bidney

<b>BIRTH</b>	20 Sep 1922 Whitechapel, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Greater London, England
<b>DEATH</b>	Jul 1984 (aged 61) Amsterdam, Amsterdam Municipality, Noord-Holland, Netherlands
<b>BURIAL</b>	Bushey Jewish Cemetery Bushey, Watford Borough, Hertfordshire, England
<b>PLOT</b>	Section BUX29 Row 7 Grave 218
<b>MEMORIAL ID</b>	203918819 ·

Harold Bidney was born in London's East End. His mother's maiden name was Steckman.

He attended a local school without achieving very high grades, and was called up or enlisted in 1940, serving with the British Army until he was demobbed in 1946.

He spent much of World War Two in Singapore reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant, and acting as Warrant Officer. On returning to his mother's home, he began work as a market trader, making the mistake of buying a car without first learning to drive. Taking it through the market where he worked, he demolished several stalls injuring a number of people. He would never drive again.

After his short-lived market career, he became a spiv. According to official documents held at Kew, his first conviction was April 25, 1951 at Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court. He was convicted of being found in a common gaming house. Bound over on his own recognizance for 12 months, he was also fined £10.

On March 21, 1955, he was convicted of selling American cigarettes without a licence knowing the duty had not been paid on them.

These and other convictions were run of the mill, but in the 1960s he did something extremely shameful. In 1965, Françoise Dior, the fanatically anti-Jewish estranged wife of the British Nazi leader Colin Jordan [memorial 98560153] seduced a number of her husband's youthful followers into mounting an arson campaign against Jewish premises in the London area. After he was convicted of an unrelated offence, one of the arsonists approached Bidney and confessed. Bidney took him to the police, but not before attempting to implicate the totally innocent Colin Jordan in the fires.

The investigation was led by Bert Wickstead [memorial number 196621054]. The two arson gangs received surprisingly lenient sentences; Mrs Jordan remained at liberty but was arrested and gaoled after returning from her native France.

After the 1960s, Bidney appears to have led a fairly uncontroversial life although he was later convicted of what most people today would regard as a victimless crime.

Harry Bidney died from a heart attack while sitting in the bar of an Amsterdam hotel. It was left to one of his Gentile friends, a fairly wealthy and loyal individual to arrange for the repatriation of his body and pay for the funeral. According to this person, who attended the funeral, he was buried on a Sunday - "a very wet Sunday" . However, United Synagogue records show the following day, ie July 23.

In his glowing obituary, Bidney's protégé Gerry Gable claimed his hero had brought the synagogue arsonists to book and also that one of the fires had resulted in the death of a yeshiva student - Volve Katz [memorial 192913241]. Years later, Gable would claim this valiant deed for himself. In reality, the Mesifita Talmudical College fire was a tragic accident, and Gable a cynical liar.

---

**Created by:** a\_baron

Added: 17 Oct 2019

Find A Grave Memorial **203918819**

*Find A Grave*, database and images

(<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 27 February 2020),

memorial page for Harold "Harry" Bidney (20 Sep 1922–Jul 1984), Find A Grave Memorial no. 203918819, citing Bushey Jewish Cemetery, Bushey, Watford Borough, Hertfordshire, England ; Maintained by a\_baron (contributor 47191016) .