

In 1879 the first crematorium was constructed at Woking. But the Home Office interfered and prevented its utilization and it lay idle for several years. In 1882 the council of the society was requested by Captain Hanham, of Blandford, Dorsetshire, to undertake the cremation of two deceased members of his family who had left express instructions to that effect. The society was unable to comply as the Home Secretary of that day reiterated the objections which had been made three years before. Captain Hanham then erected a crematorium upon his own estate, and in October, 1882, successfully carried out the wishes of his relatives. Dying himself a year later his body was also cremated on the same spot by a relative. The Government entered no protest. In 1883 a cremation took place in Wales in defiance of the coroner's authority and in consequence legal proceedings were instituted. These resulted in 1884 in the decision of Mr. Justice Stephen declaring that cremation is a legal procedure; provided it be effected without nuisance to others. In April, 1884, the House of Commons refused to pass a bill providing for the regulation of cremation. Upon the defeat of this measure the Cremation Society, backed up by the decision of Mr. Justice Stephen, announced that the crematorium at Woking was at the service of the public providing certain conditions, intended to remove the chief objection to cremation, the opportunity for removing traces of poison or other injury which are retained by an undestroyed body, were complied with. On March 20th, 1885, the Woking crematorium was used for the first time. Since then crematories have been erected at Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester.

Cremation was introduced into Germany at Gotha in 1878, since which time several crematories have been constructed.