

Robert Bullen

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS
26 October 1912**

DEATH OF MR. ROBERT BULLEN, J.P.

We regret to record the death, on Wednesday night, of Mr. Robert Bullen, J.P., of Newport, after a lingering illness, in his 79th year. The deceased gentleman, who belonged to an old and respected Devonshire family, came to the Island over half a century ago, and took up his residence at Newport as a minister of the Bible Christian (now United Methodist) connexion. After his marriage he relinquished ministerial work, but continued as a lay preacher and worker, and had since been actively connected with commercial life, particularly in life and fire assurance agencies. Some years ago he was connected with the public work of Newport, having belonged to the Town Council, School Board, and Burial Board, and he had been a Borough Justice for many years. But it was in his devoted and zealous work for the church of his choice that he chiefly distinguished himself, and heavy indeed is the loss which the United Methodist Church has sustained by his death.

He was the treasurer of the Newport United Methodist Church, which owes so much to his active interest and generous support. Writing in his "History of the Bible Christians in the Isle of Wight" of the noble pile of buildings in Quay-street, Newport, which were erected in 1880, the late Rev. Dr. Woolcock, a former circuit superintendent there, says "It will be most readily admitted that the man who had more to do with the design and erection of these buildings and who has watched over them with more care and interest than any other, is Mr. Robert Bullen." The same might be said of the part which he had taken in the provision of quite a number of the village chapels, notably at Arreton, Porchfield, Wootton, Bowcombe, Gunville, and Totland, the deceased gentleman being treasurer of the building fund in some cases, and generally showing a remarkable keenness in the success of his denomination in the rural districts of the Island.

The late Mr. Bullen was also an ardent supporter of temperance work and an uncompromising advocate of total abstinence. He was one of the passive resisters against the payment of the education rate, and to the end declined voluntarily to pay this rate. In politics he was an advanced Liberal. In his varied associations he had made many friends, who deeply regret his loss. His wife predeceased him some years ago. The funeral will take place at Carisbrooke Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon and the first part of the service will be at the United Methodist Church at 2.30 p.m.

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS
2 November 1912**

FUNERAL OF MR. ROBERT BULLEN J.P.

PULPIT AND PUBLIC TRIBUTES

The funeral took place on Tuesday of Mr. Robert Bullen, J.P., of Newport, whose death, at the age of 78, occurred last week. There were general signs of mourning in the town, the borough flag was at half-mast over the Guildhall, as it had been since the death, and the knell of the Parish-church was tolled. The first part of the service was conducted at the United Methodist Church, in the presence of a large congregation representative of the Newport, Ryde, and Cowes circuit of that denomination, as well as of other churches in the town, the Mayor and borough justices, and representatives of the public authorities with which deceased had been associated. In accordance with deceased's wish there were no funeral drapings in the church, but instead a number of white

chrysanthemums were placed round the rostrum. Before the arrival of the cortege Mr. Reginald S. Davey (organist) played "O rest in the Lord". The cortege was met at the church by the circuit ministers, the Revs. D. Watkins (superintendent), R. J. Harris (Ryde), J. Hodgson (Cowes), and J. W. Kitching (Totland), with the Rev. E. C. Bartlett (chairman of the Portsmouth district). The principal mourners were Messrs. Robert and Frank Bullen (Lifton, Devon), and Mr. Harry Bullen (Ivybridge, Devon), nephews of deceased, the Rev. W. R. K. Baulkwill (governor of Shebbear College, Devon) and Mr. C. R. H. Harvey (executors), Mr. W. J. Bailey, jun. (Solicitor), Dr. J. B. McKay, and Mr. C. Morris. A trustee from each of the churches of which the deceased was treasurer acted as pallbearer, viz., Messrs. F. Midlane (Newport), G. H. Callaway (Wootton), F. Moore (Arreton), D. Holbrook (Porchfield), A. James (Gunville), and F. Young (Totland Bay). There were also present the Mayor (Mr. J. C. Millgate), Messrs. F. Templeman Mew, J.P. (ex-Mayor), Francis Pittis, J.P., Robert Pinnock, J.P., James Thomas, J.P., R. Bird Cheverton, J.P., George B. Purkis, J.P., W. J. Whittington, J.P., Edward Morris, J.P., Harry Shepard, J.P., F. E. Whitcher, T.C. (Deputy Mayor), and James Eldridge (Clerk to the Justices). The Burial Board of which deceased was a member, was represented by Ald. R. Bird Cheverton, J.P. (chairman), Ald. C. Webb, and Messrs. J. H. Linington and W. C. Black, with Mr. J. B. Alderslade (clerk), Mr. William Weeks (the late clerk) being also present.

There were also at the service the Rev. J. H. and Mrs. Shilson, the Rev. S. Ainsworth (Primitive Methodist), the Rev. W. Rowe, Mr. W. J. Bailey, sen., Mr. and Mrs. Frank Fleming, Mr. A. Fleming, Miss Fleming (Marvel), Mrs. E. Morris and Miss Morris, Mr. and Mrs. H. U. Barton, Mr. H. Deacon, T.C., Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Croucher, Mr. S. Hollis, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. F. Payn, Mr. W. Wells, Mr. Leonard Jordan, C.C., Mr. W. Wells, Mr. Leonard Jordan, C.C., Mr. W. E. Butcher, Mr. C. H. Cave, Mr. A. H. North, Mr. D. J. Bartlett, Mrs. F. Midlane, Miss Bailey, Mrs. Arthur Kemp, Miss Greengrass, Mrs. A. Gill-Martin, Mrs. W. J. Bailey, jun., and Miss Bailey, Mr. W. H. Downer, Mr. G. W. Brown, Mr. R. Bennett, Mr. E. Matthews (East Cowes), Mr. H. Spencer (Cowes), Mr. H. Lowe, Mr. E. Willsted (Cowes), Mr. C. Willsted (Chillerton), Mr. E. J. Willsted, Mr. W. J. Taylor (Freshwater), Mr. Cooper (Ventnor), Mr. R. Gray, Mr. T. Spanner, Mr. J. Way, Mr. S. E. Tomkins, Mr. C. D. Vibert, Mr. A. G. Harrison, Mr. J. K. Alderslade, Mr. T. Lee, Mr. Frank King, Mr. A. Dore-Kelynack, Mr. J. H. Flux, A.R.C.O., Mr. A. Cheek, Mr. A. W. Abraham, Mr. G. Guttridge, Mr. G. Morris (Pan), Mr. John Sheath, Mr. H. W. Lower, Mr. King, Mr. E. F. Wray, Mr. J. Wadham (Wootton), Mr. T. C. V. Shortland, Mr. Drudge, Mr. J. Rice, C.C., Mr. I. Hayward, Mr. W. H. Upward, Mr. B. Osborn, Mr. J. W. Marshall, Mr. E. J. Kemp, and others.

Among those who were prevented from attending were the Vicar of Newport (the Rev. H. Edmund Sharpe) and Messrs. Robey F. Eldridge, J.P., R. Roach Pittis, J.P., James George, J.P., E. Chatfield-Clarke, J.P., C.C. (who sent a letter of sympathy and regret), Mr. J. W. Stanley, J.P., and Mr. W. W. Odell.

The hymn "Rock of Ages" having been sung, the Rev. R. J. Harris offered prayer, the Rev. E. C. Bartlett read the 90th Psalm and the Rev. J. Hodgson the lesson, which was followed by the hymn "There is a land of pure delight".

The Rev. D. Watkins said they had lost from their midst an honoured townsman, who for over 50 years had taken an honourable part in all the activities of the Island. The late Mr. Bullen came there as a Bible Christian minister, but circumstances precluded him from continuing in that much-loved service, so he settled down in business and very speedily secured the confidence of all classes of the community, as was demonstrated by the fact that they honoured him by election to some of the most responsible civic positions. It was a pleasure to remember his work on the old School Board and the Town Council, and the honourable service he had rendered to the State by becoming a member of the Bench and serving as a Justice of the Peace.

From a political point of view he was a pronounced Liberal, who took a deep interest in all Imperial and social questions, but that which lay nearest to his heart was the great question of social reform, particularly the abolition of the curse of intemperance. His soul was particularly stirred as a Nonconformist when the Education Act of the late Government was passed. He felt acutely the disabilities of the Nonconformist teachers, and accordingly joined the Passive Resistance movement, never voluntarily paying that part of the rate used on behalf of sectarian teaching. Only an hour or so before his demise an officer of the Crown brought his summons for the education rate, but he was to appear before a greater tribune where the secrets of all hearts were disclosed.

The distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Bullen was his religion; he was essentially a Christian believer, who had passed through that spiritual crisis called conversion, which awakened within him a great passion for God and humanity. That sacred fire never ceased to burn upon the altar of his heart. Coming under the influence of such powerful preachers as James Thorne, Cephas Barker, and other pioneers the Bible Christian Church, he vied with them in preaching the Gospel, and after relinquishing the ministry he became a lay preacher and conducted services in town and country alike, for the good of all the glory of his Maker.

Realising the advantages of suitable church buildings, he used his influence and wealth in their erection. The church in which they were assembled was built largely through his initiative and influence, and if they wished to see his monument let them look around. The villages strongly appealed to him, and they founded substantial churches of that denomination at Arreton, Wootton, Porchfield, Gunville, and Totland Bay, chiefly through his instrumentality, and to the last he acted as their treasurer. The Sunday-school was a sphere in which he delighted to work and where he showed his personal influence in every possible way. Practically all the offices of that church had been laid at his feet simply because he had won them. The sacrifice of his life was seen in the church of his choice, and the fire that burned in his heart, as it was never lit with human hands, could never be extinguished by human adversity. He delighted to dwell among his people, and there were many - some in that building - who went to him with hearts heavy and in severe straits, and he invariably aided them, his Christian life and manly virtues and character being proved by exemplary acts which he incessantly performed.

In the days of his painful illness he had no fear of death, and he never once thought of the wealth he had given and the sacrifice he had made for his church during 50 years. An historical phrase in the history of Methodism was that uttered by John Wesley, who said "Thank God our people die well". That was demonstrated by the late Mr. Bullen. After a life of sacrifice and noble devotion to the cause of God and humanity, he had passed to the life of the other world with a deep peace and joy that any one might envy. Those who were left behind realised the responsibility devolving upon them to maintain their cause; might they prove worthy of such noble examples of Christian integrity and holy ideals.

The hymn "How blest the righteous" was followed by the Benediction, pronounced by the Rev. J. W. Kitching, and the organist then gave a very fine rendering of the "Dead march" in *Saul*. The interment was at Carisbrooke Cemetery where the Rev. W. R. K. Baulkwill impressively read the committal service in the presence of a large assemblage. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. H. and F. Damp.

BOROUGH MAGISTRATES' TRIBUTE

A resolution of sympathy and condolence with the relatives of the late Mr. R. Bullen was passed at a meeting of the Newport Borough Justices on Monday, when the Mayor (Mr. J. C. Millgate) presided, and there were also present Messrs. Francis Pittis, J. Thomas, R. Bird Cheverton,

C. Salter, G. B. Purkis, E. Morris, and H. Shepard. Apologies for unavoidable absence were received from Messrs. Robey F. Eldridge, F. Templeman Mew, R. Roach Pittis, and J. W. Stanley. Mr. Robey F. Eldridge, who was absent through temporary indisposition, wrote expressing his regret and sympathy at the loss of one who, so assiduous in the duties of magistrate and so kindly and helpful to all, would be greatly missed not only by his brother magistrates, but by the whole town and neighbourhood. Mr. Mew regretted that a long-standing engagement prevented him from being present personally to record, as he wished to be allowed to do, in conjunction with his colleagues on the Bench, his sympathy with the relatives of the late Mr. Bullen. Mr. Roach Pittis was detained in London owing to ill-health, and Mr. Stanley was away from home.

The Mayor moved "That the Borough Justices desire to express their sincere sympathy and condolence with the relatives of their late colleague, Robert Bullen, Esq., J.P. in the bereavement which they have sustained and to record their sense of the loss which they feel they and the Bench have sustained by his lamented death." His worship said he could not express their feelings better than was done in Mr. Eldridge's letter, with which he thoroughly agreed. Most of them were more intimate with the late Mr. Bullen than he (the Mayor). He occasionally met and had work to do with him, and he invariably found him straightforward and perfectly consistent. He was in his day a useful member of the Corporation and School Board, and until his death was a member of the Newport Burial Board. He could only say that if more men in that borough, of the stamp of Mr. Bullen, would give their services to the town, Newport would be better. He had gone to his home above, and he would be greatly missed.

Mr. Francis Pittis seconded, saying he had known the late Mr. Bullen for a great many years and had always found him straightforward and honourable, and in the various public work he had undertaken he had well done his duty to the town and to his fellow citizens, and they deeply regretted the loss they and the town had sustained. Mr. Thomas said he had been associated in public work with Mr. Bullen on many occasions, and he esteemed and honoured him, as he was sure they all did, as being a good citizen, who was always conscientious and they and the public generally would feel his loss for a long time. Mr. Shepard said he should like to add his testimony to the worth of the late Mr. Bullen, than whom he did not know any gentleman connected with the public affairs of the borough who had been more generous in support of charitable objects. Probably his left hand never knew what his right hand did. He supported right and left every deserving charitable object which came under his notice, as he (the speaker) could personally testify. The resolution was carried in silence, the magistrates standing.

At a meeting of the Newport Burial Board, held on Tuesday, Ald. R. Bird Cheverton, J.P. (chairman). Speaking of the loss which the Board had sustained by the death of the late Mr. Bullen, said the deceased gentleman, who had been a member of the Board for 12½ years, had been assiduous in the discharge of his duties and had placed his long and valued experience at the service of the Board, especially in the matters of the laying-out of the new ground, the building of the Cemetery walls, the roofing of the cottage, &c. He was tenacious in his views and opinions, but always courteous to those who differed from him. It was resolved that a letter of sympathy be sent to the relatives.

A memorial service will take place at the Newport United Methodist Church on Sunday evening.

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