

## **Florence Jane Monk**

**Isle of Wight County Press 18 August 1956**

### **THE LATE MISS F. J. MONK**

#### **DEATH OF FORMER NEWPORT HEADMISTRESS**

The death occurred in St. Mary's Hospital, Newport, on Sunday, of Miss Florence Jane Monk, B.A., aged 81, of Winteringham, College Road, Newport, whose retirement in 1935 from the headship of Newport County Secondary Grammar School ended 25 years' loyal and exemplary service to the school whose reputation she had done so much to establish. When Miss Monk came to the Island in 1910 the school had emerged from its initial stage as a Pupil Teachers' Centre and had been providing secondary education for three years. As headmistress she gave the next quarter of a century in the service of one ideal, to equip her pupils to lead a full and useful life.

Born in Burton-on-Trent, Miss Monk was awarded her Bachelor of Arts degree at Aberystwith University and began her teaching career at Brighton Secondary School before becoming headmistress of a Pupil Teachers' Centre at Lewes and Haywards Heath. From there she came to Newport, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. M. A. Monk, who died in 1929. During the first world war her example in social and national service established for the school a reputation which it has long maintained, but it was not until after the war that the solving of staff problems allowed her full scope to expand the curriculum to include advanced education. As a teacher she possessed the gift of interesting pupils in a subject for its own sake and was able to communicate her own deep interest and love for English literature. A strict disciplinarian, she expected the best from staff and scholars, and took an intense and kindly concern in the progress of past and present pupils. During her years as headmistress nearly 2000 boys and girls passed through the school and about 100 members of staff. After the first world war Miss Monk founded the Old Students' Association and became its first president. On her retirement she was made an honorary life member and among her happiest outings before failing health limited her activity, was to attend the re-union gatherings of the association. It was a disappointment to her that her retirement took place a year before the new wing of the school was completed in 1937. The teaching of singing, drawing and drill, in which she was keenly interested, had previously been handicapped by lack of accommodation. Miss Monk's retirement was marked by many warm testimonies of appreciation from colleagues and pupils and over 400 old students subscribed to a presentation fund.

She was a former president of the County Teachers' Association and a founder member and first chairman of the Newport Townswomen's Guild. During the second world war she was associated with the work at the local British Red Cross Society's depot under Mrs. Cowper Blake and she maintained a keen pleasure in her well kept garden during her retirement.

For the last seven years she had been cared for by her sister, Miss D. Monk, a retired hospital matron, and although she had not been well for some years, her death was sudden.

The funeral took place on Wednesday when a service at the Castlehold Baptist Church was conducted by the Minister (the Rev. L. R. Davies). The hymns, which were accompanied by Mrs. W. R. Pilcher (organist), were "The Lord's my Shepherd," Miss Monk's favourite hymn, and "He who would valiant be," the hymn she chose to be sung at the unveiling of the school war memorial in 1947. The chief mourners were the Misses C., A., and D. Monk (sisters), Mr. J. Monk (nephew) and Ald. Mrs. E. R. Chandler, O.B.E., J.P. Represented in the congregation, which also included several former colleagues, were the headmaster, staff and pupils of Newport County Secondary Grammar School and the Old Students' Association, the King James I Grammar School and the Newport Townswomen's Guild. The floral tributes included those from the School and the Old Students' Association. The interment took place at Carisbrooke Cemetery. The arrangements were made by Messrs. H. and F. Damp.

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