

William Upton

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 1 July 1967

FORMER MASTER BELLRINGER

An enthusiastic campanologist and former master of the Island bellringers, Mr. William Upton, aged 78, of 85 St. John's Road, Newport, died suddenly while visiting fellow ringers at Carisbrooke Church on Thursday evening.

Mr. Upton had maintained the tradition of ringing the Pancake Bell at the Parish Church, a reminder to housewives that it was Pancake Day. He first became a ringer in August, 1907, and had performed the Pancake Day duty almost without a break from 1924 until a few years ago.

He was well known in the town, where he had been in business at a leather shop in St. Thomas's Square for many years.

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 8 July 1967

FORMER NEWPORT MASTER BELLRINGER

THE LATE MR. W. UPTON

The funeral took place on Wednesday of Mr. William Upton, aged 78, of Hilltop, 85 St. John's Road, Newport, whose sudden death the previous Thursday while visiting fellow bellringers at Carisbrooke Church was briefly reported last week.

Mr. Upton retired as I.W. District Ringing Master of the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers in 1963 after holding the Island office for almost 23 years, but continued as a ringer at Newport Parish Church and Carisbrooke Church. He started bellringing in 1907 and the following year joined the Winchester and Portsmouth Guild as a private member. One of his treasured possessions was a gold watch, chain and bellringer's badge, given to him on his 50th birthday by his family.

In all his years as a bellringer, Mr. Upton's proudest moment was the ringing of a peal of Stedman Triples in 1928 with a band mainly of Newport Church bellringers. This complicated peal has not been rung since on the Island. The same band were privileged to ring a peal of the less complicated Grandaire Triples in 1930 in honour of King George V's 65th birthday.

The service at St. Mary's Church, Carisbrooke, was conducted by the Rev. F. G. Fuller (vicar of Newport) assisted by Mr. F. Chiverton (diocesan reader) and fellow bellringers were bearers.

The mourners were Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Upton (son and daughter-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Hapgood and Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Brown (son-in-laws and daughters), Mrs. D. Fry (sister), Mrs. P. Smy, the Misses A. and K. Hapgood and Messrs. P. and S. Brown (grandchildren), Mr. and Mrs. F. Attrill (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Mrs. A. Attrill (sister-in-

law), Mrs. G. Bristow (niece), and Mr. and Mrs. D. Wollard. Mrs. A. J. Upton (daughter-in-law) was unable to attend.

Among the floral tributes received were those from the Winchester, Portsmouth and I.W. District Guild of Ringers and All Saints', Freshwater, ringers. Cremation followed. Mr. F. Groundsell made the arrangements.

FORMER VICAR'S TRIBUTE

Among many tributes to Mr. Upton the following was sent to us by the Rev. A. P. Lumley, now rector of Bryanston and Blandford St. Mary Dorset, who was vicar of Newport from 1958 to 1964: "No future history of the Isle of Wight will be complete without at least a modest reference to William Upton. Who can remember a time, until very recent years, when for six days in the week he was not to be seen in the old leather shop in St. Thomas's Square, or on the first day of the week was not to be heard ringing the bells of Newport or Carisbrooke churches? He was the Island's revered Master Ringer, sounding out in past years the curfew bell or the "pancake" bell, and leading many a team in memorable peals on all manner of notable occasions, and on some other occasions notable only for the stamina and endurance of the ringers.

"William Upton was known throughout the Island and all along the south coast of England where there were church towers with a peal of bells. I once asked him how long he had been ringing. 'Fifty-four years,' he replied. And when I added that there could be nothing much about bellringing that he didn't know, he said, with characteristic modesty, 'Don't you believe it, vicar. I am still learning.' Humble and devout, he was also a thorough man. He made the belt which I wear round my cassock; it will outlast me by a hundred years!

"Whenever I hear church bells pealing, and whenever I buckle on my cassock-belt, I will think of good William Upton, Newport and the Island will not see his like again."

Transcription by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2021
<https://www.foncc.org.uk>