

Harry George Adams-Connor

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DEATH OF CAPT. H. G. ADANS-CONNOR, C.V.O., D.L.

BRITISH LEGION PRESIDENT AND EX-CHIEF CONSTABLE.

By the death of Capt. Harry George Adams-Connor, C.V.O., D.L., which took place at his residence, Beechwood, Carisbrooke, on Monday night in his 80th year, the Island loses a distinguished Vectensian who had rendered notable service to his native place in important offices, particularly as chief constable for 36 years. He was a gentleman who enjoyed the warm esteem, not to say affection, of many in the Wight who had the privilege of knowing him. He retired from the position of chief constable four years ago, but he had continued his active association with the British Legion, an organisation in which he took the keenest interest and of which, after many years as chairman of the Island Council, he became president in succession to Lord Gort four years ago.

Capt. Adams-Connor was a twin son of the Very Rev. George H. Connor, the first vicar of Newport, and afterwards Dean of Windsor and chaplain to Queen Victoria. He was born in October, 1859, while his father was the revered vicar of Newport, and was educated at Marlborough. While there he was one of the guard of honour of cadets when the late King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, visited that great school. He served for 20 years in The Connaught Rangers, seeing active service in the Boar War of 1880-81, and again it was his distinction during his Army service to command guards of honour for Queen Victoria's visit to Sheffield in 1897, and when King George V, as Duke of York, visited Ireland in the same year. On his retirement from the Army he was appointed chief constable of the Island in 1889 and continued to carry out the important duties of that office with characteristic efficiency and dignity until his retirement in September, 1935. As Osborne House was the residence of Queen Victoria for a long period during the earlier part of his chief constableness, it was Capt. Connor's duty to supervise the local police arrangements for the safety of Her Majesty and the many Royal visitors who came to Osborne. The marked tact and ability with which he discharged these duties brought him the distinction of the M.V.O., which was conferred on him by King Edward when Osborne ceased to be a Royal residence in 1909 as a mark of appreciation of his services. For his watchful care and helpfulness during visits of the Czar and King Alfonso of Spain he received the royal orders of St. Stanislaus of Russia, and of Charles III and Isabella la Catolica of Spain. The final mark of royal appreciation of his work came in the New Year Honours of 1935, when he was promoted to be a Commander of the Victorian Order. He had been a Deputy-Lieutenant since 1899, and was elected a permanent honorary member of the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1935. During his long period as chief constable he enjoyed the confidence of the Standing Joint Committee and of the public and the warm respect of the members of the constabulary. He won that confidence and esteem by sound discipline, a jealous regard for the good name of his native Island, and last, but not least, by his unfailing tact and geniality. The measure of the esteem which he enjoyed can best be indicated in his own words. Speaking at Newport in 1932 he said: "I can look you straight in the face and say that during the whole time I have been chief constable I have never received an unkind word from any fellow Islander. It has been a delight to me to walk about the Island and receive the cheery salutations of hosts of friends and enjoy a real friendliness; which has helped me greatly in my work."

The British Legion in the Island has had no more enthusiastic supporter than the late Captain, who realised the movement's possibilities from its inception and, with typical spirit, set himself out to help in any possible way. He soon became chairman of the Island Council, and filled that office with much devotion for 14 years, until four years ago, when he was unanimously chosen to succeed Viscount Gort as

president of the Legion in the Wight. He was very proud of the Legion and the honour its members had done him, and even when his health of late prevented him leaving his residence he would stand at the gate and take the salute of the Legionists as they marched past to their annual services of remembrance at Carisbrooke Castle. Due appreciation of his labours for the ex-Servicemen's cause was paid at a meeting of the Island Council at Newport in April last year, when at practically his last public appearance the Captain was presented with a certificate bearing the following inscription: "Awarded by the President and the National Executive Council to Capt. H. G. Adams-Connor as a mark of sincere appreciation of valuable services rendered on behalf of ex-Service men and their dependents in the Isle of Wight since 1921." It was at a British Legion service at Carisbrooke Church two years ago on Remembrance Sunday that the Captain was taken seriously ill, and he had been in delicate health ever since.

A devout Churchman, he was a regular attendant at Carisbrooke Church until his breakdown in health, and usually read the lessons at the morning services. He also took a keen interest in the Island War Memorial Church of St. Nicholas-in-the-Castle, of which he was the senior warden.

To return to his life-long association with Royalty, it may be mentioned that the Captain was honoured by the close personal friendship of the Royal Governor of the Island (H.R.H. Princess Beatrice), and a message expressing grief and deepest sympathy has been sent by Her Royal Highness to Mrs. Ernest Wilberforce, Capt. Connor's only sister.

In 1893, the late Captain married Valerie Ellinor, daughter of Sir Peter Scratchley, a former High Commissioner of New Guinea, and leaves one daughter, who in 1933 married Sir Lionel Smith-Gordon, Bt. Before coming to Carisbrooke Capt. Connor lived for some years at The Rangers, Sandown.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral took place at Carisbrooke yesterday (Friday) amid signs of general mourning. Every section of the Island Constabulary was represented, and the presence of 22 British Legion standards with members of practically all the branches and women's sections in the Island testified to the widespread esteem in which the Capt. Adams-Connor was held. The police and Legion members lined the hill leading to the church, and as the hearse passed the standards were dipped in salute. Police and Legionists then joined the procession to the church. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack and on it rested the Captain's Deputy-Lieutenant's hat, sword, and belt, and decorations. The choirboys led the procession from the lich-gate, the opening sentences being recited by the Rev. J. W. F. Wayet (rector of Gatcombe), who conducted the service with the assistance of the Rev. C. E. Paterson (vicar of Holy Trinity, Cowes, and chaplain to the Royal Yacht Squadron), the Rev. H. M. Humphery (vicar of Bembridge), and the Rev. W. H. Mackinnon (vicar of St. John's, Newport).....

At the graveside the standard-bearers formed a semi-circle with Legion members and police representatives at each end, and after the committal Corpl. Dwyer and Bugler Cook, of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Ulster Rifles, sounded the Last Post and Reveille while the flags dipped again in final salute.

The mourners were Mrs. Harry Adams-Connor (widow), Sir Lionel and Lady Smith-Gordon (son-in-law and daughter), Major A. R. G. Wilberforce (also representing Mrs. Ernest Wilberforce, sister), Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Franklyn (nieces), Mr. W. D. W. Buckell, Mrs. Philpot (housekeeper), and Miss J. Page (maid). Mrs. Russell Walker (niece) was unable to attend owing to illness.

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