

## **Archibald Gaydon Bird**

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### **BUSINESSMAN AND GOLFER**

#### **DEATH OF MR. A. G. BIRD, OF NEWPORT**

An association of over half a century with the business life of Newport was broken by the death at his home on Saturday of Mr. Archibald Gaydon Bird, aged 84, of St. Mary's, Cypress Road. Apart from being one of the town's oldest business men, Mr. Bird was also among the oldest members of the I.W. County Club, the Albany Lodge of Freemasons, and the Newport Golf Club. A man of quiet disposition, he had never been a public figure, but those who knew him greatly valued his friendship and admired his integrity and other estimable qualities.

Mr. Bird was a native of Barnstable, where his father was a wine and spirit merchant. He spent some time in business at Croydon before coming to the Island, and in 1908 he purchased the old-established business of bookseller and stationer hitherto carried on by the Gubbins family at premises in High Street, Newport. The business has since become well known all over the Island under the style of A. G. Bird, and has now been carried on unbrokenly for well over a century.

Mr. Bird was the second oldest member both of the Albany Lodge of Freemasons and the County Club. He spent much of his time at the County Club, and enjoyed playing billiards and snooker, but he was best known as a keen golfer, a game which he played regularly until about three years ago. He was one of the oldest members of the Newport Golf Club, an ex-president and former secretary. It was mainly due to his efforts that the club was kept in being during the first world war, when most of the members were away in the Forces. Mr. Bird was at one time governor of the Newport Grammar School (now King James I Grammar School), and a former member of the Newport Rotary Club.

Mr. Bird married a local lady, Miss Grace Bartlett, who died in 1951.

The funeral service took place on Wednesday at the Newport Parish Church. Brethren of Albany Lodge of Freemasons formed a guard of honour at the entrance. The Vicar (the Rev. A. P. Lumley) officiated and the lesson was read by Mr. Frank Chiverton (lay reader). The service included the metrical version of the 23rd Psalm and the hymn "Abide with me." Miss K. Lower (organist) played "Nimrod" from the Enigma Variations by Elgar at the close of the service. In a tribute the Vicar said there could scarcely be a better known name in the town than that of Mr. Bird, who had piled his trade quietly in the High Street for over 50 years. Although his own acquaintance with Mr. Bird had been only of 17 months, there were many things about him which he had learned to admire - the quiet regularity of his life, and the way he delighted in a joke and in good fellowship. He went gently through his life, winning the respect of his fellows.

The mourners were Mr. R. Bird (nephew), Mr. W. D. W. Buckell, Mr. J. Dove and Mr. L. Bennington (manager) and the following members of the staff: Mr. H. Beacon, Mesdames M. Pierce and A. Richardson, and the Misses E. Odell, E. Guy, A. Mogg and H. Stay.

There was a large gathering of members of the Albany Lodge of Freemasons, including the Worshipful Master (Mr. A. C. Early), and other organisations and firms represented included the I.W. County Club, the Newport Golf Club, the King James I Grammar School, the Newport Rotary Club, the I.W. Grocers' Association, Messrs. Upward and Rich, the I.W. County Press Co., Ltd., Messrs. A. E. Hook and Co., the Westminster Bank, Messrs. J. Arthur Dixon, Ltd., Messrs. Arthur Wood, Ltd., and Messrs. Francis Pittis and Son.

The interment was at Carisbrooke Cemetery beside the grave of his wife. The floral tributes included those from the staff of Messrs. A. G. Bird, management and staff of the Newport Branch, Westminster Bank, directors of the I.W. County Club, and W. J. Nigh and Sons, Ventnor.

Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements.

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,

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