

Robey James Eldridge

1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census

Daylesford, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England

Name	Relationship	Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Robey Frank Eldridge	Head	Married	67	Market gardener	Newport, Isle of Wight
Harriet Eldridge	Wife	Married	60		Oxfordshire
Marion Hope Eldridge	Daughter	Single	32		Newport, Isle of Wight
<i>Robey James Eldridge</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Solicitor</i>	<i>Newport, Isle of Wight</i>
Clara Louise Chatfield	Servant	Single	23	General servant	Wooton, Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight County Press
1 April 1967

SOLICITOR-SPORTSMAN

THE LATE MR. R. J. ELDRIDGE, OF NEWPORT

Solicitor, sportsman, churchman, historian – these were the chief features of the long and useful life of Mr. Robey James Eldridge, aged 86, of Avondale, Avondale Road, Newport, which ended suddenly and peacefully on Good Friday.

Mr. Eldridge was the senior partner in the old established firm of solicitors, James Eldridge and Sons, on Newport, Ryde, and Freshwater, son of Mr. Robey Frank Eldridge, also a partner in the firm, who was Mayor of Newport in 1884. He was educated at Charterhouse, joined his father as an articled pupil on leaving school and qualified as a solicitor in 1904. He had been actively associated with the firm ever since, except that in the last year of so his work had been limited by the handicap of severe rheumatism, which had cripple him. He bore this affliction with courage and patience—outstanding traits in his character, which won him esteem throughout his life of many parts.

Mr. Eldridge had spent a happy day with his family on Good Friday, showing no indication of his impending death, which came very suddenly and peacefully shortly after he went to bed.

He married Miss Agnes Dorothy Way Buckell, B.Sc., daughter of Mr. William T. Way Buckell, solicitor, of Newport and Ventnor, and they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary last year. He also leaves a son, Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Eldridge, O.B.E., a partner in the firm of James Eldridge and Sons; a daughter, Nancy, wife of the Rev J. A. Kingham, vicar of Great Badow, Essex; and seven grandchildren.

In his earlier years Mr. Eldridge was an all-round sportsman. He played cricket and football for the Newport clubs and later, as a vice-president, generously and enthusiastically supported them. He and his wife were both playing members for many years of the Newport Lawn Tennis Club and the Newport Golf Club, Mr. Eldridge being president of the tennis club. As a director of the I.W. County Club he was a popular member and a skillful billiards and snooker player.

A devoted churchman, he had served St. John's Church, Newport, in many ways—as Sunday-school teacher, chorister, secretary of the Parochial Church Council for about 25 years, trustee of the parish hall

(Lekh Richmond Hall) and in unostentatious financial support. He was a vice-president of the St. John's Athletic Club.

ABLE HISTORIAN

Deeply interested in the things of the past, in the Island generally and in Newport in particular, he was acknowledged as a careful and informative historian. His researches into the archives of the ancient borough and knowledge gained by perusal of old documents in his office records and history books, enabled him to write a comprehensive history of Newport, published by the "County Press" in 1952, under the title "Newport in Bygone Days". The book won wide appreciation. His historical knowledge made him a popular lecturer on olden times in the Wight. His interest in this direction led him to secure perhaps the most extensive private collection of books on local history and prints and engravings of Island scenes and notable buildings. During recent years, when his activities were restricted, he had shown considerable artistry in illuminating many old engravings with water colours.

One of Mr. Eldridge's early interests, which gave him much satisfaction later, was in the Boy Scout movement. He was a member of the committee who formed the 1st Newport (Old Guard) Troop, the first in the Island, and was honorary treasurer to the committee for nearly 40 years.

His many other community and social services include the honorary secretaryship of the former Newport Literary Society, being honorary solicitor to the Earl Yarborough Lodge of Odd Fellows, a founder member and ex-president of the Newport Rotary Club, secretary of the Blue School Charity, and a trustee of the Carisbrooke Castle Museum.

Last, but by no means least of his interests, was gardening. He spent almost all his leisure hours in his garden or greenhouse and was particularly skilful in floriculture. His conservatory, fronting on Mount Pleasant Road, Newport, was, throughout the year, a delight to passers-by with its perfection of successive flowering plants.

Outside his profession Mr. Eldridge's main business interest was in the firm of Weeks, Ltd. He was the last of its original directors.

TRIBUTES TO A GREAT MAN

A large and widely representative congregation attended the funeral service at St. John's Church, Newport, on Wednesday, to pay their last tributes to an esteemed citizen. The Rev. S. F. Cooper (vicar) officiated, assisted by the Rev. L.J.D. Wheatley. The choir led the singing of the 23rd Psalm and the hymns "How bright those glorious spirits shine" and "Thine for ever". Mr. Horace Lower (organist) accompanied the singing and played as a retiring processional voluntary "God, be in my head".

The family mourners were Mrs. Eldridge (widow), Lieut.-Colonel and Mrs. W. J. Eldridge (son and daughter-in-law), the Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Kingham (son-in-law and daughter), Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Way Buckell (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Miss Sarah, Miss Jennifer, Miss Paddy and Mr. Robert Eldridge, and Miss Ann, Mr. John and Miss Susan Kingham (grandchildren), Mr. and Mrs. P. N. Giles, Mr. Edward Giles, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Way Buckell (nephews and nieces), Mr. and Mrs. J. C. M. Eldridge (cousins), Mrs. D. Fidgeon, Mr. Paul Sleep and Mr. Bruce Simpson. Staff, past and present, from Messrs. Eldridge's Newport, Ryde, and Freshwater offices were present.

The Mayor of Newport (Alderman A. T. Drudge) attended, and there were also representatives from the Rural District Council, County Health Committee, I.W. Law Society, I.W. County Club, Earl Yarborough Lodge of Odd Fellows, trustees of the Independent Order of Rechabites, Advisory Committee and trustees of Carisbrooke Castle Museum, Newport Rotary Club, Newport Inner Wheel, British and Foreign Bible Society, St. John's Men's Bible Class and Athletic Club, Boy Scouts'

Association, 1st Newport Scout Group, Newport Cricket Club, Newport Football Club, Newport Golf Club and Newport Victoria Sports Club.

Among the firms represented were Barclay's Bank, W. C. Black and Co., W. Blake and Son, Francis W. Bright and Co., G. H. Brown and Sons, Buckell and Drew, Frank Cheverton, Ltd., A. H. Cross and Co., Alan G. Day, Ltd., Fowlers (I.W.) Ltd., Gould, Hibberd and Randall, Ltd., I.W. County Press, Jerome and Co., Jukes and Son, Lamport, Bassett and Hiscock, Lloyds Bank, E. W. Matthews, W. B. Mew, Langton and Co., Ltd., H. W. Morey and Sons, Ltd., National Provincial Bank, Parker and Gurney-Champion, Sir Francis Pittis and Son, S. Porter, Roach, Pittis and Co., Robinson, Jarvis and Rolf, Royal Insurance Group, Harry Steadman and Co., Way, Riddett and Co., Weeks Regency Restaurant, S. W. Wendes and Yelf Bros., Ltd. Many of these organizations and firms sent floral tributes, and in addition there were wreaths from the Archdeacon and members of the I.W. Committee for Social Work, and the vicar and churchwardens, St. John's Parochial Church Council.

In a tribute the Rev. S. F. Cooper said Mr. Eldridge was one of the best type of Englishmen, and a great man. The speaker referred to Mr. Eldridge's many activities and interests, and mentioning the close association with St. John's recalled asking him to be his church warden about 13 years ago. Mr. Eldridge declined, suggesting a younger man - who had proved to be an excellent churchwarden over the years. Mr. Eldridge was a very generous donor, making gifts anonymously. Mr. Cooper also paid tribute to Mr. Eldridge's courage in the face of suffering.

Interment was at Carisbrooke Cemetery. Mr. R. G. W. Reed made the arrangements.