

Evans Lett

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS
28 November 1908

MR. EVANS LETT

DEATH OF THE ISLAND WORKHOUSE MASTER

We record with much regret the death on Saturday last, at the Island Workhouse, Parkhurst, of Mr. Evans Lett, who for the past 13 years had been Master of that establishment. As our readers will have noticed in last week's *County Press*, reference was made at the meeting of the Guardians on the previous Thursday to the serious illness of Mr. Lett, who on medical advice was then granted three months' leave of absence; but it was not generally realised that the Master's condition was so grave, and therefore the news of his death, so soon after the public intimation of his illness, came as a painful surprise. For some time past the late Mr. Lett had been in indifferent health, but it was only recently that he had to take to his bed, when his complaint, acute anaemia, developed so seriously that with all his courageous devotion to duty he could continue his work no longer. The gravest symptoms soon revealed themselves, and in spite of all that medical skill could do and the devoted nursing of his wife, assisted by Nurse Bestwick, he gradually sank and passed peacefully to his long rest at about noon on Saturday.

The late Mr. Lett, who was but 53 years of age, was appointed to the Mastership of the House in November, 1895, his wife becoming matron at the same time. He was formerly Master of the Epsom Workhouse, and previously had served in the Birmingham, Brentwood, and Liverpool Unions as assistant master, storekeeper, &c., having altogether 31 years' excellent Poor-law service standing to his credit. The advent of Mr. and Mrs. Lett at the Island Workhouse marked the inauguration of a period of highly efficient administration, in which kindly and sympathetic consideration for the inmates, particularly for the helpless aged and the children, was combined with a watchful regard for the interests of the Guardians and the ratepayers, and during Mr. Lett's Mastership many improvements had been carried out under his direction. From time to time high testimony has been born by the Chairman and members of the Board of Guardians, as well as by the Local Government Board inspector (Mr. Baldwyn Fleming), and the Visiting Commissioners in Lunacy, to the highly satisfactory results of the work and management of Mr. and Mrs. Lett, and to their care for and attention to the needs of the inmates, amongst whom both have throughout been deservedly popular. Such was Mr. Lett's devotion to his responsible duties that he could not be induced to take anything approaching full advantage of the holidays which the regulations allowed him, and no doubt he has very largely been a voluntary martyr to the public service by the solicitude for the welfare of those under his charge. That so good and highly efficient a Master should have been cut off in the prime of his manhood and in the midst of a most useful career is deeply deplored by the Guardians and all who have the welfare of the inmates at the Union at Heart, as well as by the inmates themselves. The deceased leaves a widow and one young son, for whom the greatest sympathy is felt.

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon, when the holding of the first portion of the service at the Workhouse chapel afforded the majority of the inmates of the House, where the late Mr. Lett had laboured so long and acceptably, an opportunity of paying the last tribute of respect to a Master who was so deservedly popular amongst them. The chapel was well filled by Guardians and officials, members of the Workhouse and infirmary staffs, and by inmates, for whose accommodation the gallery was requisitioned. Elderly inhabitants of the House, grief-stricken at their latest loss, and a group of the House children, evincing manifest signs of sorrow at the departure of one who by parental devotion had striven to make the House a real home for the little ones, were pathetic features of the assemblage in the chapel. The soothing and consoling strains of "O rest in the Lord," played on the organ by Miss Elger, were dying away when the sympathetic voice of the venerable and esteemed chaplain (Rev. P. G. U. Pickering), reciting the open sentences of the Burial Service, fell on the ear, as the coffin, covered with beautiful floral tributes, was borne through the south entrance of the chapel and along the aisle to the Communion rail, where it rested during the deeply impressive service. The coffin was followed by the widow and her only son, Nelson, and other personal mourners included Mr. Harry Gardler (brother-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. Begley (Streatham Hill), Nurse Bestwick (who nursed the deceased through his last illness), and Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Drudge and

Miss Drudge (Dodnor). Then came Dr. Thompson (representing Dr. Underhill, medical officer of the House, who had been called away from the Island by the distressing fatal motor accident which befell his coachman on the previous day), Mr. A. G. Harrison (Clerk to the Guardians), the relieving officers from the various districts of the Island - Messrs. C. J. Woodford (Calbourne), T. York (Godshill), G. Moody (Cowes), C. W. Young (Sandown), W. Abraham (Ryde), and B. Cooper (Newport) - Mr. J. Moore (clerk to the Guardians' Clerk and Registrar of Marriages), and other officials. The Guardians who attended were Ald. G. Fellows, J.P., (chairman), Mrs. Bull, Mr. H.M. Williams (vice-chairman), Rev. F. J. Bamford, and Messrs. Charles Dabell, C.C., (chairman of the Rural District Council), T. H. Morris (vice-chairman of the Rural District Council), G. W. Ball, W. H. Denham, E. James, C.C., P. Blowey, R. Woodward, G. Garrett, J. A. Sims, F. Baker, C.C., W. H. Arnold, W. Pritchett, J. Abraham, J.S. Mullett, E. Brading, E. Morris, J.P., S. Beeden, G. F. Quinton, A. Cheek, H. L. Morris, and K. Clark, and others present were Miss Phillips (superintendent nurse), Miss Bennett (assistant matron), Miss Saunders (girls' trainer), Nurses Ryder, Fall, and Longbottom, and Miss Dore (Infirmary), Miss Spence (laundry), Mr. and Mrs. Watson (imbecile ward attendants), Messrs. Walton Hillier (labour-master), G. Baker (baker), P. Munt (porter), C. Daish (clerk), Jarvis (tailor), Wise (carpenter), and Besant (bricklayer). Among others present were Mrs. Pickering, Mr. Charles Webb (Deputy Mayor of Newport), Mr. Stevens, Mr. A. Millidge, Mr. J. H. Green (clerk and steward at the County Asylum), and Mr. G. Matthews (representing Mr. F. Burton, Newport).

The Service was conducted by the Rev. P. G. U. Pickering and at the conclusion of his expressive reading of the lesson the hymn "When the day of toil is done" was sung. As the coffin was borne from the chapel the organist played the "Dead march" in *Saul*. The cortège then proceeded to Carisbrooke Cemetery, where the interment took place, the Workhouse chaplain performing the last rites at the grave. Mr. G. F. Quinton carried out the funeral arrangements. - Mrs. G. H. Yelf, a member of the Board of Guardians, was prevented by a cold from attending.

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