

Robert Pinnock

1881 England, Wales & Scotland Census
147 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, Hampshire

Name	Relationship	Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
<i>Robert Pinnock</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>Magistrate</i>	<i>Lewes, Sussex</i>
Mary A. Pinnock	Daughter	Unmarried	37	-	Newport, Isle of Wight
John G. Pinnock	Son	Unmarried	29	Drapers Asst.	Newport, Isle of Wight
Frederick Pinnock	Son	Unmarried	27	Outfitter	Newport, Isle of Wight
Robert Pinnock	Grandson		9	Scholar	Kingston, Jamaica
Francis V. Pinnock	Grandson		7	Scholar	Newport, Isle of Wight
Celia Coombes	Servant	Unmarried	48	Cook	Godshill, Isle of Wight
Rose Guy	Servant	Unmarried	20	Housemaid	Whippingham, Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight County Press
31 December 1887

DEATH OF Mr. ROBERT PINNOCK, J.P.

A great blank in the public life of Newport, and as great a void in the hearts of numberless personal friends, have been caused by the death of Mr. Robert Pinnock, J.P., which took place very suddenly on Christmas Eve. When the sad news became known in the town on Christmas morning it came upon people with all the painfulness of a startling and unexpected shock. Up to the last Mr. Pinnock had been seen going in and out amongst us, with his always bright smile and cheery recognition. On the Tuesday immediately preceding the Saturday night when he was peacefully carried away he was at Ryde, speaking kindly words to the Board School children there; on the Thursday and Friday he was present, as chairman of the Newport School Board, at the Christmas gatherings of the scholars at the Newport and Barton Board schools, entering with evident delight into the festival proceedings, saying happy words, and himself leading off cheers with a heartiness which seemed to tell of wonderfully-preserved physical power, despite his almost octogenarian years. On the Saturday it was noticed that he entered with more than usual ardour into the spirit of Christmastide. He walked out in the morning, full of the season's benedictions; he dispensed Christmas gifts with unstinted hand to all who had any claim upon his remembrance; and later in the day he drove out, paying visits to old friends and to his grandchildren at Carisbrooke, leaving with the latter fresh tokens of his love, and wishing them many a happy Christmastide. He spent the evening—Christmas Eve—at home, with his children around him, and there were also present two of his grandchildren—sons of his eldest son, Mr. William Henry Pinnock, who died some years ago on the voyage from Jamaica to England and was buried at sea. The grandfather read pleasant stories to his grandsons; he talked to them about their school life, and bade them be good and true; and presently, wishing all “Good Night” and a “Happy Christmas”, he retired. This was about half-past eleven on Christmas Eve.

The next morning he was found dead in his room. He was dressed, and there can be no doubt that soon after reaching his room, he was suddenly seized with fatal faintness at the heart—which he had long known to be weak—and so he passed away, closing painlessly and without a struggle his long, and honoured, and eminently useful life. We say “painlessly and without a struggle”, because looking, as we looked, upon that dear face after death, with its expression of perfect peace, the thought was resistless—there was no pain here, no struggle here—

But sweetly, gently,
He pass'd away,

From the world's dim twilight
To endless day.

--"A gentle wafting to immortal life", to quote Milton's expressive line.

The late Mr. Robert Pinnock, quitting his home on the adjacent mainland, came to the Island when he was not far advanced in his teens, and his career here should be an inspiration to all other youths who may have to carve their own way in the world. Difficulties he had to encounter in his early years here, but he made those very difficulties stepping-stones to higher things, and so he went on, "still achieving, still pursuing", until he compassed a splendid commercial success, and built up a civic career which will shine in the annals of Newport so long as it remains a municipality. What was thought of Mr. Pinnock's services to the borough was splendidly illustrated some ten years ago, when there was a great gathering at the Volunteer Drill Hall on the occasion of the public presentation to him of a superb service of silver plate in recognition of his valuable services to the town. The presentation was made by the then Mayor (now Sir Francis Pittis), and it may be of interest at this time to recall the name of some who were present and something of what was then said. To do honour to this distinguished citizen of Newport the members of the Council appeared in their robes of office; the county of the Isle of Wight was represented by Sir Barrington Simeon and others bearing well-known names; from Southampton came Mr. Alfred Pegler, J.P.; Portsmouth send its Mayor (now Sir William King), with Mr. Alderman John Baker and other leading corporators; the Church had an eloquent representative in the then Vicar of Newport (the late Dean Connor); and Nonconformity spoke through the powerful lips of the Rev. Dr. Trestrail. It was a happy circumstance that this presentation to Robert Pinnock should be made by Francis Pittis. Captains of opposing political camps, they had often come into party conflict, but differences of this stamp never affected their personal regard the one for the other, and it is interesting here to note that Mr. Pinnock's last public reference to a public man, within a day or two of his death, related to his "excellent friend", Sir Francis Pittis, the vice-chairman of the Newport School Board. When the presentation to which we have referred was made Mr. Pinnock had completed his fifth mayoralty, and his last three tenures of that position had been consecutively held, ending November, 1877. The then Mayor enumerated and emphasized Mr. Pinnock's services to the town, and thus concluded: "And now, Mr. ex-Mayor, permit me in the name of the Town Council, and in behalf of the burgesses and other friends whose names are inscribed on this illuminated memorial, to present to you this service of silver plate, and in doing so let me give utterance to the hope that you may long be spared to promote yet further the interests of this town and the well-being of your fellow-men, and may the blessing of God rest upon you through all the remainder of your years". The Mayor's remarks were eloquently endorsed by other speakers—Mr. Alderman William Baron Mew, Mr. Councillor Orchard, the Mayor of Portsmouth, Mr. Alderman Baker (a former Mayor of Portsmouth), the Vicar of Newport (Canon Connor), the Deputy Governor of the Island, Mr. Councillor Whitcher, the Rev. Dr. Trestrail, Mr. T. Chatfield Clarke, Mr. James Eldridge (then Town Clerk), Sir Barrington Simeon, and others. Thus spoke Mr. Alderman Baker of Mr. Pinnock—"He regarded him as the model of a public man, independent and firm, yet courteous and forbearing towards all. He exemplified the *esprit de corps* of public life, and long, long might the good burgesses of Newport have Robert Pinnock amongst them, and when he passed away might there be many to take his place in the same spirit". The Vicar of Newport hoped "the young men of Newport would learn a lesson from the proceedings of that evening, and as it was righteousness which exalted a nation, so might public positions always be filled by such men as Mr. Robert Pinnock". Mr. Councillor Whitcher spoke of having seen Mr. Pinnock "under almost every phase of public life, and he could only say that his perseverance, his industry, his indomitable energy, and his grasp of every subject had been to him surprising". The Deputy Governor of the Island "congratulated the burgesses of Newport on having such a public man in their midst"; Mr. T. Chatfield Clarke said he had the "deepest conviction that they had that night done honour where honour was due"; and Mr. James Eldridge who, as Town Clerk, had been associated with Mr. Pinnock for many years, testified to his devotion to the interests of Newport, and for the sake of the borough expressed the hope that many might rise up to follow in his steps. In his reply, Mr. Pinnock gave some interesting biographical details which may well be reproduced now. He

said: "When, some 31 years ago (this was in 1878), through the kindness and the confidence of the burgesses of the South Ward, I entered the Council for the first time, little did I imagine that my municipal career would have such a climax as this. On such an occasion as this my thoughts naturally revert to the time, now 50 years ago, when, soon after leaving school, I came to Newport to commence my business life. I well remember with what delight I looked upon the town and neighbourhood in those early days of my residence here, and the secret wish I then indulged in that it might be the place of my permanent abode. That wish has happily been realised, and when, in the year 1846, I was urged to enter the Council and take some share in public work, I readily assented, from the conviction that it was my duty, even if attended with some personal sacrifice, to render what service I could to the town of my adoption. After 21 years' service as a Councillor, I thought I might be permitted to retire, by my colleagues thought otherwise, and reinstated me as an Alderman, following this shortly afterwards by unanimously electing me to the Mayoralty, and four times since then has this same honour been conferred upon me". In concluding his speech on this memorable occasion Mr. Pinnock said, "These chaste and elegant gifts, this splendid record on vellum, I shall treasure to my latest hour, and they will be handed down, I hope, from generation to generation, telling my children and my children's children of the greatness of your kindness, and inciting those who may remain here to do all in their power to promote the well-being of a town which I have humbly striven to serve, and with which are associated the best and happiest years of my life".

Until 1886 did Mr. Pinnock continue as a member of the Corporation. On the 9th of November of that year his aldermanic term of office expired, and the members of the Council, on both sides, were unanimous in their desire to re-elect him, but he felt that the time had come for him to retire, and so, like a "well-graced actor" in the highest sense, he withdrew from the stage on which, for forty years, he had performed so zealous and so noble a part. In all worthy ways may be discerned the impress of his good influence, and this is the tribute which in all truth may be paid to Robert Pinnock—he lifted Newport to higher levels, and he has in every way left the town of his adoption better than he found it. The work which, perhaps, lay nearest to his heart was that of education. He was a member of the Newport School Board from its first formation fourteen years ago; for the past nine years he was its chairman; and his last public appearance was, as we have already mentioned, in connection with the Christmastide gatherings of the Board Schools. "Well done, good and faithful servant"—this his guerdon here, as in all other public enterprises with which he was associate.

Appended are a few personal items. The late Mr. Pinnock was born on the 1st of February, 1809 *, at Lewes, and early in life he removed to Chichester, where he received his education. In 1826 he came to Newport, and in 1840 he began business here on his own account. In 1846 he was elected a member of the Council, and his connection with that body was maintained for 40 years. Five times he filled the office of Mayor, namely, in 1868, 1869, 1874, 1875, and 1876, and in 1871 he was made a permanent justice of the peace for the borough. His connection with the School Board has already been mentioned. He was for many years president of the Isle of Wight Liberal Union. He was a highway Commissioner for a prolonged period, rendering most valuable service to the Island in that capacity, he was chairman of the Newport Gas Company, and amongst other offices which he most usefully filled was that of a member of the Corporation of Yarmouth. During the whole of his long career he took a great and active interest in the High-street chapel at Newport, and his name was held in honour as one of the leaders of the religious denomination to which he was so warmly and consistently attached. Broad in his sympathies, generous, kindly, and genial always, in private life he made friends wherever he was known, and many who read these words will treasure, "with miser care", memories of pleasant social meetings with him, and will say

"Long, long, be my heart with such memories filled—
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;
You may break, you may shatter, the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still"

The funeral of the lamented deceased took place yesterday (Friday) at Carisbrooke Cemetery, where rest the remains of his wife and of his youngest daughter. The bell of St. Thomas Church was tolled; all through the town places of business were closed; the blinds of private houses were drawn; flags were flying at half-mast; and the streets were thronged with mourners. The *cortege* left the residence on the deceased at eleven o'clock. The coffin, of polished oak, with massive mountings, was covered with beautiful floral wreaths, tokens of affectionate remembrance offered by members of the family and by friends in the Island and out of the Island. There were wreaths from the assistants and employees; from the domestic servants; from Blackgang, the beautiful "Sealands" home of the deceased; from the members and the clerk of the Newport School Board, "with their sincere regret and sympathy"; and from the masters, mistresses, and other teachers of the Newport and Barton Board schools, "a token of sincere regret at the loss of a true friend". The chief mourners were the four sons of the deceased (Mr. Robert Pinnock, Mr. Charles E. Pinnock, Mr. George Pinnock, and Mr. Fred Pinnock); his brother, (Mr. Henry Pinnock, J.P.); and his grandsons (Masters Robert, Frank, and Bernard Pinnock). Accompanying these were Mr. Chapple (son-in-law of Mr. Henry Pinnock), Dr. Groves, Mr. A. Harbottle Estcourt, J.P. (one of the executors), and Professor Henry Moreley. Mr. Harris Pinnock, a nephew of the deceased, had travelled many miles in order to be present at the obsequies, but he caught a chill *en route*, and was unable to leave his room, at Beechwood, the residence of his father. Following the chief mourners came a long line of private carriages; and then the employees of the deceased; personal friends; representatives of the Isle of Wight Liberal Union, the Hand-in-hand Society, the Earl Yarborough Lodge of Oddfellows, and the Local Court of Foresters; and when the procession reached the Guildhall it was joined by the representatives of the Corporation, at whose head walked Sergts. Tiley and Jolliffe, bearing the maces draped in black. Owing to illness the Mayor (James George, jun., Esq) was, greatly to his regret, unable to be present, and his place was taken by the deputy Mayor (Mr. Alderman Lock). For the same cause Alderman Sir Francis Pittis was prevented from attending; his son, Mr. Councillor Francis Pittis was detained by an engagement in London; and Mr. Ernest Wetherick attended as their representative. The borough of Ryde was represented by its Mayor (Dr. Barrow), and Mr. Alderman Colenutt; the county by Sir Henry Daly, J.P., and Mr. Edward Carter, J.P., and Portsmouth by Mr. Ald. Baker, Mr. Caine, Mr. C.B. Phippard, and Mr. H. Blessly. It is estimated that about 2000 persons were present at the cemetery. The Rev. John Dandy, B.A., was the officiating minister, and he performed the service with touching impressiveness.

** Note: other records have his date of birth as 25th February 1809*

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