

Harry Morley Williams

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DEATH OF ALD. H. M. WILLIAMS, J.P., OF NEWPORT

Newport has had to mourn this week the death of one who had taken a very helpful part in its municipal, religious, social, business and recreational life for over half a century. We refer to Mr. Harry Morley Williams, J.P., C.A., of Woodbine-cottages, St. John's-road, who passed away on Tuesday, at the age of 72, while on a visit to his daughter, the wife of the Rev. Frank C. Carter, B.D., of Guildford. After a busy life, in which he had devoted much time to public work for the benefit of his fellow man, Ald. Williams suffered serious complications as the result of a chill contracted in August, and during the following month he and Mrs. Williams went to stay with their son-in-law and daughter at Guildford in the hope that the change would be beneficial. Unhappily this did not prove to be the case and he gradually became worse. He had been lying critically ill for about a fortnight.

A great lover of cricket, of which he was an enthusiastic and able exponent in his younger days, he was for many years in business in Pyle-street as a sports requisite dealer and ironmonger. About eight years ago he disposed of the business and then, for a while, he applied his energies to the erection of a number of houses in the Mount Pleasant district. His public service commenced as a Guardian for Carisbrooke in 1892, and three years later he was elected one of the first members of the Rural District Council and Guardians for Gatcombe. His keen interest in the work of these bodies (he was particularly devoted to Poor Law administration) led to his election as vice-chairman of the R.D.C. in 1898, and, on the death of Mr. J. Ruffin Blake in 1900, he occupied the chair until Ald. Charles Dabell, J.P., was chosen for the position which he filled so ably for 30 years.

In 1904 he became vice-chairman of the Guardians and, succeeding Ald. George Fellows in the chair in 1927, he continued to preside until the Guardians were abolished in 1930, thus completing 38 years' unbroken service as a Guardian of the poor. He then became the first chairman of the Public Assistance Committee, but soon retired as advancing years necessitated curtailment of his activities. He was a member of the Town Council from 1904 to 1908 and in 1898 was elected to the County Council as a representative of the South-east Division of Newport. There was a break in his service on the county authority from 1907 to 1918, but in 1928 he was honoured by elevation to the aldermanic bench and had since continued his work in that capacity. He never took part in debate unless he had some useful contribution to make to it, and he was a forceful champion of any cause he had at heart. He was appointed a borough magistrate in 1914 and had been very attentive to the duties of this responsible office.

A member of the Congregational church for 52 years, he was the senior male member, a deacon, and chairman of the trustees. Both his daughters married Congregational ministers, the Rev. F. C. Carter and the Rev. Frederick Tilley, of Kensal Rise. He was a generous supporter of all manly sport being for many years the very popular president of the Newport Trades Cricket Club. Politically, he was a staunch Liberal, an enthusiastic worker for the party, and an ex-chairman of the Newport Liberal Club. His very wide circle of friends sincerely sympathise with Mrs. Williams and her daughters in their great bereavement.

THE FUNERAL

This took place yesterday (Friday). The first part of the service was held in the Congregational church, Newport, where the deceased and his family have worshipped for many years, and it was attended by a large and representative body of public men and others who had had personal acquaintance with a colleague whose passing they mourned. The service was conducted by the Rev. D. Hendy Davies, B.A., and Mr. A.G. Harrison read the lesson. The hymns sung were "When the day of toil is done" and "Abide with me," the latter being the deceased's favourite. The family mourners were Mrs. Williams (widow), the Rev. and Mrs. F. C. Carter and the Rev. and Mrs. F. W. Tilley (sons-in-law and daughters), Miss A. Williams (sister), Mr. F. Allison (brother-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. F. Burnard (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Harrison. Mrs. Cole (sister) was unable to be present owing to illness.

Only family mourners transcribed.

The Rev. D. Hendy Davies, B.A., said they were gathered together to honour the memory of one who was a very popular figure in the life of the town and dearly beloved by the people. Although he breathed his last in Guildford, it was but fitting that they should meet for those tender offices in Newport, where he spent nearly the whole of his strenuous and active life. He greatly cherished that church as his spiritual home. Harry Morley Williams was born in Ryde, which he left in early boyhood when the family removed to Newport, where he settled for practically the rest of his life. Very soon he began to carve for himself a distinguished career, to which they paid a loving tribute of admiration, esteem, and, indeed, gratitude. As a business man he reached a prominent position in the town and became known all over the Island. He felt the urge within him towards other spheres and cordially offered himself to the service of the community. As a public servant his record was a noble one. In connection with Poor Law administration, for which he had a very rare aptitude, he served without a break for the long period of 42 years. His membership of the County Council was not so unbroken. An aggregate of 23 years was a very impressive record of service for his fellow men.

When elected County Alderman in 1928 it was generally felt that it was a well deserved honour. Similarly he served as a magistrate for 20 years, and many present remembered tenderly his faithful service for several years as a member of the Town Council. That record was an index of his unstinted labour of love for the welfare of the community; he was, indeed, an apostle of altruism. No less impressive was his service to the church he loved so dearly where he found inspiration at all times. He took up responsibilities and duties not for his own advancement, but for the sake of those among whom he dwelt and whom he served. His connection with that church extended over 52 years, and to the performance of the duties of the offices he held he brought the same characteristic qualities of efficiency, loyalty and devotion. Christianity for him meant service. He was always ready to speak a cheerful word and give a helping hand to those who carried the load. The poor found in him a wise counsellor and a sympathetic friend. He was of a very sunny nature and optimistic temperament, and those qualities made him welcome in every kind of company. Under these winsome traits there was a bedrock of sterner stuff which gave stability to his character.

Transcription by Rosemary Stewart for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries
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