

Robert Jamers Barrett

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NEWPORT

VETERAN RAILWAYMAN'S DEATH - Mr. Robert J. Barrett, one of the oldest retired Island railwaymen, passed away after a brief illness at his home, Cheshunt, Medina-avenue, on Monday morning, at the age of 79. In his early years, while living at Ryde, he was attracted by the railway soon after the opening of the line from Newport, and abandoned an apprenticeship to enter the locomotive department at the then headquarters at Cowes. He was rapidly promoted to driver, and removed to Newport on the transfer of the depot to that town, serving for nearly 50 years with the I.W. Central and Southern Railways. He drove the first regular passenger trains on the opening of the line between Newport and Freshwater in 1889. After his retirement he responded to a call for volunteers during an emergency some years ago, and for a short time resumed his old occupation of driving. He was one of the oldest members of the Cowes Court of the Ancient Order of Foresters, at one time the largest Court in the country, having joined in 1878.

Through the skill of the medical staff of the Royal I.W. County Hospital his life was prolonged as the result of a completely successful serious operation some 14 years ago. A man of sturdy independence, he had a great love for gardening, a hobby in which he indulged to the last. An old choirboy of St. Michael's, Swanmore, where he was married in 1882, he was a devout churchman, and regularly worshipped at Newport Parish church, almost his last act being to attend evensong there on Sunday. He was then apparently in good health, but shortly after returning home he collapsed, and in spite of prompt medical attention and care he passed peacefully to rest on the following morning.

The funeral took place on Thursday, the service being at the Parish Church. The Vicar (the Rev. W.M.B. Hogg) officiated, the choirboys led the singing of the hymns "The King of Love" and "Abide with me," and the chanting of the 23rd Psalm and the Nunc Dimittis, the last named as a recessional, and Miss K. Lower, L.R.A.M., L.T.C.L., accompanied on the organ and played "Jesu, joy of man's desiring" (Bach), "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "Angels ever bright and fair," and "O rest in the Lord." The chief mourners were Messrs. G.R. and R.A. Barrett (sons), Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Shepard (son-in-law and daughter), Mrs. Samson (daughter), Messrs. R.G. and Ivor Shepard (grandsons), and S.O. Feben (nephew). Others attending were Mr. H.J. Beazley (representing Mr. J.E. Bell and the Southern Railway staff in the Island), Messrs. S.H. Burgess, W. Matthews, A.E. Smart, H. Dore, and E. Marshall (railway colleagues), Mr. J.R. Thomas (formerly manager of the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway), Mrs. and Miss Smith, Mrs. S.F. Holmes, Mrs. H. Morris, Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Satherley, Mrs. Lewis, Miss Attrill, and Messrs. C.S. Crowther, H.E. Beacon, W. Watson, E.E. Shepard, S. Elliott, W.H. Baker, W.G. Sibbick, A.D. Callaway, and W. Upton. The interment was at Newport Cemetery beside the grave of his wife, who predeceased him in 1912. On the coffin lay a floral cross from the four members of his family.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. H. and F. Damp. The family desire to acknowledge with deep gratitude the great kindness of Dr. J.J. Dowdall, Dr. G.L. Peskett, Nurse Cooper, and of many friends and neighbours in their father's sudden illness; they also sincerely thank the senders of so many beautiful flowers, and those who have expressed sympathy in their bereavement.

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