

**Ernest Croucher**

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**NOTED ISLAND MARINER'S  
DEATH**

**Mr. E. Croucher, Of Newport**

One of the Island's best-known mariners, who possessed a great knowledge of small craft, particularly sailing ships and vessels, Mr. Ernest Croucher, of Elm Villa, Fairlee Road, Newport, died suddenly at the Royal I.W. County Hospital on Saturday, aged 88. Mr. Croucher, until Christmas, had kept remarkably fit for his age. He was a member of an old Island family, and all his life was connected with their shipping firm which they established.

In his early days, as the master of one of their small sailing craft, he spent a good many years on cross-Channel potato runs. He took a great deal of pride in the achievement of his vessel and crew in one potato season, when they made no fewer than 10 crossings from the Continent with new potatoes in four weeks.

When the company changed from sail to paraffin and diesel engines he became responsible for all maintenance work on the vessels. In 1906 he brought the firms' first power ship to the Island from Leith, and was possibly the last mariner to take a cargo vessel into Brading Haven as far as the cement works, before the reclamation scheme. Mr. Croucher retired when the company was bought out by Messrs. Pickford in 1937, since when he has acted in an advisory capacity to his son, Mr. S. V. Croucher, J.P., whose shipping business, which has been in existence some 33 years, has no connection with that which was sold.

Mr. Croucher had a deep and abiding love of the sea, his knowledge of small ships was reputed to be unequalled in the country, and his dying wish was that he could be afloat again. His wife died in 1940, and he leaves three sons, Mr. E. G. Croucher, who is in the Merchant Service, Mr. S. V. Croucher, J.P., the chairman of the Island Conservative Association, and Mr. R. Croucher, B.Sc. (Econ.), in business in Bromley, Kent.

The funeral at St. Paul's Church on Wednesday was conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. L. J. D. Wheatley), when there were no flowers, by request, except a floral anchor on the coffin. The hymn "Abide with me" was sung. The family members were Mr. B. R. Coucher (son), Mr. and Mrs. S. V. Croucher (son and daughter-in-law), Mr. M. S. Croucher (grandson), Miss A. Croucher, Mr. Percy Croucher, Mr. and Mrs. C. Forrest, Mr. G. Forrest (representing Mrs. Sheath, niece), Mr. C. and Mr. G. Croucher (nieces and nephews). Mr. E. G. Croucher (son) is at sea. Miss Cox (secretary) represented the Vectis Shipping Company, Mr. J. A. Mabb the Newport Motor, Marine, and General Engineering Co., Captain H. A. Drudge the Conservative Association, and Mr. V. H. Eldridge (harbour-master) the Harbour Authority.

The interment was at Newport Cemetery.