

Luigi Pesca

Isle of Wight County Press 4 February 1928

Newport

DEATH OF "JOHNNY ICE-CREAM." ----- One of the most familiar figures in the business circles of the borough was removed by the sudden death early on Monday of Mr. Luigi Pesca, who for 45 years had carried on business in Pyle-street as confectioner, ice-cream maker, &c. His skill and wide reputation in the last-named department of his business was responsible for his being given the sobriquet of "Johnny Ice-cream," by which he has been known throughout his long association with the town. Mr. Pesca, as his name implies, was an Italian. He came to Newport from his native country with others of his race in 1882, and soon afterwards opened the Pyle-street business which he has conducted ever since. He was a man of charming and most kindly manner, and it is not too much to say that he was beloved of succeeding generations of youngsters not only because of his wonderful ices but also for himself-----for he invariably had a smile and a cheery word for every visitor to his little shop, particularly for the children. He was generous, too, especially to those in distress. Many a good cup of tea from his huge brown pots sizzling on the kitchener-top, and many a meal as well has he served to those who he knew were not in a position to pay, and as a devout member of the Roman Catholic Church he was always an open-handed supporter of funds for the relief of the poor, and a valued worker both at the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury in the town and at the Convent at Carisbrooke. He was alms-taker at the former and server at the latter for many years, and he performed his duties at the Catholic Church a few hours before his sudden end. He had been in indifferent health for some months, and as he lived alone he had been in the habit of calling his next-door neighbour by knocking on the wall. He gave this signal about 2.30 a.m. on Monday and was found lying on his bed in a dying condition. The Catholic priests, Fathers Watson and Nye, were called, and on the arrival of the latter he had evidently passed away and the matter was reported to the police and the coroner. A post-mortem examination was ordered, but as this clearly revealed that death was due to natural causes, an inquest was dispensed with. "Johnny Ice-cream" in his younger days was a familiar figure in the Market-place on Saturdays and at sports meetings and similar functions with his ice-cream barrow. He was in his 78th year and was a native of Gravego di Bardi, near Milan, north Italy. The funeral took place yesterday (Friday) amid many tokens of respect. A service was held at the Roman Catholic Church, which was filled mainly with members of the congregation, assembled to pay their last respect to one who had been helpfully identified with the church for nearly half a century, and a large crowd gathered outside. The service here and at the Newport Cemetery was conducted by the Rev. Father Watson, assisted by the Rev. Father Nye, and the Rev. Father Humbert Everest, of St. Dominic's Priory, Carisbrooke, was amongst the mourners. The floral tributes included two beautiful crosses inscribed as follows: "From a few friends and customers who will miss

his many kindly deeds,” and “From the Mother Prioress and the Sisters at St. Dominic’s Priory.”

Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements.

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