

Harry Shepard

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DEATH OF MR. HARRY SHEPARD, J.P., OF NEWPORT.

Newport lost one of its best-known business and public men, a man of very distinctive personality, on Monday by the death, on his 76th birthday, of Mr. Harry Shepard, of Petlis, The Mall, an ex-Mayor of the Borough, its second senior magistrate, one of its representatives on the County Council, and a prominent figure in its business life for the last half century. Mr. Shepard had been in indifferent health, owing to heart trouble, for about two months, but he had only been confined to the house for some three weeks.

Mr. Shepard was the second son of the late Mr. Alfred Shepard, one of the early heads of the old-established shipping and carrying firm now known as Shepard Bros., Ltd. He was educated at the Newport Grammar School during the headmastership of the late Rev. E. W. Watts, and then entered his father's business. Later he became a director of the Company and remained in that position for some years, until he resigned to give his attention to other business activities and to his public work, which he had commenced some years previously, and in which he was keenly interested. He developed a considerable business as a dealer in coal, antiques, and second-hand articles (particularly books) at premises in Holyrood-street, which he carried on until the end, and had also at times been a successful speculator in the property market. In his early days Mr. Shepard evinced that zeal for promoting the welfare and knowledge of young people which characterised his life, by acting as a teacher at St. Thomas's Sunday-school (a task he discharged for a quarter of a century), by being one of the founders and a generous supporter of the St. Thomas's Young Men's Club, which at one time flourished in premises in Lugley-street, by his active interest in the Soldiers' Institute carried on in premises in the Lower High-street, and by his work as a trustee of the old Newport Penny Bank, formerly carried on in South-street. His benevolent interest in the young was, however, not confined to these collective social efforts; he was always ready quietly and unostentatiously to give a helping hand to the deserving individual as well. As a public man Mr. Shepard always took a boldly independent line. He was persistent in criticism where he considered criticism was deserved, and this trait in his character made him a very popular public representative. Almost invariably when he sought election to public bodies he was returned at the head of the poll. He first became a member of the Town Council as a representative of the North Ward in 1903, and three years later, in spite of his comparatively short service as a councillor, he was honoured by election to the Mayoralty in succession to the late Ald. Cornelius Salter, J.P. His period as the civic head of the borough was marked by a very able discharge of the important duties of the office, in which he was supported by his elder sister, who acted as Mayoress, and by open-handed generosity. He revived the custom of holding a Mayoral banquet, and other incidents of his Mayoralty which showed his thoughtful kindliness and generosity was his provision of a dinner at the Barracks for the men of the 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers when they arrived

home from the Tibet campaign, and his beneficent generosity to the poor and children of the borough. He did not seek re-election to the Council in 1908, and it was not until 1920 that he was again returned as a North Ward representative. With the exception of a short period of retirement in 1923 (which followed a violent disagreement with the views of the majority of the Council) he remained a member of the Corporation until he finally retired in 1930. He had twice represented the borough on the County Council. He was first elected in 1918 for the south-west division in succession to the late Mr. Fred Morgan, and remained its representative for six years, when the late Mr. F. Midlane succeeded him. Then, in 1928, he became the representative of the north-west division following the late Mr. A. Peck, and was still a member of the county authority at the time of his death. He had of late been keenly interested in the work of the newly constituted Pier and Harbour Commission at Yarmouth as the representative of the County Council, and regularly attended the meetings, where his sound advice was keenly appreciated. He was appointed a borough magistrate in 1908 and while his health remained good he was very attentive to his duties on the Bench, where he was second in seniority. At the sitting of the Court on Monday the Mayor said the magistrates had heard that morning with great regret that Mr. Harry Shepard had passed away. He had always desired, as far as he was able, to participate in the work of the Bench; he held a high position in the town, and was very greatly respected, especially by the Bench of magistrates.---Mr. H. R. Palmer, on behalf of the solicitors practising in the Court, endorsed what the Mayor had stated. Mr. Shepard had been a magistrate for a number of years. He (the speaker) always had the utmost respect for Mr. Shepard's decisions and regretted his passing.----The Magistrate's Clerk (Mr. James Eldridge) said that having had a great deal to do with Mr. Shepard ever since he had been a magistrate, he knew what a great interest he took in the work. When he attended he ever carried out his duties very conscientiously. He would be very much missed in the town in many ways which were not known except to people with whom he was connected.---Inspector H. Randall associated himself with the expressions of sympathy and regret. He had known Mr. Shepard for 26 years and always found him a very able magistrate. The above reference by the magistrates' clerk to Mr. Shepard's benevolence will be warmly endorsed by many in the town who have had experience of it. Mr. Shepard was a bachelor. He had resided with his two sisters, who were his devoted companions throughout life, and who shared in his good works. His remains were cremated. It was his express desire that this should be done, and that there should not be any public funeral service, and his wishes were respected.

Messrs. Purnell and Purnell, of Ryde, made the arrangements for the cremation.

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