

Edward Morris

Isle of Wight County Press – 3 June 1922

NEWPORT.

DEATH OF MR. EDWARD MORRIS, J.P. – Another of the borough's prominent business and public men has been removed by the death, on Tuesday evening, after a long illness, of Mr. Edward Morris, J.P., of 28 High-street, proprietor of the well-known house furnishing emporium at the junction of the High-street and St. Thomas's-square. Mr. Morris, who had reached the age of 74, was a notable figure in the public and business life of Newport for over 30 years, but about a year ago his health, which had been failing for some years previously, completely broke down, and he was compelled to abandon all his activities. Mr. Morris was a native of the borough, being the son of the late Mr. Edmund Morris, cabinet-maker, of Hearn-street. He commenced business life in the humble position of an errand boy in a shop in Pyle-street, but soon migrated to Southampton, where the basis of his successful commercial activities in the home furnishing business was laid with the firm of Perkins, who then carried on the establishment in the High-street now known as Shepherd and Hedger's. Returning to Newport in his early manhood, Mr. Morris began business on his own account in the small corner premises in the High-street now known as the Welcome Coffee Tavern [*2019 - 61 High Street, corner of Castlehold Lane*]. Possessing very marked business abilities, he soon found it necessary to remove to larger premises at the corner of St. Thomas's-square, and here he later built the thoroughly modern and imposing building which now houses the business. He also built the premises at 28 High-street, opposite the Town-hall, for residential and business purposes, particularly the china, glass, and hardware department of his business. The extent and success of his trading operations are indicated by his oft-repeated and apparently unchallenged claim to be the largest individual ratepayer in the borough, and by the extension of his business to Cowes and Freshwater. Mr. Morris had done much useful service on local public bodies, including the Town Council and the old School Board, and, until incapacitated by failing health, was for many years an energetic and devoted member of the Board of Guardians. He was first elected to that body in 1891 [?] for the Whippingham Ward, and was proud of the fact that Queen Victoria was amongst his constituents. He served on the Board continuously until his retirement this year, and was third in seniority of membership. He entered the Town Council in 1887, and served as a councillor, with intervals, until 1906, when he was unseated and did not again seek election. He joined the School Board in 1897, and remained a member until it was abolished in 1903, and then acted for a period as a member of the Education Committee. Both in politics (he was an ardent Liberal) and as a member of public authorities, he prided himself on his independence, and his ardour, not to say eccentricity, in this direction made him a "stormy petrel," and led to many scenes. Both in the Town Council and on the School Board he was especially an antagonist of the late Ald. Cornelius Salter, and on the Board of Guardians he persistently demonstrated his independent spirit by protesting year after year against the monopoly of the chairmanship by one member. Another evidence of his strong opinions was his passive resistance to the education rate some 15 years ago, when he and the late Mr. Robert Bullen, J.P., went so far as to allow their goods to be sold in the Market-place in distress for rates. In spite of his highly contentious nature, he did much good public service, being especially keen on the financial side of the work. His courageous championship of forlorn hopes, and his qualities as a fighter in debate, won him many admirers, and, usually, a high position on the poll. He was always a bitter opponent of the licensed victualling trade. His antagonism in this direction was often apparent on the Borough Bench, to which he was appointed in 1907. Almost throughout his life he had been a warm supporter of the United Methodist Church. He was a trustee of the churches in Quay-street and at Gunville, and was always ready to help the small country churches. Latterly personal differences caused

him to cease attendance at the Quay-street Church, but he remained a member. He married Miss F. Fleming, daughter of the late Mr. Frank Fleming, of Marvel, and his only son (Mr. H. Morris) succeeds him in the business. The funeral takes place to-day (Saturday), service at 2 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, and the interment at Newport Cemetery.

BOARD OF GUARDIANS [*of the Poor*]

Votes of condolence were passed withand the family of Mr. E. Morris, J.P., in whose case the Chairman said they could depart from the custom of only passing resolutions in regard to persons connected with the Board. The late Mr. Morris was a member of the Board for over 30 years, and had held many public offices. He was sure if he were alive that he would not object to his saying that no one liked opposition as much as he. He courted opposition. It was the salt of his life. Beneath it all there was a kindly heart. Few people who were in distress appealed in vain to Mr. E. Morris, whom they would greatly miss. He was sure their sympathy went out to Mrs. Morris and the family in their bereavement. The last time he saw Mr. Morris he expressed regret at the thought that he must give up his work as a Guardian.

Isle of Wight County Press – 10 June 1922

NEWPORT.

FUNERAL OF MR. EDWARD MORRIS J.P. – With the Union Jack flying at half-mast from the Town-hall and numerous mourning shutters outside business premises, the funeral of Mr. Edward Morris, J.P., of 28 High-street, took place on Saturday afternoon. A service was held at the Quay-street United Methodist Church, and the interment followed at Newport Cemetery. The service was conducted by the Rev. S. L. Warne, of Brighton (formerly of Sandown – a close friend of the deceased), assisted by the Rev. P. H. Bryant (superintendent minister of the Newport, Ryde, and Cowes circuit). Mr. W. G. Bartlett was at the organ, and gave an effective rendering of the “Dead march” in “Saul” at the close. The choir led the singing of the hymns “Jesu, Lover of my soul” and “For all the saints.” The Rev. S. L. Warne paid an eloquent tribute to the deceased. He said the late Mr. Morris had won for himself a distinct place in the life of his native town. Whilst in some respects strikingly original and unconventional, in most he was punctilious in the observance of the proprieties. A man of highly strung temperament, clear, quick and keen vision, and stern independence, he was sometimes misunderstood, but underlying all his peculiarities was a heart of true pity and sweet tenderness. His firm stand on the temperance question was only one instance of his courage of conviction and indomitable will. A lover of thrift, he did not fail to cultivate generosity, and gave widely to the church of his choice and to the deserving poor. The Rev. P. H. Bryant read the lesson. At the graveside the service was taken by the Rev. S. L. Warne. The mourners were; Mrs. F. Morris (widow), Mr. H. E. Morris (son), the Misses M. and D. Morris (daughters), Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Morris (brother and sister-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. B. Redstone, Mr. and Mrs. W. Starke, and Mr. and Mrs. W. Moore (brothers-in-law and sisters), Messrs. S. H. White and H. E. Fleming (brothers-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. F. Stubbings of Wimbleton, Mrs. H. E. Morris (daughter-in-law), Messrs. E. M. and C. Moore, and S. White (nephews), Mrs. D. Starke (niece), Mr. G. H. and Miss K. Morris, of Redhill (cousins), Mr. F. Midlane, Mr. W. J. Bailey (solicitor), and Dr. J.B. McKay. The employees following were Messrs. C. A. White, H. H. Hosking, T. Symons, and

H. Hill, and the Misses W. Knight, J. Mill, B. Eldridge, J. Holbrook, and D. Taylor. Amongst those also attending were the following Justices of the Peace; Sir. Edgar Chatfeild-Clarke, D.L. (who also attended as president of the I.W. Liberal Union), the Mayor (Mr. E. Munden), and Messrs. Robert Pinnock, R. Bird Cheverton, James Thomas, A. J. Snellgrove, J. C. Millgate, H. Shepard, and Mrs. A. Kemp, with the clerk to the Borough Justices (Mr. J. Eldridge), the following members of the Board of Guardians; Mrs. Yelf, and Messrs. F. Barnes and D. J. Bartlett; and the general attendance included Mr. J. H. Linforth, of Ryde (secretary of the I.W. Liberal Union), The Rev. R. Sirhowy Jones, and Messrs. G. A. Brannon, G. Gubbins, W. H. Upward, F. H. Guy (representing Messrs. Lamport, Bassett, and Hiscock), P. Croucher, R. E. Tomkins, A. H. North, J. P. Jones, C. J. Sheath, J. K. Alderslade, E. F. Wray, A. G. Harrison, W. C. and H. R. Black, P.J. Scott, W. Wells, G. Rogers, J. W. Marshall, G. H. Rackett, and W. G. Cooper, Mrs. Newham, Miss Bailey, Inspector and Mrs. H. Sibbeck, and Mrs. F. J. Kemp. The coffin, which was of unpolished oak, with silver-plated fittings and plate, bore the inscription: "Edward Morris, J.P., born August 3rd. 1847, died May 30th. 1922." Messrs. H. and F. Damp carried out the funeral. Mr. A. P. M. Fleming, C.B.E., of Altrinham (brother-in-law), and Mr. Robey F. Eldridge, J.P., were unavoidably prevented from attending. At a meeting of the Borough Justices, held earlier in the day, the following resolution was passed on the motion of the Mayor, seconded by Mr. Robert Pinnock: "That the Newport Borough Justices desire to record their sincere regret at the death of Mr. Edward Morris, J.P., and to tender their sincere sympathy and condolences to Mrs. Morris and the family in the great loss they have sustained by his death."

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