

Edwin Snow

Isle of Wight County Press – 25 February 1893

NEWPORT

ACCIDENT TO THE “CURFEW” RINGER. – A somewhat serious accident befell Mr. E. Snow, the “curfew” ringer, on Tuesday afternoon last. He was walking along a sloping roof at Messrs. Upward and Rich’s premises when his foot slipped and he fell through a skylight to the paved court below. Assistance was promptly at hand, and he was removed to his home, where he has since been attended by Drs. Foster and Coombs. Although, happily, no bones were broken by the fall, Mr. Snow was very severely bruised and shaken, these results being the more serious in his case from the fact that he is in somewhat weak health at the present time. We trust that this old and respected public servant will have a speedy recovery and that for many years yet to come he may find himself able to mount the belfry steps and continue the duty which he has discharged with such constancy and devotion for the past half-century.

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Isle of Wight County Press - 30 September 1899

DEATH OF NEWPORT’S OLD CURFEW RINGER.

(Edwin Snow)

Until quite a recent period Newport enjoyed the distinction of being one of the few towns in England which kept up the old Norman custom of ringing the curfew, and during the passed half-century the continued observance of this custom had been due to the self-denying devotion of Mr. Edwin Snow, who took an enthusiastic interest in the work, and it was a source of real sorrow to him when a few years ago he was owing to infirmities of advancing age, he was compelled to relinquish the duty which he had performed so long and so faithfully. And the duty did not stop with the ringing of the bell which “told the knell of the parting day.” He also rang the the early morning bell — 6 in summer and 7 in winter — and such was his clock like regularity that people were wont to set their own timepieces by the first notes issuing at his touch, morning and evening, from the belfry of St. Thomas’s Church. Greatly to the regret of many, these good old customs in Newport ceased altogether with Mr. Snow’s physical inability to continue them. On Saturday last the old curfew ringer, who was also the senior member of Newport’s Company of Ringers and Chimers, passed peacefully away at the age of 74. It should be stated that amongst other church duties which the late Mr. Snow performed for a long number of years was that of chief organ blower — a humble duty, it may be, but an important one, and its discharge was marked by the conscientiousness which characterized all the work done by the good old Newport worthy whose death we now regretfully record. The late Edwin Snow was once heard to say — he was at the time ascending the stone steps to the belfry — “Whenever I go up these steps I think of the time when I shall mount the golden stairs.” We think he has mounted those “golden stairs” now. May the writer say here that there was a distinctly poetic side in the character of the late Mr. Snow. He showed it in his anxiety to continue the old curfew custom — to continue it even when its continuance meant sacrifice and personal suffering. For it physically pained him to climb those steps in the last years of his service. In bygone days there used to be an annual festival of the Newport ringers and chimers. At one of these festivals the writer was heard the old curfew ringer recite some of his own verses upon a matter appropriate to the occasion. The poet enjoyed them — so did the company; and then there was call for a song, and the Island’s most famous amateur vocalist, Mr Robert Roche, sang “Tom Bowling.” The writer thinks now very especially of two lines of that song in connection with Edwin Snow — “Faithful below he did his duty, And now he’s gone aloft.” In 1892 Mr. Snow,

on the completion of his jubilee as a bell-ringer at the parish church, was the recipient of a well-merited testimonial, consisting of a purse of gold and an illuminated address, "presented by about 150 of his fellow townsmen and friends, in recognition of his faithful and zealous services." During the past 40 years deceased had been a member of the Union Benefits Society, and for about two-thirds of that long period he had been the esteemed and excellent treasurer of the Society. He had been the trusty, diligent and respected employee of the firm of Messrs. Upward and Rich for some 37 years.

The funeral of the deceased took place on Wednesday afternoon at the Newport Cemetery, amid many manifestations of sorrowful respect. The body was received at the west entrance of the parish church by the clergy, the church wardens (Messrs. Frank Weeks, and H. Tullidge), bearing their official wands, and then surpliced choir. The opening sentences of the burial office were read by the Rev. Miles Atkinson, and the hymn "Now the labourer's task is o'er" was sung. The funeral Psalm was chanted and the lesson was read by the Rev. Scobell Lessey, M.D. The service in the church concluded with the singing of the hymn "Peace perfect peace," Mr. C. M. Bill, Mus. Bac., F.R.C.O., who presided at the organ, played the "Death march" in *Saul* as the body was borne from the church. The procession to Newport cemetery was headed by Mr. Churchwarden Tullidge and Dr. Allen Waterworth (acting for Mr. Frank Weeks), both of them carrying the official wands. The service at the grave was performed by the Rev. Miles Atkinson. The personal mourners were Mrs. Snow (widow). Messrs. Edwin Snow (son). A.E. Snow, and W. Snow (Grandsons). Mrs. E. Snow, and Mrs. A. Mabb (daughters-in law), Messrs. Percy Morgan (nephew), Charles White (cousin), and E.O. White, Mr. G.D. Rich T.C. (representing the firm of Messrs Upward and Rich). Mr. Charles Urry (shop foreman and the oldest employee of the firm of Messrs. Upward and Rich). Mr. J. Moody (captain) and his colleagues of the St. Thomas's bellringers, representatives of the Union Benefit Society, including Messrs. W. Ash (trustee), T.A. Sanders (secretary), W. Walker. C. Payn (managing committee). M. Groves, G. Hant, and A. Legg. Amongst other present were Mr. J. George, J.P., and Mrs. George. Mr. E.H.F. Payn, Mr. T. Lee, Mr C. F. Fox. Mr. G.A. Brannon, and others. A muffled peal was rung on the parish church bells after the funeral. Among the inscriptions on the many beautiful floral tributes from relatives and friends were: "With deep sympathy from the St. Thomas's ringers"; "In affectionate remembrance of a very old friend, James and A.E. George"; "With sympathy and in memory of a good old neighbour"; "With sincere sympathy from St. Saviour's bellringers, Shanklin"; "A token of respect from his employers, Upward and Rich"; "With sincere sympathy from Mrs. Scadding and family as a small token of sincere regard for one who was ever courteous and obliging to all the family"; "From Mr. And Mrs. Ediss, in affection and respect".

The widow and relatives of the deceased have expressed heartfelt thanks for the many kind expressions of sympathy which have reached them.

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