

## **William Stephens**

**Isle of Wight Country Press - 3 March 1900**

### **NEWPORT.**

DEATH OF THE VENERABLE VERGER OF ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH. – There passed away on Monday last an esteemed and notable Newportarian in the person of Mr. William Stephens, of St. Thomas's square who only a few days prior to his departure had celebrated his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. He had held the office of verger of St. Thomas's Church for some 60 years; his father performed similar duties before him; and it may be said that the name of Stephens has been associated with Newport pariah church for the best part of a century. The present writer knows how affectionate was the regard in which William Stephens was held by the several vicars under whom he served – the late Dean Connor, Archdeacon Haigh, the Rev. Clement Smith, and the Rev. H Edmund Sharpe – and this warm esteem for him was felt by all who, from generation to generation, have come into contact with this devoted and faithful servant of the church and parish. And how fond he was of St. Thomas's. He was never so happy as when performing his duties therein – duties which he continue to discharge, with the quiet, reverent decorum which distinguished him, until only a few months since he was laid aside by the growing infirmities of age. Some further details of the career of this old and honoured Newport citizen must be deferred. The funeral takes place at 2 o'clock this (Saturday) afternoon, the first part of the service at St. Thomas's Church and the interment at Newport Cemetery.

**Isle of Wight Country Press - 10 March 1900**

### **THE LATE MR. WILLIAM STEPHENS, OF NEWPORT**

In our last week's issue was recorded the death, at the advanced age of 89, of Mr. William Stephens, of Newport, who for close upon three-score years had most faithfully and diligently discharged the duties of verger, clerk, and sacristan of the parish church, commanding the confidence and regard of succeeding vicars, churchwardens, and worshippers, and enjoying the esteem of all who were in any way brought into association with him. Years ago, in the heyday of his strength, his activities found useful exercise in many worthy spheres; but his real life work was most closely identified with the parish church, and for the manner in which he performed that work during an unprecedentedly long course of year he will be held in honourable remembrance. More fitting is it, as the Vicar of Newport proposes, that the name and record of the service of William Stephens, with those of Edwin Snow, the old curfew ringer, should be perpetuated by a tablet in St. Thomas's Church.

The late Mr. Stephens was a member of the Hand-in-Hand Benefit Society for 57 Years, having been elected in 1833, at which time the number of members was 77 and the total accumulated stock was £432 15s. 10d., while at the time of his death the assets stood at a total of £10,908 18s. 5½d. He was elected a member of the standing committee in 1854, a few years later he was appointed a trustee, and at the death of the late Mr. Robert Pinnock he was elected treasurer of the Society, which office he held up to the time of his death. In his younger years he actively devoted his efforts, with other then members, to the gradual improvement of the club, with a desire to make it a permanent success, and he lived to see the desire of his heart satisfied. He had always enjoyed the respect and full confidence of his fellow members and by his death the Society has sustained a great loss.

The funeral of the deceased took place on Saturday afternoon at Newport Cemetery. The first part of the service was held at the parish church, where a number of parishioners assembled to pay their last tribute of respect. The body was met at the west door by the clergy and the choir, the organist (Mr. H. Cushing, A.R.C.O.) playing "O rest in the Lord," as the cortege arrived. The clergy present were the Vicar of Newport (Rev. H. Edmund Sharpe), the Rector of Whippingham (Rev. Clement Smith), formerly vicar of Newport, the Vicar of St. Paul's, Barton (Rev. W.H. Nutter), a former curate of Newport, and the Revs. Miles Atkinson and Scobell Lessey, M.D. The principal mourners were Mr. Harry Miller, Mr. Frank Carter (Wroxall), Mr. F. Charehouse, Mr. W. Dowden, and Mrs. Redstone. The cortege was preceded up the nave by the churchwardens, Messrs. Frank Weeks, and H. Tullidge, bearing their wands of office. Following the personal mourners came the sidesmen of St. Thomas's Church, Messrs. C.F. Fox, G. Long, T.C., T.R. Tilling, A.W. Draw, A.E. Cave, E.F. King, and E.O. White. Then came the representatives of the Hand-in-Hand Friendly

Society, including Mr. Councillor C. Salter, C.C., and Mr. H. Harvey (clerks), and Messrs T.S. Buckler, T.C., W. Warne, J. Moorman, and A.J. Salter, whilst member of the Society were among the mourners. The general attendance included the Chief Constable (Capt. Connor), son of the late Dean Connor, vicar of Newport during some 30 years of the deceased's tenure of office, and Messrs. Robey F. Eldridge, J.P., C.A., J. Stanley, A. Millidge, G.A. Brannon, T. Lee, G. Gubbins, Percy Pinhorn, C. Webb, G. Clench, Alex. Scadding, A.L. Scadding, Frank Scadding, Gilbert Scadding, and others, including a number of ladies. The Vicar of Newport recited the opening sentences of the Burial Service, the Psalm was chanted, and the Vicar of St. Paul's, Barton, read the lesson. The hymn "Now the labourers task is o'er" was sung, and the body was then borne from the church whilst the "Dead march" in *Saul* was impressively played. At the Newport Cemetery the opening sentences were read by Dr. Lessey, the committal sentences were read by the Vicar of Newport, and the Rector of Whippingham read the concluding prayers and pronounced the Benediction. The deceased was buried by the side of the grave of his wife.

*Research and transcriptions by Bob Jacobs for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries, © 2018*  
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