

James Richard Wise

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DEATH OF MR. J. R. WISE, T.C., OF NEWPORT.

By the death of Mr. James Richard Wise at his residence, 135 Hunnyhill, on Saturday, Newport has lost an esteemed resident who for many years had been prominent in its civic, business, religious, and social life. Mr. Wise, who was in his 77th year, was a native of the district where he had been in business for over half a century. His father was a carpenter at the Medina Cement Works, Dodnor, and he was apprenticed to the grocery trade at Mr. J. W. Gould's business in Newport in 1881. After finishing his time and working for a short while on the mainland, he found himself unemployed and conceived the idea of opening a canteen for the many workers at the cement works, who in those days had to shift for themselves in preparing meals. The management encouraged the plan and he started the canteen and a small shop in connection with it. It proved a great success until the introduction of machinery at the works five years later resulted in the number of workers being largely increased. Mr. Wise then commenced in business as a grocer at Hunnyhill. Thanks to his business aptitude and hard work his enterprise flourished until after 13 years, he was able to build the Garrison Supply Stores, where he had been trading ever since. Altogether he spent 62 years in the grocery trade, 53 years on his own account in the Hunnyhill district. For very many years he held contracts under the Home Office for supplying grocery and provisions to the canteens at Parkhurst and Camphill Prisons, and for a time he was an enthusiastic and much appreciated civilian visitor to the convicts at Parkhurst. He was a man of considerable enterprise, and had the distinction of being the first Island grocer to deliver goods by motor-car. His standing in the grocery trade, however, was not only local. For over 12 years he was regularly selected as a judge at the annual grocers' exhibition in London, while he is known throughout the Island as one of the founders, an ex-president, and for 16 years the extremely able hon. Secretary of the I.W. Grocers' and Provisions Merchants' Council. It was only last autumn that he retired from this office owing to failing health, and the members showed their appreciation of his good work for so many years by presenting him with a cheque. Apart from his calling, and his interest in organising its welfare he found time to devote to many other good works for the benefit of his fellow man. For 21 years he was the devoted hon. Secretary of the Newport P.S.A. Botherhood, and when he gave up that office in 1933 tribute was paid to the wonderful assiduity and efficiency he had so constantly displayed in arranging the weekly speakers and soloists and in carrying out the other duties of the secretaryship. Two years later he was elected to the Town Council as a representative of the Parkhurst Ward, and he had been a councillor ever since. During the war he was a member of the Food Control Committee. He was also one of the founders and ex-president of the Newport Rotary Club, and a founder-member job master of the Newport Toc H group. In all his activities his kindly nature and broad-minded outlook won general commendation and appreciation. Mr. Wise had been in failing health for several years, but he was only laid aside for a few days. His wife died four years ago, and he leaves two sons and two daughters. Another son gave his life in the last war in Italy while serving with the Northants Dragoons. His eldest son Mr. H. Wise, has assisted him in the business.

When the funeral took place on Wednesday the Mayor and members of the Corporation in their robes, preceded by the borough maces draped with crepe and accompanied by borough officers, walked in procession from the Guildhall to the service in the Congregational Church and later preceded the cortege on its way to Newport Cemetery. Outside the Guildhall the two lines of civic representatives divided and stood on either side of the street as the cortege passed. There was a very large attendance

in the church, the company including members of the Grocers' and Provision Merchants' Council from all parts of the Island and representatives from other organisations with which Mr Wise was associated. The Minister of the church (the Rev T. E. R. Langridge) officiated and in an eloquent tribute to the deceased describe him as "a brother beloved." He made the motto of the Brotherhood movement, with which he was so long and helpfully associated, his personal motto— "All ye are brethren." The work nearest his heart was as a visitor to the convicts in Parkhurst Prison. There he was truly the prisoners' friend and he had had the reward of receiving many letters from former convicts testifying that his advice and friendship had given them back their self-respect and new hope. It was characteristic of his desire to serve his fellow men that at the time of life when most people would seek relief from public duties he became a member of the Town Council. Mr E. J. H. Quarrier (organist of the Brotherhood) accompanied the hymns "abide with me" and "Rest for the weary." The chief mourners were Messrs, H. J. and R. F. Wise (sons), Mr F. P. Abraham (son-in-law), and Mr. F. Chiverton (hon. Secretary of the I. W. Grocers' and Provision Merchants' Council). Miss A. M. Wise (sister), Mrs. F. P. Abraham and Miss E. Wise (daughters), and Mrs. H. J. Wise (daughter-in-law) were unable to be present.

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