

Joseph James Witham

Isle of Wight County Press – 7 January 1939

Death of Mr. J. Witham, of Newport.

The death occurred suddenly on Saturday at Manaco, Denmark-road, Cowes (the residence of his sister, Mrs. W. Smythers), of Mr. Joseph James Witham, aged 61, of 84 Staplers-road, Newport, who was well know and much esteemed in the Island capital as a devoted church worker and skilful engineer.

Mr. Witham, who was a son of Mr. Joseph Witham, for many years engineer at the Corporation sewage works on the Quay, had been employed by Messrs. Wheeler and Hurst for 37 years as foreman of the engineering department and had been a faithful and beloved teacher in the Sunday-school, in later years having charge of the boys' department. He frequently attended St. Paul's Church with his widowed mother, and since her death in August last he had lived alone. He was taken ill with heart trouble just before Christmas, and that he might receive attention he went to stay with his sister at Cowes. His death resulted from a heart attack in the early hours of Saturday morning. In early days Mr. Witham served in the Newport companies of the 8th Volunteer Battalion Hants Regiment (I.W. Rifles) and proved an excellent marksman. He continued his interest in rifle shooting as a member of the Carisbrooke and Newport Conservative Rifle Clubs until his sight became impaired. He was a very keen and skilful photographer, who had won numerous prizes at exhibitions of the I.W. Photographic Society. His comparatively early death is much deplored by many friends, who enjoyed his cheery companionship and admired his estimable qualities.

The funeral took place on Tuesday at St. Paul's Church, the interment following at the Newport Cemetery. The Vicar (the Rev. H. G. Kelsey) officiated, assisted by the Vicar of Newport (the Rev. W. M. B. Hogg), and the choir, with Mr. L. E. Dore at the organ, led the singing of the hymns. ... The chief mourners were Major A. Witham, D.S.O., and Messrs. R. and L. Witham (brothers), and Mr. W. Smythers (brother-in-law). Among the large number also attending were Mr. E. J. White (vicar's warden of the Parish Church), Miss Moorman (superintendent of the girls' department of the Parish Church Sunday-school), Mr. F. Chiverton (leader of the St. Thomas's Young Men's Bible Class), Miss D. Norris, Miss M. Caplehorn, Mr. A. D. Callaway, and Mr. W. Way, as well as members of the Island farming community. Messrs. Wheeler and Hurst were represented by Mr. W. A. Hurst, Mr. R. J. Philpot, and the following members of the works staff: Messrs. W. Butcher, P. E. Prangnell, R. A. Leal, A. Williams, E. J. Hurry, W. Clark, L. Bull, C. Sheen, and L. Symmans, other employees being prevented from attending by urgent outside work. Messrs. A. and L. McDine and G. Reynolds (former employees of the firm) also attended. Messrs. H. and F. Damp made the arrangements.

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