

James Albert Gibson

1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census

Field House, Castle Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England

| Name | Relationship | Status | Age | Occupation | Birthplace |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------|-----|---------------------------|--------------------|
| James Albert Gibson | Head | Married | 45 | Medical Officer of Health | Aberdeen, Scotland |
| Lilian Mary Gibson | Wife | Married | 38 | | Northern Ireland |
| Margaret Marjorie Gibson | Daughter | Single | 14 | School | Hornsey, London |
| Edith Newbery | Servant | Single | 27 | General domestic servant | Brook, IOW |

Isle of Wight County Press

18 October 1924

DEATH OF DR. J. A. GIBSON

The medical and public health services of the Island have suffered a severe loss by the lamented death, early on Sunday, at King's College Hospital, London, of Dr. James Albert Gibson, M.D., D.P.H., M.B.B., of Carisbrooke, well known as the popular and kindly Medical Officer of the Rural District and the Medical Superintendent of the Island Joint Isolation Hospital. The news of his death came as a great surprise and shock to most people, as few knew that the Doctor's health, never very robust, had been seriously failing for some time, and that frequent operations for internal trouble had gradually undermined his weakening constitution, until, when he underwent his final operation, about a fortnight ago, at the King's College Hospital, his reserve of strength was exhausted. The operation revealed conditions more serious than had been feared, and, although it was successful, he collapsed under the great strain upon his strength, and passed very peacefully to his rest. His wife and only daughter remained in close touch with him in his last illness, and were with him at the end. As president of the Island branch of the British Red Cross Society, of which Dr. Gibson was the County Director, H.R.H. Princess Beatrice manifested deep concern in the Doctor's illness by frequent inquiries as to the progress in hospital, and sent an expression of her regret and sympathy to Mrs. Gibson on hearing of its final termination.

Dr. Gibson, who was 59 years of age, was born at Aberdeen on September 16th, 1865, and took his medical degree at Edinburgh University, having studied there and at King's College and University College, London. He afterwards practiced at Crouch End and Hornsey, holding appointments under the Post-Office, the Board of Education, and the Civil Service Commissioners. In 1906 he obtained the diploma in public health of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland. Shortly after he came to the Island as *locum tenens* for the late Dr. J. Groves, J.P., whom he eventually succeeded as medical officer of health for the Rural District, his appointment with the Rural District Council dating back to June, 1907. He relinquished private practice in the Island on appointment as the first county schools medical officer, under the County Education Committee, which important work he efficiently organised and carried on in conjunction with his rural medical officership until the appointment by the County Council of a county medical officer, with whose duties were merged those connected with the schools. In 1909 he was appointed medical superintendent of the then newly-erected Joint Isolation Hospital at Fairlee, which was planned, built, and equipped under his experienced and efficient direction, and subsequently he became medical officer of the East Cowes district. With the highest professional qualifications for his responsible public duties, he displayed in their painstaking and conscientious discharge a courageous lead and stimulus to public authorities to keep reasonably abreast of advancing sanitary science, tireless energy and pertinacity, and an unflinching tact which combined to secure the accomplishment of a most notable record of administration in the interests of public health. In spite of his failing health, he bravely maintained his naturally cheery disposition to the end. He shared with his council the commendable ambition to

complete the fine service of independent water supplies of which the rural district can boast, and which will be achieved by the projected supply from Arreton and the extension and perfecting of the supply in the West Wight. He was keenly concerned for improved housing conditions, and was greatly disappointed at the enforced abandonment of the comprehensive scheme adopted by the Council for building houses in the rural district. Perhaps his outstanding achievement was in connection with the prevention of the spread of infectious disease by the prompt and efficient isolation which the splendidly-equipped hospital at Fairlee has effectually provided for two-thirds of the population of the Island, with the prospect of sooner or later including the remainder in the area of its beneficent operations. Dr. Gibson succeeded in securing the hearty co-operation of medical men generally in the different districts in perfecting the work which the hospital is carrying on, and the Fairlee Hospital, with its proud record, will stand as a lasting monument to the skill and devotion of its first medical superintendent. Dr. Gibson's attachment to that institution is shown by his wish to be buried in the pretty little cemetery which adjoins the hospital, a wish that was respected on Thursday.

Dr. Gibson's activities for the public good were by no means confined to the discharge of the three public appointments named above. He was a zealous pioneer organiser in British Red Cross work in the Island, being an honorary life member of the Society and county director of the Island branch. In this connection he served with praiseworthy devotion during the Great War as honorary medical officer of the Seely Red Cross Hospital at Gatcombe House, and his strenuous war work also included important duties as specialist sanitary officer of the Portsmouth Garrison, with the rank of captain in the R.A.M.C.(T.), from which he retired, with the right to wear the uniform. In recognition of his war service he was honoured by the King with the decoration of Member of the Order of the British Empire. He was the author of papers on public health and sanitary subjects, including "A pure milk supply", "The housing regulations", and "Progress of sanitary science, and anomalies of the present sanitary services". He was a fellow of the Royal Institute of Public Health, a fellow, ex-secretary, and ex-president of the southern branch of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, and a member of the Royal Sanitary Institute. His natural kindheartedness and other estimable personal attributes won him a wide circle of friends, and the deepest sympathy of the community goes out to Mrs. and Miss Gibson in their heavy bereavement.

The Funeral

— took place on Thursday, the first part of the service being at the Parish Church, Newport, where there was a large congregation, representative of the public authorities, with which the late Doctor was associated, the medical profession, the British Red Cross Society, and other organisations. Princess Beatrice, as president of the Island branch of the British Red Cross Society, was represented by Capt. H. G. Adams-Connor, M.V.O., D.L. and Lady Seely, vice-president of the I.W. branch, represented Headquarters of the British Red Cross Society, other officers of which present included Lady Baring, in addition to those given below. Capt. Connor also represented the I.W. County Council of the British Legion, of which he is chairman. The personal mourners were Mrs. Gibson (widow), Miss Gibson (daughter), Mr. E. F. Gibson (brother), Miss Colson (sister-in-law), Col. and Mrs. Hewlett, Mrs. Bishop (maid), and Mr. Downer (gardener). A half-muffled peal was rung on the church bells as the cortege left for St. Paul's Cemetery, where the interment took place. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack.

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