

Antonia Polino

**Isle of Wight County Press
14 December 1957**

NEWPORT'S OLDEST INHABITANT

DEATH OF GRANNY POLINO

Recognised as the oldest inhabitant of the borough of Newport, and by her family as a centenarian, Mrs. Antonia Polino died at St. Mary's Hospital on Monday night. She had been a patient there since 1943 and was affectionately known as Granny Polino throughout the hospital. She formerly lived in John Street, Barton's Village, Newport.

In the official hospital records Mrs. Polino's age was given as 99, and by that reckoning she would not have celebrated her 100th birthday until March, but the members of her large family claim with certainty that she became a centenarian on her last birthday. At that time Father Murphy O'Connor, of the St. Thomas's Roman Catholic Church, Newport, attempted to get in touch with the parish priest of the Italian village where she was baptised, with a view to ascertaining her correct age. Unfortunately he was unable to do so, and a degree of uncertainty remains but her family have no doubt that their claim was right.

Antonia Polino was born in the village of Vallegrande, the daughter of a farmer, and first came to England at the age of 10. She returned to her native Italy, and was married shortly after her 21st birthday, but soon she and her husband decided to emigrate once more, and settled at Brighton, where Mr. Polino was an ice-cream vendor. Here Mrs. Polino's nine children were born, but shortly after the birth of the youngest, Mr. Jack Polino, now of 5 Tinker's Hill, Pan Estate, Newport, his father died, leaving Mrs. Polino to bring up the whole family. She brought them to the Island, and while living in John Street joined forces with a countrywoman and will be remembered by older residents as Newport's only woman organ grinder. Here four sons and her second daughter, Rose, all emigrated to Canada, but Jack subsequently returned and married a Cowes girl. The older sons served in the first world war under the American flag. Mr. Jack Polino fought with the British Army in the last war. His mother lived with him for some years after leaving John Street, but some 14 years ago was admitted to St. Mary's Hospital, where she had remained quite happily ever since. Although she was blind, she was until earlier in the year able to dress herself and to move about the ward with assistance, and she spent her last birthday at Pan with her son and his family, untroubled by the official doubts about her age. On that occasion the Mayor (Mr. W. G. Bull), took her a gift of chocolates. Mrs. Polino was a grandmother to 19, and, through a branch of the family in Canada, the head of five generations.

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,
© 2020 <https://www.foncc.org.uk>