

Herbert John Sheaf

Isle of Wight County Press – 8 June 1957

MEDINA FISHERMAN FOUND DEAD

COLLAPSED IN BOAT

Mr. Herbert John ("Toby") Sheaf, 76-years-old fisherman on the River Medina and a well-known character, of 40 Staplers Road, Newport, was found dead in his boat in the River Medina near Dodnor on Monday evening. Mr. Sheaf had placed his nets across the river at high tide, and was sitting in his boat waiting for the tide to turn before taking them in again, when he collapsed in the bottom of the boat.

Mr. F. A. L. Chiverton, master of Messrs. W. B. Mew, Langton and Co.'s motor vessel XXXX, who was fishing with rod and line a short distance away, noticed that there was no movement from the boat, and, feeling that there was something wrong, rowed out in his dinghy. He found Mr. Sheaf dead.

The facts were reported to the Coroner, but no inquest was necessary, as death was due to a heart attack. "Old Toby," as he was affectionately known, was out fishing for what he had said would be almost his last outing, as his nets were getting old and he did not propose to replace them. Many local residents will miss the fine flat fish he caught for them in the Medina.

MERCHANTMAN, YACHTSMAN, AND PILOT

Mr. Sheaf was born at Coppins Bridge, Newport, where his father, Aaron Sheaf, kept a greengrocery and fish shop. He left school at the age of 11 and helped in the business, including fishing expeditions to replenish stocks. In his `teens his love of the sea took him nearly all over the world in merchant vessels. In his early 20s he transferred his interest to yachting, crewing for many prominent owners. He was well known in Cowes yachting circles and he also raced in all parts of the country, in vessels such as the Moonbeam, the Westward, and King George V's Britannia, on which he was principally masthead look-out. One of his proudest achievements was to sail in the Genista under sealed orders through the Kiel Canal for the German Empress Cup, which his club won. He married Miss Florence Guy, a native of Merston, and went to live in Fairlee Road, moving to Staplers Road 26 years ago.

About 30 years ago "Toby" became a pilot on the Medina, handling sailing vessels and barges. A few years before the second world war he acted as a chartering agent, particularly for boats bringing granite from the Channel Islands. When he lost that contract, because the islands fell into German hands, he retired, but still did pilotage on a part-time

basis until his wife died eight years ago, when he went into full retirement and pursued his favourite pastime of net fishing from his boat. He made almost daily visits for a yarn with his mates on Newport Quay. He never had a serious illness and appeared to be in good health to the last. He died as he would have wished---with his sea boots on and his nets spread and full of fish. He is survived by his only daughter, Mrs. R. S. Jolliffe, of Newport, and two grandsons.

Isle of Wight County Press –15 June 1957

NEWPORT

The Late Mr. H. J. Sheaf.----The funeral took place at St. Paul's Church on Saturday of Mr. Herbert John ("Toby") Sheaf, of 40 Staplers Road, who died while fishing in the river Medina the previous Monday. The service was conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. L. J. D. Wheatley), who, in a tribute, said that Mr. Sheaf had spent a full life bound up with the sea and had been called home while he was still following his favourite pastime. The hymns were "Eternal Father, strong to save" and "Now the day is over." The mourners were Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Jolliffe (son-in-law and daughter), Mr. J. Sheaf (brother), Mr. J. Evans (brother-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. W. Sheaf, Mr. and Mrs. B. Sheaf, Mr. and Mrs. L. Sheaf, Mr. and Mrs. William Sheaf, Mrs. J. Richards, and Mrs. Manning (nephews and nieces), Mr. and Mrs. R. Mackett, Messrs. A. and F. Guy, Mr. D. Williams, Mrs. F. Chase, and Mrs. Pragnell. Interment followed at St. Paul's Cemetery. Messrs. O. C. Hamilton and Son made the arrangements. ----- Mrs. Jolliffe wishes to thank all relatives, friends, and neighbours for kind letters, which are too numerous to reply to, and for flowers. Please accept this as the only intimation.

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