

Henry James Bird

Isle of Wight County Press - 23 January 1915

NEWPORT

DEATH OF MR. H. J. BIRD. - We regret to record the death yesterday at his home, 14 Hunnyhill, of Mr. H. J. Bird, retired Army schoolmaster, who for many years had read the lessons at Carisbrooke Church and who was a much esteemed and valued parochial worker there. Deceased had been unwell for a short time and passed away rather suddenly. As he had not been medically attended an inquest will be held to-day. He has three sons serving in the Army.

Isle of Wight County Press – 30 January 1915

FORMER ARMY SCHOOL MASTER'S SUDDEN DEATH AT NEWPORT

It is with much regret that we record the death, which took place suddenly at his residence, 14 Stanley-terrace, Hunnyhill, early on Friday morning last, of Henry James Bird, a retired Army schoolmaster. The deceased, who was in his 68th year, was the son of a soldier and joined the Service as an Army schoolmaster in January, 1871. He saw service in India (medal with the Perak clasp) and in the Zulu War of 1878-9, for which he received the medal and clasp. He also possessed the good conduct medal. He was discharged on reaching the age limit of 55 in 1903, and returned from Ireland to Parkhurst, where his wife and family had resided since Mr. Bird was stationed there some three years previously. During his retirement he has ever been a willing helper in any good work, and at Carisbrooke Church, during the Rev. W. J. Stobart's vicariate, he regularly and most acceptably read the lessons. He was also a valued helper at St. Andrew's Mission-hall, Hunnyhill, and was engaged as the hon. secretary of the Wesleyan Soldiers' Recreation and Refreshment-rooms at Hunnyhill, an office for which his long Army experience particularly fitted him, and the men quartered in the district will sorely miss his help and kindly and experienced advice. He has four sons serving in the Army, one being at the Front with the Hampshires. The deepest sympathy is felt with the widow and family in their heavy bereavement.

THE INQUEST.

The Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest on the body at the Soldiers' Home, Newport, on Saturday morning. Mr. W. J. Rugg, T.C., was foreman of the jury, and Insp. Sibbeck and P.S. Hutchin were present.

The widow, Rebecca Bird, said her husband had enjoyed good health until about a fortnight before his death, when he had a cold. On the previous Saturday and Sunday he remained in bed. He said he was better on Monday, and on Thursday afternoon he went out of doors and seemed to have quite recovered. He went to bed that night at his usual time, about 10.30. Witness followed at about 11.30, when the deceased was fast asleep. He got out of bed at about 3.15 a.m., and after getting back again he coughed a little and moaned. She went downstairs and got him something to drink, and then knocked for Mr. Berridge, the next door neighbour, but her husband died within two or three minutes.

William Berridge, 12 Stanley-terrace, said he was aroused by Mrs. Bird knocking at the wall, and went in and saw the deceased lying on the bed. He seemed quite dead. He knew the deceased had had a cold, but otherwise he had never complained of ill-health.

Dr. Stanley Foster said he was called in on Friday morning, at 3.45, and found the deceased quite dead. He had not attended him before. He had made a post-mortem examination of the body and found one of the weakest hearts he had ever seen. It was in an advanced state of fatty degeneration, associated with atheroma, there was a tremendous lot of calcereous deposit in the aorta, and a large clot of blood in the pericardium, which had come from a rupture in the wall of the left ventricle due to the advanced degeneration. He attributed death to syncope, caused by the hemorrhage from the rupture. The wall of the heart had given way. It was an extraordinary case. The deceased's life must have been hanging on the merest thread for a long time.

A Juror: The deceased was a very energetic man.

The Coroner: Yes, he was. The case is perfectly clear.

A verdict was returned in accordance with the medical evidence.

The Foreman expressed the jury's sincere sympathy with the widow and members of the family, and the Coroner said he would like to be associated with that expression.

THE FUNERAL

--took place on Tuesday afternoon with full military honours, rendered by the band and a firing party of the 3rd Batt. Hants Regiment from Parkhurst. The passing of the cortège through Newport to Carisbrooke Cemetery was watched with sympathetic interest by large numbers of people. The band played Chopin's "Marche funèbre" and a funeral march by Beethoven. At the Cemetery gates the cortège was met by the Rev. A. J. N. Saunders (curate), Messrs. Robert Fisk, L. C. Attrill, and H. L. Morris (churchwardens), Messrs. W. H. Wadham, J. H. Greenfield, and G. W. Wales (fellow sidesmen), and Mr. F. Griffin (verger), of Carisbrooke Church, as well as by many other residents of the parish, amongst whom the deceased was so well known and respected. The Rev. A. J. N. Saunders officiated, and at the graveside, after three volleys had been fired and the "Last Post" sounded, the band impressively played a verse of the hymn "On the resurrection morning," whilst the firing party stood at the "present." The chief mourners were the widow, Mrs. O'Brien (daughter), Sergt. J. and Pte. C. Bird, of the 2nd Hants Regiment (sons), Sergt. T. O'Brien, Royal Fusiliers (son-in-law), and Mr. and Mrs. A. Marshall (Coves), Messrs. W. Berridge and A. Peck, and Corpl. P. Cory, of the 13th Hants. Amongst those also paying a last tribute of respect to the deceased were Capt. J. Fraser, T.C., Mr. Leonard Groves, Mrs. Markland, Mrs. Greenfield, Mr. G. Attwood, Mr. W. G. Denness, of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and Messrs. G. Reynolds, M. M. Russell, E. Chester, A. J. Newbery, and T. and W. G. Sibbick. The late Mr. Bird was greatly interested in the work of the Hunnyhill Wesleyan School, and gave valued service as a member of its teaching staff. The Rev. B. Carvosso Spencer was regretfully unable to be present at the funeral, but Messrs. W. Hurst, J. Carpenter, and F. W. Spanner represented the Wesleyan school staff, and several of the scholars were also present. The deceased's two other soldier sons could not attend, one being in the 1st Hants Regiment at the Front and one in the R.G.A. at Bombay. There were a number of beautiful floral tokens inscribed: From his sorrowing wife; his sorrowing sons and daughter, Flora, William, James, Cecil, and Roland; Tom and Maggie; Roly; Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Parsons; Mr. and Mrs. Marshall; the officers and teachers of the Hunnyhill Wesleyan Sunday-school; the churchwardens and sidesmen of St. Mary's, Carisbrooke; the Rev. A. J.

Neville Saunders, in high esteem of splendid service; in loving memory of an ever-willing helper and true friend, F. and E. Griffin; and A. Peck. Messrs. Damp carried out the funeral arrangements.

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