

John Vernon Duke

Isle of Wight County Press - 4 May 1957

A LIFE-TIME DEVOTED TO FOOTBALL

DEATH OF PRESIDENT OF NEWPORT F.C.

Sporting circles in Hampshire and the Island learned with deep regret of the death on Saturday of Mr. John Vernon Duke, of Kilmory, Cypress Road, Newport, aged 74, who had given a life-time of service to football in the Island and county. Mr. Duke had suffered from heart trouble for some years. His greatest regret was not to be able to follow the team which had been his main interest for 58 years. His death occurred after he learned that Newport had again won the league championship.

The son of the late Mr. J. T. Duke, of 8 St. John's Place Newport, he had been in the building trade all his life. The firm of Messrs. Duke Bros. was originally started by the late Mr. T. E. Duke, his brother, in partnership with a Mr. W. Hillier, in 1911. Mr. Vernon Duke joined the business in 1914. He joined Newport Football Club in 1899, and at the time of his death was the oldest member. He became a committee member in 1901 and, when the club was formed into a company in 1933, he was elected chairman, a position he held continuously until he succeeded the late Alderman Blake, J.P., as president in 1953.

Newport joined the Hampshire League in 1927 when they took over the fixtures of Gosport Albion. In these days it was a struggle to keep going, but for five seasons Mr. Duke never missed a game either at home or away and helped to lay the foundations on which the present-day success of the team was built, Apart from his long association with Newport F.C., Mr. Duke was a council member and also vice-president of the I.W.F.A. For many years he was the association's hon. auditor, and he was I.W.F.A divisional representative on Hampshire F.A. for 19 years and a council member for Hampshire for a similar period. He missed a long service medal with both bodies by one year. He leaves a widow and daughter.

The funeral service at the Parish Church on Wednesday, conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. C. R. Farnsworth. R.D.), was largely attended, there being many representatives present from the building industry and football organisations, including the Mayor, Mr. W. G. Bull (president) and Mr. S. Barton (chairman of Newport F.C. Supporters' Club); Mr. E. W. Barton (chairman) and officers of Newport F.C. ; Mr. E. L. Kingswell (president I.W.F.A.) ; and Capt. H. A. Drudge. M.B.E. (president. I.W. Referees' Society). Also present were representatives of Hampshire F.A. and Cowes F.C. The family mourners were Mrs. J. V. Duke (widow), Miss. A. C. Duke (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Duke and Miss. P. Duke (nephew and nieces), Mrs. E. K. Duke (sister-in-law), Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Hunter (cousins), and Mr. W. G. Bartlett. There were about 30 floral tributes including those from the staff of Duke Bros., Newport F.C., Newport F.C. Supporters' Club, the I.W.F.A. and Cowes F.C. Interment was at Carisbrooke Cemetery.

The arrangements were made by H. and F. Damp

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