

## **Robert Arkley Cooke 1840 - 1912**

Press reports

### **Isle of Wight County Press Saturday June 15 1912**

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The National Reserve at Ryde

On Wednesday evening a very successful meeting was held at the Town Hall, Ryde to further the objects of the National Reserve.

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Col Craddock thanked Bandmaster Holland and the members of the R. F. A. (Howitzer Brigade) Band for their kindness in playing outside the Town Hall prior to the meeting, and also Bandmaster R. A. Cooke and his band for instrumental selections inside the hall.

### **Isle of Wight County Press Saturday June 22 1912**

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Death notice

COOKE June 17, at Daniel Street, Ryde, Robert Arkley Cooke, aged 72. Mrs Cooke and family wish to return thanks for many kind letters sent on the occasion of their bereavement.

### **Isle of Wight County Press Saturday June 22 1912**

DEATH OF A RYDE BANDMASTER

We regret to record the death of Mr. Robert Arkley Cooke, of Salisbury Cottage, Daniel-street, which occurred suddenly from heart failure on Monday. Mr Cooke, who was 72 years of age, was formerly bugle-major of the Shropshire Light Infantry (the 85th Regiment), and afterwards bandmaster of the Royal Munster Fusiliers (the 104th Regiment). He was 27 years in the Army, and on his retirement in the '70's he was for some 17 years attached to the Volunteers while he also did valued work in training the Boys Brigade, Boy Scouts, Church Lads' Brigade, &c. For some years, too, he was bandmaster of the Ryde Town Band, and only last Wednesday conducted an orchestra at the Town hall in connection with the meeting of the National Reserve, for which he was forming a band.

He attended the Parish church as recently as Sunday evening, and his sudden death came as a great surprise and shock to his many friends. Of quiet and unassuming demeanour, Mr Cooke made many friends, who will long remember his interesting reminiscences of Army life and his military duty in India. His son, Mr R. A. Cooke, is now bandmaster of the 2nd Middlesex Regiment, stationed at Bordon Camp, Aldershot.

An inquest was held at the Park-road Baptist Chapel, Ryde on Tuesday. The inquiry was conducted by the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. Joyce, Esq.), and Mr W. R. Taylor was foreman of the jury.

Mrs Jane Ann Cooke, widow of the deceased, stated that her husband had been in very good health until recently and had not required a doctor at all. On Sunday evening in going down Union-street he complained of a pain in his chest and said how lucky it was it did not happen in church. They sat down on the Western Esplanade, and twice again on the front. On arriving home he still complained of the pain and thought it was wind. Witness made him some ginger tea, which seemed to relieve him. Afterwards he still complained and witness made him a large poultice, after which he said the pain went into his left arm.

Witness offered to rub the arm, but he said he could rub it himself, which he did. After talking for some time he said he felt easier and would go to sleep. At 9 the next morning he got up first and witness found him sitting in the arm-chair downstairs. After having a part of a cup of tea he said he would go upstairs and rest. Witness went up again and found him lying on the bed with his coat off. Witness asked if she should go to the doctor, but deceased said he would soon be better. Witness posted a letter and parcel, and afterwards made deceased a little Bovril. On going up again ten minutes afterwards deceased had taken the Bovril and eaten a small piece of toast.

After 1 o'clock she found that he did not answer and sent for the doctor. They were alone in the house at the time. Mrs Marriott and Mrs Gregory, her neighbours, came to help her, but on Dr. Pridmore's arrival he could only pronounce life extinct. Deceased had suffered from flatulency, but had never complained of his heart.

Dr. J. W. Pridmore deposed that he was called on Monday, receiving a message about 2 p. m. He went down at once and found deceased lying on the bed. He appeared to have recently died. He had died, as far as could be seen from external appearances, from natural causes. From the evidence of the last witness he should think deceased died from heart trouble, from which he had very likely been suffering for some time.

The Coroner said the jury might reasonably assume that death was due to heart trouble.

The jury unanimously returned a verdict in accordance with this view, expressing their deep sympathy with the widow and family.

## THE FUNERAL

-took place on Thursday afternoon and was attended by a very large number of people. The first part of the Burial Service was sung in All Saints Church. The funeral procession from the house was headed by the trumpeter (Mr E. Palmer) and the firing party, under Colr.-Sergt.-Instr. Evans, of the I. W. Rifles, marching with arms reversed. The firing party and trumpeter were all members of the National Reserve. Then came the massed bands of the Howitzer Brigade, R. F. A., and I. W. Rifles, with whom were several retired bandsman not attached to any regiment, who were allowed to play out of respect for an old comrade.

The drums were draped with crepe, and the band was under the direction of Band-Sergt. R. Holland. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack, on which were placed deceased's busby, sword and belt, with a wreath from his wife. The pall-bearers were all retired warrant officers: Master-Gunner G. Price, R. A., Master-Gunner E. Armstrong, R. A., Sergt-Major W. J. Pritchard, R. E., Garrison Sergt-Major H. Keefe, R. A., Co.-Sergt.-Major W. Hooper, West Indian Regiment, and Co.-Sergt.-Major Weir, R.A.

The bearers, members of the old Ryde Town Band, of which deceased was for a long time the bandmaster, were Messrs. J.H. Daish, H. Thearle, Crabb. J. Long, Coyne, Austin, E. Drayton, and Sayers. About 40 members of the National Reserve followed the coffin, under the command of Col. E. W. Craddock, J.P., with whom were Col. Worthington Wilmer, Major J. Ellery, and Capt. C. W. Vincent.

Then followed the I. W. Rifles, under Lieut. Swain, and the Howitzer Brigade, under Lieut. A. J. Hartnall and Lt. C. Swain. On the way to the church the band played Chopin's "Marche Funebre" and Beethoven's "Funeral march".

The service in the church was conducted by the Vicar (the Rev. Hugh Le Fleming, M. A.), assisted by the Rev. Cyril L. Blake, M.A. The hymn "Let the saints on earth in concert sing" was sung, and as the procession left the church the organist (Dr. R. Yates Mander) played the "Dead march" in Saul and "O rest in the Lord".

The C. E. M. S. was represented by Messrs. Toms, Riddett, Butcher, and A. H. Osborne, and the Ryde Working Men's Conservative Club by Messrs. S. Hogg (hon. treasurer), E. A. Austin, F. Howard, and E. Jeavey. Among those also present were Messrs. A. A. Tutte, J. Moxham, J. Jones, W. Airs, W. H. Denham, T. Grimsdick, J. R. Whitney, and T. Chapman. At the graveside the committal sentences were pronounced by the Vicar, the Territorials and National Reserve being formed up in a hollow square.

The firing party fired three volleys over the grave, and the trumpeter very impressively sounded the "Last post". The mourners were Mrs Cooke (widow), Bandmaster R. A. Cooke, Mr William Cooke, and Bandsman Ronald Cooke, Shropshire Light Infantry (sons), Mrs Price and Mrs Vacy (daughters), Mr Andrew Cooke (cousin), Mrs Hayles (niece), Messrs. William and Eddie Hayles (grand-nephews), Mrs Softley (grand-niece), Mrs Cooke (sister-in-law), Mr Perkis (brother-in-law), and Miss Perkis (niece). The coffin was of polished elm, with brass mountings, and bore the inscription "Robert Arkley Cooke, died June 17, aged 72". The following were the wreaths: From

his devoted wife; in loving memory of our dear father, from Robert and Mary; in fond memory of dear father, from Louisa, Rhoda and Gilbert (India); in loving memory from his children, Edith, Gertrude, William, and Ronald; in loving memory of our dear uncle, Harry, Marie, Wilfred, Eddie, and Nellie; from the members of the Conservative and Unionist Working Men's Club, with deep sympathy; with deepest sympathy, Mr and Mrs A. Cooke and family; with deep sympathy, Mr and Mrs Sheppard. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr C. Langdon.

#### **Isle of Wight Times Thursday June 20 1912**

##### **Ex Bandmaster Cooke's Sudden Death**

On Tuesday afternoon the Acting Coroner for the Island (Mr F. A. Joyce) held an inquest at the Schoolroom of the Park Road Baptist Church respecting the death of Mr Robert Arkley Cooke, aged 72 years, an army pensioner living at Salisbury Cottage, Daniel Street, who died suddenly the previous day.

Jane Ann Cooke, the widow deposed that on Sunday morning as they were returning from church deceased complained of pains in his chest. On getting home deceased went to bed and witness made him some ginger tea and afterwards put on a bread poultice. On Monday morning he got up about 9 o'clock but went to lie down again. When she asked him if she should send for a doctor he said no adding that he would feel better later. Just after one o'clock on going up she noticed that he was apparently unconscious. She tried to rouse him but failing to do so sent for the doctor.

Dr. Pridmore said when he arrived at the house deceased was dead but the body was still warm. The appearance of the face was consistent with death from natural causes. He would say from the evidence that death was due to heart trouble.

The Jury returned a verdict accordingly.

#### **Isle of Wight Times Thursday June 27 1912**

##### **Ryde News**

##### **Accident**

An unfortunate accident occurred during the funeral of the late Bandmaster R. A. Cooke on Thursday, Mr George E. Stamp, who was taking part in the proceedings as a member of the National Reserve, was seized with a fit immediately on leaving the church, and falling heavily sustained nasty cuts about the head and hands. He was at once attended by Sergt. Vicary RAMC, and PC Warne and taken to his house where he was medically treated.

##### **The Funeral of a Ryde Bandmaster**

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