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**RYDE'S WARTIME MAYOR  
DEATH OF MR. H. W. O. WEEKS**

**OUTSTANDING WORK FOR THE BOROUGH**

We announce with regret the death of Mr. **H. W. O. WEEKS**, B.E.M., J.P., Mayor of Ryde for six years in succession from 1939, which occurred on Monday at his home, West Street sub-Post Office, Ryde. For nine years he had been in poor health and no doubt the heavy strain of the responsibilities and duties of the mayoralty throughout the war years bore heavily on him. He carried out those duties with ability and remarkable energy, giving an enthusiastic lead to the town's efforts in connection with the special wartime appeals. Shortly after he relinquished office he had a serious breakdown and never regained his former vigour or his zest for public life. He continued as a magistrate and a member of the aldermanic bench, but indifferent health caused long periods of absence, and he resigned from the council two years ago. Mr. WEEKS was taken ill with pneumonia about nine days before his death. Deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. WEEKS, who is also prominent in public life at Ryde. Her devoted help in her husband's civic work has been equalled only by her constant care for him in his long and trying illness.

**OFFICE**

Born at Ryde on Dec. 27th, 1888, **Henry William Oscar WEEKS** was the elder son of the late Henry James WEEKS, watchmaker, of West Street. He attended the Ryde Upper Grade School and his connection with the Post Office commenced soon after leaving school. His maternal grandfather, the late Mr. John GRIST, had for a long period been sub-postmaster at the West Street office and was succeeded by his daughter, Miss GRIST. In 1913 Mr. WEEKS succeeded her as sub-postmaster and had thus occupied the position for 42 out of the 82 years the position has been held by members of the family. Besides the sub-office he conducted a greengrocery and confectionery business. He was among the oldest members of the Island branch of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters. For many years he was hon. secretary of the Island branch, but in 1953 relinquished the office when he was appointed president and only last week received a presentation from them. As chairman of the Southern District. In 1938 he was instrumental in bringing the national conference of the federation to Ryde, and presided when Sir Walter WOMERSLEY, the then Assistant Postmaster-General, was the principal speaker. His work for the conference was recognised in the Birthday Honours of 1939, when he received the British Empire Medal (civil division). He was also a former chairman of the Island branch.

**A RECORD MAYORALTY**

Mr. WEEKS entered civic life in May, 1935, when at a by-election he was returned as a town councillor for the west ward. He was chairman of the Public Health Committee from 1938 until he was elected mayor in November, 1939. He was then 51 and the youngest civic head of the borough to be elected for many years. He continued in office until 1945-6, when his length of tenure of the mayoralty was equalled only by that of the late Ald. J. I. BARTON, who had been mayor for six years, including the period of the first world war, and has never been exceeded. With practically every local organisation closed down, normal civic developments being at a minimum, and the Island being declared a prohibited area for visitors, it might have appeared that there was little normal work for the mayor to do. This was far from the case and Mr. WEEKS, with remarkable energy and an almost unbounded desire for the town to play its full part in the war effort, found that he had undertaken a full-time job. Many of his methods were perhaps unorthodox,

and often times criticised, but he deserves the credit for being the driving force behind many of the special efforts required of the townspeople during those grave days. He made, for instance, a habit of being available daily for consultation by any member of the public by attending for three hours every morning at the Town Hall. On one occasion he appealed for 15,000 flower pots, in which to grow tomato plants at Knighton, and got them. This scheme came into being largely by Mr. WEEKS's initiative and was more or less an experiment to ascertain whether tomatoes could be grown in the Island on a similar scale to the Channel Islands, whose exports had ceased on account of the German occupation. He took up the idea with great enthusiasm and in the first year two or three acres of the council's land at Knighton Waterworks were turned over to tomato growing with highly successful results. It was the first big municipal trading venture the council had undertaken and a matter of £250 was earmarked for initial expenses. The early years were favoured with good weather and from £5 worth of seed, £2000 worth of fruit was marketed.. In fact the scheme reached such a degree of success as a war-time effort that Mr. H. BEAUMONT, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, paid a visit to Knighton, and the experiment was much publicised in the national Press. On July 26th 1942, which happened to be his silver wedding anniversary, Mr. WEEKS made a B.B.C. broadcast describing the experiment.

### SUCCESSFUL APPEALS

As Chairman of the National Savings Committee, he took the lead in organising local efforts in the national campaigns and was remarkably successful in his personal appeals in securing "big money." He was chairman of the Ryde Committee of the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund and the first chairman of the organising committee of the East Wight Squadron Air Training Corps. The Ryde Garden Victory Show Committee which was the forerunner of the present Garden Show Committee, owed its inception to him and his efforts to encourage the "Dig for Victory" campaign. He was president, while Mrs. WEEKS, with equal enthusiasm, was chairman, an office which she still occupies. From the war-time garden shows they raised over £1000 for the Red Cross. In a less spectacular way Mr. WEEKS went about organising an even more serious side of the war effort as chairman of the Invasion Committee and later Local Defence Committee. Towards the end of the war he did much to help the successful establishment of the American Seamen's Club at the Esplanade Pavilion.

During his mayoralty the Princess Royal paid a visit as Colonel-in-Chief to the Canadian-Scottish Regiment, who were billeted in Ryde. Her Royal Highness, after inspecting the troops before they went overseas, attended a lunch at the Town Hall, where she was received by Mr. and Mrs. WEEKS. During the war Mr. WEEKS also entertained leading members of the Russian Embassy, when they visited the town in connection with the "Aid to Russia" appeal.

### SILVER WEDDING GIFTS

Mr. and Mrs. WEEKS' silver wedding, which came midway through their period of office, was marked by general good wishes from the townspeople, and on behalf of the Town Council they were presented with a silver tea set, and there were also gifts from the Fire Service and the Townswomen's Guild. Unfortunately the celebration had been marred two months earlier by the death of their younger son Colin, who lost his life while a member of the N.F.S. Serving during the blitz on Cowes in May 1942. In the following year Mr. WEEKS was appointed a borough magistrate and In May 1945, he was elected to the aldermanic bench. For a short period during the war, he represented Ryde West ward on the County Council.

In his early years Mr. WEEKS was a leading member of Ryde Cricket Club with a reputation as a fast bowler and a good all rounder. He had also been a footballer. After he relinquished the mayoralty, he became interested in Ryde Bowling Club and the I.W.C.B.A. and

spent much of his leisure playing on the municipal greens. At one time he was much interested in carnation growing.

His wife was formerly Miss Elsie Margaret RYALL, a school mistress at Ryde Upper Grade School, and the only daughter of Mr. T. RYALL of Ryde. He is also survived by his elder son Raymond, who is senior accountant in the Post Office Constructions Department in London.

#### THE FUNERAL

A representative congregation attended the funeral service at All Saints' Church, Ryde, on Thursday. The Archdeacon (the Ven. A. CORY) officiated, assisted by the Rev. H. WILDE, M.B.E., M.C. Psalm 23 and the Nunc Dimittis were chanted, the hymn "O love that wilt not let me go" was sung, and the organist (Mr. P. J. MONK) played "O rest in the Lord." The family mourners were Mrs. H. W. O. WEEKS, J.P. (widow), Mr. and Mrs. Raymond WEEKS (son and daughter-in-law), and Mr. and Mrs. G. F. C. WILLEMS (brother-in-law and sister).

The Mayor and Mayoress of Ryde (Mr. and Mrs. G. J. EVANS), the deputy mayor (Mr. W. G. F. SUTTON, J.P.), and the majority of the aldermen, councillors, and borough officials attended. Inspector J. TURNBULL represented the Chief Constable and the Hampshire County Constabulary; the County and Ryde Borough divisions of the Island Magistracy and the probation officers department were represented, and other bodies and organisations represented were the National Federation of sub-Postmasters, Ryde Head Post Office, the Post Office Veterans' Association, the Civil Defence Service, Ryde Sports Club, I.W. County Bowling Association, Ryde Bowling Club, Ryde Womens' Bowling Club, Ryde School, the National Savings Association, Ryde Methodist Church, Ryde women's section of the British Legion, Ryde Afternoon Townswomen's Guild, the elective borough auditors, and the Ryde Rowing Club.

The interment was at Ryde Cemetery, and the floral tokens included those from the Mayor and members of Ryde Town Council; the head postmaster and staff of Ryde Post Office; the I.W. branch of the National Federation of Sub-postmasters; the I.W. County Bowling Association; the Ryde Bowling Club; Ryde Garden Show Committee; and Ryde Women's Bowling Club.

Messrs. J. WHEELER and Sons were the undertakers.

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