

The Isle of Wight County Press April 2 1904

DEATH OF MR. FRANCES NEWMAN, J.P.

A man of inflexible rectitude, of high professional attainments, who has rendered remarkable services to the community amongst whom he lived, passed away, at St Paul's, Ryde, on Wednesday night, in the person of Mr Frances NEWMAN, J.P., C. E., the county surveyor for the Isle of Wight. Deceased's health had been failing for some time, and he had had to take great care of himself in the winter months. He was out last week, but was taken ill with bronchitis on Sunday, the end coming through heart failure at 11:30 on Wednesday night. Mr NEWMAN was 73 years of age. Mr NEWMAN was a native of the Island, was elected surveyor to the Ryde Commissioners on January 13 1857, and held office after the borough was incorporated until 1872. Then, owing to a municipal change of regime, what was known as the Knight party coming into power, he was out of office for a time, but was re-elected again in 1875, and continued to serve the town with splendid success until 1897. Much of the efficiency of the Ryde water supply and sewerage arrangements are due to his professional skill and thoroughness. One who is most competent to judge of his powers speaks in the highest terms of the rapidity with which he formed a reliable judgement on all matters brought before him. His fame as a surveyor and engineer and his knowledge of sanitary matters and of sea defence work won him an extensive *clientele* and he had been professionally connected with nearly all the Island towns, as well as with Swanage and many places on the mainland. He did much arbitration work, amongst other things in connection with the construction of the Joint Railway works at Ryde. On the constitution of the Island as an administrative county he was appointed county surveyor, an office which he held at the time of his death. A few years ago, his name was added to the Commission of the Peace for the borough and he performed his magisterial duties with characteristic conscientiousness. Mr NEWMAN was one of the most distinguished Freemason in the province. He was a P.M. of 175 and 698, P.P.G.S.W., P.G., St. Bearer, England; Royal Arch Chapter, 175, P.P.G.J., P.D.G.D.C., Eng.; Mark P.P.G.S.O., P.G.A.D.C., Eng., P.C.N. Mark Mariters, 320; Vectis Chap. Rose Croix, No 99 Ryde, P.M.W.S., Recorder and Treas.; Provincial Priory; Provincial Sub. Prior Capt. of Guards, Eng. Mr NEWMAN was a founder of the Chine Lodge. In the year 1850, he was one of the promoters of the Volunteer movement in Ryde, and stood amongst the first of those sworn in as members of the local corps. When the various local corps were amalgamated he retained his connection with the Island battalion, and retired with the rank of Major, with permission to wear the uniform of his rank. He received a medal for long service and good conduct at the hands of the Duke of Connaught in the Portsmouth Town hall. He was also one of the founders of the Ryde School of Science and Art, and retained his connection with and interest in it until the very last. When the Ryde Science and Art Council was constituted for its management he was elected chairman of that body, and occupied that position until the present day. Personally he was most methodical in his habits, possessed a fund of information on a multiplicity of topics, and was a staunch friend. But if one has to select the quality which marked him out from his fellows, it was his sterling integrity and fidelity to principle, in which none too common excellencies he was equalled by few and surpassed by none. His death leaves a blank in the community which it will be hard to fill. Sincere sympathy is felt for Mrs NEWMAN in her irreparable loss.

The funeral will take place this (Saturday) afternoon; the first part of the service being held ay Holy Trinity Church, of which the deceased was a former churchwarden and the oldest seat holder. The service begins at 3. Freemasons who propose attending are asked to meet in the parish-room adjoining the church at 2.45.