

The following report appeared in the Isle of Wight Times some when in 1966 and was a letter to the Editor.

Mr J H Fry was born in 1883 and is the son of Mr James Leonard Fry and Mrs Emma Caroline Fry.

ROYAL REGRETS

In your recent report of the late Mr. Price Marvin's' passing, it is stated that his father, the late Ald. E. Marvin was mayor here in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, when the late Ald. Ernest Groves was our Chief Magistrate, and I feel sure that a reference to your files will duly confirm my statement.

Those of early August, 1897, and when on Thursday, July 29th, the then Queen paid an official visit here on the 24th. She had been similarly to Newport, when the visit was highly auspicious, though here the memorable occasion was marred by a fatal accident to my father while helping to decorate his place of employment, upon which fatality every vestige of décor was at once taken down, so it was the only premises so bared in the whole length of Union Street while her late Majesty rode down to the Esplanade. She was very surprised and intrigued to note that bare appearance of what was an ironmongery business run by the late Councillor A. E. Jupe.

Then on returning to Osborne and of course via her private Secretary, she enquired of the Mayor as to why or how those premises were totally unadorned. Ald. Groves at once replied it was because a fatal accident had happened that morning, then again from Osborne an expression of her deeply felt grief with sympathy to my mother and us four children (the latter of whom I only survive). Also with the Royal message came a gift of £10 to my mother and one of a £1 to the young fellow who shared the tragedy, due to the sudden collapse of a small iron balcony where they both stood, as had I myself seen earlier from across Union Street, on my way to a paper-delivery round in the Haylands and Swanmore area, at a wage of 3/- weekly! In 1897 to wit, when mostly an adult male worker was paid 18/- in fact. What a contrast in the rates of these days.

I vividly recall it was Ald. Groves who visited us then in Arthur Street, and handed the letter from Osborne to my mother, this same document is kept by a kinsman of mine, it's paper somewhat marked by age, 69 years past, needless to remark, but **I do** remember Ald. Marvin as our Mayor, the exact year of his term now failing my memory, as I am nearing my 83rd "milestone," you see. But I can easily call to mind when Waylands ran the "Times" and published their annual Almanac. While I am always so interested by your "News in those Days" column, the 75 or 50 year reminiscences I clearly recollect, though obviously not those of 100 years, since that July of 1897, Ryde has never been so lavishly and strikingly adorned, not even the Mafeking scenes in 1900.

I can recall 1887 Golden Jubilee, and our first Carnival in 1888, one of it's main characters a grotesque figure called "Ally Sloper," whose wife Tootsie was impersonated by a Mr. Charlie Tyrell, a neighbour of ours in Arthur Street. Ally sported a huge synthetic nose, whilst Tootsie flaunted Sally Hatch to the life, as coloured firs were swarming from tops of several buildings, all highly exciting, to be sure. All this seems to show it was Ald. Groves' Mayoral year then, Sir, sparing you any more verbiage, and remaining your constant reader,

Yours faithfully,

JAMES H. FRY

42 Weeks Road,
Ryde. I.W.