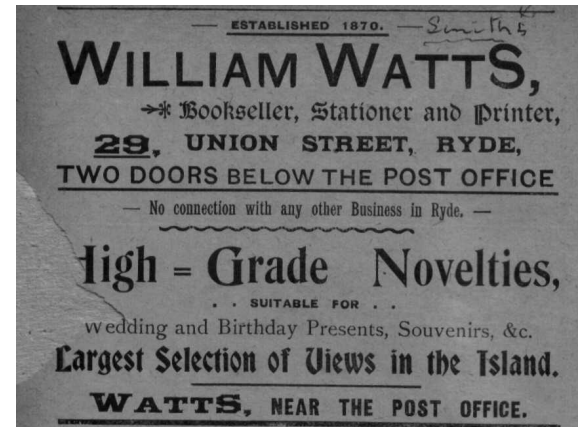


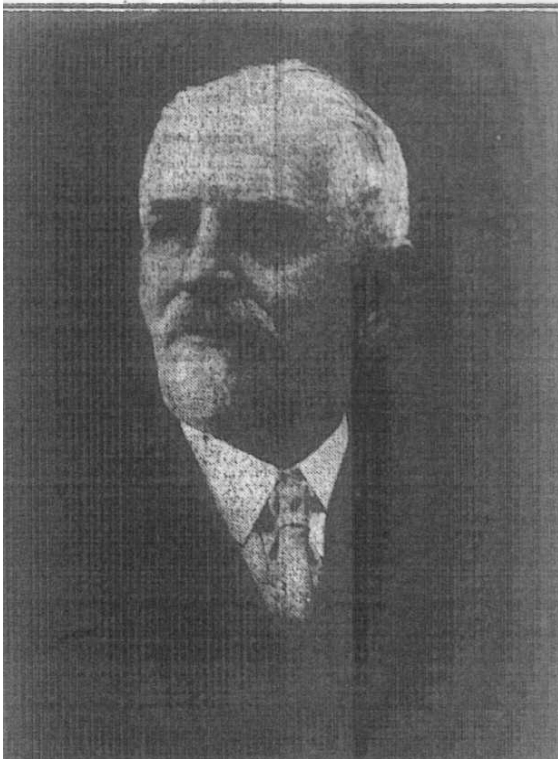
1901 CENSUS: RG13/1024. folio 19. page 29.
Abode: 29 Union-street, Ryde, IW.

William WATTS. Head. M. 56. Stationer. Eling, Hants.
Jane WATTS. Wife. M. 60. Newchurch, IW.
Marguerite WATTS. Dau. S. 29. Stationers Assistant.
Ryde, IW.



1915 KELLY's DIRECTORY page 722.
WATTS William. Bookseller, 29 Union-street, Ryde, IW.

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS Saturday 29 April 1933. page 5.



DEATH OF MR WILLIAM WATTS – A well known Ryde Business man –

It is with very deep regret that we have to record the death, at his residence, North View, Spencer-road, Ryde, on Saturday evening, of Mr. William WATTS, for more than half a century one of the best known tradesmen in the borough, and a member of the board of directors of this newspaper. Until recently Mr. WATTS, who had reached the great age of 87, had been an extremely active man, in full possession of all his faculties and able to take a keen interest in affairs local, national and international. Five weeks ago he was seized with a heart affection, and despite the best medical skill and the devoted nursing of his daughter he gradually became weaker until the end came peacefully, as stated.

By his passing Ryde loses one of her most respected citizens and one whose familiar figure had been seen about its streets for the long period of 65 years. Until a few years ago he was the doyen of Union-street tradesmen, and in business was representative of the best type of the old-fashioned bookseller and stationer, now practically extinct. No one better knew the value of books than he. His artistic tastes and his knowledge of the tastes of his customers stood him in good stead. His probity was unquestionable and the efficiency of his methods won for him a clientele which included all classes, from Queen Victoria downwards.

Outside of business he was a keen and earnest worker for the general advancement of the welfare and prosperity of his adopted town. Those privileged to enjoy his friendship or acquaintance knew him as at all times a man of his word, one

ever kindly disposed and concerned for the interests of others. There were no traces of ostentation or arrogance in his character; he ever displayed the charm of Victorian courtesy and was strongly imbued with love of home and family. He was always genial, and both in business and in all voluntary work he enjoyed an enviable reputation for soundness of judgment, thoroughness, and fairness. With his daughter and only child, who has been lovingly devoted to him, deep sympathy is felt in her sad bereavement.

Mr. WATTS was born in the parish of Ealing, near Southampton, on September 22nd, 1845, the youngest son of Mr. James WATTS. After serving an apprentice with Mr. ELLIS, bookseller, stationer, and printer of 139-140 High-street, Southampton, he came to Ryde in 1868 as assistant to E. and M.A. GIBBS, booksellers and stationers, of Union-street, whose business was established on the site of the present Post-office. Two years afterwards he started business on his own account at 15 Cross-street. Whilst there he was greatly assisted by his wife, a daughter of the late Ald. James FAIRALL, who pre-deceased him in 1918, a loss from which he never fully recovered. In 1888 he removed to more commodious premises at 29 Union-street, where the business continued to develop rapidly, and with his customers, found in many parts of the country, he was always on terms of friendship. Queen Victoria, members of other Royal families, and of the aristocracy were among his customers in the days when the Court was at Osborne House. In 1880, when he was appointed district manager for the Ryde area, Mr. WATTS began a very long and valued association with the County Press, and during the lengthened period ensuing until his retirement in 1920, he played a very important major part in building up this newspaper's present large circulation in Ryde and district. Before his retirement from active business he joined the Board of Directors, by whom, and the entire staff of the company, he was held in the highest regard and esteem.

During a very interesting career Mr. WATTS made many valuable contributions to the religious, social, and musical life of the town in the pre-war era. For nine years from 1892 he represented the East Ward on the Town Council, and he served as overseer for a term, but it was his great services to the musical amenities of the town which will be readily recalled by the older inhabitants. As far back as 1869 he managed the first two concerts under Major Augustus LEEDS, brother of the late Lady Oglander, given at the opening of the Town-hall, and at a later period he was responsible for very fine celebrity concerts which were continued almost up to the time of the Great War. His negotiating and organising ability was responsible for the appearance of many of the greatest artistes of the day, including PADEREWAKI, KUBELIK, BACKHAUS, PACHMAANN, and Madame Blanche MARCHESI. In 1899 he was asked by Miss Minnie COCHRANE to arrange a concert in the Town-hall in aid of the Binstead Boys' Brigade, and his efforts resulted in raising the magnificent sum of £250. Early in the following year he organised another concert under the same distinguished auspices, which secured £200 for the Boer War Fund. He was the first secretary of and one of the foundation members of the Borough of Ryde Philharmonic Society, and with the late Michael MAYBRICK (Stephen ADAMS), the noted composer, as president, and Dr. Yates MANDER as conductor, placed the society on a sound foundation both musically

and financially. He was also at one time a member of the Ryde Lodge of Freemasons, No. 698, and in addition to holding the office of worshipful master on two occasions he was a provincial grand director of ceremonies for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. He was one of the original members of the Ryde Club, and the last of two surviving original members of the Ryde Rowing club. In him the Church of England had a lifelong, ardent, and devoted worker. From 1868 until 1875 he was a member of Holy Trinity choir. On All Saints day in the church in the latter year he joined the Parish Church choir, having been present at the foundation-stone laying of the church, and remained a regular member until All Saints day, 1923, a period of 48 years, during which time his fine tenor voice was heard in much solo singing. He also served in the office of churchwarden from 1889 until 1891, and again in 1920. In the eighties Mr. WATTS several times took part in some cleverly performed amateur theatricals. He took great interest in the Ryde Terminable Building Societies. In short his long life was one of high character, noble aspiration, and notable achievement. He leaves behind a fragrant memory and a noble example, and all who knew and valued his friendship will cherish the one and strive to emulate the other to the good of the community which he so long and so conspicuously served.

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon and was of a very quiet character in compliance with the deceased's request that there should be no mourning and no flowers. The first part of the service was held at the Parish Church, the Rev. A.W.H.HARLOW officiating. The Nunc Dimittis was said as the coffin was carried from the church. It was of plain oak with brass fittings on which lay a full length cross of choice flowers from his daughter. The interment was at the Cemetery in a grave by the side of his wife. The principal mourners were Miss WATTS (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. J.P.WATTS, Mr. A.F.WRIGHT, T.C. and Miss K.PLUMBLEY. Among others present were Messrs. H.SWEETMAN (chairman), E.W.WAY, and T.R.TILLING (directors), G.A.BRANNON (Managing director), C.W.BRANNON, M.C. (deputy manager), G.LONG (secretary), W.H.DANN, B.A. (editor), G.R.BARRETT, W.G.SIBBICK (Newport), E.F.BROWN, and G.F.ROBERTS (Ryde), representing the Isle of Wight County Press, Mr. W.H.P.F.THIRKELL (chairman) and Miss ANDERSON (hon. secretary), representing the Ryde Philharmonic Society, Messrs. H.WORDSWORTH and E.R.GRIFFIN, representing the Ryde Lodge of Freemasons No. 698, Sir Hugh DALY, County Ald. G.R.BRIGSTOCKE, Dr. J.D.DAVIES, Lieut.-Col. C.L.ELLERY, Ald. J.B.PURNELL, Ald. G.A.BLACKALL, Messrs. E.P.MARVIN, J.CURRALL, F.P.MELLISH, F.J.LANKESTER, C.LANGDON, C.D.MUCKLOW, T.B.BIBBY (an old chorister friend), C.WELSH, Mr. and Mrs. H.HART, Mr. and Mrs. D.H.MORGAN, Mrs. WEST, Mrs. T.A.LLOYD, Mrs. LONG, Mrs. WEEKS, Mrs. HARTNALL, Madame Maud SANTLEY, Mrs. HOLT, Mrs. George HILLS, Mrs. L.J.SOUTER (Wootton), Mrs TARRANT, Mrs. F.Z.S.PETTITT, Miss COLYER, and Miss J.HALL. Messrs. WHEELER Bros. were the undertakers.
