

## DEATH OF CAPT. W. M. CAWS AT RYDE

Former Cunard-White Star Line choice pilot

Capt. **Wallace Martin CAWS**, formerly senior choice inward pilot to the Cunard-White Star Line, died at his home, Seacroft, Queen's-road, Ryde, on Saturday. Following a brief illness. During his 43 years in the I.W. Pilotage Service he had a career of great responsibility and singular interest, having throughout that period had charge of practically all the largest liners in the world when passing from the Nab to Southampton. His death severs the last link of his family's association with the pilot service, which has existed for over 200 years. Among his profession he was recognised as a very skilful officer and a genuine friend, and was held in much esteem. Since he retired he had taken considerable interest in several organisations at Ryde and enjoyed the respect of many friends, who have learnt with regret of his passing and deeply sympathise with his son and daughter.

Capt. CAWS was a member of a very old Island family, whose local associations go back to Norman times. In 1741 his forbear, Anthony CAWS, settled in Seaview, where he purchased property on a site now occupied by the High-street. He left six sons and two daughters, bequeathing to each a plot of this land. Of his sons, Anthony was the great great-grandfather of Capt. CAWS, and it is interesting to note that his plot is the only one in its entirety still in possession of the family. The elder Anthony was a pilot, and succeeding generations have each supplied members to the service. Capt. CAWS was one of three sons of the late Capt. Samuel CAWS who became pilots, his brothers having pre-deceased him, and he was 73. He was apprenticed to his uncle and granted his licence in 1900. In 1908 he was appointed senior choice pilot for the American Line, which five months later was transferred to the White Star Line, with which he occupied a similar position for the next 25 years. In May 1908 he piloted the *Adriatic*, then the largest ship in the world, on her maiden voyage. He was at the time practically the youngest pilot in the service, and the important position he had gained was ample testimony to his seamanship. In 1911 he piloted the *Olympic* on her maiden voyage and took charge of her until the end of her career. Many will recall the ill-fated *Titanic*, which foundered on an iceberg during her maiden voyage from Southampton across the Atlantic in April, 1912. Capt CAWS had joined her at Belfast when she made her first voyage to Southampton, and was in charge of the bridge when she came through from the Nab to Southampton. He had also piloted her sister ship the *Britannic*, which was lost during the 1914-18 war. In 1922 he went to Cuxhaven to join the *Bismark*, the liner granted to this country under the German reparations. She was the biggest ship in the world at the time and was renamed the *Majestic* by the White Star Line. Capt CAWS piloted her into Southampton on no fewer than 200 occasions. In 1933 Capt. CAWS received further promotion on being appointed as their choice pilot by the United States Line, and among their vessels he had charge of the *Leviathan* (formerly the German *Vaterland*). At about the same time he was appointed to a similar position when the Cunard and White Star Lines amalgamated and thus, so far as the Cunard vessels were concerned, succeeded his cousin, Capt. Neil GREENHAM of Seaview, who retired. The fusion brought added responsibilities, as the large vessels added to his charge were the *Benengaria* (formerly the German *Imperator*), the *Aquitania*, and the

old *Mauretania*, ships with an equally distinguished history in ocean travel. In 1936 came what was perhaps the crowning duty of his career when the Cunard White Star launched their new liner *H.M.S. Queen Mary* and he piloted her through Spithead on her maiden voyage and altogether on 71 occasions until the outbreak of the 1939-45 war. Of all the ocean greyhounds of which he had charge, the *Queen Mary* was his favourite, largely because she behaved so easily. With the advent of war again Capt. CAWS' duties assumed a confidential nature and were all the more onerous in view of the dangers to be faced. Although he had never piloted the *Queen Elizabeth* he was closely associated with the arrangements that were made for her historic dash to New York from the Clyde early in the war. The destination of the great liner was unknown to the Germans, but the British Government, by a clever manoeuvre, let it leak out for enemy consumption that the vessel was possibly going to Southampton. The plans were well laid and every official who would normally take part in the handling of the vessel at Southampton, including Capt. CAWS, was taken to the Clyde and placed aboard the liner. It was known that the U-boats, in anticipation of the liner travelling south, were in the vicinity of St. George's Channel, but when the *Queen Elizabeth* left a week later the Southampton officials were quietly taken off and the liner hoodwinked the submarine by making a fast crossing to New York. On completing 40 years in the service Capt. CAWS received a presentation from the Brethren of Trinity House, and three years later, on account of impaired health, he retired and was succeeded by Capt. James BOWYER, of Ryde, as choice pilot to the Cunard White Star Line. During his career in big ships Capt. CAWS had been brought into contact with many prominent political, diplomatic, and royal personages crossing from America. In 1924 he was presented to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who was a passenger on the *Olympic*, and two years before that he was presented to King George V on board the *Majestic* when she was laying in Cowes Roads during August.

Capt. CAWS was secretary of the local branch of the United Kingdom Pilots Association, until his retirement, having succeeded his brother (Capt. Sidney CAWS), and their father had previously occupied the position.

Since retiring Capt. CAWS' principle hobby had been gardening. He was a member of the Borough of Ryde Allotments Association Committee. A faithful churchman he was deeply interested in the work of All Saints' parish, and was a sidesman and a member of the Parochial Church Council. He was a member of Chine Lodge of Freemasons, the Sir Arthur HOLBROOK Lodge of Mark Masons, and Ryde Bowling Club.

### **The Funeral**

Canon A. CORY, R.D. (vicar) officiated at the service at All Saints' Church, Ryde, on Tuesday. As the cortege arrived Mr. W. L. REED (organist) played "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and at the conclusion "O rest in the Lord." The choir led the singing of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" and "Abide with me," and Psalm 23, and the Nunc Dimittis were chanted. The mourners were Mr. M. J. CAWS (son), Miss E. M. CAWS (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. Nugent CAWS (nephew and niece), Mr. and Mrs. Julian GREENHAM and Miss C. GREENHAM (brother-in-law and sisters-in-law), Capt. Neil GREENHAM, Mr. E. F. G. GREENHAM, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon GREENHAM, and Miss Phyllis GREENHAM (cousins), and Miss LIVERMORE.

Present and past Trinity House pilots attending were Captains J. BOWYER (Cunard White Star Line choice pilot), C. KNAPP, K. HUTCHINS, R. WEARNE, J. PEARCE, B.

BELL, A. M. THOMSON, A BURDEN, F. J. JANES, H. ROWE, and A. WICKENS. Southampton Pilot Service was represented by Capts. A. E. GADD, O.B.E., and J. H. SMITH, and the Trinity House pilot cutters by Capts. E. J. YOUNG, E. H. A. SCOTT, and P. J. GORDON, and Chief Eng. H. FOX. The Masonic representatives were Messrs. H. Nelson PAYNE, P.G.St.Br. (also representing W.Bro. J. L. WILLIAMS, W.M. of Chine Lodge), R. C. GOULD, H. BAKER, P. RUSSELL, and H. COLLYER (Chine Lodge), M. OSBORNE, R. G. BURKE, F. A. BRICKLE, O. V. MAINSTONE, H. ROGERS (also representing W.Bro. W. J. NEW), and Lieut-Col. C. L. ELLERY, O.B.E. (East Medina Lodge), and H. PHILLIPS (Sir Arthur HOLBROOK Lodge Mark Masons), Mr. W. A. CHRISTY, J.P., C.C. (senior vice-president), represented the I.W. Bowling Association, and Ryde Bowling Club was represented by Messrs. W. G. BURDEN, C. W. ADAMS, J. E. Le HURAY, R. E. WALLER, H. H. BASSHAM, A. BLACKBURN, P. GUY, B. J. BUCKETT, R. G. BARTER, S. F. FLIPPANCE, and O. P. BRADING (also representing Mr. A. AINLEY). All Saints' Parochial Church Council was represented by Mr. A. T. HODGES (churchwarden), Mrs. A. CORY, and Mr. and Mrs. A. J. ARCHER, and the Island division of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade by County Officers E. F. MILLGATE (treasurer) and E. WILSON. Among others present were Messrs. A. G. HIRST (representing Cowes Bowling Club), W. F. GAWN and A. J. POWELL (Ryde Allotments Committee), H. G. Occomore (former Bembridge harbour-master), Ald. L. WHEELER (also representing Mr. H. Caws WHEELER), Mr. J. G. FARDELL, Mr. W. DEWDNEY, Mrs. RAMAGE (also representing Mr. W. RAMAGE, T.C.), Dr. and Mrs. F. KENNEDY, Mr. A. J. BALLARD, Mr. H. JENNINGS, Miss CARTER (also representing Miss NUTT), Miss M. FOULKES, Mr. and Mrs. ALLISON, Miss M. ALEXANDER, Mrs. R. BARKHAM, Mr. A. WILLSTEED, Dr. G. SOWDEN, Miss Emily, Mrs. H. ROGERS, Mr. and Mrs. I. H. LOCKE, Mr. and Mrs. W. MICHIE, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. FRANCIS, Miss WALLER, Mrs. BODKER, Mrs. Trory RUSSELL (also representing Mrs. H. J. RUSSELL), and Miss L. OSBORNE. The interment was at Ryde Cemetery and about 40 lovely floral tributes included those from the Inwards Pilots, I.W. District; Southampton Outward Pilots; the officers and crews of Trinity House pilot vessels; the United States Line; All Saints' Parochial Church Council; W.M. and brethren of Chine Lodge; W.M. and brethren of Sir Arthur HOLBROOK Mark Lodge; Ryde Bowling Club; Ryde Allotments Association; I.W. Nursing Division, St. John's Ambulance Brigade; and friends at Seaview Methodist Church. Messrs. LANGDON made the arrangements.

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Researched by Ann and Les Barrett