

**FORMER RYDE MAYOR'S DEATH
MAJOR A. DENNIS**

Major Alfred DENNIS, a former mayor of Ryde, member of the County Council, and veteran of the Zulu War, died at his home, Glencoe, Surbiton Grove, Elmfield, on Saturday morning, five days after his 93rd birthday.

His military career began as far back as 1877, when he joined the Royal Engineers, and, after training at the School of Engineering at Chatham, sailed with the 5th R.E. Company to Zululand in 1878. He took part in the defence of Rorke's Drift in January, 1879, and in the Battle of Ulundi in July of the same year, and was believed to be the last survivor of the Rorke's Drift fight. Later he served on important military engineering works in Ceylon, Africa, and China, and took part in the quelling of the Boxer rising in 1900. The following year he returned home and was placed in charge of barracks along the north-west coast of Ireland. Major DENNIS first came to the Island in 1904, when he was in charge of the Needles, Cliffe End, and Warden areas. Two years later he was transferred to Ryde, in charge of R.E. work at Parkhurst Barracks, Cowes, and Puckpool, Nodes, and Sandown batteries. He retired from the Army in 1913, but was on the Island in 1914 when the first world war broke out and re-joined the colours to become Royal Engineers Assistant Commandant for the Wight.

In 1919 he left Army for the last time, and the next year embarked on a notable career of public service by heading the poll in the old St. Helens Urban District Council elections. For 12 years, until the Review of County Districts in 1933, he served continuously, and was chairman on two occasions. At the first meeting of the newly-constituted Ryde Town Council, with which St. Helens Council had been amalgamated, he was elected an alderman, and the following year was honoured with the mayoralty. He held the office for three years with geniality and distinction, and was admirably supported by Mrs. DENNIS. For several years he was chairman of the Public Works Committee. He retired from the Town Council in 1939. In 1922 he was elected to the County Council for the Ryde St. John's division, again topping the poll, and was made a county alderman in March 1937. For a time he was chairman of the County Roads Committee, and in 1949 retired from the County Council. For nine years he was a member of the Rural District Council, representing the Ashy division. He had also been vice-chairman of the Island Joint Hospital Board and a member of the Southern Seas Fisheries Board and the Territorial Army Association. In 1939 he served on the Ryde Food Control Committee.

For about 15 years he was people's warden at St. John's Church, Oakfield, serving successively under the Rev. J. Gillson GILL and the Rev. E.T.H. ROYDS, and maintaining a long association with the church. His interest in Island education matters also continued after his retirement from active local government work, and only a few days before his death he attended the opening of the new practical school block in the grounds of St. John's House. He was a staunch supporter of the Conservative Party, having been hon. Treasurer of the Ryde St. John's branch for some years and a member of the Central Council of the Island Association. Major DENNIS won many friends by his kindly and cheerful nature, and sympathy is felt with his widow, two sons, and two daughters.

THE FUNERAL

The coffin rested in St. John's Church, Ryde, during Wednesday night. The Vicar (the Rev. A.J. PEARMAN) conducted the funeral service on Thursday, assisted by Canon A. CORY (Mayor's chaplain), the choir led the chanting of the 23rd Psalm and the singing of "Onward, Christian soldiers" and "Abide with me." Mr. R. H. TOOGOOD (organist) played Solemn Melody (WALFORD DAVIES), and, as the cortege left the church, CHOPIN's funeral march. The mourners were Mrs. A. DENNIS (widow), Mrs. H. A. BELBIN (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. L.M. LEE (son-in-law and daughter), Col. and Mrs. A.V. PERRY, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. HOPPER, and Mr. H. PERRY (brothers-in law and sisters-in-law), Mrs. N. FINNEY (niece), and Major F.H. ASHFORD, O.B.E.

The County Council were represented by Alderman R. ACHESON WEBB, O.B.E. (chairman), Sir Godfrey BARING, Bt., D.L., Lt.-Col. S. CHATFEILD-CLARKE, V.D., D.L., and Capt. H.J. WARD, J.P., Councillors Capt. A. GRIST, M.B.E., M.C., Comdr. W.O. REES MILLINGTON, E.O. KIRK, G.H.A.

CANTOPHER, and H. H. PERRY, and the county officials by Mr. L.H. BAINES (clerk), Mr. A.L.

HUTCHINSON (education officer, also representing Miss M. O'CONNOR, O.B.E., C.C., chairman of the Education Committee), and Mr. F.H. BOOTH (architect). The Ryde Town Council were represented by the Mayor (Mr. W.A. CHRISTY, J.P., C.C.), accompanied by the Mayoress (Mrs. CHRISTY), Aldermen H.P. CHIVERTON, Lt.-Col. C.L. ELLERY, O.B.E., T.D., Capt. W.S. RUSSELL (also representing Ald. H.W.O. WEEKS, J.P., and A.J. FREAKES, and Messrs. A.E. AYMES, E.H. CASTLE, G.J. EVANS, R. JOLLIFFE, S.L. MATTHEWS, W.G.F. SUTTON, H.V. TAYLOR, and H. ROGERS, and the borough officials by Messrs E.S. SHEPPARD (town clerk), J. AITCHISON (treasurer), and R. LUGG (housing manager), the Island branch of the South African Wars Veterans' Association by Lt.-Col. L.W. LEWER, D.S.O., T.C (president) Mr. W. FERGUSON (hon Secretary and standard bearer), and Mr. W. H. ELDRIDGE; St. John's Parochial Church Council by Messrs. E.N. NEWMAN (hon. treasurer) and F. BURNETT; the British Legion women's section by Miss G. ANDREWS (Southern Area representative), Miss RHODES (president, Ryde section), and the Hon. Mrs. E. WILSON HEATHCOTE; the Island Federation of Women's Institutes by Mrs. C.E. LANDER (chairman); St. John's Women's Institute by Mrs. P. SHEPHERD (president), Miss I. DAYRELL-THOMSON (vice-president), and Mesdames M. WETHERALL, F.J. WALL, COLLINS, S.W. KENT, and WILSON.

Among public representatives attending were Messrs. L. MARCEY (commander, R.E.s Hampshire), T.S. MELLANBY (Ryde Sports F.C.), J. F. GRIMES, J.G. ROWE (British Legion, Ryde), W. HARDING (British Legion, East Cowes), Mesdames BRONWIN, FIDLER, RANN, E. HILLS, and R. NEWNHAM (St. John's Mothers' Union), Mr. J.H. MATTHEWS (Ryde Council of Churches and Elmfield Congregational Church), Mrs. E. WHEELER (former Public Assistance Committee member), Mr. P.J. MONK (St. Peter's Church, Seaview), Mr. V. P. EVANS (headmaster, Ryde C.E. Secondary Modern School), Mr. J. R. DIXON (Oakfield C.E. Boys' School), Mrs. G. COCKS (Head teacher, Oakfield Junior School), Miss E. C. WICKS (head teacher Oakfield Infants' School), Mr. H.J. DAVIES (head master, Ryde Secondary Modern School), Mr. C.P.B. SOUTH (manager, National Provincial Bank, Ryde, also representing Mr. D. G. TIMMS, manager, Ventnor branch), and Mr. H. MOREY (Messrs. FARDELLS).

The interment was at Ryde Cemetery, where the wreaths included tributes from the Mayor and Corporation of Ryde; the British Legion; South African Wars Veterans' Association; St. John's Mothers' Union; St. John's Women's Institute; the Oakfield Junior and Infants' Schools; and friends and neighbours in Harding Road.

Messrs. J. WHEELER and Sons made the arrangements.

Researched & typed by
Ann Barrett
Margaret Truckel