

ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER Saturday 11th August 1888

DEATH OF MR. JOHN COOMBES.- Death has removed from our midst a familiar face - that of Mr. John COOMBES, who for about 30 years has collected the poor rate in the town. Collectors, as a rule are not the most popular of mortals, but the kindly manner in which Mr. COOMBES carried out his oft-times unpleasant duties won for him general respect and good-will, and the expressions of regret at his death are universal.

Mr. COOMBES has been in failing health for some time, and his duties have been carried out by a substitute. A fatal termination was not, however, expected as he had rallied considerably, and of late his appetite improved and he was able to sit up. On Saturday, however, he was seized with an apoplectic fit and died on the following day. Mr. COOMBES was originally appointed collector for the parish of Newchurch (which then included Ryde) in 1858, and about nine years afterwards he was appointed for the parish of Ryde. Mr. COOMBES would have been 69 years of age had he lived another month. There have been already two or three candidates for the office Mr. COOMBES held. It was worth £115 a year, but it is said there is a probability of the vestry making a reduction.

The funeral took place at the Cemetery on Thursday afternoon. The service at the grave was read by the Rev. Mr. FAIR. In addition to the sons of the deceased, who attended as chief mourners, we noticed amongst those who showed their respect by attending Messrs. BARTON and JAMES (overseers), FOWLER and GROVES (ex-overseers), J. FLUX (assistant overseer), F. W. FLUX, H. PACK, T. A. BUTLER, J. F. LOADER, STEWART, and many other friends.

ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER Saturday 18th August 1888

The VICAR, in opening the proceedings, said the parishioners had missed the familiar form of Mr. **COOMBES** for some time past. Mr. COOMBES had, for a great number of years, carried out the duties, and his kind and courteous conduct was well known to all of them (applause). They all felt they had lost in Mr. COOMBES a good servant, and he thought their first duty was to express sympathy with those who had been left in bereavement.

Mr. E. MARVIN said by Mr. COOMBES' death one of the old landmarks of Ryde had been swept away. He had been collector of rates for the borough for 21 years, but previous to that he had assisted Mr. RAYNES and Mr. FAIRALL for many years. Previous to that he had been rural postman, carrying the letters between Bembridge and Ryde, and he remembered once reading a computation of the thousands of miles he had walked in that capacity. Old inhabitants like himself would remember this, and all, he was sure, felt sympathy with his family.

The expression of sympathy having been received with applause.

"The Parish Officers, in reporting the death of Mr. John COOMBES, who for upwards of 21 years had performed the duties of Collector of Rates, recommend that a successor be now appointed to carry out the duties of the office..."
