DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM FOOKES

Many friends and acquaintances, far and near, will hear with much regret of the death of Mr. William Fookes, which took place at his residence in Northgate Street, Devizes, on Thursday, after only a few days’ illness. On the previous Thursday he seemed in his usual health and spent the afternoon at the North Wilts Club. Although not feeling well he was out in the town on the following day, and on Saturday he got up with the intention of going out, but became so ill that he had to be put to bed. A day or two after he rapidly grew worse and on Wednesday pneumonia set in, which brought his life to an end on Thursday afternoon at about four o’clock.

Mr. Fookes came of a well-known Dorsetshire family, being a grandson of the late Mr. Robert Fookes, of Wolveton House, Dorchester. He was born at Whitechurch, Dorset, in 1825, and in 1850 married the eldest daughter of Mr. George Hammond, a well-known valuer and hop grower of St. Mary Cray, Kent, who survives him. He leaves four sons and three daughters, viz: Mr. William Watts Fookes, architect and surveyor, Wareham, Dorset; Mr. Robert Fookes, In India; Mr. George Hammond Fookes, F.C.A., in practice in the City of London; Mr. Edward Henry Fookes; Mrs Mary E. Bennett, Wife of Mr. H.T. Bennett, of Wimborne, Dorset; Mrs Frances J. Kingstone, wife of Mr. J.W. Kingstone of Marden Manor; and Miss Susan A. Fookes, who with her brother Edward Henry, has always lived at home.

As a boy Mr. Fookes had the great misfortune to break his leg while playing cricket, and this made him a cripple for life. In 1841 he went to Madeira, where he stayed about two years with his uncle, a leading wine merchant of the island. Here he gained such a knowledge of the Madeira wine trade and became so good a judge that his opinion and advice upon Madeira wine have ever since been highly valued. His father, having retired from the Weston Brewery, at Bath, purchased the Manor Farm at Tilshead, which his son occupied until 1864, when the property was sold, and he relinquished farming. From Tilshead, Mr. Fookes went to Pewsey, where he carried on business as a coal and corn merchant until 1897, when he retired and removed to Devizes. Mr. Fookes was a good judge of barley, and for many years bought largely.

It was in connection with cart horses that the late Mr. Fookes was best known. Always a lover of horses, he soon made a name for himself amongst the leading breeders, and was elected one of the original members of the Council of the English Cart Horse (now the Shire Horse) Society. His reputation was so great that he was in much request as a judge and he acted in that capacity at many of the large shows in various parts
of England. In fact, there was no more familiar figure at show and sales of cart horses than “the gentleman with the crutch.” In the buying of horses, his opinion and assistance were sought by many large firms.

A Churchman and a Conservative, Mr. Fookes took great interest in the election now proceeding, and while lying on his death bed made many enquiries as to how Mr. Peto’s campaign was progressing.

No one could come in contact with Mr. Fookes without feeling that he was no ordinary man. Of unusually quick and keen perception, he possessed extraordinary vigour and a remarkable memory, which he retained to the last. He will be much missed by his old friends, and the utmost sympathy is felt for Mrs Fookes and his sorrowing family in their bereavement.

The Funeral

The funeral took place at the Cemetery on Monday, and in accordance with the deceased’s wish was very quiet. The body was enclosed in an elm shell, the outer casket being of polished elm with black furniture; the breastplate bore the date of death and the age. The procession left the deceased’s residence just before 2.30, and all the mourners walked. The coffin was conveyed to the Cemetery Chapel on the bier, and the officiating clergy were the Rector (the Rev. P.W.G.Filleul) and the Rev. C.D.Ovens (Curate of St. Mary’s). The family mourners were Mr. William W. Fookes and Mr. G.H.Fookes (sons), Mr. J.W.Kingstone (Marden), Mr. H.T.Bennett (Wimborne), and Mr. Hugh Smith (Southsea), sons-in-law.

Excerpt from the same edition

DEATH OF MRS. WILLIAM FOOKES THIS MORNING

Mrs. Fookes, wife of Mr. William Fookes, who died a week ago, as recorded in another page, died at 11 o’clock this morning from precisely the same form of illness as her husband. She was taken ill on Sunday, and her condition was practically hopeless from the first. It is a striking fact that after a happy married life of nearly 60 years (they were married in 1850) death only caused a week’s separation. At the same time much sympathy will be felt for Miss Fookes and her brother at home, especially, at losing both parents so close to one another; also for Mrs. Kingstone, of Marden Manor, who being herself seriously ill in London, could not see either her father or her mother after they were taken ill.