A notable link with the Island of olden times has been severed by the much regretted death of Miss Katharine Hearn, of Oakdene, Rookley. The deceased lady was one of its best known and most useful women workers. She was an acknowledged authority on the ancient history of the Island, its old families, institutions, and folklore. Miss Hearn passed away at a Shanklin nursing home on Wednesday at the advanced age of 85. Her health during her long life had been remarkably good, and it was not until last spring that it showed symptoms of serious decline following the death of her sister, from the shock of which she never recovered. She continued some of her public engagements for a while, but slowly got worse and was eventually removed to a nursing home, where she gradually sank and passed peacefully to her long rest. Thus closed a very active and useful life, largely spent in the interests of those amongst whom she lived. She will be sadly missed in many local circles, particularly those which benefited by her cheerfully rendered services and charitable disposition.

Deceased was the second daughter of the late Mr. Alfred Hearn, of Great East Standen, Arreton, where she was born. As a member of one of the oldest families in the Island she developed a keen interest in the history of those old families, and she gradually became known as an authority on local genealogy, as to which she received inquiries from many parts of the world. Her lectures on the old manor houses and kindred subjects displayed extensive knowledge and proved most entertaining, as also did her stories of local smuggling in the olden days and her accounts of the Volunteers and other military units associated with the Island. She was a very versatile and fluent lecturer and for well over an hour she would discourse without notes upon her favourite subjects, showing herself possessed of a wonderfully retentive memory as to dates and other details. These lectures were welcome features of the programmes of various Island organisations, notably in late years of the Women's Institutes, a women's movement which won her warm admiration and support. She was always ready to seize opportunities for imparting her knowledge of local history to young people, and years ago she occasionally entertained audiences with a description of the ancient charters and other treasures of the Newport Corporation at the Town-hall. The establishment of the I.W. Natural History and Archæological Society furnished her with added opportunities for studying her favourite subjects, including geology, and she was one of the keenest and most regular members in attendance at the meetings and tours. Her residence at Staplers, where she lived alone for 30 years, was well stocked with a great variety of ancient treasures and curios, &c., some of which she used in illustrating her lectures, and all of which she was ever ready to exhibit and explain to visitors who were always welcome at her home. Miss Hearn removed from Staplers to Rookley about four years ago.

A valued church worker she will be gratefully remembered as an able and earnest speaker at religious and semi-religious meetings. She was formerly a frequent speaker at the open meetings of the St. Paul's Brotherhood, as well as at meetings of other similar organisations, and she was a popular speaker to gatherings of soldiers stationed in the Island during the war. She was outspoken in her utterances upon matters on which she had strong convictions, and was a fearless critic of some modern fashions, customs, and tendencies which the "old-fashioned" view with disfavour. Although taking no prominent part in politics she was a loyal member of a staunch Conservative and Constitutional family.

The funeral will take place this (Saturday) afternoon at the old Churchyard at Arreton, where her parents and other members of her family are interred. The service will be held in the Parish Church at three o'clock, the cortege leaving Clifden, Wroxall, the residence of her brother, Mr. Alfred Hearn, at 2 p.m.



The late Miss Katharine Hearn.