

LANCASHIRE LOSES OUTSTANDING FIGURE

Ald. Helme's Death Generally Mourned

THE passing of Alderman Thomas Wilson Helme has been mourned by the public generally, not only in Lancaster but throughout the County.

A PROMINENT figure in many spheres of activity in the Lancaster and Morecambe districts, County Alderman T. W. Helme died suddenly on Friday morning at his home, Springfield, 14, Elms Road Bare. He was 68, and a bachelor, elder son of the late Sir Norval W. Helme, who represented the Lancaster Division in Parliament for 18 years, Mr. Helme was educated at Lancaster Royal Grammar School and Leys School, Cambridge. He then proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, taking his B.A. and M.A. degrees.

Subsequently, he became a member of the firm of Messrs. Jas. Helme and Co., Halton, now part of Messrs. Jas. Williamson

and Son Ltd. During the 1914-18 war he joined the local Territorial Forces, enlisting in the 5th Bn. King's Own Royal Regiment, Lancaster. He was transferred to a cadet unit at Cambridge and was later commissioned in The Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

County Council Service

Elected to the Lancashire County Council, unopposed, as a representative of the Western Division of Lancaster, in June 1923, he had retained, continuous membership and for the past 17 years had been an Alderman. He succeeded his father, who was a county alder-

man for upwards of 30 years, On the aldermanic bench. He was a member of the Standing Joint and Finance committees and of the River Lune Catchment Board. Appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1914, he was a member of the South Lonsdale Bench.

Keenly interested in the Scout movement, he joined the County Scout Council on its inception in May, 1911, after first being introduced to scouting when the 4th Lancaster (Wesley) group was formed in 1909. He was chairman of the Lancaster Association in 1922, became A.D.C. in 1924 and in 1928 became District Commissioner. Later he was made Assistant County Commissioner and in

October 1938, became County Commissioner, a position from which he retired in July, 1948. He was president of the Lancaster and District Association and honorary County Commissioner. Mr. Helme earned several honours in the movement, being awarded the Medal of Merit in 1930 and the Silver Wolf, the highest distinction in Scouting, in 1940.

Travelling extensively in the interests of the movement, he had led Moot and Jamboree Contingents to Hungary, Sweden Holland and Scotland. He was a Rover Leader of the 13th Lancaster Crew.

Mr. Helme only retired for health reasons this year after fourteen years as chairman of

the Board of Governors of Lancaster Royal Grammar School. At the time of his death he was in his 29th year as a School Governor. He had been also actively identified with the Royal Albert Institution and the Lancaster Moor (County Mental) Hospital.

A Keen Sportsman

Sport too claimed his interest and only recently he was re-elected for the 26th year as President of Vale of Lune Rugby Union F.C. to which he had made several generous gifts including £500 towards the new stand. He had been associated with Vale all his life and regularly attended matches. For a number of years he had been President of Lancaster Swimming Club and he was also President of the Cricket Club. During the last war, Alderman Helme served as a member of the Conscientious Objectors Tribunal. He had also past service on the Lancaster, Westmorland and District War Pensions Committee.

As a leading Freemason, Ald. Helme had held high office in

the craft. He had been Provincial Grand Master of the West Lancashire Province.

Mr. Helme is survived by a brother, Mr. James Helme, of Forge Wood, Halton, and a sister Mrs. B. Gregory, of Selsey, Sussex.

The funeral at Lancaster Cemetery on Wednesday will be private, but will be preceded at 12.30 by a service at the Priory and Parish Church.

The Funeral Unusually Large Congregation

ONE of the largest congregations seen in the Priory and Parish Church, Lancaster, for many years, on such an occasion assembled for the service which preceded the interment on Wednesday. The assembly was representative of the many organisations with which County Ald. Helme had been associated, and was a remarkable tribute to the esteem in which he had been held by people in all walks of life. The service, which was conducted by the Bishop of Lancaster, Rt. Rev.

B. Pollard, who was assisted by the Revs. Canon E. Greenhalgh, Vicar of St. John's Sandylands, Morecambe (who gave the Address), W. G. Swainson, of Overton (who read the lesson) and T. Mason, of St. Christophers, Bare, who read the opening sentences. There was a full choir with Mr. H Walmsley at the organ, and they chanted the 23rd Psalm, Purcell's "Thou knowest Lord the secrets of our hearts," and the Nunc Dimittis, in addition to leading the singing of the hymns, "Praise My Soul" and "O Son of Man."

Canon Greenhalgh in his address said they had come together that morning, drawn from all walks of life, to pay a sincere tribute to a Christian gentleman, and to offer humble thanks to God for creating him and allowing him to be amongst them for so many years. Each one of them had a mental picture of Thomas Wilson Helme according to the interest they had shared with him. If these pictures were transferred to canvas, some of them would paint him as a Scout, the friend of young men others as

a wise and kindly administrator in the County Council Chamber, and on many committees; others again as a true English sportsman, loving the game for the game's sake; and others as a Mason, standing among his brethren with dignity and magnetic friendliness. There could be few men who had given so much for so many good causes for so long a time, and in doing of it made so deep and lasting an impression on their fellow men. He knew his own character had been greatly enriched by his contacts.

The cortege was preceded from the church by the choir, Wardens, Messrs. F.G.T. Adams and J. Brown, and by the clergy.

Family Mourners

Family mourners were: Mr. and Mrs. James Helme, brother and sister-in-law; Mrs. Gregory, sister; Mr. N.D. Crossley, nephew; Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Helme, Squadron Leader J.N. Helme, A.S.C., Miss Ruth Helme, Mrs. W.J. Campbell-Adamson, Mrs. W.

Croft Helme, Dr. W. George, Mr. J. Milner Helme, Miss E. Milner Helme, Mrs. Bles, Dr. P. Egerton Helme, Dr. and Mrs. Mathews, Mrs. Pemberton, Mr. J.L. Eccles, and Mrs. Ward (housekeeper).

Mr. Andrew F. S. Chance represented his father, Sir Robert Chance, D.L., of Carlisle, who was unable to be present.

Representative Mourners

The representative mourners were headed by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Earl Peel, who was accompanied by Countess Peel.

Lancashire County Council was represented by Sir F. Hindle and Mr. H Hodgkinson, who also represented the Chairman (Ald. A. Bates) and the Clerk (Mr R.H.Adcock).

Freemasonry was represented by the Lancaster and District Group (W. Bros. T. Atkinson, I.E. Singleton, H.T. Procter). Barrow Group (W. Bros. R. Twentyman, Dr. Blackee, and W. Inman) and the W.M. and Brethren of the Lodges in Lancaster, Morecambe, Carnforth,

Garstang, Ulverson, Barrow and surrounding districts. W. Bro. S. Robinson, who recently succeeded County Ald. Helme as Assistant Prov. G.M. represented the Provincial G.M. (W. Bro. A. Foster), and Major Rudolf Ord represented the Quest Lodge of Scouts, which County Ald. Helme helped to form.

Other representatives included:

County Magistrates: Col. W. Paget-Tomlinson, Capt. I. S. Keen, Mr. A.J. Gibson, Mr. Eccles, and Mr. V.F. Royle (Clerk to South Lonsdale Magistrates).

Boy Scouts' Association: Mr. J. Dodds Drummond (County Commissioner), also representing Lord Derby and Lord Rowallan (Chief Scout); Mr. K.R. Stanley, County Secretary; Mr. D. Gitchie, Preston (hon County Secretary); Mr. T. Gregson, Preston (Assistant County Commissioner); Messrs. R.E. Wright, J.W. Elwood and Watson (Morecambe), Assistant District Commissioners; Mr. G.S. Evenden (Morecambe Scouts' Association), T.W. Whiteside (Lan-

caster Scouts' Association), together with Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, Rovers and Scouts of the Troops of South Lonsdale area.

Lancashire County Police: Supt. F. Hogg.

Lancaster Corporation: The Mayor (Coun. G. Chirnside), and the Deputy Town Clerk (Mr. J.D. Waddell), also representing the Town Clerk and Mrs. Middleton (President of the Ladies' Section, Lancaster Swimming Club).

Royal Lancaster Infirmary: Mr. W. Armitage and Mr. C.H. Grimshaw.

Royal Albert Hospital Management Committee: County Ald. John Welch (Chairman), Mrs. J.A. Tomb, Mr. S.S.T. Walley, Dr. D.H.H. Thomas (Medical Supt.), Dr. W. Graham, and Major R.H. Welch (secretary).

Lancaster Royal Grammar School: Messrs. J.G. Swainson, E. Derham, the Headmaster (Mr. R.R. Timberlake) and Mrs. Timberlake, members of the staff and representatives of the school.

Lancaster Girls' Grammar School: Miss I. Gordon (headmistress).

Old Lancastrians' Association: Messrs. H. Douthwaite and T. Tyson.

Lancaster Divisional Education Executive: Messrs. J.L. Howson (vice-chairman), T.P. Woodhouse, H.L. Hirst, A. Joy, Miss Howson, Miss K.H. Nuttall, and Mr. W.K. Waiting (Divisional Officer).

Morecambe Divisional Education Executive and Grammar School Governors: Mr. R.W. Williams (chairman), Mr. H.H. Palmer (headmaster), also representing Morecambe Music Festival, and Mr. E. Hargreaves (acting Divisional Officer). Lancaster Chamber of Commerce: Mr. E.H. Stansbie (president), Mr. J.S. Oglethorpe (secretary), Mr. L.R. Andrews.

Lancaster Chamber of Trade: Mr. F.B. Smith.

Morecambe Corporation: The Mayor (Coun H.R.V. Addenbrooke), Town Clerk (Mr. Roger Rose).

Morecambe Borough Magistrates: Mr. N.L. Nevison.

Vale of Lune R.U.F.C.:

Messrs. G.R. Burgin (secretary) W. Aspden (social secretary), T. Woods, W.A.S. Hall,

T.G. Hall, D. Hall, I.D.J. Smith, A. Wilson, E. Abbott, J. E.H. Abbott.

Lancaster Swimming Club:
Messrs. G. Sargent (secretary)
J. Cole and A. Gunningham.
Girl Guides: Miss P.M.B. Taylor (District Commissioner), also representing Mrs. Birley; Mrs. McCall, Miss Derham, Mrs. A.B. Dex (Garstang), and Miss M. Richardson.
Sulyard Street Methodist Church: Ald. J.G.E. Clarke and Mr. J.E. Bell.

District Bank: Major H. De B. Askew.

Midland Bank: Mr. A.C. Tennant.

Lancaster Cricket, Bowling and Tennis Club: Mr. A.D. Thurstan (chairman).

Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society: Mr. G.M. Bland.

Others present included:
Messrs. W.H. Satterthwaite, B. Pickard, A. Sewart, Rev. D. Birney, Col. J.A. Black, Mr. E. R. Simpson, Mr. T. Walley (representing Earl of Sefton), F. J. Bollands, Dr. S.A. Nield Faulkner (Garstang), Coun. A. Gardner, Mr. D.P. Sturton, Rev. E. Jackson (vicar of Scor-

ton), Revs. A.F. Clark and J. W. Packer, Mr. H. Cross, Mr. H. Howarth, and Mrs. Hall.

(SEE TRIBUTES IN NEXT COLUMN).

Tributes From Leaders “True Friend Of Young People”

Mr. R.R. Timberlake, M.A., Headmaster of the Lancaster Royal Grammar School, writes: “His death is mourned by many at the Royal Grammar School and by many Old Boys as a real personal loss. As Chairman of the Governors, he directed the affairs of the School with wise judgement and real statesmanship. His distinguished work as Chairman was chiefly known to those over whom he presided, but his greatest achievement was perhaps that he was well known to every Master on the Staff, and every boy in the School, not just as a legendary figure who appeared in person on rare public occasions, but as a warm and live personality, to whom the smallest details, especially the human details, of School life were of real concern. In biting winds he watched matches as an eager spectator,

and any School functions always found him there, entering happily into the spirit of the occasion, as a true member himself of the community. “We shall remember him with the greatest affection for this genuine interest, and for many acts of spontaneous generosity. Those of us who had the privilege of working closely under him remember many examples of wise counsel and sympathetic understanding. But there will also be something far deeper. He combined with an unusual youthfulness of spirit something of an old-fashioned courtesy, which was not just an outside veneer, but which sprang from an inner self. This showed itself in a remarkable consideration for the feelings of others, a gift for saying the right word of encouragement or praise, and for making everyone feel that he was a person who mattered. Young people especially prize this quality when they find it, and rightly consider anyone who possesses it as one of themselves. The young people of Lancaster have never had a

truer friend, whom they will do well to remember, when it is their turn to encourage a rising generation.”

Vale Of Lune Club's Loss

Mr. W.H. Aspden, Press and Social Secretary of the Vale of Lune R.U.F.C., in an appreciation on behalf of the Club, writes:

“All connected with Vale will realise the great loss the Club has sustained by the death of one of its main stalwarts and benefactors.

“His presence helped to mould the tradition and spirit that prevails throughout the Club at the present time. His monetary gifts are known to all, but it was his other gestures that those who were close to him will ever recall when they visit Powder House Lane. To a Rugby player the appreciation is in the fact that as our President, Alderman Helme was always by our side in adversity as well as in our greater moments. When we had nothing to offer supporters but an open field, a biting wind and sleeting rain, his spirit was un-

daunted, and he ignored other more comfortable sporting organisations to encourage the Club which meant so much to him. Players and Officials noted his great love for the game, and this combined with his undoubted interest, have been for many years the inspiration behind the scenes.

“Vale have lost a great patron and friend, in whose memory the Club will always have the living spirit of Rugby football.

Boy Scouts' Commissioner AN APPRECIATION

Mr. J. Dodds Drummond, County Commissioner for Scouts, In an appreciation, writes:-

Scouts, past and present, throughout North-West Lancashire, will mourn the passing of “Long Panther.” He was the true embodiment of the spirit of Scouting and his enthusiasm and humour were an inspiration to all, from the most dignified Commissioner to the youngest Wolf Cub. His services to Scouting were on a national scale

at many World Jamborees and he was fittingly decorated by Lord Baden Powell with the Silver Wolf, the highest award in Scouting. He was a man who could talk with crowds and keep his virtue; he could walk with Kings and not lose the common touch. We shall not see his like again.

Lancaster Guardian
11th November, 1949