

Death of Mr. Harry Parsons, J.P.

SO'TON LOSES LEADING TOWNSMAN

THE "Echo" regrets to announce the death of Mr. Harry Parsons, J.P., M.I.Mech.E., which occurred at "Brampton," his Bassett home, early today. He was 79, and had been ill only for a short period.

He was founder and chairman of The Parsons Engineering Company, Ltd., Southampton, and a director of Southern Newspapers, Ltd.

ONE of Southampton's foremost and most respected public men. Mr. Parsons served his generation in many varied fields and with distinction.

The Parsons marine engine, product of the business which he founded on the Town Quay, Southampton, powers little ships all over the world.

In the counsels of the industry



MR. HARRY PARSONS, J.P.

to which he devoted his life he held high place and to the commercial activities of Southampton he made a contribution of outstanding value.

CYCLE AND MOTOR-CYCLE PIONEER

He played no small part in the growth of 20th Century Southampton and for 47 years the firm he founded has provided skilled work in the town

Mr. Parsons founded the Parsons Motor Company in Southampton in 1904, and for almost half a century earned a reputation for precision engineering all over the world.

Chairman of Southampton Harbour Board for 21 of his 27 years' service, Mr. Parsons worked indefatigably in connection with the establishment of an Empire air base at Southampton. During his long service vast schemes of dredging were carried out, the New Docks were opened and the Board's offices rebuilt.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WORK

Honorary director of Southampton Chamber of Commerce and a past president, Mr. Parsons rendered sterling service not only locally but in the wider spheres of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, of which he was vice-president, and on which he represented the local Chamber for many years.

Mr. Parsons became a director of Southern Newspapers, Ltd., in 1936 and was appointed deputy chairman upon the death of the chairman, Mr. W. A. Gleave, J.P., in 1945, and held that office until recently.

NATIVE OF ANDOVER

A Hampshire man—he was born at Andover—Mr. Parsons was educated at Brighton Grammar School and received his engineering training at the Regent-street Polytechnic in London. After serving an apprenticeship in the Metropolis, he went to the Midlands, where he assisted in the early development of the cycle and motor-cycle.

He was at one time chief designer for the Rudge Whitworth Co. and later worked with the Beeston Motor Works, of which he became manager. Then, in 1904, he came to Southampton.

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Mr. Parsons also designed the sociable—a side-by-side cycle—which he is here riding.

fitting to motor-car tyres. He formed the Parsons Non-skid Company in London to make them. After developing the idea he sold out to an American rival company.

He had many patents to his credit. His pioneering work in connection with the early cycles and motor-cycles makes interesting reading. He was often not only abreast of development, but ahead of it.

Towards the end of the last century, when there was a bicycling boom, Mr. Parsons built a bicycle made for four, and followed this with a "quin." He rode them, too. Then he designed a machine called the "sociable," a side-by-side machine.

Mr. Parsons pedalled away with many records, made on the one-famous Paddington track, when he was a member of the Regent-street Polytechnic Club. He was the first man to cycle 22 miles in an hour, the first to cover 41 miles in two hours, and the first to ride 60 miles in three hours.

The first motor-tricycle, a de Dion with a 1½ h.p. motor behind the back axle was built by this versatile engineer. The machine took part in the London-Brighton run which celebrated the abolition of the Act which required a man with a red flag to walk in front of a motor car.

WHEN PETROL WAS 6d. A GALLON

Mr. Parsons used to recall the

with the Board in 1947, when he was no longer qualified for membership.

He liked to recall that during his chairmanship 230 Board meetings were held of which he attended 223. For 14 years—1930-44—he did not miss a meeting.

Undoubtedly the outstanding feature of Mr. Parsons' Harbour Board career was his work in connection with the establishment of an Empire air base at Southampton.

Chairman of the special sub-committee which carried the project through, his efforts were indeed tireless. In August, 1939, the Board acknowledged the leadership which resulted in the establishment of the air base.

When his long association with the Board ceased in 1947, tributes were paid to his untiring efforts to make the port known throughout the world.

Mr. Parsons, for a time, served on the executive of the Docks and Harbour Authorities' Association. At one time he was a member of the Lighthouse Advisory Committee under Trinity House.

His interest in the sea was reflected in his membership of the Committee of Southampton Sailors' Home.

SIGNAL HONOUR

Mr. Parsons became a director of Southampton Chamber of Commerce in 1914, after he had been a member for four years. His valued and distinguished services were recognised in 1945, when an honorary directorship was conferred upon him.

From 1920-23 Mr. Parsons was president, and in 1943 was honoured by being elected vice-president again.

For many years Mr. Parsons served the Chamber as representative on the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, of which he was vice-president. He was also the Chamber's representative on the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire.

A member of Southampton Rotary Club for many years, Mr. Parsons was one of the senior past presidents.

A Justice of the Peace for 29 years, Mr. Parsons was chairman of the Tuesday Bench for many years.

PROMINENT FREEMASON

Freemasonry was one of the abiding interests in Mr. Parsons' life. His mother Lodge was Southampton, 394, of which he was P.M. and one of the senior members. He held Provincial Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge rank, too, and was deeply versed in the ritual of all

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SUBJECT
Parsons, Harry

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S.D. Echo

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SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Passing of Mr. Harry Parsons, J.P.

Continued from Front Page.

He opened works on the Town Quay and founded the Parsons Motor Company for the purpose of building and installing in various craft the company's marine engine, the first of its type to use kerosene instead of petrol.

The business grew so much that eventually the company's marine engine department was separated from the garage business.

NEW WORKS

In the second World War most of the company's Town Quay buildings were destroyed by enemy action, but in 1948 new works were completed and equipped.

Only recently it was announced that the company had acquired from Southampton Harbour Board the lease of land between the present works and those of Harland and Wolff's, on which it is proposed to erect new offices and extensions of plant.

In 1946 the company was turned into a public company, and Mr. Parsons became managing director and chairman.

In the spring of last year Mr. Parsons relinquished the managing directorship of the company, but continued to be chairman of the directors. He was succeeded as managing director by Colonel I. A. Marriott, a director of the firm since 1949. Mr. Parsons agreed to continue as chairman to preserve continuity and Mr. Alfred L. Ballam, F.C.I.S., remained as director and secretary.

Parsons Engineering Company manufactures not only marine engines but gearboxes, sterngear, marine auxiliaries, pumping sets, etc.

MANY PATENTS TO HIS CREDIT

Mr. Parsons was the inventor of a side-by-side chain for motor-cycles.



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SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

ONIGHT
Saturday)
Orchestra
Admission 3/-
Buffets

Ball of Dancing
Bowden Lane)
to Welbeck Avenue.
FRIDAY, 8-10 p.m., 2/6.
HOME
8; Silver, Tuesday, 7-8;
on, Tuesday, 9-10.
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Self and Res. Beaumont.
phone 57682.

PEACE COUNCIL
"ON PEACE"
at the
Centre, on FEBRUARY 19, 1951.
Team:
M. MRS. IRENE F. CANDY, B.Sc.
MR. V. HILL (World Government
Association).
MR. J. V. CANDY.
by the audience prior to the
post with name and address attached
E. Knowlton, 91, Stafford Road,
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ROYAL HOTEL
ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON. Tel. 2871
DANCING TONIGHT
AND HIS ORCHESTRA. 8-11.45. 4/-
DINNER SERVED 7-9

TOWN AMATEUR DANCE CLUB presents
EMPRESS BALLROOM
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19
7.30-11 p.m.
AND HIS ORCHESTRA.
4 Dance Competition for the "Leonora Budden"
Adjudicator: JIMMY FELLOWS (London).
(Members 2/6). Bar and Buff

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THE STADIUM
DANCE Tonight
To NAT CONELLA AND HIS GEORGIANs
Admission 3/-
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Mr. Parsons used to recall the days of motoring when the motorist was liable to be choked with dust, as the roads were gravel and tyres were solid. Incidentally, petrol was sixpence a gallon.

Some of the makes of cars which Mr. Parsons handled at Coventry in those early days included the first Daimlers, with their German engines, Benz cars, with their horizontal single-cylinder engine, Panhards, de Dions, Peugeots and Renaults.

In those early Coventry days a frequent visitor was a certain Mr. Morris, now world-famous as Lord Nuffield.

The first delivery van seen on the streets of Southampton incorporated several of Mr. Parsons' improvements.

The first cars which Mr. Parsons helped to build were not unlike pony traps, with dashboards and tiller steering apparatus.

WORK FOR HARBOUR BOARD

Mr. Parsons' work for Southampton Harbour Board was devoted and untiring. He joined the Board as a representative of Southampton Chamber of Commerce in 1920 and three years later became chairman, succeeding the late Mr. F. Beresford Turner.

Until 1944 Mr. Parsons was at the helm during momentous years. He severed his connection finally

merce in 1914, after he had been a member for four years. His valued and distinguished services were recognised in 1945, when an honorary directorship was conferred upon him.

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Mr. Parsons was twice married. He leaves a widow, two sons and a daughter.

Mr. Charles P. Parsons, son by his first marriage, is a well-known London journalist, writing under the name of Craven Hill. Mr. Frank Parsons, who lives in Southampton, and Miss Wendy Parsons are by his second marriage.

The funeral will be on Wednesday, when a service at St. Michael's and All Angels at noon will be followed by interment in the Old Cemetery.

MAGISTERIAL TRIBUTE

Before the start of business at Southampton Magistrates' Court today, the deep regret of the Bench was expressed by the chairman, Alderman F. S. Smith, at the passing of Mr. Parsons, described by him as "one of our very old colleagues."

Mr. Parsons, he said, had been a member of the Bench for nearly 30 years, and a straighter man one could not wish to meet. He was always keen on his work and very conscientious, and would be missed very much indeed.

All present in court stood in silence as a mark of respect.

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