



Plate 15. FRANCIS JOSEPH WELD
1873-1958

OBITUARY

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Mr. Francis Joseph Weld died on 30 April 1958 after a short illness. Born 16 October 1873, he lived all his life in the same house, 32 Weld Road, Birkdale. He was educated at Stonyhurst College, which had been presented to the Jesuits in 1794 by his great-grandfather Thomas Weld of Lulworth, was admitted a solicitor in 1897, and became a partner in the law firm of Weld & Weld, practising his profession for nearly sixty years and going to his office several times a week until shortly before his death. Being a man of the highest integrity, he was chosen as trustee by many individuals and societies including the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom. He was president of the Liverpool Law Society from 1925 to 1926.

Frank Weld was a man who played an active part in many walks of life and was also a leading figure among Roman Catholics. He was the eldest of four brothers and three sisters, one of whom became a nun; and is survived by his three brothers, one of whom is a bishop, and another a Jesuit priest and chaplain of Beaumont. He was a former president of the Stonyhurst Association, a governor of St. Francis Xavier's College, Liverpool from 1902 to 1947, and a member of the Knights of Malta.

He was under-sheriff of Cheshire in 1920-1921 and 1923-24, and served as high sheriff of Lancashire in 1942-1943. He became a J.P. in 1937 and retired from the bench in 1949.

Frank Weld was also a prominent figure in Southport politics and became president of the Southport Conservative Association in 1950 having previously held office for twenty-five years.

With the death of Frank Weld Lancashire lost a much loved character and true friend whose kind and thoughtful actions, and whose obvious enjoyment of life and active concern for the welfare of his friends of all ages continued undiminished to the end. He was an individualist who never owned or wanted a car; but he loved travelling by train and was a passenger on both the first and last journey ever made on the Liverpool to Southport Cheshire Lines route.

Although he remained a bachelor, he became in middle life the guardian, and virtually the father, of a family of nine, whose parents had both died before the youngest child was four years old. He loved people, was tremendously social, and was a man of varied hobbies. In his younger days he was a keen shot and had a gun in the Scarisbrick shoot. He was also an enthusiastic botanist and collected shells, eggs and butterflies. He was keenly interested in books and acquired from them and from first-hand sources an extraordinary wide knowledge of people and affairs in Lancashire, extending back for many generations. With regard to novels, he had an insatiable appetite for Charles Dickens, all of whose books he must have known by heart.

He was president of the Weld Tennis Club which was named after him, and in which he took much interest, always attending the club functions and presenting the annual cups and prizes. He was also a regular attender and box owner at the Grand National for which event he always had a large house party.

Before the National Health Service was introduced, Frank Weld was on the board of the Southport Convalescent Hospital from 1927 and was chairman from 1936-1948. For many years he was a familiar figure on Sunday mornings taking flowers from his garden for the patients and staff of the hospital, where the old ladies in particular would receive his special attention. During his last year as chairman he held a large garden party at his home for all the staff and patients who were able to come, and no doubt they appreciated his dahlias which won him many prizes in the local section of the Southport Flower Show, where he was a regular exhibitor.

Frank Weld became a member of the Historic Society in 1918, and after many years of service on the Council was elected a vice-president in 1942.

EDELINE COPPOCK