

Timaru Herald. 30 November 1934 (Papers Past) [22/09/2023]

OBITUARY

Mr Arthur Michael O'Brien, who died at his home at Knottingly Park recently, was born at Invercargill in 1880, and on the early death of his parents, went to Christchurch and received his education at the West Christchurch and Normal Schools. Early in life he took employment with Mr Walter Hayman on his farm at Studholme Junction, and afterwards worked at Temuka, Castle Hill, Marlborough and Gorge Road. Southland. From the last named district he enlisted for the Great War, from whence he returned and shortly afterwards went to Christchurch as manager of Grassy Hills, Redcliff. He next took up farming at Tawai, Waimate, and in 1926 was appointed to the position of curator at Knottingly Park, and in this capacity he found his special forte. By application and study, combined with intense enthusiasm in horticulture his display of spring blooms, especially of narcissi, at the Park came to be a feature of the district, many of the rarer varieties both of bulbs and seedlings being purchased at his own expense. One Sunday in each year recently has been set aside as a day on which the Waimate Silver Band and the general public were invited to Knottingly to view the spring flower display, the bandsmen and many of the visitors being the guests of Mr and Mrs O'Brien at afternoon tea. To picnickers and casual visitors to the Park also, he was ever ready to go far beyond his official duties for their pleasure, and his wide knowledge of flowers and trees was freely available to every enthusiast. Mr O'Brien was a valued member of the executive committee of the Waimate branch of the Returned Soldiers' Association, and he always provided and supervised the hall decorations for the annual Anzac Day services. While at Tawai he served on the local school committee, occupying the chair for 12 months, and was responsible for instituting the roll of honour and the school library. He was accorded a military funeral which was attended by a representative gathering from all parts of the district. The cortege, which was over half a mile in length, was headed by a firing party under Captain G. H. O. Barclay, comprising Messrs A. E. Lewis, A. Williams, S. Bennington, A. D. Cameron, R. Moore, C. Carbis, T. Riordan, C. Wright. H. Mewburn, and A. H. Thompson, the bearers being Messrs D. S. Chisholm, A. Bringans, M. J. Friel and J. M. King. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. W. F. Nichol, of Knox Presbyterian Church, Waimate, the Dominion R.S.A. ritual being read by Mr A. E. Lewis, president of the Waimate R.S.A. "Last Post" and "Reveille" were sounded by Bugler L. V. Brenton.

Southland Times. 1 December 1934 (Papers Past) [22/09/2023]

The death has occurred at Waimate of Mr Arthur Michael O'Brien, at the age of 54 years. Mr O'Brien was born in Invercargill in 1880, and was educated at the West Christchurch and Normal schools. As a young man he worked in the Waimate district, later going to Marlborough and Southland. While in Waimate he enlisted with the 19th Reinforcements and rose to the rank of sergeant-major. He saw two years' service and was then wounded. Returning to Waimate after his discharge from the army, Mr O'Brien engaged in farming for a time at Tawai, near Waimate, later becoming curator at Knottingley Park, Waimate, which position he held for the eight years before his death. He was a keen horticulturist and was a member of the New Zealand Horticultural Society and the Royal Horticultural Society. Mr O'Brien was a member of the executive of the Waimate Returned Soldiers' Association. He was married at Christchurch in 1920, and is survived by his widow and three step-sons. A military funeral was accorded him.