

Mr G. R. Watkins

of Drybrook

The funeral and thanksgiving service took place on Monday at the Gospel Hall, Cinderford, for Gilbert Ralph Watkins, of Oak Grove, 2 The Branch, Drybrook. The service was conducted by Mr Leslie Meredith, an elder at the Hall and a personal friend of the deceased. Mr Watkins was in his 83rd year was buried at Holy Trinity Church, Drybrook.

Born in Ruardean, the eldest of a family of nine children, he commenced work at 14 and spent 51 years as a collier at Crump Meadow, Waterloo and Northern United. His working life spanned from the early days of the hard graft of hodding to the final closure of the Forest pits. Having suffered a serious mining accident, being crushed by a truck which jumped the rails, he could speak with first hand experience of the price of coal. He became a Christian as a young man and worshipped at the Congregational Church, Ruardean, and he conducted services all over the Forest.

The greater part of his Christian work was centred at the Gospel Hall where he became an elder. He will be remembered for his dependability and patience amongst many other qualities. His study and love of the Word of God was matched by his willingness to serve others.

Since his retirement much of his time was spent in visiting the sick and infirm in old people's homes and hospitals in the Forest and Gloucester, often being the only visitor for some.

During the last two and a half years of his life, after suffering disability and blindness through a stroke, his thoughts were centred around the resurrection, the Christian's hope as found in Christ. Since the loss of his wife in May the hope of Heaven became a greater reality.
