

## Benjamin Midlane

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 8 October 1892

### DEATH OF MR. BENJAMIN MIDLANE

Death has removed from the community of Newport a well-known figure in the person of Mr. Benjamin Midlane, who passed away at his residence in Trafalgar-road on Monday last, at the age of 73. Years ago the deceased ranked as a public man of a very militant type. Holding advanced Liberal views - or views which were considered advanced a decade or two ago - no meeting of his party was considered complete without the presence of Benjamin Midlane, and wherever there was a bit of hard fighting to be done for the cause to which he was attached, he was certain to be found in the forefront of the battle. And his activities were not confined to questions of imperial politics. In municipal matters - we are still speaking of other days - he exerted a great influence amongst a section of the burgesses, especially in the South Ward. We well remember him some twenty years ago as one of the moving spirits of the old Ratepayers' Protection Association, which kept a sharp look-out for municipal grievances and gave the Corporation many a bad quarter of an hour! Closely associated with him in those days was one who, in powers of oratory, was the "John Bright" of the party. We refer to Mr. Edwin Witcher, who is still happily with us, finding after the storms of public life a tranquil haven in Her Majesty's Commission of the Peace.

Mr. Midlane also at one time concerned himself actively in parochial matters, and he was a regular attendant at the Carisbrooke Easter Vestries. Those Vestries were occasionally stormy in days gone by, and when there was a storm Mr. Midlane was generally on the side of the storm, but the subduing touch of advancing years made itself felt on a temperament that, in public affairs, was naturally tempestuous, and in the later time the once combative vestryman was found moving or seconding votes of thanks to the Vicar, none speaking more warmly than he of the unfailing gentleness and courtesy of the dear old Vicar of Carisbrooke.

Returning to Mr. Midlane's municipal career, our recollection takes us back to a certain Mayor's day at Newport when he was one of the burgesses "outside the bar" in the Council-chamber. In the course of proceedings he changed that position for one "inside the bar" and attention being called to the fact by a member (the late Alderman Henry Mew), Mr. Midlane was requested to get on the other side of the bar. He did so, at the same time indulging in a sort of Disraeli prophecy, declaring that the day would come when the Council would be bound to receive him within the bar. And the day *did* come. Mr. Midlane was a short time afterwards elected a member of the Corporation, and he was for some years an active and useful member of that body. He also sat for a considerable period on the Newport School Board.

The deceased has left his record. It is that of one who, before the infirmities of age and failing health settled upon him, did what he conceived to be best for the welfare of the community amongst whom he lived, and while there are many who may have differed from his views, there are none, we feel sure, who will fail to recognise the honesty with which he

held those views and the courage and consistency with which he stuck to them in shade or shine.

The funeral of the deceased took place on Thursday at Carisbrooke Cemetery. He had been a member of the Bible Christian denomination, and the ceremony was performed by the Rev. F. Pascoe, in the unavoidable absence of the Rev. W. B. Lark. The relatives attending were Messrs. T. H. and F. Midlane (sons), J. Midlane and H. Harvey (nephews), and T. H. Walden and W. Fiander, who were connected with the family by marriage. There were also present, amongst others, Messrs. Joseph Johnson, F. W. Black, R. Bullen, H. Sheppard, W. Knott, G. Cooper, G. Meech, E. Stiby, and R. Cole. Much to his regret, Mr. Edwin Whitcher, J.P. was prevented by illness from joining in paying this last tribute of respect to the memory of his old friend. There were a number of beautiful floral wreaths.

*Transcription by Rosemary Stewart for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2022*

<https://www.foncc.org.uk>